

Call for Chapters: Critical Heritage Studies in Central and Eastern Europe

Edited Volume in the Berghahn Series “Explorations in Heritage Studies”

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We invite chapter proposals for an edited volume that explores critical, theoretically informed, and empirically grounded perspectives on heritage in Central and Eastern Europe. The region’s layered imperial and postimperial pasts, intertwined with nationalism, ideological shifts, episodes of conflict, and ongoing sociopolitical and environmental transformations offer productive ground for interrogating how heritage is constructed, mobilised, contested, and experienced. Bringing together scholars from heritage studies, anthropology, ethnology, sociology, history, geography, museum studies, archaeology, memory studies, and related fields, the volume seeks to advance debates within Critical Heritage Studies and illuminate how they unfold within the specific historical, political, social, and environmental contexts of Central and Eastern Europe. We welcome contributions from scholars who apply Critical Heritage Studies approaches in their research on topics from Central and Eastern Europe, and we especially encourage submissions from researchers who come from the region or work in the region.

We expect contributions to be grounded in a research philosophy central to Critical Heritage Studies – approaches that move beyond positivist or normative assumptions and instead treat heritage as socially constructed, shaped by power and structured through historically and politically produced value hierarchies. Chapters should examine how meanings and authority are produced through discourses, institutions, and expert practices; recognise contestation and dissonance as inherent to heritage; and attend to issues of epistemic justice, including whose perspectives are included or marginalised and who benefits from particular heritage framings. We also welcome approaches that extend these questions into more-than-human and ecological realms, recognising the entanglement of human and nonhuman actors, environments, and material processes in heritage-making. By understanding heritage as dynamic and negotiated rather than fixed or given, we invite analyses that critically examine the region’s heritage processes, their complexities, and their broader theoretical significance.

We welcome contributions engaging with the following interconnected thematic clusters:

Heritage and politics:

- How heritage is used for various purposes, with various consequences
- Authorised Heritage Discourse and the uses of heritage in nationalist and neoliberal agendas
- Empires and post-empires, colonialism (incl. colonial collecting practices), and decolonisation (incl. decommunisation)
- Identity politics – subaltern heritage discourses, race, feminism, LGBTQ+ heritages, minority and migrant heritages
- Participation, community-oriented heritage practices from a critical perspective
- Right-wing populist uses of heritage

- Heritage in conflict and war
- Heritage, activism and justice

Heritage and temporality:

- Heritage as present-oriented practices
- Relationship between memory / memory practices and heritage
- Heritage as future-making

Heritage and materiality:

- A focus on the processes of heritage-making – conservation, management, interpretation, etc.; heritage as a process
- Non-conservationist perspectives
- A focus on intangible heritage and the intangible aspects of heritage
- Emotional and affective qualities of heritage

Post-humanist perspectives on heritage:

- Heritage in the Anthropocene and environmental legacies
- Multispecies, more-than-human epistemology
- Materiality, technological agency and infrastructures in the Anthropocene
- Heritage futures and climate change
- Biocultural heritage after fungal turn

We expect papers on the above topics, from the areas of tangible and intangible, movable and immovable, built heritage, environment and landscape; museums and other collections; discussing heritage policy, management, conservation, interpretation, and preservation, from the perspective of Critical Heritage Studies. We especially welcome contributions that reveal how different themes intersect and mutually shape one another within the specific historical, political, social, and environmental contexts of Central and Eastern Europe, demonstrating the region's distinctive entanglements and their broader relevance for Critical Heritage Studies. For example, how specific forms of heritage dissonance are entangled with imperial and postimperial legacies or are shaped by diverse civilisational discourses; how heritage practices stem from local environmental histories; or how postsocialist transformations reconfigure heritage claims.

Submission Guidelines

Please send abstracts of 300–500 words and a brief author bio to chs.in.cee@gmail.com by March 20, 2026.

Submission of full chapters (8000–10000 words including notes and references): July 20, 2026