
Final Pleistocene and Early Holocene occupation of the Northern Farafra Depression, Egypt – The significance of backed bladelet and microlithic technocomplex in the context of the Egyptian Western Desert.

Giuseppina Mutri*^{†1}, Barbara Barich[‡], and Giulio Lucarini*[§]

¹University of Cambridge, Cambridge. Archaeology department. – Royaume-Uni

Résumé

The study of the Final Pleistocene-Early Holocene lithic complexes of North Africa highlighted the constant presence of microlithic backed tools. In this regard, as already pointed out by Close (2002), the Epipalaeolithic stone production of Maghreb shows similar characteristics to the industries of the Nile Valley. This is why Close reasonably assumes that the Nile Valley may have played an important role as a point of contact and exchange between human groups. Even the microlithic complexes of the Egyptian Western Desert may have played a decisive role in these movements of ideas and technologies. In the present paper we consider the main characteristics of several bladelet assemblages recorded in various areas of the Farafra depression, which are remains of ephemeral occupations mainly linked to small temporary pools of water. We suggest that this category of artifacts, used as composed hafted tools, may represent a new approach to the environment and that, at the same time, they show the ability of transmitting technological skills on a social scale. We propose that at Farafra the emergence of backed elements was tied to the re-occupation of the area in the Early Holocene. This event not only seems slightly later compared to Dakhla and Kharga oases, but also shows different characteristics. The paper wonders about Farafra's position in the Early Holocene Western Desert and what were the exchanges with the other Egyptian oases.

Mots-Clés: Egypt, Western Desert, Farafra Oasis, Lithic technology, settlement, technological skills

*Intervenant

[†]Auteur correspondant: giuseppina.mutri@uniroma1.it

[‡]Auteur correspondant: barbara.barich@mclinknet.it

[§]Auteur correspondant: gl374@cam.ac.uk