

Reconstruction in the World Heritage Context

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To **reconstruct** means “to construct anew”. Normally, reconstruction of a damaged place would refer to the process of building again something that has been destroyed or lost, as could happen in a natural disaster, such as an earthquake, or in an armed conflict. In such cases, rebuilding would not necessarily mean recreating something exactly as it was before. Often, it would result in a new building in the style relevant to the period even though adjusting to the inherited context.

Reconstruction will also refer to re-establishing or regenerating the **social-economic** condition of a place after a period of abandonment. This will include the mental process of recalling something in one’s mind and/or re-establishing an **identity**. It is indeed a key question when reconstructing something that has been recognized as **heritage**. Here, as a matter of fact, the situation can be complex.

The 1976 UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Safeguarding and Contemporary Role of Historic Areas noted that: *‘throughout the world, under the pretext of expansion or modernization, demolition ignorant of what it is demolishing and irrational and inappropriate reconstruction work is causing serious damage to this historic heritage’*. In the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, heritage values were mainly referred to ‘monuments and archaeological sites’, as well as important collections of historic and artistic objects. However, the destruction of historic urban areas made the population bitterly aware of their losses and particularly the feeling of cultural identity associated with familiar surroundings. The question of reconstruction of monuments as part of the historic area destroyed by war was discussed in an ICOMOS symposium in Dresden in November 1982.¹ In the 1960s and especially from the 1970s, increasing attention was given to the conservation of larger ensembles, such as historic urban areas. In the 1990s, this was further extended to cultural landscapes, and vernacular built heritage. The evolution of heritage concepts was clearly reflected in conservation and reconstruction policies. It is also obvious that in such cases, reconstruction would not be limited to buildings and infrastructures, but would also refer to the social-economic condition of the place. This is something that takes the question to the ‘heritage community’ who should recognize the values of such heritage and take responsibility for the care.

¹ The Declaration of Dresden, adopted by the participants of a symposium in Dresden, 15-19 Nov. 1982

The Question of Reconstruction in the International Doctrine

In May 1964, the Second International Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historic Monuments took place in Venice and adopted the *International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites*, the **Venice Charter**. This Charter was taken as the founding ethical document of ICOMOS at its establishment in Poland the following year. The principles of the Venice Charter were also taken as a basic reference for cultural World Heritage Sites when the World Heritage Committee had its first session in 1977. The Charter favoured conservation and restoration of monuments and sites, and took a strong standing against reconstruction: *All reconstruction work should however be ruled out a priori. Only anastylosis, that is to say, the re-assembling of existing but dismembered parts can be permitted.* In 1983, the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* took a slightly broader view, stipulating that any reconstruction should be undertaken only if certain requirements were met, i.e.: cultural properties should *'meet the test of authenticity in design, materials, workmanship or setting (the Committee stressed that reconstruction is only acceptable if it is carried out on the basis of complete and detailed documentation on the original and to no extent on conjecture)'*.

In the aftermath of the Second World War, there was need for much rebuilding, when also dozens of important historic towns had been destroyed, including London, Dresden, and Warsaw, as well as even Florence. In the case of London, the new constructions were designed in modernist style, while leaving the surviving old churches standing in this newly built context. In the case of Dresden, the severely damaged major monuments were rebuilt and restored as memorials for the past. In the case of Warsaw, the entire area of the medieval city was deliberately annihilated by the enemy, who wanted to cancel the identity of the Polish people. Nevertheless, after the war, Poland decided to rebuild it on the basis of available documentation. In the case of Florence, the destroyed river sides were rebuilt in modern forms but respecting the rhythm and volume of the lost urban fabric.

