

Descriptions of Selected Ames Collection Artifacts from the Malaga Cove Site (CA-LAN-138), Palos Verdes Estates

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Abstract

Artifacts collected at CA-LAN-138, the Malaga Cove site (a.k.a., the Palos Verdes Estates “Site”¹), by pothunters, avocational archaeologists, and professionals reside with museums and less formal storage/curation facilities as well as in private collections. Most of these artifacts and other remains relate to the Del Rey Tradition. Site data are dispersed, and much additional data can be generated.

One purpose of this article is to draw further attention to LAN-138 and in doing so encourage, for instance, a graduate student or students to produce a comprehensive study of one part of the site, Malaga Cove 2, and/or a tome on the entire site, that is, Malaga Cove 1 and Malaga Cove 2. The former challenge could result in a Master’s thesis and the latter in a doctoral dissertation. Here, the hook to spark such interest is a descriptive exposition of a selection of Ames Collection specimens from Malaga Cove 2 coupled with the message that in regard to the Ames materials there is more scholarship that can be accomplished.

Beyond the messages of opportunities, this paper should be informative and entertaining for readers, putting on display some unusual and even unique creations of Tongva artists and craftsmen as well as manuports attributed to the site’s late prehistoric occupants.

Introduction

A recent *PCAS Quarterly* article (Koerper 2017c) reported that many prehistoric artifacts removed from the Malaga Cove site (CA-LAN-138) (Figure 1) are dispersed over a wide area, some at least as far away as the Field Museum, Chicago, and the Peabody Museum, Harvard University. Others remain close to LAN-138, some curated at the Point Vicente Interpretive Center (PVIC), Palos Verdes Peninsula, and the

Redondo Beach Historical Society Museum (RBHSM) at Dominguez Park, Redondo Beach. Presumably, the great majority of Malaga Cove specimens were excavated from the comparatively dark, rich midden of the site’s Level 2, so labeled by Edwin Walker (1951).

Koerper and Peterson (2014) supposed that Level 2 held mostly materials that relate to Sutton’s (2010) recently proposed Del Rey Tradition, when local stone craftsmen were producing an array of effigies, unusual ornaments, and other items that especially draw attention from those enamored of regional prehistory. Many examples of such are afforded by objects unearthed at Malaga Cove (see Hunter and Koerper 2014; Koerper and Cramer 2014; Koerper, Hunter, Snyder 2014; Koerper, Hunter et al. 2014; Koerper, Snyder et al. 2014:66–68; Koerper and Sutton 2014; Koerper et al. 2016a, 2016b; Koerper 2017b; Pond 1968; Walker 1951; E. Wallace 1961; W. Wallace 1955, 1961, 1985, 2000, 2002; W. Wallace and E. Wallace 1970). Sutton (2010:1) explained that his Del Rey concept “signals the arrival, divergence, and development of the Gabriellino [Tongva] ... and that Del Rey “would expose a more dynamic prehistory than was possible using the less developed designations of Intermediate and Late,” cultures identified in Wallace’s (1955) chronology which served southern California mainland and southern Channel Islands archaeological studies for over five decades.

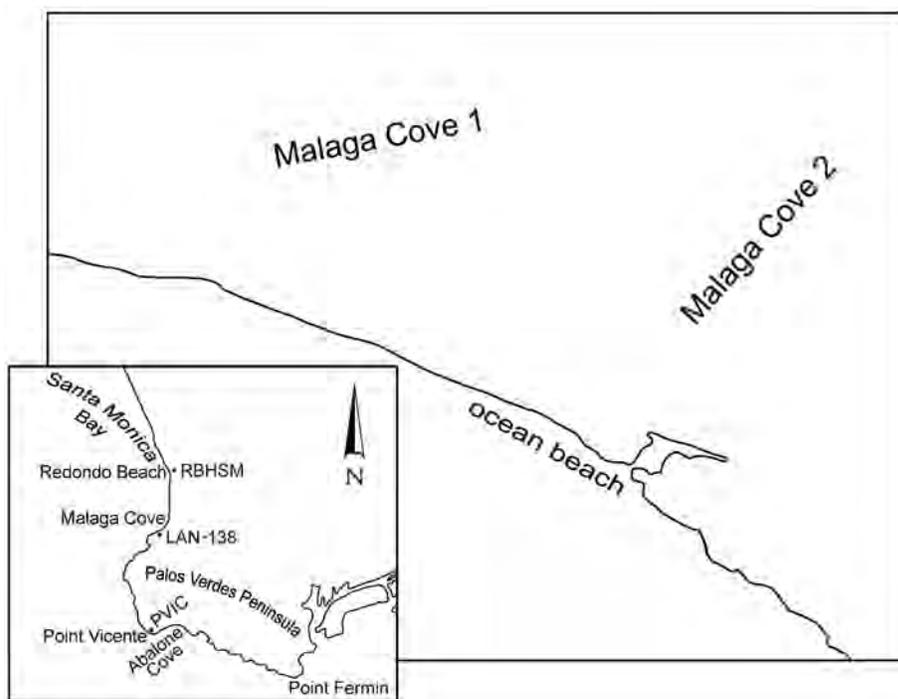


Figure 1. Site map. Malaga Cove Site, that is, Malaga Cove 1 and Malaga Cove 2, Palos Verdes Estates.

