

INTERNATIONAL CHARTERS ON URBAN CONSERVATION: SOME THOUGHTS ON THE PRINCIPLES EXPRESSED IN CURRENT INTERNATIONAL DOCTRINE

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Abstract

Conservation concepts and policies are subject to continuous evolution over time. In relation to urban conservation, the period of 1970s seems to be of crucial importance, considering that it marks the adoption of the World Heritage Convention (1972) and the International Recommendation concerning Historic Areas (1976) of UNESCO, as well as the Council of Europe's Amsterdam Declaration (1975). In 1972, there was also the United Nations International Conference concerning environment. Combined with the practical examples in various countries, these policy documents have all contributed to broadening the concepts of what is the urban heritage and its integrated conservation. Since then there have been other developments, which have caused the earlier centralized planning to become increasingly decentralized. As a result, it is necessary to verify and update the formerly established policies and their efficacy in relation to the current trends and challenges.

Keywords: Conservation charters, World Heritage Convention, historic areas, universal value

1. Globalization and universal value

The past fifty years have been characterized by an increasing globalization in the world with its positive and negative consequences. The impact of globalization can be felt particularly in the economic field, where we tend to become increasingly dependent on some supra-national forces and trends. In practice, we can identify two types of globalization, one from above, the other from below. The globalization from above comes in the form of multinational firms, international capital flows and world markets. In many cases, production is decentralized, and marketing relies on an international system of diffusion. As a result, there is increasing interdependence of standardized technologies, and especially there is dependence of a global system of economy. There are several international organizations which act in the global context; these include the World Trade Organization (WTO), founded in 1994, as well as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, which are all facing serious criticism at the moment. In fact, the World Bank has taken various initiatives that could help to reorient its policies. Another form of

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globalization can come from below, involving human rights, environmental questions as well as the whole issue of the conservation of cultural heritage. While the globalization from above relies on external resources and influences, the globalization from below relies on methods and processes that raise awareness of local cultural and economic resources and contexts.

Universal value

The question of values is closely related to globalization. Generally speaking, we tend to see values as relative to the cultural context, and therefore specific. Nevertheless, at the same time, there should be some common reference in order to justify internationally shared assessments of issues. In his speech regarding globalization, in 2003, Kofi Annan asked: "Do we still have universal values?" (*The Globalist*, online magazine) He referred to the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, according to which "everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing, medical care – and necessary social services". He further took note of the *United Nations Millennium Declaration* (A/55/L.2, September 2000), where the fundamental values of humanity are referred to freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature, and shared responsibility. Annan states: "Values are not there to serve philosophers or theologians – but to help people live their lives and organize their societies." Globalization has brought people closer to each other in the sense that the actions of each will impact others. At the same time, the people do not have a balanced share of the benefits and burdens of globalization.

The UNESCO 1972 *World Heritage Convention* is based on the firm conviction that culture is a vital condition of the wellbeing of all human society. As a result, the heritage of humanity, being a cultural product, is fundamentally associated with the notion of universality, and thus of the universal value. At the same time, it is also characterized by creative diversity as recognized by the *Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity* by UNESCO in 2001, and the subsequent *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of Cultural Expressions* (2005). In the aftermath of the Second World War, the recognition of the commonality of the heritage of humankind was seen to play a role in maintaining peace by contributing to solidarity and tolerance of humankind as well as calling for shared responsibility.

Resulting from the maturing debate, the universal value of cultural and natural heritage has gradually found its modern recognition in the international doctrine. This question has been discussed particularly in the context of the World Heritage Convention, and the definition was given an expert meeting in Amsterdam in 1998: "The requirement of outstanding universal value characterizing cultural and natural heritage should be interpreted as an outstanding response to issues of universal nature common to or addressed by all human cultures". In relation to culture this is reflected in human creativity and resulting cultural diversity. Even though, the definition was here referred especially to an "outstanding" expression of such values, it can be seen to have more general application as well. The ICOMOS study on the *World Heritage List: Filling the Gaps – an Action Plan for the Future* (2005), generally called the "Gap Report", proposes three frameworks for the identification of issues of universal nature that are common to humanity, and therefore potential references for the verification of the requirement of universal value as defined in the Convention. These references include issues that characterize society, its spiritual and social-cultural aspects, its relationship with the natural environment, and its creative capacity to respond to specific demands and requirements over time.

2. International Doctrine regarding Historic Areas

After the destruction of the habitat during the Second World War, the primary objective in the 1940s and 1950s was reconstruction. The problems caused by armed conflicts were also reflected in the initiatives taken by newly founded UNESCO in the same period. The first convention, in 1954, regarding cultural heritage was the revision and adoption of the so-called *Hague Convention* concerning the protection of cultural property in the case of armed conflict. This convention identified in the notion of cultural property monuments of architecture, art or history, archaeological sites, groups of buildings, works of art and collections. The notion of “groups of buildings” was later taken into the 1972 World Heritage Convention, where it indicates historic urban areas.

In the 1950s, there are various initiatives at the national level for the protection of historic urban areas. These are recognized particularly in Italy, where a group of professionals, in 1960, form a national association for the safeguarding of urban centers recognized for their historic and urban values (*L'associazione Nazionale Centri Storico-Artistici*, ANCSA). The scope of the association is to promote research and the involvement of the private sector as well of public authorities in the valorization and rehabilitation of historic urban areas. Some of the first examples of this new approach are seen in the urban master plans of Assisi as well as in Bologna.

