

THE CULTURAL HERITAGE FOR THE MAN

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If the September 11, 2001 attacks on the Twin Towers and the following attempts (among them Madrid, Tabá, London, Sharm el Sheikh) have made and let us feel more defenceless confronted with the new terrorism, the tsunami which has upset the asiatic southeast on last december, altering the geography of the damaged areas, has put us all facing our responsibilities, compelling us also to re-examine the risks of a development too unequal, irregular and chaotic.

The XXIst century, started from New York to Sumatra in such a dramatic way, alerts us that the world is one, that our planet is fragile and that all that happens in the world concerns us all, nobody excluded.

Moreover, we must consider that most of the monuments and sites in the developing Countries and particularly in Asia, are located within changing landscapes and that we must make every effort to find all the possible solutions for their protection.

Yukio Nishimura reminds us that "The economy is booming in many parts of Asia, and this is causing a fundamental change in urban landscapes as well as in lifestyles in many Asian cities. Various types of tangible and intangible cultural heritage, for which Asia has become famous, are at risk due to changes in both the physical and psychological environment....The cultural heritage of most Asian countries is made up of several layers, including among other indigenous spiritual beliefs Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Western colonial culture and rapid modernization during these last two to three decades."¹

In this framework, high population density, which is considered to be the single most influential feature in Asia, may lead to great difficulties in protecting cultural heritage, the traditions and the folk culture, and for protecting urban structures and conventional buildings.

Maybe a gradual change of the landscape is today

¹ Cfr.: Y. NISHIMURA, *Rethinking the notion of setting in changing landscapes*, in "NouvellesNews ICOMOS", volume 15, n. 1 January 2005, p.12.

partially inevitable, but we must all do our best to understand how and for what we should conserve that tangible and intangible heritage.

As I already was able to underline, the destinies of the cultural heritage are bound "...to the evolution of the modern societies - tempted by the progress of technology - where the best and the worst alternate, mixing the progress with different features as the destruction of the ecological balance, the progression of the egocentric materialism, the uncontrolled intensification of the destroying powers.

All this requests us to share a debate we cannot escape, starting from the acknowledgement that the balance coming from the industrial society is not so attractive.

The society waits for us to participate to the elaboration of new targets for the mankind, enriching the socio-economic debate with the introduction of a humanistic vision fed at the sources of the heritage. We are therefore called to reformulate the general framework of our action by specifying the priorities to adopt as regards the impending menaces.

But, faced with the deterioration and the dehumanization of the lifestyle, we cannot be surprised that the cult of heritage is spreading everywhere.

ICOMOS has promoted at the international level an action which, starting from the respect of the authenticity, leads to the policies of integrated conservation and sustainable development, preconized by UNESCO, intending to pursue three aims: the protection of the urbanistic and architectural heritage, the will to include this protection in the socioeconomic future of the different realities in the world and the adaptation of the new initiatives to the geographic and cultural framework of the original sites.

The List of the world heritage, then, has widely contributed to this awareness, highlighting the extraordinary diversity and richness of a cultural, environmental and

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human heritage which is unique and prestigious.²

In the framework of the different geographic and cultural areas, it becomes therefore urgent to look for closer ways to the respect of man and to the protection of the heritage; from this point of view, the habitat of the future should better draw inspiration from the places of origin, better fit to the climate, and use in a more appropriate way the natural materials and resources, shrinking the inhuman uniformities and arrogance of the industrial models in order to recover a poetry, a conviviality and a quality indispensable for the life.

