

FLAKING STONE WITH WOODEN IMPLEMENTS

At Palliaiike Cave in Southern Chile, Period III stemless pressure flaked points made of basalt and varieties of siliceous stone were found, but no bone compressors or percussors were discovered in association with the points. Since well-preserved bone was found in the cave, the professional curiosity of Dr. Junius Bird ^{became curious about the points and wanted to make these} was aroused to determine what implements and techniques were used in their manufacture. He wondered if, like ^{certain} the ^{Aborigines} Australians, these people could have used wooden implements so, at his suggestion, ~~we~~ decided to try replication with wooden flakers.

Dr. Bird generously provided seven examples of the points as well as a variety of Calafate hardwood ^{(Sp.?) (Berberis buxifolia)} and a small supply of native coarse-grained basalt. The pressure technique of the points could not be called "classic" or "extremely refined", but flake detachment does show planning and control, making the writer eager to accept the challenge of replication with wooden implements. It may be difficult to ^{visualize} associate and reconcile the shaping and forming of lithic materials - which are harder than steel - ^{by means of} with merely a wooden tool but it can be done. Perhaps ^{we find it difficult} this is because ^{to reconcile the use of a wooden flaker because} it is common in New World sites to find ^{Compressors} pressure tools of antler, bone, ivory and other non-perishables resistant to decay; but have we stopped to consider that wood, because of its perishable nature, could go unrecorded as material used for flaking stone? We know that wooden pressure tools are used in ^{the Kimberley region of Western} Australia, for this has been observed by Richard Gould (personal communication), A.P. Elkin, ("Pressure Flaking in Northern Kimberley", Man, ~~130~~ ^{P.P. 110-113}, Oct. 1948) Norman Tindale ("Aboriginal Australian" 1963 and personal communication) and others. There is also a possibility that wood was used as a pressure tip in Mexico for making blades by pressure. (Crabtree, "Mesoamerican Polyhedral Cores and Prismatic Blades" American Antiquity, Vol. 33, No. 4, Oct. 1968). ^{33:4 P.P. 446-451} So why ~~not in other sites?~~ As this paper will demonstrate, pressure-flaking with wooden implements must be considered by archaeologists on some occasions as an alternative to flaking with bone pressers.

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experiments with

other wooden flaker² techniques,

After a former try at the Australian method and ~~after concluding~~[^]
~~this experiment,~~^{I would suggest ^} it is believed entirely possible that the geographic
range of the wooden pressure flaker technique should not be confined to
Australia. ~~Both this and the Australian experiment with wooden~~^{These experiments}
~~implements~~ involved only the replication of flake character and no
attempt was made to duplicate form or size of the artifact. Indeed,
the initial attempts with wooden implements were very discouraging and
had to be confined to duplication of flake character alone. Replication
of flake scars is the real challenge and duplication of form is no
problem. As the experiments progressed, interest became keener, muscle
response improved, holding became more comfortable, and the results
more gratifying. Certainly, more prolonged experiments would improve
one's technique with the wooden flaker.

Experiments in pressure flaking with a replica of the Australian
wooden flaker were limited and resulted in only moderate success. This
was due, in part, to the fact that the Australian tool is longer than
the bone flaker ~~and because~~^{with} the holding method ~~was~~ completely reversed
from my normal manner of holding the compressor, and also because
pressure is applied by thrusting away from the body. ~~a complete~~
~~reversal of the normal pressure technique.~~^{Initially} I found the technique
awkward and concluded a longer training period was necessary. The ~~first~~
experiment, resulted in imitations of the Australian points, but I ~~do~~^{did} not
feel that they were duplications, ~~or replicas.~~ I do feel, however, that
~~persistence with this experiment would result in a production of replicas.~~

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The Palliaiike experiment was not as awkward; it progressed much
faster and was successful. It involved pressing toward the worker - much
more parallel to my normal pressure technique - and I feel that both the
technique and the points were replicated.