The 2nd International Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historic Monuments, meeting in Venice in 1964 adopted the famous Venice Charter. This charter recognizes the importance of the surroundings of monuments, but does not refer to historic urban areas. Nevertheless, the meeting also passed a “motion concerning protection and rehabilitation of historic centers” (document 8). Here, there is a call “rapidly to promote legislation for safeguarding historic centers, which should keep in view the necessity both of safeguarding and improving these historic centers and integrating them with contemporary life”. In the following years, ICOMOS, founded in 1965, took this motion at heart, and numerous national, regional and international seminars and conferences discussed the issues. For example, the 1967 *Norms of Quito* (Ecuador) notes that “Since the idea of space is inseparable from the concept of monument, the stewardship of the state can and should be extended to the surrounding urban context or natural environment.”

Conservation areas

The real breakthrough for urban conservation coincides with the increasing awareness and concern for ecology and the natural environment. In 1975, on the initiative of the Council of Europe, the *European Charter of the Architectural Heritage* draws attention to problems faced by “the groups of lesser buildings in our old towns and characteristic villages in their natural or manmade settings”. In order to meet the challenges, the document introduces the concept of “integrated conservation”. This policy depends on legal, administrative, financial and technical support and it should be based on the cooperation of the stakeholders, public and private. The conclusive conference of the Architectural Heritage Year 1975, in the Amsterdam Declaration, further contributes to launching the policies of integrated conservation, stressing the responsibility of local authorities and citizens’ participation in such initiatives.

In the following year, Nairobi 1976, UNESCO adopts the *International Recommendation concerning the Safeguarding and Contemporary Role of Historic Areas*. This recommendation gives the following definition:

Historic and architectural (including vernacular) areas' shall be taken to mean any groups of buildings, structures and open spaces including archaeological and palaeontological sites, constituting human settlements in an urban or rural environment, the cohesion and value of which, from the archaeological, architectural, prehistoric, historic, aesthetic or socio-cultural point of view are recognized. (art. 1)

This is followed by the principles, including:

Every historic area and its surroundings should be considered in their totality as a coherent whole whose balance and specific nature depend on the fusion of the parts of which it is composed and which include human activities as much as the buildings, the spatial organization and the surroundings. All valid elements, including human activities, however modest, thus have a significance in relation to the whole which must not be disregarded. (art. 3)

The Recommendation draws particular attention to “modern urbanization”, which often leads to considerable increase in the scale and density of buildings and the loss of the traditionally established visual integrity of the built environment. It would be necessary to “ensure that views from and to monuments and historic areas are not spoilt and that historic areas are integrated harmoniously into contemporary life”. (art. 5) Another problem concerns the “growing universality of building techniques and architectural forms”, which tend to create a uniform environment in all parts of the world. It is interesting to note that, wherever one goes, the periphery looks more or less the same, while the old historic centre really reflects the cultural diversity and therefore the universal value that has been stressed by UNESCO. In fact, from the cultural point of view, the universal value is not in the technical globalization of building forms and techniques, but rather in the culturally varied expressions that have been safeguarded in older historic areas. “This can contribute to the architectural enrichment of the cultural heritage of the world.” (art. 6)

In terms of the proposed legal and administrative measures, the 1976 recommendation declares: “The application of an overall policy for safeguarding historic areas and their surroundings should be based on principles, which are valid for the whole of each country.” (art. 9) Furthermore, it is stated that: “Public authorities as well as individuals must be obliged to comply with the measures for safeguarding. However, machinery for appeal against arbitrary or unjust decisions should be provided.” (art. 13) As part of the practical measures, the 1976 recommendation proposes that “a list of historic areas and their surroundings to be protected should be drawn up at national, regional or local level”. (art. 18) This has, in fact, become a standard procedure in many countries, starting from England (e.g. Bath), Germany (e.g. Romantische Strasse) and France (e.g. Strasbourg), each with somewhat different legal implications. The idea of “historic areas” has since been adopted in many other countries outside Europe. One version of this policy is to be seen in the “Main Road” projects in North America, which was based on the invitation of building owners and particularly the commerce to invest in the historicizing renovation of the house fronts along principal streets in urban centers. The idea of conservation areas is clearly visible in the policies adopted in the case of many World Heritage cities, including Olinda.

Historicized urban fabric

On the other hand, the Italian practice, developing from the 1950s, has favored a different approach. While starting from a debate on the notion of “*centro storico*” (historic

centre), the policies have since developed so that the entire territory has been perceived as historical. Therefore, the notion of “historic centre” has tended to lose its meaning within this overall context. The results of the Italian policies can be seen in the conservation of historic towns such as Bologna, Ferrara, Rome, and Venice. An interesting precedent can be seen in the urban master plan of Assisi, prepared by architect Astengo in the 1950s. Here, in addition to making a systematic analysis of the qualities of the historic centre, he also addresses the protection of the surrounding landscape as an essential part of the urban planning norms.

Since the 1970s, the political and socio-economic situations in the different parts of the world have been subject to drastic changes. Until thirty years ago, in many countries, planning continued being the responsibility of a central authority and the urban master plan could be legally adopted as a norm. Since then, however, the growing market-oriented strategies have favored the private sector at the expense of a central public authority. Gradually, there has been a tendency to abandon urban master plans that used to regulate land-use, and prefer strategic planning often leading to decentralized urban growth. At the same time the various attraction points, such as airports, railway stations, or odd commercial or industrial complexes, have been new hubs for urbanized development. The existing legislation is often based on the earlier “modern movement principles”, which favored central control. Unfortunately, this is no more effective as a basis for planning control in the current decentralized situation.

In the case of Rome, which has a long tradition in preparing master-plans, the earlier centralized plan (1964) has been consciously decentralized in the new plan of 2000, strengthening the functions and services that were made available in local centers. The new master plan provides the general framework, making the decentralization possible without too many disadvantages. In practice, this has meant that the eventual protective measures (in terms of planning regulations) would be applied to the entire municipal area rather than only to the “historic centre” as it had been in the past. In many other cases, instead, the legal and administrative framework does not necessarily guarantee a proper control mechanism. This is the case, for example, in several historic Central-European cities, such as Prague, Vilnius, Vienna, Cologne, and Budapest, where high-rise office buildings have been mushrooming within close range of protected areas or even inside. What happens is that the mayor or governor of the city can interpret the strategies in favor of ad-hoc economic and planning development, ignoring the historic qualities of the city. In fact, it is from this social, economic and political context that is born the current attempt to establish a new UNESCO recommendation concerning the “historic urban landscape”.

