

## ICOMOS THEOPHILOS ISC CONFERENCE

### “VENICE AT 60: DOCTRINAL DOCUMENTS IN THE PROTECTION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE”

PALAZZO COPPINI, FLORENCE (ITALY), MARCH 7–8 2024

CONFERENCE ABSTRACTS

#### Thursday, 7 March 2024. Day 1

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##### 10.30-12.00: Session I

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**Giora Solar, Israel**

##### **60 Years Later: Do we Need a New Venice Charter?**

The Venice Charter 1964, followed Athens Charter 1931.

It came after second world war and reflected very much the impression of destruction and needs for Reconstruction? Conservation? Memory? It was the most important outcome of International Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historic Monuments.

From time to time the question of whether the charter is still valid or should be re-written, is asked.

There are probably no revolutions in conservation thinking, but there is certainly evolution and the question of some updates is relevant.

It has been said by ICOMOS, in different occasions, that Venice Charter is some kind of 10 commandments, which you do not re-write, but you may have interpretations, additions to it etc. It has been said also that in different regions of the world and different cultures, a charters or guidelines can be written, to fit the specific regional or cultural understanding (hence, for example, The Burra charter and Principles of Conservation of Heritage Sites in China).

In 2004, in Monuments and Sites series, volume 1, dedicated to "International Charters for Conservation and Restoration", Michael Petzet writes: "... It is an irreplaceable instrument for our work on international level and attempts to write an new Charter of Venice, makes little sense".

Do we still agree with it? Shouldn't our 'instruments for our work' reflect evolution in thinking? Should our most important ethical-philosophical document be written only by architects and technician of conservation? Who will represent other stakeholders? Who will speak for the society, for the public?

There is no doubt that The Venice Charter remains valid and important, as the Athens Charter is – but new ideas like the role of the society, like urban issues and many others, not just technical ones, must be part of our most important ethical document. It should not replace nor update the Venice Charter– it has to be a charter which covers the changes and evolution in thinking and in the role of the society in deciding on the preservation of its heritage.

It should be the role of ICOMOS to write such document, led by TheoPhilos, in collaboration with others.

The presentation will present ideas and certain evolution, some already discussed by ICOMOS (like Spirit of Place and Facadism) – to try and bring forward the idea of a new charter -not replacing the Venice Charter !

**Nigel Walter, UK**

##### **Venice at 60: Article 5 and the Acceptable Limits of Use**

Few would argue against the Venice Charter's foundational status both for the discipline of conservation generally, and for ICOMOS specifically. But beyond that general agreement, there are sharply contrasting views as to its contemporary relevance. These and other issues were debated by ICOMOS in Budapest 20 years ago, in a conference marking the Charter's 40th anniversary. However, questions remain as to its ongoing significance, and how (in its own terms) it can be used 'for some socially useful purpose'? As Bogusław Szmygin asked in 2004, does the Charter remain the 'Decalogue' of the conservation discipline, or has it itself become a historical monument?

The Charter is a rich and skilfully condensed piece of writing which rewards close scrutiny. It contains within it both evidence of the age in which it was conceived – for example, in its focus on authenticity – and the seeds of other topics that have been greatly elaborated subsequently, such as significance. This paper considers the Charter's ongoing relevance in light of one pressing issue in contemporary conservation, the limits to the acceptable use of – and change to – historic buildings (Art. 5).

The paper argues that the acknowledged need for the interpretation of this text requires a hermeneutically literate approach which acknowledges the limits of a scientific/technical reading of any historic monument – the Charter included – and the importance of a dynamic understanding of the living tradition that is conservation. It concludes that the Charter remains a central text for the conservation discipline, and for that very reason will continue to be fiercely debated.

**Dimitrios Zygomalas, Greece**

**The Venice Charter - the Foundation of Heritage Protection or the Burden of the Past? An Answer through the Greek Experience**

Background: Few guiding documents in the various fields of postwar scientific progress can claim the fundamental role and worldwide reach of the Venice Charter. A foremost point of reference in the conservation agenda of numerous countries around the globe, it has had, over the 60 years since its adoption, an impact primarily in the European context, Greece not being an exception. The charter's relation with the setting of certain of the most celebrated monuments in the world actually started upon its very conception; one of the 23 delegates who contributed to its compilation came from Greece, namely Efstathios Stikas, then Head of the Department of Anastylis in the Hellenic Ministry of Education. Despite this early connection, the charter's influence in Greek conservation matters was initially minimal. It was only after 1975, when its first translation was published, that a substantial impact began to be noted, culminating, at present, in an undisputed role in all domains of action related to architectural heritage protection. This development allows for an appraisal of the hitherto usefulness of the charter, and on the present occasion of the 60th anniversary of its adoption, for an assessment of its culminating function: a foundation of heritage protection or a burden of the past?

Objectives: The proposed paper aims to conduct this appraisal, and in its wake, draw a valid conclusion as to the charter's standing in relation to the above capacities, coupled with specific proposals for an optimization of its future contribution.