LITHIC MATERIAL:

Isotrophic minerals selected for the experiments of fracturing and shaping stone with wooden flakers and billets ranged in texture from coarse ^{grained} basalt to vitreous obsidian. Non-homogeneous materials and those having apparent planes of weakness and obvious imperfections were discarded. (Flintworker's Raw Materials", Tebiwa, Vol.10, No.1, 10:1 Crabtree, 1967)

The most granular material used was a basalt from the Magellan Straits and some from Southern Idaho. The Palliaiike artifacts were made of basalt superior to the experimental material which was much too granular and tenacious to respond well to the wooden pressure flaker. Therefore, in an effort to duplicate the quality of the Palliaiike artifacts, some of the basalt was thermal treated before flaking. One specimen was retained unaltered for control and comparison. The alteration consisted of placing the natural basalt in an oven and - over a period of twelve hours - gradually bringing the temperature to 500°F; then the oven was turned off and the stone allowed to cool undisturbed for approximately twelve hours. This considerably improved the quality of the basalt but still the texture did not approximate that of the Palliaiike artifacts. Possibly, further experiments with a higher temperature and a longer cooling period would alter the material to a duplicate texture. However, lacking a sufficient amount of the Chile material, further experiments could not be made. The alteration was merely an attempt to replicate texture and does not indicate or infer the use of thermal treatment at the Palliaiike Cave.

Because the basalt supply was limited, porcelain was substituted, for it has a similar texture and behaves and responds in much the same manner. Both altered and unaltered silica minerals were also used and

it was noted that the heating process greatly improved the flaking quality of the silica. Of course, the more vitreous obsidian from Oregon and Mexico did not require alteration.

HAMMERSTONES AND BILLETS:

A hammerstone of medium density weighing approximately one and one-half pounds was used to serve a two-fold purpose - i.e., to detach usable flakes from the core and to make the preliminary roughout of the core tool. But an antler or wooden billet was used for the preforming stage.

To expand the experiment with wooden implements, a billet of ironwood from Southern Arizona was used for the percussion modification for, unlike the stone percussor, the hardwood billet will detach flakes without shattering the objective piece. When the blow is struck with a wooden billet, the lateral margins of the artifact penetrate the wood and a flake is detached without the shattering effect. Depth of penetration of the artifact's edge into the wooden percussor determines^{es} the width of the platform, for it detaches a part of the margin along with the flake. Billet-struck flakes often have a lip on the ventral side near the platform and very little definition of the bulb of force. But it should be pointed out that the wooden billet is practically worthless for the preliminary stages of stone flaking - i.e., reduction of large natural material to a usable form; making large usable flakes; making handaxes; large uniface or biface implements; and for blademaking. A hammerstone is considerably more suitable for these stages.

The working end of the wood billet is rounded so that only the arc-like convex end will contact the edge of the artifact. This gives the worker greater striking margin for the wood billet with a rounded end does not require the accuracy of the hammerstone. Also, the hammer-

stone will shatter unprepared edges whereas the billet will not.

Therefore, the billet also allows the worker a greater latitude when delivering blows on the unprepared ^{perimeter} ~~perimetric~~ edges of the artifact.

Flakes detached from the obscure side of the artifact form ridges ~~(crests)~~ ^(?) on each side of the slightly concave flake scar. These ridges ~~(crests)~~ ^(?) thicken that part of the artifact and, consequently, the ridge part of the lateral margin (edge) is stronger and will withstand more force than the concave parts of the artifact. When the wooden billet delivers repeated blows on the ridge part of the lateral margin, small flakes will naturally be removed from each side of the ridge. This is because the concave part of the edge is relatively weak in comparison to the part of the edge bearing the ridge. In turn, the removal of these small flakes forms a projection on the edge which is in alignment with the ridge. The projection will act as a platform and receive the major amount of the billet force and detach a long skimming flake. The novice experimenter may be unaware of creating this projection, become discouraged when the flake does not detach, and increase the velocity of his blows. Ultimately his wood billet will detach a good flake but this will be due to the created platform, not the increased blow velocity. ~~The exterior surface of the core is an important factor in controlling the form of the flake and when ridges (crests) are present on the surface they can be used to advantage to guide and control the flake or blade detachment.~~

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The billet technique does not require the skill and accuracy of the hammerstone and, ~~therefore~~, it offers considerable advantage to the novice experimenter for successful flake detachment when he is unaware of other related factors. As a result, the less seasoned knapper has often misinterpreted and cited this as being the technique used by aboriginal people. ^{when} Often there is no evidence to substantiate this conclusion and the character of the flakes and their scars ^{must always be} is not described, defined, or evaluated. ^{before the tool can be determined & the tech interpreted.}

