



The most significant values  
of the cultural and natural heritage

# THE NEOLITHIC VILLAGE OF TUMBA - MADZARI



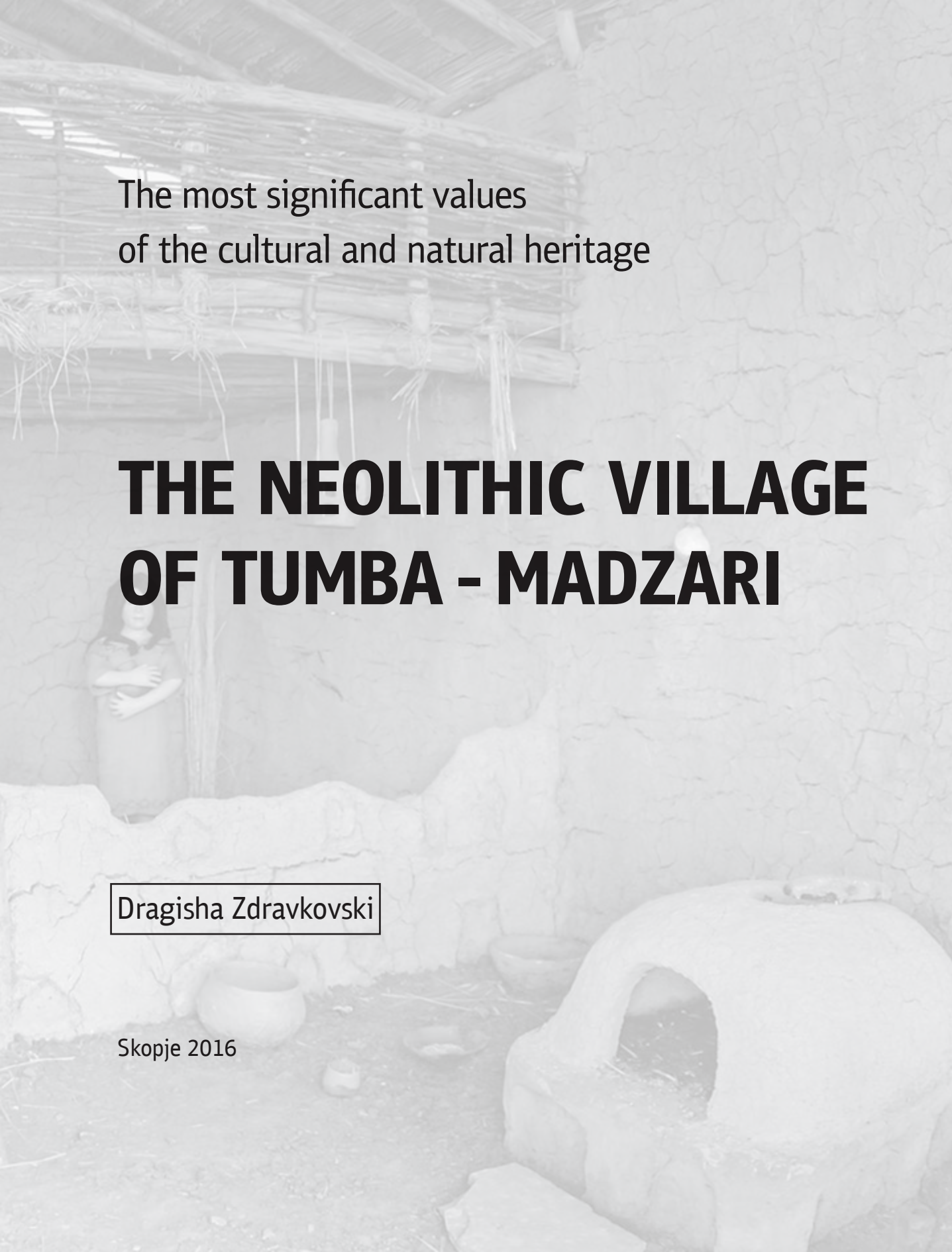
Dragisha Zdravkovski

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The background image is a grayscale reconstruction of a Neolithic site. It features a thatched roof structure in the upper left, a woman in a long dress standing in the middle left, and a large, rounded, earthen structure with a hole in the foreground right. The ground is uneven and covered with some pottery or debris.

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Dragisha Zdravkovski

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# FOREWORD

## MACEDONIAN CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

Over the past 4.5 million years since the creation of Earth, the ancestor of the modern man, “the wise man - Homo sapiens”, appearing on the African continent 150,000 years before this day, quickly settled throughout the territories of the Middle East, Asia and Europe.

His cultural evolution is recorded in the Republic of Macedonia, as well.

While travelling through the prehistoric era of the Stone Age, the Bronze Age and the Iron Age, as well as the historical epochs of the Antiquity and the Middle Ages, man created civilizations on the soil of the Republic of Macedonia by introducing and using the natural resources. He established the magnificent kingdoms of the Agrianians, Paeonia, Pelagonia, Lyncestis, Macedonia, and the principalities of Deuriopus, Dessaretia and the Penestae.

