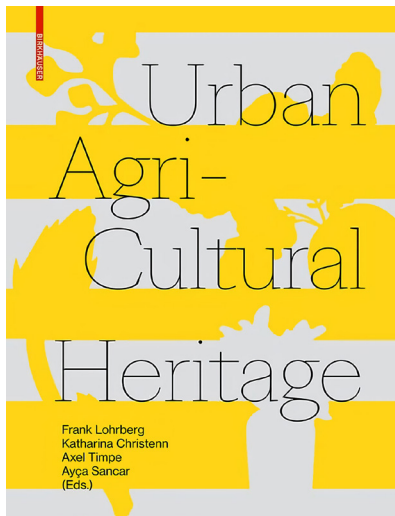


Urban Agricultural Heritage

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Could urban agriculture be recognized and embraced as cultural heritage? This intriguing question leads one to open this 214-page book, edited by a team of landscape architects from RWTH Aachen, and written by 50 authors including Frank Lohrberg, Katharina Christenn, Axel Timpe and many other landscape architects, architects, urban planners, and experts in horticulture as well as agriculture science.

The editors suggest that urban agriculture has become an important tool for sustainable urban planning. Yet it is often forgotten that urban agriculture is not a new field, but one rooted in long history and tradition. By understanding “heritage making” as a processual construction called “heritagization”, this publication deeply examines 22 urban agriculture cases, covering European cities like Erfurt, Madrid, Belgrade, St. Petersburg and so on, as well as Asian cities like Tokyo and Guangzhou, Xochimilco in Mexico and Cotonou in Africa. This offers a broad perspective from different continents. The cases are categorized into five chapters, linking urban agriculture heritage to historical research, cultural memory, cultural landscape, official heritage approaches and informal approaches. Committed to serving as a contribution to the first treatment of urban agriculture as heritage, this book provides a model of thinking that leaves room for exploration in the context of this emerging proposition.

In each article, the authors’ narrative follows a systematic pattern. They start with the history of urban agriculture in different geographical and cultural contexts, delve into the logic of urban agriculture recognized as heritage, and then interpret the current situation and provide a vision for the future. This structure allows readers to follow the discussion and obtain a specific model of understanding. High-quality, unified-styled graphics also enhance the reading experience. However, the publication is more inclined to present individual cases than demonstrate the overall developmental framework of “heritagization”. This is not as effective as it could be. Although attempting to provide examples from all over the world, only a few cases have been selected from individual countries outside of Europe, and the representativity of that remains questionable. The geographical and thematic variation leads to a lack of consistency, as each article represents a single, site-specific case in the first place. It is only in the last two chapters on the official and informal heritage approaches that inspiring examples are presented that systematically reveal the importance of “heritagization” in the creation and re-creation of cultural and historical identities.

This book is a good source of historical review and future insights into the field of urban agricultural heritage, which provides well-documented but rather fragmented examples. It is only recommended for those with some knowledge of urban agricultural development or for researchers on this specific topic.