



ICOM-CC Graphic Documents Working Group

Newsletter December 2015

News from the Working Group

Christa Hofmann

The preparations for our next Interim Meeting “Experience and Evidence” are in full swing. We have selected 24 abstracts for oral presentations and further 20 for poster presentations from over 60 submissions. The preliminary program will be announced on the ICOM-CC website in January. Registration for the meeting will open in January. We will inform you by email. Please note the new dates for the Interim Meeting: **1 to 3 June 2016**. The meeting takes place at the new building of the French National Library in Tolbiac, in Paris. Wednesday 1 June and Thursday 2 June are dedicated to oral and poster presentations. On Friday 3 June, there will be tours to French conservation studios and institutions. Our business meeting will take place on Wednesday 1 June at 6 p.m. Valentine Dubard, our assistant coordinator, and Isabelle Bonnard, conservator at the French National Library, are busy in preparing the meeting in Paris with all the necessary details. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have questions.

The Directory Board of ICOM-CC is dedicated to prepare the next Triennial Conference in Copenhagen in September 2017 that will mark the 50th anniversary of ICOM-CC. The Directory Board met with the Danish National Organizing Committee for Copenhagen in early September and visited the Conference venue at the Tivoli Conference Centre. The Call for Papers for the Triennial Conference will be sent out in the first quarter of 2016. An update on the Board activity will be available in the forthcoming newsletter of the Board.

ICOM-CC will be holding sessions at the ICOM General Conference in Milan, Museums and Cultural Landscapes Italy, 2-9 July 2016: <http://network.icom.museum/icom-milan-2016/>. ICOM-CC is actively present at the ICOM General Conference and promotes the agenda of conservation.

At the meeting of the Directory Board with the Working Group Coordinators, we discussed the challenges of climate-controlled environments for cultural heritage collections. It was proposed to create information sheets on climate control for each Working Group on the ICOM-CC website. The information compiled should be for a diverse audience of museum professionals. We welcome your ideas and suggestions on this controversial topic. Due to the complexity of the subject in our group of diverse objects and the intense preparations for the Interim Meeting, we have not yet written a draft for a text on climate control.

I am looking forward to seeing many of you at our Interim Meeting in Paris. Please take the opportunity to come to Paris, to be part of our Working Group, to discuss and exchange with us. We are a *working group*; we have to work together, especially in tougher times. Your coming to Paris is also a sign of solidarity with the people in Paris, a testimony for life and culture.

Conservation at the Historical Archive of the City of Cologne in Germany after the Collapse of the Building

Marion Verborg

On March 3rd 2009, almost the entire building of the Historical Archive of the City of Cologne collapsed into the subway tunnel underneath, causing a great loss of valuable documents and taking two lives. About 30 shelf kilometres of numerous important collections of records lay among sand and rubble, buried at between 12 and 28 meters below street level. The building in Cologne-downtown contained original manuscripts of, among others, Albertus Magnus, Napoleon Bonaparte, Jacques Offenbach, Giuseppe Verdi, Karl Marx, Heinrich Böll and Konrad Adenauer. This emergency case brought together firefighters, archive staff members and volunteer citizens to work hard to salvage these documents (fig 1). From this unpredictable crisis situation arose a strong willpower to save the history of Cologne.

The archive housed 1,000-year-old records, among those about 65,000 charters on paper and parchment, and 2,000 manuscripts. The entirety of these unique historical accounts needs to be identified, re-registered, conserved, and preserved immediately for future generations. The salvaging procedure was successfully completed in August of 2011; around 95% of the archival material was salvageable. An estimated 15% of our objects were slightly damaged, while 50% sustained medium damage and 35% were heavily deteriorated. Damages vary from small scratches on paper or parchment to huge holes in entire books (Fig 2).

As an ongoing disaster recovery process, we are currently developing and improving conservation and preservation measures in a temporary off-site building established after the collapse (Fig 3). A team of more than 50 conservation technicians and 20 conservators work on these projects, closely with archivists and process analysts.

