

The specifics of the conservation documentation at the Georgian National Museum

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Collections preserved at the Georgian National Museum include numerous artworks of national and international importance. Preservation of museum collections is the matter of the highest importance for the Restoration- Conservation scientific Institute of Georgian National Museum.

The institute incorporates conservation laboratories for various materials, such as: painting, textile, archaeological and ethnographical, photo/paper and paleontological materials. Laboratories are based on and practice globally accepted conservation and research methodologies. The major activities of the above-mentioned institute involve the technical research and diagnostics of artifacts; determination the main factors of damages; development common strategies of preventive conservation; restoration-conservation treatment of museum artifacts; field conservation; scientific researches and educational activities.

The wide range of documentation is elaborated at the Restoration-Conservation Scientific Institute; the main goal of which is recording of each stage of activities to be done for prevention, care and treatment of artifacts

The restoration-research laboratory of archaeological and ethnographic objects functions in S.Janashia Georgian Museum since 1932. There are going researches, cleaning, restoration, conservation and preparation for exhibitions and transportation of museum values made of clay, metal, bone, wood and etc.

Conservation is defined as...*“the preservation of cultural material for the foreseeable future in a way that allows the maximum information to be retrieved by further study and analysis.”*

- **Positive Aspect:** It safeguards the physical fabric/material of the object from loss and deterioration
- **Negative Aspect:** From the archaeological point of view Conservation is also destructive – by treating the object it can destroy valuable archaeological information contained within the dirt or corrosion products surrounding the object.

Therefore, documentations of archaeological finds have great importance from the beginning of excavation. They do contain some kind of information about an artifact, which existed (but was lost during the treatment or due to other reasons), or is available again.

The conservation laboratory receive the collections from the storages of the National Museum of Georgia or from other organizations, provided with the relevant order and Delivery- acceptance act.

Initially, each item is formulated in the laboratory charts. The photographs reflecting the condition are prepared and individual treatment schemes are elaborated based on the damages. The works performed by the conservator always reflected in the conservation report card accompanying with photographs,

Therefore, the institute provides two types of documentations: condition and treatment reports. Treatment report involves the detailed examination of artifact, such as material, as well as state of damages, photography before and after conservation, process of treatment and conservation materials. **Conservation Reports** In Laboratory we use different forms of conservation report sheets: *individual, cumulative, universal*. Due to material (metal, glass, ceramic, etc.) are used several types of individual conservation reports.

Following the treatment process conservation report is filled in two copies; one is kept in the laboratory, the other in the storage, where the item is located.

Individual Conservation Report for Metal Items

The 1st page gives available information connected with object: report N, inventory number, title of the Item, material, keeping area after treatment, dimensions WxHxL, weight; fixation during the excavation, incoming condition, deposite, spreading of damage, general notices, primary restoration, existence of copy or mould, total amount of photos/negative No, Item`s photos before and after conservation.

The 2nd page is description of conservation process. It`s giving the information about: beginning and end of treatment, signature of conservator. Was it consolidate preliminarily or not and material. How the object was treated: mechanically under binocular microscope or chemically (method, material), consolidation (material), treatment by inhibitor (material), removing lipids (material), adherence (material), filling out lacunae (material), type of dye, conservation (material) and general notes.

Depend on material the reports for archaeological objects have few differences in sub-points. Let me present some examples of the individual conservation reports for archeological metal, glass and ceramic.

The cumulative conservation report unites some artifacts were conserved by one treatment method. In the report is given the report #, information about M.O.: who is owner, storage place of the M.O. after treatment, M.O. incoming condition, material, executed works (mechanical treatment under magnifier, utilized materials), additional information, dates of the beginning and end of the treatment, filler`s signature and the list of conserved items. (M.O.- movable object)

Registration card of material for restoration/conservation (Objects) -universal

This kind of report consists following information: inventory number, type of the material, place of production, short description, dimensions (length, width, depth, weight, thickness), condition, material (ceramic, glass, iron/steel, bronze, copper, silver, other metal, marble, other stone, wood, textile, leather, bone/ivory, horn, other material), first fixation: sketch, photo, radiography, other.

There is description of treatment (method): cleaning, mechanical cleaning, chemical cleaning intensive washing, stabilization, covering, surface, saturation, repair, electrolytic cleaning, reconstruction, profiling, biocide treatment, chemical and physical analyses, black-white or color photos, infra red or ultra-violet rays, radiography, final report. On this page is graphic sketch of object and scale.

On the 2nd page is given the dates when the object was received and the treatment was finished. Here are photos before and after restoration, list of used material and conservator`s signature.

Research.

