# THE MAKING AND UNMAKING OF HERITAGE
## *Hacer y Deshacer el Patrimonio*

**Koumudi Malladi (1), Devashree Vyas (2), Sehaj Kaur Bagga (2)**

(1) Architect & Art Historian, India, koumudi.malladi@gmail.com

(2) Student, L.S. Raheja School of Architecture, India

## ABSTRACT

Heritage is defined by history which is by nature multi layered. The passage of time and the perspectives it affords, enables and even necessitates constant re-examination and reinterpretation of history. What effect do changes in historical perspective then have upon the definition of heritage which relies on an understanding of its history?

The present paper attempts to engage with the notion of heritage, criteria of its definition, and the mutable nature of such designations with specific reference to architectural constructions and historical cities that enjoy or have enjoyed in the past the status of a 'World Heritage Site'. Examples such as the Louvre museum in Paris or the King's Cross station in London make an interesting study as they not only allow insight into the past but reflect the changes and adaptation over a period of time. Multiple alterations, some very recently, have modified them extensively since the time they were accorded the 'World Heritage Site' status.

The above examples are contrasted by sites ridden with conflict such as the Bamiyan Valley. This site has been placed under the 'World Heritage In Danger' list by UNESCO taking into account the destruction of the Buddha statues in the region. The act of vandalism itself has had dual implications. While causing an irreparable loss to mankind of its heritage, it also serves as an effective symbol of religious fanaticism that is a pressing concern of our times.

The paper then moves on to explore the case of Dresden which lost its 'World Heritage' status with the construction of the Waldschlösschen Bridge. This is a particularly interesting case because with the absolute destruction of the city during the Second World War, it was necessary to reconstruct the historical city while simultaneously acknowledging and addressing the modern day requirements. During the reconstruction, with the readaptation of the spaces, it was almost impossible to replicate the original architectural program or to undertake such a large reconstruction project employing only the traditional techniques and materials. This essentially made it a new city constructed in the image of the old. The recent necessity of a growing city was met by the construction of a bridge that has caused it to lose its 'World Heritage' status.

Finally, this paper endeavours to foster discussion of questions central to the definition of heritage such as what happens when we have to adapt a living space to avoid its deterioration and descent into dereliction by overuse. Does it necessarily lose its historical value? What exactly is Historical value?

**Key words**: The Louvre, Dresden, World Heritage in Danger, Reinterpreting Heritage

### RESUMEN

*El Patrimonio se define mejor por la historia que por su naturaleza de múltiples capas. El paso del tiempo y las perspectivas que brinda, permiten e incluso exigen un nuevo examen y la reinterpretación constante de la historia. ¿Qué efecto tienen los cambios en la perspectiva histórica sobre la definición de Patrimonio, que a su vez se basa en la comprensión de su historia?*

*El presente trabajo trata de comprometerse con la noción de Patrimonio, los criterios de su definición, y la naturaleza mudable de tales designaciones con referencia específica a las construcciones arquitectónicas y ciudades históricas que disfrutan o han disfrutado en el pasado del estatuto de Patrimonio Mundial. Ejemplos como el Museo del Louvre en París o la estación de Cruz del Rey en Londres resultan interesantes, ya que no sólo permiten comprender el pasado, sino que reflejan los cambios y la adaptación a lo largo del tiempo.*

*Múltiples alteraciones, algunas muy recientes, han modificado los sitios desde su declaración como Patrimonio Mundial.*

*Todo ello está contrastado por ejemplos de sitios repletos de conflictos, como el valle de Bamiyán. Este sitio ha sido colocado en la lista de 'Patrimonio Mundial en Peligro' de la UNESCO, teniendo en cuenta la destrucción de las estatuas de Buda en la región. El acto de vandalismo en sí ha tenido consecuencias duales. Mientras que causa una pérdida irreparable para la humanidad, también sirve como un símbolo eficaz de fanatismo religioso, que es una preocupación acuciante de nuestros tiempos.*

