

A viewpoint on the reconstruction of destroyed UNESCO Cultural World Heritage Sites

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Abstract

The destruction of UNESCO Cultural World Heritage Sites (WHS) in conflict zones is devastating and continues to spark heated debate on reconstruction. Craft skills and construction materials can reinstate lost physical fabric. Communities who identify with WHS can ascribe meanings and values to the new fabric, thereby reclaiming their heritage. However, it is difficult to retrieve Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), including authenticity and integrity after irreversible damage has been done. ‘If a World Heritage property is destroyed and later reconstructed, could it still be recognized as World Heritage?’ is a critical question, open to debate. It was raised during a colloquium on ‘Post-Trauma Reconstruction’ held at ICOMOS Headquarters in March 2016. A participant commented that ‘it is not possible to punish the State Party if a disaster or a war occurred’, but ‘there was no further exchange on this aspect’. In this paper, I argue that the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention may need to shift the spotlight from ‘exceptional circumstances’ to the contemporaneity of heritage. An oxymoron, perhaps, but it may sustain the culture of World Heritage inscription in conflict and post-conflict zones. A new category, in concert with three qualifying conditions, is proposed.

Keywords

World Heritage; Outstanding Universal Value; authenticity; integrity; reconstruction; continuity; compatibility; distinction

Introduction

Destroyed UNESCO Cultural World Heritage Sites (WHS) will require integrated planning with cultural, social, economic and environmental improvement (1). They may face the daunting dilemma between the two extremes of modernisation and conservation. Opportunities for new development, infrastructure projects and public services that aim at accommodating contemporary urban needs may spark heated debate among different interest groups (e.g. residents, developers, designers, planners, contractors, municipal authorities, politicians), including actors in the WH system (e.g. UNESCO WH Committee, UNESCO WH Centre (WHC), UNESCO Category II Centres, States Parties, ICOMOS, ICCROM) and others (e.g. academics, consultants, researchers). Reconstruction, which usually aims at re-accommodating lost physical fabric in a post-conflict scenario, is another controversial issue relevant to different interest groups. It raises critical questions. I formulated the following ones to expose its complexity:

What is the quality of available documentation and information? What exactly should be recovered? To what extent is reconstruction politically, financially and technically feasible? Will the benefits outweigh the costs? When should work begin? Is training necessary to address technical issues? Are the same construction materials and craft skills available? Should they, alone, be employed? Should contemporary building codes, mechanical/electrical/plumbing systems and sustainability principles be employed to upgrade original designs? Should monuments be treated differently than vernacular built heritage? Should functions remain the same? How much space can be left for new functions and design creativity? What are 'the limits of acceptable change'? What guidelines should be adopted to manage reconstruction and to conduct impact assessments? Who should be on the assessment team? Who are the relevant communities or stakeholders? How can expectations be communicated? How can conflicting or competing interests and values be mediated? How can local, national and international visions be integrated?

The list of questions is indeed long, but not exhaustive. It shows that reconstruction may become the most challenging conservation and management issue facing the affected States Parties and the WH system. Admittedly, reconstruction has been a controversial issue for quite some time (e.g. see Bold and Pickard 2013; Jokilehto 2015), but due to the escalating magnitude of attacks on WHS, it has become an 'intense debate' (Rössler 2016, 133). Examples include WHS in Iraq, Syria and Yemen inscribed on the List of WH in Danger. According to the UNESCO website, UNESCO began collecting information on Syrian cultural heritage in 2014. The WHC organised a meeting on 'Post- Conflict Reconstruction in the Middle East Context and in the Old City of Aleppo in particular' in June 2015. Also, a colloquium on 'Post-Trauma Reconstruction' was held at ICOMOS Headquarters to develop a joint vision and response in March 2016. Later that month, the Canada Research Chair on Built Heritage at the Université de Montréal organised a Round Table to discuss the shift 'From conservation to reconstruction: how World Heritage is changing theory and practice' (Cameron and Wilson 2016). According to the ICOMOS website, a workshop was held at ICOMOS Headquarters in September to draft a guidance document with focus on WHS. A Scientific Symposium on 'Post-Disaster Reconstruction' took place in Turkey in October. Upcoming events, such as an academic workshop scheduled in March 2017 at Bologna University, are expected to contribute to this timely topic.

The UNESCO WH Committee currently supports reconstruction; that of the Timbuktu mausoleums in Mali is a case in point (Rössler 2016); nevertheless, it is unclear whether reconstruction can secure the WH status of destroyed WHS. In reading the proceedings of the ICOMOS colloquium, one particular question caught my attention: 'If a World Heritage property

is destroyed and later reconstructed, could it still be recognised as World Heritage?’ Following a group discussion, the comment ‘it is not possible to punish the State Party if a disaster or a war occurred’ was made, but ‘there was no further exchange on this aspect’ (ICOMOS 2016a, 23; 2016b, 35) (2). The question challenges the current WH conceptual and operational framework, which may explain why it remains open to debate. The purpose of this paper, therefore, is to present my view in order to encourage a much needed exchange of views, which may not only advance the debate, but also open new avenues for the implementation of the WH Convention in conflict and post-conflict zones in the future. The first section proposes a solution to the question, while the second and third elaborate on it by means of historical and document analysis.

