
Mumba Cave and the question of regionalization in the East African MSA

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Résumé

Lithic assemblages from the African Middle Stone Age (MSA) often contain large numbers of stone points. Their morphological diversity in addition to varying proportions in other tool types observed at MSA sites is thought to reflect regional traditions and styles. Addressing the development of regional styles is difficult due to the scarcity of detailed information on the chronological patterning of these styles for large parts of Africa and the risk of over simplification of the problem through correlating single regions with only few forms that are assumed to be representative. In this paper we change perspective and use the long MSA to Later Stone Age sequence from Mumba Cave in Tanzania to examine whether the archaeological record provides evidence in support of a development of a local tradition in the study region. This paper also addresses potential explanations for diachronic variation in lithic technology. We focus here on the site's considerable record of stone points and use morphometric methods to study diachronic changes in the morphology of these points. Based on these results, we examine competing hypotheses to explain the observed patterns.

Mots-Clés: MSA, points, East Africa

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