AUTHENTICITY IN RESTORATION PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES

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According to the principles of the Charter of Venice of 1964, "the intention in conserving and restoring monuments is to safeguard them no less as works of art than as historical evidence." In other words, the intention should be to preserve the authentic material evidence of historic objects and works of art. Respect toward significant monuments of the past is not necessarily a recent phenomenon; we remember, for example, how Pausanias during his visit to Olympia in the first century AD, saw a wooden pillar protected by a little cover. In front there was a bronze tablet that announced:2

"Stranger, I am a remnant of a famous house, I, who once was a pillar in the house of Oenomaüs; Now by Cronus' son I lie with these bands upon me, A precious thing, and the baleful flame of fire consumed me not."

Babylon and the great pyramids of Giza in Egypt were included amongst the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World as exceptional achievements of man. Of Babylon hardly anything remains today; and though proposals exist to rebuild the famous tower, this could never be more than a modern hypothetical replica of what once had existed.

The pyramids, instead, have defeated time, and are the only Wonder of the ancient World still standing today. Now they have been included in the List of World Cultural Heritage, established by Unesco in 1972 on the basis of the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. This list is intended to include monuments, groups of buildings and sites, "which are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science." A fundamental criterion for selection to the List is authenticity, and as the Operational Guidelines of the Convention indicate, it "does not limit consideration to original form and structure but includes all subsequent modifications and additions over the course of time, which themselves possess artistic or historical values."4

In 1515, when Leo X nominated Raphael the Prefect of Stones and Marbles in Rome, it was an authorization to select building material for the new basilica of St. Peter. However, the Pope also gave him the power to protect the monuments, that is the stones and marbles with ancient Latin inscriptions, from destruction. The Latin verb 'moneo' means: to admonish, to warn, to remind, to advise; and the word 'monumentum' means something that transmits a message, a memory, or a warning from the past. The bearers of this message were also called monuments, and were the ancient triumphal arches, the ancient bridges, the town gates, funeral monuments, and others with inscriptions on them. The inscriptions were considered important for the cultivation of literature and culture and thus deserved protection, but these ancient monuments were also seen as authentic documents related to Christian martyrdom and so protected for religious reasons; the Pantheon

1. The Pantheon, Rome, in an early 17th century drawing showing the damaged parts before being restored by G. Bernini for Alexander VII Chigi.

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had been dedicated to Christian martyrs in the seventh century AD.

During the Enlightenment in the 18th century, Rome's position as the international center for cultural tourism was again confirmed, and concern was expressed by many visitors for the poor condition of its ancient monuments and major works of art. Especially the paintings and frescoes of Raphael, which were considered of such universal value that their conservation was not the problem of Romans alone, but rose above all frontiers between countries and religions. It was everyone's responsibility equally, regardless of nationality. When speaking of world literature, Goethe declared that all documents that had authentic value belonged to the whole of humanity. He also wrote that "science and art belong to the world, and in front of them all national barriers disappear."

These newly discovered values were reflected also in the restorations of the 18th century. Already the 17th century art critic and historian, Giovan Pietro Bellori, had emphasized the value of authenticity in the paintings of great masters such as Raphael and Carracci. During the 18th century, critics showed preference for preserving the original work of the artist as far as possible. Reintegration of losses was to be done with respect for the original intention of the artist; however, too often this still resulted in painting over part of the original. Sometimes even the subject was 'modernized' to correspond to the fashion of the time. It took a long time until modern theory had fully developed from these beginnings.

Since the Renaissance antique sculptures had been subjected to restorations that often depended only on the imagination of the restorer. Johann Joachim Winckelmann, the German scholar who wrote the first critical history of ancient art, saw the work of classical Greek artists as an ideal model for the modern artists to imitate in order to become great. He based his observations on a careful and detailed inspection and evaluation of the original work of art; he was extremely critical of restorations that falsified the original significance of the work. Winckelmann insisted that modern work should always be indicated so as not to mislead the observer. The famous Neoclassical sculptor, Antonio Canova, who was a disciple of Winckelmann, was invited to restore the marble figures by Phidias that Lord Elgin had brought from the Parthenon of Athens to London. He refused, saying that they were 'real flesh,' and that it would be a sacrilege to touch them. In the early 19th century, it became a guideline also in the restorations of the ancient monuments, carried out under the guidance of Canova, to avoid reconstructions — and when these were necessary, to do them with utmost respect to the original.

