



# The ideas on preservation at the beginning of the 20th century in German-speaking countries: some lessons for Brazil today

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## **Abstract**

*The aim of this article is to analyze the proposals contained in the texts of Riegl, Dehio and Dvořák that have been translated in this volume of the journal, and which are of interest to the Brazilian context today. In order to do so, we first present succinctly, the way in which the writings of these authors are incorporated in Brazil. We then point out themes that emerge from their texts that remain current and that can find repercussions in other cultural contexts. Among these, it is possible to mention the following matters, which structure the subtitles of this article: problems related to the use of theoretical references to preservation; the conservation-restoration tension and the different ways of regenerating cultural assets; the permanency of the dangers threatening cultural assets, as enunciated by Dvořák; the importance of the environment in which the assets are inserted and the importance of the landscape. Pointing out some convergences and divergences among the authors and ramifications in the contemporary debate in Brazil, this article highlights the importance of a coherent approach in the method and criteria used to guide, from an ethical point of view, interventions in cultural assets.*

**Keywords:** *Cultural assets, conservation, restoration.*

## **Introduction**

The knowledge and critical analysis of publications in the German language regarding preservation is still very limited in Brazil. This fact is partly due to the difficulty caused by the language – the relatively limited number of students in the country who are fluent in German – and the difficulty of acquiring access to some of those texts. If these facts continue to present obstacles even today, they were even more difficult to overcome at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Current research on preservation has not yet revealed an impact of German-speaking authors on our debates on the subject from the beginning of that century.

As for the current scientific production, art historians have been exploring, for some decades now, the texts of Alois Riegl and Max Dvořák dealing with art history. A pioneer example is the text by Hannah Levy, an art historian of German origin who moved to Brazil in 1937 and remained there for ten years; in her 1941 article<sup>1</sup> on the Baroque, she mobilized and made Heinrich Wölfflin's, Max Dvořák's and Leo Balet's theories known. The discussion on the thoughts of Riegl and Dvořák in the field of preservation, however, is more recent – especially from the 1990's on – and more limited, with few texts being used in that sense.

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<sup>1</sup> On this subject, see Fernanda Fernandes (2016). On the role of Hannah Levy in Brazil, see, for example, the book coordinated by Adriana Nakamuta (2010).



BOTAFOGO BAY IN 1889, RIO DE JANEIRO. *Image: Public domain.*

For Riegl, the source is above all *The modern cult of monuments*, which has been translated into Portuguese twice in recent years. One translation was done in 2006 from the French edition of 1984 (with a translation from the German by Daniel Wieczorek); it was translated by Eliane Ribeiro Peixoto and Albertina Vicentini, and published in Goiânia by the Catholic University of Goiás. The other, translated by Werner Rothschild Davidsohn and Anat Falbel directly from German, was published in 2014 by Perspectiva, in São Paulo. There is also a Portuguese edition of 2013 (Edições 70), but we seldom use it. Until those recent publications in Brazil, the most used widely were mainly the above-mentioned French edition and the Spanish edition of 1987 (with a translation by Ana Pérez López).

In the case of Dvořák, he started receiving more attention in the field of preservation after the publication of the *Catechism for the preservation of monuments* in 2008 by Ateliê Editorial, with a translation by the art historian Valéria Alves Esteves de Lima and with introductory essays by herself, the art historian Jens Baumgarten and by myself, Beatriz Mugayar Kühl. This is the first and only text by Dvořák on preservation published in Brazil.

Despite the impact that these publications had, and continue to have on our environment, it is possible to notice, firstly, that we use a very limited bibliographic universe. Other texts by those authors are practically unknown in Brazil and there are no Portuguese translations. The important authors of German language, like Georg Dehio, published in this volume, or Paul Clemen, are little known in the country; their ideas are only mobilized by a very limited number of scholars, mainly from the Italian translations published by Sandro Scarrocchia (1995). Even the relevant texts and professionals from that period in restoration, from other cultural environments, such as the Belgians Louis Cloquet (1901) and Charles Buisson (1903), are seldom mentioned.



PAUL CLEMEN  
*Image: Public domain.*



FOUNTAIN OF CHARLES BULS. *Image: Public domain.*

Likewise, when Riegl and Dvořák are analyzed in Brazil, it is generally based on the intrinsic content of few texts and on their relationship to the more general frame of the transformations, throughout history, of the discussions on the preservation of the cultural heritage. However, they are not usually analyzed in depth, from the role that these texts played within the framework of the wider production by the authors and in the interrelationships, oppositions and dialogues with other interlocutors from that same period.

A testimony of such a dialogue is the text by Riegl, published in this volume, which directly analyzes Dehio's proposals, also translated here. Note that Dehio's conference is from 1905, and Riegl's text was published that same year. It is a fast dynamic of exchange of ideas, even by today's standards. Dvořák's text was written with a time span of just over ten years, but it refers to that same atmosphere of debate.