Contemporary Cultural World Heritage of Outstanding Universal Value

It must be observed from the outset that the gravity of the situation on the ground may also explain why UNESCO and ICOMOS cannot yet give a definitive answer. Large scale destruction of WHS leaves ample room for competition among developers and other powerful interest groups who will likely push for new development. In other words, the reconstruction of monuments and vernacular built heritage will not be high on their list of priorities. An alarming example is the situation in Syria, described by the Director-General of Antiquities and Museums:

... we are facing strong pressures from developers and business people. They want to build new hotels, new buildings, and we are opposed to that. But they have a lot of power, much more than we do. That is one the reasons why we need international scientific support, from ICOMOS, UNESCO and others. We cannot leave Aleppo in the hands of businessmen and wealthy companies. Which brings me to underline the challenge arising from the poverty of the people. [...] This is a problem we face particularly in Homs or Maaloula, for instance. (Abdulkarim 2016, 9)

Given this example, it can be said that the quest to maintain WH status, in spite of competing and conflicting interests and needs, may become a burden and impede upon the rights of local populations who give precedence to the quality and continuity of urban life over the fulfilment of WH requirements. Still, the central question remains: if a State Party somehow manages to reconstruct a destroyed WHS, could it still be recognised as WH?

The keyword here is ‘recognised’. To be recognised as WH, a cultural property must meet: (1) at least one of the cultural criteria (i)–(vi); (2) the conditions of authenticity and integrity; (3) the requirements for protection and management. These are the three pillars of OUV (UNESCO et al. 2013, 35). Unfortunately, the destruction of a WHS is a serious threat to its OUV, which no longer has a physical manifestation on the ground. In my view, the balance between tangible heritage and intangible heritage may need to shift in favour of the latter in a revised version of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (OG), also known as the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (UNESCO 1972). As such, the importance accorded to the physical fabric of historic architecture would decrease while the importance of the meanings and values associated with contemporary architecture – which is what a reconstruction is – would increase. This proposal is closer to the actual reality of heritage because heritage is not ‘only about the past’, it is not only a ‘thing’, a ‘cultural resource’, a ‘site’ or a ‘building’; it is rather ‘a process in which cultural and social values are rewritten and redefined for the needs of the present’ (Smith 2006, 1, 7, 44, 273).

This paper’s fundamental premise is that heritage is dynamic: it can change with changing values, perceptions, needs, circumstances and generations. This quality explains why heritage

(including cultural WH) should be understood as an evolving process rather than a fixed product (e.g. see Japan ICOMOS 2014; Labadi 2013; Smith 2006). Within this perspective, the point of reference for heritage-related decisions is neither the past nor the future: it is the present. Accordingly, the decision to reconstruct should be made to respond to the present, not to commemorate the past or to imagine the future. A reconstruction, in my view, is a contemporary architectural layer that is authentic of its period of introduction in the continuous process of evolution of a cultural property. Here, it is noteworthy that the principle of layering of values and attributes is promulgated by UNESCO and ICOMOS in light of the Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape (UNESCO 2011, Items 8 and 20).

It is also worth noting that ‘one of the positive aspects of the Convention is the lack of definition of Outstanding Universal Value in the legal text. This lack of definition allows for a flexible and nuanced approach to its implementation’ (Cameron and Rössler 2013, 101). Yet, the Convention is built on the assumption that heritage is a product, a fabric, a ‘special class of object’ (as opposed to a process) ‘that is defined and studied by “experts” or ‘specialists’ who ‘took heritage out of the hands’ of people and turned it into a ‘professionalised practice’ (Harrison 2013, 56, 63), which is a negative aspect. This explains why the scientific approach to heritage prevails over the affective connection to heritage. As a result, heritage practice tends to be fixated ‘on the material thing rather than the feelings it arouses’ (see discussion in Sullivan 2015, 113) and rather than the values ascribed to it by different people.

Values can change over time (Araoz 2011, 58), which is why a permanent Statement of OUV written in one historical moment to state why a property is valuable can be misleading. Admittedly, some past WH Committee decisions show that OUV is a concept that can change over time (Labadi 2013, 54). Amendments to the criteria for the assessment of OUV (as reflected in the different versions of the OG) also show that the evolving meaning of heritage has been acknowledged. Nevertheless, the ‘understanding of values as intrinsic’ (i.e. inherent, such as age value) and the ‘narrow focus on the supposedly unchanging fabric and history of properties’ are predominant, which is ‘why the Convention is not yet used to its full potential’ (Labadi 2013, 148).

