

Acheulean hand axes

[Science](#), [Archaeology](#)



Summary of Recent Recovery of unpublished Field s of Theodore D. McCown's
Paleoanthropological Exploration Narmada River System, India, 1964-1965

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The study is about a research done by McCown and his team from California University in the period 1964-1965. Their findings were not published due to the death of McCown, but the author of this article was able to find the handwritten, typed and edited notes. The study concentrated in Narmada river system. He provided three documents that he was able to recover from the unpublished work, these included the handwritten field notes, typed field notes and the letter that McCown had written to his wife. The researcher contextualizes the article by saying that much research has been conducted to determine the antiquity, stratigraphic context and the associated middle Pleistocene stone tools of the Narmada man. Accordingly McCown's discoveries can be useful to the paleoanthropologists of the 21st century. In the document one of the findings is from central India in Narmada and Tapi valley. The researcher anticipated to study the prehistoric archaeological problems of the Pleistocene time. He studied the region around Narmada river and the tools found indicated the presence of man. He however discovered four main problems among other the use of an inferior climate model by pre-historians that seemed imperfect in India. He proceeds to Japan where he has a conversation with a PhD archaeological candidate who had excavated Narmada (Kennedy and Langstroth 2013: 2). They excavated Yeldari dam and Purna River. In Narmada MSA materials are found in the

river banks. The same materials are found between mandia and jabulpur. In Kamharabna, ESA tools were found appearing on several good and hand axes.

The second document was composed of typed field notes by Mrs Shrkurkin who was among the team that had worked with McCown. The document contains several discoveries made at various points during the study. In a nutshell it is a summary of the discoveries that they had made during their survey, much of the tools discovered according to this document were MSA tools. The third document composed of a letter that McCown had written to his wife while surveying mula dam, a place where LSA tools were found. Including the elephant molar teeth (Kennedy and Langstroth 2013: 7).

Reaction to the article

In his discussion of the research done by McCown, the author notes that in this period only primary relative dating methods were used. However, in the 21st century more advanced dating method such as absolute dating method are used. The discovery of Acheulian tools in Narmada River or valley is an indication for the middle Pleistocene and later geological deposits in the areas of the exploration. His assertion that if McCowns findings were published, the publication could have initiated more research in the regions he explored is valid.

However he later demonstrates that various researches on the Narmada man have been done and in fact he gives a number of examples in relations to this. Accordingly he seems to contradict his first statement because after all the research has been done and Mccowns findings have not been published. He also poses a very good academic debate on the place of Asia

in the world prehistory. Indeed, given the archaeological and paleoanthropological evidence, Asia should also be put in the map of world pre-history.

Given the above, the author seems to acknowledge the polygenetic theory of evolution that the early man evolved at different places on earth as oppose to mono-genetic theory. This is true given the findings outlined in this article as well as the studies that have been done on the early man and the presence of the Stone Age tools that have been discovered in various parts of the world.

Reference

Kennedy, Kenneth and Langstroth, Elizabeth
2013 Recent Recovery of Unpublished Field Notes of Theodore D. McCowns
Paleoanthropological Exploration in Narmada River System, India. Asian
Perspective. 50 (1&2): 132 - 143