

UC Merced

Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology

Title

Oppelt: *Southwestern Pottery: An Annotated Bibliography and List of Types and Wares*

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7m63x2jx>

Journal

Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology, 10(2)

ISSN

0191-3557

Author

Griset, Suzanne

Publication Date

1988-07-01

Peer reviewed

Southwestern Pottery: An Annotated Bibliography and List of Types and Wares. Second edition. Norman T. Oppelt. Metuchen: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1988, 333 pp., \$35.00 (hardbound).

Reviewed by:

SUZANNE GRISET

Dept. of Anthropology, Univ. of California,
Davis, CA 95616.

Southwestern archaeology is justifiably infamous for its convoluted pottery typologies. There are hundreds of named pottery types and variants, and oftentimes multiple type names for the same pottery. Imprecise descriptions or conflicting applications of type names further complicate the usefulness of the many regional typologies. Some analysts have questioned the replicability and consequent reliability of pottery typologies (Swarthout and Delaney 1982); others have argued that the ware concept has been misapplied (Rice 1976; McGimsey 1980). These arguments notwithstanding, pottery typologies continue to be used, and any tool that assists in sorting through this morass is most welcome.

Oppelt's volume provides such a guide. It consists of three sections, each organized alphabetically: an annotated bibliography, a list of pottery types and wares, and a topical index. The first edition, published in paperback in 1976 (Occasional Publications in Anthropology, Archaeological Series No. 7, Museum of Anthropology, University of Northern Colorado, Greeley) emphasized descriptions and illustrations of pottery types. The second edition contains another 300 citations and brings the bibliography current through 1986. The list of types and wares has been expanded to include pottery

"dates" when available, and synonyms, in addition to the original descriptions and illustrated references. The topical index was added to this edition to reflect the expanded scope of recent pottery analyses beyond typology to questions of cultural context and interpretation.

As the introduction stipulates, the volume can be used in three ways: "specific pottery types and wares can be studied through the use of the alphabetic list of names and references; topics may be reviewed through the use of the index and the annotations cited; and the work of a specific researcher can be found by examining all citations under his or her name" (p. vi).

The volume concentrates specifically on Southwestern pottery, from prehistoric to modern wares. Citations are drawn from academic and popular presses, as well as ceramic newsletters and popular magazines. Several citations for neighboring culture areas are included, as are a limited number of citations that present analytical techniques applicable to pottery analyses in general.

Two major drawbacks to the volume are: (1) the lack of a map of the Southwest culture area, showing the general location of the major wares at different time periods; and (2) a listing of types within each ware.

The present List of Types and Wares is organized alphabetically, with no suggestion as to which type belongs in which ware. Hence, the reader must obtain the published type description(s) in order to ascertain whether the type under investigation is even in an appropriate geographical area. This may not be a problem for analysts familiar with the Southwestern typology, but it is a drawback for the uninitiated.

There are minor typographical errors, and inconsistencies in cross-referencing the bibliography, type list, and topical index. The List of Types and Wares includes duplicate listings of types or wares that seem to have been "named" or "dated" by different researchers, but the distinctions are somewhat blurred. For instance, Parker Buff is listed twice. The first time it is cited as dating ca. A.D. 1000 to post-1900, with Rogers (1945) and Waters (1982) as the sources of description. The second listing of Parker Buff dates the type as pre-A.D. 900 to post-1900, but again cites Rogers (1945) and Waters (1982), as well as others. How can these same references provide two different dates and descriptions for the same type?

In the case of Tizon Brown Ware, the List of Types and Wares contains the citations for the original and revised descriptions of the ware, but additional citations are found only in the topical index. Euler's (1959) comparison of Arizonan Tizon Brown versus that found in California is included in the index, however Meighan's (1959) naming of the California type (Palomar Brown) is not included, although it was published in the same volume as Euler's paper.

These problems, however, are intrinsic to the task of attempting to compile comprehensive annotated and indexed bibliographies--they are never perfect, and by the time they are published, there are hundreds of new citations. Nevertheless, these limitations are far outweighed by the value of having this complex body of literature pulled together in a single reference volume. The price of this hardbound edition may, unfortunately, put the volume beyond the means of many students and researchers in adjunct areas. It is, however, a reference volume that should join Colton (1953, 1965), Shepard (1956), and Rice (1987) on the shelf of any ceramic analyst's library. Hopefully, plans are already underway to publish an inexpen-

sive addendum to this volume with citations from 1987 onward, and increased entries in the topical index.

