The Beginnings of Prehistoric Archaeology in Baja California, 1732–1913

Don Laylander

Abstract

Scientific, professional, and sustained archaeological investigations of the prehistory of the Baja California peninsula began in earnest with the work of Malcolm J. Rogers in the 1920s and 1930s, and they reached an early florescence in the work of William C. Massey in the 1940s and 1950s. For nearly two centuries prior to Rogers’ time, however, inquiries by outsiders coming from a variety of nations and professions attempted to piece together information and to test speculations about the region’s distant past. Some previous publications have very briefly summarized those beginnings (García-Uranga 1987; Laylander 1992; Reygadas Dahl 2003). The aim here is to look a little more deeply into the methods, findings, and ideas from the early period, as providing a background to and perspective on the advances that have been made during the succeeding century.

Prologue

Recorded observations concerning Baja California began after 1533, following the first European visits. Spanish explorers probed the peninsula’s margins, looking for pearls, precious metals, new lands to conquer, or new peoples to convert. Their reports contained occasional observations about abandoned native campsites, but those physical traces seem to have been seen only as the remnants of very recent activity, not as potential clues to a prehistoric past.

Permanent colonization of Baja California began in 1697 with the establishment of a Jesuit mission at Loreto (Figure 1). While earlier lay explorers had taken little interest in the region’s past, some of the Jesuit missionaries, such as Sigismundo Taraval, José Rotea, Lambert Hostell, Jakob Baegert, and Miguel del Barco, now thought about and inquired into that subject. The Jesuits were generally men of considerable learning, but their views of prehistory were often based on oral legends and geographic speculations, rather than on any surviving physical evidence.

An Italian Jesuit Missionary, Sigismundo Taraval (1700–1763)

The earliest explicit speculations concerning the peninsula’s prehistory may have been those offered by Sigismundo Taraval. Born in Lodi, in the Lombardy region of northern Italy, Taraval served between 1730 and 1750 at the missions of La Purísima, San Ignacio, Santa Rosa (Todos Santos), San José del Cabo, and Santiago, all within what is now Baja California Sur (Crosby 1994:410). Notably, he was in the Cape region in 1734 at the time of the outbreak of the Pericú revolt (Figure 2), the most serious native challenge to Jesuit rule in Baja California, and he wrote an extended account of that traumatic episode (Taraval 1931). Taraval was charged with collecting materials on the history of the Baja California missions, which would serve as the foundation for the historical narrative composed by a Mexican Jesuit, Miguel Venegas, in 1739 (Venegas 1779). Venegas’ work, after sitting on the shelf for nearly two decades, was extensively revised and finally published in 1757 by a Spanish Jesuit, Andrés Burriel (Venegas 1757, 1759). Neither Venegas nor Burriel had ever set foot in Baja California.
Figure 1. Map of the Baja California peninsula.
Taraval’s own voice comes to us in an account of an expedition that he dispatched in 1732 from his mission at San Ignacio to Isla Cedros, the large island off the peninsula’s west coast. At the time of Spanish contact, the central half of Baja California was occupied by speakers of the Cochimí language or languages. According to Taraval, the southern Cochimí groups:

say that they came from the north; but they do not know the location, nor the name of the place. Those of Trinidad [Isla Cedros], as well as the more northerly groups of this mission [San Ignacio], in fact do know, affirming that they came from a great land that is called *idelgátá*…. All the Californians affirm their coming from the north, and those of the island swear to the same. But among these there are some that were natives of the Island of the Trinity that had never heard, not even by the most ancient traditions, that they had come from any other place [Des Lauriers and Des Lauriers 2006:140–141; see also Venegas 1979:407–408].

**A Mexican Jesuit Missionary, José Mariano Rotea (1732–1799)**

A few of the eighteenth-century Jesuits went beyond merely recording oral traditions or drawing geographical inferences to consider possible physical evidence relating to the peninsula’s prehistory. They examined two main types of archaeological traces—rock art and human skeletal remains. Both were linked in the Jesuits’ minds to the possibility that a race of human giants had lived on the peninsula at some period in the prehistoric past.

José Mariano Rotea was born in Mexico City and served as a Jesuit missionary at San Ignacio between 1759 and the expulsion of the Jesuit order in 1768 (Crosby 1994). He wrote an account that focused on the alleged presence of prehistoric giants on the peninsula, which was incorporated into a manuscript prepared by another Baja California Jesuit, Miguel del Barco (1973:210–212) (see below) and finally published in 1789 by a third Jesuit, the historian Francisco Javier Clavijero (1937:85–86), who wrote what would become the standard early account of Baja California. Rotea argued that there was persuasive evidence to back up the belief in prehistoric giants, including not only the traditions of elderly Indians but also the existence of outsized “shelters,” the discovery of human bones at various locations, and the pictographs seen in rock shelters.

Like Taraval, other Jesuits had elicited reports concerning prehistoric migrations. Venegas reported that prehistoric immigrants had been driven into the peninsula by conflicts, and he inferred that this had
happened after the time of Christ (Venegas 1979:518). Lambert Hostell, a German Jesuit serving at Mission Los Dolores in Guaycura territory immediately south of the Cochimí lands, affirmed in 1750 that different linguistic groups had repeatedly moved to the south (Burrus 1967:183). Jakob Baegert, an Alsatian German Jesuit stationed at San Luis Gonzaga, also in Guaycura territory, wrote in 1757 that according to a Guaycura man, “the first people came from the north” (Baegert 1982:201). In exile back in Europe during the early 1770s after the Jesuit expulsion, Baegert added, “I believe … that the first [Baja] California Indians, pursued by their enemies, entered this peninsula on foot from the north in search of a safe refuge” (Baegert 1952:57–58).

Rotea received similar accounts from his mission’s neophytes based on “the common opinion of the old people” (Barco 1981:86). “From parents to sons there had come news to them that, in very ancient times, a portion of men, as well as women of extraordinary height had come from the north, and that some were fleeing from others” (Barco 1981:89).

In addition to the evidence of such legends, another of Rotea’s arguments in favor of the prehistoric existence of a race of giants on the peninsula was archaeological, but in this case it was based on evidence that he himself had not confirmed. As noted above, it was reported that giants had entered the peninsula from the north. “Part of them traveled along the coast of the Pacific Ocean. The shelters [abrigos] of these are still in evidence, they told me, and they resemble the ones that the Californios themselves use, except very large in comparison” (Barco 1981:89; also 1973:212). Rotea did not specify the nature of these “shelters,” but they may have been examples of the man-made rock depressions or rock rings that are not uncommon on the peninsula (Ritter 1977, 1981; Tuohy 1984).

