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**HISTORIC CITIES & CULTURAL-RELIGIOUS HERITAGE:
PRESERVATION & REGENERATION
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Vol. 1



INTRODUCTION

HISTORIC CITIES & CULTURAL-RELIGIOUS HERITAGE: PRESERVATION & REGENERATION

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MARCHING TOWARDS THE OVERVIEW

It is already established by anthropologists that culture played a considerable role in making, maintaining, and memorising cities in the long-run perspectives of human history. Cities remain the symbols and career of civilization wherever they appear; in fact, the story of civilization may be narrated through the stories of historic cities. The concluding and challenging remarks that “The city may be regarded, but only very incompletely, as a centre from which spreads outward the idea of progress. It is true that progress, like the ideologies of nationalism, socialism, communalism, capitalism, and democracy, tends to form in cities and it is in cities the prophets and leaders of these doctrines are formed” by Redfield and Singer (1954: 72), is still valid in different contexts and at varying degrees. The modern vision of heritage “allows us to better integrate culture in the social and human development policy frameworks. This role of culture, cultural and natural heritage, cultural institutions, cultural products, and cultural industries has indeed long been promoted in the sustainable development process” (Bandarin, 2019: 13). Moreover, “the long and complex process that has led to the approval of Agenda 2030 has brought together all the forces in support of the idea that culture is a fundamental pillar of sustainable development processes (at some point it was even proposed to have culture as a “fourth pillar” next to the social, economic and environmental ones)” (Bandarin, 2019: 15).

Historical-cultural cities expose to those human settlements strongly conditioned by a physical structure originating in the past and recognizable together representing the evolution of their people and making an interlinking pathway of existence, maintenance, imprinting on the landscapes, and continued the symbolic marks and traditional expressions of culture, architecture, social-cultural life while absorbing all the superimpositions and transformations over time, but keep their basic essence that evolved long back in history. In supporting sustainability, identity, and images, the role of cultural traditions and religious normative have been significantly noticed at different degrees in varying contexts. Many of them over time became historic-heritage cities where the significant imprint of religious traditions has played a major role, and that system is regulated, maintained, and continuously revived by pilgrimages, rituals, and festivities.

Historic cities are the imbued human habitat centres of cultural assemblage that maintained their continuity from their existence in the past and absorbed all the intricacies and adversities of transformations and changes over time. Thus, these cities are rich repositories of history, heritage and identity accumulated and survived over centuries. Serving as the bridge between locality (site and tradition) and universality (values and messages), historic cities are recognised for their Outstanding Universal Value. On this scale UNESCO in its World Heritage List inscribed more than 300 such cities; it is expected that these historic cities work to protect unique local features, so future generations may enjoy the authenticity and integrity of these diverse settlements around the world. In this spirit, the 2011 UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) was adopted as an inclusive heritage management approach open to all the holistic programmes of development at different levels. To reconcile heritage conservation and sustainable development, cities look to HUL as the necessary framework for sustainable and liveable cities.

Historical sites are the economic, cultural, and social drivers for a dynamic and sustainable environment that evolved in the past and sustained through cultural rejuvenation over time. They constitute an integral part of nations’ history, identity and representation, and regional diversity. Even the small and medium-sized historical and sacred sites with their outstanding built cultural heritage strongly shape the urban landscapes and form the foundation stone for a balanced and polycentric settlement system. However, historical sites face many challenges, like accelerating globalization, structural, social, and demographic changes as well as environmental problems, and accelerated urban sprawl. As urban growth is a double-faced process it is the concentration of population in urban areas due to supply services that are missing in surrounding countryside; at the same time, it is a decline of socio-economic areas agglomerations. This expansion in population explosion happens due to the concentration of economic activity, which is an important determinant, and the result of urbanization, as exemplified in most parts of the globe (see Menchawy and Hakim, 2011: 312-313).

