

POLITECNICO DI MILANO
Polo Regionale di Mantova
BEST Department



Doctoral program in
Design and Technologies Exploitation for the Cultural Heritage
XXIV cycle
Coordinator: Prof. Fabrizio Schiaffonati

COMMUNICATION AND CULTURAL HERITAGE
Communication as Effective Tool
for Heritage Conservation and Enhancement

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Year: 2012

*“The good craftsman understands the importance of the sketch
that is, not knowing quite what you are about when you begin.”*

R. Sennet

To my beloved Craftsman.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation investigates the issue of communication as a potential tool for innovating enhancement strategies, in the direction of a better use of cultural heritage, for improving the quality of life of people and for ensuring protection.

In the most recent scenario of knowledge economy, culture is considered as an opportunity for the production of a system of benefits, not only economic, but which include also perspectives of social and human development. This implies two fundamental preconditions: the long-term conservation of heritage as cultural capital, and ensuring the access to culture for all. Following this line, heritage entails common interests and values and everybody should be involved in a process of fruition and protection. Communication seems to be a crucial matter in this context, because it is the privileged vehicle for spreading knowledge, and for this reason it can represent a tool for the recognition of heritage values by collectivity, facilitating access and awareness for extended protection. Nevertheless, communication is not a new instrument in the cultural enhancement field, but a change of perspective and the definition of more efficient tools and contents of communication, seems to remain still required. The research proposes to identify conservation of historic buildings as innovative key to interpret and present heritage: working on the monument, restoration tries to understand the past by discovering information and suggesting doubts and questions, becoming a moment of knowledge production. Doing this, restoration uses many and different tools, from social sciences to techniques, producing a dual look which considers both the global dimension of heritage and the detail; these two sides cannot be divided, because, thanks to the multiplicity of issues that they involve, they can more effectively represent the vital dimension of heritage. In this wider perspective, cultural heritage is the result of a process made of people, ways of life, but also practical skills, a history of work and know-how, and these particular points of view represent an opportunity to rebuild a relationship between people and culture.

The inedited character of this work is in proposing to communicate heritage through the perspective of restoration, as privileged language for a more

effective communication, particularly outside the scientific and technical field, with the aim of improving processes of heritage enhancement and conservation. Clearly, communication already plays an important role in heritage interpretation and presentation, as many experiences in the museum field at large can demonstrate; conversely, this dissertation wants to suggest the special attention for the practice and the materiality of the activity of built historic heritage conservation, as a powerful tool for spreading knowledge, improving understanding, appreciation and protection, enhancing preservation as a resource also outside the field of the physical restoration.

The research has been developed through bibliographical surveys concerning an interdisciplinary scenario of reference, which has been interpreted in a complex state of the art of cultural communication tools, and finally verifying results in the context of two direct experiences of heritage enhancement and conservation.

The dissertation is divided into four parts.

The first chapter of the research defines the theoretical framework. The starting section identifies the reasons for the communication of cultural heritage recognizing, in the context of international statements, the role of culture as a right and duty for all citizens and as a tool for human, social and economic development. Considering the reality, however, culture still does not play the fundamental role it deserves, and this is primarily due to the absence of a critical mass large enough able to recognize the value of cultural heritage and therefore influence political choices. Even if most recent perspectives of the economy of culture stress that a value, to be perceived, must meet utility criteria, conversely, enhancement strategies commonly tend to highlight the "intrinsic value" of heritage. The development of cultural experiences able to restore a direct interaction between man and culture raises as a priority, and communication, intended as interpretation and presentation of heritage, has to focus on new contents to realize a more effective approach. Thus, the research proposes to look at restoration as the field where to identify these innovative themes. Particularly, the reference is to the preservation of historic buildings, primarily because architecture, for its specific dimension of use and spatial characterization can be perhaps considered, better than other forms of art and culture, more representative of the utility values of heritage; secondarily because preservation, as the protection of authenticity and of all signs, is the privileged moment of the production of a rich and layered knowledge, which on the one hand clarifies the vital and evolutionary dimension of heritage and on the other hand places the human being in this continuity, through the study and use of material culture, as the "hand knowledge", the know-how and practice of building and conserving. In this sense, the perspective of the practice gives a more concrete, and "human" representation of heritage as something belonging to everyday life, rather than to another inaccessible dimension.

Finally, the reconstruction of the theoretical framework ends with a reflection on the role of practice in learning processes. Firstly, most recent researches about mirror neurons are introduced, which have highlighted the particular ability of the human brain to interpret reality through the understanding of the motor action from the “inside”. The existence of mirror neurons indicates that human beings share a common motor repertoire, which allows to understand others’ intentions and actions and to learn by imitation. Thus, theories of situated knowledge are briefly considered, emphasizing the importance of the concrete situation, the acquisition of the practice and contextualization for the effective development of new knowledge. In addition, a brief reference is also to theories of hermeneutics and constructivism, as regards the role of prior experience and personality for the interpretation of reality.

The second chapter of the research deals with the state of the art of the use of conservation issues for heritage communication. First, taking as an example the museum field in the context of which the issue of communication has been already widely considered, some reflections about the difficult approach to visitors by cultural institution are developed with particular reference to the problem of welcoming visitors and communication through restrictions. Difficulties in accessing culture are also determined by the use of complicated languages, which prefer “dead denotation” to expressive explanation, limiting opportunities of understanding: references to how things are concretely made are completely missing, the priority is to limitations, rather than to illustrate the importance of behaviors to manage risks. Developing awareness on the collective responsibility of protection does not rely, however, only on the relationship between heritage and visitors, but it is also a problem of formal education, which generally does not encompass conservation, with the exception of some experiences about both the education of youths and adults. The second part of the chapter proposes a survey of the tools used to communicate heritage. Starting from the traditional ones, the management of communication in events and public presentations, as well as in publishing, is discussed through the analysis of some examples, highlighting how communication in these contexts is generally oriented to exclude the topic of conservation, seen as too difficult to be communicated to the public, and the common attitude is to present a static and simplified image of heritage. Moreover, the survey considers also more recent and advanced tools: fields explored include the use of advertising, stressing some critical issues about the actual benefits for heritage conservation; virtual reality and virtual reconstructions, which despite wide opportunities in terms of communication of complexity, stratification, and of the evolutionary character of heritage, tend to reduce the quality of communication by preferring single truths and representing an impoverished image of heritage; finally, scaffolding opened to visitors, to emphasize the importance of the direct experience of conservation as

an opportunity to communicate heritage as a system in constant transformation, which deserves to be continuously lived and protected.

The third chapter reconsiders issues raised in the construction of the state of the art of cultural communication, through the analysis of two projects of heritage conservation and enhancement, very different in structure and objectives. The first is the integrated cultural system of Isola Comacina, whose object was the restoration of a system of architectures, through a strategic vision of long-term investment in the direction of sustainability, involving also the set of all cultural, social and economic resources of the territory; the second case is the project "Milano nei cantieri dell'arte", promoted by the builders' association in Milan, in the context of which a system of communication activities regarding the restoration of important monuments of the territory are organized, in order to enhance heritage through the promotion of the know-how and skills of companies working in the field of conservation. This second case has been the occasion for a traineeship at the sponsoring association. The comparison of these cases clearly shows the difference of the role of communication for the two experiences. If the Isola Comacina, a public project, is still trying to identify the best strategies for communicating the results of the intervention, "Milano nei cantieri dell'arte" has already defined a specific target in the promotion of the topics of restoration and is facing problems of an effective communication. Therefore, the first experience illustrates the case of decision makers who don't recognize the importance of the communication of contents, just focusing on visibility for political and institutional purposes, with the risk of wasting an important intangible heritage made of conservation experiences; on the contrary, the second case represents a system of stakeholders in the field of conservation seeking to give visibility and recognition to their work, providing valuable means of communication outside the specific field of preservation, through the direct involvement of actors.

The final chapter of the dissertation tries to review the system of considerations developed, emphasizing, first of all, the potentialities of issues of conservation for heritage enhancement and understanding by the wide public, and secondarily stressing the role that communication of restoration plays as a tool for the improvement of the project and process of preservation, not only in terms of raising awareness about the need for care and protection, but also as a way to shed new light on a field that is too often forgotten, but which deserves renewed attention, working on heritage and on values of collective interest.

0 INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION: A SHORT SUMMARY

The chapter is intended to illustrate general reasons, organization and expected results of this work.

0.1 Framework of the Research

The chapter firstly provides the general framework, defining the starting point, objectives and targets, and introducing the issue of communication of restoration as a potential tool for innovating enhancement and conservation strategies in the direction of a better use of cultural heritage. Moreover the context and basic motivations for this dissertation are identified, particularly referring to the PhD program in Design and Technology for Cultural Heritage, stressing the inedited character of the work, if compared to other researches in the field of heritage communication, and quoting also personal professional experiences. Finally the general structure and organization of the dissertation is briefly presented.

0.2 Research Methodology

The second section illustrates the methodological model adopted by the research, which moves first of all on the level of “on-desk” analysis, through a non-linear path of development, derived from the cyclical comparison of results aroused by the critical analysis of experiences and by references of an interdisciplinary theoretical framework; a second step of the dissertation is identified in the reinterpretation and verification of data produced in the first phase, through the direct experience and testing in the context of two specific study cases.

0.3 Expected Results

The third section defines the set of expected results, in terms of theoretical consideration and new addresses for the improvement of communication of cultural heritage.

0.1 Framework of the Research

0.1.1 Starting Point

In the most recent scenario of knowledge economy, culture is considered as an opportunity for the production of a system of economic benefits, which don't include only direct incomes, but open perspectives of social and human development.¹ This clearly implies two fundamental preconditions: the long-term conservation of heritage as cultural capital, and the ensuring of the access to culture for all. Following this line, heritage implies common interests and values belonging to the whole society and everybody should be involved in a process of fruition and protection.

Communication seems to be a crucial matter in this context, because it is the privileged vehicle for spreading information, knowledge, understanding, and for this reason it could potentially represent a tool for improving access to cultural resources, facilitate the recognition of heritage values by collectivity and the need for wider and extended protection. Communication is not a new issue in the cultural enhancement field, but the main focus is generally on improving tourist attraction, and heritage appears as something out of context and time, evaluated for its capacity of calling people to pay for watching or using. Differently, this dissertation wants to analyze the issue of communication as a potential tool for innovating enhancement strategies in the direction of a better use of cultural heritage for improving the quality of life of people and communities. This requires a change of perspective and the definition of more efficient tools and contents of communication.

0.1.2 Objectives and Targets

Suggested the still inefficient use of communication in the cultural field, the research proposes to identify issues of restoration of historic buildings as innovative key to interpret and present values of heritage: working on the monument, restoration tries to understand the past by discovering information and suggesting doubts and questions, becoming a moment of knowledge production. Doing this, restoration uses many and different tools, from social sciences to techniques, producing a dual look which considers heritage both in

¹ Cfr. Montella, M. (2009), *Valore e valorizzazione del patrimonio culturale storico*, Electa, Milano, p.11.

its global dimension and for the complexity of details; these two sides cannot be separated, because, thanks to the multiplicity of objects, subjects and languages that they involve, they can clearly represent the vital dimension of heritage. In this wider perspective, cultural heritage is the result of a process made of people, ways of life, but also practical skills, a history of work and know-how:

“[...] la storia dell’arte affronta un aspetto del lavoro umano. Certo si tratta di un lavoro particolare. Però, invece di rifiutare post-idealisticamente questo principio, perché il termine “lavoro” sembra sottolineare la materialità dell’opera, sarebbe bene dire che occorre approfondire la natura di questo lavoro, fermo restando che di lavoro si tratta.”²

This particular point of view, involving the human dimension and the experience of life, could represent an opportunity to rebuild a relationship between people and heritage.

Following this line, the research is addressed first of all to the wide public, investigating the role of cultural communication and restoration issues as tools to make people understand and appreciate heritage, improving the quality of life for all; secondly the research is addressed to the conservation field, suggesting the use of communication as a powerful tool to raise awareness and spread sensitiveness about issues of protection, improving the process of conservation; finally the research is also addressed to cultural institutions and decision makers, in order to stress the potentialities of conservation of built historic heritage, not only as an instrument for the material preservation of heritage, but as a powerful way for mobilizing a system of external resources producing added values and benefits.

0.1.3 Background

This dissertation has been developed in the context of the PhD Course in “Design and Technology for Cultural Heritage”, which aim is to promote the education of new specialists able to integrate the various needs in design for the usage, enhancement and management of cultural heritage.

Following the line of the Maastricht Treaty, the European Union has in recent decades developed new addresses relating cultural heritage management and

² Cfr. Montella, M., Toscano, B., (ed. Coltrinari F.) (2010) “Arte, Comunicazione, Valore: una conversazione” in *Capitale culturale- Studies on the Value of Cultural heritage*, Università di Macerata – Dipartimento di beni culturali, n.1, pp.149-161. Eng. trans. “[...] History of art deals with an aspect of human work. Certainly, it is a particular work. However, instead of rejecting post-idealistically this principle, because the term "work" seems to emphasize the materiality of art, it would be good to say that it is necessary to deepen the nature of this work, it being understood that it is a matter of work”

enhancement and sustainable development. The PhD course wants to follow these international goals, particularly focusing on two main issues:

- cultural heritage as a tool to promote historic identities of lands;
- cultural heritage as a tool to promote a new economic development.

Thus, in the rich context of the PhD course, the research could benefit from the many contribution involved, and concerning different fields, particularly:

- Analysis, safeguard, and preservation of the cultural heritage: tackling instruments of analysis, classification and enhancement of historic and artistic heritage at various scales; examining the concerns related to the degradation, maintenance, conservation, valorization and accessibility of heritage.
- Policies, strategies and instruments for cultural, territorial and landscape planning: discussing the ethical approach to cultural heritage enhancement; funding methods; and partnerships building for the management and operation of cultural heritage in the context of territorial planning.
- Design interventions aimed to cultural and natural heritage enhancement: examining the management of creative processes in contexts of high operative complexity; the social and environmental sustainability of interventions; and evaluation methods of the technical-economic feasibility of projects, for decision making and conflict management.
- Promotion and communication of enhancement results: investigating methods for management and promotion; “good identity” principles; graphics and corporate image; communication; medium selection; landscape and urban marketing and sociology.

Clearly, the recognition of heritage as a strategic resource for development, issues of conservation and the potentials of communication as a tool for improving enhancement, are topic widely considered in the context of the PhD course, and they have represented strategic lines for the development of different research works. Nevertheless, the studies so far developed are generally oriented to the strengthening of economic incomes deriving from the fruition of cultural heritage and to the design of communication tools for the improvement of cultural tourism and cultural consumption. Conversely, this dissertation wants to keep distance from these interpretations, proposing the communication of contents of heritage conservation as a powerful tool for the improvement of processes of enhancement and preservation.

The dissertation found its motivation also in previous professional experiences, which led to a deeper consideration of the role of communication in contexts of heritage conservation and enhancement. Among others, the main reference is to the Cultural District and recent experimental initiatives fostered by Fondazione Cariplo, involving the whole Lombardy region (Italy), since 2005. The innovative character of these projects is related to the investment in conservation through a strategic vision, which not only stresses the importance

of restoration, but also the need of managing the future of sites, planning the cultural, social and economic sustainability, through the integration of multiple cultural resources.³

The direct collaboration with the Province of Cremona (Lombardy, Italy) for the drafting of a feasibility study for the realization of the cultural district “Cre.Ar.T.E” (2007-2010), allowed a close analysis of strengths and weaknesses of the model, and the opportunity to develop some consideration about the strategic role of heritage conservation and of issues of communication in these contexts, as for example:

- paradoxically, even if conservation is often considered the core element of these projects, investment in restoration are mainly seen as a tool for mobilizing economic investments, and only marginally they are considered as a way for enhancing social and human resources;
- the knowledge produced during interventions is not used as resource, neither for purposes of better enhancement, nor for developing skills and competencies among technicians;
- communication of heritage in general is not deemed as an opportunity for education and human capital growth as a potential output of strategic planning, for the common belief that “ordinary people” don’t have competencies for effectively understand values of heritage;
- finally, communication finds its most frequent use in political and institutional purposes, when decision makers need to explain outputs and results of strategic planning to the public.

All this considered, the need to better understand the role and potentialities of communication in these contexts has become a priority, and for this reason the research has been oriented to tackle the definition of the problem and of the role of communication, trying to understand opportunities, tools, strategies for improving processes of heritage conservation and enhancement.

0.1.4 Structure of the Dissertation

The dissertation is divided into four parts:

- The first part tries to build a theoretical framework, considering firstly the legal and international background about the right to culture and public access and fruition, secondly, values of cultural heritage and enhancement, thirdly issues of conservation of built historic heritage, and finally some references to neurology and social sciences in order to identify human learning and understanding processes.

³ Cfr. Della Torre, S., (2005) “L’integrazione dei sistemi culturali come strumento di tutela pro-attiva. Un’esperienza in corso intorno all’Isola Comacina”, in *Arkos* n.10, pp. 20-25; Della Torre, S., (2006) “Il ruolo dei beni culturali nei nuovi modelli di sviluppo: riflessioni sulle esperienze in atto in Lombardia”, in *Arkos* n.15, pp. 16-19;

- The second part presents the state of the art of cultural communication, with particular reference to issues of conservation. First of all, some considerations are developed referring to the relationship between cultural institutions and visitors, with specific reference to the museum field; secondly, programs oriented to raising awareness about heritage protection in youths and adults are analyzed, finally, a short survey about instruments of communication is drafted, moving from the most traditional to the advanced ones.
- The third part reinterprets the results derived from the survey on communication tools and experiences in the context of two study cases: the Isola Comacina integrated cultural system and the initiative “Milano nei Cantieri dell’arte”. The comparison of the two projects leads to the definition of main criticalities and different strategies and opportunities in order to improve communication and potential results.
- The final part of the dissertation, starting from the set of experiences analyzed, tries to draft concluding considerations about the communication of issues of conservation as a tool for improving enhancement strategies, and as a tool to enlighten the potentialities still unexploited of the field of preservation as a strategic resource, opening new lines for further research.

0.2 Research Methodology

The research model applied to the development of the dissertation is based on the analysis and systematization of regulations, theories, and data generated by the study cases investigation and by the testing of practices in the field of communication of cultural heritage.

Considering that the relationship between communication and the improvement of heritage enhancement and conservation has never been deepened as specific interest for scientific research in the field of restoration of built cultural heritage, the methodology of the dissertation, could not benefit from previous studies on the subject, and therefore it has followed a non-linear path of development, involving cyclical stages of study and critical analysis of cases drawn from very different fields. Moreover, the experiences collected and examined refer to many kind of communication tools, from traditional to more innovative ones, taken from the different contexts of museum communication, environmental sustainability, marketing, tourism, education, etc. The analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of these experiences has therefore allowed the identification of scientific contributions and primary disciplinary references, which have been subsequently expanded through a continuous comparison between considerations emerged from the state of the art of communication and the theoretical framework, thus allowing the construction of new fields for deepening.

The interdisciplinary structure of the theoretical framework therefore includes references belonging to the international regulatory framework, to economy of culture, to cultural heritage values and enhancement, to conservation of built historic heritage, to cultural and environmental sustainability, to material culture, and to education and learning processes.

The analytical results derived from this first “on-desk” examination have been then applied in two direct contexts of analysis, particularly the integrated cultural system of Isola Comacina and the initiative “Milano nei cantieri dell’arte”. The selection of these two experiences for the development of deeper considerations has been motivated by the strong difference between the two cases: if the first one refers to a public project of strategic management of cultural social and economic resources, based on a core of investments in restoration, the second case refers to issues of conservation as a tool for promoting heritage, preservation practices and skills. Thus, if the first case has been useful in order to identify the role and uses of conservation knowledge as a tool for strategic planning, the second case stresses new perspectives and purposes of the communication of conservation.

Moreover, the experience “Milano nei cantieri dell’arte” has been the opportunity of a traineeship at the sponsoring association, and it allowed to actively participating in the implementation of the initiative, intervening with the contribution of the research experience, and collaborating to the construction of strategies for the improvement of communication effectiveness.

0.3 Expected Results

The analytical structure of the research aims to develop new perspectives in the field of cultural communication. More specifically, the research is oriented to investigating the role of issues of conservation as a matter of communication for the improvement of heritage enhancement and protection. In this sense, the results expected by this work are mainly theoretical and oriented to enlighten the role of restoration outside the field of the physical preservation of heritage: expected results can then be identified firstly, in the definition of the nature of the relationship between communication and conservation issues, and in the possible implications and potentialities in order to open new lines of research about the topic; secondly, a system of considerations are expected to be defined particularly referring to the use of communication as an effective tool for the improvement of heritage enhancement and conservation processes, to potential benefits of the communication of restorations in terms of wide understanding of heritage values and improvement in public access to culture, and to the role of conservation as strategic resource for the activation of a system of results not only in economic terms, but also from the point of view of human and social capital growth.

Finally, referring to the recipients to which this dissertation could be potentially addressed, expected results can be summarized as follows:

- provide theoretical references for strategies of interpretation and new perspectives of presentation able to improve heritage understanding while rebuilding a relationship between people and culture;
- provide best practices for the involvement of people in heritage protection, through the use of tools and innovative contents of communication able to spread awareness about collective responsibility and the recognition of values of heritage as an opportunity for the improvement of the quality of life for all;
- provide suggestions and practices to maximize the strategic management of cultural resources, through a more effective communication.

1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: A SHORT SUMMARY

After the first chapter defining the reasons, the structure and main goals of the research, the second chapter sets the Theoretical Framework by analyzing some specific issues as basic references for the development of the dissertation.

1.1 Reasons to Speak about Heritage

The first part introduces the issue of public access to culture as a tool for social, cultural and economic development, through a survey of main international statements and commitments: culture as a human right, culture as the right for education and culture as a tool for social inclusion are the main fields considered. The section closes with a short discussion about heritage protection as a duty for all, again highlighting the issue in international statements. After identifying the legislative approaches, the discussion arises doubts about the effectiveness in the application of principles stated, and tries to identify reasons for this weakness. The main cause is then associated with the absence of a critical mass large enough to effectively influence public policies, introducing the problem of public involvement and the relationship between cultural offer and demand.

The problem is thus analyzed trying to understand what are the values effectively recognised to heritage by citizens, stressing the need for focusing on the “use-value” as the only perceivable and as the one that allows to build an interaction between people and heritage. The value-utility for cultural heritage is then better analysed, through a multi-value model, as consisting of a presentation value, a landscape value, and a production value, which correspond to relative cultural demands, and stressing that the utility of cultural heritage has to be perceived at the same time as an opportunity for personal growth, for the improvement of the quality of life, and for the development of local economies. This multiple structure of heritage value is not always recognized by people, or it is perceived just partially, probably because of

inadequate enhancement policies, which are not able to successfully respond to cultural demand by providing appropriate cultural experiences.

Particularly, an effective cultural experience implies the need for rebuilding a necessary relationship and interaction between people and heritage, and the discussion introduces the topic of improving communication as a first necessary step for ensuring an extended and shared recognition of values of heritage. Thus, the last section of the theoretical framework is dedicated to the analysis of Tilden's six principles, and some references are also taken from the more recent ICOMOS Charter on Heritage Interpretation and Presentation, which once more underline the need to reconnect heritage and people, through the definition of a new "more human" communication code, and, in the context of the research this code will be associated with restoration.

1.2 Reasons to Speak about Restoration

The second part of the theoretical framework suggests then issues of restoration as a powerful tool for improving cultural communication. The discussion focuses on conservation of built historic heritage because of some inherent specificities of the discipline, particularly related to the fact that using different instruments, from the humanities to technology, the conservation "digs" the monument, "disassembles" the objects, bringing to light the knowledge about how things are made in their materiality.

These inherent specificities refer, first of all, to issues of authenticity, intended, by the conservation field, as the preservation of all signs of the monument which are the representation of the evolutionary character of heritage as living system, as something always changing and that continually offers new possibilities of fruition and knowledge. Moreover, the conservation of all signs is also interpreted as the preservation of the "trace" and the "aura", the former referring the "physical" proximity of things, and the latter implying an intellectual and emotional perception of heritage. This perspective suggests a privileged opportunity for individuals in perceiving cultural heritage and stresses the role of material authenticity as a guarantee for heritage deeper understanding.

Other issues considered by the section are related to material culture, intended as a set of practices and know-how characterizing the material consistence of cultural heritage. In this sense, practice is intended as the imperfect approximate basic knowledge acquired by experience and empirical methods. This attention for practices defines two important perspectives for the improvement of communication strategies: the first, through the study of practices, renders a more "real" representation of heritage, as stratification of the historic human ways of living and working, which lets interpret it as something close to our actual life; the second emphasizes the role of conservation intended as the use of practices, which should be communicated

also because they imply the element of “doing”, which belongs to everybody experience and is then accessible for the understanding of all.

1.3 The Role of Learning Processes

Thus, the theoretical framework closes with a necessary reflection about the “other side” of the issue, which is related to the way people understand the reality around them

The first part of this section focuses on theories of mirror neurons, which are particularly important for the understanding of the relationship that man establishes with other individuals and with the environment. Researches shows that some motor neurons activate both while performing an action, and during the observation of the same action performed by another subject. The significance of the discovery suggests important considerations such as the human intrinsic ability to understand the actions of others “from inside”, the relevance of the personal motor repertoire to facilitate understanding of others’ activities, the ability of human brain to map individual movements and compare and classify them into our motor repertoire, allowing us to build a common motor ground with others, and finally, the importance of mirror neurons in explaining our ability to learn by observing the actions of others (imitation). Researches about mirror neurons are therefore very important in the context of the research, endorsing the communication of practice and material culture as primary vehicle for sharing knowledge.

The second part focuses on social sciences issues and theories of learning. First of all, theories of situated cognition are considered because of the relevance they attribute to situatedness and direct experiences as support for interpretation. The situated cognition compares knowledge to a set of tools: if it is possible to acquire a tool but to be unable to use it, in the same way, even if learners acquire theories, they may be anyway unable to use them. The theory suggests an essential relation between knowledge and practice, introducing two key issues, the first highlighting the importance of the contextualization of the experience, the second stressing the fundamental role of the direct observation of the practice.

The last section of the theoretical framework then closes with a short discussion dedicated to the role of previous experience and knowledge in the understanding of reality: referring to hermeneutics and constructivism, these disciplines assume knowledge as the product of active interpretation of previous experience, which implies a problematic issue for the development of effective communication, that is related to the need of considering the cultural and human background of a vast and diversified public.

1.1 Reasons to Speak about Heritage

1.1.1 Heritage, Belonging to All. The International Framework about Culture, Education and Public Access to Culture

The need to communicate cultural heritage firstly lies in the global recognition of culture as a key priority for ensuring equity and cultural, social and economic development for all. As a matter of fact, culture has been considered in the context of international legislation as main tool in order to achieve these goals, and the public access to culture is thus defined as primary step to move in this direction.

Then, the purpose of discussing following references has to be identified in the interpretation that the research gives to communication, as one of the privileged tools for the extended access to culture for all.

1.1.1.1 *The Right to Culture*

A first attempt to define the right to culture is provided by the “UN Declaration of Human Rights”, where the Article 27 clearly states

(1) Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.⁴

⁴ Cfr. United Nations (1948), *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, Adopted and proclaimed by General Assembly resolution 217 A (III) of 10 December 1948, art. 27(1).

The full text in article 27, also proposes the right to the protection of intellectual property, as follows:

(2) Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

The idea of States participating to the drafting was probably to enlighten the moral right of authors. Nevertheless, by this way the two elements (public access to cultural life and protection of cultural right) have been often understood conflicting. Actually, considering the historical context, the idea of framers at that time was, on the one hand to move first steps in the direction of a democratization of culture, which was still seen as a privilege for the wealthy class, and on the other hand to stress the importance of creative creation. However, the plan of the United Nations was to share at first a statement of rights, in order to develop a more complete treaty in the next few years. But after 1948, the Cold War made difficult to go ahead with an international debate on

In this sense, heritage is seen as something belonging to all. The most urgent intent of the States taking part in the Declaration was to include this provision, because they found that culture was an important aspect of human life to be protected by human rights. The background of Article 27(1) was the fact that culture used to be associated with a small *élite*, in which large parts of the population did not take part.⁵

Similar issues emerge in Article 15 of the “International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights”⁶, which once more stresses the principle previously proposed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

1. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone:

- (a) To take part in cultural life;
- (b) To enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications;
- (c) To benefit from the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author;

Moreover, the role of States in warranting cultural rights for all implies not only to undertake all actions and strategies needed to develop and support dissemination and production of culture, but also to ensure conservation, as stated by article 15(2) of the International Covenant:

2. The steps to be taken by the States Parties to the present Covenant to achieve the full realization of this right shall include those necessary for the conservation, the development and the diffusion of science and culture.

Even if the concept of cultural life can be found in both statements, neither the Declaration nor the Covenant provide a clear definition. We can assume, considering the chronological context in which the commitments were stated, that the idea of culture was rather narrow and focused on higher concepts of culture intended as strictly intellectual matter, concerning arts, literature, music,

human rights. For these reasons, the idea of public access to cultural life remained a “nebulous” concept, and the attention moved on the problem of intellectual property protection, also for the direct economic repercussions involved. Thus, in the last 60 years, the right of intellectual property protection has seen much more interest than the public access to culture, and a wide literature and legal framework have been developed around this matter (SHAVER 2010).

⁵ Cfr. Donders, Y., (2008), *Cultural Life in the context of Human Rights, Background Paper Submitted to the Commission on Economic, Social & Cultural Rights*, U.N. Doc. E/C.12/40/13, May 9, 2008.

⁶ Cfr. United Nations (1966), *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI), December 16th, 1966, entry into force 3 January 1976.

and so on. Furthermore, in the Article 15 of the Covenant, even if more recent than the Declaration, the idea of community is unfortunately forgotten, highlighting that the potential relationship between culture and the whole life of human beings was not seen. Finally, also the concept of “freedom” was left behind in the Covenant, limiting the innovation of the latter commitment. In general we can say that the idea of cultural right, even if many times stated, has never been deepened enough, and it still remains the “Cinderella of the human rights family”

The main reason why cultural rights are “slippery and difficult is that their content and scope are unclear. [...] the category of cultural rights, compared to civil, political, economic and social rights, conceptually underdeveloped or neglected. [...]

The main reason for the underdevelopment of cultural rights is that the term “culture” remains broad and vague, which has led to a lack of consensus on which rights are “cultural” and how to best implement them. Another reason is that relatively few states have been eager to adopt international regulations in relation to cultural rights. Most states have not considered cultural rights to imply positive state obligations.⁷

Although in following legislation⁸ there’s a general acknowledgement on the broader scope of cultural life, interpreted as a way of life of individuals and communities, the idea of culture still remains a little uncertain.

As positive elements of these commitments, it is however essential to point out that the idea of cultural life arises, both in the Declaration and in the Covenant, as something dynamic, belonging to a continuous process of development. Regardless of the main characteristic of the society, cultural life is a never-ending changing process, which takes knowledge as cultural resource to produce new culture through creativity.⁹

In addition, if comparing the Declaration and the Covenant, the Article 15 of the latter translates “participation” in the concept of “take part” which seems to

⁷ Cfr. Donders, Y., (2007), “The legal framework of the right to take part in cultural life”, in Donders, Y., Volodin, V., (ed.), *Human Rights in Education, Science and Culture. Legal developments and challenges*, UNESCO publishing/Ashgate, pp.231-272.

⁸ See also United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, (1991), *Revised general guidelines regarding the form and contents of reports to be submitted by states parties under articles 16 and 17 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, U.N. Doc. E/C.12/1991/1. (Basic Reference Document), June 17, 1991 and the periodical reports provided by State Parties.

⁹ Cfr. Shaver, L., Sganga, C., (2009)“The Right to Take Part in Cultural Life: Copyright and Human Rights”, in *Faculty Scholarship Series, Yale, Paper 23.*, p.8.

http://digitalcommons.law.yale.edu/fss_papers/23

provide a larger idea of involvement of people in cultural life, entailing both the idea of consumption and creative participation:

“ ‘to take part in’ culture consists in the ability to consume and to create, individually and with others. Culture exists to be shared and to inhabit a culture is to contribute to it.”¹⁰

Moving on to the European provisions, in 1950 Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms¹¹, the Council of Europe recalled the principles of the Universal Declaration, supporting the importance of the ideals of community protection and freedom, but the concept of cultural right is even not mentioned. Also the following “Charter of fundamental Rights of the European Union”¹² stresses the freedom of art and sciences, but with no reference to the cultural right for citizens.

Moreover, the European Union “Consolidated versions of the Treaty on European Union and of the Treaty establishing the European Community”¹³ states that the EU should contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, as well as foster the common European cultural heritage. Actions should focus on improving knowledge and on the protection of the European cultural heritage, but Article 151(5) prohibits from harmonizing national laws, and the EU is only allowed to act through incentive measures, which means that the member states remains prime actors in the development of cultural policies.

5. In order to contribute to the achievement of the objectives referred to in this Article, the Council:

- acting in accordance with the procedure referred to in Article 251 and after consulting the Committee of the Regions, shall adopt incentive measures, excluding any harmonization of the laws and regulations of the Member States. The Council shall act unanimously throughout the procedure referred to in Article 251,
- acting unanimously on a proposal from the Commission, shall adopt recommendations.

Evidence shows that the idea of cultural life is still connected to a concept of national culture, that could be an opportunity if considering the most suitable

¹⁰ Cfr., *Ibid.*, p.9

¹¹ Cfr. Council of Europe (1950), *Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms*, ETS no. 005, Rome, November 4th, 1950

¹² Cfr. European Union (2000), *Charter of fundamental Rights of the European Union*, Official Journal of the European Communities, C364, December 18th, 2000.

¹³ Cfr. European Union (2006), *European Union Consolidated versions of the Treaty on European Union and of the Treaty establishing the European Community*, December 29, 2006, Official Journal of the European Union, C321 E/1

protection that a Nation is potentially able to provide because of the cultural proximity to its own heritage, but the risk is to limit possible openings to what we could call a popularization (meant in a positive and democratic sense) of culture.

Finally, a more recent attempt to define culture is provided in the Commission of the European Communities' "Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on a European Agenda for Culture in a Globalizing World":

'Culture' is generally recognized as complex to define. It can refer to the fine arts, including a variety of works of art, cultural goods and services. 'Culture' also has an anthropological meaning. It is the basis for a symbolic world of meanings, beliefs, values, traditions which are expressed in language, art, religion and myths. As such, it plays a fundamental role in human development and in the complex fabric of the identities and habits of individuals and communities.¹⁴

This last statement interprets culture as something involving human way of life, habit and behaviors. The anthropological element is introduced suggesting the recognition of a concrete link between culture and different fields of creative, social and economic life of human beings.

In brief, we could say that the right to culture strictly entails a whole range of issues, linked to other human rights, as, for example, the right of individuals to contribute and have access to cultural life, as well as rights related to the promotion of cultural life, including education, language and religion. It also concerns the protection of cultural heritage and the establishment and consolidation of cultural institutions, such as schools, museums, libraries and archives.

1.1.1.2 The Right to Education

Thus, the right to culture is strictly connected to other fundamental elements as, for example, the right to education. The right to education is stated in many international and European commitments¹⁵, recognizing to it a central role in the

¹⁴ Cfr. Commission of the European Communities (2007), *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on a European Agenda for Culture in a Globalizing World*, Brussels, 10.5.2007 COM(2007) 242 final, p.3.

¹⁵ Cfr. United Nations, "Universal declaration...", *op. cit.*, Article 26:

(1) Everyone has the right to education. [...]

development of human being, very often linked to the idea of heritage as a tool for education.

An interesting link between the culture and education, is stated in the Constitution of UNESCO¹⁶, where the Governments of the States Parties

[...]create the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization for the purpose of advancing, through the educational and scientific and cultural relations of the peoples of the world the objectives of international peace and of the common welfare of mankind[...]

Moreover, among purposes and function, the Constitution states that:

1. The purpose of the Organization is to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the nations through education, science and culture[...]

and that:

2. To realize this purpose the Organization will:

(a) Collaborate in the work of advancing the mutual knowledge and understanding of peoples[...];

(b) Give fresh impulse to popular education and to the spread of culture[...];

(c) Maintain, increase and diffuse knowledge[...];

In the Constitution of UNESCO, the two concepts of education and culture are seen as the two main parts of the need for spreading knowledge.

Looking at the European context, in the Lisbon Council (march 2000), knowledge represents a core element for social and economic competitiveness:

(2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.[...]

