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## Investigation of the Hermeneutical Approach to Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage

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Received 20 November 2021; revision 03 January 2022; accepted 16 February 2022

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### Research Article

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#### Abstract

In this article restoration is studied within a hermeneutic outlook. Hermeneutics, as a technique of interpretation, includes a general range of cases and text goes far beyond its classic sense and could include different issues such as art works. Thus, art work is considered as a text having an interpretational status and could be interpreted within different hermeneutical approaches. Hermeneutics in recognition stage functions by rendering the signs existing in the work and interpreting them by different scientific methods for identifying the material, technologies and the damages of it. Different hermeneutic approaches are originally determined on the considerable issue of authorial intent, so that the goal of restoring an art work is to restore it to its original form which conforms to the intent of its creator, or understands the work within the here and now paradigm and with an interpreter-oriented interpretation, i.e., the past is preserved as overlaid by the present. Thus, the restoration process carried on for assessing reliability level in interpretation could be analyzed, criticized and studied through a hermeneutic approach.

**Keywords:** Restoration; Conservation; Cultural Heritage; Hermeneutics

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#### 1. Introduction

Historical works generally undergo some damages through the ages, and in order to survive, they require some preservative interventions. According to Brandy, restoration is a methodological moment in the historical work alongside the overall understanding of it for transferring it to the future (Brandt, 2005:48). Restorers require special skills for intervening in the historical works without which preservation would not be properly done.

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Restorers need to fully understand the work before he/she starts taking restoration procedures, and it is this understanding that leads to his/her path through restoration. Restorer's exposure to the historical work could be studied with different approaches, namely which attitude do they have towards the studied work, and what are his/her plans for recognizing the work and its restoration afterwards. Besides his/her sapience, restorer's knowledge and experiences as exposed to the work are rooted in the understanding of interpretation methodology in restoration and plays an important role in restoration of the work. It could be definitely said that recognition stage is considered to be the most basic step before any intervention in the historical works and hermeneutics is related to understanding and explaining. Hermeneutics is a cognitive activity which could be reduced into some theories. Hermeneutics is related to and deals with interpretation, description and explanation of issues in which the subject to interpretation and explanation is not necessarily verbal (Ahmadi, 2004: 7-9). Hermeneutics does not only deal with literary texts, and its primary condition is that something complicated and alien must be perceived and whatever that could be related to and concerned with perception and understanding could be subject to hermeneutics (Gronden, 2006).

This article aims to study the relationship between hermeneutics in interpreting historical-artistic work and its restoration and conservation impressions. Thus, firstly the concept of hermeneutics and its various approaches are described. Secondly, we discuss on its relationship with perception and interpretation of the historical work and then restoration impressions resulted from it are studied alongside a review on some historical works which have been restored and conserved with different methods.

Interpreting the historical work could be an effective approach for understanding the work and then laying a foundation for restoring preserving it. Thus, getting to know the different approaches of interpreting the work in hermeneutics could serve as a link between understanding and restoring an historical work. The method for interpreting historical work and applying in restoring relies on knowing hermeneutics theories and their use in understanding different aspects of the work and then the regarded restoring method by the restorer. But the important issue that forms the main questions of this paper is that what hermeneutics has to do with restoring historical works, and how it could function in analyzing the methodology of restoring the work, and what is the meaning of hermeneutical studies in restoration. In order to scrutinize on this issue, the paper firstly deals with the first stage, i.e., understanding of the work. This stage, regardless of how and according to which characteristic of the work it is planned, could be regarded as a hermeneutical activity based on the present condition of the work because it is in this stage of restoring that in fact an alien phenomenon, i.e. the unknown aspects of the work, is to be understood and interpreted by the attempts of the restorer, and thus the different aspects of understanding the work could be probed into and evaluated, and later based on the type of the interpretation of the work analyze and criticize the adopted restoring methods.

This study attempts to firstly use the issue of "text" in its general sense and its application on historical works and objects, and then by applying romantic, objective and philosophical hermeneutical theories, the different resulted approaches of which will be introduced and analyzed.