The cases of Warsaw and Dresden are symptomatic of the period. **Warsaw** was one of the early World Heritage inscriptions in 1980. In its evaluation, ICOMOS noted: *'The reconstruction of the historic centre so that it is identical with the original, symbolizes the will to insure the survival of one of the prime settings of Polish culture and illustrates, in an exemplary fashion, the efficiency of the restoration techniques of the second half of the 20th century.'*² The property was inscribed under criterion (ii), as unique and influential European experience, and criterion (vi), as an exceptional example of the comprehensive reconstruction. In later debates, it was decided that Warsaw would be taken as an exception and it should not be taken as a precedent for reconstruction of other properties.

² http://whc.unesco.org/archive/advisory_body_evaluation/030.pdf

The historic town of **Dresden** was first nominated in the 1980s, during the German Democratic Republic, but rejected by ICOMOS due to the partial rebuilding of the principal surviving monuments. In 2004, it was again proposed including an 18km long cultural landscape area of the Elbe Valley with historic royal complexes and the rebuilt monuments in the historic centre. This time it was inscribed under criteria (ii)(iii)(iv)(v), referred to as cultural crossroads in Europe with exceptional testimonies of court architecture and festivities, as well as for its urban cultural landscape developed particularly in the early industrial era. The rebuilding of the destroyed Frauenkirche, an 18th-century symbol of Protestantism, took place at the time of the site was nominated to the World Heritage List. Here, reconstruction was based on precisely measured drawings and extensive photographic documentation from before destruction. The reconstruction was also conceived as a symbolic act referred to German unification. Nevertheless, quite apart from this reconstruction, due to the proposed new motorway bridge to be added to the existing six bridges in the inscribed area, the World Heritage Committee decided to remove the property from the World Heritage List in 2009. While highly political, the basic justification of delisting was that the new bridge would have damaged the landscape qualities in a section of the river valley. The Committee regretted that the State Party had failed to fulfil its obligations to protect and conserve the Outstanding Universal Value as inscribed. It should be noted that the assessment of the “damage” was only referred to a section of river sides, and not on the actual criteria of World Heritage justification.

Authenticity

The question of **authenticity**, which had been referred to in various international debates in the past, was mentioned in the preface to the Venice Charter: *‘Imbued with a message from the past, the historic monuments of generations of people remain to the present day as living witnesses of their age-old traditions. People are becoming more and more conscious of the unity of human values and regard ancient monuments as a common heritage. The common responsibility to safeguard them for future generations is recognized. It is our duty to hand them on in the full richness of their authenticity.’*³ Nevertheless, the issue was not further elaborated in the Charter. As noted above, authenticity was taken as a fundamental reference for the qualification of the justification of cultural sites.

Japan ratified the World Heritage Convention in 1992. This coincided with the 20th anniversary of the World Heritage Convention. At the time, a small booklet was prepared by the French professor Léon Pressouyre, former World Heritage Advisor to ICOMOS, entitled *‘The World Heritage Convention, twenty years later’*.⁴ Pressouyre recognized the merits of the World Heritage Convention, but he also raised some criticism. One of the critical points referred to restoration practices concerned Japan. He wrote: *‘The constraints of the*

³ The preface was drafted by Prof. Paul Philippot at the time Deputy Director of ICCROM

⁴ See in UNESCO website: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/activities/564/>

*criterion of authenticity, sensitive in the European realm, are even more unwieldy in other regions of the world. In Japan, the oldest temples are periodically identically restored, authenticity being essentially attached to function, subsidiarily to form, but by no means to material. This ceases to be academic with Japan having ratified the convention on 30 June 1992.'*⁵

