

HERITAGE, CULTURE AND IDENTITY

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2008

# Culture, Urbanism and Planning

Edited by  
JAVIER MONCLUS  
and MANUEL GUARDIA

# CULTURE, URBANISM AND PLANNING

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# Culture, Urbanism and Planning

*Edited by*

JAVIER MONCLÚS and MANUEL GUÀRDIA  
*Polytechnic University of Catalonia, Spain*

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# Foreword

Roque Gistau Gistau  
*President of Expo Zaragoza 2008*

Javier Monclús and Manuel Guàrdia have edited an extensive book entitled *Culture, Urbanism and Planning*, analysing the interactions between these three concepts, which are responsible for the character and personality of a city, and sometimes even its soul and charm. The chapters all expand upon contributions made by authors in the context of the International Planning History Society Conference, which took place in Barcelona in 2004, under the theme of *Planning Models and the Culture of Cities*.

Beyond the narcissistic logic of consumption or the urban spectacularisation associated with numerous urban interventions over the last few years, a new form of urbanism has become possible and necessary, focusing on the cultural dimension. Strategic plans and projects adapted to particular, changing and uncertain contexts are becoming increasingly important. This 'new urbanism' is based on a greater degree of sensitivity to the environment and attention to urban landscapes that are undergoing profound changes.

Just as other cities that have entered a new phase of modernity, Zaragoza has been undergoing a substantial transformation over the last twenty years, both in terms of its economic and demographic base, and its social relations and cultural guidelines. Since General Motors set up just 25 km from the city centre in the early 1980s, the urban economy has been experiencing an intense process of diversification. Nowadays, Zaragoza no longer depends exclusively on the automobile and related industries and the city is committed to logistics and other emerging industries. This reorientation of activities, on which recent urban growth is based, is revealed by the arrival of the high speed train service (AVE), the construction of the Pla-Za logistics platform, the recycling industrial group and many other projects.

There has also been a change in the scale of new urban infrastructure and amenities. This new scale has led to a significant change in the role of public spaces, green corridors and in particular the watercourses that should form the backbone of this city: the rivers *Ebro*, *Huerva* and *Gállego* and the *Canal Imperial de Aragón*. The city has doubled its population over the last 50 years and is currently experiencing a different type of growth; around 10% of its 660,000 inhabitants are immigrants.

The International Exhibition dedicated to 'Water and Sustainable Development' will be held in Zaragoza in 2008, promoted by the society of which I am Chairman. Hosting Expo 2008 is an opportunity to boost growth even further, by working to

achieve energy efficiency and the responsible use of water resources, thus making growth compatible with environmental sustainability. Furthermore, Expo will entail the construction of an important cultural, scientific and recreational park, conceived as a new focus of urban centrality capable of promoting the integration of the river Ebro in the city. Post Expo exploitation is therefore a strategic approach that must act as a catalyst for this metropolitan park, providing other plans and projects that are essential for the city.

The actions linked to Expo can be inscribed within this new form of urbanism that is more interested in culture and strategic projects than in traditional zoning. It is a set of exemplary actions to create new significant places, which aim to improve the quality of public spaces. The system of green corridors and the river park itself, in constant interaction with the river and river life, will be a permanent reminder of the importance of river ecosystems for environmental sustainability.

But beyond these actions, Expo 2008 should also be the seed of a new urban and environmental culture, incorporating criteria of quality, efficiency and sustainability. The challenge is to integrate strategic, urban and cultural visions. In other words, in the case of Zaragoza, such actions would not only seek to enhance the city's international presence and improve its citizens' quality of life, but also aim to make the city an international point of reference, creating a Zaragoza brand based on the responsible use of a unique resource such as water at the start of the twenty-first century.

May 2006

# Introduction

F. Javier Monclús and Manuel Guàrdia

The loss of the habitual productive functions, that had supported the contemporary city up until the 1970s, has come to give ‘culture’ a leading role that in fact it had never completely lost. The material production was a secondary aspect during millennia of existence of the cities, and the current situation could be seen as a simple return to normality if the word culture were to remit to a clear universe without ambiguities. The word, although irreplaceable, turns out to be uncomfortable for its polysemical and ambiguous characteristics. Its meaning is, on the one hand, impregnated historically by the autonomous, high and ethnocentric *enlightened* notion of culture. However at the same time it incorporates, from romanticism, a more comprehensive vision, that has culminated finally in anthropological approaches. The very economic thought adopted it, early on, against the abstract individualism of liberal economic theory.<sup>1</sup> In this line, during the nineteenth century, teaching, museums, forms of production and consumption, the celebration of large events ..., were conceived as strategic investments for encouraging the domestic economy. The large International Expositions or the Arts and Crafts movement, and their efforts to improve public taste, are in this sense exemplary episodes. Nevertheless, culture has enjoyed an ambiguous condition. It is considered that an advanced economy could not leave aside, but its values have remained outside the economic calculation and, in general, they have been situated in a superior sphere to the values of the ones occupied by the economy. Up until the 1960s, the common use of the word continued to be marked by the *enlightened* notion of high culture and was associated fundamentally to minority manifestations of an elitist character.<sup>2</sup> Over more recent few decades, the influence of anthropological thought, the decolonising process, the progress of mass culture, the contributions from critical theory and the increasing cultural diversity in

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1 Friedrich List (1789–1846), precursor of the historicist school, highlighted the fact that economic practice revealed how the productive forces of cities were conditioned by laboriousness, the urge to save, the morality and intelligence of individuals, as well as the institutions, social, political and civil laws; at the time that the manufacturing energy encouraged science, art and political perfection.

