

Roman Empire in archaeobotanical data – foodways and funerary rituals

We would like to invite you to two lectures on the plant diet and funeral rituals of the inhabitants of the Roman Empire. Papers will be delivered by participants of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowship funded under the Horizon Europe programme of the European Union.

The meeting will take place on **Tuesday, 7 May, 13:15 – 14:45** (room 210 of the Faculty of Archaeology, University of Warsaw).

Patricia Vadorpe (Institut Català de Arqueologia Classica, Tarragona; HORIZON-MSCA-2021-PF-01-101063192) **“Defining foodways across the Roman Empire using archaeobotanical evidence: from Italy to the northern provinces”** Livarda, A., Riso, F., Vadorpe, P.

This presentation will focus on foodways, as observed through food plant remains, across the Roman Empire. The aim is to shed light on the diversity and/or homogeneity in culinary practices across space and time, as well as on the different socio-economic contexts of their adoption. I will present archaeobotanical results from three areas of the Roman Empire: the core of the Empire, that is Roman Italy, and the provinces of *Germania*, which included a highly militarised zone, the *limes*, and *Britannia*, one of the more marginal zones. The archaeobotanical data from these three areas were systematically collected in a compatible manner to allow their comparison, providing an updated and very extensive dataset. First, we will provide a description of this dataset and an assessment of its robustness and quality, in order to highlight and filter out any biases. Then, we will trace the distribution of food plants across the different site types in each of the three areas under study to identify common food items and new introductions through time and across space. Lastly, the distribution of food plants will be used to identify and discuss the socio-economic network of their acquisition and their social context of consumption. We thus hope to shed new light on the different processes operating across the different areas of the Empire that ultimately formed the Roman world.

Federica Riso (Institut Català de Arqueologia Classica, Tarragona; HORIZON-MSCA-2021-PF-01-101065142) **“Archaeological and Archaeobotanical analysis of the funerary ritual in urban and peri-urban necropolises of Mutina, a Roman colony of Northern Italy”**

The archaeobotanical research provided the reconstructions of the funerary rituals associated with plants in the necropolises of Mutina (Modena), between the I century BC and IV century AD.

This research is a key example of integrated archaeobotanical analyses based on archeological sites, in order to adapt the archaeological and archaeobotanical strategy to identify and interpret the rituals and funerary practices. This could be particularly useful for the strategy that has to be adopted in necropolis excavations for grave sampling, as well as it’s a warning for a lot of important evidence that could be lost if excavation attitudes and conditions are not sensitive to fragile archaeological contexts.

In combination, a preliminary study using the technique of CT-scan imaging was performed on figs and dates, compared with modern samples. This approach aimed to create the first comparative iconographic tool to identify these fruits from the funerary context where the offerings were commonly burned.