The criticism by Pressouyre was not readily accepted by the Japanese, who reacted by proposing an international debate about authenticity. In 1993, during the ICOMOS General Assembly in Colombo, this issue was informally discussed in the corridor, resulting first in a preliminary meeting in Bergen, Norway, in January 1994,⁶ and then in an international expert conference in Nara, Japan in November of the same year.⁷ The participants adopted the *Nara Document on Authenticity*, which stressed the issue of cultural diversity as an 'irreplaceable source of spiritual and intellectual richness for all humankind'. While underlying the UNESCO principle that 'the cultural heritage of each is the cultural heritage of all', it was stressed that 'All cultures and societies are rooted in the particular forms and means of tangible and intangible expression which constitute their heritage, and these should be respected.' The Nara Document emphasized that the references for evaluating authenticity, i.e. truthfulness and credibility of the sources of information, could vary from case to case. It would therefore not be possible to have fixed criteria for truth: 'All judgements about values attributed to cultural properties as well as the credibility of related information sources may differ from culture to culture, and even within the same culture. It is thus not possible to base judgements of values and authenticity within fixed criteria. On the contrary, the respect due to all cultures requires that heritage properties must be considered and judged within the cultural contexts to which they belong.'⁸

The Nara Conference became a new paradigm in the definition of heritage, respecting cultural diversity. Potentially, this paradigm is also reflected in the future interpretation of policies prescribed in the international doctrine. One of the issues that was debated in Nara concerned the difference between 'vernacular' and 'monumental' built heritage. Indeed, it could be understood that, dealing with living vernacular heritage, the continuation of traditional crafts would have a different meaning than in the case of monuments that represented a specific historic period. This would have consequences even on the identification of the limits and criteria of reconstruction. The question may also depend on material used.

⁵ Pressouyre's text was first circulated informally to Committee members and published in 1993. Quote on p. 13

⁶ K-E. Larsen & N. Marstein (eds.), 1994. *Conference on Authenticity in Relation to the World Heritage Convention, Preparatory workshop, Bergen, Norway, 31 January - 2 February 1994*, Riksantikvaren, Tapir Forlag, Oslo

⁷ K-E. Larsen (ed.), 1995. *Nara Conference on Authenticity, Japan 1994, Proceedings*, UNESCO, ICCROM, ICOMOS, Tapir Forlag, Oslo

⁸ A list was however prepared of possible references, which included material and immaterial aspects of heritage, as well as its relationship with the context

Integrity

While the basic reference for qualification of cultural heritage properties was initially the test of authenticity in design, material, workmanship and setting, the *Operational Guidelines* were revised in 2005 to include also the condition of integrity for cultural sites. Originally, integrity was only referred to natural heritage. In principle, the condition of integrity meant a verification that all elements contributing to the Outstanding Universal Value of the property were included in the nominated area, and that their state of conservation was acceptable. However, the question of visual integrity has since become increasingly important due to the current trends of transformation both within the heritage area and in the surroundings. The visual impact of the surroundings is of particular importance also because it is not always properly controlled. Indeed, the World Heritage Committee has started placing more and more importance on this issue. The question of integrity can also play a role in the decisions about reconstruction either partially in an existing structure, or in the reconstruction of a lost structure, as has been the case for example in Williamsburg in USA.

In the European case of the **Wooden Tserkvas of the Carpathian Region in Poland and Ukraine**, inscribed in 2013, the conditions of authenticity and integrity were considered acceptable in terms of location, setting, use and function. Thirteen of the *tserkvas* were still used as churches, while three were kept intact as museums. In its evaluation, ICOMOS considered authenticity to be high as the structural timbers had been carefully repaired by traditional methods over the years. The exterior timber roof and wall cladding required replacement every 20-30 years, and had been appropriately restored in most cases. Wall cladding was here considered to be part of the ongoing maintenance schemes. Many of the details and fittings were historically authentic with inscriptions indicating the dates. One can see that a distinction is here made between historic buildings that continue their traditional use, on the one hand, and buildings that have been preserved as museums. It would seem that the material authenticity becomes more important in a museum building, while in a traditional vernacular church one can accept more extensive maintenance using traditional materials and techniques.

