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## **Conservation Training Program: Copán, Honduras**

**Research Year:** 1996

**Culture:** Maya

**Chronology:** Classic

**Location:** Copán, Honduras

**Site:** Copán

During the 1996 field season another vital area of ECAP research was supported by FAMSI. Through the award of Grant 95061 ECAP was able to augment its facilities and personnel dedicated to archaeological conservation. As ECAP's excavations have come to a close, efforts to secure long-term storage and conservation of all artifacts recovered from the site have been accelerated. Plans were initiated in 1995 for expanding the ECAP field laboratory space in the Centro de Investigaciones building located adjacent to the ruins of Copán. In 1996 the ECAP facility was completed, comprising a four room complex with enhanced-security that totals some 600 square feet of space. The complex includes a Conservation Laboratory (furnished with 8 lockable metal storage cabinets and metal shelving), a Ceramic Storage Room, a Small Finds Storage Area, and an Isolated Storage Area for mercury-contaminated artifacts. Henceforth all artifacts recovered by the ECAP research will be conserved, recorded, catalogued, and placed in permanent and secure storage in this new facility.

During the 1996 season ECAP brought two professional conservators to Copán to attend to the critical tasks of preserving a variety of artifacts recovered by ECAP. Lynn Grant from the University of Pennsylvania Museum returned for her second season at Copán, and was joined by Julie Trosper from the University of California (Berkeley). After opening and stocking the new laboratory, they conserved a backlog of previously excavated artifacts and worked in the field to conserve and transport to the laboratory the newly removed offerings from the Margarita tomb and Burial 95-1. By the end of the 1996 season all artifacts from the tombs and caches excavated by ECAP were secured in the steel storage cabinets in our new Conservation Laboratory.

A major new undertaking for ECAP during 1996, supported entirely by FAMSI Grant 95061, was the training of local individuals in archaeological conservation. In consultation with local IHAH officials, several Honduran citizens were identified as qualified candidates for further conservation training under the auspices of ECAP and IHAH. The training of these individuals was designed to meet ECAP's diverse conservation needs in both the field (focused on architectural recording and consolidation) and the laboratory (especially artifact recording and conservation).

In 1996, six local Hondurans (all residents of the town of Copán Ruinas) were trained by ECAP in various aspects of archaeological conservation. One individual was trained in architectural stucco conservation utilizing methods recommended in 1995 by both Lic. Luciano Cedillo A., Head of the Conservation Laboratory of the Mexican Institute of Anthropology and History, and Arq. Carlos Rudy Larios, Copán Project Director of Architectural Consolidation. Also in 1996 ECAP was able to train a cadre of excavation workers in the techniques of structural conservation. This was done by selecting four qualified workers who were assigned to tunnel consolidation crews where they conducted closely supervised masonry tasks throughout the 1996 season. These measures, again due to FAMSI support, solved the recurrent problem created by the local shortage of experienced architectural consolidation masons necessary to consolidate the Acropolis tunnels.

An especially talented local conservation trainee, Nelson Paredes, was selected and given in-depth instruction in the field recording of architecture by scaled drawings, and was later given further training in using scaled drawings to record artifacts by Helen Bell. Sr. Paredes has considerable talent as an artist and shows great promise for career development in archaeological conservation. During the 1997 season he continued his training and assisted the ECAP conservation effort under the supervision of both ECAP and IHAH conservators.

In combination, the facility development and training efforts supported by FAMSI funding enabled ECAP to meet and even exceed its archaeological conservation goals for the 1996 season. Further successes in 1997 were gained by building on the strong foundation that now exists for the conservation of Copán's excavated architecture and artifacts, so that both can be preserved for future scholarly study and the appreciation of visitors.

*Submitted 05/01/1997 by:*  
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