It was a world of intellectual effervescence, with expressive repercussions on the practices of the times, which is of great interest; the written production deserves to be explored in depth, in its specificities and nuances within the period itself, in its critical fortune over the last century and in what contributions it can still offer today. For this article, the decision was to specify some concerns that arise during the reading of these texts, listed under the following subtitles, which are of interest for the current environment in Brazil, but which can undoubtedly find echoes in other cultural contexts.

### **The pitfalls of limited reading**

As mentioned above, knowledge of this specific area of discussion is limited in Brazil. There is still a problem regarding the way in which the theoretical references are employed in the country, something that I partially explored in the article, "Paul Philippot, o restauro arquitetônico no Brasil e o tempo"<sup>2</sup>, in the first volume of this journal. In addition to the issues mentioned in that article, the disqualification of the theoretical references, take on yet another form, which is a biased interpretation of the authors' texts. The way in which the writings of Riegl are referenced in Brazil is, in that sense, very significant.

In most cases, *The modern cult of monuments* is analyzed as an isolated work, disregarding the fact that it integrated a project of legislative organization for the care of monuments in Austria, composed of three parts: the *Cult*, which is the theoretical discussion that lays the foundation for the proposal of an act; the project to carry out the act itself; and the provisions for the application of the act, which would be implemented at a later stage, with another structure.

When reading this set of documents, it is clear that, for Riegl, when working on monuments, the "values" he theorized should not be applied alternately or indistinctly, depending on the situation; the proposed law is essentially based on the respect for the value of "age" (Riegl, 1995: 209). Riegl chose that value, in his project for the piece of legislation, because he considered it to be the most inclusive and respectful; it took into account, in an integral manner, the works of all and each of the phases of human production, the various stratifications within the same work and the traces of the passage of time. And furthermore, the age value was based "on the solidarity with the entire world" (Riegl, 1995: 209-211), thus protecting the collective interest, rather than the interests of restricted groups.

In the text translated in this volume, Riegl also emphasizes the age value, based on a critical analysis of the panorama of his time, contrasting both the views of Dehio and those of Bodo Ehardt. Riegl criticizes Ehardt for his tendency to reconstruct and place more value on the ideal form than on the historic fabric (although Riegl makes a nuanced evaluation and

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<sup>2</sup> "Paul Philippot, architectural restoration in Brazil and time".

points out the conservative respect of Eberhard for some ruins) and Eberhard's oversimplification when considering history as secondary part of the work itself. Regarding Dehio, despite the closeness of the two authors regarding their respect for the work transformed by time, Riegl considers that Dehio's vision is still limited to historical-artistic issues; it is also opposed to the idea of national life as enunciated by him,<sup>3</sup> to reaffirm the relevance and the greater scope of the age value.

Riegl's law remained difficult to access until 1995, when it was republished in German and in Italian (with a translation by Sandro Scarrocchia<sup>4</sup>). It gradually became incorporated in the reflections on the Austrian. The comprehension of the text of the *Cult* is limited if it is disconnected from the law project; according to Scarrocchia (2006: 229), this has been the cause for imaginative conclusions about Riegl, discounting him as someone who was only speculative, and far removed from practice. But, despite having now more than two decades of this new phase of dissemination of the *Cult* as part of a larger project, a narrow interpretation of the text still persists in Brazil; the author's proposals are deformed and emphasis is placed on the most appropriate "value" for a given discourse, without actually interpreting Riegl's text in its real, and even deontological, implications.

This lack of theoretical rigor in interpretation does not refer only to texts that are already one century old and come from a context that is still little known to us. It also happens with recent writings such as, for example, the one by Salvador Muñoz Viñas in the *Contemporary theory of restoration*. It is interesting to note that Muñoz Viñas (2003: 14) shows that some of the ideas that support his theory had already been presented by Riegl at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He does not agree with Riegl's classification methods, but he points out his pioneer role and the expansion he brought to our field, by considering the various forms of perceiving cultural heritage. Muñoz Viñas, however, also remains silent on the fact that the *Cult* is part of a tripartite project and that Riegl used one of the values, the age value, as a reference for the solution of conflicts.

Muñoz Viñas (2003: 163) mentions a series of procedures that must be put into action – negotiation, balance, discussion, dialogue, consensus – in order to characterize a restoration. He emphasizes the means of appropriation by the community; by invoking the various actors involved with the issue of conservation, he sheds light on the intricate world that surrounds cultural heritage. However, he does not clarify to the same extent, which principles would guide conflict resolution. By indicating only the procedures, this may mean that, depending on the forces involved and the manner of conducting the actions – and anyone who has already participated in a public hearing knows to what extent specific directing can affect the final result, regardless of the merit of the issue. The same problem, at the same time and in the same place, can have completely opposite solutions. In fact, the idea that the law of the strongest prevails, or that the solutions are random, is far removed from the proposal of Muñoz Viñas. However, by leaving open the basis for the solution of conflict, some Brazilian authors have used his text to justify completely opposite positions, such as reconstructions, voluminous complements, massive substitutions, new constructions based on projects, all based on an "ethics" of negotiation and inter-subjectivity, in reality used only for personal gain.

