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# IDEOLOGY OF URBAN CONSERVATION

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PhD in Architectural History and Theory

The University of Edinburgh

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**Figure 1 (cover). Medieval bird's-eye view of Rhodes (Ródos)**

Source: Georg Braun and Franz Hogenberg, *Civitates Orbis Terrarum – Cities of the World: 363 Engravings Revolutionize the View of the World Complete Edition of the Colour Plates of 1572-1617*, edited by Stephan Füssel (Hong Kong, Köln, London, Los Angeles Madrid, Paris, Tokyo: Taschen, 2008), 122.

Candidate's declaration

I declare that this thesis has been composed by myself, that the work is my own, except when indicated differently for co-authored publications, and that the work has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Ruxandra-Iulia Stoica

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## Abbreviations

CIAM	Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne
EC	European Council
ICCROM	International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property
ICOMOS	International Council on Monuments and Sites
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OED	<i>Oxford English Dictionary Online</i>
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

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## Abstract

Although urban heritage has been a research field in the focus of scholars' attention since the concepts of restoration and rehabilitation of monuments had been extended to entire areas such as historical city centres, before the mid-twentieth century, architectural studies approached towns only through individual historical monuments, and historical studies only through juridical, political, and religious institutions or economic and social structures. In consequence, urban space as the manifestation of the urban phenomenon in its complexity has been largely ignored by the practice of urban conservation.

This thesis aims to be a theoretical approach to the field of urban conservation, revealing its place at the crossing of history, architecture, urbanism, geography, philosophy, and anthropology. The creation of place, its understanding, the meaning that places hold for human identity and the way they shape us in return. The basis of such an enquiry is set by looking at attitudes towards the historic fabric over time and the origins of the notion of 'urban conservation' in its European context. The concentration of economic, social and cultural exchanges over long periods of time, which characterises traditional urban cultures, gives the value of historical areas in towns. Therefore, the history of urban development provides a substantial contribution towards the protection, conservation, and restoration policy of historic towns and urban areas as well as towards their development and adaptation to contemporary life.

The term 'integrated conservation' emerged as a response to these changes in conservation's relationship to heritage and its context. This broadened image of heritage enables a better understanding of how human activity has shaped the urban fabric and of how conservation can be perceived today as a component of management of urban change. This raises a number of theoretical and methodological issues, which are discussed in detail in this thesis: how do we

understand the historic urban areas and how do we elicit their cultural values in order to protect and use these values. This research is therefore concerned with the origin and nature of ideas relevant to urban conservation, rather than with what is commonly regarded as being a prescriptive doctrine in heritage conservation generally, and indeed urban conservation. In reality, this latter view of the theoretical and philosophical body of research in conservation is hindering its theoretical development as a discipline and has an undesired, stalling effect on practice development. This is why this research aims to provide tools for thinking about specific conservation issues, not self-sufficient theories. The references span a very wide timescale because of the inherent preoccupation of humans with their own inhabiting of the world, which is ultimately the frame in which urban settlements are inscribed.



## INTRODUCTION



If I tell you that the city towards which my journey tends is discontinuous in space and time, now scattered, now more condensed, you must not believe the search for it can stop.<sup>1</sup>  
(Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*)

The concentration of economic, social and cultural exchanges over long periods of time, which characterises traditional urban cultures, gives the value of historical areas in towns. Therefore, the history and analysis of urban development provides a substantial contribution towards the protection, conservation, and restoration policy of historic towns and urban areas as well as towards their development and adaptation to contemporary life. An analysis of examples throughout this research reflects a broad range of circumstances, and reveals the characteristics of the relationship between the historical urban areas and the town as a whole and integrated urban conservation as a dimension of sustainable development. In addition, the practice of urban conservation is the outcome of a complex relation between the ideological models developed by architecture and urbanism – when they succeed to be implemented or at least imitated in practice – and political decisions, moreover shaped by cultural and economical idiosyncrasies.

Consequently, this research focuses on the integrated conservation of urban heritage, by analyzing a broad range of sources, beginning with a comprehensive review of the available secondary literature on conservation including books, articles and international charters and declarations. The primary sources analysed include written sources such as historical documents, monographs, studies, projects, and specific laws. Iconographical primary sources include cartographic and

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<sup>1</sup> Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities* [1972] (London: Vintage, 1997), 147.

cadastral sources – such as maps, plans and aerial photographs – and drawings, paintings, or pictures. The selected towns themselves, as archaeological and urban environment, represent a third category of primary sources, which are crucial for an understanding of the urban development process. This wide range of sources is required in order to understand what should determine urban conservation strategies in a given physical and cultural environment. Due to the nature of this transdisciplinary inquiry, the research will oscillate between concept and practice and in doing so will try to corroborate both scientific and also empirical approaches.

The thesis is structured in five parts: the first three analyse the historical development of urban conservation theory as a transdisciplinary field locked in *limbo* for almost a century between the spheres of influence of heritage conservation and urbanism, while the last two deal with the methodological and ideological profile of the urban conservation problematic. The driving questions of this research are: how do we understand the historic urban areas, how do we elicit their values, and how do we protect and use these values, rather than a discussion of new interventions.

The first part sets up to establish the epistemological nature of urban conservation theory – its transdisciplinarity and concern with the elusive ‘cultural capital’ notion – as well as providing an overview of the preceding literature on this subject. The second part analyses the attitudes towards the historic urban fabric over the last century between the two extremes of demolition and reproduction of historic settings (both politically or doctrinally motivated) and the slow and discontinuous development of a body of legal provisions appropriate for urban conservation (exemplified by three selected cases). Concluding the second part is a contemporary scale for degrees of intervention in urban conservation, illustrated with selected cases. The third part looks at the key moments and ideas in the emergence and development of urban conservation theory and reveals its difficulties in the context of heritage, as well as architectural and urbanist, theories; these were focused on the architectural object (as either historical monument or

contemporary creation) and only gradually considered their context, at first as background, and only in the last decades of the twentieth century as a coherent whole. The fourth part looks at the issues in urban conservation theory derived from the very nature of its object of study, the historic city in continuous development, and the methodologies of analysis appropriate to dealing with this continuous state of transformation over time. The fifth part aims to establish the intellectual context of urban conservation theory within an emic-etic discourse, which forms the background to our perception of intrinsic and typological values within the historic urban fabric.

This research is therefore concerned with the origin and nature of ideas relevant to urban conservation, rather than with what is regarded as being 'prescriptive doctrine' in heritage conservation generally, and urban conservation in particular. In fact, this latter view of the theoretical and philosophical body of research in conservation as being merely 'prescriptive doctrine' is hindering its theoretical development as a discipline and has an undesired, stalling effect on the development of practice. This is why this research aims to provide tools for thinking about specific conservation issues, rather than self-sufficient theories.

This is not intended to be a definitive view on urban conservation, but rather part of a broader process of re-evaluation that takes place in the field of architectural and urban history and theory. It represents an angle of looking at the essence of urban conservation and reconsideration of its methods, making use of the new methodologies available in the disciplines that relate to the problematic of this field. The cities illustrating this research have been chosen as far as possible from those the author had visited or, in a number of cases, studied personally, as the un-mediated experience is in this case of utmost importance. While secondary sources complement the direct experience, they cannot substitute it without significant loss of credibility of these analyses.

Not many new things can be said starting from the same concerns and using the same methods, therefore the approach detailed in this thesis is based on

innovative ideas and methods borrowed and adapted from other humanities disciplines, but nevertheless intimately connected with the field of urban conservation. In this way, this research aims to reveal the place of urban conservation at the crossing of history, architecture, urbanism, sociology, geography, philosophy, and anthropology. The references span a very wide timescale because of the inherent preoccupation of humans with their own inhabiting of the world, which is ultimately the frame in which urban settlements are inscribed. The creation of place, its understanding, the meanings that place holds for human identity and the way they shape us in return. Also, good writings arguably have a life of their own: they evolve, they reveal layers that might not have been visible for contemporary eyes, they transcend their time. This very quality of human thought makes them perennial and relevant for a contemporary reflection on the city and its conservation.



## **I. THE FIELD OF URBAN CONSERVATION**

*What is urban conservation and what has been written about its theory and practice until now, and why is it under-theorized*

The only real journey (...) would be to travel not towards new landscapes, but [to see] with new eyes (...).<sup>2</sup>  
(Marcel Proust, *La Recherche du Temps Perdu*)

This thesis looks at the ideology, as *cumulus* of ideas about the city in architecture and urbanism and beyond, that contributed to the shaping of urban conservation and aims to analyse them, as well as their historical evolution, in order to extract the essential aspects pertaining to urban conservation theory. Given the recent genesis of urban conservation as a field of inquiry, it is inevitably necessary to have a prolegomenon that looks at its definitions and context.

But what exactly is urban conservation? The answer requires more than a simple definition, as it is certainly more than a simple discipline.

Monodisciplinarity, while having its role in a more general knowledge context, is not an approach suited for solving societal problems. Besides, the object of study of urban conservation, the city, is arguably so complex that only a thoroughly interdisciplinary enquiry can attempt to make sense and offer explanations. There are fields where a multidisciplinary (also called pluridisciplinary) approach can reveal different facets in a satisfying manner, such as history, where the many disciplines can offer credible 'histories' without much overlapping. There are also fields where a crossdisciplinary approach offers solutions in the form of a tried and tested method from one discipline being successfully pioneered in another, such as urbanism, where not only the notions of structure and morphology were borrowed from biology, but even evolutionary models. Nevertheless, in the case of urban conservation, even this has proved not enough. A real integrative approach drawing on various disciplines has become necessary, more than parallel disciplinary

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<sup>2</sup> Marcel Proust, *La Recherche du Temps Perdu*, Vol. 5 *La Prisonnière* [1913-27] (Paris: Gallimard, 2000), 235.

analyses, more than borrowing methods from one another; hence, the interdisciplinarity of this field creates a new synergy from the transfer of knowledge between disciplines.

Beyond this, transdisciplinarity has the potential of offering a genuinely new approach to enquiry, because it goes beyond the binary concepts employed until now: subject/object, material/immaterial, nature/divine, simplicity/complexity, reductionism/holism, homogeneity/diversity. The term, coined by Jean Piaget, “will not be limited to recognize the interactions and or reciprocities between the specialized researches, but which will locate these links inside a total system without stable boundaries between the disciplines.”<sup>3</sup>

Basarab Nicolescu (b. 1942) defines transdisciplinarity as an approach whose scope is to understand the world in all its complexity, either as a kind of interdisciplinary research drawing on either scientific and non-scientific sources or practice, or as a new approach to knowledge involving different parts of the society beyond academia.<sup>4</sup> Either way, transdisciplinarity, instead of accumulating methods and knowledge from existing disciplines, challenges them to their core, proposing a new way of thinking and organising information.<sup>5</sup>

Transdisciplinarity is not a method, but an approach—to everything. Moreover, unlike using a method, if one truly adopts transdisciplinarity, it entails ontological change; i.e., a change of being.

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<sup>3</sup> Jean Piaget, “L’*épistémologie des relations interdisciplinaires*,” in *Interdisciplinarity; problems of teaching and research in universities*, Léo Apostel *et al.*, (Washington D.C.: OECD Publications Centre, 1972), 144. Quoted in Basarab Nicolescu, “Transdisciplinarity: Past Present and Future” (*Moving Worldviews - Reshaping sciences, policies and practices for endogenous sustainable development* (Holland: Compas Editions, 2006), 142-66.

<sup>4</sup> Basarab Nicolescu, *Manifesto of transdisciplinarity* [1996] (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2002).

<sup>5</sup> Basarab Nicolescu, “The transdisciplinary evolution of the university condition for sustainable development”, 1997, <http://basarab.nicolescu.perso.sfr.fr/ciret/bulletin/b12/b12c8.htm> (accessed 23/07/2004).



It is based on two ideas from quantum physics. First, it encompasses the logic of the included middle, a logic that is quite different than binary, Aristotelian logic—there is no A this is A and non-A at the same time. That logic excludes the middle. In fact, it is fundamental that there is no middle, no third possibility. Yet the middle is a part of Reality and must be accounted for. The logic of the included middle has been shown to be mathematically formalizable by the late mathematician Stéphane Lupasco. It is a logic that is ideally suited to accounting for complexities of various kinds. (...)

The second idea in transdisciplinarity is that Reality is comprised of more than one level. Each level of Reality has its own laws and logic. Phenomena on the quantum level, for example, behave differently than those on the level of the everyday.

All of our contemporary institutions—political, social, economic, and religious—are founded on binary logic and the idea that Reality is comprised of only one level. They are based on the Newtonian view of the world and a 19th century view of what constitutes the scientific. Such a view is hardly adequate to enabling us to deal with the unprecedented complexity that we must confront in the 21st century. (...)

Our daily life is dominated, in fact, by a technology that is entirely based on quantum physics, yet our thought process remains rooted in an outmoded world-view.<sup>6</sup>

(Karen-Claire Voss, "On Transdisciplinarity")

This research aims to establish urban conservation as an interdisciplinary approach by creating new, transdisciplinary concepts that can help understand the complexity of the city as a whole. The sources used fall into three main categories: specialist publications encompassing history and theory of both architecture and urbanism and conservation; historical, geographical, anthropological publications;

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<sup>6</sup> Karen-Claire Voss, "On Transdisciplinarity," undated, <http://www.agkc.co.uk/What%20is%20Transdisciplinarity.html> (accessed 10/01/2010).

and philosophical and cultural writings and literary works. The majority of the selected writings address explicitly the issues of urban conservation, albeit rarely conscientiously using the concept, in a way that reveals a strong belief that these issues are intrinsic to human habitation and therefore to all disciplines studying it from various points of view. Moreover, the concern for these issues transcends specialist boundaries and has proven a constant of writings addressing human existence from a philosophical or cultural point of view.

## I. 1. Research niche: theory of urban conservation

Despite the publication of a good number of books, articles and reports touching on the problematic of urban conservation, the paucity of theoretical and conceptual advance of this field remains evident. The delay in giving a sound theoretical structure to the field of urban conservation is, quite understandably, due to the complexity of the urban environment and the ensuing difficulty of separating out the effects of different variables at work within it.

In general, urban conservation practice is based on following principles with little understanding of the origin and reasoning behind these principles, or of the fact that certain aspects of them could, and do, become obsolete, or even of the fact that new issues emerge that are not yet dealt with in terms of conservation principles. This means, in many cases, urban conservation practitioners are 'blindly' following the established principles without an understanding of their underlying philosophy, and therefore are not able to adapt their approach to given circumstances that might be challenging the so far recognized conservation doctrine. The crux of this problem is enabling an actual understanding of how to identify cultural values and how to protect them while retaining their normal integration within the complexity of the urban organism, beyond the much-spread

practice of 'tick-lists.' There have been several attempts, over the last decades, to establish a categorisation of cultural values that could be used for this purpose.

Bernard Fielden (1919-2008) tried in his 1976 booklet, for the first time since the concept of heritage has expanded beyond its traditional scope,<sup>7</sup> to lay down some essential principles regarding 'cultural property'<sup>8</sup> in general and architectural and urban conservation in particular. He synthesised the different types of value that may be attributed to 'cultural property' in three categories:

- Cultural values: documentary, historic, archaeological and age value, aesthetic, architectural, townscape value, landscape and ecological value;
- Use values: functional, economic, social and political value;
- Emotional values: wonder, identity, continuity.<sup>9</sup>

In this way, Fielden provides a simple, yet efficient system which can be used for assessing the 'worth' of historic structures. However, any categorization is inevitably problematic if one takes into consideration the high degree of inter-determination between these different values. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge the different ways in which value can be created in relation to heritage, and at an urban scale even more so, since the comprehension of the urban organism is so much more difficult due to the sheer complexity of its reality on one hand and its dynamics over time on the other.

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<sup>7</sup> Other attempts relevant for the subsequent development of ideas in urban conservation, made at key moments in the history of conservation are discussed at length in Part III. Origins of Urban Conservation.

<sup>8</sup> The term 'cultural property' is used to encompass everything from museum objects to buildings and urban areas, and is generally inter-changeable with that of 'heritage.'

<sup>9</sup> Bernard Fielden, *An Introduction to Conservation of Cultural Property* (Rome: UNESCO, ICCROM, 1976), 27.

Despite being an intrinsic part of our life and acknowledged so from ancient times, cultural values have entered the ‘sustainable development’<sup>10</sup> political discourse only very recently, after a number of not very successful attempts in 1990s.<sup>11</sup> David Throsby (b.1939) argues that by acknowledging the parallels between natural capital and cultural capital, the concept of sustainable development can be used for cultural values too.<sup>12,13</sup> The benefit of this approach lies obviously in being able to apply quite readily a previously established group of concepts – and tried and tested theoretical and methodological tools – to cultural values. Throsby defines ‘cultural capital’ by analogy with ‘natural capital’ and argues for similar concepts of cultural ‘ecosystems,’ diversity, intergenerational equity and the precautionary principle (reversibility of intervention). He attempts to build a quantifiable cultural sustainability model and tests it against ‘weak’ and ‘strong’ paradigms of sustainability as established in economics.<sup>14</sup> The ‘weak’ paradigm, which assumes that natural and man-made capitals are perfectly substitutable, is not acceptable for most natural values, and even less for cultural ones. The notion of ‘unicity’ means that they are never really comparable. The ‘strong’ paradigm regards natural and man-made capitals as strictly non-substitutable and thus acknowledges the un-

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<sup>10</sup> The concept of ‘sustainable development’ in relation to ecological concerns was first promoted by the Brundtland Commission - UN World Commission on Environment and Development in its report *Our Common Future* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).

<sup>11</sup> The relation between culture and development, although not yet in terms of sustainability, was acknowledged by the Pères de Cuéllar Commission - UN World Commission on Culture and Development in its report *Our Creative Diversity* (Paris: UNESCO, 1995).

<sup>12</sup> David Throsby, “Cultural Capital and Sustainability Concepts in the Economics of Cultural Heritage,” in *Assessing the Values of Cultural Heritage* (Los Angeles: The Getty Conservation Institute, 2002), 101-17.

<sup>13</sup> David Throsby, “On the sustainability of cultural capital,” Department of Economics Research Papers 2005, Macquarie University, [http://www.econ.mq.edu.au/research/2005/cult\\_cap\\_throsby.pdf](http://www.econ.mq.edu.au/research/2005/cult_cap_throsby.pdf) (accessed 10/12/2008).

<sup>14</sup> Idem.

replaceability of certain values.<sup>15</sup> The undeniable interactions between culture and environment are a further element that challenges both these categorizations.<sup>16,17</sup>

Throsby starts with the assumption that cultural capital embodies and produces both cultural and also economic values, which to him means there is a clear distinction between cultural and physical capital – the latter being supposed to produce only economic value. In reality this idea is misleading, since virtually any physical capital has in fact the potential, to a higher or lesser degree, to become relevant from a cultural point of view, at some point in time, for a certain society or group within it. This would result in cultural value being attached to what was previously considered purely ‘physical capital’ and therefore its very nature would change to what Throsby defines as ‘cultural capital.’ In a way, this proves the unsuitability of considering cultural value as simply attached to cultural capital, be it tangible or intangible.<sup>18</sup> At the same time, Throsby distances his definition of ‘cultural capital’ from the sociological one, established by Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002), which he considers similar to the one of ‘human capital’ as established by Gary S. Becker (b. 1930) in economics. This, however, leaves his theoretical model with some contradictions and ambiguities.<sup>19, 20</sup> For example, Throsby later

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<sup>15</sup> The applicability of natural conservation policies to cultural heritage conservation is an issue not without interest, given that natural conservation legislation is often more developed than the urban conservation one.

<sup>16</sup> Joan Iverson Nassauer, “Cultural Sustainability: Aligning Aesthetics and Ecology,” in *Placing Nature: Culture and Landscape Ecology*, ed. Joan Iverson Nassauer (Washington D.C.: Island Press, 1997), 275-83.

<sup>17</sup> Ricardo Garcia Mira *et al.* (eds.), *Culture, Environmental Action and Sustainability* (Gottingen: Hogrefe and Huber, 2003).

<sup>18</sup> It should be noted that, while Throsby specifically deals with tangible heritage in his 2002 paper, he extends this rationale to intangible heritage in his 2005 paper.

<sup>19</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, “The Forms of Capital” [1983] in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed. John Richardson (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), 241-58.

<sup>20</sup> G. S. Becker, *Human Capital: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis with Special Reference to Education* [1964] (Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press, 1993).

includes a 'cultural appreciation parameter' into the equation, which could be seen as addressing the problem of cultural value encompassing not only what is embodied in 'cultural capital,' but also what is reflected by 'human capital.'<sup>21</sup> The only problem with this is that 'human capital' is defined as "accumulated education and experience embodied in people which enables them to be more productive," while 'cultural appreciation' does not necessarily have a bearing on this.

Perhaps one of the major shortcomings of Throsby's theory of cultural capital is the lack of acknowledgement of the complications of evaluating and quantifying cultural values due to the inherent nature of value judgements, which can be absolute, objective or subjective.<sup>22</sup> This means the very presence of 'cultural capital' is not easily identified, in the way in which physical, human and even natural capitals can be, and therefore raises the question whether it is in reality a similar enough category, which can be subjected to established economic principles, theories and quantification. Whether cultural value is there or not (which is a requisite assessment in order to qualify something as 'cultural capital') is then a question with multiple and possibly contradictory answers, depending of whom is to answer; and this before even raising the issue of quantifying any cultural value that might be found. In fact, Throsby's economic concept of 'cultural capital' works reasonably well only for 'institutionalized' cultural capital, i.e. that which was recognised officially through a form of 'listing' and even 'valued' to the extent to which different categories for listing are defined and used. Another problem is the fact that in this case the notion of sustainability from a cultural point of view is rendered almost unusable, as the 'institutionalised' cultural capital is bound to be only a fraction of the real one, which is profoundly relevant to human existence.

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<sup>21</sup> Throsby, "On the Sustainability of Cultural Capital," 9.

<sup>22</sup> These aspects are discussed in Part V. The Intellectual Context of Urban Conservation

But the real challenge is to realize the interconnectivity of all different values, cultural ones included, and apply the concept of sustainable development to this ensemble as a whole. An understanding of how values of different types relate to each other and how decisions about one affect the rest is essential to a more comprehensive and efficient approach especially in urban conservation. In fact, our understanding of the notion of value itself has changed; this “has ceased to be sign, it has become a product.”<sup>23</sup> Thus, the sociological notion of ‘cultural capital,’ although dismissed by Throsby, seems to be in reality much more versatile and its appropriation in the conservation field more fruitful. Pierre Bourdieu, in his theory of capital, distinguishes between three forms of capital: economic, social, and cultural, which are convertible, under certain conditions, into each other.<sup>24</sup> A fourth form, symbolic capital, is used to distinguish that capital – be it economic, cultural or social – which is consecrated: ‘perceived and recognised as legitimate.’<sup>25</sup>

Bourdieu considers these forms of capital in relation to the individual, but the concept lends itself for a wider use, such as in relation to an urban community. The cultural capital will be represented in this case, by extension, by the community’s heritage. And it is the convertibility between the different forms of capital that is at the basis of the heritage discourse, which tends to justify itself through the generation, through cultural capital, of economic and social values. It is important to acknowledge here that the concept of ‘capital’ in Bourdieu has its basis in the original meaning of the word ‘capital’ – the measure of wealth, in so far as the number of ‘cattle’ owned determined one’s social status, both etymologically

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<sup>23</sup> Michael Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 254. Quoted in Jukka Jokilehto, *A History of Architectural Conservation* (Oxford, Auckland, Boston, Johannesburg, Melbourne, New Delhi: Butterworth-Heinemann, 1999), 18.

<sup>24</sup> Bourdieu, “Forms of Capital.”

<sup>25</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, “Social Space and Symbolic Power,” *Sociological Theory* 7(1) (1989): 17.



derived from the Mediaeval Latin *capitālis* – rather than the economic *terminus technicus* used by Throsby more recently.

The cultural capital is described by Bourdieu as existing in three different states: embodied – where a person literally internalises knowledge through learning, objectified – where culture is manifest in specific objects such as works of art, institutionalized – where value is recognised and legitimised by institutions.<sup>26</sup> At the urban level these states of the cultural capital correspond to the knowledge the urban community has of their own urban environment – embodied, the urban fabric itself as material manifestation of the urban culture – objectified, and the institutionalisation of urban heritage through listing, and protection legislation and regulation.

