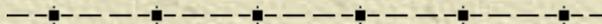


DISASTER PLANNING IN ARCHIVES – FORGOTTEN DUTY IN MONTENEGRO?

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**International Archival Day
Trieste November, 2008**



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- ✦ Montenegro is an independent country as of 2006 (a number of years it formed part of various federations: Socialist Federative Yugoslavia, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Serbia and Montenegro State Union).
- ✦ Currently, there are processes aimed at establishing all the functions of an independent state and parallel to those the ones for the accession to the European Union.
- ✦ Montenegro hastily amends the entire legislation and harmonizes it with new state and international status.
- ✦ As for archival legislation in Montenegro, the effective Law is the one enacted in 1992 (as amended in 1994). Currently, the work is under way to finalize new archival law (deadline is the end of 2008)

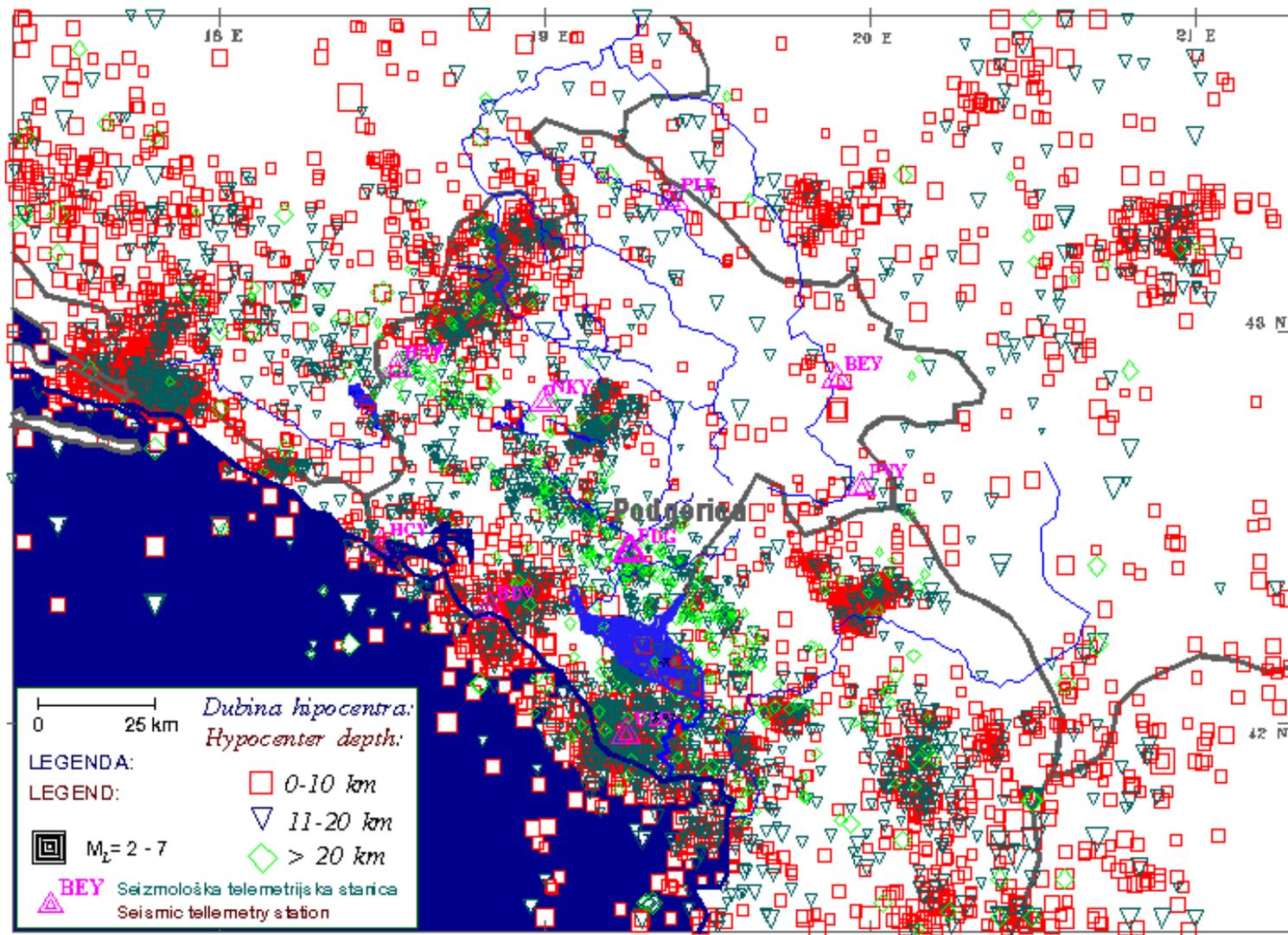
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- ✦ **Disaster plans (they existed in former Yugoslavia and were part of the system of national defence and civil self-protection), with the holders and/or creators of cultural treasure in Montenegro have not been adopted since the fall of Yugoslavia.**
- ✦ In the two-member federation of Serbia and Montenegro several laws were in force to regulate this matter: *Law on defence* (1994) in the chapter related to civil defence and protection, *Law on fire protection* (1992), *Law on protection from natural disasters* (1992).
- ✦ In the period of the State Union with Serbia, Montenegro State Archives adopted solely a *Regulation on fire protection*, 1997. The employees in all departments were not familiar with it, nor was it applied properly in the State Archives.
- ▶ Following the renewal of the independence of Montenegro in 2006, the **State archives has not until today made any disaster plan, nor has there been any bye-law on the protection of archival material in cases of danger.**

