

ENHANCED INVESTIGATION OF THE COMPOSITION OF THE VALMIERMUIŽA CASTLE TOWER GROUND FLOOR CEILING'S MONUMENTALLY DECORATIVE PAINTING

EVITA LAMASA, M.A.
Restorer
merkuss@gmail.com
Latvia

INGŪNA STROŽA, M.A.
Restorer
inguna.stroza@gmail.com
Latvia

ABOUT

The tower, built in 1883, is the newest part of the castle complex and still exists today. This date had been inscribed on the tower's weathervane. The castle tower was built as three storeys.

The Valmiermuiža Castle tower's ground floor ceiling's monumentally decorative painting was created in the so-called Moorish style, using examples from the Emir of Granada's Alhambra Castle and motifs from Arabian calligraphy. The monumentally decorative ceiling painting consists of compositions of regularly arranged geometric form arabesque ornaments in the form of eight pointed and four pointed stars (Fig. 2.1.). The painting is compositionally rich and was made in a stencil/pattern technique in bright colours.



Fig. 2. The Valmiermuiža Castle tower's ground floor ceiling's monumentally decorative painting composition



Fig. 3. Valmiermuiža Castle tower's ground floor ceiling's monumentally decorative painting microscopic study

KEYWORDS:
VALMIERMUIŽA CASTLE TOWER,
MONUMENTAL PAINTING, REGIONALLY
SIGNIFICANT CULTURAL MONUMENT,
LIME RENDERING, GLUE-CHALK
PRIMER, OIL PAINT



Fig. 4. Biological damage to the VII ornament of the monumentally decorative ceiling painting composition of the 1st floor of the Valmiermuiža palace tower



I ornament

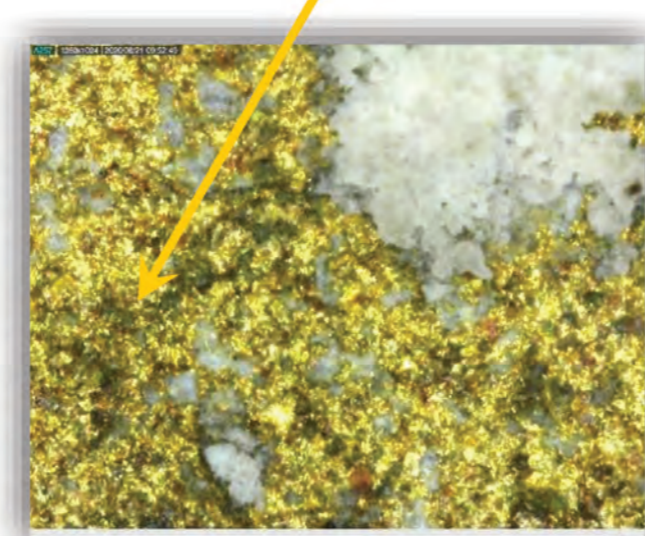
4th sample 2nd periods

7th sample 1st period

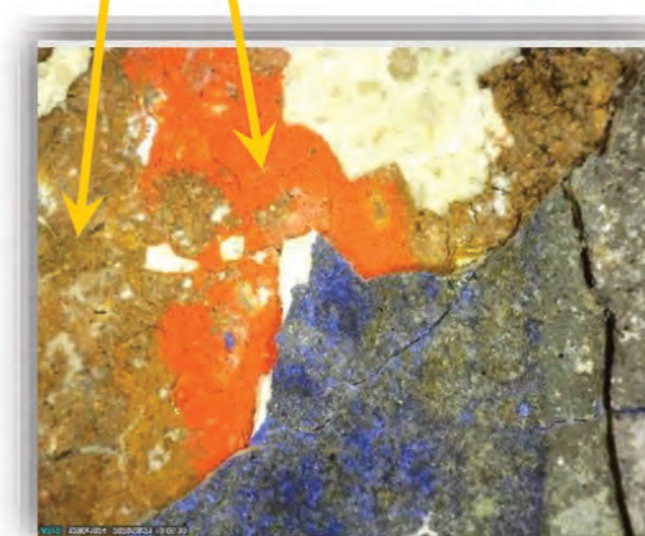
Fig. 7. I ornament of the monumentally decorative ceiling painting composition