Every landscape is the place where humans establish their organization through the trajectory of space-time-function and reciprocating construct, creation, and processes. Most of the ancient cultures, especially the Oriental World in the ancient past ordered the natural world on cosmological principles and shaped harmonious relationships with nature, which ultimately resulted in the formation of Historic-Cultural Landscapes (HCL), generally illustrated with 'heritage sites' and 'places of religion and rituals'. Mountains and springs, plains and rivers, were also sites and *foci* of sacred power from historical events and timeless sacred forces in evolving the cultural (sacred) landscapes. Over time, geographical features were inscribed by human hands to mark their achievements and accomplishments in the frame of built structures, sculptures, and resultant cultural traditions (*tangible, intangible, and transitory* heritages), i.e., an advanced culture of a humane world. Such natural and constructed places commonly became centres of special human activities and interaction, serving as the pivot of harmonizing the world through their inherent messages and underpinning meanings ensembles in the emerged Cultural Landscapes, ensemble HCL, which broadly consist of Rural, Urban, Peri-Urban, and in-between several Transitory classes of cultural landscapes. However, all these are part of interfacing and interconnectedness, and with time recording transformations, superimpositions, and changes in their typology, uses, and contexts. Nature-Human interfaces in the frame of habitat system resulted in various niches and types of the habitat landscapes, possessing and representing varying degrees of distinctiveness and varieties together with special characteristics.

UNESCO (2005) defines cultural landscapes as properties that "represent the combined work of nature and of man". Cultural landscapes — cultivated terraces on lofty mountains, gardens, sacred places — testify to the creative genius, social development, and the imaginative and spiritual vitality of humanity. Cultural landscapes can range from thousands of acres of rural tracts of land to a small homestead with a front yard of less than one acre. Like historic buildings and districts, these special places reveal aspects of our country's origins and development through their form and features and the ways they were used. Cultural landscapes also reveal much about our evolving relationship with the natural world. They are part of our collective identity. They are classified in terms of three main categories: (i) "a landscape designed and created intentionally by man"; (ii) An "organically evolved landscape", which may be a "relict (or fossil) landscape" or a "continuing landscape"; and (iii) An "associative cultural landscape", which may be valued because of the "sacrosanct attributes, and religious, artistic or cultural associations of the natural element". Making them more precise in terms of their genesis and evolution the frame of Historic-Cultural Landscapes, HCL, has been conceived. The Cultural Landscape Foundation (2013) has identified HCL with five broad types (see Leider, 2018: 7):

(i) *Historic Designated Landscapes*: the landscapes that were consciously designed or laid out by a landscape architect, master gardener, architect, or horticulturist according to design principles or an amateur gardener working in a recognized style or tradition.

(ii) *Vernacular Landscapes*: the landscape that evolved through uses by the people whose activities or occupancy shaped that landscape. Through social or cultural attitudes of an individual, family, or community, the landscape reflects the physical, biological, and cultural character of those everyday lives.

(iii) *Historic sites*: landscapes significant for their association with a historic event, activity, or person.

(iv) *Ethnographic Landscapes*: landscapes containing a variety of natural and cultural resources that the associated people define as heritage resources.

(v) *Sacred Landscapes*: landscapes characterized with some unique feature of nature that attracted human beings in the past for understanding and experiencing something beyond the earthly spirit, and over time they became *sacral loci*.

UNO Habitat III has provoked that framing structure and understanding of Historic Cultural Landscape (together with UHL) should be projected in the purview of culture-based regeneration, urban heritage (*tangible, intangible, and transitory*) conservation, urban landscapes, cultural and creative industries (e.g. tourism, pilgrimages, spiritual expositions, etc.), cultural values, cultural diversity, creative economy, inclusive development, social cohesion, right to cultural heritage, changing density patterns, mixed-use, strategic territorial governance, and several associated and consequential issues. Historic Cultural Landscape is an assembled result of a historic layering of cultural and natural values and attributes, extending beyond the notion of "historic centre" or "ensemble" to include the broader habitat context and its geographical setting, which also includes social and cultural practices and values, economic processes and the intangible dimensions of heritage as related to diversities and identities. Also, "besides protecting the tangible and intangible heritage values, the holistic historic urban landscape approach should incorporate the interests of the indigenous craftsman, challenging the existing systems that have led to unsustainable development. At the same time, interventions in historic urban areas should address the contemporary needs of mobility and functions aimed at improving the overall quality of life of the inhabitants" (Jain and Jigyasu 2019: 278).

