The Venice Charter under Review*

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The explosion in the demands of contemporary society and their impingement on the historic environment have sparked activities, concern and controversy on the place of cultural heritage in the value systems of the twentieth century world. The Venice Charter was set forth as the cornerstone of international principles regarding the historic environment barely more than a decade ago. These very principles are now under vigorous criticism. The cause is clear; technological change and concepts of the historic environment have multiplied with such force that the Charter provides fewer and fewer answers to demands for guiding principles under these new conditions. The solution, however, is not so apparent. As camps form to press one view or another for inclusions, revisions and expansions I will make a radical proposal. Let us preserve the Venice Charter as an historic monument.

Abstract

The Venice Charter has provided a set of guiding principles for the protection of historic monuments and sites since its adoption in 1964 at the Second International Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historic Monuments. That meeting expanded and further advanced those concepts set forth in the Athens Charter of 1931 which had, in effect, led to the development of major institutions for international activity in the cultural field.

In recent years, increasing interest in the protection of historic quarters and sites has led some experts to propose that the Venice Charter might well be expanded or changed further to reflect the broader interests in historic conservation which have continued to emerge over the past decade.

The author discusses the pros and cons of this argument by conducting a critical review of the Venice Charter in order to point out why and in what respects the charter is now effective and ineffective. After a general evaluation of the charter, each article of the charter is examined through a set of examples.

In conclusion the author states that the explosion in contemporary activities and the growing interest in conservation make it difficult to write another charter which will be as comprehensive and effective as the Venice Charter has been. Thus, he concludes that the Charter should be preserved as it stands, as an historic monument itself. The Charter's approach in itself may represent a form of idealism which has little place in a discipline.

The Background

When the International Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historic Monuments met in Venice in 1964 to review the Athens Charter, that Charter, accepted in 1931, was thirty-three years old. Only ten years have elapsed since the Venice Charter was prepared and proclaimed at the meeting but it is already under even more serious attack. In fact, there are even proponents of changing the Charter
altogether. Consequently, a new Charter was prepared on the occasion of the 'European Cultural heritage Year' which was directed to the members of the Council of Europe. Why is the Venice Charter considered inadequate? What factors have produced this attack after such a short period of acceptance? This is the place to discuss them by reviewing the Charter itself.

The authors of the Venice Charter without a doubt performed a tour de force at the time. Following the meeting most countries incorporated its principles into their own national laws and regulations: a significant indicator of wide approbation. Recent reactions however show that the Venice Charter does not completely meet the demands of contemporary society.

Proponents and critics (opponents) of the Charter may be grouped in general into three separate camps. One defends the Venice Charter as it stands. In this camp are also those who defend the Charter with the condition that regional Charters form an adjunct to the present document. The second proposes changing those articles which fail to meet current demands and introducing supplementary articles to complete it. The third insists that a new charter be prepared to replace the Venice Charter altogether.

The Challenge to the Charter

What lies behind this controversy? Why does such a vocal majority argue for change, favour updating and want this to be accomplished as speedily as possible? One reason may lie in the Charter’s very success. The Venice Charter has been disseminated and has become known on a scale that far surpasses that experienced during the years following the preparation of the Athens Charter.

International meetings bear witness to the way the tendency to conserve historic monuments has spread.

The Congress where the Venice Charter was developed represented only the second international meeting of technicians and architects concerned with historic monuments following a first meeting in Paris in 1957. After the Venice meeting a series of international and national meetings focused their attention on the historic environment and thus opened the way to an increasingly rich, critical evaluation of the concepts of the historic monument and their place in contemporary societies. One could compile a large catalogue listing only those meetings organized by UNESCO, the responsible organ of the United Nations in this area, as well as regional, national, local or private groups. ICOMOS formed as a result of the Venice meeting and encompassing 57 member countries, has played a particularly central role in all these meetings. ICOMOS possesses virtually no budget of its own, but nevertheless has performed a catalytic function. Its growth and influence itself warrant close evaluation.

