Reconnecting the City
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The Historic Urban Landscape Approach
and the Future of Urban Heritage

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Acknowledgements

This edited book on the on-going process of elaboration and implementation of the 2011 Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape, as developed and promoted by UNESCO since 2005, is part of an international effort to adapt urban conservation to the operational realities of the twenty-first century in which cities have assumed a critical role in human development.

A broad and growing coalition of professionals, decision-makers and community representatives in all parts of the world is participating in this process. It would be impractical to name all of them here.

We would like however to thank all our colleagues at the UNESCO Headquarters and in the Field Offices for their continued support and encouragement.

Various professionals in different parts of the world have provided critical reflections and observations on the Historic Urban Landscape as a process or product. We would like to acknowledge, in particular, the contribution of: Joseph King and Gamini Wijesuriya at ICCROM in Rome; Gustavo Araoz, Kristal Buckley and Sheridan Burke at ICOMOS; Stefania Abakerli and Guido Licciardi at the World Bank in Washington; Jeffrey Soule at the American Planning Association; Ana Pereira-Roders in Eindhoven; Marie-Theres Albert in Cottbus; Sarah Semple, Andreas Pantazatos, David Petts and Seif al-Rashidi in Durham; Karel Bakker in Pretoria; Alfredo Conti in La Plata; Muhammad Juma in Zanzibar; Susan Fayad in Ballarat; Louise Cox in Sydney; Jian Zhou in Shanghai; Lynne DiStefano in Hong Kong; Ayesha Pamela Rogers and Nadeem Tarar in Rawalpindi; Nobuko Inaba in Tokyo; Augusto Villalon in Manila; Christopher Young in London; Birgitta Ringbeck in Berlin; Jad Tabet in Beirut; Marc Breitman in Paris; Daniele Pini in Ferrara; Paolo Ceccarelli in Milan; Heleni Porfyriou in Rome; Pietro Laureano in Florence; Sophia Labadi in Canterbury; Lynn Meskell in Stanford; Paola Falini in Rome; Alessandro Balducci in Milan.

We would like to thank them all sincerely for their involvement and their dedication to the cause of urban conservation and we look forward to continued collaboration and expansion of the Historic Urban Landscape network.

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Francesco Bandarin, Paris
Ron van Oers, Shanghai
May 2014
In our previous book *The Historic Urban Landscape: Managing Heritage in an Urban Century* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), we argued that in spite of the decades long call for interdisciplinary work that was formally codified in the 1975 Amsterdam Declaration on Integrated Conservation, there is currently little integration of professions dealing with the process of heritage conservation and urban development. This leaves the field of urban heritage management seriously compartmentalised, with limited exchanges between the professional ‘silos’. This obviously reduces the efficiency and effectiveness of conservation efforts and it creates gaps that can be exploited by the forces that are not interested in the preservation of heritage resources.

In our view, the natural follow-up to the first book was to assemble a range of professional practices and viewpoints related to urban management to broaden the scope and reach of the Historic Urban Landscape as a conceptual framework and operational approach. The Historic Urban Landscape aims to respect and celebrate diversity – of heritage resources and cultural traditions – by suggesting a critical process (not a model) of identification and analysis to arrive at informed decisions regarding the policies and tools aimed at fostering sustainable urban conservation and management.

While affirming the universal importance of urban heritage, it advocates strongly for local solutions to its management, in the face of rapid urbanisation processes, as well as of the different political, cultural, and economic trajectories of contemporary societies. We argue that urban conservation practices over the past 50 years have been successful in creating a global consciousness of the importance of urban heritage and have allowed the safeguarding of many historic areas and cities. However, we also argue that the time has come to look at urban heritage as a resource for the entire city and for its sustainable development. In our view, this goal can be achieved by advancing the methodology for the implementation of the Historic Urban Landscape approach.