Over these past fifty years of international doctrine, some documents, such as the Venice Charter have been much discussed and have certainly exercised a certain impact on the various national legislations and also on local conservation policies. One of the results of the Venice Charter in particular is represented by the numerous other charters that have taken it as a principle reference. These include the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*, the *Australian Burra Charter* (last edition of 1999) and the *Nara Document on Authenticity* (1994). Obviously, the interpretation of the charters is not always consistent with the intentions of the authors. In fact, rather than using them as a conscious guideline, charters are often utilized as a justification – “post mortem”! This is the case also with the Nara Document, which has often been taken as an excuse for even drastic changes to the historic fabric, justified by the continuity of the intangible aspects of the site, its “*spiritus loci*”.

Generally speaking, and taking a look at the examples given above, we can observe that the international doctrine is more often the result rather than the incentive in terms of urban conservation. In some way, the 1970s has become a turning point in the development of conservation/development attitudes. Since then the political situation in various countries has changed from centrally controlled management towards market-oriented economy. This has had an impact on the protection of properties, which have been gradually taken over by the private sector. In this new situation, rather than being guided by a master plan, municipalities tend to develop following the logic of market economy. At the most, there is a strategic plan to orient development. Historic urban areas remain thus a testimony of earlier planning policies and as such obviously also a fundamental part of the cultural heritage. In the new situation, such areas have become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change, and the existing conservation legislation and norms have not necessarily been adapted to face the new challenges.

3. Historic Urban Landscape

The notion of “historic urban landscape”, in itself, is not necessarily new. The sight of an “urban landscape” has often been used “informally” as part of the description of a settlement, which has been built following the forms of the territory and thus becoming itself a landscape. Nevertheless, if and when such a notion will be formally adopted in an international recommendation, it is necessary to support it with clear definitions and policies required for its implementation.

One of the limitations in the existing international doctrine tends to be that it is mainly focused on architecture, even when related to historic urban areas. For example, the Council of Europe document of 1975, which introduced the concept of integrated conservation, is called the *European Charter of Architectural Heritage*. Similarly, even with a due emphasis on integrity including human functions, the 1976 UNESCO Recommendation still defines the notion in relation to “historic and architectural areas”, which is taken to mean “any groups of buildings, structures and open spaces”. Similarly, the World Heritage Convention places historic urban areas under the category of *groups of buildings*. What we are missing here are the notions that would make an urban area *urban* beyond architecture (if possible). It could be the same as taking a landscape beyond the trees, rocks and waterways, and trying to understand its dynamics as a *landscape*.

Urban dynamics

In this regard, it is interesting to take note of the principles expressed in the document drafted by the first ICOMOS Brazilian seminar about the preservation and revitalization of historic centers, Itaipava 1987.

I. *Urban historical sites may be considered as those spaces where manifold evidences of the city's cultural production concentrate. They are to be circumscribed rather in terms of their operational value as “critical areas” than in opposition to the city's non-historical places, since the city in its totality is a historical entity.*

II. *Urban historical sites are part of a wider totality, comprising the natural and the built environment and the everyday living experience of their dwellers as well. Within this wider space, enriched with values of remote or recent origin and permanently undergoing a dynamic process of successive transformations, new urban spaces may be considered as environmental evidences in their formative stages.*

III. *As a socially produced cultural expression the city adds rather than subtracts. Built space, thus, is the physical result of a social productive process. Its replacement is not justified unless its socio-cultural potentialities are proven exhausted. Evaluation standards for replacement convenience should take into account the socio-cultural costs of the new environment.*

Here, the city is defined in its totality as a historical entity, but it is also the result of social productive processes. Urban areas are seen as part of a wider space, which is permanently undergoing a dynamic process of successive transformations. The 1976 Recommendation declared that “Every historic area and its surroundings should be considered in their totality as a *coherent whole* whose balance and specific nature depend on the fusion of the parts of which it is composed and which include human activities as much as the buildings, the spatial organization and the surroundings.” While one can appreciate the intention of the authors of this text, it is however necessary to stress that one of the characteristics of historic urban areas is their *intrinsic heterogeneity*. In this aspect, we also have the support of the ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Historic Towns and Urban Areas (1987), which declares: “All urban communities, whether they have developed gradually over time or have been created deliberately, are an *expression of the diversity of societies throughout history*.” (art. 1)

Intrinsic diversity of historic areas

Considering that urban areas are the result of long processes, often responding to changing situations over time, historic urban areas reflect cultural specificities and diversities of the people who have built them and who have lived in them. This does not mean that there could not be homogenous areas within the diversity. This can be the case of relatively limited townships or urban areas that correspond to the continuity of the same policies or have been built to the same plan. The older and larger urban areas would, however, generally be better characterized in their diversity and heterogeneity rather than harmony. The typological and morphological analyses that were introduced in the 1970s also had the scope to define the specificity of each area in order to adopt the proper policies and strategies. This is certainly intended in the 1976 Recommendation, when it proposes to undertake “a survey of the area as a whole, including an analysis of its spatial evolution”, as well as noting that “surveys of social, economic, cultural and technical data and structures and of the wider urban or regional context are necessary”. (art. 19-20) In cases where an urban master plan and relevant planning norms do exist, the analysis is relatively straightforward. Where no plans have survived, it is necessary to undertake a systematic architectural survey of the built areas and open spaces in order to identify the underlying regulations (often unwritten) and in order to have a proper reference for the development of planning tools that take into account the specific character and requirements of each area.

