

NOTES ON SOUTH TEXAS ARCHAEOLOGY 2000-2
An Artifact Sequence from 41ZV263, Zavala County, Texas:
The Lost Manuscript from the Lost Peacock Site

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Lost Manuscripts

The Lost Peacock site (41ZV263) on the Nueces River in Zavala County, was excavated in May 1981 by Eric C. Gibson, then with the Center for Archaeological Research, The University of Texas at San Antonio (CAR). A series of four test units was placed to evaluate the site, during a survey of the then-proposed Internorth Pipeline Project in Zavala and Dimmit Counties (Figure 1). The artifacts from the excavations, as well as the overall survey (mostly surface finds) were drawn by Kathy Barciss (Roemer), then also with CAR. Gibson (1981) authored a comprehensive report, copies of which (under the terms of the contract with Internorth Pipeline) were provided to Dennis Lessig of Internorth (now Enron); reviews were done by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and by the Advisory Council for Historic Places, and the Texas Historical Commission. At the time, the manuscript was not slated for publication, based on contractual agreements.

However, the data from 41ZV263 included a number of excavated artifacts, many of them time-diagnostic, and having the potential to shed badly-needed light on the chronological framework of southern Texas. Once pipeline route concerns were resolved, efforts were made in the late 1980s to get this manuscript into print. I was then serving as Director of CAR, and the manuscript had been extensively edited by Sharon Quirk Gibson, then at Trinity University, borrowed the manuscript to make the changes suggested by the editor. A subsequent survey for Northern Natural Gas, for an expansion of the pipeline route, was done by Prewitt and Associates in June 1987 (Hannum 1987). Reviewing the manuscript and the bibliography, it is clear that Hannum had not seen the CAR manuscript and was apparently unaware of it.

In the mid-1990s, I began a search for a copy of the manuscript and found that a complete copy of this important manuscript could not be located, a situation that persists up to the present time. North-

ern Natural Gas (now Enron) says that it cannot (or will not) locate the manuscript and three copies provided to them in 1981. The Texas Historical Commission no longer has a copy; their copy (which may have been a draft) was discarded in the early 1990s, and CAR itself has no copy (and little in the way of project files) of the manuscript, albeit an extremely diligent search was done by Anne Fox and CAR staff members in 1995. The landowner, C. M. (Mac) Pryor, was sent a copy and up through the mid-1980s he had encouraged further research at the site. However, I have been unable to locate him despite much effort in recent years. More recently, I have asked the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation to search their archives, and a similar request has been submitted to FERC. The site was also of great interest to the late Col. Thomas C. Kelly, who examined the materials and files at CAR in the 1980s. However, no copies of any of the materials were in the papers kindly placed by his family at TARL.

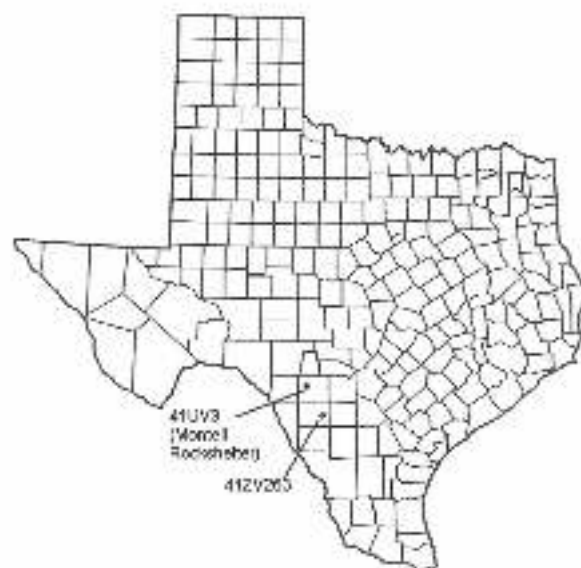


Figure 1. Texas map showing sites discussed in this paper (UV, Uvalde County, ZV, Zavala County).

