3   The Distinctiveness of Cities[1]
Heritage as a Mode of Reproduction

> In the dispositions of towns and cities are
> manifesed the memory of societies and
> landscapes.
> *(Karl Schlögel)*[2]

The concept of *Eigenlogik* – of a city's particular or intrinsic logic – has contributed to the debate which is now attempting to comprehend the ways in which every city is particular and different from all other cities, and to understand how this particularity takes definite form and is stabilized.[3] At first glance, built heritage would seem to play an obvious leading role in this function. Indeed, a city's built heritage is considered to be almost definitive of with its particularity and identity. However, seeing the "identity" or "DNA" of a city in its built heritage is an essentializing shortcut that runs counter to the concept of *Eigenlogik*. *Eigenlogik* might be understood as a 'mode of reproduction' that is operative in locally specific and long-lasting ways and is unconsciously implicit in all practices and routines.[4] That is to say, *Eigenlogik* as a locally operative praxis should be traceable also in those processes and practices through which heritage is reclaimed and shaped, interpreted and handed down. It is accordingly first and foremost the making and managing of a city's heritage that constitutes a rewarding field of study.[5]

The local as a research problem

What is 'local' about a built monument? At first glance, this would seem to be a simple matter, given the monument's fixed location. Upon closer inspection, however, locality turns out to be a parameter fraught with questions. All discourses of heritage, from the official designation to the attribution of 'meaning', evidently refer to contexts that

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1   Translation from the German by Gerrit Jackson with assistance from Johanna Blokker.

2   Karl Schlögel in the preface to Anziferow, Die Seele Petersburgs, 2003 (1922), 38.

3   Berking/Löw, Die Eigenlogik der Städte, 2008; Löw, The City as Experiential Space, 2013.

4   Bockrath, Städtischer Habitus, 2008, 76.

5   Frank, Wall memorials and heritage, 2016 (2009).

are barely, or not at all, tied to local circumstances, a fact that has come to be recognized as a major problem; note, for instance, how the World Heritage label spreads Western notions of value in parts of the world where people have very different understandings of collective memory and abide by different concepts of heritage.[6] And this is not, as many claim, just another effect of globalization; it is a problem that is as old as heritage preservation itself. When local construction businesses in post-revolutionary France dismantled the walls of the abbey at Cluny – Europe's most significant medieval monastery complex – to burn the stones for quicklime, it was scholars from Paris such as Prosper Mérimée who travelled to Burgundy to save the abbey. It was a civil servant with Berlin's building inspectorate, Karl Friedrich Schinkel, who 'discovered' the ruins of the abbey at Chorin as a national monument; in the countryside of Brandenburg it had fallen into oblivion, and locals were using it as a stable, among other things. The discovery of the Venus de Milo, too, initially elicited only a tepid local response. Even today, the ways in which global elites and local residents judge the value of cultural heritage often differ considerably.[7] The history of preservation is also the history of an attribution of meaning performed by outsiders. And even when the significance of a monument is undisputed on the local level, the local is not the framework within which this significance is attributed to it. Instead, local processes of recognizing and ascribing value to a monument generally take place in relation to global, national and regional frameworks. On the one hand, recent experience in the field of World Heritage in particular has produced striking evidence that local acceptance is indispensable to sustainable monument preservation. Yet on the other, in the logic of international heritage policies, value is defined precisely with regard to a monument's general significance: 'universal' heritage enjoys the highest status. By comparison, 'merely' national or regional significance would seem to carry a penalty; the local stands at the very bottom of this hierarchy.

This may be one reason why differences in local ascriptions of value have rarely been the focus of significant research. To be sure, differences between urban and rural populations, between higher and lower levels of education, between laypeople and heritage professionals – all have meanwhile become topics of scholarly interest. The extent to which cities belonging to a similar cultural sphere nevertheless reach decidedly different conclusions regarding the value of their heritage is a question that has not, however, been closely examined. Do these processes reflect city-specific features regarding, for instance, the selection and treatment of architectural monuments? Are there differences among the meanings attributed to comparable monuments in different cities? An initial study undertaken by the urban studies group at the Technical University in Darmstadt seems to confirm our sense that the issue presents a fertile field of research awaiting exploration: a comparative look at the ways in which reference groups of monuments – in this case medieval buildings – are treated in the three Hessian cities of Mainz, Frankfurt and Darmstadt, and an analysis of the significance they hold for each city's self-

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6   Ashworth/Graham/Tunbridge, Pluralising Pasts, 2007.

