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PHOTOGRAPHY AND HERITAGE DOCUMENTATION

Photographs and heritage bind a person to a space and time. Time and space are two fundamental categories of human physical existence, but not only that. Concepts of space and time form one of the most important parts of the deep structure of culture. We ourselves are located in time and space, and time and space are the background to all our thoughts and feelings. Preservation means preserving meanings and values. If one tries to relate meanings and values to space and time, it seems that meanings are more spatial, and values are more temporal. Meanings seem to accumulate and coalesce, whereas values emerge and fade along with people. The invention of photography gave man apparent power over time and space. Man created a process that fixed the image of a certain part of space at a certain moment in time. Space and time are essential conditions for photography, and photographs are the result of the inseparable harmony of both. According to Roland Barthes, photography has the strange property of presenting the past in the present moment: "By 'photographic referent' I do not mean the *selectively* real thing to which an image or sign refers, but the *unconditionally* real thing that is placed in front of the lens and without which there would be no photograph. Painting can imitate reality without ever having seen it.

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Speech combines signs that do have referents, but these referents can be – and most often are – 'chimeras'. Contrary to these imitations, in photography I can never deny that *this thing has been there*. It is a double position in which reality and the past overlap."[1]

The past has always been irretrievably lost, but we are left with heritage and photos. In some cases, they may even coincide. On the one hand, photographs themselves form part of the heritage, and on the other hand, they are used to document the heritage. I have written briefly about photographs as a heritage,[2] therefore, in this article I will focus on photography as a means of documenting heritage. More broadly, I will discuss how photography influences our connection to the past, shapes perceptions of the past, and recreates the past in the present. Photography plays a role in shaping the central concepts and practices of many heritage approaches. Here, for example, we can mention the methods of presenting and interpreting heritage, as well as the surveying and archiving processes.

I will first provide an overview of heritage documentation and then focus on the role of photography in the heritage creation process. As an example from Estonia, I will look at the photographs of Johannes Pääsuke. The second part of the article provides an overview of the development of conservation-restoration documentation and the introduction of photography in the documentation process. In the final section, I will examine the debate between conservation and restoration in the 19th century and demonstrate the importance of photography in the development of conservation theory.

HOW IS DOCUMENTATION RELATED TO CULTURAL HERITAGE?

Documentation can be defined in many ways. Very broadly speaking, documentation encompasses three types of activities:

- collecting information about heritage,
- organization and interpretation of information,
- management and dissemination of information.

1 Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), 76–77.

2 Kurmo Konsa, "Kuidas fotode materjalid ja tehnoloogiad mõjutavad nende kahjustusi", *Uurimusi fotograafia morfoloogiast I*. Silmakirjad 14. Kõrgema Kunstikooli Pallas toimetised 26, ed. by Peeter Linnap (Tartu: Kõrgem Kunstikool Pallas, 2022), 51–88, 52–56.

Documentation is an integral part of heritage preservation, conservation and restoration. Since all objects can be treated as sources of information, heritage preservation can also be viewed in an informational context. Every artifact is essentially an inexhaustible source of information. Various authors have proposed various approaches to describing information related to artifacts.[3] The information content of objects is not a fixed quantity, it is constantly changing, as information is constantly being lost and added.[4] Any object considered as an artifact is the result of a historical process, and therefore, in order to choose the most adequate preservation strategy, it is necessary to reconstruct the "biography" of the objects to be preserved. The main problem of preservation is how to preserve the entire information structure of the artifact as completely as possible. It is precisely to solve this task that documentation is used.

During documentation, the values and meanings of the heritage are identified and recorded, and the characteristics and condition of the heritage are described. Through the study and description of context, heritage is linked to the social and physical environment. Documentation is a tool for heritage management and monitoring, and is the basis for making preservation decisions. Documentation is a guide for preservation processes and helps to introduce heritage and interpret its significance and meanings. The objects and phenomena that make up heritage are constantly changing. A detailed description of their previous condition, problems, and actions taken as accurately as possible makes it possible to identify dangerous situations and respond to them appropriately, either through research or treatment. This allows for better planning of the resources needed for the maintenance and conservation of the object. More broadly, the documentation requirement encompasses the entire heritage management process as a whole. Documentation is also one of the possible preservation strategies. In some cases, the preservation of an object or phenomenon is limited to merely

3 Kurmo Konsa, *Laulupidu ja verivorst: 21. sajandi vaade kultuuripärandile*. Tartu Kõrgema Kunstikooli toimetised 19 (Tartu: Tartu Kõrgem Kunstikool, 2014), 21–34.

4 Michael Ames, "Cannibal Tours, Glass Boxes and the Politics of Interpretation", *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed. by Susan Pearce (London: Routledge, 1994), 98–106; Arjun Appadurai, "Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value", *The Social Life of Things*, ed. by Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: CUP, 1986), 3–63; David Kingery, "Technological Systems and Some Implications with Regard to Continuity and Change", *History from Things*, ed. by Steven Lumber, David Kingery (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993), 215–230.

documenting it. For example, documentation is often the main way to preserve information about phenomena that are part of intangible cultural heritage.[5] The specific methods and protocols used in documentation depend largely on the object being described, the purpose of the description, and the describing institution.[6]

In general terms, documentation is what helps preserve heritage: "…it helps protect heritage from destruction or forgetting and allows us to communicate the character, values, and significance of heritage not only to conservators, but also to the wider public."[7] More specifically, heritage documentation has been defined, for example, by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS): "Heritage documentation is an ongoing process that enables the monitoring, maintenance and understanding necessary for conservation by providing relevant and timely information. Documentation is both a result and an activity, the purpose of which is to ensure the availability of information needed for heritage management. It makes available various physical and mental resources, such as metric, narrative, thematic and social data, that deal with cultural heritage."[8] The following definition distinguishes between documenting and describing heritage, the latter definition also including photography: "Documentation is a pre-existing set of information. As an activity, it refers to systematic collection and storage of data so that it is available for future study. Heritage description is the collection of information reflecting the physical form, development and condition of heritage at a specific point in time, using graphic or photographic procedures."[9]

5 See: Estonian Folk Culture Centre. Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage, https://rahvakultuur.ee/vkp/nimistu/ [accessed on 19/05/2025].

6 Anastasia Kioussi, Maria Karoglou, Kyriakos Labropoulos, Asterios Bakolas, Antonia Moropoulou, "Integrated documentation protocols enabling decision making in cultural heritage protection", *Journal of Cultural Heritage*, 14, 3 (2013), 141–146, 142.

7 François LeBlanc, Rand Eppich, "Documenting Our Past for the Future", *The GCI Newsletter*, 20.3 (2005), 6.

8 Mario Santana-Quintero, Bill Blake, Rand Eppich, Christian Ouimet, "Heritage documentation for conservation: partnership in learning", 16th ICOMOS General Assembly and International Symposium: „Finding the spirit of place – between the tangible and the intangible", 29 sept – 4 oct 2008, Quebec, Canada, https://openarchive.icomos.org/id/eprint/28/1/77-1875-187.pdf [accessed on 19/05/2025].

9 Robin Letellier, *Recording, documentation, and information management for the conservation of heritage places: guiding principles* (Los Angeles: The Getty Conservation Institute, 2007), https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/71354261.pdf [accessed on 19/05/2025].

THE ROLE OF PHOTOGRAPHY IN THE PROCESS OF CREATING HERITAGE

The modern scientific and Western concept of heritage developed at the end of the 18th century, when industrialization, rapid urbanization, and the disappearance of the traditional peasant way of life directed society's attention more towards the past.[10] On the one hand, more attention was paid to monuments; on the other hand, emphasis was also placed on untouched nature and ruins. Both heritage protection and nature conservation were finally formed during the 19th century. At the same time, it must be acknowledged that the objects and phenomena considered part of both nature conservation and cultural heritage, and the human activities related to them, have of course existed before, it is just that different terms have been used to denote them.

The definition of heritage at each different level of society depends on the historical, cultural and social context and the political system. Heritage is recognized through specific practices that vary according to cultural and societal contexts. Objects, phenomena, places and people do not become heritage until people recognize them as such. Thus, heritage does not exist in any intrinsic or essential form, independent of people's opinions.

