

Title: Traditional millet growing in NW Iberia: from the ethnographic insights to the archaeobotanical implications.

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Abstract:

Millet cultivation was spreading in NW Iberia during the Late Bronze Age. Since this period, and most probably until the arrival of *Zea mays* at the end of the 16th century, millets (*Panicum miliaceum* and *Setaria italica*) were fundamental crops of the agrarian systems, until the 20th century when they disappeared from most of the regions where they were still cultivated. Today, the traditional uses of millets can be considered practically extinct.

In order to understand better past agrarian practices related with the cultivation of *Panicum miliaceum* and *Setaria italica*, we have carried out ethnobotanical surveying and research in the Atlantic regions of Galicia and Asturias where both species are still grown within non-industrialized agrarian systems that will disappear soon. This work presents the results obtained in the interviews we made to farmers who cultivated or are still cultivating millets. The questions which were asked aimed at defining each stage of the farming process, from the initial stages such as sowing, fertilising and weeding, to the final stages such as harvesting, threshing, sieving, winnowing, dehusking, milling and consumption. Samples were taken of the product and by-product from each operation and then analysed.

The results of the fieldwork showed differences in the management and uses of millets within the Iberian Northwest. Depending on the regions, millets have been used recently or nowadays exclusively for animal fodder or also for human food. Foxtail millet has been cultivated as fodder in summertime. Some plants are left to mature in order to obtain enough grain for next year sowing. Broomcorn millet is mainly used for its grain as animal and human food although the straw is also used. As human food it is reported to have been eaten as a type of porridge with water or milk.