



# Ontario Archaeological Society Arch Notes

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**Laurentian students investigate the Dunlap site**

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# Ontario Archaeological Society

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519-473-1360  
nferris@uwo.ca

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519-285-2379  
jrkeron@yahoo.com

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519-875-1072  
marsh\_birds@yahoo.ca

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mtamplin@trentu.ca

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PO Box 62066  
Victoria Terrace Post Office  
Toronto, Ontario M4A 2W1  
Phone/fax: 416-406-5959  
executive-director@ontarioarchaeology.on.ca

## APPOINTMENTS

### Editor, Ontario Archaeology

Chris Ellis  
cjellis@uwo.ca

### Editors, Arch Notes

Sheryl Smith (sherylsmith222@gmail.com)  
Carole Stimmell (castimmell@gmail.com)

### Editor, Website

Jean-Luc Pilon  
jlucpilon@hotmail.com

### First Nations Liaison

Jean-Luc Pilon (Chair)  
jlucpilon@hotmail.com

### Symposium 2010/Ottawa:

Liaison – Jim Keron

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## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

I write this report as I ride the rails back to London, having enjoyed an excellent annual symposium hosted by the Ottawa Chapter. For those who were not able to attend, it was a very entertaining and informative conference, made all the more so by the fact the Ottawa Chapter was also celebrating their 40th anniversary. That is quite an achievement, given that the OAS has only been holding conferences for 38 years! So here's to the Ottawa Chapter, for being able to be such an active and vibrant part of the OAS community and contributing so much for the past 40 years. Your efforts and leadership are well appreciated. And I look forward to celebrating their 50th anniversary, too... hopefully as a 'former' president of the OAS by then!

Elsewhere in this issue of *Arch Notes* you will come across an announcement about a new fund initiative of the OAS. Sparked by a very generous bequest by long time member Valerie Sonstenes, the aim of this fund will be to provide a means of funding student-based research focussed on any relevant aspect of Ontario archaeology and practice.

As the hope is that this will be a self-sustaining fund, awards will be relatively modest, and come from interest earned on the fund. However, research increasingly requires specialist fees, radiocarbon or materials

analyses, travel costs or community consultation, and a few hundred or thousand dollars can make all the difference for a student. As well, we certainly hope this fund will help encourage students to consider the archaeology of this region when they are deciding where to focus their study upon.

The board is very excited about this initiative, since it represents a direct effort on the part of the OAS in encouraging the next generation of cutting edge research done by those scholars, consultants, Indigenous archaeologists and government policy makers who will ensure our community continues to be vibrant and making a contribution to the archaeology of North America and globally, in the years and decades to come! Please review the announcement and consider adding your own donation to the fund.

On other fronts, a very pleasant surprise at the ABM was the announcement that our nominating committee (Jean-Luc Pilon, Alicia Hawkins and Ron Williamson) were able to encourage five members to step forward and stand for the executive. We will be able to announce our Executive slate for 2012 in the next few weeks, but in the interim, we are very pleased and thankful for the willingness of members to step forward... We WILL certainly be able to put you to work!

The Ministry of Tourism and Culture held an information session in tandem with the OAS symposium in Ottawa (and will be hosting a similar event in tandem with the APA annual general meeting, at the Provincial Archives at York University on Friday, Nov. 25th at 2 p.m., if you missed the Ottawa version).

They offered important updates on various initiatives of the Ministry, particularly on working through the implementation of the Consultant S&G. They also announced changes to the Project Information Form process (something all land based licensees have to submit before fieldwork starts), the development of model reporting (for S&G categories of report), and gave a glimpse into the incredible day to day they work through (over 2,000 reports being submitted a year – wow!). No wonder these guys always sound so pressed for time – it is staggering to think how much work is on their plate – most of which people ideally would like to see completed yesterday!

One question that arose during the discussions was the potential for updated field and reporting guides for avocational and researchers, since everything is so focussed (and given the scale, no surprise either) on consultant practices at present. Perhaps this is something the OAS membership could help develop? Something to mull over, anyways!

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## **NEW, YET TO BE NAMED, OAS STUDENT RESEARCH ENDOWMENT FUND**

Recently, the Society received a \$10,000 endowment from the estate of long time member Valerie Sonstenes. That kind gesture arising out of the sad occasion of

Valerie's passing away led the OAS Executive Board to wonder how best to use these funds to commemorate Valerie's kind gift. After some deliberation it was decided to establish

a new endowment fund specifically designed to support student research in Ontario archaeology.

The outline of the planned fund is detailed below. We do not envision this

fund as ever being able to replace the long ago cancelled student support fund for archaeology that the province supported through the then Ontario Heritage Foundation. Nor do we envision this fund ever being able to fund large scale projects or fieldwork.

However, an increasingly essential dimension of research is the need to incorporate findings from specialised analyses, for example radiocarbon dating; geophysical or 3D modelling and mapping; or soils, remains, and materials-based science analyses. Other research costs can include conducting interviews, testing innovative methodologies, going to archives or collections holdings, or engaging and collaborating with communities.

Being able to defray even a few thousand dollars of these costs can mean allowing a student to significantly enhance the contribution of their work to advancing our understanding of Ontario archaeology.

Moreover, as this fund will not be for large scale fieldwork projects, it thus encourages students to focus on and consider research questions arising from the existing archaeological record. This, we feel, is sorely needed in a province where hundreds of sites are excavated each year through CRM. Supporting value-added research on this already-recovered record helps validate the importance and costs invested in recovering the record in advance of land use impacts.

Obviously, the success of this OAS initiative must come from building the fund significantly. However, the Board feels the aim of this initiative is worthy enough to undertake the task of seeking to raise the principal to the point where interest earned can start funding student research on Ontario archaeology. We are extremely excited to be undertaking this initiative, as we feel it is an important step to take in securing the long term viability of our practice, and is an effort that will benefit



**Valerie Sonstenes**

the entire archaeological community as new research is directed at the Ontario archaeological record.

So I would ask you to join us in supporting this initiative by considering contributing a one time or recurring donation to this new and exciting endowment fund. All contributions identified for this initiative will go directly into this restricted fund, and, of course, will be a tax deductible donation to the OAS. Also, your thoughts on how to name this fund would be appreciated.