Case Studies in Reconstruction

Japan and China

One of the much debated questions regarding Japanese heritage concerns the periodic rebuilding or renovation of Shinto Shrines. The most spectacular case is certainly the **Ise Shrine**. This consists of two sanctuary areas, each with some twenty shrine buildings. Here the religious cult requires the periodic renovation of the shrines every twenty years. Consequently, every shrine has two sites next to each other, one occupied by the current building. At established intervals, a new shrine is built on the vacant site, and the previous

building is dismantled. The timber material originally comes from a reserved sacred forest. Today, it is reused in the maintenance and repair of other Shinto shrines. It should be noted that the Ise divinities are associated with the royal family. Therefore, the periodic rebuilding becomes a particularly prestigious ceremony. Indeed, the Ise Shrine is the only shrine complex in Japan currently subject to such ceremonial rebuilding. In the other cases, like in Nikko, renovation is limited to regular maintenance, repair and repainting. In the case of Buddhist temples, the question is different. While here as well, the building material is timber that may require periodic replacement, such intervention in listed properties is normally limited to those parts of the building that require renovation.

While the case of the Ise Shrine can be considered in the traditional continuity, where reconstruction per se is part of the process, there are other cases when reconstruction is part of a modern safeguarding process. Considering for example the **Forbidden City** of Beijing and similar properties, reconstruction was often considered a way of restoration. It could be justified by the well established knowledge of building typology. This position was sustained in the declaration of symposium on traditional architecture, in Qufu - China, in 2005, maintaining that *'Scientific restoration includes eliminating potential hazards, replacing the missing or damaged components, removing the components which prove unworthy of being preserved, and returning the building to its original and stable state. It is wrong to initiate any restoration when the necessary conditions are not met. However, it is equally wrong not to undertake such interventions if fully justifiable.'*⁹

The problem, however, has been that reconstruction is sometimes used for the creation of fake history in touristic areas. In this regard, the China Principles¹⁰ caution that a *'building that no longer survives should not be reconstructed'* except in special cases when definite evidence is confirmed by experts and permission granted. Reconstructed buildings should be clearly marked as such. In 2007, an international symposium in Beijing¹¹ discussed the policies of conservation and reconstruction in East Asia. It was concluded that partial reconstruction was acceptable when justified by the site's integrity, protection and/or stabilization. However, it should not be undertaken if the site in its present form has acquired significance in its own right. In any case, all relevant issues should be discussed with the community concerned. At the same time, it should be noted that the building traditions differ in various cultural regions. Therefore, there is need for in-depth research in order to establish clear guidelines for conservation and restoration, as well as clarifying the conditions and eventual limits of rebuilding.

⁹ Consensus on the China-specific Conservation Theory and Practices of Historic Buildings, Declaration of Qufu (Draft), October 2005

¹⁰ Principles for the Conservation of Heritage Sites in China, 2002, prepared by China ICOMOS and the Getty Conservation Institute

¹¹ International Symposium on the Concepts and Practices of Conservation and Restoration of Historic Buildings in East Asia, May 24-28, 2007 Beijing, China

Cases in Iran

In 2012, **Masjed-e Jāmé of Isfahan**, the principal Friday Mosque, was inscribed on the World Heritage List under criterion (ii), representing a prototype of a new layout and new aesthetics in mosque design. In 1984, part of the building was destroyed due to missile attack during the Iran-Iraq war. This section had already been restored, and there existed exact documentation in the form of measured drawings and photographs. Part of the material was also recovered after the damage. Its reconstruction was started without delay, and was considered to be to an adequate standard in the ICOMOS evaluation. It should also be noted that the colourful exterior surface tiles of mosques and public buildings tend to age due to weathering and thermal movements. Consequently, they have normally needed periodic replacement. Current the policy in Iran is to limit such replacements in tiles that have broken, and maintain those that are intact as part of the continuity of heritage.

