

## CORRESPONDENCE

### ARROW-HEADS OR DART POINTS

Mr. Browne is quite right in taking exception<sup>144</sup> to my ex-cathedra statement<sup>145</sup> (for which the co-author, Mr. Baker, was not responsible) that the large heavy points which occur, to the seeming exclusion of small light ones, in the more ancient New World archaeological sites, were used for the tipping of spear-thrower darts. Dicta of this sort, once in the literature, often become dogma, to the detriment of further inquiry.

My reasons for expressing the above belief regarding the large points were: (1) that all prehistoric stone-headed arrows so far found in the Southwest bear points weighing less than 35 grains; (2) that at Pecos and other former settlements of the arrow-using Pueblo peoples there occur hundreds of points of comparable weight for every one of larger size; (3) that in Pueblo sites such large points as have been found hafted have usually been set in short handles for use as knives, but never in arrows; (4) that small points, which can hardly have been other than arrow-heads, appear in great quantities among the bones of slaughtered buffalo in the trap-ravines of the Great Plains, while on the other hand, the heads of all Basket Maker spear-thrower darts that have come to light are much larger and heavier than those which we can be sure were arrow-heads. I had, of course, considered the possibility that the ancient heavy points, from Folsom, Signal Butte, and elsewhere, were arrow-heads, but I was unable to see why, if they were serviceable for that purpose, they should have been replaced by the small points apparently exclusively employed by tribes of the same region in later times.

To reiterate, these facts led me to assume that small points were only suitable for arrows. But my data were from a relatively restricted area and represented a rather short period of time. Nor had I the practical knowledge of archery which enabled Mr. Browne to prove that arrows with heavy heads are not only usable but effective. In discussing the Oklahoma spear-thrower I should therefore have formulated a problem, not made a categorical statement.

However, certain identification of the nature of projectile points is an important matter. Only by such identification can we hope to determine the relative age of the bow and arrow and spear-thrower, or trace the former distribution of the two types of weapons, because both the propelling devices and the projectiles were perishable and can therefore only very rarely be recovered.

What further light can be shed on this question? For one thing, it would be desirable to know the weights of the largest stone points ever used on authentic American arrows. As I have said, my own studies have been restricted to South-western collections. In that area arrows were usually of reeds, very light, and

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<sup>144</sup> AMERICAN ANTIQUITY, Vol. 3, No. 4.

<sup>145</sup> AMERICAN ANTIQUITY, Vol. III, No. 1.

(though here again I speak without first-hand knowledge) presumably not adapted for heavy points. Were heavy shafts used elsewhere in North America? What is the relation between bow strength and nature of arrow? I hope shortly to be able to contribute certain data regarding the heads of spear-thrower darts and arrow-heads from the Maya area.

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#### THE POTAWATOMI AS ALLEGED MOUND-BUILDERS<sup>146</sup>

In the article: *Potawatomi*, in the HANDBOOK OF THE AMERICAN INDIANS, Bull. 30, Pt. 2, BAE., initialed by J. M. and J. N. B. H., we read on Page 291, "Sir Daniel Wilson alludes to certain graves surmounted by small mounds, which the surveyors informed him were Potawatomi burial places. Other graves of the same character found in Iowa are also known to have been burial places of people of the same tribe." What Sir Daniel Wilson<sup>147</sup> actually says is: "In several of the mounds of another group the surveyors noticed recent Indian graves, covered with slabs or stakes, in accordance with the usual method of Indian burial, and belonging to the Potawattomies; and Mr. Lapham adds: 'The larger and more conspicuous mounds are generally selected by the Indians for the burial of their dead.' " Lapham's Antiquities of Wisconsin<sup>148</sup> is referred to; I do not know the precise passage, but on Page 59 will be found, "One of the oblong elevations was entirely covered with graves recently made by them"; Menomoni and Winnebago are meant. That is to say, historic Indians used prehistoric mounds as burial places.

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#### A NOTE ON SOUTH AMERICAN PARALLELS TO MAYA AND AZTEC TRAITS

In his stimulating *Observations on the Present Status and Problems of Middle American Archaeology*<sup>149</sup> Dr. J. Alden Mason indicates the South American relations suggested by Lacandon *material* culture. Possibly the affinities extend to other phases of native life.

According to Soustelle,<sup>150</sup> these primitive Maya retain patrilineal totemism, as discovered by Tozzer some thirty years ago, but Soustelle's totemic groups are ranged in moieties named *karsiya* and *kobo*, and among the northwestern Lacandon he even reports an approximation to exogamy (contrary to Tozzer's observations):

<sup>146</sup> Printed by courtesy of the Smithsonian Institution.

<sup>147</sup> Prehistoric Man, Vol. 1, p. 389; Cambridge and London, 1862.

<sup>148</sup> Smithsonian Contributions to Knowledge, Vol. 7, 1855.

<sup>149</sup> This series, Vol. 3, p. 306, 1938.

<sup>150</sup> Jacques Soustelle, Le totémisme des Lacandones, in Maya Research, Vol. 2:325-344, 1935.