During many years, in laboratory complex research methods (chemical-quantitative, spectral, metallographic, petrographic, microscopic, etc.) were applied. Chemical analyses of metal artifacts are determined by using non-destructive Elva X spectrometer existed in the laboratory. The result for each analysis is given in individual report sheet and the data of all analyses are gathered in the special journal.

In the report sheet is given the information about chemical elemental analysis of alloy and terms of sample analyzing.

Conditional Reports for Exhibition in Georgia or Abroad

Condition report is a complete statement of any damage that has been done to the piece. It provides accurate and current information from the time the item leaves GNM institution.

The Restoration- Conservation scientific Institute of Georgian National Museum is responsible for the preparation of objects for loans and exhibition, which include preparing detail condition report for each item.

In the Condition Report of Archaeological and Ethnographic Items is the information about: object title, inventory #, institution, date and place of production (if known), state/province, material(s) (metal-bronze, silver, iron, gold and etc., ceramic-glazed or other, clay, glass, stone-cornelian, onyx or other, wood, textile, leather, other); object dimensions in cm - LxWxH-Diameter, object weight (gr), number of units, information about previous repairs (mechanical or chemical cleaning, complete/filling, other), general condition (excellent, good, fair, poor), stability (stable or unstable), object damages: Structural (deformation, cracks, lacks, corrosion, irization, damp, fragile, mineralization, broken, hole, other), surface (corrosion, salt, dust, fat, adhesive, spots, muddy, deepening, cut off, oxidized/tarnished, scratch, other), biological (mold, bacteria, other), additional remarks, signature of reporter and date of the filling of report. Condition report includes photos of damages which artifact has.

On the other side of the report must be signatures of persons who give the artifact for exhibition and receiver who will be responsible on safety of object during the exposition and the date when this agreement was done. At the end of exhibition all objects will be checked and if there will exists any change, remarks will be done and signed again by both side.

Condition Report of Decorative Art Items

On the 1st page of Condition Report of Decorative Art Items is: Act # of the conditional report, the name of Museum/storage where object is stored and the information about the artifact - artifacts Inv. # (or unnumbered, or temporary #), title, type dimensions, provenance (artist/school), material, component parts (entire, multipartite/quantity, broken up fraction, late addition), inscription (authentic or unauthentic), condition (stable or unstable), description of damages.

On the 2nd page is information about damages: type of damage - 1.Structural (deformation, cracks, shaken laces, decomposition, crevice, unrepaired loss, nail signs, unauthentic object, unauthentic, license mark, burn, mechanical impression, oxidation, strong drying, dampening, flour, make fragile, wear out, cutting off, swelling, darkening, biodegradability, innate gap, other); 2.Surface (drop of wax, dust, oxide contamination, spots, glue mark, oil contamination, burn signs, lacquer cut off, lacquer darkening, lacquer cracking, lacquer wear, drying, discoloring, surface loosening, vandalism, mechanical damage, fatty dirt, broken); 3.Biological (fungus/mold, worm-eaten, existence of active worm, bacteria, other).

On the page 3 is information about requirement of conservation (Interference not required, Requires soft conservation, Requires average complicate conservation, Requires urgent conservation), environmental conditions: Temperature and Relative Humidity and the recommendation for keeping object (Temperature, Relative humidity, Light level).Information about reporter, signature and date of filling the report.

Condition Report for painting

The condition report for painting consists the following information: condition description of painting, artist, title, dimensions, inventory #, who examined the painting and her/his signature, who is courier and her/his signature. Information about paint layer (cracks, rift, scratch, loss of color, tuberos,

swelling, surface dust, scratch, crush of smear, retouch, other) and the support: painting support (deformation/crease, dent, tear, hole, slack, other) and cadre (condition, remarks)

Beside the documentation listed in presentation our institution elaborated several forms for monitoring the environment and monitoring form for Integrated Pest Management. Monitoring the environment is a foundational element of an overall preservation program and provides the baseline for managing the storage environment.

Our responsibility is also preparation of objects and relevant documentation for transportation.

Readiness for risks is the important part of GNM common strategy. Risk analysis and softening its impact ensures better usage of poor resources and optimal conditions for life extension of GNM collections. In 2012, in the frame of the twinning a project was translated and adapted the Georgian version of Emergency Response and Salvage Wheel (by Georgian National museum and Rathgen Research Laboratory Berlin State Museums).

This wheel helps us to;

- protect precious collections and significant records
- find reliable information instantly

Side One: Action Steps outlines critical stages of disaster response, such as stabilizing the environment and assessing damage.

Side Two: Salvage Steps provides practical tips for nine types of collections: books and documents, photographs, electronic records, paintings, and more.