

Andrea Torma

PLANT REMAINS FOUND IN GRAVE NO. 8 AT SÁRRÉTUDVARI-ÓRHALOM:  
AN ARCHAEOBOTANICAL REPORT*Introduction*

During the opening of the prehistoric tumulus of Sárrétudvari-Órhalom a larger quantity of plant findings were found in the robbed tomb No. 8. In the tomb no other grave furniture could be observed beside the botanical material and no anthropological findings could be assessed (small bits of bones). Under these circumstances of discovery having the plant records remained is of a special importance.

*Results*

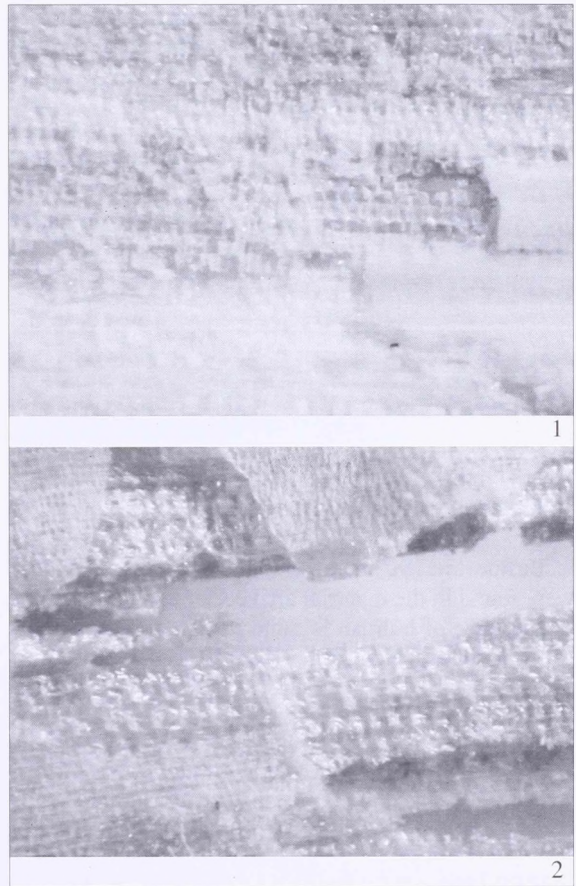
The great part of the material arrived for examination (4 bags) broke up into pieces of 10–30 mm length and 3–4 mm width. Even the parts remaining in bigger bunches have been in bad condition, they fall to tiny fibers and filaments while blowing them. The identification of the material under examination was executed by stereo-binocular microscope. The remains have a bright grayish-white discolouration. The original light brown color and in hints darker brown discolouration can be observed on the inner layers of the thicker pieces (Fig. 1). We managed to separate parts from the examined material the surface structure of which re-

Fig. 1. Colours of *Typha* remain (10x)

mained in a considerably good condition. The parallel running longitudinal marbling can be observed even by small amplification (7,5x). In case of a bigger magnifying (30–40x) the inner rows of cells can also be observed. Based on its stereo-microscopic attitude it is most similar to the leaf of *bulrush* (*Typha sp.*) that is

also supported by the comparison with the recent materials (Figs. 2-3). Based on the length of the leaves (17–20 mm) it comes from the *wide-leaved bulrush* (*Typha latifolia L.*).

phylum: *Angiospermatophyta*  
classes: *Monocotyledonopsida*  
family: *Typhaceae*  
genus: *Typha*  
species: *Typha latifolia L.*

Fig. 2. The rows of cells (50x). 1: fossilized;  
2: recent

On the bigger pieces it can be observed that the leaves are stratified in parallel resulting in about 7 mm thickness in some place. At the “bottom” parts of the pieces examined the marbling of the leaves is perpendicular to the previous and is much thinner stratified (2–3 mm).

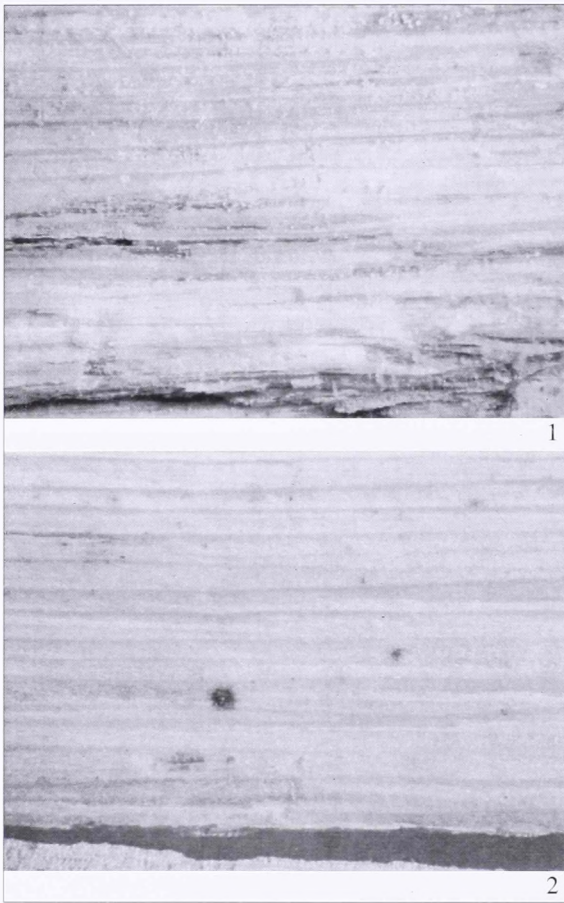


Fig. 3. The parallel veins (20x). 1: fossilized; 2: recent

Beside the leaf no other plant pieces (e.g. seeds) were found in the material arrived for evaluation.

Presence of bulrush is quite rare in archaeobotanical findings (KNÖRZER 1995; KROLL 1983) In

Hungary only indirect proof of it has been known until now. At several places of discovery (Bazsi, Pári-Altackár, Zengővárkony, Hódmezővásárhely, Magyaratád) bits of pot bottoms from the Neolithic were found on the surface of which bulrush tissue marks can be seen (FÜZES 1990). According to Füzés' observations when pots were made, shabby, second-hand bulrush tissue was spread under the clay to be shaped that remained in a distinctly visible form in the already soft clay.

#### Conclusion

Based on the consistency and discolouration of the bulrush remains one of the reasons of the findings' survival could be the ashes sprinkled into the grave which have preserving effects as a result of its potassium content. The whitish discolouration on the remains, however, can indicate mineral salt compounds that collected during the decrease of water table in the neighbourhood of the findings and got it encrusted. Further biochemical examinations are necessary to specify the reason of preservation. Bulrush can be processed by weaving and spinning. Today only the narrow-leaved bulrush (*Typha angustifolia* L.) is used for weaving. The wide-leaved bulrush (*Typha latifolia* L.), however, is soft with a flexible stalk as a result of which it is easily spinnable (JUHÁSZ 1991). The sample arrived does not demonstrate any of the two working processes. Though the leaves running perpendicular to each other can be observed but not tracks of looping between the two layers can be found.

Bulrush is found in flooded moorlands and still water in various directions. In the Neolithic era it could be common in the neighbourhood of Sárrétudvari.

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A. Torma  
Magyar Mezőgazdasági Múzeum  
Budapest. Városliget, Vajdahunyad vár  
H-1146

