50 Years After the World Heritage Convention. An analysis of the evolution of the concepts of Monuments and Authenticity

Alessandra Pica | alessandra.pica@studio.unibo.it
International Master's graduated student at University of Bologna

Abstract
As part of the curricular internship activity carried out at the University of Bologna for the master's degree program *Engineering of Building Processes and Systems*, curriculum *Historic Building Rehabilitation* under the guidance of Professors Alessia Zampini and Leila Signorelli, it was possible to analyze the concepts of authenticity and monuments. The goal was to analyze how these concepts were interpreted for nine historic centers belonging to the UNESCO World Heritage List: Lyon, Provins, and Albi; Florence, Pienza and Urbino; Cordoba, Toledo e Ávila. The analysis revealed that the historic centers represent the development of a multitude of concepts of authenticities and monuments that can ultimately be assimilated into a single entity. Despite their geographical expansion several projects allowed historic centers to preserve their distinctive features, while maintaining the values of authenticity and outstanding universal value throughout the centuries.

Keywords
Historic Centers, Authenticity, Outstanding Universal Value, Management Models.

The term Authenticity was mentioned for the first time at the Nara Conference in 1994. Over the years, it underwent evolution in the definition, mainly due to the relative characteristic of its nature. Alongside the concept of authenticity, there is the concept of Integrity. These two are necessary for the definition of a much broader concept. It was during the Convention on the *Protection of the World Cultural, and Natural Heritage* held in Paris in 1972 that UNESCO outlined the concept of Outstanding Universal Value: by its very nature, it is a changing concept in time and in place. The reasons for such flexibility and mutability lie in the basis on which this concept is founded, which is equally subjective and abstract.

As with the concept of authenticity, the definition of monument has undergone updates over time and in relation to the progress of conventions. The first complete definition of monument was purely associated with the area of memories. It is on the 1972 Convention that a more detailed analysis and a consequent grouping in the field of definitions began. As more properties were added to the definitions, it became imperative to group everything related to historic centers in a single charter. The *Washington Charter* of 1987 has the objective of protecting and safeguarding historic cities. Given the complexity, the management plan plays a key role for their preservation and for the management aspects. Each historical center is unique and exceptional in its own way, and as such is safeguarded by international and national standards. In the following essay nine situations are analyzed, although similar in terms of geographical location, they are all different.

Lyon

Lyon became part of the World Heritage List in 1998. The city has preserved the different styles that have marked each era, make the history and its value unique and authentic. It promotes local activities, thanks to the adhesion

to the *UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN)* that allows to organize cultural events, which lead to increase the value and to transmit the memory of the historical center. In 1964, the city promulgated a document called the *Safeguard and enhancement plan (PSMV)* which deals with regulating the actions of restoration, replacement, and management within the historic area. To further facilitate the regulation, in 2007 the city promoted a guide *To carry out your restoration project within the UNESCO perimeter*, which establishes the conditions of preservation and protection[1].

Provins

Provins became part of the World Heritage List in 2001. The town has been able to maintain its urban layout, preserving streets, buildings and basements in their original form and character. Within the buffer zone new constructions are almost prevented, except for a limited number of public facilities. Within the historic site, maintenance and renovation actions are subject to approval by the architect of the *Bâtiments de France*. The new buildings are in balance with the medieval city, proving that the city intends to privilege and maintain its heritage as intact and authentic as possible[2].

Albi

Albi became part of the World Heritage List in 2010. The city has provided a management plan that involves the entire community, promoting initiatives aimed at tourism and national and international involvement. The monuments are protected by the French law of 1913 and in the previous century there have been several maintenance and enhancement plans. The city also promotes economic incentives for all citizens who intend to renovate their facade within the historic site; to involve more proprietaries, it has established a prize that is awarded annually, *Heritage Prize*, for the best project of conservative renovation[3].

Florence

The historic center of Florence became part of the World Heritage List in 1982, and since 2015 also including the buffer zone. In 2014 the municipality of Florence promotes a *Structural Plan* within which it is established that any intervention aimed at restructuring or modifying the urban layout must be approved and at the same time ensure a proper homogeneity with the historical built environment, altering the current state as little as possible. The city established in 2006 the UNESCO office, which in addition to ensuring what is enshrined in the management plan, is also responsible for promoting wide-ranging projects. The city has developed projects to enhance and maintain its urban layout. In general, Florence is regulated by a municipality plan, in which only conservation and restoration practices are allowed within the historic center[4].

Pienza

The historic center of Pienza became part of the World Heritage List in 1996, still maintaining the Renaissance character that distinguishes it. Maintenance activities are regulated by national laws. Moreover, to guarantee the best respect in the field of conservation, every project is submitted to the scrutiny of the *Soprintendenza*. As far as management is concerned, the city periodically draws up a Management Plan, to guarantee the maximum efficiency and protection of the site. In 2005 the city promotes five strategic plans, each with its own address and objective[5].

Urbino

Urbino became part of the World Heritage List in 1998. The city has managed to keep its urban layout intact: activities are regulated by national and local laws. The city has developed several activities to protect its heritage, as the survey of the main buildings of the historical center to catalogue them from the historical and architectural point of view, identifying the peculiarities and the state of the structure. In recent years, the city has had to deal with social and environmental changes. This has led the city to join the *European Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy*, developing its own plan to reduce the energy efficiency of its buildings, including those in the historic center. In addition, the new management plan envisages greater involvement of residents and local businesses, seeking to enhance the potential that the site has to offer[6].

