

# “Together We Are Strong”: Emergency Associations for the Protection of Germany’s Cultural Heritage

Rainer Jedlitschka

## ABSTRACT

This article presents an overview of the creation and development of emergency associations for the protection of archives, libraries, and museums in Germany. This is a response to several wake-up calls, notably the Elbe floods of 2002, the destruction by fire of a significant portion of the Duchess Anna Amalia Library in Weimar in 2004, and the collapse of the Cologne City Archive building in 2009. The emergency associations have come together on a voluntary basis to offer mutual support in the event of natural and human-made disasters.

Drawing on the experience of the Augsburg association founded in 2015, the author explains the role and success of the new networks. Annual meetings have consolidated regional and nationwide collaboration, and deepened experience and preparedness. Training courses and major incident exercises with fire services as well as the German Federal Agency for Technical Relief form the bedrock of the cooperation.

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## KEY WORDS

Climate change, Collaboration, Cultural heritage, Disaster management,  
Emergency association, Germany, Networks, Protection

Over the past thirty years, natural and human-made disasters have exposed the fragility and precarity of Germany's cultural heritage—floods on the Oder, Elbe, and Mulde Rivers in 1997 and 2002, followed by the destruction of part of the Duchess Anna Amalia Library in Weimar on September 2, 2004, and the collapse of the Cologne City Archive building on March 3, 2009. Since then, international catastrophes—the fires at the National Museum in Rio de Janeiro in 2018 and Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris 2019, as well as the destruction of cultural heritage in Ukraine by the Russian war of aggression since February 2022—have heightened global awareness of the scale of the threat to cultural heritage.

Given that emergency services must prioritize the saving of human lives and the protection of critical infrastructures, German cultural institutions have founded so-called emergency associations (in German *Notfallverbund*) in many cities and regions in response to recent disasters. On the basis of a legal agreement, the members of these groups not only guarantee mutual assistance in the event of an emergency, but also develop risk assessment studies and appropriate emergency responses for potentially dangerous situations and prepare themselves by training and exercises. The strength of the associations lies in their knowledge of local peculiarities, regular training exercises, and the ability to prepare an emergency response.

As of September 30, 2022, sixty emergency associations exist for the protection of cultural property in Germany. The first—founded in 1997 in Berlin—expanded to the Berlin-Brandenburg area in 2002. Some are city based, notably Weimar (2007), Münster (2010), Dresden (2011), Augsburg (2015), Cologne (2018), and, most recently, Freiburg in the Breisgau (2021). Others are regional—Berlin-Brandenburg, the city and region of Hannover (2009), and the Nuremberg area (2016).

However, network partners should not be located too far apart—large distances hinder the organization of the network and, above all, the capability to help in an emergency. An emergency association can be limited to one sector—libraries, archives, or museums—or it can work across many.

This report draws on the author's experience of the Augsburg association, which covers archives, libraries, and museums. As a representative of the Augsburg State Archives, the author is a member of the association and chaired the group for two years after its inception.

The State Archives in Augsburg illustrates the importance of the city's cultural patrimony. The archives is responsible for the Bavarian administrative district of Swabia. Currently, it comprises about 3,085 million archive units with a total volume of almost 27,500 linear meters, including about 89,700 documents, 2,946,000 official registers and files, 9,350 maps, and a large number of printed materials and photos. The oldest document, a protective privilege granted by Emperor Louis the Pious to the Kempten monastery, dates from 815. The modern holdings are constantly being supplemented by transfers from authorities, courts, and other public bodies of the Free State of Bavaria in the District of Swabia.

After reviewing the literature, the author outlines the association's foundation and motivation and assesses the joint training courses and exercises carried out with the fire brigade and technical relief organization. A major theme is how local associations cooperate at a national level, along with the perspectives for further development. Last, the author considers the importance of Germany's regional emergency associations as global role models. Awareness of regional and national initiatives is all the more necessary in an era of climate change–driven disasters.<sup>1</sup> Tight budgets and limits on staffing and hiring are forcing agencies of all kinds to work together.

## Literature Review

Emergency preparedness has long been recognized as a core professional task in archives in Germany and worldwide. The experience gained in the salvage and treatment of the Cologne archives in 2009, as well as in the subsequent conservation and restoration of the damaged records, offered important insights for the upgrading of emergency preparedness. The experience confirmed the necessity of cooperation with local partners. Over the past two decades, the need to support each other in an emergency and to bundle existing resources has generated many more associations in Germany.

The topic has developed a considerable literature—much of it available online. Publications range from basic studies, including compilations of key-word collections and concrete instructions for action, to specialist studies. The published proceedings of the Conference of Heads of Federal and State Archive Administrations in Germany provides the best entry point. The discussions and reports give an invaluable overview of all features of emergency preparedness. The publication covers all relevant topics: risk analysis, its minimization (fire protection, water protection, burglary protection, packaging), danger prevention (organization, material, emergency planning), emergency management (immediate measures, restoration), and legal bases. Additional analyses, including English-language works, are listed. Twelve appendices supply further information: photos of common damage patterns and descriptions of organizational precautions, as well as concrete measures for salvaging and restoring fire- or water-damaged cultural assets.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, the website of the Westphalian Archive Office in Münster gives comprehensive practical information on emergency precautions, damage patterns, freeze-drying, and restoration.<sup>3</sup>

SiLK, the “SicherheitsLeitfaden Kulturgut” (Security Guide for Cultural Property) of the Conference of National Cultural Institutions, with its introductory essays, questionnaires, and knowledge pool, serves to raise awareness of the topic of security and the protection of cultural property in museums, libraries, and archives. It helps staff members evaluate their institution in the area of security and provides tips and possible solutions. It also provides a wide range of information for other

interested parties. SiLK covers a total of fourteen topics relevant to museums, libraries, and archives. These include general security management, fire, flood, theft, vandalism, accidents, wear and tear, climate, lighting, pests/mold, pollutants, storms, earthquakes, and acts of violence.<sup>4</sup>

Wilfried Reininghaus and Andreas Pilger offer important insights from the management of the Cologne archives collapse:<sup>5</sup> Emergency teams, they stress, must be even better prepared to respond to potential threats. One imperative is the requirement that a site- and building-specific risk management system should be in place for every archives building. This covers hazards in the vicinity of the archives building. Site safety and fire protection should be regularly checked as part of preventive cultural asset protection. Reininghaus and Pilger emphasize that emergency planning has to be based on cross-archive and cross-regional emergency associations with clear competence and communication structures.<sup>6</sup>

In his diploma thesis written at the Institute for Restoration and Conservation Science at the Cologne University of Applied Sciences, Christoph Wenzel offers practical advice on emergency prevention and planning for archives, libraries, and museums.<sup>7</sup> Detailed recommendations range from methods of risk analysis and risk management to the process of actual planning and the assignment of tasks and responsibilities. For Wenzel, the "firm will to optimize processes" is a prerequisite for the success of emergency responses. Moreover, coordination of personnel is absolutely vital to emergency prevention.<sup>8</sup>

Graham Matthews and Yvonne Smith's "Disaster Management in Archives, Libraries, and Museums" presents a balanced and informed introduction to the international literature.<sup>9</sup> A short history of the development of disaster management follows a discussion of the topic and terminology. Importantly, Matthews and Smith propose priorities for future action. The proceedings of a special IFLA 2003 Berlin conference on the preparedness of library collections for situations of "human-made" disasters (conflict, war) and/or natural disasters (earthquakes, floods, hurricanes) helpfully summarizes expert opinion on these hazards.<sup>10</sup>

The UNESCO World Heritage Centre, international advisory organizations, and individuals have developed and implemented guidelines and recommendations for disaster prevention. These include preventive measures as well as emergency plans for the evacuation of movable artifacts in the event of a disaster and precautions for reconstruction. One of the fundamental documents is the manual "Disaster Management at World Heritage Sites," which the German Commission for UNESCO published in 2017 in a German version.<sup>11</sup> The key objectives of this resource manual are to help managers and management authorities of cultural and natural World Heritage properties to reduce the risks to these properties from natural and human-made disasters; to illustrate the main principles of disaster risk management (DRM) for heritage and to provide a methodology to identify, assess, and mitigate disaster risks; to explain how to prepare a DRM plan based on this

methodology; to demonstrate that heritage can play a positive role in reducing risks from disasters and so help to justify the conservation of World Heritage properties; and finally, to suggest how DRM plans for heritage properties can be integrated with national and regional disaster management strategies and plans.

