

Summary

During the Late Glacial northern Europe has been area of big changes. The withdrawal of glacier from European Plain ended time of last glaciation and enabled for settling the new areas. The new inhabitants were the hunter-gatherers groups who survived in refugia in western and southern Europe. Their colonization movement reached European Plain. The first phase of colonization is related with hunter-gatherers communities called Hamburgian Culture. The settlement of Hamburgian Culture concentrated mainly in several regions: Netherland, Jutland, Northern Germany and Western Poland. The main sites from western Poland, namely Liny, Krągola, Mirkowice and Myszęcín are the subject of presented publication.

The small amount of archeological sources, often limited to the lithics, as well as general small number of Hamburgian sites are the main factors impeding interpretation of cultural changes during early phase of Late Paleolithic. Therefore, the new data obtained during rescue excavations related with construction of a modern road network in the last decades are particularly important. Similarly important are the new methods used for analyzing lithic sources, which allowed to gain different perspectives on the available data. The method used in this publication for analyzing lithic materials is a refitting method, which consist on reconnecting elements derived from process of splitting flint nodules. Refitting method allows to reconstruct lithic technology and spatial organization of the encampments. In results of analysis over 300 refittings were obtained.

Refitted lithic nodules allowed to reconstruct the lithic technology. The flint nodule chosen for processing were usually slab-like with one narrow dimension. These long narrow side were the front of the future core, where reduction face were located. The process of knapping started with preparation of platform. Several flakes were detached to create flat surface which formed acute angle with reduction face. The striking face were opened by detaching one frontal crested blade. The preparation of side and back of core were absent or very limited. The several methods of exploitation were distinguished. The regular bidirectional exploitation was based on using two opposite platforms alternately during blade production. The different method was preferential bidirectional exploitation were one of the platform was used primarily for detaching blades, while second opposite platforms were used only for controlling purpose. The two another method of reduction where orientation of exploitation were changed during processing can be distinguished. The simple unidirectional reduction and reduction with preparation shortening lower part of striking face occurred in Hamburgian lithic inventories as well.

The space within camps were organized around central area, where fireplace was located. In its closeness the knapping process were conducted as well as repairing of arrow points. Further from hearth the areas where different activities were carried out can be distinguished – processing of skin, butchering, bone and antler processing or working in non-organic materials. At some distance from the central area the knapping spot are present related with often only single processing event. The dumps are not clearly visible in space of encampments. The waste products were probably left close to the

places of processing. Selected elements were removed to the activity areas where particular blades or flakes were used as a tools. Dwelling structures were located in the vicinity of central area. Their size was approximately 3-4 m diameter.

Sites related with the Hamburgian Culture differs in terms of the size. The smallest encampments consist of single lithic concentration with hearth its central zone. Larger sites contain few smaller concentrations located around one main structure with hearth. The third type of encampments are very large sites, where several lithic concentrations contains fireplace.

Lithic technology and spatial organization of camps from the Greater Poland region shows two significant phenomena important for reconstructing functioning the Hamburgian societies on the European Plain – territorial regionalization and seasonal aggregation.

Hunter-gatherer groups which after the Last Glacial Maximum colonized Lowland had limited population potential. The Hamburgian Societies spread rapidly and settled new areas in so called stream migration leaving empty zones between concentration of settlement. The demographic limitation and vast area of settlement were main threat to the stability of social structure. To prevent socio-cultural disintegration the groups could increase mobility or aggregate in larger group seasonally. The second solution is suggested in case of the Hamburgian Culture. The presence of large encampments fulfills the function of socio-cultural reproduction through gatherings, rituals, exchange, marriage etc. Ensuring social cohesion enabled the functioning of the Hamburgian groups within regional spatial territories. This things in turn caused inevitable cultural differentiation.