



Rock and Roll: 13th International Symposium on Knappable Materials

Multi-scalar
Characterization
of Raw Materials



Tarragona, Spain
4th-7th October, 2021

Edited by
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Is it possible to understand information transmission and residence patterns from the archaeological record? Some examples from Patagonia

16. THE PEOPLE BEHIND
THE TOOLS
ORAL COMMUNICATION

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The archaeological record is the product of successive human occupations, which can also involve different human groups. These groups take decisions which involve their own background and choices, which are related to the knowledge and distribution of resources, as well as to the existence of neighbors and symbolic aspects.

Technological and raw material Information is transmitted through different ways along the life of different individuals. Variations in the way information is transmitted have been found out between people living close to each other. The question this paper deals with the possibility of their recognition. Can we, as archaeologists, be able to recognize them, specially taking into account the cumulative nature of the archaeological record and the equifinality problems which are so frequent? The archaeological record is the product of successive human occupations, which can also involve different human groups.

Here we will focus on one case from the South of the Upper Santa Cruz river basin, South Patagonia, dated to the Late Holocene, which will be compared with other examples from more to the south and north. We focus on technological, raw material and use-life variations in the more frequent tool types -endscrapers, side scrapers and knives- and cores, as well as blanks which provide technological information. The pattern found out can be related to differences in information transmission between different tool types, but addition information is needed. To the north, the existence of higher variation in raw material availability as well as a more incomplete knowledge of the regional archaeological record do not allow, by the moment, to discuss these aspects.

We believe that a good knowledge of the regional archaeological record and an understanding of the regional lithic structure are essential to begin to discuss if the patterns we find out can be related to specific transmission and residence patterns, as well as to begin to understand if some choices can be related to symbolic aspects. The possibility of the recognition of these patterns will also be related to the variability within the regional lithic structure.