



*Edited by*  
**Francesco Bandarin and Ron van Oers**

# Reconnecting the City

The Historic Urban Landscape Approach  
and the Future of Urban Heritage



**WILEY** Blackwell

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## The Historic Urban Landscape Approach and the Future of Urban Heritage

Editors

Francesco Bandarin

UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Culture and  
Professor of Urban Planning at the University Institute of  
Architecture of Venice, Italy

and

Ron van Oers

Vice Director, World Heritage Institute of Training and Research for  
Asia and the Pacific, China (WHITRAP)

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**WILEY** Blackwell

This edition first published 2015  
© 2015 by John Wiley & Sons, Ltd

*Registered office:*

John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 8SQ, United Kingdom.

*Editorial offices:*

9600 Garsington Road, Oxford, OX4 2DQ, United Kingdom.

The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 8SQ, United Kingdom.

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*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*

Reconnecting the city : the historic urban landscape approach and the future of urban heritage / editors, Francesco Bandarin and Ron van Oers.

pages cm

Summary: "The Historic Urban Landscape aims to respect and celebrate diversity-of heritage resources and cultural traditions" – Provided by publisher.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-118-38398-8 (paperback)

1. Historic buildings–Conservation and restoration. 2. Historic sites–Conservation and restoration. 3. Historic districts–Conservation and restoration. 4. Cities and towns–Conservation and restoration. 5. Urban landscape architecture–Conservation and restoration. 6. Cultural landscapes–Conservation and restoration. 7. Historic preservation. 8. City planning. 9. Cultural policy. 10. Urban policy. I. Bandarin, Francesco. II. Oers, Ron van, 1965– III. Bandarin, Francesco. Historic urban landscape.

CC135.R39 2014

363.6'9–dc23

2014012363

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

The ideas and opinions expressed in this text are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of UNESCO.

Wiley also publishes its books in a variety of electronic formats. Some content that appears in print may not be available in electronic books.

Cover image courtesy of Francesco Bandarin and Ron van Oers.

Set in 10/12.5 pt Minion Pro by Toppan Best-set Premedia Limited

Printed and bound in Singapore by Markono Print Media Pte Ltd



# 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-Rodgers 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.

Our final thank you, goes to all the contributors of this book: in total, 30 people (including the editors) offered a contribution to the reflection: 17 for the essays, 6 for the case studies and 7 for the interviews. While their texts have been in some cases revised before being integrated into the book, we have done our best to respect the meaning of the original. The editors have inserted most of the quotes at the beginning of the chapters. The interviews have been conducted and drafted by the editors and revised by the interviewee. Errors or imprecisions remain, of course, our full responsibility.

Francesco Bandarin, *Paris*  
Ron van Oers, *Shanghai*  
May 2014

# Preface

Francesco Bandarin and Ron van Oers

*Writing a book is an adventure. To begin with, it is a toy and an amusement; then it becomes a mistress, and then it becomes a master, and then a tyrant. The last phase is that just as you are about to be reconciled to your servitude, you kill the monster, and fling him out to the public.*

Winston Churchill

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 humankind, 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 discus-

sion 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,<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>1</sup> Bandarin, F. and Van Oers, R. (2012) *The Historic Urban Landscape. Managing Heritage in an Urban Century*, Oxford, Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 41–44.



## *Civic Engagement Tools<sup>2</sup>*

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<sup>3</sup>*

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<sup>4</sup>*

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

<sup>2</sup>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.

<sup>3</sup>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.

<sup>4</sup>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*<sup>5</sup>

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.

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<sup>5</sup>The 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.



# Contributors



**His Highness the Aga Khan** is Chairman of the Aga Khan Development Network and 49th hereditary Imam of the Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims.

