

Food for the soul, wood for the body: archaeobotanical studies on charred plant remains from *tumuli* No 4 and No 5 at Golemiya kairyak locality near the village of Mogila, Yambol region, Southeastern Bulgaria

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ABSTRACT

Up to now there has been a little archaeobotanical research on plants and plant-based foods utilised in mortuary practices during the Roman period in the province of Thrace. This paper presents the preliminary archaeobotanical study on four cremation burials in *tumuli* No 4 and No 5, part of the cemetery at Golemiya Kairyak locality, located in the northern part of the Roman province of Thrace (present-day southeastern Bulgaria). Based on the analyses of the burial practices and inventory, the *tumuli* and the related structures could be dated between the second half of the 2nd and the early 3rd century AD.

All of the studied cremation burial pits contained pyre debris and grave inventories. Three of these features showed a typical assemblage consisting of cereals, bread and/or similar processed food remains, as well as nuts and fruits. Among the charred plant remains deposited in the grave pits were locally grown species such as *T. monococcum* L., *T. aestivum* L. ssp. *compactum*, *Vicia faba* L., *Cicer arietinum* L., *Juglans regia* L., *Vitis vinifera* ssp. *vinifera*, *Pyrus communis* L., as well as imported kernels of *Pinus pinea* L. The archaeobotanical material from *tumuli* No 4 and No 5 provides opportunity to study some of the taphonomic processes documented in burial contexts and successfully complements the data about ritual use of plants in mortuary practices in the province of Thrace.

Keywords: plant offerings, archaeobotanical remains, *tumuli*, cremation burials, Roman period, the province of Thrace

INTRODUCTION

Ritual plant offering and communal funeral feasting were common and widespread mortuary practices in the Roman world. There was a broad perception that sacrificial offering of food and drinks to the deceased was intended to sustain them on their journey to the afterlife. This represented part of a sacrificial contract with the deities believed to receive the dead into the afterlife. The sharing and giving of food between the living and the dead may have created solidarity, group identity and social memory (Williams 2004, 422). The archaeobotanical study of plant food offerings in cremation graves and cemeteries of the Roman period seems to have attracted greater interest in the last 15 years, resulting in various publications on Gallo – Roman cemeteries in France (Bouby, Marival 2004; Preiss et al. 2005), Roman burials in Bel-

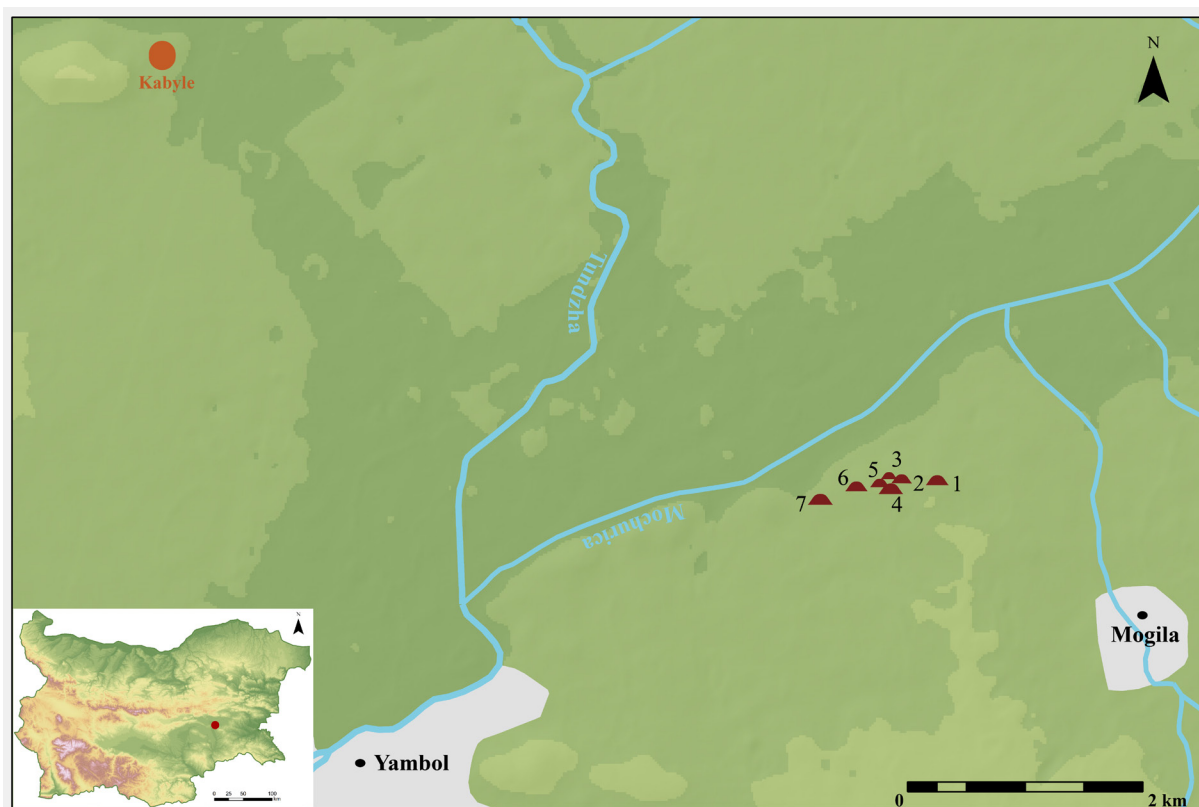


Fig.1. Map of Bulgaria with the location of the tumular cemetery at the Golemiya Kairyak locality

gium (Cooremans 2008), the Netherlands (Bakels 2005), Germany (Kreuz1995a, b; 2000), the United Kingdom (Davis, de Moulins 2000), Northern Italy (Rottoli, Castiglioni 2011), Croatia (Lodwick et al. 2018) and Switzerland (Petrucci-Bavaud et al. 2000; Pfaffli et al. 2004; Jacomet et al. 2006). However, the earliest research into plant offerings in cremation cemeteries in Italy dates back to the 1950s, when H. Helbæk (1953; 1956; 1960) studied finds from pre-urban Rome. This was much later followed by the studies undertaken on a cemetery at Pompeii (Matterne, Derreumaux 2008).

