

The Necessity of a Common Language for Coastal and Underwater Cultural Heritage

Sorna Khakzad¹

Abstract

The lack of a common discourse for defining of underwater and submerged sites has caused complications in interpretation of an underwater entity of cultural value as 'moveable objects' and 'immoveable sites' in international debates. This issue has been a topic of discussion since the United Nation Convention on the Law of the Sea which introduced its notions on salvage and protection of archaeological sites and objects found underwater. And recently, it became an ongoing issue at UNESCO to nominate underwater entities of heritage values in the World Heritage List. Since being included in the World Heritage List gives more visibility to a site and provides more benefits such as international collaboration for protection, conservation and education, as well as increasing economic benefit due to more tourism attraction, one of the goals at the UNESCO Secretariat of Underwater Cultural Heritage is to justify, first, that many of entities that WH considers as object are sites, and also to justify that they are eligible to be listed as WH since they encompass the necessary criteria. This paper presents an overview of the existing terms, conventions and clashes among ideas, and will conclude that despite the existing international conventions and several definitions for underwater cultural heritage, still a more lucid terminology and defining methodology is required for the cultural heritage under water in order to improve our management strategies. The paper will highlight the issues with definition of Underwater Cultural heritage in the 2001 Convention, and states that part of the ongoing complexity with defining 'site' and 'objects' are due to the not very sharp definition of UCH in the Convention. In the end this study will recommend a series of terms and methods for classifying sites and objects.

Keywords: Underwater cultural heritage, definition, cultural coastline, common terminology, sites and objects

¹ PhD, Researcher at University of Leuven and East Carolina University, Address: 163 Flanagan, Greenville 27858 NC, USA. Mobile: +1252 347 2675, E-mail : Khakzads11@students.ecu.edu

Research Aim

This study attempts to highlight the importance of the application of a clear common terminology in order to define the cultural heritage sites and objects under water. And will offer a series of recommended definitions and conceptual methodology for distinguishing between sites and objects in subaquatic environment. A clear definition of the type of cultural entities underwater will assist to get a lucid perception of immovable sites and movable objects, as well as justify the reasons of picking up a certain method of conservation/protection, and policies for the future.

Introduction

Distinguishing movability of objects and sites under water is the same as the objects and sites of cultural value on-land and is a matter which makes difference in management of sites and objects.² Debates on what is considered as moveable objects and what is seen as immovable site has been long discussed by different experts in the international level. One of the first discussions has been emerged from the 1982 Convention, United Nation Convention on the Law of Sea, where the interpretation of the term "object" seemed to be causing complications in protection of moveable properties. On the other hand, considering some underwater cultural entities such as shipwrecks, which are sometimes considered as moveable objects, also is in conflict with listing these properties as World Heritage Sites. As Strati stated: "The distinction between movable and immovable cultural properties appears in both national and international instruments. This restricts the protection of one or other category."³ Considering the complications that distinguishing between moveable objects and immovable sites have caused, this paper intend to introduce a set of definitions and a conceptual guidelines for assessing and defining the cultural properties underwater.

Terrestrial cultural heritage and underwater cultural heritage are two sub-groups of cultural heritage which have already been recognized internationally.

² Movable Heritage, UNESCO

http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.phpURL_ID=35031&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html (Last visited on 30 April 2014)

³ Anastasia Sрати, *The Contagious Zone*, Chapter 5, In: *The protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage an Emerging objective of the Contemporary Law of the Sea*, Edited by Anastasia Sрати, pp. 176 and 182, 1995

To some extent, they benefit from different sorts of conventions and regulations regarding their protection and management [4], however separation of conventions also brought some implications in understanding and treating coastal and underwater cultural heritage in distinguishing between sites and objects of heritage value. The lack of a common discourse [5] for nomination, evaluation, treatment and conservation of underwater and submerged sites in the coastal areas cause complications in identification and interpretation of an entity of cultural value as a 'site' or 'object'. As international conventions have sought to codify common understandings of language and meaning as the scope of heritage expand⁶, it is necessary to have the same outlook towards coastal and underwater cultural heritage in order to have a harmonized approach for their management. One of the major European reports where the necessity of a common language has been highlighted is the "Preserving our heritage, Improving our environment" where the experts recognize the requisite of common language in order to make data and results comparable and exchangeable for a sustainable management plan.⁷ The common discourse will aid in better understanding, interpretation and valorization of cultural heritage of the coastlines.

