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***The Modern Cult of Monuments* in Current Architectural Heritage Interpretation and Management**

Camila Burgos Vargas

Abstract

The paper discusses the influence and validity of the value typology proposed by Alois Riegl in *The Modern Cult of Monuments, its Character and its Origin*, regarding the contemporary debate on architectural heritage interpretation – or cultural significance assessment – and its management, especially when an intervention project is carried out. The focus is put on architectural heritage since its qualities in relation to space and function give it a unique character compared to other types of heritage. In addition, in most cases, interventions on architectural heritage involve transformations or additions to the built matter that require a particular approach, as these interventions may affect values. Since the publication of Riegl's work, different value typologies have been proposed over time, in an attempt to define how to address the significance of a heritage asset. While this has been useful in many cases for the definition of heritage listings and legal protection, some value typologies in the available literature don't offer clear definitions or have overlapping values, resulting in a difficult implementation that hinders value assessment by non-expert stakeholders and thus the proliferation of bottom-up initiatives for the protection and management of architectural heritage. The paper analyses these value typologies in relation to Riegl's and proposes how an update of the latter can be applied in the assessment of cultural significance with examples from architectural heritage.

Keywords

Value assessment, heritage studies, cultural significance, architectural heritage

The conservation of cultural heritage is traditionally associated with restoration of works of art to preserve them for future generations. In general, this work consists of cleaning and sometimes repairing the assets and their constituent parts or materials. While for other fine arts it may be straightforward to preserve an asset in its current state, in the case of architecture, its functional nature means that often architectural spaces must be not only

protected from deterioration but adapted to current use needs and requirements.¹ This may involve interventions that transform an asset to a greater or lesser extent. In the protection and management of architectural heritage, any potential interventions must be considered in the context of an asset's cultural significance, as they may affect it.

This paper analyses the value typology defined by Alois Riegl in *The Modern Cult of Monuments*² to determine cultural significance and applies an updated version to some examples of architectural heritage, illustrating the typology's relevance in the field.

How to assess value

In 1903, Alois Riegl proposed what is considered the first value typology to determine what a monument is, establishing two types: commemorative values and contemporary values. Riegl elaborated on the different values without precisely defining them, so for a clear overview of the typology, the elements can be synthesised as follows:

- Age value: the fact of not being modern. Objects show decay as a sign of the inevitable passing of time, the cycle of creation and destruction.
- Historical value: representing a moment in the evolution of human creation.
- Intentional commemorative value: keeping in the present a moment from the past.
- Use value: having (or being in adequate condition to have) a function.
- Newness value: in opposition to age value, the object is appreciated for being new, a closed and finished entity, of not having any decay.
- Relative art value: meeting the contemporary understanding of art and aesthetic taste.³

The most common way to define the cultural significance of an asset is via value assessment. In the past, values were considered intrinsic, as the definition of a monument was determined through a top-down approach to heritage interpretation.⁴ Authorities often listed monuments as a means of constructing national identities, establishing what is known as the authorised heritage discourse.⁵ With the ruling class defining heritage, there

¹ Antoni González Moreno-Navarro, *La Restauración Objetiva (Método SCCM de restauración monumental): Memoria SPAL 1993–1999, Vol. 1* (Barcelona: Diputación de Barcelona. Área de Cooperación. Servicio de Patrimonio Arquitectónico Local, 1999); Javier Rivera Blanco, *De Varia Restauratione. Teoría e Historia de la Restauración Arquitectónica* (Madrid: Abada Editores, 2008); Alfonso Jiménez, 'Enmiendas Parciales a la Teoría del Restauo (II) Valor y Valores', in *Loggia: Arquitectura y Restauración*, 5 (1998), 12-29; and Françoise Choay, *The invention of the Historic Monument*, trans. by Lauren M. O'Connell (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001 [1992]), 159.

² Alois Riegl, 'The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Character and Its Origin', trans. by Kurt W. Foster and Diane Ghirardo, in *Oppositions*, 25 (1985 [1903]): 21-51.

³ Camila Burgos Vargas and S. Mora Alonso-Muñoyerro, 'About the validity of Alois Riegl's *The Modern Cult of Monuments*', in *Journal of Architectural Conservation*, 28:3 (2022), 183-196.

⁴ Choay, *The invention of the Historic Monument*.