VII ornament



8th sample 2nd period

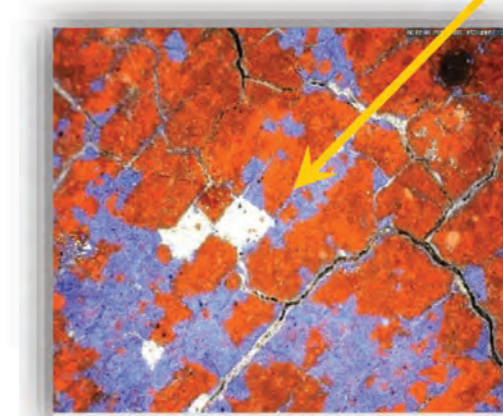


6th and 3rd samples 1st period

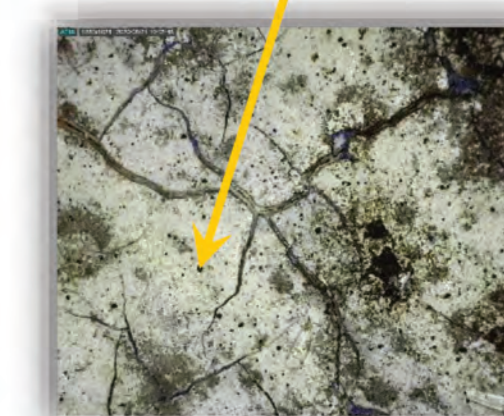
Fig. 5. VII ornament of the monumentally decorative ceiling painting composition



