

Analysis of lithic artifacts and sources of raw material of the Archaeological Region of Central, Bahia, Brazil.

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The Archaeological Region of Central, located at inner Bahia State (Limestone Plain, Chapada Diamantina Domain) and with area of 270.000 Km², has been studied by the team of the Central Project, coordinated by Dra. Maria Beltrão, since 1982. One of the aims of the Project is locate raw material sources used by the prehistoric groups in the making of lithic artifacts, considering the strategies of obtaining minerals and rocks, and also the technological possibilities in the artifacts production. It is found in the Limestone Plain silica veins, indicating a good source of chert. In the rockshelters inhabited between 1.000 to 3.000 years ago artifacts of quartz, quartzite, chert, chalcedony and limestone can be found. The quartzite, is the only rock that occurs far away of the rockshelters neighborhood, indicating a distinct strategy to obtain it. In the group of raw materials, mineralogical characteristics can be related to cultural patterns, revealing one more element for the context of human occupations studies. The relationship rock↔artifact analysis could indicate an association morphology/size↔function and also mineral technique↔ property of the instruments, increasing the geological data to the archaeological analysis about the relationship between the prehistoric human groups and the mineral resources. The purpose of this work is to relate the characteristics of the lithic artifacts and the used raw materials, in agreement with its mineralogical properties, the intensity that they appear in the archaeological sites and the distance among the sites and the probable outcrops where they were collected.