In reviewing the literature of the research, firstly the scholarly texts which emphasize on the general sense of interpretation and in which hermeneutics is regarded as the common language of our epoch and also as an interdisciplinary field of science are introduced, and then the research carried out on interpretation and its application on text in its widest sense are studied and introduced. Some articles on interpreting cultural heritage in historical sites and also an example for restoring them is provided which is to be reviewed afterwards. In all these studies, the interpreted historical work is actually regarded as a text and interpretation is used in understanding of and

introducing that work. The theoretical foundations of such studies lie in the linking points between humanities and other fields of science which were triggered in the ninetieth decade and has set up the great changes in human's outlook to the phenomena and has led to the new methodologies in both practical and theoretical research.

## 2. Literature Review

Hermeneutics is an interdisciplinary field, though it is considered much less than its real significance and importance. The world is filled with objective concepts and issues and hermeneutics helps us in understanding the hidden layers of meaning through intervening in the signs of the text (text in its general wide sense). It has been attempted, through the scholarly studies through the twentieth century, to review the most recent theory of the modern era that distinguishes between humanities and sciences, and it has always been tried, according to the scholars' ideas and also regarding to human's nature and his surrounding world, to reconsider the important connection between the two fields and establish their once lost connection (Reynhout, 2012).

Hermeneutics has grown to a global knowledge and far beyond a simple theory of understanding. Today, interpretation, as it is used in understanding the life and human relations, the natural phenomena and also in historical knowledge, provides us with means for understanding the text for understanding the world. In facing with the text (text in its general sense), human beings enter a complicated process and finally hermeneutics interpretation means demonstrate what is represented immediately and requires mediation and intervention in order to appear. Hermeneutical mediation not only manipulate the identity of the issue it interprets, but also, gaining help from interpretation, brings it to the present. Interpreting of the works and their creation process are actually considered as the two sides of a single circle which follow one another and are consistent (Figal 2011, 2004; Meredith 2006).

In some other articles based on scientific research the use of comprehensive interpretation of hidden artistic and historical values in the works which are located in historical sites and presenting and demonstrating it in a tangible way for the receivers are considered to be among the main principles of preserving the historical works. Interpretation of historical works and objects and determining their hidden values and the methods and techniques for their preservation are all procedures which are planned by the aim of information resulted from interpretation and help development of principles of sustainable preservation historical knowledge and stabilize survival of the work in the society. This outlook includes interpretation of the form and all the hidden signs which exist in the works of the past and their placement in the present context which provides us with the possibilities of getting acquainted with the work, understanding it and better experiencing its content with focus on scientific and proper interpretation, which is itself among the most essential stages in preserving the works (Icomoscharter, 2007).

In another study, restoration is considered as interpretation of the artwork from the viewpoint of a philosopher, that brings about considerable problems in both hermeneutics and restoration fields, including questions such as "in restoring an artwork, shall we search for gaining what the artist has meant to create, or shall we consider the artwork and its practical foregrounds in the present?" By taking a look at this research and considering the issue of artist's intention in restoring the artwork, one could find a delicate trace of hermeneutical approach which the author has implicitly noted in some momentary questions, and it could be considered as a starting point for drawing into attention the use of hermeneutical approaches in interpreting historical-cultural works and their restoration (Carier, 1999).

### 3. Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics is literally derived from the Greek verb “hermeneuein” and the noun “hermenia” meaning interpreter and interpretation, both of which are also derived from the root “hermes”, a messenger god in ancient Greece that interpreted the words of the God for people. Hermes was not only a messenger that repeated God’s words, but was also an interpreter for clarifying the accurate understanding and what should not be interpreted (McManus Holroyd, 2007).