*Luego, el documento pasa a explorar el caso de Dresde, que perdió su condición de Patrimonio Mundial con la construcción del puente de Waldschlösschen. Este es un caso particularmente interesante porque con la destrucción absoluta de la ciudad durante la Segunda Guerra Mundial, fue necesario reconstruir la ciudad histórica y al mismo tiempo reconocer y abordar las necesidades de hoy en día. Durante la reconstrucción, con la readaptación de los espacios, resultó casi imposible replicar el programa arquitectónico original o emprender un proyecto tan grande de reconstrucción empleando sólo las técnicas y materiales tradicionales. En esencia, se levantó una nueva ciudad, construida a imagen de lo viejo. Las recientes necesidades de una ciudad en crecimiento exigieron la construcción de un puente que ha hecho perder a la ciudad su condición de Patrimonio Mundial.*

*Esta comunicación pretende fomentar la discusión sobre la naturaleza básica de la definición de Patrimonio, sobre todo cuando hemos de adaptar un espacio concreto a la vida actual, para evitar su deterioro.¿Se pierde entonces necesariamente su valor histórico? ¿Qué es exactamente el valor histórico?*

**Palabras clave:** *El Louvre, Dresden, Patrimonio Mundial en Peligro, reinterpretando Patrimonio*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Heritage is temporal. Something considered ordinary today, can become heritage tomorrow. How is heritage and culture defined and what meaning does it hold? Is it the structure shell that survives, or, the object with beautiful workmanship? In more recent times, the idea of culture has taken on new dimensions. It is not only the object but also the narration associated with it. The events witnessed and recorded.

This is true more so with the disappearing boundaries. The new global sense of identity is blurring the demarcation more and more between what is your heritage and mine. A shared history involving different civilizations and regions has yielded diverse culture which enriches and connects undeniably.

The layered and diverse histories and cultures in the world are an important source of knowledge and wisdom. The enrichment of this cultural diversity should be actively promoted as an essential aspect of development.

The definition of cultural heritage as given in the UNESCO charter is as follows:

*Monuments: architectural works, works of monumental sculpture and painting, elements or structures of an archaeological nature, inscriptions, cave dwellings and combinations of features, which are of Outstanding Universal Value from the point of view of history, art or science;*

*- Groups of buildings: groups of separate or connected buildings which, because of their architecture, their homogeneity or their place in the landscape, are of Outstanding Universal Value from the point of view of history, art or science;*

*- Sites: works of man or the combined works of nature and of man, and areas including archaeological sites which are of Outstanding Universal Value from the historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological points of view.1*

With the passage of time, we are afforded the change in perspective to look upon history. The change in context and some distance will necessarily alter the perception of any object or event changes. This adds a certain layer to heritage which is intangible in nature.

Within the last decade or two, the importance of intangible heritage is being realised. Making records for previously undocumented oral traditions, social

practices, rituals and crafts are being undertaken. To preserve the essence of a certain ethnicity, tribes and folk culture has become an important line of investigation.
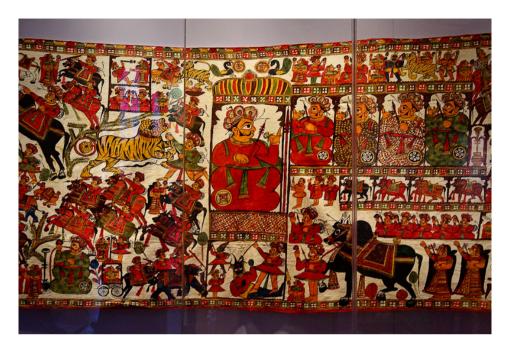
Definition of Intangible heritage according to UNESCO convention held in 2001 is as follows:

> The "intangible cultural heritage" means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity.

> The "intangible cultural heritage", as defined above, is manifested inter alia in the following domains: (a) oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage; (b)performing arts; (c) social practices, rituals and festive events; (d) knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe; (e) traditional craftsmanship.2

## 2. THE TANGIBLE AND THE INTANGIBLE

Thus, cultural heritage is not limited to monuments and collections but also includes traditions –living and dying- that is inherited and passed on. Alternately, intangible and tangible cultures are Inter-dependent and it is not really possible to conveniently separate the two. The Indian temples for instance – are not only surviving structures but also have a variety of rituals, festive customs, dances and singing associated with them. The surviving structures and living temples take on a whole new dimension because of the intangible customs, rituals and narratives associated with them and vice versa. Looking into the folk traditions, *Pabuji ki Phad* is seen in the north-western state of Rajasthan in India. This tradition involves a portable shrine in the form of a large canvas scroll which is painted or sewn with the epic story and heroics of Pabuji, a 14th century chief of the Rathor clan. The scroll is handed over generations and is worshiped to in a ritualistic manner, singing and dancing the praises of Pabuji by the nomadic bard priests known as Bhopas. While they perform this, the wives highlight on the scroll the portion depicting the event being related. When the canvas becomes thread bare, it is ceremoniously decommissioned and a new one is painted.

