

CRAFTING BONE – SKELETAL TECHNOLOGIES THROUGH TIME AND SPACE

Proceedings of the 2nd meeting of the (ICAZ) Worked Bone Research Group

Editors

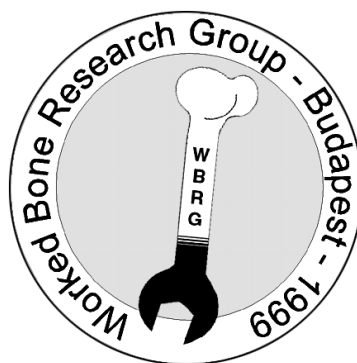
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Table of Contents

Introduction	III-IV
 General Theory	
Genevieve LeMoine – <i>Skeletal Technology in Context: An Optimistic Overview</i>	1
 Raw Material Exploitation	
Lyuba Smirnova – <i>Utilization of Rare Bone Materials in Medieval Novgorod</i>	9
Liina Maldre – <i>Bone and Antler Artefacts from Otepää Hill-fort</i>	19
Sabine Deschler-Erb – <i>Do-it-yourself Manufacturing of Bone and Antler in Two Villas in Roman Switzerland</i>	31
Rosalia Christidou – <i>Study of Bone Tools at Three Late/Final Neolithic Sites from Northern Greece</i>	41
 Manufacturing Technology	
Jörg Schibler – <i>Experimental Production of Neolithic Bone and Antler Tools</i>	49
Daniella Ciugudean – <i>Workshops and Manufacturing Techniques at Apulum (AD 2nd-3rd Century)</i>	61
Kitty F. Emery – <i>The Economics of Bone Artifact Production in the Ancient Maya Lowlands</i>	73
Karlheinz Steppan – <i>Worked Shoulder Blades: Technotypological Analysis of Neolithic Bone Tools From Southwest Germany</i>	85
Noëlle Provenzano – <i>Worked Bone Assemblages from Northern Italian Terramare: A Technological Approach</i>	93
Aline Averbouh – <i>Methodological Specifics of the Techno-Economic Analysis of Worked Bone and Antler: Mental Refitting and Methods of Application</i>	111
 Function	
Mária Bíró – <i>A Round Bone Box Lid with a Mythological Representation</i>	123
Cornelia Becker – <i>Bone Points - No Longer a Mystery? Evidence from the Slavic Urban Fortification of Berlin-Spandau</i>	129
Mickle G. Zhilin – <i>Technology of the Manufacture of Mesolithic Bone and Antler Daggers on Upper Volga</i>	149
Tina Tuohy – <i>Bone and Antler Working on the Iron Age Sites of Glastonbury and Meare in Britain</i>	157
Gitte Jensen – <i>Macro Wear Patterns on Danish Late Mesolithic Antler Axes</i>	165
Yekaterina Antipina – <i>Bone Tools and Wares from the Site of Gorny (1690 - 1410 BC) in the Kargaly Mining Complex in the South Ural Part of the East European Steppe</i>	171
Andreas Northe – <i>Notched Implements made of Scapulae - Still a Problem</i>	179
Janet Griffiths – <i>Bone Tools from Los Pozos</i>	185
Sandra L. Olsen – <i>The Importance of Thong-Smoothers at Botai, Kazakhstan</i>	197
Janet Griffiths and Clive Bonsall – <i>Experimental Determination of the Function of Antler and Bone 'Bevel-Ended Tools' from Prehistoric Shell Middens in Western Scotland</i>	207
 Social Context	
Isabelle Sidéra – <i>Domestic and Funerary Bone, Antler and Tooth Objects in the Neolithic of Western Europe: a Comparison</i>	221
George Nash – <i>Altered States of Consciousness and the Afterlife: A Reappraisal on a Decorated Bone Piece from Ryemarksgaard, Central Zealand, Denmark</i>	231
Nerissa Russell – <i>The Social Life of Bone: A Preliminary Assessment of Bone Tool Manufacture and Discard at Çatalhöyük</i>	241
Alice M. Choyke – <i>Late Neolithic Red Deer Canine Beads and Their Imitations</i>	251
Colleen Batey – <i>Viking and Late Norse Combs in Scotland: An Update</i>	267
Nerissa Russell – <i>Neolithic Relations of Production: Insights from the Bone Tool Industry</i>	271

Special Assemblages

Péter Gróf and Dániel Gróh – <i>The Remains of Medieval Bone Carvings from Visegrád</i>	281
László Bartosiewicz – <i>Roman Period Equid Ilium Implement from Pannonia Superior (NW Hungary)</i>	287
E.E. Bulten and Anneke Clason – <i>The antler, bone and tooth tools of Swifterbant, The Netherlands (c. 5500 – 4000 cal. BC) compared with those from other Neolithic sites in the western Netherlands</i>	297
Heidi Luik – <i>Bone Combs from Medieval Tallinn, from the Excavations in Sauna Street</i>	321
Steven R. James – <i>Prehistoric Hohocam Bone Artifacts from Southern Arizona: Craft Specialization, Status and Gender</i>	331
Arthur MacGregor and Ailsa Mainman – <i>The Bone and Antler Industry in Anglo-Scandinavian York: the Evidence from Coppergate</i>	343
Ernestine Elster – <i>Middle Neolithic to Early Bronze Age Bone Tools from Sitagroi, Greece</i>	355
Ülle Tamla and Liina Maldre – <i>Artefacts of Bone, Antler and Canine Teeth among the Archaeological Finds from the Hill-Fort of Varbola</i>	371
Kordula Gostenčnik – <i>Pre- and Early Roman Bone and Antler Manufacturing in Kärnten, Austria</i>	383
Index of Authors	399



