



# Questions of authenticity

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## **Abstract:**

*This paper focuses on the evolution of the concept of authenticity in the context of heritage conservation. It analyzes the initial conception in the Venice Charter, and the changes it underwent following the discussions held at Bergen and Nara in 1994. It also explores additional changes, taking into consideration social aspects, as well as broader environmental perspectives. Through the analysis of examples, international principles and criteria are shown as a valuable reference and methodological framework to approach specific heritage sites, taking into consideration their local context.*

**Keywords:** *Authenticity, diversity, Nara, reconstruction.*

The notion of “authenticity” is sometimes simply interpreted as being true. However, the issue is more complex than that. Even the word “true” can have different connotations in the diverse world regions. The word “authentic” has its origins in the ancient Greek and Latin languages, which implies a Mediterranean cultural context. However, since then it has acquired a complex set of references. There are two levels of thought, one is the local level, based on social and cultural traditions. The other is the international context, which proposes to recognize the commonality of human values and consequently the possibility to develop an international policy framework for the treatment of inheritance, as has been stated in the *Venice Charter*. The recognition of a common heritage of humanity can be seen as a positive outcome of the tragedies caused by two world wars in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. At the same time, the Preface of the *Venice Charter* also anticipates the need to recognize the diversity of cultures and traditions and the encouragement of: “each country being responsible for applying the plan within the framework of its own culture and traditions.” Therefore, while the international guidelines provide the framework, the verification of authenticity will necessarily be made in reference to the heritage resource concerned, taking into account its context.

## **Defining authenticity**

The first international recommendations regarding safeguarding of the cultural heritage were drafted in the European context. At that time, also the notion of authenticity was taken for granted like in the UNESCO Venice Conference in 1964. While the *Venice Charter* did not include any specification about the meaning of the concept, it is important to note that there was already an anticipation of the multifaceted nature of cultural heritage. The original French version of the Preface starts with the following statement:

*Chargées d'un message spirituel du passé, les œuvres monumentales des peuples demeurent dans la vie présente le témoignage vivant de leurs traditions séculaires. L'humanité, qui prend chaque jour conscience de l'unité des valeurs humaines, les considère comme un patrimoine commun, et, vis-à-vis des générations futures, se reconnaît solidairement responsable de leur sauvegarde. Elle se doit de les leur transmettre dans toute la richesse de leur authenticité. Il est dès lors essentiel que les principes qui doivent présider à la conservation et à la restauration des monuments soient dégagés en commun et formulés sur un plan international, tout en laissant à chaque nation le soin d'en assurer l'application dans le cadre de sa propre culture et de ses traditions.<sup>1</sup>*

Translating this text into other languages is not necessarily simple. For example, the notion of "les œuvres monumentales" was originally translated into English as "historic monuments" which may be correct generally speaking, but due to different cultural and historical contexts, the interpretation is not always the same in Anglo-Saxon and Latin contexts. Indeed, the question is not only of historic buildings but of important achievements. For example, Françoise Choay notes that the French concept of "monument historique" (often translated as "historic building") results from the modern approach to safeguarding heritage, and it cannot be considered a universal. The concept of "monument," instead, has ancient origins, deriving from the Latin "monere," which means to recall or to admonish. Choay notes:

*The monument solicits and mobilizes by its physical presence a living memory, bodily, organic. It exists among all peoples; it is indeed a cultural universal. Living reference to an origin, to a foundation, it belongs to the category of authenticity; it is one of the devices that anchor humans in their living condition endowed with speech, it institutes and constitutes. It is an integral part of a fundamental anthropology (Choay, 1995: 107).<sup>2</sup>*

In effect, language is one of the issues that needs attention in international communication. Paul Philippot, who wrote the preface to the 1964 *Venice Charter* had already been working as Deputy Director of ICCROM (then called The Rome Centre) since its foundation. One of the first tasks at ICCROM was establishing contacts with professionals in the different countries and creating a network for the definition of international policies and strategies relevant to the different cultural contexts. An instrument for ICCROM was the development of international training programs, first in the conservation of the architectural heritage, then also expanding to other fields. Here the recognition of authenticity in different cultural contexts certainly was one of the arguments.

At the time of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *World Heritage Convention* in 1992, Professor Léon Pressouyre, who had been responsible for the evaluation of World Heritage nominations, was invited to write a text summarizing the achievements of the *World Heritage Convention*.

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<sup>1</sup> The preface of the *Venice Charter* was written by Paul Philippot, at the time Deputy Director of the recently established ICCROM. A revised English translation could be: "Charged with a spiritual message from the past, the monumental achievements of the peoples remain in the present life the living testimony of their age-old traditions. Humanity, which every day becomes aware of the unity of human values, considers them as a common heritage, and, with respect to future generations, recognizes itself as being jointly responsible for their safeguarding. Humanity must transmit them to future generations in all the richness of their authenticity. It is therefore essential that the principles that must govern the conservation and restoration of monuments be jointly developed and formulated at the international level, while leaving it up to each nation to ensure their application in the context of its own culture and traditions."