2 In the sense resumed by Matthew Arnold’s (1822–1888) phrase: ‘the best that has been thought and said in the world’.

the cities themselves, have brought about change and a notion closer to that utilised by anthropology has become prevalent widening its meaning in a decided form.<sup>3</sup>

This less ethnocentric and more democratic vision of the term was associated, in the 1970s and at the start of the 1980s, to cultural politics implicated in social development. Since the 1980s there has been a double inflection. On the one hand, with the progressive loss of weight of physical production in cities, cultural politics have been converted into tools of economic development. Culture has become converted into premium material of the urban economy and, although it has persistently demanded an exceptional statute, it has been seen to be invaded by economic logic and the practices of *marketing*. In parallel, the vision over its social dimension has changed as a result of a growing awareness with respect to cultural diversity and place identity. At least, this is what is demanded from the more socially compromised approaches proposed by the renewal of urbanism.<sup>4</sup> Therefore it is possible to speak of a new prominence and of decisive inflection, but it should not be forgotten that in economic and urban development related thought, born with the tensions of the city in the industrial age, the cultural dimension was present right from the very beginning.

The presence of the terms urbanism and planning in the title, although redundant, tries to delimit a more comprehensive and fluid area of problems, than that which each term evokes on its own. It suggests the need to integrate visions that have developed independently from one another, often, as conflicting traditions. Michael Hebbert characterises them in a synthetic and controversial form:

Planning is rooted in social reformism, is mainly Anglo Saxon and sees itself as a professional activity distinct from architecture and engineering. Urbanism is a shared culture or common ground between these professions, is Latin and owes more to the pluralism of the real urban politics.<sup>5</sup>

Nevertheless, one should not forget that the term planning and its different adjectives (town planning, urban planning and city planning), in the Anglo-Saxon world, as much as their Latin equivalents (urbanismo, urbanisme, urbanística) arose around the first decade of the twentieth century, to designate the activity controlling urban development, and in fact have a lot in common in their genealogy.

The term *urbanism* is often utilised in a broad sense as the ‘study of cities – their economics, politics, social and cultural dimensions’, and its early use in the United

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3 The recent definition proportioned by UNESCO serves as an example: the ‘set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs’ (UNESCO 2002).

4 D. Hayden, *The Power of the Place Urban Landscapes as Public History* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1995); S. Zutkin, *The Cultures of Cities* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1995).

5 M. Hebbert, ‘Town Planning versus Urbanismo’, in *11th Conference of the International Planning History Society (IPHS), Planning Models and the Culture of Cities* (Barcelona: UPC-ETSAV, 2005), p. 89 (revised version in *Planning Perspectives*). His approach is based on a quotation of Giorgio Piccinato.

States, is especially significant, in the sense of urban culture: the ‘urbanism as a way of life’ (Wirth, 1938). A meaning that would acquire a renewed importance and which was situated, in fact, in the origins of urban anthropology. Lewis Mumford’s analyses, between the 1930s and 1960s, adopted this perspective contrasting it to the functionalist vision ever increasingly more dominant of the CIAM.<sup>6</sup> Neither is it strange that the critical visions from Jane Jacobs to Henri Lefebvre were aimed at this more social and cultural dimension of urbanism, and that a certain confluence would be produced between these visions and the more architectural ones, that in turn would result in the break with the planning tradition and the claim to the ‘culturalist’ urban project.<sup>7</sup>

At present, strategic planning and the large urban projects, motors of re-launching and renewal of the post-Fordist cities, have led to a reconsideration of the economic, social and cultural dimensions of urbanism. It is ever more difficult to dissociate these factors in urban development activity, which seems to demand renewed attention being paid to the modalities of planning, understood as a system of practices and as a process, more than as an activity centred on traditional *zoning* or in *urban* architecture.<sup>8</sup> The diversity of traditions and uses of both words thus depicts a widened field that is important to reconsider today.

The first three chapters offer a good frame of reference for setting out the relations between planning, urbanism, history and culture. Those relations were at the centre of Françoise Choay’s influential analysis published in 1965, which marked the ascent of a new culturalist vision that has not ceased from developing and from acquiring prominence.<sup>9</sup> In that essay, Choay contrasted the progressive vision with the culturalist vision in the formative phase of urban development thought – the two fundamental positions according to the two perspectives (past and future) at that time. On the one hand the progressive vision looked to the future, exercising as an agent of modernisation. His critical base was the human individual and the universal reason, capable of resolving the problematic relation of man with the world through science and technology. On the other hand, culturalist planning looked to the past. It assumed the forms of nostalgia, and its critical base was the urban community and the assertion of the values of the historic city over modern banality. In this reading, the two models were presented as recurrent, in the different phases of the development

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6 L. Mumford, *The Culture of Cities* (1938), (New York: Harvest, 1970); *The City in History* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1961).

7 M. Hebbert, 91: ‘from 1970 onwards urbanism meant a return to the urban spaces of street and square’.

8 As Rem Koolhaas indicated ‘If there is to be a ‘new urbanism’ it will not be based on the twin fantasies of order and omnipotence; it will be the staging of uncertainty; it will not be concerned with the arrangement of more or less permanent objects but with the irrigation of territories with potential; it will no longer aim for stable configurations but for the creation of enabling fields that accommodate processes that refuses to be crystallised into definitive form’. R. Koolhaas, ‘What Ever Happened to Urbanism?’, in *S, M, L, XL* (New York: The Monacelli Press, 1995), p. 969.