At the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory (TARL), there is no copy of the manuscript, and indeed, the 41ZV263 site file contains only a photocopy of the CAR site survey record, a topographic map section with the site plotted, and a photocopy of a plan map of the site made with a transit by Gibson and E. Bradley Day, on May 14, 1981. The latter is an important document, as noted later in this paper. Many of the readers of *La Tierra* were students or staff associated with CAR at the time this site was dug and the manuscript prepared. If a copy is known to exist, please contact Hester as soon as possible.

Lost Peacock Artifact Sequence

The survey form for 41ZV263 on file at TARL describes the site as on a remnant terrace of the Nueces River, downstream from La Pryor, Texas. It appears from the topographic map that it is located on an old channel or oxbow of the Nueces. The site is 160 meters long (east-west) and 100 meters wide (north-south), but since much of it is buried, its exact boundaries are impossible to determine. Four test units, 1x2 meters in size, were excavated within the proposed route of the Internorth Pipeline. These are clustered in an area of about 13 x 14 meters. The surface of the terrace in this area is described as "fairly level" and indeed the opening elevations for the four units range from 100.05-99.80 ft. The testing found archaeological materials (flakes, burned rock, river mussels, charred, faunal remains, a hearth, and several formal tools) to a depth of 90 cm below the surface. At that point, the site matrix (a sandy alluvium) changes to a reddish clay. During the course of the investigations at the site, several shovel tests were dug and surface collections were made. Black and white photographs and color slides recorded the field work (this documentation is also missing; Anne Fox, personal communication), and approximately 30 field bags of material were placed at CAR.

The excavations in this fairly tightly clustered series of 1x2 meter units are described variously in the illustrations from the lost manuscript as consisting of "Test Pit 1," "Unit A," "Unit B" and so on. The field map shows the four 1x2 test pits, but their field designations were Test Pits 1-4; clarification of this inconsistency can be expected if a copy of the manuscript can be found.

Thus, for the sake of this summary, it has been assumed that the 10-cm levels in these units were essentially the same, from the standpoint of metric

stratigraphy. This may prove not to be the case, but it is the present working assumption.

Surface artifacts included a Scallorn (?) arrow point, two Frio points, and a Zavala point (Figure 2). In the excavated units, one or all went as deep as Level 10, though the site survey form notes that the site deposits end at approximately 90 cm. Based on reconstructed notes from the illustrations, site survey form, and phone notes from conversations with Gibson on May 18, 1981, the following level-artifact associations were found at the Lost Peacock site (artifacts are shown in Figures 3 - 5):

- Level 1: no diagnostics
- Level 2: Tortugas
- Level 3: no diagnostics
- Level 4: Scallorn, Tortugas, Pedernales (1 Pedernales was found at 40 cm in shovel test; Figure 2)
- Level 5: Langtry, reworked expanding stem (cannot be typed)
- Level 6: no diagnostics
- Level 7: Early Triangular, graver, pointed uniface
- Level 8: Lerma (?), reworked triangular point (cannot be typed)
- Level 9: no diagnostics; uniface with concave edge
- Level 10: Clear Fork (uniface?) with some cortex on dorsal surface

The upper 40 cm are apparently fairly mixed, a situation not uncommon in terrace sites in the immediate area (cf. Hester 1999:9). In the deeper deposits, the occurrence of the Early Triangular specimen is of note, as well as non-point lithics also found in Level 7. Level 8 contained a bipointed specimen that would be classified by some as Lerma, although an unpublished manuscript containing a statistical analysis of Lerma (Kelly 1989) rejects the 41ZV263 specimen as being of that type.

