

ECPN Specialty Group Feature



Each month, ECPN is proud to introduce one of our amazing Specialty Group Liaisons. Specialty Group Liaisons are volunteers who serve as an intermediary between emerging conservation professionals who are interested in or part of the specialty group they represent. To learn more about ECPN liaisons contact the ECPN Outreach Officers at ecpn.aic.outreach@gmail.com or visit [ECPN's website](#).

In our first feature, we would like to introduce our Archaeological Discussion Group liaison, Skyler Jenkins. Skyler is a second year MA student at the UCLA/Getty Conservation Program, studying the conservation of archaeological and ethnographic materials.

Photo (right): Skyler Jenkins cleans a fragment of painted plaster during her work as the conservator for the site of Villa Romana di Poggio Gramignano in Umbria, Italy during the 2018 season.



1. Of all the specializations, why did you decide to pursue archaeological conservation?

I chose archaeological conservation, not only because I've been interested in archaeology since childhood, but also the interdisciplinary nature of it. I love working directly with history that can influence who we are today. Our work as archaeological conservators expands the understanding about the past of such objects and sites and enriches the archaeological record.

2. Are there any particular skills that you feel are important or unique to your discipline?

Adaptability is important throughout our field but is essential in archaeological conservation. Another key skill is the openness and drive to collaborate with related disciplines. Effective communication is vital. Working with allied professionals, it is imperative to educate them on the breadth and extent of our knowledge, what we do, and why we are needed on-site.

3. What has been your favorite treatment within your specialty?

Out of everything I've treated both in-situ (on-site) and ex-situ (off-site), I couldn't pick a favorite, but rather, I more enjoy the constant challenge that arises with archaeological objects. By that I mean not only the challenges of freshly excavated material with varying burial environments, but objects that have been excavated and lived a 'full life', so to say. An object would have a 'full life' by having been excavated from a known context scientifically and has been studied for many years, and most likely has been restored several times to most conservators' dismay. This gives a new conservator the opportunity to not only learn about previous conservation materials but also experience a more intimate relationship with an object while stabilizing it for the future with tested materials. I do highly enjoy when organic and inorganic coexist on one object.

4. Do you have any advice for someone interested in specializing in your discipline?

I was given this advice as a pre-programmer by one of my mentors and it helped immensely: If you are pursuing archaeological conservation, attend a dig (or two or three!) as an excavator. Talk to archaeologists, registrars, and other specialists that work on site. It is vital to have that experience to understand how objects move throughout an excavation.