Embracing change: how cultural resilience is increased through cultural heritage

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ABSTRACT

The notions of risk and resilience are increasingly relevant to cultural heritage. Archaeological sites and monuments in particular are widely perceived to be vulnerable and subjected to growing risks of deliberate destruction, e.g. in the context of armed conflicts. At the same time, it has become a familiar claim that cultural heritage needs to be conserved as an important resource for fostering cultural resilience, reducing disaster risk, and supporting peace and reconciliation in the future. In this paper, the author takes issue with that latter view and suggests instead that cultural resilience, risk preparedness, post-disaster recovery and mutual understanding between people will be best enhanced by an increased ability to accept loss and transformation. The evident changes of heritage over time can inspire people to embrace uncertainty and absorb adversity in times of change, thus increasing their cultural resilience.

Heritage managers may be hell to live with, but they make great ancestors.

(adapted from Andy Kerr [1993])

Cultural resilience and the conservation of cultural heritage

Resilience may be defined as the capability of a system or process to absorb disturbance (Folke et al. 2010). Recent conceptions of resilience de-emphasize notions of 'bouncing back' to a previous state and place more emphasis on processes of 'bouncing forward' involving absorption, learning, adaptation and transformation than on specific outcomes in relation to a previous status quo.[1]

Resilient systems and processes can be said to be sustainable in the sense that they have the capacity to persist over long time periods, i.e. without undermining their own preconditions. Arguably, all sustainable systems or processes are characterized by their capability to absorb adversity and continue to develop. An easier, alternative definition of resilience is, therefore, 'the capacity to deal with change and continue to develop' (SRC, n.d.).

I define cultural resilience as the capability of a cultural system (consisting of cultural processes in relevant communities) to absorb adversity, deal with change and continue to develop. Cultural resilience thus implies both continuity and change: disturbances that can be absorbed are not an enemy to be avoided but a partner in the dance of cultural sustainability (adapted from Thiele [2016, 36]).

In the context of recent armed conflicts, archaeological heritage has been deliberately targeted for destruction, for example in Palmyra in Syria, in Timbuktu in Mali and in Bamiyan in Afghanistan. Consequently, this tangible heritage has been widely perceived to be particularly vulnerable and, in some cases, even threatened with eradication. Archaeological finds, sites and monuments have thus become an important test case for the application of the concept of resilience to the realm of culture and cultural heritage. On the most direct level, we may ask how much disruption of cultural heritage is permissible before it has exhausted its capacity to absorb disturbance and thus loses its cultural significance. To this question I will return at the end, after first addressing in some detail a second, more general question: how important is substantial conservation of cultural heritage for ensuring cultural resilience in relevant communities and thus contributing to their sustainability?

The present paper is intended as a creative contribution to discussions in heritage theory, proposing an innovative application of the concept of (cultural) resilience to the field of cultural heritage. It is not primarily meant to be a contribution to the history of ideas or an exhaustive study of relevant examples and case studies.

Many voices currently insist that uncompromised conservation of cultural heritage is a significant guarantor of cultural resilience (e.g. Jigyasu [2013]; Bokova [2015]). In this view, cultural heritage is a valuable inheritance that needs to be conserved and transmitted to future generations; any risk of damage or destruction of cultural heritage is to be taken very seriously because the latter ensures cultural resilience and contributes to sustainability, both now and in the future.

This perspective has been elaborated in the context of international Disaster Risk Reduction, for example by non-governmental organizations such as the International Scientific Committee on Risk Preparedness of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS-ICORP). Ongoing discussions in this context concern the issue of protecting heritage from disaster risk and thus supporting the resilience of associated human communities in the face of possible disaster (e.g. Jigyasu [2013]).

