Conservation - restoration Works on a Flavius Valens Sarcophagus from Salona

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DESCRIPTION
The sarcophagus was in a very bad state, at first glance the missing parts were noticeable, together with structural damage and organic (lichens and other plant organisms) and inorganic (black bark, dark deposits) growth. The sarcophagus was missing a lid and the greater part of the front side and right side.

CONSERVATION - RESTORATION TREATMENT
During the operation, it was necessary to clean the inside of the crate. The soil was taken out to carry out a detailed overview of the inside of the crate. During the cleaning process, several damaged fragments were found that were compared with the sarcophagus box according to its performed processing, and according to the shape and adhesion to the original surface.

HIGH WATER PRESSURE CLEANING
Before the start of the cleaning process, it was necessary to soak the stone surface with biocidal agents. The sarcophagus was contaminated with a thin layer of deposits, so a water pressure cleaner was used. After the first rinsing, the biological activity was clearly visible. The biocide agent was used to remove plant growth.

FRAGMENT ADHESION AND STEEL REINFORCEMENT
Stone fragments found near the sarcophagus were glued using a two-component adhesive Tenax. After all the fragments were glued to their original place, 24 vertical holes have been drilled. Stainless steel bars with a thickness of 10 mm were used to act as reinforcement. The bars were additionally horizontally interleaved with stainless steel bars.

PLASTIC RECONSTRUCTION
As a material, a stone plaster of (a mixture of white cement, additives and aggregates) was used. The original stone surface that was in contact with artificial stone was coated with SN bond. Stone plaster was gradually applied, in several layers. The last layer of plaster was previously sifted through a thick sieve, thus avoiding a rough surface layer on the finished surface of the reconstruction.

FINAL PROCESSING
The front side was done using abrasive papers to give it a perfectly flat surface. Due to the lack of a larger part of the inscription it was decided that the missing letters will not be reconstructed. Only the edges of the table were chiseled to indicate the general shape. Missing ornaments were carved using an old photograph from 1885 as a reference. Left and right sides of the sarcophagus were treated using traditional stonemason’s tools to get as similar texture as possible to the original.

REFERENCES
DÖRREICHES ARCHÄOLOGISCHES INSTITUT, Forschungen in Salona, Zweiter Band, Dörrerischen Staatsdruckerei, Bel. 1926.