



ICCM
International Committee
for the Conservation of Mosaics

Newsletter 13

April 2013

The 11th Conference of the ICCM *Demetrios Michaelides*

The 11th International Conference of ICCM, with the theme *Managing Archaeological Sites with Mosaics: From Real Problems to Practical Solutions*, took place in Meknes, Morocco, from 23 to 27 October 2011. The conference was organised by the ICCM in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture of the Kingdom of Morocco, the financial support of The Getty Foundation, and the collaboration of the University of Cyprus and ICCROM.

During the conference, which was attended by about 200 persons from 29 different countries, there were 37 oral and 41 poster presentations. There were also guided visits to the Medina of Meknes, the archaeological site of Volubilis, and a zellij and a leather-dyeing workshop in Fez. One of the highlights of the meeting was the honouring of Antonio Cassio, recognised worldwide as one of the leading mosaic artists and restorers.

The members of ICCM elected the new Board for the period 2011-2014: Demetrios Michaelides, President; Roberto Nardi, Vice-President; John Stewart, Treasurer; Evelyne Chantriaux, Secretary; Aicha Ben Abed; Stefania Chlouveraki; Sabah Ferdi; Badr Jabbour-Gedeon; Ammar Haidar; Jeanne-Marie Teutonico.



Participants' visit to the archaeological site of Volubilis.



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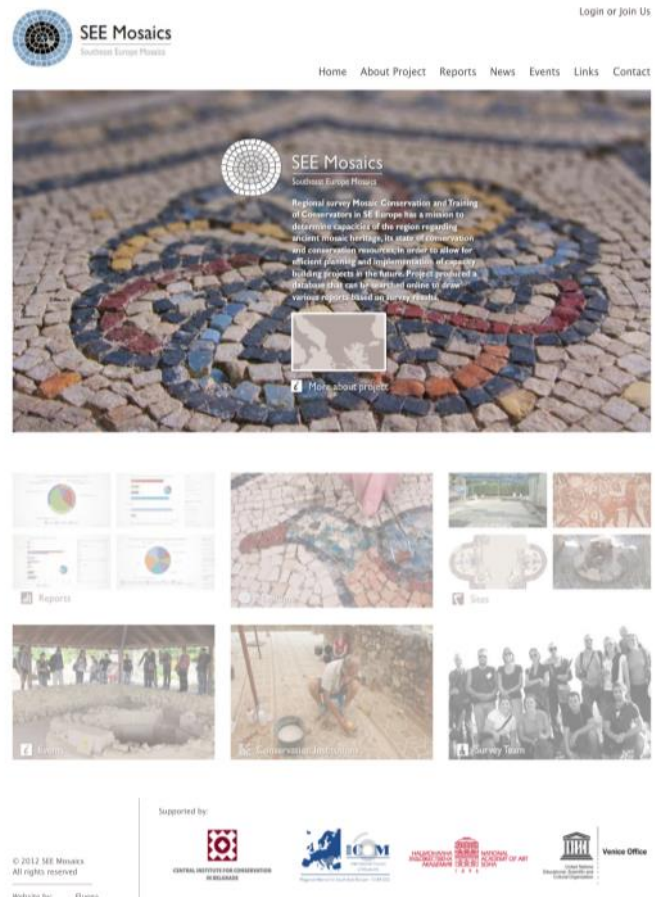
SEE MOSAICS: Database on the capacities of southeast Europe referring to ancient mosaics, conservation and training of conservators

Maja Frankovic and Branislava Lazarevic

The database created in the course of the regional survey *Mosaic Conservation and Training of Conservators in Southeast Europe*, has been recently put online and is available on www.seemosaiics.org. It contains information on mosaics and conservation practice from 39 archaeological sites open to the public, as well as 32 museums in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia. The website with the database was designed as a tool to present the survey results and to encourage regional collaboration. It will be further developed to serve the promotion of mosaic heritage and mosaic conservation activities in SE Europe.

The regional survey *Mosaic Conservation and Training of Conservators in Southeast Europe* was launched with the aim of defining the needs for conservation of ancient mosaic pavements in the region and of developing educational programmes in the field of mosaic conservation at the regional level. It was first initiated in 2007 by a group of young professionals from the region, all participants in the ICCROM Programme of Archaeological Conservation in Southeast Europe. The idea behind this initiative was to try to raise awareness at regional level, both amongst professionals and national authorities, about the needs for a more organised and active protection of the ancient mosaic heritage in the region. Since 2011, the survey is led by the Central Institute for Conservation in Belgrade and supported by the UNESCO Office in Venice, the Regional Alliance ICOM SEE and the National Academy of Art, Sofia.