The civility and citizenship should be further perceived and practiced 'Culture', as defined in the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001), i.e., 'the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of a society or a social group that encompasses art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions, and beliefs' – altogether converges into the wholeness ('cosmality') of heritagescapes. We should develop and maintain the Creative Cultural Landscapes, those defined as urban historical-cultural complexes/ecotopes where cultural activities are an integral component of the human

settlement's economic and social functioning, for example through support to cultural and creative professionals, enhanced investments in cultural infrastructure, creative industries, and new ICTs, or the adoption of bottom-up approaches to overall habitat development.

There exist a great variety of religious and sacred sites that are representative of the different cultures and traditions of the world. Approximately 20 percent of the properties inscribed on the World Heritage List have some sort of religious or spiritual connection (see Table 1). These properties to be found in most countries around the world constitute the largest single category on the List. Specific and significant spiritual meanings are mentioned to justify the Outstanding Universal Value of a large number of the World Heritage properties. Numerous historic cities on the List possess components of religious significance and are recognized as holy-heritage cities by different communities. The associated heritagescapes and manifested stories and inherent 'spirit of place' (*genius loci*) help in harmonizing the world, with emphasis on awakening the deeper sense of regenerative strategies and measures and making policies, drawing upon the perspectives of multi-disciplinary and cross-cultural interfaces, within and beyond the world of territorial segments, illustrated with studies of sacred landscapes, places of religion and rituals – all within the spiral frame of reciprocally interconnected 'Succession, Sustenance, and Sustainability'.

Table 1. World Heritage Sites by Religious Group (Re-Gr), 2020.

Se	WHS- Re-Gr	No.	Countries (number of entries)
1	Buddhist	3	Cambodia, Indonesia, Japan
2	Christian - Catholic	61	Germany (10), Spain (10), Italy (9), France (8), Portugal (5), Switzerland (2), Croatia (2), Vatican (2), Brazil (2). AND, 01 each in: Philippines, Chile, Bolivia, Paraguay, Nicaragua, Belgium, Mexico, USA, India, Ireland, and the UK.
3	Christian- Eastern Orthodox	8	Greece (3), Georgia (2), Serbia (2), and Pátmos (1).
4	Christian- Protestant	9	UK (2), Denmark (2), Germany (2); and, 01 each in: Sweden, Finland, and Norway.
5	Hindu	32	India (27), Nepal (4), and Cambodia (1).
6	Muslim	10	01 each in: Iran, Turkey, Bangladesh, India, Egypt, Iraq, Mauritania, Tunisia, Algeria, and Mali.
--	Total Religious Groups: 6. Total countries: 41. Total WHS Religious sites:123.	123	Representing 41 countries: India (29), Germany (12), Spain (10), Italy (9), France (8), Portugal (5), Nepal (4), UK (3), Greece (3), Switzerland (2), Croatia (2), Vatican (2), Brazil (2), Cambodia (2), Georgia (2), Serbia (2), and Denmark (2). AND, 01 each in: Sweden, Finland, Norway, Indonesia, Japan, Philippine, Chile, Bolivia, Paraguay, Nicaragua, Belgium, Mexico, USA, Ireland, Iran, Turkey, Egypt, Iraq, Bangladesh, Mauritania, Tunisia, Algeria, Mali, and the Island of Pátmos.

(Source: Collated from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_World_Heritage_Sites_by_religion; accessed: 15 December 2021).

