

asserts that the arbitrariness of the states and societies in Iran has created a history consisting of "a series of short runs", interrupted by successive waves of groups in political and economic power. In other words, it is a pick-axe society undergoing a recurring cycle of revolutionary detachment from established structures, re-establishment of new structures, and detachment once again. Every governing authority endeavours to dismantle the prevailing system and institute a fresh one, yet paradoxically, this very process perpetuates the cycle.

The historical trajectory of conservation and urban heritage planning in Iran throughout the past six decades is characterized by a series of fragmented aspirations, transient accomplishments, and iterative fresh beginnings. This pattern endures, whether instigated by revolutionary upheavals, transformative shifts in governmental power, or reconfigurations in city administrations.

## The academic scope of the book

Conservation research has brought attention to the intricate link between conservation and urban development, elucidating how national policies pertaining to urban development have influenced the politics surrounding conservation.<sup>2</sup> The field of conservation has been urged to reconsider its methodologies and strategies in order to strengthen its role and flexibility in response to contemporary urban problems.<sup>3</sup> Given

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2 Gregory J Ashworth and John E Tunbridge, 'Old Cities, New Pasts: Heritage Planning in Selected Cities of Central Europe', *GeoJournal*, 1999, 105–16; Gregory John Ashworth, 'Conservation as Preservation or as Heritage: Two Paradigms and Two Answers', *Built Environment (1978-)* 23, no. 2 (1997): 92–102; Max Page and Randall Mason, *Giving Preservation a History: Histories of Historic Preservation in the United States* (Routledge, 2004); John Pendlebury, *Conservation in the Age of Consensus* (London: Routledge, 2008).

3 Ashworth, 'Conservation as Preservation or as Heritage: Two Paradigms and Two Answers'; Hans-Rudolf Meier, *Denkmale in Der Stadt--Die Stadt Als Denkmal: Probleme Und Chancen Für Den Stadtumbau* (Dresden: TUD press, 2006); Pendlebury, *Conservation in the Age of Consensus*; Francesco Bandarin and Ron van Oers,

the diversity of national and regional planning contexts, the exploration of case studies is thus imperative to unveil the various scenarios that may emerge during the practical execution of conservation policies.<sup>4</sup>

In studying cultural heritage and conservation policy and practice, researchers have analyzed the discursive processes of significance production and the power dynamics involved in defining heritage and determining what elements are deemed worthy of conservation.<sup>5</sup> While acknowledging the importance of discourse, researchers have emphasized the material aspects of cultural heritage<sup>6</sup> and how empirical fac-

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*Reconnecting the City: The Historic Urban Landscape Approach and the Future of Urban Heritage* (Wiley, 2014); Stephanie Ryberg-Webster and Kelly L. Kinahan, 'Historic Preservation and Urban Revitalization in the Twenty-First Century', *CPL Bibliography* 29, no. 2 (2014): 119–39.

- 4 Randall Mason and Erica Avrami, 'Heritage Values and Challenges of Conservation Planning', in *Management Planning for Archaeological Sites*, ed. Gaetano Palumbo and Jeanne Marie Teutonico (Corinth: Getty, 2002), 13–26; Helaine Silverman, 'Heritage and Authenticity', in *The Palgrave Handbook of Contemporary Heritage Research* (London: Springer, 2015), 69–88; Jeremy C Wells and Barry L Stiefel, *Human-Centered Built Environment Heritage Preservation: Theory and Evidence-Based Practice* (New York: Routledge, 2019).
- 5 Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (London: Routledge, 2006); David C Harvey, 'The History of Heritage', in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Heritage and Identity*, ed. Brian J. Graham and Peter Howard (Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2008), 19–36; John Pendlebury, 'Conservation Values, the Authorised Heritage Discourse and the Conservation-Planning Assemblage', *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 19, no. 7 (2013): 709–27, doi:10.1080/13527258.2012.700282; Silverman, 'Heritage and Authenticity'; Heike Oevermann, Eszter Gantner, and Sybille Frank, *Städtisches Erbe – Urban Heritage, Informationen Zur Modernen Stadtgeschichte* (Berlin, 2016); Christoph Bernhardt, Martin Sabrow, and Achim Saupe, eds., *Gebaute Geschichte: Historische Authentizität Im Stadtraum* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2017).
- 6 Rodney Harrison, 'Conclusion: On Heritage Ontologies: Rethinking the Material Worlds of Heritage', *Anthropological Quarterly*, 2018, 1365–83; Rodney Harrison et al., *Heritage Futures: Comparative Approaches to Natural and Cultural Heritage Practices* (UCL press, 2020).

tors such as professional, economic, and educational conditions can influence conservation practices.<sup>7</sup>

This book centres its attention on Iran's historical development of conservation and heritage planning.<sup>8</sup> Within this context, both discursive and material processes involved in conservation and heritage planning are examined, with their dynamics explored across multiple spheres, including the administrative, academic, professional, and social realms. This investigation primarily focuses on research inquiries at the convergence of conservation and urban studies. The book investigates socio-spatial processes of policymaking and practice regarding the maintenance, restoration, and reuse of urban spaces.

