



ICOMOS THEOPHILOS ISC CONFERENCE

THE ROLE OF ICOMOS IN THE EVOLUTION OF HERITAGE THEORY AND PHILOSOPHY: ACHIEVEMENTS, PROBLEMS, CHALLENGES

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CONFERENCE ABSTRACTS

SESSION 1, Thursday, 20 November 2025

Claudine Houbart – Belgium

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The Development of an International Doctrine: The First Thirty Years of ICOMOS

In legal terminology, a "doctrine" refers to a significant rule, set of rules, theory, or principle widely accepted in a field, often shaped through consistent application of precedent. Calling a framework doctrinal implies that it is central to the field or offers a comprehensive approach to resolving particular types of issues. Since its founding and the adoption of the Venice Charter, ICOMOS has made the formulation of such principles a core part of its mission. In the first three decades of its existence, ICOMOS produced eleven international charters and around fifteen other key documents (principles, guidelines, declarations), with further texts developed by national committees. It has also played a central role in shaping major doctrinal instruments adopted by UNESCO and the Council of Europe. While a full historiography of this theoretical production is still lacking, this contribution aims to shed light on that history by examining the processes behind the drafting and dissemination of selected documents, based on archival sources from the Lemaire Collection at KU Leuven. Among the texts studied are the World Heritage Convention (1972), the European Charter on the Architectural Heritage (1975), the Nairobi Recommendation (1976), the revision efforts of the Venice Charter (1975–1981), the Washington Charter (1987), and the Nara Document on Authenticity (1994). By reconstructing ICOMOS's involvement in these processes, the paper contributes to understanding a key dimension of its mission and engages with current debates on whether a universal heritage doctrine remains viable in a world increasingly valuing cultural specificity and diversity in heritage practice.

Nigel Walter – UK

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ICOMOS at 60: Surveying our Philosophical Foundations, and How We Might Fix Them

ICOMOS was called into being by the Venice Charter which, as well as being held in great affection, also forms our ideological foundation. As a community, we are happy to engage with the theory of conservation, including debating our ever-growing collection of doctrinal documents, but we pay surprisingly little regard to questions of philosophy. This is a major concern, because it is at this level of philosophy that we i) understand our own commitments and purpose, ii) engage with others beyond our own discipline, and iii) are able to respond to external challenges.

This paper argues that, as well as being unexamined, the philosophical foundations of the Venice Charter (and thus of ICOMOS) are weak. The Charter is built on a foundation of a taken-for-granted positivism and, for lack of consideration of more appropriate alternatives, this remains ICOMOS's strongest philosophical commitment. This commitment is evident in the way we continue to dress our processes in the language of the 'scientific' and typically limit our energies to discussion of case studies and technical approaches to conservation. Meanwhile, we see little engagement with philosophies of significance, tradition, and change through time, to name but three issues essential to the care of cultural heritage.

As a result, ICOMOS faces legitimate challenges from outside its domain; examples include the Faro Convention, and censure from the rapidly developing discipline of Critical Heritage Studies, which accuses us of 'the fetishising of expert knowledge'. We struggle to respond well to these challenges because we lack the philosophical tools to do so. This paper will offer a diagnosis of this problem, suggesting some areas of urgent philosophical investigation, and concluding that TheoPhilos – the home of Philosophy as well as Theory – is the natural forum for this important and urgent work, as we contemplate the next 60 years of ICOMOS.

Jelka Pirkovič – Slovenia

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Ethical Foundation of Heritage Protection

The overarching theme of heritage theory and practice centres on advocating heritage as a common good. This pursuit is grounded in ethical considerations and a commitment to social justice. Every day, professional decision-making should be guided by these ethical principles.

Culture embodies the inherent nature of individuals within a specific community. World cultures are shaped by customs, beliefs, and traditions of diverse communities, which prompts us to question whether universal principles governing right and wrong apply equally to all communities. Universal heritage standards cannot be asserted without being grounded in equitable principles. Today, community engagement is a critical element in integrating concerns about natural and cultural heritage management and shared identity.

This presentation aims to address the dilemma by exploring the roots of modern heritage philosophy as a contemporary derivative of ancient political ethics, as articulated by ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle (384–322 BC), and the ethical stance of Indian philosopher-king Ashoka the Great (around 270-233 BC), whose edicts were inscribed in stone roughly a hundred years after Aristotle, including in Lumbini. Through this analysis, we seek to clarify the connection between ethics and politics, which can inform our professional standards and practices in heritage protection. It examines how ancient knowledge can contribute to our modern ethical framework. The combination of Aristotelian virtue ethics and Ashoka's approach to peaceful governance and tolerance based on compassion towards all living beings provides a foundation for tackling contemporary challenges in heritage protection.

