



World Heritage / Patrimoine Mondial

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Title of thesis: Our Hanseatic heritage. Unique - but why?

Type of thesis: M.A. World Heritage Studies

Supervisor of thesis: xxx

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Please provide a 500 words abstract outlining your thesis; you may wish to attach a table of contents or any other relevant material:

The thesis concerns the nomination process of World Heritage sites. It focuses on the medieval Hansa and today's potential of utilising the Hanseatic city and trade network.

Fifteen World Heritage sites are historically connected to the Hansa. Most of these sites were nominated within criteria (ii) and (iv). According to the *World Heritage Convention* only the most outstanding example of a monument, ensemble or site should be inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List and preserved for future generations.

Which is the most outstanding Hanseatic site? Do we need 15 sites to represent the Hansa on the World Heritage List? The nomination of sites is influenced by national priorities, and often also by politics, and the economics of tourism.

Similarities between the Hanseatic cities exist when comparing reports written by the advisory body, ICOMOS. The maintained medieval town centre and the role of the town in the Hansa are central points in the case for nomination. The criterion of uniqueness, which is a fundamental requirement of every WHS, is not always precisely addressed. Therefore, and because of the increase in numbers and the limited instruments to protect all 812 sites, it has become necessary to revise the criteria for the nomination of sites into the World Heritage List.

The thesis discusses proposals to link sites under one key word. Group names such as *Silk Roads*, *Vineyard Landscapes*, *Colonial Towns*, *Gothic Cathedrals* or *Hansa*. can better link related sites. The term Hansa will not only stand for one town like Lubeck, but for a network. Only tangible heritage is presented on the World Heritage List. But Hansa is not only architecture, technology, seafaring, new trade routes or the development of new cities under the Lubeck law. The character of the Hansa is also determined by the immaterial heritage such as the towns' orientation towards the sea, the exchange of culture, language, knowledge and the way of living achieved by local citizens meeting Hansa-tradesmen, and their widened perspective of the world. The uniqueness of

the Hansa can only be represented by illustrating the tangible and intangible heritage together on the World Heritage List.

The thesis further discussed the importance of updating tentative lists within the ongoing nomination process, the role of the advisory bodies, the importance of a better definition of the criteria for selecting outstanding sites and the difficulties of de-listing sites that no longer meet the criteria under which they were inscribed originally.

The past exchange of goods and products is replaced by today's exchange of technology, finance, services and science. The thesis incorporates ideas for the Hanseatic cities to reactivate historic networks and strengthen their status.