

Chapter I. Preliminary Issues

In the context of the emergence or development of methods and techniques for the investigation of the past, as well as interdisciplinary approaches whose relevance and importance are indisputable, it is necessary to study all aspects of anthropic activities in different historical periods. Moreover, the prehistoric periods, deprived of its literarily sources , represents a challenge for any type of study, but at the same time requires different approaches towards the study of various other chronological segments.

The reconstruction of human actions in the past and their implications uses a variety of methods and sources to achieve a more comprehensive image of the ancient ages. In this category are enlisted studies related to crafts, whichever is the nature of the resulting goods.

Some ceramic artifacts, as well as those made of metal, are most often seen as "guiding fossils" by archaeologists, for delimitation and chronological classification. However, we consider that there is no less important aspects of ancient communities, because the life reconstruction should represent a combination of informations.

In this context fits the plants and animal fibers processing , as well as producing and processing the textiles. The importance of finished products deriving from the concerns of this kind, lies in their nature.

Textiles have been used by humans since ancient times as a form of protection against bad weather, whether we consider making clothing parts or using them for shelter. These materials are present in the individual's life from birth until the very last minute. Probably it represents one of the most popular

categories of products used by humans, both individually and within human groups.

Textile materials can be defined as representing "all the products in respect of which the basic elements (threads or groups of threads) are intertwined by mechanical means in order to obtain the required consistency. People have used them in the activities related to subsistence, for storage and transport (both as a container and as boat sailings), for fishing or for the making of weapons.

For individuals, they have become like a "second skin", but at the same time, the production and use of textiles has been a way of expressing a gender, family, social, political, ethnic or religious affiliation.

In addition, the fabrics are fundamental parts of subsistence, economy or trade, and are important for the study of social aspects, economic, or cultural values of ancient societies.

To corroborate all these, this paper aims to study the results of fibre processing and textile production in the East-Carpathian space, primarily in the light of data collected from the study attributed to the bronze age finds. At the same time, we will also use information from ethnography, ancient literary sources, iconography and archaeological experiments. In order to complete the image of reconstruction, we are going to use informations relating to other spaces than the one chosed by us, because in other areas the study of prehistoric textiles is at a more advanced level.

We are aware of the shortcomings of our modest approach since such work was made in a relatively short time, and without a doubt we have omitted certain aspects which could have been dealt with in a more detail manner. However, given that this study represents, in our opinion, a beginning,

we believe that any criticism is constructive and can bring only benefits for the upcoming approaches.

Chapter. II. The historical and the present state of research

In this chapter we set out to achieve an overview of the concerns of researchers in the field and the most important works (which I used as a basis for the study), as well as the current status of the research on craft production and textiles processing.

In order to achieve the purpose mentioned, I first made references to the historical and present state of research on an international level, then we narrowed it down to the Eastern Carpathians. I chose this subject due to the differences between the international and romanian historiography which deals with topics related to our theme.

Chapter III. The catalogue of finds

The catalogue of artifacts used in the fibre processing , the production and processing of textiles includes those items identified in the collections of museums that hold this kind of legacy to which I had access, as well as those published in the specialised literature.

For a better and easier browse of the catalogue but also for a later on analysis I displayed the identified objects through functional categories. Thus, in the first place, whorls and spools will be indexed because they represent the majority class of materials, and they are used in the early stages of fibre processing. Subsequently, the catalogue includes weights used for loom, needles for sewing, buttons other artifacts used in this process.

Within each section of the catalogue were made two sub-sections which will include dated materials and uncertain dated ones, since some artifacts have been identified within a surface research or the data of their origins are unknown.

Chapter IV. Operative chain of precessing fibres and textiles

Analysis of data obtained as a result of the discoveries from the catalogue of Eastern Carpathians aimed at highlighting the technology for the production of fabrics. Due to the lack of complete data on this topic, we first described the evidences related to the whole european area, and then we analyzed data from the East-Carpathian space. Thus, we analyzed the raw materials, but also the stages of the operative chain of production of prehistoric fabrics.

Chapter V. Implications of the handcraft of processing fibres

Regarding the economy of the bronze age communities and the craft of processing of textile materials manufacture we tried to respond to some questions such as:

- Textiles manufacture influenced the domestic or the communities economy?*
- There is a domestic or industrial production?*
- The commercial activities were achieved with raw materials and/or finished products?*

To find the answer to these questions, we first used data related to the economic aspects of the European space. Subsequently, we analyzed the information provided by specific artifacts regarding this kind of production in the Eastern Carpathians and, at the end, we tried to combine these two types of data.

Then, we referred to the implications of the results of the fibre processing and textiles production, covering issues such as the gender of the craftsman, its status, and the role played by these products in the archaic societies.

At the end, we tried to analyze the spiritual implications of fabric production in the Bronze Age, by analysing the ways in which it can interfere with various forms of communities' externalisation.

Chapter VI. Final considerations

Analysis of prehistoric communities' activities are made mainly on the basis of identification, classification, research and study of finds from archaeological researches, whatever their type (field research, rescue excavations, archaeological surveys or systematic research).

