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6. The lithics

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Abstract. The excavations at Borġ in-Nadur by Murray included the first published analysis of lithics in the Maltese Islands. Despite the excavator's attempt at contextualising these lithics, a technological and typological analysis was not carried out. This chapter provides an analysis of the lithic assemblage recovered by Murray.

Keywords: lithics, morphology, typology, transportation, landscape.

6.1. Introduction

Although several archaeologists working in Malta in the early twentieth century had referred to lithics briefly in their work, it is really Murray's research at Borġ in-Nadur that produced the first preliminary publication about lithics[1] as well as producing an extensive drawn record in three site monographs[2]. For archaeologists with an active interest in material culture studies, Murray's work is of special interest because of her occasional description of the original findspot of several lithic pieces. While our comprehension of the contextual settings at Borġ in-Nadur is less than perfect, Murray's interest in lithics marks a first in Maltese prehistoric studies that was unmatched for a few years[3].

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[1] Murray 1923a: 65-66.

[2] See Murray 1923b, 1925, 1929.

[3] The importance of this lithic analysis, and the wider re-analysis presented in this monograph, is testament to the focal role played by Borġ in-Nadur in Maltese prehistory. This analysis of its lithic assemblage is also part of an ongoing study being carried out by the present author.

However, the wider locational characteristics of Borġ in-Nadur itself, discussed elsewhere in this monograph, increase the need for an exhaustive lithic analysis to be conducted in view of its wider landscape context. Early interpretations of the distribution of the Late Neolithic Maltese temples interpreted them as 'clusters' observed across the archipelago[4]. The theoretical focus has recently shifted from an exercise that looked at Maltese prehistoric sites as mere dots in a landscape, to one that considers islands as physically variable[5]. In recent literature, this landscape perspective has also focused on identifying processional ways that could have been in use between funerary hypogea and megalithic monuments[6]. Recently, I have also explored the possibility that Maltese prehistoric communities could have not only placed their monuments in areas of prominence[7], but also acted as a means to connect preferential routes[8]. These routes could have been dictated by particular landscape morphologies (high hills, deep valleys, etc) and access to embayments or anchorages.

My interest in these 'bays' lies in identifying elements that could suggest that they provided preferential access to imported raw materials and, therefore, a lithic assemblage variability. Such variability could in turn distinguish 'bay' sites from other 'hinterland' sites[9]. Therefore, in light of the above discussion, the following analysis of the lithic assemblage at Borġ in-Nadur discusses the typological characteristics of this site and then attempts to place the present assemblage within a wider landscape debate.

4 Renfrew 1973: 153; Trump 2002: 90.
5 Grima 2008: 37.
6 Grima *et al.* 2009: 60.
7 Grima 2008: 38.
8 Vella 2010: 3.
9 Admittedly the use of the terms 'bay' and 'hinterland' is debatable. Within an island context, such terms conjecture images that are perhaps more applicable to a continental scenario. However, since at present such a debate has not taken into consideration the possibility of variance within Malta, I find it of further importance to first investigate this matter and see if such an hypothesis can hold across the Maltese Islands. On the matter see Grima and Mallia, this volume (chapter 8).

6.2. Methodology

The analysis of the Borġ in-Nadur lithic assemblage was conducted in response to two prevailing questions:

1. is there a distinctive use between imported flint and local chert?;
2. and can we observe any specialised use of lithic tools at Borġ in-Nadur?

In light of these questions, and ongoing analysis of lithic assemblages from other sites in the Maltese archipelago, it was decided that the methodology used at Borġ in-Nadur should adhere to the methodology I have adopted elsewhere[10]. The criteria used to catalogue and classify the lithics are based on typological and technical attributes.

For reasons explored elsewhere[11], it was felt that the typological classification should not be limited to inferred function. Even if such typologies are by far the most popular in the archeological literature, they can be problematic. The study of the lithic assemblage from the site of Skorba, indicated that function was dependent on tool types defined largely by analogy. In such assumptions a scraper is considered a scraper because the analyst's interpretation is based on analogical reasoning and expectation[12]. But in the case of the lithics from Skorba, it was clear that formal tool types are not found there and at other prehistoric sites in the Maltese Islands. Indeed, the Maltese lithic assemblage appears to have been largely expedient and informal, especially those implements made from local chert[13].

Therefore, when informal lithic toolkits are known to exist, a different approach is considered necessary. First, a simplified functional classification was proposed (Table 6.1)[14]. While the terminology applied to the functional classification is commonly used by archaeologists, the Borġ in-Nadur lithics were primarily

[10] Vella 2009a, 2009b, 2010 and forthcoming.
[11] Vella 2009a, especially Chapter 3.
[12] Andrefsky 1998: 73.
[13] Vella 2009b: 100.
[14] Vella 2009b: 94.

classified according to the perceived action/motion (i.e., scraping, cutting, serration, perforation and variable). This classification, already used elsewhere[15], should allow for better comparisons with other sites.

scraping	cutting	serration	perforation	variable
scraper	blade	backed blade	awl	unretouched flake
all round scraper		knife	burin	cleaver
end scraper		dagger	drill	unidirectional core
transverse scraper			projective point	multidirectional core
side scraper				

Table 6.1. Functional tool types (source: Vella 2009: 94).

Secondly, my lithic classification is based on the morphological description and sub-division into tools and non-tools. By lithic morphology, I refer to the general shape and series of distinguishable technical attributes observed during analysis. As indicated in greater detail elsewhere[16], the morphological classification followed and applied to lithics from Maltese prehistoric sites follows a method devised for North America, in particular by Andrefsky who places due emphasis on lithic discard and waste[17].

The application of a morphological typology has required a few adaptations to cater for the limited variability in Maltese lithics. The primary distinction between the original proposed classification and the present version lies in the near absence of bifacial technology. This means that the tool of this classification consists of unifacial technology, sub-divided into unimarginal and bimarginal tools.