**Proposed Structure of the Fund:**

This endowment is created in order to support a student research fund. This is a restricted fund intended to support student research that relates to and advances knowledge of Ontario's archaeological record. The interest earned from this fund will provide students with small grants to assist them in undertaking new research for Honour's, Masters, PhD or postdoctoral level projects.

Funding will support costs directly related to obtaining critical results of studies needed to facilitate research – results that otherwise could not be paid for. This can include specialist studies, travel and accommodation costs needed to visit archives, collections holdings,

communities or to interview participants, as well as other direct and justified research costs other than those related to large scale fieldwork.

Amount of any award will be determined by the size of the interest available in the endowment for a given year. Assuming the financial capacity to do so, maximum funding for any project will be relatively modest: no more than the few thousand dollars for those specific, essential costs needed to obtain critical data.

The number of grants awarded each year will be determined by available funds considered against

total applications, and the quality of the proposals submitted. The OAS reserves the right to award no funds in any given year to help raise the endowment principal. The Executive Board will set, on an annual basis, the percent of interest in the fund that will be made available for awards, and the percent of interest to be fed back into the fund principal. At no time will the principal be used to fund research.

Applications to the fund will be vetted by a committee of four archaeologists, and chaired by a member of the OAS Executive Board. This committee will be responsible for ranking all applications and presenting their rankings to the OAS Executive Board. The OAS Board will approve the top ranked applications up to but not exceeding the available interest fund available for that year.

Successful award recipients are responsible for accounting for expenditures made. They will also be required to provide the OAS with a copy of the results of their research, including either a project summary to be published in *Arch Notes*, or a scholarly article published in *Ontario Archaeology*.



# REVISITING DUNLOP: AN INVESTIGATION BY LAURENTIAN FIELDSCHOOL STUDENTS

By Robert Browne, Amanda Colles, Nicole Gagnon, Kaitlyn Malleau, Leslie Thoms, and Nelly Zakhari

This past summer, 12 students participated in an Archaeological Field Procedures course through Laurentian University, taught by Alicia Hawkins (Figure 1). In the first four weeks of the course, we learned excavation methods, recording procedures, culture history, and mapping. However, as was tradition, the fifth week of field school was set aside for a final project whereby the students would apply what they had learned that summer to survey an archaeological site with a specific research question in mind.

This year, the students were assigned to survey the property in Simcoe County on which the Dunlop site (BeGw-9) lies. The archaeological site had been officially investigated three times before — first by Andrew Hunter in 1902. Hunter is well-known for having interviewed many land-owners in the Huronia region who reported finding

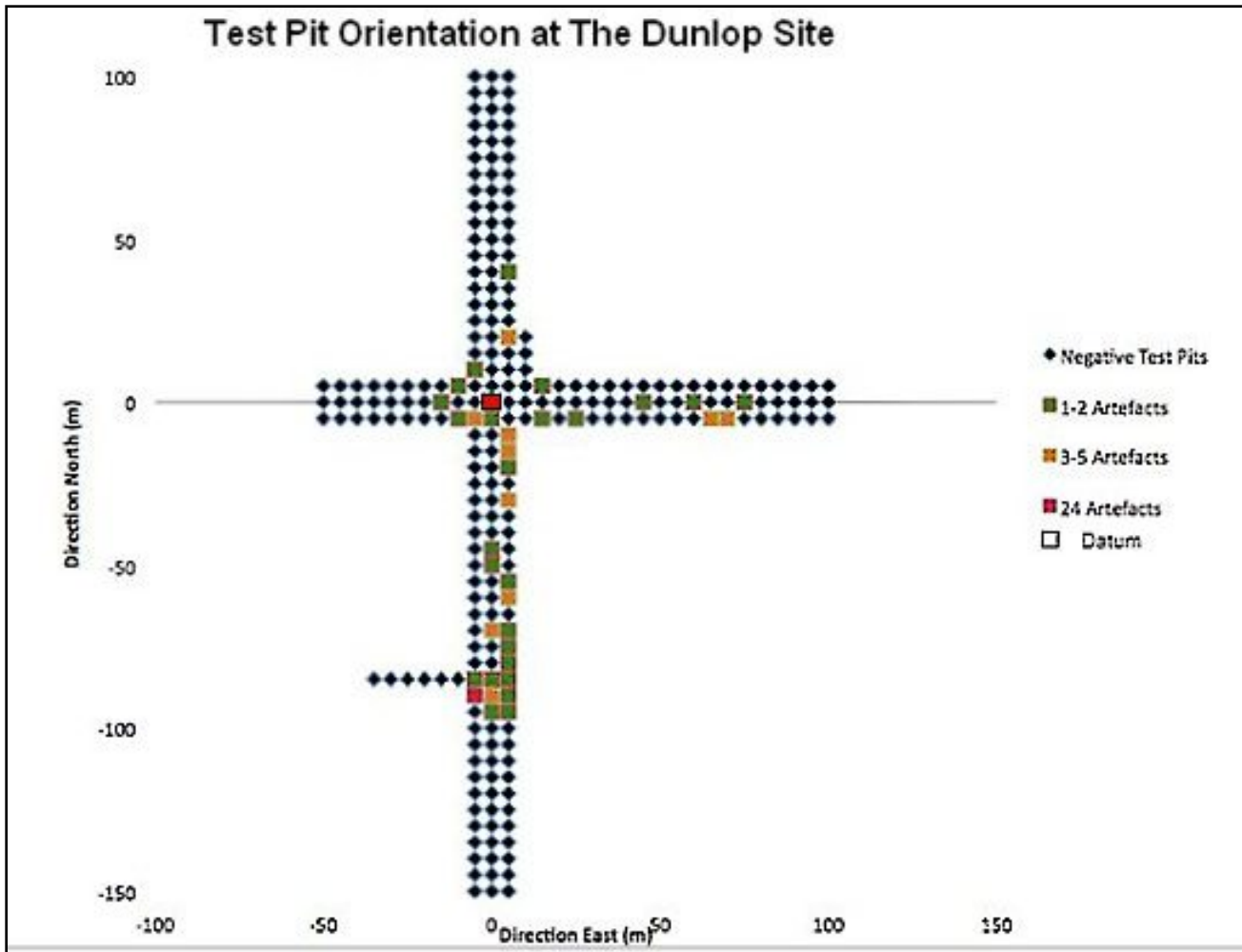
‘relics’ on their land through farming activities, and when the then-owner of the Dunlop property, John Hopkins, showed Hunter what he had found, Hunter (1902) simply noted that they were First Nations’ artifacts “of the usual kind.”

