

## FRUITS AND SEEDS FROM THE TWO ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES IN SW LIBYA

by

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**Aim of investigations.** Recent years have witnessed an intensive development of archaeological studies in North Africa and rich plant materials were found at several sites but the history of cultivated plants on that continent is still poorly known. The expedition of the University of Rome excavated two sites in the Acacus Mts. in Libya and plant remnants discovered there were studied by the present author. Excavated rock shelters were inhabited by nomadic tribes between about 9 and 5 000 B. P. These people already had domestic animals but did not practise soil cultivation. The study of plant remains should provide information on the vegetation around the shelters and possible use of wild plants.

**Preliminary results.** The very rich plant material is only partly identified. It is dominated by herbaceous plants, mainly by grasses (most abundantly *Panicoideae*). Trees and shrubs are poorly represented.

A large number of broken fruit-stones of the desert date *Balanites aegyptiaca* may indicate their use by people (1). The composition of this flora confirms the description of past vegetation based on pollen analysis (2). Plant communities were probably similar to present-day ones but the vegetation cover could have been slightly denser than to-day. A very interesting problem involved in these studies is connected with the much discussed question of the changes of the southern limits of the desert zone in the Holocene. Contribution to this discussion requires exact determination of plant taxa by comparison with reference material of fruits and seeds which is not easily available for the African flora.

### References

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