7   Vinken, Pranger von Bahia, 2015.

image, turns up revealing differences, including initial evidence for widely diverging local constructions of identity.[8]

Local history and *Eigenlogik*

In Frankfurt, the Middle Ages are a firmly established parameter in the self-image of a trading city steeped in tradition. The *Dom* (the city's main church) and the *Römer* (the medieval town hall), both of which were rebuilt after World War II, seem to occupy such an unquestionably central position in Frankfurt's urban self-image that preservationists feel no need to pay them particular attention. Instead, they focus their energies primarily on the 'unloved' monuments: post-war and industrial buildings such as the central market hall, now slated for conversion. In the perspective of city marketers, the *Römerberg* or main square in Frankfurt's old town, like the skyline dominated by the towers of German and international banks represents one of the main go-to vehicles of the city's brand, which can be adapted to appeal to individual target audiences. An island of tradition focused on the *Römer* and set before a backdrop of skyscrapers – this is the contrast in which the city probably recognizes itself most fully. A shriveled medieval remnant, an appendix, one might think; and yet a decisive point of reference and a conceptual lynchpin at the centre of vigorous debates over building policies, such as those currently revolving around plans for new construction and planned reconstruction at the site of the *Technisches Rathaus*, a large post-war administrative complex slated for demolition.[9]

The situation in Wiesbaden is different. A spa town that is not particularly rich in relics of medieval culture, the city, to quote its leading architectural preservationist, Martin Horsten, "shows astonishingly little passion" for the monuments of its early history. Experts cherish the Romanesque Sonnenberg castle, an impressive complex whose history reaches back into the 12th century, as well as the medieval town fortifications, as incomparable monuments of the era's military architecture. In the 19th century, during the rise of *Rheinromantik*, the castle was developed as a tourist destination for paying visitors and was staged as the terminus of a picturesque promenade through the spa gardens; it quickly became a popular postcard motif. Even today, however, it is proving difficult to elicit public interest in this neglected object; questions regarding the uses of the city's extensive parks, by contrast, routinely draw a great deal of public attention.

The situation in Darmstadt is more difficult to describe. The former artists' colony *Mathildenhöhe*, a famous Art-Nouveau ensemble, is unrivalled as the city's premier piece of architectural heritage and is currently being considered for nomination to the World Heritage list; the great public interest in plans to erect new buildings in the area demonstrates that it is not only outsiders who recognize the ensemble's significance. In the highly heterogeneous cityscape, where post-war rebuilding has had a profound impact, architectures of different eras appear in impassive contiguity. In the early 20th century,

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8   Vinken, Lokale Sinnstiftung, 2011.

9   The *Dom-Römer Areal* planned at that time has now been realized (cf. the essay on Frankfurt in this volume (Chapter 12).

the city added an additional story to the *Weißer Turm*, a remnant of the town's old fortifications now located next to a major department store, with the explicit aim of improving the structure's visibility and prominence amid a city that had grown larger and taller around it. Additional vestiges of fortifications stand, slightly perplexed, outside the *Darmstadtium* convention centre, as well as in a nearby green space (these remains can be a little difficult to find). According to Nikolaus Heiss, the city's appointed preservationist, Darmstadt values all eras of its past. The goal is to exhibit the city's history in its variety, operating on the broadest basis possible. As to the Middle Ages, they occupy their allotted place without much ado, as well-restored and clearly labelled architecture.

