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ТРУДЫ МЕЖДУНАРОДНОЙ  
НАУЧНОЙ КОНФЕРЕНЦИИ

# РУБЕЖИ ПАМЯТИ:

СУДЬБЫ  
КУЛЬТУРНОГО НАСЛЕДИЯ  
В АРМЕНИИ И РОССИИ



КАФЕДРА  
МУЗЕЙНОГО ДЕЛА И  
ОХРАНЫ ПАМЯТНИКОВ  
Санкт-Петербургский  
Государственный университет

САНКТ-ПЕТЕРБУРГСКИЙ ГОСУДАРСТВЕННЫЙ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ

# **РУБЕЖИ ПАМЯТИ: СУДЬБЫ КУЛЬТУРНОГО НАСЛЕДИЯ В АРМЕНИИ И РОССИИ**

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**Рубежи памяти: судьбы культурного наследия в Армении и России:**

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В сборник вошли статьи участников международной научной конференции «Рубежи памяти: судьбы культурного наследия в Армении и России», прошедшей в Санкт-Петербурге в апреле 2013 г. Исследования авторов имеют междисциплинарный характер и используют широкий спектр методов философских и исторических наук, а также культурологии и искусствоведения. Авторы статей анализируют стратегии отношения к культурному наследию от начального периода истории Армении и России и до наших дней, исследуют историю культурных влияний и заимствований, предопределивших некоторые специфические черты культурных парадигм двух стран. Значительное место в содержании сборника уделено рассмотрению христианских традиций, сыгравших в формировании культурного наследия Армении и России существенную роль.

Издание адресовано историкам, музейным сотрудникам, философам, студентам и преподавателям, всем тем, кому интересна проблема сохранения культурной памяти и культурного наследия.

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## ВВЕДЕНИЕ

Рубежи между странами строго очерчены — нарушение этих границ обычно ведет к политическим конфликтам и военным действиям. Рубежи культурной памяти, напротив, достаточно размыты: культурное наследие стран, тесно связанных общностью символов литературы и искусства, религиозных традиций, не терпит установления границ. Преодоление рубежей культурной памяти может стать позитивным, прогрессивным процессом при формировании современной культурной парадигмы. Метафизический и онтологический аспекты подобного взаимопроникновения культур должны стать предметом культурно-философского анализа ученых различных стран постсоветского периода. Для России и Армении особенно важно исследование «лакун» культурной памяти, когда то или иное явление культуры может быть незаслуженно забыто или утратило свое прежнее значение в глазах современников, следовательно, необходимы поиски новых смысловых акцентов во взаимодействии двух культур. Поэтому для современного гуманитарного знания изучение теории сохранения культурного наследия как особой сферы памяти поколений приобретает доминирующее значение. Формирование универсальных характеристик западноевропейской культуры в XXI в. не снижает роли национальных паттернов, что, в свою очередь, отражается при исследовании таких понятий, как «культурное наследие», «самосознание», «социокультурная идентификация», «культурная память». Культурная память генетически связана с мировоззренческими представлениями, которые на первых этапах человеческой истории формируют