<sup>2</sup> Original quotation: "Le monument sollicite et mobilise par sa présence physique une mémoire vivante, corporelle, organique. Il existe chez tous les peuples, il est effectivement un universel culturel. Référence vivante à une origine, à un fondement, il ressortit à la catégorie de l'authenticité ; il fait partie des dispositifs qui ancrent les humains dans leur condition de vivants dotés de parole, il institue et constitue. Il est partie intégrante d'une anthropologie fondamentale."



FRANÇOISE CHOAY. Image: Public domain.

At this time, he had met with problems concerning treatments of heritage sites in various countries. Consequently, he now took the opportunity to recall the need to verify the criteria, referring specifically to Japan:

*The constraints of the criterion of authenticity, sensitive in the European realm, are even more unwieldy in other regions of the world. In Japan, the oldest temples are periodically identically restored, authenticity being essentially attached to function, subsidiarily to form, but by no means to material. This ceases to be academic with Japan having ratified the convention on 30 June 1992 (Pressouyre, 1996: 12).*

In 1993, during the ICOMOS General Assembly in Colombo, there was an informal meeting of a small group to discuss the Japanese reaction to Pressouyre's criticism.<sup>3</sup> As a result, Japan proposed inviting an international expert meeting to discuss the notion of authenticity, to be organized at the end of 1994 in Nara. As a preparation, Norway invited a small group to discuss related issues, organized in Bergen in early 1994 (Larsen and Marstein, 1994).

A principal question related to the references for the verification of authenticity. As Herb Stovel notes in his article (here published), the *World Heritage Operational Guidelines* already recommended that:

*the property should meet the test of authenticity in design, materials, workmanship, and setting; authenticity does not limit consideration to original form and structure but includes all subsequent modifications and additions, over the course of time, which in themselves possess artistic or historical values (UNESCO, 1978: 4).*

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<sup>3</sup> The group included Nobuo Ito (Japan), Christina Cameron (Canada), Nils Marstein and Knut-Einar Larsen (Norway), Herb Stovel (ICOMOS), Jukka Jokilehto (ICCROM) and Bernd von Droste (UNESCO).



BERGEN. Image: Public domain.

The Bergen meeting proposed to broaden these references: 1) design/form, 2) material/substance, 3) technique/tradition, 4) aim/intention – function, 5) context/setting – spirit. This list was basically accepted by the Nara meeting and was included in the *Nara document on authenticity*, adding that the list could also include other internal and external factors (Larsen, 1995). In practice, it also meant recognizing that each heritage resource has its specificity and context. Therefore, each resource has to be assessed recognizing its own terms and its context.

The word authenticity can have different connotations in different contexts. As also noted in the 1994 Nara Conference, this word of Greek and Latin origin does not necessarily exist in all languages, such as Japanese or Arabic.<sup>4</sup> Taking a look at the concept of “truth,” we can recall that it has been and continues to be a fundamental issue in philosophy, where we can see a long development from the antiquity to Descartes, Kant, Nietzsche, and Heidegger. It is also interesting to look at other regions of the world, such as Sub-Saharan Africa. It has been noted that while epistemology “as the study of knowledge is universal, the ways of acquiring knowledge vary according to the socio-cultural contexts within which knowledge claims are formulated and articulated” (Kaphagawani and Malherbe, 2002: 206). Getting knowledge from traditions is often through the language, and in Africa, the language is a fundamental part of cultural inheritance. Ambassador Yai, when speaking about authenticity and integrity in African languages, observes:

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<sup>4</sup> Nobuo Ito notes that there are two words in Japanese, which however refer to different aspects of authenticity (Ito, 1995: 35-56). In reference to Muslim world, Azedine Beschouch also notes that the word “authentic” does not exist in Arabic, which uses “assil,” meaning “foundations of that which founds,” especially in the religious context (Larsen, 1985: 71-72).



NARA. Image: Herb Stovel, ©ICCRUM.

