# The Usefulness of Historical Monuments

## Habilitation thesis – Abstract

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report: configuration of my professional, didactic and scientific career
followed and prospective directions of research

# Contents

## 1. PRELIMINARIES

The introductive chapter maps briefly the major stages of my professional history that led to a doctorate in architecture (2001) elaborated in the field of the theory of cultural heritage. The title of my thesis is *Time Limits of Historical Monuments*. By 2003, the revised version of the thesis was published under the title *Timpul monumentului istoric* [*The Time of the Historical Monument*][1]. My interest, however, for ancient buildings and their cultural importance began well before, as my diploma project (viva: July 1984) had already dealt with the urban refurbishment of the arcaded side of the main square in Bistrița. An article commenting that project was published soon after[2].

All along I was motivated by the conviction that the two approaches to architecture: on the building site and in the library are inseparable. Hence my lifelong endeavour to combine the two, even if in time the drawing board was progressively replaced by the writing desk and the building site tended to give way to the lecture hall.

During the interval between my graduation and the end of the totalitarian regime in Romania I had the chance to pursue my major interest through a number of projects and of field studies, including the documentation of the vernacular architecture in the Székely Land[3]. These times set the pattern for what would later become my major fields of interest: the architectural heritage and the landscape.

However, it was after 1990 that my career received a boost in the fertile and dynamic times following the demise of the Iron Curtain.

### Beginnings

First grantee, (1992) then teaching assistant (1992-1995) at the Central European University in Prague, I had the privilege of learning from a significant number of great professors of history and theory of art and architecture who accepted to teach at the CEU[4]. I was interested teaching and there I had my first opportunity to give it a go.

In the aftermath of the closing down of the Prague college and of its Department of History and Theory of Art and Architecture (1995) I began my doctoral studies at the Bucharest School of architecture. I also began to teach there my first optional course, held between 1997-2010, called "Aspects of architecture". It discussed European

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[1] Paideia, Bucharest, 2003.The book was published with the support of two grants, awarded by the Hungarian Academy of Science and the Higher Education Support Program of the Open Society Institute, respectively.

[2] *Arhitectura* Nr. 3/1985. The article is mentioned by Dinu C. Giurescu in *The Razing of Romania's Past* (note 45 p. 57.

[3] The results are published in: *Locuința sătească în România*, Cezar Niculiu, coordinator. Institutul Central de Cercetare, Proiectare și Directivare în Construcții, Bucharest, 1989. „Covasna, Harghita, Mureș".

[4] Peter Carl, Françoise Choay, Leonardo Clerici, Philipp Fehl, Ernst Gombrich, Werner Hoffmann, Ian Jeffrey, Steven Mansbach, Damjan Prelovšek, Joseph Rykwert, Ilona Sármány-Parsons, Willibald Sauerländer, Júlia Szabó, Dalibor Veselý, and many more.

architectural culture seen through its marginal manifestations or reflected in the other arts. The course gained substance with the help of a grant awarded by the New Europe College in Bucharest (1998-1999), concluded with an essay: "Thresholds"[1].

Following the successful defence of my doctoral thesis I began teaching my second optional course: "Monument Theory", given between 2003-2017 at the „Ion Mincu" University of Architecture and Urbanism. The revised version of the thesis was the manual for the course.  Its publication would end a first stage of my academic career.

### Postdoctoral research and didactic activity

Since 2004, I am also a visiting lecturer at the Postgraduate courses aiming to train specialists in heritage conservation and organised by the Transylvania Trust in Cluj in cooperation with the Babeș-Bolyai University[2].

Yet studying the built heritage opened unexpected new horizons towards a general theory of architecture. Through the implications of heritage conservation in relation to historical gardens and to cultural landscape, I also felt emboldened me to pursue my research towards these fields of study.

The bibliographical explorations in the history and theory of gardening and landscape theory began thanks to a research grant spent at the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin (2003) and continued through more years aside my practice as an architect.  A succession of research grants (Collegium Budapest – 2005-2006, Zuger Kulturstiftung Landis und Gyr – 2006-2007, Romanian Cultural Institute in Paris – 2009, Institut d'Études Avancées de la Nantes – 2009-2010) enabled to me complete my second book: *Peisaj cu grădină și casă* [*Landscape with House and Garden*][3], a synthesis of my findings at that stage.

