PROLOGUE

Communication in our globalized world, where unlimited information is accessible through different means, represents a special challenge at heritage sites, concerning the management of reality and visitor expectations, and the establishment of a balance between historic "truth" and stories created especially for tourists. Communication at a heritage site ranges from marketing and advertising activities to activities developed for visitors (heritage interpretation), both of which tend to employ new technologies more and more often. This wide spectrum of communication activities at heritage sites makes it even more challenging to accommodate expectations of diverse audiences coming from various countries. The aim of the international conference "Understanding Each Other's Heritage: Challenges for Communication in a Globalized World", organized by the International Association of Heritage Professionals e.V. in cooperation with the Chair of Media Studies at the Brandenburg University of Technology Cottbus (BTU), was to discuss how to communicate effectively with diverse audiences and to make heritage sites places of intercultural dialogue.

Since the conference aimed at presenting various interdisciplinary views on the communication process, not only heritage interpreters and museum communicators were invited to contribute, but also architects, archaeologists and conservators. This allowed presenting and discussing various perspectives, thus creating a more holistic approach to the subject matter. Three sessions were developed in order to accommodate various aspects of communication at a heritage site, which also build the three parts of this book:

Session 1: Advertising and Edutainment: managing expectations and reality

The first impressions of a community's heritage are often in place before a visitor has even physically visited the location. Advertising and marketing can heavily shape and influence expectations and colour the experience and perception once at the site. The marketing and advertising strategies for (World) Heritage sites can either serve to promote multiple values and realities or they can serve to promote a single narrative. This session aimed to analyze how much, and what kind of promotion, marketing and advertising are needed for (World) Heritage sites; how communications strategies can attract visitors while maintaining the historical, cultural and educational integrity of a site; and how sites can be made attractive to visitors with diverse backgrounds and requirements without turning them into amusement parks.

In his contribution to this book, **Gerhard Ermischer** illustrates how telling the stories of the Spessart landscape in Germany can raise awareness about its preservation and make the local communities its stewards. He illustrates the stories that can be told in order to present the history of the landscape but also to reinforce identities of the locals and help immigrants to build new identities. He shows how the story of the landscape can become the story of the people.

Jana Richter presents in her article the importance of creating a recognizable tourist image for a World Heritage site. She illustrates the development of the image concept to represent the six estates of the Berlin Modernism, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, as well as individual image-concepts for every estate to make them recognizable to tourists. This includes concepts for public transport, bicycle paths, guidance systems in the estates and their integration into the existing tourist concepts in Berlin.

An architectural approach to communication is presented by **Xenia Panfilova**, who analyzes the effectiveness of artistic and architectural installations in representing memories. She illustrates how such installations are able to raise curiosity by using images, signs, brief text fragments and forms. She illustrates how the installations are able to join the urban spaces or to serve as an exclamation mark and a visit card.

Session 2: Heritage (mis)interpretation: challenges and opportunities for interpretation for diverse audiences

Among the challenges faced by museum and heritage managers is the need to develop effective interpretation strategies while ensuring the attractiveness and accessibility for visitors and tourists with different expectations and backgrounds. In this context, interpretation is a fundamental tool for promoting cultural awareness and mutual understanding. Employed correctly, it can help to avoid conflict, misunderstanding and intolerance. Despite this crucial role, the potential of interpretation in the management of museums and sites is still often underestimated and in many cases neglected. The aim of the session was to analyse how interpretation can contribute to remove stereotypes and prejudices; whether current interpretation is alienating some groups; how interpretation can support dialogue between opposing ideologies, beliefs and historical truths; what methods and strategies appeal to the widest audience and whether it is ever appropriate to focus on a specific audience.

Eva Battis and **Alaa El-Habashi** bring an architectural approach to the concept of interpretation by showing how architecture and urban landscape can be used to communicate with visitors. They illustrate the connections of heritage interpretation with the conservation of a heritage site and how the latter can be used to communicate the values of a site. She indicates how the principles of the ICOMOS Charter for the

Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites can be applied to conservation and restoration of urban landscapes in order to enable historic fabric to communicate its history to visitors.

Lee Davidson and **Gaëlle Crenn** present preliminary findings from a transnational study examining the Māori exhibition in New Zealand, France and Canada. The article investigates how such an exhibition, originally rooted in a specific national context, is transformed by its movement, by being subject to a different reception by audiences in diverse national contexts. They analyse the role interpretation plays in this process. With the help of a multi-method approach, the authors investigate how both museum professionals and audiences deal with the topic of interculturality and how meanings are shifted from one context to the other.

In his workshop, **Michael Hamish Glen** goes into the essence of heritage interpretation by tackling the problem of writing interpretive texts. He introduces rules of creative writing and encourages to experiment with poetry. He shows how important it is to think of the target audience when the texts are created.

Communication of industrial heritage is a challenging task, not only because many do not perceive it as heritage and do not realize the values it contains, but also because of the diverse audiences it has to be communicated to. **Heidi Pinkepank** and **Karolina Hettchen** investigate the possibility of using a bottom-up approach in the communication of an industrial heritage site in Lusatia and whether such an approach can foster mutual understanding by reconstructing the views of the diverse and disperse audiences.

Interpretation of minority cultures is also investigated by **Susanne Raymond.** She analyses a change in the interpretation of Native American culture in the museums over the past decades in the USA. The article shows how indigenous people are involved in decision making

and in communicating their own cultures. Based on the example of the National Museum of the American Indian, she illustrates new methodologies in usage, display, repair and storage of artefacts but also in representation and interpretation of Native American cultures.