Calogero Bellanca, Susana Mora Alonso Munoyerro, Cecilia Antonini Lanari, Tommaso Ciciarello – Austria/Spain/Italy

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The Mission of ICOMOS

ICOMOS is a great institution . Under this name , a great number of Declarations , and specially Charters for the protection of Cultural Heritage have being done.

During the last years , probably there have being too many of them; each country,each village wants to have one, as some years ago, each city wanted some “architecture” designed by one of the more “famous” architects.

Social problems, unmaterial heritage.....so many theoretical aspects have being protagonists of many declarations.

But we must not forget the conservation of Monuments, with their principal values and its trasmission to the future. I think that we have forgotten to discuss about real and concrete problems, and I think this was and continues to be, an important mission for ICOMOS.

Talking about historic centers, in general, public spaces, accessibility,...new uses...

And what about the destruction of the interior of historic houses, tipologies,..conserving only the facades????
Architecture is not scenography and modernization is not destruction, as hundred years ago with the walls.

What about public schools???? Public sanitary functions?? Residences for old and Young people???

Cinemas dissapears, and changes into comercial centers.

Also about the problems of the facades, of the colors of the historic cities, ecc.

And so and so...

Courses are not the real object of ICOMOS, there are other institutions for doing it.

There are a lot of congresses and meetings for discussing about general and theoretical aspects of restoration and conservation, but ICOMOS must discuss about real and concrete problems around the world and specific current cases.

SESSION 2, Thursday, 20 November 2025

Théodore Guuinic – France

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Towards an Ethics of Vulnerability: Rethinking Heritage Conservation Theory in the Context of Climate Change

Climate change has become one of the most significant challenges facing the conservation of built heritage since the end of the 20th century. It is now considered the primary risk for over a third of UNESCO World Heritage properties (ICOMOS & ICSM CHC, 2022). This global and evolving threat represents a rupture in the history of conservation, as it compels the field to project itself into increasingly long-term and uncertain futures.

The multiple hazards induced by climate change—often leading to inevitable material transformations—stand in tension with the ambition to preserve cultural heritage in its current state. Some scholars have therefore argued for a redefinition of the very concept of "heritage" (Tornatore, 2018), in light of revised collective ethical priorities and an ecological perspective. Climate change thus invites a theoretical shift, prompting a re-examination of foundational concepts in heritage conservation.

While drawing on established reflections on risk (Beck, 1986) and responsibility (Jonas, 1979), this presentation will also seek to incorporate perspectives that examine our changing relationship with time, particularly through the notions of the "horizon of expectation" (Koselleck, 1979) and "resonance" (Rosa, 2016).

Recognizing the increasing integration of these phenomena into conservation theory, the presentation will then examine to what extent the notions of "values" (Riegl, 1903) and "authenticity" (Nara, 1994) can be redefined today in light of these challenges, through the central lens of the vulnerability of buildings. Following this hypothesis, a third part of the presentation will propose to revisit current frameworks by exploring the factors and theoretical implications of such a conceptual refocusing. In this way, the proposed contribution aims to enrich the range of theoretical approaches, in a spirit of continuity and complementarity with the foundational texts of ICOMOS.

Kameli Zephaniia Bwambale – Uganda

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Decolonizing Heritage Stewardship in the Face of Climate Crisis: Reflections from the Rwenzori Mountains National Park-World Heritage Site

As the impacts of climate change intensify, World Heritage Sites—particularly in Africa—face escalating threats to their ecological integrity and cultural significance. Yet the frameworks guiding conservation remain largely shaped by Eurocentric principles established in the mid-20th century. Drawing from practice-based experiences in Uganda's Rwenzori Mountains National Park (a UNESCO World Heritage Site), this paper explores the urgent need to reframe heritage theory and philosophy through more inclusive, locally rooted, and climate-responsive paradigms.

This presentation critically engages with current doctrinal gaps around community agency, intergenerational knowledge transmission, and climate resilience in heritage management. It draws attention to the philosophical dissonance between universal conservation values and the lived realities of Indigenous and local communities, such as the Bakonzo people, whose ancestral stewardship traditions are often undervalued or excluded from formal decision-making processes.