This initial and cursory diagnosis is neither coincidental nor arbitrary. There are tangible reasons why the Middle Ages are of different relative significance to the three cities I have discussed. Frankfurt, the modern banking metropolis, is identified as a medieval establishment by its very name: legend has it that the town arose near a ford (*Furt*) held by the Franks and once used by Charlemagne to escape his Saxon pursuers. The *Römer* represents two central features of the city's self-image: the German kings were crowned here, and, perhaps even more salient, the building housed the most important market of this free imperial city and mercantile centre – a tradition that Frankfurt likes to regard as living on, uninterrupted, into the present. By reconstructing and simulating 'medieval' showpieces, Frankfurt keeps its mythical roots in sight. A city that has dedicated itself to global trade finds stability in an assertion of its origins set in stone: we are reminded that monument preservation is always also a medium of self-assurance.

By contrast, Wiesbaden, the erstwhile ducal residence and present-day state capital, sees itself primarily as a spa town. Although it was already known for its baths in antiquity and during the later reign of Charlemagne, the city did not rise to supraregional significance until the 19th century, when it became known as the "Nice of the North"; its baths, casinos and expansive parks attracted the courts of the German emperors, and in their train, it became a meeting point for the wealthy and fashionable from all over the world. To this day, the facilities that define Wiesbaden – sometimes called "Pensionopolis" (Retiree-opolis) – as a spa town and ducal residence, namely its gardens, representative bathhouses and villas, dominate the city's self-image. The Middle Ages simply do not fit into this picture: they bring connotations of the dark, the primitive and the provincial to mind that are incompatible with the desired image of a fashionable, elegant and modern resort town. If the Middle Ages have a place here, it is in the form of a *point de vue*, a picturesque ruin set in a park that frames and tames its otherness as a showpiece. That was indeed what happened in the 19th century, although as more recent history shows, this adaptation was not enough to build an emotional attachment to Wiesbaden's medieval monument among the city's residents.

Darmstadt presents a less clear-cut diagnosis. The town was granted its charter as a city in the 14th century. Its history is inextricably tied to that of the palace, which was expanded in a representative fashion in the Renaissance and Baroque periods. The old town, whose history reached back into the Middle Ages, burned down almost entirely in 1944 and was rebuilt after the war on a new street plan; outside the city centre, by contrast, many historic buildings were reconstructed. The result is a paradoxical picture that is difficult to read at first glance: a modern city is surrounded by architectural

monuments from various eras. A former ducal seat whose economy is dominated by service industries and public administration, the city has always been oriented towards the palace and never developed a strong civic image of its own. When the university moved into the palace, Darmstadt became an academic centre. Yet, other competing images continue to exist, including Darmstadt as "City of the Arts", as "City Amid Forests" and, the favourite of preservationists, as "Art-Nouveau City". Who can dispute that the *Mathildenhöhe* is more important to Darmstadt's image than are its medieval town walls? Still, these stand as a generally accepted part of the city's architectural heritage, living in placid coexistence with their more renowned neighbour; the different parts of this city's history do not interfere with each other. These findings merit further study, which may contribute to a more defined hypothesis about the way in which *Eigenlogik* operates.

With all this in mind, a fertile field in which to begin the scholarly examination of urban *Eigenlogik* would be a comparative exploration of the ways locals engage with cultural heritage, a look at the local specificity of how heritage is 'made and managed'. A second and, to my mind, even more interesting line of inquiry would address the special character of built heritage as a phenomenon of permanence having a physical basis, and thus as a medium of collective memory.[10] In her work on *The Sociology of Space*, Martina Löw has shown how any production of space must be described as taking place in an interplay between given physical circumstances and social practices.[11] How exactly can we conceptualize this interplay in relation to urban *Eigenlogik*? Helmuth Berking speaks of an "elective affinity among spatial organization, the physical environment, and cultural dispositions".[12] He continues: "Urbanity is associated with patterns of perception and emotion, of action and interpretation that, taken together, constitute what we can call the urban *doxa*".[13] How does this "association", this elective affinity between a built environment and cultural dispositions, come into being, how does it take definite form, stabilize and reproduce? With a view to built heritage as a privileged subset of the physical world, can we say that it operates in this interplay as a stabilizer of such interrelations – that it operates, to use Ulf Matthiesen's term, as an amplifier of *Eigenlogik*? [14]

Memory

We are used to thinking of the distinctiveness of a city in terms of the particularity and permanence of its urban spaces and architectures. A city's built heritage, in particular, is seen as making a significant contribution to the formation of its urban identity. Theoretically ambitious conceptualizations of the interplay between the specific and historically-developed urban environments and social valuation processes first emerged in

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10   Halbwachs, Das kollektive Gedächtnis, 1950.