Another outcome of those works was my third optional course held at the UAUIM in Bucharest without interruption between 2004-2017: Theory of the Unbuilt Spaces[4].

Thus, since 2002 the gardens and landscape have become the very field of my inquiries. The significance of the inhabited space does well beyond buildings – even when they are "hyper-architecture" due to their heritage value. Intermediate spaces are as significant; historical gardens are a fragile kind of historical monuments; finally, the landscape as representation of the domesticated nature, nature perceived through an aesthetic filter is an invention of the European Renaissance, just like the historical monument.

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[1] Published in *New Europe College Yearbook 1998-1999*. Bucharest, NEC, 2001. http://www.nec.ro/data/pdfs/publications/nec/1998-1999/KAZMER_TAMAS_KOVACS.pdf.
[2] http://www.transylvaniatrust.ro/ro/program/invatamant-postuniversitar-de-specializare-in-reabilitarea-patrimoniului-construit/
[3] The book was published by Simetria în 2011 and was nominated at the National Biennial of Architecture in 2012.
[4] The course was invented and held together with Irina Popescu-Criveanu, and  supported by a NEC-LINK grant awarded by the New Europe College (2004).

## The school in Sibiu

The fall semester of 2007 marked the inauguration of the Sibiu BA School of conservation and restoration of architecture, founded by the UAUIM in Bucharest. I was called to teach the theory courses and thus obtained my tenure as associate professor. For about a decade I held this position, while also giving my optional courses in Bucharest, as well as teaching project workshops leading MA graduation works.

Starting with 2011, I took part in a significant number of doctoral defence commissions[1], and I am participating at a few doctoral tutoring teams[2].

In September 2017 I began my activity as a tenured professor at the Landscape Architecture programme of the Sapientia Hungarian University in Transylvania. The major interest of this new engagement is to teach architectural theory to future landscape architects. Besides this, I intend to advance my research in connection to the contextuality of any building project, ecological implications of human inhabiting, ethical and aesthetic dimensions of architecture.

## Mobility

Teaching mobility is an unavoidable topic within my academic career. Mostly through the Erasmus programme I gave lectures and seminars at the Landscape architecture department of the École Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture – Paris La Villette; it is a long term cooperation I want to carry on with.

A research grant at the IAS of Nantes provided the opportunity to establish academic relationship with the local ENSA, where I took part in a diploma jury and gave a public lecture[3].

Yet another international cooperation spanning over many years, and which proved to be fertile is the one sustained with the School of Architecture of the „Gabriele D'Annunzio" University of Chieti-Pescara. It also involves occasional participations at colloquia, seminars and so forth. It also brought about a public lecture I held at the Sapienza University in Rome

Mobility also meant my participation at a number of international gatherings organised in a diversity of academic milieus, from the Washington DC to the New Delhi, from Berlin to Kriva Palanka, Macedonia, from Budapest to Dubrovnik.

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[1] Most of them at UAUIM, a defence commission at the Arts University Bucharest, and one at the Szent István University in Budapest.
[2] At UAUIM, la UB și la UTCN.
[3] „Le lieu une question de limite", 30.06.2010. http://event.vodalys.com/Datas/ensa/746785_57fba7512a141/

Last but not least, the fair number of research grants awarded to me all along permitted longer intervals spent abroad and establishing professional relationships with researchers in various disciplines.

The two domains – historical monuments and landscape, two cultural phenomena of importance in configuring and continuing contemporary inhabited places – have become with the passing of time my special field of competence. The discourse about the significance of architecture and urbanism, connecting heritage theory and landscape theory can acquire a fecund anthropological dimension.

## Publications

I wrote two books (mentioned above) and a number of articles, as well as contributions to volumes with multiple authorship, and contributions to the published proceedings of conferences. I translated into Romanian and published an important part of the oeuvre of Françoise Choay.

The list of my publications is part of the present Habilitation Dossier.

## Planning

My planning practice addresses a wide range of projects, from urban planning to restoration and from buildings to applied arts.

The list of my projects is also part of the present Habilitation Dossier.

## 2.    BUILT AND UNBUILT HERITAGE

The second chapter addresses the two major fields of interest in my researches and thus outlines my academic domain.

By today, the theory of built heritage has become a constitutive part of the late-modern theory of architecture and cannot be overlooked by our daily building practices. No self-conscious project at any scale can be undertaken without the most careful analysis of the built context.