The major purpose of the present article is to further promote long-running interest in LAN-138 by describing and illustrating a selection of specimens from a particular area of the site that is situated on residential property long owned and presently occupied by Larry and Joy Ames and on adjacent property once belonging to the Albert Levitt family. Bill Wallace originally chose the name “Malaga Cove 2” for that area, but because such could be easily confused with Level 2 of the Malaga Cove site, he subsequently opted for “Palos Verdes Estates site,” not altogether satisfactory since the properties are really just a small part of LAN-138. Wallace referred to the larger part of LAN-138 as Malaga Cove 1 (*Palos Verdes Peninsula News*, 21 November 1963). For whatever reasons, probably more whimsical than science-based, Richard Van Valkenberg (1931) referred to the place, where the Ames and Levitt homes would later stand, as “the dance floor.”

The Ames Collection began when Larry and Joy Ames decided to install a tennis court. A grader exposed

some mortars, not particularly surprising because the couple were aware that their next door neighbors, the Levitts, had similarly recognized ground stone Indian artifacts in their backyard (*Palos Verdes Peninsula News*, 21 November 1963).

The items selected to be featured herein are all associated with what Wallace called the Ames Collection, all resulting from several investigations conducted in 1961, 1962, 1969, and 1975; Wallace (2000:183–184) provided brief mention of parties involved in those efforts. Wallace (2000) discussed much of the material recovered from the Ames property, but also a smaller number of objects found away from the Levitt property. One particularly intriguing effigy was recently published (see Koerper et al. 2016b:7–9). Other relevant literature includes Wallace (1961, 1964, 2002) and Wallace and Wallace (1970).

The Ames Collection is owned by Larry and Joy Ames, and it includes some Levitt finds. It is presently in a storage facility overseen by the Rancho de Palos

Verdes Historical Society and Museum. This article's descriptions and photographic illustrations offer a wide array of Ames Collection specimens.

Selections

Incised Stones

Wallace (2000) did enumerate materials collected from the Ames-Levitt area or Malaga Cove 2. The broad richness of the collection was understated in part by the fact that Wallace limited his article to a small number of specimens.

While Wallace (2000:191) cursorily noted the small steatite "toothed" piece (Figure 2) published only

recently (see Koerper et al. 2016b) and while he gave some detailed mention to the remarkable incised effigy of this paper's Figure 3, Wallace provided no illustrations of either highly unusual piece.

The thin, 7.0 cm long tablet-like sandstone artifact shown in Figure 3 likely represents a whale. It is unique among other regional effigies with regard to the level of detailed attention to the execution of its incised design. Parallel zig-zag lines at the effigy's smaller distal end, the several ladder-like design elements of some length, and the one circular element might indicate an artist's intent to supply more than decorative embellishment. Could these varied incisions, enhanced using asphaltum colorant, also be symbolic/representational? Do the chevrons



Figure 2. Steatite effigy, perhaps representing a mandible (length, 7.0 cm).

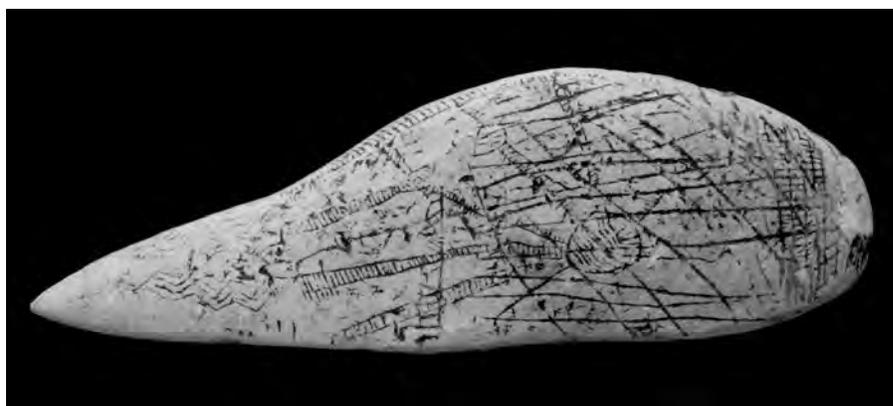


Figure 3. Incised sandstone whale effigy (length, 18.1 cm).

communicate ocean waves? The side opposite lacks incising. Parenthetically, amateur collector Joe Cote recovered three tablets from LAN-138, all with incised geometric decorations (Pond 1968). The tablets had been stacked together, thus constituting a cache, in the site's Level 2. One tablet was carved on both faces.

