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UNESCO's World Heritage: To be or not to be

1. Introduction

Two world wars irreversibly changed all social landscapes: humanity had to come to terms not only with unprecedented loss of life, but also with massive and equally unprecedented destruction of assets considered material components of culture. The international community's recognition as to imports of the latter was changing. The adoption of the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage adopted by the General Conference at its seventeenth session in Paris on 16 November 1972 (hereinafter: UNESCO World Heritage Convention) was the turning point in this regard. In public perception, the Convention – together with its concept of a list of objects expressly placed under protection – played the role of catalyst for an international movement that understood the protection of cultural heritage as a key element for the strengthening and advancement of society as a whole. To date, of the 1,121 objects declared as world heritage, 869 are cultural, 213 are natural and 39 are mixed. In total, 53 are endangered.[1]

There is no doubt that inclusion of objects in the World Heritage List is itself an act of recognition at international level for the States in which they are located, but it also implies an enormous responsibility of the whole of society in its preservation so that they survive us and can be enjoyed by later generations. In this sense, it is necessary to draw attention to the fact that membership in this List confers a series of unavoidable responsibilities and commitments on part of the States, which are the guarantors of its conservation. Today, 48 years after the advent of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention, which has been signed by 194 countries to date, it is appropriate to discuss, through various examples, the current state of affairs with respect to international protection of items of exceptional universal value.

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[1] UNESCO, World Heritage List, http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/ (accessed: 13.10.2020).

2. Background of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention

The first historical precedent that is known as the precursor to the UNESCO World Heritage Convention was the Athens Charter of 1933. The Charter sown the seeds of international cooperation in this field by shaping the first vision of historical heritage, even if in a rather anachronistic way. With the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 however these attempts to stimulate international debate on the safeguarding and protection of heritage were halted, and it took the total destruction of certain areas of the world for the appreciation of the historical heritage to regain momentum. As Francesco Francioni commented, the Second World War heightened awareness of the need to take action against the drastic and in some cases historically unprecedented destruction suffered by heritage in such a short period of time.[2] Against this background, the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (hereinafter: The Hague Convention) was adopted in Hague on 14 May 1954, through which numerous actions were promoted in many parts of the world in order to reduce or to lessen the damage caused to the heritage during various armed conflicts.

In the 1960s, two international campaigns were launched all over the world to help protect and preserve certain pieces of the world heritage the loss of which would have been irreparable for all humanity. The first one concerned the actions taken by UNESCO in order to save the Nubian temples of Abu Simbel in Egypt from flooding as a consequence of the construction of the Aswan Dam; the other was about preservation of the city of Venice during the floods of 1966. These two major projects raised awareness of the need to enact a universal instrument to introduce the protection of heritage at a global level as it became clear the existing national protection mechanisms are insufficient. Thus, the development of a uniform international system of cooperation between States proved to be of importance for the safeguarding of heritage which, by its very nature, is universal.

The first step in the conservation of historical sites and sites of exceptional natural value was taken by the United States in 1965 when it convened a Conference on International Cooperation in Heritage Conservation, the most important outcome of which was to create a body responsible for stimulating international cooperation to identify, establish, develop and manage such sites. This paved the way for UNESCO's agreement in 1970, during the 16th General Conference,[3] to creation of a new Convention entitled

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[2] F. Francioni, "Thirty years later: is the World Heritage Convention ready for the 21st century?", *Cultural Heritage and Law Review* 2003, no. 8, p. 12.

[3] UNESCO, *General Conference, 16th Session*, p. 57, https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000114046_spa?posInSet=5&queryId=dbfca55d-6e4c-4802-9c56-68abcfbb8ee7 (accessed: 10.11.2020).

International Protection of Monuments, Groups of Buildings and Sites of Universal Value, which would eventually also include natural sites, giving finally rise to the 1972 UNESCO World Heritage Convention. As Francisco Javier Melgosa Arcos observed, the World Heritage Convention was created because of the coincidence in time, and in the achievement of the same objectives, of the ecological movements and those responsible for culture in the world, giving rise to the concretion of a spirit, of some measures and the creation of a body that embodied the aforementioned Convention.[4]

As we have already mentioned, the Convention was created under the premise that there was a certain number of objects and places that, due to their exceptional value for all of humanity, should be protected under an international system,[5] because there were certain threats of destruction, disappearance or deterioration of the cultural and natural heritage that urgently required action not only by the national authorities but also by the peoples of the world.[6] In this sense, threats to the heritage were included in Article 11(4) of the Convention in an expanded form with respect to the previous texts: destruction caused by war was no longer the only named threat, and other factors were also taken into account such as natural disasters, dynamism of urban and tourist development or even neglect.

