

# M ICOM-CC

ICOM  
international council  
of museums – committee  
for conservation



## Archaeological Materials & Sites Newsletter

No. 3, August 2020

Editor: Emma Hocker

### FROM THE COORDINATOR

Dear Colleagues,

Had 2020 proceeded as expected, many of us would soon be planning a trip to China for the 19<sup>th</sup> ICOM-CC Triennial Conference in Beijing. As you are probably aware, due to the complications arising from the Covid-19 pandemic, the Conference has now been postponed to **17-21 May 2021**. The conference theme is **Transcending Boundaries: Integrated Approaches to Conservation**. The ICOM-CC Directory Board is continuing to work closely with the Chinese National Organising Committee to offer an exciting program of technical visits and tours alongside the normal conference program. See <https://www.icom-cc2020.org/> for more information. Registration is open, with Early Bird rates until 12 November 2020, followed by regular registration between 13 November 2020 and 25 March 2021, and Late Registration from 26 March to 10 May, 2021.

This will be the **inaugural meeting for the Archaeological Materials and Sites Working Group** and we have a strong program covering broad range of topics, materials and geography, as you can see in the following selected papers and posters:

- Bronze corrosion on archaeological sites: Correlation of past and present microenvironments via in situ pH, chloride and redox measurements
- Fifty-plus years of on-site metals conservation at Sardis: Correlating

treatment efficacy and implementing new approaches

- Research on the comprehensive protection of the Xi Xia Mausoleums site, China
- Identification of polymer-based artefacts from the former Wheeler Residence at the Mernda archaeological site in Victoria, Australia: A comparison of attenuated total reflectance and reflectance spectroscopic techniques
- Conservation and preservation strategies for royal painted tombs in Kurru, Sudan: Acknowledging the past while planning for the future
- Identification and analysis of floor mosaic substructures revealed by ground-penetrating radar
- Where there is a will, there is a way: Preserving the bedding on detached mosaics

The posters include:

- Hidden Hands: Early conservation work on Petrie's Egyptian Excavations
- The smell of Egyptian mummies: a new analytical approach
- New insights into a decorated wooden staff of King Tutankhamun using handheld XRF spectroscopy

- The mechanical properties of ceramic coupons consolidated with cyclododecane and their relationship to porosity, application method and sublimation rate

The **Conference Preprints** will be published in Spring 2021 and will be posted and made available online for paying conference delegates prior to the conference.

Despite the delayed conference, voting for the 2020-2023 Directory Board and Working Group Coordinators will be open from Monday 31 August 2020 to Tuesday 15 September 2020. Those of you who have an **active ICOM-CC web account** (registered before 15 August 2020) will be sent an electronically generated email prior to voting. (*If you do not have an active account at this stage, it is unfortunately too late to register.*) NOTE: some servers – especially government and institutional servers – may filter this e-mail as spam if it goes to your work address. In order to make sure you receive access to the ballot links, please consider changing the e-mail address on your account to a private address, BEFORE the voting period opens in August.

Detailed voting instructions can be found on ICOM-CC's website, <http://www.icom-cc.org/> and in the latest issue of the ICOM-CC newsletter, On Board. <http://www.icom-cc.org/54/document/on-board-vol-19-june-2020/?id=1705#.Xyu-nygzZPY>

**Working Group Program:** Each ICOM-CC Working Group is encouraged to produce a program with focus areas of research for each Triennial. The following program was proposed when our group was inaugurated two years ago:

*The Archaeological Materials and Sites group is interested in holistic approaches to archaeological collections and sites, including but not limited to the following:*

1. *Conservation and restoration of archaeological materials.*
2. *Conservation strategies and management of archaeological sites: e.g. impacts of climate*

*change; protective shelter design; new techniques for documentation and interpretation; physical vs virtual reconstruction; rescue and post-conflict conservation; managing mass tourism; pros and cons of contract excavations; encouraging and involving stakeholders; repatriation issues.*

3. *Conservation strategies and management of archaeological collections in storage: e.g. environment control; protective furniture and packaging; documentation; encouraging and involving stakeholders.*
4. *Education and training: e.g. bridging the gap between educators, archaeologists, conservators and site managers; improving guidelines for on-site conservation; strategies for interpreting sites for the public.*

If you have comments or suggestions regarding this program, please contact me at [emma.hocker@gustavianum.uu.se](mailto:emma.hocker@gustavianum.uu.se).