Another incised stone minimally noted by Wallace (2000:189), but again not illustrated by him, is shown here in Figure 4. It was crafted from a fine sandstone. The lines criss-crossing the face to form small irregular squares are infilled with black pigment, probably asphaltum. The opposite side is unadorned. It weighs just 14 g. Length is 7.0 cm, maximum width is 2.1 cm, and maximum thickness is 1.0 cm.

Large Perforated, Donut-like Ceremonial Stones

A recent publication showcased four large perforated stones, all presumed ceremonial, and all donut-like (Koerper 2017:40–42). They are with the Palmer 1917 Collection at the RBHSM. Additional perforated ceremonial stones were recovered from the Ames property.

The steatite specimen shown in Figures 5–7 was found sequestered in a complete sandstone mortar, its rim

level with the upper edges of the mortar and nestled in dark midden that filled the mortar, which measured a maximum of 200 cm in diameter between rim edges. This combination of receptacle and perforated stone was first pictured in local newspaper articles (*Palos Verdes Peninsula News*, 28 May 1964:9–10; *Palos Verdes Newspapers*, 24 May 1967:21, 54, 55). Those pictures are grainy and inadequate, but Wallace (2000:188, Figure 5) has an excellent photo of the holed stone within the mortar. Wallace made special mention of incised lines radiating outward from the large perforation at the side of the specimen that is unseen in the image. That decorative panel is illustrated in Figure 7. Interestingly, he assigned the piece to a generic category, “discoidal” (2002:190); however, “discoidal” is a term normally reserved for disk-shaped artifacts devoid of any through and through perforation.

Two additional specimens fell into Wallace's “disk” category. Figures 8 and 9 show a comparatively heavy (1,422 g), serpentine, barrel-shaped specimen. The surface of the upper end is highly polished, the polish extending a short distance below the top edges. At the opposite end are small incised lines encircling the edges. A short curved row of incised lines lies along the edge at the top end. The hole diameter at the top



Figure 4. Incised sandstone (length, 7.0 cm).



Figure 5. Large perforated donut-like steatite object.



Figure 8. Serpentine barrel-shaped specimen (maximum diameter, 10.1 cm; maximum height, 8.7 cm).



Figure 6. Oblique view of artifact seen in Figure 5.



Figure 9. Top surface of Figure 8 artifact showing grooved circular motif.

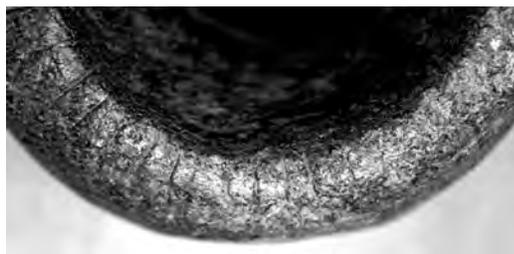


Figure 7. Decorative panel of incised lines on artifact seen in Figures 5 and 6.

surface is 2.9 cm. Hole diameter at the bottom surface is 3.1 cm. The barrel shape is slightly oval rather than symmetrically round. The maximum diameter is 10.1 cm, and the diameter measured transversely to the maximum is 9.1 cm. Maximum height is 8.7 cm.

The unique circular motif on the top surface is best described as grooved, that is, deeply cut rather than merely incised. This design element can quickly draw the attention of a viewer. No other large regional perforated stone is documented as having a comparable feature.

The third so-called “discoidal” was crafted of a soft grayish steatite. It is 9.0 cm in diameter (Figures 10 and 11). Its biconically drilled hole is 2.3 cm in diameter. Weight was not recorded, but judging by the nature of its material, it undoubtedly weighs appreciably less than the artifact just previously described. Note the somewhat evenly spaced, parallel incisions coursing entirely the curved edge of the upper end of the piece.

Wallace (2000) did not refer to the relatively mundane specimen seen in Figure 12. Both top and bottom

surfaces possess incised lines that radiate out from the edges of the hole openings. These lines run to the rounded edge of each surface, yet there is no pleasing aesthetic effect since the lines are unequally dispersed and of varying lengths.

The hole’s inner surfaces are well polished. The 756 g “donut” has a 10.6 cm maximum diameter. Height measures 4.2 cm.

The artifact may have functioned as some kind of weight. The perforation seems too small to accept

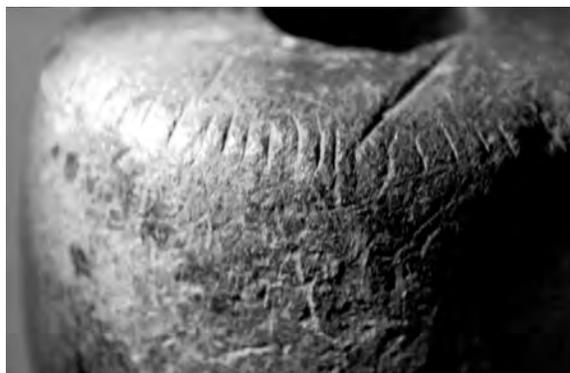


Figure 11 Parallel incisions on the Figure 10 artifact.



