

Malcolm Rogers in Baja California

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Abstract

Malcolm J. Rogers is best known for his pioneering archaeological work in the deserts and on the coast of the western United States. However, he also made important contributions to the early development of archaeology in the Baja California peninsula. Two aspects of those contributions are considered here: the nature and scope of Rogers' investigations and the later and ongoing uses of his observations, collections, and ideas about Baja California's prehistory.

Introduction

Malcolm Rogers' fame rests primarily on his investigations in southern California. However, he did significant work in Baja California. While that work has been previously noted by David C. Hanna, Jr. (1982) and Ken Hedges (2006), it may be of interest to take a more detailed look at Rogers' pioneering studies in this region and their influence on the development of archaeology in Baja California.

Rogers' Investigations in Baja California

Rogers (1966:95) wrote that "during the 1920's I made archaeological surveys of the interior and Gulf side of the northern third of the [Baja California] peninsula." However, it was only in 1929 that he made intensive investigations, including excavations, south of the international border. In that year he received a 1,600 dollar grant from the Smithsonian Institution and the San Diego Museum of Man for an archaeological investigation of coastal shell middens in San Diego County. Apparently on his own initiative, Rogers extended the scope of this work into northwestern Baja California. Based on the initial investigations in San Diego County, he wrote:

It was found that much of the work was merely duplication of past work. It was realized, that if a more comprehensive understanding of the origin of the local cultures, their movements and boundaries was to be obtained, we would have to go far afield. As a great amount of archaeological work had been done on Pacific Coast middens to the north, it was decided to use the balance of our funds for exploration of the middens to the south [Rogers 1929, quoted in Hanna 1982:198].

A preliminary report described the scope of the studies in Baja California. Fieldwork involved just three individuals: Rogers himself; his father, Frederick S. Rogers; and one additional crew member.

The work in this field was confined ... to the Coastal Belt. The sphere of investigation began at the International Line and extended to the pueblo of San Quentin on the south, a distance of 152 miles. The width of the strip surveyed varied considerably because of the nature of the terrain and its accessibility [sic]. In this region the Coastal Range comes down to the sea in many places, and the topography is mountainous. Much of it is inaccessible to automobiles. Consequently, with our facilities much of the seacoast had to be left unvisited. One strip of the coast 45 miles long between Todos Santo Bay and the Rio Salado could not be explored, as the coast highway swings far inland in this latitude [Rogers 1929, quoted in Hanna 1982:197].

Thirteen days were spent in this region and 40 sites were investigated, recorded, and studied as thoroughly as the time permitted. Shell-middens were found to be as numerous as in the upper California field, and even more extensive in their individual area. In many places the shell was found so continuous over great distances that it became a problem to partition it into sites. Only when a cultural deviation can be established within one of these great areas is it practical to consider it in any way but as a unit. Such middens are found usually to be of shallow depth, and yet when their total bulk is computed, they are very impressive [Rogers 1929, quoted in Hanna 1982:201].

In this field is an enormous area of shell-midden material, of which we have seen but a minor part, and have had the all too short time of two weeks in which to examine it. Consequently one can but describe conditions as found, and make observations relative to the better known northern field [in San Diego County]. Although the northern data is sound, the southern data is inadequate and undoubtedly many of the impressions based upon it will have to be corrected when a more complete knowledge is acquired [Rogers 1929, quoted in Hanna 1982:202].

Rogers never prepared a final report on the 1929 shell midden investigations, apparently because of issues concerning the funding of the project and perhaps also because of its unauthorized extension into Baja California. He later wrote that work in 1929 and 1930 had established the San Dieguito Complex as underlying the subsequent La Jolla and Diegueño occupations (Rogers 1966:23):

Although I had worked on the La Jolla problem many years previous to 1929, it was in

that year that investigations on a large scale were first made possible through a grant-in-aid from the Smithsonian Institution. All the large middens of San Diego County and those of Baja California, as far south as San Quentín were test-trenched [Rogers 1966:38].

