

Route 1, Box 39  
Kimberly, Idaho 83341  
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Dr. Phillip Allworth-Jones  
BRNO  
Leninova 90  
Czechoslovakia

Dear Phillip:

Thank you for your letter of Dec. 12th and for all the information contained therein. I am glad that the Corbiac paper was of some help, but bear in mind that this is only one technique of blademaking, for there are so many and one continually discovering new techniques through experiment. For instance, I found that by striking on the edge of a cobble and dampening the force until it almost approaches pressure that I can detach quite straight blades without any - or very little - platform. Then the block-on-block technique of striking the core against an anvil stone gives good blades with a minute platform. Etc. etc etc. I am sorry that you missed Dr. Swanson when he was in England. He could have discussed the various techniques with you.

I will have to wait until Spring to make the blades you request, for it is quite difficult to make them outside in the cold weather. To my knowledge, there has been nothing written on the technological characteristics of all the diverse blademaking techniques. Hopefully, in the future, and with continued experiment, Francois Bondes, Jacques Tixier or myself will be able to provide additional incite into the features and characteristics of the diverse techniques of platform preparation, core styles, kinds of force and the angle at which the force is applied. We are all working on it.

Experiments reveal that one can make a flake or blade with a diffused bulb and an overhanging lip with a hammerstone and direct percussion - depending on the style of platform. However, billets of softer material - such as wood - will cause this feature to occur more often on unprepared edges of bifaces for the softer material tends to bite into the stone and detach the margin with the flake. The statement you quote about three types of platforms is not always true and there are certainly more than three kinds of bulbs. Certain techniques have certain characteristics identifiable to that particular method, but, at this time, there has been insufficient experiments to relate to all of the Paleolithic peoples in time and space.

I would suggest that in your writings the features be described and the exact technique not be pinpointed. Too much chance for error here without experiment. By pointing out the various characteristics you will make an important contribution. There will always be some techniques which will probably never be fully understood.

I am only sorry that at the present time, I haven't time to give you more details. Thank you for inquiring about my wife who is still undergoing treatments.

If things go well and we make the meetings at Belgrade, perhaps you will be there and we can discuss this in detail. When you return to England, maybe you would like to rent the blademaking films made at I.S.U. and these will give you a close-up on preparation, angles, force etc. These can be obtained through Dr. Swanson at Idaho State University. Believe he showed them to Ian Cornwall when he was there and Ian was really pleased with the information they provided.

With best wishes,

Don E. Crabtree