Defining underwater cultural heritage; a background study

Different archaeological and cultural heritage communities, whether in the same or in different countries, have different types of discourse; archaeologists think and write about archaeology in different ways.⁸

[4] The UNESCO list of conventions:

http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=12025&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=-471.html(Last visited on 30 April 2014)

⁵Anthony Harding, COMMUNICATION IN ARCHAEOLOGY, European Journal of Archaeology Vol. 10(2-3): 119-133and Anthony Harding andNatalie Venclová, Communication in Archaeology , European Journal of Archaeology August 2007 10: 117-118

⁶ Messenger Phyllis, Smith Georg, Introduction, Cultural Heritage Management, A global perspective, Edited by: Messenger Phyllis, Smith Georg, pp: 1-7, 2010

⁷Michel Chapuis, AdèleLydon and Astrid Brandt-Grau , Preserving our heritage, Improving our environment, Volume II, Cultural heritage research: FP5, FP6 and related projects, p. 240, 2009

⁸ (Harding Anthony, Venclová Natalie, Communication in Archaeology, European Journal of Archaeology 2007 10: 117)

Communication aiming at mutual understanding is of major significance from the social, political and scientific viewpoints in holistic management plans and in discussion in the international levels.⁹ It is not stated that any of the view points from archaeologists or cultural heritage specialists are wrong, but due to different priorities in their profession and different trainings, they apply different terms and discourse

There is an extensive theoretical background behind defining culture¹⁰ and cultural heritage¹¹ to present regulations and conventions on cultural heritage¹² which shows the importance of creating a common terminology in academic and professional domain. International organizations such as UNESCO, ICOMOS¹³ (International Council on Monuments and Sites) and many individual nations have provided conventions, charters, guidelines and regulations on cultural heritage, starting with defining the subject of their document¹⁴. Currently, one of the main international organizations which deals with cultural heritage and almost has a defining role in cultural heritage management is UNESCO.

⁹ Natalie Venclová, *Communication Within Archaeology: Do We Understand Each Other?*, *European Journal of Archaeology* 2007 10: 207

¹⁰ An early definition of 'culture' introduced by Edward Burnett Tylor in his *Primitive Culture, Researches into the Development of Mythology*, Vol. 1, (1871), p. 1: "Culture ... is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society." However, since Tylor the definition of culture has been changed more.

¹¹ In most cases, the references have been limited to the paragraph or paragraphs defining concepts such as 'cultural property' or 'cultural heritage', or, more in general, what is conceived as worth safeguarding, protecting or conserving in each case. Most of the recent documents referred to here have been collected and published by UNESCO or by ICOMOS; the older ones have been traced from other sources (see e.g.: J. Jokilehto, *A History of Architectural Conservation*, DPhil Thesis, York 1986, published: *A History of Architectural Conservation*, Butterworth-Heinemann, Oxford, 1999, reprinted 2002).

¹² According to different documents, project and literature, management concept in the field related to cultural heritage has been mentioned as *Heritage Management*, *Cultural Resource Management (CRM)*, *Asset Management*, etc. and there is no exact termination for the topic that everyone accepts. (Based on: MacManamon F. P., Hatton A. (2000) *Introduction: Considering Cultural Resource Management in Modern Society*. In P. MacManamon and A. Hatton (Ed.), *Cultural Resource Management in Contemporary Society* (pp. 1- 19) London and New York: Routledge.)

