

Textile Evidence From A 17th Century Creek Site

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In order for organic archaeological artifacts to survive microbial activity over extended periods of time there is usually a significant change in the nature of the artifact. In the case of archaeological textiles the artifact is most often charred, desiccated, mineralized, frozen or saturated by water. Archeological textiles in southeastern of North America are often found in mineralized, also called pseudomorphs, or charred states depending on the Native American burial rituals for the area and the surrounding environment.

The Weiss Basin Seven Springs site (Ce 101) is located in northeastern Alabama along the Coosa River. The Seven Springs site is an enigma in that there are no earthworks, no fortifications, and no house patterns, but there are a number of burials with grave goods and pottery sherds [1]. The site has been dated by artifact type and trade goods from 1600 to 1630 A.D. and is attributed to Creek Ancestry [2]. Desiccated and pseudomorphic specimens were examined from Burial 6. The artifacts were in association with two brass arm bands and a gorget, Figure 1 and 2. Both types of specimens survived due direct contact of metallic objects within the burial.

Due to the specimens' origins and limited size, nondestructive analytical methods for data collection were used. Microscopic images using a Leica GZ6 and Sony Digital Color Video camera were collected. The digital images were analyzed using calibrated Micro Color 2000 software to measure fiber and yarn diameters. Overall sample size was measured by metric ruler. Yarn density and textile construction were evaluated for presence and type of interworking.

Upon analysis the fibers from the mass covering the bracelets was found to be rabbit hair identified by the distinct medullary structure, Figure 3. Other analyzed fibers appear to be animal fibers, but exact identification is not possible due to the amount of deterioration. Textile interworking was not able to be identified due to the deteriorated state of the specimen.

References

- [1] D. L. DeJarnette et al., *J. of AL Archaeology* 19 (1973) 32.
- [2] M.T. Smith. *Coosa: The Rise and Fall of a Southeastern Mississippian Chiefdom*, University Press of Florida, Tampa, 2000.



FIG. 1. Overview of desiccated fiber specimen from Burial 6.

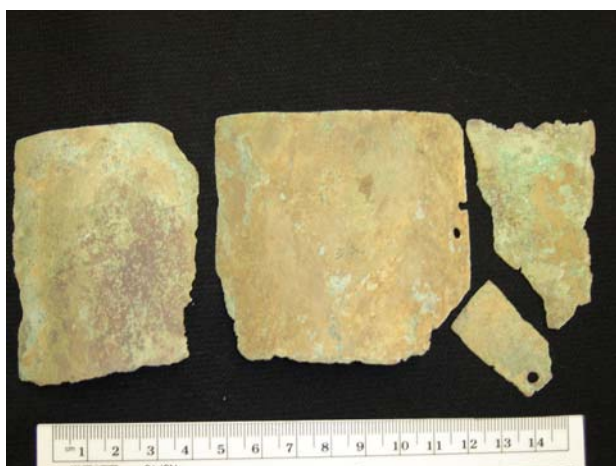


FIG. 2. Metallic Armband from Burial 6.



FIG. 3. Rabbit Fiber from specimen 1959.009.1762. Fiber diameter and Medulla Diameter are indicated. Note the divisions in the medulla indicative of rabbit fiber.