3. Protection of world heritage

In order to be declared a part of world heritage, an object must pass through filters established by the World Heritage Commission and managed by a competent body entrusted to implement the Convention. Thus, since 1978, a number of selection criteria have been established for the inclusion of properties on the World Heritage List. Let us analyse these now.

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[4] F.J. Melgosa Arcos, "Cuarenta años de la Convención del Patrimonio Mundial" [in:] *Libro de Actas del XVII Congreso Internacional de la AECIT*, Orense 2012, p. 750, https://gredos.usal.es/bitstream/handle/10366/122141/DDAFP_MelgosaArcos_Cuarentaanosconvencionpatrimonio-mundial.pdf?sequence=1 (accessed: 20.03.2020).

[5] Article 11(2) of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention which states that the Committee shall establish, keep up to date and publish, under the title "World Heritage List", a list of cultural and natural heritage properties, as defined in Articles 1 and 2 of this Convention, which it considers to be of outstanding universal value.

[6] The Noting of the World Heritage Convention which states that noting that the cultural and natural heritage is increasingly threatened with destruction and the First Recital which states that considering that the deterioration or disappearance of any item of the cultural and natural heritage constitutes a harmful impoverishment of the heritage of all the peoples of the world.

Whether natural or cultural, the candidate site must be exceptional in the sense that it should transcend the borders of its place o origin, it must be irreplaceable and it must be authentic – that is to say, it must remain unchanged over time, without having undergone far-reaching restoration or alteration. In other words, the Convention, in order to include a piece of property in the List, looks for outstanding universal value, authenticity and integrity of the site in question.

With regard to outstanding universal value, we have to take into account that this criterion is not defined in the 1972 UNESCO World Heritage Convention, so we have to refer to the Operational Guidelines for the implementation of the Convention (OG)[7] that have been published over the years. In the 2005 version of OG this value is defined as a cultural and/or natural significance that is so exceptional that it transcends national boundaries and is of common importance for present and future generations of humankind.

However, despite the attempts to define this outstanding universal value, we must conclude that there appears to be a flaw in this concept which results in lack of credibility in the system of representation of the World Heritage List. Many decisions taken by the Committee when it comes to inscribing certain sites have moved away from objective criteria, focusing instead on political, economic and cultural considerations, or even issues such as prestige or tourist attraction. To assess the authenticity of an object as part of heritage, its cultural value must be credibly expressed through various attributes such as form and design; materials and substance; use and function; traditions, techniques and management systems; the location and setting of the site; spirit and sensibility; and other internal and external factors. Thus, as Britta Rudolff explains, the conclusion is that each culture can objectify the authenticity of a given good, so that, following Jean Barthelemy's thesis, it is impossible to define authenticity univocally and objectively since there are as many ways in which an object might be described as authentic.[8]

On the other hand, considering the notion of integrity, we should note that it implies measuring the intact (untouched, unspoilt) character of the heritage and its attributes. Therefore, in order to examine the conditions of integrity one must assess the extent to which the site possesses all the elements necessary to express its outstanding universal value; whether it is of adequate size so as to allow full representation of the character-

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[7] UNESCO, The Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, https://whc.unesco.org/en/guidelines/ (accessed: 13.07.2020).

[8] J. Barthelemy, "La notion d'authenticité dans son contexte et dans sa perspective", *Restauro International Journal of Historical Heritage* 1994, vol. 129, pp. 37–46; B. Rudolff, "Between 'Outstanding Universal Value' and 'cultural Diversity' – Heritage Values in Transition" [in:] *Constructing World Heritage*, eds. M.T. Albert, S. Gauer-Lietz, Frankfurt 2006, pp. 109–120.

istics and processes that convey the significance of the site; and whether it suffers from the adverse effects of development and/or neglect.

