1 The Heritage of Cities
An Introduction

Cities are: dynamic, chaotic, dense, big, heterogeneous, anonymous, meaningful, inscrutable, dazzling, contradictory, eternal. And so on. Studying cities in terms of their heritage means focusing on issues different to those addressed by conventional debates on monuments and conservation. The city slices through the images of homogeneity that the concept of heritage often invokes, whether in terms of homeland/*Heimat*, region or even nation, and that also contaminate recent debates such as those on heritage communities, for instance around indigenous heritage.[1] Cities are distinguished by density and heterogeneity, and by comparatively high levels of dynamism, both social and spatial. As a result, debates over heritage, over the ways heritage is articulated and the ways claims to heritage are staked, merge with other structures of the imagination. Even if these, too, are at times not entirely free of traces of essentialism, the heritage of cities nonetheless reveals unmistakably that heritage production is a process.

It is thus no accident that new topics in the theory of heritage conservation have often emerged on the territory of urban heritage conservation. For instance, the concept of the monument, which, since the 19th century, had been focused on the individual monument, on exceptional architecture, was successfully enlarged around 1900 via the concept of the urban ensemble. This concept embraced not only everyday architectures but also the spatial relations between buildings and their broader environment.[2] The trend towards conceiving of heritage as a societal process or discourse[3] and the inclusion of non-material aspects also occurred internationally with an emphasis on urban heritage conservation. In the USA, calls for heritage conservation to become more "than a cult of antiquarians", for its conceptualization as a matter for society as a whole, emerged as early as the 1960s. This resulted in the establishment of the Historic District as a preferential preservation tool.[4] With its focus on the city, the European

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1   Cf. Adell, Between Imagined Communities, 2015.
2   Breuer, Ensemble, 1989.
3   Smith, Uses of Heritage, 2006; Harrison, Critical Approaches, 2013.
4   Quoted in: Murtagh, Keeping Time, 2006, 50–51. Cf. the essay on New York in this volume (Chapter 7).

Architectural Heritage Year 1975 also gave the topic a major boost. In the run-up to the event, demands by 'reformists' from countries including Germany for a new, more social conception of conservation[5] were thwarted by the heritage conservation establishment, which criticized the "almost medically therapeutic zeal" with which "urban-social matters" were being approached and the "tendency to think of and to accept conservation primarily in connection with urban planning considerations".[6] The primacy of this defence of conservation as a matter of protecting the original material substance was fateful and meant that in Germany, to this day, the "conserve as found" conception is prescribed in law and rarely questioned.[7] Only recently have calls for greater participation begun to have an impact on official procedures, not coincidentally in the sphere of urban heritage conservation once again.[8] The heritage of cities is without doubt a key issue for the future, and not only because ever greater numbers of people live in cities. It also poses a challenge because, in their dynamism and heterogeneity, urban heritage figurations often resist established conceptions of heritage typified by concepts such as endurance and persistence, homogeneity and integrity.[9] When we consider cities, it is particularly clear how hard it is to speak about heritage without also speaking about social and political issues, about interest groups, and ultimately about questions of power.[10]

The city, as should not be forgotten when considering questions of urban heritage, was long considered the locus of modern life and in many societies still represents the "open" locus of aspiration that enables liberation from traditional ties. For long phases in the modern period, city planning was dominated by a powerful hostility to tradition. In the shaping and reframing of urban spaces in line with functionalist technological ideals, the vital tasks of meaning-making and identity-formation were neglected.[11] With the renaissance of antitechnicist urban research, Jane Jacobs, among others, drew attention to social cohesion and community-making processes,[12] while Kevin Lynch focused on the production of the image of the city and its orientation function in a very broad sense.[13] This new conception of the city as a meaningful living environment – an environment that 'means' in the literal sense – also revived the topic of its "heritage" in debates about city planning, architecture and conservation. A foundational text in the section *Setting the Framework* explores this conflict between habitat and technology-driven planning, between "place" und "trajectorial space", as the one in which the

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5   Scheurmann, Konturen und Konjunkturen, 2018, 254–261.

