

AN OVERVIEW OF FOUR LATE PREHISTORIC SITES
LOCATED IN THE WESTWOOD VALLEY
RANCHO BERNARDO, CALIFORNIA¹

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ABSTRACT

Ten archaeological sites located within the Westwood Valley in San Diego County are remnants of a large prehistoric village. This village, located on the south shore of the San Dieguito River, was occupied from at least 1800 years B.P., until well into the 19th century. Six of the sites, SDi-5937, SDi-5939, SDi-10301, SDi-10302, SDi-10303, and SDi-10304, appear to represent Early Period preceramic occupations. The remainder of the sites, SDi-5935, SDi-5938, SDi-5940, and SDi-8216 (W-219), are Late Prehistoric Period occupations with both habitation and specialized activity areas. Site attributes include the presence of pictographs, rock features (a stone oven, a large rock room complex, rock granary rings, and four large stone walls), and dark midden soil. Results of an intensive faunal analysis indicates winter habitation of this village with the exploitation of rabbits and hares for food and for their pelts from which rabbit skin blankets and robes were manufactured.

INTRODUCTION

Westwood Valley is located in northern San Diego County on the southern shore of Lake Hodges, in the town of Rancho Bernardo (Figure 1). Topographically the valley is a series of gently rolling hills and knolls, most of which have large bedrock outcrops located on them. The valley is roughly divided in the middle by an east/west trending seasonal drainage that intersects with a large north/south trending perennial drainage on the eastern boundary of the project area. The north/south trending drainage empties over a waterfall into a large pool at SDi-8216, eventually draining into Lake Hodges.

Four major floral communities exist in the valley. These include Chaparral, Southern Coastal Sage Scrub, Southern California Grassland and Freshwater Marsh/Riparian habitat (Thorne 1976). As a result of the varied floral communities and the presence of permanent water sources, Westwood Valley supports a viable wildlife population representative of the foothill region of San Diego County. The abundance of plant and animal resources combined with the mild climate and

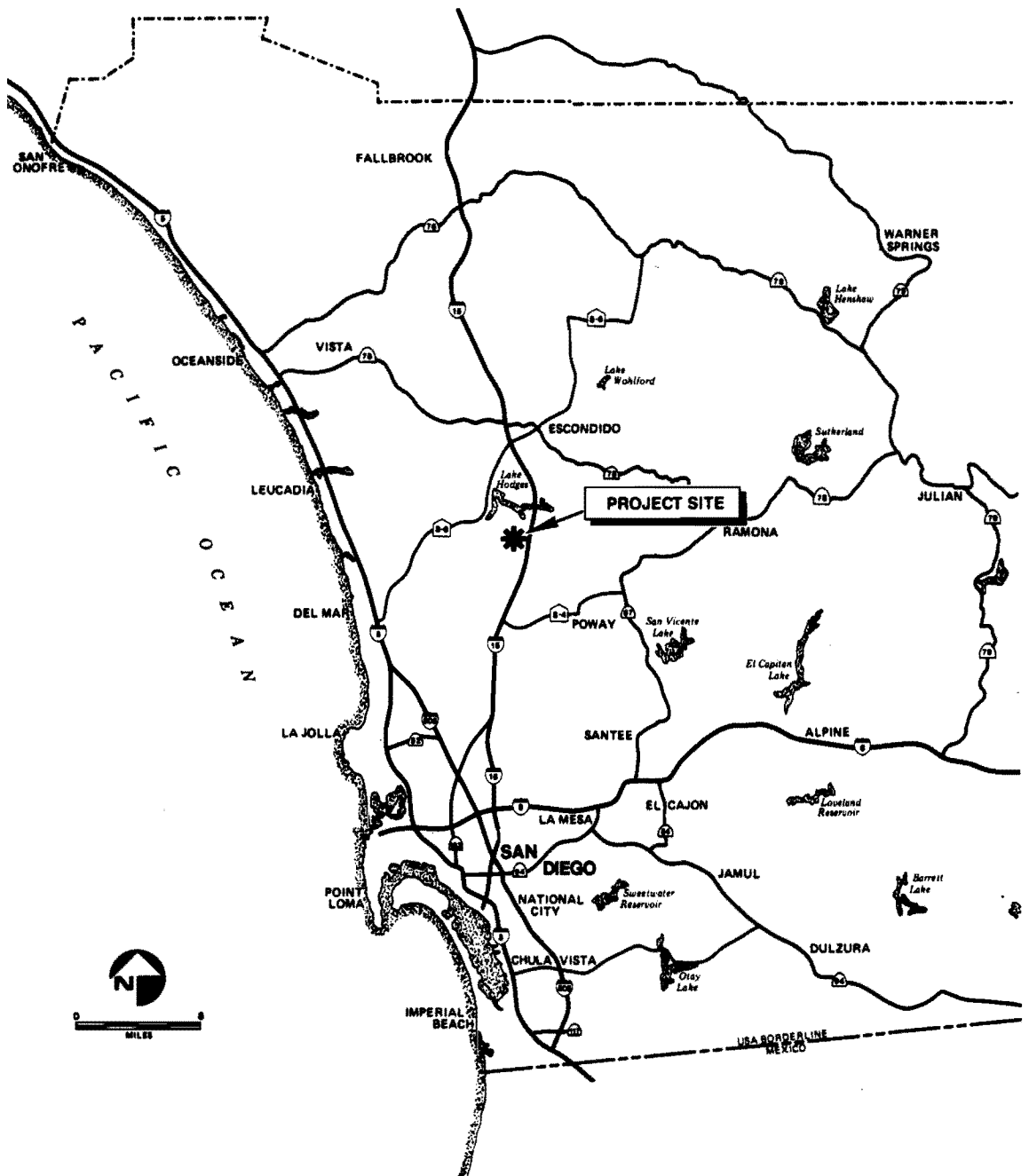


Figure 1. Regional map showing project location within San Diego County.

perennial water sources, made Westwood Valley a desirable place for Native Americans to live.