Though this specimen appears to be in an "early" context (whether Early Archaic or Paleoindian is unknown), its importance lies in its resemblance to a specimen excavated by Glen Evans at Montell Rockshelter (41UV3) in northwest Uvalde County. That specimen (804-8; Figure 6) was found at "72-78", well below the Late and Middle Archaic burned rock midden and deposits containing Gower, Early Triangular and Martindale points of the Early Archaic. It was not the deepest artifact in the Montell Rockshelter deposits; that was a distal fragment of

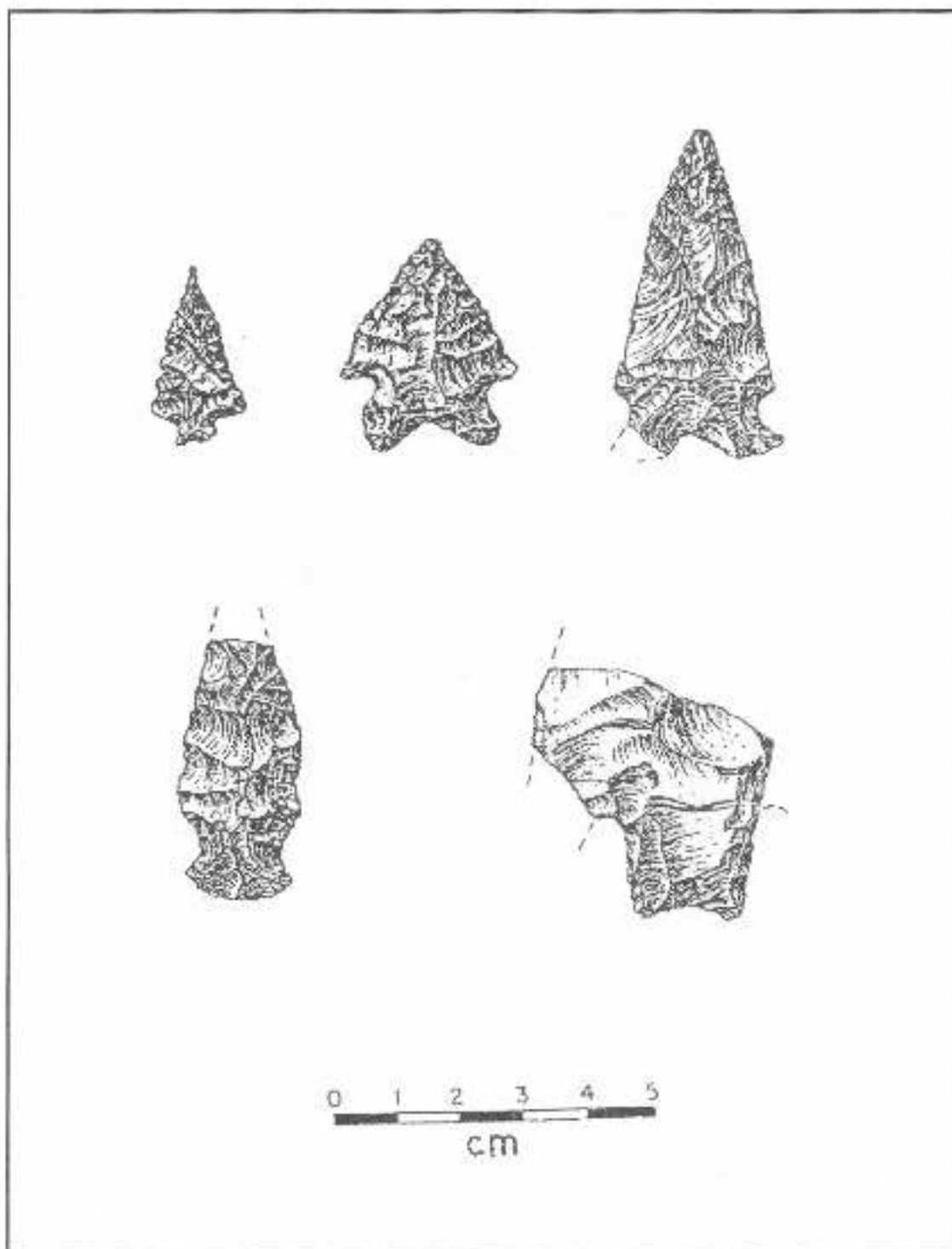


Figure 2. Surface and Shovel Test Artifacts from 41ZV263. Top row and second row left, all from surface (Scallorn?, Frio [2], and Zavala). Second row on right, Pedernales fragment from a depth of 40 cm, found in a shovel test.