«C'est dans ce contexte que le patrimoine culturel immatériel prend toute sa signification. Les langues, les dialectes, les traditions orales, les accents, les coutumes, l'artisanat, les fêtes religieuses et populaires, les marchés, autant de manifestations d'une culture ancestrale intimement ancrées dans chaque espace spécifique dont ils participent globalement à créer la 'couleur'. Dans le monde entier, ce patrimoine est en danger sous la pression d'une culture amalgamée artificiellement, dont une médiatisation et une promotion commerciale forcenée assurent le succès. Il faut prendre conscience que la disparition progressive de ces diverses facettes du patrimoine culturel immatériel porte gravement atteinte au 'génie' des lieux, à la cohérence des ambiances urbaines et à l'authenticité globale de l'identité culturelle.»³

We must try hard to reach an ever-increasing participation to the construction of ethics adapted to the post-industrial world and to our technologically advanced society; an educational effort, based on the humanism and on the 'know-how' must therefore become the predominant element for recovering the heritage.

The new challenges to face in an essentially changed world press us for the extension of preservation perspectives and fields, to: the cultural routes, the ensemble, the cultural landscape, the urban landscape, the environment, the setting, the rural heritage, the industrial heritage, the plurality of cultural categories; and to try the upgrading of

regional and national specificities as an expression of global differentiation against global uniformity.

In an increasing globalization and urbanization of the world, the future of man strictly depends on the future of town and the conditions of life of mankind depend on the capability to govern and to manage the town, today attracting, but which is no longer a 'friend' and from which we escape.

The 'happy' town is on the contrary the town able to satisfy the tangible and the intangible necessities, where man succeeds not only in 'having more' as for consumers' goods and tangible richness, but in 'being more': it is the town allowing at the same time the needs of justice, cooperation and beauty.

We must analyze the different dimensions of the humanization of the urban development, with the aim of identifying the strategies and the instruments we need today to upgrade the choices at a local level, in order to reduce the differences, the conflicts and the ideological growing crisis and to include the urban economy in the *new economy*.⁴

The urban challenge is, thus, represented by the capacity of reproducing values, departing from the ethical, spiritual and religious values, with a speed at least equivalent to the speed of their consumption.

The cultural heritage can play a considerable role in the strategies of humanization of the urban development and open new perspectives of research and integration between man and town, towards a more human policy of life and future, finally based upon the balance between tangible and intangible values.

In the volume *Il monumento per l'uomo*⁵, containing the Proceedings of the Venice Congress (1964), Piero Gazzola insists on the importance of the economic and urbanistic aspects of a monument, in acquiring a thorough knowledge of it, by affirming that "The use of these resources, as an inescapable condition and a basic tool for their rescue, is a very recent acquisition, which coincided with the realization that a rescue operation is deficient if it fails to take into account the importance of the economic

² Cfr: R. A. GENOVESE, *Autenticità e valori in un mondo globalizzato*, in <<Della Bellezza ne è piena la vista! Restauro e conservazione alle latitudini del mondo nell'era della globalizzazione >> (edited by S. Valtieri), Nuova Argos, Rome 2005, pp. 363-364

³ Cfr: J. BARTHELEMY, *Stratégies pour le Patrimoine culturel du monde. La conservation, dans un monde globalisé : principes, pratiques, perspectives*, in Proceedings of Scientific Symposium (Madrid, 1-5/XII/2002), Madrid 2002, p. 121.

⁴ Cfr: L. FUSCO GIRARD - B. FORTE, *Città sostenibile e sviluppo umano*, Ed. Franco Angeli, Milan 2000.

⁵ See on this subject AA.VV., *Il monumento per l'uomo*, Proceedings of the IInd International Congress of Restoration (Venice, 25-31 may 1964), Padua 1971.

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value of the resource before and after its retraining. Hence the importance of examining all the factors which go into forming a complete evaluation of the monument, without neglecting, as it has been the case, the economic repercussions of the rescue operation. It is economics which has been, and alas still is fuelling the speculation that has led to the destruction or abandonment of so many monuments. Today it must be made the key to monuments' survival and vitality.”