*It is symptomatic that in Dendi, the notion of authenticity bases itself on speech, which is in fact our own talk (cirici). By this one must understand that today there is a requirement to re-center values around those of the community, and their "deep talk." In the same vein, the Yoruba say: "Enu reran jojù lo" (the mouth sees further than the eyes) and "E nu la n bo" (sacrifice must be offered to the mouth). Through the above, it should be understood that the gap between the material and the spiritual makes little sense in an African context. For instance, ruins, degradation due to weather in no way affects the integrity and authenticity of a site if, through their words and spirituality, communities testify an intense attachment and value. It is the men and women of today, invested with the spirit, the values and the word of their ancestors, who create and maintain authenticity and integrity (Yai, 2001: 62-64).<sup>5</sup>*

In this regard, it is interesting to look at the outcome of International Conference on the Safeguarding of Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage: Towards an Integrated approach, organized in Nara in October 2004. The aim of the conference was to explore the connections

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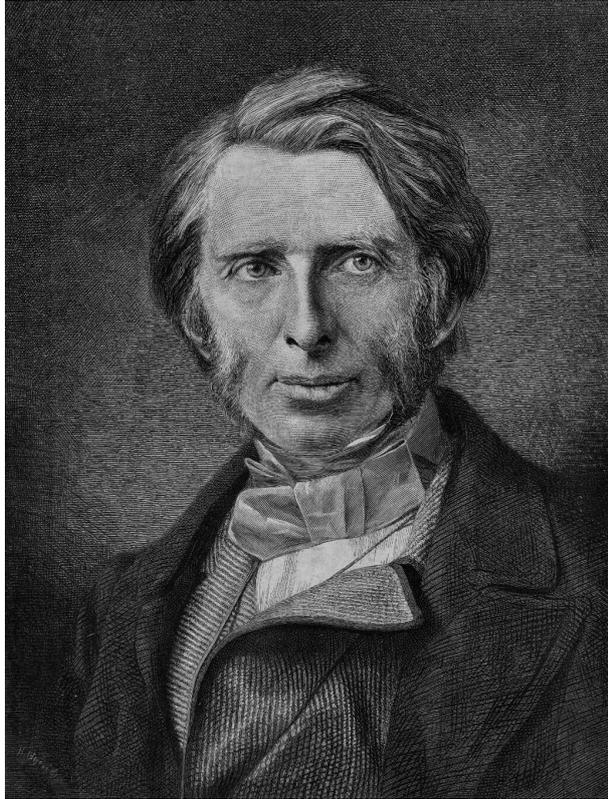
<sup>5</sup> Original quotation: "Il est symptomatique qu'en Dendi, la notion d'authenticité réfère à un dire, en fait un 'dire-nous' (cirici). Il faut y entendre, aujourd'hui, une nécessité de recentrement autour des valeurs de la communauté, de leurs 'paroles profondes'. Dans la même veine, les Yorubas disent : 'Enu rit-an iojti lo' (la bouche voit plus loin que les yeux) et 'Enu la bo' (Il faut offrir sacrifice à la bouche). Par quoi il faut comprendre que le clivage matériel/spirituel fait peu de sens dans le contexte africain. Par exemple, ruines, dégradations par les intempéries n'altèrent en rien l'intégrité et le caractère authentique d'un site si, à travers leurs dires et leur spiritualité, les communautés lui témoignent un attachement et une valeur intenses. Ce sont les hommes et les femmes d'aujourd'hui qui, investis de l'esprit, des valeurs et des paroles des ancêtres créent et entretiennent l'authenticité et l'intégrité."

between the 1972 *World Heritage Convention* and the 2003 UNESCO *Convention concerning the intangible cultural heritage*. In his opening speech to this conference, the Director General of UNESCO, Koichiro Matsuura stressed the need to approach the universal nature of human creativity in its numerous forms of expression. The *Yamato declaration on integrated approaches for safeguarding tangible and intangible cultural heritage*, which resulted from the 2004 Conference, tends to stop short of the aim. In fact, the declaration recalls that “intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity.” Furthermore, just because the intangible heritage is: “constantly recreated, the term “authenticity” as applied to tangible cultural heritage is not relevant when identifying and safeguarding intangible cultural heritage.” Several participants representing intangible cultural heritage seemed to be doubtful whether authenticity would be at all relevant for intangible heritage (UNESCO, 2006). As a result, the scope of an integrated approach of the two conventions did not seem to be attained at this time.

### Diversity of cultural expressions

In 1849, John Ruskin published *The seven lamps of architecture*, proposing seven fundamental criteria for good architecture. These were: 1) the lamp of sacrifice, 2) the lamp of truth, 3) the lamp of power, 4) the lamp of beauty, 5) the lamp of life, 6) the lamp of memory, and 7) the lamp of obedience. The lamp of sacrifice starts with the definition: “Architecture is the art which so disposes and adorns the edifices raised by man, for whatsoever uses, that the sight of them may contribute to his mental health, power and pleasure” (Ruskin, 1849: 27). Ruskin distinguishes between building and architecture. He claims that a building does not become architecture merely by stability, dictated by use. Architecture as a form of art is the real input of human creativity. He also does not consider that the decoration alone would give architecture its worth. This is given by the spirit of the original workman even in a modest building. He writes: “There is a sanctity in a good man’s house which cannot be renewed in every tenement that rises on its ruins (...) I say that if men lived like men indeed, their houses would be temples –temples which we should hardly dare to injure, and in which it would make us holy to be permitted to live” (Ruskin, 1849: 225-226). It is the dedication and sacrifice that gives architecture its spirit and intrinsic quality. He was critical of the loss of traditional craftsmanship and the introduction of industrially produced structures and materials, recognizing instead that it was the authenticity of spirit that inspired good architecture.

