



Stones, Bones, and Profiles: Exploring Archaeological Context, Early American Hunter-Gatherers, and Bison

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Book Review

Stones, Bones, and Profiles: Exploring Archaeological Context, Early American Hunter-Gatherers, and Bison. Edited by Marcel Kornfeld and Bruce B. Huckell. 454 pp. University Press of Colorado, Boulder. 2016. US \$45.00 (paperback). ISBN: 9781607324522

I must admit that when I first saw “*Stones, Bones, and Profiles*”, the title immediately caught my attention, but I ultimately decided that the title, while catchy, was not explicit enough to indicate what the book was really about without further exploration. I passed on purchasing it. That was a mistake, and I am now glad for the book editor’s request to review this book because it was well worth the read. Yes, the book includes new stone, bone, and profile studies, but what I did not immediately appreciate from the title alone is that these are building blocks that underlie most archaeological studies. This holds true in the Great Plains, where most of the articles in this book are based, due in large part to the pioneering research of George C. Frison and C. Vance Haynes, Jr., for whom this book is a tribute.

Stones, Bones, and Profiles, as described in the introductory chapter, “offers valuable new data on the peopling of the Americas, Paleoindians, bison studies, lithic studies, earliest Plains and Great Basin prehistory” (12). The chapters hold true to this description and are organized into three sections that neatly portray the goals of the book and the types of research that Frison and Haynes undertook throughout their careers: (1) peopling of the Americas and Paleoindians, (2) geoarchaeology, and (3) bison bone bed studies. Like the luminaries for which this book is a tribute, the 13 chapters are written by some of the top researchers in their respective fields and about some key Paleoindian sites in the Great Plains and Great Basin: Cooper, Gault, Jake Bluff, Lindenmeier, Lubbock Lake, Paisley Caves, Union Pacific Mammoth, and others. Beyond this list of key Paleoindian sites, the dedicated focus on stones, bones, and profiles provides readers with important new data and insights regarding the lifeways of Paleoindians and hunter-gatherers in general.

The Peopling of North America and Paleoindians section has five chapters. Fiedel critically evaluates and provides his thoughts on several of the purported pre-Clovis sites, and concludes by asking readers to judge for themselves whether his critiques are too harsh. Freeman considers the timing and geomorphology of the Laurentide and Cordilleran ice sheets and contends that because the Rocky Mountains were only partially glaciated and likely supported some animals, the Rockies deserve more consideration as a potential early route for people entering North America. The chapter by Sanchez and Carpenter delivers a much-needed update on the evidence for Mexico’s first people. Smallwood and Jennings’ analysis of Clovis projectile point and biface use-wear patterns from the Gault site, Texas, reveals that these tools underwent complicated and versatile use-life histories (e.g., some projectile points doubled as knives) that may be diagnostic of a regionally distinctive pattern. Finally, Jenkins et al. provide a particularly intriguing “snapshot” that characterizes “what living in the [Younger Dryas-age Paisley Caves, Oregon] would have been like during one stay” (132). These chapters very much build on the types of early period hunter-gatherer research that Frison and Haynes promoted throughout their careers.

The three chapters that comprise the Geoarchaeology section testify to Haynes’ pioneering work in this field. In fact, two chapters update studies that Haynes undertook early in his

career. These include Holliday's fresh take on the Lindenmeier site stratigraphy and the Pras-ciunas et al. chapter (with Haynes as one of the coauthors) that describes new fieldwork at the Union Pacific Mammoth site that hoped to, but did not successfully, link the artifacts and mammoth remains – more work is planned and needed. These updates will enable researchers to better integrate these sites into syntheses about the Great Plains Paleoindian period. Finley's chapter demonstrates how geoarchaeology may be productively used to make predictions about the archaeological record. His analysis of late Holocene rock-shelters in the Bighorn Basin, Wyoming, links the type of sediment in the rock-shelters to wet or dry climate regimes, which he then uses to predict that wet period sites will have more artiodactyls with less-intensive processing by humans than those sites formed during dry phases.

The Bison Bone Bed Studies section consists of four chapters. Bement and Carter discuss the cluster of Clovis and Folsom bison kill sites along the Beaver River in Oklahoma. In doing so, they consider the fortuitous landscape evolutionary processes that led to the preservation and eventual identification of these sites, and how this cluster of spatially proximate sites reveals a seasonal intercept bison hunting strategy that formed during Clovis times and continued through at least Folsom times. Johnson and Lewis' analysis of the geochronology and evolution of bison on the Southern Plains indicates that the change from larger ancient to smaller modern bison occurred rapidly "sometime after 8000 BP and before 6400 BP" (329). This change in size seemingly occurred when the less nutritious C_4 grasses replaced the more nutritious C_3 grasses. Brink's chapter carefully describes the essentially complete Ross site game drive in Alberta to evaluate how it functioned and how hunters used detailed knowledge of the landscape and animal behavior to trap animals. The Krotova et al. chapter describes a Late Pleistocene bison kill and campsite in Ukraine, which ultimately serves to remind readers that Frison and Haynes' contributions extend well beyond North America.

The strength of *Stones, Bones, and Profiles* is the many descriptive and interpretive studies that provide new data or syntheses, and that "constitute the three building blocks of much of the early archaeology from the appearance of earliest humans to the advent of the Neolithic or its equivalents on various continents" (3). Given this focus on early hunter-gatherers and North America, the emphasis on Paleoindian period studies is easily explained. And, of course, one cannot forget that this book is a tribute to Frison and Haynes who dedicated most, but not all, of their research careers to these topics. Thus, while the topic of each chapter varies, the book as a whole provides a tight-knit treatise on its intended subject.

Strengths aside, the book would benefit from a concluding chapter that synthesizes and links the many important conclusions gleaned from the individual chapters. Without this chapter, the reader is left to decide just how well the chapters and book made their case. Also, for a book that identifies "stones" as a cornerstone of archaeology, there is just one chapter (Smallwood and Jennings) dedicated to this subject. More chapters dedicated to lithic analysis would have improved the book, especially since Frison and Haynes contributed to this subject.

I strongly recommend *Stones, Bones, and Profiles*. It will fit particularly nicely on the bookshelves of those interested in the peopling of the Americas and Paleoindians on the Great Plains. Beyond that, it will appeal to those interested in Paleoindians throughout the Americas, geoarchaeology, and bison bone bed studies. Because these topics are arguably cornerstones of early hunter-gatherer archaeology in much of the Americas and parts of the Old World, this book will appeal to a wide swath of archaeologists and make a valuable addition to your personal library.

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