

East and many North African countries. According to the collective memory these have historically always been part of a home's food facilities and excavations seem greatly to have confirmed this. Textual evidence from historical periods in Greater Mesopotamia describe such ovens and distinguish them from the also present domed ones. Excavations have revealed the presence of tandirs in Mesopotamian Early Dynastic period, but contemporary data from Eastern Anatolia is weaker. Evidence of ovens from prehistoric and protohistoric periods in Eastern Anatolia and Mesopotamia shall be presented with the intent of dating and explaining the origin of the first specialisation of bread production.

### **Different Times Call for Different Ovens**

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In the Early Neolithic Starčevo culture and the Late Neolithic Vinča culture, different types of ovens were found. Based on the physical and technological characteristics they imply different cooking techniques. Starčevo ovens were dug into the soil right next to the semi-subterranean dwelling and connected to it with a horizontal tunnel, while Vinča ovens were domed structures, modeled from clay and were located inside the above ground houses, and were similar to traditional ovens found through various cultures up until the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Ethnology, ethnoarchaeology and experimental archaeology can help us understand the construction and usage of those fire installations. During the year 2012, an experimental Vinča culture oven has been constructed and used since then for a variety of experiments. Its main characteristic is to accumulate heat, and then bake with dry radiating heat. It is suitable for bread baking. The aim of this paper is to experimentally test Starčevo ovens and see what cooking strategies they allowed in comparison to the Vinča ones. The main questions are: could they have made the same type of bread as in the Vinča culture, how it could have been done, or if not, what was the alternative?

### **The Use of the Natural Brine for Food Preservation. Ethnoarchaeological Research in the Extra-Carpathian Area of Romania**

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The archaeological evidences confirmed that the brine of the salt springs from the Subcarpathian area was used to obtain salt, through the evaporation-crystallization processes, as far back as the Early Neolithic. This region is nowadays unique in Europe for its traditional and non-industrial ways of salt water exploitation, still intensively applied. This inestimable scientific resource has been, in the last decade, the subject of an extensive ethnoarchaeological research conducted by a Romanian/French team, with impressive results. The paper deals with some results of the ethnographic inquiries, focusing on the traditional ways in which the brine is used in its originally state, mainly for preserving different types of food, but also for daily cooking and preparing the feed for animals. It is significant that these behaviours survived the important cultural, economic and socio-political changes of the last centuries. Therefore, the paper also explores the possible implications for the prehistoric archaeology, having as premises the ancient exploitation of the brine and the (most probable) need to conserve aliments (e.g. meat, cheese), with few options available. Hence, techniques similar to those known today are highly susceptible of having been used in prehistoric times, though much more difficult to establish than the brine recrystallization.

### **Beer-making in Ancient Egypt**

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It is a common knowledge that beer, besides bread, was one of the most important staples for the Ancient Egyptian population. Recent discoveries of the constructions of breweries at such sites like Hierakonpolis or Tell el-Farkha, both dated to the Predynastic Period, together with the archeobotanical analysis of beer remains revealed quite new data, which enable us to conduct more complex beer-making process reconstruction. Unlike the so-called traditional view derived only from the iconography, beer in ancient Egypt was not made of bread. Egyptian beer was a low-alcoholic beverage obtained in malt and wheat-porridge mixing process. Although only so far Egyptian excavated breweries come from the Predynastic Period, the beer recipe, according to the archeobotanical data, was still current almost 2,000 years later at the end of the New Kingdom Period. The lack of so-called brewery-structures in later than Predynastic Periods suggests a deep social transition between Predynastic and Dynastic Periods in Ancient Egyptian society.

### **How Do You Eat Yours? Griddle Stones and Cooking in Central Anatolia**

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It is evident from faunal studies that prehistoric societies continued hunting, gathering or collecting edibles depending what the season offered despite domesticating animals and plants. In most scenarios, animal products, especially meat, were a contributor to the diet in variable quantities. This paper aims to emphasise the new method of food preparation with griddle stones that has been identified at the early Neolithic sites of Pınarbaşı and Boncuklu Höyük in Central Anatolia. Evidence