



## Conservators without Borders

### An International Archaeological Conservation and Outreach Initiative

**Conservators Without Borders** (CWB) is a program that provides conservation support to archaeological projects where insufficient funding and expertise does not allow for conservation activity. Founded by Melina Smirniou, Christie Pohl and Dominica D'Arcangelo, all alumnae of the conservation program at University College London's (UCL) Institute of Archaeology, the initiative is currently funded by a grant from UCL "Futures." Priority is given to sites in countries where finds are in need of special or urgent conservation attention (either during or post-excavation). Other primary objectives of the program include: outreach to local communities to determine sustainable methods of conservation, training conservation students, volunteers and other interested individuals, and collaboration with archaeologists and specialists on-site.



### Kythera, Greece

The first project took place on the island of Kythera in Greece in June 2007 and a second, follow-up project took place in July 2008. The archaeological material in need was excavated in the 1960's by the British School at Athens and includes Minoan, Classical and Roman artifacts from the coastal site of Kastri. The stored objects were subjected to fluctuating environmental conditions and a severe earthquake in 2006 resulted in the deterioration of many of the finds. The team collaborated with the co-directors of the Kythera Island Project, Cyprian Broodbank from UCL and Evangelia Kiriatzki from the British School at Athens, while advising employees of the local museum on preventive and basic remedial conservation practices. Saray Naidorf, a conservation student from UCL, joined the team in Greece in 2007 and Jacqueline Chapman, also a UCL student, worked with the CWB team in 2008.



**The CWB team working in the storage facility, or apotheke, in Kythera**



**Some of the ceramic vessels from the Kythera Island Project's collection**



**Saray Naidorf working with one of the employees from the local archaeological museum**

## **Jordan**

The second 2007 project took place in Jordan treating objects from collections in Umm Qais, Jarash, Karak, Petra, Irbid and Amman. The team collaborated with the Department of Antiquities and worked together with employees and archaeologists from each museum. Amy Drago, a professional conservator from the British Museum, volunteered and joined the team in Jordan. The outreach component of the project included guidance on conservation methods, appropriate storage for artifacts and practical demonstrations. There was also an opportunity to visit several museums and storage facilities during the initiative and this allowed the conservators to suggest improvements for display cases and to advise on environmental issues. CWB is returning to Jordan in 2008 to continue treating objects in need and build on the earlier outreach and training sessions.



View of modern-day Jarash and the Roman archaeological site in northern Jordan



Working with archaeologists and museum employees from Karak and Petra



A bronze pin before treatment



The bronze pin after treatment



The CWB team conducting a practical demonstration at the Department of Antiquities Headquarters in Amman

## Peru

The third CWB initiative took place in northern Peru in July 2008 working at two active excavation sites: San José de Moro, a ceremonial and funerary complex dating to the Moche civilization and Magdalena de Cao Viejo, a settlement dating from the colonial period. At **San José de Moro**, the team collaborated with Project Director Luis Jaime Castillo to conserve and restore several unfired clay house models, *maquetas*, found in tombs during the 2007 excavation season.



One of the unfired clay house models, *maquetas*, before and after treatment



The CWB team lifting fragile textile remains at San José de Moro

The conservators also assisted with the excavation and lifting of fragile textile samples associated with human remains. Outreach components included working with some of the excavation assistants to find joins between the clay fragments and designing a roof support. Some of the field school students working at the excavation site assisted with the conservation treatments and CWB concluded their visit with a lecture on archaeological conservation methods for the field and a summary of the work completed on the *maquetas*.

CWB also spent 10 days at **Magdalena de Cao Viejo** and collaborated with Jeffrey Quilter (Principal Investigator) to conserve paper, textile and metal finds excavated from the colonial church and town. The primary tasks for CWB were cleaning, stabilization and re-housing of the different objects using inert, conservation-grade packaging materials. In addition to the work on the colonial period finds, CWB had the opportunity to discuss several different conservation issues and concerns with the El Brujo Archaeological Complex archaeologists, technicians and employees. The team also demonstrated different conservation techniques, showing the variety of tools and materials used during the project.



**The CWB Peru team working on finds  
from Magdalena de Cao Viejo**



**Conducting an outreach and training  
session at the El Brujo Archaeological  
Complex**

CWB always welcomes suggestions for future projects, contact from interested volunteers and possibilities for additional funding. Please visit our website for further information: [www.conservatorswithoutborders.org](http://www.conservatorswithoutborders.org) and to contact the team please send an email to: [info@conservatorswithoutborders.org](mailto:info@conservatorswithoutborders.org)