



ICON ARCHAEOLOGY GROUP

2024 GROUP MEETING AND CONFERENCE: ON SITE LIFTING FOR ARCHAEOLOGY

Presented online 14 August 2024

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PROGRAMME

13:30 2024 group meeting (AGM)

- Welcome
- Opening address from AG Chair, Luisa Duarte
- Proposed changes to AGM format
- New committee members
- Tasters for upcoming events
- Updates from committee members:
 - Icon AG's response to Historic England Future For Archaeological Archives Programme (FAAP)
 - First Aid For Finds new edition

On site case study:

Olivia O'Dwyer, Eleanor Smith, Zeynep Ada Çelik & Dilan Erdim Lifting an Iron Age copper alloy bowl: reflections on the in-progress excavation of an Iron Age room at Kaman-Kalehöyük

14:15 Session one

Helena Jaeschke ACR, FIIC Keeping it together

Lucie Altenburg Up in arms: the lifting of presumed warrior displays in a cemetery from the Tène

Laura Ratcliffe Warren Block lifting Bronze Age ceramic vessels on the A30 highways improvement works, Cornwall 2021- 22: The trowel edge between archaeology and conservation

Q&A / break

15:40 Session two

Riva Boutylkova Lifting Roman mosaic floors in Southwark

Ruben With Different block lifting methods used at the Gjellestad ship burial, facilitating documentation by µCT scanning, consolidation and reassembly

Ella Andrews Lifting wall painting fragments at the Middle Kingdom Theban Project at the Theban Necropolis, Egypt

Kate McEnroe & Christina Altland Working on Broken Glass: Lifting an 18th c. Casement Window

Student presentation Jesse Lundervold & Rocio Gonzalez-Oyarce

Q&A / break

17:00 End

KEY TIMES

13:30 Group meeting (AGM)

14:00 short break

14:15 Session one

15:30 Q&A / break

15:40 Session two

16:45 Q&A

17:00 End





Reassembling the southern tip of the Gjellestad ship after consolidation of the rivet soil blocks.
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ABSTRACTS

Olivia O'Dwyer, Eleanor Smith, Zeynep Ada Çelik, & Dilan Erdim Lifting an Iron Age copper alloy bowl: reflections on the in-progress excavation of an Iron Age room at Kaman-Kalehöyük

During the July-August 2024 season at the tepe site of Kaman-Kalehöyük, central Anatolia, archaeologists at the Japanese Institute of Anatolian Archaeology unearthed a Late Iron Age room thought to be an iron production workshop. The site's field conservator and three interns are working with archaeologists to lift a large copper alloy bowl and numerous iron tools from the room. This presentation will consider the interdisciplinary context of the excavation and recording of this room, and the team's decision-making during lifting.

Helena Jaeschke ACR, FIIC Keeping it together

A short journey around the challenges presented by various objects in holes and the different ways they have been kept together, from the small but unexpected remains of a Roman casket at Milton Keynes, past a 17th century bottle-kiln in Devon, some very flat bodies in central Egypt and finishing with the worst Ikea kit ever: the 2nd Solar Boat of Pharaoh Khufu. What worked and why we used it.

Lucie Altenburg Up in arms: the lifting of presumed warrior displays in a cemetery from the Tène

In the summer of 2022, the archaeological unit of the City of Paris sent its conservator to assist the Service archéologique du Val d'Oise with the lifting of large complex iron objects. The excavation took place in Bouqueval, north of Paris, where a constructor was going to backfill soil from a quarry close-by. From an initial dig in the 70's and a survey conducted in 2021, the site was a known early cemetery from the Tène period (450 to 25 BC) with chariot burials and individuals buried with weapons and personal adornments. We expected a large number of objects that would need to be lifted and we had to take stock of the conditions we would be working in. The sediment could be sandy and loose or compact and hard to dig through within the same grave, which itself was often deep and narrow. We knew, from the survey, that the iron was, more often than not, completely mineralised and fell apart when the soil beneath it was disturbed. This made the lifting of long and thin objects a difficult operation. The previous conservator had heavily consolidated the exposed surface of the objects, but it had not helped the lifting and they almost always collapsed under the consolidated surface. Another argument against direct consolidation was the subsequent study of mineralised organic material caught in corrosion layers and the sampling of fibres. This talk aims to be a retrospective of how we prepared for the block lifting, the issues we encountered and some of the solutions we did not always have time to implement, but hope to develop for following digs.

