

GLASS & CERAMICS CONSERVATION

Newsletter of the ICOM-CC Glass and Ceramics Working Group

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ICOM
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EDITORIAL

Dear Glass and Ceramics Working Group members and friends,

I am delighted to be writing the editorial for our final newsletter for the triennium 2023-2026.

To begin with, I would like to express my gratitude to all the members and friends reaching out and contributing to every issue over the past three years. But mostly, I wish to thank Monica and Nadia the assistant coordinators of Glass and Ceramics Working Group for their invaluable support and assistance.

Putting together this issue has inspired both reflection and anticipation. It has also led me to consider what lies ahead and the challenges we face as a field and as a community—particularly emergency challenges that remain highly relevant and important, as evidenced by the recent event organized by ICOM-CC 'From Damage to Recovery: Roundtable on Earthquake-Affected Collections' to which our group was pleased to contribute.

As we close one chapter and look forward to the Oslo conference in September, along with planning for the new triennium, don't forget that the call for candidates for ICOM CONSERVATION Directory Board and Coordinators is now open. These are elected roles that actively contribute to designing and implementing policies, programs, and activities for the 2026 -2029 triennium.

Back to our newsletter, this issue isn't centered on a single main article; instead, it brings together a selection of information, experiences, and initiatives. Within these pages, you will find a brief overview of the upcoming Triennial Conference of ICOM-CC in Oslo, a new initiative for the study of stained glass in Belgium, a review of the conference of ICOM in Dubai, the presentation of a recent book on Ceramic Repair from the Neolithic to the 20th Century from Spain, Training in the Conservation and Restoration of Ceramic and Glass at the University of Amsterdam- introducing as a new section on Training and Professional opportunities for membership across the globe, and as always, the announcements for upcoming conferences and workshops.



I hope you enjoy reading Issue 31 of the Glass and Ceramics Working Group newsletter.

Polytimi Loukopoulou
ICOM-CC Glass and Ceramics Working Group
Coordinator

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21st ICOM-CC Triennial Conference

Oslo, September 14-18, 2026

The **21st ICOM-CC Triennial Conference** will take place in **Oslo**, Norway, on **September 14-18, 2026**.

The theme for the 2026 Triennial Conference is **Cultural Connections in Conservation**.

Cultural connections touch upon the very reasons we conserve cultural heritage. Both societal and professional connections – as well as our links to the past and future – are vital to unlocking and supporting the cultural identities embodied in our material culture. As global changes and societal shifts continue, it becomes increasingly important to understand, respect, and advocate for diverse voices and communities, including Indigenous cultures. Adapting to new challenges, forging new paths, and fostering inclusive collaborations can align with our commitments to conserving our material heritage, whether from the past or contemporary in origin. We must also acknowledge that one of the unintended consequences of conservation could be increased cultural distance. By integrating rigorous methods, insightful perspectives, and relevant technology in ethical and dynamic new ways, we can ensure that conservation knowledge is accessible and impactful – both professionally and societally.

At the Oslo Conference we aim to answer questions such as:

- How can conservation establish new and renew existing professional connections to address global challenges?
- How can conservation navigate temporal connections between the past, present, and future understandings, and uses of material culture?
- How can conservation help advocate for diversity and cross-cultural communication?
- How can conservation help to bridge inter-generational cultural divides?

Do Not Miss Events

Triennial Lecture: A Signature Moment

Monday, September 14, 2026

The Triennial Lecture—delivered during the opening Plenary Session—has long been a defining feature of ICOM-CC Triennials. Since its formal introduction in 2002, it has gathered the international conservation community around a forward-looking reflection on the field's direction, challenges, and responsibilities.

This year, **Antoine Wilmering** (Retired, formerly Getty Foundation) will deliver the lecture. A respected conservator and longtime supporter of ICOM-CC, Wilmering has devoted more than three decades to expanding conservation research, training, and global capacity. His leadership at the Getty Foundation strengthened international conservation infrastructure and broadened access to high-quality education and scholarship.

His lecture will invite the field to reflect on collective progress and consider strategies for addressing emerging global demands—opening the 2026 Triennial Conference with depth, clarity, and vision.