In a proposal submitted to the Smithsonian Institution for another grant in 1930, Rogers proposed to work in Orange County and on San Clemente Island but to apply any surplus funds to investigations in Baja California:

Work in this region of Baja California would be shifted from the Pacific coast side of the peninsula to the east side, around the head of the Gulf of California, where the presence of shell-middens has been reported to the writer. This region contains a pottery culture of considerable antiquity besides the historic Yuman, for which we have no stratigraphic relationship [Rogers 1930 letter, quoted in Hanna 1982:204–205].

After 1929 Rogers' efforts in Baja California seem to have been limited to "small and intermittent surveys" (Hanna 1982:202). Among these was "a brief survey of the northeastern section" of Baja California in 1932 (Hanna 1982:221). He noted that with respect to portions of the peninsula south of Laguna Chapala, "I am unfamiliar with the archaeology" (Rogers 1966:99). However, in aggregate, his survey work, particularly along the eastern margins of the Sierra Juárez and Sierra San Pedro Mártir, added up to an important contribution.

Frederick S. Rogers was a close collaborator in his son's investigations. The elder Rogers assisted in survey and excavation work, with special emphases on photography and the documentation of rock art. He also expanded his son's horizon concerning Baja California archaeology. In 1930 Frederick

Rogers took part in a cruise of naturalists along the peninsula's coasts and reported on archaeological finds (Bancroft 1932:89–91, 105, 183). His contributions included preparing sketch maps and collecting artifacts from sites along the outer Pacific Coast south from Islas San Benito to Cabo San Lucas and along the Gulf of California coast as far north as Bahía de los Ángeles. Malcolm Rogers, discussing the ethnohistoric testimony of the eighteenth-century Jesuits Baegert, Venegas, and Clavigero concerning walled clearings, noted that “Frederick S. Rogers reports similar structures ... on the Gulf side of the lower half of the peninsula and adjacent islands” (Rogers 1939:8). The elder Rogers was said to have established that La Jolla II middens were present as far south as Bahía Tortugas (Rogers 1966:93), and he had noted a “ground pictograph or gravel outlined figure” on a mesa in the same area (Rogers 1966:101).

Records on file at the San Diego Museum of Man indicate that Malcolm Rogers and his collaborators recorded at least 131 archaeological sites on the Baja California peninsula. In the statistics given here, sites at which Rogers distinguished multiple loci are counted as single sites. Figure 1 shows the sites' geographical distribution. It has been necessary to exclude some sites from these summaries because the locational information in the records is excessively vague or ambiguous; in addition, some of the plotted locations necessarily represent best guesses based on the available information and may not be correct.

The chronological periods or cultural complexes that Rogers associated with components of Baja California sites are summarized in Figure 2. Rogers changed his period/complex nomenclature several times during the course of his studies. “San Dieguito” here encompasses some components that were labeled in Rogers' records as “Malpais.” Most of the components here grouped as “La Jolla” were termed “Littoral” in the original site records. The original records commonly

distinguish subperiods, or phases, including San Dieguito I, II, and III; La Jolla I and II; and Yuman I, II, and III. These phases have been lumped together here for consistency and because subsequent investigators who have used the San Dieguito/La Jolla/Yuman system have found it difficult to replicate or to justify Rogers' distinctions.

A high proportion of the sites were reported as containing multiple components. If the phases are counted separately, the proportion of multicomponent sites would be substantially increased. This pattern may suggest that Rogers made his chronological/cultural assignments on the basis of diagnostic individual artifacts or traits rather than on the basis of the collective characteristics of assemblages or on negative evidence.

The frequencies of sites reported to possess various traits have been grouped into generalized categories in Figure 2. The groupings and the labels for them that have been used here do not necessarily match Rogers' own terminology. It is also likely that the original notes did not cover all the traits that the recorders actually observed at a given site, particularly in the case of “flaked stone” and “shell,” which often seem to have been taken as givens, not needing explicit comment. Figure 2 also summarizes the categories of materials from these sites that have been accessioned in the San Diego Museum of Man's collections. In some cases this listing may possibly include materials that were acquired from the sites subsequent to the work of Rogers and his associates.