11   Löw, The Sociology of Space, 2016 (2001).

12   Helmuth Berking and Martina Löw in their introduction to: Die Eigenlogik der Städte, 2008, 8.

13   Berking, Skizzen zur Erforschung der Stadt und der Städte, 2008, 23. Italics in the original.

14   Lecture held by Ulf Matthiesen at the colloquium "Space, Place, Power" in Darmstadt in January 2011.

the 1960s. The timing was not coincidental: resistance to the dictates of modernist instrumental functionalism arose in the name not only of the city's image and its individuality,[15] but also of the regional and the local. Against the doctrine of the International Style and its claim to universal validity, critics took recourse to the specific site and its history. The famous book *Architecture of the City* published by the architect and theorist Aldo Rossi in 1966 strikes me as containing several particularly interesting points that might be taken up by the hypothesis of *Eigenlogik*.[16] The city, Rossi writes, has a biography that is manifest in its buildings and spatial structures. This biography is a matter not so much of sedimented history but rather of collective memory, an unconscious that participates actively in present-day processes of urban design and interpretation. This point is of decisive importance for a city's future viability, Rossi argues in a radical turn away from technocratic planning traditions, since the productive creation of new architecture is impossible without recourse to this 'memory'. Rossi indeed reads the city's architecture as a 'mode of reproduction', or as "conditioned and conditioning", to use his own words.[17]

This mode of reproduction, Rossi goes on to argue, is anchored in permanent structures such as the urban layout and local architectural typologies of a city, but most importantly in its so-called "primary elements": its key buildings, which are the privileged sites where meaning aggregates. And it is these key buildings, which are profoundly imprinted on the collective memory, that can be described as built heritage in the full sense of the term.[18] The meaning and great significance these monuments have for the city, Rossi argues – and this argument is particularly interesting in our context – are tied to their permanence, to their survival as vehicles of meaning that is not bound to functions more strictly conceived. To the contrary, Rossi writes, these buildings retain their ability to define the image and identity of a city even as their functions change and even after they have lost all 'useful' function.[19]

Rossi's *Architecture of the City* seeks to conceptualize the elective affinity between the attribution of meaning and the physical circumstances as the result of an interplay between permanent meaningful structures and buildings on the one hand, social practices of value ascription on the other; it is in this sense that architecture is 'conditioned and conditioning'. Urban spaces are, according to this view, not merely the products of design and planning processes, of changing social actions and attributions. Rather, they themselves 'inform' the social actions performed on them and with them. The material givens of a city do not merely reflect general and local power relations and interests, they actually shape and stabilize social actions and lend them their specific local character. To my mind, Rossi's theses read like a theory of *Eigenlogik* avant la lettre: each city is individual and each is particular because it reproduces its features in a constant interplay of proposed meanings and attributions, a dynamic process in which the permanent architectural elements act as stabilizing factors. In the following sections, I will

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15   Lynch, The Image of the City, 1960.

16   Rossi, The Architecture of the City, 1984 (1966).

17   Rossi, The Architecture of the City, 1984 (1966), 32.

18   Rossi, The Architecture of the City, 1984 (1966), 22.

19   Rossi, The Architecture of the City, 1984 (1966), 88–94.

examine the question of how these architectural elements, and built heritage in particular, act as amplifiers of *Eigenlogik*. Since I am exploring largely uncharted territory, I can only offer a sketch of some major aspects of the issue.

