

VALUES OF A MONUMENT IN A NEW WORLD

The topographical and thematic extension of the concept of monuments, as well as the mere physical stress by pollution, ageing of material and different uses of monuments, have confronted conservation and restoration with new tasks. The solutions of these problems in many cases extend what has been defined as restoration in 1964 by the Venice Charter. For the same reason there is often a call for a new charter or the modification of the old one to cope with these problems. In addition conservation and restoration become increasingly involved in social problems and environmental considerations. This raises the question of whether we live in a new world - just as America seemed to be a new world to the first immigrants - and whether the philosophy of preservation and conservation is still valid. Does this new world need new ideas of preservation and conservation? Are the value categories we attribute to a monument still valid?

To answer this question it seems necessary to examine these categories. Being an Austrian preservationist, one nearly automatically refers to Alois Riegl, an Austrian preservationist and conservator general of the former Imperial and Royal Central Commission for the Investigation and Preservation of Monuments, who in 1903 tried to define these values in his basic work "The Modern Cult of Monuments". With his decisive work, conservation and restoration in Austria definitely left 19th century's tendencies of historicism in conservation, which are defined in their extremes by Viollet-le-Duc and opposed by John Ruskin. Referring to Alois Riegl also seems to be justified by the fact that there has been a growing interest in his work as illustrated by recently published translations in other countries (1).

Alois Riegl's understanding of values has been and still is based on the general agreement on two fundamental premises (2):

First, the historic relativity of each creation of art and therefore of each monument. Riegl presumes - and by this he is one of the founders of modern conservation science - that there is no objective art-value, that there is no hierarchy of styles nor can be. There is only a relative art-value which is defined by the respective "Kunstwollen" (the determination to create art in a particular phase of artistic development at a particular time). This includes that the respective consideration of values is also subject to the "Kunstwollen" of our time.

The second premise is to accept the historic relevance of each work of art, of each monument. Monuments, being mostly creations of fine arts, depend on the transmission of the initial idea of their artistic value by material - unlike for instance the creations of performing arts. Thus monuments are subject both to the finiteness of material and to the interventions of man. The consequence of material decay and human intervention is that artistic creations and monuments (aside from a few exceptions made of particularly resistant material) have changed their original shape thus gradually reducing their initial identity.

Viollet-le-Duc, representing a historicist approach to conservation, has denied this historic relevance and has defined conservation as follows: "To restore a building is not just to maintain, repair or rebuild it but to re-instate it in a complete state such as it may never have been in any given moment" (3). This was opposed by John Ruskin who by accepting the physical end of a monument in the extreme defined restoration as the most total destruction which a building can suffer, because of the loss of its historic relevance in the most cases.

Alois Riegl distinguishes between the values of the past and the values of the present which do not coincide but may even disagree with each other. Among the values of the past the "Alterswert" (age-value) is of utmost importance for us apart from the commemorative and the historical value. Accepting the historic

relevance of a monument, we have to assume that everything which history has changed is irreversible and as such has become part of the monument. This is the real sense of "Alterswert" (age-value) which is often misunderstood as mere exterior symptoms of ageing. Thus Alois Riegl's notion of the "Alterswert" (age-value) refers to the historic relevance of a work of art and a monument as well as to an esthetic value and dimension (making the past visible) symbolizing the transitory character of history within a general philosophical framework.

Among the present-day values Alois Riegl distinguishes primarily between the utilitarian value and the art-value (which he accepts only as a relative one). Every restoration therefore depends on decisions to be made in the field of tension created by the different values of art, use, history and age.

These values are represented in the respective articles of the Venice Charter which largely coincides with Alois Riegl's theory (4). Riegl stressed the importance of the "Alterswert" and so does the Venice Charter by declaring that conservation is the main task and that restoration has to be an exceptional action (Art. 9). This is contrary to the conviction that it is possible to re-gain an original shape by restoration. Although Historism has disappeared for quite some time the misleading impression and treacherous hope that monument preservation through restoration may undo history is still valid, and influences as well as obscures concepts and means of monument preservation in the fields of restoration, restitution, reconstruction, anastylosis etc. (2).

