

CHANGES OF MEANING AND PERSPECTIVES FOR THE DESTINIES OF THE BUILT HERITAGE

Stefano Francesco Musso^a, Giovanna Franco^a

^aUniversità degli Studi di Genova, Italy

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ABSTRACT

It is difficult to say what Restoration is today and what place it occupies among the disciplines of architecture, in the fields of education, research and profession. Equally complex is to delimit the concept of Cultural Heritage, which is increasingly extended and differentiated by scale, types of artefacts, age of formation, etc. Furthermore, it is increasingly subject to risks of various kinds that cast doubts on its survival and transmission to the future. On the other hand, we still live in a "liquid" and ever faster changing contemporaneity, according to Zygmunt Bauman, while for the philosopher Umberto Garimberti it would be almost "cemented" and blocked (Palese 2014). Our relationship with the traces of the many pasts that preceded us cannot ignore this fragile, uncertain, but also open nature of the time we live and those that await us. Marc Augé, in this regard, questioned about the two great ways of relating to the future in different human societies - one that makes the future a consequence of the past: the intrigue, the other that makes it a birth: the inauguration - which find their institutional and cultural expressions (Augé 2012, 14). Even the ways in which each era and each community have lived, recognized, interpreted, preserved, or innovated their own built heritage of cultural interest and value seem to be attributable to the metaphorical figures of "intrigue" and "inauguration". Many protagonists of the life

of our cities, landscapes, and territories, on the other hand, now claim the right/duty to act on that heritage, often generating radical conflicts between different ideal and operational visions and perspectives and, at times, irreversible losses of its "relevant parts". The contribution therefore proposes an ideal reflection on these themes and similar perspectives, also with reference to current events and concrete and operational situations at the local scale but not only.

KEYWORDS

Cultural Heritage; memory; values; conservation; innovation.

1. SPACES AND GOALS OF RESTORATION, BETWEEN CONSERVATION AND INNOVATION

The discipline of Restoration has been formed, for some, over many centuries since ancient times. For others, starting with Eugene Emmanuelle Viollet Le Duc, "the word and the thing are modern", that is, they were born between the 18th and 19th centuries. Whatever the shared point of view, there is no doubt that in the past decades and in the most recent years, we have experienced a radical transition from a conception of "monuments," true homeland glories, masterpieces of art depositories of

collective historical memory, selected through processes of an "aristocratic" character, to a more "democratic" vision of what constitutes the built Cultural Heritage, in the words of Alois Riegl (Riegl 1903) and then of Gustavo Giovannoni (Giovannoni 1945). The interest has gradually extended from monuments (considered intangible but, often, extensively redesigned, for various reasons including ideological) to works of 'modest entity', if they are rich in testimonial values, up to including in the Heritage to be protected the widespread construction of historic centres, the so-called minor architecture, serial, without architects and then also the poor and fragile one of rural environments. The 'choral' (or systemic, we would say today) values have thus joined the 'individual' or strongly identifying ones, while History (historiography) was engaged in a parallel re-reading of the many pasts of which those constructions are a tangible surviving trace, irreproducible and irreplaceable and moreover the bearer of an equally important and precious heritage of intangible assets (knowledge, traditions, collective memories, rituals, folklore ...). The built heritage of the twentieth century also required unprecedented attention, as a product of a recent history and perhaps not yet completely 'historicized', understood and accepted but, in any case, not elidable and sometimes more fragile and at risk than the older one. Many researches have been developed in this direction, as demonstrated by the recently concluded European JPICH program entitled CONSECH20 (<https://consech20.eu>, Musso and Franco 2021, 240-261) dedicated to the heritage built in so-called 'historical' reinforced concrete, that is, belonging to the early twentieth century, a pioneering period for the material and for the construction technique, but also for many 'types' of buildings built in European cities to mark lifestyles, emerging social needs, innovative ways of living and using the urban scene. Even this new extension of what many now consider the contemporary built heritage of cultural interest and value has given rise to

