

The programme of the International Council of Monuments and Sites foresaw the publication of a review specializing in the analysis of themes relating to the safeguard of cultural properties, monuments and places of international interest.

What yesterday was still an idea has become a reality to-day. Our periodical does not try to imitate the excellent reviews of aesthetic criticism, of history of art, and of restoration, published in all countries. Nor does it intend to be a supplement to the numerous bulletins devoted to specifically local problems.

« Monumentum » has in view to express the purpose of Icomos and the ideals inspiring it. It presents itself as the instrument to voice our aims and programmes and, at the same time, it may lead to a better understanding both of the universal value represented by the patrimony of monuments and of the culture reflected in this patrimony.

The review will give evidence of our conviction that such a patrimony is the result — either by conscious co-operation, or by fortuitous help — of civilizations, even though different and far away in time and space. The architect, the historian of art, the curator of monuments, the scholar, the technician of restoration, in their collaboration to « Monumentum » will have to consider themselves as more than the mere specialists which they are, to grasp the problem of safeguarding cultural properties in all its complexity.

The topics discussed in the review will not be determined by data of minor importance but by cases which are really representative and of universal interest.

We are not unaware of the difficulties which may arise when the question is how to guarantee to « Monumentum » the original contributions and discussions of a high scientific and doctrinal level which the review intends to demand. To carry out our plans and to realise our programme, we will have to give proof of an authentic « œcumenism » by claiming our conviction that cultural properties result from reciprocal influences among various civilizations at all levels. This will force us to divest ourselves of any chauvinistic pride in order to attain a universal level when conceiving the problems of how to safeguard monuments and sites.

Thus we have in view a revision of the traditional forma mentis; this implies the adoption of a new critical method which should be able to satisfy the demands and the wishes of our time. It also implies really penetrating information criteria. We may not forget indeed that the careful reader and the shrewd judge of our essays will be to-morrow's specialist; better prepared than we are and less forbearing than we wish him to be, he will be accurately informed of the conquests and acquisitions realized everywhere. To him we confide the solution of those problems we have not been able to carry out up to now.

The future experts will judge whether we did what we could and tried everything to hand down a patrimony of which the safeguard depends upon our knowledge, tenacious will power, and diligent care, with the help of the most up-to-date technical means, and above all upon a view of our civilization from which any narrow-minded attitude and sectarianism would be banished.

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President of the International Council
of Monuments and Sites.*