The Roman Empire, Byzantine, the medieval states - all left a powerful civilizational imprint.

The belief in the natural phenomena, followed by the belief in the many gods, to finally worship our only God - all left indelible cultural traces.

All this enormous cultural and natural heritage of the Republic of Macedonia was subject of the capital project of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia, “Publications of the most significant values of the cultural and natural heritage,” carried out by the Cultural Heritage Protection Office.

130 monographs featuring the Archaeological Heritage, Sacral heritage, the Treasures of the churches and monasteries in Macedonia and the Natural heritage were created.

Macedonia - the high forest land in the heart of the Balkan Peninsula, as the name suggests, furrowed by the deep valleys of the Vardar tributaries and the river Drim, adorned with the blue - green waters of Lake Ohrid, Prespa and Dojran, with the proud giants Kozuv, Shar Mountain, Korab and Jablanica, Selecka Mountain and other mountain ranges, today lights 130 torches of its own, as well as the world's, cultural and natural heritage; a legacy to preserve, use wisely and pass on to future generations of the Macedonian road to eternity.

Prof. Viktor Lilchikj Adams, Ph.D.

# THE NEOLITHIC VILLAGE OF TUMBA - MADZARI

## Introduction

The archaeological site of Tumba-Madzari is located in the eastern area of Skopje, in the Chento settlement, near the stadium "Boris Trajkovski". It has been known to archaeological literature ever since 1961/2, when it was discovered during archaeological reconnaissance conducted for the purpose of the construction of a highway. Nowadays it is hardly noticeable as two-thirds of the settlement is encircled by houses built in the late sixties and seventies of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the years before, the Tumba (mound) dominated above the surrounding flat land. Not far,



Fishing at Lake Katlanovo, 1954. (Taken by B.Drnkov)



to the north and west, rises a low hill or ridge that extends from Gazi Baba and Kamnik to the east and northeast. The Tumba settlement lies underneath in the fertile field. It has a very favourable location. On the one hand, the hill provides the necessary security, in particular, regarding the possible increase of water of the lake Shamak, and on the other, everything that such a natural environment can provide: trees, pastures, hunting opportunities, and fertile fields with slopes facing the sun. The settlement occupies a central position in the Skopje Valley. It had visual contacts with all the surrounding settlements, which was not coincidental. Tumba-Madzari represented an economic and cultural centre in the micro-cosmos of the Neolithic man of the Skopje Valley and the region.

The first archaeological excavations were conducted in 1978, and the results showed that



Plan of the mound



Village of Taor, 1954. (Taken by B.Drnkov)



it was a Neolithic settlement with three stages of life. The settlement has an irregular circular shape with a diameter of 220 m and height of 3 m. The stratigraphy of the settlement shows a cultural stratum with a thickness of 2.40 m, and depth of the pits of 2.80 m. The oldest cultural stratum chronologically corresponds to the phase Anzabegovo-Vrshnik I; the second i.e. the middle stratum, to the phase Anzabegovo-Vrshnik II, and the third, and last stratum, is synchronous with Anzabegovo-Vrshnik III. The oldest archaeological finds discovered on Tumba originate from the end of the Early Neolithic, which has been documented and presented by several ceramic fragments painted by using white colour, as well as a female figurine with steatopygia. Most of the artefacts and archaeological data belong to the Middle Neolithic – the phases Anzabegovo-Vrshnik II-III. In that period, the settlement reached its greatest economic and cultural development. The end of the life in the settlement is at the beginning of the Late Neolithic, at the end of the phase Anzabegovo-Vrshnik III, recorded by a small number of items, among which is a miniature figurine with a bird-like face. A Late Neolithic stratum is absent. It may have been devastated in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, or the settlement ceased to exist at that location in the prehistoric period due to unknown reasons.



Archaeological research of House 1 in 1981

# Natural and geographic conditions

The Neolithic settlement of Tumba-Madzari in Skopje is located in the central area of the Skopje Valley, which is part of the upper region of the river Vardar in Macedonia. In the contemporary geological frame, the Skopje Valley (Skopje and Kumanovo) was formed during the Holocene. All rivers that flowed into the Vardar carried large quantities of various terrigenous material and accumulated it in the plain. As a result, the flow of the Vardar in the Polog and the Skopje region occasionally slows down and alters its course. During the Holocene, fluvial erosion occurred causing the flattening of the peaks of the low surrounding mountains. The material was deposited on the surface of the plain – a process that continuously lasts until the present day. As a result of these deposits, sedimentary cliffs were formed in the middle of the valley: Gradishte and the Skopje Fortress-Kale from the west, and Gazi Baba and Kamnik in the east.