Roberto Di Stefano, in his late writing for ICOMOS and for the defence of the principles of the conservation of monuments and sites in the third millenium, after having reminded the initiatives brought to an end by ICOMOS, by UNESCO and by the Council of Europe for the protection of monuments and, particularly, for the protection of the historic towns, realized in the *Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* (UNESCO, 1972) as well as in the *European Charter for the Architectural Heritage* (Council of Europe, 1975, Amsterdam) following the promulgation of the *European Year of the Architectural Heritage* (AEPA, 1975) and ten years later, in the *Convention concerning the Protection of the Architectural Heritage in Europe* (Granada, 1985), underlines that in these documents we can see “the transition from ‘safeguarding’ to ‘policy’ for the conservation of the cultural heritage (in particular architectural and historic centres), in an economic and touristic framework in which integrated conservation constitutes a factor of economic growth, promoting the use of the resources in question. Their conservation is not seen merely as a cultural issue but also an economic process of transforming resources into assets.”⁶

After having examined these aspects during the General Assemblies (Rothenburg, 1975; Moscow, 1978; Rome, 1981; Rostock, 1984; Sofia, 1996; Madrid, 2002) and many Congresses (Paris, 1976; Ditchley Park, 1977), ICOMOS has founded a special international Committee in Eger (Hungary), which has attained the drafting of an *Charter for the Conservation of Historic Towns and Urban Areas* (*The Washington Charter*), approved during the General Assembly in Washington in 1987.

⁶ Cfr: R. DI STEFANO, *L'ICOMOS e la difesa dei principi della conservazione dei monumenti e dei siti nel terzo millennio, L'ICOMOS et la sauvegarde des principes de la conservation des monuments et des sites dans le troisième millénaire, ICOMOS in defence of the principles of conservation of monuments and sites in the third millenimum*, in “Restauero”, n.154/2000, pp. 43-44.

Today, the real ‘duty of the State’ is no longer the conservation of the cultural property, but the definition of a policy able to realize this conservation, meant as the transformation of an existing resource into a property able to provide most of all an immaterial utility.⁷

The concept of protection and conservation of the cultural heritage, effective till thirty years ago, is today completely out-of-date for the different interpretation of the ‘duty of the State’, already identified by Giuseppe Fiorelli ⁸ at the end of the XIXth century; moreover, the motivation based upon the ‘right of art’ which Giovanni Spadolini appealed to in many times, seems not less out-of-date.⁹

On the contrary, what has been affirming at present time is the basic duty of the State to guarantee the ‘right of the citizen’ to live a better life in a society which – having surmounted the merely nationalistic vision, and became instead part of the more general framework of the international cooperation – looks for a global development not only sustainable, but really in accordance with the double need for the man of material property and spiritual values.

The investigation for satisfying at the same time both these needs constitutes the real *duty of the State* and imposes no longer the ‘conservation of cultural property’ of art and history, but a ‘policy of cultural property’, that is a set of guidelines of the initiatives the State should undertake in the various fields of the associated life, focusing towards the aforesaid development. These guidelines should be selected with the aware consensus of the whole population (through the democratic participation and the control of its transparency) for sharing first of all the reasons to conserve the things having value; people must have (besides every kind of hidden conviction) the free possibility to recognize and to interpret them. Moreover, it is people who have to select the way to take from these things the specific and particular (economic and cultural) utility they offer; a way of ‘utilization without consumption’ (that is conserving), which requires complicated ways of management, economic,

⁷ Cfr: R.A. GENOVESE, *Coscienza politica e competenza tecnica*, in R. DI STEFANO, A. BELLI, R.A. GENOVESE, P. RUSSO, P. VALVO, *L'uomo ed i monumenti. Una politica per la vita*, in “Restauero”, nn. 136-137/ 1996.

⁸ Cfr.: R.A. GENOVESE, *Giuseppe Fiorelli e la tutela dei beni culturali dopo l'Unità d'Italia*, in “Restauero” n. 119, 1992.

⁹ Cfr.: G. SPADOLINI, *Beni culturali. Diario, interventi, leggi*, with a writing by Giulio Carlo Argan, Florence 1976.

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technical and administrative investments, as well as sometimes considerable costs, which have to be justified by reliable, only material, benefits for the population.

