

Ethnoarchaeology: Its concept and Applications in Archaeology

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Abstract

The theoretical developments in archaeology have influenced the nature of cultural inferences that can be achieved by studying material culture. Since the fifties of last century the aims of archaeology were beyond identifying the cultural-historical context of material culture. Instead the focus was inferring cultural aspects from artifacts and testing assumptions on material culture. To reach such a research end, the relationships between human behavior and material culture should be more identified. Moreover, the evaluation of archaeological assumptions based on material foundation ought to be measured in a context where both human behavior and material culture can be directly observed. Ethnoarchaeological studies, therefore, have been developed to clearly identify human-material relationships and to testify the archaeological assumption where behaviors can be directly observed and to identify the factors that can affect these behaviors and their material correlates. Despite the fact that ethnoarchaeology has been intensively practiced in most parts of the world, less studies have been carried out in the Levant. Hence, this paper aims at presenting the nature and conceptualization of ethnoarchaeology, the main topics that have been studied in this part of the world and how to use such studies for archaeological reasoning. Moreover, it aims to suggest further research aspects that can be studied and how to use such studies with archaeological and historical sources to conceptualize the past in the Levant from inside.

Key-words: ethnoarchaeology; definition and uses; applications, Levant.

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