¹³ All ICOMOS charters and doctrinal texts can be visited at: <http://www.icomos.org/en/charters-and-texts> (Last visited on 30 April 2014)

¹⁴ Prott & O'Keefe, *supra* note 44, at 8; accord Blake, *supra* note 45, at 63 (noting that lack of generally agreed definition in instruments such as international conventions and guidelines, means that each instrument "must be interpreted internally without reference to any set of principles")

One of the best known conventions on cultural heritage is UNESCO Convention 1972¹⁵ which defines Cultural Heritage as: “**Monuments:** architectural works, works of monumental sculpture and painting, elements or structures of an archaeological nature, inscriptions, cave dwellings and combinations of features, which are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science; **Groups of buildings:** groups of separate or connected buildings which, because of their architecture, their homogeneity or their place in the landscape, are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science; **Sites:** works of man or the combined works of nature and man, and areas including archaeological sites which are of outstanding universal value from the historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological point of view.” Although, the general definition of UNESCO Convention 1972 is an umbrella which encompasses all the past valuable manmade remains, in addition to this convention there are other conventions on historic objects, sites, towns and so forth. These conventions provide more detailed guidelines for defining, protection and conservation of different aspects and branches of cultural heritage.

Focusing on underwater cultural heritage, one of the remarkable aspects is the term cultural heritage that has been adapted to it. However there has been series of changes and adaptations of the term ‘archaeology’ and ‘cultural heritage’ behind it. It is a key point to understand that archaeology is a discipline or profession which gather historic data and interpret them for the sake of science and historical knowledge. However, the archaeological remains and data are a part of whole notion of cultural heritage which requires other kinds of attention. It is worth mentioning a short history of shifting the term underwater archaeology to underwater heritage in UNESCO and some international institutions documents. This will help to clarify the position of this asset in our decision making.

The first legal and official notion of underwater cultural heritage was mentioned in the first UNESCO Recommendation in 1956: “..., by archaeological excavations is meant any research aimed at the discovery of objects of archaeological character, whether such research involves digging of the ground or systematic exploration of its surface or is carried out on the bed or in the sub-soil of inland or territorial waters of a Member State.”

¹⁵Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage

Although there was not a lucid definition of the underwater cultural site, in general this recommendation covered and considered the archaeology of under water in the same important level as archaeology on land. The neglected point, however, is that this recommendation only mention the “objects of archaeological character” and missing the whole image of sites of historical and cultural values. In 1972 UNESCO published a book under the title of “Underwater Archaeology: A Nascent Discipline” where the term archaeology was still a powerful discipline which was somehow cast a shadow on the other disciplines which should be involved in the study of underwater historical remains. Finally the in 1981 another book published- Protection of the Underwater Heritage- the switch from archaeology to heritage should be regarded very important in interpretation of this field. Later on in the Council of Europe and ICOMOS the term underwater cultural heritage has been used. According to the ICOMOS Charter 1996 “underwater cultural heritage is understood to mean the archaeological heritage which is in, or has been removed from, an underwater environment. It includes submerged sites and structures, wreck-sites and wreckage and their archaeological and natural context.” Continuing to apply the term “Underwater Cultural Heritage” in the February 1997 issue of UNESCO Sources, we reach the 2001 the UNESCO Convention on Protection of Underwater Cultural heritage.¹⁶ According to this convention, underwater cultural heritage is defined as: “All traces of human existence having a cultural, historical or archaeological character which have been partially or totally under water, periodically or continuously, for at least 100 years.” The UNESCO Convention on Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage has divided this heritage into the following three main categories:

- (i) Sites, structures, buildings, artefacts and human remains, together with their archaeological and natural context;
- (ii) Vessels, aircraft, other vehicles or any part thereof, their cargo or other contents, together with their archaeological and natural context; and
- (iii) Objects of prehistoric character.

Having briefly introduced the definitions and state of different categories of cultural heritage underwater and terrestrial, in the following section, the effectiveness and use of the abovementioned definitions is going to be assessed.

