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Historical Wood Utilization

Historical wood utilization in the district of Opava in the Middle Ages

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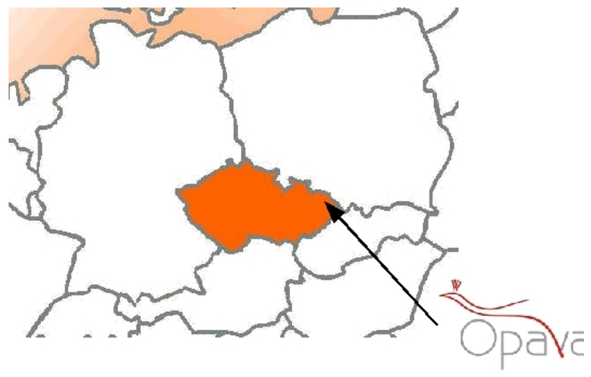
Goal

Microscopic species identification of wooden samples from archeological research of Opava town.

Material and Methods

During 2002–2006 various archaeological research of rescue character was carried out in the historical centre of the Opava town. Besides usual found objects (china; glass; leather, bone and horn products; metal artefacts) a lot of wooden objects and wooden construction elements were found. Wooden artefacts preserved in Opava conditions are usually in a good state.

Thin sections were made from samples with use of a blade. Subsequently, temporary micro slides were made for microscopic observation.



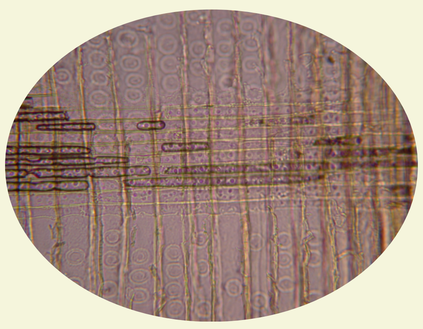
Research area in the Czech Republic

Pavement made of wood (spruce, fir)

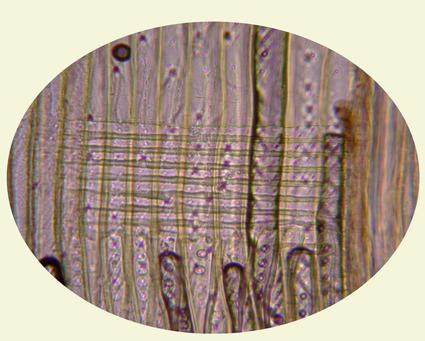
Waste reservoir (fir, spruce)

Results

In total, 616 wooden samples from Opava findings were microscopically analysed. Wood of the following species was identified: Picea, Abies, Pinus, Larix, Quercus, Fraxinus, Ulmus, Cerasus, Fagus, Tilia, Acer, Alnus and Carpinus.



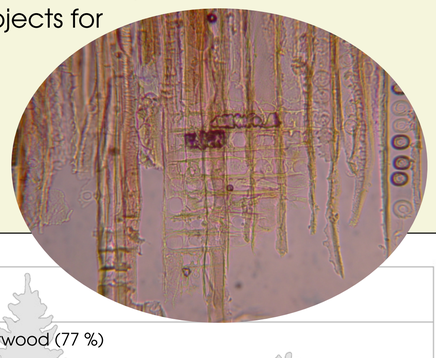
Norway spruce – radial section



Fir – radial section

Bottoms and segments of dishes. Made of spruce, larch and fir.

Wood of Scots pine, which has a high volume of resin, was used for the production of wooden objects for making fire or light.



Scots pine – radial section

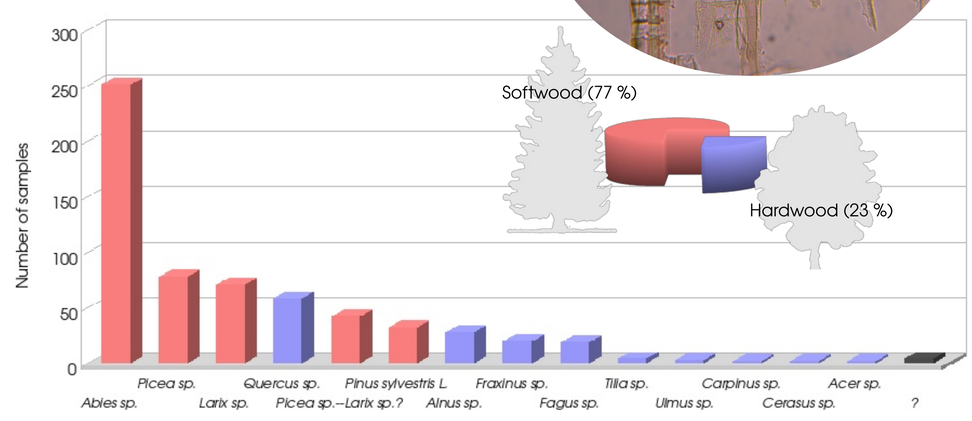
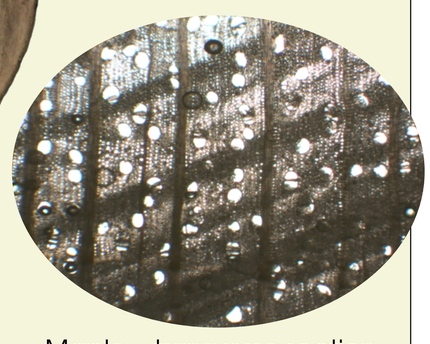


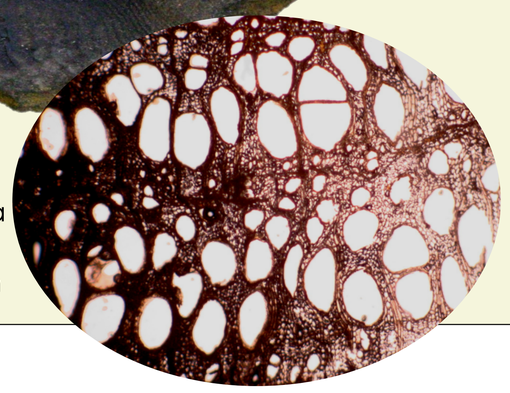
Chart of wood species occurence in identified samples (small samples only)



Maple – transverse section

Wooden spoon

Hardwood was preferred for the production of turned wooden containers. As an example, there are parts of a turned bowl made of ash.



Ash – transverse section

Conclusion

The found wooden artefacts prove that wood was an important building material and a raw material to produce artefacts in the life of a medieval person.

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