A key-word of our times, landscape – as nature perceived through an aesthetic filter – has accompanied since the renaissance the modernisation of European societies and has achieved the status of a nearly all-encompassing concept when anthropic environment is concerned.

### Renaissance

Both concepts have their origins in the European Renaissance and both provide a basis to our post-industrial identities. The comparison between them is hence legitimate, and the

critical commentary necessary in order to avoid conceptual amalgamation. The insufficient understanding of these two cultural phenomena specific to our inhabited world carries the danger of the reification of both cultural heritage and landscape, thus bringing about the loss of their potential to give metaphorical sense to any human habitat.

The crossroads of this reasoning is at the adequate distinction between construction and construct. Both concepts – heritage and landscape - are part of a cultural structure that finds its expressions in a historical monument (that can be a building, townscape or natural site), or a territory ("built" mentally from the disparate elements of a scenery considered as valuable).

The new Renaissance sense of the world produced an architecture that was composed of antique elements and replaced the spectacular Gothic. It was for the first time in history that architectural forms emerged as a result of an intellectual choice instead of the natural evolution of techniques, programmes, taste etc.

In this cultural milieu, Alberti's treatise marks the beginning of the progression of architecture towards a more autonomous status. The autonomy of architecture, dependant on social command, can only be relative, therefore the classical language of architecture provided a favourable means to achieve the displacement of its meaning. Behind the classical decorum, entirely new layouts, programs and modern functions could develop along the fulfilment of the industrial revolution.

During the same eighteenth century aesthetics was coming about. Attempts to understand art are ancient, but the philosophy of art as self-standing discipline is tied to the Enlightenment.

## Two inventions

During the Renaissance, Greco-Roman antiquities acquire a new status and lead to the invention of the historical monument, as a result of a synthesis of scholarly, artistic and technical expertise. At the same time, a new sense of the past is emerging, involving an entirely different approach to history.

Another conceptual offspring of the epoch is the idea of landscape. First an image of domestic scenery, the idea of landscape would become by the eighteenth century with the establishment of the sublime a polymorphic phenomenon comprehending scenery, its representation and nature perceived in aesthetic terms.

It is noticeable that none of the two inventions of European Renaissance remained a fashion or an intellectual whim. They both evolved along centuries and became the complex cultural phenomena that influence our everyday practice in architecture and urban planning. And both occupy a central position in long range development strategies.

## Construction and construct

Beyond their similarities, the two cultural phenomena differ essentially: architectural heritage manifests itself in a very material way, whereas landscape is intangible by its essence. The closest architectural heritage comes to landscape is in its intangible dimension. The 2003 Paris *Convention* defines the object of intangible heritage as a complex set of knowledge, the conservation of which depends on its being transmitted from one generation to the next. Thus, any restoration – as defined by Cesare Brandi – remains irrelevant with regard to the intangible heritage. Instead, intangible heritage serves to conserve tangible one. There is a danger here of reification through the focus on the physical support of memorial meaning: reduced to its materiality, architectural heritage can lose its specific value.

The closest landscape comes to architectural heritage in its "cultural landscape" stage. Unlike the Paris Convention, the European Landscape Convention (Florence, 2000) is less cautious when it transposes the terminology or monument conservation in the context of landscape. When landscapes are managed, planned or restored, a construct tends to be treated as a construction – and once reified, landscape loses its potential to unify our fragmented representations.

Hence the actuality of the discussion on usefulness. The analysis made by Tim Ingold around hand axes is relevant also in our context. These Palaeolithic tools found everywhere early humans lived are not only the result of their making, but also of their being used and sharpened repeatedly. The same goes for architecture. Historical monuments also change in time, although obeying stricter rules.

## 3.    THE INHABITABLE WORK OF ART

In modern Western culture, art is exempt from any practical use. The idea emerged during the Renaissance and was famously consecrated at about the same time when the landscape garden was invented. Architecture would follow suit, even if by its very nature it must keep its usefulness something even Kant had to admit. Treating beauty and usefulness as separate values has a long history and the debate is unlikely to be ever concluded. It is nevertheless necessary to tackle the issue even if, as experience has overwhelmingly proved it so far, aesthetic experience cannot be explained through scientific methods provided by positive sciences.

