

Re: How did the millions of stone tools get on the savanna?

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- *From:* Lee Olsen <paleocity@xxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Thu, 25 Jun 2009 06:07:39 -0700 (PDT)
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On Jun 24, 9:13 pm, "deowll" <deo...@xxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

"Lee Olsen" <paleoc...@xxxxxxxxxxx> wrote in message

news:81fd82b9-d0b2-4bc6-882f-ba29fba70457@xx

On Jun 23, 2:40 pm, Marc Verhaegen <m_verhae...@xxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

(SAP)

SF:

How did the millions of stone tools get on the savanna? Did the lions make them?

DD:

Thousands of stone tools, tens of thousands of scraps and millions of natural geofacts,

ROFL. I'll call this idiots bluff....<http://tinyurl.com/6x4goy>

I've read the theory that these things were just a biface produced as a by product of making sharp chips.

Correct, Noble & Davidson. Tony Baker most recently.

I don't see a sharp pointed end like this one
being formed unless somebody wanted a sharp pointed end.

Correct.

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This is not to say that bifaces weren't formed by people who just wanted sharp chips but this one seems unlikely.

The fallacy in the chip dispenser theory can be demonstrated in a number of ways.

1) Use wear and retouch tests have shown that both modern and early Homo only utilize flakes down to about the size of a quarter, they are then discarded because they are too small to easily grip. Thousands of hand axes are covered with flake scars much smaller than the size of a quarter, thus showing that shape was intended, not tiny non-usable flakes.

2) Isolated piles of flakes have been found that when conjoined show that many usable (larger than a quarter) flakes were left behind and the shaped axe was removed from the site.

3) Many side-struck cores have one side already the shape of an axe and show shaping only on the side that didn't, thus once again showing shape was the goal.

4) Cleavers are handaxes with a tranchet flake knocked off the tip and show use wear on the tip edge, proving they were tools.

While it is true that some cores can resemble hand axes, and thus give the false impression that axes were cores for flakes, this occurs in only a small percentage of the time. In these cases, it is the flakes that are missing and the core is the object discarded.

Sometimes, Clovis being the most obvious example, both the discarded flakes and the point were utilized. IOW, a Clovis point acted as both a chip dispenser and a handaxe at the same time, especially in the case of the largest ones.

Bottom line: Any cores with fine chipping that leave flake scars smaller than a quarter in size are deliberately shaped tools. Those that have larger scars and an amorphous shape could well be a chip dispensers and a by product of flake manufacture. These seldom meet the statistical criteria for a classic

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axe.

But if one does enough cherry-picking, sure, one can find marginal-looking objects and make any argument they want.

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