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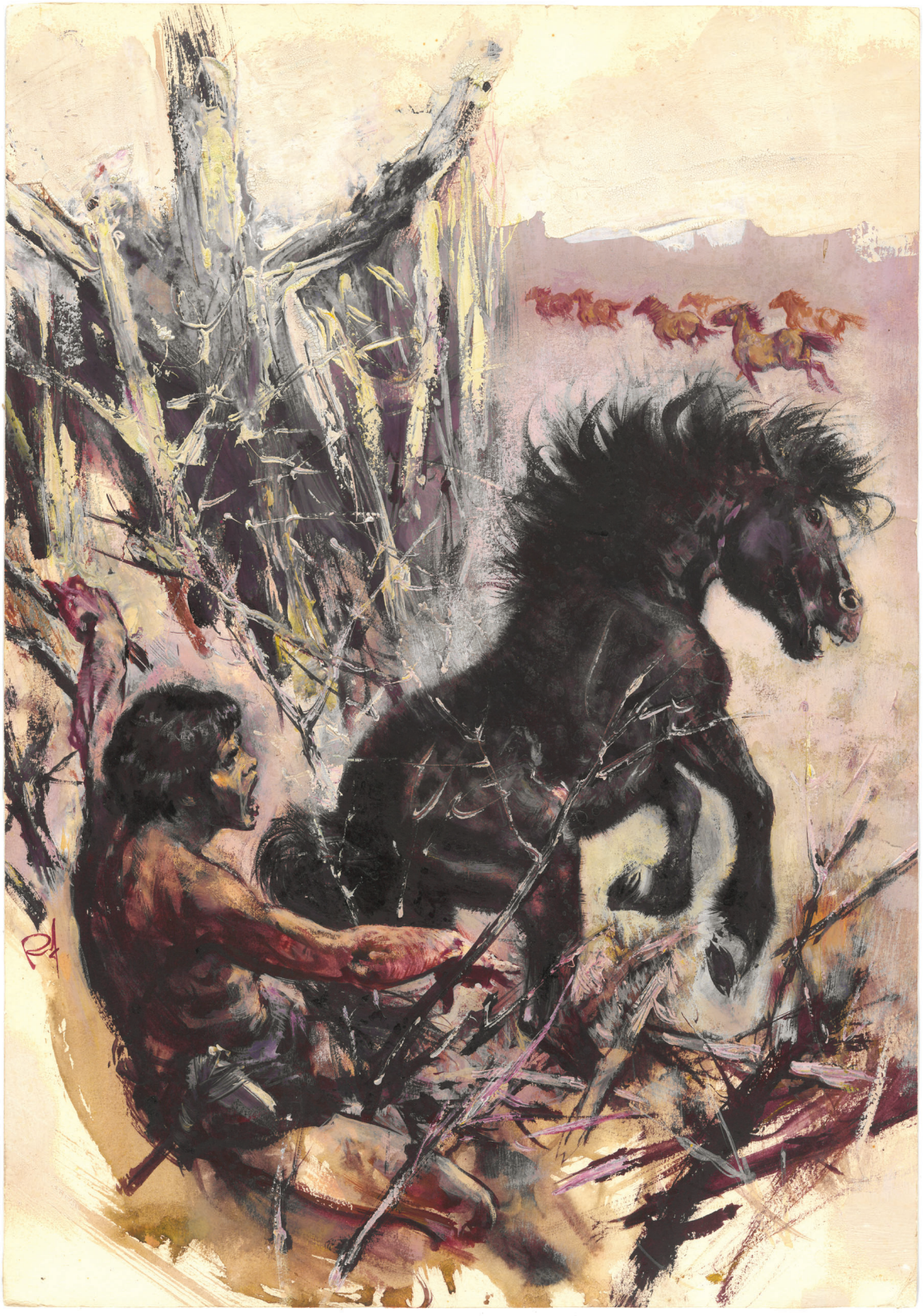

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Malaurie points from the Netherlands