¹⁶ UNESCO Convention on Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage, 2001
<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/underwater-cultural-heritage/> (Last visited on 30 April 2014)

Imprecision of the UNESCO 2001 Convention's Definition:

With its wide definition, this convention covers sunken sites and objects in diverse state of submergence in rivers, seas, lakes and so forth. However, some aspects remain not perfectly clear, and a few also have caused complications in categorizing sites and objects.

First of all the purpose of categorization of the underwater heritage in these three groups is not clear. The questions rise that this categorization is for the purpose of identification, management or any other purposes? Does the Convention is separating the sites, from objects and vessels? The objects of prehistoric character are parts of the archaeological artifacts in the first group. What is the purpose of distinguishing them in a separate group? Why the context of pre-historic cultural object is not mentioned here? Does it mean that the Convention consider them as objects that can be moved? What happens if they are part of a cultural landscape?

Separating the vessels into a separate category also seems to follow a certain aim, but still not clear. Was it only to highlight the importance of these entities as archaeological? Or the aim was to also highlight the importance of their archaeological and natural context?

Following the general definition and the age limit of minimum 100 years of submergence, a recently submerged historic town in the pond of a newly built dam would be considered as underwater heritage or else? In case that the site can be moved, as it has been done in Aswan Dam project, is the entity considered as object or site?

A historic ship recently sunk due to a storm, would be underwater cultural heritage or remains as unidentified kind of heritage since it has not yet been underwater for 100 years? And since it is not yet integrated with its natural context, is it considered an immovable site or moveable object? For example, Built in 1896 in the naval shipyards Ateliers et Chantiers de la Loire, Nantes, the four masted steel-built bark *Caroline* had 97.86 meters in length, a beam of 13.71 meters and a draft of 7.74 meters, with a tonnage of 3011. Launched in May of 1986, the bark served under the flag of the company Ant.

Dominique Bordes et al. In 1900, captain Louvet assumed Caroline's command and sailed in her till she was wrecked between the Ilhéus da Madalena and Areia Larga, Pico Island, on September, the 3rd 1901.

This incredible underwater city, trapped in time, is 1341 years old. Shicheng, or Lion City, is located in the Zhejiang province in eastern China. It was submerged in 1959 during the construction of the Xin'an River Hydropower Station.

In addition, the 2001 Convention, excludes Pipelines, cables and any other installations, placed on the seabed and still in use, from underwater cultural heritage. This will exclude the historic remains of the ports and waterfront which have been in use from even centuries before, and are still in use. In addition, this exclusion, cause complication in defining an underwater cultural area which encompasses such installation and objects or artifacts related to the installation. In this case the question is that are the objects and artifacts going to be considered as underwater heritage without including the rest? For example the Venice historic port installations considered as underwater cultural heritage? Finding an archaeological object in the vicinity of these installations would disregard the historic installation and would it be considered an object out of its context?

Effectiveness and the use of Existing Terms and Definitions

The UNESCO division of underwater cultural heritage to three sub-groups as mentioned above implied that each of these three categories has its own special characteristics. However, how much this categorization has been helpful to gain the 2001 Convention goals and pursuing its higher aims of giving more visibility to the underwater entities and justifying its present purpose of inclusion in the World Heritage List? For that purpose, one major issue that the World Heritage concerns about is the movability of the entities. Under the 1972 Convention three different forms of immovable cultural heritage (as mentioned in the former sections) can be inscribed on the World Heritage List. The question here is to distinguish between immovable sites and movable objects relying on the 2001 Convention's definition. Was the Convention's definition effective in this regard?

The first category is a combination of archaeological and natural context; obviously this type of site loses all or parts of its value and integrity, if the whole or parts of the site should be moved.