Rotea personally carried out what seems to have been the earliest reported archaeological excavation in Baja California. Hearing native reports of a giant human skeleton, he went to the site to make his own investigations. He closely inspected the surface of the site, estimating its length at 3–4 m, but noting that erosion had moved the remains downslope and reburied them. He then proceeded to excavate several pieces of bone, including a large fragment of a cranium, some teeth, vertebrae, a rib, and a leg bone. He attempted to measure the bones in the field, but they generally broke or crumbled away on being exposed. Some vertebrae were taken back to the mission at San Ignacio “and comparing them to those of our own dead, I saw that those of the giant were about three times as large” (Barco 1981:89). Rotea also received some pieces of a jaw with teeth from Georg Retz, the German missionary who served at Santa Gertrudis between 1751 and 1768. Rotea reported that Retz’s specimens were similar to the ones that he himself had found (Barco 1973:211, 1981:87). Based on Rotea’s account, the Jesuit historian Clavijero added:

Rock art formed the final basis for Rotea’s conjectures concerning the peninsula’s prehistory. After his venture into archaeological excavation, he turned his attention to pictograph sites. “I went to explore several painted caves, but I will speak of only one of them, because it is the most special one” (Barco 1981:87). Measuring about 8–10 m in length, 5 m in depth, and more than 5 m high, its semicircular vault was filled from top to bottom with painted figures of men, women, and animals. As Rotea interpreted what he saw, the male figures were wearing coats, shirts, and trousers, while the females wore dresses. (What Rotea
perceived as “clothes” were probably the nonrepresentational patterns of body colors that have become familiar to later observers of the Great Mural paintings.) “The pictures of animals showed representations of the familiar ones in the country, such as deer, hares, etc., as well as others which are unknown there, as a wolf and a pig” (Barco 1981:88). The colors—green, black, yellow, and deep red—were to be found locally at the Las Vírgenes volcanos. The positioning of the figures convinced Rotea that the images must have been produced by giants, because they were “placed so high without scaffoldings nor any other instruments suited for the job, only giant men could have painted them” (Barco 1981:89).

**A Spanish Jesuit Missionary, Francisco Escalante (1724–1806)**

José Rotea’s observations of Great Mural rock art in central Baja California were repeated and confirmed by his colleague and contemporary, Francisco Escalante, the missionary at Mulegé. Escalante was born in Andalusia and served at Mulegé between 1757 and 1768, except for a brief interlude at Santiago (Crosby 1994). At Rotea’s request, Escalante made inquiries among the Indians of his mission as to their traditions, and he received similar answers which were also written down by Barco.

Like Rotea, Escalante personally went to see one of the rock art sites. He found a large cave; its size (8 m by 4 m or more by 5 m high) was similar to the one that had been visited by the San Ignacio missionary, but in this case the cave or rock shelter had a flat ceiling rather than a domed one. The ceiling was filled with paintings of animals and of men armed with bows and arrows, which were judged to be remarkably well preserved. Escalante “says that they are crude paintings, that they are very far from the beauty that this type of art can achieve. However, he explains that their authors showed more industry, more skill and more knowledge than the present natives of that country” (Barco 1981:90).

**A Spanish Jesuit Missionary, Miguel del Barco (1706–1790)**

Born in Estremadura, Barco served briefly at San José del Cabo in 1737 and then at San Javier until the 1768 expulsion. He may have been the author of an anonymous manuscript, *Adiciones*, written to supplement an also anonymous *Descripción de la California* written in the 1750s (Barco 1988; but cf. Aschmann 1966), as well as various other reports and letters. In exile in Bologna, Italy, after the expulsion, Barco produced a large manuscript of *Correcciones y adiciones* to update the published history of Baja California by Venegas and Burriel. This volume was eventually published in Spanish (Barco 1973, 1988) and partially translated into English (Barco 1980, 1981).

Barco’s manuscript provided the accounts by Rotea and Escalante discussed above, to which Barco added a few notes, apparently on his own authority. He noted that some Indians now claimed that the legendary giants had been so large that they could paint the ceilings while they were lying down in the floors of the caves. This claim was going a little too far for Barco:

It is more natural to convince oneself that, to do this work, they looked for wood to build a scaffolding and, having a platform in the cave or caves, even though it might not be very high, it would have sufficed so that those giants could paint in comfort. There was plenty of wood for this sort of job. What can be said for certain is that the authors were not natives of that land, since they painted clothed individuals and animals [presumably including the “wolf” and “pig” mentioned by Rotea] which are not found in California. Therefore
they must have come to this land from other regions [Barco 1981:91].

An Anonymous Franciscan

In 1790 an unnamed Franciscan compiled information on Alta and Baja California (Salvatierra 1946:241–268). While he focused primarily on plant and animal resources, one section of the report discussed rock paintings:

In all of civilized California, from south to north, and especially in the smooth caves and cliffs, several crude paintings show themselves. Despite their lack of proportion and little art, there are readily distinguishable representations of men, fish, bows, arrows, and different lines joined in the manner of characters. The colors of these paintings are four: yellow, red, green, and black. Most of the images are painted in very high places, and from this some infer that the consistent tradition claiming there were giants among the ancient Californians is true. Be that as it may, at Santiago Mission in the south, a series of red hand prints is found on a very high, smooth cliff. In the high outcrops, toward the beaches, are seen painted fish of various shapes and sizes, bows, arrows, and some obscure characters. In other areas, Indians armed with bow and arrows, and at their feet diverse kinds of bugs, snakes, and mice, along with lines and other shapes of characters. There is seen a flat rock 2 varas [1.7 m] long on which are imprinted images like noble insignias or shields and lines from various characters.

Toward El Purmo, about 30 leagues [150 k] beyond the mission of Santiago del Sur [note: possibly he meant the Cabo Pulmo area, which is only about 3 leagues rather than 30 leagues from Santiago], an outcrop about 8 varas [6.5 m] long was found, and in its center is seen an inscription that appears to be in Gothic letters, mixed with Hebrew and Chaldean characters.

As much as the California Indians have been asked what the figures, lines, and characters signify, it has not been possible to get a satisfactory reason. The most that has been affirmed by their accounts is that they are from their ancestors, and that people today are absolutely ignorant of the meaning. It might be found from the Californians concerning the pictures and lines that they are symbols and meaningful signs by which they sought to leave for posterity memories of their establishment in this location, of some wars, or of other political or natural events. These paintings are not like those of the Mexicans [i.e., Aztecs], but they may have been invented [Salvatierra 1946:267–268].