For those concerned with risk preparedness, cultural heritage can contribute to strengthening the resilience of communities in two ways (Jigyasu 2013, 21–2). On the one hand, as has often been emphasized, traditional skills and knowledge can improve the prevention and mitigation of disaster, e.g. by employing building and subsistence strategies that are more resilient to local hazards such as the impact of earthquakes or floods (e.g. Lari [2014]; see also Van de Noort [2013]). This argument combines intangible heritage, i.e. the heritage that consists of skills, traditions, knowledge and ways of doing things with the tangible heritage it brings about physically. Although such benefits may in some cases be obtainable from heritage, in other cases cultural heritage can actually increase disaster risks and its conservation may therefore be counter-productive. Rohit Jigyasu (2017, 68), President of ICOMOS-ICORP and UNESCO Chair of Cultural Heritage and Risk Management, recognized that 'we should not discount the fact that many cultural beliefs and practices result in a fatalistic approach of interpreting disasters as "God's Will" and undertaking no proactive measures to reduce disaster risks.' He also appreciated that many monuments may be particularly vulnerable in case of disaster, 'due to inherent defects in their design and construction or additions/alternations done over time', i.e. due to the imperfectness of the very heritage that was hoped to be superior in resilience. There are thus possible gains of traditional skills and knowledge in providing higher resilience in case of disaster but, on balance, they alone may not justify concerted efforts to preserve the cultural heritage as a matter of general policy.

There is a second, arguably more important, reason for cultural heritage to be able to enhance cultural resilience and mitigate the impact of disaster. That reason is linked to heritage values such as a sense of place and belonging supporting people's collective identity and self-esteem. As we

know, not the least from the history of archaeology, assurance of cultural heritage and a joint origin and history may, on the one hand, provide psycho-social support in times of need, increasing a community's capacity to absorb disturbance (e.g. Trigger [1995]; Saito [2016]). On the other hand, it may be a prerequisite for fostering appreciation of the origins, histories and cultural heritage of other cultures and can thus benefit mutual reconciliation, dialogue and peace in post-conflict recovery (e.g. Bokova [2015]). Such benefits of heritage for disaster-risk reduction and post-disaster recovery often become manifest in distinct cultural expressions such as sacred sites, traditions and other cultural property. Protecting and celebrating cultural heritage to the extent that it is linked to a community's collective identity and supports its members' self-confidence does not, however, necessarily increase the chances for sustainable peace and under-standing between cultures, despite this being often assumed.

The French-Lebanese author Amin Maalouf (2012) observed that far too many people subscribe to problematic and even dangerous notions of cultural heritage. Evoking historical traditions, collective origins, joint ethnicity, a shared territory and a deeply felt allegiance to the 'tribe' of one's own particular social group as opposed to other ones, cultural heritage fuels many conflicts, not always appreciating and giving value to diversity within each society, both concurrently and over time. Instead, the seemingly natural link between cultural behaviour and a particular tribal identity essentializes cultures and places individual human beings in narrow, cultural boxes that are orientated towards the past and may be opposed to civil liberties, human rights and indeed to reasoning generally (Pinker 2018, 31, 333–4, 357–8). In diverse societies, strong tribal allegiances jeopardize social cohesion too. In his critique of the UNESCO report on *Our Creative Diversity* (World Commission on Culture and Development 1995), the Norwegian anthropologist Thomas Hylland Eriksen (2001, 133) took UNESCO to task for naively fuelling contemporary identity politics, in an age when many armed conflicts have strong ethnic/cultural dimensions. A commitment to tradition and historical knowledge and a sense of place and belonging deriving from it will support a community's collective identity and self-esteem. But, similar values also featured prominently in campaigns to 'take back control' of Britain through Brexit and to set 'America first' with Donald Trump – campaigns that many find problematic in the way they have been supporting and increasing divisions both within and between different societies and social groups while at the same time suppressing rational thinking (Pinker 2018, 334).

Today, it can no longer be taken for granted that the vast majority of people living in any one area do (or would want to) share the same cultural identity, a common history and a joint sense of belonging to their place of residency (see also Holtorf [2009], [2017]). Indeed, it is true to say that we all have multiple collective identities and very many of them are not anchored in a collective past. As Maalouf (2012, 101–2) pointed out in his insightful essay, 'we are all infinitely closer to our contemporaries than to our ancestors.' This observation implies that downplaying rather than celebrating the tribal concept of identity and its links to heritage will have benefits for peace and understanding. Maalouf argues that once we realize how many different influences made each of us who we are and how much we share with fellow human beings, no matter where they live or who their ancestors were, we are not inclined to fight them in the name of a single collective identity that contrasts 'us' with 'them'. As social beings, our human identity should not be reduced to any single, tribal affiliation:

> [W]hen one sees one's own identity as made up of a number of allegiances, some linked to an ethnic past and others not, some linked to a religious tradition and others not; when one observes in oneself,

in one's origins and in the course one's life has taken, a number of different confluences and contributions, of different mixtures and influences; some of them quite subtle or even incompatible with one another; then one enters into a different relationship both with other people and with one's own 'tribe'. (Maalouf 2012, 31)

It appears, thus, that cultural resilience and risk preparedness may be advanced as much, if not more, without the dubious benefits of a cultural heritage that more often than not keeps us apart in categories that appear to resist change.