The compass, intensity of work, and diversity of these meetings have already reached far beyond the principles of the Venice Charter. It is probable that much of the insistence on change has originated in these meetings. Earlier, European countries formed the core of these activities but today in terms of the number of participants, interest, and actual work undertaken the compass has spread far beyond Europe. A range in natural and climatic conditions, cultural, economic and social differences have provoked a variety of issues, applications, results and in short, a variety of views. In addition technical advances and the possibilities for widespread application have led to a new set of circumstances. This has heightened concern. Concern about the destructive forces of modernization, and its accompanying industrial effluent and air pollution which even threaten human life, have combined with and intensified the concern about the protection of monuments and sites.

The geographical region represented by a group of scholars and technicians who wrote the Venice Charter is a narrowly defined one. A large majority of the participants at the meeting as well as those who drafted the Charter represented European countries.

Twenty three of the people who drafted the Charter, were representatives of international organizations; seventeen of the twenty three participants were Europeans. Of the remaining three, one was Tunisian, one Peruvian and the other a Mexican. It is natural that the Venice Meeting, which represents the beginning of International Relations in this field, should have been heavily influenced by European attitudes and views. It is natural to accept this situation. When criticizing the Venice Charter, however, one should keep this influence in mind.

It is now easier to criticize the Venice Charter because the subject has spread and grown more diversified since 1964 and has also reflected the viewpoint of only a specific group. For those outside attitudes and traditions accepted in Europe, evaluation is even easier. They can see the contradictions in the basic principles of the Charter, (especially when those principles are examined not as a whole but as they have been applied in one case after another). Inadequacy is apparent not only in compass but in concepts.

If the Venice Charter’s inadequacy has become strikingly apparent in only a brief ten years then we must be especially cautious when directly addressing the question of how the subject is likely to develop if our criticisms are to be constructive ones. For if its principles are to be meaningful they must incorporate not only the results of recent experiences but also take into account concepts and scope which are likely to emerge with new developments.

One of the necessary features for effective principles is, for them to be general guidelines rather than weighed down with details and specifications. This forces principles to remain general and to avoid the cut and dried expressions of laws. Those who have wanted to use the Venice charter as laws have been disillusioned.

The Venice Charter must be evaluated and understood as a whole. Instead each of its articles has often been taken and interpreted separately and this has led in many cases to contradictory applications. Unlike a law, each article cannot be taken out of its context.

Another practical deficiency should be remembered, the original French version when translated into English, Spanish and Russian produced differences in interpretation, deviation and deficiencies in the second languages. For example, we have identified four or five different versions of the Venice Charter in Turkish, each produced by a different translator and each translated from a different language; all show clear differences in explanation and understanding. In fact, there
are observable differences between the original French and the
English version, and these are known to have increased
still further in the Russian text.

In general we observe throughout the Charter an effort to
prevent general errors made in implementation prior to 1960,
to make up for inadequacies, and to address current issues.
This is noticeable in the main headings on definitions, aim,
conservation, restoration, historic sites, archaeological
excavations and publications as well as in each one of the
individual articles.

Definitions:

Article 1 The concept of an historic monument embraces
not only the single architectural work but also the
urban or rural setting in which is found the evidence
of a particular civilisation, a significant
development or a historic event. This applies not
only to great works of art but also to more modest
works of the past which have acquired cultural
significance with the passing of time.

Article 2 The conservation and restoration of monuments
must have recourse to all the sciences and
techniques which can contribute to the study and
safeguarding of the architectural heritage.

These first two articles under the heading of 'Definitions',
in the Venice Charter are examples that stress the reparation
of supposed inadequacies and the inclusion of new
characteristics.

Perhaps it would have been more appropriate to call the
section which includes these two articles not 'Definitions' but
'Completions' or 'Preliminary Principles. In fact, the first
article of the Charter rather than addressing the questions of
what constitutes a historic monument proceeds on the
assumption that this definition is simply taken for granted and
lists the features missing in this definition. The intention may
have been to proceed from these separate characteristics to the
whole. If this was the intention, no claim can be advanced for
its success.