Rogers' Interpretations

Rogers' ideas about Baja California prehistory were presented in four major synthetic publications: *Yuman Pottery Making* (1936); *Early Lithic Industries of the Lower Basin of the Colorado River and Adjacent Desert Areas* (1939); “An Outline of Yuman Prehistory” (1945); and *Ancient Hunters of the Far West* (1966).

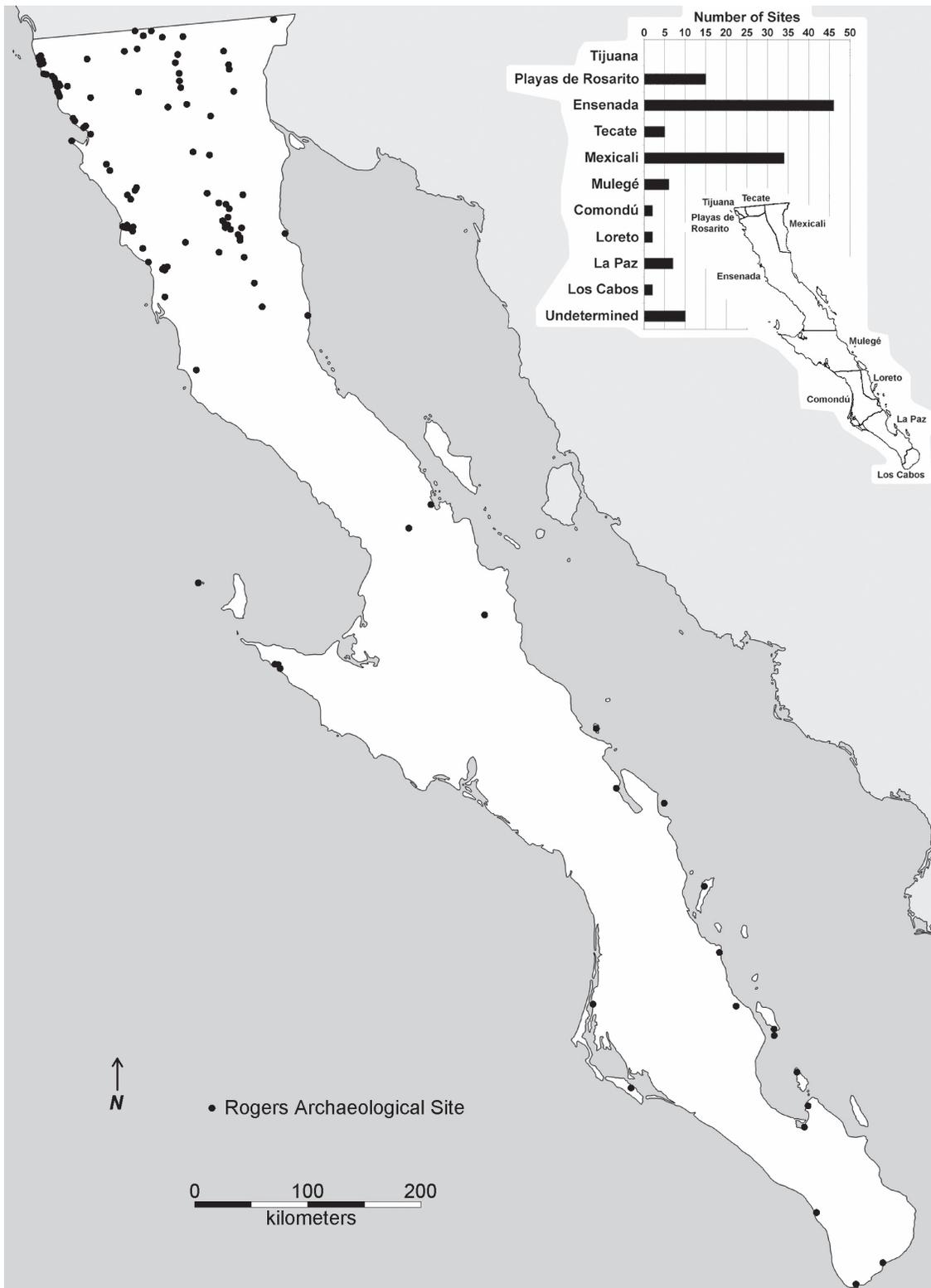


Figure 1. Sites recorded in Baja California by Malcolm Rogers and his associates. Inset: frequencies of sites by *municipio*.