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1. Introduction

The wide diversity of flint points in Europe during the Late Palaeolithic and Mesolithic is a well noted and acknowledged phenomenon. Accordingly, many types have been distinguished by archaeologists. One of them is central to this paper: the Malaurie point. This kind of artefact is especially known from France, where it is called *pointe de Malaurie*, named after the site Abri Malaurie at Rocamadour (Lot; Niederlender *et al*., 1956). The first author thought he had picked up a specimen from an arable field near Odoorn in the Dutch province of Drenthe during the 1980's. The artefact did, however, not stand up to the test of scrutiny and the initial typological determination must therefore be rejected[1]. Nevertheless, the Odoorn find is the reason for drawing attention here to Malaurie points from the Netherlands. Previously, Machiels (1994: section 5) has addressed this subject by discussing their geographical, temporal, and cultural occurrences in this country. As new information has become available since then, the purpose of the present paper is to provide an update of this overview. In addition, the function of Malaurie points from Dutch territory is briefly considered.

2. Definition of the Malaurie type point

The Malaurie type point has been defined by several scholars (e.g. Deeben & Niekus, 2016: 105, Niederlender *et al*., 1956: type 09; Pasty *et al*., 2002: 15; *cf*. Célérier, 1993: 89 & fig. 30). Despite small differences between these definitions, they all say that this type is a backed point with a truncated, more or less perpendicular basis. This base can either be straight, convex, or concave. Another feature is a straight or slightly convex retouched back, whereas the retouch is usually steep. Size is, however, an aspect that is unsufficiently addressed in these definitions. Generally, the Malaurie points are longer than 3 cm, as indicated by drawings in publications (e.g. Deeben & Niekus, 2016: fig. 19.1; Grimm, 2004: fig. 9; Pasty *et al*., 2002: fig. 24; *cf*. Tab. 1).

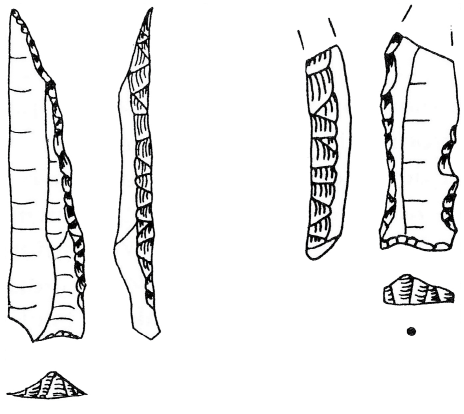

Fig. 1 − Two examples of Malaurie points from the Netherlands, coming from Blerick-Tradeport Oost. The actual length is *c*. 4.4 cm (left specimen) and 2.9 cm (right specimen), respectively. Source: Machiels 1994.

3. Distribution in space and time

The number of Malaurie points discovered in the Netherlands is modest. The authors know of ten to twelve specimens, coming from ten findspots. Two examples of these artefacts are depicted in **Figure 1**. Furthermore, **Table 1** lists information about their findspots, the way of recovery, dating and cultural attribution, the number of points, and related matters[2]. The majority of the points were already published by Machiels, though it is not clear in each and every instance which

1. It concerns a backed point with a retouched basis. Close examination reveals that the latter is not the truncature so typical of Malaurie points, but in all likelihood the result of striking platform preparation.

2. The listing of the other points types includes complete specimens and fragments that are classifiable as Malaurie points or not. For the sake of clarity, backed blades are excluded.

site exactly is meant and what the sources are. This applies to Barneveld and Elslo. It was decided to omit them from this study, also because one of these locations might be the same as the site Harskamp-Friese Veld mentioned by Verpoorte (2014). The latter site has perhaps yielded a Malaurie point and was therefore included here.

Furthermore, the site Milheeze in the province of Noord-Brabant is not part of the present study. According to Machiels (1994: 69), one Malaurie point was discovered here. A recent overview about the site by Arts (2012) does, however, not make mention of any specimens, despite the typological specification of the discovered points. Neither does any of the illustrations indicate the occurrence of this type. Perhaps a penknife point depicted by Arts (*ibidem*: fig. 12, no. 1) has been mistaken by Machiels for a Malaurie point. In accordance with the type definition and depiction (Deeben & Niekus, 2016: 105, fig. 19.2: nos 7 & 12), this penknife point is a pointed backed blade with an obliquely retouched base that is sharply angled. The retouched back is slightly convex.