6   According to Georg Mörsch in: Mörsch/Vereinigung der Landesdenkmalpfleger, Denkmalpflege 1975, 1976, 87–89.

7   See Vinken, Escaping Modernity, 2017.

8   See Sandmeier/Selitz, Das Kommunale Denkmalkonzept, 2020. Lisa Marie Selitz is currently completing a dissertation on the topic of *Erhalten – Erneuern – Beteiligen. Partizipation als Verhandlungsgegenstand der städtebaulichen Denkmalpflege* (working title, forthcoming 2021).

9   See Sophie Stackmann's dissertation on *Integrität als Konzept für das Erbe der Vergangenheit – eine kritische Lektüre* (working title, forthcoming 2021).

10   Harvey, Heritage Pasts, 2001.

11   Cf. for example, the essay on Cologne in this volume (Chapter 9).

12   Jacobs, Death and Life, 1961.

13   Lynch, The Image of the City, 1960.

formatting of heritage in modern urban space must also be decided. The latent tension between the designation of the city as both "modern" and "significant" or "meaningful" is a leitmotif in many of the essays collected in this volume.

In reducing the heritage question to a social one, however, we do not do justice to the complexity of the issue. After all, cities are not only characterized by heterogeneity and contradictions, dynamism and fluidity; as "ancient" nodes and meaningful habitats, they are often also privileged sites of heritage, characterized by a high degree of architectural and structural tradition and stability – of "monumentality" in other words. Of course, their perdurability should not be understood in static terms; urban spaces are subject to penetration and layering, connections, disruptions and breaks. The fundamental observation that many cities are distinct not only in terms of their ambience, but also with regard to their structures, spaces and architectural manifestations, is one that Aldo Rossi was able to demonstrate vividly with reference to the European city.[14] Rossi did not focus his thought on a concept of heritage – or did so only to the extent that the "urban artefacts" and structural features and peculiarities of a city can be used to derive a specific local (in Rossi's terms a "rational") architecture. And yet his *Architecture of the City* details key elements (alongside urban artefacts primary elements, locus, aura, etc.) that should be analysed in order to understand the built heritage of cities. For Rossi, the city, with its layers of deposits and overlays, reutilizations and reinterpretations, continuities and breaks, is more than a passive stone stage-set: it becomes an effective "actor" by prestructuring significations, "setting" standards, suggesting ways of reading (or not) that may become active in processes of constituting and claiming heritage. Drawing on these considerations, heritage may be considered a specific mode of reproduction rather than a mode of production.[15] This approach, outlined by an interdisciplinary research cluster on "The Intrinsic Logic of Cities"[16] attempts to open ways to seeing heritage as a social practice without disregarding specific "given features" of the urban environment that contribute to the particularity or distinctiveness of urban heritage.[17]

This position in no way contradicts the view formally articulated by Critical Heritage Studies, according to which heritage heritage has no intrinsic value but only value that is socially negotiated, communicated and made.[18] As early as 1903, in his influential work *The Modern Cult of Monuments*, the Austrian art historian and conservationist Alois Riegl described built heritage as a phenomenon of reception.[19] If today we correctly understand heritage to be a social practice, the question of what is specific to this practice and which concept of practice we wish to apply nonetheless often remains underarticulated.[20] My working hypothesis is that heritage positions itself as a practice of reproduction or making permanent, a practice whose key principle is the projection of

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

15   Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, From Ethnology to Heritage, 2004.

16   Berking/Löw, Die Eigenlogik der Städte, 2008.

17   Cf. the essay on *The Distinctiveness of Cities* in this volume (Chapter 3).

18   Smith, Uses of Heritage, 2006.

19   Riegl, The modern cult of monuments, 1982 (1903).

20   Harrison, Understanding the Politics, 2009.

endurance forwards into the future. And many "political" treatments of the concept of heritage very much underestimate that these processes appear to be determined more by phenomena belonging to the repressed and the unconscious than by intentions and political goals – a circumstance that the French philosopher Jacques Derrida summarized in his concept of hauntology.[21]

