

Route 1
Kimberly, Idaho

May 24, 1965

Dr. J. Tixier
Museum National D'Histoire Naturelle
Prehistoire
1 Rue Rene Panhard
Paris, XIII, France

Dear Dr. Tixier:

Thank you so much for the package of Gran Pressigney flint, which I received last week. This material is not only beautiful, but the quality is excellent for knapping. To avoid wasting any of this precious flint, I will saw some of the pieces which I shall use for pressure flaking. I will also heat some of the plaques of this flint and return them to you for your pressure work. The flint requires a little more pressure than obsidian, but it does not crush as easily as obsidian. Since obsidian is a volcanic glass, it does not alter by the thermal treatment, so I will send these plaques just as they are.

Thank you, also, for the translation of your letter which I received Friday from Dr. L. Cabot Briggs and which also included the article on the obsidian razors of the Aztecs. This is the first article I have ever read on the blades of the Aztecs and there is much information that will help me. It is a fine paper and I am grateful that you thought to send it to me.

I shall write to Dr. Briggs and thank him for the translation, for I do appreciate his help. This man is a true friend of yours and, in his letter to me, he gave you many compliments. To quote from his letter - "Tixier is a remarkable person in more ways than one; remarkable knowing particularly in North African prehistory, remarkably skillful in working flint, and above all remarkably nice, modest and cooperative. It is a real pleasure and privilege for me to be able to help him and you too". Thought you might enjoy knowing what a real friend you have in Dr. Briggs.

to answer some of your questions:

① Regarding the feathering retouch, I do not hold the artifact any differently, but I do support it by placing in the palm of the hand a piece of hard rubber or leather with a groove in it for the flake to follow. The feathering technique requires a different approach than the parallel flaking, which goes past the center line of the artifact. One must set the point of the tool a little further in on the edge. When applying pressure, it is done faster and with a little more downward pressure than inward. The inward pressure must be directed in line with the ridge left by the previous flake and at right angles to the edge of the artifact. The force is with a quick snap and not the slow inward and downward pressure which is used when bending the flake from one side to the other.

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There are two methods of making the reverse flaking.

(1) Hold the artifact in the hand in the normal manner, but instead of pressing toward the index finger - press away and towards the little finger.

(2) Place a piece of cloth in the palm of the left hand and support the left hand on the inside of your left thigh. Then press towards the right thigh, with the flake going between the index and second finger. This second method produces a different character than the first and the flakes are not broken against the cloth.

If these instructions are not clear, please ask me again or for any other information I can give to help you in your pressure work. I will be glad to help in any way that I can for I have been repaid many times by the beautiful flint you sent. I have plenty of the Oregon obsidian and will be sending you some more.

I would like to make one request of you. Do you have a photo of the beautiful cave painting on the walls of your Museum. I refer to the one painted so beautifully that it showed the leg motion of the animal. I do wish I had taken a picture of this, and if you have a photo of this painting I would greatly appreciate a copy of it. If not, please do not feel obligated to try and fill this request.

I am working on the Capsian core using untreated material and a bone tool. So far, I have not had much luck. I can flake the heated material, but not the unheated when I use the bone tool. For me, Ivory is a much better tool than bone for it is stronger and, with the ivory, I can make the core and blades. I shall keep trying.

We had a delightful visit in Berkeley, California with Francois and Denise Bordes and enjoyed very much making the movie with him. He is truly the master of percussion and his pressure work is very, very good. It was such a pleasure to see these grand people again. I left Francois about 100 lbs of Oregon obsidian which he intends to ship back to Bordeaux and he said that he would see that you got some of it.

We do hope that you will be able to attend the INQUA congress in Denver, Colorado in August for I would enjoy very much talking and working with you again.

Please let me be of whatever help I can, for I am more than repaid by hearing of your most interesting work. I will look forward to hearing of your work in Lebanon.

Sincerely,

Don E. Crabtree

Co. 11.2.1922

Route 1
Kimberly, Idaho
July 5, 1965

Dr. J. Tixier
Museum National D'Histoire Naturelle
Prehistoire
1 Rue Rene Panhard
Paris, XIII, France

Dear Jacques:

Please excuse my long silence, but business interests have just about taken all my time. Thank you so very much for sending the slides of the cave and the cave paintings. These are magnificent art works and you cannot know how delighted I am to have them in my collection. Thank you for taking your valuable time to take these pictures for me and you may be sure they will be put to good use in my lectures.

I haven't done anything with the Gran Pressigny flint yet for I am waiting until I can get a new diamond sawblade, for I don't want to waste a single piece by using the percussion method on this material.

I have been experimenting with the Capsein cores and find that a pressure tool of antler, bone or ivory is more satisfactory to use than the copper tip, as the copper tool has a tendency to crush the platform. Antler or ivory is better than bone, as bone is more brittle, but it still can be used. A thinner blade can be detached with antler or ivory as they can be set closer to the edge without the platform crushing. I will send some examples as soon as I've done a little more experimenting on the Capsein Cores.

I hope to make a trip to Glass Butte, Oregon soon to get some obsidian. Would you rather have me send you this material in slabs (plaques), or do you prefer it in the rough chunks. I plan to send you some, so let me know which you prefer. Also let me know if there is anything else I can do for you, or any questions I can answer for you to help you in your pressure work.

I have been working on the Egyptian technique - trying to duplicate the blade I saw in the Louve. Also had a chance to study a piece of this same type of work while I was in Berkeley and was able to observe the scars more closely. I have had no luck with the inertia method shown in Semenov's book "Prehistoric Technology", but am doing quite well with the hand-held pressure. In the past, I have been placing the platforms above the ridge of the previous flake scar. Now, to change the style of flake, I use a wider spacking and set the tool ahead of the ridge and the flake scar is very similar to the Egyptian technique. I apply a downward and outward pressure to produce the wide and slightly curved scars the Egyptians were able to produce.

Tomorrow I leave to join Dr Earl Swanson in the Idaho Primitive area at their dig. He is working on a Peleco Indian site that should be most interesting. I will take your slides with me, for I am sure Swanson and the students will enjoy seeing them.

Thank you again for this wonderful gift and much success in your Summer work.

Sincerely,

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