What is more, all such efforts of protecting cultural heritage in the name of cultural resilience and peace are directly linked to a distinctive 'threats-based' heritage paradigm defining a larger 'heritage at risk' framework (Holtorf 2015; Rico 2015, 2016). This framework has been applied throughout the natural and cultural heritage sectors and has motivated countless well-known efforts from saving Stonehenge to saving tigers, the Yanomami and the Ozone layer. Although the application of the 'heritage at risk' framework has commonly been successful in creating additional value, attention and support, based on claims of rarity (as e.g. in UNESCO's Unite4Heritage campaign),[2] this approach to heritage is also deeply problematic. The anthropologist Trinidad Rico (2015) pointed out that 'heritage at risk' thinking favours dominant discourses that marginalize and threaten alternative approaches and practices without considering their value. As I will show, the 'heritage at risk' framework also misunderstands the character and significance of heritage in society. In this paper, I argue that cultural heritage can nevertheless make an important contribution to cultural resilience and sustainability – when it is perceived and understood in a different way.

Cultural heritage and its capacity of absorbing disturbance

Natural processes of change and transformation have been driving the evolution of life on Earth. The natural heritage is a record of these changes, until the present day (Thomas 2017). By the same token, applied to the cultural domain, I suggested elsewhere that 'cultural heritage is the continuous manifestation of change over time not its victim' (Holtorf 2015, 417; 2016). In fact, as a result of rapid global change in the present, the cultural heritage is growing rapidly, not shrinking. Disasters too modify and create heritage that will have important stories to tell to future generations about some very dramatic processes and events (Okamura 2015; Rico 2016). If there is any major risk to heritage as a result of destruction from disaster it is the risk of thoughtless approaches to restore or reconstruct heritage.

The Bamiyan Buddha statues that in 2001 were purposefully blown up by the Taliban are a case in point (Figure 1). The details and specific context of these acts of destruction have been discussed elsewhere (see e.g. Flood [2002]; Harrison [2013, 182–91]). There are now powerful political forces in Afghanistan and clearly expressed preferences elsewhere which, for a variety of reasons, advocate their meticulous re-construction. The ambition to recreate merely as a token of victory over the Taliban that had wanted them gone expresses first and foremost precisely a *lack* of cultural resilience. More specifically, it would imply that the major disturbances that occurred during the rule of the Taliban will not be absorbed unless one can pretend that the destruction of the statues never happened in the first place.

In fact, the mighty statues could increase local resilience and have a positive impact on the future development of the Bamiyan Valley even while they remain physically absent from their former positions. Regional development and a minor tourist industry could capitalize on the 2001 events of destruction, interpret the empty niches that once contained the statues, and in a cultural centre tell the stories of the entire region (see Ross et al. [2017]). Likewise, a process of creatively

Figure 1. A continuously evolving landscape. View of the Bamiyan Valley with one of the destroyed Buddha statues in 2005. Photograph by Tracy Hunter. Reproduced unchanged according to CC BY-SA 2.0. Source: https://www.flickr.com/photos/11121785@N00/1778632003.

recreating, in some form, parts of the statues as part of a larger strategy of development in the area could have a positive impact, too. Ranging from consolidating the existing stone rubble as a lying statue in front of one of the empty niches, to constructing full-size copies in various materials in the neighbourhood, to inviting visitors to observe the construction process of an entirely new statue nearby, there are many possible options for expressing on-going change and transformation of the Bamiyan Buddha statues (Holtorf, forthcoming). As we move into the future, the challenge with endangered or even destroyed heritage like the Bamiyan Buddha statues is not that they were deliberately targeted and risk losing their cultural significance. The true challenge is how to deal with the contemporary absence of the statues and how to make the site – and the local community – absorb the changes that occurred while advancing peace and understanding in the region.

