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REVIEWS

Test Excavations at CA-FRE-61, Fresno County, California. Kelly R. McGuire, with contributions by Randy Bethard, Amy J. Gilreath, Krislyn Taite, and Eric Wohlgemuth, including Choinimne Ethnography and Ethnohistory by Helen McCarthy. Museum of Anthropology, California State University, Bakersfield, Occasional Papers in Anthropology No. 5, 1995, xi + 138 pp., 52 figs., 29 tables, 6 appendices, \$10.00 (paper).

Reviewed by:

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Kelly McGuire and his colleagues have produced an interesting report on well-executed investigations at CA-FRE-61, a large, multicomponent site at an elevation of about 450 feet at the base of the Sierra Nevada foothills on Highway 180, some ten miles south of Pine Flat Lake and 25 miles east of Fresno. The site contained abundant milling equipment, both portable and bedrock, representing both mortar/pestle and millstone/handstone technologies, each in its own spatiotemporal context. The earlier millstone component, whose assemblage structure is similar to those of early millstone sites in southern California, was dated between 6,000 and 2,500 B.P., while the later mortar component, which is believed to be associated with the substantial amount of rock art at the site, was dated between about 3,000 and 1,000 B.P. There is also some indication (two steatite beads above 10 cm.) of incidental use of the site after 1,000 B.P. Although the assemblages from the two major components differ in specifics of technology and other details, both support use of the site for short-term vegetal food processing that

focused on resources found in the immediate vicinity.

Part I of the report describes the ethnography and ethnohistory of the Choinimne, the Yokuts group in whose territory CA-FRE-61 is located. This information, generated to provide context for the archaeological investigations, was especially important based on an initial assumption that the Choinimne may have used the site and its vicinity during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. No archaeological evidence of historical period use was discovered when the site was investigated by McGuire. However, today's Choinimne knew of the site and had visited it earlier in the company of a local avocational anthropologist. The general vicinity of the site is known to have been used by the Choinimne in the past for the collection of vegetal foods. McCarthy effectively presents a great deal of ethnographic and ethnogeographic information both directly and indirectly pertinent to archaeological understanding of the site locale. Similarly, her ethnohistory describes the many hardships and betrayals faced by the Choinimne in their interactions with intruding non-Indians, despite which the people even today maintain a number of their traditional practices and "continue to express a strong sense of cultural identity." I also understand that the Choinimne have a continuing interest in the information that derives from local archaeological investigations.

Part II describes the archaeological investigations, which were undertaken in 1992 in conjunction with improvements proposed for Route 180 by Caltrans and the Fresno County Transportation Authority. The site area was large, more than 56,000 m.², and contained numerous surface features, including 61 bedrock features that contained 78 mortar depressions and 59 slicks, as well as six bedrock pictograph panels

and 16 bedrock features that contained cupules. The site was physically stratified, with almost all of the later materials occurring in the upper 40 cm. within the upper stratum of silty to sandy loam alluvium, and earlier materials dominating recovery below 60 cm. in a sandy clay colluvium, with a mixture of both late and early materials found between 40 and 60 cm. Excavation of 24.3 m.³ of cultural deposit unearthed a limited assemblage. The only time-sensitive artifacts pertinent to the local chronology, first described by Moratto (1972) at Buchanan Reservoir, were the two Late Period steatite beads. The two major classes of material recovered through excavation were milling/processing tools and flaked stone artifacts. Subtracting debitage ($n = 6,078$), nonartifactual organic remains (floral and faunal, $n = 3,213$), small fragments of hardened clay ($n = 148$), and modern historical debris ($n = 148$), somewhat more than 200 formal artifacts and expedient tools were recovered through excavation, less than ten tools per cubic meter.

Most notable characteristics of the earlier component were millingstones ($n = 8$), handstones ($n = 27$), hammerstones ($n = 10$), and cobble-core tools ($n = 20$); virtually absent were hunting weapons. It is not difficult to agree with McGuire that this early assemblage appears oriented toward the processing of both small seed taxa and fibrous vegetal materials. As documented by the flotation study at the site, potential resources include acorns, manzanita berries, pine nuts, and wild cucumber seeds. Faunal materials suggest that small mammals, such as ground squirrels, jackrabbits, and cottontails (all found within the immediate vicinity of the site), were more important than large game during the earlier cultural period, suggesting that capturing such animals was ancillary to vegetal food processing. The site gives the strong impression of being a task-specific area rather than a place of habitation.

Although appropriately cautious in his ap-

proach and suggestions, McGuire argues that the assemblage structure of the early materials is similar to that of the southern California Milling Stone Horizon. McGuire's comparisons are based on work conducted by Basgall and True (1985), who compared ratios of key artifacts recovered from 30 southern California Milling Stone Horizon sites. These artifacts included millingstones, handstone, hammerstones, points/bifaces, cobble/core tools, and scraper tools. Ratios of these tools at CA-FRE-61 compare favorably with those from the southern California sites. CA-FRE-61 lacks only scraper planes, the absence of which McGuire speculates could be due to specialized use of scraper planes in processing plant materials that are absent in the CA-FRE-61 region.