Scope and method: To achieve this goal, a systematic review, analysis, and evaluation of the so far impact of the charter in Greek conservation matters will be pursued, highlighting the multiple fields that it has affected and the extent of its influence. The material for this task will be provided through bibliographic and archival research, coupled with personal experience from the duties of deputy director of a major supervising body of the Hellenic Ministry of Culture.

Main findings and implications: The proposed review and appraisal will allow for a fully documented answer to the vital question of the title to be drawn, complemented with suggestions for future action, on a national, and even, international level.

**Francesca Cipolla, Stephen Levrant & Francesca Bellucci, UK**

**The Charter In Practice: The UK Experience**

The practicalities of The Charter in our everyday work as independent conservation architects and heritage consultants, and how we apply The Charter when approaching a client's brief and commission.

How The Charter affects our clients and how do we, as professionals and practitioners, balance the aspirations of clients with the more purist approach of The Charter.

How the values established by The Charter are translated in our assessments of significance, enabling us to confidently disaggregate the relative importance of the building components to inform implementation options.

How the Charter promulgates early engagement with heritage stakeholders, such as the ICOMOS, Local Authority, Historic England and other statutory consultees, enabling us to establish a clear set of parameters that can guide the client team on the associated heritage opportunities and constraints.

How The Charter interacts with the UK Law and Guidance, and how the advice, commentary, and feedback we provide are based or deviate from The Charter.

How the concept of *balancing benefit* as promulgated by NPPF conflicts with the Charter. Where does benefit come in?

How The Charter can help to explain that there is a *value beyond the intrinsic* to clients, including major developers.

How the *sustainability and zero carbon aspirations* come into The Charter, where interventions and impacts may have adverse effect on the purist approach.

How successfully The Charter assists in promulgating the idea of *quality and good design* in new interventions.

The following three Case Studies from our Company's Portfolio will be presented to offer a comprehensive and evidenced-based discussion:

1. Hayle Harbour, South Quay: new development in World Heritage Site
2. London - Liberty Store: nationally important landmark (Grade 2\*)
3. Typical Victorian terrace house: domestic property (Grade 2)

## **12.30-14.00: Session II**

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### **Calogero Bellanca & Susana Mora, Italy/Austria/Spain**

#### **60 Years of Charter of Venice 1964-2024**

The Venice Charter has been and remains the international document known and implemented throughout the world for conservation and restoration.

In these 60 years, after Amsterdam 1975, Nara 1994, Universal Declaration on Cultural diversity, Paris 2001, Xian Declaration on the conservation of the setting of heritage Structures, sites and areas, 2005, Convention on the value of cultural heritage for Society, Faro 2005, the Quebec declaration on the preservation of the spirit of place 2008 and finally the Recommendation on the historic urban landscape, Paris 2011 with the extension of the principles of architectural conservation to urban conservation and World Heritage Convention in all five continents, a growing attention to different cultural memories but some points seem to be subject to conflicting interpretations.

The new paradigms on which we can agree must spread the need for constant maintenance after restoration interventions and on the correct use of techniques and technologies to respect the different authenticity to favor distinguishability and, where possible, reversibility and minimal intervention.

One of the contradictory aspects remains that of the compatible use of pre-existences and the social purpose of our cultural heritage, controlling mass tourism and living heritage.

Another aspect remains the behavior to be adopted in the face of destruction and natural disasters, in this case we must accept, as has happened in some historic cases, reconstruction as an exceptional moment.

Above all the proposal, in a stimulating way the old-new dialogue with reintegration. All over the world we have significant episodes.

The Venice Charter remains, as the guideline has already been reiterated on other anniversaries, the constitutional charter to which it is necessary to refer without modifying it while respecting the different values, but opening up to changes and tolerance.

### **Stefano Gizzi, Italy**

#### **The Relevance of the Venice Charter Today**

The following aspects will be considered:

1) The universal importance of the Charter of Venice. Despite the criticisms of Eurocentricity levelled at the Venice Charter, it is not just limited to European concepts, but also reflects a global vision. In fact, among the signatories of the document, in addition to representatives from Europe, were scholars and restorers from Japan (Daifuku), Latin America (Pimentel from Peru and Flores Marini from Mexico), Africa (S. Zbiss from Tunisia) as well as the Brazilian, Redig de Campos. All made contributions linked to the culture of their own countries.

2) The validity of the concepts of authenticity and identity present in the Charter. The subject of authenticity is present from the "preamble" of the Charter, and is taken up again in article 9, where it is applied as an adjective to the term 'document' creating a value relationship for every historical record. This adoption will influence national legislations on protection.

3) Agreement on distinguishing conservation concepts from restoration concepts. The distinction between conservation (with the related maintenance) and restoration is still accepted among practitioners of restoration theory; a distinction that has informed successive charters while provoking an antithesis between the act of conservation and that of restoration which should instead be viewed as complementary; a distinction, too, that though very clear in the Charter, has been successively diluted in a series of subordinate interpretations.

4) Landscape and historic centres. Significant today, is the possibility of a further development on the theme of landscape, contained in article 1, with the mention of rural sites and vernacular architecture, and in the following articles 14 and 15 referring to monumental sites (and thus historical nuclei inserted in their landscape-environmental context), and to archaeological sites, which represent a topic of extraordinary current relevance.

