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# From mines to settlements (and vice-versa): the raw materials from the Mons Basin (western Belgium) as a proxy to study mining products circulation and experience the definition of a mining complex

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## Résumé

A synthesis of Neolithic flint extraction sites from the Mons Basin (Western Belgium) has established the presence of 5 to 7 extraction sites concentrated on a small area (65 km<sup>2</sup>), including the very famous World Heritage site of Spiennes. These extraction sites are distinguished both by extraction methods and by the nature of their products. These differences refer to various aims within the socio-economic organization of agro-pastoral communities.

In parallel with this topic, a pioneering work to characterize silicifications from the Upper Cretaceous to Paleocene deposits allows to take a fresh look at the regional and extra-regional circulation of mining products from the Mons Basin (mainly within the Haine valley and the Upper Scheldt area).

The circulation of raw materials, as a proxy, establishes relationship, even indirect, between village communities and it sketch a diachronic overview of the most important extraction sites of the Mons Basin (Spiennes, Douvrain and Flénu) from the 5th to the end of the 3rd millennium. This component also suggests a form of organization between some extraction sites and leads us to question the relevance of the notion of mining complex, currently used to define any regional cluster of flint extraction sites.

**Mots-Clés:** Mons Basin, flint extraction, mining complex, circulation nextwork

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