



Center for
Prehistoric
Research

Center for Prehistoric Research

- current and past activities -

Research:

Field

- NEENAWA: three-year project for improving archaeological and chronological methods in the research of prehistoric wetland sites
- Archaeological excavation of Vrbjanska Čuka tell at Slavej
- Reconnaissance of prehistoric sites in Pelagonia
- Geomagnetic scanning of Neolithic tells in Pelagonia
- GIS mapping of Neolithic tells in Pelagonia
- Archaeological excavation of Neolithic tell at Mogila
- Digital Elevation Model of the tell Vrbjanska Čuka
- 3D models of Pelagonian tells at Dobromiri, Trn and Vrbjanska Čuka

Laboratory:

- Carbon 14 dating of samples from Pelagonian tells at the University of Bern
- Archeobotanical analyses of organic samples from Vrbjanska Čuka performed at the University of South Bohemia

Cabinet:

- Photogrametric 3D images of Neolithic house models
- Osteologic and paleodemographic analysis of Neolithic population in Macedonia
- Determinining mathematical proportions in Neolithic
- Study of the Neolithization in the Balkans
- Research on corporeality and hybridity in prehistory
- Study of the semiotic components of Neolithic houses and households
- Research on symbolism of Iron Age jewelry
- Study of Iron Age burial mounds in Macedonia
- Research of the pile dwelling site Vrbnik at Struga
- Pleistocene paleoenvironment and biological and cultural development of the hominini

Conferences and lectures:

- *Prehistoric Wetlands and Lakes: bringing forward dendrochronology in archaeology*, a week-long international academic conference in Skopje, Ohrid and Bitola
- *Neolithic in Macedonia I*, archaeological conference - 2015
- *Neolithic in Macedonia II*, archaeological conference - 2016
- *Neolithic in Macedonia III*, archaeological conference - 2017
- *A Cult of Cult*, scientific meeting

- Lectures of Jaromír Beneš (University of South Bohemia), Vasil Nikolov and Krum Bacvarov (Bulgarian Academy of Sciences), Albert Hafner (University of Bern), Andrey Mazurkiewicz (Hermitage Museum), Sofija Stefanović (Biosense Institute), Pavel Shidlovsky (University of Kiev), Ondrej Chvojka and Jan John (University of South Bohemia) etc.
- Lectures and presentations of CPR members at the University of Bern, Hermitage Museum, University of Ljubljana, University of Kiev and the University of Vilnius.

Trainings:

- Improving excavation methods for wetland sites, Serteya (Russia)
- Improving excavation methods for wetland sites, Bürgashi (Switzerland)
- Archeobotanic Summer School, Prilep (Macedonia)
- Dendrochronology Workshop, Ohrid (Macedonia)
- Seminar for the Balkan Neolithic, Bern (Switzerland)
- Dendrochronology course, Bern (Switzerland)
- ESC underwater archaeology course, Ohrid (Macedonia)
- Training in GIS software and application, Bern (Switzerland)

Exhibitions:

- *New Age: the life of mothers and babies of the Neolithic in the Balkans* exhibition of Biosense Institute at Novi Sad (Serbia)
- *Women, Mothers and Goddesses: languages and universal metaphors in Prehistoric art* exhibition of the Archaeological Museum of Udine (Italy) - *in preparation*

Publications:

- *Neolithic in Macedonia: new insights and perspectives* (edited by Ljubo Fidanoski and Goce Naumov)
- *Macedonian Bronzes: religion and mythology of Iron Age communities in the Balkans* (Nikos Chausidis)
- Book of abstracts from the conference on *Prehistoric Wetlands and Lakes: bringing forward dendrochronology in archaeology* (edited by Goce Naumov)
- *Neolithic in Macedonia: one step forward in the research of first agricultural societies* (*in press*)
- *Grncharica Pottery: contribution to the Early Neolithic puzzle of Balkans* (*in preparation*)
- Publications exchange with German Archaeological institute of monographs and journals on Balkan prehistory

Promotions:

- *Neolithic Figurines in Macedonia* by Goce Naumov
- *Neolithic in Macedonia: new insights and perspectives* edited by Ljubo Fidanoski and Goce Naumov
- *Macedonian Bronzes: religion and mythology of Iron Age communities in the Balkans* by Nikos Chausidis

Media:

- Website of the Center for Prehistoric Research (<http://cip-cpr.org>)
- Website of NEENAWA scientific meeting (<http://www.neenawameeting.cip-cpr.org>)
- Website of Vrbjanska Čuka - research on tell in Pelagonia (*in preparation*)
- Facebook profile of the Center for Prehistoric Research (<https://www.facebook.com>)
- Documentary on archaeological excavations at Vrbjanska Čuka site