Cultural heritage, whether tangible or intangible, is sustainable to the extent that it has the capability to adapt to change through creative transformation and continues to develop (Boccardi 2015; Lane 2015). When we observe that any specific heritage has been lost or is currently vulnerable and at risk we should ask how that heritage has been or might be transformed absorbing the apparent disturbances (Holtorf 2015; DeSilvey 2017). Just like entire societies, cultural heritage that is not adaptable and receptive for transformation is not sufficiently resilient and therefore not sustainable over long time periods. The diminution of cultural heritage is no diminution of a community's eternal self. Instead, loss of specific manifestations of heritage is an inevitable outcome of a living culture continuing to exist now and in a future that is going to be subjected to changes and transformations compared with the present. As Giovanni Boccardi, Head of Emergency Preparedness and Response at UNESCO, emphasized (2015, 93), our current approach to managing heritage is ultimately unsustainable: 'The battle to preserve the existing remnants of the past is sooner or later going to be lost, as nothing lasts forever.'

Cultural heritage, just like nature, is a continuously evolving process, not a legacy in any part already complete. The British social anthropologist Ingold (2010) advocated the view that both people and buildings should be seen as something persistent, continuously re-born and constantly growing, going through ever new creative transformations. In this perspective, people and buildings should not be seen as entities that are complete at the time of their birth or completion, subsequently to be preserved until their eventual death or abandonment which then may become visible in the archaeological record. Instead, people and buildings, like mountains, clouds and waves in the ocean, are considered to be crystallizations of persistent processes that continually carry on, while occasionally leaving behind ephemeral cast-offs into the archaeological record. For Ingold, people and built heritage are persistent and they are, therefore, originating all the time, undergoing continuous episodes of birth. Their lives have no beginning or end but are punctuated by various events and processes of transformation. For example, people are conceived and to some extent genetically and culturally formed long before they are physically born; by the same token, their impact on other people and on the world at large continues long after their bodily death. The equivalent may be said about built heritage: it is conceived and to some extent culturally formed long before it is constructed, and its impact on other structures and on the world at large continues long after it has been abandoned. In that sense, people and heritage continually grow (see also Holtorf [2015, Table 1]). Accordingly, the Bamiyan Buddha statues may have been conceived long before they were constructed and they did not cease to exist in people's minds after they fell out of use as religious monuments or even as a result of their destruction.

Ingold's observations combine insights about cultural heritage with insights about people and natural phenomena. In this vein, it is instructive to take a closer look at landscapes (e.g. Figure 1). They do not begin and end either. They have not been completed at any given point in time so that this state could – or should – be preserved. Landscapes are transformed continuously, combining change and creation (Penrose 2007). The British heritage specialist Graham Fairclough suggested accordingly that '[t]he process of apparently destroying landscape character is also an act of renewal' and that landscape is 'something that is created anew every day in the multiple shifting perceptions of all citizens or subjects' (Fairclough 2007, 84). Any act of changing, destroying or replacing a heritage object in the landscape can be seen as a form of interpreting, using and transforming this heritage as it continues to evolve. Indeed, the very cultural significance of heritage is not timeless but dependent on the roles it plays in society and therefore in regular need of adaptation to changing circumstances over time (see also Holtorf and Fairclough [2013]).

Historically minded individuals like those managing cultural heritage should understand better than most the various processes that translate one landscape and one historical situation into another. Historical change is not the time for sentimentality about what is at risk of being lost but for learning, creativity and re-invention (Turner 2016). In that sense, we should be averting loss aversion and recognize that any transformation of heritage, however drastic and unnecessary it may seem at the time, can ultimately be a way of absorbing disturbance and thus a manifestation of growth for the future rather than decline from the past (Holtorf 2015; see also Harvey and Perry [2015]; DeSilvey [2017]). Cultural heritage thus comes to play an important new role. Much as cultural heritage witnesses how people in the past have proven to be resilient and been capable of absorbing adversity in various ways, it can inspire people today and in the future to embrace change and transformation through successful adaptation.

It is well known that the extent to which risk, specific threats and ways of absorbing disturbance are socially acceptable and deemed tolerable depend to a large extent on socio-cultural factors that determine their perception (Douglas and Wildavsky 1982; Cannon 2016). Resilience is firmly linked to people's attitudes towards specific hazards and disasters and their likely impact. It is therefore very appropriate, as ICORP suggests (Jigyasu 2013, 22), to focus on strategies that 'help victims recover from the psychological impact of disasters'.