Typical daily tasks include identification, registration, condition report, dry cleaning, quality control, categorization (depending on the possibility of direct or indirect use), digitization, and rehousing. These are the main steps in the recovery process. The procedures are still evolving, using feedback from co-workers to improve our system. In our case, the term "conservation" describes a course of action that, considering the need of treating very large amounts of material, does not aim to restore aesthetic appearance, but aims to stabilize documents so that they can go back into use, be it in their original or in digital format. We also use all the opportunities and possibilities that this specific situation offers us, taking advantage of the newest technology as well as the large pool of co-workers. In addition to conservation challenges, we are facing the constraints of the legal framework of a recourse.

One of our specific projects is the treatment of the 3,000 meters of archive material salvaged wet. They were cleaned of dirt and ground soil at a rinsing station after the collapse. These documents were then frozen and are currently stored at - 26°C in a freeze storage unit near Cologne. Vacuum freeze drying units were used in various places in Germany (Fig 4). Once dried, the documents are cleaned on site. Another project is the unmounting, dry cleaning, stabilising and remounting on conservation quality material of records on parchment from the middle ages. Taking advantage of other institutions' experience with mounting of parchments, we developed a housing process to improve long-term preservation.

A considerable project in which every conservator is currently involved is the development of a conservation documentation software. The aim is to write our documentation form of each object we treat in a database and to reduce the use of paper forms. Faced with the large amount of objects we treat and document every day, we decided to develop a way to collect the data and take advantage of this great amount of information. The software will allow us to assess the quantity and

quality of damage. It will also help us to define conservation procedures and the treatment needs of objects. Finally, it will also allow us to calculate the time we spend on the disaster recovery process.

Many other projects are also created on site, among others un-mounting and cleaning of large format books and photo conservation. Insect monitoring and climate control are our priority as well.

Coordination of all these projects in an “after-disaster” context is challenging, and requires some non-conservation specific skills, communication of which is of primary importance. Every choice must be the result of a balance between budget options, material/time availabilities, and effective management of personnel.



Fig 1: Salvaging operation in March 2009



Fig 2: Damaged object – Photo before treatment



Fig 3: Conservation Lab – Cologne City Archive



Fig 4: Vacuum freeze drying unit in Cologne

Ancient Writing Materials in India with special reference to Palm leaves

Deepakshi Sharma, Research Scholar, National Museum Institute, New Delhi, India

Ancient India was a land of oral tradition. Knowledge has been transmitted orally to the future generation. The emphasis of spoken language led to the negligence of writing tradition. The concept of a writing system in India started much later than its language. The first reference to writing in India was found in a Pali Buddhist canon of the 5th Century BC. The heterodox traditions of Buddhism and Jainism had a high esteem for the written word. To them, writing was considered as a means of transmitting and documenting knowledge that would otherwise be lost forever. At first, man started

to communicate through the media of making marks on wet soil with wooden sticks. Soon after that, he started to print on clay tablets and on flat surfaces. He used stone and hard surfaces to engrave the letters and figures abundantly. With the discovery of metals, he started to express his views and speech on various kinds of metallic plates. Ancient writers wrote on a variety of materials that were pottery, animal hides, cloth, papyrus, parchment, palm leaf, bamboo, birch bark and paper. There was, to a certain extent, a progression over time from the use of papyrus to palm leaf and later, paper. Overtime the use of various mediums influenced and transformed the Indian scripts. However, the unique characteristics of each material often lent them particular purposes that were maintained over the centuries.

From early times various kind of plant materials were used in India for making manuscripts. Before the introduction of paper, the most popular traditional support or inscribed decoration material used to write in South and Southeast Asia was palm leaves. Palm leaf is a generic term. In various regions where the use of palm leaves is alive, people also use the vernacular term that often imply a particular variety leaf. In Sri Lanka the palm leaf is known as 'Ola', in Thailand as 'Larn', in Burma as 'Lontar', and various parts of India as 'Tula', 'Sritala' or 'Karalika'. South and Southeast Asia's wealth of knowledge was for centuries written on palm leaves. Development of conservation ideas and practices in this sphere has been rather limited.

