# ABSTRACT

*Mata’a* are prehistoric stemmed obsidian artifacts found in large numbers on Rapa Nui (Easter Island, Chile). While often described as weapons and used as evidence for “collapse” researchers have shown these artifacts have wear patterns consistent with cultivation. We investigate the overall shape variability of *mata’a* as a means for determine aspects of shape that may be constrained due to functional performance. We find that the blade shape is widely variability with no sub-groupings detectable. Stems, on the other hand, are consistently fashioned and their shape indicates that the most significant formal attribute of the *mata’a* is that it was hafted on a shaft. Comparing *mata’a* with shape variability to other stemmed artifacts known from the Pacific shows that *mata’a* are most similar to tools used for non-lethal activities such as tattooing and scarification.