

## ICOM GLASS COMMITTEE

### ICOM Glass Committee Meeting in Israel, 14-18 September 1997: Report by the Chairman

The 1997 Annual Meeting was organized by Yael Israeli and Maud Spaer of the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, and Yael Gorin-Rosen from the Israel Antiquities Authority. 26 members and affiliates attended it. The Glass Committee was particularly happy to receive two members of the Working Group "Glass, Ceramics and Related Materials" of the Conservation Committee and some non-ICOM members, both from Israel and from other countries. Their specialized knowledge greatly contributed to the paper sessions and the following discussions.

#### SUNDAY

##### LECTURE SESSIONS: THE ISRAEL MUSEUM, JERUSALEM

*Ian Freestone* discussed the compositional relationships between Byzantine and Islamic glass from Northern Israel and the Beth She'arim Slab. He came to the conclusion that the slab dates from a transitional period in glassmaking in the 9th century AD.

*Elias Khamis* discussed two wall mosaics excavated at the entrance porch to the Umayyad Market at Beth Shean in 1995-96. The lecturer suggested a date of 738 CE for these mosaics, based on reconstructions of the fragmented date on the inscription and historic information available about the building's founder, the Governor Kabisa.

*Ayala Lester* grouped several dozens of Islamic cut glass fragments, selected from several thousands of shards found in ancient Tiberias, into distinct vessel types. Particularly remarkable was a group of deeply cut 'molar flasks.' She developed a chronology from the middle of the 8th century until the 1st quarter of the 11th century CE for this material.

*Rachel Polak* described a hoard of more than 200 glass vessel fragments found in a cavity on a temple platform at Caesarea. She separated the vessels into 30 distinct types. Based on related pottery and bronze vessel finds, the hoard could be closely dated to the late 10<sup>th</sup> to the early 11th century.

*Lisa Pilosi* discussed two ancient vessels in the Metropolitan Museum of Art: a colorless drinking bowl with gilt sprig decoration and a footed bowl with enamelled garlands. Both pieces proved to be genuine objects from antiquity but 'improved' in later times with decorations. The enamel contained chromium, an element that was not identified until the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.

A tour of the museum following the session included the Dobkin Glass Pavilion, Shrine of the

Book and a visit to the storerooms where glass from various excavations was laid out on tables. Some of the archaeologists who had worked on these sites were available for comments.

*Marie-Dominique Nenna* compared the glass found at sites from Mariout Lake near Alexandria with those near Wadi Natrun. Chemical analysis of the glass working waste revealed that the glass at Wadi Natrun contained much less lime, and that the sand used was very different from that near Alexandria.

*Jennifer Price* talked about a large deposit of glass fragments from the Sanctuary of Demeter at Mytilene. This sanctuary had been covered with a layer of waste containing some 3000 glass fragments from the 2nd quarter of the 1st century AD. The find provides closely datable groups of small blown bowls and cups from one of the most important trading centres in the Aegean.

*Veronica Tatton-Brown* discussed some recent acquisitions of the Greek and Roman Department at the British Museum: a mosaic glass slab in a bronze mount from the 1st century AD, a mystery vessel (possibly a urinal), and a pottery beaker copying a glass vessel in shape and decoration.

*Vesna Delic* presented great many pieces of documentary evidence about Venetian glassmakers working in Dubrovnik from the 14th century onwards. Fragments from excavations, kept in the Dubrovnik Museum, provided the base of discussion.

*Hannelore Marschner* discussed the glass finds from Phidias' workshop in Olympia, Greece, in the 5th century BC. Her chemical analysis of the colourless glass proved it to be of high quality, and that it was probably imported as ingots.

*Helmut Ricke* illustrated problems of authenticity in Murano art glass made from 1930 to 1970. The dating and attribution of these objects is complicated by numerous aspects, including the long production times of designs, reissues and interpretations of old designs (made either the original or by another Muranese factory), or straight-forward fakes.

*Daniel Verberne* talked about a new Glass Department which was opened at the Bezalel Art Academy in 1997. The facility includes modern sawing, grinding and drilling equipment and a furnace built by five students. The lecture was illustrated with examples of student work.



**Ennion Jug**, drawing by Florica Vainer, Israel Museum, Jerusalem.

## MONDAY

A visit to the recently redesigned Ha'aretz Glass Pavilion of the Eretz Israel Museum kicked off the second day. There were guided tours by Henrietta Brunner, Curator of the Pavilion, and by Gusti Lehrer-Jacobson, who was largely responsible for the new display. This very informative exhibition included an almost complete glass furnace from the 13th century. A few interesting 'puzzle' pieces were also brought up from the storeroom for discussion. All artefacts were beautifully displayed, and many participants took advantage of the opportunity to talk to the designer and the conservators.

The Ceramics Pavilion followed, with a special exhibition on Cypriot pottery and a glassblower from Hebron, who made traditional copies of ancient glass in traditional fashion.

