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The Cross-Cultural City: cultural diversity in World Heritage Cities
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Our cities have evolved, developed and changed over the generations and have left a legacy of their past. The capacity of the city is to adapt and reflect its history. We read the city as a text and the shocks and changes are part of the turbulences that have taken their toll over time. This is reflected in the Outstanding Universal Value of these cities representing a quarter of all World Heritage sites.

The shocks of culture have been identified in the meetings of the city by Walter Benjamin and in the meeting of cultures by Umberto Eco. Walter Benjamin's concept of shock and his particular understanding of the role that shock plays in transition societies provides a very rich tool for analyzing some of the transformations that Central and Eastern European societies are undergoing since 1989. Umberto Eco debates the Culture Shock with examples from the meeting of European and indigenous cultures at the end of the 15th century. He gives three options when the culture takes over or there is an assimilation or possibly a mutation.

The British philosopher Herbert Spencer first used the phrase "*Survival of the fittest*" after reading Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* — in his *Principles of Biology* (1864), in which he drew parallels between his own economic theories and Darwin's biological ones, writing

> "This survival of the fittest, which I have here sought to express in mechanical terms, is that which Mr. Darwin has called 'natural selection' or the preservation of favoured races in the struggle for life."

> "Thus by survival of the fittest, the militant type of society becomes characterized by profound confidence in the governing power, joined with a loyalty causing submission to it in all matters whatever"

in a series of lectures as a rebuttal to the science and culture of Darwin's theories of evolution propounded also by Professor Thomas Henry Huxley, JC Sharp in Culture and Religion 1873 coined the term Culturists. This is determined as, "those who esteem culture and recommend it as the one panacea for all the ills of humanity and the effect in elevating the whole man."

We need to develop a greater understanding of the term which is often perceived as tautological, therefore the urban aspects of the *'survival of the adaptive'* is surely embodied in the Pantheon in Rome having managed to survive through some 2000 years through adaptive reuse.

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[1] The Five Stages of Culture Shock - Critical Incidents Around the World. Contributions in psychology, no. 25. Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1995

Monuments remain while the people change; the pagan temples and the Christian churches – religious migrants including the Departure from Egypt, the movement to New England, the search for new lives and better conditions. How is the layering effected?

Neighbourhoods are built over, by, instead of, absorbed in, occupied or even hijack the previous layers, periods and cultures.

What are the attitudes to the 'other'? It is interesting to note the differences of the Greek and Roman approaches and their effect on urban form. Two examples of Cevat Erder are Pergamum and Pompeii. We have to comprehend the capacity for integration and the absorption of cultures. In the case of Greece, "more than a century of archaeological excavations have shown that its slow growth complied with certain rules and demands. Before adding a new structure, not only the ambient architecture, but also its special relationship to surrounding buildings was taken into consideration….. Free symmetry was the rule. It is a concept of city planning based on rules and unconditional respect for the environment and for the past." Roman settlements have a mechanical and simple pattern, not finding the elegance of Greek cities, created by the concern for beauty and aesthetics. By accepting the concept of monumentalism, by adding a concern for symmetry and axial order, and by establishing a proportional relationship between masses and empty spaces, the Romans created their own type of urban form.

Cultural diversity is an inherent part of the urban history. The dynamics of change in the city, its expansion and the migrant patterns that have left the traces and evidence including their planning, architecture and intangible traditions. Sites of cultural significance include – Trebic, Mostar, Harar and Baku. Ghettos, caves, monasteries and convents are living, evolving or relicts of time. This has been defined by Francis Bacon[2] as' the remnants of history which have casually escaped the shipwreck of time'. The immigrant areas by the ports of entry and docks repeat itself all over the world. On a personal note, the East End of London is dramatic in manifesting this change over the centuries, moving from the 18th century Huguenot silk weavers to the Methodist community, then the Jewish tailors and finally the Bangladeshi culinary shops and the accompanying arts and fashion activities of the Muslim community. A true polyglot over time; but was this a religious or cultural diversity?

Growth and Change

'City growth generates urban change' reaching a point of metamorphosis The rapid and intense urban growth generates change not only within city structure but leads to new form of the city. This new form cannot be based on the same rules as past cities which had been remaining almost the same for centuries. There is a need for the definition of a new form for the city built with independent components rather than as a comprehensive, complex structure; a polynuclear city. A method of analyzing this new form based on communication theory is defined and presented and the new city components are described.[3]

The cross-cultural city should be seen as a celebration of faith and recognition of the other.

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[2] Advancement of Learning
[3] **Landmarks and Urban Change,** Anthony Clerici, Izabela Mironowicz, Wrocław University of Technology, Poland

values
beliefs (standards), which have significance for a cultural group or an individual, often including, but not being limited to spiritual, political, religious and moral beliefs.
places may have a range of values for different individuals or groups and values are continually renegotiated.
Australia ICOMOS Code on the Ethics of Co-existence in Conserving Significant Places, 1998

Cultural heritage diversity exists in time and space, and demands respect for other cultures and all aspects of their belief systems. In cases where cultural values appear to be in conflict, respect for cultural diversity demands acknowledgment of the legitimacy of the cultural values of all parties
Operational Guidelines – Nara Document

This also raises the issue of urban transformations and the dynamics of change from past to future and religion has something to say about our past and future.