These preliminary remarks cannot do much more than roughly outline the field in which my approaches to cities and their heritage have been undertaken. The aim of this collection of texts is less to make a contribution to theory than to establish a research practice that seeks explorative and occasionally playful access as a means of revealing the scintillating complexity of urban heritage via constantly proliferating cross-sections and shifting perspectives. At the same time, these studies, which were written over a period of more than ten years, also seek to go beyond established approaches to urban heritage, most of which are tied to specific disciplines. To put it another way, I attempt to take approaches from the archaeological sciences, which take heritage in its materiality seriously and which also concern themselves with historical monuments and city quarters, topography, city layouts and plot structures, and fuse them with methods of inquiry drawn from the social sciences, which focus on the processes by which heritage is formed and reproduced. In this, particular attention is paid to urban places and spaces and to the relevant orderings and relationships within them that often have a lasting effect on heritage. The contribution made to heritage-making by different spatial practices is expanded upon in detail in one of the introductory chapters.[22]

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The section entitled *Zoning the City: Heritage and Modernity* focuses on the intersection of spatial segregation and heritage-making processes, and on the question of how the often-contradictory demands made of the city (identification, orientation vs. function, market, etc.) are each organized in a spatial sense. By bringing to bear insights from critical spatial theory, patterns can be recognized here that are often reproduced over long periods and through political ruptures, and that are reinterpreted and re-evaluated in accordance with the changing conditions. The first example to be considered is the Uzbek capital of Tashkent, a city that, since the colonial period, has been shaped by the dual structure of modernity – tradition and a variety of planning logics (Asian-Islamic, "Western" – Tsarist and Soviet, etc.). It is only against the background of these spatial-social constellations that conflicts over cities' heritage develop their full depth. In societal debates around tradition and identity, which are permeated by social, ethical and ideological tensions, a question central to all heritages discourses is clearly articulated: that of the "right" way to live.

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21   In *Specters of Marx* (originally published in French in 1993) Jacques Derrida develops the concept of "hauntology", a philosophy of haunting, in which the repressed returns as a ghost and deploys its potency for society in a spectral, in-between status (Derrida, Specters of Marx, 1994). Sophie Stackmann theorizes heritage as spectral in her dissertation *Integrität als Konzept für das Erbe der Vergangenheit – eine kritische Lektüre* (working title, forthcoming 2021).

22   Cf. the essay on *The Spaces of the Monument* in this volume (Chapter 4).

Overall, the texts collected in this section show that the making of heritage enclaves, historic districts and similar urban heritage formations can be understood less in terms of intentional heritage-planning than as a complex interplay of established structures within the urban environment and societal processes of value attribution. It is the specific features of the urban environment and the attributions of meaning embedded latently within them that first offer the specific possibility of claiming, reactivating and formulating heritage. The fact that this social process of ascribing value is itself also pre-structured (and subject to historical shifts) by means of categories such as race, class and gender is self-evident. Since the publication of my book *Zone Heimat* in 2010, I have frequently discussed how practices of spatial separation and segregation can take the form of heritage-making (or more precisely heritage-formation).[23] The European *Altstadt* (old town, historic city centre) – or rather its production – involves the articulation of anti-modern images of nostalgia and ideological residues that were formed within European Romanticism and remain effective in the evaluative standards, goals and aesthetic norms of urban heritage to this day. This is discussed in detail in the book with respect to the Swiss city of Basel. However, "historic" quarters and districts are not the result of a desire to protect or preserve; their existence can rather be ascribed to the specific goals of modernization that were formulated since the 19th century and the planning practices that went along with them. By means of zoning, the establishment of specific building zones, the *Altstadt* is afforded a place in the modernized urban body; it is this spatial segregation that first makes possible the integration of contradictory development goals in the modern city.

Zoning and the establishment of Historic Districts have been inextricably intertwined from the start. This can be seen clearly with respect to the development of preservation legislation, for instance in the USA. As one of the key achievements of modern city planning, zoning pursues a strategy of outward demarcation and inward homogenization. For America's Historic Districts, established as "special zones", this leads to the aesthetic homogenization of urban heritage, which can be read as a yearning for the "lost" integrity of the "good old days". The processes of homogenization that go hand-in-hand with the declaration of a Historic District are associated with the flattening of heterogeneity and difference and the elimination of everything that is foreign or alien. The example of New York makes clear that these fantasies of homogenization and demarcation via heritage-zoning are fuelled in equal part by social and by economic interests. In the case of the Historic Districts, the modernization of the zone aims not only at formal and aesthetic standardization "in the image of the old" but also at the creation of socially homogeneous neighbourhoods (in terms of ethnicity and class), and ultimately at the safeguarding of property values.

