CC11 and CC12: SERF Archive Report: Lithics

Introduction

There are 18 lithics recovered from the Castle Craig excavations, 14 in 2011 and 4 in 2012.

Methodology

The methodology, type and attribute terminologies employed for the analysis of the primary and secondary technologies follows the format devised and adopted for the *Southern Hebrides Mesolithic Project* (Finlayson et al. 2000). This augmented the research design used for the analysis of the lithic assemblage from the site at Kinloch on Rùm (Wickham-Jones 1990), derived from earlier terminologies and technological classifications (Tixier *et al*. 1980), and subsequently enhanced (Inizan *et al*. 1999). This format lends itself to the incorporation of later prehistoric forms such as projectile points, 'knives', certain types of scrapers and Post-Medieval gunflints (cf. Wright 2012). The database for the typological and technological analysis of the lithics uses Access™ 2016.

Primary Technology speaks to those initial procedures of the *chaîne opératoire* relating to the choices made in the selection and the obtaining of appropriate raw material, the reduction strategies, the production of blanks, e.g. flakes and blades through to the discard of cores. The knapping reduction strategies undertaken in the past are determined by reference to the detailed analysis of the characteristics and attributes of the cores and debitage products recovered during archaeological fieldwork (Finlay *et al*. 2000a, 553; Woodman *et al*. 2006, 78).

Secondary Technology refers to the later stages of the *chaîne opératoire*, which considers the process of the modification of blanks, their utilisation and discard. Following the removal of a blank from a core, modification is generally achieved by the application of pressure to the edge of the blank. In the case of scrapers, the modified edge functions as the working edge. However, that may not be the case for all retouched artefacts. For example, the modification may be undertaken to facilitate hafting (Finlay *et al*. 2000b, 571; Wickham-Jones and McCartan 1990, 87). Invasive and inverse retouch are generally particular features of secondary modification during the Neolithic and Bronze Age periods (Ballin 1999 and others).

For individual lithics, the first number is the catalogue reference followed by the small finds number.

Raw Materials

Agate is the most common raw material at 38.89% followed by quartz 27.78%, flint 22.22%, and jasper 11.11% (Figure 1).

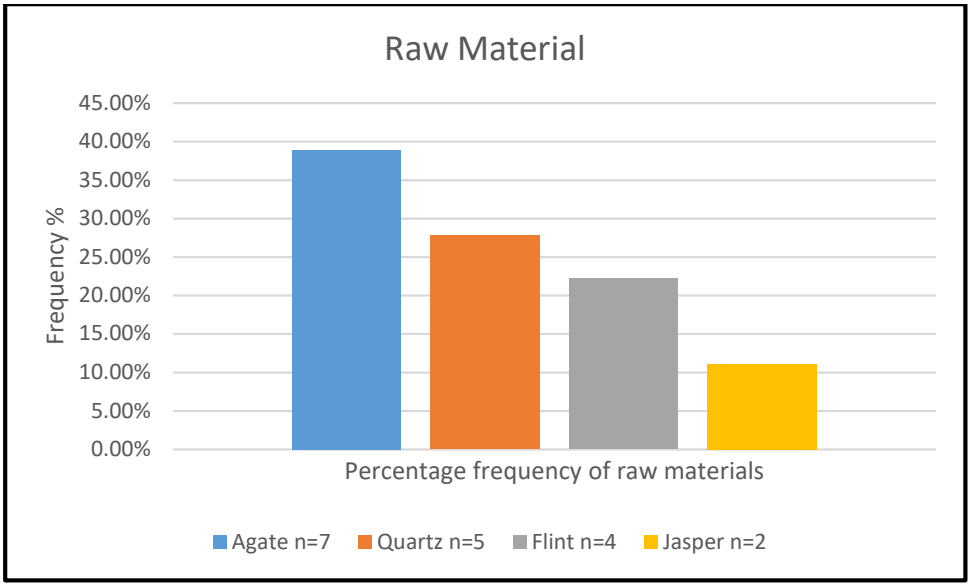

Figure 1: Numerical and percentage frequency of lithics from CC11 and CC12.

Character

The character of the assemblage is set out at Table 1. 44.44% of the lithics are chunks; flakes 27.78%, small fraction debitage 16.67%, and modified forms 11.11%.

	Total	Agate	Quartz	Flint	Jasper
Chunks	8	6	1	1	
Flakes	5		1	2	2
Primary					
Secondary	2			2	2
Tertiary	3		1		
Primary regular					
Primary irregular					
Secondary regular					
Secondary irregular	2			2	2
Tertiary regular					
Tertiary irregular	3		1		
Small Fraction	3	1	2		
Modified	2		1	1	
Total	18	7	5	4	2

Table 1: Character of the assemblage.

Condition

All of the lithics are fresh save for three burnt pieces; two chunks (0127/6209; 0467/6103) and one flake (0132/6310).

Primary technology

There are no primary flakes and all are irregular; two are secondary and three tertiary. There was a platform reduction strategy employed for three of the flakes (0128/6209; 0129/6308; 0132/6310). The other two flakes (0134/6320; 0475/6590) and the chunks are bipolar.

2011

Two chunks (0467/6103; 0469/6105) and one piece of small fraction debitage came the demolition debris.

