



AUTHENTICITY IN RELATION TO THE WORLD HERITAGE CONVENTION



INTRODUCTION

This Annex reproduces the Nara Document on Authenticity, drafted by the 45 participants to the Nara Conference on Authenticity in Relation to the *World Heritage Convention*, held at Nara, Japan, from 1-6 November 1994. The Nara Conference was organized in co-operation with UNESCO, ICCROM and ICOMOS.

The World Heritage Committee examined the report of the Nara meeting on Authenticity at its 18th session (Phuket, Thailand, 1994) (see document WHC-94/CONF.003/16).

Subsequent expert meetings have enriched the concept of authenticity in relation to the *World Heritage Convention* (see Bibliography of the *Operational Guidelines*).

I. THE NARA DOCUMENT ON AUTHENTICITY

Preamble

1. *We, the experts assembled in Nara (Japan), wish to acknowledge the generous spirit and intellectual courage of the Japanese authorities in providing a timely forum in which we could challenge conventional thinking in the conservation field, and debate ways and means of broadening our horizons to bring greater respect for cultural and heritage diversity to conservation practice.*
2. *We also wish to acknowledge the value of the framework for discussion provided by the World Heritage Committee's desire to apply the test of authenticity in ways which accord full respect to the social and cultural values of all societies, in examining the outstanding universal value of cultural properties proposed for the World Heritage List.*
3. *The Nara Document on Authenticity is conceived in the spirit of the Charter of Venice, 1964, and builds on it and extends it in response to the expanding scope of cultural heritage concerns and interests in our contemporary world.*
4. *In a world that is increasingly subject to the forces of globalization and homogenization, and in a world in which the search for cultural identity is sometimes pursued through aggressive nationalism and the suppression of the cultures of minorities, the essential contribution made by the consideration of authenticity in conservation practice is to clarify and illuminate the collective memory of humanity.*

Cultural Diversity and Heritage Diversity

5. *The diversity of cultures and heritage in our world is an irreplaceable source of spiritual and intellectual richness for all humankind. The protection and enhancement of cultural and heritage diversity in our world should be actively promoted as an essential aspect of human development.*

6. *Cultural heritage diversity exists in time and space, and demands respect for other cultures and all aspects of their belief systems. In cases where cultural values appear to be in conflict, respect for cultural diversity demands acknowledgment of the legitimacy of the cultural values of all parties.*
7. *All cultures and societies are rooted in the particular forms and means of tangible and intangible expression which constitute their heritage, and these should be respected.*
8. *It is important to underline a fundamental principle of UNESCO, to the effect that the cultural heritage of each is the cultural heritage of all. Responsibility for cultural heritage and the management of it belongs, in the first place, to the cultural community that has generated it, and subsequently to that which cares for it. However, in addition to these responsibilities, adherence to the international charters and conventions developed for conservation of cultural heritage also obliges consideration of the principles and responsibilities flowing from them. Balancing their own requirements with those of other cultural communities is, for each community, highly desirable, provided achieving this balance does not undermine their fundamental cultural values.*

Values and authenticity

9. *Conservation of cultural heritage in all its forms and historical periods is rooted in the values attributed to the heritage. Our ability to understand these values depends, in part, on the degree to which information sources about these values may be understood as credible or truthful. Knowledge and understanding of these sources of information, in relation to original and subsequent characteristics of the cultural heritage, and their meaning, is a requisite basis for assessing all aspects of authenticity.*
10. *Authenticity, considered in this way and affirmed in the Charter of Venice, appears as the essential qualifying factor concerning values. The understanding of authenticity plays a fundamental role in all scientific studies of the cultural heritage, in conservation and restoration planning, as well as within the inscription procedures used for the World Heritage Convention and other cultural heritage inventories.*
11. *All judgements about values attributed to cultural properties as well as the credibility of related information sources may differ from culture to culture, and even within the same culture. It is thus not possible to base judgements of values and authenticity within fixed criteria. On the contrary, the respect due to all cultures requires that heritage properties must be considered and judged within the cultural contexts to which they belong.*
12. *Therefore, it is of the highest importance and urgency that, within each culture, recognition be accorded to the specific nature of its heritage values and the credibility and truthfulness of related information sources.*
13. *Depending on the nature of the cultural heritage, its cultural context, and its evolution through time, authenticity judgements may be linked to the worth of a great variety of sources of information. Aspects of the sources may include form and design, materials and substance, use and function, traditions and techniques, location and setting, and spirit and feeling, and other internal and external factors. The use of these sources permits elaboration of the specific artistic, historic, social, and scientific dimensions of the cultural heritage being examined.*

Appendix 1: Suggestions for follow-up (proposed by Herb Stovel)

1. *Respect for cultural and heritage diversity requires conscious efforts to avoid imposing mechanistic formulae or standardized procedures in attempting to define or determine authenticity of particular monuments and sites.*
2. *Efforts to determine authenticity in a manner respectful of cultures and heritage diversity requires approaches which encourage cultures to develop analytical processes and tools specific to their nature and needs. Such approaches may have several aspects in common:*
 - *efforts to ensure assessment of authenticity involve multidisciplinary collaboration and the appropriate utilisation of all available expertise and knowledge;*
 - *efforts to ensure attributed values are truly representative of a culture and the diversity of its interests, in particular monuments and sites;*
 - *efforts to document clearly the particular nature of authenticity for monuments and sites as a practical guide to future treatment and monitoring;*
 - *efforts to update authenticity assessments in light of changing values and circumstances.*
3. *Particularly important are efforts to ensure that attributed values are respected, and that their determination included efforts to build, as far as possible, a multidisciplinary and community consensus concerning these values.*
4. *Approaches should also build on and facilitate international co-operation among all those with an interest in conservation of cultural heritage, in order to improve global respect and understanding for the diverse expressions and values of each culture.*
5. *Continuation and extension of this dialogue to the various regions and cultures of the world is a prerequisite to increasing the practical value of consideration of authenticity in the conservation of the common heritage of humankind.*
6. *Increasing awareness within the public of this fundamental dimension of heritage is an absolute necessity in order to arrive at concrete measures for safeguarding the vestiges of the past. This means developing greater understanding of the values represented by the cultural properties themselves, as well as respecting the role such monuments and sites play in contemporary society.*

Appendix 2: Definitions

Conservation: all efforts designed to understand cultural heritage, know its history and meaning, ensure its material safeguard and, as required, its presentation, restoration and enhancement. (Cultural heritage is understood to include monuments, groups of buildings and sites of cultural value as defined in Article 1 of the World Heritage Convention).