Plenary session: Cultural Connections and Changing Practice

Wednesday, September 16, 2026

This plenary, **Cultural Connections and Changing Practice: Perspectives Through Time**, features three keynote presentations followed by a panel discussion. The session explores not only how conservation is practiced but why, asking participants to consider the profession's evolving theories, responsibilities, and societal role.

It examines conservation's historic position as both material and intellectual gatekeeper, the shifting boundaries of practice, and the enduring question: for whom do we conserve? By engaging with pioneering work, critiques of established norms, and new directions in the field, the plenary highlights how conservators navigate change and build meaningful cultural connections.

The concluding panel, grounded in Indigenous perspectives, expands the discussion and reinforces conservation's shared goal of sustaining cultural memory across communities, contexts, and generations

Collectively, these contributions illuminate how people have managed change—both conceptually and practically—to build cultural connections in the past and present, while encouraging reflection on future possibilities.

Keynote Speakers:

Dr. Miriam Clavir

Conservator Emerita at the UBC Museum of Anthropology and a leading voice in conservation ethics, particularly regarding First Nations collections. Author of *Preserving What is Valued*, her work challenges assumptions about what—and whom—conservation serves. Her career includes significant contributions to repatriation and integrating Indigenous perspectives into conservation practice.

Dr. Sabyasachi Mukherjee

Director General of Mumbai's CSMVS, where he has led major modernization initiatives, from building refurbishment to new conservation and education centers. Under his leadership, CSMVS has earned UNESCO heritage awards and international recognition. He is active globally as a museum leader, educator, and advocate for collaborative conservation.

Juanita Kelly-Mundine (she/they)

Coordinator of First Nations Collections & Repatriation at the National Museum of Australia. A West Bundjalung and Yuin woman, she focuses on community-centered care, Indigenous knowledge systems, and the preservation of intangible cultural expressions, bringing culturally grounded approaches to contemporary conservation.

Additional information are available on the conference [website](#).

Call for Candidates (2026-2029 Triennium) ICOM Conservation Directory Board and Working Group Coordinators

As the 2023–2026 triennium comes to a close, we would like to invite candidates for the 2026–2029 Triennium Directory Board, as well as for the Working Group Coordinator position.

We strongly encourage all of you to consider submitting your candidacy—the more, the merrier! More information on how to submit your candidacy can be found on the ICOM-CC website.

Assistant Coordinators

The Working Group wishes to emphasize the importance of your participation also as Assistant Coordinators and warmly invites you to carefully consider taking part.

Your involvement is essential not only for the continuity of the group but also for the successful implementation of its activities.

Ars Lucis: A New Centre for Stained Glass Research and Conservation in Belgium

Prof. Joost Caen

jcaen@arslucis.be

Dr. Liesbeth Langouche

llangouche@arslucis.be

Antwerp, Belgium – A significant new resource for the study and preservation of architectural glass has emerged with the founding of **Ars Lucis**. Established in 2025 by Professor Joost Caen, the center is dedicated to managing the Caen Collection—one of the world’s most extensive private assemblages of stained glass—and making its vast technical and historical data accessible to the global conservation community.

The Caen Collection: A Research Repository

The heart of Ars Lucis is the Caen Collection, an archive of international significance focusing on the history, materials, and techniques of glass painting in the Low Countries. The collection serves as a primary resource for:

- **Material Evidence:** Thousands of objects, including stained-glass windows, panels, painted roundels, and fragments dating from the 13th century to the contemporary era.
- **Technical Archives:** An extensive library of historical publications, original drawings, and photographic documentation regarding glass painting and conservation-restoration.
- **Historical Glazing:** A specialized focus on historical clear glazing and architectural integration.

A Hub for Conservation Expertise

Ars Lucis operates as a center of expertise, bridging the gap between academic research and practical conservation. Led by Professor Joost Caen, a leading authority in glass conservation-restoration for over 40 years (and ICOM member), and Dr. Liesbeth Langouche, an expert in historical clear glazing, the center provides:

- **Specialized Consultancy:** Advice on the technical research and restoration of historical glass.
- **Professional Training:** Specialized workshops and lectures for conservators and art historians.



Seraph, England or France (?), c. 7350. Caen Collection

- **Ongoing Research:** Active participation in international scholarly forums, including the Corpus Vitrearum and upcoming 2026 guest lectures at King’s College, Cambridge.