Location	*Province*	*Site excavated?*	*Dating/culture*	*Particularities*	*References*
Blerick-Tradeport Oost [East]	Limburg	Yes	*Federmesser* group	2x Malaurie point; 44 x 10 x 5 mm & > 29 x 10 x 5 mm; four specimens of other point types	Machiels, 1994
Gennep-site J	Noord-Brabant	Yes	Early Mesolithic	1x Malaurie point; no information available about its dimensions; thirteen specimens of other point types, all microliths	Machiels, 1994: 69 (after pers. comm. J. Deeben M.A.); archive J. Deeben stored at the *Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed*, Amersfoort (NL)
Harskamp-Friese Veld	Gelderland	No	*Federmesser* group	1x possible Malaurie point, dimensions unknown; twelve specimens of other point types belonging to the *Federmesser* group; the site has also yielded Mesolithic flint artefacts. Is this the site that Machiels (1994: 69) calls Elslo? Or does it concern Barneveld?	Verpoorte, 2014
Mierlo-Hout	Noord-Brabant	No	*Federmesser* group	1x Malaurie point; > 49 x 20 x 8 mm; four specimens of other point types	De Jong *et al*., 2015: 66 & fig. 33; Machiels, 1994: 69
Nederweert-De Banen	Noord-Brabant	Partially	*Federmesser* group and Mesolithic	1x Malaurie point; 51 x 13 x 4 mm; 44 Late Palaeolithic specimens of other point types	Beerenhout *et al*., 1988/1989; personal observation second author
Nunspeet-Hulsthorsterzand	Gelderland	No	*Federmesser* group or Early Mesolithic	1x Malaurie point; dimensions unknown; stray find	Personal observation second author
Oostelbeers-Dennedijk	Noord-Brabant	Partially	*Federmesser* group and Mesolithic	1x Malaurie point; dimensions unknown; eighteen Late Palaeolithic specimens of other point types	Arts & Deeben, 1978; Machiels, 1994: 69
Prandinga	Friesland	Yes	*Federmesser* group	The name of the site is misspelled as 'Pradige' and 'Prandinge' by Machiels and Schwabedissen, respectively; 1x Malaurie point; 40 x 14 x ? mm; fourteen specimens of other point types	Bohmers, 1947: 182 & pl.27; Machiels, 1994: 69; Schwabedissen, 1954: 53 & pl. 81
Wanssum	Limburg	No	*Federmesser* group	1x Malaurie point; dimensions unknown; according to Machiels stray find made by the amateur archaeologist J. Driessens, but (probably) associated with three specimens of other point types	Machiels, 1994: 69; personal observation second author
Westelbeers-Kapeldijk	Noord-Brabant	Yes (and possibly recovery during field survey)	*Federmesser* group	1-2x Malaurie point; > 36 x 12 x 4 mm and > 27 x 10 x 4 mm; four specimens of other point types	Arts & Deeben 1976; Machiels, 1994: 69

Tab. 1 – Overview of sites with Malaurie points in the Netherlands, with information about their number and dimensions, the way of recovery, dating and associated culture/technocomplex. Several times '>' precedes the length, indicating that the object was originally longer.

As regards Westelbeers, it is clear from literature that Machiels (1994: 69) must refer to the site along the Kapeldijk as published by Arts & Deeben (1976). In other words, it does not concern a series of excavated Late Palaeolithic and Mesolithic sites about which two reports have appeared (Snijders & Broertjes, 2016; Snijders, 2000). These reports do not mention or depict any Malaurie points, contrary to the booklet by Arts & Deeben (1976: fig. 6, no. 3 and possibly 9) about the Kapeldijk site.

Figure 2 shows the geographical distribution of (possible) sites with Malaurie points; the figure is based upon the data presented in table 1. The map does not show a distinct cluster, though more sites are located in the southern Netherlands. Perhaps this distribution indicates that originally the number of Malaurie points decreased gradually in the northern direction, something that would fit well with the idea of their southern origin (*vide infra*).

