A000-Eur-France-Le Grand Pressigny-Acheulian-Hand Axe-*Homo erectus*-ca 250,000 BP-Black Flint



Fig. 1. Dis-Eur-France-Le Grand Pressigny-Acheulian-Hand Axe-Black Flint

Case no. 1

**Formal Label:** France-Le Grand Pressigny-Acheulian-unifacial projectile point-*Homo heidelbergensis* (*Homo erectus*), 250,000 BP

**Display Description:**

This rare Acheulian unifacial projectile point from Le Grand-Pressigny in Southern Touraine, France, was made by *Homo erectus* in the Acheulian method from a flake, the predominant tool technology of the Lower Paleolithic, ca. 250,000 years ago. Its white patina and soil sheen on the original surfaces were added by its use in hunting large Pleistocene mammals and its subsequent burial for over at least 250 millennia. European Acheulian flake tools are rarely exhibited in museums because hand axes take precedent. The edges show extensive retouching to make it very sharp on the cutting edges to cut through tough hides, since the hunter’s life depended on it.

**Accession Number:** A

**LC Classification:** GN776.22 F7

**Date or Time Horizon:** ca 250,000 BP

**Geographical Area:** Le Grand-Pressigny, Southern Touraine, France

**Map, GPS coordinates:**



**Cultural Affiliation:** Acheulian

**Medium:** Le Grand Pressigny flint

**Dimensions:**

**Weight:**

**Condition: This Mousterian Hand Axe** has a patina and soil sheen on the original surfaces with no modern damage or repair.

**Provenance:** This is from an old French collection of Le Grand Pressigny artifacts.

**Discussion:**

This Mousterian hand axe from Le Grand-Pressigny in Southern Touraine, France, was made from rare black flint by *Homo erectus* in the Acheulian method from a flake, the predominant tool technology of the Lower Paleolithic, ca. 250,000 years ago. Its dark patina and soil sheen on the original surfaces were added by its original use in hunting large Pleistocene mammals and its subsequent burial for over at least 250 millennia. European Acheulian flake tools are rarely exhibited in museums because hand axes take precedent. The edges show extensive retouching to make it very sharp on the cutting edges to cut through tough hides, since the hunter’s life depended on it.

The Acheulian Tradition first began in Africa and there it is well-defined and most diverse when compared to other regions where it eventually diffused.  Acheulian tools are fashioned from large flakes as opposed to using a whole cobblestone as the core.

The first hominins to live outside of Africa were *Homo erectus*.  Around 1.8 million years BP, these hominins spread from Africa to south Asia keeping to the tropical zones which they preferred.  By 700,000 years BP they had colonized temperate regions of Europe and North China, but they never reached Australia or the Americas.  Unlike *Homo Neanderthalensis*, *Homo erectus* avoided glacial and sub-Artic regions.  Homo erectus arrived in Europe when stone tool technology included both Acheulian flake tools and the earlier Oldowan style pebble tools.  Between 700,000 and 400,000 BP, the first hand-axes were made by *Homo erectus* in Europe.  Both occupied sites and kill sites indicate that large game animals were butchered simultaneously with stone tool manufacture.