When discussing the process of creating heritage, it is useful to consider the different levels of society, as this process varies across them. Society is organized into interconnected levels, ranging from the family unit to humanity as a whole.[11] When addressing heritage issues, it is important to distinguish between the following social groups and administrative levels: individual and family; local government; nation/state; and humanity. The creation, functions and management of heritage differ at different levels of society. Each level of society has its own characteristic heritage discourse, that is, the way in which heritage is understood, talked about, and handled. An object or phenomenon may be heritage for a community, for example, but may not be considered heritage at the national level.

10 Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire", *Representations*, 26, (1989), 7–24; David Lowenthal, *The Past Is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

11 See more: Konsa, *Laulupidu ja verivorst: 21. sajandi vaade kultuuripärandile*, 46–51.

Since its invention, photography has formed an integral part of heritage discourse and practice. In this respect, the heritage sector is of course by no means exceptional, with Ariella Azoulay pointing out that we live in an era where: "…it is difficult to imagine any human activity that does not use photography or at least does not provide the opportunity to use it in the past, present or future."[12]

Historically, the term "cultural heritage" (fr. *patrimoine*) was introduced in its modern sense during the French Revolution. In 1790, François Puthod de Maisonrouge used it in a petition to the Constituent Assembly[13] and in 1794, it was used by Henri-Baptiste Grégoire, who published an essay on the damage and destruction of cultural heritage during the French Revolution.[14] The modern approach to heritage was very closely related to the formation of nations and nation-states, as heritage played an important role in strengthening and harmonizing the identities of states and nations.[15] The first step taken was the inventory and documentation of the heritage. Through this, heritage was linked to national institutions.

In England, the Ancient Monuments Act (1882) was enacted in 1882, and in France, the Commission des Monuments Historiques (1837) was established in 1837. However, the transformation of the past into heritaga (heritagisation) was largely visual. The French monk and founder of paleography, Bernard de Montfaucon (1655–1741), wrote as early as 1719: "…by the term heritage I understand only what is seen with the eyes and what can be depicted in pictures."[16] Monuments were depicted in drawings, paintings, and diagrams, and visual representations became the basis for their various classification systems and scientific studies.

12 Ariella Azoulay, *The Civil Contract of Photography* (New York: Zone Books, 2008), 146.

13 Marilena Vecco, "A definition of cultural heritage: From the tangible to the intangible", *Journal of Cultural Heritage*, 11, 3 (2010), 321–324, 321.

14 Joseph L. Sax, "Heritage Preservation as a Public Duty: The Abbe Gregoire and the Origins of an Idea", *Michigan Law Review*, 88, 5 (1989), 1142–1169, 1143–1144, http://scholarship.law.berkeley.edu/facpubs/1662 [accessed on 19/05/2025].

15 Gabi Dolff-Bonekämper, "The social and spatial frameworks of heritage: what is new in the Faro Convention?", *Heritage and beyond* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing, 2009), 69–74, 70; Diane Barthel, *Historic Preservation: Collective Memory and Historical Identity* (Newark, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1996); Susan M. Pearce, *Collecting in Contemporary Practice* (London: Sage, 1998).

16 Françoise Choay, *The Invention of the Historic Monument* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 51.

Photography immediately entered this process of categorizing and exploring heritage. It was seen as a miracle tool that makes heritage eternal. Thus wrote Baron Frederick Pollock (1783–1870), president of the Photographic Society, in 1855: "The variety of objects which photography can deal with, its ability to make permanent what seems as fleeting as the shadows that move across a sundial, the power that photography has to fix momentary objects, is of paramount importance for history (not just for an industry created by one man, but for the history of everything that belongs to man, and for the entire globe on which man lives). It is not too much to say that no individual – not only an individual person, but also no individual substance, no individual matter, nothing that is extraordinary in art, that is glorified in architecture, that is intended to arouse admiration in those who look at it, need to perish anymore, but can become immortal through photography. We cannot imagine a better history of all that belongs to man than that which is recorded by photography; and not only of what belongs to man himself, but of everything that can attract his attention: in short, everything that can be observed visually is made permanent, so that everything that is noticed now remains noticed forever."[17] Here, Pollock associates photography with permanence, history, immortality, and encyclopedic knowledge about the world and man himself.

In the 19th century, photography was considered a tool in science and art that allowed for the capture of the real, objective world. As one of the introducers of Francis Frith's Stereoscopic Views in the Holy Land, Egypt, Nubia etc. wrote in 1858, photography offered "only the pure unadorned truth; the real situation is before us and we know it."[18] The photographs were thus evidence of reality, including heritage. Photographs provided reliable evidence of the past, unlike the scattered, selective, and imprecise human footprint, thus fulfilling a documentary function.[19] Photographic documentation of national monuments began in France and England. The first large-

17 Frederick Anthony Stansfield Marshall, *Photography: The Importance of its Application in Preserving Pictorial Records of the National Monuments of History and Art* (London: Hering & Remington, 1855), 11–12.

18 Joan M. Schwartz, "'Records of Simple Truth and Precision': Photography, Archives, and the Illusion of Control", *Archivaria*, 50 (2000), 1–40, 22.

19 Sigfried Kracauer, *The Past's Threshold: Essays on Photography* (Berlin: Diaphanes, 2014 [1951]), 74.

scale photographic documentation of monuments took place in 1851, when the French Committee for Historical Monuments (*Commission des monuments historiques*), headed by Prosper Mérimée (1803–1870), formed a group of photographers (*Mission héliographique*). All five photographers hired – Edouard Baldus, Hippolyte Bayard, Gustave Le Gray, Henri Le Secq and Auguste Mestral – were members of the newly formed *Société Héliographique*, the world's first association of photographers. The photographers were tasked with capturing France's endangered monuments.[20] The committee used the photographs to determine the condition of the monuments and assess the need for conservation and restoration work. Given the travel opportunities at the time, most of the committee members had never seen most of the monuments with their own eyes. Photography offered a much faster and more reliable method compared to the architectural drawings and blueprints used until then. Each photographer was assigned a specific route and given lists of monuments. The technique most used was calotype (also known as talbotype), in which a negative was produced on light-sensitized paper and a positive was then printed on salted paper (Fig.1). The only exception was Hippolyte Bayard, who used glass plates coated with albumen to make negatives. The resulting 258 photographs were not published; they were used exclusively by the Committee for Historical Monuments and by architects for the conservation and restoration of buildings.[21] However, the Committee was not very satisfied with the images received, as they depicted the buildings based on artistic rather than technical conservation requirements. The images from different photographers were also different, even though the initial task was the same for all of them.[22]

Because photographers drew on earlier pictorial conventions when capturing buildings and landscapes, early architectural photographs

20 For information on the mission, see: Daniel Malcolm, "Édouard Baldus, Artiste photographe", *The Photographs of Édouard Baldus* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1994), 17–97; Barry Bergdoll, "A Matter of Time: Architects and Photographers in Second Empire France", *The Photographs of Édouard Baldus* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1994), 106 –108; Christine Boyer, "La Mission Héliographique: Architectural Photography, Collective Memory and the Patrimony of France, 1851", *Picturing Place: Photography and the Geographical Imagination*, ed. by Joan Schwartz, James Ryan (London: Tauris, 2005), 21–54.

21 Anne de Mondenard, "La Mission héliographique: mythe et histoire", *Etudes photographiques*, 2 (1997), 60 –81, https://journals.openedition.org/etudesphotographiques/127 [accessed on 19/05/2025].

