Introduction

The Late Stone Age is chronologically situated by some authors between 20 000 and the appearance of metallurgy. According to Vogel (1997:307) «This broad characterization encompasses groups of highly mobile foragers as well as less mobile and settled village-based food-producers. The analytical query, however, is one of positively identifying significant differences between these different kinds of subsistence and socio-economic systems and discriminating between Late Stone Age hunting-gathering societies in a strict sense from food-producing societies, which are sometimes termed Neolithic. The debate on the relevance of the term Neolithic in western Africa results, in part, from this difficulty in distinguishing early food producers if their subsistence system was based on the cultivation of oil palms and tubers like yams.»

In the Northwest of Benin during the surveys undertaken with the German team of SFB 268 some Late Stone Age site were discovered along the Pendjari river and can contribute to elucidate some questions about Late Stone Age.
Pendjari sites are located along the Pendjari river in northwest of Benin.
The sites are eroded seasonally eroded and in fact destroyed.
But this allowed us to see on the surface lithic material on eroded surface. Excavations were made on one of the sites.
In 2000 the first excavation was made and we reached a depth of about 30 cm. In 2006 a second excavation was made and the materiel continued until the depth of 80 cm. The stratigraphy consist of 3 mean layers. Yellow top soil without any artefact, red soil like burnt clay with many charcoal, and red-whitish soil.
The artefacts we found there were mainly stone artefacts. The analysis of these stone artefacts shows that most of them were waste then followed the flakes, nuclei tools and lamellas etc.
41 per cent of the material was in quartz and 59 per cent in silex.
The analysis of the cores shows many types: globulous cores, blade cores, prismatic cores etc.
The flakes measurements show that there are very small flakes:
10 percent have a length between 4 and 5.9 cm
40 percent have a length between 2 and 3.9 cm
60 percent have a length less than 2 cm
The main tools are microliths
There are different kinds of microliths
The microliths found in the 2000 excavation. What is interesting here is the presence of pottery. Pottery sherds are seen between 25 and 30 cm. They are old according to date.
Datations du site de la Pendjari

Atmospheric data from Reimer et al (2004); OxCal v3.10 Bronk Ramsey (2005); cub r:5 sd:12 prob up[chron]

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<th>6000CalBC</th>
<th>5800CalBC</th>
<th>5600CalBC</th>
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The calibrated date is around 5000 BC, which is among the oldest pottery in the region. In the North till the latitude of Onjougou as wrote Huysecom the pottery is older than south of this latitude. On this site we think that more investigations should be made, more excavations with archaeobotanical analysis. We note that on the other side Breunig and Wotzka have made some investigations which have to be taken into account.
Discussion
- Problématique du Late Stone Age
- Late Stone Age et Néolithique
- Contribution du site de la Pendjari à l’étude de cette période
Je vous remercie