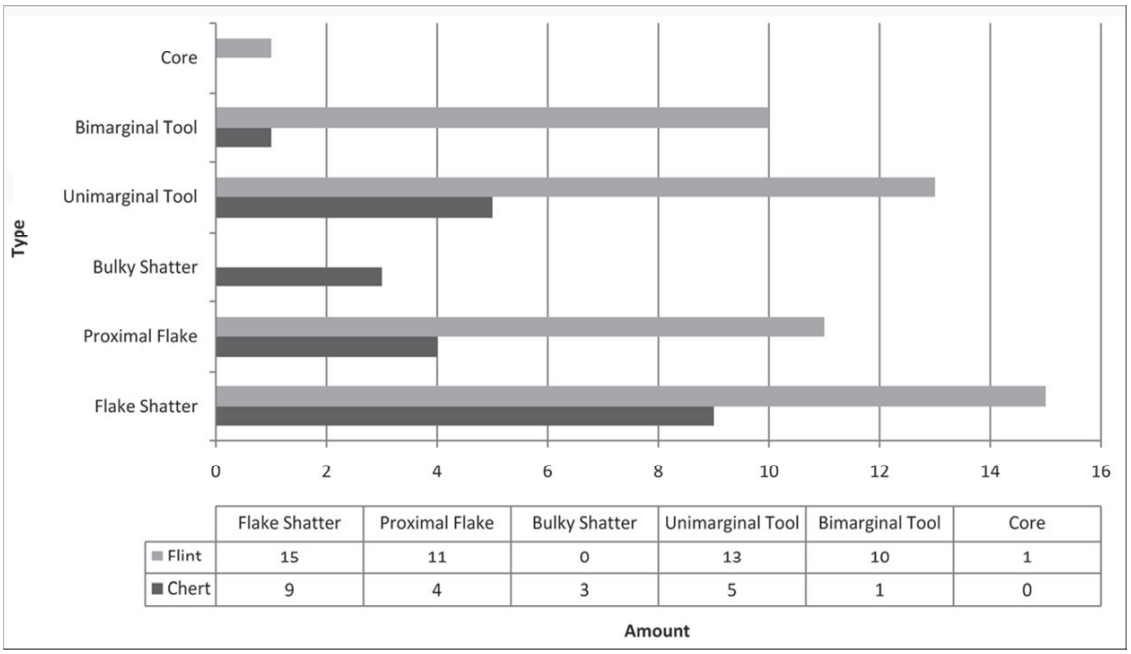
15 Vella 2009b: 94.
16 See Vella 2009a.
17 Andrefsky 1998: 75.

These two tool types are distinguished on the basis of the retouch location, whether found on a single edge (unimarginal) or on dual edges (bimarginal). Under the non-tool section, to increase the noted technological variability, the so-called debitage is distinguished according to the presence/absence of certain attributes. Flake shatter, prevalently found in Maltese lithic assemblages, consists of a discarded lithic with no sign of use. In the case of Maltese assemblages, there is a further distinction that needs to be made. If a lithic assemblage contains a consistent group of informally made pieces with one or more possible 'usable' edges, then it is crucial to distinguish between them and flake shatter. Yet, the latter category often appears to be manufactured expediently and typically used for immediate requirements with the prevalent raw material of choice – local chert. Unlike flake shatter, proximal flakes are lithic pieces with intact proximal ends, which provide us with a recognisable striking platform[18]. Furthermore, bulky shatter is defined as a lithic that lacks any recognisable attributes and/or unidentified ventral or dorsal surfaces.

6.3. Typological considerations

Despite Murray's interest in prehistoric lithics from Borġ in-Nadur, it remains unclear whether all lithics were recovered or whether only a selection was kept during the excavations. Also, it occurs to me that our present lithic assemblage could have easily been found in both Late Neolithic and Bronze Age deposits. Furthermore, although the findspot of some pieces was recorded we cannot say that the context of these artefacts is definitely a stratigraphic one. Therefore, the approach to this assemblage, while mainly focusing on general typological characteristics, will focus on trends observed and attributes worthy of attention.

[18] Andrefsky 1998: 81.



	Flake Shatter	Proximal Flake	Bulky Shatter	Unimarginal Tool	Bimarginal Tool	Core
Flint	15	11	0	13	10	1
Chert	9	4	3	5	1	0

Figure 6.1. Chart illustrating the different type of morphological types observed on the lithics from Borġ in-Nadur.

The lithic collection, at present housed at the National Museum of Archaeology in Valletta, amounts to a total of 72 lithics in flint and chert; no obsidian lithics were present in the assemblage even though Murray mentions the recovery of a 'small fragment of obsidian' from the site[19] (Fig. 6.1). Primarily made up of debitage (58%), the non-tools are sub-divided into flake shatter (33%), proximal flakes (22%), and bulky shatter (3%). In the case of both flake shatter and proximal flakes, imported flint makes up the larger number of lithic debitage. Interestingly, the flint debitage has a high prevalence of cortex present on the dorsal surface which could indicate that flint was entering the site of Borġ in-Nadur in relatively unworked conditions. The bulky shatter observed in the lithic assemblage is primarily made from local chert (n=3) which ranged in size as well as attributes. Typical of other bulky shatter analysed in the Maltese Islands[20], the seemingly irregular form of these lithics appears to indicate that they were often a product of initial reduction and immediate discard due to their lack of usable edge.

[19] Murray 1923a: 66.
[20] Vella 2009b: 94-95.

