RaumFragen: Stadt – Region – Landschaft

Michael Ripmeester
Matthew W. Rofe *Editors*

Global Iconoclasm: Contesting "Official" Mnemonic Landscapes

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RaumFragen: Stadt – Region – Landschaft

Reihe herausgegeben von

Olaf Kühne, Forschungsbereich Geographie, Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen, Tübingen, Germany

Sebastian Kinder, Forschungsbereich Geographie, Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen, Tübingen, Germany

Olaf Schnur, Bereich Forschung, vhw – Bundesverband für Wohnen und Stadtentwicklung e.V., Berlin, Germany

RaumFragen: Stadt – Region – Landschaft | SpaceAffairs: City – Region – Landscape

Im Zuge des „spatial turns“ der Sozial- und Geisteswissenschaften hat sich die Zahl der wissenschaftlichen Forschungen in diesem Bereich deutlich erhöht. Mit der Reihe „RaumFragen: Stadt – Region – Landschaft“ wird Wissenschaftlerinnen und Wissenschaftlern ein Forum angeboten, innovative Ansätze der Anthropogeographie und sozialwissenschaftlichen Raumforschung zu präsentieren. Die Reihe orientiert sich an grundsätzlichen Fragen des gesellschaftlichen Raumverständnisses. Dabei ist es das Ziel, unterschiedliche Theorieansätze der anthropogeographischen und sozialwissenschaftlichen Stadt- und Regionalforschung zu integrieren. Räumliche Bezüge sollen dabei insbesondere auf mikro- und mesoskaliger Ebene liegen. Die Reihe umfasst theoretische sowie theoriegeleitete empirische Arbeiten. Dazu gehören Monographien und Sammelbände, aber auch Einführungen in Teilaspekte der stadt- und regionalbezogenen geographischen und sozialwissenschaftlichen Forschung. Ergänzend werden auch Tagungsbände und Qualifikationsarbeiten (Dissertationen, Habilitationsschriften) publiziert.

Herausgegeben von
Prof. Dr. Dr. Olaf Kühne, Universität Tübingen
Prof. Dr. Sebastian Kinder, Universität Tübingen
PD Dr. Olaf Schnur, Berlin

In the course of the “spatial turn” of the social sciences and humanities, the number of scientific researches in this field has increased significantly. With the series “RaumFragen: Stadt – Region – Landschaft” scientists are offered a forum to present innovative approaches in anthropogeography and social space research. The series focuses on fundamental questions of the social understanding of space. The aim is to integrate different theoretical approaches of anthropogeographical and social-scientific urban and regional research. Spatial references should be on a micro- and mesoscale level in particular. The series comprises theoretical and theory-based empirical work. These include monographs and anthologies, but also introductions to some aspects of urban and regional geographical and social science research. In addition, conference proceedings and qualification papers (dissertations, postdoctoral theses) are also published.

Edited by
Prof. Dr. Dr. Olaf Kühne, Universität Tübingen
Prof. Dr. Sebastian Kinder, Universität Tübingen
PD Dr. Olaf Schnur, Berlin

Michael Ripmeester · Matthew W. Rofe
Editors

Global Iconoclasm: Contesting "Official" Mnemonic Landscapes

Editors
Michael Ripmeester
Brock University
St. Catharines, ON, Canada

Matthew W. Rofe
University of South Australia
Adelaide, SA, Australia

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For our families

Foreword

When Michael Ripmeester and Matthew Rofe invited me to write this preface I immediately accepted for two fundamental, and equal, reasons: the subject was (and is) attractive and touched me personally (as I will explain later), and these two colleagues were among the first contacts we established at Green Lines Institute when, almost 15 years ago, we started to create a network that allowed us to launch and run a series of international conferences with participants from all continents for more than a decade. If memory serves me well, Michael and Matthew established a fruitful contact during one of the first Green Lines conferences and that memory and joint work have lasted until the present.

I will not engage in an analysis of the content of the various chapters of this book, because this is not the scope of a forward and because the editors do so in the Introduction. I will only note two ideas/themes that are transversal to each chapter and which are dear to me. On the one hand, the authors deal with questions of memory and its imposition/exposure on various landscapes (taking the word "landscape" in a very broad and comprehensive sense), and the (inevitable) question of the preservation and/or annulment of that memory including the material, emotional, social and other effects. On the other hand, the chapters together highlight the duality between academics and practitioners, their roles, what is assumed typical for each group, and the possibility (or impossibility) of shifting between them.