Palm leaves were used for writing with the help of *stylus* or *stillus*. Generally, manuscripts are rare commodities written on a wide range of subjects like religion, philosophy, history, literature, medicine and science. For years, scribes have recorded a large amount of India's literary and scientific heritage on the available palm leaves and thousands of these are still preserved in various libraries and museums of India. Given the intellectual tradition of India and Indian culture's inherited knowledge, it is no surprise that a vast corpus of these palm leaf manuscripts have been accumulated over the centuries. However, due to Indian tropical climate, these palm leaf manuscripts could last only for four to five centuries, after which a new patron would commission scribes to copy the previous manuscripts onto freshly treated palm leaves. Traditionally palm leaf manuscripts were immersed in water after hundred years, although some of them were later recopied and others still lay abandoned in the store or community houses. Palm leaf manuscript culture refers to the development and use of the manuscript as a means of storing and disseminating information until the age of printing. The early age of manuscript culture consisted of the upper caste copying mostly religious text in the places of worship. Manuscript culture in the rural areas created new jobs built around the making, copying and the trade of manuscripts that is continuing. The art of palm leaf writing still survives away from the shops, in some friendly native household, in a temple, or at an astrologer's place. Many specimens of the original materials available in various libraries in India are getting old and going brittle. In some places of India, it is believed that the palm leaf manuscript itself is the object of worship and the essence of the text is personified in the name of a god or goddess. Many temples still use palm leaf manuscripts for reference instead of religious books. Professional horoscope makers known as nahakas traditionally write horoscopes on palm leaves. The palm leaf manuscripts bear testimony to the rich cultural heritage of India that include folk literature, native medicinal formulae, religious writings, astrological texts, astronomical facts, records of cultural practices, traditional systems of medicine, agricultural sciences, and crafts and skills. These manuscripts are an important material for historical research and a treasure trove of ethnographic and historical information. Hence, the use and maintenance of palm leaf manuscripts continues to exist in our country.

The Training Programs in Conservation of Heritage Collections at Paris I Panthéon – Sorbonne University in Paris

Claude Laroque, Senior lecturer, head of Book and Paper department

The first training program in conservation started in France in 1973, at the University Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne in Paris. This training delivered after four years a Master's degree in *Conservation-Restauration des Biens Culturels*. The training involved all types of objects found in heritage collections: sculptures, paintings, art objects and archaeological objects, graphic arts, textiles etc. This program was decidedly multidisciplinary and gradually oriented the student to a specialty. The student to be admitted to this course should have already a 2-years degree in art history or in archaeology.

The program has undergone various transformations until the reformation of university degrees introduced on the European template. In 2005, the training was split into two degrees: a bachelor degree (*Licence de préservation des biens culturels*) obtained after 3 years and a master degree (*Master de conservation- restauration des biens culturels*) after two more years (M1 + M2). The bachelor degree is dual: conservation and art history or preservation and archaeology. Therefore, teaching runs over 5 years.

In 1995 a post graduate program in preventive conservation was started parallel to the conservator's training. In 2010, Master 2 was created, a research program hosting students wishing to achieve a PHD. A new reform will be implemented in September 2016 which will allow the three degrees to be gathered under a single statement entitled "**Conservation of Cultural Properties**" with three paths "**Methodology and practice of conservation**" (1), "**Preventive conservation**" (2) "**Values and materiality of Cultural Heritage**" (3)".

(1) Training delivered to future conservators is classically articulated around three axes: conservation, science and art technologies. Theoretical courses are more numerous during the first two years. The amount of practical courses increases during the fourth year, or first year of Master. The multidisciplinary courses are more numerous in the early years and specialization is increasing gradually. In the fifth and final year the student completes a long internship in institutions (minimum six months but in general ten months), usually abroad. After this period, the student must write a "Master thesis" in connection with his internship experience; he will have to defend it before a jury. This work is the most important part for his graduation. Candidates are recruited on selection tests and an interview. They must determine at the time they enter the program what will be their specialty. 20-25 students are selected each year, all specialties together. Students wishing to specialize in graphic collections enter the "Book and Paper" section. Teaching covers both graphic works of art and book. Altogether 126 persons have graduated in this specialty.