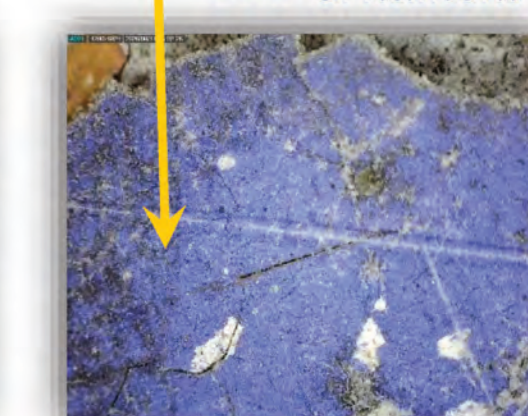
IX ornament



3rd sample 2nd period



5th sample 2nd period



2nd sample 2nd period

Fig. 6. IX ornament of the monumentally decorative ceiling painting composition



Fig. 1. Valmiermuiža Castle tower, 2020

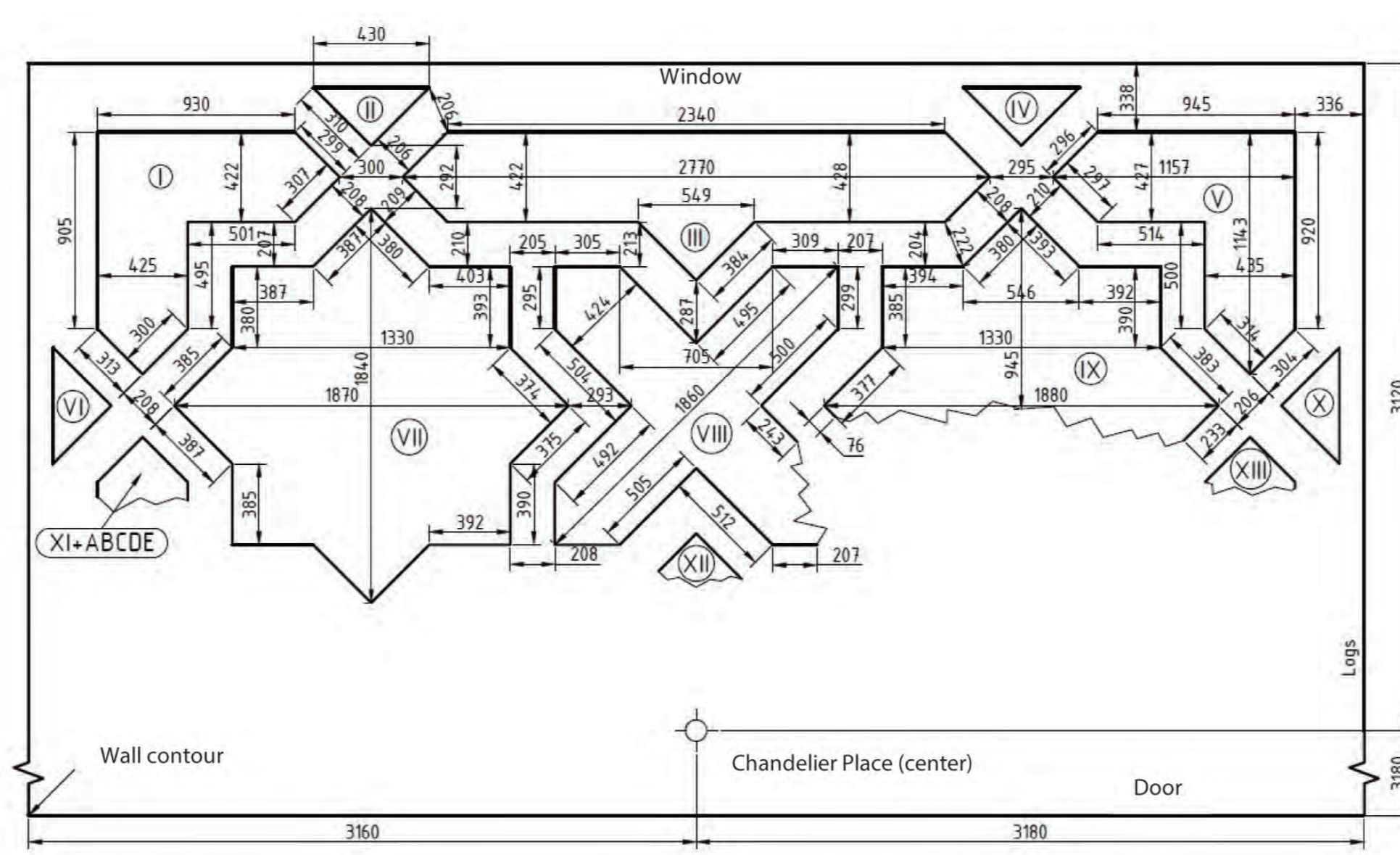


Fig. 2.1. The scheme with scales of preserved monumentally decorative ceiling painting composition ornaments

Fig. 2.1 The Valmiermuiža Castle tower's ground floor ceiling's monumentally decorative painting composition scheme

INVESTIGATION PROCESS

No serious capital repair work had been undertaken on the tower for an extended period, which is why there is damage mainly of a technical nature (holes in the roof, open window apertures without window frames or glass), which has created serious damage in the interior's artistic finish. The painting has been subjected to radical weather fluctuations (air humidity and temperature), corresponding to seasonal changes in the weather and the impact of wind (dust and pollen).

The condition of the ceiling's base material is critical. The wooden beams have decayed. The reed layer armature's wire and nail fastenings are so badly rusted that they can, without resistance, be easily snapped.

The entire paint layer is covered by a comparatively thick layer of grime. The overall loss of the paint layer on the ceiling is ~ 65 % (Fig. 2.1). The monumentally decorative ceiling painting is in an emergency condition - fragile, crumbling and breaking up into a fine craquelure. Under the impact of pressure, the paint chips have become detached from the base and become rolled-up, forming scales.

Microscopic investigation revealed that the black belts of ornamentation are of bronzing which has blackened, which was confirmed by the results of physical chemical analysis (Fig. 5). Traces of salt have formed on the surface of the painting from the effects of moisture and mould has progressed.