The pathways of *succession* (evolution and existence in ancient past) passing through *sustenance* (continuance, maintenance, organic growth, and uses in the present) and progression towards *sustainability* (planning for conservation, preservation, governance, cultural enveloping, and perspectives as in SDGs) makes the 'holistic' ('cosmic') frame of understanding and creation of action plan in making the harmonious World of historic-heritage cities: 'Sublime, Blissful, Beautiful' ("*Satyam-Shivam-Sundaram*" in Indian metaphysics). Environmental features were inscribed by human hands to mark their achievement and accomplishments in the frame of built structures and advanced culture of the urban world (historic cities). With time, such natural and constructed places commonly became centres of advanced human activities and interaction, serving as a pivot of harmonizing the world through their inherent messages and underpinning meanings, ensembles in the Urban Cultural Landscapes, UCL, and Historic Urban Landscape, HUL. That is how they require special care for understanding and planning – Preservation & Regeneration, and also care for maintaining them as nexus of visioning future and fulfilling the SDGs as envisioned by the UNO/UNESCO. It is noted that "preservation of urban heritage should not be seen as an "alternative" to urban growth, but, on the contrary, as an integral part of a city development strategy that requires – to be successful – a full understanding of the cultural values of each place (Bandarin, 2019: 4). Inherently the ideologies and imposition of values result in the multifaceted cultural landscape manifested as a spatial and political phenomenon and a way of seeing that is replete with meanings" (Taylor, 2015 :185). Therefore, the historic cities and their landscapes are also the "inhabited landscape(s), the physical world that people participate in directly, modifying it as they are able to according to their needs, aspirations and means"

(Punekar, 2006: 110). The pivotal “role of landscape in people’s sense of place, place meaning and values that are regarded as central to a conservation ethic, and commonly accepted” as way of understanding (Taylor, 2018: 54). Moreover, “it is useful to think of cultural landscapes as ideas embedded in a place, and to consider the recording of cultural landscapes as an exercise in cognitive mapping rather than physical mapping” (Smith, 2010: 46).

The frame and interventions in preserving the identity and rationality of Urban Historic-Heritage City, at least have fifteen broad concerns for holistic and sustainable planning (see Table 2).

Table 2. Urban Historic-Heritage City: Frame and Interventions in preserving its identity.

Frame/ Interventions	Basic norms and Characteristics
Protection:	Ensuring that a specific property is safeguarded from destruction, change in use and appearance, etc., through laws, by-laws, and regulations. Listing and designations are the most common instruments used for protection.
Preservation:	Keeping safe from injury, decay, destruction, and change, allowing no alteration of the original situation. Although there is no significant semantic difference between the concepts of preservation and conservation, the latter allows for more changes – as by definition new elements may have to be put in place.
Conservation:	Dynamic action is taken to prevent decay, embracing all acts that prolong the life of a given property, assuming that a considerable amount of existing material and style would have to, and should be, retained.
Restoration:	Returning something as nearly as possible to its original form or condition; reviving its original character supports the re-establishment of a completed “ideal” state that may have never existed.
Renovation:	Improvement of existing (usually physical) conditions of a building and built structure, not necessarily concerned with the replication of its original state.
Urban Renewal:	Range of interventions in the urban fabric, through development and rehabilitation within the physically, functionally, and/or socio-economically obsolete, and incorporating elements of local identities rationally.
Adaptive Reuse:	A restored, renovated, or recuperated building/s is to have new functions while keeping basic and ethical standards of restoration and addressing the needs of the new use which needs to be clarified and defined in the continuity.
Redevelopment:	New befitting plan for a specific area of the city, entailing the clearance of the existing built-up area before the construction of new structures with a new layout, keeping new architecture in old settings – thus preserving old values.
Reconstruction:	Rebuilding of something no longer in existence, but survive in memories and images, with particular care (or not) of producing a replica of the original condition and situation (archaeological and others).
Rehabilitation:	Bringing back a certain level of efficiency and/or returning to a state of functionality; put back in function, make the fabric or ensemble to perform its functions (usually associated with current standards), taking into account sustainability and for mitigation against natural disasters.
Revitalization:	Bringing back new vitality; bringing ‘spirit of place’ (community life and function) back to life through regenerating. It may also involve the allocation of new uses, proper order, including the informal sector.
Recuperation:	Taking into possession and making alive, together with recovering a condition previously lost and assigning to it the same or new functions.
Improvement:	Any action aimed at making the value rise, or the level of comfort, utility, and efficiency (physical, socio-economic, cultural, religious) or for a better appearance – vision and experiential; even sometimes imposing restrictions.
Enhancement:	Increasing, “making greater” (value, desirability, attractiveness, landmarks); adjusting with change and at times, additional elements, not necessarily corresponding to the original state of the site, e.g., new public spaces, new architecture, upgrading street furniture.
Maintenance:	The upkeep of property and equipment allows the total infrastructure to perform its specific functions adequately, through public participation and awakening. This issue is one of the bottlenecks of continuity/sustainability and adequate conservation.

