

The Significance of a Second Folsom Projectile Point from Bonfire Shelter, Texas

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On the Great Plains, projectile point typologies were traditionally believed to denote culturally and temporally discrete groups (Irwin and Wormington 1970). Recent work on the Northern Plains suggests a more complex story, highlighting the vague and often overlapping stratigraphic relationship between point types and questioning their appropriateness as the basis for interpreting Paleoamerican prehistory (Sellet 2001). Chronological overlap is most conspicuous ca. 11,000–10,000 RCYBP (Sellet 2001), notably coinciding with the Younger Dryas ^{14}C plateau, during which temporal resolution is reduced (Holliday 2000). On the Southern Plains, distinct types sometimes overlap in excavated deposits. The late-Glacial component at Bonfire Shelter (Bonebed 2, averaging $10,080 \pm 100$ RCYBP; Holliday 2000) is cited for its stratigraphic association of Folsom, Plainview, and possibly Midland types (Dibble 1968; Holliday 2000; Holliday et al. 1999).

Bonebed 2 was originally interpreted to be the result of three separate bison jump kill events (Dibble and Lorrain 1968). The projectile point assemblage, consisting of four complete Plainview (one of which may be Midland) and, at the time, a single Folsom, was regarded as an oddity given the apparent sequence of the kill events and the known chronological order of Folsom and Plainview elsewhere on the Southern Plains (Dibble 1968; Holliday et al. 1999). Dibble (1968:73) reasoned that the single Folsom point might have entered the Bonebed 2 deposit by any number of intrusive agents (e.g., a pickup by a later group or carcass carry from previous hunting attempts).

Recent reanalysis of the Bonebed 2 assemblage has challenged some of Dibble's (1968) interpretations, namely the division of Bonebed 2 into separate stratigraphic components. Various indicators suggest that Bonebed 2 represents a single kill event (Byerly et al. 2005), and, as such, the Folsom and Plainview components are stratigraphically contemporaneous.

We report here on an additional Folsom point fragment recovered in a recent review of Bonebed 2 lithic artifacts. The fragment was screen recovered from Bonebed 2 on February 26, 1964 (Pit C: F28, F15 Stratum [Dibble 1964]). Though originally catalogued as an unworked flake, the fragment demonstrates bifacial flaking, including a single flute on one face and multiple flutes on the obverse (Figure 1). Lateral grinding and basal retouch are minimal. Morphometrically the fragment conforms closely to the Folsom point type (Amick 1995:30-31). The color and translucency of its raw material are similar to the other Folsom point found at Bonfire Shelter (Dibble 1975:67).

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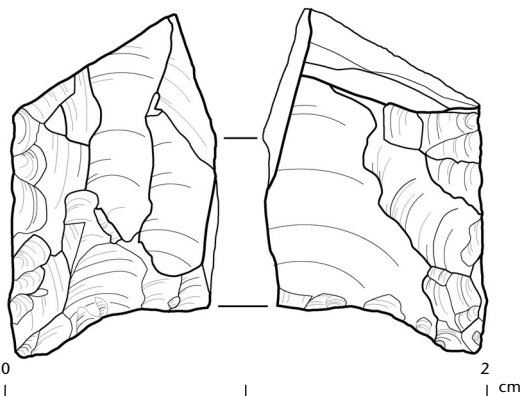


Figure 1. The second Folsom point fragment recovered from Bonebed 2, Bonfire Shelter, Texas (flute thickness 3.27 mm; maximum thickness 3.75 mm).

The discovery of another Folsom point greatly reduces the probability that the Folsom component is intrusive and thus strongly suggests that the Folsom-Plainview association at Bonfire Shelter is real. These findings demonstrate a close temporal association of Folsom and Plainview on the Southern Plains, indicating significant diversity and cultural interaction during Late Glacial times.

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