In addition, in relation to cultural goods, a series of additional criteria are also required for inclusion in the List. These are: 1) the object must be a masterpiece of human creation; 2) the object has to testify to an exchange of influences during a certain period or cultural area; 3) the object needs to offer a unique or exceptional testimony about a cultural tradition or a civilisation, whether it has disappeared or is still alive; 4) the object must represent a style of construction or landscape characteristic of a significant period of human history; 5) the object must be an example of a human establishment representative of a culture; 6) the object has to be related to events, living traditions, beliefs, exceptional works, etc.

Drawing up and monitoring the above-mentioned list is entrusted to the World Heritage Committee, an entity made up of representatives of several UNESCO member states and that is responsible for implementing the articles of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention. The Committee therefore requests each State Party to the Convention to submit to it a tentative list of sites it intends to nominate for the World Heritage List (Article 11 of the Convention).

The main purpose of these tentative lists is to allow the Committee to consider on case-by-case basis the outstanding universal value possessed by each site to be nominated to the World Heritage List. It should also be stressed that the Convention has set up this system of nominations to the List so that the States Parties themselves are responsible for nominations, i.e. the Committee cannot decide on its own whether to include into the List a site that has not been nominated by the respective countries. This system also helps to raise a sort of dual awareness – among States and their local populations – as to the actual universal value of the cultural treasures they possess. In the words of former ICCROM Director Stefano de Caro, "the prestige of World Heritage status can attract greater public interest in a heritage property and States Parties tend to use them as flagship sites to improve the management of cultural heritage in general".[9] However, as we will point out below, these good practices are not reality in all cases. This is because, although in principle it is necessary that States Parties provide protection and management mechanisms and legislation that unambiguously guarantee the long-term safeguarding of sites that eventually achieve World Heritage status, the actual implementation of these is not always carried out, and this is where failures occur. We must not forget on this point that Article 6.1 of the Convention enshrines the principle of respect for the national sovereignty of the States Parties, which means that the protection of a site must be the responsibility of the country in question, thus assuming the

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[9] S. de Caro, "Managing Cultural World Heritage" [in:] *World Heritage Resource Manual* 2013, p. 4, https://whc.unesco.org/en/managing-cultural-world-heritage/ (accessed: 13.07.2020).

obligation to transmit the property to future generations in an optimum state of conservation by adopting protection, safeguard and conservation measures.[10]

Similarly to the mechanisms relating to inclusion of a site into the List, the World Heritage Committee is also equipped with the necessary powers to carry out a procedure of deletion of a site from the List that has either deteriorated to such an extent that it has lost its intrinsic characteristics or that after a period of time the State Party in possession of the site has failed to implement corrective measures for its safeguarding. In practice these exclusions may be detrimental since they may be used as a way for the States Parties to cease to protect certain sites despite prior commitment. This would undoubtedly be a setback to the very principles of the World Heritage Convention, the main objective of which is the conservation of such sites, and, in consequence, humanity might be at a loss. This was the case, for example, with the exclusion, at the request of the Sultanate of Oman, of the Arabian Oryx Sanctuary, where the said country decided to carry out oil prospecting in that territory.[11] Another instance of deletion concerned the cultural landscape of the Elbe Valley, where the city council of Dresden built a bridge that broke with the natural environment of the valley.[12] These examples underscore the need to raise awareness about world heritage, not only among the people, but also within the public authorities of the States, so that the importance of cultural goods is placed above any national plan of any kind.

As we have seen, the World Heritage Convention has conservation as its fundamental objective and this is precisely its greatest challenge. Achieving this goal requires wide collaboration, from site managers, public administrations of the States Parties, advisory bodies such as the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) or the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, the international community, local actors and civil society. With regard to the conservation and management of cultural heritage, Gamini Wijesuriya points out the necessity of an integrated approach that facilitates communication and coordination between different groups within the community and local or state agencies as legislative bodies in order to address all the interests at stake.[13]

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[10] Article 4 of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention states that each State Party to this Convention recognises that the duty of ensuring the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission to future generations of the cultural and natural heritage situated on its territory belongs primarily to that State.

[11] News extracted from the UNESCO Website, https://whc.unesco.org/en/news/362 (accessed: 13.10.2020).

[12] News extracted from the UNESCO Website, https://whc.unesco.org/en/news/522 (accessed: 13.10.2020).