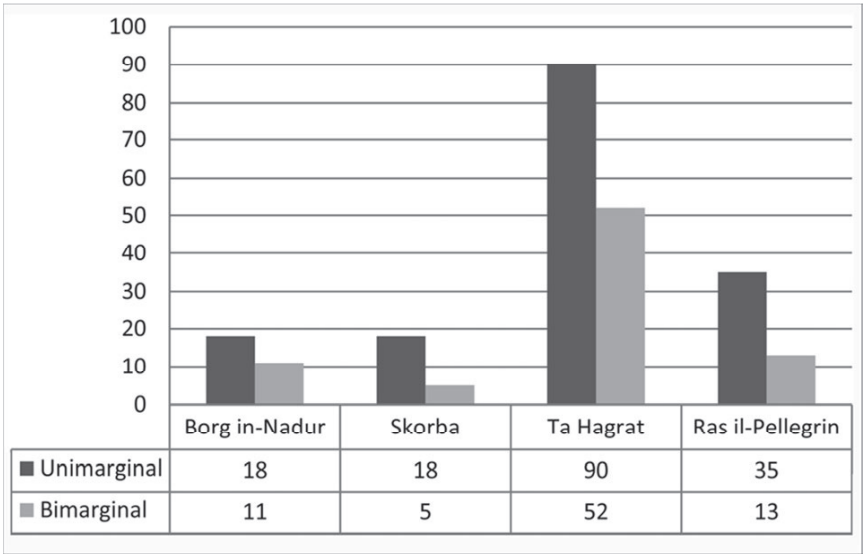
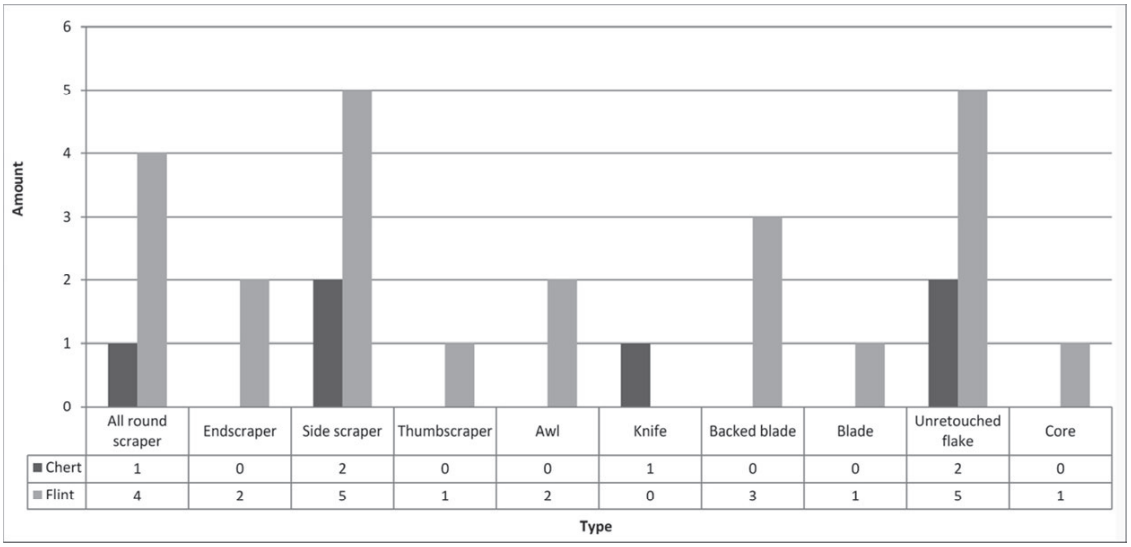


Figure 6.2. Chart depicting unimarginal and bimarginal tools observed on the lithics from a number of Maltese Late Neolithic sites.

Turning to the tools analysed, an interesting pattern emerged from the Borġ in-Nadur assemblage. Before this study was carried out, the majority of Maltese Late Neolithic sites had provided a prevalent tendency in favour of unimarginal tools with a rather minimal presence of bimarginal lithics. In contrast, as seen in Fig. 6.2, Borġ in-Nadur represents the closest numerical association between the two tool types observed to date in the Maltese Islands. This trend is difficult to interpret without being certain that *all* lithics were collected by the excavators, rather than a selection. However, if we had to tentatively assume that this trend is actually representative of the archaeological situation, then the close gap between these two tool types could represent a higher variety of tool types.

In this scenario, therefore, attention should be placed on a better examination of the variability and spectrum of tools recovered from Borġ in-Nadur (Fig. 6.3). The majority of tools analysed appear to



	All round scraper	Endscraper	Side scraper	Thumbscraper	Awl	Knife	Backed blade	Blade	Unretouched flake	Core
Chert	1	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	2	0
Flint	4	2	5	1	2	0	3	1	5	1

Figure 6.3. Chart showing the various functional types observed on the lithics of Borġ in-Nadur.

have a limited amount of retouch, usually limited to the dorsal surface. In all cases but one (no. 4; Fig. 6.7b), these lithics were mainly retouched in an irregular fashion. Despite this patterning, the retouch was often applied with forceful pressure as indicated by the deep and intensive cluster of retouching noted in several lithics. Interestingly, despite the apparent lack of uniform lithic production, lithics were selected as tools on the basis of usable edge/s and retouching applied only to better the functionability of the implement itself. This intent on utilising the raw material to its fullest extent can be interpreted as a conscious use of imported flint, which despite its possible better workability, was manufactured informally. However, it should be noted that 60% of all flint tools have extensive cortical skin on their dorsal surface, possibly an indication that these tools were not reduced from unworked nodules but used as tools. The comparison to chert implements is less than compelling, particularly in light of the limited chert tools observed at Borġ in-Nadur (n=6). Interestingly, at another site (Ras il-Pellegrin) chert lithics did not have a cortex unlike the flint implements which were variable[21].

It is becoming increasingly evident that the Late Neolithic megalithic structures made a wider use of imported flint (at various

[21] Vella 2010: 24.

stages of the reduction sequence) than the locally available chert. The Borġ in-Nadur toolkit is mainly comprised of flint (n=23) and some chert (n=6), a pattern confirmed also at other sites in the Maltese Islands[22]. Despite the absence of some tool types found at other Maltese sites, the present assemblage covers the main types of tools indicated above. At Borġ in-Nadur, the lithic toolkit focuses around three inferred activites: scraping (all-round scraper, end scraper, side scraper, and thumb scraper), perforation (awl), and cutting (knife, backed blade, blade, and unretouched flake). Finally, the single core (no. 14; Fig. 6.5b) observed during analysis could indicate a marginal and limited lithic manufacture that might have occurred at Borġ in-Nadur.

As with other represented tool types, the scrapers analysed are prevalently made from imported flint with cortical skin present on the dorsal surface. Aside from being the most common scraper types identified, the all-round and side scrapers were by far the bulkiest implements. Lithic no. 2 (Fig. 6.4b), identified as an all-round scraper, was the largest implement observed at Borġ in-Nadur. This tool was made from an opaque, smooth-grained grey chert that measures 9.7 by 7.1 cm[23]. In the case of one all-round scraper (no. 1) (Fig. 6.5c), measuring 8.4 by 6.5 cm, its substantial dimensions and overall semi-circular shape is comparable to other such implements observed at Ta'Ħaġrat[24], and also at the Xagħra Circle hypogeum (Gozo)[25]. Lithic no.1 was recovered by Murray below the pavement level and appears to have undergone edge rejuvenation.