традиционную культуру, поддерживаемую посредством культа, вследствие чего именно культурная память удерживает единство культуры трансляцией неизменных основ мирового бытия, воплощенных в артефактах материального и нематериального культурного наследия. Для истории взаимовлияний армянской и русской культуры христианская традиция является базисным структурным элементом. Роль христианской культуры проявляется через социально-государственные структуры и национальный характер, который складывается под воздействием социально-исторической памяти и одновременно актуализирует ее на новом этапе исторического развития. В этой связи исследование формирования качеств национального характера, таких как терпимость и патриотизм, свободолюбие и коллективизм, религиозность и безверие, способность к самоорганизации, позволяют в меняющемся мире найти новые пути взаимопонимания. Вера в подлинность культурных ценностей, доверие к практике сохранения наследия и уверенность в правильности интерпретации культурного наследия — вот та триада, которая формирует мировоззрение человека и отражается в общественном сознании в эпоху Нового времени. Чрезвычайно важно возвращение в образовательную систему двух стран изучения национальных художественных памятников прошлого, которые сохранили свои культурные и национальные особенности. Памятники истории и культуры позволяют реконструировать связь между социально-исторической памятью и обществом, ибо эти явления не только взаимодействуют между собой, но и предопределяют существование друг друга. В этом процессе безусловное лидерство должны принадлежать институтам памяти: библиотекам, архивам, музеям. Открытость и многофункциональность институтов памяти позволяет говорить о появлении нового акцента, направленного на воспроизводство новых культурных форм. Примером является деятельность Института древних рукописей им. Св. Месропа Маштоца «Матенадаран», который осуществляет не только хранение и изучение древних армянских рукописей, но и ведет разнообразную культурную и образовательную деятельность как в Армении, так и за рубежом. Исследователи выделили общие для



## ВВЕДЕНИЕ

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институтов памяти тенденции: развитие их полифункциональности и интерактивности; становление библиотек и музеев как образовательных учреждений; активное использование ими новых информационных и коммуникационных технологий. Освоение реального культурного наследия, его материальных объектов и нематериальных феноменов требует от субъекта больших усилий, прежде всего достаточного объема знаний, владения определенными методами анализа артефактов, понимания содержания наследия, сложного языка смыслов и традиций. Таким образом, самореализация личности происходит через творение культурного феномена, которое вбирает в себя всю культурную традицию, всю систему ценностей данной эпохи и тем маркирует процесс индивидуальной переработки наследия. Специалисты в области музейного и архивного дела, истории и философии культуры и искусства, историки Армении и России могут по праву участвовать в этом процессе.

A. M. Ronchi

## MAKING CULTURAL HERITAGE ALIVE: THE ROLE OF CULTURAL MEDIATORS

### Preface

Among a number of interesting topics covered by this conference my interest was kept by a short list of items<sup>1</sup> as "Forms of translation and actualization of a cultural heritage" that are in some way related to what in analogy with the Internet sector we can term "Heritage 2.0". This term does not refer specifically to technology but more in general involving a completely renewed approach to our heritage.

In the twenty-first century, the Information Society era, does the nineteenth century's encyclopaedic approach to museums still apply?

One of the main ways of evaluating the effectiveness of a visit to a museum or exhibit is to ask for feedback about it. Do users exiting the museum believe that they know or understand more about the exhibits than they did before the visit? How do they "score" the experience? And what about feelings and emotions? Of course the whole paper do not refer to experts and researchers.

Referring to the classic taxonomy proposed by researchers "objects" may be mainly subdivided between "tools" and "communication objects". Through the centuries significant "tools" loose their practical utility and may turn into "communication objects" as it happened for roman masonry tools or Galileo's telescopes.

Artefacts and archaeological remains are mainly "communication objects", so they must "communicate" something to visitors. The communication

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<sup>1</sup> Forms of translation and actualization of a cultural heritage, Strategy of authority and society at preservation and actualization of a cultural heritage. The modern exhibition's practice of museums, archives, libraries. ...How to get citizens closer to heritage.

process associated with cultural heritage involves a reasonable degree of complexity. We can present a work of art and propose an interpretation of it, or try to offer to the visitors the whole set of elements required to evaluate the work of art autonomously. Each visitor may receive a different “message” from the artefact accordingly with his/her own cultural background, interests, mood, etc.

Some of the main intrinsic difficulties with the cultural heritage communication process arise from the fact that the work of art usually pertains to a different historical and cultural context, from its integrity and conservation; indeed, many of them are no more located in the original place and its original location may be not accessible anymore.

How many times have we seen descriptions such as “Terracotta Fragment — Second Century”, objects removed from their usual context or function, and artefacts on display without a “code” that can help us to understand their function or meaning?

Of course the case of archaeological relicts is one of the most significant even because, very often, glass boxes inside museums located far from the original archaeological site host similar relicts.