Pabuji ka phad scroll (source: wikimedia, Image by Michele Ahin)

Another example is the Totem poles as created by the First Nations of the Pacific Northwest – Canada. Erected by the family or the community, visible to all, the totem poles displayed imaginary beings or crest animals, marking lineages, power and privileges. They would serve to document histories of the community, or clan members. They are entwined with the facets of life, these being the birth, maturity and death; honour, values and inspirations; relationships and kinship.



Totem pole of the First Nations of the Pacific Northwest  (source: theartistspoint.com, Image by unknown)

With the kind of globalization and homogenisation being witnessed today, there is a requirement for the adaptation and acclimatization of several monuments for them to be able to able to form an equation with the context around it, thus adding our own to the already layered history. But this process is an important one, as an object interacts in its own way with its surrounding. It forms its own interrelationship and evolves in an organic way to what ever is around it and endures. This natural course of its development, not only ensures its survival but also its evolution to assimilate and relate with the changes around it, from the context it was originally built in. This allows for an interesting new meaning to the nature of the interaction between the tangible and the intangible aspects.

Buildings constructed to a purpose and still under use demonstrate this. The use and the stress on a structure could only increase with our growing requirements. The demands of the growing population and advancing technology on the heritage structures need to be addressed and tended to. Our current approach of attempting to confine the structure in its present state and not allowing any change or alterations is only resulting in making show pieces out of them. This is hampering their natural course of evolution and adaptation they might have previously experienced, thus altering the 'life' of the structure considerably. Our attempt must be to try to assimilate the old with the new while respecting the legacy.

*2.1 The Louvre*

With its conception in 1190, the site at Louvre, presently holding the Louvre Palace Complex, bears testimony to a number of significant stages in French history. Initially constructed as a fortress, the site has since then been razed, rebuilt, extended, connected, restored and added to. Majorly a masterpiece of Classical Architectural Style, the structure reflects elements of Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque, Neo-Classicism, Neo-Baroque and most lately, Modernism.

Through the course of time since the medieval period, the Louvre Palace has seen influence of the ruling dynasties and the prevailing decision makers. The impact of stages of French history has left a mark so remarkable that it stands as a very representation of French history. After its role as a fort and as a palace for the royal family, it retains all its glory and serves as one of the largest museums in the world.

As a very important museum, the visitor footfall is only increasing every year putting a strain on the functional spaces. With the intention of aiding tourist and visitor amenities for the museum, the main courtyard, Court Napoleon, was enhanced with a large glass and steel pyramid, three surrounding smaller glass pyramids and an underground lobby network, facilitating movement within the array of wings within the Louvre Palace, and acting as a concourse. The structure was commissioned in 1984 and opened in 1989.

Louvre Museum with the glass pyramid in front (source: <u>wikimedia</u>, Image by Alvesgaspar)

Essentially, the circulation of visitors thus abetted, the functional importance of the pyramidal concourse cannot be undermined. Yet, the modernist style of Ar. I M Pei's glass pyramid, its stark form and sheer magnitude, in juxtaposition with the classical architectural representation of the Louvre Palace, seems to be emphasized to such a degree, that it Stands its own despite the overwhelming heritage quotient of the Louvre Palace Complex. While a true depiction of beauty and brilliance in architecture itself, the pyramid, in context with the Louvre Palace site, dominates the vista. As a result, the notion of French history embedded in the heritage architecture of the Louvre Palace building embraces the modern French adding another dimension to the story of The Louvre.

### 2.2 King's Cross Station

The King's Cross station takes this idea of adaptation to an interesting level.

