

To Restore or Not to Restore: The Variability of Cultural Heritage Protections

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Abstract

The concept of cultural heritage preservation often grapples with the dilemma of restoring or leaving heritage sites in their current state, a decision heavily influenced by the inexorable passage of Time. This paper delves into the intricate relationship between Time and cultural heritage, examining how Time encourages heritage protection and becomes a part of it. Through various case studies, the paper explores the impact of Time on different facets of cultural heritage, such as tangible and intangible heritage, and the complex interplay between natural decay and human progression. The discussion extends to international regulations, highlighting the role of organizations like UNESCO and the variability in heritage protection methodologies worldwide. A significant part of the discourse revolves around "living heritage" and the challenges of preserving heritage sites still in active use. The paper critically assesses contemporary stresses on cultural heritage, such as tourism and modern restoration practices, using examples like the Cathedral of Notre Dame and Carcassonne Castle. Ultimately, this paper aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the relationship between Time and cultural heritage, questioning the extent to which change should be controlled or allowed and proposing that the actual value of heritage might lie in its continual adaptation and interaction with the present.

Keywords: Cultural Heritage, Time, Preservation, Restoration, UNESCO, Living Heritage, Tangible Heritage, Intangible Heritage, Natural Decay, Continuum of Human Progress.

1. Introduction

Before any discourse can approach the concept of cultural heritage, one must consider the profound implications of the passage of Time. During much discourse on the subject, the implications of Time are often assumed but not explicitly recognized. Time is what incites the desire to protect cultural heritage. When one reflects on a paper, a charter, or national and international legislation

concerning the subject, one will see that the cultural heritage protections outlined are a response to this passage of Time and its varying effects on cultural heritage. Time is central to discussing cultural heritage protections at any level, especially in the philosophical sense demanded by such discussion.

The differing approaches to protecting cultural heritage become clear after reflecting on the aforementioned sources. The paper will analyze these

sources of regulation and their differences. The consideration of Time will be at the forefront of this paper's analyses, not only as the primary encouragement toward protecting cultural heritage but as a force that, by its effect on it, becomes an integral part of cultural heritage. Using case studies concerning both preservation and restoration efforts in various countries, this paper will identify the relationship between Time and cultural heritage under different lenses. The paper will discuss how these regulations and case-specific implementations have recognized and honored this relationship. By the end of this paper, the reader should be able to analyze past and present restoration efforts and determine whether such efforts adequately consider the role Time plays in cultural heritage.

2. The Relationship of Time and Cultural Heritage

Having already broadly considered the effect of Time on cultural heritage, this relationship should be made more explicit. Time understandably has numerous nuanced implications on cultural heritage, but this section will attempt to generalize them into comprehensive, though certainly not exhaustive, interpretations.

One of the abundant definitions for cultural heritage attempts to identify the many facets constituting the concept: tangible cultural heritage consisting of physical objects, structures, groups of structures, and even whole

contexts, whether moveable or not; natural heritage consisting of physical places initially composed by the Earth and not humanity; intangible cultural heritage consisting of "practices, expressions, knowledge, and skills"¹ from individual to community levels; and museums containing these heritage elements and their values². Each facet is affected by the passage of time in varying ways.

Consider Time in two distinct ways: Time imposes a *natural decay* and creates a *continuum* of human progress.

Natural decay directly impacts tangible cultural heritage, a relationship that will receive the most attention later in this paper as tangible heritage and its protections become the primary focus. This reflection of Time is evident in various ways. However, perhaps the easiest to understand and the most prevalent manifestation of natural decay is the degradation of an object or structure. Decay is a reunification of these tangible heritages with nature. Different materials will have different lifespans. Ceramics, for instance, have consistently been a valuable window into the past as they resist decay better than other objects of interest used by ancient cultures³. They hold the stories of their creators and those who might have used them since their original owners⁴. A question arises then that will be revisited: if humanity values these stories, should such objects be placed in museums and fully protected—or places fully preserved—thus preventing such stories from

¹ "Intangible heritage."

