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Engstrand: *Royal Officer in Baja California, 1768-1770: Joaquin Velasquez de Leon*

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the Society for American Archaeology. The avowed purpose was to re-evaluate models of Holocene climate proposed by Antevs and others. The editor concludes (iii-iv):

The consensus of the S.A.A. symposium was that Antevs' model serves well enough as a general statement of long term climatic trends in the Great Basin during the Holocene: it was relatively cool and moist between 10,000 and 7,000 years ago [Anathermal], warmer and dryer between 7,000 and 4,000 years ago [Altithermal] and cool and moist during the last 4,000 years [Medithermal]. However, several factors continue to make it difficult to correlate the effects of these trends.

Of the nine papers here (plus an Introduction by Don Fowler) seven concern Antevs' scheme. Two of these (Fry and Adovasio on western Utah and Grayson on Lower Klamath Lake) attack the notion of an altithermal directly, and one attacks it by indirection (Weide, saying it is a non-problem). Three support it at least in part (Butler on the flora and fauna of southern Idaho; Davis, Elston, and Howard on an altithermal lowstand of Lake Tahoe; and Madsen on vegetational zones of southeastern Nevada). Still another finds it irrelevant to their local problems (Mehring and Warren on marsh formation east of Death Valley).

Grayson's attack is the most direct and also perhaps the most interesting. His analysis of the avifauna from the Nightfire Island site indicates that the deep-diving waterbirds are substantially more abundant in what should be the altithermal time period than they are before or after, leading him to conclude that Lower Klamath Lake was deeper then, rather than shallower, as it should have been according to Antevs. He also attacks Hansen's pollen analysis of the peats there. One wonders why he did not attack Antevs still more directly. Antevs in 1948 believed that Mt. Mazama ash had come before his altithermal and that the eruption occurred between 8500 and 9000

years ago. The 6600 B.P. date noted by Grayson would bring the altithermal up too close in time. Or would it? In any case, since people have long been complaining about the Antevs procrustean bed, starting with Jennings and Aschmann back in the 1950's, I find it odd that they don't take on that tough old Swede directly rather than coming around corners at him.

The critical point so far as archaeology is concerned is whether something substantial happened to the climate about 5000 B.C. and something else about 2000 B.C. The local effect we may suppose will have varied depending on the local situation, and I don't imagine Ernst Antevs would have denied that for a moment. Antevs was convinced that the climatic changes were closely related to glaciation, perhaps in a more-or-less mechanical way. Most people would not agree to this today, but it does still seem that something was happening; the dates 2000 B.C. and 5000 B.C. keep recurring in the archaeological record of the Great Basin and in other parts of the world as well. On the evidence of this volume, it would seem the agreement on the causes of this is not nearly as widespread as the symposium consensus.

It may seem churlish to complain about the editorial quality of a publication like this which is so obviously poorly funded. Nevertheless the inconsistencies of illustrations and referencing constitute a serious annoyance.



Royal Officer in Baja California, 1768-1770: Joaquín Velásquez de León. Iris Wilson Engstrand. Los Angeles: Dawson's Bookshop. 133 pp. 1976. \$24.00.

Reviewed by AUSTIN SULLIVAN
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Though an obscure military figure, Velásquez' tenure in Baja California is of potential

interest because of the critical historic significance of this period in California studies. The expulsion of the Jesuits from the peninsula in 1767 occurred just prior to Velásquez' arrival on the scene. Moreover, the missionization of Alta California began in 1769, during Velásquez' stay. Therefore, this book holds forth the promise of information about these events and about the day-to-day existence of Spanish and Indian inhabitants of the peninsula in the late eighteenth century.

Engstrand's work is composed largely of translated letters from and about Velásquez to various correspondents, often of uncertain identity. In these letters, Velásquez provides an extensive description of Baja California, after overstating its virtues and potential use to the Spanish. In other writings, he addresses himself to the Alta California expedition, which he apparently favored before its departure, and toward which he became even more favorably inclined as reports from the north reached him.

A part of Velásquez' duties while serving in Baja California was to participate as a member of a scientific expedition sent to observe the transit of Venus across the face of the sun; this effort was part of a worldwide program to develop more accurate measurements of the distance between the sun and earth. As a result, a number of letters translated in this text deal with these scientific observations and are of interest to scholars concerned with the history of science.

In its present form, this book would probably have been better received if it had appeared as one or two journal articles. Otherwise, a book of greater breadth and depth might have been more reasonably published. As it stands, the author-editor has attempted too little. The reader's initial impression is that the material has been put into book length form despite a lack of substance to justify such treatment—and this initial bad impression remains when one finishes the work. Some of the means used to expand the substance of the volume are reminiscent of techniques used by grade school

students to pad homework assignments. For example, the first page of the text is designated as page 15, indicating that even the blank page preceding the half-title has been given page value. Moreover, some, but oddly not all, plates and maps are paginated.

Once a decision was made to publish this material in book form, it seems unfortunate that the author gave no attention to producing a more substantial work. There are many directions in which the work might have been legitimately expanded—and many questions are raised by the material which go unanswered. In particular, the claims, observations, and other matters discussed in the translated text could have been treated by an evaluation relating this material to other available data.

The organization of the work appears somewhat fragmented, lacking in a continuity that would have bridged gaps in the various correspondences. No attempt will be made here to evaluate the quality of the translations, which make up the bulk of the work. However, it should be noted that nowhere in the text or footnotes is the reader provided with even portions of the original Spanish text which might readily be compared with the translated version. An index and bibliography have been included.



Tribes of California. Stephen Powers (Introduction and annotations by Robert F. Heizer). University of California Press, 1977. 482 pp., 44 figures. \$20.00 (cloth); \$5.95 (paperback).

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The reprinting this year of A.L. Kroeber's *Handbook of the Indians of California* by