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<sup>3</sup> This subject on national life, homeland and education appears in different forms in the texts of the three authors translated here, and deserves to be explored in depth by researchers dealing with those topics, given their links with the discussion at that time in German-speaking countries, and the (tragic) consequences in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>4</sup> See the considerations by Scarrocchia (2006: 229) himself. The *Cult*, the project for an act and the regulations for the enforcement of that act have been published in the volume edited by Scarrocchia (1995), containing an anthology of Riegl's words, as well as from other authors, some contemporary to Riegl, and other more recent ones, including Scarrocchia himself.

This discourse frequently appears associated with modern architecture; some authors, mostly architects, say that, for the most recognized elements valued by historiography and critics, what matters is the “original image,” which can be re-established – even more so because it is often possible to consult the executive project, and there is abundant photographic documentation on the work –, to the detriment of the material aspects which are transformed by time and of possible transformations and additions. And, for this, they used Muñoz Viñas. We should note that the process he proposes – of negotiation, equilibrium, discussion, dialogue, consensus – does not aim towards a single plausible solution for modern canonical architecture. For those architects, the only voice that can be heard is their own, without taking into account that any architectural work has many implications for other areas of knowledge (history, engineering, sociology, anthropology, etc.) and for the community in general that attributes complex meanings to those constructions which widely extrapolate only their idealized image.

Riegl, Dehio and Dvořák, all emphasize, with different nuances in the texts presented here, the importance of preserving the materiality of the work, criticizing the 18<sup>th</sup> century stylistic unity, the corrections and purifications commonly practiced in that century in a search aimed at reconstituting an idealized form.

It is ironic to note that, when referring to the restoration of canonical modernism, many current architects who consider themselves at the forefront of thoughts on restoration, and who are opposed to everything that was painfully built in the disciplinary field of restoration since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, have a very similar thought to the one existing in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and which was so vilified by the different trends of the modernism.

**“May God save monuments from great restorers!”**

This quote from Dehio significantly shows the tension between conservators and restorers still present in the change from the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In recent decades several authors, including John Ruskin, William Morris and Camillo Boito, had already been fiercely criticizing the incisive nature of most of the interventions made throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with the return to a supposedly idealized original state, the consequence of which was the suppression of elements added over the centuries and even the disappearance of important marks of the work’s history. This made secular buildings seem newly built, causing serious damage to the work as a historical document and problems in its perception, by reincorporating it in a violent way into an existing reality, gradually stratified over time.

Given the large number of works that underwent such actions –just remember the data reported by Tschudi-Madsen (1976: 25), which states that between 1840 and 1873, 7144 churches were restored in England; this number corresponded to half of the medieval churches in the country –the virulence of many of the criticisms of the period regarding restoration is, therefore, not surprising. John Ruskin, in 1849, considered restoration a “destruction accompanied by a false description of the destroyed monument” (Ruskin, 1944: 250); Camillo Boito, in 1884, considered conservators as “necessary and worthy men” while the restorers were “almost always superfluous and dangerous men” (Boito, 2002: 37). And Georg Dehio, in the text translated in this volume, affirms that the “18<sup>th</sup> century historicism, in addition to its legitimate daughter, conservation of the monuments, also generated an illegitimate daughter, restoration” (Dehio, 1995: 353).

Boito, nevertheless, when evidencing the dangers of restoration, took fundamental steps to contain the interventionist fury and to turn restoration into a culturally based act, respectful of the work as a historical document, which is stratified in time and legitimate. Riegl, on the other hand, launched the basis to overcome the opposition between conservation and restoration and to lay the foundation for a responsible preservation, preferably conservative. Dvořák, in the text translated here (especially in item IV), shows that much of what was done in his time were false restorations that had to be fought, and he presented a program of what should be, in fact, carried out in restoration.

Françoise Choay, when analyzing the transformations of that period, shows that preservation presupposes the use of two specific instruments: a normative construction (jurisdiction), which conferred to the project its institutional status; and a solidary and tributary discipline of historical knowledge when it came to practical action, restoration, which built its instruments throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century (coming from a long tradition of re-reading of experiences from previous centuries) and acquired its epistemological statute at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, precisely with Alois Riegl (Choay, 2011: 22). The restoration thus assumed characteristics of an autonomous disciplinary field, with its own matured theoretical-methodological and technical-operational instruments.

This discussion, evidenced during the transition from the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, would later be strengthened by authors like Cesare Brandi, in the period following World War II, with a solidary articulation between theory and the practice of interventions, under the name “restoration”. It was understood as an autonomous disciplinary field –and not isolated, since it requires the collaboration of different fields of knowledge– which in fact preserves (and does not destroy, as it happened in the 19<sup>th</sup> century) the work in its conformation, including its materiality, and as a historical document. In addition, restoration does not allow a return to any given state: the work is in a certain condition and is directed to another, with a full respect for its documentary, formal and material aspects.

