

## Abstract

This project investigates the underrepresentation of women in prehistory due to the need for archaeological experts to include women in activities other than those regarding the household or children. Specifically, this project will look at how there has been less emphasis on ground stone tools in archaeology because of their association with women and domestic activities. There has not been an enough scholarly interest in ground stone tools until the last twenty years because of the assumption that they were utilized in mundane daily activities, such as food preparation, thought to have been largely under the purview of women in prehistory. Our understanding of prehistoric society and its people may be skewed, therefore, in part because we have given less attention to these artifacts due to modern biases. Using a random sample of 41 articles, I argue that these biases also directly impact modern trends in archaeological research, whereby women have predominantly studied ground stone tools and men have studied other types of stone tools, such as chipped stones. Strides to debunk the nullability associated with stone tools would be useful to the analysis of these tools because there might be more historical implications to these artifacts other than their use in daily activities. Also, it would help to stop the stereotype of women being associated only with daily activities or child-rearing.



**Purpose**  
Stone tools could be sharpened to aid in hunting or shaped into a mortar-pestle-type object that could be used for crushing/grinding of pigments or spices. Stone tools can be classified as either ground stone or chipped. Chipped stone tools were chipped away through a process called flintknapping. Ground stone tools were made by grinding or polishing stones together (*The Wonderful World of Stone Tool Technology*, n.d.). The distinction of the two are due to the association of these tools with certain practices and people. Chipped stone tools were used more for hunting and presumed to be used more by men. Ground stone tools were used to grind products down like food and presumed to be used more by women. Over time in archaeology, the distinction between the tools because of their structure and who it was associated with has stuck, but it is not necessarily correct. These terms may be inappropriate to use because there is not concrete evidence that strictly women only used ground stone tools or men predominantly used chipped stone tools (Woodman, 2005). Ground stone tools specifically and their evolution over time for different uses can share with us the history of the people that used them, along with revealing how the people evolved over time (Andrefsky, 2009). Ground stone tools were especially helpful in prehistoric times for many reasons, but unfortunately, it has been constrained in the realm of the household and the faulty assumption women were the only ones who used these tools. This impacts history as it has been incorrectly presenting how, who, and why these tools were used. This is false as researchers in different parts of the world have found that women did engage in hunting or non-domestic activities with stone tools. In Ethiopia women created the stone tools themselves (University of Florida, 2003) and in the Americas burials of women show hunting-tools with them that revealed they were hunters as well (Haas et al., 2020). Also, it continues the narrative throughout history that women were only needed in a domestic sense as they were the only ones associated with using these tools in domestic activities. Even on a wider scale in history, it shows how in archaeology women haven't wanted to contribute to this field most likely to reveal that women had a larger role in history, but this has been constrained by a privileged group of white men (Wood, 2000). This research project aims to reveal how this incorrect view of the ground stone tool and women's role with the tool has continued and why this viewpoint should not prevail.

## Methods

- Data is being compiled from several different authors and their projects/articles on the complexities surrounding stone tools.
- Participants
  - The "participants" for this methodology will not be in the form of a survey or interview, instead it will be based on compiled data from the data analysis done on specific author's articles or projects.
- Materials/Measures
  - The material used to conduct my quantitative data analysis is an Excel sheet corresponding with pie charts that are compiled of data from the Excel sheet.
  - Measurements will be made based on key-words or phrases referenced in their works.
    - For determining relevant themes.
- Data Analysis
  - The instrument that I will use to compile my data will be a qualitative data analysis.
  - I will compile my data based on certain key terms or phrases that are mentioned in archaeological articles or projects on ground stone tools.
  - I will be keeping an Excel sheet that will have a record of these phrases based on ten different sources.
- Procedure
  - The procedure of my analysis will be compiling data from the articles that I have found that are credible and sufficient for the discussion of ground stone tools
    - The data will include author name, title, year published, key phrases included in the paper, attitude of the paper on certain subjects, etc.
    - The data I compile from this will then be turned into a pie chart that will show the general stance of these papers and the themes present in their articles/projects.