It should also be noted that the water level in the Ajvatovsko or Arachinovsko Blato (Blatija) and the Katlanovo Lake (Shamak) increased. They were interconnected by means of a natural waterway causing the water from the upper lake Blatija to flow into the lower lake Shamak. They were natural condensers of heat, causing milder winters than the ones today. Research conducted into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century showed that in the month of August the depth of Shamak amounted to 2 m. However, in the periods of heavier rain, the depth had increased several times and the waters of Shamak and Blatija were merged. When that happened the water came close to the ridge north of Tumba - Madzari - Kamnik - Gazi Baba. Therefore, it must be taken into account that the entire life of Neolithic man in the Skopje region was oriented toward the water and the adjacent terraces and fields. Photos of Shamak from 1954 illustrate this very vividly, suggesting the importance of the lake in the life of the villages established along its lines.



Discovery of objects  
– bathtubs



In the waters of the Vardar and the surrounding marshes, many fish species were spawned and caught by man, such as carp, catfish, Macedonian vimba, chub and more. Fish were also the food of mice, turtles, otters, beavers and predators. In the most difficult times, when farming yielded modest harvests, the swamp represented a reliable source of food. The analysis of a large amount of osteological material from Tumba-Madzari showed that domestic animals, such as goats, sheep, pigs, cattle, donkeys, dogs and chickens, have been bred for a long time. The mountains and river valleys were rich in stone needed for making tools and weapons. The stone knives were manufactured by means of chipping the amphibolite of the nearby surroundings. Others were acquired by way of exchange with the settlements of Ovche Pole, which is abundant in that material, as it is located next to the Zletovo-Kratovo eruptive zone. The fertile land and fields of the Neolithic man were located on the old soils. Today, they are below the groundwater level of the settlement mounds in the Skopje region, whereas the river terraces were covered by new erosion sediments long ago.

In Macedonian prehistory, the genesis of the Neolithic can be traced in Anatolia. The process of neolithization in Macedonia took place in the direction of Thessaly - Aegean Macedonia - Pelagonia / Peshterica – along the river Treska toward the region of Skopje and Pelagonia -Babuna and Pletvar to the mid-section of Povardarie and the Skopje region; toward the north to Kumanovo - Nikushtak, at Breg and further down through Slavishko Pole to Gorna Struma. This process took place simultaneously in the east toward Ovche Pole-Anzabegovo and the valley of Bregalnica and Lakavica to Kanli Chair. It continued further to the east and ended in the mid-section of the valley of the river Struma. At the same time, the process of neolithization unfolded in the west, in Polog – Tumba-Palchishte and Stenche. Several pottery fragments with good texture and red colouring, painted with extended white angles, suggest a direct link with Pelagonia. From the



region of Skopje, the Neolithic benefits quickly reached the Kumanovo region and Ovche Pole. This process occurs in the period of 6500-6300 BC, simultaneously with the neolithization in the valley of the river Struma.

The evolution of the Neolithic in the Skopje Valley, located on the main (central) natural highway in the Balkans, the Vardar-Morava Valley, possesses all the major features of the Neolithic of the Balkan-Anatolian cultural complex of the old Neolithic, but it also develops its own specific characteristics inherent only to the Neolithic culture in Macedonia. Its achievements in material culture and art enable its high ranking amidst the Neolithic culture in Europe.

Archaeological research results have shown that settlement mounds, including Tumba-Madzari, were created by means of permanent layering, which was the result of human life and natural sedimentation.

The first houses were erected on fertile fields. Over time, the mounds grew in width and height. The settlements were burned and demolished, after which the terrain was levelled and the houses were re-built and reconstructed. In the Ethnological Museum of Macedonia there are several photographs of the village of Taor and the lake Shamak taken by B. Drnkov before the hydro-meliorative works for drying the lake Shamak took place in 1954. One photo shows a few houses – cottages (trolls) built in the same manner as the Neolithic ones, whereas others depict fishing on the lake. The floor of the house was elevated above the ground by means of wooden poles as a protection from water. This traditional way of building has retained all the old elements known since the Neolithic were discovered during the excavations at Tumba-Madzari. Considering that the settlement hasn't been fully explored yet, it is difficult to say how many people lived there at certain stages. Tumba-Madzari was re-settled again in the 1960s / 1970s. Unfortunately, though, the new constructions definitely destroyed the Neolithic cultural strata of the majority of the settlement. The main urban concept known to other Neolithic regions was probably applied in Tumba-Madzari as well. It consisted of one empty central space around which were houses of different size located at varying distance in-between. The central square was the place for



Plan of the discovered houses

organizing joint social activities such as the performance of the harvest and some cult games. All settlements were erected near water – a small stream, the Vardar (Tumba-Stenche, Tumba-Brvenica etc.), or along the lines of the marshes. Problems with water supply were non-existent, but perhaps the opposite was true – due to the large amounts of water at certain times the residents of the lower parts had to withdraw to the upper hilly areas. They might have had problems with mosquitoes and malaria, as well as arthritis. Nevertheless life in the Neolithic was, generally, joyful and peaceful, without major disruptions, calmly flowing for more than two thousand years.



As discussed above the houses were built in a traditional manner, typical of all agricultural civilizations. Nowadays, these types of houses, cottages, barns and pens can still be found in some villages in Macedonia. They help to reconstruct the appearance of the Neolithic house. Furthermore, models of houses-altars of the Neolithic (especially the samples from Porodin and Pelagonia) provide a highly reliable reconstruction of, at least, the outward appearance. According to archaeological research, the internal layout is authentic for each house. The walls of the houses were built by firstly positioning poles in the earth, interwoven by means of twigs and filled with a mixture of mud and straw. The poles were of various thickness and density.



