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## **Spinning and Weaving on the Balkan Peninsula during the Bronze Age Archaeological Evidence from Northern Greece and Neighbouring Countries**

Fragile organic materials such as textile fabrics seldom survive the millennia unless they have had the advantage of being deposited in an environment that prevents them from a rapid decomposition. According to Elizabeth Barber (1991) the Aegean is one of the worst possible places in the Old World for the survival of textiles. This also applies to the area under investigation, a marginal corner of the sophisticated civilisations of the Aegean Bronze Age. Here, at the threshold to the Balkans, we find Central Macedonia, a region that was characterised by varying cultural traditions during this period. However, the absence of textiles leaves us with insufficient knowledge concerning the technological standard of the fabrics produced and worn at that time. Furthermore, neither Linear B tablets nor frescoes have been found, evidence which could have given us a hint of Bronze Age textiles in this part of the Old World.

My PhD project deals with the technical aspects of textile production on the Balkan Peninsula during the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC. Geographically the main focal point involves finds from sites and settlements from Northern Greece (i.e. Epirus, Macedonia and Thrace) as well as its adjacent neighbours, such as Albania, FYROM, Bulgaria and Romania. So far I have been able to register data from the tomba of Kastanas, Macedonia, and very soon data from Albania and Romania will be added to the database. At the XI. NESAT I aim for presenting a summary of every data available by that time.

The current investigation covers analyses of studied spindle whorls and loom weights, illuminated in the light of recent spinning and weaving experiments. Based on a technical and morphological analysis of the investigated textile tools, deriving from a number of locations spread over a wider temporal and geographical space, the attempt is made to feature different characteristics that may suggest a technical or rather culturally conditioned development, thus contributing to the subject of cultural mobility on the Balkan.

So far a new analysis of the material from the tomba of Kastanas, excavated in the years 1975-1979 superficially published by Ioannis Aslanis (1985) and Alix Hochstetter (1987), offer possibilities to observe changes through time and space in the activities of spinning and weaving. At Kastanas the Late Bronze Age (from c. 1200 BC and onwards) appears as a floruit for textile production with a broad spectrum of tools, some of which seem to indicate the making of surprisingly thin threads (perhaps for luxury fabrics?). This may reflect regional innovations and maybe intensified interactions with the Mycenaean *koine*.

### LITERATURE

**Aslanis, J. (1985)** *Kastanas: Ausgrabungen in einem Siedlungshügel der Bronze- und Eisenzeit Makedoniens, 1975-1979. Die frühbronzezeitlichen Funde und Befunde*. *Prähistorische Archäologie in Südosteuropa* 4, 195-198; Pl. 11, 52, 81, 83.

**Centre for Textile Research (CTR)** Die Ergebnisse und Forschungsberichte des *Tools and Textiles — Texts and Contexts*-Projekts (TTTC) sind auf der Homepage des CTR unter folgendem URL-Link frei herunterladbar ► <http://ctr.hum.ku.dk/research/tools/toolsreports>

**Barber, E. J. W. (1991)** *Prehistoric Textiles. The Development of Cloth in the Neolithic and Bronze Ages with special Reference to the Aegean*. Princeton University Press, Princeton/Oxford, xxi.

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**Wardle, K. A. (in Vorbereitung)** Auf den Assiros *Web Pages* veröffentlicht Dr. Wardle unter dem Titel 'Assiros: Greek Macedonia' jedoch die neuesten Ergebnisse seiner Grabung der Toumba von Assiros, die einer sich in Vorbereitung befindenden Publikation vorausgehen.

► [artsweb.bham.ac.uk/aha/kaw/Assiros/assirosindex3.htm](http://artsweb.bham.ac.uk/aha/kaw/Assiros/assirosindex3.htm)

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