WESTEC Services, Inc. has been involved in archaeological work in Westwood Valley since 1977. Altogether, 13 sites have been surveyed, tested and developmental impacts mitigated. The 1985-1986 field work was concerned with ten of these sites (Figure 2). The sites have been divided into Early and Late Period occupations using several diagnostic indicators: pottery, introduced into San Diego County from the desert to the east approximately 1,000 year ago; the presence or absence of obsidian from Obsidian Butte, a source that was unavailable before approximately A.D. 1600 (Dominici 1984); and the presence or absence of historically introduced pollen and seed recovered from midden soil. Early Period sites, then, are defined by an absence of pottery, the presence of Coso rather than Obsidian Butte obsidian, and the results of Carbon-14 dates, obsidian hydration measurements, pollen and macrobotanical analysis. Late Period sites are defined by the presence of pottery, Obsidian Butte obsidian, and Late Prehistoric style projectile points, as well as, the results of Carbon-14 tests, pollen and macrobotanical analysis.

The Late Period sites within Westwood Valley are portions of a large village complex. The excavation and analysis of these sites is, therefore, an important addition to the understanding of Late Prehistoric occupations within San Diego County. To date, only two Native American villages, other than the Westwood Valley complex, have been excavated in San Diego County. These are the village of Ystagua in present day Sorrento Valley and the village at Sabre Springs near Poway. The Westwood Valley village complex contains a variety of stone features and pictographs, elements not found at Ystagua or Sabre Springs. This paper is intended to give the reader a broad overview of the Late Prehistoric sites in Westwood Valley. The stone features are described in two additional papers presented by Richard Carrico and Roxana Phillips at the SCA meetings. These papers discuss all of the stone features (Richard Carrico) and the stone oven or *horno* located on SDi-5938 (Roxana Philips).

SITE DESCRIPTIONS

SDi-5935 (W-1482)

SDi-5935 is a large site consisting of two loci located in the southeastern portion of the study area (see Figure 2). Locus 1 is situated on a low hill approximately 50 m from a semi-perennial stream. Site area, as defined by surface artifact distribution, is approximately 18,000 sq. m. Portions of Locus 1 were extensively disturbed. Midden soil had been removed from a large borrow pit, resulting in

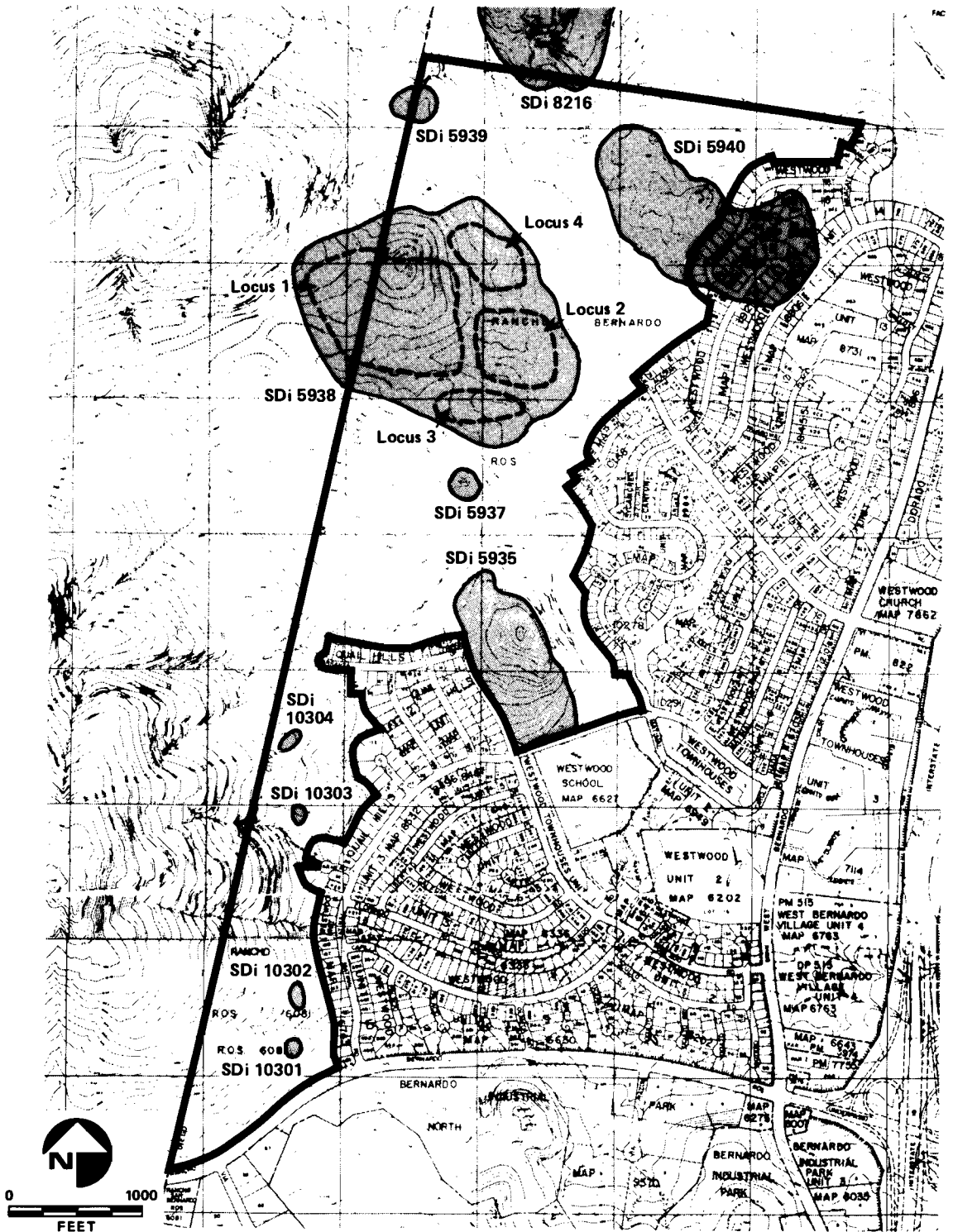


Figure 2. Archaeological sites within the project area.

partial destruction of the western portion of the site, and motorbike trails crisscrossed much of the remaining area. The eastern portion of the site was relatively undisturbed, and surface collection revealed extensive surface debris extending across the top of the hill, almost to the stream bed on the east. The maximum depth of units excavated on Locus 1 was 110 cm, however, sixty-nine percent of the artifacts from this site were recovered above 50 cm.