I would argue that the ‘fabric’ of a property such as a building is the outcome of the architectural culture and practice of the moment (in our case, the present). The ‘history’ of a property is not static because the society of the moment can change the course of its history, for example, by adding new elements to, or removing existing elements from, its fabric (i.e. human interventions). A State Party, moreover, nominates a property for inscription on the WH List in light of the meanings and values ascribed to it in the moment of nomination. The Statement of OUV, adopted by the WH Committee, relates more to those meanings and values than to others in the history of the property. That Statement relates more to the present than to the past or the future. Thus, the creation of a new category of Contemporary Cultural World Heritage to address the reconstruction of destroyed WHS – which is my solution to the question of concern – is not such an oxymoron as it may sound. If the readers of this paper are willing to entertain this proposal as they proceed to the following section, and to build on it, they may contribute to sustaining the culture of WH inscription in conflict and post-conflict zones.

Reconstruction in-between development and conservation

Reconstruction is not the only issue currently challenging the WH system. There are three ‘areas of concern’ or ‘trends’ in particular that ‘threaten to undermine the relevance and credibility of the Convention. They are a gap in understanding between cultural and natural values, increased

politicization of the system and a subtle shift from conservation to development' (Cameron 2015, 31). To this list, I would insert reconstruction under the last two areas of concern because the decision to rebuild a deliberately destroyed WHS is chiefly made in the 'national self-interest', which would further increase the 'politicization of the system', and, because reconstruction is vaguely in-between development and conservation. In this paper, only the latter is examined.

The place of reconstruction in the WH system is vague because international heritage doctrine rests atop unclear terminology. By way of example, the Venice Charter, promulgated by UNESCO, states, 'All reconstruction work should however be ruled out "a priori"' and avoid 'conjecture' (ICOMOS 1964, Articles 15 and 9); the Recommendation Concerning the Safeguarding and Contemporary Role of Historic Areas adds that such work can be 'irrational and inappropriate' (UNESCO 1976; Preamble); as per the OG, it is 'justifiable only in exceptional circumstances [...] and to no extent on conjecture' (UNESCO-WHC 2015, Paragraph 86).

In my view, these principles or guidelines are futile because they do not provide applicants and evaluators (who, respectively, submit and review proposals for reconstruction) with sufficient information to determine what is appropriate or 'irrational and inappropriate' or 'conjecture'. Put differently, guidance directed at reconstruction was not well-thought-out with practitioners in mind. To a greater extent, other authors find, 'Actually the international charters, with the exception of the Athens Charter and perhaps the Burra Charter, barely address practice and practitioners and thus never give direct guidelines for future practice' (Aygen 2013, 33).

The expression 'to no extent on conjecture' (UNESCO-WHC 2015, Paragraph 86) is somewhat understood to mean that guesswork must be avoided, but its applicability is arguable. For instance, one author argues, 'all attempts to reconstruct the past' involve 'subjective hypothesis', which is why any reconstruction is 'fake' and 'it is all but impossible to produce permanently convincing fakes' because 'time has its own merciless way of exposing them' (Fitch 1982, 47, 189), while another argues that architectural design itself is 'subjective hypothesis' whether the intention is to 'reconstruct the past' or 'to construct the present and future' (Semmes 2009, 167). The following sub-sections clarify why a reconstruction is considered 'fake' to some but 'authentic' to others.

Reconstruction understood as development

It can be said that reconstruction largely fell under the category of development – not conservation – in the early years of the implementation of the WH Convention because the Venice Charter discouraged imitation. This Charter is a continuation of 'truth-enforcement conservation', which is a classical theory of conservation that seeks to protect and reveal historical truth (Muñoz Viñas 2005, 99). This theory is an outgrowth of John Ruskin's philosophical approach to change. Ruskin (1819–1900) was an English art critic who remarked, in his treatise *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (first published in 1849), that architecture cannot and should not attempt to 'raise the dead' (1890, 353). He condemned imitation because, in his opinion, it is wrong 'to render the architecture of the day, historical' (1890, 325). In other words, contemporary architecture must not appear to be old because that would be dishonest architecture and a false sense of historical evolution. Within this perspective, restoration and reconstruction are negative interventions. They wrongly interfere in the natural cycle of ageing, noting that for Ruskin the age of a building is 'its greatest glory', 'that golden stain of time', moreover, 'the picturesque' is 'sought in ruin, and supposed to consist in decay' (1890, 339–352).

Ruskin's treatise explains why distinction between old and new architecture became a

‘principle of honesty’ that ‘must govern our treatment’ of historic buildings and places (Ruskin 1890, 42; see also Khalaf 2016a). This point is clearly expressed in the Venice Charter: ‘any extra work which is indispensable must be distinct from the architectural composition and must bear a contemporary stamp’ (ICOMOS 1964, Article 9). Until the Nara Document on Authenticity (ICOMOS 1994), reconstruction was believed to be a falsification of ‘the artistic or historic evidence’ more so than restoration (ICOMOS 1964, Article 12). Yet, one may argue that the preserve as found ethos, which attempts to freeze ‘the architectural composition’ in time, also works against ‘historic evidence’ because physical fabric is supposed to evolve, age and experience some form of decay. This is the natural cycle of ageing – to return to Ruskin. Logically, moreover, ‘Nothing can be, nor should be, “conserved as found” or ‘frozen in time’ otherwise it ceases to be heritage and to have ongoing cultural meaning’ (Smith 2006, 48, 275). Thus, both preservation and reconstruction are human interventions that tamper with the fabric and history of a cultural property.