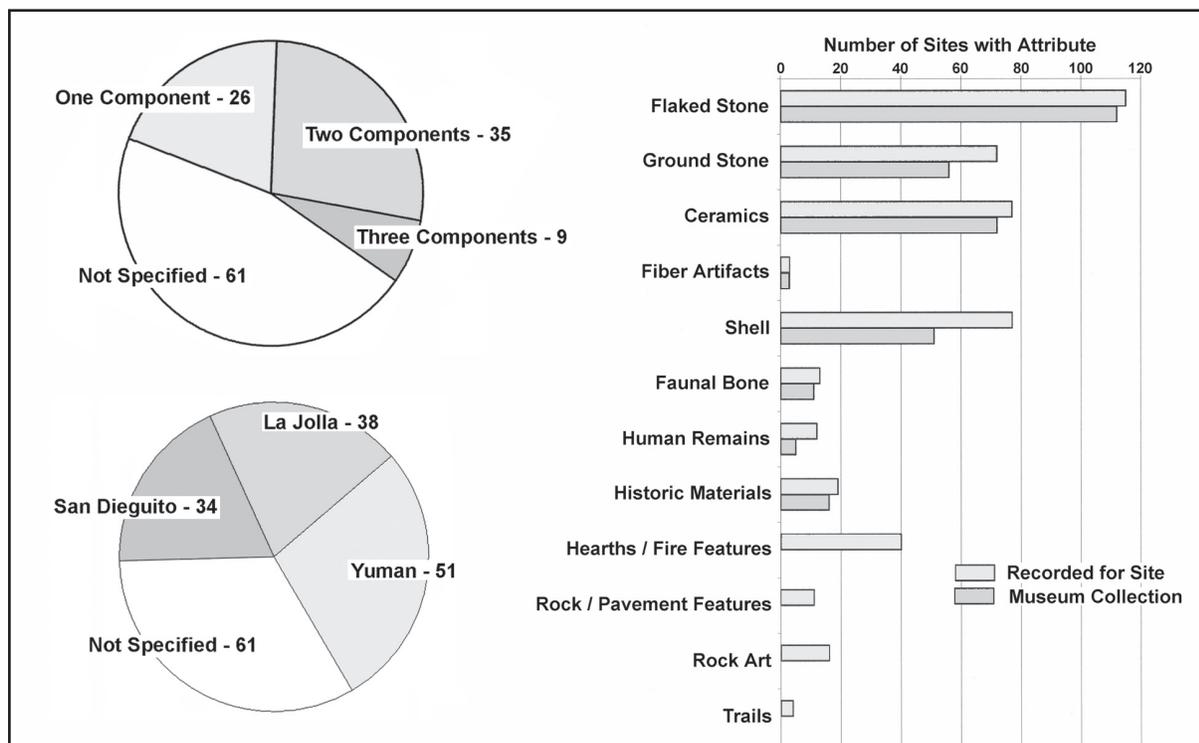


Figure 2. Frequencies of major chronological/complex components (left) and frequencies of sites with various attributes in records and in collections at the San Diego Museum of Man (right).