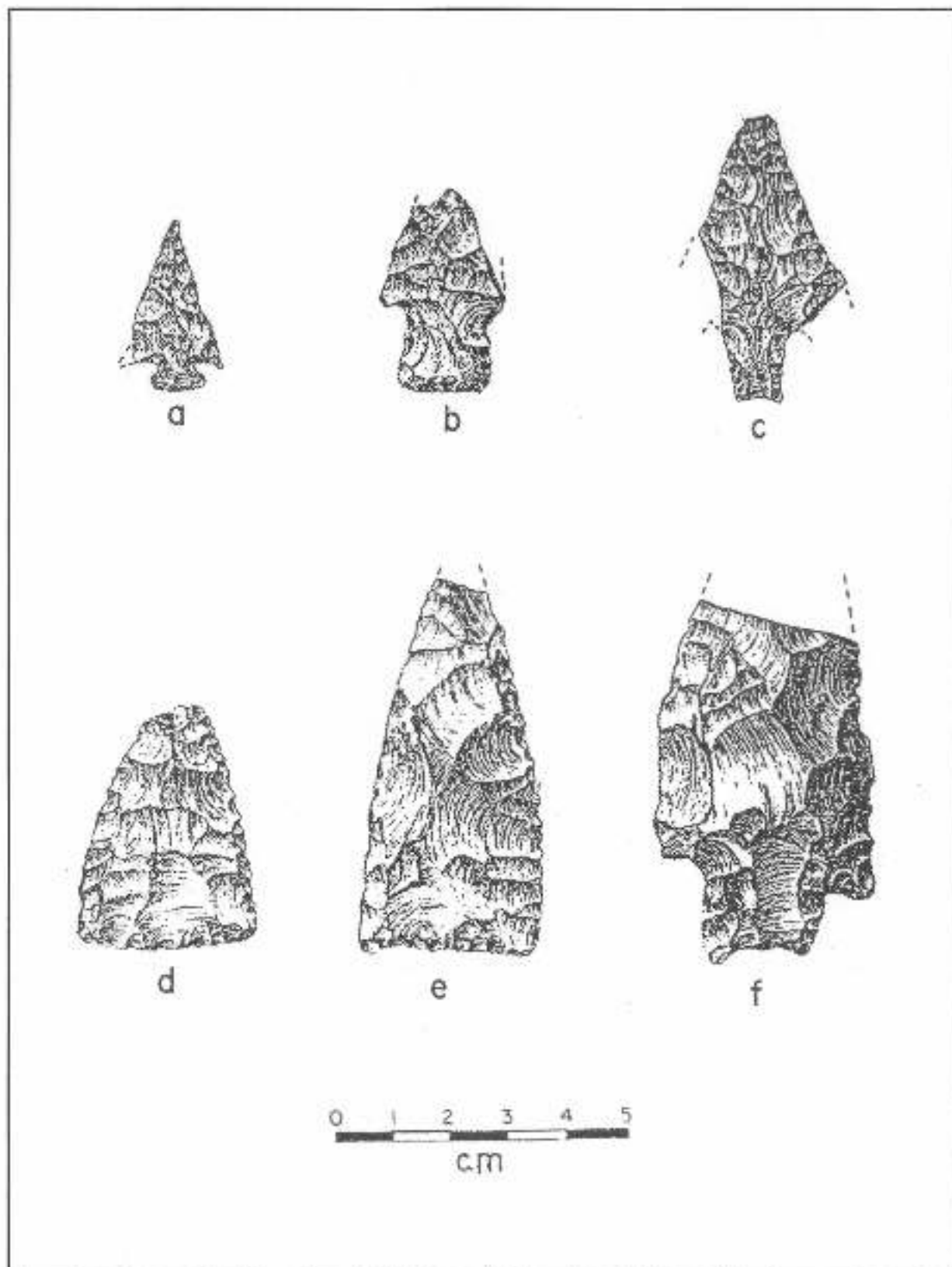


Figure 3. Excavated Artifacts from 41ZV263. a, Scallom (Test Pit 2, Level 4); b, untyped reworked expanding stem dart point (Unit A [see text], Level 5); c, Langtry (Unit B, Level 5); d, e, Tortugas (d, Unit B, Level 4; e, Unit B, Level 2); f, Pedernales (Unit A, Level 4).

