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REVIEWS

First Coastal Californians

Lynn Gamble (ed.)
Santa Fe: SAR Press, 2015,
160 pp., \$24.95 paperback.

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California has a lot to offer. Our golden beaches and towering mountains were home to some of the most linguistically and culturally diverse groups in the prehistory of North America. The state's history includes the arrival of some of North America's first settlers, and the development of several of the world's most complex hunter-gatherer societies. By any standard, California's past has the potential to illuminate many issues of interest to contemporary anthropology, ranging from human-environment interactions to the origins of social complexity. Recent scholarship in coastal California has done much to advance our understandings of the theoretical and material basis for the region's dynamic history. Compared to other regions of North America, however, comparative archaeological case studies drawn from California are still relatively rare, and there is a lack of appreciation and understanding of the area among the wider public. Considering our state's rich heritage, it is thus imperative to bring California archaeology to as broad an audience as possible.

First Coastal Californians, edited by Lynn Gamble, concisely overviews cutting-edge research on California coastal archaeology in a way that will be immediately accessible to a general audience. Each of the volume's seventeen chapters is written by leading scholars who provide excellent discussions of their respective areas of expertise. Although they present summaries of recent research, the content of each chapter is not watered-down. Rather, they present some of the most up-to-date interpretations and data on a range of topics relevant to California coastal archaeology. As such, the volume should be of interest to local archaeologists who wish to review current approaches and models for understanding the prehistory of the state's coastal regions, as well as to

archaeologists from other parts of the world looking for an introduction to California coastal archaeology. The book would also be excellent as a classroom resource for upper-level undergraduates, as well as for any other non-specialists interested in learning more about California's past.

One of the most noticeable attributes of the volume is how enjoyable it is to read. Each chapter starts with a colorful story or anecdote that introduces us to the topic to be discussed. These well-written narratives set the scene for the discussion that follows, while reminding the reader of the excitement of archaeological discovery. Each chapter is accompanied by numerous photos and tables, and the book itself contains a total of 24 beautiful full-color plates. While the aesthetic appeal of the book might not be the primary concern for scholarly readers, it is noteworthy as it will certainly enhance the appeal of the volume to a wider audience. Although the chapters are relatively short, they are well-edited and make a great deal of information easily and quickly available.

The volume's seventeen chapters cover California prehistory from the first occupations of the coast into the modern era. Early coastal adaptations are well covered, with chapters summarizing recent evidence for coastal migrations into the Americas as well as models for the impact of climate change on coastal populations. Geographically, contributions include discussions of the Bay Area, the central coast, Ballona Bay, and both the northern and southern Channel Islands. Chapters covering the central coast and Ballona Bay were especially interesting as they present material not widely covered in similar volumes. The state's more recent history is also reviewed, with sections on both the formation and economic underpinnings of the mission system, as well as indigenous attempts to rebel against and resist it. California's current anthropological climate is represented by an excellent chapter on modern basket weaving, as well as numerous chapters referencing the pressing need to preserve our coast in the face of advancing shorelines and anthropogenic climate change.

In addition to a breadth of geographic and chronological contributions, chapters in the volume provide an overview of a number of unique technological, artistic, and religious practices that represent California's

indigenous heritage. A chapter on indigenous watercraft provides a useful summary of the many different kinds of aquatic transportation used by California's pre-Hispanic coastal residents. Chapters on ritual traditions and rock art draw on both ethnohistory and archaeology to discuss sacred traditions in both northern and southern California. A discussion of shell beads, one of the most emblematic trade goods of coastal Californian traditions, also provides an excellent overview of the importance of wearable wealth for coastal peoples. Additionally, a chapter on controlled burning emphasizes the fact that native populations have been actively managing their landscapes for thousands of years, while also highlighting the importance of working together with modern-day descendant communities in order to preserve and understand California's heritage.

Like many other recent volumes dealing with coastal California archaeology, there is a noticeable focus on the archaeology of the northern Channel Islands. This is unfortunate, but is probably unavoidable considering that this is where the majority of recent research has taken place. It is noteworthy that this emphasis is not as heavy as it has been in many other volumes, and much effort seems to have been made to include chapters on areas from up and down California's coast. Additionally, while the volume is focused on the coast, the book might have been improved with a greater discussion of coastal people's relationships with adjacent regions and other areas of California. This is especially true for discussions of trade and exchange, where the majority of shell beads,

for example, were traded to non-coastal regions. An absence of in-text citations is also sometimes frustrating, but was probably a practical decision that will enhance the volume's appeal to a non-academic audience. Finally, in an effort to make the book's language as accessible as possible, some familiar technical terms have been changed to more general-usage words. This is most apparent in the repeated use of "window screen" to refer to archaeological sifting screens. Again, this was done to increase the accessibility of the volume, but a section introducing the reader to the techniques of archaeological science at the start of the volume might have served a similar purpose.

It is hard to put together a book that is both accessible to the public yet of scholarly interest to practicing archaeologists. In *First Coastal Californians*, Lynn Gamble and the various chapter contributors have certainly succeeded in this task. Although readers who have been following the archaeological literature in California will be familiar with many of the themes presented, the chapters present informative and up-to-date summaries of a wide range of important subjects that should be of interest to any archaeologist working with hunter-gatherer populations or coastal environments. Most importantly, this volume makes California coastal archaeology both exciting and accessible to a wide range of both specialists and non-specialists. Hopefully, this book will allow many different readers to gain a deeper insight into and appreciation for California's fascinating archaeological past and rich indigenous present.



Orderly Anarchy: Sociopolitical Evolution in Aboriginal California

Robert L. Bettinger
Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015,
312 pages, ISBN: 9780520283336,
\$70 (hardcover).

Reviewed by Brian F. Coddling
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This book offers one of the most significant theoretical contributions to California and Great Basin anthropology since Steward's (1938) ambitious explanatory project. As the title suggests, the central theme of this work is focused on understanding the formulation of 'orderly anarchy.' While many unilinear evolutionary thinkers believed some form of anarchy was the foundation from which other political organizations emerged, Bettinger is perhaps the first to illustrate that orderly anarchy is itself an evolutionarily stable adaptation to particular social and environmental circumstances, not merely