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Ezell, Paul H.

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REPORTS

New Information on San Dieguito III Technology

PAUL H. EZELL

In August, 1964, as our excavation project at the C.W. Harris site (Fig. 1) was nearing its end, data were recovered which should have been reported at once in order to alert others to the possibility of similar observations. This note is a belated effort to make the information available.

On August 13, 1964, Commander Harry P. Beverage recovered the "point" shown as Fig. 2, left, and on August 14 the one shown in Fig. 2, right, while seeking charcoal in order to date an elementary hearth (Bordes 1972:60) in the San Dieguito horizon at the site. Both bore a brownish-black stain on both sides of the basal third of the artifact. The stain was insoluble in water but soluble in lighter fluid. Most of the material was then scraped from the side shown of specimen 1960-1-969 (Fig. 2, right) for further analysis. A small portion was heated in a spoon, upon which it emitted a distinct petroleum odor. The rest was sent by James R. Moriarty, then at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography in La Jolla, for more sophisticated analysis. On September 7, 1965, S.R. Silverman, of the Chevron Research Company at La Habra, California, wrote Moriarty that "... the material was generally similar to a wide variety of natural asphaltic or tarry bitumens."

The two implements are made of the apinitic green stone, commonly called horn-

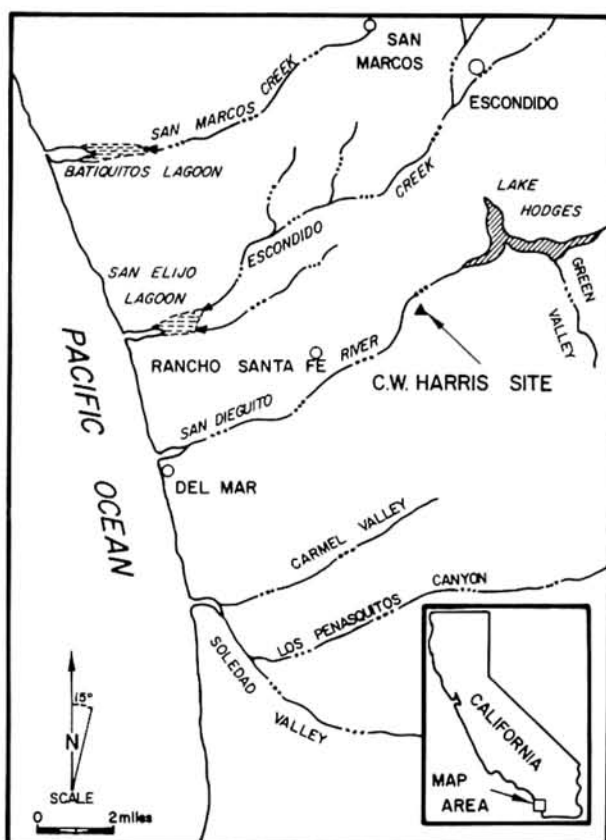


Fig. 1. Location of the C.W. Harris site, San Diego County.

fels or felsite, which occurs abundantly as cobbles and boulders in the bed of the San Dieguito River adjacent to the site. Because it is the best raw material for flaked stone tools available in San Diego County it attracted aboriginal exploitation of that resource in prehistoric times. Typologically, the blades are conformable with one of the criteria identified by Malcolm J. Rogers (1929:462; 1928:344) as distinguishing the third phase of the San Dieguito culture sequence.

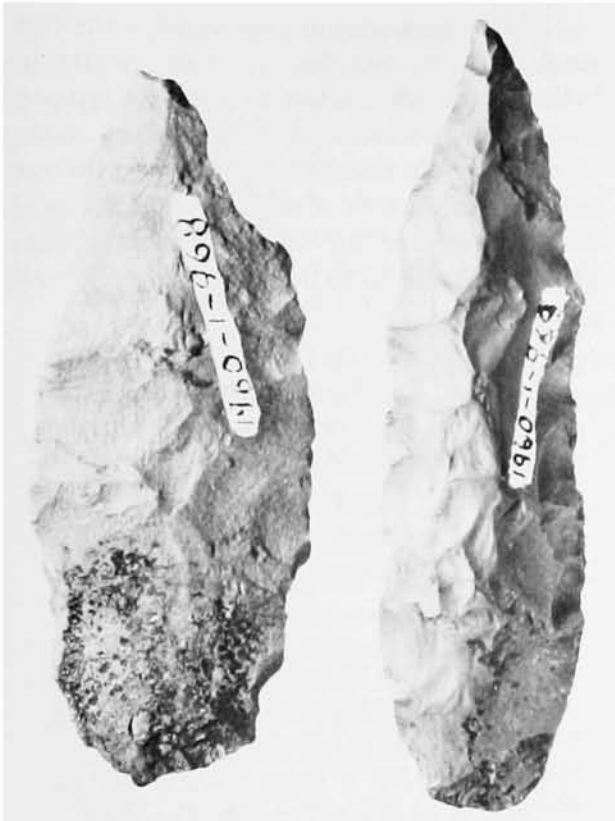


Fig. 2. San Dieguito blades with traces of resin used in hafting. Blade at left is 70 mm. long. C.W. Harris site, San Dieguito horizon.