Also useful is the systematic literature compilation on the website of the European Archival Network for Disaster Management.<sup>12</sup>

The development of German emergency associations is well tracked in the literature.<sup>13</sup> Particularly noteworthy are the reports on the nationwide meetings of the emergency associations.<sup>14</sup> The reports record the establishment of new associations<sup>15</sup> and document their activities<sup>16</sup>—exercises carried out<sup>17</sup> or real operations, such as the flood disaster in Rhineland-Palatinate and North Rhine-Westphalia in July 2021.<sup>18</sup>

The necessity and urgency of mutual exchange and cooperation in the field of emergency preparedness is now well established. The journal *International Preservation News* titled its 2009 issue “Disaster Management: The Power of Collaboration.” The central lesson of catastrophes such as Cologne is the importance of anticipating, saving, and rebuilding. “Collaboration is the key to effectiveness: collaboration with emergency services; collaboration with the cultural institutions threatened by the disaster, and international collaboration with experienced colleagues and volunteers full of energy.”<sup>19</sup>

Emergency preparedness cooperation is well advanced in the United States. Writers like Graham Matthews,<sup>20</sup> Beverly Lashley, Sheryl Davis, and Kirsten Kem have investigated cooperation between libraries, archives, and museums.<sup>21</sup> Some of the most extensive and diverse examples of network formation come from California—the Inland Empire Libraries Disaster Response Network (IELDRN), established in 1987.<sup>22</sup> The California Preservation Program (CPP) provides information on emergency preparedness and response as well as references to local networks and contacts.<sup>23</sup> The US State Department maintains an excellent website on emergency preparedness and response.<sup>24</sup> It provides information and links to collaborative disaster networks at the county level for archives, libraries, and museums.

Noteworthy too is the Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC) in Andover, Massachusetts, which has an emergency hotline, training programs, outreach activities, and web resources. Telephone advice is available to institutions and individuals handling collection-related disasters. Information includes advice on drying wet collections and dealing with damage from fire, pests, and mold. Founded in 1973, NEDCC was the first independent conservation laboratory in the nation to specialize exclusively in treating collections made of paper or parchment. Today, the center offers conservation treatment, digital imaging, and audio preservation services, as well as preservation training, assessments and consultations, and disaster advice on collections.<sup>25</sup>

The need for partnerships at the local level, where official response to human-made or natural disasters alike begins, led to the creation of Heritage Preservation's Alliance for Response Initiative (AFR). AFR brings cultural heritage and emergency management professionals together. Launched in 2003, the initiative remains effective by encouraging institutions to complete disaster plans and to train for emergencies, creating cooperative disaster assistance networks among museums, libraries, archives, and historical properties and sites; raising awareness of the importance of cultural heritage in communities; and influencing official emergency policies and plans.<sup>26</sup> In 2021, the Foundation for Advancement in Conservation (FAIC) initiated the AFR Network initiative in an effort to increase communication and coordination among networks. Member networks currently include Atlanta, California, Colorado, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Orleans, North Carolina, Northeast Ohio, Northwest Pennsylvania, Oklahoma, Philadelphia, Portland, Sarasota Manatee, Savannah, Seattle, South Florida, Texas, Vermont, and Washington, DC.<sup>27</sup>

## The Augsburg Emergency Association

To protect cultural assets and provide legal safeguard, the diocese, city, university, and state archives set up in 2013 a permanent emergency association and invited the participation of archives, libraries, and museums in the city. Ten institutions participated in the foundation meeting of the "Augsburg Emergency Working Group" in October 2013.

To regulate cooperation between the members of an emergency association, an agreement is usually concluded between them. This gives the whole enterprise a certain binding force. By concluding agreements, institutions accept a moral obligation also to provide mutual help and support. Topics such as personnel, organization, financing, and liability are regulated. A working group drafted an Augsburg Emergency Agreement, modeled on the agreements of other associations, and submitted it to the legal departments of member institutions.

The next step was the signing of the "Agreement on Mutual Support of Augsburg Archives, Libraries and Museums in Emergencies" on March 3, 2015. This was the first agreement of its kind in the Federal State of Bavaria. Signatories include the Augsburg City Archives; the Augsburg art collections and museums; city archaeology; the Augsburg University Archives and Library; the Augsburg State Archives; the State and City Library; the Archives of the Diocese of Augsburg and the Diocesan Museum of St. Afra; and the State Textile and Industrial Museum (TIM).

The signed text follows closely the agreements of the associations in Hannover, Münster, and Speyer.<sup>28</sup> A preamble emphasizes that the city of Augsburg is the seat of several institutions that hold cultural assets of urban, regional, national, and international significance. Each of these institutions is obliged to protect and preserve





**FIGURE 1.** Signing of the agreement of the “Augsburg Emergency Association” by the respective institutions. From left to right: Prof. Dr. Andres Lepik (director of the Museum of Architecture of the Technical University of Munich), Dr. Karl Borromäus Murr (director of the State Textile and Industrial Museum Augsburg), Dr. Klaus Ceynowa (deputy director general of the Bavarian State Library), Domkapitular Msgr. Harald Heinrich (vicar general of the Diocese of Augsburg), Prof. Dr. Sabine Doering-Manteuffel (president of the University of Augsburg), Dr. Margit Ksoll-Marcon (general director of the Bavarian State Archives), Thomas Weitzel (cultural advisor of the City of Augsburg). *Photo: Kerstin Lengger, City Archive Augsburg.*

the cultural assets it holds. However, damage can occur as a result of “natural disasters, fire, water, technical defects, external force or other unforeseeable events”—which cannot be countered by one organization alone. The aim of the participants in the network is therefore “to pool their human and material resources . . . and to carry out the tasks required for the protection of the cultural property in mutual support” (§ 1).

Other institutions that hold unique or particularly valuable cultural property and are located in Augsburg can be included in the association upon application and subject to the consent of all participating institutions (§ 2).

A working group oversees the functioning of the network. The group—including at least one representative from each of the institutions involved—elects a chairperson for two years and meets every six months (§ 3). Since early 2020, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, virtual meetings have become the norm.

The agreement outlines “preventive tasks” (preparation of a building-specific disaster response plan, including details of cultural property requiring special protection; building inspections; exercises and training of staff) and “tasks in an emergency” (personnel and technical assistance, e.g., personnel assistance in salvaging and

packing fire- or water-damaged archival materials) (§ 4). In both cases, maintaining contact with the responsible authorities and agencies, especially the Augsburg Fire Brigade and the German Federal Agency for Technical Relief (Technisches Hilfswerk, THW), is of critical importance. The coordination and streamlining of disaster responses maximizes the effectiveness of individual agencies. Hosting meetings in turn gives members an invaluable opportunity to get to know partner institutions.