Communal feasting was an important part of Thracian ritual, and it accompanied every important event – from weddings, political agreements and military victories to funerals (*see* Георгиева и др. 1999). The available archaeological and archaeobotanical data shows that during the Roman period, and in particular between the 1st and 2nd centuries AD, food sacrifices and funeral feasting were still elements of the burial rituals in Thrace. Unfortunately, up to now there have been few studies on archaeobotanical evidence on plants and plant-based foods, associated with mortuary practices in the province of Thrace. Their role within ritual contexts has been interpreted mainly in the light of archaeological observations made by the excavators of the sites. According to the available data, both domestic and wild animals were sacrificed together with plant offerings such as fruit, nuts, bread and pastries, seeds, herbs and mushrooms (e.g. Георгиева 2000; Гетов 1989, 47 – 65; Праматаров 2018, 16 – 17; Теодосиев, Манов 1993). The presence of plant offerings in burial contexts has been investigated and highlighted by R. Georgieva (Георгиева 2000), discussing both their symbolic and utilitarian functions. Archaeobotanical analysis of plants and bread-like remains, some of which related to burial contexts from the Roman period, have been carried out and discussed by Tz. Popova (Попова



Fig. 2. Structure No 2 (cremation burial), tumulus No 4 (photo provided by the excavators of the site)



Fig. 3. Structure No 3 (cremation burial), tumulus No 4 (photo provided by the excavators of the site)

1986; 2002; Popova 2016). However, a more systemized research, based mainly on archaeobotanical data from ritual contexts, has been done by I. Hristova (Hristova I. 2015). *Pinus pinea* remains and their role in mortuary practices in Hellenistic and Roman times has been reviewed by Tz. Popova and H. Hristova (Popova, Hristova H. 2017). In spite of these studies, the state of the archaeobotanical evidence is still fragmentary. More research is required and more precise sampling strategies need to be carried out during excavations.

This paper presents the preliminary results from the archaeobotanical investigation of four cremation burials in burial mounds No 4 and No 5, part of the Roman cemetery at Golemiya Kairyak locality near the village of Mogila, Southeastern Bulgaria. It suggests an interpretation of the ritual and symbolic function of the analysed plant taxa, along with a discussion of how and when they entered the burial context.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SETTING

Burial mounds (*tumuli*) became one of the main burial features in the period between the 1st and 3rd centuries AD for almost the entire territory of the Roman province of Thrace. According to Pramatarov (Праматаров 2018, 9 – 11) several types of tumular can be conditionally distinguished: 1) a single *tumulus*; 2) a group of several *tumuli* (from 2 to 7 mounds), 3) small tumular cemeteries (between 8 – 20 mounds), 4) large groups of *tumuli* (over 20 mounds). The classification was mainly determined by the number of embankments, the distance between them and by the internal organizational model of the *tumuli* (which could be linear, circular or “scattered”). From a topographical point of view, the cemeteries during this period were located in the plains of the province and in its semi–mountainous areas, up to 800 m above sea level (Праматаров 2018, 9 – 11).

Nowadays, the Roman period necropolis at Golemiya Kairyak locality lies in the territory of the village of Mogila, Yambol district. However, during the Roman period it was situated in the northern part of the Roman province of Thrace (the present-day Southeastern Bulgaria). The cemetery consists of 7 *tumuli* (Fig. 1). Archaeological excavations and archaeobotanical studies were carried out at *tumuli* No 4 and No 5 in 2018, as part of a project between the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology – Polish Academy of Sciences and the Regional Historical Museum at Yambol. The project was supported under Project No. NCN OPUS 2017/25/B/HS3/02516 of the National Science Centre – Poland (Александров и др. 2019а, 179 – 182).

Burial mound No 4

Tumulus No 4 is hemispherical in shape with an oval base of 20 x 25 m and a height of 1.8 m. During the excavations two cremation burials and two features related to funerary practices were discovered and studied. The primary feature (documented as Feature No 2) represents a grave pit, rectangular in shape, dug into the ancient humus soil horizon. The excavators of the site suggest that the body of the deceased had been first placed upon a funeral pyre. After that, the skeletal remains, pyre debris and iron nails from the cremation activity were collected and all placed together at the bottom of the pit (Fig. 2). An earthen mound with a height of 0.8 – 1 m and a diameter of 6 m was then heaped up above the grave. The inventory consists of six clay vessels, an iron medallion with golden encrusted plate, a bronze coin of Lucius Verus (161 – 169 AD), animal bones and burnt plant offerings. The anthropological analysis of the human remains suggests that they belong to an adult (female?) individual (Александров и др. 2019а, 178 – 179).

In the northern periphery of the *tumulus*, Feature No 3, a cremation burial, was excavated (Fig. 3). The funerary ritual had been performed in the same way in that pyre debris was collected and placed at the bottom of the grave pit. A ceramic bowl, pieces of a bronze vessel, plant offerings and animal bones were found in the grave pit as well (Александров и др. 2019а, 178 – 180).