The next question is how to define a new world. It seems quite useful to point out some characteristic aspects of the present time which may differ from Alois Riegl's time, and investigate their relevance for preservation. Assuming that Alois Riegl's emphasis on the "Alterswert" and the Venice Charter's principles are still valid, it is also necessary to investigate whether they may be applied as a solution to these examples.

- * The fact that there are ICOMOS national committees in all continents proves that today we have to preserve a world-wide cultural heritage including monuments arising from different cultures, traditions and eras. Though Alois Riegl was only concerned with the artistic heritage of Europe, his limitation of the art-value to a relative one and his high esteem of the "Alterswert" permit to apply his category of values to all cultures and times, thus permitting his values as a proven fact.
- * The disturbed ecological balance, the threats of world-wide pollution, and the awareness that every day some species in fauna and flora become extinct, make man realize the finiteness of nature. Knowing that no restoration can bring back the values of a lost monument, conservation and restoration have never given up the struggle for slowing down the process of destruction and decay thus proving similar intentions as the ecologists have.
- * Wherever ancient orders are relieved by new orders, monuments of the past are endangered because they are also symbols of the past. They are only protected by their historic relevance, their present-day values having become outdated overnight. Stressing the values of the past may save them.
- * When underlying former states are to be uncovered in a building the Venice Charter requires the documentation of the layers to be destroyed. Such an approach has been facilitated by the technical possibilities of a new world. But nevertheless the historical value and the "Alterswert" of these deleted layers should be seriously taken into consideration before deciding to destroy them in favour of an earlier phase of a monument.
- * Technical possibilities of documentation by photography, photogrammetry, arial photography, holography, film, TV and video tempt us to reconstruct lost or de-

stroyed monuments with the argument that the copy is almost identical with the original. But this is not true since such reconstructions lack historic relevance and are mere copies. On the other hand the possibilities of documentation remind us of the values lost since we become aware not only of recent losses but of all losses suffered or caused in the course of time.

- * World tourism uses monuments as part of its industry and creates dangers both by its mere physical wear and by its historicist attitudes trying to "sell" the monuments in a condition in compliance with the "customer's" own or suggested imagination. This new "historism", which is reflected by postmodern architecture seems to be pragmatic and aimless, whereas the Historism of 19th century rather seemed to express itself by consequent execution of certain stylistic orders.
- * The destructions of modern warfare and the permanent threat of a catastrophe, which may happen and has happened on a smaller scale before, make us try to suppress our anxieties by reconstructing war damages. This attempt to make forget the unthinkable and to turn back the wheel of history is doomed by the fact that the destructions of war have also become part of the monuments as historical relevance and "Alterswert". Especially when a reconstruction is undertaken generations after the destruction of the original, there is no monument's value left but a new one, which Alois Riegl calls the intended commemorative value - a monument of a monument.
- * Historic buildings were mostly constructed at a time when material costs were high and labour was cheap; therefore a considerable amount of continual repair was planned to be part of the inherent qualities of the monument. Today the situation has changed drastically, and labour intensive repair and maintenance jobs exceed by far the costs for building material, a reason why people would prefer replacement to repair. This labour cost vs. material cost ratio is a decisive factor even if we bear in mind that Alois Riegl's values favour the repair and conservation of a monument. But his argument may be supported by the fact that in many parts of the world there is a considerable degree of unemployment. If governments want to create jobs they will hardly find a better opportunity. The benefits from such a policy are imponderable but will have repercussions on many sectors of economy.
- * The environmental pollution and physical wear of monuments have made it necessary to repeat conservation activities at shorter intervals and to provide additional preventive measures which must not change the original shape of the monument. If additions are necessary they should be recognizable but must not spoil the effect of the monument as a whole. This has gained a new particular significance in the case of consolidation and hydrophobication of surfaces.
- * The scale of built-up environment has changed. Modern means of transport have also changed the scale of time. This change in dimension constitutes a danger for monuments and sites which are threatened by the fact that they are no longer lived in but only looked at - thus shifting their importance from a living part of our environment to a museum piece of a world which seems to have reached the limits of soil and space. The free spaces necessary to provide the traditional site for certain monuments are no longer available. The only way to provide the desired space and protection for monuments is to include them at the earliest possible stage into planning instruments of whatever range. In this phase any decision on the preservation of monuments can be made without incurring expenses since there is still a choice between various options and no money has been invested in planning.