Access and Collaboration

Ars Lucis is currently developing a digital database to facilitate remote research. In the interim, the physical collection and library are available to researchers and professionals by appointment.

The center also publishes a bimonthly digital newsletter (available in Dutch, French, and English) featuring technical updates, conference news, and exhibition reviews. ICOM-CC members and glass specialists are encouraged to subscribe or contribute information regarding international glass art developments.

Future Objectives

Inspired by international models such as the Vitrocentre (Romont) and the Cité du Vitrail (Troyes), Ars Lucis is working toward the establishment of the first dedicated stained-glass museum in the Benelux region. This facility will integrate the collection with a public-facing center for the study of light and glass.

- **Support:** Information on the “Friends of Ars Lucis” program and institutional partnerships is available on the center’s [website](#).

Review: The experience of the 27th ICOM General conference

Dubai, UAE, 11-17 November 2025

Maria Papadimitriou

Lead Archaeological & Preventive Conservator, MSc, FIIC

Independent Heritage Consultant

pap-dim@otenet.gr

From 11 to 17 November 2025, the global museum community gathered for the 27th General Conference of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) in Dubai, under the theme “The Future of Museums in Rapidly Changing Communities.” This premier triennial event — the first ever hosted in the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia (MEASA) region — welcomed thousands of participants, including curators, conservators, educators, and cultural leaders from over 100 countries. It provided a dynamic forum for dialogue, innovation, and collective reflection on the evolving role of museums in a swiftly transforming world.

The scientific programme was structured around three interconnected thematic days — Preserve, Adapt, and Catalyse—designed to address pressing questions about heritage, community relevance, and institutional innovation. On Day 1: Preserve (12 November), speakers examined how museums make critical decisions about which narratives, collections, and cultural elements to prioritise while maintaining authenticity, historical integrity, and ethical stewardship in the face of climate change, technological disruption, and misinformation. Day 2: Adapt (13 November) focused on how museums respond to shifting societal values, cultural norms, and demographic changes, exploring inclusive museological practices and strategies for institutions that are representative and responsive to diverse public needs. Finally, Day 3: Catalyse (14 November) highlighted the role of museums as proactive agents that empower communities to navigate and access opportunities amongst social, economic, and environmental challenges.

In parallel, the three International Committees Sessions offered specialised forums exploring disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives. Notably, a joint session on Architecture and Museum Techniques of Museum Storage by

ICAMT and the newly established ICOM Storage International Committee focused on contemporary challenges and innovations in museum storage architecture and collection management — emphasising sustainable design, climate control, space optimisation, and the integration of new technologies to enhance long-term preservation outcomes.

The Museum Fair provided a premier stage to showcase new research and cutting-edge products, services, and technologies that drive the advancement of museum development, programming, operations, and management worldwide.

On the afternoon of 14 November, the ICOM General Assembly convened to elect the new ICOM Executive Board for 2025–28 and to adopt key strategic resolutions shaping the organisation’s direction.

The International Committees Day (15 November) offered a dedicated space for deep professional exchanges. For conservation professionals, the ICOM-CC Day on Collection Care and Risk Management began with a morning session at the ICCROM-Sharjah campus (Sharjah Institute for Heritage), featuring presentations and discussions on risk management frameworks, institutional experiences, and preventive conservation strategies, followed by a dedicated workshop session. In the afternoon, activities moved to the Sharjah Archaeology Museum, where expert panel presentations and guided museum visit provided practical insights into collection care within archaeological and museum contexts. This collaborative day fostered professional exchange, highlighted regional and international perspectives, and reinforced the importance of risk-informed approaches to sustainable collection management.

In conclusion, the ICOM General Conference stands as a global meeting point for museum professionals committed to shaping the sector's future. More than a forum for technical presentations, it functions as a dynamic space for networking, collaboration, and meaningful exchange, offering direct engagement with institutions, thought leaders, and innovators from across the international museum community.

The true value of the Conference resided in its global collaboration and cross-disciplinary exchange. It was a rare opportunity to connect with museum professionals across sectors, broaden our understanding of heritage within diverse social and cultural contexts, and engage with emerging trends that shape the future of our field. Like the Olympic Games of the museum world, ICOM Dubai 2025 was a celebration of shared purpose—a moment where connections were strengthened, ideas inspired, and collective visions for a resilient, inclusive, and innovative museum future were collectively imagined.