The survey was implemented in 2011/12 by a team composed of colleagues from each of the countries involved, who took part in the project on a voluntary basis. Its mission was to determine the capacities of the region regarding the ancient mosaic heritage and its state of conservation, as well as the conservation resources, in order to allow for the efficient planning and implementation of future conservation and educational projects.

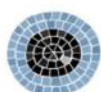


The survey focused on ancient mosaic pavements on archaeological sites that are open to the public, and in museum collections, in eight countries in the region. It was conducted through questionnaires, conceived so as to meet the following objectives:

1. To present a quantitative picture of the ancient mosaic pavements on archaeological sites open to the public and in museums in the region of southeast Europe.
2. To present the quantitative and qualitative picture of the state of conservation of ancient mosaic pavements on archaeological sites open to the public and in museums in the region of southeast Europe.
3. To determine the number of people working on mosaic conservation, their professional qualifications; as well as the existence of academic study and professional training programmes in the region.

The results obtained through the questionnaires were systemised and entered in the database in order to be statistically analysed and to enable the presentation of the survey results. The database can be searched online to find various reports on mosaics in museums, archaeological sites open to the public, as well as on the mosaic conservation profession in the region. Professionals from all the institutions that took part in the survey have access to the complete versions of the questionnaires, in addition to the reports. Access to the questionnaires can also be granted to users who register on the website.

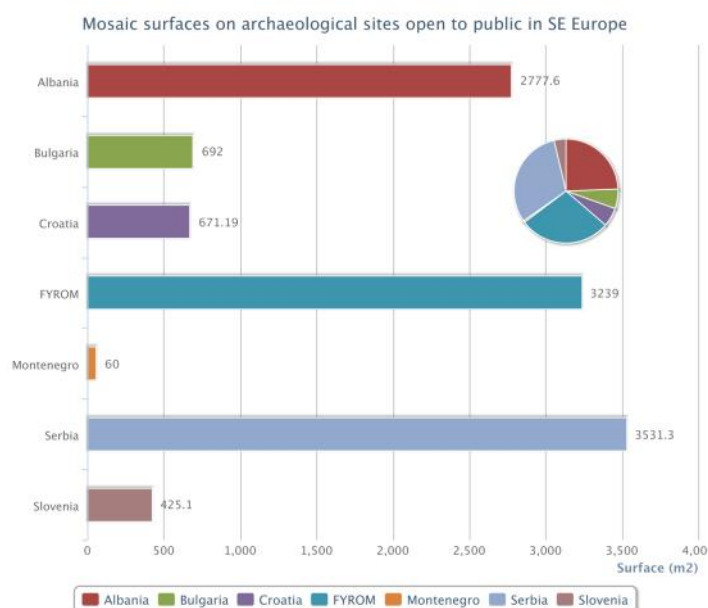
The statistical analysis of the survey results gives a clear picture of the capacities and the needs for the conservation and the presentation of the mosaic heritage in southeast Europe. The results of the survey will allow for better planning of conservation projects by determining priorities, and will help in the creation of training programmes, either at local or regional level, thus fostering inter-institutional collaboration in the region.



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NARNIA training course on mosaics

Maria Dikomitou-Eliadou

A training course was implemented by the Archaeological Research Unit of the University of Cyprus entitled “Mosaics in the field. Issues of iconography, material selection and preservation”. It was organised in the framework of the European funded project *New Archaeological Research Network for Integrating Approaches to ancient material studies* (NARNIA). It was held between the 11th and the 14th of October 2012 and its main objective was to introduce participants to issues related to mosaic iconography and technology. Although a major part of the course was theoretical and consisted of taught lectures focusing on important issues related to mosaic history and iconography, the preservation of ancient mosaics and techniques of conservation, it was enriched also with visits to archaeological sites with mosaics. Furthermore, the concept of preventive conservation for materials and structures was discussed, including examples of different practices in the Eastern Mediterranean. The training course brought together high-profile scholars with great impact on research in the field of ancient mosaics. It was broadcasted online giving the opportunity to interested individuals outside the lecture room and outside Cyprus to follow the lectures, and attracted many students and scholars from universities and other research institutions across the world. The scientist-in-charge for this training event was Professor Demetrios Michaelides, director of the Archaeological Research Unit.

Another related training course (within the NARNIA project) is planned for late October/early November 2013. It will take place at the Archaeological Research Unit and its theme will be “Cultural heritage practices: issues of archaeological conservation and site preservation”.