The definition develops a conceptual approach which is
believed either to exist or, if not, should exist. The
monumentality of a single structure is put down as a concept
and then visual extensions are added to the concept to
encompass urban and rural settlements. Among the values
introduced to this more multifaceted definition of a monument
is the notion that it should show evidence of a particular
civilisation, be part of a historical development or event. It
does not stop here, however. Among the deficiencies of the
concept of an historic monument a new quality is stressed in
the second sentence of the definition.

The former emphasis on the visual appearance of pomp
and splendour in a monument when assigning it value should
be put aside. Not just magnificent and clearly important
structures, but modest buildings and clusters of buildings
have a place in this definition.

Placing Article 2 in the section on 'Definitions', at the
head of the Charter was a sound move. The role of science and
technology in the conservation of cultural property had
previously been neglected and relegated to a corner position.
This definition addresses the deficiencies which had been
clearly felt primarily in the implementation of conservation
projects. It makes it manifest that assistance from branches of
science and technology must be actively sought in the solution
of conservation problems. As such it comes out squarely
against those who opposed the notion that the field could have
a scientific and technological dimension.

Aim:

Article 3 The intention in conserving and restoring
monuments is to safeguard them no less as works
of art than as historical evidence.

This article evolved after considerable debate and
represents a major change in viewpoint. In a sense it opposes
giving special weight in the evaluation and classification of
historical monuments to their artistic aspects, their beauty,
uniqueness and aesthetic qualities. Art and history are given
equal weight in the evaluation and there is an effort to create
a balance between the two. This is an effort to terminate the
long disagreement between those who value a structure
primarily for its aesthetic qualities, (architects, restorers,
aestheticians, conservators, etc.). and those who value a
monument largely for its historical qualities (archaeologists,
art historians and historians). The incorporation of this article
in our opinion, has led to a new stage in conservation.

The articles handled below and divided in the Charter into
the subheadings 'Restoration' and 'Conservation' are in fact
difficult to distinguish from each other. We shall handle them
as listed in the Charter. Under the heading 'Conservation'
there are five articles which give a set of conceptual principles,
required features for decision-making and approaches. The
five articles under 'Restoration' addresses principles for
implementation, general matters at a technical level and
methodology.

Conservation:

Article 4 It is essential to the conservation of monuments
that they be maintained on a permanent basis.

This article stresses a principle whose validity is definite
and here to stay. The only solution is the continued protection
of a monument and maintenance measures for its conservation.
Conservation measures following restoration must be a part
of all programs and projects. Those restoration projects which
do not provide for maintenance frequently fail to conserve, or
worse, cause actual damage.

Article 5 The conservation of monuments is always
facilitated by making use of them for some socially
useful purpose. Such use is therefore desirable but
it must not change the lay-out or decoration of the
building.

It is within these limits only that modifications
demanded by a change of function should be
envisioned and may be permitted.

It is clear that for a monument to survive it must take a role
in the function of society. In order to ensure their existence
monuments must be assigned or provided with a function.
The conservation projects themselves determine the way in
which the monument will be used. When decisions on functions
are made, the conservator, technician and administrator should
seek assistance from other fields in order to determine the set
of functions which can take place and survive in the building as part of a larger societal setting. This article is restricted to orienting some intervention and remains somewhat obscure. It is consequently limited and inadequate.

It is obvious in the article that the refuunctioning of a structure must not affect its layout, plan or decoration. On the other hand, in order to avoid the dangers in wholesale refuunctioning it points out that changes maybe made in function and achieved with some ease as long as the structure is not put under necessary stress.

The article does not make it clear, however, that it applies to cases where the structures themselves have already lost their original function. In the event that the monument maintains its original function, then it is assumed that it will continue to do so and thus this was not inserted in the article. One should recall that there are efforts, usually unrealistic, to restore the old functions to a monument. The contradiction between proposing a new function and forcing the resumption of an old function weakens this article. This contradiction may be witnessed frequently in Turkey when functions are debated after the restoration of Ottoman baths (hamam) and caravanarais (kervansaray) which had long ago fallen into disuse.

