

FRUITS AND EARS – ANOTHER WELL FROM THE LINEAR POTTERY CULTURE: SCHKEUDITZ-ALTSCHERBITZ, SACHSEN, GERMANY

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During large scale archaeological excavations in advance of the expansion of the airport for Leipzig/Halle, the Archaeological Heritage Service in Saxony uncovered a settlement from the early Neolithic Linear Pottery Culture (LBK), including a well. It is now the sixth early Neolithic well found in Sachsen. Three of these, found near Eythra and Plaußig, were presented by U. Maier at the 14th Symposium in Kraków 2007.

The lower 3 m of the well with its wooden shaft were preserved in waterlogged conditions by the ground-water table. The feature was block-lifted and transported to the premises of the Archaeological Heritage Service where further excavations directed by Rengert Elburg, and almost under laboratory conditions, started in March 2008 and will finish this year.

The wooden shaft of the well was built in log-cabin style from oak and dates dendrochronologically shortly before 5100 cal BC. After its abandonment, the lower part of the well was filled, in several episodes, with sediments and organic material which is remarkably well preserved.

Archaeobotanical investigations accompany the excavation. By February 2010 about 300,000 plant macroremains from 120 species were identified, mainly cultivated plants (*Triticum dicoccon*, *T. monococcum*, *Hordeum vulgare*, *Lens culinaris*, *Pisum sativum*, *Linum usitatissimum*, *Papaver somniferum*) and ruderals which reflect the human impact within the settlement and its immediate surroundings.

Some plants like *Physalis alkekengi* (5400 seeds) and *Hyoscyamus niger* (1200 seeds) are so regularly found that their cultivation can be presumed. The well contains not only fruits and seeds but also complete inflorescences. Sensational and most impressive are complete uncarbonised cereal ears, which will be presented on the poster.

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