

CULTURE, NOT CULTURALISM: THE JOURNAL “CONSERVATION SCIENCE IN CULTURAL HERITAGE”

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It was definitely not easy for Salvatore Lorusso to validate the theoretical and operative framework whose overall design would inspire the editorial initiative we are celebrating today and which has reached the prestigious 20-year milestone of its existence.

To prove it, we only need to mention the obstacles from within the Tuscia faculty itself at the hearing of the teaching staff promoted by the Ministry of the University and Scientific Research concerning the “state” of the Faculty in Viterbo and the Degree Course in Udine.

The only professor who declared he was available for the hearing was Lorusso, whose observations were extremely precious in preparing the report for the Minister, which would provide the basis for the Udine Conference and the report for the curricular outline of the “Reform”.

However, our colleague was moving to the glorious University of Bologna and the prestigious seat in Ravenna, where there was a particular cultural vivacity in the Institute of *Antichità Ravennati e Bizantine* directed by Raffaella Farioli Campanati, an impeccable art historian, and where, in the section *Italia Nostra*, Desideria Pasolini Dall’Onda was the competent hostess.

It is not by chance that in this new academic and cultural context, Salvatore Lorusso’s interests developed until the launching of a Journal that was an innovation in the sector of cultural heritage.

“The invitation to be strong and to arm oneself heralds the inevitable battle”. This is what we could feel in that distant, but near 2001, the year of the founding, at the University of Bologna, of the Journal, “Quaderni di Scienza e della Conservazione”, which changed its name to “Conservation Science in Cultural Heritage” in 2007, to become more international.

What was the reason for “being strong”?

Sharing with Salvatore Lorusso the idea and, therefore, the intent to open a new and different journal, we felt we were facing a difficult challenge. The duel was not against a local, national or international Institution, but against an atavistic, and as such, acquired idea and consequent acknowledgment of the singularity and validity related to the decisional uniqueness in its evaluation by the historians of the historical-humanistic sciences for problems regarding the protection and valorization of cultural heritage: the technical-experimental sciences could, if necessary, intervene, but only for a potential and simple consultation.

A real doctrine existed in life and in the course of scientific research in that sector, which represented an attitude that was well-established and diffused. Therefore, this is the global meaning on which rests the current text written on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Journal’s publication.

At first it is important to underline its intent, which over the years the Journal has fully achieved as its objective, and which was born from the will to tackle and examine

in depth the knowledge and research in the polyhedric sector of cultural heritage and taking into consideration the holistic value of cultural heritage.

The intent was to point out that the approach, which was different compared to the way information had been passed on in the past, in discussing cultural heritage wished to highlight the importance of the set of values corresponding to the different scientific historical-humanistic, philological-philosophical-social, technical-economical-managerial, legal-identity areas.

Hence, the importance of interdisciplinarity in dealing with and helping to find a solution to the numerous and different problems related to cultural heritage.

Consequently, the importance of a historical-technical Journal in observing the state of the art regarding research on multidisciplinary aspects connected to cultural heritage, to its knowledge and conservation, was evident. Such research, it is worth emphasizing could only be carried out in synergy with the different and specific disciplinary sectors that characterized it.

The aim was to affirm the importance of the uniqueness of the sciences as a synergy between human sciences and experimental sciences and, at the same time, to offer an instrument of communication accessible to the experts, to the Institutions and public opinion. The objective was to show how historical-artistic research could be taken a step further in its objectivity by dealing with it from new and more stimulating points of view and using a different investigation method. Such assumptions, presented and communicated, were at the basis of the research sent over the years for publication in the Journal. The subjects connected to the various scientific areas were then subjected to the evaluation of Qualified Reviewers, who were competent experts in specific research areas. Particular attention was paid to young researchers, who were offered a way and means of having a continuous flow of knowledge, so that in the future they could give a meaning to our effort, having been driven to improve it.

Looking beyond the medium-long term, the efforts made to open the Journal, planting the seeds for the future, which is such a coveted reality, have won over the media and the international market. Edited in English and Italian, and available in hardcopy and electronic version, it rests on two conceptual terms: interdisciplinarity and internationalization.

This is therefore, how the research, studies, experimental contributions, and thematic collections, which have been the subject of the annual publication of the Journal for twenty years, from 2001 to 2020, represent a concrete result attributable to the integration in the scientific field of the above-mentioned knowledge, a knowledge that has no boundaries, scientific, geographical or otherwise.

In these chaotic and particular times, owing to an international scenario where globalization dominates not only in an economic context, but also in the cultural and scientific sectors, we should not only rely on an editorial model with univocal characteristics, but on the peculiarity of a dynamic model, of an open structure, free and innovative, with a team that is likewise eager to follow open minds.

This then is how with the aim of creating a synergy between art and science, the desire was to highlight that, if culture is one, cultural is also plural.

Culture is a quality, an identity that unites and elevates, whereas the cultural disperses, scatters, deteriorates, discredits, forcing us to look at numbers in the cumbersome context of quantity: cultural heritage, cultural activities, cultural actors, cultural engineers, cultural deposits, cultural industries.

This is why it is not only important to verify, in the criticism of an art work and in the scientific evaluation of research, whether they meet the criteria mentioned above, but

also to certify if the art work or the research correspond to “culture” and, so, to quality and identity: this is, therefore, how the principles, on which the scientific works published in the Journal “Conservation Science in Cultural Heritage” have been established and consolidated.