Bourdieu considers that the accumulation of cultural capital in the embodied state, which is in his view the most fundamental state, requires that time and labour are invested personally by the individual in order to assimilate it. It is, therefore, not possible to delegate this to another party.<sup>27</sup> This is essential for communities inhabiting historic urban areas, as it has been already recognised empirically that the success of urban conservation has a relation of direct proportionality with the level of awareness and identification of the community with their built heritage. Moreover, the logic of the transmission of embodied cultural capital is similar from the individual to the community. Where there is already an accumulation of strong cultural capital, the process of inheritance works unconsciously, from the outset, and results in a perpetuation of the accumulation of embodied cultural capital within the community from one generation to the next – including the acculturation of the newcomers.

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<sup>26</sup> Bourdieu, "Forms of Capital," 243.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 244-5.

The objectified state of the cultural capital is inseparable from the embodied state, as the simple transmission of objectified cultural capital does not guarantee appropriation – the individual has to have the means, as embodied cultural capital, for ‘consuming’ the cultural goods.<sup>28</sup> This is also true at community level, and explains the clash of hierarchies and value judgements in the historic urban context as communities change or are replaced over time.<sup>29</sup> Bourdieu warns, however, that in order for the objectified cultural capital to be active, it has to be appropriated by the individual; but he does not offer an explanation of what happens with the difference between all cultural capital objectified as cultural goods and those that are already appropriated and therefore count for symbolic or material exchange. This category of objectified cultural capital, moreover, is the most important for a historic urban area, but not yet recognised as such. The respective built fabric is thus underestimated; the community only recognises its value in terms of economic and/or social capital, but not in terms of cultural capital, as heritage value.

As for the individual, the institutionalisation of cultural capital at community level has the role of eluding the biological limits of the cultural capital in an embodied state.<sup>30</sup> The formal recognition of cultural capital gives it not only constancy, but also autonomy from the actual cultural capital existing at any given moment. This is a tricky issue as cultural capital in institutionalised form does not represent only planning and conservation regulations and other materials which acknowledge the cultural values of a historic urban area, but also the system of listing the built heritage, in particular conservation areas.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 246-7.

<sup>29</sup> The aspect of urban processes is dealt with in great detail in Part IV. Issues in Urban Conservation.

<sup>30</sup> Bourdieu, “Forms of Capital,” 247-8.

<sup>31</sup> Marta de la Torre (ed.), *Assessing the Values of Cultural Heritage* (The Getty Conservation Institute, Los Angeles, 2002)

## I. 2. Brief review of published & unpublished works in urban conservation

While a growing number of publications have been addressing the field of ‘urban conservation,’ it is astonishing how little progress they show in terms of maturing either a theoretical framework or its practical implementation. For example, a very recent report of English Heritage still highlights solely aesthetic-visual aspects as perceived threats to conservation areas, although it does acknowledge the need for a synergic action of the community and local authorities.<sup>32</sup> In reality, the problems raised by the conservation of historic urban areas in practice can only be solved when they are not treated anymore as separate and distinct entities, based exclusively on their ‘looks’ – although it should be admitted that they do reflect artistic and historical values, – but as intrinsic parts of the city as a continuum in all

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<sup>32</sup> *Heritage at Risk: Conservation Areas* (London: English Heritage, 2009), 5. The report seems to be flawed in other aspects too: it has been carried out by a market research company and it is based solely on local authorities’ own assessments. From the report it is clear that there is very little awareness of what might be the causes of the shortcomings found in the current state of conservation of the actual fabric of the Conservation Areas.

its aspects of the built environment and community life alike. The literature addressing urban conservation ranges from academic books and articles to studies and reports commissioned by governments and international heritage bodies; there are many analytical case-studies, but relatively few synthetic or methodological works.

The only comprehensive and systematic historical survey, published in 1999 by Jukka Jokilehto, discusses the beginnings and development of urban conservation concepts within the larger context of architectural conservation.<sup>33</sup> Similarly, Françoise Choay's (b. 1925) *L'Allégorie du patrimoine*, published in 1992, discusses its emergence and development within urbanistic scholarship.<sup>34</sup> The ideas deriving from these two different filiations and their relationship hold the key to understanding better the perceived idiosyncrasies of the urban conservation field.<sup>35</sup>

There are also publications that are concerned especially with the history of legislation and administration in heritage conservation in general, including urban conservation, such as *Policy and Law in Heritage Conservation*, published in association with the Council of Europe and edited by Robert Pickard which brought together overviews of the legislative situation in several European countries and highlighted the countless variations of heritage protection systems.<sup>36</sup>

Otherwise, very few books are dealing with urban conservation; they are mostly collections of reports on the conservation management of various historic cities, such as those published by the different national and international

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<sup>33</sup> Jokilehto. *A History of Architectural Conservation*, 213-37.

<sup>34</sup> Françoise Choay, *L'Allégorie du patrimoine* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1992), 135-243.

<sup>35</sup> This is discussed in Part III. Origins of Urban Conservation.

<sup>36</sup> Robert Pickard (ed.), *Policy and Law in Heritage Conservation* (London and New York: Spon Press, 2001). Also national studies, such as John Delafons, *Politics and preservation: a policy history of the built heritage, 1882-1996* (London: E & FN Spon, 1997) focusing on Britain.

conservation bodies. A substantial research of urban conservation case-studies in European countries has been carried out in the years preceding the first international charters targeted specifically at urban areas.<sup>37</sup> The volume was commissioned by the German Commission for UNESCO to look at historic towns' conservation in other European countries: France, Great Britain, Italy, The Netherlands, Poland, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Switzerland. The study has highlighted the varying motivation behind this newly found concern for historic centres in Europe – from historical and civic responsibility, to urban lifestyle and national identity – and the many ways in which these have been put in practice depending of each country's culture and traditions – from government programmes, to private enterprises and civic groups' initiatives. Moreover, it has become apparent that all these case-studies reflect very different legislative, administrative and financial circumstances in terms of planning, building and land, as well as heritage protection, social planning.<sup>38</sup>

Other collections of case-studies are *The Conservation of European Cities*, edited by Donald Appleyard in 1979, which reveal a consistent preference for dealing with smaller historic urban areas within the city rather than with the complex issues raised by an integrative approach,<sup>39</sup> and *Management of Historic Centres*, edited Robert Pickard in 2001, presenting various strategies aiming for an integrated approach to urban conservation.<sup>40</sup>

Seven years after 'conservation areas' found their way in British planning legislation, a research report was published by the University of York on the issue of

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<sup>37</sup> German Commission for UNESCO, *The renewal of historic town centres in nine European countries: France, Great Britain, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, short reports: Austria, CSSR, Hungary, Switzerland* (Bonn: Federal German Ministry for Regional Planning, Building, and Urban Development, 1975).

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 319-24.

<sup>39</sup> Donald Appleyard, *The Conservation of European Cities* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1979).

<sup>40</sup> Robert Pickard, *Management of Historic Centres* (London and New York: Spon Press, 2001).

conservation area designation;<sup>41</sup> this was in 1975, the European Architectural Heritage Year that had seen also the first charter promoting the conservation of the historic built environment as a whole. The report's intention was to deal with attitudes that influence the listing of conservation areas. It starts by offering a historical overview of the application of the concept of area conservation in practice: from the initial framework that left everything at the discretion of the local authorities, to the attempts to shape the approach into something more effective. The four historic towns' conservation studies carried out in 1968: Bath, Chester, Chichester and York played an important role in this process.<sup>42</sup> The report already advances a critical view of the general stress on the importance of the visual aspects in urban conservation, to the detriment of other social, economic and political factors.<sup>43</sup> This approach, therefore, was rather superficial and one could argue it still is when looking at the available legislation and guidance.<sup>44</sup> A more comprehensive and integrated approach could only be the result of local initiatives and most failed in this due to various factors, one of which was the precarious provision of conservation expertise within their personnel. The arbitrary mode in which conservation areas were designated, to 'tick' a task and without any financial implications for the local authorities, still casts its shadow over urban conservation practice. Urban conservation is mostly dependent on the 'hospitality' of planning.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> David Gamston, *The Designation of Conservation Areas, Research Paper 9* (York: Institute of Advanced Architectural Studies, The University of York, 1975).

<sup>42</sup> Colin Buchanan and Partners, *Bath: a study in conservation* (London: HMSO, 1968); G.S. Burrows, *Chichester: a study in conservation* (London: HMSO, 1968); L. Esher, *York: a study in conservation* (London: HMSO, 1968); D.W. Insall, *Chester: a study in conservation* (London: HMSO, 1968).

<sup>43</sup> Gramston, 11-21.

<sup>44</sup> Gramston, 25-35.

<sup>45</sup> Gramston, 95-108.

A sort of precursor of urban conservation theory is the study of townscape in the United Kingdom pioneered by Gordon Cullen<sup>46</sup> (1914-1994) and Gerald Burke<sup>47</sup> (1914-2007) in the 1960s, which –despite drawing on a variety of disciplines – limits itself, purposefully, to the visual realm. In the 1980s, Philippe Panerai (b. 1940) takes the analysis of urban form in France a step further into so-called ‘urban analysis,’ by looking at all the formal components of the urban fabric and their functional and hierarchical relationships.<sup>48</sup> The study of the existent urban form has developed significantly in the last three decades of the twentieth century, in particular urban morphology, which has become an integral part of urban conservation methodology.<sup>49</sup> While the methodology of analysis remains almost unchanged, much of the literature of the recent decades is concerned with upgrading its tools by making use of new technologies. This has resulted in such studies becoming more accessible, providing more accurate data, and in the possibility of analysing aspects which were beyond boundaries in the past. At the same time, however, the inherent limitations of these methodologies have often made administrators complacent, by transforming this kind of study into a ‘box-ticking’ exercise. One of the most advanced tools is ‘space syntax’ – a set of techniques developed by Bill Hillier in the 1990s for the analysis of spatial configurations which are a significant aspect of human agency.<sup>50</sup> This brings, in a more comprehensible and dynamic way, the issue of function into the analysis of urban form.

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<sup>46</sup> Gordon Cullen, *Townscape* (London: Architectural Press, 1961).

<sup>47</sup> Gerald Burke, *Townscapes* (Harmondsworth, New York [etc.]: Penguin, 1976).

<sup>48</sup> Philippe Panerai, Jean-Charles Depaule and Marcelle Demorgon, *Analyse Urbaine* (Marseille: Editions Paranthèses, 1999). The book is based on research carried out in 1975 and the text completed and published first in 1980.

<sup>49</sup> This is looked at in detail in Part IV. Issues in Urban Conservation.

<sup>50</sup> Bill Hillier and Julienne Hanso, *The Social Logic of Space* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

A good number of papers addressing the use of urban analysis in the conservation of historic centres have been published over time in *Monumentum*, the heritage conservation journal published by ICOMOS,<sup>51</sup> which was an important vehicle for ideas in this field internationally. But beyond this, most other studies have limited circulation, being published only in ad-hoc volumes and series of reports and very seldom translated in other languages. While all these studies and reports contain valuable information regarding the state of knowledge at the time, they tend to be rather parochial, exclusively using particular case-studies and only at their best representing a nation-wide synthesis. There is still a pronounced lack of writings that address Europe-wide experiences comparatively and which extrapolate these into theory.

But one of the earliest and most important writings on the subject of urban conservation is Alexander Papageorgiou (b.1933), *Intégration urbaine: Essai sur la réhabilitation des centres urbains historiques et leur rôle dans l'espace structure de l'avenir* published in 1971. It offers, for the first time, a comprehensive discussion of the cultural values of historic urban centres and their contemporary relationship with the city as a whole, in a pan-European perspective. This is a methodical study of urban conservation, which requires a closer look. According to Papageorgiou there are three necessary and sufficient conditions for the creation of an integrated historical urban centre: an original and specific urban composition, esthetical and

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<sup>51</sup> Such as Dobroslav Líbal, "Méthodes d'analyse des valeurs artistiques des architectures historiques des villes et des villages," *Monumentum* I (1967), T. Savarenskaia, "Problèmes et méthodes d'étude du patrimoine historico-urbaniste," *Monumentum* 27, no.2 (1984): 121-35, and the substantial comparative study by Alexander Papageorgiou-Venetas, "The Nineteenth-century Metropolitan City Quarters in Europe: Criteria for Action on their 'Integrated Conservation,'" Part I, *Monumentum* 26, no.4 (1983): 293-306 and Part II, *Monumentum* 27, no.1 (1984): 47-70, <http://www.international.icomos.org> (accessed 4/05/2004).



historical values, and the existence of an active population - an active social life.<sup>52</sup>

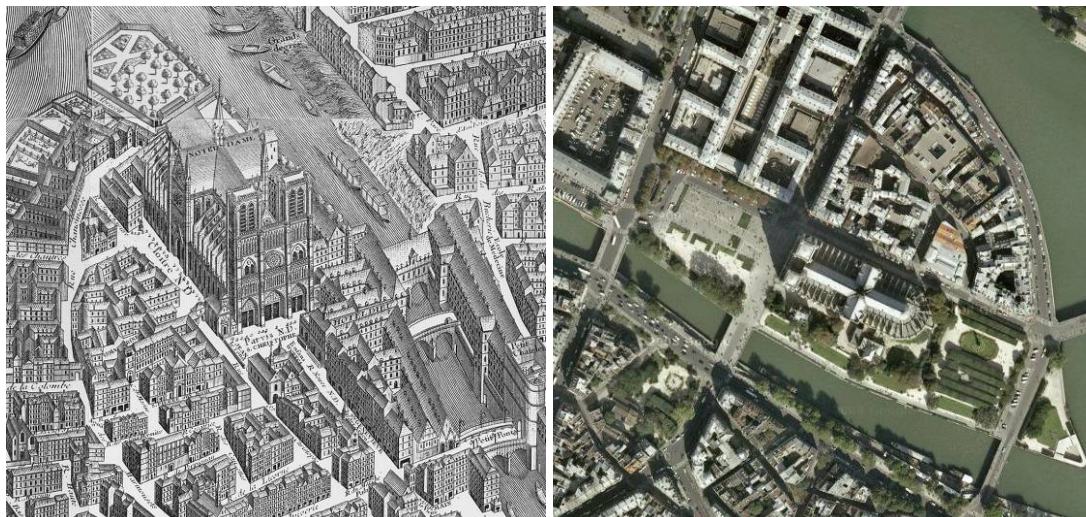
While these conditions should theoretically be sufficient by themselves to guarantee that new urban development happens with the natural integration of the historic urban fabric, this is seldom the case. In most cases, the rehabilitation of historical centres is the result of interventions of either the authorities (central or local), the local communities or, less often, private initiative.

Papageorgiou calls for the integral conservation of historical centres at a visual level, effectively linked with the contemporary urban fabric through introduction of modern infrastructure, but only as much as it is absolutely necessary and while avoiding any visual presence. And indeed, the visual or aesthetic realms are the main concern in urban conservation in the 1970s and 80s, being backed-up by the massive literature and individual studies in urban morphology. From an aesthetic perspective therefore, the conservation of the character of the urban image has to take into consideration the morphological diversity inherent within historical urban areas and preserve the various architectural and urban features characteristic for each historical period. Only in certain cases does this mean the preservation of an existing morphological unity. Moreover, elements of the urban structure are also considered: the character of the street network, the visual density of the built environment (land occupation, volume, height, etc.), the relationship between architectural form and urban space, the insertion of a variety of non-architectural elements within the urban image.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Alexander Papageorgiou, *Intégration urbaine: Essai sur la réhabilitation des centres urbains historiques et leur rôle dans l'espace structure de l'avenir* (Paris: Vincent Ferla, 1971). Original in German, but published also in English as *Continuity and Change: Preservation in City Planning* (New York, Washington, London: Praeger Publishers, 1971); curiously, the English edition received a very poor review in *Urban Studies* vol.9 no. 2 (1972):240-1..

<sup>53</sup> Papageorgiou. *Intégration urbaine*, 75.



**Figure 2. The *parvis* of Notre Dame de Paris enlarged in the seventeenth century as shown in *Plan de Turgot***

**Figure 3. The *parvis* of Notre Dame today, after being expanded dramatically by Baron Haussmann in 1860-1870**

Sources: Louis Bretez, *Plan de Paris: commencé l'année 1734 / dessiné et gravé sous les ordres de Messire Michel Etienne Turgot ... [et al.] ; levé et dessiné par Louis Bretez ; gravé par Claude Lucas ; et écrit par Aubin* (Paris, 1739) and Google Maps, <http://maps.google.fr> (accessed 17/09/2009)

All the elements of the street are important: its route, width, slope, paving materials, greenery. Alterations to the street network, by introducing elements foreign to the original urban structure, result in the irremediable destruction of the urban image, such as the – by now classical – example of the squares opened in front of medieval cathedrals that were formerly encased in the urban fabric. This cancelled the surprise and awe characteristically conveyed by the presence within the small-scale, intricate medieval urban fabric of such grandiose structures. This instance can be considered a mere visual aspect, but it has also a deeper meaning, reflecting changes in the perception of the necessary spatial relationship between buildings meaningful for the community and the rest of the urban fabric. Moreover

this is misrepresenting, to an unsuspecting beholder, the character of the medieval urban open space.<sup>54</sup>

Urban interventions within historic urban areas should preserve the effect of visual cohesion created by the visual density of the built environment. The orientation, way of grouping and relationship with the open spaces (squares, gardens, inner courtyards, streets) and the urban structure. By recognising their essential role for the urban image and structure, it is possible even the integration of isolated archaeological monuments within a living historical urban area through their re-adaptation to contemporary functions (for example the Pantheon in Rome reused as a church and the *Thermae Diocletiani* reused as church and archaeological museum). However, archaeological diggings often raise the problem of the partial demolition of later structures within the historical urban fabric. Digs at the Agora in Athens led to the destruction of part of Plaka.<sup>55</sup>

Papageorgiou's discourse jumps then to more practical issues, such as urban furniture and illumination, which affect conservation areas. At street level there are multiple ways of dealing with the urban furniture: either by making replicas of the original pieces where suitable evidence survives, or create new designs that harmoniously integrate with the historic architecture, or even new designs that contrast harmoniously with the historic environment. The illumination can be static, but it is desirable to be nuanced in order to best display architectural features or it can be a 'light spectacle' with various phases. At the level of architectural interventions the aesthetic problem becomes multi-fold: conservation of the authenticity of form and substance; legal and administrative measures for the protection against alteration or demolition of historical architecture; conservation

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 77.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 85-7.

measures and techniques, restoration and reconstruction against ageing and mechanical destruction of historical architecture.<sup>56</sup>

Papageorgiou gives four degrees of intervention from conservation, to restoration, to reconstruction and, finally, to contemporary extension. Conservation means for Papageorgiou maintenance works or radical conservation works and structural consolidation (maximum 25% of the substance is lost in 100 years). The main concerns in this type of intervention are the replacement of traditional materials, the loss of patina, and the visibility of the intervention. Restoration means the reconstruction of a partially destroyed architectural work, of which the main part has survived. The morphological diversity of the urban fabric, resulted from substance accumulations, gives here the choice of the stage of maximum significance to be restored.

By contrast, reconstruction deals with those cases where war or other calamities led to the complete or almost complete loss of the architectural work. Such a decision can be motivated only by a few very strong reasons: the building had an important function before destruction; the site had an important role in the urban fabric with a determinant role for the urban image; played an important symbolic role within the urban fabric; or had an important significance for the community's identity, a strong emotional link.

Contemporary extension, either horizontally or vertically, means for Papageorgiou that a contemporary architectural expression is employed. Since the reconstruction of war-damaged historical centres is unavoidable and necessary, he considers that contemporary intervention within them has to take the form of scenographic solutions that make use of pastiche, harmonious integration by mimesis, or harmonious contrast through a contemporary architecture that respects

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 92-103.

the historic urban scale. The originality and authenticity of the site within the urban fabric are important issues to be considered, and he deplors the arbitrary relocation of facades in the historic centres in order to fill in urban image *lacunae*, or the equally arbitrary relocation of monuments that represent obstacles for urban interventions.

Papageorgiou's contribution lies also in the fact that he addresses the social issues involved in the regeneration of historic centres.<sup>57</sup> The first acute problem is that of functional restructuring: life within the majority of historical centres until not too long ago was characterised by a high degree of social symbiosis, an intense and animated urban development, almost total absence of motorised transportation, almost total absence of large open spaces and social infrastructures (such as those for leisure and sport), and almost total absence of large industrial sites. The fundamental functions of the historical urban centre were, historically, residential, commerce and manufacture, local administration and culture. He observes the process of restructuring and adaptation, in the 1970s, of the functions of the historical centre to residential, cultural and touristic; the latter produces the most perturbation from the characteristic way of life and functional changes of historic structures.<sup>58</sup>

An even more invasive intervention is urban renovation: 'cleansing' and restructuring of the urban fabric, an approach with a long history, that possibly reached its apogee with the slum clearances of the nineteenth century. The cleansing requires transformations to accommodate modern infrastructures and functional adaptation, but the restructuring of the urban fabric should normally exclude conservation areas, being limited to discreet and limited interventions.

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<sup>57</sup> The precursor of this approach, Patrick Geddes' theory of the city is discussed in Part III. Origins of Urban Conservation.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 132-8.

Nevertheless, the facilitation of urban development in conservation areas is a very important issue. Demographic evolution has already shown the tendency towards ageing and pauperisation of the community in the historic centres; conversely, their rehabilitation leads to re-densification of the historic centres, but also to gentrification. Not last are the issues of social and aesthetic education which determine the perception of the community toward the historic centre and its rehabilitation.<sup>59</sup>

Urban rehabilitation means protection and even re-instatement of the original principles of organisation of the urban space, as well as conservation and protection of the original urban scale and image of the historic centre and its integration within the surrounding contemporary urban fabric. Demolition within conservation areas is usually undertaken from private initiative with the scope of liberating the site for new buildings, but it can also be the result of a planned rehabilitation of the urban fabric and its urban image through elimination of 'nocive' structures,<sup>60</sup> cleansing of the centre of the *insulae* (even their transformation through *praedial servitude* in public open space), or, in extreme cases, undertaken in order to restore the original urban layout or for creating perspectives towards important urban monuments.<sup>61</sup>

Papageorgiou considers that the integration of the historic urban centres in the contemporary and future urban fabric should be done in such a way that the introduction of modern infrastructures remains hidden. In order to protect as much as possible the historic centre from invasive motorised traffic (insufficient width, vibrations, pollution, noise), he recommends different types of access in the centre:

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid. 139-47.

<sup>60</sup> The term refers to those parts of the urban fabric that are considered 'harmful' to the conservation of its cultural significance.

<sup>61</sup> Papageorgiou, *Integration urbaine*, 149.

several dead-end penetrations from the nearest main road, access from a transit road, access through a side-road derived from the main one, access from a tangential main road. Or even no direct access: a pedestrian zone surrounded by a perimetral road. Re-instatement of the original pedestrian function of the majority of its streets would be allowed through the introduction of underground transportation, restricted private car access in certain areas, temporary regulation of the traffic and limited car access. He already envisages the need for perimetral buffer zones that protect the unity of the historical centre but without isolating it from the surrounding natural and urban landscape.<sup>62</sup>

In attempting to offer a comprehensive and systematic picture of urban conservation issues, Papageorgiou has already opened the discussion of approaches and degrees of intervention in urban conservation, which are inevitably very different from the concepts used in traditional conservation theory for other types of cultural heritage. There is always the debate of what terminology better conveys one's approach. It is generally agreed that the term 'preservation,' at least in English, although meaning simply "the action of preserving from damage, decay or destruction"<sup>63</sup> has in most people's minds strong connotations of "intactness, keeping, repair,"<sup>64</sup> whether or not these are actually implied by the speaker/writer. Hence the term 'preservationist' refers chiefly to static maintenance of cultural heritage in its existing state (or any other resource for that matter) as distinguished from 'conservationism' which has a more dynamic understanding of maintaining cultural resources for ongoing use – the much circulated concept of 'sustainable development.' But the two root words, 'to preserve' and 'to conserve,' seem to have

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 154-67.

<sup>63</sup> Sense **1.a.** and from this the syntagma **1.b.** 'preservation order' for the legal obligation laid on an owner, *OED Online*.

<sup>64</sup> Sense **3.**, *OED Online*.

been perfect synonyms for a long time in English with one or the other in predominant use. Only in the nineteenth century did 'to conserve' become the main term used. The later, twentieth century distinction of sense between the two terms when referring to heritage is the result of the diverging approaches to cultural heritage and especially at an urban and cultural landscape level, where the conflict between static maintenance and the necessity of maintaining a dynamic, integrated role of cultural heritage is most apparent.<sup>65</sup>

A true conservationist recognises that change is a law of life; that there comes a point beyond which a building cannot or should not be preserved, when it should make way for something new which, well designed, could enhance architectural values. The aim should be to leave for the posterity a better town or city.<sup>66</sup>

(Bernard Feilden, "Architectural and Urban Conservation")

Peter Larkham argues that the concept of 'townscape management' is more appropriate as it encompasses both preservation and conservation;<sup>67</sup> however, townscape management suffers from the limitations of the notion of 'townscape' and seems to concentrate only on the visual features of the urban fabric. In *Conservation and the City*, Larkham differentiates between the concepts of heritage and conservation, seeing the first as a subjective product, as defined by Gregory Ashworth, and, conversely, the second as an objective, professional outcome.<sup>68</sup> But both these concepts are, arguably, subjected to the same opposing paradigms within

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<sup>65</sup> The etymology and development of meaning over time of the term 'conservation' is discussed in Part III. Origins of Urban Conservation.

