

CHAPTER 9

THE MOUSTERIAN ARTIFACT ASSEMBLAGES FROM THE 1991-1993 EXCAVATIONS

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THE MOUSTERIAN OF THE MAIN HU ("DOCK") AREA EXCAVATION (see tables and figures in Chapter 8)

Our excavations confirmed the presence of pre-Gravettian components at HH, as earlier found by Tihon, Destexhe, Haesaerts and Froment. In our step trench on the eastern face of the railroad cut (MM-OO/-21-23), at the interface between Strata C-E, we found an exhausted core, as well as a fire-cracked rock. In Stratum E we found a plain flake. In F (a bright orange clayey loess near the base of our trench) we found a plain flake and another fire-cracked rock. Haesaerts had found 3 flakes in his level E on the western face of the road cut; he considers the base of this layer to date to Moershoofd or Hengelo and to be equivalent to our E. He furthermore believes that this layer corresponds to the one in which Tihon had found a biface (Mousterian of Acheulean Tradition?).

Below Strata 4+4.1 in our main block excavation along the western side of the railroad cut, we dug two levels: Strata 5 and 6. The former produced 28 items of debris (see Tables and Figures in Chapter 7). There are no blades or bladelets. Nearly half the items (11) in stony Stratum 5 are microdébitage and 9 are chunks. Stratum 6 (dug in only a very small area) produced only 7 debris items; 1 is a blade fragment. Neither level had any retouched tool.

In our *sondage* near the eastern face of the road cut in the "Dock" lawn, stony Stratum 5 produced only 15 pieces of debris, all flakes or shatter (except for a blade fragment). There are no tools. Stratum 6 yielded 11 pieces of debris, including 2 chunks, 2 flakes, 3 items of microdébitage and 4 blades. It also has a sidescraper.

MOUSTERIAN OF THE WESTERN HS ("SMETZ") AREA (see tables and figures in Chapter 8)

The largest artifact assemblage in the 9 sq.m. J-L/53-55 HS ("Smetz") area pit is from stony Stratum 5: 138 debris. These include a Levallois core and a faceted Levallois flake which refits to it. (A plain flake also refits to this Levallois core; these refits are from different squares.) There is a second Levallois flake, plus 59 other flakes and 14 chunks. Microdébitage items total 38 items. As in the small, apparently Mousterian assemblages from the "Dock" site, Stratum 5 in the main "Smetz" pit yielded 15 blades (or fragments thereof) and in addition had 3 bladelets. There of course exists the possibility that the latter (and perhaps some of the other artifacts) could be intrusive from immediately overlying Stratum 4, since the interface has evidence of possible hydraulic disturbance (colluviation according to Haesaerts), as well as frost activity. Stratum 6 yielded 7 artifacts, including another Levallois core, 2 chunks, 3 flakes and a blade. Stratum 7 produced 30 artifacts, including a Levallois flake, a platform renewal flake, 8 other large flakes (one of which is a double-bulb Kombewa flake), 16 items of microdébitage, and 4 chunks. Stratum 8 produced 10 items of debris (a flake core, a platform renewal flake, 2 flakes, and 6 items of microdébitage). There are 3 items of cortical shatter in Stratum 9. In Stratum 11 there are 13 items cortical shatter, 4 secondary decortication flakes, and a blade.

Most of the artifacts from these levels are made on grainy, patinated "Hesbaye" flint, distinct from the finer, unpatinated variety on which almost all the Gravettian artifacts are made.

Sondage JJ-KK/45-46 in the southeastern corner of the "Smetz" property also had a relatively abundant artifact assemblage in stony Stratum 5. There are 40 artifacts from a very limited area: 8 microdébitage, 22 flakes, 6 chunks, 2 blades and 2 bladelets (at least one of which may be intrusive from Stratum 4). There are no retouched tools.

SUMMARY

There may have been a significant hiatus between the Mousterian and Gravettian deposits throughout the HH site, caused perhaps by a (or a series of) major erosion episode(s). Whatever sediment had existed above the stony layer (Stratum 5) may have been removed under conditions of high humidity during the Last Interglacial or an (or several) interstadial(s). Later, soon after the upper loess of the very early Würm Pleniglacial began to be deposited, the site was again occupied by humans during Gravettian times. Neandertals probably repeatedly used HH mainly as a source of flint, given the relative abundance of cores, chunks and débitage--and scarcity of formal tools--in our various excavations. This is also suggested by the presence of relatively numerous Levallois cores and flakes.



Plate 1. Dense scatter of flint artifacts (mainly larger debris) at base of Stratum 4 in squares Q/25-26 in the *sondage* adjacent to the road cut in the main (“Dock”) area.



Plate 2. Closeup of scatter of flint artifacts at base of Stratum 4 in Q/26d in the *sondage* adjacent to road cut in the (“Dock”) area.



Plate 3. Refitted prismatic blade core from Stratum 4 of the excavation trench adjacent to the railroad cut in the main (“Dock”) area.