

ADDITIONAL PALEO-INDIAN BIFACE VARIABILITY IN NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO

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ABSTRACT

Two recently recovered bifaces, which can be assigned to the Paleo-Indian period, are reported from the Thunder Bay area. Their attributes are presented and comparisons are made with other reported Paleo-Indian refined bifaces from the region. The chronological placement of the artifacts is discussed.

INTRODUCTION

Two bifaces have been recently recovered from site DaJn-7 on Arrow Lake (Fig. 1). One has been identified as a Minoqua point and the other a Scottsbluff Type I point. Both have been classified as projectile points based on a microscopic examination of the wear pattern. Both points are in the W. Dutchak collection, Thunder Bay, Ontario. These represent the first reported occurrence of a Scottsbluff Type I point, and only the second example of a Minoqua point to be recorded in the Lakehead Complex, a late Paleo-Indian manifestation in Northwestern Ontario (Fox 1975, 1977).

While true Scottsbluff type points have been reported from areas to the south and west (Caine 1974; Mason 1963; Mason and Irwin 1960; Pettipas 1969, 1970a, 1970b, 1970c, 1975, 1976; Ritzenthaler 1972, Salzer 1974; Steinbring 1971, 1974), most previously recorded points for the Lakehead Complex are refined bifaces of a lanceolate form (Fox 1975:48). Salzer (1974: 44) has stated that Minoqua points are the same as the type that Mason (1963: 203) called the "Wisconsin variant" of Scottsbluff. This author would agree that Minoqua points are a true type but would disagree that they are necessarily the same as those that Mason called the "Wisconsin variant" of Scottsbluff.

DISCUSSION

The point base under discussion (DaJn-7-180) would, however, appear to be a true Scottsbluff Type I (Fig. 2a; Fig. 3a). It has been manufactured from jasper taconite, has parallel-sided lateral edges, small shoulders, and a broad stem. The flaking is of a transverse parallel type and in cross section, the point describes a thick oval. The stem edges exhibit grinding, while the base is concave and shows basal thinning but lacks grinding. This description is almost identical to the definition of the point type given by Wormington (1957: 266), the only difference being that Wormington (1957:266) does not indicate presence or absence of basal grinding or thinning as part of her definition of the type. The metrics of this artifact are shown in Table 1.

It would also appear to be thermally altered, as a "pot lid" fracture is present on one surface.

Although the point is wider than the average as described by Wormington (1957:266), this is not unexpected as Mason and Irwin (1960: 53) state:

"...It does appear that Scottsbluff points on the periphery of central distribution (Texas, Louisiana, Wisconsin) are as a group noticeably larger than the specimens from the better known sites in the high plains."

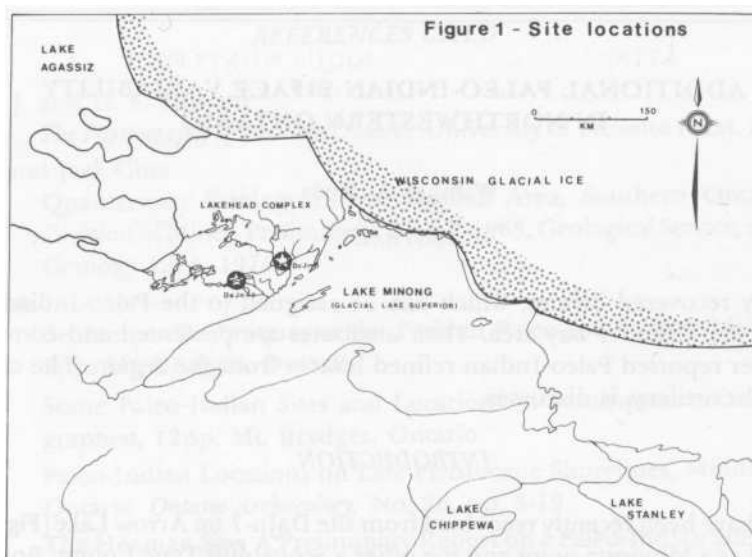


Fig. 1. Map of location of the Lakehead Complex and sites under discussion.

TABLE 1
ATTRIBUTES OF SCOTTSBLUFF TYPE I BASE
FROM DAJN-7, ONTARIO

Catalogue Number	DaJn-7 - 180
Raw Material	jasper taconite
Stem height	19.0 mm, 18.9 mm (asymmetrical)
Basal Width	26.8 mm
Basal Thickness	7.2 mm
Blade Width	38.9 mm (blade incomplete)
Blade Thickness	8.9 mm (at distal end)
Blade Length	8.5 mm (from shoulder, blade incomplete)

Some might disagree that point types in the Boreal Forest should be given names that have traditionally been reserved for points from the high plains. As both groups, however, were probably herd-hunters (various authors, Fox 1975), bison being the mainstay on the highplains and caribou in the Boreal Forest, this author would agree with Mason (1963: 200), "As long as rigorous control is maintained over the typological perimeters which define a Type I see nothing but obscurantism in arbitrarily restricting a useful terminology to the region of initial formulation. I would counter the possible objection that such names as Eden and Scottsbluff should be restricted to the applications to Plains representative of a certain formal class because they are more than formal types but reflect or have their cultural matrix a plains oriented or plains adapted live-way by suggesting that this conception is perhaps a function of historical accident as to where the initial finds were made. It is certainly not a product of any kind of distributional analysis."