9 F. Choay, *Urbanismo: Utopías y realidades* (Barcelona: Lumen, 1970, 1965 1<sup>st</sup> ).

of town planning. Nevertheless, considering the present ‘cultural turn’ as a simple reissue of this historic recurrence would be a clearly reductive interpretation.<sup>10</sup>

Michael Hebbert and Wolfgang Sonne adopt a more pragmatic than nostalgic attitude in their chapter, to analyse the uses of history in twentieth century planning. Of the three basic *patterns of reading the past* that they recognise, they emphasise the study of the *Lasting Types and Forms* and the use of *History as Local Memory* for being the most operative. They distrust the great interpretations, *the history like a Big Canvas*, and defend history for its usefulness in interpreting urban processes and helping new planning proposals. When the relations between planning and culture are examined, as occurs in the two subsequent chapters, it can be seen how today the use of the very word culture embraces a much wider field than the notion of culturalist urbanism, understood as the discipline looking towards the past. Currently the cultural economy integrates all kinds of artistic forms and institutions, including not only the media, but also publicity and marketing. This is the present field of reference of the new cultural urbanism that, at the same time, must face the challenges and conflicts rising out of the new multiculturalism.

The changing relations between culture and urbanism are analysed in the chapter by Robert Freestone and Chris Gibson and synthesised in an historic succession of paradigms in order to recognise the new aspects brought to each phase. They underline the growing prominence of culture, up to the complete fusion in ‘the creative city’. Greg Young’s article, although recognising the growing inclusion of the dimensions of culture ‘across the entire spectrum of planning experience’, advocates a reflection that aims towards a more effective ‘integration of culture into planning’. In spite of the fact that it takes the ethical component of culture into consideration, it rejects the return to universal values of the Enlightenment and settles for ‘openness and diversity’, and the ‘cross-fertilisation of collaborative post-modern approaches and insights’. In a purposeful and instrumental tone, the author presents the experiences of ‘cultural mapping as structures, techniques positioned to capitalise on the whole culture of place, tangible and intangible elements, and to articulate cultural diversity and values’. Both chapters demonstrate the present notion of culture: multiple, dynamic, fluid and with changing hierarchies. They are a good exponent of how the looks towards very diverse, present, hidden or emerging cultural issues have multiplied.

Initially the conservation of monuments, as well as the formation of museums, was inscribed within a policy of ‘construction of the national memory’, a heraldic and emphasised history. Urbanism and the cultural facilities of capital cities were

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10 F. Choay herself indicated the limitations of both positions: the ingenuous and persistent illusion of a scientific planning in the progressive approaches, as much as the blockade of the culturalist urbanism within an aesthetic outlook. Both models *a priori*, objectified and treated as things, ignored the fact that the built environment had the specific quality to be meaningful, and had exercised a corrosive influence over the imaginary. Choay advocated proposals *a posteriori* born out of the point of view of the inhabitants, from their existential, practical and affective links.

the modern shop window of a reconstructed identity, and the materialisation of the national spirit. The careful restoration of some monumental architecture in the renovated Athens, or in Haussmann and Viollet-le-Duc's Paris, was accompanied by the demolition of old urban fabrics. David Gordon's chapter shows how the weight of political matters and capital status continued exercising a decisive consideration throughout the twentieth century, and does not seem to be affected by the weakening of the national narrative and of the state frameworks. Nevertheless the social imaginary of the twentieth century was not formed in a top-down manner alone, at the dictates of political power and technical elites. Margarita Gutman shows the influence of images diffused through the most popular mass media, in Buenos Aires in the 1920s, reflecting the bottom-up approach.

Similarly the evolution of the conservationist sensibility ended up overflowing time and again the technical and institutional approaches. The Italian experience, expressed through Giorgio Piccinato's useful revision, offers the key principles in order to understand this process and its influence in our critical approaches.<sup>11</sup> The chapters by Laura Kolbe and John Pendlebury allow for the perception, beyond the significant differences between urban, cultural and institutional realities, of the chronological correspondence and the basic tuning of the different experiences. In an extremely similar process to that which occurred towards the end of the nineteenth century, following the grand urban reforms of the European capitals, the 'conservation movement' arose like a reaction to the demolitions deriving from the politics of modernisation of the post-Second World War period. These often confronted the technocratic criteria of politicians and technicians, with the formation of artistic and intellectual minorities, partisan to conservation, in tune with the new movements which began growing from 1968 onwards. The process of integrating a wide notion of culture in planning is not in the slightest way exempt from conflicts. Over the last decade, planning has been increasingly invaded by economic logic and affected by the powerful social changes deriving from globalisation. The growth of tourism and the multicultural character of historic centres configure a new and changing reality that requires new answers, as indicated by Alessandro Scarnato, in examining the cases of Florence and Barcelona. In short, everything leads one towards a growing conscience of the necessary renewal of one's key interpretation. This is even more important when the success of the post-modern cities is increasingly associated to the ability of their urban centres to propose themselves as 'the synthesis of the positive aspects of the whole city'.<sup>12</sup>

Insofar as the cultural and symbolic economy came to prevail in the 1970s, firstly in the North American cities, and then in other western metropolises, conventional

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11 It is sufficient to recall names such as Camillo Boito, Luca Beltrami, Gustavo Giovannoni, Roberto Pane, Cesare Brandi, Saverio Muratore, Guido Canella, and episodes of great influence such as Padova's morpho-typological analysis or Bologna's plan of the 1960s and 1970s.

