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## MALCOLM JENNINGS ROGERS

1890–1960

Southwestern archaeology lost one of its pioneers when Malcolm Rogers' jeep was struck from the rear on September 11, 1960. The injuries sustained resulted in his death in San Diego on September 14, only days after he had completed a manuscript embodying some of the conclusions he had reached as a result of study which extended back to 1919. During a period when anthropological research in the desert portion of the Greater Southwest was concentrated on social anthropology he was virtually alone in giving attention to problems of archaeology, yet he still found time to collect ethnographic data on technology, ethnobotany, and mythology from surviving Indian groups in Southern California, Baja California, and Arizona which provided bases for his archaeological interpretations. It was foreseen that the ethnographic resources would shortly disappear; it was not foreseen that the archaeological resources also would vanish as quickly under the inroads of "collectors" and expanding settlement. The nature of the archaeological evidence in this area is such that it is more than usually vulnerable to this kind of destruction, so that archaeologists working in the area in the future will have less than the usual proportion of remains available, and their debt to Rogers will be that much larger.

That the debt will not be greater is a function of two dilemmas which Rogers was less successful than some in solving. He loathed administrative work, yet was

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forced by circumstance to play an administrator's role as well as that of a researcher which he so much preferred. Furthermore, he was committed almost to the point of obsession to the thesis that he should announce no conclusions (even in the form of hypotheses) until he had considered all the evidence. Consequently, he published only under pressure and always, as he felt, prematurely. That his reports so often present his formulations without detailing the evidence on which they are founded is a reflection of that approach, as well as of one of his characteristic "blind spots." He was perhaps overprone to assume knowledge on the part of others which, in his case, was a product of his own particular training and experience. That his concepts had empirical and theoretical foundations susceptible of communication to others has been demonstrated repeatedly in conversations when he was shown the necessity of explicating what he regarded as common knowledge. The background for his reports is further demonstrated in the superb volumes of field and laboratory notes which he left for the period from 1919 on.

The archaeology with which he dealt requires the particular preparation which Rogers brought to it — one is reminded of the relationship between training and career in the case of such men as Dubois and Black. Born September 7, 1890 in Fulton, New York, he attended public schools in Syracuse and Jenner's Preparatory School, and matriculated in science at Syracuse University, where he studied for six years, ultimately specializing in mining geology. At the same time his predisposition toward science was balanced by an informed taste in music and wide reading in literature, and as a youth he was a frequent visitor in the home of Raphael Pumpelly, whose talk did much to shape his life. During 1917–18 he worked as a mining geologist in the Pacific Northwest, returning to the east in 1918 for government service in connection with the galena shortage and enlisting in the Marine Corps later that year. After his discharge in 1919 he took up citrus farming at Escondido, California, and began the pursuit of those interests which soon led to his long association with the San Diego Museum of Man. At first this association was on a volunteer and part time basis—he appeared listed first as Field Archaeologist — but by 1930 when he moved to San Diego he had become a full time Curator.

He served the Museum in both administrative and research capacities until the end of 1945, when he resigned and moved to Hipass, California, until poor health caused him to move to Scottsdale, Arizona. During this period he maintained his interest in archaeology almost in spite of himself. Improved health and pressure from friends persuaded him to return to the Museum as Research Associate in 1958 to undertake the task of preparing his work for publication and to assist in reorganizing the collections after the disturbances of the war years when the Museum had been taken over by the Navy.

Rogers' major contributions were the perceptions of culture differences and sequences in the desert Southwest and the southern coast as a function of human ecology in an arid habitat. He recognized and described the La Jolla complex on the coast and the widespread San Dieguito and Amargosa complexes of the interior. His excavation of a buried San Dieguito site confirmed the sequence for that complex developed from his study of the surface alteration of stone artifacts and the relation between artifact types, their surface alteration, and their occurrence with respect to physiographic evidence. He went counter to the atomistic trend of reconstructing a different culture for each different projectile point found, seeing instead one underlying culture pattern of food collecting modified by local and regional variations as the product of the interplay between economy, technology, tradition, habitat, and population movements. This, together with his conservatism regarding the dating of Early Man remains in the area gave him a reputation for intransigence, yet it was his efforts to modify his hypotheses rather than disagree categorically with those of others drawn from a lesser range and body of evidence than used by him that, in my opinion, made his reports difficult to use. I like to remember him as I saw him one afternoon after his return to the Museum of Man in San Diego. Norman Tindale, of the South Australian Museum, had come down from UCLA to study archaeological collections from the arid Southwest, bringing with him slides of Australian artifacts, both ethnographic and archaeological, for comparison. Eventually it became apparent that some of our assumptions are ill founded, and Malcolm looked up and said, "It looks as if we will have to change our ideas."

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