# RISK ANALYSIS APPLIED TO A PORTUGUESE ARCHIVE

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The work here presented refers to a preservation risk analysis for the paper-based collection existing in Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino (Lisbon, Portugal) which gathers in its premises archival documentation spanning 500 years. The main objective of the risk analysis was to determine the mathematical magnitude of the risks observed in this Archive which made it mandatory to evaluate physically and environmentally the building itself and also to understand the human practices involved. The methodology was based on the Cultural Property Risk Analysis Model (CPRAM; Waller 2003) and constituted a practical and useful application of this model to a Portuguese archive. In this work the above mentioned model was for the first time applied to a Portuguese cultural institute.

During this risk assessment it was necessary to adjust the model, namely in the matter of the Value attributed to the collection in study and the decrease in this parameter once the collection was submitted to any level of damage. This work allowed the team and the Archive to identify the two main risks opposing the collection - Physical Forces and Fire – though the dramatic yet possible scenarios considered for these two agents of deterioration were major contributors for the high values encountered. Still according to our study, among the more manageable agents – and manageable is not a definition of less dangerous! – illumination and environmental settings were found as those that the institution could act on quickly and this action could increase dramatically the collection´s life span.

Using the CPRAM mathematical approach it was possible to point out which risks were the most relevant, and direct the institution towards solving them first. The risk analysis performed this Archive, besides acting as the support for the remedial and preventive measures towards the fire and physical forces issues (the ones with higher Magnitude of Risk (MR) values) resulted also in an enriched experience in the field of conservation in general and preventive conservation in particular. Constructed around a mathematical plot it is easy to deem it too complex and one can, at a first glance, consider more urgent a more practical preservation-related activity. Ironically, in a world ruled by financial constraints, this model is as practical as it gets. Further, use of the model not only helped to make conscious decisions but also to better understand both the collections as the building housing them.

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## Reference
Waller, Robert. 2003. *Cultural Property Risk Analysis Model: Development and Application to Preventive Conservation at the Canadian Museum of Nature*. Göteborg Studies in Conservation 13, ISSN 0284-6578; ISBN 91-7346-475-9 Göteborg Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, Göteborg; xvi + 189 p.p.

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risk analysis, archive, cultural heritage, CPRAM