In 1968, Frank Ridley followed-up on Hunter’s investigation, and was able to locate, what he called “refuse heaps,” which bordered a five-acre site on the property. He gained permission from the new landowner, Arthur Dunlop, to sample artifacts from two of these middens. His findings included ceramic pots (decorated) and pipes, brass and iron artifacts, stone artifacts, a glass bead and a bone bodkin — artifacts belonging to what he called “historic Huron” (Ridley, 1968).

Finally, in 2008, the most recent survey of the site was completed by Anne Dorion. For her undergraduate thesis, she investigated the possibility of the Dunlop site being the St-Ignace I mission site (Dorion, 2008). Through her observations she concluded that the site was as small as



Figure 1. The team who participated in the 2011 survey of the Dunlop site, including the students and staff of the Laurentian field school (Photo by M. Raynor).



**Figure 2. A diagram depicting the location of the test pit transects relative to the zero point midden (the Datum). (Plotted by Caitlin Gibert.)**

Ridley had reported (about five acres), and that it was a candidate for being the village of Arethsi (Dorion 2008). She was also able to record the location of a midden on the site — possibly one of the same ones that Ridley had observed in 1968 (Dorion, 2008).

In June 2011, we surveyed the Dunlop site once more. Our assigned objectives were to estimate the boundaries of the archaeological site, and to determine if the Dunlop site was suitable location for a future field school.

In order to answer both questions, the Dunlop site was surveyed using a combination of Stage 2 and Stage 3 methods outlined in the Standards and Guidelines for Consultant Archaeologists (2011).

The first task upon arriving on the Dunlop site was to locate the UTM coordinates of the positive test pit intersection reported by Dorion in 2008. A handheld GPS device and the map illustrating the 2008 survey were used for this purpose. The datum location, referred to as the zero point, was chosen to be the midden first observed by

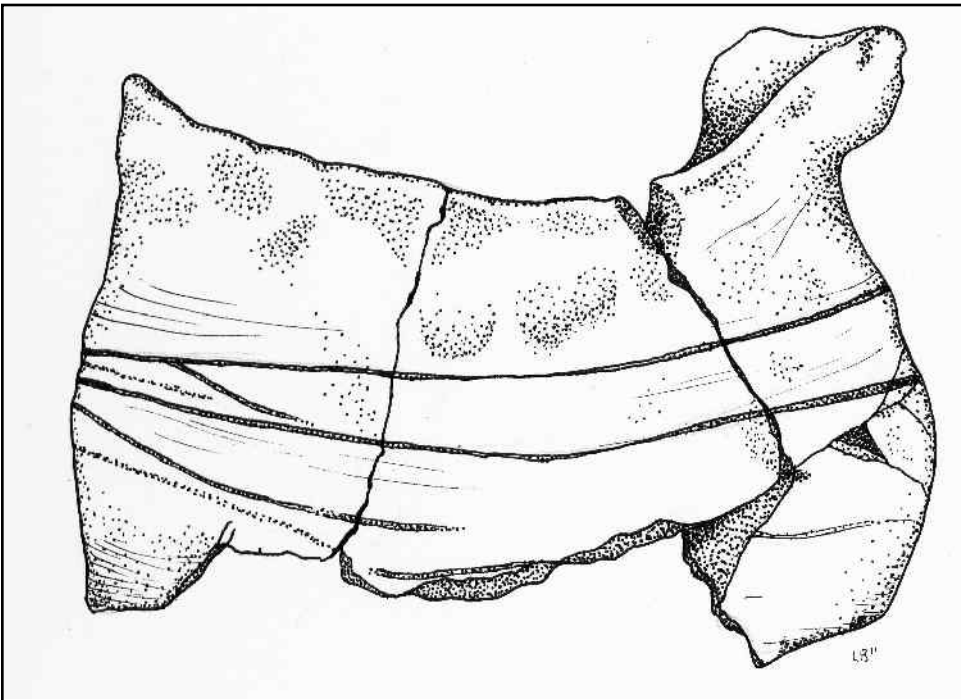
Dorion. From this zero point, test pitting was done in three lines at 5 m intervals, in the north, east, south and west directions respectively (Figure 2). The transects continued in each direction until several test pits were consecutively found to be negative (at least seven) in all of the three lines. The test pits were dug to an approximate diameter of 30 cm, and an average depth of  $25.9 \text{ cm} \pm 5.9 \text{ cm}$ .

All the soil from each test pit was shovelled into hand screens with 1/8" mesh. The screen leavings were examined on-site, and then the decision on whether the test pit was positive or negative was made. Test pits considered 'positive' were those containing any artifactual material, carbonized floral remains (other than charcoal), or faunal remains. Every test pit was labelled with a coordinate indicating its location along the north-south axis and the east-west axis. The test pit was then marked with a coloured flag indicating whether it was found to be positive or negative. The GPS locations of all test pits were then recorded using UTM coordinates. In total, we dug 248 test





**Figure 3. The joining rim sherds of a pot displaying frilled decoration, recovered from the midden at 85m south, 5 m west (Photo by A. Hawkins)**



**Figure 4. The joining rimsherds of a juvenile pot. (Scale 1:1, illustrated by Liisa Blomme.)**

pits.