Furthermore, Anne-Marie Guimier-Sorbets is organising two further NARNIA training courses in Paris. The first, which will take place from the 22nd to 25th of May, is entitled “Interior decoration in the Eastern Mediterranean during Hellenistic and Roman times: mosaics, paintings, iconography, materials, techniques and conservation”; the second, from the 27th to 29th May, is entitled “Information systems for archaeology and cultural heritage”.

For details on forthcoming training courses please visit: <http://narnia-itn.eu/training-courses/>



Participants of the training course, visiting the Kourion archaeological site.

New cover building at Chedworth Roman Villa, England

John Stewart

The Roman villa at Chedworth, in southwest England, has been protected and presented under wooden vernacular buildings shortly after its discovery in 1864. The National Trust has undertaken extensive investigations and environmental monitoring at the site since the mid 1990s. These have been reported at two ICCM conferences (1999 and 2005).

The outcome of these investigations was the decision to replace the 19th century structures with a new one, to enhance both the conservation and presentation of the site. Designed by the architectural firm of Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios, the new building opened in spring of this year. For a description of the project, see: <http://www.idox.cotswold.gov.uk/WAM14/doc/Report-270815.pdf?extension=.pdf&id=270815&appid=&location=volume1&contentType=application/pdf&pageCount=1>

Brèves de Saint-Romain-en-Gal

*Evelyne Chantriaux, Marion Hayes, Christophe Laporte,
Andréas Phoungas, Maurice Simon*

Parallèlement au programme de restauration, les activités de l'atelier intègrent des opérations de maintenance sur des mosaïques présentées en musée ou *in situ*, et les interventions de dépose occasionnées par de nouvelles découvertes archéologiques.

Opérations de maintenance

Elles consistent essentiellement en un programme local, comprenant le dépoussiérage biennuel des mosaïques exposées au musée de Saint-Romain-en-Gal, et, à Vienne, le nettoyage de la Mosaïque aux Masques, présentée dans l'ancienne église St-Pierre transformée en musée lapidaire en 1872. L'étanchéité très relative de l'édifice nécessite ici l'emploi d'un solvant pour enlever les dépôts dus à la pollution urbaine ou à des événements ponctuels, comme le nuage de cendres engendré au cours du printemps 2010 par le volcan islandais. Une autre mosaïque conservée en fragments dans ce musée a été nettoyée, pour figurer dans une exposition sur le Temple d'Auguste et de Livie¹ où elle était présentée quand il faisait office de musée-bibliothèque, au milieu du XIXe siècle ; l'opération devrait donner lieu à la restauration de cette mosaïque découverte en 1827, qui présentait un décor centré sur un dieu Océan², et dont les restes remontés sur ciment ont retrouvé leur lisibilité après leur récent nettoyage. L'entretien a également concerné cette année la mosaïque médiévale conservée *in situ* dans l'église de Cruas (Ardèche), que l'atelier avait consolidée en 1990³.



*Fragment de la mosaïque à décor d'Océan conservé
au musée St-Pierre de Vienne.*

¹ Exposition : 16 colonnes à la une - Le temple et après, Musée-Cloître St-André le Bas, du 16 septembre 2010 au 9 janvier 2011.

² Lancha, J., *Recueil Général des mosaïques de la Gaule III*, 2, Province de Narbonnaise, Vienne 1981, 83-84.

³ Chantriaux et al., « A propos de l'opération réalisée à Tournus par l'atelier de Saint-Romain-en-Gal : interventions de conservation et de restauration sur trois mosaïques romanes », *Actes du colloque : "Le décor retrouvé à Saint-Philibert de Tournus. Regards sur la mosaïque médiévale"*, Tournus 18 et 19 septembre 2003, C.I.E.R., décembre 2004, 55-66.

L'exposition saisonnière des mosaïques de la *Maison aux cinq mosaïques*, replacées pendant la période estivale à leur emplacement d'origine se poursuit –depuis une dizaine d'années maintenant–, avec des opérations de maintenance qui devraient intégrer la reprise du traitement des lacunes sur la mosaïque aux *xenia* : les comblements de chaux appliqués dans les vides du *tessellatum* ont en effet partiellement disparu et nécessitent d'être remplacés. Le principe de la programmation annuelle de cette présentation suscite des interrogations de la part des autorités de tutelle, qui préféreraient une solution pérenne évitant le coût entraîné par les opérations de mise en place et de démontage de l'ensemble. L'édification d'un abri permanent restant un projet difficilement réalisable dans le contexte budgétaire et archéologique de Saint-Romain-en-Gal, l'alternative d'une exposition saisonnière est cependant la seule qui permet aujourd'hui la présentation –au moins intermittente– des mosaïques, tout en limitant les risques de dégradations dus aux conditions climatiques ambiantes⁴.