His Highness the Aga Khan is the Founder and Chairman of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), a group of private, non-denominational development agencies dedicated to improving the quality of life of impoverished communities in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. AKDN's cultural agency, the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, improves the socioeconomic conditions of communities in the Muslim world, through urban regeneration projects and other cultural initiatives. Website: [www.akdn.org](http://www.akdn.org)



**Francesco Bandarin** is the UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Culture (2010–2014). He has served as Director of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre and Secretary of the World Heritage

Convention from 2000 to 2010. He is an Architect and Urban Planner specialising in Urban Conservation, and Professor of Urban Planning at the University Institute of Architecture of Venice. He studied Architecture at the Institute of Architecture of Venice, Italy and City and Regional Planning at the University of California, Berkeley, USA. For over 20 years, he was a consultant for international organisations in the field of urban conservation and development. At UNESCO, he has coordinated the reform processes of the World Heritage Convention and implemented projects in major World Heritage Sites. He has directed the overall process

for the drafting and adoption of the UNESCO *Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape*. He has coordinated the UNESCO Culture and Development Policy for the Post-2015 UN Millennium Development Goals. He has published extensively on Urban Planning, Conservation and Cultural policies, and has recently co-authored *The Historic Urban Landscape: Managing Heritage in an Urban Century*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012. Email: [f.bandarin@gmail.com](mailto:f.bandarin@gmail.com)



**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](mailto:stef.bianca@gmail.com)



**Anthony Gad Bigio** is an Urban Advisor with over thirty years of experience of urban development projects across the world. After a 20 years career at the World Bank, he became Adjunct

Professor of Urban Resilience and Low-carbon Cities at the George Washington University Graduate Program on Sustainable Urban Planning in Washington DC, USA. He is a Lead Author for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, contributing to the preparation of the chapter on urban planning and carbon emissions of its 2014 Fifth Assessment Report and an official reviewer of its chapter on urban impacts of climate change (Working Group II). Having graduated as an Architect and Urban Planner *summa cum laude* from the University of Rome, Italy, he has worked on projects aimed at the preservation and rehabilitation of historic cities in the context of social and economic development, primarily in the Middle East and North Africa region. He has published extensively on the topics of urban development, climate change and cultural heritage. Email: agbigio@gwu.edu



**Richard A. Engelhardt** is the former UNESCO Regional Advisor for Culture in Asia and the Pacific serving in that position from 1994 to 2008. After retiring from UNESCO, he

continues to be active in the heritage profession, as consultant in cultural policy and heritage management to governments and as an educator. Mr. Engelhardt is the UNESCO Chair Professor of the Conservation and Management of Historic Towns and Urban Centres at the National College of Art in Lahore, Pakistan, Honorary Professor in the School of Architecture at Southeast University in Nanjing, China, and Visiting Research Professor in the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Hong Kong. During his career, he has received numerous honours and

awards in recognition of his services in safeguarding the heritage of the Asia-Pacific region. In 1994, H.M. King Norodom Sihanouk of Cambodia knighted him with the title of *Commandeur de l'Ordre Royal du Cambodge*. Email: richard.a.engelhardt@gmail.com



**Patrizia Gabellini** is an Architect and Professor of Urban Planning at the Politecnico of Milan, Italy, where she has been Director of the Department of Architecture and Planning.

She has been visiting scholar at the IURD of the University of California, Berkeley, USA, and visiting professor in the Academy of Architecture in Mendrisio – University of the Italian Switzerland. She directed the 'Design and Communication' project of the Master Plan of Rome, the Master Plan of Jesi and coordinated the territorial project of the Esino Valley in Marche Region, all in Italy. She was consultant for the Master Plan of Bologna and member of the scientific committee for the Territorial Plan of Emilia Romagna region. She has been Editor of the Journal *Urbanistica* and is the Director of *Planum*, a European Journal of Urbanism online ([www.planum.net](http://www.planum.net)). She is author of several books and essays, published in Italy and abroad. Since 2011 she is the Deputy Mayor for Planning, Environment, Urban Quality and Historic City of the Municipality of Bologna, Italy. Email: [assessoreurbanisticaambiente@comune.bologna.it](mailto:assessoreurbanisticaambiente@comune.bologna.it)



**Feng Han** is Professor at the Department of Landscape Architecture and Assistant Dean of the College of Architecture and Urban Planning, Tongji University (CAUP), Shanghai, China.

