The ERC-funded PLANTCULT Project (GA682529) focuses on plant foods of prehistoric Europe as these foods have been closely associated to cultural expression, social and economic organisation of past human societies. The project seeks a) to explore ancient culinary transformation of plant ingredients into specific foods and recipes and through this investigate how plant foods shaped social and cultural identities in a large part of Europe spreading from the Aegean to Central Europe, from the Neolithic through to the Iron Age (7th-1st millennia B.C.). In order to better understand past culinary practice in relation to plant foods, the project is not only examining ancient plant foods; it also focuses on the collection of ethnographic information on traditional food preparations potentially prepared in prehistoric times. These include bulgur, trachanas, breads/porridges, split pulses (a fava type mash), Grünkern (green-harvested and roasted/smoked spelt), wine and fruit syrups. This aspect of our project does not only inform our archaeological inquiries and methodologies, but also opens up the way towards connecting our research with contemporary society, consumers as well as small and medium enterprises. Our paper presents an overview of prehistoric plant foods focusing on a selection of food ingredients and products encountered in both archaeobotanical and ethnographic contexts in Greece and Central Europe and assesses the context of their survival in modern European society as household preparations and marketed goods.
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