Reconstruction understood as conservation

In some cultures, a reconstruction is not a falsification or a forgery or pastiche. It is a ritual that allows the conservation and transmission of local building culture from generation to generation. It is more about intangible heritage than tangible heritage. In Ise, Japan, for instance, shrines are dismantled and replicated every 20 years as a result of ‘the Shinto belief in the death and renewal of nature and the impermanence of physical things’ (Kalman 2014, 145, 146). The replica, built on a site adjacent to the dismantled shrine, is not dishonest or ‘fake’ architecture: it is authentic contemporary architecture. What is of value is not the ‘golden stain of time’ – to use the words of Ruskin (1890, 340) – but rather the belief system associated with conservation practice.

In light of the Japanese approach to change, the Nara Document on Authenticity (ICOMOS 1994) and more recently the Nara+20 Document (Japan ICOMOS 2014) were written. These documents and the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, also known as the ICH Convention (UNESCO 2003), shifted the Western outlook on reconstruction. As a result, ‘many voices now maintain it is the stories and cultural processes associated with historic places that are of greater importance than the physical fabric’ (Kalman 2014, 119); nevertheless, the WH system slightly shifted its attitude to reconstruction. The spirit of the Nara Document on Authenticity was integrated into the 2005 version of the OG (UNESCO-WHC 2005, Paragraphs 79, 86) and the Riga Charter on Authenticity and Historical Reconstruction in Relationship to Cultural Heritage (ICCROM/Latvian National Commission for UNESCO/State Inspection for Heritage Protection of Latvia 2000) was recognised, albeit not elaborated on (UNESCO-WHC 2005, Annex 4 on page 95). This is still the case in the current OG, which maintain that reconstruction is ‘justifiable only in exceptional circumstances [...] and to no extent on conjecture’ (UNESCO-WHC 2015, Paragraphs 79, 86; see also Annex 4 on page 83).

The Riga Charter states that a reconstruction is considered ‘a replication of cultural heritage’ that is ‘in general a misrepresentation of evidence of the past, and that each architectural work should reflect the time of its own creation, in the belief that sympathetic new buildings can maintain the environmental context’ (ICCROM/Latvian National Commission for UNESCO/State Inspection for Heritage Protection of Latvia 2000, Article 5). This statement can be interpreted to mean that a reconstruction is not ‘sympathetic’ or compatible architecture. A recent paper on architectural compatibility, however, shows that replication (including reconstruction), reinterpretation as well as contrast are three relevant approaches to compatible design that should

not be ruled out a priori but rather considered on a case-by-case basis (Khalaf 2016b). For instance, a replica can be compatible with intangible heritage and tangible heritage if the place continues to sustain local building culture (e.g. knowledge, traditional craftsmanship, techniques) and to build with available construction materials, which can be character-defining elements that ‘reflect’ the sense of place, where the ‘time of creation’ does not matter due to the continuity of building culture. In this example, ‘the issue of depth of time simply does not apply’ – to use the words of Smith (2006, 285). Still, the imitation of the forms of the past is not looked upon favourably in the OG, although some exceptions have been made.

‘Exceptional’ examples

A well-known reconstruction inscribed on the WH List is the Historic Centre of Warsaw in Poland:

After much hesitation, the World Heritage Committee listed the historic city of Warsaw in 1980 as an ‘exceptionally successful and identical reconstruction of a cultural property which is associated with events of considerable historical significance.’ It went further. ‘There can be no question of inscribing in the future other cultural properties that have been reconstructed.’ The Committee’s Operational Guidelines were amended accordingly so that criterion (vi) could only be used in exceptional circumstances or in conjunction with other criteria [footnote included]. Despite a couple of exceptions, the Committee has remained unsympathetic to reconstructions over its first three decades [...]. (Cameron in Cameron and Wilson 2016, 13)

Another well-known reconstruction is the Old Bridge Area of the Old City of Mostar in Bosnia and Herzegovina, inscribed on the WH List in 2005 under criterion (vi), which is the clearest one associated with intangible heritage out of the six cultural criteria for the assessment of OUV. To meet this criterion, the nominated property shall:

be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance. (The Committee considers that this criterion should preferably be used in conjunction with other criteria). (UNESCO-WHC 2015, Paragraph 77)

The terms ‘directly or tangibly’ are understood to mean that the property must exist on the ground, especially because the WH Convention is a property-based Convention. In other words, it is immovable tangible heritage that is inscribed on the WH List. Intangible heritage such as ‘living traditions’ or ‘beliefs’, alone, cannot support the nomination of a destroyed property for inscription on the WH List. Reconstruction could support its nomination and potential inscription – ‘in exceptional circumstances’ (UNESCO-WHC 2015, Paragraph 86).