My professional experience has, over the last 40 years, passed through these two roles and, in each of them, I have had to deal with the issues of memories (constructed, maintained, transmitted, deconstructed, destroyed). It goes without saying that in each of these roles the way one deals with memory is inevitably different. I started in the academy, lecturing on heritage and museum studies as core subjects in Anthropology and Archaeology courses, among others. Teaching the fundamentals of heritage and museum studies inevitably involves dealing with how memories—material and intangible—should be faced, how and from where or who they might be collected, what can and should be done with them in terms of preservation and presentation to the public, which ones can (or should…) be annulled, and how to make these complex selections. This academic role does not easily take into account the practice of the professional, but rather emphasizes the guidelines of "good-practices," In fact, what the academy establishes as guidelines—of

course I always encouraged my students to explore the guidelines of professional associations, codes of ethics, among so many other documents—but what marked this teaching was the academism of what one "should do", rather (or often far from) what one "can do". I then abandoned academic teaching and launched myself into the world of professionals who curate museums and exhibitions. This is what I do now for a living. And, from this side, the analysis and treatment of memory is not the same. Besides pursuing "good practices" there are budgets, and clients, and politicians, and local authorities' regulations, and so many other constraints that permanently confront us and force us to (re)shape what would be the ideal museum or exhibition. When I was teaching, I had some experience of curating museological projects, but nothing that could compare with the present. Today, I am absolutely sure that I would teach the subjects of museology or heritage in a significantly different way. Not in the principles, not in the theoretical meanings or conceptualization, not even in scholarly and academic statements, but in their connection and applicability to professional practice.

Memory, on this side of professional practice, ceases to be that abstract entity conceptualized in the theoretical terms that we often face as academics and becomes exactly what a certain Mayor wants to see in "his" museum… or the idea that a CEO of a company has, or has not, of how to present this or that in a corporatized museum. Options (what is silent and what is evident, the way in which a particular memory is affirmed or suppressed) are no longer theoretical discussions, riddled with conceptualism, but very pragmatic decisions that sometimes demand excessively pragmatic actions.

The confrontation in this book between these two worlds is rich, perennially meaningful and—as the editors say—makes perfect sense. Indeed, throughout all the conferences we have organised at Green Lines, of which Michael Ripmeester and Matthew Rofe have been part, this dichotomy was always present: we have always encouraged and accepted contributions from academics and practitioners on the themes of heritage and sustainable development, in their various approaches. It is therefore a pleasure and an honour to write these forward lines for the book Michael Ripmeester and Matthew Rofe have edited, with the certainty that it is an important milestone in its field.

Sérgio Lira
mail@slira.net

Acknowledgement

The list of people for whom we are grateful is very long. However, here we would like to specifically thank our authors, all of whom demonstrated a great deal of patience and grace through the long process of editing. We hope that this project will be the start of enduring network of scholars looking to understand mnemonic landscapes and the ways in which people engage with them. We need to acknowledge the support of the Landscape Research Journal. Their encouragement to initiate the wider project was instrumental in getting us started. We also would like to thank Olaf Kühne, whose kind words and encouragement prompted us to put this volume together. We also owe our gratitude to the Social Justice and Equity Research Institute and the Faculty of Social Sciences—both at Brock University—for providing funding for the writer's workshop that preceded this volume. This even also benefited from the efforts of Brock University Geography graduate students Daniel Anane, Joshua Boadi, and Abigail Mensah. We also would like to acknowledge the patience and timely support of Balaji Sundarrajan and Omika Mohan of Springer Nature.

Finally, we would like to thank our respective families for their enduring support and enthusiasm, even when the work seemed overly daunting. Thanks to all of you. We couldn't have done it without each one of you.