Partners/Associates:

- University of Bern
- Hermitage Museum
- University of South Bohemia
- German Archaeological Institute
- Institut Biosense
- Archaeological Museum in Udine
- University of Kyiv
- Spanish Research Council
- Free University Berlin
- Principat, Krakow
- Archaeological Museum of Macedonia
- Institute and Museum - Bitola
- Institute and Museum - Prilep
- Museum of the City of Skopje
- Institute for Old Slavic Culture

Center for Prehistoric Research

The Center for Prehistoric Research (CPR) is an organization dedicated to study and presentation of all prehistoric periods found in Macedonia and in the wider region. Considering the rich cultural heritage from this period, CPR's primary goal is to enable a thorough understanding of the life of the prehistoric communities while applying numerous scientific methods. CPR's members are archaeologists who study Paleolithic, Neolithic, Chalcolithic, Bronze Age and Iron Age from different aspects. Within our activities, archaeological sites are being excavated, studied and presented, as are the material culture, chronology and the geographical features of prehistory, so they could be interpreted applying the current theoretical models. Apart from the research activities, CPR organizes scientific round tables, workshops and conferences to initiate the discussions on prehistoric archaeology. Moreover, CPR publishes research that present the latest knowledge regarding the cultural heritage in the Republic of Macedonia.

CPR cooperates with several domestic and international institutions and creates a platform for a future networking in projects that will thoroughly examine and present this period. Within these cooperations students and young professionals are being trained through inclusion in field research, lab analyses, expert publications and public scientific events. As a result of these activities, CPR significantly impacts the application of new scientific approaches and ethical norms in the Macedonian archaeology. Thus, by presenting the cultural heritage through research, scientific debates and publications, CPR has a direct influence over the popularization of prehistory and the protection of sites and material culture originating from this period. CPR's aim is to enhance the cooperation among experts and institutions that will strengthen the scientific ethics and the research methods applied in prehistoric archaeology.

NEENAWA:

Network in East European Neolithic and Wetland Archaeology

NEENAWA project is a scientific cooperation among CPR and three other institutions (University of Bern, the Museum of Hermitage and the University Taras Shevchenko in Kiev) which is ongoing from 2015 till 2018. The project is focused on enhancement of scientific infrastructure and training of students and professionals dealing with prehistoric archaeology, especially the Neolithic and the settlements near lakes, rivers and marshes. The project comprehends training of Macedonian archaeologists in Switzerland and Russia for new methods in underwater archaeology and contemporary approaches in excavation of wetland settlements. Moreover, equipment suitable for such research will be provided, as well as literature that will enable study of contemporary archaeological methods and data about the pile-dwellings and wetland settlements. During the project, CPR organize an international scientific conference regarding wetland archaeology and dendrochronology in which scientists from Switzerland, France, Russia, Ukraine, Greece, Lithuania and other countries will participate. At the end of this project a journal of texts will be published that will summarize the research and the results of the prehistoric settlements established in wetlands.



Research on the site of Vrbjanska Čuka

Vrbjanska Čuka is located in Pelagonia, in the vicinity of the villages Slavej and Vrbjani in the municipality of Krivogashtani. It has been researched since 2016 within the international project of the Centre for Prehistoric Research, the Museum and the Institute for Cultural Heritage Protection from Prilep, the University of Southern Bohemia and the Institute for Ancient Slavic Culture. The goal of the research is to determine the character of this settlement through various archaeological and multidisciplinary methods, which, so far, has yielded many new results and insights.