TABLE 2
ATTRIBUTES OF TWO MINOQUA POINTS FROM
DAJN-7 AND DcJI-1, ONTARIO

	Dutchak Collection (DaJn-7)	Lakehead University Collection (DcJi-1)
Catalogue Number	DaJn-7-181	DcJi-1
Raw Material	Knife Lake siltstone	jasper taconite
Maximum Length	48.4 mm	54.1 mm
Maximum Breadth	20.4 mm	19.0 mm
		(at shoulders)
Maximum Thickness	6.0 mm	6.6 mm
Stem Length	13.4 mm, 13.1 mm	15.1 mm, 15.6 mm
	(asymmetrical)	(asymmetrical)
Stem Breadth	19.1 mm	15.0 mm

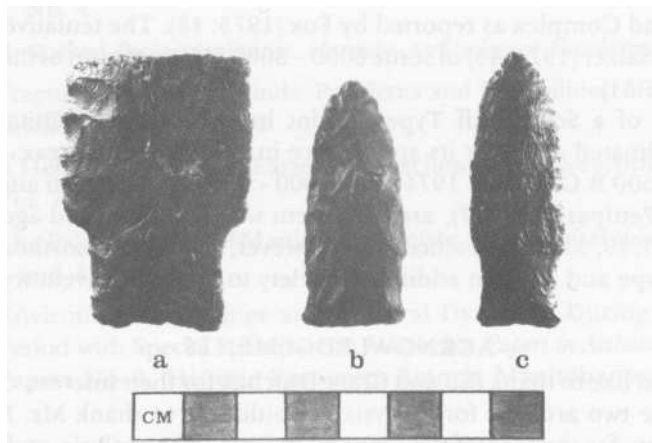


Fig. 2. Obverse of Scottsbluff points: a Scottsbluff Type I base, DaJn-7 (W. Dutchak Collection); b: Minoqua point, DaJn-7 (W. Dutchak Collection); c: Minoqua point, DcJi-1 (Lakehead University Collection).

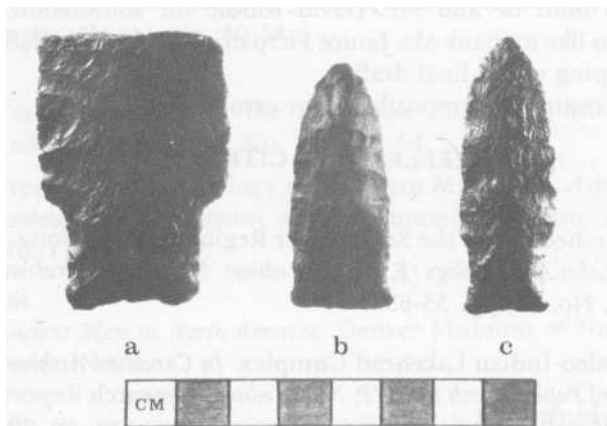


Fig. 3. Reverse of Scottsbluff points: a Scottsbluff Type I base, DaJn-7 (W. Dutchak Collection); b: Minoqua point, DaJn-7 (W. Dutchak Collection); c: Minoqua point, DcJi-1 (Lakehead University Collection).

The second point under discussion, the Minoqua point (DaJn-7-181) (Fig. 2b; Fig. 3b), has been manufactured from Knife Lake siltstone. The point converges at an angle of 75°. It has a slightly inset, roughly parallel-sided stem which terminates at the base in two short lateral projections or "ears", and a straight base. The flaking is of a transverse parallel type and in cross section the point is bi-convex. The stem exhibits grinding and the base is basally thinned and ground.

In Table 2, the metrics of this point are compared with those of the only other known Minoqua point in the Lakehead Complex (Fig. 2c; Fig. 3c).

Both points exhibit roughly the same gross morphology, the major exception being the deeper indentation of the stem on the DcJi-point.

CONCLUSIONS

The Minoqua point from Arrow Lake further substantiates the occurrence of the type in the area of the Lakehead Complex as reported by Fox (1975: 48). The tentative date given to the Minoqua phase by Salzer (1974: 45) of some 6000 - 5000 B.C. is not out of line for the Thunder Bay area (Fox 1975:31).

The occurrence of a Scottsbluff Type I point in Northwestern Ontario is not totally unexpected, as estimated dates for its appearance in neighbouring areas, 6500 B.C. (Salzer 1974: 45), 7000 - 4500 B.C. (Caine 1974: 57), 7000 - 4000 B.C. (Mason and Irwin 1960: 51), 8000 - 5500 B.C. (Pettipas 1976: 27), are congruent with the estimated age of the Lakehead Complex (Fox 1975: 29, 51). Its presence does, however, represent a northeasterly geographic expansion of the type and adds an additional variety to the lithic inventory of the Lakehead Complex.

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The author alone accepts any responsibility for errors.

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