

Cp 20-9 pl

Route 1, Box 210
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Dear Peter:

It was so good to hear from you and to receive your most informative and instructive explanations of the Grand Pressigny cores and blades. Fortunately, Gene Titmus reads some french and has been a great help in understanding the terminology and the nomenclature of the Old World. This is certainly a most exciting and enigmatic project to work on.

Last week was my first opportunity to do some minor experiments on small obsidian blocks. It is my feeling at this time that the punch or drift was not used because of the yield at both the proximal and distal ends of the punch and also the percussors used too much force to be used by using this method. It would increase the accuracy, but the resistance of the Grand Pressigny flint is so great that I feel after one or two blows the punch would become unserviceable and particularly with the use of the ridge as a platform even though it was slightly abraded. The approach of my initial experiments has been to use a fixed anvil or a fixed percussor and then strike the core against the anvil. There are two types of blows: one is a direct line and the other is an arclike blow. I find with the arc-like blow that a crack is started and the blade will follow the free surface or the guiding ridge or convexity of the core's surface. This allows for a nice termination without removing the end of the ~~core~~^{core}. The amount of force and accuracy are of utmost importance and it is going to take considerable practice in order to have repeated satisfactory results. Hopefully the weather will warm and I will be able to continue on with additional experiments, and I will keep you in touch with the results.

About the literature on other large blades, I can only say that it is in one of the back copies of American Antiquity many years ago that I read of the Lena River cores. Their method was entirely different from the Grand Pressigny technique. It would appear that they were made from a large biface with a flat top or else severed a biface to create a platform on the top and then they removed both lateral margins and as the core was reduced it became somewhat polyhedral in form.

The only other very large blades that I am aware of are those from MesoAmerica and Ecuador. There is still so much to be found out about how the superb blades were made in Belize, and of flint, while other very large macro blades were made in other parts of MesoAmerica, particularly in Guatemala and those were made of obsidian. So far no satisfactory core has been found, yet numerous blades were exported in their natural form. They were probably used as knives,

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daggers, or spears. They were very flat and pointed. By the way, these blades were stemmed which destroyed the platform so there is no information from the finished tool regarding the platform preparation. Work will be continued on this site starting in January and surely this next summer will yield much more information about the technologies used in the blade production.

In my reading I do remember illustrations of long bladelike forms being found made of obsidian in both Africa and New Zealand, but unfortunately I can't quote publications regarding the implements.

Peter, I find that approximately 230 Centigrade is the approximate temperature for heat treating Grand Pressigny flint; however, I find no indications that the cores were ever heat treated. But should you try pressure flaking Grand Pressigny flint, that temperature is approximately right or correct for altering the flint.

Peter, I would look forward to having you submit your findings on technologies used in Grand Pressigny cores to The Flintknappers' Exchange for which I believe you have the address. Jacque Nichols is the editor. I am sure many people in the New World would be most interested in your approaches and your interpretations of the Grand Pressigny core and blade production.

Thanks again for your great articles and drawings, and I do wish you a happy and prosperous New Year. I will look forward to another visit if you get as far as Australia - don't forget me.

Your friend,

Don Crabtree

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