Past	myth and mythology
The eighteenth century philosophers
Present	religion and moral values, politics, religion and state
Future	future of the world community, afterlife

Preservation thus transcends the single building and embraces the conservation and rehabilitation of the whole environment in which society maintains an interest.[4]

Culture and religion:[5]

And perhaps we should add to this 'nature'. Culture has three dimensions: place, people and time. These are cultural attributes acquired through interactivity – giving the meaning to cross-culture. Different definitions focus on 1, behaviour patterns, 2 outward manifestations of belief art or knowledge and 3 values and meanings. What is common is 'the way of life' – material intellectual and spiritual.

Is religion part of culture or vice versa or neither? Culture and Religion[6] is a forum for exploring the perspectives of both anthropology and cultural studies. In particular, the journal will consider why cultural studies have hitherto neglected the significance of religious manifestations in cross-cultural perspectives, and define ways in which the discipline of religious studies needs to engage with other areas of contemporary critical, cultural, and anthropological theory.

Culture

Culture is defined as the system of shared attributes, including beliefs, values, customs, behaviors and artifacts that the members of a group or society use to cope with their world and with one another, and that are transmitted from generation to generation through learning. Culture can be considered as the entire human social heritage; specifically, it is the tradition of a particular social group, a way of living learned from, and shared by, the members of that group.

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[4] Erder, Cevat; From Consciousness to Conservation, UNESCO Publishing House
[5] Culture and religion a conceptual study, Basil Pohlong 2004 Mittal Publication
[6] The journal Culture and Religion

Specifically, the term "culture" in American anthropology had two meanings: (1) the evolved human capacity to classify and represent experiences with symbols, and to act imaginatively and creatively; and (2) the distinct ways that people living in different parts of the world classified and represented their experiences, and acted creatively.

Religion

Definitions of religion are wide and varied. In one sense religion is defined [7]as a system of beliefs based on humanity's attempt to explain the universe and natural phenomena, often involving one or more deities or other supernatural forces and also requiring or binding adherents to follow prescribed religious obligations.

Like culture itself, religion consists of systematic patterns of beliefs, values, and behavior, acquired by people as a member of their society. These patterns are systematic because their manifestations are regular in occurrence and expression and are shared by the members of a group. Within all religions, however, there is not homogeneity; there are differences of interpretation of principles and meanings. Most religions have organized behaviors, including congregations for prayer, priestly hierarchies, holy places, and/or scriptures.

Religion is the belief in and worship of a god or gods, or a set of beliefs concerning the origin and purpose and future of the universe. Many religions have narratives, symbols, traditions and sacred histories associated with their deity or deities, that are intended to give meaning to life. They tend to derive morality, ethics, religious laws or a preferred lifestyle from their ideas about the cosmos and human nature. It defines space and place in time through a hierarchy of the sacred and profane.

The differences between the physical or metaphysical components of religious practice and their tangible and intangible needs create the diversity within and without the group society. This is expressed through time in the religious calendar and ethnic festivals, generating a commonality for pluralism.

The conceptual divergences of the understanding of holy places or those *People sanctifying place* or those *Places sanctifying people*. In addition to comprehending examples of holy places with different narratives, I hope to show examples from the PUSH project ([www.pushproject.org]( ))

The differences of intervention through *Compromise* and *Coexistence* will be the manifestation of the dialectics of interpretation.

Where do we stand?

The new recommendations on the Historic Urban Landscape Approach will share this integrative concept to bring together custodians and stakeholders. We need to determine roles for coexistence and a forum for dialogue between religions and religious communities.

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[7] This definition is from a Webster's Online Dictionary search for its definition of religion.

The memorials of the public practices as embodied in the faith of the people and manifested in the buildings erected to celebrate the beliefs and devotions of the past, present and future.

There are two issues, the evolution of the faith itself and its architectural and planning expression. This will also deal with internal schisms, and changes that have taken place over the centuries. And from what better place to start than Jerusalem? Here we have the coexistence of traditions.   There are sites of religious significance – Vatican City, Kathmandu, Nara, Santiago de Compostela, all including criterion (vi) from the Operational Guidelines.

Conservation of Living Religious Heritage ICCROM 2003
       Reconciling faith and conservation
       Changing liturgical and functional needs
       Competing requirements of co-existing faiths
       Fluctuating interest in religion
       Growing secular pressures on place of religious value
       Museification of religious places and/or objects
       Continuity of faith v. 'scientific' conservation

Religion as a matter of faith

Urban metamorphosis
Mono-cultural cities in the periphery
Multi-cultural cities with layered societies at centres and crossroads

Finally, the paragraphs on management in the operational guidelines show how the religious communities as Stakeholders manage the people and as Custodians manage the site. Examples from the Holy Land abound, but the archetype is surely the situation of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the effects of the Status Quo on behalf of the communities.