Book Presentation: Frágil y eterna. Reparación de cerámica desde el Neolítico hasta el siglo XX (Fragile and Eternal. Ceramic Repair from the Neolithic to the 20th Century)

Carmen Dávila Buitrón, 2025. Madrid, Editorial Tecnos.

Foreword by Jaume Coll Conesa, Director of the National Museum of Ceramics and Decorative Arts
carmendavilabuitron@gmail.com

As a member of the ICOM Glass and Ceramics Working Group, I would like to share the research I have been conducting over the last twenty years on the repair techniques developed throughout history to preserve and give new life to ceramic objects. This field—positioned between archaeology, conservation, and the history of technology—has remained surprisingly marginal despite the ubiquity of repaired objects in museum and archaeological collections. *Frágil y eterna* aims to fill this gap.

The book traces more than 10,000 years of strategies devised to prolong the life of damaged vessels, from Neolithic stitching and lacing to the highly skilled work of staple menders and early modern craftsmen, as well as the refined solutions developed in the ancient Mediterranean and beyond. Repair emerges not merely as a practical response to breakage but as a cultural and symbolic act. Mechanical joins, adhesive technologies, reinforcements, and volumetric or chromatic reintegrations illuminate both the technical knowledge of each period and broader attitudes toward material value, authenticity, and time.

The volume is organised into five chapters. After an updated historiographical overview, the second chapter defines the conceptual boundaries between repair and restoration and proposes a general classification system based on function, chronology, and authorship. The third chapter addresses key interpretative issues and other fundamental considerations for the study of repairs, including the motivations behind interventions, the identity of the craftspeople, drilling technologies, the morphology of perforations, joining materials, adhesive practices, and aesthetic intention.



DÁVILA BUITRÓN, Carmen (2025). *Frágil y eterna*. La reparación de cerámica desde el Neolítico hasta el siglo XXI: Book cover. Madrid: Tecnos.

Chapter four forms the core of the book, presenting a systematic typological classification of known repair techniques, arranged at different levels according to their technological and material characteristics. This is supported by extensive bibliographic research and the direct examination of objects from more than one hundred museums. Richly illustrated with colour photographs and drawings, and synthesised in clear analytical tables,

the study provides specialists with practical tools for identifying and categorising interventions on archaeological, historical or vernacular ceramics. The concluding chapter evaluates the contribution of this research to the understanding of such repairs, while highlighting unresolved questions—among them bindings, clamps, and staples—and considers why many repairs have disappeared from the archaeological record. It also seeks to open paths for further investigation into more specific aspects of repair interventions. The book closes with a succinct statement of purpose: what is not known cannot be preserved.

By combining museographic observation, documentary research, archaeometry, and experimental archaeology, and supported by 276 high-quality photographs, 24 drawings, 6 tables, and detailed technical analyses, the publication enables readers to perceive features that often escape notice in the conventional viewing of archaeological or historical objects. Ultimately, *Frágil y eterna* invites reflection on the survival of objects and on the human condition itself: repair as an act of care and resistance against oblivion. I hope that this approach will be of value to archaeologists, conservators, and historians of technology, as well as to all scholars concerned with material culture and the biography of objects. (The book is currently available only in Spanish).

Curriculum Vitae

Carmen Dávila Buitrón, PhD Archaeology and Conservation. She worked as a conservator at the Museo Arqueológico Nacional and at Spain's Ministry of Culture from 1992 to 2011, and has been a professor at the Escuela Superior de Conservación y Restauración de Bienes Culturales de Madrid since then. She is the author of more than fifty publications on the history and documentation of the conservation and restoration of archaeological materials, especially ceramics, mosaics, and metals.



Neolithic vessel from the site of Los Cascajos (Los Arcos, Navarra), mended and associated for illustrative purposes with a lithic drill of the type used for this task.

Museum of Navarra (Pamplona, Spain) (Dávila, 2025: Fig. 17). DÁVILA BUITRÓN, Carmen (2025). *Frágil y eterna*. La reparación de cerámica desde el Neolítico hasta el siglo XXI: fig. 17 Madrid: Tecnos.



