

CHAPTER I

THE PALAEOOLITHIC PERIOD

FOR the existence of man in Italy in the tertiary period the evidence has from time to time been adduced, but it has never withstood the test of criticism and examination.¹ A deposit of the pliocene period from Colle del Vento yielded bones at first thought to be human, but later admitted to be anthropoidal. To the pliocene also was attributed a human skeleton from Castenedolo. This gave rise to a long discussion, and, after a careful examination of the place and circumstances of the find, it seemed almost certain that the skeleton was of quite modern date, introduced into the pliocene deposit in which it was found. Finally, at Monteperto, near Siena, were found bones of a creature of the whale type, marked with regular incisions. However, it was pointed out that these were lying in a deep-sea deposit which contained no signs of human industry, but numerous teeth of a carnivorous fish, to which the incisions are undoubtedly due.

There is abundant proof that Italy was inhabited by man at an early date in the quaternary period. Up to the present very little scientific exploration of these early deposits has been undertaken, and the evidence for the period is scattered and often unreliable. It has, however, been sifted by Colini in his usual masterly fashion in an article on the Valle della Vibrata at present in progress,² on which the present treatment of the question is in part based.

As a basis for division and arrangement it is convenient to take Mortillet's French palaeolithic series consisting of five types, *Chelléen*, *Acheuléen*, *Moustérien*, *Solutréen* and *Magdalénien*, making no assumptions whatsoever as to the much disputed question of the chronology. Of these types

¹ *B. P.*, vii, p. 96; xiii, p. 68; xv, p. 89.

² *B. P.*, xxxii, pp. 117 and 181.

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Absence from Italy of *Solutréen* and *Magdalénien* periods.

the two which are most frequent in Italy are the *Chelléen* and the *Moustérien*. Implements of modified *Chelléen* form, which answer to the French *Acheuléen*, do occur, but scarcely form a definite and distinct series. The *Solutréen* as a palaeolithic period is unrepresented, though well-worked implements of *Solutréen* type are found in certain neolithic deposits. Of the *Magdalénien* period there is not a trace in Italy. The absence of remains of the *Solutréen* and *Magdalénien* periods is explained by Pigorini as follows :—¹

Reasons for this.

While these two cultures, or at any rate the latter, prevailed in Central Europe, Italy was already falling under the influence of a new people who came by sea, and brought an advanced and developed civilization with them. In accordance with this view is his theory that the *Kjökkenmøddings* of Jutland and Denmark were formed by families descended from the old *Chelléen* race migrating northwards from Western Europe. At the same time tribes of *Hyperborei*, moving southwards across Belgium and France in pursuit of the reindeer, left their traces in the remains known as *Magdalénien*. Contemporary with both these events, the formation of the *Kjökkenmøddings* of Denmark and the descent of the *Hyperborei*, was the appearance of new families in Italy bringing with them the neolithic culture, the most conspicuous innovations of which were the polishing of stone and the use of pottery. The invaders, then, of Central Europe to whom the *Magdalénien* civilization was due did not penetrate the barrier opposed by the Alps.

Chelléen and *Moustérien*.

Thus the two types with which we have to deal are the *Chelléen* and the *Moustérien*. We shall examine very briefly their chief characteristics and their distribution, asking at the same time whether any attempt at approximate chronology can be made. It must be noted that in speaking of *Chelléen* or *Moustérien* types we do not mean to imply that the implements in question are palaeolithic in date, except where this is definitely proved, but only in form.

