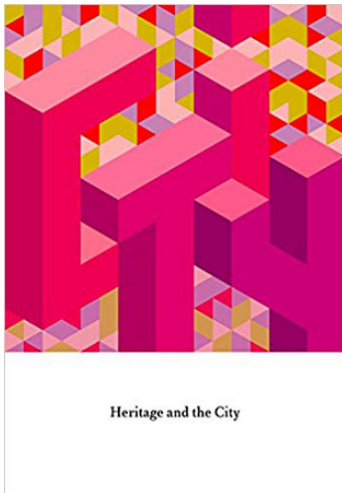


## HERITAGE AND THE CITY

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Robert Kusek and Jacek Purchla (eds.)  
*Heritage and the City*  
International Cultural Centre, Krakow, 2017, 315p.

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One can hardly find two more broadly discussed – and somewhat related – expressions than heritage and the city, which also suggest numerous other major topics such as cultural value, sustainability, creative industry or social inclusion. Accordingly the book by its title assumes a very rich and multifarious reading that is also the expressed aim of the editors who writes in the introductory chapter “*we hope that the volume will inspire further reflection and broaden the scope of the discussions dedicated to the city among heritage experts and professionals [S]imultaneously, in the case of the city-loving non-professional readership*” (p. 11). This wish is truly fulfilled with the publication of this 2017 work, edited by Robert Kusek and Jacek Purchla. The book is the product of the International Cultural Centre in Krakow, Poland, one of the most prestigious research institutes of (among other disciplines heritage studies in Central Europe). It manages numerous innovative cultural projects, and supports specialists with its outstanding library, summer schools and conferences. The current publication also coincides with the biannual conferences on contemporarily relevant aspects of heritage with a focus on Central Europe and the V4 countries (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia), as stated on the book cover.

Based on this background information it seems justifiable that the majority of the discussed case studies are from this region (overwhelmingly from Poland and with only a few exceptions such as Switzerland). However there are no cross-national comparative studies which would have helped to emphasize the aim to focus on Central-Europe. The reason behind that can be found in the introductory paper (titled *The City: A Laboratory of Heritage*), which explains how Central European-ness is fundamentally characterized by the multicultural aspects of each city. Accordingly, comparative investigation can and should be realized within each settlement. This complexity of Central European cities poses multiple challenges for the connection of heritage and the settlement and hence these places provide valuable examples for such investigations.

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Similarly the authors are mainly from Central Europe in its widest understanding. The overreaching scope of the title (*Heritage and the City*) does appear in the multiplicity and variety of the authors' specializations as well: there are at least fifteen different professions named in the short biographies at the end of the publication. Most of the contributors are the single authors of each paper. Only the introductory piece by Jacek Purchla (the then head of the International Cultural Centre) and Robert Kusek, and the chapter about Poznan by Bogusz Modrzewski and Anna Szkołut are co-authored. The only project in this publication that has multiple authors (four) is a Hungarian pilot project funded by the Norway Grants and the Hungarian state, organized centrally from Budapest and realized by diverse actors and scholars on the site.

Half of the contributors added visuals to their texts not just to illustrate but to explain a specific issue too. Throughout the chapters there are colour and black-and-white images about the contemporary or former state of the locations under examination, maps and plans about the built heritage and also tables and graphs with data about specific methodological questions or research findings. The book itself is framed with two visuals. On the last page a bird's eye view of the International Cultural Centre on the main square of Krakow can be seen. This is a commonly used image, a kind of defining visual feature of almost all the publications by the Centre. The graphic design on the front cover presents the word 'city' in front of a checked, non-figurative background. The relationship between the content of the book and the visual on its cover is complex. On the one hand, the design of the letters ('city') is in line with the poster style of a previous conference organized by the Centre on the same topic. On the other hand these letters have a building block shape that can allude to the built heritage aspect of the cities. Similarly, the geometrical and colorful shapes in the background are as inseparable from each other as the topics named in the title of the publication.

The reader can find both theoretical investigations (like Gábor Sonkoly's chapter on the concept of historic urban landscape) and case study analysis (for instance Hanna Grzeszczuk-Brendel's investigation on the urban movements of Poznan), as well as a combination of them (for example Heike Oevermann's chapter, which looks at industrial heritage and its possible management practices in four different countries: Switzerland, Germany, Poland and Hungary). These diverse paper types are grouped into five bigger units with identical titles. Two units deal with specific categories: urban landscape and the creative heritage city, two are dedicated to practices such as narrating and revitalizing the city and one section is about risk (entitled *Heritage in Conflict*) within the scope of heritage and the city. Each of these sections contains three chapters (except the first, which has four). Interestingly the order of these sections shows a kind of framing format as the first two and the last one have exclusively or mostly theoretical investigations whereas the parts in between them provide almost solely case studies, analyzing one or more settlements.