The ‘policy of cultural property’ thus considered, is much more than what till some years ago we intended as ‘conservation of cultural property’, because it means having recognized that only the political conscience is able to allow us to realize the conservation as the transformation of an existing resource into a property able to provide an essential, first of all spiritual, utility.

We deal of course with an extremely delicate and difficult transformation process supposing individuals having high degrees of education (engendering the existence of the *conservateurs*) and instruction (engendering the existence of the *restorers*).

As it is well known, in the Italian culture, the distinction between ‘conservateurs’ and ‘restorers’ already goes back to Camillo Boito, for whom “... one thing is to conserve, other is to restore, on the contrary, very often one thing is the opposite of the other “; and who considers “... the conservateurs, necessary and worthy men” and “... the restorers, nearly always non-essential and dangerous men”.¹⁰

But W. Morris too, by creating a movement of public opinion for the protection of the ancient buildings (named SPAB), recalled the attention on the necessity of the presence of both a multitude of citizens having to quit their apathy (the ‘conservateurs’) and of a lot of technicians and decideurs (the ‘restorers’) who had to learn not to discuss in their own personal interest. And this besides the ascertainment that “...the English ruling class is apathetic. It seems to us that nobody could be charged with a deliberate desire of destruction.”¹¹

After then, for the whole XXth century – with the evolution of the concept of conservation of the heritage assuming more and more evidently the modern connotation of basic element for the economic and cultural development of the society (and, therefore, the political connotation) - the basic exigency of creating the presuppositions to encourage on one side the growing of the ‘conservateurs’, on the other side that of the ‘restorers’ has been more and more

debated; and this especially at the present moment where there is a very high risk both to distort the education of the ‘conservateurs’, due to the manipulation of the information through media and to the dequalification of the educative and school instruction systems, and to make a mess in the education of the ‘restorers’ by admitting in the operations on cultural property especially architectural property (that is, to develop the professional practices) technicians not specialized in the proportion required by the cultural progress today reached in the different concerned fields (starting from plans, structures, installations, economic, juridic and administrative fields).

This delicate transformation process requires basic factors such as the widespread education; the public education, the specialized technical training, the regulation of professional practice, factors today essential for any policy of cultural property.

Indeed, it is certain that in order to create in the population a culture of ‘conservateurs’¹² we must talk about widespread education rather than instruction, about promotion of the capability of recognizing and understanding the values inside the works of art; this occurs as a feeling of the man and, therefore, mostly depending on the personal sensibility itself which allows every individual to appreciate the beauty, the music, the art and let him perceive the different feelings and emotions, or to improve the souvenir.

However, while the countries are feeling a stronger sense of the ‘duty of the state’ to protect the heritage, the exigency of organizing efficient public Institutions for the management of the various duties concerning the protection is being more and more developed: from the control of the exportation of property to their catalogation, from the creation and functioning of the museum structures to the regulation of the rights of property. Therefore, these public institutions need the work of professionals able to work in the field of conservation and, with this aim, they must receive a very peculiar and comprehensive education.

After a deep deliberation on what has been said by now, there is just need to remind that in the first quarter of the XXth century, many Countries already felt the exigency

¹⁰ Cfr: C. BOITO, *I restauratori*, Lecture held at the Exhibition in Turin on June 7, 1884, Florence 1884.

¹¹ Cfr: W. MORRIS, *Manifesto della SPAB*, in “The Athenaeum”, London 1877.

¹² Cfr.: R.A. GENOVESE, *Formation des conservateurs et des restaurateurs*, report developed at the XIth international ICOMOS Congress (Sofia, 5-9 October 1996) «Le patrimoine et les changements sociaux», published in the Proceedings of the Symposium, Sofia 1996.

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in the labour world to have at disposal qualified technicians in the field of the activities concerning architecture, who had to possess at the university level, a training very different from that of the engineers, because it had to ensure together with the analogous education in the technical field (structural, hydraulic, topographic, etc.), a deep humanistic culture (and therefore, historic, architectural, town planning, etc.) able to develop the ability for planning and creating the buildings and the cities.

