

Ephorate of Antiquities of the City of Athens

Department of Conservation of Antiquities and Works of Art



Storage Stories

European Days of Conservation - Restoration 2021

Wednesday, October 6th

Presentation of good practices in mobile monuments and
cultural heritage objects

Storage Stories...

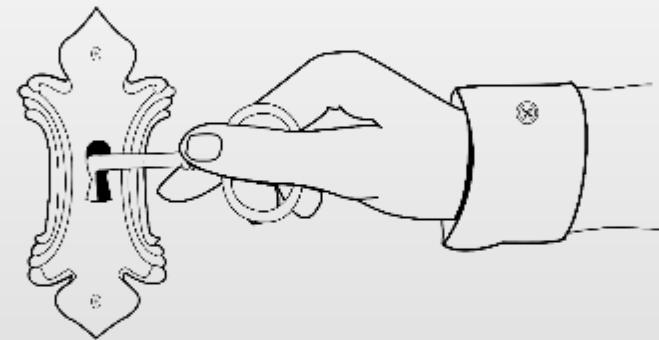
Usually archaeological storerooms are impassable.

Only a few people have access.

These are mainly specialized staff and scholars
that were granted a specific permission.

The storerooms of The Old Museum of Acropolis
enshrine finds excavated from Acropolis Hill
and the areas surrounding it (Slopes).

One of the objectives of the project* “Reopening the Old Museum of Acropolis with new uses.” is to create **a storage accessible to the public, the educational and the scientific community** revealing the invisible aspects of the Hill’s story. A story that begins from the prehistoric times until the recent Restoration of its monuments.



* As a part of the Operational Program “Attica 2014-2020”.co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund.



Old Acropolis Museum

Ephorate of Antiquities of the City of Athens (EACA), in order to meet the needs of the protection and valorisation of the movable and immovable monuments under its responsibility, plans the refurbishment of the Old Acropolis Museum, its West Storerooms and the Acropolis Conservation Laboratory.

The esthetic and functional upgrade of the Old Acropolis Museum and its facilities will offer visitor a versatile space of multiple uses, the scholar a functional study area and the staff a pleasant and upgraded workplace.

Up-to-date conservation laboratory & storerooms

Accessibility

Educational programmes

Interdisciplinary collaborations



Until recently in the facilities of the Old Acropolis Museum, archaeological objects made of different materials with **different preservation needs** were stored.

- Metal
- Ceramic
- Stone
- Glass
- Wood
- Textile
- Human and Animal remains

Storerooms

- ! **Unsuitable, non controlled environmental conditions** (temperature, relative humidity, air pollutants, illumination).
- ! **Use of outdated storage media made out of improper materials** (paper, styrofoam, wood etc.). Corrupted packaging that no longer serve their purpose.
- ! **Lack of space - inappropriate layout.**
Not allowing the use of wheeled vehicles, pallet trucks or other type of equipment, in order to safely transport the antiquities.
- ! **Inability to immediately locate** the archaeological objects.
- ! **Need of Safety and Emergency plan** (flood, fire, earthquake and theft)



