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“SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR THE
SAFEGUARD OF CULTURAL HERITAGE IN
THE MEDITERRANEAN BASIN”



**PROGRAM
and
ABSTRACTS**

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Between the Secchia and the Samoggia rivers, in the area which belonged to the Roman *Mutina*, a number of hiding-wells were recently discovered by the Archaeological Superintendence of the Emilia-Romagna Region. The inhabitants of that country used the wells to hide goods, when they abandoned their houses during wars between the Longobards and Byzantines (end of VI - first half of VII century A.D., Gelichi S. & Giordani N. <eds.> "Il tesoro nel pozzo", Panini, Modena, 1994). The Cognento well is one of these wells. It is about 10 m deep and in its filling nine Stratigraphic Units (SU 9-1, 9 being the deepest) were identified from an archaeological point of view. The hidden goods (some ceramics, wooden objects and coins) were found in SU 8, 7, 6. In the filling of the well also faunal and vegetal remains were recorded. The latter are the subject of this paper. Archaeobotanical analyses were carried out on samples taken in the Stratigraphic Units undisturbed by ploughing (SU9-SU2); samples (7 for pollen; 13 for seed/fruit analysis were taken from 10,1 to 4,4 m depth; wood remains longer than 1 cm were studied). About 4000 pollen grains (100 taxa), 11000 seeds/fruits (100 taxa) and 500 wooden remains (20 taxa) were identified. Plant remains outline the botanical history of the well and the vegetational landscape throughout a thousand years from ca 600 A.D. to the XVIII century A.D. (datings are based on archaeological/archaeobotanical data). The village was in an open landscape (AP pollen <25%-35%) dominated by wild grasses. The forest remnants were at first mostly Pines, with a significant amount of European Silver-Fir; then meso-hygrophilous oak wood spread (deciduous Oaks, Elms, Hornbeam, Alders, Willows, Maples, Hazel, etc.). Some Holly Oak pollen was found from US8 to US3. A significant amount of cultivated plants, weeds and ruderals were recorded. Bread Wheat s.l. Rye, Barley, Common Millet, Grape-vine, Common Walnut, Hemp, Flax, Sweet and Sour Cherry, Bullace, etc. were cultivated in the village before the inhabitants left it after letting their goods down into the well. Wooden objects were mainly made of local wood: *Quercus* sez. *robur*, *Fraxinus* cf. *oxycarpa*, Poplar, Willow, Elm, Walnut), but wood was also obtained from the mountains (Chestnut tree, Beech). The goods remained hidden so long because after they were let down into the well, it began to be covered by Nettles, Brambles, Elder and Dwarf Elder, which put the well out of sight.