unprecedented ideal and theoretical reflections and parallel technical and design proposals (Di Biase 2013, 195-236; Musso 2009, 24-35). We have thus progressively arrived at a very broad vision of what today is the Cultural Heritage to be protected, safeguarded, preserved, and restored. Entire parts of the contemporary city, as well as ancient, vast landscapes built and shaped by man during the past ages, are today the center of interest. UNESCO has opened new frontiers in this direction and has shifted the initial and exclusive interest in 'things' towards their intangible meanings and values (traditional construction skills and techniques, symbolic values, rituals, etc.), making even more complex the problem (Fiorani 2014, 9-23). The international organizations operating in this area (UNESCO, ICCROM, ICOMOS, ...) have gone so far as to ask that the States protect various human expressions which, apparently and only superficially, can be considered without links with the material heritage of the places they belong to. The immaterial, in fact, often needs many and different "material" supports to be able to express itself, to consolidate, last and be transmitted between generations (thus becoming a tradition). Matter, however, perishes, spoils, breaks, sometimes to the point of disappearing. However, with its disappearance, even what it kept or transmitted immaterial is in danger of being lost forever. On these aspects of the question, today more than yesterday, we must carefully reflect and work, even in the face of the risk of loss of conspicuous parts of our contemporary cities which, for ideological, political, economic, or artfully technical reasons are under the pressure of the much invoked "Urban regeneration". Demolishing buildings built during the twentieth century, only because they are considered an expression of historical periods and regimes that were later rejected, or because they are 'ugly', or bulky and useless compared to the new needs of the cities, risks annihilating even the memory, the memory of that "brief century" initially recalled that it is an essential part of

our being citizens of Europe and of today's world. We cannot erase the history that we do not love, that we do not respect and that we even abhor and condemn. Demolishing the material traces with bulldozers, thinking that with this we will obtain the desired result, can only increase the damage compared to the delicate themes of the collective memory of our societies and an immemorial civilization is destined to repeat the mistakes made and to get lost in the future. Of course, nostalgia and opposing historical revisionisms are always lurking and this constitutes a constant danger and a challenge never won forever. However, there have been dark times in recent European history that we cannot ignore or simply obliterate. Not everything, as also for the ancient, can and must be preserved, much can be transformed and modified, even before simply demolished, also for the respect of the much-heralded sustainability of the future in our territories. In any case, the traces of that past often refer to oppression, injustice, segregation, and other nefarious expressions of the power of some over others. These are terrible things that we had hoped to be completely overcome, at least in Europe, but which in any case we do not have the right to cancel as if nothing had happened. However, there are also expressions and creations of those dark moments that speak not only of violence and abuse, but also of individuals, families, social and aggregate life, education, care, and work. Emblematic, among the many cases of cities founded by the Fascist Regime in Italy, is the case of Carbonia (Musso 2012, 19-32). This small town in western Sardinia won the European Landscape Award a few years ago with an ambitious plan / project for the recovery, conservation and revitalization of the settlement wanted by the hierarchs of the time to settle the miners of the coal mines in the area, in full period of economic self-sufficiency of the country. Even in the dramatic historical phase that Italy and Sardinia then experienced, the planning and subsequent construction of Carbonia drew some of the best design

energies of the moment from the rest of the country, reflecting the most modern theories on urban and territorial planning as well as building typology at the service of living and community living. For these reasons, here as in other places, the duty is not only of the defense or recovery of memory and of the rigorous and non-ideological historical reconstruction, but it is also that of the material safeguarding of that settlement, of those places, of that landscape built by the man.