In such a situation we face a cryptic object pertaining to a completely different age and cultural context, deprived by its original function and location, it's hard enough? Anyway the situation does not differ too much if we consider frescos, sculptures or any other work of art including mechanical and scientific marvels.

The “experience” in visiting the Sistine Chapel may be enriched if we consider that there was a conflict between Florence and the Vatican State at the time of the Last Judgment fresco or the statue named Pietà Bandini was shaped in order to appear in right proportions once placed on a marble basement or more simply making evident the dynamic effect frozen in a “futuristic” drawing.

It may seem a outrageous reference but even in theme parks where we face a minimum complexity in “experience” provision there is a significant care in briefing the spectator at different levels, the overall context, the specific action and the best way to experience the performance. Forty years of experience in this sector have certified the customer satisfaction.

In recent times some pilot project tested a similar approach merging together the need to control the flux of visitors, mainly for preservation issues, and the attempt to improve the experience of citizens thanks to one of more "stops" in briefing rooms before the "live" experience<sup>2</sup>.

Since a long time we felt the need to improve the approach to cultural heritage, to find an up to date promotion of our rich and precious heritage. The role of "memory institutions" is to research, to preserve for future generation but even, last but not the least, to disseminate and promote knowledge and "culture".

Some potential questions are: How can we get our heritage alive? How to engage citizens in heritage? How to actualize our patrimony? How to involve young generations, "digital natives"?

Let's take into account for instance a page of an ancient codex as the Leonardo da Vinci's Atlantic codex. An exhibit showing these wonderful artefact may attract visitors for the historical and general cultural value of the object but many times it does not "communicate" to the visitor, the original role and value of the document, understanding the meaning and the innovation due to that work. It is a paramount objective to provide the opportunity to fully understand and appreciate similar artefacts, not only the myth of the fetish.

If dissemination and promotion of knowledge and culture is one of the tasks in charge to memory institutions in comparison with the market this is the "service" to be delivered to citizens. As a consequence it would be reasonable to meter this performance and try to improve as much as possible the level of customer satisfaction. If it make sense to rank the "value" of an artefact or relict the success of a memory institution does not depend too much by the "value" of their assets, of course it helps, more frequently it depends by the ability to "communicate" and promote.

The task to activate and better communication between artefacts and citizens is in charge to a specific professional profile the "*communication manager*". A person or a group of persons sharing this specific

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<sup>2</sup> E. g. Multimedia Room introducing the set of Giotto's frescos at the Scrovegni Chapel in Padua, briefing room introducing Leonardo's Last Supper in Milan.

skill, the group may be composed by curators, art historians, experts, psychologists, designers, etc.

One of the main roles of the “*communications manager*” must be to rebuild the original context of the work of art in such a way that it is possible to “communicate<sup>3</sup>” it together with all of the elements required to make an objective evaluation. We can better term this role “cultural mediator” including in this definition both communication and mediation aspects. So at the end we must provide a code in order to interpret the object, its historic context. In order to accomplish this task we can take advantage from the use of some technologies<sup>4</sup>.

Of course, the implementation of these services will necessitate a different workflow, additional competencies and skills, and more exhibition space in order to host hi-tech installations.

In addition, one of the possible catalysts for the application of technology to cultural heritage is education. Technology-based cultural heritage services should be used at home, at school and on-site. Indeed, there are many digital cultural data repositories, usually websites, which could potentially be linked to setup an educational service<sup>5</sup>. Anyway we must adequately take into account the significant evolution of user behaviours and preferences, especially if we refer to young generations and students.

## Users Evolution

Now let's get closer to the main topic, young students and new generations. Is a common understanding that recent generations represent a discontinuity if compared with the past ones. Such discontinuity or if preferred singularity is recognised both by adults complaining because

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<sup>3</sup> Artefacts usually come from a different historical period to our own, and so we must re-enable communication between the artefact and the public.