The Franciscan’s account was probably based in part on Clavijero’s (1789) published book, which in turn had been based primarily on the accounts of Rotea, Escalante, and Barco. However, it also included some additional information that may have been collected during the Franciscans’ brief sway over Baja California between 1768 and 1773.

A Hungarian Naturalist and Fabricator, János Xántus (1825–1894)

In the early and middle nineteenth century a variety of visitors came to the Baja California peninsula, and several of them afterwards wrote accounts of their experiences. However, these visitors’ interests were generally not aroused by the evidence concerning the region’s prehistory and its archaeology. One very peculiar partial exception was the case of János Xántus (Figure 3).
Xántus was born in Hungary, but after taking part in the abortive 1848–1849 revolution against Austria, he fled to the United States and served for a time in the army. Receiving training as a naturalist, he came under the sponsorship of the Smithsonian Institution. For more than two years, between 1859 and 1861, Xántus was stationed at Cabo de San Lucas, holding the position of tidal observer for the United States Coast Survey, but his main responsibility seems to have been to collect zoological specimens. Then and subsequently, after his return to Hungary under an amnesty, he built an international reputation as a skilled and energetic natural history collector. However, he was also a quarrelsome man, a habitual liar, and a plagiarist (Madden 1949; Xántus 1976, 1986; Bright 1980).

During his years in the Cape Region, his many letters to his Smithsonian patron, Spencer F. Baird, reflect his focus of collecting natural history specimens (Xántus 1986). They do not betray any interest in the region’s ethnology or archaeology. Nonetheless, during this period he also published a travel account in Hungarian that purported to address those subjects (Xántus 1860, 1976). Xántus’s illustrations were often borrowed without acknowledgment from previous publications written by other authors and concerned with entirely different regions. His narrative included descriptions of pueblo-like three-, four-, or seven-story adobe buildings and their ruins, extensive scatters of aboriginal pottery, cinnabar mines with prehistoric trading links extending as far as Oregon, and irrigation ditches that could be traced for miles, all located on the Baja California peninsula. Perhaps Xántus assumed that the geographical remoteness of his prospective readers, the obscurity of his subject matter, and the limited sway of his language would save him from exposure.

Two decades later, Xántus’s archaeological fantasies gave pause to a genuine investigator in Baja California. Herman ten Kate wrote:

It is in vain that I have searched in Lower California for other traces of an ancient civilization. It has been impossible for me to encounter on the route between Juan Marqués and La Paz the ruins, remains of irrigation canals, and numerous fragments of pottery of which the Hungarian traveler Xantus speaks [ten Kate 1883b].

An American Ornithologist, Lyman Belding (1829–1917)

The last quarter of the nineteenth century witnessed a flowering of scientific interest in non-Western cultures and peoples on the part of scholars in Europe and North America. Some but not all of those scholars were working within the nascent discipline of anthropology. Serious investigations into Baja California’s prehistoric archaeology were resumed by a variety of individuals who had extensive scientific interests and experience outside the region, including...
Lyman Belding, Herman ten Kate, Edward Palmer, and Léon Diguet.

Belding was a pioneering, self-taught, widely traveled ornithologist and naturalist (Figure 4). In these respects, he was very much an heir to the same tradition as Xántus. Belding had been born in New England, and he had retired from business and was living in Alta California. An ornithological associate described Belding as “a painstaking and accurate observer, a conscientious recorder, and [one who] had in fact the real spirit of research. He hated inaccuracy and exaggeration” (Fisher 1918:60).

In 1881–1883 Belding collected and documented Baja California’s birds, traveling extensively in the northern part of the peninsula. Coming to the Cape Region in late 1882 and early 1883, he also delved into anthropology and archaeology in the company of Herman ten Kate (discussed below). Belding wrote a short article on their shared findings (Belding 1885). He recounted their largely unsuccessful efforts to locate and confirm the identity of any descendants of the local Pericú Indians. The investigators had more success in finding prehistoric burials:

The Indians of Lower California south of 24 degrees 30 minutes [i.e., south from Isla Espíritu Santo] buried their dead in caves below shelving rocks, without regard to the points of the compass, usually painting the bones, but how they made the bones clean and ready to be painted is still unknown. At Zorillo we were shown a small cave in a granite rock by our local guide, who said that an Italian collector, several years before, had found bones of a “gentle,” the Mexican name for an Indian or heathen.

The sand in the cave was dry, coarse disintegrated granite, about a foot deep. By digging in it I found the well preserved skeleton of an adult male Indian, who was perhaps the last of the Pericues. This skeleton was wrapped in cloth made from the bark of the palm and bound with three ply cord which had been plaited as sailors make sennit, the material being fiber of the agave….

The package, which was about twenty inches long, did not appear to have been disturbed since burial, although a femur and some small bones were missing, and nearly all of the bones had been unjointed. The bones of the hand were inside of the skull, which was full of small bones and sand. Meanwhile Dr. Ten Kate found the skeleton of a girl about twelve years old. This was also in excellent condition, although differing from those found elsewhere, in not having been painted, a rare exception. For the skeletons found by Dr. Ten Kate on Espíritu Santo Island, at Encenada and Los Martires … had all been painted the usual brick red, with the
exception of one the Doctor found at Los Martires which had a skull of very inferior, almost idiotic form.

The few bones we afterwards found in a cave near Candelario and several skeletons found at San Pedro by Dr. H. Ten Kate had also been painted. All of the skulls were of one general form, namely, the pyramidal -- high, long narrow, with wide, prominent cheek bones.

The only ornaments, or other objects of aboriginal handiwork found with the skeletons, were two small, neatly worked, pearl oyster shells, which were in the package of the bones of the young girl found at Zorillo. These shells had been polished on the convex side, the edges finely serrated and pierced at the apex as if to be suspended about the person for ornament [Belding 1885:22].

A Dutch Anthropologist, Herman Frederik Carel ten Kate (1858–1931)

The first professionally trained anthropologist to study Baja California prehistory was Belding’s traveling companion, ten Kate (Figure 5). Born in Amsterdam, he studied ethnology, physical anthropology, and related disciplines under some of the leading authorities of the day at several different universities in the Netherlands, France, and Germany. He received a Ph.D. in zoology from the University of Göttingen in 1882 (Hovens and Hieb 2004).

Immediately after getting his doctorate, ten Kate set out on a two-year anthropological reconnaissance of Native North America. His fieldwork included ethnographic observations, physical anthropology, linguistic studies, and archaeological excavations. The archaeological work played only a relatively minor part in most of his studies, with the notable exceptions of some investigations in Arizona and at the southern tip of Baja California. After this initial venture in the United States and northern Mexico, ten Kate went on to a long career that involved fieldwork in many other regions within both hemispheres. Politically, ten Kate was a persistent critic of European colonial practices.