Montenegro and risk factors

- ✦ Previous experiences show that Montenegro has got a geographic position which is exposed to numerous unfavourable influences and extraordinary situations, like: natural disasters, especially earthquakes, fires and floods, then war activities, transit roads suitable for illicit trade and so on.
- ✦ For instance, Montenegro, its coastal zone in particular, is marked as an area of high seismic risk. During the past centuries, a large number of very strong, disastrous earthquake had struck the area.
- ✦ The most recent big earthquake in 1979 struck a wide area of the coastal zone and the hinterland and its intensity was very high (7.0 units of the Richter scale).

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The epicenter map for earthquakes in the Montenegro region during XX century

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Experiences of archivists during and after earthquake

- ✦ In this earthquake considerable part of cultural heritage, including the archival material, was damaged or destroyed.
- ✦ Despite previous centuries' long bad experience with earthquakes in this area, we saw that potential dangers and damages get forgot very quickly, consequently the same mistakes are repeated (lack of prevention).
- ✦ During the 1979 earthquake one could see the shortcomings of the existing plans. These shortcomings could be seen in forecasting possible risks and bad planning and implementation of prevention measures.
- ✦ **Very important indicators for archivists for their future plans of action in extraordinary situations is the experience of this particular earth tremor that among priorities for remedying the damage suffered, archival material did not occupy the appropriate place.**

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The main square in Kotor after earthquake 1979



The building of Police and Parliament in Kotor completely destroyed with all documentation under the stones.

The street passing by Kotor archives flooded after earthquake



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Experiences of archivists during and after earthquake

- ✦ A large part of archival material was additionally damaged or destroyed after the earthquake (archival material remained trapped in ruined or damaged buildings without any protection; effect of rains and floods that followed the earthquake, transport by unprofessional persons, inadequate temporary accommodation, out-of-control destruction of archives of organizations, enterprises, factories etc., during the cleaning of rubble, and so on)
- ✦ Not so numerous Montenegrin archivists, despite their engagement, could not cover such a widely hit area and protect all the archival material.
- ✦ After almost 30 years from the earthquake, part of archival material is still in a physically poor conditions and located in storages that were then declared emergency and temporary.

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Archival sources as necessary factor in preparation of disaster plans

- ✦ The issue archivists were faced with after this experience was: **whether the archival sources on damage incurred by cultural heritage in the past, as well as the examples on rescue, should be an unavoidable segment in the planning of protection and prevention?**
- ✦ Laws and disaster plans envisage for planning to be based on scientific and expert analysis and results, and certain institutions are obliged to continuously explore and offer data (seismological institute, meteorological service, military organizations and so on)
- ✦ On the basis of the stated experience, Kotor archives in particular, we think that the **data from archival sources** are very important:
 - for envisaging various risk factors and all possible forms of danger and cataclysms, as a scientific datum coming as a result of experience, that is why they should be unavoidable in creating disaster plans,
 - in the application of former experiences in measures for the elimination of consequences of disaster and rescuing of archival material, as well as other cultural heritage,
 - when preventive protection of cultural heritage is at stake and remedying and reconstruction of cultural heritage.
- ✦ **Archives should by all means get their place among above-mentioned institutions which research and prepare data for action plans.**

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Montenegro state strategy in the area of contingency situations