From a German perspective, what is remarkable about heritage preservation law in the United States is the fact that urban heritage conservation, in particular, is considered a societal undertaking, and that the use of participatory mechanisms, up to and including the involvement of residents in listing processes, has become the norm. The 'innocent' wish of preservationists and many residents for "historic" and beautiful

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23   For a comprehensive overview, see: Vinken, Zone Heimat, 2010; Vinken, Im Namen der Altstadt, 2016.

urban spaces has nonetheless been corrupted by the prevailing patterns of ownership and power: the spatial and legal demarcation of historic quarters and the social desire for segregation are directly linked. It is a tension that is increasingly also articulated in German debates, for instance in the conflict around the role of heritage conservation in processes of gentrification,[24] or in calls emanating from the left for the protection of established populations and their social and cultural networks. In the image of a homogeneous and socially vulnerable established (East German) population defending itself against mobile and privileged (Western and global) newcomers of all kinds we certainly see repeated patterns of defensiveness and fear of otherness latent in concepts associated with identity formation, such as *Heimat* and neighbourhood.

Heritage – armed with claims about background, origin, permanence and identity – has established itself as a (necessary) counterpoint to a 'modern' present, which is progressing, forgetful of tradition, towards a wide-open future. At a time when many countries are including the remnants of modernism on lists of protected monuments, this dialectical process, in which the origins of the heritage concept lie, reaches its conclusion. Taking as an example the debate over the heritage of modernism in Düsseldorf, I discuss how perspectives are shifting now that the megastructures from which the preservationist movement once sought to protect the city from are themselves being recognized as worthy of preservation, and how new fronts and arguments are emerging in this debate about urban heritage.

The section on ***Doing Tradition: Heritage Politics and Identity-Building*** pays closer attention to the political aspects of urban heritage That heritage structures in urban spaces are being harnessed not only to desires for prestige and distinctiveness, but also to revisionist and reactionary conceptions of history, can be demonstrated with reference to three German case studies, each of them subtly different and all located somewhere between restoration, reconstruction and revitalization. However, these are not examples of the national instrumentalization of heritage politics; rather, the cases of Cologne, Berlin and Frankfurt make it possible to reveal the ideological implications of such projects, which understand themselves to be unpolitical and the innocuous continuation of local traditions. Characteristic of such projects, which can be located in time between post-war reconstruction and the recent present, are lines of argument that invoke aesthetics in support of the "historic" framing of urban areas, and by the same token reject modernism and the modern formal language. Moreover, the efforts expended on urban heritage that are examined here are underpinned by promises of continuity, in that they are presented as "recovering" or "regaining" something by means of repair, restoration or reconstruction. In this way, the act of *making* and its political and societal goals are effectively disguised. It is therefore all the more important to recall these acts, in order to promote critical engagement with cultural heritage and to allow for multiperspectivity and contradiction.

The image of a static and homogeneous identity that characterizes many urban restoration projects is opposed to this goal. In Cologne, it is not well known that the current *Altstadt* is the result of a reconstruction campaign that was driven by heritage conservation and that sought to preserve the identity of a city almost entirely destroyed

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24   Takahashi, Berlin Heritage Conservation, 2018.

in the war. It is even less well known that the area which was rebuilt did not exist in this form before the comprehensive rehabilitation efforts of the 1930s and 40s. The fantasies of homogenization that were radicalized and reinterpreted in racist terms during the era of Nazi rule were revitalized in the post-war era in the vestments of (supposedly unpolitical) compromise formulae. The consequences of these acts of repression are deeply inscribed in the appearances of German cities: to this day they can be read in the ongoing debates within institutional heritage conservation, a field which, shielded by claims of scientific objectivity, considers itself to be unpolitical and seeks to cast its abstention on questions of heritage and heritage politics as a virtue.[25]

