

Animal Husbandry and Hunting in the Central and Western Balkans Through Time

Edited by Nemanja Marković and Jelena Bulatović

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A herd of the Balkan autochthonous cattle 'Buša' from the Balkan Mountains (Stara planina), Serbia (photo: Sergej Ivanov)

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Contents

Foreword	iii
Contributors	iv
Eating Well on Adriatic Palaeoshore – Marine and Terrestrial Molluscs as Evidence of Late Pleistocene and Early Holocene Cuisine in Vlakno Cave, Dugi otok, Croatia	1
Antonela Barbir, Nikola Vukosavljević and Dario Vujević	
Bone Technology from the Early Neolithic Site of Bataševo (Serbia)	10
Selena Vitezović, Nemanja Marković and Velibor Katić	
Herding and Hunting at Vinča – Belo Brdo and Stubline During the Late Neolithic, a Stable Isotopic Perspective	19
Rosalind E. Gillis, Jelena Bulatović, Kristina Penezić, Miloš Spasić, Nenad N. Tasić and Cheryl A. Makarewicz	
Fishing Techniques in the Late Neolithic Vinča Culture: Fish Hooks from the Site of Vinča – Belo Brdo	40
Selena Vitezović	
Storage Practice and Problems with Pests in the Late Neolithic: Two Examples from the Central Balkans	51
Đurđa Obradović	
Images of Half-persons, Hybrids and Surreal Creatures in the Late Neolithic Vinča Culture	61
Miloš Spasić	
Animals in the Early Bronze Age Funerary Practice at Mokrin and Ostojićevo Cemeteries, Serbia	80
Tamara Blagojević	
New Data from the Old Records: Zooarchaeological Remains from Late Bronze and Early Iron Age Sites in Northern Bosnia	93
Jelena Bulatović and Aleksandar Jašarević	
Zooarchaeological Research of the Late La Tène Period in Serbia: an Overview of the Data	119
Teodora Radišić	
Animal Husbandry and Hunting in Roman Provinces in Serbia: a Zooarchaeological Overview	130
Sonja Vuković	
The Potential for Horse Breeding in the Vicinity of Viminacium	143
Dimitrije Marković and Ilija Danković	
Fish Consumption and Trade in Early Byzantine Caričin Grad (<i>Justiniana Prima</i>)	154
Henriette Baron and Nemanja Marković	
Animal Exploitation in the Territory of Present-Day Serbia During the Medieval Period: a Zooarchaeological Perspective	167
Teodora Mladenović and Mladen Mladenović	

Foreword

Herding and hunting, along with farming, represented the economic basis of subsistence of communities in the past. The strategies of animal husbandry and hunting were diverse and different between communities, whilst they also changed over time. The differences and variations were sometimes caused by local or regional environmental conditions, but were also the result of social, cultural, political, and even religious factors. One of the goals of archaeological research is the discovery and reconstruction of the impact of these factors on the strategies of animal husbandry and hunting in the past.

Animal remains represent the most frequent and most numerous traces of animal-based economic activities. Therefore, zooarchaeological research is central to understanding and reconstructing patterns of past animal exploitation. Geographic position of the Balkan Peninsula is such that it has always represented an important region for transferring and exchanging knowledge, ideas, people, material cultures and other civilization traits between southwest Asia and central Europe. The archaeological heritage of this region thus provides an excellent opportunity for studying the development of economic strategies practiced by a number of communities that inhabited the Peninsula through prehistory and history. During the Early Neolithic, the groups of people that arrived from southwest Asia brought first domesticated animals and plants to the Balkans, and it is from here that animal husbandry spread to other parts of Europe. Following the introduction of domesticates, a long period ensued during which animal herding techniques underwent adaptations, diversification, specialisation, and transformations – from the Late Neolithic through the Bronze and Iron Ages, up to the Roman and Medieval periods. Changes in animal husbandry practices were accompanied by shifts in the significance and role that wild animals played in the past communities, as well as the development of hunting strategies.

