

## UC Merced

### The Journal of California Anthropology

**Title**

Huddleston and Barker: *Otoliths and Other Fish Remains from the Chumash Midden at Rincon Point (SBa-1), Santa Barbara-Ventura Counties*

**Permalink**

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/79t926dd>

**Journal**

The Journal of California Anthropology, 5(1)

**Author**

Langenwalter, P. E., II

**Publication Date**

1978-07-01

Peer reviewed

"Two Petroglyph Sites in Lincoln County, Nevada," by R.F. Heizer and T.R. Hester (Repro.); (2) "Ven-195: Treasure House of Prehistoric Cave Art," by R. Gibson and C. Singer (Repro.); (3) "Shaman and Rock Art Symbols," by G. Garvin; and (4) "The Manufacture of Petroglyphs: Additional Replicative Experiments from the Western Great Basin," by C. Busby, R. Fleming, R. Hayes, and K. Nissen.

The study by Gloria Garvin (No. 3) is particularly interesting because it presents a notable contrast to the monograph by Gibson and Singer (No. 2) in interpretation of the significance of the pictographs at a site in the Santa Monica mountains.

Altogether the papers represent cogent additions to or refinements of information already existing on rock art and should be in the library of anyone concerned with petroglyphs in Western North America.



*An Archaeological Overview of the Northern Channel Islands, California, Including Santa Barbara Island.* Michael A. Glassow. Tucson: Western Archeological Center, U. S. National Park Service, 1977. vi + 249 pp.

Reviewed by ROBERT L. HOOVER  
*California State Polytechnic University  
 San Luis Obispo*

One is overwhelmed today by the proliferation of environmental impact reports and cultural resource management papers necessary to satisfy legal requirements at various levels of government. Few of these consist of serious contributions to the science of archaeology. In fact, CRM has become a convenient means of pacifying the profession and the concerned public while providing some employment but little addition to human

knowledge. There are notable exceptions to this unfortunate trend. I was delighted to find Glassow's report on the archaeology of the Northern Channel Islands to be one of the better examples of the latter. Prepared for the National Park Service's Western Archeological Center, this volume summarizes in detail and evaluates previous archaeological research on the northern islands of the Santa Barbara Channel region—Santa Cruz, Santa Rosa, San Miguel, the Anacapas, and Santa Barbara Islands.

Glassow begins with a general section which includes a summary of ethnographic knowledge, describing settlement patterns, subsistence, and social and economic organization of the Chumash. He also deals with chronologies for the general area of southern California and specifically for the Channel Islands. The relatively few and anomalous radiocarbon dates from this region and the poorly developed Chumash shell bead chronologies being worked out can be remedied by an extensive program of radiocarbon dating now begun by Spaulding and Glassow (1972). Careful stratigraphic excavation has replaced the search for museum specimens in burials over the last forty years.

One of the most thought-provoking sections of the volume discusses regional research problems, not simply from an insular perspective but as part of the entire Chumash *oikumene*. Orr's (1968) belief in the presence of early man by 40,000 B.P. on the northern Channel Islands, while not as astounding as the proposed 50,000 years B.P. date for the Calico site, is a fascinating and plausible complement to Louis Leakey's theory that the Continental Shelf formed a major migration route for Pleistocene man into North America. If one considers ease of travel and availability of resources, the coastal route would seem more favorable than the traditional routes in the Great Basin and Great Plains. Firm evidence must be collected by underwater

archaeologists, who have been active in the Santa Barbara Channel for some time (Hudson 1976).

Seasonality and local conditions have not only affected the living patterns of the Chumash but also the habits of the modern archaeologist. It is no secret that the Santa Barbara coastline and islands were favorite areas for summer surveys by graduate students through the mid-1960's. Recent studies of interior sites, many supervised by Glassow, have gone a long way to correcting a biased data base. Glassow even describes (p. 41) the effects of seasonal growth on the ability of archaeologists to recognize sites. He also describes the frustrating limitations of working with incomplete collections gathered by others (p. 146), an experience I remember vividly as a graduate student analyzing Olson's Santa Cruz Island material (Hoover 1971).