It is hardly surprising that other actors move in to fill this gap. The particularly vehement wave of reconstructionism that has been rolling over Germany since the 1980s has largely suppressed other debates on city planning in the public consciousness, establishing standards to which heritage conservation can no longer refuse to conform: restoration and reconstruction "in renewed splendour" are once more in vogue.[26] In Berlin, one can see where this unholy alliance might lead. Around the newly reconstructed palace of the Hohenzollern Kaisers, a combination of restoration, reconstruction and rehabilitation is creating a historic centre that is full of nostalgia for Prussia and its megalomaniacal imperial fantasies. The aim is to erase memories of the historically and ideologically divided heritage landscape of central Berlin. A city shaped by destruction and ruptures, whose heterogeneity is again approaching pre-war levels, is marginalizing and suppressing undesirable narratives, particularly East German perspectives and cultures of remembrance. Yet even this level of revisionism is surpassed by the beloved fake historic districts of cities such as Dresden and Hildesheim, or, as analysed here, Frankfurt am Main. In Frankfurt, urban heritage takes the form of a homogeneous *Altstadt* clone, brand new and constructed above an underground car park. Marketed as "reconstructions", these projects are revisionist erasures that thin out and contaminate urban heritage. Such practices can thus be located within the grand narrative of the European city: the tale of the good old days. It is this one narrative of original, meaningful order that is opposed to the presumed senselessness and formlessness of the present – a narrative that was already used to encourage a moral and aesthetic renewal of society by the conservative reformers of the 19th century,[27] and one with which, more recently, UKIP and the now defunct Brexit Party campaigned for Britain to leave the European Union, illustrating their arguments with images of Poundbury, Prince Charles's fake Olde England suburb near Dorchester.[28]

Today, the boundary between heritage figuration and historically themed architecture has in many regards become fluid – materially, aesthetically, ideologically. The repoliticization of debates about heritage, which has finally reached Germany not least

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25   Vinken, Erbe und Emotionen, forthcoming 2021.

26   Buttlar, Denkmalpflege statt Attrappenkult, 2011. Cf. the essay on Berlin in this volume (Chapter 10).

27   Pugin, Contrasts, 1836; Pugin, Gothic Architecture, 1920 (1821–1838).

28   Website YouTube, Building for the Future, marketing trailer UKIP. Cf.: Vinken, Erbe und Emotionen, forthcoming, 2021.

in the form of the "decolonize" movement, can therefore only be welcomed. And I understand my book to be, among other things, a plea for the stakeholders in this debate to become more aware of their social responsibility, in order to reformulate heritage as a contribution to productive coexistence in a pluralistic and heterogeneous society. My text on the Sicilian capital, Palermo, reveals what an urban community can achieve when various actors understand the heritage of the city to be a political platform that can be used to bring about positive social change. By means of a coordinated heritage politics that attempts to draw together a disparate range of voices, a real turn-around has been accomplished in recent decades in a city that appeared irredeemably lost to organized crime. The reappropriation of the city by its residents was in fact achieved in the name of an urban heritage that aimed to counter the established narrative of a "city of crime", attracting significant support. Alongside determined political coordination, the key to success was the involvement of a variety of political and social groups as well as a broad palette of activities. These embedded conventional heritage conservation measures, such as inventorization and restoration of monuments, in a broad spectrum of support measures as well as social and educational projects in order to achieve a revitalization and rehabilitation of the historic centre, to stop processes of decline and desertion, and to disseminate new hope.

Finally, the section **Reclaiming Heritage. Conflicts, Contestation, Canonization** examines the potential of heritage to generate conflict. The focus here turns to social processes of contesting and reclaiming heritage, and to the highly varied constellations of actors involved. These are often manifestations of conflicts between global and local perspectives. Interwoven with them, however, though not paralleling them entirely, are other dynamics, which can be gathered together under the heading of the canonization of heritage. Canonization reflects fundamental power relations; it strengthens, marginalizes and contests heritage.[29] Yet cultural heritage is fundamentally a phenomenon grounded in collective perception and requires consensus to be effective. The various texts presented here provide arguments and observations that may help to evaluate these processes of negotiation and meaning-making, but ultimately it is always a matter of perspective and the standards applied, i.e. of positionality.