The paper argues for a decolonized approach to heritage conservation—one that acknowledges the legitimacy of Indigenous knowledge systems and re-centers community voices in global heritage discourse. By examining youth-led initiatives and indigenous-led education programs spearheaded by the National Association of World Heritage Ambassadors (AWOHA Uganda), this paper showcases alternative models of conservation that are participatory, climate-conscious, and culturally embedded.

Through the lens of climate justice and heritage pluralism, this contribution proposes new philosophical directions that reconcile conservation practice with environmental ethics, postcolonial critique, and social equity. The reflections offered are not merely theoretical but rooted in actionable community engagement and adaptive heritage strategies in the Rwenzori region—lessons which can inform global conservation thinking and policy.

Bianca Gioia Marino – Italy

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Starting from Naples: heritage enhancement, authenticity and new theories and practical challenges.

As in many cities, the historic center of Naples, included in the WHL from 1995, has been overwhelmed by overtourism and this raises several questions about the relationship between development and the preservation of the cultural heritage values. Naples, meanwhile, with a strong identity known throughout the world for its historical and cultural traditions, is experiencing a moment of great notoriety, is a notable creative reference point, thanks in part to particular media attention, with the organisation of events and production of TV series that convey the values of its anthropology together with a insight into the city's historical sites. The characteristics of its inhabitants and their well-known way of life, based on openness, welcome, tolerance and creativity, reflect a unique cultural specificity in a world now flattened by globalisation. Now, hordes of tourists flock to a city now invaded by accommodation facilities and restaurants, altering the socio-economic and settlement balance and reducing the authenticity of Naples' intangible heritage to mass stereotypes.

The recent UNESCO Conference held in Naples in June defined the city as “a permanent international laboratory of best practices in cultural enhancement”. The Grand Project “Historic Centre of Naples, enhancement of the UNESCO site” aims at redeveloping the historic core of the city and in the process of drafting the new Management Plan for the Historic Centre of Naples, the Technical and Scientific Committee Committee is promoting an integrated approach to cultural heritage enhancement based on interaction between different stakeholders.

Starting from the potential and critical issues of the Neapolitan case and the actions implemented by the municipal administration, this contribution aims to bring to the discussion some aspects that require the identification of new paradigms and interpretation strategies in order to define a new conceptual geography for the refinement of the authenticity criterion, a key concern for ICOMOS since its foundation 60 years ago.

Through an examination of the development of the criterion of authenticity in documents over the last twenty years and a focus on the Neapolitan case, comparing theoretical aspects and current practices, we aim to take stock and define some outlines for a new theoretical framework for further study of the new meanings of heritage, taking into account current cultural and economic phenomena.

Yasemin Sarikaya Levent – Türkiye

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Bridging the Financial Gap in Heritage Conservation: Theoretical Challenges and the Potential of Public-Private Partnerships

A persistent theoretical and practical challenge in heritage conservation is the issue of finance. While ICOMOS has been instrumental in shaping the global theory and philosophy of conservation, its doctrinal texts and charters have historically placed primary emphasis on technical, ethical, and methodological principles, with relatively little attention to the economic realities that underpin conservation practice. Yet, the sustainability of conservation efforts fundamentally depends on the availability of financial resources—a dimension that, if neglected, can render even the most robust theoretical frameworks inoperative.

This paper critically examines the gap between conservation theory and financial practice within the ICOMOS tradition, arguing that the lack of systematic engagement with funding models constitutes a significant limitation in current heritage philosophy. In response to this challenge, the paper explores public-private partnerships (PPPs) as a viable and increasingly necessary alternative for mobilizing resources, expertise, and innovation in heritage projects. Drawing on international examples, the discussion will analyze both the advantages (such as diversified funding, shared risk, and enhanced stakeholder engagement) and the risks (including potential commodification, accountability concerns, and value conflicts) associated with PPPs.

By foregrounding finance as a core theoretical and practical issue, this contribution calls for a more integrated approach in ICOMOS doctrine—one that recognizes economic sustainability as inseparable from conservation

ethics and practice. Such a shift is essential for developing adaptable, inclusive, and future-oriented frameworks capable of addressing the complex realities of heritage management in the 21st century.