The 3Ts: Tangibility, Time, Threat

In light of the above observation, tangibility or lack thereof is definitely an issue. Absence matters in the WH system. Filling this absence also matters because the physical fabric of a reconstruction is considered to lack cultural significance or ‘outstanding universal significance’ – to use the wording of criterion (vi) (UNESCO-WHC 2015, Paragraph 77). Yet, some authors would argue that ‘cultural significance is found in the intangible values and stories associated with the place [or building] that has been reconstructed’ (Kalman 2014, 158). Alas, this argument is not fully

acknowledged given that criterion (vi) ‘should preferably be used in conjunction with other criteria’ (UNESCO-WHC 2015, Paragraph 77). The depth of time also matters, as explained earlier, which is why a reconstruction is not easily recognised as WH. Threat to OUV is another issue; for this reason, the Riga Charter states that ‘any reconstruction’ must ‘always’ be ‘reversible’ (ICCROM/Latvian National Commission for UNESCO/State Inspection for Heritage Protection of Latvia 2000, Preamble). Logically, the use/function of a reconstruction and its effects/impacts on the environment can be reversible, but reversing a reconstruction (the building itself) means its demolition, which is not a minimal intervention. To the contrary, it is a large intervention that causes adverse environmental impacts, which are threats.

Due to the weight given to – what I call – the 3Ts, a destroyed and later reconstructed WHS could not be recognised as WH unless an ‘exceptional’ reason is argued to justify its eligibility. Or, unless the balance shifts in the OG in favour of intangible heritage associated with contemporary architecture, which is my solution. A reconstruction is a contemporary property, but a property nonetheless. It does not contradict the *raison d’être* of the WH (property-based) Convention. As explained in the introduction to this paper, moreover, the WH Committee has recently made some exceptions and decisions to support reconstruction such as that of the Timbuktu mausoleums in Mali, (Rössler 2016); yet, Timbuktu was inscribed on the WH List under criteria (ii), (iv) and (v) – not (vi). This information is here mentioned to clarify that the intangible dimension of heritage is not exclusively expressed in criterion (vi) (e.g. see UNESCO-WHC 2012a). This note brings us to a fourth issue: criteria tend to dissect heritage, so we risk treating it like a ‘thing’. In fact, heritage was initially understood to mean just that.

World Heritage concepts in flux

The WH system was built on the assumptions that: (1) heritage is a thing that relates to the past; (2) authenticity is ‘truth’ embedded in material testimony; (3) integrity is completeness and lack of change. Accordingly, a reconstruction could not easily become WH because: (1) its physical fabric relates to the present, which means that it is (2) ‘false’ or ‘fake’ architecture that (3) replaces destroyed ‘true’ architecture, thereby causing change, although destroyed architecture is already incomplete. The following sub-sections explain why these initial assumptions are flawed and what modifications have been made to address them, followed by (4) the proposal of more relevant qualifying conditions for reconstruction.

(1) Heritage

In the WH Convention, cultural heritage refers to ‘monuments’, ‘groups of buildings’ and ‘sites’ of ‘Outstanding Universal Value’ (UNESCO 1972, Article 1), which explains why it was initially treated like a thing. That definition was later broadened; for instance, a category of cultural landscapes was created and a Global Strategy for a Representative, Balanced and Credible World Heritage List was developed (Cameron and Rössler 2013; UNESCO-WHC 2015, Annex 3).

OUV is not defined in the Convention. The OG clarify that it means ‘significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity’ (UNESCO-WHC 2015, Paragraph 49). The amendments to the criteria for the assessment of OUV throughout the years show that the evolving meaning of heritage has been acknowledged. Yet, a reconstruction, which could be important ‘for present and future generations of all humanity’, is not looked upon favourably in the OG (UNESCO-WHC

2015, Paragraph 86).

Many contemporary authors have critically investigated the concept of heritage and questioned the idea of a ‘Statement of OUV’, which became a requirement introduced in the February 2005 version of the OG (UNESCO-WHC 2005). The following passages are noteworthy because they show the relevance of my solution to the central question, reiterated thereafter. The passages are arranged in a manner that links one argument to the next:

... ‘heritage’ is not a ‘thing’, it is not a ‘site’, building or other material object. While these things are often important, they are not in themselves heritage [...] heritage [is] a process that while it passed on established values and meanings [is] also creating new meanings and values. (Smith 2006, 44, 48)

What constitutes heritage is not fixed: we have learned that it evolves with society and reflects its changing values over time. It is therefore incumbent upon contemporary societies to redefine the role, meaning and purpose of heritage. (Bandarin and Van Oers 2012, 178)

Because values are in our minds and not inherent to objects, site valuation is fundamentally an extrinsic process. [...] Outstanding Universal Value, like all values, is attributed by people and through human appreciation. (Labadi 2013, 15, 54)

