

UrbanMetaMapping Semester Talks: Summer Term 2023 via zoom, 12.00 - 13.00 (CEST)

Registration via: talks.urbanmetamapping@uni-bamberg.de

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Tabita Redepenning (Herder Institute for Historical Research on East Central Europe, Marburg)

Iconisation of war destruction images. The case of Szczecin

Urban representation is a major public discourse, and a powerful driver of heritage debates, and cultural change. Analysing the visual discourse of Szczecin in the scope of my dissertation, the presence of war destruction images after World War II is striking. Szczecin with its transnational history and its access to the Baltic Sea was heavily impacted by the World War II destruction, and the shift of the Polish border leading to an exchange of the city's population.

The images' influence since their taking, their visual repetition up until today, and their agglomeration points of publications are the focus of my presentation. Selected examples show the rise of particular images to become an icon due to their specific visual imagery and the narration attributed to the displayed buildings. On the other hand, their devaluation and exploitation illustrate them as contested objects. Starting from the actor's perspective, the presentation contextualises the conflicts with the overall construction of "authenticity" regarding urban structures in Szczecin. Using iconic image analysis, and visual and textual discourse, I focus on Polish and German civil society actors after 1945, who are connected to the city, like the German expellee organizations (Vertriebenenverbände) and the Polish Tourist and Sightseeing Society (PTTK). My sources are tourist publications relating to Szczecin (including maps and actors' reports), supported by analysis of newspapers and images from social media.

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