

CONSERVATION IN USE AND REUSE OF HISTORICAL BUILDINGS

DANIELA PITTALUGA

Department Architettura e Design/Università degli Studi di Genova

daniela.pittaluga@arch.unige.it

Abstract.

The preservation of historic structures has often been associated with their use. Since the nineteenth century, some of the restoration theorists placed the "value of use" among the key ones to pay attention to. Indeed the "use" favors constant monitoring, possible maintenance and consequently conservation. Use and reuse therefore seemed synonymous with "best practice". However, several factors have undermined these assumptions since the 1960s. Giuseppe Zander denounces and criticizes the exclusion of the theme of the reuse of monuments within the discipline of restoration. On the other hand, the "Adaptive reuse" that arose initially in some Anglo-Saxon-speaking countries, seems to acquire more and more space, even within the world of restoration with all that this entails. The article starts from an examination of the theoretical assumptions related to the use and reuse of the architectures, then it makes a comparison with some real cases, Italian but also foreign in order to answer the following questions : are there more vulnerable buildings, less prone to be reused? are there more fragile materials or technical solutions? how much does the change in use during building transformations affect the invasiveness of the solutions? or how much is the change in mentality that causes the most damage, even in those interventions where the destination of use remains the same?

The article also proposes a verification of the use / reuse, not only with regard to the material heritage of historical structures but also to the intangible heritage underlying them. How much a new concept of use can actually modify, or sometimes even cancel, this particular type of heritage? How much a new use can be compatible with the intangible heritage of a previous use? How much is it possible to keep memory through the material traces of a previous use and its intangible heritage?

The article also intends to investigate the current panorama of positive and less positive interventions in order to conclude with a series of resilience / resistance strategies as useful elements for the preservation of historical structures.

Keywords: conservation, reuse, material heritage, immaterial heritage