

INTEGRATED ARCHAEOBOTANICAL RESEARCH – ONLINE TUTORIAL

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The Integrated Archaeobotanical Research project (IAR) was funded by the EU Marie Curie Framework 6 Transfer of Knowledge programme at the University of Sheffield 2007–09.

Traditionally, charred or waterlogged seeds and fruits, recovered from archaeological sites, have been the primary source of evidence for the reconstruction of past diet, subsistence strategies and plant economy, but other types of plant material can also shed light on these research areas. The purpose of the IAR project was to bring together specialists in a wide range of archaeobotanical materials: charred plant remains (including underground storage organs such as roots and tubers), wood charcoal, waterlogged plant remains (including fragile leaf and stem fragments), silica phytoliths and starch, to develop complementary research and training strategies for investigating the ancient economy, building on each discipline's strengths.

The training output of the IAR project is encapsulated in the 'Online Archaeobotany Tutorial' available from the University of Sheffield website. The 'Online Archaeobotany Tutorial' is not designed to be used in isolation as a self-taught archaeobotany course. Rather, the tutorial is intended to be used in tandem with a taught course or under archaeobotanical supervision.

The tutorial contains teaching packages on wood charcoal, charred seeds and fruits, charred roots and tubers, waterlogged plant tissues, pollen, phytoliths and starch. Each archaeobotanical specialism is explained in terms of the history, sampling, recovery, identification, quantification, data analysis, interpretation and storage of the botanical material concerned. The individual components of the package can be accessed individually, or followed through in sequence for each type of material. In addition, there is a section on modern interpretive tools, currently comprising ethnobotany, but soon to include a plant ecological database.

Web address: http://archaeobotany.dept.shef.ac.uk/wiki/index.php/Main_Page

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