

HISTORY OF CULTIVATED AND SYNANTHROPIC PLANTS IN POLAND FROM THE NEOLITHIC TO THE MIDDLE AGES

by

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Aims and methods. Plant remains (pollen and macrofossils) preserved in archaeological sites were examined in order to obtain knowledge of the history of plant cultivation, the use of wild plants and the spread of synanthropic flora in prehistoric times. The study includes:

- 1) our own investigations on selected sites
- 2) the preparation and analysis of the data bank covering all prehistoric localities in Poland.

Results. 1) Since 1954 several sites of the Medieval and Neolithic age have been studied within the Cracow area. Rich Medieval plant remains were found in the present-day Old Town (Wawel Hill and Main Town Square) dating from 8/9-15 cent. A. D. The flora of Medieval Cracow included about 350 taxa from various plant communities. Most abundant were plants associated today with meadows (*Molinio-Arhenatheretea*), field weeds (*Secali-Violetalia*), ruderals (*Onopordetalia*) and xerothermic grassland (*Festuco-Brometea*). Cultivated species included cereals, oleiferous plants, vegetables, spices and dry and fleshy fruits (1,2).

In the eastern part of the town (site Pieszów) oxbow lake sediments were studied by pollen and macrofossil analyses and together with the results of the geomorphological and archaeological investigations allowed reconstruction of palaeoenvironmental conditions during the Neolithic settlement. Human impact on vegetation was described and correlated, by means of C^{14} dating, with the settlement changes on the loess terrace (3,4,5).

2) The index of taxa known from Polish archaeological localities is in preparation with the aid of a computer program (for data set up to 1974 see 6,7). Hopefully, the review of the Polish palaeoethnobotanical studies will be completed for a book prepared by the International Work Group of Palaeoethnobotany.

References

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