⁵ Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006).

was no space for different interpretations and narratives around a heritage asset, so cultural significance could be perceived as a fixed feature. There has since been a paradigm shift towards a heritage interpretation that may change over time as value is assessed more broadly.⁶ People's perceptions of an asset – or their experiences in relation to it – may be diverse, and the same person may even change the value they assess to an asset over time. This plurality has also led to the concept of narrative as a way to define cultural significance as elaborately and with as much nuance as possible. However, a narrative can be synthesised and compared with the value definitions outlined in a typology to inform a value assessment,⁷ making both methods compatible and complementary.

In recent years, heritage-listing policy has evolved, taking into consideration more diverse forms of heritage. In Spain, for example, while national law from 1985⁸ referred only to historical-artistic heritage, later regional laws included other possible types of heritage: industrial, ethnographic or scientific.⁹ However, this approach puts these types of heritage at risk of becoming obsolete as our notion of heritage continues to evolve. One way to avoid this is to focus on value assessment, which can be applied to heritage of any kind, regardless of discipline.

In the last decades, especially since the 1972 adoption of the World Heritage Convention, which reflected global consensus on the importance of monuments (and evolved into care for cultural heritage as a broader field), multiple value typologies have been proposed to address heritage interpretation and management.¹⁰ Comparing these typologies, it is possible to see that many values – scientific, symbolic, educational or aesthetic, for example – correspond to those previously proposed by Riegl.¹¹ For example,

⁶ Susan Pearce illustrates it with the Watts Towers' case, included in the US National Register of Historic Places in 1977 and landmarked by the state of California and the city of Los Angeles in 1990, thanks to a popular initiative. 'The Making of Heritage', in Erica Avrami, Randall Mason and Marta de la Torre, eds., *Values and Heritage Conservation: Research Report* (Los Angeles, CA: Getty Conservation Institute, 2000), 59-64. See also Françoise Choay, 'Riegl, Freud e i Monumenti Storici. Per un Approccio "Societale" alla Conservazione', in Sandro Scarrocchia (ed.), *Alois Riegl: Teoria e prassi della conservazione dei monumenti. Antologia di scritti, discorsi, rapporti 1898-1905, con una scelta di saggi critici* (Bologna: CLUEB, 1995), 455-465; Erica Avrami et al., eds., *Values in Heritage Management. Emerging Approaches and Research Directions* (Los Angeles, CA: Getty Conservation Institute, 2019).

⁷ If an asset is subject to different interpretations and thus, different and/or conflicting narratives are defined, it would always be possible to assess the same value for different motivations or different sets of values.

⁸ Ley 16/1985, de 25 de junio, del Patrimonio Histórico Español <<https://www.boe.es/eli/es/l/1985/06/25/con>>.

⁹ Luis Miguel Sanz Rodríguez, 'La protección del patrimonio arquitectónico en los países europeos del diálogo 5+5. Análisis y comparación de la legislación y estudio de la viabilidad de la armonización de las categorías en las que se clasifica el patrimonio arquitectónico', PhD dissertation, E.T.S. Arquitectura (Universidad Politécnica de Madrid), 2020.

¹⁰ For example, Fredheim and Khalaf list twenty of them (including Riegl's). L. Harald Fredheim and Manal Khalaf, 'The Significance of Values: Heritage Value Typologies Re-examined', in *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 22:6 (2016), 466-481.

¹¹ For an in-depth analysis see Burgos Vargas and Mora Alonso-Muñoyerro 'About the validity of Alois Riegl's'.

scientific value might be assessed to heritage when an asset represents an important achievement in the history of science or testifies to an important aspect of science. In the former case, the asset could be assessed in terms of significance using Riegl's historical or commemorative values. In the latter, the asset could be assessed using his commemorative and age values, as it serves as testimony to a specific moment in time and also has acquired value as evidence of the passage of time. Similarly, educational value corresponds to Riegl's age and historical values; aesthetic value corresponds to his art-relative value; and symbolic value corresponds to Riegl's commemorative value and also to historical value if the symbolism relates to a moment from the past.

An important feature of the Burra Charter, issued in 1979¹² by the Australian chapter of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), is social value, which, if interpreted as contemporary, is not reflected in any of the values defined by Riegl. For example, while symbolism related to a national sentiment may be linked to a historical event and thus to historical or commemorative values, symbolism associated with a current sense of identity or belonging that is not related to a moment from the past could be related to social value.

Lastly, given contemporary socioeconomic dynamics, heritage is increasingly viewed as a source of economic and real estate value, and not just as culturally significant. Therefore, it becomes necessary to consider economic value when managing architectural heritage, as it may influence decision-making that may affect other values.