(Sources: Various sources, collected and collated by the authors).

Historical urban areas are the memory of a city, and the overall landscape they constitute displays the typical scene of a city that evolved in a certain historical period and maintained its continuity while absorbing the transformative superimposition. Thus, they are of value for protection as the repository of our existence and survival (Wang, 2012).

Historic cities in terms of civilisation consist of location, morphology, and physical aspect that differs, correspond to their environment. They are, mostly, built with indigenous belief and wisdom which reflects human legacy on how it is settled with traditional, economic, political, and spatial aspects (Rapoport, 1990). The structuring, shaping, and operating sustainable heritage city (SHC) system may be arranged into 6-tier operation, i.e., 1- Setting the vision for SHC of the venture, 2- Identifying the SDGs Target 11.4 & Inclusive Heritage Development, IHD, Strategies, 3- Achieving the Political Cohesion, 4- Building the SHC Frame, 5- Measuring the SHC's Potential & the Progress, and 6- Ensure Accountability & Responsibility (see Table 3). The structural shaping is rationally befitting to historic heritage cities where religion has to play a major role.

Table 3. Shaping Sustainable Heritage City (SHC) System.

SHC attribute	Resultant function
1. Setting the vision for SHC of the venture ↓↑	Identifying – an Inclusive heritage city vision in tune with the heritage city's identity and long-term Inclusive heritage development, IHD, strategy; relevant multi-stakeholders and mechanisms; the existing governance and organizational mechanisms for historic heritage city solutions.
2. Identifying the SDGs Target 11.4 & IHD Strategies ↓↑	Developing heritage city infrastructure (e.g., Internet of Things); Identifying and developing smart and sustainable heritage city services in the purview of SDGs Target 11.4 containing within the so-called "Urban Sustainable Development Goals".
3. Achieving the Political Cohesion ↓↑	Local governments should obtain the necessary political approval and backing to ensure that the strategic programme is pursued as related to IHD. This includes the adoption of the programme/ targets through consensus.
4. Building the SHC Frame ↓↑	Improvement of existing traditional infrastructure and new infrastructure must be built under the IHD; developing an action plan for Public-Private Partnerships programmes; ensuring long-term services via good operation-maintenance of Sustainable Heritage City, SHC.
5. Measuring the SHC's Potential & the progress ↓↑	Consisting of monitoring and evaluating potential and work programme required to achieve the UN - SDGs Target 11.4, emphasising a set of sustainable development targets related to heritage cities and heritage sites and settlements.
6. Ensure Accountability & Responsibility ↓↑	Involves evaluating, reporting, and learning from the SHC process and related experiences. The reflective process of evaluation will feed into a process of continuous learning, which in turn will influence and inform the IHD of the future vision and strategy for smart and SHC.

(Source: Singh, Kumar, & Rana, 2020: 197-198, as given in Habitat III Quito Report, October 2016).

In the successful operation of the Sustainable Heritage City System, like to other planning models, community participation is the key energy in functioning and maintenance of the system by making rational balance among social (religious and cultural heritage), physical (housing and community development), and economic (cultural-heritage tourism) attributes of the heritage-holy city (Singh, Kumar, & Rana, 2020: 198). A recent study remarks that "If the urban SDG is to prove useful as a tool as intended for encouraging local and national authorities alike to make positive investments in the various components of urban sustainability transitions, then it must be widely relevant, acceptable and practicable" (Simon, et al., 2016: 60). This is rationally valid in the case of historical and heritage cities, where one always faces the problem of linking locality and universality. Additionally, central to this task has been the challenge of determining how to benchmark and measure performance according to the SMART criteria (i.e. specific, measurable, assignable, realistic, and time-specific), based on specialist scholarship, the existing literature, and practical experience of the site (see Birch, 2015: 228), taking into account demand, pressure response, and multifactor versus single factor, and also considering two metrics: the traditional dimensions of sustainability (equity, economics, and environment) and later forming the

Liveability Principles of Partnership for Sustainable Communities (PSC), while making a bridge between the age-old traditions and high-tech smart city plans (Singh, Kumar, & Rana, 2020: 202).

