

ICOM ICMAH ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2026

**“EXPLORING THE DEPTHS”
THE INSPIRATIONAL JOURNEY OF
MARITIME ARCHAEOLOGY**

October 28-30, 2026 at Zadar, Croatia

**#History & Archaeology Museums #Underwater Cultural Heritage
#Preservation #Conservation #Collection Management #Climate Change**



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ARCHAEOLOGY
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of Zadar
Department of
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Centre Camille Jullian
Histoire et archéologie de la Méditerranée et de l'Afrique du Nord
de la Protohistoire à la fin de l'Antiquité



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For Information, please contact:

Secretary.icmah@icom.museum or visit: <http://icmah.mini.icom.museum/>

CALL FOR PAPERS
ICOM ICMAH Annual Conference 2026

"Exploring the Depths - The Inspirational Journey of Maritime Archaeology"
Preserving The Underwater Cultural Heritage Collection Within History And
Archaeological Museums

Date: October 28-30, 2026 **Venue:** Zadar, Croatia

• **INTRODUCTION**

Maritime archaeology serves as a cornerstone in the preservation and interpretation of underwater cultural heritage. As custodians of this heritage, history and archaeological museums play a crucial role in safeguarding and disseminating cultural artifacts recovered from shipwrecks and submerged sites, including ancient urban centers and trading ports. These institutions act as vital repositories, facilitating public engagement and appreciation for the intricate narratives encoded within the depths of the ocean. Through rigorous excavation, precise documentation, and advanced conservation techniques, maritime archaeology mediates the relationship between artifacts and historical context.

This practice not only yields insights into historical trade networks, cultural practices, and quotidian life but also emphasizes the significance of diverse submerged sites and the museums dedicated to their study. Such museums serve as pivotal platforms presenting tangible evidence of maritime history while confronting challenges surrounding accessibility and public involvement. The synergy between maritime archaeology and museums illustrates a dynamic partnership that enriches our comprehension of global history, making the submerged treasures of our underwater heritage accessible to a broader audience.

This conference will explore the complexities involved in preserving and exhibiting underwater cultural heritage collections, highlighting the collaborative efforts required to connect the underwater world with the public sphere. Additionally, it will explore the trajectory from seabed recovery to museum display, analyze the implications of evolving marine and coastal environments on submerged archaeological sites, and discuss innovative technologies utilized in the mapping and documentation of these sites.

The conference is being collaboratively organized by the ICOM International Committee for Museums and Collections of Archaeology and History (ICMAH), ICOM Croatia, the International Centre for Underwater Archaeology (ICUA), the Museum of Ancient Glass (MAS), the Archaeological Museum in Zadar (AMZD), the Department of Archaeology at the University of Zadar (ZARH), and The Camille Jullian Centre for historical and archaeological research laboratory of the French National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS).

• **CONFERENCE THEMES**

This conference focuses on presenting reliable experiences, case studies, excavation projects, and research efforts that are directly relevant to the subject matter under discussion, as well as the forthcoming themes:



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1. **Underwater Cultural Heritage and Climate Change:** A prominent and growing theme focusing on the impacts of changing marine and coastal environments on submerged sites and developing strategies for protection and preservation. Understanding and mitigating the impact of rising sea levels, extreme weather, and changing ocean currents on underwater cultural heritage.
2. **Conservation and Management:** Discussing the technical and legal aspects of preserving and managing underwater sites and recovered artifacts. explore the management of underwater cultural heritage within international law.
3. **Approaches for Mitigating Looting of Underwater Cultural Heritage Sites:** Investigating the innovative methodologies and practices aimed at addressing the illicit excavation, exploitation, and looting of underwater archaeological sites. Furthermore, discussing the development of robust legal frameworks that enhance protections for underwater heritage, the implementation of advanced technologies to monitor vulnerable sites, foster local stewardship, and the optimization of site management protocols, ensuring sustainable preservation.
4. **Technology and Innovation:** Highlighting innovations in mapping, documentation, and virtual access to underwater sites. Discussing the utilization of advanced tools like geophysical surveys (side-scan sonar, magnetometers), and submersibles to discover, analyze, and document sites in deep or difficult-to-reach places.
5. **Museums and Public Engagement:** Exploring the role of museums as custodians of underwater heritage and developing strategies for community involvement, accessibility, and awareness. Exploring how to "bring the past to life" through both analogue and digital practices, including museum displays, interactive exhibits, and public involvement in research.
6. **Ancient Seafaring and Trade:** Ongoing research into ancient shipwrecks (e.g., Roman, Phoenician) continues to reveal insights into historical trade networks and maritime history.