These two graves were surrounded by a round stone wall. In the periphery, two other features related to the mortuary practices were found (Fig. 4). Finally, an earth mound with a diameter of 16 m and height of 1.7 m was piled up. Based on the analysis of the funerary practices and grave inventory, the mound and its features could be dated to the second half of the 2nd century AD (Александров и др. 2019а, 179 – 180).

Burial mound No 5

Burial mound No 5 is hemispherical in shape, with a diameter of 20 m and a height of 1 m (Fig. 5). The centre of the mound is at an altitude 173.99 m. At its highest part there is an oval-shaped trench with a diameter of 1 x 0.8 m and depth up to 0.8 m. The mound was completely

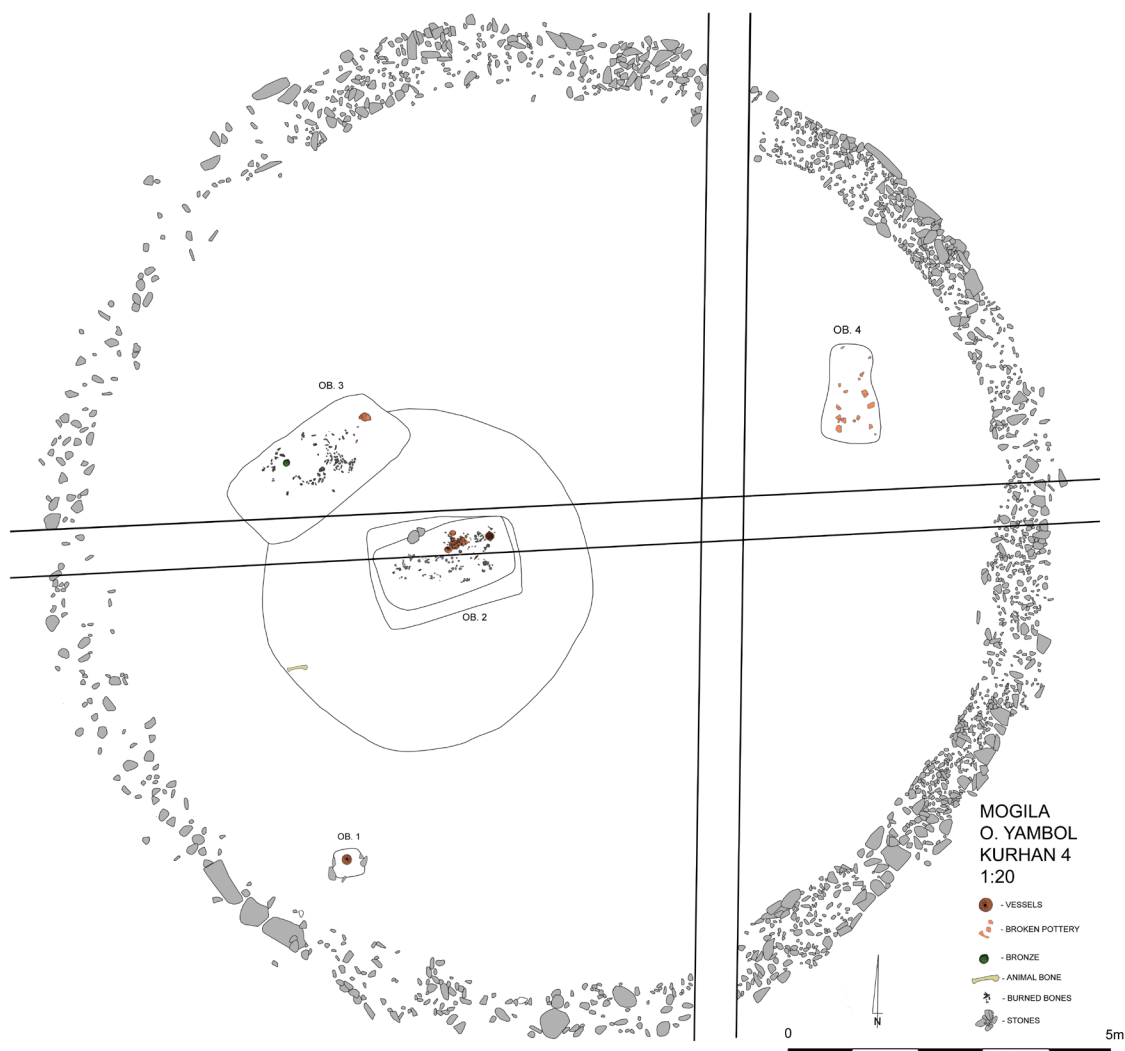


Fig. 4. Plan of the excavated burial features in tumulus No 4 (Александров и др. 2019a, 179)

investigated with 6 cremation burials, 4 inhumation burials as well as 3 features related to mortuary practices. Features No 7, 9 and 10 (cremation burials) had been placed in the central part of the barrow. Features No 1 – 3 (cremation burials) were situated in the mound's periphery where the other features related to mortuary practices were found as well. The inhumation burials (No 8, 11 – 13) were discovered in the southern part. All features were enclosed by a stone wall and an earthen mound had been accumulated above, with a diameter of 13 m and height of 1 m (Fig. 5). Based on the analysis of mortuary practices and the grave goods, the *tumulus* and the related structures could be dated to between the second half of the 2nd century and the early 3rd century AD (Александров и др. 2019b, 180 – 182).