Cfr. United Nations, “International Covenant...”, *op.cit.*, Article 13:

1. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to education. They agree that education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity, and shall strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. They further agree that education shall enable all persons to participate effectively in a free society

Cfr. European Union, “Charter of Fundamental...”, *op.cit.*, Article 14:

1. Everyone has the right to education and to have access to vocational and continuing training.

¹⁶ Cfr. United Nations (1945), *Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization*, Adopted in London, November 16th, 1945 and amended by the General Conference in following sessions.

1. The European Union is confronted with a quantum shift resulting from globalisation and the challenges of a new knowledge-driven economy. [...]

5. The Union has today set itself a new strategic goal for the next decade: to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion. Achieving this goal requires an overall strategy aimed at:

- preparing the transition to a knowledge-based economy and society by better policies for the information society and R&D, as well as by stepping up the process of structural reform for competitiveness and innovation and by completing the internal market; [...]

8. The shift to a digital, knowledge-based economy, prompted by new goods and services, will be a powerful engine for growth, competitiveness and jobs. In addition, it will be capable of improving citizens' quality of life and the environment.

Furthermore, the EU Treaty underline the connection between culture and education, by asserting the need to spread knowledge about culture:

Action by the Community shall be aimed at[...]:

- improvement of the knowledge and dissemination of the culture and history of the European peoples[...]¹⁷

Culture and education are core elements also in the Commission of the European Communities' "Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on a European Agenda for Culture in a Globalizing World"¹⁸, with a strong connection to the idea of education as a lifelong learning process able to create and improve competencies and to develop the market:

3.2 Culture as a catalyst for creativity in the framework of the Lisbon Strategy for growth and jobs

[...]specific objectives should be addressed:

- Promote creativity in education by involving the cultural sector in building on the potential of culture as a concrete input/tool for life-

¹⁷ Cfr. European Union, "European Union...", *op.cit.*, art.151(2).

¹⁸ Cfr. Commission of the European Communities, "Communication from the Commission...", *op. cit.*, pp. 9-11.

long learning and promoting culture and arts in informal and formal education (including language learning).

- Promote capacity building in the cultural sector by supporting the training of the cultural sector in managerial competences, entrepreneurship, knowledge of the European dimension/market activities and developing innovative sources of funding, including sponsorship, and improved access to them.

The role of local culture for education is also stressed in the context of development of international relations:

3.3 Culture as a vital element in international relations

specific objectives should be addressed:

- to ensure that all its cooperation programs and projects take full account, in their design and their implementation, of local culture and contribute to increase people's access to culture and to the means of cultural expression, including people-to-people contacts. Especially important is education, including advocacy for the integration of culture in education curricula at all levels in developing countries;

1.1.1.3 Culture and Social Inclusion

Many international commitments also enlighten the role of culture as fundamental tool for social development and inclusion.

The attention for culture as social element, arises starting from the Seventies, when important social changes were ongoing, the interest in participation to cultural life was growing, and culture started to be felt as a need for all.

A first recognition of this renewed situation is stated in the UNESCO "General Recommendations of the Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development" (1972, Helsinki): the document suggest to replace a top-down perspective of "cultural democratization" with the idea of a "cultural democracy", prompting individual creativity and re-appropriation of means for cultural production and expression; with this aim, the Conference refers to a broader concept of culture, in the past limited to classic arts and historic heritage which didn't facilitate a broad access for all, and suggests the inclusion of cultural industries and mass media, as the tools for a wider involvement of people.¹⁹

¹⁹ Cfr. UNESCO (1972), *Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development*, Helsinki, recommendations n. 1,2, 3, 4, 6, 10.

Moreover, the UNESCO “Action Plan on Cultural Policies for Development” of the “Intergovernmental conference on cultural policies for development” (1996²⁰) make out the following:

1. Sustainable development and the flourishing of culture are interdependent.
3. Access to and participation in cultural life being a fundamental right of individuals in all communities, governments have a duty to create conditions for the full exercise of this right in accordance with Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
12. We must therefore empower all people and communities to harness their creativity and to consolidate and forge ways of living together with others, facilitating genuine human development and the transition to a culture of peace and non-violence.

Furthermore, the European Council contribution to the debate on culture and development in Europe titled “In from the margins” (1998)²¹ underlines the importance of considering culture as a tool for social inclusion and give new importance to cultural policies in the governance of European countries:

Its central themes are two interlocking priorities: to bring the millions of dispossessed and disadvantaged Europeans in from the margins of society and cultural policy in from the margins of governance.

There is a growing acknowledgement that, if culture – whether understood as the “whole life of the people” and its values or, more narrowly, as artistic activity of all kinds – is left out of account, sustainable development is likely to fail.

Culture and Education have been quoted as universal and fundamental rights and tools for development in international covenants. However, it seems that something is still missing for the complete accomplishment of these goals: as a matter of fact, public policies and private action are still inadequate, because even if culture is stated as a right, nevertheless its related benefits are considered not effective, and the general idea is that culture and education are needs to be given more than goods to be made available to anyone.

²⁰ Cfr. UNESCO (1998), *Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development*, CLT-98Conf.210/5, Stockholm.

²¹ Cfr. Council of Europe (1998), *In from the Margins*, Council of Europe Publishing.

1.1.1.4 The Duty of Protecting Heritage

However, heritage is not only the privileged tool for achieving some fundamental objectives, but it is also a duty, and the free access to culture should be supported by the wide involvement of people in the protection of cultural heritage.

After reaffirming the principles of the “Universal Declaration of Human Rights” and the “International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights”, particularly stressing the right to access and wide participation in “cultural life”, the Council of Europe “Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society” (Faro, 2005) emphasizes the need to:

[...]recognize individual and collective responsibility towards cultural heritage;²²

and the Parties recognize that:

- a. everyone, alone or collectively, has the right to benefit from the cultural heritage and to contribute towards its enrichment;
- b. everyone, alone or collectively, has the responsibility to respect the cultural heritage of others as much as their own heritage, and consequently the common heritage of Europe;
- c. exercise of the right to cultural heritage may be subject only to those restrictions which are necessary in a democratic society for the protection of the public interest and the rights and freedoms of others.²³

Finally, attention is focused also on the importance of environment and quality of life, by stating the importance to:

- c. reinforce social cohesion by fostering a sense of shared responsibility towards the places in which people live;²⁴

By this way, cultural heritage is defined not only as a right for people, but their involvement is identified as collective responsibility and duty, in order to provide wide access to cultural life, improve quality of life, foster sustainable social and economic development and to provide a necessary protection.

With the goal to allow people to fully participate in the process of conservation and enhancement of cultural heritage, in respect of the duties suggested above, the Framework Convention also recommends:

²² Cfr. Council of Europe (2005), *Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society*, Council of Europe Treaty Series - No. 199, Faro, October 27th, 2005, Section I, Art. 1(b.)

²³ Cfr. *Ibid.*, Art.4 (a., b., c.)

²⁴ Cfr. *Ibid.*, Section II, Art.8 (c.)

b. enhance the value of the cultural heritage through its identification, study, interpretation, protection, conservation and presentation;

d. foster an economic and social climate which supports participation in cultural heritage activities;²⁵

Referring to shared responsibility for cultural heritage and public participation, the Framework convention also suggest integrated approaches for the involvement of all stakeholders of the conservation and enhancement process:

a. promote an integrated and well-informed approach by public authorities in all sectors and at all levels;

b. develop the legal, financial and professional frameworks which make possible joint action by public authorities, experts, owners, investors, businesses, non-governmental organizations and civil society;

c. develop innovative ways for public authorities to co-operate with other actors;

d. respect and encourage voluntary initiatives which complement the roles of public authorities;

e. encourage non-governmental organizations concerned with heritage conservation to act in the public interest.²⁶

Moreover, stressing the importance of public access to culture and the need for awareness for the efficient protection of cultural heritage, the Framework Convention also states to:

a. encourage everyone to participate in:

- the process of identification, study, interpretation, protection, conservation and presentation of the cultural heritage ;

- public reflection and debate on the opportunities and challenges which the cultural heritage represents;

d. take steps to improve access to the heritage, especially among young people and the disadvantaged, in order to raise awareness about its value, the need to maintain and preserve it, and the benefits which may be derived from it.²⁷

²⁵ Cfr. *Ibid.*, Art.5 (b., d.)

²⁶ Cfr. *Ibid.*, Section III, Art.11 (a., b., c., d., e.)

²⁷ Cfr. *Ibid.*, Art.12 (a., d.)

In order to undertake and get better participation, the Convention highlights the need for developing knowledge, including cultural heritage as fundamental element for all levels of education (not only schooling) enclosing life-long learning processes, with a focus on the need for improving professional training:

- a. facilitate the inclusion of the cultural heritage dimension at all levels of education, not necessarily as a subject of study in its own right, but as a fertile source for studies in other subjects;
- c. encourage interdisciplinary research on cultural heritage, heritage communities, the environment and their interrelationship;
- d. encourage continuous professional training and the exchange of knowledge and skills, both within and outside the educational system.²⁸

Finally, also the role of information society and digital technologies are recognized to be important tools for facilitating the public access to culture, with particular attention for contents and for the protection of cultural heritage:

- a. encouraging initiatives which promote the quality of contents and endeavor to secure diversity of languages and cultures in the information society;
- d. recognizing that the creation of digital contents related to the heritage should not prejudice the conservation of the existing heritage.²⁹

As illustrated by this section of the Theoretical Framework, the public access to culture is the key to ensure the fundamental right of citizenship and equitable development for all, and the research suggests recognizing this element as the main aim of a more efficient cultural communication.

The section has been thus discussing the theory, but looking at the facts, it is clear that concrete results are still far. This probably occurs because there is no critical mass large enough to be able to influence policies,³⁰ and culture, in a typical top down perspective, is interpreted as the main instrument for development, without considering what is the actual perception and the role that the so-called critical mass effectively recognizes in heritage. This introduces a question related to the public involvement in culture, what are the values generally recognized to heritage and which might be effective enhancement strategies in order to build the widespread recognition of the potential of culture as a tool.

²⁸ Cfr. *Ibid.*, Art.13 (a., c., d.)

²⁹ Cfr. *Ibid.*, Art.14 (a., d.)

³⁰ Cfr. Montella, “Valore e Valorizzazione...”, *op.cit.*, p.44

In other words, it is assumed that the difficulties in effectively achieving objectives set out above, is also in the limitations than communities encounter in affirming their own desires, especially referring to cultural heritage, and for this reasons, the following sections deepen the concept of value of heritage and related questions of cultural supply and demand.

1.1.2 Cultural Heritage: Value and Enhancement

The difficulty in defining the value and enhancement for cultural heritage is probably and primary due to its double nature as public and private good.³¹

In fact, referring to potential values that people recognize to public and private goods, we could say that private goods (and wants) depends on individual preferences which can be identified by the market responding to the demand of private desires; on the contrary, concerning public goods, if the need is anyway related to satisfying public's wants for specific services, it is also true that individual preferences are more difficult to evaluate, because since the same amount (of goods and services) is consumed by all, (nobody can be excluded from resulting benefits), individuals are not forced to reveal their preferences.

Attempting to mediate this double nature of cultural heritage implies that often public policies interfere with individual preferences, trying to orient public wants and ensure (in best cases) a more equal and better redistribution of resources and benefits, defining community needs on the bases of some collectively accepted principles. These principles are not easy to verify, but there's evidence that these wants are outside the economic framework of generally defined public and private goods.

This introduces the idea of "merit goods" (and wants),³² which we could briefly explain as individual choices restrained by community values, which

³¹ The fundamental difference that economy generally recognizes between public and private goods is based on the principles of rivalry and excludability. In this sense public goods respond to the "non-rivalry" principle, which implies that no one *should* be excluded from the enjoyment deriving from the public good, and it would be undesirable to do so, because there's no marginal cost in sharing its benefits. On the other hand, a public good is also defined by a "non-excludability" principle, which means that no one *can* be excluded. This second difference between public and private goods (or services) determines that if the latter are supplied in the satisfaction of private wants, and for this reason they *can* be purchased by individuals in varying amounts, the former, which are supplied in the satisfaction of public wants, *must* be consumed in equal amount by all. Both the principles of non-rivalry and non-excludability seem not to fully respond to the characteristics of heritage Cfr. Stiglitz, J.E. (1999), "Knowledge as a Global Public Good, in Kaul I., et al. (eds.) *Global Public Goods: International Cooperation in the 21st Century*, Oxford University Press, New York, p. 308.

better seems to represent the identity of cultural heritage. In many cases this can imply the political imposition: as a matter of fact, the concept lies behind many economic actions by governments which are not performed specifically for financial reasons or by supporting incomes, and for these reason cultural heritage is often linked to this idea (for example, governments accept to sustain the cost of restoration of monuments, even without any evidence of direct incomes, because it is seen as a need recognized by the community and probably a shared preference for all individuals).

The conditioning of the top-down perspective of “merit goods”, based on the idea of inherently important values for a community, implies that very often people do not exactly realize the true benefit (for example, people underestimate the benefit of education), even if usually these goods have positive externalities.

In order to deepen these problems, next chapters will try to define what are the values connected to heritage, and what is enhancement.

1.1.2.1 The Values of Cultural Heritage

As previously introduced, the value of a good, even cultural, strictly depends on the demand (individuals wants). This shouldn't be seen as a pure economic point of view, because, quoting a prominent humanist

“Costituiscono patrimonio tutte quelle cose a cui va il nostro interesse e che, pertanto, sopravvivono e si manifestano grazie a

³² The concept of merit good was for the first time introduced by Musgrave: Cfr. Musgrave, R. A. (1957), “A Multiple Theory of Budget Determination”, in *FinanzArchiv*, New Series 25(1), p. 341:

“[...] we have defined public wants as wants which are not subject to the exclusion principle; but that the problem of the Service Branch nevertheless remained one of satisfying these wants in line with individual preferences and consumer sovereignty. Here [...] public policy aims at interference with individual preferences; and frequently, such interference carries redistributive implications. I do not wish to say that interference of this sort is always bad[...]. The apparent willingness of the public to provide for a second car and a third icebox prior to assuring adequate education for their children is a case in point. However, this seems to me a special problem which should be distinguished from the more general theory of public wants. Where interference with individual preferences *is* desired, our schema must be expanded. Such wants – which for lack of a better name I refer to as merit wants – may be thought of as provided for in a separate branch. Here a strict separation from the Distribution problem does, indeed, become untenable.

For more details about the definition of “merit good” see also: Musgrave, R. A. (1987) “merit goods.”, in Eatwell, J., Milgate, M. and Newman, P (eds.), *The New Palgrave: A Dictionary of Economics*, First Edition, Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 830-845.

questo interesse e in ragione dei vantaggi, sia materiali che spirituali che ne ricaviamo.”³³

Cultural offer and demand must be interdependent, and this interdependence is strictly bounded to the definition of values that people recognize to culture. This could sound as arduous task, because, as previously introduced, the top-down perspective of merit goods makes difficult to see to which extent people effectively understand the nature and potential benefits of heritage. For long, heritage (and culture in general) has been considered owning a value in itself (esthetic, sublime, artistic values like the powerful and “divine” creation of the artist), but this kind of value is only potential and doesn’t exist if not perceived, and perception necessary implies an interaction between the (cultural) object and the user. The interaction, the use of (cultural) objects reveals their utility, which means an inherent value that can be generally shared, and, in some way, measured.

An interesting perspective in this direction is offered by the definition of a multi-value dimension of cultural heritage, as the one proposed by Montella³⁴. Montella suggests three areas regarding the so defined “value-utility”: the “presentation” value, the “landscape” value and the “production” value, to which three types of cultural demand (wants) are coupled.

The first value (demand for “presentation-value”) refers to the improvement of human capital. Unfortunately, in most cases, the demand for this kind of value is mainly oriented by the brand linked to cultural heritage as “aristocratic experience”: the idea of cultural heritage as something belonging to acknowledged people has moved from an inaccessible field for the mass, to the object of desires in order to acquire a certain status-symbol. People approaching to heritage in this attitude, are generally not very aware about the cultural values they are meeting, simply following a “desire for respectable rituals”³⁵. This condition is limiting, but not negative, hoping that the assiduous access to culture would produce also a need for improving human capital.

Nevertheless, other groups recognize the added value of cultural heritage as they see an opportunity for improving the quality of their lives, and they ask for more cultural opportunities: this kind of demand is focused on education and information, in the recognition that the whole heritage, from monuments to

³³ Cfr. Urbani, G. (1967), *Relazione al “Colloquio internazionale CIHA sulle responsabilità dello storico nella conservazione e nel restauro dei monumenti e delle opere d’arte*, Venezia (unpublished), Cit. in Montella, M. (2009) *Valore e Valorizzazione del patrimonio culturale storico*, Electa per le Belle Arti, Milano, p.97. English translation:

“Heritage is all those things to which our interest is addressed and that, therefore, survive and take place thanks to this interest and by reasons of the benefits, both material and spiritual, that we can get”

³⁴ Cfr. Montella, “Valore e Valorizzazione ...”, *op.cit.*

³⁵ “desiderio di decorosa ritualità”, in *Ibid*, p.102,

artifacts, to intangible goods, belongs to human existence. Unfortunately, this audience has been till now only a minority and there's a need for communicating the values of cultural heritage, particularly looking at that range of "unconscious" people who don't take part in culture motivating a lack of competences, trying to provide multi-dimensional experiences through the exploration of the meaning of objects and their context, in order to improve the quality of the demand for culture.

The second value identified (demand for "landscape value") refers more directly to the quality of life (environment, landscape), which is the indispensable condition in order to provide the opportunity for the improvement of human capital. This is probably the field to which people are generally more sensitive, even if the impact of citizens on decisions concerning the environment (cultural, social, natural and economic) is still not very incisive, because of a clear lack of information and communication, which limit the possibility of active participation. The cultural offer related to the "landscape value" should then be oriented to the dissemination of risks in the conservation of cultural heritage.

Finally, the third value (demand for "production value") is strictly related to economic assets, as strongly arising particularly in last decades, and it mainly refers to the value, among the others, that local heritage can represent as a competitive advantage for the quality of place specific products.

Following this model, it is important to underline that "presentation value" and "landscape value" in many ways contributes in the creation of the "production value". The following diagram (Figure1) briefly drafts this relationship.

Thus, there's evidence of the great potential in the production of value that a cultural resource can offer: heritage might increase human capital and the need for more cultural consumption (demand for "presentation value"), enhancing the quality of life (demand for "landscape value"), with important effects on the economic system, too, through the improvement of services and all other activities connected to cultural heritage fruition and enjoyment (demand for "production value"). These advantages are still not confirmed in appropriate enhancement policies, by public and private investments, limiting the opportunities for a wider audience to recognize and benefit from these values.

This condition also introduces another problem: conservation and protection of cultural heritage are generally insufficient, probably because, out of literature, the external benefits of cultural heritage are still seen as scarce, and, as a consequence, enhancement is not maximized in order to improve offer and demand of culture. In brief, this limits both the benefits for people and human capital growth and it represents a threat for the protection of cultural heritage, setting a vicious circle of continuous loss of opportunities.

The following chapter deepens these problems, particularly referring to the development of the concept of enhancement in the Italian legislation, as an example to illustrate weaknesses and criticalities in policies.

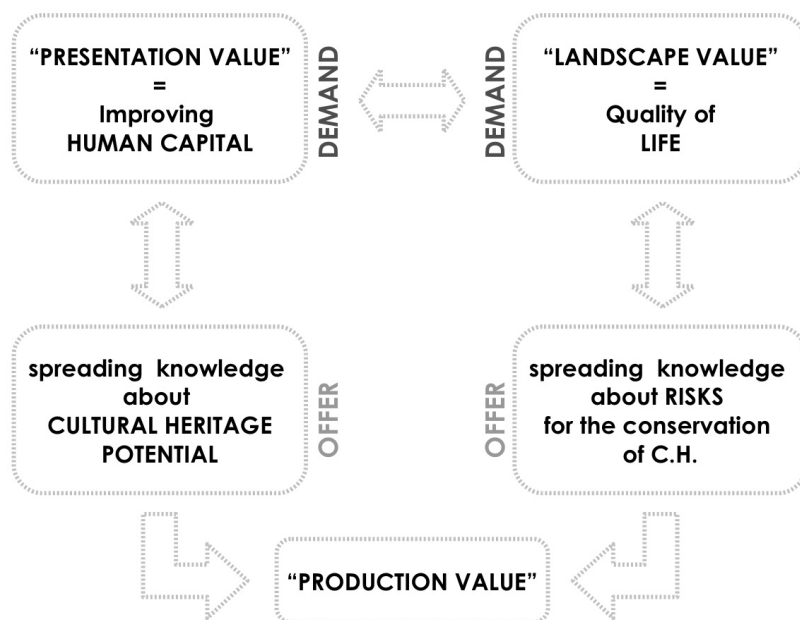


Figure 1: System of Values for Cultural Heritage, based on Montella (2009)

1.1.2.2 Enhancement

As previously introduced, the inefficiency generally encountered in enhancement policies and activities, causes a loss of opportunities at various levels, which becomes more significant concerning cultural heritage. Even analyzing the issue exclusively from an economic point of view, it is important to enlighten the difference between economic and cultural goods in general: if the former answers to the satisfaction of needs, the latter respond to the satisfaction of desires. Moreover, if the needs (particularly primary needs) are destined to be exhausted, desires grow through consumption and direct experience of use. This last is the advantage that cultural heritage potentially implies, because the consumption of culture can develop the ability of individuals to perceive the utility value of heritage, growing progressively the desire for more culture³⁶. And this is probably due to the fact that

³⁶ Cfr. Trimarchi, M., (2006), L'evoluzione del prodotto culturale, www.fizz.it:

“L’uso di un bene culturale [...], fosse anche più volte lo stesso, non darà mai luogo ad una identica esperienza.”³⁷

These elements are particularly important for reconsidering enhancement as necessary strategy for the improvement of “cultural capital” protection³⁸ and, lastly, for economic development. What seems primary lacking is a specific attention for the quality of the cultural experience as fundamental way for recognizing the effective utility value of cultural heritage.

The relationship between individuals and cultural heritage, has seen some kind of historical evolution, which could be interpreted as the shift from a natural to a legal protection. Taking, as an example, the development of the concept of enhancement in the Italian legal framework,³⁹ this evolution can be summed up through some main steps:

- What we nowadays call heritage, was in the past belonging to everyday life, privates, churches and other civil institution;
- Private collections are born as “robbery”⁴⁰, because they were mainly war booty;
- Private collection then evolves during centuries as private treasures, cultural refuges where only people belonging to the same class (educated people) were admitted;
- The idea of the cultural collection then configures itself as the place where to protect heritage from danger, including the uneducated mass, seen as a threat
- From Private Collections, to Museums, the situation doesn’t change much: even if they’re created with the more democratic aim of allowing public

“Se le prime esperienze di consumo culturale possono risultare costose in termini di meccanismi di apprendimento e dunque di livelli di apprezzamento, [...] il costo-opportunità di tale consumo decresce decisamente rispetto al costo degli altri consumi, e questo induce l’individuo a desiderare “dosi” crescenti degli stessi consumi”. English transl.: “If the early experiences of cultural consumption can be expensive in terms of mechanisms of learning and therefore levels of appreciation, [...] the opportunity cost of that consumption decreases significantly compared to the cost of other consumptions, and this causes the individual to desire growing "doses" of the same consumption.”

³⁷ Cfr. Montella, M., “Valore e Valorizzazione...”, *op. cit.*, p. 79. Eng. trans.: “The use of a cultural good, in fact, even more times the same, never gives rise to an identical experience.”

³⁸ Cfr. Throsby, D., (1999), “Cultural Capital”, in *Journal of Cultural Economics*, n.23, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Netherlands, p.3.

³⁹ The reference to Italian legislation has been chosen because of the identification of the Italian context as cultural background for the research. Clearly, the analysis might be extended with the deepening of the idea of enhancement in the international context, too, but this is not the real purpose of the work, and the reference to Italy is only needed in order to provide some interesting lines for debate.

⁴⁰ Cfr. Eco, U. (2001), “Il museo nel terzo millennio”, in *Eco Papers. Conferenze Museo Guggenheim di Bilbao*, n. VIII, www.umbertoeco.it.

access to culture, they still use “top down” perspective⁴¹ implying the mission of educating unqualified people; people can see heritage, but they’re not involved in the process of interpretation and protection;⁴²

- In the Sixties and Seventies, heritage start to be considered as a need for the improvement of quality of life, and the protection of cultural heritage and the public access to it, is recognized as a right for all citizens⁴³

It shouldn’t then come as a surprise if, particularly in the Italian context, the main attention has been for long oriented to the strong protection of heritage, excluding enhancement as concrete cultural experience to allow people to understand heritage utility values.

As a matter of fact, first laws of the new Italian State were conceived in order to protect those goods represented by

[...] le cose, immobili e mobili, che presentano interesse artistico, storico, archeologico o etnografico, compresi:

- a) le cose che interessano la paleontologia, la preistoria e le primitive civiltà;
- b) le cose d’interesse numismatico;
- c) i manoscritti, gli autografi, i carteggi, i documenti notevoli, gli incunaboli, nonché i libri, le stampe e le incisioni aventi carattere di rarità e di pregio.⁴⁴

⁴¹ we might say, using the words of Barthes, that for a long time, the "language"-of culture has been developed not by the "speaking mass" but by a small "group of decision makers "who have interpreted the signs in a "very arbitrary" way :

“ the language is elaborated not by the 'speaking mass' but by a deciding group. In this sense, it can be held that in most semiological languages, the sign is really and truly 'arbitrary'" since it is founded in artificial fashion by a unilateral decision”, in Barthes, R. (1968), *Elements of Semiology*, Hill and Wang, chapter. I.2.6.

⁴² Cfr. Quatremère de Quincy used to compare Museums to a warehouse: Cfr. Quatremère de Quincy, A.C. (1970), *Considérations sur les arts du dessin en France*, Genève, Slatkine, op. cit. in Marzotto Caotorta, M. (2011) *Il museo e l’opera d’arte*, Associazione Finestre sull’Arte, p. 13, www.ebookperlarte.com:

“this museum as far as the eye can see[...] this collection of many objects in one place”.

⁴³ See survey about National and international commitments in previous chapters and Cfr. Bodo, C., Bodo, S. (2007), “La coesione sociale e le politiche pubbliche per la cultura”, in *Economia della Cultura*, n.4/2007, Il Mulino, Bologna.

⁴⁴ Cfr. Legge 1 giugno 1939, n. 1089, *Tutela delle cose di interesse artistico e storico*, art.1. English translation:

“things, non-movable and movable, which represent an artistic, historical, archaeological or ethnographic interest, including:

stressing the need for a tough protection able to assure the continued existence of cultural heritage; same kind of attitude was also in the law for the protection of nature and landscape⁴⁵.

Those so frightening risks for heritage have widened even more when the after-war reconstruction entailed social needs as work and houses, which overcame the priority of heritage protection. This process was widely recognized at that time, but no initiative was successful in stopping (or at least reducing) the consequences of public policies, specifically in the building field.

Enhancement seemed to be however a priority in Italian culture: in fact, as stated in articles 9

“Art.9

[...] La Repubblica promuove lo sviluppo della cultura e la ricerca scientifica e tecnica.”

and 3 of the Italian constitution,

“Art.3

[...] È compito della Repubblica rimuovere gli ostacoli di ordine economico e sociale, che, limitando di fatto la libertà e l’eguaglianza dei cittadini, impediscono il pieno sviluppo della persona umana.⁴⁶

the public use and access to cultural heritage is undoubtedly belonging to constitutional principles. The idea of enhancement of cultural heritage, will be for the first time quoted only in 1964, in the measure establishing the *Commissione Franceschini*⁴⁷, even without specific juridical definition of the

a) the things regarding paleontology, prehistory and early civilizations;

b) things of numismatic interest;

c) the manuscripts, autographs, the correspondence, significant documents, incunabula, and books, prints and engravings considered rare and valuable.”

⁴⁵ Cfr. Legge 29 giugno 1939, n. 1497.

⁴⁶ Cfr. Governo Italiano, *La costituzione della Repubblica Italiana*, www.governo.it. English translation of article 3 and 9:

“Art.3

[...]It is the task of the Republic to remove obstacles to economic and social order, which, by limiting the freedom and equality of citizens, impede the full development of the human person”

“Art.9

[...]The Republic promotes the development of culture and the scientific and technical research.”

⁴⁷ The so-called “Commissione Franceschini” (from the name of its President), also known as “Commissione d’indagine per la tutela e la valorizzazione del patrimonio storico, archeologico, artistico e del paesaggio” (eng. tr. “Commission for the protection

notion of enhancement, probably following that contagious example that from the Gaullist France opened to the institutionalization of cultural policies, followed by other countries as Japan, United States and Sweden.⁴⁸

Moreover, an idea of enhancement arises in the late Seventies, in the institutional decree⁴⁹ of the new Ministero per i beni culturali e ambientali (Ministry for Cultural Goods), even if without legally qualifying the concept.

Finally, enhancement is juridically separated from protection, in 1998, when D.L. 112 defined it as:

“ogni attività diretta a migliorare le condizioni di conoscenza e conservazione dei beni culturali e ambientali e ad incrementarne la fruizione”⁵⁰

The concept of enhancement in Italian Legislation has been then implemented through the “Codice dei Beni Culturali e del Paesaggio” (Code on Cultural and Environmental Heritage):

La valorizzazione consiste nell’esercizio delle funzioni e nella disciplina delle attività dirette a promuovere la conoscenza del patrimonio culturale e ad assicurare le migliori condizioni di utilizzazione e fruizione pubblica del patrimonio stesso, anche da parte delle persone diversamente abili, al fine di promuovere lo sviluppo della cultura. Essa comprende anche la promozione ed il sostegno degli interventi di conservazione del patrimonio culturale. In riferimento al paesaggio, la valorizzazione comprende altresì la riqualificazione degli immobili e delle aree sottoposti a tutela compromessi o degradati, ovvero la realizzazione di nuovi valori paesaggistici coerenti ed integrati.⁵¹

and enhancement of historical, archaeological, artistic and landscape”) was established by the law n. 310 in 1964, and concluded its work in 1966. The institution of the Commission was a sign of consciousness of the need for greater awareness in public action with the aim of more effective results in the protection of cultural heritage and environment.

⁴⁸ Cfr. Bodo&Bodo, *op.cit.*

⁴⁹ Cfr. D.Lgs. 14 dicembre 1974, n. 657

“Art. 2. Il Ministero provvede alla tutela ed alla valorizzazione del patrimonio culturale del Paese. Promuove la diffusione dell’arte e della cultura” (eng. tr.: “The Ministry shall ensure the protection and enhancement of the cultural heritage of the Country. Promotes the spread of art and culture”)

⁵⁰ Cfr. D.Lgs 31 marzo 1998, n. 112, art. 148(e). English translation:

“each activity designed to improve the conditions of knowledge and conservation of cultural and environmental heritage and to increase its use”

⁵¹ Cfr. D.Lgs 22 gennaio 2004, n. 42, art.6. English translation:

“The enhancement consist in exercising the functions and regulation of the activities aimed at promoting awareness of cultural heritage and to ensure the

The Code also states that the cooperation to enhancement activities can include privates and that the enhancement of public goods can be managed through direct and indirect strategies.⁵²

By this way, the Code recognized the need for the participation of many different stakeholders and stockholders in enhancement, following the idea that only through the wide involvement of all it will be possible to provide the survival of such a widespread heritage.

This is what Italian law drafts, reporting acknowledgements which have been layered during decades (or maybe centuries), but which still seems not to have a concrete impact on the reality of cultural heritage.

Thus, some critical points can be underlined:

- As stressed above, in the common sense, as in cultural policies, enhancement is limited to museums and tourism, and it doesn't seem to be interpreted as an opportunity for the production of important benefits (social, cultural, economic);
- In these contexts, heritage is exploited for the status symbol assessment that it generates. Heritage is still the object of an elitist marketing, oriented to the production of direct economic incomes such as tourist flows implementation;
- Thus, there's inadequate attention for the development of human capital through high quality cultural experiences, that is the main tool for developing the cultural demand;
- Moreover, this is a risk for heritage: there's no protection if heritage become an habit based on a status symbol;⁵³
- Finally, particularly referring to built cultural heritage, more attention is put on restoration than on enhancement activities because of the greater communicative impacts that it produces.

best conditions for public use and enjoyment of the same heritage, even by persons with disabilities, with the aim to promote the development of culture. It also includes the promotion and support of conservation of cultural heritage. With reference to the landscape, the development also includes the requalification of buildings and areas under protection compromised or degraded, or the creation of new consistent and integrated landscape values.”

⁵² Cfr. *Ibid.*, art. 111, 112, 115

⁵³ Cfr. Montella, Valore e Valorizzazione...” *op.cit.*, p.41:

“La frequentazione dei musei, ad esempio, si risolve per i più in un rituale obbligato da esigenze di esteriore decoro [...] Talché è facile figurarsi che molti ne perderebbero interesse, allorché diventasse un costume di massa, e che pochi soffrirebbero, al di là delle apparenze, per il venir meno di qualche quota di quanto finora conservato.” Eng. transl.: “The attendance to museums, for example, is resolved, for the most, in an obliged ritual by needs of exterior decoration [...] and it is easy to figure out that many of them would lose interest when becoming a mass habit, and that few would suffer, despite appearances, of the disappearance of some parts of what so far preserved.”

All this happens because cultural heritage, intended as a “merit good”, is actually still not seen as a “community preference”⁵⁴, and, as previously quoted, if it is not perceived by a sufficient number of subject, there will never be the opportunity to impact on policy makers decisions.⁵⁵

In order to attempt to solve these problems, enhancement should be oriented to the development of effective cultural experiences, able to grow cultural demand, also through a more efficient communication instead of a “fordist communication”⁵⁶, which exclude common people, with the aim of developing participation and widespread appreciation for the importance of heritage as fundamental value belonging to the life of all citizens.⁵⁷

All these considerations have introduced the existence of a vicious circle which is both undermining development opportunities and protection of heritage. This situation needs to be solved through new tools of enhancement, starting from the development of more effective cultural experiences.

1.1.2.3 The Importance of the Cultural Experience

Previous chapters have been repeatedly stressing the need for both ensuring public access to culture and provide heritage protection, through effective enhancement strategies, which should allow the full understanding of values and the importance of protecting and experiencing cultural heritage. The purpose of this chapter is thus trying to define what a cultural experience is and how it should be planned in order to support more effective enhancement activities.

It is common opinion, that culture and enculturation are mainly belonging to schooling and basic education. This kind of education ensure the ability for people to become good producers but the idea of culture as thoughts activator and developer of new sensorial perspectives is largely put aside. On the

⁵⁴ Cfr. Montella, “Valore e Valorizzazione...” *op. cit.*, p. 44.

⁵⁵ Following these ideas, an interesting guide about the need for identification of landscape in order to improve protection has been released by ECOVAST – European Council for the Village and Small Town. The guide begins the list of suggestion by stressing the need for wide recognition, and that

“CITIZENS CAN TAKE THE INITIATIVE

Action does not lie with governments alone. We all have a stake in the landscape.”

For more information, see European Council for the Village and Small Town, *ECOVAST Landscape Identification. A Guide to Good Practice*, 2006, www.ecovast.org.

⁵⁶ Cfr. Montella, “Valore e Valorizzazione...” *op. cit.*, p. 43.

⁵⁷ Cfr. Montella, M. (2007), “Individuazione dei livelli minimi delle attività di valorizzazione”, in Ufficio Studi MiBAC, *Notiziario*, xxii-xxiii. 83-88 / gennaio 2007 - dicembre 2008, p.113.

contrary, schooling is not the only matter, but also culture intended as cultural *experience* must be considered.⁵⁸

The idea of cultural experience finds interesting connection with the model of development suggested by Amartya Sen⁵⁹ and related to an idea of culture as participation in the democratic process of decision. Sen introduces the concept of “capability” (which is different from an idea of human *abilities*), that found its roots in education as fundamental instrument for giving to all the possibility to choose with “full knowledge of the facts”. Capability is something that the society can ensure or deny to people. Sen also defines two types of freedom concerning the concept of capability: positive and negative freedoms. The latter is depending on the absence of constraint, the former is related to the opportunity for individuals to freely realize their own human potential. Capability is also a system of alternatives that everyone must effectively have, even if not used or chosen.

Even if the western society is commonly defined as advanced, opportunities to follow “positive freedoms” are limited. One way to build a solution to the problem is the reference to culture, in a new perspective which considers it as a tool for the protection of effective freedom of choice, for the full understanding of opportunities.⁶⁰

Art and cultural experience reveal its central role in not coming up with our expectations and opening to stimulating and unexpected possibilities. Cultural experience offers something more than traditional education, which is generally configured as a transfer of information from the teacher to the student, requiring the direct involvement and participation for a full appreciation of cultural values.

