

# Through the Eyes of a Stranger

Appropriating the  
Foreign and  
Transforming the  
Local Context



Filip Franković  
Ana Popović  
Mislav Fileš  
Julia Kramberger

**Editors**

Proceedings of the International Graduate and  
Doctoral Student Conference, October 14—15  
2016, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences,  
Ivana Lučića 3, Zagreb, Croatia

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# List of Abbreviations

<i>Aesch. Pers.</i>	Aeschylus, <i>Persians</i>
<i>Aeschin. 3</i>	Aeschines, <i>Against Ctesiphon</i>
<i>Aristot. Const. Ath.</i>	Aristotle, <i>Constitution of the Athenians</i>
<i>Bacchyl. Ep.</i>	Bacchylides, <i>Epinicians</i>
<i>Cic. Inv.</i>	Cicero, <i>De Inventione</i>
<i>Diod.</i>	Diodorus, <i>Historical Library</i>
<i>Hdt.</i>	Herodotus, <i>Histories</i>
<i>Hes. Fr.</i>	Hesiod, <i>Fragment</i>
<i>Hp. Aer.</i>	Hippocrates, <i>De aere aquis et locis</i>
<i>Isoc. 12</i>	Isocrates, <i>Panathenaicus</i>
LH	Late Helladic
<i>Lys. 2</i>	Lysias, <i>Funeral Oration</i>
<i>Paus.</i>	Pausanias, <i>Description of Greece</i>
PBF	Prähistorische Bronzefunde
<i>Pind. P.</i>	Pindar, <i>Pythian</i>
<i>Plin. Nat.</i>	Pliny the Elder, <i>Naturalis Historia</i>
<i>Plut. Arist.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Aristeides</i>
<i>Strab.</i>	Strabo, <i>Geography</i>
<i>Thuc.</i>	Thucydides, <i>Histories</i>
<i>Xen. Anab.</i>	Xenophon, <i>Anabasis</i>
BF	Balkan flint

# Editors' Introduction

Many archaeological excavations from all around the world produce objects which originate from a geographical region other than the one they are found in. Such objects are usually described by archaeologists as foreign objects. A vast number of possible interpretations are offered that describe such objects as products of trade, exotica, souvenirs, personal belongings of migrants etc. In most of these interpretations, most attention is paid to the place of origin, ascribing to such objects the meaning they used to have in the context of their origin. Such a view results in the attribution of a more passive role to the receiving society, presupposing that the use of the object, the meanings attributed to it and the way the object shaped the receiving context did not differ much from the context of its origin.

However, in recent years, the focus of research has started to shift from the society of origin to the context of consumption. Observed in this way, the reception of foreign material culture could be interpreted as a dynamic process, in contrast to the passive role previously ascribed to the receiving society. Unfortunately, this represents a topic not often discussed in either student or a broader archaeological community in Croatia. That is why in Spring 2015 a group of students of Archaeology from Zagreb decided to organize an international conference which would gather doctoral candidates and young researchers from different parts of the world. The exchange of ideas and experiences with people from different universities dealing with different periods in different parts of the world seemed as a great starting point to revive the activities of the student community in Zagreb. Potential participants were encouraged to direct their research interests to the ways foreign objects were appropriated into new cultural contexts and the meanings they acquired in that process.

As this was the first conference of this kind organized at the Department of Archaeology, now, three years after the idea was originally created, we are delighted to end our more than successful journey with these Proceedings. We, as both organizers and editors of this volume, feel a great honor and privilege that we were able to host so many successful international students from all over Europe and even beyond. These Proceedings contain only a glimpse of what students of Archaeology are able to do and serves as an indicator of the ambition and enthusiasm for making a change in our discipline. Also, it is only a small part of the 17 papers presented at the conference. We would hereby like to thank all of the conference participants, without whose inspiring presentations our idea of the final publication would not have been born in the first place.

We would also like to thank everybody who invested any effort into the realization of both the conference and the publication starting with volunteers, faculty staff, professors and all the people who showed interest in the conference. Special thanks go to the six authors who submitted their papers for the final publication and worked hard to meet our demands.

In the end, we leave this publication as the inheritance to the new generations of students from Zagreb, in order to never forget that their Department is only a small drop in the archaeological sea. By encountering foreign ideas and appropriating them to their own needs, their local context will be enriched forever. Thus, the ever changing and dynamic character of our discipline is a great reminder that the exchange of thoughts and ideas can only serve to one's own progress.