<sup>4</sup> E. g. if we need to recreate the original context of the work of art, an important aspect that is specifically linked to computer graphics and 3-D models is space contextualisation, which means the ability to place the digital 3-D object in the right location while preserving the full set of spatial relations between the model and all of the other objects in the scene.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example. URL: <http://www.louvre.edu>.

their children do not pay attention or are getting bored by learning and by adults that discovered new skills and capabilities in young generations. Why my daughter may remember one by one dozens of Pokémon names and attributes and she completely unable to remember the names and the time sequence of the seven kings of Rome? What is the difference between Pikaciu and Romolus?

What's wrong? Do we need at least to re-shape our didactic methodology? Probably yes, and unfortunately we are already in late, we miss and are still missing an incredible learning potential due to the improved mind-set of new generations. Of course, as mentioned in the title of another contribution I wrote recently, such generations are now attending university courses and in glimpse the problem will find a natural solution, they will educate future generation taking advantage from their own vision and approach to information and knowledge. Of course the lack of our "cultural mediators" role will cause, in such a situation, some drawbacks in the implementation of the new approach to traditional content.

The impact on daily life of digital technology is much more relevant than the effect due to previous technologies. The appeal and the broad field of applications favour a real change of behaviour.

More than ten years ago the report *New Information Technologies and the Young*<sup>6</sup> identified the extent of provision and access to technologies, the ways in which young people use them, and some of the opportunities and difficulties associated with each form of communication and expression. The report provides a comprehensive picture of young people as users and consumers of new technologies, how many hours per week watching television, how many hours playing video games, downloading music and videos, browsing the internet, using smart phones, instant messaging and more. In addition it provides some information in terms of their creative activity, such as their use of digital audio and video, website creation, and distributing visual, musical or literary work across the Internet.

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<sup>6</sup> The project *New Information Technologies and the Young* was launched by Screen Digest — General Direction Office IV of the Council of Europe. A final report on the project was published; see Council of Europe (2001).

## The Internet Generation

As a result of this environmental change, the combined action of long term exposure to TV programmes, video games, Internet browsing and more we face now a completely new generation, the *digital natives*<sup>7</sup>. How do we identify a digital native? Digital Natives are used to receiving information really fast. Their brain seems to be able to process information in parallel and multi-task. So they prefer direct/random access to information and content. Graphic and Video content are longer preferred than text. They use to look for support on line and use to belong to one or more communities (users, supporters, owners...).

Similar skills are often misunderstood or very little appreciated by older generation, the *digital immigrants*, they perceive a mix of drawbacks such as students look bored and pay a very little attention or they do other tasks during lectures. This is a side effect of their special skills acquired in hours and hours of digital tasks. The information transfer rates of MTV or the attention required by a video game are much more than a foreign language lesson. The power of digital story telling is a strong competitor in many cases. The skill to learn by example or by doing is very relevant in digital generations; they do not need instruction manuals or training courses. Nowadays digital devices, and not only them<sup>8</sup>, do not include users manuals, people use to learn by doing, only if they require special safety instructions there is an instruction sheet within the box.

Digital natives prefer games to "serious" work; they prefer edutainment applications or serious games. There is a very well known example of marketing strategy based on educational games. An American company launching a new 3D CAD software on the market decided to market this new product thanks to an on line game. In order to play the game the user must recreate some mechanical details using the 3D CAD software tool, at the end of the game the user have learned enough in order to use the CAD system.

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<sup>7</sup> We use the terms coined by Mark Prensky.

<sup>8</sup> E. g. IKEA furniture kits use to provide a very basic instruction sheet.

## Dealing with digital natives

In 2001 in a very well know paper<sup>9</sup> Mark Prensky outlined: "It is amazing to me how in all the hoopla and debate these days about the decline of education in the US we ignore the most fundamental of its causes. Our students have changed radically. Today's students are no longer the people our educational system was designed to teach".