### Afternoon Lecture Session:

*Dan Barag* introduced new evidence on Eastern Mediterranean core-formed vessels of the 7th century BC. This new group of such vessels is remarkable because of its method of manufacture.

*Batsheva Goldman-Ida* focused on glass vessels for Jewish ceremonial use. Her lecture addressed questions of origins for various vessel types and their respective decorative features.

*Torben Sode* discussed the manufacture of glass bracelets in modern India. He pointed out that the techniques and processes have not changed much since ancient times, despite production on an enormous scale. He also showed a short video documenting the processes.

An invitation to view a superb private collection of post-medieval glass concluded the afternoon. In the evening, the Director of the Jaffa Archaeological Museum gave a personal tour through his museum and through the streets of Old Jaffa.

## TUESDAY

A guided tour through the Old City of Jerusalem started the events of the day. The conference participants visited the excavated remains of the very richly appointed house where the famous Ennion ewer, now in the Israel Museum, was found. The object had been damaged by fire when the Romans conquered and burned this part of the old city. Other tour highlights were the Dome of the Rock on the Temple Mount, with 8th-century glass wall mosaics still *in situ*, and the coloured glass windows of the El Aqsa Mosque.

The lunch break took place at the Rockefeller Museum, with time to view the museum collections and/or to join a visit to the conservation department. The Ancient and Islamic glass collection, a strength of the museum, can be viewed in "historic" settings: the displays have not changed since the days of the British mandate. In the afternoon, the program continued with a visit to the synagogue in the Hadassa Ein Karem hospital to view the famous set of stained glass windows by Marc Chagall, and a visit to the L.A. Meyers Islamic Museum. Although the glass display of this museum is currently closed to the public, the curator Rachel Hasson kindly

showed the participants a selection of the finest and most interesting pieces.

The early evening provided the opportunity to visit one of the best private collections of ancient glass in Israel. Prof. Dan Barag was available to discuss the collection and to answer questions. The Israel Museum remained open to visit -for the die-hards- until 22.00.

### **WEDNESDAY**

An excursion to the excavations at Caesarea allowed participants to get familiarised with the glass finds from this rich site. Sherry Pinqas made all the excavated glass available to us. Rachel Pollak was also present to answer questions. The fragment of a cage glass was noticed by some conference participants, and a heated discussion ensued.

The tour continued with a visit to Beth She'arim. The famous glass slab is still in the cave where it was originally made more than a thousand years ago. A heated discussion developed as to how the slab was melted, why this was done in the cave and why the estimated 8 tons of glass were abandoned, which must have taken weeks to melt.

In the afternoon, we saw the excavated glass of the Roman city of Sepphoris and admired the ancient mosaics. On the return to Jerusalem we stopped at the mouth of the ancient Belus River, now called the Na'aman. According to Pliny the Elder, Phoenician traders camping at this beach discovered glassmaking there 'by accident.' Strabo (63/64 CE) mentioned the sand from this beach in connection with glassmaking. The area is now built up and a modern highway cuts across it.

### **THURSDAY**

A full program of excursions began with a guided tour through Crusader Akko, where remarkable building sites are uncovered every year. In Galilee, we were welcomed and guided through the Nahariya Glass factory. This small, family-run factory produces objects made of ordinary colourless sheet glass. Painted decorations on two or three layers of glass. The factory works with both in-house and external designers. A small exhibition of their work was specially mounted for us. After a spectacular lunch buffet we visited the new Open Museum and the automobile museum all at the Tefen Industrial Park.

The afternoon tour led us to Bet-She'an National Park. The city dates back to the 5th millennium BCE, but most of the remains are Roman or Byzantine. Excavation and conservation campaigns are still in progress. The visit provided grounds for discussion of the numerous problems relating to site conservation and restoration. An excavated glasshouse could only be viewed from a distance, since the site was covered up.

### **FRIDAY**

Post-conference excursion to Masada, tour of the sites; then a swim in the Dead Sea, and Qumran, site of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

## SATURDAY AND SUNDAY

### *Saturday Program:*

A lampworker at work in Jerash, making vessels for the tourist market in colourless glass or with iridescent decoration.

Visit to Jerash, one of the best preserved and grandest of the Roman towns.

Visit to the church on Mount Nemo, with splendid mosaics floors. Visit to a glassmaker trained in Syria, working similarly as the Hebron glassmaker in Tel Aviv.

Visit to the Church of St. George at Madaba. There are remains of a huge mosaic floor depicting the incredible map of the Holy Land (including Jerusalem) made around 560 CE.

### *Sunday Program:*

Tour of the ancient sites of Petra, including the small but excellent local museum.



Jordan Tour Participants.