The lack of participation and interest in the cultural field, so many times recalled⁶¹, can also be assumed, if interpreted through Sen’s theory, as related to a lack of freedom of choice, positive freedoms and capability.

Cultural experience is, by this way, the main context for understanding cultural heritage and for growing individual capability. As an example, I would like to quote a personal experience: when I was at school, I was asked to read the novel “Fräulein Else”, by Arthur Schnitzler. The book is a monologue of a girl forced to show herself necked to his father’s friend because of her family’s debts. Living up to a daughter’s duty, she yields to this demand but then commits suicide. I remember that experience as one of the worst of my life as a student. I couldn’t actually understand, as young girl belonging to a free (or

⁵⁸ Cfr. Sacco, P.L., Segre, G., (2006), “Creativity and new patterns of the consumption in the experience economy”, in *EBLA Working Papers Series*, n. 02/2006, Università di Torino, Torino.

⁵⁹ Cfr. Sen, *op.cit.*

⁶⁰ Cfr. Sacco, Segre, *op. cit.*, pp. 8-9

⁶¹ Cfr. Montella, “Valore e Valorizzazione...”, *op.cit.*, p.104

supposed to be free) society, the reason why she had to do such a thing, and I felt the book as totally boring and sad. Recently, reading the same story, I discovered it absolutely strong and innovative, and this is because nowadays I understand the time in which the novel was written, I know what is the opinion about women in a male chauvinist society, and I know that financial problems can go over human respect and rights.

From the recent re-reading of that novel I've learned something absolutely unexpected:

- First of all I could definitively catch the values suggested by the book;
- Secondly I felt my personal lack of knowledge about the context in which the book has been written and I started to feel the need to deepen what I know about it;
- Finally I recognized the importance of issues expressed by the novel, and the values that it can offer to contemporary society, too.

This is just an example to enlighten the importance of a cultural experience able to meet people sensitiveness, expectations and previous knowledge. The personal case quoted here shows the importance of the context in which cultural experiences are built, but also the need to find right ways to communicate culture to different kind of people, different expectations and backgrounds. Moreover, the example is useful in order to stress the importance of presenting heritage as something belonging to us, something near to our experience of life, something more "human" and not belonging to a higher and sublime experience of art, as superior and not accessible dimension.

In brief, as a conclusion of this section of the Theoretical Framework, it is possible to say that there's a need for rebuilding a direct interaction between people and cultural heritage, in order to allow the recognition of values and involve people in a process of understanding and protection. Furthermore, enhancement can't be only seen as an activity to spread knowledge about culture and make cultural heritage work from an economic point of view, but also cultural experiences, shaped by the capabilities of every person, must be involved as the complementary strategy to achieve full and effective enhancement.

1.1.3 Starting from Communication. Heritage Interpretation and Presentation

What is the role of communication in this context? With reference to the main topic of this work, the research introduces with this chapter communication as support tool for improving processes of conservation and enhancement of cultural heritage, working on the cultural experience, for achieving the objectives proposed along the Theoretical Framework of this dissertation.

During last decades, the literature has reconsidered communication, and the issue has been developed in some interesting models that it is necessary to quote in the context of the research. Particularly, the role and use of interpretation and presentation of cultural heritage will be discussed in the following part: interpretation and presentation will be illustrated as tools for improving heritage protection and enrich the cultural experience for spreading awareness about the values of cultural heritage and the need for its conservation.

Interpretation related to heritage was first defined by Freeman Tilden in 1957. Tilden is often considered the father of interpretation. His theories were developed in the context of US National Parks, and his most famous writing⁶² had been commissioned by National Park System with the aim of encourage potential major donors in supporting the conservation of natural parks, a sort of fund-raising activity *ante litteram*. Tilden's ideas were more widely oriented in improving people's perception of heritage, and for this reason the principles he developed can be easily applied to the conservation of different kind of cultural objects (e.g., nature, archeological sites, monuments, museums, etc.), as the same author enlighten by quoting different cases taken from "natural and man-made heritage".

Tilden develops some suggestions about how the visitor should be introduced and guided at the heritage site, in order to improve the understanding of the cultural object and the opportunity of learning.

Tilden stresses the importance of the visit as direct experience, considered as a kind of education superior to schooling, because of the opportunity to connect the visitor with the "Thing Itself", experiencing something that no book could ever supply. In this context, the role of the interpreter or presenter (could be an historian, architect, archeologist, researcher, or simply a guide...) is particularly important because he has to "project the soul of things". Moreover, we could say that interpretation aims both to reveal "a larger truth that lies behind any statement of fact" and "to capitalize mere curiosity for the enrichment of the human mind and spirit".⁶³

Tilden developed six main principles which should support the interpretation activity at the heritage site:

1. Any interpretation that does not somehow relate what is being displayed or being described to something within the personality or experience of the visitor will be sterile.
2. Information, as such, is not interpretation. Interpretation is revelation based upon information. But they are entirely different things. However, all interpretation includes information.

⁶² Cfr. Tilden, F. (2007), *Interpreting our heritage*, The University of north Carolina Press (first edition 1957).

⁶³ Cfr. *Ibid.*, p. 33.

3. Interpretation is an art which combines many arts whether the materials presented are scientific, historical or architectural. Any art is in some degree teachable.
4. The chief aim of interpretation is not instruction, but provocation.
5. Interpretation should aim to present a whole rather than a part and must address itself to the whole man rather than any phase.
6. Interpretation addressed to children (say up to the age of twelve) should not be a dilution of the presentation to adults, but should follow a fundamentally different approach. To be at its best it will require a separate program.⁶⁴

The first principle is particularly interesting for the purposes of this research and it defines visitor's interests at the site as strictly linked to everything belonging to his personality, experience and ideals. The visitor is not a blank board, he owns personal wishes and he feels himself as a good man as well as his interlocutor. This implies that the visitor probably doesn't want to be talked *at*, but prefers to be involved in the conversation; thus interpretation should be oriented to entail the audience connecting people with the history of the heritage site, making them feel a part of it, including past present and future life.

“These people of other centuries played, loved, quarreled, worshipped, knew beauty – all the essentials were about the same. [...] The visitor says, “These folks were not so different, after all”⁶⁵

The visitor feels involved if he feels that the interpreter is speaking about *him* and not about something or someone completely different from his personal reality. Speaking about the sublime value of heritage means to tell the story of something uncertain and unreachable: the visitor will be unlike to respond unless the story presented touches his personal experiences, thoughts, hopes, way of life, social and economic position, etc.

Therefore, it is important to build a new relationship between heritage and who stands in front of it, referring to homely things and situations belonging to the visitor's personal range of experiences.

The communication by interpreters should also try to respect the visitor's identity using a simple (but not simplistic) language, in order to facilitate understanding, making people feel proud of themselves, and, as a consequence, pushing them to do their best in learning.

The second principle is dedicated to define the difference between interpretation and information. These words are often misunderstood as to be the same: actually they are completely different concepts, and information can be better considered as a part of interpretation.

⁶⁴ Cfr. *Ibid.*, p. 34-35.

⁶⁵ Cfr. *Ibid.*, p.42.

The third principle refers to the idea that interpretation should use many instruments (art and science) in order to tell the most complete story possible. Tilden also states that “we are all in some degree, poets and artists” and for this reason art stands for a fundamental tool, because it can always touch everybody’s sensitiveness.

The fourth principle is also particularly interesting in the context of this work because it introduces the idea of provoking as a tool for the improvement of the process of learning during interpretation.

Provocation enlighten a peculiarity of interpretation, significantly different from instruction: if the latter refers to schooling as formal education achieved through the top down approach of a teacher “pouring” knowledge in pupils, provocation aims to “stimulate the reader or hearer toward a desire to widen his horizons of interest and knowledge, and to gain an understanding of the greater truths that lie behind any statement of facts”⁶⁶. Tilden observes that provocation pushes the visitor to search out meanings for himself; on the contrary instruction tend to submerge the audience in “a high tide of facts, perfectly accurate”, but which results completely ineffective.

Moreover, Tilden comes to the definition of a relationship between heritage preservation and interpretation: in fact, an adequate interpretation can provide awareness in the visitor and stimulate conservative behavior. Quoting a park service administrative, Tilden clarifies this point:

“Through interpretation, understanding; through understanding, appreciation; through appreciation, protection.”⁶⁷

Fifth principle is devoted to the consideration of heritage as a whole, which means interpreting the unity of heritage and presenting it as one single complex reality and not as the sum of elements apparently not connected to each other. At the same time Tilden stresses the entire nature of visitor, too, intended, as also introduced explaining the first principle, as an integration of many elements (physical, psychical, intellectual, involving emotions and experiences): interpretation should try to respect the visitor taking into account this complexity.

Finally, a specific principle is devoted to the distinction of particular interpretation for children: youth is recognized as primary phase for knowledge development, which deserves attention.

Tilden principles are still nowadays taken into great consideration and often recalled as reference points⁶⁸, for the importance they stress about the need for a

⁶⁶ Cfr. *Ibid.*, p.59

⁶⁷ Cfr. *Ibid.*, p.65

⁶⁸ See, as an example the HICIRA project, financed by EU and involving Italian, French, Swedish Netherlands and Spanish partners, in the planning of guidelines based on best practices, for the development of interpretive centers, institutions for the

renewed relationship between heritage and people in the perspective of making preservation effective through human capital growth and improvement of understanding (awareness).

More recently, interpretation principles have found a confirmation in ICOMOS regulations, with the “Charter on the Interpretation and Presentation of Heritage Sites” (2008),⁶⁹ which, basing its principles on the Venice Charter,⁷⁰ try to define the role of presentation and interpretation, through communication as major tool for the achievement of wide conservation of cultural heritage. First of all, the Charter provides important definitions for the interpretation and presentation concepts:

“Interpretation refers to the full range of potential activities intended to heighten public awareness and enhance understanding of cultural heritage site. These can include print and electronic publications, public lectures, on-site and directly related off-site installations, educational programmes, community activities, and ongoing research, training, and evaluation of the interpretation process itself.

Presentation more specifically denotes the carefully planned communication of interpretive content through the arrangement of interpretive information, physical access, and interpretive infrastructure at a cultural heritage site. It can be conveyed through a variety of technical means, including, yet not requiring, such elements as informational panels, museum-type displays,

dissemination of knowledge about natural or cultural heritage. Interpretation centers use different means of communication to enhance the understanding of heritage and awareness. Cfr. Various Authors (2005), *Heritage Interpretation Centres. The Hicira Handbook*, Barcelona.

⁶⁹ Cfr. ICOMOS (2008), *Charter on the Interpretation and Presentation of Heritage Sites*, Quebec (Canada)

The ICOMOS Charter on Interpretation and Presentation particularly refers to the introduction of the Venice Charter, that states:

“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.

It is essential that the principles guiding the preservation and restoration of ancient buildings should be agreed and be laid down on an international basis, with each country being responsible for applying the plan within the framework of its own culture and traditions.”

⁷⁰ Cfr. IInd International Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historic Monuments (1964), *International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites*, Venice.

formalized walking tours, lectures and guided tours, and multimedia applications and websites.”⁷¹

Some main elements can be highlighted in these definitions:

1. Interpretation should facilitate understanding and public awareness on the importance of heritage and its protection. A set of instruments useful for the purpose is suggested;
2. Presentation is identified as planned communication activity of interpretive contents.

Following this line, main objectives of the Charter are:

“Facilitate understanding and appreciation of cultural heritage sites and foster public awareness and engagement in the need for their protection and conservation.

Communicate the meaning of cultural heritage sites to a range of audiences through careful, documented recognition of significance, through accepted scientific and scholarly methods as well as from living cultural traditions.

Safeguard the tangible and intangible values of cultural heritage sites in their natural and cultural settings and social contexts.

Respect the authenticity of cultural heritage sites, by communicating the significance of their historic fabric and cultural values and protecting them from the adverse impact of intrusive interpretive infrastructure, visitor pressure, inaccurate or inappropriate interpretation.

Contribute to the sustainable conservation of cultural heritage sites, through promoting public understanding of, and participation in, ongoing conservation efforts, ensuring long-term maintenance of the interpretive infrastructure and regular review of its interpretive contents.

Encourage inclusiveness in the interpretation of cultural heritage sites, by facilitating the involvement of stakeholders and associated communities in the development and implementation of interpretive programs.

Develop technical and professional guidelines for heritage interpretation and presentation, including technologies, research, and training. Such guidelines must be appropriate and sustainable in their social contexts”.⁷²

⁷¹ Cfr. *Ibid.*, Definitions.

⁷² Cfr. *Ibid.*, Objectives.

Tilden's principles, as well as ICOMOS' suggestions, provide an important support for the identification of what are the strategies to be adopted for an efficient interpretation and presentation of heritage. Interpretation and presentation are then defined as basic tools for improving processes of enhancement, as well as develop a necessary awareness about the need to preserve heritage. Particular importance is placed on the rapport with the public, in order to reestablish a participatory relationship of understanding between man and cultural object, instead of pure education.

However, some critical elements still deserve to be clarified, also introducing a set of issues which will be the core of the following development of this work.

If it is true, as repeatedly mentioned by the references of this chapter, that heritage communication should consider the direct involvement of the audience, encouraging interaction and dialogue, it is equally true that not all opportunities for interpretation and presentation include direct experiences, where the interaction cannot be guaranteed. It is certainly possible to work on the differentiation of the communication, in a way to catch as much as possible the attention of a diverse public, hoping that the contents will be understood at best.

In any case, it is too difficult to intercept the interests of all. Certainly Tilden, suggesting the development of attitudes respectful of the identity of the visitor and pointing to a communication that links man and heritage through the reference to every-day life, offers a new perspective, but which does not completely solve the problem of communication, with the risk of excluding, however, some groups from the full enjoyment and understanding;

Even only considering the case of direct experience, the use of dialogue as a tool to optimize the communication possibilities and to understand visitors' expectations, seems in any case not very realistic, or at least not completely effective. The idea to discover the public expectations on the field and thereby modulate the communication seems unlikely, both for the inherent differences between individuals, even if having similar experience, and because, still in the best conditions, visitors not necessarily will be brought to reveal their preferences.

Too much responsibility is therefore delegated to the managers of communication, whether guides, architects, conservators, archaeologists and public and private institutions responsible for conservation and enhancement. Evidently, working only at this level will never give satisfactory results because too many are the issues and problems involved.

Without ambition to fully solve the problem, the research suggests to consider only one of the critical nodes of the matter, with particular reference to the contents of communication.

If one of the objectives proposed by the father of the interpretation is the reconstruction of a relationship between cultural objects and subjects, then perhaps one way could be to find a common "code", for interpreting culture, art,

and heritage as something belonging to a more human dimension which highlights the opportunities of access for all.

The research than suggest, starting from next chapter, to look for this new “code” inside the discipline of restoration.

1.2 Reasons to Speak about Restoration

1.2.1 Improving Communication: Restoration as an Instrument for Better Interpretation

The idea of considering restoration as the framework within which to identify a new “code” for rebuilding a relationship between man and heritage, rises from some inherent specificities of the discipline, which have been deepened along personal education and professional experience, strictly bounded to the field of restoration.

As a matter of fact, using different instruments from the humanities to technology, restoration “dig” the monument, “disassembles” objects, bringing to light the knowledge about how things are made in their materiality.

Thus, the research suggests taking this more real perspective on cultural heritage as a new key for heritage interpretation and presentation.



Figure 2 -“We’re digging; it’s your history” – France’s INRAP adopts a new, inclusive language for heritage at these preventive excavations preceding a construction project in Strasbourg, France, 2009⁷³

⁷³ Picture taken from: Council of Europe (2009), *Heritage and Beyond*, Council of Europe Publishing.

1.2.1.1 *The Architecture Priority*

The introduction of the theme of restoration for improving heritage communication, needs some clarification. As a matter of fact, the research would like to narrow the issue within the field of built historic heritage, as a first step for understanding the potential of the instrument.

The choice of focusing on architecture stems from the belief (or perhaps presumption) that, if compared to other disciplines, architecture immediately represents the utility of cultural heritage. In the previous chapter, following a model proposed by Montella⁷⁴, the importance of the use value was highlighted as the only really perceptible value. Architecture can be described for its spatial qualities, accessibility and visitability, and therefore it can be interpreted as a privileged representation of a utility recognizable by anyone and that concerns the experience of living.

There's evidence that the considerations that will be drawn from the architectural sphere may be, with appropriate adjustments, extended to other areas of cultural heritage, and the choice of focusing on architecture is only a starting point, probably the most complex, but also the most rich, for the multiplicity of elements that it involves.

1.2.1.2 *The Conservation Priority*

Another clarification is then necessary: the word restoration used so far is just a way to simplify, to immediately make evident the topic of the discussion. Actually the term is absolutely wrong⁷⁵, because we are effectively moving in the context of *conservation* intended as in its etymological, Latin origin of the “verb “conservāre” composed by “cum” (with) and “servare” (to keep, to maintain, to take care...) meaning to keep together, to take with us, to maintain something so that it can be not altered, damaged or removed, to keep alive or present, to avoid the disappearance of something and so on”⁷⁶, which implies a service, the service architecture gives us by inhabiting and using it, the service that we must return through maintenance, protection and reuse (which refers, or should refer, to a planning *inside* history); in order to allow architecture sharing sense with us, everybody, from technicians to the wide public must be involved in the process of conservation. Conservation is thus antithetical to the idea of

⁷⁴ Cfr. Montella, “Valore e Valorizzazione...”, *op.cit.*

⁷⁵ “restauro e conservazione sono concetti antitetici, opposti, inconciliabili” (Engl. transl.: “restoration and conservation are antithetical concepts, opposites, incompatible”), cit. in “Introduzione” del saggio Torsello, B.P. (1984), *Restauro architettonico: padri, teorie, immagini*, Franco Angeli, Milano.

⁷⁶ Cfr. Musso, F. S., (2011), “‘Cum-servāre’/‘Trāns-formāre’. Ideas, concepts, actions and contradictions.”, in Kealy, L., Musso, F. (eds.), *Conservation/Transformation*, EAAE, Leuven, p.31.

restoration as “res-instaurare” which means to restore or rebuild, and implies planning *the* history and the exclusiveness of the designer (the architect, the restorer, etc.) as the only necessary reference.

By choosing and selecting which signs are a priority for the understanding of history, restoration tries to intervene on values; on the contrary conservation deals with the preservation of information as prior vehicle of knowledge:

“Il concetto di valore implica giudizio, quindi scelta, possesso, preferenza, privilegio, ma anche emarginazione, negazione, rifiuto e così via; quello di dato comporta distacco, sospensione, rinvio. Ogni azione innescata dal valore è destinata a chiudersi in gesti conclusivi, che lo affermino definitivamente in quanto guida per la ricerca della compiutezza; mentre il dato chiede la presa d’atto della compiutezza che si è già realizzata, quindi non è più realizzabile, ma che proprio per questo, si dispone come fonte praticamente inesauribile di saperi, come inizio sempre nuovo, nella sua apparente immobilità, di processi interpretativi.”⁷⁷

Compared with restoration, conservation is therefore proposing an attitude that could be maybe defined as more cautious, particularly referring to the recording and preserving of that rich and layered knowledge, that only the direct intervention on monuments, while “digging” and “disassembling”, is able to reveal.

Conservation can therefore be important to propose a more accessible image of heritage, following two main issues, the first related to the theory and technique of conservation, and the second linked to the practice:

1. Registration of signs as the conservation of *authenticities*, of the traces of time passing and of human life experience, which represent the developing character of heritage as a living system, as an organism evolving during time;
2. The “craft” dimension of the restorer’s work, which implies a particular knowledge made of manual labor, know-how, intuition and disposition to think about things in order to find solutions to complex problems, that the same theory of restoration is very often not able to provide “by the book”.

All this wants to introduce an everyday dimension of heritage, which can catch the attention and the experience of a wide range of subjects and that,

⁷⁷ Cfr. Torsello, B.P. (1988), *La materia del restauro. Tecniche e teorie analitiche*, Marsilio, Venezia, pp.47-48. Engl. trans.: “The concept of value implies judgment, therefore choice, possession, preference, privilege, but also exclusion, denial, rejection and so on; the data implies detachment, suspension, postponement. Every action triggered by the value is set to turn in concluding actions, which definitively affirm value as guidance for the pursuit of perfection; while the data calls for the recognition of the perfection that is already built, and that is no more achievable, but precisely for this, it stands as inexhaustible source of knowledge, as always new beginning, in its apparent immobility, of the processes of interpretation.”

starting from these reasons, could be considered as a new tool of cultural communication.

These themes will be discussed in the following chapters, firstly illustrating how the issue of authenticity, as intended by architecture conservation, can be important in order to reconstruct a direct relationship between man and heritage; secondly the practice of conservation will be discussed in order to clarify the role of material culture as a powerful language for involving people in the understanding of heritage.

1.2.2 Authenticity or Authenticities

If it is not one of the objectives of this work to investigate the role of authenticity as a cornerstone of the theory of restoration, the principles of authenticity assumed by conservation stress the importance of the evolutionary and vital dimension of heritage, which are assumed, in the context of the research, as essential elements of a more effective communication.

If briefly referring to the history of restorations, it is not difficult to understand that the priority of restorers has always been to study and enhance the value of cultural heritage, protecting its authenticity, as main and inherent presupposition for the recognition of its importance as work of art. Question is: what value and what authenticity?

Restorers have always been working (and they do so today, too) by adding, or subtracting elements: adding has been often understood as the action of camouflaging the signs of time and history, in order to produce a complete and coherent image of the monument; on the contrary, subtraction, has been interpreted as removing signs as addictions considered less significant if compared to other layers of the monument, defining an historical scale of importance, with the aim of revealing *the* originality and *the* pureness of the monument. Both these attitudes try to discover authenticity, in the conviction that the “wrinkles” that the time passing and that human and historical events have left on the monument, are not concerning to the real value of cultural heritage, intended as ideal dimension of the monument. In this sense, evolution and transformation are not considered as fundamental elements in order to ensure authenticity:

“il punto cruciale è proprio quello di andare alla ricerca di una dimensione ideale dell’oggetto d’arte, piuttosto che di accogliere una dimensione materica – quasi corporea – in cui l’unica legge certa è quella della trasformazione”⁷⁸

⁷⁸ Cfr. Pracchi, V., *Autenticità, artisticità e restauro*, (unpublished). Eng. transl: “The crucial point is to search for an ideal dimension of the art object, rather than to accept

The choice then is between a material and evolving dimension against the fixed and ideal one, which denies the living nature of heritage:

“Come può essere davvero *lui* se in tutto questo tempo non è cambiato. Come può essere ancora uguale ad allora?”⁷⁹

Transformation then rises as fundamental issue: diverging from restoration, conservation should read heritage as what is in the world, what has seen a beginning, an evolution and that probably one day will end. This perspective introduces the idea of authenticity as “irreproducibility of the authentic material”⁸⁰ of heritage, thus something that changes and can’t be frozen.

Therefore, conservation implies the registration of *signs* and *data*, better than values: this suggest an idea of tangible authenticity as:

“[...] una proprietà processuale, dinamica, in continua evoluzione che via via si modifica nel tempo. Tutti gli apporti successivi che la mano dell’uomo ed il tempo depositano, sono ulteriori effettivi testimoni di autenticità.”⁸¹

that involves the impossibility to stop time passing and leaving traces on the heritage. These traces are the witness of the past completeness of the monument, which means past *authenticities* which are not possible to recreate today. For this reason degradation becomes a source of knowledge for understanding the evolution of the monument, to be read as:

“opera come processo continuo, in cui persino il degrado ha una parte notevole nel racconto e nella spiegazione della sua storia”⁸²

Thus, the story of the monument seen as a process, can’t simply imply *one authenticity* intended as single interpretation, but it considers the evolution of heritage and the wholeness of its *many authenticities*, intended as many steps, many truths describing the reality of heritage.

the material one - almost corporeal - where the only certain law is that of transformation”

⁷⁹ Cfr. *Ibid.* Eng. transl: “How can he really be him, when for all this time he has not changed. How can it still be the same as then?”

⁸⁰ Cfr. *Ibid.*

⁸¹ Cfr. Dezzi Bardeschi, M. (2008) “The Discriminating value of the Authenticity in the Debate on the Restoration Before and After Nara”, in *Values and Criteria on Heritage Conservation. Proceedings of the International Conference. Florence 2nd-4th March 2007*, Edizioni Polistampa, Firenze, p.198. Eng. transl: “[...] a procedural, dynamic, evolving property that gradually changes over time. All following contributions that the human hand and time have deposited, are more effective witnesses of authenticity.”

⁸² Cfr. Della Torre, S., Pracchi, V., (2006) “Saper vedere (la complessità del) l’architettura”, in Cucuzza N., Medri M. (eds.), *Archeologie. Studi in onore di Tiziano Mannoni*, Edilpuglia, p.456. Eng. transl.: “work of art as a continuous process, in which even degradation has an important part in the narration and explanation of its history”

1.2.2.1 Heritage: a Living System

In this sense decay is the result of the signs of history, and changes have to be intended as representations of heritage as living system.

Decay then becomes the truth of life that breaks into the work of art, and preserving signs of decay becomes fundamental because it triggers questions about origins, transformations and past completeness of the monument. Therefore, there is no possibility for selection and addition that it is not derived from the analysis of what heritage effectively represents in its evolution over time: respecting permanence means to refuse selection on the basis of a value hierarchy “which has always been demonstrated to be temporary and inherent to its own time.”⁸³

Moreover, the study and interpretation of signs also turns into a way to teach the culture of conservation, because they reveal words of an “unwritten but built history” that generates “astonishment”⁸⁴ motivated by the unveiling of traces apparently meaningless:

“Il dato, infatti, non è sempre immediatamente afferrabile attraverso la semplice osservazione; spesso è nascosto, inaccessibile, camuffato, e abbisogna, per essere colto, di particolare attrezzatura intellettuale e tecnica.”⁸⁵

The curiosity of discovery is the opportunity to spread knowledge, not only in the context of the discipline, but also outward, offering a fascinating language that can rise a desire to learn more⁸⁶; nevertheless, the recognition of the importance of the multilayered nature of heritage can enlighten about the need for participating in a process of conservation, generating a sense of responsibility for the protection of our heritage⁸⁷.

1.2.2.2 The Importance of Signs: Trace and Aura

Furthermore, the issue of *authenticities* implies some clarification about the role of signs and traces in the reconstruction of a deep relationship between

⁸³ Cfr. Pracchi, “Autenticità...”, *op.cit.*

⁸⁴ Cfr. Quendolo, A., (2006), “Permanenza e leggibilità dei dati materiali”, in *Archeologia dell’Architettura. Supplemento di Archeologia medievale*, n.XI2006, Edizioni All’insegna del giglio, p. 16.

⁸⁵ Cfr. Torsello “La materia...”, *op.cit.*, p.57. Eng. trans.: “The data, in fact, is not always immediately comprehensible by simple observation is often hidden, inaccessible, camouflaged, and needs to be taken, particularly intellectual and technical tools”

⁸⁶ Cfr. *Ibid.*, p.16: “Il Restauro non è, dunque, materia da concludere, ma momento di ricerca e di aperture”. Eng. transl.: “The Restoration is not, therefore, a matter to conclude, but the time to research and openings”.

⁸⁷ Cfr. Quendolo, “Permanenza...”, *op. cit.*, p.16.

people and heritage. Thus, some dimensions of authenticity can be defined as follows:

1. authenticity as uniqueness in time and space of the layered material that frame that “hic et nunc” which distinguishes the work of art:

“l’hic et nunc dell’opera d’arte – la sua esistenza unica è irripetibile nel luogo in cui si trova. Ma proprio su questa esistenza, e in null’altro, si è attuata la storia a cui essa è stata sottoposta nel corso del suo durare.”⁸⁸

2. Authenticity as the perception of life and the flowing of time, through a process of degradation and transformation of natural and human events
3. The authenticity as a real opportunity to interpret the authentic object for its aura.

In particular, referring to the latter, the authentic object introduces an additional element that goes beyond the rational dimension of the conservation of the sign or trace:

“Cade qui opportuno illustrare il concetto, sopra proposto, di aura a proposito degli oggetti storici mediante quello applicabile agli oggetti naturali. Noi definiamo questi ultimi apparizioni uniche di una lontananza, per quanto questa possa essere vicina. Seguire, in un pomeriggio d’estate, una catena di monti all’orizzonte oppure un ramo che getta la sua ombra sopra colui che si riposa – ciò significa respirare l’aura di quelle montagne, di quel ramo.”⁸⁹

The concept of aura refers to the relationship between men and “the objects of the past”⁹⁰; in other words, the problem of understanding the art object by the observer that stands in front of it. This relationship then becomes a “feeling-knowledge”⁹¹ that implies both the intellectual and emotional experience, which means the concept and feeling as two parts of one truth: the trace which appears

⁸⁸ Cfr. Benjamin, W., (1966), *L’opera d’arte nell’epoca della sua riproducibilità tecnica. Arte e società di massa*, Einaudi, Torino, p.8. Engl. trans.: “the *here and now* of the work of art - its unique existence in a particular place. But the story to which it was belonging during its existence, has been developing only in this existence, and nothing else.”

⁸⁹ Cfr. *Ibid.*, p.11. Engl. Transl: “It is necessary here to illustrate the concept, proposed above, of aura about historical objects, using a reference applicable to natural objects. We call them unique appearance of a distance, however near it may be. Following, in a summer afternoon, a chain of mountains on the horizon or a branch which casts its shadow over the man who is resting - this means to breathe the aura of those mountains, of that branch.”

⁹⁰ Cfr. Quendolo, A. (2003), “Il rapporto con gli oggetti del passato: la “traccia” e l’“aura”. Alcune riflessioni sulla proposta di restauro delle superfici esterne del castello di Valbona”, in QUENDOLO, A., FORAMITTI, U. (eds), *Restauri di castelli*, Udine, pp. 103-114. Engl. transl: “

⁹¹ Cfr. *Ibid.*, p. 106

in the material proximity of things, implies the physical appropriation of the object by the subject who observes, while the aura as the appearance of the emotional distance of the thing, take possession of the observer. These two aspects of perceiving heritage then dissolve the linear sequence of time, from past to present to the future, making the action of the man trying to stop and fix this continuity absolutely useless. Moreover this suggests a way of understanding heritage that depends on the nature of human being and which involves all of us. Finally, this also implies that the trace and the aura of cultural objects cannot be separated, and the preservation of the material authenticity of the good is a guarantee of its deeper understanding.

The following chapter will try to further investigate these considerations, noting that not only the understanding of the value of heritage is indivisible from its material authenticity, but also that the perception of the “symbolic value is inseparable from awareness of the material condition of an object.”⁹²

1.2.3 Material Culture

The second element introduced at the beginning of this section, is connected to the “craft” dimension of the intervention on the monument.

We’re referring to that still little explored branch of the restoration field concerning the practices and know-how rather than a “mythological” history almost exclusively made by the theoretical evolution of the discipline.⁹³

The study of the so-called material culture has been rarely recognized as prior opportunity to enrich the process of heritage understanding outside the field of restoration. Theory and practice have been very often considered as belonging to two different levels (theory at the top, practice at the bottom) and the study of material culture has been neglecting the material consistence of its objects:

“‘Material culture’ too often, at least in the social sciences, slights cloth, circuit boards, or baked fish as objects worthy of regard in themselves, instead treating the shaping of such physical things as mirrors of social norms, economic interests, religious convictions - the thing in itself is discounted.”⁹⁴.

This also happens in restoration: if considering the development of the discipline, the main concern has always been about theoretical problems to be solved by technical means, without any need to deepen their practical aspects.

⁹² Cfr. Sennet, R. (2008), *The Craftsman*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, p. 129.

⁹³ Cfr. Pracchi V. (2001), *La cassetta degli attrezzi. Pratiche di cantiere nel pensiero dei restauratori.*, Attività di ricerca post dottorato, Politecnico di Milano.

⁹⁴ Cfr. Sennet, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

”Una prassi tradizionale e consolidata è infatti al servizio dell’idea che si vuol rendere manifesta direttamente sull’opera. Si può ben affermare che la componente tecnica nel restauro è la vera ancella della storia: un modo per raggiungere un obiettivo che storicamente varia, senza però alcuna riflessione su come debbano variare in conseguenza anche le modalità operative”⁹⁵

In this sense restoration has been more careful to the theoretical resolution of problems:

“La ‘cosa-architettura’, l’oggetto costruito, non è stato indagato cercando di capirne le modalità di produzione, quanto altri più eterei ed immateriali aspetti (beninteso, anch’essi molto importanti)”⁹⁶

building up a history that could be defined as belonging to “restorations and restorers.”⁹⁷

On the contrary, what seems more interesting for the purposes of this research, and which has found only recently some development in the field of conservation, is the understanding of practices, which means how things are made, how they work, etc.

According to Treccani, practice deeply differs from technique because it relates to the sphere of material culture and know-how as a different approach to architecture, conceived as a set of actions, as “effective acts that have enabled resources,⁹⁸” strongly related to the context in which they have been produced. This vision provides a contrast between the two terms: on the one hand, technique is intended as standardized model to be taken as point of reference, on the other hand practice is seen as that imperfect, approximate and often considered backward technological knowledge of those anonymous traces that define built heritage, as that basic knowledge, not transmitted through codified

⁹⁵ Cfr. Pracchi, “La cassetta...”, *op. cit.*, p.10. Eng. transl.: “A traditional and consolidated practice is at service of the idea that we want to manifest directly on the object. It is possible to say that the technical component in restoration is the true servant of the story: a way to reach a goal that historically varies, without any reflection on how the practices should change, too.”

⁹⁶Cfr. Pracchi, V. (2008), “Studio delle tecniche costruttive storiche. Riflessioni e prospettive di ricerca”, in Pracchi, V. (ed.), *Lo studio delle tecniche costruttive storiche: stato dell’arte e prospettive di ricerca*, Nodo Libri, Como, p. 9. Eng. transl.: “the ‘thing-architecture’, the built object, has not been investigated trying to understand methods of production, but other and more ethereal and immaterial aspects (evidently very important, too) have been considered.”

⁹⁷ Cfr. Pracchi, “La cassetta...”, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

⁹⁸ Cfr. Treccani, G.P. (1996), “Pratiche Costruttive e Progetto di Conservazione”, in Della Torre, S. (ed.) *Storia delle Tecniche Murature e Tutela del Costruito. Esperienze e Questioni di Metodo*, pp.277-287

forms, but acquired through experience and empirical methods, which Treccani defines as “eccentric”, and that, for various reasons, have not reached a “scientific threshold” or “formalization”.

The perspective proposed by Treccani interpretation about the concept of practice emphasizes two dimensions particularly interesting for the purpose of this research:

1. conservation as *the study* of practices for understanding the traces seen as signs of human experience (ways of living, using, working, building and implying also technical and specific know-how), which has determined the aspect and consistence of built historic heritage as we know it today. This is the dimension that allows us to interpret heritage as something closer to the actual reality, which suggests that the motivations and actions that led to the construction of heritage as we nowadays perceive and experience it, are not so different from those that move our present human experience, quoting Tilden: “These folks were not so different, after all”⁹⁹
2. conservation as the intervention on monuments, involving the *use* of the practice and production methods to find solutions to complex problems, by generating, from time to time, new questions and doubts to be solved. Moreover, conservation very often implies “digging” and “disassembling” objects, making *repairs*, as the privileged way through which we understand how things are concretely made and how they work.¹⁰⁰ This dimension belongs to the broader context of the experience of doing as integral part of existence and which involves anyone, from children to adults, from common people to technicians, etc.

“Nearly everyone can become a good craftsman. [...]. Our species’ ability to make things reveals more what we share.”¹⁰¹

If the first dimension renders a more realistic representation of heritage as the sum of human actions, the second emphasizes the role of human activities as a part of heritage evolution. In both cases practice is seen as the action based on that imperfect and empirical knowledge, as defined by Treccani.

The two dimensions suggest practice as a powerful tool for improving communication, offering the opportunity of a deep appreciation of heritage, which involves us because of the closeness between our experience of life and

⁹⁹ Cfr. Tilden, *op.cit.*, p. 42.

¹⁰⁰ Cfr. Sennet, *op. cit.*, p.199: “Douglas Harper believes that making and repairing form a single whole; he writes of those who do both that they possess the ‘knowledge that allows them to see beyond the elements of a technique to its overall purpose and coherence. This knowledge is the ‘live intelligence, fallibly attuned to the actual circumstances’ of life. It is the knowledge in which making and fixing are parts of a continuum.” Put simply, it is by fixing things that we often get to understand how they work.”