The provision of the necessary financial means for the realization of the tasks of the association is the responsibility of each participating institution. The network itself has no budget of its own. The participating institutions, just like the persons working for them, shall fulfill their duties with the care customary in the treatment of cultural property (in German: *übliche Sorgfalt*). The assisting institutions shall indemnify each other against liability for all bodily injury and property damage caused by actions taken within the scope of the performance of the agreement, unless the damage is caused intentionally or by gross negligence (§ 5).

The confidentiality of personal data is also guaranteed and may only be used for purposes of cultural property protection (§ 7).

The plans of the Archive Office for Westphalia of the Regional Association of Westphalia-Lippe (Landschaftsverband Westfalen-Lippe, LWL), a service provider for municipal and private archives in Münster, and the Thuringian Main State Archive in Weimar, served as a template for the preparation of a building-specific emergency response plan.<sup>29</sup>

For the specific risk analysis of member institutions, the "Security Guide for Cultural Property" of the Conference of National Cultural Institutions (Konferenz Nationaler Kultureinrichtungen, KNK) proved very helpful. The KNK is an association of internationally important museums, including collections and archives from the eastern German states.<sup>30</sup> With its introductory sections and questionnaires, the guide serves to raise awareness of the issues of security and cultural property protection in museums, libraries, and archives. It supports staff in evaluating their institution and provides tips and possible solutions.

The hazard prevention plan offers both guidelines and a permanent checklist. The aim is to familiarize employees with their workplace emergency plans and precautions to secure their service buildings and prepare all staff in the best possible way for all contingencies. Most important, the application of the emergency plan should provide documentation and proof that the emergency precautions on-site and in the association are always up to date.

The emergency plan includes a site plan, an escape route plan, a schedule for emergency measures, and an alarm plan with contact lists for rescue services, the organization's own administration, and the members of the emergency association in Augsburg. It is supplemented by an evacuation plan, which defines recovery priorities: addresses of institutions and relief organizations; emergency services;



suppliers of recovery materials and first aid; freight forwarders and transport services for the removal of archival materials; storage and cold stores for the accommodation of evacuated archival materials; addresses for the proper handling of damaged documents, such as blast-freezing, freeze-drying, and conservation.

To reach a wider public and to promote the exchange of information, a dedicated homepage of the Augsburg Emergency Association was activated on the signing of the agreement.<sup>31</sup> In addition to aims, activities, and members, the homepage lists “go-to” persons and the text of the agreement.<sup>32</sup> A “News” section features media reports, events, and emergency exercises. Members have a reserved space for communication and cooperation. This area has key information on the protection of cultural assets and emergency planning, for example, checklists, hazard prevention plans, and the guidelines of the fire brigade of the city of Augsburg.

## COMMON EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT

At the preparatory meetings, members agreed on the importance of a common equipment base for the proper recovery of archives and library materials. Although some institutions possessed small quantities of material for the initial treatment of damaged cultural assets, others had none.

The success of coordinated responses to incidents depends on the storage on-site of the necessary materials in kits or containers. The type and scope of the required resources depends on the nature of the threatened artifacts, the (structural) conditions on-site, and the identified risks. A kit should contain protective equipment, technical aids, tools for recovery, means of transport, and materials for packaging and first aid.

It is important to regularly check the stock for completeness and functionality and to replace materials with expiration dates. Kits must provide enough materials and equipment to ensure initial care for the first twenty-four hours in the event of an emergency. Basic supplies required are materials from the following categories:

- Protective clothing/health protection (e.g., boots, gloves, overalls)
- Technical/electrical materials (e.g., electrical distributors, lighting, radios)
- Cleaning materials (e.g., brooms, buckets, rags)
- Packaging materials (e.g., bubble/stretch film, cardboard boxes)
- Office supplies (e.g., labels, pens)
- Transport aids (e.g., pallet truck, hand truck)
- Tools (e.g., hammer, screwdriver/wrench)
- Equipment (e.g., tent, tables, chairs)

All materials should be sorted by these categories and placed in labeled and easy-to-handle, transportable (with wheels), and closed outer packaging such as plastic boxes that are protected from outside influences. Kits should be unlocked for quick access in case of emergency.



**FIGURE 2.** Handing over emergency kits—Dr. Werner Lengger from the University Archives Augsburg (left) and the chairman of the emergency association, Rainer Jedlitschka from the State Archives Augsburg (right).  
*Photo: Richard Helfrich, State Archives Augsburg.*

Because the procurement of equipment is cost intensive at around 1,000 euros, an application was made for an open grant.<sup>33</sup> This grant, together with contributions from member institutions, funded the purchase of emergency boxes for all participating archives, libraries, and museums.<sup>34</sup>

The distribution of emergency supplies to members guarantees two things. First, each institution can respond to minor damage from its own resources. Second, mutual support: in major emergencies, the kits are easily transportable to where they are needed. The fact that their contents are already familiar to the partners facilitates the assistance measures.

Especially important are films and packaging materials for preparing wet archival and library materials for freeze-drying after possible water damage. In an emergency, blast-freezing prevents the formation of mold and other harmful effects. Subsequent vacuum freeze-drying is the gentlest and safest method of removing water from wet and soaked archival or library materials. The advantage of this process is the direct conversion of ice into water vapor, bypassing the liquid phase.<sup>35</sup>

## TRAINING AND EXERCISES

The Augsburg Agreement provides for regular salvage drills by partnership members in cooperation with emergency services. Keeping a balance of skills is essential. Though structural and organizational measures of preparedness are important for successful action, practical training in dealing with typical damage patterns (water damage, fire, mechanical damage) is indispensable. Documenting the response procedures is not enough. Training for disaster response can help staff avoid flawed decision-making in high-stress situations.

Training and exercises target people who, as members of an emergency group of the participating institutions, can act as multipliers in an emergency. They should be able to explain the decisive steps and guide the work in a comprehensible and precise manner to support staff (including volunteers) who can be mobilized at short notice and in large numbers in the event of a major accident or disaster.

In addition to the walk-throughs of the member institutions at the regular meetings of the working group, the Augsburg association has so far conducted two major exercises: in 2016 with the fire department and in 2019 with the THW. Unfortunately, a recovery exercise planned for 2020 in one of the participating museums to learn about the conditions that differ from archives and libraries, could not be carried out due to the COVID pandemic. In the future, regular exercises will be held to train new employees.

In addition, the so-called alarm chain of the network has to be tested at regular intervals: an alarm list identifies alphabetically by member institution the respective emergency officers and deputies with cell phone numbers. The emergency officer who triggers the alarm calls the contact person of the institution. If this person can be reached, the task is completed for the person raising the alarm. If the person called cannot be reached, then their deputy is called. If they are unobtainable, the process is continued with the emergency officer of the following institution and so on. The calls are always continued in this order until someone is reached. The called party is then responsible for alerting the next on the list.

## INSTRUCTION AND PRACTICE WITH THE AUGSBURG FIRE BRIGADE

To prepare for a major exercise with the Augsburg fire brigade, the emergency teams of the association took part in a training course at the Augsburg City Archive in autumn 2016. Guided by the conservator of the archive, small groups practiced the handling, packaging, and transport of damaged materials. Equipment from the emergency kits was used. A station with a dispenser for stretch film was set up for the packaging of soaked documents. This method works well for freezing damaged archival documents, with the film separating the individual objects. Participants practiced the transport of objects—previously soaked in a washbasin—to and from the station in tubs, as well as their correct packing with stretch film.



**FIGURE 3.** The practice station for packaging at the Augsburg City Archive. *Photo: Kerstin Lengger, Augsburg City Archive.*

It was very useful for all participants to attach the foil dispenser from the emergency kits to the tables themselves, which requires some skill. The helpers were also surprised at the weight of soaked archival materials.

