

# TWO PROBLEMS ABOUT THE CAVES DWELLING IN BANAT IN PREHISTORY

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It is known that at first glance, cave suggests fear, because of darkness, moistness and total order, seems to be a hostile environment of a total possible human habitation. Researches conducted in Romania - and this is true all over the world - have shown that caves were the prehistoric human groups for a preferred homelessness and serious until the artificial shelters – pit houses or hovels.

Among the many interesting issues discussed in depth, is the second post by large possibilities in the results: 1) the criteria according to which in prehistory - and not only - people choose caves that were to become a refuge for generations and 2) the reasons why they did as a (relatively) small caves to present evidence of human use. The talk at a time. These issues have been discussed for a long time ago by the geographers<sup>1</sup> and archeologists<sup>2</sup>, bringing explanations are more or less satisfactory. Given that some years we are concerned with our team of collaborators research the endokarst in Banat, allow us to address briefly of the many problems that it raises living caves, only two: 1) the position of the cave mouth with traces of living versus wind and 2) elevation relative to the cave inhabited (in our case distance from the water thalweg).

1. It should be recalled that the start of over 1252 caves knew in Banat<sup>3</sup>, traces of human habitation (until XIX<sup>th</sup>) recorded in only 135 of them<sup>4</sup>. Of these, we have additional data on entry (the mouth) for 45 cases, which they analyze and, depending on the area. We are convinced that their analysis is sufficient for us to form an accurate picture of the played role (or not) of the cave mouth orientation in its designation as a shelter and even abandon some preconceived idea that there's no background in the field.

**a) In the Cerna Valley**, the analysis takes into account the 13 caves. Of these, 4 were mouth-oriented to E (P. cu Aburi - 2146 / 2, P. Hoților - 2146 / 6, P.Nr. 61 Ineț - 2144/12, P. 2143/a- Bobot), 3 are targeted to N (P. No. 24 de la Prisaca de la Șchiopu - 2144/24, P. No. 25 de la Prisaca de la Șchiopu - 2144/25, P. No. 26 de la Prisaca de la Șchiopu - 2144/26) and 2 each for V (P. Gaura Ungurului - 2147 / 9, P. Șoroniște - 2147 / 6), for NE (P. 1 din stânga hidrocentralei(2145 /...), P. No. 3 din stânga hidrocentralei (2145 /...) and to SE (P. Mică (2144/65), P. Oilor (2144/63)).<sup>5</sup>

**b) In the Caraș Valley** we have 14 caves, which 8 of them are the entry for V (P. Mărghițaș -2237 / 8, P. Cuptorul Porcului - 2240 / 8, P. Cerbului - 2251 / 1), P. Lungă - 2240 / 29, P. Omului - 2240/28, P. cu Oase - 2240/10, P. Țapului - 2240/27, P. Grădinca - 2240/13;), 2 to N: P. Cuptorul Ciumei - 2240/9 - the first entry, P. Vrașka - 2238/10), 2 for SE (P. Fugarilor - 2238/25 and P. Cuptorul Ciumei - 2240/9- the second entry), 2 to E (P.

<sup>1</sup> M. Bleahu/V. Decu/ Șt. Negrea/ C. Pleșa/ I. Povară/ I. Viehmann, 1976, pp. 36-39. Pompei Cocean, 1979, pp. 105-126.

<sup>2</sup> S. M. Petrescu 2000, pp. 75-84.

<sup>3</sup> C. Goran 1982, pp. 122-173.

<sup>4</sup> S. M. Petrescu 2010.

<sup>5</sup> M. Bleahu/V. Decu/ Șt. Negrea/ C. Pleșa/ I. Povară/ I. Viehmann, 1976, pp. 36-39. Pompei Cocean, 1979, pp. 105-126

de la Socolovăț - 2238 / 1 and P. No. 1 of Socolovăț - 2238/26), to a SV (P.2 Mai - 2238/30).

c) **The Nera Valley** is represented in our analysis of four caves that have mouth-oriented to the E ( P. din colțul Cătănii - .... / .., P. Gaura Hicleană - 2230 / 3 and P. Gaura Porcarului - 2227/13 ), One for NE (to P. la Găuri, P. Mare - 2227/11) and one for SE (P. Rolului - in 2230 / 4).

d) **In the Danube Valley** we have about 2 caves with entry-oriented to SE (P. Veterani - 2211 / 2 and P. Gaura Chindiei II - 2221 / 2), a cave-oriented to S (P. din Valea Ceuca - ... / ..) and one for NE (P. Gura Ponicevei - 2211 / 3).

