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Symposium: A New Look at Some Old Sites. Papers from the Symposium Organized by Francis A. Riddell presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society for California Archaeology, March 23-26, 1983, San Diego, California. Salinas: Coyote Press *Archives of California Prehistory* No. 6, 1986, iv + 82 pp., 3 maps, 1 photo, 2 tables, 1 chart, \$4.95 (paper).

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Toward the end of a long and distinguished career as California's State Archeologist, Francis A. Riddell organized a symposium to examine how recent research has affected our understanding of some of the state's classic archaeological sites. Twelve papers were presented, of which ten have been gathered and revised for publication.

Symposium collections are typically a varied lot, suffering as they usually do from different authorship of papers and varying intellectual cohesiveness among the contributors. This volume is no exception, but archaeologists will find more of interest here than in many symposium volumes because the subject matter involves the key sites on which much of California's sequences of culture history have been reconstructed. Such classics of California prehistory as the Emeryville Shellmound, Mescalitan Island, Borax Lake, the Tank site, and Gunther Island are represented here, often in more detail than has been seen since the original site report. In addition, the authors include some of the most important figures in California archaeology, who draw on years of research experience to reevaluate landmark excavations.

Coyote Press has done a nice job with the volume, offering a clean and readable collection at an extremely modest price. The Press should be commended more generally for making available many important papers at affordable prices. This is especially so because of the fact that many institutions have ceased to publish archaeological contributions while some of the commercially published volumes now cost almost as much as it cost to fund an excavation in Kroeber's early days.

The volume includes 10 papers; two others given at the original symposium were not submitted for publication. The papers are divided into two groups: five on south-

ern California sites and five from central and northern California. The selection of sites chosen for these papers was somewhat arbitrary, unavoidably so given the number picked, but choices were made to give variety in site age and regional distribution, and the ones used are about as representative and significant as any 10 sites could be. In the southern California group, Robert L. Hoover reexamines SBA-53 and SBA-54 at the Campbell locality in Goleta. The Mescalitan Island site, also at Goleta, is reviewed by Michael A. Glassow, John R. Johnson and Jon M. Erlandson. William J. Wallace discusses the Malaga Cove site near Los Angeles, while D. L. True examines the Molpa site on Mt. Palomar in northern San Diego County. Makoto Kowta concludes the section with an analysis of the Tank site, LAN-1, in Topanga Canyon.

The central and northern California section, which is called "Northern California," begins with a paper by Albert B. Elsasser about HUM-67, the Gunther Island site at Eureka. Next, the Borax Lake site, adjacent to Clear Lake, is discussed by Clement W. Meighan. William H. Olsen analyzes the King Brown site, SAC-29, an unpublished but key Late Horizon site near Sacramento; James A. Bennyhoff revisits the Emeryville Shellmound just below Berkeley. The last paper is a retrospection on Buena Vista Lake in the southern San Joaquin Valley by David A. Fredrickson.

The careful reader may note that no editor is identified for the volume. While the manuscript clearly has been edited from the production standpoint--typeface is clear and orderly, pagination is accurate and uniform, and typographic errors are eliminated--the contents of papers are variable enough to indicate an apparent lack of rigorous content editing. Some of the problems are strictly mechanical. For example, certain papers contain numbers of

grammatical errors, while others are virtually error-free. The lengths and contents of papers also vary markedly. As indicated in Table 1, the longest paper is more than three times the length of the shortest, although originally all were 20-minute conference papers. Bibliographic citations vary even more, ranging from three to 33 with an average of 17.6. Four papers are complemented with useful maps and tables, while the others lack any additions. Mechanical details are not necessarily accurate measures of the quality of papers, and they certainly are not here, but this much variation indicates the lack of firm guidance in the development of the final publication.

The average conference paper is about 2,000 words long. Four of the present papers have preserved that length, and three more are only slightly longer--less than 3,000 words each. The other three papers (those by Kowta, Bennyhoff, and Glassow, Johnson, and Erlandson) were substantially expanded since the date of the conference. One other possible sign of post-conference revision might be the inclusion of references published since the conference, although it is not necessarily true that for a given site any vital reference was published afterward. As the table shows, however, only four papers use post-1982 references, and the correlation between paper length and the use of more recent references is actually negative.