In the same period of time another expert, Francesco Antinucci, a cognitive psychologist wrote a book entitled "La scuola si è rotta — Perché cambiano i modi di apprendere"<sup>10</sup> ("The school crashed: why learning patterns are changing"). Later on the same author wrote "Computer per un figlio"<sup>11</sup> ("Computer for a child"). I was involved myself in the same field both because of my direct interest in exploring the use of digital technologies in the academic field<sup>12</sup>, early in the nineties my lab was in charge for the EMWAC (European Microsoft Windows Academic Centre) and because my research activity in the field of new technologies for Cultural Heritage and Museums. Again the discontinuity between past and actual generations was the key topic of the reports and studies.

Is it true that pupils refer to the Web as their own memory and basic knowledge? We may say basically Yes even if this represents for many reason a concern. Are information available on line quality proof?

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<sup>9</sup> Marc Prensky, *Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants, On the Horizon* (NCB University Press, Vol. 9 No. 5, October 2001).

<sup>10</sup> Francesco Antinucci, "La scuola si è rotta — Perché cambiano i modi di apprendere", Editori Laterza, 2001.

<sup>11</sup> Francesco Antinucci, *Computer per un figlio: giocare, apprendere, creare*, Editori Laterza 2001.

<sup>12</sup> Alfredo M. Ronchi, *Hypertext in Education*, International Conference ECAADE, Budapest (H), September 1990, Alfredo M. Ronchi, *Windows in cattedra*, SOFTTIME n°1 /1992, Alfredo M. Ronchi, Patrice Arenra, Philippe Benthien, Eric Busch, Sébastien Canus, Bruce Damer, Elseline Smit, David Villechaise, *Virtual University: a connective intelligence exercise*, MediARTEch, Fortezza da Basso. Firenze 23 maggio 3 giugno 1996, 2. Alfredo M. Ronchi, "Enseignement a distance: personnalisation, interactivite' et evaluation", Fondation Sophia Antipolis, Sophia Antipolis 27, 30 March 1996.



And more and more they really think: why do I need to memorize when Napoleon did surrender at Waterloo if I can click on Wikipedia?

Part of the problem is due to the fact that in recent times some technologies are (re-) enabling and extending some “old” communication formats. Today, people have the opportunity to create digital objects, a new class of objects from an ontological point of view, and they can use multimedia, virtual reality technologies and the Internet, which are all powerful communication tools, but still immature technologies that have yet to fulfil their full potential.

We cannot forget that a relevant part of education in the past was based on “personal” mentors and direct training in ateliers. This educational approach was based on customised methodology and learning by example or learning by doing. In many cases the format of knowledge transfer was in parallel and “multitasking”. Later on mainly due to the need to multiply the number of learners we choose to rely on books and lectures and linear formats the only one supported both by speech and books.

The only limit to this mechanism (although it is an important one) is that we can only apply it to visible and tangible objects, and so thus far we have only been able to apply it to objects that exist physically.

It is really so evident a different mind-set? Some experts<sup>13</sup> call this “neuroplasticity”, the ability of our brain to re-shape accordingly with specific input patterns and reaction required. In addition to neuroplasticity, social psychology offers compelling proof that thinking patterns change depending on an individual’s experiences. A sufficiently long training may activate this phenomenon<sup>14</sup>. In fact, some researchers believe multi-sensory input helps kids learn, retain and use information better. Does this sound familiar? Our digital natives engage in this type of brain plasticity every day. Digital natives

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<sup>13</sup> Cathleen Richardson, 21st Century Learners: Research, Hotchalk — <http://www.hotchalk.com/mydesk/index.php/editorial/54-students/66-21st-century-learners-research>, Mark Prensky, Do They Really Think Differently?, On the Horizon (NCB University Press, Vo 6, December 2001), The Partnership for 21st Century Skills — <http://www.p21.org/>

<sup>14</sup> This period of time and the quality of the result depend on another factor termed “malleability”.

have acquired special skills thanks to the “involuntary” massive training due to TV, games and digital services. They have grown up paying close attention to the sensory input of MP3 players, cell phones, video games and computers. Such an experience on one side let them re-experience old training formats and on the other side emphasize the gap in efficiency between traditional education and the potential of digital communication and new formats. It is a common understanding that people who grow up in different cultures do not just think about different things, they actually think differently. The environment and culture in which people are raised affects and even determines many of their thought processes. So the Apple motto “think different!” is much more than a motto.