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Introduction

Michael Ripmeester and Matthew W. Rofe

When we sent out our call for chapters for this monograph in the fall of 2020, we did so in a period of tragedy and significant social transition. People all over the world had, seemingly overnight, reconsidered their collective pasts. The murders of George Floyd, Breana Taylor, and others by police officers, were, of course, the catalysts. Of course, knowledge of the horrifying treatment of children who died during the residential school experiment in Canada, the continued official resistance to Indigenous history and the ongoing impacts of colonisation in Australia and the South Pacific, and the marginalization of peoples at their own cultural sites had already drawn attention to the reconsideration of agreed upon "public" pasts. However, the intensity and scale of these social movements in response to these murders was unprecedented. Against this backdrop, we were not surprised that the chapter proposals we began to receive reflected a global diversity of contributors, interests, and objectives. Our project quickly evolved from the development of a standard academically oriented undertaking to one that was excitingly diverse and spanned the often disparate worlds of the academy, professional practice, and activism. From this diversity we began to develop an idea: what if this group could become the beginning of a diverse network of people—professionally, culturally and linguistically—interested in questions of the public past? What might they accomplish?

M. Ripmeester (✉)
Brock University, St. Catharines, Canada
e-mail: mripmeester@brocku.ca

M. W. Rofe
UniSA Creative, The University of South Australia, Adelaide, Australia
e-mail: Matthew.Rofe@unisa.edu.au

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Trying to organize some coherence around the submissions, while supporting contributors from non-English speaking backgrounds, different career stages, and those new to writing and publishing, we organized a writers' workshop. During the workshop, individual authors or groups of authors presented written drafts of their papers. Contributing authors were also engaged in a peer review process intended to socialise the development of this project and create opportunities for contributors to develop ties with each other. Originally, we discussed the possibility of holding the writers' workshop in person. However, the COVID-19 global pandemic put an end to that idea. Responding flexibly, we held an asynchronous e-workshop in which some interaction was possible. Our contributors took up this opportunity with gusto.

As mentioned, contributions came from individuals and teams. We received numerous submissions from practice-based academics, heritage practitioners, architects, and artists. This presented a challenge for us as the volume's editors. Quite rightly, the papers reflect the institutional and conceptual underpinnings of each author or group of authors. However, and given this, while the authors deal with contested memories, their papers are structured differently and reflect different concepts, vocabularies, and idioms. In our initial attempts at organizing the chapters, we tried to impose a coherence on them drawing on our own scholarly training as professional academics. However, and given input from participants and our own frustration, we eventually gave up. This volume, then, might not read as consistently as we had envisioned. But, what initially seemed to us to be a problem ended up providing this volume with a unique strength.

The literature exploring the ill-fit of scholarly work and practical application has a long history (v. Kress and Wedell, 1993; Lantos, 1994; Sargeant, Sadler-Smith, and Dawson, 1997) In recent decades, however, universities across the globe have embraced a narrative of academy/industry integration (Smith, Wilkins, Marshall, Dellapenna, Pressley, Bauer, South, and Green, 2018; Tarazona and Rosenbusch, 2019). While scholars have produced many papers espousing this integration as important, their writing suggests that the gap between academics and practitioners stubbornly persists (v. Bartunek and Rynes, 2014; Carton and Ungureanu, 2018; McGiffen, 2021). Given the existing literature, there is no good reason to rehearse the entire canon of this discussion here. A few summary statements may suffice.

We can begin by highlighting some differences between scholarly and practitioner work identified by various authors, most of whom, incidentally, are scholars. These differences are often presented as binaries:

Research vs. Practice
Universal Truths vs. Solutions
What works vs. what is applicable
Rigor vs. Relevance
Theory vs. Goals
Puzzles vs. Problems

(v. Yingling 2010; Bartunek and Rynes, 2014; Han and Stenhouse, 2015; Hubbard, 2018; McGriffen, 2021).

In some ways, these binaries seem real enough. In a recent paper, Čorak, Živoder and Marušić (2021) identified very real differences between scholars and practitioners. In approaching post-pandemic tourism recovery, for instance, they found that scholars focused on long-term transformational goals. Conversely, practitioners were intent on finding immediate market solutions to secure industry survival. These types of binaries might be, however, exacerbated by a set of socio-cultural and institutional problems rather than by any real incompatibility. As several authors suggest, structural orientation to problems, institutional reward systems, and accepted modes of knowledge transfer may create rather than reflect this divide (Yingling, 2010; Hubbard, 2018; McGiffen, 2021). For example, and despite all good intentions, to advance as scholars individuals must clear sets of hurdles that, in general, work to preclude their participation in a practitioners' realm. Likewise, practitioners, working in private or public sector realms face problems that require immediate solutions and that leave little opportunity for a deep dive into the academic literature. Wolfenedon, Sercombe and Tucker (2019) illustrate how this process might unfold. Most often, they write, authors at either pole publish or produce knowledge for others occupying the same epistemological ground and use similar vocabularies, theoretical frameworks, and methodologies. In their paper, they explore the efforts of a practitioner co-author to publish a paper in an academic journal. While the journal's editor recognized the paper as "good," it was rejected as not measuring up to the journal's academic standards. Working with colleagues with more experience in writing for academic journals, the original author finally had the paper published. However, as the authors note, this translation did not occur without cost. In this case, one of the participants stated: "Something is always lost… you can't trade currency across the border without losing some" (Wolfenden, Sercombe and Tucker, 2019, 566). In other words, in a world wherein knowledge production must fit epistemological rules, some is bound to be lost as it moves across the practitioner-academic divide.