SESSION 3, Thursday, 20 November 2025

Franca Malservisi – France

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Twelve Years Later: a key ICOMOS France Event for Dissemination of Venice Charter Principles

The meeting organized by ICOMOS France in 1976, in response to a request by ICOMOS International, was an inaugural moment in the acclimatization process of the Venice Charter. The issue of the journal *Les monuments historiques de la France* devoted to these exchanges must be placed in the context of the late 1970's to highlight considerations regarding a specific French way of dealing with charter's principles and concepts. While the twelve years since the Venice Congress may seem a long time, the time taken to establish a national section of ICOMOS within a highly structured administrative organization explains this delay. Surprisingly, despite the active presence of French representatives at international meetings on built heritage (Athens, Paris, Venice), the 1964 document remained confidential for several years. The thematic contributions proposed in 1976, are evidence of an acceleration in the emergence of new issues: what attitude to adopt towards the diversity of 19th and 20th century heritage? How to deal with the multiplication of innovative techniques? What lessons to draw from operational experience in ancient urban fabrics?

The presentation will focus on different attitudes towards the Venice document proposed by the contributors, most of whom were personalities connected to the Heritage Department. Inspector F. Enaud, a specialist in mural paintings conservation, expresses his agreement with the charter, confirming a shared international culture in this field and its influence on the discourse about built heritage. Architects such as Y.M. Froidevaux, F. Sonnier, and B. Monnet develop positions and formulas that continue to inform the current debate and restoration projects, thus confirming their role as Venice charter's primary exegetes.

The 12-year time lag between the moment of formulation and of appropriation invites us to reconsider temporal aspects to promote consensus-building and reduce frictions in today's changing environment.

Stefano Gizzi – Italy (VIRTUAL)

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The Revision of Restoration Theory: The Role of the Italian ICOMOS Committee Name

1. In recent years, the Icomos scientific committees of many countries, including Italy, have begun a profound revision of the ideas hitherto prevalent in the field of Restoration Theory and Philosophy, both architectural and archaeological.

In particular, attention has increasingly focused on the aspects of the material reality of architectural and archaeological artifacts, overcoming the still idealistic conceptions that prioritized figurativeness and aesthetic aspects.

Precisely in Italy, there is a growing focus on the data of preliminary knowledge of works to be restored, also through surveys carried out with various methodologies, from the most advanced to the most innovative.

2. The problems underlying such a new vision are linked to the difficulties and resistances regarding the overcoming of consolidated theories, such as that linked to Cesare Brandi, but which need to be profoundly updated.

These are encountered especially in confrontation with art historians, who are still not aware of the importance of material data in the analysis of historical artifacts.

3. Regarding the crisis that seems to grip various sciences today, even that of restoration (which remains a science, even if applied to architecture or archaeology) seems to suffer from an almost sense of powerlessness. It is therefore a matter of overcoming obstacles for an update of restoration theory through continuous dialogue and research.

Dimitrios Zygomalas – Greece

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A Tough Interrelation: Architectural Conservation Theory and Mechanical Installations Arrangement in late 19th and Early 20th-Century Monuments Name

Since its foundation in 1965, ICOMOS has played a pivotal role in the formulation of common principles for the conservation of architectural monuments. With the Venice Charter as its primary point of reference, it has shaped a constantly growing theoretical framework, which, within the European setting, has placed the emphasis on preserving monuments “in the full richness of their authenticity”, as clearly prescribed by the renowned document. Yet no matter how meticulously these principles are applied with the aim of preserving form, structure, context, and character, a major cause of concern frequently arises: the arrangement of the all too often complex and bulky mechanical installations that are required to ensure, next to an attractive restoration, a viable and safe use of the conserved monument. The subsequent conflict calls for a focused discussion, which will highlight the complexities of achieving consensus and provide directions for an optimum future pursuit of the latter. This is the goal of the present paper, which will address the above issues, initially through a review of related conservation principles in the so far drafted ICOMOS doctrinal documents, and secondly, through a detailed assessment of characteristic case studies in major late 19th and early 20th century monuments of Thessaloniki, in northern Greece. The overall endeavour will culminate in the deduction of crucial conclusions as to the extent to which the required consensus has been achieved and the prospects for an even better future pursuit. The material for this task will be provided through bibliographic and archival research, coupled with the author's unique, firsthand experience as director of the state body charged with the protection of the selected monuments.

Lukasz Mikolaj Sadowski – Poland

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Socialist Realist Heritage in Poland – Successes in Protection and Challenges for the Future Discussion

We propose to consider the issue of socialist realist housing complexes protection; how the approach to protection has changed over the last twenty years, and what threats and conservation challenges this heritage will have to face today.