[13] G. Wijesuriya, "An Integrated Approach to Conservation and Management of Heritage", *ICCROM Newsletter*, December 2008, vol. 34, p. 8, https://www.scribd.com/document/180538843/Newsletter-34-ICCROM-pdf (accessed: 10.06.2020).

As is well known, UNESCO – with the aim of guiding the activities of the Member States in protecting this cultural or natural heritage – has also been making various recommendations that intend to advise and persuade countries without imposing mandatory solutions. Thus, thanks to the efforts of many of the States Parties to the World Heritage Convention, as well as the effects of civil society, there was a number of successful actions undertaken to safeguard the heritage. However, on many occasions, all the efforts made have not been sufficient, and objects that were considered part of the world heritage have been lost, with detriment to the society as a whole. Therefore, for the sake of balance, it is appropriate to examine several cases that illustrate the lights and shadows of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention.

3.1. Success stories in the world heritage protection

1) Russia: Historic Centre of St. Petersburg and its surrounding monuments[14]
The Historic Centre of St. Petersburg was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1990. In 2006 the World Heritage Centre learned of a construction project by Gazprom to build a new commercial centre that included a 300-metre high skyscraper in the middle of protected area. Russia was reminded of its obligations under the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention. In consequence, alternatives were considered for the design of the tower, respecting the spirit of the historical city of St. Petersburg. Eventually the Okhta Centre construction was halted in July 2010. In this way, the action of the Russian authorities was decisive in the preservation of the heritage value of that city as it made the company reconsider its position and decide to relocate the skyscraper outside the area qualified as historically and culturally relevant.

This case demonstrated the importance of dialogue between conservation of World Heritage and the interests of urban development, resulting in a solution that does not undermine the integrity of the protected area because it is considered exceptional for humanity.

2) Cambodia: Angkor[15]
Angkor is one of the most valuable archaeological sites in South-East Asia as it houses the remains of the capital of the Khmer Empire from the 9th to the 14th century. The site, which was declared a World Heritage Site in 1992, is vast in size as it occupies about 400 km^2, largely covered by forest. The site is visually spectacular and so the main

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[14] For more information related: UNESCO Website, https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/540/ (accessed: 13.07.2020).

[15] M. Rössler, "World Heritage Success Stories", *World Heritage Review*, January 2019, no. 90, p. 20, http://whc.unesco.org/en/review/90/ (accessed: 13.07.2020).

concern for its preservation is mass tourism. However, cooperation in developing sustainable tourism on the part of the social partners involved and the government itself resulted in success in counteracting the pernicious effects of mass tourism. Among the measures implemented by the Cambodian authorities there were: the total restriction of more sensitive or vulnerable areas, the creation of a body of qualified guides and the increase in the price of tickets in order to raise funds for conservation of the site.

The case is a good example of a well-balanced approach between competing interests: today tourism in Angkor not only complies with respect for the world cultural and natural heritage, but also generates revenue that contributes to its preservation for future generations.

3) Mali: Timbuktu[16]

This city of Timbuktu is located at the gates of the Sahara desert and within the confines of the fertile area of Sudan. The city was founded in the 5th century, and its economic and cultural heyday was during the 15th and 16th centuries. Its privileged location was source of its prosperity as a hub of trade in salt, grain, gold and livestock. With this wealth the city became an important centre for the dissemination of Islamic culture with the creation of the Sankore University and 180 Koranic schools. The city of Timbuktu was put on the World Heritage List in 1988.

During the civil war in 2012 several extremist groups destroyed 14 monuments, including tombs and mausolea. A rapid international response involving the city's social fabric and both local and national authorities led to the mausolea being rebuilt in 2015. The reconstruction was carried out by local people who understood value of the ancestral knowledge transmitted from generation to generation and the role of monuments in keeping these traditions alive. In other words, this reconstruction was not only about material restoration of the protected sites but also about social recovery.