METHODS AND MATERIALS

The archaeobotanical field strategy involved probabilistic or judgemental sampling within representative features. These were ashy deposits in the grave pits (pyre debris) and the content of ceramic vessels that had been part of the grave inventory. However, sampling procedures

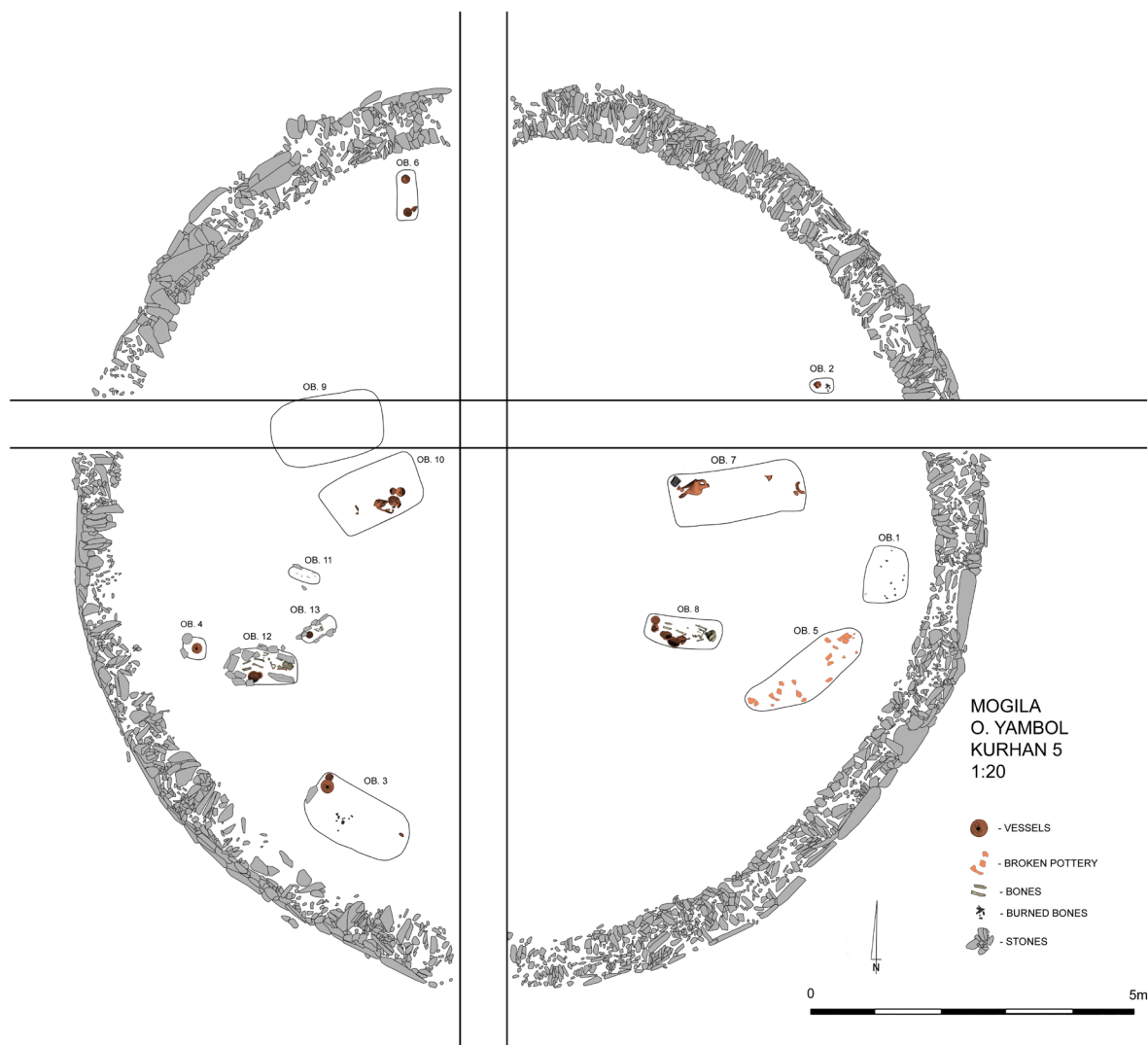


Fig. 5. Plan of the excavated burial features in tumulus No 5 (Александров и др. 2019b, 181)

varied by context. Readily visible charred plant remains were gathered manually (for example fragments of charred wood), but in the sections with higher charcoal density, soil samples were collected and processed using a bucket flotation. A sieve with 1x1 mm mesh size was used. The volume of each sample was measured prior to flotation.

Twenty six soil samples (or a total of 213 l) were processed. However, only sixteen of the samples, collected from the cremation grave pits, could be defined as informative and representative. A significant amount (3.100 kg) of charred archaeobotanical remains were recovered and sorted according to their preserved integrity.¹ More than 6 000 charred remains were analysed, probably representing only a small fraction of the original plant deposit as not all the contexts were processed by flotation. The ubiquity of each plant taxon has been calculated per context as a percentage proportion of the total number of remains. Each fraction underwent preliminary visual examination with illuminated magnifying glass. Identification of taxa was carried out using a stereomicroscope BRESSER Advance ICD at magnification between 20x and 40x.

¹Measured in dry condition, after the flotation procedure.

