

SESSION TITLE: **Balkan Flint in SE European Prehistory:
Chronological, Cultural and Social Perspectives**

ORGANISER: *M. Gurova* (Bulgaria)

CO-ORGANISERS: *C. Bonsall* (UK), *D. Borić* (Serbia/UK), *B. Voytek* (USA)

SESSION PROPOSAL:

Bulgarian Early Neolithic chipped stone assemblages reveal coherent and diagnostic formal flint toolkits for the vast Karanovo I and II cultural area, characterized by long, regular blades with (bi)lateral semi-abrupt high retouch and sometimes with rounded or pointed ends, as well as highly (re-)used sickle inserts, made of high quality yellow-honey-waxy coloured flint with sporadic whitish spots (well known and often referred to in the literature as 'Pre-Balkan Platform flint', or simply 'Balkan flint'). One of the most challenging questions in relation to these toolkits is the identification of their raw material outcrops, supply strategy, and the network of their widespread distribution (local and supra-regional). According to recent geological research in Bulgaria, the term "Pre-Balkan Platform" is an incorrect term for Moesian Platform. "Balkan flint" probably means every type of flint in the Moesian Platform and adjacent parts of the Balkan Alpine Orogen including both Lower Cretaceous (Aptian) flint and Upper Cretaceous (Campanian and Maastrichtian) flint.

The spatial distribution of tools made of this type of raw material is very wide: the artefacts defined as made of 'exotic' Balkan flints are reported from Neolithic Greece, Serbia (including Vojvodina), Romania, Macedonia, Hungary etc.

Regarding the time span of the toolkits under discussion and their function, it is useful to point out that they are abundant during the whole "classical" Early Neolithic Karanovo I and II periods of the Tell Karanovo sequence, or until ca 5500 cal BC. On the other hand, in terms of their lasting 'retardation' in the same sequence, the end of the Karanovo III period at Tell Karanovo: 5500-5280 cal BC can be regarded as a *terminus ante quem* for the presence of formal toolkits.

Only a few sites in Bulgaria offer the possibility of studying the formal tools in conditions of changing contextual data. In spite of the fact that an impressive corpus of flint studies has been generated over the last two decades, many questions still arise with regards to these flint toolkits: tracing their (perhaps mythically over-exposed!) raw material, its outcrops and procurement strategy; the location of their workshops, identification of their manufacturers (flint knappers) and technological origin; the identification of their distribution and exchange network mechanisms; elucidating their interactions and impacts with adjacent Early Neolithic cultural groups and identities, etc.

The organisers of this thought-provoking session intend to solicit interdisciplinary contributions and specific case studies relating to this specific research problem, in order to stimulate real debate based on empirical data and sound theoretical concepts.

In order to keep within the constraints of the EAA organising committee, please to send a title **by 15th May 2009**. We look to seeing you in Trento.

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