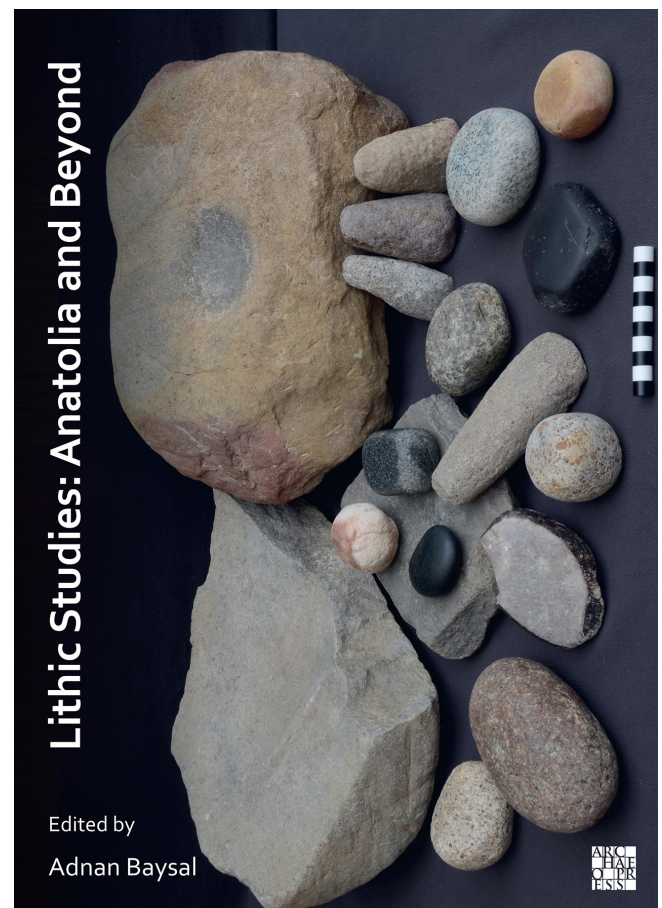


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Review of Adnan Baysal (ed.), 2022. *Lithic Studies: Anatolia and Beyond*. Oxford: Archaeopress. ISBN: 978-1-789699-27-2. € 54.89.

This edited book consists of 17 specialist papers that cover the latest studies on Neolithic flaked and ground stone artefacts from West Anatolia and its surrounding regions. Following a preface by Mehmet Özdoğan, who acknowledges the considerable development of Neolithic lithic studies in recent decades in Anatolia, the introductory article by the editor, Adnan Baysal, addresses three main goals of the present volume. The first goal is to assess the degree to which the results of lithic analyses in Anatolia follow the Neolithisation theories proposed thus far for Southwest Asia. The second is to examine “the connected nature, continuities, interactions and influences from the Neolithic societies of northwest Anatolia to the contemporary societies of the Danube Plains from the perspective of lithic studies.” Third, Baysal presents a more comprehensive aim, which is to “connect the loose ends of perpetually increasing data created by excavations and surveys of the Neolithic in the western part of Anatolia” and the neighbouring regions. In other words, the most important goal of the present book is to bring together the ongoing Neolithic lithic studies in West Anatolia and beyond to build up a bigger picture for understanding Neolithisation processes from the viewpoint of lithic analysis.

Indeed, these aims are well justified for current Neolithic research in Southwest Asia. Since the times of Gordon Childe and the Braidwoods, who developed fundamental theories of the Neolithisation processes in the early-mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, Neolithic research in Southwest Asia has centred on the “core” region or the Fertile Crescent stretching from the Levant, southeast Anatolia, to the Zagros foothills. The evaluation of those early theories has also been conducted in the Fertile Crescent, leaving rather aside neighbouring regions, such as West Anatolia, away from this chief stream of research despite its geographic proximity. This is likely because the main research interest among Neolithic archaeologists has long been directed to primary Neolithisation, which can be conducted only in limited regions of the world. However, with the development of increasing field investigations and related studies, secondary Neolithisation processes have attracted more researchers’ interest because they can be studied anywhere in the world. Therefore the revealed patterns can be interpreted to develop a global model. The current research no longer surmises a simple diffusion model, either in immigration or acculturation but has developed more realistic approaches that incorporate complicated processes involved with the interactions between indigenous and incoming societies. Moreover, this field is characterised today by the extensive employment of cutting-edge archaeometric methods; for example, radiometric data for high-resolution chronology allows determining dispersals of pottery use, genetic data provide



a view of population movements, and lipid residue analysis reveals the introduction of milk use.

Lithic analysis stands at the centre of this main research trend, especially for the ubiquitous availability of research materials, regardless of the site condition and period, which allows analysing of cultural processes in the period of Neolithisation from a consistent view of a single industry. Given this, the present volume aiming to explore the potential of lithic studies in the modern context of Neolithic dispersal research is most welcome.

This book does not supply a straightforward table of contents; the articles are not assigned to specifically numbered chapters or grouped under proper headers. However, they appear roughly lined up by category covering similar subjects. According to the editor’s introductory paper, the first two articles deal with general subjects. The article by Elizabeth Healey provides an overview of the lithic raw material environments, which likely conditioned Neolithic regional cultural groups in Anatolia, to highlight the unique position of the Neolithic lithic industries in West Anatolia and to the west. On the other hand, Laurence Astruc’s article focuses on the functional study of Neolithic industries. It presents a concise history of and describes the prospects for microscopic approaches to determine the use and function of the Neolithic tools of Anatolia.

