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Abstract

Traditional African archaeobotany commonly used carpology and phytolith analysis, among other subdisciplines of archaeobotany, as key methods to reconstruct past plant use and human diet. Recent advances in collaborative work within the discipline, for example, combined macro- and microremains approaches or the building of local reference collections, land use and anthropogenic land cover models to investigate how humans have influenced the shaping of the environment and vice versa.

Greater collaboration among the subdisciplines, such as the combined study of macroremains (seeds, fruits, wood charcoal) and microremains (phytoliths, starch grains, pollen), significantly increases our understanding of the immense archaeological and environmental diversity and its changes on the African continent from a diachronic perspective. Integrating ethnoarchaeology is also helpful to (re)interpret the archaeobotanical data, for a deeper understanding of past environments and future adaptations. In the same way, the construction and use of local reference collections have improved taxonomic identification and interpretation.

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