<sup>66</sup> Bernard Feilden, "Architectural and Urban Conservation: A review of the state of the art," *Town and Planning Review* Vol. 56 No 2 (1985): 197 reprinted in Gerald Dix and John Nelson Tarn, *Design and Conservation in the City* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1985).

<sup>67</sup> Peter J. Larkham, "Conservation and the management of historical townscapes," in *The Built Form of Western Cities* (Leicester and London: Leicester University Press, 1990), 349-69.

<sup>68</sup> Peter J. Larkham, *Conservation and the City* (London and New York : Routledge, 1996), 14.



the society: one which aims to present a 'truthful' heritage 'truthfully' conserved, while the other manipulates both heritage and conservation to its own, mostly economic and political, ends. It is the first paradigm that is studied here, because the better this is understood and professed, the less room for the second to pervert the real role of heritage and conservation within the society. It is in the nature of things that any theory, upon its application in practice is subject to a number of 'modifiers' which have to do with the very nature of our world and human society; the best one can do is to try to identify these modifiers and foresee their impact, in order to include necessary measures to minimize or, ideally, cancel these impacts. The psychological impulse in conservation is not concerned only with the visual appearance of historic fabric, but also with its meaning. Studies of people's reactions at buildings from different periods will therefore show the combined result of this inner meaning associated to certain periods and the aesthetic qualities of certain styles.

Disappointingly, the one book actually entitled *Urban Conservation* is a simple attempt at indexing the many aspects involved in urban conservation and fails to address the substance of the problem.<sup>69</sup> However incomplete, it seems to be intended as a quick-reference tick-list for 'professionals.' It lacks a coherent argument and merely skips from one issue to another and from one scale of analysis to another.

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<sup>69</sup> Naouhm Cohen, *Urban Conservation* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1999) and its identical reprint as *Urban Planning: Conservation and Preservation* (New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Lisbon, London, Madrid, Mexico City, Milan, New Delhi, San Juan, Seoul, Singapore, Sydney, Toronto: McGraw-Hill, 2001).

## **II. ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE HISTORIC URBAN FABRIC**

*The motivational background of actual interventions and their acceptability*

Who controls the past controls the future: who controls the present controls the past.

(George Orwell, 1984)<sup>70</sup>

This research focuses exclusively on the European tradition, taking into consideration its internal variations resulted from geographical and historical conditions. A survey of the history of urban conservation would reveal underlying, ever-present and therefore intrinsic values. Nevertheless, it is impossible to include every instance of urban conservation, and moreover a statistical approach is out of the question not only because a great number of instances is required to be analysed for valid results, but also because it would be extremely difficult to include the dimension of successfulness in this equation, not to mention that the data will be clearly manipulated when choosing questioning criteria. Furthermore, the success of these actual instances ranges from perennial interventions to tremendous failures, therefore choosing a set of case studies would only lead to discover characteristics implicit in our selection procedure.

Attitudes towards the historic urban fabric in the twentieth century have produced the two extreme positions taken by urbanism in European cities: demolition, when the historic city was regarded as valueless vs. reconstruction, when the historic city was regarded as crucial cultural heritage. Conversely, the development of an urban conservation approach that considers the cultural values of the historic urban areas, as well as the need of keeping this an integral part of the contemporary city, makes us realise that interventions on the historic urban fabric should reflect the particularities of its spatio-temporal and social context. This means, in fact, that ethical guiding principles and a thorough knowledge of the

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<sup>70</sup> George Orwell, 1984 [1949] (London: Penguin, 2003), 35.

situation are the only ones that can provide a basis for urban conservation interventions. It is thus impossible to have prescriptive 'recipes,' and, moreover, in reality urban conservation practice represents a compromise of all the interests at stake.

## **II. 1. Demolition rages in European cities and their different contextual and chronological characteristics**

Almost all European towns have passed through several integral and quasi-integral reconstructions over time as a result of different historical processes affecting the whole of Europe or only parts of it. There are two different, but equally important, reasons for this: one coming from inside the city system and the second from outside it.

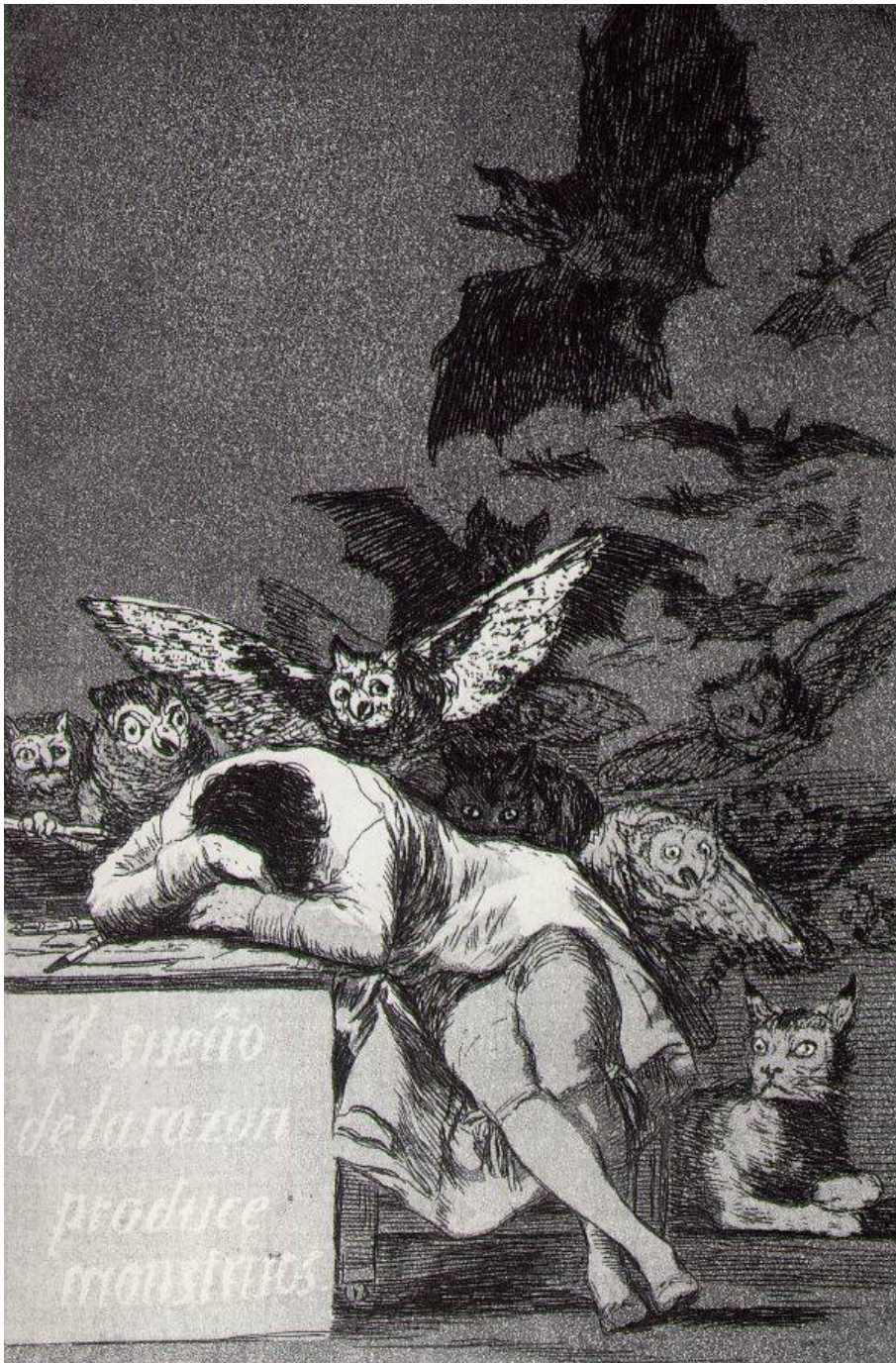
The internal one is the mechanism of regulating the density with the extension of the 'normally' grown city, which can be considered almost unregulated in so far as any regulations respond to the needs of the community, rather than being arbitrarily imposed for the sake of an outside interest. This mechanism acts upon both types of cities: with development hemmed by natural formations, such as steep slopes or forests, or human developments of the site such as fortifications or irrigation works, for which is characteristic the density development; and with un-hemmed development, for which the extension

development is predominantly characteristic.<sup>71</sup> In either situation the mechanism regulating density with extension results in quasi-integral substitution of the built environment, with the exception of symbolically important buildings, or buildings which continue to succeed in fulfilling certain urban functions. This process can be compared, *mutatis mutandis*, to 'natural selection' in that the process of replacement is generally very slow and gradual, and only in specific historical circumstances becomes swift and accelerated. European cities have been through three substantial reconstructions: one in the Middle Ages, when masonry buildings were substituted in the place of predominantly wooden ones; the second during the Renaissance, when the primitive accumulation of capital emerged as an urban condition; and the third as a result of the industrial revolution and accelerated urbanisation. In all cases these reconstructions involved changes of the urban texture, which means not only replacement of buildings, but also changes in the spatial organisation.

On one hand, the external reason for reconstruction is constituted by the 'need' for architectural-urban statements of autocratic governments of all epochs. On the other hand, the *tabula rasa* approach of modern urbanism represents a similar ethos, where the architects and urbanists, bolstering a 'scientific functionalism' doctrine, assume the role of drastically reshaping the urban environment. But if continuous urban processes are so crucially at the core of the notion of urban heritage, what happens when the city is forcibly deconstructed?

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<sup>71</sup> Gheorghe Curinschi Vorona, *Arhitectură. Urbanism. Restaurare* (București: Editura Tehnică, 1995), 382.



**Figure 4. Francisco Goya, El Sueño de la Razon Produce Monstruos (The sleep of reason produces monsters), 1799**

*Source: Francisco Goya, Los Caprichos [1799] (Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, 1969), Plate 43.*

## II. 1. 1. Autocratic architectural-urban statements

If what we look like, in urban terms, is what we are, he who decides what we are going to look like is also deciding what we are, what we were, what we are going to be.<sup>72</sup>

(Spiro Kostof, "His Majesty the Pick: The Aesthetics of Demolition")

The Romans generally preferred to show respect for the settlements and buildings of the peoples they colonised, in an attempt to make them their allies, rather than reluctant, subjugated communities.<sup>73</sup> But this is the exception, the opposite being the norm: the erasing of a community's built form in order to replace it with symbols or legitimising expressions of power is an inherent manifestation of dominance. Spiro Kostof (1936 - 1991) attempts a brief history of these occurrences, highlighting the corroboration of architectural and urbanism theories with these autocratic gestures in his suggestively titled essay "His Majesty the Pick."<sup>74</sup> From the making of the Athenian agora, to Imperial Rome's radical re-modelling of the city, to the Medieval and Baroque periods, examples abound.<sup>75</sup> But it was really nineteenth century Paris that opened the way for autocratic invasive operations on a much grander scale: "in Haussmann, Napoleon III found the man and he himself

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<sup>72</sup> Spiro Kostof, "His Majesty the Pick: The Aesthetics of Demolition," in Zeynep Çelik, Diane Faro, and Richard Ingersoll (eds.), *Streets: critical perspectives on public space* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1996), 9-22.

<sup>73</sup> For example, at Sarmizegetusa, the capital of the newly conquered Roman province of Dacia Felix, was established by Trajan, at the end of the first century A.D., as the new settlement of Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa, not far from the original Dacian capital at Sarmizegetusa Regia.

<sup>74</sup> Kostof, "His Majesty the Pick."

<sup>75</sup> For example, in the eleventh century, the Normans demolished large parts of Saxon settlements at Norwich, Lincoln, York, Nottingham, etc. to make way for their castles, cathedrals and other new structures. Lise E. Hull, *Britain's Medieval Castles* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2006), 10 and Jeffrey J. Cohen, "The Flow of Blood in Medieval Norwich," *Speculum* 79, no.1 (2004): 33.



supplied the necessary impetus and tyrannical power to carry the work through.”<sup>76</sup> The three most notable monumental schemes within the historic urban fabric of capital cities of the twentieth century are the plans for Rome in 1920s-30s, Berlin in 1930s and finally Bucharest in 1980s. All three schemes have at their centre grand axes between monumental buildings, aptly called Via dell’ Impero in Rome, Avenue of Victory in Berlin and Victory of Socialism in Bucharest.<sup>77</sup>



**Figure 5. Plan of Paris showing the extent of Haussmann’s operations; new streets are drawn in black**

Source: Patrick Abercrombie, “Paris: Some influences that have shaped its growth,” *The Town Planning Review* 2, no.4 (1912): Plate 110.

<sup>76</sup> Patrick Abercrombie, “Paris: Some influences that have shaped its growth,” *The Town Planning Review* 2, no.4 (1912): 315.

<sup>77</sup> For comparison, they have respectively 0.85km, 5km and 3.5 km.

Mussolini's plan for Rome entails a similar destruction as its counterparts for Paris, Berlin or Bucharest, but a different conception of legitimizing its authority: instead of proposing new monuments, the Fascist ideology profits of the city's antique imperial past still extant within the many historical layers of its urban fabric. The monuments of Imperial Rome become monumental display and pretended filiation of the Fascist regime. The selective demolitions manipulate the history of Rome to over-emphasize the antiquity. Intensive demolitions of post-antique urban fabric started in 1920s and continued frantically until the 1940s. The 1931 masterplan saw the collaboration of many important Italian architects of the time, including Gustavo Giovannoni (1873 - 1947), whose concept of '*diradamento*' – enhancement of the historic urban texture through clearance of 'nocive' elements – has been, ironically, used to justify the so-called 'urban renovation' of the Fascist government.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Gustavo Giovannoni's urban theories are discussed in Part III. Origins of Urban Conservation.



Figure 6. Dense urban fabric around the Mausoleum Augusti in Rome before demolitions



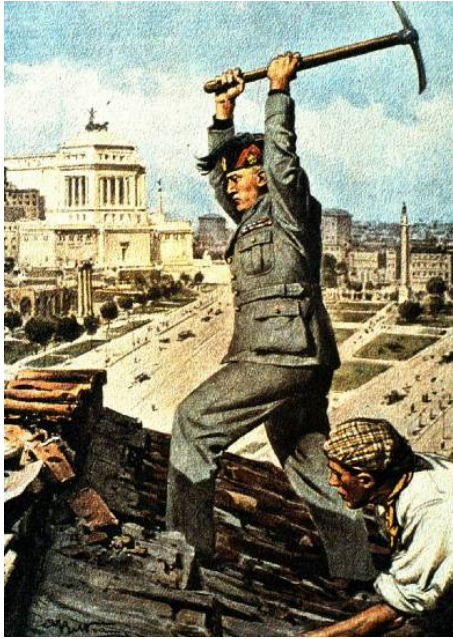
Figure 7. Demolitions and archaeological excavations around the Mausoleum Augusti



**Figure 8. Piazza Augusto Imperatore with the ruins of Mausolum Augusti in the centre, 1937**

Source fig. 6-8: Soprintendenza Speciale per i Beni Archeologici di Roma, <http://archeoroma.beniculturali.it> (accessed 14/12/2009).

In effect, in the case of Mausoleum Augusti, this has been preserved isolated from its original context, the dense urban fabric formed over time. Instead, the new Piazza Augusto Imperatore design has attempted, without much success, to integrate it with new Fascist palaces and the modernist 'temple' housing Ara Pacis Augustae. In this way, its symbolic meaning has been manipulated to serve Fascist values.



**Figure 9. Benito Mussolini symbolically inaugurates the demolition works for Via dell'Impero (now Via dei Fori Imperiali), Rome, 1935**

Source: *Domenica del Corriere*, No.9 (3 March 1935), cover.



**Figure 10. Excavations on the site of Via dell'Impero, 1932**

Source: Archivio Fotografico di Roma, shown in *Via dell'Impero: Nascita di Una Strada* exhibition at Palazzo Cafarelli, 2009.



**Figure 11. Aerial view of the finished Via dei Fori Imperiali from the Colosseum to Piazza Venezia**

Source: Otto Karl Werkmeister, Totalitarian Art lectures, Northwestern University, 1999, [http://faculty-web.at.northwestern.edu/art-history/werckmeister/May\\_4\\_1999/index.html](http://faculty-web.at.northwestern.edu/art-history/werckmeister/May_4_1999/index.html) (accessed 20/04/2002).

In the cases of Berlin and Bucharest, history is not uncovered, but on the contrary, obliterated to make room for the new, in-the-making 'history.' Thus, in terms of functionality, Ceaușescu's intervention in Bucharest can only be compared, *mutatis mutandis*, with Hitler's plan for Berlin.<sup>79</sup> Both designs had no practical aim, except for impressing and humiliating (a fact which is perhaps linked to the psychological traits of the two dictators).<sup>80</sup> Both dictators were personally involved into their actual designs and any municipal control was bypassed.<sup>81</sup> Needless to say, the designs elaborated by their respective architects were simply responding to very precise requests, so their contribution is negligible as far as the overall conception is concerned.

For Berlin, Hitler had the general plan in mind for quite a while before commissioning it to Speer or mentioning it to anybody else, and indeed before even he had the remotest prospect of gaining the actual power necessary to implement it. For Bucharest however, the idea developed in the aftermath of the great earthquake that affected Romania in 1977. Using it as an excuse, the Communist government proceeded to demolish large areas within historic urban centres to make way for new 'civic centres,' more appropriate for representing the 'new man' of Socialism. Once again this was seen as an excellent opportunity by reckless professionals to demonstrate the virtues of modernist urbanism and, thus, despite opposition from a large group of intellectuals and residents, there was also support.

Detail-wise, however, the dictator's architects can claim authorship. And if the form and architectural details of the unimplemented plan for Berlin have little

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<sup>79</sup> Iain Boyd Whyte. "Hitler's Berlin," in E. S. Schaffer, ed., *Comparative Criticism 23: Humanist traditions in the twentieth century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 117-43.

<sup>80</sup> Megalomania, manic disorder, frustration with their own past, paranoia, obsession with their own person. All of these have been claimed to have affected both dictators.

<sup>81</sup> For Berlin see Albert Speer, *Inside the Third Reich* [1969] (London: Phoenix, 1995), 123.

importance now, those of the House of the People ensemble are an enormous, ugly scar for Bucharest.<sup>82</sup>



**Figure 12. Hitler sketching to show his ideas to Albert Speer, 1933**

Source: Deutsches Bundesarchiv, Wikimedia Commons, <http://commons.wikimedia.org> (accessed 12/03/2009).



**Figure 13. Ceausescu and his wife viewing the scaled model for the Victory of Socialism Ensemble**

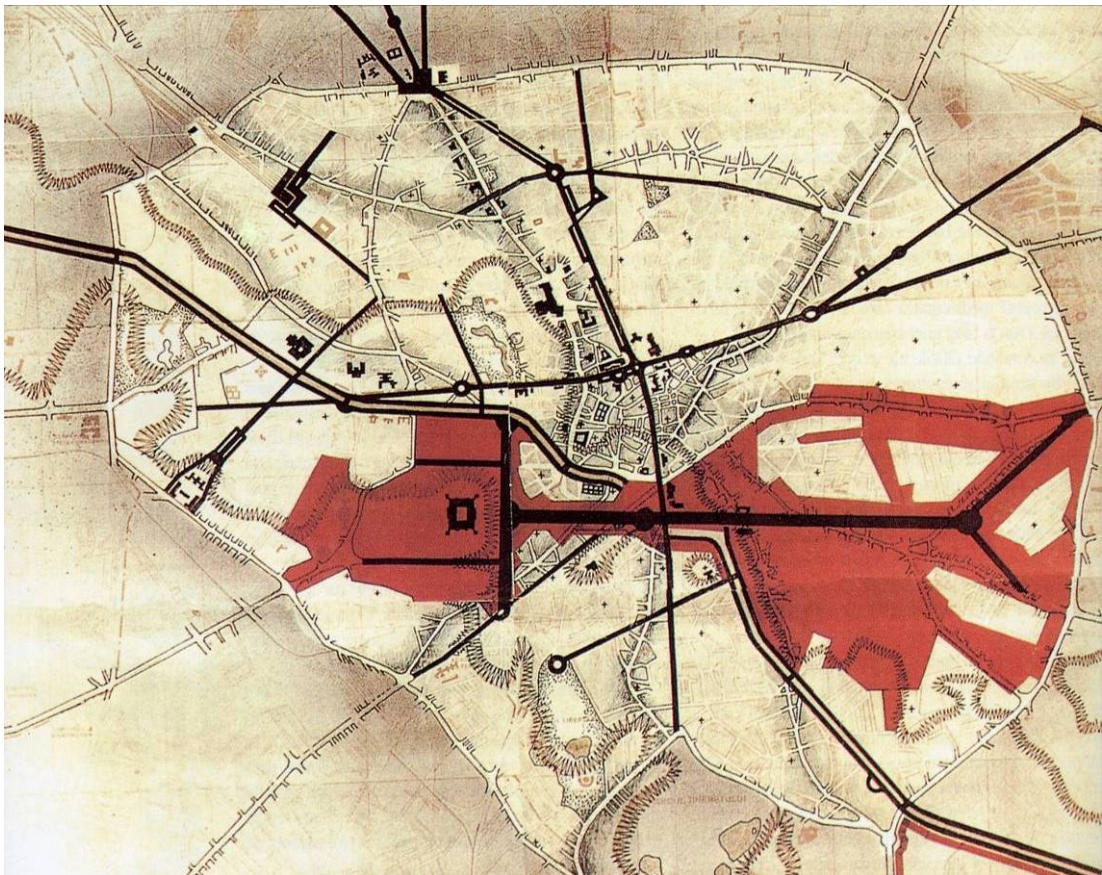
Source: Still from "Anca Petrescu: Verweile doch, Du bist so schön," R.A.M., VPRO Television, Netherlands 3, episode 20, 29 February 2004, <http://www.vpro.nl/programma/ram/afleveringen/16450074/items/16450079> (accessed 15/01/2006)

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<sup>82</sup> Ceausescu's chief architect for the project is literally nobody, a much less than mediocre newly qualified architect at the time. Subsequent projects of her come only to enforce this.



In the aftermath of the earthquake, the Romanian dictator earmarked the most stable ground for demolition and for the erection of a new civic centre: a significant residential area developed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but also including earlier churches and ensembles adjacent to the historic centre of Bucharest. A competition for The House of People was held in 1982, and in 1984 a huge area was already cleared of houses and the building begun. Thousands of houses were demolished and over forty thousand people were relocated into modernist high-rise developments on the outskirts of Bucharest to make way for the symbolic Communist scheme. Tens of thousands of workers worked day and night to make the rapid completion of the project possible.