From these theoretical and practical developments related to the intervention treatments in cultural heritage, the antinomy between conservation and restoration should be overcome nowadays.

Ricardo Dalla Negra (2017: 35-37), for example, is opposed to what he considers the incoherence of the use of the two terms in Italy at the moment, affirming that, from that process of review initiated at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, restoration can only be called as such if it has as its objective, in fact, conservation; and there is no sense in avoiding the use of the term restoration and replacing it with conservation only because “restoration” evokes modes of intervention treatment from other historical moments, which we no longer share today.<sup>5</sup> In other words, the 18<sup>th</sup>-century vision of restoration has been overcome, in theory and in practice, and if restoration does not have conservation as its purpose, it cannot be considered as such. For actions that do not have conservation as their central objective, the author proposes the term restructuring. While restoration aims at the conservation and the “resolution of the text,” restructuring implies a recovery of a generic, non-conservative type, whose primary purpose is the transformation of the text (Dalla Negra, 2017: 39). According to Dalla Negra, it does not make sense to speak of a restoration aimed at re-establishing, both in the historical sense

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<sup>5</sup> Note that B. Paolo Torsello (2005: 15), who approaches the line of thought known in Italy as “integral conservation”, has shown that restoration is recognized in that country as a discipline, while conservation is not.

and in the present, because those interventions “always behaved (and still entail) a fraudulent modification of the architectural text on which it intervenes” (Dalla Negra, 2017: 35), a topic which Dvořák (item IV) also analyzes.

Dehio, given the period in which he wrote the text, was understandably vague regarding the “artist” restorers, considered those who practiced free and arbitrary artistic creation in search of stylistic unity, mainly concerning excessive and unjustified completions. He opposed this position to conservation, which should fall in the historical-critical field and he considered that artistic creativity should not be linked to the field of conservation.

Dehio invoked God to protect us from restorers; and Manfredo Tafuri, ninety years later, would attribute to divine grace the merits of the intervention of Carlo Scarpa in the Castelvecchio of Verona:

*I believe that Scarpa gave a work of exceptional qualitative importance [...] valid in relation to the culture of decades. Moreover, what was permitted of Carlo Scarpa should not be permitted either of his imitator or to a normal professional. [...] Scarpa succeeded, even massacring a monument, to give us a work of high validity. This happened by the grace of God, and not everyone has grace (Tafuri, 1997: 98).<sup>6</sup>*



CASTELVECCHIO AND SCALIGER BRIDGE, VERONA. Image: Public domain.

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<sup>6</sup> Original quotation: *Io credo che Scarpa abbia dato un'opera di eccezionale importanza qualitativa [...] valida in rapporto alla cultura di quei decenni. Inoltre, quello che era permesso a Carlo Scarpa non va permesso né a un suo imitatore né a un normale professionista. [...] Scarpa riusciva, anche massacrando un monumento, a darci un'opera di alta validità. Questo avveniva per grazia di Dio, e non tutti hanno la grazia.*



The contraposition of conservation-restoration, should be overcome, but, as can be seen in Tafuri (and other more recent authors), it still persists. That is why Dalla Negra's analysis that, in the specific case of the Castelvecchio, show how Tafuri attributed a predominantly transformative end to restoration (rather than a conservative one that Tafuri associated with conservation), and he continued:

*Beyond the fate that a "massacre" of a historical building cannot be permitted of anyone, although such operations are the order of the day, the real problem is that our universities induce new architects to always feel invested with such "grace," accustomed as they are to follow the bad examples that come from the so-called elite of the architects (Dalla Negra, 2017: 43).<sup>7</sup>*

So as not to have to resort to God to save what we ourselves recognize as cultural heritage, the three texts translated here present elements of great usefulness for training and for professional deontology of those who work on this heritage, praising a broad respect for works that are stratified by time.

### **The topical aspect of the dangers enunciated by Dvořák**

Dvořák begins his first paragraph by stating the dangers threatening monuments, and he speaks at length on these, associating various related issues. Certain aspects resonate even today; I would like to draw attention to some of these: the art trade, the misconceptions of progress, and the intertwining of those issues with greed and context.

Dehio shows that the trade of works of art has its useful side, but in fact, he points out the destructive side, which he considers to be the prevailing one. Also Dvořák (item I.3) shows the dangers of those uncontrolled actions and their consequential impoverishment. Both show the dire consequences and highlight the fact that these objects have their historical and artistic significance linked to the context for which they were created: to remove them means to erase that value.

