

Archaeozoological researches in the eneolithic site from Drăgănești-Olt (Slatina Olt county)

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Drăgănești-Olt is 35 km south of Slatina town and 65 km north of Turnu Măgurele locality, at the limit between the Boian Plain and the Olt Valley. The tell-site from Drăgănești-Olt lies on the right bank of Sii rivulet (an old meander of the Olt river), in the midst of the flat alluvial plain, a swampy area in prehistory. 3645 faunal remains were recovered by the archaeological investigation in the Eneolithic site (Table 1). The analysed bones have been divided between three phases. The major phase of occupation (the lower layer (2-2,90 m depth) belong to Gumelnița A2; the next stratum developed during Gumelnița B1 (1-2 m depth) and the upper layer belongs to the third phase, corresponding to Sălcuța IV ¹.

In term of specimen counts cattle were the most important taxon in the lower and middle levels. So, in Gumelnița A2 they account 27.8 %, a seemingly value (27.6 %) is recorded during Gumelnița B1. The quota sharply decreases towards the end of the habitation up to 21.1 %. The NMI (minim number individuals) quantification better illustrates the decline, from 24.2 % at 14.8 %. The same decline in importance starting with Gumelnița A2 is emphasised in case of caprovines. During the site function their quota visible diminishes from 21,8 % at 8.1 % (as MNI) and 23.6 % - 8.9 % (as fragments). Surprisingly domestic pig is the next most common taxon accounting for 21 % of the MNI in the lower levels, the quota rising at 27.4 % in the upper levels. As fragments their quota is unchangeable (around 17 %). The descendent fluctuations of cattle and caprovines quota reflect upon the domestic/wild ratio. In this context the domestic species account 70-69.5 % in Gumelnița A2 decreasing at 51-57.7 % at the end of the Eneolithic habitation. Among the hunted mammals, red deer prevails in all contexts, with 21 % (as fragments) in earlier levels, reaching 35,6 % up to the end. The wild swine records a visible increased percent, especially in the upper levels, when two-folds.

It is worth mentioning the presence of the horse bones; domestic or wild form is difficult to suppose, its sample being extremely fragmented. Besides the above-mentioned species, roe deer, aurochs and a lot of small carnivorous were hunted.

Based on the aforementioned data, we may assume, purely hypothetically that, somewhere towards the end of the Gumelnița site function a retrogression in the animal husbandry would be happened. That is concretised in cattle and small ruminants declining and a greater interest in pig exploitation, a species that claimed not special conditions for feeding. In correlation, hunting gains in importance. Maybe climatic changes would

Table 1 – The species frequencies at Drăgănești Olt

	Phase I				Phase II			
	Frgm.	%	NMI	%	Frgm.	%	NMI	%
Bos taurus	200	27,8	31	24,2	419	27,6	48	21,8
Sus domesticus	124	17,2	27	21	282	18,6	52	23,6
Ovis/Capra	170	23,6	28	21,8	156	10,2	25	11,3
Canis familiaris	14	1,9	3	2,3	35	2,3	9	4
Domestics	508	70,6	89	69,5	892	58,8	134	60,9
Cervus elaphus	156	21,6	20	15,6	450	29,7	48	21,8
Sus ferrus	34	4,7	9	7	115	7,6	19	8,6
Equus caballus	9	1,2	3	2,3	25	1,6	5	2,2
Capreolus c.	7	0,9	2	1,5	6	0,3	3	1,3
Bos primigenius	1	0,1	1	0,7	15	0,9	3	1,3
Lepus sp.					1	0,06	1	0,4
Ursus arctos					1	0,06	1	0,4
Meles m.					3	0,1	2	0,2
Martes m.	1	0,1	1	0,7				
Castor fiber	2	0,2	2	1,5	5	0,3	2	0,2
Vulpes vulpes	1	0,1	1	1,5	2	0,1	2	0,2
Wilds	211	29,3	39	30,4	623	41,1	86	39
DETERMINED	719	100	128	100	1515	100	220	100
Bos/Cervus	4				40			
Sus sp.	1				8			
Bos sp.					2			
Splinters	42				160			
MAMMALS	766				1725			
Unio	5				35			
TOTAL	771				1760			