So in 1920 in Rome, the ‘Scuola superiore di Architettura’, was born; originating, just a few years later, the Faculty of Architecture, thanks especially to Gustavo Giovannoni who supported, among other things, the necessity to characterize the graduate course with lessons as ‘Stylistic and constructive characteristics of monuments’ and ‘Restoration of monuments’.¹³

Following this, a few years later, in 1925, the professional practice of engineer and architect was also regulated, differentiating the two fields of activity in the light of the exigencies prescribed by the culture and the technique of this period.

Half a century later, the enormous and speediest development of the society, produced by the civilization of the machines, has created a series of new exigencies in the field of construction, also due to the rising of new materials, techniques and technologies, which have asserted a deep knowledge of a great number of specialistic notions, indispensable for allowing, in the practice, to give an answer to the exigencies of the social development. The renouncement to change and to give order and contents to the university instruction systems and the choice of reorganizing the teaching by proportioning it to the increased number of students and yet neglecting the quality, together with the choice of preferring the practical experimentation of new teaching and professional training methods, has caused, as everybody knows, the chaos in University.

In our specific field of interest, we must note that the cultural and operative education question, in order to give an answer to the modern necessities both of conservation and of restoration of the cultural (and architectural) heritage has been completely disregarded in spite of the warning, of the signals and of the suggestions formulated

since 1975 by Italian and foreign experts of the field, and by the teachers of the concerned disciplines. An accurate critical examination of the events and of these signals has been realized by Roberto Di Stefano¹⁴ and to this we refer.

Moreover, we have to point out that these concerns expressed by the scholars coincide with the recommendations formulated at the international level, in the main official documents.¹⁵

In conclusion, the situation which has begun to establish in many Countries shows that the protection of the architectural and environmental heritage by all declared in serious danger, requires, as an essential mean, the work of specialized technicians, namely the restorers.

A policy for the cultural property must therefore regulate first of all the professional activity.

Once stated which must be the necessary requisites for the technicians to be qualified for the professional practice, it will be consequently possible, to reorganize the university (and post-university) didactics of the field, today appearing very confused.

Anyway, the considerations on this theme point out as a preliminary fact, the basic exigency already quoted of the preliminary reorganization of the system of professions, in order to be further able to debate seriously on the structure of the graduate courses and on the operation field kept for the restorers.

Firstly, it thus appears that, concerning the graduate courses for engineers and architects, a unique graduate course for ‘engineers-architects’ (a professional figure already existing in other European countries, as France and

¹⁴ Cfr.: R. DI STEFANO, *Restauro dei monumenti: formazione e professione*, in “Restauro” n. 124, 1993; also see the Proceedings of ICOMOS Congress *Formazione e professione*, (Rome 16 december 1993) in “Restauro” nn. 127-128, 1994.

¹⁵ Cfr.: *The European Charter of the Architectural Heritage*, 1975, art. 9; in the well known Declaration of Amsterdam, 1975, we can read: “the integrated conservation requires a promotion of the methods, of the techniques and of the professional skills connected to restoration and requalification”. The *European Convention of Granada* of 1985, then, states (art. 19) that the parties will engage themselves to encourage the permanent education. Finally, The *Washington Charter* (1987) art 16, says “The protection requires a specialized education to be organized for all the professions connected to.”

¹³ Cfr.: G. GIOVANNONI, *Questioni di architettura nella storia e nella vita*, Rome 1925.

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Germany) would be perhaps worthwhile; these would be able to give an answer to the social requirement concerning both the realization the connected equipment and the housing and planning; the course should therefore provide an equally humanistic and technical education, that is:

- a) humanistic (history of architecture, of the city, of the arts, of the techniques; aesthetic; sociologic and economic theories; legislation of cultural property, etc.) in order to explain the aims or the objectives the professional activity in the modern society must aim to;
- b) technical (technical physics, applied chemistry, science and technique of the constructions, survey techniques, road constructions, installations, economic techniques, etc.) in order to provide the means and the instruments for the professional activity.