Thus, Riegl's value typology is still relevant as a tool in the interpretation and management of heritage with the following updated definitions:

Age value: not being modern. Representing the inevitable passing of time, the cycle of creation and destruction.

Historical value: representing a moment in the evolution of human creation.

Commemorative value: keeping in the present a moment from the past.

Use value: having a function, and also being in condition to have one.

Newness value: being appreciated for the fact of being innovative or new, a closed and finished entity, of not having any decay.

Artistic value: meeting the contemporary understanding of art and aesthetical taste.

Social value: nurturing the development, identity or sense of belonging of a community with contemporary meanings.

Economic value: market value (non-defining of cultural significance).¹³

¹² Australia ICOMOS, 'The Australia ICOMOS Guidelines for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance ("Burra Charter")' 1979. <https://australia.icomos.org/wp-content/uploads/Burra-Charter_1979.pdf> [Accessed 20 December 2021].

¹³ Burgos Vargas and Mora Alonso-Muñoyerro, 'About the validity of Alois Riegl's'.

Riegl's value typology as a tool

The value typology outlined above can be a useful tool for elaborating a value assessment of an asset to determine its cultural significance. Such an assessment might be conducted as an initial approach to heritage interpretation, based on information available at an early stage, or it might synthesise in-depth analysis supported by extensive documentation, depending on the available sources.

The following examples illustrate the application of Riegl's updated typology to analyse the significance of architectural heritage before and after contemporary intervention projects in architecture – that is, twentieth- and twenty-first-century interventions carried out on assets already considered to be monuments.¹⁴ The projects showcase a variety of periods, architectures, geographical areas and project outcomes to illustrate the value of the typology in facilitating analysis.

Villa del Casale in Piazza Armerina, Sicily (Italy)

The Roman Villa del Casale in Piazza Armerina is an archaeological site containing the remains of a Roman villa from the third century AD. In the 1950s, the architect Franco Minissi won a competition for the protection and musealisation of the villa, and the intervention was carried out between 1957 and 1967.¹⁵ It consisted of the volumetric restitution of the villa in Perspex and glass with a metallic structure installed on the remains of the walls, evoking how the original Roman villa could have been. Metallic walkways were added over the remaining walls to allow exhibition of the villa's mosaics. The intervention included a design for climatisation facilities that was not implemented.

¹⁴ These examples are extracted from the author's PhD dissertation 'Superimposed Heritage. The Persistence of Contemporary interventions on Architectural Heritage' (Universidad Politécnica de Madrid and Università Iuav di Venezia, 2024), where further examples as well as three in-depth analyses applying Riegl's updated value typology have been developed. The main source for the analysis of the reactions to each project were newspapers and other media (see notes throughout the text).

¹⁵ Alessandra Alagna, 'Franco Minissi. Restauro e Musealizzazione dei Siti Archeologici in Sicilia'. PhD dissertation. (Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II, 2008); Beatrice Vivio, *Franco Minissi. Musei e restauro. La trasparenza come valore* (Roma: Gagnemi Editore, 2010), pp. 73-81 and 228-231.



Figure 1. Villa del Casale in Piazza Armerina. A portion of Minissi's structure over the remains of the Roman walls. 2019 (© Camila Burgos Vargas).

The project has been highly appreciated in academia as an example of the application of the theoretical principles of preservation,¹⁶ but the lack of maintenance and proper facilities led to problems in the preservation of the mosaics and the deterioration of the intervention itself. Criticisms of the intervention included concerns about the greenhouse effect, which was damaging the mosaics and creating discomfort for visitors, and difficulties in appreciating the mosaics when sunlight produced contrasting lights and shadows.¹⁷ The lack of maintenance and pressure from authorities led to the removal and replacement of the intervention starting in 2007.

Interestingly, the site's inscription in the World Heritage List by UNESCO in 1997 did not consider Minissi's intervention as part of an ensemble that added value to the site. In fact, the site's evaluation report issued by ICOMOS¹⁸ expressed concern about the climatic conditions and suggested the need for alternative interventions. The values assessed before the intervention could be age, commemorative and historical ones, as the remains belong to a Roman-period villa featuring multiple stages of construction and distinctive mosaic decorations characteristic of a luxury residence. Artistic value can be assessed in relation to the remains of the elaborate Roman mosaics. The intervention would have added use value (as the restored site could become a museum), social value (as a cultural and touristic attraction), and newness value (as a showcase for innovative approaches to restoration at both conceptual and material levels). It would also have added commemorative value in relation to the history of the *restauro* discipline, serving as an example of the implementation of its principles, especially reversibility. This value has been lost as the intervention has been dismantled.