In December 2003, an international ICOMOS conference on earthen built heritage was organized in Yazd, in Iran. As a part of the conference, participants visited the citadel of Bam, **Arg-e Bam**, one of the major national monuments in the country. Only two weeks after the visit, Bam was struck by a powerful earthquake that caused serious damage to the citadel and the surrounding town. Some 30,000 people lost their lives. The citadel walls and the Governor's quarters that had been maintained and partly rebuilt over the years, were severely damaged and partly collapsed. In April 2004, the Iranian Government organized an international workshop in Bam to discuss appropriate policies of reconstruction and restoration.¹² The resulting Bam Declaration 2004 spoke about the qualities of the traditional environment in Bam, and stated: *The conservation, wherever possible, should be preferred and their reconstruction should be seen as a chance to perpetuate the living identity of Bam. Thus, through its urban landscape, there is an opportunity for real improvement in building technologies, and a reduction in vulnerability to natural forces, such as future earthquakes.* At the same time, archaeologists started exploring the citadel as well as the whole region. It was understood that this region was rich in heritage with several other citadels and remains of ancient cities. The area of the city of Bam was located in an oasis that received water through a system of underground canals, so-called *qanats*. It was also interesting to note that the Citadel of Bam had more than two thousand years of history, which became more evident after the destruction that revealed earlier historical layers in the structures.

Based on the new information, Iran nominated Bam and its Cultural Landscape to the World Heritage List, accepted in June 2004. At the same time, the property was placed in the List of World Heritage in Danger, requiring the safeguarding operations to be undertaken and a proper management plan to be prepared. The Management Plan was prepared and accepted

¹² International Workshop on the Recovery of Bam's Cultural Heritage, 17-20 April 2004, Bam Iran: The Bam Declaration and Recommendations

in 2007, the first in Iran.¹³ The urban master plan for the city of Bam was prepared immediately after the earthquake to provide a basis for the general reconstruction. The process was assisted by special funding by the Iranian Government, as well as some donations by foreign countries. Within the Citadel, the process consisted of careful archaeological exploration of all soil removed from the streets. At the same time, in collaboration with Iranian and foreign universities, there was a systematic research concerning the materials to be used in reconstruction. As a result, the reconstruction was undertaken in select areas of the Citadel always using traditional crafts and materials, but reinforced with palm fibres to increase resistance. All reconstruction was based on archaeological evidence and not on conjecture.

The question of rebuilding the city was different. Most of constructions were relatively recent, and the damaged fabric was mostly privately owned. The Urban Master Plan, which was prepared in 2004, followed the historic urban pattern. However, the rebuilding process was not fully under control. The population was frightened and psychologically not ready to accept mud-brick structures. The new buildings were often made in reinforced concrete and/or with a steel frame and fired bricks, which obviously changed the character of the historic town. On the other hand, as a result of the archaeological surveys and mapping of the region, the district councils became interested in the recognition of heritage resources in their areas, which all became part of the Comprehensive Management Plan.

Consequently, while the earthquake caused a lot of problems, human and material, it also promoted new interest in the recognition and safeguarding of cultural heritage in the region. In 2013, the World Heritage Committee commended the *'considerable efforts made by the State Party, with the support of the international community, to address the threats that led to the inscription of the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger and to implement the corrective measures'*.¹⁴ At the same time, the Committee decided to remove Bam and its Cultural Landscape from the Danger List, and the State Part was requested to submit an updated report by 1 February 2015. During the process of recovery, some sections of the property have already been rebuilt. This includes parts of the Governor's Quarters and the defence walls, as well as some individual structures inside the Citadel precinct.

Bagrati Cathedral

Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Monastery were inscribed in the World Heritage List as a serial property in 1994 under criterion (iv). ICOMOS recommended inscription, stating that *'Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Monastery represent the highest flowering of the architecture of medieval Georgia'*. Bagrati Cathedral was originally completed in 1003 as the principal

¹³ Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, 2007. *Comprehensive Management Plan 2008-2017: Bam and its Cultural Landscape, World Heritage Property*, Tehran, Iran

