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### Completing the picture: eastern Yorkshire flint and cross-Pennine exchange

There are well known similarities in material culture between Yorkshire and areas to the west of the Pennines, including Cumbria, south west Scotland and beyond into Ulster. These links do not need to be reiterated here: however, it can be stated that they are demonstrated by different aspects within the archaeological record, both in terms of monumental evidence, for example tombs, and in terms of portable artefacts, for example stone axes and flint.

It is apparent that Group VI axes, originating from the Great Langdale range of mountains in Cumbria, are an important part of the cultural link, as eloquently demonstrated by the massive presence of these artefacts in eastern Yorkshire. This has been studied relatively intensively, by Bradley and Edmonds amongst others, but it is becoming increasingly apparent that the movement of Group VI axes eastwards is only a small part of what would have been a complex movement of people and artefacts across the Pennines, with the presence of eastern Yorkshire flint to the west of the Pennines offering the opportunity to understand this movement in even greater depth. Thus, it is the aim of my PhD to understand both the importance of Yorkshire flint in cross-Pennine exchange, and how eastern Yorkshire flint crossed the Pennines to Cumbria, and potentially beyond.

The first stage of this is data collection across the region not only in terms of archaeological data from SMR's, ongoing projects and other sources, but also in terms of geological data, enabling me to accurately identify flint that originated from Eastern Yorkshire. This basic data will be used to identify study areas across the region, which will allow me to examine the lithic evidence in much greater detail. Proposed study areas at the current time include the lithic assemblage from the Thornborough monument complex, lithic scatters found around Craven in the Pennines, and at Crosby Ravensworth, just west of the Stainmore Gap, and the assemblage found at Skirwith in Cumbria, several miles south of Long Meg and her Daughters. This work is currently in progress, and there is little I can currently say about the results, so rather than discuss conclusions, I am going to explore the different ways in which I can use this data.

The first question that needs to be addressed is the route or routes that the flint took in order to cross the Pennines. The topography of the area dictates that there are many potential routeways, with the high prevalence of east-west orientated rivers and their associated valleys all providing usable routeways to the Eden Valley in Cumbria and beyond. Possibilities at the moment include Wharfedale, across to the Ribble Valley, and also to the north, across the Stainmore Gap. In order to fully assess the most probable routeways, topographic data is going to have to be combined with archaeological data, not only in terms of the presence of flint, but also other portable artefacts, such as Group VI axes, and monuments, although the relative paucity of these in the north Pennines themselves is going to make it slightly more difficult.

However, identifying potential routeways for the movement of Yorkshire flint is only part of the picture, as it is also important to identify the mechanisms behind its circulation. There are many possibilities, including flint being taken across by dedicated traders, who would potentially have carried quantities of flint across the Pennines from Yorkshire to Cumbria. Another possibility is the trading of flint hand to hand from community to community, with the flint moving only relatively short distances at a time. How this can be identified within the archaeological record isn't yet clear. However it would seem that the context in which the flint was found has the potential to offer the most information.

Another problem which stems from how the flint moved across the Pennines is the form in which the flint moved. In other words, did the flint move as finished articles or was it carried across as lumps of unprocessed flint, to be worked into implements and tools on the western side of the Pennines? Again, it is going to be difficult to answer this question, as lumps of unprocessed flint are unlikely to enter the archaeological record. One possible indicator would be scatters of primary flakes, with a high degree of cortication, which can be seen as being indicative of a flint working site.

Even when we have ascertained how flint moved across the Pennines, it is apparent that we need to place the movement of flint within the context of wider cross-Pennine exchange. As mentioned earlier, the movement of Group VI axes in the opposite direction to eastern Yorkshire flint is an important aspect of this exchange, and it presents the obvious question as to whether or not axes were exchanged for flint, or whether other artefacts or commodities were involved in this complex exchange procedure. This question can be asked of the data, although whether or not we will get a coherent answer is not yet clear.

The final aspect of my PhD will be to place all of this information within a social context. It is apparent that eastern Yorkshire had a perfectly usable source of stone for axes, with group 26 axes being produced in the area, so why was it necessary to import Cumbrian axes? Equally, the presence of sources of flint indigenous to areas west of the Pennines would make the presence of eastern Yorkshire flint unnecessary: suggesting that foreign materials could hold some kind of significance to Neolithic populations. Anthropology potentially offers the best chance for fully interpreting the social implications of exchange, and may shed some light onto archaeological evidence that may initially appear inscrutable. My PhD also offers the possibility to study such concepts as 'ownership' and the role of artefacts in defining relationships within society.

It is hoped that by the end of my PhD I will have added considerably to the understanding of the Neolithic in the north of England. Eastern Yorkshire and Cumbria have undergone a larger degree of work, with the archaeological similarities between them noted, but interpretation has been hampered by the paucity of available information for the central and northern Pennines. The study of the movement of group VI axes has gone some way towards addressing the issue, but as yet the picture is still incomplete, and by appreciating the movement of eastern Yorkshire flint within the context of wider cross-Pennine exchange, I hope to change this.