(2) The current Master 2 in Preventive Conservation is a one-year training focusing as its name says on preventive conservation. The program is divided into several modules (general principles of preventive conservation, study and evaluation of cultural properties, environmental context of cultural properties, collection management and project development). After a nine-week internship in a heritage institution, the student produces a report that is the most important part for his graduation. This work is defended before a jury. From 2016 on the program will run over two years to allow free periods in which students can work. Applicants must have a minimum professional experience of three years to apply. They come with diverse backgrounds: conservators (which are the most numerous), registrars, curators of museums, libraries or archives, architects etc. Their number varies from 12 to 16 people per year.

(3) "Values and materiality of Cultural Heritage" program which will replace the current "Master 2 research" will proceed as currently, over one year. Lectures and seminars in research methodology train the students to their future thesis work. At the end of his year, the student has to present for graduation, a critical overview of the bibliography for his future PHD. The logical result of this year is a registration to doctorate. Candidates are recruited after an interview with a jury. They are around 15 people each year and their origin is quite diverse but the students from the masters in art history, archaeology and conservation are the most numerous.

Abstracts of Master Thesis in Conservation of Cultural Properties, Book and Paper Department, June 2015

Marion GOURIVEAU *Etude et restauration de modèles anatomiques en papier-mâché du docteur Auzoux: un modèle de colimaçon et deux modèles d'homme – Study and Conservation of Anatomic Models in Papier-mâché from Doctor Auzoux: Model of a Snail and two Models of Man*

Since Antiquity, men were interested in anatomy, which pushed them to overcome taboos in order to learn more about the human body. Artists contributed towards this science by representing anatomical bodies in two or three dimensions. During the 19th century, scientists wanted to make this science more objective, detached from empiricism, which elongated them from the artistic approach. In this context, Louis Auzoux created three-dimensional items that were used to learn anatomy at universities. These objects in papier-mâché were covered with a layer of pigments mixed with gelatine. The inner structure is metallic. These objects are composed of multiple pieces that can be disassembled. These items are kept in various kinds of institutions. They are sometimes misidentified because of the lack of documentation. With time, they lost their educational value. Moreover, the aesthetic value decreased because of their bad conditions. They are endangered items but their historical value and didactic impact are still active. Nevertheless, these items lost educational value during the musealisation process. Conservation is just a step in the revalorization process. It could be useful to carry out a survey giving more visibility to all anatomical models made by Auzoux and kept in museums. This dissertation is based on the study of three models: a little man model in the Natural History Museum of La Rochelle (France), a snail model in the University of Aberdeen (Scotland) and a life-size man model kept in the Medicine museum of Bruxelles (Belgium).

Minjung KIM *La spécificité du papier coréen – The Specification of Korean Paper*

Càilún improved paper in 105 A.D. in China. Papermaking skills were passed on to Korea and from there, to Japan, by a Goguryeo Kingdom's Monk called Damjing in Korean and Donchō in Japanese. As a result, the papers of these three countries have some similarities in their papermaking techniques; but only Korean and Japanese paper use the same raw material like mulberry, and the same papermaking techniques, like for instance the Nagashizuki one in Japan and the Yulmuljing one in Korea. Currently, traditional Japanese paper is an essential material in paper conservation, and, therefore has been fairly well investigated. However, only a few people know how Korea has contributed to the development of papermaking, and what kind of paper is produced in Korea.

Roxane MOINE

Le chine collé. Etude et restauration d'un corpus d'œuvres de la bibliothèque royale de Belgique et du Rijksmuseum – Chine collé. Study and Conservation of a Group of Objects from the Royal Library in Belgium and from the Rijksmuseum

Chine-collé is a specific printing technique carried out using an engraving plate or a lithographic stone. It consists in pasting the picture printed on a very thin paper called Chinese paper, at the early stage of printing on a wider and thicker European paper. This association allows for subtle lines thanks to the thinness of the Chinese paper and for protection by non-direct handling thanks to the European paper. This technique was invented in the 19th century by engravers and printers who wanted to change printing techniques and searched more suitable materials for their needs. Nowadays, Chine-Collés from the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century are not highly

prized. As part of an internship at the Royal Library of Belgium, we focussed on the treatment of a body of six *Chine-Collés*. The main conclusions based on those works are the effectiveness of the secondary support for the protection of the picture and the strong reactivity of the Chinese paper to hygrometric variations. In case of delamination, it leads to important structural modifications, which are difficult to handle. The conservation treatments had the ambition to adapt better to each specific case without distorting the artwork. We hope to have made some key reflections on a still insufficiently met topic in the bibliography of art history and conservation.