Our program is necessarily quite broad and, I am proud to say, very international, as is reflected in papers submitted to the Beijing conference and also in the following news items and articles in this newsletter. In this issue, we hear from St. Petersburg, Russia about an interesting domestic find, head to Australia to hear about how archaeological conservation first-aid is adapting in the face of Covid-19 restrictions, as well as a design competition for protective structures for sites in Cyprus. It is also **award season**, with nominations for excellence in conservation, heritage management, collections care, research and volunteer programs, etc. requested by the European Heritage Awards and the UK-based Society for Museum Archaeology. Deadlines for both are in early October, so I encourage you to apply. There are plenty of remarkable projects and initiatives that have been taking place in our field, and they deserve to be rewarded.

Enjoy the following and stay safe!

## Early 18<sup>th</sup> century ice-chamber discovered in St. Petersburg

Cyrill Shmelev, Natalia Shirokova and Natalia Vasilyeva (Saint Petersburg, Russian Federation)

During the restoration of the building of the 1st Cadet Corps in St. Petersburg, Russia, numerous artefacts have been discovered dating back to the 18-19th centuries. Among the large number of dish fragments, Dutch tiles, coins, fragments of military apparel, and architectural details, a wooden ice-chamber or "refrigerator" was also found (fig. 1). The historical building where the restoration works were carried out is the West Wing of the Palace of Alexander Menshikov, a friend and assistant of Peter the Great (1672-1725). The building was handed over to the First Cadet Corps in 1731. The existence of such constructions in the basement of the building is mentioned in written documents from 1730.



Fig. 1: General view of the ice-chamber before dismantling

*Lednik* (ice-chamber) is the Russian name for an insulated wooden space, usually a log structure designed for storing food. At the end of winter, blocks of ice from a nearby water source were loaded into the *lednik* and covered with straw, which allowed the room to maintain the temperature of a refrigerator during the warm season. This type of construction is traditional for many regions of Northern Europe. The discovered object is the lower part of the ice-chamber. It consists of two lower rows of logs of the log house, inside which resided a wooden plank box and a plank floor mounted on the ground joists. The original number of logs is unknown. The height of the construction is limited by the height of the room in which it was located. There is a thaw water drain hatch with a small pit below in the center of

the floor. The dimensions of the log house are 3.7 m by 4.2 m, the thickness of the floorboards is 50-70 mm, the thickness of the box boards is 20-24 mm, and the diameter of the timbers is around 200 mm.

The *lednik* was discovered in July 2019, when the basement backfill was removed. It was located at a depth of 1.2 m from the floor level. Preservation of the wood was made possible by the level of ground water, and lack of oxygen. Over the past year, archaeologists, architects and restorers have made measurements and monitored the condition of the wood. For preservation and temporary storage of the object, a new location was set up with specially crafted tanks for the object; specific devices and packaging materials were created for transferring the object's parts.

Preliminary studies show that the details of the ice-chamber are made of coniferous wood, the moisture content of the wood ( $W$ ) according to the samples of the lower timbers is 503%, the density ( $\rho_w$ ) of the waterlogged samples is 1.03 g/cm<sup>3</sup>, of the absolute dry ( $\rho_0$ ) samples is 0.3 g/cm<sup>3</sup>. The waterlogged wooden archaeological details of the *lednik* are in need of conservation treatment. The plan is to have the log house exhibited as a museum object in the basement of the building where it was found, after the restoration works are completed.

At the end of July 2020, archaeologists dismantled the ice-chamber and moved it into water tanks for temporary storage and conservation preparations.

Work proceeded in the following stages:

1. Exposing the construction (fig. 2),
2. Sketching and photo-documentation (fig. 3),
3. Dismantling the construction and lifting the components (fig. 4 and 5),
4. Packing the components for transport (fig. 6),
5. Cleaning (fig. 7),
6. Temporary storage in water tanks (fig. 8 and 9)
7. Preliminary examination of samples.