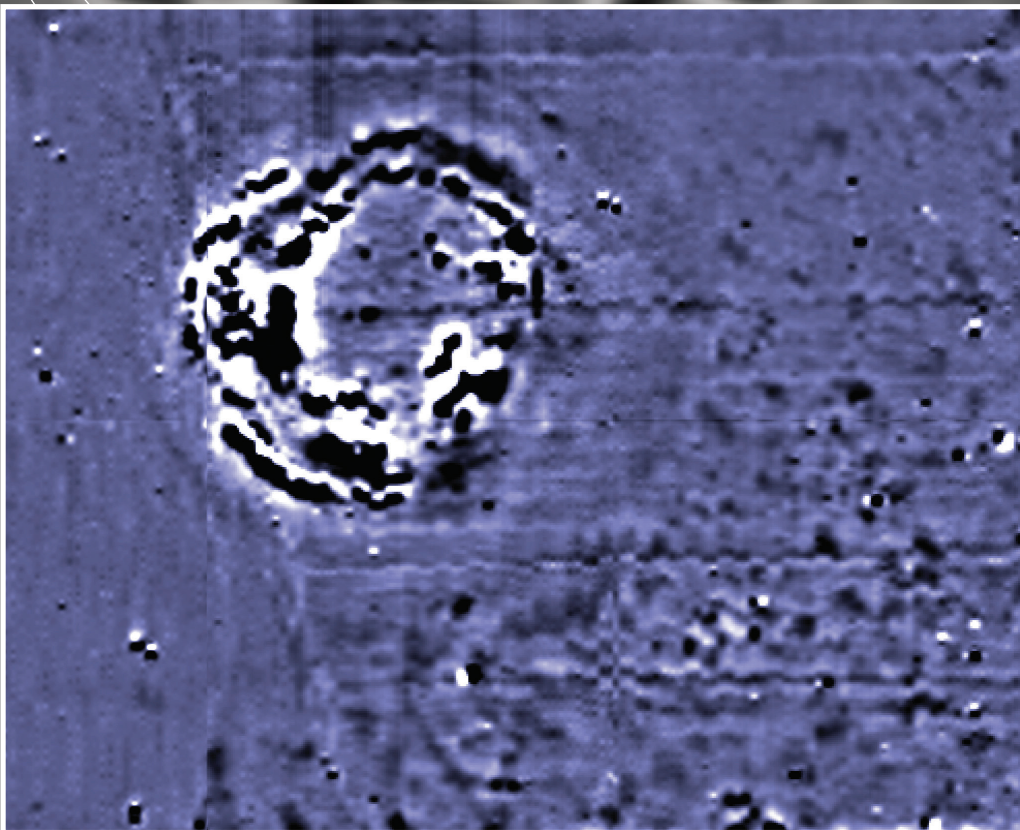
This site is a tell typical of the region of Pelagonia, established in the Neolithic. It was also used later during the Classical period, while it served as a necropolis in the Middle Age. The research is focused on definition of Neolithic dwelling structures. Moreover, two houses were registered where ovens, hearths and platforms for cereal processing were found. Therefore, archaeobotanical analyses were performed, which confirmed that the population consummated wheat, barley, lentils and peas, but also used to eat lots of fish. The research team found many vessels for cooking and food preservation, and especially many high quality pots used for serving. Apart from these, numerous tools, 'altars', anthropomorphic house models and figurines were found, reflecting the dynamic economic and symbolic processes within this settlement.

The tell is also being studied with digital topographic modeling, geo-magnetic scanning and 3D technology. Besides the already used methods, also geological, zooarchaeological, anthropological and use-wear analyses are performed, and the settlement will be dated by using C14 and AMS methods.



Geomagnetic scanning and GIS mapping of prehistoric tells in Pelagonia

Even though applied for quite a while elsewhere, GIS mapping and geophysical scanning of prehistoric sites are at their very beginning in Macedonia. Some CPR members have been performing such research in the past years, mostly focused on Pelagonia. Neolithic tells at Dobromiri, Trn, Porodin, Mogila, Opticari, Bitola, Vrbjani, Borotino and Slavej were geo-magnetically scanned and MR was applied in cooperation with the Polish Academy of Sciences, University of South Bohemia and Prynicipat which yielded remarkable results regarding the settlements features and the manner of organization of the objects within these characteristic sites. CPR members are also focused on GIS mapping of numerous tells in the wider central area of Pelagonia. As a result, approximately 100 prehistoric sites were recently documented and measured. This research is ongoing and will continue in different parts of Pelagonia.



Paleodemographic and osteological analyses of the Neolithic population in Macedonia

In 2017, CPR has signed a memorandum of cooperation with BioSense Institute within their project *BIRTH: Prehistoric fertility in the Balkans between 10 000 - 5 000 cal BC* supported by the European Research Council. Foreseen for the period from 2017 till 2020, in this cooperation CPR will mediate the analysis of human and animal remains found at Neolithic sites in Macedonia. This project will enable results in multiple domains: bones and teeth found at Neolithic sites will be chronologically analyzed with AMS method; based on chronological and osteological analyses, Neolithic paleodemographic processes in Macedonia will be detected; anthropological analyses of Neolithic mothers and babies will provide an insight into the diseases, stresses, pathology, pregnancy and the nutrition of these individuals; the same analyses will be performed onto the animal bones, which would provide data on the quantity of the species, their nutrition, diseases and migration.

