49. Analysis of Refuse Midden Material from Site Ven-62

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I was able to secure from the Museum of Anthropology, Berkeley, a series of random matrix samples from site Ven-62, originally secured in 1928 by Prof. Ronald Olson, from a site designated by him as "Site 10" (Olson, 1930). The samples were taken from successive levels in one excavation pit (Pit A) and extended to a depth of approximately 12 feet. Each sample consisted of a random volume of soil packed in a cigar box. Since the total mass of the mound is unknown and no attempt was made to secure a constant volume of material, a physical analysis can merely express certain constituents as a percentage by weight of the samples at hand.

As is customary the rock, bone, shell and charcoal were sorted out of each sample and weighed. The data are given as follows:

Sample No.	Level in Pit, by feet	Per cent rock	Per cent bone	Per cent shell	Per cent charcoal
34254	1	12.51	1.04	7.43	0.110
34260	2	0.90	0.36	8.92	0.059
34261	3	1.90	0.44	12.24	0.144
34262	4	0.87	0.35	10.33	0.105
34263	5	4.62	0.29	13.32	0.133
34265	6		Not determined		
34266	7	3.20	0.13	10.48	0.080
34267	8	5.24	0.04	13.03	0.061
34268	9	1.88	0.12	4.73	0.133
34222	9-1/2	2.02	1.44	5.59	0.000
34269	10	8.27	0.75	6.74	0.054
34270	11	0.88	0.51	8.04	0.000
34271	12	0.62	0.91	3.73	0.039
34272	12	1.01	0.22	6.04	0.000
34320	?	2.37	0.06	2.71	---
34322	?	5.67	0.87	7.86	---
Mean		3.46	0.50	8.08	0.065

A few comments may be offered with reference to the results.

1. In so far as Pit A is concerned, there is no obvious stratification. The occurrence of the components varies in an inconsistent and probably random fashion from top to bottom.

2. The shell is almost exclusively from the Pismo clam, a mollusc which was eaten extensively along the Santa Barbara channel. Since the shell

of this animal is very thick and heavy as compared with the common mussel, the high percentage by weight may not be a true index to its nutritional significance.

3. The findings conform within reasonable limits to those obtained by Cook and Treganza (1950) with sites near Santa Barbara. For rock and shell Ven-62 lies in a position intermediate between SBa-53 and SBa-81 and exceeds these two sites somewhat with respect to quantity of bone and charcoal. Considering the high level of variability the correspondence is really close. Since the Santa Barbara sites are of a relatively recent culture period it is legitimate to infer that a similar culture obtained at the Ventura site, or at least that the subsistence environment was essentially the same.

Bibliography

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