**Rosa Anna Genovese, Italy**

### **Venice at 60: Contemporary Conservation Theory in the Light of Doctrinal Documents on the Protection of Cultural Heritage**

The Venice Charter has outlined shared principles for the conservation and protection of Architectural Heritage at international level, laying the bases for a broader dialogue between nations and represents, to this day, a fundamental reference for reflections and discussions on the challenges concerning contemporary restoration, also in consideration of the extraordinary impact across the world in culture and operational practice.

- The Circular Economy model, implemented in cities and territories, configures a new and sustainable urban metabolism. It implies a change in Governance and in design/planning activity itself, identifying new relationships between resource values and community needs, promoting codesign, co-innovation and co-management.
- The main challenge is to address the operational needs related to the ecological and digital transition in the built environment, particularly in historic urban areas, finding effective solutions in multiple dimensions (cultural, environmental, social, economic) and ensuring stakeholder involvement in the decision process of integrated conservation/ design/ planning/ management.
- In particular, the reuse of Cultural Heritage goes beyond the boundaries of a singular building or architectural complex, to acquire new parameters into a broader territorial dimension, that takes into consideration the relationship between medium/large cities and small villages and, in parallel, between planning and protection.
- The consideration of heritage categories: civil, religious, industrial buildings, is fundamental data for an active and consistent protection strategy, connecting such properties to the thematic as well as logistic features (local identities enlivened by Cultural Routes).
- 'Cultural Routes' constitute a particularly interesting strategy for the development of inland areas/landscapes based on the promotion of relational values. Cooperation and collaboration at local level are key values to be stimulated and promoted through specific actions. Cultural Routes represent a new approach in the currently evolving, and rapidly expanding process, involving the conceptual universe of Cultural Heritage. They offer new perspectives and tools for its protection, contributing to strengthen 'intercultural dialogue' and 'sustainable development', while supplying a policy of local conservation. They represent and introduce a qualitatively new approach to the notion of conservation of Cultural Heritage, which integrates with other heritage classes (architectural properties, historic cities, cultural landscapes, intangible heritage) existing in their area.

## **15.00-16.00: Session III**

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**Claudine Houbart & Stéphane Dawans, Belgium**

### **The "Open" Venice Charter: Learning from the Multiple Translations and Interpretations of the Charter's Article 7**

This presentation is part of a research project focusing on a blind spot in the historiography of the Venice Charter: its translations. Initially drafted in French, the charter was translated into English in the months following the congress, then into Spanish and Russian for the first ICOMOS assembly in 1965. The French and English versions then served as the starting point for the other translations; however, even a superficial comparison of these versions reveals major discrepancies. For some articles, they are even far from "saying almost the same thing", to use Umberto Eco's expression. Based on these already discordant texts, multiple interpretations were developed over space and time. Thus the Venice Charter appeared to have been an "open work" rather than a universalist standard.

The current project proposes, in an exploratory phase, to compare the French, English, Spanish and Italian versions of the document, before potentially extending to other languages. It has two main objectives. The first is historical: documenting the translations, dissemination, reception, interpretations and uses of the Charter

offers a unique prism through which to gain a nuanced understanding of the international and even global evolution of heritage principles and practices from the 1960s to the present day. The second is theoretical and practical, and should be of greater interest to the members of the Theophilos committee. On the basis of discrepancies in wording, principles and terminology, the project proposes not to attempt a reharmonisation of the versions of the charter (as was proposed at the end of the Pecs colloquium in 2004), but to encourage an inter-cultural dialogue. Therefore, discordances are not considered as problems to be solved, but as opportunities for debate. From this perspective, the charter is seen neither as the "foundation of heritage protection" that would be still relevant today as such, nor as a "burden of the past", but as the starting point for useful discussions and exchanges for the future.

In this presentation, we will illustrate the potential contributions of the project through one of the most debated and controversial passages of the charter, the article 9 and the notion of "contemporary stamp", using concepts inspired by the work of Umberto Eco on questions of intention, translation and interpretation.

**Alberte Klynsner Steffensen, Denmark**

### **From Monuments to Living Heritage: Revisiting the Venice Charter in the Face of the Contemporary Heritage Landscape**

The Venice Charter of 1964 has been the benchmark for tenets governing architectural conservation and set forth pivotal principles that shaped conservation practices for decades. However, conceived during a time when heritage was primarily associated with physical monuments, the landscape of cultural heritage has transformed significantly since then, encompassing immaterial aspects, democratization of heritage values, and diverse sustainability considerations.

This research aims at exploring the strengths, limitations, and adaptability of the Venice Charter in light of evolving perspectives on heritage. The presented research delves into the charter's historical context and its role as a foundation for conservation efforts, asking whether it remains a guiding beacon or a potential hindrance. A key focus of the research is the examination of obstacles associated with the conservation of younger heritage categories in the face of contemporary challenges posed by sustainability imperatives. The inherent complexities of managing heritage structures marked by ongoing developmental histories and transformations are explored with an example of industrial heritage dealing with the concept of 'living heritage'. In the context of a future where resource responsibility and reuse are paramount matters, firm definitions of original substance as defined in the Venice Charter as well as a constrained delineation of the concept of landscape may pose challenges, particularly for unintentional monuments situated in complex environments or marked by evolving narratives through time.