In recognizing intangible heritage as a specific category that stands in opposition to ‘tangible’ heritage, the Convention continues a separation of objects, buildings and places from the practices and traditions associated with them. This maintains the Cartesian dualism of matter and mind. (Harrison 2013, 137)

... heritage practices [...] which separate emotions and feelings from material things and thus construct people as external to, and separate from, places and things, not only fail to come to grips with the nature of heritage, but also have negative consequences for people. (Ireland and Blair 2015, 13)

Taken together, these passages form a narrative. It reveals that heritage is more a process than a thing. Heritage relates more to the values – including OUV – of the present than to those of the past or the future. The integration of tangible and intangible aspects – including emotions and feelings – is closer to the meaning of heritage than their separation (the WH Convention + the ICH Convention makes more sense than the WH Convention vs. the ICH Convention). For these reasons, the creation of a new category of Contemporary Cultural World Heritage is not to be seen as a threat to the relevance or credibility of the WH Convention, but rather as an opportunity to break new ground for its implementation not only in conflict and post-conflict zones, but in general.

(2) Authenticity

The term ‘authenticity’ is not mentioned in the WH Convention, but it is in the Venice Charter (ICOMOS 1964, Preamble). The term was introduced and defined in the October 1977 version of the OG, which fell under the paradigm of truth-enforcement conservation, discussed earlier in this paper. Cultural properties had to ‘meet the test of authenticity in design, materials, workmanship and setting’ (UNESCO 1977, Paragraph 9), which are associated with physical fabric. The ‘Test of Authenticity’ became the ‘Conditions of Authenticity’ in the 2005 version of the OG. That

version and the current one include intangible aspects, in keeping with the spirit of the Nara Document on Authenticity (ICOMOS 1994):

... properties may be understood to meet the conditions of authenticity if their cultural values [...] are truthfully and credibly expressed through a variety of attributes including: form and design; materials and substance; use and function; traditions, techniques and management systems; location and setting; language, and other forms of intangible heritage; spirit and feeling; and other internal and external factors. (UNESCO-WHC 2015, Paragraph 82)

The proceedings of the colloquium on 'Post-Trauma Reconstruction' held at ICOMOS Headquarters show, 'We've always been concerned about material authenticity, and today we increasingly focus on functional authenticity as well' (Araoz 2016, 3). 'Functional', I would argue, refers to the way heritage is being used in the present because past generations cannot use it anymore, and future generations cannot use it yet. A simple observation, perhaps, but further exploration of 'use and function' in future research may contribute to advancing the debate on reconstruction. We need to ask ourselves a fundamental question: for whom do we reconstruct? I would argue that we reconstruct a destroyed WHS to bring it back into use, in the present, for the benefit of the concerned communities.

Indeed, the larger debate on authenticity continues to be passionate:

Authenticity is a difficult term to accurately define as it is often confused with originality. An authentic element may not be original but is 'authentic' of its period of introduction. [...] 'All original fabric is authentic but not all authentic material is original.' (Bridgwood and Lennie 2009, page unknown, but see 'Chapter 46: Principles, ethics and criteria of conservation' under 'Part 7: Conservation in Practice')

Defining authenticity as a dynamic concept resulting from the varying historical changes in buildings might [...] be closer to the actual history of most structures than to declare them as static, original [...] Authenticity understood in relation to the extrinsic values associated with the site can explain why such properties as the 'Old Bridge Area of the Old City of Mostar' in Bosnia and Herzegovina were included on the World Heritage List. [...] the importance of the living connection with the property is stressed as central. (Labadi 2013, 117, 122)

Other authors give special attention to 'truth' and 'falsehood':

... truth or falsehood are qualities that we may attribute to historical accounts or interpretations but not to buildings which may only be judged good or bad, appropriate or inappropriate. (Semmes 2009, 154)

The present condition is necessarily authentic [...] the only actually authentic condition. [...] Non-authentic states cannot exist in the real world [...] If something exists in a given condition [...] that condition is necessarily, tautologically authentic. [...] From an objective point of view, the notions of authenticity and falsehood are meaningless even in the case of deliberate forgery. [...] Forged objects are undisputable, tautologically authentic objects [...] the fact that they were purposely produced to be wrongly identified by the subjects does not deprive them of a basic feature: real existence. (Muñoz Viñas 2005, 94, 99)

In light of the above passages, I would argue that a reconstruction in the present is a layer in the continuous process of evolution of a destroyed WHS just as any human intervention, including

conservation work, was in its past and will be in its future. That layer is altogether a ‘contemporary stamp’ – to use the words of the Venice Charter (ICOMOS 1964, Article 9). It is “‘authentic’ of its period of introduction’ (see Bridgwood and Lennie 2009, chap. 46). More explicitly, the layers of a destroyed and later reconstructed WHS and their ‘successive conditions are all equally authentic, silent testimonies of its actual evolution’ (see Muñoz Viñas 2005, 94) or, said differently, of its ‘actual history’ (see Labadi 2013, 117). To return to the Venice Charter, it is noteworthy that ‘the valid contributions of all periods [...] must be respected’ (ICOMOS 1964, Article 11). ‘Valid’ can be interpreted to mean what is culturally significant, which is a quality that is determined in relation to the values and perceptions of the moment (in our case, the present). So, a reconstruction – or any human intervention for that matter – could be a ‘valid contribution’ of ‘our period’ if we deem it to be. It is either valid or not, culturally significant or not, well designed and executed or not, but it is neither true nor false, which ‘are qualities that we may attribute to historical accounts or interpretations but not to buildings’ (see Semes 2009, 154). This assessment brings us to examine the requirement of integrity.