This volume deserves an important place in the library of anyone interested in the archaeology of the Santa Barbara Channel. It is the most exhaustive summary of previous research for that region in existence and includes even such early researchers as Leonard Outhwaite, Lorenzo Yates, and Gustav Eisen. It is truly an encyclopedic research effort. However, I was left with a vaguely uneasy feeling as to the ultimate use of the report by the National Park Service. Glassow correctly points out (pp. 153, 199) the inappropriateness of making management recommendations for the privately owned islands of Santa Cruz and Santa Rosa, where archaeological resources have been very well protected in comparison to the other government-owned islands. Rep. Anthony Beilenson (D-Calif.) has recently introduced a bill to expand the Channel Islands National Monument by acquiring the two islands for \$50 million. Parks must have users to be justifiable, and users imply site destruction. Considering the state of site deterioration on the federal islands and at places such as

Yosemite and Death Valley, this bill could only be an archaeological disaster. A better proposal is the joint management of most of Santa Cruz Island by its present owner and the Nature Conservancy for 30 years, with title then reverting to the Conservancy (Los Angeles *Times*, Sept. 30, 1977). Glassow's report could not have been more timely for this important region.

## REFERENCES

- Hoover, Robert L.  
1971 Some Aspects of Santa Barbara Channel Prehistory. Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Anthropology, University of California, Berkeley.
- Hudson, Dee Travis  
1976 Marine Archaeology Along the Southern California Coast. San Diego: San Diego Museum Papers, No. 9.
- Orr, Phil C.  
1968 Prehistory of Santa Rosa Island. Santa Barbara: Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History.
- Spaulding, Albert C., and Michael A. Glassow  
1972 Archaeological Research on Santa Cruz Island, California. Research Proposal submitted to the National Science Foundation. (Xerox.)



*Otoliths and Other Fish Remains from the Chumash Midden at Rincon Point (SBA-1), Santa Barbara-Ventura Counties, California.* Richard W. Huddleston and Lloyd W. Barker. Los Angeles: Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, *Contributions in Science* No. 289. 36 pp., tables, bibliography, 8 figures.

Reviewed by P. E. LANGENWALTER, II  
*University of California, Riverside*

Repeated studies of the Rincon site in the past have in effect ignored the subsistence-

related activities of the Chumash occupation. Huddleston and Barker have filled a portion of this gap with the analysis and interpretation of fish remains collected during the destruction of the site. The conservative conclusions of the study, which are based on solid evidence, are a valuable contribution to our knowledge of Chumash subsistence activities.

The format follows a style established by John Fitch, which provides a body of biologic data and estimations of capture techniques for each species. This information is interpreted in the context of which species were taken, the numbers taken, where they were captured, and what techniques and equipment might have been used in the process. Remains from two portions of the site believed to represent different temporal occupations, were compared and found to contain dissimilar assemblages suggesting a much more sophisticated fishing economy during the later occupation.

The paper provides discussions of the pitfalls and some of the potential uses of otoliths ("ear stones" of fish) for archaeology. It also demonstrates the necessity of using column samples screened with 18- and 30-mesh screen to avoid substantial skewing of fish samples. These topics are useful guidelines for archaeologists needing to determine sampling techniques and anticipated products when planning excavations. Some of these aspects have been presented elsewhere, but the authors provide an excellent example of their implementation.

Several problems may detract from the usefulness of the paper. Each species account includes citations of previous zooarchaeologic studies where that taxon was recorded. This is meant to be an aid to comparative research, but is done ignoring cultural and temporal differences, thus leading to confusion for those not familiar with the literature. The same oversight is present in the inter-site comparisons.

Another problem is the brevity of the explanation of how the biologic data relate to

aboriginal fishing activities. The reader is largely required to compare the species accounts with the conclusions to gain a clear idea of the specific reasons for each interpretation.

In addition to the principal discussion, several examples of Chumash use of otoliths in ornamentation are figured and described. The bibliography appending the paper is comprehensive for coastal Central and Southern California studies of fish from archaeological sites through 1975.



***Life Among the Indians: being an interesting narrative of the captivity of the Oatman girls among the Apache and Mohave Indians.*** Royal B. Stratton. (Reprint of the first and second editions, San Francisco, 1857.) Selected and arranged by Wilcomb E. Washburn. New York and London: Garland Publishing Co., *The Garland Library of Narratives of North American Indian Captivities*, Vol. 71. 183 and 321 pp. 1977. \$29.70.

Reviewed by R.F. HEIZER  
*University of California, Berkeley*

This is Volume 71 of a series numbering 111 in which 311 captivity accounts are reprinted facsimile. Selection and editorial supervision are by America's eminent historian of American Indians, Wilcomb E. Washburn.

This is, for all practical purposes, California's only real and authentic Indian captivity—that of the Oatman sisters, Olive and Mary Ann. A Mormon family on their way to California was attacked in 1851 in western Arizona, and two sisters (aged 14 and 5) were captured by some uncertainly identified Indians (Mohave?, Yavapai?). A brother, Lorenzo, survived, though wounded, and was instrumental in the release after five years in captivity of the older sister, Olive, now 19 and flourishing five vertical stripe chin tattoos