22 Ibid.

FIG.1. THE MIDDLE PORTAL OF THE AUBETERRE CHURCH. SALTED PAPER, 23.3 × 28.1 CM. PHOTO: GUSTAVE LE GRAY, 1851 / METROPOLITAN MUSEUM.

blur the line between documentation and interpretation.[23] The lack of clear distinctions caused dissatisfaction among architects and conservators who value the documentary side. Photography was initially considered a kind of natural phenomenon. According to Talbot, the photographs took themselves, they are objective imitations of what is found in the world. This also meant that photographs were different from all other images made by humans, as they were documentary in nature. Today, photography is considered a visual art without any problems, and documentary photography is only one part

23 James S. Ackerman, "On the Origins of Architectural Photography", *This is Not Architecture: Media Constructions*, ed. by Kester Rattenbury (London, New York, 2002), 26–36.

of all photography. Whether a photographic image is documentary or not depends primarily on the viewer.[24]

In England, the Architectural Photographic Association was founded in 1857, whose goals included an ambitious plan to create a large collection of architectural photographs, mainly of monuments.[25] For photographs to be of greatest use "in the field of architecture, absolutely accurate representations of these works must be made."[26] In 1897, the National Photographic Record Society was founded in England with the aim of documenting English lifestyles, cities and landscapes, which tended to fade and change rapidly in the process of modernization.[27] With a similar goal, photographic societies emerged in North America and began photographing rapidly disappearing Native American cultures.[28] But as was already evident from the *Mission héliographique* case, photographers experimented with the new medium and, whether consciously or not, began to exploit opportunities for expressive depictions of architecture. In other words, it can be said that the artistic component was often fully present also in images taken for documentary purposes. In some cases, the photographers themselves discussed possible ways of taking pictures. Charles Nègre claimed that he could take three types of photographs of an architectural object: for the architect, a general view with a "geometrically precise drawing of the facade"; for the sculptor, close-ups of the more interesting details; and for the painter, a picturesque view that captures the "imposing effect" and "poetic charm" of the monument.[29]

From Estonia, an example of such systematic recording of national-level visual heritage could be the photographs taken by Johannes

24 Joel Snyder, "Documentary without Ontology", *Studies in Visual Communication*, 10, 1 (1984), 78–90.

25 Robert Elwall, *Photography Takes Command: The Camera and British Architecture 1890–1939* (London: Heinz Gallery, 1994).

26 "The Architectural Photographic Association", *The Spectator Supplement* (2 October 1858), 31–32.

27 Jens Jäger, "Picturing Nations: Landscape Photography and National Identity in Britain and Germany in the Mid-Nineteenth Century", *Picturing Place: Photography and the Geographical Imagination*, ed. by Joan Schwartz, James Ryan (London: Tauris, 2005), 117–140.

28 Brian W. Dippie, "Representing the Other: The North American Indian", *Anthropology and Photography*, ed. by Elizabeth Edwards (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), 132–136; Paula Richardson Fleming, Judith Luskey, *The North American Indians in Early Photographs* (New York: Harper and Row, 1986).

29 Ackerman, "On the Origins of Architectural Photography", 26–36.

Pääsuke (1892–1918)[30] for the Estonian National Museum (ERM). The Estonian National Museum, founded in 1909, immediately began collecting photographs, which were initially received either as purchases or gifts.[31] In 1912, the ERM published an advertisement in the newspaper, where it "called for photographers to lend cameras to the museum for taking photographs due to their high prices, or for photographers themselves to come to the ERM service to supplement the department of photographs of the homeland".[32] In response to this call, photographer Johannes Pääsuke came to work at the Estonian National Museum. His photography trips to various regions of Estonia are well known. In addition to taking photos, he also filmed and collected antiques for the museum. In the spring of 1914, under the guidance of art historian F. von Stryck, he photographed Tartu's older buildings, views and buildings of the city center, but also, apparently on his own initiative, the slum environment.[33]

One of the most important goals of the photography campaigns was to capture the lifestyles and customs of peasant, rural, country people before they disappear forever. Ethnography was directly related to national identity, and Estonian photographer Peeter Linnap directly links Johannes Pääsuke's activities to the "discourse of shaping the foundations of romantic national statehood."[34] Ethnology dealt with the study of the people and their history, as the peasant way of life formed the basis of the identity of Estonians. So, it is natural that a museum focused on ethnography would engage in photographic recording of peasants. On the one hand, Pääsuke based his selection of places worthy of photographing on existing values and the instructions he had been given in advance. Thus, the phrase "we reviewed the most important places" is repeated in his photography

30 For more about him, see: Peeter Linnap, *Eesti fotograafia ajalugu (1839–2015)* (Tartu: Tartu Kõrgem Kunstikool, 2016), 84–87; Kairi Kaelep, "Johannes Pääsukese elukäigust ja koostööst Eesti Rahva Muuseumiga", *Johannes Pääsuke. Mees kahe kaameraga*, comp. by Jana Reidla (Tartu: Eesti Rahva Muuseum, 2003), 81–93.

31 Piret Õunapuu, *Eesti Rahva Muuseumi loomine ja väljakujunemine*. Dissertationes historiae Universitatis Tartuensis 23 (Tartu: Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus, 2011), 105–107.

32 Kaelep, "Johannes Pääsukese elukäigust ja koostööst Eesti Rahva Muuseumiga", 82.

33 *Johannes Pääsuke. Mees kahe kaameraga*, comp. by Jana Reidla (Tartu: Eesti Rahva Muuseum, 2003); Pille Epner, "Tsaariaeg. Vaatepildikunst: üleminek graafikalt fotole", *Kahemõõtmelised majad. Arhitektuurifoto Eestis 1860. aastatest tänapäevani* (Tallinn: Eesti Arhitektuurimuuseum, 2002), 7–28.

34 Peeter Linnap, "Elurežissöör Pääsuke ja positivistlik etnograafia", *Johannes Pääsuke. Mees kahe kaameraga*, comp. by Jana Reidla (Tartu: Eesti Rahva Muuseum, 2003), 95–105, 101.

FIG. 2. RUINS OF LIHULA CASTLE. GLASS PLATE NEGATIVE, 130 × 180 MM. PHOTO: JOHANNES PÄÄSUKE, 1913 / ESTONIAN NATIONAL MUSEUM.

notes. On the other hand, he also made personal choices, which probably also depended on local conditions and shooting situations. Thus he writes that: "It was interesting in front of the farm, we took some pictures of the day and we also received food from the kind people, for which we were not charged, and on top of that we were given some old money to take to the museum."[35] Or elsewhere: "… we quickly rushed to Palmsi Manor, where there was supposed to be a magnificent waterfall with its multi-tiered fall, but we saw that it wasn't worthy of a photograph."[36]

The Estonian National Museum tasked Pääsuke with capturing the old, so he focused on archaic buildings, activities, and people, preferring, for example, people wearing traditional costumes, and

35 Johannes Pääsuke, "Johannes Pääsukese märkmed 1913. aasta suviselt matkalt I", *Teater. Muusika. Kino*, 10 (1986), 52–61, 53.

36 Ibid., 58.

old-fashioned buildings:[37] "…on the road we found an original old-fashioned smokehouse, and we made 8 photographs of it inside and outside. After that we immediately headed to the Lihula ruins, where we arrived at 5:00. The ruins are not of a special interest, just a typical hillfort, a few cellars, a moat and a pile of stones, that's all. However, we still took some photos as a keepsake." (Fig. 2).

People in traditional costumes and villages and buildings with an original appearance are being sought.[38]"The village of Ninase is like something outright created for a photographer, the houses and the village are very original, /more/ than anywhere else in Saaremaa. /---/ We took about 20 photos here, and there were also plenty of great typical fishermen."[39] And elsewhere: "From here, straight on to the village of Võhma, nothing stood out to us there either, only one old woman was dressed in Võhma's traditional clothing, wearing a hat like a stocking on her head. This was nothing unusual, because there weren't any more of them in similar clothes."[40] On the one hand, Pääsuke was looking for everyday things to photograph that were characteristic of the particular corner of the country, but on the other hand, he was also interested in extraordinary and outstanding objects and phenomena. Pääsuke himself describes it as follows: "There was nothing special to photograph here, we only found 1 picture of plowing and some antiques."[41] and elsewhere: "We also stayed overnight here to capture the rare scene of hay being mowed with a scythe in the morning, with nearly 60 people involved in the work."[42]

Pääsuke has certainly shaped, to a large extent, the later visual understanding of the Estonian peasant and his culture with his photographs and films. The collection of photos by Pääsuke and, more broadly, the Estonian National Museum is similar to

37 Tõnis Liibek, "Fotojaht talurahvale", *Johannes Pääsuke: inimesed ja rõivad läbi kaamerasilma* (Tartu: Eesti Rahva Muuseum, 2018), 9–21, 20; Ellen Värv, "Muutused Eesti maaelanike rõivastuses 19. sajandi lõpul ja 20. sajandi algul", *Johannes Pääsuke: inimesed ja rõivad läbi kaamerasilma* (Tartu: Eesti Rahva Muuseum, 2018), 24–34, 31–32.