### Architectural beauty

Since the advent of modern aesthetics, architecture has remained the only art that never ceased being useful. As such, architecture is a sort of "living fossil" and can work as a link between the arts of our times and their archaic ancestors, when beauty and usefulness, symbolic and functional utility would accompany works of art in solidarity.

While natural beauty is a matter quite present in present debates, architectural beauty per se is much less frequent and it discussing together the ethical and aesthetic aspects of the art of building is only a relatively recent trend. The difficulties of the matter can be followed far back in history – in Plato's Hippias Maior, for instance, the reasoning of Socrates ends in an aporia. Nor do more recent attempts fare much better in their endeavour to define architectural beauty. If they do not eschew the matter altogether (Scruton), they advocate with equal chances the total creative autonomy (Michelis) of the architect and the opposite (Frampton).

## The model without a rule[1]

In more recent times the pressure on architecture to join the other genres in their „uselessness". Such a move, opposed to what is ostensibly present in the field of visual arts, which try to redefine themselves as socially or politically active, points at the prolonged semantic crisis of architecture and makes the more important the enquiry into its defining usefulness. Equally obvious remains the representative function of architecture. Still implicit in the aesthetic project of the Modern Movement, the fragmentation of architectural representation in the post WW2 decades the significance of built forms seems to have crossed a threshold of the impossible return.

## What kind of modernity?

The measure of this loss of sense is well illustrated by the difference of treatment of the boundaries. While in the landscape garden invented during the Enlightenment in England the garden boundaries were hidden in order to achieve the aesthetic effect of limitless perfection, but remained essentially there, Modern Movement has effectively abolished traditional boundaries that had defined human settlements for some ten millennia.

The critique of these evolutions came very early and acquired consistency in the postmodern trends in architecture and urban planning. By their diverse nature and an assumed refusal of a monolithically universal mission, although short-lived, these movements contributed to subvert the utopian ambitions of Modernist urban planning. Machine-like design of human settlement did not and could not go away. Yet practice has become more diverse and more open towards actual developments. The advent of the ongoing revolution in global communications created, among other things, a reaction for rediscovering the bodily dimensions of art and architecture in particular, as well as a new awareness for climate change, extreme poverty, new nomadism.

Any approach aiming to establish a new theory of inhabiting – or, rather, a new theory of the architectural and urban project – without universalist ambitions but sufficiently

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[1] Paraphrase of a title by Françoise Choay, *La règle et le modèle – The Rule and the Model.*

general to be applicable in post-industrial societies, involves questioning the significance of built forms.

## Marginalia to the architectural and urban project

Concerning the architectural and urban project, history and theory of architecture count as a secondary degree of the art to build – a trade with the most concrete practical applications. Research in these domains demand methods and tools to a large extent similar to any speculative endeavour within other modern disciplines.

However, every architectural project involves a thorough theoretical research in order to gather all the preliminary knowledge necessary to a good solution. Yet this kind of architectural writing and ultimately the whole project remains a graphic and literary representation of architecture proper. What counts here is the analytical approach to the context, which, eventually, will lead to the intervention in the territory.

At the purely theoretical level, the descriptive and the prescriptive writings are usually mixed in different proportions to put forward any kind of critical discourse in architecture and urban planning. Yet their conclusions do not and cannot lead in themselves to the project, which must in any particular case to be articulated according to the given contextual circumstances.

Hence, different attempts to solve theoretically the semantic crisis in architecture have not succeeded this far. A hybrid theory, combining built heritage theory and landscape theory also involving the newer ecological awareness appear as having better chances to achieve a rethinking of the architectural and urban project. The already experimented participative planning or the "local project" have brought positive outcome. Rethinking the primordial architectural gesture, tracing a limit, would thus mean a spatial approach to the boundary. It would become an intermediate realm between anthropic and natural habitat, mediating a functional coexistence between them.

A new architectural thinking centred on some sort of "ecological usefulness" shall find a good basis in the study of the usefulness of historical monuments. The successful examples of the reuse of ancient structures is already a sufficient point.

## 4. WHAT IS THE USE OF HISTORICAL MONUMENTS?

Due to their semantic excess, built heritage provides a rich territory to research architectural meaning in terms of the good relationship between functional and expressive adequacy. Among the values identified by Riegl as specific to historical monuments (*Denkmalswerte*), usage is present as one of the values for contemporaneity – we would call it functionality. Quite obviously, as the talking is about the inhabitable work of art.

