

ART AND SCIENCE, ART IS SCIENCE

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My speech will be brief so as to leave room for the speakers who follow. I would like to start by highlighting some aspects related to how the Journal started, to its development and history, aspects that I have put together in some figures; in this regard, I thought I would start with a statement: "I believe that the incompleteness of any culture is its first virtue, because it leaves the door open to encounter, interpretation and truth".

The beginning of my speech with this idea, in some ways a precept, was already present in one of the first Editorials with which "Quaderni di Scienza della Conservazione" opened in 2001 at the University of Bologna and became, in 2007, the historical-technical Journal "Conservation Science in Cultural Heritage".

Besides, the precept itself, on the twentieth anniversary of the publication of the Journal in 2020, as well as on this occasion dedicated to its presentation, led me to entitle the present meeting: "Art and science: art is science".

Apologizing for this unusual beginning, I asked myself whether the idea with which the Journal was launched, which encompasses the three phases that distinguish the evaluation of a work of art, i.e. encounter, interpretation and truth, has, over the years, pursued and actually achieved its objective.

I shall let the scholars judge and give their answers, they are the ones who are involved in doing research with dedication, perseverance, and competence, but also with humility, impartiality and enthusiasm, within the context of the numerous diversified problems that deal with the protection and enhancement of cultural and environmental heritage.

At this point - and I apologize for the delay - I would like to greet and thank the participants in this meeting, albeit from a distance, due to the well-known pandemic situation that continues to involve and disrupt our country and the whole world.

Today's event follows several meetings that have been organized in recent years at the Accademia delle Scienze dell'Istituto di Bologna on themes referable to the scope of the Academy as established in their statute, in which Art.2 states that it aims to "encourage and promote the Physical, Natural and Medical Sciences, as well as the Moral Sciences".

On this occasion, following the kind invitation to present the Journal, from the President of the Accademia delle Scienze dell'Istituto di Bologna, Prof. Walter Tega, whom I sincerely thank, it was decided to involve some qualified representatives from suitable scientific areas for the said meeting: "Art and Science, Art is Science".

And it is precisely the synergy between Art and Science, as an indisputable truth that has not yet been accomplished, that is the result of the different experiences and skills of the speakers acquired over the years with their respective research and institutional activities. In this regard, the following persons were invited to participate in this meeting:

- The philosopher, Mauro Mantovani, Rettore Magnifico dell'Università Pontificia Salesiana, Rome
- The art historian, Daniela Porro, Soprintendente Speciale Archeologia Belle Arti Paesaggio, Rome
- The architect, Giovanni Carbonara, Emerito della Sapienza Università di Rome
- The historian, Damiano Fonseca, Accademico dei Lincei.

In this way, there is a concrete response to the meaning of the holistic value of the cultural artefact seen as a set of values, in addition to the consequent importance of addressing the various problems of protection and enhancement of cultural and environmental heritage in an interdisciplinary way.

And bearing in mind this holistic value, it is exactly what the papers express and testify to, when submitted to the Journal for publication and are then evaluated by the Qualified Reviewers – they are all referable to various areas of investigation and corresponding values (Figure 1): the historical-humanistic area with cultural, historical, aesthetic and artistic values; the philological-philosophical-social area with spiritual, symbolic and social values; the technical-economic-management area with technical, economic, financial, marketable and commercial values; the legal-identity area with values of authenticity, identity, interdisciplinarity and internationalization. The latter two terms are the key words on which the entire structure of the Journal is based:

A work of art is ultimately characterized by a holistic value or a set of values that cover different areas of investigation.

