



International Commission for History of Towns
Commission Internationale pour l'Histoire des Villes
Internationale Kommission für Städtegeschichte



Call for papers

Conference of the International Commission for History of Towns (ICHT)

Kaunas, Lithuania, 10-12 September 2026

Organizers: The International Commission for History of Towns and Vytautas Magnus University

Forgetting and Remembering the Past in Urban History

In 2026, a new four-year ICHT program called **“Dichotomies of Urban History”** (suggested by Steinar Aas) will begin. The first conference of this program, titled “Forgetting and Remembering the Past in Urban History”, invites researchers to focus on memory issues in the history of cities.

The processes of forgetting and remembering the past in urban history are intricate phenomena that involve the dynamic interplay of collective memory, urban development, and cultural identity. Urban spaces frequently function as repositories of collective memory, encapsulating the complex interactions between historical events and contemporary experiences. Elements of the built environment, such as street names, monuments, and public spaces, play a crucial role in forming and preserving urban memory. Semiotics and signs as well as myths and popular historical narratives could also be part of this formation or preservation process. Institutional providers of cultural memory are also often established to commemorate, while others may be torn down or eliminated to contribute to the forgetting.

The objective of this conference is to investigate the urban spaces of forgetting and remembrance, seeking sources that reveal which aspects of our multifaceted urban past are remembered and which are consigned to oblivion. The conference aims to examine how traumatic events (e.g., natural disasters, urban fires, wars, occupations) and joyful occurrences (e.g., periods of liberation, rapid growth, celebrations, festivals) are documented in historical sources and categorized, and how these processes influence the cultural identity of cities.

We cordially invite submissions from scholars examining the urban past across various historical periods, from the antiquity to modern times. It would be a pleasure to meet with you in Kaunas and have a possibility to exchange our thoughts, ideas and views.

Paper submission

Paper submission and registration e-mail address: vaida.kamuntaviciene@vdu.lt

The paper submission mail should contain your name and surname, affiliation, phone number, topic of your speech and abstract (speech length: 25 minutes). All papers will be peer-reviewed and no more than fifteen proposals will be accepted.

The conference will be held in person, but in exceptional cases, it is possible to present papers remotely.

Deadline of paper submission: March 1, 2026.

Notification: April 1, 2026.

Articles based on the conference papers will be published in the peer-reviewed open-access journal *Kaunas history yearbook / Kauno istorijos metraštis*. Submissions will be accepted until January 1, 2027, with publication planned for December 2027.

Information about Kaunas

Kaunas is the second-largest city (about 300 000 inhabitants) in Lithuania and a unique centre of culture, education, and history in the Baltic region. Located at the confluence of the Nemunas and Neris rivers, Kaunas was first mentioned in written sources in the 14th century and received self-government rights in 1408, which spurred its development as a key trading hub. In the years 1920-1940, Kaunas served as Lithuania's temporary capital and became renowned for its distinctive modernist architecture, now recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage site. The city's historic Old Town features landmarks such as remnants of the Kaunas Castle, the Town Hall, and the Hanseatic League trading post, reflecting its dynamic medieval past. Among the many sacred sites, Kaunas offers visitors four Gothic churches, the Baroque masterpiece of Pažaislis Camaldoles Monastery, and the modernist Christ's Resurrection Basilica, whose terrace reveals panoramic views of the city centre. The legacy of Soviet occupation is still symbolized by the austere panel block residential districts in Kaunas, which contemporary city residents are gradually trying to transform. During history, Kaunas experienced multiple transfers, the cityscape still carries visible signs of these changes and offers a powerful backdrop for reflecting on memory and change. Today, Kaunas is both a window into Lithuania's historical transformations and a lively European city with a multicultural heritage.

Although Kaunas has its own airport, Vilnius Airport offers a greater variety of flight options. The Lithuanian capital, Vilnius, is about 100 km from Kaunas, and these cities are conveniently connected by trains and buses running approximately every half hour.

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