

EDITORIAL

The orphaned synagogue in the urban space. How are we supposed to deal with it? At a first glance, this is the question within the scope of the contemporary concept of Critical Heritage Studies, which originates from the North American context. However, the addressed synagogues are located primarily in Central and Eastern Europe, in various Polish regions, in Lithuania, the Czech Republic, Croatia, Hungary, the west of Romania as well as in Ukraine and Belarus. In this case, the chosen concept must be adapted in many respects. As a result of these adaptations, a series of processes can be observed here that show phases, dynamics and intensities that have been little described so far and are characterized by phenomena such as de-demonization, de-ideologization, contextualization, appropriation, attempts to correct or improve conservation practices. Bringing these new narratives together for the first time at a conference was a challenge. Combining the results of the conference in the form of a publication is another one.

The conference ‘Jewish or Common Heritage? (Dis-)appropriation of Synagogue Architecture in East-Central Europe since 1945’ took place at the German Historical Institute and the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw in September 2023. It was planned by a project team of the GHI and Bet Tfila – Research Unit for Jewish Architecture at Technische Universität Braunschweig as part of the joint research project ‘Appropriation and Revitalization: Negotiation Processes of the German-Jewish Cultural Heritage in Poland’ within the framework of the DFG-Priority Program 2357 ‘Jewish Cultural Heritage’, supervised by Ruth Leiserowitz (Warsaw) and Ulrich Knufinke (Braunschweig).

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