Between 1849 and 1852, the Great Northern Railway developed the London terminus in the King's Cross which was till then predominantly a rural area. The first temporary station was opened in 1850. This not only brought about great change allowing it to develop into an important industrial heartland, but was soon to witness what would become one of the most important Railway terminals to be built there.

The plans for the station in its current location were first made in 1848 by architect Lewis Cubitt and the station opened with two platforms in 1852. The station roof, the largest at the time, was said to be modelled on the riding school of the Russian Czars of Moscow.

Major increases in rail traffic necessitated the widening of the railway lines into King's Cross Station and the extension of the station on its west side. With exponential increase in the passenger traffic, it became necessary to expand and modernize King's Cross Railway Station. However, this presented a formidable challenge in that the heritage aspect of the 160 year old station could not be
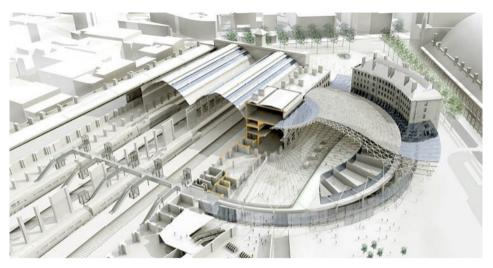
compromised. Another important aspect to dwell upon was the severe damage to the western part caused by aerial bombing in May, 1941. The repairs done were cursory and this left the yellow stone brickwork of the western elevation marred by metal sheets.



King's Cross station, Victorian Facade (source: www.mcaslan.co.uk)

The ambitious transformation of the King's Cross Station created a remarkable fusion between the original Victorian architecture and 21st century functional architecture. It involved three key elements of architecture: restoration, adaptive re-use and new construction. This relationship between the old and the new not only helped to create a modern transport super-hub at King's Cross but also resulted in revitalising and modernizing one of the most important terminals of London.

At 7,500 square metres, it is Europe's largest single-span station structure, comprising of 16 steel tree form columns that radiate from an expressive, tapered central funnel. The centrepiece of the 500 million pounds redevelopment is the new vaulted, semi-circular concourse to the west of the existing station. The concourse rises some 20m and spans the full 150m-length of the existing Grade I Listed Western Range, creating a new entrance to the station through the south end of the structure and at mezzanine level to the northern end of the Western Concourse.

Model of the Concourse constructed on western side (source: www.mcaslan.co.uk)



View of Concourse (source: londonist.com)

The Western Concourse sits adjacent to the façade of the Western Range, clearly revealing the restored brickwork and masonry of the original station. The station is now three times the size of the original concourse and caters to over 150,000 passengers daily.

The expansion, restoration and modernisation work started in 2007 and the completely transformed station with new entrances, more space better facilities and with the stunning new Western Concourse opened in 2012. The original Victorian entrance was restored and opened in 2013. New underground ticket halls, new escalators and more than 300 metres of new passageways were made.

This balance between old and new, exemplifies the complexity of development in a modern city. The adaptive re-use of the King's Cross station not only succeeded in keeping the heritage and functionality in place but also gave it the changes needed to survive into the future.

## 2. CHANGING PERSPECTIVES

The way one perceives is coloured by the current circumstances. It is required that one is sensitized enough to understand that ideas may change over time as newer concepts and theories come to light.
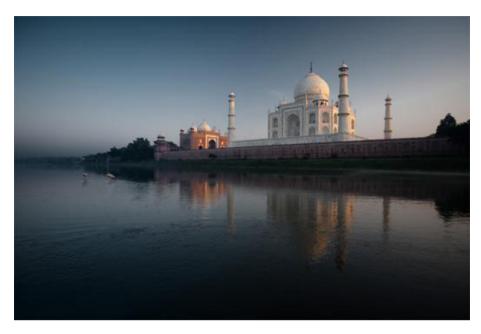
Reconstruction of the past always leads to looking at it with the wisdom afforded by hindsight and a more complete knowledge of the event or object. At other times, there is loss in translation and certain key information is missing. This completely alters our understanding and forces us to reinterpret with a new, possibly inaccurate, knowledge base.