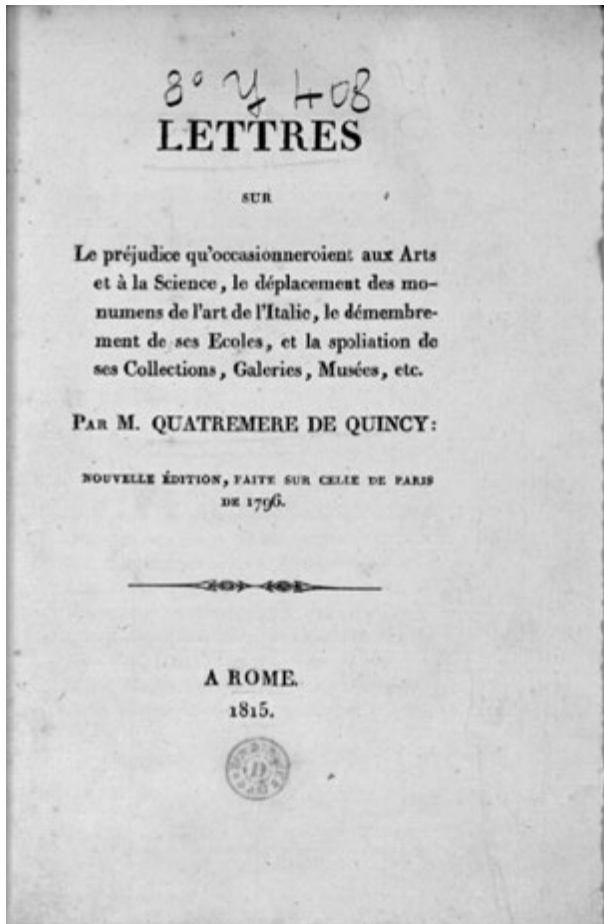
The discussion of this subject has illustrious precedents of great interest; one of them, perhaps the pioneer given its vehemence, has been Quatremère de Quincy in his *Letters to Miranda*, from 1796.<sup>8</sup> This author's frontal attack against the official policy of the Directorate aimed to remove the works from countries occupied by the French army and transfer them to France. In combating what was officially called "repatriation," Quatremère invoked several arguments, the main one being the loss of context for works of art, but also issues related to commercialization. Nowadays these could have even more tragic consequences, due to the damages that the illegal archaeological exploitation and sale of works of art, cause in diverse areas of the globe; and due to their association with unclear processes of circulation of money that end up financing activities outside the legal framework.

Édouard Pommier (1989: 46-47) notes how some expressions used by Quatremère, such as bundles of merchandise, jewelry, tariff, value, are not fortuitous, denoting aspects of a dangerous threat to art: being considered mainly as an object, which has a price and that enters the merchandise circuit. In his text, Quatremère predicted, almost prophetically as Pommier highlights, two dangers for monuments and art: the commercialization and the fetishism of those works, opposed only by one of the values that art and monuments possess, their history.

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<sup>7</sup> Original quotation: *Al di là del fatto che un "massacro" di un edificio storico non può essere consentito ad alcuno, sebbene tali operazioni siano all'ordine del giorno, il problema vero è che le nostre università inducono le nuove leve di architetti a sentirsi sempre investiti di una tale "grazia", avvezzi come sono a seguire i pessimi esempi che provengono dalla cosiddetta élite degli architetti.*

<sup>8</sup> Recently published in Brazil. See: Paulo Kühl and Beatriz Kühl (eds.) (2016). In Spanish, there are only two translations; see Quatremère de Quincy, 1998 and 2007.



QUATREMÈRE DE QUINCY.  
*Image: Public domain.*

As to context, Quatremère emphasizes that works of art are more effectively appreciated when they are grouped together with others from the same period. This makes it possible to compare them with the schools that preceded and succeeded them. The author questions that if upon transferring these objects, the physical and moral reasons of the different ways of making art would also be brought along. He emphasized the need to preserve works of art in their context and the capital importance of that context, which the author considers in a broad sense: it includes aspects such as climate, forms of nature, physiognomies, memories and local traditions, games, festivities. Quatremère works in an articulated way with what today we call material and immaterial heritage, showing their interrelation and the fact that they are inseparable. Antonio Pinelli (1978: 53-55) shows how much Quatremère's proposal was a precursor by underlining the importance of the connective weave, the variety of schools in the same period and the stratification of schools over time, in addition to the indivisibility and organic character of culture and the importance of the artistic, historical, cultural and physical context.<sup>9</sup> Another aspect emphasized by the author is the fact that cultural heritage has to be understood as a common heritage, belonging to all of Europe and not just to one country, a theme that resonates in Riegl's text, and which is opposed to the national vision of Dehio, whose view is more limited. In this way, Quatremère, Dehio and Dvořák show how greed acts as a separating factor at various levels.

<sup>9</sup> For these subjects and a complementary bibliography, see Paulo y Beatriz Kühl (2016).

On the questions related to the wrong ideas of progress, it is worth raising a series of arguments. The essential aspect that is evident in Dvořák's text is the importance of constant maintenance and conservation to ensure that the heritage element lives on for as long as possible: to consolidate and protect, instead of renewing, and not to exceed certain defined limits in order not to fall back into extremes such as remaking everything that is missing or replacing what is damaged. Because, by overcoming certain limits, the work

*[...] After restoration, it resembles a banal modern building: the poetry, the humor, the picturesque appeal that surrounded it disappeared, and the result of the restoration, which often involves great costs, does not imply its preservation, but rather its destruction and disfigurement<sup>10</sup> (Dvořák, 1916, 32).<sup>11</sup>*

The author emphasizes, however, that this does not mean immobility, by affirming that it is possible to adapt a house to the demands of the present, and he also argues: if it is possible to adapt a house, it is possible to adapt an entire city (Item I.3, PAG).

