

INTRODUCTION

The *ICOMOS World Report 2014/2015 on Monuments and Sites in Danger (Heritage at Risk)* is the latest volume of what is already a whole series of World Reports started in 2000 on the initiative of President Michael Petzet and followed by the volumes *H@R 2001/2001*, *H@R 2002/2003*, *H@R 2004/2005*, *H@R 2006/2007*, *H@R 2008–2010*, and *H@R 2011–2013*. The series has also been complemented by three special editions: *H@R Special 2006 Underwater Cultural Heritage at Risk/Managing Natural and Human Impacts*, *H@R Special 2006 The Soviet Heritage and European Modernism*, and *H@R Special 2007 Cultural Heritage and Natural Disasters/Risk Preparedness and the Limits of Prevention*. The continuation of the successful series, also disseminated via the internet, is related to Resolution 26 of the 16th General Assembly of ICOMOS in October 2008 in Quebec, which resolved to “request the Heritage at Risk Series to be continued and that actions be taken to enhance its communication and impact so as to support protection and conservation of the cultural heritage world-wide and to better serve ICOMOS and its Committees to define priorities and strategic goals”. And the ‘ICOMOS Cultural Heritage Global Monitoring Network’ initiated by President Gustavo Araoz in June 2010 is considered as being “the logical outgrowth of our Heritage@Risk programme”.

In light of the ongoing armed conflicts and destructions of cultural heritage in Syria, Iraq and in Yemen the UNESCO World Heritage Committee at its 2015 session in Bonn/Germany recommended ‘to the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to develop a post-conflict strategy, including means to extend support for reconstruction of damaged World Heritage properties through technical assistance, capacity-building and exchange of best practices...’. As a consequence ICOMOS at its Annual General Assembly and Advisory Committee meeting in October 2015 in Fukuoka/Japan decided to dedicate its 2016 scientific activities to the topic of ‘post-trauma reconstruction’, by means of workshops and international conferences, to raise fundamental questions, explore theoretical and practical issues and lay the foundations for practical recommendations that will hopefully be needed in a not-too-distant future. In this spirit, the new *ICOMOS World Report 2014/15* not only tries to fill a gap in ICOMOS’ annual reporting, but offers among others two very relevant contributions to the topic of post-trauma reconstruction after threats and damages caused by human-made or natural disasters. One is related to Mali, where in May 2012 Islamic rebels caused serious damages to mausoleums, mosques and manuscript collections in Timbuktu (*H@R 2011–2013*, pp. 94 f.). Unfortunately, a report on the destructions was not available. The new detailed report from ICOMOS Mali on the “identical” reconstruction of the 11 destroyed mausoleums in Timbuktu in 2014–2015 (pp. 52–57) – based on archaeological investigations, research and complete documentation and the use of traditional construction materials and techniques – is a convincing document about the necessity of including the local communities in the reconstruction process. The same lesson we have to learn when reading the report on the

disastrous earthquakes of April and May 2015 in Nepal (pp. 102–109): During the preparation of the post-disaster rehabilitation process it became clear that a successful reconstruction of the settlements and the cultural sites will only be possible by ensuring cultural continuity – and cultural continuity can only be ensured through the knowledge and skills of the community being passed on from generation to generation.

In this volume special attention is given to reports focussing on the current situation in the Near East (pp. 63–101), some of them including similar reflections concerning the involvement of stakeholders and citizens in the planning process of rehabilitation. The impact of the civil war on the cultural heritage in Syria was first documented in the previous edition (*H@R 2011–2013*, pp. 143–147). In January 2013, ICOMOS in cooperation with ICCROM, the DGAM (Directorate General of Antiquities & Museums in Syria) and UNESCO managed to hold an e-learning course for Syrian cultural heritage professionals, conducted by ICORP, the ICOMOS International Scientific Committee on Risk Preparedness (see *H@R 2011–2013*, p. 9 and p. 146). It was coordinated by the ICOMOS permanent and operational working group on Syria, established informally as early as in 2012. Since 2014 also in charge of Iraq, the working group was validated by resolution of the General Assembly in Florence in November 2014 as *ICOMOS Working Group for Safeguarding Cultural Heritage in Syria and Iraq*. Among the activities of the working group (see report on pp. 63–67) monitoring is the highest priority (see also the report on Aleppo, pp. 97–100), followed by intensifying contacts to other organisations, such as DGAM (with a detailed report on Syria 2015, pp. 69–96), and universities, and involving them in research, formation and training courses for cultural heritage professionals in both countries (offered in Beirut in 2014 and 2015, with the support of UNESCO). However, activities also include establishing a data base with the architectural and urban documentation of all the cultural heritage sites in both countries, starting with a 3D documentation of the old city of Damascus with the assistance of the American CyArk Foundation (report of the working group, p. 64 f.). On behalf of the Annual General Meeting of its members in November 2015, the board of ICOMOS Germany adopted a memorandum ‘For the Safeguarding and Preservation of the Cultural Sites in Syria’ (p. 101). As regards Iraq, the attacks against Nimrud in March 2015 and the ongoing damages to the archaeological site by terrorists were denounced in a UNESCO Press Release of April 2015 by Director-General Irina Bokova, declaring that the “deliberate destruction of heritage is a war crime” (p. 67). Unfortunately, no report on the situation is available. The report on the future of the heritage of Mosul after the destruction by ISIS in April 2014 (p. 65 f.) clearly points out the importance of research and documentation for a possible post-disaster reconstruction. In the case of Yemen, again there is no report to describe the extent of cultural heritage at risk due to the ongoing armed conflict, but ICOMOS in a statement of April 23, 2015 expressed its deep concern about