The apparent lack of strong editorial control among the papers is evident in a much more important aspect--the variation in orientation among papers. All authors faced the same charge, to reexamine and reevaluate key sites based on new knowledge gained from regional studies since the original excavation, and from the development of new methods and techniques not available to the original excavator. How each scholar interpreted these directions was up to the individual, which produced some fascinating

Table 1
SOME FORMAL VARIATIONS AMONG PAPERS

Author(s)	No. of pages of text	No. of references cited	No. of references published after 1982	Illustrations
Hoover	2.7	13	1	0
Glassow, Johnson, and Erlandson	9.0	33	0	2 tables 1 map
Wallace	3.1	12	1	2 maps 1 halftone
True	4.5	6	1	1 table 1 map
Kowta	8.1	29	0	0
Elsasser	3.0	12	0	1 table
Meighan	2.3	3	0	0
Olsen	4.0	15	1	0
Bennyhoff	6.5	30	0	0
Fredrickson	4.8	23	0	0

differences in what different writers chose to emphasize. Some of these differences can be attributed to the interests of the individual, some to the fates of the key sites, some to the level of research in different parts of the state, and some to differences in problems, methods, and theories studied by workers around particular localities.

For example, some authors devoted their papers to detailing what happened to the sites they were reviewing since the original excavation: Wallace's paper is an example. Other papers looked explicitly at revisions of the place of their site in regional sequences. Hoover's paper is one of these. The paper by Bennyhoff is one of a few that re-examine the originally excavated data from the perspective of more recent methods; the paper by Glassow, Johnson, and Erlandson is another. In both cases, the use of refined seriation of artifact types in concert with the use of individual gravelots as units of analysis led to revised and more detailed analyses of the sites in question. Other papers do not deal with the original collections in detail, but look to new regional frameworks for the reinterpretation of the

original sites as wholes: the paper by True is a case in point. Kowta's paper was unusual in this collection in trying to link his interpretation of LAN-1 to changing research orientations among archaeologists who have studied the area over the past 40 years.

In spite of this variation, some common threads can be found among the contributions. The most important is the universal concern for the chronological placement of the sites. In fact, there is no other archaeological problem mentioned by all the writers. This gives the unfortunate and false impression that space-time ordering is the only significant archaeological problem to occupy California researchers in the last half-century. The importance of radiocarbon dating was stressed by many of the writers, but relatively few integrated obsidian hydration data in their reevaluations. Burial lot analysis was stressed by several writers, but only for chronological ordering. Social ranking, role specialization, social relationships, economic differentiation, paleopathology, paleonutrition, paleodemography, and related interests that have been subjects of burial analysis in the last two decades go

essentially unnoticed in these papers. Olsen mentions a reevaluation of site settlement interpretation at the King Brown site, but settlement analysis is rarely mentioned in the volume as a whole. Recent research into subsistence activities and prehistoric exchange patterns are also weakly reflected in spite of the fact that California research has made major contributions in these areas in the last few decades. The recent advances in paleoclimatology and climatological reconstruction that have led to exciting reinterpretations of the prehistory of several parts of the state are barely reflected here, and there are other important absences as well.

The absence of most of the directions of recent California archaeological research from this set of papers constitutes the real conceptual weakness of the volume. The symposium's intent, to reinterpret early major excavations in light of recent research, is a valuable one, but it can hardly be fulfilled if most avenues of recent research are not taken into consideration. The absence of strong editorial direction is shown more clearly and more significantly in this regard than in any other. The goal of the volume is still a very useful one, however, and it deserves to be met more successfully than it is here. Perhaps this volume will serve as a point of departure from which more comprehensive reexaminations can be developed.

It would be wrong, however, to dismiss the present collection because of these problems. The volume draws needed attention to some of the more important excavations in the state, a pressing need because major sites have virtually disappeared in many

areas, and because major excavations have become mostly things of memory. For many readers, these reviews will serve as useful introductions to the original reports. In a few cases, such as King Brown, there are no original reports, or the original reports lack much valuable information, but critical data are presented here. The opinions about these sites are offered by seasoned researchers. In at least half the cases, the writer did research at the site in question, or has done major analysis of the collection. This reviewer has had the good fortune to visit many of these sites, and these retrospectives are particularly meaningful as a result. Other fieldworkers with more than a few seasons of experience are likely to feel the same appreciation, while more recently arrived scholars can use this volume as an important key to California archaeology's great places and ritual lore.

In one sense, this volume better reflects the concerns of the original excavators of the sites reviewed here than it does the concerns of present-day California archaeology. It would be an especially fitting tribute to Fritz Riddell if his concern for reexamination were carried forward at future conferences, so that the progress made in the discipline over the last 85 years since Emeryville was first excavated could be reflected more broadly and accurately. In the meantime, the present volume should be an affordable, attractive purchase by every serious California archaeologist as an abstract of major sites in the state and their places in regional cultural sequences as we now understand them.

