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The Mescalero Apache Bow-Drill

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THE MESCALERO APACHE BOW-DRILL

In an article which recently appeared in the *AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGIST* Paul S. Martin furnished evidence that the bow-drill, hitherto thought to be confined to northern North America, was used by the Pueblo Indians of the Southwest.¹

I am able to confirm Dr Martin's conclusion of a southern extension of the distribution of the bow-drill by data I have gathered from the Mescalero Apache Indians, who ranged, before reservation days, over what is now western Texas, south-eastern New Mexico, and northern Mexico. According to my Mescalero informants the bow-drill was employed for making fires by those who had difficulty with the hand-drill. The use of the latter was much more common, however.

No elaborate pains were taken in the manufacture of the Mescalero bow-drill. Pieces of pliable wood of lengths which varied according to the tastes of the individual users were crudely strung with sinew. No wooden nut or hand-piece was made ordinarily. Any available object, such as a piece of buckskin or rawhide, which would protect the hand was utilized instead. Even fighting-bows were converted into bow-drills on occasion. The Apache bow-drill was never used for drilling.

It is interesting to note that the Chiricahua Apache, the western neighbors of the Mescalero, denied that the bow-drill was ever used among them.

M. E. OPLER

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THE AZTEC CALENDAR STONE: A REPLY

TO THE EDITOR:

Since Señor Alfonso Caso of the Mexican Museum, in the *AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGIST* for July-September, 1934, so caustically criticized my brief article, in the issue of October-December, 1933, on the remarkable resemblance of the design on the Aztec "Calendar Stone" to a compass card, calling it a "fantastic interpretation," may I be allowed a final word to say it was not an "interpretation" but merely a statement of fact.

A fact is a fact. Anybody can explain it anyway he prefers. The fact remains. And it is a fact that the so-called Calendar Stone of the Aztecs carries a design that is an exact, ornamental reproduction of the ancient compass card of the mariner's compass. Therefore, call it anything you like, the design is there. The resemblance seemed to me to be worth noting. It was not done through ignorance of Mexican and Central American archaeological literature, for I have been somewhat acquainted with that field for fifty years or more.

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¹ Paul S. Martin, *The Bow-Drill in North America* (*American Anthropologist*, Vol. 36, 1934, pp. 94-97).