

# Western Macedonia, Greece

## Wood as construction material at the Neolithic lakeside settlement Anarghiri IXb.

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

**Advisors :** Prof. Dr. Albert Hafner and Prof. Dr. Kostas Kotsakis

**PhD study :** Tryfon S. Giagkoulis



*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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*Wooden pile from the waterlogged layers of Anarghiri IXb.*

until recent years (Andreou et al 1996, Antoni and Chi 2010), one could argue that the intensive study of neolithic architecture has been of relative limited interest for prehistorians in comparison to other aspects of Neolithic material culture.



*Sample of wooden construction element form Anarghiri IX.*

processing and documentation of the preserved wooden constructional elements (vertical and horizontal piles, wattle works, planks etc) from the waterlogged layers of neolithic settlement Anarghiri IXb implement a methodology for making use of available data for approaching the exploitation of wood as constructional material incorporate the data generated into the spatial and stratigraphic context of the settlement, correlating the wooden elements with concrete construction units specify the use of different wooden elements in building processes represent the basic forms of settlement's constructions document the possible pattern(s) of building techniques implemented by neolithic inhabitants correlate the proposed interpretations with the geographical, chronological and cultural context of the settlement

The study of the wooden elements from the waterlogged neolithic layers at the lakeside settlement Anarghiri IXb could be integrated in the wider research framework concerning the examination of the building technology developed by prehistoric communities of Greek Macedonia and the adjacent areas. Taking in consideration the history of more or less systematic archaeological investigation of numerous neolithic sites in these regions from the early 20th century

With the exception of the preliminary reports concerning the data from Dispilio (Chatzitoulousis 2008, Chourmouziadi and Giagkoulis 2002, Facorelis et al 2014), the study of wood as construction material in Greek prehistoric settlements is practically nonexistent, mainly due to the absence of such elements in the usual archeological data sets from prehistoric settlements. It could be also stressed that, although the evidence of prehistoric pile dwellings with well-preserved waterlogged layers at the neighboring Balkan regions (Albania and FYROM) are today numerous, in the so far published reports the examination of prehistoric architecture and wooden constructional elements appears to be of lower research priority.

Taking in consideration the current research level concerning neolithic architecture in Greek Macedonia and the adjacent regions, the trends in European wetland archaeology on the specific field and mainly the archaeological material from the ongoing excavation at the neolithic lakeside settlement Anarghiri IXb (Chrysostomou et al 2015), the organization and implementation of the study aims to: create a reliable data corpus from the systematic sampling,

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