While making plans and strategies in this direction, the hard realities to be kept serious consideration, i.e. (1) while the SDGs set targets for nations, most of the implementation will need to take place at the city or regional levels; (2) the SDGs have much to say about “*what*” but much less about “*how*” or “*by whom*”; and (3) goals are great, but the real tests of success will be implementation, bottom-up experimentation, and localization! Considering all the diagnostic niches and consequences, let us march and make ‘pilot models’ at the level of the holy-heritage city. Following the six such procedures represent a direct commitment to heritage conservation in the spectrum of SDGs and NUA (Rypkema, 2016):

- Leverage cultural heritage to strengthen social participation and the exercise of citizenship.
- Develop vibrant, sustainable, and inclusive urban economies, building on cultural heritage.
- Support urban economies through promoting heritage conservation activities.
- Promote regeneration while preserving cultural heritage.
- Include culture as a priority component of urban plans and strategies that safeguard cultural heritage; and
- Support leveraging cultural heritage for sustainable urban development.

Historic cities are complex and dynamic systems and reflect the many processes that drive the physical, social, environmental, and economic transition and they are prime generators of any such changes, which further reciprocate into other changes over time. Of course, many of the processes responsible for the physical and social transformation of historic cities, such as the demise of traditional and religious activities (e.g., pilgrimages, and festivities), gentrification, and the impact of tourism, are also to be taken into consideration; here public intervention is debated as the main mechanism for controlling social and economic processes, which will help the planning culture in the historic cities (see Bandarin and van Oers, 2012: 49).

To be remembered that ‘all the problems generate from the mind so that solutions would come from the mind, which can be transformed with the conscience and solidarity through the awakened education since the childhood’. This will help to prepare the young cadre of generation in protecting, preserving, and promoting cultural-religious heritage that has been inherited from our ancestors over time; this will further help in making better understanding, and making this world more resilient, happy, and humane. A newly initiated mission, RWYC—‘*Reconnecting With Your Culture*’, has opened a new path in this direction; its preamble provokes, “A visionary mission of awakening the youth to prepare for the global understanding, human services, and preserving our cultural heritage in the cosmic frame of Nature-Culture interfaces through the quality and Deeply-rooted Education and dialogues: a march re-appraising interconnectedness between locality and universality—Holiness to Wholeness”. This is initiated by Olimpia Niglio, and now people from different parts of the world are joining in promoting the good causes of global peace and harmony.

Heritage Ecology as a way of deeper knowing and exposition of spirit and power of place is widely provoked to understand and experience the historic-holy-heritage cities; thus, it helps to explore the meaningful relationship with the place and inherent meanings—to be taken as core in global understanding. The imbued issues are under the process of evolution, existence, and eventuality, on the spatiotemporal scale of ‘succession-sustenance-sustainability’—the foundational platform and evolving pattern, transformation, and scenario in holy-heritage cities, sacred sites, and pilgrimages. The past is to inspire; the future is in dreams; the present is to act; let us understand and practice heritage ecology to foster preservation and regeneration of historic cities and their integral part of cultural-religious heritage. These issues are critically appraised in the broader domain of geography as the way and the path of awakening. Think *cosmically*, see *globally*, behave *regionally*, act *locally* but *insightfully*. This is an appeal to walk on the path of transformative environmental consciousness.

No town or city is immune from either the external forces that dictate the need to adapt or the internal pressures that are present within urban areas and which can precipitate growth or decline. Urban Regeneration is an outcome of the interplay between these many sources of influence and, more importantly, it is also a response to the opportunities and challenges which are presented by urban degeneration in a particular place at a specific moment in time. Therefore, the challenge lies “to build synergy between conservation and management of built form as well as social and economic regeneration. Additionally, mainstreaming of heritage in various urban development sectors such as infrastructure, housing, environment, and health is critical for larger sustainability of urban heritage conservation and management initiatives” (Jain and Jigyasu, 2019: 294).