**The Editors**



# Iron Gates (Serbia): the Difference in the Use of Stone Raw Ma- terials During the Me- solithic – Neolithic Transition

Anđa Petrović

**Abstract** The archaeological sites in the Iron Gates present an excellent key study for mapping the influx of non-local raw materials, with reference to the chipped stone artifacts from the sites Lepenski Vir and Padina. The petroarchaeological analysis has not been systematically applied in the previous research projects, and this paper will deal with the already published data. Human activities in the Mesolithic-Neolithic transitional period in the Iron Gates are in the focus of this research. This kind of research conducts a new use-wear analysis of the chipped stone artifacts from the sites Lepenski Vir and Padina and combines them with the already existing hypotheses. The previous interpretations proposed that different varieties of grey flint represented local raw materials and that the presence of the so-called Balkan flint was a sign of the import of a non-local material. This kind of selection has been carried out on the basis of the research done so far by various authors, who produced a large number of models of non-local raw material import. But was there a distinction between the use of these raw materials in the past? What was the Balkan flint used for, and what kinds of activities were the locally extracted flint and quartzite used for? How was the non-local raw material introduced into everyday practice? The answers to these questions can provide a deeper insight into the lithic technological organization of the archaeological sites in the Iron Gates, and also help solve the issues connected with the procurement of raw material by producing new data, never observed before.

**Keywords** use-wear analysis chipped stone artifacts Balkan flint Iron Gates Mesolithic  
Early Neolithic

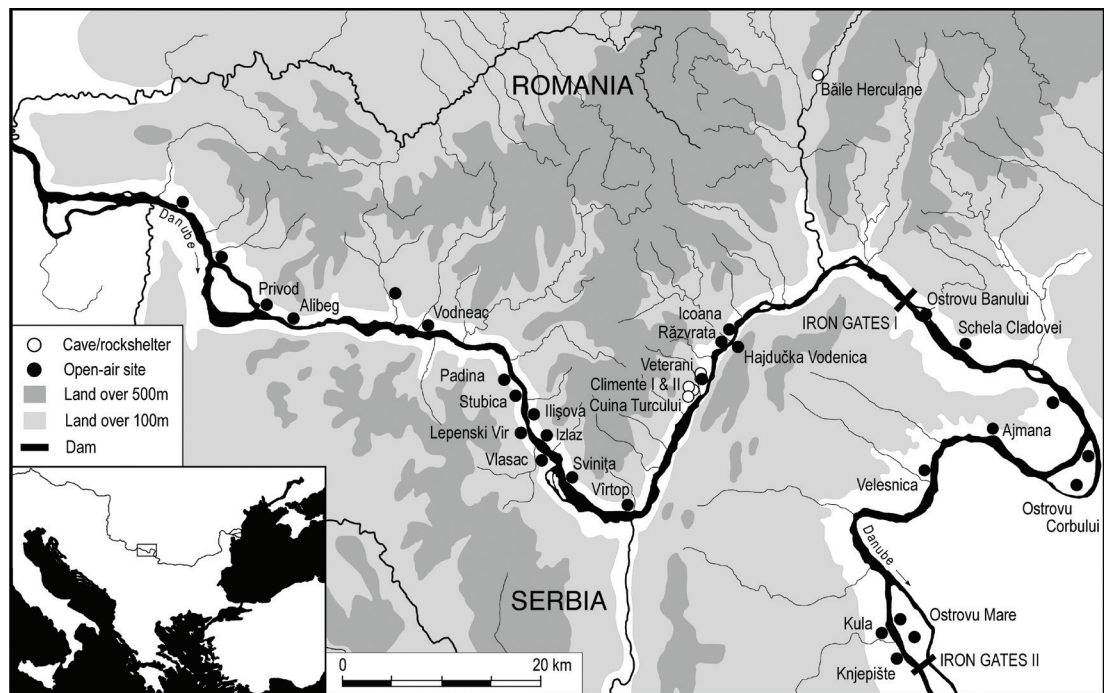
## Introduction

This paper deals with the difference in the use of stone raw materials in Iron Gates sites, during the transition from the Late Mesolithic to the Early Neolithic. The main question is whether the Balkan flint, seen as a non-local material, was used and if it was, for what purpose. Furthermore, the ratio of the usage of other raw materials compared to the Balkan flint needs to be considered. The main data was gathered on the basis of use-wear analysis. The sample that will be discussed here represents 19 artefacts that originate from the Lepenski Vir site (Lepenski Vir Collection, National Museum in Belgrade). Additionally, some notes were made after recording the chipped stone industry from the Padina site, and they will be presented here as an indicator for some future projects.