Yuman Pottery Making presented the results of Rogers’ 1928 ethnoarchaeological studies of traditional ceramic technology. His primary informant was Rosa Lopez (Owas Hilmawa), a Southern Diegueño (Kumeyaay) woman living at Manzanita in San Diego County. He also summarized observations among the various modern Yuman and Uto-Aztec groups of southern California and adjacent regions, together with some archaeological observations. Four of the named groups, the Northern Diegueño, Southern Diegueño, Kamia, and Yuma, had territories that spanned the international border, but Rogers’ information about their ceramic practices probably came mainly or exclusively from sources of information north of the border. Information on two groups, the Kiliwa and Cocopa, was specific to Baja California but was probably not based on first-hand ethnographic experience (Rogers 1936:17–18, 35–36).

In *Early Lithic Industries* Rogers discussed, in chronological order, the Malpais Industry, San Dieguito-Playa Complex, Pinto-Gypsum Complex, and Amargosa Industry. The geographical ranges of the first two patterns included portions of Baja California. The Malpais Industry (later to be redesignated San Dieguito I by Rogers) was assigned an initial date of around 2000 BC according to the short chronology that Rogers accepted in 1939. Malpais “extends south into the Pattie Basin [i.e., Laguna Salada or Laguna Macuata, in northeastern Baja California] and down the gulf side of the peninsula of Lower California an unknown distance” (Rogers 1939:6). Rock-lined clearings (“sleeping circles”) on desert pavement surfaces, attributed to the Malpais Industry, had a restricted range, but it included the eastern side of the peninsula (Rogers 1939:7). Also attributed to the Malpais Industry was site SDM-LC-55, an extensive array of cairns

composed of volcanic rocks, standing 2 to 3 ft high, located in the Cañon Jamau area at the eastern base of the Sierra Juárez (Rogers 1939:12–13, 1966:53).

The San Dieguito-Playa Complex was reported primarily on the western slope of the peninsula (Rogers 1939:Plate 21, Map 1). Three phases, San Dieguito I (ca. 1200 BC), San Dieguito II (ca. 800 BC), and San Dieguito III (ca. BC/AD), were projected for coastal southern California and northwestern Baja California. A fourth phase, San Dieguito IV (ca. AD 700–900), was seen as having persisted in southern Baja California down to the time of the ethnohistoric Pericú in the Cape Region:

In the west, and particularly in Lower California, sufficient time elapsed so that many old [San Dieguito-Playa] forms went into disuse, perhaps because of a changed economy ... a definite drift to the south into the cul-de-sac of the Lower California peninsula has been established, and in this region the very latest phases developed. The pseudo-Australoid type of cranium is so characteristic of all the early crania from the Santa Barbara region to the tip of Lower California that it makes it quite probable that the non-Yuman historic peoples of the latter region were the descendants of the San Dieguito people [Rogers 1939:71].

“An Outline of Yuman Prehistory” represented Rogers’ synthesis for the latest period of prehistory in southern California and adjacent areas. He saw the initial core of Yuman cultural development, labeled Yuman I, as having been located in the lower Colorado River Valley, including the river’s delta in northeastern Baja California. Yuman I was now dated between ca. AD 800–900 and 1050, although in 1939 he had dated the Yuman complex as extending back as far as BC/AD (Rogers 1939:Plate 21). Yuman II

(ca. AD 1050–1500) was marked by an expansion into the Salton and Pattie basins, associated with the presence of prehistoric Lake Cahuilla. With regard to the desiccation of the lake that occurred around AD 1450, Rogers wrote the following:

The sudden impact caused by large groups leaving the west half of the Colorado desert was transmitted into a less leisurely migration than that practised earlier. As the Pacific littoral to the north was already blocked by the Shoshoneans, the flow was directed principally into the Lower California peninsula, whose central mountainous area had but meager pre-Yuman population if archaeology is any index. The La Jolla people’s habitat was confined to a thin Pacific frontage, and the war-like Yumans should have met with but slight opposition in driving them into the southern half of the peninsula [Rogers 1945:194].