That is how the Historic City Systems develop as the ‘complex whole’, which can better be analysed and understood within an interdisciplinary framework, emphasising Urban Historic Landscape, UHL, and Urban Cultural Landscape, UCL.

COVERAGE WITH *EDA* (2022)

Esempi di Architettura, vol. 9, n.1 and n.2, 2022, attempts to keep pace with the issues as discussed. Papers were invited by the professionals and scholars from various cross- and multi-disciplines to deliberate and explain the role of current issues of preservation and regeneration of historic cities, illustrated with cultural landscapes and sacredscapes framed with attributes of cultural-religious heritage – those all historically and culturally imbued – from experientiality to sustainability: Theory vs. Practice: Understanding vs. Exposition – all aimed at enhancing this ‘Complex Whole’ of Cultural Heritage, an important resource for the future sustainability of the world.

(a) Coverage with *EdA*, (1), 2022

EdA, volume 9 n.1 consists of eight articles mainly focusing on the significance of the cultural-religious heritage in dialogue with the city and the urban landscape.

The paper by Singh and Rana narrates a historical description of the Vishvanatha Shiva (Vishveshvara), the patron deity of the holy-heritage city of Varanasi, India – how over time since its first reference in the 6th century BCE till date the temple has faced destructions, demolition, and contestation, but ultimately it reached to the phase of resurrection in 2019-2022, and presently becomes the religious identity. This paper will serve as a model of the histogenesis of the urban landscape of holy-heritage cities, especially in the oriental world.

The paper by Lee-Niinioja introduces a perspective of interfacing between the folk village and heritage values in the cultural landscape in South Korea, illustrated the Hahoe Folk Village’s clan residence in Andong that testifies the yangban culture’s remnants as the ruling class during the Joseon Confucian Dynasty (CE 1392-1910). The natural-cultural landscape of mountains, open agricultural fields, and water around the village, pavilions, and retreats was admired among the 17th-18th century poets and continues as heritage attributes.

Latkar traces the evolution of the sacredscape of Lord Vitthala of Pandharpur, Maharashtra, in India, through *Puranic* (ancient mythology) times and the period of *Bhakti*, the devotional movement of Medieval India. The existing literature on Hindu pilgrimage tradition acknowledges the manifestation of cosmological frame in shaping the sacredscapes of pilgrimage places in Pandharpur.

Continuing on the Asian continent, Kale and Nene, from India, have proposed an important reflection on Ranjeshwar – a temple located in Ranje village, in Bhore tehsil of Pune district in Maharashtra, India. This paper focuses on the aesthetics of the substructure of the water pool (Kund) connected to the temple. The general studies of smaller water bodies are presented in terms of planning, materials, geometrical pattern, and construction technology, and their functions in evolving the landscape.

The paper by Pusalkar examines the city of Jaipur, situated in the Rajasthan state of India, and planned by architect Vidyadhar in the 1700s, emphasising the architecture and planning of cities following the Vastu Shastra guidelines, while understanding its urban context and also exploring the interrelation between those guidelines and sustainability to investigate potential approaches for future planning.

In the European continent, Lindblad, Eriksson, and Gustafsson have introduced the image and personality of Malmö city, illustrated with the history of Caroli Church. This church was built in 1879 in central Malmö, Sweden’s third-largest city (2021). It was renewed in the 1960s and 1970s with the demolition of many old buildings. However, the church was deconsecrated in 2010 and sold to the owner of the nearby shopping mall in Caroli City.

The paper by Grompone deals with the Chora of Paestum in the south of Italy. This landscape is characterized by a network of sanctuaries placed with each other. The sanctuaries fulfilled different roles within society, and for this reason, they were built *intra moenia* or *extra moenia*. The author introduces archaeological context with suggestive reflections about the conservation and the valorization of this important cultural heritage.

The last paper in this section (*EdA*, 9.1) by Fuentes, from Mexico, describes the bountiful landscape and its transformation in Coatepec in Veracruz, illustrated with coffee production. The attributes that transformed this landscape include the insertion of communication systems and infrastructure, the modernization of mills, urban development, cultural, economic, and social activity, and, most notably, a new railway to speed up communication with the rest of the world.