## Archaeological background

The archaeological material that will be studied here comes from Lepenski Vir and Padina, two famous Mesolithic and Neolithic sites from Iron Gates (Fig. 1). This region is settled in Eastern Serbia and it represents a closed area, an eco-niche suitable for examining the shift to agriculture, and other archaeological aspects which are specific for the Late Glacial and Early Holocene periods. Over 100 multi-layered sites have been uncovered in this region, and these are the only Mesolithic sites surrounded by the distinct paleoecological environment in South-Eastern Europe situated on the river bank, instead of on the sea coast.

**Fig. 1.**  
The Iron Gates region, archaeological sites (after Bonsall *et al.* 2008. Courtesy of the authors).



Lepenski Vir is located on the right terrace of the Danube river in the Upper Gorges. Rescue excavations started in the 1960s and continued in the 1970s (Srejović 1969). At the end of the excavations led by D. Srejović, this area was flooded for the purposes of the construction of the hydropower plant *Đerdap*, and the site was transferred to a nearby location. Although the excavations ended, the culture of Lepenski Vir is still a key subject of many studies conducted by eminent scholars. Diverse analyses like a series of absolute dating, human remains analyses (with paleopathology and dental-based studies), faunal and zooarchaeological analyses, abrasive stone analyses, chipped stone analyses, observing of detailed dietary changes and other have been conducted so far on the sites in Iron Gates (Kozłowski and Kozłowski 1984; Radovanović 1996; Bonsall *et al.* 2004; 2008; Borić and Stefanović 2004; Borić *et al.* 2004; Antonović 2006; Roksandić 2012; Radović and Stefanović 2015; Borić 2016; Cristiani *et al.* 2016). All of the analyses which were conducted in recent years and decades testify how important Lepenski Vir still is, even though the excavations are over. There are many questions about the hunter/gatherer/fisherman communities that inhabited Lepenski Vir which are still provoking and unanswered. Since the beginning of research, the phase of settlement defined with trapezoidal houses has been characterized by the controversy of dating the settlement. The discussion concerned the connection between the aforementioned types of

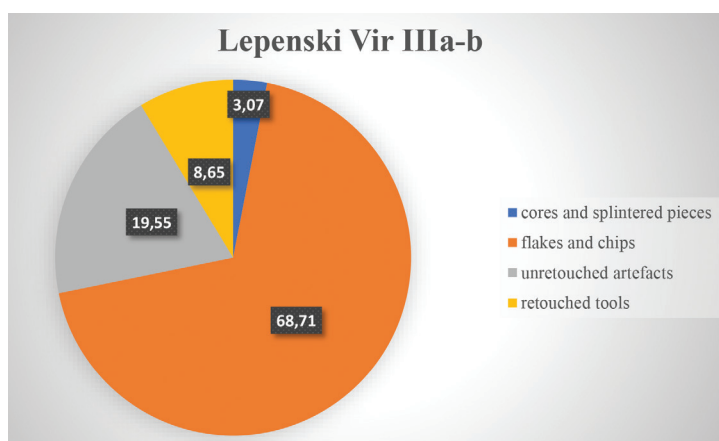
objects, which D. Srejšović considered to belong to the Mesolithic period, and ceramic vessels and fragments of Early Neolithic provenance found on the floors of these houses (Garašanin and Radovanović 2001). However, the emergence of pottery is not the only problem that researchers faced excavating this site. In the past few years, further analyses of human remains were carried out, this time including the material from children's graves. The analysis noted changes in the mortuary practice (Borić and Stefanović 2004; Borić 2016). According to the newest results of absolute dating, the chronology of the site roughly covers the regional Mesolithic to the Early/Middle Neolithic (Borić and Dimitrijević 2007; 2009; Borić 2011).