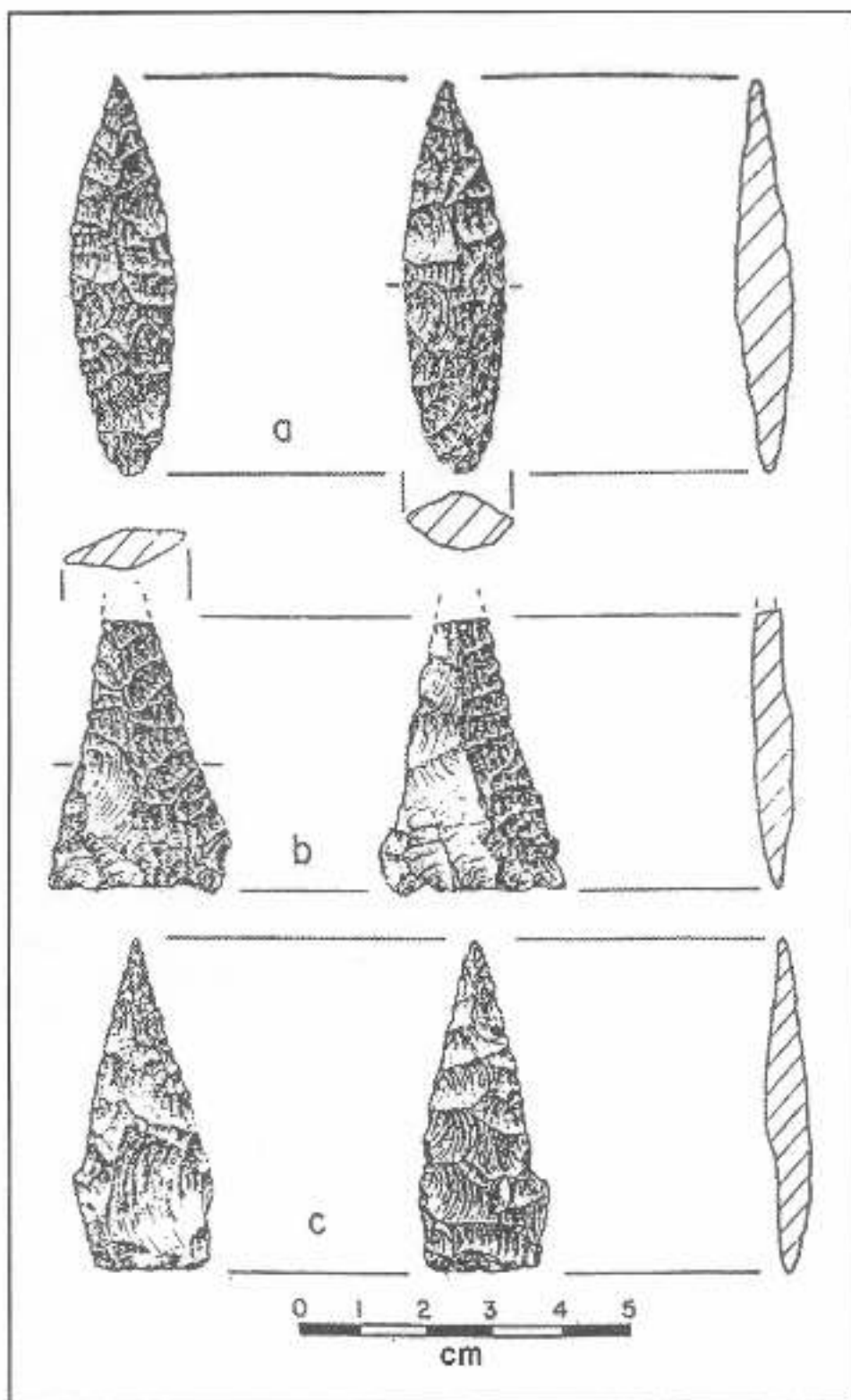


Figure 4. Excavated Artifacts from 41ZV263. a, bipointed specimen ("Lerma"; Test Pit 1, Level 8); b, Early Triangular (Test Pit 1, Level 7); c, untyped reworked point (Unit A, Level 8).

