

# Conservation

Safeguarding of cultural heritage and conservation of its whole diversity is an important task of the world society in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In this context, a feeling of shared responsibility is currently accompanied by the awareness of many particular problems of conservation, restoration and documentation of the world heritage, connected with cultural differences between various parts as well as diverse definitions of cultural heritage. The 20<sup>th</sup> century brought substantial changes in understanding the role of conservation and safeguarding of world heritage. Such documents as *the Nara Document on Authenticity*, *the Yamato Declaration* or *the Burra Charter* promote more holistic look at tangible heritage, discerning its connections with intangible aspects and considering its full cultural context, including social issues and the surroundings of the monument. A theory of conservation, which forms the basis for conservation rules included in this documents, allows for a universal dialogue, which considers cultural diversity of the world and at the same time offers a more complex image of world heritage and chances to safeguard it.

The Polish Institute of World Art Studies focuses on the problems of safeguarding and conservation of tangible cultural heritage. From the establishment of the first organisation, the Polish Society of Oriental Art, which originated the Institute, this problems have been undertaken not only during cyclic meetings, but also during different thematic conferences or those devoted solely to conservation issues such as the conference *Polska Konserwacja w Egipcie i na Bliskim Wschodzie* [*Polish Conservation in Egypt and in the Middle East*]. An important part of organizations' activities referring to safeguarding of world heritage, has concerned activities at the forum of cyclic Meetings of Culture Ministers' from the countries belonging to Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEM CMM), where we have participated in works connected with organization of cooperation in the scope of safeguarding and conservation of European and Asian monuments. In 2011 and 2013, the Institute cooperated with the British Library's Arcadia program, which covered digitalization and conservation of the collection of manuscripts in Ethiopia. In 2012, resources from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, obtained through the Polish Embassy in Hanoi, were spent on conservation workshops held in Hue Monuments Conservation Center, in Hue – the former capital of Vietnam, within "Technical Training in Hue for Vietnamese Specialists in the Area of Renovation and Conservation of Historic Sites and Objects" for the specialists from this country. The seat of the Institute hosts cyclic seminars, during which not only historical and culture-related issues, but also conservation problems are discussed.

Our goal is to present theoretical and practical issues of conservation and safeguarding of tangible cultural heritage in the context of cultural differences in understanding aesthetical, social and spiritual values. Poland is a country with exceptional experience in safeguarding cultural heritage. Its difficult history, struggle to maintain the national identity and then the necessity to rebuild a totally destroyed country had a great impact not only on the rich experience in rescuing the heritage but also on the establishment of so-called "Polish school of conservation" associated with the specific cultural conditions. Our members perform conservation work in various countries and deal with conservation and safeguarding of non-European art in Polish collections.