

Fasti Online Conservation. A presentation

Stefano De Caro¹, Elizabeth Fentress²

¹ *General Director of ICCROM, Rome*

² *President of the International Association of Classical Archaeology*

Every archaeological excavation inevitably brings some destruction to its object. Once removed, layers that accumulated for centuries, covering structures and objects, can never be put back, and can only be recorded in the documentation. Because of this unfortunate truth archaeology has become more attentive to the conservation of the finds, monuments and material culture that constitute, along with the documentation, the basis of our reconstruction of ancient cultures, both for scholars and for the wider public.

This conservation of a complex and diversified heritage in most cases requires the contribution of a number of scientific and technical disciplines, as well as the need for scholars, not only to interpret the evidence but also to build a link between their finds and society, creating both knowledge and participation, without which the monuments remain extraneous, mere objects in collections or sites for tourists. Economic sciences are needed too, to create models for the sustainable management of cultural heritage which are sustainable and sensitive to social needs. The availability of information from international experience forms the necessary basis for progress in archaeological conservation, but because of the very recent development of an organic, scientific approach to the discipline its bibliography is still very short, limited to a small number of items in respect to the much larger number of examples of good practice. Many of these publications are found on the margins of large exhibitions or of large excavations in famous sites, generally in countries where there is already a substantial scientific community. The majority of the immense daily output of conservators in museums and archaeological sites is thus unpublished, and constitutes the grey literature that fills archives without bringing anything new to their colleagues, or to the education of new professionals.

For this reason, ICCROM, the International Center for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property, founded by UNESCO in 1956 to contribute to the formation of personnel dedicated to the conservation of cultural heritage, and AIAC, the International Association for Classical Archaeology, created in Rome in 1945 to re-launch professional collaboration between archaeologists divided by the second World War, have decided to propose a new, on-line review, based on the model of AIAC's Fasti Online Archaeology (www.fastionline.org) and its peer-reviewed journal, **Fasti Online Documents & Research (FOLD&R)**, which have for the last ten years published excavations in numerous countries around the Mediterranean.

The aim of the new project is even more ambitious than that of the Fasti Online, as we will accept contributions from anywhere in the world and in any language, as long as a longer article has an English abstract. These will be peer-reviewed by a professional recognized by ICCROM, paginated and immediately published online. Although no contribution is required from authors, we hope that national and other professional organizations will appreciate this enterprise and will help underwrite its (very reasonable) costs. We are very grateful to the Superintendence of Pompeii, the Italian Institute for Conservation and Restoration, and the General Direction for Antiquities of the Italian Ministry of Culture and Tourism for having supported the beginning of this initiative, and to ALECSO, the cultural organization of the Arab League, to have put the development of Fasti Conservation into the objectives of the program agreed with ICCROM. We hope that other institutions will join these early supporters.

Ad maiora!