2. WHICH HERITAGE? CENTRAL ISSUES AND NODES

Many disciplines, as is natural and proper, today deal with this 'dilated and extended' built cultural heritage, each offering their own methodological and ideal contribution, their own tools and pursuing their own specific scientific, cultural but also operational objectives, to the conservation/sustainable transformation of the world we live in. Among them, the Restoration also tries to deal with the many challenges just mentioned, albeit with some complications and many delays, together with the architectural and urban design, the disciplines of building and landscape architecture. Each stage of the process of expansion of what we now consider "Cultural Heritage", initially mentioned, on the other hand, has resulted in inevitable changes in the ways of thinking and acting on it. Every moment of those events marked, in some ways, the closure of a cycle, which was answered with the opening of new questions that now require answers at least in part unprecedented. The progressive and impressive increase in the number and types of artefacts, ignored or depreciated yesterday and today the object of unexpected interest, of research and design experiments of various kinds and purposes, was accompanied, as recalled, by the parallel extension of attention towards previously unknown eras or devalued, overcoming the disputable historiographical selections, of various origins and foundations, proposed above all in the more distant past, in

the nineteenth century when the first requests arose to 'preserve' at least some fragments of previous eras, in the face of the risk that the new society of industry risked completely erasing all traces of it. The extension of our gaze into space has similarly pushed us out and beyond the only large sites or monumental complexes, traditionally considered as worthy of conservation and restoration, beyond the cities of art and their central places, towards the suburbs, the marginal and rural areas, fragile or depressed inland zones and yet rich in evidence of a past that we cannot forget, if we want to have a future. We must take note of all this and face the new challenges that this unexpected situation proposes to the Restoration and to contemporary architectural and urban planning culture, even if certainly not only to them. In fact, one of the most pervasive consequences of the processes mentioned is a substantial and potentially positive change in the same concepts used in this area. Everyone, in fact, now intends and wants to deal with Heritage, a term now widespread also in Italy but not directly identifiable with the term 'Cultural Goods' which is the basis of our legislation about protection. Those who intend to act to effectively take care of it, with conscious responsibility towards the citizens of the future, is not always very clear and evident, but it will be seen. It is indisputable, however, that the expansion of the temporal, spatial, material and ideal horizons of the idea of 'Cultural Heritage', combined with the progressive narrowing of the spaces of new buildability and modifiability of the environment in which we live - a reflection of a thousand reasons and processes of change in contemporary society - has caused an explosion of interest in existing, ancient or recent artifacts and sites, to which we recognize some values and different potentialities, including use or reuse, more or less 'adaptive'. To face the new challenges posed by the destiny of the Heritage, new skills, innovative disciplinary, scientific, technical, and operational tools are required, in addition to those referable to the traditional world of Restoration alone. This can result

in an enrichment of all those involved in the world of protection, with many benefits for the transmission to the future of those assets, in the most intact state possible, so that they reach those who will follow us with all the material and intangible values of which they are bearers. and, if possible, enriched with new values. Everything depends, however, on how much and how we will be able to govern the complex processes that develop in this area by the work of many and different subjects, each bearer of legitimate requests, needs, intentions which, however, can often prove to be conflicting with each other and potentially capable of destroying what, on the contrary, one declares to want to 'enhance'. This, even overcoming the logic of physical intervention considered as a singular and definitive event, autonomous, closed in on itself, strictly authorial and self-finalized, capable of definitively 'closing' the history of the artefacts and sites subject to attention. In fact, it is necessary to avoid the risk that the enormous power of attraction that the Heritage (from the artistic artefact to the building, from the city to the landscape) seems to exercise on the most diverse disciplines, professionalism, skills, abilities and on many sectors of administration, politics, industry, and finance, produce more damage than we would like. Every era and every community, on the other hand, have the right and duty to question themselves about the relationships they intend to establish with their past and, therefore, also with the material traces that are still part of the current living environment. Rather, it is necessary to clearly pose some fundamental questions to those who intend, or must, deal with a heritage that belongs to everyone but, of course, no longer to the past and not exclusively to our transient present. On the other hand, the patrimony should not be for anyone a hunting territory, of free and autonomous expression of singular interests (individual or category), or a simple 'resource', understood as an asset of economic income or multiplier of profits, not even for the State and local institutions. Indeed, forms of collaboration, subsidiarity, or synergy between

public and private sectors in this field are welcome, without ever forgetting that cultural heritage is a 'Common Good'. It is a matter of civilization.