12 G. Amendola, *La ciudad postmoderna. Magia y miedo en la metrópolis contemporánea* (Madrid: Celeste Ed., 2000), p. 33.

planning gave way to a cultural and strategic urbanism, that saw a resource and a motor for urban changes within culture. It was not a question of the revaluation of the city's history and its architectural heritage, but rather of the 'selling' of the whole city and its different urban fragments. In a context reflecting the growing intensity of urban competition in the global market, cities committed themselves to the renewal of their images as a decisive factor according to the strategic objectives set out. The integration of the economic and cultural dimensions – shown in the prominence of the new notions of cultural urbanism and *strategic urban planning* – implies that the clear dichotomies established by Choay in the 1960s have been overcome. The convergence between culturalist urbanism and that more attentive to economic concerns and the driving of the urban processes was able to be observed. In the same way, the renewed role of image in recent urban development strategies cannot be understood simply as 'formalism' or 'historicism', but rather as a manifestation of the pragmatism that dominates recent politics. The reconfiguration process of the city as a system of scenographies has expressions, so characteristic of the post-modern cities, such as the thematised historic areas, the new *shopping malls*, or certain residential environments of 'neo-traditional' architecture, such as the 'successful' *New Urbanism*: the current expression closest to culturalist urbanism, understood as a nostalgic look to the past and critical of the present. Christopher Silver reminds us that, despite its integrative approaches and its use of history as a critical tool, New Urbanism has not taken on the challenge of resolving the large problems of cities and, in fact, has contributed to *sprawl* and segregation.

Without any doubt, the *par excellence* expression of the current pragmatism is in the proliferation of 'emblematic' projects, with spectacular architecture, and the thematisation of the city, in strategies directed towards promoting the image of the cities' labels (*City Branding*), with the consequent risk of banalisation of urban spaces. As indicated by Graeme Evans ('Branding the City of Culture: the Death of City Planning?'), it is a matter of the 'explicit branding of whole cities', in the way of the large corporations, that has its logic and its costs, and can produce 'uneven, unpredictable results'. This same context drives the strategic utilisation of international expositions, Olympic Games and other events that, despite a long tradition, has acquired a renewed interest with the objective of renewing and re-launching the image of the city, to mobilise the diverse agents and resources, and to catalyse new urban projects. As F. Javier Monclús emphasises, these strategic planning projects have no reason to be limited to prestige or 'emblematic' projects alone, as they allow for the encouragement of other urban regeneration-related developments and, in fact, 'are just as susceptible to be converted into mere policies of image, as in others generating considerable economic and social benefits'. With all of these, the examination carried out by Lilian Vaz and Paola Berenstein of a number of Latin American experiences, where the excesses of 'heritagisation, musealisation and disneyfication' are associated to the progressive gentrification of the historic centres, warns of the risk over the imposition of spectacularisation urbanism as the 'single model'. The review carried out by Roberto Segre of recent urban development and architectural operations in a range of Latin American cities

has the intention of valuing them according to the diversity of the situations and of the results. It therefore offers an uneven balance, full of contrasts, but also of opportunities.

In this series of approaches, the analysis offered by Stephen Ward relating to the case of Baltimore offers a good reason for a final reflection. During the last few decades, Baltimore has been converted into a model, a type of ‘touristic and cultural form of urbanism’ that has inspired and continues inspiring numerous regeneration operations of *waterfronts* and urban areas. Nevertheless, the distance between that limited by its effects in the urban economy, and in the well-being of the whole population – and not only for a sector of users and visitors of the cities – and the overwhelming international success of the model turns out to be somewhat disturbing. Although it does not signify the discrediting of other initiatives that seek to provide an answer to the intense processes of urban reconversion associated, one way or another, to the logics of globalisation.

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The idea for this collection of essays arose out of the 11th Conference of the International Planning History Society (IPHS), held in Barcelona in July 2004.<sup>13</sup> The interest expressed in the connection between *culture* and *planning*, taking into consideration the different meanings of this latter term, was present in a number of the debates and discussions which took place during that Conference. For this reason, it seemed interesting to prolong this discussion in the form of this collection of essays, to enable their diffusion for a much wider audience. These essays, presented under the three broad themes of *Historical and Cultural Perspectives; Images and Heritages*; and *Cultural Urbanism and Planning Strategies* all extend beyond the scope of the communications presented in Barcelona on that occasion.

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13 The theme of the IPHS 2004 Conference was ‘Planning Models and the Culture of Cities’. See the Conference book: *Planning Models and the Culture of Cities. 11th International Planning History Conference* (Barcelona: Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona, 2004).

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PART I  
Historial and Cultural Perspectives

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## Chapter 1

# History Builds the Town: On the Uses of History in Twentieth- century City Planning

Michael Hebbert and Wolfgang Sonne

**Michael Hebbert** is an historian, geographer and town planner. He teaches town planning at the University of Manchester (England), edits the Elsevier research journal *Progress in Planning* and is active with the Urban Design Group and the journal *Municipal Engineer*. He works for the preservation of Manchester's industrial heritage and has published widely on regionalism, urbanism, planning history, and London past and present.

**Wolfgang Sonne** is lecturer for history and theory of architecture at the Department of Architecture at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow (Scotland). He studied art history and archaeology in Munich Paris and Berlin and holds a PhD from the Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule in Zurich. He has previously taught at the ETH Zurich, at Harvard University and at the Universität in Vienna. His publications include: *Representing the State. Capital City Planning in the Early Twentieth Century*, Munich, London and New York: Prestel 2003.

Modern urbanism has been profoundly shaped by readings of the past. Town planning is a prospective activity by definition, but its intractable, long-lasting subject-matter forces planners to take a stance towards the history, whether they cling to legacies, memories and precedents or reject them. In the words of Arthur Korn, one of the most outright rejectionists, *History Builds the Town*.<sup>1</sup> In this paper we ask in what sense history built the twentieth century town. What types of historical reference have planners employed? Have they been actively researched and procured, or worn more casually, as loose-fitting myths? Which has counted for more, the particular or the universal?

Awareness of designers' historiographic strategies is well developed in architectural theory.<sup>2</sup> The uses of history in town planning have been less well studied. We argue that they fall into three distinct categories: first of all, history

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1 Arthur Korn, *History Builds the Town* (London: Lund Humphries, 1953).