Finally, it is CR Ashbee, the proponent of the Arts and Crafts that has the last word, depicting the work of the artisans from all the communities in Jerusalem working on the fixtures and furnishings of the High Commissioner's Residence[8].

"How were all these different races and religions, with heir various traditions and customs to be got to work together?... But craftsmanship – the cunning of man's own right hand – was found here to be, as so often before in human story, a great amalgam; and it was interesting to observe how all these different work people, Moslems, Christians, Jews; English French, German; Greeks, Armenians, Syrians, Poles and Russians with no common language, and who when the machine guns of the mandatory Power patrol the streets are ready to be at each others' throats, were working, jesting and in the end banqueting harmoniously together…   Whatever the aesthetic merits of the work may be which this polyglot community produced, it was an object-lesson in the futility of political methods as set beside the cohesive power of the arts and crafts when practised rather than talked about."

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[8] Ashbee, C.R. (ed), The Pro Jerusalem Society, "Work done at Government House, Jerusalem" 1922-1924

Authenticity was determined at the Council of Trent

THE COUNCIL OF TRENT Session IV - Celebrated on the eighth day of April, 1546 under Pope Paul III - Decree Concerning The Edition And Use Of The Sacred Books

Moreover, the same holy council considering that not a little advantage will accrue to the Church of God if it be made known which of all the Latin editions of the sacred books now in circulation is to be regarded as authentic, ordains and declares that the old Latin Vulgate Edition, which, in use for so many hundred years, has been approved by the Church, be in public lectures, disputations, sermons and expositions held as authentic, and that no one dare or presume under any pretext whatsoever to reject it.

UNESCO constitution

That since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed;

That ignorance of each other's ways and lives has been a common cause, throughout the history of mankind, of that suspicion and mistrust between the peoples of the world through which their differences have all too often broken into war;

That the great and terrible war which has now ended was a war made possible by the denial of the democratic principles of the dignity, equality and mutual respect of men, and by the propagation, in their place, through ignorance and prejudice, of the doctrine of the inequality of men and races;

That the wide diffusion of culture, and the education of humanity for justice and liberty and peace are indispensable to the dignity of man and constitute a sacred duty which all the nations must fulfil in a spirit of mutual assistance and concern;

That a peace based exclusively upon the political and economic arrangements of governments would not be a peace which could secure the unanimous, lasting and sincere support of the peoples of the world, and that the peace must therefore be founded, if it is not to fail, upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind.

(a) Collaborate in the work of advancing the mutual knowledge and understanding of peoples, through all means of mass communication and to that end recommend such international agreements as may be necessary to promote the free flow of ideas by word and image;

(b) Give fresh impulse to popular education and to the spread of culture:

(c) Maintain, increase and diffuse knowledge:

Samarkand

Samarkand - Crossroads of Cultures (C i, ii, iv) The historic town of Samarkand is defined as the crossing and synthesis of world cultures. Developed from the seventh century BC as ancient Afrasiab, Samarkand had its most significant development in the Timurid period from the fourteenth to the fifteenth centuries. The major monuments include the Registan Mosque and madrasahs, Bibi-Khanum Mosque, the Shakhi-Zinda compound and the Gur-Emir ensemble, as well as Ulugh-Beg's Observatory.

Jerusalem

Nara

Historic Monuments of Ancient Nara Japan. The historic monuments of Nara - temples, shrines, the excavated remains of the great imperial palace - provide a vivid picture of the capital of Japan in the 8th century AD, a period of profound political and cultural change.

Vatican city

"The Vatican, a continuous artistic creation whose progress spreads over centuries, represents a unique masterpiece of the modeling of a space, integrating creations which are among the most renowned if mankind" (Fra Angelico, Raphael and his students, Botticelli, Michelangelo). (I) "The Vatican exerted a underlying influence on the development of art from the 16th century," through its architecture (Bramante, Michelangelo, Bernini), its painting and sculpture (Raphael, Michelangelo) and the antiquities of the Museum. (II) "The Vatican is both an ideal and exemplary palatial creation of the Renaissance and of Baroque art." (IV) "[...] the Vatican is directly and materially connected with the history of Christianity.