3. DIFFERENT VIEWS ON HERITAGE AND ITS DESTINY

For the reasons highlighted so far, it is important to consider the many and frequent reflections that sociologists, philosophers, historians, and not just architects or urban planners, propose about the role that the material traces of the past can have in the present and in the future, as well as on how to ensure they can fully express it. On the other hand, there are many implications and sometimes contradictions that any intervention on those 'traces' entails, while also attempting to save the intangible meanings and values with which they are impregnated, or with which they can be vehicles towards the future. The problem, on the other hand, goes beyond the restricted area of restorer specialists and, in explicit or implicit ways, involves many protagonists of contemporary culture who offer interesting suggestions for thought capable of proposing a new "inauguration" of the theme, towards the future that awaits us (Hobsbawm 2013).

Zygmunt Bauman argues, for example, that "Concern for the present moment leaves no room or time to reflect on the eternal. In a fluid and constantly changing environment, the idea of eternity, perpetual duration, or lasting value, immune to the passage of time, has no foundation in human experience" (Bauman 2009, 117 - translated from the authors from the Italian edition). Also, for this reason, the tendency to save the 'traces' of the past often clashes with the situation of the present (cultural, training, educational, political, social, economic, productive ...), triggering a radical contradiction and partially undergoing its effects devastating. "The speed of change deals a fatal blow to the value of durability: 'old or durable' become synonyms of 'obsolete',

'out of date', something that resists despite having lost its 'usefulness' and therefore destined shortly to end up in the garbage basket" (Bauman 2009). On closer inspection, two centuries later and with the necessary differences in language and style, Bauman's words seem to echo those of John Ruskin and bring back to the fore the ancient theme of the duration and durability (or durability) of architecture, opposed to the eternal becoming (and inevitable disappearance) of individual men and entire social communities or civilizations. It is a crucial theme in ancient and Renaissance treatises, partly abandoned or overtaken by the Modern Movement in architecture aimed at the search for other and different values. However, it seems today to re-emerge, for example, in the many reflections on the themes of sustainability (environmental, economic, social, and cultural), to which restoration and conservation can perhaps make important contributions, together with the other disciplines of architecture and urban planning. Not destroying, conserving, re-using existing buildings - even more so if in reinforced concrete, very difficult to 'dispose', respecting their built substance and their characteristics, is an important contribution to the protection of existing resources, also from the energetic point of view and not just the consumption of land and space. Limiting the use of synthetic chemicals, especially in restoration sites, contributes to respect for the environment and the health of operators and citizens. Intervening with the caution of the minimum intervention avoids economically unsustainable investments, or which discriminate a few valuable objects to the detriment of the conservation of larger, articulated, and widespread sets of common goods of the community. This also contributes to ensuring a more acceptable social impact for each intervention, especially if you try to make the restored building universally accessible, in physical or alternative ways. And the examples in this sense could go on and on. However, it is necessary to ensure that

we can first of all overcome the bitter situation denounced by Bauman according to which "There are fewer and fewer, with the exception of objects stolen from the flow of everyday life and mummified for the pleasure of the tourist, the things that have seen previous eras at the birth of the individual; and even less those who, born later, have reasonable hopes of outliving their spectators" (Bauman 2009, 117-118). The relationship that culture and society seem to express today with respect to the artifacts and monuments born before the contemporaneity in which we are immersed is however very contradictory. It is also deeply linked to the question of the use that, of those objects, sites, or monuments, we can ensure to guarantee, as has always been argued, a permanence with meaning in the current and future life environment, i.e., an unrestricted presence. a mere fetish or a simple appeal for the "pleasure of the tourist".