Interior of House 1

**In House 1** of Tumba-Madzari they have a thickness of 0.15 m and are arranged at a distance of 0.60 to 1 m, dug 0.30 m deep. On the inside were vertically arranged split wood - planks, whereas the vertical pickets remained on the outside. The walls were layered with a thick mixture of mud and straw, with a thickness of 0.15 m. This coating was renewed each season. As a result, the house had solid thermal insulation. The interior surface was smooth, whereas on the exterior were applied imprints of finger marks or wavy lines. Some remains revealed traces of white paint, as well. The roof of the house consisted of a wooden construction built on two leads and a layer of chaff, reeds or bulrush placed on vertical beams with forks mounted on the corners and the middle of the exterior of the walls. Larger houses probably had a small attic on the inside, at least in part of the house, in order to ensure a higher temperature. The attic was used for sleeping and keeping certain products. This manner of building was observed in the Neolithic houses of Kirokithia in Cyprus and others. In the more contemporary dwellings of the villages were registered so-called vaults above the hearth, woven from branches, which were used for hanging or placing

various objects or vessels, away from animals which could enter and break them. Information regarding the appearance of the houses and the method of construction, as well as the easily flammable material, is provided by means of the pieces of archaeological material that remain on the field. More information can be obtained by observing the ceramic models - altars of the Neolithic, as well as the contemporary examples that have continued as a building tradition for a period of several millennia. Today, these are the three relevant sources used in the attempt to reconstruct the Neolithic houses in Tumba-Madzari. Here, we also point to the identical and other contemporary examples from the field of ethnology from the village of Konjsko near Lake Prespa.



Bone tools



Decorated stone plates

Since the excavations in 1981, when the first house was discovered, seven other houses were also discovered, though not published. The architectural remains of the house were 0.30 m below the surface of the earth. It was built in the traditional technique of placing poles into the ground, often flanked by stones / mills. There was a considerable distance between the poles and so the roof was probably not supported by the walls, but by external thick poles. The filling of the house walls shows that there were large chopped beams incorporated inside which had left imprints. They provided sufficient heat in winter and a pleasant shade in summer. The entrance to the house was probably on the west side, where no openings for stakes were found. The foundation of the house is a perfect square, measuring 8 x 8 m, i.e. 64 m<sup>2</sup>. The roof was built on two leads of

straw (or reeds and bulrush from the nearby lake) placed on a wooden construction carried by thick wood. The interior of the house was divided by means of a thin irregularly-shaped parapet. It divided the two calotte furnaces built next to it. On the west side there was a furnace built of a massive mud platform, with a lot of stone and pottery in the middle, measuring 1 x 1 m and



Hollow ceramic vessels with painted brown decoration

with a height of 0.40 m. At the corners and in the middle there were legs of clay joined by a slight arch. Remains of the calotte in the shape of a wreath, with a height of up to 10 cm, were discovered *in situ*. The interior of the calotte was 0.80 x 0.80 m wide with an opening on the south side. Around the furnace were discovered eight vessels *in situ*, two of which were painted amphorae, a cup, pots with barbotine decorations, frutarium and a small pyxis with an engraved ornamentation on the bottom in the form of a print-pintadera.

On the east side of the parapet there was another furnace, also square, measuring 1.30 x 1.30 m, and with a height of 0.40 m. On the corners and in the middle there were also moulded legs joined by an arch, but less pronounced. The platform ends in a calotte shape measuring 1.0 x 1.0 m. The remains of its walls are inclined on the inside. The floor of the recipient is a thick layer of clay with multiple coatings. Traces of burning have not been recorded, aside from a great amount of ash of the straw. Similar calotte furnaces were discovered in House 1 in Slatina near the village of Zelenikovo.

In the middle, eastern part of the house, is located a platform, 0.37 m high and 0.50 m wide, containing a shallow recipient with a triangular sandstone of a green mill for grinding grain.

In the archaeological research conducted in the period from 1981 to 2009 were discovered several houses in various Neolithic settlements: Cerje, Stenche, Mramori, Slatina and Tumba-Madzari. In all of them were found identical or similar objects - ovens for baking bread. They were heated by using a lot of ember, which was afterward taken out or set aside in the oven. Another way of heating these ovens was by intensely burning straw which developed a temperature of up to 800 °C. Today, the old ovens in the villages of Macedonia and elsewhere in world are being heated in the same manner - by burning straw or wood, after which, the ember and the ashes are discarded, the bottom wiped with a damp cloth (creating a layer of coating), and the bread is baked. The village inhabitants of all human civilization were skilled in this ancient craft. In their cultural evolution they managed to discover the secret of the preparation and the baking of bread. It is the biggest leap in human history, made precisely in the Early Neolithic.