In these events he also saw an explanation for the presence of the Seri on the western coast of Sonora and adjacent islands in the Gulf of California:

As the peninsula continued to narrow to the south and subsistence sources become critical in the latitude of 30° [i.e., south of El Rosario and Bahía San Luis Gonzaga], overcrowding may well explain the peculiar position and culture of the Seri. Kroeber’s [1931] ethnologic hypothesis ... suggests a former peninsular habitat [for the Seri], and I find nothing in the archaeology of Cochimí territory which is inimical to that theory except the absence of certain Seri elements. Most of these elements in which Seri differ from Cochimí, if not all ... could have been acquired from the Mexican mainland [Rogers 1945:194].

Rogers extended Yuman III territory south beyond Bahía de los Ángeles (Rogers 1945:184). He stated:

... in Lower California ... [western coastal] middens with a Western Yuman material pattern gradually diminish in number in a southerly direction until they disappear completely from the archaeological picture in the latitude of Ensenada, even though in the Peninsular Range and particularly on the Gulf of California side, Yuman sites with pottery extend at least 120 miles farther south [Rogers 1945:173].

Ancient Hunters of the Far West presented Rogers' (1966) final ideas concerning the early period San Dieguito Complex. After Rogers' death in 1960, the material for the book was edited by Richard F. Pourade. Rogers' analysis distinguished four chronological or technological phases (San Dieguito I, II, III, and IV) and four geographical "aspects" (Central, Southwestern, Southeastern, and Western). The Central aspect included the Colorado River delta and the Gulf of California coast as far south as Puertecitos, south of San Felipe. The Southwestern aspect included the remainder of Baja California, with the exception of the crest of the Peninsular Range between the international border and about the latitude of Bahía de los Ángeles. San Dieguito I, II, and III were represented in the Central aspect, while San Dieguito II and III were represented in the Southwestern aspect. San Dieguito IV was limited to the southern end of the peninsula.

According to Rogers:

The San Dieguito I migrational movement from the Colorado Desert pressed on south, into a narrow strip of terrain between the Peninsular Range and the Gulf of California. My early surveys extended no farther south than to Punto Fermin [near Puertecitos]....

Later on, in 1930, Frederick S. Rogers ... brought back artifacts of a decided San Dieguito I slant from the east coast of the peninsula. These were noted as far south as La Paz.... In San Dieguito II times, a westerly movement took place from the Colorado Desert into Southern California and a narrow strip of Mexico, paralleling the International Boundary [Rogers 1966:79].

San Dieguito sites were said to be absent within the Sierra Juárez and Sierra San Pedro Mártir to the south of this border strip. However, "to the west of the Sierra Juarez lie some intermontane basins.... In them and westerly to the Pacific Coast there are widely separated San Dieguito II camps with a minimum of archaeological debris, in a surficial position" (Rogers 1966:81).

Rogers compared San Dieguito I lifeways to those reported by the Jesuit missionary Baegert for the "Pericú" (Baegert was actually describing the Guaycura) of southern Baja California (Rogers 1966:38). He considered that subsequent work supported his previous hypothesis of a San Dieguito IV phase in the southern third of the peninsula, representing a melange composed of inherited San Dieguito traits together with other elements. "When the archaeology of the south half of the peninsula is worked out, I predict that a basal San Dieguito horizon will be found with overlying levels becoming more and more diluted with the passage of time" (Rogers 1966:100).

Influence of Rogers' Observations, Collections, and Ideas

Rogers' legacy to Baja California archaeology has taken several forms. His unpublished site records, notebooks, and artifact collections, which were deposited at the San Diego Museum of Man, constitute important potential resources for future investigators. In addition to his manuscripts and artifacts, Rogers has

exerted an ongoing influence through his published ideas. These were manifested, above all, in his cultural and ceramic taxonomies and in his scheme of culture history.

The importance of Rogers' legacy in Baja California as elsewhere has been increased by subsequent impacts to archaeological sites that were still available for study in his own time. Even in the 1930s and earlier, the archaeological record was diminishing. For example, in reporting on site LC-20, Rogers noted that "a great many metates and manos have been taken off this site back to SD county by Gringos" and that "as early as 1930, relic hunters were showing me arrow points, dart points, and spear points which they had obtained from as far south as La Paz" (Rogers 1966:97). Urbanization, agricultural development, utility lines, highway construction, undocumented collecting, and natural erosion have reduced the possibility of repeating many of Rogers' observations, making archaeologists dependent on his preserved records and collections.

