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the Gulf of California area and its peoples. Given that the primary narrator and others of his generation are now deceased, perhaps little more of the early Kiliwa times will be learned. Specialists in folklore will be pleased by the data on traditional narratives, recognizing that not all genres are well represented. But those that are (especially star lore, creation cycles) tie in nicely with data to the north as well as west. The dictionary should also be welcomed by all of the above specialists for many of the same reasons. Lexical ties and specific lexical features are very important to good and thorough interpretation in linguistics, anthropology, and folklore. In all, both volumes are well done, and Mixco is to be commended for providing a wealth of clear, well organized, and valuable data for us all.

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Earliest Man of America in Oregon, U.S.A.
D. E. Tyler. Ontario, OR: Discovery Books, 1985, 260 pp., 458 photos, \$24.95 (paper).

Reviewed by:

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That important benefits are to be gained from close cooperation between professional

and avocational archaeologists is a principle adhered to by most of our colleagues in the professional ranks, and it was in that spirit that this reviewer approached the book by Dr. Tyler. Standards of criticism for non-professional works should be different, and generally less stringent, than those we apply to professional publications, not because amateurs are less intelligent or have less to offer the discipline, but simply because they tend to be less schooled in the academically oriented rules and formats of our specialized field. Rather than expecting them to fit the mold of university-trained archaeologists, we should encourage contributions by responsible avocationalists despite what we may see as shortcomings in their products.

The true measure of any such effort by a lay archaeologist should be simply this: Is it a *contribution*? Does it really add usefully to our current information or offer genuine alternatives to present interpretation? The answer to these questions in the case of *Earliest Man of America in Oregon, U.S.A.* is a slightly qualified but emphatic *no*.

Dr. Tyler's background is that of a well-educated physician (M.D., University of Oregon Medical School) who also obtained a law degree (Juris Doctor, University of Denver). He has practiced medicine as a genito-urinary surgeon and has published medical articles in that specialty. In surprising contrast to his medical background are his two previously published books, *Originations of Life from Volcanoes and Petroleum: A Scientific Theory Opposed to Evolution* and *A New and Simple Theory of Gravity*. Dr. Tyler lives in Ontario, Oregon, on the Snake River near the mouths of the Malheur and Owyhee rivers, both of which drain the desiccated, desert shrub region of extreme southeastern Oregon, the locale for the finds that are the subject of his book.

Although the titles of the author's two previous books offer something of a hint

about his theoretical orientation, it is not until the concluding chapter of *Earliest Man* that one understands the conceptual context in which Dr. Tyler interprets the finds described in this book. It may have been fairer to the reader to present the theoretical stance first, since such background explains why the finds were considered so significant. The author clearly is predisposed to extremely unconventional theoretical positions, including opposition to evolutionary theory and natural selection, opposition to the concepts of plate tectonics, disputing the possibility of the Bering Land Bridge, a belief in the spontaneous generation of species as a result of chemical reactions aided by volcanic eruptions, and the assertion that mass extinction caused by volcanic eruptions is a frequent event that gives sudden rise to new cohorts of plant and animal species. One of the most startling and important contentions, and the one most relevant to the finds discussed in the book, is that the human species originated spontaneously and independently on separate continents, and that this happened perhaps three times in North America alone, beginning in the Pliocene. These Pliocene humans are referred to as *Homo sapiens plionorthamericanis*, or "Plio-americans," and are said to have been responsible for most of the objects described and pictured in *Earliest Man*.

The objects described were found at a number of sites, mostly in the Malheur and Owyhee drainage areas, and all in upland contexts above the alluvial floodplains. The numerous and very excellent photographs give us a chance to judge for ourselves whether these objects were culturally fashioned, though they cannot for the most part tell us how ancient the objects are. Most of the flaked stone items pictured indeed appear to be artifactual, particularly the obsidian specimens, but the proposed triangular "net weights" generally show no

evidence of cultural modification and are almost certainly natural stones.