For more than a thousand years, mankind has accumulated, in this privileged site, the treasures of its collective memory [...] and of its universal genius." (VI)

Lalitpur (Patan), Nepal

Only a few kilometers separate the sites of the durbar (urban squares) of Bhatgaon, Patan and Kathmandu, the Buddhist stupas of Swayambu and Bodnath, and the Hindu temples of Pashupati and Changu Narayan. In Patan, the esplanade of one durbar is lined with palace buildings. The stupa of Swayambu is surrounded by temples, monasteries and statues. The Pashupati is part of an ensemble containing hospitals and shelters; it is built on terraces overlooking the holy Bagmati River. Mythical principles came into play in the design of these sites. About 2,700 temples and other monuments occupy the Kathmandu Valley. With their sculpted polychrome wood, red brick, and copper roofs, these temples are often grouped together in an exiguous manner. Pagodas, stupas and vihara complete the landscape.
The selected sites "provide a testimony to the impact that the Kathmandu Valley had on civilisation. (III) The durbars of Kathmandu, Patan and Bhodgaon constitute eminent, successive, and complementary examples of the great royal residences of Nepal. (IV) The selected monuments illustrate Nepal's civilisation, which was founded on religious elements that excluded the Islamic world, and resulted from a complex exchange of influences coming from India and Tibet. (VI)

Santiago de Compostela, Spain

"Around its Cathedral which is a world renowned masterpiece of Romanesque art, Santiago de Compostela conserves a valuable historic centre which is worthy of one of Christianity's greatest holy cities." (I) "[...] During both the Romanesque and Baroque periods the Sanctuary of Santiago exerted a decisive influence on the development of architecture and art not only in Galicia but also in the north of the Iberian Peninsula." (II) "Santiago de Compostela is "associated with one of the major themes of medieval history." (VI)

Fez

Founded in 808 A.D. by the new Idriss Dynasty proclaimed by Ali, the royal capital of Fez is composed of two centres, located on either side of the river and occupied by Andalusian Shi'ite immigrants and by immigrants from Kairouan respectively. While conflicts between the Fatimid Shi'ites and the Umayyads were pursued elsewhere in Morocco, the city of Fez underwent development.
After being captured repeatedly during the 11th century by the Almoravids Sunnites, the two quarters were united within the same fortification wall. Fez was then captured by the Shi'ite Almohades. In the 13th century, when the Marinides came to power, Fez began to experience a period of progress. A new city and a Jewish quarter were added to the royal capital, which was enjoying expansion and enlightenment. Fez reached its heyday in the 14th century.
After its fall in the 15th century, Fez regained its function as capital under the rule of the Alaouites (descendants of Ali who still reigned over Morocco) in the 19th century. From the time of its prestigious past to the present, Fez has retained its function as an Islamic cultural centre.

Vigan, Philippines

Vigan, established in the 16th century, is the best-preserved example of a planned Spanish colonial town in Asia. Its architecture reflects the coming together of cultural elements from elsewhere in the Philippines and from China with those of Europe to create a unique culture and townscape without parallel anywhere in East and Southeast Asia.

Zanzibar

The Stone Town of Zanzibar is a fine example of the Swahili coastal trading towns of East Africa. It retains its urban fabric and townscape virtually intact and contains many fine buildings that reflect its particular culture, which has brought together and homogenized disparate elements of the cultures of Africa, the Arab region, India, and Europe over more than a millennium.

Mazagan (El Jadida), Morrocco

The Portuguese fortification of Mazagan, now part of the city of El Jadida, 90-km southwest of Casablanca, was built as a fortified colony on the Atlantic coast in the early 16th century. It was taken over by the Moroccans in 1769. The fortification with its bastions and ramparts is an early example of Renaissance military design. The surviving Portuguese buildings include the cistern and the Church of the Assumption, built in the Manueline style of late Gothic architecture. The Portuguese City of Mazagan - one of the early settlements of the Portuguese explorers in West Africa on the route to India - is an outstanding example of the interchange of influences between European and Moroccan cultures, well reflected in architecture, technology, and town planning.

Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina

The historic town of Mostar, spanning a deep valley of the Neretva River, developed in the 15th and 16th century as an Ottoman frontier town and during the Austro-Hungarian period in the 19th and 20th centuries. Mostar has long been known for its old Turkish houses and Old Bridge, Stari Most, after which it is named. In the 1990 conflict, however, most of the historic town and the Old Bridge, designed by the renowned architect, Sinan, were destroyed. The Old Bridge was recently rebuilt and many of the edifices in the Old Town have been restored or rebuilt with the contribution of an international scientific committee established by UNESCO. The Old Bridge area, with its pre-Ottoman, eastern Ottoman, Mediterranean and western European architectural features is an outstanding example of a multicultural urban settlement. The reconstructed Old Bridge and Old City of Mostar is a symbol of reconciliation, international cooperation and of the coexistence of diverse cultural, ethnic and religious communities.

Assisi

Assisi, a medieval city built on a hill, is the birthplace of Saint Francis, closely associated with the work of the Franciscan Order. Its medieval art masterpieces, such as the Basilica of San Francesco and paintings by Cimabue, Pietro Lorenzetti, Simone Martini and Giotto, have made Assisi a fundamental reference point for the development of Italian and European art and architecture.

