

# Conscious Digitisation:

## Supporting the Conservation and Interpretation of the V&A's Collection of Large Scale Reproductions

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### What?

Funded by EPSRC through the SEAHA Centre for Doctoral Training and co-funded by the University of Brighton the research project is supervised by the University of Brighton, University College London and the Victoria and Albert Museum.

The aim of this project is to research digitisation techniques and integrate standards to support the conservation and interpretation of the V&A's collection of large scale reproductions.

### Why?

Since the first public museum opened its doors in the United Kingdom in the 17th century, the key principles to protect and take care of the collections and to make them accessible to the public have remained the same for all UK museums. Increasingly, digital imaging technologies are becoming the leading tool to abide by those principles.

There is however a need for a greater understanding of the wider potential of digital in museums. Resources, internal digitisation requirements and external expectations need to be considered, as each museum collection has its own issues and challenges, and a universal approach to digitisation is not possible.

It is crucial that digitisation technologies are tested against their suitability for a collection and their ability to deliver results that satisfy both internal and external requirements to allow conscious choices to be made and workflows and standards to be implemented.

### How?

The purpose of this project is threefold:

- First, to understand internal digitisation requirements and external expectations to evaluate common threads and differences.
- Second, to investigate which digitisation technologies and methods are most suitable to document, care for and interpret the V&A's collection of large scale reproductions and if there is a need to refine and tailor these technologies to the V&A's needs.
- Third, to determine which tools, workflows and standards are needed to incorporate suitable technologies and methods into the existing imaging services.