Locus 2, located approximately 80 m northwest of Locus 1 on a small knoll, encompasses an area approximately 30 m x 70 m. This locus was a bedrock milling activity area with few associated artifacts. SDi-5935 is defined as a Late Period site by the presence of pottery, Obsidian Butte obsidian, and C-14 dates ranging from 800 years B.P. to 160 years B.P.

SDi-5938 (W-1485)

This large site is composed of four loci located on both sides of an east/west trending seasonal drainage (see Figure 2). A number of rock features, all of which are to be preserved in open space easements, are located on Loci 1 and 2. Information gleaned from the excavation and analysis of SDi-5938 indicates this site was occupied from approximately 1110 years B.P. into the 19th century. SDi-5938 was probably the central living area for Native Americans remaining in the Westwood Valley after this property became a ranch. It was not an uncommon occurrence during the early period of European occupation of Native American land for those individuals remaining to become occasional workers on the ranch.

Locus 1 covers approximately 1200 sq meters, extending from the top of a large hill to the northern edge of the east/west trending drainage (Figure 3). Features at this locus include: a stone oven or *horno* (Feature A), three rock rooms (Features B and D) and a pictograph associated with the oven (Feature F), a complex of 16 interconnecting rock rooms located on the hill above the oven (Figure G), a pictograph associated with the rock rooms, and 19 bedrock outcrops containing 44 individual milling elements that extend from the top of the hill to the drainage. Three of these milling features have rock rings or granary bases located on them. Subsurface cultural deposits were discrete, with large areas devoid of artifacts between activity areas and stone features.

The rock features are discussed in more detail in the paper presented at the SCA meetings by Richard Carrico. Briefly, however, eight of the 16 rooms located in the rock room complex were excavated. These rooms were filled with dark culture bearing midden that contained an abundance of

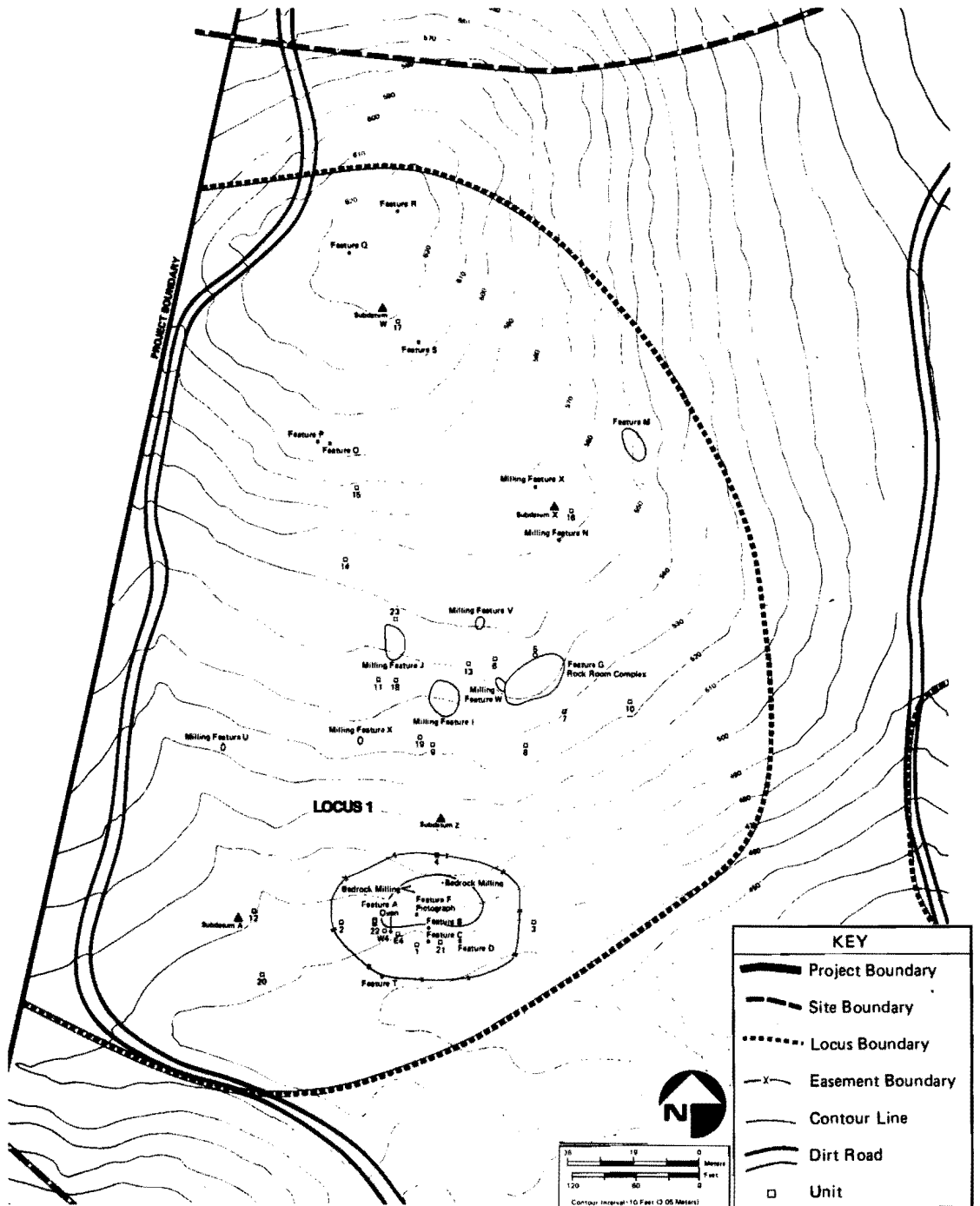


Figure 3. Map of SDi-5938 Locus 1, showing site boundaries, bedrock milling features, rock features, and units.

cultural debris including: pottery; flaking debris; flaked lithic tools; 84 of the 136 projectile points recovered from the Westwood Valley excavations; numerous bone tools, including an antler pressure flaker; and a large quantity faunal remains (much of it with burn patterns indicative of cooking). Units located adjacent to and outside the boundaries of the rock rooms were sterile of cultural debris.