The essays in this book relate to a variety of disciplines and professional practices concerned with urban conservation and management, but they do not cover the entire spectrum. Surely other important tools and practices can be put to the fore, including those from the sociological, philosophical, anthropological, ecological and managerial disciplines. As such, this volume is a contribution that needs to be expanded and continued by other professional disciplines, actors and stakeholders.

The chapters are intersected with additional contributions, in the form of ‘case studies’ and ‘interviews’ with prominent professionals and personalities, in order to enlarge the range of opinions and perspectives. The case studies elaborate on particular applications of tools or present relevant examples, while the interviews...
discuss theoretical issues in relation to cities, urbanisation, communities, and the management of urban heritage in different parts of the world.

The Structure of the Book

Francesco Bandarin’s essay ‘Urban conservation and the End of Planning’ opens the reflection by discussing the situation of the disciplines of conservation and planning, in a world dominated by global processes and social and economic dynamics that have profoundly transformed the approaches to urban management and urban development. The separation between historic areas and the rest of the city that has characterised the twentieth century’s experience is seen today as a risk as well as a waste of an important stock of knowledge and experience.

The post-war attempts to reconnect conservation and planning have produced important intellectual results, but have proven inadequate to cope with the emergence of global processes and the de facto end of planning as the key urban management tool. In recent years, new methodologies have come to the forefront, based on a landscape approach to urban management that matches the principles expressed by the 2011 UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape and offers a new possibility to reconnect the city management processes, while also valuing the historic city as a resource for the future. The different contributions presented in the book have been organised in two sections, dealing respectively with the disciplinary perspectives on urban heritage conservation and with the development of a tool-kit for the implementation of the Historic Urban Landscape approach.

Section 1: The Layered Dimensions of Urban Conservation

All cities are the product of a gradual layering process that sometimes spans thousands of years of history, like for example in Damascus, Rome and Delhi, and sometimes this lasts just a few decades, as in Brasilia, Chandigarh and Shenzhen. Each layer represents a moment in the history of the city, an expression of its culture, of its economic strength, of the ways it adapts to the physical environment, of its innovation capacities and its technological achievements. The layering process is also the result of the interaction, all along history, between human societies and the environment, with the aim to create human settlements adapted to the needs of life, to the changes of population density and size, to the ambition of its inhabitants: in other words an Urban Landscape, which is the expression of the most complex and resilient invention of human-kind, the city.

The first part of this section deals with the physical layers of the city, what we can call the ‘stratigraphy’ of the city. The section starts with an examination of the role of archaeology in interpreting the layers of the urban environment. Tim Williams’ essay ‘Archaeology: Reading the City through Time’ discusses the role archaeology plays in today’s urban areas, in the planning process and in the construction of civic identity and sense of place. As much as archaeological remains are fundamental to the understanding of an urban complex, they constitute a presence that needs to be managed and made compatible with modern needs. This interface is multidimensional, and it involves scientific and policy choices that affect the way in which the layers of time can be preserved and exposed. It also needs technical capabilities to make compatible, infrastructure development and preservation, as well as it requires a comprehensive integration of the rationale of archaeology in the processes of civic participation and planning.

As much as cities are a layered built construct, they rest on another layered system, the geological strata formed during Earth’s history. This relationship is a fundamental one, albeit often forgotten with dire consequences for urban conservation and for the protection of urban environments from natural hazards.
This dimension is discussed by Margottini and Spizzichino in their chapter on ‘How Geology Shapes the Urban Environment’, through a number of case studies ranging from the ancient cities of Mesopotamia to more recent urban formations in Italy (Rome, Orvieto), Africa (Lalibela) and South America (Machu Picchu). This essay discusses the way in which the geological setting has determined the ways in which cities were built, their morphology, building materials and building types, as well as the way they were able to adapt to the hydrological and ecological constraints. The relationship of a city to its geological context is not only at the basis of its resilience through time (or of its collapse) but is also the main reason of the continuity of forms and types through the millennia. Obviously, the industrial age has interrupted this continuity, as it has allowed the use of non-local materials and of new building technologies. This ‘separation’ between the city and its geological context is at the origin of many of today’s challenges that are related to urban resilience, sustainability and energy efficiency.