threats to cultural properties in Yemen, mentioning the three Cultural World Heritage Sites, but also many other places of great cultural importance (p. 141 f.). On June 3, 2015 the International Committee of the Blue Shield published a statement on the extremely worrying reports about the destruction of cultural properties, including the bombing of the World Heritage Site Old City of Sana'a, and urged all parties to abide by the terms of the 1954 Hague Convention (ibid.). Finally, on June 12, 2015 the Director-General of UNESCO condemned the destruction of historic buildings in the old city of Sana'a (ibid.).

It is worth mentioning that for the first time ICLAFI, the ICOMOS Legal International Scientific Committee, is contributing to an edition of *H@R* with a very detailed report related to the legal problems in connection with the protection of cultural properties in the event of armed conflicts, followed by a recommendation to expand the definition of cultural heritage in *Heritage at Risk* (pp. 152–164).

The new *ICOMOS World Report 2014/2015* consists of contributions from 24 countries, among them reports from national and international scientific committees of ICOMOS, but also, as usual, reports by individual experts and also quotations from different expertises, statements, articles and press releases. An analysis of the reports shows that, apart from the general risks to heritage from natural disasters and physical decay of structures, there are certain patterns in human activity endangering our heritage, such as risks from war and inter-ethnic conflicts, as documented in the mentioned reports on the Near East. Human-made risks from development pressures caused by population growth and progressive industrialisation are reported from all parts of the world, resulting in ever-greater consumption of land, destroying not only archaeological evidence, but entire (even protected) cultural landscapes, either by planning tourist development facilities like the aerial tramway in the Navayo Reservation of the world-famous Grand Canyon (p. 140), or building commercial and residential tourism units, like on the shore of Lake Burley Griffin (p. 18) or at the South Rim entrance of the Grand Canyon. Renewed uranium mining around the Canyon is threatening drinking water, and uncontrolled alarming contamination from mining activities and sewage pollution is reported for the basin of Lago di Cuitzeo, a protected ecological reservation north of the city of Morelia, Mexico (p. 58). Large-scale mining projects continue to threaten cultural landscapes (see the ICOMOS Australia report, p. 16 ff.), for instance the planned copper mining in the area of Oak Flat in Superior, Arizona (p. 139) – or those reported already in the previous volume (*H@R 2011–2013*, Introduction p. 10) at Mes Aynak, Afghanistan (ibid., p. 18), Sakdrisi, Georgia (ibid., pp. 64–66) or Roşia Montana, Romania (ibid., p. 122). – Good news at least regarding the latter: after its nomination by the Romanian Government the ‘Rosia Montana mining cultural landscape’ has been included in the UNESCO World Heritage Tentative List since February 1, 2016.

In some countries such uncontrolled developments are often justified by the lack of financial resources to guide them in the direction of protection and cultural continuity. In this sense the declaration of ICOMOS Bulgaria of June 2014 states in plain terms how bad the condition of the ‘authentic’ cultural heritage is, while significant EU funds are being allocated for false reconstructions of ruins, based on conjecture and having destructive consequences especially for archaeological sites (pp. 35–37). Often it is also the political will that is missing, for instance if the extant legal regulations and structures are not put in use, are weakened or even neglected, as reported by ICOMOS Pakistan about the pro-

ject of the Lahore Orange Metro Train and its implementation (pp. 110–113). In some countries, the economic crisis (reported in the previous volume, pp. 10, 74, 82–84) seems to be used as a pretext for the repercussions on the cultural heritage sector – as reports from Serbia (pp. 125–128) and Croatia (pp. 38–41) try to investigate and explain. To some extent, e.g. concerning the Socialist (Soviet) modern heritage (see also the *H@R* Special 2006 on *Soviet Heritage and European Modernism*), there is apparently a problem of attitude: While in the Republic of Moldova an ICOMOS member of the International Scientific Committee on 20th Century Heritage is fighting for the recognition – and protection – of four important public buildings as outstanding examples of Socialist modern heritage in Chişinău (see report pp. 147–151), in Bulgaria the Buzludzha building from 1981 (a monument to praise the glory of the Bulgarian Communist Party) was abandoned after 1989 and has suffered since then from vandalism and decay (report pp. 32–34). In Bosnia-Herzegovina the Historical Museum in Sarajevo, a typical building of Socialist modern heritage from 1963, was damaged during the armed conflicts in 1990 and since then has been in bad condition. The project for rehabilitation worked out by ICOMOS has not been supported by the public administration (report pp. 29–31). The ongoing destruction of Soviet Heritage in the Ukraine also needs to be mentioned (report pp. 133–135).