The gap, then, seems wide. Nevertheless, some commentators continue to maintain that it is socially produced and therefore might be overcome. Bartunek and Rynes (2014), for instance, contend that the act of naming a scholar-practitioner divide creates it. Moreover, once called into existence, the structural scaffolding that has grown around it forces individuals to make choices about the goals and epistemological groundings of their work. This, they conclude, creates unproductive and unnecessary tensions between individuals tethered to either pole. Put another way, we might suggest that the work of scholars and practitioners is not necessarily that different. Rather, an active process of delineation positions the efforts of both scholars and practitioners as such. In like manner, Yingling (2010) argues that the distance between the poles is exaggerated. Indeed, he avers that the differences may be more a question of "degree than scope" (Yingling, 2010, 117). Both sides, he suggests, are always, and necessarily, involved in critical thinking. He puts it

this way: “Critical thinking is reason itself and therefore does not recognize essentially artificial and other often irrational disciplinary bounds” (Yingling, 2010, 118).

Even where gaps might exist, analysists argue that it would be beneficial to all if epistemological boundaries and the structures that authorize knowledge might be erased, or at least eased. Indeed, these boundaries are where extant epistemological tensions can lead to new knowledge creation. Hubbard (2018) contends that there is little reason that academic and practitioner knowledge production cannot connect productively at some level. Indeed, and even if the connection is slight and tenuous, exploring ways to increase relationships between academics and practitioners might not only diminish knowledge waste, but might facilitate new knowledge production. This conclusion is tested and acknowledged in research focused on the sexual health of teenagers (Arpin, 2022), pedagogical strategies (Martell, Carney, Marin, and Hashimoto-Martell, 2021), therapy (Dattillio, Piercy, and Davis, 2014) and medicine (Smith, Wilkins, Marshall, Dellapenna, Pressley, Bauer, South and Green, 2018; Neel, Goldman, Marte, Bello, and Nothnagle, 2019). These sorts of collaborations, authors suggest, may provide benefits to society and, more specifically, to students who require access to both concept/theory and problem-solving skills (Bartunek and Rynes, 2014; Hubbard, 2018).

In this volume we likewise strive to test the academic-practitioner boundary. After all, we are cognisant that the creation of these knowledge/expertise boundaries and the power dynamics they embody mirror the constructed and contested nature of the landscapes that each contributor to this monograph explore. Given this, these papers are connected through their explorations of landscape iconoclasm. In this context, we use the term iconoclasm to refer to the intentional demolition of landscape elements that hold particular meanings (Bevan, 2006; Zarandona, 2015). The human landscape can sometimes seem natural, coherent, and almost inevitable (Cresswell, 1996, 2019; Kuehne, 2015). This is particularly true through periods of seeming stability; there are simply no reasons to question material forms and the way lives are embedded in them. Writing of symbols of nationalism, for example, Michael Billig (1995; v. Fox, 2018) contends they may become banal, unquestioned parts of our lives. Indeed, significant scholarly attention has been devoted to such everyday landscapes and the ways in which they reflexively embody and communicate discourses that reinforce the hegemony of dominant groups. This has certainly been true of many mnemonic landscapes.

Recent work in geography, however, has contributed to new ways of understanding place, and by inference, landscape in the context of wider processes (Massey, 2005; Cresswell, 2015, 2019; Peng, Yan, Strijker, Wu, Chen, and Mah, 2020; Pearson and Gorman, 2023). The long dominance, for example, of systems of mnemonic landscapes may suggest that a particular mnemonic region exists as natural and coherent sets of relationships that produce material shapes and socio-cultural meaning. However, it may be more accurate to describe this seeming immutability as the result of stable social, cultural, political, and economic processes that lend an aura of permanence to these relationships (Delanda, 2006, 2016; see also Cresswell, 2019). However, it should come as no surprise that the

above-mentioned processes can become unstable and upset the social relationships and the spaces in which they are embedded. Thus, apparent boundedness or coherence is neither total nor inevitable; the discourses that support them are, for example, discontinuous (Foucault, 1979) and the regimes that support them may fade or fall (Levinson, 1998).

