

Tixier to Crabtree - March 18, 1966

Paris, March 18, 1965 (for 1966)

Dear Don;

What a pleasure to get good news of your research on tool making techniques!

I waited to reply for your return from Mexico. I hope you and your wife had a good time there. I also waited to be able to announce to you that a parcel of Grand Pressigny flint was sent to you yesterday.

I'm glad that the micro-burins pleased you. I enclose a drawing (2a) showing the four varieties of microburins (distal right and left, proximal right and left). There are even "double" microburins and I have just discovered a workshop of "capsian" technique where they made trapezes and two trapezes were obtained from a single blade (2b) - this in the Sahara last November. I would like to have a sketch of your microburin found near your home, because, if it is typical, it would be worth while for you to write a short article on the first discovery of this type of tool in North America.

A piece of news in your letter impressed me greatly: the project of Swanson and Wendorf for a session like that of Les Eyzies. That you should have thought of me gave me very great pleasure. Bordes, whom I saw a few days ago, is delighted by this project. I send my best wishes that it may succeed.

Thanks for the reference to the article of Tebiwa; as far as pressure technique is concerned, I am your pupil.

I have resumed tool-making a little, but I still have problems about retouch. I don't manage very well, particularly with the pieces "made on slabs," to get good "feathering flaking," my flakes often coming off with a "step fracture." But I certainly hope to correct this fault which must be less frequent with flint and with preforms (I don't know quite what he means by this).

Don't worry about the "capsian" nuclei; we have plenty of time.

Bravo for your movie camera that shoots 44,000 frames per second. That's magnificent. I think you are right in supposing that obsidian bends in detaching from the nucleus. It is the only valid explanation for the beginning of the distal extremity rising very high (maybe as shown in sketch no. 1?).

I have just got for my laboratory a furnace of which I enclose the specifications. I have started trials and obtained good results with "Bergeracois" flint at 300 degrees Centigrade (572 Fahrenheit) for 20 hours. On the other hand, this temperature is too high for Grand Pressigny. I will keep you posted on my experiments with "Heat Treating."

I am very glad, believe me, to be able to work with the obsidian which you sent me, and I thank you again. One question: how do you break the obsidian slabs so that the break follows your scratch line made with a diamond (or with a wheel)?

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What can I do for you? is there anything that you need? Would you like to have some experimental pieces made on blades in imitation of the tools of the French Upper Palaeolithic?

Hoping to have good news of you avery soon, I beg you to give my very good remembrances to your wife and to believe ~~me~~, dear Don, in my very sincere friendship.

(Signed)

J. Tixier

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