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Introduction

Archaeologists and Archeozoologists, both study worked osseous materials (bone, antler and tooth, including ivory, in short all referred to as “bone”). Such reports, however, are often buried at the very back of faunal analyses appended to site reports. Furthermore, the two groups of specialists have had little chance to interact, even within Europe since they tend to attend different conferences and write for different fora.

At the root of this problem lay the arbitrary, largely institutional division between pre- and proto-historians, often imposed on bone manufacturing experts by nothing but formalism in research tradition. The most exemplary series of studies in this field is entitled: “*Industrie de l’os neolithique et de l’age de metaux*” (Bone industry from the Neolithic and Metal Ages). Another classic, a book, is sub-titled “The Technology of Skeletal Materials *since the Roman Period*”. In very early prehistoric assemblages, attention is often focused on the question of whether a particular piece of bone was worked or not. In later assemblages, it is the intensity of manufacturing that often renders objects zoologically non-identifiable, so that important aspects of raw material procurement, including long distance trade, remain intangible.

The history of raw material use, however, is continuous and many of the constraints and possibilities inherent in skeletal materials are the same whether one is dealing with Paleolithic or Medieval artifacts. Indubitably, the organization of manufacture, the function and value of bone artifacts (as well as some technological innovations such as the regular use of metal tools or lathes), differ substantially between simple and complex societies through time. On the other hand, fundamental questions of tensile characteristics, procurement strategies, style and certain technological requirements are not only similar diachronically, but also open up new vistas when apparently unrelated periods are compared. The function of these objects as social markers, for example, remains remarkably constant through time, even if details vary. The papers in this volume reflect these conceptual similarities and differences as did the papers delivered at the conference itself.

The first meeting of what was to become the Worked Bone Research Group (WBRG) was organized by Dr. Ian Riddler in the **British Museum, London, in January 1997**. The commitment and enthusiasm of that first workshop has greatly inspired subsequent efforts in recruiting a wide range of bone specialists, capable of contributing to discussions concerning bone manufacturing.

In keeping with the aims of the Worked Bone Research Group, since 2000 an official working group of the International Council for Archaeozoology (ICAZ), an effort was made to present these papers on the basis of what *connects* them rather than segregating them by archaeological period or region. Contributions mostly include articles based on papers delivered in September 1999 at the second Worked Bone Research Group meeting in Budapest, organized by the editors with the unfailing support of the Aquincum Museum (Budapest) and its staff. Several people who were unable to be present at this conference were also asked to contribute papers. Finally, five of the studies in this volume, originally delivered at a symposium on bone tools organized by Dr. Kitty Emery and Dr. Tom Wake, entitled “*Technology of Skeletal Materials: Considerations of Production, Method and Scale*”, at the 64th Annual Meeting of the Society for American Archaeology (Chicago 1999), were added thereby expanding the academic spectrum both in terms of research tradition and geographic scope.

There are a total of 36 papers in this volume. Research was carried out on materials from Central and North America to various regions of Europe and Southwest Asia. The authors represent scientific traditions from Estonia, Hungary, Romania, and Russia, European countries in which, until recently, ideas developed in relative isolation. Other European countries represented include Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, and Switzerland. Last but not least, the North American scholarly approach is also represented here.

Schools of thought may be said to be exemplified by what used to be Soviet research, well known for pioneering works on taphonomy, experimentation and traceology. Bone manufacturing was first brought to the attention of Western scholars by the publication in 1964 of the translation of S. A. Semenov’s *Prehistoric Technology*, published originally in 1957. Scholars in France have also carried out decades of co-ordinated work on operational chains in the manufacturing process from the selection

of raw materials to finished products, with special emphasis on prehistoric modified bone. An entire working group, “Unspecialized Bone Industries/Bone Modification”, is directed by Marylene Patou-Mathis. This working group itself is part of a larger research program on bone industry “*La Commission de Nomenclature sur l’Industrie de l’Os Préhistorique*” headed by Mme. H. Camps-Fabrer. Several specialists such as Jörg Schibler in Switzerland, have created laboratories where ground laying work has been carried out for years on worked osseous materials, especially from Swiss Neolithic Lake Dwellings and Roman Period sites. Language barriers have often prevented these important bodies of work from being as widely disseminated as they deserve. Arthur MacGregor in England, writing in English, has had a decisive influence on specialists working on more recent Roman and Medieval worked bone assemblages in Europe.

