The surveys carried out since 2002 in the Northern Pindus of Western Macedonia (Greece), have led to the discovery of an impressive number of sites, lithic scatters, finds spots and isolated artefacts, techno-typologically attributed to the Levallois Mousterian Middle Palaeolithic. The chipped stone artefacts are mainly distributed along the watersheds that surround the high altitude Vlah town of Samarina up to ca. 2100 m, on the ridges of the Boghdani and Gurguliu mountains in the Smolikas massif. Apart from the aforementioned finds, outcrops rich in good quality chert have also been discovered. They are often associated with decortication areas located close to the extractive points of the raw materials. Important sites were found also along the southern terraces of the Samariniotikos River at some 1500 m of altitude.

This conference presents the results so far achieved from the study of the landscape on which late Neanderthal groups moved, obtained knappable raw material for making tools from local sources, settled in base camps close to the river course, and practiced hunting activities along the mountain open landscapes. According to the typological characteristics of the chipped stone artefacts, and the location at the top of morainic circles, the assemblages have been attributed to a recent period in the development of the Levallois Mousterian Middle Palaeolithic. The Samarina finds show that Neanderthal groups seasonally exploited the natural resources of the Pindus highland zones most probably after 70,000 BP, during a period of climatic amelioration of the OIS-3.

The unique finds from the Northern Pindus chain help us understand some modes of behavior of the Middle Palaeolithic groups within an activity radius of ca. 20 km between some 1350 and 2100 m of altitude.