Life is the fundamental basis for creativity and the resulting diversity of expressions for all humanity as well as for nature as a whole. This question was discussed by the French philosopher Henri Bergson, who was also the President of the International Committee on Intellectual Co-operation, the predecessor of UNESCO. In his *Creative evolution*, he writes: “Like the universe as a whole, like each conscious being taken separately, the organism which lives is a thing that endures. Its past, in its entirety, is prolonged into its present, and abides there, actual and acting” (Bergson, 1911: 15). The driving force or impetus of this growth and development is represented by life. He refers to it as *l’élán vital*, which has been translated as “life impetus” or “life force.” We can also speak of the impulse, vigour, or spirit that sustains creativity in living organisms, and the creativity also means diversification. The constantly evolving cultural diversity is a result of this creative impetus. Bergson insists that it is not created in a void but based on duration (*la durée*): “an original impetus of life, passing from one generation of germs to the following generation of germs through the developed organisms which bridge the interval between the generations” (Bergson, 1911: 87). In a different context, when discussing the sources of moral and religion, and the diverse aspects of living creatures, he continues:



JOHN RUSKIN.  
Image: Public domain.

*Yet we have only mentioned implicitly the essential: the unpredictability of the forms that life creates from scratch, by discontinuous jumps, along its evolution. Whether one places oneself in the doctrine of pure mechanism or in that of pure finality, in both cases the creations of life are predetermined, the future being able to be deduced from the present by a calculation, or in the form of idea, the time being therefore without effectiveness. Pure experience suggests nothing like it. No impulse or attraction, it seems. An impulse (impetus) can precisely suggest something of this kind and also make us think, by the indivisibility of what is internally felt and the divisibility to the infinite of what is externally perceived, to this real, effective duration, which is the essential attribute of life (Bergson, 1991: 1072).<sup>6</sup>*

In 2005, UNESCO adopted the *Convention on the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions*. In the introduction this convention borrows a statement already present in the 1994 *Nara document on authenticity*, noting that: “culture takes diverse forms across time and space and that this diversity is embodied in the uniqueness and plurality of the identities and cultural expressions of the peoples and societies making up humanity.” Consequently, cultural expressions are defined as “those expressions that result from the

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<sup>6</sup> Original quotation: “Encore n’avons-nous mentionné qu’implicitement l’essentiel : l’imprévisibilité des formes que la vie crée de toutes pièces, par des sauts discontinus, le long de son évolution. Qu’on se place dans la doctrine du pur mécanisme ou dans celle de la finalité pure, dans les deux cas les créations de la vie sont prédéterminées, l’avenir pouvant se déduire du présent par un calcul ou s’y dessinant sous forme d’idée, le temps étant par conséquent sans efficace. L’expérience pure ne suggère rien de semblable. Ni impulsion ni attraction, semble-t-elle dire. Un élan peut précisément suggérer quelque chose de ce genre et faire penser aussi, par l’indivisibilité de ce qui en est intérieurement senti et la divisibilité à l’infini de ce qui en est extérieurement perçu, à cette durée réelle, efficace, qui est l’attribut essentiel de la vie.”

creativity of individuals, groups and societies, and that have cultural content" (UNESCO, 2005).<sup>7</sup> As a matter of fact, cultural expressions cover both tangible and intangible expressions of human creativity. Therefore, the question can be raised about the commonalities and differences of approaches in the case of the different forms of cultural inheritance. This convention, even though perhaps not having gained the same popularity as the 1972 and 2003 ones, it nevertheless raises some fundamental concerns, including the essential integrity of the tangible and intangible dimensions of cultural expressions.

### Aspects of conservation theory

In his *Teoria del restauro* (1963), Cesare Brandi distinguishes between an intervention aiming at reestablishing the 'preconceptual functionality' of an object, which could be an industrial product, and the restoration of a work recognized as a work of art. He refers to the definition of art by John Dewey, who notes that a work of art is a work of art only if it is recognized in an individual experience. Indeed, as a work of art, it must be re-created in a human consciousness every time a restoration is contemplated (Dewey, 1934).