The work of all of these groups as well as certain individual scholars is well known within limited circles. Otherwise, however, the overwhelming experience of most researchers on worked bone have been feelings of isolation and alienation from most archaeological or archaeozoological work related, most importantly, to the absence of an international forum where their often specialized work can be presented and problems discussed.

In spite of the fact that there have been many practical obstacles to information flow between specialists in this field, there are really remarkable similarities of approach which should ultimately lead to the development of more compatible paradigms in research. Agreement on methodologies will have a positive feedback on communications, helping the field to grow and develop properly.

It seems that, at last, archaeologists and archaeozoologists and other specialists are talking to each other and sharing methodological points of view. One striking example of this can be seen in the emphasis on raw materials studied in parallel to types found in the majority of papers in this volume. Previously studies often concentrated on typo-chronological questions, ignoring the questions of raw material morphology and availability. The series published by the *Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique*, edited by Mme. Henriette Camps-Fabrer in France is largely to be credited for beginning this new trend. It contains many papers concentrating on understanding manufacturing sequences and, indeed, from Europe to North America there are papers which explicitly deal with manufacturing sequences in individual assemblages.

There is also a consistent emphasis on experiment and manufacturing techniques present in much of the work in this volume. The related but fraught question of function continues to tantalize and frustrate most specialists. A number of articles attempt to apply techniques of hard science, such as scanning electron microscopy or light microscopy, together with experiment to get objective, “processual” answers to this important group of questions. Other researchers rely deductively on analogy, archaeological context, gross morphology, and textual sources as they try understanding how these objects were used.

When editing the volume, we tried to concentrate on the underlying main concepts represented by each paper rather than grouping them diachronically or by geographical region. As a result, contributions follow a line from the theoretical through the problems of raw material selection, manufacturing techniques, experimental work, technical function and socio-cultural interpretations. Obviously many of these papers deal with several of these aspects simultaneously. Finally, analyses of assemblages are grouped to show the current state of general application of these principles as illustrated in papers in the rest of the volume. Reports on bone tool types will ultimately benefit from more unified typologies and also provide researchers with comparative databases from regions beyond their own.

Finally, a word on the organization of papers in this volume. Although the editors have tried to group these papers by what they see as the main theoretical and methodological thrust of the authors it should be understood that most papers, to a greater or lesser extent, overlap between these artificial sub-titles. Happily, almost all these works include considerations of raw material exploitation, manufacturing and functional analyses and all make some attempt to consider the social context from which these artifacts emerged. It is exactly this cross-cutting of boundaries which allows us to hope that the study of worked osseous materials is well on the way to developing into a discipline in its own right.

In addition to the generous support given by our sponsors and technical editors for this volume, organizing the conference would not have been possible without the active help of numerous colleagues. Special thanks are due to Paula Zsidy, Director of the Aquincum Museum, Katalin Simán, archaeologist and two students from the Institute of Archaeological Sciences (ELTE, Budapest): László Daróczi-Szabó and András Markó. The Hotel Wien, Budapest and its efficient manager provided a comfortable setting for our discussions at a reasonable price. Last but not least, help with abstract translations by Cornelia Becker, Noelle Provenzano as well as Marjan Mashkour and Turit Wilroy should also be acknowledged here.

NEOLITHIC RELATIONS OF PRODUCTION: INSIGHTS FROM THE BONE TOOL INDUSTRY

Nerissa Russell

Abstract: Technology consists not only of tools and techniques used to accomplish tasks, but also includes the social context of these tasks. I will explore the bone industries of Neolithic southeast Europe, Anatolia, and south Asia. I argue that the differences seen among these regions are attributable to the social organization of production, and that the bone industry can provide a window to this social organization. I will focus on raw material selection and conservation, standardization of tool forms, and reuse. These represent decision points in the production process that reflect how manufacturers and users approached bone as a raw material.

Keywords: Neolithic, technology, reuse, standardization

Résumé: La technologie ne concerne pas seulement les outils et les techniques utilisées pour accomplir des tâches données, mais elle inclut également le contexte social dans lequel sont accomplies ces tâches. Nous explorerons les industries osseuses néolithiques du Sud-Est de l'Europe, d'Anatolie et de l'Asie du Sud. Nous montrerons que les différences observables entre ces régions peuvent être reliées à l'organisation sociale de la production, et que les industries osseuses permettent d'approcher cette organisation sociale. Nous nous centrerons sur la sélection et la conservation des matières premières, la standardisation de la forme des outils et leur réutilisation. Ces éléments cristallisent les choix opérés au cours des procédés de fabrication et reflètent la façon dont artisans et utilisateurs ont appréhendé l'os en tant que matière première.