Teachers and Professors, mainly belonging to the digital immigrant’s community, are training people grown up with smart phones, Nintendo WII, the Internet and the social web. They speak an outdated language (that of the pre-digital age), are struggling to teach a population that speaks an entirely new language.

Immigrants even if citizens of the digital domain keep some “attitudes” that are typical of the domain of origin. They prefer to print out email<sup>15</sup>, they prefer to read documents on paper not on computer screens, they call by phone asking “did you receive my email?”, they keep a paper based archive and basically do not thrust too much in on line services, if they buy air or train tickets on line they choose the option to fetch the original printed version at the ticket counter. Their general behaviour is strictly “linear” and mainly “mono-medial”.

As a consequence do we need to re-train trainers and memory institutions professionals? How can we bridge the gap between the traditional way of thinking and the huge set of opportunities offered by the information age?

Is the way to transfer information and knowledge significantly different from the traditional one? Do trainers need to adapt their curricula methodology and pedagogy to the evolving environment?

Let us try to answer to some of these questions. Of course, as already mentioned, the gap will be eliminated in a short while, digital natives will

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<sup>15</sup> Even more remote — ask the assistant to print them out.

reach key positions in schools and universities but this seems the way to skip the problem not to solve it.

Today's "teachers" have to learn to communicate in the "language" and "style" of their "students/visitors". It has to be clear that this is not a matter of "content" it doesn't mean changing the meaning of what is important, or of good thinking skills. But it *does* mean to change the format, use different media to focus the concept, going faster, less step-by step, more in parallel, providing different point of view or examples with more direct/random access, among other things. It is evident that there is no a unique recipe in order to update our methodology. It depends by a number of factors such as topic, classroom, resources and more.

A frequent objection from "digital immigrant educators" is "this approach is great for facts, but it wouldn't work for my subject". We can try to get much more in detail subdividing theoretical subject and "practical" subjects. Learning maths is different from learning how to design something. There is another potential distinction between new topics and the traditional ones. Traditional content includes reading, writing, arithmetic, logical thinking, understanding the writings and ideas of the past, etc.

We need to invest some time and resources in order to "think differently" preparing learning materials concerning recent topics such as information technology, mechatronics, robotics and more. "Classical" topics require a more relevant investment because we need to remove the bias due to "traditional" thinking trying to start from "tabula rasa" using the digital generation toolbox.

### **Lost something, any concern, and drawbacks?**

Did we lose anything in the process? What about potential drawbacks and risks? The idea, but it is more than a feeling, is that in such a process digital natives lost some basic assets. Their own "culture" seems to be much more a set of bi-dimensional tiles sometimes interconnected. Direct access to information or even knowledge atoms may cause the lack of understanding of the rationale beyond. So it becomes very difficult to build up a mental model or to activate reflection in order to evaluate

and criticise what they learn. They miss the opportunity to elaborate what they learn by doing, their experience.

Learning and working at "warp speed" does not provide them the opportunity to "pause" and assimilate, reconsider, amend or criticise what they are learning or doing.

Do they need to learn more about what was before and digital native generation? I think that it is embedded in the humankind to investigate and know from where we come from and where are we going to. Unfortunately part of this knowledge is in the gap between traditional "content" and "new topics". One of the key roles of "cultural mediators" is to bridge this gap trying to provide the best and most successful mix of traditional content and new topics taking advantage from the native innovative skills stimulating the rise of relevant missing skills. This topic is relevant enough to deserve another full paper.

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