¹⁰¹ Cfr. Sennet, *op.cit.*, p.268.

the one still readable in the monument, thus imposing the conservation of all signs as fundamental *authenticities* for understanding the past.

Moreover, the knowledge produced by intervention on the monument is not only the high culture, but it also concerns the “meaning behind objects”, the know-how in the material appearance of things. Objects, artifacts, buildings and all products from the past become expression of the material culture that produced them and of the society that used them. It is then necessary to start from the recognition of a “circular link that binds high culture to the popular culture”,¹⁰² which means that high culture cannot exist regardless material culture as expression of everyday life. Paraphrasing Ginzburg, it is possible to say that recognizing the value of material culture is to take a choice that favors the assumption of “a weak scientific status to achieve significant results” rather than take “a strong scientific status to get results” already proven to be of “minor interest”.¹⁰³ Everything that man makes, manufactures, processes with the “truth of hands”, is necessarily bound to the environment and its materials, which respond to fixed laws in time and space, as stable parameters that we can still understand and learn.¹⁰⁴

Methods of material culture have been sometimes considered irrational and wrong, but, on the contrary, they’re strongly connected to the scientific methods; a difference between the two can be better found in purposes: if the empirical thought aims at the practical resolution of the problem, the scientific thinking wants to understand “causes of the anomalies observed”¹⁰⁵. They both advances by trial and errors. Nevertheless, material culture is always followed by the “immaterial culture”, and this come into evidence when we try to learn “any manual labor [...] the knowledge and will to do something interact so quickly, as if they were one”¹⁰⁶

In this sense, the material culture deserves a new dignity, because it tells us something about what we are and how we understand the world:

“people can learn about themselves through the things they make,
[...] material culture matters”¹⁰⁷

¹⁰² Cfr. Pracchi, “Studio delle tecniche...”, *op.cit.* p.17.

¹⁰³ Cfr. Ginzburg, C. (1979), “Spie. Radici di un paradigma indiziario, in argani, A.(ed.), *Crisi della Ragione*, Einaudi, Torino, p.92

¹⁰⁴ Cfr. Mannoni, T. (2009), “Cultura Materiale e Cultura Esistenziale”, in Pracchi, V. (ed.), *Lo studio delle tecniche costruttive storiche: stato dell’arte e prospettive di ricerca*, Nodo Libri, Como, p.151.

¹⁰⁵ The reference is to the recognition of the rationality of empirical knowledge by Francis Bacon, cit. in *Ibid.*, p.154.

¹⁰⁶ Cfr. Mannoni, *op. cit.*, p.152

¹⁰⁷ Cfr. Sennet, *op.cit.* p.8.

and for this reason it is worth to be recognized as powerful tool for improving heritage communication.

1.3 The Role of Learning Processes

1.3.1 Learning from Others: Practice and Mirror Neurons

For the purposes of this work, it seems however important to briefly analyze the “other side” of the problem of the public access to culture, which is related to how people learn and which are the processes that allow and help us to understand reality. The first concern is thus to human brain mechanism of understanding and to theories of mirror neurons.

The study of mirror neurons is particularly important for the understanding of the relationship that man establishes with other individuals and objects.

A first evidence of the existence of mirror neurons was detected in the Nineties by a team of scientists led by Prof. Giacomo Rizzolatti at the University of Parma (Italy). Studying the brain of some macaques, scientists were able to observe how some neurons were activated both while performing a certain action, and during the observation of the same action performed by another subject. The significance of the discovery of mirror neurons is particularly linked to the opportunity to understand how individuals relate to their environment, how they recognize gestures and actions, as well as to the ways in which our brain learns by observing the action of other individuals (imitation).

Although direct detection of the existence of mirror neurons in humans is still lacking, several indirect tests have shown the existence of a mirror system in the brain of men, too, with some significant differences.

Among the most relevant, especially for the purposes of this work, recent studies have shown that in humans, the activation of mirror neurons occurs also in the case of the observation of actions apparently devoid of purpose or sense and in the case of individual movements that form a more complex action.¹⁰⁸ Furthermore mirror neurons seem not to require the presentation of a real scene to be activated,¹⁰⁹ which suggest an important role in determining human’s capacity to imitate other’s action.

¹⁰⁸ Cfr. Rizzolatti, G., Craighero, L., (2004), “The Mirror-Neuron System”, in *Annual review of Neuroscience*, n.27, Annual Reviews, 2004, p. 172.

¹⁰⁹ Cfr. Rizzolatti, G., Fabbri-Destro, M. (2008), “The Mirror System and its role in social cognition”, in *Current Opinion on Neurobiology*, n. 18, Elsevier Science Ltd, p.181

Thus, the main function of mirror neurons is to mediate the understanding of actions made by others: each time we watch another individual performing an action, neurons representing that action are activated in the observer premotor cortex. The motor representation produced in the observer is the same that would be spontaneously generated during active action and whose outcome is well known to the acting subject. By this way, the mirror system translate “the visual information into knowledge”¹¹⁰

Another fundamental aspect of the functioning of mirror system is linked to the connection that seems to exist between the capacity of activation of these neurons and prior knowledge stored in our memory. On the basis of some experiments, it has been possible to detect as in humans the activation of mirror neurons occurs particularly in the observation of actions belonging to the motor repertoire already present in the individual. Instead, in the case of unknown actions, the perception of stimuli determines the activation of other perceptive mechanisms (such as the view).¹¹¹

This last consideration has particularly interesting consequences on human ability of imitation and learning by imitation: some studies have shown that when an action is already part of the motor repertoire of the individual, he'll be more primed to repeat the action just observed,¹¹² that suggests the fundamental role of motor repertoire in understanding other's action. An example to better illustrate this point can thus be useful:

“Imagine that a pianist is demonstrating a given chord or a given sequence of chords on a soundless piano. From time to time, the pianist deceives his students by performing finger movements that are similar to the chord movements from a motor point of view, but which are devoid of any musical meaning. Mary is an absolute beginner, while John is already a good pianist. The hoax of the teacher will be immediately understood by John, who surprised will ask the teacher what his strange finger movements are for, while Mary will not be able to recognize the difference between the true and the fake chords. In other words, knowing how to play the piano provides a different kind of understanding of the observed movements.”¹¹³

Referring to the example, “there's no reason to assume that Mary is less able than John in reading the mind of the teacher”, but the real problem is that “she

¹¹⁰ Cfr. Rizzolatti & Craighero, *op.cit.*, p. 176

¹¹¹ Cfr. *Ibid.*, p. 179

¹¹² Cfr. *Ibid.*, p. 180

¹¹³ Cfr. Rizzolatti, G., Sinigaglia, C. (2011), “Through the looking glass: Self and others”, in *Consciousness and Cognition*, n.20, Elsevier Science Ltd., p.67

cannot actually understand *what* the teacher is doing”. And this will happen whether the teacher is playing true or fake chords on the piano.

This evidence shows us that the richer is our repertoire, the shaper our sensitivity to other’s action, and that our ability to understand actions and behavior of other individuals strictly depends on the development of our personal expertise. Moreover, researches showed that not only the mirror system, together with the development of our experience, is able to help us understanding the goals in observed motor actions, but by the same way we can also anticipate the motor intention underlying the action of others.¹¹⁴ This also implies that our understanding of others’ action can occur on two levels: lower or higher. The former refers to single movements, the latter implies to understand other’s motor goals and intentions¹¹⁵.

What is so special about mirror system is that mirror neurons seem to discharge when we’re simply observing another individual acting. The actions of others are thus compared by our brain to our own motor possibility: “because of this mapping we can share a motor common ground with the others”, and thanks to such a sharing “we may represent a given motor action as our own or as being performed by someone else”¹¹⁶

Basing on these observation it has been therefore possible to assume that the mirror system “not only underlies action understanding, but also, and most importantly, solely allows us to understand the action of others ‘from inside’”¹¹⁷

For the purposes of this research, some considerations can be drawn from the brief survey proposed above:

1. the discovery of mirror neurons suggests an intrinsic ability to understand the actions of others “from inside”: whenever we see others doing things, we can understand goals and anticipate intentions, thanks to the activation of neurons related to our motor skills, thus allowing a deep understanding of others’ behavior; when understanding and knowledge development are linked to the action, and then practice, the learning activity seems to be in some ways more immediate, for biological reasons pertaining to the human neurological system;
2. researches have highlighted as the richness of the motor repertoire of each individual can facilitate understanding of the activities of others, from a simple understanding (single actions and movements) to the more complex one that includes goals and intentions; This implies that the prior knowledge, however, influence the understanding of reality, and the contextualization of learning situations in a circumstance of past experience will be more effective for the observer;

¹¹⁴ Cfr. *Ibid*, p.68

¹¹⁵ Cfr. *Ibid*, p. 71

¹¹⁶ Cfr. *Ibid*, p.70

¹¹⁷ Cfr. *Ibid*, p.64

3. the discovery of mirror neurons also illustrates how, by the observation of others' actions, our brain is able to map the individual movements and compare and classify them into our motor repertoire, thus allowing us to build a common motor ground with others. In this sense, even if knowledge of the observed action does not belong to our motor memory, the mirror system is able to interpret at least the simplest movements that form the complex action onto our own motor possibilities.
4. finally, mirror neurons also explain much about our ability to learn by observing the actions of others (imitation). Researches on mirror neurons has also shown that the formation of motor memories is strongly facilitated when subjects "both observe and perform the same movement"¹¹⁸, stressing the importance of learning by doing. This perspective suggests the significance of learning approaches typical of the "craft" sphere, in the context of which learning occurs primarily as copying the practices of others.¹¹⁹ Following this line, understanding actions is often easier when observed and imitated, rather than explained verbally, and this is likely because "language is not an adequate 'mirror-tool' for the physical movements of the human body"¹²⁰

Briefly surveying studies about mirror neurons, the research tried to find in neurological sciences some references in order to better clarify the significant role of action and practice in human processes of understanding.

The following chapters will move on the fields of social sciences and pedagogy, focusing on situated cognition, processes of learning by doing and the role of prior experience in understanding.

1.3.2 Situated Cognition and Learning by Doing

The most common conception of education is generally based on the assumption that learning is a process which has a beginning and an end and is separated from the rest of our activities.

"situations that bring learning into focus are not necessarily those in which we learn most": this means that learning is part of our lives and that we learn in different ways during life. We of course learn in school, and this is a kind of imposed learning: we have to memorize information, we must remember data and things, etc. In other moments of our lives, learning is intensified, as for example

¹¹⁸ Cfr. Rizzolatti&Fabbri-Destro, *op.cit.*, p. 183

¹¹⁹ Cfr. Sennet, *op.cit.*, p. 58

¹²⁰ Cfr. *Ibid.*, p. 95

we hear or see something that arise a sense of familiarity, something that make us remind what we already know and teach us some new aspects about something that is already art of our background. Again, in some other moments, learning gels by itself, as for example a child learns his first word...¹²¹

Recent studies has tried to keep distance from formal approaches to education, suggesting learning as situated in activities connected to our experience of participating in everyday life.

“[...] Non ti devono imporre le cose. La mia maestra di sostegno, tanto carina, ci faceva imparare le cose con il gioco. Io ero la più brava del gruppo, però del gruppo di sostegno. Prima della classe mai. Perché lei ci faceva vedere le cose in modo diverso [...]”¹²²

Moreover, methods of didactic education assume the idea that there’s a necessary separation between knowing and doing, considering conceptual knowledge as abstracted, self-contained and theoretically independent from the situation in which it is learned and used. On the contrary:

“The process of engaging in practice always involves the whole person, both acting and knowing at once. In practice, so-called manual activity is not thoughtless, and mental activity is not disembodied.”¹²³

This implies that much of what is taught in formal education turns out to be almost useless and generally unsuccessful.

Situated cognition theories propose a different approach, stressing the importance of situation and direct experiences as support for interpretation.¹²⁴ Following this idea, knowledge is a product of the activity and situations in which it is produced, and for this reason it involves continuous social negotiations. This particularly implies that all knowledge is continually evolving with each new occasion of use, because new situations, negotiations, activities necessary recast in a new, more complex textured form, and consequently knowledge is always under construction.

¹²¹ Cfr. Wenger, E. (1998), *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, Identity*, Cambridge University Press, p.8.

¹²² Cfr. Di Mento, M.(2007), “Museo e «non visitatori»: riflessioni sugli assenti”, in *Economia della Cultura*, n.2/2007, Il Mulino, Bologna, Eng. transl.: “You mustn’t impose things. My so kind support teacher, she made us learn things through the game. I was the best in the group, but in the support group. First of the class, never. Because she made us see things in a different way”

¹²³ Cfr. Wenger, “Communities of Practice: Learning”, *op. cit.*, p.47

¹²⁴ Cfr. Lunce, L.M., (2006), “Stimulations: Bringing the benefits of situated learning to the traditional classroom”, in *Journal of Applied Education Technology*, Vol. 3, N. 1, Eduquery, Denton TX, p.39

Knowledge may be compared to a set of tools:¹²⁵ in this sense, it is possible to acquire a tool but to be unable to use it, and in the same way we could say that even if learners acquire theories, they may be anyway unable to use them. By contrast, the active use of a tool builds an increasingly rich understanding both of the tool itself, and of the world in which the tool is commonly used.

Moreover, the community and its viewpoint strongly influence the way a tool is used: for example, both carpenters and smiths use hammers but differently, and the different use is determined by a particular accumulated insight of the communities, which make impossible to use the tool appropriately without understanding the related culture. In the same way both engineers and physicists use mathematics, but with different approaches. Consequently, conceptual tools are products of social negotiation and the appropriate use is not simply a function of the abstract concept alone: activity, concept and culture are interdependent and learning must consider all the three.

Very often schooling deny students to engage the relevant cultural domain of a specific concept, so that the way students understand these concepts is very different from the real use by practitioners: on the contrary, learners need to be exposed to the authentic activity, they need to see how practitioners use culture to wrestle against real problems of the world. Conversely, didactic education provide students a hybrid method, that is the culture of schooling applied to reality, completely different from practitioner's one, inducing learners to misunderstand concepts. As a consequence, this limiting learning process causes intimidation and produces a sort of "cultural phobia"¹²⁶.

The theory then suggests to privilege an essential relation between knowledge and practice¹²⁷ (authentic situation), proposing situated apprentice methods as effective strategies for improving learning by direct and indirect experience of the reality of the world.

This also means that situated cognition theories then introduce two key issues for the development of this research:

1. Contextualization of the experience as situated knowledge (through scenarios, simulations) to improve the learning process through a direct connection between theory and practice. This first point is particularly relevant if referring to occasions of cultural communication when the tendency is to tell only the most important stories, such as, the history of victories and winners, without reference to the consequences and problems that some events have produced on the real life and practice of human

¹²⁵ Cfr. Brown, S.J., Collins, A., Duguid, P. (1989), "Situated Cognition and the Culture of Learning", in *Educational Researcher*, Vol. 18, n.1 (Jan-Feb.), American Education Research Association, p. 33.

¹²⁶ Cfr. *Ibid.*, p.34

¹²⁷ Cfr. Mannoni, *op.cit.*, pag.152

existence. It is thus important to build concrete and detailed backgrounds in order to develop a deeper and more complex understanding of the reality.

2. Situated knowledge as the direct observation of experience. As also pointed out discussing material culture and mirror neurons, direct observation and learning by doing are essential when learning by imitation and for the acquisition of skills. Direct observation offers the possibility of a more immediate understanding of the information and, in some contexts, provides the translation of knowledge into competence. However, in situations of cultural communication, it is not always possible to provide direct experience observation or learning by doing, but certainly it is important to take advantage of these opportunities whenever possible, for the significant implications concerning the improvement of learning processes.

The topic discussed thus far mainly relate to the importance of context and experience for the improvement of the processes of learning and understanding of reality. However, the importance of situated cognition also affects two other significant aspects for the purposes of the research:¹²⁸

1. firstly, situated cognition involves not only formal education, but the everyday experience of learning;
2. secondly, situated cognition also involves learning in collaborative experiences.

The first point stresses that learning from experience, situated knowledge and cognition belong to a lifelong process, which implies that learning is not only a matter of formal education, but refers to the experience of life. In the context of the present work, this means that heritage fruition and enjoyment don't simply refer to enculturation methods, but to lifelong-learning as individual investment in a process of personal identity building.¹²⁹

The second point concerns the possibility, through situated cognition experiences, of creating and operating in the context of "communities of practice". Participation in this type of collaborative groups has shown to be so effective for the improvement of individuals' enculturation processes, as for the development of efficient solutions to complex problems that communities of practice are able to produce, better than competitive contexts.¹³⁰ For these reasons, the issue of communities of practice is considered as a significant instrument to improve communication in contexts such as heritage conservation and enhancement, too.

¹²⁸ Cfr. Lunce, *op. cit.*, p.39

¹²⁹ Cfr. Canziani, A. (2009), "Un ponte tra cultura, economia e scienze cognitive", in Putignano, F. (ed.), *Learning Districts. Patrimonio culturale, conoscenza e sviluppo locale*, Maggioli, Milano.

¹³⁰ Cfr. Sennet, *op.cit.*, p. 32

1.3.3 Learning Belonging to Inherent Experience and Personality

As seen in previous chapter, common teaching methods privileges transmission models of education based on abstract concepts that should be assimilated by learners outside context and situation. This kind of method has been described as unsuccessful, or, at least, limiting. Moreover, these transmission methods use to consider knowers as empty boxes to be filled, with no consideration for prior knowledge and experiences characterizing learners. Following the transmission model, the information communicated by the teacher is received with no modification by the student, which implies that the receiver/learner is substantially passive. This is clearly impossible in reality, because all individuals, young or adult, have already experienced the world and have acquired a system of experiences and ideas which deeply condition their behavior and personality.

Disciplines as hermeneutics and constructivism, then can be helpful in better enlightening the role of experience in the understanding of world: as a matter of fact, both hermeneutics and constructivism suggest that knowledge is strictly related to active interpretation of previous experience. Particularly hermeneutics, focusing on ways through which understanding can be produced, stresses the function of interpretation intended as a process by which individuals make sense of their experience.

In hermeneutics, then, meaning is constituted through a circular action, the hermeneutic circle, where understanding develops thanks to the continuous movement between the whole and the parts of a work, and between present and past.

For hermeneutics philosophers, meaning-making is inevitably shaped by prior knowledge: the process of meaning-construction is similar to the structure of dialog and depends on a question and answer system, where answers are built on those questions that have already been asked and solved. This movement involves the whole and the part, but also the present and the past; the trajectory of the process is strongly dependent on what we already know,¹³¹ and modifications to the sense we construct are made constantly adding or denying something,¹³² implying that any interpretation is never fully completed.

¹³¹ Cfr. Hooper-Greenhill, E. (2000), “Nuovi valori, nuove voci, nuove narrative: l’evoluzione dei modelli comunicativi nei musei d’arte”, in Bodo, S. (ed.), *Il museo relazionale, riflessioni ed esperienze europee*, Fondazione Giovanni Agnelli, Torino, p.23-24;

¹³² Cfr. Hooper-Greenhill, E. (1999), “Learning in art museums: strategies of interpretation”, in Hooper-Greenhill, E. (ed.), *The Educational Role of the Museum*, Routledge, New York, p. 51

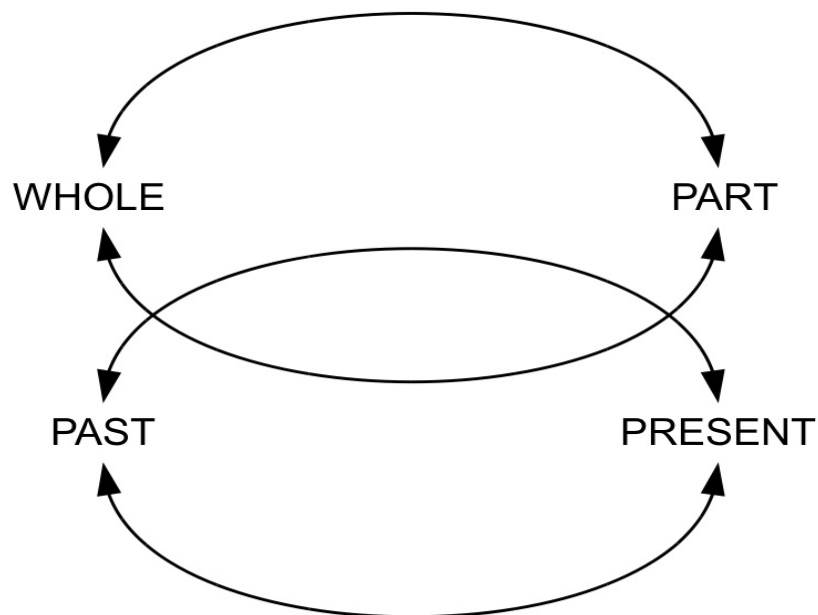


Figure 3: Hermeneutic Circles by Hans Georg Gadamer¹³³

Accordingly, knowledge emerges through a never-ending interpretation process of experience, directly made by the knower, and not intended as an objective body of concepts that can be transmitted. This implies that learners are active subjects of the process of making sense of the experience, which introduces the relativity of knowledge, strictly bounded to individual culture.

Consequently, the classical methods of transmitting knowledge used in didactic education and teaching definitively appears as ineffective,¹³⁴ and constructivist theories better suggest apprentice approaches instead of teaching: this means that the role of teachers is not *giving* notions to students supposed to accept them as true, but *building* stimulating context for the production of interpretation and, therefore, understanding. In this perspective, the relationship between learners and teachers become more similar to a conversation, where

¹³³ Cfr. Gadamer, H.G. (1976b), “The Historicity of understanding”, in *Critical Sociology: Selected Readings*, Connerton, P. (ed.), Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, p.117:

“We know this from the learning of ancient languages. We learn that we must ‘construe’ a sentence before we attempt to understand the individual parts of the sentence in their linguistic meaning. But the process of constructing is itself already governed by an expectation of meaning that follows from the context of what has gone before.”

¹³⁴ Cfr. *Ibid*, p. 51

they both play an important role, and teachers can be considered both trainers and learners.

The need for considering prior experience for its implication in building a more effective learning process has been already highlighted in previous chapters, as, for example, in Tilden's principles of interpretation. Constructivism and hermeneutics theories seem to endorse what previously illustrated, noting the role of past experience as founding element in human understanding processes.

Referring to the purposes of this work, the theme of prior experience recalls a critical element for the development of effective communication strategies, as already stressed discussing interpretation and presentation theories: as a matter of fact, prior experience is strictly dependent on the subjective experience of each individual, which determines a rather complex process of identification of people's needs. For these reasons, the discussion developed so far has tried to refer also to issues of practice, material culture, physical action, direct experience, in an attempt to find a common ground of understanding on which to build appropriate communication strategies to intercept the expectations and capacities of the widest range possible of people.

2 COMMUNICATION AS A TOOL AND TOOLS FOR COMMUNICATION

COMMUNICATION AS A TOOL AND TOOLS FOR COMMUNICATION: A SHORT SUMMARY

The previous chapter has tried to define the theoretical references for the research. Among main issues, it raised the problem of the recognition of heritage as use value, thus involving interaction between the user and the object, which must be guaranteed through effective cultural experiences. Moreover, restoration issues have been suggested to be a powerful tool for improving the cultural experience, because of the particular perspective that they offer about heritage. Following this line, this chapter considers the problem of communication more closely, trying to build the state of the art of the use of conservation issues for the communication of cultural heritage.

2.1 Communication as a Tool for Building a Relationship with Visitors

The first section illustrates the attitude of cultural institutions regarding visitors. The issues considered, are mainly taken from the field of museums, where, differently from restoration, the problem of approaching to the visitor has been already considered, both in literature and in many different experiences. Often visitors are seen as very important in terms of economic incomes, but they are also judged as intruders ready to destroy cultural heritage. Clearly, the public use of heritage poses a question of conservation, particularly concerning the material consistency of the work of art, which implies collective awareness about the value of heritage in order to ensure protection. Turning mindless visitors into mindful visitors requires first of all to attract people to participate to cultural experiences, facilitating access through more welcoming attitudes. For this reason the chapter suggest some main strategies: first of all trying to make people feel at ease and provide opportunities to be independent in building their own cultural experience;

secondly an approach to the physicality and materiality of things which is often much more effective than a communication focused on abstract ideas of heritage; finally, limiting restriction and explaining risk management, to suggest what behaviors are important to ensure the protection of heritage, shifting the focus from negative to positive and active role of people.

2.2 Communication as a Tool for Education

The second section deals with education as privileged tool for improving people behavior through a better communication of the fragility of heritage. First of all communication as youth education is considered, stressing the fact that very often the difficulties in approaching people to cultural heritage are due to the weakness of educational programs. Particularly, the need for multisensory participative experiences about conservation issues in youth education is stressed through the brief description of some ICCROM projects and of the “ELAICH - Educational Linkage Approach to Cultural Heritage” program.

Moreover, communication as education is also identified to be a fundamental element for raising awareness in adults, quoting again some programs promoted by ICCROM. The section then closes with a reflection on raising awareness in professionals and institutions, highlighting the need to make them recognize their fundamental role in the management and conservation of heritage.

2.3 Tools for Communication: Traditional Instruments

The two following sections analyze then the instruments commonly used for communication in the field of heritage enhancement, firstly referring to more "classic" tools and then considering the most "advanced". The first section focuses, first of all, on events, stressing the central role of the political part in presentations of restorations, openings of big exhibitions, etc.: the interest in a communication that can enhance human capital and effectively protect heritage is generally marginal and the focus is on the ability of administrations in fundraising and/or in meeting (at least apparently) public interests. Nevertheless, the knowledge generated while working or studying on heritage are not considered as a tool for enhancement.

A second part of the section analyzes instead the field of publishing, as one of the most common tool of communication applied in the field of heritage enhancement. Very often the main concern of publications is to present results of interventions, giving a very static image of heritage; on the contrary, these tools of communication should work on contents in order to provide a more complete and attractive presentation. Two examples are presented in order to better illustrate the issue: the first is referring to another ICCROM project, dedicated to help guidebooks to include conservation issues in their texts; the second refers to the publication dedicated to the restoration works of Santo Stefano

Church in Lentate sul Seveso (Milano, Italy), raising some remarkable consideration about the effective results of the initiative.

2.4 Tools for Communication: New Approaches

This section is instead dedicated to more advanced and recent tools for communication of cultural heritage. First of all, the discussion considers the topic of advertising, underlining its effectiveness in catching people's attention, but raising some doubts concerning the efficacy of such strategies in communicating the values and the importance of heritage. The question of advertising is then analyzed debating the interesting case of the restoration of Coliseum, developing some considerations about the management and the role recognized to communication, in the context of such a particular intervention.

The section then moves to the use of computer technology and virtual reality for the communication of cultural heritage, focusing on virtual reconstructions, and highlighting the potentials of the tool particularly for the opportunity to represent many aspects and many interpretations of cultural heritage, proposing a more complex and dynamic representation.

Finally, some cases of scaffolding opened to the public are considered, not much for the innovative instruments used by these experiences, but because of the original perspective they propose. As a matter of fact, these opportunities allow people to approach the monument from an unexpected point of view, also to understand issues of conservation and material culture as fundamental parts of built historic heritage.

2.1 Communication as a Tool for Building a Relationship with Visitors

2.1.1 Communication as a Tool for Welcoming Visitors

The very first approach to visitors is an important step of the establishment of effective strategies of communication. Differently from the field of conservation of historic buildings, the problem of dealing with people, and specifically with visitors, has been already widely considered in the context of museums, both in literature and in many experiences, and for this reason, most of the considerations and examples quoted in the following discussion will be taken from that cultural area.

Very often visitors are considered as ambiguous entities by cultural institutions: on the one hand, they recognize the importance that visitors can imply in terms of economic incomes, but on the other hand, tourists are often seen as intruders, ignorant masses, threatening and ready to destroy, degrade, damage, devalue cultural heritage.

“the housekeeping tasks of the curators are to efface the effects of the visitor.”¹³⁵

This is probably due to the fact that still there’s no recognition of the dignity of the visitor as a key player in the production of culture and in the protection of heritage: the visitor accesses, sees, reads, consumes culture, but not necessarily he is asked to understand and participate in the enhancement and preservation process. By this way, visitors are quantitatively evaluated in economic terms, but there’s no specific interest for the quality of the visit, and for the implications that this perspective could offer:

“Quantity and not quality seems to be the name of the game, and the evaluation of the work of the museums is measured by weight of bodies, rather than by depth of experience.”¹³⁶

Moreover, organizations and cultural institutions very often see their audience as just made up by experts and consequently the communication does not deal with broad public involvement in cultural experiences, but merely provide a transfer of information that should be received and understood by

¹³⁵ Cfr. Hooper-Greenhill, E., (1988), “Counting Visitors or Visitors Who Count?”, in Lumley, R. (ed.), *The museum Time Machine*, Routledge, New York, p. 224.

¹³⁶ Cfr. *Ibid.*, p. 211.

those who already know and wants to deepen their cultural background. As discussed in the previous chapter of Theoretical Framework, the pool of users interested in the access to culture has become increasingly broad. Today, the public includes experts, amateurs, but also people who have no cultural background, who seek mostly to satisfy a “bisogno di decorosa riuaità”,¹³⁷ and they see cultural activities as a way to reach a sort of status symbol. The more and more widespread need for culture is certainly an essential opportunity to improve the quality of life, but it also raises a question of conservation, which cannot be solved without involving the public in the process of protection, spreading a deep sense of collective responsibility.

Walter Benjamin even warned the risk of loss of the aura in exposing cultural heritage to the public fruition:

“oggi, attraverso il peso assoluto assunto dal suo valore di esponibilità, l’opera d’arte diventa una formazione con funzioni completamente nuove, delle quali quella di cui siamo consapevoli, cioè quella artistica, si profila come quella che in futuro potrà venir riconosciuta marginale.”¹³⁸

Without embracing such drastic consideration, the public use of heritage poses anyway a conservation problem, particularly concerning the material consistency of the work of art. This implies the need to spread awareness of the use-value of heritage and the need to ensure, as far as possible, its enjoyment for future generations, recognizing the key role of the whole community in the process of protection. Quoting a particularly effective statement, the problem is to turn “mindless” visitors into “mindful” ones.¹³⁹

Last but not least, excluding the public from qualitative experiences of cultural heritage is a real anti-marketing strategy: as a matter of fact, the visitor will have no interest in repeating bad experiences, limiting the opportunities for improving economic incomes.

Nevertheless, even if social needs have clearly changed considerably, the response from the cultural institutions seems still slow, and the overall trend is to present cultural heritage as something inaccessible to most people, something to keep in a glass box and that cannot be contaminated by some kind of utility.

¹³⁷ Cfr. Montella, “Valore e...”, *op.cit.*, p.102. Eng. transl.: “need for decorous rituals”.

¹³⁸ Cfr. Benjamin, *op.cit.*, p.5. Eng. transl.: “Today, through the increasing importance of the exposition-value, the work of art becomes a formation with totally new features, and the one of which we are aware, that is the artistic one, is emerging as the one that will be possibly recognized as marginal in the future.”

¹³⁹ Cfr. Moscardo, G. (1996), “Mindful Visitors. Heritage and Tourism”, in *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol.23, n.2, Elsevier Science Ltd, Great Britain.

“Je n’aime pas trop les musées. Il y en a beaucoup d’admirables, il n’en est point de délicieux. Les idées de classement, de conservation et d’utilité publique, qui sont justes et claires, ont peu de rapport avec les délices. [...] Je suis dans un tumulte de créatures congelées. [...] Déjà glacé par le geste autoritaire et le sentiment de la contrainte, je pénètre dans quelque salle de sculpture où règne une froide confusion. [...] Devant moi se développe dans le silence un étrange désordre organisé. Je suis saisi d’une horreur sacrée. [...] Bientôt, je ne sais plus ce que je suis venu faire dans ces solitudes cirées, qui tiennent du temple et du salon, du cimetière et de l’école... Suis-je venu m’instruire, ou chercher mon enchantement, ou bien remplir un devoir et satisfaire aux convenances ? [...] Quelle fatigue, me dis-je, quelle barbarie ! Tout ceci est inhumain.”¹⁴⁰

The criticalities suggested by Paul Valéry in the quotation proposed above pertain three main issues:

1. The quality of museum spaces is low, they are described as cold and similar to a cemetery;
2. The works of art are out of context and it is impossible to understand the sense of the exhibition (“désordre organisé”);
3. Too many works of art are put together and it is difficult to remember all of them (“tumulte de créatures”)

Contemporary museums have in most cases already tried to face these problems, also using more welcoming and effective communication tools, but it is undeniable that the idea of museum as something out of time and context, as something difficult is still present in everyone’s perception.

“Domanda: Quali aggettivi associ al museo?”

Risposta: Lezione, scuola. Noia. Come un teatro.

D: Per chi è il museo?

R: per una persona colta, interessata, che ha voglia di imparare, di istruirsi, di vedere e di capire. Per me, no.”¹⁴¹

The literature about museums management very often complains the still too low levels of attendance by the vast public and this is probably due to the fact

¹⁴⁰ Cfr. Valéry, P. (1960), “Le problème des musées”, in *Œuvres*, tome II - Pièces sur l’art, Nrf, Gallimard, Bibl. de la Pléiade. First published in *Le Gaulois*, April, 4th 1923. p. 1290

¹⁴¹ Cfr. Di Mento, *op.cit.*, p.211. Quotation from an interview to a doorkeeper, taken by the author of the article. Eng. transl. “Question: What adjectives do you think are related to the museum? Answer: Lesson, School. Bore. As a theater. Q: For whom is the museum? A: For educated and interested people, for people who want to learn, to educate themselves, to see and understand. Not for me.”

that the museum still does not fully play its role as a cultural communicator, which refers to the inability to attract the audience through different and more effective languages and tools.

2.1.1.1 Make People Feel Comfortable

The first thing that museum should consider developing a communication that makes people feel at ease is not to treat them as inadequate and provide opportunities to be independent in building their own cultural experience.

A short (but not exhaustive) list of strategies could be drafted as follows:

1. Provide the widest variety possible of activities: the public of museums can vary significantly. Once the visitor approaches the cultural site his expectation can't be always met by the solely observations of what is visible. Activities organized inside the museum should not only consider age, but also the fact that every single visitor has its own way of approaching experiences of any kind and he can feel more involved by some communication tools better than others. Conferences, videos, printed materials, workshops (and many others more), are all tools that should be provided inside museums, in order to meet everyone's expectations and abilities.
2. Allow visitors to control their experience: ensuring tools for orientation and materials that can guide the independent visitor is very important because we generally feel more involved when we can build experiences on our own. Very often cultural places look like meaningless spaces where disorientation and the feeling to get lost are predominant. If the visitor doesn't feel to have a power to influence what he's doing he'll never be able to pay attention for details, he'll never feel involved enough.
3. Interpretation should connect to personal experience of visitors: this is probably one of the most difficult things to realize. As introduced through issues of situated cognition, learning is much more effective when dealing with our personal experience or when situated in real context. If the latter is maybe more easy to be achieved (possibly through workshops or other experiences of learning by doing) the former involves not only assuming individuals' previous experience, but also the understanding of interpretive community of belonging. Very often the literature about cultural sites and museums management suggests to carefully screen and classify visitors in order to better tune communication strategies. If this approach can be helpful, there's anyway a risk for excluding some groups of subjects. Thus, trying to find a common "code" for understanding, while providing extremely physical experiences, seems to be to be much more effective in many cases.
4. Develop challenge, doubt, questions: museums and cultural sites should work on keeping the visitor attention level very high not only by using

impressive and high-tech tools (such as, multimedia, virtual reality, etc.), but also forcing people to think about what they're experiencing, providing conflict, ambiguity, raising questions and doubts. This is another opportunity for the visitors to control the level and the quality of the communication they receive, and to feel more involved in what they're doing.

Clearly, the best strategy to improve visitor's experience is to provide continuous assistance, giving to people the opportunity to deal with problems (not only in understanding) directly with guides, interpreters or other subjects who can help them to face difficulties.

Unfortunately, this is not always possible, and the visitor is left alone to understand what is around him. Moreover, very often it also happens that interpreters are not prepared enough to help in better experiencing culture, privileging a "formal" educational approach that makes people feel completely inadequate and far from cultural heritage. This implies that working on languages, even if not directly spoken by guides and interpreters, and codes to meet people understanding rises as a priority.

