

GONE WITH THE WIND? EVALUATING THE FUNCTIONAL POTENTIAL OF A FEDERMESSERGRUPPEN ASSEMBLAGE FROM THE ERODED DUNE LANDSCAPE OF LOMMEL-MAATHEIDE

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Abstract

We present the results of a large-scale functional analysis performed on the lithic assemblages from the Federmessergruppen site of Lommel-Maatheide. This vast site is located in Northern Belgium on a large Late Glacial sand ridge on the edge of a paleo-lake. Different lithic concentrations attributed to the Final Palaeolithic were discovered within the context of preventive archaeology. Given their varying location with regard to the sand ridge, the site offers an excellent opportunity to study site activities and dynamics and to evaluate the extent to which post-depositional processes impacted the potential of functional studies.

Exhaustive screening revealed a differential preservation pattern between the different concentrations and permitted to evaluate the impact of excavation strategies on the surface state of the lithic artefacts. Specific functional insights were obtained thanks to the combination of techno-morphological, use-wear and residue analysis with experimental studies. Both animal and vegetal processing tasks could be identified in addition to hunting activities and particular propositions could be made with regard to the hunting techniques used. We conclude that large-scale comprehensive functional analyses of Final Palaeolithic contexts have the potential to reveal unique insights in past dynamics.

Keywords: Final Palaeolithic; Federmessergruppen; functional analysis; post-depositional processes