Etymology of the notion of “urban”

When attempting to define the notion of “historic urban landscape”, we should be able to clearly delimit such as a territory. Does such an urban landscape cover all the administrative area of a town or city? Is it limited to what could be defined and eventually protected as *historic*? Does it encompass the surroundings? These are some of the questions that can be posed.

Ildefonso Cerdá y Suñer, known for his urban plan for Barcelona, is generally given as the originator of the term *urbanism*. In fact, Cerdá claims this himself in his search for a

proper term for the type work that he was doing when planning a town or city. He opted for the Latin term *urbs*, referred to the word *urbum* (plough), and thus for the legendary operation by the Romans to use a plough to trace the limits of a settlement (using sacred bulls). Tracing this boundary, one *urbanized* an area in the sense that it was delimited from a previously open and free field (furrow) into an area to be constructed. Urbanism would thus mean planning related to the urban area, excluding the open field. On the other hand, an urban area will obviously contain open spaces, which are in a certain way *urbanized*, i.e. have become part of the urban settlement (Cerdá, 1999).

Cerdá also discusses other terms such as *city* and *town*, which are often given as synonyms. It can be noted however that the word “town” (Old English: *tun*) used to mean a built enclosure. Later it was generally distinguished from a *village*, which instead derives from *villa* (Italian for country house) and indicates an inhabited place smaller than a town. City is referred to Latin *civis*, meaning townsman, the inhabitant of an urban settlement. In medieval usage, a city (deriving from *civitas*) was a cathedral town thus distinguished from an “ordinary” town. The bishop (archbishop) who ruled over other bishops was metropolitan. The seat of the metropolitan was thus called *metropolis*. Obviously, in recent times, this word has taken a more generic meaning of very extensive urban areas or areas that enclose the neighboring municipalities in the surroundings of large cities.

Over the centuries, there has always been a clear distinction between the enclosed urban area, *urbs* (in Greece, *polis*), and the surrounding rural area, the open territory. This relationship started changing as a result of the industrialization and the population increase in the late 19th century. The areas that were built mainly for residential purposes at the outskirts of existing urban areas were called *suburban*. These were a sort of go-between, not being rural but without the services that characterized urban centers. The construction of suburban areas has continued until the present. Over time, however, the suburban areas have been provided with a number of services and have become much appreciated for their residential qualities.

Settings of urban areas

One of the critical problems now faced especially around large metropolitan areas is exactly the fate of their “setting”. Such areas used to be agricultural, contributing to the sustenance of the urban population. They were characterized by small rural settlements, often even of historic value, and in any case forming a cultural landscape that reflected the local history and cultural identity. Particularly in the second half of the 20th century, the increasingly rapid expansion of metropolitan areas has increased the land value. Thus the areas outside urbanized land have become subject to development pressures often without proper planning. As a result, farming land has been transformed into industrial or storage use or similar, and the traditional settlements have been transformed losing their rural nature and taking a more suburban character. Such informal *eating* into the open land could also result in *favelas*, built to low quality and not providing the necessary services. (Even so, voices are heard defending the human qualities that merit due attention in such settlements.)

The transition areas were taken as a major theme for the 2005 ICOMOS General Assembly in China, where these problems have become urgent due to the rapid economic development now taking place especially in metropolitan areas, such as Shanghai. The conference adopted the *Xi'an Declaration on the Conservation of the Setting of Heritage Structures, Sites and Areas*, where the setting of a heritage area is defined as “the immediate and extended environment that is part of, or contributes to, its significance and

distinctive character". The Declaration notes that historic areas "also derive their significance and distinctive character from their meaningful relationships with their physical, visual, spiritual and other cultural context and settings". Therefore, it is necessary to develop proper planning tools and strategies for the conservation and management of areas forming the setting.

What is historic?

The term "history", in English, has been defined in two senses: a) the temporal progression of large-scale human events and actions; b) the discipline or inquiry in which knowledge of the human past is acquired or sought. Philosophy of history can be placed under either of these, and would thus be called *speculative* when examining the progression, or *critical*, i.e. the epistemology of historical knowledge, when searching for knowledge of the human past. "Historic" would thus be understood not just as something being old, but rather as something that is significant as a source for the discipline of history, i.e. something that can be associated with a particular meaning and eventually value. When dealing with cultural heritage, the term "historic" would thus become a qualifier as heritage.

Urban areas in their great variety are the product of on-going processes. As such, they necessarily reflect the intentions and needs emerging in the different periods as well as taking into account the existing situations, environmental, economic and socio-cultural. While the resulting fabric would reflect the diversity of human creative spirit, it would also enclose a form of continuity that gives a particular identity to each area. Being considered *historic* would not be automatic, but rather the result of continuity in appreciation over time. Historic urban areas are thus areas of which the historicity has been recognized by the community concerned. This means that they are areas that would merit special care and even protection in order monitor and control any changes that would undermine the recognized qualities.

Landscape and Urban Landscape

Modern representation of landscape goes back to Dutch painting in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (*landskip*, *landschap*, *landscap*, from Dutch), meaning "picture representing inland scenery" (distinguished from "seascape"). In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the English landscape garden was then designed as a symbolic representation of ancient myths, referring to painted classical landscapes and poetry. In 1962, UNESCO adopted the *Recommendation Concerning the Safeguarding of the Beauty and Character of Landscapes and Sites* (1962), which provided broad indications for the definition of protected landscapes and sites, emphasizing that:

Protection should not be limited to natural landscapes and sites, but should also extend to landscapes and sites whose formation is due wholly or in part to the work of man. Thus, special provisions should be made to ensure the safeguarding of certain urban landscapes and sites which are, in general, the most threatened, especially by building operations and land speculation. Special protection should be accorded to the approaches to monuments. (art. 5)

This Recommendation noted that measures taken for the safeguard of landscapes and sites should be both 'preventive and corrective'. 'Corrective measures should be aimed at repairing the damage caused to landscapes and sites and, as far as possible, restoring them to their original condition.' (art. 10) Considering the formulation of the policies at a distance of some 40 years, it seems that, in the 1960s, landscape was still

strongly associated with the idea of identifying it with a 'picture'. It was a static object, and consequently, it was expected to be treated and restored as if it were a 'monument'.