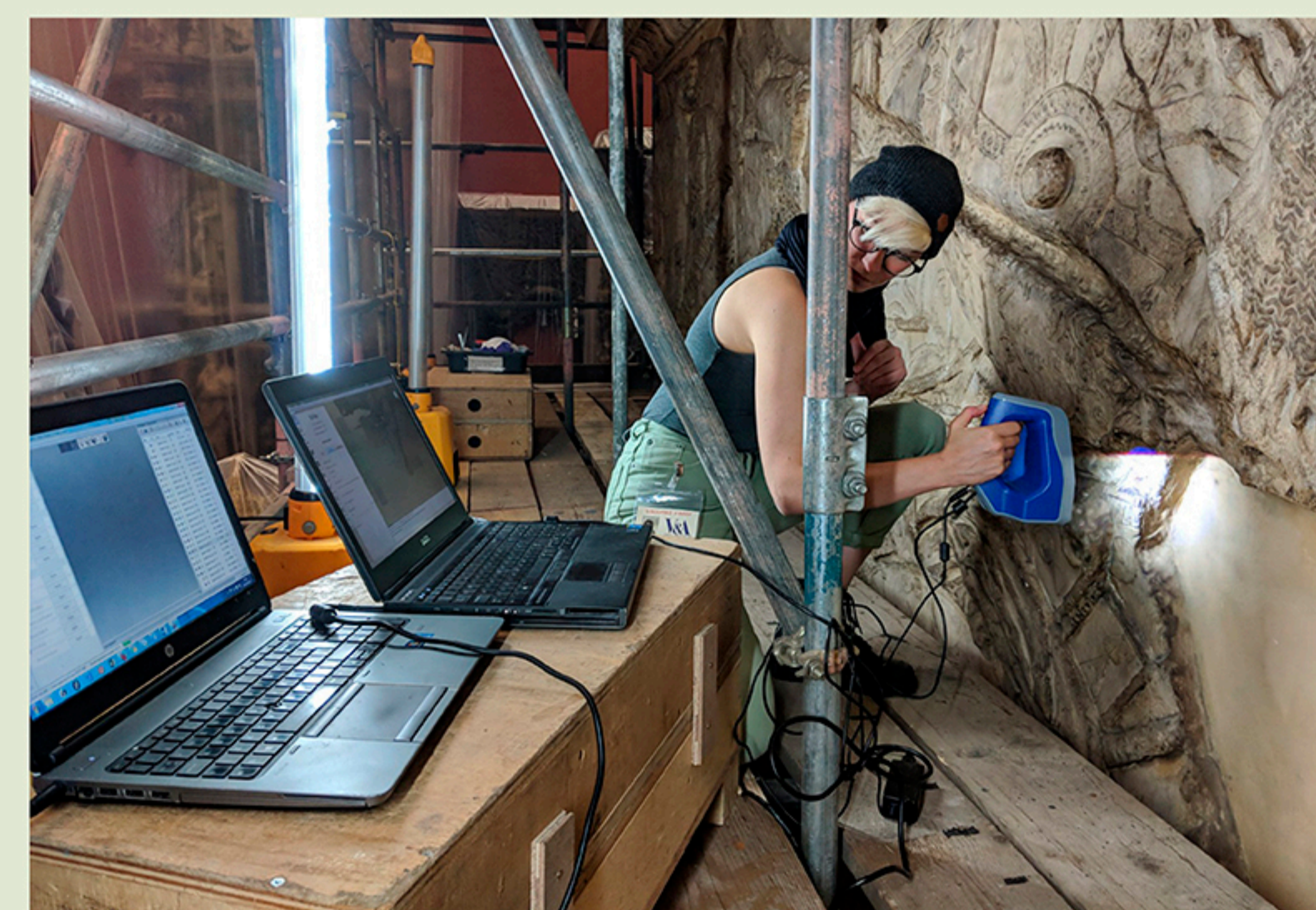


Fig.1

During the renovation of the V&A's cast courts the team were able to make use of erected scaffolding and digitise part of the Trajan Column using both structured light scanning (fig.1) and photogrammetry.

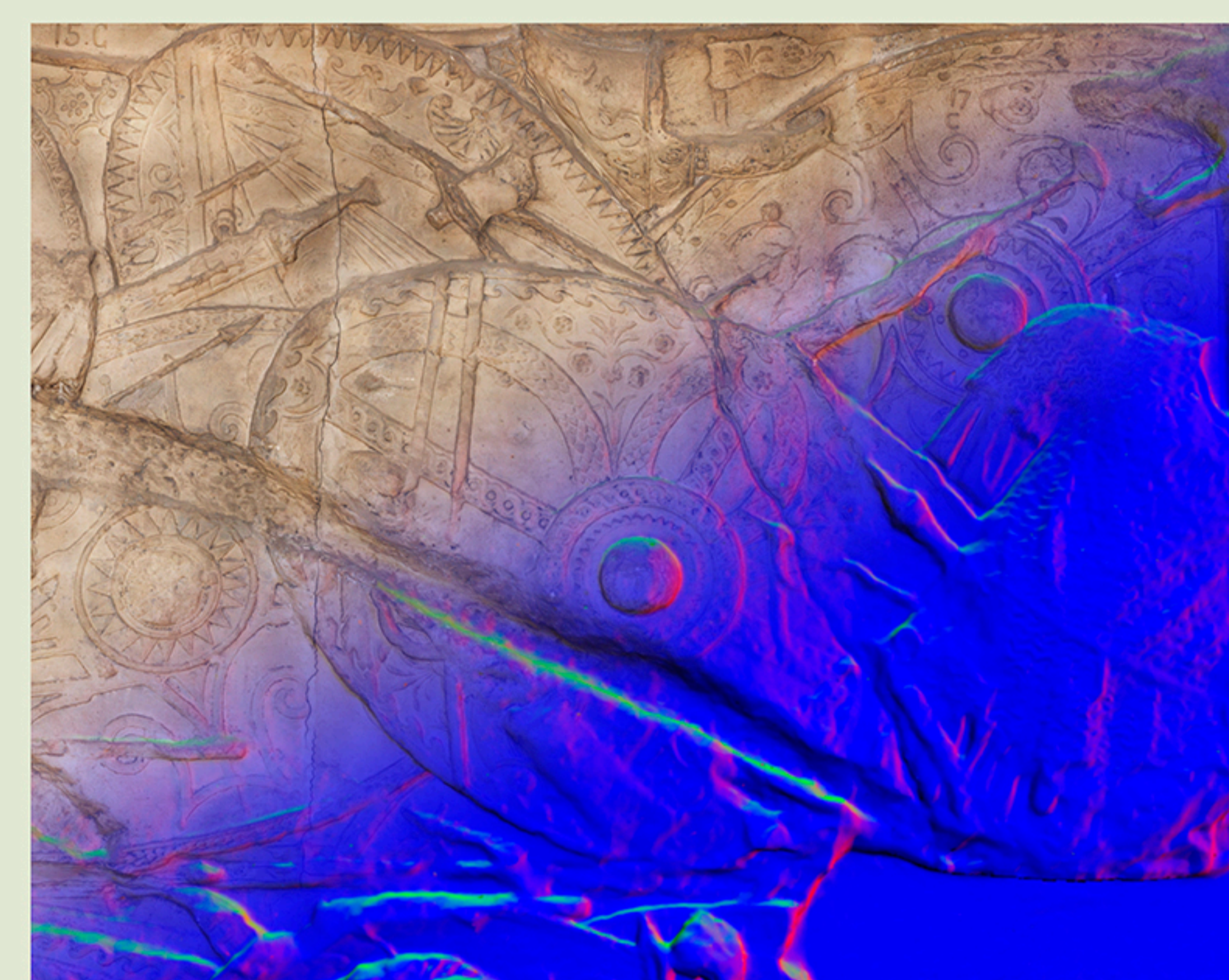


Fig.2

3D reconstruction of a 3m x 1.6m detail on the column's base (Orthophoto overlaid with colour-coded surface variation (fig.2)).