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

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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)
Wall painting documentation of the past

Documentation practice:

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

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

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

Reinforcement of roof exterior with cement, undated archival image
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**

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
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.)
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?

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)

Graphical Documentation

Visual (illustrated) Glossary

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Thank you for your attention!