This publication brings new results of research on animal herding and hunting in the central and western Balkans during prehistoric and historic periods. The investigations presented here cover a wide range of topics related to animal exploitation strategies; they range from broad syntheses to specific case studies and, moreover, include interdisciplinary studies that use zooarchaeological and historical data, iconographic representations and modern laboratory analysis. Twenty-two authors contributed to this publication by presenting their research within 13 papers. We think that it is significant and encouraging that the majority of contributors are early-career scholars, who started their professional journeys with the study of faunal remains from sites in the central and western Balkans. We believe that this trend promises further development of zooarchaeology as an academic discipline in the region.

The first steps towards the preparation of this volume were taken when a dedicated session was organised at the 42nd Annual Meeting of the Serbian Archeological Society, under the auspices of the Bioarchaeological Section of the Society, in the town of Negotin in Serbia, between 30 May and 1 June 2019. We would like to take this opportunity to thank our dear colleague Dr Nataša Miladinović-Radmilović, the head of the Bioarchaeological Section, for her support in the organisation of the session. We would also like to express our gratitude to the members of the editorial board who provided us with endless support and whose reviews enhanced the scientific value of this publication.

The Editors

Contributors

ANTONELA BARBIĆ graduated at the University of Zagreb (Croatia) in 2015. She enrolled in the doctoral program of Archaeology (University of Zagreb) in 2017 and is working on the diet changes on the eastern Adriatic coast in the Pleistocene-Holocene transition. From 2018 she has been employed at the Institute of Archaeology in Zagreb. She has participated as an associate on 'Archaeological Investigations into the Late Pleistocene and Early Holocene of the Lim Channel' project and her current one is 'Iron Age Female Identities in Southern Carpathian Basin'. Her research interests include various aspects of human-animal interrelationships in prehistory, with a focus on diet and subsistence strategies in the Paleolithic and Mesolithic, using mammalian and mollusc remains.

HENRIETTE BARON, née Kröll, is a German zooarchaeologist and author of the books '*Tiereim Byzantinischen Reich*' on Byzantine zooarchaeology and '*Quasi Liber et Pictura*' on Avar burial zooarchaeology. She studied archaeology, zoology and anthropology in Kiel, Berlin and Basel and graduated from Kiel University in 2002. Subsequently, she has worked at two German cultural heritage departments. Since 2009, she has been working at the Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum in Mainz, a renowned research institute for archaeology. In 2013, she obtained her Ph.D. from Mainz University. Her research specialisms include small mammals and birds, with a special focus on the Early Middle Ages and the Byzantine Empire.

TAMARA BLAGOJEVIĆ is a research assistant at the BioSense Institute, University of Novi Sad, and a Ph.D. candidate at the Department of Archaeology, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade (Serbia). From 2015 until 2020 she was a member of the ERC funded project '*BIRTH: Births, Mothers and Babies: Prehistoric Fertility in the Balkans Between 10,000-5000 BC*', which studied prehistoric human fertility. Being a member of a paleodemography research group, the main focus of her study is population dynamics reconstruction at the beginning of the Neolithic in the central Balkans. To address this complex process, she employs the method of summed probability distributions of radiocarbon dates, combined with environmental and data on economic strategies.

JELENA BULATOVIĆ is a research associate at the Laboratory for Bioarchaeology, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade (Serbia). Her research interest in the broadest sense is zooarchaeology. She is especially interested in the nature of human-animal interrelationships in the central and western Balkans, mostly during the later prehistory – from the Early Neolithic to the Late Iron Age. Her work is focused on detecting strategies of exploitation of domestic animals. The main questions she is trying to answer in her research include how the strategies of animal exploitation changed over time and what the social and cultural aspects of these changes were at the local and regional level.

