

# AGRICULTURE: ARCHAEOLOGICAL

The simplest methods of handling implements and agricultural instruments conceal thousands of years of wisdom and advancement. By means of technological evolution and the transformative juncture that came about through the mastery of metals, humans would redesign and improve their work tools as they strove to increase their efficiency and stamina until the invention of machines.

Very few archaeological records exist about the first-ever instruments used by man.

Ordinary stones or pieces of wood were used for breaking or digging. However, necessity would hone the skill of carving tools from harder stones like flint, the fracturing of which created sharp edges for cutting. Mastery of the chipped stone technique led to the creation of the earliest cutting tools (knives, scrapers and scythes) that would later evolve into instruments composed of various materials with a tighter grip. Thus came the invention of handles and the technique of embedding several small stone elements onto a wooden or bone support, which together functioned as rip saws.

The discovery of metal casting would create a universe of new artefacts that were harder, more robust and better adapted for their purposes. The ability to produce instruments to which a greater level of hardness is associated, namely copper, bronze and iron which emerged, respectively, in the Chalcolithic Period, Bronze Age and Iron Age, increasingly facilitated the more arduous tasks of daily life. As an example, let us take the evolution of the plough which initially consisted only of a forked log of wood. In the Middle Ages, a ploughshare was introduced that allowed it to pierce the earth more easily before the cast iron plough was invented in the mid-19th century.

