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Goerke and Cowan: *The Pacheco Site (Mrn-152) and the Middle Horizon in Central California*

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The Pacheco Site (Mrn-152) and the Middle Horizon in Central California. Elizabeth B. Goerke and Richard A. Cowan with Ann Ramenofsky and Lee Spencer. *Journal of New World Archaeology*, Volume VI, Number I, January, 1983, 98 pp., 4 maps, 32 figures, \$8.00 (paper).

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The Pacheco site (Mrn-152) is located a mile from the present shoreline of San Pablo Bay in eastern Marin County. Goerke and Cowan report archaeological excavations at Mrn-152 between 1972 and 1975 by crews from several institutions, and concisely describe the prehistoric deposit and its environmental, historic, and ethnographic setting. The archaeological and theoretical background against which the analyses of the site take place is also discussed briefly. Analyses of a 20 x 20 cm. column sample and of nine burials are reported. Research topics to which excavation data are applied include whether Mrn-152 was the ethnographic site of *Pu Yu Ku*; the chronological and taxonomic assignment of the site (including a comparison of the site with the "Early Bay" assemblages from Ala-307 and SMa-77); and questions regarding sedentism, social ranking, and political organization.

Three age determinations were obtained: two radiocarbon assays of human bone collagen, and one amino acid racemization value. The dates ranged from 3050 ± 130 years B.P. to approximately 3480 years B.P., suggesting occupation of the Pacheco site at least in part coeval with that of University Village (SMa-77) and West Berkeley (Ala-307). Analysis of the Pacheco assemblage, however, suggests more typological and environmental similarities with other Marin County and San Pablo Bay shore sites than with either University Village or West Berkeley.

Some 90% of the shellfish remains at Mrn-152 were of *Mytilus edulis*, the bay mussel, in contrast with the emphasis on bay oyster (*Ostrea Lurida*) at coeval South Bay sites. Other sites on San Pablo Bay have shown a similar emphasis on mussel, while later Marin sites evidence a shift to clam. Sea mammal bone appears to have been relatively insignificant at the Pacheco site.

The three burials for which interment position could be determined were flexed on side or back. Artifacts associated with five of the burials included worked *Haliotis* shell, a charmstone, several lithic tools, four *Olivella* saucer beads (Types F2b, F3a, and F1), one whole shell spire-lopped *Olivella* bead, two mortar fragments, a pestle fragment, a polished bird bone tube and a quartz crystal. Goerke and Cowan suggest that the relatively small number of grave-associated artifacts and the absence of ceremonial floors in the excavated area indicate a low status population in a village marginal to local political and social centers. The evidence for this, however, is a bit scanty.

Some 65% of the site's artifacts were of flaked stone. Obsidian (from Annadel and Napa Glass Mountain sources) was somewhat more prevalent in lower levels, while chert was more common in the upper levels. Goerke and Cowan's bipolar core tool type may prove of interest for Bay Region site comparison.

Other recovered artifacts include a steatite earplug, large and small "projectile points" (Beardsley's Types N2, N3 and N4b), mortars, pestles, and an argillite "pencil." Bone tools included an eyed needle, spatulate awls, and serrate scapulae. Six bird and mammal bone tubes were found, and incised bone was noted. Also recovered were several baked clay figurines or decorated objects.

Goerke and Cowan consider the Pacheco site to have been essentially a "Middle Horizon" occupation. Artifact types which have been identified as indicative of "Middle Hori-

zon" occupation elsewhere in Central California are present in the Mrn-152 assemblage, although other traits supposedly indicative of "Early" or "Late Horizon" occupation are also noted. Goerke and Cowan state that "while these traits may imply a general age and orientation, neither artifact nor absolute date gives complete certainty that the Pacheco site was solely or entirely a Middle Horizon area of occupation" (p. 52). Their primary orientation, however, is clearly toward identification in the Mrn-152 assemblage of traits which have been tied to the Central California Taxonomic System (CCTS).

As has been so common in the Bay Region since the inception of the CCTS, analysis of this site focuses not on the patterns noted at the site which might contribute to a taxonomy specific to the Bay, but on the pre-established three-Horizon scheme based on Delta/Valley assemblages, types and orientations. Where there has been lack of correspondence between the CCTS and Bay Region assemblages, explanations such as stratigraphic mixing of the deposit too often have been offered. I would suggest that rather than failures in the sites, this lack of correspondence may indicate failure in the CCTS as a cultural scheme transferable as whole cloth from one region to another (see Moratto

1984: 199-201, 237). While the use of an established chronology and taxonomy is tempting, where it can only be used by discounting some part of the assemblage, it is probably less than functional. While clearly some artifact types do function in both the Bay Region and Interior California, it may be that other factors such as types and ratios of shellfish used, distinctive Bay Region tool types, and ratios of types or materials present are more significant in Bay Region cultural taxonomy.

A focus on artifact types, cultural modes, and subsistence strategies specific and perhaps unique to the Bay, such as that from which the definition of the Berkeley Pattern derived, is essential for the meaningful delineation of Bay Region subregional cultures. Not until these cultures are defined within the context of the region will it be possible to focus on questions of cross-cultural relationships and exchanges over time between the Delta/Valley and Bay and throughout Central California, a focus essential to the comprehension and interpretation of California prehistory.

Apart from this over-reliance on the CCTS, however, Goerke and Cowan's report is thorough, concise and well-written—a useful and thoughtful contribution to Bay Region archaeology.