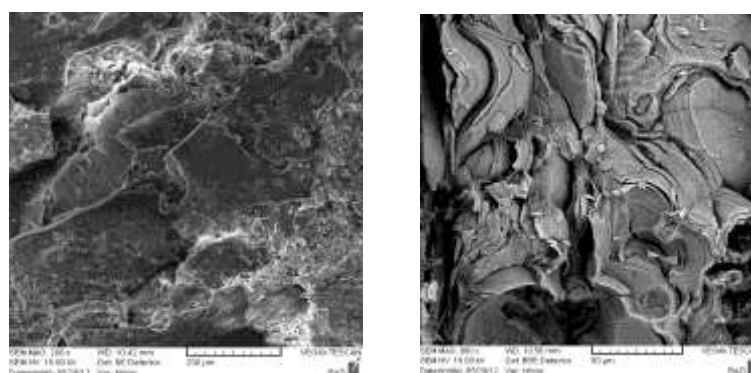
Hermeneutics, according to the scholars of this field, has a general aspect that encompasses so wide a range of issues. From Dilthey who aimed at proving it as a general methodology in humanities, to Heidegger and later Gadamer who was the innovator of philosophical hermeneutics that regarded hermeneutics as a general phenomenon and insisted that the generality of philosophical hermeneutics in the twentieth century includes the whole human knowledge. Regarding the fact that post-positivist philosophy has gradually acknowledged the role of hermeneutical understanding in natural sciences, and there is a fair account for bringing Gadamer’s claim for the generality of hermeneutics into a serious consideration (Weinsheimer, 1991). Paul Ricoeur also, by his expanding the concept of text and considering all issues containing signs as text, develops hermeneutics’ territory to a great extent and this extension entangles hermeneutics for its generality with various issues and sciences, a widespread interaction which enrich and raise its significance and importance (Ricoeur, 1974). In this sense, hermeneutics, as the shared language of this epoch, has been firstly and in its classic definitions used to signify as interpreting the texts by means of a set of rules and principles. Later on, and according to scholars such as Dilthey, a methodological foundation was attributed to the whole body of humanities which could better voice the whole story of the history of human’s perception, and later it took a step further and went beyond an issue just dealing with interpretation of the texts and gradually by resolving into a general philosophy of perception, trespassed the borders of mediation on humanities and claimed itself as a total issue (Gronden, 2006).

According to Gadamer Hermeneutics reflects itself in different advances fields of sciences and especially natural science (Linge, 1997: 38). Later this theory has been was also adopted and analyzed by theories of scholars in the field of natural science and it was concluded that both humanities and natural sciences share the same outlook in gaining the perception of truth and method (Madelin, 1997: 165). So that now hermeneutics scope of practice, i.e., theory and practice of interpretation, lasts until significance and the necessity of its perception is at work and could include a wide general range of issues (Weinsheimer, 1991).

According to the mentioned approaches, scholars and thinkers believed in the generality and the applicability of Hermeneutics in different fields of knowledge. Thus, hermeneutics could be thematically both considered from humanities and art view point, and also as an act done on the material of an art work, and thus it could be included in natural science field and due to the interpretable position of historical-artistic works both materially and thematically, it could be seen as a hermeneutic activity which starts with understanding.

Today and in restoration field, what is included in the subset of the important issue of understanding is often brought about under two titles: technological and pathological studies. In technological studies it is attempted to identify the material and technology engaged in making of the work, and in pathological studies the damages made to the work which mostly make changes in the physical appearance of the work are considered. In both levels, both when it is aimed to recognize the content and artistic values of the work, and also in identifying the material of the work and various types of observing and scientifically analyzing laboratory and device methods such as SEM-EDS, XRD, XRF, FT-IR, ICP and etc. are at work for identifying the material of the

work and the results of which are interpreted and then comes the determining of the technologies of making of the work and also their damages, a hermeneutical activity in interpreting the material is at work. In the stage of understanding the work, in fact the conservator with interpreting the signs which could be done with the help of some laboratory tools or even observation, interacts with making attempt to understand the work, and it must be mentioned that identifying the material of the work and interpreting the signs of damages it has undergone aims the conservator for understanding the work and its context, and this interaction exist in hermeneutics territory, and the conservator is firstly seen as the interpreter of the work which is to be restored and conserved, and thus the way he interprets and approaches the work influences his conservation procedures. Numerous examples could be considered in technology and pathology of various historical woks in this regard, such as the exhaustion of historical ceramics and the different corrosion types of metal works and other damages in historical works with mineral or organic material or a combination of the two, that in all cases the study of physical signs with the aim of different laboratory methods demonstrate a sign of an internal cause to the conservator and helps him/her in interpreting the existing signs and thus makes clear the way for determining preserving and restoring the work. For example, figure 1 shows the corroded layer of the glaze in a sample of a historical glazed brick from Achaemenid site of Tall-e-Ajori in Parseh. The corroded and faded layer of glaze is a sign which shows the development of the interactions of corrosion of the glaze such as Ion exchange interactions during the ages. Interpreting scientific-laboratory studies with different device tests and observations done with Scanning Electron Microscopy (SEM) with Energy Dispersive X-Ray Analysis (EDS) is a sign for the corrosion of the glaze and its flaking in the burial environment in this sample through the ages (Yousefnejad et al. 2014).