During the 1882–1883 expedition and shortly after returning home, ten Kate wrote three scholarly accounts of his investigations in Baja California, as well a travel book on his experiences in North America. He later also contributed two notes concerning subsequent studies of his osteological collections that were made by other investigators. His scholarly works were published in French (ten Kate 1883a, 1883b, 1884, 1911a, 1911b). The most substantial of these accounts was later translated into Spanish (ten Kate 1979). His travel account of Baja California was published in Dutch (ten Kate 1885), and the chapter on Baja California has subsequently been translated into English twice (ten Kate 1977, 2004).
Ten Kate’s first publication on Baja California archaeology took the form of a brief letter, written in La Paz just as he was preparing to leave the peninsula, and sent to the Société d’Anthropologie de Paris (ten Kate 1883a). In it, he signaled his particular interests in the physical anthropology of the region’s prehistoric population and in its rock art:

From La Paz, I made two expeditions, one to the island of Espíritu Santo, the other in the interior of the southern part of the country. The results are a collection of skeletal remains (among others, six more or less complete skulls, which are very dolichocephalic) found in some caves; a certain number of arrow and lance points; and the discovery of several rock paintings.…

Lower California is a fairly virgin field of study, and one day I expect to return to undertake missions in the center and north; but this land is a desert with very little water, and the great heat will soon begin. I leave these sad regions for the time being [ten Kate 1883a:375].

Unfortunately, ten Kate’s ambitions for subsequent work on the peninsula were not to be realized.

In the same year, he published a slightly more extended discussion of his Cape Region observations. In addition to noting the physical anthropological issues concerning surviving descendants of the natives and the characteristics of burials, which would be treated at length in his next paper, he made passing mentions of observed flaked and ground stone artifacts, including lance and arrow points, knives, manos, and metates. The most substantial contribution of this article was a discussion of four pictograph sites in the sierras of the Cape Region, at Rincon de San Antonio, El Sauce, Boca San Pedro, and Agua Tapada (Figure 6). He presented sketches of panels at these sites, including both abstract and zoomorphic elements, painted in red and “rather crude … in my opinion, inferior to many of the pictographs of the North American Indians” (ten Kate 1883b:322).

Ten Kate’s most technical and detailed report was published in the following year (ten Kate 1884). This study focused on an analysis of skeletal materials from the various human burials he and Belding had discovered and collected (Figure 7). Seven skulls and a variety of postcranial remains were described in great technical anatomical detail both verbally and through an array of measurements, very much in the spirit of late nineteenth century European and American anthropology. The near ubiquity of red ochre applied secondarily to the skeletal remains in Cape Region burials was also noted. The hyperdolichocephalic (long, narrow) character of the skulls was stressed, and comparisons were made with findings reported from other regions. No physical resemblance was seen with the Yuman-speaking populations of northern Baja California, southern Alta California, and western Arizona. Instead, similarities were found with a range of Melanesian populations in the southwest Pacific and with the purportedly very early remains from Lagoa Santa in Brazil. While noting these correspondences, ten Kate cautiously refrained from offering any hypotheses, such as trans-Pacific migration, to account for them. The skeletal collections of ten Kate and Belding were subsequently restudied in detail by Paul Rivet (1909) and by Rose Noble Tyson (Noble 1973a; Tyson 1977a, 1977b).

A chapter of ten Kate’s travel book was also devoted to his journeys in the Cape Region with Belding. Although the primary objective for ten Kate had been to discover Indian remains, the travelogue contained more about the region’s natural history than its archaeology. However, he made note of his previously discussed discoveries of human burials, pictographs, lithic artifacts, and shell middens. One unusual find was a rock feature observed near Todos Santos. It was:
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Figure 6. Ten Kate’s drawings of Cape Region pictographs: Rincon de San Antonio (top left); El Sauce (top right); Agua Topada (bottom left); Boca San Pedro (bottom right) (ten Kate 1883b:323–325).

Figure 7. Ten Kate’s drawings of a female skull, 20–24 years, found at San Pedro (ten Kate 1884:356–257).
a gigantic rocky block of mica schist standing alone, the surface of which is covered with countless number of loose stones. This rock is known to the present-day residents by the name of Piedra de los Viejos (Old People’s Rock) and is thus the subject of a tradition. When the Indians went fishing, one by one they tossed a stone on this rock. If the stone stayed in place, that was regarded as an auspicious sign for fishing. If the stone rolled back from the slanting surface of the rock, then that was regarded as a sign that whoever had thrown the stone would meet with misfortune on the catch and would do better not to take part [ten Kate 2004:121].

Although ten Kate’s Baja California travels had been limited to the Cape Region, he noted the potential of future investigations farther north:

Anthropological and ethnographic investigation of Lower California north of 24º40’ is still desirable, too. If I have succeeded in clearing up the horizon for the part south, what remains is still shrouded in total obscurity. The numerous pictographs that, according to Clavijero, may be found in the mountains between latitudes 27 and 28º have never found anyone to describe them, and neither on the peninsula nor on the islands has anyone tracked down what remains of the original inhabitants. There can be no doubt that a rich find will reward the future visitor in this realm [ten Kate 2004:100–101].

Baja California would again briefly capture ten Kate’s attention almost three decades later (ten Kate 1911a, 1911b) in response to the armchair physical anthropological investigations of Rivet in Paris. Rivet, later founder of the Musée de l’Homme in Paris, used the anomalous skeletons collected in the Cape Region by ten Kate and later by Diguet (see below) to bolster his hypothesis of the multiple origins of Native Americans, including a trans-Pacific migration from Melanesia:

Keeping myself strictly to the facts on which I have tried to shed light in the course of this memoir, my conclusions are the following:

(1) The ancient inhabitants of the most southern part of the California peninsula seem to have had a very limited local expansion on the coast of the California archipelago, a little more extended on the side of the North American continent; however, new studies will be needed on the subject.

(2) They are closely related to the South American race of Lagoa Santa.

(3) They present affinities no less evident with the widespread hypsistenocephalic race [with extremely high, narrow skulls] in Melanesia and Australia.

(4) The differences that exist among these three varieties of a single race, from both cranial and skeletal perspectives, are explicable by the conditions of life and the diverse environments to which they were subjected.

(5) The double hypothesis, issued by ten Kate in 1884, is found to be on all points confirmed [Rivet 1909:248].