## Results

- Pie chart A shows the count of authors being a woman or a man.
  - 65.0% authors were women.
  - The second most likely author was both women and men with 20.0%.
- Pie chart B shows the count of the region of the world the study/article focused on
  - 13.2% of the studies focused on the American Southwest.
  - The second most likely region studied is tied between Africa, Aegean, and Southern Levant with 7.9%.
  - There was a wide dispersion of what region of the world the studies focused on though.
- Pie chart C shows which articles mentioned women.
  - The majority was-yes they did mention women with 59.0%
- Three qualitative tests were run too to find a possible pattern of themes
  - Specifies ground-stone tool use are with women
    - 11 out of 41 sources specify ground stone tool use with women.
  - Description of ground stone tools
    - More research needs to be conducted on ground stone tools: 9 out of 41 sources
    - Reflects occurrences in life: 9 out of 41 sources
    - Focuses on the specific use of the tool: 8 out of 21
    - More description of the specific stone used: 7 out of 21
    - Shifts in different facets (society, culture, etc.) correlated with the tool: 7 out of 41
  - Attitude toward women and ground stone tools
    - Neither positive or negative: 19 out of 41

## Future Work

- More research could be done on ground stone tools.
- There was much support for more research to be done on these tools in the articles that were studied for this research project.
- The acquired data will have positive implications for both history and archaeology as there will be a better understanding of pre-historic times.
- This field of study will continue to flourish and there is a good amount of data that needs to be acquired.
- Possible research projects that can be formed from the data presented in this project are as follows:
  - Studies on ground-stone tools throughout more areas of the world.
  - The importance of ground-stone tools across many areas of culture, society, etc.
  - More studies on the gentrification of ground stone tools
  - The history of specific stones used for tools
  - How to ground stone tools
  - Is it possible to separate women from ground stone tools
  - Men that were the primary users of ground stone tools

## Conclusions

The conclusions of this study are as follows: more research should be done on ground stone tools because of the important implications they can share about the world that was around them, they reveal shifts in different facets of the world, articles/projects on ground stone tools continue to mention women, and mainly women are authors of projects on ground stone tools.

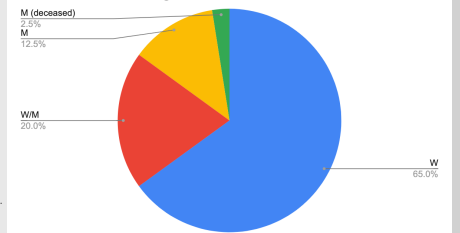
The most common theme amongst the research/projects used in this dataset was the need for more research to be done on ground stone tools. The authors shared that these tools should not be overlooked or exclusively associated with domestic activities, through use-wear analysis and studies they can share more about the world that was around them. This can have important implications for both archaeology and history because it may fill in data that stills need to be acquired for more knowledge about society, culture, etc. in pre-historic times. As well, these tools transformed and shifted with the world around them. So, studying these tools can reveal more information on the shift of labor, population dynamics, improvement of technology, etc.

Unfortunately, the trend of women being the main person to study ground stone tools is still obvious in this project as well as most of the authors of these projects/articles were women. The association between ground stone tool use and women continued in the data as well, as it was one of the prevalent theme found in the data set. Even though this project was able to show that there has been a shift in the attitude regarding ground stone tools, as more people are identifying the need for them to undergo research as they reveal important facets of how the world was, the biases that were already present in this field are still present.

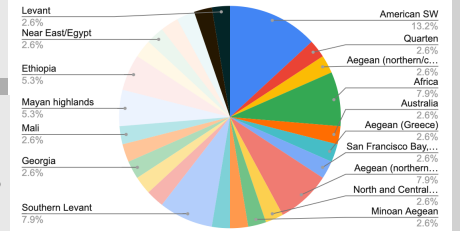
## Acknowledgements

- My research mentor Jami Craig was a major help in the creation of my research project and poster.
- She has prepped me to have sufficient knowledge in ground stone tools from an archaeological perspective.
- This was a completely new field for me as I am a Political Science major, but we reviewed the whole first semester through PowerPoint presentations and readings about ground stone tools and archaeology.
- I also had the opportunity to help assist her in proof-reading field journals of an excavation of a house on Kea, Cyclades, Greece.
- This semester I gathered, along with her help, about 50+ articles and studies to help create this project.
- Jami Craig is a Ph.D. candidate at Florida State in the department of Classics.
- She is very well versed in the history of ground stone tools and their use on Kea, Cyclades, Greece.
- Her contact information is as follows:
  - Email: jamicraig2019@gmail.com

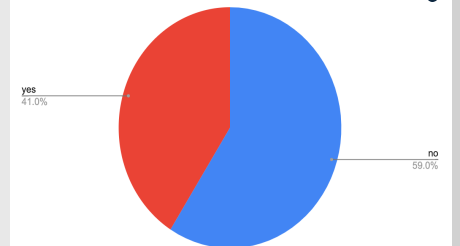
## Count of authors being a woman or man



## Count of region of the world the study/article focused on



## Count of mention about women in the articles



## Literature Cited



## References