These concepts have been subject to a further evolution over the subsequent decades and particularly from the 1970s, when the ecological concern for the environment became more pressing. As a result, the 1995 Council of Europe *Recommendation on the Integrated Conservation of Cultural Landscape Areas as Part of Landscape Policies* differed from the 1962 UNESCO Recommendation in some essential aspects. Landscape was defined as a 'formal expression of the numerous relationships existing in a given period between the individual or a society and a topographically defined territory, the appearance of which is the result of the action, over time, of natural and human factors and of a combination of both'. (art. 1) Rather than being a static object, the environment was seen as a "dynamic system comprising natural and cultural elements interacting at a given time and place which is liable to have a direct or indirect, immediate or long-term effect on living beings, human communities and heritage in general". As a result, there was need for a comprehensive policy of protection and management of the whole landscape, taking into account 'the cultural, aesthetic, ecological, economic and social interests of the territory concerned'.

In 1992, the World Heritage Committee decided to introduce the notion of cultural landscape in the Operational Guidelines (1994 edition). Here, cultural landscapes are defined as "combined works of nature and of man", and they are seen as "*illustrative of the evolution of human society and settlement over time, under the influence of the physical constraints and/or opportunities presented by their natural environment and of successive social, economic and cultural forces, both external and internal*". (2005: art. 47) Cultural landscapes can be designed, organically evolved or associative, and can include urban areas and settlements. According to the proposed categories, urban areas could be understood either as designed or as organically evolved. The latter category could be further referred to an area that has stopped developing sometime in the past ("relict landscape"), or an area that is still living and subject to changes. It is noted that a cultural landscape is not only a "picture". It is based on a complex set of criteria, cultural, economic, social, etc. Therefore, the aesthetics are only one dimension, and often not the most important. Instead, it is a territory that has archaeological and historical stratigraphy, and consists of the contributions of the different generations as well as of the impact of environmental changes (climate, vegetation, etc.).

How to meet the condition of integrity?

Another key issue in the identification and definition of historic urban landscapes should certainly be its integrity. Integrity must necessarily be related to the qualities that are valued in a particular property. The social-functional integrity of a place is referred to the identification of the functions and processes on which its development over time has been based, such as those associated with interaction in society, spiritual responses, utilisation of natural resources, and movements of peoples. The spatial identification of the elements that document such functions and processes helps to define the structural integrity of the place, referring to what has survived from its evolution over time. These elements provide testimony to the creative response and continuity in building the structures and give sense to the spatial-environmental whole of the area. Visual integrity, instead, helps to define the aesthetic aspects represented by the area. It is on such dimensions of integrity that one can base the development of a system of management so as to guarantee that the associated values would not be undermined. In many cases, it is not enough to focus on the limited World Heritage area, but rather take into account a vaster territorial context. This was the case, for example, in the Valley of Noto, in Sicily,

where the eight historic urban areas were integrated into a territorial management master plan. The purpose here was to place emphasis on the economic and functional aspects of the regional economy and relevant land use, which could not be suitably managed if only limited to the nominated World Heritage sites.

What are the limits of an historic urban landscape?

Taking into account the different factors discussed above, we can try to identify issues that should be included in the definition of an historic urban landscape. While recognizing that each area has its own characteristic components, i.e. the structures, open spaces, functions, etc., we should be looking at what characterizes an historic urban landscape as an “urban landscape”. This means taking into account the ways in which the built and open spaces have evolved over time, i.e. what have been and are the dynamics of evolution and the resulting patterns or marks left in the area? What in an urban landscape can be considered to have been historicized based on shared recognition. Generally, an urban landscape is also a “living” entity, responding to the needs of the population and the forces of the market. Furthermore, an urban area has a functional and visual relationship with its setting, which contributes to its meaning, significance and values. This notion should be further elaborated in the requirement of “buffer zones”.

Considering that, in general language, words may have many different meanings, which can change over time, it is useful to agree on selected terms that are associated each with a precise meaning thus forming the terminology for the field concerned. Thus, we could consider “environment” as a generic term for our living territory. Instead, “landscape” could be defined as a visual perception of specific qualities in a particular land area, including especially aesthetics (seen in views and approaches) as well as the geomorphology of the territory. Taking into account the definitions already given for the notion of “Cultural landscape” this could be defined differently from an “ordinary” landscape, as a living territory characterized by evolution over time. The essence in the definition of cultural landscape is to pay attention to its layers of history and evolution over time, the traces left by the different generations in response to the challenges offered by the natural environment. “Urban landscape” can be seen as the built-antropic territory, which is characterized by on-going processes. Its management needs understanding of the causes of dynamics of development. Passing then to the “historic urban landscape”, this can be seen as recognition of specified qualities in historically perceived urban territories or sites, where the change can range from static to dynamic. In the management it is essential to maintain the specificity and “historicized” qualities of such areas, which should be recognized for their social and cultural as well as physical characteristics.