ILIJAS DANKOVIĆ is a research assistant affiliated with the Institute of Archaeology in Belgrade (Serbia) and has been engaged in excavations of the ancient Viminacium for over a decade. His interest concerns Roman provincial archaeology, primarily researching all aspects of identity and the status of women in the Roman world, reflected in material culture, which is the topic of his Ph.D. dissertation. He is also concerned with topics related to textile manufacture, water supply, and the Roman road network.

ROSALIND E. GILLIS is a researcher at the Interdisciplinary Centre for Archaeology and Evolution of Human Behaviour (ICArEHB) based in the University of Algarve (Portugal). After completing her Ph.D. (ITN-LeCHE) and post-doc (ERC-NeoMilk) at the MNHN, Paris (France), she travelled to Kiel University (Germany) to undertake a post-doc where the Vinča analysis was carried out. Her research is focused on uncovering the modalities of animal husbandry practices during the initial stages of farming in Europe, using stable isotopic and age-at-death analysis across different European climates and Neolithic cultures. She seeks to understand how these practices were adapted to local environments and how they impacted these biomes as well as how husbandry practices evolved to meet societal needs.

ALEKSANDAR JAŠAREVIĆ is a senior curator at the Regional Museum in Doboj (Bosnia and Herzegovina). He specialised in the Late Bronze and Iron Age periods of the western Balkans, with particular reference to the territory of present-day Bosnia and Herzegovina. His focus is on the studies of material culture with an interest in metal finds and pottery production and technology. A special part and growing interest in his studies is devoted to the analysis of bone objects, and their importance for understanding the cultural, religious and economic dynamics between different prehistoric communities. He also deals with the problems of the Late Medieval and the Ottoman archaeological heritage, its presentation and preservation.

VELIBOR KATIĆ is a senior curator archaeologist at the Museum of Mladenovac – Department of the Belgrade City Museum (Serbia). He has been a head and collaborator on over 20 archaeological excavations throughout Serbia, including the territory of Mladenovac, from the Early Neolithic to the Early Modern period, and those projects provided him with broad expertise in the field of archaeology. He is also the founder of Archaeological Collections in the Museum of Mladenovac. He is the author over 30 publications in the field of the Neolithic, the Iron Age, the Roman and Medieval archaeology. He has authored and co-authored ten exhibitions, through which the rich history and cultural heritage of the town of Mladenovac and surroundings was presented.

CHERYL A. MAKAREWICZ is a professor of Zooarchaeology and Stable Isotope Biogeochemistry at the Institute for Prehistoric and Protohistoric Archaeology at Kiel University (Germany). Her research examines the evolution of human-animal relationship with a particular focus on animal domestication processes in the Near East and animal use in Neolithic societies. She is currently PI of the ERC funded project ‘ASIAPAST’, which employs diverse biomolecular and zooarchaeological approaches to investigate the spread of pastoralism across the Eurasian steppe.

DIMITRIJE MARKOVIĆ is a junior research assistant and a Ph.D. candidate at the Laboratory for Bioarchaeology, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade (Serbia). His interests are oriented towards exploration of the Roman period, primarily using the field of zooarchaeology. In the focus of his research are questions concerning the diet and supply mechanisms of the Roman army stationed on the Danube Limes in present-day Serbia. His approach involves a combination of data gained through animal remain analysis, as well as other forms of material culture, in order to better understand the wider contexts.

NEMANJA MARKOVIĆ is a research associate, zooarchaeologist at the Institute of Archaeology, Belgrade (Serbia). The focus of his research is the reconstruction of past human-animal relationships, mainly in the field of animal economy, strategies in animal husbandry and palaeopathology. Through studying several topics in past decade, he analysed animal remains from the Early Neolithic to the Early Modern period, and those projects provided him with a broad expertise in zooarchaeology. Together with veterinarian scientists, he started pioneering research in the field of animal palaeopathology in the central Balkans. Currently working on the foundation and further development of the research on ancient animal diseases in this geographical area.