Cordoba

Cordoba became part of the World Heritage List in 1984. The city has preserved its historic character by keeping the number of urban interventions to a minimum. Although there have been some maintenance interventions, the city maintains its appearance even at the building level. Protection is provided by the *Casco Histórico*: it is responsible for developing and designing activities aimed at preserving the memory of the historic center, keeping alive the interest at the local and international level[7]. From the point of view of the maintenance of historic buildings, the growing need for interventions has led to the creation of a manual designed specifically for facades: it provides clarification about the design choices, and it directs the designer in the right regulatory and decision-making context for the preservation of the historical and architectural character of the property. In general, however, the historical complex is protected by the *Special Plan (PEPCH 2003)* which provides for the maintenance of the urban and architectural heritage[8].

Toledo

Toledo was added to the World Heritage List in 1986. The regulations governing protection and preservation are mainly defined in the *Castilla-La Mancha Law (LPHCLM)*. For the monuments, considered as cultural interest, to benefit from a degree of protection and preservation over time, this law provides for the cataloguing of the different properties, which are protected by urban or special plans. According to this provision, the historic center of Toledo has been included in the *Special Plan (PECHT)*, defining any type of intervention. At the urban level, the city has taken care to protect even those areas that are not part of the historic center. The city seeks and demonstrates a will to involve citizens at an inclusive level, manifesting cultural interest, which allows the remembrance and memory of historical properties[9].

Ávila

Ávila became part of the World Heritage List in 1985. The city, thanks to increasingly inclusive urban plans aimed at heritage conservation, has managed over the years to emphasize its properties. The progressive increase in the number of tourists and the urgent need to improve approaches to the management of the historic center have prompted the city to join the *Smart Heritage City (SHCity)* project as a pilot city. The implementation of such software within the urban fabric has also allowed the analysis from an environmental and sustainable point of view of the single buildings involved: following the collection of all the information, reports are compiled, based

on which the final decisions are taken both for the conservation of the property, if in a state of deterioration, and for the improvement from a management point of view, whether aimed at tourism or sustainability of the property[10]. Fifty years after the Paris conference, the concepts of authenticity and monument have evolved and, in some ways, expanded. Over the years, an increasingly comprehensive explanation has been given, even though the concept of authenticity is still subjective and, by its very nature, difficult to define. The definitions of the cornerstones of the conventions have had to be combined with the problems, on the one hand, and the opportunities, on the other, of the management of properties on the World Heritage List. The historic centers represent the development of a multitude of authenticities and monuments that can ultimately be assimilated into a single entity. The picture of the three nations of Southern Europe made it possible to highlight more developed centers, as opposed to smaller ones. Although different in terms of surface area, the cities analyzed present common guidelines. Among these is the willingness and understanding that a management plan aimed at the conservation of the site is necessary. Moreover, each city tries in its own small way to involve its community as much as possible, ensuring the preservation of memory among citizens and allowing the historical site to remain alive over time. Among the most inspiring common factors is the willingness to adhere to projects that involve the majority of stakeholders: innovative projects that pushes its citizens to a targeted and effective preservation while preserving the historic character of the building, project that takes into account the energy efficiency of historic buildings pushing the administration on innovative fronts and in step with the times, or even project that promotes the latest technology applied to a management sector such as that of historic centers. In addition, the planning of targeted urban plans guarantees them an easier management of the problems that arise. The willingness of the different protection and preservation projects allows historic sites to manage urban expansion and preserve the distinctive features that have led them to be on the World Heritage List, while maintaining the values of authenticity and outstanding universal value.[11]

[1] cfr. VILLE DE LYON. n.d. https://www.lyon.fr/.
[2] cfr. UNESCO World Heritage Convention. Provins, Town of Medieval Fairs. n.d. https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/873#activities.
[3] cfr. VILLE DE ALBI. n.d. https://www.mairie-albi.fr/fr.
[4] cfr. FIRENZE PATRIMONIO MONDIALE. n.d. https://www.firenzepatrimoniomondiale.it/.
[5] cfr. UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE CONVENTION. *Historic Centre of the City of Pienza*. n.d. https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/789.
[6] ivi *Historic Centre of Urbino*. n.d. https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/828.
[7] cfr. AYUNTAMIENTO DE CORDOBA. n.d. https://www.cordoba.es/.
[8] cfr. GMU - AYUNTAMIENTO DE CORDOBA. n.d. https://www.gmucordoba.es/.
[9] cfr. AYUNTAMIENTO DE TOLEDO. n.d. https://www.toledo.es/.
[10] cfr. INTERREG SUDOE - SMART HERITAGE CITY. n.d. http://shcity.eu/.
[11] To develop the essay, major international charters and documents found on the websites of individual municipalities were analyzed. In addition to the note's references, the following sources were also considered:
AYUNTAMIENTO DE AVILA. n.d. https://www.avila.es/.
COMUNE DELLA CITTÀ DI PIENZA. n.d. https://www.comune.pienza.si.it/.
COMUNE DI URBINO. n.d. https://www.comune.urbino.pu.it/.
KING JOSEPH, STANLEY-PRICE NICHOLAS, *Conserving the authentic: essays in honor of Jukka Jokilehto*, Rome, Ugo Quintily S.p.A., 2009, («Conservation Studies », X)
ICOMOS - INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL AND MONUMENTS AND SITES. n.d. https://www.icomos.org/en.
UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE CONVENTION, n.d. https://whc.unesco.org/.
UNESCO, ICOMOS, ICCROM, IUCN, *Managing Cultural World Heritage*, Paris, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2013
VECCO MARILENA, *L'evoluzione del concetto di patrimonio culturale*, Milano, 20112, Franco Angeli, 2007