**Fig 1** Deteriorated glaze layer pictures by SEM

In different cases in which the clear signs of damages appear in the surface of the work, the conservator could, in the stage of understanding of the work, firstly by observing those signs in the physical appearance of the work to some extent identify the damage and then decides for taking the proper conservatory procedure. In Figure 2 there is a sample of a historical bronze and the corrosion signs on it with light green color that shows the disease of the bronze sample (Scott, 2002: 186).



**Fig 2** Corrosion products of bronze (Scott 2002: 186)

Based on what has been previously discussed on the generality and inclusive character of hermeneutics and the inclusion of restoration in this domain, different conservatory procedures could be considered as conforming to hermeneutical theories, in the sense that in restoring of the work, the restorer aims to restore the work to its original form and primary conditions which conforms to the intention of its creator with taking some proper conservatory procedures, or will preserve the work in its current conditions with all its layers and historical sediments. Besides depending on the latest knowledge, the insight and proficiency of the restorer is adoptable to and could be analyzed based on particular hermeneutics theories. Hermeneutical theories in this study could be studied in three approaches, namely the Romantic, Objective and Philosophical approaches are to be introduced and studied, and their results in restoring of the woks are to be analyzed.

#### **4. Romantic Hermeneutics and Restoration**

Romantic hermeneutics is firstly considered in Schleiermacher's approach. According to him, perception, as a technique, includes reconstructing and re-experiencing the subjective intentions of the author, because perception is started from the settled statement and will turn back to the subjective existence from which it has raised (Palmer, 1969: 86). Schleiermacher never considered the text as apart from its author and has introduced understanding of the author's thought as the true perception of the text. This is gained through an intuitive approach to the text. The interpreter, in encountering to the text, attempts to grasp the intention of the author, in other words, he intuitively undergoes the subjective steps of the author which resulted in the text and thus fully grasps the purpose of the text. Schleiermacher's hermeneutics is a text-oriented approach though it is not restricted to a particular type of text. Dilthey confirms his insight which asserts that all perceivable phenomena are essentially considered as text, and expands it so that it includes the whole historical phenomena Dilthey asserts the issue of objective perception in humanities (ibid:105-106). According to Schleiermacher and Dilthey, perception and interpretation only take place via reconstruction of the author, and the time distance between the author and the interpreter should not block perception, because perception of the text is author-oriented and text-oriented and must be immune from the subjective prejudices of the interpreter. The author-oriented and objective perception of the text would prevent the subjective personal interpretation and sees the perception and interpretation of the text as a unit and settled activity. In art works, the intention of the author/creator is considered as the fundamental pivot in their aesthetic experiment and the distinction between the work and other objects. Works of art maintain a unique purpose and intention which are raised from the reflection of their creator (Panofsky 1996, 17). Regarding the issue of the author's intention and that text has a general meaning of its own and the restorer can

function as an interpreter, it could be concluded that the interpreter in this case and in encountering to the historical-artistic work should bridge the time gap between himself and the work with the help of his historical and experimental knowledge, and studies the work in its own historical and geographical aspects. Here, perception of the subjectivity/mentality of the creator of the work once he has created it, as well as its cultural and historical context would help in the objective perception of the work. Thus the time distance between the making of the work and its coming to the restorer's hands which often shows itself in different changes in the surface of the work including different sediments and exhaustion or corrosion on the work, from the viewpoint which considers the purpose and intention of the creator as the main principle in interpretation, are as much removed from the work as possible so that the work is restored as conformed to the purpose and intentions and its primary and original form. In figure 3 some examples are provided from historical objects that having undergone exhaustion process during the ages some sediments has covered their surface and in restoring of them and regarding the remained sediment layers are removed so that the work is restored to its original form. In figure 4, too, represents some samples from Sassanid glassware with superficial layers of exhaustion which show the exhaustion process during the ages and are mostly removed from the surface of the work in restoring process to come up to the original surface of the work.