Apart from the research, the exhibition 'New Age: the life of mothers and babies of the Neolithic in the Balkans' was realized as part of this project. CRP together with BioSense Institute has provided 3D animations and illustrations of Neolithic house models from Macedonia. The display of these digital projections is a result of the photogrammetric documentation of Neolithic house models performed with the cooperation of the Museum of the City of Skopje and the museums and institutes for protection of cultural heritage from Bitola and Prilep. Multiple lectures of the team included in the research are planned as part of the project, which would present the methods applied in the scientific analyses and the results they would provide.



Publication exchange with the German Archaeological Institute

Recently, CRP has established cooperation with the German Archaeological Institute (Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, DAI), one of the most distinguished archaeological institutions in the world. One of the activities of this cooperation was the exchange of publications between DAI and CPR concerning the prehistoric archaeology. DAI has enriched the library of CRP with numerous editions regarding Near Eastern, European and especially Balkan archaeology with a focus on the Neolithic and the remaining prehistoric ages. Among the numerous editions of the Institute, DAI gave many issues of its journals Bericht der Römisch-Germanischen Kommission and Germania; moreover, they will regularly distribute the future editions of these extremely important journals. CPR has also delivered its publications to the DAI library, as well as numerous issues of Macedonia Acta Archaeologica and Patrimonum, but also monographs regarding research of prehistory in Macedonia. This cooperation is CRP and DAI's contribution towards presentation of Macedonian archaeology worldwide and vice versa, towards presence of actual highly ranked scientific articles in the world in Macedonia. All these publications are available to Macedonian students and archaeologists for their research.





Neolithic in Macedonia: new knowledge and perspectives

edited by Ljubo Fidanoski and Goce Naumov

'Neolithic in Macedonia: new knowledge and perspectives' is a result of the archaeological conference in which the latest research related to the Neolithic sites in Macedonia were presented. It includes most of the reports that address various aspects related to the research and reconnaissance of Neolithic settlements at Lake Ohrid, Ovče Pole and the Raec Gorge, calibration of chronological dates in Pelagonia and the redefining of the Late Neolithic in the same region, as well as several works devoted to the study of material culture associated with ceramic models of bread, protomathematics within vessels and anthropomorphic representations, zoomorphic figurines, objects for weaving and amulets. These papers provide new insight into the Neolithic of Macedonia and complement the already known image about the beginnings and development of Neolithic communities in this region.



Macedonian bronzes and the religion and mythology of Iron Age communities in the Central Balkans

by Nikos Chausidis

'Macedonian bronzes' refers to a pretty copious category of Iron Age bronze objects, dated mainly between 8th and 6th centuries BC. The majority of them are considered being used as jewelry with an emphasized symbolical i.e. magical and religious purpose. It is believed that they primarily belonged to the Paeonians, but also to other populations living in Macedonia and its surroundings. Even though this monograph encompasses the typology, the chronology, distribution and other material aspects of these items, mainly, its focus is the spiritual culture of the people who created and used them, especially their symbolical, magical, mythical, religious and the global semiotic system. Besides these finds, while revealing the aforementioned aspects, the author uses written historical sources referring to relevant periods and territories, but also to related phenomena of other cultures from the Indo-European and the Mediterranean area. Apart from the basic text in 8 chapters within 1200 pages, this book contains 389 tables with catalogued illustrations, a bibliography and English summary in 75 pages.