2.1.1.2 The Language of Museums

"prima che la lingua bisognerebbe cambiare la testa di burocrati e professori. Che scrivendo non pensano alla gente normale, ma solo ai colleghi e rivali accademici"¹⁴²

As already stressed too often communication inside museums or at cultural sites does not take into account the diversity of expectations, knowledge and skills of individuals. The layout of exhibitions, however innovative, is almost never sufficient to explain something more than what can be learned from the mere contemplation of objects. Even less effective are the descriptions and captions that follow what is exposed: the works of art are often supplied of incomprehensible inscriptions, because of the excessive technicality of terms used, or for the lack of information provided. Even the most banal caption, often ignores the fact that most visitors could not have an idea of what a "plaster cast" or an "oil on canvas" might be: these are terms that can lead to the most creative interpretations, but that generally do not help visitors in understanding.

The work of art is an object made of some material and belonging to a given context and to a specific culture, and communication should not forget these elements. Certainly, many progresses have been made in recent times, but in most cases, the museum still does not consider the feelings and needs of the

¹⁴² Cfr. Chiaberge, R. (2007), "Turisti smarriti tra fibule e membranacei", in *Il Sole 24 Ore*, n.97, 8 Aprile. Engl.trans.: "First that the language, we should change the head of bureaucrats and professors. While writing, they do not think to normal people, but only to academic colleagues and rivals."

public. A painting that for someone might represent sublime art, because thanks to prior knowledge it has been possible to understand the code and the message that the artist wanted to communicate, for somebody else, painting is nothing but “the art of protecting flat surfaces from the weather and exposing them to the critic.”¹⁴³

As previously suggested, trying to offer more physical experiences and explaining how things are made in their materiality, allows a more immediate understanding and appreciation of heritage. A personal example is helpful to clarify this point.

Recently, I had the occasion to attend to the inauguration of an exhibition dedicated to inlaid Stradivari violins, in Cremona.¹⁴⁴ It was, according to the most, a great opportunity, because five of the about ten inlaid violins of the great Master would have been exposed, for the first time in the world, all together. Why not to attend to such an event, then?

After a brief introduction by local authorities, who insisted on the exceptional nature of the event and how they had been successful in organizing such a thing, all participants were invited to enter the room.

Personally not prepared about the history and importance of the art of inlay in violin making, I found myself in front of a very poor exposition: 5 crystal cases in which musical instruments were on display, and, by my own point of view, they all looked the same (only thanks to the support of my mate-violin maker I finally noticed that the inlays were not exactly all the same ...).

Captions reported not so immediate messages:

“Antonio Stradivari.

violino/violin *Sunrise* (1677)

Dr Herbert R. and Evelyn Axelrod Collection. USA CH”

My first thought, reading the caption of the first showcase on display, was dedicated to trying to understand what the *Sunrise* had to do with a violin. Only a little later, and again thanks to the guidance of my mate-violin maker I could understand that each caption was reporting author, nickname of the violin, year of completion, ownership of the instrument. Profane as I am (and have remained the same, despite the participation to the exhibition), I found the experience incredibly boring, if not for one thing. Nearby the showcases with the violins a video screen had been installed in order to display a short documentary on how to do in practice the inlay of a musical instrument. Participants at the opening (with the exception of a large group of violin

¹⁴³ Cfr. Bierce, A. (1911), “The Devil’s Dictionary”, in *The Collected Works of Ambrose Bierce*, Vol. VII, The Neale Publishing Company, New York and Washington, p244.

¹⁴⁴ “Antonio Stradivari. L’estetica del sublime”, Cremona, Sep. 24th – Oct 9th 2011

makers, who however insisted in the devout observation of musical instruments) were all gradually crowding in front of the screen, amazed about how difficult it was and how much work was behind the design and construction of those two or three leaves inlaid on instruments seen just before. Some particularly impressed visitor was also tempted to return to the glass boxes to look more closely at the violins, now able, thanks to the acquisition of some competence, to interpret the extraordinary value.

Slowly, perhaps more attracted by the uneducated mass in front of the screen than by the video content, even experienced violin makers were moving to the display, leaving themselves being captured by the charm of images.

The video had taught something to all of us. Something that remains impressed in memory. I cannot tell now the difference between the instruments on display that day. But I know it's hard to make an inlay. I have respect for that work and I understand the need to preserve and enhance it.¹⁴⁵ I've also been able to see with my own eyes that the sublime beauty of these inlays is nothing but a work of the hands. Then even the inlay acquires a certain familiarity, it is close to my life experience, it belongs to me.

Nevertheless, the video had attracted the attention of experts. Looking at the craftsman in the documentary burning bones into a powder and then mix them with glue to make a black paste to fill the cuts previously made on the wood, my mate-violin maker exclaimed: "But this stuff has not been made for centuries! I would have gone instead to buy some black ink...". Somehow the video also had led experts to reflect on their profession and on what were the old techniques to achieve the same result which is reached through different tools today.

Leaving the idea of a superiority of the past is always very difficult. But the example has served to illustrate how an approach to the physicality and materiality of things is often more effective than trying to communicate something abstract as the sublimity of the work of art.

2.1.1.3 Restrictions and Risk Management for Raising Awareness

"Le porte si aprono, ma non è consentito entrare [...]. Le transenne (inutilizzate) per regolare il flusso di pubblico ammoniscono 'Vietato salire sulle transenne' e 'Vietato dare da mangiare agli

¹⁴⁵ Cfr. Gesché-Koning, N. (2002), "Cultural Tourism: New Opportunities and/or Challenges for Museum Education", in Dufresne-Tasse, C. (ed.), *L'evaluation, recherché appliqué aux multiples usages*, ICOM-CECA, Université de Montreal, Editions Multimondes, p.103

uccelli' [...] ogni area è delimitata e deserta, ad eccezione dei custodi, composti e all'erta nelle loro uniformi semi-militari.¹⁴⁶

The issue of approaching people accessing a cultural site also implies a reflection on restrictions, limitations and the management of risks for the conservation of cultural heritage.

As previously noted, visitors who access to museums are generally not very welcomed. The feeling is often of entering a military base or a hospital.

Bans are everywhere and rarely they explain the reasons for such hard regulations. Visitors are seen as a threat for heritage, and strategies for improving their behavior seem to be still inadequate.



Figure 4: Royal Mausoleum of Mauritania, Algery (Picture: G. Rehner 2010)



Figure 5: Caroussel, Paris, France (Picture: V. Martin, 2011)

¹⁴⁶ Cfr. Hooper-Greenhill, "Nuovi valori...", *op.cit.*, pp.1-2. Eng. transl.: "The doors open, but it is not allowed to enter [...]. The barriers (unused) to regulate the flow of visitors warn "Do not climb on barriers" and "Do not feed the birds" [...] each area is cordoned off and deserted, except for guardians, tidy and on the alert in their semi-military uniforms"

The use of restrictions generally does not help the visitor to understand the risks for heritage conservation, but rather to prohibit certain behaviors often stimulates the desire to violate the rules, that are interpreted as a denial of personal freedoms.

By contrast, the involvement of the public in understanding the fragility of heritage and conservation difficulties may positively affect attitudes.

The difference lies in trying to explain not only what we shouldn't do, but also to suggest what behaviors are important to ensure the protection of heritage, shifting the focus from negative to positive and active role of people.¹⁴⁷

The Cultural heritage field still sees little interest in developing tools for raising awareness, even if many interpretation and presentation manuals have been developed during time. Strategies for raising protective behaviors have mainly been implemented in the field of landscape and natural conservation. The attention on sustainable use of nature has seen a significant growth, especially in recent time: sustainable development, sustainable tourism, sustainable energy and sustainable use of land and natural resources are topics quite debated because they involve our health and our opportunities to survive in the future. The proximity of these themes to our perception is one of the reasons for the growing attention, and this also makes people more ready to understand their fundamental role in achieving common goals of protection.



Some interesting references about tools for raising awareness can be found in the literature. A recent experience is the one of *Communication, Education and Public Awareness toolkit for National Focal Points and NBSAP coordinators*,¹⁴⁸ which try to provide a set of suggestion useful to face the problem of awareness about matters of biodiversity, considering all levels of the problem, from policies, to stakeholders, to mass-media and, of course, public participation.

Moreover, as it will be also shown in the following section referring to the experience of tourist guides, the field of tourism management has also

¹⁴⁷ Cfr. Gesché-Koning, N. (2008), "Veni, Vidi, Vici. Museum and Monuments coping with tourism in Rome", in *Tourisme culturel: tendances et stratégies*, Colloque organisé par Pointe-à-Callière, musée d'archéologie et d'histoire de Montréal, et le Centre des sciences de Montréal. Du 29 septembre au 3 octobre.

¹⁴⁸ Cfr. Various Authors (2007), *Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) A toolkit for National Focal Points and NBSAP coordinators*, Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and IUCN, Montreal, Canada.

considered the issue, and an example can be quoted within the Practical Manual *Managing Tourist at World Heritage Sites* provided by UNESCO.¹⁴⁹ As a matter of fact, the manual includes a section dedicated to how to manage tourists behavior making them more aware of their role in heritage protection. The section suggests strategies for relieving the pressure on fragile heritage sites, educational programs in order to teach low-impact ways to visit sites and interpretation programs to teach the respect for a site's resources and protection issues.

These are just some examples to stress how the role of public participation should raise as a priority in many fields of conservation of natural and cultural resources.

Going back to the issue of restrictions, it is important that museums, as well as other cultural institutions and organizations, try to move the focus from prohibitions to explanations. Instead of warning about what the irresponsible visitors shouldn't do, they should rather inform people about what they can do in order to positively contribute to protection. Moreover it is important to explain why certain strategies are taken in order to manage conservation risks on the site: controlling the visitors number in order to relieve pressure on heritage, avoiding high heels in order to protect ancient floors, what is the purpose of the humidity control systems, etc., are all ways to explain people how many difficulties the conservation of cultural heritage concretely implies.

An interesting recent study on this matter has shown that visitors can be particularly sensitive to issues of risk management. In particular, the reference is to the study on the perception of the presence of dust inside spaces of a set of monuments in the United Kingdom.¹⁵⁰ As everyone working in the field of conservation of monuments very well knows, dust can potentially represent a danger, both in how it interacts with surfaces, visually and physically, and through abrasion during its removal. Removing dust is time-consuming and in many situations it can be also very expensive, therefore the best strategy is to remove it only when strictly necessary. Because the definition of this necessity clearly involves also the visitor perception of the impact of dust, it was decided to investigate it through questionnaires. The survey was led at four National Trust properties (Lanhydrock, Chastleton, Calke Abbey and Baddesley Clinton), along with a Historic Royal Palace and three English Heritage properties, at the beginning of 2000. Around 100 visitors per property were asked six questions by house staff who recorded the results. The questions were:

1. Which part of the room in your opinion needs most care?
2. Why do you think this part of the room needs such care?

¹⁴⁹ Cfr. Pedersen, A. (2002), *Managing Tourist at World Heritage Sites: a Practical Manual for World Heritage Sites Managers*, UNESCO World Heritage Centre.

¹⁵⁰ Cfr. Lithgow, K., Brimblecombe, P. (2003), "Dust - The visitors' point of view", in National Trust, *Views*, Issue 39, Winter 2003, pp.47 -49.

3. What words would you use to describe .the appearance of this room?
4. Do you think historic houses are in general dusty?
5. Why do you think dust in historic houses might cause us concern?
6. How would you improve cleaning in this room?

Results show that standards of housekeeping were positively evaluated and visitors clearly perceived them as to be more than just the removal of dust, but concerning a process of protection. Moreover, visitors seemed to be aware of the risks of over-cleaning and the professionalism needed in the care of those kinds of monuments and their contents. Furthermore, the presence of dust was also perceived as sign of history, the “patina” of time. However, an interesting contradiction aroused by the investigation was that while recognizing the difficulties of cleaning and attributing to dust a certain sense of time, visitors were oriented to ask for more dust removals. This clearly suggests a need for more communication and explanation of risks of cleaning in the protection of heritage, in order to make dust more acceptable in visitors perception.

2.2 Communication as a Tool for Education

2.2.1 Communication for Youth Education

The difficulties in approaching people to cultural heritage find their reasons also in the lack of heritage knowledge and of adequate cultural means for understanding its values. This is probably due to the weakness of educational programs about this matter, which generally don't allow people to effectively interpret heritage.

During the past, children were not even considered as playing an important role in the protection of heritage and they seemed not to require a specific cultural background about conservation issues.

Only in recent times, the role of youths has been recognized as fundamental for building more aware future generations, and particular attitudes have been acknowledged as necessary in order to develop specific activities to facilitate children understanding. As also Tilden has stressed while building his fundamental principles:

“Interpretation addressed to children (say, up to the age of twelve) should not be a dilution of the presentation to adults, but should follow a fundamentally different approach. To be at its best it will require a separate program.”¹⁵¹

Thus children have not to be seen as a less important category, but as a resource which can be enhanced through particular means.

Moreover, children education often requires very direct experiences in order to optimize the educational process: this kind of approach has probably something to teach also to adult education, and what we generally judge very childish can reveal new perspectives for the understanding of the world by grown-up people, too. For example, children have shown to be particularly attracted by what is out of life-size or human-size: big whales, dinosaurs skeletons, and big statues. They reveal by this way the curiosity for what does not belong to the point of view they generally experience from their dimension. Evidently, also adults are attracted by extraordinary things:

“Does this love of the superlative sound childlike? Yes, until you recall that several million adults spoke with great relish of the “biggest blizzard” (1888), and that other millions enjoy such

¹⁵¹ Cfr. Tilden, *op.cit.*, p. 76.

superlatives as: the highest mountain in the world [...]; the biggest petrified saurian ever found; the proximity of the highest and the lowest point in the United States [...]; the first robin seen in spring; the smallest church – multiply these instances as you will”¹⁵²

The surprise effect that everything out of our normal perception gives us is an experience that characterizes any age during existence.

Moreover, the very physical relation that children establish with things is particularly interesting, because it allows to immediately understand reality:

“younger children [...] love [...] personal examination through three senses other than sight and hearing. Most notable is the urge to know ‘what it feels like?’ [...] ‘What does it smell like?’”¹⁵³

This is something that characterizes adult perception too. Considering museums and expositions, very often multisensory exhibit or exhibit with extreme physical property¹⁵⁴ seems to be the most attractive and understandable for the public. In fact, as many times underlined in this work, the possibility to “touch” things, to understand how they are made in their materiality and how they’re produced is particularly important for deeply appreciate the reality around us. The material aspect of things seems to be the one that can talk to everybody: in this sense communicating conservation issues as a way to reveal how things are made, is a strategic tool for improving heritage understanding.

The approach to children education can vary significantly: from special books, to specific experience and particular didactic programs. Not wanting to be exhaustive about the matter that is actually very wide, the following discussion will shortly illustrate some interesting initiative dedicated to education of children and young adults, with the aim of raising awareness about heritage protection.

2.2.1.1 ICCROM Projects

In recent times, ICCROM¹⁵⁵ has been very active in launching a series of initiatives in order to raise awareness in people. Some specific programs have been developed in order to make children conscious about the need for preserving heritage. The brief survey about ICCROM projects (promoted together with ICOM-CECA and other partners) is particularly useful because it shows different approaches for the improvement of children education about cultural heritage:

¹⁵² Cfr. Tilden, *op.cit.*, p.79

¹⁵³ Cfr. *Ibid.*, pp. 79-81

¹⁵⁴ Cfr. Moscardo, *op.cit.*, p.384

¹⁵⁵ For further details, see ICCROM section dedicated to *Public Advocacy*, www.iccrom.org.

- The first case, the project *Save Marcus Aurelius*,¹⁵⁶ deals with problems of conservation, trying to teach children issues of degradation illustrating heritage fragility, and the difficulties of the intervention on the monument. The initiative was developed in 1985 involving two groups of 10 year old students which were invited to visit the bronze statue of Marcus Aurelius while it was undergoing restoration at the Istituto Centrale del Restauro laboratory. Both groups learned about the historical and artistic significance of the statue. However, only one group received detailed information about the restoration project, and the conservation activities involved in stabilizing and protecting the statue. After their tours, each group was asked to draw a picture about the statue and what they had learned. The group that received only historical information drew very static pictures (generally a man on a horse). On the contrary, the group that received both the conservation and historical information drew much more dynamic pictures, completing them with many comments on strategies for conservation: they had become more aware about problems of conservation and they felt the need for protecting the statue. This is the reason why several of them depicted the statue under a protective dome. The project revealed that students tend to regard cultural heritage as stable and permanent, as something dead. Explaining issues of conservation made them more sensitive to problems of degradation and more interested in learning about how to protect heritage.
- The second case, the project *Adopt a Monument: Save the Coliseum*, (1992-1993) was focused on encouraging students to raise public awareness about the deterioration of cultural heritage, by undertaking a specific site or monument in need of conservation or restoration. The students involved were aged 14-17. In this case, students symbolically adopted the Coliseum. They learned about its history, its cultural significance, and its state of conservation. They visited it regularly, and became invested in its protection. Over an entire school year they undertook various projects to contribute to its preservation, and to raise public awareness about its condition. The main goals of the project were related to encourage students to actively contribute to the conservation of cultural heritage by raising public awareness of the issues facing a given monument, and to give students, through a real situated experience of learning, a basic grounding in managing a public advocacy campaign.
- The third case, *The City Beneath the City*, (1995-1996) was addressed to students aged 7-12, involving also their teachers, for an amount of 3200 students, 168 teachers, 154 classes and 23 European Countries. During the initiative students undertook various learning projects about different periods in their cities and concerning different disciplines. All their projects

¹⁵⁶ Cfr. Gesché-Koning, "Cultural Tourism...", *op.cit.*, p.97

were collected in individual portfolios, which were then entered into a competition. Teaching methods included formal education in classrooms and direct experiences throughout the cities, such as visiting museums and archaeological sites, studying monuments, drawing historical maps, making historical research and archaeological excavations, working in laboratories, talking to residents of old neighborhoods, taking photos, and many other activities. Students also discussed urban development, its positive and negative aspects, particularly focusing on the inevitability of change and strategies for achieving a balance between heritage conservation and development.

- The fourth case, *All Roads Lead to Rome*, promoted together with ICOM-CECA, combines the teaching of ancient history with intercultural understanding and with the development of international youth cooperation in order to increase cultural heritage awareness. The project involved high-school students, museums, and other cultural organizations from Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom. A first phase of the project was dedicated to assembling documentation on the roman world by museum educators. Around 200 publications were collected, but only 2% demonstrated to deal with restoration and conservation issues. Moreover, the second phase was addressed to 15-18 years old European students, asking them to present a work (could be a poster, event, performance, etc.) dedicated to conservation issues, following given themes related to Ancient Rome, with particular attention for the problem of tourist flows pressure on heritage sites. Some evaluations about the experiences led some years after the participation revealed that conservation issues had been the most impressive for the subjects involved.¹⁵⁷ Another important aspect of the project was the focus on awareness of the cultural similarity based on shared Roman roots of many different European countries. The aim was thus also the creation of a better climate for cross-cultural cooperation and understanding.
- Finally, another interesting initiative is the one of the poster competition *Stop Graffiti*. The competition was intended as a learning tool in order to raise awareness about the threats, particularly vandalism and graffiti, which face urban cultural heritage. Students involved (aged 7-13) spent four months learning about the value of cultural heritage and the threats it faces. Courses focused on graffiti, the damage it causes, and the issues involved in removing it. Each student then created an anti-graffiti poster for the City of Rome, and learning materials were developed for teachers. By this way, not only students sensitiveness about issues of protection was improved, but the activities were also oriented to discourage them from creating graffiti, and to persuade their mates to stop doing graffiti.

¹⁵⁷ Cfr. *Ibid.*, p.99.

2.2.1.2 ELAICH - Educational Linkage Approach to Cultural Heritage¹⁵⁸

The ELAICH project is part of EU “Euromed 4”, the fourth milestone of the Euromed Heritage program, which has committed a total of 57 million Euros to fund partnerships between conservation experts and heritage institutions from the countries of the Mediterranean region, with the aim of recognizing culture as a catalyst for mutual understanding between people

Particularly, ELAICH project provides modern and innovative tools for teaching the importance of protecting heritage, especially to children and young adults. For this purpose a multi-disciplinary team, consisting of specialists in various areas of cultural heritage conservation and education from five highly-rated universities, has developed an innovative educational approach. Alongside traditional course materials, concerning many disciplines from art to chemistry and physics, the ELAICH course uses modern e-learning applications and includes a substantial component of on-site work. The on-site work (the so called “intellectual in-situ work”) focuses on the study of selected built heritage sites and includes both documentation and a variety of activities simulating all those investigations which are normally required to ensure preservation in real situations (taking photographs, measurements etc.)



Figure 6: On-site activities during an ELAICH course in Malta (2011)

¹⁵⁸ For further details, see ELAICH website: www.elaich.technion.ac.il.

During the development stage of the project, the ELAICH partners teach courses to some groups students, examining the teaching methods they have developed. The first ELAICH course was held in Athens, Greece from November 2009 to February 2010, and was very successful.

To sustain the achievements of the project, an e-learning application has been developed. Through this application a flexible system of courses is provided, suitable for students with their teachers. Using advanced media tools, this platform supply scientific and conservation-related knowledge to the public. It also provides a virtual environment for intercultural dialogue and guidelines for teachers.



Figure 7: Students taking part in an ELIACH course in Israel (2010)

Through these courses, ELAICH goals are also oriented to contribute to a number of key values that form the basis of modern civil society. Bringing together young students belonging to different cultures to work on a particular monument, requires youths to understand multi-cultural values of cultural heritage as they apply their theoretical knowledge in-situ and achieve tangible results in a relatively short time. Moreover, working on a monument belonging to the “other” is particularly important to teach students cultural tolerance.

2.2.2 Communication for Lifelong Learning

Not only youth education, but also adults must be involved in a process of raising awareness and building better competencies in order to ensure heritage protection. Moreover, for the purpose of this work, this part would like to focus not only on the role that interpreters have in communicating heritage to people, but also on the importance of professionals and institutions in the production of knowledge about conservation. The issue of awareness then refers here also to the consciousness of subjects involved in cultural production process, recognizing their fundamental role and the contribution they can effectively give to the end of improving the conservation and enhancement process.

For these reasons, a short survey on interesting experiences will be presented below.

2.2.2.1 ICCROM Projects¹⁵⁹

As previously stressed, very often heritage interpretation and presentation only relies on guides, interpreters and professionals, whose abilities are not always adequate for the task. Creating occasions for improving the competencies of these subjects is fundamental in order to provide better communication and ensure public acknowledgement on the values of heritage and on the need for protection.

Again, some interesting initiatives promoted by ICCROM (together with other partners) are briefly illustrated:

- In 1997-99 the project *Let's Save Our Heritage Together* was developed. It was meant for guides, speakers or cultural mediators who lead group visits to museums, monuments or archeological sites.

A training program was given to them focusing on the problems posed by preserving heritage. Tour guides were encouraged to highlight conservation issues whenever possible: particularly they were asked to complement the presentation on site with a short discussion about fragility issues, which was called "Five minutes for eternity", emphasizing problems of material degradation linked to nature, environment and maintenance.

The project was launched by the Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB), involving museums and cultural institutions from several different European countries.

ICCROM only participated in the development of the project at Ostia Antica, but a wide variety of other projects were undertaken throughout Europe to highlight conservation problems in museums, such as light, humidity, insects, etc.

¹⁵⁹ For further details, see ICCROM section dedicated to *Public Advocacy*, www.iccrom.org.

At Ostia Antica, experts also created a self-guided tour of eight stops. Each stop focused on a different conservation problem, including mosaic restoration and maintenance, over-grown vegetation (roots damaging mosaics and walls), building erosion due to naturally occurring salts, and so on. A leaflet to accompany the tour and provide detailed information was printed in English, Italian, and French. Other important results of the project were the creation of a training course for tour guides and the planning of twenty-four guided visits;

The initiative was particularly successful, as the results of the monitoring activity through 4500 questionnaire filled by visitors can demonstrate:

- 90% would recommend the tour to a friend wanting to visit the site;
- 86% agreed that visitors can contribute to heritage protection;
- 84% appreciated the information on conservation issues;
- 79% wanted to receive this kind of information regularly;
- 79% agreed that cultural heritage preservation concerns all of us;
- 32% understood the fragility of heritage for the first time after following the tour.

The reference text *Public and the Safeguard of Heritage* was published as a tool for conservators, site managers, and tourists. It included experiences of all cultural institutions taking part in the larger project.

- Another project involving adults and lead by ICCROM is *Media Save Art Award*, mainly addressed to print journalists. The aim of the project was to increase the amount of media coverage that heritage preservation receives and, of course, raise public awareness of heritage conservation.

In 1987 ICCROM analyzed the cultural heritage and preservation content in two Italian and two French national newspapers. The results were poor: only a very small amount of articles dealt with preservation issues. Moreover, this coverage was often alarmist, tending to cover major tragedies, such as natural disasters causing the loss of priceless collections.

In order to improve the discussion about conservation problems on journals and newspaper a competition was organized. The award was given to the best article from anywhere in the world.

First edition of the award was in 1991. For the first competition, the two categories were daily newspaper and magazine. The articles had to address the preservation of cultural heritage, and had to be written for the general public. Articles published in specialist professional publications were not eligible.

At first, the award focused solely on the quality of the articles themselves. However, over time journalists began submitting additional materials relating to public discussion sparked by their articles. Given that this type of public engagement was exactly what ICCROM hoped to stimulate, the project embraced this shift, by making public engagement generated by an

article one of the award's evaluation criteria. While sometimes a difficult element to evaluate, including public response broadened the scope of the competition, pushing journalists to actively engage their audiences.

2.2.2.2 Conservation for Building Awareness and Competencies among Professionals and Institutions

As seen in previous discussion, raising awareness implies a continuous learning process, involving not only the public, but also practitioners of conservation and enhancement. Nevertheless, conservation projects are just rarely considered as occasions for mobilizing non-economic resources, and to develop human, social and intellectual capital. In most cases restorations, more or less needed, are seen mainly as a tool for fund-raising, justifying interventions as leverage for tourist incomes and for the development of tourist flows, as the power of local growth.

In a tourism-based perspective, the value of restoration projects is thus considered “to be found only in the time after restoration has been carried out, and people use the asset as a seat for activities or enjoying it as a cultural good.”¹⁶⁰ In this sense, the definition of cultural heritage values is developed through a top down perspective, which sees in the object itself its effective importance, with no relevance for conservation as a tool for enhancement.

This happens also because decision-makers have to deal with consensus calling, and with the need to account short term results showing the effectiveness of strategies and success of mandate, focusing on well established and more “familiar” choices, which generally limit the consideration of innovative and multi-resource approaches:

“Even though government officials regularly choose how preservation policies will be implemented as they design various heritage programs, they rarely use a systematic and comprehensive approach to the choice of instruments. One can always interpret past actions as revealing implicit choices, but to make choices in a more explicit self-conscious way while designing these programs would [...] result in qualitatively different decisions. [...] there may simply be a level of inertia that comes from overfamiliarity with certain tools and current and past practice; in other cases there

¹⁶⁰ Cfr. Della Torre, S., “Learning and unlearning in heritage enhancement processes”, in *ESA Sociology of Culture RN mid-term Conference Culture and the Making of Worlds*, 2010

may well be a systemic unfamiliarity with the true range of tools that is available”¹⁶¹

In this sense, restoration is not evaluated for the multiplicity of external benefits that it can potentially produce, and institutions and organizations managing heritage don't see the purpose of using it for enhancement, building motivations to preserve and protect, as the driving force to ensure long term maintenance. This question introduces another problem, that goes far beyond the purposes of this work, but which is worth to be considered because involving the very important role that administrations play in heritage enhancement and conservation, and potential conflicts in decision-making when heritage values are dealt with: because of the political needs administration generally has to respond, there's no certainty about the possibility to adopt long term strategies, and this is also due to a persistent lack of regulations oriented to quality and improvement, giving instead limits and hard rules. In other words, there's a need for more effective regulations, oriented to enhancement and best practices, as fundamental parameters for evaluation, and this requires shifting from *accounting* to *accountability* of decision makers, in order to stimulate more responsibility, openness and attention for highly qualitative results, in order to understand the intervention on heritage as. “a good exercise to train community participation, the empowerment and commitment of the administrative system as a whole. The tangible benefit (physical restoration) is a device to get an intangible benefit useful in many fields beside restoration”¹⁶²

An interesting experience in the direction of improving quality has been recently developed by HERITY International. The initiative has been initially intended to help visitors experiencing heritage in a more conscious way, involving them in supporting the quality of conservation, communication and services at heritage sites. HERITY is today present in different countries, such as Italy, Spain, Brazil, Portugal, Sweden, United Kingdom, Lithuania, Czech Republic, France, Turkey, UAE.

The purpose of the initiative is to give evaluation of the performance of a heritage site, assessing through scientific criteria, and particularly:

1. perception of cultural significance (VALUE);
2. state of maintenance, preservation and restoration (CONSERVATION);
3. information provided to the visitor (COMMUNICATION);
4. quality of reception and services offered (SERVICES).

The evaluation is provided by HERITY organization, and it is based on the integration of evaluations by site directors, HERITY experts and the public. The

¹⁶¹ Cfr. Schuster, J.M. (1997), “Choosing the Right Tool(s) for the Task”, in Shuster J.M., *Preserving the Built Heritage. Tools for Implementation*, , Hanover, (New Hampshire – USA), University Press of New England, p.125.

¹⁶² Cfr. Della Torre, S., “Learning and unlearning...”, *op.cit.*

result is a “target”, the symbol of HERITY, which synthesizes the results of monitoring, acting as a quality certification of the heritage site.

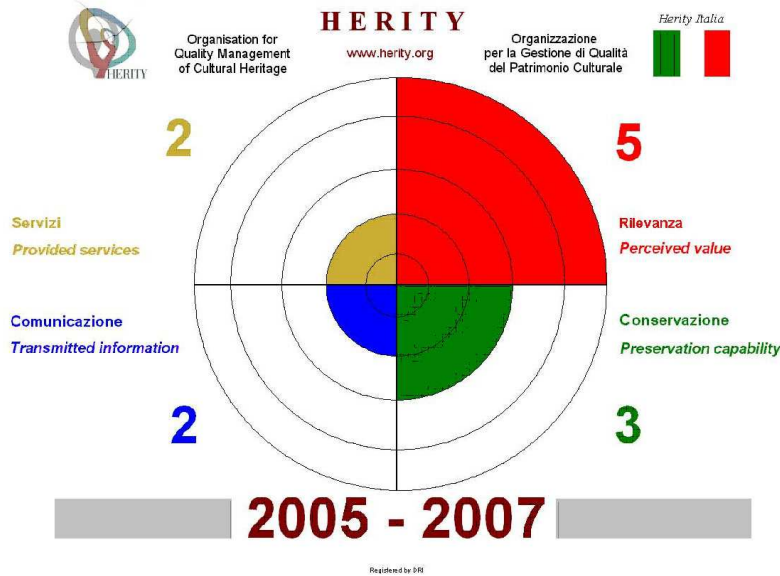


Figure 8: HERITY “target”

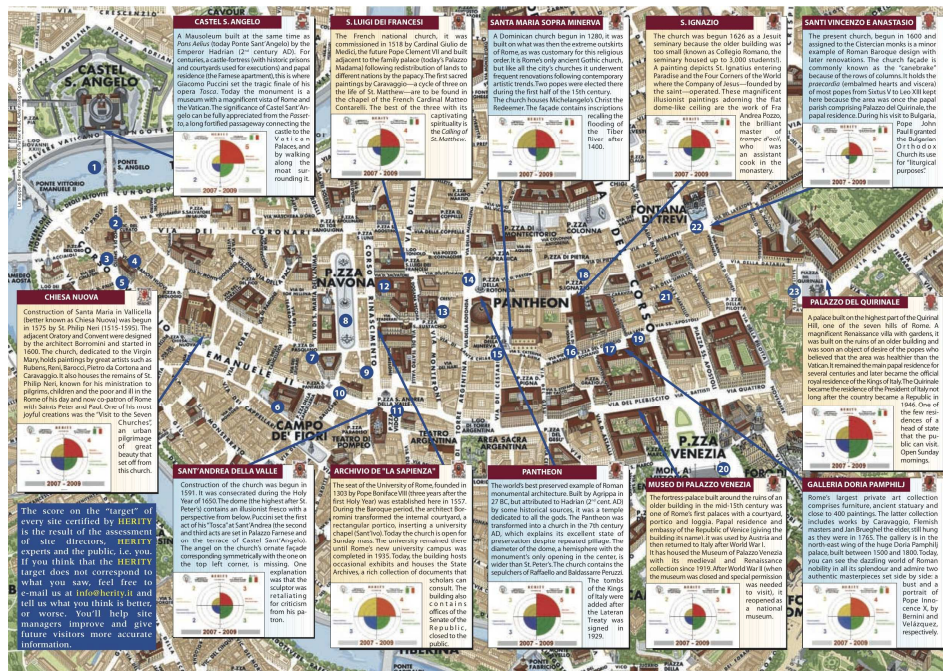


Figure 9: HERITY map of Rome

In Italy, from first tests, HERITY Italia has been able to produce an interesting map of qualitative heritage sites in the city of Rome, providing a clear and understandable way to allow the public to decide whether or not to

visit a cultural heritage site and encourage owners and managers to foster appreciation for improve preservation of the cultural heritage they manage.

The experience is an interesting case because it integrates a strategy for raising awareness in visitors about their role in supporting the quality of sites, giving at the same time an innovative interpretation of heritage, and it has also become a way to stimulate heritage managers in working for improving quality. HERITY certification is at the moment not compulsory, and clearly a system of considerations could be developed on criteria for evaluation, but anyway it seems an interesting case to be quoted, for the attention in assessing not only the economic performance of cultural institutions, but also conservation issues, services, communication, etc.. In other words, created to inform and involve the visitor, allowing to align expected results, the HERITY certification has proved to be a useful decision support to operators, managers and sponsors helping them to run heritage.

These issues referring to quality and accountability will be reconsidered in the following chapter concerning the two main study cases analyzed for the development of this work, better highlighting the problem in the context of concrete experiences.

2.3 Tools for Communication: Traditional Instruments

2.3.1 Events

Inaugurations, presentations, openings, are all occasions that attract large numbers of people. But how are these opportunities managed and what is generally communicated to the public?

The political part is usually a central element of these events, especially when it comes to main occasions such as the presentation of the results of an important restoration or particularly relevant exhibitions; administrators and leaders preside over this kind of events, highlighting some fundamental elements:

- Firstly, elements that characterize the communication are the fundraising ability and financial profits: partners and sponsors are presented, also stressing the economic benefits (in best cases social ones, too) that the initiative will produce in the short term. This is an absolute necessity for all those institutions and organizations that base their existence on public consensus. The primary need is to “esibire i risultati con buon anticipo rispetto alla scadenza del mandato”¹⁶³ to improve the reputation of the authorities and ensure electoral success.
- Secondly, cultural enhancement is usually presented as reflecting the will of governments and organizations in achieving objectives of common interest. Once again, the focus is on increasing consensus about the strategic ability of authorities, ensuring electoral success.

Therefore, it is clear that the interest in a communication that can enhance human capital and effectively protect the heritage is actually only marginal, or a consequence of the actions taken.

Referring to the field of restoration, often administrators cannot even explain the deeper reasons of the need to preserve heritage, and this leads to a system of fundamental considerations:

- Frequently, administrations do not have the competence to make effective decisions about heritage, and do not have a complete picture of the range of possibilities available. In general they act, following reasons of common sense or consolidated practices, justifying only afterwards, the reasons for

¹⁶³ Cfr. Montella, M. (2010), “Standard e figure professionali nel processo di decentramento”, in Various Authors, *Professioni e mestieri per il patrimonio culturale*, Guerini, Milano, p.291. Eng. transl.: “to produce results well in advance of the end of the mandate”

choices, by stressing the positive effects of the strategies adopted. This often results in an inability to optimize resources¹⁶⁴

- Administrations don't recognize the need to use the technical knowledge produced by the restoration, which generally requires long term processes to evaluate effective results. Precisely because the consensus is based mostly on a short temporal perspective, the adoption of a long-term vision is generally abandoned;
- As a result, administrations do not know how to manage the knowledge produced during the intervention on the monument, they do not know what to ask to the technicians, they can't even imagine what would be the tools and strategies to adopt, because out of their consolidated procedures.