The discussion on socialist realist monuments has been going on in Poland since the beginning of the 21st century. This was the beginning of the debate on the assessment of the value of such complexes, in which conservators and organizations such as ICOMOS took an active part (ICOMOS initiated one of the first debate, Monuments of the second half of the 20th century - valuation, protection, conservation, 2010, patronage B. Szymgin). The greatest challenge at that time was to develop criteria for the assessment, to provide effective protection and to change social awareness. As a result the most important buildings were listed as monuments (although there have been spectacular demolitions), and their public perception become more positive. Today, however, new challenges and problems arise, especially in the socialist realist housing complexes. These are diverse complexes with diverse needs, as we have monumental, central residential districts; typical housing estates in large cities; new cities. These urban spaces are living housing structures and at the same time often key elements of the city centre. The dynamic transformations of modern cities and new conservation challenges (counteracting climate change, etc.) make it necessary to open a new chapter in the discussion.

We propose to draw attention to:

- the problem of greenery – its maintenance; inappropriate greening of squares and axis;
- the problem of parking lots (Konstytucji Square);
- the problem of losses and degradation of detail (retaining walls, coffered ceilings in arcades, sgraffitos);
- the problem of disintegration of the urban fabric;
- the problem of insufficient cooperation between conservation services, the city, the greenery management

SESSION 4, Friday, 21 November 2025

Tamás Fejérdy – Hungary (VIRTUAL)

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Monuments & Sites vs Cultural Heritage

Looking at the issue from an ICOMOS perspective, the first challenge is the confusion in the use of terms. The identification of monuments and sites, as the original concepts defining the scope of ICOMOS, with (built)

heritage assets does not recognise a quantitative, but above all a qualitative, difference: that cannot be effectively addressed either in principle or in practice. It must be seen that 'all monuments are heritage elements, but not all heritage elements are historic monuments.' The second challenge, that the principles and practices applicable to monuments cannot be imposed on all heritage elements, as this would create a completely unrealistic situation - socially, economically and in terms of value protection - and would be an unnecessary burden. A third challenge is the intellectual slippage that has led the theoretical approach to over-emphasize the non-material dimension. All monuments (built heritage) have intangible DIMENSION, and that is important, but: it is NOT EQUAL TO INTANGIBLE HERITAGE. It is worth taking the approach of the 1994 NARA DOCUMENT, which does not at all force a global generalisation. It makes the key principle globally valid that each major cultural region defines its own 'norms' of authenticity for a given region. However, a regional or local approach following the principle of subsidiarity, cannot be unprofessional. Just as in medicine, so in dealing with heritage values, it is not the majority vote, and not short-term interest, that should decide, but broad knowledge and conscientious implementation!

Because of this short-term, interest-driven approach that there is the forth challenge, the re-facing of existing monuments (and other elements of the built heritage) in a way that amounts to their falsification. The wide, over-confident use of IT leads to the destruction of many original assets or their replacement by false reconstructions. This is the area where the need for unambiguous guidelines is greatest and most urgent.

Jinze Cui – China / Belgium

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Incompatible Modernities: Dilemma in the Conservation and Display of Earthen Historic Sites in China

Underpinned by Confucian ethos, the Chinese architectural tradition customarily rebuilt sites with historically perceived significances, facilitating cultural durability and resilience without making a fetish of material immortality. In the 1930s, the first architectural heritagisation movement led by reformist traditional scholars established a historicist view with period 'styles' based on Western sensibility of architecture. In 2013, President Xi Jinping's goal of making the people 'capable of remembering nostalgia' boosted a postmodern expansion of aesthetic sensibility for proactively appreciating the past. However, the Chinese earth-timber architectural tradition's inherent material ephemerality makes it impossible for shapeless historic sites to satisfy the people's growing request for seeing concrete architectural forms defined by period 'styles'.

During China's post-1980s second architectural heritagisation movement, the top-down importation and promulgation of the perceived spirit from the Venice Charter and related UNESCO doctrines provoked and exacerbated a conflict between the people's visual sensibility and the intuitiveness deficiency of earthen historic sites. On the one hand, the dogmatic material-based historical authenticity and anti-reconstruction sentiment rejects China's conventional rebuilding of historic sites. On the other hand, the general public largely feel unable to identify with European elites behind the institutionalised AHD, especially when their appetite for the visibility of history has been amplified by the collective sense of being victimised by modernisation.