Neglect and/or lack of use and maintenance are very often the source of possible deterioration or destruction. It applies to industrial buildings, like The Factory in West Hollywood from 1929 (p. 137 f.), to single or groups of buildings, like the Old U.S. Mint (1874) in San Francisco (p. 139), the A. G. Gaston Motel (1954) in Birmingham, AL (a gathering place for prominent leaders in the Civil Rights movement in the US, p. 138), the ‘Cliff Block’ hospital building of 1903 in Tanga, Tanzania (report provided by the ISC on Shared Built Heritage, pp. 144–146), the *Ledigenheim* (home for singles) in Hamburg (pp. 45–47), the *Multihalle* (multi-purpose hall) in Mannheim (p. 47 f.), but also to churches, like the Collegiate Church of the Holy Cross in Liège (pp. 23–28), or to mural paintings, such as the fresco cycles in five of the six churches in Voskopoja, Albania, under state protection as ‘Monuments of Culture of the First Category’ (report on pp. 12–15), and the wall-paintings in Ireland and their endangered condition (pp. 49–51). Even historic urban districts all over the world suffer from neglect, lack of maintenance or careless, often totally unplanned renewal processes, like the Historic Civic Block in East Point, Georgia (p. 136), the South Street Seaport in New York (p. 137), the economic area of the Otto-Wagner-Hospital in Vienna (p. 21 f.) or the medieval town of Vyborg in Russia (report pp. 120–123). Similar threats to the historic urban structure by development pressures are reported from World Heritage Sites – the core zone of Vienna (Karlskirche p. 120 f.), the core and the buffer zones of the Moscow Kremlin (pp. 117–119), one of the buffer zones in Berlin (St. Hedwig’s Cathedral and Magnus-Haus, pp. 43–45), the cities of Guadalajara, Guanajuato and Puebla and the university area in Mexico City (see the reports on pp. 58–62), from the buffer zone of Cuzco, Peru (pp. 114–116), and the continuing threats to the buffer zone of the ‘El Camino de Santiago’ cultural route in Spain (pp. 129–132).

All these reports on threats to World Heritage Sites – it is a relatively large number – including armed conflicts (Mali, Syria, Iraq, Yemen) or development pressures (Austria, Russia, Germany, Mexico, Peru, Spain) can be considered as the result of a continuous proactive observation, a preventive monitoring of the state of conservation, which – in accordance with article 4 of

the ICOMOS Statutes – lies in the responsibility of the National Committees of ICOMOS (in special cases supported by the International Scientific Committees). As explained already in the Introduction to the previous edition, such preventive monitoring is part of the responsibilities of the advisory bodies ICOMOS, IUCN and ICCROM, and their mandates and functions result from articles 8 (3), 13 (7) and 14 (2) of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention in connection with paragraphs 30 and 31 of the Operational Guidelines. For instance, the positive results of the continuous activities of the German monitoring group for World Heritage Sites, founded in 2001 (compare H@R 2006/2007, pp. 62 f., H@R 2008–2010, p. 13 and H@R 2011–2013, pp. 67–71), but also of ICOMOS monitoring groups in other countries, or the monitoring reports presented in this edition will hopefully convince all National Committees of ICOMOS to attend to the task of preventive monitoring in the future. Based on the annual reports of all ICOMOS committees on the dangers and trends in conservation in their region, the *Heritage at Risk* initiative becomes the database for the already mentioned Global Monitoring Network: ICOMOS as a sort of general “monument watch” observing the state of conservation worldwide.

With this volume of *Heritage at Risk* we hope to have succeeded in giving a certain overview of the threats, problems and trends

regarding the protection of monuments in different regions of the world. We are quite aware of the gaps in our work and of the limits to what we can do. However, in the near future the *Heritage at Risk* initiative will not only need an improved financial base, but also contributions from all ICOMOS committees in the form of annual reports collected by a press and information office to be installed at our International Secretariat in Charenton-le-Pont. Our special thanks are addressed to Gaia Jungeblodt, our director at the International Secretariat, who over the last years has collected all the relevant information for our editorial work, such as reports, press releases and comments on worldwide threats to heritage. Thanking all colleagues who have contributed to this publication and made their pictures available to us, we would also like to note that, in line with ICOMOS policy, the texts and information provided for this publication reflect the independent view of each committee and of the different authors. At the secretariat of ICOMOS Germany in Berlin we would like to thank John Ziesemer who was in charge of the editorial work and the English translations, and Aurelia Ziegenbein for her administrative work. Finally, we wish to extend our thanks to the German Federal Government Commissioner for Cultural Affairs and the Media who once again provided the necessary financial and organisational framework for this publication.

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