Figure 10. Large perforated steatite stone carving (diameter, 9.0 cm).



Figure 12. Hard steatite donut stone (maximum diameter, 10.6 cm; height, 4.2 cm).

a digging stick, casting doubt on such a purpose. It could possibly have attached to a fishing net (see Koerper 2017a).

An even more mundane “donut” not mentioned by Wallace (2000) is another possible fishing sinker (Figure 13). Carved of light gray micaceous steatite and weighing 440 g, its maximum diameter and height are 9.0 cm and 3.5 cm, respectively.

Ornaments

Among the many and varied examples of Ames Collection body ornaments, three pieces might stand out above the others. The lip labret shown in Figures 14 and 15 was shaped from medium gray steatite. It weighs 10.0 g. The diameter of the internal face is 1.9 cm, and that of the external face is 2.3 cm. Height measures 1.6 cm.

A coating of asphaltum was laid onto the relatively flat face, over which linear incisions were applied in seemingly haphazard fashion. Perhaps the tar and



Figure 13. Micaceous steatite donut stone (maximum diameter, 9.0 cm; height, 3.5 cm).



Figure 14. Steatite lip labret (height, 1.6 cm).



Figure 15. Lip labret showing striations and asphaltum on top surface.

incisions had helped glue decorative accoutrements (feathers?) onto the labret. The smaller opposite face is slightly convex.

The bi-pointed sedimentary stone illustrated in Figure 16 is a nose rod. Such adornment was secured in place by pressures that depended on penetration through a perforated septum and also on downward pressure of both nostrils. It weighs only 7.0 g. It is 9.4 cm long and exhibits an ovate cross-section.

A tiny biconically drilled steatite pendant projects the appearance of an animal claw (Figure 17). It is a burial associated object. Length is 3.1 cm. Its maximum width is 1.4 cm, while maximum thickness is 3.7 mm.

Receptacles

Among the receptacles in the Ames Collection, the most unusual is a Giant Egg Cockle (*Laevicardium elatum*) into which molten asphaltum had been poured (Figures 18–20). While the tar was still viscous, a coiled basket was placed upon it. It is unknown whether anything had been in the basket. The shell's maximum dimension is 13.7 cm, and its height is 5.5 cm. The specimen weighs 314 g.

The sandstone mortar previously cited is the only other receptacle that contained anything. Recall that it housed an unusual, large perforated donut-like stone (Figures



Figure 16. Nose rod ornament (length, 9.4 cm).



Figure 17. Steatite pendant (length, 3.1 cm).



Figure 18. Giant Egg Cockle receptacle (maximum dimension, 13.7 cm).



Figure 19. Asphaltum inside Giant Egg Cockle container.



Figure 20. Basketry imprint in the asphaltum.

5–7), a circumstance that suggests dedication to ritual activity. Likewise, the Giant Egg Cockle dish that had contained a basket indicates probable ritual practice.

Another likely ritual object is the cup pictured in Figures 21–23. With its small size, a groove just below the rim and another encircling the base, and two vertical grooves positioned at opposite sides, one reasonably suspects a connection to *toloache* ceremony. Drinking *toloache* induces loss of consciousness followed by visions.

Maximum cup diameter is 7.0 cm. Height extends to 4.7 cm, while bowl depth descends to 3.3 cm. It weighs 247 g.

Wallace's (2002) Figure 3 pictures five mortars, a bowl, an ovoid granite metate (or bowl?) of notably pleasing symmetry, and a small cup (see Figure 24). Wallace and wife Edith had published this cache that was found clustered within a 28 in x 30 in area (W. Wallace and E. Wallace 1970:Figure 1). The cache was from the Levitt property.

The couple wrote:

The nature and conditions of [the cache] clearly indicate deliberate and careful

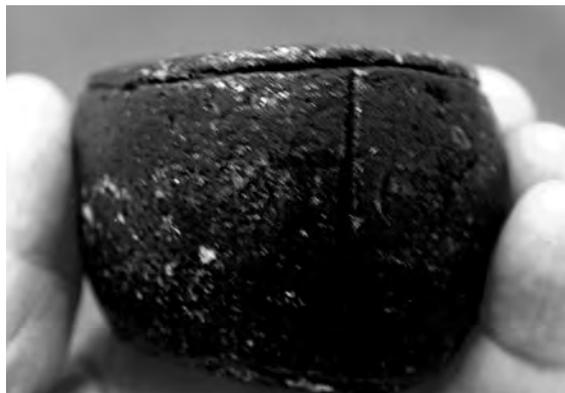


Figure 21. Possible *toloache* cup (maximum diameter, 7.0 cm; height, 4.7 cm).

concealment, and it is tempting to see in the cache a reflection of the Toloache Cult of the Gabrielino and other coastal Indians. At the end of the ceremony, the sacred mortars for preparing and brewing the jimsonweed drink administered to initiates were buried until the



Figure 22. Bowl of possible *toloache* cup.



