

Shrimps in fish sauce?

An exceptional discovery of shrimp remains (*Crustacea Decapoda*) in the archaeological levels of the Roman harbour of *Ratiatum* (Rezé, Loire-Atlantique, France)

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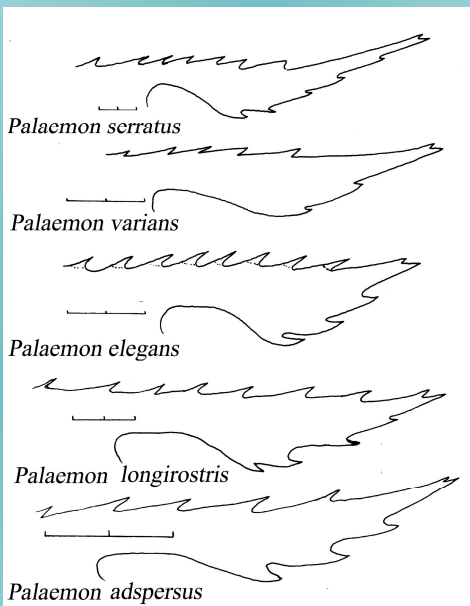
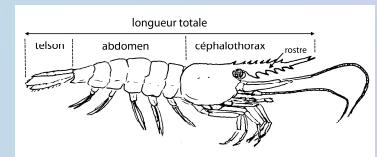
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Shrimp remains (*Crustacea decapoda*) have been discovered in programmed archaeological excavations in the Roman harbour area of *Ratiatum* (Rezé, Loire-Atlantique, France).

Carapace fragments from these small animals can only be detected after careful sieving of the sediment with a 1.1mm square mesh. The discovery of these shrimp fragments is exceptional at an archaeological site; their presence in *Ratiatum* is explained by the favourable preservation conditions offered by a water-logged environment.



Shrimp taxa can be identified by the morphology of different parts of their exoskeleton. Here, the morphology of the rostrum (rigid extension of the head) allowed us to identify *Palaemon longirostris* whilst that of the telson (rear end of the body in arthropods) makes the sand shrimp *Crangon crangon* clearly identifiable. The first species is quite abundant, with more than a hundred specimens; the second is rarer (a few specimens).



The ecology of the main species *Palaemon longirostris* indicates that they were caught in an estuary such as that of the Loire. The fact that pieces of shrimp are systematically associated with small fish used in preparing fish sauces suggests that these shrimps were probably also used in this type of preparation.

The main aim of this poster is to draw the attention of archaeoichthyologists on this type of neglected remains, and demonstrate that their identification is possible and can provide useful information.

So if you think shrimp remains are present in your samples, please do not hesitate to contact us!!

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