

AN ENIGMATIC CEPHALOPOD JAW ELEMENT FROM THE LATEST MAASTRICHTIAN OF THE NETHERLANDS

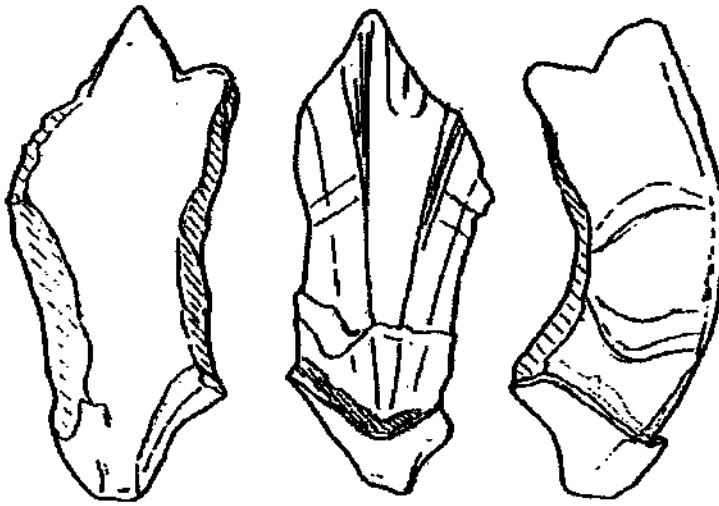
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The upper portion of the Meersen Member (Maastricht Formation, subunits Ivf-5/-6) as exposed at the ENCI-Maastricht BV quarry south of Maastricht, has yielded an enigmatic cephalopod jaw (Natuurhistorisch Museum Maastricht collections, no. NHMM JJ 11128) (see Figure).



Structure and size clearly differentiate the present specimen from nautiloid jaw elements (rhyncholites, conchorhynchs) which locally are very common, especially in the basal portions of the various members in the Maastrichtian Formation. In recent years, numerous specimens representing the various ontogenetic stages, have been collected. From the upper Valkenburg and lower Gronsveld members in particular, well-preserved material, partially silicified with dark purple-stained remains of organic material (?) and winglike extensions, is available. These specimens may be assigned to the following taxa: *Rhyncholites minimus* Blinkhorst, 1861, *R. marcellae* Van der Tuuk, 1985 and *Conchorhynchus limburgicus* Van der Tuuk, 1982. There is no doubt that these jaw elements belonged to the two nautiloid taxa known to date from the Maastricht Formation, namely *Cinomia heberti* (Blinkhorst, 1861) and *Eutrephoceras depressus* (Blinkhorst, 1861). However, it should be noted that these are in need of a modern revision. A third species, *Epicymatoceras vaelsense* (Blinkhorst, 1861), appears to be restricted to the Vijlen Member (subunits 0-4, Gulpen Formation).

The present specimen might thus be linked to one of the ammonite taxa known from the Meersen Member, viz. *Menites terminus*, *Sphenodiscus binckhorsti*, *Baculites vertebralis* and *hoploscaphtes constrictus*. Of these, baculitids and scaphitids have aptychi as lower jaws, and only *M. terminus* appears large enough to have contained such a jaw.