Fig. 2: Exposing details of the construction before dismantling



Fig. 4 and 5: Dismantling the construction



Fig. 3: Documentating the construction



Fig. 6. Packing timbers for transport



Fig. 7. Cleaning with water sprays





Fig. 8 and 9: Temporary storage in water tanks

After disassembling the *lednik* into its component parts, it became obvious that the details of other wooden constructions used in the *lednik* were possibly parts of ships and barges. For example, most of the floorboards correlated with the 2-inch ship deck boards (a “board type”—in English classification). Numerous fragments of iron nails and pegs (treenails), as well as holes left by them, were also discovered. One of the ground joists has a deep wave-shaped carving along its entire length (fig. 10). A copper 2 kopeks coin from the turn of the 18th century was found in the backfill of the pit under the hatch. That indicates that the log house operated for at least a 100 years.



Fig. 9. Ground joist with carved design

The restoration of the *lednik* is of great importance. This construction is an architectural object of everyday use from the times of Peter the Great; it is found in a uniquely good condition for a wooden structure, rare for St. Petersburg archeology. Produce that was stored in this “refrigerator” could have been served at the table of the Emperor and his entourage.

The archaeological and conservation work is a collaboration between specialists of the Laboratory of Archaeology, Historical Sociology and Cultural Heritage named after Prof. G. S. Lebedev of Saint Petersburg State University, the architectural Bureau “Studio 44” and the State Hermitage Museum.

**Funding for conservation is urgently needed!**

Please send any inquiries or suggestions for grant opportunities to Natalia Vasilyeva at [nvasiljeva@yandex.ru](mailto:nvasiljeva@yandex.ru)

## Zoom to the Rescue – Archaeological First-Aid in the Age of COVID-19

Holly Jones-Amin

I bet if you are reading this in August 2020, you are somewhat Zoomed out. I am! However, I've found a good use for Zoom, and if you read the next two paragraphs, you will find out what it is.

Each state of Australia has different acts that govern how excavations are carried out. In Victoria, archaeology and archaeological conservation are administered by two government organisations. Heritage Victoria is the Victorian State Government agency responsible for administering the *Heritage Act 1995*. The Heritage Act 1995 governs how colonial-settler sites are excavated and managed. Aboriginal Affairs Victoria manage Indigenous sites. All building sites in the CBD of Melbourne, Victoria are located on both early colonial settler site and Indigenous sites.

For this reason, all construction must be preceded by an archaeological excavation. For the excavation to occur, the archaeologist requires a permit. The permit is awarded after the archaeologist has engaged a conservator and presented Heritage Victoria with an 'Artefact Management Proposal'. The proposal must detail how recovered artefacts will be managed in the field and post-excavation. The Heritage Act ensures that there is a practical framework to ensure that collections are planned for throughout an archaeological project. The Act provides a model that ensures that archaeological artefacts are conserved and curated and are accessible for social use into the future.

Melbourne has been in lockdown for the best part of five months, and due to building construction being deemed an essential service archaeological excavations have continued. I have had to find ways to continue to perform archaeological conservation first-aid. That's where Zoom to the rescue first-aid comes in. Before COVID-19, I would have driven to the archaeological site or office to examine and triage objects. With these privileges denied I have undertaken first-aid using Zoom. My client shows me the objects via her computer camera, and I have relied on her senses. She shows me the objects, and I ask her a series of questions, that replace my sense of touch, sight and smell, such as, how heavy is it, is it warmer or colder than your skin, and does it smell? From her answers, I identify how to triage the objects, and she learns how to use her senses to identify deterioration. This has been a fun, practical and fantastic two-way learning process that I will continue to use after the lockdown. Undertaking first-aid using Zoom has improved our working relationship, built trust, and taught the archaeologist specialist new archaeological conservation first-aid skills.