e) **The Bârzava basin** records (archaeological) three caves, with mouth targeted in 2 cases to E (P. Gaura Turcului - 2246/11, P. Gaura Pârșului - 2246/12) and to the NV (P. din Dealul Colțan - 2251/51).

f) **In the Miniș Valley** we have three caves, one oriented to N, (P. Ponor Uscată), V (to P. Hoțu - 2233 / 6) and last-oriented to SE (P. Ponor - Plopa - 2233 / 1).

g) **The Gârliște Valley** has a cave mouth oriented to V (P. Galaț - 2236 / 4), in the **Râul Mare basin** a cave with archaeological traces oriented to N, (P. Mare din Dealul Socaia- 2160 / 1) and in the **Rusca Mountains** clearing a cave is oriented to N-NW (P. cu Apă de la Românești - 2273 / 1).

Reviewing caves with traces of habitation to which we have verified the orientation of mouth, shows at least an interesting fact: contrary views of some, people in the prehistoric times (and historical) does not necessarily sought to live in caves with his mouth usually targeted to the south and therefore more exposed to heat and light sun, but those caves providing other more important for their survival<sup>6</sup>.

Moreover, graphs made on the number of valleys and caves taken into question (pl.I) denotes a fact that could be intuit and observed in the absence of such graphical representation: matters in these cases the orientation of valleys to the cardinal points. 2. Nobody has raised the relative altitude of caves with traces of living versus brook / river / valley / plateau than the tangential, to support and sometimes allegations of occupations as fishing, hunting and grazing.

In the case of new caves analyzed, only a few are located near water or are crossed by a watercourse, such as P. Ponor-Plopa (2233 / 1)<sup>7</sup>, but there is a special situation. Otherwise, caves are situated at different heights, sometimes even higher. **In the Cerna Valley**, arrangement starts from their relative altitude of 20 m (P. 2143/a-Bobot), continues to 45 m (P. Gaura Ungurului - 2147 / 9), up to 90 m (P. Oilor - 2144 / 63), 108 m (P.Nr. 61 Ineț - 2144/12) and actually arrive at the relative altitude of 240 meters (P. cu Aburi - 2146 / 2)! Above this quota, access to the cave is today impossible without special equipment. Probably human communities and weather risk scale of this type to cave - at least - removed from water sources and even inaccessible to domestic animals.

**The Caras Valley**, caves are at a variable elevation relative to the river, from 50 - 65 m (P. Cuptorul Ciumei - 2240 / 9, P. Fugarilor - 2238/25, P. Omului - 2240/28, with P. cu Oase - 2240/10, P. Țapului - 2240/27, P. Grădinca - 2240/13, P. Vrașka - 2238/10), 100

<sup>6</sup> It may be mentioned here that some of the difference for people in the shelter choice: to be fossil cave, as far as possible upward, with gentle microclimate, floor neaccidentat without power, without underground water courses to produce the rain flood with Strategic Arrangement (defensible in case of attack), with easy source of water, near the forest trail, near pastures for animals the family close to the waters where was fishing.

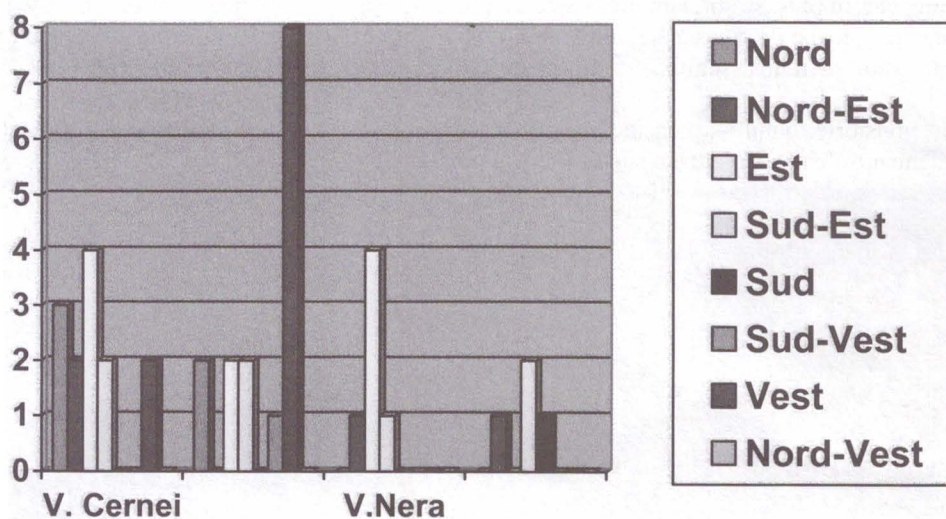
<sup>7</sup> If this cave is not about the discovery of the oldest contemporary human bones, but it is a modest discovery of ceramic fragments Coțofeni maded in May 1977.

