
A Tale of biface technologies from S. Peninsular India ; (British Museum collections) - 3D geo-morphometric and classical techniques of analysis

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Résumé

Biface tools have played an important role in the Palaeolithic studies trying to decode ancient lifeways through them. Often the traditional metrical analysis has been unsatisfactory and subjective, especially in instances of asymmetrical tools with various possibilities of orientation, for capturing data reflecting their shape. Recent years have seen the application of 3D scanning as an accurate, efficient and objective method of data collection as an alternative. It has the additional advantage of being both interactive and reversible analytical process.

Traditionally the collections of Palaeolithic artefacts kept since long in the museums are seldom subject to study (due to lack of related documentation, and often doubtful or mixed context thereby increasing the possibility of misinterpretation). Moreover, if at all they are studied, it is often the classical typo-technological analysis which is applied, along with very simple measurements to record the bifaces morphology.

This paper will present the preliminary results of both geo-morphometric as well as classical analytical methods applied to bifaces from South Peninsular Indian Palaeolithic assemblages kept in the British Museum collections. It will highlight the complimentary nature of both methods in deciphering the tool technology and morphology and show the advantages of the geo-morphometric analysis.

This combined methodology will be further applied to other collections and participate to the current increasing availability of 3D data. This enhances the possibilities of statistical comparisons at a large scale, geographical and temporal as well. The present study will also

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contribute to the development of digital data repositories, easily accessible for the community of archaeologists and sparing collection specimens repeated manual handling.

Mots-Clés: Lithic Technology, Digital Data, Biface analysis, 3D geo, morphometrics, Museum collections