Heroes, places, and events may, then, fall into collective disfavour (Hood, 200; Connerton, 2009; Hirst, 2020). In his chapter in the classic volume *Interpreting the Ordinary Landscape*, Pierce Lewis (1979, p. 12) makes the astute observation that the '…human landscape is our unwitting autobiography… [where] our cultural warts and blemishes are… [e]xhibited for anybody who wants to find them and knows how to look for them'. In this case, key social movements have challenged dominant narratives of memoryscapes revealing them as partial, incomplete and, in some instances, simply not factual. Thus, those mnemonic warts and blemishes, like all landscapes, can play an integrative role in the mediation of memory (Qvistrom and Wastfelt, 2020). It is, after all, at the hallowed sites of memory that mnemonic practices meet mnemonic products (Olick, 2016). Or, put another way, the nature of landscapes as neither natural nor neutral opens the door for contestation; they become sites where different social groups struggle against local manifestations of global social, political, and cultural forms of inequity. The movement towards destabilization of mnemonic hegemony has been fomenting for many years. In the United States, for example, after the 1966 murderer of a young man in Tuskegee, Alabama was acquitted, protesters took out their frustration on a confederate monument (Cox, 2021). In 1996, Canadian First Nations successfully protested the "derogatory representation of Aboriginal peoples" contained in an Ottawa, Ontario monument (Davidson, 2014). The point is that the individuals who make up social movements have long been aware of, and protested, monuments that celebrate inequity. In recent times there is also growing recognition that these protests have become transcultural demonstrations against the legacies of colonialism and other forms of widespread inequality (Edmonds, 2021; Rigney, 2022). It is no surprise, then, that global protest movements butt up against glorious nationalist foundation myths and the forgotten tragedies that so often accompanied them. The chapters in this book engage these tensions.

This volume contains ten chapters. They all, of course, feature discussions of contested mnemonic landscapes. The global reach of Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests generated "irruption[s] of memory" (Wilde, 1999) focused on monuments and the problematic pasts they represent (v. Edmonds, 2021; Brogden and Harper, 2021). The accounts in this volume, however, do not necessarily derive from the Black Lives Matter protests, though some certainly do. In some chapters, for example, the protests drew new intensity to existing efforts to address a troubled past. In others, however, the links to BLM protests are very loose if they exist at all. Nevertheless, the case studies here represent continued local struggles over memory and power and are part of a growing global movement to address the inequity made concrete or bronze in monuments and historic sites.

In the first chapter, registered architect and Ph.D. scholar, Dominic Trimboli explores the complicated relationship between the tragic histories of the Wadjemup Burial Ground

and Roeborne Gaol in Western Australia and their current uses. The end goal is, as he describes, forms of “Truth telling.” In the case of Wadjemup Burial Ground, the silenced history of the island on which it is sited was long hidden beneath a veneer of tourism, recreation, and leisure. The accommodations awaiting tourists include the jail in which Aboriginal men were incarcerated. This creates an uneasy tension between the privilege of consumption and the terror of oppression. While there is progress, he argues that the work is not done. The landmarks continued presence he suggests, “…seems to remain closer to a form of ‘truth’ or cultural authenticity than any museum could ever seemingly offer.” Moreover, and as he concludes local efforts to redesign and recode the sites as promoting inclusivity and to foster reconciliation have proven effective. Yet, in the end, and as always, questions remain.