REFERENCES

- Colton, Harold S.
1953 Potsherds: An Introduction to the Study of Prehistoric Southwestern Ceramics. Museum of Northern Arizona Bulletin No. 25.
1965 Check List of Southwestern Pottery Types. Museum of Northern Arizona, Ceramic Series No. 2 (revised).
- Euler, Robert C.
1959 Comparative Comments on California Pottery. In: Archaeological Resources of Borrego State Park, by C. W. Meighan, pp. 41-42. Los Angeles: University of California Archaeological Survey Annual Report 1958-59:25-44.
- McGimsey III, Charles R.
1980 Marina Mesa: Seven Prehistoric Settlements in West-Central New Mexico. Harvard University Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology Papers 72.
- Meighan, Clement W.
1959 Archaeological Resources of Borrego State Park. Los Angeles: University of California Archaeological Survey Annual Report 1958-59:25-44.
- Rice, Prudence M.
1976 Rethinking the Ware Concept. *American Antiquity* 41:538-542.
1987 Pottery Analysis: A Sourcebook. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Rogers, Malcolm J.
1945 An Outline of Yuman Prehistory. *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 1:157-198.
- Shepard, Anna O.
1956 Ceramics for the Archaeologist. Carnegie Institution of Washington Publication No. 609.
- Swarthout, Jeanne, and A. Dulaney
1982 A Description of Ceramic Collections from the Railroad and Transmission Line Corridors. Museum of Northern Arizona Research Papers No. 26.

Waters, Michael R.

1982 *The Lowland Patayan Ceramic Typology*. In: *Hohokam and Patayan: Prehistory of Southeastern Arizona*, R. H. McGuire and M. B. Schiffer, eds., Appendix G. New York: Academic Press.



California Radiocarbon Dates. Fifth edition.

Gary S. Breschini, Trudy Haversat, and Jon Erlandson, Compilers. Salinas: Coyote Press, 1988, vi + 119 pp., 30 figs., 1 table, \$5.95 (paper).

Review by:

R. E. TAYLOR

Radiocarbon Laboratory, Dept. of Anthropology,
Institute of Geophysics and Planetary Physics,
Univ. of California, Riverside, CA 92521.

California Radiocarbon Dates represents an ongoing database project of the compilers. In this edition, data on 2,681 ^{14}C values--up from 2,330 in the previous edition--have been assembled. The primary listing of the dates uses trinomial site designations (state/county/site number) with the counties listed in alphabetical order and sites listed in numerical order within the county grouping. Those dates lacking a site number are listed at the end of each county group of dates. In addition to the trinomial designation ordering, other information provided in the data record includes the conventional B.P. age expression (age \pm range), the "date" in A.D./B.C. notation, the laboratory number, sample material, reference to end notes, provenience (provenance), collector/submitter, and a source reference.

Following the compendium of individual dates are tables and figures summarizing the assembled dates. These summaries provide information on such things as the number of dates and number of ^{14}C -dated sites in each county and then, through a series of histo-

grams, lists, in 250-year increments, the dates from each county--or in a few cases, dates from individual sites with large suites of dates (e.g., CA-ORA-119 with 25 dates)---out to 10,000 years B.P. A brief listing of additional comments on individual dates, a set of references to the database itself and an annotated bibliography dealing with the interpretation of ^{14}C data are also included.

This compendium constitutes a significant reference resource whose main virtue is that it provides a framework within which a complete database for California ^{14}C dates can be developed. There is currently an international effort being coordinated by Renee Kra, the Managing Editor of *Radiocarbon*, to get all ^{14}C data on some type of computer-based system. However, this will be an extremely slow process as funding for such enterprises is very limited. The efforts of the compilers of *California Radiocarbon Dates* should be applauded and supported by everyone professionally interested in California archaeology.

Support means having archaeologists send to the compilers lists of ^{14}C dates obtained as a result of fieldwork. However, even above the database itself, the annotated bibliography compiled by Jon Erlandson at the end of the booklet should be included on the required introductory reading list of all first-year graduate students in archaeology. They should also be required to read the last sentence of his introduction: ". . . a fundamental tenet in modern archaeology: don't rely on a single ^{14}C date . . ."

In scanning the entries, one should note a few issues raised by the format. These comments are not directed at the compilers, who were at the mercy of their sources, but are for the users and contributors to future editions. In the compendium, dates are expressed with both B.P. and A.D./B.C. notations. Before 1976, all labs published their dates in this manner using the rela-