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# Ethnoarchaeology and Interpretation of formative processes of the archaeological record

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## Résumé

The interpretation and analysis of formative processes of the archaeological record is certainly a crucial problem of archaeology. Over the years the theory and practice of the archaeological excavation have been enriched with various fields of study and archaeologists multiplied excavations all over the world. Therefore, nowadays archaeologists have wide and various interpretative models to apply.

Ethnoarchaeology has certainly been important for the development of theory and practice of stratigraphic excavations. In fact, analysis of formative processes of the archaeological record was the fulcrum of ethnoarchaeological research for a long time, from its beginning to the nineties. Archaeologists tried to use the observation of current traditional societies to better understand the archaeological record. Nowadays ethnoarchaeology has changed and expanded its horizons and is open to different themes which are not directly connected to the stratigraphic problem. But the topic is still crucial for ethnoarchaeological research.

It is important to consider and reconsider the role of ethnoarchaeology in the development of the comprehension of the formation processes of the archaeological record. "Nunamiut Ethnoarchaeology" by R.L. Binford (1978) which is a classic of archaeological theory building, is certainly exemplary for what concerns the importance of ethnoarchaeology and the interpretation of formation process and archaeological record.

But it is important to analyse how ethnoarchaeology has enriched interpretative models over the years and how archaeologists accepted and used it. Because, if it is undeniable that ethnoarchaeological advances have been crucial for archaeology it is not so commonly accepted.

Therefore the author will consider various ethnoarchaeological researches from different countries and chronologies and their influence on archaeology.

Lastly the problem of the archaeological record of pastoralism will be considered. In fact, the study of current nomadic societies can contribute significantly to the reconstruction of models of pastoralism in the past. The ethnoarchaeological research conducted by the authors in Siberia and Mongolia will be presented to stress the role of ethnoarchaeology for and archaeology of pastoralism in Central Asia.

**Mots-Clés:** Ethnoarchaeology, formative processes, archaeological record, pastoralism, Central Asia

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