² "Cultural heritage." It should be noted that this is only a condensed form of one of UNESCO's definitions. The definition of heritage is elsewhere refined to more specific Cultural Domains that are not relevant to this paper's discourse.

³ "How ceramics are telling the story of 14th century Chinese trade."

⁴ Ceramics can tell a much wider story, including the migration of peoples, the fade of cultures, their creators' beliefs, their creators' societal structure, and a window into the progression of humanity.

continuing? Thus removing them from their natural decay? The question begs whether humanity should truly seal all cultural heritage away and what such a stagnant world would look like.

The long history of ceramics has been mentioned. On the other hand, wood has a much shorter lifespan, which may necessitate different approaches to preserving these works (if that is the desired goal). Some structures in Japan are routinely rebuilt, a practice that spans the gap between tangible and intangible heritage. These practices will be discussed further in the paper due to their unique relationship to Time and the contention between cultural traditions and protections outlined by higher legal bodies. Architecture, composed of any material, has some of the most significant insights into past and present cultures. Restoration approaches will be examined heavily, for restoring a project asks one to prioritize some aspect of this project's stories over the rest when these stories (or the natural decay) are an innate aspect of the project.

However, the reader should consider that decay is not unique to the length of time a tangible object/place has been exposed to. Decay also relies on the *condition* in which the object/place is kept. Knowing the lifespans of different materials helps paint a picture of their natural decay, but it misses the aspects of the object/structure's usage. The human wear on these tangible heritages, through their intended function and blatant vandalism, is a part of this decay⁵. This aspect of decay blends with the second

interpretation of the relationship between cultural heritage and Time proposed before the continuum.

The continuum of human progress directly and indirectly affects cultural heritage. It could also be understood as a generational continuum. Time tests and shapes *intangible* cultural heritage by suggesting a continual turnover of generations of humans. Intangible cultural heritage has existed for as long as humans have been humans, for it is one of the things that defines humanity. Ancient burial sites were discovered tens of thousands of years ago; these peoples had practices and perhaps even cultures that, without preservation and documentation, were lost to the generational continuum. Approximately 17,000 years ago, humans painted remarkably intricate scenes within the Lascaux cave system in France⁶. Such prehistoric paintings have become *tangible* cultural heritage protected by national regulations and organizations like UNESCO. However, the *practice* of painting was an *intangible* heritage that has been lost simply due to this generational continuum. Humanity now values these tangible places because of their inherent aesthetic value and the significance Time has added to them. In a way, Time has turned a heritage valuable for its intangible qualities into a heritage valued for tangible qualities.

This continuum also indirectly affects *tangible* cultural heritage in the sense that humanity consistently engages in sundry conflicts that pose threats to physical objects and places of cultural significance; this describes the previously mentioned blend of the continuum with natural

⁵ Shanks, "The life of an artifact."

⁶ "Prehistoric Sites and Decorated Caves of the Vézère Valley."

decay. While this can be viewed as a separate concept from the passage of Time, it is instead a facet of it. In the same way, a nomadic culture has been phased out by the generational continuum, and the rise of new ideologies and governments within the continuum of human progress has phased out tangible heritage. For example, places of Roman tangible heritage have been weathered by the centuries but destroyed intentionally by the religious and political agendas arising through the continuum⁷. The Great Mosque of Córdoba is a prime example of tangible heritage surviving this continuum but being changed significantly to reflect the changes within the continuum⁸.

Time intrinsically implies change and cultural heritage protections seek to control this change. To what degree should this change be prevented or stopped altogether? This question is answered through the variable approaches to preservation and restoration worldwide. One must consider, especially in the restoration process, if searching for value within an instance of tangible heritage, one must forgo other aspects of its history and thus an integral aspect of its existence as heritage.

3. International Regulations.

Within the realm of cultural heritage protection, distinct methodologies arise across the world. These methodologies

have been derived from cultural norms and practices and shaped into the charters and legislation necessary in the modern world. Considering the expansive history of cultural heritage and the disconnected nature of the world when these methodologies were first fostered, contentions should be expected concerning cultural heritage regulations between nations. Despite these differences, international organizations like UNESCO still attempt to find common ground between nations. It is, in fact, an aspect of UNESCO's mission to promote cooperation and understanding in, among other areas, culture⁹. UNESCO seeks to connect nations and improve the understanding of foreign expression. In an increasingly globalized world, such initiatives are often welcomed and necessary.