	Phase III				TOTAL SAMPLE			
	Frgm.	%	NMI	%	Frgm.	%	NMI	%
continued								
Bos taurus	210	21,1	20	14,8	829	25,6	99	20,4
Sus domesticus	181	18,2	37	27,4	587	18,1	116	24
Ovis/Capra	89	8,9	11	8,1	415	12,8	64	13,2
Canis familiaris	27	2,7	10	7,4	76	2,3	22	4,5
Domestics	507	51	78	57,7	1907	59	301	62,3
Cervus elaphus	354	35,6	27	20	960	29,7	95	19,6
Sus ferrus	88	8,8	14	10,3	237	7,3	42	8,6
Equus caballus	25	2,5	5	3,7	59	1,8	13	2,6
Capreolus c.	6	0,6	3	2,2	19	0,5	8	1,6
Bos primigenius	7	0,7	2	1,4	23	0,7	6	1,2
Lepus sp.					1	0,03	1	0,2
Ursus arctos	2	0,2	1	0,7	3	0,09	2	0,4
Meles m.	2	0,2	2	1,4	5	0,1	4	0,8
Martes m.	1	0,1	1	0,7	2	0,06	2	0,4
Castor fiber	1	0,1	1	0,7	8	0,2	5	1
Vulpes vulpes	1	0,1	1	0,7	4	0,1	4	0,8
Wilds	487	49	57	42,2	1321	41	182	37,6
DETERMINED	994	100	135	100	3228	100	483	100
Bt/Cervus	7				51			
Bos sp.	3				14			
Splinters	75				277			
MAMMALS	1079				3570			
Unio	35				73			

be partially responsible for this “crisis” in the economic system, even if it is known that Gumelnița Culture developed during the gently climate of the Atlantic². Notable changes appear in the kill-off patterns, too. In the first two phases bovines and small ruminants were mainly exploited for meat. In the last stage of settlement function a shift toward secondary product exploitation is emphasised in parallel with the drastic decreasing of their number.

Exploitation of aquatic resources during the site function is related to the vicinity of the river Olt, imprinting maybe a seasonal role to the economic activities. Fishing and gathering were not neglected having some contribution to the inhabitant diet. No fish remains and

Table 2 - Domestic species frequencies in Gumelnița sites (Frgm.)

	Bos taurus	Sus domesticus	Ovis/C apra	Canis familiaris.	Domes tics	Wilds
Drăgăne ști-Olt	25,6	18,1	12,8	2,3	59	41
Bordușa	21,8	19,3	22,1	19,3	82.6	17.4
Bucșani	31,2	18,5	6,4	1,7	64.2	35.8
Gumelni ța	61,2	9,4	11,2	6,6	87.9	12.1
Tășaul	17,9	10,3	24	7,1	69.6	26.9

only 73 snail shells (*Unio* sp.) were found, even if his number would had been greater. Taking into account the inaccurate method of bone collecting (hand picking) we suppose that aquatic resources would have been much more exploited as the statistics shows it.

As for the synchronism with other Gumelnița sites (concerning archaeozoological data), partially likenesses were established. The great part of the sites developed an economy focused upon cattle breeding: e.g. Drăgănești-Olt (phases I; II), level Gumelnița A from Căscioarele³, Gumelnița (all levels)⁴, Bucșani⁵, Tangâră⁶. The cattle quota fluctuates between 27-45 %; sometimes pig or caprovines rank the second, connected to the local resources or the facilities offered by the biotop. Lower percentages in case of bovines are noted at Bordușani (21,8 % as fragments and 11 % as MNI)⁷. At Tășaul, sooner in Gumelnița A2, cattle record just 17 % (both quantification methods), exceeded by caprovines with 35 %⁸. At Însurăței-Popină I caprovines are quoted with 17.3 %, slightly surpassing the cattle (16 %)⁹. In Gumelnița B or somewhere later (in case of Drăgănești-Olt) the aforementioned changes would happen. They are clear observed also in case of Căscioarele¹⁰. Alexandra Bolomey argued for these changes the decreasing of bovines' tall due to the irrational exploitation during Neolithic. Their breeding became not advantageously, the meat supplying being counterbalanced by an intensifying of deer exploitation (meat, hide and antler)¹¹. For the moment this hypothesis seems to

provide good arguments even if it was elaborated more than fifteen years ago. Any time the phenomenon is not applicable in case of Gumelnița site, where the animal economy is homogenous during the site function¹².

Palaeofaunal data argue the existence of various biotopes in the surroundings of Drăgănești-Olt. Small ruminants preferred a dry environment with forested spots. Cattle had similarly requirements with a little more humidity and suids needed well-watered forested areas. Red deer needed forests; roe deer and horse preferred also the forest steppe and open lands. Wild swine, badger needed well-watered spots with forest galleries in the vicinity of the river Olt. Reiterating these data beside the mammal frequencies it would be supposed that a main part of the area was probably plain forests with spots of grassy steppe and forest galleries along the waters.

Note

1 Nica, Schuster, Zorzoliu, 1995, 11, 18

2 Cârциumaru, 1996, 14

3 Bolomey, 1968, 19-29

4 Necrasov, Haimovici, 1966, 103-104

5 Bălășescu, 1998

6 Necrasov, Haimovici, 1959, 561-570

7 Moise, 1997, 114

8 Bălășescu, 1999

9 Moise, 1999, 176

10 Bolomey, op cit.

11 Dumitrescu, Bolomey, Mogoșanu, 1983, 152-153

12 Necrasov, Haimovici, 1966, 103

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