The estimated timespan for the beginning of Mesolithic activities on Lepenski Vir is 10130-8640 cal BCE (95% probability) or 9330-8760 BCE (68% probability), and the start for the activities associated with the trapezoidal buildings is 6130-6020 cal BCE (95% probability) or 6090-6050 BCE (68% probability), labeled as Start Transition LV I-II. The Early Neolithic is estimated to have begun in 5940-5750 cal BCE (95% probability) or 5880-5770 cal BCE (68% probability) (Borić 2016, 21-22).

Another site that will be mentioned here is Padina, situated on the right bank of the Danube, a few kilometers upstream from Lepenski Vir and nearby the Vlasac site. Padina was excavated by B. Jovanović from 1968 until 1970. These excavations were done within systematic surveys and probing in order to protect the cultural heritage in the Danube Gorges before building the dam (Radovanović 1981). Padina A belongs to the earliest phase of habitation on the Danube bank (the formative phase of the Iron Gates Mesolithic), and the second archaeological horizon (Padina B) represents the Mesolithic/Neolithic transition (Jovanović 1987). Recent research focused on obtaining the new AMS dates based on skeletal remains revealed that people returned again and again to this site in the wider time frame from the mid-10th millennium to the mid-6th millennium BCE (Borić and Miracle 2004, 356). The early Neolithic phase can be dated between 6300 and 5500 BCE, after the site was abandoned (Borić and Miracle 2004, 357).

#### The chipped stone industry

The first analysis of chipped stone artefacts of Lepenski Vir was done by Polish authors J. K. Kozłowski and S. K. Kozłowski (Kozłowski and Kozłowski 1984). It is very important to underline that this study was made on the basis of the chronology proposed by D. Srejšović and that the new dates did not radically disturb the Balkan flint ratio. Later on, their study was complemented by I. Radovanović and J. Šarić (Radovanović 1996; Šarić 2014). The raw materials from the Preneolithic period (Layer I) were classified into 18 different types with the help of the petrologists M. Pawlikowski (Kozłowski and Kozłowski 1984, 260-261). This classification selected gray radiolarite, gray flint and quartzite as important raw materials of local origin (Kozłowski and Kozłowski 1984). The situation changes in the Neolithic Layer III, where the most used raw material is the so-called Balkan flint (65,73%) followed by quartz, striped flint, and grey radiolarite and grey flint as less frequent materials (Kozłowski and Kozłowski 1983, 271), with production focused on flakes and unretouched tools (Fig. 2). As this statistic shows, and according to the previous research by I. Radovanović, the site has a character of a workshop (Radovanović 1996, 292) and the bipolar technique is represented in the Epipaleolithic and Mesolithic periods.



**Fig. 2.** The structure (%) of the chipped stone assemblage from the Neolithic layer III (modified from Radovanović 1992, 291-292).

A detailed petrological analysis of the chipped stone artifacts from the Padina site does not exist and the material has been divided on the basis of microscopic observations highlighting the presence of quartz, quartzite, siliceous rocks, obsidian, non-transparent flint, chalcedony and river pebbles (Radovanović 1981, 28). Knapping technology traditions like lamellar, flake and bipolar technologies are present at Padina A, and an older tradition specific for Padina B is represented by the bipolar technology, quartz tools and a large number of flakes. The presence of a younger tradition at Padina B is characterized by blade technology (Mihailović 2009, 67).

### Balkan flint

Since Balkan flint is considered a non-local raw material on the sites in the Iron Gates, whose products and their use are discussed in this paper, a small overview of the key problems and characteristics of this specific raw material is needed. An increase in the use of non-local raw material at the Lepenski Vir site in the Neolithic period is notable. From the visible import at 6,52% in the Preneolithic period, the ratio changes into a predominant production with Balkan flint in the Neolithic (65,73%) (Kozłowski and Kozłowski 1984). For the Neolithic phase of Lepenski Vir it can be said that the population of the Starčevo culture exploited the local resources to a lesser extent, but that the majority of raw materials were imported from the eastern region (Kozłowski and Kozłowski 1984, 267-275), focusing on the production in the Early Neolithic horizon, the production of cores, blades and tools of the Balkan flint (Bogosavljević-Petrović and Starović 2013, 87).