Mots-clés: Néolithique, technologie, réutilisation, standardisation

Zusammenfassung: Technologie besteht nicht nur aus Werkzeugen und Techniken zur Bewältigung von Aufgaben, sie schliesst auch den sozialen Kontext dieser Aufgaben ein. Ich werde die Knochenindustrien des neolithischen Suedosteuropa, Anatoliens und Suedasiens untersuchen. Ich vertrete den Standpunkt, dass die in diesen Gebieten beobachteten Unterschiede der sozialen Organisation von Produktion zuzuschreiben sind, und dass die Knochenindustrie einen Einblick in diese soziale Organisation bieten kann. Im Mittelpunkt meiner Untersuchung stehen die Auswahl und Konservierung von Rohmaterial, Standardisierung von Werkzeugformen und Wiedergebrauch. Diese stellen Entscheidungspunkte im Produktionsprozess dar, die den Umgang von Herstellern und Verbrauchern mit Knochen als Rohmaterial reflektieren.

Schlüsselworte: Neolithikum, Technologie, Wiedergebrauch, Standardisierung

Technology consists not only of the tools and techniques used to accomplish tasks, but also includes the social context in which these tasks occur (Dobres 1995; Dobres and Hoffman 1994, 1999; Ingold 1990; Lemonnier 1992; Pfaffenberger 1988). In this paper, I will explore the bone industries of Neolithic southeast Europe, Anatolia, and south Asia. I will argue that the differences among these regions are attributable to the social organization of production, and that the bone industry, in conjunction with other materials, can provide a window to this social organization.

This discussion is based on my study of the bone tools from fourteen Neolithic sites in the former Yugoslavia (Russell 1990), the new excavations at Çatalhöyük in Turkey (Russell, this volume), and from Mehrgarh in Pakistan (Russell 1995; see Table 1). Four of these (Selevac, Opovo, Çatalhöyük, and Mehrgarh) are large, well-collected assemblages from recent excavations and may confidently be considered representative of at least the areas excavated. The remainder are museum

collections that often derive from small excavations and that have been subjected to various kinds of selection. They must therefore be used with caution, but can still provide useful information. Given these limitations, I will confine my discussion here to the bone points from these sites. Points are the most frequent tool type in all the assemblages, of obvious importance in the Neolithic, and are generally recognized and curated by the excavators.

I will focus on raw material selection and conservation, standardization of tool forms, tip angle, and reuse. These represent a series of decision points in the production process (*chaîne opératoire*) that reflect how the manufacturers and users of these tools approached bone as a raw material. Since the productive process does not occur in a vacuum, but is embedded in social life, these decisions reflect both the nature of the raw material and the tasks undertaken, and the social relations of the producers and consumers (Dobres 1999).

Raw material selection

The choice of taxon and body part for the bone points appears to be motivated chiefly by practical considerations of size, shape, and strength in all these assemblages (see Tables 2 and 3). Heavier points are made on bones of larger taxa (red deer, cattle), while most points are made on bones of smaller taxa (roe deer, gazelle, sheep, goat). Their shape largely limits points to long bones and ribs. It is only in the Vinča culture assemblages from southeast Europe that rib points are common. Rib points may have been used as multi-purpose tools, burnishing with the flat part of the tool as well as piercing with the tip.

While bone points could have been used in a variety of tasks (e.g., sewing leather or cloth, weaving, basketry, decorating pottery), they must surely have functioned primarily as perforators. Perforation places considerable stress on the tip of the point (Bouchud 1977), no doubt accounting for the large number of fragmentary points found in most assemblages. The strength of the bone is thus an important consideration. While we lack complete information on the relevant physical properties of the bones available to prehistoric bone tool makers and users, testing of modern materials has revealed certain patterns: pig bone is less strong than that of cattle, horse, or deer; wild animals have stronger bone than their domestic counterparts; and within the body, the radius and tibia are stronger than the humerus and femur (Albrecht 1977, Evans 1973, Yamada 1970). Unfortunately, I have been unable to find test data for metapodials, a favorite material in most prehistoric bone industries, but they are dense and seem strong in comparison to the other long bones, and due to their shape are easily split.

Raw material selection in these assemblages tends to follow these patterns. Bone tool manufacture often obliterates the diagnostic characters needed for identification of taxa and body parts, so many tools can only be placed in general categories such as medium (sheep-sized) vs. large (cow-sized) mammal or indeterminate long bone. Moreover, ribs, which are commonly used in the Vinča assemblages, are easy to identify as a body part, but generally not identifiable to species even when complete. At Mehrgarh, many of the tools from the earlier seasons were available only in the form of their catalog entries, thus precluding precise identifications. Nevertheless, there is a clear preference for wild taxa in those points that can be identified to species in all the assemblages with a reasonable sample size. Wild animal bone often predominates, and, with the exception of the small sample from At, always exceeds its proportion in the general fauna from the site where this is known (see Table 4). Pig bone is rarely used, although pigs, both wild and domestic, are quite common in the southeast European assemblages. Çatalhöyük cannot be evaluated in terms of usage of wild vs. domestic bone, as we have not yet determined which, if any, of the animals present were domestic. The overwhelming predominance of sheep/goat (mostly sheep) in the bone points from Çatalhöyük (almost 95% if we include the medium mammal category,

which are most likely mainly sheep/goat) is even greater than the proportion of these taxa in the general fauna (63%). This is probably related to the predominance of slender rather than heavy points at the site. Among the body parts, metapodials and to a lesser extent tibias are heavily favored, as well as ribs at the Vinča sites.

