OCCASIONAL PAPERS THE MUSEUM TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

NUMBER 81

14 JANUARY 1983

A NEW SPECIES OF TUBE-NOSED FRUIT BAT (NYCTIMENE) FROM THE BISMARCK ARCHIPELAGO, PAPUA NEW GUINEA

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Tube-nosed fruit bats of the genus *Nyctimene* (Chiroptera, Megachiroptera, Pteropodidae), and its sister-taxon *Paranyctimene*, are unique among the various taxa that comprise the family Pteropodidae, being distinguished by their peculiar tubular nostrils. The nine currently recognized species of *Nyctimene* occur in Indo-Australia from Timor, through Sulawesi and the Moluccas, New Guinea and tropical Australia, and the Bismarck and Solomon Islands to Santa Cruz Island.

In the summer of 1979, the Taylor South Seas Expedition from the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County (LACM), led by one of us (Smith), visited the Bismarck Islands of New Ireland and New Britain for the purpose of surveying the bat fauna of this poorly known region. Preliminary results of this expedition were reported by Smith and Hood (1981). A more extensive report of collections made, plus the results of a second expedition (1981) to the Bismarcks (including Manus and Duke of York islands), is in progress. In addition to the capture of many species new to the fauna of the Bismarcks, we encountered an undescribed species of *Nyctimene*, which is diagnosed and discussed below.

Nyctimene masalai, new species

Demonic Tube-nosed Fruit Bat

Holotype.—LACM 65798, adult male (preserved in alcohol, skull removed) collected on 9 July 1979 by James Dale Smith

(original number 4522) at Ralum, 10 m., New Ireland Island, New Ireland Prov., Papua New Guinea (lat. 3° 33′ S, long. 152° 22′ E).

Paratype.—LACM 65799, young adult male (preserved in alcohol, skull removed) collected on 19 July 1979 by James Dale Smith (original number 4878) at 2 km. NW Hilalon, sea level, New Ireland Island, New Ireland Prov., Papua New Guinea (lat. 3° 51′ S, long. 152° 39′ E).

Distribution.—Bismarck Archipelago, Papua New Guinea, known only from New Ireland Island.

Diagnosis.—Size moderately large (see measurements below). Color mottled, dark reddish brown above; black, middorsal strip (5 mm. wide) from back of crown to base of tail; grayish white with yellowish brown wash below; spots on wings, ears, and narial tubes whitish. Cranium narrow and elongate (rectangular rather than squarish); rostrum relatively long and narrow; frontal sinuses inflated and parallel to each other (not converging in supraorbital region); maxillary toothrows straight, converging anteriorly; bony palate moderately domed (not flat), deepest anterior to second upper premolars; postdental palate not markedly pandurate; pterygoid wings low. Dentition with marked reduction of coronal cusps; canines relatively short and broad-based, upper pair lacking labial cusps; P3 and p3 unicuspid and nearly subconical.

Measurements.—Selected cranial and external measurements (in mm.) of holotype and paratype, respectively: condylobasal length, 30.7, 29.7; zygomatic breadth, 20.4, 20.9; mastoid breadth, 13.7, 13.5; interorbital breadth, 6.2, 5.7; breadth across canines, 5.6, 5.8; length of maxillary toothrow, 10.9, 10.4; breadth across upper molars (M1-M1), 8.3, 9.0; length of mandibular toothrow, 12.5, 12.1; length of mandible, 24.0, 23.4; height of coronoid process, 13.3, 13.7; length of head and body, 103, 94; length of tail, 22, 21; length of hind foot, 14, 13; length of ear, 14, 14; length of forearm, 67.5, 63.5; weight (grams), 52.3, 45.2.

Description.—Head long and narrow; face deep; ears broad, bluntly pointed; narial tubes long, directed anteriorly; flight membranes dark brown; wing attached to dorsal surface of foot at base of third toe; large white blotches on dorsal surface of forearm and all digits of wing (spots on membrane between fingers pale yellowish brown); leading edge of ear pinna and narial tube with white spots.