This all implies that, for example referring to cases of conservation or study of monuments, the knowledge baggage created is not used as a tool for enhancement. This represent a missed opportunity, because, as the issues and cases previously illustrated point out, the use, for example, of the most technical contents produced during the intervention, makes the communication approach much more immediate, facilitating the appreciation of heritage, developing awareness and responsibility and, last but not least, providing an opportunity to understand more deeply the reasons for the investment in conservation, sharing the goals of administrations and thus supporting their actions.

By this way, it happens that during major events, such as inaugurations and conferences devoted to particular cultural occasions, the part that has most directly dealt with the production and conservation of this important cultural heritage, is not involved, or only marginally, and while the government advertises the positivity and superiority of their choices, the benefits for those receiving the communication is, at best, only superficial and do not imply any approach to cultural heritage.

While this is not a case of intervention on the built heritage, I would like to refer again to the example of the exhibition of inlaid Stradivari's violins, in order to clarify these issues through a concrete experience.

As previously described, before entering the room in which musical instruments were exposed the authorities involved in organizing the event had provided a brief presentation. I do not remember much of what was said on that occasion: more than anything I remember some confused dates and mutual honors among the authorities. In the middle of the crowd, and next to me that day, was a gentleman in his sixties, few white hair and very clear eyes. You could see he had tried to dress appropriately for the occasion, with jacket, tie and trousers, but the general appearance was a bit worn and clothes too big for his size. It was obviously a person who has more important things in mind. At some point in the presentation, one of the speakers among the authorities began to describe the exceptionality of one inlay's detail: a wonderful griffin made by

¹⁶⁴ Cfr. Schuster, *op.cit.*, p. 125.

the hand of great Master Stradivari. At that point, I began to feel a little impatience from that strange person standing next to me. After having observed me, trying to guess whether I would have even remotely understood the importance of what he was going to tell me, he whispered in my ear: “No, no, no! It is not a griffin, is a cock ready to attack! And then the griffin is a lion with eagle's head! The inlay on the violin by Stradivari could at best be misunderstood with a raptor, but it is a cock, nothing more than a rooster!” I smiled a bit astonished to the words of that man, and then I also thought maybe he was a little crazy. Only later, thanks again to the advice of my mate-violinmaker, I discovered that the man was a “Great Master”, too, perhaps less self-centered of Stradivari, but still a great master. He was in fact an important violin maker, an expert of the conservation of old instruments, which, by the same authorities who had presented the event and the griffin, had been commissioned to prepare the exhibition and to study the musical instruments on display.

What would have been the added value of asking to that strange man to intervene in the presentation? First, the public would have benefited from a more complete and correct information, and would have had access to the exhibition with some competence more. Furthermore, referring to the history of the cock, personally is something that will remain forever in my memory, both because it was a position that challenged the traditional interpretation about the way in which Stradivari selected its subject for inlays (Stradivari was a great Master, so he would have never depicted a rooster, but only griffins! Or, more simply, in the shop next to his workshop, his neighbor had a book of ornaments that Stradivari used to copy, by selecting the subject according to the mood of the day or what was most suitable for the purpose of the work?), and because the image of the cock also gave me a way to dream about the Great Master, who was nothing more than a craftsman, perhaps not very well educated, and who probably even hadn't an idea of what a griffon was. Stradivari was the excellence of the violins. Maybe he was not so prepared in mythology?

The example above is intended to be only a way to highlight how, through simple means, and working on the quality, communication may often produce the most significant benefits. Working on contents rather than formats opens up important perspectives for improvement, both for the implications in terms of understanding by the public, and for the benefits that the promoters themselves could obtain, also in terms of image.

2.3.2 Publishing

Publishing is one of the most common tools of communication applied in the field of heritage enhancement, particularly referring to catalogues, books about restoration works, tourist guide, etc. Moreover publications represent one of the

most widespread tools that visitors, tourists, and the public in general, commonly choose in order to learn and understand heritage.

Even when these publications are planned with the help of experts and high level practitioners of the field, very often the main concern remains to present results of interventions, rendering a very static image of heritage, with no attention for processes, particularly referring to conservation works, while problems of protection and the difficulties of maintenance are even not mentioned. This implies that the role of the visitor in improving heritage conservation is not perceived:

“Tourists usually think that since heritage sites and monuments as well as museum objects have survived for centuries, they will still last forever. They are not in the slightest aware of what is at stake when talking about heritage preservation.”¹⁶⁵

Referring to these problems, two main examples will be briefly described in following chapters: the first one is an ICCROM project devoted to the improvement of the quality of guidebooks contents; the second is the case of the restoration works on Santo Stefano Church in Lentate sul Seveso (Italy).

2.3.2.1 ICCROM project

The first experience quoted, has been developed in 2003, by ICCROM. The initiative was dedicated to the development of new approaches in guidebooks, with the main aim to encourage editors to allocate sufficient space to the heritage conservation message. This could take the form of a page dedicated to raising awareness for the respect of cultural property in guidebooks.¹⁶⁶

In order to follow this goal, a seminar titled *The Fragility of Heritage Sites: the Role of the Tourist Guidebooks in Raising Public Awareness* has been organized in July 2003, addressing to a selected target of tourist professionals, journalists, travel authors and editors, tourism bureaus and travel agencies. The results of the seminar have been particularly relevant for the recognition of the need to spread awareness, first of all in tourist professionals:

“I realized as never before the urgent need to develop responsible policies in terms of cultural heritage ...we absolutely have not been

¹⁶⁵ Cfr. Gesché-Koning, *op.cit.*

¹⁶⁶ For more details see ICCROM *Awareness Projects – Guidebooks Project*: www.iccrom.org

aware that we have been giving pride of place to the natural environment over cultural heritage”¹⁶⁷

Some important conservation messages were defined as generally lacking in guidebooks publications:

- cultural heritage is fragile and it is slowly disappearing;
- cultural heritage belongs to all of us;
- together, conservation professionals, the media and the public can preserve heritage for the future.

Furthermore, a list of well known guidebooks editors was selected in order to establish a partnership with the aim of having these conservation and protection issues inserted in their publications.

- Lonely Planet: Travel Guidebooks;
- Footprint: Handbooks;
- Michelin: Guide Vert and Guide Néos;
- Hachette: Guide Bleu and Le Guide du routard;
- Gallimard: La Bibliothèque du voyageur;
- Touring Club Italy: Guide del mondo and le Guide blu;
- Fodor's Publications.

Some important results were produced by the initiative:

- Lonely Planet (French edition) and Michelin both requested presentations regarding the fragility of heritage sites for their editorial staff in Paris;
- following these presentations, both organizations have developed texts based on ICCROM guidelines to include in their next publications;

Furthermore, other main achievements were:

- Lonely Planet (French Editions) has included the raising awareness message in the guidebooks dedicated to India, Thailand, Tunisia, Cuba, Greece, Peru, Umbria and Tuscany, Rome;
- the Michelin's text has been included in the volumes dedicated to Normandie Cotentin, Côte d'Azur, Midi Pyrénée, Bourgogne and Italy.



Figure 10: Some guides which introduced conservation issues in their text

¹⁶⁷ Lonely Planet participant of the seminar *The Fragility of Heritage Sites: the Role of the Tourist Guidebooks in Raising Public Awareness*, Rome , 4-5 July 2003, taken from www.iccrom.org.

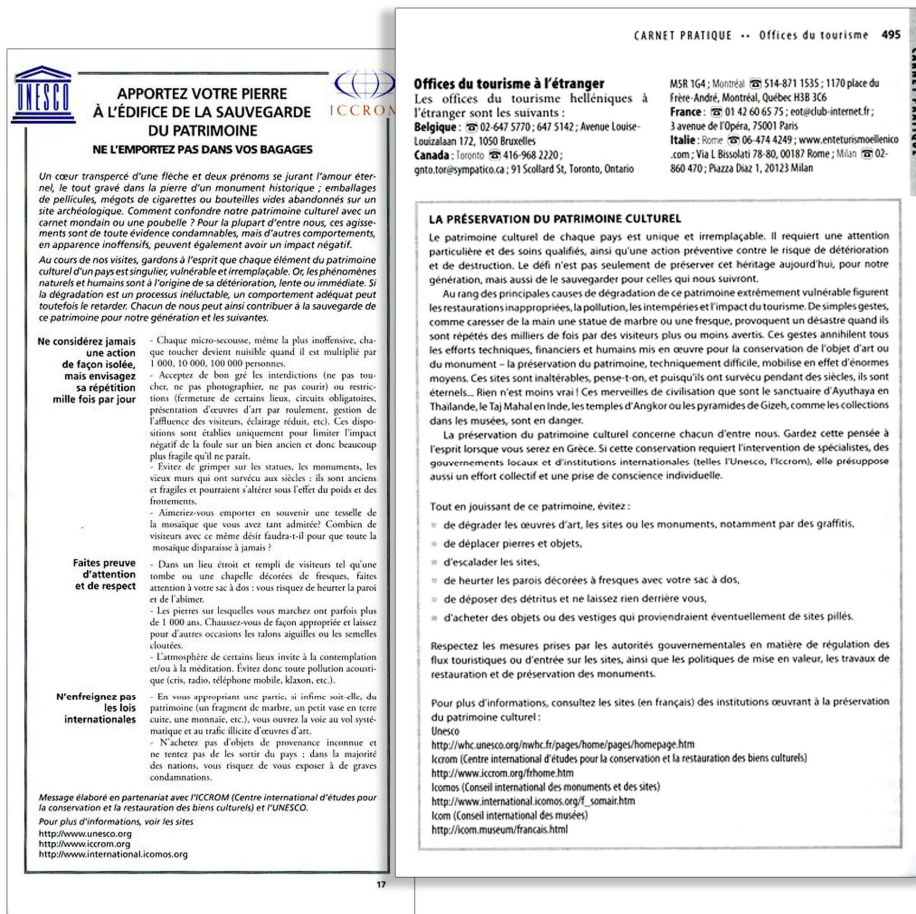


Figure 11: two examples of texts inserted in guidebooks (on the left Michelin, The Green Guide: Normandier Cotentin, îles Anglo-Normandes; on the right Lonely Planet: Greek Islands)¹⁶⁸

The case quoted above clearly shows how very simple actions and working on contents of communication means, can lead to big results. Moreover, the case also demonstrates that very often professionals in the field of communication are the first who need to be made conscious about their responsibilities and their role in heritage protection and enhancement.

¹⁶⁸ Images taken from: Bosquès, N. (ed.) (2005), *Le Guide Vert. Normandier Cotentin: îles Anglo-Normandes*, Michelin, Paris, p. 17, (on the left); Willett, D. et alii (2004), *Îles grecques et Athènes*, 3rd ed., Lonely Planet, Paris ; p. 495, (on the right).

2.3.2.2 The Case of Santo Stefano Conservation Works

Another interesting case about publications, which deserves a short discussion, is the one of the conservation project on Santo Stefano Church in Lentate sul Seveso.

Lentate sul Seveso is a small village near the city of Milan. Some years ago the public administration recognized the need for restoring of the Santo Stefano Oratorio, a medieval church that still preserves a wide cycle of frescos that illustrate Santo Stefano's life. The project was developed by Politecnico di Milano and after the end of the intervention, the Municipality, together with the university, decided to plan a communication strategy for the monument. First of all, a publication about the restoration project was planned and realized.¹⁶⁹ In addition to this, an association called “Amici dell'Arte” (“Friends of Art”) was founded by a group of people interested in implementing their artistic and cultural knowledge.¹⁷⁰ The members of the association were trained as tour-guides for the visitors of the church. A presentation of the restoration works, that was planned involving a famous expert in communication strategies, was also organized by the Municipality, and an important art critic was invited too, in order to share his view on the monument and its restoration.



Figure 12: Poster inviting people to the public presentation of restoration works and publication.

¹⁶⁹ Cfr. Pracchi, V. (ed.) (2008), *L'Oratorio di Santo Stefano a Lentate sul Seveso. Il Restauro*, Silvana Editore.

¹⁷⁰ Informations taken from: www.amiciarte.it

For the occasion of the presentation event, an aperitif was also planned. For this reason, the famous communication expert tried to find out a symbolic image to accompany the joyful moment, and he decided to reproduce on a poster the fresco representing Santo Stefano's mother and father with a glass of wine. Unfortunately the liquid inside the glass was not wine, but blood, announcing Santo Stefano's death, as predicted by the saint himself.

Moreover, some months after the end of the restoration, the Lentate sul Seveso municipality decided to shorten the publication because they found the previous book too long and detailed. They decided to ask to an art historian to prepare a short pamphlet about the monument, with no connection to the previous publication and with a very low cost for the public administration.

The result was a communication tool full of mistakes and completely not pertaining the restoration works, making the previous publication completely useless.

The question is: why a potentially successful communication strategy has turned into a failure (or, at least into something different...)? Why so much energy was spent for a good conservation work as well as for a good communication strategy oriented to the involvement of local communities and of the wide public, when the way originally chosen had to be abandoned so quickly?

We can anyway consider this example as a positive experience for a number of externalities produced by the cultural enhancement process. First of all, the free creation of an association of local people interested in arts and in the enhancement of the church; secondly, the institution of guides trained by the university to present and disseminate highly technical contents: the success of this last externality is particularly demonstrated by the visitors register, in which many tourists have left their comments on the interesting and high quality explanations regarding the restoration process provided by the guides during the visits. Furthermore, the publication can also be considered as a good externality because of the specialized contents that it communicates, while mediating between technical terminology and a simplified language, accessible to the wide public.

In addition, some critical elements can be underlined about this example: many problems are clearly directly related to the public administration itself, which normally manages the cultural heritage. As also previously introduced, the public administration usually fails in upgrading its internal competences and it does not count with specialized teams able to manage with communication, its contents and strategies. The lack of competences of the main manager (public administration) of cultural heritage implies a fundamental question: How can people be aware when those who are responsible for raising their awareness have no adequate instruments of their own?



Figure 13: The two publications about Santo Stefano Church in Lentate. On the top, the first wide publication¹⁷¹ with information about restoration works and detailed description of the frescos; on the bottom, the simplified "Guidebook", with just short descriptions and many images.

¹⁷¹ Cfr. Pracchi, "L'Oratorio...", *op.cit.*

2.4 Tools for Communication: New Approaches

2.4.1 Advertising and Culture

Adverts find their most innovative application in the marketing field, but in recent times, new strategies have been developed for the communication of cultural heritage, too. The chapter will present two cases of advertising applied to culture: the first one refers to the Bolzano municipality guerrilla marketing campaign, for the promotion of cultural activities; the second case, refers instead to the restoration of Coliseum that will be funded by a famous Italian firm. Particularly, considering this last case, some interesting implications will be stressed.

2.4.1.1 *The Bolzano Province Experience*¹⁷²

In recent years the administration of Bolzano has demonstrated an increasing attention for culture as a tool for the involvement of the local community.

The communication campaign of Bolzano municipality belongs to a wider awareness strategy, which aim was the promotion of culture among local population and the improvement of citizens' participation in cultural activities.

One of the focuses of the initiative was on the enhancement of built cultural heritage and on contemporary art: in fact, the territory of Bolzano is usually appreciated for its landscape and natural environment; the idea was to try new approaches in order to involve also other resources of the area.

Moreover, specific attention was dedicated to non-visitors, which means groups of people generally not very attracted by cultural activities. For this reason it has been necessary to find alternative ways of communicating culture, and one of the tools chosen was advertising.

Thus, the guerrilla marketing campaign was developed through many and different initiatives, and two particularly deserve to be quoted in the context of this research:

- A not very attractive, supermarket-like flyer was posted into the mailbox of 150.000 citizens of Bolzano. The aim was to catch the attention and stimulate curiosity in order to develop in people a need for more

¹⁷² Cfr. Lampis, A. (2009), "Marketing culturale, capacitazione degli attori e stimolo della domanda culturale: l'esperienza della Provincia Autonoma di Bolzano", in Putignano F. (ed.), *Learning Districts. Patrimonio culturale, conoscenza e sviluppo locale*, Maggioli Editore, Milano, pp. 61-77.

information about the cultural offer available in the area. The flyer was reporting some catch phrases:

“Compri tante cose. Cosa ti rimane?”

Questa volta pensa a te... Investi in cultura!!

Euro: pochi. Massima convenienza”¹⁷³



Figure 14: supermarket-like flyers inviting people to “buy” culture

- The inside of the flyer then advertised a list of cultural initiatives, presented as they were “best prices” of a supermarket.
- Another very interesting initiative was developed in view of some important events dedicated to contemporary art (the opening of the new Museum of Contemporary Art in may 2008 and the European Biannual of Contemporary Art in July 2008): two very short texts were distributed in hospitals, supermarkets and theaters, titled: “Se questo è un quadro” (“If this is a painting”) and “Lo potevo fare anch’io” (“I could do the same”)¹⁷⁴. The aim was to stimulate curiosity and invite people to approach contemporary art and culture.

¹⁷³ Cfr. Lampis, *op.cit.*, p.69. Eng. transl.: “You buy a lot of things. What do you have left? This time, think to yourself ... Invest in culture!! Euros: a few. Maximum convenience”

¹⁷⁴ Cfr. Vettese, A. (2006) *Se questo è un quadro*, Carocci; Bonami, F. (2007), *Lo potevo fare anch’io. Perché l’arte contemporanea è davvero arte*, Mondadori, Milano.



Figure 15: Another advertisement of the Province of Bolzano cultural campaign

The results of the communication strategy developed by the Bolzano municipality are many, but some are particularly interesting in the context of this work. First of all thanks to the guerrilla marketing campaign, the administration has succeeded in raising attention and curiosity in many of the cultural activities organized on the territory. Seen the interesting impact of the use of these innovative tools, many other institutions, such as local museums and theaters, started to adopt similar strategies in order to promote their cultural activities. Moreover, the cultural vitality developed and promoted in the area was also perceived and recognized by local population, increasing consensus in the Municipality administration.

From the brief set of conclusions defined above, it is easy to understand how a careful use of innovative tools, even if not directly pertaining to the field of cultural heritage, can be very helpful in improving communication. However, the tools proposed have worked mainly on formats and on presentation, more than on contents. This could imply a risk of misunderstanding, leading to the

idea that culture is innovative only if accompanied by funny guerrilla campaigns and other strategic means.

In fact, these tools seem to be much more effective increasing our “desiderio di decorosa ritualità”,¹⁷⁵ more than the need of knowledge and a need to live and understand heritage.

This last question will be also considered analyzing the following case, which refers to the restoration of Coliseum.

2.4.1.2 The restoration of Coliseum

The restoration project of the Coliseum (Rome, Italy) is a case particularly debated in Italy in recent times. As a matter of fact, the fund-raising activity for the realization has gone through several difficulties that have delayed the achievement of the conditions necessary for the execution of interventions, until the identification of a major supporter in Diego Della Valle, president of Tod's SpA.

In brief, the project provide for the replacement of the locking system of the perimeter arches, the restoration of the northern and southern elevations, the restoration of walkways, the restoration of the basement level, the implementation of plants and facilities and the construction of a service center in order to bring outside all the support activities that are currently in the monument (reception, ticket office, bookshops, toilets). The amount made available by Italian entrepreneur, as the main funder of the intervention, will be 25 million Euros.

The case is still in the news¹⁷⁶ for the contestation raised by one of the main Italian trade unions (UIL) concerning the correctness of procedures of the sponsorship contract signed in 2011.

Beyond any controversy about such a significant intervention by a private, in a restoration work of public property and public interest, the offer of the Italian entrepreneur will probably at last be able to implement a system of activities absolutely necessary, given the current precarious state of conservation of the monument.



Figure 16: A satirical portrait of the sponsor of Coliseum restoration.

¹⁷⁵ Cfr. Montella, “Valore e...”, *op.cit.*, p.102. Eng. transl.: “desire for respectable rituals”.

¹⁷⁶ Newspaper and news channels are particularly sensitive to this topic in Italy. The vignette, here taken as example, is from an Italian satirical newspaper “Il Misfatto” – www.ilmisfatto.it, and realized by Portos.

However, it is necessary to ask ourselves, what is the advantage for a corporation producing clothing accessories (its most famous product are probably shoes) in the sponsorship of a monument of such proportion and importance? Some clarification may be obtained from the Sponsorship Agreement signed by the Ministry for Cultural Heritage, by the Superintendent and the Sponsor.¹⁷⁷

The first advantage is clearly fiscal, and consequently:

“L’importo erogato dallo sponsor, ai sensi del presente accordo, potrà godere della deducibilità fiscale, ai sensi della normativa vigente”¹⁷⁸

Other major advantages are derived from the management of the communication plan. The sponsor of the project, according to the agreement, will establish a no-profit Association that will manage the communication for the whole duration of the restoration works.

“L’associazione [...] avrà il diritto di: a. gestire, in esclusiva, l’attività di comunicazione relativa agli interventi”¹⁷⁹

To the association, it will also be granted the realization, for the duration of the works and for the next two years, of a built structure for purposes of communication and hospitality center, nearby the monument. More in detail:

Il Centro - [...] potrà fregiarsi e utilizzare la denominazione dei segni distintivi dello sponsor – sarà attrezzato sia la fine di accogliere adeguatamente la stampa internazionale, sia in modo da ospitare [...] le persone anziane, quelle diversamente abili e tutti coloro che soffrono di particolari disagi, interessati a visitare il Colosseo e i relativi lavori di restauro.”¹⁸⁰

Moreover, the Association will have the right to create a website, make publications on restoration works and on the Coliseum, take pictures or videos of the monument in order to freely use them for communication and sponsor purposes.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁷ Cfr. *Sponsorizzazione per il finanziamento di lavori da realizzare nell’Anfiteatro Flavio – Colosseo, Roma*, January 21st, 2011.

¹⁷⁸ Cfr. *Ibid.*, art. 8, p.8. Eng. transl.: “The amount paid by the sponsor pursuant to this Agreement, will benefit from the tax deductibility, according to current legislation.”

¹⁷⁹ Cfr. *Ibid.*, art. 4.1.a, p.5. Eng. transl.: “The association [...] shall be entitled to: a. manage, exclusively, the communication activities related to interventions”

¹⁸⁰ Cfr. *Ibid.*, art. 4.1.b, p.5. Eng. transl.: “The Centre - [...] will boast the name, and will use the distinctive signs of the sponsor – it will be equipped to adequately accommodate both the international press, and host [...] the elderly, the disabled and all those who suffer particular discomfort, interested in visiting the Coliseum and its restoration.

¹⁸¹ Cfr. *Ibid.*, art. 4.1.c, e, f, p.5-6. Eng. transl.: “c. make a website [...]; e. make and organize photographs and video [...]; f. make and use materials [...] and applications

With regard to exclusive rights granted to the sponsor and the association about brand management and image, the agreement also provides the opportunity to create a brand representing Coliseum, and freely use it without any limitation; the brand can also be associated with other sponsor's brands or products.¹⁸²

The duration of all these rights for the sponsor is 15 years and will be eventually extended.

The sponsorship agreement quoted above clearly illustrates how all the promotional and communication activities will be delegated directly to the sponsor. Therefore, not only the sponsor will have the right to use the image of the Coliseum for its own purposes, but it will also manage the communication of the restoration works. Beyond some criticism about the skills of a corporation that generally doesn't deal with cultural heritage, and doubting of the quality of the potential output, the most interesting point is probably that in the agreement, no monitoring on the communication contents has been considered, if not the necessity of obtaining a positive opinion by the Superintendence, on communication plans that will be developed annually by the Association. The agreement, in fact, doesn't include any measure in order to protect public interests in terms of communication quality: the problem of a qualitative communication seems not to belong to the main interests of the administration, and it is not recognized as a right for citizens.

In this sense, it is easy to suppose that the focus of communication strategies will be mainly oriented to the sponsorship of the role of Tod's in the accomplishment of the necessary intervention on the monument, with important consequences in terms of image for the company, but probably with no benefits for the quality of communication. On the contrary, this opportunity would be particularly important to let the public know the Coliseum by a completely different perspective, also spreading the awareness about the difficulties that the intervention on a monument of such importance may involve.

Clearly these are only suggestions, because in the reality the agreements are continually under discussion. However, it seemed important to mention the case, which certainly deserves to be monitored, in order to see how the opportunity will effectively be managed by the stakeholders.

It is worth wondering, in any case, if the image the Coliseum restored, in the future will be more close to that of the monument that everyone knows now, or to a shoe.

with images and information related to the interventions on the Coliseum, and make publications [...];”

¹⁸² Cfr. *Ibid.*, art. 4.1 and 4.2, p.4-6.

2.4.2 Virtual reality: Communicating a Different Truth

Computer technologies are increasing their importance in the development of innovative ways for supporting the conservation process of cultural heritage: information technology, simulations, virtual reconstructions, but also graphics, video and advanced audio techniques allow the definition of a new way of studying and understanding heritage. The IT research for the conservation of cultural heritage has been developing quite fast during last decades and experiences and examples are many. This involves not only the research field, but also the ways heritage is communicated to the public, particularly referring to heritage digitalization, virtual tours, augmented reality, advanced tools that generally attract a wide range of people because of the possibility to “physically” interact with the cultural resource and/or build personal paths of understanding and interpreting heritage.

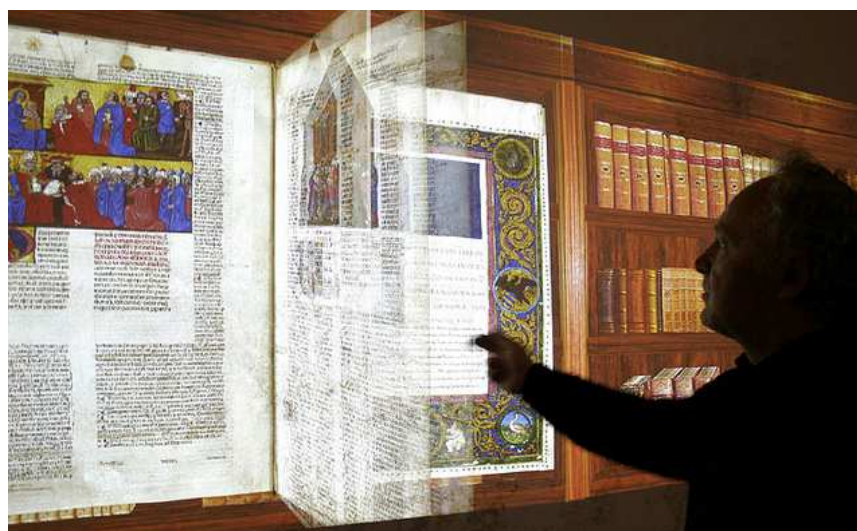


Figure 17: Interactive virtual library in Palazzo Ducale di Gubbio¹⁸³

The field is clearly very wide, and this research doesn't aim to give an exhaustive framework about innovative virtual experiences for the promotion of cultural heritage; however, some cases will be quoted particularly referring to the use of conservation issues, in order to underline potentialities and criticalities of virtual technologies for the study and communication of heritage.

2.4.2.1 Virtual Reconstructions

Virtual reconstructions are particularly interesting for the field of restoration because they offer the possibility to build models or environments on which to

¹⁸³ Image taken from Flickr.com; Installation by Stark s.r.l. – Design by Paolo Buroni;

try theories, virtually experimenting some of the operations that are necessary in real conservation (e.g. cleanings, colourings, and so on); moreover, virtual reconstruction are very often used in order to rebuild past images of the monument, with the opportunity to materialize hypothesis and verify assumptions. The flexibility and reversibility that these technologies offer are not only important because of the need to limit direct intervention on the monument, but they allow us to think and open our mind to many different possibilities, scenarios and points of view.

Virtual reconstructions are also increasing their importance in enhancement strategies, as in museums or other cultural context. Some examples are the reconstruction of Ancient Rome (“Rome Reborn” for Google Earth and the virtual reconstruction realized by the Municipality of Rome) and the reconstruction of the amphitheatre in Pula (Istria): in all these cases, monuments are represented as they were supposed to be in the past, giving us the possibility to see cultural heritage in its authentic and original state.

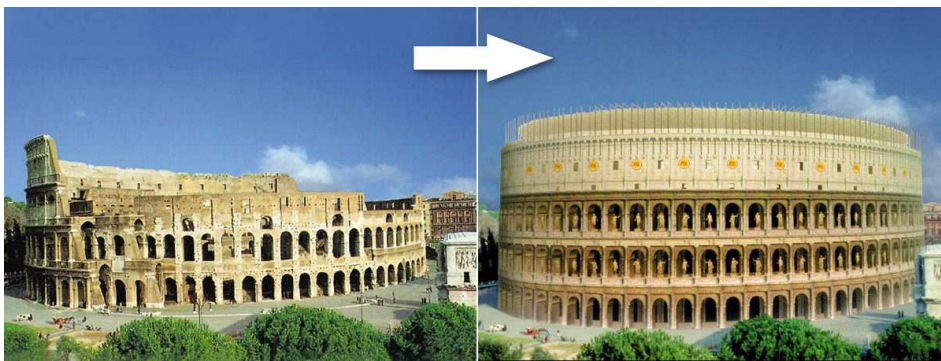


Figure 18: The reconstruction of the Coliseum – Municipality of Rome (Italy)¹⁸⁴



Figure 19: The reconstruction of Rome - "Rome Reborn" project for Google Earth¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁴ Images taken from www.capitolium.org

¹⁸⁵ Images taken from www.romereborn.virginia.edu

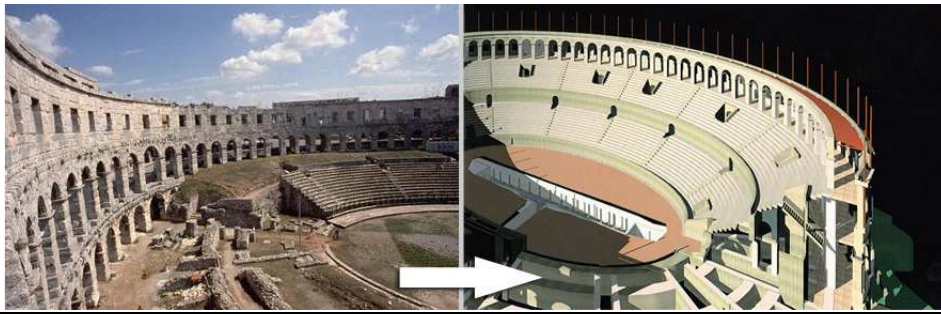


Figure 20: The reconstruction of the Amphitheatre in Pula (Istria)

Question is: which past and which originality?

As introduced in the theoretical framework, the authenticity of cultural heritage is not something static, but is depending on its evolution as living system. There's evidence of the potential of virtual and computer technology in representing this continuity, but unfortunately the general attitude when using virtual reconstructions is about following common schemes that privilege very re-integrative simulations and which propose a single point of view, in the common belief that a complete and unique representation is much more communicative and effective.

“The development of modern technologies [...] rendered possible the creation of real-life, three-dimensional virtual models that enable not only experts, but also the public at large to gain an extremely interesting insight into the vanished architectonic heritage [...]. It is indeed fascinating to be able to visualize the splendour of the Amphitheatre in all its glory, as did the ancient Romans [...].”¹⁸⁶

From this interpretation of the use of virtual reality, some questions rise naturally: is the heritage vanished or simply transformed? The roman civilization lasted hundreds of years: is this the aspect that the amphitheatre has kept for such a long time? Hasn't it ever changed just a bit? Is the amphitheatre today less “glorious” than in ancient Rome?

This is exactly what virtual reconstructions should avoid: giving an absolute and immobile image of heritage. The possibilities that virtual reality offers are strongly connected with transformation and the opportunity to try different interpretations;¹⁸⁷ on the contrary 3D reality is generally perceived a tool to

¹⁸⁶ Cfr. Starac, A. (2009), *From Fragment to Reconstruction*, Catalogue of the Exhibition, Archeological Museum of Istria, Pula, p.3

¹⁸⁷ Cfr. ICOMOS, “Charter on Interpretation and Presentation...”, op.cit., Principle 2.4:

“Visual reconstructions, whether by artists, architects, or computer modelers, should be based upon detailed and systematic analysis of environmental, archaeological, architectural, and historical data, including analysis of written,

bring heritage back to its original state, to its “ancient splendour”¹⁸⁸. There’s a need for working on the variety of possible solutions, showing how, when it comes to conservation, there is always more than one point of view. In this sense science and technology cannot give us the absolute truth, but they can help us considering many interpretations.¹⁸⁹

As many other times stressed in this thesis, the conservation work is the moment of knowledge production, but it is also the moment of raising new questions, because, while “digging” the monument, conservation can always bring new details into light, new signs, sometimes apparently meaningless, which contribute to the rebuilding of the complex and stratified history of cultural heritage. The representation of heritage as a never-ending knowledge process, the uncertainty, instead of absolute truths, can be in fact much more communicative, because it tries to make sense of things, answering some questions and creating new ones, involving everyone in an interactive relationship with cultural objects. And this is the way by which virtual technologies can effectively help in improving the communication of the richness and the value of heritage.

2.4.3 Communication as Direct Experience: Scaffolding Opening to Visitors

The following experiences refer to some cases of particular approaches to cultural communication, such as scaffolding accessible to visitors. These cases have been included in the section dedicated to new tools for communication, not for the use of particularly innovative instruments, as the examples quoted in the previous part dedicated to virtual reality, but rather because of the contents proposed. As a matter of fact, the following examples open new perspectives in the direction of the communication of technical contents, mainly related to the material culture of monuments, which can offer exceptional experiences to visitors, focusing on the idea of restoration as a fundamental part of the process of enhancement.

The first case refers to the restoration of St. Pieterskerk in Leiden. The very ancient church, particularly representative for the history of the city and today used as a cultural and meeting centre, began in 2001 with a long conservation

oral and iconographic sources, and photography. The information sources on which such visual renderings are based should be clearly documented and alternative reconstructions based on the same evidence, when available, should be provided for comparison.”

¹⁸⁸ Cfr. Parrini, G. (2010), “Beni culturali? No beni digitali”, in *La Stampa*, 20 ottobre, www.lastampa.it

¹⁸⁹ Cfr. Bellini A., “Definizione di Restauro”, in B. Paolo Torsello, *Che cos’è il restauro? Nove studiosi a confronto*, Marsilio, Venezia, 2005.

process of interiors and exteriors. During special dates (e.g. the Museum Week in 2006) the scaffolding remained open in order to allow tourists to get a glimpse of the technical aspects of the intervention. In addition, visitors could enjoy a spectacular view of the city from the top of the church.¹⁹⁰



Figure 21: Scaffolding of St Pieterskerk in Leiden was opened to tourist offering an unexpected point of view on the city.

Some years before 1992, another similar example was developed in Poitiers for the restoration of the church of Nôtre Dame La Grande. During the intervention on the very damaged facade of the church, the administration responsible of the project allowed tourists to visit the scaffolding, in order to get them closer to the masterpiece of sculptures, object of the conservation process.¹⁹¹

Other similar examples propose the realization of double scaffolding or specific structures dedicated to visitors access.

A first case is about the Aosta Roman Theatre's restoration (2001). Considering the specificity of the project, the Superintendence of Aosta decided to develop a strategy for documenting the intervention on the monument also using innovative technologies like short films, audio and video media, etc. Moreover, the superintendence recognized the need to show real-time operations on the monument: for this reason special scaffoldings were created, in order to make it accessible to visitors.

¹⁹⁰ Informations taken from www.pieterskerk.com

¹⁹¹ Information take from www.bernezac.com

The main goal of the Superintendence was, at first place, the involvement of local inhabitants and tourists in an open construction site, in order to make people more sensitive to the restoration process and its technical and cultural aspects. Secondly, the Superintendence pursued the participation of economic stakeholders and companies, external to the public administration, in order to support both the restoration project and its economical sustainability after the end of the interventions through the management of guided tours.



Figure 22: Scaffolding at the Aosta Roma Theater

The scaffolding was built with a modular structure, made of steel, following all current security regulations even if allowing the best possible visibility. It allowed visits of three group guided tours at the same time and it ensured the accessibility to all levels of the monument, including the top of the building. The technology used for the construction of the scaffoldings ensured a good stability to the structure, avoiding the realization of joints on the facade of the monuments as well as the building of foundations.

The structure is provided with emergency stairs and a panoramic lift and it allows a complete view not only of all parts of the monument, but also a panoramic perspective on the north-west area of the roman settlement and other surrounding monuments such as “Torre dei Signori”, “Porte Pretoriane” and the via Porta Pretoria buildings, ancient documents of Roman times.

Furthermore, an exposition area, with the purpose of interpreting and presenting restoration works has been created at the basement level of the monument.¹⁹²



Figure 23: Scaffolding in St. Karl Borromäus Church, Vienna.