Paul Philippot knew well Brandi's philosophy, having already spent a period to study the policies of the Istituto Centrale del Restauro (ICR) in Rome in the 1950s. Coming to work at ICCROM, in 1959, he continued his good relationship with the Director of ICR, Cesare Brandi, as well as specially with Laura and Paolo Mora, the chief conservators. Jointly with the ICR, ICCROM established the international course on the conservation of mural paintings, where the policies of the ICR were further developed into practice. Based on this experience and further research, Philippot and the Moras decided to write *La conservation des peintures murales*, published by ICCROM in 1977. The research was based on an international advisory committee, created by the International Council of Museums (ICOM). In this book, the theory of restoration was discussed particularly in reference to the problems of presentation of the works of art (chapter xi). A clear distinction was made between the modern restoration of a work of art and the traditional way of dealing with paintings, retouching and even partly over-painting the original. The authors note that the traditional, artisanal approach was relevant in the strict limits of a traditional society. Such repair could still be conceivable even today, but it should then be understood as repair and not "restoration."

*This implies, in fact, in its very concept, a historical distance from tradition, which makes it impossible to spontaneously continue its creative processes, and no longer makes it possible to conceive of an intervention on the work as a critical interpretation. While the historical consciousness claims today the respect of the authenticity of the documents of the past, modern aesthetics, highlighting the uniqueness of the work of art as creation of an individual conscience in a given historical moment, in turn has shown its irreproducible character: in all rigour even by the artist himself who would either make a replica, or even a false, or create a new work (Mora, Mora and Philippot, 1977: 348).<sup>8</sup>*

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<sup>7</sup> See introductory remarks and article 4 on definitions.

<sup>8</sup> Original quotation: "Celle-ci implique en effet, dans son concept même, une prise de distance historique vis-à-vis de la tradition, qui rend impossible la continuation spontanée de ses démarches créatrices, et ne permet plus de concevoir une intervention sur l'œuvre comme une interprétation critique. Tandis que la conscience historique réclame aujourd'hui le respect de l'authenticité des documents du passé, l'esthétique moderne, mettant en évidence le caractère unique de l'œuvre d'art comme création d'une conscience individuelle dans un moment historique donné, a montré à son tour son caractère irréproducible: en toute rigueur même par l'artiste lui-même qui, ou bien ferait une réplique, voire un faux, ou bien créerait une œuvre nouvelle."

In modern restoration of a damaged image, the basic idea is to reduce the disturbance and render the image a maximum presence, at the same time respecting its authenticity both as an artistic creation and as an historic document. Considering that the aim is no more to complete the damaged image, it is necessary to establish an approach based on precise criteria and on a critical assessment. Comparing with the principles of linguistics, a work art can be interpreted as a "text." A reconstitution of the text of an image within its "context" can be thus justified but taking care that it stops where starts a hypothesis. It is also required that the re-integration of the lacunae in the "text" of the image be distinguishable, but at the same time taking care that the context be respected. In the case of mural paintings, which are part of architecture, the problems regard not only the painted images but also the architectural context. Consequently, restoration of mural paintings needs to be seen as part of the architecture, and as a part of the architectural restoration. In some cases, therefore, it would be possible to allow more extensive forms of reintegration than would be tolerable in isolated paintings, while still respecting the recognized artistic and historical authenticity in each case.

### The question of authenticity in context

When Sir Bernard Melchior Feilden was Director of ICCROM, he wrote his by now classic *Conservation of historic buildings* (1982), where he defined the tasks of conservationists:

*Conservation is the action taken to prevent decay. It embraces all acts that prolong the life of our cultural and natural heritage, the object being to present to those who use and look at historic buildings with wonder the artistic and human messages that such buildings possess. The minimum effective action is always the best; if possible, the action should be reversible and not prejudice possible future interventions. The basis of historic building conservation is established by legislation through listing and scheduling buildings and ruins, through regular inspections and documentation, and through town planning and conservative action* (Feilden, 1982: 3).

When the ICOMOS *Training Guidelines* of 1993 was written, he defined the scope of conservation:

*to prolong the life of cultural heritage and, if possible, to clarify the artistic and historical messages therein without the loss of authenticity and meaning. Conservation is a cultural, artistic, technical and craft activity based on humanistic and scientific studies and systematic research. Conservation must respect the cultural context* (ICOMOS, 1993: art. 3).