For the anthracological analysis, each fragment was broken manually. The anatomical characteristics of the wood were observed in transverse, tangential and radial planes, using a reflected light microscope with dark field illumination and magnifications between 20x and 50x. Identification was based on identification keys, wood anatomical atlas (Schweingrüber 1978) and a reference collection of charred wood specimens.²

RESULTS

A total of 11 different taxa and bread-like fragments, have been identified. The archaeobotanical assemblage consists of two separate categories: **1)** ritual plant food offerings (approximately 5 in number, 3% of the studied material); **2)** fire wood and/or remains of the cremation facility (approximately 94,7%).

Ritual plant food offerings

A total of 418 charred plant food remains were identified in the samples, including grains of cereal and leguminous crops, fruits and nuts, bread-like/porridge (?) fragments, also seeds of *Vitis vinifera* ssp. *vinifera* and *Pyrus communis*, stones of *Prunus* sp., nutshells of *Juglans regia*, bracts of cones, shells and kernels of *Pinus pinea*. Cereal crops are represented by 2 taxa – einkorn (*Triticum monococcum* L.) and club wheat (*Triticum aestivum* ssp. *compactum* Host). However, einkorn is predominant as it occurs in all samples. Two leguminous species have been identified – chickpeas (*Cicer arietinum* L.) and fava bean (*Vicia faba* L.).

The state of preservation of the analysed plant remains varied from sample to sample, but also from one type of plant remains to another. Considerable differences in the degree of carbonisation were encountered (i.e. *Pinus pinea* nutshells were found both open and closed) (Fig. 6). Nutshells, stones, seeds, kernels and remains of cones were found fragmented but fairly well preserved. Pulses and cereal grains were preserved better, although *testa* was disturbed in places.

Firewood

A significant number of charred wood remains were found. The charcoal assemblage was composed of shapeless pieces of wood and bark, as well as fragments of branches and twigs, varying in size between 2 mm and 5 cm in length and between 3 cm and 5 cm in diameter. Four different taxa were identified, although the samples were clearly dominated by a single wood taxon – *Quercus* sp. The analysis has shown that *Fagus sylvatica* L., *Acer campestre* L. and *Pinus* sp. also occurred in representative amounts.

Structure No 2 (cremation burial) within mound No 4

A total of 5 samples from the grave pit were collected and analysed. The amount of recovered archaeobotanical remains is significant (approximately 2 kg).³ The content of three ceramic vessels was sampled as well, but no archaeobotanical material was found.

The archaeobotanical assemblage consisted of charred einkorn grains (*Triticum monococcum* L.), fava bean (*Vicia faba* L.), chickpea (*Cicer arietinum* L.), grape seeds (*Vitis vinifera* ssp. *vinifera*), pear seeds (*Pyrus communis* L.), stones of *Prunus* sp, fragmented walnut shells and nuts of *Juglans regia* L., as well as small parts of stem of herbaceous plant whose precise identification was not possible due to its poor state of preservation (Diagram 1).Of particular

²Reference collection kept at the Department of Interdisciplinary Research and Archaeological Map of Bulgaria, NAIM – BAS, provided by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Tzvetana Popova.

³Charred plant remains, measured after flotation in dry condition.



Fig. 6. Charred nutshells of *Pinus pinea* found in cremation burial No 2, tumulus No 4 (photo by H. Hristova)



Fig. 7. Charred cone fragments of *Pinus pinea* found in cremation burial No 2, tumulus No 4 (photo by H. Hristova)

interest is the large amount of charred *Pinus pinea* L. nutshells (some of them semi-opened), kernels, scales and other small and unidentifiable parts of the pine cone (Fig.7). Fragments of bread/cereal porridge (?) were found as well (Figs. 8 – 9). The components of the dough have not been investigated yet, but the primary examination shows that they have an irregular shape, bumpy surface and a porous inner structure with negative imprints of grains.



Fig. 8 – 9. Charred nutshells and kernels of *Pinus pinea*, found in cremation burial No 2, tumulus No 4 (photo by H. Hristova)

Anthracological analysis has shown the use of three deciduous and one coniferous species – oak (*Quercus* sp.), beech (*Fagus sylvatica* L.), field maple (*Acer campestre* L.) and pine (*Pinus* sp.). A high concentration of fragmented branches and bark remains was found.

Structure No 3 (cremation burial) within tumulus No 4

A total of 3 samples from structure No 3 were analysed. Charred remains belonged to einkorn (*Triticum monococcum* L.) and club wheat (*Triticum aestivum* ssp. *compactum*), grape (*Vitis vinifera* ssp. *vinifera*) and walnut (*Juglans regia* L.). Small bread/cereal porridge fragments were also found. Charred wood was from *Quercus* sp. and *Fagus sylvatica* L. (Diagram 2).

Structure No 7 (cremation burial) within tumulus No 5

The archaeobotanical remains from structure No 7 were recovered from a total of 3 samples. Einkorn (*Triticum monococcum* L.), grape seeds (*Vitis vinifera* ssp. *vinifera*), walnut shells (*Juglans regia* L.) and small shapeless pieces of bread or cereal porridge were identified. The analysis of charred wood has shown the persistent use of oak (*Quercus* sp.), pine (*Pinus* sp.) and beech (*Fagus sylvatica* L.) (Diagram 3).

Structure No 10 (cremation burial) within tumulus No 5

2 samples from structure No 10 were analysed. The archaeobotanical assemblage consisted of six grape seeds (*Vitis vinifera* ssp. *vinifera*) and a small number of einkorn grains. Charred wood remains belonged to *Quercus* sp. (Diagram 4).

