

THE CONSERVATION OF THE MURAL “EPIDERMIS” OF HISTORICAL MONUMENTS. METHODOLOGICAL BENCHMARKS¹

Ileana Mohanu,* Dan Mohanu**

Keywords: mural *epidermis*, good practices, compatibility, reversibility, authenticity, conservation-restoration, preventive conservation, emergency intervention.

Rezumat: Reperete metodologice dedicate *epidermei* monumentelor istorice comentate în acest text introductiv reprezintă forma contrasă a ghidului de bune practici în conservarea-restaurarea picturilor murale realizat în cadrul proiectului sectorial de cercetare intitulat „Metode și tehnici inovative pentru evaluarea intervențiilor de conservare-restaurare și urmărirea stării de conservare a construcțiilor tradiționale din România”, desfășurat în intervalul 2019-2020. *Epiderma* monumentelor istorice trebuie înțeleasă în accepția cea mai vastă, de la tencuielile de parament la decorațiile murale complexe și marile ansambluri iconografice. Această identificare extrem de nuanțată a domeniului de care ne ocupăm urmărește recuperarea, pe cât posibil, a unui monument istoric în autenticitatea sa, prin urmare în unitatea sa organică în care fiecare element ce îi definește imaginea și structura să fie tratat egalitar. Rămânând în sfera generalităților, articolul prezintă succint principiile care guvernează intervenția asupra suprafețelor arhitecturale, propunând în final etapele metodologice ale procesului de conservare-restaurare.

Abstract: The methodological benchmarks dedicated to the *epidermis* of the historical monuments commented in this introductory text represents the contracted form of the good practice guide for the conservation-restoration of mural paintings made in the context of the sectorial research project named “Innovative methods and techniques for the evaluation of conservation-restoration interventions and the tracking of the state of conservation of traditional buildings in Romania”, which unfolded in 2019-2020. The *epidermis* of the historical monuments needs to be understood in its wider acceptance, from façade renderings to complex mural decorations and the great iconographic ensembles. This extremely nuanced identification of the field pursues the recuperation, as much as possible, of a historical monument in its authenticity, therefore in its organic unity where each element which defines its image and structure is treated in an egalitarian manner. Remaining within the sphere of generality, the article succinctly presents the principles which govern the interventions on the architectural surfaces, finally proposing the methodological stages of the conservation-restoration process.

In the conditions of the new communication technology, the generous diffusion, in the virtual space, of information from the cultural area, once accessible only to specialists, has generated a veritable devaluing of competences, with disastrous consequences in fields such as that of heritage, governed by a fragile legislation, with a permissiveness that leads to the loss of authenticity or purely to the destruction of the values of the past (Fig. 1). The inconsistency of the education in the field of heritage protection has generated in its turn a proliferation of destructive interventions on our monuments, in the name of development, modernisation, and comfort, of evolution of mentality and the changes that appeared on the scale of values of contemporary existence.

All of these appear, paradoxically, in the conditions of a resumption of efforts of extension within the Romanian space of the List of World Heritage Sites, of a growing interest for the built heritage, affirmed among others by the attribution of the title of European Capital of Culture to cities such as Sibiu and Timișoara.

The accelerated rhythm in which the interventions on the interior and exterior mural painting ensembles in Romania were made, during the last decades, doubled by the gradual diminution of a rigorous and extensive control of these interventions, raises the issue of the existence of an active and efficient legislation, supported

* CEPROCIM S.A., Bucharest, Romania; e-mail: ileana_mohanu@yahoo.com

** National University of Arts, Bucharest, Romania; e-mail: dan_ileana@yahoo.com

¹ The methodological benchmarks presented in the following text represent the contracted form of the good practice guide in the conservation-restoration of mural paintings made within the sectorial research project named “Innovative methods and techniques for the evaluation of conservation-restoration interventions and the tracking of the state of conservation of traditional buildings in Romania”, 2019-2020.