Celebrating the 60th anniversary of the Venice Charter, this research sheds light on the charter's legacy and its validity in the contemporary landscape of heritage protection as well as the future role of the monuments in our ever-changing societal context.

**Camila Burgos Vargas, Spain**

### **Superimposed Heritage at Risk and the Venice Charter**

The Venice Charter set the way in which interventions on monuments, or architectural heritage, should be carried out, reaching a global consensus that still has not been overcome, and providing a frame of reference for contemporary interventions on heritage.

The charter, in its text, states that additions must be avoided unless strictly necessary. This kind of statement may have created a conceptual division between a pre-existence and a contemporary intervention carried out on it, being subject to a different consideration with respect to stratifications prior to the listing of a property or site.

Sometimes a contemporary intervention on heritage may add values to the ensemble they act on, but the different consideration for the newer strata in monuments puts them at risk when further transformations may be made.

The proposed paper will present this issue and illustrate it with the case of the Palazzo della Pilotta in Parma (Italy). This complex was the result of different stratifications over the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries mainly, and it was partially destroyed during World War Two.

Between the sixties and the eighties an intervention was made by architect Guido Canali in which a contemporary layer was added. Canali's intervention has been considered since the beginning an exemplary work, being recognised via the Italian Census of Architecture from 1945 to today. However, this has not avoided that the contemporary layer was modified in recent years, putting at risk the values of the ensemble.

This paper wants to create awareness about this issue related to the Venice Charter and to start a conversation about how to approach it from now on.

## 16.30-17.30: Session IV

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**Ádám Arnoth, Hungary**

### **The Issue of Reconstruction and the Venice Charter**

Doctrinal texts are a living intangible heritage of conservation. Venice Charter is among the most important ones. It provides the basic principles, terminology, guidelines for restoration, evaluation and even for the authority, and gives the possibility of international communication. On the other hand, the issue of reconstructions is now a vivid, current problem.

Repairs as reconstruction became usual solutions in the postwar period and Venice Charter is said to be a reaction against some of some of reconstruction. Not only the texts, but even the restorations/reconstructions should be re-evaluated. I studied among others:

Warsaw, Rynek Starego Miasta. It is a reconstruction, but full of original details and contemporary parts, like sgraffito on the facades. The cathedral has a reconstructed Gothic interior, but the new façade is an art deco composition, obviously a 'contemporary stamp'. I think the Warsaw interventions are in harmony with the ideas of the Venice Charter.

Athens, Stoa of Attalos is a questionable reconstruction with too much new part. In a case of excavation, reconstruction is ruled out. But is it an excavation? A large part is anastylosis, many parts in situ, and the new parts are distinct as they are unharmed. Is it enough for bearing a contemporary stamp?

Mostar bridge is a similar case as other post-war reconstructions of bridges (Verona, Budapest): important not only for the identity, but it serves even functional needs. Original parts were used, details of the earlier timber bridge were detected and displayed.

Some part of the recent Hungarian practice of reconstructions should be rejected as it is the populist way of conservation. Buda, Castle hill: reconstructions are built without any ruins, and against the urbanistic regulations of the city.

These cases show that despite of the clarifications of the Nara and Kraków charters some important definitions are still missing like reconstruction, contemporary stamp, conjecture, archaeological remains. The distinction, definition of historic vs. fresh (contemporary) ruin can be useful as well.

**Olesya Chagovets & Olena Zhukova, Ukraine**

### **Reconstruction of Destroyed Architectural Monuments in Ukraine: Between Historical Authenticity and Modern Needs of the Urban Environment**

Introduction. In the context of the 60th anniversary of the Venice Charter, this report focuses on the challenges and opportunities for the reconstruction of destroyed monuments in Ukraine that go beyond traditional methods of restoration and conservation.

Key challenges. The circumstances of extensive cultural heritage destruction due to hostilities in Ukraine have presented us with a crucial decision: how to preserve the historical identity and cultural memory of the nation? An example of this can be a city like Kharkiv, where the conservation of ruins or the creation of memorial sites proves to be impossible.

Discussion of the potential for reconstruction. This report analyzes the challenges associated with the replication of monuments in the urban context of Ukraine, with a particular focus on ensuring the preservation of the urban environment and historical identity.

A critical assessment of methods. Recognizing the loss of historic buildings as a threat, this report emphasizes the necessity of finding flexible solutions. Special attention is dedicated to preserving the authenticity of the destroyed objects while ensuring their adaptation to new functional needs and the demands of modern usage. Considering the uniqueness of each site, various approaches are explored, ranging from precise reconstruction to more interpretive methods that maintain the historical essence of the place while introducing new functional elements.

Conclusions. The report outlines discussions on the moral and practical aspects of reconstructing destroyed objects, addressing the role of the Venice Charter in Ukraine today. It suggests updating doctrinal documents to tackle current urban challenges. The paper highlights the significance of ruined monuments for cities' historical and cultural identities, exemplifying cultural heritage preservation during wartime.