DISCUSSION

Food for the soul

Cremation burials provide a great opportunity for the preservation of funeral feast remains or plant offerings for the deceased (Lodwick et al. 2018, 7). According to K. Pramatarov (Праматаров 2018, 16 – 17) there are two ways that food offerings could enter a burial context. Directly, if they were intentionally placed on the *bustum*, or indirectly when ritually burnt plants together with pyre debris were collected from the *ustrinum* and placed in the *cinerarium*, the

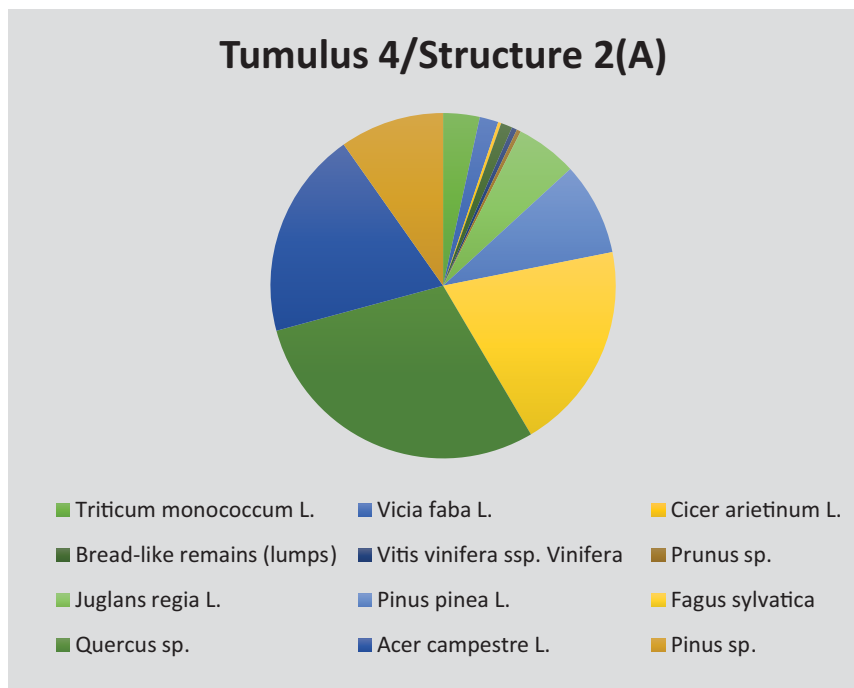


Diagram 1. Quantative ratio between the plant taxa represented in the samples from cremation burial No 2, tumulus No 4

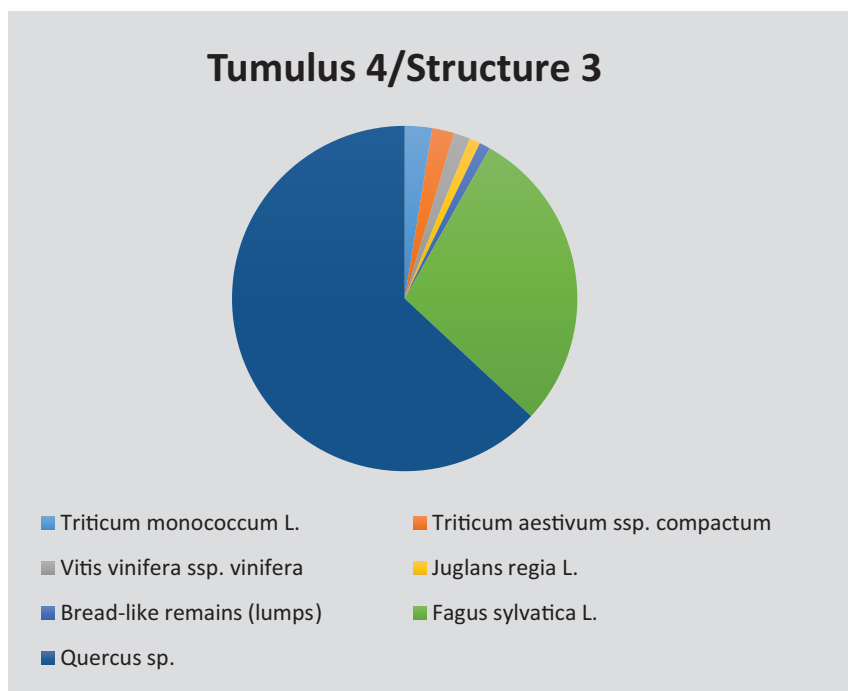


Diagram 2. Quantative ratio between the plant taxa represented in the samples from cremation burial No 3, tumulus No 4

grave or ritual pit/wooden chest/baskets or vessels. Plants may also have derived from funerary meals, although, such ritual meals are more likely to have been preserved only if there is evidence of other features related to mortuary practices at the site (Lodwick et al. 2018, 8).

What we know from the analysis of the archaeobotanical material from *tumuli* No 4 and No 5 is that some of the plant remains underwent several types of macro structural changes. This consisted of deformation, fragmentation and changes in size due to a long – term high temperature exposure, while other remains were fairly well preserved. We may suggest that ritual foods were placed or had fallen in the periphery of the burning fire which might have con-