M. Coutier discovered that when he struck blows on the side of a piece of flint with a rounded piece of wood he could detach thin, flat flakes with flat bulbs of applied force - called the "wooden hammer" technique. (Adams Ancestors, L.S.B. Leakey, 1960) If Coutier was aware of the stone penetrating the wooden billet, the unwitting creation of the platform projection, and the use of ridges to guide the flakes, he did not make reference to it. So, unfortunately, this has ~~led~~^{led} to the conclusion that all thin, flat flakes with diffused bulbs are, therefore, detached with a wooden billet. This is not always true.

The wooden billet can be successfully used for ~~only certain~~^{only} ~~technique~~ after preliminary work has been accomplished with percussors of denser materials. The hardwood billet does, however, have a ~~very~~ definite and useful place in stone flaking but, aboriginally, it may not have had the wide-spread use interpreted by some ~~experimenters~~^{archaeologists}. Final conclusions of the knapping instrument used in manufacture can only be determined after an evaluation of a comparatively large population of flakes and artifacts. ~~This paper will attempt to explain its use and give some clues for manufacturing interpretation.~~

PREFORMING:

The involved process of preforming is not explained here because it has been fully described in detail in "A Stoneworker's Approach to Analyzing and Replicating the Lindenmeier Folsom" (Tebiwa, Vol. 9, No. 1, Crabtree, 1966) The proper use of a wooden percussor is covered in the text under "Percussion Tools".

This paper is primarily concerned with ~~using a~~^{the use of} wooden pressure flaker. However, it is well to note that when a wooden flaker - rather than one of bone, antler or metal - is used ~~to~~ⁱⁿ pressure ~~flake~~^{flaking}, the last stage of preforming must be done with considerable care. The surface of

the preform should be left as regular as possible, for it is ~~very~~ difficult to remove step or hinge fractures left by careless percussion preforming when the worker is using a wooden flaker.

If the worker employs the core tool technique he can use either a hammerstone; antler, bone, or wood billet; or a punch and direct or indirect percussion to remove all surplus material from the mass until it is preformed into the proper form. But for the final forming, thinning, and sharpening, the wooden flaker and pressure technique is used.

A simpler method is to obtain blanks by using a hammerstone and percussion to detach simple flakes from the core and thereby eliminate the preforming stage. Flakes intended for bifacial points are designed to be straight with the distal end pointed and feathered and, of necessity, must be slightly larger and thicker than the intended artifact. All flakes detached from the core may not have these requisit^{es}, so the worker selects ^{only} those which are suitable for pressure work and ~~the discards~~ ^{discards} ~~discarded flakes are used for tools other than points.~~ ^{the other flakes or uses them for other purposes.}

WOODEN PRESSURE FLAKER:

Properly used, wooden pressure tools make fine compressors. Selected hardwoods have sufficient strength to transmit the force necessary to exceed the elastic limit of the lithic material and induce fracture. When the stone reaches its elastic limit, shear stresses are induced, fracture occurs, and a flake is detached. After ^{much trial and} ~~many trial and~~ ^{error} ~~error methods~~, it was determined that ^a ~~the~~ wooden flaker with a sharp pointed working end would not tolerate the pressing strain and would either split or break. ~~Even fire-hardening the tips made no apparent improvement in the working qualities of the pointed wooden tip.~~ But when a shaft of selected hard wood from 8" to 2' long and three quarters

inches feet


of an inch in diameter was fashioned with a blunt working end, it was strong enough to withstand and transmit sufficient force to fracture the material. But wood must be carefully selected for flakers; - it must be sufficiently hard to prevent too deep a penetration of the lithic material into the tip of the wooden flaker and tough or fibrous enough to prevent splitting. Highly resinous woods which are too hard (such as ironwood) were found to be too brittle and would break. Ironwood is ~~very~~ good for wood billets but does not work as a compressor. Coarse-grained wood will split before a flake can be removed. The worker should experiment with various types of wood until he finds a satisfactory billet or pressure flaker. At this time, the writer has not had a sufficient variety of woods to express a preference. However, experiments reveal that the Calafate wood - a species of barberry which grows in the grasslands near Fells Cave - is a ~~very~~ satisfactory tool for pressure work. Dr. Junius Bird generously provided four pieces of Calafate; and the writer gathered some Manzanita from Arizona and found both ~~very~~ satisfactory for pressure flakers. Other woods were also tried, but none were equal to the Calafate and Manzanita. I hope in the future to obtain some Australian hardwoods for further experiments.