Ten Kate generally supported Rivet’s views, as Rivet had generally supported ten Kate’s, and the latter responded briefly to a critic, Paul Ehrenreich, who doubted his linking of the Cape Region skeletons with Melanesia and Lagoa Santa. Ten Kate offered a number of technical corrections to the descriptions of the Baja California collections. Commenting on a
problem posed by some unexpectedly tall individuals, he suggested that a likely explanation was the existence of prehistoric contacts with the Yaqui Indians of Sonora across the Gulf of California. He also deplored the museum’s loss of some of the specimens from his 1883 collections.

**An English Naturalist, Edward Palmer (1831–1911)**

Another indefatigable field naturalist, Edward Palmer was born in Norfolk, England, but came to the United States while in his teens (McVaugh 1956). He took part in an expedition to South America as a hospital steward and naturalist, and he subsequently worked as a medical doctor, including service with the Union Army during the American Civil War (Figure 8). Palmer’s career was varied, but it focused mainly on the collection of natural history specimens for an array of different institutions, notably the Smithsonian Institution and the United States Department of Agriculture. His biological collecting was focused primarily on plants, but he also collected invertebrates, as well as reptiles, amphibians, mammals, and birds. His travels took him as far afield as Cuba and Central and South America, but most of his work was concentrated in the southern and western United States and in northern Mexico. Palmer’s field records place him in Baja California in the years 1867, 1870, 1875, 1887–1892, and 1897. His work was mostly along the coasts and on the islands of the region, except for forays into the northern interior just south of the international border.

Concerning Palmer’s work as a botanical collector, his biographer has written:

> The collections made by Edward Palmer between 1853 and 1910 were prepared with more care than those of most of his contemporaries. He was primarily a botanical collector, and his botanical specimens were exceptionally well documented for his time…. [However,] he was unwilling to attend to the documentation and distribution of his own collections, and preferred to entrust them for naming, sorting and selling, to his friends and patrons—prominent scientists all [McVaugh 1956:vii].

Subordinate but conspicuous interests for Palmer were ethnography and archaeology. He recorded observations of living Native American communities, with particular attention to ethnobotany, and made collections of items of material culture from them. His archaeological work included a stint with the Bureau of American Ethnology in 1881–1884 that was focused on the prehistoric mounds of the southeastern United States. In addition to his botanical collecting, he conducted archaeological excavations and collected artifacts in Utah, Nevada, Texas, Coahuila, Tamaulipas, San Luis Potosí, and central Mexico, as well as in Baja California. Of his investigations in Utah, one authority observed:

Figure 8. Edward Palmer.
Palmer’s work here [in 1875] represents the very first attempt at scientific investigation of Puebloan ruins in the Southwest, and his results have been characterized by Professor Holmes as “the first collection of importance known to have been made by exhumation.” The one regrettable thing in connection with these early explorations is that Palmer’s notes have been widely scattered, if not, indeed, utterly lost to science [Judd 1926:40–41].

With regard to Palmer’s work in northern Mexico, it has been asserted that “the archaeological materials, especially those from Coahuila, remain among the most important series ever to have come from this area” (McVaugh 1956:81).

Palmer’s archaeological work in Baja California occurred in 1887 and 1897. In the first of these years, Palmer excavated a small burial cave near Bahía de los Ángeles. The collection from that site was duly sent to the United States National Museum (Smithsonian Institution), where it was cataloged and briefly reported (Wilson 1890:127–129). However, Palmer himself did not analyze in detail or interpret the materials. A detailed discussion of the artifacts would be published only many decades later by William C. Massey and Carolyn M. Osborne (1961). Included in the collection from the cave were tubular stone pipes, bone awls, abalone and Olivella shell ornaments, a piece of coral, unworked shell from two species, wooden flaking tools, cane whistles, a possible bullroarer, a cane arrow or dart shaft fragment, a bundle of cactus spines, various wooden fragments, cordage, matting, hairnets, a carrying net, a feathered apron or cape, a human hair cape, a tumpl band, and cotton cloth. From other midden sites around the bay, Palmer recovered marine shells belonging to 22 species and two potsherds. The human skeletal remains from the Bahía de los Ángeles would subsequently be analyzed and reported by other investigators, including Hrdlička (1927) and Tyson (Noble 1973a, 1973b; Tyson 1975a, 1975b).

Palmer’s second reported venture into Baja California archaeology occurred in 1897 on Isla Espíritu Santo. He recovered a skeleton from a burial cave on the island. This was also curated at the United States National Museum, and it was subsequently analyzed by Rivet (1909) and Tyson (1977a).

Palmer’s contribution to Baja California archaeology was a mixed one. On the one hand, his methods of excavation and collection were evidently careful and scientifically sound by the standards of his period. He recovered and preserved unusual and important materials that otherwise might not have survived through the ensuing decades. On the other hand, by not thoroughly reporting and interpreting his findings, he did little to directly influence thinking about the peninsula’s prehistoric past.

A French Engineer and Naturalist, Léon Diguet (1859–1926)

Born in Le Havre, Diguet came as a chemical engineer to the French-owned El Boleo mining complex at Santa Rosalía in 1889 (Figure 9). During his single tour of duty with El Boleo, he explored the interior of the peninsula, collecting natural history specimens that were sent to museums in Paris. In 1893–1894 he returned to the peninsula, this time as the leader a natural history expedition sponsored by the French government. Subsequent expeditions would take him to other parts of Mexico and resulted in numerous scientific publications on diverse subjects relating to natural history, archaeology, and ethnography (Dávalos 1961; Grant 1974).

Diguet’s archaeological studies of Baja California focused on two main subjects: rock art throughout the central and southern parts of the peninsula and Cape Region burials. He addressed the first subject in an 1895 article, which has also been published in English translation (Diguet 1895; Grant 1974). He subsequently reworked his treatment of this topic within a more
general report on the region (Diguet 1899). This latter work also included a section on the burials, which were addressed again in a separate article in 1905; the article was subsequently translated into English (Diguet 1899, 1905, 1973).

Diguet’s (1899) initial observations on Cape Region burials largely paralleled the earlier observations made by ten Kate. The remains were usually found in small caves or natural excavations, on the surface or at shallow depth, in disturbed contexts. Burial accompaniments were absent, except occasionally for worked shells and grinding stones. The bones were mixed with palm fibers and fragments of cordage; undisturbed burials were reportedly wrapped in palm fibers and tied with cordage into packets:

![Figure 9. Léon Diguet.](image)

Exceptionally, some of these burials, as I was able to see on Isla Espíritu Santo, were not gathered into the form of packets, but placed in a sort of rectangular pit formed by rocks aligned one after the other; the body is then found lying down and only covered by a thin layer of gravel [Diguet 1899:43].

