

# NOTES ON NEW BOOKS

Editorial note

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## *The Challenges of World Heritage Recovery* Magdalena Marcinkowska and Katarzyna Zalasńska (eds.)

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Armed conflicts, and natural disasters like fires, floods, or earthquakes, are just examples of the threats to the preservation of cultural heritage, especially with respect to those of outstanding significance for mankind. The destruction of world heritage, which in previous years has taken place in Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Mali, Nepal, and Haiti, has become an urgent matter for the international community in terms of its recovery and reconstruction.

A new book, *The Challenges of World Heritage Recovery*, edited by Magdalena Marcinkowska and Katarzyna Zalasńska, in cooperation with Dąbrówka Lipska, is a response to the need for an in-depth analysis in the matter of recovery and reconstruction of cultural heritage in post-trauma times. Most of the articles in this collection were presented during a conference of the same title, which was held on 6-8 May 2018 in Warsaw (Poland). In the historical centre of Warsaw, a place deliberately destroyed during the Second World War, experts from all over the world met to discuss how, when, and why the recovery of world heritage is important.

In this carefully-edited collection of articles, various aspects of recovery are presented in three different sections: “The Integrative Approach for Recovery – Theory and Methodology”; “The Processes of Recovery – Documentation, Communities and Cultural Rights”; and “The Challenges of Urban

Heritage Recovery". The reflections concern the notions of recovery and reconstruction in conservation doctrine, as well as their evolution and legal approach. The unique value of the book is its number of interesting case-studies, which help to understand the notion of recovery and disseminate knowledge coming from actual experiences of armed conflicts and natural disasters. One may find the story of the reconstruction of not only Warsaw, but also Dubrovnik and Timbuktu. During their long and complicated process of recovery of a city they had several important aspects in common, like the need of its inhabitants to "build back better", the necessity of documentation and urban and management plans to foresee all the architectural and urban challenges, as well as the role of heritage in the destroyed urban spaces, while at the same time taking into account the identity and wishes of the local communities.

In today's world, which faces the challenges of regional armed conflicts and natural disasters, the questions of reconstruction and restoration of monuments have become present-day challenges. The outcome of "The Challenges of World Heritage Recovery" conference collected in this book constitutes a milestone in the discussion on the recovery and reconstruction of cultural heritage. The publication can serve as a basis for the further development of guiding principles for reconstruction as well as of practical standards which would promote the fundamental tenets included in the *Warsaw Recommendation on Recovery and Reconstruction of Cultural Heritage*. The book includes the full text of this document, which was adopted by more than 200 participants from all over the world, including international organizations such as ICOMOS, ICCROM, the World Bank, UNISDR, and UNESCO. The *Warsaw Recommendation* sets up universal guidelines for the recovery and reconstruction of cultural heritage properties which have been damaged in a result of armed conflicts and natural disasters.

The recent events concerning the destruction of world heritage show that the need for recovery and reconstruction guidance is more relevant than ever. The tragic news about the fire in the Japan's Shuri Castle, a World Heritage Site in Okinawa, or the earlier fire in the Notre Dame Cathedral in April, only prove that this debate needs to be continued.

*The Challenges of World Heritage Recovery* provides guidance for dealing with future challenges in the area of cultural heritage in emergency and crisis situations. In the pages of this volume international experts, heritage professionals, and researchers share their reflections on how, when, and why the recovery and reconstruction of cultural heritage is important for all peoples and future generations.