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**Conservation work of the ceramic finds from the island of Gavdos**

In this paper, we present the main aspects of conservation of the ceramic finds from the excavation of the University of Crete at the Bronze Age building complex at Katalymata on the island of Gavdos. The first author's contribution to this work started in 2014 and is in progress at the Laboratory of Conservation of the University. It represents an immense but also exciting effort, because of the large number of pottery and other clay artefacts unearthed, their rich variety of shapes, and, above all, their particular local character. In fact, most of them continued to be hand-made until the end of the 2nd millennium BC, consist of native clays, and result from long-lasting Gavdiot techniques of manufacture and decoration. Clays are abundant on the island but, as a rule, quite friable, and clay objects are usually covered with a tough crust of salts, soil particles, dust, and, rarely, with products of biodeterioration (algae, lichens). Colors are very faint, preserved mostly due to the salt crusts that also act as a protection layer, and must be treated (and almost 'revealed') with extreme caution. Thus, both gentle solvents and dental and surgical tools are used for their cleaning, while the whole conservation process is under constant examination and control with a diophthalmic stereomicroscope. The indigenous, unique character of these ceramic finds calls for a mutual, close collaboration between the conservator and the archaeologists; this collaboration is strengthened every year during the days of the summer training school of the Gavdos project, where young students of the University are acquainted with the various stages of conservation work on this material, as well as its interdisciplinary approach.

We submit this abstract for a poster presentation.