Locus 2 is located in the eastern portion of the project area at the intersection of the northward flowing drainage and the east/west trending drainage (Figure 4). The features present on this locus are situated on either side of the east/west drainage and on corresponding ridgetops. Features on the south side of the drainage (Figure 4) are associated with a large bedrock outcrop and include: three large rock walls that run parallel to and partially bisect the east/west trending drainage on its north-facing slope (Features D, E and F), a rock-lined storage pit (Feature C), a rock overhang (Feature B), and a number of possible terraces located along the face of the bedrock. Soil surrounding these features was very dark and appeared to be midden but was culturally sterile. Prehistoric artifacts were located on the surface of the stone features. Historic artifacts recovered from this locus was recent trash that included soft drink cans, beer cans, and spent cartridges.

Features on the north side of the drainage (Figure 4), also associated with a large bedrock outcrop, include: a large stone wall (Feature O), a smaller stone wall (Feature M), a disturbed rock room on the south facing slope (no feature designation) and a rock wall connecting two small bedrock outcrops located on the top of the knoll (Feature L). A rich, discrete midden deposit is located approximately 30 meters west of this last feature. Artifacts recovered from this deposit included a glass trade bead.

Locus 3 at SDi-5938, located on the knolltop south of the Locus 1 and the east/west trending drainage (Figure 4), was characterized by sparse, shallow cultural deposits consisting of lithic flaking debris and several flaked lithic tools. Two large bifaces were recovered from the locus surface. Locus 4, located north of Locus 2 was a bedrock milling feature with a single associated surface flake and no subsurface cultural deposits.

SDi-5940 (W-1488)

SDi-5940, surpassed in size only by SDi-5938, extends over a series of knolls in the northeastern portion of Westwood Valley (Figure 2). A perennial stream is located approximately 250 m northwest of the site. This site was characterized by sparse, shallow, cultural deposits that

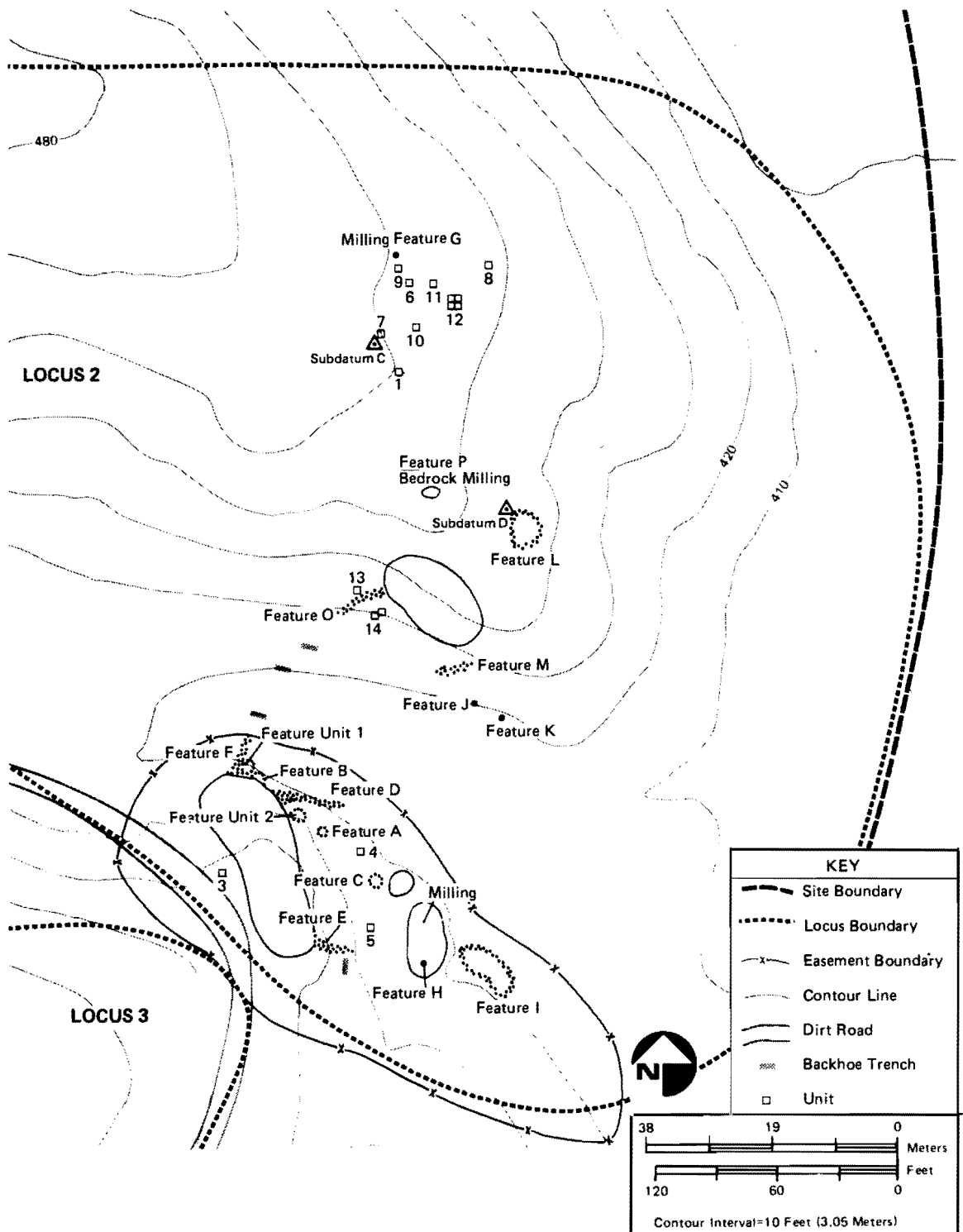


Figure 4. Map of SDi-5938 Locus 2, showing locus boundary, bedrock milling features, rock features, backhoe trenches, and units.

include: flaked lithic debris, flaked lithic tools, manos, 3 projectile points, pottery and faunal remains.