**Fig 3** Samples of historic objects with surface sediments and removing them after restoration (Scott, 2002: 176-218)



**Fig 4** Restored Sassanid jars (<http://www.metmuseum.org/collection/the-collection-online/search/324830?rpp=30&pg=1&ft=sasanian+owl+glass&pos=2-30/1/2016>-[http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details/collection\\_image\\_gallery.aspx?partid=1&assetid=1077025001&objectid=367274-30/1/2016](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details/collection_image_gallery.aspx?partid=1&assetid=1077025001&objectid=367274-30/1/2016)  
[http://www.miho.or.jp/english/member/shangrila/vol31/eshan31\\_3.htm](http://www.miho.or.jp/english/member/shangrila/vol31/eshan31_3.htm), 2/2/2016)



The author-oriented character of romantic hermeneutics is reminiscent for style restorations of Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc in 19th century, a self-trained architect who gained experiment and worked in architect studios in Italy and central Europe. He has restored many of European historical architectural works that were mostly destroyed. He believed that works of art must be restored based on their original form and what they have used to be. According to critics, his influence, whether positive or negative, has left in many of restored European architect works such as Notre Dame church, laMadelein Church, Carcassonne castle, Pierrefonds castle and many other restored buildings (Jokilehto, 1986: 213-279). Warsaw, capital of Poland, too has been restored to its original form after the destructions of the world war (Figure 5). In fact, it could be said that Romantic hermeneutic as well as its following objective hermeneutics theories suggest a type of restoration which conforms mostly to the original form of the work.



**Fig 5** Right: restored historic center of Warsaw after world war (Jokilehto, 1986: 409) Left: Notredam de Paris in 19th century <http://www.notredamedeparis.fr>. 2/1/2016

## 5. Objective Hermeneutics in Restoration

Emilio Betti and Eric Hirsh also like their progenitors call a return to hermeneutics historic tradition by posing an objective approach, an approach which relies on some principles and basics as its assumption and emphasizes on the distinction between the subject and the object he is to perceive. Betti sees the hermeneutical process of interpretation as traveling through the path of creation of the work, but this time the creation path is taken from end to start. In creating the work, subjectivity and purposes of the creator are considered as starting point, but are considered as the ending point in interpretation process. In this process a transition to another subjective territory is taken place in the time epoch of the interpreter. He interprets the subjectivity of the creator as objectified in the form of the work. The methodology he has provided is based on principles which emphasize on the objectivity of perception. The work must be interpreted based on its relation to the subjectivity in which it has been crystalized, and it is only in this case that a valid interpretation is done. The necessity of perceiving the details of the text with regarding the whole text and perceiving the wholeness of the text based on its details, and that the interpreter should adapt his interpretation at the utmost conformity to the original work form the basic principles of objective hermeneutics just as romantic hermeneutics.

Eric Hirsch, too, like Betty, advocates to objective approach in perceiving the text. According to him, text maintains a determined meaning that relies on the intention of its creator. He launches the issues of the literal meaning and its ascertainment, its interpretation, and the critic of judgment and analysis of validity in interpretation. In Eric Hirsch's hermeneutical theory, the author's intention plays the main role and ties it to the possibility of achieving an objective perception of the work. The literal meaning of the text is not a result of the words setting next to each other, but relies on



the consciousness and intention of the author. Thus, it is a settled and unchangeable issue which forms the grounds of the issue of validity in interpretation that is not manipulated by historical perception. Meaning is firstly gained through speculation and then methodological assessment of the text. Perception is formed through signs and actively, and reproducing and recognizing the author's intention could always be considered which is a unit and settled issue. The author's intent is the main key to the perception of the text, but it is not enough by itself and the interpreter should also consider some aspects beyond the text itself, because the interpretation which is formed with regard to all the aspects of genesis of subjectivity and consciousness of the author has the utmost conformity with the text, or in other words, the conformity of interpretation relies also on contextual perception of the work (Hirsch, 1967: 5-8-47-63).