Roman theatre. Sagunto (Spain)

The ruins of Sagunto's Roman theatre date back to the period between the first centuries BC and AD, with interventions in the first half of the twentieth century. Between 1986 and 1994, Giorgio Grassi and Manuel Portaceli undertook a project that eliminated a small

¹⁶ Marco Dezzi Bardeschi, 'The work of Franco Minissi at the Roman villa in Piazza Armerina in danger', in Michael Petzet and John Ziesemer (eds.), *Heritage at Risk. ICOMOS World Report 2006/2007 on Monuments and Sites in Danger* (Altenburg: E. Reinhold-Verlag, 2008), <<https://www.icomos.de/data/pdf/heritage-5-0427-1339-50.pdf>> (Accessed 10 December 2025); Beatrice Vivio, 'The "narrative sincerity" in museums, architectural and archaeological restoration of Franco Minissi', in *Frontiers of Architectural Research*, 4 (2015), 202-211; Calogero Bellanca, 'Franco Minissi in Sicilia', in Valter Curzi (ed.), *Musei italiani del dopoguerra (1945-1977) Riconoscizioni storiche e prospettive future* (Milan: Skira, 2022), 265-286; Ananke, 'Piazza Armerina (Enna), Villa del Casale, 1957-1963', in *Ananke*, 44 (2004), 42-47.

¹⁷ ICOMOS, 'Advisory body evaluation. 832. Villa del Casale (Italy)', (1997), <<https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/832/documents/>> [Accessed 27 November 2023]; Guido Meli (ed.), *Progetto di recupero e conservazione della Via Romana del Casale di Piazza Armerina / Centro regionale per la progettazione e il restauro e per le scienze naturali ed applicate ai beni culturali* (Palermo: Regione siciliana, Assessorato dei beni culturali, ambientali e della pubblica istruzione, Dipartimento dei beni culturali, ambientali e dell'educazione permanente, 2007).

¹⁸ ICOMOS, 'Advisory body evaluation'. As defined in the World Heritage Convention from 1972, ICOMOS is the advisory body that evaluates the nominations for the World Heritage List, issuing reports that may or may not recommend the inscription of a nominated site in the list to UNESCO.

museum that had been built on one side of the *scaena*, reconstructed the *scaena* following analogy criteria using light-coloured brick, and covered part of the *cavea* with limestone. Archaeological remains from the town (which had been in the museum) and the theatre itself were placed in the new *scaena* for exhibition.¹⁹

The project was controversial from the start. Academics expressed strong opinions both for and against the project. The authors insisted that the remains had previously been modified and were therefore not authentic ruins.²⁰ The project was nominated for the Mies Van der Rohe Award in 1994. However, a Spanish court declared the intervention to be illegal in 2000.²¹ The demolition order was revoked in 2008, as pulling down the intervention was considered economically infeasible and would not have guaranteed recovery of the ruins.²² Meanwhile, the theatre has been in use since 1994. Public opinion remains mostly critical.²³ The long-familiar image of the ruins was suddenly replaced by a new building, which became highly visible in the surrounding landscape.



Figure 2. Roman theatre, Sagunto. Some ruins remain visible or are exposed in the scaena after the intervention by Grassi and Portaceli (© José Luis Filpo Cabana).

¹⁹ Giorgio Grassi and Manuel Portaceli, 'Teatro Romano de Sagunto', in *Arquitectura*, 263 (1986), 27-37; Lucía Gómez Robles, 'A Methodological Approach towards Conservation', in *Conservation and Management of Archaeological Sites*, 12(2) (May 2010), 146-169.

²⁰ Antón Capitel, 'La transformación del Teatro romano de Sagunto: una arquitectura declarada culpable', in *Arquitectura*, 328 (2002), 100-101.

²¹ Lydia Garrido, 'El Teatro romano de Sagunto, condenado a ser ruina', in *El País*, 2 January 2008; David Cohn, 'Court Case Tests Limits of Spain's Preservation law', in *Architectural Record*, 28 January 2008.

²² El País, 'El Supremo ratifica la decisión de no demoler el teatro romano de Sagunto', in *El País*, 23 November 2009.