Stefano Bianca’s essay on ‘Morphology as the Study of City Form and Layering’ looks at a discipline that analyses the results of the layering process, Urban Morphology, a powerful tool to understand the city’s history and to connect it to the processes of its development and rehabilitation. Urban Morphology analyses the historic urban fabric as a complex cellular micro-system that evolves organically. Because this discipline does not focus only on the outstanding monuments, but on the urban fabric as a whole, it can provide a basis for conservation planning and for renovation and adaptation processes that want to emphasise continuity of the urban form and of urban spaces.

The discussion on urban morphology is enriched by two short contributions. The first is an interview with Architect Wang Shu, who discusses the situation of urban conservation in China and the present trends. The second is a case study by Patrizia Gabellini that presents the evolution of the planning approach to conservation of the historic city of Bologna in Italy, well known for having been the first to apply the morphological approach to its historic conservation policies.

Finally, within this part dedicated to the urban physical environment, an issue of great importance is discussed, that is the resilience of cities with respect to natural hazards, in particular related to climate change. Anthony Gad Bigio’s essay ‘Historic Cities and Climate Change’ looks at these challenges through a review of the current situation of more than 200 cities inscribed on the World Heritage List. The analysis reveals a high degree of vulnerability, in particular to floods, landslides and climatic events. The essay discusses the policies cities can develop to enhance their resilience and to mitigate the impacts of climate changes in the long term, while preserving their historic character.

Bigio’s analysis is complemented by an interview with the physicist Filipe Duarte Santos that discusses the environmental challenges of the ‘urban century’ and the role urban heritage can play in the future.

The second part of this section deals with what could be termed ‘intangible’ layers centred on the social dimension of the city. Rohit Jigyasu’s essay on ‘The Intangible Dimension of Urban Heritage’ discusses the nature of the intangible values in historic environments and the process of their representation (or not) and preservation. Furthermore he looks, through the lens of some selected case studies in Asia, at the ways in which intangible values are associated to planning and management processes, and considers the tools that can be used and developed to identify and assess the impact on intangible heritage values.

An interview with Lisa Prosper, an indigenous peoples’ intellectual leader, complements this discussion on the role of intangible values as expressions of local identity. In addition, a case study by Feng Han presents the philosophical and cultural basis for the interpretation of Nature in the Chinese tradition that informs directly urban planning and design.

Another fundamental intangible layer of the city is certainly constituted by the planning and
management structures that condition and orient its development. The role of this social construct is examined in Francesco Siravo’s essay ‘Planning and Managing Historic Urban Landscapes’, which compares traditional urban planning methods with those needed to preserve the character and social structure of an historic environment. On the basis of an extensive experience in dealing with historic areas in Europe, Africa and Asia, he points to the components that a sensitive planning practice should consider in order to avoid disrupting the physical and social environments, ranging from the analysis of land ownership and tenure to economic activities, infrastructure and services needs, as well as to financial aspects.

Within this discussion the interview with Mohsen Mostafavi on the challenges of urban transformation, brings to our attention the risks of conservation approaches aimed at freezing the historic city, without considering its relationship with the broader urban, regional and ecological contexts.

Finally, the essay of Ken Taylor ‘Cities as Cultural Landscapes’ rounds up the discussion by presenting, through a number of case studies in Asia and Australia, the possible application of the Historic Urban Landscape approach to complex urban conservation situations. Its main point of concern is the construction of significance in urban places, as well as how urban heritage can become a resource to foster rehabilitation and regeneration of the modern city.

