



HAL
open science

Eemian: What's up on the Western front? ou à l'ouest Rhin de nouveau ?

David Hérisson, Jean-luc Locht, Luc Vallin, Laurent Deschodt, Pierre Antoine, Patrick Auguste, Noémie Sévêque, Nicole Limondin-Lozouet, Agnès Gauthier, Guillaume Hulin, et al.

► To cite this version:

David Hérisson, Jean-luc Locht, Luc Vallin, Laurent Deschodt, Pierre Antoine, et al.. Eemian: What's up on the Western front? ou à l'ouest Rhin de nouveau?. The Rhine during the Middle Palaeolithic: boundary or corridor?, May 2017, Sélestat, France. hal-01992850

HAL Id: hal-01992850

<https://hal.science/hal-01992850>

Submitted on 24 Jan 2019

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.



Distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution - NonCommercial - NoDerivatives 4.0
International License

Eemian: What's up on the Western front? ou à l'ouest Rhin de nouveau ?*

David Hérisson¹, Jean-Luc Lochet^{2,4}, Luc Vallin³, Laurent Deschodt^{2,4}, Pierre Antoine⁴, Patrick Auguste⁵, Noémie Sévêque⁶, Nicole Limondin-Lozouet⁴, Agnès Gauthier⁴, Guillaume Hulin^{2,7}, Bertrand Masson³, Bassam Ghaleb⁸, Clément Vermoux⁴

1 – CNRS-UMR 7194 ; 2 – INRAP ; 3 – SRA Hauts-de-France ; 4 – CNRS-UMR 8591 ; 5 – CNRS-UMR 8198 ; 6 – CNRS-UMR 81646 ; 7 – CNRS-UMR 7619 ; 8 – GEOTOP, Université du Québec à Montréal



The revised settlement history of Northern Europe during the Eemian



In the 1990s, evidence for the presence of Neanderthals east of the Rhine River during the Eemian was found through new investigations focusing on the chronology of Palaeolithic occupations both in central and middle Europe. More recently, in an area located west of the Rhine, the discovery of the site of Caours in the Somme Basin in the early 2000s provided, for the first time, evidence that Neanderthals settled northern France during the Eemian optimum (MIS 5e). So what's up on the Western Front?

An exceptional site allocated to the Eemian interglacial was discovered in 2013 with rescue archaeological test-pits at Waziers in the Scarpe River Valley, a tributary of the Escaut (Scheldt). Investigated within the framework of a multidisciplinary effort, the alluvial sequence is thick (~ 2.5m), with organic silts and peat layers deposited in a large palaeo-meander of the Scarpe River, and preserved by a loess sequence (± 3m). The correlation of the base of the sequence (silt and peats) with the Eemian is based on the following: i) the occurrence of mammals and mollusc assemblages typical for Pleistocene interglacials; ii) a first U/Th (TIMS) date on oogons of Characeae (minimum age: 103 ± 3.5/-3.4 ka), and iii) the occurrence of a typical Last Glacial (Weichselian) loess sequence overlying fluvial organic deposits.

Owing to the rarity of such sequences and the importance of the flint artefacts discovered within the peat layers, a multidisciplinary research project was launched at Waziers in 2014. Our poster presents the main results from these new investigations and highlights the unique potential of this site for both the reconstruction of Eemian palaeoenvironments and Middle Palaeolithic occupation of northern France. On-going investigations at the Waziers site will undoubtedly produce important contributions to the knowledge of Neanderthal groups and their settlement dynamics throughout the great plains of northwestern Europe.

Stratigraphic sequence

Unit 1 – antequaternary substratum (Eocene sand).

Unit 2 – quaternary deposits prior to unit 3, slope formation (hillwashed chalky gravels and sand).

Unit 3 – lower coarse fluvial deposits (chalk, glauconitic sand and glauconitic sandstones).

Unit 4 – thin fluvial deposits mainly clastic

4a – lower grey loam (laminated loam, a little of sand, malacofauna)

4b – slightly organic loam

4c – upper grey loam (identical to 4a)

4d – upper slightly brownish loam.

Unit 5 – thin fluvial deposits mainly organic

5a – lower brownish loam

5b – lower peat; laminated peaty deposits rich in avifauna

5c – laminated grey loam; laminated deposit with a variable thickness infilling a stream channel

5d – grey loam in little channels which erode prior formations

5e – upper brownish loam and mainly peat. The deposit is rich in woods and faunal remains with frequent woods pointed by beavers. Toward the bank, the unit directly overlies on the peat 5d with a heap of large woods, probably a beaver dam.

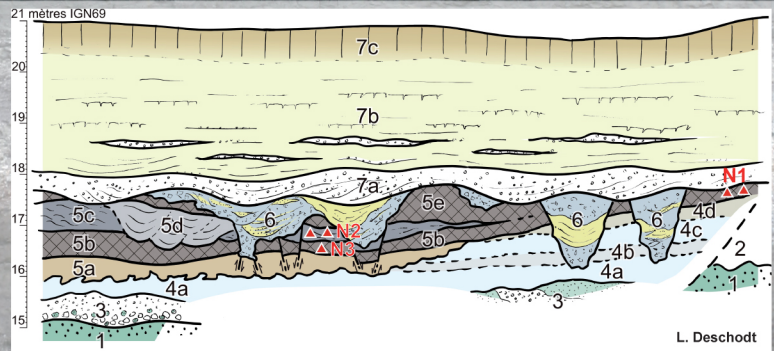
Unit 6 – reworked fluvial deposit, clayey gravels and thermokarstic figures. Unit 6 is associated with deformations, injections and cracks of the prior deposits. It infills little channels typical of thermokarstic structures.

Unit 7 – covering deposits

7a – sheet of chalky gravels, truncates and erodes under-lying layers

7b – sheet mainly constituted of sand. The laminated structure reveals fluvial structures with some chalky gravels deposits.

7c – layer mainly constituted of loam (loess).



L. Deschodt

Excavation - 2014



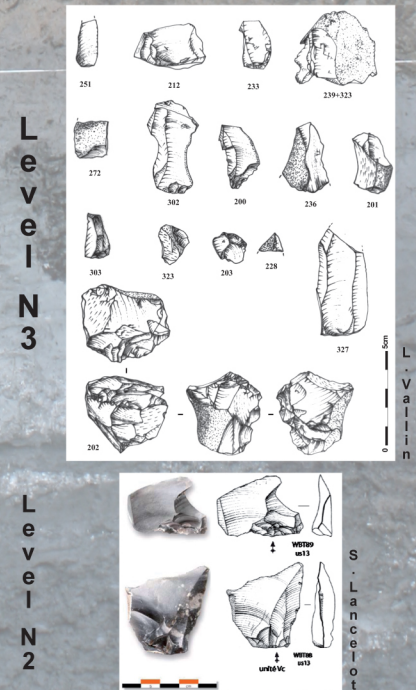
Bioproxies



Mammals remains



Lithic artefacts



Remerciements: B. Clarys pour les dessins de la faune, le SRA des Hauts-de-France, la CADDAP et la mairie de Waziers pour leur soutien logistique et financier, AVENTIM, les propriétaires et les exploitants agricoles pour l'autorisation d'accès lors des prospections et des fouilles, le CCE du Pas-de-Calais pour la conservation des restes végétaux et l'ensemble de l'équipe de fouilles et de recherche.

* Double clin d'œil à l'ouvrage d'Erich Maria Remarque, Im Westen nichts Neues, roman pacifiste sur la Première Guerre Mondiale paru en 1929 et au Ch'ti, patois du Nord parlé dans les alentours de Waziers.