Like many international organizations, UNESCO keeps its regulations broad and leaves the specifics to the individual nation¹⁰. The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) is one of UNESCO's leading advisors and proposes a charter with such regulations¹¹. The Venice Charter of 1964, initially proposed by the IInd International Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historic Monuments but adopted by ICOMOS in 1965, suggests sixteen articles that outline the broad considerations one should take in the preservation and restoration of tangible heritage sites¹². In these articles, one will see how the relationship between Time and

⁷ Deprez, "Destruction Of Cultural Heritage Since Antiquity: A Shocking Review."

⁸ "Discovering the Monument."

⁹ "UNESCO in brief."

¹⁰ Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization: 2022 Edition.

¹¹ The Venice Charter.

¹² It should be noted that the Venice Charter highlights approaches to preserving and restoring the tangible heritage sites

cultural heritage is understood. In Article 3, there is some recognition of this integral relationship: “The intention in conserving and restoring monuments is to safeguard them no less as works of art than as historical evidence.¹³” The article solidifies historical and aesthetic values as two cultural heritage considerations. This article still does not discuss the extent to which history should be prioritized, and more noticeably, it does not discuss the continuation of a site’s history as opposed to its being bottled and preserved as is. Article 7 furthers the discussion on this relationship: “A monument is inseparable from the history to which it bears witness” The article proposes an agreeable statement, broad as is necessary with international regulations, and promotes moving a site only in the case of “paramount importance.”¹⁴ The theme of the Venice Charter and most other regulations is to act only when necessary for the work’s preservation and only to the extent necessary to preserve it.

The later articles expressly discuss restoration. Article 9 claims restoration aims “to preserve and reveal the aesthetic and historic value of the monument and is based on respect for original material.¹⁵” Any necessary alterations, such as the intervention on the Flavian Amphitheatre that prevented its collapse¹⁶ (or another

addressing its columns)¹⁷, are proposed to bear a “contemporary stamp,¹⁸”. In this way, it is acknowledged that it is not an authentic part of the work but is necessary for its preservation/restoration. This article fails to express whether the sometimes centuries’ worth of Time between the original material and the modern analysis of the work should be prioritized less—or if it does suggest this, why. The charter goes on to specify that restoration should be carried out using as close to traditional methods as possible, that replacement parts may be introduced if bearing the contemporary stamp, and that additions should only be made in congruence with the original aesthetic and not disrupt its context or composition¹⁹. These three points will be observed later using the Cathedral of Notre Dame as a case study.

By the end of the Venice Charter, two considerations are left ambiguous: whether or not to prioritize a moment of a work’s history over the rest and a consideration of living heritage. These two considerations are aspects of distinct methodologies of cultural heritage, the former being a more Western-centric way of thinking concerning material value, and the latter a less Western-centric approach more considerate of preserving the continuity of heritage²⁰.

of buildings, monuments, and their contexts; its guidelines are not necessarily applicable to objects and do not satisfy intangible heritage needs.

¹³ The Venice Charter.

¹⁴ The moving of Abu Simbel in Egypt is an example of such paramount importance. The site had to be relocated, or the flooding resulting from dam construction would have destroyed the work irreparably.

¹⁵ The Venice Charter.

¹⁶ Cerone, “The Structural Behaviour Of Colosseum Over The Centuries.”

¹⁷ Podesta, “Consolidation And Restoration Of Historical Heritage: The Flavian Amphitheater In Rome.”

¹⁸ The Venice Charter.

¹⁹ The Venice Charter.

²⁰ Poullos, “Discussing strategy in heritage conservation: Living heritage approach as an example of strategic innovation.”