38 See, for example, travel notes from Muhumaa and Saaremaa. Johannes Pääsuke, "Johannes Pääsukese märkmed 1913. aasta suviselt matkalt II", *Teater. Muusika. Kino*, 11 (1986), 66–74.

39 Ibid., 69.

40 Ibid., 69, 73.

41 Ibid., 67– 68.

42 Ibid., 68.

heritage recording efforts that took place in many other European countries during the same period (1850–1920), such as Great Britain, Scandinavia, Switzerland, France, Poland, Italy, and Germany.[43] The task of photography was to document folk culture, which was gradually disappearing due to the changes brought by modernism, and which was seen as the foundation of national identity. The information collected formed an archive that could be used to promote the development of the state and/or nation in the future.[44] Photography, precisely because of its pictorial nature, was well suited to expressing the people's collective perception of history.[45] As contemporaries wrote: "/---/ such photographic records will soon become a thing necessary for any country, society or organization that is "interested in their history and wants to pass it on to their descendants."[46]

One of the first undertakings aimed at globally capturing the world through photography was the French optician Noël-Marie-Paymal Lerebours' publication "Excursions Daguerriennes: Vues et Monuments les Plus Remarquable du Globe" (1841–1843). Soon after the invention of the daguerreotype, he began buying up daguerreotypes from around the world depicting famous places. He also sent photographers to Europe, North America, and the Middle East to take pictures of famous places. Lerebours collected over 1,000 daguerreotypes in this way, of which 110 were eventually published in a book. The places captured on the daguerreotypes look as if they were taken from the World Heritage List: the pyramids, the Alhambra, the Acropolis, the Roman Forum, Jerusalem, Nazareth, as well as views of Moscow, Geneva and Beirut (Fig. 3).

The pictorial depiction of famous buildings was also known earlier, for example, the Nuremberg Chronicle (Liber Chronicarum), published in 1493 and containing numerous engravings of city views (Fig. 4). However, the Excursions Daguerrienes characterize the

43 Elizabeth Edwards, "Between the Local, National, and Transnational: Photographic Recording and Memorializing Desire", *Transnational Memory: Circulation, Articulation, Scales*, ed. by Chiara De Cesari, Ann Rigney (Berlin, Boston: Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 2014), 169–194.

44 Elizabeth Edwards, *The Camera as Historian: Amateur Photographers and Historical Imagination 1885–1918* (Durham: Duke UP, 2012), 137–144.

45 Edwards, "Between the Local, National, and Transnational: Photographic Recording and Memorializing Desire", 173.

46 Ibid., 171.

FIG. 3. THE PYRAMID OF CHEOPS. NOËL-MARIE-PAYMAL LEREBOURS. EXCURSIONS DAGUERRIENNES. VUES ET MONUMENTS LES PLUS REMARQUABLES DU GLOBE. 1840S. ENGRAVING MADE FROM A DAGUERREOTYPE IN A BOOK, 27.5 × 39.3 × 5.5 CM. METROPOLITAN MUSEUM.

FIG. 4. VIEW OF NUREMBERG. WOOD ENGRAVING. HARTMANN SCHEDEL. LIBER CHRONICARUM, 1493. ARTISTS MICHAEL WOLGEMUT AND WILHELM PLEYDENWURFF. WIKIMEDIA COMMONS.

rapid adoption of technological innovation, which made it possible to quickly document a large number of buildings.

In the late 19th century, English geologist and amateur photographer W. Jerome Harrison (1845–1908) called for the creation of a universal photography museum that would "embrace the traditions and historic architecture of Europe and even the world."[47] The first truly comprehensive and universal visual memory project can be considered the Archive de la Planète, founded by the French banker and philanthropist Albert Kahn (1860–1940). This project, launched in 1910, used the latest filmmaking and color photography technologies to "create a memory of the world through images."[48] For two decades, Kahn funded professional photographers who documented buildings, landscapes, people, and ways of life around the world, creating "a kind of photographic record of the inhabited and human-modified surface of the globe as it appeared at the beginning of the [20th] century."[49] The goal of the project was "to permanently record in memory the various aspects of human activity, customs and practices, the inevitable disappearance of which is only a matter of time."[50] The project resulted in the shooting of 72,000 autochrome plates, 4,000 stereoscopic black-and-white photographs, and 120 hours of film, which is now preserved at the Albert-Kahn Museum. (Musée Albert-Kahn) (Fig. 5). It was a visual collection covering global heritage, of course based on a European view of world heritage. Such initiatives as the Excursions Daguerrienes and the Archive de la Planète described above later formed the basis for UNESCO's designation of World Heritage.[51]

Photographs were the first widespread form of visual recording. The more photography spread and the easier it became for people to use

47 Elizabeth Edwards, "Salvaging our Past: Photography and Survival", *Photography, Anthropology, And History: Expanding the Frame*, ed. by Christopher Morton, Elizabeth Edwards (Farnham, Surrey & Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009), 67–87, 70.

48 Gilles Baud-Berthier, "Albert Kahn: The Man and His Legacy", *The Wonderful World of Albert Kahn: Color Photographs from a Lost Age*, ed. by David Okuefuna (London: BBC Books, 2008), 325–331, 326.

49 "Archives of the Planet: Albert Kahn collections", *The UNESCO Courier*, 41,4 (1988), 16–17, 16, https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000079077 [accessed on 19/05/2025].

50 "Archives of the Planet: Albert Kahn collections", *The UNESCO Courier*, 41,4 (1988), 16–17, 16, https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000079077 [accessed on 19/05/2025].

51 Paula Amad, *Counter-Archive: Film, the Everyday, and Albert Kahn's Archives de la Planète* (New York: Columbia UP, 2010).

FIG. 5. FRANCE, ALBI, OLD MILL WITH A VIEW OF THE NEW BRIDGE. AUTOCHROME. PHOTO: AUGUSTE LÉON, 1916 / MUSÉE ALBERT-KAHN.

it, the larger part of their lives they presented and captured through photographs. Photography also transformed the lives of ordinary people into heritage. While in earlier times, only representatives of the upper class could afford to have themselves captured, the world of ordinary people suddenly had meaning and a historical dimension. It was only when photography became accessible and easy at the end of the 19th century, with the appearance of the first Kodak cameras on the market, that people began to widely record everyday life and create family memories.[52] A major role in this was played by women, to whom Kodak also directed its camera advertising.[53] Photographs are considered an important part of personal and family heritage, as they help recall the past and create a strong emotional connection

52 Brian Coe, Paul Gates, *The Snapshot Photograph: The Rise of Popular Photography, 1888–1939* (London: Ash and Grant, 1977).

53 Patrizia Di Bello, *Women's Albums and Photography in Victorian England: Ladies, Mothers and Flirts* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2007); Emma Lewis, *Photography – a feminist history: How Women Shaped the Art* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2021).

FIG. 6. FAMILY ALBUM WITH PHOTOS. ALBUM SIZE 8.4 × 14.5 CM. PHOTO: GUSTAV SULLAN, SECOND HALF OF THE 1930S, ESTONIA / PRIVATE COLLECTION OF KURMO KONSA.

with it. In old photographs, we see relatives whom we have never met, but who we have been told about. Visual images create the feeling of being personally acquainted with them. Photos are also always associated with oral heritage; looking at them reminds us of times gone by and events that took place. In the first half of the 20th century, roll film cameras with negative formats of 4.5×6 cm to 6×9 cm were very popular. Such formats were well suited for making contact

copies, and the resulting photos were pasted into small albums (Fig. 6). Family photo albums can be considered a kind of family archive that symbolically bound together a specific human community.[54]

PHOTOS AND DOCUMENTATION OF THE CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION PROCESS

One way to preserve heritage objects is through their conservation and restoration. Conservation-restoration as a profession, as we know it today, developed in the 19th century. People have probably been organizing, repairing, and rebuilding various objects since ancient times. However, all of this was very far from conservation in the modern sense. In the 19th century, conservation began to be considered a comprehensive process, including the scientific study of objects, the identification and elimination of damaging factors (of course, if possible), the creation of suitable storage conditions, the prevention of further decay, and the constant monitoring of the condition of objects.