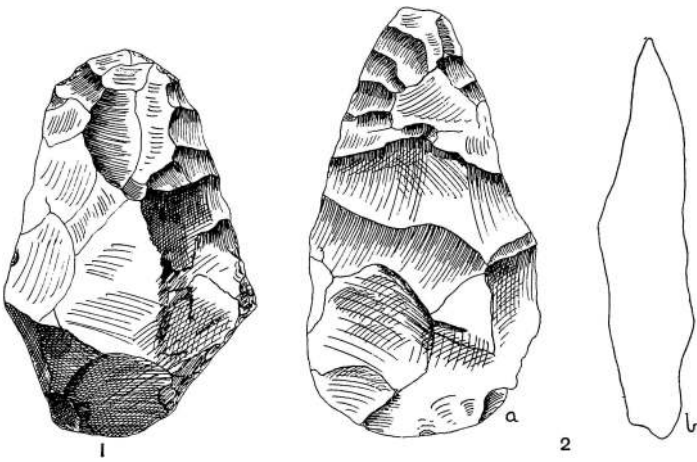
A. *Chelléen* implements.

The *Chelléen* implements of Italy may be divided into two types according as the greatest thickness lies at the

¹ *B. P.*, xxix, pp. 193–5, especially the footnotes.

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base or near the centre.¹ The former type is generally made Type 1. from a rolled pebble of flint or quartzite, the length varying from 6 to 19 cm. This type is the more common of the two, and is more roughly worked than the other. The base, which is adapted to the hand, often shows the surface of the pebble from which the implement was made. Two sub-types may be distinguished. The first is roughly oval in form, and the point is broad and rounded (fig. 1). The



FIGS. 1, 2. *Chelléen* implements. Scale $\frac{1}{2}$. (Colini, *Bull. Pal.*)

second is triangular, with straight edges and a well-marked point (fig. 3).

The second main type of *Chelléen* implement is more care- Type 2. fully worked. Usually it is elliptical in shape, with regularly curved sides and a rather dull point (fig. 4). Occasionally, however, the form is an elongated ovoid with a point sharpened by minute flaking (fig. 2).

In both types it must be noticed that the two sides, which are both worked, seldom have the same convexity (cf. fig. 5), while in some cases we find the well-known twisted edge shown in fig. 4 (right side).

¹ *B. P.*, xxxii, pp. 125 sqq.

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Other
types.

These are not the only forms found, though they are the most stable and perhaps the earliest types. In the implements from several of the great Italian centres of flint-working we see not only examples of much finer workmanship, recalling that of the *Acheuléen* period in France, but also signs of the adaptation of the implements to special uses, by means of minute flaking at particular points.

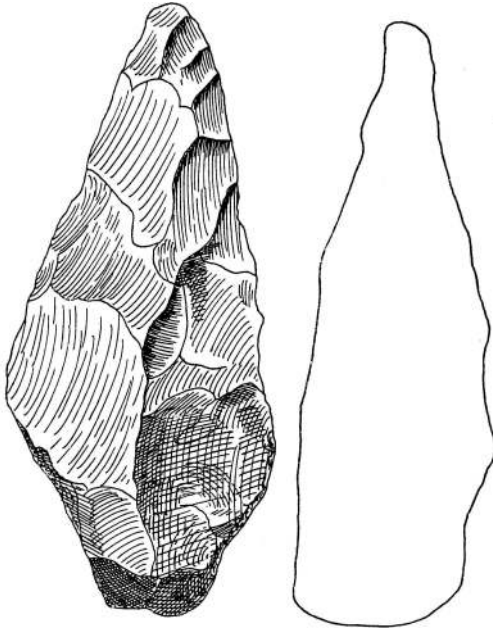


FIG. 3. *Chelléen* implement. Scale $\frac{1}{2}$. (Colini, *Bull. Pal.*)

Distribu-
tion
a. Vibrata
Valley.

The distribution of the *Chelléen* implement in Italy is not difficult to ascertain. The Valley of the Vibrata has yielded numerous examples, but unfortunately it is impossible to ascertain their original stratification, as they are found in recent alluvial deposits produced by the denudation of the surrounding hills. Along with these implements were found points and flakes of *Moustérien* type. The probability, based on evidence from other sites, is that all the true *Chelléen*

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forms found in the valley are of palaeolithic date. This is, however, not a certainty. *Moustérien* types, on the other hand, often survived into neolithic times, and this may have been the case with some of the Vibrata examples. Such implements do appear to have been found in the neolithic deposits of the valley.