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**BUSINESS MEETING**  
**WEDNESDAY 17TH SEPTEMBER**

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Apologies from members: Jutta-Annette Page (USA), Jan Kock (Denmark), Gunnel Holmér (Sweden) and James & Halina Graham (United Kingdom).

The Board of the Glass Committee remains unaltered:

Chairman: Reino Liefkes, United Kingdom

Secretary: Jutta-Annette Page, United States

Members: Catherine Vaudour, France  
Gunnel Holmér, Sweden  
Ingeborg Krueger, Germany  
Wendy Evans, United Kingdom  
Anne Vanlatum, France

The general election for the Executive Council was discussed and members were invited to propose candidates to the Chairman by October 15<sup>th</sup>, 1997. No proposals were received.

The 1998 Annual Glass Committee Meeting will coincide with The General Triennial ICOM Meeting in Melbourne from 10-18th October, 1998. Attendance for our meeting will be hard to predict, since only 15 voting members were present and only a few voiced interest in attending the '98 meeting. Also, the AIHV Triennial Meeting will be held during the same month in Venice and Milano (28th October-1st November, 1998). This competition for members' attendance will be a recurring problem, as the AIHV Triennial Meeting has slipped one year, and will continue to be held in the same year of the General ICOM Meeting. The Chairman will try to resolve this problem with the AIHV President.

Wendy Evens reported on the various glass collections that Melbourne has to offer. It was suggested to combine our program with that of the Decorative Arts Committee. The Working Group "Glass, Ceramics and Related Materials" of the Conservation Committee will not join our meeting in Melbourne, as they plan to meet in Helsinki in September.

**The Melbourne Conference program will be mailed separately by the Australian organisers (see the attached form)!**

Future meetings: Gunnel Holmér has stressed that we are still very welcome to meet in Sweden in 1999. No official invitation for the year 2000 has been received yet, but in 2001 we plan to meet in Corning, NY, United States.

**BUDGET FOR 1997**

Grant from ICOM Paris	£ 213.80
Grant from ICOM Israel	£ 1,489.00
Participants' Fees	£ 2,536.00
<b>Total income 1997</b>	<b>£ 4,236.00</b>
Funds in Bursar	£ 1,246.44
<b>Total funds 1997</b>	<b>£ 5,484.24</b>
Total expenditure 1997	£ 4,332.80
<b>TOTAL REMAINING</b>	<b>£1,151.44</b>



## **18TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE & 19TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF MUSEUMS**

**Saturday 10- Friday 16 October, 1998, Melbourne, Australia**

The official registration forms for the General Meeting should now have reached each ICOM Member and we hope that many of our members will attend!

In addition to the general program as outlined in the official brochure, the Glass Committee will be arranging several activities; these will be held jointly with the Applied Arts Committee for Monday to Wednesday.

### **Preliminary Program**

Monday, October 12: Two or three commercial galleries will show contemporary glass exhibitions. One will focus on the work of Klaus Moje.

Tuesday, 13 October, Morning session: Business meeting, and perhaps short paper program, featuring an introduction on the Special Exhibition ART OF GLASS by Geoffrey Edwards, Curator of Sculpture and Glass at the National Gallery of Victoria. The exhibition showcases the extensive collection of ancient, antique, and modern glass of this museum.

Afternoon: Selected heritage sites including one of the best 1870s fully furnished mansions at Werribee Park, not far from Melbourne; University of Melbourne to see Walter Burley Griffin's celebrated Newman College and the Mattei Collection of Antique glass (mostly British) and also perhaps the University Gallery. Visit to the splendid neo-Gothic St. Patrick's Cathedral.

Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup>, Afternoon session: Tour of stained glass windows (19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century) in Melbourne. Last but not least there will be the special exhibition ART OF GLASS, staged by Geoffrey Edwards, who will be available to give participants a guided tour at the National Gallery of Victoria.

The cost for these additional activities will have to be kept to a minimum as it is not desirable to charge a substantial additional fee. There will not be a separate admissions fee for the glass program. However, it is still essential for us to know how many members of the Glass Committee intend to join this program. Please fill in the attached form and return it to the enclosed address no later than July 30, 1998.

### **Please note:**

**A second mailing with the final program of the joint Glass and Applied Arts Committee Meeting will be sent to those only who submit the attached form!**



**ICOM GLASS COMMITTEE MEETING IN AUSTRALIA**  
**MELBOURNE, October 10 – 16, 1998**

Yes, I am planning to attend the ICOM Glass Committee Meeting during the General Conference and I would like to receive the final program.

Last Name	First Name	Position/Title
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Institution/Address
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State	Country	Zip Code
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Telephone	Fax	e-mail
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I would like to give a paper:

yes ☐ no ☐

10 minutes ☐

20 minutes ☐

Signature	Date
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(Please return by July 30 to Geoffrey Edwards, National Gallery of Victoria, 180 St. Kilda Road, Melbourne, Victoria 3004, Australia, Fax +61 3 9 208 0245)