However, the focus of conservation has always been on the processing of objects. What is specifically done, of course, depends on the object, but also on the purpose of the processing. It is clear that the conservation of a building is different from the restoration of a painting, and the conservation of an Old Believer prayer book in daily use is also slightly different from the processing of a parchment manuscript preserved in an archival collection. Objects have both a physical nature (they are things) and a cultural meaning (they refer to something, mean something). Understanding the relationship between the tangible and intangible aspects of an object is the foundation of the conservation process. This characteristic blending of physical and cultural information is one of the charms and challenges of conservation. On the one hand, conservators use scientific research methods that provide scientific facts about objects, and on the other hand, they try to understand people's thoughts and attitudes towards objects. The dual nature of objects is related to the physical processing of the object and the interpretation of the object. A conservator deals with the physical side of an object, processes it, but at the same time he also interprets the object.

54 Linnap, *Eesti fotograafia ajalugu (1839–2015)*, 59.

When processing objects, a distinction is made between conservation and restoration. The goal of conservation (from the Latin *conservare* "to keep, preserve") is to ensure the preservation of values through direct influence on the objects being preserved. The goal of conservation is to stabilize the condition of the valuable elements of an object. Depending on the objects and processing goals, a wide variety of physical and chemical methods are used for this purpose. Efforts are made to slow down the decline in the value of objects as much as possible. The term restoration (from the Latin *restaurāre* "to restore, rebuild, repair") refers to an activity aimed at restoring an object to its presumed state at some earlier time period. During this time period, the values inherent in the object must be so important that they outweigh the possible decline in other values. During restoration, altered or damaged elements may be removed and new ones added. Restoration is based on a comprehensive study of the object and its history. Restoration increases the aesthetic and functional value, but may decrease the scientific value. Distinguishing between conservation and restoration activities can be difficult in practice. Depending on the object and the purpose of the processing, they may be combined, and it is also not uncommon for conservation to be accompanied by so-called restorative effects. However, the direct goals of both treatments are certainly different, and through them it is always possible to tell whether it is conservation or restoration. If such a distinction is not directly necessary, either both terms are used in combination when talking about conservation/restoration, or only the term conservation is used.

The idea that conservation and restoration should document what is being done and how it is being done is, of course, nothing very new. The beginning of the documentation of buildings and monuments can be dated to the 16th–17th centuries.[55] Descriptions of restoration work have been known since the 16th century, but their authors are eyewitnesses, not the direct performers of the work themselves.[56] The most important and influential architectural theorist of the

55 Barbara Vodopivec, Rand Eppich, Ingval Maxwell, Alessandra Gandini, Roko Žarnić, "A Contribution to a Unified Approach in Policy Making through Documenting Cultural Heritage", *Progress in Cultural Heritage Preservation*. 4th International Conference, EuroMed 2012 Limassol, Cyprus, 29 oct – 3 nov, 2012 Proceedings (Heidelberg: Springer, 2012), 359–368, 361.

56 Alessandro Conti, *History of the restoration and conservation of works of art* (Amsterdam, Boston *et al*.: Butterworth-Heinemann, 2007), 37.

FIG. 7. DISCOVERY OF THE TEMPLE OF ISIS IN POMPEII, BURIED UNDER PUMICE AND OTHER VOLCANIC MATERIAL. COLOURED ETCHING BY PIETRO FABRIS, 1776. 21.5 × 39.2 CM. WELLCOME COLLECTION.

Renaissance, Leon Batista Alberti (1404–1472), advised all architects to study old, beautiful buildings, take their measurements and make drawings, become familiar with the proportions of the buildings, and even make models for further study.[57] In the 18th century, extensive excavations took place in the ancient cities of Herculaneum, Pompeii, and Stabiae, which were buried under ash as a result of the eruption of Mount Vesuvius. The excavated sites were documented with plans, drawings and descriptions.[58] (Fig. 7). In England, the study of medieval buildings became widespread from the 1770s onwards, accompanied by their fairly thorough documentation.[59]

The so-called stylistic restoration that emerged in the 19th century required a critical examination of buildings in order to "determine the age and character of each part – to create a detailed, reliable evidence of a kind, also in the form of a description or precise drawings." (Viollet–le–Duc)[60]. Viollet-le-Duc systematically documented all the

57 Jukka Jokilehto, *A History of Architectural Conservation* (Oxford: Butterworth Heinemann, 1999), 27

58 Ibid., 57.

59 Jukka Jokilehto, *A History of Architectural Conservation*, PhD Thesis (York, England: The University of York, 1986), 236.

60 Jokilehto, *A History of Architectural Conservation* (1999), 151.

FIG. 8. IN CONSERVATION DOCUMENTATION TODAY, DESCRIPTIONS ARE ALWAYS ACCOMPANIED BY PHOTOGRAPHS, WHICH ALLOW FOR A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE OBJECT. NETTY MULD, *TARTU ÜLIKOOLI MUUSEUMI KÄSITSI MAALITUD JA PABERTAUSTAL OLEVATE ÕPPETAHVLITE KONSERVEERIMINE*. GRADUATION THESIS (TARTU: KÕRGEM KUNSTIKOOL PALLAS, 2022).

restoration work carried out. He made sketches and drawings of all the details to better understand the principles on which the architects and artists had relied.[61] In the 19th century, extensive documentation was compiled during the restoration of buildings. For example, the restoration documentation of Magdeburg Cathedral (1826–1835) consists of five volumes of research materials with drawings and plans, and reports.[62]

A distinction is made between textual (written) and visual documentation, which naturally go hand in hand. In the case of written documentation, the object, its damage, the conservation methods used, etc. are described in text. Visual documentation is widely used and extremely important in the case of heritage, as it is not possible to adequately present all information related to objects in text alone. Visual documentation allows you to present the object in a clearly understandable form, and it is also easy to show the object's dimensions, damage, areas to be treated, etc. (Fig. 8)

The use of photographs to document the condition of buildings began almost immediately after the introduction of the daguerreotype. Systematic conservation documentation of museum objects, especially works of art, began to develop in the mid-19th century. From 1853, Charles Eastlake, director of the National Gallery (UK), prepared a description of each painting to be conserved, which was then assessed by the appropriate committee. These descriptions indicated the painting's registration details, the times of previous repairs, dimensions, materials and techniques, and condition.[63] Around the same time, the South Kensington Museum (now the Victoria and Albert Museum) began to include photographs in its descriptions of paintings.[64] Manfred Holyoake's book "The Conservation of Paintings", published in 1870, also describes the importance of photographs in preserving paintings: "Photographs of paintings can be used directly in restoration. Examples such as the portrait of Richard II have made this obvious to all. The photograph, taken by the Arundel Society before its last cleaning, now allows the wider

61 Jokilehto, *A History of Architectural Conservation* (1986), 220.

62 Ibid., 195–197.

63 Hero Boothroyd Brooks, *Practical Developments in English Easel Paintings Conservation, c. 1824–1968, from Written Sources*, PhD Thesis (London: Courtauld Institute of Art, 1999), 54.

64 Boothroyd Brooks, *Practical Developments in English Easel Paintings Conservation, c. 1824–1968, from Written Sources*, 59.

public to appreciate the extent of the recent overpainting; and the photograph now taken of it effectively prevents the possibility of a similar careless overpainting happening again – as the public can now identify it."[65] Scottish chemist Arthur Pillans Laurie (1861–1949), who was one of the first to undertake the scientific study of paintings, stated in 1926 that photographs should be taken of paintings both before and after processing. He also emphasized the importance of restoration documentation in attributing artworks.[66] In 1930, issues of documenting works of art were discussed at an international conference in Rome, and in the first half of the 1930s, two articles were published in the French journal *Mouseion: revue internationale de muséographie*, which emphasized the importance of conservation documentation.[67] In 1932, the William Hayes Fogg Art Museum in Cambridge (USA) began publishing the journal Technical Studies in the Field of Fine Arts, where various approaches to conservation began to appear. George Stout, a research fellow at the Fogg Art Museum, published an article in 1935 introducing a four-page tabular format for describing the condition of paintings.[68] In the article, Stout emphasizes the importance of condition descriptions for art historians, as well as conservators, and he writes that: "documentation is the tool that helps to advance the collection of knowledge necessary for the conservation of paintings."[69] He highlights the advantages of the tabular format over the usual narrative description, which are time saving, a more thorough and systematic description of the layered structure of the painting, and ease of future use. He also emphasizes the need for continuous documentation of damage throughout the life of the object and the importance of photographic documentation.[70]

65 Manfred Holyoake, *Conservation of Pictures* (London: Dalton and Lucy, Booksellers to the Queen and to H.R.H. The Prince of Wales, 1870), 57.