To what extent have Alois Riegl's values coped with the problems of the new world? If we analyze the examples investigated before, it can be said that in many of them the values have stood the test, and it seems that only a more rigid application of these values can guarantee the success of preservation and conservation in a new world. This confirms the validity of the Venice Charter as far as values are concerned.

If the art-value and the use-value of a monument are accepted, its preservation is beyond doubt. If they do not seem to justify its preservation, it is necessary to evaluate its historical and age values. They are the more decisive ones.

But what we also need the values for is to establish guidelines for conservation and restoration. Stressing the importance of the "Alterswert" (age-value) and respecting it, is the best way to avoid mistakes in conservation and restoration. Increasing destruction as well as economic and technical possibilities enhanced by the lack of sensibility to artistical singularity, have contributed to a growing degree of insecurity and uncertainty in questions of reconstruction within monument's preservation. The consequence of this general undermining of traditional values is that today's definition of restoration has become so ambiguous and vague, covering almost every existing possibility of intervention in a monument, that the lack of restricting methodological criteria makes it increasingly difficult to keep the interventions in the works of art within accepted boundaries. This is perhaps the reason for the upcoming of a new "Historism" which, without the basis of the 19th century Historism has only a vague and unclear impetus towards historic criteria (2). The general impression is that the decrease of substance in a work of art - and this concerns both built monuments and movable assets of art - which is caused by restoration carried out without respect to historical criteria, should be balanced by additions which also disregard its historical context.

What conclusions can be drawn? We have found the values to be valid still. But values alone will not protect and preserve monuments, values that are not respected will not help to avoid misinterpretations and insensitive restorations. It is therefore necessary to stress and emphasize these values by taking measures in four fields:

- + With the general introduction and acceptance of the notion of historical value and "Alterswert" (age-value) of a monument, it will be easier to respect its historical relevance. A more rigid application of the Venice Charter will make many restorations more adequate.
- + Both the Arts - by way of reconsidering the historical relevance of works of art and establishing clearly defined and limited substantial criteria for concepts and measures of conservation and restoration - and the Sciences - by way of extending and developing the means and techniques of advanced conservation and restoration - may contribute to a better respect of the monument's values and use.
- + In a new world with changing scales of space, time and value rating it is necessary to integrate conservation into the planning instruments at the earliest possible stage. Monuments today form part of a planning network and the only way to assess and preserve monuments and their values is integrated conservation. This demand has repeatedly been risen but was never consequently expressed.
- + The political decision to opt for preservation rather than renewal needs a sound scientific basis, as well as the possibility of providing funds and the willingness to do so in an attempt to pass on the values we have inherited to the next generation.

It is certainly not intended to answer all demands by naming these values, confirming the Venice Charter and adding a few recommendations, but they are thought as contribution for a discussion on conservation and restoration in a new world.

Franz Neuwirth

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German: Alois Riegl, *Der moderne Denkmalkultus, sein Wesen und seine Entstehung*, in *Gesammelte Aufsätze*, Augsburg-Wien 1929, page 144-193.

This essay is the reprint of the first part of the more detailed study of Riegl concerning this topic which was published in 1903 under the title "Entwurf einer gesetzlichen Organisation der Denkmalpflege in Österreich" editor k.k. Central Commission.

English: *The Modern Cult of Monuments: its Character and its Origin* (translated by K. Forster and D. Ghilardo), published in *Oppositions*, Nr. 25, 1982, page 21-51.

French: *Le culte moderne des monuments. Son essence et sa genèse* (traduit par D. Wiczorek), Editions Du Seuil, Paris 1984.

Italian: *Il culto moderno dei monumenti. Il suo carattere e i suoi inizi* (trad. di R. Trost - S. Scarrochia), published in *Chiesa Città Campagna*, a cura di A. Emiliani, *Rapporto della Soprintendenza per i Beni Artistici e Storici per le province di Bologna, Ferrara, Ravenna e Forlì*, Nr. 27, Bologna (Alfa Editoriale) 1985.

