University Eötvös Loránd

Faculty of Humanities

DOCTORAL (PhD) DISSERTATION THESES

Melinda Harlov-Csortán

The introduction of the notion *cultural heritage*

and heritagization in Hungary (1957-2015)

Critical analysis of Hollókő and Fertő/Neusiedlersee

through the lens of heritagization

Doctoral School for History Dr. Gábor Sonkoly DSc, Head of the Doctoral School

Doctoral Program for Interdisciplinary History, Atelier

Dr. Gábor Sonkoly DSc, Head of the Doctoral Program

Members of the committee: President: Dr. Gábor Sonkoly DSc

External reader: Dr. Attila Pók CSc

Internal reader: Dr. Mónika Mátay PhD

Secretary: Dr. András Keszei PhD

Members: Dr. Zsuzsanna Varga DSc

Dr. Máté Tamáska PhD

Dr. Máté Zombori PhD

Supervisors: Dr. Péter Erdősi PhD and Dr. Tamás Fejérdy DLA

Budapest, 2020

I.   The PhD research

Elements and reminiscences of the past have been acknowledged, researched and protected by scholars and practitioners from diverse disciplines adapting different methods, from diverse perspectives and operating within separate institutional systems. They have conducted their projects within the given political and policy system. Through the work of the scholars and practitioners and with the support of the policy system, the public's attention has been called to valuing the given elements of the past. Accordingly, heritage and heritagization[1] as the seemingly unified terms of the above-mentioned processes can and should be researched and analyzed as a historical, cultural and social phenomenon. Heritage has become a frequently adapted phrase in numerous new fields and with a more and more widening meaning and context. By naming something heritage a certain valuation process takes place that requires actors in the role, for instance, of inheritor or, testator and those, who acknowledge or prove the inheritance action. The process also involves different time periods (as the past is symbolically inherited in the present) and the inherited object that (whether it is tangible or intangible) can be described according to scale or location. During such a process both the inherited object and the inheritor are often affected by, for instance, value systems and trends. The evaluation of the heritage example[2] can be changed over time, as well as the accepted behavior of the inheritors whether the person is supposed to share the inherited element with the greater public or it is better not to even acknowledge it. Accordingly, the heritage phenomenon and the consequences of the heritagization process can be researched and analyzed from diverse disciplinary perspectives.

The current research investigated the introduction and realization of the supranational understanding of cultural heritage and heritagization in Hungary in the period between 1957 and 2015 taking into account also the international connections and ideological influences. The research focuses on how the outside norms could be adapted to the local cases and in what ways they transform the power-presenting quality, the image and symbolic meaning of the researched

---

[1] Heritagization is the complex process of achieving and maintaining heritage status that is related to the identification, maintenance, safeguarding and popularization of any example named heritage. It is often accompanied by a certain reinterpretation of the past and modification of memories. The process is realized in territorially and chronologically defined steps and alludes to the character of the remembering community and its values as well. Heritagization leads to a change in the understanding of the given example and the interconnections, interactions and exchanges within and outside the inheritor community. Despite the different emphasis, most understandings of the term share the emphasis on its social embeddedness, and also points to its certain representation-building and -reinforcing role as well.

[2] Many scholars consciously prevent to use heritage site as a term by referring to this categorization where site refers one type of heritage, moreover heritage site over-emphasize the tangible aspects of heritage. By sharing these thoughts the current paper uses the term heritage example to name among others the members of the UNESCO World Heritage List.

examples in the eyes of diverse communities. This process is often accompanied by a certain reinterpretation of the past and modification of memories, which leads to a change in the understanding of the given example and the interconnections, interactions and exchanges within and outside the inheritor community.

The time frame of my research is between 1957, when the nation-wide state network system of monument protection institutions was re-established in Hungary[3] and 2015, when the first European Heritage labeled location in the country was awarded and thus the whole international heritage system appeared in Hungary. The historical moments and political periods at national and international level are investigated based on their influences on the notion of cultural heritage and heritagization in Hungary. Along these lines the chosen time frame offers the opportunity to examine the processes of interpreting certain histories and pasts and the favoring of given heritages in the transforming representations of the country within the supranational heritage system as well.

