Archaeological Investigations at Molpa, San Diego County, California

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Worked sherds (1) (Not illustrated)

A single modified sherd was recovered. It is circular, biconically drilled in the center of the disc, and has the appearance of a spindle whorl. its use in this context is not known. It may have been an ornament. Shaped sherd fragments are not common in the San Luis Rey territory but are often found in the adjacent Diegueño sites (True 1966).

Historic Artifacts

Five artifacts representing post-contact influences were recovered during the investigations at Molpa. All were surface finds or excavated from the uppermost level (0 to 6 inches).

Knives (2) (Not illustrated)

Two fragments of iron or steel knives were recovered. One had a fragment of wooden handle still attached to its tang. This suggests the possibility that it was deposited on the site after the village was abandoned since preservation in this region is poor. The second knife included only a portion of the steel blade without a tang or handle.

Trade beads (2) (Not illustrated)

Two blue glass beads were recovered from the surface. Two different forms are represented: one is disc-like, the other more tubular. These are not uncommon bead types in southern California, occurring in association with Spanish mission-period sites dating prior to 1830.

China and glass (3) (Not illustrated)

Two china and one glass sherds were recorded. One is a handle fragment probably from a cup. The others were nondiagnostic as to form. None were recognizable as to the kind of ware. The glass was amber to brown

in color and could have come from any number of sources either during the latter stages of the Indian occupation or after the village was abandoned.

ARTIFACT DISCUSSION

The artifact assemblage described above is an adequate sample for the purpose of delineating the tool inventory of the ceramic-bearing component of the San Luis Rey Complex. It is probably a fair inventory of San Luis Rey I, as well, since many of the elements are the same. However, the line between the two components in this sample is not clearly defined. On the basis of the available sample we cannot say much about activities or activity areas within the village, nor can we talk about developments through time in detail.

The functional tool categories outlined above are reasonably well defined on the basis of ethnographic data, and except for multipurpose usage of individual classes of implements, the categories are probably valid. They were further substantiated, in part at least, by detailed microscopic examination of the artifacts with functional criteria in mind.

For the most part the traditional uses (projectile points, drills, knives, scrapers and related tools) were revealed by the microscopic examination, but there was some deviation from the expected distribution of use classes based on formal characteristics alone. Re-examinations of the projectile point sample using a binocular microscope, suggests that many artifacts designated as projectile points may have served as multipurpose tools or may have been artifacts other than projectile tips. For example, in this sample, the tips of several artifacts previously classified as projectile points were marked by abrasion and wear and had a worn or rounded cross section. Most of the artifacts are made of crystalline quartz and unfortunately, this is the most difficult material for this kind of examination because quartz does not show wear facets or abrasion marks under light use. This means that our observations must remain tentative, especially in any quantitative sense. However, wear facets were clear

the climax of San Luis Rey II times, and later reoccupied after historic times when the basic village patterns were beginning to break down.

The site here has at least two separable areas of concentration. The lower midden, adjacent to the San Luis Rey river proper, appears to be the richer in terms of artifact concentration. It is clearly San Luis Rey II, although road construction has destroyed a significant portion of the site. The second midden area is located higher on the slope on a bench next to a small canyon draining part of the Pine Hills area of Mount Palomar. Test pits in this upper part indicate a depth of 30 inches of dark ashy midden. Artifacts, however, are not common, and potsherds tend to be scarce. A trail complex connects this locality with the Dyche Valley-Pine Hills area on Palomar. This relationship is shown on map 4.

3. DATING AND COMPARISONS

Investigations at SDi-308 (Molpa) permit some additional comments on the most recent prehistoric cultural phase in northern San Diego County, California. The deepest levels of this site appear to be consistent with the San Luis Rey I sample described from the type site SD-132 (Meighan 1954). The artifacts recovered from the test trench excavated along the northwest margins of the site are typical of the early milling-stone complex found in this region (True 1958: 255-263). This milling-stone component is clearly distinct from the San Luis Rey material. The present report is directed toward the San Luis Rey II component, and the more precise definition of this phase was the prime objective of the investigation. Suggested time relationship between the various complexes known for this area so far are presented in figures 1 through 4.

