
Small tools in the Middle Pleistocene of the Philippines: the lithic assemblage from Kalinga in northern Luzon

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Résumé

The Southeast Asian Lower Palaeolithic has for long attracted attention – as for other part of the world – for its large cutting tools like handaxes, although the small and unretouched tools are often the main technical categories forming these assemblages.

The early Middle Pleistocene lithic assemblage of the Kalinga site in the northeastern part of Luzon has been recovered in association with butchered faunal remains including an almost complete skeleton of *Rhinoceros philippinensis*. The artefacts have been produced from siliceous and igneous rocks most likely collected in the direct vicinity of the site. The knapping techniques include direct hard hammer stone in freehand percussion as well as the use of anvils for the production of tools from laterized rocks.

We identified two different knapping strategies: bifacial centripetal and bifacial orthogonal on anvil. The reduction sequences are short and non-organized and the final aim of the two knapping strategies is oriented towards obtaining small flakes with non-standardized morphologies and dimensions, and often without any intentional retouch.

We conducted an experimentation to reproduce the identified knapping techniques and products using the same raw materials. We also conducted a use-wear study of the archaeological artefacts.

The preliminary results of the analysis of the stone artefacts, raw material procurement, use-wear analysis and the experimental work, altogether, show that this expedient technology was constrained by: a) the raw material availability and knapping qualities of the used pebbles, and b) the subsistence activities developed at the site.

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