



## Invited Opening Article

### ICOMOS

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ICOMOS has very much influenced my work, my missions and especially the content of my courses at the Middle East Technical University in Ankara as well as my courses in ICCROM on architectural conservation. Thus, I have learned the multidisciplinary facets of conservation of cultural property - the importance of dialogue between owners and historians, archaeologists, art historians, scientists and technicians of conservation and that is what makes our profession challenging, attractive and dynamic. But what I have learned above all is that in order to establish the right balance and right dialogue, one should always keep in mind that an understanding of the attitudes of people towards their own heritage is fundamental. Only in this way can one correctly diagnose and cure the ailments affecting cultural heritage.

A wider world is in front of us. Nations that we thought would never come together only a few years ago are now joining forces for a more peaceful world. But curiously enough, at the same time, there is a sort of disintegration. Disintegration may not be the right word, but there certainly is an evident wish for separation from long-term bonds, a long-time dominance of a cultural policy, which seems to be the reason behind a new trend. A search for identity and reassessment of cultural values is strikingly strong in numerous places all over the world. New borders are requested, suggested and planned, and sometimes force is used to implement these ideas. Manifestations of a search for identity are bringing about new values concerning cultural property. The world is revising its concepts. Let's hope that this will be beneficial for all of us.

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It is obvious that the ease of communication today is one of the factors. This facility of communication affecting cultural properties is a tempting one. Those responsible for conservation should be aware of the danger of the ease of this movement which is bringing and has already brought uniformity to many aspects of our lives. This could easily bring about the uniformity of cultural values, thereby impairing their richness and variety.

Here, I think we should review the famous discussion on conservation, especially for those who think that conservation is basically and merely a scientific problem. I am thoroughly opposed to this belief, and take the side of those who think that conservation is above all a cultural issue. We should always remember that conservation means self-respect. It is respect for oneself, of one's own achievements, and thus it is respect for the achievements of others. Differences between human beings and societies as well as their cultural heritage should receive the same respect. In this world of fast communication, we should tight so as not to lose this respect by understanding the differences in cultures. We should try to understand that each culture has its own way of evaluating and conserving its cultural property.

ICOMOS has long years of experience and accumulated knowledge from which many lessons can be drawn. This knowledge, when properly used, can create miracles. It should be used towards protecting valuable objects and treasures and not towards imposing uniformity. Science and technology should be applied as services for culture in a world that is all too quickly losing its heritage and where ugliness seems to have become a virtue. In other words, one should always remember that conservation of cultural property is a very sensitive issue and it is not a "fast food" service. ICOMOS is the right place.

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ODTÜ emekli öğretim üyesi. Klasik arkeoloji kökenli Prof. Dr. Cevat Erder, 1964 yılında Ortadoğu Teknik Üniversitesi (ODTÜ) ODTÜ Tarihi Anıtların Bakım ve Onarımı- Restorasyon Bölümünü kurdu. 1965-74 yılları arasında ICOMOS Yürütme Komitesi üyeliği yaptı. 1981-1988 yılları arasında ICCROM'un genel müdürlüğü görevini yürüttü. 1986 yılında Aga Han Mimarlık Ödülü'nü, 1997'de ICCROM Ödülü'nü, 2003 yılında da ICOMOS'un Pietro Gazzola Ödülü'nü kazandı.

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