Nationalism that was supported by the philosophy of the Age of Enlightenment found concrete expression in the American Declaration of Independence and in the French Revolution, which gave special significance to national monuments as material evidence of the nation's history. Whilst there was much destruction for hate of past authorities, the Declaration of 1794 ordered an inventory to be made of all monuments and historic buildings that now belonged to the people of France. The declaration also protected these buildings against the ignorant vandalism of those who had not been instructed in the arts 'to be aware of the value and the motifs' of these works. The historian and Minister of the Interior, François-Pierre Guizot nominated the first Inspector of Historic Monuments of France, Ludovic
Vitet, in 1830. Guizot was conscious that all periods in the history of the country had contributed to architecture; the historic buildings thus formed a continuous, concrete and authentic chain of documentation that had to be studied, recorded and preserved. Later Anatole France compared a historic building to a book, where the contributions of different generations formed the chapters.

Romanticism and the various revivals of the 19th century contributed to the preference at that time for stylistic purity in medieval buildings, and, consequently, many historic buildings suffered arbitrary and destructive restorations, removal of original parts, and creation of new elements on the basis of analogy. Even for the Notre-Dame of Paris, there were proposals to erect spires on the west towers in order to make the cathedral more complete. The movement against this type of restoration was led by the English writer and art critic John Ruskin, who fought with an almost religious fervour against restoration, and emphasized the intrinsic and moral values in the true and authentic work of past generations. The stones of a historic building are a living testimony of this work, and have to be guarded like jewels in a crown so long as this is possible with all the means that one can invent — even unsightly ones. Then, if nothing helps, let it go! Copying to him was inconceivable: “what copying can there be of surfaces that have been worn half an inch down? The whole finish of the work was in the half inch that is gone; if you attempt to restore that finish, you do it conjecturally; if you copy what is left, granting fidelity to be possible, . . . how is the new work better than the old? There was yet in the old some life, some mysterious suggestion of what it had been, and of what it had lost; some sweetness in the gentle lines which rain and sun had wrought. There can be none in the brute hardness of the new carving.” In 1877, William Morris, in his Manifesto for the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) invited his readers to maintenance and respect of the architectural heritage, “to treat our ancient buildings as monuments of a bygone art, created by bygone manners, that modern art cannot meddle with without destroying”, and to “hand them down instructive and venerable to those that come after us”.

The Italian theory for the conservation of works of art drew from the different cultural approaches that have been dealt with above. After the Second World War, this theory was crystallized by Cesare Brandi, the founder and first director of the Italian Central Institute of Restoration in Rome. According to Brandi, restoration consists of the preservation of the material of a work of art, and it aims at the re-establishment of the potential unity of the work of art so far as possible without committing an artistic or historic falsification. A fundamental pre-condition for restoration is the recognition and definition of an object as a work of art, considering its aesthetic and historic aspects. Restoration is the method for transmitting the work of art to the future.

Time is an important factor in historic objects. The patina of age is not the dirt deposited on the surface, but it is the permanent alteration of the surface of materials as a result of weathering and ageing processes. In terms of cleaning, it is necessary to distinguish and respect this, which in fact is the original surface of the object. Over-cleaning would necessarily mean loss of this original surface and consequently loss of some of the artistic and historic values of the object. Past restorations and over-paintings did not generally involve the same artistic aims and qualities as the original, they did more to obscure the original work of art than to provide any significant artistic or historic contribution. Consequently, if the potential unity of the original work of art still can be conceived, it may be justified to remove the later additions after proper documentation in order to reveal the original work of art. Reintegration of losses of material may be justified or not according to their position, depth and size. In principle, reintegration must not be based on conjecture, nor be made in the artistically most significant parts. Modern work should be distinguishable at close inspection. Decision about removal of later additions to a work of art may sometimes be difficult. In principle, when an older work of art has become part of a significant new artistic creation, restoration should aim
at the re-establishment of the potential unity of this later work of art. This could be the case, for example, when antique sculptures have been used for the decoration of a Renaissance villa.