**Figure 14. Victory of Socialism scheme and demolished areas in the centre of Bucharest (in red); the old historic centre is shown in the middle on the northern side of the river Dâmbovița**

Source: Dana Harhoiu, *București, un oraș între Orient și Occident/Bucarest, une ville entre Orient et Occident* (Bucharest: Editura Simetria, 1997), plate 1



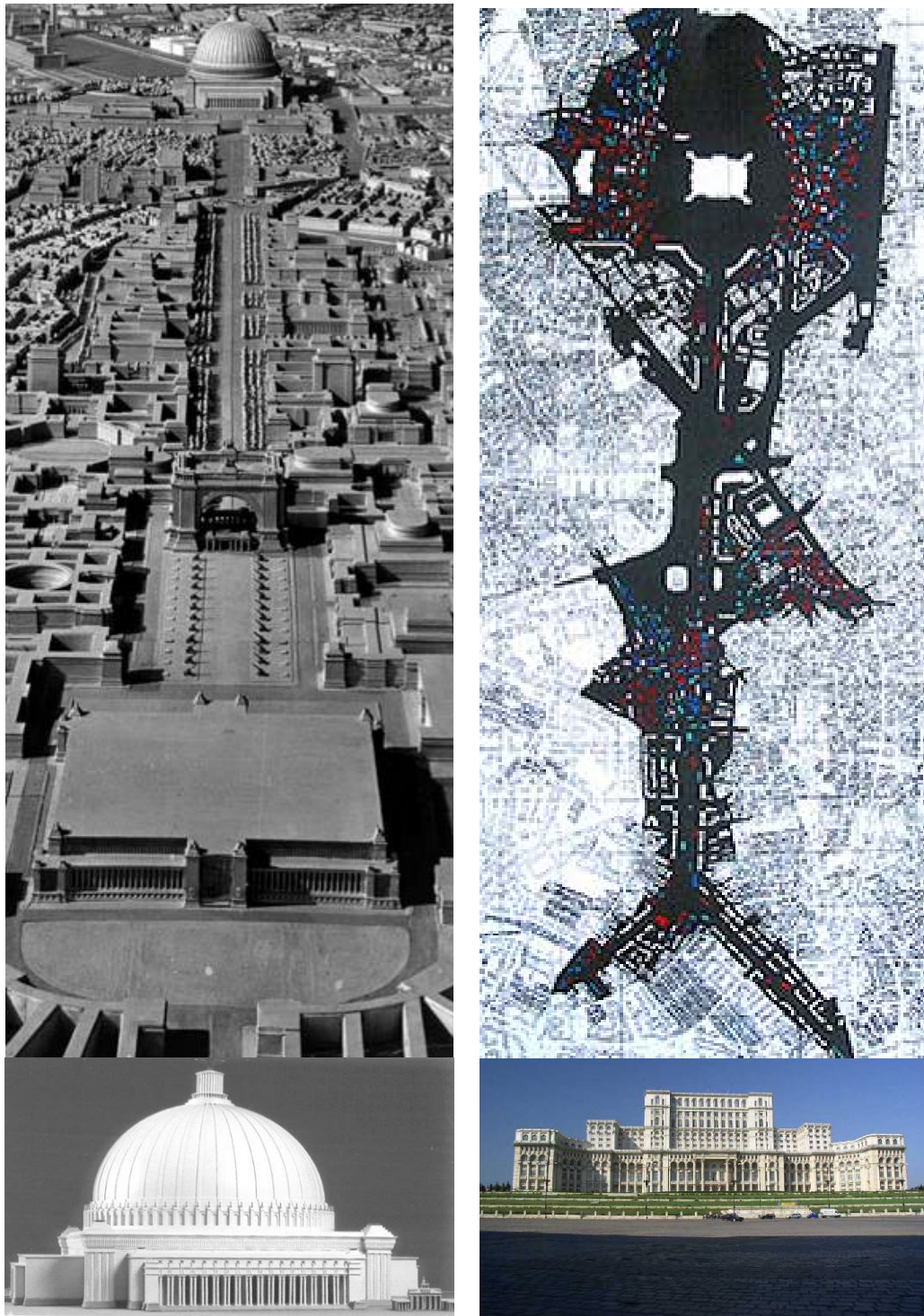
**Figure 15. Surviving buildings behind the wall of newly built blocks**

Source: Still from "Anca Petrescu: Verweile doch, Du bist so schön," R.A.M., VPRO Television, Netherlands 3, ep. 20, 29 February 2004, <http://www.vpro.nl/programma/ram> (accessed 15/01/2006)



**Figure 16. Aerial view illustrating the incongruous scale of the House of the People and Victory of Socialism Boulevard bordered by a continuous wall of blocks interrupting the historical urban structure**

Source: "The largest building in Europe - The Palace of Parliament in Bucharest, Romania," <http://hubpages.com> (accessed 4/05/2008)



**Figure 17. Model of Hitler's plan for Berlin as Welthauptstadt Germania and Volkshalle detail, 1937-9 and Plan of the People's House scheme in Bucharest as realised 1984-1989 and main façade of the Peoples' House.**

Sources: Deutsches Bundesarchiv, Wikimedia Commons, <http://commons.wikimedia.org> (accessed 12/03/2008); Competition entry 1996, "Allocated Grounds 01," IR. PRJ TOORNEND, <http://too.nl> (accessed 14/02/2006) and author's photo.

Both enterprises claimed lives, in Berlin building materials were produced in concentration camps, while in Bucharest the eagerness to have it finished in record time resulted in a very high number of accidents and deaths. Both have also been political instruments as well, while in Berlin people from the cleared area were relocated in the houses of the deported Jews, in Bucharest they were moved into rented flats in purpose-built blocks – and thus yet another way for the regime to crush private property. Also in the case of Bucharest there is an added dimension of the opposition of the Communist regime to religion – many churches were demolished. The few churches and ensembles that were spared have been relocated, so that they do not disturb the symmetry of the new designs. The new sites left them isolated and encroached within the enceintes of the new blocks. The remains of the historic urban fabric are painfully visible right behind the monumental ‘wall’ of the new ensemble.

Post 1989 an enormous amount of literature and other events intended to get the attention of the public has been produced: articles in academic journals and newspapers, the exhibition “The State of the City,” and the architectural competition Bucharest 2000 International Urban Competition in 1996. A society entangled in economic and social transition was in danger of overlooking such an issue that does not have an immediate impact, but rather a more treacherous, long term one. *Bucharest 2000* attempted then to reframe this urban scheme, and subsequently deconstruct the political theocracy created by the communist regime.<sup>83</sup> The government, however, decides to move the Parliament in the House of the People and transform the other half of it in a conference centre.<sup>84</sup> The House of the People,

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<sup>83</sup> Roann Barris, “Contested Mithologies: The Architectural Deconstruction of a Totalitarian Culture,” *Journal of Architectural Education* 54, no.4 (2001): 229-37.

<sup>84</sup> The fact that the government was at the time formed by a party established by successors of the former Communist nomenclature played an important role in this decision, such politicians being more inclined psychologically to identify with this urban scheme and its megalomania.

as other communist landmarks, is marketed extensively by foreign tourist guides on Romania,<sup>85</sup> but to the disappointment of the tourists the guided tours of the building hardly have any reference to its history, but rather present it in terms of its current function.<sup>86</sup> The other dimension of this scheme is the wide and lengthy corridor boulevard which, quite literally, severed the southern part of Bucharest from the rest.<sup>87</sup> The boulevard forms a barrier both above ground, where all the transversal streets have dead-ends behind the continuous curtain blocks, and also underground, where major infrastructure works prevent any passage. As a result, from the inception of this project until now the southern quarters became partially derelict because of lack of proper accessibility and links with the city centre.

Therefore this case provides, beside another illustration of how totalitarian regimes position their ideology vis-à-vis the historic city, a question for contemporary urban conservation which can be reduced to economic value vs. cultural value, i.e. the cost/benefit of keeping vs. demolishing this building. For Berlin, where the megalomaniac ensemble remained unbuilt, conservation is only concerned with the physical support of the plan and designs, as a matter of keeping historical testimonies. Although Hitler's plan was not realised — not for its intrinsic absurdity — but for more mundane reasons, it does not now, in any case, raise the problem of relationship with the cultural identity of Berliners. In the case of Bucharest, however, the issue is far more complex since Ceaușescu's megalomaniac plan was actually put into practice. But the conditions in which this happened should make it clear for anyone that there is no link with the cultural identity of Bucharestians and thus raises uncomfortable questions in terms of contemporary urban conservation.

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<sup>85</sup> As part of a growing market for the so-called 'dark tourism.'

<sup>86</sup> Since 2004 the building also houses, controversially, the National Museum of Contemporary Art.

<sup>87</sup> *Bucharest 2000 International Urban Competition* (Bucharest: Simetria Press, 1996)



**Figure 18. Aerial view of central Bucharest showing the 1980s scheme to the south of the historic centre**



**Figure 19. Aerial view of the People's House scheme**

Source fig. 19-20: Google Maps, <http://maps.google.ro> (accessed 5/07/2009)

It has been, and still is, a trauma for the city and for its people, just as much as the World War II destructions in Poland, Germany or other European cities. And even more so because the economic resources that went into post-war reconstruction, went in Bucharest into further scarring of the city by building the monstrous complex on top of the destroyed district.

The reuse of the House of the People, and what is more for such prominent functions, raises the further question of a possible 'assimilation' of the ensemble into the conscience of the community, resulting, in time, in a twisted significance and role within the urban fabric. But to forget is dangerous because it leads to 'intimacy with the monstrous,' to the smooth integration of the abnormal into the daily cycle of life.<sup>88</sup> In ancient Rome, the Senate wiped its deposed emperors from the historical record by a decree of *damnatio memoriae*, removing their names from public inscriptions and destroying their statues.<sup>89</sup> This act was meant to destroy the memory of a citizen who was deemed unworthy of being a member of the community. The flattening down of Nero's Domus Aurea is also an act of *damnatio memoriae*. This is a political decision and a way of manipulating not only the urban environment, but history as well. Some of the projects submitted to the Bucharest 2000 competition seemed to play this card too – not, of course, proposing the total obliteration of the ensemble, but architectural-urban gestures that would cancel its symbolism and distort its presence and originally intended role within the urban fabric.

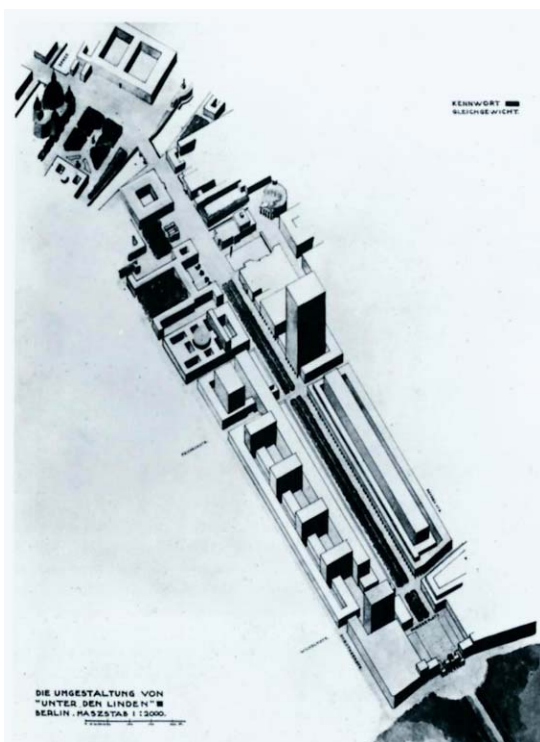
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<sup>88</sup> Maria Raluca Popa. "Restructuring and Envisioning Bucharest - The Socialist Project in the Context of Romanian Planning for a Capital, a Fast Changing City and an Inherited Urban Space, 1852-1989: An exercise in urban imaginary, collective memory and planning history" (PhD thesis, Central European University, 2004), 306.

<sup>89</sup> Harald Weinrich, *Lethé: The art and critique of forgetting*. Literary Criticism/European, Vol. 181 (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2004), 33

## II. 1. 2. Tabula rasa approach of modern urbanism

It is inevitable to start with Le Corbusier's (1887 – 1965) *Urbanisme*:<sup>90</sup> he commences his tirade by pejoratively comparing the organic plans of historic cities with a donkey's path. The new scientific functionalism in urbanism dismissed the organically developed city without recourse. This attitude was also influenced by the developments in American architecture – European architects viewed with admiration the 'liberty' enjoyed by their American counterparts and associated the image of the skyscraper with progress and modernity, economical, technological and architectural. European society, however, was more conservative, and the administration too; very few projects were actually built.



**Figure 20. Cornelius van Eesteren's competition proposal for Unter den Linden, Berlin, 1925**

Source: C. van Eesteren, *Het idee van de functionele stad: Een lazing met lichtbeelden 1928 / The idea of the functional city: A lecture with slides 1928* (Rotterdam: NAI Publishers / The Hague: EFL Publications, 1997)

<sup>90</sup> Le Corbusier, *Urbanisme* [1925] (Paris: Flammarion, 1994), 5-6.



In 1925, when the magazine *Der Städtebau* published a brief for an international competition for Unter den Linden titled “What shape will Berlin’s main street take in the twentieth century?,” Cornelius van Eesteren’s entry, suggestively called ‘Equilibrium,’ attempted to reconcile the traditional street façade and historic city with tall buildings and centralized business functions at the expense of the residential.<sup>91</sup>

But the years after the war are the most remarkable because they have seen the application, and then progressive deformation, of the theses established before the war by the actors of the Modern Movement. The *tabula rasa* of the devastated European towns was ‘finally’ the place to convert utopia into reality.<sup>92</sup>

In the English edition of *Formes Urbaines: de l’îlot à la barré*,<sup>93</sup> Ivor Samuels added an ‘Anglo-Saxon post-script’ dealing with the culture of urban design in the United Kingdom and the United States of America. He argues that the patterns of reconstruction after the Second World War in the United Kingdom are heavily indebted to a Howardian and Corbusian social engineering credo. Both are exponents of what Karl Popper (1902 – 1994) called ‘utopian social engineering,’ i.e. the pursuit for the greatest good.<sup>94</sup>

But many modernist interventions in historic urban centres are just like prototype airplanes that did not work: one conserves some for the sake of history,

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<sup>91</sup> C, van Eesteren, *Het idee van de functionele stad: Een lazing met lichtbeelden 1928 / The idea of the functional city: A lecture with slides 1928* (Rotterdam: NAI Publishers / The Hague: EFL PUblications, 1997), 15-9.

<sup>92</sup> *Reconstruction: Architecture et Urbanisme d’après guerre dans les villes du Nord de la France* (Lille: Ecole d’Architecture de Lille et des Régions Nord, 1997), 1.

<sup>93</sup> Philippe Panerai, Jean Castex and Jean-Charles Depaule, *Formes Urbaines: de l’îlot à la barré* (Marseille: Éditions Parenthèses, 1997). English edition: Phillippe Panerai *et al.*, *Urban Forms: The Death and Life of the Urban Block* (London: Architectural Press, 2004).

<sup>94</sup> A detailed historical survey of modernism’s *tabula rasa* approach, in the context of the development of ideas about historic monuments and the historic urban fabric, is provided in Part III. Origins of Urban Conservation.

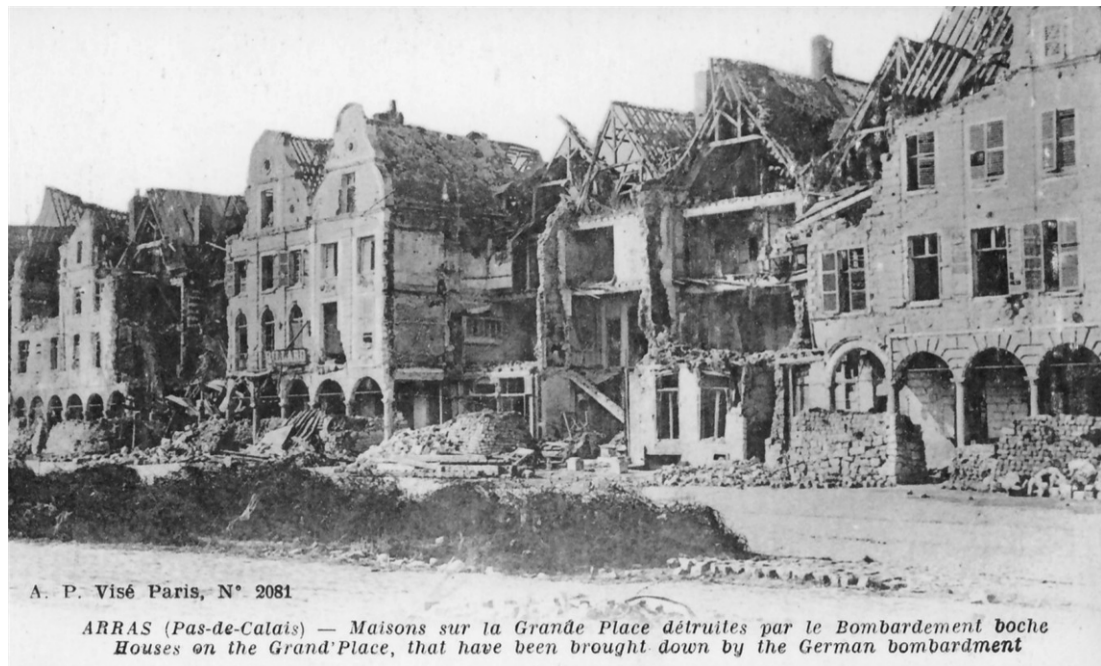
which has to know of failures as well. But this does not make the modernist experiments heritage by default. The difference is that while such artefacts like prototype airplanes take just some space in a museum, the modernist ensembles raise much more ethical issues in their conservation. Of course their gentrification – which, while being untrue to their original aim of popular housing, ensures nevertheless their conservation – can be a solution for a few chosen ones, where this is possible. This can only solve the problem of keeping some testimonies for history, but by no means offers solutions for the social-economic problems they initially attempted, and infamously failed, to solve. These problems remain, furthermore compounded with those of the identity of the community, and solutions should be sought elsewhere beyond the scope of this research.

## II. 2. Reproduction of historical settings and their different motivational and conceptual dimensions

On one hand, the crisis of national identities caused by the destruction of world wars had as a result the desperate attempt of reviving *genius loci* by selective reproduction of historical settings destroyed during world wars bombardments.

For example at Arras, where the historic core of which was reduced to rubble by German artillery, the squares were restored in the 1930s by Pierre Paquet (1875–1959). The town hall and seventeenth century buildings around the squares have been restored in an archaeological manner. The fact that their state was the result of a catastrophe, and furthermore that there was still enough of their original fabric surviving, means this choice of intervention is justified from a conservation ethics point of view.

A few years later, between the debarcation in May 1940 and the liberation in summer 1944, a good number of towns in northern France suffered the destructions of the war. While these may have represented for the actors of the reconstruction (politicians, developers, architects) the occasion to rethink the city, this wholesale erasing of the ancient heritage represented for generations of ordinary citizens, passive actors of the after-war period, a long-lasting traumatism.



**Figure 21. Grande Place in Arras after bombardment**

Source: *Postcards of the Past*, <http://www.oldstratforduponavon.com> (accessed 6/07/2008)



**Figure 22. Aerial view of Arras' Grande Place today**

Source: *Wikimedia Commons*, <http://commons.wikimedia.org> (accessed 6/07/2008)

The Baedeker Blitz in 1942 systematically targeted English historic towns in response to the bombing of the Hanseatic League town of Lübeck. Ironically, the blitz was called after the tourist guides by German publisher Verlag Karl Baedeker which were used to choose the targets. Cultural identity was indeed the aim of both sides: the attacker wants to destroy it for the victim, the victim wants to reconstruct in an attempt to cope with the distress of sudden loss.

In 1944, Warsaw's historical centre was deliberately obliterated as punishment for the Polish resistance to the German occupation. This was the culmination of years of wartime destruction and resulted in ninety percent of the urban fabric being erased. Its rebuilding after the war, as once again capital of Poland, was done in a conservation paradigm heavily influenced by the agenda of the new political power. Selected buildings were meant to be replicas of their pre-1939 originals, but most buildings have been in fact reconstructed to what they were or might have been in different historical periods. This resulted in the 'Old' Town as a whole being reconstructed in an architectural form that never existed in the past. Eighteenth century paintings, which captured the *zeitgeist* of Warsaw's heyday, have been used as 'sources' for their reconstruction, despite the fact that extensive surveys survived.<sup>95</sup> Original fabric was further cleared to allow total remodelling of the interiors of the buildings.

By reconstructing the ruined objects we were acting in conflict with every principle of restoration that had prevailed so far; and yet we were complying with the will of the community by at least restoring the image of that which had been forcibly removed from the map and the history of our people through the schemes of others. We regard what

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<sup>95</sup> Michał Murawski, "(A)political buildings: ideology, memory and Warsaw's 'Old' Town," *Mirror of Modernity: The Post-war Revolution in Urban Conservation – Docomomo E-Proceedings 2*(2009): 13-20.

we have done as a dramatic exception to the basic principles of restoration that we continue to respect.<sup>96</sup>

The endeavour to reconstruct Warsaw's historical centre was led by the scale of the trauma suffered by its community. But the tangible form taken by the reconstruction was in fact a compromise of historical evidence and conservation principles with political interests.



**Figure 23. Warsaw historic centre after bombardments, January 1945**

Source: *Przedwojennej Warszawy*, [www.warszawa1939.pl](http://www.warszawa1939.pl) (accessed 4/07/2008)

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<sup>96</sup> Jan Zachwatowicz, quoted in Wim Denslagen, *Romantic Modernism: nostalgia in the world of conservation* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009), 97.



**Figure 24. Aerial views of Warsaw Old Town in 1935, during the reconstruction in 1945, and now**

Source: "WWII historical imagery in Google Earth," <http://google-au.blogspot.com/2010/02/wwii-historical-imagery-in-google-earth.html> (accessed 10/05/2010)



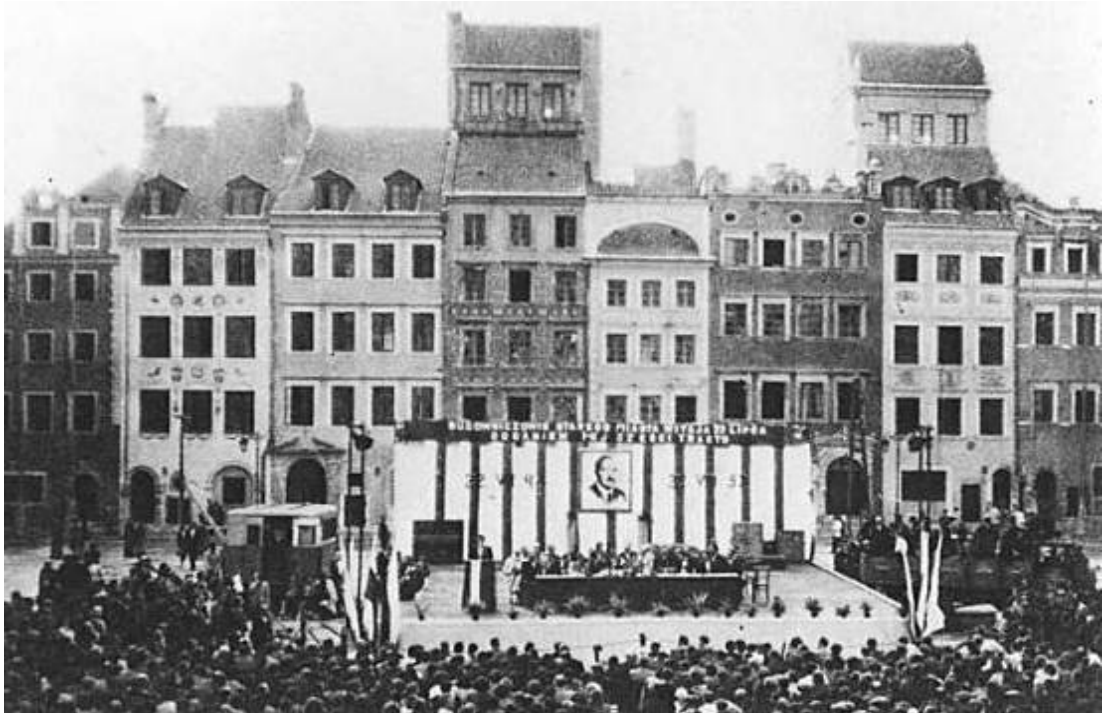
Figure 25. Warsaw, Stare Miasto in 1913



Figure 26. Warsaw, Stare Miasto in 1945

Source fig. 26-27: *Przedwojennej Warszawy*, [www.warszawa1939.pl](http://www.warszawa1939.pl) (accessed 4/07/2008)





**Figure 27. Political propaganda ceremony for the completion of the Old Town, 1953**

Source: Lawrence J Vale and Thomas J. Campanella (eds.), *The Resilient City: How Modern Cities Recover from Disaster* (Oxford, New York, etc.: Oxford University Press, 2005), 141.