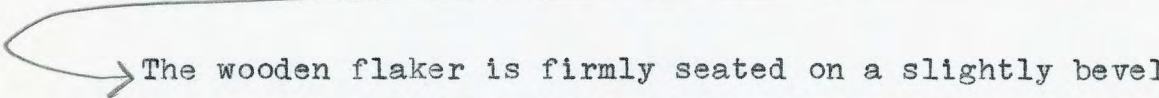
~~Initial experiments with wood pressure tools were with varieties easily obtainable in quantity - i.e., mountain mahogany, manzanita, bamboo, oak, hickory, ash, etc. The Calafate wood was kept for the final testing. Ironwood, because of its remarkable hardness, was tried but it was resinous and brittle and, therefore, broke.~~

Having become accustomed to flakers of bone, antler and metal, it was necessary to modify the holding method and vary the application of pressure with the wooden implement. The tips of bone, antler, and metal flakers will withstand more downward pressure than the wooden tool. They

also allow greater control and "feel" of flake detachment and the worker can remove long narrow curved parallel flakes from one lateral margin to the other. This was not accomplished in this experiment with the wooden flaker, but it is not rejected for it may have been due to the brevity of the experiment. The coordination and rhythms of muscular motor habits become ingrained in the worker who has used ~~bone,~~ ^{bone,} ivory and metal flakers for years and changing to tools of wood, ^{requiring learning} a new technique, ^{and} ~~and~~ ^{the} ~~a~~ different "feel" made response difficult. It was necessary to attempt a variety of diverse approaches in order to overcome some of the difficulties encountered. The wooden pressure tool would slip, the tip would break, the wood was insecure and would yield when pressed against the margin of the artifact. ~~The wooden tool limits the worker's "feel", muscular reaction, and the response of the lithic material.~~ ^{"feel"} "Feel" has little meaning to the novice, but when one has pressure flaked with bone, metal, or antler which adheres ^{es} to the platform of the artifact, he is accustomed to feeling the flake part from the ^{piece being worked.} ~~objective piece at the proximal end of the proposed flake.~~ Pressure tools must be kept in alignment and the flake pressed off across the face of the artifact to delete small step fractures or ^{irregular} ~~areas~~ of minor non-homogeneity. The wooden pressure flaker has, to date, limited the worker's "feel" of control. The experiment using wooden pressure tools was limited to a few weeks while pressure tools other than wood have been used for many years by the writer. As with any craft or trade, the worker must become familiar with his tools.

If the tip of the wooden pressure flaker is rounded to resemble the end of a broom or mop handle, one can apply considerable pressure without the flaker breaking. As work proceeds, the tip of the compressor is rotated to expose new surfaces, retain the rounded shape, and even the wear pattern. If the tip becomes fibrous, it can be rubbed on an abrasive stone to expose a new hard surface.

New pressing techniques had to be devised to successfully use the bluntly rounded wooden tip. The blunt end contacts a wider part of the artifact's edge and detaches flakes with wider proximal ends than when a harder pressure tool is used. With the wooden flaker, the worker uses a thrusting motion in a straight line toward the edge and then presses away from the artifact to detach a flake. 

The wooden flaker is firmly seated on a slightly beveled platform and then thrust downward and away in a simultaneous motion; snapping, rather than press, off a flake. If basalt or other coarse textured materials are being worked, considerably more force is necessary to detach flakes. If the downward and outward force is not coordinated, the snapping method may break the flakes off short and terminate the end in a step fracture rather than the desired feathered edge.