Finally, we excavated four test units in three locations where the test pits yielded large amounts of archaeological material. These excavations were done to gather a representative sample of the artifacts in each location, so as to estimate the time of occupation and the cultural affiliation of the site. Each unit was excavated with shovels, and the soil was again screened using 1/8" mesh. The first test unit was a 1 m x 1 m square situated on the midden found at the zero point, where we discovered a pipe bowl fragment on the surface. Next, we dug two smaller 50 cm x 50 cm test units east of the datum—

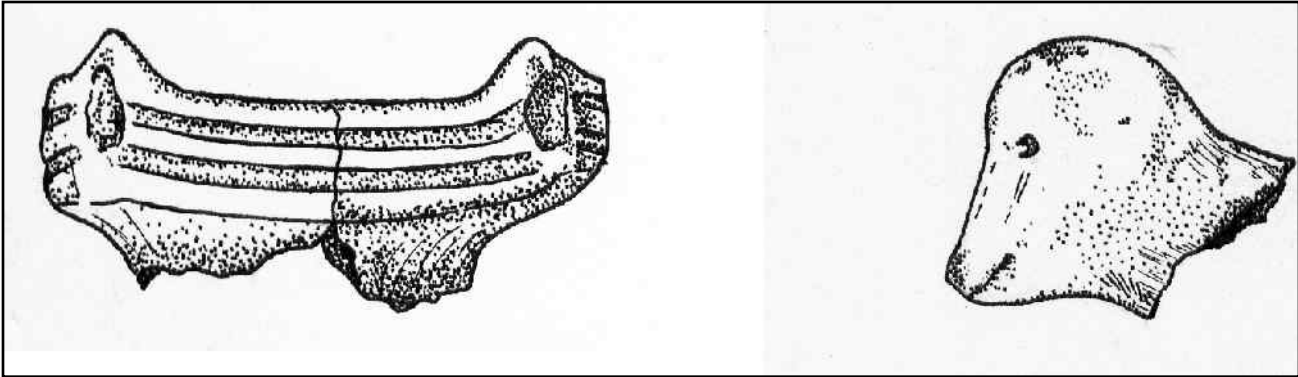


Figure 5. Examples of coronet pipes (left) and an example of an effigy pipe (right) were found. (Scale 1:1, illustrated by Liisa Blomme.)

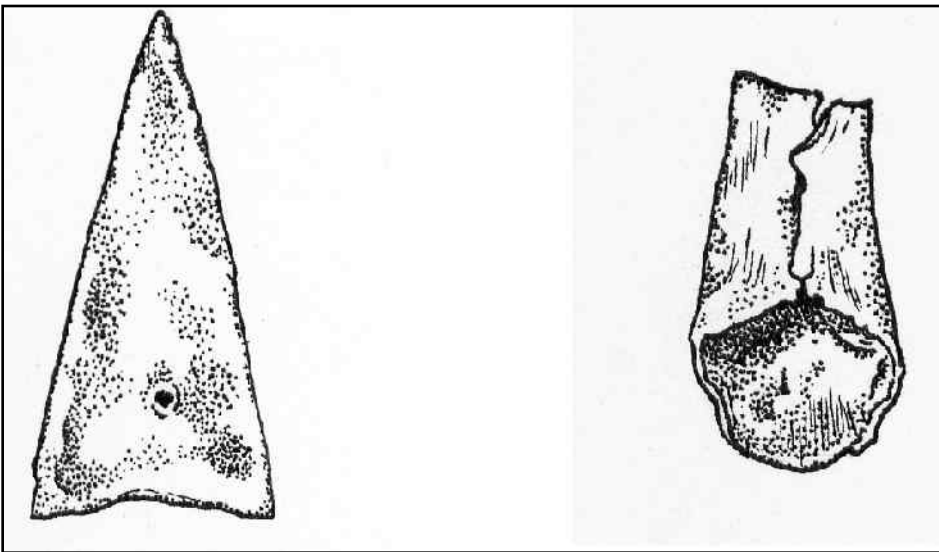


Figure 6. Projectile point and copper-based metal cone recovered from the zero point midden. (Scale 1:1, illustrated by Liisa Blomme.)



Figure 7. A possible rosary bead found in the midden at 85m south, 5 m west (Photo by A.Hawkins).

one at a distance of approximately 62 m, and the other at a distance of about 68 m. Neither of these test units contained many artifacts, a finding that was unanticipated because test pits in this area had yielded reasonable numbers of items. The last test unit, which was 1 m x 1 m, was laid-in over test pit 85 m south, 5 m west, because of the high artifact density of that particular test pit.

We found what we believe to be an astonishing amount and variety of artifacts, particularly in the excavated test units. The units which were the most abundant in archaeological material were the datum unit

and the unit located in the southern transect. The diversity of artifacts, as well as the very dark-coloured soil observed in these units (indicating a high organic component), led the team to believe that these two units were positioned on middens.

In total, 3,826 g of pottery was collected—including plain, incised, frilled (Figure 3), and juvenile pieces (Figure 4)—making it the most abundant type of artifact found. Other recovered material included 236 g of clay pipe fragments (Figure 5); 234 g of chipped lithics; 51 g of iron artefacts; 25 g of artefacts made of copper-based metals (Figure 6); 4 g of glass beads (both turquoise and red, round and tubular); a clay bead; as well as a



wooden bead, which may be from a rosary (Figure 7).

The materials used to craft several of these artifacts (iron, copper, and glass), as well as the styles of the ceramic pots and pipes found on the site suggest that Dunlop was occupied in a post European-contact period by the Wendat people. The glass bead collection, although small, suggests a Glass Bead Period III occupation (A.D. 1625-1650) (Fitzgerald et al., 1995).

We also recovered 321 g of faunal remains, including those identified as belonging to fish, bird, small and large mammals; and 255 g of floral remains including charcoal, carbonized corn, and squash seeds. These plant and animal remnants suggest that the group who settled at Dunlop had a subsistence strategy typical of the Wendat of that time, which included keeping corn, squash, and bean crops (Ramsden, 1990). Typically, their subsistence also included hunting and fishing, which fits with not only what was found on the site in terms of faunal remains, but also with the tools that were found (projectile points, and a netting needle) (Ramsden, 1990).