3.2. Failures in the world heritage protection

1) Syrian Arab Republic: cultural heritage

Syria is a cradle of the world's oldest civilisations. It is home to peoples from the East such as the Persians, Mongols, and Arabs, but also from the West with the Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, and finally the Crusader forces of the kings of Europe. Over time Syria became the place where nomadic tribes such as the Canaanites and the Arameans

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[16] Th. Joffroy, B. Essayouti, "Lessons learnt from the reconstruction of the destroyed mausoleums of Timbuktu, Mali", *The International Archives of the Photogrammetry, Remote Sensing and Spatial Information Sciences* 2020, vol. XLIV-M-1, HERITAGE2020 (3DPast | RISK-Terra) International Conference, 9–12 September 2020, Valencia, Spain, pp. 913–920.

settled. In more recent centuries, the country was absorbed into the Ottoman Empire; with the outbreak of the First World War it became part of the territories under French rule and only after the Second World War it gained its independence. This complex history produced equally rich cultural legacy. Syria's cultural heritage consisted of thousands of archaeological sites and 7 world heritage sites.

However, since the Syrian civil war began in 2011, many archaeological sites, towns and castles have simply disappeared or are at risk of destruction. In addition, 5 of the 7 world heritage sites have been seriously damaged, including the Historic City of Aleppo, Crac des Chevaliers and the Cities of Palmyra, Bosra and Aapamea. As Isber Sabrine remarked, the action of terrorist groups during the years of the conflict has led to the destruction of incalculable property such as temples, mosques, churches, statues, reliefs and all kinds of heritage of incalculable historical value.[17] Archaeological sites have also been subject to clandestine excavations and the resulting illicit traffic in cultural property.

The scale of destruction of the Syrian heritage has led to the conclusion that it had been devised as yet another war aim. Destruction was deliberate, implemented to show superiority over the enemy or to achieve other war-related ends with propagandistic, ideological and economic intentions, including cultural cleansing. In this respect, it must be stressed that although states are sovereign in their territory and therefore also over the assets on it, sovereignty does not amount to a licence to damage or destroy the exceptionally important cultural heritage that exists on their borders, as these transcend the individuality of a society or a people and become exceptional assets for all mankind. An act of destruction can be a crime and may lead to prosecution.

Although the war in Syria is regarded a failure, there is still a lesson to be learned. The response by UNESCO as well as ICOMOS has been limited due to the nature of powers they possess. UNESCO may intervene only through international conventions, but the very nature of these instruments is that talks can only be made with legitimate governments. The context of a civil war makes it unclear which party is actually legitimate. All in all, the international response was scant and late; UNESCO got involved in 2014, three years after the beginning of the conflict.[18] Furthermore, the instability of the area meant that until very recently it was not possible to send experts to Syria regularly to make detailed assessments of the full extent of damage to the country's cultural heritage.

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[17] I. Sabrine, *The Protection of Cultural Heritage during the Syrian Conflict by Refugees in the Diaspora (The Case of Heritage For Peace)* [in:] *Migration and Asylum: New Challenges and Opportunities for Europe,* eds. B.B. Atienza, J.A. Parejo Gámir, B. Sánchez Alonso, Madrid 2016, p. 144.

[18] In this respect, one should mention the UNESCO-funded Emergency Safeguarding of Syrian Heritage Project, http://www.unesco.org/new/es/syria-crisis-response/regional-response/syria/projects/emergency-safeguarding-of-the-heritage/ (accessed: 10.11.2020).

The notorious rigidity of international texts encouraged non-profit organisations throughout the world to step in. Several non-governmental bodies such as Heritage for Peace, APSA or the Syrian Heritage Archive Project are working to fill the void in areas where, unfortunately, the Syrian Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums does not yet have access to. Their first task is to document the damage done to the Syrian cultural heritage.

The Syrian example demonstrates the need for cooperation between different actors in society as neither national nor international bodies are effective when they work in isolation. The consensus is that the catastrophic lessons of the destruction of cultural property in that territory requires new approaches and more effective systems capable of addressing the present challenges. Protection of world heritage demands a greater degree of responsibility and commitment from the States Parties to the UNESCO Convention. This commitment is linked to the principle of the common interest of mankind, which does not focus on the legal ownership of goods, but rather on the fact that these cultural riches belong to all humanity. Collective interest calls for collective action. The World Heritage Convention is, after all, enforceable against any State Party and its obligations are *erga omnes,* which means that as a signatory to the Convention a violation of the established obligations affects international community as a whole.