Dvořák recommends that the heritage element should be read from its specificities and not from universal formulas; he problematizes the destruction of different phases for a return to a supposed original state – subjects, as we have seen, also present in Riegl and Dehio – and he is absolutely against stylistic prejudices. Dvořák shows the dangers of a preservation guided by the artistic preference of a given moment, which considers only some types of expressions as valid. He shows that this one-sidedness of critics and artists was doubly negative regarding the heritage from other eras, because not only there was a predilection for a historical moment, but also testimonies from other less valued times were destroyed. In this way, the excluded elements were not considered in preservation policies and were also eliminated due to stylistic prejudice. He takes up again, as Riegl already preached, the importance of a solid professional deontology and of not acting according to prejudices of a certain time.

Although more than a century has passed between the texts of the three authors and the present, this lesson has not yet been truly incorporated into our practice. Even with all the changes that have taken place in recent decades in Brazil, with the growing extension of the notion of heritage, some stylistic censorship is still perceptible, for example, in relation to manifestations of late eclecticism, which face resistance because they are considered mistakes instead of a legitimate manifestation of its time.

In addition to acting without stylistic prejudices, it is essential, in interventions in buildings or areas of cultural interest, that the project be developed from a detailed reading of the work transformed by time (of its materiality, conformation, documentary aspects), of the landscape in which it is inserted, also structured over time, and in a manner that is sensitive to the various forms of apprehension by the community. This also applies to new buildings built in historical areas, which must start from a reading of the whole, a theme that is present in Dehio's text, which advocates respect for relationships and for volumetric relations, using modern forms.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Original quotation: *Sie gleicht nach der Restaurierung einem langweiligen Neubau, die Poesie, die Stimmung, der malerische Reiz, die sie umgaben, sind verschwunden und das Ergebnis der oft mit großen Kosten verbundenen Restaurierung ist nicht Erhaltung, sondern Zerstörung und Verunstaltung.*

<sup>11</sup> We should note, however, that in the final part of his text, when he offers some practical advice – some of which is extremely relevant and current – referring to render and paintings of “modest” buildings, he presents a suggestion that was not duly meditated on: to paint the exterior in a gray color, and the interior in white (Item 4b).

<sup>12</sup> This theme has important implications for the application of Riegl's act (1995: 225). It deserved to be treated in depth, but it escapes the objectives of this article.

In Brazil, this capacity to read appears in isolated and sporadic cases; it should, on the contrary, set the tone for the approach to the problem. Claudio Varagnoli (2007: 837), when analyzing case studies, shows how, in some projects, the relationship between the new and the old is ambiguous: the pre-existence is heavily manipulated, only to serve as a vehicle for the project of the new, reducing its role to mere pre-text.

A series of prejudices against restoration continue to this day<sup>13</sup>; some of these also stemming from poor training and from the position of some architects. Roberto Pane already criticized this in 1967 (in a text republished in 1987), evidencing the importance of forms of collaboration and the subordination of restoration projects to a common goal (transmitting works to the future in the best possible manner, respecting their documentary, formal and material aspects), affirming that there is still a need for architects to understand this, because “very often they make a cult of personality and social irresponsibility” (Pane, 1987: 199).

In many cases the pre-existence is seen as pre-text, something that can be freely shaved away, erased, overwritten. It is necessary, on the contrary, to understand the text in order to respectfully develop the language of the new proposal. This has been little practiced in the training of architects in Brazil; very often, in the project exercises, the existing elements are not considered as a fundamental fact: it is only a hindrance to be ignored, or a pre-text, for the contemporary manifestation.

The classifications by Maurizio Calvesi are also of interest, and they were analyzed by Giovanni Carbonara, in a preface to the publication of Dvořák's text in Italian. Calvesi, when examining the forms of relationship with the past, shows that:

*[...] the fanatic of the ripristino<sup>14</sup> and the sventratore<sup>15</sup>, are guided by an ideology that is equal and only apparently contrary: the sventratore judges monuments and testimonies of the past as a pure encumbrance, in the race towards a future which demands straight and fast roads; the fanatic of the ripristino is projected towards a remote past, no less mythical and ahistorical, in an equally unconscious and hasty escape (apud Carbonara, 1997: 367).<sup>16</sup>*

Along with them, Calvesi places the beautifiers. Carbonara shows that Calvesi's classifications are efficient for locating “along a single axis of historic distortion, some fanatics of the *ripristino* in flight towards a mythical past, some *sventratori*, running instead towards the future, and some beautifiers mythologizing the present in an anti-historical way” (Carbonara, 1997: 367).<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> For some of these problems, see Kühl (2016, 2017).