- ✦ Within the framework of the Ministry of Interior of Montenegro there is the area of extraordinary situations and civil security. After the recent reforms an organization as unit has been established: Sector for extraordinary situations and civil security.
- ✦ Back in 2006 Montenegro adopted an important document: *Strategy of national security of Montenegro* (in accordance with the recommendations of the *Strategy from Yokohama* and UN plan of action).
- ✦ The necessary legal documents have also been enacted, for instance, *Law on protection and rescue* (2007) which regulates the rescuing of “cultural heritage from the consequences of natural disasters, fires, epidemics, epizootics, epiphytotics and other upheavals and risks”.
- ✦ **The National strategy and the laws obliged for the plans for the protection and rescue to be enacted at the level of the state (national action plans), local community (municipal action plans), as well as the individual plans made by companies, other legal entities and entrepreneurs.**
- ✦ **After regaining independence, Montenegro signed a whole series of binding documents, like the UN Conventions concerning various fields, including those from the area of the protection of cultural properties.**

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Archives in Montenegro and preventive protection planning

- ✦ In Montenegro, archival material is stored:
 - in the State Archives (24 archival departments in the territory of Montenegro, distributed in 21 municipalities: 5 municipalities having departments and 6 having offices in the north, 4 municipalities in the central and 5 in the coastal southern zone – in Kotor there are 2 departments. Total quantity of the material is over 9000 m),
 - with the holders outside archives (churches, museums, libraries, Academy of science and arts, private persons or families. These have not been registered as special archives and there are no data on the quantity of the material.)
 - with records creators (state and private ones).
 - With all mentioned holders and creators of archival material in Montenegro, currently **THERE ARE NO** plans for the activities in extraordinary situations!

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The Map of the State Archives of Montenegro



CETINJE

Head office of the State Archives

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- ✦ The case of the State Archives, as well as other institutions which take care of cultural heritage and which do have action plans for contingency situations, points out to the fact that in Montenegro:
 - National Security Strategy, adopted in 2006, has not been applied in practice in relation to cultural heritage.
 - Public, especially responsible persons in the institutions which take care of cultural heritage, have insufficient, if any, knowledge of the obligation of making action plans.
 - **The report “Condition of cultural heritage in Montenegro”** (made by teams of experts for the need of the Ministry of Culture and the Government of Montenegro in 2006) contains conclusions on the devastation of cultural heritage, points out to dangers, recognizing the failure to implement preventive protection, **but it does not explicitly emphasize the need and the obligation of drafting disaster plans.**
- ✦ **Ministry of Interior of Montenegro** is entrusted with this area, but it does not perform its duty:
 - familiarization of all subjects with the significance of action plans and the obligation of adopting and implementing them,
 - monitoring and supervision over the adoption of action plans at all levels (programme of protection and rescue, instructions for application and so on)
 - inspection supervision over facilities and installations regarding the implementation of protection measures,
 - sanctioning subjects who have not adopted action plans or who do not apply them.

DISASTER PLANNING IN ARCHIVES – FORGOTTEN DUTY IN MONTENEGRO?

How to create disaster plan within a centralized archival service of Montenegro – this is a problem which should be studied well by Montenegrin archivists, who should analyze and find the most suitable solution, since the existing condition indicates a whole series of factors which hinder the adoption of a unique plan at the level of State Archives organized in such a way. (It should be emphasized that the centralized organization of the State Archives envisages a unique way of work, unique plans, laws and bylaws, instructions, and all the rest, for all other departments of the State Archives).

Factors with unfavourable impact on the adoption of an efficient disaster plan for the State Archives

- ✦ Archival Departments differ from each other a great deal in:
 - Archival material (type, quantity, age, importance).
 - Geographic position, they are located in various climatic conditions (factor risks are different).
 - Uneven development of archival service in the past period (coverage of the territory of Montenegro with archival network has only been achieved in 1992, when many towns got their first archives).
 - Unequal level of awareness of social communities within regions on the significance of archival material as a general cultural property (there are great differences between the developed coastal area and the towns in the north).

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Factors with unfavourable impact....

- ✦ Archival material in Montenegro has not been valued and no categorization has been made.
- ✦ Ownership of the State Archives over archival buildings (out of 24 archival departments and offices it is **only 4 buildings and 3 premises within the buildings owned by different owners, that are owned by the State Archives**, and solely **5 buildings were purposefully built**. It is impossible to implement the Plan in the buildings that are not owned by the Archives or where the buildings are jointly owned. The State Archives cannot act on various high risk factors).
- ✦ Problem of securing means for the regular maintenance of the buildings (buildings and the premises are under the competence of the Administration of Joint Affairs of Montenegrin public authorities. Apart from the Archives, other beneficiaries are all state institutions, bodies and organizations, and the budget is very limited).
- ✦ Lack of storage room in the existing archival buildings.
- ✦ Location of archival facilities (often in very densely populated urban areas, in the immediate vicinity of cafes and restaurants and so on)
- ✦ Storerooms even in purposefully built or adapted archival buildings are not fully secured from risks (fires, leaking, negative effect of human factor).

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Factors with unfavourable impact....