Laura Ratcliffe Warren Block lifting Bronze Age ceramic vessels on the A30 highways improvement works, Cornwall 2021- 22: The trowel edge between archaeology and conservation

During excavation works along a roughly 8-mile corridor for road infrastructure improvement works on the A30 in Cornwall five large ceramic vessels were discovered and block lifted for onwards conservation work off site. Dating to the earlier half of the Bronze Age, this group of vessels represents a more concentrated cluster of block lifts similar to many individual ones that have been undertaken over the last 20 years in the county. Two vessels were from barrows and three unusually large ones from an unusual type of depositional context that may well relate to constructional identity from the middle Bronze Age. In all instances the vessels were excavated and wrapped in cling wrap and plaster bandage during live commercial excavations and under time pressure. This group of objects and their removal from site highlights the importance of a good dialogue between conservator and archaeological field teams and demonstrates the advantage to having an understanding of archaeological practice on site.

Riva Boutylkova Lifting Roman mosaic floors in Southwark

A group of Roman mosaics was lifted from a London excavation site in Southwark in 2022-2023, by the MOLA conservation team. Two 2nd and 3rd century floor mosaics were found together, on a soft bedding mortar, and excavated first. This was done by facing the tesserae with PVA-enforced scenic gauze and long fibred tissue paper. The mosaics were cut into liftable sections and separated from their bedding using steel plates and chisels, before being lifted and turned face-down onto plywood crates for transport and temporary storage. During later stages of the excavation, a mausoleum was found with a central mosaic floor, which was embedded in opus signinum, a hard Roman concrete. Underneath there was a second, older mosaic floor, also with an opus signinum bedding. These two mausoleum mosaics in concrete

proved more challenging to lift – they were sectioned into smaller pieces and some were lifted with their concrete bases, to avoid damaging the tesserae. Plans are being developed to fully conserve and display the mosaic floors and mausoleum on the site where they were found, which will make these beautiful examples of Roman culture and craftsmanship accessible to the public. This project is a good example of the efficient problem-solving required for work on MOLA's active excavations, as our involvement needs to fit within the limits and workflows of fieldwork on building sites. Our conservation work in turn affects the wider project outcomes, including funding, storage, research and wider engagement.

Ruben With Different block lifting methods used at the Gjellestad ship burial, facilitating documentation by μ CT scanning, consolidation and reassembly

The Gjellestad ship burial was discovered in 2018 as a result of a survey performed by the Norwegian Institute for Cultural Heritage Research using ground-penetrating radar at an agricultural field in southeastern Norway. The survey revealed structures in the soil corresponding to the remains of several houses, burial mounds, but also a ship burial, all invisible at the surface. The excavation of the ship burial in 2020-2021, performed by the Museum of Cultural History, revealed the lower parts of a Viking age ship. As the excavation progressed down towards the hull of the ship, different versions of block lifting were employed to extract what little was still left of objects, due to several cases of plundering, leveling of the mound and centuries of agriculture. As the ship hull was slowly unearthed, the poor state of preservation of the ship was revealed. The wood ranged from a color change in the soil to the partially sound wood of the keel, and the iron rivets were preserved as empty crusts of extremely fragile corrosion products. The keel and the rivets, especially in the bow and stern, holds essential information about the construction of the ship and as the rivets were still at their original place within the ship, documentation of these were essential. We therefore developed a novel approach to facilitate georeferencing and extraction of the rivets, keeping their fragments in-situ within the soil, allowing μ CT scanning.

Ella Andrews Lifting wall painting fragments at the Middle Kingdom Theban Project at the Theban Necropolis, Egypt

The Middle Kingdom Theban Project (MKTP) is a project in the Theban Necropolis, Egypt led by the Universidad de Alcalá, Spain. MKTP involves the excavation, conservation, and epigraphic analysis of funerary structures in Deir el-Bahari and Asasif. In recent seasons, the conservation work has focused on developing methodologies for the documentation and treatment of wall paintings in the tombs of Dagi (TT103) and Djari (TT366). The wall paintings in Dagi consist of both in situ paintings and hundreds of fragments on the tomb floor that were stacked together by the Ministry of Antiquities in the 1980s. Due to the tomb's neglect for over 40 years, the delicate wall painting fragments were buried under a layer of compact sediment. Additionally, the back of the fragments is composed of a mud and straw substrate, making their removal from the sediment challenging. The plaster side has important but friable pigments present which needed to be protected during excavation and lifting. The fragments were lifted by two members of the conservation team during the 2023 season using Japanese tissue, cellulosic adhesives, and ridged boards. This method allowed for careful excavation while preserving much of the material and consolidating the pigment layer. After the hundreds of fragments were lifted, the tissue facing was removed and further treatment was undertaken.