<sup>14</sup> *Ripristino*: reconstitution of the original aspect or shape of a monument, by removing added elements as well as superpositions. Note from the translator.

<sup>15</sup> *Sventratore*: those who do *svrentamenti*, which is the broadening, extensive demolitions in order to open wide spaces in historic centers.

<sup>16</sup> Original quotation: *[...] il fanatico del ripristino lo sventratore sono animati da una ideologia uguale e solo apparentemente contraria: lo sventratore giudica monumenti e testimonianze del passato alla stregua di un puro ingombro, nella corsa verso un avvenire che esige strade diritte e veloci; il fanatico del ripristino è proiettato verso un passato remoto non meno mitico ed astorico, in una fuga altrettanto inconsulta e frettolosa.*

<sup>17</sup> Original quotation: *lungo un unico asse di distorsione storica, dei fanatici del ripristino in fuga verso un passato mitico, degli sventratori, in corsa invece verso il futuro, e degli abbellitori, mitizzanti in forma antistorica il presente.*

Due to the fact that a well-founded preservation imposes certain limits on interventions in cultural heritage, there are many architects who see restoration as an insufficient and inadequate instrument for heritage to be inserted in the contemporary socio-economic and cultural reality (this preconception also exists in other sectors, such as politics, the real estate market, etc.): they believe that the project must have total freedom. They do not compare it with the project of the new, in which there are also factors that condition the elements of the project (the dimensions of the land, the program, the budget, the legislation, etc.), but that do not annul the creative act; on the contrary, the limitations must be understood as an impulse for new solutions. Restoration also has conditioning factors, which derive from the reasons for which we preserve it, which must be explored in a proactive way in order to achieve a renewed configuration of the work, which considers economic and use issues, but does not take them as unique and determining factors in an isolated way. It must be articulated with the pre-existence, without denying it, obliterating it or imitating it and proposing a renewed and respectful syntax.

Although there are several examples of restoration projects that account for a number of issues, articulating theory and practice, it is recurrent that a respectful action is considered unfeasible, both from the economic point of view, and from the technical point of view. Dvořák (1916: 20) already warned: “[...] the ‘modernization and embellishment’ of the city is very often only a pretext, the real reason is the benefit derived from the speculators of the construction of such deformation, to the detriment of the public economy.”<sup>18</sup> Unfortunately, no detailed cost comparisons have yet been made in Brazil, but based on studies conducted abroad, a careful restoration is not necessarily more expensive than a more invasive intervention.<sup>19</sup> Good restorations can cost less than radical “renovations” and they do not impede the reuse of the work for contemporary functions, both in terms of practical and economic issues; on the contrary<sup>20</sup>.

The fact is that a well-founded intervention is the result of a multidisciplinary process, which gives rise to a detailed project and memory; this does not necessarily result in a longer process in its entirety, but it instead implies a broader phase of studies and project, and a shorter work phase. It is the inverse reasoning of what is happening now, in which projects are the result of insufficient studies and the works are delayed because too many unforeseen events occur. Based on consistent studies, the costs are more controllable and involve fewer budget additions resulting from aspects not previously controlled. The profit margin will probably be lower, but even so, the operation can be profitable and viable. It is essential, therefore, not to confuse viability with maximum profit, nor a legitimate need for profitability with unbridled greed.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Original quotation: [...] daß sehr oft die “Modernisierung und Verschönerung” der Stadt nur ein Vorwand ist, während die eigentliche Ursache der Nutzen ist, den Bauspekulanten aus Umgestaltung zum Schaden der Allgemeinheit ziehen [...].

<sup>19</sup> The example is described by Simona Salvo (2006): the restoration of the façades of the Pirelli skyscraper in Milan, a project by Gio Ponti (built between 1956 and 1960). The careful studies led to a well-founded project and to a successful work, in a reduced time span (studies: July-December 2002, executive project: March 2003, concluded works in April 2004). The cost was around 20% than the estimate for the substitution of the continuous façade, presented by a team of experts who considered that the original façades were unrecoverable from the technical point of view, and even if it was possible, they would not have an adequate thermal and acoustic behavior. The restored façades have a performance that is equal or superior to contemporary façades.

<sup>20</sup> For these subjects, see Kühl (2017).

<sup>21</sup> We should remind the results of the NGO Transparency International, quoted by Joseph Rykwert (*apud* La Cecla, 2008: 25), these show that 78% of the corruption funds worldwide pass through civil construction.

### The importance of the environment; extrapolation for the landscape

The way in which the three authors deal with the issue of the environment in which cultural assets are inserted is of great relevance.

Dehio categorically affirms that it is also necessary to protect the environment of the monuments and that constructions should not be isolated, since they are not museum pieces; he also shows that a monument can be destroyed indirectly by affronts to its environment. This is a point that was also examined by Cesare Brandi, in the *Theory of restoration*, from 1963, with another extent, when dealing with "preventive restoration" (Brandi, 1988: 55-61).