²³ Salvador Lara Ortega, 'El teatro romano de Sagunto. Avatares de una década', in *Loggia, Arquitectura y restauración* (2002), 32-37; Adolf Beltrán, 'Con el uso y el tiempo, la obra se ha ido entendiendo mejor. Entrevista: Manuel Portaceli, Arquitecto', in *El País*, 26 January 2008.

The proposal was coherent in the sense that its premise was reconstruction of the theatre for usability, but it did not align with the principles of minimum intervention or reversibility. Despite their supposed lack of authenticity, the ruins were established in the social imaginary, and the prominence of the new construction hides them. The pre-existent values could be considered age, historical and commemorative values. The first-century remains testify to the Roman era in Spain and the origin and history of the city of Sagunto. After the intervention, the contemporary layer would have added newness value. Use value would have been added as the theatre recovered its function, in addition to exhibiting the ruins and other elements. However, covering part of the pre-existing structures could have caused the loss of their commemorative and age values.

Reichstag. New German Parliament. Berlin (Germany)

The Reichstag building was designed by Paul Wallot and built in 1894. In 1933, a fire partly destroyed it, an event exploited by the Nazis to take absolute power over the country. In the 1960s, an intervention by Paul Baumgarten reinstated it as a parliament building, but as the capital was moved to Bonn, it was seldom used. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, it was decided to reinstate the parliament in the Reichstag building, and a project by Foster and Partners was carried out between 1992 and 1999.²⁴

The intervention consisted of the dismantling of the parts belonging to Paul Baumgarten's intervention from the sixties, the extension of the building's area, and adaptations to update the parliament for contemporary times, including innovative technical facilities. A new dome was built, as required by the commissioners, and the restored building was opened to the public. The project also integrated elements and traces from the original building and the end of World War II.²⁵

Foster's initial proposal for a canopy-like building over the original was criticised. Modifications guided by a parliamentary committee reflected the general sentiment about the necessity of rebuilding the dome burnt in 1933.²⁶ The transparency of the parliamentary chamber's ceiling and dome is a metaphor for democracy and the new beginning for Germany. The dome has become one of Berlin's main tourist attractions. In 1999, Norman Foster was awarded the Pritzker Prize for his body of work, including the Reichstag project, signifying general high regard for the project in the field of architecture. Opening the dome to the public has further contributed to its importance as a symbol.²⁷

²⁴ Norman Foster, *Rebuilding the Reichstag* (London: Weidenfield & Nicolson, 2000); Lutz Koepnik, 'Redeeming History? Foster's Dome and the Political Aesthetic of the Berlin Republic', in *German Studies Review*, 24(2) (May 2001), 303-323; Francesca Schellino, 'L'edificio del Reichstag di Berlino: passate e recenti trasformazioni', in A. Ferlenga, E. Vassallo, and F. Schellino, eds., *Antico e Nuovo. Architetture e Architettura* (Padova: Il Poligrafo, 2007), 929-938.

²⁵ Foster, *Rebuilding the Reichstag*.

²⁶ The Guardian, 'The eagle has risen', in *The Guardian*, 18 April 1999; DW, 'The Reichstag: From Political to Architectural Symbol', in *DW*, 31 July 2006.

²⁷ Peter Davey, 'Democratic Representation', in *The Architectural Review*, 216 (Nov 2004), 1293, 44-45.



Figure 3. Interior of Norman Foster's Reichstag dome. 2018 (© Camila Burgos Vargas).

Before the intervention, the values that could be assessed to the building are age, historical, artistic, commemorative and use values. The building is originally from the end of the nineteenth century and reflects the architectural style of the time. It is a testimony to numerous events in the history of Germany and the world. It hosted the first parliamentary session of the unified Germany in 1990, and it was also used as an exhibition hall. The intervention could be considered to have added commemorative, artistic and newness values. It is an example of contemporary language in architecture and innovation in facilities, with a focus on reducing energy consumption. It is also one of Foster's main works. The project symbolises a new beginning for the country while acknowledging previous events; however, no trace of the 1960s intervention remains, resulting in the loss of the historical value associated with that stage of the building's history. Foster's project would have added use value as well, because it addressed the presence of asbestos that had rendered the building unusable. The intervention also allowed the expansion of the functions present in the building.