According to the objective hermeneutics theory, the restorer takes a methodological procedure in encountering with the work. Firstly, he must grasp the literal meaning of the work as the interpreter and in recognition level, a unit and determined meaning which the creator has left in the work. In historical works, this could include the material of the work which the creator has chosen on the one hand, and also the techniques and manners related to the author's intention which are found deep in the heart of the work which their perception could determine and limit the goal and approach of the restoration as well as the level of restorer's manipulation with the work. Achieving the author's intention and determining the appropriate method, in addition to the study of the work leads the restorer into the understanding of the context in which the work has been created. The final restoration could be criticized in this theory and factors such as the use of proper laboratory and scientific methods in understanding the material aspect of the work and thus the proper recognition of the technology and damages appeared in the work and the inclusive study of the context of the work form the critic and judgment criteria. Providing a proper and compatible restoration to the work, a compatibility which only requires reconstruction of the subjectivity of its creator, determines the validity of restoration. Thus, in this theory, restorer bridges the time gap between himself and the work with the aim of the perception of the author's consciousness and the context of the work, and reproduces the work based on the author's intention afterwards (figures 6). According to this theory the restorer, in his encountering to the work, requires two issues before his manipulating with the work. Firstly, the meaning of the text, and then its context. In the perception level, recognizing the distinction between the internal and external layers of meaning is of great importance, i.e. the material and then the meaning left in the work that is to reconstructed as the creator's intention in this stage, and in attempt to understand the context of the work, the meaning of the work is studied in relation to its historical, social, cultural, economic and political contexts contemporary to the work itself and also from the current viewpoint and the present context.



**Fig 6** Right: Achaemenes glazed brick from susa, louvre museum Left: Ishtar gate with glazed bricks from Babel, Berlin Museum (<http://www.berlin.de/orte/museum/pergamonmuseum/index.en.php> 2/1/2016 <http://www.louvre.fr/en/oeuvre-notices/panel-sphinxes> 2/1/2016)

## 6. Philosophical Hermeneutics and Restoration

According to philosophical hermeneutics principles, the aim of perception is not to understand the meaning of a work as occurred to the receiver or the author, but it seeks to understand what the work means to us and in the present time. But this does not mean that we could do anything to the work, and the perception is an action based on perceiving ones' self and its alliance to the past, in philosophical hermeneutics interpretation is considered as an open process which no individual outlook would terminate it (Ricoeur, 1975). Philosophical hermeneutics was firstly innovated by Heidegger and later Gadamer who claims this hermeneutical approach seeks to clarify the fundamental conditions which form the foundations of perception phenomenon in its all types. Philosophical hermeneutics is thus considered to be interpreter-oriented and text-oriented and overlooks the subjectivity and intention of the author and makes it impossible to achieve an objective perception of the past works due to the fact that human cannot free himself from the bounds and limits of historical evolution, and thus he is always bound within the history and could not see himself at a dominant position for perceiving the past (Couzens hoy, 1982: 41-42). This outlook is the most fundamental critic in objective approach to hermeneutics. According to philosophical hermeneutics approach the interpreter and the object of interpretation are tightened to each other in tradition's context and thus the interpreter is equipped with some specific assumptions once it comes to interpretation and he could not interpret any phenomena with a clear mind, and hence perception is not reproducing an established issue. Gadamer actually attributes an ontological foundation to his philosophical hermeneutics and his regarded ontology is the ontology of perception and according to him perception is resulted from compatibility of the interpreter's horizon of meaning with the one of the text, a compatibility which could result in endless possible meanings and in other words there is an endless meaning interplay between the interpreter and the text. Gadamer sees the existence of the art work not as an object to which perceiving subject encounters, but as a play that its experience and perception are the keys to enter the game. The player never sees the play as an object. He is subjugated, and the play goes on according to its regulations and demands, and the gained result is an interplay between the play and player (Palmer, 1969: 187). Thinking of this play as a severe act requires belonging to it, and this attachment itself prevents the player from thinking of it as an object. Besides, as the play runs and thus prevents from its objectifying, the players lose their statues as perceiving subjects and perform what is not an object from the position of those who are not subjects, and thus they interpret the play from within.