We should note that Dehio's statements precede by decades what is recorded in the document known as the *Athens Charter* of 1931, the result of the scientific meeting organized by the International Office of Museums of the League of Nations. In the document, the concern is not to harm the visuals of the monument.



PARTHENON. Image: Valerie Magar.

In the period between the publications of the texts of Riegl and Dehio and that of Dvořák, it is worth noting the proposals contained in the two articles by Gustavo Giovannoni in the fortnightly magazine *Nuova Antologia*, of 1913: “Vecchie città ed edilizia nuova” and “Il diradamento edilizio dei vecchi centri.” The first addresses the theories related to urbanism, covering topics such as the transformation of the existing city, expansion, densification, circulation, coordination between “old city” and “new city”, also working with the conflicts between the demands of modernization and expansion and the need to preserve (and showing that it is possible and feasible to work using a conservative key). In the second one, he uses the theoretical foundation of the first, and establishes a method for interventions in urban areas of interest in respect to preservation. They constitute a systematic exhibition of the way of seeing the city as a complex organism, to be worked on in its entirety, addressing the relationship between the existing city, new areas of expansion and areas of interest for preservation in an articulated manner.

Although it is not a text oriented directly to questions relative to preservation on the urban scale, Dvořák goes beyond Dehio. He opens his *Catechism* speaking of the city of N.; the concern for the composition of the whole, amalgamated with time, unity, even in the temporal, typological and stylistic diversity of the elements that compose it, stands out in his description. His interest goes from objects of daily life (especially in item III) to entire complexes, with the landscape understood in a broader manner, and he actually dedicated one of the final items of his text to the rural and urban landscape (item VI.13).

Riegl also enunciated in a pioneering sense a very emblematic and highly topical theme: the question of natural beauty. Riegl criticizes Dehio for having pushed it to one side in his article. Riegl also considered the care of that which was not created by man, natural monuments, as an elevated form of necessary altruism Dvořák (item II) also mentions that the theme of natural beauty gained increasing significance, but it was in Riegl that this subject matter appeared with the greatest emphasis.

These discussions in a German-speaking environment are of great interest. It is significant that it appeared in the Constitution of the Weimar Republic (1919) which, in spite having been short lived, introduced the subject as a constitutional subject, as Salvatore Settis has shown (2010: 129): article 150 establishes that the monuments of art, history and nature, as well as the landscape, are under the protection of the State.

We should also remember that, from the point of view of the method of restoration, Brandi, in the *Theory of restoration*, gave the conservation of works of art the same importance as works that are not considered art, such as entire urban environments (Brandi, 1988: 60-61) as well as things of natural beauty (Brandi, 1988: 38), which, even though they are not the product of human action, are equated to works of art.

At a time when issues related to the natural environment are deservedly highlighted and appear as a concern of various disciplines such as ecology and geography, for example, it is important to return to an issue that has been addressed by few authors in recent times. Paolo D'Angelo (2001) draws attention to the paradox of having greatly increased sensitivity to the landscape, but from the conceptual point of view, it is increasingly assimilated and reduced to the natural environment, which generates confusion. The author shows that the environment is a physical fact, scientifically describable, while the notion of landscape, from the point of

view of culture, is a phenomenon of perception and also falls within the scope of aesthetic experience. He does not question the legitimacy of considering the environment from the physical point of view or the need for its protection. But the landscape, when approached by naturalists, geographers or in an aesthetic sense, takes into account different factors, each with its legitimacy; the issues involved cannot be treated in the same manner. The protection of the environment, the author continues, is not the protection of the landscape in an aesthetic sense; it requires awareness of the cultural and historical character, and it means recognizing the aesthetic identity of those places.

Reiterating the discussion on natural beauty and on the landscape, which are themes that appear in an embryonic way in the texts presented here, based on more strictly cultural referents and expanding the problem from the point of view of aesthetics, as advocated by D'Angelo, is of great interest for future reflections. Our three authors leave, in this way, seeds for discussions that are very current.

### **As a conclusion**

The themes covered in this article are not intended to exhaust the issues that the texts translated in this journal present for reflection in today's world, but they point out the relevance and timeliness of these discussions. In addition to the divergences and nuances between the way of thinking of the three authors, one point that I call upon to conclude this article is the search, common to all of them, for a coherent approach that guides the intervention treatments in cultural heritage from the ethical point of view. Based on the proposals presented in those texts, the works must be treated in accordance with strict methods and criteria, and not be at the mercy of comfortable relativisms. From proposals such as those presented here, intervention treatments gradually distance themselves from simple empiricism and move toward being affiliated with the critical thinking of a certain period. Based on consistent principles, anchored in the reasons for which we preserve cultural assets, it is possible to overcome both the attitudes dictated by individual predilections, which any sentient being possesses, as well as a greater or lesser appreciation of a given historical present in relation to the cultural manifestations of other periods and act in accordance with a solid professional deontology.

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