CAPTURING, USING, AND CREDITING IMAGES FROM LATIN AMERICA:

A Workshop on Integrating Visual Resources into your Field Research

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Claudia Brittenham, Art History and the Center for Latin American Studies
Bridget Madden, Visual Resources Center
Allie Scholten, Visual Resources Center
Capturing Images
Methods for Field Photography

Equipment

- Architecture/site vs. interior/archives
- Cell phone photography can be effective!
- Tripods, copy stands, levels

More on VRC Scanning and Photography Recommendations
Methods for Field Photography

- Quality - what to look for?
  - For research, teaching or publication?
Image Quality

- Presentation and publication standards:
  - 1500 pixels on the long edge
  - 300 ppi resolution
Methods for Field Photography

- Quality
  - Obstructed views, reflections, blurs
  - Avoid photographing into sun
  - Zooming in
  - What to do in low light settings?
What can be edited?

*sometimes, take multiple
Ethics of Editing Photos

- Decide on your ethical standards for presenting/publishing images
  - Does removing the person or object change the narrative of the image?
  - Do you have permission to publish an image of this person?
- Cropping the image could workaround editing someone or something out
- Could you capture an alternate photo, or choose a different photo to present?
Storage and Backup

- Hard drive
- Cloud-based storage
  - Google Drive, Box, Dropbox
- External storage
- Do these images need to be shared?

File Types

- Preservation
  - HEIC or RAW
- For Use
  - JPG, TIF
Ethics and Photography

Images of people, sacred places & objects

Automatically captured GPS data
Removing Geotags

- Remove location info from images on hard drive
- Disable Location on phone, camera
Think about Cataloging

1) Photographs of site markers/labels interspersed with object photography for cataloging OR
2) Record information elsewhere
Cataloging Systems
Best Practices

● Select a platform: balance your needs with time & effort

● Document your decisions in a Google Doc
  ○ File naming conventions
  ○ Folder structure
  ○ Systems/processes
  ○ Define abbreviations used

● Back-up your images and data
Option 1: Descriptive Filenames & Folders

- Identify/describe the image in the filename
- Store files in folders by research trip
  - Keep photos in the order you took them
  - Descriptive file names allow photos from other sources to be interfiled and discovered with your own
- Browse Adobe Bridge (free!) or similar
File Naming Conventions

- Must be unique
- Pick what’s meaningful to you
- Short but descriptive, abbreviations are useful
- Avoid punctuation (capitals & underscores OK)
- Include date: YYYYMMDD
- Batch rename in Adobe Bridge

More on file naming practices from Princeton University
Option 2: Spreadsheet

- Choose fields to describe your images
- Searching and sorting
- Tracking robust information
- Easy to spin off into different uses, such as permissions requests
- Collaborating? Try a cloud spreadsheet like Airtable or Google Sheets.

VRC Recommendations for Other Platforms
Subject Tagging

- Tag subjects, iconography, or other relevant project information not captured in the file name
- Quickly add to Adobe Bridge or your cataloging spreadsheet/system
- Aids searching & sorting
Other Cataloging Resources

- **Tropy**: research photo management platform by the group that developed Zotero and Omeka. Really rich tools for describing photographs, taking notes, transcribing/transliterating texts and glyphs, etc.

- **ArchaeoCore**: a metadata schema based on VRA Core 4 that “foregrounds the site, maintaining the connection of the site to the object throughout its lifecycle”

- **VRC Guide to Cataloging Your Images**
Track Permissions Requests for Publishing Projects

- Your catalog will help when it’s time to publish
- Spreadsheet provided by your editor
- Can still track even if not yet under contract, save your future self time!

Basic sample spreadsheet from the VRC
Image Permissions and Publishing
Copyright and Fair Use Laws

● The US and Latin American countries have different copyright laws and fair use conventions
● Research national patrimony laws and local conventions where your fieldwork takes place
● Good faith effort to meet your legal obligations
● Consider your ethical obligations and local customs, too
● Bureaucracy, time, labor, and fees may add to the publication timeline
Image Copyright Basics in the US

- Works published 1925 and earlier are in the public domain
- Images of 2D works do not have additional copyright
- Images of 3D works, including public sculpture and architecture, DO have additional copyright

Fair Use

- [CAA Code of Best Practices in Fair Use for the Visual Arts](#)
  - Useful guidelines and limitations to consider your approach
- [CMSI Fair Use Library](#) (fair use codes by discipline)

→ These guidelines do not include concepts of national patrimony or other countries’ laws and practices
Work Rights and Image Rights


Other rights beyond copyright?
Copyright Tools and Resources

- **When Works Pass into the Public Domain**: chart outlining copyright terms for published and unpublished works based on US copyright laws
- **Digital Copyright Slider**: Helps answer the question “Is it Protected by Copyright”? (for works published in the US, although there is an option to review unpublished works)
- **Digital Image Rights Computator**: Helps assess image rights (separate from work rights)
- **University of Chicago Copyright Information Center**
- **Bridgeman v. Corel**: case law establishing that faithful reproductions of 2D works are not protected by copyright
Line Drawings

Creating your own images can potentially help you:

1. Visualize your research and argument
2. Sidestep certain copyright and permissions issues

L: Photo of the cast of an underside of an object.
R: Amanda Chacón's redrawing of an image from a 1906 publication.
Ethics in Publishing Images

Before capturing and using images, consider ethical obligations:

- Human remains
- Live human subjects
- Sacred sites and objects
- Cultural heritage sites
- Looted objects
Publishing Photographs of Human Subjects

- Permission/waiver may be required by the publisher
- Practice reciprocity meaningful to the community
- Identify and humanize individuals you’re depicting whenever possible
Additional Resources

- CLAS Online Cultural and Research Resources
- VRC Guide to Managing Personal Image Archives
- Recordings and resources from the VRC’s Personal Archiving Workshop Series (hosted live during Winter & Spring 2021)
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