**Jinze Cui, Belgium/China**

**Same Path to Different Destinations? Reconstructing Wooden Corridor Bridges in Southern Zhejiang, China**

This paper demonstrates how traditional craftsmen and rural society in China were restricted by Venice Charter-based domestic and international doctrines, and hindered in the bottom-up valorisation of their heritage. Such valorisation often hinges on legitimate local expectations and public interests.

Based on on-the-spot investigation and personal interviews, my observation focuses on the rural areas of southern Zhejiang province with living 'corridor bridge' architectural traditions.

Between 2006 and 2013, a series of selected bridges were listed as national-grade heritage; some were inscribed on China's UNESCO World Heritage (WH) tentative list. This has imposed top-down external impacts on the indigenous building behaviour, which is especially evident during the reconstruction of three typhoon-destroyed bridges in 2017. In this programme, local craftsmen were told to execute the plans made by professional institutes and approved by the national heritage authority.

The findings show:

- 1) The local aestheticisation of corridor bridges is not primarily established upon the sense of distance towards the past, but the appreciation of living traditions and customs such as the spiritual guarding for good fortune and avoiding disadvantages;
- 2) the vernacular perceptions and expectations upon bridge-building practice are incompatible with the imposed external gaze of heritage academics and authorities, especially the dogmatic anti-reconstruction sentiment from the Venice Charter;
- 3) particular Western heritage aesthetics and values were promulgated through the fear of losing WH candidacy as well as domestic cultural relic status, while spontaneous bottom-up voices from local communities were belittled and labelled as target for modern heritage education;
- 4) during the post-1980s architectural heritagisation process in China, the tangible aspect of heritage is underscored by an imported 'tangible versus intangible' approach. This is opposite to the Chinese traditional dualism in architectural sensibility which stresses metaphysical value-connection over the truthfulness or oneness of substance.

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## **Friday, 8 March 2024. Day 2**

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### **10.00-11.00: Session V**

**Ave Paulus & Arnstein Brekke, Estonia/Norway**

**Discussions in North Europe about the Protection of the Authenticity of Heritage Values**

The current paper deals with the discussions around the heritage values, its authenticity and cultural continuity in the legal discussions in Nordic-Baltic heritage policies and practices. Three primary doctrinal documents referred to in these discussions are the Venice Charter (1964), the Nara Document on Authenticity (1994), and the Faro Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (2005). Discussions are about the very principles of heritage conservation: (1) the values of the heritage, (2) the authenticity and integrity of heritage; and (3) the meaning and function of the heritage for society and humankind.

Within European climate goals policies, there is a strong lean towards instrumentalization of heritage, its use, and reuse as a climate asset. In the light of the massive reconstruction wave, the general principle of the Venice Charter on preserving intrinsic values of heritage, the historical authentic body of the object and its historic environment becomes crucial. On the other hand, the authenticity of vernacular heritage and cultural landscapes lies in its intangible values, cultural communities, and the continuation of heritage practices as elaborated in depth in the Nara Document on authenticity and the UNESCO Operational Guidelines relevant to all Convention parties.

The authors analyze how these central themes of heritage values, meaning, and authenticity are under hot debate in current Estonian and Norwegian heritage discourse. Concrete examples are given in the discussion around new heritage conservation legislation in Norway; the monument lists reviews in Estonia, authenticity policies, and conservation principles in the light of Climate Policies and the Renovation Wave in both countries.

In the Faro Convention, protecting heritage communities in their cultural environment is central to sustainable development and building a peaceful democratic society. These transcendental values of heritage for humankind

are mentioned in the Venice Charter, but not very elaborated there. Maybe thinking more about the role of heritage in the human rights framework would be the next step further, especially in this turbulent time of change.

**Shirley Cefai, Malta**

**Venice Charter and the Development of Authenticity**

Authenticity was mentioned in the Venice charter and since then the way authenticity is perceived and understood has changed. This change is due to change in the definition of heritage. This in turn influenced the values society attributed to heritage as the values were forced to become wider in scope. Though the Venice Charter mentioned authenticity, it did not specify the attributes heritage should demonstrate so as to be considered authentic.

Authenticity is one of the main aspects considered when heritage is listed as a World Heritage Site. In the mid-20th century, only tangible heritage was considered and hence authenticity depended on the materiality of heritage. In fact in the 'Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention 1977' stated that the property should meet the test of authenticity in design, materials, workmanship and setting - hence dealing with materiality.

Once intangible heritage and cultural landscape were considered on the World Heritage List, the definition of authenticity was rediscussed. The definition of authenticity was also questioned when Japan joined the World Heritage Convention at the end of the 20th century. The cultural differences between the West and the East came to the foreground. This led to a change in the Operational Guidelines of 2005. Depending on the cultural heritage and its context, heritage may be understood to meet the conditions of authenticity and are expressed through the attributes of 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.

