

Restoración arquitectónica – Authors and Theories

Chronological order

- Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc (1814–1879)
- John Ruskin (1819–1900)
- William Morris (1834–1896)
- Alois Riegl (1858–1905)
- Cesare Brandi (1906–1988)

Texts titles

- Eugène- Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc
 - Restoration
- John Ruskin



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Eugène- Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc's Vision of Restoration

Eugène Viollet-le-Duc (1814–1879) was a French architect and theorist best known for his influential ideas about the restoration of historic monuments. His theory of restoration, articulated in his *Dictionnaire raisonné de l'architecture française du XIe au XVIe siècle* and in various essays, is both visionary and controversial.

Viollet-le-Duc believed that restoration was not simply about repairing or preserving a building, but rather about bringing it to a state of completeness that may never have existed at any one moment in history. For him, to restore a building meant to re-establish it in a finished, ideal form, consistent with the spirit, logic, and structural principles of its original design.

He emphasized rational analysis and stylistic unity. According to his vision:

- The architect-restorer should understand the building's original logic, including its structure, materials, and historical context.
- Restoration should aim to reconstruct what the original architect "would have done". had they

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Viollet-le-Duc's restoration belief stemmed from.

Critics

foundations for modern conservation theory, influencing later debates on the ethics of restoration and preservation.



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John Ruskin's Vision of Restoration

John Ruskin (1819–1900), the English art critic, writer, and social thinker, had a radically different view from Viollet-le-Duc on the restoration of historic buildings. In his seminal work *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849), particularly in the “Lamp of Memory,” Ruskin argued against restoration altogether.

For Ruskin, a building's value lies in its age, authenticity, and the marks of time. He believed that every stone bearing the trace of human hands and centuries of weathering was sacred. Restoration, in his view, was a form of destruction, an attempt to erase history and replace genuine craftsmanship with modern imitation.

He wrote:

“It is impossible, as impossible as to raise the dead, to restore anything that has ever been great or beautiful in architecture.”

Instead of restoration, Ruskin advocated preservation and conservation:

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William Morris's Vision of Restoration

William Morris (1834–1896), the British designer, writer, and social reformer, developed his ideas on restoration as a direct response to both Viollet-le-Duc's creative restorations and Ruskin's moral philosophy of preservation. Deeply influenced by Ruskin, Morris sought to put these ideas into practical action.

In 1877, he founded the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB), often called "*Anti-Scrape*", to oppose destructive restorations that sought to return buildings to an imagined original state. Morris believed that every historical building should be preserved as it has come down to us, bearing the traces of time, use, and change.

For Morris:

- Restoration was a falsification of history, an act of arrogance that erased the authentic life of a building.
- Preservation, on the other hand, meant careful maintenance and repair, using traditional



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His vision established the foundation of modern conservation principles, emphasizing minimal intervention, respect for authenticity, and maintenance over reconstruction.