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**Small neolithic 'greenstone' axe with possible traces of red ochre from Ternat
(province of Flemish Brabant, Belgium)**

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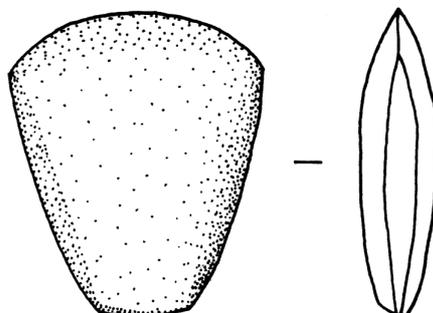
1 cm





In 2010, a small 'greenstone' axe dating back to the middle or late neolithic age was found during an archaeological trial trenching evaluation nearby the village of Ternat in Belgium. The artefact's position in a bioturbated loamy sediment just beneath the plough soil could not be linked to an archaeological feature in the immediate vicinity of the findspot. However, some neolithic flint artefacts were recovered as surface finds whereas the filling of an isolated windthrow structure contained a substantial number of prehistoric flint-tempered potsherds.

This thin-bladed axe with faceted edges has a length of 39 mm, a width of 32 mm and a maximum thickness of 11 mm. The perfectly curved cutting-edge shows no visible traces of usage. The small butt is slightly damaged. The axe is entirely polished but shows a number of small cavities on one side of the artefact's body. In some of these cavities a reddish-brown coloured, ochre-like substance is recognizable.



The general term 'greenstone' is used in this context because of the absence of a petro-archaeometric study of the raw material. Similar 'greenstone' axes of diverse shapes and sizes occur frequently in several neolithic contexts throughout (North Western) Europe (**Pétrequin et al. 1997**). A well-known production centre of axes in jadeitite, omphacitite and eclogite is situated in the Mont Viso area (Piedmont, Italy) (**Pétrequin et al. 2007**) where also a relatively extensive petro-archaeometric research has been performed (see: **Compagnoni et al. 2007; D' Amico 2005**). Other outcrops of 'greenstone' materials being exploited during the neolithic period occur in the Armorican Massif in Brittany (France) (**Paillet 2009**) and around Mount's Bays area (West Cornwall, England) (**Markham and Floyd 1998**).

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