



Collection Development, Cultural Heritage,
and Digital Humanities

DIGITAL TECHNIQUES FOR DOCUMENTING AND PRESERVING CULTURAL HERITAGE

Edited by **ANNA BENTKOWSKA-KAFEL**
and **LINDSAY MacDONALD**



ARC HUMANITIES PRESS

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FOREWORD

COSCH stands for Colour and Space in Cultural Heritage and represents four years of networking activities of scientists and researchers from other disciplines from twenty-eight European countries. They share a dedication to improving the understanding of optical measurement techniques, applied to various tasks in documentation of material cultural heritage. The COSCH network benefited from the support and funding of the European Cooperation in Science and Technology, commonly known as COST. COST was founded in 1971 as an intergovernmental framework for cooperation in science and technology and is one of the oldest European bodies funding networking in these areas. Cooperation is implemented through the so-called Actions, such as COSCH. A COST Action provides a platform for dialogue and exchange of interdisciplinary knowledge amongst researchers from different academic disciplines, as well as industry and commercial research laboratories.

COST Actions have a funding period of four years. The funding covers networking activities, mainly the cost of organizing and travelling to meetings, conferences, and workshops. Financial support is also available for research exchange visits (so-called Short-term Scientific Missions, or STSMs), training schools, publications, and other dissemination activities. Personnel costs cannot be funded, which distinguishes COST Actions from research projects supported through the framework programmes of the European Union, such as Horizon 2020 and the earlier 7th Framework Programme (FP7) for Research and Technological Development. The networking character of COST Actions is paramount. Despite the lack of research funding, COST Actions have nonetheless a clear scientific focus that guides work conducted in the course of all activities. COST takes a bottom-up approach to the selection of proposals for funding: any kind of scientific objectives held by an international group of researchers may compete for support, if it fits within the COST implementation rules. When accepted, a proposal is transformed into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and is signed by all participating countries. This document defines the objectives, programme of work, its milestones and measures to be implemented by the Action. The summary of the COSCH MoU (2012, p. 3) reads:

True, precise and complete documentation of artefacts is essential for conservation and preservation of our cultural heritage (CH). By ensuring access to the best possible documentation of artefacts we are contributing to the enhanced understanding of material CH and help its long-term preservation. We are all responsible for ensuring that this heritage is

passed on to future generations. Documentation of CH involves researchers, scientists and professionals from multiple disciplines and industries. There is a need to promote research, development and application of non-contact optical measurement techniques (spectral and spatial) adapted to the needs of heritage documentation on a concerted European level, in order to protect, preserve, analyse, understand, model, virtually reproduce, document and publish important CH in Europe and beyond. Research in this field typically relies on nationally-funded projects with little interaction between stakeholders. This Action will provide a stimulating framework for articulating and clarifying problems, sharing solutions and skills, standardising methodologies and protocols, encouraging a common understanding, widening applications and dissemination. The Action will foster open standards for state-of-the-art documentation of CH. It will simplify the usage of high-resolution optical techniques in CH and define good practice and stimulate research.

COSCH represents four years of intense interdisciplinary work, to the benefit of our common cultural heritage, aimed at optimizing its documentation through a better understanding of technology, and its dependencies on the questions and requirements of specific applications. Exemplary case studies in applied technology, in accordance with identified guiding research questions, are the main subject of this book. They represent the practical work which has been conducted in order to meet the COSCH objectives.

Frank Boochs
COSCH Chairman