Perhaps no other aspect of Rogers' work has exerted more influence on subsequent archaeologists than his uncompleted work on aboriginal ceramics. In various ways, several investigators, including Albert H. Schroeder, Ronald V. May, Gena R. Van Camp, Michael R. Waters, Don Laylander, Jerry Schaefer, and Antonio Porcayo Michelini, have made use of Rogers' notes, collections, and publications, together with later studies, to describe and interpret the pottery found in Baja California.

Schroeder (1958) worked with Rogers' ceramic collections, focusing on the lower Colorado River area. He noted the presence of Tumco Buff (including Tumco Red-on-Buff and Tumco Stucco) in the river's delta area in Baja California. However, in a 1958 letter Rogers commented that in Schroeder's analysis "the Yuman sherds were about 90% mislabelled" (quoted in Waters 1982a:279).

May's (1978, 2001) typology was identified as "a contribution to Malcolm J. Rogers research." He defined types based, in part, on Rogers' classification and collections and identified several types as occurring in northern Baja California, including San Diego Brown, Palomar Brown (identified as Rogers' Piñon Brown), Hakum Brown, Pine Valley Red, Pine Valley Gray, San Felipe Brown, and Salton Buff.

Van Camp (1979) was critical of Rogers' approaches in several respects. However, she made extensive use of his collections and manuscripts, and she publishing a summary of his uncompleted ceramic typology. This included notes on the presence in Baja California of San Diego Brown, San Felipe Brown, San Vicente Brown, and Kiliwa Brown.

Waters (1982a, 1982b, 1982c) reexamined and modified Rogers' classification of buff ware types and traits. He presented relatively detailed evidence for the occurrences and frequencies of Black Mesa Buff, Colorado Beige, Tumco Buff, Salton Buff, Colorado Buff, and Tizon Brown types at 10 sites that Rogers had recorded in northeastern Baja California.

Laylander and Schaefer (2006) summarized Rogers' work as well as later investigations that related to aboriginal ceramics in Baja California. They noted the revised views that emerged in pottery chronology and geographical limits as well as changing perspectives on issues concerning typology and approaches to interpretation.

Porcayo Michelini (2009a) used new archaeological evidence from northeastern Baja California to reevaluate Rogers' (1936) generalizations concerning Yuman ceramics. He also employed replicative experiments to duplicate the technology involved.

One of Rogers' earliest successors in the field of northern Baja California archaeology was Adán E. Treganza. While an archaeology student in his early

twenties, Treganza conducted his first published investigations along the California/Baja California borderlands, recording 15 sites in the Sierra Juárez and the Laguna Salada basin (Treganza 1942). Frederick Rogers accompanied Treganza during some of his fieldwork (Hedges 2006). Focused primarily on late period sites, Treganza cited Malcolm Rogers' 1936 and 1939 monographs. Treganza also included a brief note on Rogers' "San Dieguito Culture." An appendix to a later report included information on the "San Dieguito Lithic Industry," both in the Sierra Juárez area and on the Pacific Coast between Rosarito Beach and Descanso (Treganza 1947).

Rogers' influence can be seen in the work of William C. Massey, who pioneered scientific archaeology in the central and southern portions of the peninsula. Massey (1947, 1961, 1966a, 1966b; Massey and Osborne 1961) adopted many of Rogers' cultural classifications. However, he emphatically rejected the view that the Yuman-Cochimí entry into the peninsula had occurred as late as Yuman III times (post-AD 1450), and he did not accept the identification of the Pericú/Las Palmas culture in the Cape region as San Dieguito IV. Massey's own early archaeological work received scant notice in Rogers' (1966) final synthesis.

