
Abstract:
North American archaeologists often designate spurs on scrapers as gravers or use them as temporal markers for the Paleoindian Period. The functional and stylistic aspects of spurred scrapers are explored here through an ethnoarchaeological study of stone scraper procurement, production, use, and discard among the Gamo of southern Ethiopia. This research demonstrates that the presence of so-called "graver" spurs does not have a functional significance, but is the result of inexperience and/or the waning strength of the hideworker. Furthermore, spurred scrapers occur in abundance at villages where breakage rates also are high, reflecting the presence of a number of inexperienced hideworkers. Lastly, this paper explores the relationship between the experience of the knapper and tool standardization. The analysis suggests that in lineage-based learning systems more-experienced hideworkers assist less-experienced hideworkers, and thus blur any relationship between experience and standardization.

Keywords: Scrapers; Paleoindian period; Gamo; Ethiopia