A recent survey on the Riegl-literature can be found in : Sandro Scarrochia, *Studi su Alois Riegl. Ricerche dell' Istituto per i beni artistici culturali naturali della regione Emilia-Romagna*, Nuova Alfa Editoriale 1986.

(2)

Ernst Bacher, *Kunstwerk und Denkmal - Distanz und Zusammenhang*, published in:

* *Deutsche Kunst und Denkmalpflege*, 1986, page 124-127. Deutscher Kunstverlag.

* *Kunsthistoriker* (Mitteilungen des Österreichischen Kunsthistorikerverbandes), 1985, Nr. 1, page 22 ff.

(3)

"Restaurer un édifice, ce n'est pas l'entretenir, le réparer ou le refaire, c'est le rétablir dans un état complet qui peut n'avoir jamais existé à un moment donné"
M. Viollet-le-Duc, *Dictionnaire Raisonné de l'Architecture Française du XI^e au XVI^e siècle*, tom. VIII, Paris 1854, page 14 ff. (reprint 1967)

(4)

Alois Riegl's value categories were introduced into the Venice Charter by Mrs. Gertrude Tripp, who as Austrian representative worked in the drafting committee in 1964. As former vice-president of the Austrian Federal Office of Historical Monuments (Bundesdenkmalamt) and former member of ICOMOS Executive Committee she has been and as vice-president of the Advisory Council of the - Austrian Federal Office of Historical Monuments (Fachbeirat beim Bundesdenkmalamt) she still is representing and introducing Alois Riegl's values in theory and practice of conservation.

VALUES OF A MONUMENT IN A NEW WORLD - summary Franz Neuwirth, Austria

The topographical and thematic extension of the concept of monuments, as well as mere physical stress by pollution, ageing of material and wear of monuments have confronted conservation and preservation with a new world. The solutions of these problems in many cases differ from what was defined as conservation in 1964 by the Venice Charter. This raises the question whether the rules of conservation and preservation, whether the values of a monument are still valid.

Which are these values? Alois Riegl, an Austrian preservationist in 1903 tried to define these values in his basic work "The Modern Cult of Monuments". With his decisive work, conservation policy in Austria definitely left 19th century tendencies of historicism in conservation. He distinguishes between the **values of the past** and the **values of the present**, which do not coincide but may even disagree with each other. Among the values of the past the "Alterswert" (**age-value**) is of outmost importance apart from the **commemorative** and the **historical value**. Among the present-day values he distinguishes primarily between the **utilitarian** and the **art-value** (which he defines only as a relative one).

The understanding of his values is based on the agreement on two fundamental premises: First, the historic relativity of each creation of art. There is no objective art-value but only a relative art-value. Second, to accept the historic relevance of each work of art. Monuments are both subject to the finiteness of material and to the interventions of man. Accepting this historic relevance, we have to assume that everything which history has changed has become part of the monument. This is the real sense of "Alterswert" which is often misunderstood as mere symptoms of ageing.

These values largely coincide with the Venice Charter. Riegl stressed the importance of "Alterswert" and so does the Venice Charter by declaring that conservation is the main task and restoration has to be an exceptional action.

To find out the validity of these values in a new world some characteristic aspects of the present time, which may differ from Alois Riegl's time are investigated. Assuming that his emphasis on the "Alterswert" and the Venice Charter's principles are still valid, it is necessary to investigate whether they may be applied as a solution to these examples. Subsequently ten characteristic aspects are presented.

The analysis of the examples confirms the validity of Alois Riegl's values and of the Venice Charter as far as values are concerned. But the economic and technical possibilities enhanced by the lack of sensibility to artistic singularity and historic relevance have contributed to a growing degree of insecurity and uncertainty in monument's conservation and restoration. The lack of restricting methodological criteria makes it increasingly difficult to keep interventions in monuments within accepted boundaries. This seems to be the reason for the upcoming of a new "Historism" which without the basis of 19th century Historism has only a vague and unclear impetus towards historic criteria.