These attributes moved away from the consideration of materiality. Perhaps materials and their quality should once more become protagonists in the consideration of World Heritage Sites

**Giacomo Martinis, Italy**

**Authenticity Vis-à-Vis the Issue of Values: On Doctrinal Texts and the Regulation of Interpretation**

While putting the emphasis on the unity and commonality of human values, the preamble of the Venice Charter provided a vague definition of the term authenticity which in turn undermined the clarity of its role in conservation practice. Articulated around the topic of historical monuments, the issue is confronted more openly in art. 15 ("All initiatives shall also be taken to facilitate the understanding of the monument brought to light, without ever distorting its significance"), presenting the argument that the preservation of cultural heritage relies on its prior knowledge.

Since the time of the writing of the doctrinal text, an expanding multilateralism and so a diversified regional representation offered insights into the issue of authenticity from different points of view. The role of this concept in conservation practice solidified in the Nara Document, declaring it to 'illuminate the collective memory of humanity'. Based on the recognition of diversity and the effort to legitimise otherness, this opened the field to relativism in cultural interpretation leading methodologies of interpretation to become more complex, to rethinking the work on historical sources and to question established preservation practices.

Supporting extended involvement is seen today as ensuring that knowledge on heritage, the theories built upon, and the practices that unfold, are transmitted in a stratified and coherent manner. In this view, encouraging a dialogue between the various stakeholders in the identification of heritage values, allows for an objective, rigorous and scientific approach to evaluation activities by building on the complementarity of interpretations.

Therefore, in the current historical paradigm that privileges holistic systems, recentering the focus of doctrinal texts from material conservation to the interpretation of values means both maintaining the emphasis on prior knowledge, as set out in the Venice Charter, but also a strengthened consideration of people-centred approaches. In this context, the contribution deepens the re-analysis of the understanding of the notion of authenticity as applied to the values-theory and explores its possible role in the rewriting of the Venice charter.

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**11.30- 12.30: Session VI**

**Philipp Oswalt, Germany**

**Should Symbolic Interventions in Protected Monuments be Possible?**

The premises of Chapter 5 and 6 of the Charter of Venice require that changes to the building are only permitted on the basis of functional requirements. Changes to the symbolic function are explicitly excluded. Even so such



a rule makes sense for the majority of monuments, it is repeatedly shown in practice in specific cases that such a general principle leads to conceptual problems and that its claimed general validity is therefore questionable.

First of all, it should be noted that such a principle of modern monument preservation prevents millennia-old cultural practices of perpetuation of significant monuments. This leads to the paradox that a tradition of monument practice has been broken off in order to preserve monuments. Prominent examples of such sites include the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, the Cathedral of Syracuse, Diocletian's Palace in Split and the Mezquita-Catedral de Córdoba.

In Germany, this principle has led to a number of fundamental conceptual conflicts. When Günther Domenig's Documentation Center (1998-2001) was inserted into the Congress Hall of the Nazi Party Rally Grounds in Nuremberg (1935-43) and when Daniel Libeskind (2001-2011) converted the Arsenal Main Building (1873-1877) into the Dresden Military History Museum, this monument preservation premise was de facto overridden. The debate about the appropriate way to deal with the depiction of Jewish sows in medieval churches or with a bell tower in Potsdam, which was erected by right-wing extremists in 1991 and is now a listed building, is still ongoing. The competition (2023) for the desired redesign of the Bismarck monument in Hamburg (1906) recently failed due to the conceptual conflict with the rules of monument preservation. The planned restoration of the Haus der Kunst Munich (1933-37) to its original state by Chipperfield Architects has led to a controversial debate (since 2017). In the Anglo-Saxon world, debates similar to those in Germany have broken out in the context of the Black Life Matters movement.

The question arises as to whether visual and symbolic changes to a monument should not be possible in justified individual cases and what rules should apply. As a working hypothesis, the concept of double legibility is proposed, in which the original expression remains visible, but visible interventions simultaneously articulate a new symbolic statement. Theoretically, such a concept can be based on the idea of tolerance of ambiguity (Else Frenkel-Brunswik, 1949).

### **Paolo Girardelli, Turkey/Italy**

#### **Transnational, Hybrid, Diffused: Ideas and Remarks on Emerging Definitions of Heritage in Multi-Cultural Contexts**

Philosophies and practices of conservation are intimately linked to the ways in which heritage is defined, presented and experienced in changing historical situations. This paper addresses conceptual, theoretical and practical issues related to recent experiences in blurring the borders between heritage and society, by expanding the scope and the ontology of heritage. Three ranges of questions will be discussed in this context:

- Beyond the museum: drawing on the European and Italian practice of the "museo diffuso" or Eco-museum, a new approach to museology addresses heritage as a space of encounter with the past, that can be experienced away from the boundaries of a physical building. The "collection", the "edifice" and the "visitor" characterizing traditional museums are replaced by heritage at large (found in public and private spaces that are not identified as Museums), the "urban environment", and the "community"
- Transnational commitments: If the community is characterized by plural, diverse national and cultural affiliations, the experience of heritage becomes also an experience of encounter with "otherness". Both the selection of objects to be inventoried, restored and displayed, and the physical/virtual itineraries leading to this experience should avoid traditional, nationally bounded concepts and categorizations
- Physical/digital hybridity: In order to enhance and facilitate encounter and dialogue across borders and beyond traditional lines, virtual elaborations should work in synergy with the real experience of heritage

These three areas of inquiry will be discussed and illustrated with reference to the limits of the Venice charter, and (in counterpoint) to a concrete project for a Diocesan Museum of the Latin Catholic heritage of Istanbul in the Cathedral of Saint Esprit, whence stepping beyond the building to discover heritage at large in the city will be encouraged.