After the introduction of the theoretical framework (with terminological contextualization) and the adapted methodologies, the historical, social and political conditions and background are introduced. Before the microanalysis of the case studies the research looks at the subject on macro-level and investigated the related academic disciplines and professional institutions that were influenced by the adaptation of the supranational understanding of cultural heritage and the related processes. This chapter also analyze the usage of the notion in national politics and on international level as well. The introduction of heritage and heritagization is investigated through two case studies, the old village of Hollókő and the Fertő/Neusiedlersee cultural landscape that were acknowledged as one of the first and one of the last UNESCO World Heritage examples of Hungary during the researched period. The two chosen case studies experienced the most vivid transformation in their representation. They are introduced in Chapter 4 including the major local events and the already conducted research about them.

The analysis of the case studies is structured around four research perspectives: the territory (how the given heritage example is defined geographically); the relation to past and to time (what period of the local history is emphasized, by whom and why); the actors (all those communities and institutions who have a role in how the given location has been perceived); and the values (the representational symbols that visualize the location). The micro analysis

---

[3] Monument protection organizations had existed even the late 19th century, but due to the historical events (world wars) and system changes, they had to be re-established. From this year, it operated continuously until the early 2000s. Merényi, Ferenc, A magyar műemlékvédelem száz esztendeje, *Építés Építészettudomány*, 1972, Vol. 4. No. 1-2., 3-49.

investigates also the conditions and requirements based on a heritage example is acknowledged as a UNESCO World Heritage example. Integrity, authenticity, management plan and criteria for the outstanding university value have to be expressed and maintained in order the given example to keep its UNESCO World Heritage status. These conditions are discussed and analyzed at the two case studies throughout the researched period to reach a better understanding how heritagization can influence a given example.

Introduction to the conceptual framework of these analytical approaches as the definitive point of departure in generating and analyzing the empirical data preludes the findings of each research approach. They are evaluated separately regarding the two heritage examples and also compared and contrasted to achieve an understanding of the complex issue, namely the (change in) representation of the heritage examples. By analyzing both the theoretical aspects, as well as the practical processes, the Thesis aims to analyze the complex issue of heritagization through historical, social and cultural research.

The Thesis has double goals. On one hand, it aims to introduce the Hungarian case studies and transformations due to heritagization for the broader (international) audience, align with the contemporary research approaches[4] that analyze supranational trends on local level by emphasizing similarities and peculiarities. On the other hand, it aims to describe and investigate the complexity of a contemporary phenomenon that influences numerous nations and communities in many aspects by pointing to the possible advantages and disadvantages. I hope in this connection that I have made a modest contribution to the discourse.

II.   Method and sources

Based on the complex phenomenon of cultural heritage and the process of heritagization it is necessary to apply a multiplicity of methods and diverse sources in order to conduct the macro- and micro-analysis[5] of the research questions. The aim of this research was to conduct a problem-oriented, interdisciplinary research that can provide new information about how the supranational notion of cultural heritage and the connecting process of heritagization influence the representation of both the specific heritage examples and the related professions in Hungary. By representation the current research means more than visual appearance and pays attention

---

[4] Kalinsky, Yelena, Globalizing East European Art Histories: Past and Present. *Artmargins online*. 2020. https://artmargins.com/globalizing-east-european-art-histories-past-and-present/, (2020.08.20.).

[5] The macro-analysis concentrates on the related academic and professional disciplines influenced by the introduction of the supranational cultural heritage notion – monument protection, ethnography and environment protection – and their documents and institutions. The micro-analysis focuses on two case studies: the old village of Hollókp and the Fertő/Neusiedlersee cultural landscape and investigates the influence of heritagization from the perspectives of location, time, actors and values.

to the understanding and evaluation of the given case studies as well as the role and tasks of the related academic and professional disciplines (such as ethnography or monument protection). Accordingly, multiple methodologies and sources were applied.

I conducted library research, visual analysis and primary data collection. The locations of the research were mainly the capital of Hungary, where most archival materials are available, and on site, in Hollókő and Fertő/Neusiedlersee area. Investigations took place in other countries as well, for instance, in Austria (at the Vienna City Library, in Wien), in the Czech Republic (at the Charles University in Prague), in Germany (at the Herder institute for Historical Research on East Central Europe in Marburg), in Poland (at the International Cultural Centre in Krakow as well as at the German Historical Institute in Warsaw) and in USA (U. S. National Park Service in Washington). On these occasions, research could be conducted at specialized libraries and archives; challenging the applied methodologies by becoming a member of international research teams[6] and deepening my knowledge by conducting interviews. As a result of the theoretical research, a literature review of the previous scholarly work could be formulated and the applied methodologies were reviewed and adapted to the current research project. I investigated, among others, sociological texts, monument protection reports, UNESCO documents. I also looked at local representations and marketing texts about the case studies. I became familiar with many state decisions and the recommendations of international organizations and scholarly publications in which different concepts were described or evaluations were formed. One of the most important sources was the publications of UNESCO World Heritage Committee and its Advisory Bodies such as ICOMOS and IUCN,[7] as well as texts submitted by the States Parties.[8]