4. NEW RISKS FOR HERITAGE

The built cultural heritage, now so extensive, varied, and widespread on the territories, suffers every kind of attack by nature, with greater violence, depth, and recurrence than in the past, without forgetting the continuing havoc caused by men and even by those who it should take care of it directly. Marc Augé denounces this when he argues that "There are ongoing processes of standardization and 'spectacularization' that distance us both from the traditional rural landscape and from the urban landscape born in the nineteenth century [...] restorations and lighting stiffen the landscape of the city. The palaces of the Marais or other "historical monuments" in Paris become the virtual objects of the gaze of spectator tourists destined to see them for a few moments, in passing. By their virtual nature, the restorations - such as reconstructions, reproductions, simulacra - belong to the field of the image: they conform to the image, they are the image of distant or

vanished realities which they replace" (Augé 2004, 75-76 – translated by the author from the Italian edition). In these processes, those who in various ways and in many ways are involved in restoration certainly have something to say. At the very least, it should be done by those who deal with it as researchers and scholars but also as educators and as designers. In fact, according to Augé, "The fourth ambivalence of tourism, which is also that of our world in general, is the ambivalence of reality and its copy at a time when copies are more and more realistic, and reality is increasingly penetrated by simulacrum and fiction" (Augé 2004, 57). It thus happens, more and more often and at every latitude, that "[...] the commercial success of the parks in which simulacra of the present or of history are offered corresponds to the spirit of the time [...]. The spirit of the times is first and foremost the privilege attributed to the present over the past and the future, a spirit of immediate consumption that is very well suited to the spectacle of the world. The 'spectacularization' manifests itself at other levels and in different ways: plastering of buildings, flower villages, restoration of ruins, "sound and light" spectacles, lighting, regional parks, arrangement, and protection of large natural sites, but also theatricalization of current events for images, simultaneity of the event and its political, sporting, or artistic representation [...]. This 'spectacularization' makes the border between reality and its representation, between reality and fiction more tenuous every day. It has perverse effects: the nuance is foreign to it; if diversity is its raw material, it always treats it in the same way, with the same language, in the same style, uniformly [...]" (Augé 2004, 57-58). This situation also gives rise to the widespread tendency towards homologation of the surface treatments of monuments, or of the design solutions adopted for new parts added or inserted within or alongside the restored monuments. For this reason, we are witnessing the increasingly striking contrast between a heritage that is peripheral in various aspects, left to a destiny of progressive

abandonment and deterioration, and the more "central and attractive" one, the beneficiary of large public and / or private investments only because it is more easily exploitable, i.e., 'salable'. The former will perhaps have the sad fortune of disappearing, sometimes arriving 'authentic' at his "funeral service", as John Ruskin wished. The second will live as many new lives and often only cosmetic interventions as there are more solicitations for his perennial resurrection (or reproduction/reconstruction/re-presentation/interpretation). This is pursued with respectfully pseudo-ancient forms or, on the contrary, genuinely innovative, and contemporary, but sometimes very invasive and destructive. On the other hand, according to the philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy: "[...] the city that is feared to lose is the city without its «banlieu», while the one that is feared and nothing more is the city with and in its «banlieu». What one would like to preserve is the governing and commercial city, the 'bourgeois' capital which gives itself, as a city, the representation of its power. The city that moves away its «banlieu», while preserving its castle, its cathedral"(Nancy 2002, 18). For this reason, not only in the Los Angeles of which the French philosopher speaks "[...] the city of today offers itself as a spectacle to the city of yesterday: it preserves and restores it, revives its facades, monumentalizes and patrimonializes the city that passed into the very moment in which it deconstructs it. It opens the excavations of its future circulation corridors, bringing to light older layers that it will then put under glass, leaving them visible along the new roads. On the area of a destroyed prison, where a parking lot will be built, a group of young archaeologists is grappling with the remains of a primitive Greco-Roman ruin. The city looks at itself, searches for itself and eludes itself at the same time in its annals and in its layers crushed on each other. If once, take the case of Troy, successive kingdoms stacked their cities on top of each other as successive layers of power, now a single kingdom extends to all horizons, and the exhumed ancient

ramparts are no longer foundations, but curious inclusions within a bottomless and borderless expanse" (Nancy 2002, 43-44).