66 Arthur Pillans Laurie, *The Painter's Methods and Materials* (London: Seely, Service and Co, 1926), 237; Arthur Pillans Laurie, "Review of 'The Scientific Examination of Pictures' by AJ Martin de Wild", *Apollo*, 10, 59 (1926), 292.

67 Akke Kumlien, "Les fiches de renseignements techniques sur les peintures contemporaines", *Mouseion*, 25–26 (1934), 220–225; Erich Wiese, "La conservation des tableaux contemporains", *Mouseion*, 20 (1932), 23–25.

68 George L. Stout, "A museum record of the condition of paintings", *Technical Studies in the Field of the Fine Arts*, 3(4) (1935), 200–216, 201–203.

69 Stout, "A museum record of the condition of paintings", 202.

70 Ibid., 201–203.

The "fathers" of modern conservation – Friedrich Rathgen (1862–1942), Alexander Scott (1853–1947), Harold Plenderleith (1898–1997) – do not mention documentation in their approaches. It is true that their books include descriptions of conservation and restoration work on various objects as examples. So, indirectly, an overview is also given of the documentation of the work, but no separate chapters are dedicated to it. In the 1930s, however, the importance of documentation began to be emphasized more and more in both conservator and museological circles.[71] The Metropolitan Museum of Art established the Sub-Department of Conservation and Technical Research in 1942, where in the following years documentation forms specific to modern conservation were developed, covering processing requirements for objects, conservation protocols, condition assessments for loaned objects, and handling instructions.[72] They were published in 1946 in the book "The Care and Handling of Art Objects" by Robert Sugden.[73] However, it can be said that only a few museums have proper conservation documentation before the 1970s. This does not mean that conservation work was not documented, but that the importance of documentation depended very much on the institution and the initiative of the conservators themselves.[74] The objects were definitely documented when the conservator wrote an article about them.[75] The recording of restoration work in photographs began in the mid-19th century. It was used in some museums and, of course, in articles and books on conservation. However, it was not until the middle of the 20th century that taking photographs of objects being conserved became a standard working procedure.[76] Today, photography is the most common method of visual documentation (Fig. 9).

71 Morwenna Blewett, "The history of conservation documentation at Worchester Art Museum", *AIC Paintings Speciality Group Postprints*, 18 (2006), 94–107.

72 Lawrence Becker, Deborah Schorsch, "The Practice of Objects Conservation in The Metropolitan Museum of Art (1870–1942)", *Metropolitan Museum Studies in Art, Science, and Technology I* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2010), 11–37.

73 Robert P. Sugden, *Care and Handling of Art Objects* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1946).

74 Michelle Moore, "Conservation Documentation and the Implications of Digitisation", *Journal of Conservation and Museum Studies*, 7 (2001), 6–10: https://www.jcms-journal.com/articles/10.5334/jcms.7012/#r60 [accessed on 19/05/2025].

75 Helmut Ruhemann, "A record of restoration", *Technical Studies*, 3, 4 (1934), 3–15.

76 Knut Nicolaus, *The Restoration of Paintings* (Cologne: Könemann, 1999), 374– 375.

FIG. 9. PHOTOS IN THE CONSERVATION DOCUMENTATION HELP TO UNDERSTAND THE WORK PROCESS. ANASTASIA MALKOVA, *MOLDPILLI KONSERVEERIMINE JA REKONSTRUEERIMINE*. GRADUATION THESIS (TARTU: KÕRGEM KUNSTIKOOL PALLAS, 2023).

It is quick, relatively cheap and easy, and interpreting photographs is generally easier compared to, for example, drawings. It is also easier to identify buildings and objects and describe surface details with photographs (Fig. 10).

It is good to use photographs to characterize changes in condition, for example before and after conservation-restoration (Fig. 11).

The first significant technical innovation in documenting buildings occurred in the 1870s, when photogrammetry was introduced. True,

FIG. 10. PHOTOS ARE VERY SUITABLE FOR DESCRIBING DETAILS. TRIINU MERESAAR, *STUKKIDE KONSERVEERIMINE VÄÄRTUSPÕHISE ANALÜÜSI ALUSEL: SARGVERE MÕISA, EESTIMAA RÜÜTELKONNA HOONE JA ENDISE EESTI TEADUSTE AKADEEMIA HOONE NÄITEL*. GRADUATION THESIS (TARTU: KÕRGEM KUNSTIKOOL PALLAS, 2023).

it began to be used more widely from the 1930s.[77] The biggest changes in documentation have occurred since the 1970s, however, with the introduction of computers and digital methods. First, 2-D computer

77 Ross Dallas, "Tools overview", *Recording, Documentation and Information Management for the Conservation of Heritage Places: Illustrated Examples*, ed. by Rand Eppich, Amel Chabbi (Los Angeles: Getty Conservation Institute, 2007), 5–9.

FIG. 11. CONDITION OF THE OBJECT BEFORE CONSERVATION. NETTY MULD, *TARTU ÜLIKOOLI MUUSEUMI KÄSITSI MAALITUD JA PABERTAUSTAL OLEVATE ÕPPETAHVLITE KONSERVEERIMINE*. GRADUATION THESIS (TARTU: KÕRGEM KUNSTIKOOL PALLAS, 2022).

programs were used to create drawings, and later 3-D modeling was also used.[78]

It is known from the Estonian National Museum that in 1960, alongside two positions for restorers, a senior mechanic position was established, with Roman Vulf, who held a higher education, being hired. His main responsibility became the maintenance and conservation of metal and wooden objects. He also introduced special conservation diaries, in which brief descriptions of the procedures used in the work were written.[79] The first restoration protocol for a wooden object, which included photographs and the views of the restoration committee, was known from 1965.[80]

PHOTOGRAPHY INFLUENCES THEORY: THE DEBATE BETWEEN CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION

The conservation and restoration of cultural heritage has been an important topic in European cultural discussions since the first half of the 19th century. At the same time, photography, which had developed, was immediately involved in solving both the practical and theoretical issues of preservation. The immediate connections between restoration and photography were not simply the result of coincidence. Both conservation and photography deal with issues of time and the natural and the artificial.[81] Both fields attempt to transcend time, one by preserving real objects and the other by visually "freezing" moments in time through technology.

The central theme in the debates at the time was related to the controversy between restoration and conservation ("non-restoration") of medieval buildings.[82] These antagonistic approaches are today

78 Serra Akboy-Ilk, "The nature of drawing in the changing culture of architectural documentation", *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research*, 33, 1 (2016), 29–44.

79 Janika Turu, *Biotsiidide kasutamine ja nende mõju Eesti Rahva Muuseumi tekstiilide näitel* (Tallinn: Estonian Academy of Arts, 2018), 27.

80 Arnold Kärbo, "Puidu restaureerimise ajaloost Eesti NSV-s", *Raamat-aeg-restaureerimine: artiklite kogumik V* (Tartu: Tartu Riiklik Ülikool, 1984), 34–43.

81 For conservation and time see: Kurmo Konsa, "Time and Space of Heritage Preservation: Conservation Theoretical Perspective", *Baltic Journal of Art History* , 13 (2017), 193–215, DOI: https://doi.org/10.12697/BJAH.2017.13.09 [accessed on 19/05/2025].