Figure 23. Bottom of possible *toloache* cup.



Figure 24. Cache items from Levitt property at Malaga Cove 2.

time when another crop of young males was ready to undergo the rite [W. Wallace and E. Wallace 1970:3].

The nearly 600 g cup (Figure 25) was made of compact micaceous steatite. It is 7.2 cm x 9.2 cm minimum and maximum diameters, and its height is 6.5 cm (Wallace and Wallace 1970:3).

The flowerpot-shaped mortar shown in Figure 26 (or the Wallace's Figure 1d [1970]) is made of fine-grained sandstone. It is 23.9 cm in maximum diameter and is 14.0 cm in height. Unlike certain other flowerpot mortars, the rim was not embellished with shell bead inserts.

Another "flowerpot" with a flat, unembellished rim is seen in Figure 27. It is particularly intriguing for its broken out base (the result of a ritual killing?). Its provenance is either the Ames backyard or adjacent Levitt property. Diameter measures 23.9 cm. The rim is fairly thick, 2.7 cm.

In a recent visit to the Ames home, this article's senior author took several photographs of two sandstone flowerpot mortars. The broken specimen shown in Figures 28 and 29 had been described by Edith Wallace (1961). Surfaces along the breakage had been



Figure 25. Micaceous steatite cup (height, 6.5 cm).



Figure 26. Flowerpot-shaped mortar (maximum diameter, 23.9 cm).

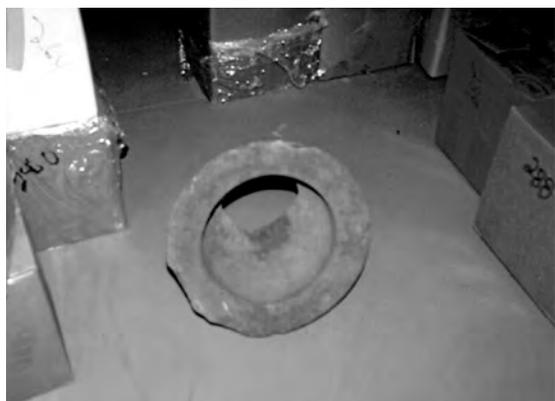


Figure 27. Flowerpot mortar, possibly “killed” (diameter, 23.9 cm).

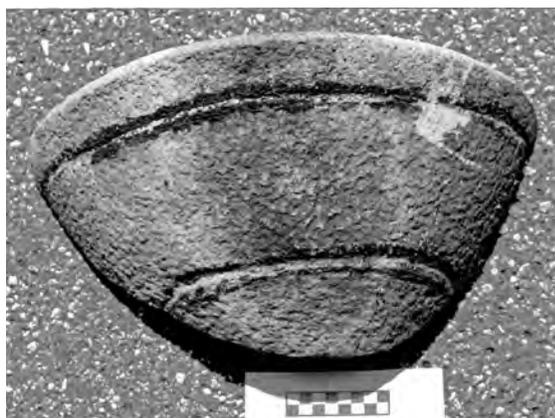


Figure 28. Half of a flowerpot mortar that had undergone prehistoric repair.



Figure 29. Asphaltum design on the broken flowerpot mortar (diameter, 37.8 cm).

liberally smeared with asphaltum to effect repair. Both trails of tar that had once encircled the vessel, she believed, had also facilitated the mending, as she argued that they had served to glue what were perhaps bark-like thong bindings, thus securing the two halves. Mrs. Wallace estimated that the specimen when complete had weighed perhaps 22 or 23 kg.

We can question the interpretation of thong bindings. Similar encircling lines of asphaltum seen on the outer surfaces of the complete and undamaged sandstone receptacle of Figure 30 would obviously not have been for repair. Exact dimensions are not available for this specimen, but the scale should be somewhat helpful.

The flat rim of the broken mortar (Figures 28 and 29) has an asphaltum design. Impressions of shell disc beads in a single row are reported for the rim by Edith Wallace (1961:6). The inner bowl walls exhibit smooth symmetry. The specimen’s concavity is 16.4 cm deep, and it is 31.1 cm in diameter. Maximum diameter of the mortar is 37.8 cm.

Edith Wallace (1961) illustrated a second flowerpot mortar, but it is not the same one pictured in



Figure 30. Flowerpot mortar with encircling design elements.