On October 6, 2016, twenty-five members of the emergency groups met for an all-day event at the Augsburg Fire Department. In the morning, a fire protection instruction was on the program. In the theoretical part, the fire brigade's training manager provided information on the fire behavior of various materials, the extinguishing agents available, and the correct response in the event of a fire: keeping calm, reporting the fire, containing it safely, and attempting to extinguish it.

In the afternoon, participants practiced the correct extinguishing of small fires using a gas-fired extinguishing trainer and a stack of files set on fire. For cost and environmental reasons, water and foam were available as extinguishing agents. A new type of water fog extinguisher was tested. This device offers a number of advantages for use in institutions storing cultural assets. It is based on the principle of a water mist fire protection system, which has been successfully used in stationary facilities for some time. Here, very small water droplets are used as an extinguishing agent. As the extinguishing nozzles spray the water so finely, the surface area of the water introduced can be increased many times over. In this way, energy is extracted from the fire more quickly, and the cooling effect of the extinguishing agent water is



optimized. In addition, the required quantity of extinguishing water is significantly lower compared to a conventional water extinguisher—thus, damage caused by the extinguishing agent is reduced. Finally, the significantly longer spraying time creates extinguishing reserves.

Practical firefighting exercises are indispensable for the staff of cultural institutions. The best fire extinguisher is useless if it is not used at the right time or if no one can operate it. The training takes away fear of contact, giving the user a sense of security and achievement. Skills pay off. A few correctly placed spray bursts can quickly put out a fire. Training provides a discipline for dealing with the surprise, fear, or panic generated in a real emergency.

Following instruction in the correct extinguishing technique, the teams had to tackle a small emergency—a fire in an archive or library magazine. To do this, a steel rack filled with files and books intended for destruction from the municipal and state archives was placed in a fire brigade training container and set on fire. Behind the closed door, the flames spread rapidly, creating a lot of smoke from cracks and joints. Under the supervision of the fire brigade, participants put out the blaze with water extinguishers.

The collapsed steel shelf illustrated the high temperatures that can be reached in a closed room in a very short time. After the fire was



**FIGURE 4.** Extinguishing a burning stack of files with water. Photo: Kerstin Lengger, Augsburg City Archive.



**FIGURE 5.** The burning file shelf in the exercise container. Photo: Kerstin Lengger, City Archive Augsburg.

put out, the files and books that had been severely damaged by fire and extinguishing water had to be retrieved.

For this purpose, teams staffed various workstations (salvage, transport, documentation, and packing). Equipped with appropriate protective clothing, that is, a single-use protective suit, gloves, and dust mask, the first group placed the documents from the destroyed shelves in plastic tubs. These were then carried by the next team to the fire brigade vehicle hall. Tables were already set up for further processing. Recovered files and books first had to be documented so that they could be easily found again. Depending on the categorization (dry, moist, wet), the documents were then wrapped in stretch film so that they could be transported away for storage in freezers or directly to our own workshops for restoration.

The scale of the task to be accomplished in an emergency impressed participants. A key aim of the exercise was to coordinate and teach procedures within and between the individual teams. A coordinator wearing a colored protective vest kept track of the situation and served as contact person for helpers and emergency personnel. Helpers were surprised by the extent to which the removal of fire-damaged archival materials irritates the respiratory tract. The wearing of appropriate protective masks is mandatory. The teams that pack the salvaged materials in foil need to be changed regularly.

## EXERCISE WITH THE GERMAN FEDERAL AGENCY FOR TECHNICAL RELIEF

The second major exercise of the Augsburg association in the autumn of 2019 concerned cooperation with the THW. This organization is internationally unique.<sup>36</sup> Founded in 1950 and based in Bonn-Lengsdorf as a German civil defense and disaster response organization with only a few full-time employees, it relies mainly on volunteers. The THW offers a wide range of technical capacities, especially for major damage situations, ranging from the lighting of accident sites to extensive logistic capabilities, including the deployment of complex and heavy special equipment such as excavators. It is called in by the "blue light forces" involved, primarily the fire services.

"Support for recovery of cultural property after a fire in the Augsburg State Archive"—this message reached the THW local branch in Augsburg alerting it to an unannounced exercise on the morning of September 28, 2019. According to the exercise scenario, records of the Augsburg State Archive were damaged after a fire in an upper story of the magazine building. These records consisted of approximately 400 prepared slip-lid cartons and wet-to-moist files not worthy of archiving and previously soaked in tubs (i.e., documents such as volumes, plans, and books to be destroyed). In the scenario, the fire had just been extinguished by the fire brigade. It was now necessary to recover the archival documents damaged by fire and water. The





**FIGURE 6.** THW helpers retrieve the archival material from the shelves of the State Archive. *Photo: Dieter Seebach, OV THW Augsburg.*

THW provided two salvage groups and, through the logistics department, a large tent, benches, pallets, and wire mesh boxes for the setting up of the emergency service documentation center. A crew transport vehicle, two equipment trucks, a crew truck, and a truck tipper with loading crane arrived quickly on-site with twenty-eight helpers and materials.

Because the elevator could not be used, the recovery of the archival materials from the storeroom on the third floor was carried out by a line of helpers on the staircase passing plastic tubs from hand to hand. In the magazine, a member of the emergency team of the State Archive was available as contact person for the THW. Everything went smoothly in a routine, professional manner.

For further processing, an assembly point (tables, benches under a tent, wire mesh boxes, and pallets) for the eighteen helpers on the emergency response team who had been alerted was set up by THW in the parking lot of the State Archive parallel to the rescue. Divided into rotating three-person teams, they began the further processing of the salvaged materials. Foil dispensers from the emergency kits and prepared information leaflets on the workflow were attached to the tables: the recovered files, volumes, and plans were to be documented in a list with consecutive numbers and at least one digital photo taken by means of a smartphone. Prepared counting cards, which could be placed on or next to the recovered object, guaranteed the unique numbering of each object. Depending on the categorization (dry, moist, wet), the teams had to pack the objects with stretch film. In this way,

they could be transported away in skeleton containers—depending on the categorization—for storage in freezing plants or directly for restoration in their own workshop. Dry materials would be taken to another archives as a temporary storage area.

The THW helpers finished the rescue surprisingly quickly—an encouraging result in the event of a real emergency. However, it also became clear that the documentation and initial treatment of the objects took considerably more time than had been expected by scenario planners. Everyone, helpers and staff, gained valuable experience.

In addition to technical know-how and gained experience, for example, on the proper handling of soaked large formats, the exercise demonstrated the crucial role of leadership in handling groups in an emergency: clarifying tasks, functions, and structure within the Augsburg association team and the response team of the disaster control authority.<sup>37</sup>

The aims of the exercise were to secure the THW as a partner for the protection of cultural assets in Augsburg and to ensure technical and personnel support for the emergency team. Another concern was to coordinate procedures for salvage documentation. The two exercises described tested the viability and functionality of structures, organization, and communication. The exercises boosted the motivation of those involved in the work of the emergency association, reviving and extending the momentum of the start-up phase.

Members of the association as well as the emergency forces of the fire department and THW shared a common learning experience. Emergency teams were



**FIGURE 7.** Photo documentation with smartphone at the rescue station in the tent. *Photo:* Kerstin Lengger, City Archive Augsburg.