*As stated by the archaeologist, COVID-19 has forced us to think laterally about how we manage artefacts. Devoting half an hour a week to ensuring their stability before being given to the analyst/conservator has been enlightening, saved time, built relationships and established new and effective processes (pers comm. 2020 Rusalka Rubio Perez, Extent Heritage).*

## Protective shelter design competition, Cyprus

Leslie Friedman

The shortlist for a competition to design protective shelters at the World Heritage site of Nea Paphos (or Nea Pafos) was recently announced. As part of the Nea Paphos Conservation and Management Project, a collaboration between the Getty Conservation Institute (GCI) and the Department of Antiquities in Cyprus (DoA), a Call for Expression of Interest from architectural design firms worldwide was issued in fall 2019.



The Theseus mosaic. Photo by Scott Warren. Courtesy of the J. Paul Getty Trust

From the many responses received, six firms were selected to continue to the next phase of the process, which is to develop a Concept Design for two shelter prototypes over parts of the Villa of Theseus and House of Orpheus to protect some of the most important mosaics at the site, in addition to a bath complex with mosaics and fragile hypocaust remains.

The competition is part of a larger DoA/GCI effort to advance the conservation and management of this important archaeological site. The shortlisted firms will now create conceptual designs for their proposed prototype structures, with a final design to be selected in 2021. For more information please see the full press release here: <http://news.getty.edu/getty-conservation-institute-announces-shortlist-for-design-protective-shelters-for-ancient-mosaics.htm>

## European Heritage Awards 2020

Applications for the European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards 2021 are open, with a deadline of **1 October 2020**. Awards are in the following categories:

1. **Conservation:** Outstanding achievements in the conservation, enhancement and adaptation to new uses of cultural heritage.
2. **Research:** Outstanding research, digitisation and knowledge transfer projects, which lead to tangible effects for the safeguard and enhancement of cultural heritage in Europe.
3. **Dedicated service to Heritage:** Open to individuals or organisations whose commitment over a long period of time (minimum 10 years) demonstrates a high degree of dedication and civic engagement coupled with excellence in the safeguard and enhancement of cultural heritage

in Europe, which exceeds normal expectations in the given context.

#### 4. Education, training and awareness-raising:

Outstanding initiatives related to education, training and awareness-raising of cultural heritage with the aim of fostering capacity-building and local support, building a sense of place and identity and stimulating citizens engagement and ownership.

For more information, see

[http://www.europeanheritageawards.eu/apply/?fbclid=IwAR3393T8pw91aQPES\\_SDIfhdA7onej0RbL\\_L5vqb7Ht0RXKJz2ynU5JUYGhM](http://www.europeanheritageawards.eu/apply/?fbclid=IwAR3393T8pw91aQPES_SDIfhdA7onej0RbL_L5vqb7Ht0RXKJz2ynU5JUYGhM)  
[http://www.europeanheritageawards.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/HA2021\\_CallforEntries\\_EHA.pdf](http://www.europeanheritageawards.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/HA2021_CallforEntries_EHA.pdf)

## Society for Museum Archaeology (UK) Excellence Awards 2020

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Nominations are now open for the Society for Museum Archaeology (SMA) Annual Awards for Excellence 2020. The closing for entry is 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2020. All projects should have been completed between 1<sup>st</sup> January 2019 and 31<sup>st</sup> July 2020 within the UK.

There are 6 categories of awards:

1. **Exhibition, Display or Interpretation Project** (developed in house).
2. **Collections Care/Collections Development Project** (e.g. rationalisation, storage, conservation, documentation programmes).
3. **Engagement Project or Event** (at a museum venue or led by a museum on behalf of a city/region or a community project).

4. **Collections Research** (undertaken by an organisation or individual relative to museum archaeological collections).

5. **Collaborative Partnership** (between a museum and other organisation(s) of benefit to the wider archaeological sector and /or museums and their audiences).