Consequently, one successful strategy for disaster risk reduction is to increase people's capability to absorb adversity. This could be done by lessening psychosocial dependencies on past certainties while at the same time fostering curiosity, resourcefulness and entrepreneurship brought to bear on the uncertainties of the future, encouraging a continuous process of adaptation to shifting circumstances. It may also mean enhancing human capacity to accept the possibility of loss over time, thus improving human abilities to deal with any such eventuality as and when it occurs – much in the same way as we have come to accept the need to cope with the possibility of death and disaster in our personal lives (Turner 2016). If loss is not seen to be as extraordinary and does not weigh quite as heavily, a community will be more resilient to disasters that cause dramatic transformation including loss (Figure 2).

Consequently, the best approach strengthening people's self-esteem does not consist of narratives reaffirming the extent to which the victims always have been, still are and always will remain rooted in their own culture as they know it and as the cultural heritage manifests it. Communities do not best build resilience by perceiving the local past as their very own 'repository of adaptive pathways' (Van de Noort 2013, 227). I suggest instead that self-esteem and confidence can better be built by learning to perceive the past of any community as a showcase of the surprising capacity of all humans to deal with change, develop and adapt creatively.

Figure 2. A traditional fortune teller's business in New Delhi, India, in 2017. As customers are sensitized for transformatory life events ahead, their psychosocial dependencies on past certainties is reduced and their capability to accept loss and absorb adversity is enhanced. Photograph: Cornelius Holtorf.

A good recent example for such an attitude appears to be the way in which native Hawai'ians have embraced the recent eruptions of Mount Kilauea. According to recent reports (e.g. Botkin-Kowacki and Armstrong [2018]), although several thousand people had to evacuate their homes on Hawai'i Island and many houses have been destroyed by the volcano, these losses did not lead to widespread anger. Instead, the native population is aware that they live close to a volcano and they responded with acceptance and even reverence for the power of the goddess Pele and Mother Nature. As one evacuee, Cecilia Ascher, put it: if you choose to live on a volcano you 'have to be strong and go with the flow' (cited in Botkin-Kowacki and Armstrong [2018]). In due course, they will build new houses. This positive attitude is part of the distinctive cultural heritage and indeed cultural resilience of the native Hawai'ian community and helpful in dealing with the impact of transformative events such as a volcanic eruption.

An improved readiness worldwide to accept loss, adapt to uncertainty and embrace change might even contribute to advancing sustainable peace and mutual understanding between people in times of perceived stress. It could do this by preventing expressions of mutually exclusive identities firing tribal oppositions, while at the same time inviting global human sympathy and solidarity during periods of significant social transformation. This is more or less the precise opposite of the argument that the conservation of cultural heritage should be promoted in the interest of peace and understanding because mutual cultural appreciation is said to benefit reconciliation. If anything, reconciliation may be easier with less heritage preserved. Collective identity and self-esteem could better be derived from other sources, e.g. shared skills, values or aspirations for the future. Peace and understanding should not be based on who our ancestors were or may have been, and their legacies, but rather on who we and our children are or aspire to be, and how we prefer to live our lives next to and together with others.

In this context, it is intriguing to realize that the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 which was adopted at the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction 2015 establishes that '[m]igrants contribute to the resilience of communities and societies and their knowledge, skills and capacities can be useful in the design and implementation of disaster risk reduction' (Sendai 2015)(§ 36(vi)). It makes sense to recognize that migrants' relevant knowledge, skills and capacities consist precisely in a proven capability to seek and find new opportunities elsewhere. This capability was in many cases developed by creatively adapting intangible heritage, whereas previous tangible certainties were effectively lost. The migrant's relationship to heritage is therefore not inherently inhibited as a result of dislocation and loss, but can also be enhanced due to an acquired capacity to absorb disturbance and continue to develop.

For example, Abdi-Noor Mohamed, who a decade ago moved from Somalia to Sweden, has been recognizing very profound differences in terms of cultural heritage in Somalia and Sweden respectively (Mohamed and Holtorf 2017). The tangible remains of the past in Somalia are lost to him while those in his new country of residence are meaningful only in some parts and not necessarily for the same reasons as for those who grew up in Sweden. Yet at the same time, from his particular vantage point of being a migrant in Sweden, Mohamed was able to identify the emergence of new forms of cultural heritage resulting from processes of hybridization in relation to intangible heritage, e.g. regarding poetry, knitting, hair dressing and cooking where Somali and Swedish traditions have become mixed. As in this case, migrants often have an enhanced capability to become aware of and embrace cultural change in new and hybrid forms. Had more people the abilities of migrants, it could have considerable benefits for social cohesion and cultural resilience.

