Prospects of the Old Stone Artifacts and Hunting Tools in the Kantō Area: Focusing Mainly on Trapezoid Tools

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This paper reviews the study of trapezoid stone tools. This were also referred in the Proem for Study of Trapeze-shaped Tools by Hiroyuki Sato. It was expected that stone artifacts before Aira-Tn ash fall would be elucidated. Since then, 28 years have passed, and trapezoid tools have been found at various archaeological sites across Japan. Especially, those unearthed in the Kantō region have yielded data as a result of stratigraphical and typological analysis. In addition, the analysis of traces of use, as well as experimental research, has progressed, enabling a more profound examination of the functions and applications of trapezoid tools.

This paper reviews the studies of trapezoid tools of the above-mentioned age from the perspective of typology.

Although past studies focused on trapezoid tools made mainly of wide flakes, those made of elongated flakes are too important to overlook. Backed points, also known as pen-point-knife-shaped tools, have been found mainly in eastern Japan and occasionally in the Kyūshū region. Because of its shape, pointed at one end and shaped at the other, this type of stone tool is assumed to have been independently developed by interactions between knife-shaped tools and trapezoid tools.

In order to make trapezoid tools, stones were processed and then cut into trapezoidal pieces, and the side edges of the blade part were shaped and knapped to provide flat surfaces, especially disoriented surfaces. Trapezoid tools are categorized into six types: ① those with a horizontal blade and a pointed butt; ② those with a horizontal blade and a flat butt; ③ those with a horizontal blade, a flat butt, and sharp corners at the blade tip (shaped like a trapezoid with its width increasing toward the blade tip); ④ those with an angled blade and a pointed butt; ⑤ those with an angled blade and a flat butt; and ⑥ those made of elongated flakes knapped on the edges.

Trapezoid tools have been excavated in the Kantō region from the Layers of Sagamino B5 and lower Musashino X at the deepest level, which means they are among the oldest stone tools of Tachikawa loam formation. Trapezoid tools are most common among those unearthed from the Layer of B4 and the Layers from upper X to IX. Most of these trapezoid tools are classified as Types I to V. The newest trapezoid tools have been unearthed from the black band Layer of Sagamino B3 and the Layer of Musashino VII. Most of them are classified as Type VI (those made of elongated...
flakes cut and shaped on the side edges). In the northern Kantō region, the materials of trapezoid tools are different at each archaeological site. This suggests that there were regional differences. The trapezoid tool culture reached its zenith before the rise of the knife-shaped tool culture represented by tools shaped on both side edges and excavated mainly from Layer VII.

Key words: Trapezoid tools, backed points, knife-shaped tools, cutting method, knapping to provide flat surfaces, knapping to provide disoriented surfaces, typology