

## THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE EARLY MEDIEVAL VEGETATION IN THE MĚLNÍK VINEYARD REGION, CZECH REPUBLIC

Alex BERNARDOVÁ<sup>1</sup>, Jan NOVÁK<sup>1</sup>, Petra HOUFKOVÁ<sup>1</sup>, Petr MEDUNA<sup>2</sup>

*Key words: Malacology, Macrofossils, Early Medieval, Vine growing*

The fertile lowland of central Bohemia is an important area for historical events in its development. The town of Mělník, at the junction of the rivers Vltava and Labe, is connected with the wife of the first Czech Christian monarch Bořivoj I, the duchess Ludmila who was grandmother of St. Václav (Wenceslas), the patron of the Czech state. According to the legend, St. Ludmila with St. Wenceslas founded the first vineyards in Bohemia. From the practical point of view, St. Ludmila would not be able to do without wine, if she would perform a Christian ritual.

The reconstruction of the historic centre of Mělník revealed the fortification of the castle from the 9<sup>th</sup> century and consequent development of the settlement into the medieval town, with a small settlement site near the river Pšovka with the production area. Archaeological research also had the specific goal to find out about *Vitis vinifera* cultivation in the Mělník region.

Palaeoecological analyses reconstructed the area in the near vicinity. The results of anthracological (charcoal) and molluscan analyses indicate a mosaic landscape with a pattern of intensively used open vegetation and thermophilous dry stands. A mosaic of oak and pine woods, sparse coppice and scrub are reconstructed in the vicinity of the settlement. All molluscs found are species which avoid woodland, the most frequent of which were *Vallonia costata* and *V. pulchella*, indicators of dry or moderately humid environments. Species of dry stony stands were also frequent (*Truncatellina cylindrica*) or humid areas (*Succinella oblonga*, *Vertigo pygmaea*).

Analysis of macrofossils revealed the most important useful plants, *Triticum aestivum*, *Hordeum vulgare* and *Panicum miliaceum*. There were also some weeds that were quite frequent finds, but in recent times they have become extinct or very rare in our landscape, such as *Bupleurum rotundifolium*, *Stachys annua*, *Polycnemum majus*, etc. Among the macroremains, a charred *Vitis vinifera* pip has also been found, and it is a question whether it is either an isolated import or the confirmation of local viticulture. Supporting arguments for local viticulture, that have also been found, are weed species typical of vineyards.

---

<sup>1</sup> Laboratory of Archaeobotany and Palaeoecology, University of South Bohemia, Faculty of Biological Science, Branisovska 31, 37005 Ceske Budejovice, Czech Republic, e-mail: sumenka@gmail.com

<sup>2</sup> Institute of Archaeology, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Letenská 4, 11801 Praha 1, Czech Republic, e-mail: meduna@arup.cas.cz