

A DAY WITH FIELD ARCHAEOLOGISTS IN THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

June 29, 2012 Vasilka Dimitrovska Archaeological Prospection, Day of Archaeology, Day of Archaeology 2012, Environmental Archaeology, Finds, Prehistory, Survey abrasive stone tools, Archaeological Institute, archaeological site, archaeologist, Archaeology, Bulgaria, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences in Sofia, Eastern Macedonia, embedded flint tools, Ilinka Atanasova, Institute of History, Institute of History and Archaeology, Kochani, Macedonia, prehistoric site, Republic of Macedonia, Skopje, stone tools, University of Stip, Vinica

6:00 am

I wake up. My colleague who came from the Archaeological Institute of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences in Sofia is my guest these days. We drink our first cup of coffee and exchange opinions about today's trip. We have a really busy agenda and we begin slowly to sort out and prepare all the equipment we need for the field.



Prospecting St. Atanas site, Macedonia

07:00 am

We are on the highway from Skopje to Eastern Macedonia. The road to the small town of [Kochani](#) takes no more than 1 hour and 15 minutes. Our colleague, archaeologist Ilinka Atanasova is already waiting for us. Together we leave Kochani towards the [archaeological site of St. Atanas](#) located a few miles from this city. The prehistoric site of Eneolithic period with [outstanding findings of female figurines has been attracting the attention of the scientific community](#) for several years, since it was

prospected and excavated in 2008. But we are more focused on the chipped stone material that is my subspecialty in archaeology. While our colleague is explaining the artefacts of the site, we are observing profiles of the trenches where in the soil there are still embedded flint tools.



Eneolithic figurines from the Republic of Macedonia, St. Atanas site

10:30 am



*The stone collection from mine
Opalite*

Our visit to the mine “Opalit” is scheduled before. This mine for non-metals (opal, agate, chalcedony, opalized tuffa) is located 1 km from the site of St. Atanas. Several years ago this mine was my topic of interest as a possible location where prehistoric communities of the region and beyond obtained raw material for their stone tools. The same goes for my colleague from Bulgaria, who tests the assumption that some raw materials for stone tools found at prehistoric sites along the Struma in Bulgaria came from this deposit. We walk around and observe the surface deposits in search of possible quarries made by prehistoric communities. We take photos and document the information [for my doctoral dissertation](#).

13:30 pm

We arrive at the Institute of History and Archaeology at the University of Stip, my home institution. A meeting with prof. d-r. Blazo Boev, my mentor for the thesis, is very useful. The long talk covers all my notes from today and personal opinions on the subject of local resources for stone in prehistoric Macedonia. Any information fills in and shapes my thesis towards this topic.

14:45 pm

Driving to the city of Vinica, our final destination for today. In a local “[Terracotta Museum](#)” there is a small collection of ground and abrasive stone tools from the archaeological site ‘Vinica Fortress’. I feel a moral and professional responsibility to help with this topic, since I’m the only archaeologist in Macedonia working with stone artefacts from prehistory. While I am getting all information about the field notes and stratigraphy, I am thinking about possibility to come again with my mentor. We could work together and process this collection for scientific publication. In the meantime we managed to visit the site ‘Vinica Fortress’, the fortification from the time of Justinian I, which is a trademark of the town of Vinica.



Ground and abrasive stone tools from Vinica Fortress (Eneolithic)

17:00

We get back to Skopje. We are home and I began to check and answer emails, facebook and twitter messages. My archaeological day has not yet been completed. I need to sort all impressions, notes and photos from the past day in the folders to be usable in the future for me or for someone else.

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This article was written as part of the action for 'Day of Archaeologists' (June 29, 2012). The goal is to raise public awareness of cultural heritage and the responsibility that archaeologists have about it.