Figure 30. Rather, it has no encircling asphaltum lines on its outer surfaces, but it does have decoration on its almost flat, very slightly concave rim. This complete sandstone mortar is the very one pictured in W. Wallace (1971:Plate 4), which is illustrated next to an unusual pestle. William Wallace (2002:189) referred to this implement as “extraordinarily well-shaped and finished.” It was found together with the two decorated mortars described in great detail by E. Wallace (1961). The pestle was “unusually long (greater than 34.5 cm.) and slender (50 mm.)” He was convinced that the pestle had been employed with the ceremonial mortars.

There are no less than two additional flowerpot mortars from the so-called Palos Verdes Estates site, one of which is seen in Figure 31. It weighs 22.5 kg.

Other receptacles include the specimens in the photographs of Figures 32 and 33. The first is another specimen from the cache of seven (see also specimen 1b in Figure 24). Diameter of the well-crafted bowl/mortar is 22.0 cm, and height is about 17.5 cm.

The second specimen is a globular bowl (Figure 33). It appears as Figure 6 (left) in one of Wallace’s last publications (2000:191) and merits attention particularly as it was part of a different cache, but on the Ames’



Figure 31. Flowerpot mortar lacking asphaltum design (weight, 22.5 kg).

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Figure 32. Receptacle from the cache of seven shown in Figure 24 (diameter, 22.0 cm).



Figure 33. Globular bowl (diameter 14.6 cm at the top).

property. This cache included only a second bowl, smaller, and also globular and of steatite (see Wallace 2000:191, Figure 6, right). Wallace gives 14.6 cm for the diameter at the top of the larger and 10.5 cm as the diameter at the top of the smaller. Wallace labeled both as “mortars,” but being steatite it would not have been used with a pestle.

Pestles

William Wallace (2000:189) mentioned a number of pestles, including the one previously discussed that was cached with the two decorated flower pot mortars described by Edith Wallace (1961). None of those described by E. Wallace are pictured in Figures 34 and 35. The specimen shown by itself was found on the Levitt property. Its knobbed handle projects phallic imagery. It weighs 605 g. Length is 20.9 cm, and maximum diameter is 4.5 cm. In Figure 35 the far left specimen is also knobbed and shows careful attention to symmetry.

Knife Blade

Among the many knife blades recovered from the Palos Verdes Estates “site,” a translucent obsidian, leaf-shaped specimen, shading from black to gray,



Figure 34. Knobbed pestle (length, 20.9 cm).

exhibits especially skillful manufacture (Figure 36). William Wallace (2000:184) described “shallow, almost imperceptible notches at the sides of its thin pointed base.” Very careful retouching occurred at its borders. It was not created for practical use; after all, it had been placed alongside a child burial exhumed from the Leavitt property. The 142 g specimen is notably thin, 1.08 mm at the maximum. It is 20.2 cm long and 6.5 cm wide.

A Natural Manuport

A 6.5 cm long piece of asbestos (Figure 37) was recovered from the Ames property. It is easily recognized as asbestos for its foliated and sheared structure. It is the fibrous or abestiform variety of serpentine known as chrysotile and occurs in narrow veins in massive serpentine (Murdock and Webb 1966:334). In Los Angeles County asbestos may perhaps be found at Potts Valley, Catalina Island. And then there is Serpentine Cave, not far south of Point Vicente (Van Valkenberg 1931; Koerper 2018), another possible source of fibrous asbestos. Then again, its origin may have been the Great Central Valley with subsequent transport via the Grapevine into the Los Angeles Basin (Walter Lombardo, personal communication 2017). Was it collected as a pretty oddity or



Figure 35. Display of pestles from Malaga Cove 2.



Figure 36. Ritual obsidian knife blade (length, 20.2 cm).



Figure 37. Asbestos manuport (length, 6.5 cm).

souvenir, and did it exceed mere collectible status, assigned some meaning connecting to, say, medicine, magic, or good luck?

A Smoking Pipe

A 106 g steatite smoking pipe (Figure 38) was retrieved from the Levitt property. It is 7.5 cm long, and its maximum width is 3.6 cm. For some unfathomable reason, it had been coated with asphaltum, thickly at its distal end.

An Irregularly Shaped, Donut-like Artifact

Was the serpentine artifact of Figure 39 a donut stone mimic for child's play, an ornament, or perhaps a ritual object? Small, lightweight donut-like stones



Figure 38. Steatite smoking pipe (length, 7.5 cm).



Figure 39. Small, irregular serpentine donut stone (maximum dimension, 5.5 cm).

are long suspected as having been toys (Schumacher 1878:268; Putnam 1879:161; see also Koerper and Gust 2009; Koerper 2017a). Weighing a mere 83 g, perhaps it had been a fish line sinker. Its maximum dimension is 5.5 cm.

In a 1964 newspaper interview with Grace Clair, Bill Wallace told the reporter that donut-like artifacts posed an enigma, but that they served as net weights or ceremonial stones. The article carried a photograph showing four "donuts" that included the object under discussion, and its diminutive size is in stark contrast to the other three specimens (Clair 1964:7).

