

## **Spoilt for choice? On the interpretation of some flint and chert assemblages from the Irish Late Mesolithic and Early/Middle Neolithic**

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The presentation focuses on a selection of chipped flint and chert assemblages from the Eastern Irish Lowlands, which have been analysed as part of a doctoral thesis undertaken at the School of Archaeology, UCD. Detailed macroscopic analyses of these assemblages have highlighted several interesting aspects, and shed new light onto the selection and procurement strategies of these raw materials. The assemblages in question not only allow insights into the use and significance of certain raw materials at the transition from hunting and gathering to early farming in Ireland, but also indicate travelling distances and mobility patterns.

Special attention will be paid to the issues related to the nomenclature, identification, and analysis of the chert and festooned chert artefacts, since detailed investigations of these raw materials are still in its early stages in Ireland. With reference to the flint artefacts, the practicability of an analytical method, which was developed to improve the differentiation between artefacts from primary and secondary sources, will be discussed. Questions will be raised about our current approach to recording the raw material quality and knapping properties, and the composition and possible interpretations of some of the flint caches discovered in the area will also form part of the speech.