Diguet concluded that the Cape Region burials probably predated the arrival of the Pericú in that region:

What pleads in favor of a temporary stay on the peninsula by a certain race is the localization of such burials in the southern portion; that localization including the two islands of Espiritu Santo and Cerralvo, and, on the peninsula, a series of points delimited by a straight line from the gulf to the Pacific Ocean, points indicating the steps along a path following a set direction [Diguet 1899:43].

The 1905 article partly repeated the 1899 discussion but also modified and elaborated upon it, based on subsequent investigations. For instance, at two undisturbed mortuary sites near Cabo Pulmo, he observed:

These two funerary shelters, where the burials of seven individuals are found, are located a short distance apart. They do not seem to constitute, properly speaking, true graves, but rather, temporary stations, destined to receive briefly the dead of a family or of a tribe; dead who were, I think, transported there when the nomadic tribe changed its residence [Diguet 1905:331].

Diguet’s views concerning mortuary offerings were amplified by discoveries at relatively undisturbed mortuary caves near Pescadero and near Santiago. In the first of these, the objects included a knife handle with resin to attach the flaked stone point, a wooden punch, a dozen bone tools interpreted as lance or harpoon points, and some hair with a pearl ornament. In the second case, the findings included wooden tablas.
(tabular pieces of wood, attested ethnographically and subsequently documented archaeologically throughout the peninsula and believed to have a ceremonial or religious function [see Cassiano 1987]), sticks, and a woman’s grass skirt.

These findings also changed Diguet’s views concerning the identity of the burial makers:

The silence of the missionaries [concerning mortuary customs] made me suppose, for a time, that the custom of painting burials and bundling them went back to tribes prior to the evangelization of the country, such as those, for example, that signaled their existence by the pictographs that are found, still today, at many points along the length of the peninsula. I abandon that hypothesis, in considering that the various objects found in the cave near the village of Santiago appear to belong to those Pericues who, alone, inhabited the south of Baja California from the Bay of La Paz at the time of the conquest [Diguet 1905:333].

Diguet’s skeletal collection from the Cape Region was later studied by Joseph Deniker (1895), Rivet (1909), and Tyson (1977b).

In contrast to his limited work on burials, Diguet’s rock art studies far surpassed those of his predecessors and in terms of geographical scope would not be equaled for more than half a century. He identified 30 pictograph and petroglyph localities in central and southern Baja California (Figure 10). He discussed a sample of the more elaborate, distinctive, or better-preserved examples in detail, recording their contexts, dimensions, color patterns, and intersite variations (Figure 11).

Diguet noted some of the practical problems in discovering and recording the rock art sites:

Encountering pictographic specimens is not always an easy matter, because one often faces the ill will of the interior’s native; the interest that one brings to these investigations awakens mistrust in him, and it is not without difficulty that he agrees to furnish a stranger with information about a landmark that, in his eyes, must reveal the existence in the country of a treasure or a rich mine, which the characters, indecipherable to him, would indicate to someone else, offering to that man a source of riches that will be lost to the native [Diguet 1899:36–37].

He gave considerable attention to the contexts within which rock art occurred. While some of it occurred on isolated rocks or cliffs, other sites were seen as having served as habitation areas or as meeting places. Materials removed from the caves or rock shelters, piled in front of the entrances, were used to conceal them. Differences in rock types and outcrops afforded palates that were variously suited for large-scale panels or much more limited work and for crude or for refined productions, as well as either supporting or hindering the art’s preservation.

He stressed the occurrence of at least the more extensive rock art sites in close proximity to water sources such as springs, tinajas (natural water tanks), or creek beds. The sites tended also to be situated at high elevations, in locations linked by paths to the summits or crests of the sierras. The animal subjects of the art matched its locations: “Fish are depicted at a short distance from the sea, hares in the localities near large arroyos, deer on the plateaus, mountain sheep in the settings where that animal lives, lizards in arid places, etc.” (Diguet 1899:38).

Diguet saw arrays of human and/or animal figures as representing formally composed, animated scenes of hunts or battles. He suggested the existence of marked differences in craftsmanship in the work. In the Cape
Region, the paintings were considered crude and hastily executed. In the peninsula’s central region (now known as the Great Mural area), much more artistry was manifested:

The paintings generally occupy the entrance of the cave or at least the best-lit parts; they are disposed so as to receive sunlight at certain hours of the day. The silhouettes of the pictographic subjects, which are only presented in the manner of a crude scheme, are often difficult to distinguish well when they are examined close up and in shadow, but they take on, when they are lighted and examined from a certain distance, a vigor and a relief that are not the simple effect of change, but the result of an idea of decorative art pushed to a sufficiently controlled degree [Diguet 1899:31].

There, the execution is not only more careful, but incontestably more studied. Although always executed in large lines and in an altogether schematic fashion, one perceives, after a certain time, that these paintings denote by their style the knowledge of an art that was no longer in its infancy, and that the author, by the grouping and disposition of subjects, was committed to the realization of a decorative conception….

Figure 10. Map of rock art sites recorded by Diguet (after Grant 1974:138–140). Not all of Diguet’s sites have been located and mapped.
Figure 11. Diguet’s drawings of rock art elements (Diguet 1899:29, 34–35). Petroglyphs from Cañada del Muerto (first row, left), Laguna de San Pedro (first row, right), and Cañada de Pinami (second row). Variation in Great Mural anthropomorphic pictographs at San Borjita, Palmarito, San Juan, Santa Gertrudis, and El Ratón (third row). Pictographs at Cañada de San Matlilita (fourth row).
In contrast to the eighteenth century Jesuits, but in agreement with other observers during the late nineteenth century and afterwards, Diguet firmly rejected the belief in the existence of a prehistoric race of giants. He explained the great heights of some paintings as owing to painters having stood on collapsed roof materials that were later removed from the shelter’s floor. However, also like those contemporary observers as well as their predecessors, he was not disposed to attribute the art to the ancestors of the contact-period peoples:

One certain fact that appears to prove that the race with which we are concerned only made a temporary stay on the peninsula is that the pictographic remains are only found along the route of the cordillera. The plains a little way apart from the sierra, where existence would have been at least as easy, only very rarely offer paintings or petroglyphs.

Together, all the preceding facts show that tribes belonging to a more or less nomadic race would have ventured onto the peninsula, journeying along the cordillera, and that the height of the journey was made along the crest of the sierra, in a manner that spread out a vast panorama across an unknown region [Diguet 1899:40–41].

He argued that the travelers would have been able to distinguish mountains on the mainland across the gulf from the crest of the sierra and that they could have continued across the gulf by boat. In a larger perspective he noted similarities between Baja California rock art and the finds reported in Alta California (Owens Valley), Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas.