Another paradigmatic human being excelling in resilience and the skill to adapt to sometimes surprising developments is the field researcher. Many researchers have learnt to deal with change in the field and to carry on with the work. Although it may not be surprising to those who have undertaken fieldwork, it is significant in the present context that in a recently published handbook on 'Disaster in Field Research', the capability to absorb adversity and embrace change, not the least in terms of cultural values, is identified as an essential trait of the field researcher (Ice, Dufour, and Stevens 2015, 195, 198). In fieldwork, as in history, the only thing that may be truly permanent is the need to be resilient and always ready for change.

Conclusion: cultural heritage, resilience and change

Considering the future of heritage means thinking about a time in which heritage as we know it may no longer exist (Harvey and Perry 2015; Ceccarelli 2017; Ross et al. 2017). In the words of the Canadian tourism researcher Catherine Cameron (2010, 203), we need to recognize the boundedness of heritage in time and space: 'It is logical to project that heritage and its manufacture may wane or change as new social and cultural conditions unfold in the future.' But cultural heritage is more resilient than many may think. The empty niches from where before 2001 two large Buddha statues looked down onto the Bamiyan valley manifest archaeological heritage that has absorbed the iconoclasm and radical extremism of the Taliban during their rule of Afghanistan 1996–2001 (see Figure 1). In Syria, we currently see similar processes at work where brutal conflicts affect the cultural heritage and leave a vivid legacy of the emergence of new conditions in the future (Holtorf 2016; cf. Kamash 2017). Such episodes of destructive change are historically not unique but, in our time, they challenge and transform values of conservation that many have been investing into heritage. They question the viability of the familiar 'heritage at risk' framework of preservation that has been mobilizing many people but appears to have succeeded better in channelling our own sensitivities and desires than in providing undeniable benefits for future generations (Holtorf 2015; DeSilvey 2017).

Drastic challenges and changes of archaeological sites and monuments were only to be expected over time. Archaeological heritage – and the concept of archaeological heritage – are sustainable and persist precisely to the extent that they can absorb disturbance and prove to be adaptable to changing circumstances. Indeed, that is the very character of cultural heritage in society. If anything, cultural heritage is the manifestation of change over time. The 'heritage at risk' framework misunderstands – that saving heritage is nothing but a specific manifestation of change (Holtorf 2012).

Am I belittling the evil of heritage destruction? Am I facilitating the interests of extreme ideologies and powerful global forces destroying people's cultures? I think not. History and cultural anthropology have been documenting in much detail how cultures inevitably change. Cultural heritage should not be seen as a token of the past, now threatened, but as a way of facilitating changes that improve peoples' lives under new circumstances and thus enhance cultural sustainability. Cultural heritage that has persisted to the present day can tell powerful stories about transformation over time. The question is not whether some of it is gone, together with the times that are gone, but how much of it has developed and adapted to new realities. Cultural heritage is significant in society because it promotes cultural resilience – precisely through the way, often highly evident, in which it has been able to adapt and develop in the past.

To return to the question with which I started this paper, the question of how much disruption of cultural heritage is permissible before it has exhausted its capacity to absorb disturbance and thus loses its cultural significance is actually badly phrased, as it seems to assume that the value of cultural

heritage resides in its tangible fabric. But it is increasingly realized that the value of cultural heritage lies instead in what it does in society. A better question is, therefore, how can people's own cultural resilience and risk preparedness be enhanced by learning to appreciate and embrace the changes that have become manifest in the transformation of cultural heritage over time?

An increased resilience and capacity to deal with transformation and even loss of specific manifestations of cultural heritage can help people adapt to new circumstances and absorb adversity in their own lives too. With this in mind, maybe cultural heritage conservation ought not to celebrate so much the inherent values and timeless qualities of the remains of the past bequeathed to us. Instead this cultural heritage might facilitate our capability of adapting those legacies of the past to changing circumstances today and in the future: not as reminders of tribal belongings from time immemorial but as inspirations for the need to embrace uncertainty and the human potential to keep developing over time.

Notes

1. For recent overviews of the extensive discussions of sustainability and resilience across many fields and sectors, see Field et al. (2012), especially chapter 1, Brown (2016), and Thiele (2016), with further references. The present paper does not address the resilience of individual human beings outside of communities, e.g. resilience that relates to psychological development and health.
2. See http://www.unite4heritage.org/ (accessed 6 April 2018).

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Disclosure statement

Notes on contributor

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