In more detailed terminology, landscapes, harbors, cities and villages underwater can be regarded as immovable sites. However it might be argued that parts of them can be moved, it is debatable that moving any part of these kinds of sites will harm the integrity of the site as it is for immovable sites on land. The second category is vessels, aircrafts and other vehicles and their associated objects. This category is very critical since the degree of integration and linkage with its environment and surrounding is very important in order to distinguish it as a movable object or immovable sites. And it is crucial to pick a scale for measuring the integrity of the sites. As it is notable from ICOMOS definition, the archaeological and natural context of wreck-sites is very important. Therefore, if a wreck is integrated into its natural environment and connected to the archaeological and cultural values of its surrounding, it will be a major flaw to consider that as movable object.

In addition the links of the heritage assets with other heritage or people's feeling and beliefs is a factor which helps in defining a kind of site or/and object. The intangible links between people and their cultural heritage, their memory of their environment and history and the sense of place attachment and identity are all qualitative variables and indicators to measure the integrity of a site considering the social, cultural and natural aspects.¹⁷

To assess an underwater historical entity, as movable or immovable, there is a need for assessing it through some criteria. These criteria should be shaped according to cultural, historical and natural value of the sites, and assessing the level of integrity of the remains with their natural environment, plus the degree of impacting the natural features by touching the historic sites. In this respect, the 2001 Convention has been highlighting the 'natural and archaeological context' in the two instances. For the purpose of this paper, this point—context—is a starting point and the subject of focus for assessing an underwater cultural heritage as site or object.

¹⁷Rössler, M. 2006. World Heritage cultural landscapes: A UNESCO flagship programme 1992–2006. *Landscape Research* 31: 333–353.

Methodology of Defining Sites and Objects

The justification of 'movability' involves two series of factors: exogenous factors (economic, political, technical, social) which are adopted according to ecosystem services approach and the Coastal Zone Management concepts, based on the existing link between the concepts of "landscape" and "ecosystem" which has been emphasized by Leser (1997)¹⁸; and endogenous factors (state of the site preservation, environmental values and integration).

According to what discussed previously, underwater cultural heritage is a branch of cultural heritage in general. The underwater cultural items, mostly, were objects and historical monuments and sites which were not supposed to be underwater and due to an accident or natural disaster happened to be submerged. As such, when we talk about it we should be clear about the types of heritage; is it a movable object independent of any other factor? Is it an immovable underwater monument or site? Is it a historic or prehistoric landscape? Is a part of a larger image in the landscape?

Keith Muckelroy offered a systematic evaluation tool which has been developed for shipwrecks.¹⁹ Although, there are some units which are very relative and virtual in measuring and assessing, and also he argued that his conclusions are preliminary, the idea can be adopted to evaluate the level of integrity of sites and objects within their natural environment for underwater historical/cultural remains. Muckelroy states that the feature of "location and settling" for shipwrecks depends on different factors. Structural remains which can be extensive to fragments, the quantity of objects found within the shipwreck site and the state of distribution of the site and objects, and the geological condition of the site, and finally the state of integration of the historical items with organic growth and flora and fauna in the surrounding.²⁰

However the scale of measurement used to express the quality and quantity of the factors above are debatable and to some extent relative, and how to measure these factors need to be explained.

¹⁸Leser, H. 1997. *Landschaftsökologie*. Stuttgart: Ulmer. MA (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment). 2005. *Ecosystems and human well-being: Synthesis*. Washington, D. C.: Island Press

¹⁹Muckleroy, K., 1978. *Maritime Archaeology*. Cambridge University Press

²⁰ Above

These variables are ordinal and scientifically to some extent acceptable, however for a better comparison tool, either more sites should be assessed in this way, or they should be transferred into ratio variables.

In many guidelines the focus of underwater cultural heritage was mainly on shipwreck. For instance the historic Shipwreck Acts of 1976, Australian Guidelines, mainly focuses on shipwrecks and their objects. However, the importance of the protected zone around a shipwreck has been mentioned and this points out the importance of the surrounding of the wrecks. This focus, although beneficial for the protection and study of the shipwrecks, has caused a division between the shipwrecks and the other sites such as landscapes and towns, either submerged or on land. That is the reason why shipwrecks in some documents have been regarded as objects and treated in a way that its removal from its surrounding would cause no harm to whole entity of a cultural heritage site.