[22] See Vella 2009:96, 2010: 11.
[23] Despite the fact that this tool was identified as an all-round scraper, a reasonable amount of doubt has to be admitted. The general morphology and size of the lithic suggests that this piece was meant to be used on a hard material. While no signs of hafting could be recognised it seems reasonable to propose that this tool could have been some type of hoe, perhaps meant to clear/dig soil.
[24] Vella 2009: 98, fig. 8.4.
[25] Malone *et al.* 2009: 244, fig.10.21.

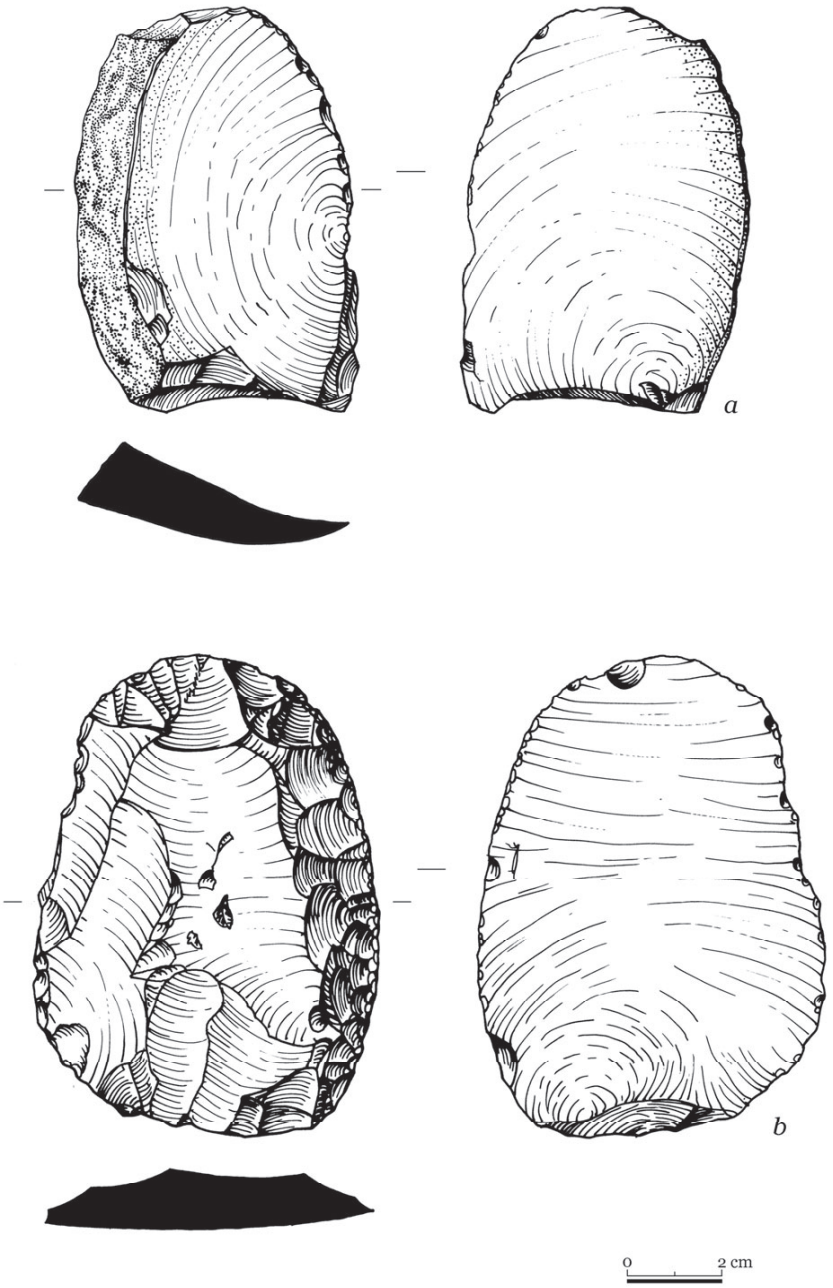


Figure 6.4. (a) no. 3, knife; (b) no. 2, all-round scraper (scale 1:2, drawn by Maxine Anastasi).

The latter activity was carried out in the form of knapping of the dorsal surface which decreased the steep angle of the edge, followed by ventral notchings to apply deep retouching. Two smaller all-round scrapers (nos 12 and 13; Figs 6.6e and c respectively) show intensive retouching applied on the wider edge of the implement, but in both instances the proximal ends appear to have been hafted onto a composite tool. Their retouching, while

intensive, must have been applied with a fine indenter that induced pressure from the ventral surface, as with lithic no. 14. The side scrapers show signs of edge rejuvenation that failed (no. 9) or succeeded (no. 7; Fig. 6.7e) according to the initial steepness of the edge angle. Their overall dimensions appear visibly smaller than the all-round scrapers, and they are less than the scraper average of 3 by 2.5 cm. There seems to be a different approach to the production of these side scrapers that revolves around the raw material used. The imported flint implements are often retouched, whereas the chert examples are used with their original edge (no. 26). The end scrapers (n=2) from Borġ in-Nadur are clearly smaller than their other counterparts, and mostly differentiated due to their typical larger width than length, which seems to make them hand-held implements with little to no retouching. Finally, a single thumb scraper (no. 17; Fig. 6.6f) was observed in the assemblage. This scraping implement appears in limited quantities across other sites and seems to have been used on a soft material[26].

At Ras il-Pellegrin, perforating implements were distinguished on the basis of a prominent beak-like protrusion, usually located on the distal end[27]. Similarly, the two flint awls (nos 5 and 46) recognized in the Borġ in-Nadur assemblage have distinguishable beaks that are not only visibly rounded, but also have micro-detachments that are typical of unretouched used lithic tools. Both of these tools measure around 3.7 by 2.7 cm with a feathered termination and simple striking platforms. Lithic no. 5 (Fig. 6.7c) appears to have been recovered from the south-eastern apse, as indicated by Murray[28].