2 Wolfgang Sonne, 'Gebaute Geschichtsbilder. Klassizismus, Historismus, Traditionalismus und Modernismus in der Architektur', in Evelyn Schulz and Wolfgang Sonne

has been used as the encyclopaedic source of types and references; second, as the reservoir of collective memory, place-identity and local attachment; and third, as a source of normative justification and purpose for the act of planning. Each type of discourse implies a distinct time pattern and reading of the past. The balance between these modes has shifted in unexpected ways, and each has its risks. A planner with a one-sided sense of history is almost as dangerous as one with none at all.

## Lasting Types and Forms

Modern town planning originates at the turn of the twentieth century, at the moment of shock when new technologies began to demonstrate their power to dissolve conventional conceptions of space and time. For those wrestling with this challenge, the first reaction was to look to a timeless formalism.<sup>3</sup> Daniel Hudson Burnham and Edward Herbert Bennett begin their 1909 planning report on Chicago not with statistical data on the modern city but with a general history of classical urban design from Antiquity to the *Beaux-Arts*.<sup>4</sup> Henry Aldridge opened his *Case for Town Planning. A practical manual for the use of councillors, officers and others engaged in the preparation of town planning schemes* (1915) with a hundred page account of planning as ‘one of the oldest of the arts evolved in the slow development of organised civic life in civilised countries’.<sup>5</sup>

In his seminal text for the new discipline, *Town Planning in Practice* (1909), Raymond Unwin emphasised the need for systematic historical research towards a ‘classification of the different types of plan which have been evolved in the course of natural growth or have been designed at different periods by human art’.<sup>6</sup> His mentor in this project was the architect Camillo Sitte whose 1889 pamphlet *Der Städtebau nach seinen künstlerischen Grundsätzen* tried to distill lasting rules of urban design from examination of historic layouts. Sitte deliberately used black and white plan analysis in an attempt to abstract from context and derive generic principles for present practice.<sup>7</sup>

It was striking how scholars in the German art-historical tradition brought their discipline’s scholarly traditions of periodisation and abstraction of types and forms to bear on the design of cities, largest of human artefacts. Albert Erich Brinckmann

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(eds.), *Kontinuität und Wandel. Geschichtsbilder in verschiedenen Fächern und Kulturen* (Zurich: vdf Hochschulverlag, 1999), pp. 261–330.

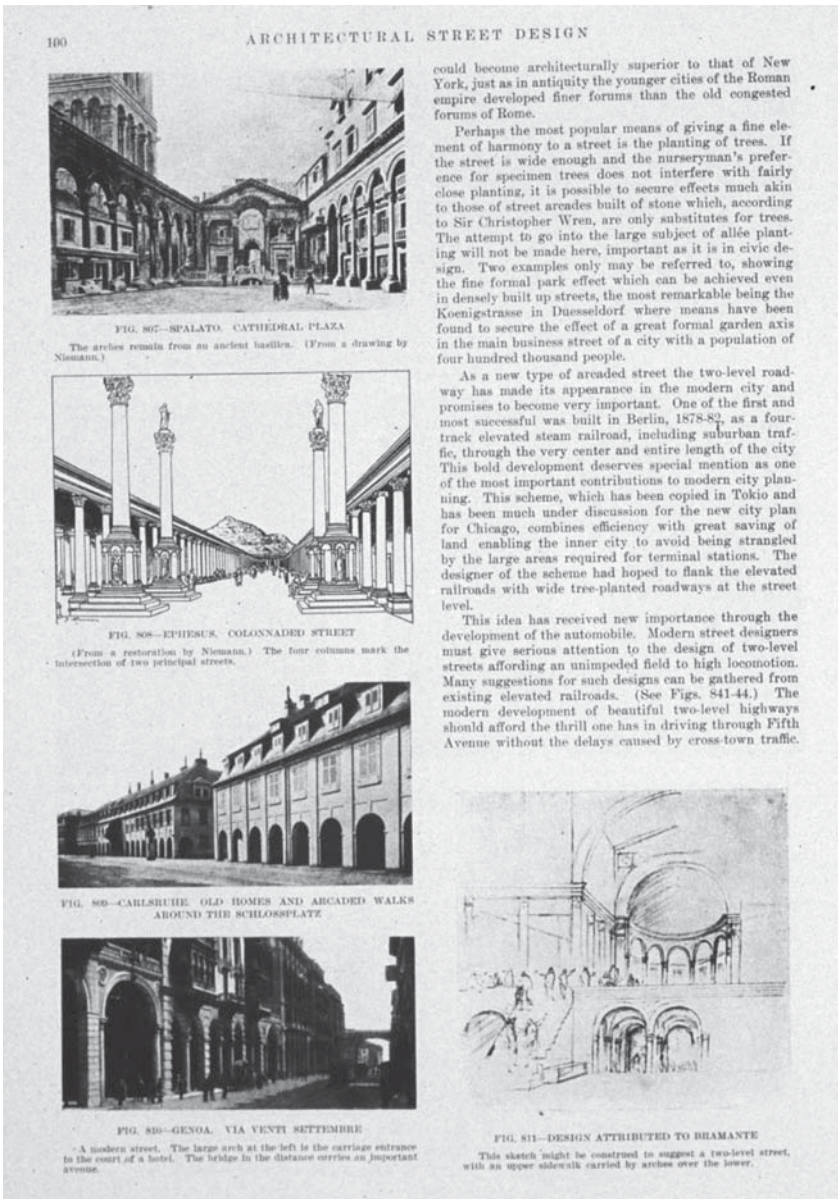
3 David Harvey, *Condition of Post-Modernity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989).