Though the artifacts collected divulged much information about the Dunlop occupation, the main objective of the team, as mentioned, was to investigate the dispersion of the artifacts over the site, and determine the boundaries of the occupation. Though time constraints prevented test pitting to each border of the Dunlop property, it appears that the midden at the zero point would represent the northwest boundary, considering that very few artifacts were found to the north and the west of it. The midden at 85 m south, 5 m west may represent an additional western boundary, considering that no artifacts were found to the west of it. Dorion's observations seem to agree with the ones of this study, as most of her positive test pits were also found to the southeast of the zero-point midden (2008). Taking into account the work done by Dorion as well as the positive test pits observed in this study, it would seem that the site extends southeast from the zero point and 85 m south, 5 m west test units in an ellipsoid approximately 75 m east, 95 m south, and 166 m southeast. These results are in keeping with what is known of settlement patterns in this area, as well as what was observed by Ridley in 1968, in that generally middens are found at the peripheries of the settlement itself (Ramsden, 1990). It is interesting to note, however, that although the village would have overlooked the Sturgeon River, the margin of the site does not appear to be delineated by a steep drop-off.

The investigation of the property was also meant to determine if the Dunlop site would be appropriate location for a future field school. It is this group's recommendation that Dunlop would be a good choice for a later field school for three reasons. Firstly, there is a great variety and quantity of post-contact artifacts present at this site that will give students experience with artifacts of many materials. Also, the site's proximity to other Wendat

archaeological sites and educational centres in the community would help bring students in contact with a bigger picture of archaeology in Southern Ontario. Finally, little is known of the Dunlop site, and conducting another field school at this site would help to better understand the function of settlement once found there.

The work done at Dunlop by this field school was a very rewarding and educational experience for all the students involved this summer, and it is the team's hope that the work done will shed a little more light on the ambiguous occupation of the Dunlop site. The team would like to thank the property owners, the Guthrie family, for allowing this archaeological investigation to take place, and Anne Dorion for the use of her previous research on the site. The team would also like to thank the Huron-Wendat Nation for their continued support of our work.

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# SUMMARY OF A WORKSHOP ON SUSTAINABLE ARCHAEOLOGY: COLLECTIONS AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT IN ONTARIO

Kira Westby, MA  
Sustainable Archaeology at the University of Western Ontario  
kwestby@uwo.ca

## INTRODUCTION

On Saturday July 9, 2011, Sustainable Archaeology (SA) hosted a workshop at the Museum of Ontario Archaeology. Facilitated by Drs. Neal Ferris and Rhonda Bathurst, with Dr. Aubrey Cannon of the McMaster portion of the SA also present, the workshop was attended by 50 representatives from the municipal, archaeological, and cultural heritage professions in Ontario.

This workshop was held as part of the initial planning for the SA project. Funded by the Canadian Foundation for Innovation, the Ontario Research Fund, and the University of Western Ontario and McMaster University, the Sustainable Archaeology facility will hold thousands of Ontario archaeological collections, all of which will be converted from objects to digital information that can be accessed by researchers and communities through an informational platform.

Value added capacities will include 3D and x-ray/CT scalable scans of diagnostic artifacts, floral and faunal remains, thin section profiles of lithic sources, ceramics and other artifact categories, and geophysical mapping and immersive technologies to conduct 3D spatial analyses of in-site context – ultimately providing an innovative, paradigm changing research accessibility to the broad scope and range of archaeological collections, reports and mapping from Ontario, either directly at the facility or online.

As well, the informational platform and facility will operate within integrated archaeological and First Nation values, enabling engagement, collaboration and the differing priorities that exist for this archaeological material and amassed record of Ontario's archaeological heritage – so much of which is being compiled currently through CRM activity.

### **Collections Management**

Along with receiving a tour of the new Sustainable Archaeology facility currently completing construction adjacent to the Museum, workshop attendees on the 9th participated in a series of discussion sessions focusing on the care and storage of artifact collections, digital data

standards, development of standardized terminology, Sustainable Archaeology's planned digital database, and practices around accessibility to collections and digital information. The workshop raised a number of important issues and questions for both Sustainable Archaeology and the archaeological community, and helped the facility get a sense of the range of practices and standards used by archaeologists in Ontario, which will help in the development of a series of online 'best practice' guides for collections and digital data management.

One of the main issues discussed was the current state of accessioning and the long term preservation of artifacts, and the standards the SA facility will need to adopt to achieve these aims. This included discussing topics that ranged from the use of standardized packing and storage materials and mediums that should be used in the facility, to more specific issues such as stabilizing and conserving particular types of artifact classes.

The attendees were also given a brief overview of conservation and storage procedures in place at other Canadian and international archaeological repositories. During subsequent table and full group discussions participants found that, with some variation, these standards are generally already in practice among archaeologists in Ontario and could be readily adopted by the facility.

This will include general standards for bulk collection storage that are typically used in archaeological repositories world-wide, including the use of archival quality, acid-free, non-off-gassing, re-sealing 4 mil polyethylene bags of the appropriate size for the artifact(s) in question. These bags are then housed in corrugated polypropylene 'bankers' style boxes (15" deep x 12" wide by 10" high), which can hold between 40-50 pounds of material, and designed specifically to fit the facility's custom high density mobile shelving. Less stable artifacts or distinct classes of artifact will either be held in lockable specimen cabinets (with the use of acid-free paper, form foam, etc.), or placed in sealed boxes with oxygen absorbers to stabilize the items from further degradation.

Attendees were also introduced to some of the storage management practices that will be adopted by Sustainable Archaeology, including the use of RFID (Radiofrequency Identification) tags to identify and track boxes in storage, and the use of DM/QR (Data Matrix/Quick Read) codes (similar to bar codes but can be scalable down to less than a

centimeter, and ‘read’ by scanners or even smart phones) to tag individual artifacts and bags of artifacts. Attendees were also introduced to the technology to be used by the facility as part of the ‘object to digital information’ conversion process of making archaeological data available for online research, including digital laser scanning in 3D of artifacts, and immersive site environment re-constructions.