The implements meant for cutting and based on a blade technology seem to be the only tool types that were manufactured within a planned, semi-formal activity. The reason behind the use of the term ‘semi-formal’ to describe blade manufacture rests on the fact that, as evidenced by the multi-directional scars on most dorsal surfaces, these implements were not being knapped from unidirectional and formal cores. However, their shape and general

[26] Vella 2010: 9.
[27] Vella 2010: 7.
[28] Murray 1923a: 65, in particular plate F, no. 13.

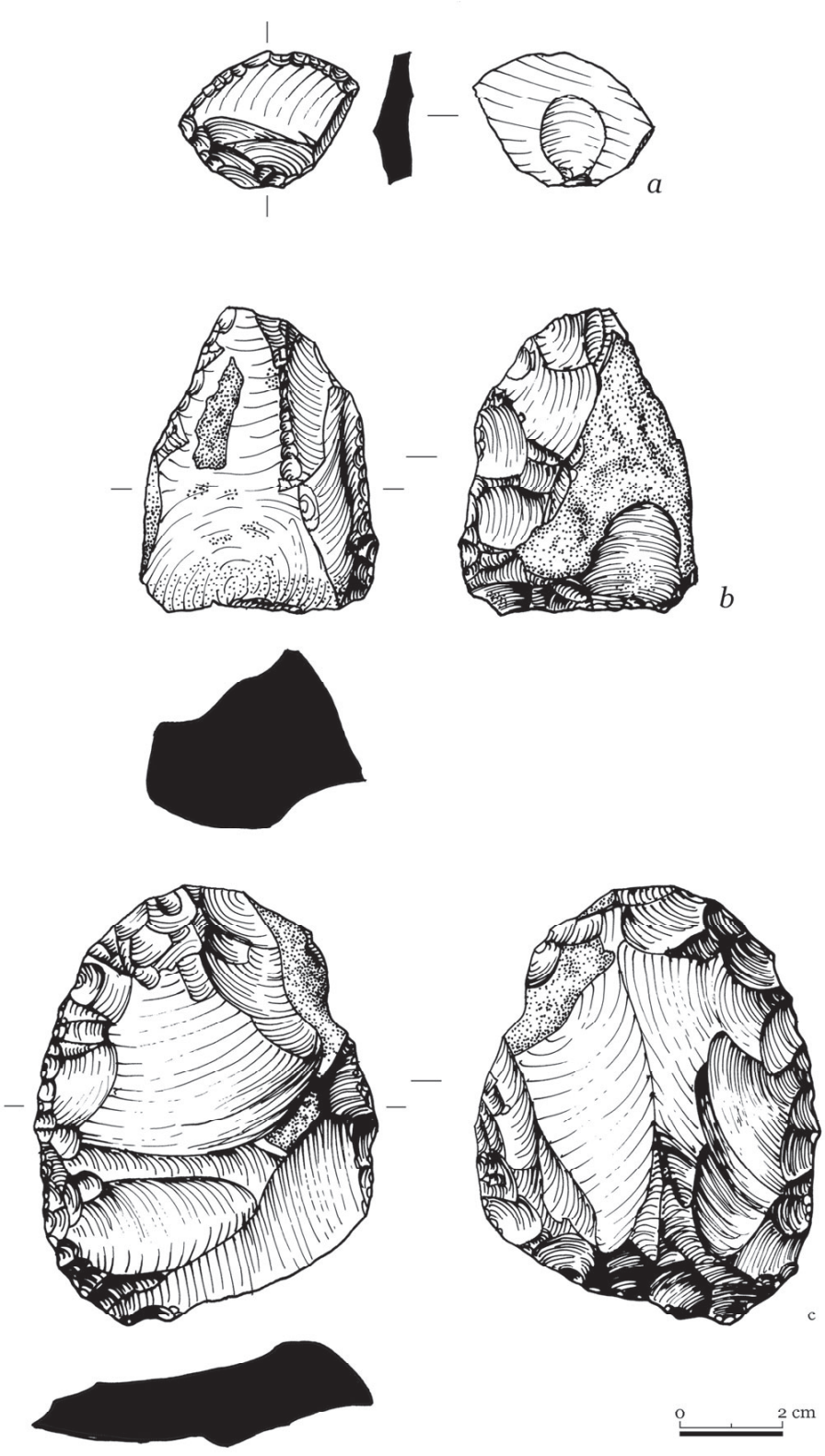


Figure 6.5. (a) no. 16, side scraper; (b) no. 14, core; (c) no. 1, all-round scraper (scale 1:2, drawn by Maxine Anastasi).