While the size, shape, and strength of the bone are clearly of great importance in raw material choice, it should be noted that there is still a good deal of variation among the assemblages, and that less optimal bones are sometimes used. Some of the variation no doubt reflects different sets of tasks carried out at the various sites, and some results from expediency. A user seeking only a quick and dirty solution for the task at hand may be less selective than someone who sets out to make a bone point as part of a curated toolkit. I also have the impression that groupings of similar forms on similar materials reflect the tastes of individual bone tool makers and users, and may have been one way of expressing identity. Additionally, we should bear in mind that the choice of wild vs. domestic bone, or a particular taxon or body part, may well have had symbolic value at which we can only guess (Hodder 1990).

Splitting

Both ribs and long bones can be split longitudinally, thus maximizing the yield from a given amount of raw material, as splitting can result in two or even four points instead of one. This is at the price of additional labor to effect the splitting, however. Thus splitting may serve as an index of the value of bone as a raw material. As can be seen in Table 5, there is a high proportion of splitting at all the sites studied here. Period II at Mehrgarh, the period with the most intensive bone tool industry, has the highest rate of splitting of the larger samples. Splitting proportions from the later, Bronze Age periods at Mehrgarh are presented by way of comparison. I have found that Bronze Age assemblages in Europe also tend to have relatively low proportions of splitting. Thus bone is treated as a valuable resource during the Neolithic in all these regions, but bone lessens in importance with the advent of metal tools.

Standardization of form

Standardization is more difficult to quantify, but there can be striking differences in the degree to which assemblages sort neatly into distinct types. Standardization may reflect a closer matching of the tool to the task and increased task specialization. These might result from a desire to increase production to meet a rising demand due to population growth, increased exchange, or the perceived need for prestige goods. To the extent that it involves modification of the base end of the point, standardization may also reflect technological factors such as hafting. Standardization is achieved through greater modification, and thus involves greater labor input.

Çatalhöyük and the southeast European sites show little standardization: the points do not divide easily into subtypes. In

Site	Period	Cultural Period	# of Tools	# of Points	Museum
Danvers	early Neolithic	dfm	17	10	Sturtevant
Sajan	early Neolithic	Edm	30	13	Edmunda
Lodur	early Neolithic	Edm	27	17	Edmunda
Geodys	middle-late Neolithic	Edm	12	8	Edmunda
At	late Neolithic	Edm	48	30	Vfma
Petrozani	middle Neolithic	Edm	67	65	Vfma
Kiri	late Neolithic	Hux	142	105	Saxino
Kalsai	middle Neolithic	Kalsai	16	13	Saxino
Dania Tark	middle-late Neolithic	Edm	13	4	Tark
Kosi	middle-late Neolithic	Edm	2	1	Tark
Geodys	middle-late Neolithic	Edm	6	1	Tark
Danvers 'Station'	middle-late Neolithic	Edm	5	3	Sturtevant
Sajan	middle-late Neolithic	Edm	1032	517	Sturtevant, P. L. L.
Opevo	late Neolithic	Edm	194	336	P. L. L.
Chalchay	early Ceramic Neolithic	Edm	413	192	Kozma
Mahaym	Ceramic Neolithic	Period I	797	41	Kozma
Mahaym	Ceramic Neolithic	Period II	678	185	Kozma
Mahaym	Chalcolithic	Period III	208	84	Kozma

Tab. 1 Assemblages used in this study

Cultural Period	Chalcolithic	Bronze	Iron	Copper	Ceramic	Ceramic	Quartz	Lapis	Ceramic	Quartz	Small-Medium Mammal	Medium Mammal	Large Mammal	Indeterminate Mammal	Bird
Danvers	1 / 0.0											1 / 0.0	8 / 0.0		
Sajan												2 / 0.3	5 / 0.3		
Lodur	4 / 0.3											7 / 0.3	2 / 0.3		
Geodys	1 / 0.3											1 / 0.3	2 / 0.3		
At	3 / 0.0											2 / 0.3	23 / 0.3		
Petrozani												9 / 0.3	50 / 0.3		
Kiri	16 / 0.3											44 / 0.3	27 / 0.3		2 / 0.3
Kalsai												13 / 0.0			
Dania Tark												2 / 0.0	2 / 0.0		
Kosi												1 / 0.0			
Geodys															
Danvers 'Station'															
Sajan															
Opevo	6 / 0.2														
Chalchay	12 / 0.4														
Mahaym I	143 / 0.3														
Mahaym II	22 / 0.3														
Mahaym III	20 / 0.3														
Mahaym	7 / 0.3														