The question of how to interpret authenticity in an historic structure or site is not always straightforward as some specialists may believe. Partly the question concerns those who are responsible for implementation of projects, partly it concerns the subsequent need to assess whether or not the requirements had been met. Especially in the case of World Heritage nominations, it is ICOMOS and the World Heritage Committee who are in the position of judges. Taking into account the 1994 *Nara document* and the need to recognize the diversity of references in the different social and cultural contexts, it is not easy to guarantee a balanced judgment without an in-depth knowledge of the place. Indeed, the criteria that are applied in one case may not necessarily be applicable in another. The question is fundamentally related to cultural diversity and the context. One of the questions that is often on the table concerns the reconstruction of buildings severely damaged or even completely destroyed in fire, earthquake or war. The fire that broke out in the roof structures of the Notre Dame of Paris on April 15,



SIR BERNARD MELCHIOR FEILDEN  
AND JUKKA JOKILEHTO  
Ferrara  
*Imagen: Herb Stovel, ©ICCRUM.*

2019, also a center-piece of a World Heritage property, is an example of the requirement of rebuilding. France's President Emmanuel Macron said that this fire reminds us that our history never stops. "Yes, we will build the cathedral of Notre Dame even more beautiful than it was. But this must be done in five years. We can do that."<sup>9</sup>

After World War II, there was much rebuilding in war-stricken countries, and with variable results. One case is the destroyed historic centre of Warsaw, which was fully reconstructed on the basis of available documentation after destruction in the 1940s. The site was inscribed in the World Heritage List in 1980, and the justification complimented its meticulous restoration. However, it was also observed that the case of Warsaw should not be taken as a precedent for other World Heritage nominations. Examining the World Heritage List, indeed, one can see a great variety of solutions. In the case of the ancient imperial palace area in Nara, for example, a replica of the imperial palace has been constructed in the centre of an archaeological area at the time of 1300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Nara as the capital of Japan. The problem is not only the clearly modern construction on the foundations of an ancient palace, but also that it pretends to replicate a building that was in a different location. Another example is rebuilding the lost royal palace in the center of the World Heritage city of Vilnius (Lithuania), only based on some sketches before its destruction in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The ancient cathedral of Kiev, another victim of the World War II, was completely reconstructed and is now the centrepiece of a World Heritage property in the heart of the city.

Having said that, we can look at the case of Bagrati Cathedral in Georgia. This royal cathedral church was originally built around AD 1000, but it was ruined during armed conflicts in the 17<sup>th</sup> century with parts of it remaining standing. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, archaeologists excavated a large number of elements embedded on the site. In the 1950s, it was decided to start a reconstruction, which was carried out also based on the guidelines provided by the 1964 *Venice Charter*. Indeed, a clear difference was made between the original parts and the new structure. In 1994, Georgia nominated the cathedral together with a nearby monastery to the World List. It was accepted, and the ICOMOS justified authenticity as:

*Bagrati Cathedral is ruined and may be considered ipso facto to be completely authentic. Gelati Monastery has been in continuous use since construction began and so it inevitably has certain elements that were introduced at a period before the modern philosophy of conservation had been formulated. However, much of its authenticity lies in its use and in its group integrity, neither of which can be challenged (ICOMOS, 1993).*

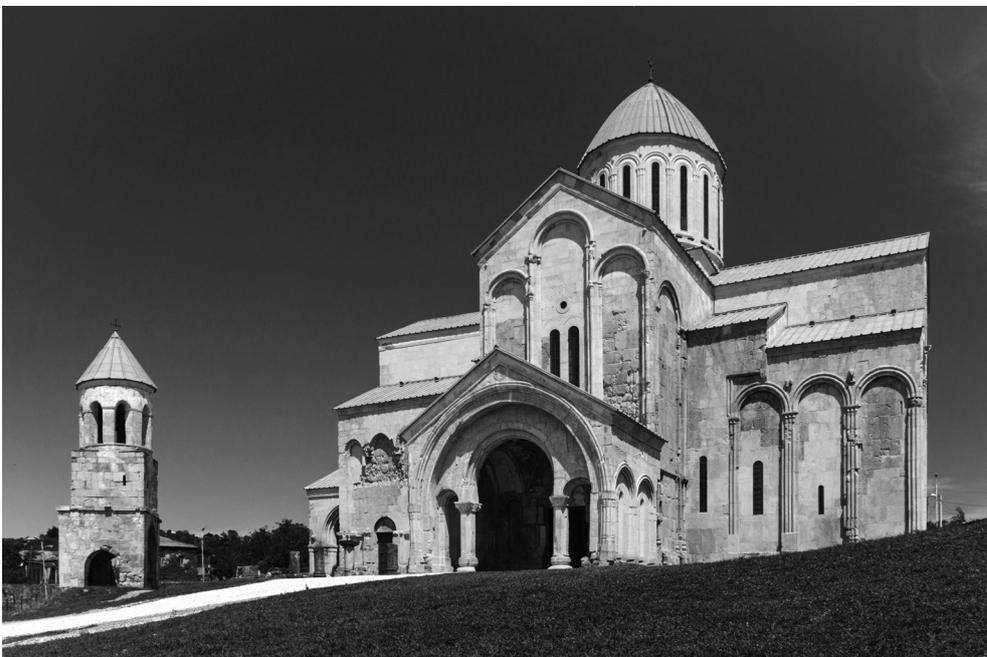
In 2002, the authorities were interested in continuing the reconstruction of the roof, the cupola, and the interior, which had not been done earlier. In the new assessment, ICOMOS now was strongly critical of the proposed reconstruction, even though it was considered achievable if carried following ICOMOS guidelines. Unfortunately, there was a lack of communication. In any case, the roof was built using new stone but inserting original elements as recommended by the *Venice Charter*. The Italian architect Andrea Bruno was invited to design the new sections, which he proposed in modern materials, while fully respecting the original structural form. Work completed, Bruno was given an international award for his design. Nevertheless, the ICOMOS expert who visited the site considered that, with the new additions, the historic building had now lost its authenticity. The property was subsequently removed from the List, and the Gelati Monastery was renominated with modified boundaries, in 2017.

