

Introductory Paragraph on Disaster Risk Management for the Protection of Movable Cultural Heritage

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Introduction

Disaster risk management of cultural heritage is a topic that has been confronted in a systematic, methodological and theoretical manner at international level only in the last 15 years. This complex discipline encompasses not only climatic and environmental factors as examined by preventive conservation but also those connected to safety, security, sociology, etc. in order to arrive at integrated disaster risk management.

Historical origins of disaster risk management of cultural heritage have their roots in the holistic approach of preventive conservation and how this discipline has found its positioning with respect to restoration. Several conferences and important courses have helped this discipline to evolve over time.

Terminology to present the theoretical and practical concepts of disaster risk management applied to cultural heritage has been studied and agreed upon over time. Terms such as “disaster”, “risk”, “vulnerability”, “probability” and “integrated management” are more and more used and shared as well as other terms specific to disaster risk management.

Geographical and cultural diversities show us that the perception of risks and their analyses can vary with respect to the local situation in sociological, psychological and anthropological terms in relation to the cultural heritage.

Various stages in the cycle of integrated emergency management are taken into account: “risk prevention and preparedness” meaning preventive actions to be implemented to avoid or minimise the impact and severity of catastrophes; “risk readiness” meaning immediate actions to confront the situation caused by the catastrophe; “risk response” meaning the coordination of actions aimed at minimising the devastating effects created by the catastrophe; and “risk recovery” meaning the programme of actions to rectify the situation prior to the catastrophe (restoration, reconstruction, stabilization, rehabilitation, etc.).

This new discipline provides the opportunity to investigate sectors outside our own specialisation. Scientific exchanges with fellow architects, sociologists, biologists, botanists, conservators, engineers, fire-fighters, physicians, volunteers, etc, enrich its development.

The legal framework for the protection of cultural heritage is supported by The Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (1954) and its two Protocols (1954 and 1999); the UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (1970); the UNESCO Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972); the UNIDROIT Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects (1995); the UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage (2001) as well as the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003).

The actions of the International Committee of the Blue Shield and its national committees contribute to this cause too as well as the operations and trainings developed by the Liaison Officers for the protection of cultural properties of the Armed Forces of certain countries, such as Austria.

Support materials, methods and training curricula have been developed over the past 15 years by institutions such as ICCROM, ICOM and its specialised international committees for Conservation and Security, the Getty Conservation Institute, the National Committees of the Blue Shields, specialised NGOs such as WATCH and FOCUH and IGOs, many Universities and Research Institutions. An on line bibliography “Museums Emergency Programme” dedicated to the Disaster Risk Management of Movable Cultural Heritage, developed in occasion of the partnership among ICCROM, ICOM and GCI, is available on the GCI Website: <http://gcibibs.getty.edu/asp/>.

Keywords: Disaster Risk Management, Armed Conflict, Emergency, Catastrophe, Militaries, NGOs and IGOs, Conventions

Keynote recommendations

Session on ***Risk Management for the Protection of Movable Cultural Heritage***

1. Cristina Menegazzi (Keynote)
2. Markus Swittalek
3. Claudio Cimino
4. Aparna Tandon