
Event review: Chipped stone tools workshops 2014, Skopje, Macedonia

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In February and March 2014, HAEMUS, the Center for Scientific Research and Promotion of Culture, organized public stone tools workshops. The workshops titled “The stories written in stone” were held at the Museum of the Old Bazaar in Skopje with the help of the Skopje City Museum. The workshops combined students from both the Department of Archaeology at Saints Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje and the Department of Archaeology at Goce Delčev University in Shtip and were hosted by prehistoric stone tools specialist Vasilka Dimitrovska.

The aim of this project was to educate archaeology students about stone tool analyses. Through a combination of presentations and lectures the workshops covered categories including petrological, technological, typological, use-were and statistical analyses, as well as the interpretation of the analytical results. Due to the comprehensive topics regarding lithic studies, only five students per session could attend the workshops. The lessons were comprised of the following topics:

Topic 1: Introduction to the world of prehistoric stone tools;

Topic 2: Basic principles and criteria for petrological, technological and morphological analysis of stone artefacts;

Topic 3: Basic principles and criteria for petrological, technological and morphological analysis of ground stone artefacts and abrasives tools;

Topic 4: Working with stone material and recognition of prehistoric tools from the archaeological site of Cocev Kamen, based on surface material collected by undergraduate students of archaeology.

The students found the most interesting topic to be typology of the stone tools. During the two field trips which were undertaken in 2013, undergraduate students of archaeology collected surface material in the vicinity of Cocev Kamen (Kratovo district). Cocev Kamen is an archaeological site dated from prehistory until the Mediaeval Ages and the abundance of the lithic material collected in the vicinity of the site allowed students to develop different approaches in identifying types of the stone tools. This approach was complemented with supplementary bibliographical as well as the video material.

The main prehistoric periods or ‘ages’ were named after the materials used to make artefacts which most identified that period. During the ‘Stone Age’ (or ‘Lithic’ Age) stone tools were very common. Although the analysis of stone tools cannot provide precise dating,



it can shed light on the economic background of the culture. It can also provide a more comprehensive picture of the various characteristics of the stone industry at particular sites or regions, as well as its relationship with other related industries.

At present, the lack of Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and early Neolithic materials makes it hard to answer questions about the evolutionary trends of chipped stone artefacts in Macedonia. The small number of stone artefacts is primarily due to the lack of knowledge about the lithic materials, the absence of sieving and flotation, and the personal choices of the researchers as to which types of finds are to be kept.

These workshops complemented the academic program at both archaeology departments in Macedonia by covering the Stone Age, as well as the basic information about stone tools and types of analyses, topics which are not typically included in university lectures. They are also an attempt to gain more public interest in prehistoric stone materials. Regarding the given interest of the students about lithic studies, we hope that in the future there will be same or a similar type of workshops held by HAEMUS professionals trained in prehistoric stone tools.

Official web site: <http://haemus.org.mk/stone-tool-workshops-by-haemus-the-stories-written-in-stone/>



Figure 1. Stone tools workshop I, Museum of the Old Bazaar, Skopje, 18 February 2014. (Photos by Vasilka Dimitrovska.)