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## Analysis from two cess pits and problems with their interpretation

### ANNOTATION

Comparative analysis of the finds inventory from two cess pits. Large assemblage of archaeological finds from excavations of two house plots situated in various parts of Prague brings new information about the material culture of its inhabitants in late medieval and early Post medieval times.

### SUMMARY

This article refers to analysis of an inventory of two cess pits with special regard to pottery finds. The first pit was uncovered during the excavation in the vicinity of the Národní metro station at Nové Město quarter in 2009. However considerable fragmentation of artefacts from its infill complicated their analysis to certain extent. Apart from that later intrusions appeared in the lower sediments, which opened questions about the filling process of the feature, its function and also methodological aspects. From this reason only more significant items of the pottery assemblage are presented in this article (Hostomice goods, stoneware, fine sculptures etc.), dated from the 1st half of the 15th century to the 2nd half of the 17th century. This proved as the most suitable access with the aim to enlarge the, so far, not very numerous base of specific shapes, decoration types and pottery groups. Interpretation of the feature, situated in the back part of a townsman's plot and originally signed as a well, appeared quite problematic. In cooperation with the environmentalists this function was excluded and time horizons were stated when this pit could have been used as faecal.

The second excavated feature was uncovered at The Malostranské square in the ground floor of the house No. 260/III in 2006. To the contrary from the previous one a large amount of complete vessels (89 pieces) was gained, and the general fragmentation was much less extensive especially in the lower parts. Variations of morphological and decoration changes could thus be observed. Kitchen pottery prevailed mostly with cups of small diameters. The infill of the pit was dated since the end of the 15th to the late 17th century and can partly be connected with the existence of a hospital situated nearby in 1485-1590. The homogenous content of the layers suggests gradual filling of the feature, which could have been used for depositing the faecal at the same time.

Analysis of two Prague pits with similar construction aimed first at publishing at least part of the large finds assemblage from their infill. Comparison of their content, filling process and presumed function proved to be beneficial. The results show that the character of the fill can be determined by the position of the pit within the house plot and its accessibility. In a limited space in the house ground floor the frequency of the filling might not be so high and the number of its users is more reduced than if the pit is situated in the rear part of the plot with variable boundaries, which did not have to be firmly defined. Archaeologically uncovered pits, tens of which are known from Prague only, give evidence about the waste management as well as about certain habitual practices connected with early post medieval hygiene. They are significant for the knowledge of what was included in the interiors of surrounding houses. From this point of view they will always be archaeologically very observed features despite the difficulties their analysis bring with them.

**Fig. 1.** Prague 1-Nové Město. Original appearance of the house block with the archaeological trenches from 2009-2012 and the position of the pit Z043 (in yellow).

**Fig. 2.** Prague 1-Nové Město. Reconstruction of the plot boundaries on the base of the archive evidence by J. Pařez.

**Fig. 3.** Prague 1-Nové Město. Groundplan of the feature Z043.

**Fig. 4.** Prague 1-Nové Město. The area of the archaeological excavation (red line) and the position of the plot (red infill) on the section of a map of the northern edge of the south part of Nové Město in Prague around 1519.

**Fig. 5.** Prague 1-Nové Město. Fragment of the Jewish gravestone from the infill of the feature Z043.

**Fig. 6.** Prague 1-Nové Město. The finds situation in the Z043 feature and its surroundings. Recognised chronological horizons in colours supplemented by examples of the finds.

**Fig. 7.** Prague 1-Nové Město. A thin walled small jug with a mark on its base.

**Fig. 8.** Prague 1-Nové Město. Olive green glazed beaker with embossed decoration.

**Fig. 9.** Prague 1-Nové Město. Fragment of a miniature vessel with olive green glaze on both sides.

**Fig. 10.** Prague 1-Nové Město. Fragments of so called Hostomice goods (a-d) and fragments of glazed pottery with atypical decoration (e).

**Fig. 11.** Prague 1-Nové Město. An unglazed lid with dimples on the knob.

**Fig. 12.** Prague 1-Nové Město. A fragment of a jug with typical rouletting decoration.

**Fig. 13.** Prague 1-Nové Město. A “tankard” with rich rouletting decoration fired in reduced atmosphere.

**Fig. 14.** Prague 1-Nové Město. Stoneware jug with horizontal lines and indented foot.

**Fig. 15.** Prague 1-Nové Město. Pottery forms for casting metal items (buckles).

**Fig. 16.** Prague 1-Nové Město. A base of a metallurgical cup with traces of metal (on the top) and a complete one with “a crutched cross” mark on its base (on the bottom).

**Fig. 17.** Prague 1-Nové Město. Tiny zoomorphic and anthropomorphic pottery statue.

**Fig. 18.** Prague 1-Nové Město. Bone knife handles from the fill of Z043 pit.

**Fig. 19.** Prague 1-Malá Strana. The position of the house “The three Golden Crowns” (No. 260/III, Malostranské square 11, Tržiště 16); top: current cadastre map of Prague; centre: stable cadastre, the Emperors imprint from 1842; bottom: an orthophoto of Malá Strana.

**Fig. 20.** Prague 1-Malá Strana, No. 260/III. The position of the Z05 feature (yellow) within the building constructions of the house No. 260/III and late medieval constructions revealed within the plot. (Analytic plan of the building phases by M. Kovář, 2009, inputs by T. Cymbalak 2012).

**Fig. 21.** Prague 1-Malá Strana. Finds situation in the Z05 feature and its surroundings. Chronological horizons in colours supplemented by examples of finds.

**Fig. 22–24.** Prague 1-Malá Strana, No. 260/III. A withdrawal of drawing documentation of the pottery finds from the pit Z05.

**Fig. 25.** Prague 1-Malá Strana, No. 260/III. A glass bottle.

**Fig. 26.** Prague 1-Malá Strana, No. 260/III. Glass pilgrim bottle.

**Fig. 27.** Prague 1-Malá Strana, No. 260/III. Photo of a sample of complete pottery vessels from the pit Z05.

**Tab. 1.** Prague 1-Nové Město. Copa Centrum Národní. Results of the archaeobotanical macro remains analysis from the infill of the Z043 feature.

**Tab. 2.** Prague 1-Nové Město. Copa Centrum Národní. Results of the palynological analysis from the infill of the Z043 feature.

**Tab. 3.** Prague 1-Nové Město. Copa Centrum Národní. Results of the numismatic analysis of the finds from the infill of the Z043 feature.

**Tab. 4.** Prague 1-Malá Strana. Malostranské square No. 260/III. Results of the numismatic analysis of the finds from the infill of the Z05 feature.

**Tab. 5.** Prague 1-Malá Strana. Malostranské square No. 260/III. Results of the archaeobotanical macro remains analysis from the infill of the Z05 feature.

**Tab. 6.** Prague 1-Malá Strana. Malostranské square No. 260/III. Results of the analysis of the charcoal and its amount in the pit Z05.

**Graf. 2.** Prague 1-Nové Město. Copa Centrum Národní. Percentage and the amount of pottery unglazed and glazed in layers in the Z043 pit.

**Graf. 1.** Prague 1-Malá Strana. Malostranské square No. 260/III. Percentage and the amount of pottery unglazed and glazed in layers in the Z05 pit.

*English by Linda and Patrick Foster*