Warren and True (1961:261) suggested a date of 8000-11,000 years B.P. for the San Dieguito component at the Harris site, based on extrapolation from a number of radiocarbon dates for the over-lying La Jolla horizon. During the summer of 1964 C. Vance Haynes, Jr., then at the Department of Geology of the University of Arizona, and Dean Milow, a geologist then at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, visited the excavations independently of each other. Both gave estimated geological dates of 9000-12,000 B.P. for the San Dieguito horizon at the site. As a result of his 1965 and 1967 work at the site Claude Warren (personal communication) was able to obtain a radiocarbon date of 9030 \pm 350 B.P. for the San Dieguito horizon there.

Being aware of Putnam's descriptions (Wheeler 1879:59-60 and Figs. 1-7) of the use

of asphaltum among the Chumash, Rogers (1929:462-463) had speculated on the possibility of its use also by the San Dieguitoans. The two blades found in 1964 give enough substance to that conjecture that it can be added to the trait list for the San Dieguito III phase. It seems improbable that asphaltum was used on blades by the San Dieguitoans only twice, and that we just happened to recover those same specimens. Space does not permit a detailed review of the literature on the use of such substances as asphaltum or pitch as an element in hafting in prehistoric times in the western United States, but the summary statement can be made that the wide distribution of the technique as reported in that literature is additional evidence for its considerable antiquity.

Such a discovery as this in an open site presents the possibility that other examples may appear, especially if the investigators are alerted to the phenomenon. To that end, Norman B. Tindale (personal communication) has provided the following suggestion:

Dr. R. Le Messurier of the University of Adelaide first observed that the resins used by aborigines in their stone tool setting and spear haft junctions gave fluorescent reactions when subjected to appropriate light and indicated the probability that this could be a tool for the archaeologist in determining the presence of resin, even when it had become fragmented. We are not aware as to whether the method has been successful in archaeological practice, although it seems clear that even resin reduced to powder will still show reaction.

In short, it might be worthwhile, should one find a "point" in place in a buried context, to remove it and its matrix as a block in order to transport it to a laboratory where "black light" is available. It would be interesting to know whether it might even be worth trying it on surface finds.

San Diego State University

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An Early Account of a Fired Clay Anthropomorphic Figurine from Marin County

FRANKLIN FENENGA

In 1952, while clearing out a file, Dr. William Duncan Strong passed on to me a folder of scraps of notes about California ethnography and archaeology accumulated during his student days at Berkeley. One of these notes was a newspaper clipping which permits us to add one more specimen to the corpus of 40 fired clay figurines recorded from Marin County by Goerke and Davidson (1975) and one more site to the list of 15 from which they have been reported.

The original account appeared in the *Oakland Tribune*, October 21, 1924, under the byline of Frank Cliff, and it is here repeated with minor editorial emendations consisting primarily of the elimination of a now irrelevant speculation on how it might have been introduced by a traveling Hopi and how the Coast Miwok are related to the main body of Miwok speakers:

1,000 YEAR OLD POTTERY ART DUG UP: Clay Figurine, Revealing Traces of Color, Is Unearthed from Tiburon Peninsula Shell Mound.

By Frank Cliff

Was the California Indian on the verge of developing the pottery art when the white man came into the land and drove him from his ancient holdings?

This is the question which has arisen over the finding of a small, crudely moulded pottery figure of a man excavated Sunday from a shell mound on the Tiburon peninsula in Marin County.

The find is a startling one as the making of pottery or the development of a figure art was unknown or unpracticed by the California Indian tribes. Yet the figurine is decidedly a step in both directions.

Resembles Hopi Art

If the figurine was not made by the tribe occupying the mound in which it was found, then it opens up the interesting alternative of having been carried into the bay region from the land of the Hopi Indians in Arizona. It greatly resembles certain figures of amulets which have been in use by those Indians for a long period of time and which have not changed their form despite the advancement which the Hopi art has made.

There is then the possibility that the little figure was the protecting god of one of these wanderers who reached as far as the Tiburon peninsula and there died. His remains were interred in the mound on the shore of the bay along with his belongings and the little god of clay.