

“It is the civic duty of each and every one of us to help preserve our cultural heritage.”

Urban Heritage Care in the 19th and 20th Centuries and its Tradition

The 43rd international conference on Urban History of the Prague City Archives, held in cooperation with the Institute of History of the Faculty of Arts of J. E. Purkyně University in Ústí nad Labem, the Institute of History of the Czech Academy of Sciences, the Prague City Museum and the National Heritage Institute

8–9 October 2024, Prague



The protection of monuments and heritage care are undoubtedly major phenomena accompanying urban development in the 19th and 20th centuries, and the institutionalisation of these efforts is also a prominent modernisation trend, especially in the history of large cities. And yet, what role did cities themselves play in their birth and functioning, or their administration headed by political representatives? And how were heritage measures perceived by city dwellers? Did they become involved in this work, and if so, what role did they take? These are the two primary questions we aim to address at our conference, conceived as an international interdisciplinary gathering of historians, preservationists, archaeologists, art historians and other specialists. While we are interested in the development in Prague in comparison with other Czech and Moravian cities, we would also like to take into account the situation in other (Central)European metropolis.

Basic issues to be addressed are therefore the organisation of heritage care and its specific tasks within the framework of city administration (local government), the care of monuments as part of the cultural policy of cities, the clash of institutional and individual interests in the field of heritage care, its ideological foundation with an emphasis on important personalities connected with its activities, the mechanisms of its functioning with regard to various natural, but especially socioeconomic conditions, including the effect of monument care in extraordinary times of war, and the issue of cultural heritage as the object of confiscation.

Consideration should also be given to the study of monument care and protection by city residents, manifested particularly in the activities of associations, and the topic of cultural heritage as an integral part of the collective memory of cities and its place in shaping local (urban) or even national identity. Special attention should also be directed to the functioning or “non-functioning” of cities as heritage reserves, often influenced by the one-sided demands of the tourist business, or the issue of restoration and reconstruction of monuments in urban areas. The role of heritage institutions, especially city organisations, in the protection of monuments is then a unique topic. However, the state policy in the field of monument conservation, implemented mainly through state institutions, and its clash or intersection with urban policy and administration in the context of the 19th and 20th century development should not be left aside.

The focus should be on immovable monuments, as well as important movable artefacts, which significantly shaped and continue to form the space and the historical identity of cities and their inhabitants. We would like to pay attention not only to the “institutional” era in the operation of monument care in urban areas, when the protection of monuments and their care became the subject of public interest,

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but also to the “pre-institutional” period, in which the relationship of urban society to historical monuments was gradually formed, i.e. to the heritage value of objects, a movement with roots stretching back to the Early Modern period.

Please send paper proposals along with an abstract and your short introduction by 25 April 2024 to the contact address provided below. The organisers reserve the right to make the final selection among the submitted papers. The presented papers will be printed in a monothematic volume as part of the *Documenta Pragensia* series. Foreign participants will be provided accommodations at the expense of the organisers. No conference fees are collected. The conference languages are Czech and German (or English). Simultaneous interpretation from German is provided.

Conference board:

doc. PhDr. Olga Fejtová, Ph.D. (Prague City Archives)

prof. PhDr. Michaela Hrubá, Ph.D. (Institute of History of the Faculty of Arts of J. E. Purkyně University in Ústí nad Labem)

prof. PhDr. Martin Holý, Ph.D. (Institute of History of the Czech Academy of Sciences)

Mgr. Lenka Stolárová (Prague City Museum)

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