

Stellingen behorende bij het proefschrift *Challenges to the Occupation of North-West Europe during the late Middle Pleistocene*, door Nicholas Ashton

1. The association of human evidence with fluvial environments in Britain during the Lower Palaeolithic (Ashton *et al.* 2006) is more a reflection of the availability of lithic raw material and subsequent discard of artefacts in these locations rather than a reflection of human landscape use.

Ashton, N.M., Lewis, S.G., Parfitt, S.A. and White, M. 2006. Riparian landscapes and human habitat preferences during the Hoxnian (MIS 11) Interglacial. *Journal of Quaternary Science* 21(5), 497-505.

2. Time-averaged stone tool assemblages from river terraces can effectively be used to document relative human population change (Ashton & Lewis 2002; Ashton and Hosfield 2010) and do not simply mirror past biases in collection (McNabb 2007).

Ashton, N.M. and Hosfield, R. In press. Mapping the human record in the British early Palaeolithic: evidence from the Solent River system. *Journal of Quaternary Science*
Ashton, N. and Lewis, S. 2002. Deserted Britain: declining populations in the British late Middle Pleistocene. *Antiquity* 76, 388-396.
McNabb, J. 2007. *The British Lower Palaeolithic: Stones in Contention*. Routledge, London

3. The claimed absence of humans in Britain during MIS 5e (Ashton 2002) reflects the scarcity of suitable 'capture points' for artefacts and the short duration of this period (as suggested for northern Europe by Roebroeks and Speleers 2002) rather than a genuine human absence.

Ashton, N.M. 2002. Absence of humans in Britain during the last interglacial (Oxygen Isotope Stage 5e). In A. Tuffreau and W. Roebroeks (eds). *Le Dernier Interglaciaire et les Occupations Humaines du Paléolithique Moyen*. Lille: Publications du CERP. 93-103.
Roebroeks, W. and Speleers, B. 2002. Last interglacial (Eemian) occupation of the North European Plain and adjacent areas. In A. Tuffreau and W. Roebroeks (eds). *Le Dernier Interglaciaire et les Occupations Humaines du Paléolithique Moyen*. Lille: Publications du CERP. 31-39.

4. The well-documented early human colonisation of islands in south-east Asia (e.g. Flores at 800 ka: Brumm *et al.* 2006) and recently claimed evidence from Crete at 130 ka (Panagopoulou and Strasser 2010), suggests that the island history of Britain is of minimal importance to understanding human occupation during the Palaeolithic.

Brumm, A. *et al.* 2006. Early stone technology on Flores and its implications for *Homo floresiensis*. *Nature* 441, 624-628
Panagopoulou, E. and Strasser, T. 2010. <http://www.ascsa.edu.gr/index.php/News/newsDetails/plakias-survey-finds-stone-age-tools-on-crete/>

5. A 'short chronology' for the Lower Palaeolithic occupation of Europe from 500 ka (Roebroeks and Kolfshoten 1994) has little meaning now that earlier sites have been discovered for example at Atapuerca (Carbonell *et al.* 2009) and Pakefield (Parfitt *et al.* 2005).

Carbonell, E., *et al.* 2009. The first hominin of Europe. *Nature* 452, 465-469.
Parfitt, S.A *et al.* 2005. The earliest record of human activity in northern Europe. *Nature* 438, 1008-1012.
Roebroeks, W., and T. van Kolfshoten 1994. The earliest occupation of Europe: a short chronology. *Antiquity* 68, 489-503

6. Morphological distinctions in handaxes can be used to model the dispersal history of hominid groups across continents (Lycett 2009) rather than the variation predominantly reflecting factors such as resharpening (McPherron 1999) and variations in raw material (Ashton and White 2003).

Ashton, N.M. and White, M.J. 2003. Bifaces and raw material: flexible flaking in the British earlier Palaeolithic. In M. Soressi and H. Dibble (eds) *From Prehistoric Bifaces to Human Behavior: Multiple Approaches to the Study of Bifacial Technology*. 109-123.

Lycett, S.J. 2009. Understanding ancient hominin dispersals using artefactual data: a phylogeographic analysis of Acheulean handaxes. PLoS ONE 4(10):e7404. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0007404
McPherron, S.P. 1999. Ovate and pointed handaxe assemblages: two points make a line. *Préhistoire Européenne* 14, 9-32.

7. The view that early human fossils such as ‘Lucy’ are too rare and fragile for public display and should only be available for scientific study (as defended for example by Richard Leakey and Rick Potts) undermines the role of museums as the public access point to original objects.

8. The ‘Desert Louvre’ in Abu Dhabi can be viewed as ‘France selling out its heritage’ (Daniel Alcouffe, Honorary Curator at the Louvre), rather than an important way of bridging what the ‘world considers a clash of civilizations’ (Jacques Chirac) between Islam and the West (Washington Post March 11th, 2007).

9. Books such as ‘The God Delusion’ by Richard Dawkins have provided a false dichotomy for Christians who believe in evolution, by providing them with a choice of atheism or supporters of ‘intelligent design’.