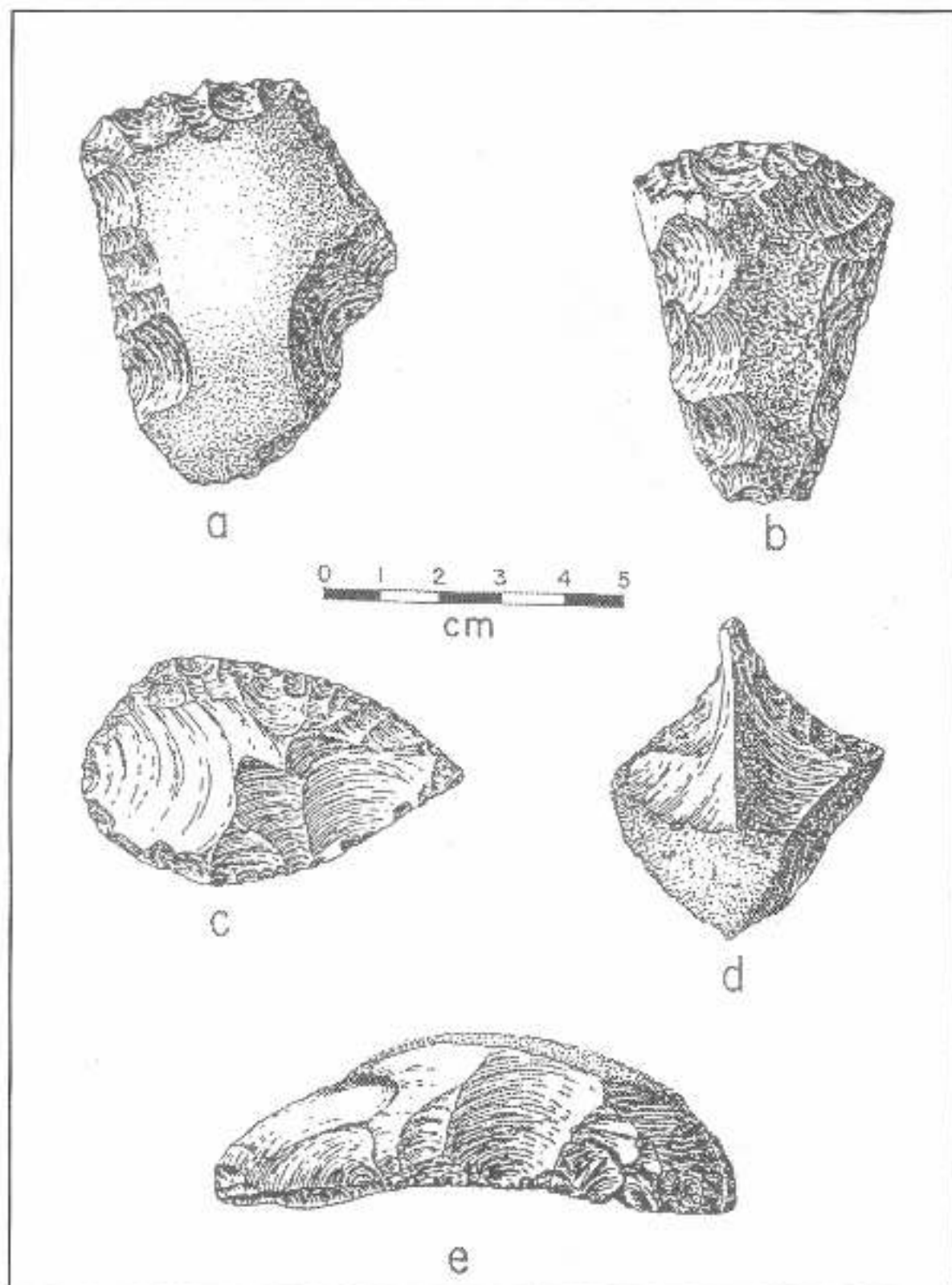


Figure 5. Excavated Artifacts from 41ZV263. a, uniface (Test Pit 1, Level 5); b, Clear Fork tool (Unit A, Level 10); c, pointed uniface (Test Pit 1, Level 7); d, graver (Unit B, Level 9); e, uniface with concave edge (Unit B, Level 9).

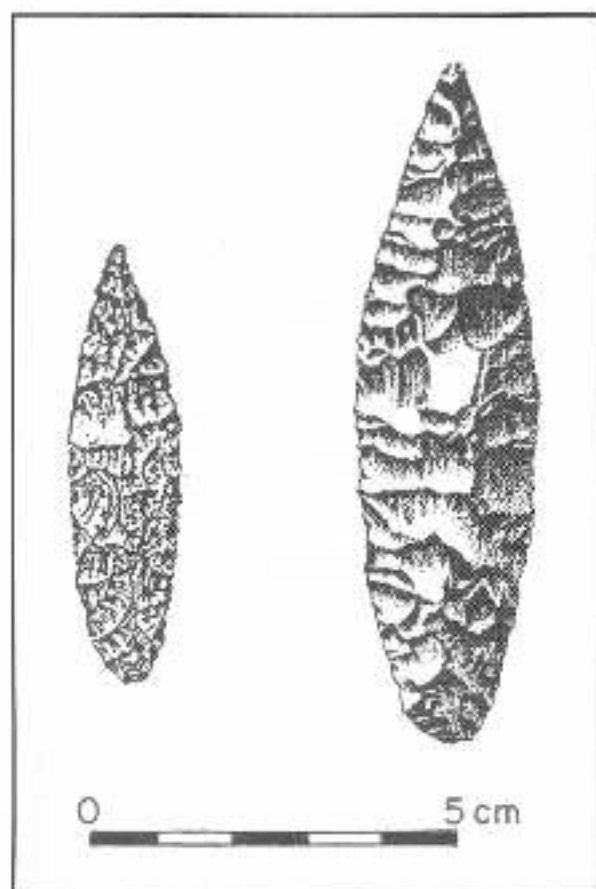


Figure 6. Comparisons of Bipointed Specimens from 41ZV263 and Montell Rockshelter. Left, 41ZV263. Right, 41UV3 (Montell Rockshelter; drawing by Hal M. Story).

what is clearly a large Paleindian point at 14.5 feet below the surface of the rockshelter.

As seen in Figure 6, it is somewhat larger than the specimen from Lost Peacock, but the form and technology are quite similar. More crudely made artifacts, some of similar form, were excavated at La Calsada Rockshelter, Nuevo León, by Nance (1992), with radiocarbon dates interpreted by Nance as around 6000-7300 B.C.

Concluding Comments

Although much of this paper has had to focus on the disappearance of all known copies of the manuscript dealing with 41ZV263, the surviving materials on this site provide a glimpse of what is potentially an important set of archaeological data for southern Texas. It is hoped that publication of this paper will lead to the "discovery" of a copy of the lost Lost Peacock manuscript, so that the materials from 41ZV263, and from other sites recorded and surface-collected by the project can, at last, be fully published.

It appears that Early Archaic (and earlier?) occupations are buried in the terrace at 41ZV263 and that there are potential relationships with similar bipointed dart points such as the one found in Level 8. The latter could well have implications for a revised view of early occupations in South Texas and adjacent areas.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

All drawings, except for a specimen in Figure 6, were done by Kathy B. Roemer.

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