(b) Coverage with *EdA*, 9 (2), 2022

Following the focus of the special international call, *EdA*, volume 9, n.2, includes eight articles with a broad focus on more design perspectives in dialogue with the cultural-religious heritage and the urban landscape, and related planning perspectives.

The first paper, by Singh and Kumar, attempts to analyse the pilgrimage circuit of Pañchakroshī Yātrā in Varanasi city, one of the holy-heritage cities in India. The paper describes the cosmogonic symbolism in its development and territorial formation, illustrated with a series of multiple concentric sacred layers. The detailed mapping of the pilgrimage route and attached sacred complexes, temples, and associated sacred tanks provides a basic platform to preserve and further development strategy for holy-heritage ensembles of the urban areas.

Discovering the Indian treasures, the paper by Srinivasan and Sagare illustrates the case of Bundi in Rajasthan, a medieval town located on a hillside between two catchment areas. Its hydrology and topography are

resonated poetically in the morphology of this historic town as well as in the rich miniature paintings adorning the walls of its palaces and havelis. Further, noted that the historic urban landscape of Bundi presents a delicate and lyrical relationship among the mindscape of its people, its physical environment, and the imagined and manifested space of the miniature paintings.

The paper by Daprà reflects upon the ecclesiastical heritage in the urban context –projecting it as a cultural heritage. The ecclesial and ecclesiastical heritage still constitutes an element of identity and cultural recognizability for local contexts, and thus it becomes a constitutive of the urban landscape, especially in Italy and Europe. Nonetheless, it is often lacking in systemic knowledge in strategic planning for its protection and enhancement, resultantly exposed to frequent risks of decay and abandonment. Such trends involve also the “living” heritage, which is exposed to the changing religious and urban interferences and the need for transformation and renovation of its spaces.

Linaki and Serrao attempt to shed new light on multi-criteria decision-making systems through the proposal of a new open-access multi-criteria evaluation based on a decision-making method and befitting into the enhancing of the landscape, illustrated with Ano Syros. This site is a protected medieval traditional settlement in the Greek island of Syros, Cyclades. The settlement was founded in 1200 by the Venetians on a hill leading to the top of Syros where the Catholic Cathedral of Saint George is situated.

With a case study of Italian architect Paolo Zermani, a study of the landscape is presented by Cresci, noting his contributions in designing important projects along the ancient religious routes of the Via Francigena, such as the Teatrino di Varano, the Town Hall, and the Chapel of Noceto, and the Chapel in the woods. The study further reflects upon the dialogue between the natural landscape and anthropogenic context.

The follow-up three articles have focused on Mexican sites. The first one by Aloisio presents the peculiarity of the Mexican Gulf and likewise identified areas that can be defined as a cultural graft, which is also occurred with the spread of the Catholic religion and the introduction of colonial vernacular architecture. This foundation has marked a transition from the elastic-wooden world, characterizing the pre-Hispanic production, to the plastic-masonry one, following the discovery of the Americas.

The next paper by Dib presents discourses on structural aspects of the religious heritage in Mexico, illustrated with the statistical studies of typical Mexican Colonial belfries in Mexico City, Morelos, Oaxaca, and Puebla. These examples focus on the structural solutions of the seismic vulnerability of these belfries. This study significantly highlights the damage and the destruction of this religious cultural heritage during earthquake events, resultantly occurred changes in the urban landscape, and favorites the loss of the cultural references, which are very important for the local community.

The last paper by Fabiola, et al. dedicated to the Templo de la Misericordia, known as “El Hospitalito” – located in the Historic Center of the city of Irapuato, Gto, whose cultural values and attributes go beyond the notion of a group; thus, registered as Cultural Heritage of the city. The paper has proposed designed solutions for the restoration of this important religious heritage, following three different criteria, viz. liberation, consolidation, and integration. Today, as part of the programme of dignification of the temple “El Hospitalito”, an executive project is being carried out, which contemplates the scenic illumination of the exterior and actions of improvement, maintenance, and finally restoration for its safeguarding.

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