What is the so-called Balkan flint (BF) and where does it originate from? The products of BF are usually standardized and systematically knapped tools (Gurova 2008; Gurova and Nachev 2008; Bogosavljević-Petrović and Starović 2013, 78) made from a honey yellow to brownish flint with white spots. Many scholars have been dealing with the source and production of BF, and artefacts made from BF are found on sites in Northern Greece, Serbia, Romania, Macedonia, Bulgaria, and Hungary. The problem of origin relates to the Karanovo I–Starčevo–Körös–Criş taxonomic unit of the Early Neolithic period in the region. According to the newest laser ablation analysis (LA-ICP-MS), we can say that the source might be in the area of Nikopol and Pleven in Northern Bulgaria (Gurova *et al.* 2016). BF is, together with obsidian, a marker of the distribution paths of exchange in Neolithic communities in Serbia, and therefore the provenance questions are directly linked to the process of neolithization, marking it as an essential parameter important for the transitional period in the Iron Gates (Bogosavljević-Petrović and Starović 2013).

**Fig. 3.**

Archaeological sample (Lepenski Vir Collection, National Museum in Belgrade), photo by A. Petrović.



### Sample and method

The archaeological sample that will be discussed here represents 19 artefacts from Lepenski Vir (Lepenski Vir Collection, National Museum in Belgrade) (Fig. 3) and some preliminarily checked pieces from Lepenski Vir and Padina (Archaeological Collection, Department of Archaeology, Faculty of Philosophy), all made from BF.

Out of the whole Lepenski Vir assemblage, 145 pieces were microscopically analyzed and these 19 artefacts were selected on the basis of the raw material and their Early Neolithic provenance. Although the technological and typological analyses have been previously published, as it was stated earlier, we observed the material once again, taking it as a standard procedure before starting with the use-wear analysis, which is needed for creating a general insight about the assemblage.

The whole sample was analyzed with the low-power approach and some of the samples were studied with the high-power approach. The analyses were completed at the Physico-Chemical Laboratory of the National Museum in Belgrade and at the Laboratory of Technological and Functional Analyses of Prehistoric Artefacts (LTFAPA) at the Sapienza University of Rome.

The low-power approach was performed using an OLYMPUS SZ 61 (magnifications ranging from 10× to 60×), and Nikon SM2 745T (oculars 10×, magnifications ranging from 0,67× to 5×) stereomicroscopes and a reflected light system. During the use-wear analysis, two metallographic microscopes were used, OLYMPUS BX51M (magnifications ranging from 50× to 500×.) and Nikon Optiphot (oculars 15×, lenses 10×, 20× and 40×).

The main categories of analysis were the localization of the scare, distribution, initiation, form, orientation, and edge rounding, which all led to the identification of the contact material (soft, medium hard, hard). The main results of the use-wear analysis of the artefacts made from BF will be summarized here as the most representative data, chronologically connected to the Early Neolithic.

### Results

Based on the proposed methodology, the following preliminary results were noted. Some of the artefacts (# 191, # 211, # 264) had transparent lacquer (shellac) on the ventral sides and edges used for marking. This made the analysis extremely difficult, giving a fake image of a polished area (Fig. 4). The results and observations of these artefacts are not considered valid.

**Fig. 4.**  
Shellac on the ventral side of #191, ×50, consequence of poorly labeled artefacts, photo by A. Petrović.



Firstly, locating the activity zones on the artefacts and defining the edge rounding was done together with the examination of the retouched areas. During this stage, two main activities were observed: cutting and scraping.

Another positive aspect of applying use-wear analysis is in questioning the morphological form of the artefacts. Two out of six scrapers (#202, #206) have proven to us that the typological interpretation does not always match with their function. Lateral sides on these scrapers were been used for cutting (Fig. 5). These two represent the fact that different products of knapping could be used in various activities with various contact materials.

**Fig. 5.**  
Cutting edge,  
#206, 1x1,5,  
detail, photo by  
A. Petrović.



The second group is represented with the scrapers made on blades. These scrapers have clear use-wear traces on the distal ends, with well-preserved edge rounding obtained by a transversal movement indicating scraping and a continuous zone of cutting, established by a longitudinal movement on lateral sides.

The third category of artefacts is represented by eight long blades with preserved medial and proximal ends. The edge rounding on most of the blades is not very pronounced, leading us to the conclusion that maybe they were not used constantly. Blades #194, #201, #203 have been used intensively like the rest of the blades defined with the areas of polish formation and very notable edge rounding. During the laboratory training in spring 2016 at LTFAPA, led by Professor C. Lemorini, residue traces were noted on one blade. A more detailed residue analysis will be performed in the future.

