

Conservation and Handling of Delicate Botanical Material in Field and in the Laboratory

Abstract

Botanical remains from archaeological sites must be handled with care. Too often the material is destroyed post excavation. Handling of the material includes sampling, field conservation, transport, splitting, concentration, conservation, documentation and storage in addition to the analysis itself. One must emphasize the conditions under which they have been preserved in the cultural layers and possible damage expected during analysis and storage.

Organic materials still are difficult to conserve, they most often would have been better off left alone. The preserving conditions at the site are not possible to maintain indoors, and must therefore be substituted by other conditions which do not limit later analysis. One must unfortunately also consider the cost of such conservation. In interdisciplinary projects the conservation of a representative material must be given high priority, later generations of scientist must be given access to the material excavated. Various methods, ideas and procedures will be discussed and presented.