**FIGURE 8.** The helpers of the THW and the Augsburg Emergency Association. *Photo: Dieter Seebach, local group THW Augsburg.*

made aware of the importance of cultural property protection, which for most of them was new and unknown. Articles about the exercises in the relevant employee magazines highlighted the significance of protecting the cultural patrimony.<sup>38</sup>

## Exchange and Networking—Germany-wide Meetings of the Emergency Associations

Because only a few employees of cultural institutions are “trained” rescue workers, professional exchanges are essential, with experts from civil defense and disaster control and with colleagues from other associations. The first national workshops and meetings of representatives of emergency associations took place in 2011 and 2014 at the Academy for Crisis Management, Emergency Planning and Civil Protection (Akademie für Krisenmanagement, Notfallplanung und Zivilschutz, AKNZ) in Bad-Neuenahr-Ahrweiler, a training and further education institution of the Federal Office for Civil Protection and Disaster Assistance (Bundesamtes für Bevölkerungsschutz und Katastrophenhilfe, BBK).<sup>39</sup> Starting with a meeting in Stuttgart in 2015, AKNZ, liaising with the local association, jointly organized annual workshops: Darmstadt (2016), Dresden (2017), Münster (2018), and in 2019—on the tenth anniversary of the collapse of the city archives—Cologne.<sup>40</sup> The meeting planned for 2020 in Weimar had to be cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic and finally took place in 2022.

The emergency associations have a common portal.<sup>41</sup> In addition to an overview of existing associations in Germany with contact details, the portal offers practical suggestions for planning and work-sample documents, information on emergency materials, reports on exercises, and references to the specialist literature.

Each of the annual meetings explores a general theme in a program of lectures, workshops, and guided tours through local cultural institutions at the host venue. For example, the theme of the meeting on April 29–30, 2019, in Cologne was "Weimar—Cologne—Rio: Cultural Property Protection in Cooperation with the Emergency Services."

Weimar, Cologne, and Rio represent the biggest recent disasters in which cultural assets of world importance have suffered extensive damage. In these instances, as in many others, cooperation with the emergency services on-site played a major role in the effort to preserve buildings and cultural assets in the disaster, or to recover them afterward.

The Cologne meeting in 2019 assembled over 120 representatives of libraries, archives, and museums, and emergency services from the fire brigade and the Federal Agency for Technical Relief. Delegates shared insights from past disasters and the daily work of the emergency services. Most important, they reflected on outcomes and future perspectives. It was emphasized how important the daily routine of packing, recording, indexing, storage, and security transfer is for emergency situations. Presentation topics ranged from reports on cases of damage, emergency prophylaxis, and cooperation between cultural institutions and emergency services in the event of disasters, to the handling of cultural assets damaged en masse and the possibilities of support for reconstruction.

The lessons from the Weimar and Cologne disasters confirm that skilful emergency planning, reinforced by existing contacts and exercises with the emergency services, can protect cultural assets effectively. It is precisely these goals that emergency associations pursue by establishing and regularly updating rescue mechanisms.

The contributions by the fire services and the German Federal Agency for Technical Relief at the Cologne conference demonstrated that their strength is the ability to make quick decisions and implement them effectively. Particularly noteworthy in this respect is the area of logistics (vehicles, procurement of materials at any time of the day or night), or the spontaneous awarding of contracts to companies to secure cultural property, for example. Equally noteworthy is the emphasis on the importance of dialogue between the emergency services and representatives of cultural institutions to minimize dangers to the cultural property during the rescue operation.

By contrast, the fire at the National Museum of Brazil in Rio de Janeiro exemplified the fatal consequences of poor planning, lack of fire protection, and mismanagement by the authorities. As museum director Prof. Dr. Alexander Kellner pointed out, the fire at the beginning of September 2018 destroyed almost all exhibits and collections.<sup>42</sup>





**FIGURE 9.** “Cologne Flakes.” Salvage unit with archival material fragments in the restoration and digitization center of the Cologne City Archive. *Photo: Rainer Jedlitschka, State Archives of Augsburg.*

One of the highlights of the 2019 Cologne conference was the visit to the Restoration and Digitisation Centre (Restaurierungs- und Digitalisierungszentrums, RDZ) of the Historical Archive of the City of Cologne in the Porz-Lind district of Cologne, housed in the former warehouse of a furniture dealer. The archival documents damaged in the collapse of the Cologne City Archive building in 2009 are processed there. A total of twenty-seven kilometers of archival materials were buried when the building collapsed—some of them in the groundwater. Ninety-five percent of the archives were salvaged thanks to the commitment of the fire brigade, aid organizations, and voluntary helpers. The wet documents were

first blast-frozen, then freeze-dried in a special facility. The cleaning and further processing continues to this day. Within this 10,000-square-meter facility, employees restore the damaged archival materials and merge them into indexing units. This represents a great challenge. The technicians call the fragments—some of which are very dirty and fragile—“Cologne Flakes,” an allusion to the well-known oat flakes Blütenzarte Köllnflocken (Flowery Köllnflakes). The “flakes” come from a wide variety of archival holdings. They contain so little text that no direct conclusions can be drawn about their origin.

The aim of the processing is to prepare the papers for digitization so that they can be virtually puzzled out. The new method for the snippets was largely developed by a spin-off of the Fraunhofer Institute. The scanner went into operation at the end of 2015. The computer-aided reconstruction is carried out using concise features such as cracked edges, paper colors, text, and line progressions. The virtually assembled document serves as a template for the physical reconstruction or restoration.<sup>43</sup> The Cologne City Archive is developing new methods and machine-supported work procedures to hone and refine reconstruction from fragments in the future.

## Conclusion

Formal, contractual associations for disaster preparedness, response, and recovery offer a sophisticated and highly effective tool for the protection and preservation of the cultural heritage. By collaborating closely with neighboring cultural organizations, each institution gains access to information and resources in emergencies.<sup>44</sup>

Though there are many honors for the creation of art, until recently there were no European prizes—at least none with prize money—for the preservation of movable art and cultural assets. In 2016, the German magazine *Kulturbetrieb* (*Cultural Business*) awarded the first prize “for the protection, care and exhibition of art and cultural assets.” It is called Riegel—KulturBewahren and is worth 2,100 euros.<sup>45</sup> In 2017, the award went to the network of emergency associations in Germany. The prize honored the outstanding voluntary commitment of employees to the prevention and protection of the art and cultural assets entrusted to them, as well as to the goal of interdisciplinary and future-oriented cooperation. Representing the emergency associations in Germany, Michael John, head of the Dresden Emergency Association, accepted the award in Munich in October 2017.<sup>46</sup>

The future of the emergency associations network in Germany is now secure. The BBK has agreed to provide organizational and financial support for this grassroots



**FIGURE 10.** The participants of the meeting of the German emergency associations in Cologne 2019.  
Photo: Janet Sinica, Cologne.



movement.<sup>47</sup> Globally, however, international networking in emergency prevention is still in its infancy. But the prospects are promising; for example, the trinational project EURANED (European Archival Network for Disaster Management) links Poland, the Czech Republic, and the Federal Republic of Germany.<sup>48</sup>

International cooperation has so far taken the form of exchange visits. Within the framework of the mutual exchange program between the Federal Archives and the Department of Archive Administration and Archival Services at the Czech Ministry of the Interior, the author visited the National Archives in Prague in the fall of 2019. It was an opportunity to discuss emergency preparedness and management. The visit included technical facilities for decontamination for mold-infested archival and library materials and for vacuum drying of flood-damaged cultural assets. This issue has become very important in the Czech Republic after the flood of the century in August 2002. Emergency associations do not yet exist in the Czech Republic.<sup>49</sup> Of course, the German emergency associations also support the cultural institutions affected by the war of aggression against Ukraine.<sup>50</sup>

Emergency preparedness remains a continuing and growing challenge. The preparation of an emergency plan or the establishment of an emergency association, though important, are only starting points. Reviewing, updating, and trialing emergency plans are ongoing. Forewarned is forearmed.<sup>51</sup> The success of an emergency association depends on the individual commitment of all involved and the availability of adequate financial resources.