The next six articles present specific techno-typological studies of lithic artefacts of West Anatolian sites. Lilian Dogjama takes up two groups of bifacially flaked tools recovered from the Neolithic levels of



Fig. 1 An example of a diamond-shaped biface from Çatalhöyük.  
(Photo: Lillian Dogiama)

Çatalhöyük (Fig. 1). Her analysis of the *chaîne opératoire* of these tools reveals contrasting natures, one group being hunting tools for daily use and the other including ritual tools for non-daily use. The next article, by Neyir Kolankaya-Bostancı, analyses the flaked stone assemblages from Kanlıtas Höyük to interpret the function of this early Chalcolithic settlement, assigning it to a locale seasonally visited for hunting and herding. The article by Zehra Fűrüzten Taşkıran and Harun Taşkıran also takes a functional view. It argues the distinct nature of the Neolithic occupations at the cave of Suluin, which may have differed from mound settlements. A study by Betül Fındık and Zafer Derin reports on Neolithic lithic assemblages from Yesilova Höyük of West Anatolia, containing obsidian from Melos, the Aegean Sea, and Eşref Erbil's study describes techno-typological features of projectile points from the late Neolithic site of Ege Gübre. The two remaining papers in this block differ from those above in that they provide a broader view of the study region. The paper by Ian Gatsov and Petranka Nedelcheva focuses on the chrono-spatial distribution pattern of pressure debitage for blank production. It points out the usefulness of the lithic technological analysis to trace cultural and populational dispersals during the Neolithic dispersals. Bogdana Milić, on the other hand, refers to an even more general view needed to interpret the cultural connectedness between West Anatolia and Southeast Europe.

While the above-mentioned papers are concerned with techno-typological issues, the next two examine the circulation of one particular raw material: obsidian. The exploitation and consumption of obsidian rocks have attracted Neolithic archaeologists since the early times of Neolithisation research, notably since the pioneering work by Colin Renfrew addressed in the introduction (Baysal). The paper by Marina Milić provides a useful overview of the circulation of obsidian from sources in Central Anatolia toward the west, and that by Lia Karimali and Stella Papadopoulou provides a comprehensive summary of the use of obsidian from sources at Melos in Greece among the Neolithic communities in the Aegean Sea.

The remaining five articles, placed at the end of the volume, cover ground stone tools. As stated in the preface by Özdoğan, research on ground stone tools is a rather new arena of Neolithic studies in Southwest Asia, particularly in West Anatolia. The papers compiled in this block sufficiently demonstrate how this research subject developed recently in the Neolithic archaeology of West Anatolia and beyond. The paper by Christina Tsoraki actually shows us an array of important perspectives obtained through this research: it revealed that, with the aid of microscopic studies, a unique practice of ground stone use for plastered floor/ wall preparation in the Neolithic architecture of Çatalhöyük. The paper by Abdulkadir Özdemir and A. Onur Bamyacı points out the validity of an ethnographic analogy to interpret the function and use of prehistoric ground stone tools from the Neolithic Aegean industries. In the next paper, Emre Güldoğan adds new data on the ground stone studies on the basis of materials from the Marmara region, while Dragana Antonović and Vidan Dimić mention the situation of Neolithic ground stone research in Serbia. In contrast, Danai Chondrou not only reports on new data from northwest Greece but also explores the potential of groundstone analysis for understanding the social identity of manufacturers and the role of groundstone tools in Neolithic society.

Overall, the above collection of articles undoubtedly contributes to our better understanding of the Neolithic development in West Anatolia and its neighbouring regions. It is notable that these papers cover the entire facets of the *chaîne opératoire* in the flaked stone tool production and use from raw material (Healey), core reduction (Gastov and Nedelcheva), tool typology (Dogiama, Erbil), function (Astruc), and their relationship to the settlement organisation (Kolankaya-Bostancı, and Taşkıran and Taşkıran). This important collection of papers is, needless to say, enriched by the other chapters reporting new discoveries of lithic assemblages. It is also to be noted that the present volume in its entirety matches one of the editor's expectations, evaluating the Neolithisation theories: a diffusionist cultural history model defined by Childe, processual approaches advocated by Lewis Binford, and a post-processual approach opened by Ian Hodder addressed in certain chapters (e.g., Baysal, Tsoraki and Dogiama).

For readers of *Neo-Lithics*, the papers discussing the pressure debitage of blank production technology in this volume should be particularly attractive. The paper by Ian Gatsov and Petranka Nedelcheva directly tackles this issue, while two more articles also emphasise the importance of technological study in obsidian circulation studies: Marina Milić and Lia Karimali and Stella Papadopoulou suggest the use of lever pressuring as an important marker of the westward diffusion of the Neolithic technology originated from the Fertile Crescent of Southwest Asia. This view is based on the fact that the technological expertise required for lever pressuring is unlikely to have been transmitted without social learning, as some experimental studies suggest.

On the back cover of this volume, the editor reinforces the idea that the main aim of this work is to bring together the latest lithic studies related to Neolithic Anatolia and beyond and to connect them. I conclude that the present volume is a significant step in this direction. For those interested in the Neolithic dispersals from the Fertile Crescent, like me, the present volume serves as an important dataset to be referred to when studying the secondary Neolithisation processes in the

other neighbouring regions, for example, the south Caucasus to the north, the southeast Zagros plain to the east, the Nile Valley to the southwest, and the vast desert to the south.

As such, and all the more emphasised as it comes from a reader who enjoyed this book, I would like to offer a few tips. One is that the title of the book, *Lithic Studies: Anatolia and Beyond*, does not suggest anything about the Neolithisation processes in Anatolia. In addition, the table of contents should be reconsidered. Readers have far easier access to a desired paper when the articles in one volume are classified by group according to editorial policies. In the present volume, even the paper structures are inconsistent (e.g., the lack of an abstract and inconsistencies related to paragraph headings). Despite these technical issues, I certainly celebrate Baysal and his colleagues for sending this fine volume to readers gathering around the *ex oriente* and beyond.

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