### **Homaira Fayez, Norway/Afghanistan**

#### **From 'Objects' to 'Community' and then to 'Environment': The Evolution of Architectural Heritage Conservation in Theory and Practice**

Many scholars have developed theories and practices underlying the mechanisms for protecting and extending the life of historic buildings. International institutions, as the main advocates of heritage conservation, influenced by their world views, have adopted universal policies to guide the process. Among the various normative texts they have initiated, the 1964 Venice Charter is indeed the most important universal conservation code. However, this biblical, centralized text is insufficient as a holistic and integrated conservation code to meet today's understanding of the potentials and vulnerability of architectural heritage and the corresponding approach to

conservation, particularly considering the health of environment in the crises of climate change. The recent changes impacted every aspect of heritage identification, valorization and protection both at the institutional and community levels. This review article examines which theories and practices have contributed to the establishment of the fundamental principles of the Venice Charter and why? What are its most important concepts and rules? and what has been the evolution of heritage conservation afterwards? The results demonstrate that architectural conservation began with a strong privilege of objectivity in practice to create a real, tangible, and static object which was only concerned with individual monuments or sites. Only vulnerable to the trace of time, stylistic restoration and armed conflicts. However, recent demands have transformed this understanding to make heritage conservation a subjective, dynamic, value-linked, multidisciplinary and contextual-based approach.

## 14.00–15.30: Session VII

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**Shantanu Subramaniam, UK**

### **Approaches to Setting of Historic Monuments in Practice: A Case Study of Aihole, Southern India. (virtual)**

The concept of Setting of Heritage assets is a central concern of the Venice Charter, and is illustrated in several articles within the doctrinal document. The concept of setting is multifarious, with historic layers adding evolving meaning to understanding and interpreting heritage assets.

Aihole is part of the tentative list for UNESCO World Heritage Status (Ref: 5972), as an expansion to the World Heritage site at Pattadakal. Both sites illustrate contrasting but interesting approaches to the treatment of 'setting' around early Chalukyan Monuments, dating from the mid-5th to the late 8th Centuries.

This presentation would examine approaches to setting of historic monuments in the Malaprabha Valley and its impact on historic fabric and living heritage. It argues that subsequent built heritage and current living traditions are an integral part of understanding, appreciating and conserving the setting of monuments, and that a nuanced and balanced approach is necessary.

In this, the research provides a critique of Article 14 of the Venice Charter and urges a review of the meaning and significance of setting and integrity in the contemporary world.

**Chih-Yuan Chang, Taiwan**

### **Reflections on Cultural Heritage Repurposing and Accessibility in the Venice Charter: An Analysis of Cultural Heritage Cases in Japan and Taiwan. (virtual)**

This paper discusses the provisions of the Venice Charter, specifically Article 5 on the "Principles of Conservation," Article 13 on "Additions," and Article 16 on "Publications." It puts forward considerations for future theory of conservation and doctrinal texts. The paper engages in a dialectical analysis between the Venice Charter and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals' indicator "Reducing Inequality within and among Countries" and the concept of "Accessibility" in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This analysis is complemented by examining cultural heritage cases in Japan and Taiwan. The research concludes: 1. Adhering to the Venice Charter's emphasis on the concept of conservation through restoration, it is essential to protect the environment and the additions made, without causing harm to existing elements. However, when considering the demand for repurposing, it is crucial to ensure "fair service" for diverse users. 2. In the context of "fair service," the construction of accessible pathways in the cultural heritage preservation environment is paramount and fundamental. These pathways should cater to the needs of visually impaired, hearing impaired, and physically disabled individuals. 3. Utilizing mobile technology, virtual images, and physical touch models as aids can be effective tools for cultural heritage education. It is recommended to prioritize the presentation of these aspects in cultural heritage reports, publications, and informational websites.

**Tamás Solymosi, Hungary/Japan**

### **Beyond Monuments: Rethinking Heritage Through the Mundane and the Ephemeral in Tokyo. (virtual)**

Challenging Monumentality: Existing doctrinal texts in architectural heritage, like the Venice Charter, prioritize the preservation of grand monuments and exceptional sites. This focus overlooks the vast realm of everyday, vernacular architecture that shapes our cultural landscapes and daily lives.

Redefining Value: We propose a new principle: recognizing the inherent value of the mundane and ephemeral in architectural heritage. This shift acknowledges the dynamic nature of everyday spaces, where decay and transformation can be integral to their cultural significance.

Multidisciplinary Dialogue: To understand these nuanced dynamics, we advocate for a multidisciplinary approach that goes beyond traditional architectural expertise, fostering a holistic understanding of how everyday spaces are lived, used, and transformed over time.

