

ARCHAEOBOTANY

The primary aim of archaeobotanical investigations is not merely the identification of plant remains, but the reconstruction of the relationships between human communities, the environment, and cultural practices, through the integrated study of plant macroremains (archaeological wood) and microremains (pollen and other palynomorphs). This approach makes it possible to address key themes in archaeology and ancient history, such as the management of natural resources, technological and symbolic choices, and the interaction between landscape and ritual practices. Analyses of archaeological wood allow the investigation of strategies for selecting plant species used in the production of artefacts and grave goods, providing insights into the technical knowledge of ancient communities, the mechanical properties sought, and the availability of resources in the surrounding territory. In parallel, archaeopalynological investigations applied to sediments associated with funerary contexts make it possible to explore the informational potential of pollen not only as an indicator of past vegetation landscapes, but also as a possible trace of ritual practices and depositional processes, thereby broadening the interpretative framework beyond environmental reconstruction alone.

In a context such as the necropolis of Piazza d'Armi in Spoleto, characterised by a strong symbolic component of the funerary contexts, archaeobotanical research represents a fundamental tool for integrating traditional archaeological data. It offers the opportunity to access independent information on environmental dynamics, resource exploitation strategies, and the interactions between social practices and landscape, contributing to a more articulated and multidimensional interpretation of protohistoric societies in central Italy.

The analytical activities were carried out at the Laboratory of Archaeobotany and Palynology of the Department of Environmental Biology, Sapienza University of Rome (<https://dba.web.uniroma1.it/it/archeobotanica>), under the scientific responsibility of Alessia Masi and Laura Sadori, ensuring the application of well-established protocols and an interpretative framework consistent with the most up-to-date research directions in the field of archaeobotanical sciences.