Pelage and Coloration.—Dorsal pelage long (8-9 mm.) and lax; extending along pectoral limb to proximal third of forearm and

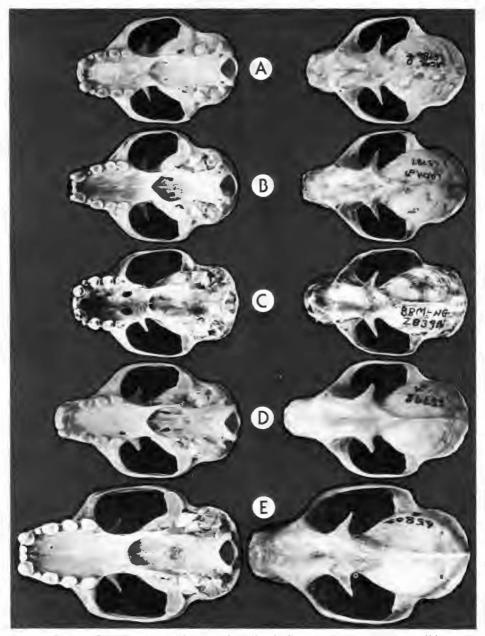


Fig. 1.—Dorsal and ventral views of skulls of Bismarck Nyctimene. A, N. albiventer (LACM 65786); B, N. vizcaccia (LACM 65787); C, N. cyclotis (BBM-NG 28398); D, N. masalai (LACM 65798, holotype); E, N. major (LACM 65802). See text for discussion.

also extending to knees in a V-shaped pattern with apex at base of tail; hairs tricolored (dark brown at base, mid-region pale grayish brown, reddish brown at tip); overall coloration of back mottled dark reddish brown; dark black middorsal stripe (5 mm. wide) from back of crown to base of tail. Ventral pelage short (4-5 mm.) and sparse; throat and middle portion of chest and abdomen grayish white; lateral regions and lower flanks with yellowish brown wash.

Cranium.—Rostrum relatively short and narrow (Fig. 1D); breadth across lacrimal foramina only slightly greater than width of rostrum and interorbital region; braincase long and narrow (not globose); zygomatic arches flared to the side, straight for most of their length and paralleling longitudinal axis of cranium. The foregoing features give the cranium a roughly rectangular shape (viewed from above). Frontal sinuses inflated and lying parallel to each other, not converging appreciably in supraorbital region, and separated by a medial groove; sagittal and lambdoidal crest low. Viewed in profile, skull rather planar (Fig. 2B); rostral portion of nasals flattened; forehead rising with a gentle angle to supraorbital boss; top of skull flat to about middle of braincase, then gently curved ventrally; braincase not deflected below alveolar plane. Bony palate long and narrow; gently domed, deepest portion anterior to second upper premolars; postdental palate not markedly pandurate; pterygoid wings low (Fig. 2B); maxillary toothrows straight (not bowed or arcuate), converging anteriorly.

Dentition.—Dental formula I 2/0, C 1/1, P 3/2, M 1/2 = 24. Incisors. Upper incisors tightly placed between upper canines; each subtriangular with a strong central cusp; narrow cingular shelf on posterior face extending to anterolateral face of tooth. Lower incisors absent as is characteristic of all members of the genus.

Canines. Upper canines relatively short; posterior cingular shelf confined to internal, basal portion of tooth (Fig. 3A); labial margin of cingulum with shallow notch (this may be exaggerated as tooth wear progresses); external cusp, or indication thereof, absent; rear face of canine flat. Lower canines short, broad at base; posterior cingulum extending rearward from middle of labial margin as a gently spiralled scallop to internal apex of canine.

Premolars. First upper premolar (P2) reduced to small spiculė; coronal surface generally round and flat; second upper premolar (P3) most prominent of postcanine teeth; single strong

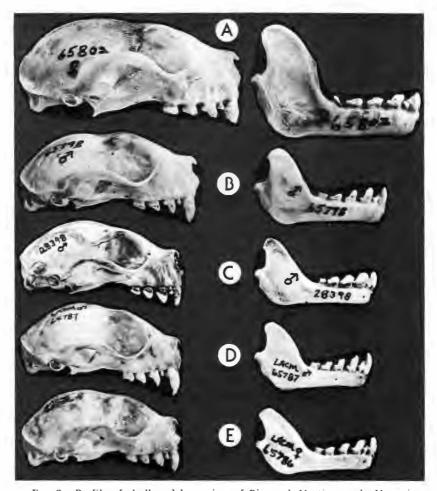


Fig. 2.—Profile of skull and lower jaw of Bismarck Nyctimene. A, N. major (LACM 65802); B, N. masalai (LACM 65798, holotype); C, N. cyclotis (BBM-NG 28398); D. N. vizcaccia (LACM 65787); E, N. albiventer (LACM 65786). See text for discussion.

