

Route 1
Kimberly, Idaho

April 26, 1967

Dr. William Longacre
University of Arizona
Tucson, Arizona 85721

Dear Bill:

It was so nice to receive your letter today and the artifact a few days ago. Also, thanks for your invitation to visit Grasshopper again. We had been hoping you would invite us, as this is our very favorite spot and I did so want to see the excavations again. We certainly will be there when you name the date.

The artifact you sent is certainly an enigma. I hold it by the turkey tail and it closely resembles the basal part of the Simon Site Clovis projectile from Idaho. When held by the other end, it is a typical turkey tail biface, not uncommon in the Ohio State Museum.

Technologically, there are several other facets to be considered: The biface was made by a superbly controlled percussion core technique. This is evident because there is no curvature of the long axis to indicate that it was derived from a blade; nor is there any remaining undisturbed surface left after removal of the last series of flakes which would give a clue to the immediately preceding technique. When a flake or blade is used as the preform, it must be straightened and the dorsal side of the flake or blade is usually more convex than the ventral side. This artifact is perfectly straight on the long axis - both faces, or sides, being almost parallel. The percussion flaking was an alternating series of flakes and was directed at almost right angles to the lateral margins. These flakes were stopped on the median line and were met by another flake removed in the same manner on the opposite side.

When one views the artifact from the marginal edge, it is of a sinuous nature because the worker staggered the platforms and spaced them properly to receive the blow from a resilient percussor. The flake scars have a minimum of compression rings which indicates the use of a soft hammer. The material is a very fine quality chalcedony but, unfortunately, there is a plane of weakness due to the healing of a crack. This caused the thinning flakes to truncate at this plane of weakness. The thinning method used produced a parallel-sided artifact rather than a biconvex - a not too common technique. This technique is, however, characteristic to the thin Solutrean bifaces and also to the preforming of the Simon Site material in Idaho and a few other surface finds in the Western United States.

The baffling aspect of this tool is that the surface was abraded and polished on both the dorsal and ventral surfaces before the lateral margins were retouched and this polish appears to be the result of function rather than intentional preparation. This abrasion also is characteristic of the smoky quartz artifacts at the Simon Site in Idaho. And the retouching is not comparable in quality to the previous work. Retouch flakes are short, steep and random in nature and, with a few exceptions, have erased the former retouch. The last retouch has also deleted the original edge at the base of the artifact and removed any characteristic grinding. The original distal end, or the end that was notched, has been modified after the artifact received the functional polish. The rejuvenation of the margins and the notching appears to have been done by someone other than the original worker. I do not mean to imply that all flaking is not aboriginal but only that the artifact may have been damaged by use and then rejuvenated to function as a different tool type.

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There is little change in texture of the retouch scars and no patination showing a time element was involved - only that the last series of retouch flakes intersects the polished surface. The initial form and technique of the artifact suggests that it was Clovis, for the base was deliberately thinned by the removal of a large flake on one surface and by multiple thinning flakes on the other side; yet this was a thinning and not a refined fluting technique. The large thinning flake was intersected by one large lateral flake and an artifact designed this thin will not permit a long channel to be removed and, further, fluting an artifact this thin would not assist in the hafting.

Hope this will be of some help to you but I believe Dr. Haury's observation of this and similar tools makes him more qualified than I for this analysis - for I try to limit my work to technology.

We plan to leave Saturday for Ann Arbor and will be looking forward to seeing you at the meeting there and hearing your paper. I will bring the artifact there and give it to you and save sending it through the mail.

= Now Evelyn has a few remarks, so will see you soon.

Sincerely,

Don E. Crabtree:

Dear Bill:

I have sort of lost track of Art Jelinek so will you please give him a message for me. Since he is at a new University, I discussed this problem with Dick Daugherty and he has had me send the original copy of the Les Eyzies tapes to him at Pullman and said that he would arrange with Alan Smith to have the thermafax copies made there and sent to the participants. Am sure that Art will be glad to be rid of this job, but, if not, please have him get in touch with Dick for further instructions. Hope Art will be at the meeting too so we may visit with him. Sorry it has taken so long on the tapes, but ISU promised to do the typing and, after waiting eight months, I picked them up and did the work here at home. Will see that you get a copy.

Evelyn