4. Considering the History of Heritage

The first consideration, as described before, wonders whether any one point of a work's history should be prioritized over the rest—and if it should, whether this necessarily needs to be the original. This point is raised in many works of tangible cultural heritage. The Great Mosque of Córdoba could not be preserved or restored without first considering if one of the cultures apparent in its history should be prioritized over another. Córdoba was at some point home to the cultures of Rome, Visigoth, Islam, Judaism, and Christianity, each contributing to some extent to the site's current context and composition²¹. The structure has a recognizable duality between Christian and Islamic architecture, which has been embraced during preservation/restoration efforts. Conversely, in some instances, the intervention of another culture is pointedly objected to and often 'rectified' via restoration.

There are many examples of one culture's monument falling under the control of another, being altered, and upon being returned to its original culture, being restored to its original form. The House of the Blackheads in Riga, Latvia, is an integral image of Latvian sovereignty²². After being destroyed by the Germans and Soviets before and after WWII, the site was restored following Latvia's independence from the USSR. Latvia elected to prioritize its own 'Latvian' history over the marks of oppressors.

Another curious contemplation arises when one considers the kinds of restoration efforts conducted in the past. Romans had a particular appreciation for ancient Greek arts and architecture. Often, they would discover broken sculptures, both decayed and vandalized, and elect to copy and alter originals in a way they felt honored the art. Today, one must look upon the same work with the same appreciation and contemplate many more considerations. Heritage laws aside, one must consider the broader knowledge of history, preservation/restoration efforts, and their implications for the future. It is often deemed unethical for such a work to be altered in any way that changes its original composition. This notion may imply that the Romans were wrong to have altered the Greek heritage themselves. However, their alterations are often appreciated nonetheless for their virtue, neither the Roman nor Greek presence in the work being necessarily prioritized.

It is curious then that society has decided this is when alterations should be deemed unjustified and the current state of these objects/places should be its final state. Understandably, this is a complex dilemma. It is agreeable that works should not be altered nonchalantly, but if they are perhaps vandalized through historical events like WWII that add to a work a profound mark of the continuum, of Time and its many pitfalls, and the very state of civilization at that time, does this mark not become an integral part of the work? The ancient monuments of the Greeks, the

²¹ "Historic Centre of Cordoba."

²² Welscher, "German traces in Latvia: the House of Blackheads."

Aztecs, the Romans, and the Egyptians were all altered in this way and are venerated for this history. Castles laid to waste by war have served their function as a castle. Restoring a castle to its original state seems to rob it of its hardships and what it has achieved. The same could be said about works as simple as a cracked ceramic vase.

The value of a work can not be fully realized if any element of its history is forgone in pursuit of preservation or restoration. The House of the Blackheads restoration does not honor Time's distinct mark on it. However, it does pursue the continuation of this work's story in the context of thriving Latvian sovereignty. Allowing a work to survive the continuum without being bottled and shelved and to continue as a part of living heritage and the work's surviving culture may necessitate modern age similar changes and interventions as exhibited throughout the work's vast history.

5. Considering the Continuity of Heritage

The second consideration left ambiguous in the Venice Charter and other charters is the consideration of living heritage²³. As with the House of the Blackheads, a culture or practice alive today may demand nuanced approaches to heritage protection. A living heritage should not be bottled and shelved the way some charters propose tangible heritage be addressed.²⁴ Without considering the surviving use of a

place or work of heritage, this approach would weaken the heritage's value. Here, further conjecture rises amidst the conjecture that is the cultural heritage discussion. There are discrepancies between national/cultural approaches, and there are different values prioritized over others—the preservation of function over the mark of Time, for instance.

In Japan, traditional Shinto practices are often still maintained. These practices may be considered intangible heritage despite the usage of tangible monuments. The Ise Jingu shrine in Mie prefecture²⁵ is neither preserved nor restored; the shrine is deliberately rebuilt in its entirety (even including some artifacts within). Shikinen Sengu is an eight-year ceremony of replacing the shrine piece by piece, each artfully crafted from the wood of centuries-old cypresses²⁶. The rebuilding process runs on a twenty-year cycle, the last having been completed in 2013 and the next scheduled for 2033. This renewal of architecture keeps the site alive, even if it may be composed of different trees. It breathes new life into a place and thus into the Shinto traditions observed there. Additionally, it necessitates the transfer of traditional crafts knowledge to pass on through the generations²⁷. The Ise Jingu shrine reveals how vocations, as intangible heritage, can survive the continuum of human progress through a living heritage approach toward tangible

²³ Poullos, "Discussing strategy in heritage conservation: Living heritage approach as an example of strategic innovation."