In my opinion, McGuire demonstrates that the CA-FRE-61 millingstone assemblage is indeed more similar to those of southern California than to those found in closer proximity at nearby upland areas of the Sierra Nevada, where millingstone components from the same period occur, but in association with relatively large assemblages of projectile points and bifaces, including Great Basin forms such as Pinto, Humboldt, and Elko, and an abundance of obsidian from the Great Basin. After discussing possible ties with Buena Vista Lake, Clarks Flat, the Skyrocket site, and other northern California expressions of millingstone adaptations, McGuire concludes that the early component at CA-FRE-61 is most similar to southern California millingstone expressions, and proposes (perhaps as an afterthought) that if the component "must ultimately assume a more explicit cultural-historical identity," that it be subsumed within the Buena Vista Complex, which for 30 years or more has been "favorably compared to the southern California Milling Stone Horizon" (p. 122). Despite such favorable comparison, my cursory analysis of the Buena Vista assemblage structure (Wedel 1941) shows no closer relationship between CA-FRE-61 and Buena Vista than between CA-FRE-

61 and the Sierran and other northern California millingstone sites rejected by McGuire.

The upper component at CA-FRE-61 also is devoted to short-term food processing, one of many such sites being located along the intermittent drainages that traverse the region, probably representing a procurement locus for an as yet unidentified village. The artifact yield for the later subsurface component above 60 cm. was quite sparse, consisting for the most part of bifaces ($n = 27$), unifaces ($n = 8$), cores ($n = 8$), and other, mostly expedient, flaked stone tools ($n = 37$), to which can be added three steatite bowl fragments, two steatite beads, and two pestles; no subsurface features assignable to the Late Period were discovered. However, the charred plant assemblage contained a variety of locally available seeds that included, among others, acorn, manzanita, pine nut, wild cucumber, redmaids, and a variety of grasses.

These seeds compare well with inferences based upon analysis of bedrock mortar depths, following the findings of McCarthy et al. (1985) that the neighboring Western Mono employed mortars with different depths for different purposes. Shallow mortars with a depth of up to 5.5 cm. were "starters," used in the initial milling of acorn meal, those from 5.5 to 9.5 cm. were for "finishing" the acorn milling process, and those deeper than 9.5 cm., which are not practical for acorn processing, were used instead for small seed processing. The frequency profile of mortar depths at CA-FRE-61 corresponds rather closely to the frequencies observed for the Western Mono by McCarthy et al. (1985). With 18% of CA-FRE-61 mortars likely devoted to acorn finishing and 41% oriented toward seed processing, the probable use of local bedrock mortars not only with acorn but with other seeds as well is supported.

I consider this work on CA-FRE-61 to be a solid contribution, not only to regional prehistory but to California's Mid-Holocene archaeology generally. The report is well written, with

thorough discussions of methods. The interpretive comments are clearly justified by the data and the analyses, and do not warrant a tentativeness that at times seems to color the discussion. There are hints here and there in the report that additional dimensions were in the wings waiting to be addressed, but were left off stage to await another venue. One such dimension is the cultural landscape that in many ways was shaped by women's work, with the archaeological record demonstrating that such was the case for several thousands of years, through different technological eras and probably differing climatic regimes.

On a less postprocessual note, I found the relationship between the extensive bedrock surface features and the sparse artifactual content of the later subsurface deposits provocative. As discussed to some extent by McGuire, the later component witnessed the introduction of the bedrock mortar into the region, an innovation variously dated in the region between 1,650 and 1,000 years ago. So what was happening at the site during the 1,400 years or more prior to the introduction of the bedrock mortar, and how did the flaked stone inventory fit in at this time? Because the available data were too sparse to allow more than speculative discussion on these issues, the authors did not have the responsibility at this time to carry their discussions further than they did.

I was particularly impressed with McGuire's connection of the early millingstone component with the southern California early millingstone cultures. Despite a relatively sparse assemblage, its structure was remarkably similar to those of southern California. It should remind us of William Wallace's seminal 1954 paper, where he suggested the possibility of historical relationships between the early millingstone cultures of southern California and those of northern California, specifically making reference to the Borax Lake site. With his usual caution Wallace (1954:121) wrote, "The locating of a similar ancient site geographically intermediate between

the two [areas] would strengthen the case for cultural linkage." CA-FRE-61 is at the right place with the right assemblage to strengthen that linkage.

Mark Q. Sutton, editor of the Occasional Papers in Anthropology for the Museum of Anthropology at California State University, Bakersfield, deserves commendation for his commitment to making sure that at least a portion of anthropological efforts in California and the Great Basin becomes available through publication. Karen Nissen also deserves commendation for her efforts as shepherd for the field project at CA-FRE-61 and, as I understand it, as sheepdog with a major role in herding this report into the publication corral.

A final note. CA-FRE-61 recently was selected as a major contribution for a public exhibit under Caltrans auspices at a roadside rest stop on Highway 99 near Pixley, south of Fresno.

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One purpose of rock art research is to document sites so that—whatever happens in the future—a record is available of what was present at that site at a particular point in time. A study of the rock art of Warner Valley that began in 1987 is now published in this University of Nevada Technical Report. The material covers a large body of rock art, places it into its archaeological context, and examines it in conjunction with environmental factors. I am pleased to see comprehensive studies such as these; few individuals devote so much time and energy in the documentation and study of petroglyphs and pictographs.

Chapter 1 describes the purpose of the Warner Valley rock art study that contains 117 archaeological sites and includes 20,216 units of rock art. In placing the rock art into prehistoric