MLADEN MLADENOVIĆ is a Ph.D. candidate of archaeology at the Department of Archaeology, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade (Serbia). His research interests include the Late Antique, Early Byzantine and Medieval archaeology and zooarchaeology. His special scientific interests are animal exploitation during these periods, the importance of animal husbandry, hunting and fishing in the economy of settlements and usage of secondary animal products. He is interested in the use of biomolecular analyses, stable isotopes and aDNA analyses, to better understand aspects of food provisioning at archaeological sites via animal husbandry and/or long/short distance trade of livestock.

TEODORA MLADENOVIĆ is a research assistant and a Ph.D. candidate of archaeology at the Laboratory for Bioarchaeology, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade (Serbia). Her research interests include Medieval archaeology and zooarchaeology. She has focused on a few main topics – the importance of animal use in the economy of different settlement types, changes and/or improvements in animal husbandry techniques, diet, trading, connections and relationships between different settlement types, hunting and the role of wild animals in the Medieval Serbian state. Her approach is to integrate information provided by animal remains from archaeological sites with other forms of material culture.

ĐURĐA OBRADOVIĆ is a Ph.D. and a research assistant at the Institute of Archaeology (Serbia). She is an archaeobotanist working mainly on macrobotanical remains from the Neolithic sites in the central Balkans. Her research interests are the economic and socio-cultural aspects of food production and the sustainability of first farming economies.

KRISTINA PENEZIĆ works at the BioSense Institute, University of Novi Sad (Serbia) and was a research assistant on ERC funded project ‘BIRTH’ that investigated prehistoric fertility. In that capacity, she analysed biological stress and variability of birth rate patterns. She is also an associate of the Centre for Digital Archaeology, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade, where she is the coordinator for the Vinča project, and has been a member of several international research projects. Her interests are the use of physical and chemical analyses and methods in the reconstruction of everyday life in the Balkan prehistory, environmental reconstruction, geoarchaeology, and biocultural mechanisms which led to prehistoric fertility increase.

TEODORA RADIŠIĆ is a research assistant at the Laboratory for Bioarchaeology, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade (Serbia). In the broadest sense, her research interests are directed toward studying economic practices in the Late Iron Age. She attempts to understand animal husbandry and hunting strategies in the individual settlements, and to recognise similarities and differences in subsistence strategies between settlements. She combines zooarchaeological data with archaeological data seeking answers to questions about settlement function, mutual relations of settlements and socio-economic circumstances in the Late La Tène period, and also the changes that happened in the subsistence strategies with the arrival of the Romans in the Danube area of the south Pannonian plain.

MILOŠ SPASIĆ is a senior curator and the head of Prehistoric Collection at the Belgrade City Museum. He is a project director of systematic archaeological excavations at the Neolithic site of Stubline. His research interests include settlement and household archaeology and material culture studies of Neolithic and Eneolithic of the central Balkans. Human-animal relations, body representation politics, social production of spaces and places among late prehistoric communities of the central Balkans are his main research areas, as well. He deals with critical heritology and museology and is interested in the development of new exhibition strategies that include broader appropriation and reception of scientific results in the creation of museum narratives.

NENAD TASIĆ obtained a degree in archaeology at the University of Belgrade (1986) and received his Ph.D. in 1998. At the same Department, he began his teaching career as a lecturer (1986) to be promoted to full professor (2015). A significant step in his career came with a post-doctoral residency at Rupprecht-Karl Universität in Heidelberg at the Institut für Ur- und Frühgeschichte as a Humboldt Foundation Fellow. After returning to the University of Belgrade where he has held the Chair of Methodology, his research projects have included different subjects, such as Neolithisation, Neolithic settlement pattern and salt sources, chronologies of Balkan Neolithic, to name a few. He is currently the director of research at the site of Vinča – Belo Brdo.

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