Another interesting case refers to the scaffolding of St. Karl Borromäus Church in Vienna. In 2009-2010 some restoration works were required in order to conserve the wonderful paintings inside the great dome of the church; giant scaffoldings were then necessary in order to allow restorers to safely work on the paintings. The invasive dimension of the structure and the long time required for interventions considered, it was decided to open to the public the access to scaffoldings: by this way security stairs and a lift took up visitors and restorers to the very top of the church, offering a unique possibility to see the works of art from the short distance

¹⁹² Informations taken from: www.rossetassociati.it

Finally, a further experience must be quoted for the particular results of the initiative: the reference is to the case of the Cathedral of Santa María in Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain.¹⁹³ In the Master Plan of the restoration works of the whole complex, a pioneering initiative called “Open for works” was planned with the aim of opening the whole physical process to the public. Guided tours and a system of other experiences (publications, cultural events, etc.), both for young and adults, are organized in order to spread awareness about the activity of conservation and the knowledge generated by the project. By this way, the tour at the church becomes a visit to a real working site, with helmet and all safety devices and attentions required. Tours propose a totally unexpected perspective on the monument, as an open living project which changes every day.

Scaffolding accessible to public also had the purpose to finance the restoration works. The amount of visitors attracted by scaffolding, and related incomes from the tickets paid by tourists, were so high that its dismissing seems till nowadays too disadvantageous.



Figure 24: Scaffolding open to public in Cathedral of Santa María de Vitoria.

Many other more recent attempts have been made in this direction: in Italy we can register tours to the scaffoldings of the Palazzo Ducale in Venezia¹⁹⁴, to

¹⁹³ For further information see www.catedralvitoria.com

¹⁹⁴ Cfr. www.soprintendenza.venezia.beniculturali.it

the frescos of the Frati Cappuccini Church in Fontevivo (Parma, Italy)¹⁹⁵, and to Andrea Pozzo's frescos in San Francesco Saverio's Church in Mondovì, (Cuneo, Italy).¹⁹⁶

These examples are particularly interesting because they promote people's participation along the entire conservation process. The main purpose is to involve people by attracting attention through an experience that, because of its highly technical contents, commonly excludes the public. On the contrary, these experiences are occasions to see heritage from a totally unexpected point of view, both because climbing scaffoldings offers particular sights on the monument, and because this kind of approaches present heritage in its evolution, which includes also maintenance, problems of care and degradation, raising doubts, questions and curiosity.

Very often these experiences also include the opportunity to see restorers at work. This is also very important in order to communicate conservation issues, and, as introduced in the theoretical framework and in other experiences quoted in this chapter, the approach to the manual work, watching experts operating on the monument, can provide interesting occasions for rebuilding a more direct and "physical" relationship between people and heritage.

¹⁹⁵ Cfr. www.comune.fontevivo.pr.it

¹⁹⁶ Cfr. www.andreapozzo.com

3 NEW PERSPECTIVES FOR COMMUNICATION BETWEEN PROJECT AND PROCESS IN THE CULTURAL FIELD

NEW PERSPECTIVES FOR A COMMUNICATION BETWEEN PROJECT AND PROCESS: A SHORT SUMMARY

The previous chapter has built the state of the art of communication in the field of heritage enhancement and conservation. In order to give a complete picture of weaknesses and strengths of communication tools, the following chapter will deepen some questions through the investigation of two study cases, which have been more closely analyzed through direct experiences. The chapter is divided into two sections: the first is dedicated to the description of the two study cases; the second is dedicated to some more in deep considerations and to potential perspectives of the two experiences.

3.1 Two Study Cases

Thus, the first section starts with the description of the Isola Comacina Integrated cultural System. Isola Comacina is a small island of the Como lake, and it has been the core of the Integrated Cultural System, which main actions were focused on the restoration and enhancement of a system of cultural sites still present on the island, through a strategic vision: the project not only stressed the importance of the conservation of heritage, but also the need of managing the future of the site, planning the cultural, social and economic sustainability, integrating multiple resources of the territory. The communication issue is clearly very important, but the strategy till now used has only considered the political and institutional level, with no attention for spreading the awareness of the importance of integrated management as a tool for innovating conservation practices at local level. Some steps forward have been done in this direction, but today, with most of planned interventions

completed, there's still a need for planned communication. The section then follows with the description of the project "Milano nei cantieri dell'arte", that has been the opportunity of a traineeship at the promoting association of building companies of Milano, Assimpredil Ance. The experience is endorsed by a system of private, public and institutional stakeholders, which promote local heritage through the enhancement of skills and know-how of restoration enterprises operating in the Milano area. The idea comes from the consideration that not all actors involved in restoration processes find adequate space for representation, and values produced in single interventions remain matter of interest just for small groups of experts. The initiative works on two-years themes: 2009-2010 was dedicated to architectures from XV-XVI centuries, 2011-2012 to XVII-XVIII and the future two-year period 2013-2014 to XIX-XX. Every year conferences, workshops and guided tours are organized and, parallel to the initiative, a dedicated website that collects restorations realized by local enterprises is constantly implemented, as an archive of local know-how about the industry of conservation. Building enterprises and professionals are asked to become communicators of their works on monuments selected, during both conferences and guided tours. Despite first difficulties, "Milano nei cantieri dell'arte" boasts strong results, particularly referring to the large amount of people participating to events and the high number of enterprises involved.

3.2 Some Considerations and New Perspectives

The second section of the chapter compares the two study cases, developing some more in deep considerations, and focusing about potential perspective of the use of communication in the context of the two experiences. With regard to the first case of Isola Comacina, the public nature of the initiative determines some specific difficulties to clearly define the purpose of enhancement and related strategies. Consequently, the knowledge produced from the important conservation project of the whole island is not recognized as a key instrument for the promotion of the territory. The concern is then on the need to develop policies to orient administrators on quality rather than on the simple representation of results (accountability), and the communication of restoration is identified as the first step to highlight the high level of what has been done, as well as an innovative communication tool to enhance the attractiveness of the area. Regarding the second case of "Milano nei cantieri dell'arte", the mainly private nature of the initiative has allowed, on the contrary, a clear definition of objectives as creating a qualifying and qualified competitiveness among companies working in the field) and the building of a strong structure for the development of the project. This structure is supposed to potentially represent a community of practice that is anyway not properly working, at the moment. The main problems of the experience are then defined on two levels of internal and external communication: the first refers to the need to make the community of

practice work, developing strategies for the involvement of all significant actors in the process; the second level refers to external communication, suggesting the need for a more planned and coordinated communication, as the only way to improve the quality of the project and the achievement of main goals concerning the competitiveness of all members involved.

3.1 Two Study Cases

3.1.1 The Isola Comacina Enhancement Project

This first study case was the opportunity to consider the use of communication in the context of an integrated cultural system, evaluating interpretation and presentation approaches for the improvement of the impact of restorations, carried out on the Isola Comacina (Como).

3.1.1.1 *The Story*

Isola Comacina (Ossuccio, Como, Italy) is considered an important cultural site because of its long history, today still represented by the archaeological remains related to seven different churches (commonly dated before the destruction of the island made by Milano in 1169), and for three buildings particularly representative of the Rationalism Movement.

The island has been neglected for centuries, but in recent times it came to new attention, starting from archaeological diggings in the early twentieth century,¹⁹⁷ moving through the planning and building of three houses for artists by Pietro Lingeri, during the 1940s.

3.1.1.2 *The Integrated Cultural System*

During the last years the island became also the core of the Isola Comacina Integrated Cultural System, which has been developed by a team of public, private and institutional stakeholders, with the common aim of enhancing and conserving a rich and complex heritage. The goal of the project was the connection of the Island and of its heritage with a system of cultural resources and stakeholders belonging to the wider area of the west side of Como Lake.

The integrated cultural system has been co-financed by Fondazione Cariplo and is considered as pilot experience for the project “Distretti Culturali”, promoted in the whole Lombardy region (Italy).¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁷ Cfr. Monneret de Villard, U. (1914), *L'Isola Comacina. Ricerche Storiche ed Archeologiche*, Premiata Tipografia Editrice Ostinelli, Como; and Belloni L. M., Belloni Zecchinelli M., Caporusso D. (1998), *L'Isola Comacina e il territorio di Ossuccio. Cronache e ricerche archeologiche negli scritti di Luigi Mario Belloni e Mariuccia Belloni Zecchinelli*, ET, Milano.

¹⁹⁸ www.fondazionecariplo.it

The innovative character of this project is related to the investment in conservation through a strategic vision: as a matter of fact, the project not only stresses the importance of the restoration and conservation of such a rich heritage, but also the need of managing the future of the site, planning the cultural, social and economic sustainability, through the integration of multiple cultural resources of the area, in the perspective of creating a stable and growing system of production of culture, economy and social integration.¹⁹⁹

3.1.1.3 The Communication Issue

The communication-participation issue is a crucial matter for this kind of strategic and integrated projects and two different attitudes can be identified: the first, and most common one, is focused on the traditional aspects related to restorations, but the real focus is on promoting the efficacy of local public administration in fund-raising activities; the second one, is a communication strategy oriented to improve the capacity to deploy not only material, but also (and mainly), human and local resources. This second alternative represents a more interesting strategy when it allows to connect with cultural stakeholders (associations and institution representing the local identity); it acts on the territory and links local and cultural resources with the aim of developing human capital, more than touristic outputs.

In the Isola Comacina case, the communication strategy used till now has only considered the political and institutional level, with no attention for spreading awareness of the importance of integrated management as a tool for innovating conservation and enhancement practices at local level.

Today, with most of planned interventions already completed, there's still a need for a planned communication, oriented to the sustainable management of the site. Recently, some steps forward have been made in this direction, and some important innovations can be enlighten:

¹⁹⁹ Cfr. Della Torre, S. (2006), *L'integrazione dei sistemi culturali come strumento di tutela pro-attiva. Un'esperienza in corso intorno all'Isola Comacina*, in "Arkos" n.10, 2005, pp. 20-25; Della Torre, S., *Il ruolo dei beni culturali nei nuovi modelli di sviluppo: riflessioni sulle esperienze in atto in Lombardia*, in "Arkos" n.15, pp. 16-19;

- First of all the publication of a book²⁰⁰ related to the restoration of Lingeri's houses for artists on the island; the initiative has been supported by Fondazione Carlo Leone et Mariena Montandon,²⁰¹ which since long has been developing and promoting cultural projects on the area. The publication of the book has been linked to an exhibition in Villa Carlotta, the most visited cultural site of the area of Como Lake²⁰². The exhibition was designed to disseminate the most technical aspects of the restoration project, which means not only communicating the history and work of Lingeri, but also more specific aspects of techniques and the attitude of today facing the restoration of modern

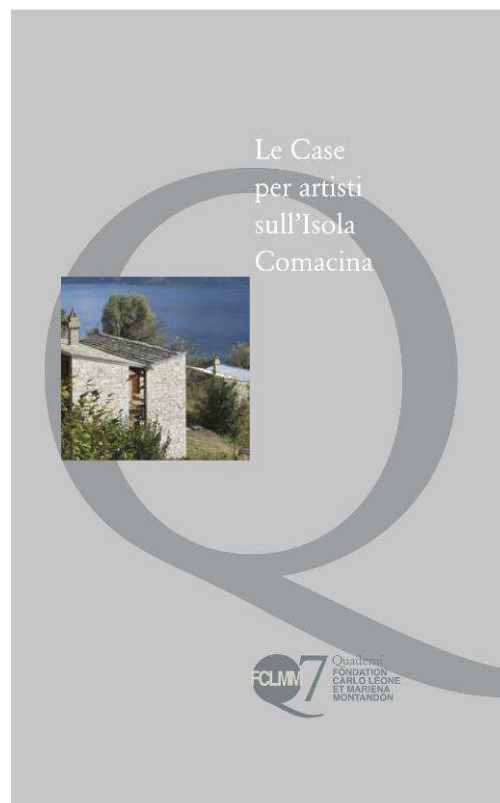


Figure 25: Cover of the book about Lingeri small houses

- architecture. The initiative seemed to be particularly interesting because of the link between architects, local associations and institutions, which produced an improvement of interest connected to the conservation project, also certified by a growing number of visitors to the Villa Carlotta Museum.²⁰³
- Secondly, during 2010 guided tours were organised in order to spread the knowledge about local history and about what have been done. The approach to these tours was also oriented to the involvement of architects who lead the conservation projects on monuments. The idea is that the history of Isola Comacina, is not only related to the evolution of social and human events, but also to technical knowledge, which means the human history read through “material documents”, something that we can today study, understand and preserve from decay.

²⁰⁰ Cfr. Canziani, A., Della Torre, S. (2010)(eds.), *Le Case per Artisti sull'Isola Comacina*, Nodo Libri, Como, 2010

²⁰¹ See www.fcmm.org

²⁰² See www.villacarlotta.it

²⁰³ About 25000 visitors, 2000 visitors more than last year in the same period.

Finally, other communication activities, even if with less significant benefits than the ones stressed above, have been set in recent times, and deserve to be mentioned:

- In 2010, the development of the promotional image of the island, through the implementation of a website with the aim to represent the complexity and the stratification of Isola Comacina cultural heritage. The website proposes also different opportunities of cultural and tourist fruition, involving natural, architectural and artistic paths. Furthermore some educational activities are being planned (e.g. the creation of workshops for children and young adults, involving the University of Insubria, then the world of research and innovation) to promote the knowledge and the understanding of the island.
- In 2011, an event for the refurbishing of two Lingeri's houses was organized by the Consulate of Belgium, in conjunction with the "Fuori-Salone del Mobile", as a rare opportunity to visit the architecture of Lingeri, before the reopening of the houses, as places of hospitality for artists.



Figure 26: Guided tour inside one of Lingeri houses.

3.1.1.4 Results

The idea of spreading the knowledge of conservation is connected to the belief that everyone, not only technicians, can understand what is the material development of our heritage, and the idea itself of change and evolution, and understanding through study, doubt and uncertainty, makes the material heritage turn into the object of a long-life learning process, which assumes culture as something always new, different and interesting to learn.

This experience show how the involvement of local stakeholders can positively contribute not only to the promotion of standard activities, mainly connected to cultural tourism, but also to the development of the awareness that cultural heritage is something belonging to present time and to all of us, and enhancement is not only a way for improving economic incomes, but it is also the way for conserving cultural heritage through a wide participation of technicians as well as local communities.



Figure 27: Guided tour at the archeological remains of the Basilica di Sant'Eufemia, on Isola Comacina

3.1.2 Milano nei cantieri dell'arte

The project “Milano nei cantieri dell'arte”²⁰⁴ has been the opportunity of a traineeship at the sponsoring association Assimpredil Ance, and it allowed to

²⁰⁴ For details Cfr. *Dedalo – Rivista bimestrale di Assimpredil Ance*, n. 16, Novembre-Dicembre 2009, and Chiapparini, A., de Adamich, M. (2011), “L'innovazione come brand: l'immagine e la visione del settore del restauro nel progetto ‘Milano nei cantieri

actively participate in the implementation of the initiative, intervening with the contribution of the research experience, and collaborating to the construction of new instruments for the improvement of the effectiveness of the communicative activity. The collaboration specifically implied the participation in the planning of events, the selection of materials and contributions, as well as the management of the online archive, founded at the Association, which finds its main objective in the communication of restoration experiences.

3.1.2.1 The Project Structure, Intents and Goals,

The experience “Milano nei cantieri dell’arte”, endorsed by a system of private, public and institutional stakeholders and led by the local association for building companies (Assimpredil Ance), tries to promote local heritage through the enhancement of skills and know-how of building enterprises operating in the territory of Milano and its surroundings.

The idea comes from the consideration that not all actors involved in restoration processes find adequate space for representation, and values produced in single interventions remain matter of interest just for small groups of experts. Communication about restoration is generally focused on what is visible, giving little attention to the work that lies behind the result, an hidden work (e.g. related to structural engineering, plant engineering, technology, materials, etc..), which deserves to go out of anonymity and start to speak to an audience not only made by technicians.²⁰⁵

The initiative works on two-year periods: 2009-2010 edition was focused on architecture from XV-XVI centuries, 2011-2012 is addressed to XVII-XVIII centuries and the future two-year period 2013-2014 will be focused on XIX-XX centuries. This structure is designed in order to reach EXPO2015 with the definition of thematic itineraries, on the territory of Milan and suburbs, which can intercept tourist flows and become an alternative key to interpret local heritage. The initiative doesn’t use high-tech tools for communication, but privileges contents and innovation of the enhancement process, with the aim of proposing a new, practical and unexpected point of view.

Every period includes some events like conferences, workshops and guided tours, and it also works through a website where interventions on built heritage are presented: the aim is to built a knowledge archive about local culture of restoration.

dell’arte”, in Biscontin, G., Driussi, G. (ed.), *Governare l’innovazione. Processi, strutture, materiali e tecnologie tra passato e futuro, Atti del convegno di studi, Bressanone, 21-24 giugno*, Edizioni Arcadia Ricerche, Venezia, 2011, pp.19-28.

²⁰⁵ Cfr. Giorgi, A., Poletti, R. (1995), *Accoppiamenti Giudiziosi. Storie di Progettisti e Costruttori*, Skira, Milano.

3.1.2.2 Workshops Conferences and Guided Tours

The main character of conferences and workshops is the complete absence of a specific target: this could be considered a weakness, because the need to discuss with a very mixed public could lead to misunderstanding and avoid the control on contributions quality. Nevertheless, the risk is controlled thanks to the diversity of topics, which calls at the same table for discussion architects, enterprises, students and audiences, with the purpose of exchanging experiences and points of view and to create synergies between different fields of design, production, research and fruition.



Figure 28: Workshop at Cascina Cuccagna (MI) – 17 aprile 2011 (Image by F. Malara)



Figure 29: Guided tour at Villa Reale in Monza - April 14th 2011 (Image by F. Malara)

As a consequence of this, during workshops or conferences, the debate is in fact focused on quality, and events are thought to become opportunity for the development of competencies, standards and goals: strengths and weaknesses of interventions are discussed, and differences are strongly enlightened.

Another important moment consists in guided tours to some historical buildings restored in recent times.



Figure 30: Guided tour at Brera Botanic Garden - April 9th 2011 (Image by F.Malara)

Tours are in some cases very “tourist-kind”, in other cases very technical, and they involve technicians, architects and restorers to become guides for the audience. Also in this case the complete absence of a target can become a potentiality if working on communication:

- firstly, it is important to use direct experience to give strength to the explanation of the value of monuments, with attention for the reconstruction of a context, in order to enlighten all the elements related to history, culture, economy, ways of life and working, with the aim of catching the interest and experience of all;²⁰⁶
- secondly, it is important to talk about the monument and restoration, describing how things are made in their material aspects, in order to provide a more complex but not complicated representation of the object;
- finally, it is important to work on risk management, explaining reasons of some choices (such as humidity control, scheduling of visits in closed

²⁰⁶ Cfr. Montella, M., Cerquetti, M. (2008), “Innovazione della comunicazione nei musei locali delle Marche”, in Dragoni, P. (a cura di), *La qualità nel museo. Ricognizione sullo stato di alcuni musei locali*, Eum Edizioni Università di Macerata, Macerata pp.191-200

groups, etc.), in order to raise awareness that restoration is not the only way to conservation, but that there is also something we can do after interventions, and assiduous care and prevention can provide real protection²⁰⁷;

Guided tours have been till now affected by certain discretion by professional and restorers involved, who seem to be afraid of annoying a public not prepared to innovative contents. On the contrary, both the surprise effect and the concreteness of interventions represent opportunities for the improvement of communication effectiveness.

3.1.2.3 The Website: an Archive for Local Know-How²⁰⁸

In addition to conferences and tours, a website is integrated in the project with the dual function of promoting events and creating an archive of topics, issues and experiences of companies working in the restoration field.

The website has a specific section where descriptions of interventions on monuments can be uploaded. Technicians and restorers are asked to implement the website, also including technical documents, and by this way, to describe their competencies and directly communicate their work.

The structure of the website is being revised in order to improve some weaknesses which have already been identified. Briefly, there is a need for:

- working on data retrieval, which now seems to be rather weak. It is necessary to activate at least a research inside documents and by topic. At the moment it is very difficult to find data if you do not already know the details of projects and interventions;
- providing a space for debate. Whether creating a space for public debate online, or organizing preliminary briefing focused on goals and contents of the web publication, the debate is important to ensure a high level of quality and to build opportunities for highly professional qualification.
- giving space for communication to all types of interventions. Currently, the data sheet lends itself to the description of projects carried out on specific parts of the building (e.g. painted surfaces), and little space is left to more extensive interventions (static consolidations, plants, etc.). To solve this deficiency, resources have been invested to define at least two types of forms, the one devoted specifically to intervention on surfaces, the other dedicated to larger restoration projects.

²⁰⁷ Della Torre, S., (2010), "Preventiva, integrata, programmata: le logiche coevolutive della conservazione" in Biscontin, G., Driussi, G. (eds.), *Pensare la Prevenzione. Manufatti, Usi, Ambienti, Atti del Convegno di Bressanone, 13-16 luglio*, Edizioni Arcadia Ricerche, Venezia, pp. 67-76.

²⁰⁸ www.milanoneicantieridellarte.it

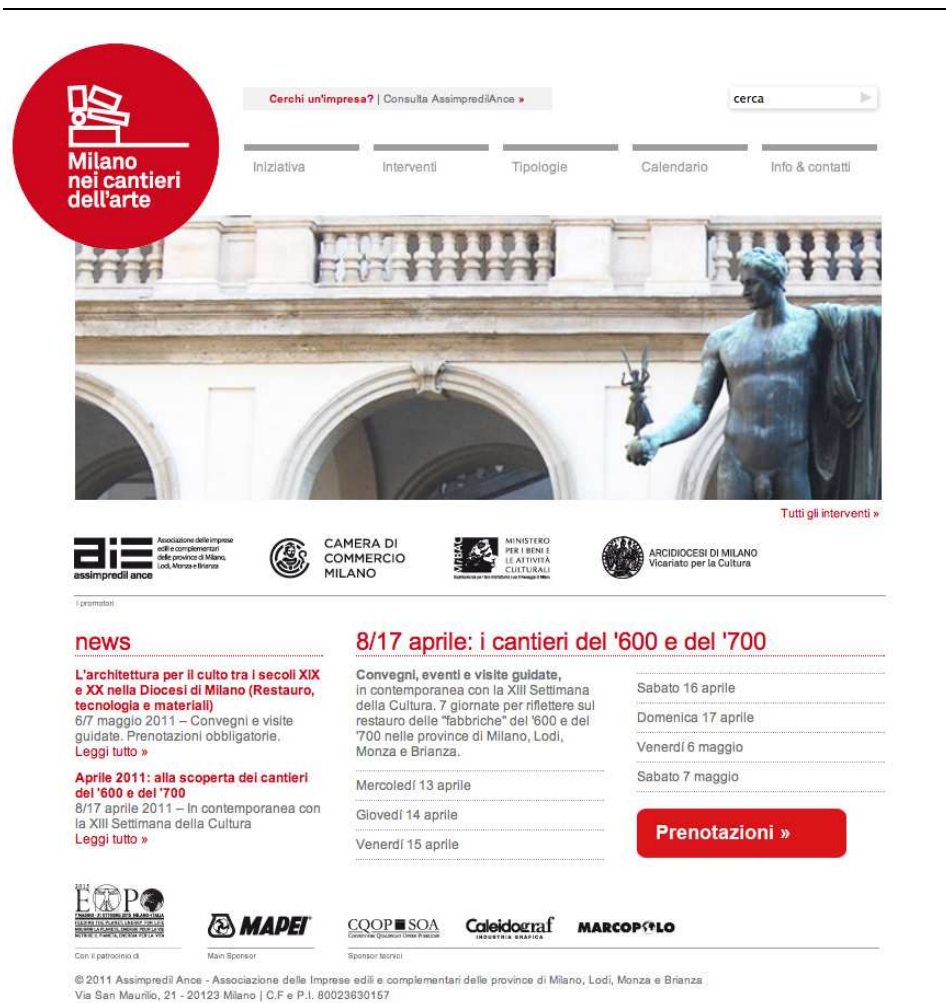


Figure 31: homepage of the website

Another section of the website (called “tipologie”), has been planned in order to provide a space for new solutions to specific problems, patents, etc. It's about building a sub-archive highly specialized where to collect excellence of skills: the aim is to keep the broad capability of communication of the website in general, while providing a section more oriented to the interests of technicians and professionals.



**Milano
nei cantieri
dell'arte**

Cerchi un'impresa? | Consulta AssimprediAnce »

Cerca

Iniziativa
Interventi
Tipologie
Calendario
Info & contatti

Teatro alla Scala

Piazza della Scala, 2
20121 Milano



Fondazione Teatro alla Scala
Via Filodrammatici, 2 - 20121 Milano
www.teatroallascala.org

Restauro del Teatro alla Scala

A partire da 1999, il Teatro alla Scala è stato oggetto di una costante attività da parte di Cooperativa per il Restauro, che ha compreso interventi di manutenzione straordinaria, monitoraggio e manutenzione ordinaria di tutte le superfici di pregio. Gli interventi di manutenzione straordinaria sono stati distinti in due grandi appalti: restauro e conservazione delle facciate monumentali su p.zza Scala, Via Filodrammatici e via Verdi (anno 1999) e restauro degli apparati decorativi e delle finiture di pregio interne, relative al corpo monumentale (giugno 2002/dicembre 2004). Nel 2002, a 36 mesi dal grande cantiere sugli esterni, è stata svolta l'attività di monitoraggio scientifico sulle facciate monumentali; nel 2004, in parallelo allo svolgimento degli interventi sugli apparati decorativi interni, è stato eseguito un primo intervento di manutenzione delle stesse. Negli anni a seguire, sono state portate avanti puntualmente attività di manutenzione ordinaria sia delle superfici esterne sia interne del Teatro, ciò al fine di prevenire e limitare il deperimento fisiologico di questo bene, unico e di imprescindibile valore storico e artistico non solo per i milanesi, ma a livello mondiale.

Testi a cura di Simonetta Offredi e Raffaella Silari
Foto storiche tratte da
Teatro alla Scala: restauro conservativo – Progetto definitivo, Indagine storica
Archivio fotografico: di Cooperativa per il Restauro S.C.p.A.
Fotografo: Ranzani Mauro

Teatro alla Scala - storia



Scarica relazione storica

Scarica relazione tecnica

Scarica filiera

Teatro alla scala - interventi



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Figure 32: An example of intervention published on the website

The screenshot shows the website interface for 'Milano nei cantieri dell'arte'. At the top, there is a search bar with the text 'Cerchi un'impresa? | Consulta' and a search button labeled 'cerca'. Below this is a navigation menu with tabs for 'Iniziativa', 'Interventi', 'Tipologie', 'Calendario', and 'Info & contatti'. The 'Interventi' tab is selected, and a sub-menu shows the years '400 - '500', '600 - '700', and '800 - '900'. The main content area is titled ''400 - '500 / Elenco'. It features a search bar with the text 'Cerca un intervento' and a search button labeled 'cerca'. Below the search bar is a list of 18 monuments, each with a small image, a title, a brief description, and a 'Leggi tutto >' link. The monuments listed are: Abbazia di Morimondo, Arco di Porta Romana, Arengario di Monza, Biblioteca di Santa Maria Incoronata, Ca' Granda, Università degli Studi di Milano, Cappella di Teodolinda, Duomo di Monza, Casa dell'acqua di Paulo, Casa Fontana Silvestri, Casa Villa a Cornaredo, Cascina Monastero di Santa Maria di Baggio, Cascina Roma a San Donato Milanese, Castello Da Corte a Bellusco, Conca di Viarenna, Cripta della Chiesa di San Primo Martire, Duomo di Milano, Ex Casa degli Umiliati a Monza, Ex Chiesa di San Carpofo, Ex Chiesa di San Pietro dei Pellegrini, and Ex Convento di San Domenico a Lodi.

Figure 33: A snapshot on the list of monuments uploaded

3.1.2.4 Results

Despite initial difficulties, “Milano nei cantieri dell’arte” boasts strong results. First of all the political choice of making public and private institutions work on same objectives and collaborate for the preservation and enhancement of built heritage, bringing together different disciplines, perspectives, and interests, sometimes competing, in order to achieve the common goal of disseminating a conservation culture which recognize the importance of history of labor and know-how as significant part of heritage. This renewed look on heritage has led to a great attractiveness of the initiative and since the first edition in 2009 it has involved about 3000 architects, restorers, art lovers, and the numbers increased in 2010, with about 4600 participants.

This is however not only a success in terms of numbers of visitors, but also because of the involvement of a significant amount of building companies operating in the field of restoration: as a matter of fact firms presenting their interventions on the website are 67 and published projects are more than 150.

The absence of a specific target helps to change perspective and to talk about how things are concretely made, prompting the promoters to get involved, discussing, and sharing their knowledge and expertise, with particular attention to large scale participation of the public. However, the ambitions of the initiative in training and education move on two levels: first, the diffusion of knowledge to the wide public and second increasing skills and expertise in local restoration enterprises. The combination of these elements represents an opportunity for business growth and development, because only focusing on highest levels of competencies there’s the possibility to create conditions for a qualifying and qualified competition.

3.2 Some Considerations and New Perspectives

3.2.1 The Isola Comacina Enhancement Project: Perspectives

As shown in the previous section of this chapter, the Isola Comacina enhancement project is a complex initiative, and the communication strategy belongs to a wider enhancement plan. Trying to deepen the question of communication, the following discussion will attempt to identify weaknesses and opportunities, defining possible solutions and core points of attention in order to develop effective strategies for the future of the initiative. Specifically, the main focus will be on the use of conservation as a tool for communication, stressing how the knowledge produced by the set of interventions on the island has been considered till now, and highlighting possibilities of use in order to improve the understanding, the appreciation and the attractiveness of the site.

3.2.1.1 Main Characteristics of the Initiative

The project for the Integrated Cultural System of the Isola Comacina²⁰⁹ is a public initiative, mainly promoted by public stakeholders, who work (or at least should work) in the perspective of public interests protection.

As previously mentioned, introducing the history of the project, Isola Comacina is the pilot project for the wider initiative “Distretti Culturali”, which is currently promoted by Fondazione Cariplo on the whole Lombardy region, and which is the result of the latest research on integrated cultural development. The basic purpose of this type of intervention is closely related to the theme of enhancement, in view of the development of the set of all the cultural, intellectual, human and economic resources of the territory. It is therefore necessary to recognize the highly innovative degree of the initiative that, if on the one hand has required a decided disposition by local actors to work on new strategies, certainly on the other hand it has also faced many difficulties and a long process of collective negotiation.

²⁰⁹ Cfr. Della Torre, S., Pesaro, C. (2002), “Il progetto di Sistema Culturale Integrato”, in *Intorno all'Isola. Convegno di Presentazione del progetto di Sistema Culturale Integrato del Distretto dell'Isola Comacina*, Provincia di Como – Assessorato per la Cultura, Tremezzo (Como).

At the heart of the development of the project a system of restorations of monuments of particular significance to the area have been placed.

Currently, most of the planned interventions have been finalized, and what the initiative is facing is the improvement of the results generated by the design phase.

3.2.1.2 Definition of Strategic Goals

For a more specific understanding of what previously analyzed, it is necessary to ask some fundamental questions, to try to identify the objectives for the future of the initiative:

1. What is the role of communication in the promotion activities?
2. What is the role and use of knowledge resources developed during the intervention?
3. What is the role of the project and of main achievements for the realization of goals and for the future development of the island and its surroundings?
4. What are the strategic goals?

Starting from the first one, certainly, the role of communication is central for the activities which have been developed till now. The primary need is to explain the richness of the territory and to develop new ways to fruition. Considering in detail the communication activities previously identified in the analysis of cases, it is clear that the initiative has produced some significant results, especially as regards the systematization of human and cultural resources of the territory, but it is also true that other activities undertaken, suggest the risk of a return to established models, which in the past have been of limited effectiveness, especially as regards the ability to enhance the area generating virtuous development processes. Generally, the enhancement activities tend to ignore everything that has been done on the island, as if the investments, the efforts and resources put into play, had been exhausted together with the conclusion of the design stage of the project.

The development of an initiative of this scope has certainly given an important cognitive process, both in terms of developing innovative management strategies, and from the point of view of the production of knowledge about the territory. Moreover, looking to the field of restoration as a central node of the project, it is undeniable that the conservative activity concentrated on the island has allowed to develop a unique body of knowledge, which anyway seems to remain unused. Paradoxically, all the information produced during interventions is considered only marginally from the strategies of communication and promotion. The case of the guided tours mentioned above is an example: the involvement of professionals as communicators is still occasional, visits organized have been for the more addressed specifically to technicians, and the involvement of groups outside the world of conservation of monuments has been absolutely accidental. The guided tours usually offered to

the public, satisfy very classic and tourist criteria, the activities of conservation are just mentioned, and the communication is not influenced by any added value by the quality of the conservation work. In other words, the communication strategies do exactly what they could do without the intervention of restoration of the entire island.

If we then analyze the process of knowledge production during operations on the Isola Comacina's monuments, it is also important to note that there has been no sharing of processes among the professionals who undertook the restorations. The technicians involved have worked almost independently, and this not because the schedule of each project was not corresponding, but because the conditions for sharing knowledge and skills have not been created.

It is thus evident that the definition of strategic objectives that the project wants to bring forward to the future is not at all clear. The process of developing such a complex initiative, has necessarily required the support of a system of experts and professionals from various fields of research and innovation, but now that the accompanying process is ending, the feeling is of certain confusion over what should be done. As proposed earlier in this thesis, it seems that, as typically happens for projects managed by public subjects, administrators do not have a clear idea of the range of opportunities available. For this reason, the tendency is to prefer strategies that are more familiar to their experience of management. The ability to communicate what has been done in practice, and a different kind of initiatives, are not even considered. Furthermore, the major limitation of projects of public interest is the close ties of dependence on the mandate, which determines the difficulty in developing long-term strategic visions. Insofar as administrators might be enlightened, a radical change of party, or any management problem, can lead to abandon virtuous paths for the need to account the activity always in a very short time.

Certainly it is necessary to recognize the difficulty that a small local reality as the one of Isola Comacina had to face at the end of a project of such proportions, because the public sector, at least in Italy, often proves to be strongly lacking in competencies, and also the updating of those abilities already present seems to be always very difficult. However, it is also true that the accompaniment may not be permanent, and the subjects involved must become independent and self-manage the future development of the initiative.

Following this line, it seems there is no concrete solution to the problem and the ineffectiveness of the actions seems to be determined by a vicious cycle that depends on the chronic lack of knowledge, skills, and funds. However, some considerations could be developed to try to identify new possibilities, in particular referring to strategies for monitoring and skills enhancement.

As already mentioned, the first concern of governments is, in fact, on accounting of processes, mainly because it is what the administration procedures and occurrences of "consensus-building" require. But perhaps the problem is, as already raised in other areas of cultural heritage enhancement, in

moving from numbers, to people and processes, from *accounting* to *accountability*, in the context of which is perhaps more plausible to create long term scenarios, assessing and managing the quality of interventions not only from a purely economic point of view.²¹⁰ In addition, processes of *accountability*, not only strengthen the right of citizenship, recognizing the opportunity owed to all, of knowing the ways in which public funds are spent, but they also make people more aware about the quality of public policies, developing control processes of efficiency of the initiatives.

Accountability is often lacking in the Italian public sector, and the problem is getting more and clearer in the field of cultural heritage protection and enhancement, and a deep change of perspective in the management of public performances is strictly required. Communication is in this context just one small node of the widest problem, but starting from presenting results, showing the quality of what has been done, is a step forward in this direction. Considering the case of Isola Comacina, a better use of communication might be not only a way to improve attractiveness on the site, but also a way to raise awareness in people, in administrators, in professionals, in order to start to develop more effective policies.

Clearly, this is not the ultimate solution, but starting with a clear definition of roles, from a process of *accountability* at all levels can perhaps open up some more opportunities to develop more effective strategies for identifying goals, imposing to evaluate and include all the tools and all resources in the planning and management process of system development projects. The problem is thus to choose “the right tool(s) for the task”²¹¹, but before getting to develop the most effective choices, there’s a need for creating the context for these decisions to be taken.

In brief, evidence shows that in this case the problems go well beyond a more or less effective communication, but the development of more efficient processes of interpretation and presentation could not ignore this kind of considerations.

3.2.1.3 Benefits from the Communication of Restorations

Beyond therefore considering the problems of the overall project, it is worth to identify in any case what benefits could derive from the development of innovative strategies in terms of communication, and what consequences it might ensue, both in terms of improving promotion, and efficiency of the interventions.