Trebic

The ensemble of the Jewish Quarter, the old Jewish cemetery and the Basilica of St Procopius in Trebic are reminders of the co-existence of Jewish and Christian cultures from the Middle Ages to the 20th century. The Jewish Quarter bears an outstanding testimony to the different aspects of the life of this community. St Procopius Basilica, built as part of the Benedictine monastery in the early 13th century, is an exceptional witness to the influence of Western-European architectural heritage in this region.

Prague

Prague illustrates the process of continuous urban expansion since the Middle Ages. By its role in the political, economic, social and cultural evolution of Central Europe since the 14th century and the richness of its architectural and artistic traditions, it has served as a reference for the urban development of much of Central and Eastern Europe. (II) The quality of its urban and architectural ensemble justifies its international renown. (IV) It played a noteworthy role in the development of Christianity in Central Europe and attracted architects and artists from all over Europe. Since the reign of Charles IV, Prague has been the leading cultural and intellectual centre of Central Europe. (VI)

Codova, Spain

The historic centre of Córdoba has conserved its medieval plan and the irregular layout of its narrow streets. The squares, promenades, ornamental lakes and magnificent gardens are integrated into the landscape of the city, which is constructed on the bank of a meandering section of the river. The Roman bridge, which has served vast regions over the course of its history, remains the anchor point of Córdoba.

Like its layout, Córdoba's domestic architecture reminds us of its Moorish period. In addition to the houses, which are built around patios enclosed by grillwork, are monuments which testify to the different periods in the city's history: Roman vestiges, Moorish minarets and the Moorish Almodovar Gate, the Jewish synagogue, and various Christian monuments, including the reconstructed Alcázar, the Calahorra Tower and numerous churches of Mudéjar and Gothic inspiration. The mosque-cathedral and the Roman bridge remain the principal landmarks of this historic landscape.

Acre

Old City of Acre (C ii, iii, v) The historic townscape of the walled port city of Acre is characteristic of Islamic perceptions of urban design, with narrow winding streets and fine public buildings and houses. Beneath the Ottoman Acre, from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, lie almost intact the remains of its predecessor, the Crusader city, dating from 1104–1291. Crusader Acre is today mostly subterranean and has only recently begun to be revealed.

Baku

Built on a site inhabited since the Palaeolithic period, the Walled City of Baku reveals evidence of Zoroastrian, Sassanian, Arabic, Persian, Shirvani, Ottoman, and Russian presence in cultural continuity. The Inner City (Icheri Sheher) has preserved much of its 12th-century defensive walls. The 12th-century Maiden Tower (Giz Galasy) is built over earlier structures dating from the 7th to 6th centuries BC, and the 15th-century Shirvanshahs' Palace is one of the pearls of Azerbaijan's architecture.

Harar Jugol

The fortified historic town of Harar is located in the eastern part of the country on a plateau with deep gorges surrounded by deserts and savannah. The walls surrounding this sacred Muslim city were built between the 13th and 16th centuries. Harar Jugol, said to be the fourth holiest city of Islam, numbers 82 mosques, three of which date from the 10th century, and 102 shrines. The most common houses in Harar Jugol are traditional townhouses consisting of three rooms on the ground floor and service areas in the courtyard. Another type of house, called the Indian House, built by Indian merchants who came to Harar after 1887, is a simple rectangular two-storied building with a veranda overlooking either street or courtyard. A third type of building was born of the combination of elements from the other two. The Harari people are known for the quality of their handicrafts, including weaving, basket making and book-binding, but the houses with their exceptional interior design constitute the most spectacular part of Harar's cultural heritage This architectural form is typical, specific and original, different from the domestic layout usually known in Muslim countries. It is also unique in Ethiopia. Harar was established in its present urban form in the 16th century as an Islamic town characterized by a maze of narrow alleyways and forbidding facades. From 1520 to 1568 it was the capital of the Harari Kingdom. From the late 16th century to the 19th century, Harar was noted as a centre of trade and Islamic learning. In the 17th century it became an independent emirate. It was then occupied by Egypt for ten years and became part of Ethiopia in 1887. The impact of African and Islamic traditions on the development of the town's specific building types and urban layout make for the particular character and even uniqueness of Harar.

Istanbul as Unity and Trinity - Umberto Eco

The "Story of the Slave and the Warrior" in Jorge Louis Borges' *Aleph* has a character called Droctulft, a barbarian from Lombardy who arrives with his tribe to besiege and capture Ravenna one day. Droctulft comes from the forests of his country, he is "brave, innocent and ruthless," the only kind of settlement he knows of are the huts in the forest and he now sees a city for the first time.

We may imagine him watching the city walls, towers and other things that he had never seen before as Ravenna slowly emerges on the horizon. As Borges recounts, he encounters the cypresses and marbles of the city, the integrity of a large number of elements that have come together without causing disorder, an organization consisting of regular and open spaces with its statutes, temples, gardens, columns and capitals. Not having known refinement before yet endowed in the recesses of his soul with the immortal gift of discernment, Droctulft notices a kind of complex process. He kneels instantly and indicates his defeat in front of the "thing" he come to conquer and destroy. Droctulft is hit by the unexpected surprise of the "the city," abandons his tribe and fights (and dies) for Ravenna.