SDi-8216 (W-219)

SDi-8216 is Piedras Pintadas, a site recorded by Malcolm Rogers in the 1920's. This large site is located on the southern shore of Lake Hodges with approximately 90% of the site situated on city-owned property (Figure 2). Features located on the main portion of the site include: a complex of six interconnecting rock rooms, nine rock art loci, 10 bedrock milling features and several areas of dark midden soil. Large areas of the midden have been heavily pothunted. Surface artifacts observed on these midden areas include manos, pottery fragments, and a lithic scatter with a wide variety of tool types. A small portion of the site extends onto the project area and twenty 1 x 1 meter units were excavated on this portion of the site during the 1985-1986 field work. These units contained sparse subsurface cultural deposits that include: flaking debris, flaked lithic tools, pottery, and a pendant tip.

SITE DISCUSSION

Flaking Debris

Approximately 97% of the artifacts recovered from the Late Prehistoric sites at Westwood are flakes and angular waste fragments. The majority (approximately 95%) of the flakes are small percussion and pressure flakes, less than .5 cm in size, indicating that tool finishing and maintenance, rather than initial lithic reduction, was occurring at Westwood Valley. The predominant lithic materials recovered from all sites were porphyritic and non-porphyritic metavolcanics. The remainder of the lithic materials recovered, in order of abundance were: quartz, quartzite, obsidian, and chert (including Piedre de Lumbré chert which is available from a source on Camp Pendleton located approximately 20 miles northwest near Oceanside). A large quantity of jasper was also recovered, the majority of it from the units located adjacent the oven (SDi-5938, Locus 1, Feature A).

Pottery

The majority of the pottery recovered from Westwood is Tizon Brownware. Some sherds have what appears to be a burned, crusty substance inside the vessel. This material appeared initially to be burned food, however, chemical analysis showed this material to be an inorganic silicon complex. Microscopic comparison of this material with asphaltum indicates the two may be identical.

Dating

Carbon-14 dates obtained for these four sites place occupation from 1100 years B.P. to modern. The presence of Obsidian Butte glass on these sites also places them within a Late Prehistoric time frame. The Obsidian Butte source, located in the southern portion of the Salton Trough, has been subjected to periodic flooding from ancient Lake Cahuilla, making the source unavailable for exploitation until after approximately 1044 years B.P. (Dominic 1984). There is evidence that trade routes between San Diego County and the desert to the east were used by Native Americans until A.D. 1860, placing exploitation of Obsidian Butte glass into a Late Prehistoric/Post Contact time frame. Hydration rim measurements from all Obsidian Butte samples ranged between 1 and 2.5 microns.