It is therefore necessary to stress and emphasize these values by taking measures in four fields:

- * A more rigid application of the Venice Charter and the general introduction and acceptance of the "Alterswert" (**age-value**) will make many restorations more adequate.
- * Both the Arts and the Sciences may contribute to a better respect of the monument's use and values.
- * To integrate conservation into the planning instruments at the earliest possible stage. Monuments form part of a planning network and therefore integrated conservation is necessary.
- * To emphasize the need of a political confession for preservation and conservation rather than renewal and the willingness to provide funds to preserve the values we have inherited for the next generation.

L'extension géographique et thématique de la conception du monument, les problèmes simplement physiques dus à la pollution et le vieillissement de la substance du monument ont confronté la conservation et restauration des monuments à des tâches nouvelles. Les solutions proposées s'éloignent bien souvent des concepts classiques de conservation, définies en 1964 par la Charte de Venise. Il faut donc se demander si les règles suivies jusqu'à présent et les valeurs du monument sont encore valables.

Quelles sont ces valeurs ? Dans son essai "Le Culte moderne des monuments", paru en 1903, Alois Riegl, un expert de la conservation autrichien, a tenté de définir ces valeurs. Par cette oeuvre décisive, la conservation autrichienne se détourne définitivement des concepts de la conservation historiciste du 19^{ème} siècle. Riegl distingue en principe entre les valeurs du présent et les valeurs du passé, qui non seulement ne coïncident pas mais bien souvent se contredisent. Parmi les valeurs du passé l'"Alterswert" (valeur d'ancienneté) passe avant la valeur commémorative et la valeur historique. Quant aux valeurs du présent, Alois Riegl distingue entre valeur utilitaire et valeur artistique (celle-ci n'étant qu'une valeur relative).

Sa définition des valeurs est basée sur deux prémisses fondamentales: tout d'abord sur la relativité de chaque création d'art, car la valeur artistique n'est jamais objective mais toujours relative. En second lieu sur l'acceptation de la relativité historique de chaque oeuvre d'art. Les monuments, considérés en tant qu'oeuvre d'art, sont soumis à des changements dus au vieillissement naturel et aux modifications apportées par l'homme. Si nous acceptons la relevance historique nous devons par conséquent admettre que tout changement fait partie du monument. Ceci est la vraie signification de l'"Alterswert", souvent faussement interprétée comme simple symptôme de vieillissement.

Les valeurs mentionnées correspondent en général à la Charte de Venise. Riegl souligne l'importance de la valeur d'ancienneté, la Charte de Venise en fait d'ailleurs de même en définissant la conservation comme étant la tâche primordiale, alors que la restauration devrait être limitée à des cas exceptionnels.

Avant d'appliquer ces valeurs dans un nouveau monde il convient d'examiner certains aspects caractéristiques de notre époque, qui diffère de l'époque d'Alois Riegl. Supposons que la priorité de l'"Alterswert" et les principes de la Charte de Venise soient encore valables. A l'aide de dix exemples pratiques nous allons examiner si ces valeurs peuvent apporter une solution à nos problèmes.

L'analyse des exemples confirme la validité de la théorie d'Alois Riegl et de la Charte de Venise en ce qui concerne les valeurs. Or les possibilités économiques et techniques associées au manque de sensibilité artistique et historique ont fait accroître l'incertitude dans le domaine de la conservation et restauration des monuments. Le manque de critères méthodologiques restrictifs rend la sauvegarde des monuments encore plus difficile dans un cadre donné. Ceci semble d'ailleurs être la raison pour laquelle nous assistons aujourd'hui à la renaissance d'un nouveau "historicisme", qui sans la base de l'historicisme du 19^{ème} siècle, n'offre que des définitions très vagues des critères historiques.

Il convient donc de souligner ces valeurs en proposant des mesures dans quatre domaines. Une application plus rigide de la Charte de Venise et l'introduction générale de l'"Alterswert" (valeur d'ancienneté) rendront les restaurations plus appropriées. Les arts et les sciences doivent tous deux contribuer à mieux respecter l'utilité et les valeurs des monuments. La conservation doit être intégrée dès le début dans la planification, car les monuments font partie du réseau de planification. Il faut souligner l'importance d'une confession politique plaçant l'accent sur la conservation et restauration et non sur le renouvellement et préservant les fonds nécessaires, afin de conserver les valeurs héritées pour la génération future.