The content of the publication can also be structured by the type of heritage the different texts deal with. Industrial heritage, cultural landscape and historic urban landscape have already been named but chapters are also dedicated to shared (with the title *Central European Cities and Their Stories of Shared Memories*), forgotten (by the author Julia Sowińska-Heim), unwanted (with examples from the Balkan Peninsula) and many other types of heritage. Similarly, the cities under discussion show significant variations in terms of size (from a small settlement in Hungary, Balatoncsicsó with a population of 220 inhabitants according to the official town

website to a case study analysis of the German capital), location (such as coastal [for instance Piran in Slovenia or Frombork in Poland] or mountainous [such as Banská Štiavnica in Slovakia]) and character (a touristic city [like Izola in Slovenia] a creative industry-focused settlement [for instance Łódź in Poland] and a cultural capital [Pilsen in the Czech Republic]).

After reviewing all these different varieties, one might ask the question how coherently the seventeen papers can be connected to each other. The answer is the title of the book: *Heritage and the City*, as the connection of those two nouns is addressed in every case. Sergiu Nistor for instance focuses on the different heritages within the city, while in similar vein Riin Alatalu discusses the diverse oppressors' heritage within Tallinn. However, she describes an opposite relation in which these heritage examples are contested. Also to this category one can group those papers that focus on solely one aspect (such as built heritage or practice, involved or dismissed social group, expressed or denied historical period) within the integrity of the city. The only case study from Hungary can be included in this category, as the pilot project is about one single parish house within the settlement. Similarly one street in Poznan is in the focus of Hanna Grzeszczuk-Brendel's paper, while the role and possibility of grassroots organizations are the main subject of Alexandra Bitušíková, when she examines two Slovakian cities, Banská Bystrica and Banská Štiavnica, which have gone through major economic, social and urban transformations that were partially modified by the activities of these communities. Małgorzata Nieszczerewska's contribution, meanwhile, is a good example of papers centered around a single event. She investigates the process, intentions and influences of ruin porn, photography focusing on the decline of architectures. Gábor Sonkoly's chapter can also be grouped here looking at the top-down management recommendations for historic heritage examples in the cities. These papers pay significant attention to the relation of heritage and its surrounding which is managed, supported or challenged by the city administration.

Other authors investigate the situation when heritage that defines the city is the "result" of a historically formed relation. For instance in the case of the oriental cities on the Balkan Peninsula analyzed by Tobias Strahl, the built heritage remnants of a former period define not just the cityscape, but influence the related tourism and often the perception of contemporary society as well. However, often more recent processes structure the relation of heritage and the city to an extent when the perception 'heritage is the city' is formulated. This is discussed by Stsiapan Stureika regarding the harvest festival in Belarus, which is always connected to a kind of urban redevelopment at each location. Accordingly the intangible heritage defines the cityscape after the event as well. As a starting phase of such a relationship Łukasz Musiaka investigates the touristic potential of the tangible heritage in the former State of the Teutonic Order and suggests the advantages of the heritage impact on these settlements.

Many chapters target the issue of cities without heritage. Such a lack of relation can be seen as a natural result of transformation over time when the former industrial and military areas and their remains are not in use any more, as discussed by Bogusz Modrzewski and Anna Szkotut. However this disconnectedness can also be a consciously chosen path when a community forms a new image for its settlement and creates a new narrative as well as a physical surrounding as a set of representational tools. Julia Sowińska-Heim describes such a dismantling and creating process in Łódź in part 4 of this publication. A similar transformation is evaluated

through three examples from Slovenia (Koper, Izola and Piran) in Daniela Tomšič's paper, which focuses on the inductive and deductive components of cultural heritage in urban development projects. A city can also be in danger of losing its heritage if the "authentic owner" is missing. This well-known scenario is also described with a focus on the city without heritage in Tobias Strahl's paper about oriental cities.

Some papers are centered around the diverse interpretations of heritage and the city. These examples includes literary analysis (such as Csaba G. Kiss' writing about Banská Štiavnica) that looks at the myth of towns which formulate their heritage as well. Other authors look at more administrative texts and analyze the adapted narration about the given city and its heritage. This is the methodology Anne Karwińska used in analyzing the tale of Gliwice as well as in Heike Oevermann's paper (entitled *Urban Transformations: Reuses of Industrial Heritage Sites*), which examines the industrial heritage discourses of three cities in post industrial time. As can be seen, the above proposed understanding of the papers leads to a typography in which the examples can be categorized into more than one group. This exemplifies well how complex and interconnected the topic 'heritage and the city' is.

This book, which is dedicated to both professional and non-professional city enthusiasts, offers a wide range of city and heritage types and analyzes their possible relations. The authors of the papers provide unique and interesting case studies and introduce numerous methodologies that allow both target groups to look at these topics (heritage and the city) from new perspectives. By providing information from Tallinn to the Balkan Peninsula, with investigations that are participatory, empirical, comparative or theoretical, the volume fulfills its mission to explore the relation of heritage and the city in a perfectly structured publication, which will surely widen the knowledge and the perspective of its readers.