An American Travel Writer and Historian, Arthur Walbridge North (1874–1943)

North, born in Alta California, traveled extensively on the peninsula during 1905–1906. He published two articles and two books discussing his journeys, including observations on rock art in the northern part of the peninsula (North 1907, 1908a, 1908b, 1910).

In an initial article on the Sierra de San Pedro Mártir published in a geographical journal, North commented, in passing, on the survivors “of the once numerous tribes of the Pais, Cahuilla, Santa Catarina, Yuma and Cocopa Indians” (North 1907:547). He evidently confused the Yuman-speaking Kiliwa of the region with the Uto-Aztecan-speaking Cahuilla of southern California, an error he would rectify in a subsequent publication:

In prehistoric times a race of people came upon the great sierra and on cliffs in its deep canons drew petroglyphs, with human figures, trees, and strange designs in outline where men of modern stature may not reach. This race disappeared when red men came upon San Pedro Mártir Sierra; but these later arrivals, also, were men of magnificent physique for six feet is an ordinary height among the Cahuillas [sic], the descendants of these old-time Indians [North 1907:548–549].

North published a more anthropologically oriented article the following year (North 1908a). He discussed the history of exploration and the ethnographic characterization of the native groups. Noting the kinship between the Yumans and the Cochimí but the distinctiveness of the Guaycura and Pericú in the far south, he focused in particular on the Yuman groups.

Turning specifically to archaeological evidence and prehistory, he saw the apparently imminent disappearance of the native groups from the peninsula as a repetition of an earlier, prehistoric episode of extinction for the people who had occupied the region prior to the coming of the Indians:

What people was this? For want of a better name I shall designate them the “Petroglyph

...
Makers.” According to the usual Indian tradition these men were giants, for time is ever prone to add to the stature of a superior people. To my personal knowledge five distinct groups of cliff writings bear evidence of these prehistoric inhabitants [North 1908a:244].

North described pictographs from three sites in northern Baja California. The first set was near the Franciscan mission of San Fernando Velicatá and would later be restudied by Engerrand (1912b, 1912c; Laylander 2013) and Earl Johnson (1978). The renderings of part of one of the panels by North and by Engerrand can be compared (Figure 12).

A second set was in the Sierra de San Pedro Mártir, about 150 km north of San Fernando Velicatá (Figure 13). There, North encountered three sets of pictographs, including one that he interpreted as “a guidepost,” with images of several clothed people approaching two pine trees (North 1908a:247). Noting the inaccessibility of the rock art panels, he concluded that “the people who marked these cliffs either had an abundance of rope ladders at their disposal or else lower buttresses of the crag have crumbled away” (North 1908a:248). North’s third set consisted of petroglyphs carved into granitic boulders adjacent to tinajas (natural water tanks) in Arroyo Grande on the eastern slope of the southern Sierra de Juárez (Figure 13).

North’s next publication was a detailed history: Mother of California: An Historical Sketch of the Little Known Land of Baja California from Cortez to the Present Time (North 1908b). In this, he reiterated and elaborated upon his previous views concerning the peninsula’s prehistory:

These various inscriptions have certain kindred points. All of them are written on cliffs facing the east and at heights of ten to fifteen feet above base level; all are in close proximity to water. Those at San Ignacio [based on the description by Rotea] and on San Pedro Mártir Sierra are picture drawings, while the other groups consist of characters not unlike those of the writings of the ancient Chaldeans and Ethiopians. However, until some method of deciphering these petroglyphs is discovered, all that can be predicted of the earliest Californians is that they...
were sufficiently advanced in civilization to clothe themselves and to employ an alphabet [North 1908b:125–126].

He also included in this book a photograph of the San Fernando Velicatá rock art panel (Figure 12).

North’s final contribution was a book-length presentation of his travels, Camp and Camino in Lower California. This volume republished, with some revisions, his previous discussion (North 1908a) of the Petroglyph Makers (North 1910:65–71).

A French Geologist and Archaeologist, Georges Charles Marius Engerrand (1877–1961)

Engerrand was born in Libourne, near Bordeaux, France, and earned licentiates in geology and botany at the University of Bordeaux, where he also attended lectures by the famed sociologist Émile Durkheim. During his student days, Engerrand took a stand as a Dreyfusard in the notorious controversy over the false accusations of espionage that were made against army Captain Alfred Dreyfus in the 1890s. To avoid being required to serve in the French army, Engerrand emigrated to Belgium in 1898 at the invitation of the eminent geographer and fellow-anarchist Élisée Reclus. In Belgium he taught, did field research, and published on both geology and anthropology.

In 1907 Engerrand moved to Mexico, and in the following year he became a Mexican citizen. He held several important posts, including professor of prehistory at the National Museum of Anthropology, did extensive fieldwork, and published studies on both geology and archaeology. He was Franz Boas’ hand-picked successor as director of the Escuela Internacional de Arqueología y Etnología Americanas (International School of American Archaeology and Ethnology) in Mexico City. He helped to pioneer stratigraphic archaeological investigations to develop a relative prehistoric chronology for the Valley of Mexico. However, by 1917 nationalist political tensions during the Mexican Revolution made it impossible for him to continue his work, and he emigrated again, this time to the United States. He was a member of the Anthropology Department at the University of Texas from 1920 until 1961, the year in which he died (Figure 14). Although reportedly esteemed as a teacher, he produced few publications after his departure from
Mexico (Brogan et al. 1962; Campbell 1962; Graham 1962; Newcomb 1962; Rutsch 2010).

Engerrand came to northern Baja California for three and a half months in the fall and winter of 1911. His expedition took him through the northwestern portion of the peninsula, roughly between Ensenada and San Fernando Velicatá. It resulted in two archaeological studies, one on “eoliths,” and the other on rock art. A report on the eolith study was published in French and in Spanish (Engerrand 1912a, 1913). It was translated and published in English in a somewhat abridged form by Paul H. Ezell (Engerrand 1981). The rock art investigations were published in two articles, the first one in both French and Spanish (Engerrand 1912b, 1912c) and the second only in Spanish (1912d); these have recently been translated and published in English (Laylander 2013).

The eolith conundrum concerned the problem of distinguishing very early, very crude prehistoric lithic artifacts (“eoliths”) from morphologically similar but purely natural rocks. Engerrand (1905) had previously addressed the eolith problem in Europe, where he had been a vigorous supporter of specimens from pre-Holocene (Pleistocene and even Tertiary) sites in France, Belgium, Britain, and Portugal as constituting genuine eolithic artifacts. However, he would subsequently recant that position (Engerrand 1912a).