cusp on anterior, external portion of tooth (Fig. 3A); internal cusp absent (perhaps it has fused completely with main cusp); short labial and lingual ridges extending rearward from central cusp, then dropping abruptly to shelflike heel of tooth; third upper premolar (P4) subequal in size to P3; strong anterior, external cusp; lower anterior, internal cusp; lobate heel angled lingually. First lower premolar (p2) reduced in size; crown generally flat and with short external cusp; second lower premolar (p3) with strong, high cusp on anterior, external portion of tooth

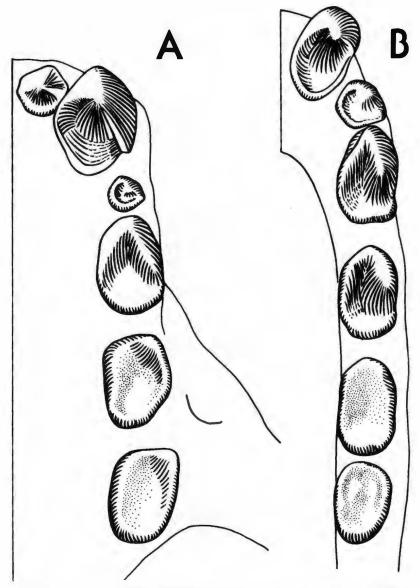


Fig. 3.—Upper (A) and lower (B) dentition of Nyctimene masalai (LACM 65798, holotype).

(Fig. 3B); internal cusp absent (again, probably fused with main cusp); short labial and lingual ridges extending rearward from central cusp, then dropping abruptly to shelflike heel of tooth; third lower premolar (p4) slightly smaller than p3; anterior,

external cusp high; internal cusp not distinct; these two cusps connected by a ridge that arcs around anterior margin of tooth; posteriorly, internal and external ridges drop rather abruptly to heel of tooth.

Molars. First and only upper molar (M1) subequal in size to P4; cusp positions and ridges similar to those of P4 but much lower; tooth nearly flat as viewed in profile. First lower molar (m1) similar to p4 in size and coronal morphology; anterior portion of tooth only slightly higher than heel; second lower molar (m2) slightly shorter than m1; no distinct cusps apparent, crown flat.

Soft palate.—Entire length of soft palate covered with 20-21 palatal ridges, eight or nine of which are interdental; first ridge short, extending straight across palate between first upper premolars; second through fifth or sixth ridges similar in shape with a lateral branch extending anteriorly from toothrow at about 45° angle, then bending sharply to cross midline at perpendicular angle; next few ridges with indentation medially, may connect at midline; all aforementioned ridges rather thick, rounded, and separated by deep grooves, their surface wrinkled. Posterior to interdental ridges is a series of more widely spaced, delicate ridges clothed by many sharply pointed, toothlike papillae, anteriormost of which randomly and irregularly traverse soft palate; many do not reach midline; last eight or nine postdental ridges more or less regular in form, spacing, and nearly all extend, unbroken, across soft palate.

Etymology.—The epithet for the new species, masalai, is taken from the Tolai language and means forest demon or devil.

COMPARISON AND DISCUSSION

The most recent critical review of the tube-nosed fruit bats is that by Andersen (1912b:681-722, 828). He treated 13 species of Nyctimene (papuanus, albiventer, minutus, varius, cyclotis, cephalotes, geminus, major, scitulus, lullulae, aello, robinsoni, and certans). The holotypes of these, except for cephalotes (not examined by Andersen and apparently lost), are housed in the collection of the British Museum (Natural History). All except N. cephalotes (Pallas, 1767), N. albiventer (Gray, 1862), N. major (Dobson, 1877), N. aello (Thomas, 1900), N. robinsoni Thomas, 1904, N. major lullulae Thomas, 1904, and N. certans Andersen, 1912a were described by Andersen (1910). Since the review by Andersen (1912b), seven additional taxa of Nyctimene have been