(3) Integrity

Likewise, the term ‘integrity’ is not mentioned in the WH Convention, but it is in the Venice Charter (ICOMOS 1964, Article 14). It became a requirement for the nomination of cultural properties in the 2005 version of the OG (UNESCO-WHC 2005, Paragraphs 88, 89). The current version maintains:

Integrity is a measure of the wholeness and intactness [...]. Examining the conditions of integrity, therefore requires assessing the extent to which the property: a) includes all elements necessary to express its Outstanding Universal Value; b) is of adequate size to ensure the complete representation of the features and processes which convey the property’s significance; c) suffers from adverse effects of development and/or neglect. [...] the physical fabric of the property and/or its significant features should be in good condition, and the impact of deterioration processes controlled [...]. (UNESCO-WHC 2015, Paragraphs 88, 89)

Because this definition places emphasis on appearance and tangibility, integrity is often understood to mean ‘lack of change from the original and/or a valued subsequent configuration(s)’ (Kalman 2014, 203) where ‘change’ refers to what the eye can see. This explains why integrity is often combined with the term ‘visual’ – i.e. ‘visual integrity’. This combination is still largely the case in international heritage discourse (e.g. see UNESCO-WHC 2013; Khalaf 2016b, 2016c). ‘Ironically, restoration achieves an appearance of integrity while often destroying the integrity of a later configuration’ (Kalman 2014, 205). I would add: ironically, reconstruction achieves an appearance of integrity while replacing the integrity of an original that is neither whole nor intact.

Integrity is also understood to mean ‘honesty’ (Kalman 2014, 206). As explained earlier in this paper, Ruskin’s ‘principle of honesty’ originated the conservation principle of distinction between old and new architecture (Ruskin 1890, 42; see also Khalaf 2016a). Accordingly, any intervention, including a reconstruction, must be distinct and legible to prevent the observer from thinking that what is being observed is part of cultural heritage. Distinction, therefore, prevents deception. Ironically, the fact that an intervention has been made or built makes it an undeniable, tangible, part of cultural heritage. It cannot be deprived of its ‘basic feature: real existence’ (Muñoz Viñas 2005, 99).

The debate on integrity has indeed increased, especially due to the growing number of

proposals for new projects in or near WHS, such as proposals for high-rise and large-scale development (e.g. see Araoz 2011; Bandarin and Van Oers 2012; Khalaf 2015; UNESCO-WHC 2013). A project proposed in or near a WHS is expected to be visually compatible with, yet distinct from, existing physical fabric so as not to compromise the integrity and threaten the OUV of the WHS. It has been acknowledged, though, that the conditions of integrity for cultural heritage should expand beyond visual aspects and physical fabric to include intangible elements (e.g. see UNESCO-WHC 2012b). This may explain why ‘Examples of the application of the conditions of integrity to properties nominated under criteria (i) – (vi)’ are still ‘under development’ since the 2005 version of the OG (UNESCO-WHC 2005; 2015, note next to Paragraph 89). This remark brings us to the following proposal in the context of reconstruction.

(4) Relevant qualifying conditions for reconstruction

It is noteworthy that ‘both integrity (for natural heritage sites) and authenticity (for cultural heritage sites) were described as “qualifying conditions” [but] This phrase disappeared in the Feb. 2005 version’ of the OG (Stovel 2007, 21). Some authors had already acknowledged, before 2005, that integrity and authenticity ‘may not be enough to give a fully clear picture of the key indicators for maintaining the essential “character” or “sense of place” of an historic city’ – or a WHS – because there is a third ‘qualifying condition’. It is ‘the sense of continuity – the sense of timelessness’ (Stovel 2004, 114, 115). In my view, *Continuity* is a qualifying condition for reconstruction because continuity of beliefs, rituals and living traditions for example could cancel out the importance accorded to the depth of *Time* (see *3Ts* in this paper).