I would argue, however, that the main and indispensable usefulness of historical monuments is exactly their least practical component: their importance for memory. The very reason that justifies their exceptional status and the considerable concerted efforts made to keep their physical presence for as long as possible. This statement is best supported by the inclusion of monuments (artefacts fabricated to exert a memorial function) into the wider domain of historical monuments (artefacts of various functions that acquire memorial value in time).

And this memorial quality is what makes ruined architecture "useful" even when all other possible usages had been reduced to nothing.

Historical monuments cannot be planned or designed. Their anthropological function as identity and memory carriers can only build up in time. They can only be either preserved or destroyed. And once disappeared, historical monuments are lost irretrievably.

Usefulness, in the case of historical monuments cannot be reduced to the trivial sense of usage. For giving meaning to particular places and times, the specific usefulness of historical monuments is irreplaceable for ensuring the spatial anchor of societies and their cultures.

The often-spectacular achievements of contemporary architecture are incapable of becoming ruins. Therefore, examining the temporary potential of architectural ruins can throw light on the deeper sense of the usefulness of historical monuments.

## The ruin

For Riegl, but also for Cesare Brandi the ruin represents a special category of architecture. The former associates it with his value of ancientness (*Alterswert*). The latter considers it as the utmost expression of architecture, freed from now on of its duties as the useful work of art. It fits thus best into Brandi's rules for adequate restoration.

Since the advent of Modern Movement architecture, its techniques and materials, buildings can no longer get ruined, with the notable exception of industrial architecture, hence the increased interest presented by this relatively new domain for heritage conservation.

## Vitruvius the unavoidable

The interest for ruins introduces in the same eighteenth century an uncanny sort of architecture: the pseudo-ruin. It is a garden pavilion, a folly. Its main function is of an eye-catcher in the landscape garden, built when there was no authentic ruin at hand to fulfil the task.

Applying to the pseudo-ruin the test of Vitruvius's triad brings about relevant results. The false ruin is revealed to be an edifice fully accomplished: it is sturdy in spite of its fragile appearance, it is useful because it fulfils its function, and it is "beautiful" if we accept the validity of this ultimate aesthetic category when ostentatiously absent.

For Brandi, the fragment can represent the entire work of art. Architecture being different by its usefulness, reconstruction is often applied without the necessary caution.

## Reconstruction

Yet why should ruined architecture be reconstructed? Since we cannot build historical monuments – we can only build something new – their disappearance, no matter how regrettable, remains irreversible.

Reconstructions in the aftermath of WW2, decided because the massive loss of spatial reference was felt as unbearable, relativized the canonical attitude towards reconstruction for the sake of cultural identity and survival. Copies made in good faith were better than urban void.

These precedents shall never legitimise arbitrary reconstructions of mediaeval or ancient ruins. They necessarily result in historical fakes and produce further loss of value in terms or cultural heritage.

In the core of the matter is the concept of authenticity. While not yet obvious during the first decades of effective monument restoration (Viollet-le-Duc, Lecomte du Noüy), the answer to the question whether to reconstruct is: no.

As methodological reference, the case of Norcia is exemplary.

The earthquakes that stroke Umbria in August and October 2016 destroyed all the churches in the old town and parts of the city wall also crumbled. The damaged segments amount to about one fifth of the total length of the walls. The enclosure follows the same outline since the Roman times. We have an exceptionally rare case of uninterrupted cohabitation of *urbs* and *civitas*. Norcia is a surviving example of historical urban settlement showing successive phases of its development during the roughly two thousand years of its existence.

The city walls were still an organic whole two years before the discussion; they are well documented with precise measurements and photographs; the fallen stones are collected in situ and can thus be rebuilt with the same techniques and mortar; tha all living today remember the walls as they were before the collapse. All the data necessary for an authentic reconstruction are at hand.

However, beyond legal, doctrinal, historical or technical matters, remains to answer an elementary question: what is the use today of the city walls surrounding the old town of Norcia? What is their usefulness?

The city walls of Norcia are still today a physical as well as visual barrier between two very different kinds of urban structure, ancient and modern, that coexist today and function not alongside but as complement to one another. The disappearance of the walls or a porosity enhanced beyond the penetrations ensured by the existing gates would inevitably result in the diffusion of the urban structures from the outside to the inside.

