

CEREALS FOR THE CARPETANIANS: ARCHAEOBOTANICAL RESEARCH IN EL LLANO DE LA HORCA, A LATE IRON AGE OPPIDUM (SANTORCAZ, MADRID, SPAIN)

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“El Llano de la Horca” (Santorcaz, Madrid) is an important *oppidum* (9.5 ha) of the Carpetanians in central Spain which was occupied between the end of the 3rd century BC and early decades of the 1st century BC. The urban planning is a complex one with rectilinear streets and blocks of rectangular houses. We have concentrated the research in a huge area in the centre of the *oppidum*, where several houses have been excavated. Houses are usually divided into an entrance, a central room with hearth and lateral departments with storage and other possible functions (sleeping and service areas). Excavation of two departments at the back of the houses has revealed abundant cereal grain remains, spread around their respective surface excavation areas. Naked wheats are dominant (*Triticum aestivum-durum* and *T. compactum*). *T. monococcum*, *T. dicoccum* and *Hordeum vulgare* are also present. The preservation state of the caryopses suggest good storage conditions, but the cereal mixture indicates that the archaeological contexts could correspond more to domestic areas, where cereals would have been processed for meals, with grinding surfaces close to hearths, instead of a storage place with cereals in pottery vessels or textile sacks.

Other archaeobotanical analyses of pollen and wood charcoal, indicate an open landscape dominated by herbaceous taxa (Asteraceae, Chenopodiaceae, Poaceae, *Glomus*) resulting from land cleared of woods. These studies have also revealed the presence of *Pinus* (*P. sylvestris-nigra*, *P. pinea-pinaster*), *Juniperus* (*J. phoenicea* type), *Quercus faginea*, *Q. ilex* and *Q. suber* as the main trees exploited. Occurrences of *Alnus*, *Corylus*, *Fraxinus* (*F. angustifolia*) and *Juglans* indicate the existence of several periods with an optimum in water resources availability.

The results draw a picture of a subsistence based on cereal agriculture and crop processing activities, with evidence of woodland clearance in order to gain space for crop fields for the necessities of a growing community, which was probably in the order of many hundreds inhabitants.

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