**Article 6** The conservation of a monument implies preserving a setting which is not out of scale. Wherever the traditional setting exists, it must be kept. No new construction, demolition or modification which would alter the relation of mass and colour must be allowed.

This article reflects one of the features that has emerged from the rejection of protecting monuments as separate entities and the acceptance that the monument must be evaluated as a part of a larger environment. But the article certainly does not offer a clear-cut solution. In fact the issue of protecting the monument with its environment was partly transferred to the next article.

We have witnessed a variety of standards for the area to be protected around a monument ranging from 10,50,500 meters, etc. Just as each monument represents a separate problem, so does the environment which surrounds it. It soon became obvious that to set legal standards for a circumference around a historic area was not a solution because of the great variation between different historic settings. A general approach was thus deemed preferable and if there was a historic environment surrounding the monument it was to be kept as it stood. It opposes any destruction, new construction or reorganization that would disturb the harmony of colours and the environment as an aggregate whole.

Here terms such as the ‘breakdown of harmony’ and the ‘scale of the structure’ are not resolved and this naturally leads to contradictions in implementation.

**Article 7** A monument is inseparable from the history to which it bears witness and from the setting in which it occurs. The moving of all or part of a monument cannot be allowed except where the safeguarding of that monument demands it or where it is justified by national or international interests of paramount importance.

A separate article was devoted to the monument in its setting because of the recent importance of this issue. There had also been a rising number of examples of moving monuments from one location to another. In particular, the construction of the High Aswan Dam and the international campaign launched to save the monuments to be flooded by its waters had international reverberations. Efforts of this kind turned into an international competition and somewhat influenced the formulation of this article.

Criticism arose not only over the relocation of monuments, such as those at Abu Simbel, which were removed from the lake area to other locations in Egypt but even more so over those temples that were taken to other countries; the results were neither satisfying nor encouraging. At the Venice Meeting arguments over this project were intense and the situation gained such importance as to lead to the insertion of a special article for such cases.

**Article 8** Items of sculpture, painting or decoration which form an integral part of a monument may only be removed from it if this is the sole means of ensuring their preservation.

Article 8 is difficult to consider separately from the preceding article; the decorative pieces of a monument are hardly to be thought of as independent entities. Again we are confronted with developments in the implementation of conservation projects.

In Europe, in particular, there had been a growing number of cases where the statuary and decorative reliefs of churches had become serious conservation questions because of the ravages of time and air pollution. The decoration especially on the exterior of these structures had been subject to deterioration and, in the face of no other solution for the protection of the stone in situ, many items had been removed and stored in depots or displayed in museums while the empty spaces they left behind were filled by copies. There has been virtually a competition in the development and application of techniques for this operation. As little progress was made in a scientific solution for halting the deterioration of stone in situ and as removal solutions grew increasingly numerous and widespread, the writers of the Charter felt they had to draw a hard line expeditiously. This strengthened the focus of the Charter on current issues but damaged its period of validity as the fashion itself passed.

This article completed the listing of conceptual principles for the conservation of monuments and acceptable methods for their application. Methods for restoration are then listed in five articles. These may be viewed as the main lines to be followed in conservation work: the bases for projects or their implementation.

**Restoration:**

**Article 9** The process of restoration is a highly specialized operation. Its aim is to preserve and reveal the aesthetic and historic value of the monument and is based on respect for original material and authentic documents. It must stop at the point where conjecture begins and in this case moreover any extra work which is indispensable must be distinct from the
Article 10 Where traditional techniques prove inadequate, the consolidation of a monument can be achieved by the use of any modern technique for conservation and construction, the efficacy of which has been shown by scientific data and proved by experience.

The first sentence proposes the acceptance of a principle. It insists that conservation requires knowledge of a special quality, comprises a discipline and a separate profession. Those who lack this knowledge and experience, no matter how well placed their intentions, are not in a position to undertake and succeed in a restoration project. This is still an object of contention. Individuals with different professional preparation and lacking any practical experiences in the discipline continue to undertake the restoration of historic monuments in many countries. It is natural to find that the bitter results of such projects became the targets of special emphasis in this first principle.