In this kind of interpretation, the perception process is started by launching the dialogue between the interpreter and the text. Firstly, the interpreter provides the text with a pre-perception and the text has the opportunity to assayer this pre-perception. Therefore, the interpreter approaches the text and in this reciprocal path between the subjectivity of interpreter and the horizon of meaning of the text happens the perception and the composition of the interpreter's horizon of meaning and that of the text. According to Gadamer, the author himself is one of the interpreters of the text whose interpretation and perception of the text is by no means prior to other interpretations and the interpreters are not required to obey his interpretation anymore, thus the author's purpose and intention could not function as a determinant factor in perception. Interpreting the text does not necessarily maintain reproducing the author's subjectivity, but it is a productive activity. In this production, the subjectivity and prejudices of the interpreter-in fact the influential history of the text which forms these prejudices- and the text itself contribute to the production of meaning which steps beyond the author's intention. Due to the fact that Gadamer describes the transition from the familiar world of the interpreter to the text as projection of prejudices, it is clear that interpretive prejudices could cover and overshadow the text, and they do the same thing in every case and thus

this raises the doubt that Gadamer's hermeneutics only determine the fact that how the present can absorb the past and dominates it, and not the way it makes clear what has happened in the past (Weinsheimer, 1991).

According to philosophical hermeneutics, the restorer in his encountering to the historical work, calls it from the past into the present and studies, restores and preserves the work from now and here and in the present context. According to this theory, perception is a historical/chronic phenomenon, i.e. interpreter's perception does not equal that of the primary receiver of the work, since his perception is determined by the historical statues of the receiver and the meaning of a work goes always beyond the author's intention. The mission of each interpreter who is located in a time distance from the work is to perceive the meaning and time distance itself aims the perception process and thus it must not be abridged in order to perceive the work. A work belonging to the past could not be perceived merely by itself, but the time distance, i.e., the changes this work has undergone during the time, are considered as foundations that maintain the events that work has undergone and its current statues is based on them.

In this theory, perception is not considered as reproduction, but it is by itself a production, a production which occurs in the composition of the past with the present and according to Gadamer's main model of perception, i.e. the fusion of horizons of meaning, perception is the result of the fusion of horizon of the text and the horizon of interpreter. In this case and in encountering to the text, the interpreter's horizon that maintains his own intentionality is fused with the horizon of the text that is the embodiment of the intentionality and data of the author, and it is through this event that perception is resulted. In this event, the interpreter and the text are both influenced by and change each other. It is obvious that according to the horizons of different interpreters, different infusions take place and as a result, there occurs the possibility of various interpretations all of which maintain validity and value. Perception process here is considered as a kind of production and is thus not limited to the reproduction of the author's subjectivity. Hence, according to this approach the restorer as an interpreter, encounters to the work in the present and does not seek to reproduce the past, in other words, the time distance between he himself and the work, which represents itself in various exhausted layers formed and different changes taken place on the surface of the work in the present statues of the work, aims the interpreter in the perception process and thus must be preserved (Figure 7). There is no method for confirming the best type of restoration, and different types of restoration of the historical work could be carried out depending on the type of perception and interpretation of the interpreter (restorer), each of which has a certain and unique value, and no single one is considered to be necessarily as the best one. This approach actually maintains the methodological transformation of the past into the present and overshadowing the past by a cover of the present in which the traces of the present in the past demonstrates itself in different methods of conservation and restoration through the attempts that the restorer has made (Figures 8, 9 and 10). The use of different various modern materials<sup>†</sup> and techniques in preservation and restoration of historical-artistic works which is increasingly developed could also be included under this approach to interpretation.

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<sup>†</sup> The use of nano-material and other modern material in restoration



**Fig 7** Restored historic jars without removing the sediment layers

([http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details.aspx?objectId=1347558&partId=1&searchText=sasanian+glass+owl&page=1](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=1347558&partId=1&searchText=sasanian+glass+owl&page=1))

The twentieth century is celebrated with different philosophical hermeneutical theories with different and various approaches among which the relativism that is rooted in subjectivism, is the dominant one. Scholars and thinkers of this field make a link between the perception and the interpreter's horizon of meaning and his hermeneutical statues, do believe in the temporal aspect of perception and think of non-temporal and independent perception of interpreter as impossible, and thus perception is always considered as subordinate to the author's subjectivity and horizon of meaning that is issued in his current present time.