In 1835, when the newly established kingdom of Greece took over the Acropolis of Athens, and the earlier military defenses were removed, the excavators found a great part of the marbles of the little temple of Athena Nike, which had been demolished in the 17th century. The almost symbolic, nationalistic re-erection of this temple, gave a special meaning to the Greek word 'anastylosis' (restoration). The Charter of Venice, which ruled out reconstruction in general, approved of anastylosis as "re-assembling of existing but dismembered parts" of a monument.10. "The material used for integration should always be recognisable and its use should be the least that will ensure the conservation of a monument and the reinstatement of its form."11

In the first decades of the 20th century, important campaigns were undertaken by the Greek government to restore and partly rebuild the temples of the Acropolis, which had suffered so badly in the past centuries. Unfortunately, the technology of concrete and iron that was used in the restorations is now causing trouble by breaking the original blocks of marble and by staining the material. The present restoration work tries to correct these mistakes by referring to the most advanced knowledge that the science of today can provide. Due to high air-pollution, remaining original statues will be taken to a museum and replaced with casts. Structures must be strengthened to resist seismic action. Though the technical aspects of these, on-going restorations may well be justified, questions related to authenticity have raised some controversy. In the 17th century the Parthenon had been ruined in an explosion, and its potential unity was destroyed. This event, though regrettable, has become so significant that it cannot be ignored in the restoration. A displaced column recalling the explosion, or a missing panel documenting the period when the temple was used as a Christian cathedral, have all become part of the image that time has given to Parthenon through its history. One can even ask, whether it is justified in this case to remove completely all traces of past restorations, and to replace them with new restorations — neatly polished! To do this for didactic reasons may also be questioned. Didactic models may be useful in museums to explain earlier forms of a structure, but over-restoration on the original site may, on the contrary, result in confusing what is original with what is new; it may in fact cause loss of faith in the authentic, and be counter-productive by discouraging visitors from using their imaginations.

A building, like a work of art, can be conceived as a whole and have its potential unity. For example, the beautiful details of a Taj-Mahal are not to be considered as independent works of art, but as an integral part of the
whole. Conservation work should aim at maintaining the authenticity and the potential unity of this whole. In a medieval building, such as the cathedral of Wells, the sculptural figures were conceived as an integral part of the west front and were built at the same time as the rest of the structure. The significance of each single figure results from its iconography and specific role in this context. Decisions regarding the replacement of these statues with replicas or completing the elevation with new figures should be considered on the basis of the criterion of authenticity of the whole building, the whole work of art. Even technical decisions, such as those concerning cleaning and consolidation, should be seen in the light of the same criteria of authenticity and maintaining the potential unity of the building in order to arrive at a balanced result from the aesthetic and historic point of view.

There are, however, buildings where the construction has continued for centuries, such as the cathedral of Trondheim in Norway, and here one may more easily accept even a modern addition. The historic core of the city of Split in Yugoslavia consists of the remains of the palace of the Roman Emperor Diocletian, subsequently modified through significant contributions of various centuries from the Middle Ages through the Baroque to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As a living town with such important historical stratification, Split has also been included in the List of World Cultural Heritage. Restorations and interventions of any kind, necessitated by the use of the city, should always respect this historic authenticity. For example, one would be reluctant to accept the demolition of the 18th to 20th century line of shops, that give scale to the water front of the palace, in order to display the remains of the Roman wall behind.

The theory of Brandt and the approach of Ruskin are mainly concerned with the aesthetic and historic aspects of works of art and of historic buildings. In architecture, however, the aspect of use is an important factor that is often the cause of modifications as well, as has been indicated in the theory of the Austrian conservator and historian Alois Riegle, at the beginning of our century. Even the Venice Charter recalls that conservation of "monuments is always facilitated by making use of them for some socially useful purpose". In historic towns, this aspect is even more evident, and the policy of urban conservation must necessarily take it into account. The 1976 Unesco Recommendation regards historic areas and their surroundings as "an irreplaceable universal heritage", and states further that "every historic area and its surroundings should be considered in their totality as a coherent whole whose balance and specific nature depend on the fusion of the parts of which it is composed and which include human activities as much as the buildings, the spatial organization and the surroundings. All valid elements, including human activities, however modest, thus have a significance in relation to the whole which must not be disregarded."