Numerous secondary publications about cultural heritage and the critical documents about the notions of heritage and heritagization in Hungary were published in the researched period (1957-2015). The documentations of numerous workshops and conferences about the topic help to establish a detailed and firm knowledge about what the contemporary recommendations and guidelines are.[9] Similarly, scholarly papers can be investigated to decode

---

[6] I became member of research teams such as of the Beyond Hegemonic Narratives and Myths: Troubled Pasts in the History and Memory of East-Central and South-East Europe project.

[7] ICOMOS is the abbreviation of International Council on Monuments and Sites and IUCN stands for International Union for Conservation of Nature.

[8] State Parties are the "countries which have adhered to the World Heritage Convention" (UNESCO, *Revision of the Operational Guideline*, 2019, https://whc.unesco.org/en/documents/173608 (2020.07.30)).

[9] Such conferences were organized by the Central European University in 2000 with the title "National Heritage, World Heritage, Medieval Studies" or the "Pieces of Art within Cultural Heritage" organized by the National Art Protection Office in the same year. Similarly important publications are among others: György, Péter; Kiss, Barbara, and Monok, István (eds.), *Kulturális örökség – társadalmi képzelet*. Budapest. Akadémiai Kiadó, 2005

used methodologies both on national and international level too.[10] Those writings that provide understanding of the official regulations (both national and international)[11] or contrast the given guidelines with case studies[12] as well as those that verbalize constructive critique are all indispensable elements to discover the complexity of the proposed research subject.[13]

The comparative analysis of the visual representations about the two case studies (photos, marketing images and films) points to their constant and transforming features as well. For this, I have looked through the Photography Collections of related museums such as the Palóc Museum or the Ethnography Museum or the András Román Archive. I also looked through films made by, for instance, the Hungarian Police Department and still images of the Virtual Filmstrip Museum and the introductory and image films of the whole country as well as the two case studies. Statistical data and their evaluations also provide information, among others, about the general conditions at that time or about certain events that modified the general public's notion of the case studies.[14] With context analysis and visual analysis, the difficulties of top-down guidelines or state regulations and the horizontal interactions of the different scientific or cultural fields as well as the later realized bottom-up aims and civil approaches realized mainly by the inhabitants of the two case studies after the political change could be decoded.

Besides theoretical investigations I conducted primary research as well, which were composed of mainly three types of examinations: participation in the field, interviews and on-site experiences. Since 2006, I have been working as an administrative and/or academic member of diverse cultural and education institutions, where I could experience and research the operation of such institutions.[15] In 2017, I undertook a five-month traineeship at the European Commission Directorate General for Education, Culture and Youth in Brussels, where I actively participated in the organization of the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018.

---

or Bardoly, István and Haris, Andrea (eds.), *A magyar műemlékvédelem korszakai. Tanulmányok*, Budapest, Országos Műemlékvédelmi Hivatal, 1996.

[10] Ashworth, Gregory J., Realisable potential but hidden problems: a heritage tale from five Central European Cities, in: Purchla, Jacek (ed.), *The Historical Metropolis. A Hidden Potential*, Krakow, International Cultural Centre, 1996, 39-64.

[11] Lowenthal, David, Natural and Cultural Heritage. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 2005, Vol. 11. No. 1., 81-92.

[12] Illés, Andrea and Karády, Ilona (eds.), *National Memorial Places: Castles, Famous Buildings and Historical Memorial Places*, Budapest, M-Érték Kiadó Kft., 2008.

[13] Kowalski, Alexandra, When Cultural Capitalization Became Global Practice: Genesis of UNESCO's 1972 Convention, in: Bandelj, Nina and Wherry, Frederick F. (eds.), *The Cultural Wealth of Nations*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2011, 73-90.

[14] Statistical data and public polls were investigated regarding for example, the frequency and possibilities of taking journeys within the country as free time activities at the Open Society Archive.

[15] For instance, I was able to cooperate in the daily work of the Hungarian National Committee of ICOMOS.

