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THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF TWO KERN COUNTY SITES

The Archaeology of Site Ker-74. F. A. Riddell

A Cave Burial from Kern County. R. F. Heizer

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INTRODUCTION

In January, 1949, an historic Yokuts cemetery located approximately twelve miles due west of Delano, Kern County, California in T25S/R23E, lying in territory claimed aboriginally by the Wowol,¹ was destroyed by land leveling. The present designation for this site is Ker-74;² its aboriginal name is unknown. The author, as Assistant Archaeologist of the University of California Archaeological Survey made a study of this site both in the field and in the museum as part of his regular duties.

The cemetery is situated on a natural sandy knoll on the edge of a former slough, and only a few miles southeast of the former shoreline of Tulare Lake. Approximately 1.5 miles southwest of Ker-74 is an historic village that was occupied in October, 1854,³ this is designated by Gifford and Schenck as their Site 28.⁴

It is not known that a habitation site existed on one of the other rises near Ker-74. If so, then Ker-74 can be assumed to be the cemetery for such a village; if not, Gifford and Schenck's Site 28 may possibly be the source for the burials in Ker-74. Since fragmentary freshwater mussel shell was evidenced in the earth spread out in the leveling operation it might be guessed that there was a habitation site in conjunction with, or in close proximity to Ker-74. The artifacts, however, strongly indicate burial association rather than an unassociated occurrence in a midden deposit. The matrix, as far as could be ascertained, was a fine sandy silt with little or no indication of charcoal or ash.

The site was on or near the 225' contour elevation which places it a few feet higher than the surrounding flat terrain. Because of its elevation, yet nearness to a slough, Ker-74 was a natural location for a village and/or a cemetery.

Present at the destruction of the cemetery were several local people who were interested in preserving as much material as possible from destruction by the land leveling machines. It was from these persons that I was able to obtain information on burials and artifacts. Those people to whom I am most indebted for information and collections from this site are: Mr. and Mrs. Louis Vergano, Mr. E. R. Dorsey, Mrs. Helen C Kopp, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Cornelison, Mr. Edward Butts, all of Delano; and Mr. and Mrs. Harry S. Riddell, Jr. of Lone Pine. I take this opportunity to thank them sincerely for their aid.

Though the information obtained concerning this site was meager it does seem to be of enough importance to warrant description. This is especially true since a considerable portion of the aboriginal artifacts recovered accompanied burials and were additionally associated with Caucasian trade material.

All specimens, unless otherwise specified, bear catalog numbers of the University of California Museum of Anthropology (UCMA), Berkeley, California. Catalog numbers for the artifacts from Ker-74 are as follows: 1-103111 to 1-103150 inclusive; 1-116052, 1-116053; 1-118990 to 1-118999 inclusive; 1-116055 to 1-116107 inclusive. The skeletal material bears the catalog numbers 12-7262, 12-7263, 12-7265. The University of California Archaeological Survey accession numbers for the material from this site are 15 and 51.

The typological designations for shell bead and ornament forms are taken from E.W. Gifford's Californian Shell Artifacts, Univ. of Calif. Anthropol. Records, Vol. 9, no. 1, 1947.

Cloth: Cloth material from this site was observed by some of those present to be "some like silk but most like burlap". All of the cloth material was in a disintegrated condition and no effort was made to save any of it. The fabric resembling burlap might well have been of aboriginal manufacture since material of this sort has been described from this area by Kroeber,⁶ Gifford and Schenck,⁷ Wedel,⁸ Walker⁹ and Latta.¹⁰

Copper tacks: Also associated with Burial 4 were ten small round headed copper upholsterer's tacks, 1-103136. Adhering to several of these tacks were fragments of a rather fine woven red cloth material. The diameter of the round heads are 8.0 mm. while the total length of each tack is 10.0 mm.

Iron spikes: One complete iron spike, reminiscent of a modern railroad track spike, and fragments of two other spikes were recovered from this site but these are not accompanied by location or association data. All three specimens, 1-103132, are heavily rusted. These specimens had apparently been wrapped in a cloth or rag as traces of cloth occur on all three specimens. One of the spike fragments has Types F5b and X2b Olivella beads (see infra, p.18) adhering to it. The whole spike has what may be the impression of a F5b type bead on its surface. The dimensions of the complete spike are as follows: Head -- 3.5 x 2.5 cm., and 1.0 cm. thick; Body -- maximum width 1.5 x 1.5 cm.; Total length -- 17.4 cm.

