

# B o o k R e v i e w

## Tourists in Historic Towns Urban Conservation and Heritage Management

Aylin Orbaşlı  
E&FN SPON, Taylor & Francis Group, London and New York, 2000,

ISBN 0-419-25930-9  
210 pp. Paperback

---

In the second half of the 20th century there has been a growing appreciation and understanding of historic urban settlements, their recognition as heritage, and a desire for area based conservation. Parallel to the development of urban conservation is the steady growth of "cultural tourism". As tourism becomes an important component of historic towns, its impacts on their conservation and sustainability has become a major consideration. Increasingly, conservation attitudes are responding to the new demands placed by the visitor, with a growing and noticeable emphasis on the exterior appearances of buildings and the transformation of urban places into commercial products. Tourism undoubtedly brings economic and cultural vitality to places, nevertheless, in historic towns it is paramount that the desires and aspirations of the local resident community are matched with those of the visitor. Tourism planning which responds foremost to local development needs is going to be the approach enabling long term and sustainable outcomes for the historic environment. *Tourists in Historic Towns*, by discussing the inseparable yet complex relationship between conservation and tourism, focuses on a current subject which is also of particular importance for Turkey today.

The book, based on a PhD thesis undertaken by Aylin Orbaşlı at the Institute of Advanced Architectural Studies, at the University of York from 1990 and subsequent studies by the author, focuses on medium sized historic towns that are established or emerging in the tourism market in both developed and developing countries. The relationship between conservation and tourism is further developed through the five case studies from Spain (Granada), England (York), Malta (Mdina), Turkey (Antalya) and Germany (Quedlinburg). The book consists of six chapters alongside an "Introduction" and "Conclusion" section. Each of the first five chapters are followed by a case study of one of the historic towns mentioned above. At the start of each chapter a series of key questions identify the content, with the questions being picked up in the subheadings of the chapter. A. Orbaşlı defines the main intention of the book: "to examine the relationship of culture, heritage, conservation and tourism development in historic towns and urban centres so as to develop decision-making and management practices for historic urban environments in the interest of long-term and sustainable development".

The first chapter entitled "The Historic Town", provides an overview of the development of historic towns. Through the sub headings, "urban form", "urban heritage", "urban conservation" the recognition of historic towns as heritage and the start of the urban conservation movement in Europe, the approaches and commonly agreed principles of urban

conservation today, and its successes and common outcomes in developed and developing countries are discussed. The case study relating to this chapter is the Albaicin quarter of Granada in Spain.

The second chapter entitled "The Tourist-Historic Town", examines the growing appreciation of historic towns as tourist destinations, the role conservation has played in generating tourism and the role tourism has come to play in the recognition and conservation of historic towns. The chapter also discusses the architectural, cultural and social implications of tourism in historic towns. The discussion under the subheadings "historic town as product", "historic town as destination", "historic towns under tourist pressure" identifies the conflicts and tensions arising between the local community of a place and visitors to it. The case study chosen for this chapter is the city of York in England.

The third chapter "The Tourist Town", discusses historic towns which in responding to visitor demands have been turned onto museums or theme parks. The chapter sets out by asking the questions "what is authenticity in the urban environment?", "can a town be a museum?", "can a museum or park be a substitute for an urban experience?", responding through the subheadings "the historic town perfected", "heritage from the past, museums for the future, cities for today". The chapter is supported by a case study of the walled town of Mdina in Malta.

The fourth chapter "Decision Making for the Historic Environment", is an examination of the of the urban decision-making process in the areas of conservation, economic development and tourism management. The roles played by a variety of players from the global tourist industry to the local community are interpreted under the subheading "key players", and conflicts arising between the key players under the subheading "conflict and constadiction". The chapter focuses on the fact that the urban realm has a wide ranging ownership, highlighting the frequently occurring conflict of conservation and tourism being managed through separate departments and agenda. The case study chosen for this chapter is the old town and port of Antalya in Turkey.

The fifth chapter "Planning for Tourism in Historic Towns" focuses on tourism and development planning for historic towns. Through the subheadings "historic towns: conservation and tourism", "developing the historic town market", "planning for the future" the relationship between tourism and the conservation of historic towns is discussed. The chapter stresses the importance of developing tourism through an understanding of local needs and aspirations. The case study given for this chapter is a World Heritage Site, the town of Quedlinburg in Germany.

The sixth chapter, "Heritage Management in Historic Towns", develops ways in which tourism can benefit urban conservation and discusses the use of better management, innovation, good design and added value to reduce pressures and add to the visitors' experience and enjoyment of a place. Overcoming tensions and maintaining a balance between old and new, conservation and development, local community and visitors is discussed through the subheadings "sharing the urban resource", "better

management of tourism in historic towns", "enhancing the place" and a wide number of examples.

The book, intended for a multi-disciplinary readership including academics, professionals and decision makers in the fields of conservation, heritage management and tourism development, is written from an architectural and conservation point of view. A. Orbaşı points out that "the book intends to bridge the gap between conservation and tourism in historic towns". In conclusion, *Tourists in Historic Towns*, both in the way the topic has been approached and in the way it is supported by numerous examples and black and white illustrations, is a significant publication of interest to anyone involved in conservation or tourism in the historic environment.

Nur Akın