



Fondazione di Sardegna



**Fish and Fishing Communities**  
Understanding Ancient and Modern Fisheries  
through Archaeological Fish Remains

**ITALY | ALGHERO - STINTINO**

**1st - 7th OCTOBER 2017**



ICAZ | 19th FRWG Meeting | Sardinia, 2017

# **Fish and Fishing Communities**

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**ABSTRACT BOOK**

experienced through the full physical contact with the fish among the slaughter and butchering, the salting and culinary preparations) and immaterial standpoint (symbols, imaginary, vernacular forms).

### **Ying Zhang\***

\* School of Archaeology and Museology, Peking University (No. 5 Yiheyuan Road, Haidian District, Beijing, China); address: zhang\_y@pku.edu.cn; 008618510600249

### **Freshwater fishing strategies in the Neolithic Yangtze River region: Environment and culture**

*Keywords: Freshwater fishing strategies; Environment; Yangtze River; Integration*

The Yangtze River originates in the Tibetan Plateau and runs eastward across China, passing through a large area of diverse physiographic and environmental settings. Ecologically, the Yangtze River region provides habitat for a great diversity of plants and animals. Culturally, it is considered as the cradleland of agriculture and civilisation in South China. There is a long history of fish consumption in the Yangtze River region. Historical records and archaeological findings imply that freshwater fish may have played an important part in the subsistence economy, possibly more important than any other cultural centre in China.

This paper examines archaeological evidence for freshwater fishing strategies in the Yangtze River region, looking at the fish remains from Neolithic sites dating between ca. 8000–4000 BP. It aims to reconstruct the fishing methods, fishing grounds, and likely fishing seasons using both fish remains and other archaeological artefacts. By comparing the fish assemblages from sites of different ages and environmental settings, this paper aims to investigate the differences in the environmental and cultural aspects, and to generate a broader view of the subsistence economy.

### **Ivana Živaljević\*, Nemanja Marković and Milomir Maksimović**

\* BioSense Institute, University of Novi Sad, Serbia (Dr Zorana Đinđića 1, Novi Sad 21000, Serbia); ivziv81@yahoo.com; ivana.zivaljevic@biosense.rs; +381638941820

### **Food worthy of kings and saints: Fish consumption in the Medieval monastery Studenica (Serbia)**

*Keywords: Medieval fish trade; Sturgeons; Feasts; Religious celebrations; Studenica monastery*

The paper focuses on fish consumption and long-distance fish trade in the Medieval monastery Studenica in Serbia, from the perspective of archaeozoology, historical sources and pictorial evidence. Medieval written sources on the subject suggest that fish was available primarily to particular social classes – the royalty, nobles and monasteries. Preserved muniments indicate that the majority of distinguished monasteries during the 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> centuries had their own fishing ponds, fishing grounds and their own fishermen. Fish consumption occupied an important role in monastic contexts, both in Christian religious practices (e.g. Lent) as well as in celebrations commemorating the Virgin Mary and the monastery founder, during which high-quality fish was obtained from greater distances. Ichthyoarchaeological remains discussed in this paper originate from waste deposition areas within and outside of the ramparts of the Studenica monastery, accumulated during the 14<sup>th</sup> and first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. Apart from remains of locally available species (catfish, carp, pike), the faunal assemblage contained the remains of migratory sturgeons (beluga, Russian sturgeon, stellate sturgeon) most likely transported from the Danube area, about 200 km away as the crow flies. Skeletal element distribution, butchering traces and size estimations (of beluga in particular) indicate that large specimens (over 2 m in total length) were brought whole to the monastery, possibly dried or salted. Their occurrence is an additional indicator of long-distance fish trade recorded in muniments, and it offers new insights into economic, social and religious practices in Medieval Eastern Orthodox monasteries.

**Ivana Živaljevi** \* and Sofija Stefanović

\* BioSense Institute, University of Novi Sad, Serbia (Dr Zorana Đinđića 1, Novi Sad 21000, Serbia); ivziv81@yahoo.com; ivana.zivaljevic@biosense.rs; +381638941820

### **Neolithic fishing landscapes: Case studies from Serbian sites in the gorges and in the plains**

*Keywords: Fishing; Mesolithic; Neolithic; Danube Gorges; Pannonian plain*

The Mesolithic-Neolithic settlements in the Danube Gorges (North-Central Balkans) flourished in a specific landscape, with rapid changes in the riverbed, whirlpools, cataracts and strong river currents. These features were particularly favourable for fishing, and led to the prolonged stay of human communities during the Mesolithic (ca. 9500-6200 cal BC) and the emergence of permanent settlements in the Transformational Mesolithic-Neolithic phase (ca. 6200-5900 cal BC). Even with the appearance of domestic animals after 6000 cal BC, these settlements remained in use primarily as fishing centres, suggesting that