²⁴ Newer charters, such as the The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, 2013, opens more room for living heritage concerns. However, they are far from the primary focus of the charter's proposals, falling into

the vague category of justified deviances from the charter's proposed regulations.

²⁵ Daigo. "Traditions | Shikinen Sengu."

²⁶ Idem.

²⁷ Idem.

monuments. Guédelon Castle will be referenced later as a more modern version of this resilience.

This practice would be severely hindered if they adhered strictly to the international charters with a more materialistic approach to cultural heritage protections. There is aesthetic value in a temple, but greater historical and cultural value in the way it is used. Japan takes great care to safeguard its culture, going so far as to limit immigration into the country. With such rich traditions surviving into the modern era, it is no wonder they hesitate to expose their culture to foreign influences and more significant contemporary stressors. These practices are a living example of heritage surviving the continuum. If more nations, especially those with a more Western-centric approach to cultural heritage²⁸, took as much care to preserve the story behind a heritage site as the site itself, they would see far more value preserved. Nevertheless, some innate belief is ingrained in many that freezing an object/place in Time is best for it, that bottling and shelving it to be observed and often unused is the best way to honor it.

6. Contemporary Stresses—Tourism

Few nations escape the contemporary stresses on cultural heritage. Many host excellent examples of heritage preservation and restoration efforts, but France is best suited to complement this paper's discourse. When peering into French heritage protections²⁹, particularly with

tangible cultural heritage, one sees tourism as a common consideration rising to the forefront of their regulations. Prioritizing tourism is not unique to France. Most locations that can be exploited for tourism revenue are often at the detriment of indigenous peoples or locals whose lives have revolved around these heritage places. It would be ideal for other considerations to surpass tourism in a governing body's list of priorities, but it is typically not the case until it is essential. Tourism funds the efforts that protect these heritage sites and often contributes to those communities. Tourism can be invaluable to a community, but at other times, this value is a contemporary dependency in disguise.

Tourism offers more than just benefits. It alters the lives of those who used these heritage sites for their original function. Charters stress the need to involve indigenous and local communities in efforts to preserve, restore, or showcase their heritage. This involvement often boils down to job availability for these people. As with Angkor Wat in Cambodia³⁰, the original users of this religious site have been restricted, and their practices are hindered by tourism and government regulations. Many engage with the site through an economic lens, becoming a part of the tourism industry.

The rise of cultural tourism is an inevitable change given how heritage protections are approached, but one that may damage the heritage as much as it is being protected. The value of Chaco Culture National Historical Park in New Mexico, USA, is derived primarily from the

²⁸ Poullos, "Discussing strategy in heritage conservation: Living heritage approach as an example of strategic innovation."

²⁹ "Code du patrimoine."

³⁰ Poullos, "Discussing strategy in heritage conservation: Living heritage approach as an example of strategic innovation."

culture of the Navajo people native to the area—or should have been.³¹ Instead, a more significant emphasis was placed on the aesthetic value of the site. The government did attempt to involve them in the efforts concerning the park, but the Navajo people were relocated from their native land to preserve the heritage at hand. Furthermore, when “new age” groups attempted to practice rituals at the park, the traditions of the Navajo people were infringed on; the government responded to this by banning both to avoid discrimination.³² One severely damages the heritage's value by prohibiting using a heritage site for its traditional purpose. One disrupts the continuum evolving alongside this heritage, adapting from generation to generation to become what it is today. Imposing regulations on this heritage abruptly halts this continuum, jeopardizing its future so tourists can observe its past. Admittedly, these measures are sometimes necessary to ensure the physical preservation of a structure or site. However, in preventing natural decay to such an extent, one runs a high risk of stopping the continuum—in other words, choking living heritage. Is it always right to preserve a tangible site if it might undo an intangible, living heritage? Similarly, there must be a more tailored approach to sensitive issues regarding religion and tradition in cultural heritage to safeguard intangible heritages against the continuum of human development and its ideological trappings.