She represents China in the ICOMOS-IFLA International Scientific Committee on Cultural Landscape and is a member of the World Commission on Protected Areas of IUCN. She works as an expert for international evalua-



tion of World Heritage nomination and heritage related policy making, as expert of the UNESCO program of Conservation and Management of World Heritage Sites in China and as an Advisory Professor for WHITRAP (Shanghai). She has published several papers on heritage landscape conservation and sustainable development. She is the Regional Editor (Asia/Pacific) of the *Journal of Management and Sustainable Development of Cultural Heritage*. She was awarded several prizes including the 2010 Advance Leading 50 Women in Asia from Australia. Email: franhanf@gmail.com



**Jyoti Hosagrahar** is Director of Sustainable Urbanism International at GSAPP, Columbia University, New York and Bangalore; Chair of the PhD program at Srishti School of Art,

Design, and Technology, Bangalore, India. Since 2011, she has served as an expert member of the National Advisory Committee for World Heritage Matters under the aegis of the Ministry of Culture, Government of India and served on the Working Group for revising India's Tentative List 2011–2013. During the past 6 years she has taken part in the UNESCO working groups for development of the Historic Urban Landscapes approach. She is the author of *Indigenous Modernities: Negotiating Architecture and Urbanism*. New York: Routledge, Archtext Series, 2005; co-author of 'Why Development Needs Culture,' in the *Journal of Cultural Heritage Management and Sustainable Development*, 1 (1), 2011; she is the lead author in SUI's 'Integrated Plan for Managing Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Development in the Hoysala Heritage Region of Karnataka, India.' Email: jh2443@columbia.edu



**Rohit Jigyasu** is a Conservation Architect and Risk Management Consultant, currently working as UNESCO Chair Professor at the Institute for Disaster

Mitigation of Urban Cultural Heritage at Ritsumeikan University, Kyoto, Japan and Senior Advisor at the Indian Institute for Human Settlements (IIHS) in Bangalore, Karnataka, India. He is elected member of the Executive Committee of International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and president of ICOMOS International Scientific Committee on Risk Preparedness (ICORP). After undertaking his postgraduate degree in Architectural Conservation from School of Planning and Architecture in Delhi, he obtained his doctoral degree from the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim, Norway. He has been teaching as visiting faculty at several national and international academic institutions in India and abroad. He has also been consultant to several national and international organisations for research and training on Cultural Heritage Risk Management and has contributed to several international publications. Email: rohit.jigyasu@gmail.com



**Hidenobu Jinnai** is Professor of Urban Design at Hosei University in Tokyo, Japan, and since 2004 Director of the Laboratory of Regional Design with Ecology at the Graduate

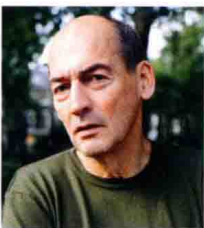
School of Hosei University. He is also the Director of the Historic Museum of Chuo-ward of Tokyo. He graduated in Engineering at the University of Tokyo and studied Architecture at the University Institute of Architecture of Venice, Italy. He specialised in the analysis of historic cities both in Asia and in Europe, with special focus on Japan and Italy. His research interests are in the field of spatial anthropology, urban morphology and conservation of historic cities. He is the author of several books and articles, among which *Turkey: Pilgrimage to cities*. Tokyo: Process Architecture, 1990; *Italian Acquascape*. Tokyo: Process Architecture, 1993; *Tokyo: A Spatial Anthropology*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995; *Living Places in Southern Italian Cities – Amalfi, Lecce, Sciacca and*

*Sardegna*. Tokyo: Chuo-Koron Bijutu Shuppan, 2005. Email: jinnai@h-jinnai.jp



**Jukka Jokilehto** was born in Helsinki, Finland, and graduated as Architect and City Planner at the Polytechnic University of Helsinki; he earned a PhD (DPhil) at the University of York, United Kingdom, in

