

A CHERT POINT FROM KRUM BAY, ST. THOMAS

By Alfredo E. Figueredo

Recent work by the eminent Polish archaeologist Janusz K. Kozłowski has brought a heightened awareness of stone tool analysis to Caribbean archaeology. Kozłowski's influence has been beneficial especially in helping local archaeologists to shed many preconceptions which held much valuable evidence trapped irretrievably. Modest efforts realized independently by other workers (*e.g.* Figueredo 1974) never could have attained the impact of the Kraków professor's monograph, 'Preceramic Cultures in the Caribbean'.

One important aspect of Kozłowski's morphological and technological exposition, is the presence of 'points' in West Indian preceramic contexts. Such 'points', when found formerly, by and large were glossed over in site reports and other germane literature. Workers with many years of field experience, and the *very* few newcomers who have read their predecessors' work, have, of course, come across the 'puntas de lámina simple' of the Cubans, Carrington's 'point' (in a MS account!), Olsen's 'point' from Antigua, McKusick's 'point' from St. Lucia, and the controvertible Scholander Collection, published eruditely by the great Lovén (1932). Those 'in the know' will add mentally scattered references by Branch, Harrington, Jimeno, Morales Cabrera . . . , but, to the wise, it is said, a few words are sufficient.

During the course of excavations at the ill-fated Krum Bay Site, St. Thomas, the author came across artifacts chipped out of exotic (*i.e.*, non-St. Thomian) chert. These occurred in strata VI and V, and coincided with feeble attempts made by the Krum Bay people to use local chert and hyaline quartz, before opting for the nearly exclusive use of basalt attested in strata III, II, and I. Peculiar in this small assemblage of artifacts chipped out of exotic stone, is a small 'point' of brown chert.

Out of the 1329 chipped stone artifacts analyzed and seriated by the author from his excavations at the Krum Bay Site during 1973 and 1974, 1134 (92.3%) were of local basalt, 59 (4.8%) of local felsite, 12 (1.0%) of local chert, 10 (0.8%) of hyaline quartz, 9 (0.8%) of other materials, and only 5 (0.4%) of exotic chert. All 1329 artifacts represent a core and flake tool technology properly Meso-Indian, as the 'blades' are clearly accidental. Only three stone artifacts chipped bifacially were found, two made of basalt, and one of brown chert.

The brown chert point from Krum Bay (*vid.* Fig.) comes from Trench A, Pit 3, Level J (= Stratum VI, thick shell midden with much gray ash, Munsell Soil Color Chart value 2.5 Y 5/0), at a depth from the surface of approximately 90

cm. The chipping is bifacial. There is no ready indication of use as a perforator, so that the term 'point' is descriptive and does not imply a *function*; notwithstanding, *morphology* and *technique* suggest, potentially, use as a perforator (*vid.* Figueredo 1974 for qualified alternative interpretations; *cf.* Kozłowski and Ginter 1975). The specimen is unique in the entire collection from Krum Bay, and also in the Archaic (Meso-Indian) of the Virgin Islands.

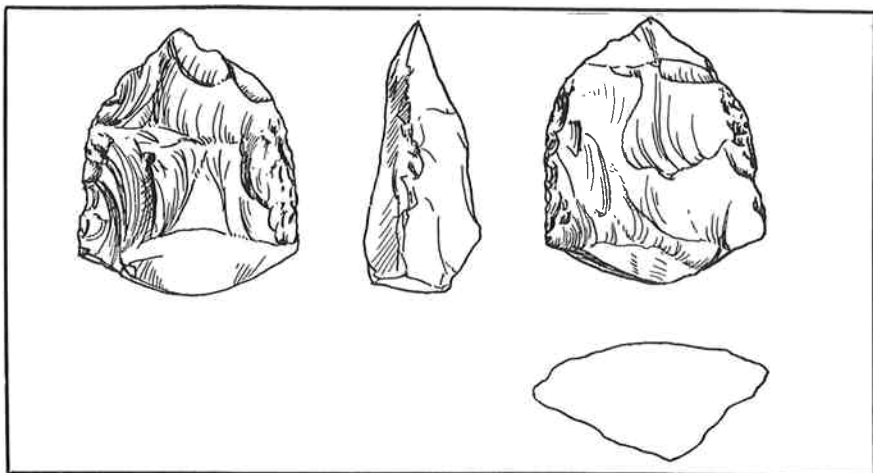


FIGURE
A Chert Point from Krum Bay, St. Thomas
Scale 1:1
Drawn by Jeffrey M. Gross

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