In subsequent research were found similar facilities, and in 1982 was discovered a house which exhibited the same types of furnaces as House 1, a circular hearth and a large, round, well-moulded clay recipient (opening for a pole), with a profile decoration of carved vertical and slanted lines. In the neighbouring village of Slatina near Zelenikovo, was discovered a similar furnace with the same well-profiled legs and sides decorated by distinctly incised slanted lines. Research revealed a number of the so-called movable archaeological items, mostly pottery fragments, as well as whole or broken pottery vessels which were afterward reconstructed.

In House 1 were discovered 45 whole vessels and a large number of fragments. These included various pots or pithoi decorated by means of the barbotine technique (patches of diluted clay), resembling a tree bark. These vessels had decorations of engraved finger marks on the body, while the shoulder and neck are smooth and divided from the body with a distinct strip of pressed finger marks. The large vessels, frutaria, are also very impressive, with distinct ribs on the inside under the rim, as well as the plates of various sizes and several smaller vessels - pots. With their perfect, simple form, they speak volumes about the exceptional masters who created them.



Cup vessels

Especially impressive with regard to form are the askoi, which were a characteristic pottery form of Tumba, as well as the entire Upper Vardar region during the Middle Neolithic. By means of research were found a large number of askoi of different sizes: from small – of 1 l, to large – containing 7 to 8 l. Considering the form and the decoration with feathery barbotine, they are very reminiscent of waders. They have four vertical handles on the belly and one on the back. They were carried on the back by means of inserting rope through the handles. The rope went on a distinct edge that ended with three fingers, much like the foot of a bird, resembling waders. They may have found the inspiration from the birds in the nearby lake. In archaeology, they are considered to be distant descendants of the leather bellies (bags), but made of ceramics. They were used to carry and store clean drinking water from a close spring or stream. Askoi have a rough texture with lots of straw in the earth which makes them light

and easy to carry, and pour the water. The askoi in Macedonia, in this form and quantity, were first discovered while surveying Tumba, displaying the most exceptional classical form. Afterward they were discovered during the research of other Neolithic sites in the Skopje region: Zelenikovo, Govrlevo, Mrshevcı and others. The askoi vessels of Tumba-Madzari, with regard to shape and craftsmanship, are the most impressive among the discovered vessels.

From the diverse repertoire of vessels, the beautiful gourd-like “amphorae”, painted with dark brown or brown ornamentation over pale ocher, are very distinctive. Many fragments of these luxury vessels were discovered on Tumba-Madzari. Two were discovered whole in House 1, and one that was missing a neck, was discovered in House 3. All three vases have the same shape and the same decoration conception. The body depicts vertical brown fields, with striped leaves connected with the baseline (as a leaf on a twig). The earliest explorers of the Anzabegovo-Vrshnik culture group pointed to this floral ornament that they believed were olive leaves. On the body are depicted brown crescent ornaments, and on the neck there was a spiral which flowed, and the larger crown of rhombuses. The vessels of House 1 and House 3 are the same size and have no handles on the body; only three small oval indentations. The small vessel has four vertical tunnel-like holders through which a rope was inserted. These three vessels, as we said, have the same shape and decoration. The colour of the items from House 1 is pale ocher, and on the third item from House 3, it is slightly darker baked terracotta. All were discovered on the floor, *in situ*,



near the furnaces. Since these two houses are in close proximity, with an obvious similarity of the vessels, and belong to the same cultural stratum, they were presumably painted at the hand of the same master which would be a significant discovery for prehistoric science and the significance of the site of Tumba-Madzari.

Another group of vessels of extraordinary beauty, of the category of luxurious pottery, are the simple bell-like cups on a small conical foot, decorated with painted brown spirals or vertical hanging triangles, oftentimes striped or only with slanted parallel lines in pale red.

A special group of vessels is represented by the spherical pots decorated by impression incising of nails or sharp objects before baking. Some of the pots were decorated by means of the so-called organized, unorganized barbotine technique or arched technique, with flat or slightly extended wreaths and flat unobtrusive bottoms.

What makes Tumba-Madjari and House 1 well-known was the first discovered terracotta sculptural representation of the Great Mother. With its impressive dimensions of 0.39 m in height, the classical calm posture of emerging from the house, representing a vigil over her home, as well as peace and prosperity, makes this terracotta exclusive. It is the main thread which connects the spirit of the man of the Anzabegovo-Vrshnik culture group in Macedonia, but also indicates the common spiritual and material roots with the Veljusha-Porodin culture group of Pelagonia. On the cylinder over her eyes using brown colour (identical to the colour of the painted pottery) is placed hair in the form of bangs. It is distinctly represented and gathered in the back. In subsequent research were discovered other whole items or fragments of the cylinders and the house with different sizes and depiction of hairstyles. Some resemble Afro hairstyles, others were only highlighted by incising, woven in various braids and then arranged in beautiful hairstyles, secured with a needle, and more. The variety of styles suggests the extraordinarily lavish fashion of the Neolithic woman and its importance in the society of Tumba-Madzari. The head and chest represent a cylinder, moulded around a tree, evident from the imprints of almost all samples. The belly of the woman-house has an irregular square shape, with several different openings. In fact, they represented the windows and the doors. Most of them had openings in which to hold the rope to hang them on the beam over the furnaces.