Mosaïque à décor bachique découverte à Saint-Laurent d'Agnay en 2009.

Opérations de dépose

Les opérations de dépose sont devenues plus rares, surtout dans la région Rhône-Alpes où la politique menée par le service de l'archéologie pour limiter les fouilles conduit au réenfouissement des vestiges révélés par les opérations diagnostiques. La dernière intervention de dépose effectuée par l'atelier a concerné un sol de *terrazzo* découvert en octobre 2010 dans un quartier périphérique de Lyon, dans le cadre d'une fouille réalisée par l'INRAP⁵. Ce pavement de 12 m², présentant un fond blanc à incrustations de fragments de marbre et de schiste, a été déposé dans les dix jours qui ont suivi sa découverte, pour respecter les délais de restitution du site aux aménageurs.

L'opération de dépose précédente remonte à 2009 : elle a été réalisée dans le cadre de la fouille d'une vaste villa romaine à caractère vinicole localisée à Saint-Laurent-d'Agnay (Rhône), qui a livré une mosaïque datée du I^{er} siècle après J.-C.⁶ Les risques de déprédations dus à la situation isolée du site et à la médiatisation dont a fait l'objet la découverte, ainsi que la volonté des archéologues d'accéder aux niveaux inférieurs ont justifié la dépose du pseudo-*emblema* à décor bachique et d'une partie du sol de *terrazzo* blanc qui l'encadrait. La restauration devrait être prochainement programmée, quand la dévolution du pavement aura été définie.

⁴ Chantreaux et al., « Maintenance et présentation in situ à Saint-Romain-en-Gal », *“Wall and Floor mosaics: Conservation, Maintenance, Presentation”, Proceedings of the VIIIth Conference of the International Committee for the Conservation of Mosaics, Thessaloniki 29 October – 3 November 2002, Thessaloniki 2005*, 287-296.

⁵ Fouille du 25-29 rue Joannès Carret Lyon 9^e (déplacement de la rue). Aménageur : Le Grand Lyon. Maître d'ouvrage : La société d'équipement du Rhône et de Lyon (SERL). Responsable d'opération : Sophie Nourissat, Institut national de recherches archéologiques préventives (INRAP). Responsable scientifique et prescripteur : Luc Miret (Service Régional de l'Archéologie).

⁶ Fouille effectuée depuis 2008 dans le cadre d'un programme de recherche de l'Université Lumière Lyon 2 consacré aux processus de romanisation dans l'arrière-pays des colonies de Lugdunum et de Vienne. Financement : Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication - DRAC Rhône-Alpes - Service Régional de l'Archéologie ; Association GAROM – Direction : Matthieu POUX, Professeur d'archéologie romaine et gallo-romaine, Université Lumière Lyon 2.

⁷ Poux, M. *Villa de Goiffieux, Commune de Saint-Laurent-d'Agnay (Rhône), Rapports de fouille 2008-2009-2010*, consultables sur le site du Laboratoire Universitaire d'Enseignement et de Recherche en archéologie nationale : http://luern.fr/Gofiac/Rapport_Goiffieux_2009.pdf

Nea Moni of Chios – The wall mosaics conservation project

Georgia Sotiropoulou

Historical data

Nea Moni, the “New Monastery”, is an 11th century convent on the island of Chios in the Aegean Sea, near Asia Minor. It is located on Mount Probation at an altitude of 433 m. The construction of the monastery’s main church or *catholicon* started in 1043 and finished 13 years later. The church, of octagonal type, is composed of a nave, which is situated between the triconch sanctuary and the narthex —the latter preceded by exo-narthex— built during a later phase. The interior decoration consists of wall mosaics, which are very characteristic of the “second golden age of Byzantine art”. The mosaics cover the vaults according to a very strict iconographical plan and were made in 1055-1056 by artists who were directly connected with the imperial workshops of Constantinople. The monument is inscribed in the World Heritage List since 1990.

The mosaics

The tesserae are made of natural stone, ceramic and glass. Their size varies, from 4 to 6 mm for the faces, hands and feet of the figures, to much larger tesserae for the clothing and the background. Fifty-seven different colours and hues of tesserae can be distinguished. The original Byzantine foundation of the mosaics consisted of layers of lime mortar. The majority of mosaics were detached in the 1950s and 1960s and reset on new concrete panels reinforced with an iron grid and hooks.

The monument and the mosaics have suffered damages over the centuries, caused by natural disasters, such as earthquakes, and also endogenous factors and improper conservation treatments. These have resulted in the further deterioration of the tesserae and the bedding layers leading to the formation of cracks, detachment, losses, surface deposits and corrosion.