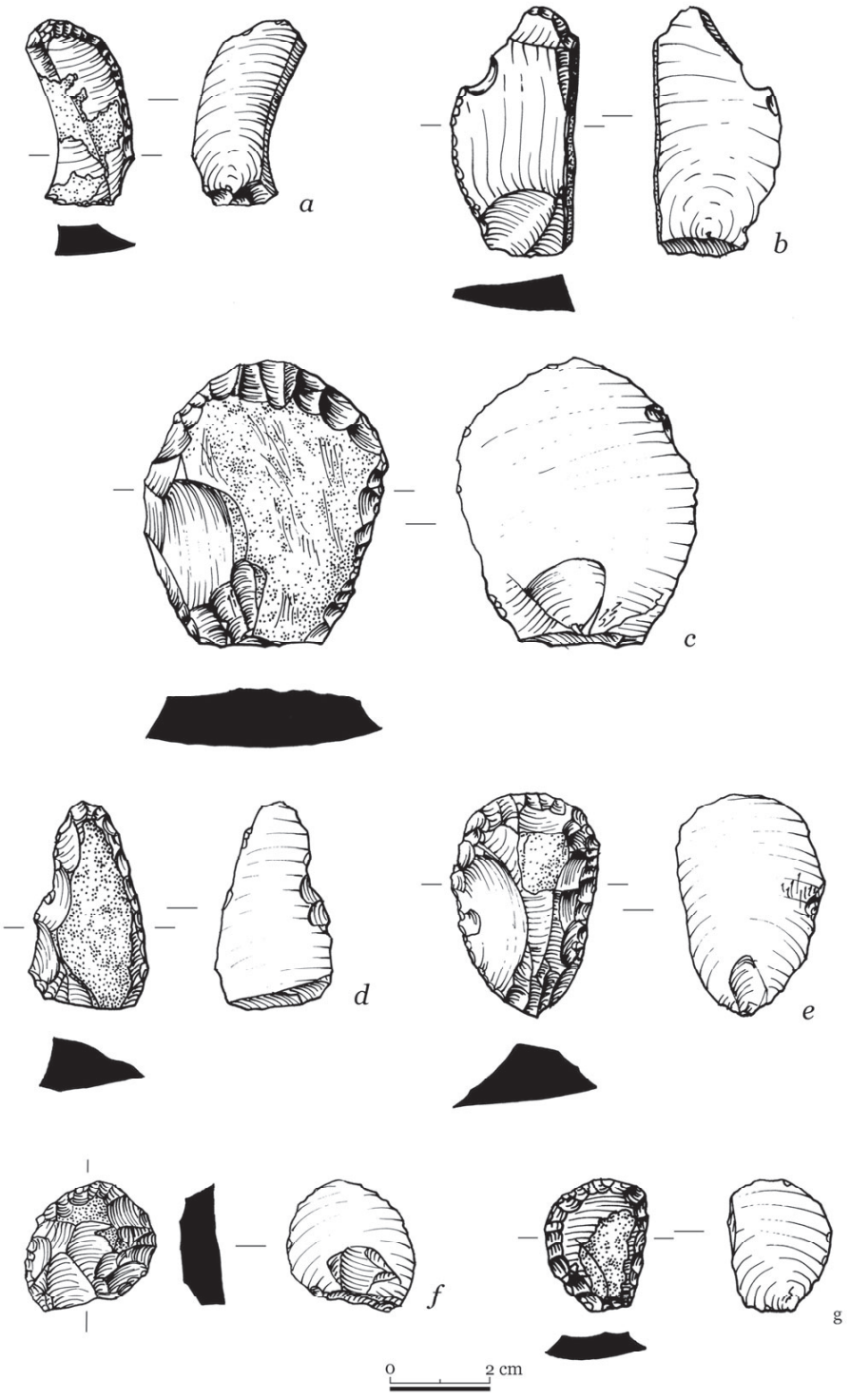


Figure 6.6. (a) no. 25, side Scraper; (b) no. 22, backed blade; (c) no. 13, all-round scraper; (d) no. 23, side scraper; (e) no. 12, all-round scraper, (f) no. 17, thumb scraper; (g) no. 15, all-round scraper (scale 1:2, drawn by Maxine Anastasi).

morphology indicates common attributes that are in compliance with other Maltese assemblages. The distinction between knives and backed blades is based on their size difference and retouching. The chert knife (no. 3; Fig. 6.4a) measures 8.9 by 5.5 cm while the backed blades measure less than 5.0 by 3 cm. Furthermore, these tool types were distinguished on the basis of their inferred motion. Lithic no. 3 seems to have been used in a serrating motion, which would account for the rounding on its edge and limited micro-flake detachments[29]. On the other hand, backed blades and blades were considered cutting implements possibly used in longitudinal motions, which should explain their limited rounding. Lithic no. 4, a flint blade, is of particular technological interest. This tool's overpass profile indicates that the lithic was knapped through the use of a bending force, probably by pressure flaking. Furthermore, the dorsal scars and intact distal end suggest that this implement was knapped from a pyramidical core not exceeding 4.5 cm in length.

The unretouched flakes (nos 6, 38, 39, 40, 43, 51, 68) observed in this assemblage have little in common. These lithics, have no formal attributes and mostly lack striking platforms. During analysis, it was difficult to infer the motion produced by these lithic tools. As proposed elsewhere[30], these morphologically diverse lithics seem to have had one usable edge and were probably the product of opportunistic knapping that was perhaps mainly concerned with reduction.

The final tool type observed at Borġ in-Nadur consists of a single core (no.14; Fig. 6.5b), identified by Murray as a surface find[31]. Made from imported flint, this core has some cortical skin still covering its dorsal surface. However, its clearly abraded proximal end is interpreted as sign of an attempted rejuvenation that was eventually abandoned. Smaller than another core found at Ta'Ħaġrat[32], lithic no. 14 measures 4.0 by 5.7 cm. There are no

[29] Rounding refers to the smoothened appearance of a lithic edge which would indicate thorough use of the edge. The lack of micro-flake detachment, which occurs inevitably on any used lithic, suggests that in conjunction with rounding this knife was used in a multi-directional manner.
[30] Vella 2009: 98.
[31] Murray 1929: pl. 2.
[32] Vella 2009b: 99.

signs of uniform knapping and, in fact, this piece appears to have been knapped through a heavy percussor. This could indicate that the user was trying to reduce the larger core to a single lithic.