Prehistoric Wetlands and Lakes

- scientific meeting -



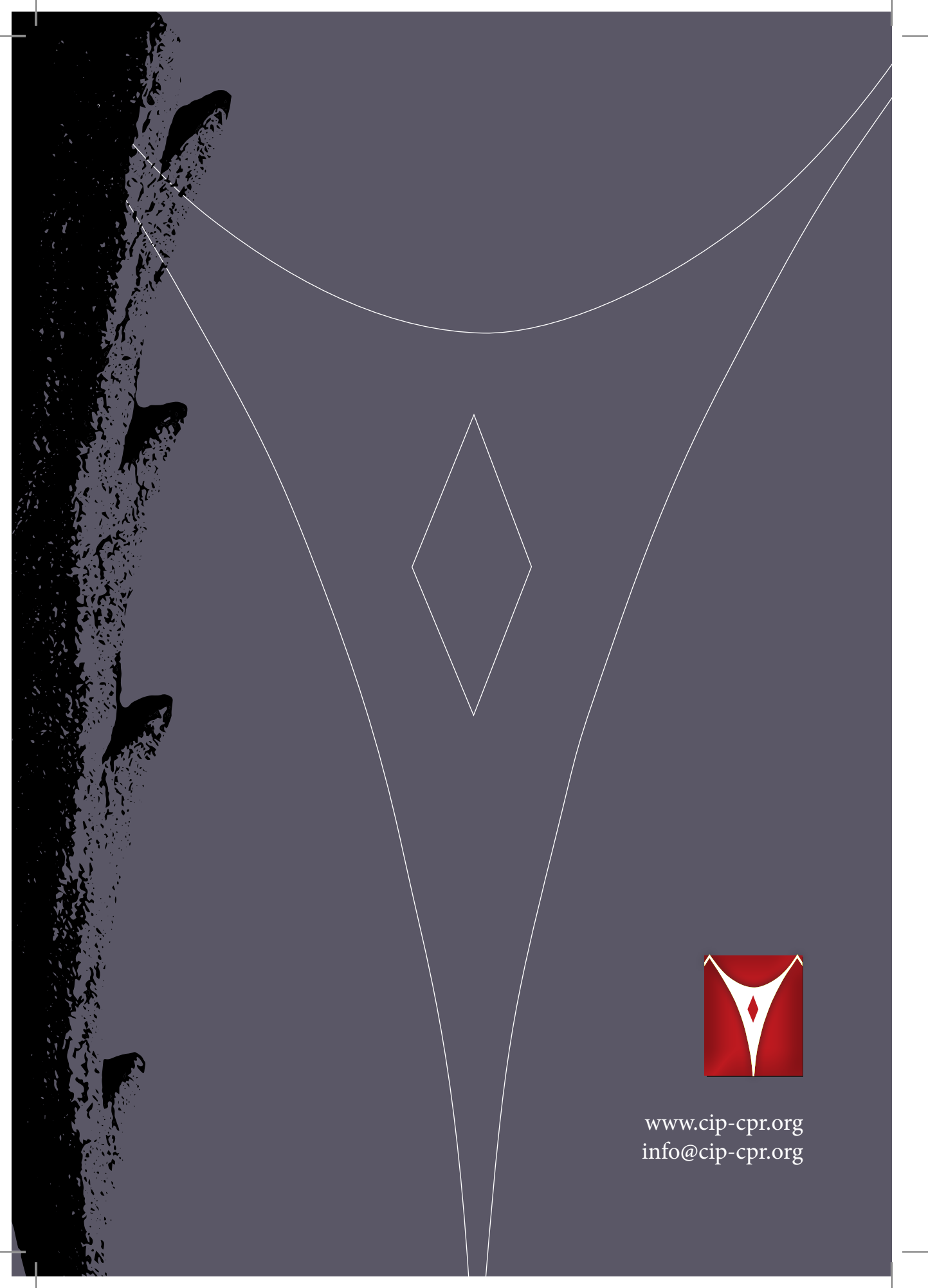
Center for Prehistoric Research was the organizer of the scientific meeting '*Prehistoric Wetlands and Lakes: bringing forward dendrochronology in archaeology*', which took place in Skopje, Bitola and Ohrid in the period 11-17.05.2016. The latest advances and challenges in wetland archaeology were presented with the contribution of more than 20 participants from Switzerland, Russia, Ukraine, France, Holland, Greece, Lithuania, Slovenia and Macedonia. Numerous prehistoric sites from East, Central and Southeast Europe were elaborated with particular focus on the pile dwellings, chronology, networks, agricultural societies, underwater archaeology, wetlands, inland waters, wooden structures, house models, bone tools and conservation. Special session with workshops on dendrochronology was performed in order to introduce thoroughly the benefits of this scientific method and its incorporation within wetland archaeology. As an area with large number of wooden pile dwellings Lake Ohrid was perfect setting for such workshop and discussions on experiences and challenges with dendrochronology.

Neolithic in Macedonia

- archaeological conference -



Each year the Center for Prehistoric Research organize '*Neolithic in Macedonia*' conference and hosts archaeologists from local and international institutions related with the research and preservation of prehistoric cultural heritage. This conference is meeting place of many Macedonian archaeologists who excavate and study Neolithic settlements and material culture and present their latest results which come out of the current research. Colleagues from neighboring countries and Europe contribute as well with their study of finds and sites associated to those in Macedonia and some present their work particularly focused on different aspects of the Neolithic in Macedonia. The presented papers open various discussions and contribute towards novel and more thorough understanding of the first farming societies established in this region. As result to this conference an edited book is published annually which encompass the papers presented and discussed on this challenging archaeological event.



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