5. HISTORY – MEMORY - OBLIVION

Memory and oblivion thus enter in continuous mutual fibrillation, precisely because they are fundamental dimensions of human existence and of every culture, as Martin Heidegger recalled. Paul Ricoeur has dedicated to the theme of the traces of the past some fundamental reflections that concern us directly even if his discourse develops on the more general level of history and of the relationships between past, present and future. He first proposes a fundamental distinction between the Greek 'eikon' (image), the 'trace', the 'imprint' (like the seal imprinted in wax), the sign and the document and argues that not everything is a document, while everything can be a trace of the past. The problem is that "[...] the metaphor of the imprint of a seal on the wax reinforces the idea of a localization of the memory, as if it were collected and stored somewhere, in a place where it is preserved and from where we will be able to extract it to evoke it, recall it to memory [...]" (Ricoeur 2004, 5). This "place", on closer inspection, is for many precisely the monument. Ricoeur invites, however, "[...] to be on guard against the tendency, also typical of language, to treat the past as an entity, a locality, in which its forgotten memories would stay, and from which they would be extracted from anamnesis" (Ricoeur 2004, 6). Monuments, in this perspective, are certainly traces and documents of the past, as Jacques Le Goff already proposed, but Ricoeur in this regard points out that "Documents are traces and archives are reserves of inventoried traces. Now what is a trace, if not the modern equivalent of the footprint for the Greeks? [...] the trace left is also an imprint offered for deciphering [...]. Thus, the enigma of the footprint is repeated in that of the trace; It is necessary to have a preliminary theoretical

knowledge about the habits of those who have left the trace, and a practical knowledge about the art of deciphering the trace, which, only then, acts as a sign-effect of the passage that has left the trace" (Ricoeur 2004, 14). Even thinking about the destiny of the monuments, a theoretical and a practical knowledge is invoked that, certainly not exclusively, the world of Restoration has elaborated in more than two centuries of history. We must be aware of this, and we can talk about this, in comparison with anyone who intends to deal with those material traces. Among many others, the opposition between "true" and "false" (or between likely, authentic, or counterfeit) has always characterized, for example, the ideal dialogue and the comparison between distinct design solutions. Paul Ricoeur, however, recalls that "The true-false opposition is at the same time also a trust-suspicion opposition. The critical undertaking of history therefore does not liquidate the suspicion of having been deceived by false testimony. The historical truth thus remains pending, plausible, probable, contestable, in short, in continuous re-writing. Therefore, it is on inscribing the problematic of the 'passeness' of the past in the great circle of temporality that the destiny of this suspended truth, of this forever incomplete truthfulness, ultimately depends" (Ricoeur 2004, 19). Also, for these reasons, the future we would like for monuments and cultural heritage in general takes on extremely delicate characteristics, which cannot be solved with simple technical or formal recipes. Restoring implies, in fact, being deeply aware of the fact that "memory and history have a relationship with oblivion [...] (which concerns) recalling to memory - what is currently defined as remembrance or simple memento - and not inscription, conservation, keeping in memory. From the memory that "keeps", from the memory that "remains", we pass to the memory that "evokes", to the memory that "returns". The notions of presence and absence of the past take on a strictly phenomenological tint at this level, in contrast to the ontology of fundamental oblivion: it is the

