Museums and Replica Materials

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In many history museums established recently, replica materials are used extensively. However, at the present stage, there is no satisfactory common understanding on "what" replicas are to the museum, and in what form they can be used. This paper clarifies the nature and limits of replicas mainly from the technical aspect, and examines how they can be used in research and in exhibition. Only part of the information of the original material is copied into a replica. Nevertheless, at whatever technical method may be adopted, copying is carried out to a considerable extent in a manner depending on the subjective impressions of the producer, and thus it cannot be said that strict objectivity is guaranteed. Therefore, a replica may be justifiable only when it is used as a copy, or in the context of a particular scenario in exhibition. The production of a replica in itself can be ranked as a part of material research.