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29. THE CHANGING PERSPECTIVE OF HERITAGE

Over the past thirty years, the concept of cultural heritage has been continually broadened. The Venice Charter (1964) made reference to “monuments and sites” and dealt with architectural heritage. The question rapidly expanded to cover groups of buildings, vernacular architecture, and industrial and 20th century built heritage. Over and above the study of historic gardens, the concept of “cultural landscape” highlighted the interpenetration of culture and nature. Today an anthropological approach to heritage leads us to consider it as a social

ensemble of many different, complex and interdependent manifestations. This is now reflecting the diversity of cultural manifestations. The quest for the “message” of cultural properties has become more important. It requires us to identify the ethical values, social customs, beliefs or myths of which intangible heritage is the sign and expression. The significance of architectural or urban constructions and the transformation of natural landscapes through human intervention are more and more connected to questions of identity. Cultural heritage

is a synchronized relationship involving society; norms and values; ideas and belief systems that attribute relative importance. Symbols, technologies and objects constitute the tangible evidence underlying such norms and values. Thus they establish a symbiotic relationship between the tangible and the intangible.

Ref: Mounir Bouchenaki Assistant Director General for Culture, UNESCO - ICOMOS 14th General Assembly & Scientific Symposium.