

12th International Symposium on Knappable Materials

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Session Proposal: [Polished stone tool production: knapping before and after polishing](#)

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Polished stone tools represent the eponyme technical novelty for the “new stone age”, the Neolithic period. The final elaboration of the surface of the artefact by grinding / abrasion / polishing added new physical qualities, a more efficient and lasting working edge to certain tools, e.g., axes, adzes, wedges and picks. It is well known that the invention of the technique of polishing much preceded the appearance of productive economies and survived the Neolithic period at least till the general appearance of metal tools - and weapons - for the same functions. Moreover, the specific demands for producing long-lasting and durable polished stone artefacts lead to the formation of the largest supply systems in (European) stone age.

The “chain of operation” for producing polished stone artefacts, however, involves a knapped phase in the ontogeny of the object; prospecting, mining, extraction and pre-form fabrication, just like traditional chipped stone implements, similar to handaxes of cores. It is not by chance that the largest “flint mines” in Europe were in fact producing suitable raw materials for the manufacturing of polished stone tools.

Having studied the process of polished stone tool production on specialised settlements in Hungary and in contemporary ethnographical materials we became interested in the “knapped” phase of the life of polished implements. It is also noteworthy, that quite a few polished stone tools have an “afterlife” as re-worked artefacts, by re-shaping or knapping. We recommend our session to the interest of specialists working in a diachronic context embracing the life of the tool from extraction till rejection and re-use.