To conclude, the Augsburg initiative has nurtured strong interpersonal links. Through the working group and joint exercises, members enjoy a sense of community and solidarity. Shared experiences have fostered close collaboration between agencies in the cultural life of the UNESCO World Heritage City.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The urgency is underlined by the United Nations climate change conference (COP26 summit), which was held in Glasgow in November 2021, postponed by one year because of the COVID-19 pandemic, an event many believed to be the world's last best chance to get runaway climate change under control. The COP26 brought parties together to accelerate action toward the goals of the Paris Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, visit <https://ukcop26.org>. I would like to express my sincere thanks to the editor and reviewers of *American Archivist* for acceptance of my article and helpful comments. I am also deeply grateful to Anthony Adamthwaite, professor emeritus at UC Berkeley's Department of History, for his review and help with the translation of my paper into English. The author welcomes comments and feedback at [rainer.jedlitschka@staau.bayern.de](mailto:rainer.jedlitschka@staau.bayern.de).

<sup>2</sup> Notfallvorsorge in Archiven. Empfehlungen der Archivreferentenkonferenz, [www.landesarchiv-bw.de/sixcms/media.php/120/51980/ARK\\_Empfehlungen%20zur%20Notfallvorsorge%20in%20Archiven%202010.pdf](http://www.landesarchiv-bw.de/sixcms/media.php/120/51980/ARK_Empfehlungen%20zur%20Notfallvorsorge%20in%20Archiven%202010.pdf), captured at <https://perma.cc/PCJ5-J8A3>. These recommendations were elaborated in 2004 and last revised in 2010; reprinted in *Richtlinien zu Kulturgut und Notfallbewältigung*, ed. Clemens Rehm and Wilfried Reininghaus (Düsseldorf: Landesarchiv Nordrhein-Westfalen, 2011), 57–111. In addition, reference should be made to the summary article by Rickmer Kießling: "Notfallvorsorge in Archiven," in *Verwahren, Sichern, Erhalten. Handreichungen zur Bestandserhaltung in Archiven*, ed. Mario Glauert and Sabine Ruhnau (Potsdam: Landesfachstelle für Archive, 2005), 227–47, as well as to the literature documentation on the topic "emergency" of the Kompetenzzentrum Bestandserhaltung für Archive und Bibliotheken in Berlin und Brandenburg

- (KBE), updated in December 2021: [https://www.zlb.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/KBE/Literaturdok/Literaturdokumentation\\_zum\\_Thema\\_Notfall.pdf](https://www.zlb.de/fileadmin/user_upload/KBE/Literaturdok/Literaturdokumentation_zum_Thema_Notfall.pdf), captured at <https://perma.cc/9ELM-SPFW>.
- <sup>3</sup> LWL-Archivamt für Westfalen, [https://www.lwl-archivamt.de/de/bestandserhaltung\\_notfaelle/notfalle-im-archiv/](https://www.lwl-archivamt.de/de/bestandserhaltung_notfaelle/notfalle-im-archiv/).
- <sup>4</sup> The SicherheitsLeitfaden SiLK is available online at <https://www.konferenz-kultur.de/SLF/index1.php>, and it is also available in English at <https://www.silk-tool.de/en> and Arabic at <https://www.silk-tool.de/ar>. It has also recently been published in a print edition: Alke Dohrmann, Almut Siegel, and Katrin Schöne, *SiLK—Sicherheitsleitfaden Kulturgut* (Zittau: Graphische Werkstätten, 2021).
- <sup>5</sup> Wilfried Reininghaus and Andreas Pilger, eds., *Lehren aus Köln. Dokumentation der Expertenanhörung, Der Kölner Archiveinsturz und die Konsequenzen* (Düsseldorf: Veröffentlichungen des Landesarchivs Nordrhein-Westfalen, 2009).
- <sup>6</sup> See also Kölner Erklärung, "Resolution of the General Assembly of the VDA—Association of German Archivists E.V. on September 24, 2009 in Regensburg—Cologne Declaration on the Protection and Preservation of Archival Collections," *Der Archivar* 62 (2009), 453.
- <sup>7</sup> Christoph Wenzel, *Notfallprävention und-planung für Museen, Galerien und Archive* (Cologne: VdS Verlag, 2007).
- <sup>8</sup> Andrea Joosten explains from a librarian's point of view why emergency planning is a management task: an emergency team must be assembled, networks must be created, resources must be procured, and tasks must be delegated. See Andrea Joosten, "Notfallplanung als Managementaufgabe," 2016, <https://www.dasbibliothekswissen.de/Notfallplanung-als-Managementaufgabe.html>.
- <sup>9</sup> Graham Matthews and Yvonne Smith, *Disaster Management in Archives, Libraries and Museums* (London: Routledge, 2016).
- <sup>10</sup> Johanna G. Wellheiser and Nancy E. Gwinn, eds., *Preparing for the Worst, Planning for the Best: Protecting our Cultural Heritage from Disaster* (proceedings of a special IFLA Conference held in Berlin in July 2003, München: K.G. Saur, 2005).
- <sup>11</sup> UNESCO World Heritage Convention, "Managing Disaster Risks for World Heritage," <https://whc.unesco.org/en/managing-disaster-risks> (English) and <https://www.unesco.de/sites/default/files/2018-01/Katastrophenschutz.pdf>, captured at <https://perma.cc/G9GW-RZPT>.
- <sup>12</sup> Das Bundesarchiv, "Literature," <https://www.bundesarchiv.de/euronotfall/literature/index.html.de>.
- <sup>13</sup> Thomas Bürger and Michael Vogel, "Kulturgutschutz und Notfallverbünde. Herausforderungen und neue Initiativen nach dem Hochwasser," *Bibliotheken in Sachsen* 4 (2010): 222–24; Johannes Kistenich, "Lehren aus Köln. Erfahrungen aus dem Aufbau des Notfallverbundes Münster," *Archivpflege in Westfalen-Lippe* 74 (2011), S. 30–36; Johannes Kistenich and Marcus Stumpf, "Notfallverbünde in vergleichender Perspektive: Ergebnisse eines Workshops," *Der Archivar* 65 (2012): 61–65, [http://www.archive.nrw.de/archivar/hefte/2012/ausgabe1/Archivar\\_1\\_2012.pdf](http://www.archive.nrw.de/archivar/hefte/2012/ausgabe1/Archivar_1_2012.pdf), captured at <https://perma.cc/4MPP-GSZG>; Marcus Stumpf, "Notfallverbünde im Aufbau. Entwicklungsrisiken und -chancen am Beispiel des Notfallverbundes Münster," *Archive in Bayern* 7 (2012): 141–58; Almuth Märker, "Die Gründung des Notfallverbunds Leipziger Archive und Bibliotheken," *Bibliotheksdienst* 46 (2012): 557–69, with a Guideline (*Leitfaden*) for establishing an emergency association. As a recent summary on the Augsburg association and the Germany-wide movement of emergency associations, see Rainer Jedlitschka, "Im Fall der Notfälle. Immer mehr Kultureinrichtungen verbünden sich zur gegenseitigen Hilfe bei Katastrophen," *Bayerische Staatszeitung* 49 (December 10, 2021): 16–17.
- <sup>14</sup> Notfallverbünde, "Treffen der Notfallverbünde," <http://notfallverbund.de/verbuende/treffen-der-notfallverbuede>, captured at <https://perma.cc/K78W-NF7C>; and, for the meeting in Cologne, see Rainer Jedlitschka, "Arbeitstreffen der deutschen Notfallverbünde 2019 in Köln," *Scrinium* 74 (2020): 196–98.
- <sup>15</sup> Michael Vogel, "Gut vorbereitet sein auf etwas, das nie passieren soll. Dresdner Kultur- und Wissenschaftseinrichtungen gründeten einen Notfallverbund," *Bibliotheken in Sachsen* 4 (2001): 254–55; Bettina Joergens, Der Notfallverbund Demold. Bestandserhaltung, Archivmanagement und Archivpolitik," *Der Archivar* 68 (2015): 388–91; Ingo Schwab, "Münchener Notfallverbund offiziell gegründet," *Der Archivar* 69 (2016): 263; recent examples include Ilka Minneker, "Gründung des Notfallverbundes Dortmund—Kulturgut gemeinsam schützen," *Archivpflege in Westfalen-Lippe* 91 (2019): 55, and Johannes Staudenmaier and Erwin Stoiber, "Notfallverbünde Bamberg und Amberg—Sulzbach-Rosenberg gegründet," *Nachrichten aus den Staatlichen Archiven Bayerns* 78 (2020): 65–66.