Cup vessel



A pot

In 1984, during the excavation of the basement of a house at Tumba, on the street "Finska", which represents the centre of Tumba, Goran Ristovski accidentally unearthed a terracotta depicting the head of a woman. It is very strikingly sculptured, in life-size, moulded around a thick stake of unsorted earth, smoothed with several layers of pale ocher clay. The face is flat / levelled, with incised eyes, vividly expressed eyebrows and nose. The master did not form a mouth. Particular attention was devoted to the hair which forms prominent deep grooves - braids arranged on the left side in a ponytail. For the time being it remains without applicable analogies and other scientific information, but we believe it is part of a representation of the Great Mother with impressive dimensions. Generally speaking, the anthropomorphic sculptures at Tumba are numerous. Art is a special scientific challenge and has partially been analysed. It reveals the spiritual life of the people from the 6<sup>th</sup> millennium BC. The material and pottery presented at the Museum of Macedonia are just a small part of the overall information the Neolithic man left behind about himself and the world he lived in. We will never entirely discover his spiritual life, because, apart from the sculptures, there are no material remains from the other forms of art, such as the stories, songs, music, play, dance, disease and treatment.



An altar - the Great Mother



Discovery of the Great Mother in House 1



The Great Mother of House 5

In addition to the already mentioned items, at Tumba were discovered other anthropomorphic male and female statuettes. We will mention two small statues modelled in stone. One represents a small head modelled in flint with a pronounced nose. While modelling, the master expressed a great sense of form, by creating the head from the natural form, without presenting any emotional state or other characteristic of the character. The other stone statuette is a female representation in steatopygia, with a flattened torso and small breasts, and arms placed over the belly. The head of the statue is missing. At Tumba were discovered many more upright, phallus-like figurines, with a patterned representation of the face, a distinctive nose, incised eyes and hair, with hands only marked. An item originating from the end of the Middle and the beginning of the Late Neolithic

stratum is a very simply modelled miniature head with a bird nose. A special category of items from Tumba are the altars of the so-called type *small table*. They consist of a recipient (small vessel) set on a square table with small short legs, often decorated with incised lines, hanging triangles, etc.



Fragment of the Great Mother

In addition to the anthropomorphic images, by means of archaeological research, were also discovered many zoomorphic altars, which also speak of the spiritual life of the Neolithic man. They usually represent domestic animals. Among them especially prominent is the ceramic representation of the life-size head of a ram bucranium (32-33-27 cm). There is an encrusted oil-free white colour (possibly ash) with openings in which were embedded natural horns. It illustrates the cult of the ram. Like other sculptures, this also indicates a high artistic and aesthetic achievement of the sculpture ceramists from Tumba. As the rear side is very smooth, it was, most likely, attached to the facade of a house. Such bucraniums were found in the Neolithic sanctuaries of Anatolia,

Romania and other places. Based on the morphological characteristics, this find is dated at the end of the Early Neolithic. It is thought that the head was modelled according to a model of the sheep Uriel (*ovis vingeli*), the first domesticated sheep in Asia, and brought to Ovche Pole. It is not certain whether this animal existed in the late stages of the Middle Neolithic in the Skopje region, when the discovered items were smaller, which is the reason it should be dated to the end of the Early Neolithic. Of the other zoomorphic representations, determined as altars in archaeology, we will mention the goat with a recipient on the back, modelled very tersely, but clear enough to determine what it represents. There is another similar representation - the altar of an animal with a human face- a *centaurus*, with a recipient - a *small plate on the back*. Some researchers believe that grains of corn were placed in the plate to fertilize and kept through the winter until the next sowing in the spring. These types of altars were found in the late stages of the Neolithic and the last examples of this type were found in the Late Neolithic, in the phase Vinca - Plochnik of the Balkan-Anatolian cultural complex.



Fragments of the Great Mother

By means of archaeological research were found a great number of items from the jewellery category. The most common are amulets made of flat, disk-like river stone, pierced with two conical holes for a leather strap which was worn on the neck. Several examples of ceramic statues, as well as the Great Mother altar of Govrlevo, suggest this type of use. This amulet is presented very distinctly and beautifully on her back. In addition to these, other fragments of bone bracelets were also discovered, as presented on the hands of the Great Mother. A large number of bi-conical and cylindrical bone beads for necklaces were also discovered. This category of decorative objects illustrates the manner of ornamentation of the Neolithic man and the desire to look beautiful.



Fragment of the Great Mother

During the archaeological excavations of Tumba, despite the above-mentioned construction remains of houses, pottery vessels, cult objects, and stone and flint tools, many other items were also discovered. These include: clay loom weights, bi-conical weights (reels) for fishing nets and balls for rods. In House 1, close to the furnace, were discovered fifty-two weights. One possibility is that the fishing net was hanging on the beam to dry, but after the fire, only the weights remained. Many tools made from animal bones used by the Neolithic man were also discovered. They mostly consisted of needles, spatulas, spikes, milling machines, hooks and more. The use of flint is represented by various flint knives produced by means of splitting the flint and smoothing the sides afterward. Stone was used to make mortars, pestles and mills. Neolithic culture is characterized by the smoothing of stone tools, such as: adzes, chisels, wedges, hoes, hammers, spiked maces etc.