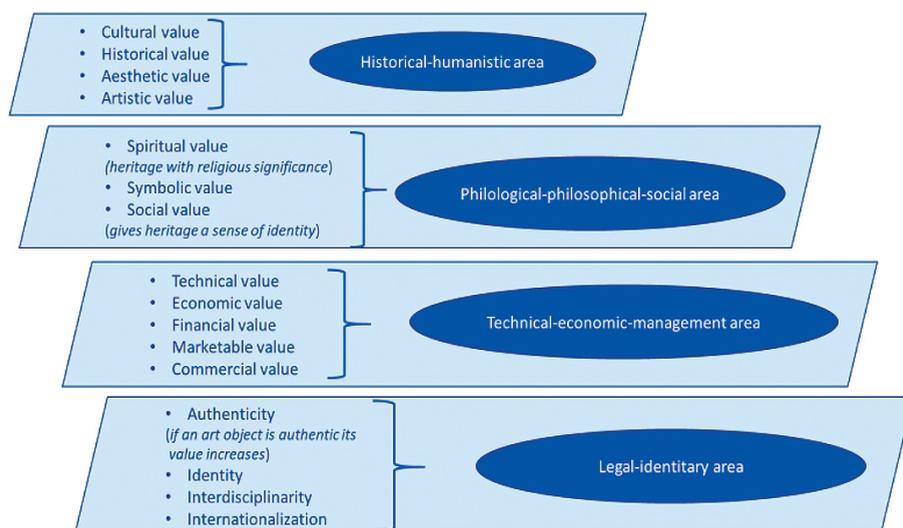


Figure 1. The holistic value of cultural heritage and areas of investigation.

Figure 2 points out how the aforementioned title “Art and Science: Art is Science” corresponds directly to the picture of a person who rightly represents this synergy between the Sciences, namely that of Leonardo da Vinci, the sixteenth-century genius, whose two emblematic works testify, in my opinion, to the aforementioned synergy of the artist who lends himself to science and the scientist who lends himself to art, thus merging the two worlds together with his innate peculiarities.



Figure 2. Art and Science: Art is Science.

I am referring to the Vitruvian Man, a drawing in pen and ink on paper (man as the measure for all things) and to the Mona Lisa, in the latter case, to the Mona Lisa housed in the Louvre, an oil painting on wood, and to a second Mona Lisa known as the Earlier Mona Lisa or Isleworth Mona Lisa, an oil on canvas, which is actually the first Mona Lisa, as it was executed by Leonardo 11-12 years before the Louvre Mona Lisa.

Now, why did I find it of particular interest to mention this painting and this first version by Leonardo?

Because for some time now, it has been the subject of my studies, and it is also the subject of a heated debate among scholars with historical and technical backgrounds, a debate that comes from pre-established positions, preconceptions, and consequent evaluations that in no way converge in a mutual need to find the scientific truth, seen as integrating Art and Science.

It is on the union between Art and Science that I would like to end by looking at an excerpt from a writing by Leonardo, shown in Figure 2:

“Painting can be shown to be philosophy, because it deals with the motion of bodies and the promptitude of their actions”.

It was with such promptitude, or rather, readiness, audacity, and boldness that I dared to launch, in what was certainly not a favorable setting, in that temporally distant but emotionally close 2001, the initiative, that is, the opening of the Journal “Quaderni

di Scienza della Conservazione” which was then to become the current Journal “Conservation Science in Cultural Heritage”.

To conclude, I would like to mention my deep gratitude to those who have shared with me, in these twenty years, the hardships and the joys, and those moments - and there have been many disheartening, but equally exciting ones.

Given the large number, I shall not give names and here, I am referring to the Deputy Editors and the Scientific Editors, as well as the members of the Scientific Board, the Linguistic Advisor, the staff of the Alma Digital Library – which, with OJS (Open Journal Support) of the University of Bologna manages and publishes online journals, including the Journal – the Editorial Secretary, the Journal Manager, the Editorial Staff, the Head Publisher and staff members of L’Erma di Bretschneider, the historic publishing house that has published the hard copy of the Journal since 2020: the entire structure, therefore, to which I owe the deep gratitude that has allowed the Journal to occupy a place in the world of scientific publishing at an intercontinental level.

In this regard, a few years ago, “Conservation Science in Cultural Heritage” was included in the “Emerging Sources Citation Index” (ESCI - Journal List Web of Science, initially managed by Thomson Reuters and today by Clarivate Analytics) and is a “reference point for evaluation and quality control for scientific journals”, with the function of evaluating journals following a system based on strict criteria such as: objectivity, selectivity and collection dynamics.