

Studies on the Identification of Mordanted and Weighted Textiles

Marei Hacke

*Postgraduate Fellow in Conservation of Museum Collections
Museum Conservation Institute*

Historic textile collections frequently hold silks weighted with mineral salts, and mordanted and dyed fabrics containing metal ions. These textiles are generally regarded as being the most susceptible to degradation, and conservation treatments are often problematic. The identification of the metal ions present in the textile is not only of art historical interest, but may also aid the conservator in the choice of conservation treatment.

This talk will provide a summary of the literature on silk weighting, focusing on its history as well as the deterioration, stabilization and identification of weighted silks. In addition, results will be presented from a recent research project at MCI regarding the applicability of portable XRF analysis for the in-situ identification of metallic mordanting and weighting agents.

MCI
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MCI Theater
Museum Support
Center
4210 Silver Hill Road
Suitland, MD 20746
301-238-1240



Smithsonian
Museum Conservation Institute