This paper analyses this dilemma by observing one of the earliest programmes of the conservation and display of earthen historic sites in China – the Daming Palace national archaeological park filled with mock picturesque ruins, demonstrating the juxtaposition of incompatible modernities on a World Heritage site reshaped by both Chinese and Western heritage perceptions.

Xi Chen, Qinyi Shi – China

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Reflections on the Reconstruction of Architectural Heritage in China

In the context of increasing threats such as armed conflict, climate change, and the instrumentalization of culture for political or economic purposes, the reconstruction of architectural heritage has become both urgent and controversial.

In 1994, the Nara Conference introduced the concept of cultural relativism, a key aspect of Cultural Anthropology, into the new international conservation doctrine. This approach recognized and respected diverse cultures, prompting a reevaluation of the foundational authenticity theories. China, as an East Asian nation predominantly characterized by wooden heritage, holds a distinctive perspective on authenticity and reconstruction. In classical Chinese society, the appreciation of architecture primarily focused on the abstract, intangible associative values detached from the physical structure itself. Consequently, significant commemorative structures have historically undergone repeated reconstruction, with specific component

methods and even appearances adapting to the prevailing styles of each reconstruction period. Moreover, due to the material characteristics of

wooden structures and the traditional maintenance practices such as routine care and disassembly repairs, China does not overly fixate on the material authenticity of architectural heritage during the process of reconstruction.

This study takes Suzhou as a case example, selecting typical architectural heritage reconstruction cases from around 1980 to the present. It analyzes the historical processes of reconstruction cases in China and summarize the characteristics of conservation theory within the Chinese context. Through this discussion, the paper aims to address a core philosophical challenge in contemporary heritage conservation: how to formulate a concept of authenticity in the context of architectural reconstruction that both respects cultural diversity and upholds ethical integrity within a globally pluralistic framework.

Timothy Augustus Y. Ong, Drew Ashley Paige L. Rabadon – Philippines (VIRTUAL)

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Ship(s) of Theseus: Authenticity(es) and Identity(es) of Biñan's Alberto House(s)

The Alberto Mansion is significant in Philippine national patrimony as an "extant" heritage structure related to the national hero, Jose Rizal, being his maternal ancestral home. Within the locality of Biñan where it originally stood, the controversy of its dismantling and eventual reconstructions has resulted in two houses, each containing fragments of its original materiality, one in situ; another within a "heritage resort" framing an idealized Philippine past. This paper argues that the notions of authenticity and spatial identity ascribed to both replicas cannot be analyzed on the simple dichotomy of original and copy and must be viewed as a plural system of mutually validatory structures. Through the lens of the Ship of Theseus and the transmutation of originality in Greek mimesis and Baudrillardian hyperreal, the entities simultaneously exist as authentic and reproduction, agents dynamically interacting with each other and the collective memory of their everyday contexts in the substantiation of their significance.

SESSION 5, Friday, 21 November 2025

Marc Laenen – Belgium

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Cultural Heritage from an Argument of Conflicts between Cultures to an Educational Tool for Inclusive Policy and Planning

Since its inception ICOMOS produced relevant doctrinal texts and guidelines for conservation practice in different cultural and physical environments. At the threshold of the third millennium the situation has changed: among many new challenges renewed regionalism made heritage a target for destruction and an argument to mobilize forces against "the others".

Apart from the international political context increased migration in our immediate living environments urges decision makers to create conditions for inclusive policies. One of these key conditions is to raise awareness and to stimulate responsibility among the different cultures and subcultures - each having their own heritage - for a shared workable multicultural environment. Here cultural heritage is the bone of contention.

ICOMOS charters on cultural tourism and on the interpretation and presentation of heritage resources promote ways to present regional cultural specificities for local communities and their visitors with the necessary respect for heritage conservation and environmental respect. Programmes as Life beyond Tourism by the Romualdo del Bianco Foundation in Florence promote heritage tourism at the service for peaceful coexistence.

Increased migration compels heritage organizations and relevant parties to refine the narratives and information transfer methods (intellectual/educational, emotional/performative, information technology...) into efficient and effective instruments that change attitudes. Here careful selection of endangered heritage resources, the right accents in the narratives, the joint involvement of all heritage sectors with other relevant partners and a sound evaluation system may be needed. Here ICOMOS can be an eye opener for a basic pedagogical trajectory.