I believe that coming to Istanbul after reading innumerable books about the city would reproduce the astonishment of this mythical Lombardian. (For a long time, the voyage to Istanbul has constituted a literary genre with its own rules and the arrival is always predicated on speed.) Perhaps the reason for this is that some cities resist being described from afar and then suddenly draw one in (London, Rome and Paris) while others reveal themselves gradually without reservation (New York may be considered as such). Istanbul undoubtedly belongs to the second category. At least for those who come from the sea -as it once used to be customary... Whether the boat comes from the Strait of Istanbul or Çanakkale, it passes by the Golden Horn and reveals the city from different perspectives through a kind of cinematographic displacement.

Perhaps the most cinematographic among all descriptions of Istanbul is the one by Nerval, who is little known worldwide. His is followed by those of Gautier, Flaubert, Loti and Edmondo de Amicis. All adolescents in Italy (at least from 1886 up to my generation) were raised on De Amicis' *A Child's Heart*, a thought-provoking book charged with positive emotions. Besides being a good author, De Amicis was a good journalist as attested by his book *Constantinopoli* (1874). De Amicis' little-known, lovely interview accompanied me on my first trip to Istanbul.

Like De Amicis, I had postponed this trip for years out of different and totally unexpected reasons. I continued to imagine this city through photographs, engravings, paintings, stories and even old maps. There are cities that are understood through a coincidence. Others require a long period of preparation and can be grasped through a mixture of in-depth knowledge and the imagination. Perhaps many visited Istanbul to discover it. This is why I had to excavate like an archaeologist to unearth the real city again, I had to process and use what I found below this personal Istanbul.

Another requirement is to excavate what others have found... This is why I had De Amicis' text ready when I came to Istanbul. For he had seen what I cannot see today. First of all, De Amicis comes from the sea. On the last night of the nine-day boat journey, he makes a thorough mystical preparation when he hears the captain announce, "Gentlemen! Tomorrow at dawn, we will see the first minarets of Istanbul." Passenger De Amicis sleeps little, goes to the deck as soon as he sees the faint light heralding dawn and curses in disillusionment, for there is fog.

But the captain comforts him. The fog will enhance the beauty of entering Istanbul. The Prince's Islands are distinguished in the direction of the boat's bow, and given the speed of those times, there are two more tiresome hours before they can see Istanbul. They approach the city enjoying every moment. After a sea journey of one hour the captain points to a white dot, the tip of a very high minaret.

Then, the shapes and colors of houses are gradually perceived below the minaret, the pointed tips of other minarets tinged with a rosy color, the city walls below the houses and their dark towers are slowly discerned, but the houses stretch in an interminable row and the city appears to spread over a plain. And then, amidst the fog; "a huge shadow still covered with a layer of fog, a very large, graceful and imposing building rose toward the sky from the top of a hill, it rounded out magnificently in the middle of four very long and thin minarets whose tips glistened like silver under the first rays of the sun." This was the Hagia Sophia and to suddenly see it rise in the void must have been beautiful...

At this point the unexpected surprise facing them continues, new towers and new domes, again colorful houses above bright houses are revealed in the morning mist, jagged and capricious, white, green, pink and glittering shores emerge. But fog still blocks entry to the Bosphorus and the boat has to stop. This gives the passenger the opportunity to observe the city acting single-handedly to shake off the fog still covering it. At the end, the ship starts again and from below the Palace hill, listening to the symphony of cypresses, firs and plane trees, it passes by the roofs of mansions and annexes, domes, grated windows, arabesque doors barely perceptible through binoculars, labyrinthine gardens, passages and secret corners that the passenger tries to understand.

It is unnecessary for me to repeat page after page of what De Amicis wrote about this arrival; the sudden appearance of Üsküdar in the sunlight, the bright image of Galata and Pera, the symphony of little houses with thousand colors, clusters of trees and "small

harbors, seaside mansions, summer palaces, groves, other barely perceptible villages only whose roofs glistening in the sun can be seen amidst the distant fog, a medley of colors that makes one want to shout with joy, a botanical wealth, something not thought of before, a grandeur, a pleasure, a grace..."

I was unable to see this Konstantinopolis because I came to the city from inside. For as I crossed the Marmara Sea by ship from the Asian shore, at the moment that the city flashed in front of my eyes, it was the middle of the day and there was no fog. (During my stay there was only one sunny day, I saw Istanbul immersed in light, the green of the gardens and the hills tinged with the color of gold only for one day.) For if there had been fog, as it slowly dispersed, it would have revealed not streets and villages but the coexistence of domes, minarets and other modern buildings... Nonetheless, a couple of hours after my arrival I was at the top of the Galata Tower and saw the city bathed in the light of the setting sun. And another day I toured the shore of the Bosphorus by car. Even as I crossed the harbor of the Golden Horn, I felt a part of the excitement of De Amicis.

