

Route 1
Kimberly, Idaho
Sept. 10, 1965

Dear Francois:

I was so happy to receive your interesting letter of Sept. 1st and thanks for all the good information you gave me. I shall try holding the antler as you suggest, but I don't have your experience in percussion and, therefore, will probably not be as successful as you are with this method.

I just returned from the INQUE meet at Boulder and saw so many of your American friends there, including most of those that were at the meeting in Les Eyzies last year. They all asked about you. It was such a surprise and so good to see the Guichards again and I just wish I could speak French so I could really converse with them.

I will be so happy to see the work you have done on the Swedish material and the untreated flint. I tried some pressure work on the untreated French flint when I was at Les Eyzies and I, too, found that it did not permit as much control and did not leave as sharp an edge.

I am now sawing some obsidian to send to you and am including some with a little red in it.

I am really excited about your finding the grinding technique used by the old ones of Europe. Only you would have noticed it. Thanks for the drawing showing how you hold the antler to increase the speed of the tool - this is an important phase of the different techniques. My problem is - the longer the tool - the poorer shot I am. With your accuracy, you are going to get some fine thin blades. Apparently, the high speed of the antler seems to break the cohesion more easily without setting up so much shock to the artifact. It also seems to make a straighter, flatter, thinner flake - particularly, if the edge is ground so that it won't collapse. I think you have solved much of the Solutrean methods. One thing that sure helps me in the thinning, is to rest the biface on the inside of my thigh. With the Faster blow, the leg helps dampen the shock and I can make them quite thin without breaking.

I saw Art Jelinek at Boulder and he had just seen Desmond Clark and Leakey. While they were examining tools and flakes with abraded edges and platforms he mentioned that he had seen us grind the edges of the tools prior to the flaking and he said they both jumped up and contradicted him with an emphatic "no." Art did not pursue it further, so I am glad you have found this grinding and understand its use.

I have been practicing and have had some success with the indirect percussion method. I have been using a wood handle with a copper point. I put a pad on a block of wood and then rest the biface on the pad. After I grind the platforms, I then strike a fast blow, using a long piece of antler. I am not as accurate as you, so this indirect method helps me, but I still need your help and a lot of practice. If you know a local baker who would let you put a pan of blades or preforms in the oven when he bakes his bread, this would be one way of tempering your stone. Bread temperature is about right for cooking the flint, if it is first covered with sand or earth to keep it from heating or cooling too quickly.

Please give our regards to your family and I hope we will be able to visit together again in the near future.

Will be sending you your package in a few days and will also send something to Guichard.

Sincerely,
Don E. Crabtree

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