



On the Border

Analysis of Materials Recovered from the 1964 and 1991-1992 Excavations at the Garden Canyon Site

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Background

The Garden Canyon site is located in the middle San Pedro River Valley in southeast Arizona on lands administered by Fort Huachuca. The site was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1974. Although three major excavations had been conducted on the site, a systematic analysis of the artifacts was never completed. Funding from the Department of Defense Legacy Resource Management Program permitted the entire collection from the Garden Canyon site to be cataloged and analyzed.

Objective

The project objective was to identify, analyze, and catalog all of the lithic flakes and tools, ground stone, shell, ceramics, and faunal material from three field seasons.

Summary of Approach and Findings

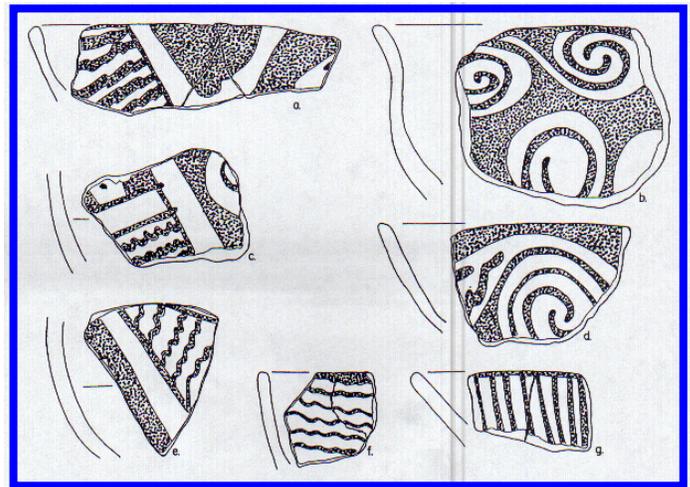
Most of the artifacts in the collections appear to be from midden deposits even though the 1964 excavations concentrated on features such as pit structures and surface rooms. The dominance of Babocomari sherds in the ceramic collection suggests that most of the midden deposits are Classic period in age, although earlier ceramics are present in sufficient quantities to indicate a substantial pre-Classic component as well. The early pre-Classic ceramics from the site are primarily San Simon series types of local variants. Classic period ceramics are predominantly locally produced and executed on a highly micaceous paste epitomized by Babocomari Polychrome.

The results of the lithic analyses indicate that raw materials were locally procured, primarily within the Garden Canyon drainage. There was very little obsidian or high quality chert that might have been obtained through trade. Two Archaic projectile points were recovered through the excavations, but no other evidence of an Archaic occupation was noted. A core flake technology, probably aimed at producing expedient flaked tools, dominated the flaked stone collection. Ground stone consisted primarily of hand stones, metates, and nether stones. The ratio of ground stone to flaked stone projectile points was fairly high, suggesting that plant processing was more important than hunting at this site.

The excavations produced a large quantity of faunal remains. These remains indicate the people ate a fair amount of rabbit and deer. The presence of certain taxa that prefer more mesic habitats than exist in the canyon

mouth today point to a marsh-like environment in Garden Canyon during the Formative occupation. The distribution of artiodactyl elements suggests that deer and antelope were hunted and butchered at remote locations.

The analyzed shell consisted of five marine genera and one local freshwater species. The principal shell source was from the Gulf of California. Shells were fashioned into bracelets and beads.



Late pre-Classic ceramics from Garden Canyon Site

Benefit

The analyses of the Garden Canyon collections from the 1964 and 1991-1992 excavations were informative since each material class resulted in a descriptive database that can be used as a foundation for future work.

Accomplishments

The project successfully processed three field seasons of archaeological material and information from the Garden Canyon Site at Fort Huachuca, Arizona. Without funding from Legacy the collection would have continued to deteriorate and data on the early people of Arizona would never have been realized.

Contact Information:

Steven D. Shelley and Jeffrey H. Altschul
Statistical Research, Inc.
Statistical Research, Inc.
6099 East Speedway Blvd.
Tucson, AZ 85712
520.721.4309