Fragment of a pithos from Kastri (Syros, Greece), Bronze Age (2500–2300 BC), repaired with a clamp and two quadrangular lead plates—inner and outer of a gap—joined together through perforations at their four corners.

National Archaeological Museum of Athens (Greece) (Dávila, 2025: Fig. 179). DÁVILA BUITRÓN, Carmen (2025). *Frágil y eterna*. La reparación de cerámica desde el Neolítico hasta el siglo XXI: fig. 179. Madrid: Tecnos.

Training and Professional Opportunities for Glass and Ceramics Conservators

This new section of the newsletter seeks to highlight training and professional opportunities for the glass and ceramics conservators. We hope this section will become a point of reference for such opportunities. Please, do not hesitate to send us short description of the training opportunities taking places at your institution!

Training in the Conservation and Restoration of ceramic and Glass at the University of Amsterdam

Dr. Kate van Lookeren Campagne
MSc Course coordinator
K.E.vanLookerenCampagne@uva.nl

The English-language programme in the Conservation and Restoration of Glass and Ceramics at the University of Amsterdam (UvA) begins with a two year, full time MSc programme, followed by a two year Advanced Professional Programme (APP). Together they form a four year training route leading to professional practice as a conservator. The UvA conservation department has nine specialisations that are offered every two years in rotation. The materials, objects, and on-site projects that are covered in the ceramic and glass course cover a wide range from Egyptian faience and archaeological pottery to porcelain objects, tiles and modern artworks. Objects in collections as well as in the built environment are considered.

During the first year of the Master course, students from all specialisations follow a shared curriculum that introduces conservation theory, professional ethics, conservation science, documentation, and preventive conservation. This common foundation is designed to give every student a solid understanding of ethics, production processes, material science, deterioration processes, and analytical research techniques, enabling students to develop the diagnostic skills that are central to the work of a professional conservator. An average of three days a week is spent on practical assignments including testing materials and techniques and investigating and treating historical objects. Students work intensively with museum-grade objects from the beginning of the course, learning to recognise and interpret technology and degradation phenomena in a real situation

Practical techniques are tested on mock-ups and test material before being applied to historical objects.

Theoretical teaching is closely integrated with hands on work. Students begin with the extensive investigation of case study objects before designing and carrying out treatments that they have already tested, which may include cleaning, desalination, consolidation, reassembly of fragments, gap filling and retouching. Each step is carefully documented and critically evaluated within contemporary ethical frameworks, with particular attention to reversibility, authenticity and the visual impact of treatment. There are guest teachers from the professional field and excursions to museums and conservation departments are integrated into the programme.

The Master phase concludes with an 18 ECTS thesis, usually object and/or material based and frequently linked to museum collections. A documented example from the Glass and Ceramics specialisation is Theresa Evelyn Costello's 2021 thesis, Diagnostic Investigation into a Cracking Phenomenon on the Mouthpieces of Seventeenth–Eighteenth Century Glass Horns, which examines the causes of cracking in historic glass musical instruments and the implications for their conservation.

Theses from the glass and ceramics programme can be found in the [UvA thesis online repository](#), where titles and full texts are available for many recent projects.

The Advanced Professional Programme that follows directly from the MSc course builds directly on the foundation of the master course. UvA master students generally continue automatically to the APP course where they are provided with a study grant. The course is not open to students who have not followed the UvA Master course.

APP students spend their time working in a professional context including the UvA studios or partner museums and heritage institutions in the Netherlands. Under the guidance of experienced conservators and lecturers, they take responsibility for more complex treatments and projects, collaborating with scientists, curators and stakeholders. They are expected to work with increasing autonomy and to contribute actively to decision making about conservation strategies. In the second year of the APP programme, students design and carry out a three month research project which focuses on practical conservation issues. While being expected to work independently, there is close collaboration with heritage specialists as well as conservation scientists at the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands (RCE). The research project is followed by eight months of internships at professional conservation studios both in the Netherlands and abroad.

For students studying on a bachelor course in the Netherlands, there is the opportunity to follow a minor in conservation and restoration which provides an introduction to the field. Students completing the course are exempted from a number of the selection tests, including chemistry.