- ✦ There are no conditions for the safe takeover of archival material (there are no rooms for disinfection, getting rid of vermin and rodents prior to the placing of material in storerooms, or they are inadequate for this purpose).
- ✦ Problem of storing archival material on prescribed archival shelving and in archival boxes (around 70% to 85% of archival material is stored in archival boxes. Only now are non-acid ones being procured. Metal shelves have not been provided in all departments).
- ✦ No air-conditioning of premises has been provided (occasionally in the central archival building. The oldest material in Kotor is stored in the storeroom equipped with air-conditioning system which is out of order).
- ✦ In most buildings, the condition of electrical and water installations is rather poor, control and maintenance irregular.
- ✦ There are no fire detecting devices and fast intervention.
- ✦ There is no video surveillance, neither are there guards in most buildings.
- ✦ In most buildings there are no personnel for regular cleaning.

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Factors with unfavourable impact....

- ✦ The workshop for technical-technological protection of papers ill-equipped both with regards to people, machines and material (they restore around 8000 documents a year, and the most damaged is the oldest and most precious archival material).
- ✦ Microfilming and digitization is not done, so that Montenegro does not have copies of its most valuable archival heritage (some form of digitization is done in Kotor Historical Archives, mostly of Austrian land registers, using very modest equipment and without specialized personnel for this activity).
- ✦ Small number of archival personnel in most buildings is poorly trained, especially in the departments established after the reorganization in 1992.
- ✦ There is no awareness among the responsible persons nor among wider social community on literal implementation of the *Law on protection at work*, consequently no necessary equipment is acquired for the protection of health of the employed in archives and it is neglected that the work is done in difficult and irregular conditions.

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Disaster plans with the holders outside archives

- ✦ The protection of archival material stored in churches, museums, libraries, Academy of science and arts, with natural persons or families, is not monitored by the State Archives since these are not registered as archival institutions.
- ✦ **In museums, libraries and similar institutions in Montenegro**, archival material shares the destiny of other cultural heritage. Low budget of these institutions is usually unfavourably reflected on the care of archival material.
- ✦ **Archival material of religious communities in Montenegro** has mostly not been looked after properly, and the measures for the prevention and protection of the same are not implemented consistently (the exception are church archives in the coastal area, since after the 1979 earthquake conditions for the storing of archival material have been improved. Good example is Kotor Diocesan Archives.)
- ✦ **The State Archives must urgently, through new legislation, increase the monitoring over these holders of archival material and create conditions for adopting disaster plans that would concern these archives.**

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Disaster planning with records creators

Quite worrying is the situation with regards to the measures of protection and security of archival material with records creators. Some of the problems are:

- There is no awareness on the significance of adequate protection of archival material and current records (usually only until operative function exists).
- Transition processes, ownership transformation and similar, are unfavourable for the care of archival material.
- No categorization of records creators has been made in Montenegro.
- Most records creators do not provide adequate storing of material.
- The State Archives has got limited storage capacities for the regular takeover of archival material from records creators.

Proposals for the activities with records creators from the level of the State Archives:

- State Archives should urgently modernize methods of monitoring records creators and the processes for the protection of this material.
- The obligation to draft disaster plans to be introduced together with the Regulation on office activities.
- Part of preventive protection burden (microfilming and/or digitization) to be imposed on records creators as an obligation.

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Conclusion

- ✦ Disaster planning regarding archival material is an obligation which has been forgotten in Montenegro.
- ✦ At this level Montenegro needs assistance of the international community:
 - In the education and training of all the subjects concerned with the protection of archival material (bodies, organizations, NGOs, wider public).
 - In securing solid material support for the adoption and implementation of all short-term and long-term protection plans, especially those disaster ones.
 - In accordance with the National Strategy, we should be also thinking about joint projects for the protection and security of archival material at the level of the countries in the region.

Examples of archival buildings and storing of archival material in Montenegro



Kotor Historical archives (the oldest holdings in Montenegro)

-depositories near by private houses and the kitchen of restaurant.

-- the part of fonds are stored in the space office.

Examples of archival buildings and storing of archival material in Montenegro



- Department of Kotor archives**
- the main building with depository
 - in the courtyard there is a restaurant with the kitchen “attached” on the depositories
 - problems with rain and plane roof of depositories
 - still there are some wooden shelves
 - lack of boxes.

Examples of archival buildings and storing of archival material in Montenegro



The State Archives Department in Bar
Example of common use of the building by different owners.

Archival depository situated near by other business offices, separated only by a glass door.

Examples of archival buildings and storing of archival material in Montenegro



Bishops archives

Kotor Bishop's Archives situated in the Old town of Kotor

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Thanks for your attention!