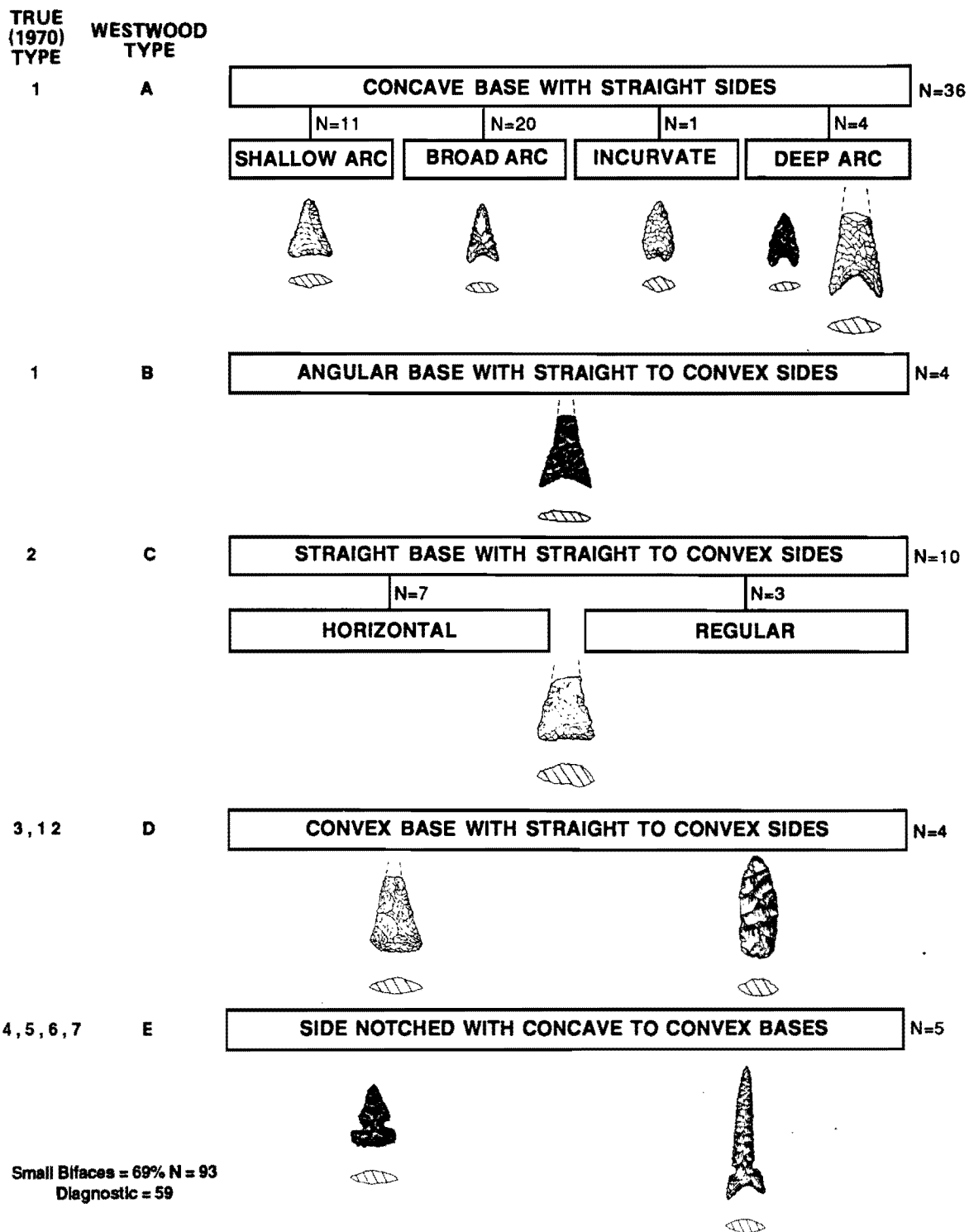
Bifaces

One hundred thirty-six bifaces were recovered from the Westwood sites (Figure 5), 84 from the large rock room complex. Quartz was the preferred lithic material. Microscopic examination revealed that some of these points had been used as drills.

Cultural Affiliation

The Late Period sites are assumed to be associated with the Northern Diegueño/Ipai, although there are strong traces of Luiseño influence from the immediate north. As a complex of sites, those occupied after A.D. 700 are part of a larger village settlement that may be the poorly-documented village of San Bernardo/*Sinyau-Pichkara*.

Information on San Bernardo/*Sinyau-Pichkara* is sparse and somewhat contradictory. In the early mission records the nomenclature of San Bernardo appears as both a mission/presidial district and as a specific placename for an area centered on present-day I-15 as it crosses Lake Hodges. Diegueños from Paguay (Poway), "alias" San Bernardo, appear in baptismal records indicating that at least some of the record keepers considered the Diegueño settlement at Paguay to be part of the larger *rancheria* of San Bernardo. It is possible that the *rancheria* was in fact comprised of several clan-based settlements including those in present-day Poway Valley and Rancho Bernardo. Archaeologically, these settlements may be represented by major sites at Sabre Springs along Chicarita Creek, at Rattlesnake Creek in Poway, and by the complex of sites in Westwood Valley.



Small Bifaces = 69% N = 93
 Diagnostic = 59

Figure 5. Diagram of small biface types from Westwood Valley.

Pictographs

An important feature at Westwood Valley are the pictographs. The Valley is one of the major concentrations of pictographs painted in what has become known as the Rancho Bernardo Style (Hedges in Kyle and Carrico 1987). Nine large panels are located on SDi-8216 (W-219) and two are located on SDi-5938. One of the pictographs on SDi-5938 is a maze located adjacent to the oven (Figure 6) the second is a curious miniature located at the rock room complex (Figure 7).

The Rancho Bernardo Style is characterized by large maze-like design motifs that incorporate parallel lines, squares, rectangles, spirals, and right angles (Figures 8 and 9). The majority of the paintings are executed in large panels, generally with an eastward orientation. All designs are painted in red with the exception of one locus on SDi-8216 which includes black and a pale whitish or cream-colored pigment. The mineral pigments have not been tested but appear to be red iron oxide (the typical paint used in rock art, not only in southern California but around the world) and manganese dioxide (a graphite-like mineral used elsewhere in southern California). These mineral pigments do not fade. The present faintness of the paintings is due to weathering, erosion, exfoliation, and obscuring by a rain water deposit of calcium carbonates.

The majority of the recorded Rancho Bernardo Style pictographs are located in an area bounded on the south by Rancho Bernardo and on the north by the town of Moreno in Riverside County. Sites have been recorded east to Travertine Point, south of Indio and south to Singing Hills, near Dehesa east of the city of El Cajon indicating the style extends beyond this concentration. Rock art of this style is consistently associated with Late Prehistoric cultural remains, although Hedges (in Kyle and Carrico 1987) feels the Rancho Bernardo Style fits into the earlier portion of the Late Prehistoric time-frame.

The cultural affiliation of Rancho Bernardo Style rock art is unclear. It appears from Rogers' site record notes that he believed the paintings to be of Shoshonean origin, or to show Luiseño acculturation. Westwood Valley is located within the Northern Diegueño territory as defined by Kroeber, although it is not far south of the Luiseño boundary. The major concentrations of this rock art style exist within Northern Diegueño territory with the style extending into Luiseño territory. The style may have originated in the desert to the east and was then introduced into the Rancho Bernardo area where a major fluorescence occurred. If this is true then cultural identification of the early residents

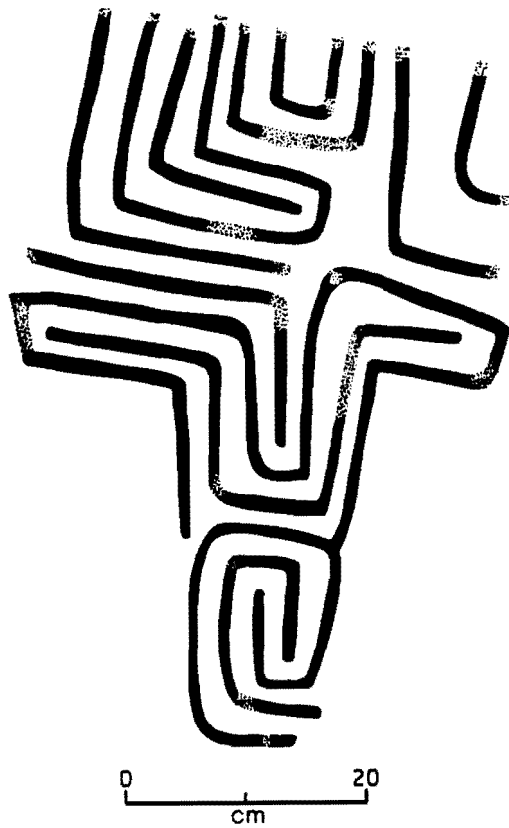


Figure 6. Rancho Bernardo style maze at SDi-5938.

