ABSTRACT

La Villa Madame. Achat et restauration par Maurice Bergès (1912-1925)

Villa Madama. Purchase and restoration by Maurice Bergès (1912-1925)

On 14 January 1913, the French engineer Maurice Bergès acquired Villa Madama and commissioned the Roman architect Pio Piacentini to carry out the consolidation and restoration work. The "Bergès papers", discovered at the Musée de la Houille Blanche, regard Villa Madama during the period 1912-1926, and throw light on many aspects of the villa's contemporary history, especially on the restoration work in the early 20th century. At that time, there was much discussion in Rome between experts from Italy and other countries on the subject of restoration and the problems relating to it. This would eventually lead to the Charter of Athens in 1931 followed by the Venice Charter in 1963. However, by 1912 some of the participants already had clear ideas on the subject, and specialists were beginning to draw up projects with innovative ideas, looking to the future. Therefore, it was necessary to clarify the new principles by persuading people with decisional power to adopt them, by changing the mindset of professionals in the sector, and by convincing politicians that there were administrative advantages. The restoration of Villa Madama took place during this whirlpool of activity, guided initially by Camillo Boito's ideas, then by criteria similar to those of the future Athens Charter. The result of the restoration project is therefore linked to the differing opinions at the start of the century, swinging between the reconstruction approach which had gained favour in the 19th century and the application of preventive conservation which was beginning to be accepted. Since preventive conservation was not applicable to the villa in 1912, it was used later in the work carried out by Bergès, and the appearance of the villa in 1923 (on the outside) shows the result of the changed approach.

Crocifissi giotteschi. Alcune ipotesi sull'organizzazione del lavoro nella bottega medievale

Giotto-style crucifixes. Some ideas on how medieval art studios were organised

Following on from Bruno Zanardi's studies regarding the organisation of medieval worksites for fresco painting, efforts have been made to find out more about how medieval art studios were organised. To this end, some Giotto-style crucifixes were compared to see if there were analogies and marked differences in execution, and if repetitive operations were used in the production of paintings on wooden panels. The aim was to identify those produced on site and those created in studios, since Giotto's activities included both types of location. Comparison showed that all the crucifixes (the one from Santa Maria Novella to a slighter lesser extent) are technically very similar to one another, and that there must have been a degree of standardisation amongst the various painters and assistants involved. The idea of standardised painting techniques – where procedures were laid down by a supervising artist or maestro – was given further support by graphic studies carried out on the various figures of Christ. Superimposing graphic outlines showed that "patterns" were systematically used to produce paintings on wooden panels. The patterns were cut out so as to obtain the silhouettes of the various features of the figure. Then they were placed on the support to help the artist paint the figure in different positions, sometimes inverting elements, using them back to front, or combining different sizes and shapes. The patterns were evidently important tools for achieving standardised results. Hence, we should understand that the creativity of medieval artists was partly guided by a set of codified workshop rules.

ABSTRACT

La Carta del Rischio: proposta di normalizzazione delle tipologie degli edifici nella banca dati del Sistema Informativo Territoriale

Risk Map for Cultural Heritage: proposal for standardising types and categories of buildings held on the national database (SIT)

The Risk Map's national database not only provides information regarding the geographical distribution and concentration of important buildings throughout Italy, but also defines the various forms of risk they are subject to, linking the danger factors – intrinsic aspects of particular areas – to the vulnerability of the building, which depends on its state of conservation. There are many types of report cards for the Risk Map depending on the different requirements for recording the details of the building. In every case, the reference system for identifying buildings on the database is based on a fundamental concept – the uniqueness of the identification details. After several years of trying out the database by recording details, we have found that there are too many different categories and types of buildings in this fundamental section, making it difficult to carry out searches and to identify particular buildings quickly and accurately. This paper sets out to analyse the architectural categories in order to deal with the inadequacy of the reference system by revising the database. The aim is to carry out a detailed examination of the criteria for categories and types of buildings on the Risk Map, in order to standardise the architectural descriptions used, so that particular buildings can be found quickly and accurately.

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Materiali vitrei nell'opus sectile di Porta Marina (Ostia antica)

Glass materials in the opus sectile of Porta Marina (Ostia Antica)

The decoration in opus sectile discovered in 1959 at Ostia Antica, near Porta Marina (now on display at the "Museo dell'Alto Medioevo" in Rome) shows the extraordinary degree of skill achieved by the Romans in this particular type of artwork. Dating back to the fourth century AD, the decoration consists mainly of marble inlays, and formed part of a large hall with a rectangular exedra. Glass was used for the mosaics on the exedra roof vaulting, in the form of gilded or glass paste, coloured blue, green, turquoise, red and black. It was also used in some sections of the opus sectile where glass tiles and other pieces – both monochrome and polychrome – have been found (the latter imitating serpentine and types of variegated marble). Examination and scientific analysis by means of scansion electronic microscope (SEM) and X-ray microanalysis enabled us to acquire useful information about the raw materials as well as the techniques used to make the various types of glass items.