Conservation project

The conservation project of the wall mosaics of the *catholicon* of Nea Moni was implemented between 2003-2007 by the Directorate of Conservation of Ancient and Modern Monuments of the Hellenic Ministry of Culture, and was co-funded by the European Union. The project consisted of two main phases:

1. A series of conservation studies aiming at the evaluation of the condition of the mosaics: examination and technical investigation of the metal reinforcement elements and previous conservation treatments. These led to a proposal regarding the partial and selective lifting of mosaic panels that had already been detached and relayed in the past.

2. The conservation treatment of the mosaics, which included:

- Detachment and relaying of selected areas of the mosaics in order to examine the condition of the cement restoration mortar and iron reinforcements, in order to predict and prevent the problems they may cause to the tessellated surface in the future, and to estimate the difficulties involved in the case where detachment was necessary before proceeding with the restoration of the mosaics.
- The in situ conservation of mosaics, involving consolidation of tesserae, facing, consolidation of detached areas by grouting, removal of previous repairs, filling of lacunae, resetting of tesserae and surface cleaning.



Detail from the “Crucifixion” in the nave.

New discoveries during conservation

After the removal of the restoration mortars, which were used for the integration of lacunae in previous conservation campaigns, parts of the sinopia of the mosaics were revealed. Its traces were found in several areas of the monument and were conserved and preserved in situ as they provide important information on the technology of mosaic making.

Further analysis is planned in order to identify the composition of the mortars and the pigments and to investigate the materials and the methods used in the construction of these monumental mosaics.

The mosaic collection of the New Museum of Patras, Greece

Christos Pilalis

The discovery, between the 1960s and 2006, of a large number of mosaics belonging to private dwellings and public buildings of the Roman era in several locations in the city of Patras, has resulted in the creation of a special section at the New Museum of Patras. This consists of two exhibition halls, one dedicated to private, the other to public life, based on the unique pictorial representations of the mosaics. The discovery of such a large number of mosaics reflects the wealth of the city, while the rich thematography of both the exhibited and the stored mosaics reveals various aspects of life in Roman times.

The 'Private life' exhibition hall contains 13 mosaics with various depictions, including the Calydonian Boar Hunt, the Three Graces dancing, the Chariot of the Sun, a Medusa head, the personification of the River Nile, a Triton, Venus, a scene of grape-pressing with Pan, birds and fish, cupids fishing and a hunting scene with rich geometric decoration.

The 'Public life' hall includes mosaics which depict the Cyclops, gladiatorial combats, musicians and athletic competitions, as well as mosaics featuring the names of the mosaicists/artists. This rich variety of themes is harmoniously presented in the space creating a unique exhibition of Patras from the 2nd to the early 4th century AD. The brilliance in the conception and execution, the style and the richness of themes –ranging from complex geometric patterns to elaborate pictorial representations– and finally the size of many of the pavements were taken into account when designing the exhibition, so that the mosaics are both attractive and accessible to the general public.

A study of the pathology and effects of weathering was undertaken in order to propose the most appropriate methods for transferring the mosaics to the New Museum of Patras, as well as for presenting them and managing the collection in the future. The mosaics are exhibited both on the floor and on vertical supports, which were specially designed and constructed. The vertical supports are free-standing, earthquake-resistant structures, which are capable of bearing the weight of the mosaics. These structures are lined with synthetic wood (plywood), 4.4 cm thick, and their surface is set at a positive inclination of 5%.

The mosaics were transferred from the old museum in a number of sections, depending on their size and decorative theme, and were treated individually. They are presented in portable free-standing supports, an innovative and versatile mounting method which is unique by Greek standards. Today there are 400 m² of mosaics displayed at the New Museum. The rich variety of themes presented, their impressive quantity and the innovative mounting method and presentation of the mosaics make this a unique collection which is of particular interest to those involved in the conservation and study of mosaics. It is certainly worth a visit.



The New Museum of Patras.



Detail of a hunting scene, Roman mosaic in the 'Private life' exhibition hall of the New Museum of Patras.