One can say that history builds the town. The different periods and cultures have established diverse criteria that are reflected in the present day reality. From very early on, urban areas were planned using often a regular grid. Khorsabad had such a grid, and so had various other urban settlements in the Ancient Middle East, in Egypt or in ancient Persia (e.g. Persepolis), as well as those associated with the Hippocrates of Chios (e.g. Miletus), the Roman world, or Teotihuacan in Mexico. Another form of urban development was based on “organic” growth, resulting in an apparently irregular pattern, such as those of European medieval or many Islamic towns. In the antiquity and through the Middle Ages, urban settlements were generally circumscribed and surrounded with fortifications, thus making a clear distinction from the rural open territory. Planning grids could however be taken into the territory even outside the core area, giving a structure to an entire region. This was the case for example of the Roman *centuriation*, a technique for large-scale land partition, where one side of the square was 710m.

From the fifteenth century onwards, urban planning gradually enters into the modern era, where urban areas start extending into the territory without strict limits. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, many cities were designed as the focal points of large-scale vistas and axial planning. In many cases, European cities could be integrated with designed landscape layouts, such as Hannover or Aranjuez cultural landscape. In the nineteenth century, the American model of grid plans, such as those of Washington DC in USA (L'Enfant, 1791), Cienfuegos in Cuba (1819), or Barcelona (Cerdá, 1859), provided a structure for endless development. With the continuation of urban growth, large cities have in certain cases grown into megalopolises involving populations that reach tens of millions. Examples could be found in South-east China, such as Shanghai, in Mexico the Mexico City, or even in Europe, the urban ring of the Netherlands. There are obviously many theories and hypotheses for urban growth in the future, which we do not want to enter here.

What this brief survey gives us is a canvas with lots of variables. In the modern world, urban landscape can extend to tens or even hundreds of kilometers, including several administrative areas. Whether we should consider all this built landscape "historic" is an issue for reflection. Until now, the international conservation charters and recommendations have had an impact in relatively limited areas. Even the European 1995 recommendation regarding the protection of cultural landscape areas tends to put fairly strict limits to the implementation. Nevertheless, due to the expansion of the notion of historicized territory and the appreciation of even recently built areas, it is worth having another look at this issue. At the same time, the larger areas are being handled the more generic or "flexible" the proposed guidelines would necessarily be. We can note that, for example, in the 2000 master plan of Rome, protective measures can be extended to practically all built areas of whatever date, mainly subject to their quality and characteristics.

Another question concerns the implementation of international guidelines and recommendations. So far, the charters have been mainly known to conservation professionals, who however are rarely involved in the decision-making process regarding planning and development of larger areas. To who is the international doctrine addressed? Who are the stakeholders interested in taking note of such proposals and able to implement them? In principle, the answer should be: the public authority. However, the systems and tools of planning control would seem to vary greatly from country to country. In some, control is in the hands of a centralized authority, in others it is the responsibility of local councils. At the same time, the private sector, including multinational companies and local land owners, is having an increasing role in what actually happens on the ground. Furthermore, the physical condition of vast built areas makes it economically difficult if not impossible to intervene by a public authority. Thus, in today's global society the initiative tends to remain in the private sector, who often have the financial means and can justify any intervention on economic grounds without much attention on the overall impact of the projects.

Learning from the experience of the World Heritage Convention, one can note that much advance has been possible due to the interest raised by the World Heritage List. As a result, many governments have taken measures to establish protective measures and management systems and plans for areas that earlier were not even thought about. The identification of areas that could be defined as "historic" within the urbanized landscape (even in cases of vast metropolitan areas or megalopolises) could give a useful support for the management regime of areas with recognized qualities. In order obtain concrete results, international charters should be sustained by clear education and training

incentives to be integrated into the career structure of those involved in the decision making.

It is useful to take a look at the doctrine defined in international principles and how this relates to the theory of restoration. We can say that the principles are the outcome of a reflection based on practice, and therefore they become documentary evidence for the cultural evolution that has taken place over the years. Theory, instead, provides a description of the methodology that is required in the decision-making process aiming at the conservation and restoration of heritage resources. In fact, the principles and the theory should be seen as complementary. Within the process of conservation, there are many issues that need to be taken into account, and the decisions may vary according to the diverse situations and the character of the resource concerned and its cultural, social, economic and physical context. The questions can range from keeping the historical material, and eventually replacing like with like, to recognizing the essential meaning of architecture and urban ensembles as based on the recognition of the functional schemes and dynamic processes that reflect perceptions and changing uses. In the latter case, obviously, the challenge lies in the monitoring and control mechanisms that can be implemented. Another fundamental requirement will be the involvement of all stakeholders in the decision-making process, which should be based on a learning process and building of attitudes. "Restoration" can be seen as a historical-critical approach to existing territory, based on the recognition and valorization of its qualities. "Conservation", instead, can be understood as the methodology based on communication and learning processes aiming to prolong the life and clarify the messages associated with heritage resources.

Taking into account the evolution of conservation philosophy and policy and the changes in the physical reality of which our heritage is part, we believe that the notion of historic urban landscape can become another paradigm on the cultural route. It has already been recognized that conservation is a fundamental part of modern life and the management of our living space. Historic urban landscape is a new challenge that can provide us fresh guidance and that may well lead to the revision of the legal and administrative frameworks. In any case, the conservation of our heritage, material and immaterial, is necessarily based on communication and building up of attitudes. It requires a learning process and informed involvement of all stakeholders, public and private.