• IMPORTANT NOTICE.

- The language of the conference is **ENGLISH**.
- For Paper submission and application for Travel Grants, please fill out the form attached.
- Participation in the conference is free of charge.
- The presentations will be in PowerPoint format during the conference, and the full papers will be delivered at the same time.
- The article format will be communicated for accepted papers.
- A digital publication will be ensured on the ICOM ICMAH Website <https://icmah.mini.icom.museum/publications-2/our-publications/>.

• IMPORTANT DATES

- Abstract submission deadline : February 20, 2026.
- Notification of acceptance of abstracts : March 20, 2026.
- Conference date : October 28-30, 2026.



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- **EXCURSIONS**

Please note that the museum visits will be held on October 30, 2026, and information about the full program will be announced later.

- **DIVING CONDITIONS**

Should any participant express an interest in visiting the underwater archaeological site, two options are available. Participants may choose to engage in snorkeling or diving at the Pag island, near the village Šimuni. The diving excursion shall include:

- Letavica diving site, known for a collection of ancient Roman amphorae, is available for certified Advanced Open Water Divers (AOWD).
- Pag Island Coast, known for the Roman shipwreck with piles of broken amphorae, is available for snorkeling, and also certified Open Water Divers (OWD).

All options are subject to the weather conditions. Please note that fees will apply for diving at any site (Equipment rental and diving guide are available on-site).

- **CONTACTS & INFORMATION**

For information, queries, and Abstract Submission, please contact:

secretary.icmah@icom.museum

Or visit: <https://icmah.mini.icom.museum/>

Cordially,

ICOM ICMAH Board



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ICOM ICMAH Regulation for Traveling Grants To Attend The Conference On-site

Date: October 28-30, 2026 **Venue:** Zadar, Croatia

Dear Applicant for ICMAH Grants,

ICOM ICMAH, being inclusive of the largest two themes in museums, is also one of the oldest international committees in ICOM, that aims to create a network of communication, to organize events such as conferences, seminars, workshops for museum professionals and to realize publications to diffuse the knowledge about all aspects on museology and museography of archaeological and historical museums and collections worldwide. We seek to achieve an active collaboration, a polyphonic communication, and a democratic milieu for sharing experiences in history and archaeological museums.

During the ICOM ICMAH Annual Conference, we aim to give a grant to a number of museum professionals to attend the conference. In 2026, the ICOM ICMAH Annual Conference will be held in Zadar, Croatia. In this regard, ICOM ICMAH plans to support **2 Museum Professionals** up to **2000 €** to attend the conference this year **Onsite**. The travel grant shall support the following:

- Accommodation Cost in 3 stars' hotel.
- International Transportation, Economy Class.

Insurance coverage, local transportation, meals, and other expenses related to the member's participation will not be covered by the grant in any circumstances.

The applicant should be:

- Being an individual member of ICOM, please indicate your ICOM number and submit a copy of your membership card.
- Being from the countries belonging to Categories 3, 4, and 5 determined by ICOM.
- Be up to date with ICOM membership for 2025 and 2026.
- Members who have received grants in the last three years will not be eligible to receive a grant in 2026.

The priority will be given to:

- Member of ICMAH, please send us the justification for your membership.
- Applicants under 40 years old.
- Applicants who are being accepted as one of ICOM ICMAH's Annual conference 2026 speakers.

So, if you are planning to apply for the ICOM ICMAH grant for 2026, please fill out the attached application and send it to secretary.icmah@icom.museum.

Cordially,

ICMAH Board



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PAPER SUBMISSION APPLICATION FORM

Please fill in the following details before submission:

PERSONAL INFORMATION

- Name:
- Country:
- Date of Birth:
- Profession:
- Organization:
- Email:
- ICOM Membership Number (If Applicable):
- Affiliated since:

EXCURSION PREFERENCES

- For Excursions on October 30, 2026, please select:

☐ Visiting Museums in Zadar

☐ Engaging in explorative diving activities for the purpose of examining the underwater archaeological site.
- If you select to engage in the Diving activities, what is your level of certification

☐ Open Water Divers (OWD)

☐ Advanced Open Water Divers (AOWD)

APPLICATION FOR GRANTS

- Are you applying for the ICMAH Travel Grant?

☐ YES

☐ NO
- **Short Biography** (150 words maximum)

- **Motivation Letter** (150 words maximum). If you are applying for a Travel Grant, please fill in this section.



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- **Abstract** (200-300 Words Maximum)

Please write your abstract HERE



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