

983.

Archaeological Survey Monograph

INVESTIGATION OF A LATE PREHISTORIC COMPLEX

IN

CUYAMACA RANCHO STATE PARK

SAN DIEGO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

D. L. True

Department of Anthropology
University of California, Los Angeles

1970

East Mesa Area

An upland plateau region marked by many open meadows, springs and wooded ridges. It is not clear in all cases whether several villages found here are parts of larger settlements or how they should be grouped.

SDi-862

This is a small village located on a rocky point of land on the western margin of East Mesa overlooking the Sweetwater River Canyon. The elevation at the site is 4650 feet above sea level. The site has bedrock mortars, a dark ashy midden and numerous artifacts scattered over the surface. Potsherds are common. No historic artifacts were recovered. This site location may be one of the five Rancherias of the Mesa de Huacipin (Rensch 1950:22).

SDi-863

The site, located on a low ridge along the western margins of the East Mesa region, is probably the main village of the Huacipin settlement. This was described as the most important of the villages "of the five little mesas" (Rensch 1950:22). Test pits indicate at least 24 inches of soft ashy midden. Bedrock mortars are numerous as are potsherds and other artifacts. This was supposed to have been occupied in historic times but no historic artifacts were recovered. Excavations were carried out here in the past by the San Diego Museum of Man. However, no collections resulting from these operations were located in the Museum and no record of the excavation was recognized. The elevation of this site is 4680 feet above sea level.

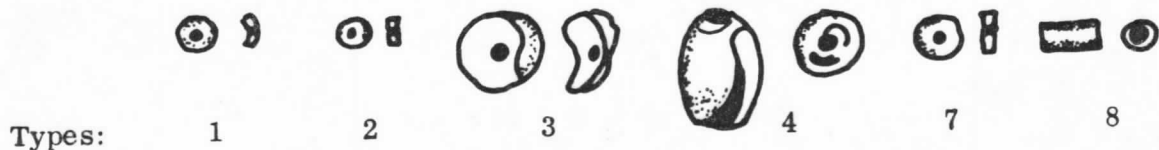
Four other locations on the East Mesa are believed to represent late prehistoric or protohistoric villages (SDi-850, 886, 879, and SDi-860). Of these only SDi-860 will be discussed in detail. The others follow the pattern described above for similar settlements.

Dripping Springs (SDi-860, CRSP 75)

SDi-860 is the type site for the present study and was partially excavated during the summer of 1962. An evaluation of the results of this excavation will be presented in the following sections.

SDi-860 was a historically occupied village along the southern margins of the East Mesa at an elevation of 4800 feet above sea level. The site was designated CRSP 16 in the 1961 survey. No specific historical data are available for the site but it is almost certainly a summer village for the settlement of Jamatyume (Samataguma). This important Diegueño community was located in the Descanso Valley at the base of the scarp marking the southern and western boundary of the East Mesa. Historic artifacts were recovered in the excavations.

At the time of the 1961 park surveys the surface of the site contained numerous potsherds, chipping waste, and lithic artifacts. Milling stone fragments, hammers and other heavy duty stone implements were common on the surface. During the summer of 1961 a work gang from the County road camp uncovered several ollas along one edge of the site. The artifacts were turned over to park personnel, but have not been included in the present analysis.



Types:

1

2

3

4

7

8

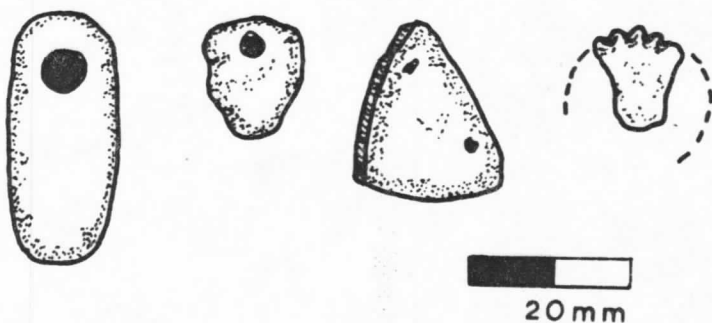
Type 4--spire-lopped olivella shell beads. Not all specimens here represent beads and some bead-like items may represent Olivella shells used as teeth in the Image Burning ceremony. Except for differences in size, shells used for teeth and beads would be identical (DuBois 1905: 625; Davis 1919: 18) (21).

Type 7--small disc beads of bone usually less than 5 mm in diameter and less than 2 mm thick (1).

Type 8--tubular bone beads made of bird or rodent bone. ca. 10 mm long by 3 mm in diameter (2).

✓ Type 10--glass beads (historic). Only a small sample was recovered here, although some cremations are known to contain numerous trade beads. The specimens here are small (less than 3 mm in diameter), round forms in several shades of blue (3). Bracketed numbers following the figure designation indicate frequency in the SDi-860 collection. Missing numbers in the suggested typology represent types found in the larger area but not present in the Cuyamaca collections examined.

(Note: in above illustrations, Type 1 is 6 mm in diameter; others are to scale)



Pendants (11)

Pendants are relatively common in the Cuyamaca area. Most specimens are simple oval or rectangular forms made of steatite or schist. Decoration is confined to simple linear elements--usually geometric--scratched on the surface of the artifact.

Shaped shell fragments with drilled holes are believed to be the remains of shell pendants (3 specimens of this site). Shell recovered here is usually calcined and in small bits. The original forms are unreconstructable. It is assumed that pendants and other decorative items were thrown on the cremation fire and destroyed. Clam, pecten, abalone, and horn shells have been identified in the sample.

In addition to those pendant forms described above, several carved steatite and ceramic items were recovered from sites in the Cuyamaca region, albeit not from SDi-860. These effigy forms seem to represent stylized fish or bird-like elements and are not unlike Canaliño specimens illustrated by Rogers (1929: Plate 74). The ceramic specimens may be modeled in clay and fired or carved out of a potsherd. Usually they are perforated. Similar specimens are illustrated by Heye (1919: Figure 23, and Plate XII). Effigy elements are often associated with cremations in Diegueño territory.

Historic Artifacts (36, excluding beads)

The portion of the site designated as the "cemetery area" produced several artifacts of European or Anglo origin. These include China and green bottle glass sherds, square iron nails, several unidentified iron objects, an iron knife (steel) blade, blue glass trade beads, and a brass button.

Projectile points fashioned out of blue willow ware china and green bottle glass were recovered from SDi-860.

The brass button has been identified as a Phoenix Button (Number 4) (Strong 1960: 418-419). The specimen here is Strong's Style 1. Phoenix buttons have been recovered from other Southern California mission sites, and they date prior to 1835 for the initial introduction into the Pacific Northwest (Strong 1960: 418). This, of course, tells us little about the introduction or use in Southern California, except that it probably postdates 1835.

Historic or Anglo artifacts are not rare in the Cuyamaca area and are often found with cremations in the Diegueño territory. In contrast, few Anglo artifacts are recovered from the midden, apart from the cemeteries.

Table 15 summarizes the artifact inventory for SDi-860.