4 Daniel Hudson Burnham and Edward Herbert Bennett, *Plan of Chicago* (Chicago 1909).

5 Henry Aldridge, *Case for Town Planning. A practical manual for the use of councillors, officers and others engaged in the preparation of town planning schemes* (London, 1915), p. 9.

6 Raymond Unwin, *Town Planning in Practice. An Introduction to the Art of Designing Cities and Suburbs*, 2nd edition (London: Allen & Unwin 1911), p. 104.

7 Camillo Sitte, *Der Städtebau nach seinen künstlerischen Grundsätzen* (Wien: Verlag Carl Graeser, 1889), preface.



**Figure 1.1 Werner Hegemann and Elbert Peets, *The American Vitruvius*, 1922. Arcades and colonnades are arranged in a historic sequence which suggests the eternal recurrence of urban archetypes.**

Source: Werner Hegemann and Ebert Peets, *The American Vitruvius. An Architect's Handbook of Civic Art* (New York: Architectural Book Publishing, 1922).

wrote both on the design of squares (1908) and on town planning in general (1920).<sup>8</sup> Cornelius Gurlitt's copious historical writing was matched by a manual of urban design in 1920.<sup>9</sup> The most ambitious compendium combined Germanic formalism with American pragmatism. Werner Hegemann's and Elbert Peets' *American Vitruvius: An Architects' Handbook of Civic Art* (1922) drew examples from 3,000 years of urban history with more than 1,200 illustrations.<sup>10</sup> Historic variety was ordered according to universal urban elements, creating subtle thematic connections across long periods.

This way of constructing the affiliation of motifs resembled Aby Warburg's contemporaneous attempts to classify the painted antique *pathos formula* in the large tables of his 'Mnemosyne-Atlas'.<sup>11</sup> Hegemann and Peets were not writing an account of real historic influences or trying to conjure a return of archaic forms, but offering contemporary designers an encyclopedic scheme of urban elements, with a clear preference for a timeless classicism of axial layout and rhythmic enclosure.<sup>12</sup>

This claim for the universality of Civic Art was compromised once Le Corbusier and the Charter of Athens had explicitly jettisoned all historic types and forms in favour of a radically new and puritan urbanism, based upon the functional logic of the modern city. But it soon became apparent to town planners that their clients expected them to inject some humanism into the austere doctrine of functional separation set out in the Charter of Athens. The issue of human association dominated postwar meetings of CIAM, caused the breakaway of younger modernists in Team X in 1953, and triggered the emergence of the subdiscipline of urban design in 1956. The search for the heart of the city, its symbolic and interactive essence, brought modernism back to the interrogation of history.<sup>13</sup>

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8 Albert Erich Brinckmann, *Platz und Monument* (Berlin, 1908); Albert Erich Brinckmann, *Deutsche Stadtbaukunst in der Vergangenheit* (Frankfurt am Main, 1911); Albert Erich Brinckmann, *Stadtbaukunst. Geschichtliche Querschnitte und neuzeitliche Ziele* (Berlin, 1920).

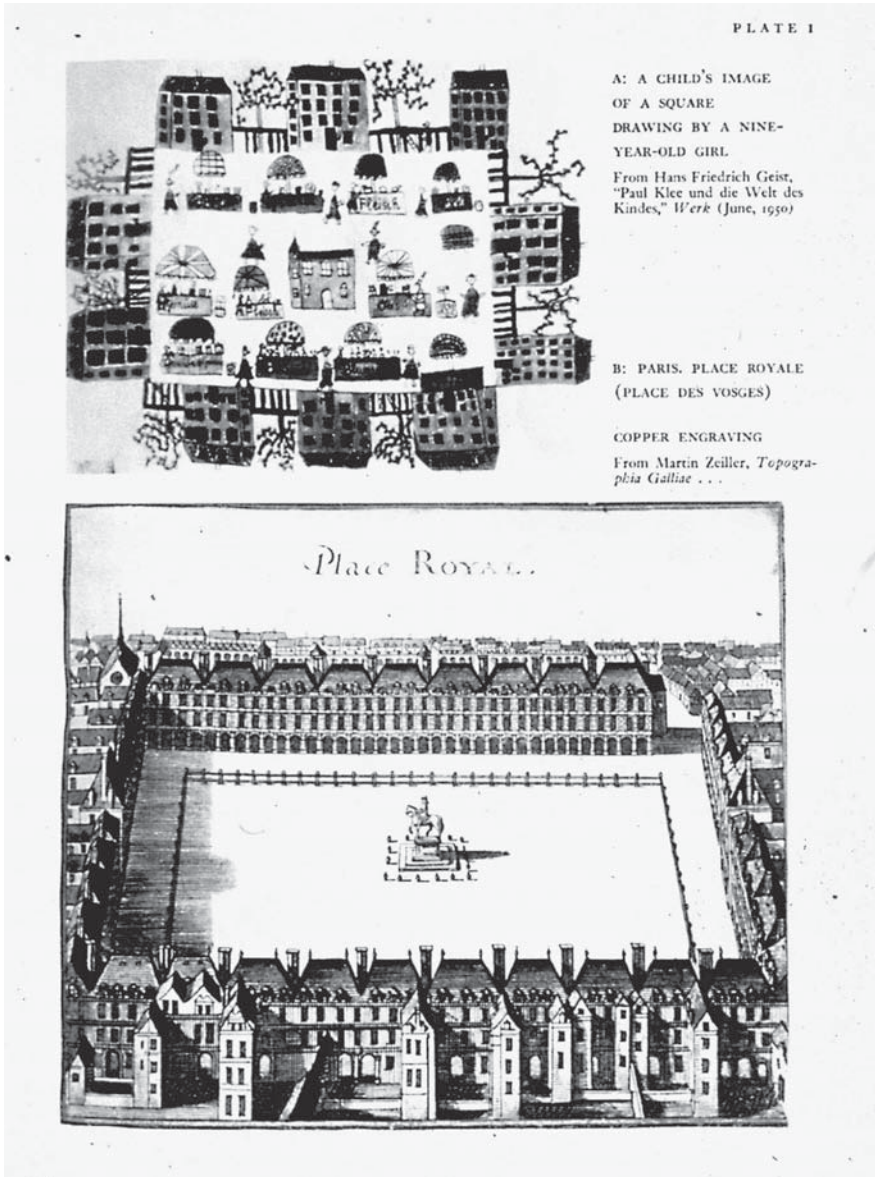
9 Cornelius Gurlitt, *Historische Stadtbilder*, 12 vols. (Berlin, 1901–12); Cornelius Gurlitt, *Handbuch des Städtebaues* (Berlin, 1920).