For some reason it was deemed necessary that a branch of expertise should be stressed once again when it came to the objectives of application. Highlighting historic and aesthetic values together was to draw attention to the respect for conservation and the need to keep away from partial, amateur solutions. The basic objective here was to defend values as a whole and to press for projects based on realistic and dependable documentation of original material. The intention was to bring halt immediately to additions during restoration since the time of Viollet-le-Duc which were not based on existing evidence.

While transfers by hypothesis, imputations, the probability of resemblance to other examples have been one of the most interesting aspects of actual projects, they have also proved to be especially misleading and damaging. There is a patent desire to avoid this. If additions and the completion of structures cannot be prevented for technical and aesthetic reasons, the article definitely prescribes the way these should be handled. The features required are simple. Additions to the structure should be easily visible and should bear the stamp of the period when they were made. The documentation of work should be carried out before, during and after restoration with archaeological and historical investigations. It is stressed that restoration is clearly a category distinct from the interventions performed on other structures.

Article 10 Where traditional techniques prove inadequate, the consolidation of a monument can be achieved by the use of any modern technique for conservation and construction, the efficacy of which has been shown by scientific data and proved by experience.

The most current warning is to respect the traces of additions made to a monument in different periods. As specific examples come to mind it grows more difficult to propose a more detailed and decisive principle. One should underline that the ultimate objective is not to create a unity of style. The most salient part of this article is contained in the final sentence. The ultimate decision does not rest with the restorer, or in the form it took during its period of greatest contribution within a 'unity of style' takes its place here in the design and implementation of restoration projects. This passion has produced innumerable examples in Europe. Innumerable unfortunate examples in England at one time gave 'restoration', such a bad name that the term began to be used only in a derogatory fashion.

It is unnecessary to pause over the desire to envisage structures as a whole in terms of the findings of archaeologists and documents of historians and to make an effort to ensure their survival in these terms. It is impossible to suggest that finds from periods that do not interest the restorer should be discarded in favour of the period or periods which can alone concern him. When it comes to application, however, the practical means for ensuring the preservation and display of this evidence are hazy. An exaggerated example of this problem might be the case where one historical section of the fortification walls of Istanbul would be painted white. The restorer who undertook such a procedure would easily open himself to criticism. Examples of such procedures are numerous.

There are a large number of restorers who have sought to effect a 'unity of style'. Even today there are those who adhere to this approach. Although interesting and even necessary in the design process, this approach must be given direction when it comes to the actual implementation of a project.

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Article 12 Replacement of missing parts must integrate...
harmoniously with the whole, but at the same time must be distinguishable from the original so that restoration does not falsify the artistic or historic evidence.

This article repeats with some more specifications the principle set out in article 9 with regard to additions to the original structure. This article, however, has been repeatedly applied and criticized since the Venice Charter was passed.

In centuries where pressures have been brought to bear by investments in the tourist industry aimed at economic development we find hurried restoration projects undertaken on long-neglected historic monuments. These present a host of examples where there is little or no consistency in the approach to ensure harmony between the original structure as a whole and additions carried out during the process of restoration. It should not be difficult to consider what specific measures can be taken to ensure harmony on the one hand and the ability to distinguish additions if the general principles of the Charter as a whole are kept in mind.

Article 13 Additions cannot be allowed except in so far as they do not detract from the interesting parts of the building, its traditional setting, the balance of its composition and its relation with its surroundings.

Comments made on the preceding article are especially applicable to this one. The architect has the power and responsibility to restrict his additions by respecting the interesting parts of the building and its setting. He should restrain himself from damaging its surroundings by respecting the structure at all times. The subject has sparked widespread discussion and criticism which can be followed by reviewing the debates held at recent meetings.

Historic Sites:

Article 14 The sites of monuments must be the object of special care in order to safeguard their integrity and ensure that they are cleared and presented in a seemly manner. The work of conservation and restoration carried out in such places should be inspired by the principles set forth in the preceding articles.