Unlike the percentage of BF at the Lepenski Vir site, at Padina B (Neolithic layer), we have 29% of artefacts made out of this raw material (Mihailović 2004, 62). A part of the Padina assemblages was not suitable for analysis because the artefacts were heavily weathered and on a major number of tools, PDSM traces such as trampling were detected. However, use traces are present on most artefacts from the collection, and they require special attention, since the shift and mixture of applied technologies may have been a result of the variety of raw materials on Padina site.

### **Discussion**

The analysis of the whole sample provided many various results that led us to rethink the previous interpretations of some objects at Lepenski Vir. When we talk about the sample from the National Museum, where 90% of artefacts were made of BF, different kinds of conclusions emerge.

BF was a non-local raw material used mostly in the Early Neolithic period at the Lepenski Vir site. Before that, in the Mesolithic, not many tools were made of this raw material. A change of the pre-

dominant raw material in the Early Neolithic period is obvious, together with the typical Neolithic assemblage. By questioning the use of these artefacts, many other questions unfolded. Below are the two results that should be discussed and viewed from different aspects.

The first one concerns the typology, as one of the most important *domains* in archaeology, whose role is irreplaceable, not just because of the identification and classification of the objects, but because it is the crucial means of communication among different specialists. With this, we are underlining the language we use in numerous different analyses of the archaeological material. Typology is needed, but it is a category created for researchers dealing with typological and technological analyses, and it is based on the morphological form of the object. In many cases, this *appearance* imposes the use of artefacts. For example, scrapers are used for scraping and blades for cutting. Implying the functional analysis in observing the lithic industries of prehistoric people gives us an opposite insight into *the life* of an artefact. This situation is noted on the scrapers from the Lepenski Vir assemblage, where, as it was stated, there are cutting traces on the lateral sides as well. The same situation is noted on scrapers from Drenovac, another Neolithic site in central Serbia (Gurova 2016). These analogies will not be discussed here, but it is very important to acknowledge that this is not an isolated case in the wider area. This is also a reminder that we should always analyze the function of the tool as well, because in the end that is the proof of the activities and processes that happened in prehistory.

Having in mind that no transparent difference in the use of BF artefacts and those of another raw material is visible, this analysis gave us an insight into some specific activities performed with long blades. The standardized blades made of BF are considered as formal tools (Gurova 2012), making the question of its use far more interesting. As it was stated, there are three blades with very pronounced traces of medium hard and hard contact materials, like stone or bone. The rest of the preserved blade fragments have traces of very soft contact materials, or they might have been used for a short period of time. The longest (7,1cm) unretouched blade #191 has no use traces, except scarce traces of post-depositional surface modifications. These lateral sides are very sharp, and their lack of traces could be connected with the presumption that they might have been left for some future activities. These long blades made of BF are linked to the Early Neolithic horizon and we can speculate that they were exchanged. These BF artefacts were maybe cherished for some important activities between different communities. The background for this thesis lies in the various approaches to the relationship between incomers and local communities and their dietary behavior (Bonsall *et al.* 2004; Borić *et al.* 2004; Bonsall 2007; Borić 2016).

### Conclusion

If we exclude the typological-functional categories results and use long blades as one of the most relevant results of this study, as discussed in the previous chapter, the most important conclusion is that there is no differentiation in activities between the usage of BF artefacts and tools made from other raw materials. This interpretation was created after the complete review of the whole Lepenski Vir assemblage and a wider sample including all represented raw materials. The presence of BF in the Transitional period is noted, but its predomination in the Early Neolithic is the key, connecting the acquisition of this raw material with later periods and making of the *formal* tools. Secondly, two main motions present on BF artefacts are cutting and scraping, together with the zones of combined activities.

The conducted analysis showed the importance of the function of the tool, but also observed that in this specific case, BF was not used for special activities, at least not notable by the used methodology. These are just preliminary results that helped us discover the wide scope of the data that could be obtained with the help of the use-wear analysis. Overall, these 19 artefacts are key to the modern understanding of lithic studies and the need for conducting functional analysis. Although the size sample is small, the obtained results are significant, because for the first time we confirmed the use of the tools made of BF, as well as the long blades, which had been negated so far. A more detailed analysis in the future will try to resolve all the fine nuances needed to reveal the human processes in the Iron Gates region during the Late Mesolithic and the Early Neolithic periods.

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