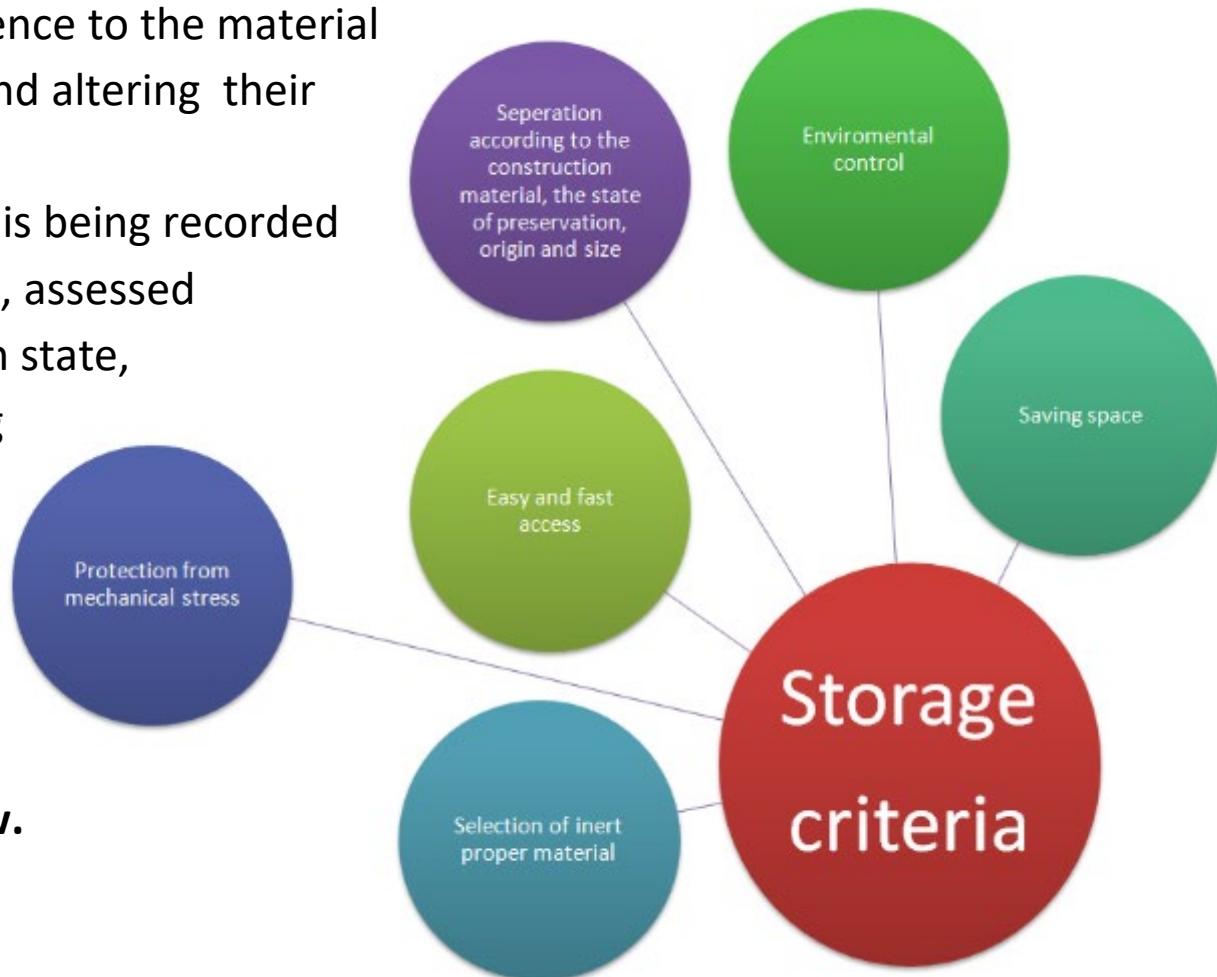
Preventive conservation

The conservators working on the project apply the principles of preventive conservation, by taking into consideration all measures that aim to avoid and minimize any future decay or loss without any interference to the material and the objects' structure and altering their appearance.

The archaeological material is being recorded from scratch, photographed, assessed according to its preservation state, packed and stored following the contemporary practises

applied in Conservation.

Over 14,574 objects and sets of fragments have been stored up to now.



Storage of Bones...

BEFORE



Bones were either stored in commercial polypropylene (PP) boxes or in custom-made packages.

Each human or animal remain has a specially designed case to avoid mechanical stress utilising polyethylene (PE) foam sheets, PE-PP co-polymer sheets, PE non woven textile, acid free tapes and papers.