As regards the chronology and cultural attribution, it should be noted first of all that no absolute dates are available for Dutch sites with Malaurie points. Nevertheless, the present archaeological record suggests that such points from the Netherlands are first and foremost part of the material culture of the Late Palaeolithic *Federmesser* group, especially since several specimens were found during excavations (**Tab. 1**). A similar stance is taken by Deeben & Niekus (2016: 109) and Machiels (1994: chapter 5). Malaurie points are attributed by the former scholars to the final phase of their tentative threefold chronological subdivision of the

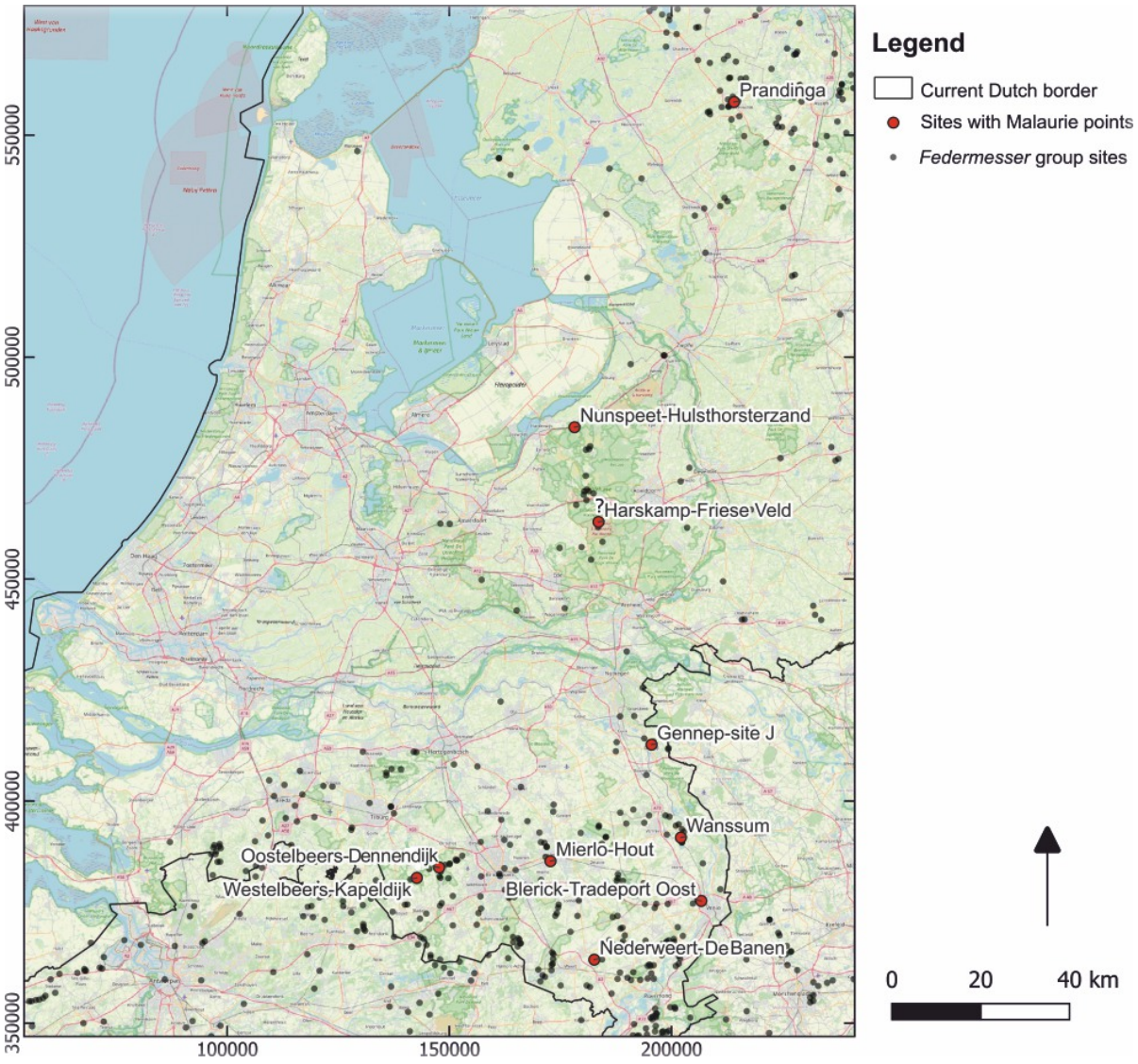

Fig. 2 − Geographical distribution of sites with Malaurie points known from the Netherlands, indicated by red dots labelled with the names of these sites. The black dots symbolise sites of the *Federmesser* group.