Cut Dewi, Eara Nopera Rauzi, and Mirza Irwansyah, scholars from Syiah Kuala University consider the memorials dedicated to the memory of the 2004 earthquake and tsunami in Banda Aceh, Indonesia. They contend that commemoration always puts the past to wider socio-cultural, economic, or political use. In this context, they explore the Aceh Tsunami Museum in Banda Aceh as an artefact that simultaneously fosters both remembering and forgetting. As they note, local officials began to plan for the museum within days of the tragedy. However, as they point out, the mnemonic framework of the museum is strategically selective, focusing on the historical period of glory of the Islamic Kingdom while failing to mention prolonged periods of armed conflict (the Dutch War 1873–1904 and the Aceh Free Movement 1989–2005) that are so important to the history and identity of the Acehnese people. This, they contend, is because of the wishes of the central government and international donors “to play it safe” by avoiding politically contentious issues. Perhaps more importantly, they contend that this institutional amnesia extended to relief funding; victims of the tsunami were compensated for their losses while the victims of the conflict were not. In conclusion, Dewi, Rauzi, and Irwansyah suggest that the Aceh Tsunami Museum represents unequal relationships of value, identity, and memory making.

Heritage site manager John Zulu writes of heritage dissonance at the Mosi-oa-Tunya/ Victoria Falls World Heritage Property located in Zambia. Zulu outlines the ways in which the memoryscapes at the falls champion British colonial memory and the falls’ natural heritage rather than Zambian national history and the practices and values of local Indigenous peoples. Indeed, this site is inscribed on UNESCO’s World Heritage List for its ‘natural’ geological value with only scant recognition of human occupation of the site. This silencing of the cultural values of local Indigenous people manifest itself in several ways, with Zulu noting that, for example, Indigenous soldiers are not included in World War 1 commemorations of Zambian forces on the site. Moreover, and even more disturbing is that Indigenous people have been cut off from sacred sites around the falls by fences seeking to demarcate and ‘protect’ the site. Furthermore, Zulu suggests that as tourism numbers increase, the local peoples have become even more secretive about their cultural links to the falls. This has the effect of exacerbating the area’s memory divide.

Yeimy Walker, Jacky Bowring, Shannon Davis are colleagues in the School of Landscape Architecture at Lincoln University in New Zealand. In their chapter, the trio explore violence against two colonial monuments: one in Columbia and the other in New Zealand. Their wide-ranging paper explores the ways in which monuments can become lightning rods for political unrest, particularly that associated with the long oppression of Indigenous peoples. This violence, they contend, suggests not only the power of monuments as artefacts of memory themselves, but also, and reflecting their expertise as landscape architects, the power of their placement in public space. In both cases, colonial powers erected monuments championing a narrative of noble and justified conquest in places that held particular significance to the conquered. In this case, the monuments' locations intensified their potency as symbols of colonial oppression. They conclude with the question as to whether public space is as inclusionary as the term would suggest, especially when such landscapes promote only the voices of the powerful. They suggest recognizing this problem, acknowledging the voices of protestors, and working to make public spaces more inclusive can work to "reflect the deeper histories of places."

Italian artist and independent scholar Roberto Recalcati examines the difficult and linked histories of fascism and disgraced heroes in Italy. His chapter asks difficult questions. For example, in his introduction, he makes the bold claim that in attacking monuments, protestors may risk putting the monuments on trial and underestimating the power of the past in which they emerged. This, he contends is an abrogation of duty and risks missing both extant racism and the legacies of colonialism. Thus, while politicians sidestep or ignore issues around the numerous monuments to Fascism that remain in Italian cities, commemoration of resistance and efforts to recontextualize troublesome monuments are slow and piecemeal. Yet, he suggests that the continued existence of these monuments may yet have a use. Echoing Bonnie Honig's (2017) assertion that we need 'public things', Recalcati concludes that even troublesome monuments need to exist to be read and reread to "reflect on the atrocities committed by our ancestors."

In an innovative chapter, architects and scholars Nerma Omićević and Bojana Bojanic Obad Scitaroci take the meaning of "contested memories" in an original direction. They begin by outlining Sarajevo's long history of recovering anthropomorphic and natural disasters. Though each disaster brought change, Sarajevo retained parts of its previous identities. The result is a palimpsest-like multi-layered and multi-cultural landscape. The most recent disaster they discuss is the Siege of Sarajevo, which lasted from 5th April 1992 to 29th February 1996. Despite attempts by the Serbian besiegers to erase the built heritage of the city, it survived. Moreover, and despite the massive changes the recovery engendered, the new urbanscape, replete with new monuments and memorials again, serves to bolster the population's resilient heritage. Perhaps more importantly, this latest disaster has prompted city-wide efforts to proactively plan for disaster abatement. In this light, Sarajevo's entire form is a memory to the resilience of its residents. Moreover, and using specific examples, they suggest the result of cycles of destruction and change have provided the opportunity for healing.