The viewpoint chosen also causes differences in the way we read something. An object with ethnic or religious significance would hold different meanings depending upon if the viewer belongs to the ethnicity of religion; has a fair understand of the same; or if the viewer is an outsider only looking at it with the perspective of an object of curiosity. Hence we come across two ways of interpretation; the first offers ready constructed facts and a fixed view of the site as it 'was'3, while the second is to accept the changes cause by the living element of the site since its conception and to understand the nuanced identity.

### 3.1 The Taj Mahal

In AD 1634, the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan floated what was possibly the earliest architectural competition in India, resulting in the design of The Taj Mahal, in accordance with the Mughal garden concept of *charbagh* – a garden divided by four rivers of heaven, symbolic of paradise. However, instead of the typical central placement of the tomb, as seen in Humyun's tomb, the tomb is situated at the head of the garden.

As a result of this decision, the monument gained perspective, as well as depth, to the first distant view of the monument from the present day entrance to the site. However, it is little known, that despite the seemingly strategic position of the Taj Mahal, it was originally intended to be view by all members of general public from the Yamuna River. The planning included a dense orchard in the front - *whe*re the gardens stand today. A complete view of the structure made it appear as if the pristine white monument was floating atop paradise.

Taj Mahal as seen from  the river Yamuna (source: ebharat.in, Image By Unknown)

When the Taj Mahal was discovered by the British during their colonial rule, the orchards had disappeared, though the concept of *charbagh* was evident. Hence, as an attempt to restore the structure to its former glory, the gardens as seen in the present day were planned. The entry was taken from the front entrance, originally intended exclusively for the royal family. This resulted in causing a complete shift from the intended perception of the Taj Mahal.

Relating the example of Taj Mahal in order to define heritage, it could be noted that with variation in time periods, we redefined the notions of heritage, restricted to a particular timeline. While the Taj Mahal was intended to be viewed as a metaphorical paradise, by redefining its viewpoint the very essence of its perception has been altered, adding a varied layer of insight to its heritage.

### 3.2 Dresden Elbe Valley

An interesting case study to look into here would be of one of the only cultural heritage sites of the historic city of Dresden in Germany. The complete site which was granted the World heritage status in 2004, extends for 18 kms along the Elbe River from the Ubigau Palace and Ostragehege fields in the northwest to the Pilnitz Palace and the Elbe River Island in the south-east. The other prominent features are the Old town or the heritage city of Dresden with Baoque buildings like Residenzschloss, the Zwinger, the Frauenkirche, the Augustusbrücke and more, from the 16th to the 20th centuries. The Blue Wonder steel bridge (1891-

93), the passenger steam ships (Earliest from 1897) and shipyard (c. 1900), the single-rail suspension cable railway (1898-1901) – all of which are still in use. The old villages of Laubegast and Loschwitz retain their historic framework and have several outstanding examples of Berlin Classicism, Italian Renaissance, late Romanticism as well as the post-Industrial Revolution period.

The fabric of the Dresden Elbe valley does not only have notable cultural highlights but also has remarkable natural aspects like protected biotopes and Bastei- the Elbe Sandstone rock formations. The gradually sloping river banks had been terraced and were cultivated as vineyards, three of which are still retained.

Dresden, as a capital of the Electorate of Saxony from 1547, grew as an important centre culture, science and technology. The Electors Augustus I and Augustus II re-built the city in Baroque and Rococo Styles, after it was destroyed by a fire in the 17th century. The economy of the town developed further from the end of the 18th century when importance of the river for shipping increased and later when it was connected by railway to Berlin and Leipzig. During the Second World War, the historic centre was subjected to heavy bombing in 1945, and was destroyed once more. Several of the monuments have been restored and re-constructed since.

With the astonishing destruction, leaving only parts and fragments of the structure behind, to re-build the city in the image of the destroyed was an extraordinary task undertake. The debris was sorted thru and an effort made to identify the pieces with the buildings and structures. Studies were conducted to understand the construction and structural details of the well documented



Present day image of Residenzschloss, Dresden (source: wikimedia, Image by X-Weinzar)

Baroque structures. While replacing the missing portions, an attempt was made to stay true to the original image. Though new technology was used for construction, the original elements were replicated. Paintings made by Bernardo Bellotto, better known as Canaletto, were referred, to recreate the original views and vistas.