- <sup>16</sup> In an emergency, objects made of paper, parchment, leather, film material, glass, fabric, and metal must be packed, transported, and, if necessary, dried in a manner appropriate to the material. To ensure that all employees know how to handle the various objects in the immediate shock of an emergency, the Stuttgart Emergency Association has produced an informative handout "for your pocket," see [https://notfallverbund.ub.uni-stuttgart.de/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2020/05/Pocket\\_NoVe.pdf](https://notfallverbund.ub.uni-stuttgart.de/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2020/05/Pocket_NoVe.pdf), captured at <https://perma.cc/BZX9-ZF49>. The emergency association in Bielefeld offers a practical introduction to emergency planning: Ingrun Osterfinke, "Notfallplan for take away. Eine praktische Online-Hilfe zur Eigenen Notfallplanung nach Erfahrungen des Bielefelder Notfallverbundes," *Aus Evangelischen Archiven* 61 (2021): 96–104, <https://www.evangelische-archiv.de/aus-evangelischen-archiven>.
- <sup>17</sup> As recent examples, see Ralf Lusiardi, "Feuer und Wasser! Der Notfallverbund Magedburger Archive erprobt den Ernstfall," *Archive in Sachsen-Anhalt* 1 (2019): 39, and Matthias Herm, "Erste gemeinsame Notfallübung des Notfallverbundes Duisburg," *Der Archivar* 73 (2020): 72–73.
- <sup>18</sup> So the Emergency Association of Cologne Archives and Libraries helped to salvage archival materials from the flooded City Archives in Stolberg near Aachen, see "Stolbergs Stadtarchiv in Gefahr: Köln schickt Hilfe," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, July 19, 2021, <https://www.sueddeutsche.de/panorama/wetter-stolberg-stolbergs-stadtarchiv-in-gefahr-koeln-schickt-hilfe-dpa.urn-newsml-dpa-com-20090101-210719-99-439116>. On the severe damage to archives caused by the 2021 flood disaster and the use of emergency associations, see also the press release of the Association of German Archivists, [https://www.vda.archiv.net/fileadmin/user\\_upload/VdA\\_Pressemitteilung\\_22072021\\_Naturkatastrophen\\_2021.pdf](https://www.vda.archiv.net/fileadmin/user_upload/VdA_Pressemitteilung_22072021_Naturkatastrophen_2021.pdf), captured at <https://perma.cc/EQ2S-U5UB>.
- <sup>19</sup> *International Preservation News*, no. 49 (December 2009): 4, <https://cdn.ifla.org/wp-content/uploads/files/assets/pac/ipn/49-december-2009.pdf>, captured at <https://perma.cc/DZ6R-DPFY>. This journal used to be published three times a year in 1987–2013 reporting on the preservation activities and events that support efforts to preserve materials in the world's libraries and archives, <https://www.ifla.org/publications/international-preservation-news-1987-2013>.
- <sup>20</sup> Graham Matthews, "Disaster Management. Sharing Experience, Working Together across the Sector," *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science* 37, no. 2 (2005): 63–74.
- <sup>21</sup> Sheryl Davis and Kristen Kern, "Cooperative Activity in the USA, or Misery Loves Company," Matthews and Smith, *Disaster Management in Archives, Libraries and Museums*, 134–58.
- <sup>22</sup> See IERLDRN: Inland Empire Libraries Disaster Response Network, <https://ieldresponsenetwork.wordpress.com/about>.
- <sup>23</sup> See California Preservation Program, "California Preservation and Disaster Networks," [https://calpreservation.org/information\\_resources/california-preservation-and-disaster-networks](https://calpreservation.org/information_resources/california-preservation-and-disaster-networks).
- <sup>24</sup> Heritage Preservation, "Cooperative Disaster Networks, May 2009," [https://www.sos.wa.gov/\\_assets/library/libraries/c2c/disasterresponsenetworks\\_0509.pdf](https://www.sos.wa.gov/_assets/library/libraries/c2c/disasterresponsenetworks_0509.pdf), captured at <https://perma.cc/E8GU-W8DD>.
- <sup>25</sup> Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC), "Disaster Assistance," <https://www.nedcc.org/free-resources/disaster-assistance>.
- <sup>26</sup> Jane S. Long, "Emergency Preparedness and the Power of Partnerships," *International Preservation News*, no. 49 (December 2009): 6–10, see 8; visit American Institute for Conservation (AIC), "Alliance for Response," <https://www.culturalheritage.org/resources/emergencies/alliance-for-response>.
- <sup>27</sup> AIC, "Alliance for Response."
- <sup>28</sup> The complete text of the Augsburg emergency agreement is publicly available at [https://notfallverbund-augsburg.de/Materialien/Notfallverbund%20Augsburg/Notfallvereinbarung\\_Augsburg.pdf](https://notfallverbund-augsburg.de/Materialien/Notfallverbund%20Augsburg/Notfallvereinbarung_Augsburg.pdf), captured at <https://perma.cc/ZH43-T2CJ>. Two of the emergency agreements mentioned are also publicly available at [http://www.feuerwehr.de/news/2009/10/28/Notfallverbund\\_Vereinbarung\\_28102009.pdf](http://www.feuerwehr.de/news/2009/10/28/Notfallverbund_Vereinbarung_28102009.pdf) (Hannover), captured at <https://perma.cc/5C6F-7MY7>; and [http://notfallverbund.de/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Notfallvereinbarung\\_Muenster.pdf](http://notfallverbund.de/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Notfallvereinbarung_Muenster.pdf) (Münster), captured at <https://perma.cc/NJ2C-PW99>.
- <sup>29</sup> <http://www.lwl.org/waa-download/pdf/Musternotfallplan.pdf>, captured at <https://perma.cc/7XNA-DZG6>.
- <sup>30</sup> <https://konferenz-kultur.de/>.
- <sup>31</sup> Notfallverbund Augsburg, [www.notfallverbund-augsburg.de](http://www.notfallverbund-augsburg.de).
- <sup>32</sup> Notfallverbund, "Warum gibt es Notfallverbünde," <https://notfallverbund-augsburg.de/informationen.html>, captured at <https://perma.cc/C8JV-5N69>.

