

Western Macedonia, Greece

Antler Artifacts from the Prehistoric Lakeside Settlement Anarghiri IXb, Florina, Greece.

Project : Universität Bern, Institut für Archäologische Wissenschaften, Abteilung Ur- und Frühgeschichte

Advisors : Prof. Dr. Albert Hafner, Prof. Dr. Nikos Efstratiou

PhD study : Christoforos Arampatzis



Aerial view of large scale excavation at the prehistoric settlement Anarghiri XI. (Early Neolithic - Early Bronze Age)

The neolithic lakeside settlement Anarghiri IXb. The Rescue Excavations Project of Florina's Ephorate of Antiquities at the coalmining zone of Amindeon, Western Macedonia, Greece has so far revealed substantial new evidence for the cultural development - from Early Neolithic to Late Bronze Age - of this region which is characterized by the presence of four lakes. Among the numerous finds there are a considerable great number of wooden elements belonging to Neolithic structures preserved in situ at the lower waterlogged deposits mainly of the settlements Limnochori II, Anarghiri IXa and Anarghiri IXb.

Anarghiri IXb is a settlement inhabited in the early 5th millennium, was oval in shape and approximately 2.8 hectares in size, in the central part of which the archaeological layers are almost 4 m thick. Rather unique were three wooden trackways (one of them preserved over a stretch of 90 m) unearthed on the eastern edge of the settlement, which served either as moorings for log boats or as connections between the settlement and the opposite lakeshore. It is expected that the expansion of the excavational work at the central area of the occupation will reveal more evidence about the dwellings' layout, which were either built on platforms or raised on piles in the lake. In the subsequent Neolithic periods (c. 4700-3300/3200 BC) the settlement became a dryland site characterised by several successive burnt destruction layers.

The extensive sampling of the wooden construction elements from the settlement's waterlogged layers is organized and already realized according to the standards set by related projects in European lakeside dwellings.



Aerial view of the on - going excavation at Anarghiri IXb (Late Neolithic – Early Bronze Age) at the edge of the Coal Mining Zone.

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The last thirty years there has been an increase in the studies of worked bone and antler assemblages from prehistoric settlements in Greece. These studied assemblages are coming mainly from neolithic settlements from Thessaly and Macedonia and less from Bronze Age sites or from other parts of Greece. Despite this research increase, with the exception of a few studies (Arabatzis in press, Christidou 1999, Stratouli 1998, Στρατούλη 2002), there seems to be a lack in the studies of worked bone and antler assemblages from the region of Western Macedonia and in all of these studies the quantity of the antler artifacts is rather small in order to provide us with enough data.

On the contrary, the rather big worked antler assemblage (~ 350 artifacts so far) from the prehistoric settlement of Anarghiroi IXb provides enough data in order to form a typological system that could serve as a basis of an extensive typology of the antler industries of all the prehistoric settlements of the area. This assemblage contains mainly tools for daily life activities (hammers, axes, chisels, sleeves, net weavers, harpoons) and less artifacts of other categories such as personal ornaments (pendants and rings).

One of the most important aspects of this assemblage is the rather big presence of semi products and manufacture waste which reveal that at least a part of the manufacturing process was being held inside the settlement and they give us significant information about the study of the manufacturing techniques and perhaps about the antler working places.

The aims of this multidimensional study of the antler artifacts are : the establishment of a typological system, the reconstruction of the manufacture stages of the artifacts and the study of their function, the study of the variations (typological categories and manufacturing techniques) in space and time, the correlation of the artifacts with habitation phases and domestic/constructional units and the comparison of the assemblage with others from Greece and from European lakeside settlements.



Net weaver.



Sleeve with transverse perforation.

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