**Fig 8** Japanese historic bowl 17th century, restored with gold (<http://bento.si.edu/from-the-collections/-japanese-art/friday-fave-tea-bowl/attachment-tea-bowl>)



**Fig 9** Combination of the historic museum building in Sidney with a modern structure, the purpose is conservation and rehabilitation of the historic building for application (<http://sydneylivingmuseums.com.au/stories/rattling>)



**Fig 10** Conservation a historic building in London in a cover of modern structure  
(<http://www.hok.com/design/service/renovation-restoration/cabinet-office-22-26-whitehall>)

## 7. Conclusion

This article has studied the relationship between hermeneutics and restoration. The main linking point between the two is to consider the text in its general sense including many different issues such as historical and architectural works and objects on the one hand, and the issue of generality of hermeneutics on the other. Thus, considering everything as a text, and interpreting the signs and symbols of the work for perceiving its meaning, form the fundamental grounding of this study. Hermeneutics, as a technique for interpreting the work is a cognitive activity in which the different sciences as far as they are concerned with attempt to perceive the meaning are included, and this study has sought to scrutinize over its relationship with the restoration of historical works. Restoration, firstly makes its way into the work and the methods for its preservation by making attempts to understand it. Understanding the work from restoration outlook means determining the material and techniques used and applied in making the work and also studying the signs of damages the work has undergone through the ages and interpreting them with the help of various methods including observation, scientific-laboratory as well as devise analysis and tests, and reveals its relevance as a cognitive activity in hermeneutics territory. In the level of understanding the work we have provided different examples of historical works and the existence of damage signs in them in both main fields of technology and pathology, as well as the use of different methods for determining and analyzing the material and interpreting the damage signs, based on which the issue of interpretation of the physical signs of the work to which the restore is faced to were defined. In fact, the use of device observation and analysis methods such as SEM-EDX, XRF, XRD, ICP and many other methods in conservation studies of the historical-artistic works, each provide use with particular tools for identifying and scientific interpretation of the work that helps the restorer in continuing the proper path in the cognitive activity through the restoration.

Thus, the historical work as a text, text in its general sense, requires interpretation and the restorer is firstly seen in the position of an interpreter of the historical work. Thus, in discussing on the hermeneutical aspect of restoration, we have firstly discussed on theories of classic Romantic, Objective and philosophical hermeneutics approaches with the main question of whether the restorer, in his facing to the historical-artistic work, scrutinizes it in its own historical and geographical context, or sees it from the viewpoint of here and now. For the first case, the romantic

and objective approaches to hermeneutics were discussed in which according to the theories of Schleiermacher and Dilthey and some of their recent followers such as Emilio Betty and Eric Hirsch, interpretation is deeply rooted in the author's intention and it wholly maintains reproducing the subjectivity of the creator. According to this theory, restore must consider the work as located in its own historical and geographical context and restore it in a way that the work would finally restore to its original form, i.e., what its creator has once created. In this paradigm, a valid restoration maintains the utmost accordance to the author's intention, and thus restoration is considered to be reproduction and reconstruction of the work as aimed by its creator. Objectivism in interpretation is accompanied with perceiving the meaning and context of the work and thus returning to the author's intention, and the aim of interpretation is to achieve the author's intention that is itself a criterion for assessing the validity. In this paradigm, priority and validity mostly goes to a restoration in which the final result would almost completely conforms to the original form of the work by perceiving the meaning of the work and its context and it is done through the path of understanding the author's intention, and it is this kind of restoration could be criticized and assessed. In philosophical hermeneutics which is based on theories of Heidegger and Gadamer, perceiving the work is considered as an interpreter-oriented activity and this approach overlooks the author's intention and thinks of achieving the objective perception of the past as impossible, since it believes that human being and his creations are always bound to their historical context and perception is itself regarded as a historical phenomenon and thus human cannot free himself from the limits of temporality and gain control of the past. Thus, perception is restricted to the present and is resulted from the fusion of horizon of the interpreter with that of the text, a fusion which would make the text open to numerous possible interpretations. The interpreter is defeated in the meaning play and perception goes further than the methodologies he applies in approaching the text. According to this theory it could be said that restoration is imposed to the work from the outlook of her and now and different methods of restoration could be used for restoring the work among which no single one is prior to the others, and each one is resulted from the confusion of the horizons of the restorer and the work and has got its own value. This kind of restoration is actually an artistic application of the present into the past, or in other words saving the past in a cover of the present. Today all of these methods are used in restoration of art works, and what is important and crucial is the restorer's having an update knowledge and a proper sapience, insight and experience, so that regarding the spirit and conditions of the work, he could choose a method which would be most beneficial to restoration and conservation of the artwork and help to its transition to the future.

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