Permanence

Built heritage is involved in processes of collective meaning (re)production in a very special way. Its privileged role in the stabilization of urban distinctiveness is a virtue of its social construction as a permanent and stable marker of identity. The monument is permanent – not so much in its physical existence (which of course is limited) but rather in its construction as heritage – at least for as long as it is recognized as such.[20] All production of meaning that envisions heritage produces permanence. Practices in the field of heritage preservation aim at perpetuation and reproduction, at making their object everlasting and present – not unlike the liturgy: eternity achieved by means of ceaseless reenactments. On a side note, this construction of permanence explains all measures directed at heritage preservation, down to the creation of replicas and reconstructions.[21]

My first hypothesis, then, is that heritage is predestined to serve the formation and amplification of city-specific modes of reproduction because the attribution of permanence is intrinsic to it. Heritage preservation, as a 'liturgy of commemoration', is by design a mode of reproduction. Dominant among the practices and routines that are directed at, and constitute, the monument are those that are framed as reproduction or re-enactment. The authority of heritage is rooted in an assertion of its permanence, and this permanence is delegated to its materiality. But it is again important to note that this property of permanence is not to be confused with the actual material presence of the heritage object, which may be attenuated to the point of complete disappearance; rather, it is an integral structural component of the concept of the monument. The power of the monument lies in this very ability to attract new ascriptions of meaning and to legitimize them by virtue of its apparent permanence. These processes of meaning attribution are not unrestrained, however, but are structurally stable and directional to a large degree. This is because every ascription of meaning to a built object, if it is to be successful, must adhere to the perpetuating formula of the liturgical: that is, it must be a "reproduction".

That is my second hypothesis on heritage as an amplifier of *Eigenlogik*: to be successful, an attribution of meaning to a monument must be a reproduction or re-enactment, one which in extreme cases can also accommodate breaks and contradictions. The monument's material construction is necessary to its complex figure of permanence. On the one hand, the physical reality of the monument produces and enables the notion of simple duration in time, and hence its credibility or authority as heritage. On the other

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20   Pred, Place as Historically Contingent Process, 1984.

21   Nerdinger, Geschichte der Rekonstruktion, 2010.

hand, the physical substance of the monument literally serves as the material on which successive attributions of meaning can be inscribed.[22]

Alienness

The monument is the product of an attribution of stability: it is a permanent sign and a sign of permanence. The attribution of collective meaning to such objects and the aggregation of (originally religious) practices around them that promised physical permanence were among the earliest cultural activities of human society, as was the production of them. Particularly illustrative examples include prehistoric megaliths and sites such as Stonehenge. Yet the decisive point about these objects is not their permanence as such, but rather their ability to store meaning. By 'store' I do not mean that they serve as passive reservoirs, but that they can act as vehicles of meaning, vehicles driving an ongoing process in which meaning is rendered relevant to the present in a relational fashion. The authority of the 'always already' is coupled to current relevance by the monument's physical reality. The latter lends the monument its presence: it is visibly and palpably part of the spaces in which we live. But at the same time and just as evidently, as the very definition of the monument implies, its origins do not lie in our own time. In its physical reality it precedes us, it is "old". Alois Riegl, the great theorist of the monument of the turn of the 20th century, wrote a treatise on the "modern cult of monuments" in which he ascribed central significance to what he called "age value" (*Alterswert*).[23] The most salient quality the monument possessed, he believed, was not its historic value, not its ability to attest to a past era, but rather its quality of being visibly and palpably old. It is this quality that enables us to experience the fundamental truth that becoming and passing never cease; it is this quality that allows us to participate on an emotional level in something that exceeds our own limitations, that reaches far into the past and the future.[24]

The monument's age, authenticated by its physical reality, engenders a highly powerful double experience: that of familiarity – the object has always been there – as well as that of alienness – the object is not of our time, and thus not (entirely) ours. It projects from a different time, from another world into ours. Our interpretations and attributions of meaning do not entirely exhaust it; hence, the monument is alien in the sense that it is not (entirely) comprehensible. Built heritage cannot be understood in a concrete way because many aspects of it may be incomplete, fragmentary or just 'missing': aspects such as the circumstances of its production, the stages of its transmission, or its original use or meaning. At the same time it is inaccessible in a very fundamental way simply because it is old, and thus produces a figure of difference relative to current and past interpretations and attributions.