described: N. vizcaccia Thomas, 1914, N. draconilla Thomas, 1922a, N. celaeno Thomas, 1922b, N. sanctacrucis Troughton, 1931, N. bougainville Troughton, 1936, N. malaitensis Phillips, 1968, and N. albiventer minor Phillips, 1968. Paranyctimene raptor Tate, 1942, also was described after Andersen (1912b). Tate (1942: 341-343) discussed some, but not all, of these taxa in his account of pteropodids contained in the Archbold collections. Likewise, Laurie and Hill (1954: 46-48) treated most, but not all, of these bats. They assigned the various taxa of Nyctimene known to occur in the geographic area covered by them to species and subspecies, but did not discuss or otherwise justify these assignments. More recently, several other workers (Phillips, 1968:817-825; McKean, 1972:16-20; and Koopman, 1979:12) have remarked on regionally limited taxa of Nyctimene. To date, however, the genus remains unreviewed in its entirety.

Like many bats from the Indo-Australian region, most species of Nyctimene are represented only by the holotype or extremely small series (one or two in most cases) from scattered localities, many of which are islands. In addition, much of the crucial cranial material is damaged or has heavily worn dentition, thereby limiting critical comparisons and analyses of characters. These troublesome factors are further aggravated by a rather high degree of individual variability that is apparently common among pteropodid bats. In the past, species of Nyctimene have been based mostly on coloration and overall size. In preparing the description on N. masalai, we have examined and directly compared it with the 15 holotypes of Nyctimene in the British Museum (Natural History), holotypes of N. malaitensis and N. albiventer minor (Bernice P. Bishop Museum, Honolulu), and representative series of all other species of Nyctimene except N. sanctacrucis. In addition, we have attempted to identify and use characteristics in the diagnosis and description that seem applicable to all taxa of Nyctimene.

Nyctimene masalai is easily distinguished from N. m. major, with which it is sympatric, on the basis of large overall size of the latter (Figs. 1E and 2A). The cranium of major is flatter in profile, much more massive, and the dentition is characteristically more cuspidate than that of masalai (Fig. 1E). Nyctimene masalai approaches N. m. scitulus in overall size, but remains distinct because of the qualitative characters mentioned above. This is also the case with N. geminus, which currently is regarded as a geographic race of major. Nyctimene lullulae (also regarded as a

subspecies of major) is slightly smaller than masalai, but again, is distinguished by cranial and dental features typical of major. Nyctimene robinsoni, N. aello, and N. celaeno (regarded as a race of aello by Laurie and Hill, 1954) occupy geographic ranges that are allopatric to that of N. masalai. Nyctimene robinsoni, an apparently close relative of N. major, is distinguished from masalai by the same general suite of characters that separates masalai from major. Large size, highly cuspidate dentition, and a unique broad middorsal stripe easily separate N. aello and N. celaeno from N. masalai.

Nyctimene masalai is slightly larger in overall size compared to N. cyclotis (Figs. 1C and 2C). It is conceivable that these two occur sympatrically (cyclotis having been recently reported from New Britain Island by Smith and Hood, 1981), but as yet they remain allopatric. While similar in size, cyclotis is readily identified by its generally dark, extremely long and wooly pelage, as well as uniquely cuspidate postcanine dentition (Fig. 1C). The premolars and molars of cyclotis are round as opposed to rectangular and the premolars have three strong cusps; the palate is markedly arcuate. The cranium of cyclotis tends to be more squarish than rectangular. The large round palatal fenestrations shown in Fig. 1C are not wholly artifactual, but are frequently encountered in specimens of cyclotis, and are often asymmetrical. They do not occur in all specimens, but their form, position, and incidence of occurrence seem consistent enough to consider them a feature of the species.

