

A NEOLITH FROM SON VALLEY

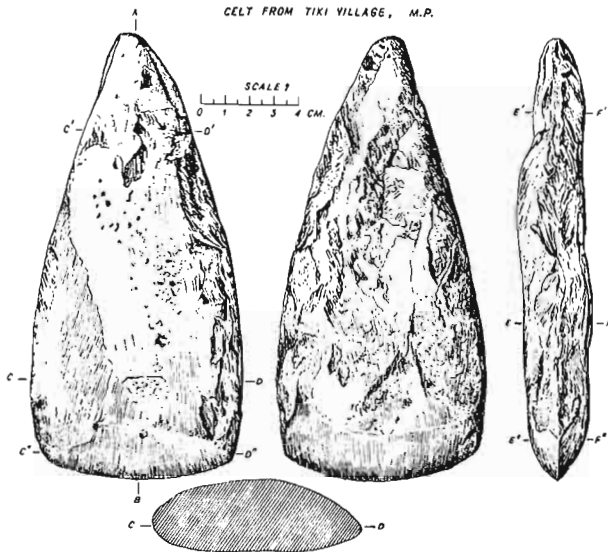
THE present note describes a new neolithic stone-axe (celt) collected from a locality half a mile south of the village Tiki (81° 22' : 23' 56') in Sahdol District, Madhya Pradesh; twelve miles north-east of the present course of Son River, on the road connecting Rewa and Sahdol. The best route to this locality is via Rewa. This lone trait of prehistoric culture was discovered¹ in March 1965.

The country around Tiki is formed of red clay and soft sandstone; flanked in the north

and north-west by high Vindhyan hills and in the south by Deccan trap hills. The slightly undulating tract around Tiki, famous for reptilian and amphibian fossil remains, has hardly any covering of soil. Small patches of recent to sub-recent gravel deposits here and there, mostly weathered and disintegrated, support a scanty vegetation. The artifact was found lying on the red clay ground among weathered fossil bones of Triassic age and pebbles of quartz and quartzite. A good search by the field party did not yield a second specimen, which indicates the rarity of such implements in this area.

(a) *Composition*.—The specimen is composed of very fine-grained, hard, compact greenish-black basalt, a rock which occurs in great thickness in the south of the area.

(b) *Measurements*.—Max. length: 19.1 cm. (A-B); max. breadth: 8.8 cm. (C-D); breadth near pole: 4.5 cm. (C'-D'); breadth near cutting edge: 8.0 cm. (C''-D''); max. thickness: 2.9 cm. (E-F); thickness near pole: 2.25 cm. (E'-F') and thickness near working edge:



Tiki celt: Three views of the (a) dorsal, (b) ventral and (c) lateral surfaces of the specimen, with cross-sectional outline. Measurements between the points designated by A, B, C, C', D, D', E, E', F, F' and F, F', F'' have been shown in the text.

2.3 cm. (E"-F"). Letters given in parenthesis may be compared with those given in the figure-drawings of the celt. Weight: 662.7 gm.

(c) *Patination*.—Differential chemical alteration (patination)² is distinctly discernible on several spots over either of the surfaces, marginal faces, especially on terminal lateral profile towards the pole of the specimen. A distinguishing elongated patinated scar (3.4 cm. in max. length) with brownish hue covers the left margin at the pointed butt-end.

(d) *Shape and Size*.—The characteristic shape of the specimen is triangular in external form but cross-section reveals more or less lenticular profile from top view. The specimen is remarkable for its massive size and weight.

(e) *Workmanship*.—Neolithic techniques for tool-making are clearly discernible in this artifact. The specimen exhibits chipping and pecking on the surfaces and margins. High degree of polishing on both surfaces near the cutting-end is remarkable. On the convex (dorsal) surface several deep and shallow flake-scars are noticeable along with marks of weather-actions. Lateral margins vary in thickness. Left margin produces a thinner profile in comparison to the thicker right margin on which marks of frequent chipping are present. The ventral surface bears a flat and depressed look. The polar end is somewhat tapering with a blunt finish.

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1. Second author collected the specimen from the area mentioned.
2. Goodwin, A. J. H., "Chemical alteration (patination) of stone," in R. F. Heizer and S. F. Cook (Eds.), *The Application of Quantitative Methods in Archaeology*, Quadrangle Books, Chicago, 1960.