

Call for Papers 'Jewish Urban Landscapes in Mid-20th Century Europe'

The University of Amsterdam (UvA), the Netherlands Institute at Athens (NIA), and the Workshop on the Study of the Jews in Greece (WSJG) are pleased to announce a two-day conference on 'Jewish Urban Landscapes in Mid-20th Century Europe', to be held in **Athens, Greece on 4-5 February 2025**. The conference, with keynote lectures by Professor Michael Meng (Clemson University) and Professor Bart Wallet (University of Amsterdam), aims to shed light on what happened to Jewish sites and quarters in urban environments throughout the whole of Europe between 1930 and 1970, facilitating a knowledge exchange between scholars researching case studies across borders. We anticipate a peer-reviewed publication featuring revised and expanded versions of several papers presented at the conference.

European Jewish life in the middle of the twentieth century was marked by persecution, devastation, and loss. The Shoah unfolded differently in different countries, but by 1945 many former Jewish districts, as well as Jewish private properties and communal buildings, had been changed beyond recognition – vandalised, looted, expropriated, or turned into rubble. Before deportation to the death camps, Jews had been forced to leave their places of residence, often preceded by confinement in ghettos or other designated areas of cities.

The Shoah dramatically changed how survivors experienced and navigated the urban landscapes they returned to or settled in. Although the political histories of European countries in the post-war era diverged tremendously, decimated Jewish communities everywhere faced similar challenges regarding their damaged, stolen, or destroyed homes, synagogues, schools, businesses, and cemeteries. While survivors who chose to stay rather than immigrate sought to rebuild their lives within a vastly changed cityscape, they had to cope with unwilling and sometimes hostile fellow citizens and local governments. Additional obstacles to their resettlement were posed by plans for urban renewal, which often ran right through places where many Jews had lived. Only from the 1970s, influenced by a changing memory culture, interest in Jewish heritage gradually increased, paving the way for the conservation, monumentalisation, and musealisation of (former) Jewish sites and quarters in subsequent decades.

We welcome original contributions from researchers at different stages of their career and from all relevant disciplines on the following themes:

- Continuity and discontinuity of Jewish urban and spatial experiences;
- The transformation of the historic map of Jewish neighbourhoods;
- The roles played by Jewish local and national councils and international agencies on the reconfiguration of Jewish urban landscapes;
- The neglect, demolition, and repurposing of (normative and secular) Jewish places;
- Meanings attributed to Jewish spaces and places by non-Jews;
- Implementation of urban redevelopment plans for (former) Jewish sites and expropriation procedures;
- Early attempts at the preservation and conservation of Jewish heritage;
- Conflicts between Jews, non-Jews, and local governments over (former) Jewish sites.

Papers should be delivered in English and should last no more than 20 minutes, so as to allow ample time for discussion.

Successful applicants will be provided accommodation (3 nights). In case your institution does not cover travel expenses, the organisers will endeavour to provide a limited number of travel grants.

Those wishing to apply should send one PDF file with 1) an **abstract of no more than 400 words** and 2) a **bio of no more than 200 words** (indicating academic affiliation and field of research) to Dr Sietske van der Veen s.b.vanderveen2@uva.nl by **23 September 2024** at the latest. In case of questions, please also use this email address.