4. Conclusions

Cultural and natural heritage is a unique and irreplaceable asset that plays a fundamental role in fostering intercultural and intergovernmental dialogue and thereby promoting learning, education and social cohesion. For a long time we have believed that the World Heritage List was the culmination of the global efforts and that we could ingratiate ourselves with the assumption that the objectives of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention had been achieved. This assumption is premature, if not altogether wrong. The world is increasingly faced with pressing social, environmental and economic challenges and so our heritage is not immune to the turbulent scenarios in which we find ourselves.

Paradoxically, the spirit of the Convention has often been overshadowed and its precepts diluted by the World Heritage List itself, since on many occasions all the focus was on obtaining inscription and not on its corollary. Inscription is but a first step. Effective protection of a site requires a comprehensive follow-up so that situations such as those referred in this article, which have led to the total or partial loss or irreparable damage, are not repeated. The List itself is meaningless if there is no serious commitment on the part of all the agents involved in the maintenance of the site. As we have noted, the mere inclusion in the List does not always lead to better conservation. Truth

of the matter is that such inscription entails real obligations on the part of the States, not just theoretical ones.

It is therefore necessary to redouble our efforts so that communication and coop-eration between different agents involved in the care of heritage – lawmakers, public authorities at all levels, local population and even business community – is effective. A change of perspective is needed here; the problems of heritage protection cannot be solved by experts acting alone, and it is essential to involve the entire society in the task of its safeguarding.

Consequently, there is urgent need for new directions and guidelines to help shape a new policy for the management of world heritage. It is important that the public au-thorities of the signatory states of the Convention once and for all give effect to the right of access and participation to the population in the governance of culturally significant properties, since the role of the community is key to any good management. The first step needed here is admission from the relevant bodies that our past heritage belongs to all of humanity and that it transcends physical borders or narrow cultural associations. This task may be achieved through synergy between education and awareness-raising measures. The second step is public participation: citizens must be involved in discourse about what they want to treat as world heritage, and furthermore, this discourse needs to function as a bridge between the public and all the other agents involved. Citizen participation must be encouraged at a local level, as they are the ones who have daily contact with the heritage located in their territories. It is therefore essential to draw up a collective-oriented, flexible and constantly revised strategic plans for the management of world heritage sites, with representatives from different areas in constant dialogue with one another and ready to make adjustments as needed. It seems nothing short of this would be enough to breathe life to the outstanding objective of the 1972 UNESCO World Heritage Convention: bequeathing our world heritage to the generations to come.

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Summary

UNESCO's World Heritage: To be or not to be

This paper examines the UNESCO World Heritage Convention throughout its 48-year history with the aim of presenting examples of its successes and its failures. Cultural heritage is in danger of destruction, disappearance or deterioration, and so the states have become aware of the uniqueness and intrinsic strength of cultural assets as means to strengthen societies. This awareness has led to intensified interest in cultural heritage protection.

The World Heritage List is an instrument of recognition of exceptional properties the loss of which would impoverish all present and future humanity. This halo of international recognition means that everyone has a responsibility to preserve this property for the future.

Keywords: conflicts, cultural heritage, protection, world heritage

Streszczenie

Światowe dziedzictwo UNESCO: być albo nie być

Niniejszy artykuł przybliża 48 lat funkcjonowania Konwencji w sprawie ochrony światowego dziedzictwa kulturalnego i naturalnego, przyjętej w Paryżu dnia 16 listopada 1972 r. Autorka podaje przykłady odniesionych przez ten czas sukcesów i niepowodzeń. Dziedzictwo nie jest niezniszczalne, dlatego też doświadczenia związane z destrukcją, odbieraniem ochrony czy stopniową degradacją uświadamiają państwom członkowskim, jak ważne jest dbanie o dziedzictwo.

Jednocześnie państwa mają świadomość, że unikalne właściwości dziedzictwa przekładają się na siłę społeczeństw. Z tego powodu rośnie zainteresowanie ochroną dziedzictwa.

Lista Światowego Dziedzictwa jest instrumentem rozpoznania przymiotów przesądzających o wyjątkowości obiektu, dzięki którym dziedzictwo jest źródłem duchowego bogactwa w wymiarze powszechnym. Wpis na Listę jest zatem źródłem zobowiązań nie tylko po stronie państw, ale także po stronie wszystkich ludzi.

Słowa kluczowe: konflikty, dziedzictwo kultury, ochrona, dziedzictwo światowe