### **Digital Data Management**

After dealing with the storage and conservation of the physical materials themselves, the discussion turned towards collecting and maintaining the digital and non-digital records generated during the excavation and analysis of the artifacts. This included the need for some consensus on terminology. The creation of a standard thesaurus for Ontario archaeology (similar to what has been achieved for archaeology in the UK) was identified as a major area of concern if the informational platform is to function as intended as an integrated and searchable system for archaeologists and non-archaeologists. Terminology was seen as connected to issues of user accessibility – as the database is also intended as a research tool for the public, a move from the often convoluted technical jargon and taxonomy of Ontario archaeology, or the augmentation of that technical terminology with more general purpose metadata, will be necessary.

No simple solutions or ready-made thesauri for Ontario archaeology were produced (!), but understanding the need to search both technical terms (artifact, context or site typologies, temporal classifications), AND basic material, age, space and donor/project categories, was identified as crucial to the success and usability of the informational platform once available online.

Best practices for the retention, migration and ongoing use of digital archaeological data were also discussed. This is critical because this has been a non-issue in Ontario and much of North America archaeology to date, with people either not focused on the issues, or subscribing to the fallacy that digital data copied to various mediums such as CDs or memory sticks will effectively preserve digital data. As a result, there have been no standards of practice developed in Ontario archaeology for digital data preservation. However, as more and more datasets are only generated digitally, and as media and file formats become antiquated, our ability to migrate the data forward without degradation will become critical to ensure no loss of meaningful contextual and field record data.

Happily, Sustainable Archaeology has been working with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) in the UK, an organization that has been working since the mid 1990s to develop format standards for most forms of archaeological digital data, so this part of the day was more an overview of



the digital data and metadata standards to be adopted in the SA facility from that collaboration.

### **Long Term Disposition of Collections and SA Acquisition Management**

The afternoon portion of the workshop included a good deal of time going over and discussing the processes and procedures for donating and accessing collections at archaeological repositories generally in Canada and the United States, and specifically how people manage the long term disposition of collections here in Ontario. While there are no repositories per se in Ontario, participants outlined a range of practices, from transferring collections to museums or other ‘public institutions’, to retaining collections themselves in rental lockups and other storage facilities, or in available space at work or home. A common theme was the fact that museums and the province have limited or no capacity to take collections here in Ontario. Elsewhere in Canada and the United States there are over 200 artifact repositories of one kind or another, ranging from university holdings to formal provincial or state run facilities. Over half of these repositories charge fees for taking collections, typically a onetime ‘per box’ fee, averaging between \$400-\$500, in part depending on the donation. Other fees charged typically include preserving digital data, verifying or processing collections, etc.

The need for the SA facility to be self sustaining was discussed, and the need to charge fees consistent with already established practices across North America (e.g., one-time fee, based on number of boxes, etc.) was reviewed. These fees will be necessary to off-set the processing and long term costs of housing the collections in the appropriate storage environment, and so allow the SA facility itself to be self sustaining. Workshop participants also discussed the possibility of adopting a ‘sliding scale’ fee structure. At the lower end of the scale donors would be submitting collections in storage containers that meet SA standards of practice, and digital data and catalogue information formats would be provided in a format that largely allows the data to be plugged right into the SA informational platform, reducing internal processing requirements to applying labels and scanning diagnostic artifact classes.

This was seen as a balanced means of facilitating partnerships between donors and the SA facility. Given that, and considering the wide range of fee structures at play across North America currently, Sustainable Archaeology will be adopting a sliding scale for onetime acquisition fees that will range from \$150 to \$300 per SA-format banker’s box. Setting the fee for a particular acquisition will be determined by the size and scale of the collection to be donated, the ability for the collections to be processed easily, number of objects to be scanned, condition of the collection, etc. In addition, a \$20 per Gigabyte of digital data to be



archived and preserved will also apply. As well, processing an older collection was recognized as much more labor intensive, and the need to add a processing fee (estimated at \$25-\$35 dollars an hour) for very labor intensive collections acquired can be applied, should it be determined as necessary in reviewing a collection for acquisition.

As many of the workshop participants noted, while acquisition fees could be accounted for in budget planning for new projects and costs can be reduced through adoption of SA standards as collections are being processed in the field and afterwards, the answer to what to do with older collections is less clear cut. The cost of transferring these 'legacy collections', defined as older collections un-curated, not well processed, and existing entirely as paper records and artifacts housed in various formats suffering some kind of incremental or major degradation as time progresses, cannot be underwritten as a project charge-out fee, as those projects were long ago completed, or were never done in a strictly commercial context.

Questions such as how legacy collections can be prepared for accessioning, the labor costs for either donor or the SA facility to incorporate these collections into the informational platform, how they will be digitized, and at whose expense, were discussed in depth. At the same time, despite the challenges it was also broadly recognized that these collections cannot be abandoned, and that the research viability of the SA informational platform will be greatly enhanced by the inclusion of these legacy collections. Suggestions put forward for dealing with the cost of re-packaging, digitizing and storing these collections included creating a fund or levy drawn from CRM projects that could be set aside exclusively for managing legacy collections, pro bono or heavily discounted fees at the SA, and a general recognition that the province needed to be involved in these discussions for defining the 'public trust' and Minister's direction for long term disposition of such collections. Clearly, this discussion during the workshop was just the beginning of a much more substantive and long term discourse that will require the attention and consideration of the broader archaeological community, province, Descendant groups, and the wider public.

#### **Accessibility and Collaboration**

The last discussion of the day centered on long term accessibility and collaboration. During discussion it was acknowledged that some information may require a tiered level of access, however this could be easily done within the informational platform through the use of member login profiles. Nonetheless, the intent of the SA will be to provide broad access to the digital information compiled within the informational platform, and to provide direct access to collections for research and use. So the point of online access to scanned datasets, field and spatial documentation, site mapping and catalogues of full assemblages, must be to facilitate access, not exclude access.

At the same time the SA facility is committed to working closely with First Nation communities, and to incorporate Descendant cultural values alongside archaeological values into the informational platform. This may lead to certain specific information requiring consent to access (e.g., a proposal for studying sacred objects) in which both archaeologists and First Nation representatives would need to provide consent. But the point here is that, with justification satisfying concerns, consent can be obtained.