Chelléen forms are recorded from other parts of the Abruzzi and also from the Marche. In the latter district isolated

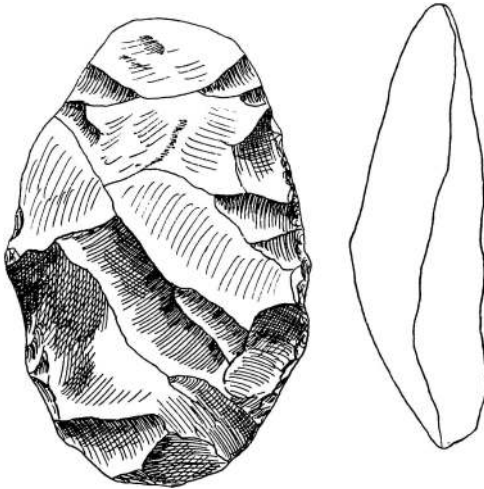


FIG. 4. *Chelléen* implement. Scale $\frac{2}{3}$. (Colini, *Bull. Pal.*)

examples have been found, but for the Abruzzi the evidence is more satisfactory. The chief centre of the stone-working industry seems to have been near La Maiella, in the neighbourhood of Chieti. The implements of La Maiella, made from rolled pebbles of flint or rarely quartzite, mostly conform to the main types, but some, of forms more advanced and delicate, are precisely parallel to those which in France are termed *Acheuléen*. Compared with the implements of the Vibrata Valley those of La Maiella exhibit greater finish and more regularity of shape. Unfortunately none of these implements were found in deposits which justify any

^{b.} La
Maiella.

conclusions as to their age, and any date which we may assign to them must be a mere matter of analogy.

We may conclude that in the Marche and Abruzzi the *Chelléen* industry not only extended over a wide area, but underwent considerable development. On the bank of the c. Imola. Santerno near Imola (Emilia), *Chelléen* and *Moustérien* were

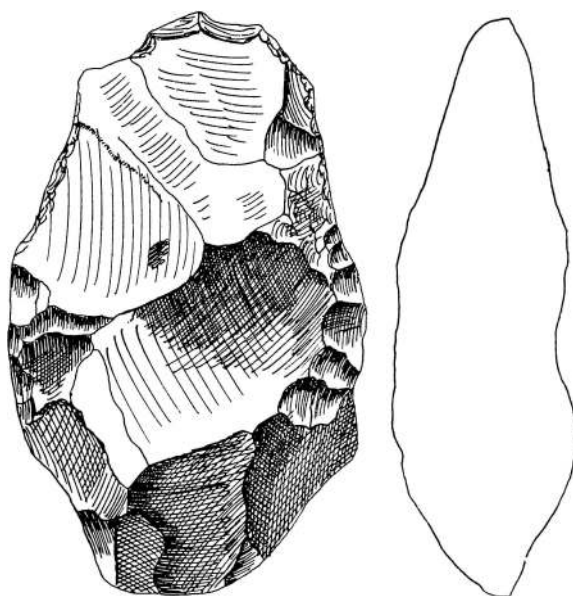


FIG. 5. *Chelléen* implement. Scale $\frac{3}{4}$. (Colini, *Bull. Pal.*)

found associated in such a way as to establish their contemporaneity. They were found in the quaternary deposits of the second terrace of the river.

d. Umbria. Various parts of Umbria have yielded *Chelléen* forms whose position was not ascertained. In some cases, however, we are able to say exactly from what stratum they come. At Busco, S. Egidio and Petrignano, they were found in sand or sandy gravels left by the quaternary alluvium of the Tiber and the Chiascio. In other places they occurred on the surface, where the surface happened to consist of quater-

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nary alluvium, on the terraces of the Tiber and several of its tributaries. In the lowest and therefore latest alluvial deposits the *Chelléen* forms were always associated with the *Moustérien*.