DATING

The nature of the recovered artifact assemblages and the ethnographic information available—both for the area at large and for the site in particular—indicate that San Luis Rey II is the terminal phase of the late prehistoric/protohistoric occupation in this area, and that SDi-308 was occupied well into historic times. Present estimates based on glass bead types and informant data suggest that it was abandoned sometime in the first two decades of the nineteenth century. Other SLR II villages in the area were occupied for several decades after Molpa was abandoned. In general, it seems that this phase of Luiseño culture history had terminated not later than the 1870s for the territory in general. The terminal end of San Luis Rey II, then, is defined historically and presents few problems. The beginning, however, is not clearly indicated by the data presently available, and its duration is not known.

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Appendix B. Artifacts from SDi-593,
Paloman Mountain State Park, California
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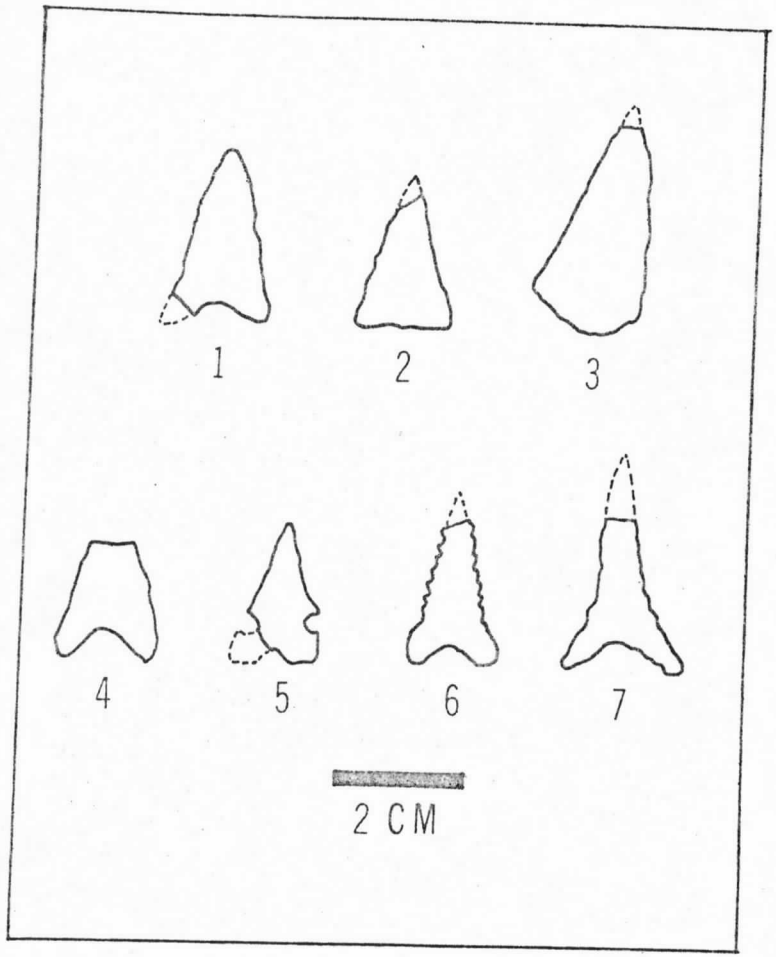

Appendix Fig. 1. Projectile point forms from the excavations at SDi-593.

of this type were found at SDi-593, averaging 2.1 cm. in length and 1.3 cm. in width. Only one example of my Type 6 was found. Precise serrations along the upper edges of the point and incipient side notching near the base distinguish Type 6 from Type 5. The single type point is 2.5 cm. long and 1.5 cm. wide. My Type 6y is represented by six specimens. This form is different from those described above in that it is narrow relative to its width along most of its length and flares outwardly sharply at 140 degrees, forming a deeply indented fishtail base. Three of these forms are serrated. Forms similar to this from other collections in this area sometimes have rounded cross sections near the tip and some indication that they may have been used as a drill. Type 7 points average 1.7 cm. in width. No whole specimens are included in the present sample.

The projectile points from SDi-593 average 2.3 centimeters in length. Quartz is the material most frequently used in the manufacture of these points. Of the forty-three identifiable specimens 79 percent are made of quartz. Three artifacts are made of black obsidian, two are basaltic, two a local chert, and one is an unidentified beige-colored stone.

BEADS

Two beads were found at this site. One was a shell disc made from a side section of an Olivella. The other was a blue glass trade bead.

POTTERY

Two hundred and twenty sherds were found at SDi-593, all but two of them on the surface or within the two upper levels of the excavation. The pottery here is the type designed Palomar Brown (Meighan 1959; Euler 1959). The few rim sherds present have both direct and recurved forms.

(p.155) avg. size: 0.6 cm diam. x 0.5 cm. length