

## Woody plant resources in the medieval site of l'Esquerda (Roda de Ter, Barcelona, Spain)

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**Summary:** *L'Esquerda is located at the NE of the Iberian Peninsula. The site has provided charcoal samples from the Iberian period to the Middle Ages. We present here new results from the Early Middle Age and principally the Late Middle Age. The catchment area of forest resources is reduced at the vicinity of the site. No outside contributions are observed. An important aspect is the relationship between *Buxus sempervirens* and *Quercus* type deciduous in domestic contexts. Riparian forest is present in the anthracological record too. Discussion is also made on wood selection and the rest of the economic activities in relation to forest exploitation.*

**Key words:** *anthracology, L'Esquerda, Middle Ages.*

### INTRODUCTION

The Iberian and Mediaeval site of l'Esquerda is situated in a meander of the Ter River, between 450 and 480 m asl (Fig. 1). Since the eighties, we have analyzed macro remains (Cubero *et al.*, 2008) of different cultural phases of the village, the Iberian period (Cubero, 1999), the Early Middle Age and also the Late Middle Age (Cubero and Ollich, 2008).

### DATA AND RESULTS

The Early Middle Age charcoal samples originate from a few pits; instead Late Middle Age samples come from domestic contexts, like habitat levels, beams, and fire or handle tools. Wood has been gathered with the sediment or isolated. In the second case remains are single and visible to the naked eye. In some circumstances, it has been able to have a special idea of the wood distribution inside the houses.

Three main groups could be assumed, (1) riparian and deciduous riverside forests were developed, (2) *Quercus* deciduous was dominant with shrub and bush communities (3) and also signs of agricultural activities are recorded (Table 1). Attention should be paid to the relationship between *Quercus* deciduous and *Buxus*

*sempervirens*. This relation is apparent already in the Iberian period, but during the Middle Ages it seems slightly modified: *Buxus sempervirens* is less important now.

### DISCUSSION

The obtained results are a first approximation of the medieval landscape, especially of the Early Middle Age. This extraction context is not comparable with other contexts from the Late Middle Age. The samples should be increased because the number of remains is not meaningful. The anthracological record shows a dominant and exploited oak forest with elements from evergreen forest, some fruit trees, cultivation of nut trees, and a riparian forest little used. Oak was used in building for beams, therefore its great ubiquity.

### CONCLUSIONS

Little anthracological research is carried out in the context of the medieval period. This kind of information allows us to gather a basic knowledge of l'Esquerda (*Roda civitas*) environment and its surroundings. So, it is necessary to continue this type of analyses to understand the ways in which the forest was exploited associated at agriculture and handcraft.

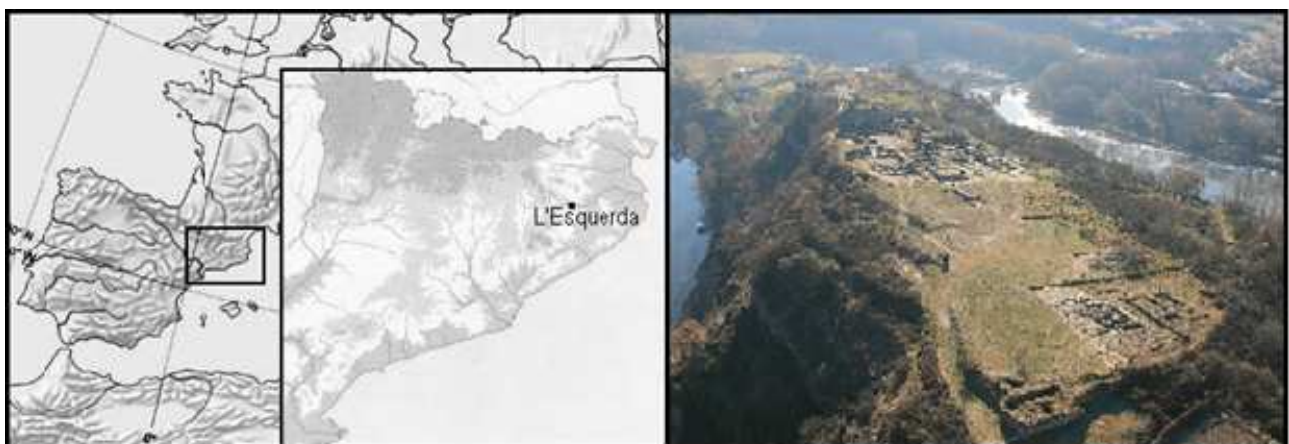


FIGURE 1. Situation and aerial view of L'Esquerda (Masies de Roda-Roda de Ter).

Taxa	E M A (500 AD)	L M A (1200-1300 AD)
<i>Alnus</i> sp.	2	7
<i>Populus /Alnus</i> sp.		1
<i>Populus</i> sp.	6	5
<i>Salix</i> sp.		14
<i>Ulmus</i> sp.	3	53
<i>Buxus sempervirens</i>	6	156
cf. <i>Viburnum tinus</i>		8
<i>Pomoideae (Sorbus)</i>		1
<i>Prunus avium / cerasus</i>	4	2
<i>Prunus</i> cf. <i>spinosa</i>	5	
<i>Prunus</i> sp.	6	5
<i>Corylus avellana</i>		2
<i>Quercus</i> type <i>caducifolia</i>	50	332
<i>Quercus</i> type <i>sempervirens</i>		1
<i>Quercus</i> sp.	9	1
cf. <i>Catanea sativa</i>		1
<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>	3	18
<i>Juglans regia</i>		16
Total	100	623

TABLE 1. Taxa identified at the Middle Age site of L'Esquerda (NR).

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