### Section 2: Building the Toolkit

Over the course of six years of policy review and best-practice analysis, during the time of discussion and elaboration of the new UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape between 2005 and 2011, the international community of practitioners identified four main types of tools that would be needed to regulate and facilitate heritage management in contemporary and dynamic urban contexts. The four main types include: civic engagement tools; knowledge and planning tools; regulatory systems and financial tools. These tool sets are elaborated respectively by Julian Smith, Jyoti Hosagrahar, Patricia O’Donnell, and Donovan Rypkema, who outline the key issues and the main benefits. These analyses have been supplemented by case studies and interviews aimed to highlight specific issues.

Overall, a great variety of tools for the conservation and management of urban heritage resources can be observed, arguably much more than most practitioners would realise. This should be seen as a reflection of the enormous effort put into urban heritage conservation and management over the last 40 to 50 years,¹ as discussed by Jukka Jokilehto in his essay ‘Evolution of the Normative Framework’. This extensive overview clearly reflects his lifelong professional engagement with the topic and serves as a benchmark against which to view the current shifts in thinking about urban conservation practice.

The next important step is to ensure a systematic, integrated and broad use of these tool sets in the management of urban heritage, which is the primary goal of this book. Naturally, not all tools can be easily transferred from one geo-cultural context to another, but the adaptation to one’s own context should begin with learning from others’ experiences and insights.

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Civic Engagement Tools

Cultural mapping and community participation in conservation planning and decision-making have become important tools to foster civic engagement. They are based on the recognition that the management of heritage, including its urban expressions, rests in the hands of its creators and custodians, not in the hands of absent caretakers. This is argued in particular by Julian Smith in his essay ‘Civic Engagement Tools for Urban Conservation’ that deals with experiences of urban revitalisation from within, and the tools needed to make conservation meaningful and successful.

An interview with His Highness the Aga Khan highlights the importance of engaging the communities of beneficiaries from the beginning of an intervention, in order to shape programmes that are responding to the effective local needs, and not to preconceived ideas of decision makers. A case study by Richard Engelhardt presents the Cultural Diversity Lens, a tool developed by UNESCO to recognise and value local cultural specificities.

Knowledge and Planning Tools

Jyoti Hosagrahar in her essay ‘Knowledge and Planning Tools’ discusses the tools needed to read and interpret the urban landscape, as well as those aimed at its protection and improvement. She points to the fact that as the notion of heritage significance is now extending beyond monuments and architectural ensembles, a broader range of knowledge and planning tools is needed and has to be made available to the urban heritage manager for safeguarding and developing the city’s heritage resources. A case study by Hidenobu Jinnai presents a methodology for the investigation of urban structures and meaning that supports an innovative approach to urban conservation and rehabilitation.

Regulatory Systems

In the Western world during the last two to three decades increasingly sophisticated regulatory tools have been conceived and adopted to facilitate a more holistic and integrated approach to heritage landscapes, including historic cities in their wider setting, as summed up in Patricia O’Donnell’s essay ‘The Role of Regulatory Systems’. Such a comprehensive approach is largely lacking in countries outside the Western context, due to their specific dynamics in the political, economic and social spheres, which have created different legal and institutional frameworks. An interview with Rahul Mehrotra illustrates the importance of these aspects in the

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2 The Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape outlines that: Civic engagement tools should educate a diverse cross-section of stakeholders and empower them to identify key values in their urban areas, develop visions, set goals, and agree on actions to safeguard their heritage and promote sustainable development. In particular, seeking a strengthening of governance and citizen participation in the reallocation of buildings. These tools that constitute an integral part of urban governance dynamics, should facilitate intercultural dialogue by learning from communities about their histories, traditions, values, needs, and aspirations and by facilitating the mediation and negotiation between conflicting interests and groups. UNESCO (2011) Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape, Paris: para. 24a.

3 Regarding knowledge and planning tools, the 2011 Recommendation further outlines that: Knowledge and planning tools should help protect the integrity and authenticity of the material attributes of urban heritage. They should also allow for the recognition of cultural significance and diversity, and provide for the monitoring and management of change to improve the quality of life and of urban space. Consideration should be given to the mapping of cultural and natural features, while heritage, social and environmental impact assessments should be used to support sustainability and continuity in planning and design. UNESCO (2011) Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape, Paris: para. 24b.