¹⁴ Draft Decision: 37 COM 7A.31

cathedral in the capital city of Kutaisi in the United Kingdom of Georgia. It was destroyed in an armed conflict in the 17th century and remained in ruins until the 20th century. By 1950s, the archaeologists had explored the site finding sufficient material evidence to start reconstruction. In the 1990s, the walls had been rebuilt nearly to their full height. The principles followed those recommended by the Venice Charter. Regarding authenticity, ICOMOS stated in its evaluation: *'Bagrati Cathedral is ruined and may be considered ipso facto to be completely authentic. Gelati Monastery has been in continuous use since construction began and so it inevitably has certain elements that were introduced at a period before the modern philosophy of conservation had been formulated. However, much of its authenticity lies in its use and in its group integrity, neither of which can be challenged.'* The ICOMOS site mission had high praise for the quality of restoration that had been so far, but expressed doubts about the projects that were then discussed for continuing the reconstruction.

Due to financial limitations, nothing was done on Bagrati for several years. However, by 2002, it was decided to continue the rebuilding on the basis of the project that had been prepared using new archaeological evidence found on the site, and according to the same principles as earlier. This was supposed to include rebuilding the vault and cupola, as well as integrating the interior. While for the exterior there existed material evidence, this was not the case for the entrance part of the interior. In fact, the project foresaw an analogical reconstruction of this section. This was however rejected by an ICOMOS/UNESCO mission. Consequently, the authorities contacted the Italian architect Andrea Bruno, who designed a modern structure in steel and concrete.

In November 2011, there was a meeting at UNESCO in Paris, and it was agreed that the reconstruction was feasible if undertaken according to principles confirmed by the World Heritage Committee. Nevertheless, there was a lack of communication between the Georgian authenticities and the international organizations. In March 2012, there was another UNESCO-ICOMOS mission. Bruno's project was considered acceptable in principle. Nevertheless, the ICOMOS expert was not in agreement with the continuation of the reconstruction without prior agreement with the Committee. He considered that the authenticity of the property was lost as a result, and recommended the removal of Bagrati Cathedral from the World Heritage List. He wrote that *"at the time of inscription the monument was not totally in a ruined condition with parts reconstructed. This was accepted at the time of inscription but it is no justification for a monumental re-building that is being carried out without prior approval either as a strategy or in terms of detail by the Committee."* In 2013, The World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS recommended that the Committee express deep regret that the opportunity to undertake a careful, reversible reconstruction of the majority of the building based on clear evidence of what previously existed, with sensitive new work introduced where evidence is lacking, which could have allowed the Cathedral to be re-used and valued as part of contemporary society has not been taken.

The reconstruction was completed and the Cathedral was officially inaugurated in September 2012. In the mean time, the World Heritage Committee agreed with the ICOMOS assessment, and decided in principle to remove the property. However, it also recommended that the buffer zone of the Gelati Monastery would be redefined so that the Cathedral could be enclosed within the boundary as a national monument. At the same time, it is of some interest that the project by Andrea Bruno was praised as an excellent example of rehabilitation of a ruined building, and was awarded an international prize in 2013: *Restoration of the Bagrati Cathedral ... succeed[s] in restoring the original arrangement of volumes ... albeit in contemporary forms, with traces of the outline still preserved. The work confirms the commitment of the designer, architect Andrea Bruno, ... marked by intellectual consistency, who has placed the complex relationship between "old and new" as the centre point, with an always original interpretation of reintegration.*¹⁵

It is obvious that one of the principal reasons for the delisting of Bagrati Cathedral from the World Heritage List has been the lack of proper communication. However, it is also noted that the application of the principles of reconstruction is not sufficiently clear internationally. There tend to be very diverse approaches that partly refer to the personal experience of each professional. There is not sufficient agreement about how to deal with the great diversity of cultural expressions in the world, and how should international guidelines be interpreted in the different situations.