**Figure 28. Warsaw, Stare Miasto now, after façade reconstruction between 1948-1953**

Source: *Wikimedia Commons*, <http://commons.wikimedia.org> (accessed 4/07/2008)

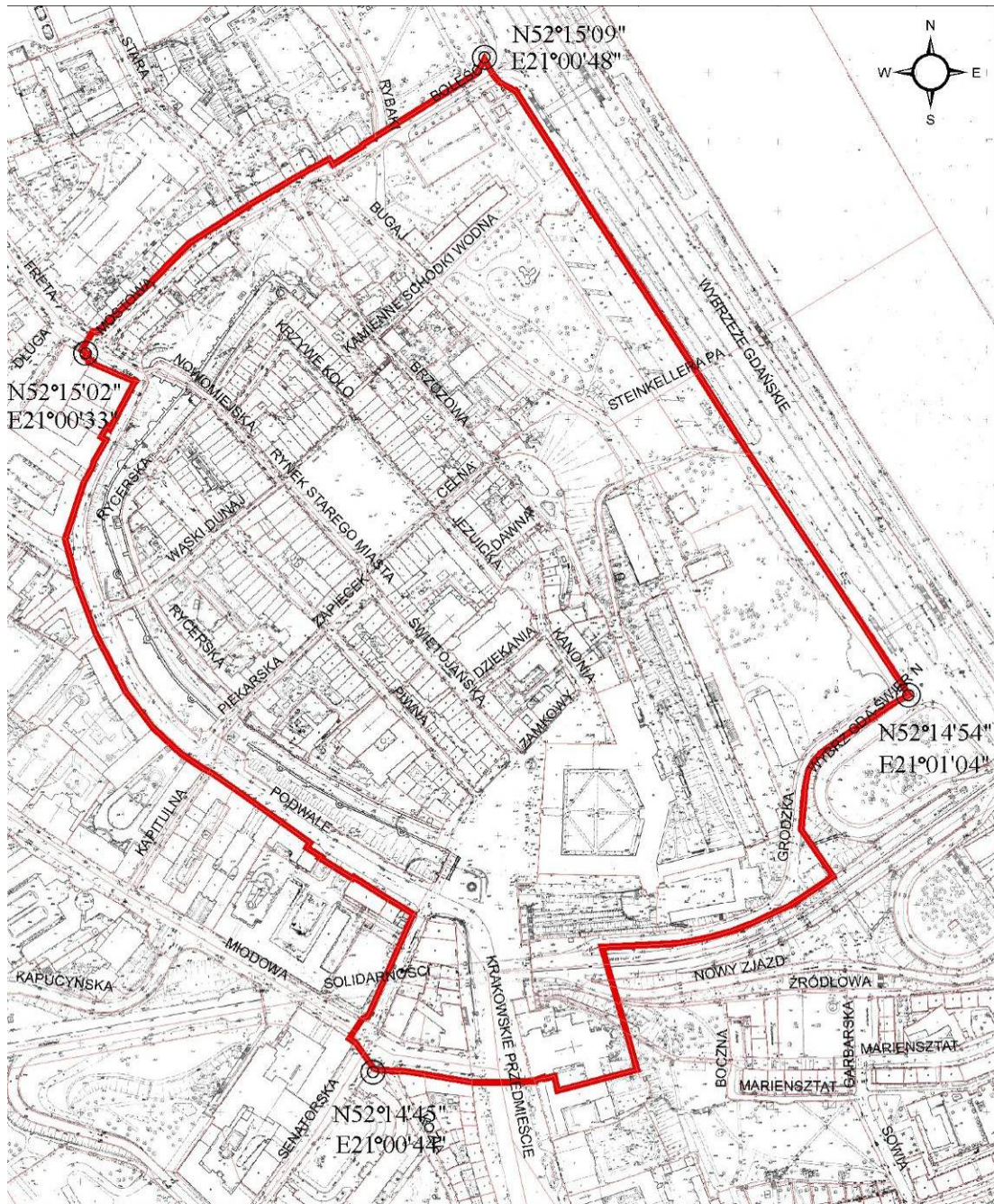
Having this in mind, one can see the rebuilding of the Old Town of Warsaw as an act of urban conservation in its rather large sense,<sup>97</sup> and not an attempt at 'archaeological reproduction,' as Aldo Rossi (1931 – 1997) considers it,<sup>98</sup> whose course was perverted by political ideology. The ensemble, although at the urban formal level is a replica of what had been destroyed, has its own existence and is indeed authentic in that it is the creation of specific historical and geographical circumstances. Its premeditated destruction by the Nazi troops created an extreme circumstance, and therefore an extreme solution was applied by complete reconstruction, using traditional materials and technology as similar as possible with those used over time for the construction of the original buildings, albeit in a debatable architectural form. This solution aimed to ensure the continuity of the urban space in order to provide support for the continuation of the identity of an urban population already traumatised by war.

In this particular case, we have a rather heterogeneous combination: while intrinsic values lie with the medieval aggregation of the space as it stand before destruction, specific qualities derive from its physical creation, or rather re-creation. One should not, therefore, consider the urban ensembles before and after the destruction as 'original' and 'copy,' but rather as being equally authentic, each a creation of its own period and historical context, with both sharing a formal appearance and the same site. The historic centre of Warsaw has been included on the World Heritage List precisely for its reconstruction.

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<sup>97</sup> See the 1982 ICOMOS Declaration of Dresden, <http://www.icomos.org/docs/dresden.html> (accessed 30/05/2003).

<sup>98</sup> Aldo Rossi, *Selected Writings and Projects*, ed. John O'Regan (London: Architectural Design, Dublin: Gandon Editions, 1983), 50.



**Figure 29. Historic Centre of Warsaw, World Heritage Site boundary**

Source: World Heritage Centre, <http://whc.unesco.org> (accessed 9/10/2005)

While only such exceptions can be motivated, we are still confronted with a regrettable misunderstanding of conservation resulting in extended practice of pastiche in architecture and urbanism with the declared scope of creating thematic

city centres or such. This is always linked with ‘conservationism’ – a ‘freezing’ type of restoration, which is fundamentally opposed to integrated urban conservation.

The reconstruction of large portions of the historic urban fabric, even at a superficial, façadist level, is nevertheless rare, not least due to the extreme economic costs of such interventions. More common for such an approach are individual buildings and monuments and the fall of the Iron Curtain has marked another important moment for the reconsideration of heritage in Central and Eastern Europe. The motivation was, in many of the newly independent states, a need to reaffirm the legitimacy of their national culture, suppressed and even negated during the Soviet period. For example, the immediate plans for rebuilding the large ensemble of the Palace of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, which stood as a ruin for several centuries overlooking the old town of Vilnius.<sup>99</sup> Or the reconstruction of the medieval Hungarian royal seat at Visegrad.<sup>100</sup>

A more extreme case is to be found outside Europe, possibly due to a weaker position of the conservation professionals in rapport with contemporary political interests: nationalist motivations too led, at the end of the 1970s, to subjecting the Place Royale in Québec’s historical centre to a much criticised Viollet-le-Duc style ‘restoration’ to a French-period architectural form, destroying any traces of the later British and twentieth-century architecture and replacing them with pastiche

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<sup>99</sup> Monika A. Murzyn, “Heritage Transformation in Central and Eastern Europe,” *The Ashgate Research Companion to Heritage and Identity* (Aldershot: Ashgate, ), 319.

<sup>100</sup> József Laszlovszky, “The Medieval Royal Seat and Forest at Visegrád. A Proposed World Heritage Site and its Heritage Aspects” and Péter Szabó, “The Visegrád World Heritage Project: Problems and Tasks,” *Archaeological and Cultural Heritage Preservation* (Budapest: Archaeolingua, 2006) 83-90 and 91-96.

‘reconstructions.’<sup>101</sup> In this case though the fact is not mentioned neither in the statement of significance of the area,<sup>102</sup> nor in later monitoring documents.<sup>103</sup>

The ship of Theseus has been for a long time the exemplary philosophical case for authenticity, challenging the understandings of persistence and identity: ‘under what conditions does and object persist through time as one and the same object.’

Now the thirty-oared ship, in which Theseus sailed with the youths, and came back safe, was kept by the Athenians up to the time of Demetrius Phalereus. They constantly removed the decayed part of her timbers, and renewed them with sound wood, so that the ship became an illustration to philosophers of the doctrine of growth and change, as some argued that it remained the same, and others, that it did not remain the same.

(Plutarch, *Vitae Parallelae*)<sup>104</sup>

Mereological theory of identity holds that the identity of an object depends on the identity of its component parts, i.e. an object continues to exist only if it is composed of all the same components as it was composed originally, therefore sameness is a necessary condition of identity.<sup>105</sup> It thus allows even for a disassemblage of the object in between the start and end reference times, which means it basically allows for an interruption of existence of the object without loss of identity in the end. However, the mereological theory denies identity to objects that

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<sup>101</sup> Nationalist motivations Richard Handler, *Nationalism and the Politics of Culture in Québec* (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1988), 148-9.

<sup>102</sup> Historic District of Old Québec, World Heritage List (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/300>)

<sup>103</sup> “Report on the State of Conservation of Historic District of Québec,” in *Periodic Report on the Application of the World Heritage Convention* (<http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/docs/rspm-whsr/rappports-reports/r5.aspx>)

<sup>104</sup> *Plutarch's Lives*, translated from the Greek by Aubrey Stewart and George Long (London: George Bell and Sons, 1894), xxiii.

<sup>105</sup> In Logic, mereology is the formal study of the relations between parts and wholes. *OED Online*.

we otherwise see as persisting through time. Spatio-temporal continuity offers a more realistic alternative, i.e. a persisting object must have a continuous path through space-time, compatible with a change of parts, as long as the change is gradual and the form of the object is preserved throughout; thus the persisting object is diachronically identical (redefining the persisting object as a space-time worm whose stages bear the incompatible properties, rather than the worm itself).



**Figure 30. Campanilla di San Marco, Venice collapsed in 1902 and was reconstructed as an exact replica over the next ten years.**

Source: Royal Institute of British Architects Library Photographs Collection

Venice is still Venice though the most conspicuous of its monuments has been overthrown, but it would cease to be Venice were all the smaller canals, the network of which gives the place its cachet, filled in and macadamized!<sup>106</sup>

(G. Baldwin Brown, *The Care for Ancient Monuments*)

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<sup>106</sup> G. Baldwin Brown, *The Care for Ancient Monuments: An Account of the Legislative and Other Measures Adopted in European Countries for Protecting Ancient Monuments and Objects and Scenes of Natural Beauty, and for Preserving the Aspect of Historical Cities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1905), 23.

### II. 3. Approaches in the conservation of urban areas

We do not inherit the land from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children.

(Native American Proverb)<sup>107</sup>

The relationship of conservation to planning policy in a given country ensues from a specific national historical and political context, furthermore influenced by pan-European policies.<sup>108</sup> For this reason, the governmental reforms through which European countries are passing are reflected in the way the designation, control and management of conservation areas is dealt with. At the emergence of concerns with urban conservation in 1960s, from a politico-administrative point of view, there were two models to be found in the European countries: a combination of central and regional government in Western Europe – with different degrees of decentralisation, generally increasing in time – and a highly centralised government

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<sup>107</sup> *Ancestors: Webster's Quotations, Facts and Phrases* (San Diego, California: ICON Group International, 2008), 2.

<sup>108</sup> These are discussed in Part III. Origins of Urban Conservation.

in the countries under communist regimes. Later developments are concerned with the increased devolvement of powers in western governments and a transition from a solely centralised form to a mixed one in the former communist regimes. These situations overlap with further cultural and historical differences resulting in varied approaches to urban conservation from an administrative and legal point of view. Nevertheless, at an expert level there is generally coherence, research and methodologies influencing urban conservation approaches transgress political boundaries all over Europe.

Information collected from official publications, however, is somewhat dry, lacking any explanation of the philosophy behind these actions. The overall impression is that conservation policy in France has been promoted and put into institutional frame by certain individuals taking action in this matter. It would be interesting to go further into the history of these key personages and to identify their European relationships, for French law predated international documents. It would be also interesting to find contemporary academic opinions on this subject, as the governmental publications do not attempt to evaluate the result of *Secteurs sauvegardés* strategy overtime. Moreover, specialist reports comprised in further international publications are compiled by officials, and sometimes are just repeating with different words the same ideas found in official publications of twenty-thirty years ago.



### II. 3. 1. Development of European legislation and practice

The issue of the development of legislation and practice of urban conservation in Europe has been the subject of a number of publications, as discussed in the first part of this thesis. In order to understand better the background of politics against which urban conservation has developed in the second half of the twentieth century, this section will take a closer look at two very different European systems in France and the United Kingdom, complemented by a peculiar situation on the other side of the Iron Curtain, in Romania. The French one is quite representative, *mutatis mutandis*, for the majority of the countries of continental Europe either due to historical similarities in the legal system and administration, or through direct influence where new legislation in other countries has looked at the French one as exemplary. The British one is almost at the opposite pole, but at the same time its role on the European scene is very important, not last due to the increased pervasiveness of English language studies and publications, affording them a much wider reach than those in other languages. The Romanian system, although based on the French one, represents a notable anomaly on the European scene due to the peculiarity of its historical circumstances. The discussion of these three systems aims to paint a picture of the dynamic development of policies in these countries, highlighting the tight, and sometimes uncomfortable, relation between urban conservation and politics.

#### 1960s-70s

It should be noted here that in Italy there was already a law, from 1939, for the Protection of Natural Monuments which included in its definition “environments composed of immovable objects with special characteristics and of traditional

aesthetic value"<sup>109</sup> – hence, historic towns could be included and were required to submit their Masterplans for approval. Another law dealing with urban development of historic areas was passed in 1942, but it did not consider the historic urban areas as a whole; instead, it had provisions regarding the treatment of the individual historic buildings within them. In any case, it seems that both these laws were in fact of little actual consequence for historical urban areas and it was only in the discussions that led to the formulation of the Gubbio Charter in 1960 that urban conservation issues were more clearly articulated. Even then, it took another seven years until they were translated into urban conservation legislation.<sup>110</sup>

In France, central government had from the very beginning and currently has the most important role in both planning and conservation and France was the first European country to offer legislative support for conservation areas, not only in designation and protection but also in financial provisions. In 1962, the *Loi Malraux*,<sup>111</sup> amended the legislation for the protection of the historical and cultural heritage of France. It had the aim of facilitating building restoration as a response both to the post-war reality of French towns and to the reconstruction trend. The *Loi Malraux* has been both a heritage protection law and also an urbanism law, promoting an urban theory which considers that urban dynamics should be based on the existing town. Thus, it opposed the *tabula rasa* approach of demolition and reconstruction of old quarters with administrative and financial tools that would allow instead their conservation. It set up the *Secteurs Sauvegardés*<sup>112</sup> with the

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<sup>109</sup> Giorgio Gianighian, "Italy," in Pickard, *Policy and Law in Heritage Conservation*, 192.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 193-6. This law was prompted by the landslide of Agrigento in 1966.

<sup>111</sup> Called after his initiator, the writer André Malraux, French Minister of Culture at that time. Anecdotic, in his early twenties, he was arrested for vandalising historical monuments. He stole carved stones from a wall of the ruins at Banteay Srei temple, at that time still enshrouded in the Cambodian jungle.

<sup>112</sup> Conservation Areas

objective of revitalising historic centres and quarters, and instituted global actions on public spaces and built ensembles. *Secteurs Sauvegardes* policy, answering the double objective relevant both to heritage and urbanism, gave to the state the possibility to create conservation areas that present “un caractère historique, esthétique ou de nature a justifier la conservation, la restauration et la mise en valeur de tout ou partie d’un ensemble d’immeubles.” In these *Secteurs Sauvegardes*, a preliminary speciality authorisation is required, a demand which characterises heritage protection legislation. Previously, this rule was only concerned with historical monuments and their surroundings and with natural sites and monuments. The *Loi Malraux* instituted a specific device to delimit conservation areas and guide interventions towards its double objective: *le Plan de Sauvegarde et Mise en Valeur*.<sup>113</sup> This embodies at the same time identification and protection support for urban heritage, regulations integrating all urban dimensions such as social, economic, functional, and heritage conservation-enhancement guidance. Therefore, in *Ssecteurs Sauvegardes*, the *Loi Malraux* takes precedence over planning law. Improved areas do not undergo important structural changes and the residential function being preserved, although there is a considerable shift of the social structure caused by higher rents and living standards. In 2001 there were ninety-two *Secteurs Sauvegardes* in France, representing historic cities, old town centres, and exceptional post-eighteenth-century urban fabrics, all of them being nominated by the central government. Although further amended over time, the *Loi Malraux* is still the core act of planning and conservation policy in historic towns.

In the United Kingdom, the Housing Acts of 1909 and 1923 allowed for town schemes to include provision for areas of special character, but to no effect.<sup>114</sup> Only in 1966 were the Four Towns Reports commissioned to investigate the pressures

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<sup>113</sup> Conservation-Enhancement Plan

<sup>114</sup> Michael Ross, *Planning and the Heritage: Policy and Procedures* (London: Spon Press, 1996), 28.

faced by Bath, Chester, Chichester, and York, with the aim of extracting from them information that allowed generalisation. Colin Buchannan's (1907 – 2001) study of Bath addressed environmental and traffic management issues as well as the usual concerns of townscape and listed buildings, but the other studies remained conventional in approach, failing to address the social or economic aspects of the community.<sup>115</sup>

Following these reports, the *Venice Charter*, the UNESCO and CE Recommendations, and taking inspiration from the French and Italian experience, the Civic Amenities Act 1967 has introduced conservation areas in the UK.<sup>116</sup> But the French conservation plans for their *Secteurs Sauvegardes*, although acknowledged as comprehensive, were seen as requiring measures too severe and expensive, while for England the main threat to historic urban areas was development rather than decay. Within the Act, there was neither a conspicuous obligation on the part of local planning authorities to designate them, nor protective or financial provisions. In fact, the Act was originally presented as offering protection to the surroundings of listed buildings rather than creating proper urban conservation areas.<sup>117</sup>

Unlike in France, local government has the most important function in planning and conservation in the United Kingdom. The conservation system was decentralised from the beginning, local authorities already playing the most important role in planning.<sup>118</sup> Urban conservation provisions were introduced in planning acts. The Town and Country Planning Act 1968 and its Amendment 1972 enabled local planning authorities to control demolition in Conservation Areas and

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<sup>115</sup> Delafons, *Politics and preservation*, 99.

<sup>116</sup> "areas of special architectural or historic interest the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance" (Civic Amenities Act 1967)

<sup>117</sup> Delafons, *Politics and Preservation*, 95-6.

<sup>118</sup> Gilbert McAllister and Elizabeth Glen McAllister. *Town and Country Planning. A Study of Physical Environment: The Prelude to Post-War Reconstruction*. Faber and Faber Limited, London: 1941

made conservation grants available.<sup>119</sup> The Town and Country Amenities Act 1974 provides full control tools over Conservation Areas. It comprises financial provisions and, quite uniquely, provisions for raising public awareness and involvement in Conservation Areas. The local planning authorities are in charge of nominating and managing Conservation Areas, and centralised financial provisions are designated only for 'outstanding' ones. The conservation areas policy is therefore part of the planning policy, and it is somewhat independent from historic monuments authorities.<sup>120</sup> The Town and Country Planning Act was updated in 1997, but as far as Conservation Areas are concerned, no changes were made. Currently there are 9,350 Conservation Areas in UK.

A peculiar case from the point of view of conservation areas policy is Romania,<sup>121</sup> where unlike anywhere else in the communist block or outside, in the late 1970s, the Romanian communist government started a systematic destruction of the historic centres, in order to make room for new civic centres mirroring the new social order, in spite of previous conservation activity. A revised law for the protection of cultural heritage promoted conservation efforts in 1974, although

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<sup>119</sup> A curiosity in terms of fiscal provisions for conservation is the fact that in the United Kingdom VAT is levied on restoration, but not on alterations, conversions, or extensions of buildings, even when they are within designated Conservation Areas.

<sup>120</sup> Legally, Historic Scotland has only consultative role as representing the Secretary of State.

<sup>121</sup> In Romania the first law for the protection of historic heritage and corresponding institutions dates from 1892, following French models. However restoration activity was primarily driven by extreme stylistic restoration, although already out of fashion in Europe. The Commission for Historic Monuments was active until 1948 when it was abolished, at the same time with other institutions considered bourgeois. Three years later, in 1951, a replacement Commission was instituted, and only in 1959 a Directorate for Historic Monuments to take on practical restoration work. In 1977 both were abolished, together with the restoration courses in architectural education. Kazmer Kovacs, *Timpul monumentului istoric (The Time of the Historic Monument)* (Bucharest: Paideia, 2003), 27-8. Only in 1990 this activity was resumed, but shortly after, both the Commission and Directorate were subjected to overwhelming political pressure and involvement resulting in little efficiency. The NGOs and private firms involved in heritage protection and conservation have gained ground slowly and with much difficulty.

designation of Historical Areas<sup>122</sup> had been regulated already in 1955 by the Council of Ministers Decision on National Cultural Heritage, but without any other provisions. The 1974 Law for the Systematisation of the Territory, Urban and Rural Settlements – which was a planning act – provided a proper basis for designation and protection, but still no financial arrangements since the contemporary policy was that of funding exclusively state-owned properties. But the 1977 earthquake gave the chance and pretext for demolition within the historic centres to be undertaken almost nationwide, even when some of the affected buildings could still be saved. Buildings that survived the earthquake entire were also demolished. In the same year, the totalitarian government, in contradiction of existing legislation, abolished the Directorate of Historic Monuments. As a result, important historic centres were replaced by modernist ensembles and in the smallest towns by standardised community centres.<sup>123</sup>

### 1980s-90s

Due to its historical political context, heritage conservation in France has been mainly conducted by central government, and only over the last two decades of the twentieth century was this partially transferred to regional and local administration, and its institutions diversified. To supplement the highly selective central policy of *Secteurs Sauvegardés*, France launched a decentralisation process in the 1980s. The law for decentralisation of town planning responsibilities from 1983 instituted *ZPPAU – Zones de protection du patrimoine architectural et urbain*<sup>124</sup>, and in 1993, landscape heritage was included in *ZPPAUP – Zones de protection du patrimoine*

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<sup>122</sup> In Romanian *Zone Istorice*

<sup>123</sup> See Part II. Attitudes towards the Historic Fabric over Time for the case of Bucharest.

<sup>124</sup> Protection Zones of Architectural and Urban Heritage

*architectural, urbain et paysager*.<sup>125</sup> The purpose of these zones is to enable local management of urban and rural areas and landscape considered of heritage value, but of lesser importance than the *Secteurs Sauvegardés*.

After the fall of the communist regime in 1989 Romania, efforts were concentrated towards remaking of heritage conservation legislative and administrative system. The 1977 law, which put an end to conservation practice and education, has been finally abolished. The Governmental Ordinance from 1992 – a planning act – specifies the obligation of the local planning authorities to designate Reservations of Architecture and Urbanism and to provide specific regulation as part of the General and Local Urbanism Plans which were to be drawn up over the next two years, as the previous systematisation plans heading towards destruction of the past and reconstruction according to communist policies were obsolete. The Governmental Ordinance from 1994 approved by a 1995 Law – this time a heritage conservation act – established protective measures and responsible authorities. Subsequent acts provided legal support for state funding towards conservation of sites in private ownership, but only for those inside areas declared of national importance. Only the 2001 Law includes some financial provisions such as state contribution towards the conservation costs, disregarding ownership, and tax discounts or exemptions.

### **2000s onwards**

During the previous decades urban conservation scholarship and practice developed along the same lines on both sides of the Iron Curtain, even though, of course, practice was much hindered by the lack of money on the Eastern side.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Protection Zones of Architectural, Urban, and Landscape Heritage

<sup>126</sup> Romania is an isolated case where hindrance took unimaginable proportions and there was a declared state policy against heritage conservation.

After the fall of the Iron Curtain, however, the Eastern block was faced with an economic pressure for uncontrolled development proportionally much higher, in the context of which the economic resources for urban conservation increased at a much slower rate and the transitional legislative and administrative system lagged behind.

The threats to the historic urban fabric are sometimes direct, but sometimes more insidious. One of the greatest threats Europe-wide is pressure by large multinational companies targeting monuments or gap sites within city centres paired with an apparent incapacity, inability, disinterest, or even unwillingness to negotiate of the local authorities. Where demolition was eventually avoided, the characteristic result of urban conservation is the so-called *façadism*, a ‘rotten apple’ syndrome, sacrificing the fabric of the historic buildings relevant to the community for the sake of commercial interests and intensive utilisation of properties. It is an extreme commodification of the urban heritage, through which nothing remains but ‘stage-set’ façades void of meaning decorating the townscapes.<sup>127</sup> At the opposite pole, stagnating or even declining economic situation in some European cities, compounded with migration to the suburbia, has brought about the wide-spread problem of unused historic buildings. This applies not only to commercial and industrial buildings, which, due to rapid economic change, increasingly stand empty and need new solutions for a sustainable re-use, but especially to residential buildings, directly affected by the declining population in some areas.<sup>128</sup>

Poor planning puts at risk many historic centres too, where the impact of decisions for areas outside the historic centre on the latter is ignored. Large-scale

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<sup>127</sup> An example of such an inappropriate development plan is the Europa-Passage in Hamburg, where an entire complex of historic buildings was eventually demolished to make room for a gigantic city-centre mall despite assiduous opposition.