Piazza Armerina cover building inaugurated

John Stewart

The celebrated mosaics of the Villa del Casale at Piazza Armerina have been covered since completion of their excavation with the 'glasshouse' structure of metal and glass and perspex roofing (1957-67). Designed by the architect Franco Minissi, and supported by the great theoretician Cesare Brandi, the structure became famous in its own right. By the end of the century serious deterioration of its mosaics and wall paintings prompted concerted conservation investigations, carried out by the Centro Regionale per la Progettazione ed il Restauro of Palermo. This was followed by a 'Restoration and Preservation Plan' developed by specialist consultants, which proposed replacement of the Minissi structure with a new cover building. The project was directed by Guido Meli (former ICCM Board member) and the conceptual design of the new building was by the architect Gionata Rizzi. This greatly enhances the appreciation of the ancient mosaics in an opaque framework, and improves their environmental conditions. The new building was inaugurated this July; however, the remaining thirty percent of the structure is still to be built. The project was accompanied by extensive conservation of mosaics and wall paintings of the Villa, which is now completed. See: http://www.centrorestauro.sicilia.it/news/2006_Villa_del_Casale/Villa_Romana_del_Casale_Piazza_Armerina_considerazioni.html
<http://www.villaromanadelcasale.it/la-villa-romana-del-casale/materiale-scaricabile/>

Conservation and management of mosaics in Libya (CaMMiL)

John Stewart

Amongst the many casualties of the four-decade rule of Muammar Gaddafi is the cultural heritage of Libya. In particular, its archaeological sites and mosaic heritage are in a perilous state. *Conservation and Management of Mosaics in Libya* (CaMMiL) is a modest training initiative to offer short workshops to the Libyan Department of Antiquities, which will provide an introduction to current best practice in mosaic conservation and management. These are intended to serve as a foundation for more formal training courses run by other international organisations. Funded by The Getty Foundation, the project is led by Dr Will Wootton of King's College London, supported by John Stewart of English Heritage, Hafed Walda, also of King's, and Dr Alaa El-Habashi of Monofia University (Egypt).

A reconnaissance mission took place in April 2012, which confirmed a strong interest in the subject. As a result, a small group of conservation professionals are presenting two week-long workshops on the conservation and management of mosaics, primarily within the context of archaeological sites. The first took place in Tripolitania in November 2012, the second will be in Cyrenaica early in 2013.

The Villa of the Nereids, excavated in 1964 by Italian archaeologists at Tajura, near Tripoli. The mosaics were remounted on iron-reinforced concrete and are now in an advanced state of deterioration. The unstable cover building over them is progressively collapsing.



Madaba, Jordan: The Martyrs' Church reopens after the completion of the protective shelter

S. Chlouveraki

On December 13, 2012 the church of the Martyrs, which was inaccessible to visitors for decades, reopened after the completion of a shelter that was built over it in order to protect its mosaic floor pavements. The Martyrs' Church, with mosaics dating to the fifth century, is located at the Madaba Archaeological Park. It is one of 29 Byzantine churches of Madaba, 25 kilometres southwest of Amman.

The construction of the protective shelter was funded by the Hellenic Aid and administered by the USAID-Jordan Tourism Development Project (Siyaha). The Hellenic Aid Madaba Project was initiated in 2008 and aimed to improve the conservation and presentation of the Martyrs' Church as well as the interpretation of St George's Church, leading to an enhanced tourism experience in Madaba.

HRH Princess Sumaya, vice chairperson of the Board of Trustees of the Jordan Museum, who inaugurated the shelter spoke about the importance of the mosaics of Madaba and emphasised on the importance of the preservation of mosaics in situ, their projection and proper maintenance programme. The Greek Ambassador to Jordan, Heracles Asteriades, said that the project, which cost over half-a-million euros, aimed at "preventing further destruction and allowing researchers and the public to access the mosaic floor". During the course of this project, Mr Asteriades, who was fascinated by the mosaics spent a lot of time on-site working on the mosaic floors and preparing the site for the inauguration of the shelter. Father Innokentios, the representative of the Greek Orthodox Church, which owns the site stressed the fact that although the mosaics are now protected their conservation is not completed and more work is required in order to stabilise them and prevent further damage.

At the same day the interpretation centre with audiovisual features that was established in the framework of the same programme was inaugurated at the nearby St George Church. The purpose of this centre is to provide information to the visitors about the Byzantine mosaic map of the Holy Land, which is preserved at the church's floor and is amongst the highlights of Jordan's cultural heritage.

Read more at <http://jordantimes.com/martyrs-church-reopens-after-preservation-work>



General view of the mosaics and the shelter of the Martyr's Church immediately after the inauguration on 13 December 2012 .

The Museum at the Lowest Place on Earth: A new museum in Safi, Jordan opens its doors to the public

K. D. Politis and S. Chlouveraki

The concept for a museum located at the lowest place on the earth's surface was conceived in the late 1990s during excavations of the Sanctuary of Saint Lot at Deir 'Ain 'Abata, Safi, Jordan. Although intended to house the finds from that site and others in the region of the southern *ghawrs*, its scope was global, encompassing a unique geographic location on earth. This placed the Museum at the Lowest Place on Earth (MuLPE) on the world heritage and tourism maps.