Regarding the case of Bagrati, it is good to recall that the reconstruction also responded to the intentions of the Georgian Patriarchate and the religious community to re-establish this important monument. Consequently, it is interesting to refer to the Kyiv Statement on the Protection of Religious Properties within the Framework of the World Heritage Convention, which resulted from a UNESCO conference in Kiev in 2010. The participants: *Recalled that the protection of religious heritage represents a special challenge and opportunity that needs to be addressed in the effective implementation of the World Heritage Convention, and noted that living religious places have often been placed on UNESCO's World Heritage List specifically for their religious and spiritual significance ... Emphasized that the continuing nature of religious heritage calls for dialogue and mutual understanding between the religious communities concerned and all other stakeholders, who must work together to preserve the significance of cultural, mixed and natural heritage sites associated with the sacred.* Indeed, the roles of the different stakeholders in the conservation/reconstruction process have become one of the important issues to integrate in the relevant capacity building processes.

Current International Debate on Reconstruction

While the Venice Charter, in its historical context following the Second World War, was almost completely against reconstruction, the field has not necessarily followed this

¹⁵ International "Domus Restoration and Preservation Prize", 2012

principle in practice. Indeed, there are a number of different types of reconstructions in Europe as well as in other continents. In the World Heritage context, there have been attempts to limit inscription of rebuilt properties to special cases, such as Warsaw and Dresden. However, there has also been a certain amount of confusion about the criteria to be applied in each case. An interesting and conflicting case is the Bagrati Cathedral. When the question is about unbaked earthen material, the situation is somewhat different compared to stone and brick buildings. In the Citadel of Bam, the partial reconstruction was based on careful archaeological and historical evidence gathered on the site. It is interesting to compare Bam to another similar structure, the Bahla Fort in Oman, also on the World Heritage List. This property had gradually deteriorated over time, and it has also been subject to reconstruction, but this time based more on traditional knowledge of its typology without. Here, the reconstruction which does respect the typical architectural characteristics in the region has however not been subject to any special debate.

In the USA, *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* (1992) were basically inspired by the Venice Charter. However, the question of reconstruction was here seen as part of the normal preservation or regeneration process. In fact, the Standards defined 'reconstruction' as: *the act or process of depicting, by means of new construction, the form, features, and detailing of a non-surviving site, landscape, building, structure, or object for the purpose of replicating its appearance at a specific period of time and in its historic location.*¹⁶ It was stressed that reconstruction should be preceded by thorough archaeological investigation, and should be based on the accurate duplication of historic features and elements. The aim is to 'recreate the appearance of the non-surviving historic property in materials, design, color, and texture'. Reconstruction should be identified as a contemporary re-creation, and designs that were never executed historically should not be constructed.

In 2000, there were various activities related to the conservation of cultural heritage. A series of European conferences aimed at the verification of the principles of conservation, then expressed in the concluding Krakow Charter 2000.¹⁷ Here it is stated: *'The reconstruction of entire parts "in the style of the building" should be avoided. Reconstruction of very small parts having architectural significance can be acceptable as an exception on condition that it is based on precise and indisputable documentation. If necessary, for a proper use of the building, completion of more extensive spatial and functional parts should reflect contemporary architecture. Reconstruction of an entire building, destroyed by armed conflict or natural disaster, is only acceptable if there are exceptional social or cultural motives that are related to the identity of the entire community.'*

¹⁶ Kay D. Weeks & Anne E. Grimmer (eds.), 1992. *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring & Reconstructing Historic Buildings*, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service. The earlier versions of the Standards dated from 1978 and 1983.

¹⁷ International Conference on Conservation, Krakow 2000, Principles for Conservation and Restoration of Built Heritage, Krakow Charter 2000

In October 2000, there was another international initiative specifically discussing the issue of reconstruction. The resulting Riga Charter¹⁸ made reference to a number of international doctrinal papers that establish a presumption against reconstruction of the cultural heritage. It was however considered that exception could be made in: *'circumstances where reconstruction is necessary for the survival of the place; where a 'place' is incomplete through damage or alteration; where it recovers the cultural significance of a place; or in response to tragic loss through disasters whether of natural or human origin, and providing always that reconstruction can be carried out without conjecture or compromising existing in situ remains, and that any reconstruction is legible, reversible, and the least necessary for the conservation and presentation of the site'*.