82 See e.g.: Nicolaus Pevsner, *Ruskin and Viollet-le-Duc: Englishness and Frenchness in the Appreciation of Gothic Architecture* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1969); Thordis Arrhenius, *The Fragile Monument– On Conservation and Modernity* (London: Artifice Books, 2012).

primarily associated with the names of Viollet-le-Duc and John Ruskin, although in many ways they are later ideas that were only associated with these men's names in retrospect. Eugène Viollet-le-Duc is known for his interpretative restoration approach, which critics have called destructive. In his book Dictionnaire *raissone de l´Architecture francaise du XI au XV siècle* he defines restoration as follows: "The term "restoration" and the activity itself are modern. Restoring a building does not mean preserving it, repairing it, nor re-establishing it to the previous condition; it means bringing it to a state of perfection in which it may or may not have been before." [83] By the modernity of restoration, Viollet-le-Duc refers to the fact that in earlier times, i.e. before the 19th century, it did not exist in this form. He emphasizes the uniqueness of his contemporary era compared to the entire history of humanity to date, as "for the first time the past is being analyzed, what is found there is being compared and classified, and a true history of the past is being created."[84] He strongly emphasizes the importance of analytical study of buildings, both from a material and spiritual perspective. Since few buildings, especially in the Middle Ages, were built in just one stage, they had many different changes and additions. Moreover, the buildings were also added to and modified after their completion. Thus, stylistic restoration required critical examination of the buildings to "determine the age and character of each part – to create a detailed, reliable evidence-based record, also in the form of a description or precise drawings."[85] Also, buildings in different areas had different styles. To do this, the architect had to be familiar with local variations of different styles and different schools. Based on the studies of the building, the architect had to decide how to restore the building. The present is the important moment when decisions are made about a monument – what style it was in and what is the ideal embodiment of that style in a building. The most perfect state of an object is its

83 Eugène Viollet-le-Duc, *Dictionnaire raisonné de l'architecture française du XIe au XVIe siècle* (Paris: A. Morel, 1854–1868). He writes about the restoration in the eighth volume of the work. See: https://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/Dictionnaire_raisonn%C3%A9_de_l%E2%80%99architecture_fran%C3%A7aise_du_XIe_au_XVIe_si%C3%A8cle [accessed on 19/05/2025]. English translation: Eugène Viollet-le-Duc, *On Restoration* (London: Sampson Low, Marston Low, and Searle, 1875), https://ia902708.us.archive.org/8/items/onrestorationby00wethgoog/onrestorationby00wethgoog.pdf [accessed on 19/05/2025].

84 Viollet-le-Duc, *On Restoration*, 13.

85 Ibid., 36.

original state. Wear and damage deform and distort an object, and it is the duty of the conservator to free the object from the ravages of time. He even developed his idea so far as to claim that the original state of an object was not when it was finished, but when it was finished at the level of an idea. For Viollet-le-Duc, the most important thing was the conceptual shape of the object. The goal of restoration is to reconstruct the "ideal original state" of a building, as it would have been if the object had been designed and built under ideal conditions at a specific point in history. According to this model, the history of a building can be captured by reconstructing a series of objects that correspond to the successive stages of development of the building.[86] The authenticity of the building can only be assessed in the present moment.[87] At the same time, he considered it important to take into account the specifics of the building's construction and changes made during later use. An object that existed inevitably only in the present was restored to correspond to a specific moment in the past.

In the mid-19th century, such stylistic restorations that often led to arbitrary innovations and reconstructions that ignored historical reality were increasingly criticized. One of the figureheads of such a critical attitude is John Ruskin, who himself did not directly create any conservation theory, but many of his positions formed the basis for the development of modern conservation philosophy. In his work "The Seven Lamps of Architecture" (1849) he dealt extensively with the characteristics and values of architecture. He strongly defended the material authenticity of historical architecture, emphasizing the value and beauty of old buildings: "For, indeed, the greatest glory of a building is not in its stones, nor in its gold. Its glory is in its Age, and in that deep sense of voicefulness, of stern watching, of mysterious sympathy, nay, even of approval or condemnation, which we feel in walls that have long been washed by the passing waves of humanity."[88] His extreme love for the old even went so far as to claim that nothing new should disturb old buildings. Old damaged buildings must not be rebuilt or restored, everything must remain as it has come to us: "*We have no right whatever to touch them*. They are

86 Arrhenius, *The Fragile Monument– On Conservation and Modernity*, 63–64.

87 Aaron Vinegar, "Viollet-le-Duc and Restoration on the Future Anterior", *Future Anterior*, 3, 2 (2006), 55–65.

88 John Ruskin, "The Seven Lamps of Architecture", *The Works of John Ruskin, 8* (London: George Allen; New York: Longmans, Green, 1903), 233–234.

not ours. They belong partly to those who built them, and partly to all the generations of mankind who are to follow us."[89]

Of course, restoration as an activity was completely "wrong" in his opinion: "Neither by the public, nor by those who have the care of public monuments, is the true meaning of the word restoration understood. It means the most total destruction which a building can suffer: a destruction out of which no remnants can be gathered: a destruction accompanied with false description of the thing destroyed."[90]

For Ruskin, the traces of history on an object are the greatest value of these objects. The authenticity of a building lies not in its historical form, but in the traces that time has left on the building. They form part of the object, and without them, that object would be something else entirely, thus losing an important part of its true nature. The building is significant in its historical integrity, from its creation and extending into the distant future.

Both Viollet-le-Duc and Ruskin immediately embraced the new invention of photography and emphasized its importance. Thus wrote Viollet-le-Duc: "Photography, which is becoming more and more important in scientific research every day, seems to have appeared precisely to assist in the great undertakings of restoration."[91] John Ruskin, who captured Venetian buildings on daguerreotypes, wrote in a letter to his father in 1845: "This is certainly the most wonderful invention of this century; given to us, I think, just in time to preserve for the public some of the hallmarks of destroyers."[92] And elsewhere: "It's almost like carrying a palace; every stone and speck is there."[93]

For them, photography meant much more than just a simple tool or instrument; they began to conceptualize it based on their theoretical perspectives and practical experiences in the preservation of buildings. When Eugene-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, along with Jean-Baptiste Lassus, applied to be the restorers of Notre-Dame de Paris in 1842, he had a number of daguerreotypes made to

89 Ruskin, "The Seven Lamps of Architecture", 245.

90 Ibid., 242.

91 Viollet-le-Duc, *On Restoration*, 1.

92 "Letter from John Ruskin to W.H. Harrison, 12 August 1846", John Ruskin, *The Works of John Ruskin, 3* (London: George Allen; New York: Longmans, Green, 1909), 210, n.2.

93 Ibid.

document the condition of the building. He probably used these photographs taken by Kruines and Lebours, which have now been lost, to present his restoration project to the commission.[94] They began the restoration in 1845 and completed it almost two decades later, in 1864.[95] To explain the restoration work of the church to the wider public, Viollet-le-Duc and Jean-Baptiste Lassus published a comprehensive monograph, *Monographie de Notre-Dame de Paris et de la nouvelle sacristie*[96], which was published between 1857 and 1860. The work was equipped with comprehensive drawings, plans and photographs (Fig. 12). The drawings depicted the result planned by the architects before the restoration process (Fig.13 and 14), and the photographs depicted the final result.[97]

For Viollet-le-Duc, photography became an indispensable assistant to the restorer (Fig. 15). On the one hand, it helped identify what was invisible even to the experienced eye, on the other hand, the photograph captured the essence of the building that restoration could have hidden. He writes about photography in his dictionary *Dictionnaire raissone de l´Architecture francaise du XI au XV siècle*: "…the advantage of photography is the creation of irrefutable reports and documents, which can still be consulted even when restorations hide traces of ruins. Photography has made architects pay even closer attention to the smallest traces of the previous layout of buildings, they have begun to better understand the structures of buildings, and it has given them a permanent means of justifying their actions. "That's why we can never use photography too much in restoration, because very often we discover in a photograph what we haven't seen on the monument itself."[98]

Compared to Viollet-le-Duc, Ruskin's attitude towards photography was much more ambivalent. The initial enthusiasm was later replaced

94 Yvan Christ, *L'Age d´Or de la Photographie* (Paris: Vincent, Feral et Cie, 1965), 15.

95 Daniel D. Reiff, "Viollet le Duc and Historic Restoration: The West Portals of Notre-Dame", *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 30, 1 (1971), 17–30: https://doi.org/10.2307/988670 [accessed on 19/05/2025].

