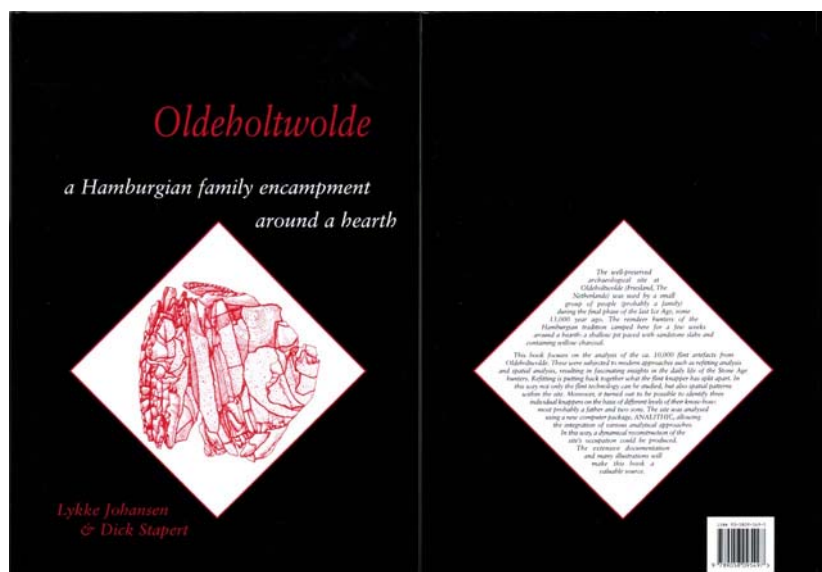


Johansen, L. & D. Stapert. 2003. Oldeholtwolde. A Hamburgian family encampment around a hearth. – Lisse, A.A. Balkema Publishers

Book review by E.N.A. Heirbaut



Oldeholtwolde, the most important Hamburgian site in the Netherlands (province of Friesland) was discovered by an archaeological assistant during observations at a leveling process. This was the start of a meticulous excavation (1980-1981) during which at least 10 000 pieces of flint, 46 kilos of stone from the fireplace, charcoal and ochre were recovered and given exact coordinates. The encampment could be dated to the Dryas II period, more specifically to the Havelte phase of the Hamburgian, about 13 000 years ago. After the analysis of the material recovered at this extremely well-preserved site, the authors concluded that a small family, consisting of about 4 people, camped here for several days. Centre of their camping place was a small hearth around which several clusters of flint material were discovered.

This book focuses on the analysis of the ca. 10 000 pieces of flint artefacts. They were subjected to different modern approaches such as refitting, use-wear-analysis and ring-and-sector-analysis. A completely new computer package (*Analithic*), developed for the analysis of the Oldeholtwolde material, allowed the integration of various analytical approaches. By doing so, the authors were able to create a dynamic picture of the site's occupation.

A lot of preliminary reports (for instance Breest & Veil, 1991; Moss, 1988; Stapert, 1984; Stapert & Krist, 1990; Stapert, Krist & Zandbergen, 1986) already set the tone of what to expect from this book. Counting almost 200 pages, the publication is a detailed summing-up of all the different inquiries, methodologies and conclusions. Not only is the excavation itself an example of the precision with which the researchers tried to dissolve the mystery of the Oldeholtwolde-site, every part of the research, going from the description of the material to the final conclusions, is very well-documented and explained. The only (small) short-coming on this behalf may be the rather restricted explanations of the computer software *Analithic* and in particular what the program is capable of.

The analysis of the flint artefacts is very thorough. A lot of attention goes to the description of the different tool types, and even to individual tools. Furthermore, they provide us with detailed descriptions of the debitage sequences and the results of the different investigations. This is especially the case for the refitting. This study may in some cases reveal individual flint knappers on the basis of marked differences in their skill. Here, it was possible to distinguish three flint knappers: a very skilled knapper who had mastered the whole *chaîne opératoire* of Hamburgian flint technology, a less skilled one who can be considered an advanced pupil and a third knapper who was totally unskilled. The fact that one of the authors is a very skilled flint knapper herself only contributes to this part of the study. The only facet that is not much elucidated in this book is the use-wear-analysis: because the study is not yet completed, only some preliminary results were incorporated. I hope that these results will be presented in the same way.

I can only conclude that this is a very well-researched book. The text is clearly structured and all findings and conclusions are very well-documented with drawings, graphs, distribution- and density maps. It combines different studies, going from stratigraphy to radiocarbon dating; from describing artefacts to applying the ring-and-sector-analysis and spatial analysis of the finds. Maybe the authors could have drawn more parallels with

other sites, but this is only a small shortage. Nevertheless, this book can very well be used for comparisons, not only with other Hamburgian sites but also for the way in which such research should be conducted. Well done!

Johansen, L. & D. Stapert. 2003. Oldeholtwolde. A Hamburgian family encampment around a hearth. – Lisse, A.A. Balkema Publishers. 229 pp. ISBN 90 580 9549 5. Price € 99.00/\$ 109.00 (hardback).

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