Addressing conservation within an urban context gives rise to a fundamental inquiry: What defines urban conservation or urban heritage planning? The UNESCO World Heritage Committee has classified heritage sites according to the physical scale of the built or natural features they cover, including monuments, groups of buildings, or cultural landscapes (settlements of both cultural and natural significance).<sup>9</sup> In practical terms, and notably in large cities of Iran, the conservation of an entire urban area is seldom achievable due to the scarcity of preserved historic

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7 Wells and Stiefel, *Human-Centered Built Environment Heritage Preservation: Theory and Evidence-Based Practice*.

8 Ashworth distinguishes between conservation and heritage based on their respective objectives, methods of work, selection criteria, and strategies. Accordingly, this book employs the term 'conservation' to describe the preservation of the built environment with the aim of safeguarding its intrinsic value, which includes its age and artistic significance, while adhering to the methodological traditions of the architectural conservation profession. On the other hand, the term 'heritage' is used when approaches in handling the built environment, history, and memory are tailored to meet the current economic and sociopolitical objectives, rather than focusing on the inherent value of specific monuments. See: Ashworth, 'Conservation as Preservation or as Heritage: Two Paradigms and Two Answers'.

9 The World Heritage Committee, 'Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention' (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, Paris, 2021), chap. II.

fabric. Does this suggest that urban conservation or urban heritage planning are almost nonexistent in Iranian cities or similar urban contexts?

Under the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) approach, the understanding of an urban area has transcended the confines of the conventional categories mentioned above.<sup>10</sup> HUL encompasses the geographical setting, the natural and built aspects, as well as the intangible cultural and socio-economic features of the urban structures under consideration. In my investigation of conservation processes, I adopt a comparable multifaceted perspective. However, to maintain a focused scope, I choose to include only those conservation processes that demonstrate urban-scale significance, thereby avoiding an overly broad perspective that could arise from applying the HUL approach to the notions that I explore in this book. Adopting a relational perspective on the notion of scale thus provides an effective framework for explaining the practices I observed in my research of conservation projects in Tehran. In essence, I focus not on the *size of the objects* being conserved, such as monuments or urban areas, but rather on the *scale of their influence* during or after the preservation process.

Storper and Scott argue that not every phenomenon occurring within a large city can be considered an urban phenomenon. The label of "urban phenomenon" or a constituent element of the city is appropriate only when it "influences urban land nexus dynamics" and contributes to shaping the city's form.<sup>11</sup> For instance, let us consider repurposing a museum. If our concern lies primarily with its internal arrangements, such as interior architecture and structural stability, we are operating within the realm of architectural conservation. However, if we are addressing its placement within the city's socio-economic relationships, including variables such as human and vehicular traffic, parking capacity, the emergence of amenities such as cafes and bookstores, or the utilization of municipal funds that may influence other city projects, we are discussing urban heritage planning. According to this approach,

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10 WHC UNESCO, 'Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape', 2011.

11 Michael Storper and Allen J. Scott, 'Current Debates in Urban Theory: A Critical Assessment', *Urban Studies* 53, no. 6 (2016): 1114–36.

individual buildings, beautified facades, or, as I will discuss in the case study chapter, graffiti art that leaves a socio-spatial mark on the city's engagement with its past can be considered elements of urban heritage planning.

## Underlying concepts

### Urban heritage assemblage

To fully comprehend the evolution of the academic and professional field of conservation, it is necessary to examine the material role played by historic places, urban spaces, urban infrastructure, and the environment, in addition to analyzing heritage discourses. Within the field of urban planning, scholars have situated heritage planning processes within socio-spatial<sup>12</sup> assemblages.<sup>13</sup> Also, scholars in heritage studies have studied heritage assembled within national and local socio-economic contexts,<sup>14</sup> and as discursive-material processes.<sup>15</sup>

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- 12 When assemblage theory is utilized to examine cities and the social processes within them, it takes into account both the social and spatial elements involved. Consequently, it perceives urban processes as socio-spatial processes. See: Manuel DeLanda, *A New Philosophy of Society: Assemblage Theory and Social Complexity* (London & New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2006).
- 13 Jean Hillier, 'More than Meat: Rediscovering the Cow beneath the Face in Urban Heritage Practice', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 31, no. 5 (2013): 863–78; Shulan Fu and Jean Hillier, 'Disneyfication or Self-Referentiality: Recent Conservation Efforts and Modern Planning History in Datong', in *China: A Historical Geography of the Urban* (Springer, 2018), 165–91.
- 14 Sharon Macdonald, 'Reassembling Nuremberg, Reassembling Heritage', *Journal of Cultural Economy* 2, no. 1–2 (2009): 117–34; Pendlebury, 'Conservation Values, the Authorised Heritage Discourse and the Conservation-Planning Assemblage'.
- 15 Solmaz Yadollahi, 'Prospects of Applying Assemblage Thinking for Further Methodological Developments in Urban Conservation Planning', *The Historic Environment: Policy & Practice* 8, no. 4 (2 October 2017): 355–71; Harrison, 'Conclusion: On Heritage Ontologies: Rethinking the Material Worlds of Heritage'; Har-