

Abstract

This work assesses the evolution of textile production in the Czech lands during the Eneolithic, a period that is the earliest source of broader archaeological information for the study of textile manufacturing. The basis for the study is provided above all by archaeological finds of textile tools (spindle whorls, weights, spools and awls) that are evaluated within individual archaeological cultures in terms of quantity, shape, size and function, archaeological context and chronological development. This is supplemented by a survey of fragmentary textiles and their imprints dating from the Stone Age in the Czech Republic. Another important source of information is provided by findings from research into Eneolithic pile-dwelling settlements around Alpine lakes that have provided numerous finds of archaeological textiles as well as textile-making tools and tool fragments that have not been found in the Czech lands. An interesting comparative set of artefacts is provided by the objects found in the possession of the mummy of Ötzi dating from the Middle Eneolithic Period. The second part of the work focuses on the experimental testing of several hypotheses formulated on the basis of the study of archaeological materials. The experiments focused on the potential of working bast fibre from trees as an important raw material for Stone Age textile manufacture and especially on the interpretation of strikingly large spindle whorls, more precisely the broader series of questions relating to the relationship of the spun raw material, the spindle whorl used and the qualities of the spun fibre.

Keywords

Czech Republic, bast fibre, Eneolithic, experiment in archaeology, pile-dwelling settlements, spindle whorls, textile production, textiles, wool