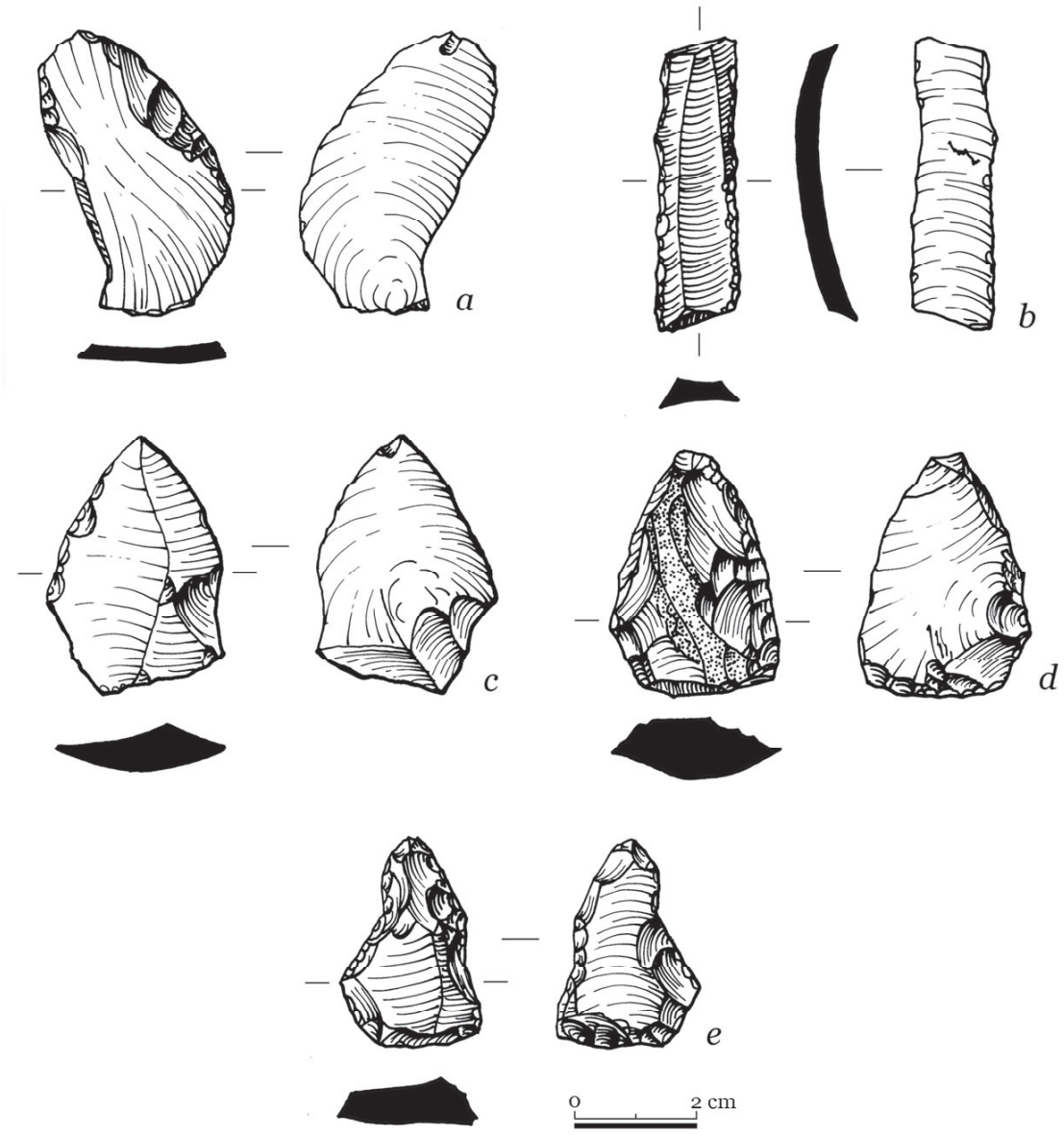


Figure 6.7. (a) no. 11, backed blade; (b) no. 4, blade; (c) no. 5, awl; (d) no. 20, side scraper; (e) no. 7, side scraper (drawn by Maxine Anastasi).

6.4. Discussion

Borġ in-Nadur is an archaeological site of significant interest for Maltese prehistory. The physical location of the site begs the question how raw materials were arriving there in prehistory. Of relevance is to ask whether Borġ in-Nadur was able to attract a variety of raw materials. However, it seems to me that obsidian was not arriving in any significant quantities into Malta from the 'outside' world as indicated by the ongoing research;[33] this is in contrast to Trump who believes that obsidian procurement continues during the Late Neolithic[34]. It is known that Late Neolithic sites in the Maltese Islands appear to experience a very limited influx of obsidian. In some instances the quantity and type of obsidian reaching the archipelago has been interpreted as a decline in the contact with the 'outside' world. Yet, as indicated by the persistent recovery of imported flint, Maltese prehistoric communities were still in contact with the 'outside'. An acquisition process existed whereby socially-significant individuals attached to the Late Neolithic Maltese megalithic monuments were able to procure flint and other 'exotica'[35].

At Borġ in-Nadur, it appears that despite the site's proximity to a significant embayment (Marsaxlokk Bay) the flint recovered is limited. Unlike Ras il-Pellegrin on the west coast, the range of imported flint observed at Borġ in-Nadur is limited by colour and quality, a trend comparable to the situation at the multi-period site of Tas-Silġ on the southern side of Marsaxlokk Bay[36]. Aside from this limited variability, imported flint appears to be superior in quality to Maltese chert, which is mostly of medium quality. Although chert outcrops have not been identified in south-eastern Malta, I suggest – with due caution – that sites in this corner of the island, including Borġ in-Nadur and Tas-Silġ, were procuring their

33 Vella 2009b: 93, Vella 2010: 5.
34 Trump 2002: 210-211.
35 It is beyond the scope of this paper to deal with the possible mechanisms that could have allowed certain sites a preferential role in raw material acquisition. The ongoing study of lithics from Maltese prehistoric sites should allow me to model regional acquisition of raw materials.
36 Cazzella *et al*. 2009a.

chert from other areas, and therefore, selected 'better' quality chert.[37] To understand the stage in which raw materials entered Borġ in-Nadur, Fig. 6.8 highlights the presence/lack of cortical skin observed on non-tools and tools according to raw material.