The two remaining species that occur in sympatry with N. masalai are N. albiventer and N. cephalotes. They are similar in size, but both are smaller than masalai. The Bismarck Archipelago (including the Admiralty Islands) is the only geographic area in which albiventer and cephalotes are known to occur sympatrically. Nyctimene albiventer, in its current context, is a wideranging species that occurs from the northern Moluccas through New Guinea, the Bismarcks and the Admiralties, to the Solomon Islands. Laurie and Hill (1954) placed N. papuanus, N. draconilla, and N. bougainville as subspecies of N. albiventer. With the exception of bougainville (see below), these associations seem to be correct, although Koopman (1979:6) regarded draconilla as a distinct species (the specimens referred to draconilla by Greig-Smith, 1975, and mentioned by Koopman, 1979, as partial justification of this arrangement, are Paranyctimene raptor). The name cephalotes was first introduced into the Bismarck area when

Laurie and Hill (1954) relegated *N. vizcaccia* Thomas, 1914, to subspecific status under *N. cephalotes*. Formerly, *cephalotes* was applied to bats that occurred generally west of New Guinea (Timor, Peleng Island, off the east coast of Sulawesi, and the Moluccas); one specimen from Numfoor Island, Geelvinck Bay, Irian Jaya, was also assigned to *cephalotes* (Laurie and Hill, 1954; Koopman, 1979).

In the preparation of this description of masalai and the development of comparative criteria for species of Nyctimene, we stumbled inadvertently onto a problem concerning the identity of albiventer and cephalotes. Neither albiventer nor cephalotes is especially well defined in the literature and, as noted above, the holotype of the latter appears to be lost. We arrived at our understanding of cephalotes by first defining the nature of albiventer. For this, we used the holotypes of albiventer, papuanus, and draconilla as well as considerable comparative material from the mainland of New Guinea. We regard albiventer to be a moderately small species with a narrow, brownish black middorsal strip. The dorsal pelage is not mottled and the venter is generally uniformly whitish or yellowish white. The cranium is squarish with an extremely short rostrum and globose braincase (Figs. 1A and 2E), and the palate and maxillary toothrow are broad and arcuate rather than narrow, straight-sided, and convergent anteriorly. The second upper premolar is bicuspidate with a strong external cusp and a lower, usually prominent, internal cusp (Fig. 1A), but tooth wear may obliterate the internal cusp. The second lower premolar also is cuspidate with a strong external cusp, usually flanked by a short anterior and posterior loph, and a prominent internal cusp. There is some individual variation in the distinctness of the internal cusp throughout the geographic range of the species and wear quickly obliterates its appearance. However, this tooth and its upper counterpart are always broad and round rather than long and narrow. All of these features easily distinguish albiventer from masalai. They do not, however, characterize tube-nosed fruit bats from the Solomon Islands that have been previously assigned to N. albiventer bougainville.

With albiventer so defined, we are left with one remaining species in the Bismarcks—supposedly N. cephalotes. This bat agrees in size and general external appearance with albiventer, but its dorsal pelage is usually mottled and the venter is often darker. In describing N. bougainville, Troughton (1936) made similar observations in his comparison with N. papuanus, and these appear to

have influenced Pohle's (1953) association of bougainville with albiventer. Subsequent authors have followed this assignment. More importantly, the cranium and dentition of the remaining taxon differ considerably from those of the form that we regard as albiventer. The cranium is rectangular with a relatively longer rostrum than in albiventer, and the braincase is elongate, not globose (Fig. 1B). The second upper and lower premolars lack a distinct internal cusp. Often there is a marked, flangelike ridge sweeping in a graceful and gentle curve from the posterior internal margin of the cingulum upward to the apex of the prominent and narrow external cusp (Fig. 1B). This is especially apparent on unworn teeth. The teeth are usually longer and somewhat narrower than those of albiventer, although this tendency may be obscured by wear and erosion. The preceding features characterize specimens formerly referred to N. albiventer bougainville from the Solomon Islands, the holotype of N. vizcaccia, and a larger series of topotypes (Ruk, Rooke, or Umboi Island) in the Bernice P. Bishop Museum.