Describing them briefly:

²¹⁰ Cfr. Montella, “Individuazione...”, *op.cit.*, p.113

²¹¹ Cfr. Schuster, *op.cit.*, p.124.

- First, in response to problems just noted, the communication of the restoration of the island can represent a tool to account for the quality of what has been done, the dimension and difficulty of the operation as a whole;
- In addition, the knowledge produced by the interventions of restoration is still an important asset, and not to enhance it represents a missed opportunity in terms of optimization of resources;
- The development of the system of knowledge also implies, however, a problem of internal communication. As previously highlighted, the process of cognitive development has been realized for areas with no interaction of the players involved. The systematization of knowledge resources, the sharing of expertise and know-how might have important consequences in terms of growth of the knowledge asset, both in terms of defining the most efficient and effective opportunities and for the development of strategic objectives.
- Referring to external communication, spreading of information produced in the intervention phase is an opportunity in terms of promotion. It is evident that the store of knowledge of what has been done on the island allows to rebuild a completely new interpretation of heritage, improving the possibilities of the cultural offer: the idea of heritage in constant evolution, a more engaging reading, a more real interpretation than the “official” history of the island, are all elements that allow to reconstruct a directed relationship between man and heritage, while also contributing to the improvement of the attractiveness of places.
- Finally, the presentation of the material culture of restorations can determine some important consequences in terms of spreading the culture of protection, the need for involvement of all to ensure the preservation of heritage, as well as the recognition of its immense value and the importance of a collective responsibility in order to preserve it to the future.

3.2.2 Milano nei cantieri dell’arte

“Milano nei cantieri dell’arte” benefits from a well defined structure and clear identification of objectives. It is worth to deeply analyze the initiative in order to stress weaknesses and opportunities for the improvement of the project.

3.2.2.1 Main Characteristics of the Initiative

In contrast with the experience of Isola Comacina, “Milano nei cantieri dell’arte” is basically a private initiative, while including the collaboration of a system of public subjects: the main promoter is in fact Assimpredil Ance, the association of building entrepreneurs of Milan, Lodi and Monza. The focus of

the project is therefore on the protection of private interests, mainly related to the restoration sector, recognized as the most critical branch of the building area, which is passing through a slowdown in recent years, for the combination of a system of problematic factors.

Above all, this slowdown is behind the decision to set up activities such as the ones promoted by “Milano nei cantieri dell’arte”: the industry of conservation of monuments, in fact, feels the need to talk about itself, finding space for discussion, and drawing attention to an area that, even by the promoters themselves, is identified as the one that leads activities of public interest.

As previously mentioned, the structure of the initiative is supported and coordinated by a technical-scientific committee, which brings together the main representatives of entrepreneurs, and some other actors working in the protection of cultural heritage. The purpose of the committee is to enhance heritage, but without losing sight of the main object of such development, which remains the industry of restoration.

In essence, therefore, the committee has been working primarily as a coordinator, but it can also be interpreted as a community of practice,²¹² internal to the wider association that seeks to put into play various interests and skills in order to improve the initiative. The choice of interventions communication, methods and topics are all defined within this committee, through a continuous feedback on the initiatives already undertaken, in an attempt to improve the effectiveness of the strategies each time, by growing the experience.

One final note on the communication tools: as in the case of the Isola Comacina, it is not about particularly advanced tools, but new seem to be the intentions laying behind the implementation of activities.

3.2.2.2 Definition of Strategic Goals

Unlike the integrated project of the Island, the definition of strategic objectives has been the basic condition to launch the initiative. As already mentioned, in fact the objectives are clear and consolidated, and relate both to the need to revitalize the field, and improving the competitiveness of companies involved in the project.

²¹² References to the model of communities of practice can be found in Lave, J, Wenger, E. (1999), “Legitimate peripheral participation in communities of practice”, in McCormik, R., Paechter, C. (eds.), *Learning and Knowledge*, SAGE Publications, pp. 21-35; Lave, J., Wenger, E. (1991), *Situated Cognition. Legitimate peripheral participation* Cambridge University Press; Wenger, E (2006), *Communities of Practice. A Brief Introduction*, www.ewenger.com; Wenger, E. (1998), “Communities of Practice: Learning as a Social System”, in *System Thinker*, Vol. 9, No. 5 (June/July), Pegasus Communications, www.pegasuscom.com; Wenger, E. (1998), *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, Identity*, Cambridge University Press.

With particular reference to the second point, the problem of creating a skilled and qualifying competition, embraces a wider scenario that involves the procedures for the execution of public works: the system of Italian procurement is in fact based mainly on economic requirements or ex-ante qualitative assessments of applicants to the realization of a certain type of intervention. If the system seems to work for the new building, it is certainly less significant for the restoration of cultural heritage. Besides, as required by the Italian legislation, the creation of maintenance plans and maintenance of completed works, clearly functions also as a tool for knowledge registration, but it doesn't account, except indirectly, of the quality of work and skills of executors.

Thus, communicating the restoration, for the companies involved in “Milano nei cantieri dell'arte”, is primarily a way of trying to promote their own competencies. Further on, these skills, because of a decreasing attention for the sector, are likely to be lost: many of the companies, in fact, have been in the business for generations, they have developed a layered and rich know-how, and for them, the market slowdown also means the risk of losing that vast store of knowledge, the material culture, which qualifies them and represents an intangible heritage for the entire community at the same time.

The theme of the restoration is central both in the context of “Milano nei cantieri dell'arte” and for the integrated project of the Isola Comacina; the difference however is that if for the latter, it is the final goal, in the first case it is the actual object, the matter to be communicated: “Milano nei cantieri dell'arte” does not want then to present the restoration works, but mainly to promote the work behind a certain result, the manual work that still allows to preserve heritage.

3.2.2.3 Strategies for Improving Communication

From what has been previously introduced, is therefore evident that critical issues of communication in the context of “Milano nei cantieri dell'arte” are related to two levels: a problem of internal and external communication. Considering the first, it is possible to affirm that, differently from the case of the Isola Comacina, “Milano nei cantieri dell'arte” can be seen as a kind of community of practice which does not work, or that anyway might work better. It is formalized, but not all its members do recognize themselves as such, if not at the institutional level. Moreover, the access to this community is developed almost hierarchically, and the more peripheral subjects have difficulties in joining the group, limiting the opportunities for growth and development of the initiative. Consequently, it is possible to outline some potential strategies to try to solve this condition:

- plan activities for the development of an internal recognition of the community of practice. It's important to attract a greater number of subjects, even the peripheral ones. A good tool would be to add a questionnaire on

the difficulties encountered during the restoration, in the form for the cataloguing of interventions for the website, in order, at least, to bring out the issues and take the first steps towards building an effective area of debate;

- another way for involving a larger number of subjects is to create educational initiatives for professionals, to bridge the gaps highlighted by the questionnaires. This allows not only to bring out the usefulness of the cooperation of everyone, stressing the efficacy in "perturbing"²¹³ the consolidated practice of the community by the periphery, but also to offer a service that acts as a reward for the efforts that have been done, through highlighting a number of problems. Very often it seems that the difficulty to expand the community, and therefore its chances of improvement, lies in the fact that entrepreneurs have some skepticism about the need to communicate their skills to colleagues: they feel, in essence, a certain risk in sharing internally the peculiarities of their work, and they don't see the purpose of offering to the others their knowledge, following a typical "antisocial expertise"²¹⁴, in the context of which "invidious comparison can blind experts to the very meaning of quality"²¹⁵. Therefore it is necessary to create incentives to develop a more social expertise and to involve all the available competencies, both to develop new ones, and to plan new strategies for improving the initiative itself.

Furthermore, there is also a problem of communication to the outside, which limits the impacts and benefits of the presentation of contents. Certainly the absence of a target of communication is a strength, but only if it is desired. By contrast, analyzing the case of "Milano nei cantieri dell'arte", this condition seems to be completely accidental. The external communication is not wholly effective because it is not planned and coordinated, and therefore it is necessary to deepen the question and find possible solutions.

Starting from the conferences and guided tours, these are generally organized by involving not only the companies operating in the field of restoration, but also other figures in the conservation of monuments, such as architects, historians, critics, etc. This is due to the fact that very often particularly important monuments are the object of the events planned, and they have involved many different professionals in the conservation process. As a consequence, this implies the participation of many backgrounds and many competences. In other cases, the only speakers involved are enterprises, and they frequently feel the need to communicate what goes beyond their direct responsibilities and competencies, in an attempt to provide a more complete experience. In any case, in general, the result is that of failing to properly bring

²¹³ Cfr. Wenger, "Communities of Practice. Learning...", *op.cit.*, p.118.

²¹⁴ Cfr. Sennet, *op.cit.*, p.246-252

²¹⁵ Cfr. *Ibid.*, p.250

out the core elements of the restoration work that still remains hidden behind other and apparently higher contents of the communication. On the contrary, there's a need to ensure that the very characteristics of the manual labor, the practice of restoration, are communicated with sufficient dignity and importance.

Very often technicians facing these official presentations seem to consider the "practical" side of the intervention on the monument as the less important, and they try to refer to theories, they list steps of interventions, they describe complex chemical procedures, etc. What seems completely lacking is anyway the difficulty of operating in certain ways, the illustration of leading choices, in other words, the problems of the practice itself.

As already showed discussing the case of the exposition of Stradivari's violins, the communication of theories, of the official information or standardized processes, seems to be less effective and interesting, both for other technicians, and for the public, because they belong to that idea of technique that Treccani, differently from the practice, used to define as the "standardized model to be taken as point of reference"²¹⁶. The technique is also what all the professionals at various levels know, and what is generally associated with formal education, which effectiveness, as a strategy for communication, has been called into doubt in this research.

On the contrary, what seems to be a powerful tool to attract the attention of all is the manual labor and the "craft" dimension of know-how, and a context of practical skills such as the one of "Milano nei cantieri dell'arte" should try to exploit the initiative to communicate this part of the restoration knowledge.

It arises therefore as a priority to give space to the communication of:

- how things are made in their materiality, describing the practice of intervention processes, rather than technical references which draw from such practices;
- Speaking of the difficulties, problems encountered and the operational choices selected to address these issues;

This approach requires not only the recognition of the importance of the practice by those who have to communicate, but it is also necessary that the "communicators" have been able to record the materiality of their work and its difficulties. This introduces another point of the problem of external communication, which is often linked to the unavailability of documentary material from companies, which do not properly record what they do, and have difficulties in explaining their activities.

The system of knowledge produced during the restoration, is still hard to record, for the chronic lack, particularly in the Italian regulations, of clear rules, requirements and guidelines generally shared along the restoration chain. In literature many suggestions have been developed for the systematization of

²¹⁶ Cfr. Treccani, *op.cit.*, pp.277-287.

knowledge in the field of restoration, and also Italian regulations tried to define the different skills and tools that actors involved in the intervention on historic buildings must adopt for a coherent and coordinated data recording;²¹⁷ nevertheless, despite of some recent attempts,²¹⁸ we are still far from a real systematization with the aim of using information for planning of effective protection of cultural heritage.

The situation clearly affects also an experience such as the one of “Milano nei cantieri dell’arte”, because the executors don’t see the need for a more efficient registration of information, undermining also the opportunities for an efficient communication of what has been done. During the traineeship experience, it has been possible to observe a clear difference between companies that deal only with surfaces and those that deal with broader interventions. In fact, the former, working on a relatively smaller part of the monument, generally pay more attention to the recording of the details of the work, while the latter encounter many difficulties in documenting the intervention. It is, however, necessary to adopt a coordinated methodology for the registration of the knowledge on the restoration site, because, as already mentioned, it is both the only tool for companies to communicate their quality, and it is also an invaluable intangible heritage that should be approached by the public for a deeper understanding.

Thus, it seems to be necessary that the design of interpretation and presentation takes place starting from the execution phase of restoration works. “Milano nei cantieri dell’arte” could therefore be the ideal framework for experimenting with new ways of recording and communicating knowledge, with a view to wider use of these methodologies, in order to enhance the entire chain of the conservation of heritage. In this sense, the initiative could improve the planning structure, providing a system of indications for coordinated and more efficient documentation and communication of contents.

Some of these suggestions, for the construction of a methodology of registration of the knowledge, preliminary to the improvement of the effectiveness of communication, could involve first of all the general approach of recording information: as a matter of fact, the registration of information

²¹⁷ In Italy, despite the recent and numerous reforms of the Cultural Heritage Code (D.Lgs 42/2004) and the Public Contracts Code (D.Lgs 163/2006 and following Regulation D.P.R. 207/2010), procedures for intervention on the architectural heritage are still similar to those of public procurement in general and the peculiarity of restoration activities is not properly valued by specific rules.

²¹⁸ Cfr. Verpoest, L., Stulens, A., (2006), “Monumentenwacht. A monitoring and maintenance system for the cultural (built) heritage in the Flemish region (Belgium)”, in *Conservation in Changing societies – Heritage and development*, International Conference, (Leuven, May, 22nd-25th, 2006), Raymond Lemaire International Centre for Conservation, Leuven, pp. 191-198; and Cfr. Della Torre, S.(ed.), (2003), *La conservazione programmata del patrimonio storico architettonico. Linee guida per il Piano di Manutenzione e consuntivo Scientifico*, Milano, Guerini.

during the restoration site, usually follows the common scheme of “before” and “after”, with no attention for all activities in between. Drawings and photographs shouldn’t represent only single operations, but try to document the process through the listing of operating sequences. These sequences can be many, and they can imply the same action but different materials and/or techniques. The area selected for the documentation of an operating sequence should be carefully chosen, in order to clearly document the intervention.



Figure 34 - An example of communication of the common scheme "before and after". The picture represent the front and back cover of a publication about restoration works in the S. Bernardino Church in Abbiategrasso, Italy (1988)

Moreover, the production of graphic and photographic material is then essential to ensure effective communication, especially when it comes to conferences and workshops, where there is no possibility to directly relate to the monument and to the restoration practices. Clearly, the building up of a useful photographs archive is complex and requires a good coordination between all actors operating in the restoration site. The archive must be anyway organized in order to register both the global intervention, but also methods and results of single operations on the monument.

This implies that all operating sequences chosen for registration should be provided with a set of photographs. Furthermore, videos can be also helpful because they link the efficacy of the image to the registration of time needed for the execution of single operations.



Figure 35 - An example documentation of an operating sequence (preparation of a mortar).

The list of suggestions proposed above is just a short example to show how the planning and coordination of a better communication in the context of the initiative “Milano nei cantieri dell’arte” should face a deep change of procedures along the whole chain of conservation,²¹⁹ in order to develop more efficient communication activities.

The knowledge system and materials that can be developed by this way are not only useful to provide the right support to communication, but they are also very important in order to make technicians aware of their role as communicators and the relevance of their practice as a tool for education to be recorded and presented. Moreover, the systematization of knowledge on the restoration site is also what could positively impact on the efficiency of the intervention, in the perspective of a planned and coordinated conservation of cultural heritage.²²⁰

Summing up what has just been analyzed concerning the initiative “Milano nei cantieri dell’arte”, it is possible to outline the following two levels of criticality and strategies to be adopted:

1. Internal communication: it is important to identify the purpose of the initiative in improving the practices, which means that the focus should be on the sharing of expertise;
2. External communication: defining the practice as a primary object of the communication.

Only in this direction will be possible:

- a selection of the best ways through which to communicate and improve the performance of the instruments themselves;
- improving the competitiveness of all subjects involved.

²¹⁹ Cfr. Catalano, M., Chiapparini, A., Moioli, R., “La conservazione programmata come processo conoscitivo: la registrazione della conoscenza nel cantiere di restauro”, in *Proceedings of the Precoach International Conference on Preventive Conservation of Architectural Heritage*, 29-30 October 2011, Nanjing, China, 2011, p.84.

²²⁰ Cfr. *Ibid.*, pp. 82-89.

Thus, it can be said that differently from the Isola Comacina case, “Milano nei cantieri dell’arte” presents a solid and clear motivation, but there is a need to begin from the internal problems before being able to really improve the communication skills to the outside. Working on developing an efficient community of practice is therefore a necessity.

The building of an active community is the priority also in order to improve awareness in technicians working in the field of restoration, about their role and about the importance of what they do (the practice), in terms of improvement of external communication and enhancement of cultural heritage.

Moreover, it is clear that improving the capacity of action and communication may also have significant effects with regard to the objectives of promoting skills and development of a qualifying and qualified competition, among the members involved and externally. Only in this direction it is in fact possible to set up foundations for a real post-evaluation activity, comparing quality both inside and outside the community.

Finally, it is at least significant to note that the communication of the role of conservation is evaluated as an opportunity for economic growth and a chance for the development of the entire chain of restoration, primarily (or perhaps because of it) in the context of a private association rather than in the public sphere. It is therefore an interesting perspective that should be considered for the recognition of the openings that the value of restoration can offer, not only in terms of cultural enhancement.

The two study cases here presented and discussed have been selected because they are representative of two interesting situations of communication of restoration, but also for the strong differences in structure and purposes. Particularly, among most important, is the significant difference of characteristics and role of the main subjects involved. As a matter of fact, on the one hand Isola Comacina is the case of a public administration that doesn’t pay attention to the communication of contents, generally just looking for political and institutional visibility; on the other hand, “Milano nei cantieri dell’arte” is the experience of a set of (mainly) private subjects working in the field of restoration and seeking to give visibility and recognition to their work.

By this way, the Isola Comacina case illustrates the risk of dispersing a valuable heritage of experiences in conservation, while “Milano nei cantieri dell’arte” tries to provide valuable means of communication outside the specific field of restoration, but through direct involvement of prime actors.

Thus, the case of Isola Comacina highlights how difficult it can be, particularly in the context of a public and wide strategic project, to give the appropriate recognition to a communication oriented to the value of the work that has been done, instead of stressing only the “inherent” value and the importance of the monument.

The analysis of the two cases of Isola Comacina and “Milano nei cantieri dell’arte” has then underlined how the issues of communication aroused from this research are just the smallest part of a wider set of problems. Clearly, the consideration of these questions goes over the purposes of the dissertation, but the building of the general framework of criticalities and potentialities has been considered as fundamental in order to underline the complexity of the development of effective communicative strategies able to concretely improve cultural heritage enhancement and the whole chain of the conservation process of built historic heritage.

4 CONCLUSIONS

CONCLUSIONS: A SHORT SUMMARY

The research here developed has deepened potentialities of communication as an effective tool for improving conservation and enhancement of cultural heritage.

Considering the problem in a wider context of regulations and theoretical references, it has been possible to observe as culture is generally considered as a right for human, social and economic development. A right that seems still not completely achieved and a wide range of people are excluded from the fruition of culture, also because of a communication which limits the perception of the utility value of cultural heritage for the whole society. In this context, the protection of heritage as cultural capital and the public access to culture through effective cultural experiences are two fundamental preconditions. Even if problems of the field of conservation and enhancement go far beyond issues of communication, a reflection on the role of presentation and interpretation of cultural heritage arises as a priority in order to rebuild a relationship between people and culture, through the identification of a common language. Particularly, the research has proposed to consider new contents of communication looking at the field of theory and practice of conservation of built historic heritage, showing how, through a wide survey of experiences and the deepening of two specific study cases, communicating heritage in the renovate perspective of its materiality and issues of conservation could represent first of all, a powerful tool for touching the experience of life, ways of acting in the world and understanding reality by all, secondly, an important occasion to raise awareness about the need for more protection and finally, a primary strategy to stress the role of preservation, as fundamental part of heritage value and for its potential externalities also outside the discipline.

The main results of this work are thus in terms of considerations, bringing into light, on the one hand, criticalities of cultural communication as it is nowadays used particularly in the context of enhancement activities, on the

other hand, what benefits could derive from a different communication more careful not only to what is “visible”, but also to the work, to difficulties and to the many histories that lay behind the image commonly communicated of heritage.

This last chapter summarizes the system of results derived by the development of the research through some final remarks and focusing on two levels: communication for improving enhancement and understanding of heritage and communication for improving conservation. The former stresses the opportunities in making heritage more accessible for the wide public, through the explanation of its complexity and of its identity as living and evolving system, which for this reason deserves a continuous fruition because of the unique and fundamental values that it can communicate; the latter underlines the importance of communication in raising awareness about the collective responsibility in protection and the need to communicate conservation in order to give new centrality to the subject, intended as a core part of cultural heritage and as a strategic resource also outside the field of the physical restoration.

4.1 Communication for Understanding and Enhancement

By analyzing and comparing different experiences and examples, the research has first of all stressed the positive impact that the communication of issues of conservation could offer to enhancement activities. In this sense, restoration could influence the attractiveness of heritage, facilitate processes of understanding, stimulate desires for more cultural “consumption”, and help the recognition of the utility value and the importance of experiencing culture for the improvement of human capital and the quality of life.

In the perspective proposed by this research, conservation is not only the theory and the technique of the material preservation of heritage, belonging to the field of experts, but it is effectively a fundamental part of heritage development process, for the rich and stratified knowledge that the intervention on the monument is able to produce, offering a new way to look at things, and new opportunities for learning culture.

Particularly, the topics that the communication of restoration can introduce in terms of cultural heritage enhancement can be summarized as follows:

- Conservation as the representation of the complexity of heritage, which implies different perspectives of interpretation;
- Conservation as a never ending knowledge path, made of doubt and uncertainty, involving people in the process of understanding;
- Heritage as living system, as something evolving and never the same, which deserves continuous attention and fruition.

4.1.1 Interpreting the Complexity of Heritage

As already stressed along the development of this work, conservation, using different instruments from the humanities to technique, proposes a double perspective on heritage, through a “macro” vision, which considers the cultural object globally, and a “micro” vision, which is more focused on the detail, on how things are made in their materiality and how they work. Generally, experiences quoted in the dissertation, tend to privilege just one of these two perspectives, leading to simplified messages, selecting and limiting the quality of contents. This happens also, for example, in the case of the most advanced tools for communication, when the priority is to bring heritage back to its “original splendor”, to its “uniqueness”. This implies the communication of one single truth, which does not coherently represent the developing character of culture and heritage. What conservation does, while studying cultural heritage,

is about disclosing the complexity of objects, explaining that heritage is not simply what is visible, but it is the result of the layering of many different human experiences, way of living and working, social and historical events, know-how and competencies.

In the context of this work, the complexity that conservation can communicate hasn't been intended as "complication", but as a richness which is the result of "spiritual and material culture"²²¹ that cannot be divided, because the material object is always a product of a certain society, as the expression of a set of cultural experiences concerning ways of making, living, using objects, which constitute the essential significance of the materiality of things. This approach to materiality is what characterizes our experience of life, and which constitutes that common language that every human being shares with others.

Thus, there's no reason to believe that the complexity of heritage is something not affordable by ordinary people, because it is the result of a complex culture made by people. Moreover, the many possible interpretations that conservation can offer studying the monument, can better meet the different expectations of a wide and diversified public, which presents different prior experience and personality²²² and which previous references can vary significantly. Evidently, it is not plausible to mediate the communication considering all possible backgrounds, but a richer and more complex representation of heritage can clearly offer more opportunities to connect to everybody's understanding and ways of interpreting reality.

Explaining the complexity is therefore one of the added values of conservation as a tool for cultural communication: the study of every element and every detail is an opportunity to interpret heritage as a whole, and the selection of just one perspective is simply limiting the perception of its value and of its importance:

"Marco Polo describe un ponte, pietra per pietra.

- Ma qual è la pietra che sostiene il ponte? - chiede Kublai Kan.

- Il ponte non è sostenuto da questa o da quella pietra, - risponde Marco, - ma dalla linea dell'arco che esse formano.

Kublai Kan rimase silenzioso, riflettendo. Poi soggiunge: - Perché mi parli delle pietre? È solo dell'arco che mi importa.

Polo risponde: - Senza pietre non c'è arco."²²³

²²¹ Cfr. Altan, C.T. (1983), "Il concetto di cultura", in Altan, C.T., *Antropologia, storia e problemi*, Feltrinelli, Milano., p.149

²²² Cfr. Chapter 1 and the section dedicated to the role of learning processes.

²²³ Cfr., Calvino, I., *Le città invisibili*, Mondadori, Milano, 2003, p.83. Eng. transl.: Marco Polo describes a bridge, stone by stone. 'But which is the stone that supports the bridge?' Kublai Khan asks. 'The bridge is not supported by one stone or another,'

4.1.1.1 Complexity of Contents and Complexity of Language

Following this line, the complexity of built historic heritage is not a risk for communication effectiveness, but it represents an opportunity, a different and more interesting point of view. The risk could be instead in the complexity of languages of communication that, as already shown through many examples, tend to prefer “dead denotation”,²²⁴ which means to “name acts rather than explain the process”.²²⁵ In other words, the language of cultural communication very often prefers the theory to the practice, quotes parameters instead of giving reasons and explaining things, even when communicating very simple ideas, in the conviction that the importance of heritage deserve an “official” code of communication, limiting, by this way, the possibilities for understanding by those who have no specific technical and scientific competencies.

The research has stressed the peculiarity of conservation, as the study and use of material culture and practice. Theory, technique and practice are different ways to talk about the same thing: where theory tries to find reasons for things happening, and technique tries to identify standard references,²²⁶ the practice looks for the tools to make things happen in the best way possible.²²⁷ In this sense, talking about how things are made in their materiality and how they work is something that everybody can understand because it involves the way we experience life, acting in the world. Moreover, talking about practice has been demonstrated to be much more interesting for technicians, too: as a matter of fact, theory and technique are what experts already know. On the contrary, the approach of empirical knowledge is the opportunity, also for practitioners, to compare their experiences and find new solutions.

4.1.1.2 A Complex History behind Heritage

Moreover, conservation of built cultural heritage proposes the understanding of human life in all its aspects, because it’s about a way of living and dealing with problems of everyday life.

The official history, that is the one that commonly is communicated to the public, is just one of the possible interpretations. In most cases, it is the history of successes, the history of victories, and everyone of us, generally doesn’t share so much with those narrations. But there are other stories behind the

Marco answers, ‘but by the line of the arch that they form.’ Kublai Khan remains silent, reflecting. Then he adds: ‘Why do you speak to me of the stones? It is only the arch that matters to me.’ Polo answers: ‘Without stones there is no arch.’”

²²⁴ Cfr. Sennet, R., *op.cit.*, p.177

²²⁵ Cfr. *Ibid.*

²²⁶ Cfr., Treccani, *op.cit.*

²²⁷ Cfr., Mannoni, *op.cit.*, p.154

official one, which are motivating the evolution of human experience and culture:

“Who built Thebes of the seven gates? In the books you will find the name of kings. Did the kings haul up the lumps of rock? And Babylon, many times demolished. Who raised it up so many times? In what houses of gold-glittering Lima did the builders live? Where, the evening that the Wall of China was finished did the masons go? Great Rome is full of triumphal arches. Who erected them? Over whom did the Caesars triumph? Had Byzantium, much praised in song, only palaces for its inhabitants? Even in fabled Atlantis the night the ocean engulfed it the drowning still bawled for their slaves.

The young Alexander conquered India. Was he alone? Caesar beat the Gauls. Did he not have even a cook with him? Philip of Spain wept when his armada Went down. Was he the only one to weep? Frederick the Second won the Seven Years' War. Who Else won it?

Every page a victory.

Who cooked the feast for the victors? Every ten years a great man. Who paid the bill?

So many reports. So many questions.”²²⁸

Preserving all signs and traces, conservation brings into light clues of different and possible interpretations of the same history, telling us much more about who we are and reconnecting our experience of life to our past. Communicating also these aspects of cultural heritage is what makes us say “Those folks were not so different after all!”²²⁹ In this perspective, history is not just something belonging to the past, but it is a continuity of events, among which we can identify our presence and our role. By this way heritage becomes the representation of this evolution and of our identity.

²²⁸ Cfr. "Fragen eines lesenden Arbeiters" - translated by M. Hamburger from *Bertold Brecht, Poems 1913-1956*, Methuen, N.Y., London, 1976

²²⁹ Cfr. Tilden, *op.cit.*, p.42.

4.1.2 Doubt as One of the Name of Intelligence²³⁰

Heritage conservation is, however, not only the moment of production and revelation of a complex and layered knowledge, but sometimes it is also the moment of the discovery of new signs, unexpected and unexplainable. While studying and working on the monument, conservation raises doubts and questions, and tries to record and fix them in order to give the most complete image possible of heritage, offering to future generations the opportunity to understand and try to answer those questions left open.

These aspects of conservation are also very interesting for cultural communication. As a matter of fact, doubt is a status of human life, it involves belief, disbelief, dubiety and distrust, and it is connected to the way everyone interprets reality. Doubt introduces the dimension of uncertainty, revealing that everything we know may completely change in the future. In this sense doubting helps us to demolish some ideals previously built, opening our mind to unlearning and to the opportunity to broaden our individual and collective knowledge. Doubt is also the way to develop curiosity as the necessary condition to understand reality as never ending learning process. In this sense, doubt encourages to observe things in their details, not stopping the sight on the surface, but trying to understand how things are concretely made, looking inside, discovering what we didn't know and what we could learn more, destroying boundaries of our mind, in order to grow, to develop, and build new perspectives.

Conservation works through the doubt. Explaining doubts and the multiplicity of answers and alternatives possible is a way to involve people in the process of heritage understanding: doubt is what makes us think, what pushes to find solutions to problems. The progressive dimension of conservation, as a never completely defined knowledge, becomes a lever of attractiveness and involvement, giving the opportunity to everybody to develop personal interpretation and proposing answers and raising new doubts and questions.

This point of view allows to give a renovated dynamism to the image of the monument, that is not only the sublime object to be kept hidden in a glass case, but it is an object of study, to understand and know, every time always new.

4.1.3 Heritage is a Living System: Now or Never

Following these issues, conservation gives us a particular image of heritage as something not fixed, evolving, belonging to the process of development of

²³⁰ quotation from Jorge Louis Borges, in Matamoro, B., (1979), *Diccionario Privado de Jorge Luis Borges*, Altalena, Madrid

human history, something vital and changing day by day. This vision of heritage makes the cultural experience absolutely unique, and what we can see and read today, will be probably completely different in the future, and will deserve new attention, new appreciation, new and different cultural experiences.

Moreover, acting on the monument for ensuring preservation and protection, conservation applies transformations, reveals parts and aspects that normally are not available to fruition, becoming a special occasion to approach heritage from a completely different point of view. Conservation disassembles the monument, looks inside the materiality of things, and reveals tangible and intangible layers of history: in this sense, conservation itself can become an intensive and unique opportunity to draw people closer to heritage, through extremely rich and exceptional experiences, which can represent an important qualitative change, in order to make heritage effectively speak to everyone.

4.2 Communication for Improving Protection

Beyond the added value of the communication of restoration as a tool for enhancing the perception of cultural heritage, creating new opportunities for learning and for human capital development, the research has also tried to stress the potential benefits of the communication of restoration for the improvement of the process of conservation. Put otherwise, this work also wanted to focus on the opportunities of a renewed centrality and attention for the practice of restoration, in the direction of the development of the quality and efficacy of interventions.

Clearly, externalities include first of all issues of raising awareness about the importance of protecting heritage, through more careful behaviors and sharing a collective responsibility; secondly, talking about the difficulties of conservation is a way to explain and motivating assiduous care; moreover, it is also about giving adequate tools for understanding conservation, in order to allow the participation of a critical mass in the sharing of values, improving the results and making sense of interventions; finally it is a matter of giving new importance to the chain of conservation, both as a fundamental part of heritage significance and evolution, and as an important field to be enhanced and improved, for the values and benefits of collective interest that it involves.

4.2.1 Protecting Heritage through Awareness

Following these lines, the more and more extended notion of cultural heritage for the contemporary society, necessarily requires different strategies for heritage conservation, which can't be only based on interventions of restoration, but which ask for assiduous concern and maintenance. Clearly this implies the involvement of a wide range of subjects recognizing the priority of constant care and risk management rather than restoration as moment of deep modification of the monument.

The still insufficient protection of cultural heritage is first and foremost due to the lack of a mass wide enough to recognize the use value of heritage and influencing political choices in the direction of preservation. Communication of issues of conservation helps to recognize the importance of heritage, its values, developing a need for protection, as the only way to ensure continuous accessibility to culture and fruition. Explaining how things are made, how they work, the difficulties and risks of conservation and maintenance is primarily a way to develop desires for better protection, opening the opportunity to

effectively conditioning the attitude and choices of decision makers. In other words, communicating conservation is a way to give effective instruments for understanding heritage, sharing values and knowledge inside the process of protection, participating in addressing and selecting objectives, and improving the effectiveness of interventions.

Other reasons for the still inefficient conservation of heritage are evidently to be found in the lack of active involvement of the public as fundamental actor for effective preservation. Risks determined by the increasing pressure of tourist flows and extended fruition have been recognized in many fields of cultural heritage conservation and enhancement, and effective protection can't be realized regardless the involvement of all individuals approaching heritage for different reasons. Explaining things and problems of care, proposing best practices and suggesting careful behaviors, instead of restricting and limiting is a way to involve everyone, showing the potential role that each subject can play, through respectful and aware attitudes, in the management and fruition of heritage.

4.2.2 Improving Project and Process of Conservation

Finally, communicating restoration is also a way to create a wide space of concern on the field, outside the niche of experts and professionals. As it has been particularly stressed while discussing the two study cases of Isola Comacina and "Milano nei Cantieri dell'arte", conservation is a matter of intervening on culture, which mediates public and private interests, needs and opportunities for development, and for this reason it deserves to be communicated also in the perspective of giving new importance and attention to its role, working in the direction of improving the quality of the whole process.

The field of restoration too often, even by operators in the sector, is considered a highly specialized branch that does not deserve to be communicated externally.

"Di queste esperienze (di restauro), molte non vengono comunicate, e così vanno perdute, come se fossero troppo specialistiche: passano nei media le scoperte che fanno leva su valori comuni, non i cambiamenti di prospettiva cui dà luogo la conoscenza intima della materia e dei segni del tempo. Né la comunicazione sui restauri esalta la ricerca tecnologica sottesa al lavoro di conservazione, che affronta con altissimi livelli di

responsabilità irripetibili oggetti il cui comportamento pone problemi di grande complessità.”²³¹

Conversely, conservation deals with the protection of the monument as a unique and unrepeatable evidence of what we are, intervening with a very high responsibility, not only through choices that can change the perception, but also insisting on those values that heritage is able to communicate.

Moreover, the idea that the restoration is excessively “specialistic” and therefore not interesting also for research, industry and innovation, is frequently emphasized inside and outside the discipline.²³² In contrast, restoration is based precisely on a process of learning and unlearning of common places, becoming a true space of change, which has much to teach also to areas outside the field of conservation.²³³

Furthermore, conservation is also the moment of training and enhancement of know-how and practical skills, both traditional and stratified, and definitely advanced and evolving, which, as often emphasized by this work, not only represent an effective code of communication, but they are themselves an important heritage for the ability to get us closer to our identity, thus deserving to be coherently valued.

In this sense, issues, values, contents and practices of restoration become a matter of collective importance, and they also represent an immaterial baggage of knowledge to be registered, communicated, enhanced, in order to improve the whole process of conservation. In this sense a renovated attention for conservation means also a more efficient and effective protection. This implies a change of perspective along the whole chain of conservation, which is a not an easy objective to be achieved, and which is probably the most important criticality for the purposes of this work. Beginning from communication can represent anyway a starting point in order to mobilize resources and underline problems to be faced for the wide recognition of heritage as a fundamental value for improving the quality of life for all.

The first question at the basis of this dissertation was referring to reasons for communicating heritage and particularly to the role of issues of preservation as a powerful tool for improving communication as effective instrument for

²³¹ Cfr. Della Torre, S. (2010), “Conservazione programmata: i risvolti economici di un cambio di paradigma”, in *Capitale culturale- Studies on the Value of Cultural heritage*, Università di Macerata – Dipartimento di beni culturali, n.1, p. 53. Eng. trans. “Many of these experiences (restorations) are not communicated, and so they are lost, as if they were too specialized: discoveries leveraging on common values pass in the media, but not the changes of perspective that results in a profound understanding of the material and the signs of aging . Neither the communication of restoration enhances the technological research underlying the conservation work, which faces, with high levels of responsibility, unique objects whose behavior raises questions of great complexity.

²³² Cfr., *Ibid.*

²³³ Cfr. Della Torre, “Learning and...”, *op.cit.*

heritage enhancement and conservation. The research has thus tried to dismantle grounds and common beliefs which tend to exclude these topics from strategies of communication: communicating conservation thus arises at the end of this work as a first step for unlearning these prejudices, opening new perspective for cultural development, from many points of view.

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