Another early investigator in Baja California was Brigham A. Arnold. If William Massey was the "Malcolm Rogers of Baja California archaeology," Arnold might perhaps be said to have been the "George F. Carter of Baja California archaeology." Arnold was a Berkeley-trained geographer who proposed that assemblages in the Laguna Chapala basin and elsewhere in the peninsula's Central Desert represented Early Man occupations that he dated far back into the Pleistocene on the basis of their geomorphological contexts. In his writings, Arnold (1957, 1975, 1984) essentially ignored Rogers' studies. However, Rogers (1966:95) observed that "Arnold's work at Laguna Chapala has undoubtedly provided us with the most valuable archaeological data of recent times." Rogers

interpreted Arnold's assemblages as representing a "definitely San Dieguito I" component, a San Dieguito II component, and a mixed component containing San Dieguito III, Amargosa II, and La Jolla II elements (Rogers 1966:97). Based on subsequent studies, Rogers' shorter chronology for the Laguna Chapala sites and Arnold's longer chronology may have been about equally wide of the mark (see Ritter 1976, 1991; Davis 2003; Gruhn and Bryan 2009).

Rogers had collected human skeletal material from sites in northwestern Baja California. These remains were analyzed by Spencer L. Rogers (1963, 1977) and Rose Noble Tyson (Noble 1973; Tyson 1980).

The influence of Rogers' culture-historical interpretations seems to have largely lapsed in central and southern Baja California. References to them are rare in the work of later investigators. One of Rogers' constructs that has essentially disappeared from the archaeological literature is "San Dieguito IV," as applied to the Las Palmas culture in the ethnohistoric territory of the Pericú within the Cape Region of Baja California Sur. The idea that the Cape Region contained a relatively isolated genetic population and a conservative cultural tradition had predated Rogers' own work; interest in the idea has persisted, although it has not gone unchallenged. However, subsequent investigators have not pursued an identification of such evidence specifically with the San Dieguito complex.

In the north where Rogers had worked, the situation is understandably somewhat different. In his rock art studies Ken Hedges (1970, 1973) made extensive use of Rogers' early records. Elements of Rogers' field observations or his culture-historical classification scheme involving San Dieguito, La Jolla, Amargosa, and Yuman patterns are still often utilized by investigators in this region (e.g., Álvarez de Williams 2004; Cuadra Gutiérrez 2005; Porcayo Michelini 2007, 2009b). However, in this northern part of Baja California, the ongoing influence of Rogers' interpretations

has arguably been less marked than in southernmost Alta California.

Given that Rogers' culture-historical scheme and his ceramic typology continue to play a prominent part in ideas about northern Baja California archaeology, it seems legitimate to ask whether or not this should be regarded as a good thing. During the initial phase of archaeological studies, before more extensive and intensive investigations had been conducted and before radiocarbon dating offered a framework for absolute chronology, Rogers' pioneering, often intuitive work did much to bring order and clarity to the field. If nothing else, his interpretive schemes implied some important testable hypotheses about regional prehistory. But has the usefulness of those schemes now been superseded? In asking such questions as "Is this a San Dieguito site?" or "Is this a Yuman II component?" or "Is this a Tumco Buff sherd?" are we asking the wrong questions or at least phrasing them in a dysfunctional manner? For instance, in attempting to label a site as "San Dieguito," are we trying to subsume too much information and as a consequence obfuscating the distinct issues of the site's chronological placement, its geographical affiliations (i.e., the potential ethnic origin and identity of its inhabitants), its technological characteristics, and its prehistoric functions? That issue seems at least to be worthy of serious consideration.

Conclusion

To the degree that archaeology can claim to be a scientific discipline, it must be the welcome fate of its pioneers, such as Malcolm Rogers, to have their substantive contributions and ideas become more and more thoroughly superseded by later studies. But to the degree that the objects of archaeological study, unlike those in many scientific disciplines, are perishable and nonrenewable, the original observations and collections of the field's pioneers must continue to be important resources for subsequent investigators. This,

in addition to providing a model of bold, energetic, and imaginative research, is Malcolm Rogers' legacy to Baja California archaeology.

Acknowledgments

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