7. Contemporary Stresses—Restoration

³¹ Poullos, “Discussing strategy in heritage conservation: Living heritage approach as an example of strategic innovation.”

Revisiting France, this section will go deeper into the modern conception of restoration and consider some of the restoration regulations analyzed earlier from the Venice Charter.

The Cathedral of Notre Dame is another venerated site of cultural heritage, though its history necessitated some deviation from the typical bottle and shelve approach to cultural heritage. The cathedral was altered starkly, and unlike the Venice Charter's suggestion, the alteration did not bear a contemporary stamp signifying it was altered. The spire of the Cathedral of Notre Dame was restored in the 19th century, well after the cathedral's construction between the 12th and 14th centuries.³³ The spire was not a replica of the original but a more extensive version deemed to emulate better the Gothic style they believed Notre Dame should exude. Of course, this restoration occurred well before the Venice Charter, UNESCO, and anything like it. One can observe how past alterations are celebrated again, but modern alterations receive much more criticism. If done correctly, there should be a way to alter a tangible heritage that increases its value (whether aesthetically or culturally) and prolongs its life without bottling and shelving it as a novelty for tourism or museum exhibitions. Alterations can and should aim to further society's engagement with the work.

In a way, France has honored its past by continuing the cathedral's story, altering it in a way that only strengthens its presence and does not seek to hide any aspect

³² Poullos, “Discussing strategy in heritage conservation: Living heritage approach as an example of strategic innovation.”

³³ Zraick, “Notre-Dame Cathedral: Facts and a Brief History.”

of its past. On the other hand, Carcassonne Castle exhibits a vastly more intensive intervention that masks the history of this heritage site³⁴. The castle was not simply restored but restored to a condition unlike what it had been at any given point³⁵. This kind of intervention interferes with the site's natural decay and with its past. Some may argue that, in this case, France slighted the relationship between Time and this site; others might argue that its story continues now only thanks to this intervention. In either case, it is undeniable that Carcassonne Castle is no longer valued primarily for its original history and aesthetic but for what it has become. This alteration aimed to further society's engagement with the work and has succeeded in this. While the House of the Blackheads was restored to honor its original culture's determination and continuity, Carcassonne Castle was restored to pave a new history for the site. Now, being something new, the question of how this modern image of Carcassonne Castle should be preserved will raise new conjectures. Here is a castle, retired and decaying, dressed as a castle anew without its original form, and asked to perform a very un-castle-like function in engaging tourists. It promotes the continuum, so it at least respects an aspect of the relationship between Time and cultural heritage that many sites do not.

The Cathedral of Notre Dame necessitated a second intensive intervention more recently after experiencing a fire that ravaged the structure in 2019. This

time, the restoration was handled far differently than the spire's 19th-century alteration/restoration. France has attempted to restore the cathedral to its pre-fire condition despite an initial consideration for new designs³⁶. They aim to use as close to traditional methods as possible during the restoration. They could only successfully utilize these traditional methods thanks to another heritage site (one that is not recognized by UNESCO but is an exemplary embodiment of French heritage)³⁷. Many professionals were consulted to restore the timber beams of Notre Dame's spire, and roofing hailed from Guédelon Castle or were trained there. Guédelon Castle in Burgundy, France, is a unique, modern construction of a 13th-century castle that began in 1997 and has used 13th-century approaches both in construction and in the community's functioning³⁸. Guédelon Castle warrants its discourse by integrating tangible and intangible heritages and concerning Time. However, its mention here solidifies the argument that heritage is most valuable when allowed to live and breathe in the continuum and is not stifled by preservation efforts. For the Cathedral of Notre Dame, this project allowed for the 13th-century vocation of wood hewing to contribute to a genuine restoration of the site³⁹.

Nonetheless, such a pivotal moment in the site's history should not be forgotten entirely through restoration. Humanity has not restored the Flavian Amphitheatre or the Luxor Temple to their original glory

³⁴ "Historic Fortified City of Carcassonne."

