
Multidisciplinary approaches to the uses of plants as food, medicine and raw material by Mesolithic communities

Marian Berihuete-Azorín^{*1}, Raquel Piqué², Marta Alcolea², and Harry Robson³

¹Institute of Botany, University of Hohenheim – Allemagne

²Departament de Prehistòria, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona – Espagne

³University of York (UoY) – Department of Archaeology, BioArCh, University of York, York, North Yorkshire, YO10 5DD, UK, Royaume-Uni

Résumé

Either for food or as a raw material, plants were probably the most important resource for past hunter-gatherer communities in the temperate regions of the globe. Therefore, the investigation of human-plant relationships is necessary in order to understand the economic and social organization of past societies. The management of this resource and the applied processing techniques can be carried out in a variety of ways and scales, which have important social and economic implications. Whilst plant macroremains are generally better-preserved in anaerobic deposits, notably waterlogged/submerged localities, a suite of techniques now enables us to identify otherwise invisible remains. All together, molecular and isotopic techniques, analysis of phytolith, use-wear analysis of tools and archaeobotany, allow us to investigate the past use of plants, including nuts, berries and seeds, wood, underground storage organs (USOs), as well as fungi. It would be interesting to compare what different remains show about the use of plants and assess how these methodologies complement each other. Under this framework, several approaches might be relevant, from archaeobotany to ethnobotany, including experimental work. Methodological papers dealing with the recovery of wild plant remains or their interpretation are equally suitable for the session. It is likewise of interest to discuss the use of plants in different types of environments and to try to identify and define patterns and the relevant socio-economic and environmental variables affecting them.

Mots-Clés: plant management, plant as raw material, plant, foods, archaeobotany, isotopic technics, phytoliths

*Intervenant