Currently the SA is meeting with communities to discuss their interests in the project. By the end of this year the SA will create an Advisory Committee of both archaeologists and First Nation community representatives to facilitate an ongoing dialogue about archaeological and First Nation values. Arising from that ongoing discussion that group will be able to jointly address and provide direction to the SA on issues and challenges as they arise, and input where consent is required for investigating objects felt today to have culturally sensitive values.

#### **Next Steps**

The July workshop was successful in terms of gathering information and feedback and in highlighting the specific needs and concerns of the archaeological community in Ontario, and we thank everyone for participating. Clearly what was accomplished on that Saturday was the beginning of a long term conversation we hope Sustainable Archaeology will help facilitate across the archaeological community, and between the archaeological community and all those others in Ontario that come together over the archaeological heritage of the province. Next steps for us will be to develop draft submission guidelines and general practices for dealing with the physical and intellectual data that it will hold. We invite further feedback, questions and ideas as we move forward over the coming months, and invite people to follow us online, and drop by to visit the facility; the success of Sustainable Archaeology will really only be measured by the input and support it receives as we move forward.

Finally a thank you to both the Museum of Ontario Archaeology, and the Dean's Office, Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Western Ontario, for supporting the workshop and contributing to the food and drinks we were able to provide.

You can follow our progress at our website:

<http://www.sustainablearchaeology.org/index.htm>

Or follow our blog at:

<http://sustainablearchaeologyuwo.blogspot.com/>.

For more information about the project, please contact:

Dr. Rhonda Bathurst, Operations Manager.

UWO Sustainable Archaeology Facility, Museum of Ontario Archaeology

[rhonda.bathurst@uwo.ca](mailto:rhonda.bathurst@uwo.ca)

[webmaster@sustainablearchaeology.org](mailto:webmaster@sustainablearchaeology.org)

# A VISIT TO THE PISA BOAT MUSEUM

By Henry van Lieshout

In the January/February 2000 issue of *Arch Notes*, I reported that, while on a business trip to Pisa, Italy, in 1999, I was able to visit the newly discovered site of an old harbour which contained about 15 ships from the 5th century CE. The archaeologists at the site were excited to tell me that this was the most important discovery in Italy in the 20th century and the magazine of The Archaeological Society of America, *Archaeology*, contained articles on this discovery in two issues during 1999 and reported that the site contained “the largest group of ancient vessels ever discovered in a single place.” The site is also considered to be the ‘Pompeii of maritime archaeology’.

I therefore felt privileged to visit the site shortly after its discovery and I walked among the boats that were in the process of being covered in fibre glass in order to strengthen them in preparation for their removal from the site. The site was littered with the pottery, anchors, coins, animal bones (including pig, bear and lion), nails, jewellery and other artifacts, including the skeletons of a man with his dog, with wooden collar intact, entombed in the mud at the bottom of the harbour.

The people at the site in 1999 advanced the theory that the harbour silted very rapidly but this didn't seem plausible to me because from the harbour wharfs and artefacts there was enough evidence of violence. It was also clear that the wharfs were deliberately destroyed, certainly not ripped apart as a result of silting, however rapid.

I was told of the intent to eventually house the boats in a museum in Pisa, together with a selection of the hundreds of thousands of artifacts found at the site. One of the most dramatic remains was a Roman military supply ship that was upside down in the harbour, and with a gaping hole in its bottom. I concluded my *Arch Notes* report in 2000 with the comment that I hoped to

have an opportunity to go to Pisa at some time in the future to visit the museum, having had a chance to see the site at the outset.

Then in 2002 a book appeared, *The discovery of the undersea Pompeii: The Lost Ships of Pisa* by Michael Sedge, at the time a former director-at-large for the American Society of Journalists and Authors and also the Mediterranean Editor of the *Scientific American Discovering Archaeology* publication.

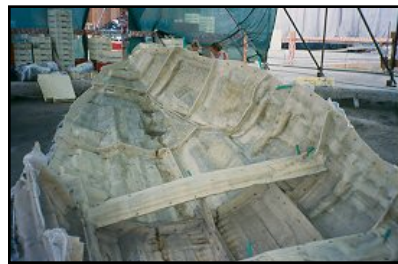
The theory suggested in the book was that the harbour was destroyed during a heavy storm in the Mediterranean. This too does not seem plausible given that the military supply ship was found upside down with a huge hole in its bottom. In addition, what about all the smashed amphorae and the full ones that were abandoned? Besides, the Mediterranean is a very calm body of water and even if there was a huge storm somewhere, the coastline in the vicinity of Pisa is protected by the islands of Elba and Corsica. Through his publisher I was able to contact Michael Sedge and I asked him whether any consideration was given to the possibility that the harbour was destroyed during the two military campaigns waged by Alaric against the Roman Empire, which resulted in its collapse and the sack of Rome in 410 CE. This timing seemed to fit the destruction of the harbour. Alaric, at one time a mercenary leader of Roman armies and well versed in naval tactics, led two invasions of Italy at about that time, and it seems to me that he would have taken care to ensure that as he progressed south towards Rome, that he would have destroyed military installations in his rear.

Michael told me that this was a possibility that he, and others, had not considered. He went on to tell me that he was in negotiations with the BBC to produce a documentary on the site and its contents, and that he would be in touch if his negotiations were fruitful, but his efforts didn't produce the desired outcome.

