Obsidian Studies in the Great Basin

Edited by Richard E. Hughes

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Preface to Second Printing

Ten years ago I would have been skeptical if someone had told me that there would be an interest in reprinting Obsidian Studies in the Great Basin. Regardless, the volume, originally published in a run of 400 copies in June 1984, has been out-of-print for more than five years, and the Archaeological Research Facility has received a steady stream of requests for it.

On reflection, the call to make Contribution 45 again available is, I think, a tribute to the burgeoning interest in obsidian studies worldwide. In 1982, when I organized the symposium at the 18th Great Basin Anthropological Conference in Reno, Nevada at which most of the papers in this volume were first presented, obsidian studies in western North America were scarcely a decade old. Although pioneering work in obsidian characterization began during the middle 1960s, little of that work reached a wider audience until several years later. Because so much obsidian work has been completed in the Great Basin over the past decade, it is easy to forget that until the early 1980s, only three studies had been published specifically focusing on Great Basin obsidian characterization (Jack and Carmichael 1969; Condie and Blaxland 1970; Nelson and Holmes 1979), although somewhat greater attention had been devoted to obsidian hydration (e.g. Michels 1969; Layton 1972a, b; 1973).

Over the last ten years archaeological research employing chemical characterization and hydration rim measurement has increased by an order of magnitude; a citation list of such studies would run several pages. However, since many of the themes of contemporary obsidian studies have changed little during this time, the research strategies applied, and general concerns voiced, by the authors of papers in Contribution 45 are as appropriate today as they were when they were first published.

Richard E. Hughes
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EDITOR'S PREFACE

Most of the papers in this volume were presented in preliminary form at a symposium I organized and chaired at the 18th Great Basin Anthropological Conference, held in Reno, Nevada, September 30, 1982. Two manuscripts (by Bettinger, Delacorte and Jackson and by Stross) were solicited for publication following the conference.

I thank John Graham (Coordinator, University of California Archaeological Research Facility) for making a place for this volume in the Contributions series, and Suzanne Sundholm (Archaeological Research Facility) for assistance in seeing the manuscripts through to publication.

R.E. Hughes
July 26, 1984
OBSIDIAN SOURCE ANALYSIS