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<sup>9</sup> See: [<https://www.euronews.com/2019/04/16/watch-live-emmanuel-macron-gives-speech-on-notre-dame-cathedral-blaze>] (accessed 16 March 2019).



NOTRE-DAME. *Image: Valerie Magar, 2019.*



BAGRATI. *Image: Herb Stovel, ©ICCRUM.*

Another question concerns new buildings in an historic context. The historic city of Graz was inscribed in the World Heritage List in 1999, justified due to “a harmonious blend of the architectural styles and artistic movements that have succeeded each other from the Middle Ages until the 18th century.”<sup>10</sup> In 2003, as part of the celebration of its nomination as the European Capital of Culture, a new Art Museum was built in the World Heritage area. This building, designed by Colin Fournier and Peter Cook was deliberately provocative in its amoeba form, which completely detached from the traditional harmonious integrity of the city, which had justified its inscription. However, the ICOMOS site mission recommended that it was acceptable. As a matter of fact, it would always be correct to inform UNESCO about major new developments in advance, like in the cases of Nara and Graz. The question of new and often oversized constructions tends to be a new type of hazard particularly in the surroundings of historic centers. Indeed, the question is now about integrity, in the first place, and only secondly about authenticity.

This issue can be taken back to the 1970s, when both the Council of Europe and UNESCO introduced methodologies for planning in historic areas, based on the principles of “integrated urban conservation.” It is useful to repeat the often noted definition of the 1976 UNESCO Recommendation:

*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 (UNESCO, 1976, paragraph 2).*

Based on research and analysis of the territory, the question is to define the significance of an historic area and the elements that form the integrity in relation to the significance. Once having identified the elements, it is also possible to verify how these elements meet the requirement of authenticity. When dealing with the planning of historic areas, it is necessary to distinguish between the often-fragile traditional fabric, its typology and the resulting urban form, compared to modern planning and development that corresponds to a different conception.

Since the introduction of the concept of cultural landscapes, there has been closer collaboration between organizations dealing with nature and those dealing with culture. For example, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and ICCROM are jointly developing capacity building in the World Heritage Leadership Programme. While earlier, nature was expected to be preserved free of human intervention, the traditional custodians of sacred natural territories are now being involved in joint ventures of management. A publication, which came out in the International Year of Biodiversity in 2010, offers recommendations for sustaining sacred natural sites with their natural and cultural qualities. In the World Heritage context, natural properties have always been required to verify their integrity. Considering that culture and traditional care are now recognized as part of the strategies of nature conservation, it is also necessary to explore the relevance of verifying the authenticity of the ecosystems and traditional cultures that are relevant in such sites (Verschuuren, McNeely and Oviedo, 2010).

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<sup>10</sup> [<https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/931>].



GRAZ. *Image: Public domain.*



GRAZ KUNSTHAUS. *Image: Public domain.*

In 2005, the Council of Europe adopted the *Framework convention on the value of cultural heritage for society (Faro convention)*. In this, it is clear that the scope of safeguarding heritage is not an elitist task; rather it means making the people aware of their heritage, and, so to say, give the heritage back to the community. The *Faro convention*, indeed, refers to cultural heritage not as a set of monuments but as all the resources inherited from the past which people identify, “independently of ownership, as a reflection and expression of their constantly evolving values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions. It includes all aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time.” As a result, the convention also coins the notion of “heritage community,” who consists of people “who value specific aspects of cultural heritage which they wish, within the framework of public action, to sustain and transmit to future generations.” Thus, it must be the people who learn to recognize the significance of their inheritance in all its aspects, and consequently associate value to it.