<sup>128</sup> *Heritage at Risk: ICOMOS World Report 2001-2002 on Monuments and Sites in Danger* (München: K.G. Saur, 2001).



business parks and shopping malls outside the city, together with a general reduction in diversity are pushing out of business, and out of their historic buildings, traditional retail trade and small commercial enterprises. This leads to the desolation of town centres, with even fewer houses being used for living – a development that is dangerous for heritage.<sup>129</sup> The ‘solution’ of building city-centre shopping malls instead has brought about yet another problem: the privatisation of public space.<sup>130</sup>

Therefore, in spite of the aforementioned theoretical and regulatory evolution in the field of urban conservation, historic centres slowly undergo degradation and depopulation, losing their commercial, services and craft functions as a result of housing policy linked to a commercial policy focused on their outskirts. At the same time, using adaptation to modernity as a pretext, others endure developments that do not respect their scale either formal or functional, such as tall buildings, huge commercial areas, high-speed routes, and oversized parking areas. Contemporary cities are victims of their unmanaged economic development, leading to hypertrophy of office, commerce, tourism functions or, on the contrary, to their transformation into museum-cities. In other words, unilateral approaches resulted in more damage and only a holistic approach seeking a delicate

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<sup>129</sup> A series of comprehensive surveys on this topic were carried out in the United Kingdom: *Ghost Town Britain: The Threat from Economic Globalisation to Livelihoods, Liberty and Local Economic Freedom* (London: The New Economics Foundation, 2002), *Ghost Town Britain II - Death on the High Street: How Britain's Local Economies Are Losing Ground and Fighting Back* (London: The New Economics Foundation, 2003) and *Clone Town Britain: The Survey Results on the Bland State of the Nation* (London: The New Economics Foundation, 2005).

<sup>130</sup> In the Hanseatic city of Lübeck, listed as a World Heritage Site in 1987, the market square was significantly affected by the building of an out-of-scale department store which replaced the former post-office, a post-war building which was well integrated spatially and architecturally. The protest of ICOMOS Germany had extensive coverage by the media and prompted UNESCO assessment missions. Despite this, the department store was eventually built, although only on the larger site of the two initially ear-marked for this.

equilibrium between them can lead to the accomplishment of the goal of integrated conservation.

The 1970s have seen the rise of urban conservation legislation Europe-wide and the past three decades its application in practice; specialist literature abounds in case-study reports and, to some extent, essays evaluating urban conservation practice on a national scale, but there is still very little comparative assessment between the different legislative systems.<sup>131</sup> Nevertheless, this historical survey of the development of urban conservation legislation in three European countries serves to indicate the variety of approaches found in practice. While it is possible to infer how these differences are reflected in the success of urban conservation interventions, an actual assessment should use a substantial pool of case-studies in order to provide sufficiently similar cases for comparison. But even if it is true that some of the failings of urban conservation are due to the imperfections of one legislative system or another, this is arguably secondary to the influence that the mindset of those involved in these interventions has on the outcome. This is why the establishment of urban conservation as a discipline is more important in the long term than having its own dedicated legislation. Once the issues surrounding urban conservation are acknowledged and studied by the professions responsible for these interventions, this will ensure a greater success than a more restrictive legislation.

From an urban conservation point of view, the differences of architectural manner or style should be of no substance; all buildings of all ages, belonging to all architectural paradigms or styles are equal. Despite this, architectural expression and even urban form cause most often desire or repulsion, depending of whether they are situated within the historic fabric of the city centre or the modern

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<sup>131</sup> One notable exception is Peter Larkham's *Conservation and the City* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996)

peripheries. A judgement of value without nuances underscores such an impulsive passion of the public opinion.

This ambivalence is illustrated in Glasgow, for example: on one hand the modernist high-rise blocks of the Gorbals were demolished and replaced with an urban form similar to the one that pre-existed on the site, albeit in today's ubiquitous dress of wood and brick or stone facing; on the other hand new high-rise blocks are being built in the Harbour.



**Figure 31. In 1960s, Basil Spence's tower blocks replaced old tenements in Glasgow's Gorbals**

Source: Scran, <http://www.scran.ac.uk> (accessed 30/06/2008).



**Figure 32. The 1960s' towers have been demolished too in 1990s and replaced with new tenements**

Source: Scran, <http://www.scran.ac.uk> (accessed 30/06/2008).



**Figure 33. Tower blocks come back in fashion in Glasgow Harbour Phase II, 2005**

Source: Glasgow Architecture, <http://www.glasgowarchitecture.co.uk> (accessed 30/06/2008).

But, while the society might pass subjective value judgements that favour one architectural style over another in different periods, heritage experts have to be able to recognize as objectively as possible those buildings or urban interventions that best embody the spirit of each of these architectural styles and periods for the purpose of listing and protection, in order to ensure their passing on to the next generations (who might, and usually will, change their preferences). Moreover, they should be able to define the composite nature of cultural values, where architectural historical values represent only one layer within a much more complicated construction of interdependent values that make up the heritage significance of a building, urban intervention, or indeed the urban environment as a whole.

Yet another viewpoint is that of urban conservation, that is at an urban rather than individual building level, where what counts most is not only the cultural significance of the urban texture, but also its continual ability to fulfil its community's needs. The nature of the urban environment means that urban conservation is very distinct from the other branches of heritage conservation. This difference means that it is possible for a particular building or urban intervention to have values that are ultimately at odds with their other layers of relevance for the society, such as a valuable architectural and/or historical significance that fails to perform its function or to adapt reasonably to the changes in the society, or, on the contrary, a building or urban intervention that has no special architectural historical merit, yet successfully continues to fulfil its role in the urban texture.

Of course, the modernist period is not the first time when a conscientious architectural and urbanistic production denies or challenges the inherited, historic one; almost every period has developed its architectural styles in opposition to the precedent ones. But what differentiates the situation in the twentieth century post-war period from the previous centuries is a combination of circumstances that generated urban interventions on a scale and extent that had never been seen before: the destructions of historic centres during the war on one hand and the models of governance of the European countries, on both sides of the Iron Curtain, which

allowed virtually unlimited power to the state over the development of the built environment.

### II. 3. 2. Contemporary options for intervention

Although the term 'conservation' has been used until the twentieth century in its original sense of keeping or preserving, when the eponymous discipline became increasingly complex, it required a nuancing of its terminology and clear definitions. A first attempt was made, again, by Gustavo Giovannoni; in *Enciclopedia Italiana* for the entry '*restauro*' he identified the following categories: consolidation; re-composition through anastylosis; liberation; and completion or renovation.<sup>132</sup> The modern concept of conservation encompasses an even more diversified range of approaches towards heritage, and indeed urban fabric, which can be classified<sup>133</sup> according to the degree of intervention. They range from investigation, legal protection and interpretation to preservation, restoration, reconstruction, re-creation or replication, and alteration. Even though the necessity to intervene results from binomial urban processes, urban conservation, while taking into consideration the immaterial component, can inherently deal only with the very substance of the urban fabric in trying to ameliorate an identified inner conflict. Urban conservation's ultimate aim is to retain cultural significance; this means in all cases some degree of intervention, whether passive or active. It is important to understand that these different degrees of intervening should depend today only of the specific circumstances of any given case, rather than of 'fashion' as it has been the case since the beginnings of conservation as a discipline. The traditional Morris vs. Viollet-le-Duc debate has no place anymore in contemporary conservation practice, especially in urban conservation; it has nevertheless, historiographic

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<sup>132</sup> Jokilehto. *A History of Architectural Conservation*, 222.

<sup>133</sup> The following is an adaptation to the specifics of urban context of categories from the Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Heritage Value (ICOMOS New Zealand, 1992), art. 13-21 and Burra Charter (ICOMOS Australia, 1999), art. 15-25.

interest and helps our understanding of the evolution of ideas regarding the ethics of conservation intervention.

### **Investigation, legal protection and interpretation**

All of these actually mean non-intervention in the physical sense of the word. This kind of 'passive' intervention can only be applicable to 'dead' cities, part of what G.M. Cantacuzino (1899 - 1960) calls 'fossil monuments,' so old and removed from us and so unintelligible that they have almost no relation to contemporary society; these are truly historical testimonies relevant only to scholarship.<sup>134</sup> This becomes their chief use.



**Figure 34. Aerial view of Sarmizegetusa Regia, archaeological remains of the antique Dacian capital fortress, an outstanding example of its type, characteristic of the Late Iron Age in Europe**

Source: cIMeC – Institute of Cultural Memory, Romania, <http://www.cimec.ro> (accessed 20/11/2002).

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<sup>134</sup> Gheorghe Matei Cantacuzino [Lectures 1955-9], *Introducere la opera lui Vitruviu* (Introduction to Vitruvius's work) (Bucuresti: Editura Meridiane, 1993), 92.



For example, at Sarmizegetusa Regia,<sup>135</sup> in Romania, the archaeological sites have been reburied in soil following survey, although even then a certain amount of maintenance is needed, due to the eventual decay processes generated by the investigation itself.

### **Urban Preservation**

This includes maintenance, repairs and stabilisation in order to protect the fabric of an urban area from processes of decay and retard deterioration, except where decay is appropriate to the site's cultural value. This is generally the procedure favoured in those historic urban areas turned into museums as their main use.

The category to which urban preservation applies is that of deserted settlements, testimonies to natural or man-made disasters, such as Pompeii and Herculaneum, or much more recently Belchite in Spain and Oradour-sur-Glane in France. But there are also many other settlements deserted as a result of less sudden, but equally pervasive forces, especially changes in economy; what is unusual about them is that they remained deserted. Over time there have been many movements of communities from one settlement to another and occasionally some have been temporarily deserted, but by their very nature of being in advantageous positions in the landscape and close to water and other resources, it meant that they were sooner or later re-colonised by another community.

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<sup>135</sup> Sarmizegetusa Regia is part of the Dacian Fortresses of the Orăştie Mountains World Heritage Site. The six fortresses, built between the 1st century B.C. and 1st century A.D., show a peculiar combination of defensive and religious architecture, representing the exceptionally high cultural and socio-economic development of the Geto-Dacian kingdoms.



**Figure 35. Aerial view of the excavated area of Pompeii with the Vesuvius in the background**

Source: Dipartimento di Scienze della Terra, Università di Napoli Federico II, <http://www.dst.unina.it> (accessed 20/03/2002)

For example, the Roman commercial town of Pompeii<sup>136</sup> in Italy, which represents truly ‘a moment in time,’ is preserved as a museum, with minimal ‘active’ conservation intervention.

On the other hand, urban preservation that museumises a historic urban area within a living city is nothing more than a economically driven-option disguised as conservation, positioning urban conservation as a consumerist response to an increasing need for leisure in modern society. But it is also a result of ignorance of professionals engaged in urban development, who mistake the

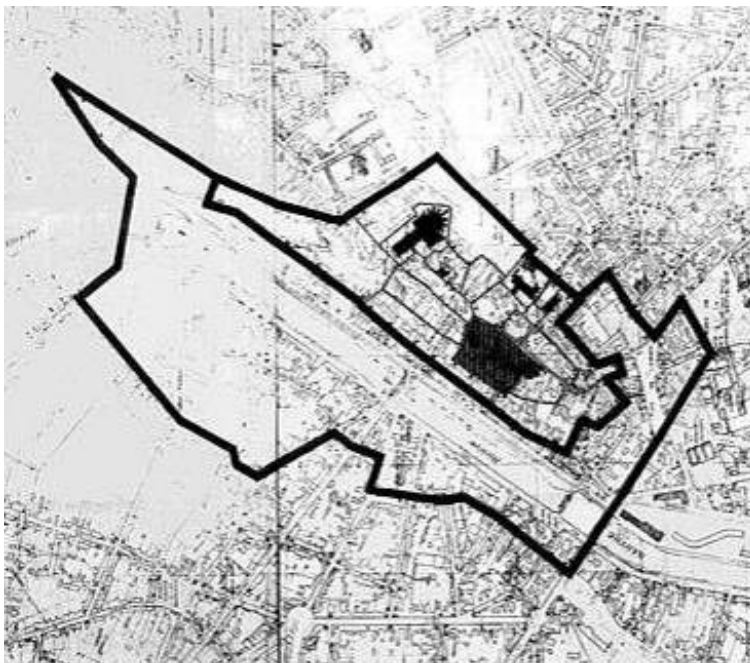
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<sup>136</sup> Having been buried under lava and ash by the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 A.D., Pompeii reveals a rare testimony of the Roman society and daily life at that specific moment. Pompeii is part of the Archaeological Areas of Pompei, Herculaneum and Torre Annunziata World Heritage Site.

transformation of historic centres into theme parks for urban conservation and revitalisation. This kind of approach categorically denies any chance of adapting the historic centre to remain a true centre within the contemporary city; it is completely isolated and removed from the urban organism, frozen at a moment in time and maintained lifeless.

### Urban Restoration

This means an intervention aiming to bring a historic urban area to a known earlier state, by introduction of additional material where loss has occurred, but using only original materials and traditional techniques. It is based on the existing material and at the same time on the logical interpretation of all available evidence, so that the place is consistent with its earlier form and meaning. This involves anastylosis and reinstatement, and may involve removal of accretions. This degree of intervention offers a choice of options in terms of use of an urban area, either 'restoring' the original use as well as its form, or adapting to another use relevant to contemporary community, or a mix of both.



**Figure 36. Plan of Vieux Mans, the *Secteur Sauvegarde* of Le Mans with the Gallo-Roman fortification hatched in black in the centre**

Source: P. Prunet, *Secteur Sauvegarde Le Mans: Plan de Sauvegarde et de Mise en Valeur* (Ministère de l'Équipement et du Logement, Ministère des Affaires Culturelles, Département de la Sarthe, 1972)



**Figure 37. Vieux Mans, the historic centre of Le Mans on the bank of Sarthe with tanneries still existing at the beginning of the twentieth century**



**Figure 38. Le Mans' Gallo-Roman fortification wall and ruins exposed on the bank of River Sarthe**

Sources: *Wikimedia Commons*, <http://commons.wikimedia.org> (accessed 12/09/2009) and author's slide collection.

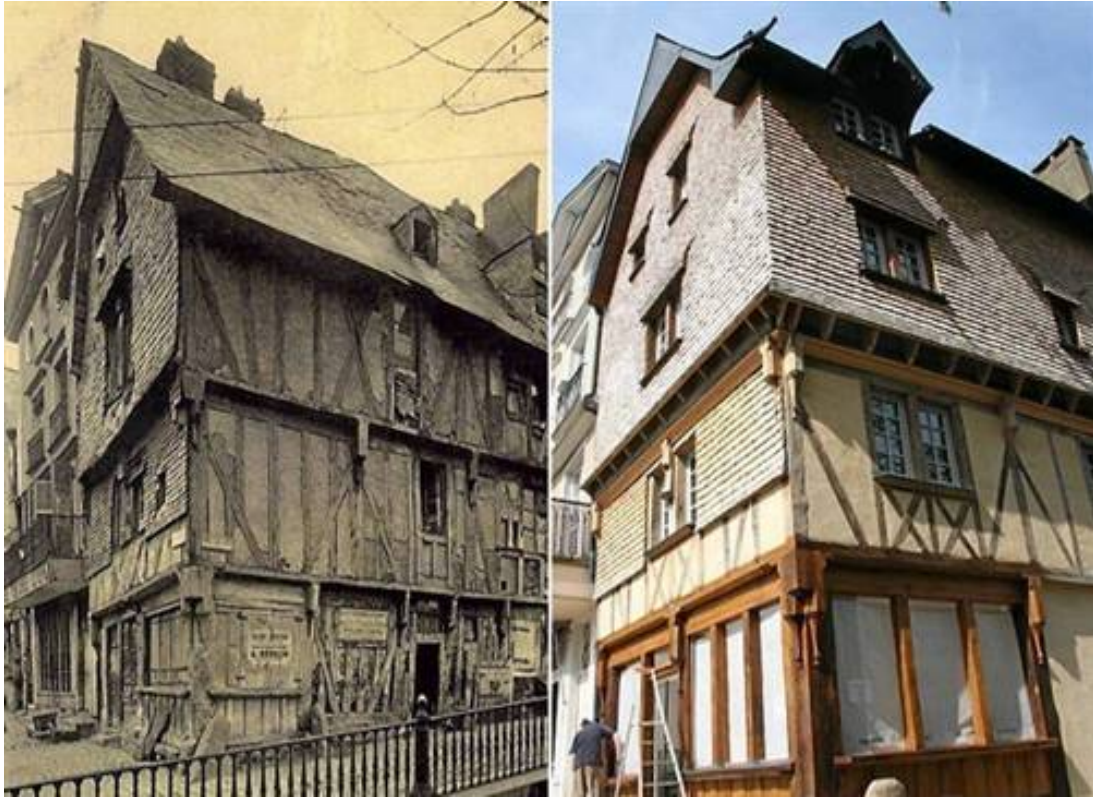
The town of Le Mans, France, for example, has developed from an Iron Age Gallic settlement on a rocky bank of the river Sarthe into a fortified Gallo-Roman city, and was continuously inhabited throughout the Middle Ages. Its street network dates from this period, although there are few traces of the pre-fifteenth century houses due to the town's destruction during the English invasion in 1425-1428. The *Secteur Sauvegardé* of Le Mans created in 1966 and subsequently extended in 1971,<sup>137</sup> consists of the urban ensemble situated inside the Gallo-Roman precinct and its immediate surroundings. Its surface was doubled in 1990 with a second contiguous area, added as a result of a further study of the urban evolution of Le Mans. As the original Conservation and Enhancement Plan<sup>138</sup> was adopted in 1974, it is rather abbreviated for contemporary requirements; however, it comprises a fair historical urban study. It is clear that while the intention has been to restore the area of the Gallo-Roman fortification in order to show the antique remains as an open-air museum, for the rest of the medieval urban fabric there has been a restoration in both form and use, retaining and reinstating as much as possible the original residential use.

It is important to note here that what is considered urban restoration at town-level could, and usually does, involve the whole possible range of degrees of intervention at the level of the individual structures.

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<sup>137</sup> "Recensement des décrets et arrêtés portant création de secteurs sauvegardés et approbation des plans de sauvegarde et de mise en valeur," *Legifrance.gouv.fr Le service public pour la diffusion du droit* <http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichSarthe.do?reprise=true&page=1&idSarthe=SARDOBJT000007104354&ordre=null&nature=null&g=ls> (accessed 20/07/2009)

<sup>138</sup> P. Prunet, *Secteur Sauvegarde Le Mans: Plan de Sauvegarde et de Mise en Valeur* (Ministère de l'Équipement et du Logement, Ministère des Affaires Culturelles, Département de la Sarthe, 1972)



**Figure 39. Le Mans, Place du Hallai, La Maison du Pilier aux Lumières before conservation and after, in 2009; its original commercial and residential functions were restored, but the intervention as a whole is one of architectural reconstruction with a new bearing structure being introduced and also alterations partly to revert the facades to an earlier state (second floor .**

Source: " La résurrection de la maison du Pilier aux lumières," *Le Mans et sa région*, <http://www.lemans.maville.com> (accessed 12/09/2009).

### Urban Reconstruction

Again to a known earlier state, but this time by introduction of new material within the fabric, where loss has occurred, using modern techniques and materials, and only if this is essential to the function or understanding of heritage.

In the case of Buda Castle Hill <sup>139</sup> in Budapest, a Hilton Hotel was built in 1977 incorporating the 13<sup>th</sup> century Dominican monastery ruins and 17<sup>th</sup> century

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<sup>139</sup> The Castle District of Buda was designated a World Heritage Site in 1986

Jesuit College. While being a clear intervention of its time stylistically and in terms of materials used, the volumetry of the ensemble mimics the previous urban form. Nevertheless, at the level of the individual architectural object, this is merely a display of ruins within the new structure with little continuity of layout or type of function of the different spaces.



**Figure 40. Budapest, Hilton Hotel built in 1977 on Buda Castle Hill**

Source: author's slide collection

### Urban Re-creation or Replication

This is the choice of intervention in exceptional cases as a result of extreme situations where crucial heritage has irrecoverably been lost. Reproduction of historical settings had different motivational and conceptual dimensions:<sup>140</sup> On one hand, the crisis of national identities caused by the destruction of world wars resulted in the desperate attempt to revive *genius loci* by the selective reproduction of historical settings destroyed during wartime bombardments.<sup>141</sup> On the other hand, we are confronted with a regrettable misunderstanding of conservation, resulting in the extended practice of pastiche in architecture and urbanism with the declared ambition of creating thematic city centres. This is always linked with a “freezing” view of conservation, which is fundamentally opposed to integrated urban conservation, or is chosen as a facile solution by the unskilled architect.

In the case of Dresden, the replication of the Newmarkt area and Frauenkirche was done after a fifty year time-lapse. It involved, beside reconstruction of the street network pattern – which was left as residual space by the post-war rebuilding in the area, - the replication of façades in modern materials, mostly to their architectural expression from right before the war, but also licence in some cases, such as where adjacent buildings have been co-massed under a newly unified façade. These aspects raise the question of which of the two categories previously discussed does this case belong to.

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<sup>140</sup> The instances where built ensembles, such as the housing development in the shape of medieval fortresses at Harverleij in Holland, the Getty Villa in Los Angeles (1974 reconstruction of Villa dei Papiri, Herculaneum as educational centre and museum), or entire urban settings, such as the Huis Ten Bosch in Sasebo, Japan (1992 reconstruction of a seventeenth century Dutch town as a theme park), have been replicated within an entirely foreign location are obviously outside the urban conservation discourse.

<sup>141</sup> As typified in the case of Stare Miasto in Warsaw discussed in Part II. Attitudes towards the historic fabric over time.





**Figure 41. Dresden's Newmarkt *insulae* of new buildings and Frauenkirche, replicated between 1992-2005**

Source: *Wikimedia Commons*, <http://commons.wikimedia.org> (accessed 4/07/2008)



**Figure 42. Haagsche Bluf Shopping Centre, The Hague, Van Lamoen & Wurth/W.E.Hienkens, 1999-2001**

Source: Author's digital images collection.

To the extreme, the so-called 'retro-architecture' scheme in the centre of The Hague includes replicas of historic façades from The Hague and Delft, and even an imitation of the campanile of Santa Maria e Donato in Murano, integrated in the glass curtain-facades of a large shopping centre.

### **Adaptation**

Indubitably the most common case, whereby integrated conservation allows alterations and additions compatible with the original fabric, which do not detract from the value of heritage, and where they enable the urban fabric to continue to serve a socially, culturally and economically useful purpose. The utmost difficulty lies with the initial evaluation of the necessity for intervention, its localisation and the informed determination of its nature and importance.

A new concept, that of 'interim use,' has recently emerged in Germany to respond to the increasing number of unused buildings and sites within the historic core of towns.<sup>142</sup> This notion has the advantage that it occupies vacant sites and buildings which would otherwise have a negative impact on their surroundings. Moreover, the concept can be used as a public participation tool, by introducing changes on a temporary basis to elicit the reaction of the community.

As we have seen in the previous chapter, in addressing such a wide span of interventions, conservation associates itself with the idea of sustainability: finding the appropriate degree of intervention in order to balance cultural, social, economic, political interests in any given case, in a way that does not jeopardise the right of subsequent generations to inhabit and identify with the city. In effect, it is akin to a 'curatorial act' which, in its original, museological sense, is twofold: what is retained and what is added (which in many ways is determined by what is retained). This

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<sup>142</sup> Nicole Blumner. *Planning for the Unplanned: Tools and Techniques for Interim Use in Germany and the United States* (Berlin: Deutsches Institut für Urbanistik, 2006), <http://www.difu.de> (accessed 9/03/2007)

double perspective also appears in one of the earliest testimonies of human interest in and understanding of the conservation of the urban environment as a cultural necessity: the oath of allegiance taken by the young men of ancient Athens when coming of age.

I will not hand over (to the descendants) the fatherland  
smaller, but greater and better, so far as I am able, by myself  
or with the help of all.

(Ephebic Oath, 5th century BC)<sup>143</sup>

This archaic civic oath embodies several ideas that are essential for understanding essence and *raison d'être* of urban conservation: first of all the very fact of taking such an oath of allegiance to one's *polis*, represents the identity given by this to the community and the strong value put on this attachment; secondly the idea of being responsible to pass on the city from one generation to the next; thirdly the understanding of the responsibility of each generation not simply to keep and preserve what had been inherited, but to enhance and add to it; and finally the idea of this being not only an individual responsibility, but a shared one – the community as a whole is the subject of this relationship to its city, even if the oath is taken individually. Plato defined the *polis* as being composed of the 'present generation,' its 'ancestors' and its 'descendants'<sup>144</sup> and explained that individual's property rights are limited in significant ways by the interests of both prior and subsequent generations.<sup>145</sup>

When it comes to deciding over the degree of intervention, there are two main streams in contemporary urbanism in Europe, determined by specific national historical and political context. The first approach towards urban conservation as

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<sup>143</sup> P. Siewert, "The Ephebic Oath in Fifth-Century Athens Source," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, Vol. 97 (1977): 102-111, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/631025> (Accessed: 10/07/2010).

