



CEU DOCTORAL SCHOOL OF HISTORY

The Doctoral Thesis in Comparative History

by

**Liliana Iuga**

on

“Reshaping the Historic City under Socialism: State Preservation, Urban Planning, and the Politics of Scarcity in Romania (1945-1977)”

will be held on

**Friday, March 17, 2017, at 11:30 a.m**

in

**Senate room, Nádor 9.  
Central European University (CEU)  
Budapest—1051**

Examination Committee

Andrea Pető – Chair (Department of Gender Studies, CEU)  
Constantin Iordachi – supervisor (Department of History, CEU)  
Susan Zimmermann – CEU internal member (Department of History)  
Simon Gunn – external member (University of Leicester)  
Florian Urban – external reader (Glasgow School of Art)

**ABSTRACT**

This dissertation analyzes the relation between planning and built heritage as part of the urban reconstruction process in socialist Romania. The argument challenges a common view that largely defined heritage policies in the Romanian context in terms of neglect and extensive destruction, and proposes instead to look at the construction and usage of the historical built environment as an economic, political and cultural resource. It states that, despite the ideology of radical urban transformation, preservation did play a role in the process of reshaping urban landscapes under socialism, which is visible in the fragmented character of urban modernization policies, as well as in the resulting cityscapes. The topic of demolition and reconstruction is approached as part of strategies of economic development and urban planning, paying attention at the changing conceptual, institutional, and legal frameworks. The study contributes to the literature on urban modernization during the postwar decades, emphasizing the peculiarities of the Romanian socialist project as an ideologically-based strategy of development.

Centrally-devised economic policies prescribed a moderate pace of urban growth in the first two postwar decades, to shift to intensive industrialization and urbanization in the 1970s. These stages coincided with the rise and fall of modernism, which was replaced by the imposition of a more compact urban model, stressing higher building densities. The ideological vision of radical reconstruction was challenged (and constrained) by two types of preservationist agendas. First, the Bucharest-based Department for Historic Monuments re-conceptualized the value of built heritage, stressing especially in the 1970s the need to preserve and incorporate portions of the old town into projects of urban modernization. However, despite the efforts of dedicated professionals, the Department's activity was negatively affected by internal frictions

and a limited understanding of its scope. As a result, it failed to develop a stronger institutional and legal basis, which would have allowed its experts to negotiate from a position of stronger authority with political decision-makers. Second, confronted with economic constraints and the scarcity of resources, decision-makers themselves elaborated an alternative “preservationist” agenda, stressing the need of saving on urban land, infrastructure and even old buildings. In the 1960s and the early 1970s, Ceaușescu personally criticized demolitions as a waste of resources.

The second part of the thesis focuses on two case studies □ the cities of Cluj and Iași □ in order to argue for the importance of local legacies and visions in shaping the socialist project. If Transylvanian towns were perceived as having a compact medieval core worthy of preservation, in Moldavia and Wallachia the historicity of the old town was less legible in the inherited built fabric, and only individual monuments were singled out as heritage. The smaller case studies discussed in these chapters show how concepts regarding the specific character of the town were defined, challenged, and re-defined as part of urban redevelopment projects. At local level, the creation of new regimes of spatial and social order depended on the extent to which various actors could manipulate the infrastructure of a system that was simultaneously rigid and porous. It concludes that, despite the rhetoric of grand schemes of action, the approaches to urban redevelopment have been rather local and contextual.

**CURRICULUM VITAE***Liliana Iuga***EDUCATION**

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 2010-2017   | Central European University, Budapest (Hungary), Department of History/ doctoral candidate                  |
| 2015, 01-03 | Centre for Urban History, University of Leicester (UK)/ visiting student                                    |
| 2008-2010   | Central European University, Budapest (Hungary)/ M.A. in Historical Studies                                 |
| 2007, 03-06 | Università per Stranieri, Perugia (Italy)/ ERASMUS scholarship  |
| 2004-2008   | Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca (Romania), Faculty of History and Philosophy/ B.A. History-Art History |

**WORK EXPERIENCE****STUDENT ORGANIZER**

“Nation and Empire Undergraduate Conference”, CEU Budapest/ August 2015

- Academic coordination of the conference (organizing and chairing panels)
- Organization of academic and social events

**INTERN**

Der Bundesbeauftragte für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaliger DDR, Berlin (DE)/ January-March 2014

- Identification, analysis and organization of primary and secondary sources as part of a project regarding the cooperation of secret services in former socialist countries
- Translation of sources in/from Romanian, German, English

**STUDENT ORGANIZER**

Graduate Conference in European History (GRACEH), CEU Budapest/ October 2012-April 2013

- Academic coordination of the conference
- Responsible for maintaining the correspondence with guest speakers and participants
- Organization and maintenance of academic and social events

STUDENT ASSISTANT

“National Museums in a Changing Europe”, EUNAMUS conference hosted by CEU Budapest/ December 2012

- Assistance with logistics, preparation of the conference materials
- Hostess, providing assistance to participants and guests

MUSEUM ASSISTANT

National Art Museum, Cluj-Napoca (RO)/ June 2005-December 2006

- Assisting museum curators in the organization of exhibitions
- Producing content for the museum’s webpage
- Data recoding for the museum’s specialized library

PUBLIC LECTURES

- *The Banality of Preservation: Institutionalized Heritage-Making and the Politics of Scarcity in Socialist Romania*, The Department of History at CEU, Departmental Research Seminar Series 2016/2017 (October 26, 2016).