HOLDING:

The method of holding the wooden pressure tool is quite different than when antler or other hard flakers are used because the harder tool will tolerate more downward pressure at its tip. When wood is used, the artifact being pressure flaked must be firmly supported. This can be either ^{with} by a padded anvil stone or, if hand-held, the artifact ^{can be} is held in ^{horizontal} ~~the position of the hand~~ the left hand with its lateral margins ~~vertical~~ ^{horizontal} and the back of the hand solidly supported ^{against} ~~on~~ the inside of the left thigh. The worker sits on a low seat and holds the wooden flaker as close as possible to the tip in order to increase the leverage. If the pressure tool is longer (about two feet), the distal end ^{can be} is rested against the right ribs and kept in alignment with the forearm of the right hand. This enables the worker to use the forearm and shoulders to increase the ^{vertical} ~~pressing~~ pressing force. The low seat raises the left thigh above the posterior, thus permitting

pressure to be applied perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of the artifact on the vertical edge. ^{The position of the Australian Aborigine worker differs somewhat, since} ~~The aboriginal possibly also assumed a seated position for he was~~ accustomed to sitting on the ground.

The wooden flaker is placed on the margin of the artifact and ^{pressed smoothly} thrust inward in alignment with the proposed flake, ^{As pressure increases, an} ~~then outward~~ causing ^{outward force is imparted,} the flake to detach from the artifact. Examination of aboriginal flake scars and those made experimentally reveal that pressure was applied in ~~much~~ the same direction. The technique is different than when using antler or bone pressure tools which are held at an angle to the margin with the force being directed at right angles to the long axis of the pressure tool.

The wooden flaker technique and the change of applied pressure requires the worker to use a different set of muscular motor habits and, in the beginning, will form either blisters or calluses on the right hand. After a few attempts, a blister formed at the base between the first and second fingers until I became accustomed to the change in technique. It requires about three weeks of intermittent practice before the right hand is really comfortable. Perhaps the shaft of the pressure tool could be served with fiber or sinew to make it more comfortable and to prevent slippage.

PRESSURE FLAKING:

Preforming by direct percussion leaves fairly large randomly spaced flake scars, creating crests and hollows which must be removed by pressure to make the artifact symmetrical and regular. A platform is established by making a bevel on the edge in alignment with the ridge to be removed. ^{The bevel} is made by pressing the wooden flaker at right angles to the margin to detach small flakes and ^{to} slant the edge toward the face ^{being} ~~to be immediately~~ flaked. The tip of the pressure tool is then seated

firmly on the platform and the worker presses ^{smoothly} first inward and then outward, detaching a flake which, in turn, removes the ridge. When the major ridges are removed, the piece is ready for the next stage of final pressure flaking.

When both faces of the artifact are pressure-flaked from both margins, the worker has a choice of two techniques: (1) One-half of the face can be pressure flaked from one margin and then one-half of the opposite face pressure flaked from the same margin. (One-half of both faces flaked from one margin). ^{then} (2) One-half of one face can be pressure flaked from one margin then the piece turned and the same face flaked from the opposite margin, having the flakes meet and terminate at the median line. (One face pressure flaked from both margins). Both stages are then repeated to complete the artifact.

The edge of one margin is beveled on one face which removes the overhang left by previous bulbar scars. Then a more pronounced bevel is made on the same margin but on the opposite face and this bevel is used as a platform area for the pressure retouch. To remove the second series of flakes from the same margin but the opposite face, the edge must again be beveled in the same manner as previously described. However, now the bevel is on the face to be flaked. After the second bevel is made, the artifact is held in the left hand with the first beveled side resting on the palm and the second beveled side visible to the worker and this bevel serves as a platform to detach flakes on the obscure side. ^{A series of} Flakes ^{are} removed ^{is} in order along the margin beginning at either the base or tip of the artifact, depending on the worker's preference. If work is started at the tip, flakes become increasingly larger as the worker near^s the base; if flaking starts at the base, flakes become increasingly smaller as the work ^{approachs} ~~near~~ the tip. Flakes progress along the margin toward the base or tip until all of the beveled margin

is removed.

