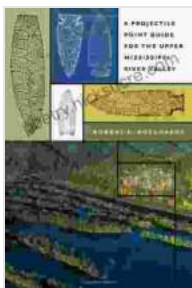


A Comprehensive Guide to Projectile Points of the Upper Mississippi River Valley: Bur Oak Guide

The Upper Mississippi River Valley (UMRV), spanning across the states of Iowa, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Minnesota, is a region rich in archaeological history. For thousands of years, various Native American cultures inhabited this area, leaving behind a wealth of artifacts that provide insights into their lives and traditions. Among these artifacts are projectile points, which were essential tools for hunting, warfare, and other daily activities. This guide aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the projectile points found within the UMRV, focusing specifically on the Bur Oak tradition.

Projectile Point Terminology

Before delving into the specific types of projectile points, it is important to understand the basic terminology used to describe them.



A Projectile Point Guide for the Upper Mississippi River Valley (Bur Oak Guide Book 1) by Robert F. Boszhardt

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- **Hafted vs. Unhafted:** Projectile points can be either hafted or unhafted. Hafted points were attached to a shaft or handle, while unhafted points were used as hand-held weapons or tools.
- **Stemmed vs. Notched:** Stemmed projectile points have a projecting base or "stem" that fits into a shaft. Notched projectile points have indented notches on the base to secure the shaft.
- **Barbed vs. Unbarbed:** Barbed projectile points have small projections or "barbs" along the blade edges designed to prevent the point from slipping out of the wound. Unbarbed projectile points lack barbs.

Bur Oak Tradition

The Bur Oak tradition is a distinct cultural complex that flourished in the UMRV from approximately 1200 BCE to 1 CE. This tradition is characterized by the production of a specific type of projectile point known as the Bur Oak point.

Bur Oak Projectile Points

Bur Oak projectile points are typically medium-sized, measuring between 2.5 and 4.5 inches in length. They have a triangular blade with a straight or slightly concave base. The blade edges are typically straight or slightly excurvate (outward curving), and the shoulders are usually angular. Many Bur Oak points also exhibit a distinctive "fishtail" or "swallowtail" base, although this feature is not always present.

Bur Oak points are typically made from high-quality materials such as chert, quartzite, or obsidian. They were commonly hafted onto wooden shafts using sinew or other binding materials.

Temporal and Spatial Distribution

Bur Oak projectile points are found throughout the UMRV, with particularly high concentrations in the southern and central portions of Wisconsin and Illinois. They are most commonly associated with Middle Woodland period sites (1000 BCE - 500 CE), although they have also been found in Late Archaic period (3000 - 1000 BCE) and Early Woodland period (1000 - 500 BCE) contexts.

Cultural Significance

Bur Oak projectile points played a crucial role in the lives of the Bur Oak tradition peoples. They were primarily used for hunting, as evidenced by their frequent association with animal remains and hunting tools. The fishtail or swallowtail base is thought to have provided a secure fit within the shaft, allowing for powerful and accurate throws.

In addition to their practical use, Bur Oak projectile points also held symbolic and ceremonial significance. They were often elaborately decorated with carvings or inlays, suggesting that they were valued objects beyond their utilitarian purpose.

Other Projectile Point Traditions of the UMRV

While the Bur Oak tradition is one of the most well-known cultural complexes in the UMRV, there were also a number of other projectile point traditions present in the region.

Archaic Period Projectile Points

The Archaic period (8000 - 1000 BCE) is characterized by a variety of projectile point styles. Some of the most common Archaic point types in the

UMRV include:

- **Hardin Barbed:** Medium-sized, stemmed projectile points with pronounced barbs and a concave base.
- **Godar:** Small, stemmed projectile points with straight or slightly expanded stems and square shoulders.
- **Kirk Stemmed:** Long, stemmed projectile points with straight stems and square shoulders.

Woodland Period Projectile Points

The Woodland period (1000 BCE - 1000 CE) is characterized by a shift from stemmed to notched projectile points. Some of the most common Woodland point types in the UMRV include:

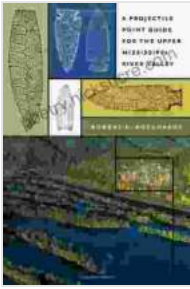
- **Madison:** Small, triangular projectile points with straight notches and a rounded base.
- **St. Charles:** Medium-sized, triangular projectile points with side notches and a convex base.
- **Cahokia:** Large, triangular projectile points with deep side notches and a straight base.

Mississippian Period Projectile Points

The Mississippian period (1000 - 1500 CE) is characterized by the emergence of larger

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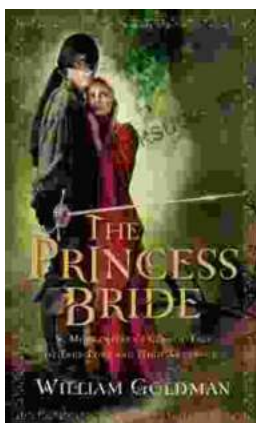


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