PALEO-COASTAL ARCHAEOLOGY

The eight continental fringing islands of Southern California (Figure 1) contain some of the longest and most detailed records of maritime cultural development on the North American Pacific Coast. Exceptional archaeological preservation, a human occupation spanning twelve millennia, and the obligatory dependence of the ancient islanders on seafaring and marine subsistence make the California Channel Islands an “American Galapagos” for studying prehistoric maritime cultural adaptations (Arnold 2001; Erlandson and Colten 1991; Erlandson 1994; Erlandson et al. 1999; Kennett and Kennett 2000; Porcasi et al. 2000; Raab et al. 1994, 1995). Particularly significant information has been collected during the last decade on the islands’ settlement during the Late Pleistocene to Early Holocene transition, defined here as the period between about 6,000 and 10,000 B.C. These discoveries are significant not only because they help to establish firmly the existence of a California Paleo-Coastal Tradition (Moratto

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