Kate McEnroe & Christina Altland Working on Broken Glass: Lifting an 18th c. Casement Window

The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation (CWF) has undertaken archaeological work within the historic area for nearly one hundred years. The Foundation's rich research history continues today, with multiple archaeological sites currently open. Archaeological conservators at CWF assist this work primarily in the laboratory. However, when needed, they are called to sites to aid field work, typically in assessing and lifting delicate artifacts. Recently, construction for a new archaeology building revealed a previously unknown building foundation, likely dating to the turn of the 18th century. One particularly exciting find included a partially intact casement window with window glass and lead comes. The window appears to have been removed and partially folded on itself when deposited in the cellar of the building during its 18th century demolition. Conservators at CWF were tasked with stabilizing and block lifting this fragile artifact to allow for safe transport for research and treatment. This talk will provide an overview of this artifact's lift including challenges, documentation, and the collaboration process with archaeologists.

Jesse Lundervold & Rocio Gonzalez-Oyarce The Post-Medieval Pottery Reconstructions of T.C. Lethbridge

The Hole House assemblage is a post-medieval archaeological assemblage from a 12th-century manor house in Branscombe, Devon. The assemblage is mainly ceramic and features 12 fully restored ceramics which were both excavated and repaired by Thomas Charles (T.C.) Lethbridge in the 1950s and 60s when he lived at Hole House. The reconstructions are composed of a variety of repair materials and markers of Lethbridge's approach to his repairs. This project outlines the treatment of the reconstructions in the Hole House assemblage, incorporating material analysis, object biography, and conservation theory into the chosen methodology. Furthermore, one of Lethbridge's restorations is used as an example of the complexity of balancing different biographical stages with the material condition of the object. This vessel was affected by four structural issues: the concealment by plaster of the internal and external ceramic surfaces, the dissociation of fragments, the fragility of some plaster fills, and the misalignment of the fragments. Here, we focus on the first issue by testing dry and wet methods and discussing their effect on the storytelling potential of the ceramic as well as the material condition of the vessel. We aim to contribute to the growing discussion around preserving old repairs in ceramics and show how different biographical stages can be kept within the object.



Helena excavating at the Elite Cemetery at Hierakonpolis near Edfu, Egypt
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SPEAKER BIOS

Lucie Altenburg is an archaeological conservator working for the Pôle archéologique, a municipal unit of the Ville de Paris. After a few years at MOLA, she joined the team of conservators at the Kulturhistorisk museum in Oslo, Norway. In 2021, she took up the position of conservator in the small French team. Since then, has been working to implement more efficient conservation protocols within the team from fieldwork to post-excavation studies.

Christina Altland is the Assistant Conservator of Archaeological Materials at The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. Altland received her master's degree from Durham University for the Conservation of Archaeological and Museum Objects in 2021. Her experience includes collections from terrestrial and marine archaeological contexts, with particular research interests in iron and wood.

Ella Andrews is the Andrew W. Mellon Advanced Fellow of Objects Conservation at The Michael C. Carlos Museum at Emory University. She trained in conservation at UCL and holds

a B.A. in Anthropology from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. She has worked on sites all over the world as a conservator on archaeological projects in the United States, United Kingdom, Israel/Palestine, Greece, and is currently a member of Middle Kingdom Theban Project in Egypt, which is what her talk today focusses on. Her research interests include polychrome surfaces, the use of organic nanoparticles in conservation, and the identification of pigments through multistep analysis. She is an Associate of the American Institute for Conservation and Professional Education and Training Co-Chair for AIC's Emerging Conservation Professionals Network.

Riva Boutylkova is an archaeological conservator working for both London Museum and MOLA. She completed a BA in Conservation/Restoration at Antwerp University in 2018, specialising in ceramics, and an MA in Conservation of Archaeological and Museum Objects at Durham University in 2020. After this, Riva worked at Dorset Museum, supporting their on-site gallery redevelopment project, before moving to London where she splits her work treating freshly excavated material at MOLA, and caring for the archaeological collection at London Museum. Besides her current work, Riva's interests include glass and ceramics conservation and museum outreach projects.

Zeynep Ada Çelik is a third-year graduate of the School of Cultural Heritage Protection and Repair at Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University. Cleaning of bronze objects is her area of interest, and iron age materials are a subject she wants to know more about. She is working as an intern conservator at the Japanese Institute of Anatolian Archaeology in Kaman.

Dilan Erdim is a student at Yıldız Technical University, Department of Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Property. They worked in various different companies as an intern, and hope to continue their work in the fields of conservation and restoration of archaeological objects.