The smoothing was done on a softer rock by means of water to achieve a finer surface. Most tools have a trapezoidal shape, with the blade smoothed on one side (much like the front teeth in humans). The hoes and axes, in addition to the wedges, were planted onto a horn that was easily perforated for making a handle. That is one difference with the previous period, the Paleolithic, when man held his stone tools with his hand. By placing handles their use was already more efficient. After the research of Anzabegovo, these objects were never again the subject of specialist analysis. Consequently, nothing more can be said regarding this important part of the material culture in the Neolithic, i.e. the genesis of the material. For the time being, the only available analyses are those of E. Elster and D. Wide regarding the stone industry of Anzabegovo. As an illustration: in Anzabegovo I, 43.9% of the tools are quartz, a number which continues to shrink, leading to only 25% in Anzabegovo IV. Among the most dominant materials are vulcanite, chalcedony and opalite. In the last phase, the presence of red jasper is noteworthy. In the middle stages, Anzabegovo II-III, the most numerous artefacts are those of andesite with 31%, the sandstones with 50% and opalite with 15%. The stone tools, artefacts of Tumba-Madzari, were manufactured from these materials - minerals as well.



Anthropomorphous head



Regarding the sources for the material, the above-mentioned authors consider that opalite, quartz, quartzite, yellow-brown and yellow-red jasper, chalcedony, basalt and andesite are local minerals found in the peripheral hills of Ovche Pole. Given the similar geomorphological situation, at least a portion of these minerals were available to the Neolithic man of Tumba-Madzari. A more detailed analysis of this material will provide a more concrete image. Perhaps part of the tools, the knives and blades, were brought from the settlements in Ovche Pole?

Other archaeological items, such as deer horns, ceramic pintaderas (stamps), various wild olive seeds, freshwater mussels and anthropological and zoological osteological remains were also discovered at Tumba. A pintadera – stamp was made of terracotta with incised angular lines.

The analysis of the bones of animals and birds from Madzari, made by A. Moskalevska, points to rich and healthy meals. The traces of fine cuts on these bones suggest that they were prepared for eating. On some bones were found traces of deliberate processing (antlers and long bones). Another type of traces were marks of cutting to the root of the horn, suggesting the need for possessing trophies or the performing of cult / magical rituals. Of the analysis conducted on 2847 bones, only 5.5% were of wild animals. All others, apart from the 14 human bones and the 22 fish bones, were of domestic animals. It is evident that the Neolithic man, as far as providing meat for food, was absolutely dependent on his herds, and very little on hunting. Of the animals, the sheep and the goat are represented by 48% and the cattle by 41%. The ratio of bones from sheep and goat is 4.4: 1. The ratio of bones from sheep and goat against cattle is: in Anzabegovo II 62.63%:



Female stone statuette



A head of stone

15.19%, i.e. 6: 1; and in Anzabegovo III 64.89%: 7.63%. Small quantities of pigs were bred at Madzari, represented by only 10% of the bones. In Anzabegovo, sheep and goats dominated over cattle and pigs and they were bigger than those of Tumba-Madzari. The ratio of small and larger cattle at Tumba-Madzari is more consistent. Here dominates small domestic cattle, which must have been used as a work force for nearby fields, suggesting that the residents of this settlement were predominantly farmers. The Anzabegovo residents, however, were predominantly shepherds. This probably comes as a result from the character of the natural environment.

At Tumba Madzari were not discovered any graves of its inhabitants, so regarding the funeral ritual and related beliefs there is no information. Thus far, the only discovery is the burial of a baby dated to the Middle Neolithic.

The archaeological research results suggest that the settlement of Tumba-Madzari existed during the 6<sup>th</sup> millennium BC. The oldest archaeological finds are pottery fragments with a smoothed glossy surface and painted white ornaments. The pottery with white painting is chronologically and culturally determined as the oldest phase of the Anzabegovo-Vrshnik group. At the end of the Early Neolithic the settlement was established and life began to develop. In the next stages, Anzabegovo-Vrshnik II-III or Middle Neolithic, the settlement reached a considerable economic prosperity and cultural development. Its end is determined at the beginning of the Late Neolithic period with modest archaeological finds. This situation probably arises as a result of climate changes, resulting in the abandonment of the settlement, possibly due to increased water levels. This theory is also implied by the nearest neighbouring settlement of Slatina, near the village of Zelenikovo, which continues to exist throughout the stage Anzabegovo-Vrshnik IV or Late Neolithic. In general, the Late Neolithic cultural stratum is present on a very few sites, compared to the Middle Neolithic which is present at a greater number of sites. This, as mentioned previously, was most likely due to climate change, on one hand, as well as the exhaustion of natural resources, on the other. Neolithic culture, though immanently agricultural, is very dependent on the fertility of the land and the weather. The change in these factors could decrease the harvest, and thus, the source of food and the survival of the people.