After initial architectural plans and the acquisition of seed funding, substantial financial support was given by the Government of Jordan via the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities. A new bold plan was made which included a large conservation laboratory, several storage rooms, a hostel and tourism facilities complete with restaurant, toilets and museum shop.

The construction works commenced in 2005 and were for the most part completed by 2008. After some structural adjustments, the exhibition of objects and information panels were designed by the Hellenic Society for Near Eastern Studies in collaboration with the Jordanian Department of Antiquities. These were successfully accomplished in 2011 and the museum was formally opened on 18 April 2012 (International Museum Day).

The exhibits include a small but rather interesting mosaic, from the Diakonikon of the Sanctuary of Saint Lot, which still preserves two of the original bedding layers and is mounted in a versatile system that allows easy removal and handling of the mosaic sections for further study, as well as the addition of more mosaic sections in the future as the study of the material proceeds. The conservation, mounting and installation of the mosaic is funded by the European Center for Byzantine and Post Byzantine Monuments (EKBMM), Greece, and a new phase of this programme was planned for November–December 2012.

A spacious conservation laboratory, which is located next to the exhibition was also designed by the EKBMM team of mosaic specialists in 2007 and was put into operation in 2011 in order to prepare the mosaic for the exhibition. A window on the side of the mosaic exhibit allows the visitor to view the conservation work undertaken in the laboratory.



The Museum at the Lowest Place on Earth (MuLPE).



The mosaic exhibit at MuLPE.

Mission effectuée en Libye

Gaël de Guichen and Aicha Ben Abed

Évaluation de la situation des mosaïques

La mission a été effectuée dans le cadre du programme MOSAIKON à la demande de l'ICCROM avec l'accord des autorités libyennes. Elle a été effectuée du 26 Novembre au 3 Décembre 2010 par Aicha ben Abed et Gaël de Guichen. Durant toute la mission le Dr Adel el-Turki, les a accompagnés et orientés.

La mission avait pour objectifs

- Rencontrer les autorités libyennes en vue d'explorer les possibilités futures de collaboration
- Vérifier et compléter les questionnaires sur les collections des musées en Libye.

En cours de mission il est devenu évident qu'il n'était pas possible d'étudier les seuls pavements de mosaïque dans les musées, mais qu'il fallait aussi connaître les conditions des pavements laissés sur les sites archéologiques. La mission a pu visiter les principaux musées archéologiques et tout particulièrement Sabratha, Zliten, Tripoli, Leptis Magna, Benghazi, Qasr Libya, Tocra, Apollonia, Cyrene, Ptolemais. Il a été ainsi possible de voir les cinq plus importants sites archéologiques ouverts au public et huit musées dans lesquels se trouvent des mosaïques.

Commentaires

On a dénombré 195 pavements romains et byzantins, tous montés, représentant 1873 m². La plupart des panneaux étaient montés sur des dalles de béton armée, le reste étant encore entoilé. Il est aussi à noter que 98% des panneaux étaient exposés dans les salles, une grande partie sur les murs entourés de lourds cadres de bois. Faisaient exception à ceci, les œuvres présentées à Leptis dans la nouvelle aile du musée de Leptis créées à cet effet.

Le musée de Tocra étant fermé pour cause des risques d'effondrement, ce qui met en grand danger les œuvres exposées et demande une intervention immédiate pour leur sauvegarde.

Par ailleurs à Cyrène, le bâtiment construit autour d'une mosaïque pour servir de musée de site a été abandonné après le transfert des œuvres dans un nouveau bâtiment. Sans entretien la mosaïque est aujourd'hui dans un mauvais état.

Dans la plupart des cas, les interventions de restauration pourrait être améliorées sans présenter de caractère d'urgence.

Hors du cadre de la mission, une visite à la Villa Silin (qui offre un ensemble exceptionnel de mosaïques) a été programmée. Il a été constaté une très rapide dégradation du bâtiment qui a entraînée celle des pavements. Cette situation exige une intervention d'extrême urgence.

Il a été remarqué également que le personnel intervenant sur la collection des mosaïques aurait besoin d'une formation sérieuse pour pouvoir faire face à la situation. Il en est de même pour le personnel intervenant sur les mosaïques *in situ*.



Les mosaïques de Zliten dans le Musée archéologique de Tripoli.



La mosaïque d'Orphée de Ptolémaïs.