game of appearing-disappearing-reappearing at the level of reflective consciousness" (Ricoeur 2004, 103-104). Restoration and architectural design in general have great responsibilities in this sense when they often play with these terms. Planning the future of monuments and historical buildings requires, on the other hand, to recognize that "The values expressed by an ancient work [...] are no longer contemporary: they have deteriorated, they no longer speak to us. The work tells of its time, but no longer tells it comprehensively. Those who contemplate it today, whatever their erudition, will never have the gaze of those who saw it for the first time. It is this lack, this emptiness, this gap between the disappeared perception and the current perception that the original work expresses today [...]. The perception of this gap between two uncertainties, between two incompleteness, is the essential reason for our pleasure: at an equal distance from the historical reconstruction and the actualization operated by the forceps (Oreste and Antigone in jeans, Egisto and Creon in suits and ties, etc.). The perception of this gap is the perception of time itself, of the sudden and fragile reality of time, erased in the blink of an eye by erudition and restoration (the illusory evidence of the past) as well as by spectacle and updating (I illusory evidence of the present)" (Augé 2004, 25-26). For this reason, someone invokes restoration as a rare and precious ability to make the ancient work speak again, in clear and understandable ways, restoring its lost unity, completeness and "beauty". On the other hand, the illusory evidence of the past and that of the present now seem to have won everywhere, in our 'liquid' contemporaneity, starting with some Unesco sites and the infinite reconstructions implemented by recalling the ancient and fortunate motto of "how it was (of course not!) and where it was (maybe yes!)" (Musso 2015, 95-110). Basically, it is a simple recipe that certainly requires considerable technical skills, but which does not solve the problem of the relationship of our contemporaneity with the material traces of the worlds that preceded us.

The reconstructions can do a lot, but they do not contribute to the construction of a future that is not forgotten and not even a hostage to a past which, in any case, is no longer and will never be able to return to being.

6. NEW CHALLENGES AND NEW HORIZONS FOR THE BUILT HERITAGE

For the many reasons mentioned, it is no longer just the great and ideal contrasts of the past that mark the current debate on Heritage. They are still present but expressed in partly new words and actions. The most complex and risky challenge now seems to have shifted to the conflict between the reasons for conservation and the aspirations to enhancement. The relationship between the two polarities is delicate and sometimes conflictual and they do not always find clear and autonomous ideal and operational expressions. The correspondence between the ends and the means used to satisfy their requests is not always strong and crystalline. It can thus happen that extreme and courageous defenses of a conservative nature are implemented with profound gradients of transformation of the existing artefacts, due to the many interpretations of the restoration that have been offered throughout history. Conversely, an action of an admittedly transformative nature which not only modifies the existing one, but which deliberately produces new "forms", can sometimes allow, or help the conservation of the artefact. It all depends, after all, on how much it really affects your body. The Restoration, despite its many variations, expresses a particular attention, a real debt, towards the matter stratified in the course of history (of all stories!). Matter is not a fetish, nor does it represent the only value, meaning or interest of the artefact inherited from the past. However, memories, values, symbols, traces of lives, skills or rituals and everything immaterial that can be linked to it (already

known or yet to be discovered), will only be able to survive our actions if these do not change its consistency. physical and formal more than is strictly necessary to ensure stability and durability. The difference, after all, is that between a consideration of the building (or heritage) as the real reason for being of the intervention, the real protagonist of the protection / conservation / restoration action, on the one hand, and its assumption as simple opportunity for self-affirmation, on the other. The perennial conflict between the rigor (of the surveys, of the analyzes, of the diagnoses, of the research on the origins and conditions of the artefact) and the creativity (of the design solutions), can perhaps only be overcome by the humility of the intervention. After our passage, as John Ruskin and William Morris wished, the monument must still be able to speak of the worlds of which it is a surviving trace, as well as of our present. For this reason, it is necessary to be partly out of phase with the time we live in, to be able to see its risks and contradictions, rather than uncritically suffer its dynamics. Only in this way, will we perhaps be able to say that we are truly contemporary and, therefore, capable of contributing to the future. Even for those who work for the destiny of our monuments, landscapes and cultural heritage, the idea of contemporaneity suggested by the philosopher Giorgio Agamben can therefore be valid: "Only who does not allow himself to be blinded by the lights of the century and manage to see in them the part of the shadow, their intimate darkness can consider himself contemporary [...]. Contemporary is he who receives full face the beam of darkness that comes from his time" (Agamben 2008, 14-15 – translated by the authors). Not to be blinded by the lights of the present, in order not to conform to the transient "fashion" of the century, to be somehow "asynchronous" with respect to what everyone thinks contemporaneity is, perhaps also allows us to see its limits and not to sacrifice to it what does not belong to us entirely, nor forever.

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