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Appendix

Statement of Significance

The ICOMOS study on the *World Heritage List: Filling the Gaps – an Action Plan for the Future* (2005), generally called the “Gap Report”, proposes three frameworks for the identification of issues of universal nature that are common to humanity, and therefore potential references for the verification of the outstanding universal value. The study was initiated with the typological framework analysis based on the properties so far inscribed or proposed to be inscribed on the World Heritage List. Secondly, an outline was prepared on the chronological and regional framework, which can help in identifying the time and place of each property, i.e. verifying the relevant cultural periods and the cultural region, within which the nominated property should be understood. The third

framework refers to the themes or issues of universal nature in the sense intended in the conclusions of the World Heritage Global Strategy Meeting in Amsterdam in 1998: “*The requirement of outstanding universal value characterizing cultural and natural heritage should be interpreted as an outstanding response to issues of universal nature common to or addressed by all human cultures*”. In relation to culture this is reflected in *human creativity and resulting cultural diversity*. The notion of cultural diversity has been expressed in the *Nara Document on Authenticity* as one of the fundamental issues for the understanding of the true significance of a place. The Amsterdam meeting however also stresses that “*identification of the outstanding universal value of heritage sites can only be made through systematic thematic studies, based on scientific research according to themes common to different regions or areas*”.

Having in mind the definition of the Amsterdam conference we should first identify what are the possible universal themes that could relate to a particular site. As a consequence, it is necessary to respond to specific questions, such as:

- Why was this place developed in the first place? E.g. a place at the mouth of a river could have been established because it was a convenient trading place.
- What functions developed on this site over time? E.g. a site may have become a trading place, but it also required a system of defence, a system of providing food, and possibly a system of developing some handicrafts or industry.
- What spiritual or other cultural functions were associated with the place over time? E.g. the historic town of Assisi has been associated with the significant events that led to the creation of the Franciscan Order by St. Francis.
- What is the principal story or the principal stories of the place? E.g. in the cases of Assisi, the Vatican, or Mecca, the spiritual meaning could be taken as central.

The above questions should give the possibility to identify the appropriate themes that indicate the meaning or function of the place in its history. One can thus identify the principal reasons that have prompted the establishment and the development of a place. The main purpose here is to identify what the place has signified over time, and/or what it now signifies. The question is: What is it a sign about? What is its meaning? As guidance to the definition of the themes, it will be useful to take note of the themes that ICOMOS identified in the 2005 analysis. This thematic framework includes the following principal headings, but obviously the question is about an open framework, and further subheadings could be added to the list:

THEMATIC FRAMEWORK

1) Expressions of society

Interacting and communicating
Cultural and political associations
Developing knowledge

2) Creative Responses and Continuity

Domestic habitat
Religious and commemorative architecture
Pyramids, obelisks, minarets, belfries
Castles, palaces, residences
Governmental and public buildings

Educational and public buildings
Recreational architecture
Agricultural architecture
Commercial architecture
Industrial architecture
Military architecture
Transport structures
Cave dwellings
Rock art and monumental painting
Monumental sculpture, dolmens
Equipping historic buildings
Rural settlements
Urban settlements
Sacred sites
Cultural landscape

3) Spiritual responses (religions)

Ancient and indigenous belief systems
Hinduism and related religions
Buddhism
Confucianism, Taoism, Shintoism
Judaism
Christianity
Islam

4) Utilising Natural Resources

Agriculture and food production
Mining and quarrying
Manufacturing

5) Movement of Peoples

Migration
Colonisation
Nomadism and Transhumance
Cultural routes
Systems of transportation

6) Developing Technologies

Converting and utilizing energy
Processing information and communicating
Technology in urban community

Authenticity: Modern thinkers, from Nietzsche to Heidegger have referred to the idea of a *creative process*, which gives specificity to each object. In the words of Prof. Paul Philippot, Director Emeritus of ICCROM, *the authenticity of a work of art is a measure of truthfulness of the internal unity of the creative process and the physical realization of the work, and the effects of its passage through historic time.* A work produced through such a creative process differs from a work produced as a replica. The artistic or creative value of particular works can be assessed higher than of others. As Heidegger has said, the truth of such a work is more 'luminous'. Documentary evidence and authentication of sources of information refer to the second aspect of being authentic. This is most relevant in the historical and archaeological verification of a particular heritage resource. The test of authenticity should not be limited to one aspect ignoring another. Rather, it should be based on a critical examination of all the relevant aspects aiming at a balanced judgment as a synthesis. The social context and living traditions form the third aspect of authenticity, and have been given increasing attention particularly in multicultural communities, such as Canada (e.g., see writings by the Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor). In traditional social-cultural context, particular consideration is given to the immaterial dimension of heritage, the know-how and skills, as stressed in the UNESCO convention on intangible heritage and some national laws.

The condition of "integrity": In relation to natural heritage sites, the concept of a biotope is defined in an environmentally uniform region referring to the conditions and the flora and fauna which live there. Within a particular habitat, the different organisms living together interact forming an ecosystem with its functional integrity. In reference to the built environment, the issue of integrity is relevant especially in relation to urban and regional areas, but also to historic buildings and even archaeological sites (Venice Charter, articles 6 to 14). The issue of integrity is important as a reference to defining the limits of restoration and re-integration of artistic or historic objects. Functional integrity is particularly obvious in the case of an industrial site, such as factory, but it is equally relevant in urban fabric. It provides a reference for understanding the functional relationship of the elements forming the built environment. Structural integrity instead identifies the elements that survive in today's historical condition. Even a relict cultural landscape can be defined in terms of its historical integrity. The issue of functional integrity is most relevant to living urban or rural areas, the planning and management of their present-day use. Visual integrity is the result of processes change and growth. In order to properly appreciate the existing reality, it is useful to relate to the functions and the historical-structural integrity of the place.

The concept of value, in the cultural context, can be seen as the social-cultural association of qualities to things or places. From this results that values can be interpreted as constructs. Traditionally, values were generated in a community over generations and learnt by newborn members from the elders. In modern society, the references have been broadened due to wider information and communication networks and due to increasing globalization. However, values still result from learning processes. In order to understand whether genuine and true, value perceptions need to be referred to the relative cultural-historical context. It is in this sense that we can speak of relativity of values. It does not mean arbitrary relativity dependent on the wishes and different view points of individuals. Rather, in the context of defining the significance of cultural heritage, relativity of values should be interpreted as the relative importance or relative worth associated with a particular site as compared with other sites elsewhere having comparable characteristics. This would generally mean reference to the relevant cultural region, and in certain cases, such as the case of modern architecture, reference should be seen in the global context.