Since the original program of the buildings could not be retained for the same function the interiors spaces were repurposed to create the galleries as they stand today. Essentially, a new city was re-created in the exact image of the old, with an objective to make it a heritage centre, showcasing the culture in the best way possible. The buildings were now adapted to allow for modern technology and amenities.

The galleries housed in the monuments, hold one of the most fantastic collections ranging from porcelain and Messiaen pottery, paintings – displayed in the old masters (Alte Meister) and the new masters (Neue Miester) galleries, sculptures, mathematisch physikalischer salon- displaying mechanical marvels, time pieces and globes, the opulent royal collections in the Historisches and Neues Gr enes Gew elbe , the Turkish Krammer, and many more.

One of the most stunning recreations is the complex ring- ribbed vault on the area that earlier housed the palace chapel. A study in reverse engineering was carried out to understand the constructional details of the structure, making it possibly one of the only examples of such vaulting in the world.

The site was awarded the status of a world heritage site in 2004 with the following justification:

> *Criterion (ii): The Dresden Elbe Valley has been the crossroads in Europe, in culture, science and technology. Its art collections, architecture, gardens, and landscape features have been an important reference for Central European developments in the 18th and 19th centuries.*

> *Criterion (iii): The Dresden Elbe Valley contains exceptional testimonies of court architecture and festivities, as well as renowned examples of middle-class architecture and industrial heritage representing European urban development into the modern industrial era.*

> *Criterion (iv): The Dresden Elbe Valley is an outstanding cultural landscape, an ensemble that integrates the celebrated baroque setting and suburban garden city into an artistic whole within the river valley.*

> *Criterion (v): The Dresden Elbe Valley is an outstanding example of land use, representing an exceptional development of a major Central-European city. The value of this cultural landscape has long been recognized, but it is now under new pressures for change.*

With the revival of the city and further development, it has become an expanding centre putting a strain on the resources. One of the main points of concern was the increasing traffic on the Augustusbrücke, which is the main bridge connecting the city on the either side of the Elbe. This was solved by the construction of the Waldschlösschen bridge.



Blue Bridge on Elbe River (source: thelocal.de, Image by: Unknown)

The Waldschlösschen adds an element of contemporary construction on the river which already has beautiful constructions like Augustusbrücke and the Blue bridge. It also became the reason for a reversal of the decision by UNESCO and Dresden Elbe Valley losing the world heritage status.



Waldschlösschen Bridge on Elbe River (source: goethe.de, Image by: Unknown)

Over use of the Augustusbrücke would have led to a deterioration of the structure along with the congestion of traffic causing several other problems of circulation in the adjacent areas. This would have eventually led to damages to the bridge as well as the access zones to the bridge.

Despite this loss of the world heritage tag, the site continues to thrive as a heritage destination for tourism. The museums constructed with modern displays and services are comparable with the best in the world.

## 4. CONCLUSION

Heritage as a concept is contextualized by the prevalent perspectives and theories, which limits it to the time frame where these particular ideas hold true. The perception and understanding of a certain heritage object or structure would different with changing phases. The structure though, remains a constant. The way we perceive the structure, will necessarily be different from the idea with which it was created, what does change for the heritage structure, is the way it interacts with what is around it. The nature of this equation could be physical, contextual, religious, political or theoretical.

Trying to contain a heritage site within a certain framework and imposing rules which limit possibilities of its development, not only ends up making an ornament out of it, but also alters the natural organic progress, disallowing it to acclimatise with what is around it. The changes this acclimatisation brings about would only add to the layering of history in the story of the structure. Interruption of this intrinsic and essential process would obstruct the instinctive flow of the story that the structure would tell.

A re-examination of the current approach and policies for the protection and preservation of heritage sites would seem like just the first step. There is an urgent need to recondition our outlook and understanding towards structural heritage. To appreciate the mutually interdependent relation between the past, present and the future would sensitize us to the nuanced narrative being constructed.

### REFERENCES

Copeland, T. 1998. 'Interpreting the Historic Environment' in  *Heritage Interpretation,* ed M Blockley, A Hems, Routledge,  pp. 86 Available from Google E-books [10 March 2015]

UNESCO Convention Report, *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention.* Available from UNESCO. [July 2013]

UNESCO Convention Report, *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Heritage.* Available from UNESCO.org. [September - October 2003]