Criticism in recent years has centred primarily on this article which treats the safeguarding of historic sites and monument clusters. It was impossible to predict the concentrated effort that would be made after World War II to revive the value of historic settlements destroyed during the war. Over ten to fifteen years before the writing of the Venice Charter the issues involved in this massive reconstruction had not fully emerged. Monuments had been virtually abstracted from their settlements and restored according to the principles applicable to individual monuments. The inadequacy of the article reflects the state of affairs at the time.

These issues have now taken on totally new dimensions as villages and whole towns have joined the class of aggregate structures which are considered as parts of settlements to be protected.

When not just historic centres or destroyed sections of a city are considered for conservation, the number and scale of settlements for protection have expanded radically. In addition to technical and economic issues, a whole set of psychological and social questions which had hardly been thought of have entered the arena.

In the case of the protection of extensive settlements, not only monetary and investment issues became paramount but also problems of examining in conjunction with them, the implications for change in social structures. One could not be abstracted from the others.

This article has lost its significance as these issues have become part of broader questions of urban and regional planning as well as environmental conservation, all of which form parts of overall national planning policies. If protection procedures are restricted to the guidelines of this article, projects are doomed to avoid the real issues and would turn into a farce. Contradictions that are evident in individual monuments and the difficulties that arise later when they are evaluated in an historic ensemble are bound to intensify still further when projects become part of this more complex scale of operations. If one adheres to the article when dealing with individual monuments within a settlement, one must remain constantly aware that the solution is not necessarily appropriate when viewed on the scale of the settlements as a whole. The problem of handling settlements as an aggregate unit has long bypassed the brief principles set out in this article.

In our view an advance in methodology rather than a change in basic principles is now in order.

Excavations:

Article 15 Excavations should be carried out in accordance with scientific standards and the recommendation defining international principles to be applied in the case of archaeological excavation adopted by UNESCO in 1956.

Ruins must be maintained and measures necessary for the permanent conservation and protection of architectural features and objects discovered must be taken. Furthermore, every means must be taken to facilitate the understanding of the monument and to reveal it without ever distorting its meaning. All reconstruction work should however be ruled out a priori. Only anastylosis, that is to say, the reassembling of existing but dismembered parts can be permitted. The material used for integration should always be recognisable and its use should be the least that will ensure the conservation of a monument and the reinstatement of its form.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century structures within archaeological sites were relegated to a separate, artificial category termed 'dead monuments'. Here, however, we want to address the case of monuments which have been brought to light as a the result of archaeological excavations and have then taken on a particular appearance because of their conservation after exposure.

In our opinion, archaeological research carried out over the last century for scientific purposes has brought forward and revealed the importance of this phenomenon. This constitutes a special case because of the conservation techniques applied both during the process of excavation and after the work itself has been totally brought to light.

Otherwise the research and protection methods for works
that have remained standing since the Greek, Roman and Byzantine periods as well as the Middle Ages would not necessitate distinct protection and evaluation measures. There has been a concerted effort, however, to specify and apply fundamental principles in archaeological methods and this has played a leading role in these developments.

The series of proposals incorporated in this article were actually specified by UNESCO in 1956 and are a set quite apart from the other articles of the Charter. The second paragraph, however, reveals an effort to summarize and reduce to a general principle the protection of archaeological ruins.

For superficial reasons there may be a rationale for separating the use, ordering, upkeep and evaluation of ruins which are situated on an archaeological site. The distinction which attracts particular attention here, however, is the passion to reconstruct archaeological sites. This devotion to revivification finds its principles set forth in Article 11 where the question of principles related to the unity of style are handled. But archaeological ruins have confronted us with circumstances that go far beyond the provisions envisaged in this article. The fashion for constructing antique buildings virtually from the ground level up has opened the way to a continued debate. The general opinion is that restrictive measures must and can be taken. These restrictions would produce scientific as well as aesthetic benefits.

