

## **The Current State of Projectile Point Typologies in Southeast New Mexico**

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Typologies are a systematic classification system used to organize materials according to common characteristics. Typologies using projectile points have provided much of the regional pre- Formative (AD 200 – 1450) chronological sequences currently used today. Projectile points can be studied either according to particular attribute measurements to form a typology, or by a more intuitive typology system. Some typical projectile point organizational strategies are chronologically based (i.e.

Early, Middle, or Late Archaic), based on function (arrow vs dart), or based on style (the form or shape of the point). Each of these organization methods may result in different interpretations of the projectile points themselves. None of methods are incorrect, however, using them on an individual basis does not provide the whole picture behind the projectile points. By using statistical methods that employ high- resolution metrical data, the variation within and between projectile point types can be explored, all of the methods can be used together, and archaeologists can assess whether the typologies have been appropriately defined.

The projectile points shown were either collected or analyzed in the field from the Permian Basin in southeastern New Mexico. These photos will show the variety, similarities, and differences between projectile points found in southeastern New Mexico, and aim to provide a visual context for such questions as; 1.) Which point is Middle Archaic, Late Archaic, Early Formative or Late Formative? 2.) How can you tell which is which? 3.) Is it based on overall shape, size, notching style, stem shape, or blade treatment? 4.) Is it from the datable contexts in which they were found? 5.) When does one point become Late Archaic and the other Early Formative, and how do you know what to call it?

Southwestern Archaic projectile point chronology and typology, both currently defined as vigorously as possible, still have a great deal of amorphous gray areas. One of these gray areas is that a projectile point type may be named differently across state lines and regions, often making it confusing for researchers working with cultures that did not adhere to those arbitrary boundaries in the past.

Projectile point manufacture, reworking, time and place of deposition, and “completeness” all play into what we see today, how we “type” the points, and where we place them chronologically. The projectile points shown will be used in a study that seeks to address the problems and questions presented above.

**How many point “types” do you see?**