AFTER

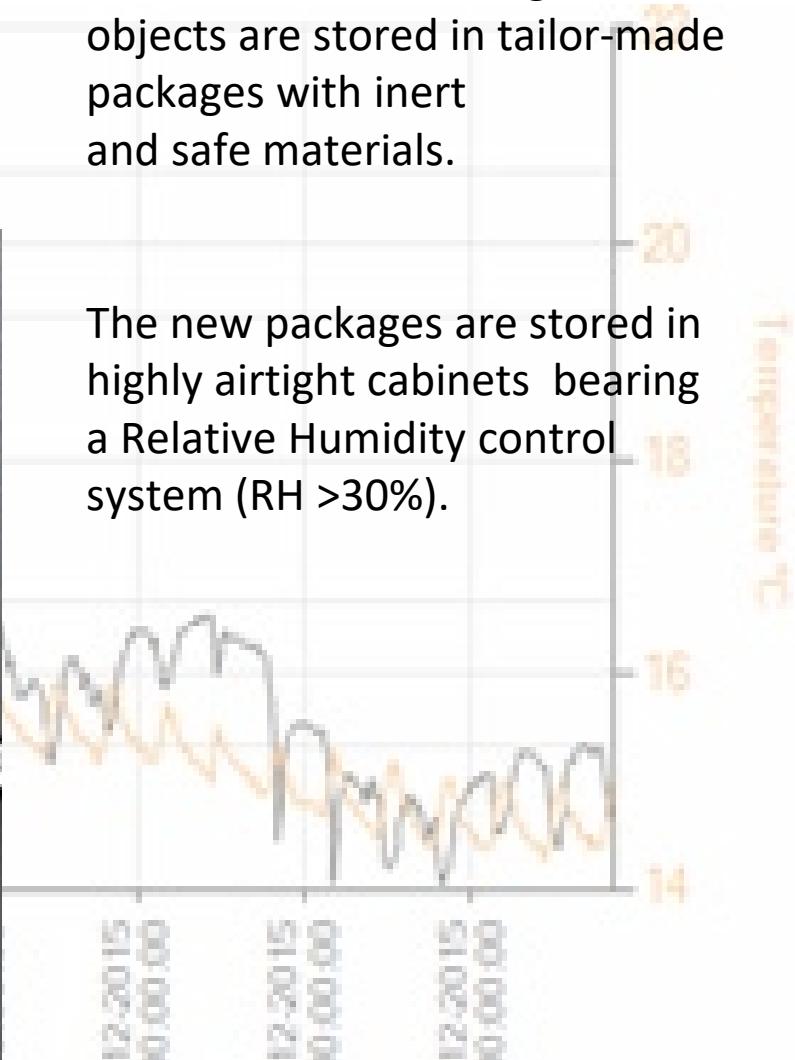


Storage of metallic artefacts...



Bronze, iron, lead and gold objects are stored in tailor-made packages with inert and safe materials.

The new packages are stored in highly airtight cabinets bearing a Relative Humidity control system (RH >30%).



Documentation

All information regarding the archaeological materials are registered in a **digital database**.

- Archaeological information
- Dimensions
- Construction material
- State of preservation
- Conservation priorities
- Previous interventions
- Location of storage
- Storage medium etc

Also, objects labels and packaging are **photographed**.



Documentation Stories

Old, obscure, worn, written in different languages, labels are kept as a part of the storage history of the object.

Labels' indications are recorded and information are handwritten in PE labels.

Likewise, old packages from products such as cigarette boxes or commercial bags from stores that no longer exist, are kept as information for future scholars.

A cigarette case named “Niki”, contained ceramic and stone finds from a 1928 excavation.

The tobacco factory of L. Maroulis in Kavala was very famous in the markets of Greece and abroad.



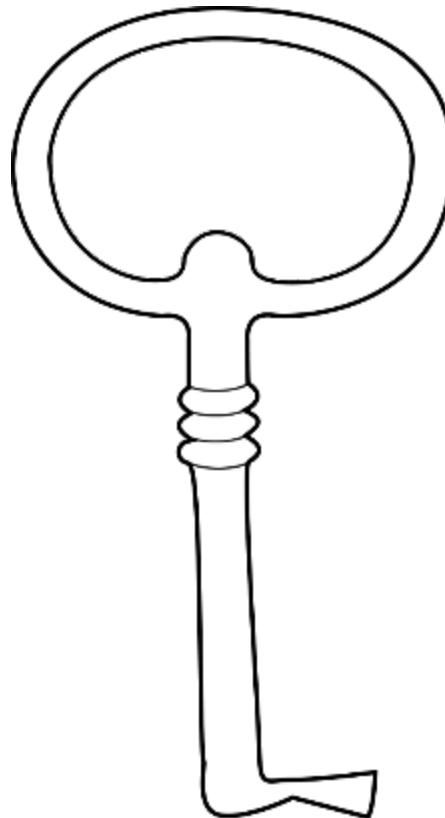
Preventive Conservation

Storage Documentation

Upgrading the storage of the archaeological material we will succeed in the:

- Preservation and protection of the archaeological material
- Use of up to date systems and storage materials
- Preservation and increasing accessibility in information
- Immediate tracking of antiquities.
- Stabilisation and control of environmental conditions
- Safety of archaeological material from theft and physical disasters.
- Improvement and increase of storage space for future use.
- Facilitation of handling of archaeological material.

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