Structures revealed by archaeological excavations are rare and unique. From a historical point of view they constitute important reference points for agencies and as such should be handled with the utmost care. Consequently, the usual proposal is to conserve them as originally found. Only one principle is proposed for their reconstruction. If all their component parts may be found and reinstated with confidence then anastylosis is permitted. For anasty application that fall outside these requirements we refer the reader to the section of article 9 which deals with hypotheses and imputations.

Reconstruction on archaeological sites which has not conformed to the principles of anastylosis has generally damaged the balance of the site or in combination with the inadequacies of the environment as a whole has done little more than produce the appearance of a disorganized open-air museum.

Publication:

*Article 16 In all works of preservation, restoration or excavation, there should always be precise documentation in the form of analytical and critical reports, illustrated with drawings and photographs. Every stage of the work of clearing, consolidation, rearrangement and integration, as well as technical and formal features identified during the course of the work, should be included. This record should be placed in the archives of a public institution and made available to research workers. It is recommended that the report should be published.*

If there is one principle to be singled out as not subject to debate it is the documentation and publication of studies. That era has passed for those who look upon the subject as a simple one of 'repair' or for those who give no value or importance to completed projects.

Just as all completed scientific studies are published so that they may be used for educational and research purposes, so should conservation and restoration projects be presented for the criticism and evaluation of a wider audience. The documentation of historic monuments, conservation research and study methodologies form an integral part of current education in conservation and without exception have a place in the programs of all such organizations.

Conclusion

The object of this review has been to examine the Venice Charter article by article as it has been subject to increasingly intense doubts and criticism. We have selected those aspects which we believe have deserved especial attention for their narrowness of vision and superficiality, in an effort, at least, to draw the attention of public opinion to these aspects. It is only to be expected that certain important parts of the articles of the Venice Charter, if not as a whole, have grown inadequate during a period when the concept of historic monuments and sites has been undergoing a highly radical process of change and revision.

Throughout this examination it has become manifest that the list of principles found in the Charter do not deserve to be relegated to the status of objects to be 'tossed aside or sold'. On the other hand, to correct their inadequacies and produce a new Charter is a demanding and perhaps unnecessary task. Under current circumstances it appears obvious that any new Charter will be even more rapidly outdated.

Although the field has not evolved the necessary qualities to constitute a branch of scientific inquiry (it is difficult to oppose categorically those who claim that there will eventually be a branch of science termed 'The Science of Cultural Property'), we are confined to accepting it as an area of expertise. One wonders how many such branches, if any, expect to have their fields defined and directed by a Charter such as the Venice Charter. If there are many then there is reason to make a concerted effort to draw up a new Charter. Otherwise the effort will have been in vain.

Our present opinion is that the Venice Charter, with its stated qualities, has performed a function since it was first drawn up and passed. As such, its influence is still prevalent and it should be reviewed as an historic document. The Charter is worthy of the respect devoted to an historic document and should be preserved according to the principles proposed for the preservation of an historic monument. When necessary to resort to the Charter for implementation, it should be (re) viewed as a reference point.

Among the current training programs for the protection of historic monuments it may be employed as a basic educational tool. Or if a text on concepts is to be written it would find its place among the list of 'Contents'. If otherwise left to patching, revision and repair it will eventually resemble little more than a sorely patched sack.

If we are forced to propose another, definitive solution to replace the patchwork approach, a more general review of the responsibility of the professional in the field may be more in
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order. In medicine the professional's responsibility is the conservation and repair of individual human beings. In architectural conservation there is a similar relationship between the restorer and his monument or site. If one accepts this comparison, one might propose a Charter along the lines of the oath of Hippocrates, born on the island of Cos in 460 B.C., for candidate doctors when turned from students to professional doctors:

"The regimen I adopt shall be for the respect and the benefit of my monuments according to my ability and

judgement, and not for their hurt or for any wrong. I will give no deadly treatment to any, though it be asked of me, nor will I counsel such, and especially I will not aid to demolish whatever monument I enter. There I will go for its benefit and the benefit of society, refraining from all wrong doing and corruption, and especially from any act of seduction. And I will document and publish every step that I take"

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