

Tony's Quick and Dirty Opinions

Tony Baker December 24, 2007



This webpage began in September 2007 and stems from a desire to convey my ideas and beliefs in short, concise form. I have noticed that too often my webpages are interpreted incorrectly, or certain sections are taken out of context and distorted beyond my intentions. Therefore, these are my short opinions on subjects associated with Paleoindians, lithics, and other related archaeological issues. This will be a work-in-progress and, therefore, I will date each opinion. Little or no justification or references will be offered. I have adopted the Frequently-Asked-Questions format.

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What is the archaeological record?

The archaeological record consists of two parts: the undisturbed-part, which is in or on the ground, and the disturbed-part, which lies in storage areas, people's desks and in the literature. 9/30/07

How is Paleoindian defined?

Years ago I placed Marie Wormington's definition on my webpage (www.ele.net/pes/defin_pi.htm) and wrote I was in agreement with the definition. Today, Marie's definition is a subset of mine as I include South America with North America. I define Paleoindian as beginning with the first people into the New World and ending when ground stone tools start appearing in the archaeological record. So Paleoindian is a way of life and terminates at different times at different locations. 9/30/07

Was Clovis First?

In different words, "Did the first people to walk into the New World bring with them the Clovis point?" My opinion is no! There are no fluted points outside of North and South America. People who were already in the New World invented Clovis. 9/30/07

When did people first arrive in the New World?

I am a late-arrival advocate, or in other words, the first people arrived after the end of the Last-Glacial-Maximum (17,500 cybp). (See www.ele.net/arch_record/stones.htm.) 12/11/07

Did the first people in the New World cross the Bering Strait?

Most definitely. 9/30/07

Did the first people in the New World have a lithic technology?

Yes, they had a lithic technology as sophisticated as any other in the world. They made thick-bodied projectiles similar to the Sluiceway in Alaska and the El Jobo in South America. (See www.ele.net/art_folsom/pre-clovis_2004/preclovis2004.htm.) 9/30/07

Did the first people in the New World only have a bone technology?

No! (See **Did the first people in the New World have a lithic technology?**) 9/30/07

Are Clovis and Solutrean related?

The lithic technologies are similar but this is a result of independent invention and not contact. 9/30/07

Is the oldest Clovis found in the Southeast United States?

I have no opinion for this question. However, it is illogical to assume the greater abundance of Clovis points found in the Southeast is related to the earliest dates. The abundance of these points, Clovis and others, is a result of greater food and lithic resources. 9/30/07

Is the Sandia Point a fake?

Yes! (See www.ele.net/sandia_cave/elephant.htm.) 9/30/07

How can I tell if an arrowhead is authentic?

If you haven't found it yourself in the dirt, sometimes you can't. Some modern replicators are knowledgeable and skilled enough that it is impossible to distinguish their products from the real stuff. If one must purchase points, beware of perfect, complete points found 50+ years ago by somebody's uncle. Authenticators are like mothers; everybody has one. 9/30/07

How old is this lithic artifact?

Rocks cannot be directly dated. Therefore, they are dated by association with datable things. Most lithic types were made by a number of different people through time, so types can't be dated. Arrowheads are an exception to this rule. 9/30/07

Do lithic technologies vary with distance from lithic sources?

Most definitely. Artifacts found near or at abundant sources will be larger, exhibit more cortex and most likely be hard-hammer struck. Also, blades most often are found near these sources. (See **Do blades maximize cutting edge per mass?**) Artifacts found at distance from the source will exhibit the opposite of these characteristics, plus they will be highly curated. 9/30/07

Do blades maximize cutting edge per mass?

No, blades are a wasteful technology. Blades are associated with lithic sources where material is abundant and their frequency drops off with distance from the source. 9/30/07

How were Folsom Points fluted?

Folsom points were fluted with direct soft hammer percussion. Jigs and enhanced pressure devices are tools of the modern replicator. 9/30/07

Was the acheulean handaxe the desired product of manufacture?

No, the acheulean handaxe was the by-product of flake extraction or it was a flake core. Granted, there is evidence that the "handaxe" was used on occasion, but only as a handy, expedient tool. (See www.ele.net/acheulean/handaxe.htm and www.ele.net/acheulean/boxgrove/bg_handaxe.htm) 9/30/07

Did Homo erectus use soft hammers to make acheulean handaxes?

No. (See www.ele.net/acheulean/handaxe.htm.) 9/30/07

Is this object an artifact or a rock?

If you have difficulty deciding if the object in your hand is an artifact or a rock, it is a rock. If you have a box of these objects and some even have faces or are shaped like animals; you have a box of rocks. There is no question about an artifact being an artifact. 12/24/07