After having identified the meaning of the site and the relevant themes of universal nature associated with it, one can thus enquire about the *relative value* of the related expressions seen within the cultural region and period that is represented by the selected place:

- What have been the creative-innovative responses to the above functions and where are these expressed? E.g. description of the architectural or artistic design, including relevant typology and morphology. In Assisi, considering the principal story related to the life and work of St. Francis and the Franciscan Order, the question is about 13th and 14th centuries. Here, we can find the paintings by Giotto and Cimabue, as well as the development of the Franciscan basilica building type.
- What are the cultures or cultural regions and the timeframes that are represented by the creative responses? E.g. the issues related to the artistic and spiritual significance of Assisi should here be compared within the relative culture and cultural region.
- What are the elements in the place that together form its social-functional and historical-structural integrity? E.g. in the case of Assisi, the nomination came to enclose the entire cultural landscape which not only included the principal elements related to St. Francis and his Order, but also the historic land-use of the place with the medieval structures and the connecting road network.
- Are these elements true and historically verified responses to the identified functions? i.e. what is the authenticity of the place?
- What are the boundaries of the proposed site? Is it a monument, group of buildings or site? Is it a historic town centre? Is it a cultural landscape? Is it a serial nomination?

To recapitulate, in order to prepare the *Statement of Significance* (SOS) for a World Heritage nomination, it is necessary to follow a clear methodology. The above questions can help to clarify the process. It is noted that the word 'significance' can have various meanings. It stems from the word 'sign', which can be interpreted as "a mark or device having some special meaning or import attached to it". (Oxford English Dictionary) In philosophy, a 'sign' is associated with semiotics and the study of the relations between signs and their meanings. It can also be defined as any information carrying entity. Significance should first of all be referred to the meaning of a property. As indicated in the above questions, the purpose is to initiate the enquiry by identifying the meaning of the place, i.e. what it signifies, what is it a sign for; what information does it carry? We can identify the most relevant out of the various themes exemplified in the ICOMOS Gap Report (listed above). The purpose is to understand what story a place can tell us.

A '*Thematic Study*' is useful for the identification of sites that represent a particular theme. ICOMOS has so far prepared several thematic studies, such as those on historic canals, bridges, railways, antique theatres, fossil hominid sites, rock art, and vineyards. These are available on the Internet. Thematic studies are generally made when a need emerges regarding problematic nominations.

When a nomination is prepared, it is necessary to undertake a "*Comparative Study*" in order to compare the property concerned with others that have been identified through the Thematic Study and to verify its representivity. Based on a critical examination of all relevant information, a monument or site can thus be justified, for example, to be the first or the most advanced example of its kind.

The Statement of Significance justifying the outstanding universal value of a property can thus be defined as a proposition, resulting from an evaluation process, which should comprise the following steps:

1. *Meaning of the site*: Identifying the themes of universal nature, in reference to which the place was established and has developed, i.e. what is the meaning of the site, what does it signify, what is its story? (e.g.: trading, farming, defence, symbol, spirituality) (See: thematic framework in ICOMOS Gap Report)
2. *Integrity*: Identifying the tangible/material elements and the intangible/cultural issues that express or represent the relevant themes in the property, i.e. verify the social-functional, historical-structural as well as visual-aesthetic integrity of the place.
3. *Authenticity*: Verifying (testing) the historical and social-cultural authenticity (truthfulness) of the elements that define the integrity of the property.
4. *Thematic study*: Identifying and describing the relevant cultural-historical or functional-historical contexts in thematic studies, which should aim at defining the relevant cultural region(s), where comparable properties are found. In the case of modern movement in architecture, such thematic studies would need to be sufficiently holistic considering the wide diffusion of modernity.
5. *Comparative study*: Preparing a comparative study on the basis of the above analyses, i.e. verifying the **relative value(s)** of a place as compared to other places that have similar or comparable characteristics or features. (see: chronological-regional framework in ICOMOS Gap Report)
6. *Category of property*: Deciding about the category of the property (monument, group of buildings or site), and whether it should be a single or a serial nomination. (See typological framework in ICOMOS Gap Report)
7. *Statement of Significance*: A synthetic statement concerning the meaning of the site, i.e. the story (stories) it is associated with, and its relative importance or value in the appropriate context.
8. *World Heritage criteria*: Applying the World Heritage criteria to the themes and features represented by the property; i.e. how the nominated property meets one or more of these criteria.
9. *Protection and Management*
10. *Statement of World Heritage significance*

From the above, one can conclude that the statement of significance should not only refer to values, but should clearly indicate the meaning and truthfulness of the site. The significance should also take into account the definition of the boundaries and the category of the site nominated. Taking note of the definitions given in the 2005 edition of the Operational Guidelines, we can appreciate that the outstanding universal value (OUV) is not a value in the strict sense. First of all, it cannot be simply decided on the basis of national or local values. It is only by comparing similar qualities or characteristics that one can provide the necessary elements to justify the OUV of a property. The outstanding universal value is the primary condition for a nominated property to satisfy in order to be eligible to the World Heritage List. It is a construct based on research and one that should also meet specific administrative requirements. In fact, according to the 2005 edition of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, "To be deemed of outstanding universal value, a property must also meet the conditions of

integrity and/or authenticity and must have an adequate protection and management system to ensure its safeguarding.” (par. 78) Following from this statement, to satisfy the requirement of outstanding universal value also means that a property must comply with the other administrative requirements, which were taken as additional conditions in the previous editions of these guidelines.