Besides employment, I have been volunteering in the field of my research as well.[16] These opportunities have given me the chance to experience certain parts of the operation of such cultural institutions. I conducted interviews with professionals and practitioners and semi-structured life-history interviews with a focus on the research period.[17] Besides looking at the everyday life of the inhabitants, the aim was to define the impact of the social and geopolitical situation on their working conditions and everyday practices. There were occasions when I "only" engaged in a conversation with inhabitants of the case studies. These occasions cannot count as proper interviews due to their un-structured, almost accidental character and due to their brevity. In these cases, I was not able (or on numerous occasions I did not get the permission) to write down quotations. Despite these difficulties, I was able to collect important perspectives that often hinted at a less prosperous or optimistic situation of a certain cultural initiative or personal perspective.

The on-site examinations were undertaken at both sites (Hollókő and Fertő/Neusiedlersee). The research was composed of site visits to places of memory, cultural, natural locations as well as other tourist attractions. I spent both shorter and longer time periods in both locations as an observer or an active participant in the interpretation processes. My aim was, among others, to understand settlements through their use of spaces with public art inaugurations as a kind of self-representation. I also paid attention to the other visitors' habits and behavior as well as speaking with the on-site interpreters of the diverse cultural institutions in Hollókő and or at the Fertő/Neusiedlersee cultural landscape. This approach enabled me to explore the complexity of the heritagization process at local level.

Looking through the enumerated printed and visual sources about the case studies as well as the related professions[18] and also based on the on-site research and the interviews not just the variety of the participating actors could be identified,[19] but the diverse aims and understandings can also be decoded. For this aim, comparative research on the sources about the same subject written or created by different actors was undertaken. With the applied research methodologies, the change in the representation or image of the case studies and the professions that has influenced by the introduction of the supranational notion of cultural heritage and the related process of heritagization could be decoded. The current research was

---

[16] For instance, I volunteered to be a tour-guide at numerous specific events (such as conference) in both case studies.

[17] Among others I could conducted interview with Taschner Tamás, the head-secretary of the Hungarian Council of the Fertő/Neusiedlersee World Heritage site in 2017.

[18] My research focused on three disciplines: monument profession, ethnography and environment protection.

[19] The related actors can be categorized in numerous ways, such as local, professionals, government people, international actors.

undertaken bilingually, in English and in Hungarian, as for example the international documents were investigated in English while the interviews were mainly conducted in Hungarian. The text of the PhD Thesis is chosen to be in English so the results of the conducted research can enter the international discourse.

III.   Findings of the research

Every UNESCO World Heritage example can be connected to a specific location, and the identification of such a location (including defining its borders) is significant both in case of the nomination, acknowledgement and management processes. Through location and its complex understanding tangible and intangible heritage aspects can be combined and numerous actors get involved in the processes. Accordingly, the location of the heritage example gains new territorial categorizations such as through the identification of the core and buffer zone. Due to heritagization new occupational possibilities (e.g. tourism) and functions (cultural) are formulated that can affect the cultivation processes and the nature-human relation at and representation of the given location. Heritagization processes triggered tourism at both locations, but as the investigation pointed out it could not become the exclusive income source. Due to heritagization financial support and interest increased and put these locations to a different path, where balancing the diverse factors[20] is a new and challenging task.

Regarding the case study analysis with time perspective it can be concluded that both the heritagized segment or period of the past and the time of the heritagization process play important role in the analyzed process. The researched UNESCO World Heritage examples were interpreted as being at the last stage of their existence at the time of their heritagization, which also suits that notion of cultural heritage, which understands it as race against time. Through heritagization the goal was to evaluate, acknowledge and safeguard the continuously existing characters of the two heritage examples. Such continuity and timelessness were ensured mainly by the tangible elements, even though the intangible aspects have played equal important role at both cases. Hollókő and Fertő/Neusiedlersee cultural landscape too are seemed as unchanging sleeping or ghost areas for many of the visitors and based on the local economy and population numbers as well. These notions prevent the possibility to reflect on the different time periods and the changing representation of the given heritage example. For example, the recent past, the 20th century is not subject of heritagization neither on national nor on supranational level during the researched period. Moreover, the original, static and timeless

---

[20] The diverse factors are for example the requirements due to heritagization and the necessities of the inhabitants.

8

notion also challenges the acknowledgement of the context and circumstances[21] that might influence the researched heritage example throughout time.