Admission to the programme is selective and competitive, six students being accepted every two years. To apply, applicants must have obtained an academic bachelor's degree. We take students from a wide range of backgrounds and consider carefully their motivation as well as evidence of hand skills and a suitable level of chemistry. Applicants initially submit a portfolio that demonstrates manual skills and relevant experience, a motivation letter and curriculum vitae. Shortlisted candidates are then invited to undertake a number of online tests to provide an idea of their practical and analytical skills and level of chemistry and are also invited to an interview. The selection process is designed to assess not only academic preparation but also manual dexterity, visual acuity and suitability for the profession.

Our aim is to train professional conservators that have the knowledge, skills and mind-set to work independently as professional conservators and managers able to tackle a broad range of conservation challenges, in both an institutional and independent setting.

Details of the course and research areas can be easily found on the University of Amsterdam website.

UPCOMING EVENTS

45th International Symposium on Archaeometry (ISA 2026)

18-22 May | Turin, Italy

The International Symposium on Archaeometry advances scientific techniques for studying the past, showcasing cutting-edge developments across disciplines, materials, periods, and regions. It fosters multidisciplinary collaboration and serves as a key forum for researchers and professionals to share innovations and build partnerships.

More information available on the [website](#).

Workshop for Conservation of Roman & Late Roman Pottery (Balkan Heritage)

23 May – 5 June 2026 | Stobi, North Macedonia

Hands-on conservation workshop and field school focused on the theory and practice of pottery conservation and documentation, suitable for both beginners and advanced students. It primarily serves students in Archaeological Conservation, Archaeology, Anthropology, History, Art History, and related fields training in Roman ceramic conservation within an archaeological site context.

More information available on the [website](#).

Heritechne 2026 – 3D Data Analysis of Archaeological Ceramics

10–12 June 2026 | L'Aquila, Italy

Part of the Heritechne International Conference, dedicated to research in the field of digital technologies for cultural heritage, this special session highlights innovative research on 3D data analysis of archaeological ceramics, focusing on how digital methods address long-standing challenges in pottery studies.

More information available on the [website](#).



International Conference on Ceramic Analysis in Archaeology (ICCAA-2026)

15–16 June 2026 | Salzburg, Austria

Organized by the International Alliance for Academic Research (IAAR), this event aims to provide researchers, delegates, and scholars with meaningful opportunities to exchange knowledge on technological applications in ceramic analysis.

More information available on the [website](#).

Workshop for Conservation of Roman Glass (Balkan Heritage)

6–20 June 2026 | Stobi, North Macedonia

A field school and conservation workshop focused on studying and restoring Roman and Late Roman glass from the Deultum–Debelt necropoleis in Bulgaria. It offers hands-on training, lectures, and flexible instruction for both beginners and advanced students, though good manual dexterity is helpful.

More information available on the [website](#).

Isotope Investigations in Archaeology

29 June - 3 July 2026 | Padova, Italy

The Summer School in Isotope Investigations in Archaeology provides a hands-on introduction to stable isotope analysis (C, N, O, H, S, Sr) and its archaeological applications in exploring ancient diets, mobility, and patterns of material exchange.

More information available on the [website](#).

32nd International Colloquium of the Corpus Vitrearum

6–9 July 2026 | Kraków, Poland

The International Colloquium and Forum of the Corpus Vitrearum examines the evolution of stained-glass research, bringing together specialists across disciplines to discuss historical and emerging methods, the value of traditional approaches, and the role of stained glass in broader art-historical study.

More information available on the [website](#).

Analyzing, Documenting & Restoring Archaeological Ceramics (Amelia ICS)

13 July – 7 August 2026 | Amelia, Italy

Hands-on program at the Amelia International Conservation Studies that trains students to analyze, document, and restore archaeological ceramics, combining foundational theory with direct work on authentic artifacts.

More information available on the [website](#).

COORDINATING TEAM

Coordinator

Polytimi Loukopoulou

Hellenic Ministry of Culture
Byzantine and Christian Museum
Athens, GREECE

polylouk@gmail.com

Assistant Coordinators

Monica Ganio

Getty Conservation Institute
Los Angeles California, USA

mganio@getty.edu

Konstantina Tsatsouli

Modern Monuments and Technical Works
Service of Thessaly and Central Stereas
Ellados / Hellenic Ministry of Culture
Volos, GREECE

nantiat@gmail.com

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