



LIVING ON THE EDGE. LATE PALAEOOLITHIC COMMUNITIES ON THE NORTH EUROPEAN PLAIN

The northern part of Europe was glaciated ca. 100,000 years ago. The first signs of ice-sheet retreating north have occurred 20,000 years ago, while 15,000 years ago a migration of people from Franko-Cantabrian area has begun. They settled north-eastern France, Belgium, Thine area, Switzerland, southern Germany, Czech Republic, Moravia and southern Poland.

Pioneers, who recolonized the North European Plain, were related to Hamburgian culture, living in a tundra environment and based mainly of seasonally migrating reindeers, supplemented by small mammals and fishes.

After a short deterioration of climate condition, known as Older Dryas, the area from the Atlantic coast to the Bug river was occupied by hunter-gatherers, who used various backed pieces as projectile points. It is worth highlighting, that those groups inhabited also the area, sunken nowadays under the North Sea, so called Doggerland. The common name of this formation is Federmesser culture (Federmesser Gruppen) or more generally technocomplex with back arched points. They lived mostly in the Allerød climatic optimum of the Pleistocene. However, this warm period of late glacial climate development was interrupted by cold oscillations and Federmesser societies had to stand against them. Moreover, they came face to face with the biggest late glacial ecological disaster – the volcanic eruption in the western Germany.

The last Palaeolithic hunter-gatherers lived in a very cold natural conditions related to the Younger Dryas, lasting almost 1100 years. However, the harsh climate did not prevailed them to inhabit the vast area from the British Islands to Wolga river.

Keywords: Late Palaeolithic, Hamburgian, Federmesser, Swiderian, the North European Plain, hunter-gatherers, subsistence strategies



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