A Unique Fish Line Sinkers

Koerper et al. (1988:134, 137, 138) discussed and illustrated a smooth, roundish, sedimentary beach pebble with a piddock clam hole that was found at CA-ORA-855, the Juaneño village of Putuidem in San Juan Capistrano. They observed a small amount of wear at the hole's outer surface at the top where, it was surmised, a suspending cord or string had probably been attached. The specimen was labeled a "possible net weight sinker." Because the object was very lightweight, functional identification was subsequently switched to "probable fish line sinker" (Koerper 2017a:110). Greater certainty attends the line sinker interpretation with the following discussion of a very similar specimen (Figure 40) from the Ames property.

It too is a soft, sedimentary stone, roundish, water sculpted, but with two piddock-drilled holes, rather than just a single clam perforation. Amazingly, one hole retains vegetal cordage that likely attached to a



Figure 40. Fish line sinker. Note vegetal cordage still attached.

fisherman's line on which was either a fish hook or a fish gorge?

A Bone Gorge

An asphaltum laden bone fish gorge (Figure 41) was recovered on the Ames property. A probable fish line imprint is visible on the side shown. The artifact's length is 1.7 cm, and maximum width is 2.3 cm.

A Bone Flint Knapper

A 7 g flint knapping tool resides with the Ames Collection (Figure 42). It is made of mammal bone. Its length is 7.9 cm. The rounded blunt end indicates that it was not an awl employed to either perforate leather or to manufacture basketry.

Other Nonperishable Material Remains

The additional inventory of items of nonperishable materials from the Ames and Levitt properties coupled with those discoveries specifically selected herein for photographic illustration and description support an interpretation of the Palos Verdes Estates "site" as



Figure 41. Bone fish gorge (length, 1.7 cm).



Figure 42. Bone flint knapper (length, 7.9 cm).

attributable to occupations occurring within a period ranging from the Angeles III to Angeles VI phases of the Del Mar Tradition. In this, there is general concordance with the content of most of the Malaga Cove site's Level 2. The additional inventory summarized by Wallace (2000) included weapons, artifacts associated with procurement of food and raw materials, food preparation, manufacturing, etc. The Ames Collection contains arrow points, shell fish hooks, possible atlatl spurs, knife blades and other cutting implements, drills, reamers, scrapers, choppers (Figure 43), hammerstones (Figure 44), smoothing pebbles, awls, a possible wedge, tarring pebbles (Figure 45), manos, metates, abalone shell dishes with asphaltum plugged excurrent holes, and so on. There were multiple burials, a stone-lined storage pit, and other features. Food consumables were reflected by the presence of mollusk shells and the bones of fish, birds, and mammals. The Angeles IV and/or V components bespeak of year-round occupation.

Radiocarbon Dates

There is a radiocarbon dating story worth repeating from Koerper (2016b:11–12, and end note 3) that injects amusing color into the larger narrative on the Palos Verdes Estate “Site.” It involves two C-14 assays supporting the component assignments:

Conventional Dates (Not Calibrated)

UCLA-680, 1170 ± 100 BP (AD 780)

UCLA-681, 1800 ± 100 BP (AD 150)

Koerper's previous version of the story incorrectly referred to a single assay when there were actually two radiocarbon samples, each run on marine shell (see Berger et al. 1965:342; also Wallace 1964:2). Neither was prepared and processed at UCLA. Rather, preparation and processing occurred using a portable radiocarbon laboratory built onto a truck driven by Dr. Erv Taylor, then a graduate student, who transported the equipment to the uneven surface of a dirt lot

adjacent to the Palos Verdes Estates “site.” Dr. Taylor and Gordon Fergusson had together assembled the portable system.

Dr. Willard Libby (1960) shared his vision of having such an invention when he delivered his Nobel Prize acceptance speech. He stated that it would be “most refreshing and rewarding for the radiocarbon daters to go out and partake, at least vicariously, in the thrill of an archaeological dig.” The top-heaviness of the vehicle and its precarious destination was a cause for some



Figure 43. Chopper.



Figure 44. Hammerstone.



Figure 45. Tarring pebbles.

concern, and Taylor surmised that the impracticability of it all negated any similar future experiment (personal communication to senior author). His prediction was correct.

Concluding Thoughts

Publications that have heretofore discussed archaeological discoveries at the Palos Verdes Estates “Site” altogether allow no more than abridged characterizations of the artifactual inventory and of social and economic behavior attendant with the settlement and virtually nothing pertaining to the inhabitants’ seasonal round of activities. One purpose of this article has been to further expand awareness of the remarkable range of variability and of the aesthetic/scientific richness of the Ames-Levitt finds for the instruction and enjoyment of followers of regional prehistory, archaeologists and avocationalists alike. A related purpose of our article is to alert researchers to the potential of the Palos Verdes Estates “Site” remains to fill in many gaps and in the process perhaps to satisfy the central requirement for a Master’s degree. An expanded effort focused on both Malaga Cove 1 and Malaga Cove 2 could lead to a Doctor of Philosophy dissertation.