CONFERENCES

- |                |   |
|----------------|---|
| 2016, November | “Every Town Has a Historical Past, yet not Every Historical Past is Valuable”- Approaches to the Concept and Management of the Historic Town in Socialist Romania, <i>Heritage Studies and Socialism: Transnational Perspectives on Heritage in Eastern and Central Europe</i> , Gießen (Germany) |
| 2016, June     | “Basements, Old Streets and Decrepit Houses. Discovering the Late-Medieval Town in Iasi, Romania, during the Socialist Period”, <i>Denkmalschutz im Staatsozialismus</i> , Imre Kertesz Kolleg, Jena (Germany)  |
| 2015, October  | “Out of Socialism, Back to Europe: Contested Heritage Policies in Iași in the Context of the Romanian Competition for the European Capital of Culture”, <i>Urban Heritage and Urban Images: Imagineering Urban Heritage</i> , Humboldt University of Berlin (Germany)                             |
| 2015, June     | “Transforming Historical Cityscapes in Socialist Romania: Heritage-Making, Urban Centrality and the Constraints of an Economy of Scarcity”, <i>Negotiating Change in Urban Spaces from the Middle Ages to the Present</i> , Nuffield College, University of Oxford (UK)                           |

- 2015, May “Missing from the Map: Socialist Realism Design at Small Scale in a Secret New Town. The Case of Dr. Petru Groza Town (Romania)”, *Cities of a New Type. Industrial Cities in People’s Democracies after 1945*, Dunaújváros (Hungary)- with Oana Țiganea
- 2014, June “On Urban Typologies and Revolutionary Change: State Socialism, Urban Transformation and the Politics of Architectural Heritage in Romania”, *The European City in Transformation: from the Early Modern Period to the Present*, GRAINES Summer School, University of Vienna (Austria)
- 2014, April “Negligible Heritage”: Negotiating Socialist Urban Transformation in the Historic City Center of Iași in the 1970s, *European Social Science History Conference*, Vienna (Austria)
- 2013, November “Building a Space for Negotiation: Nationalist Rhetoric, Multi-ethnicity and the Construction of the Orthodox Cathedral in Cluj”, *Under Construction. Building the Material and the Imaginary World*, University of Stuttgart (Germany)
- 2013, September “The Old City and the Rhetoric of Urban Modernization”, Italian Association of Urban History Congress, *Visible and Invisible: perceiving the city between descriptions and omissions*”, Catania (Italy)
- 2012, September “Romanians and the City: Local Politics, Historical Narratives and Public Space in Cluj (1918-2000), European Association of Urban History Conference, *Cities and Societies in Comparative Perspective*, Prague (Czech Republic)
- 2012, May “Re-conceptualizing Urban Change in 1960s Romania: from the ‘Socialist Reconstruction’ to the ‘Socialist Transformation’ of Cities”, Graduate Conference in European History, *Transformations in European History*, Vienna (Austria)
- 2011, September “Nationalizing the City: Monuments of Romanianness and Public Space in Interwar Cluj”, Italian Association of Urban History Congress, *Fuori dall’ordinario*, Rome (Italy)
- 2010, October “Shaping the Romanian Public Space in Interwar Cluj: the Case of the Orthodox Cathedral”, *The Evolution of Transylvanian Towns during the Interwar Period*, Târgu-Mureș (Romania)

**GRANTS AND AWARDS**

2016, 04-09	Write-up Grant, CEU Budapest (HU)
2015, 01-03	Doctoral Research Support Grant, CEU Budapest (HU)
2013, 09	Bursary of the Italian Association of Urban History Congress, Catania (IT)
2010-2013	Full Doctoral Scholarship, CEU Budapest (HU)
2008-2010	CEU Master's scholarship, CEU Budapest (HU)
2007, 03-06	ERASMUS scholarship, Università per Stranieri, Perugia (IT)
2004-2008	Student Scholarship, Babeş - Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca (RO)

**LANGUAGES**

- Romanian (native)
- English (advanced, C1-C2)
- French (upper intermediate, B2)
- German (upper intermediate, B2)
- Italian (upper intermediate, B2)
- Hungarian (beginner, A1)

**LIST OF PUBLICATIONS**

- “Negotiating Building Preservation and Urban Development in Socialist Romania. The Case of the Dimitrov Street in Iași”, *Archiva Moldaviae* 9 (2017) (forthcoming).
- “Întinerirea bătrânului Iași: Administrație locală și sistematizare urbană la Iași în anii 1960” (The Rejuvenation of Old Iași: Local Administration and Urban Planning in 1960s Iași), *Historia Urbana* 24 (2016): 73-91.
- “Building a Cathedral for the Nation. Power Hierarchies, Spatial Politics and the Practice of Multi-ethnicity in Interwar Cluj, Romania (1919-1933)”, Eike-Christian Heine (ed.), *Under Construction. Building the Material and the Imagined World* (Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2015), 95-108.
- “Cu un pas înaintea demolărilor. Despre oportunitatea și paradoxurile studierii orașului istoric în România anilor 1970. Interviu cu Eugenia Greceanu” (One Step ahead of

Demolitions. On the Opportunity and the Paradoxes of Studying the Historic City in 1970s Romania. An Interview with Eugenia Greceanu), *Arhitectura* 6 (2014): 42-45.

- “The Old City and the Rhetoric of Urban Modernization in Romania (1950s-1970s)”, S. Adorno, G. Cristina and A. Rotondo (eds.), *Visibile/ invisibile. Percepire la citta tra descrizioni e omissioni* vol. I (conference proceedings), Catania: Scrimm Edizioni, 2014, 161-176.
- “Monument și spațiu public românesc în Clujul interbelic. Cazul Catedralei Ortodoxe” (Shaping the Romanian Public Space in Interwar Cluj. The Case of the Orthodox Cathedral), *Marisia* 31-32 (2011): 307-322.