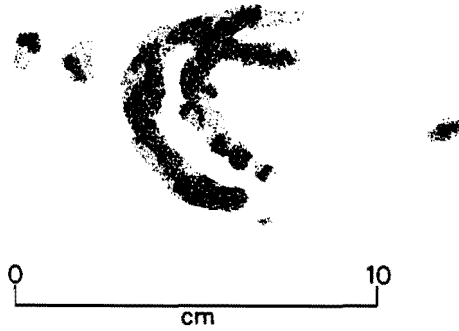


Figure 7. Miniature double-line crescent painting at SDi-5938.

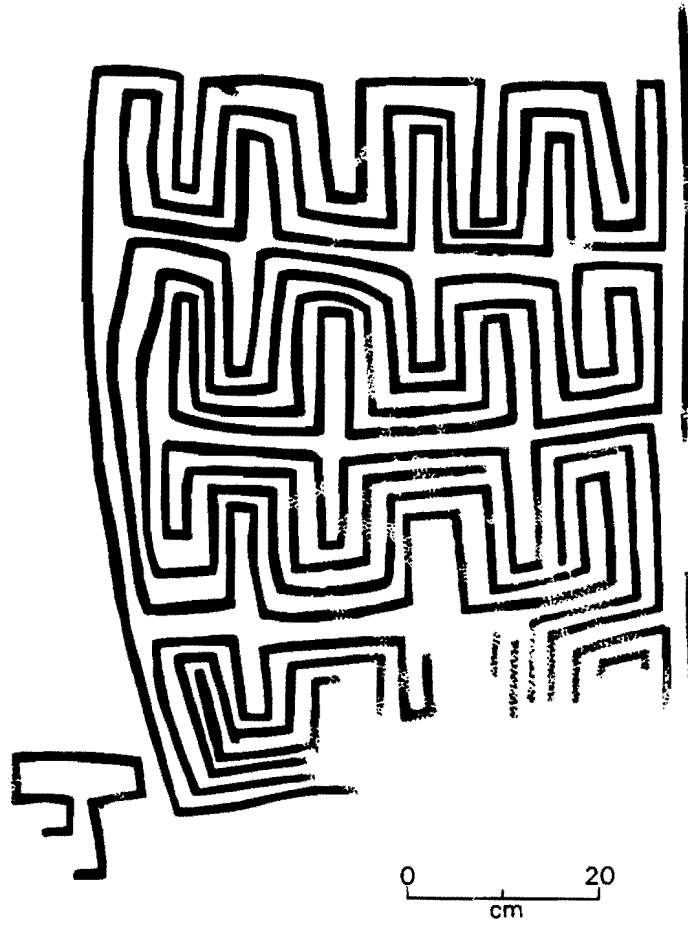


Figure 8. Locus 5, Panel 1, large maze on left at SDi-8216.

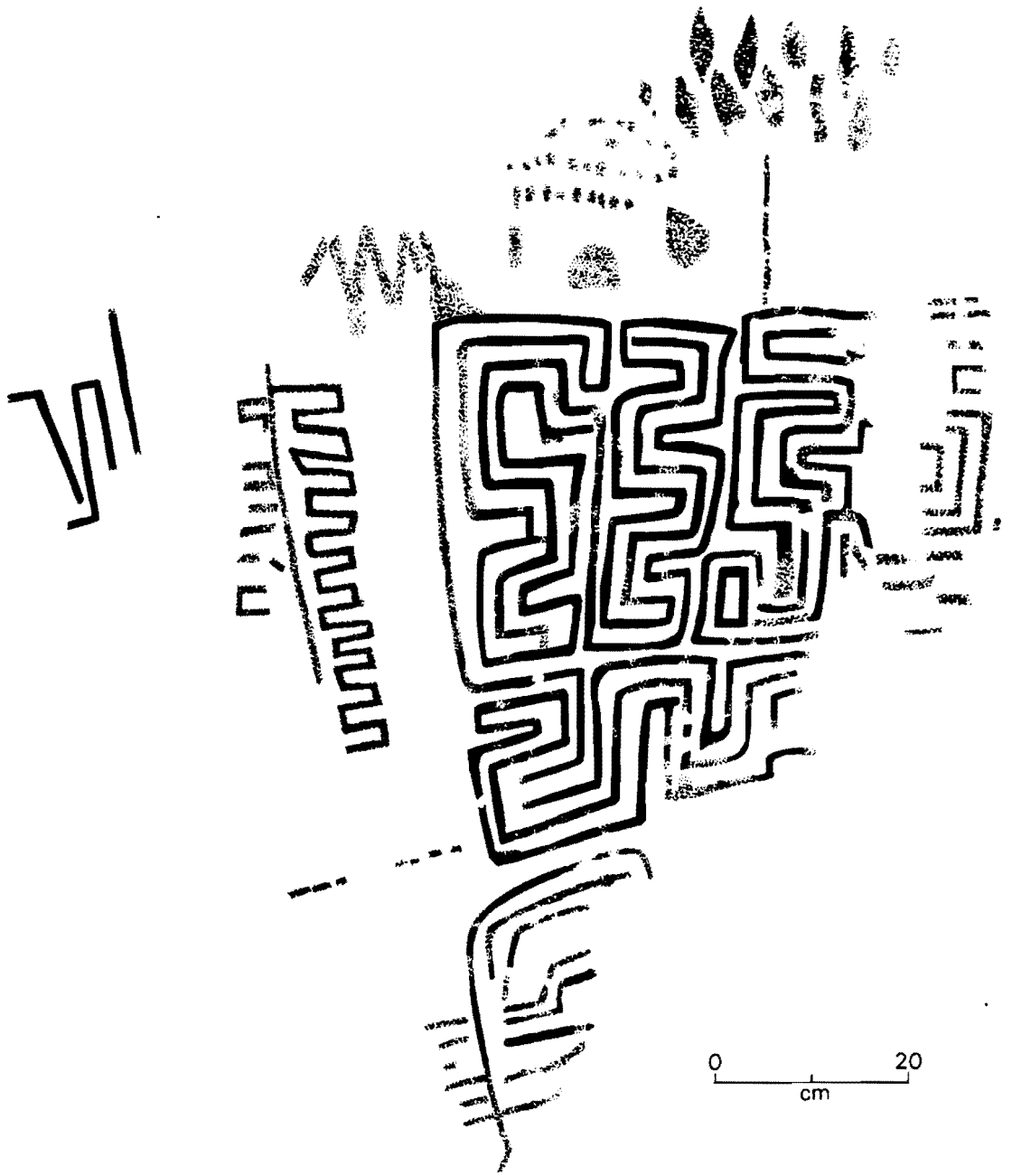


Figure 9. Locus 5, Panel 1, miscellaneous designs and the second large maze at SDi-8216.

of Travertine Point and Palm Springs will answer the questions of cultural affiliation of this rock art style.

