

THE BRITISH UPPER PALAEOLITHIC (1996-2001): AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY AND SOME COMMENTS

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I. EARLY UPPER PALAEOLITHIC

A new, relatively late date for the Aurignacian has been recorded at Uphill Quarry Cave B of (OxA-8408) $28,080 \pm 360$ BP (Jacobi and Pettitt 2000). The AMS radiocarbon date is on the forepart of a flat lozenge-shaped bone or antler point which comes from an old collection with no lithic associations.

Also from Somerset is a date of (OxA-3451) $24,600 \pm 300$ BP on the basal portion of a bone or antler point found in the 1890s at the Hyena Den (Jacobi 2000). There are no associated lithic finds. Other AMS dates on the British Earlier Upper Palaeolithic are reviewed in Jacobi (1999).

A long sequence of AMS radiocarbon dates on modified and un-modified bone has been reported from Paviland Cave, Gower Peninsula, S Wales (Aldhouse-Green *et al.* 2000). The largest number of dates, on ivory, bone and shell, can be shown to fall within the time span *c.* 29-21,000 ka BP (uncalibrated), covering the Aurignacian and Gravettian periods. A proportion of the lithic artefacts and possibly some of the ivory artefacts seem to pre-date the ceremonial 'Red Lady' burial which has been directly dated by AMS to (OxA-1815) $26,350 \pm 550$ BP and (OxA-8025) $25,840 \pm 280$ BP.

A rare example of an open-air Early Upper Palaeolithic site has recently been discovered at Glaston, in Rutland (Thomas and Jacobi 2001). It consists of a small assemblage of lithic artefacts, including a leaf point, some large waste flakes and a blade core. The associated fragmentary fauna includes horse and woolly rhinoceros, the latter showing evidence of carnivore damage. AMS dates are currently awaited on the faunal components.

II. LATE UPPER PALAEOLITHIC AND FINAL PALAEOLITHIC

Evidence concerning the resettlement of Britain just after 13 ka BP (uncalibrated) has been extensively reviewed and summarised (Barton 1997a, Barton and Roberts 1997, Housley *et al.* 1997, Barton 1999a, Barton 1999b, Barton and Dumont 2000).

The oldest known human occupation is attributed to the first part of the Lateglacial Interstadial (equivalent of the Meindorf Oscillation). Reconstruction of the North Sea Plain area indicates a major landbridge with Europe at this time (Coles 1998). 'Creswellian' assemblages from sites like Gough's Cave (Jacobi 2000) show that horse and red deer formed major elements of the human diet (Richards *et al.* 2000). The retouched tools in these assemblages are characterised by trapezoidal backed blades ('Cheddar' points), end of blade scrapers, piercers, becs, *Magdalenian* blades and *pièces esquillées*

Interpreting human activities in the second half of the Lateglacial Interstadial (equivalent of the Alleröd Oscillation) is still problematic because of the scarcity of available AMS dates. Fieldwork over the past few years has concentrated on previously excavated caves in the west

of Britain, which have produced evidence of Final Palaeolithic occupation (Barton 1997b, Barton *et al.* 1997, Roberts 1999a, Barton and Price 2000). Retouched tools in these assemblages typically include curve-backed points (*pointes à dos courbe*) and blades (*lames/lamelles à dos courbe*). New unpublished AMS dates from King Arthur's Cave place the occupation there at (OxA-6844) 12, 250 ± 100 BP. The occupation horizon is sealed by a thick overlying sequence of Younger Dryas deposits with AMS dates on microfauna.

Of potentially similar age is a newly discovered open-air site at Nea Farm, Somerley (Hampshire), which shows parallels with the Upper Palaeolithic flint assemblage from Hengistbury Head (Barton and Ford in prep.). So far no dating has been undertaken at this site. Human activity in Britain probably continued throughout the Interstadial. Consistent with this view is a recent find of a uniserial barbed point, from Gransmoor (Yorkshire) dated to between 11,500-11,100 BP (uncalibrated) based on radiometric dating of wood in which the point was lodged (Sheldrick *et al.* 1997). The possibility of a Bromme presence in Britain has also been mooted on the basis of finds from East Anglia (Roberts and Barton 2001).

Evidence for Younger Dryas occupation in Britain is still extremely sparse, and it is unlikely that the region was continuously occupied during coldest phase of the Stadial. Dating of sediments using the OSL (Optically Stimulated Luminescence) technique at the open-air site of Avington VI (Berkshire) has suggested that the age of the Ahrensburgian 'long blade' assemblage can be placed at around 10,300 years ago (Barton *et al.* 1998). There is also a published TL date on a burnt flint artefact of (QTLs/DPF11) 10,740 ± 1120 BP from an open-air site at Deer Park Farm (Dorset), but no diagnostic tools were found amongst a lithic assemblage dominated by hard-hammer struck blades and cores (Green *et al.* 1998).

Finally, a book celebrating the life and work of Professor Dorothy Garrod, one of the most distinguished and important British Palaeolithic archaeologists of the 20th century, was published in 1999 (Davies and Charles 1999). It includes papers detailing some of her early work in the British Upper Palaeolithic (Roberts 1999b, Jacobi 1999).

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