Justine PROVINO *Communication et conservation des documents musicaux écrits en milieu universitaire nord-américains – Communication and Conservation of Musical Documents written at North American Universities*

The master's thesis deals with the question how conservation treatment procedures are determined according to the circulation of music scores in institutions affiliated to academic research in North America. Book and paper preservation and conservation internships within university libraries and archives and a specialized research centre in Canada and the United States completed the research. The research axioms are the following: definition of music score conservation within the academic field, organization of conservation treatment procedures and limitations of conservation treatment procedures. First, to understand how to conserve a musical document it is necessary to give a definition of a music score's components (notes, staves and song), format (book, sheet music) and process (handwritten, printed). User value is the primary value of a music document for playing at concerts or to study. Cultural heritage policies established within an institution and patrons' expectations determine how music scores are valued (as an artefact for research or for artistic purpose). Therefore, conservators need to collaborate with music curators and music librarians to enhance their range of conservation practices according to the institution's cultural heritage policies. Then, collection surveys can be undertaken to determine and anticipate the needs in preservation and conservation of music score collections or of a particular piece of music. Collection surveys rely on a pre-established conservation vocabulary. A systematic poll of a collection, or a part of collection, can be used as a reading tool when it comes to establish preservation plans. A systematic poll can also be used as an initial approach for a condition report on music scores. To give access to both content and container of a music score is the result of an interdisciplinary collaboration between the stakeholders within the institution. The range of conservation practices is made stronger when it is able to adapt to the patron's expectation in the academic field.

Reports from Conferences and Workshops

Adapt & Evolve: East Asian materials and techniques in Western conservation

London, 8 to 10 April 2015

Fiona McLees, Icon Book and Paper Group *Adapt & Evolve* committee member

April 2015 saw Icon's Book and Paper Group proudly hosting our first specialty conference since the formation of Icon, and it provided the UK with a great opportunity to invite national and international colleagues to London in order to host not only a conference but also a wonderful range of studio tours, breakout sessions and associated workshops.

Almost 10 years on from *The Paper Conservator's* 2006 issue dedicated to East Asian conservation techniques, and a full 30 years since the vital and now well-thumbed 1985 issue *Hyōgu: The Japanese Tradition in Picture Conservation*, the Book & Paper group decided the time was ripe to use this conference as an opportunity to re-evaluate and update our knowledge of East Asian materials and techniques in conservation. As a committee member for the conference, I was particularly keen that the papers, posters and workshops scheduled would provide information applicable for book and paper conservators working with all kinds of objects, not just those treating East Asian objects. I hope

that those who attended can agree we delivered on this front: with papers ranging from the unique and respected expertise of specialists who were instrumental in introducing us to skills and materials from the East, such as Professor Katsuhiko Masuda and Pauline Webber; to those who are providing us with new ways to develop our application of East Asian materials, such as Claude Laroque and Susan Catcher; and in between a whole encyclopedia of specific and hard-won knowledge was shared by the fantastic international contributors.

It is difficult to pick out particular highlights in such a comprehensive program, but I will hazard a few personal ones of my own. The paste-making discussion and Q&A between the British Museum's Hirayama Studio conservators and conservation scientist Dr. Vincent Daniels provided a different perspective on this routine activity, and was a rare chance for open questions on this topic, which sometimes we can be embarrassed to ask. Two complementary papers presented by Eliza Jacobi and Karin Eckstein on the use of re-moistenable, solvent set- and heat-set tissues were also a highlight for me, because of their relevance to some of my own current projects, as was also the case with Eve Menei's presentation on the use of East Asian materials in papyri conservation. Finally, the number of talks covering the making and use of Japanese and Korean papers in conservation was an essential examination of the quality of the papers we currently use, and how we might diversify further by sourcing papers such as Korean Hanji for conservation purposes on Western objects. Megumi Mizumura's suggestion that pressuring suppliers for clearer information on how fibers are processed during papermaking seemed to meet with much agreement: how many of us know how the kozo fibers in our favorite Japanese repair papers have been cooked or how exactly the paper sheets were dried?

