

Plant Exploitation During Bronze Age in Transylvania

Abstract

The habilitation thesis *Plant Exploitation During Bronze Age in Transylvania* represent a part of my scientific research carried out after obtaining my PhD degree in 2009, in a field of interdisciplinary research, namely archaeobotany. The PhD thesis entitled "Plant cultivation in pre and the protohistory of the intra Carpathian basin from Romania" was also published in 2009. In 2012, thanks to a UEFISCDI research grant, I published a new archaeobotany book: "Plant species within the diet of prehistoric communities from Transylvania". Unfortunately, Romania is facing with a great lack of specialists in the field of archaeobotany, although in the past things have not been too good (we had only two specialist, now retired) our country does not have an "archaeobotany school" like other surrounding countries. I believe that I have reached a professional level and I could manage and train students who would like to follow this field of research in Romania. Scientific work carried out during the 19 years of career focused strictly on the human diet has been materialized through publishing archaeobotany articles (58 studies) in Romanian and English, in specific journal in Romania and abroad, most indexed in international databases, also by books as a single author (3 books) or in collaboration (6 books).

The current research continues the doctoral thesis topic, attempting to complete the missing pieces of our knowledge on the human diet in the Bronze age.

The motivation for choosing this topic for my habilitation thesis comes from the fact that in last years I have worked mainly on archaeobotanical evidence from sites belonging to the Bronze Age. The discoveries were made in systematic or rescue archeological sites: Carei-*Bobald*, Tășnad-*La Sere* (Satu Mare) Șimleul Silvaniei-*Observator* (Sălaj) Vlaha-*Pad* (Cluj) Teleac - *Grușet-Hârburg* (Alba). In the habilitation thesis I presented strictly my own research, carried out on samples recovered from sites from the Transylvanian area. Because of that, this subject has become closer and more accessible in terms of the number of archaeobotanical data that helped to me to trace and sketch the evolution of plant exploitation in mentioned area. In this thesis I will refer strictly to the investigations processed and published by me. A work that would debate all possible discoveries related to Bronze Age, as well as analogies with other spaces, requires too much effort to be developed in a habilitation thesis but it will be the subject of my future research. Some archaeological sites provided a significant amount of macro botanical remains discovered in domestic contexts: the floor of the house, the hearth, pits or

supplies (Carei-Bobald, Teleac-Gruset-Hârburi), while others were isolated discoveries in contexts with ritual deposition (Șimleul Silvaniei -Observator, Vlahă-Pad). Whatever of the context of the discovery, the information obtained from the macro analysis of plant debris is extremely valuable in the process of the human plant diet reconstruction of the prehistory of the Transylvanian space. It should be emphasized that some of the results of scientific research, presented in the habilitation thesis are unique, they provide extremely valuable information on plant species exploited by the populations of the Bronze Age in Transylvania. We intend to publish the scientific results in the form of a book in English, this being the reason for writing the thesis in English, a thesis that will later be accessible to all specialists interested in this research topic.

Returning to the subject of the habilitation thesis, due to the remarkable advances of the Bronze Age societies and spectacular transformation of the way of life, the specialists dealing with this period name it: **The first golden age of Europe**. But if we talk in terms of diet, archaeobotanists call the change in the evolution of the food as the **Third food revolution** because the new species included in the human daily diet from Bronze Age changed remarkably the way of alimentation of those societies.

The habilitation thesis is structured on four chapters, some of them having subchapters dedicated to the plant species from Transylvania, but also to the archeological sites where they were discovered. Chapters 1 and 2 include, *Introduction* and *Proposal for Career Development*. Chapter 3 is dedicated to *Bronze Age plant species* in Europe with a synthetic approach and an approach to important species included in the human diet. In subchapter 3.1. we have advanced a *reconstruction of the climate and vegetation* during the Bronze Age based on a series of palynological studies carried out by specialists on areas related to the Transylvanian space. Subchapter 3.2. includes *case studies* of some sites chronologically framed in all the three periods mentioned above: early, middle, late. This subchapter is also the one that presents the unique scientific results regarding the plant species included in the human diet, but also the archaeological contexts in which they were discovered. Subchapter 3.3. analyzes the *list of important species* discovered in the sites of the Bronze Age in Transylvania, but also the hypotheses of their use in the human diet.

Chapter 4 contains *the conclusions* acquired after analyzing the evidence from the archaeological sites and a comparison of them from the seven archaeological sites investigated from an archaeobotanical point of view.

In conclusion, I believe that through archaeobotanical analyzes and scientific papers that I published related to this topic I have managed to contribute to the reconstruction of the way of life of Bronze Age communities. This is a very important issue for the interdisciplinary research from Romania and abroad because in this way we can join the "table" of prestigious research related to past diet reconstruction.

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