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New Supports for Archaeological Textiles

A few years ago very prominent Neolithic textiles were excavated in Baden-Württemberg, Germany. Because of their three-dimensional character the finds were conserved and stored in moulds with a cover made of plaster. After years of storage the finds are brittle and very fragile. Dust of gypsum is laying on the finds. Handling and investigation of these textiles is rather difficult and the finds can easily be damaged.

New concepts for storage and mounting these finds have to be developed. The aim of our work was to find nonporous and noncrumbling materials to support the fragile textiles. Despite adequate aging properties and usual demands regarding preventive conservation, the material should be easy to process. The material should be stable and mould the profile of the object precisely. Comparative studies were carried out on different materials as papmache, Plexiglas®, polycapolacton and stripes of textile. The suitability for the use of the materials indicated pH measurements and an Oddy-Test. Processing and mechanical stability were tested by manufacturing moulds exemplary.

The best results were achieved with stripes of textile, which were stable and met the requested demands. The new supports were made out of stripes of textile and Japanese paper, which is a soft subground for the find and separates the mould from the find.

Bibliography

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