In the island of Capri *Chelléen* forms were found alone, e. Capri. certain flakes found with them being far too shapeless to be called *Moustérien*. The fauna with which the implements were associated included *Elephas antiquus*, *Rhinoceros tichorhinus* (?), *Ursus spelaeus*, *Felis tigris* (?), and the hippopotamus. Thus *Chelléen* man must have lived in Capri in the old quaternary period. Similar evidence comes from Terranova, near Venosa, in the North of the Basilicata. *Chelléen* implements were found together with remains of *Cervus elaphus*, *Hyaena spelaea*, *Ursus spelaeus*, *Felis spelaea*, *Hippopotamus amphibius major* and *Elephas antiquus*.

In North Italy *Chelléen* forms seem to be rare. A few f. Liguria. isolated examples are quoted, e. g. from the Grotta delle Fate in Liguria, and from the Euganean hills, while it is certain that at Breonio and at Rivoli the *Chelléen* industry g. Breonio and Rivoli. in a modified form existed during the neolithic age.

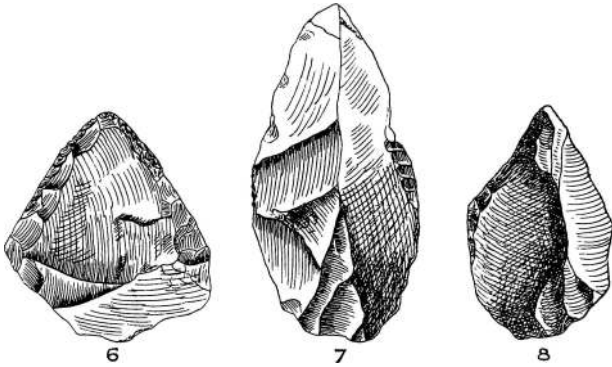
From the islands only one *Chelléen* form is yet recorded. h. Sicily. It was found in Sicily, in the district of Trapani.

Besides the examples from Venosa and Capri, South Italy has yielded many others. The bulk of these come from the i. Gargano. peninsula of the Gargano, in which district palaeolithic forms were made until very late.

The conclusions to be drawn from our material are not numerous. As in France, so in Italy, the *Chelléen* imple- General conclusions. ments are found sometimes alone, sometimes with the *Moustérien*, and, in some cases at least, belong to a quaternary period which had a warm climate and whose fauna included the elephant. We have as yet no evidence from Italy itself for the hypothesis that the *Chelléen* period was definitely earlier than the *Moustérien*. Again, though implements of *Acheuléen* type occur, they are never accompanied by the objects which distinguish deposits of this type in France. The *Chelléen* industry had a long life in Italy, and Pigorini contends with much plausibility that the arrival of neolithic people and industries did not altogether destroy it.

In particular, he describes as direct descendants of the *Chelléen* implements two forms, the *Solutréen* spearhead and the flaked axe found in neolithic deposits at Rivoli, and in the Valley of the Vibrata and elsewhere.

Did *Chelléen* man come from Africa? Pigorini suggests further that the *Chelléen* man, whom he takes to be the earliest inhabitant of Italy, came from Africa.¹ He supports this idea by pointing to the distribution of the *Chelléen* implement in Africa, where it is found in Algeria and Tunis, in the Nile valley, in Somaliland, in the French



Figs. 6-8. *Moustérien* borers. Scale $\frac{1}{4}$. (Colini, *Bull. Pal.*)

and Belgian Congo, in Cape Colony, Natal and the Transvaal, and also in the neighbourhood of the Victoria Falls.