Today, it is necessary to identify a new professionalism owning the humanistic culture necessary to plan and to devise the new, according to the exigencies of our society in evolution and, at the same time, owning the technical skills to manage the programmes and the plans and to superintend the works.

The specialization in particular fields – as that of the architectural, archaeological and urban restoration – will become possible for the architect-engineer through the frequency at post-university (multi-annual and highly qualified) Schools, considering the experiences performed till to-day and, on the other side, trying hard to connect these experiences within a unitary plan concerning the global didactic functions of the Universities.

First of all an institutional role must be allowed to these Schools, much more incisive than the actual one, as educational centre for specific professional experiences and experiences of the labour market, and, consequently, they must avail on all the cultural and didactic resources, necessary to agree within a wider policy of the cultural property.

Anyway, these specialization Schools will allow the graduated architect-engineer to deepen the knowledge of all the factors required – in the different cases occurring in the practical reality – for planning and for executing the restoration of a monument, of an archaeological site, and of an ancient urban environment.

Therefore, to this expert and only to him (who owns this knowledge) the law will allow the practice of the

profession of restorer. A profession requiring the action of many experiences (planning, structures, installations, etc.) and, which therefore can only be practised with the support of many different skills by a group of technicians, but guided or coordinated by a unique professional responsible (the architect restorer).

In summary, we can say that a policy intending to implement the conservation of cultural property, meant as the transformation of an existing resource into an asset which should essentially produce a spiritual value requires the existence of fundamental factors such as widespread teaching, public education, technical specialized training and regulation of professional practice.

But, the work of technical restorers, acknowledged as fundamental by our modern culture to protect the architectural and environmental heritage, is actually hindered in many parts of the world. As a consequence, the need arises to carry out a thorough update of the qualifications required for the practice of restorer of this property . Once these requisites have been established, it will be possible to reorganize university (and post-graduate) didactics, and also understand the cultural objectives of the graduate courses on Conservation of cultural property, recently created in some countries. In this way, it will be possible to define the role of the conservation expert, as well as those inherent to the training of the restorer, who will be the only one legally authorized to take action on the architectural and environmental property.

In conclusion, the principles and the culture of conservation should become an integrant part of the training of 'conservation' and 'restoration' experts. They should also be able to create the *political awareness* and the *technical expertise* which are crucial to ensure the protection of the cultural property.

Moreover, we must point out that to reach a balance between the conservation and the utilization of the property, we need a brighter social participation to affirm itself and an aware consensus of the majority to accept the choices for a cultural development action to be reached.

Only the balance between public and private actions (each one developing their own specific role) can guarantee the conservation of the cultural heritage for the benefit of the community.

As a consequence, the existence of a real policy for

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cultural property, supported by *participation* and *aware consensus* of the population, is today the central instrument to guarantee the economic, social and cultural development of the countries.

Abstract

In an increasing globalization and urbanization of the world, the future of man strictly depends on the future of town and the conditions of life of mankind depend on the capability to govern and to manage the town.

The cultural heritage can play a considerable role in the strategies of humanization of the urban development and open new perspectives of research and integration between man and town, towards a more human policy of life and future, finally based upon the balance between tangible and intangible values.

This delicate transformation process requires basic factors such as widespread education, public education, the know-how, specialized technical training, and regulation of professional practice.

The principles and the culture of conservation should become an integral part of the training of “conservation” and “restoration” experts. They should also be able to create the political awareness and technical expertise which are crucial to ensure the protection of our cultural heritage.

Therefore, only the balance between public and private actions can guarantee the conservation of the cultural heritage for the benefit of the community. As a consequence, a real policy for cultural heritage, supported by participation and aware consensus of the various levels of the population, is today the central instrument to guarantee the social, cultural and economic development of countries.