Tab. 2 Taxa used for bone points

Context / Period	Scapula	Humerus	Radius	Ulna	Femur	Tibia	Metacarpal	Long Bone	Fib	Mandible	Antler	Beaver's Tooth	Indeterminate
Site													
Derevica								1 .00.0	2 .00.0	7 .00.0			
Sajon								4 .00.8	3 .03.1	4 .00.8	2 .05.4		
Indeg			1 .05.9	1 .05.9		1 .05.9	8 .07.1	5 .09.4	1 .05.9				
Gradina							6 .05.0		2 .05.0				
At				3 .00.0			6 .00.0	6 .00.0	15 .00.0				
Perovani	2 .03.1			1 .05.5			5 .07.7	32 .09.2	23 .03.4	2 .03.1			
Kiri			2 .05.9	3 .05.9		10 .09.5	38 .05.4	44 .03.8	6 .05.7				
Kalasi							10 .06.9	3 .03.1					
Domus Pula							3 .05.0		1 .05.0				
Foai							1 .00.0						
Griffiths							1 .00.0						
Derevica 'glacina'								1 .03.3	2 .04.4				
Sajon				2 .00.4			88 .05.0	110 .01.3	320 .01.9			2 .00.4	
Opovo	2 .00.4		1 .00.3	1 .00.3			141 .07.9	38 .01.3	131 .09.0		2 .00.4		
Čančevići		1 .00.5	4 .02.1	1 .00.5		15 .07.8	134 .08.8	34 .08.8	1 .00.5				
Mahragah I			1 .00.2			6 .00.9	75 .01.7	141 .02.0	9 .00.4		3 .00.5		405 .03.3
Mahragah II		1 .00.2				24 .04.1	111 .09.0	202 .04.5	6 .00.0		3 .00.5		238 .00.7
Mahragah III			1 .00.2		1 .00.2	16 .05.1	10 .01.9	54 .04.3	2 .00.4				

Tab. 3 Elements used for bone points

Site	% Points on Wild Run a (n)	Approximate to the Wild in General Run a
Sajon	100.0 (5)	4.5
Gradina	80.0 (5)	4.0
At	42.9 (7)	4.5
Perovani	10.7 (28)	2.5
Opovo	88.2 (110)	7.5
Mahragah Period I	75.0 (34)	5.0
Mahragah Period II	50.0 (24)	5
Mahragah Period III	55.6 (9)	2.5

Mahragah general formal proportions from Mahragah w/1999; Gradina and Sajon from unpublished manuscript by Kender 1981; proportion file at Kender's Museum; remaining assemblages analysed by the author.

Tab. 4 Proportion of wild fauna

Site	% Split (N)
Dimnovac	100.0 (10)
Sajan	74.9 (13)
Ludac	74.3 (17)
Gradiste	100.0 (8)
At	87.3 (32)
Potporanj	98.3 (44)
Kani	90.0 (100)
Kalanj	100.0 (13)
Donja Ivala	100.0 (4)
Koraj	100.0 (1)
Bilinski	100.0 (1)
Dimnovac 'Slatina'	66.7 (3)
Salavac	80.7 (403)
Opovo	91.1 (314)
Catalhöyük	89.3 (133)
Mehgarh Period I	80.9 (209)
Mehgarh Period II	97.2 (331)
Mehgarh Period III	83.1 (67)
Mehgarh Periods IV-VI	59.5 (42)

Tab. 5 Proportion of splitting

Site	% Reused (N)
Dimnovac	20.0 (3)
Sajan	80.0 (3)
Ludac	60.0 (10)
Gradiste	25.0 (4)
At	10.0 (20)
Potporanj	7.0 (43)
Kani	12.9 (83)
Kalanj	54.5 (11)
Donja Ivala	75.0 (4)
Koraj	100.0 (1)
Bilinski	0.0 (1)
Dimnovac 'Slatina'	50.0 (2)
Salavac	3.2 (343)
Opovo	49.4 (184)
Catalhöyük	87.2 (123)
Mehgarh Period I	83.2 (388)
Mehgarh Period II	74.3 (340)
Mehgarh Period III	42.3 (41)
Mehgarh Periods IV-VI	40.9 (22)

Tab. 6 Proportion of Reuse

the Körös, Tisza, and Hvar culture assemblages, there is to some degree a distinction between expedient points that have minimal modification (snap the bone, sharpen the tip) and more carefully finished points requiring more effort to manufacture. This probably reflects the length of time the maker expects to curate the point. This could be related to the kinds of tasks the points are used in, but more likely is a gauge of the intensity of these activities and the organization of labor: making expedient tools as needed makes sense for people who perform a task only occasionally. In the Vinča culture assemblages, this dichotomy is not evident, with most tools relatively carefully finished. At these sites, then, there may have been more intensive production of whatever goods were manufactured with the bone points (textiles, leather goods, basketry?), or else greater task specialization such that certain people were engaged in these tasks more regularly.

At Mehrgarh, standardization is much more developed. Period I resembles the Vinča sites, in that the points do not subdivide readily into subtypes. In Period II, several subtypes are clearly discernible, reflecting increased standardization accomplished primarily through greater modification. This increased manufacturing effort is surely related to a reorganization of labor in the direction of greater task specialization. This same trend is also reflected in increased spatial differentiation of activities in Period II at Mehrgarh. Copper tools appear during Period III, and bone tools become more scarce and less standardized. (Bone pottery polishers become common, however, reflecting the beginning of mass production of pottery at Mehrgarh [Jarriige 1984]). The Bronze Age periods at Mehrgarh show little standardization in the bone industry apart from a fairly pronounced expedient/carefully finished dichotomy among the relatively small number of bone tools present. European Bronze Age assemblages appear to follow this same general pattern.