Federmesser group (Deeben & Niekus, 2016: 109). In this periodisation the youngest section of this cultural group is dated to *c*. 11,065-10,700/10,600 BP. This time span coincides with the end of the Allerød interstadial and the beginning of the Late Dryas stadial. To underpin their argumentation, Deeben & Niekus (*ibidem*) refer to the German site Bad Breisig in the Rhineland, where excavations brought several Malaurie points to light (Baales & Jöris, 2002). The stratigraphical evidence shows that this site postdates the Laacher See volcano eruption around 11,065 BP (Baales *et al*., 2002: 283). In his chronological assessment of the Blerick site, Machiels (1994: 69) points out that the lithic assemblage includes a blade of Wommersom quartzite and a microburin in flint. He is inclined to see them as indicators of the late *Federmesser* group. Machiels (*ibidem*) furthermore refers to two ^{14}C-dated Azilien sites with Malaurie points in France: *Grotte de Pégourié* at Caniac-du-Causse (Lot) and *Grotte de la Borie del Rey* in L'Agenies (Le Tensorer, 1981; Orliac, 1988). The outcomes of ^{14}C-dating are 11.290 ± 320 BP and 10.350 ± 340 BP respectively; the former is related to the uppermost of five Azilien layers (Thevénin, 1997: 394; he cites Séronie-Vivien, 1995: 46)[3].

The chronological assertions above about the chronological position of Malaurie points in the Netherlands are justified, as they are supported by numerous other studies, especially with respect to France (*inter alia* Bodu, 2000; Bodu & Valentin, 1997; Kegler, 2007; Langlais *et al*., 2019; Naudinot, 2013; Pasty *et al*., 2002; Thévenin, 2007; Weber *et al*., 2011). The overall picture emerging from these studies is that Malaurie points are concentrated chronologically at the end of the Allerød and the Younger Dryas. In France, particularly its southern and western sections, this horizon is culturally labelled Laborian (French: *Laborien*) after the find spot La Borie del Rey in the department Lot-et-Garonne (Le Tensorer, 1981; see also Langlais *et al*., 2019). Contemporary Malaurie points found in northern France are associated with the Belloisien and the *Federmesser* group. The present evidence suggests that this type of point may have originated somewhere in the south, especially south(west)ern France, and spread from there northwards. This hypothesis is strengthened by recent excavations in front of the German cave Blätterhöhle near Hagen in southern Westphalia, which yielded a Late Palaeolithic assemblage dated to the Younger Dryas (Baales *et al*., 2023). The typological-technological composition of the lithics is hitherto unparalleled for the Hagen district and its wider surroundings. Characteristics of the lithic ensemble are numerous backed lithic projectile points of high variability, one of them being a Malaurie-like point. According to Baales *et al*. (2023), the lithic finds do not indicate, as usual for Younger Dryas discoveries in Westphalia, the Ahrensburgian. Instead, they are considered suggestive of a connection with the (Late) Laborian. The faunal spectrum is said to endorse this view. It lacks clear evidence for reindeer, a hunting prey typical of the Ahrensburgian and usually associated with open, tundra-like environments. But the faunal remains do include bones of red deer, an animal species that most probably lived in a forested milieu and which the Laborian liked to hunt. The Blätterhöhle site is therefore thought to represent a short-term immigration of human groups from southwestern regions with a backed point (e.g. Laborian) tradition, assumably around the middle of the Younger Dryas and due to a brief climatic amelioration. To put it in the words of Baales *et al*. (2023: 44), 'This expansionary movement may have been facilitated by a brief north/northeast expansion of their ancestral environment, as indicated by the red deer remains at the *Blatterhöhle*.'