In the



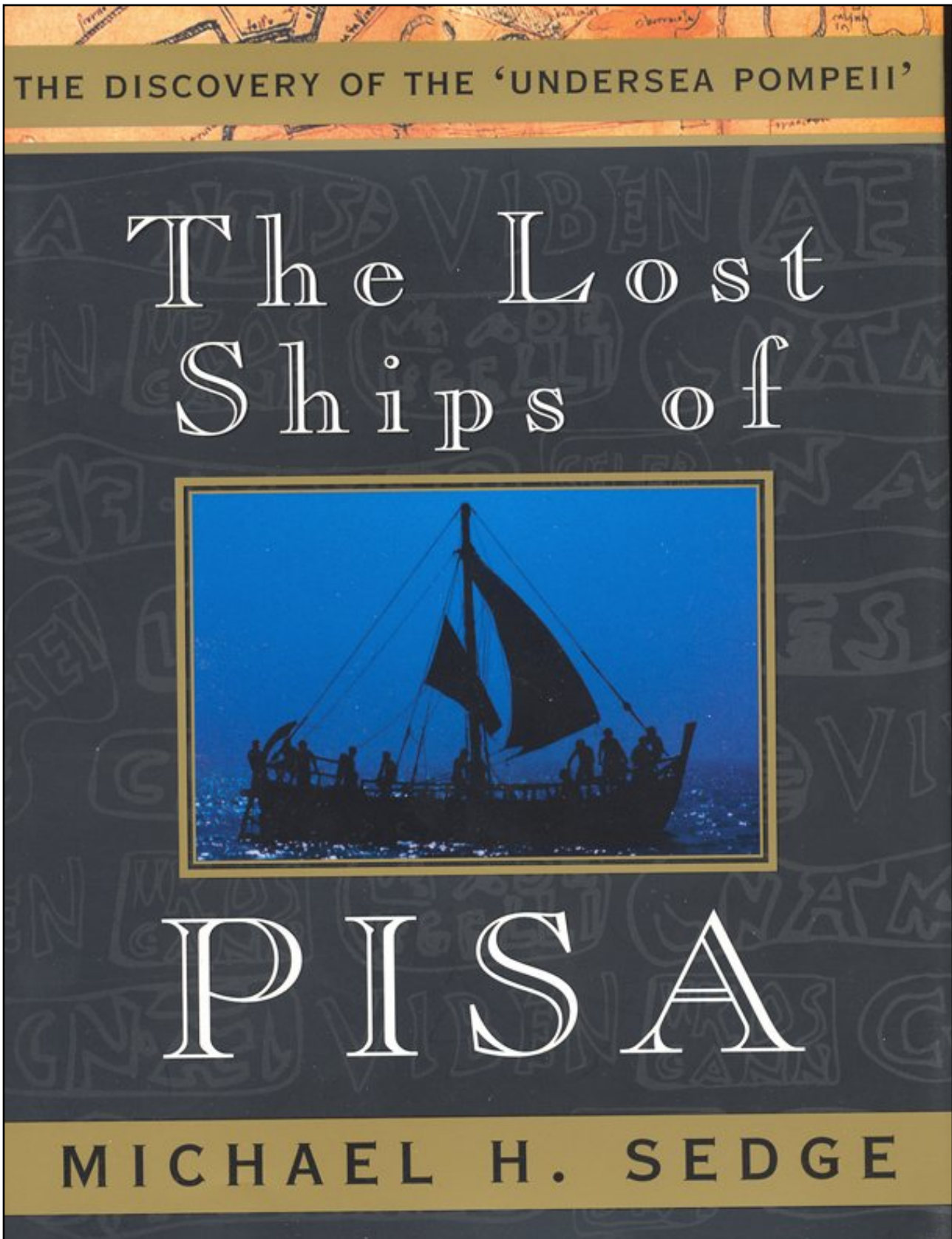
Broken Amphora from the Pisa harbour site



Roman military ship from the Pisa harbour covered in fibreglass to preserve it



The Pisa harbour site during excavations in 1999





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**Pisa. Senza esito il sopralluogo del consigliere dei Beni culturali, resta chiuso anche per giugno**  
**Museo delle navi senza soldi**  
*Il sindaco al ministro Galan: deve visitare il cantiere*

January/February 2003 issue of *Arch Notes* I wrote a reflection on Michael's book and concluded that for those of us that intend to visit Pisa to see its leaning tower, there's a further reason to visit because the museum is within walking distance from the tower.

Where am I headed with this story, one may ask?

Well, in June 2011 I had the opportunity to visit Pisa as part of a Mediterranean cruise with family members. I obtained the address of the museum from the internet, making sure it was open on the day we would be in Pisa, on June 1, 2011. I walked the fairly long distance to the museum's location, appropriately inside the naval shipyards built in the 16th century during the Medici era but could not see any sign of the museum. I approached a few locals and between my Italian and their English learned that the entrance to the museum was in another nearby street, but once there I again saw no sign of the museum. After more enquiries and walking around the area I was running out of time to connect with my family who were at the leaning tower complex, so on my way back to meet them I stopped at an outdoor cafe for a beer. I asked the server whether she knew where the museum was but although she knew about it, she didn't know its location. Another server overheard my question, came over and told me that there was an article on the museum on the front page of that morning's local newspaper, but he didn't know what it was about. I asked whether he would buy me the paper, handed him the one Euro cost, and when he came back he showed me the headline, which reported that due to funding cutbacks the museum was closed effective

immediately.

Apparently the Ministry of Culture for Tuscany had committed 2.5 million Euro towards the museum project and only 1.0 million had ever been sent. The mayor of Pisa had invited the Minister to visit the museum to see what had been accomplished with a view to obtain the balance of funding, but a low level delegation had been sent and this was seen as a clear signal that the Minister had no interest in the museum and did not intend to send the balance of the money.

In my opinion, while the location of the museum was in a historically appropriate location at the 5th century Medici shipyards, this is not a good location to attract the level of attendance it needs to be financially viable. After all, visitors to Pisa come to see the leaning tower complex, and there is a large existing cultural museum across the street from the tower complex. With some planning it would have been possible to co-locate the naval museum with the cultural museum, in which case the naval museum would attract a share of the millions of tourists that visit Pisa each year. There may not have been adequate space to place all the ships and artifacts at the cultural museum, but a smaller exhibit available to the public is better than what there is to be seen now, which is zero.

The notion that 10% of 100 is better than 100% of zero, is certainly appropriate in this case.

So for the last 12 years I've been looking forward to the possibility of one day seeing the museum with the artifacts I saw first-hand at the time the site was being excavated in 1999, and then on the very day that I am in Pisa to visit the museum, they close it!



The Ontario  
Archaeological  
Society  
Inc.

PO Box 62066  
Victoria Terrace Post Office  
Toronto, Ontario M4A 2W1  
(416) 406-5959  
**oasociety@ontarioarchaeology.on.ca**  
www.ontarioarchaeology.on.ca

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