- 33 The application was submitted to the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation (Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz, SPK) from funds provided by the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media (Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für Kultur und Medien, BKM) and the Cultural Foundation of the Federal States (Kulturstiftung der Länder, KSL) for the KEK Model Project Funding 2015. The Coordination Office for the Preservation of the Written Cultural Heritage (KEK) awards annual grants for corresponding measures, see <https://www.kek-spk.de/foerderung/allgemeine-informationen>.
- 34 Various companies offer corresponding, already completely filled emergency kits; for example, the Hans Schröder GmbH in Karlsdorf-Neuthard, Germany, <https://archivbox.com/de/zubehoer/notfallbewaeltigung/notfallboxen>.
- 35 Andrea Giovanni, *De Tutela Librorum. La conservation des livres et des documents d'archives—Die Erhaltung von Büchern und Archivalien*, 4th ed. (Baden: Hier und Jetzt Verlag, 2010), 542–46.
- 36 Civil protection is part of public safety and hazard prevention. In Germany, despite its high complexity, the subsidiary, expandable assistance system forms an efficient chain of hazard prevention, also in international comparison. See Jochen Molitor, "Zwischen Apokalypse und Alltagsunfall. Zur Geschichte des Bevölkerungsschutzes in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland," *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* (APuZ 10-11/2021), 10–15; and Wolfram Geier, "Strukturen des deutschen Bevölkerungsschutzes," *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* (APuZ 10-11/2021): 16–22. See also [https://www.thw.de/DE/THW/thw\\_node.html](https://www.thw.de/DE/THW/thw_node.html).
- 37 See Rainer Jedlitschka, "Vorbereitet für den Ernstfall—Notfallverbund Augsburg übt mit dem THW," *Der Archivar* 73 (2020): 55–56.
- 38 See Rainer Jedlitschka, "Notfallverbund Augsburg probt den Ernstfall," *Feuerwehr-Augsburg. Jahresausgabe*, no. 21 (2017): 10–11; and Dieter Seebach, "Notfallverbund Augsburg übt im Staatsarchiv," *THW-Journal Bayern* 1 (2020): 113–15.
- 39 Kistenich and Stumpf, "Notfallverbünde in vergleichender Perspektive," 61–65.
- 40 Notfallverbünde, "Treffen der Notfallverbünde."
- 41 Notfallverbünde, "Notfallverbünde in Deutschland," [www.notfallverbund.de](http://www.notfallverbund.de).
- 42 Ulrich Fischer and Thomas Thorausch, "Weimar—Köln—Rio—Paris. Bundesweites Arbeitstreffen der Notfallverbünde in Köln," *Der Archivar* 73 (2019): 254–55.
- 43 See <https://musterfabrik-berlin.de/landingpage/index.php/koelner-fragmente/>, captured at <https://perma.cc/W77M-MY9K>. Two hundred employees at the currently four locations of the City Archive take care of the cleaning, processing, and digital preservation of the recovered manuscripts, books, and documents. It is currently unclear who will have to bear the costs of the restoration. The city hopes to be able to assert claims for damages against the construction companies involved.
- 44 Thomas Bürger and Michael Vogel aptly summarized the goals and rules of emergency associations after the floods on the Oder and Neisse Rivers in 2010: "The experts must know each other; they must build up a network of accessibility; they must regularly conduct joint training and exercises. This creates professionalism and collegiality in interdisciplinary cooperation and sovereignty and mutual trust in extreme situations." Original quote: "Die Experten müssen sich kennen; sie müssen ein Netzwerk der Erreichbarkeit aufbauen; sie müssen regelmäßig gemeinsame Schulungen und Übungen durchführen. So entsteht Professionalität und Kollegialität in spartenübergreifender Zusammenarbeit und Souveränität und wechselseitiges Vertrauen bei Extremsituationen." Thomas Bürger and Michael Vogel, "Kulturgutschutz und Notfallverbünde. Herausforderungen und neue Initiativen nach dem Hochwasser," *Bibliotheken in Sachsen* 4 (2010): 222–24, 224.
- 45 *Kulturbetrieb*, "Kulturbetrieb. Das Magazin," <http://www.kulturbetrieb-magazin.de>; Riegel—KulturBewahren, <https://www.riegel-preis-kulturbewahren.de>, captured at <https://perma.cc/WF3Y-GA87>.
- 46 Riegel—KulturBewahren, "Notfallverbünde Deutschland ausgezeichnet," <https://www.riegel-preis-kulturbewahren.de/fruehere-preistraeger/riegel-2017>, captured at <https://perma.cc/7ALY-BZ74>. See also the concise laudatory speech "Plädoyer für 'Strukturierte Prävention'" ("Plea for 'Structured Prevention'") by Professor Dr. Andreas Burmester, chair of Restoration, Art Technology and Conservation Science at the Technical University of Munich, on the occasion of the award of the Riegel—KulturBewahren Prize for the Protection, Care and Exhibition of Art and Cultural Property in 2017 to the emergency associations in Germany, Riegel—KulturBewahren, "Plädoyer für Prävention," <https://www.riegel-preis-kulturbewahren.de/fruehere-preistraeger/riegel-2017/laudatio-2017-plaedoyer-fuer-strukturierte-praevention>, captured at <https://perma.cc/G57D-6XDN>.

- <sup>47</sup> Almut Siegel, “Die Notfallverbünde in Deutschland. SiLK-Team übernimmt die Koordination im Auftrag des Bundesamts für Bevölkerungsschutz und Katastrophenhilfe (BBK),” *Kulturbetrieb* 1 (2021): 78–79.
- <sup>48</sup> Sebastian Barteleit, EURANED: An European Initiative of Disaster Prevention and Disaster Management, *Restaurator. International Journal for the Preservation of Library and Archival Material* 31 (2010), H. 3/4, 178–183. For more details on the historical background of the European Archival Network for Disaster Management, see Das Bundesarchiv, “Disaster Prevention—Some Notes on the European Working Group,” [https://www.bundesarchiv.de/euronotfall/working\\_group/index.html](https://www.bundesarchiv.de/euronotfall/working_group/index.html), captured at <https://perma.cc/D4EH-FW7H>.
- <sup>49</sup> See Rainer Jedlitschka, “Erfahrungsaustausch zur Notfallprävention und -bewältigung im Nationalarchiv der Tschechischen Republik,” *Der Archivar* 73 (2020): 275–77; and Jiri Neuvirt, “Universal Drying Chamber for Flood-Damaged Paper Objects,” *Restaurator* 3–4 (2010): 222–45.
- <sup>50</sup> In Munich, Stuttgart, Cologne, Halle/Saale, Weimar, Dresden, and Berlin, the emergency associations, with the support of the local fire department and local units of the THW, are setting up material collection points on site to receive the donations in kind and prepare them for transport to Ukraine. Learn more at <https://www.dainst.org/-/hilfsguter-fur-den-kulturgutschutz-an-kulturinstitutionen-in-der-ukraine-verteilt>.
- <sup>51</sup> As the saying goes, it is better to “be wise before harm” than to “be wise from harm.” It was not until the mid-1990s that archives and libraries in Germany began to pay more attention to this issue. See Kistenich, “Lehren aus Köln,” 30–36, 31. At an annual conference of the International Institute for Archival Science in Maribor in 1992, Hermann Rumschöttel from Germany spoke about a fire at Trausnitz Castle in Landshut in Bavaria in 1961, which destroyed archival records of the Landshut State Archives at the time. He then called for archival disaster planning. Hermann Rumschöttel, “Der Großbrand im Staatsarchiv Landshut und die Notwendigkeit archivischer Katastrophenplanung,” *Atlanti* 2 (1993): 30–32.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



**Rainer Jedlitschka M.A.** graduated with a master's degree in modern history and German studies from the University of Munich and gained his teaching diploma in 1999. A visiting scholar at the University of California, Berkeley, in 2000, he completed his archival education at the Bavarian Archives School in Munich. Currently a senior archivist at the State Archives of Augsburg and alumnus of the German National Academic Foundation, he is also lecturer at the Bavarian Archives School and the University of Augsburg. In 2015, he was a founding member of the Augsburg Emergency Association and its chair. His publications focus on archival topics and modern German history.