Reuse

After the point has been manufactured and used, its use life can be extended by resharpening, repair, reworking into a different kind of tool, or simply reuse in a different task without reworking. All of these occur in prehistoric assemblages, but resharpening is by far the most common. Again, this involves investing extra labor to get more use out of a given quantity of bone. It also reflects a greater degree of attachment to (identification with?) the tool. It is in the amount of reuse that the most striking differences can be seen between Mehrgarh and Çatalhöyük as opposed to the southeast European sites, as well as among the sites within southeast Europe, and among the periods at Mehrgarh (tab. 6).

Most of the southeast European Neolithic sites have quite low rates of reuse. (Selevac, studied before I became highly sensitized to resharpening, probably has a somewhat higher rate than represented here. I doubt that I missed any substantial number of resharpened points, however, and this seems to be confirmed by the low resharpening rates at many other southeast European sites.) There seems to be little concern for extending the use life of the points.

The assemblages that deviate from this rule, most notably Opovo, appear to result from a differing balance of activities using bone points. There is a strong correlation between tip angle and resharpening rate. Tip angle is measured slightly back from the very tip of the point, so that it is a rough measure of the robustness of the tip. Every southeast European assemblage with a reasonable sample (more than 10 points with tips preserved) that has over 50% slender point tips (less than or equal to 20°) also has more than 50% of the points exhibiting reuse, chiefly resharpening. Likewise, those with less than 50% slender tips have less than 50% resharpening. In fact, the assemblages fall rather clearly into two groups: one characterized by high rates of resharpening and high proportions of slender points; the other by very little resharpening associated with very few slender tips (fig. 1). Çatalhöyük fits with the first group, with the strongest association of all between resharpening and slender tips.

This is perhaps not too surprising. Since slender tips are more delicate, they are presumably used because one needs a sharp tip for piercing. If they dull with use, they must be resharpened to maintain their viability for the task. Heavier points would be used when sharpness is less crucial to begin with. The slenderer points would also be more likely to break and need repair. It seems very likely, then, that slender tips are used for a different task or tasks than the heavier tips, something that requires a truly sharp point. Unfortunately, the present state of microwear analysis of bone tools does not permit distinction of most contact materials, so we cannot make a direct determination of what these tasks might be. The obvious candidates are sewing hides, leather or cloth; and certain types of basketry that require sharp awls. Whatever the task or tasks, it seems to have been of particular importance at Çatalhöyük. The extensive evidence for textile manufacture at the site suggests this is a likely candidate (Mellaart 1967).

In any case, the clear separation between the sets of assemblages suggests that there is some degree of specialization in certain kinds of production at the level of the settlement. Most of these sites appear to be settled, year-round villages; this is surely true of Selevac and Opovo. The functional differences, then, are unlikely to be logistical or seasonal. Rather, they imply production for exchange. Other evidence suggests that exchange was particularly important at Opovo, and may even have been its *raison d'être* (Russell 1993, Tringham et al. 1992, Tringham et al. 1985).

There is a different dynamic at work at Mehrgarh. As can be seen in fig. 1, the high levels of reuse are not associated with particularly high quantities of slender-tipped points; in fact, there is a negative correlation. There is also a trend to decreasing reuse through time, especially after Period II. Even the 40.9% reuse rate of the Bronze Age periods at Mehrgarh is higher than most of the southeast European Neolithic sites, however. This indicates that bone is being treated as a valuable resource to be used as fully as possible.

I would argue that bone for tools is more valuable at Mehrgarh because it is in effect scarcer. This is not because suitable animals are unavailable in the environment, but because of the social structure. It may be hard to imagine how bone could be hard to come by when so much of it is produced as a by-product of meat consumption. However, if the preferred material comprises a limited number of body parts from wild animals (primarily metapodials and tibiae), if the bone needs to be reasonably fresh and perhaps uncooked to retain its full strength, and if not everyone is a hunter and access to wild animal bone is controlled by those who are, the prime raw material for bone points begins to seem much rarer.

Much of this would also apply in Neolithic southeast Europe and at Çatalhöyük. I would argue, then, that the crucial difference is a social one. There is some evidence for a fairly developed division of labor from the very beginnings of the Mehrgarh sequence, in the form of well-differentiated activity areas. Moreover, several Period I burials, each interred with five infant goats arranged in a semi-circle around the feet, raise the possibility that these individuals were specialized herders (Meadow 1984). If there were specialized goatherds, there may also have been specialized hunters. Such hunters would have the opportunity to control access to prime tool-making bone, presumably in exchange for other goods. Greater occupational specialization at Mehrgarh may have brought about the intensified use of bone seen in the Neolithic periods, only to fade away as bone became less important following the introduction of metals.