The rarity of sites with Malaurie points in the Netherlands could be circumstantial evidence for a late occurrence within the *Federmesser* group. Typologically, these points are reasonably well recognisable, and they were so far discovered at merely ten sites, as mentioned above. In comparison, currently the total number of (possible) *Federmesser* group sites known from Dutch territory is more than 500[4]. Apart from a site where only a single find was made, in these instances Malaurie points are without exception a minority within the point assemblages (**Tab. 1**).

3. The authors have not been able to consult this work by Séronie-Vivien M.-R., 1995. *La grotte de Pégourié, Caniac-du-Causse (Lot)*. Préhistoire quercinoise, Supplément 2.

4. This number is taken from an inventory by the second author.

In conclusion, Malaurie points from the Netherlands may be considered typical of the final stage of the late *Federmesser* group. This phase probably coincides with the end of the Allerød interstadial and the onset/first half of the Younger Dryas stadial. In absolute chronological terms, it concerns roughly the period of 11,100-10,500 BC (see in this connection Baales *et al*., 2023: especially fig. 2; with further references). As regards the youngest Malaurie points from Dutch territory, there is at present one specimen coming from an Early Mesolithic site (**Tab. 1**). Provided that the artefact is indeed a part of this site and not older, that would imply an absolute age somewhere between *c*. 9,000-7,800 BC.

4. Function

Hitherto, none of the Malaurie points from the Netherlands has been examined microscopically for use wear. Consequently, from that perspective, no statements about their former function can be made. Several other Late Palaeolithic backed point types, however, from this country as well as Belgium and Germany were the subjects of such analysis (e.g. De Bie & Caspar, 2000: section 5.2.3; Pawlik, 2002; Rots *et al*., 2002). The examinations arrive at the general conclusion that these artefacts have served as components of projectiles. They have either been mounted on a shaft or have been shafted as barbs. The same function may therefore be, generally speaking, assumed for Malaurie points, although more research is needed here. This also holds true for France, the supposed cradle of this artefact type. Here, these points are usually regarded as parts of projectiles and, accordingly, they are frequently referred to as armatures (e.g. Langlais *et al*., 2019; Naudinot, 2009; Pasty *et al*., 2002; Thévenin, 1997). Nevertheless, their function as such has not been established by microwear analysis. The present authors have only found one publication discussing the use of a Malaurie point based upon the results of this kind of analysis (Marchand *et al*., 2011: 286). The artefact stemming from an excavation at Chaloignes in the Maine-et-Loire Department (France) is said to display traces of dry skin working, which may be due to the fabrication of straps or pieces of leather. It is, however, difficult to imagine that this was the main task of Malaurie points.

More microwear research is also important from a different perspective. Typologically, Mesolithic backed points with a retouched base – C type points, according to the classification by Bohmers & Wouters (1956: 29-30 & fig. 6) − appear to have developed from Malaurie points in a process of microlisation (*cf*. Crombé *et al*. 2014: 594). The question arises to what extent this idea is corroborated from a functional angle.

5. Conclusions

To conclude, the main findings of the present study are the following:

- Malaurie points, all made in flint, are hitherto rare discoveries in the Netherlands. Everything indicates that the scarcity reflects the original situation;
- at present, nothing hints at a concentration of Malaurie points in a specific part of the Netherlands. Nevertheless, most finds have been made in the southern part of the country. Presumably this distribution pattern reflects a southern influence, also because the origin of the Malaurie type probably lies in France;
- the far majority of the sites containing the points under consideration are attributable to the Federmesser group, probably its youngest phase. This stage roughly corresponds with the end of the Allerød interstadial and the beginning/first half of the Younger Dryas interstadial (together c. 11,100-10,500 BC). The youngest Malaurie point known comes from an Early Mesolithic site (c. 9,000-7,800 BC), provided this artefact is not an earlier relict;
- hitherto, none of the Malaurie points from the Netherlands has been subjected to microwear analysis to unravel their former function. Nevertheless, their common use as (components of) projectiles may be surmised. Such a function is hinted at by microwear analyses of other Late Palaeolithic backed point types from Belgium, Germany, and the Netherlands.

