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Review of American Indian Archery

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American Indian Archery. The Civilization of the American Indian Series. By Reginald and Gladys Laubin. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991. Glossary, notes, bibliography, index. xii + 179 pp. \$14.95.

"I have long considered writing about Indian archery, which has held a lifetime interest for me, to try and correct some of the misconceptions regarding this phase of American Indian life" (ix). That this is the fourth reprinting of *American Indian Archery* suggests that the Laubins' interest is shared by many readers. In several reviews of this book since its 1980 publication, it has been variously described as "readable" and "methodically researched," and "Laubin's style" as "a highly personal, large-minded one." Such accolades may well overwhelm the uninitiated student of Native American archery, creating a sense that this is the definitive work on the subject. Such is not the case.

The Laubins do present much information on the manufacture of archery equipment. Most is provided on the bow, less on arrows, and the least upon arrow points. Using personal anecdotes and research data, they give the reader an insight into many facets of diverse Native cultures. This is an element of the quandary that this reviewer experiences with *American Indian Archery*. By combining snippets of stories and observations from distinctly different tribes, they give the reader a false impression of homogeneity in regard to Native American cultures. The narrative makes it laborious to sort out a particular tribal approach to archery, which is the admitted goal of this reviewer.

The disarray created by this potpourri of Native American approaches to archery is intensified by references to non-Native designs. The authors' blended technologies, such as those that create the "Osage Turk" bow with its simulated carabao horn decoration, seem far removed from the implied focus upon strictly Native American bows.

American Indian Archery is an interesting compilation of various aspects of this subject,

valuable as a personal account. While it may not be whole-heartedly embraced by a tribalistic purist for the reasons stated, this work still has much to offer. It would seem that some of the "misconceptions" alluded to by the authors remain unresolved for this reviewer.

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