2012

The recovery locations of the lithics from 2012 are:

- A jasper flake (0128/6209) and an agate chunk (0127/6205) from backfill (100) of 2011 trench;
- Quartz flake (0475/6590) from an old ground surface (126) overlying paving stones (128). There is a radiocarbon date of 50 cal BCE–208 cal CE (1945 ± 45 BP; SUERC-45396 on charcoal from (126);
- Two flakes, one jasper (0129/6308) and the other flint (0132/6310) from top surface of turf (600). Other lithics recovered are a quartz chunk (0130/6310), agate chunk (0131/6310), and one piece of agate small fraction debitage (0133/6310);
- Two agate chunks (0472/6538; 0473/6538) and single piece of quartz small fraction debitage (0135/6316) from surface of demolition rubble (601);
- A flint flake (0134/6320) from a lens of burning (602) overlying midden and debris (605). There is a radiocarbon date of 751-408 cal BCE (2440 ± 30 BP; SUERC-29217 on charcoal from (605); and
- An agate chunk (0474/6539) from paving (907) under tumbled wall stones (905), and overlying pre-wall occupation charcoal rich matrix of clay with stones and burnt bone (909), and sub-soil (911).

Secondary technology

The modified lithics comprise two scrapers. These artefacts require illustration.

2011: Flint disc scraper (0468/6104)

It is from demolition debris from the wall core (006). There is direct semi-abrupt retouch around the entire circumference of the flake, with inverse retouch at the proximal end removing the bulb of percussion. There is further inverse retouch at the median, right hand side.

2012: Quartz convex scraper (0471/6417)

The scraper is from the demolition debris from the wall core (821). There is inverse scalar retouch to a bipolar quartz flake with a *siret* fracture, and proximal spalling. The coarse character of the raw material accounts for the poor quality of retouch.

Discussion

The disc scraper is a form found in Late Neolithic contexts (Butler 2005, Figure 53; Edmonds 1995, 104-105).

Other than the disc scraper, none of the lithics are truly diagnostic and cannot be ascribed to any given prehistoric archaeological epoch. However, there are characteristic elements of the assemblage ascribed to Iron Age events. Humphrey's (Humphrey 2003, 2004) research into Iron Age flint utilisation in central and southern Britain suggests markers such as the use of local materials, prevalence of secondary and tertiary flakes, and a high incidence of chunks (Humphrey 2004, 56-57). The modest size of the assemblage determines that is not possible to state categorically an Iron Age provenance.

Dr Dene Wright
27 March 2018

References

Ballin, T. B. 1999. The Lithic Assemblage in S. Speak and C. Burgess: Meldon Bridge: a centre of the third millennium BC in Peeblesshire. *Proceedings of The Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, 129: 81-93.

Butler, C. 2005. *Prehistoric Flintwork*. Stroud: Tempus.

Edmonds, M. 1995. *Stone Tools in Society: working stone in Neolithic and Bronze Age Britain*. London: Routledge.

Finlay, N., B. Finlayson and S. J. Mithen. 2000a. The Primary Technology: its Character and Inter-site Variability. In S. J. Mithen (ed.), *Hunter-gatherer landscape archaeology: The Southern Hebrides Mesolithic Project 1988-98. Volume 1: Project development, palaeoenvironmental studies and archaeological fieldwork on Islay. Volume 2: Archaeological fieldwork on Colonsay, computer modelling, experimental archaeology, and final interpretations*: 553-569. Cambridge: McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research.

Finlay, N., B. Finlayson and S. J. Mithen. 2000b. The Secondary Technology: its Character and Inter-site Variability. In S. J. Mithen (ed.), *Hunter-gatherer landscape archaeology: The Southern Hebrides Mesolithic Project 1988-98. Volume 1: Project development, palaeoenvironmental studies and archaeological fieldwork on Islay. Volume 2: Archaeological fieldwork on Colonsay, computer modelling, experimental archaeology, and final interpretations*: 571-587. Cambridge: McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research.

Finlayson, B., N. Finlay and S. J. Mithen. 2000. The cataloguing and analysis of the lithic assemblages. In S. J. Mithen (ed.), *Hunter-gatherer landscape archaeology: The Southern Hebrides Mesolithic Project 1988-98. Volume 1: Project development, palaeoenvironmental studies and archaeological fieldwork on Islay. Volume 2: Archaeological fieldwork on Colonsay, computer modelling, experimental archaeology, and final interpretations*: 61-72. Cambridge: McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research.

Humphrey, J. 2003. The utilization and technology of flint in the British Iron Age. In J. Humphrey (ed.), *Re-searching the Iron Age*: 17-24. Leicester: Leicester Archaeological Monographs.

Humphrey, J. 2004. *Iron Age flint utilisation in central and southern Britain the last "Stone Age?": an integrated theoretical and empirical study*. University of Leicester, Unpublished thesis.

Inizan, M.-L., M. Reduron-Ballinger, H. Roche and J. Tixier. 1999. *Technology and Terminology of Knapped Stone*. Nanterre: CREP.

Tixier, J., M.-L. Inizan and H. Roche. 1980. *Préhistoire de la pierre taillée, 1 terminologie et technologie*. Valbonne: CREP.

Wickham-Jones, C. R. (ed.). 1990. *Rhum, Mesolithic and Later Sites at Kinloch: excavations 1984-86*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Wickham-Jones, C. R. and S. B. McCartan. 1990. The Lithic Assemblage: Secondary Technology. In C. R. Wickham-Jones (ed.), *Rhum: Mesolithic and Later sites At Kinloch: excavations 1984-86*: 87-102. Edinburgh: Society of Antiquaries of Scotland.

Woodman, P. C., N. Finlay and E. Anderson. 2006. *The Archaeology of a Collection: The Keiller-Knowles Collection of the National Museum of Ireland*. Wicklow: Wordwell.

Wright, A. D. 2012. SERF Archive Report: Flaked Lithic Assemblages 2007-10. Unpublished SERF Report: University of Glasgow.