TRANSNATIONAL ACCESS
User report

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Platform/s accessed

☐ FIXLAB
☐ MOLAB
☒ ARCHLAB

Project Title*

ARTDEICS -Analyses of artefacts recovered from Dutch East India Company shipwrecks

User Group Leader*

Francesca Gherardi and Sarah Paynter (Investigative Science, Historic England)

Venue*

1. Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed (RCE) office (Amersfoort)
2. Maritiem Muzeeum Zeeland (Vlissingen)
3. RCE Science labs, Rijksmuseum Science labs and metal conservation studio, and Rijksmuseum (Amsterdam)
4. Museum Kaap Skil (Oudeschild) and Batavialand (Lelystad)

Date

20-24 June 2023

Summary*

Present here an abstract (max 300 words)

The Iperion-HS Archlab proposal forms part of the broader '#Rooswijk1740 project'.

The *Rooswijk* was a Dutch East India Company (VOC) vessel, which sank off Kent in 1740. During the excavation in 2017 and 2018 many artefacts (silver coins, glass beads, bottles and vessels, copper alloy and pewter objects) were recovered and transported to Historic England, Fort Cumberland laboratories (Portsmouth, UK) for the post-excavation phase, to be conserved and studied. The artefacts have been analysed with scientific techniques (SEM-EDS, XRF, FTIR spectroscopy, XRD) to determine the manufacturing processes for the objects, to investigate provenance, to identify previous repairs, and to assess their preservation state.

This Archlab visit allowed us to discuss our scientific findings on silver coins, glass beads and bottles, copper alloys and pewter objects with other scientists, archaeologists, conservators and curators from different institutions (RCE, Maritiem Muzeeum Zeeland, Rijksmuseum, Museum Kaap Skil and Batavialand), who have previously studied similar objects recovered from other VOC shipwrecks. The access to publications suggested by the colleagues met during this visit will help us to to compare compositional data obtained from the analysis of the artefacts from the recent excavations of the *Rooswijk* with similar objects from the previous excavations, as well as from other VOC shipwrecks. During the visit, we had the chance to see similar objects from other VOC shipwrecks, to compare hallmarks and decorations, and to discuss manufacturing techniques, provenance of materials, commercial relationships, suppliers of cargo materials, and the challenges in the conservation of objects recovered from marine sites.

This visit provided a holistic view of the material so far recovered from the *Rooswijk* and other VOC shipwrecks and will further strengthen the collaboration between colleagues at Historic England, RCE, Maritiem Muzeeum Zeeland, Rijksmuseum, Museum Kaap Skil and Batavialand.

Report

Write a maximum of 1-2 pages, following the scheme:

1. *Introduction, motivation and scientific objectives of the visit*

The aims of the visit are:

1. to discuss scientific data collected from artefacts from VOC shipwrecks, with a particular focus on silver coins, copper alloy and pewter objects, glass bottle and beads, and sabre blades, which are stored at RCE, Maritiem Muzeeum Zeeland, Rijksmuseum, Museum Kaap Skil and Batavialand;
2. to access technical reports, papers, historic literature about scientific investigations of artefacts from VOC shipwrecks;
3. to see artefacts from the Rooswijk recovered in 2004/2005 and stored at the Maritiem Muzeeum Zeeland and object from other VOC shipwrecks ('t Vliegent Hart, Rooswijk, Hollandia, Boot, Burgzand-Noord 17, etc.) and compare manufacture, hallmarks and decoration, and evaluate their state of preservation and conservation history.

2. *Reasons for choosing IPERION HS facilities*

The Archlab visit to RCE offered the unique opportunity to discuss scientific data from objects from other VOC shipwrecks collected by RCE colleagues to gain information about manufacture, provenance, the introduction and exchange of new technologies and craftmanship in the Netherlands.
The visit and discussions with the archaeologists, scientists, curators and conservators from RCE, Maritiem Muzeeum Zeeland, Rijksmuseum, Museum Kaap Skil and Batavialand helped us gain more knowledge on the objects in the cargo exported to specific locations, their manufacture and quality, specific commercial relationships, life on board and the status of crew members.
The comparison and integration of the scientific data collected from the objects from the Rooswijk and held in the Neatherlands and UK has contributed to the bigger picture of knowledge of the VOC international trade.

3. ***Activity during your visit (please describe the steps taken, instrumentation used, techniques employed, data sources consulted, etc.)***

Day 1_Visit to RCE (Amersfoort): we visited the headquarters of RCE and we met Ineke Joosten, Bertil van Os and Martijn Manders. We presented a summary of the #Rooswijk1740 project, in particular the scientific results obtained from the analysis of copper alloy and pewter objects, silver coins, glass bottles and beads from the Rooswijk. We discussed our results with data collected from RCE colleagues on other VOC shipwrecks and we presented open questions about collecting references from technical reports and papers and historic documents about guilds and suppliers of objects which were part of VOC cargo.

