

THE CULTURAL VALUE OF THE BUILT HERITAGE IN
THE INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTS DEDICATED TO THE
PRESERVATION OF THE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Maria Bostenaru Dan^{*1,2}

1. ERGOROM '99, Bucharest, Romania,
2. "Ion Mincu" University of Architecture and Urban Planning, Bucharest, Romania

*maria.bostenaru@iaim.ro

The evolution of the concept of cultural value in the following international documents will be analysed:

- Charter of Athens (1931, 1933)
- The Venice Charter (1964)
- European Charter of the Architectural Heritage (1975)
- Declaration of Amsterdam (1975)
- Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (1985)
- The Nara Document on Authenticity (1994)

1931 the Carta di Atene was released by the Advisory Council for Antiquities and Fine Arts in Italy. According to a research undertaken by the Getty Institute (www.getty.edu/conservation) this document was a major source of ideas expressed in the Venice Charter. It is stated that preserved should be the works in which the civilisation has found its most high expression and which are in danger. In case that a restoration is unavoidable because of degradation or destruction, it recommends that the historic and artistic work of the past is respected without prescribing the style of a certain epoch. The conference recommends maintaining a function within the buildings, but the modern destination shall respect the historic and artistic character. Monuments of historic, artistic or scientific value are recognised. Special recommendations are made for archaeological findings. Reinforced concrete may be used if the aspect and the character of the restored monument are not altered. It is also recommended that in the city, especially in the vicinity of antique monuments the character and the physiognomy of the city shall be respected. The same applies for picturesque views. Publicity, telegraph poles and aggressive industry shall be avoided in the vicinity of art and history monuments (www.tine.it/Normativa_BBCC/Carre.htm). The document was followed in 1932 by the Carta Italiana del Restauro.

The 1933 Charter of Athens was a completely different document. It was a result of the IVth CIAM (International Congress of Modern Architecture). It promoted the functional city, with singular blocks within a green area instead of so-called "urban slums" the potential heritage value of these being denied.

The Venice Charter or The International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites was released in 1964 by ICOMOS (the International

Council on Monuments and Sites) at the Second International Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historic Buildings. According to the Getty research (www.getty.edu/conservation) it continues to be the most influential international conservation document. "The concept of an historic monument embraces not only the single architectural work but also the urban or rural setting in which is found the evidence of a particular civilization, a significant development or an historic event. This applies not only to great works of art but also to more modest works of the past which have acquired cultural significance with the passing of time." (article 1, www.international.icomos.org/e_venice.htm). The main principles are based on the concept of authenticity and the importance of maintaining the historical and physical context of a site or a building (article 6, 7, 8, 14). It sees the monuments not only as works of art but also as historical evidence (article 3). It continues the idea set in the Carta di Atene (1931) regarding the preservation of monuments with works from different periods (article 11). It also continues the idea set in the Carta di Atene (1931) regarding modern uses in historic buildings and the use of modern materials. The process of restoration shall "preserve and reveal the aesthetic and historic value of the monument and is based on respect for original material and authentic documents" (article 9).

1975 was declared by the Council of Europe as European Architectural Year and in this year two important documents were released: the European Charter of the Architectural Heritage (1975) and the Declaration of Amsterdam (1975). The Charter first states the "irreplaceable cultural, social and economic values represented by historic monuments, groups of buildings and interesting sites in both town and country." (www.icomos.org/docs/euroch_e.html) In the first article it states that "The European architectural heritage consists not only of our most important monuments: it also includes groups of lesser buildings in our old towns and characteristic villages in their natural or manmade settings". Thus it sets accent on the surroundings of monuments which contribute to their character. "Entire groups of buildings, even if they do not include any example of outstanding merit, may have an atmosphere that gives them the quality of works of art, welding different periods and styles into a harmonious whole. Such groups should also be preserved." The nature, importance (spiritual, cultural, social and economic) and threats (dangers) to European architectural heritage are defined. It puts forth a concept which is called "integrated conservation". This is a mean to avert the dangers in which heritage is. It encourages training facilities. It is achieved through sensitive restoration techniques and appropriate functions. For the integrated conservation legal, administrative, financial and technical support are necessary. The Charter aims to a common European policy for the protection of architectural heritage and calls for co-operation.

The Declaration of Amsterdam was adopted by the Congress on the European Architectural Heritage, Council of Europe, in the same year 1975. It emphasizes the formerly stated roles of planning, education, legal and administrative measures in the protection of European heritage. It goes in detail in explaining what "integrated conservation" means. "Integrated conservation" calls for co-operation between architecture and urban planning. Thus architectural conservation must become an integral part of urban and regional planning. Also "integrated conservation" calls for participatism. "A policy of conservation also means the integration of the architectural heritage into social life. The conservation effort to be made must be measured not only against the cultural value of the buildings but also against their use-value. The social problems of integrated conservation can be properly posed only by simultaneous reference to both those scales of values". Local authorities and citizens must be involved in conservation. Conservation must not remain a matter for experts. The public opinion and the affected people are important supporters of conservation measures. This was one of the key elements of participatism. Means for participation are also named in the declaration. If possible, the change of residents through restoration shall be avoided. "In order to enable the population to participate in the drawing up of programmes they must be given the facts necessary to understand the situation, on the one hand through explaining the historic and architectural value of the buildings to be conserved and on the other hand by being given full details about permanent and temporary rehousing [...] This practical way of interesting people in culture would be of considerable social benefit". The recommendations of the Declaration of Amsterdam will be put in the greater frame of the participative movement in the 1970s. A great importance is given to training and education of young people and for conservation as a prospective discipline. A basic consideration is that "apart from its priceless cultural value, Europe's architectural heritage gives to her peoples the consciousness of their common history and common future" (www.icomos.org/docs/amsterdam.html). Again, it is stated that "the architectural heritage includes not only individual buildings of exceptional quality and their surroundings, but also areas of towns and villages of historic and cultural interest [...] Protection is needed today for historic towns, the old quarters of cities, towns and villages with a traditional character as well as historic parks and gardens, The conservation of these architectural complexes can be only be conceived in a wide perspective, embracing all buildings of cultural value, from the greatest to the humblest – not forgetting those of our own day together with their surroundings". Contradicting the Charter of Athens (1933) it sets for historical continuity in order to enable individuals to feel secure despite abrupt social changes. Thus it calls for a new town planning, other than the functionalist one. It was the age of participatism, and more will be

talked about this in the full paper. It continues the idea of the Carta di Atene (1931) and of the Charter of Venice (1964) regarding new functions in old buildings. "The recognition of the claims of aesthetic and cultural values of the architectural heritage should lead to the adoption of specific aims and planning rules for old architectural complexes". There must be an integration between the common planning regulations and those for protecting historic buildings. With this purpose it calls for an inventory of the buildings, complexes and sites with cultural value. Financial means for "integrated conservation" must be assured.

Finally the Nara Document of Authenticity (1994) was released at an ICOMOS Symposium. Authenticity is a more recent concern in what regards the conservation of cultural heritage (www.getty.edu/conservation). The Nara Document (www.international.icomos.org/naradoc_eng.htm) builds on the Venice Charter (1964) in what regards the cultural value. It introduces the concept of cultural diversity. Cultural and social values of all societies must be preserved, respect for other cultures must be exercised. The value of cultural property must be judged depending on the cultural context to which it belongs. Although the management and care of heritage are primarily in the hands of the culture which produced it, adherence to international charters and documents must be given (www.getty.edu/conservation).