To return to integrity, it must be observed that its potential expansion beyond physical fabric and visual aspects is a positive step. It implies that the compatibility of a reconstructed WHS with former architecture, as well as its distinction from former architecture, would no longer be judged exclusively in reference to conventional, aesthetically-driven, indicators (e.g. form, scale, height, proportions, colours, materials, patina or ‘that golden stain of time’ according to Ruskin (1890, 340)). Judgement could be made in reference to less aesthetically-driven, more intangible, indicators of compatibility in particular (e.g. use, function, knowledge, traditional craftsmanship, skills, practices, techniques). Taken together, *Compatibility* and *Distinction* are qualifying conditions that could cancel out the importance accorded to *Tangibility* and potentially replace the requirement of integrity altogether for reconstructed WHS and for new nominations of reconstructed cultural properties. From a practical point of view, a reconstruction is a new project. Compatibility and distinction can help determine ‘the limits of acceptable change’ because it is unrealistic to expect a reconstruction to be entirely *à l’identique*, especially if the tangibility of the original has not been (digitally) documented and recorded prior to its destruction. For this reason, the expression ‘to no extent on conjecture’ in the OG ought to be revisited (UNESCO-WHC 2015, Paragraph 86).

The requirement of authenticity also risks being dropped, as hinted at earlier in this paper, but for yet another reason that is widely accepted by the international heritage community: the ‘constantly re-created dimension of heritage also means that authenticity cannot apply to intangible cultural heritage’ (Labadi 2013, 132). This may explain why ‘the technical and theoretical aspects of the notion of authenticity in the context of the reconstruction of cultural heritage’ will be examined in March 2017 (ICOMOS 2016a, 27). I would add that the notion of continuity should be examined at the same time.

In closing, if my solution and recommendations are adopted, *Threat* to OUV could be

reversed, which means that a destroyed and later reconstructed WHS could still be recognised as WH rather than an ‘exceptional’ case. More so, other reconstructed cultural properties may potentially be nominated and inscribed on the WH List in the future irrespective of their ‘exceptional circumstances’. On the other hand, if the OG remain as presently worded (UNESCO-WHC 2015, Paragraph 86), the culture of WH inscription may no longer have a future in conflict and post-conflict zones due to ongoing destruction.

Concluding remarks and recommendations

In this paper, an attempt has been made to build a base upon which future dialogue and research on the topic of reconstruction in the WH context can be established. The introduction showed that *what exactly* should be reconstructed, *why, for whom, when* and *how* are questions open to debate. Any decision will inevitably be a compromise and negotiation among different interest groups. Benefits and adverse impacts should be identified and assessed to guide decision-making.

The addition of reconstruction guidelines and impact assessment guidelines in a revised version of the OG – with practitioners in mind – can help direct States Parties in implementing the WH Convention in conflict and post-conflict zones in the future. However, without political will, legislation, financial support, human resources and active coordination on the ground to effectively implement the guidelines, these efforts will be futile. The success or failure of a proposal for reconstruction, like any project proposed in a historic place, usually depends on:

... the professional sector, which comprises the architects, heritage professionals, planners, engineers, landscape architects, archaeologists, contractors, and trades who plan, design, and carry out the work. The quality of the finished product depends on their expertise and vision. Nevertheless, their initiatives can succeed only within a conservation context that demands quality, community and local government support, and a property owner or developer who has the vision and the means to commission and pay for the work. (Kalman 2014, 39)

To address the question of whether a destroyed and later reconstructed WHS could still be recognized as WH, I argued that Tangibility, Time and Threat play a major role. Because the weight given to these 3Ts is significant, reconstruction may not secure WH status unless ‘exceptional’ reasons are argued, or, unless the balance shifts in favour of intangible heritage associated with contemporary architecture, which is my solution.

One way to achieve this shift is to revise criterion (vi) noting that any reconstruction work should be documented and archived. Yet, if a destroyed WHS was not inscribed on the WH List based on criterion (vi), modifications might be made to its initial justification for inscription. Moreover, if a WHS will not be entirely reconstructed, modifications might be made to its initial delineated boundaries. That being said, the need for criteria and boundaries should be reconsidered in the OG. While extreme, this recommendation is made nevertheless because the idea of criteria and boundaries confines heritage and inhibits its capacity for change.

Admittedly, ‘It is easier to conserve the object than understand the emotions’ (Sullivan 2015, 113), which is why it is easier to focus on monuments, groups of buildings and sites that fit specific criteria and have specific boundaries than to understand the sentimental meanings of these man-made creations. In view of the increasing attacks on WHS, however, it is time to truly empower residents and users in the present – i.e. Communities: the ‘Fifth C’ added in 2007 to the Strategic Objectives of the WH Convention – and let them speak about their affective connection to heritage. ‘For, indeed, the greatest glory of a building is not in its stones, nor in its gold’ and

while Ruskin continued ‘Its glory is in its Age’ (1890, 339), I believe glory is in the feelings that a building evokes, whether it is an original or a reconstruction.

Last but not least, the requirements of authenticity and integrity risk being dropped due to perceived contradictions. Instead, I propose exploring three qualifying conditions in concert with a new category of Contemporary Cultural World Heritage, suitable for reconstruction: Continuity, Compatibility and Distinction.

Notes

1. The reconstruction of historic buildings and districts is the principal focus of this paper, but, of course, the reconstruction of the archaeological remains of destroyed WHS merits investigation as well.
2. I did not attend the colloquium. My great interest in WH is the reason for writing this paper.

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