Specialized production such as seems to have occurred at Mehrgarh implies relations of barter as opposed to the autonomous households bound in gift relationships that are believed to have characterized the Neolithic of southeast Europe (Bender 1978, Bogucki 1993, Greenfield 1991, Sherratt 1982, Tringham and Krstić 1990). That is, Mehrgarh, perhaps from the very start, tended more to organic than to mechanical solidarity. Supra-household organization, in the form of large compartmented buildings that may have been public storage facilities, appears in Period II at Mehrgarh and these buildings become increasingly large and elaborate through the sequence. By Period III, pottery is being produced on a scale that can only be termed mass production (Jarrige 1981, 1984; Lechevallier and Quivron 1981; Vandiver 1995; Wright 1991, 1995). In southeast Europe and apparently at Çatalhöyük, on the other hand, it is the individual houses that are elaborated. Households compete for status, but resist the imposition of a higher authority or the loss of household self-sufficiency (Russell 1990, 1993; Tringham and Krstić 1990).

It is hard to know how this difference in values and social organization came about, but the consequences were profound. As we can see through the bone industry, among other indications, Mehrgarh, Çatalhöyük, and the cultures of southeast Europe all experienced intensified production during the Neolithic, perhaps even centered around the same products, such as textiles and ceramics, and possibly agricultural produce, and using very similar technologies. The social context

in which this production was embedded, however, led to rather different results. The more rigid roles and interdependent structure of Mehrgarh society encouraged the rapid development of craft specialization, while southeast Europe's households and those of Çatalhöyük remained more independent, with production geared to prestige competitions.

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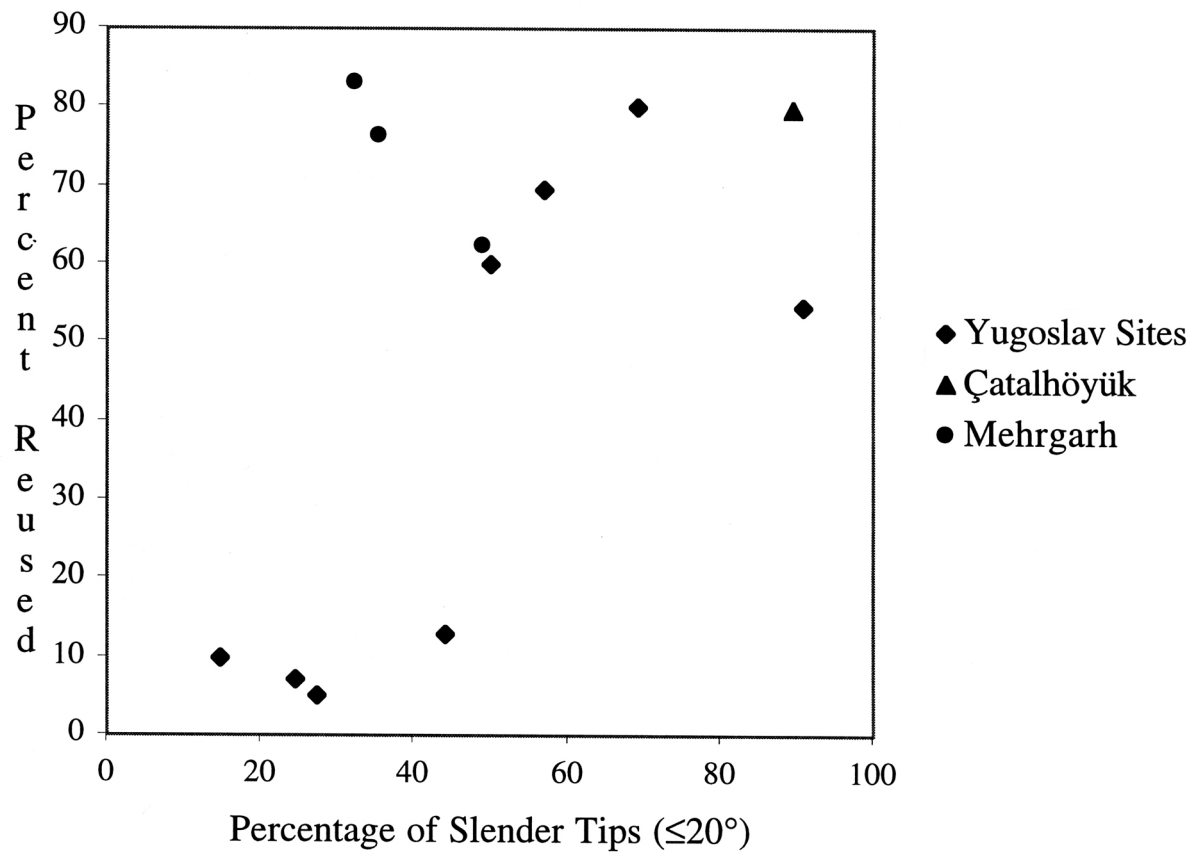


Fig. 1 Tip angle and reuse