In the context of the ICOMOS Advisory Committee meeting in Costa Rica, October 2013, the ICOMOS Scientific Committee on Interpretation and Presentation of Heritage Sites, ICIP, is proposing to start facilitating a debate on 'permissibility and standards for reconstructions of monuments and sites'.¹⁹ The question is raised whether the Venice Charter statement on reconstruction is still relevant or whether there should be more precise criteria. It is also noted that today digital reconstruction is also possible, which was not the case in the 1960s. The Committee has proposed to prepare a questionnaire inviting a reflection on the reasons and strategies of reconstruction in the different countries and cultural regions. The question is posed whether reconstructions have been effective as components of public interpretation and presentation programmes, and whether the Venice Charter's position should still be considered relevant today.

It is obvious that the debate on reconstruction is necessary. This is also necessary due to the much changed cultural context of today compared to the period after the World War. Today, the question of reconstruction is actually equally relevant considering the many armed conflicts, earthquakes and other disasters that affect properties and places recognized as heritage. In the case of World Heritage properties that have been affected by such disasters, the international community has often given a helping hand. However, when the deterioration has taken place in a distant past, the question is changing. Partly this may be due to the association of special significance to the ruined form of a site, which can also be recognized for its 'historical integrity' even as ruin. On the other hand, reconstruction can also be understood as a cultural act. This is particularly the case in sites such as Ise Shrine. However, it can also be the case when a building or structure has been strongly part of the cultural identity of the place. Yet another question can be raised when reconstruction is used in order to reintegrate an urban area and when corrective measures are introduced in the

¹⁸ The Riga Charter on Authenticity and Historical Reconstruction in Relationship to Cultural Heritage, Riga Charter 2000, resulted from a conference in Riga, Latvia, in October 2000. It was attended by delegates of the Baltic States, as well as USA, UK, Canada and ICCROM

¹⁹ ICOMOS ADCOMSC 2013/10 8-4, Ver. 23/09/2013; ICOMOS debate on permissibility and standards for reconstructions of monuments and sites

management of a landscape or a cultural landscape. Obviously, the main purpose of safeguarding heritage resources is to maintain them with respect to their historical authenticity and credibility. However, current debate is placing on the table a great variety of situations that range from ancient monuments and archaeological sites to historic urban areas and vernacular cultural landscapes. Each case has its specific qualities and conditions. Therefore, the decisions necessarily should be taken back to the cultural critical process of recognition of something as heritage, and then planning how to conserve and manage such heritage.

The problem remains: who is going to do this recognition? By whom should this something be recognized as heritage? Immediately after the World War, the emphasis was on monuments, and it was mainly the task of the State to protect them. Since the 1990s, there has been a gradual broadening of the understanding of heritage. Consequently, the number of stakeholders has necessarily increased. This is clear in the Council of Europe Faro Convention of 2005, which introduces the concept of “heritage community”, increasingly also recognized by UNESCO. In the closing session of the 40th anniversary of the World Heritage Convention, celebrated in Kyoto in November 2012, the conference adopted the Kyoto Vision, which underlined the importance of the Role of Community stating: *Only through strengthened relationships between people and heritage, based on respect for cultural and biological diversity as a whole, integrating both tangible and intangible aspects and geared toward sustainable development, will the “future we want” become attainable.*²⁰ Such relationships should be grounded in a multi-disciplinary and participatory approach to conservation. It also means that heritage conservation must be understood in the more general socio-economic framework, which is essential for any success in the long term. In areas that have been marginalized losing their traditional vitality, the reconstruction and regeneration of social and economic frameworks will be of fundamental importance in order to re-establish their functional life and integrity based on the active involvement and empowerment of the local communities.

²⁰ *The Kyoto Vision*, adopted by “Closing Event of the Celebrations of the 40th Anniversary of the World Heritage Convention”, in Kyoto in November 2012.