The ICOMOS training guidelines of 1993 stress the importance to recognize the practice of conservation as interdisciplinary that should involve all stakeholders:

*The practice of conservation is interdisciplinary; it therefore follows that courses should also be multidisciplinary. Professionals, including academics and specialized craftspersons, who have already received their normal qualification will need further training in order to become conservationists; equally those who seek to act competently in historic environment (ICOMOS, 1993).*

It is further noted:

*Education and sensitization for conservation should begin in schools and continue in universities and beyond. These institutions have an important role in raising visual and cultural awareness –improving ability to read and understand the elements of our cultural heritage– and giving the cultural preparation needed by candidates for specialist education and training. Practical hands-on training in craft work should be encouraged (ICOMOS, 1993).*

As already stressed in the *Venice Charter*, and as was becoming increasingly important towards the later 20<sup>th</sup> century, the contextualization of the recognition of heritage resources was fully recognized. In 2005, the ICOMOS General Assembly in China adopted the *Xi’an declaration on the conservation of the setting of heritage structures, sites and areas*. Here it is noted that it is essential to acknowledge the contribution of setting to the significance of heritage resources. This is further stressed in the 2011 UNESCO *Recommendation on historic urban landscape*, recommending extending the management to the context. As a matter of fact, the management of heritage within its context is critical as has been seen in the conservation practice. This also means that the question of conservation needs to be discussed in the broader context of capacity building, as has been recognized by UN Economic and Social Council in 2006, the World Heritage Committee in 2011, as well as by the ICOMOS International Training Committee in 2013.

In the 1994 Nara Conference, Françoise Choay implies that the question of authenticity needs to be seen in the context of philosophy, i.e., search for meaning, if we wish to recognize it as a universal. Authenticity has multiple connotations that may be related to the significance and meaning of a resource. It is therefore necessary to first understand what the resource is and what is its historical, social, and cultural context. Exploring the meanings that have been associated with authenticity, we note that it can be defined as something that sustains and proves itself, as well as having credit and authority from itself. It refers to creativity, authorship, and identity in form and substance. It is different from “identical,” which refers to reproduction, replica, copy, or reconstruction. Authenticity can relate to the ‘original creative



FARO. *Image: Public domain.*



XI'AN. *Image: Public domain.*

source,” but it also relates to historical continuity, including interventions in different periods of time, and how these have been integrated into the context. Authenticity can be understood as a condition of the heritage resource, its artistic, historical and cultural dimensions, the aesthetic, structural and functional form of the object or site, its material and technology, as well as its physical and socio-cultural context (Jokilehto, 1995: 17-43).

Paul Philippot often recalled that the conservation of heritage is a cultural problem. We need to understand, recognize and respect the achievements of past generations, the result of human creative capacity to respond to the needs of community and environment at different times. It does not exclude reconstruction when this is well motivated and correctly executed. However, a replica obviously represents a new construction, which can have its own significance and truth. As noted by Henri Bergson, the results of human creative efforts endure in time and generate the foundations for our present-day life. Culture and cultural traditions are results of such creative efforts, today represented in the diversity of cultures and heritage in the different regions of the world. To know ourselves, we need to know our foundations, and this is also the basis for communicating with others. As stated in the preface of the *Venice Charter*, “Charged with a spiritual message from the past, the monumental achievements of the peoples remain in the present life the living testimony of their age-old traditions.”

The preservation and safeguarding of this heritage must be based on a critical judgement regarding the historical significance and condition of the work, as well as its evolving context over time. In his *Theory of restoration*, Cesare Brandi stresses: “Restoration consists of the methodological moment in which the work of art is recognized in its physical being and in its dual aesthetic and historical nature, in view of its transmission to the future” (Brandi, 2005: 48).<sup>11</sup> Each work of art as well as each historic object has its specificity. Therefore, it is not possible to decide about restoration prior to having made a critical survey and study of its significance that also takes into account its duration over time. It is through such methodology that are defined the elements forming its integrity and verifying the true meaning of each. With the recognition of historicity of the urban and rural territory as heritage, and the introduction of the methodology of integrated urban conservation, the concern is no more only of individual works of the past but of a holistic approach to the cultural and natural environment. This is the context, where the specificity and authenticity of each element should be critically assessed.

The international criteria for conservation cannot be taken as template, but rather as a methodological framework. The universality of the theory of conservation is in the methodological approach to the critical recognition of the human cultural expressions of the past in their integrity and authenticity.

*Heritage conservation does not mean applying fixed solutions or copying from other cases. Rather it is based on the critical recognition of each resource for its significance and in its specificity. Conservation is itself a creative process. While the international doctrine –adopted e.g. by UNESCO or ICOMOS– provides us with an overall umbrella of guidance, each case must necessarily be taken in its specificity. Consequently, each conservation project is a new challenge, and when it is successful it can also become another layer in the history of human capacity to critically appreciate the significance of a particular place, to find appropriate culturally and environmentally sustainable solutions for safeguarding it (Jokilehto, 2018: 308).*

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<sup>11</sup> The original Italian *Teoria del Restauro* was published in 1963.

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