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Consiglio Nazionale
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Science and Technology for the safeguard of Cultural Heritage in the Mediterranean Basin

3rd International Congress on

9-14 July 2001, Alcalá de Henares SPAIN



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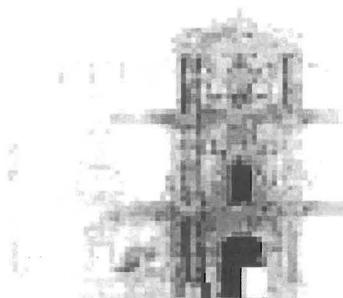
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UNIVERSIDAD DE ALCALÁ
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3rd International Congress on
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3^{er} Congreso Internacional
“Ciencia y Tecnología Aplicada a la Protección del
**Patrimonio Cultural en la
Cuenca Mediterránea”**
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Para esta edición:

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Cubierta:

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SERVICIO DE PUBLICACIONES DE LA UNIVERSIDAD DE ALCALÁ

Editores:

Jesús Alpuente, Irene De Bustamante, Pablo L. López y Juana Sanz

I.S.B.N.: 84 – 8138 – 449 - 6

Impreso en España

Depósito Legal: M-28.833-2001

Imprime: Cofás S.A.
C/ Juan de la Cierva, 58
Polígono Industrial Prado de Regordón
28936 Móstoles

THE ARCHAEOBOTANICAL ARCHIVE: PLANTS USED BY MAN (WHICH, WHERE, HOW, WHEN?) - WHAT FRUITS DID ROMANS EAT IN EMILIA ROMAGNA (NORTHERN ITALY)? SOME RESPONSES FROM SEEDS AND FRUITS

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As a part of the CNR's research project "Cultural Heritage-Biological Archives", a review of carpological remains dated Roman period in the Emilia Romagna region is presented, focusing on records of 'fruits' (in the common – not strictly botanical - sense of 'edible fruits'). Published and unpublished data were considered. The records came from 11 archaeological sites located in six provinces, mainly in the plain. Archaeological deposits were wells, drained channels, *villae*, necropolis and votive sites. Chronology, based on archaeological data and radiocarbon datings, ranged from the IIth cent.BC to the VIIth cent. AD. The records were subdivided in three phases: 1) 'repubblicana', two sites - II-I cent.BC; 2) 'imperiale', six sites - I-IV cent.AD; 3) 'tardo antica', three sites - V-VII cent.AD. Concentrations (number of records per litre) were available for six sites. Altogether, 23 taxa were recognised, accounting for ca. 1/10 of all carpological taxa of the Roman period. They were mainly considered surely/probably cultivated species (e.g., *Citrullus lanatus* <Thunb.> Mats. & Nakai, *Ficus carica* L., *Juglans regia* L., *Pinus pinea* L., *Prunus avium* L., *Prunus persica* (L.) Batsch, *Vitis vinifera* L. subsp. *vinifera*. etc.) joined by some wild species (e.g., *Cornus mas* L., *Crataegus* cf. *monogyna* Jacq., *Prunus spinosa* L., *Rubus fruticosus* s.l., etc.). In the older phase (repubblicana), fruits were 11 taxa; grape and fig prevailed, and were mainly joined by apple, pear and cherry. In the following phase (imperiale), the number of taxa was more various (18 taxa), especially the cultivated ones among which are several exotics. The variety of Prunoidee increased due to the addition of *Prunus cerasifera* Ehr, *Prunus domestica* L. subsp. *domestica*, *Prunus domestica* L. subsp. *insititia*, *Prunus dulcis* (Miller) D.A.Webb, *Prunus persica*. In the last phase (tardo-antica), the variety of fruit decreased (13 taxa) and only *Prunus domestica* L. subsp. *insititia* and *Prunus persica* remained among Prunoideae.

Work founded by CNR (Progetto Finalizzato Beni Culturali - Presidente: A. Guarino, Direttore: Prof. U. Baldini - Sottoprogetto 4, Coordinatore: Prof. G. De Stefano; Unità Operativa: C.A.Accorsi).