<sup>144</sup> Plato. *The Laws* (Book XI, 923), 464.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.* (Book IV, 707-708), 464-465.

part of town planning seeks democratic active participation in planning decisions, expecting that in this way the solution would better satisfy everyone's interests by reflecting the will of the community. This view is fundamentally different from the second, more common one, which seeks rather to achieve, by exclusively appealing to professionals, an environment that would enhance a democratic community. This is in other words, by extrapolating from urbanism to urban conservation, the dichotomy between conserving democratically and conserving for democracy.<sup>146</sup>

It should be noted that the way the listing system is conceived in all European countries has resulted inherently in a shift in the process of selection over the last two centuries if compared with the situation before the regulation of this field. The role of changing value judgements is therefore evident.<sup>147</sup> This means that listing by default everything built before the eighteenth century does not allow anymore the natural selectivity that occurred before: the cultural value is overvalued in comparison to all the other values and leads the decision process. The same, although to a lesser extent, goes for the nineteenth century, while for the twentieth century the balance is completely disturbed: a cultural value which is still under debate because we are dealing with such a recent, even contemporary period, is imposed against all other inconveniences derived from the conservation of 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings, such as poor condition due to feeble structures and materials, and lack of flexibility for adaptation to actual requirements for life or work.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> Roger Paden. "Values and Planning," *Ethics, Place and Environment*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (2001): 28.

<sup>147</sup> See Part V. The Intellectual Context of Urban Conservation.

<sup>148</sup> Of course there are exceptions for each of these periods, but the general trend is the important issue here.



### **III. ORIGINS OF URBAN CONSERVATION**

*Critical historical survey of the ideological basis of the notion of 'urban conservation'*

Quel beau livre ne composerait-on pas en racontant la vie et  
les aventures d'un mot ?

Honoré de Balzac, *Louis Lambert* (1832)<sup>149</sup>

The pleasure found by scholars in following a word back in time is not simply an erudite game, but the satisfaction of the journey comes from the fact that one is able to see how the different meanings and connotations a word has over time reflect the conditions of each period and geographical space through which that word travels.

It is not surprising then, that, in certain ways, the evolution of the concept of 'conservation' is mirrored in the linguistic development of the word itself. The etymology of the term 'conservation' is from the Latin *conservare*, which means simply to keep, to preserve. It exists in English, as well as in Romance languages: English – *conservation*, French – *conservation*, Italian – *conservazione*, Romanian – *conservare*, Spanish – *conservación*, Catalan – *conservació*, Portuguese – *conservação*. A word deriving from the same Latin root actually exists in the great majority European languages; however, in many cases it is not the one used to define heritage conservation, or indeed in their respective syntagma for "conservation area." In fact, by looking at the etymology of the current *terminus technicus* for this concept, one can discover a definite relation with the way in which heritage conservation concerns came about. The inclusion of a new sense in dictionaries means that it is already well established in the public perception of the meaning of that word.

For example, in the United Kingdom, the Oxford English Dictionary gives seven meanings ranging from trivial to specialist, from which some are relevant in tracing the evolution of the term and indeed its attached concept. The original meaning, in use at least from the fourteenth century onwards is:

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<sup>149</sup> "What a glorious book might be written on the life and adventures of a word!" Quote from Honoré de Balzac, *Louis Lambert*, in *La Comédie Humaine/Balzac 11, Études philosophiques Études analytiques*, ed. Pierre-Georges Castex (Paris: Gallimard, 1980), 591.

**1.a.** The action of conserving; preservation from destructive influences, natural decay, or waste; (...)

with several usages, including the following:

**b.** Preservation of existing conditions, (...)

**e. *spec.*** The preservation of the environment, esp. of natural resources.

This certainly is the original sense, which is synonym to 'preservation,' aiming to an unchanged situation or state into perpetuity, if possible. This is a static concept *par excellence*. Another meaning which one can find of relevance is the one used from nineteenth century in psychology:

**3. *Psychol.* Faculty of conservation:** memory proper, or the power of retaining knowledge, (...)

A direct link can be easily made between heritage and memory, and by conserving the heritage we ensure the conservation of the knowledge embedded within it. The actual connection is probably deeper and truer than this connexive syllogism, if it were to consider the latent potential of a word's meaning. This data may refer to technological development, climate, customs, art, ideas and so on, and can be retrieved through specialist interpretation. By accessing this immanent memory, we aim to reveal the identity of those who created it: these are our ancestors, *ergo* heritage construes our identity. There is recurrent evidence in all civilisations supporting this idea, from Egyptian *mastaba* to the Greek and Latin words for 'monument' which derived from 'memory' (*mneme*) and 'to remind' (*monēre*) respectively.

The problem, however, lies with the differences between cultures and their permanently changing nature, which result in a continuously changing relevance of these 'monuments' from a generation to another and from one culture to another. In addition, we are faced with an 'acceleration' of this phenomenon, in line with an increased rhythm of life in general, which rends the past obsolete before we even had the chance to decipher it. Memory is alive, always carried by the living, and therefore in permanent evolution, subject to the dialectics of recollection and



amnesia, while history is the ever problematic and incomplete reconstruction of that which is no more.<sup>150</sup> This is where the term ‘heritage’ provides a more inclusive definition, by substituting true memory with a constructed history.

But in the case of urban conservation, due to the discrete nature of the substance of the city, it is also important how ordinary substance, not only ‘monuments’ become receptacles and transmitters of this identity. The idea of conserving a trivial object as testimony to an event by investing it with a semiological charge, in order to transmit the memory to further generations, can be found in the *Bible’s* Second Book of Moses, Exodus 16:

33. And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a pot, and put an omer full of manna therein, and lay it up before the LORD, to be kept for your generations.

34. As the LORD commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the Testimony, to be kept.<sup>151</sup>

(Exodus, *The Holy Bible*)

In order to understand the evolution of the notion of heritage over the past three centuries towards including urban heritage, one should be aware of the expanding of the concept in two major ways: from monuments which have originally a memorial purpose towards including incidental carriers of memory on one hand, and from tangible heritage to incorporate intangible heritage on the other. As a consequence of this enlargement of the notion of ‘heritage,’ a new meaning for ‘conservation’ has developed. This is concerned with the special syntagma “conservation area” and has only emerged as late as 1958:

7. *Special comb. Conservation area*, an area deemed to be of special architectural, natural, or other interest, whose

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<sup>150</sup> Pierre Nora, *Les Lieux de Memoire, Tome 1: La République* (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1997), 25.

<sup>151</sup> Exodus 16: God Gives Manna, The Second Book of Moses, *The Holy Bible*, King James Version, <http://www.bartleby.com> (accessed 20/06/2003).

character and appearance are protected (usu. by law) from undesirable changes.

Hence the term conservation surpasses the narrow and limited understanding of preservation, allowing for enhancement, and not only of the appearance, but it refers to character.<sup>152</sup> Therefore, the term 'conservation' has been used in this sense, of keeping or preserving, until the twentieth century, when the discipline with the same name became increasingly complex requiring a nuancing of its terminology and clear definitions.

It seems there is a continuous confusion between conservation professionals when it comes to deciding what we conserve at city level. 'Why' and 'how' we should conserve historic cities and urban areas has been discussed over and over again in conservation, planning, and administrative circles. The question of 'why' and 'how' should, in my view, lead straight to 'what' to conserve. But this link is not always very clear, and it seems that, thirty years after urban conservation was identified as an issue, theoretical and conceptual research is still needed in order to backup such decisions.

This is the consequence of the fact that most education in this field is focused on 'how' to conserve and its appanage of practical skills and knowledge, rather than on 'what' to conserve and its conceptual prerequisites. In essence, there are at least two major conservation approaches: the first and most common is concerned with an almost algorithmic practice for similar initial conditions, while the second is concerned with the questioning of the very rationale of this field. Therefore, once something has been identified as worthy to be protected by law, conservation's instrumental arsenal is employed and contemporary technologies, as well as knowledge of the traditional ones allow for the best operational results.

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<sup>152</sup> Nevertheless, the definition was rather vague and had no proper operational guidelines.

The problem, however, lies with the identification of what constitutes heritage, which, in the case of urban conservation areas, tends to be still rather arbitrary due to the lack of a proper theoretical framework for the urban heritage discourse. This needs to be expanded and refined, reflecting the perspectives and participation of academia, public, and administration, in order to inform dialogues across social, political, and disciplinary boundaries. The concept of 'urban conservation' has no disciplinary base due to the limited offspring of theoretical literature, and has generally failed to accommodate terminologies, as it is situated at the articulation of two worlds with parallel existences: heritage conservation and urbanism.

### III. 1. Turn of approach from monuments' preservation towards urban conservation

Urban conservation emerged at the beginning of the last century as an idea almost unwittingly rooted in both urbanism and also heritage conservation simultaneously. It is indebted to the 'invention' of urban heritage,<sup>153</sup> as Françoise Choay refers to it, but, as we will see, it was merely a 'discovery:' it has always been there. Protective attitudes towards what we call today 'heritage' have been identified in our culture from the oldest times, but it was in Rome, predictably, that in 1162 the senate of the Republic of Rome even had to issue a decree protecting Trajan's Column. This should certainly not be seen as protection of ancient monuments in the modern sense, but it does clearly indicate that they were aware that with the destruction of

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<sup>153</sup> "Chapitre V. L'invention du patrimoine urbain," in Françoise Choay, *L'Allégorie du patrimoine* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1992), 135-243.

such a symbol of the ancient grandeur of Rome they would lose a piece of their own heritage and significance.<sup>154</sup>

There are innumerable examples, such as S. Prassede in Rome, which has been successively restored in the 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries reusing Roman columns of unusual design, architrave fragments, and columns from the nearby Baths of Titus and Trajan, etc. (most richly decorated placed nearest to the High Altar).



**Figure 43. S. Prassede, Rome, capital re-carved into a column base and slices of ancient marble columns re-used as wall facing and floor mosaics**

Source: Author's slide collection.

In a way, the medieval and Renaissance practice of *spolia*, reuse of materials from plundered from antique ruins, was the phenomenon that triggered a

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<sup>154</sup> "Rome, §VII, 1(i): Spolia and reuse: Architecture," *Grove Art Online*, <http://www.groveart.com> (accessed 25/09/2006)

realisation that these ruins, are a heritage still relevant for contemporary life on a higher level than simply as a source of building materials. The humanist Francesco Petrarca complained in 1347 to Cola di Rienzo, tribune of the Roman people, of the continuing deterioration of the remains of Classical antiquity through this practice.<sup>155</sup> Raphael, too, complained in 1519 to Pope Leo X of their state, compared with descriptions by Classical authors, and advocated their protection and rebuilding, or at least their surveying and reconstruction on paper. The Pope appointed Raphael *Romanarum Antiquitatum Praeses*, which can be considered the proto-institution for the protection of heritage. However, it has been argued that the Pope's interest was in fact to exploit the ruined buildings and the report and reconstruction of ancient Rome that supposedly ensued, as much as they would have been an important 'heritage survey,' did not prevent this.<sup>156</sup>

Thus, the destruction of ancient buildings continued in the Renaissance and Baroque periods, but the creation of collections of antiquities from the early 15th century marked a change in the way they were valued. The use of *spolia* as building components had come to an end; each ancient item discovered was isolated and, as a work of art and an antiquity, served as a means of teaching and civilizing. This, together with the more general framework of the developing discipline of historiography, have led to the general conception of heritage as isolated objects and monuments.

The period starting with the end of the eighteenth century witnessed the emergence of the institutionalised concept of heritage in a wider meaning than just ancient monuments. The first such Decree for the protection of monuments dates from 1792, during the French Revolution, when the Legislative Assembly decided

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<sup>155</sup> H. A. Meek, "Changing Attitudes to Restoration," *Ulster Journal of Archaeology* 28 (1965): 122.

<sup>156</sup> G. Baldwin Brown, *The Care of Ancient Monuments*, 11.

provisory conservation measures for monuments of the National Fund threatened by revolutionary torment:

(...) considerant qu'en livrant a la destruction les monuments propres a rappeler les souvenirs du despotisme, il importe de preserver et de conserver honorablement les chefs-d'oeuvre des arts, si dignes d'occuper les loisirs et d'embellir le territoire d'un peuple libre.

(Decree of 16 September 1792)

But after this revolutionary Decree, it was not until 1913 that a law for the protection of historical monuments was promulgated in France, followed in 1930 by a law for protection of natural sites and monuments. Protection was eventually extended to surroundings of historical monuments only in 1943. Other European countries followed suite.



**Figure 44.** 'La Liberté guidant le peuple' by Eugène Delacroix, 1830

Source: *Wikimedia Commons*, <http://commons.wikimedia.org> (accessed 4/07/2008)

A key issue for the understanding of the strong links between *heritage* and *identity*, if not even identification of one with the other, is the very emergence of conservation as a discipline in the nineteenth century. This happened precisely for the purpose of enhancing the definition of national identities, as a result of the ideological revolution begun in the eighteenth century.

In order to apprehend the evolution of our understanding of the notion of 'heritage' over the past century towards including urban heritage, we should be aware of the expansion of the concept in two major ways. The first acknowledges the understanding that monuments can be attributed not only *a priori* but also *a posteriori* memorial value: it expands from monuments which originally had a memorial purpose, towards including incidental carriers of memory. The second extends the notion of 'heritage' from tangible, material heritage towards incorporating intangible, immaterial heritage.

The two developments of meaning are closely interconnected, pointing to a shift from the perennial towards an acceptance of the ephemeral and the fragile. Alois Riegl (1857 - 1905) was the first to distinguish between traditional and modern approaches towards heritage, between 'intentional' and 'unintentional' monuments,<sup>157</sup> bringing into attention more inconspicuous aspects of heritage such as minor traditional buildings, which are not of special interest in themselves, but together form an identifiable pattern with heritage value. Accordingly, the term 'urban heritage' was coined by Gustavo Giovannoni<sup>158</sup> at the beginning of the twentieth century to define urban fabric as a *sui generis* entity, and not as the sum of its independent monuments, which was the understanding of the historic city in his time and still is today to a great extent. This idea was truly innovative, and one could say it came before its time as it has proved to have little influence on the development of conservation at the beginning of the twentieth century, and it was only at the end of the century that urbanism and politics have become ripe enough to assimilate it – at least on a theoretical level, since a lot of the practice still leaves a

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<sup>157</sup> Alois Riegl, *Der moderne Denkmalkultus, sein Wesen und seine Entstehung* (Leipzig-Viena, 1903). Translated in English as *The Modern Cult of Monuments*, tr. Kurt W. Forster and Diane Ghirardo, *Oppositions* 25 (1982): 21–51.

<sup>158</sup> Françoise Choay's introduction to the French edition of *Vecchie Città ed Edilizia Nuova*, Gustavo Giovannoni. *L'Urbanisme face aux villes anciennes* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1998), 13.



lot to be wished for in this field. The reason for this may seem elusive, but it is probably exactly that lack of conceptual research aforementioned, or, in other words, we cannot see the woods for the trees, as we are so much involved in the technological advancement of conservation.

Hence, an 'archivist' model still prevails in our society's view of urban heritage. Within this, the town is metaphorically assimilated with an archive: its buildings, streets, symbolic places are individually regarded as charters about our history and our culture. The concept of archive, based on the idea of authenticity, was firstly theorised by Camillo Boito (1836 - 1914);<sup>159</sup> it necessarily implies a certain curating through the identification, selection and preservation of the material as close as possible to its authentic form, although comprising successive stages. But while this approach might work at the level of individual monuments, it does not really lend itself to be instrumental at an urban scale, where the historic town is essentially characterized by its permanent re-use, adaptation, and even destruction to make room for the new.

Despite this, it is still a common, superficial approach to urban conservation that leads to the creation of museum-city-centres and thematic towns, giving up their vocation as places of urbanity only to become inert objects of display. And this is exactly the flaw of certain conservationist theories, which makes them not only vulnerable to criticism, but also puts tools in the hands of those opponents who advocate the complete dismissal of conservation in certain cases. Historic centres and areas in cities are researched, put through a strainer with more and more generous criterial holes, but still somewhat aleatory, and offered different grades of protection and, afterwards, of cultural marketing. The success of the actual instances of urban conservation ranges from perennial interventions to remarkable failures.

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<sup>159</sup> Camillo Boito, "I nostri vecchi monumenti: Conservare o restaurare?," *Nuova Antologia* 87 (1885): 480–506.

This implies there is more out there than conservation precepts; urban fabric, regarded as a living organism, is far more complex and, very important, is in continuous change.

As a consequence of this enlargement of the notion of 'heritage,' a new meaning for 'conservation' has developed; therefore a second element to be considered is that of the development of conservation theory and philosophy in general. Ideas about the urban fabric have evolved to convergence within two schools of thought which developed to a great extent in parallel: heritage conservation and urbanism; albeit the greater cultural context of these ideas is reflected in their similar apparent inability of dealing with the tension between object and texture that appears in visions of the historic city. The next part looks at the relationship between the two schools, their historical circumstances and consequences.

### III. 2. Conservation of historic cities (as complex monuments) vs. integrated urban conservation

As anachronistic as it may seem, some still argue that, by definition and common sense, conservation of urban heritage means putting it under a glass-bell, protecting it from natural decay and man-made changes by engaging the impressive conservation technical know-how developed over the last two centuries. Others declare that testimonies of the passing of time and accumulation of styles and periods actually add up to its heritage value. Still others have recently asserted that urban heritage conservation must, and is becoming increasingly integrated into contemporary life.

Historically, searches for the perfect city, crucible of the ideal society, compound and reveal simultaneity of conceptual virtues and operational vices. Does this mean that the contemporary vision of metropolis is doomed to fail as well? As the challenge of swift urbanisation of the last two centuries has coupled with important societal transformations, certain urban changes occurring as a result of these have brought about concern that environmental as well as urban heritage resources are being irreversibly destroyed and thus lost for the generations to come. Moreover, recent decades confirm the malfunction of modern urbanism and the

crisis of a futile “modernity” based on the rejection of tradition. In response, the cultural and identity role played by ancient quarters is henceforth reaffirmed, establishing urban conservation as a conceptual result of post-modernity, i.e. its attention for inconspicuous issues. This part investigates the prospect of urbanism after post-modernism from this particular point of view: urban conservation, in the light of the evolution of the relationship between the two. It provides a synopsis of the actual process of integration of cultural values into the planning process in Europe.

This has not been the only dilemma in contemporary urbanism, but it is one of the most important ones, not only because it seems to be the cause of certain urban problems – produced either by completely disregarding conservation, or by misunderstanding it – but also because it can help to solve certain dysfunctions ensuing from the current rapid urban change. While heritage conservation and urbanism emerged as disciplines from streams having little connection with each other, they did meet over the centuries and, most importantly, they became to be very closely related in the contemporary city. This chapter aims to provide an insight into the role of urban conservation within the reality of a changing built environment where globalisation, through social and economic shifts, drives the evolution of the character and, in the long run, identity of the place itself.

Attitudes in urbanism towards heritage have changed significantly over the centuries. Until the middle ages, urban development has been characterized by an organic and continuous use of urban form surviving from previous periods; this practice does not yet acknowledge the relics inherited from the past as sources of knowledge and therefore they are unscrupulously adapted or used as building material. Nevertheless, this is not surprising when we consider the relatively slow pace of change up until the early modern period, which ensures the continuity and presence of testimonies of a community’s past naturally, without the need of conscientious measures aiming to preserve them.

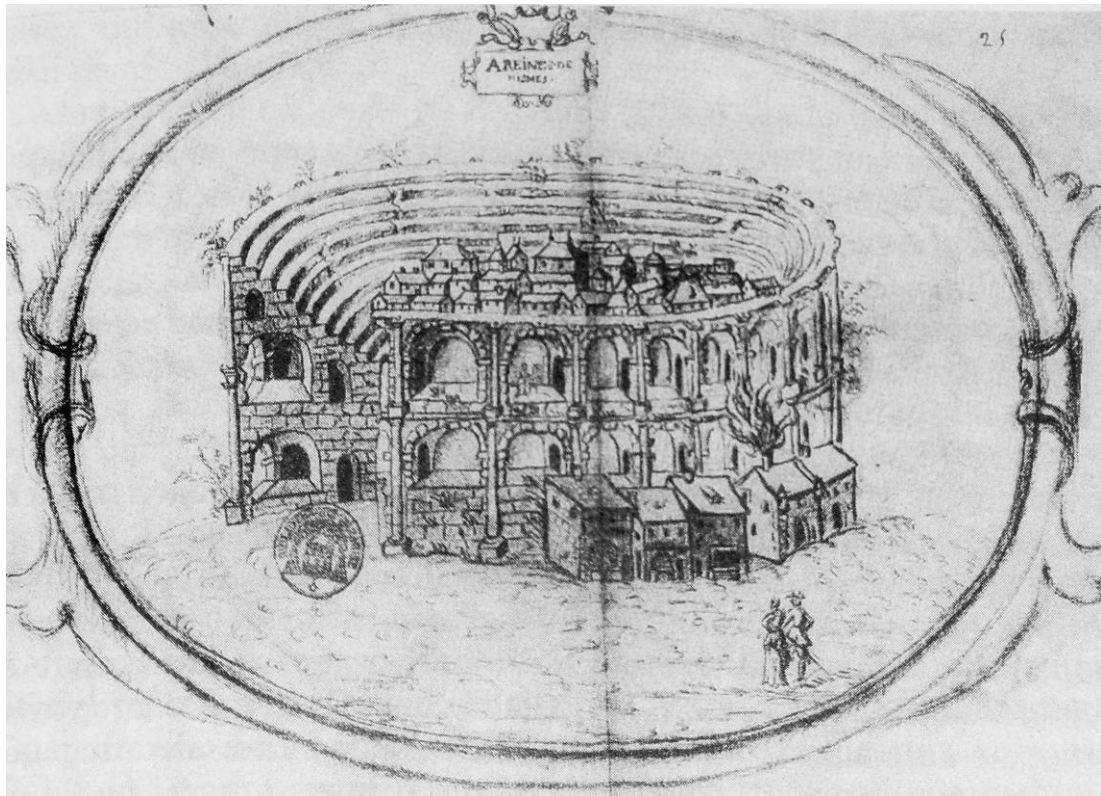


Figure 45. Les Arènes de Nîmes, seventeenth century drawing in a manuscript by Dubuisson-Aubenay

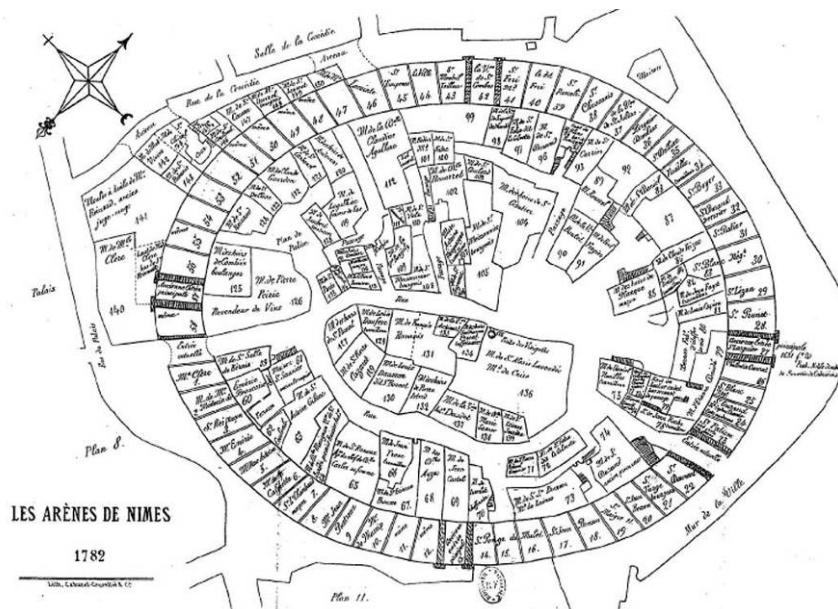


Figure 46. Plan of the Château des Arènes in 1782

Sources fig. 46-47: Françoise Choay, *Alegoria patrimoniului [L'Allégorie du patrimoine]* (București: Simetria, 1998), 67 and *Histoire de Nîmes*, <http://www.nimausensis.com> (accessed 28/07/2010).

The amphitheatre in Nîmes, for example, was encroached by medieval buildings housing almost 2000 people right up until its restoration, which started in 1786 and continued until mid-nineteenth century. The amphitheatre was for many centuries a real fortress with mansions, houses and churches; the buildings inside, outside and then on top of the amphitheatre structure have been demolished.