Heritage interpretation for a diverse audience is a challenging task. In her article, **Iryna Shalaginova** investigates cultural differences in correlation with Kolb's learning styles and how these may affect interpretation of heritage sites. She illustrates the use of several framing techniques that might help overcome some of the cultural barriers in the interpretation of heritage sites for a foreign audience.

Maria Angélica da Silva *et al.* illustrate the challenges of interpreting heritage sites that local communities and visitors have difficulties in identifying with. Inspired by the example of the re-use of Franciscan monasteries, they illustrate the possibility of enabling architectural constructions to communicate meanings to audiences, a so called interpretation without words. The aim of the projects presented in the paper is to revitalize the sites and strengthen the meanings they are able to communicate.

Some scholars point out that heritage interpretation should be used to support the conservation efforts at a heritage site. In her article, **Alexandra Skedzuhn** investigates how conservation processes and their methods, materials, aesthetics and ethics are mediated to the audience in order to enhance their awareness of a heritage site. The article illustrates present trends and strategies in conservation mediation on the example of the Museum Island in Berlin. It addresses the opportunities and challenges for a variety of mediation strategies of heritage conservation that employ both traditional and new media.

Aziliz Vandesande *et al.* investigate loss of values at a World Heritage site and how a value-based mapping tool can be applied to a (re)interpretation and more effective conservation of a heritage site. The

article analyses what values entail and how those can be incorporated into a strategic interpretation plan to address visitors with various backgrounds.

Session 3: There's an app for that: World Heritage sites and new media

Electronic and print media, as favourite sources of information and entertainment in our globalized world, also play an important role in the transmission of knowledge about other cultures. Depending on the perspective and representation techniques employed, media discourses can serve to broaden the audience's knowledge about foreign cultures, traditions and heritage places or can contribute to the reinforcement of existing cultural and ethnic stereotypes. The session analysed how new media can help to transmit the values of (World) Heritage sites; how World Heritage Sites are currently presented in the new media and what are the strategies to improve their presentation and what are the opportunities in using new media tools, such as 3D innovation, multi-touch screens, smart robots and others in communicating with visitors.

Mario Santana Quintero approaches the concept of communication from a conservation perspective. He analyses how knowledge on World Heritage properties can be effectively captured and disseminated. He underlines the need for a holistic and participatory approach in order to guarantee the scientific correctness and reliability of information used to record, in protection and documentation of heritage places, as well as, in the longevity of the records to be transmitted and kept for future uses.

The relevance and usefulness of the Internet are analysed by **Nina Hinrichs**, who discusses how the Wadden Sea World Heritage site is represented on the web and how the medium may assist in representing cross-cultural values of the site. She describes an interactive communication structure among touristic and research institutions,

museums and official representative institutions, which was established to represent the Wadden Sea on the Internet. Through this example, she presents the advantages and critical aspects of the transmission of knowledge and universal values on the Internet.

Roseline Oliveira *et al.* analyse and illustrate the use of videos, exhibitions and internet presentations in disseminating the knowledge and sharing experience about the development history and contemporary situation of some Brazilian cities. Among other things, they attempt to create a discourse on shaping urban landscapes in a globalized movement.

The use of podcasts in the representation of World Heritage Sites is analysed by **Katharina Sandberg** in her contribution to this book. She illustrates types of podcasts available at various heritage sites and their usefulness for various target groups. She discusses how podcasts may be used in promoting Outstanding Universal Values of World Heritage sites and increasing the involvement of new audiences. As a conclusion, she draws suggestions on how to use podcasts effectively to reach and involve a wider range of people.

Katharina Schillinger illustrates how new media based tools can open new possibilities in involving visitors with uncomfortable heritage, based on the example of the former GDR penal institution in Cottbus. She indicates how visitors can connect with the history of a dark heritage site with the help of a simple audio guide combined with a heart rate measurement device. This tool places personal reactions in the foreground and serves as a cautious mediator between the present and a dark past.

All in all, our conference made a significant contribution to the discussion about how to effectively use media and communication tools for the benefit of heritage sites. Conservation is not complete without a meaningful interpretation strategy, which should, as discussed, take into

consideration the values of the site and the needs and expectations of the main target groups. By combining lectures with workshops organized by professionals in connection with trends and the practical aspects of heritage interpretation, the conference offered valuable insights into theory and praxis. The importance of communicating heritage in order to strengthen identities and a sense of belonging, as well as to inspire respect and a collective understanding for the need to care and preserve, was emphasized and confirmed in every discussion following the presentations.

This book reflects the spirit of collective understanding and of productive exchange of knowledge and experiences achieved during the event, making it possible for participants to revisit their favourite lectures and topics and for other readers to dive into a world of knowledge on the topic of heritage communication and interpretation. Moreover, it is the product of the voluntary work of members of the International Association of World Heritage Professionals (IAWHP) e.V., an alumni group established by graduates of the master programme World Heritage Studies in Cottbus. The approaches and perspectives described in this book are as diverse as the people who are part of the association: they have different nationalities, backgrounds and occupations. However, they all share an interest for heritage, history and culture, and the desire to make the world a more beautiful and tolerant place by preserving – and adequately interpreting – heritage. This book is a small contribution to this goal.

Iryna Shalaginova - IAWHP e.V. President (2011-2012)

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