³⁵ "Viollet-le-Duc's restoration." Centre des Monuments Nationaux.

³⁶ McGreevy, "Hundreds of Centuries-Old Trees Felled to Rebuild Notre-Dame's Iconic Spire."

³⁷ "Guedelon."

³⁸ "In France, workers build a castle from scratch the 13th century way."

³⁹ Willsher, "They said it was impossible': how medieval carpenters are rebuilding Notre Dame."

because they have honored the mark of Time—at least up to the modern age when preservation efforts now seek to freeze heritages' decay. If the cathedral is restored, the value of this moment should be considered worth preserving to some degree as well. The sheer emotion this event evoked in the community and the people's willingness to come together to restore their heritage should be reflected in the site. That could be a sliver of the building showing the restoration process—as seen when the restoration of ancient works highlights features of each era of Time the work experienced—or perhaps the vaults may be left smoke-charred to signify their and the community's resilience. In any case, the fire need not be concealed for the site to proclaim its survival triumphantly. Time decays a monument, and the monument wears that decay like a medal. Humanity restores a monument and strips those medals away.

8. Conclusion

Time lends itself well to beauty. Most charters and legislation concerning cultural heritage express the desire to identify such beauty in aesthetics and historical significance. The fall of the Roman Empire evokes a devastating sense of beauty; its once regal architecture is now ruinous skeletons. This culture is venerated for the beauty of its collapse. The tangible heritages left by ancient Greece and Rome have influenced modern aesthetics, not via their original form, but via these skeletons they left.

Time's continuum brought Greece and its monuments to their knees. Time's natural decay turned them into the works of beauty society reveres today. Rome saw that beauty as well and sought to emulate it. Greek culture continues to influence humanity profoundly because we have allowed their philosophies to live with, adapt with, and guide us. Their monuments have and should continue to do the same.

After discussing many case studies, a prevailing notion arises from their approaches: tangible heritage should be preserved in its present state or potentially restored to a former one. The day humanity decides to assess a tangible work of heritage is arbitrary. The ruins of Pompeii could have remained isolated, their story and their decay continuing for decades longer without society's knowing⁴⁰. The sarcophagi discovered beneath Notre Dame Cathedral would have gone unnoticed without the 2019 fire⁴¹. The Great Mosque of Córdoba was recognized as a fine monument and has still been altered significantly in the past. Contemporary society has arbitrarily decided to make no more interventions in the monument despite valuing its historical interventions. Has history ended then that society should not value further intervention?

Indeed, even if this is the case, the value of living heritage should be aptly considered. Living heritage may thank the physical preservation of a place, the stalling of its natural decay, to preserve the place of its traditions. The work's story continues and adapts to the continuum in

⁴⁰ "Archaeological Areas of Pompei, Herculaneum and Torre Annunziata."

⁴¹ Kuta, "Unraveling the Secrets of the Sarcophagi Found Beneath Notre-Dame Cathedral."

these cases. However, this living heritage is sometimes sacrificed in the name of preservation and contemporary constraints. Other instances where living heritage remains a core value, such as the upholding of Shinto traditions, are considering Time in a fundamentally different way. Bottling and shelving a work seeks to capture its value while living heritage seeks further continuity. This continuity is pursued via controversial interventions, as with Carcassonne Castle.

The reader must decide how integral Time's relationship with cultural heritage is to each work. They must decide if a work's total value can be derived from a stagnant state or captured only in the broader scope. They must decide what that scope is: if a work should see continued use, be refitted for contemporary service in the continuum of human progress, be allowed to continue its natural decay, or show reflections of each pronounced intervention (including disastrous ones) from a work's history, amongst other considerations. Using the case studies discussed throughout the paper, the reader can reflect on these considerations with some confidence regarding their nuanced implications. However, They must note that each case of heritage has a unique status, and no interpretation of the aforementioned considerations can apply to all heritage works.

In preservation, the decay of Time is foregone, and in restoration, a clear line is drawn. If priority is taken, the continuum is impeded, and the reader decides if such action is needed. To restore or not to restore is the question of time's profound impact on heritage expression.

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