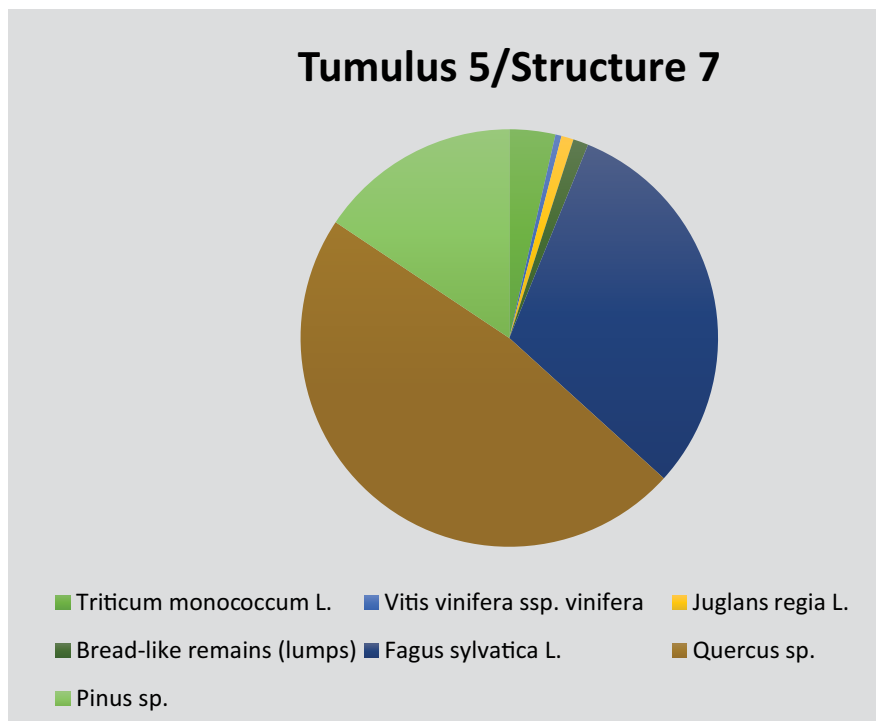


Diagram 3. Quantitative ratio between the plant taxa represented in the samples from cremation burial No 7, tumulus No 5

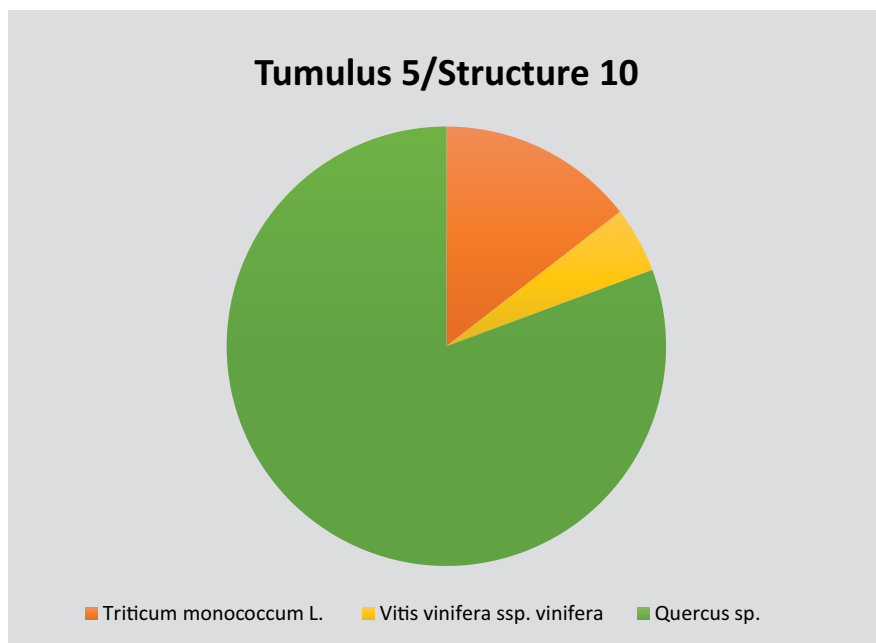


Diagram 4. Quantitative ratio between the plant taxa represented in the samples from cremation burial No 10, tumulus No 5

tributed to their state of preservation. However, there is no certain evidence as to whether they were burnt on the pyre, before or after the cremation. They could equally be defined either as pyre debris or as burial offerings. The presence of fragmented stones and seeds of fleshy fruits, and bread remains, suggests that part of the meals consumed at the funeral ceremony could have been deposited as well.

The preservation of carbonized plant food remains in a ritual context and associated with cremation burials is a relatively common phenomenon, although a number of processes may result in a loss of significant information. Since all of the offerings were subject to combus-

tion, the selective preservation which may occur in the majority of settlement sites for example can be ruled out. Plant remains from settlement sites are selectively preserved depending on whether they are subjected to processing, cooking or storage. They have differing probabilities of coming into contact with fire and thus being preserved. Non-selective combustion of all the remains might therefore provide a more realistic picture of the cultivated/imported and collected plants present (Rottoli, Castiglioni 2011, 500). All species, represented in the samples from *tumuli* No 4 and No 5, belong to the natural vegetation of the region or are grown locally, except for the Mediterranean stone pine which cannot thrive on the territory of Bulgaria due to unfavourable climatic conditions. In particular, the majority of the investigated cremation burials from the province of Thrace contain locally grown cereal and leguminous crops, fruits and nuts in different quantities and ratios (see I. Hristova 2015, 124 – 125). However, R. Georgieva (Георгиева 2000) notes that sacrificial plant food may also have included edible mushrooms, herbs (thyme, horsetail, etc.) and other imported plant goods such as olives, pistachios, dates and figs. The expansion of trade networks and road systems, the establishment of military installations, etc., would have meant a greater access to new food items which could then be incorporated within the local burial rites. The imported foodstuffs were probably distributed in small quantities and were considered a privilege of the individuals with higher social status (see Popova, Hristova 2017). This phenomenon has been testified in the samples from *tumulus* No 4 as well. *Pinus pinea* L. remains were found only in the charcoal assemblage of feature No 2, fully corresponding to the rich grave inventory, and suggesting a more special treatment or mortuary differentiation of the deceased. The presence of cone scales and other cone parts indicate that probably the entire cone was imported for reasons beyond food consumption (Lodwick 2015, 59 – 60).