Each of the archaeological monuments, fixed or mobile, provides data on aspects of every day activities in prehistory, of relationships between members of a community, inter-community relations, but also in terms of the environment, in general, and individuals from eras preceding the occurrence of writing.

From the multitude of issues that could be studied on the basis of archaeological findings, the present study has attempted to provide a unique

perspective on the study of the paleo-crafts, namely on fibre processing and textile production in the East-Carpathian space, in the bronze age.

The originality of this topic is given by the fact that, firstly, this work represents the only approach of this segment for the period of time mentioned and in the geographical area in particular, but also for the whole territory of Romania.

The study of the various stages of the operative chain of production and fabric processing in prehistory complements the knowledge about various communities, and the need for such an approach is given by the importance that these materials have had to individuals and human groups, starting with the Upper Paleolithic to the present.

Fabrics, fibres and their processing are inherent to human activity, because these organic materials have a spreading and extremely wide functionality. From birth to death, textiles accompany the individual, protect him and cover his need for aesthetic.

In an attempt to reconstruct the prehistoric crafts we used, in the first place, archaeological data, due to the characteristics of the period concerned. They relate to recording and analyzing the vestiges which provides information on the activities involved in textile production. Under ideal conditions, the finds of preserved fabric are clear indications of the raw materials used, the manufacturing, the functionality and relevance that textiles had to prehistoric man. In the absence of actual textile, the operative chain of the production of fabric can be reconstituted on the basis of information provided by the tools used. These artifacts, usually small, are often neglected in the archaeological researches and publication of the results for reasons already expressed. At the same time, the absence of defining models,

classification and analysis probably made these „small finds” hold an effective range. We have tried to show the peculiarities need to be registered for each type of artifact in part. We have referred mainly to the whorls, weights of looms, but also to the needles for sewing, because we considered that these objects are the most commonly encountered. Throughout the documentation, we found that some of the artifacts were involved in the production of prehistoric textiles (bone combs, objects for smoothening threads, spools, small wheels for spinning threads, bone buttons). The archaeological, arheozoological and arheobotanical studies can provide information about the raw materials used.

For the completion of archaeological data, but also for a better understanding of the methods and procedures which used in textile production, we used ethnographical and ethnoarchaeological data, but also ancient literary sources of iconography. Last but not least, we believe that all of these clues can be merged to carry out archaeological experiments, whose measurements provide real data on the stages of the production and use of fabrics. In terms of methodology and methods addressed to which we devoted a chapter, please note that we have adopted to models already enshrined and adapted them to the realities found in the documentation.

In order to understand and to be able to analyze the phenomena studied in bronze age we resorted to the international historiography studies, because there are gaps in the Romanian area for this (sub) domain of research. The second chapter of this work, aimed at both the history and the present state of research on the production of textiles in the bronze age. We've found that, since the 19th century, some of the European countries have published many works on the subject. Moreover, the issue has been addressed through

ethnographic and ethnoarchaeological studies, techniques but also by gender archaeology works, experimental reports etc. At the same time, at the european level have emerged, after the mid 20th century, a series of conferences and publications that facilitates and summarizes the exchange of information between researchers. We mention the activities of AEGAEUM and NESAT. We found that some areas of Europe have to offer, as a result of archaeological researches, a broad categories of clues regarding the production and use of fabrics in the Bronze Age, resulting in discoveries of garments, textile fragments (in various states of preservation), and tools. These have been analysed and published in monographs which can serve as a model, even decades after they were published.

Against this backdrop, in the last decade, the CTR is a leap forward in researching these crafts, due to the fact that the Center for Textile Research aims to develop methods for study, training of specialists, but also the realization of a common base of knowledge about prehistoric textiles, but also ancient or medieval.

The study of prehistoric fabrics was initiated and developed by researchers in the Scandinavian area, because in this area of Europe were reported as early as the 19th century, the discovery of some textile fragments, clothing in significant number. We should mention that in most European countries have been discovered and analyzed the fabrics and tools used for their processing .

If for the European area we found that the study of crafts related to textile production began in the late nineteenth century, unfortunately the romanian historiography hasn't benefited from such approaches. Thus, the information concerning the practice of the spinning, and sewing are scarce.

Although there were some short articles on archaeological textiles, information relating to these activities in the Bronze Age are very few. The only concrete data, which can be used as a tool for study are the ethnographic collections.

Other works that deal with prehistoric remains involved in the operative chain of production of fabrics are studies that analyzes traces of the neolithic in Transylvanian and in Cucuteni culture. In this context made a paper on the analysis of the artifacts-tools because, so far, in the area in question, was discovered only a fragment of textile attributed to the bronze age (fragment that is still under study, at the moment).

Although we are aware that a process such as this can be improved, we express confidence that the thesis represents an important step towards the development of this kind of approach, especially because, unfortunately, the bronze age lacks this kind of studies.

More data could be provided by evaluating more artifacts or by corectly publicate those that will be identified in archaeological research. At the same time, enlarging review could provide more information about this subject. From the analysis of a batch of materials, the development of experiments in the use of typical artifacts could also provide more information.

We hope, in this regard, that our modest contribution to research aspects of the activities of humans in the Bronze Age groups will have continuity and the knowledge of these communities will gradually enrich.

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