The chapter on how Sicily's cultural heritage came to be included in the (northern) European canon of taste and culture through the writings of the pioneer travellers of the late 18th century shows, with reference to Palermo, that the conflict between the global and the local is anything but new. It is possible to read this story as one in which Sicily grows closer to Europe, as an Enlightenment project that is associated with a major increase in positive knowledge (archaeological, historical art-historical, etc.). Yet it is clear that a significant body of knowledge was also lost in this process of canonization: not only the legacy of Arab-Norman culture, but also mediaeval sites were excluded from the local canon after failing to satisfy the aesthetic judgment of the representatives of the northern Enlightenment. The irony, not further elaborated in the chapter, is that these same Enlightenment thinkers, in their later garb as Romantics, were to rediscover the Middle Ages, raising it up as a model for their respective national cultures. These acts by which Sicily was 'discovered' certainly fit the pattern of colonialism:

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29   Silverman, Contested Cultural Heritage, 2011.

questions of evaluation and, above all, of evaluative hegemony are matters of power and are accompanied by marginalization and loss.

In this context, the "foreign" and the "familiar" are certainly ambivalent and shifting categories. In the name of heritage, the foreign can be appropriated as exotic or as a primal origin, or else can be excluded and eliminated as hostile, inappropriate, ugly.[30] In addition, travelling heritage also provides a good opportunity to study processes of contextualization, framing, rejection and appropriation.[31] In this context, an essay on a "German" monument in the Bronx explores the emotional residues of heritage making. A monument forced to "travel" by anti-Semitism was adopted by the German community in New York and then banished to the Bronx; processes of appropriation and marginalization, destruction and redemption are are revealed as through a magnifying glass.

The tension between global and local evaluations is analysed once again with regard to Salvador da Bahia (Brazil). The starting point here is the rehabilitation, with international support, of the city's Pelourinho district, one of the largest contiguous Baroque city centres in the Americas, which was recently granted UNESCO World Heritage status. The rehabilitation of an important urban monument has taken its toll in terms of displacement, population transfer, and the weakening of social and cultural ties. The complexity of this example emerges from the fact that the former centre of the global slave trade is today a vital tourist destination, above all for Brazilians who come here to seek reconnect with their African roots. The *africanità* which is ascribed to the city is located less in its colourful building traditions, however, than in its cultural practices – precisely those aspects of its heritage that have experienced significant weakening as a result of the forces of homogenization and gentrification to which the historic centre has been subject as part of the heritage-making process. The lines of conflict and ambivalences are not always easy to resolve in a former city of slavery that is energetically reclaiming its African heritage, and that is assigned a specific role in the national consciousness: For in Bahia's urban heritage are also articulated the highly fragmented conflicts that surround the definition of a Brasilian identity.

Similar questions can be asked from a different perspective about New Orleans's Black heritage. In contrast to Brazil, the official historiography of the United States is unambiguously white; Blackness is not a component of American identity as a matter of course, as it is in Brazil. To this day, Black culture is generally considered to represent an exteriority. The starting point for my examination of this are the many irreversible instances of destruction that the city experienced in the disastrous floods caused by Hurricane Katrina in 2005. I analyse changes that have taken place in the city since reconstruction and the suppression of Black heritage artefacts, a phenomenon that takes its place in a long history of marginalization, domestication and commercial exploitation. In this context, once again, the urgent question arises of what we want to speak about when we speak about the heritage of a city; who can this "we" be? On which side do we wish to place ourselves? Here we can observe how racist discrimination proliferates monstrously, even in discourses around cultural heritage and indeed precisely in

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30   Vinken, Das Erbe der Anderen, 2015.
31   Juneja, Mobile Heritage, 2015.

these discourses. The re-politicization of this debate, which is being pursued by Post-Colonial and Critical Heritage Studies, has already reached "the streets" of our cities in the form of the conflicts over Confederate monuments, the decolonization movement and Black Lives Matter activists. To research urban heritage is to write against the homogenization latent in established conceptions of cultural heritage; it means analysing heritage process in their contradictory modes of reproduction in the knowledge that the question of heritage is always a political one.