Though a great many obvious or possible artifacts are pictured, their interpretations are for the most part very fanciful. Without much consideration for alternative descriptions, we are introduced to examples of "primitive fluting," probable "scrapers," "burins," "crescents," "probable daggers," "hand-axes," "unifacial miniature points," triangular "net weights," "Mousterian flake points," and other unfounded interpretations of items that are familiar to archaeologists working in southeastern Oregon. All of the clearly cultural objects pictured are best interpreted as items produced by such activities as quarrying, core reduction, tool manufacture, and hunting. Most are either lithic refuse or uncurated tools that are typical of prehistoric lithic surface sites in that part of North America.

Perhaps the age of the sites is the point on which the author's arguments hang most precariously. On what basis is it proposed that these sites date to the Pliocene, around three to four million years ago? Two principal arguments are given. One is that the tools are all found above the level of ancient "Lake Idaho," allegedly (no references are given in the chapter on geologic background) dated to that period. The logic is simply this: "Artifacts are presumed to be the age of the lowest terrace upon which they are found" (p. 28). The fallacy of this argument should be obvious, particularly to anyone who has looked for quarry and primary lithic reduction sites on alluvial floodplains. Artifacts of all ages are found above alluvial and lacustrine terraces.

The second argument for the extreme age of the objects is that they are typologically very old. For example, objects found at one location are said to ". . . resemble those of Old World Paleolithic cultures. None resemble the projectile points used by American

Indians during the last 13,000 years" (p. 39). *Ergo*, these artifacts must be Paleolithic tools. The problem, of course, is that the products of early-stage lithic reduction, particularly in a toolstone-rich area such as southeastern Oregon, must necessarily look rather crude (and therefore "Paleolithic-like"), regardless of their time or place. The rarity of formed flake tools like projectile points (the author admits these are found occasionally at some of these sites, but he dismisses them as ". . . probably superimposed later than the time of the Paleolithic culture" [p. 43]) is not at all surprising since Dr. Tyler was probably not the first to collect from these places. Indeed, the places where he found projectile points maybe entirely vacant of them now.

One of the principal impressions left by this book was surprise that someone as well educated as Dr. Tyler could have an imagination so unconstrained by the dictates of scientific reasoning. Two more examples of this tendency should suffice. Anticipating the objection by archaeologists that his sites are largely the product of lithic reduction activities, the author counters: "It is a concept that is contrary to the simple approach that a person intending to make a tool from a rock would finish the product once he started the production" (p. 64). This is a typically unsupported assertion, and contrary to both common experience and ethnographic testimony. Another example of the author's imaginativeness occurs in the context of his description of very large flaked stone items that he interprets as tools used in the hand (but which may also be bifacial cores, or, in some cases, naturally flaked slabs): "If used to process animals, both the people who use them and the animals must have been very large" (p. 82). Are there no reasonable alternatives to a Pliocene race of giants?

It would truly take a volume at least as

large as Dr. Tyler's to list and explain the many shortcomings and errors found in *Earliest Man*. Beyond the problems already mentioned, I found the book to be poorly organized and written somewhat clumsily in a tedious and pedantic style. Though the photographs are excellent (and might offer a good example to many professionals who have not done so well), the drawings and maps are very amateurish. The author can be forgiven for having a poor command of lithic terminology and of the archaeological and geologic literature, but his use of supporting references is woefully inadequate. Inaccurate assertions of supposed fact are commonplace, as are clearly unfounded interpretations of flake scars and other forms of attrition on specimens.

The value of this book is chiefly as an example of its *genre*, though it is not nearly as well done as works by I. Velikovsky, E. Von Daniken, A. Landsburg, and J. Goodman. Its major archaeological contribution may be to call attention to prehistoric sites in the Malheur and Owyhee river areas, where organized research has barely begun.



Handbook of Indian Foods and Fibers of Arid America. Walter Ebeling. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986, 971 pp., 73 figures, 50 plates, 12 tables, Appendix, Glossary, Index, References, \$65.00 (hardcover).

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Walter Ebeling, Professor Emeritus of Entomology at UCLA, took on a truly monumental task: a delineation of the known plants and animals used as food and/or fiber in arid North America, including portions of