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22   Wohlleben, Theoretische Grundlagen, 1999. The intangible heritage would require a separate study at this point with regard to its *Eigenlogik* effects.
23   Riegl, Der moderne Denkmalkultus, 1903.
24   Riegl, Der moderne Denkmalkultus, 1903, 150.

Now the figure of difference so produced, which eludes complete comprehension or resolution into a precisely defined meaning, by no means makes the monument any weaker. On the contrary, its aura and authority are directly linked to this (attribution of) alienness, alterity or excess. In his book on *Bau und Überbau* (Structure and Superstructure), the art historian Martin Warnke has described the Gothic cathedral as a figure of excess or '*Überschuss*'.[25] The question he was trying to answer was this: What motivated people in the Middle Ages to erect these gigantic buildings, which by virtue of their sheer size and the effort and expense required to build them are conceivable only as the joint accomplishments of many different social groups? How was it possible to keep these social groups with their divergent interests committed to a shared goal for many decades? Warnke's novel idea is that the cathedral is a "figure of excess" that eludes any attempt to offer a final or complete interpretation or to subordinate it in its entirety to any specific intention or plan. It is precisely because the cathedral literally "surmounts" everything that it can become, beyond all divergent interests, becoming a screen on which community can be projected, that it can serve as a vehicle of collective meaning.

The monument is more than the "witness who can be interrogated again and again" which heritage preservation institutions like to invoke. It is more than a product of competing 'makings' and processes of negotiation. Its meaning resides in the very fact that it is inexhaustible: a figure of excess whose authority and ability to sustain the emergence of consensus are ultimately rooted in a double experience – that of its evident permanence and its evident alienness.

Mode of reproduction

Built heritage is constructed as a figure of excess that proves resistant to complete interpretive comprehension and time and again requires reinterpretation. With regard to the interrelation between built heritage and *Eigenlogik*, another point is crucial. The attribution of meaning to a monument is indeed fundamentally open in the sense that it is always incomplete; but it is by no means open in the sense of being unrestricted or free of presuppositions. Readings or attributions of meaning in the context of built heritage are oriented towards an origin – not unlike the exegeses of a sacred book, the meaning of which is obscure and yet presumed across all interpretive approaches to be present and powerfully operative. The relevance of the monument is rooted not in its current topicality but in its authenticity. The logic of the attribution of meanings is the current exegesis of something that is said again and again; it is the act of rendering present an older, original and hence true meaning.

This ability to render the past present also proves to be a structural bridge across profound ruptures. When the power of interpretation shifts radically, for example, in the transition from a colonial to a postcolonial society, heritage is transformed. Exactly what is important is now different. The Jesuit church may be joined by the pillory. Yet even these new interpretations, as scholars in the field of postcolonial studies have emphasized again and again, are not trapped between the alternatives of affirmation or

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25   Warnke, Bau und Überbau, 1984.

rejection, but instead create palimpsestic appropriations, fusions whose heterogeneity allows them to melt down older and contradictory layers of meaning as well, suspending the various origins.[26] The monument is accordingly not (or certainly not first and foremost) a mirror of conflicting powers of interpretation or successive processes of negotiation. Operative in it are echoes of older attributions: repressed and almost illegible information regarding its meaning, which is now present only in the form of displacements, disfigurations and palimpsestic inscriptions – and which, not unlike the unconscious, nonetheless has an effect, helping to shape present-day attributions of meaning. [27] A structural form of self-reference is characteristic of the monument, a mode of reproduction that persists through all 'makings'.

26   Lagae, From Patrimoine partagé, 2008.

27   For Derrida heritage is a ghostly phenomenon, "haunting" us with older, latent or unconscious layers of meaning; cf. Derrida, Specters of Marx, 1994 (1993).