For the linkage between people and their cultural heritage, as well as among different assets of heritage, also, variables should be developed to define these links. Linkage in this sense can be considered either tangible or intangible. Tangible linkage is where people have a visual, audio, or touchable connection with their heritage. For instance, when people can see their heritage and make link with them is a tangible visual connection. The degree of importance of such link needs to be assessed in the community. On the other hand, when people have a sense of place attachment to or memory from a heritage asset which might not be seen actually, an intangible link has been established.²¹

Based on the abovementioned factors, cultural, natural and social, in the following section some definitions have been recommended for distinguishing between sites and objects of cultural heritage values underwater.

Recommended Definition for Sites and Objects

As above-mentioned, there is a series of indicators that needs to be considered in defining sites and objects.

²¹Lewicka, M.,2008.Placeattachment,placeidentity,andplacememory:restoring the forgotten city past. Journal of Environmental Psychology 28,209–231)

These indicators are mainly under two categories; there are factors linking underwater cultural heritage with a community, and there are equally factors that may link that heritage with the environment. There have been guidelines to define these factors for cultural heritage value assessment in general and for underwater cultural heritage²², as well as resources in more holistic planning. Examples of such methods are ecological and ecosystem approaches.²³

These indicators are social, natural, economic, political²⁴ and cultural. Under each indicator a series of criteria have been developed to assess the cultural heritage entities. These criteria are to evaluate the degree of underwater cultural heritage linkage with people and environment. These indicators and criteria in several instances have overlaps. Although, this evaluation system is a qualitative method of analysis, a collaborative and multidisciplinary method should be applied among archaeologists, cultural heritage specialists and experts from other relevant disciplines (such as natural scientists, economists, social scientists) to assist with a comprehensive evaluation of the underwater cultural heritage entity. In addition, through involvement of different stakeholders other aspects and degree of heritage significance for different individual and groups of the society will be determined. In the end, the aim of cultural heritage preservation is not only for the sake of its heritage values, but also for the benefit of humanity.²⁵

Applying the indicators and criteria above in order to measure the degree of integrity of natural and social aspects, and evaluation of underwater cultural heritage assets, here a series of terms are recommended for categorizing sites and objects and determining their movability in relation to their context:

²²Sorna Khakzad, Conservation and Presentation of Underwater Cultural heritage to the Public, Unpublished Master Thesis, 2008 and Thijs Maarleveld, Ulrike Guerin, Barbara Egger, Manual for Activities directed at Underwater Cultural Heritage, Guidelines to the Annex of the UNESCO 2001 Convention, UNESCO 2013, pp. 81-86

²³Harald Schaich, Claudia Bieling, Tobias Plieninger Linking Ecosystem Services with Cultural Landscape Research, pp. 269-277: (GAIA 19/4 (2010): 269–277 | www.oekom.de/gaia)

²⁴Kennedy, J.J. and Thomas, J.W. (1994). Managing Natural Resources as Social Value. In R.L. Knight and S.F. Bates, editors. A new century for natural resources management. Island Press, Washington D.C. Pages 311-321.

²⁵ Records of the General Conference, Resolution 15 adopted by the General Conference at its 31st session", UNESCO 2001, p. 52, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001246/124687e.pdf#page=56> (Last visited on 25 April 2014)