As a result of the investigation it can be concluded that the identified actors should have had even roles throughout the whole processes but their possibilities and significances have changed during the researched period due to the contemporary circumstances (such as political system or economic situation). Both case studies show that not just the limited or no participation of the locals for instance, through their bottom-up or local institutions can challenge the success of the processes, but it can be equally disadvantageous if the professionals' or the local governing units (such as the municipality or the local council of the given UNESCO World Heritage example) do not have a constant and equal role. Even though the two case studies were acknowledged as UNESCO World Heritage examples in two different political regimes, the central power always played a role in how the values of these two heritage examples could be verbalized and spread among the public. The World Heritage Committee and the Advisory Bodies through their narratives and requirements also influenced the expressed values regarding the two case studies.[22] These transformation regarding the expressed values of the given heritage examples influences their representation as well.

At both cases among others the value of closed-to-nature human existence is expressed and emphasis is paid to show this value to the contemporary society. These heritage examples expand their significance both on national level and within an international context too. The given values[23] were transformed to be aligned with the international heritage organization. By this process the evaluation of the case studies became more understandable for the general public and the appreciation of these heritage examples can be spread nationally and internationally as well. However, through the increased relevance and role, the narration about them can be simplified, and the complexity of the heritage examples that they have gained over time is challenged. Despite this seemingly negative consequence it is important to keep in mind that change and transformation is part of the communities and cultures. Accordingly, by heritagization the natural processes and transformation cannot and should not be interrupted and on the other hand, these natural transformations happen despite the heritagization of the given example.

---

[21] For example, the case studies became members (such as the RAMSAR) and Hungary also joined increasing number of international cooperations (like the EU) during the researched period.

[22] Meyer, John W., *Weltkultur: Wie die westlichen Prinzipien die Welt durchdringen*, Frankfurt, Suhrkamp, 2005.

[23] The values of the two case studies were defined and documented by the representatives of the diverse disciplines and were adapted to accommodate the goals of the supranational heritage organization during the heritagization process.

The concept and realization of heritage and heritagization is a management-focused field that harmonizes the related disciplines and strives for its best realization in the given circumstances. That is why one of its most commonly adapted methods is the collection of best practices, and also for the same reason, there is no set of specific instructions nor strong requirements and rules initiated by the heritage institutions except charters and recommendations. Heritagization as a managing tool is very flexible as its main focus is what is doable in case of a given example and for the contemporary society. It is also important to emphasize that heritage studies include the practical profession and the theoretical investigation too that critically look at, analyze and evaluate these management processes using adapted methodologies from related disciplines. It is unquestionable that all the connecting scholarly disciplines such as history, sociology, ethnography, architecture and environmental sciences are needed to undertake heritage studies, but they cannot be identified or replaced with any one of them. Similarly, none of the related professional or scientific fields can solely fulfill the complex tasks of heritage management. As for researching or adapting the notion of heritage, numerous other aspects have to be considered as well such as economic and policy-related ones.

The investigation pointed out that the acknowledgement of the notion of culture heritage and heritagization happened belatedly in Hungary. Even at the end of the researched period, there was not a well-established notion of and constantly operating autonomous apparatus for heritage and heritagization in Hungary. Instead, the related disciplines were forced to transform and because of that, their institutional and operational possibilities drastically decreased. There might be numerous circumstances and reasons for that such as historical reasons and institutional ones. Accordingly, it is not simply the notion of cultural heritage as a new international phenomenon that threatens the knowledge about and future of (the remains and reminiscences of) the past in Hungary but rather the impacts of a multiplicity of effects and circumstances.

IV.   Some already published works in the topic

2019 – Hollókő, az (újra)teremtett genius loci [Hollókő, the (re)created genius loci]. In: Tamáska, Máté and Kollár, Árpád (eds.). *A genius loci: Irodalom és építészet*. Budapest. Martin Opitz Kiadó. 115-134.
2018 – Heritagizing the Countryside in Hungary. *Acta Universitatis Sapientiae European And Regional Studies.* Vol. 13. No. 1.: 19-35.

2017 – From The Borderland Of The Iron Curtain To European And World Cultural Heritage. *Folklore. Electronic Journal of Folklore*. Vol 70.: 193-224.

2016 – Műemlékvédelem, kapocs a világgal [Monument protection, key to internationalism]. *Múltunk - Politikatörténeti Folyóirat.* Vol. 61. No. 4.: 113-135.

2016 – Shift of importance from built heritage to the locals. Story of the first Hungarian World Heritage Site. *Furnace*. University of Birmingham. Issue 5: World Heritage and Local Communities. 42-54.

2016 – A cultural landscape on the border. In: Bassa, Lia and Kiss, Ferenc (eds.). *Proceedings of TCL 2016 Conference*. Budapest. INFOTA. 229-240.