The archaeobotanical assemblage of the sampled contexts from *tumuli* No 4 and No 5 suggests that certain plant foods (such as wheat, walnut, grapes and fleshy fruits) were traditionally placed as a sacrificial offering of the deceased. This could be dictated by various religious beliefs. For example, it is assumed that walnuts symbolize the World Tree or were probably seen as a symbol of fertility (Георгиева P. 2000, 161). In the Greek world the broad bean, or field bean (*Vicia faba* L.), was closely connected to Demeter and Kore. It was not only an important staple food, but it was also associated with the souls of deceased people (Ciarialdi 1999). In Ancient Rome, the plant was of symbolic and sacred importance. In the annual ritual of the *Fabrariae Calendae* (Calends of the Beans) in the beginning of June, a sacrifice of mashed broad beans with lard was offered to Dea Carna, the Goddess of death and life (von Stokar 1951, 521). According to R. Georgieva (Георгиева P. 2000) fava beans were connected to the Orphic mystery, and their symbolic presence among the other funerary plant offerings could be related to the religious syncretism that was evident across the eastern provinces at that time, incorporating some of the Orphic rites of the Thracians. Pine kernels and grapes were associated with Dionysus and Sabazios. However, the placement of such gifts could be dictated by local taste preferences or was intended only to emphasize the prestige of the dead (Георгиева P. 2000, 161 – 162). M. Gimbutas 1989 suggests that cultivation and the cult of the dead are linked together in many ways. The dead body or the skeletal remains of the deceased are placed into the earth in one form or another in the same way grains are planted. Both enter another dimension, hidden from other spheres of existence (Gimbutas 1989, 321). The insignificant presence of grains and pulses of the principal crops does not allow any particular conclusions to be drawn with respect to possible ritual preferences.

Wood for the body

The main criteria for wood collection and use in the pyres might have been its availability in the region. The cremation of a human body is a long process that requires high temperatures, and this means that a large volume of good quality firewood would be needed in a short space of time (Herman 1990). M. Fuhrman (Fuhrman 1971) notes that in written Roman sources there is only one single record mentioning fuel wood selection in cremations. It comes from Tacitus who reports the use of *certislignis* ('certain woods') for the cremation of Germanic nobles (*Germania*, XXVII).

Three of the studied features were fairly poor in wood remains, but cremation burial No 2 contained a variety of types, dominated by *Quercus* sp. Oak forests represent the dominant vegetation type in the lowlands and foothills of Bulgaria and the use of oak wood as fuel in the cremation process is to be expected (Hristova I. 2015, 129). Unfortunately, it is hard to conclude whether the wood used at *tumuli* No 4 and No 5 was gathered according to its availability or whether it was deliberately selected. However, it is worth noting that the same wood taxa have been reported in burial contexts from other parts of the Roman Empire (e.g., Costa Vaz et al. 2020; Deforce, Haneca 2012). We may suggest that during this period both sacrificial plant food offerings and fuel wood may have had important symbolic functions in the mortuary practices in the province of Thrace.

CONCLUSION

All of the studied cremation burial pits at *tumuli* No 4 and No 5 contained pyre debris and grave inventory. The archaeobotanical assemblage consisted of cereals, bread and/or similar processed food remains, nuts and fruits. It successfully complements the data about the ritual use of plants in mortuary practices in the province of Thrace. However, future archaeobotanical analyses of the bread-like remains and wood fragments may reveal more detailed information of the taphonomic processes that occur in burial contexts.

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Храна за душата, дърво за тялото: археоботанични изследвания на овъглени растителни останки от могили № 4 и № 5 в местността Големия кайряк при с. Могила, област Ямбол, Югоизточна България

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РЕЗЮМЕ

Настоящото изследване се фокусира върху растенията и растителната храна в погребалната обредност в римската провинция Тракия, представяйки данните от първичните археоботанични анализи на растителни останки, открити в гробове с трупозгаряне в надгробни могили № 4 и № 5 в м. Големия кайряк, Ямболско, датирани във II в. сл. Хр. Представителният им брой предоставя добра възможност за изследване на тафономичните процеси и разкрива детайли от погребалните практики в изследвания район.

През 2018 г., по време на археологическото проучване на двете могили са събрани 26 проби, в които са идентифицирани овъглени останки от 10 растителни вида. Сходствата в резултатите от отделните структури свидетелстват за поставянето на ритуална храна на кладата – хляб, зърно, плодове и ядки. Особен интерес предизвиква структура 2А, където растителните „дарове“ са най-многобройни. Сред тях са и голямо количество останки от ядки и шишарки на средиземноморски чадърест бор (*Pinus pinea* L.), смятани за луксозна вносна стока. Антракологичният анализ показва, че използваните за кладата дървесни видове са такива, които развиват висока температура при горене – бук (*Fagus sylvatica*), дъб (*Quercus sp.*) и бор (*Pinus sp.*). Изследваните археоботанични материали успешно допълват данните за местните и импортните растителни видове, както и за мястото им в погребалната обредност през II в. сл. Хр. в римската провинция Тракия.

Ключови думи: ритуална храна, археоботанични анализи, растителни останки, надгробни могили, гробове с трупозгаряне, римска епоха, римска провинция Тракия