

## **Abstract**

Landscape transformation that occurred during the Middle Ages in western and central Europe is reflected in all pollen diagrams. An event that was so striking and widespread was used by Firbas to distinguish a biostratigraphical period called the Younger Subatlantic (zone X; Firbas 1949). High Medieval landscape transformation is connected with rapid colonization in our area that resulted in extensive deforestation and intensified agriculture. During the first half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the settlement network was already stabilized and was very similar to the current state and was reaching also mountain areas (Klápště 1994). New organization and changes in land ownership, as well as a need for more effective agriculture, resulted in the connecting of small fields into larger ones and in an increase of cultivated area (Klápště 2006). The use of the land was different, and for the first time complete (Bakels 2009). During a few centuries anthropogenic factors that were enormously enhanced throughout the 13<sup>th</sup> century, formed a cultural landscape that was much more similar to the landscape of today than to the landscape of, for instance, the 9<sup>th</sup> century.

This doctoral thesis is focused on the Early Medieval landscape in the Czech lands and its transformation that culminated during the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries. From that time onwards the prehistoric landscape pattern was definitively lost and replaced by much coarser patches with different species composition and distribution of particular biotopes. This thesis has two different aims, i) to study and describe characteristics of early medieval landscape and its transformation during the High Medieval time by means of pollen analysis from both archaeological layers and natural sediments; ii) to assess the potential of pollen-analytical data from both archaeological layers and natural sediments. The question was whether pollen analysis that is usually performed in natural sediments and that well-reflect long term vegetation development, can be successfully applied to archaeological research in urban contexts. In the case of natural sediments, the question was if the detail of pollen data is sufficient to reflect landscape changes. Can we miss something important when we study landscape history only by reading pollen diagrams?