B. *Moustérien* implements. The distinguishing characteristic of the *Moustérien* implements of Italy is that they are made not from rolled stones but from artificially struck flakes of flint.² The working, which is sometimes quite fine, is usually limited to one face of the implement, while the other is untouched and shows

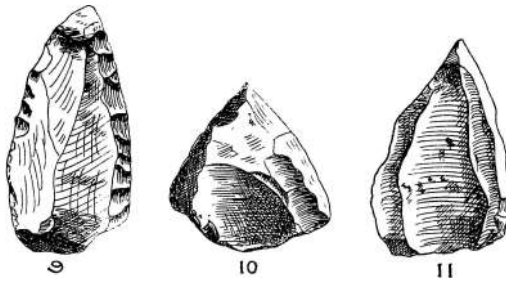
1. 'Points.' the bulb of percussion. In Italy the *Moustérien* implements are of four forms, points (*punte*), scrapers, discs and large retouched flakes. The points are formed of flakes which taper towards one end, while the other end, formed by the plane of percussion, is left blunt to be held in the hand (figs. 6-11). The lower face is of course plane or nearly so,

¹ *B. P.*, xxix, p. 192

² *B. P.*, xxxii, pp. 181 sqq.

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and the upper surface is worked in longitudinal flakes. Sometimes the point and edges are finely retouched. The shape varies from oval to triangular, but admits of endless varieties, and is often very irregular. The point is often unsymmetrically placed, as in fig. 12. Plate I, fig. 1, gives some examples of neolithic date. The scrapers also are made by working on one face only. One of the longer edges is worked to a fine cutting or scraping edge by minute flaking, while the opposite edge is usually left unworked. The cutting-edge is almost always convex. The forms are trapezoid, ovoid or segmental, the arc in the latter case forming the sharpened



Figs. 9-11. *Moustérien* borers. Scale $\frac{3}{8}$. (Colini, *Bull. Pal.*)

edge (figs. 13-17). The so-called flakes do not conform to any definite shape. They are usually rather broad, and are retouched at the point and on one or both edges (fig. 18). The discs are, unlike the other implements described, worked on both faces. Their general appearance may be gathered from fig. 19.

Rosa states that implements of these four types were found in the Valley of the Vibrata, sometimes in company with *Chelléen* types, sometimes alone, and sometimes in neolithic deposits. In the absence of evidence to the contrary, we must admit that at least a certain proportion of these implements are most probably of neolithic date.

Moustérien shapes are well represented in various parts of the Marche, though we have no evidence to show in what stratum they lay. In the Abruzzi the district of Chieti has yielded numerous examples of this industry. It is stated

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that *Chelléen* and *Moustérien* implements were here found together in alluvial gravels fifty metres above the present level of the river Alento. There seems, however, to be some reason for doubting this statement. The wide diffusion of the *Moustérien* types in the Marche and Abruzzi shows that the industry had a firm hold on this part of Italy, so that

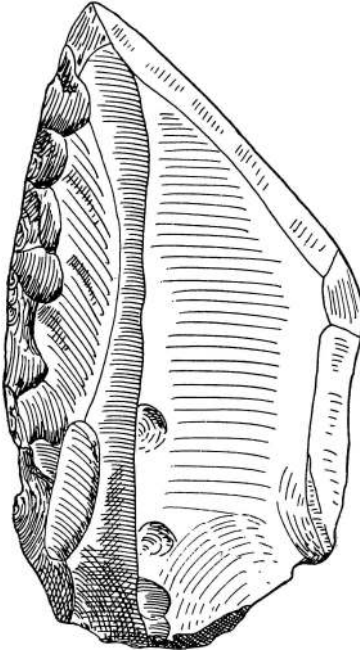


FIG. 12. *Moustérien* borer. Scale $\frac{1}{2}$. (Colini, *Bull. Pal.*)

the existence of *Moustérien* forms here in neolithic times occasions no difficulty.

Date of
 the *Mous-
 térien*
 imple-
 ments.
 Datable
 deposits.

The examples we have so far mentioned give no clue whatsoever as to their date. There are, however, in Italy deposits from which more definite conclusions can be reached. In the Valley of the Vibrata, on the quaternary terraces of the river Santerno near Imola and in the pleistocene alluvia