Kolumba Museum. Cologne (Germany)

The Kolumba museum is a complex composed of strata from different periods. The main element is a fifteenth-century church that was destroyed during World War II, and on the remains of which a chapel was built in 1947. Below the church, there are also

archaeological remains from the Roman period.²⁸ The intervention to transform the site into a museum was designed by architect Peter Zumthor and took place between 1997 and 2007. It comprised enclosing the area (including the existing chapel from 1947) with custom brick and using some of the remaining ruined walls as part of the façade. In some areas, the new brick forms a lattice. A new walkway made the ruins visitable, and upper levels were added for exhibition areas. The building received positive feedback from the media and won several architecture awards, mainly in Germany.²⁹

For the intervention, a special type of brick that emulated the church's stone masonry was employed. This was the only material used in the façade, aside from the mortar. The bricks measured up to 60 centimetres in length, spanning the entire thickness of the walls, with no separation or joint between the interior and exterior. In 2016, problems emerged on the west façades related to water filtration and efflorescence, so they were covered by scaffolding for three years.³⁰

The integration of the original St. Kolumba façade, the enclosing of the chapel and the new volume of the building suggest a radical approach compared to another of Zumthor's interventions, the Shelter for Roman Ruins in Chur, Switzerland. The values that could be assessed before the intervention are age, historical, commemorative, and artistic values. The site has elements that date back to the Roman period, remains of the church with Gothic features, and the 1950s chapel that became a symbol of hope by hosting an image of the Madonna that survived destruction. The post-intervention values of the complex could be considered use, newness, artistic and commemorative values. The intervention protects and values the ruins as part of the museum, while the treatment of light with the lattice creates a new spatiality in the ruins area. The museum is also representative of the work of Peter Zumthor.

²⁸ Peter Zumthor, 'Arte sagrado: Museo Kolumba en Colonia, Alemania', in *Arquitectura Viva*, 116 (2007), 38-45.

²⁹ Virginia Navarro Martínez, 'El museo Kolumba: elogio de la pieza ausente – Kolumba Museum: in praise of the missing piece', in *Proyecto, Progreso, Arquitectura*, 1 (Edición Conjunta con el n° 2) (2010), 132-143; Luigiemanuele Amabile and Alberto Calderoni, 'Ruins upon Ruins. St. Kolumba in Cologne', in *ADH journal*, 1 (2024), 36-53.

³⁰ Kolumba Museum website (n.d.), section Architecture, <<https://www.kolumba.de/index.php?language=en&art=666&cat=14>> [Accessed 10 October 2025].



Figure 4. Kolumba Museum, Cologne. Archaeological area and chapel enclosed by Zumthor's intervention (©fcamusd).

Conclusion

The various value typologies that have been proposed over the years show that many of the values are derivative of those defined by Riegl in *The Modern Cult of Monuments*. Despite its age, the typology has not been overtaken; it is possible to adapt it to the present with the addition of social and economic values to address the complexity of contemporary heritage interpretation and management.

As the examples show, it is possible to apply the theoretical value typology to real cases of architectural heritage and intervention projects, elaborating value assessments of assets with different characteristics. As they are based on the same value typology, this allows for comparisons that elucidate the different effects of contemporary interventions on architectural heritage. Experts considered Minissi's Piazza Armerina to be significant, but it disappeared. Sagunto's theatre, by contrast, has endured despite a demolition order rejecting the intervention. Berlin's Reichstag went through a process that led to its significance as a public symbol.³¹ Finally, the Kolumba museum represents an intervention that has persisted and whose main building material has become a model despite problems

³¹ As the German authorities commissioned and monitored the design, this case might show some signs of a top-down approach in its conception as a culturally significant asset.

in the façade.³² The four cases present different scenarios of how an intervention may be perceived and evolve over time. Value assessments based on the updated typology reveal not only the significance of heritage but also the mechanisms that inform emotional attachment to it, bridging different research fields such as architecture, history, heritage studies and anthropology.

While the scope of this paper is limited to highlighting how Riegl's value typology can be used as a tool to assess cultural significance to heritage sites in Europe, further research could explore its applicability to other geographical areas or other types of heritage.

Disclaimer

The author's presentation at the *Vienna School Conference IV: für Riegl/gegen Riegl* introduced research described in the article 'About the validity of Alois Riegl's *The Modern Cult of Monuments*' and its continuation as part of the doctoral research *Superimposed heritage: The persistence of contemporary interventions on architectural heritage*. Part of this paper is drawn from the unpublished PhD dissertation.

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³² Known as 'Kolumba™ brick', it is now commercialised in thirty different colors showing the intervention's influence in the architectural field. <<https://en.petersen-tegl.dk/kolumba/products/>> (Accessed 14 October 2025).

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