Paolo Del Bianco – Italy/Hungary (VIRTUAL)

"President Emeritus Romualdo Del Bianco-Life Beyond Tourism Foundation. CEO COMI SpA –
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A Third Point of View

The 2005 Faro Convention of the Council of Europe shifted the focus from heritage itself, as in the 1972, 2003, and 2005 UNESCO Conventions, to its relationship with communities, promoting access to heritage for all. Since WWII, public interest in heritage has grown steadily. Today, over a billion people travel globally. At many sites, low-cost flights and other factors have intensified this flow, often leading to overtourism and conflict with locals, negatively affecting their quality of life. Many heritage cities, once living organisms, have lost their balance between residents and visitors, turning into hubs of fast consumption, distorting local life and urban cultural landscapes.

This trend, though irreversible without economic damage, can be managed. Highly visited sites can leverage their multicultural environments as places for training in dialogue and mutual benefit. Life Beyond Tourism® promotes a “virtuous economy” based on this opportunity, enhancing a new perspective that reconciles enjoyment of heritage with its protection. These sites become spaces to educate citizens in intercultural dialogue, mutual respect, and peaceful coexistence—a form of indirect protection for the economy and direct protection for heritage and the environment. In this way, “Heritage PROTECTS Heritage.”

This new model offers a “third way” between consumption-based tourism and rigid conservation: a responsible, benefit-driven use of heritage that prioritizes people and peace. It creates economic, social, and cultural returns through meetings and understanding among cultures.

In this context, the 2022 Tourism Charter of the IISC Cultural Tourism Committee also endorsed dialogue among cultures for world peace, aligning with Life Beyond Tourism® and similar models aimed at rethinking the role of heritage in global society.

Malin Myrin – Sweden

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The Dynamic Management of Change – Today's Challenges for Integrated Conservation

Cultural heritage plays a vital role in achieving long-term sustainable societal development. Cultural environments embody our history and make it accessible in people's everyday lives. Integrated conservation, and the recognition of historical environments as resources in societal development, urban planning, and land-use planning, has been a widely accepted understanding within our profession for several decades. Sir Bernard Feilden defined integrated conservation as “the dynamic management of change in order to reduce the rate of decay”.

This presentation aims to explore the interplay between conservation and development, particularly in the context of large-scale urban development plans. Within such plans, legibility and cultural value are key concepts that require careful consideration. Success in this area requires collaboration across various professions and perspectives, as well as meaningful engagement with the public. These development plans often impact historic environments and cultural heritage that, from a public perspective, are neither recognised as monuments nor as designated heritage sites.

Integrated conservation encompasses concepts of heritage and interpretation, operative practices, interdisciplinary cooperation, and the balance between top-down and bottom-up processes. To what extent do we, as cultural heritage professionals, live up to the principles of integrated conservation and the dynamic management of change?

Ayesha Agha Shah – Pakistan/Bahrain

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Expertise Under Question: The Shifting Authority of Heritage Professionals in the Context of Heritage Developments in Pakistan

In recent years, the authority of heritage professionals has come under growing scrutiny, especially in contexts where heritage is instrumentalised for national identity, development, or tourism. In Pakistan, traditional conservation values often take a back seat to broader heritage agendas. This paper examines how the authority of heritage experts is being reshaped and contested in such settings.

Although ICOMOS charters promote value-based, expert-led conservation, the realities in developing countries like Pakistan reveal a more complex and fragmented landscape. Heritage decisions are frequently driven by political actors, private interests, and institutional dynamics, sidelining professional ethics and global

conservation principles. These conditions raise pressing theoretical questions: Who defines heritage value, and how do professionals respond when conservation is compromised by economic or ideological imperatives?

The study employs a mixed-methods approach. It draws on semi-structured interviews with architects, conservation professionals, and public officials, as well as document analysis of international charters, local policies, and heritage laws. International case studies are comparatively analyzed to understand how global conservation philosophies are negotiated in diverse cultural and political contexts.

Findings reveal that professional authority is often contingent on broader systems of governance and development. While ICOMOS principles are globally referenced, their application remains uneven and context-dependent. The comparison highlights both shared tensions and context-specific challenges. In Pakistan, limited institutional coherence and weak regulatory enforcement further constrain expert agency. The paper argues for rethinking how conservation theories can better accommodate local realities, and how professional ethics might be reasserted within competing policy agendas.