Day 2_Visit to Maritiem Muzeeum Zeeland (Vlissingen) (Photo 1): with Ineke Joosten, we met Gabrielle Baumann and Henriette le Cointre, who gave us a tour of the museum and the museum deposit. We had the chance to see the artefacts recovered from the previous excavations of the Rooswijk in 2004/2005 and compare them to the objects from 2017/2018 excavations. We discussed the manufacture, procedures and trade of objects and life on board on VOC vessels, and we gained precious information about relevant publications and databases.

Day 3_Visit to RCE Science labs, Rijksmuseum Science labs and metal conservation studio, and Rijksmuseum (Amsterdam) (Photo 2): with Ineke Joosten, we met Tamar Davidowitz and Amelia Hammond. We shared information about our projects on VOC shipwrecks (Dutch silver alloys, silver and copper alloy marks, monitoring of etc.) and scientific data, with a particular focus on the conservation of the artefacts (especially copper alloy objects) and learned about their work. We visited the metal conservation studio of the Rijksmuseum and looked closely at some of the artefacts from the Hollandia wreck and their state of preservation. We went to the Rijksmuseum, in the “special collections” area of the museum, to look at artefacts from other VOC shipwrecks (Hollandia, 't Vliegent Hart, etc.). Finally, we visited the RCE science labs to see the analytical equipment and discuss the advantages and challenges of different types of technique, equipment and materials.

Day 4_Visit to Museum Kaap Skil (Oudeschild) and Batavialand (Lelystad) (Photo 3): together with Ineke Joosten, we went to Texel to the Museum Kaap Skil, where we meet Arent Vos, Alec Ewing and Corina Hordijk. With Arent we went to Texel harbour to see the Texel roads where hundreds of wrecks lay on the seabed and are currently monitored and studied by RCE. At the museum we had the chance to see artefacts from the Palmhout wreck and Burgzand-Noord 17, discuss their recovery and their exceptional state of preservation. In the museum exhibition about trade, we saw several artefacts (thimbles, spoons, coins, glass bottles, plates, etc.) similar to the ones from the Rooswijk and under study at Historic England.
We then visited Batavialand, which is the provincial depot for archaeological finds from underwater sites, where we looked at objects from different shipwrecks, compared marks and decorations and discussed their state of preservation and conservation procedures, particularly the difficulties presented by iron objects.

4. ***Project achievements during the visit (and possible difficulties encountered)***

The visit gave us the opportunity to meet experts in VOC vessels, their history and conservation. We shared our scientific data with these colleagues and discussed the results. We gained information about

the manufacture and trade of the cargo, commercial relationships and procedures on board of VOC vessels. We obtained references to papers, technical reports and historic publications on the topic, of which we were previously unaware.
We saw closely several classes of artefacts from the previous excavation of the Rooswijk and other VOC shipwrecks, which helped us to better understand some of the objects under study at Historic England.
This visit allowed us to create a network of researchers with a common interest on VOC vessels, to share experience, challenges and plan future collaborations.

5. *Outcome and future studies*

Thanks to this visit, we had inspiring discussions and gained a better understanding of the objects in the cargo of VOC vessels, with a specific focus on their manufacture, quality and use. By visiting different museums and meeting researchers we established collaborations and ideas for future projects.
In particular, the common interest on the conservation of copper alloy objects from underwater sites will lead to a future Archlab proposal from Rijksmuseum and RCE to visit the science lab of Historic England.

Expected publications, presentations and other dissemination activities

Insert here publications and dissemination activities.

The experience and data gained from this visit will be shared with other colleagues in Historic England and MSDS, who are working on the #Rooswijk1740 project.
In the next years few scientific publications (on silver coins, copper alloys and pewter artefacts, etc.) and the final project publication will be prepared and the contribution of the Iperion Archlab visit will be acknowledged.

Captions for the photos*

Please, provide 1 or more high-quality photos, preferably in horizontal format, taken during the access and write here the captions for the photo/s.

Photo 1 – Visit to the Maritiem Muzeeum Zeeland (Vlissingen) and some of the artefacts from their collection.

Photo 2 – Visit to RCE Science labs, Rijksmuseum Science labs and metal conservation studio, and Rijksmuseum.

Photo 3 – Visit to Museum Kaap Skil (Oudeschild) (top row) and Batavialand (Lelystad) (bottom row).