

**POSTER SESSION****WHEN IS AN *OLIVELLA* BEAD?**

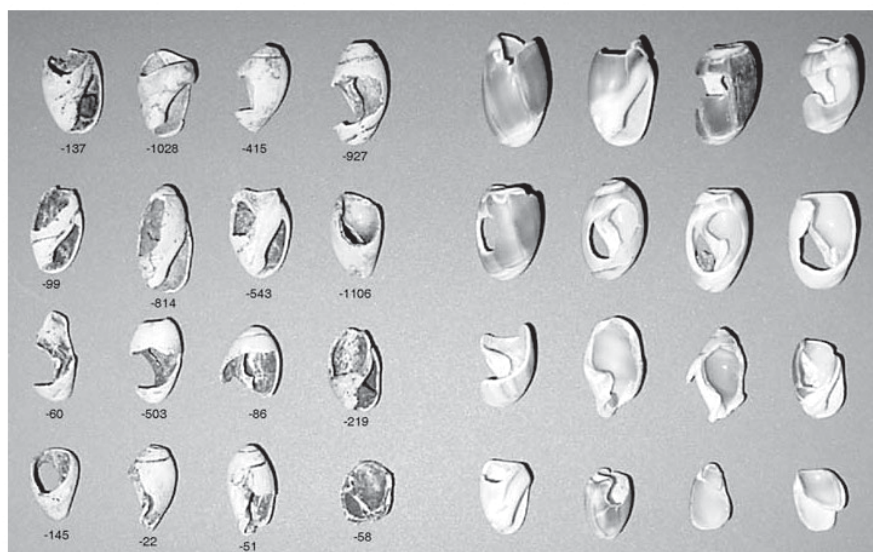
JEFF ROSENTHAL

*Broken Olivella shells, shells with missing spires, and those with perforations on the body whorl are commonly found in archaeological deposits along the Big Sur coast of central California. These shells are frequently interpreted as bead-manufacturing refuse or one of a number of minimally modified Olivella bead types. The current study compares a large collection of Olivella shells and fragments from a Middle Period site along the Big Sur coast with a modern collection of Olivella shells made on the adjacent beach. Little difference was found between the archaeological and natural shells, suggesting that most modifications to archaeological specimens can be attributed to natural causes. In combination with a review of regional collections, little evidence is found for a significant labor investment in the production of Olivella shell beads along the Big Sur coast.*

# WHEN IS AN OLIVELLA BEAD?

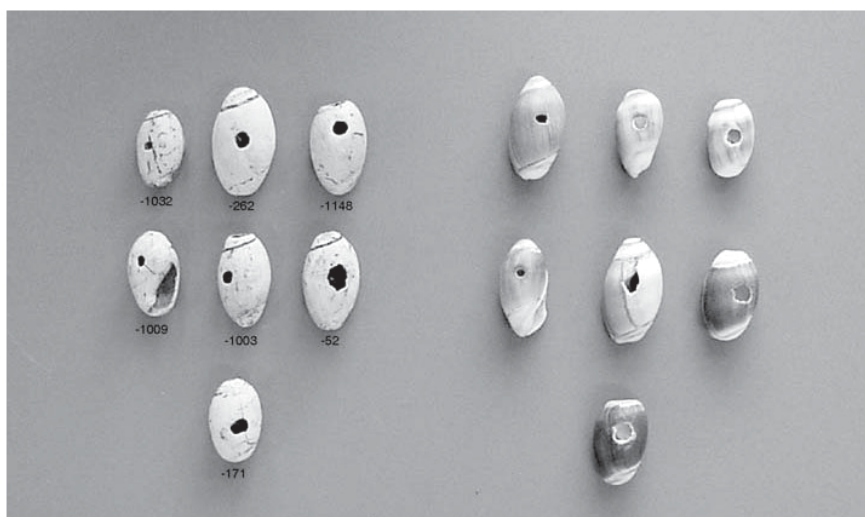
## SHELL BEAD PRODUCTION AT MNT-238?

**NO!**



**MIDDEN SHELLS**

**BEACH SHELLS**



**MIDDEN SHELLS**

**BEACH SHELLS**

# WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

## QUANTITATIVE DATA FROM MNT-238

	FROM MNT-238		NATURAL BEACH FINDS			
	No.	%	1974		2003	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Large Punched Spire-Lopped (A4c)	46	0.19	9	0.10	21	0.16
Medium Punched Spire-Lopped (A4b)	-	-	4	0.04	3	0.02
Large Spire-Lopped (A1c)	148	0.60	61	0.68	82	0.64
Medium Spire-Lopped (A1b)	9	0.04	3	0.03	7	0.05
Small Spire-Lopped (A1a)	2	0.01	-	0.00	-	0.00
Whole Shell	9	0.04	13	0.14	15	0.12
Broken	32	0.13	3	0.03	19	0.15
TOTAL	246	1.00	93	1.00	147	1.00
Pebble in Aperture	31	0.15	34	0.38	17	0.13

- ▶ **Natural Beach finds are typologically indistinguishable from midden finds**
- ▶ **Frequency distribution of beach and midden finds is nearly identical**

## BEADS FROM MNT-238



## 16 FINISHED OLIVELLA BEADS



- ▶ **No bead manufacturing refuse**
- ▶ **No beads in production**
- ▶ **No bead-making tools**



## WHY ARE THERE BEACH SHELLS IN THE MIDDEN?

- ▶ **Intentionally Collected**  
Whole *Olivella* are underrepresented in the midden
- ▶ **Children foraging**  
Indiscriminately collected



## WHY ARE THERE "BEADS" ON THE BEACH?

- ▶ **Modification from predators**
- ▶ **Beach wear**

## WHAT IS THE EVIDENCE FOR BEAD PRODUCTION AT YOUR SITE?