

Archaeobotanical macro-remain analysis of the medieval cesspit 938 from Chrudim, Czech Republic



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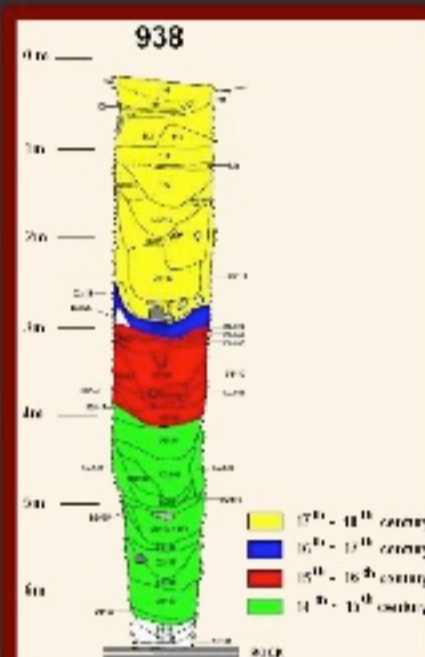
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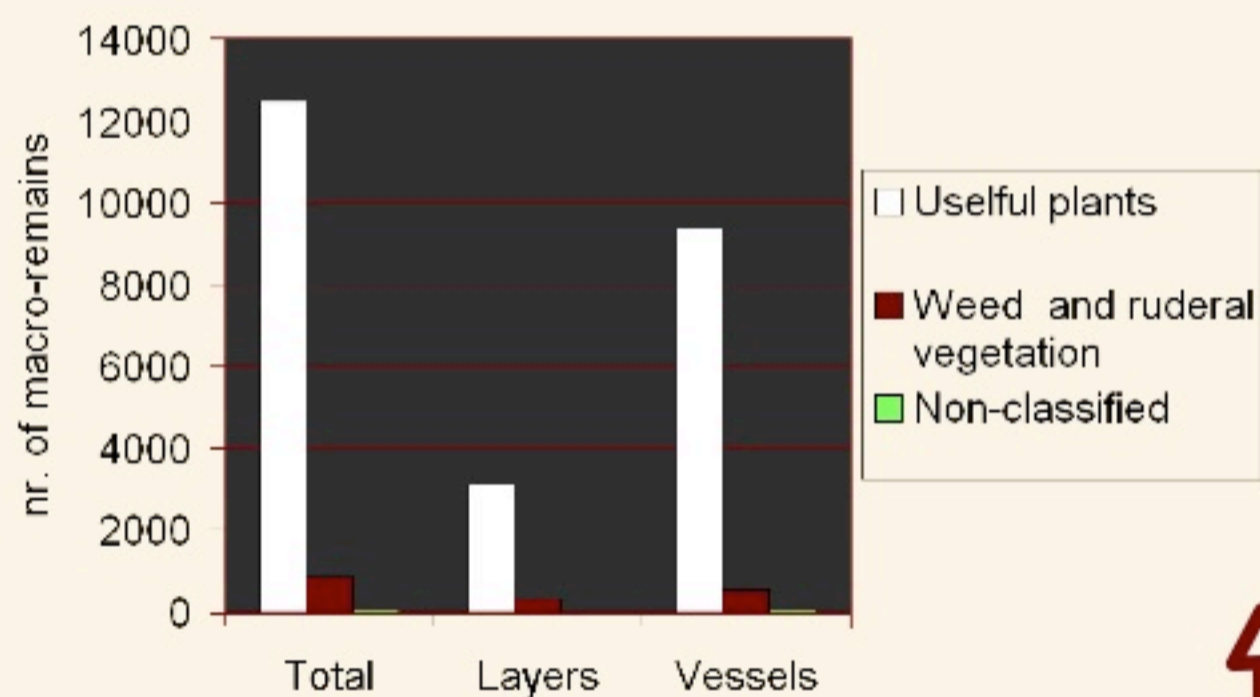
Introduction:

The medieval town of Chrudim, prominent royal town in Eastern Bohemia, was situated on an important trade route from Prague to Moravia. The area of three ground-plots belonging to three houses was investigated in the archaeological salvage research in 2006. Several objects were discovered including cesspits, waste pits and a cellar with barrel vault. Cesspit 938 is one of three circular cesspits with stone walls. The cesspit was in use from the 14th-17th Century. Construction was several times partially emptied during this period. Infill of cesspit was chosen for its very fine stratigraphy.



Vessels:

A huge amount of various vessels was found in the cesspit. Pots and jugs of different shapes and tiles from tiled stove.



Layers vs. vessels:

Although all samples from layers and vessels contained almost the same species of useful plants and the other vegetation, a difference between number of macrofossils was registered. The main difference was in high concentration of useful plant macroremains. There were 3x more diaspors contained in vessels against the number in samples from layers. The possibility of partial preservation of authentic filling of vessels found in cesspit was outlined.

Macro-remains:

Over 13,000 plant remains were identified. 12,500 of them belong to group of useful plants. These are represented by 23 species of total number of 71 species.

Among the useful plants picked fruit-bearing species like *Rubus idaeus*, *Rubus fruticosus* and *Fragaria vesca* prevailed. *Ficus carica* was identified as an ordinary imported fruit.

Other vegetation was represented by number of ruderal species and weeds of arable fields.

Time changes:

A difference in structure of weed and ruderal vegetation between the High Medieval and the Early Modern sediments was confirmed. The High Medieval sediments contained weed species like *Neslia paniculata*, *Valerianella dentata*, *Setaria pumila* etc. whilst there was a minimal occurrence of them in the Early Modern sediments. This is probably connected with a change of lifestyle and agricultural methods in the Early Modern period in comparison to the older period. The difference in frequency of occurrence is shown in the table below.

	HM	% EM	%
<i>Neslia paniculata</i>		57	10
<i>Silene sp.</i>		57	10
<i>Setaria pumila</i>		43	0
<i>Thlaspi arvense</i>		43	10
<i>Valerianella dentata</i>		43	0
<i>Fallopia convolvulus</i>		29	0
<i>Persicaria lapathifolia</i>		29	0
<i>Viola sp.</i>		29	0

HM-High Medieval EM-Early Modern