Steel strike-a-light: A strike-a-light, 1-103133, had no data concerning its recovery but since it is heavily rusted and has Type F5b and X2b Olivella beads adhering to its surface, it is possible that it was associated with the above described iron spike and spike fragments. There is no evidence, however, of cloth material on this specimen. The dimensions of the specimen are: Length, 8.6 cm.; width, 3.5 cm.; thickness, 8.0 mm. One of the "horns" had been broken off before loss or burial by the Indians (pl. 1n).

Glass beads: The following is a list of bead types found occurring in Ker-74, the typology of Mr. Clement W. Mcighan has been used throughout.¹¹ The approximate or actual number of beads of each type from this site is given after the catalog number or the owner; association is given after the approximate number of beads per type. CC stands for Cornelison Collection and NL for no location.

<u>Type</u>	<u>Cat. No.</u>	<u>No. of beads</u>	<u>Burial</u>
17	CC	1	NL
34	1-103136	3	4
35	"	123	4
	1-116052	1	NL
48	CC	12	NL
51	CC	6	NL
53	CC	1	NL
55	1-103136	5	4
60	"	1	4
61	"	1	4
64	CC	3	NL

(cont.)	Type	Cat. No.	No. of beads	Burial
68	CC		6	NL
		1-103138	1	7
74	CC		20	NL
81	CC		3	NL
90	CC		3	NL
		1-116099	1	9
99		1-103136	145	4
		1-116092	8	9
		1-103138	1	7
100	CC		-	NL
		1-103136	26	4
		1-116104	1	9
102		1-103136	2	4
		1-116102	1	9
		1-116103	2	9
111	CC		6	NL
120	CC		2	NL
		1-116052	1	NL
122		1-103138	1	7
	CC		10	NL
124	CC		1	NL
126	CC-		1	NL
127		1-103136	1	4
		1-116052	1	NL
141		1-103136	5	4
143		1-116052	1	NL
	CC		4	NL
146		1-116106	5	9
		1-116052	1	NL
	CC		9	NL
147	CC		2	NL
151		1-103136	25	4
153	CC		-	NL
154		1-103136	25	4
		1-116095	10	9
	CC		-	NL
168	CC		2	NL
184	CC		5	NL
		1-116100	3	9
187		1-103136	13	4
188		1-103138	131	7
	CC		10	NL
204		1-103138	1	7
		1-116105	1	9
215	CC		6	NL
218		1-103136	105	4
		1-116098	1	9
235		1-103136	8	4
236	CC		6	NL
237	CC		5	NL
238	CC		5	NL
239	CC		10	NL
		1-116052	1	NL

(cont.)	Type	Cat. No.	No. of beads	Burial
	240	CC	6	NL
	243	1-103136	4	4
	244	"	1	4
	245	1-103138	2	7
	246	"	1	7
	247	"	1	7
	248	"	1	7
	249	"	7	7
	250	1-116052	1	NL

Additional beads from Ker-74 for which no type designation could be assigned since the only specimens known to Meighan and the author are those in the Cornelison Collection are as follows:

- a) Similar to no. 71 with a slightly lighter shade of blue.
- b) Similar to no. 55 with a navy blue instead of red color.
- c) Hexagonal bead with biconical outline, wire wound, opaque white background with inlaid spirals of pink and green--both transparent. Length 16.5 mm., maximum diameter 8.0 mm., minimum diameter 4.0 mm., perforation diameter 1.9 mm. Walker illustrates this bead type.¹²
- d) Spherical bead with horizontal ribs; diameter 6.0 mm., perforation diameter 1.9 mm., color is pale pink, bead is opaque. This bead, too, is illustrated by Walker.¹³
- e) Similar to no. 141 but is red, not blue.
- f) This bead is green and transparent. Its dimensions are: length 8.4 mm., diameter 10.0 mm., diameter of perforation 1.9 mm.

Shape:



- g) Similar to no. 120 but green, not red.
- h) Similar to no. 17 but blue, not red.

WORK IN ASPHALTUM

Olivella beads: Shell beads of the following types were found with asphaltum adhering to them indicating the possibility that some of the beads had been set in this material as ornamentation on some unknown object.

C23c, one specimen, 1-103130.

F5b, two specimens, 1-118996.

X4, two specimens, 1-116053.

X4, about 20 specimens set in a rectangular asphalt tube with abalone ornaments and steatite beads. For a description of this rectangular asphalt tube see a following section under the above major topic heading.