From the point of view of authenticity, continuous development and change, which often characterize urban fabric, may, however, create problems. Even Lübeck, the old Hanseatic town on the Baltic Sea, could not be accepted to the World Heritage List, because too much of its fabric had been lost in the recent decades— either as a result of war or of commercial activities. It was not considered to have kept its authenticity as a representative medieval town. Also reconstructions do not qualify as part of the authentic urban fabric. The Bryggen or 'wharf' area of the west-coast city of Bergen in Norway reflects the thousand year old history of the town.
express the social and climatic requirements of the country. In Finland instead, the 17th century market town of Raahd, on the northern sea side, was built with wide streets and large court yards to satisfy the needs of fire safety and agriculture. In each case, the policy of conservation must take full account of the physical, cultural, political, and socio-economic context in order to reach concrete results.

In order to avoid unnecessary pressure for change and destruction, it is important to plan the type and scale of commercial and other activities for historic towns in a way that these can be absorbed by the historic structure — that the requirements of the existing fabric are duly considered. Preservation of the sole elevation of a building may be accepted as an exception in the case of emergency, but it can never form a general rule in the preservation of historic areas. Building norms, such as those related to fire regulations, air conditioning, and to consolidation and reinforcement of existing structures in earthquake-prone zones, are generally developed according to the needs of rapidly-advancing modern building technology. If they are blindly applied to historic buildings without due consideration of values involved, results may be disastrous. Dubrovnik, on the Adriatic coast, has a record of one major earthquake every twenty-eight years, which means several during the three hundred years that have elapsed since the town was largely rebuilt after an earthquake in the 17th century. In the earthquake of 1979, relatively few buildings had serious problems, though minor damage occurred in many structures. According to present norms, all historic structures should be made safe and resistant in case of a major earthquake. Without considering the existing structural system and its eventual consolidation to resist in the next seismic action, engineering calculations usually give preference to calculable modern structural systems. In the case of Dubrovnik, the result would be a completely new reinforced concrete structure. Only the elevations could be preserved or rebuilt in original stones. If this plan should be carried out, one might well ask, what is then left of the authenticity of Dubrovnik — also part of World Heritage?

The area is listed as World Heritage, but the western part that was rebuilt as a replica after the 1955 fire has not been included.

Rome, an outstanding example of an historic town, which has been the capital of the ancient world empire, the capital of Christianity, the capital of art and culture, and today the capital of Italy, has been included also in the List of World Heritage. Its structure is a clear example of how an urban complex can grow over a period of more than two thousand years always keeping something of the earlier phases while new structures are added. It shows, how a town reflects its history and development in the whole of its fabric — not only in some significant monuments or in external features such as elevations. The policy of conservation of such a town must consider the whole urban fabric in order to preserve its authenticity and the material evidence of its history. An historic town consists of various types of buildings and infrastructures that reflect the social and economic structure of its population as well as the changes that have occurred throughout history. The urban fabric may find its characteristic forms according to cultural and climatic contexts. The typology of the buildings of Ferrara reflects its earlier function as a medieval commercial center on the river Po, as well as its later phase as a Renaissance garden city. In Isphahan, in Iran, the articulated quarters and curved narrow streets
During the last hundred or two hundred years, conservation has obtained an officially recognized position in the legislation of most countries. The principles of conservation have developed, both in theories and in guidelines established in practice, and have today found an expression even in internationally approved documents. The cultural heritage is a tangible, material evidence of the contribution of generations that forms the basis of the modern world. We may say with Morris, "stave off decay by daily care"\(^{14}\), but due to the complexity of values involved, we also need a critical-historical approach for its conservation. Principles and theories are continuously challenged facing new situations; terminology needs to be refined to correspond to the requirements of the multidisciplinary field. The Charter of Venice invites conservators to have "recourse to all the sciences and techniques which can contribute to the study and safeguarding of the architectural heritage"\(^{15}\), and we can be grateful that modern technology can provide tools and instruments that were not available a short time ago. However, we have to be wise enough to use this knowledge for the well-being of our heritage and not the contrary. What we face in conservation, is a cultural choice. When the Arch of Titus was restored 160 years ago, the simplified design of new parts did not result from lack of ability, but it was a conscious cultural choice to respect the original. We have to be able to choose the appropriate medicine for each case, and for this we need our brains, our hands, and our hearts.

Footnotes:
2. Pausanias, Description of Greece, V, xx, 6-7.
6. La Commission temporaire des Arts, 'Instruction sur la manière d'inventorier et de conserver ...', 1794.
11. Idem.
13. Unesco, 'Recommendation concerning the safeguarding and contemporary role of historic areas', (1976), Art. 3.