When flaking is started on the margin - whether at the base or tip - a short flake with the bevel adhering is removed to establish a ridge. This and subsequent flakes ^{become increasingly long} will be increasing longer, and all flakes ~~are~~ terminated at the median line of the long axis. After each flake is detached, the tip of the pressure tool is again seated on the beveled edge and flaking is spaced to allow the platform part of the second flake to intersect the sharp edge left by removal of the bevel of the preceding flake. (~~Subsequent flakes detached also remove the prepared bevel and are spaced to intersect the sharp edge.~~)

The wooden flaker does not crush the edge, ^{It} and will detach a flake ^{with a broad and diffused rather than a deep bulb of force.} which will not have a deep bulb of force but, rather, will be ~~wide, flattened and diffused.~~ Flaking will progress ^{es} toward either the base or tip (depending on where the worker starts) along the margin until all beveling is removed. Due to the blunt, thick end of the wooden tool, the spacing interval between flakes is ^{broader} wider than when an antler pressure tool is used. The worker intentionally spaces the flakes so that each subsequent flake scar will intersect the last scar and form a straight sharp edge. When pressure flaking is complete, the wooden flaker leaves edges which are uncrushed and quite sharp. Flaking is continued until both faces and both margins are flaked, ~~and the artifact completed.~~

The wooden flaker is not suitable for removing long, narrow, curved, ^{or} parallel flakes and is inadequate as a notching tool; but ^{it} could be used for making a shouldered or stemmed point.

CONCLUSIONS:

Palliaike

Two of the seven points show better quality workmanship than the other five. This appears to be because a material superior to basalt was used ^{rather than} ~~and not~~ the result of greater skill. All seven examples show surface smoothing to ^{varying degrees,} ~~a lesser or greater degree.~~ The bifacial smoothing could be ^{either} intentional abrading by the worker or unintentional smoothing by function. Without the aid of considerable magnification and further experiment, it is difficult to pass final judgement. If these points were hafted, then it would seem that the bifacial basal smoothing could not be the result of function. Hafting could be accomplished by using resins and adhesives to affix the base of the point to a wooden shaft, ^{as shown by the Kimberley Aborigines,} ~~This hafting technique is not un-~~ ~~common but was used by the Australians who also used wooden flakers.~~ Many Clovis points from Western North America are smoothed to ^{an} ~~even~~ greater degree, for example those found at the Simons site in Idaho. Some points show the detachment of short flakes terminating in step fractures. ^{Palliaike points were made of basalt, the} ~~Because the lithic material was basalt, this is difficult~~ ^{on these specimens may have arisen. Maybe due to} ~~to define for it could be~~ because the material is difficult to work, because the worker was less skilled, or because of the wooden flaker. ^{of the Palliaike} All points are thick in relation to their width, making them resistant to breakage. However, since only one point in the collection (1755c) shows an attempt at basal thinning, this could be due to the worker's inability to thin, ~~because he was working~~ basalt which is difficult to ^{control} thin with a wooden flaker, ^{tool such as a} or simply because he wanted the point thick for a particular function.

Palliaike Cave points and replicas pressure flaked with a wooden flaker have flake scars with certain comparable characteristics. The wooden tool distributes the force over a wider area than when bone or antler tools are used and produces flake scars with a diffused bulb. It also removes a part of the lateral margin with the flake, leaving a distinctive edge. This is due to the spacing of the final series of

pressure flakes, leaving the margin with a serrated appearance. However, this is coincidental, for the serrating technique was not employed.

The wider, blunter tip of the wooden tool narrowed the margin of the worker's visibility for seating the tool on the edge. For me, the wooden flaker required more foot pounds of pressure than is needed with a harder compressor. I did not find the wooden flaker suitable for detaching long, narrow, curved, ^{or} parallel flakes; but ^I do not reject the possibility, pending further experiment. The wooden flaker will not withstand the amount of downward pressure that a bone, antler or metal tip will tolerate. It also limits the worker's muscular reaction, "feel" and control of the lithic material's response.

The wooden billet does not shatter the objective piece, and a less skilled worker can successfully detach flakes without understanding a more sophisticated technique. The wooden compressor can be used by a less skilled worker to produce a sharp edge on a stone tool.

After working with the wooden flaker and producing some acceptable replicas, I believe it is entirely possible that the Palliaike points could have been pressure flaked with a wooden tool. But knapping is not an easy art and the worker is inclined to look for better flaking tools and improved techniques to make stone tools. So I am unable to reconcile the presence of bone in the cave and the absence of bone flakers. But, by the same token, I am unable to reconcile the Australian's use of wooden flakers, yet I know this to be a fact.

Try ecological conclusion.

~~Wooden flakers can be successfully used to make these points - but were they? Having successfully replicated the flake scars of the Palliaike points in the experiment, I would not hesitate to say that these points can be made with wooden flakers.~~