



Request for Proposal

THE MORA SAMPLE COLLECTION

From: ICCROM Archives and Laboratory

Date: 27/06/2017

Re: Re-organization and description of the Mora sample collection

ICCRUM wishes to rearrange, describe and properly rehouse the historical Mora sample collection. We ask scientists/conservators with experience in this type of work to prepare a proposal to accomplish the task.

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1. BACKGROUND

ICCRUM holds a valuable collection of material samples, which was donated by Paolo and Laura Mora, two internationally renowned conservators involved in the coordination of ICCROM's Mural Painting Conservation course and technical missions and campaigns for almost 20 years (1960s-1980s).

This collection, currently kept in an archival repository of ICCROM's Laboratory, is composed of around 1,400 material samples (fragments of mural paintings, plaster, stone, ceramics, etc, and cross/thin sections). Samples were taken during conservation missions on a variety of significant worldwide heritage sites. They come from monuments of thirty-two (32) different countries:

Afghanistan	India	Oman
Algeria	Iran	Peru
Australia	Ireland	Portugal
Belgium	Israel	Romania
Croatia	Italy	Spain
Colombia	Japan	Sri Lanka
Czech Republic	Lebanon	Switzerland
Egypt	Malta	Thailand
France	Mexico	Turkey
Germany	Morocco	United Kingdom
Greece	Nepal	

The best known sites are as follows:

- Egypt: Nefertari Tomb, Abu Simbel Temples, Karnak, Saqqara.
- Greece: Knossos (Creta).
- Iran: Isfahan, Persepolis.
- Italy: Agrigento, Assisi, Herculaneum, Padova, Rome (Catacombs, Domus Aurea, Pantheon, Palatino), Tarquinia Tombs.
- Turkey: Göreme churches.
- Israel: Masada.



These material samples are a unique resource for future conservation research. In many of the heritage sites documented in this collection, the taking of samples is nowadays prohibited. Potentially these samples could be reused applying non-destructive analysis techniques, which could allow further investigation and knowledge of these sites.

Nevertheless, this collection is at risk of loss and dissociation, as samples lack of proper description, labeling and storage measures. Similar challenges are faced by other institutions holding important historic sample collections. This limits the potential value these collections might hold for future research and conservation projects.

Conditions of the collection

Samples range from very small pieces to large fragments. They are housed in compartment plastic storage boxes with deteriorated foam on the case bottom. Smaller fragments are placed in plastic or glass small tubes with tops, while bigger fragments are kept loose within the boxes. Individual samples labels are also kept loose close to the samples. This lack of proper storage conditions carries the risk of dissociation, and issues associated to sample identification and retrieval.

Documentation on the samples is sparse. Loose small pieces of paper with hand-written notes indicating the place, monument or type of sample material are located within the box or compartment containing the samples. In addition, a descriptive list of the samples is available, containing the following information: Reference number, Old number, Place, Country and Notes. The list was produced in 2002 by ICCROM's Laboratory personnel.

This lack of proper documentation raises an important question for the reuse of the samples. In fact, a substantial effort is needed to cross-reference archival and bibliographic material (i.e., mission reports, correspondence) with the samples.

2. THE PROJECT

2.1 Project Aims

This project addresses the following specific goals:

- Provide archival processing (rearrangement, description/ cataloguing, including photo documentation of samples) for overall knowledge and control of the material samples.
- Apply preservation measures (preventive conservation and rehousing) to guarantee the safety and security of samples.
- Establish protocols for granting access to and use of the collection.
- Make samples accessible and useful to a wide community of researchers via a digital catalogue on ICCROM's website.

Once finalized this specific project, ICCROM would like to foresee follow-up activities that could consist of:

- Surveying the sector to know to what extent this is a challenge faced by many other conservation institutions.
- Raising awareness of this issue.
- Exploring other possible methodologies for reorganizing, describing, documenting, storing and sharing data of these collections.
- Enhancing access through open knowledge sharing.

A project-based partnership of interested institutions and a knowledge exchange plan should be implemented for the benefit of the conservation community (e.g., communication events with other laboratories or small workshops at ICCROM; publication of web articles; peer-reviewed papers to be presented in international symposiums, etc.).

2.2 Work plan

The project focuses on the specific short-term goals, as available resources are only sufficient for the collection processing. Different steps within this phase include:

1. Survey of the material (including photo documentation of each sample) and preliminary cataloguing (cataloguing form to be established). In parallel, mapping of the state of conservation of the fragments.
2. Rearrangement of samples (following pre-established criteria); provision of a stable labeling system and rehousing in appropriate containers.
3. Processing of the data collected: logical and functional data reorganization and cataloguing in archival software.

2.3 Expected qualifications of the consultant

The consultant should be a professional specialist (i.e., scientist, conservator, archivist) with the skills and experience 1) to identify different types of mural painting techniques and materials; 2) to arrange and describe samples collections, as well as to rehouse them; 3) to photo document the samples; and 4) to help create an online database.

3. PROPOSAL TO BE PROVIDED BY THE CONSULTANT

Deadline for receiving questions (by email to archive@iccrom.org) regarding the proposal is 20 July 2017. Answers will be sent to all candidates by 25 July.

Proposals should be submitted by e-mail to archive@iccrom.org and received by 23:59 Rome time on 31 July 2017. The selected consultant will be notified by mid September.

The proposal should include:

- Project aims
- Objectives
- Methodology
- Parties involved (individuals/organizations)
- Workplan
- Timetable
- Role/responsibilities of the consultant
- Expected outcomes
- Modalities for reporting
- Data and documents produced, including final report and cataloguing data

The proposal should be accompanied by:

- CV with statement of experience and credentials
- Two references