Counterpreservation as Praxis: In many cases, preservation in the traditional sense may not be viable or desirable for mundane heritage. We propose exploring the concept of counterpreservation, where controlled decay or adaptation become valid strategies for maintaining the cultural memory and social relevance of these spaces.

Discussion and Action: Through this proposed principle, we aim to spark a critical dialogue within the field of architectural heritage. By recognizing the value of the mundane and embracing multidisciplinary approaches, we can develop more inclusive and adaptable strategies for safeguarding the diverse tapestry of our built environment.

### **Katti Osorio, Panama**

#### **Interpretation of Heritage From Cultural Diversity and its Influence in its Preservation. (virtual)**

The Venice Charter promotes awareness regarding the unity of human values and the shared, common heritage that expresses said values. On that line, the Venice Charter also highlights the importance that "the principles guiding the preservation and restoration of ancient buildings should be agreed and be laid down on an international basis, with each country being responsible for applying the plan within the framework of its own culture and traditions." It is apparent that the Venice Charter was oriented to recognize the sovereignty of countries as a basis to articulate their own systems of protection of heritage in accordance with some international principles universally agreed upon.

During the decades of 1960s, 1970s and 1980 even, the conservation efforts at national levels were inextricably linked to nationalist views as dictatorships in Latin America sought to validate their official interpretation of a united national culture as an argument for social cohesion under their rule. For example, indigenous peoples and ethnic communities found themselves subject to the interpretations of their own cultural expressions from the national level, top down. In the 21st century with the increasing calls for appreciation towards cultural diversity, including the universal human right to freely participate in cultural expressions. As the Universal Declaration of Human Rights indicates under article 27, "Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits." Adequate conservation measures to be adequate may require harmonizing often conflicting views on the same, shared heritage from different stakeholders. Heritage routes for example, offer an opportunity for exchange of cultural values for the stakeholders along the routes whose cultural identities have influenced each other. Is the Venice Charter flexible enough to accommodate this challenge?

### **Nilüfer Yöney & Yıldız Salman, Turkey**

#### **Rewinding Urban Places: Resurrected Historical vs. Accursed Modern**

The international acceptance of "the valid contributions of all periods" as opposed to the 19th century approach of "unity of style", was a turning point brought about by the Venice Charter as a reflection of the modernist attitude of its time. The Charter referred to the importance of "the superimposed work of different periods", and this idea was developed in following doctrinal texts with reference to authenticity and recent heritage. In this theoretical process, the Quebec Declaration focuses on "the spirit of place" in terms of change and continuity, the Valetta Principles accentuates "the respect for historical values, patterns and layers", and the Madrid - New Delhi Document states that "the cultural significance" is not only limited to the "original heritage place" but later interventions acquire their own cultural significance and should be recognised and respected".

Recent examples of so-called "reconstructions", replacing post-war modern architecture with that of late 19th and early 20th centuries in European cities and bringing back past styles, has become a sociological phenomenon. This contemporary place-making approach, however, mostly results in the creation of brand-new "historical" buildings. If reconstruction is to bring back something lost but retained in urban memory, these examples are beyond reconstruction, creating a hyperreality of fake heritage as a response to the *horror vacui* of modernism. The strong public preference of falsified historical styles replacing modern architecture raises questions about the continuity of the spirit of place. As the unwantedness of modern architectural heritage creates a time-gap, preservation of the layered authenticity of places becomes a challenge. This paper aims to discuss the future of this accursed heritage in terms of conservation theory: If post-war reconstructions reflected a period attitude and were in essence 20th century heritage, how could 21st century resurrections replacing 20th century architecture acquire meaning as urban places?

**Gilly Carr, UK (Invited Guest)**

**Introducing the new International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance Charter for Safeguarding Sites**

In January 2024, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) launched, at the European Commission, its new Charter for Safeguarding Sites. The Charter had been adopted by the organisation in Zagreb two months previously. This heritage charter is the first of its kind dedicated to safeguarding sites of the Holocaust, the genocide of the Roma, and of crimes committed by the Nazis and their collaborators. Such sites range from concentration camps, forced labour camps and killing sites to mass graves, sites of pogroms and death march routes. Comprising four Articles, it identifies risks, threats and challenges to the safeguarding of the significance of sites and suggests international good practice in responding to such risks. In the 21 century, the kinds of threats to sites include but move beyond issues of neglect and decay, and preservation and conservation strategies. Problems today include armed conflict, climate breakdown, inappropriate reuse, lack of funding, political distortion of narratives, vandalism and lack of heritage protection.

The Charter proposes safeguarding principles, responsibilities and practices, and IHRA anticipates applicability of the Charter to all sites of trauma. After five years of building the Charter, this year is focused on its translation and dissemination, and putting it into practice.

To this end, in my capacity as Chair of the Safeguarding Sites project, I would like to investigate opportunities for cooperation with others in our field to help promote and discuss the Charter.

(Dr Gilly Carr is UK delegate to the IHRA and Chair of Safeguarding Sites project.)