

GENIUS LOCI – THE SPIRIT OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES **Visy Zsolt*, Hongrie / Hungary**

When referring to the immaterial value and intangible dimensions of monuments and sites, one should devote more attention to archaeological heritage. It has some special features compared to other types of our built heritage, and these particularities can contribute significantly to the present discussion.

We refer to a homogenous cultural heritage of mankind, and archaeological heritage has mainly the same characteristics as the others, but it has one or two particular features that should be pointed out. I would like to mention some of them, since they can be relevant to the present discussion.

- A significant part of archaeological heritage sites is totally unknown as such both for people and scholars until their discovery.
- A significant part of archaeological sites - independently of the time of their discovery and identification- remain almost in their original position. There are slight differences on the surface indicating their presence underneath, or partly conserved remains of human activity also visible in some manner, up to different building stages. It is to be pointed out that in both cases some learning and education is needed for a full identification and evaluation.

Many contributions speak about the immaterial value of heritage sites where there is or was a living connection between them and the people evaluating them. This relationship can be classified as follows:

- The monument in a heritage site was built by the ancestors of the present population;
- The monument in a heritage site was built by a previous but unrelated people, but is nevertheless used by the present population;
- The monument in a heritage site was built by a previous but unrelated people, and the visible remains became part of the cultural heritage of the present population;
- The monument in a heritage site was built by a previous but unrelated people. However, having remained invisible and unknown during a long period of time, the unidentified remains could not become part of the cultural heritage of the present population.
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A great part of the archaeological heritage belongs to group 4, since it remained unknown and unidentified. Its cultural heritage value will be revealed in its entirety by the work of scientists in cooperation with communities and the public sector. The most important thing, from my point of view, is that it becomes a real cultural heritage site through these common efforts leading up to its possible conservation.

A. Román named that type of built cultural heritage (cities) dead heritage. It is evident that effective educational and management programs are to be prepared for this type of monuments.

The question is whether these sites have a spiritual character of any kind, and if so, what is it. It is clear that, lacking continuity and connection with the present time, if there is any kind of spiritual value, it can not be the same as the original one. But it is clear that also in these cases there is an immaterial value closely related to and originated from their (newly discovered and interpreted) original character, and which stems from their ancient values. Local people and visitors learn these values and develop their own beliefs regarding the site, which somehow begins to live again. Of course it is not the same as it originally was, but something similar to it, adapted to the requirements of the present time, of the present people. It starts to live in part independently from it, but this role is very important for the present society and it therefore becomes part of their life. The monument lives again, it becomes an integral element of the place, of the region.

Through the discovery of new archaeological sites this process has taken place many times in our countries and it will often do so again. It means and proves that all such archaeological sites - visible or not visible, conserved or not conserved - have become an important element in the life of the community, because it is clear and evident for everybody that on the given place there was something important in an earlier age, something that played an significant role in the life of the ancient society in question. Images of long-gone life and death, work and religion, blood and sweat, fortune and misfortune can and will be pictured. All these automatic beliefs, supported and educated by scientific evaluation, restore the spiritual values of a monument, though the latter is not the same as it originally was. Some new habits and activities can be started, reactivating something from ancient times, giving some new color to the place, to the settlement.

Several examples of this type of monuments from every country could be mentioned, but not for monuments that have been reconstructed elsewhere. Such reconstructions belong to another type of sites, that is - I can not find a better expression for it - Disneyland. No society in the world could experience the same resonance and feeling in a reconstructed monument that has not been re-erected above its original foundations, as in a monument conserved or reconstructed on its original site.

The spirit of the place, the *Genius loci*, is the only and indivisible value of every monument. It remains forever and returns if the monument - the imprint of human activity on the landscape - has been revealed and its characteristics become familiar and popular again.

It is not difficult to answer the question as to why uneducated people can also see and feel clearly and automatically the difference between the two types of reconstructions. Their knowledge may be restricted, but they - as every one of us - grasp the idea of the past, they feel the wind of old times in the original place, but not in the new place chosen for the reconstruction.

These archaeological examples, in which continuity is missing, praise human creativity as all other monuments do but also clearly prove the existence of the special spiritual value of monuments. Thus, when referring to the spiritual values of built heritage, we must recon with one of the most important and clearly general value of them, with the *Genius loci*, which is to be considered when preparing every stage of the conservation process and every kind of management and educational program.

*** Visy ZSOLT**

Doctor of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences
Professor of archaeology at the University of Pécs
Main fields of activity: Roman archaeology and history, Aerial archaeology, archaeological heritage management.
President of the Subcommittee for Archaeological Heritage Management of the Hungarian ICOMOS Committee.
Main Secretary of the Hungarian Society for Antiquities

Earlier posts:

Archaeologist/director of museum in Dunaújváros and Szentes, Hungary
Conservator of Roman buildings in Germany
Teacher at several universities
Deputy State Secretary for Culture
President of the Hungarian World Heritage Committee