

General Introductions of Documentation Practice and its History in Georgian Wall Painting

**Nutsa
Papiashvili**
September 2017



CIDOC 2017

Tbilisi, Georgia. 25-30 September 2017



Main characteristics of wall paintings

- **Immovable** cultural heritage
- Direct **contact to open environment** (unchangeable and uncontrollable)
- Large in **size, scale**
- Consists of several **stratigraphic layers**
- **Heterogeneous** into materials
- **Heterogeneous** into **condition** (different degree and extend of deterioration)



Nikortsinda Cathedral, beginning of 11th C.

Wall painting documentation of the past



Handmade graphical scheme and legends of deterioration phenomena, St. Marina Chapel, Gelati Monastery, Authors: G. Cheishvili, D.Cheishvili, 2014

Documentation practice:

- photographs
- short textual reports
- handmade Graph. Doc., sketches, drawings



Ateni Sioni church during roof repair, undated image, © Project Data 2016



Reinforcement of roof exterior with cement, undated archival image

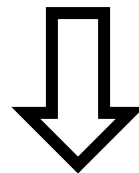


Documentation of wall paintings is challenging

Objectives/questions to define:



- **Why?**
- **By Whom?**
- **When?**
- **How?**
- **How precise?**



Prioritize documentation needs

Why to document?

Essential tool for:

- **investigation** (understanding original technology and condition of the paintings);
- to establish **conservation priorities**;
- to plan and carry out **conservation intervention**;
- to **monitor** condition of the wall paintings in a long-term period of time;
- to **communicate** with professionals, different stakeholders and public;
- for **archive**

Who should carry out documentation?

Conservator-Restorer because documentation is used at **ALL stages of a conservation programme**



When to document?

Conservation Process

Documentation



1. Information Gathering
2. Assessment
3. Planning
4. Intervention
5. Monitoring and Maintenance

Information Gathering

- ***Collection of archival documents***
 - textual evidences
 - photographs
 - schemes & sketches
 - video records
 - anecdotal notes
- ***Understanding of physical history of the site***

historical events/changes, previous interventions, etc.



17th C. Wall Paintings after uncovering,
Anchiskhati Basilica, 1958, © Zenko



Wall paintings after restoration, 1958, © Zenko

Ateni Sioni, Church of Dormition

1938



1951



1958?



1979



1984



2011



*Detail of the Angel from Ateni Sioni, Church of Dormition, transformation of the condition and appearance over time,
© Ateni Project Data 2016*

Assessment of original technology & condition

to identify and document particular features of wall paintings (type, distribution, rate, causes, etc.)



© Vardzia Project 2013



Documentation during Planning an implementation of remedial intervention

To record the process, control the changes, demonstrate results

Historical Building of Tbilisi State Academy of Arts 2017



1980's repainting

< -----during removal of repainting -----
-->

uncovered
original scene

Monitoring of condition or remedial interventions

*Sapara Monastery
Paintings of St. Marina
Chapel, 13th C.*



2011



2012



2016



How to document?



© Vardzia Project 2013

Criteria for selection recording methods for wall paintings:

- No harm to conservator & paintings;
- Precise/high quality (if possible);
- Low cost or affordable price;
- Easy for use by conservator;
- Portable, lightweight;

Which are the prior doc. methods for paintings?

Non-invasive* methods of investigation/documentation

(*does not require sampling)

How to document?

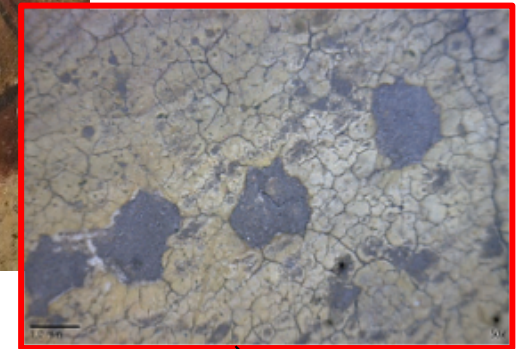
Imaging Visible/raking light



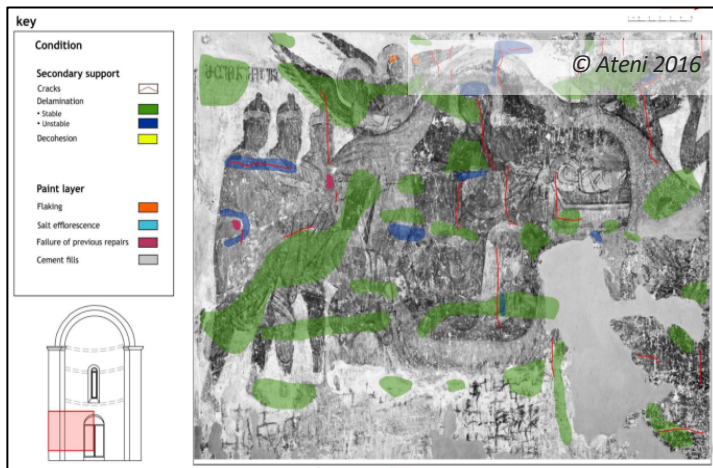
Micro-imaging (50x, 200x)



© Dino-Lite



Graphical Documentation



Visual (illustrated) Glossary



Acknowledgments



Tbilisi State Academy of Arts

Special thanks to:

- Nana Kuprashvili
- Mzia Janjalia



Courtauld Institute of Art

Special thanks to:

- Sharon Cather
- David Park



National Agency for Cultural
Heritage Preservation of
Georgia



Thank you for your attention!