96 Jean Baptiste Lassus, Eugène Viollet-Le-Duc, *Monographie de Notre-Dame de Paris et de la nouvelle sacristie de MM. Lassus and Viollet-Le-Duc* (Paris: A. Morel, [1853–1857]): https://docnum.unistra.fr/digital/collection/coll5/id/177 [accessed on 19/05/2025].

97 Arrhenius, *The Fragile Monument– On Conservation and Modernity*, 55–61.

98 Ackerman, "On the Origins of Architectural Photography", 26–36.

FIG. 12. NOTRE DAME, PARIS. 1850S. THE PHOTO WAS TAKEN DURING THE RESTORATION WORK ON NOTRE DAME, LED BY VIOLLET-LE DUC. ALBUMEN PHOTO ON PAPER. PHOTO: LOUIS-AUGUSTE BISSON AND AUGUSTE-ROSALIE BISSON / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS.

by a much more critical attitude.[99] In his work The Stones of Venice, published in 1853, he treats photography almost as a miracle tool that gives people the opportunity to capture various objects (Fig. 16): "The ability to truly represent material and physical things, which within certain limits and conditions are impeccable, is now available to every person, and almost without any effort."[100]

99 Michael Harvey, "Ruskin and Photography", *Oxford Art Journal*, 7 (1985), 25–33; Karen Burns, "Topographies of Tourism: Documentary Photography and The Stones of Venice", *Assemblage*, 32 (1997), 22–44.

100 John Ruskin, *The Works of John Ruskin, 11* (London: George Allen; New York: Longmans, Green, 1909), 199.

FIG. 13. VIEW OF THE FACADE OF NOTRE DAME, DESIGNED BY VIOLLET-LE-DUC, WITH HYPOTHETICAL TOWERS. 1860. WIKIMEDIA COMMONS.

FIG. 14. NOTRE DAME, PARIS. CONSTRUCTION OF THE TURRET. DRAWING BY VIOLLET-LE-DUC. 1860S. WIKIMEDIA COMMONS.

FIG. 15. NOTRE DAME, PARIS. THE WEST FACADE OF NOTRE-DAME DEPICTED IN THE EARLY 1860S, TOWARDS THE END OF THE RESTORATION. THE TOWER HAS BEEN REBUILT AND THE STATUES OF THE KINGS HAVE BEEN PARTIALLY RESTORED. ALBUMEN PHOTOGRAPH ON PAPER, 27.6 × 21.1 CM. PHOTO: ÉDOUARD BALDUS / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS.

In Lectures on Art, published in 1870, he expressed the opinion that photography could have a negative impact on art: “Let me state once and for all that photographs do not replace any of the qualities

FIG. 16. DUCAL PALACE, VENICE. PHOTOGRAVURE FROM JOHN RUSKIN'S *THE STONES OF VENICE*, VOL 3 (BOSTON: DANA ESTATES AND COMPANY, 1890).

or uses of fine art, photographs have so much in common with nature that they even share its modesty, and do not give you anything valuable that you can achieve yourself. They are no substitute for any good art, because the definition of art is "Human work guided by human design."[101]

Ruskin here refers to the connection of photography with nature, which was already emphasized by the inventors of photography. Daguerre himself described photography as "the spontaneous reproduction of images from nature" and called daguerreotypes "imprints of nature." In his view, photography was "a chemical and physical process that gave nature the ability to present itself."[102] Henry Fox Talbot, who discovered the photographic process at the same time as Daguerre, called it "nature's pencil." Photography was considered a mechanical process that was also natural, and because of this, it was given the objectivity and authenticity that was otherwise attributed to nature. Ruskin, in his later criticism of photography,

101 John Ruskin, *The Works of John Ruskin, 20* (London: George Allen; New York: Longmans, Green, 1909), 165.

102 See: Louis-Jaques-Mandes Daguerre, "Daguerrotype", *Classic Essays on Photography*, ed. by Alan Trachtenberg (New Haven: Leete's Island Books, 1980), 11–15.

uses this naturalism argument when he argues that photography can never be equal to art. Photography, which belongs to the realm of nature and technology, has nothing to do with man-made culture. This natural objective nature of photography allowed Viollet-le-Duc to use it to show that the building had been authentically restored. The photograph allowed the condition of the building to be captured, and based on it, it was later possible to prove that the restorer's actions were appropriate.

CONCLUSION

Humans perceive both space and time primarily visually. Space is made up of objects and items that are arranged in a specific way, and time appears to us through the changes in these objects and items. The processes that create the past, give it meaning, and frame it, are also largely visual. Thus, heritage is inextricably linked to visual representations of objects, landscapes, and phenomena. There is therefore nothing surprising in photography's connection to heritage, but it is a field with plenty of research material.

Clearly, the relationship between heritage and photography is not one-dimensional or clearly defined; it involves a complex interaction between multifaceted phenomena. In this article, I chose three topic areas for more detailed discussion. Firstly, it became clear that photography has actively participated in the process of defining heritage, as well as its institutionalization, since its introduction. It is in visual form that heritage, regardless of its location, is easier to grasp and handle. The use of photography significantly changed how the public could experience buildings. Through the medium of photographs, distant buildings suddenly became close. The circle of people with visual knowledge of architecture increased markedly. Photography significantly contributed to the introduction of heritage objects and thus to the wider use of the concept of heritage itself.

The second round of topics focused on the instrumental role of photography in conservation and restoration. Modern conservation and restoration are no longer possible to imagine without photography. This is not particularly surprising, as photography came in addition to the previously used methods of visual representation. It must be acknowledged that photography helped to make the description and measurement of monuments more precise. Photography did not bring

a radical change to the recording of monuments, but rather seamlessly connected with the visual practices that had been in use until then. However, when we look at conservation documentation, we see that images are always accompanied by their contextualization through text. This is where the decontextualizing effect of photography becomes apparent: when taking a picture, a large part of reality is removed to capture a selected part of reality as accurately as possible. The removed part is replaced with textual descriptions.

The third area discussed is probably the most surprising, namely that it turned out that photography also plays an important role in theoretical discussions of conservation and restoration. The central problem in conservation and restoration is the question of the authenticity of objects. Photography's connection, whether apparent or not, to nature and objectivity allowed it to be used to support various theoretical concepts.

KURMO KONSA: Photography and Heritage Documentation
KEYWORDS: photography; cultural heritage; heritage documentation; conservation and restoration; authenticity

SUMMARY

The past is always irretrievably lost; nevertheless, we are left with our heritage and photographs. In some cases, the two may also coincide. On one hand, photographs themselves form part of our heritage, and on the other hand, they are used to document our heritage. In this article, I discuss how photography affects our engagement with the past, shapes our understanding of the past, and recreates the past in the present day. Photography is instrumental in shaping concepts and practices central to many approaches to heritage. Examples can be considered in this article of heritage presentation and interpretation, as well as surveying and archiving processes. Documentation is an integral part of heritage preservation, conservation, and restoration. Since all objects can be considered as sources of information, the preservation of heritage can also be viewed informationally. Since its introduction, photography has actively participated in the process of defining heritage and also in its institutionalization. Heritage, regardless of its location, is easier to grasp and handle in visual

form. The use of photography significantly changed the way the general public experienced architecture. Through photographs, distant objects suddenly became closer. The circle of individuals who had visual knowledge of architecture increased noticeably. Photography contributed significantly to the introduction of heritage objects and thus to the broader use of the term "heritage" itself. Today, conservation/restoration can no longer be imagined without photography. Again, this is not something particularly surprising, since photography was developed in addition to the previously used methods of visual representation. It must be recognized that photography helped make the describing and surveying of monuments more accurate. Photography did not bring a radical change to the documentation of monuments, but was smoothly integrated with visual practices that had been in use until that day in age. Photography also plays an important role in the theoretical discussion of conservation/restoration. The central problem of conservation and restoration is the question of object authenticity. Photography's association, whether apparent or not, with nature and objectivity allowed it to be used to support various theoretical concepts. Obviously, the relationship between heritage and photography is not unilateral or clearly defined; it is a complex interaction between multifaceted phenomena.

CV

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