Two mosaics treated during “Mosaic Conservation Course - Syria”, 2011-2012

Roberto Nardi

During October-December 2011 and June-July 2012 the two modules of “Mosaic Conservation Course – Syria” (MCC-Syria) were held in Italy, in the headquarters of the Centro di Conservazione Archeologica (CCA) at the Convento di San Nicola, Belmonte in Sabina (Rieti). The MCC was developed by the CCA of Rome in the framework of the MOSAIKON programme.

The course involved a group of eight technicians of the Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums of Syria, coming from different museums and mosaic conservation laboratories in the country. The course was structured with morning lectures and afternoon practical work in the laboratory, during which participants implemented a conservation intervention on a detached mosaic divided into 67 sections. This black and white mosaic was discovered during the archaeological excavation of a third-century imperial villa, conducted by the Soprintendenza Archeologica of Rome during 1987-1992 in the neighbourhood of Quadraro, in the proximity of the ancient Via Latina in Rome.



The mosaic depicts in its centre a black cantharos out of which water issues in a spout and overflows. Four doves are refreshing themselves at this “spring”. This panel is surrounded by forty squares that show different decorative patterns. The mosaic was divided into small pieces and was detached from its original site in 1992. Afterwards, it was transferred to the storage room of the Museo delle Terme in Rome where it remained on canvas for years waiting for a conservation intervention. During the conservation process participants could practice the assembling of the mosaic on the new support made of aluminum honeycomb, and the manufacturing and use of lime-based hydraulic mortars.

Field activities included the recovery from the site and the treatment of another mosaic: the polychrome roundel depicting a Medusa head, from the Roman Villa of Sant’ Imbenia, near Alghero, Sassari, Sardinia.

On this occasion participants implemented the preliminary operations for the recovery of the fragments, such as documentation, cleaning the gauze application and recovery techniques.

The mosaic has been transferred in the laboratory at the Convento di San Nicola where participants started the conservation, with the application on clay and first aid treatments.



Contributors

Ben Abed Aicha, *MOSAICON Regional Co-ordinator*

Chantriaux Evelynne, *Atelier de restauration de mosaïques et d'enduits peints/ Musée gallo-romain de Saint-Romain-en-Gal-Vienne*

Chlouveraki Stefania, *Head Conservator of the W.D.E Coulson Conservation laboratory at INSTAP Study Center for East Crete, T.E.I.A.- Department of Conservation Antiquities and Works of Art*

de Guichen Gaël, *Honorary President, ICCM*

Dikomitou-Eliadou Maria, *NARNIA Project Manager, Post-Doctoral Research Fellow, University of Cyprus*

Frankovic Maja, *Conservator, Central institute for conservation in Belgrade; Project Co-ordinator of SEE MOSAICS*

Hayes Marion, *Atelier de restauration de mosaïques et d'enduits peints/ Musée gallo-romain de Saint-Romain-en-Gal-Vienne*

Laporte Christophe, *Atelier de restauration de mosaïques et d'enduits peints/ Musée gallo-romain de Saint-Romain-en-Gal-Vienne*

Lazarevic Branislava, *Conservator, Central institute for conservation in Belgrade; Project Co-ordinator of SEE MOSAICS*

Michaelides Demetrios, *Professor of Classical Archaeology, Director of the Archaeological Research Unit, University of Cyprus*

Nardi Roberto, *Centro di Conservazione Archeologica (CCA), Rome*

Phoungas Andréas, *Atelier de restauration de mosaïques et d'enduits peints/ Musée gallo-romain de Saint-Romain-en-Gal-Vienne*

Pilalis Christos, *6th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities*

Politis D. Konstantinos, *European Centre for Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Monuments*

Simon Maurice, *Atelier de restauration de mosaïques et d'enduits peints/ Musée gallo-romain de Saint-Romain-en-Gal-Vienne*

Sotiropoulou Georgia, *Conservator of antiquities and works of art, Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, Culture and Sports, General Secretariat of Culture, Directorate of Conservation of Ancient and Modern Monuments, Greece*

Stewart John, *Senior Architectural Conservator in the Building Conservation and Research Team at English Heritage, London*

International Committee for the Conservation of Mosaics (ICCM)

Archaeological Research Unit
University of Cyprus
P.O.Box 20537
1678 Nicosia, Cyprus
Tel.: 00357 22893570
Fax: 00357 22895057
Website: www.iccm.ac.cy
E-mail: info@iccm.ac.cy

Edited by Demetrios Michaelides
Prepared by John Stewart, Stefania Chlouveraki and
Skevi Christodoulou

For future contributions please contact
Ms Skevi Christodoulou
christodoulou.paraskevi@ucy.ac.cy or info@iccm.ac.cy