10 Werner Hegemann and Elbert Peets, *The American Vitruvius. An Architect's Handbook of Civic Art* (New York: Architectural Book Publishing, 1922). Cf. Christiane Craseman Collins, *Werner Hegemann and the Search for Universal Urbanism* (New York: Norton, 2005).

11 Martin Warnke (ed.), *Aby Warburg. Der Bilderatlas Mnemosyne* (Berlin, 2000).

12 Wolfgang Sonne, 'Bilder, Geschichte und Architektur. Drei wesentliche Bestandteile der Städtebauteorie in Werner Hegemanns und Elbert Peets' *American Vitruvius*', in *Scholion. Bulletin der Stiftung Bibliothek Werner Oechslin*, 2 (2002): pp. 122–133; Wolfgang Sonne, 'Images, History, and Architecture. Three Crucial Elements of an Appropriate Urban Design Theory in Hegemann and Peets' "American Vitruvius"', in *Proceedings of the Conference 'The New Civic Art, Werner Hegemann and International Exchanges'* (Miami, 2005), in print.

13 Sigfried Giedion, Jose Luis Sert and Fernand Léger, 'Neun Punkte über: Monumentalität – ein menschliches Bedürfnis' (1943), in Sigfried Giedion, *Architektur und Gemeinschaft. Tagebuch einer Entwicklung* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1956), pp. 40–42; and Jacqueline Tyrwhitt,



**Figure 1.2** Paul Zucker, The archetype of a square in a children's drawing and the Place Henri IV in Paris, in *Town and Square*, 1959. The eternal type of an urban element is represented by the 'innocent hand' of a child.

Source: Paul Zucker, *Town and Square*. From the *Agora to the Village Green* (New York and London: Columbia University Press 1959).

Kevin Lynch and Edmund Bacon defined urban design in terms of the analysis of historic streets and quarters, reestablishing the seminal importance of a Grand Tour of Italian exemplars.<sup>14</sup> Joseph Rykwert went further back, looking to ancient Rome for source of symbolic meaning in urban design.<sup>15</sup> At MIT, Stanford Anderson initiated a major study into the history of streets and their dual generic role as a basis of circulation and a setting for exchange.<sup>16</sup> And, in an early and ambitious contribution, Paul Zucker studied the history of the urban square, showing it to be a psychologically determined archetype of universal relevance at every stage of development and every scale of settlement. In his opening pair of illustrations a child's drawing reveals the *Ur-form* of a square which also informed in Henri IV's Place Royale in Paris.

The 'Paradox of History', for Zucker, was that types and forms could remain constant however radically functions change over the epochs of urban history.<sup>17</sup>

Towards the close of the century the broad current of postmodern urbanism became increasingly receptive to historical material that could inform revivalism. There were synoptic narratives such as the huge pictorial atlas of Leonardo Benevolo's *Storia della città* and the encyclopedic multivolume *Storia dell'urbanistica*,<sup>18</sup> and a revival in art-historical contributions such as Wolfgang Braunfels' *Abendländische Stadtbaukunst* and Michael Hesse's overview of *Stadtarchitektur*.<sup>19</sup> Spiro Kostof, another architectural historian, contributed the most subtle and wide-ranging study of historic types and form in his final pair of books *The City Shaped* and *The City Assembled*.<sup>20</sup> Like in the *American Vitruvius* from the 1920s, the structure was thematic, not chronological, deliberately inviting the modern practitioner to reflect and translate. In these years practising urbanists contributed actively to historical investigation. Rob Krier's teaching and practice in Stuttgart gave rise to

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Jose Luis Sert, Ernesto Nathan Rogers, *The Heart of the City. Towards the Humanisation of Urban Life* (New York: Pellegrini and Cudahy, 1952).

14 Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1960); and Edmund Bacon, *Design of Cities* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1967).

15 Joseph Rykwert, *The Idea of a Town. The Anthropology of Urban Form in Rome, Italy and the Ancient World* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1988).

16 Stanford Anderson (ed.), *On Streets* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1978).

17 Paul Zucker, *Town and Square. From the Agora to the Village Green* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1959), p. 18.

18 Leonardo Benevolo, *Storia della città* (Rome and Bari: Laterza, 1975); *Storia dell'urbanistica*, 12 vols. (Rome and Bari: Laterza, 1976–91).

19 Wolfgang Braunfels, *Abendländische Stadtbaukunst. Herrschaftform und Baugestalt* (Cologne: Du Mont, 1976); Michael Hesse, *Stadtarchitektur. Fallbeispiele von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart* (Cologne: Deubner Verlag, 2003).