Information sources: all material, written, oral and figurative sources which make it possible to know the nature, specifications, meaning and history of the cultural heritage.

II. CHRONOLOGICAL BIBLIOGRAPHY - ON AUTHENTICITY

Publications which preceded the Nara meeting and which helped prepare the ground for the authenticity discussion which took place in Nara:

Larsen, Knut Einar, *A note on the authenticity of historic timber buildings with particular reference to Japan*, Occasional Papers for the World Heritage Convention, ICOMOS, December 1992.

Larsen, Knut Einar, *Authenticity and Reconstruction: Architectural Preservation in Japan*, Norwegian Institute of Technology, Vols. 1-2, 1993.

Preparatory meeting for the Nara Meeting, held in Bergen, Norway, 31 January - 1 February 1994:

Larsen, Knut Einar and Marstein, Nils (ed.), *Conference on authenticity in relation to the World Heritage Convention Preparatory workshop*, Bergen, Norway, 31 January - 2 February 1994, Tapir Forlag, Trondheim 1994.

The Nara meeting, 1-6 November 1994, Nara, Japan:

Larsen, Knut Einar with an editorial group (Jokilehto, Lemaire, Masuda, Marstein, Stovel), *Nara conference on authenticity in relation to the World Heritage Convention. Conférence de Nara sur l'authenticité dans le cadre de la Convention du Patrimoine Mondial*. Nara, Japan, 1-6 November 1994, Proceedings published by UNESCO - World Heritage Centre, Agency for Cultural Affairs of Japan, ICCROM and ICOMOS, 1994.

The Nara meeting brought together 45 experts from 26 countries and international organizations from around the world. Their papers are contained in the volume cited above, as is the Nara document prepared in a working group of 12 meeting participants and edited by Raymond Lemaire and Herb Stovel. This volume of Proceedings invites members of ICOMOS and others to extend the discussions of the Nara Document issues to other regions of the world.

Significant post-Nara regional meetings (as of January 2005):

Authenticity and Monitoring, October 17-22, 1995, Cesky Krumlov, Czech Republic, ICOMOS European Conference, 1995.

The European ICOMOS Conference of 17-22 October, 1995 which took place in Cesky Krumlov, Czech Republic brought together 18 European members of ICOMOS to present national views of the application of authenticity concepts from 14 countries. A synthesis of presentations affirmed the importance of authenticity within the analytical processes we apply to conservation problems as a means of assuring truthful, sincere and honest approaches to conservation problems, and gave emphasis to strengthening the notion of dynamic conservation in order to apply authenticity analysis appropriately to cultural landscapes and urban settings.

Interamerican symposium on authenticity in the conservation and management of the cultural heritage, US/ICOMOS, The Getty Conservation Institute, San Antonio, Texas 1996.

This Authenticity meeting which took place in San Antonio, Texas, USA in March 1996, brought together participants from ICOMOS national committees of North, Central and South America to debate the application of the concepts of Nara. The meeting adopted the

Declaration of San Antonio, which discussed the relationship between authenticity and identity, history, materials, social value, dynamic and static sites, stewardship and economics, and contained recommendations extending “proofs” of authenticity to include *reflection of its true value, integrity, context, identity, use and function*, as well as recommendations pertinent to different typologies of sites.

Saouma-Forero, Galia, (edited by), *Authenticity and integrity in an African context: expert meeting, Great Zimbabwe*, Zimbabwe, 26-29 May 2000, UNESCO - World Heritage Centre, Paris 2001.

The Great Zimbabwe meeting organised by the World Heritage Centre (26-29 May 2000) focused attention on both authenticity and integrity in an African context. Eighteen speakers looked at issues arising in management of both cultural and natural heritage properties. The meeting resulted in the publication cited above, which includes a set of recommendations coming from meeting participants. Among recommendations were suggestions to include *management systems, language, and other forms of intangible heritage* among attributes expressing authenticity, and an emphasis given to the place of local communities in the sustainable heritage management process.

Reconstruction discussions in the context of the *World Heritage Convention* (as of January 2005):

The Riga Charter on authenticity and historical reconstruction in relationship to cultural heritage adopted by regional conference, Riga, 24 October 2000, Latvian National Commission for UNESCO - World Heritage Centre, ICCROM.

Incerti Medici, Elena and Stovel, Herb, *Authenticity and historical reconstruction in relationship with cultural heritage, regional conference, Riga, Latvia, October 23-24 2000: summary report*, UNESCO - World Heritage Centre, Paris, ICCROM, Rome 2001.

Stovel, Herb, *The Riga Charter on authenticity and historical reconstruction in relationship to cultural heritage, Riga, Latvia, October 2000*, in *Conservation and management of archaeological sites*, Vol. 4, n. 4, 2001.

Alternatives to historical reconstruction in the World Heritage Cities, Tallinn, 16-18 May 2002, Tallinn Cultural Heritage Department, Estonia National Commission for UNESCO, Estonia National Heritage Board.