Rocio Gonzalez-Oyarce is a post-graduate student on the MA in Conservation of Archaeological and Museum Objects at Durham University. Her background in Biological Anthropology (University of Chile, Chile) led her to work with skeletal collections of human remains and commercial archaeology projects between 2015 and 2022. During this time, she became interested in archaeological and museum objects, which motivated her to take an internship at the National Centre of Conservation and Restoration (Chile) to work with mummified individuals, get a diploma in Heritage Collection Management and Conservation (Alberto Hurtado University, Chile) and in Curatorial Practices (Adolfo Ibanez University, Chile) before applying to Durham University. She recently completed a 10-month placement in the Royal Albert Memorial Museum and is interested in organic and composite objects.

Helena Jaeschke ACR, FIIC was among the second cohort of archaeological conservation students to graduate from University College Cardiff under Dr David Leigh. After undertaking postgraduate research at the Institute of Archaeology in London and a brief spell at the Horniman Museum, she and husband Richard worked for the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology and the Epigraphic Survey of the Oriental Institute of Chicago University in Luxor,

Egypt. They moved to north Devon and set up an independent archaeological conservation practice working for museums and sites in the UK, Egypt and Oman. Helena is currently the Conservation Development Officer for Museum Development South West, supporting 500 museums with their collection care needs and occasionally getting to spend some time on sites in Egypt. Have a look at the free resources on www.southwestmuseums.org.uk/what-we-do/collections. Helena served on the committee of the UKIC Archaeology Group and was Treasurer of UKIC before it transitioned into ICON. She hosts a South West Conservators Group network www.facebook.com/groups/362010104153973. She and Sarah Allen won a Conservation Award for PRIMROSE: a project to help community museums care for their photographic collections.

Jesse Lundervold is a post-graduate student on the MSc in Conservation for Archaeology and Museums at University College London. Before studying conservation, Jesse researched nanoparticle synthesis while attaining their MS in chemistry from University of California, Davis and earned a BA in chemistry and fine art in 2018 from William Jewell College in Missouri. They completed part of their second-year conservation placement at the Royal Albert Memorial Museum in Exeter, UK and are currently a sculpture conservation intern at Tate.

Kate McEnroe is the Conservator of Archaeological Materials at The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. She graduated in 2014 with an MA and MSc in conservation from the Institute of Archaeology, University College London. Following work experiences at the Museum of London and the Brooklyn Museum, Kate joined The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation in 2016.

Olivia O'Dwyer is a doctoral candidate at the University of Athens, where she is researching the manufacture and use of Egyptian blue pigment in Bronze Age wall paintings from mainland Greece, with a particular focus on the paintings from the Palace of Nestor, Pylos. She is currently a pre-doctoral research fellow at the Malcom H. Wiener Laboratory for Archaeological Science, American School of Classical Studies at Athens. Olivia completed her training in conservation at the Institute of Archaeology, UCL, and works as a field conservator for the Palace of Nestor Excavations, Pylos; the Middle Kingdom Theban Project, Luxor, and the Japanese Institute of Anatolian Archaeology in Kaman, where she is presenting from today.

Laura Ratcliffe Warren ACR, MCIfA, FSA is an archaeological conservator working for herself as a freelance conservator and also in post excavation finds and reporting for Cornwall Archaeological Unit. She has over 20 years of experience conserving archaeological objects and undertaking practical excavation works on archaeological sites in Britain and the Middle East. She also spent 7 years working in the Royal Cornwall Museum managing, stabilising and conserving museums objects and archives and more recently, five years working on an historic landscape conservation community project in West Cornwall.

Eleanor Smith is an undergraduate student at Cardiff University, studying a Bachelor of Science in Conservation of Objects in Museums and Archaeology. Her research interests include archaeological metals and green conservation. She is currently interning at the

Japanese Institute of Anatolian Archaeology in Kaman, where she is researching the effectiveness of green and non-toxic corrosion inhibitors on archaeological bronzes and iron.

Ruben With undertook a diploma in objects conservation at the University of Oslo in 2014, focusing on archaeological iron, followed by about 5 years working as conservator for archaeological materials at the Museum of Archaeology, University of Stavanger. From 2019 until February 2024 employed as conservator for archaeological materials at the Museum of Cultural History, University of Oslo. Started a PhD in Conservation at the Department of Archaeology, Conservation and History at the University of Oslo February 2024. The PhD project will seek to visualize, identify, trace and, thereby, get a better understanding of different corrosion phenomena taking place in the inner structure of objects made of copper alloy and iron using μ CT scanning, accompanied by chemical analyses using instrumentation such as SEM-EDS, μ Raman, FT-IR and XRF.



Ella Andrews lifting in situ and fragmented wall paintings on site in the Tomb of Dagi (TT 103).
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