1986. He worked in Finland as an architect and urban planner in the 1960s. He joined ICCROM in 1972 as the Director of Architectural Conservation and retired with the position of Assistant Director-General in 1998. He has been President of the ICOMOS International Training Committee (1993–2002) and has been ICOMOS World Heritage Advisor from 2000 to 2006. Presently he is Consultant and Lecturer in Architectural and Urban Conservation; Special Advisor to Director-General of ICCROM; Professor at University of Nova Gorica, Slovenia; Honorary Visiting Professor at University of York. Main publications: *A History of Architectural Conservation*. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann, 1999; *Management of World Cultural Heritage Sites*, co-authored with Bernard M. Feilden. Rome: ICCROM, 1993; he is the author of several publications on the philosophy of conservation, and on the management of World Heritage properties. Email: j.jokilehto@fastwebnet.it



**Rem Koolhaas** founded OMA in 1975 together with Elia and Zoe Zenghelis and Madelon Vriesendorp. He graduated from the Architectural Association in London and in 1978 published

*Delirious New York: A Retroactive Manifesto for Manhattan* (New York: the Monacelli Press). In 1995, his book: *S,M,L,XL* (New York, the Monacelli Press), summarised the work of OMA in 'a novel about architecture.' He heads the work of both OMA and AMO, the research branch of OMA, operating in areas beyond the

realm of architecture such as media, politics, renewable energy and fashion. In 2014, Koolhaas curated the 14th International Architecture Exhibition of the Venice Biennale, under the title, *Fundamentals*. Koolhaas has won several international awards including the Pritzker Architecture Prize in 2000 and the Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement at the 2010 Venice Biennale. Rem Koolhaas is a Professor at Harvard University where he conducts the Project on the City. Email: park@oma.nl



**Claudio Margottini** is a Senior Scientist at the Geological Survey of Italy (ISPRA), Vice President of the International Consortium on Landslides at the University of Kyoto, Japan,

and acting professor at the Huangzhou University in Wuhan, China. His major field of expertise is the development of engineering geological techniques for the conservation and protection of cultural and natural heritage. His activity include projects for the sites of Machu Picchu (Peru), the Buddhas statues of Bamiyan (Afghanistan), the Lalibela Churches (Ethiopia), the Koguryo Tombs (North Korea), the Vardzia caves (Georgia), the Minaret of Jam (Afghanistan), the Stelae Park in Aksum (Ethiopia), the Moai Statues (Easter Island, Chile), the Tiwanaku Pyramid (Bolivia), Petra (Jordan), the Katski Column (Georgia), the Herat Minaret (Afghanistan), the Bayannuur Tomb (Mongolia), the Orongo cliff and village (Easter Island, Chile), the Maaloula cliff and village (Syria), the Zohak Archaeological Fortress (Afghanistan) as well as many Italian sites of high cultural value. He is the author of over 250 publications. Email: claudio.margottini@gmail.com



**Rahul Mehrotra** is a practising Architect and Educator. He works in Mumbai, India, and teaches at the Graduate School of Design at Harvard University,



Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA, where he is Professor of Urban Design and Planning, and Chair of the Department of Urban Planning and Design as well as a member of the steering committee of Harvard's South Asia Initiative. His practice, RMA Architects, founded in 1990, has executed a range of projects across India. These diverse projects have engaged many issues, multiple constituencies and varying scales, from interior design and architecture to urban design, conservation and planning. As Trustee of the Urban Design Research Institute (UDRI), and Partners for Urban Knowledge Action and Research (PUKAR) both based in Mumbai, he continues to be actively involved as an activist in the civic and urban affairs of the city. Email: rahul@rmaarchitects.com



**Mohsen Mostafavi**, Architect and Educator, is Alexander and Victoria Wiley Professor of Design and Dean of the Harvard University Graduate School of Design, Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA. His work focuses on modes and processes of urbanisation and on the interface between technology and aesthetics. He has taught at numerous institutions including the University of Pennsylvania, the University of Cambridge, and the Frankfurt Academy of Fine Arts (*Städelschule*). He serves on the steering committee of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture and the board of the Van Alen Institute, and has served on the design committees of the London Development Agency (LDA) and the RIBA Gold Medal. He is a consultant on a number of international architectural and urban projects. His recent publications include *Ecological Urbanism*, Zurich: Lars Müller Publishers, 2010; *Implicate & Explicate*, Lars Müller Publishers, 2011; *Louis Vuitton: Architecture and Interiors*, New York: Rizzoli, 2011; *In the Life of Cities*. Zürich: Lars Müller Publishers, 2012; *Instigations: Engaging Architecture, Landscape and the City*: Zürich, Lars Müller Publishers, 2012; and *Architecture is Life*. Zürich: Lars Müller Pub-