6. **Volunteer Award** – to celebrate all aspects of volunteers in museum archaeology, this category is very broad. Nominations are welcomed for an individual volunteer, groups of volunteers, projects involving volunteers, a volunteer-run museum, etc. Winners will be notified by Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> October and the awards will be presented at the SMA virtual conference (Friday 13<sup>th</sup> November). More information can be found on <http://socmusarch.org.uk/>

## Call for Papers - Journal of Conservation and Museum Studies

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### Call for Papers - Special Collection – COVID-19 and the Museum

How can we ensure public health while maintaining the traditional functions of the museum? Have current responses to the pandemic changed how we consider/reconsider public engagement and access; implement new measures and measure their success? How can museums remain accessible to those who require tactile exploration to explore exhibitions while limiting disease transmission? How can we conserve and safeguard collections with reduced staffing and social distancing measures? How has/will the pandemic affect staffing and training decisions, particularly in relation to volunteer programmes and internships? What options are available to museums to curate digital exhibitions? How are museums documenting this unique moment in human history for future generations? These and many more questions have become increasingly important as the SARS-COVID-19 pandemic swept the world, closing museums and cultural institutions and forcing many to rethink their physical collections and conservation protocols. In this unprecedented moment in history, the decisions

museums and cultural institutions take now will impact the field for many years to come.

With this in mind the *Journal of Conservation and Museum Studies* solicits the submission of short reports and reflections (1000-1500 words) on how the pandemic has impacted museums, collections care and conservation science. Given their current importance, we aim to publish these contributions as quickly as possible, using a fast-tracked review process.

To make a contribution, please register at [www.jcms-journal.com](http://www.jcms-journal.com) and follow the instructions for article submission. To ensure the collection remains timely, an initial deadline for submissions has been set for **August 21<sup>st</sup> 2020. However, as this is an online collection, we will consider submissions after the deadline (until further notice) that fall within the remit of the collection.** If you require assistance (or to discuss a potential contribution or a late submission), please contact Caitlin R. O'Grady at [caitlin.r.ograde@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:caitlin.r.ograde@ucl.ac.uk)



## Call for Abstracts – 6<sup>th</sup> Archaeological Research and New Technologies Symposium

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The Call for Abstracts is now open for the Archaeological Research and New Technologies Symposium on 8-10 October 2020, Kalamata, Greece. The Symposium focuses on the use of New Technologies in Archaeological Research (Archaeometry, Computing Technology, Conservation and Restoration) notably with the presentation of interdisciplinary approaches, special case studies and research on archaeological materials and assemblages.

Registration: 80 euro (regular), 50 euro (student). Includes participant bag, coffee and lunch breaks, guided tours, proceedings publication.

**Abstract submissions:** Abstracts must be submitted electronically by August 30, using the template given on the web page: [www.laboratoryarchaeometry.gr/symposia.html](http://www.laboratoryarchaeometry.gr/symposia.html). The Abstract should follow the layout and content guidelines given in the abstract template. Abstracts should be written in English or in Greek, and their length should have a MAXIMUM of one (if possible full) page. The Abstracts should be as

detailed and clear as possible in order to assist the Scientific Committee in their evaluation. Abstracts should be as integral as possible in order to assist in their evaluation and should contain: Goals and importance of research, methodology, main results, short interpretation. If figures and tables need to be included in the abstract these should fit in a single column and the file size should be limited to 5 MB. References should appear in alphabetic order in the reference list, and should use the style in the abstract template. All submissions will be reviewed by the members of the Scientific Committee.

Presentations will be given either as oral or poster communications depending on the reviewers' decision, based on quality and originality. Online presentation options are available. All presentations will be eligible for publication in the Symposium Proceedings (University of the Peloponnese Press) after peer-review.

For more information: [arch\\_rnt@uop.gr](mailto:arch_rnt@uop.gr)  
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## Upcoming Events