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Realizzazione di modelli virtuali attraverso l'elaborazione di rilievi microfotografici. I manufatti in steatite di Tepe Hissar (Damghan, Iran)

Creating virtual models by means of processing micro-photographic reliefs. Items in steatite from Tepe Hissar (Iran)

Examining traces of hand-working techniques (flaking, abrasions and cuts) is one of the most technologically advanced fields of prehistoric research, and it has important applications in forensic diagnosis (e.g. traces found on bone material). The case study in question refers to the prehistoric activity of making beads in a relatively soft stone material known as steatite (talc and magnesium silicate). This bead-making activity was discovered in the early 20th century at the proto-urban site of Tepe Hissar (Damghan, north-eastern Iran) an re-examined in the 1970s by a joint Italy-US expedition. Dating to the first half of the third millennium BC, the activity consisted of hewing blocks of steatite, splitting them into bars, and then into long square-section rods. The rods were then cut into small parallelepipeds which formed the rough shape of the beads. The traces of splitting and cutting take various forms: some of the regular-shaped cuts were probably made with copper or bronze blades; while others were made with more irregular cutting tools, obtained from the glass-like material found in metal-smelting slag, and flaked in the same way as the more common flint stone. Along with digital microphotography and SEM images, micro-morphological investigation was carried out using image-processing soft-

ware Leica LAS Montage 3D. This program enabled us to produce a series of high definition micro-photographic reliefs of the grooves on the surface of the steatite, which were then converted into profiles or micro-sections showing the differences between the two types of grooves. This diagnostic technique requires careful cleaning of the area to be studied, carried out in ultrasound baths, but has the advantage of avoiding the need to make silicone casts of the grooves. One of the main problems in 'analogical' microphotography is the small depth of field available. Recently designed software makes it possible to assemble, on the vertical axis of the focal field, the images of those points that the physical limits of an optical microscope would not be able to resolve, in other words focusing on the same image with different focal lengths. The development of these programs has led to a generation of products which make it possible not only to focus perfectly on images beyond the resolution power of the lenses, but also to build up virtual 3D images on three Cartesian axes. The photos are processed by a software program, Leica LAS multifocus, which regulates the movement on the Z axis of the stereoscopic microscope, acquiring "n" images (decided by the operator) which are then 'merged' into a single image obtained from the sum of the non-redundant points.

I materiali plastici: poliuretano, polimetilmetacrilato e polivinilcloruro. Tre casi di studio

Plastic materials: polyurethane, poly-methylmetacrilate and polyvinyl chloride. Three case studies

Semi-synthetic and synthetic polymers are now present in the collections of many museums not only as constituent materials of paintings, sculptures, installations, but also as products of fashion, cinema and design. Over the last ten years, studies and investigations in the conservation field have disproved the common belief that such substances were unalterable and indestructible, instead showing that they are susceptible to deterioration. The fact is that many works in plastic are now in a state of advanced deterioration requiring urgent conservation treatment. Therefore it is clear that the time has come to conduct in-depth investigations into the complex problems relating to the degradation of plastic materials. Also evident is the importance of research into new conservation strategies, and how indispensable preventive conservation is. Against this background, the paper sets out not only to provide information of a general nature but also to highlight the widely differing forms of deterioration and their occurrence on traditional materials, outlining some basic approaches for dealing with conservation problems affecting plastic items, as well as identifying suitable materials for their conservation and establishing best practices. The paper gives a brief outline of the history and degradation of three synthetic polymers amongst those most commonly used in contemporary artworks: polyurethane, poly-methylmetacrilate and polyvinylchloride, then examining three items made of these substances. Each case study focuses on analysing the plastic materials, the execution techniques, the state of conservation and degradation, as well as describing research and development of experimental products and intervention methods for their conservation.

Indagini radiografiche sulla pala di Carlo Maratti nella cappella Spada

X-ray examination of the altar piece by Carlo Maratti in the Spada Chapel

The X-ray examination conducted on the painted altar piece by Carlo Maratti (1625-1713) for the Spada Chapel in Santa Maria in Vallicella, showed that the artist had second thoughts about the layout of the figures and the setting. The abandoned version is documented graphically on several sheets belonging to Maratti, in particular by a sketch of the overall composition conserved in the Louvre and another drawing showing only the Virgin Mary with Child, in the Aldega Foundation, Amelia. This paper reviews all the data provided by the X-ray examination, adding new information to that already furnished by previous studies which attempted to throw light on the lengthy planning and execution of the altar piece.