lishers, 2013. Email: mohsen\_mostafavi@gsd.harvard.edu



**Patricia M. O'Donnell** is a Landscape Architect and Planner, and founded in 1987 Heritage Landscapes LLC, Preservation Landscape Architects and Planners, based in Charlotte, Vermont and Norwalk, Connecticut, USA. Her professional firm is dedicated to a vibrant future for communities, territories and cultural landscapes of all types and scales, with some 500 project credits and 66 professional awards. She serves as Global Chair, IFLA Cultural Landscapes Committee, as the US Member of the ICOMOS IFLA Cultural Landscapes International Scientific Committee and as an expert in the UNESCO World Heritage Centre. Since 2004 she has contributed to the development of the UNESCO Historic Urban Landscape process and recommendation as an invited international expert and collaborated with international experts on the final drafting committee. She is currently working on guidance incorporating Historic Urban Landscape constructs and tools for the World Bank on social development projects addressing the sustainable stewardship of heritage villages in Bhutan, as well as Indian heritage cities. Email: odonnel@heritagelandscapes.com



**Christian Ost** is an Economist with extensive experience in education institution management and economics of heritage. He holds a PhD in Economics from the Catholic University of Louvain, Belgium, a Master's degree in Economics from Georgetown University, Washington DC, USA, and a Certificate in European Studies from the University of Geneva, Switzerland. He was Dean of the ICHEC Brussels Management School from 2000 to 2008. He has been developing the field of economics applied to cultural

heritage since the 1980's, as co-author with Raymond Lemaire of a report on the cultural heritage and economics to the European Commission, as visiting lecturer at the Raymond Lemaire International Conservation Centre in Leuven, the Catholic University of Louvain, and as member of the ICOMOS International Economics Committee, which he chaired from 2000 to 2005. In 2008–2009, he was guest scholar in residence at the Getty Conservation Institute in Los Angeles, with a research entitled 'A Guide for Heritage Economics in Historic Cities: Values, Indicators, Maps and Policies'. Email: christian.ost@ichec.be



**Lisa Prosper** is the Director of the Centre for Cultural Landscape at Willowbank, which seeks to further the development of a cultural landscape approach to heritage con-

servation and community development by emphasising the interrelated physical and socio-cultural dimensions of places and regions. She has been contributing to the development of heritage theory and practice for over a decade and is regularly an invited speaker on cultural landscapes and Aboriginal heritage at both Canadian and international forums. She has been a member of numerous expert committees including the working group to develop the federal standards and guidelines for the conservation of cultural landscapes in Canada. She also shares responsibility for the development of the curriculum associated with the Diploma Program at the School of Restoration Arts at Willowbank, where she teaches heritage theory and field studies. Email: lisa.prosper@willowbank.ca



**Donovan Rypkema** is President of Heritage Strategies International, a firm working at the nexus of heritage conservation and economics. Rypkema has worked in more than 40

countries. International clients include the World Bank, the Inter American Development Bank, the Council of Europe, and others. He is the author of numerous publications including *Feasibility Analysis of Historic Buildings*. Washington, DC: National Trust for Historic Preservation, 2007; 'Public-Private Partnerships and Heritage'. *CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform*, January 28, 2012; *The Economics of Historic Preservation: A Community Leader's Guide*. New York: The National Trust for Historic Preservation, 2005, that has been translated into Russian and Korean. He holds a Master of Science degree in Historic Preservation from Columbia University, New York, USA. He serves on the Board of Directors of Global Urban Development, and the Senior Advisory Board of the Global Heritage Fund. He teaches a graduate course on the economics of historic preservation at the University of Pennsylvania. In 2012 he received the Louise du Pont Crowninshield Award from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the highest US award for lifetime contribution to the field of historic preservation. Email: DRypkema@HS-intl.com