- 1- Single Movable objects: are the historic, archaeological objects which are independent of any other elements, there is no tie or little tie between them and their natural surroundings. They are not a part of a bigger image, or if they had been, the image and remains of it does not exist anymore. Ship cargos, piles of amphorae, single statues and similar object out of their original context, without any tie with a ship, building or landscape and connection to people's whole image and memory of their environment can be regarded as single moveable objects.
- 2- Accumulated Movable objects: are the historic, archaeological objects and remains which have link with other objects in their vicinity. The total views of these objects, all together, make a bigger image. Their tie with their natural environment is at minimum. Mobility of these objects depends on other aspects such as state of conservation, values and necessity for scientific research, possibilities of conservation, protection and/or maintenance. For instance the Kizilburun shipwreck with its marble drums cargo is an example of such entity. Kizilburun was a shipwreck on the way from a stone quarry to a temple construction site, when it sank in the Aegean Sea.²⁶ These entities are not part of a larger landscape which has social-cultural links to people and communities, should they be moved.
- 3- Immovable objects: are those which have a tie with their natural or/and cultural environment. Relocating them harm the overall view of a bigger image. They integrated with natural features and/or make a contribution to understand their cultural/social surrounding. Integration in this level means that these sites are immovable because they are literally integrated with the natural environment, or are so strongly tied to their natural environment in a conceptual fashion that moving items from the location may eliminate the importance of both the items and the location. One example of physical integration with the environment is the case of World War shipwreck, *Burrasque*, in Belgium water. Although the wreck is a single sunken ship, ecologically it is a strong habitat for flora and fauna, and also it is tied to the history of the World War II, and displacing it will cause the loss of at least one of its significances.

²⁶ Carlson Deborah N. ; AYLWARD William, The Kizilburun Shipwreck and the Temple of Apollo at Claros, American journal of archaeology, 2010, vol. 114, no1, pp. 145-159

On the other hand, apart from physical literal integrity with the natural environment, some objects have ties with intangible aspects of heritage such as sites of memorial values. There are submerged grave yards in the shorelines of Shief along the Persian Gulf in Iran, where the graves and their tombstones can be seen along the shore, some of them submerged. Displacement of these stones not only causes the physical disintegrity of the graveyard, but also is considered disrespectful for the local community, and also the tombstones themselves have no scientific or cultural significance out of their context.

- 4- Immovable sites and properties: are monuments, buildings, landscapes, villages and their remains, which the same as on-land sites had been built and located in the specific spot. They are a part of larger image of urban design, historic landscapes and previous life. In most of the cases they extend from both site into water and in-land; however sometimes most of their traces have been erased or hidden under the soil or sand. These sites are mostly close to the shorelines, although there are some sites which are in deeper waters and disconnected from the known network of the coastline. Cases of Baia in Italy, Siraf in Iran and Alexandria in Egypt are examples of such sunken sites.

One of the examples that can be regarded as an achievement in inscription of the underwater historic vessels into the World Heritage List is the Red Bay World Cultural Heritage Site. The property includes the remains of rendering ovens, cooperages, a wharf, living quarters and a cemetery, together with the underwater wrecks of vessels and whale bone deposits.²⁷

Conclusion

Managing an underwater cultural heritage entity, to a great extent, depends on how and what we define that entity and if we assess it as a moveable object or immovable site. Although some experts in this field might agree that a homogenous series of terms is used for different sorts of underwater sites, there are still many discrepancies in interpretation of these terms, as it was discussed for objects and sites and immovable and movable entities. This study suggested a conceptual assessment methodology to consider different aspects of underwater cultural heritage with respects to its cultural landscape, and social-cultural and natural environment.

²⁷<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1412>(Last visited on 30 April 2014)

The assessment is a case by case approach, and depends on the factors in each location. The importance of the site integrity was highlighted. Based on the proposed assessment indicators and criteria, a series of terms for moveable and immoveable objects and sites were suggested. These terms will help to create a common ground for discourse among cultural heritage specialists in order to facilitate the future decision making on conservation, protection and listing of the sites and objects. This study hopes at opening the new discussion on the evaluation of different underwater entities, and incorporate in acknowledging the importance of many sites— such as shipwrecks and accumulation of archaeological objects— and eligible to be inscribed in the World Heritage List as the heritage of the humanity and world assets.