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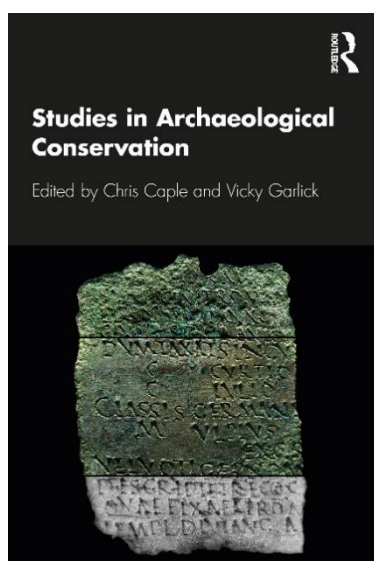
- The European Association of Archaeologists (EAA), 26-30 August 2020, Budapest, Hungary: <https://www.e-a-a.org/ea2020>. **CANCELLED!**
- As part of an Arts Council England/Historic England funded project '*Options for Sustainable Archaeological Archives*', DigVentures are running two online discussion workshops '*Rethinking Archaeological Archives*' on 27 August and 3 September, 2020. For more details, see: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/rethinking-archaeological-archives-workshop-registration-115727677599>
- ICON Archaeology Group Annual General Meeting: 29 September 2020, 15.00 - 17.00 The Icon Archaeology Group invite you to attend our 2020 AGM via Zoom. (Booking instructions will be available shortly) As well as the AGM, we are also delighted to welcome several guest speakers: Lorraine Finch, Icon Trustee and accredited archives conservator, who will give a presentation about the newly formed Environmental Sustainability Network. <https://icon.org.uk/groups/archaeology/icon-archaeology-group-events> Joining details will be added later.

- Archaeological Research and New Technologies Symposium: 8-10 October 2020, Kalamata, Greece (see call for abstracts above).
- IIC 28th Biennial Congress, 2-6 November 2020, Edinburgh, Scotland, *Practices and Challenges in Built Heritage Conservation* **will now be held virtually**, and is free for members of IIC. Registration is now open. See <https://www.iiconservation.org/congress/Edinburgh>. A number of Getty Attendance Grants have been approved to support those from under-represented countries to attend the Congress. Check the website for details.
- The Society for Museum Archaeology Conference will be held virtually on 13th November, with the AGM on Thursday 12th. The 20th ICOMOS General Assembly will **take place virtually between 3 and 16 December 2020**, with three or four short Zoom meetings corresponding to the votes on resolutions and the successive stages of the elections. <https://www.icomos.org/en/about-icomos/governance/general-information-about-the-general-assembly/future-general-assemblies-2019-2020>
- For a list of other archaeology conferences, see <https://waset.org/archaeology-conferences>

Many institutions are offering webinars or other online education. For instance:

- <https://icon.org.uk/groups/heritage-science/webinar-series>
- <https://www.facebook.com/events/186148212707579/>
- FAIC's series Connecting to Collections Care offers a number of webinars, such as the Care and Curation of Archaeological Collections for Museum, taking place on 26 August 2020. See <https://www.connectingtocollections.org/> for past and forthcoming webinars.

## New Publications



### Studies in Archaeological Conservation

Editors: Chris Caple and Vicki Garlick  
 Routledge  
 ISBN 9780367358433  
 Publication date: December 15, 2020  
 264 Pages 74  
 B/W Illustrations

and approaches used in current conservation practice around the world and, taken together, provide a picture of present practice in some of the world-leading museums and heritage organisations.

*Studies in Archaeological Conservation* is the first book for over a quarter of a century to show the range and diversity of archaeological conservation, in this case through a series of case studies. As a result, the book will be of great interest to practising conservators, conservation students and archaeologists around the world.

[https://www.routledge.com/Studies-in-Archaeological-Conservation/Caple-Garlick/p/book/9780367358433?fbclid=IwAR39WUjUmWxWM\\_NRXC7lxbS9v8cb2x7F1X2YFp1bXR4YQpqu2rjDUp3bNE](https://www.routledge.com/Studies-in-Archaeological-Conservation/Caple-Garlick/p/book/9780367358433?fbclid=IwAR39WUjUmWxWM_NRXC7lxbS9v8cb2x7F1X2YFp1bXR4YQpqu2rjDUp3bNE)

*Studies in Archaeological Conservation* features a range of case studies that explore the techniques

**CCI: Heritage Collections and COVID-19**

In April, the Canadian Conservation Institute published [\*Caring for Heritage Collections During the COVID-19 Pandemic\*](#), a compilation of information and recommendations to help those who are responsible for ensuring that collections and heritage materials remain safe. Version 2 of the resource has now been published, which includes further guidance on reopening heritage institutions, including air filtration levels for ventilation systems in building spaces and how to deal with historic surfaces and heritage interiors. Greater detail is also provided on the persistence of the virus on surfaces.

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