m (P.2 Mai - 2238/30, P. Cuptorul Porcului - 2240 / 8), 115 m (P. Cerbului - 2251 / 1), even 150 m (P. de la Socolovăț - 2238 / 1 and P. No. 1 de la Socolovăț - 2238/26). In addition to a part of the right slope of Caraș river, some caves have an easy exit from the Crno Polje plateau, doline plateau dotted with vegetation and poor, deprived of water, where, however, could hunt and practice of animal modest grazing (sheeps - goats, for example). In this case are P. Omului - 2240/28, P. cu Oase - 2240/10, P. Țapului - 2240/27, P. Grădinca - 2240/13, P.2 Mai - 2238/30, P. Cuptorul Porcului - 2240 / 8), the distance to the plateau was only 30 - 35 m!

**In the Nera Gorges**, caves known to us with traces of human habitation is situated over the river at an altitude of 20 m (P. Rolului - in 2230 / 4) 50 - 60 m (P. Gaura Hicleană - 2230 / 3 and P. Gaura Porcarului - 2227/13), 100 m (P. din Colțul Cătănii - ..../...), and even to 150 - 170 m (at P. la Găuri, P. Mare - 2227/11).

Reviewing altitude of caves used in the past as human shelter, reveals firstly that the caves are near water (elevation between 0 - 5 m) missing (one exception, P. Ponor-Plopa (2233 / 1), but here the archaeological material is unsafe), which is at least explicable by the movement of cold air near the water line, the danger of being easily attacked by other animals and people, the danger of devastating by high flood, etc.. In addition, it is known that the caves located near the water line are the newest and the oldest are close to the ridge<sup>8</sup>; be so good as now thousands or even hundreds of years in caves near the water have been or half active even active, so moist and thus unfit to even temporary housing. In practice, the man chose to shelter those caves that offer the best that life itself, as well as the safety of his animals.

In prehistory, the man was considered a part of nature and the cave was used as a done and the other elements of nature, in a single purpose: survival and progress<sup>9</sup>.



#### PLATE

**Diagram with the direction of orientation of the mouth caves in the prehistoric Banat**

<sup>8</sup> I. Povară / Cr. Goran / W.F. Gutt, 1990, p. 8-11

<sup>9</sup> Pompei Cocean, 1979, p. 126.

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## PROBLEME LEGATE DE LOCUINȚA PEȘTERILE DIN BANAT ÎN PREISTORIE

(Rezumat)

Trecerea în revistă a peșterilor cu urme de locuire pentru care avem verificată orientarea gurii, evidențiază cel puțin un fapt interesant: contrar părerilor unora, oamenii timpurilor preistorice (dar și istorice) nu urmăreau neapărat să locuiască în peșteri cu gura orientată de regulă spre sud și expuse deci mai mult căldurii și luminii soarelui, ci acele peșteri ce asigurau alte condiții mai importante pentru supraviețuirea lor și a animalelor din turmă. Mai mult, contează mult în aceste cazuri orientarea văilor față de punctele cardinale.

Analiza - pe baza criteriului altitudinii - a unor peșteri utilizate în trecut ca adăpost uman, relevă în primul rând faptul că peșterile aflate lângă apă (altitudine între 0 – 5 m) lipsesc (o singură excepție, P. Ponor-Plopa - 2233/1, dar aici materialul arheologic este nesigur), fapt explicabil cel puțin prin circulația aerului rece pe lângă firul apei, pericolul de a fi ușor atacați de animale și alți oameni, pericolul unor viituri devastatoare, etc. În plus, se știe faptul că peșterile aflate aproape de firul apei sunt cele mai noi, iar cele mai vechi sunt cele aproape de creastă; se putea astfel foarte bine ca acum mii sau chiar sute de ani peșterile din apropierea apelor să fi fost semiactive sau chiar active, deci umede și astfel improprii unei locuiri chiar temporare.

În preistorie, omul s-a considerat parte a naturii și s-a folosit de peșteră, așa cum a făcut-o și cu celelalte elemente ale naturii, într-un singur scop: supraviețuirea și progresul.