

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

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Abstract

In this paper the evolution of the concept of cultural value in several international documents will be analysed. In 1931 the Carta di Atene¹ was released by the Advisory Council for Antiquities and Fine Arts in Italy. Monuments of historic, artistic or scientific value are recognised. The work of the past shall be respected without prescribing the style of a certain epoch. The 1933 Charter of Athens was a result of the IVth CIAM (International Congress of Modern Architecture), with the potential heritage of so-called "urban slums" being denied. The Venice Charter² 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). It extends the concept of historic monument to more modest works of art which have acquired cultural value. It also accentuates the value of historical evidence. 1975 was declared by the Council of Europe as European Architectural Year and in this year were released: the European Charter of the Architectural Heritage³ and the Declaration of Amsterdam.⁴ In the age of participationism they introduce the concept of "integrated conservation". Finally the Nara Document of Authenticity⁵ was released at an ICOMOS Symposium.

1. Introduction

Culture means the totality of material and spiritual values created by the human kind and of the institutions necessary for the communication of these values.⁶ Consequently, cultural value is the totality of material and spiritual values of the built heritage. Crişan⁷ defines the cultural value as being the complex out of inner and associated values which characterise different components of the built heritage.

First the cognitive and educative value of the built heritage was recognised, implying also the aesthetic and the economic value,⁸ during the French Revolution.

In 1903, Alois Riegl writes about the identity and social perception of the historic monument.⁹ Riegl identifies the various values of the built heritage which makes it to be a monument:

- Rememoration values,
 - Age value,

- Historic value,
- Intentional rememoration value,
- Contemporaneity value,
 - Use value,
 - Artistic value,
 - Novelty value,
 - Relative art value.

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

- Carta di Atene (1931),
- Charter of Athens (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).

2. Carta di Atene - 1931

In 1931 the Carta di Atene¹ was released by the Advisory Council for Antiquities and Fine Arts in Italy.

According to research undertaken by the Getty Institute¹⁰ 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 un-avoidable 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. Monuments of historic, artistic or scientific value are recognised. Special recommendations are made for archaeological findings.

The conference recommends maintaining a function within the buildings, but the modern destination shall respect the historic and artistic character. 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.

The document was followed in 1932 by the Carta Italiana del Restauro.

3. Charter of Athens - 1933

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 "slums" around monuments shall be demolished and green space shall be created, as promoted by Le Corbusier.¹¹ Also, it promotes a "statistic" view on heritage,⁸ as it recommends a selection of historic buildings to be kept, while similar ones can be demolished. It promotes reconciliation.

4. Venice Charter - 1964

The Venice Charter² 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 research¹⁰ 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).

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 (articles 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 die Atene¹ regarding the preservation of monuments with works from different periods (article 11). It also continues the idea set in the Carta di Atene¹ 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).

5. European Architectural Year - 1975

The year 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 Heritage³ and the Declaration of Amsterdam.⁴

European Charter of the Architectural Heritage - 1975

The Charter³ first states the "irreplaceable cultural, social and economic values represented by historic monuments, groups of buildings and interesting sites in both town and country." 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.

Declaration of Amsterdam - 1975

The Declaration of Amsterdam⁴ 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 pro-

grammes 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".

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. It continues the idea of the Carta di Atene¹ and of the Charter of Venice² 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.

6. Nara Document of Authenticity - 1994

Finally the Nara Document of Authenticity⁵ was released at an ICOMOS Symposium. Authenticity is a more recent concern in what regards the conservation of cultural heritage. The Nara Document builds on the Venice Charter² 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.¹⁰

7. Discussion

Crişan⁷ observes that built objects are not just material resources, but also cultural resources. In fact, the discourse on resource architecture is a contemporary one.

The Congress of the International Union of Architects which took place 2002 in Berlin was about resource architecture. The XXIrd World Congress of Architecture had the main theme "Resource Architecture". The topic was in concordance with the growing importance of 'sustainable development', a lasting priority topic in the Framework Programmes of the European Union. One aspect of 'sustainable development' concerns the environment. Sometimes this has a focus on protection of the environment, for example from aging or disasters, other times it is explicitly oriented towards the cultural heritage. The built environment stays at this junction between 'architecture' and 'urban planning', between the single building and the city. The "resource architecture" stays even more, at the junction between the natural and the built environment. The building process has used the natural environment as a resource, while the built object is a resource in itself. The "resource architecture" shapes and is shaped by the ecologic, social and cultural side of our lives. Architecture takes place in a context, in a dialogue civilisations and cultures, but also of disciplines, as debated at the congress. A dialogue of civilisations concerns the techniques, one of cultures of traditions, but the materials used in the process of building concern how innovations can build on traditions. Local materials are a material resource and regional identity a spiritual resource. Genius loci can mean how to build in context respecting the heritage in techniques and concepts of beauty formed over history and tradition, planning and building to protect the material resources and to increase spiritual resources.

