

PATRIMONIO SOMMERSO. Liceità tecnica ed etica dell'azione di spostamento dei monumenti e delle città per effetto dell'acqua

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Abstract

This paper aims to reflect on the legitimacy of an extreme and exceptional act in restoration: moving historic monuments, sites and cities as the only option to counter the certain loss of that cultural heritage due to water submersion. If in the past experts had already dwelled on the issue of whether, why and how to carry out such an operation and promoted a heated cultural debate, in recent times, the impact of human activities and climate change, especially sea level rise and coastal erosion, has made this very issue and its related technical and ethical implications highly topical and urgent. The opportunity to focus on the main cultural and operational repercussions of such an action is provided by specific case-studies that have been dealing with it adopting different assumptions, technological solutions, outcomes and impacts. Examples of these are the colossal feat of moving the Nubian Temples of Abu Simbel due to the construction of the Aswan dam in the 1960s, the recent moving of the Rubjerg Knude lighthouse in Denmark to counter the continuous coastal erosion, and the decision to let the water submerge urban centres by rebuilding them elsewhere, as happened near the Resia Pass in the Vinschgau Valley, which will be probably replicated in Jakarta, Indonesia. Starting from case studies, the goal is to investigate the meaning and the technical choices underlying the action of 'rescue by relocation' (or 'loss by abandonment') of architectural heritage in the face of water risk. This paper also addresses the unsolved contrast between the identity of monuments and cities and the power assumed by their image for contemporary society on the one hand, and the authenticity of materials and spaces, the reproducible or replaceable value of the physical and formal continuity established between the architecture and the environment on the other.

Keywords: *Climate change, water risk, cultural heritage and landscape, moving historic monuments and cities, technical and ethical issues.*