In Baja California he concluded that all of the specimens he examined at locations between Ensenada and San Fernando Velicatá were naturally fractured “pseudo eoliths” rather than genuine human artifacts (Figure 15). They variously possessed very clear “pseudo bulbs of percussion,” “pseudo striking platforms,” “pseudo utilization,” and “pseudo retouch.” Nonetheless, their origins were attributed to the effects of the diurnal succession of heat and cold, the seasonal succession of dry periods and rain, transporting by water, and the impacts of oxen, horses, and carts on roads.

Engerrand reviewed in some detail the European arguments that had been advanced to show that natural or accidental processes could account for the existence of pseudo eoliths. However, the reason for his categorical classification of all his Baja California specimens as pseudo-artifacts rather than true artifacts, despite his acknowledgment of the insuperable difficulties in making such distinctions, was not stated clearly in his report. It was perhaps based on a presumption that such crude, simple artifacts would only have been produced in a Pleistocene, pre-paleolithic stage of culture, and that Baja California and the Americas in general had not been occupied at such an early period.

Engerrand’s eolith study played a role in the history of Baja California archaeology. Its consideration of the problem of identifying a possible early lithic industry in northern Baja California presaged the later controversies surrounding claims of Pleistocene assemblages.
by Brigham A. Arnold (1957) and George F. Carter (1980). It was also perhaps the first detailed presentation of evidence concerning prehistoric lithic technology in the region.

Engerrand’s other 1911 study concerned three rock art sites in the region of San Fernando Velicatá and El Rosario (Figure 16). One of the pictograph sites at the location of the 1769 Franciscan mission of San Fernando had previously been reported by North as discussed above (Figure 12), and its rock art panels would subsequently be described again, in part, by Johnson (1978). Engerrand’s other two sites were known as San Julio and La Sierrita.

Engerrand briefly noted the previous history of rock art studies, relying primarily on the account by Clavijero. In reporting his own work, he was conscientious in describing the colors used on the pictographs, the dimensions of the panels, their condition as an apparent indicator of their age, and their contexts, particularly with regard to available water sources. He was somewhat cautious when it came to interpretation, noting that some elements were recognizable as anthropomorphic and possibly zoomorphic and that some others might represent gaming pieces. More speculatively, he suggested:

> without denying that the petroglyphs commemorate some interesting facts relative to ancient migrations, I believe I can express the opinion that certain of them are maps or contain indications concerning locations where water can be found.

Of their antiquity I will say nothing, since all we know is that their authors are not the ancestors of the present Indians [Engerrand 1912b:205].
He explicitly rejected earlier claims concerning giants or Near Eastern inscriptions, attributing the former to the natives having encountered the remains from large animals mistakenly identified as human and the latter to “nothing other than fortuitous coincidences” (Diguet 1912b:206).

Shortly after the appearance of his article on his observations of Baja California’s rock art, Engerrand published a short additional note on the same subject (Engerrand 1912d). In the meantime, he had gained access to a copy of Diguet’s (1899) report, and he used it both to make some interregional comparisons and to defend his previous views. In the latter cause he cited finds from the French Pyrenees and Pitcairn Island in support of the plausible antiquity of the Baja California paintings.

**Conclusions and Aftermath**

Several generalizations seem to be applicable to prehistoric archaeology in Baja California, as it was practiced both during the period under consideration here and during the century that followed:
The Beginnings of Prehistoric Archaeology in Baja California, 1732–1913

(1) The pioneering archaeologists were notably diverse in their national origins. As noted above, the investigators included individuals from Mexico (Rotea), the United States (Belding, North), Spain (Escañate, Barco), France (Diguet, Engerrand), Italy (Taraval), the Netherlands (ten Kate), and England (Palmer). In subsequent decades the national diversity of the community of Baja California archaeologists would continue with important contributions from Canada, Latin America, and Europe, but with a more pronounced predominance of Mexican and United States investigators.

(2) The early investigators were also diverse in their professional roots. They had only exceptionally been trained as anthropologists or archaeologists. However, many had a vocation or a strong avocation in the field of natural history, and they found it normal to encompass archaeology within that interest. During the twentieth century, professional archaeologists would come to predominate, although not to the exclusion of important continuing contributions from other sorts of individuals, particularly in the field of rock art studies.

(3) All the early archaeologists discussed here were male. Women have played equally prominent roles in the prehistoric archaeology of Baja California only since the early 1950s, beginning with the contributions of Barbro Dahlgren de Jordan (1954; Dahlgren and Romero 1951).

(4) The early investigators expressed concerns about chronological issues, but they generally saw poor prospects for being able to address those issues effectively, even in very coarse-grained terms. That would change notably, first in the relative chronological schemes that were propounded by Malcolm J. Rogers (1939, 1945, 1966; Laylander and Bendímez 2013) and then through the increasing availability of absolute radiocarbon dating, beginning in the 1950s with the work of Carl L. Hubbs and his associates (Hubbs and Bien 1967; Hubbs et al. 1960, 1962, 1965).

(5) Some attention was given by the investigators to a variety of archaeological artifacts, ecofacts, and features. However, the overwhelming focus of interest during the beginning centuries was on just two elements of the prehistoric record, rock art and human burials. Strong interest in these elements has continued throughout the subsequent decades. However, it has come to be more adequately balanced with due attention to many other facets of the archaeological record.

(6) Early investigators tended to assume, almost without reflection, that cultural contrasts among different archaeological assemblages or between such assemblages and the traits that seemed to be reflected in the ethnohistoric and ethnographic records were to be ascribed to differences in ethnicity, prehistoric migrations, and population replacement. This interpretive bias would continue for another half century in the views of Rogers, Paul Kirchhoff (1942), and Massey (1961, 1966), only slowly making room for alternative explanations such as internal evolutionary processes taking place within cultures, trait diffusion between cultures, and adaptive diversity within and between cultures.

(7) The contact-era Native Baja Californians, who by the middle to late nineteenth century had become culturally if perhaps not physically extinct in the central and southern parts of the peninsula, were usually characterized by the early archaeologists as savage, crude, and a generally inferior set of beings. Such a view seemed to require that any impressive elements found in the archaeological record must be attributable to some superior race that had subsequently vanished from the region. This attitude of racism and ethnocentrism would generally disappear during the following decades.

(8) Finally, the early archaeologists in Baja California clearly recognized that what they were offering was not the final, definitive word on this subject. They explicitly acknowledged the potential for important
future studies and advances in understanding the peninsula’s prehistory.

Acknowledgments

My sincere thanks to Julia Bendímez Patterson and many others who have stimulated and shared my interest in Baja California archaeology over the past three decades. I appreciate the comments of Thomas Bowen and an anonymous reviewer.

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