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Samenvatting

Binnen de laatpaleolithische en epipaleolithische spitsen van Europa wordt het type Malaurie onderscheiden, waarvan doorgaans wordt verondersteld dat dit soort artefacten als (onderdeel van) een projectiel heeft gediend. Het type heeft een puntig uiteinde en is in de regel van vuursteen, langer dan 3 cm en bezit steile retouche, die een rechte of iets gebogen lange zijde en de haaks daarop staande convexe, holle of rechte basis beslaat. De huidige bijdrage bespreekt de tien tot twaalf Malaurie-spitsen – telkens van vuursteen − die in Nederland aan het licht zijn gekomen. Ze zijn afkomstig van tien sites. In elk geval moeten acht daarvan (waarschijnlijk) aan de laatpaleolithische *Federmesser*-groep worden toegewezen; eenmaal duiden de associaties op het vroeg-mesolithicum en daarmee op een datering tussen *ca*. 9.000-7.800 v. Chr. Binnen de *Federmesser*-groep zijn de Malaurie-spitsen dateerbaar in de late fase, dat wil zeggen de periode tussen *ca*. 11.100 en 10.500 v. Chr., ondanks dat voor de Nederlandse vondsten geen absolute ouderdomsbepalingen, zoals ^{14}C-dateringen, ter beschikking staan. Het zijn (vooral) ontdekkingen in Duitsland en Frankrijk die in die richting wijzen. Naar het zich laat aanzien, heeft de Malaurie-spits zich binnen het laatstgenoemde gebied ontwikkeld. Voor die origine spreekt vermoedelijk ook de verspreiding van Malaurie-spitsen in Nederland, die van zuid naar noord afneemt. Oorspronkelijk moeten Malaurie-spitsen daar overigens een zeldzame verschijning zijn geweest. Niet alleen het bescheiden aantal voorbeelden van Nederlandse bodem is daarvoor indicatief. Evenmin zijn sites ontdekt waarin dit type de spitsenassemblage getalsmatig domineert, een vindplaats bestaande uit niet meer dan een Malaurie-spits daargelaten. Bovendien zijn de onderhavige spitsen slechts mondjesmaat op vindplaatsen van de *Federmesser*-groep tevoorschijn gekomen, terwijl van deze archeologische cultuur in totaal ruim 500 (mogelijke) sites voor Nederland bekend zijn. Tot slot, geen van de Malaurie-spitsen uit dit land is tot dusver op microscopische gebruikssporen onderzocht.

Sleutelwoorden: Nederland, laat-paleolithicum, vroeg-mesolithicum, *Federmesser*-groep, Malaurie-spitsen, vuursteen, chronologie, geografische verspreiding, functie.

Summary

Among the Late Palaeolithic and Epipalaeolithic points from Europe, the Malaurie type is distinguished, which is usually assumed to have served as (part of) a projectile. The type has a pointed end and is generally made of flint, longer than 3 cm and has a steep retouch, covering a straight or slightly curved long side and a convex, concave or straight base at right angles to it. The current contribution discusses the ten to twelve Malaurie points - each made of flint - that have come to light in the Netherlands. They come from ten sites. In any case, eight of these must (probably) be assigned to the Late Palaeolithic *Federmesser* group; once the associations indicate an Early Mesolithic age and thus a date somewhere between *c*. 9,000-7,800 BC. Within the *Federmesser* group, the Malaurie points are datable to the late phase, *i.e*. the period between *c*. 11,100 and 10,500 BC, although no absolute age determinations, such as ^{14}C dates, are available for the Dutch finds. It is (mainly) discoveries in France and Germany that point in that direction. It appears that the origin of the Malaurie type must be sought in the former area. The distribution of Malaurie points in the Netherlands, which decreases from south to north, probably also speaks for this origin. Originally, such flint artefacts must have been rare there. Not only the modest number of examples from Dutch territory is indicative of this. Nor have any sites been discovered in which this type numerically dominates the point assemblage, apart from a site consisting of no more than a single Malaurie point. Moreover, the artefacts under discussion have been encountered at less than a dozen of sites of the *Federmesser* group, while over 500 (possible) sites of this archaeological culture are known from the Netherlands. To conclude this summary, none of the Dutch Malaurie points have yet been examined for microscopic signs of use.

Keywords: The Netherlands, Late Palaeolithic, Early Mesolithic, *Federmesser* group, Malaurie points, flint, chronology, geographical distribution, function.

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