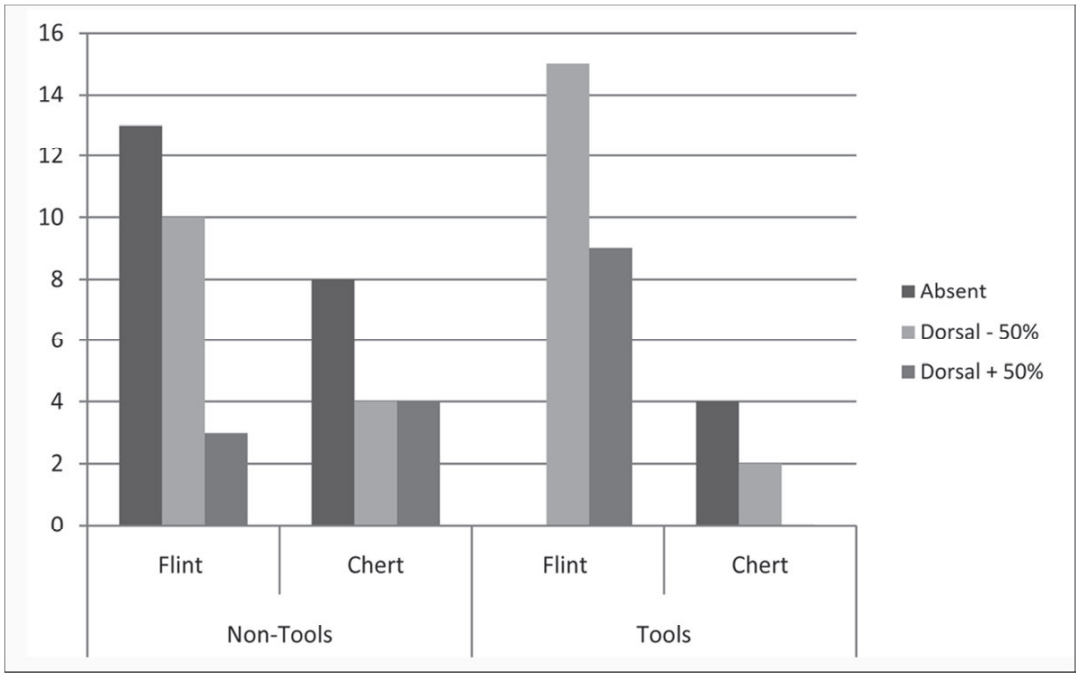


Figure 6.8. Chart illustrating primary, secondary, and tertiary lithics subdivided into non-tools and tools.

In an ideal scenario, the drop-off between tertiary (i.e., no cortical skin), secondary (i.e., less than 50% covered in cortical skin), and primary (i.e., covered in cortical skin) lithics illustrates the stage of manufacture of a lithic. In a schematised representation, the sub-division of these lithics should be seen as a gradual drop-off starting from tertiary lithics and proceeding to primary ones. Any fluctuations that go below or above such a gradual drop-off, can be interpreted as a distinctive pattern related to some manufacturing aspect. For example, if cores are introduced into a site unworked,

[37] No exhaustive surveying of chert outcrops has been conducted yet in the Maltese Islands. From personal observation, extensive Middle Globigerina Limestone deposits in north-western Malta include chert outcrops that range from the area of Qlejgħa-Baħrija to Ġnejna Bay. To date, no chert has been observed in south-eastern Malta but we cannot discount the possibility that sources were available there.

then a chart would illustrate a high incidence of primary and secondary lithics with less examples of tertiary type. Returning to Borġ in-Nadur, the flint non-tools appear spread across all three types. Chert, on the other hand, seems to be at equal levels when it comes to secondary and primary lithics. This pattern contrasts sharply with the tools. In the case of flint lithic tools, no tertiary flakes were observed during analysis and the majority had at least 50% or less cortical skin present. Chert lithic tools, on the other hand, lack primary flakes. These patterns, while at odds, can be interpreted as follows:

- Non-tools, both flint and chert, include the entire spectrum of cortical skin types. In reality, little can be inferred from such a pattern.
- Flint tools were fashioned from knapped lithics with little discrimination. Therefore, the user did not object to the presence of cortical skin, but rather selected possible lithic tools even at the earlier stages of reduction.
- It seems that chert lithic tools were recovered at a later stage of reduction. The absence of primary chert tools could indicate that either the user undertook reduction and then selected tools or chert was introduced into Borġ in-Nadur at a worked state (with little to no cortex).

This differential approach to raw materials can also be extended to their use and manufacture. Flint tools at Borġ in-Nadur seem to have been favoured as scraping implements. Their variability, understood in a morphological sense, seems to have been dictated by their usable edge/s which was/were then retouched accordingly. In the case of these scrapers, the fullest examples of intentional edge retouching were observed, as well as examples of rejuvation. Such rejuvenation was extended as many times as the edge allowed, and the tools were only discarded once further retouching became impossible due to edge steepness. The use of the chert seems less focused. I believe that chert lithic tools played an even more informal role in Maltese Late Neolithic assemblages. As seen in the case of Borġ in-Nadur, chert was utilised for a variety of tasks. It was not utilised, however, for some tasks that include fine knives and unretouched blades. Nonetheless, some exceptions to the rule

surely exist but the key element suggested here is that chert only supplied an opportunistic and limited use in Maltese Late Neolithic megalithic monuments[38].

Finally, I want to end on Murray's own contribution at Borġ in-Nadur. Although the information she provided on the lithics from this site was brief she did attempt to contextualise them. Sadly, I am not aware of any selection biases during the excavations, but we should keep in mind that some lithics might have been missed, lost, and perhaps discarded. However, if we look at Murray's short contribution in the journal *Man*[39], two interesting points ought to be highlighted:

- Some lithics were recovered in 'cut holes' in a semicircular niche of the apsidal building[40].
- The majority of the lithics seem to have been found '... chiefly in the apsidal building and under the pavement west of the "dolmen" ...'[41]

Sadly, despite some observations of artefact findspot by Murray, during this study it appeared hardly possible to cross-compare between Murray's limited contextual description and the lithic assemblage. However, the above remarks illustrate two contextual situations that merit some attention. Firstly, the former remark by Murray is an interesting insight into the artefact deposition, and possibly caching of lithics at the Late Neolithic temple of Borġ in-Nadur. In particular, this brings forward the possibility that lithics were hidden or ritually deposited within the temples below the used floors. Murray's second remark also presents a limited view into the wider issue of chronology that we (as contemporary archaeologists) are inevitably faced with considering. As I have stated earlier on, the presence of Early Bronze Age deposits at Borġ in-Nadur stress the need for us to not only consider this lithic assemblage as part of the Late Neolithic temple, but possibly also as including later

[38] This trend contrasts sharply in earlier periods, as represented by significant amounts of chert debris observed at the Red Skorba huts in Malta. See Vella 2009a.
[39] Murray 1923a: 65-66.
[40] Murray 1923a: 65-66.
[41] Murray 1923a: 65.

intrusions. However, the lithics analysed all fall within basic tool and non-tool types observed in other Maltese Late Neolithic sites. The question, however, remains somewhat open, and beckons more research in the future.

6.5. Conclusions

The analysis of an assemblage of lithics discovered almost a hundred years ago is an important exercise. While archaeologists, including Murray, often attempted to contextualise and analyse artefacts, it is only through quantifiable study that we can better characterise and understand the toolkits used in Maltese prehistory. This study also shows that some meaningful interpretations can be proposed on the basis of technological observations. As suggested in this chapter, lithic analysis can also play a role in better characterising the variable role that megalithic temple sites may have had in prehistory. Clearly located in significant areas, the properties of their lithic assemblages reflect choices and adaptation.

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