
Function of pointed tools made from bird bones: a case of study on Indians Canoeros of Strait of Magellan, Chile

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Résumé

Awls made from bird bones are the most common artefacts in the maritime sites of Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego. Their use is generally interpreted using ethnographical data recorded by sailors and ethnologists on the last Yamana and Kaweskar people. These tools are made on various anatomical supports, and their active parts present a large variety of shapes and dimensions. These variations can be explained by a simple adaptation to the available species, the maintenance of the tools, or choices relating to the purpose for which it was made : to pierce skin or bark, to separate vegetable fibers in order to weave baskets, to work whalebone plate or animal tendons, etc.

Pointed tools made from bird bones are divided into two distinct categories. The first, very common, is constituted by " huecos " awls (*sensu* Piana, 1984). They are defined by the presence of an epiphysis. The second, more rare, is characterized by small pointed tools made on diaphysis segments. These were only found at four archaeological sites : Offing 2 (Locus 1), Punta Santa Ana 2, KM 44 et Dawson 3. They are all located in the Strait of Magellan and are dated from the recent intermediate period (3500-2000 years BP.).

In Offing 2, a functional hypothesis was formulated about these small pointed tools made on diaphysis segments (Christensen, 2016). It is based on the discovery of numerous of them (n : 98) in an area of the site where bird and fish bones were rejected. This observation led to consider these tools as elements of composite hook.

This study aims to characterize the " traceological signatures " of " huecos " awls and small pointed tools made on diaphysis segments. The comparison of the use-wear observed on these tools will allow us to discuss fonctionnal hypothesis and how they really were used.

Mots-Clés: Appointed tools, Bird bones, Traceology, Experimentation.

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