Finally, we compared the Bismarck and Solomon specimens with those referred to cephalotes from Peleng Island and the Moluccas. The latter agree in external appearance and general shape of the cranium. The crania of Bismarck and Solomon specimens tend to be less rectangular than either those of cephalotes or masalai. Specimens of cephalotes from Peleng Island and the Moluccas are larger in overall size, and the upper and lower premolars have a moderately prominent internal cusp. This is also true of the specimen from Numfoor. On the lower premolar, this cusp may be reduced to a promontory or shoulder on the internal ridge that extends from the posterior cingulum to the apex of the external cusp. Thus, given these differences, we regard Nyctimene vizcaccia Thomas (1914) to be a valid species, separate and distinct from cephalotes and masalai, and occupying a geographic range in the Bismarck and Solomon Islands. All three taxa appear to be allied and may ultimately be regarded as members of a "cephalotes-group." Furthermore, we regard N. bougainville from the Solomon Islands, heretofore assigned to N. albiventer, as a junior synonym of N. vizcaccia and as a valid subspecies of that species, Nyctimene vizcaccia bougainville, new combination. There seems to be little evidence to warrant recognition of the subspecies minor from Fauro, Choiseul, and Santa Ysabel islands. Although slightly smaller in overall size, representative specimens are not markedly removed from the range of variation in N. v.

bougainville, and we therefore regard N. albiventer minor as a junior synonym of N. v. bougainville.

Nyctimene masalai differs from supposed cephalotes from Peleng Island and the Moluccas by being larger in overall size, having a somewhat broader, yet rectangular cranium, and a relatively longer rostrum. The dentition of masalai is, perhaps, the most reduced of any species of Nyctimene in terms of coronal cuspidation (Fig. 3). Nyctimene malaitensis Phillips (1968) is known only from the type specimen from Malaita Island, Solomon Islands. It appears to be a species distinct from N. v. bougainville which is smaller in all respects. Nyctimene malaitensis does approach masalai in size, but the cranium is less rectangular, the rostrum is shorter and broader, and the palate is flat, not domed as in masalai. The dentition of the holotype of malaitensis is badly worn. The foundations of the teeth are broad and rounded, and those of the upper and lower second premolars appear to have supported internal cusps.

SUMMARY

A new species, Nyctimene masalai, is described from New Ireland Island, Bismarck Archipelago, Papua New Guinea. The new species is compared with all other species of Nyctimene except N. sanctacrucis. In these comparisons, useful characteristics for identifying the species of Nyctimene are presented, and Nyctimene albiventer and N. cephalotes are discussed in detail. As a result, Nyctimene vizcaccia is raised to species rank. Nyctimene bougainville, from the Solomon Islands (previously assigned to N. albiventer), is placed as a junior synonym of N. vizcaccia, and Solomon representatives are assigned to Nyctimene vizcaccia bougainville. Nyctimene albiventer minor, also from the Solomons, is put into the synonymy of N. vizcaccia bougainville.

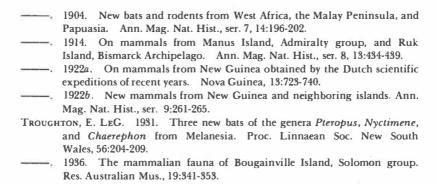
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We thank John E. Hill for reviewing the manuscript and making material in his care available to us. John Wright, Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, and William Presch III, Dept. Biology, California State Univ., Fullerton, also commented on the manuscript. We thank the curators of the following institutions for allowing us access to critical material: K. F. Koopman, American Museum of Natural History, New York; B. Marlowe, Australian Museum, Sydney; A. Ziegler, Bernice P. Bishop Museum, Honolulu; W. Z. Lidicker, Jr., Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, Univ. California (Berkeley); H. Felten and D. Kock, Natur-Museum Senckenberg, Frankfurt; D. E. Wilson, United States National Museum, Washington; H. Hackethal, Museum fur Naturkunde, der Humboldt Universitat

zu Berlin, Berlin, DDR. Also, we would like to extend our thanks to M. Raga (former First Assistant Director), N. Kwapena (current First Assistant Director), G. Maynes, F. Kimbag, and C. Umkau, Division of Wildlife, Department of Lands and Environment, Papua New Guinea, for granting permission to conduct field research in the Bismarck Archipelago and for providing invaluable assistance and companionship in the field. Lance Hill and J. Pernetta, Dept. Biology, Univ. Papua New Guinea, provided institutional affiliation for our field project, and A. Norrie graciously provided us with shelter and a base of operation during our stay on New Britain in 1979 and 1981. Susan Smith prepared the illustrations for the paper. Last, but not least, we wish to thank Mrs. Reese Taylor for her continued financial and moral support without which none of this work would have been possible.

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PUBLICATIONS OF THE MUSEUM TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

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ISSN 0149-175X Texas Tech Press Lubbock, Texas 79409