4 Regarding Regulatory Systems, the 2011 Recommendation outlines that: Regulatory systems should include special ordinances, acts, codes or decrees to conserve and manage tangible and intangible components of the urban heritage, including their social and environmental values. Traditional and customary systems should be recognised and reinforced as necessary. UNESCO (2011) Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape, para. 24c.
construction of cultural significance in non-Western contexts.

Financial Tools

Three authors share their insights and experiences regarding the availability and merits of different financial tools that could be employed in the urban heritage management process. Donovan Rypkema in his essay ‘Devising Financial Tools for Urban Conservation’ discusses a full range of traditional and innovative schemes that can be introduced to support urban heritage conservation policies within a Historic Urban Landscape approach. Christian Ost and MV Serra in their case studies, emphasise that effective urban heritage management is determined by values and aspirations, constrained by political realities and markets, characterised by shortcomings and externalities, as well as supported by tailor-made schemes involving incentives, regulation and investments. This involves multiple source financing, complex cost recovery mechanisms and subsidies.

The essay by Michael Turner and Rachel Singer ‘Researching and Mapping the Historic Urban Landscape’ offers a picture of the existing and possible collaborative efforts to expand academic knowledge and operational capacities for the implementation of the Historic Urban Landscape approach. Finally, the interview with Architect Rem Koolhaas provides an outlook on the future of heritage in a metropolitan world and points to the need to expand our view to new types of cultural resources, in response to an increasing demand for urban identity.

Ron van Oers completes the book with the essay ‘The Way Forward: An Agenda for Reconnecting the City’. The historic city is not just a fragment of the urban complex, it is a basis for its identity and a fundamental resource for its development. To achieve this, we have to reconnect the different disciplines that operate in the city, in support of a landscape approach which integrates physical and intangible dimensions. The need for new approaches and new instruments to enhance urban conservation policies and the city’s management processes is reflected in the Action Plan that accompanies the UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape. The Action Plan, currently being implemented in different parts of the world, is functional to a demonstration of the viability of the Historic Urban Landscape approach. To this purpose, a 20-point agenda is proposed to researchers, planners, administrators and citizens interested in reconnecting the historic environment with the modern city.

5The fourth set of tools specified in the 2011 Recommendation concerns financial instruments, which: should aim to improve urban areas while safeguarding their heritage values. They should aim to build capacities and support innovative income generating development rooted in tradition. In addition to government and global funds from international agencies, financial tools should be effectively employed to foster private investments at the local level. Micro credit and other flexible financing to support local enterprise, as well as a variety of models of public-private partnerships, are also central to making the approach financially sustainable. UNESCO (2011) Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape, para. 24d.
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Stefano Bianca, Architectural Historian and Urban Planner, studied at the ETH in Zurich, Switzerland, where he gained a PhD in 1972 and was visiting professor in 1978/79. He had a lifelong professional involvement with historic cities in the Islamic world. Since 1975 he has directed many important urban conservation and rehabilitation projects in cities such as Fes, Aleppo, Baghdad, Medina, Cairo, Zanzibar, Hunza, Samarkand and Kabul, some of them as director of the Aga Khan Historic Cities Programme (1992–2006). He is the author of many books and articles dealing with Islamic architecture, cities and gardens, as well as integrated conservation and urban planning. His most recent publications are: ‘Hofhaus und Paradiesgarten’, Munich, 1991 and 2001; ‘Urban Form in the Arab World – Past and Present’, Zurich, London and New York, 2000; ‘Cairo – Revitalising a Historic Metropolis’ (ed.), Torino, 2004; ‘Karakoram – Hidden Treasures in the Northern Areas of Pakistan’ (ed.), Torino 2005; ‘Syria – Medieval Citadels between East and West’ (ed.), Torino 2007. Email: stef.bianca@gmail.com
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