



Stefanović, S. 2015. *Prehistoric babies in the (bio)archaeological record. 22nd Neolithic Seminar „Modelling the Processes of Neolithisation”*, November 06th-07 th 2015. Ljubljana, Slovenia.

Abstract: The whole evolution of human fertility is based only on indirect evidences, such as sites densities and paleodemographic reconstructions, and there is no evidence about number of babies born by prehistoric mothers. On those indirect evidences we have built one of the most important chapter of human evolution: people lived at the very low population densities until the beginning of the Neolithic when they experienced fertility increase. Starting point of the new ERC BIRTH project is that such important chapter of human evolution cannot be written without direct evidences about fertility rate and project intends to provide first direct, skeletal evidence about number of babies born by prehistoric mothers. The project develops an integrative framework for understanding skeletal, nutritional and cultural effects on fertility rates, and for the study of bioarchaeological evidence of birthing in the Central Balkans between 10000-5000 BC. In this presentation, special attention will be on possible role of culture in prehistoric demographic shift, and some archaeological evidences about community attitudes to birthing process and childcare from prehistoric Balkans will be presented.