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Ground Stone Analysis: A Technological Approach

Jenny L Adams

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Archaeologists refer to stone artifacts that are altered by or used to alter other items through abrasion, pecking, or polishing as "ground stone." This includes mortars, and pestles used to process vegetal materials, pigments, clays, and tempers; abraders, polishing stones, and hammerstones for manufacturing other artifacts; and artifacts shaped by abrasion or pecking, such as axes, pipes, figurines, ornaments, and architectural pieces. Because there is a fuzzy line between flaked and ground stone artifacts, some analysts state that ground stone includes any stone item not considered flaked.

This manual presents a flexible yet structured method for analyzing stone artifacts and classifying them in meaningful categories. The analysis techniques record important attributes based on design, manufacture, and use.

Part I contains discussions on determining function, classification, attributes of grinding technology, use-wear analysis, modeling tool use, utilization of ethnographic and experimental resources, and research suggestions. Part II contains definitions and descriptions of artifact types. Here the author also seeks to unravel the knot that has developed around conflicting application of terms.

A significant reference for any archaeological fieldworker or student who encounters such artifacts.

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