Bucranion - head of a goat



Altars – a type of a small table



Furnace

The results of the archaeological research of Tumba-Madzari in the past three decades have provided many archaeological items and scientific information. A small number of them were presented at a permanent exhibition in the Museum of Macedonia and some thematic exhibitions in the country and abroad. But those were only archaeological movable objects that can be placed in museum showcases in a limited number. Other immovable items, like the houses with internal inventory, such as furnaces, hearths, mills, baths and other archaeological objects, remain completely unknown to the general public. Therefore, in 2007 commenced the preparations for the project *Reconstruction of the Neolithic village of Tumba-Madzari*. The aim was to reconstruct life at Tumba in the 6<sup>th</sup> millennium BC. Starting from October 2008, Houses 1, 2, 3, 4, as well as other auxiliary facilities were reconstructed in the manner and with the same material as in the Neolithic. The facilities are built of wood, branches, reeds, bulrush, mud and straw. House 1 measures 8 x 6.50 m and resembles the Neolithic one, whose remains were discovered in 1981. On the interior was presented the overall inventory discovered during research: two calotte ovens for baking bread with built-in archaeological spoliass discovered in research, a stone grain mill, a great number of large and small copies of pottery, various tools and weapons, cult sculptures and more. So far, three dolls (model) were made: a girl, a woman grinding corn on a stone mill and a man with an askos on his back, as well as arrows and a spiked mace in his hands. The dolls are dressed in simple clothes of hemp decorated with ornaments painted on the ceramic vessels. On the neck, the woman carries a copy of the necklace found in the research. Above the stove, tied with a rope, hangs a copy of the Great Mother, an altar discovered in House 1 at the same spot.



Interior of House 2

**House 2** is smaller (4 x 4 m) and is covered with reeds, whereas the walls are made of branches of hazel covered with a mixture of mud and straw. The entrance resembles an inscribed letter M, as the altar at Tumba-Stenche. The house contains reconstructions of a calotte furnace and a bathtub with incorporated spoliass discovered during research. A woman (model) is also presented, weaving on a reconstructed vertical loom. On the floor, covered with clay, were placed several copies of ceramic vessels found in this house.





Interior of House 3

**House 3** measures 6 x 4 m, and is higher than the rest, due to its short wooden interior half-storey which was used for sleeping. Examples of this type were found in other archaeological sites of the Balkan-Anatolian cultural complex as well. On the floor was built a calotte furnace, and around it are several copies of vessels and small sculptures. Above the parapet which divides the furnace hangs a copy of the Great Mother, but different from the one in House 1. A model of a woman in a sitting position, making a pot out of clay, is placed in the house. She is accompanied by a girl carrying a saucer in her hand. Straw baskets, a stone mill and a mortar are placed on the floor. A small pen with a model of a cow and a seated woman who milks it is made on the exterior by the south wall. The appearance of the cow was created according to the osteological features, and during the modelling was consulted an archeozoologist.

**House 4** is the largest, with an appearance like the Neolithic, whereas the interior represents a modern classroom for lectures, conferences, presentations and screenings recorded during excavations. On the walls will be placed posters, as well as photographs of all previous research, and other information of interest for the professional and general public. In addition, the expert team plans to place the most current and interesting archaeological discoveries in several showcases.



Reconstruction of the Neolithic village in 2008





Neolithic village of Tumba-Madzari

Particularly attractive for the youngest audience is a small pen with an oval base covered with reeds. At the time being visitors can see a goat, a sheep and two baby goats reconstructed according to the suggestions of an archeozoologist. Another item of interest is the five beehives over 100 years old, placed under a small wooden overhang, brought from the village of Furka. They were woven from thin branches, and covered with a mixture of mud, straw and manure. These can also be seen in the village of Taor, on a photograph from 1954.

The Neolithic village has a scientific basis and potential for tourism, as well as recognizable cultural contours which are a challenge for visiting. It guides us to the deep past, which is a few millennia older than the appearance of the letter. The archaeological artefacts are the only narratives of the lifestyle and beliefs of the inhabitants of Tumba. In a way, they bring us closer to distant times, when life in the settlement pulsated each day, slowly changing the natural environment. This museum has its own website and is a member of the European Association of Open-Air Museums – EXARC. This makes Tumba-Madzari easily accessible to a wide audience. Although the project has not been fully realized, in the period from October 2008 to July 2011, the village was visited by many people from Macedonia and abroad. A flyer containing basic information about the village in Macedonian, Albanian and English is available to visitors. The most frequent visitors to the Neolithic village are student group tours, archaeology and history of art students and individuals who want to enjoy the Neolithic village idyll and peaceful, but also educate themselves and remember some details of the past. Once the entire project is realized, the Neolithic village will constitute a closed cultural complex and an open air museum, one of the very few from the Early Stone Age in Europe and the only one in Macedonia, "... the most developed region of Europe in the 6<sup>th</sup> millennium BC."

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