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Minshall: *The Broken Stones*

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Author

Payen, Louis A

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The Broken Stones. *Herbert L. Minshall.* La Jolla: Copley Books, 1976, 166 pp., \$16.50 (cloth).

Reviewed by LOUIS A. PAYEN
University of California, Riverside

The Broken Stones is a personalized and readable book in which Herbert Minshall, a self-proclaimed avocationalist, presents what he believes is overwhelming evidence for a Lower Paleolithic occupation of North America and specifically of the Mission Valley in San Diego, California. He is not the first to maintain that there is evidence of a Lower Paleolithic level culture buried in the Pleistocene deposits in this latter area; over twenty years ago geographer George F. Carter published *Pleistocene Man at San Diego*. Carter's book was not received with enthusiasm. *The Broken Stones* echoes many of Carter's views. This is not surprising in that we learn Minshall and Carter share a lifelong friendship and interest in archaeology. Minshall has directed his book to a wider audience than did Carter, and as a result does not provide the same kinds of detail on which one might evaluate the validity of his argument. While new sites and controlled excavations are reported, the kinds of evidence and conclusions reached are much the same as those presented in 1957.

Minshall takes exception to the currently held view that man's initial occupation of the New World was around 12,000 years ago. Instead, he maintains that humans have occupied this continent for at least 125,000, if not 250,000 years. These people were only "a little past the *Homo erectus* stage", possessed a simple tool kit made up of rudely flaked stones, and followed a hunting and foraging lifeway. It is his tools, the broken stones, from sites at Texas Street and Buchanan Canyon within the City of San Diego, as well as at the sites in the Mojave Desert (Calico) and Yuha Desert in California, the Black's Fork Basin in

Wyoming, and Manitoulin Island in Canada (Sheguiandah), that are taken as evidence for this ancient cultural horizon. At many of these localities the stones are found in contexts indicative of considerable age (Calico, Texas Street, Black's Fork, Sheguiandah), while at others the crude form of the alleged artifacts is taken as suggestive of great antiquity (Buchanan Canyon, Yuha Desert). If Minshall is correct, this would extend the archaeological record in California by a factor of between twelve and twenty! While there is now a growing number of archaeologists that would be willing to entertain possibly 20,000 to 35,000 years for man's tenure in the Americas, Minshall's estimate will be a bit much for many to accept. There can be no doubt that such a notion will cause some critics to assign the book without further consideration to the same category of pseudoscience as Eric von Däniken's *Chariots of the Gods?* and Barry Fell's *America B. C.* That would be most unfortunate indeed; this reviewer for one would take exception to such a judgement. Rejection of Minshall's thesis on faith alone, and not with careful consideration of the validity of his data, would be equally unsound. Nor have all the individual localities he cites been unanimously rejected by the archaeological "establishment": consensus as to the alleged artifacts being man-made or naturally broken stones has not been reached. Likewise, there is a wide divergence of opinion as to the actual age of the sites, (e.g., most lack direct radiocarbon or other dating evidence). No one position can yet claim priority on what is known today. Whether Minshall's position can weather critical examination will only be known when rigorous review of his data is undertaken. If proven valid, a new chapter in New World prehistory will have been written. Until then, *The Broken Stones* must remain a statement of a plausible hypothesis, nothing more.

The book is profusely illustrated, having

over 40 line drawings, maps, and diagrams, 17 black-and-white plates, and no less than 16 (often full-page) color plates. Several color reproductions of paintings conceptualizing ancient lifeways add a dramatic touch. The graphics attest to Minshall's skill as a professional artist. Like other outstanding volumes in the Copley series on western history and prehistory, the book is well-bound, printed on high quality paper, and moderately priced.



Drawn from Life: California Indians in Pen and Brush. *Theodora Kroeber, Albert B. Elsasser, and Robert F. Heizer.* Socorro, New Mexico: Ballena Press, 1977, 295 pp., \$8.95 (paper).

Reviewed by WILLIAM C. STURTEVANT
Smithsonian Institution

This is a collection of 326 different illustrations of California Indians and Indian subjects, being all that the authors could find that were done by European and Euro-American artists from the sixteenth century to about 1880. Not only works in pen and brush (and pencil) are here, but also woodcuts, engravings, and lithographs; only the early photographs are excluded. The reproductions are adequate in size (usually only one or two per 9¼" x 6" page) and quite well printed, save for a few over-dark examples; none seems to be cropped. In most cases we are told, or can deduce, where the originals are. Sizes are not given, and occasionally it may be unclear what the original medium is.

The illustrations are arranged geographically, grouped into eight regions of the state. Kroeber provides a short cultural summary for each region and adds comments on a few of the following illustrations. Ethnographic comments, brief but critical, are in end notes.

The first reliable depictions date from

about 1778-1791. Earlier ones can hardly be expected to turn up, unless the drawings apparently done on Drake's voyages, long secreted in a private collection, turn out to include some of California subjects.

This volume, the result of a great amount of work, is sure to become the standard guide to early illustrations of California Indians. Although it is unlikely that very many additions can be made, the implied challenge should be accepted, now that this new area for art history and ethnohistory has been established. Let us begin, using the convenient Kroeber-Elsasser-Heizer figure numbers: the watercolor originals for some of the lithographs should be added — those for 71 (by Wm. Smyth) and 121 (by E.M. Kern) are in the Peabody Museum, Harvard; those for 2, 10, 12 (by Balduin Möllhausen) were destroyed during World War II but photographs survive in Berlin (Hartmann 1963); an excellent oil painting of northern California Indians by Charles Nahl, in the Gilcrease Institute, should be included even though it is mislabeled as showing Shoshonis (Ewers 1967:89). Surviving original photographs of which woodcut reproductions appear here should be mentioned: those by A.W. Chase underlying 208 (right), 212, 213, and 270 are in the National Anthropological Archives, and that for 263, by Carleton E. Watkins, is in the California State Library.

Some of the depictions reproduced are entirely imaginative while others are derived without useful change from better ones, as the authors point out. But many are really "drawn from life," even though the original field sketches have only rarely survived. All the illustrations have some value as ethnographic evidence. Those that are obviously important give reliable data on aspects of Indian culture, although they are usually of little esthetic interest—for example, those by Tomás de Suría, José Cardero, J.G. Bruff, George Gibbs, and Möllhausen. But at least two highly skilled