Faunal Analysis

An intensive analysis of the faunal remains recovered from the Westwood Valley sites has provided evidence for diet and seasonal occupation of the valley. Bone artifacts identified include: over one hundred bone awls ranging in size from tiny fish vertebrae needles to lance-sized tools, bone beads, the residue from bone bead manufacture, three bone spatulates, and a bone tube manufactured from the long bone of a deer-sized mammal which is heavily burned on the interior and lightly burned on the exterior. Reynolds suggests (in Kyle and Carrico 1987) that the bone tube may have been used to transport live coals from one fire to the next.

The faunal assemblage was virtually identical at all of the Westwood sites, reflecting an inland hunting-gathering subsistence pattern which emphasized the exploitation of small mammals, particularly rabbits and hares. Approximately 97% of the faunal remains at Westwood Valley were rabbits and unidentifiable rabbit-size mammals. Additional species exploited as food sources included coyote (or domestic dog), mountain lion, mice, gophers, badgers, weasels, skunks, ground squirrels, birds, fish, pond turtle and snake (both poisonous and non-poisonous). Burn patterns on faunal remains show that, in general, animals at Westwood were cooked over or in hot coals. Rat-size and smaller animals were usually cooked whole and unskinned. Rabbit-size and larger animals were skinned and perhaps cut into parts before roasting. Snakes were roasted unskinned in hot coals. Turtles were partially dismembered and roasted in their shells. Long bones of most animals, after cooking, were cracked open and the marrow removed and consumed. This practice makes it virtually impossible to determine butchering techniques used by Native Americans. No evidence of butchering was identified on Westwood faunal remains.

There is ample evidence that occupants of this village were not dietetically stressed. This conclusion is based on the number of available protein sources that were either not utilized or were under-utilized. Permanent water sources in Westwood Valley would have supported both endemic and migratory species of waterfowl. However, only about .25% of the faunal remains at these sites were birds. Ocean resources were available 13 miles to the west and yet only around .40% of the specimens were fish. There is no evidence from any site that deer were being exploited for food even though ethnographic reports indicate they were plentiful and easily hunted. All recovered deer bone from the Westwood sites were long-bone fragments suitable for tool use. The

emphasis of rabbits as a food source was most likely one of expediency. Hares and rabbits were plentiful, easily captured and furnished ample supplies of protein, as well as, providing skins for the most important garment the Native American owned, the rabbit-skin robe or blanket. Ethnographic data describes communal rabbit hunts as important economic efforts, providing both food and skins for the necessary rabbit-skin robes and blankets (Bettinger 1985; Kroeber 1970; Steward 1938; Bean 1972; Harrington 1942). An abundance of lagomorphs (hares and rabbits) as well as winter protection and mild climate, were the basis for selection of winter camps by southern California prehistoric populations (Reynolds in Kyle and Carrico 1987). Lagomorphs are in full winter peltage during the colder winter months, and thus provided full hides for the essential and highly valued rabbit skin robes and blankets used by Native Americans (Reynolds in Kyle and Carrico 1987).

The near absence of subadult and juvenile rabbits and squirrels from the faunal assemblage at Westwood Valley suggest this village may have been used as a winter occupation site. Peak breeding season for *Lepus californicus* (Black tailed hare) is April to May with a 43 day gestation period (Reynolds in Kyle and Carrico 1987). This breeding season is typical for all rabbit species. Adult size (but not weight) is reached in two months. During November, December and January adult rabbits are in full winter peltage and there are no subadults or juveniles. The very small percentage of subadult rabbits in the Westwood faunal collection can be explained in two ways. One is that occupation extended into February. This would allow for early breeding in December with subadults or juveniles present in February. The second explanation is that large villages such as the complex at Westwood were never completely deserted, therefore, those subadult rabbit and ground squirrel specimens present can be accounted for by off-season residents.

SUMMARY

In summary, the four Late Period sites within the Westwood Valley study area reflect continual winter occupation from approximately 1100 years B.P. to well within the 19th Century. These dates are based on radiometric samples, obsidian hydration and sourcing, the presence of diagnostic artifacts such as pottery and Late Period style projectile points, and inferred cultural chronology.

The villagers conducted trade with people of the eastern California desert and the southern edge of the Great Basin. Trade items included obsidian from the Salton Trough and from Coso, jasper from the desert, and a type of chert from the

Camp Pendleton area. A glass trade bead indicates that the occupants had contact with Spanish settlers after A.D. 1769.

Based on the faunal remains, activity at the settlement was most intense during the winter months although a longer duration of occupation cannot be excluded. While at the site, the occupants produced a large variety of bone tools (possibly used to manufacture and repair baskets and to sew animal skins), built stone enclosures for shelter and storage, and practiced other day-to-day activities.

NOTES

1. The efforts and support of many people was necessary during the excavation and analysis of the Westwood Valley sites. I would like to particularly acknowledge the following people who made the presentation of this paper possible. Foremost is Richard Carrico who directed and supported the entire effort, Richard Reynolds of the Page Museum in Los Angeles for his intensive faunal analysis, and Ken Hedges of the San Diego Museum of Man for his analysis of the pictographs at Westwood and for permission to use the excellent artistic renderings of three of the panels located in the valley.

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