What had been one of the two most accessible articles on Malaga Cove 2 (Wallace 2000) did not do justice

to the Ames and Levitt artifacts; in all fairness, that seems not to have been Wallace’s intent, and admittedly the present article is only a modest step in addressing the need for a more satisfactory record. Rather, we suppose Wallace’s intent was to alert professional colleagues and perhaps others to the availability of an archaeological resource requiring further attentions, an effort for which the authors are most grateful.

Wallace’s year 2000 effort provided few illustrations of some of the collection’s more spectacular artifacts. For instance, the remarkable steatite effigy that possibly represents a mandible (Figure 2) and to which he gave spare mention was not illustrated; the whale effigy bearing a panel of superb geometric designs (Figure 3) was neither illustrated nor even referenced. Wallace did provide a simple photographic image of one particularly interesting donut stone (2000:188, Figure 5). That specimen (herein, Figures 5–7) is unique for its huge perforation. Wallace’s text (2000:187) coupled with his Figure 5 and our paper’s suite of figures effectively complement one another.

It is curious that another unique donut-like stone, one with great eye appeal (Figures 8 and 9), but never previously showcased, went missing from Wallace’s article. Clearly, he was drawn to ritual paraphernalia (see e.g., Wallace 2000) and accepted that the fancier “donuts” were not intended for workaday purposes.

Similarly, other one-of-a-kind Ames-Levitt specimens drew no recognition whatsoever. They include the Giant Egg Cockle laden with asphaltum that preserves a basketry imprint (Figures 18–20), the asbestos manuport (Figure 37), the donut-like stone which was possibly a toy (Figure 39), and what is most likely a fish line sinker (Figure 40).

Wallace was enamored of what he called a “possible lip labret” (2000:192, Figure 2). It is the lip labret appearing herein (Figures 14 and 15).

We illustrate several receptacles (see Figures 24 [which includes the mortar of Figure 32] and 33) that are seen in Wallace’s 2002 publication. They are respectively his Figure 3, which includes the specimen seen herein in Figure 32, as well as Wallace’s Figure 6 (at right). Neither the broken flower pot mortar of the present paper’s Figures 28 and 29 nor the complete specimen shown in Figure 30 appear in Wallace’s (2000) Malaga Cove 2 article, but they do appear in his year 2002 piece.

The large obsidian blade (Figure 36) was also pictured by Wallace (2000:Figure 4).

Those contemplating research that draws on Malaga Cove 2 data, be advised that Dr. Wallace’s Malaga Cove 2 field notes are presently held at an Autry facility. They are archived under “William and Edith Wallace Personal Papers and Photographs, 1946–2006, Braun Research Library Collection, Autry Museum; MS.10.” The Library and Archives of the Autry is currently closed to researchers. For the latest information regarding the opening date, visit <https://theautry.org/research-collections/library-and-archives-autry>. For more information about the Library and Archives collection, email rroom@theautry.org. Compiling a formal catalog of finds, if one cannot be located among Wallace’s papers, would be a significant contribution.

Another contribution could involve producing a survey of Malaga Cove items held in certain relatively untapped museum collections. Such a survey would be beneficial for comparative purposes. Within Los Angeles, such collections reside with the Southwest Museum and the Los Angeles Museum of Natural History. Dr. Frank Palmer’s Malaga Cove discoveries can be found locally (e.g., Southwest Museum) but also outside California (e.g., the Field Museum, Chicago, and the Peabody Museum, Harvard University). Major European museums, such as the British Museum, London, and the Musée de L’Homme, Paris, possibly curate Malaga Cove artifacts, hopefully with provenance intact.

Further, the Rancho Palos Verdes Historical Society board of directors will consider requests to examine the Ames Collection artifacts presently held in storage. Also, note that the present article accounts for but a fraction of the Ames Collection; our descriptions followed cherry-picking mostly what we deemed the more significant specimens. There is more information that might be extracted from the artifacts noted in this article. As a for-instance, sourcing the ceremonial blade’s (see Figure 36) obsidian would provide useful data on trade. There is at least one other obsidian specimen—a possible cutting or scraping tool.

Any persons wishing to access that collection should understand that Larry and Joy Ames own the artifacts. We advise some diligent homework prior to requesting study of the objects; become familiar not just with Malaga Cove archaeology but also with the fit of the area’s prehistory within a backdrop of the culture chronology schemes put forth by Wallace (1955) and Sutton (2010).

Endnotes

1. Quotation marks are supplied to remind readers that Malaga Cove 2 should not be regarded as a site separate from Malaga Cove 1. Together, they comprise a single site, CA-LAN-138, or the Palos Verdes Estate “Site.”

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