20 Spiro Kostof, *The City Shaped. Urban Patterns and Meanings through History* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1991); and Spiro Kostof, *The City Assembled. The Elements of Urban Form through History* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1992).

his study of generic types of street and block pattern,<sup>21</sup> Philippe Panerai and fellow members of the Versailles school produced their seminal analysis of the transition from nineteenth to twentieth century urban form,<sup>22</sup> and Allan Jacobs contributed meticulously researched typologies of urban thoroughfares.<sup>23</sup>

For the neo-traditionalist wing the revival of historic types and forms became a matter of doctrine. Advocacy of street and square got entangled in arguments for masonry and timber building, vertical windows, and adherence to norms of classical detailing. Leon Krier was a polemical advocate of eternal principles of urban design, to which all good cities must conform.<sup>24</sup> The wit and elegance of his work made up for the narrowness of its frame of reference. A more synoptic attempt to distill a systematic theory of urbanism from past types was the *New Civic Art. Elements of Town Planning* compiled by Andres Duany, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk and Robert Alminana in 2003. Title and organisation pay deliberate homage to Hegemann's and Peets' *American Vitruvius. An Architect's Handbook of Civic Art* (1922). In terms of its display as well as its contents the *New Civic Art* is anything but new – following established models, it draws from all historical periods and sources, including Hegemann's book and modernist planning projects. Its concept of history is a pragmatic traditionalism: every historic solution may be chosen if it appears to be good. No barriers are constructed between past and present, for as the authors say in the preface: 'this collection is only a manual of proven practice'.<sup>25</sup>

New Urbanism's strategy – codify history and use the codes as a basis for present action – has been heavily criticised for its formulaic manipulation of appearances. Its most disturbing repercussion has been to divorce town planning from the creative world of architecture. But doctrinal neo-traditionalism is a fringe movement, unrepresentative of the generality of planning practice for which knowledge of generic types and forms of city-building is part of the essential process of learning the vocabulary of urbanism.

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21 Rob Krier, *Stadtraum in Theorie und Praxis* (Stuttgart: Krämer, 1975); engl.: *Urban Space* (London: Academy Editions, 1979).

22 Philippe Panerai, Jean Castex, Jean-Charles Depaule, *Formes Urbaines. De l'ilot a la barre* (Paris : Dunod, 1977); engl.: *Urban Forms. Death and Life of the Urban Block* (Oxford: Architectural Press, 2004).

23 Allan B. Jacobs, *Great Streets* (New York: Random House, 1993); Allan B. Jacobs, Elizabeth Macdonald, Yodan Rofé, *The Boulevard Book: history, evolution, design of multiway boulevards* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2002). Cf. N.R. Fyfe (ed.), *Images of the Street* (London: Routledge, 1998).

24 Leon Krier, *Architecture. Choice or Fate*, Windsor: Papadakis 1998.

25 Andres Duany, Elisabeth Plater-Zyberk, Robert Alminana, *The New Civic Art. Elements of Town Planning* (New York: Rizzoli, 2003), p. 9. Cf. Michael Hebbert, 'New Urbanism – the movement in context', in *Built Environment*, 29, 3, (2003): pp. 193–210.



Figure 1.3 Patrick Geddes, *Arbor Saeculorum* – the tree of the centuries, 1895.

The process of history is represented as organic growth.

Source: Volker Welter, *Biopolis. Patrick Geddes and the City of Life* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2002).

## History as Local Memory

Town planning may draw on universal types but it is also an encounter with specific place and people. Local distinctiveness arises from a specific history which the planner needs to appreciate. Perhaps the most distinctive theory of this kind informed the work of Scottish town planning activist and theoretician Patrick Geddes. His view of history as a continuous process of growth was clearly marked by biological overtones and may be best represented by his design for a stained glass window, showing the ‘Arbor Saeculorum’, the tree of the centuries, in 1892.

The different historic cultures unfold like a growing tree, each oscillating between the ‘temporal’ and the ‘spiritual powers’.<sup>26</sup> Contemporary time is the quasi-biological result of all that has gone before.

‘A city is more than a place in space’, Geddes wrote, ‘it is a drama in time’ proceeding in phases that he likened to ‘the layers of a coral reef in which each generation constructs its characteristic stony skeleton as a contribution to the growing yet dying and wearying whole’.<sup>27</sup> Geddes arranged his famous travelling Cities and Town Planning Exhibition – starting in Chelsea in 1911 and destroyed in the Pacific Sea in 1914 – according to a chronological order beginning with the ‘origin and rise of cities’ and finishing with the latest developments of the Garden Cities.<sup>28</sup> Contemporary planning emerges directly from history, not only firmly rooted in time but also in space. Therefore Geddes’s most widely-communicated idea was the need for intensive, historically-based local survey as a basis for action. Only through intense process of sharing collective memory could the future be projected.<sup>29</sup> The Outlook Tower embodied his approach, being both a museum of civic development and a centre for urbanism, with a rooftop *camera obscura* looking out on contemporary Edinburgh.<sup>30</sup> While Geddes brought his own peculiar methodology, others took different routes to the same end of an intensive, respectful survey. In France the archival and cartographic tradition of Paris historian Marcel

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26 Volker Welter, *Biopolis. Patrick Geddes and the City of Life* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2002), pp. 88–90.

27 Helen Meller (ed.), *The Ideal City* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1979), pp. 79, 82.

28 Volker Welter, *Biopolis. Patrick Geddes and the City of Life* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2002), pp. 124–127.

29 Patrick Geddes, *Cities in Evolution. An Introduction to the Town Planning Movement and to the Study of Civics* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1915), pp. 329–375.

30 Helen Meller, *Patrick Geddes. Social Evolutionist and City Planner* (London: Routledge, 1990).