

Reflections on tangs and other morphological adaptations that may be hafting-related

Sonja Tomasso & Noora Taipale, University of Liège

Tanged tools have always attracted archaeologists' attention, and have often been considered to mark the beginnings of stone tool hafting. Very little is known, however, of the specifics of hafting these tools. Also the role of tanged tools in toolkits and lithic assemblages, as well as their significance in terms of technological evolution and human behaviour, are still largely under debate. We are presenting here some of our first observations and ideas of hafting and use of tanged tools building on our ongoing PhD research on the Mousterian/Aterian cave site Ifri n'Ammar (Morocco) and the Gravettian open-air site Maisières-Canal (Belgium). Our experimental and analytical work aims at reconstructing plausible methods of hafting and using tanged tools, and contributing to a better understanding of the role of tangs in the assemblages under study. Our preliminary results suggest that several hafting modes are possible for tools of similar morphology, and that tanged and non-tanged tools can in some cases be hafted using the same logic. We therefore argue that more detailed functional data on both tanged and non-tanged tools is needed before we can meaningfully assess the importance of the presence of tanged tools in various archaeological contexts.