No matter how much may have been written on it, it is not always possible to comprehend a city described by others. At the harbor of Galata, I cannot insist on seeing the flow of human beings that De Amicis observed from dawn till dusk; that Armenian lady gently stretching her head from a mother-of-pearl and ivory inlaid palanquin, the old Turk with his silk turban and blue caftan and behind him a Greek on horseback followed by his dragoman, a dervish with his conical hat, Iranian soldiers with their astrakhan calpacs, the disheveled Gypsy woman, the Catholic priest, the old Jew, an eunuch walking in front of the women of the harem, an African slave carrying a monkey, a charlatan in the guise of a soothsayer (But may De Amicis really have seen these? Or at least, may he have seen them all at once? Or has he made a patchwork by putting together what he saw on different days?). In any case, I should discover my own Istanbul and leave aside that of the others.

My travel experience tells me that touring in a city by going from place to place by car escorted by an experienced guide who describes every avenue and square is almost a scientific method to not understand it. On the contrary, the only way to get to know a city well is to stroll alone without asking for help, walk, get lost and if possible not use a plan, to go where you smell something interesting, to follow the path shown by the city sun, the smell and the echo.

It goes without saying that before getting lost in a city one needs to designate a place of return (there is no problem here, this may at least be the hotel) and a point of arrival. Otherwise, if you just hit the streets, you will have difficulty making choices and will never get lost. Getting lost in a city is only possible through erring.

For instance in his travels De Amicis sets out on a clearly defined route which is rather long, traverses three civilizations and which he will cover on foot. The itinerary is physical because its history is known. From the antique city walls along the Byzantine Palace to the shores of the Marmara Sea and to the Golden Horn... This itinerary is at the same time symbolic. For the cross and the crescent fought along this route, the city was besieged by Mehmet II in 1453 and captured here.

An eminently sensible, inevitable route from the perspective of a Westerner. Considering that the places visited belonged to Second Rome until that moment, that the entire East was under the sway of Christian civilization and turned into the symbol of the greatness of the Ottomans in the very same place... Big churches turned into mosques and the radical change of the skyline on the evening of the same day... These thoughts render De Amicis' visit pathetic. For until Konstantinopolis, he is in the capital of a Christian empire. A target that Western Christianity regards as exterior, where it identifies the beginnings of decline and avoids because of the difference in sect. When the city becomes the capital of the Muslims opposing Christianity the first shock is gradually overcome (between the 16th and 17th centuries), thus Constantinople turns into an object of desire and triggers the exotic imagination of the West. The city turns into an object on which literary essays are written. While Western Christianity does "almost" not like it until that moment, it turns into the temple of difference once it is subjected to a radical transformation.

To fully understand and be able to talk about conflicting feelings, I chose to look for another face of the city by following another line of siege, and I looked for the traces of Konstantinopolis in 1204. I laid De Amicis' book to rest and toured the city from the perspective of historian Niketas Khoniates (from the Byzantine side) and Robert de Clary and Cillehardouin, two historians on the side of the Crusaders.

This siege and this fall was even more terrifying, -at least spiritually- it was like a preparation for the Ottoman siege in the 15th century. For this was the first siege and devastation of Konstantinopolis. The capital of Western Christianity had gathered Christian militiamen and had set out to recover the "Holy Land" in the name of Christ.

The Crusaders (the French and the Flemish) depart for the Holy Land in 1203; in the meantime they have to use Venetian boats as Jerusalem has been recaptured by Selahattin Eyyubi but do not have enough money. The Venetians ask for their help in subduing the city of Zara on the way. So they conquer Zara. The son of Emperor Isakios II, Aleksios, who was deposed from the Byzantine throne by his brother Aleksios Angelos III resurfaces here. The young prince asks for the help of the Crusaders in capturing the Empire, and promises in return a real treasure and strong military support for future Crusades. But Aleksios will later delay keeping his promises. So on the morning of July 26, 1203, Venetian fleets parade in front of the city walls on the shore of the Marmara Sea. Banners and standards wave in the wind, and shields of every color extend from the sides of the galleys. While the Byzantines witness this scene with concern from the city walls, the Crusaders notice the city gradually emerge in the morning light (like De Amicis) and start to cheer...

The Crusaders' fleet arrives in Üsküdar to drop anchor. But on August 6, it attacks Galata. Here it sees Konstantinopolis in all its splendor, and on an instinct, believes that it has to subdue it. Like knights sent to rescue the lovely and faithful bride from her master,

the Crusaders do not only want to take back this dazzling beauty but also start to desire it. Thinking that another cause of their presence is to restore the city to its rightful owner, the Crusaders sack it as soon as they capture it, unconscious, as though tasting a good game.