The workshop elements programmed to run before, during and after the conference were extremely popular, and made convenient use of having so many experts in London at once. All were fully booked far in advance and allowed fortunate attendees to experience specialist presentations and workshops covering Japanese wood box making, brush making, papermaking, paste making, karibari, and a whole raft of other skills. Equally, the posters submitted to the conference showed yet further uses of East Asian materials and approaches, such as photograph conservation and bespoke box making.

We hope that those attending the conference agree that we delivered on our proposal to refresh our understanding of East Asian materials and techniques, and that it introduced us all to new ideas and voices in the dynamic relationship between East and West. The conference committee is, of course, extremely grateful and pleased to have collaborated with so many exceptional speakers, poster authors, workshop leaders, session chairs, suppliers, sponsors and studio tour hosts in order to deliver this conference, all of whom are due many thanks for their participation.

Please look out for our conference post-prints, which will be digitally available in the very near future!

Aqueous cleaning systems for Paper, Workshop with Richard Wolbers

Vienna, 6 – 8 July 2015

Christa Hofmann

At a three-day workshop at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna organised by the Austrian Association of Conservators (ÖRV), Richard Wolbers introduced his aqueous cleaning systems for paper. The first day was dedicated to lectures on conductivity, pH, gels, emulsions, buffers and chelating agents. By measuring the surface pH and the surface conductivity of paper, cleaning solutions and gels can be adjusted to different purposes. Swelling of paper can be enhanced or diminished. The addition of buffers, solvents or chelating agents helps to dissolve certain components or stains. Richard Wolbers introduced the qualities of agarose, xanthan and velvicol gels. On the second and third day, the

participants prepared and tested different solutions and gels on test papers and objects that they had brought to the workshop. Measuring surface pH with small pieces of agarose gels seemed a very gentle method. The introduction of different gel systems broadens the spectrum of methods. Emulsions of gels and non-aqueous solvents offer low toxic ways to reduce non-aqueous discolorations and stains.

XIII. IADA Congress

Berlin, 12 – 16 October 2015

Christa Hofmann

The XIII. IADA Congress in Berlin with 481 participants and over 100 on the waiting list was a very successful and well-organised event. 15 and 5min oral presentations together with a rich display of posters gave an excellent overview of current subjects, projects and challenges. Presentations on art on paper, books, large formats, conservation research and new materials were put together in a well-balanced while sometimes intense program. At the beginning, conservators from Berlin gave lively short presentations of innovative exhibition mounts. The themes of display, decision making and priority setting re-occurred in different context. New methods of micro sampling for analysis offered new horizons for the identification of inks, parchment or fixatives. Handheld devices were presented to measure vibrations during transport and bioluminescence from mould. Bacterial cellulose was introduced as a new material for making infills. On Friday, a rich and diverse program of tours and workshops finished the weeklong conference. The presentations will be published ongoing in the Journal of Paper Conservation. IADA plans to make the life-streams of lectures accessible on its website: <http://iada-home.org/>

Network of heads of conservation and collection care at European National Libraries

Christa Hofmann

The network of heads of conservation and collection care at European National Libraries meets once a year to discuss topics of common interest. This year we meet at the IADA congress in Berlin. We talked about relocation and new storage in our institutions. Recent other topics of discussion have been digitisation and loans. We greatly profit from an informal and personal exchange. Discerning international trends and challenges common to small and large institutions is helpful. Currently representatives from 14 institutions are part of the network. Our vision of Europe is broad and includes Israel, the Russian Federation and the United States as a guest. Our next meeting will be in Paris at the Interim Meeting of our Working Group.