Hence, the function of the city walls of Norcia is today as it was erstwhile: defensive. It is not military defence, of course, but cultural defence, in the spirit of any move meant to protect built heritage. The usefulness of the defensive structures is, *mutatis mutandis*, the same: they do not protect an image, a scenery, or even some historical buildings, but en entire urban system – Gestalt – adapted to present times, yet conditioned by a built framework constituted along the centuries, still coherent and functional.

For all these reasons, the particular case of the city walls of Norcia represents an exception to the rule. The reconstruction of their crumbled parts is not only possible from scientific, theoretical, architectural and technical points of view, it is compulsory.

## 5.  CONCLUSIONS AND PROSPECTS

## Provisional assessment

My present professional belief involves that:

1.      A well-conceived architectural project cannot lack the most detailed research of the specific data of the site. There can be no optimal intervention without the proper knowledge of the context – its research is no different to the one, legally binding, accompanying an intervention on historical monuments.

2.      A well-conceived restoration project, having all the required preliminary studies cannot achieve excellence if projective imagination is not involved in its making. The restored building needs to be integrated into the contemporary human settlement.

3.      As a result, context constitutes the first and final point for every kind of project aimed to arranging inhabiting at any scale. Today, context is intimately associated with the idea of landscape.

4.      Current practice offers innumerable and decisive proof for the unsuitable way humans administer their relationship with the natural milieu. Reinventing this relationship means to reunite beauty and usefulness of architecture and urbanism.

The next theoretical matter I intend to explore and develop is a sketchy synthesis of an anthropology with the theory of perception, the theory of cognition. This should bring me closer to imagine the future of architecture as anthropological endeavour in the rapidly changing circumstances of the present.

It seems very likely that the branch of the profession best placed to formulate the problems and find solutions at this stage is landscape architecture. It must and it can take into account the valuable built heritage as much as the valuable natural environment and thus attempt to build places – and limits – by a planning that permits the survival of humankind alongside and within nature.

## Academic Project

I intend to continue teaching besides carrying on with planning, even if at a much-diminished rate. Teaching project and leading planning groups made me aware of the difficulties but mostly of the benefits of team work.

My research continues earlier explorations. "Monumentified" architecture – hyper-architecture due to its enhanced expressive content – was interesting enough; then considering the house and also at the horizon from the garden brought me to landscape theory. Now I want to proceed towards a better understanding of the usefulness of architecture at a moment in our history when the artificial world seems to overwhelm the natural one.

I envisage an architectural and urban education as comprehensive as possible, trying to avoid the pitfalls of the rupture between architecture and urban planning, restoration and gardening, between courses and project, or theory and practice. Landscape architecture at a crossroads, trying to reinvent itself as the synthetic domain of the art of building houses and cities, gardens and roads.

## Desired continuations

I wish to develop some of the ideas contained in this Habilitation thesis in a book called the *Usefulness of Historical Monuments*. It will take much reading and re-reading, as well es pursuing several speculative directions that can prove either productive or impracticable.

I also intend to continue my architectural practice. More recently I worked mostly in rehabilitation projects, but also on a few public and private gardens.

Such is the context where recognising and interpreting the usefulness of historical monuments can work as a mediator for better understanding the more complex issue of the usefulness of the built environment: no longer a self-centred relationship, but one working both for humans and for the natural world.

## Doctoral Project

My interest as supervisor of future doctoral research will concentrate on the integrated theoretical approach to the built heritage as such, culturally motivated; it should also work as a means to better understand the human settlement in the territory. No theoretical endeavour can afford to ignore the larger context, whether it means sustainability, ecological awareness or social implication.

I consider more than desirable the emergence of a well-prepared group of theorists-practitioners who should assume the responsibilities of protecting the built heritage within the omnipresent urban sprawl, the excesses of cultural tourism and of the development business. Their combined effect lowers the quality of urban life by its semantic impoverishment, but also endangers the global ecological equilibrium. A concerted, coherent management of built heritage is in direct relationship with the reasonable exploitation of the available resources of the planet. My mission as an architect and a teacher can only aim to contribute to the formation of professionals who would sustain the collective effort the persistence of a vast cultural and natural heritage.

My arguments concern an integrated and contextual approach to heritage conservation. I trust that the doctoral research I shall have the chance of supervising will develop these kinds of prospects and will become, in time, a theoretical corpus with beneficial impact on the everyday architectural and urban practice.

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