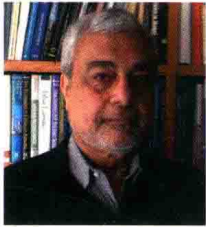


**Filipe Duarte Santos** is Professor of Physics and Environmental Sciences at the University of Lisbon and Director of the Research Centre SIM – Systems, Instrumentation and Mod-

elling in Environmental and Space Sciences and Technology. Mr Santos holds a Master of Sciences in Geophysics by the University of Lisbon and a PhD in Theoretical Physics by the University of London. He published more than 150 scientific papers in the areas of Physics, Environment and Climate Change. He has been visiting researcher or professor at the Universities of Wisconsin, North Carolina, Indiana, Stanford and Harvard in the USA, Munich in Germany, Surrey in the United Kingdom and Vrije University in the Netherlands, among others. Mr. Santos is Vice-President of the UN Commission on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and delegate to the



UNFCCC since 1999. He was Coordinator for Sustainable Development, Global Change and Ecosystems in the Ibero-American Program CYTED from 2007 to 2011 and is presently Review Editor for the 5<sup>th</sup> Assessment Report of the IPCC. Email: fdsantos@oal.ul.pt



**MV Serra** is an Urban Planner with a 40 years experience in Latin America, South and East Asia, and Africa in the fields of municipal development, housing finance and plan-

ning, municipal services and public utilities, urban upgrading, land policies and planning, and urban heritage. He worked for 15 years as Lead Urban Specialist at the World Bank, involved with operations as well as analytical studies and policy analysis. He led the activities of the Bank's Cultural Heritage Unit. Before joining the Bank, he was executive director of Fundação Nacional Pró-Memória, the operational arm of the Brazilian Ministry of Culture for cultural heritage preservation. He currently consults on urban issues and writes extensively on the urban history and problems of Rio de Janeiro. Together with Teresa Serra, he recently published the *Guia de Historia Natural do Rio de Janeiro (Guide of Natural History of RdJ)*. Rio de Janeiro: Editora Cidade Viva, 2013 and published a review article on the impact of the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Olympics ('Rio Gets Ready', *Arqtextos* 17, 2013: 138–191, Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul). Email: mvserra@jurea.com



**Wang Shu** is an Architect and Professor at the China Academy of Art in Hangzhou, China. He established the Amateur Architecture Studio with his wife Lu Wenyu in 1997.

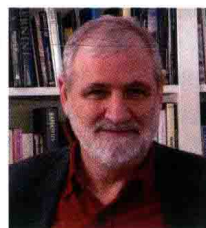
He has been working and doing research on re-establishment of contemporary Chinese architecture, which reflects in

his projects as the Ceramic Houses, New Campus of China Academy of Art in Hangzhou or the Ningbo Historic Museum. The projects have been published widely and exhibited in important venues around the world. He serves as the Head of the School of Architecture in the China Academy of Art in Hangzhou. He has been invited by universities and institutes around the world to give lectures and speeches. He has been awarded the Pritzker Architecture Prize in 2012. He is the winner of the Schelling Architecture Prize 2010 and received the Gold Prize of Architecture from France Architecture Academy 2011. He was the Kenzo Tange Visiting Professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Design in 2011. He has been member of the Jury of the 2013 Aga Khan Award for Architecture. Email: wangshu@caa.edu.cn



**Rachel Singer** has completed an MA in the Conservation of Material Heritage from Haifa University, and a BA in Geography from the Hebrew University, Israel. She lives

in Jerusalem and is currently working towards a graduate degree in Urban Design at the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design. She has previously worked on research projects relating to planning and policy in twentieth century Jerusalem and contemporary issues in the fields of transportation and environment. Currently, she is completing an internship as part of her conservation studies that includes a specialisation in documentation at the Israel Antiquities Authority as well as theoretical research on the Historic Urban Landscapes. She is also a participant in the EU Seventh Framework project 'Designing Safer Urban Spaces'. Email: lambielion20@gmail.com



**Francesco Siravo** is an Architect specialising in historic preservation and town planning. He received his professional degrees from the University of