My visit starts at the place where the siege started, toward the north from the front of the city walls, from in front of Blakhernai (Ayvansaray). A groundless siege was laid here; a fancy parade, a few brave skirmishes, colorful outfits and weapons glittering from Venetian boats and attacking from the sea. Following a more or less straight line along the city wall, they reach Blakhernai, which close to the current day Atatürk Bridge. The first Venetians to reach the city walls put the nearby houses on fire, the first fire spreads and turns to ash a large part of the city from Blakhernai to the Cristo Benefattore Monastery, and almost the entire section until the city walls.

Faced with these events, emperor Aleksios III takes his gemstones and gold coins and runs away. The residents of the city are at a loss, they rush to prison to release the deposed Isakios and enthrone him. They also recognize under equal terms the empire of Aleksios (Aleksios IV), son of Isakios who is supported by the Crusaders. In this way the Crusaders enter the city, and as they wait for their payments to arrive, they set camp in Pera and settle there. Isakios and Aleksios have promised more than they can give and do not have enough gold. They impose new taxes and confiscate the assets of their subjects. Meanwhile, the Crusaders hold the city gates and start to clash with the locals. A group from Flanders, Pizza and Venice starts a squabble in the street of the North African Muslims. Worse to come, the Crusaders put the nearby houses on fire. The fire spreads instantly, it burns down the city along the Golden Horn, reaches the Hippodrome and almost the Hagia Sophia.

In January 1204 Aleksios Murtzuphlos V has the young Aleksios Angelos strangled and takes over the empire. Afterwards the Crusaders and Byzantines come into open conflict and an attack is launched. During these events the assailants put to fire a large number of houses again (and the third fire spreads). Ravaged by fire for nine months, Konstantinopolis is exhausted, Aleksios V has fled as well and this time the Crusaders have no one left to enthrone in his place (later on Baudouin of Flanders will be chosen emperor and the Eastern Empire will be administered from the West for more than half a century).

Konstantinopolis was sacked in the war, the enemies who were annihilated were the residents of the city. Churches were ransacked, palaces were occupied and plundered. The residents were subjected to torture because they could not indicate the location of their treasures; the chastity of children was threatened... Western historians usually disregard the consequences of these events. Byzantine historians, on the other hand, perhaps exaggerate a little in describing the destruction of the city. Of course an ugly period was being chronicled; so that when the raging Niketas Khoniates lamented the fate of the city, he would remember Selahattin, who fought against the Crusaders and recaptured Jerusalem, as a magnanimous person. Still it is also difficult to say that Selahattin, who beheaded the cavalry officers protecting the pilgrims, was innocent... But no comparison is needed: The fighting witnessed in Jerusalem was between ruthless enemies. This one, on the other hand, was an act of banditry among brothers...

Thus I ended my days in Istanbul, looking for the traces of these moments of siege and capture, and later trying to rediscover the route followed by Niketas Khoniates and his family along the burning avenues of the city and the rubble during their flight to Silivri. Following faded ruins and lost traces, reaching antique Byzantium in the Yerebatan Cistern with subterranean paths whose surfaces had lost their luster, I walked to rediscover the Christian ruin of San Salvatore in the Hagia Irini by chance and almost coincidentally...

But the goal was still to get lost. And by losing myself, I also found the city that I did not explicitly seek. Thus on the traces of the siege of 1203-1204, lost in dreams around the Galata Tower and then climbing towards the northeast, I was able to see the ritual of the whirling dervishes. Asking myself where the Crusaders may have set camp, I discovered the night life in the cafés and restaurants along İstiklal Avenue, in visiting the shore where they landed upon arrival, I suddenly found myself in Kadıköy (or I thought I did but it may be the same), this mosaic of nations and their attires which De Amicis saw on the Galata Tower and infuriated him, a kind of ethnic jazz constituted of Anatolian peasants with tanned faces, youths with their heads covered and bare legs, sailors...

In looking for the monastery mentioned by my historians, I left behind alleys and -suddenly- found myself in front of Mimar Sinan's imposing building. From the shore of the Golden Horn where the Venetians and Genoese had settled, I seeped into a long crevice teeming with people and at once found myself in the Spice Bazaar. And even though the guidebooks state that it is not as told by 19th century travelers, even though warehouses and stores were built in the place where once stood bags brimming with colorful wares and plastic goods reigned victorious, a genius loci which was not visible but could be sensed lingered in the Spice Bazaar. The fragrant voyage to the past and the East ended in a slightly dizzying fashion here. I had to go to the pier to not get dazed, I sat on the tiles opposite the door in Pandeli, which can almost be considered mysterious, and ordered one of the sweets made with honey. The flow of the blood through the veins recalled the excitement of a sin that had been committed.

At this point I could no longer tell if I was in Byzantium, Konstantinopolis or Istanbul. I realized that I made a trip where I traversed three civilizations and three periods at the same time. But this city with three names and three histories was in fact still the same. I thought that it was perhaps not coincidental that amidst the city walls, bearded church fathers had discussed to the point of exhaustion the secret of the trinity, that is how "one thing" could be at once "one" and "three."

This is where my impressions of my first trip to Istanbul end. Next time I will discover another face of the city.

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