The XXth century offers a methodological perspective on restoration in its policy documents.

According to Crişan⁷ any architectural product includes cultural value elements. The author also states that even the architecture works not protected legally if they belong to historic-architectural heritage they possess characteristics which belong conserved from the point of view of associated cultural values. The author proposes a classification of cultural value which is common in Romanian site surveys in:

- Outstanding cultural value: potential monuments, conditioned by the authenticity of the resource,
- Architectural value: conditioned by cultural identity;
- Environmental value: the resource contributes to the cultural quality and significance of a historic urban context, the cultural identity is at urban scale;
- Minor cultural value: the cultural significance of any architectural product.

Seen from the point of view of such a classification, the concept of cultural value evolved during the XXth century from considering only the first category up to the environmental value of a building in a group of buildings of outstanding value as a whole. It is about the scale at which the objects of cultural value are seen.

Another matter worth discussion is the participatism. While the Carta di Atene¹ called for interdisciplinary co-operation, the documents released in the European Architectural Year (1975) call for something broader, the so-called communication.^{13,14} Communication is a collective concept of the following activities in the process of planning:

- Information, as pre-requisite,
- Participation, as communication in tighter sense with the citizens,
- Coordination, as accord about measures, programs etc. between the dependent actors of a sphere,
- Cooperation as work together of independent actors from different spheres. A step between coordination and cooperation is the work together of independent actors from a sphere.

The history of participation and communication is now 40 years long, and in this development we can distinguish two generations.¹⁴ The 1960s were the pre-history of participation. In the 1970s it was the blossom time of participation. In the 1980s and 1990s there is already the second generation, the one where it is more about communication than about participation, the modalities of involvement of affected people change. It was the 1970s when the concept of "integrated conservation" was released, and it promotes the participation of affected people and decision makers like local authorities besides of the experts. Although it cannot be compared to more complex models of participation, it is an attempt to include these views.

Finally, the Nara Document on Authenticity⁵ differentiates the groups of people, being experts, affected people or local authorities dealing with the cultural heritage object. Authenticity can be material authenticity, concept authenticity, execution authenticity and location authenticity.⁸

It must be noted that the "integrated conservation" concept was developed in Europe, and the classification of epochs of participatism refers to Western Europe¹⁴ while in other cultures it may be different.

8. Conclusions

An evolution in the attribution of cultural value can be observed. First the Carta di Atene (1931) recognised the monuments of historic, artistic and scientific value, recognising the contribution of all epochs. The next analysed document, the Charter of Athens (1933) is a radical document. While still recognising the value of monuments, it denies the value of historic urban tissue

which takes the form of so-called "slums", and in the environment of monuments it promotes replacing these with public green spaces. It is one of the areas where significant evolution will be made in the following documents. The Venice Charter (1964) expands the concept of historic monument to more modest works of art which have acquired cultural value. The physical context of a building shall be maintained. The context becomes even larger as set in the European Charter of the Architectural Heritage (1975) and the Declaration of Amsterdam (1975). Both promote the so-called "integrated conservation". Within this concept, the conservation expands from the single building to urban or regional scale, to groups of buildings and interesting sites. Even if none of the buildings in a group has outstanding merit, the group as a whole can have. Apart of expanding the scale at which cultural value and conservation are dealt with, the documents released in the European Architectural Year call for broader participation as just the one of experts. Already the Carta di Atene (1931) called for interdisciplinary co-operation, but in 1975, during the first generation of participatism, this shall be more, it shall be communication with non-experts, the affected people and the decision makers in the local authorities. Finally, the Nara document on authenticity, though bringing up a concept dealt with already in earlier documents, expands the role of those concerned. Only the culture which brought out a certain heritage can decide over its conservation. It is participatism seen in a broader way. Also here the affected people decide.

The layout in the plans of buildings, its innovative elements, is part of the concept authenticity. It builds one of the elements contributing to architectural value, one cultural value category. Therefore the study of cultural heritage policy documents regarding the cultural value is useful for the study of "The innovation in the plan of the current floor: Zoning in blocks of flats for the middle class in the first half of the 20th century", an ongoing research project of the author, in order to determine which are the elements to be conserved in interventions for changed living standards today.

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