The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries' understanding of heritage was not only limited to isolated monuments, but also what mattered was their cult value in the first place, and only evolved to art value with the fashion of collections and exhibitions. Inherently, monuments were limited to *capo d'opere* of their style, selected on the basis of aesthetic, artistic and historic criteria. Jean Nicholas-Louis Durand's (1760 - 1834) typology<sup>160</sup> epitomises, in its "geometrical silence," as put by the architectural theorist Manfredo Tafuri (1935 - 1994), the approach of his period to the theory and history of architecture, which placed an emphasis on pragmatic values, to the extent of ruling out any possibility of transcendental ones:<sup>161</sup>

C'est donc de la disposition seule que doit s'occuper un architecte, même celui qui tiendrait à la décoration architectonique, et qui ne chercherait qu'à plaire, puisque cette décoration ne peut être appelée belle, ne peut causer un vrai plaisir, qu'autant qu'elle ne résulte que de la disposition la plus convenable et la plus économique.<sup>162</sup>

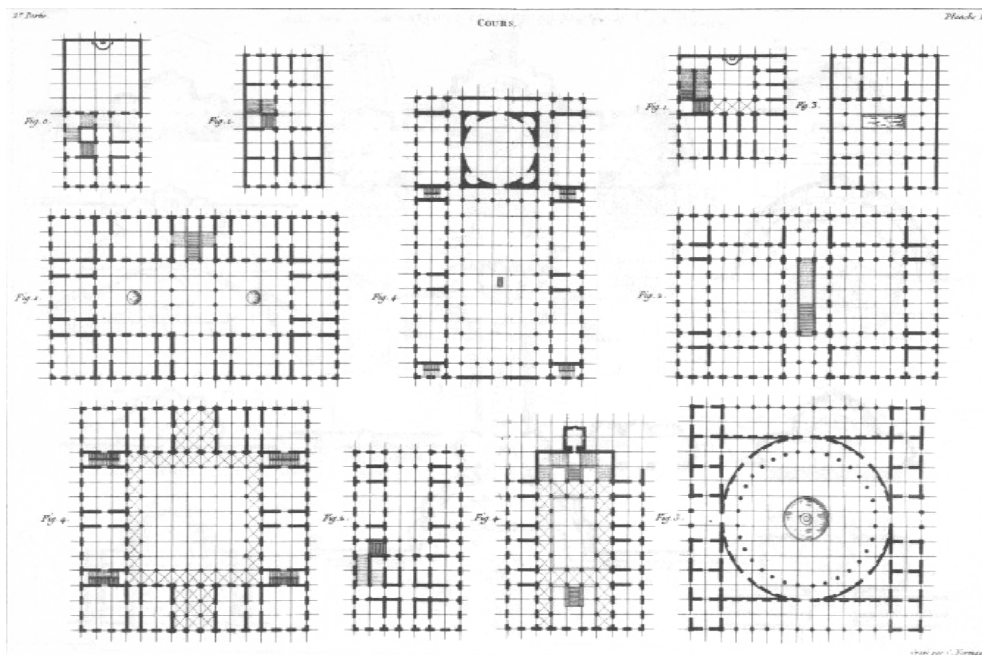
(Jean Nicolas-Louis Durand, *Précis des leçons d'architecture données à l'École Royale Polytechnique*, 1802-1805)

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<sup>160</sup> Jean Nicolas-Louis Durand, *Recueil et parallèle des édifices de tout genre, anciens et modernes, remarquables par leur beauté, par leur grandeur, ou par leur singularité, et dessinés sur une même échelle. Avec un texte extrait de l'Histoire Générale de l'Architecture par J.G.Legrand* (Paris: L'Imprimerie de Gille Fils, 1799-1801).

<sup>161</sup> Manfredo Tafuri, "Toward a critique of architectural ideology." In *Architecture Theory since 1968*, Ed. K. Michael Hays (Cambridge, Mass. and London, En.: The MIT Press, 2002), 10.

<sup>162</sup> Jean Nicolas-Louis Durand, *Précis des leçons d'architecture données à l'École Royale Polytechnique*, 1802-1805 (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1819), 21.



**Figure 47. Plate from *Précis des leçons d'architecture* by Jean Nicolas-Louis Durand, 1817**

Source : Jean-Nicholas-Louis Durand. *Précis des leçons d'architecture données à l'Ecole polytechnique* [1802-1805] and *Partie graphique des cours d'architecture faits à l'Ecole royale polytechnique depuis sa réorganisation* [1821], translated as *Precis of the Lectures on Architecture: With Graphic Portion of the Lectures on Architecture*, (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2000).

Conversely, eighteenth and nineteenth-century's theories of urban design were founded on attitudes towards the historic city, be them critical or full of prise, and reveal the way in which the historic city was understood as organism on one hand, and as cultural value on the other. Already starting with the seventeenth century "the divinely created Order of Nature and the humanly created Order of Society were once again seen as illuminating one another."<sup>163</sup> Baroque designs that relied entirely on geometry and symmetry were replaced at this time with designs aspiring to 'naturalness,' and 'picturesque.'

The emergence of the Enlightenment dwelled on the idea of a link between 'history' and 'human nature'. The latter was seen as perpetually adapting, even in

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<sup>163</sup> Stephen Toulmin, *Cosmopolis: The Hidden Agenda of Modernity* (New York: The Free Press, 1990), 98.

terms of our moral character, influenced by external factors which arguably follow potentially discernable principles and patterns. Marc-Antoine Laugier (1713-1769), who according to Tafuri “officially initiated Enlightenment architectural theory” with his provocative and much criticised *Essai sur l'Architecture* in 1753, wrote in praise of the organically developed historic city:<sup>164</sup>

It is not an easy task to design the plan of a city so the overall beauty would be divided in an infinity of local beauties, all different; for it to be ordered, yet with a sort of confusion; that a number of regular parts would yield together a certain idea of irregularity and chaos, which is so suited to big cities. No city better than Paris offers to the imagination of a clever artist such a beautiful field of action. It is like an immense forest, with topographical variations which alternate plains and mountains, crossed in the middle by a large river which, dividing itself in several branches, forms islands of different sizes.<sup>165</sup>

(M.A. Laugier, *Essai sur l'Architecture*)

This passage seems to hint to Laugier’s belief that what seems to be irregular and chaotic in the historically evolved city must in fact be the variation resulting from a system that works pretty much like an organic one, i.e. a forest. This would seem to mark a definite shift from the preceding urbanist thought: the geometric street pattern, the controlled townscapes, and the formal garden design of the Renaissance. However, Laugier made a sudden shift of ideas when he wrote twelve years later on the same issue: the ‘unruly’ forest had become an ‘ordered’ park.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> Manfredo Tafuri, *Architecture and Utopia: Design and Capitalist Development* [1973], Tr. Barbara Luigia La Penta (Cambridge, MA and London, England: The MIT Press, 1976), 3-4.

<sup>165</sup> M.A. Laugier, *Essai sur l'Architecture* (Paris, 1753)

<sup>166</sup> Tafuri notes an interesting comparison with projects for London by John Gwynn and George Dance Jr. See J. Gwynn, *London and Westminster Improved, illustrated by plans : to which is prefixed, a discourse on publick magnificence; with observations on the state of arts and artists in this kingdom, wherein the study of the polite arts is recommended as necessary to a liberal education: concluded by some proposals relative to places not laid down in the plans* (London, 1766)



Whoever knows how to design a park well will have no difficulty in tracing the plan for the building of a city according to its given area and situation. There must be squares, crossroads, and streets. There must be regularity and fantasy, relationships and oppositions, and casual, unexpected elements that vary the scene; great order in the details, confusion, uproar, and tumult in the whole.<sup>167</sup>

(M.A. Laugier, *Observations sur l'Architecture*)

These approaches in architecture and town planning could not be further apart, and Durand was in fact a declared opponent of Vitruvius and Laugier.<sup>168</sup> The more pragmatic, architectural approach, although initially controversial, eventually took over, not without the role played by Durand's longstanding teaching career and his writings' prompt translation into German.<sup>169</sup>

Although the city is seen as a natural phenomenon, the importance of its 'natural' laws is underestimated and architects' attention concentrates on the formal issues of this naturalness, applying to the city the formal dimensions of the picturesque. In this way, the city's formal and esthetical issues dominate the discourse, to the detriment of structural and organisational concerns. It seems to be a deep misunderstanding of the inner complexity of the city, as if by preserving or reproducing its 'natural' image, its internal laws would be preserved or reproduced as well.<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> M.A. Laugier, *Observations sur l'Architecture* (The Hague, 1765): 312-3 which takes up ideas from *Essai sur l'Architecture* (Paris, 1753), 258-65

<sup>168</sup> Werner Szambien, "Durand, Jean-Nicholas," *Grove Art Online*, <http://www.groveart.com> (accessed 12/06/2005)

<sup>169</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>170</sup> This misunderstanding is perpetuated today by the New Urbanism group.



Figure 48. Plan of the City of London, John Norden, 1593

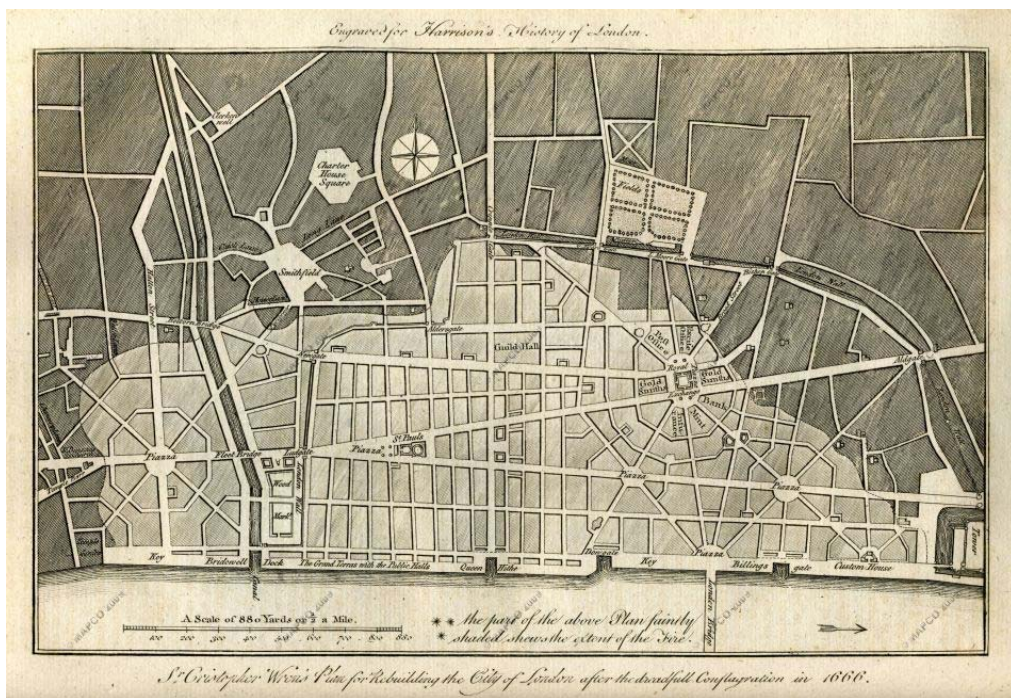
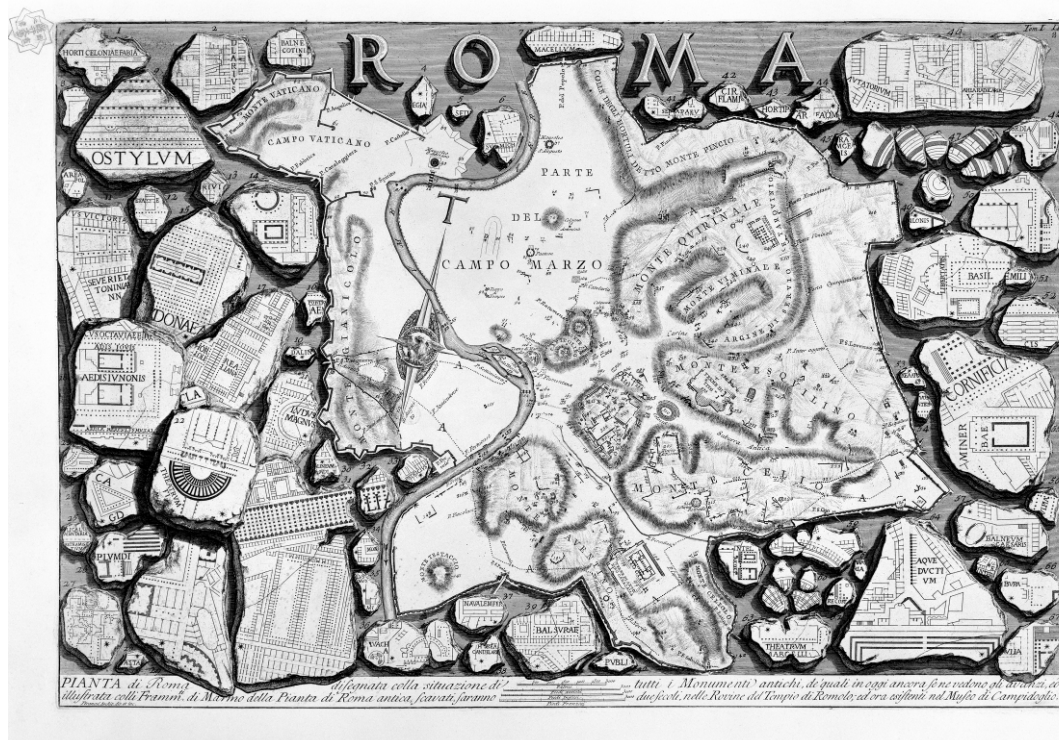


Figure 49. Proposal for the rebuilding of the City of London after the Great Fire of 1666, Sir Christopher Wren, 1666

Sources fig. 49-50: Wikimedia Commons, <http://commons.wikimedia.org> (accessed 17/12/2009) and Mapco: Map and Plan Collection Online, <http://archivemaps.com> (accessed 17/12/2009)



**Figure 50. Plan of Rome illustrated with marble fragments of Forma Urbis Romae, by Giovanni Batista Piranesi.**

Source: Giovanni Batista Piranesi, *Le Antichità Romane*, vol.I [1756], plate II, in *Opere di Giovanni Battista Piranesi, Francesco Piranesi e d'altri* (Paris: Firmin Didot Freres, 1835-1839)

Giovanni Battista Piranesi's (1720 - 1778) *Ichonographiam Campi Martii*<sup>171</sup> reveals a cityscape which is nothing more than a *summa* of isolated monuments, as if composed of fragments of *Forma Urbis Romae*,<sup>172</sup> in which "history is invoked as an inherent 'value,'" and "typology is asserted as an instance of superior organisation,

<sup>171</sup> Giovanni Battista Piranesi, *Ichonographiam Campi Martii* (1762) (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1835).

<sup>172</sup> Fragments depicting important buildings from *Forma Urbis Romae*, the Severan Marble Plan (203-211 AD) discovered in 1562, were earlier drawn and published by Piranesi in *Antichità Romane*, vol. 1 (Rome, 1756), plates II-VII. He borrows from *Forma Urbis Romae* the manner of representing the ground floor of buildings so that there is a continuous inside-outside flow of space, but while the Antique plan represents a relationship and ratio of public buildings to residential ones that reflects a real situation of the Roman urban fabric at that moment, Piranesi chooses to represent grand public buildings and ensembles in an imaginary situation, albeit a number of them are actual historic ones shown in their real location.

yet the configuration of the individual types tends to destroy the very concept of typology."<sup>173</sup>



**Figure 51. Ichonographiam Campi Martii by Giovanni Battista Piranesi**

Source: Giovanni Battista Piranesi, *Campus Martius Antiquae Urbis*, vol.X [1762], plates VIII-XIII, in *Opere di Giovanni Battista Piranesi, Francesco Piranesi e d'altri* (Paris: Firmin Didot Freres, 1835-1839).

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<sup>173</sup> Tafuri, "Toward a critique," 10.

Monumental buildings and ensembles are shown in their perfect symmetry and hierarchy of layout with their axes clashing with each other and with the organic shapes of the topographical substrate at awkward angles, resulting in residual spaces; these would be hidden to those traversing a 'real' Piranesi's *Campus Martius*, but they are mercilessly apparent in his planimetric representation. This is therefore a kind of 'heterotopia,' which according to Michel Foucault (1926 - 1984), represents the simultaneous juxtaposition, within a single, real place (albeit the bi-dimensional space of the paper in this case), of different spaces and locations that are otherwise incompatible with each other.<sup>174</sup> This ultimately reveals the essential struggle between architecture and the city, the underlying incongruity between object and context.

Completely disregarding this struggle, Durand takes apart the urban texture back into its separate, taxonomical parts.<sup>175</sup> This fact provides the basis for the attitude of contemporaneous urbanism towards heritage. While this theoretical discourse has gained territory within architectural epistemology, the question of renovating historic centres has emerged in all large towns, with a different set of problems, as an attempt of actually restructure urban life.

This had given rise to a romantic reaction which makes urban heritage – simultaneously precious and fragile as a result of the general movement of urbanisation and industrialisation through which the society is passing – a matter of conscience.

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<sup>174</sup> See discussion of Foucault's "Of other spaces" in Part V. Issues in Urban Conservation.

<sup>175</sup> Durand, *Recueil et parallèle des édifices de tout genre*.

It is in this context that Victor Hugo (1802 – 1885) has written “Guerre aux démolisseurs:”<sup>176</sup> a true manifesto against the vandalism represented in his eyes by the unchecked urbanism of the time and, at the same time, a plea for heritage.



**Figure 52. Paris clearing in 1853**



**Figure 53. Paris in 1873, after Hausmann’s interventions**

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<sup>176</sup> Victor Hugo, “Guerre aux démolisseurs: 1825-1832,” *Littérature et Philosophie Mêlées, Tome Second* (Paris: Librairie de L. Hachette et Cie., 1868), 24-52.

Patrick Geddes (1854 – 1932) pioneered a sociological approach to the study of urbanisation; he argued that the city should be studied in the context of the region; predicted that the process of urbanisation could be analysed and understood; and believed that the application of knowledge about the city could shape future developments towards life-enhancement for all citizens. Inherent in all these beliefs was the central idea that social processes and spatial form are intimately related, which Geddes drew from contemporary geographers Élisée Reclus and Paul Vidal de la Blanche and sociologist Frédéric Le Play.<sup>177</sup>

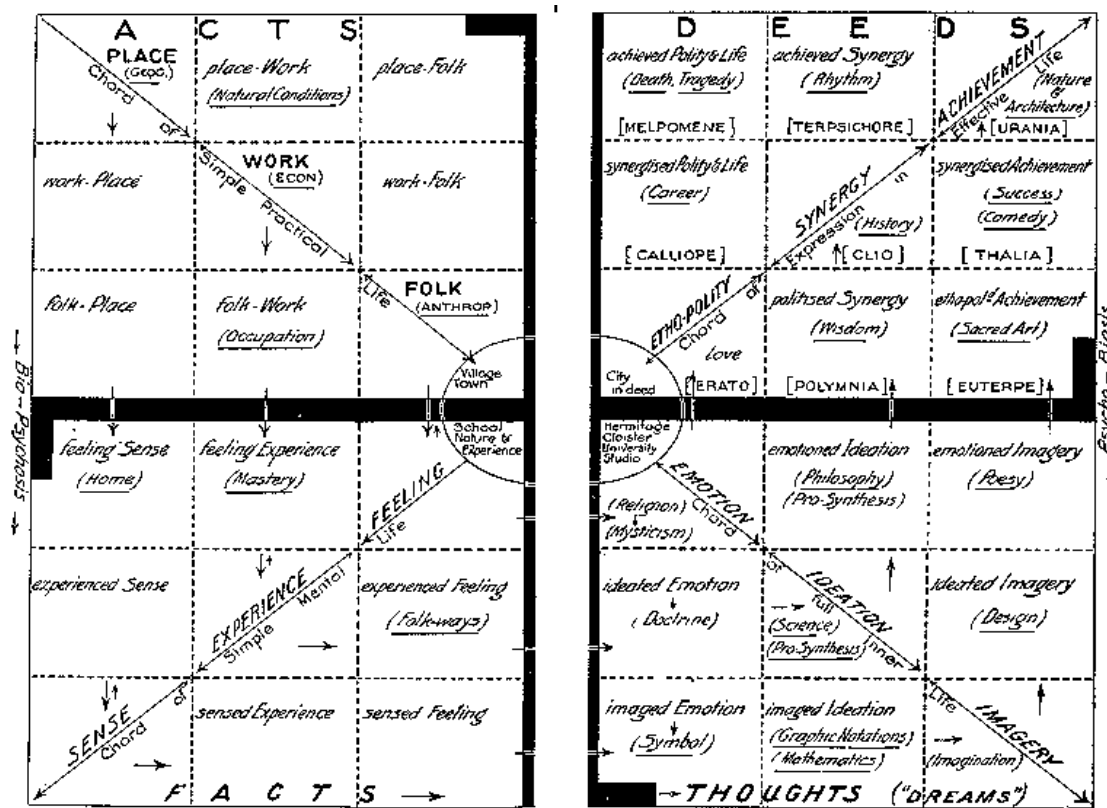


Figure 54. Patrick Geddes' Thinking Machine

<sup>177</sup> Peter Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow* (USA, UK, Australia: Blackwell Publishing, 2002), 146.



Figure 55. Old Edinburgh Street at the International Edinburgh Exhibition, 1886

Source: EdinPhoto, <http://www.edinphoto.org.uk> (accessed 8/05/2005)

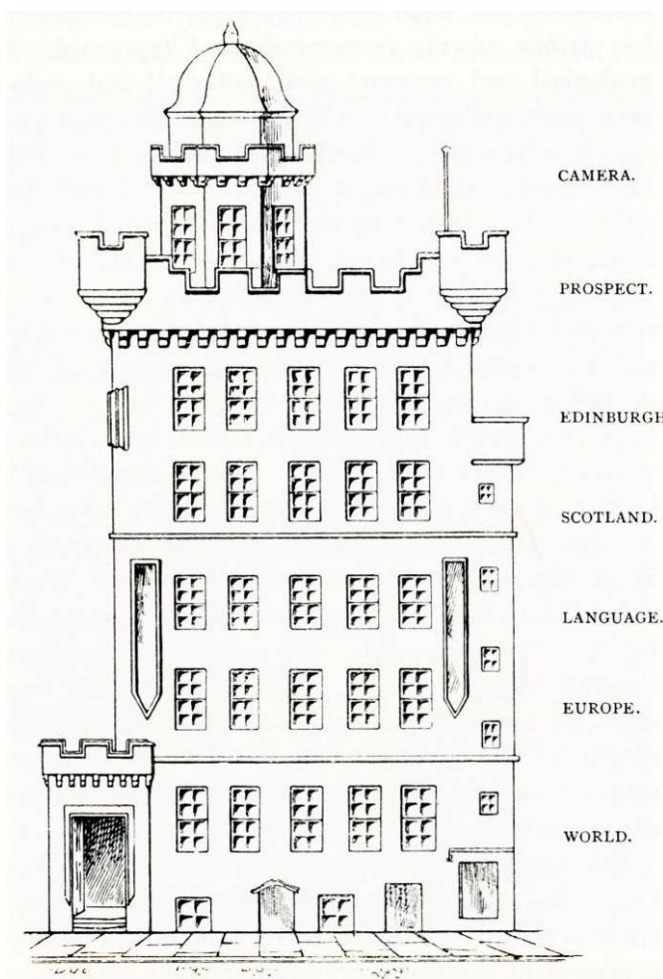


Figure 56. The Outlook Tower by Patrick Geddes

Source: Patrick Geddes, *Cities in Evolution: An Introduction to the Town Planning Movement and the Study of Civics* [1915] (London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1968), 324.



Geddes believed that a community needs to be educated about their urban environment in order to enhance this relationship, and as a result have a happier community living in a better environment. For the International Edinburgh Exhibition in 1886 he persuaded the council to present the area dedicated to the city as a the Royal Mile of the Old Town, populated with replicas of the historical buildings lost in the previous decades to hygienist interventions. Also, for the continuing civic education of the community, he established a Civic Observatory and Laboratory in Edinburgh's Outlook Tower. The urban context was interpreted for visitors in a gradual manner from the world scale on the ground floor, to Europe an scale on the first floor, Language, Scotland and Edinburgh on the higher ones, and culminating with the top storey as an observation point, both mediated by the *camera obscura* and also unmediated from the terrace. Geddes understanding of the cultural significance of the urban fabric in its entirety and complexity marks an important landmark for urban conservation.

G. Baldwin Brown (1849 – 1932), too, acknowledges that beside the artistic and historical monuments recognised until then, there are

(...) a large number of humbler domestic relics of the older days, in the shape of town houses, country cottages, street fountains, rustic bridges, sign boards, and the like, which would never find a place in any state inventory, but which combine to give their picturesque charm to our more ancient town and hamlets.

This aspect is the creation of centuries during which the urban community has been fashioning for itself a material environment. The habitations, the places of meeting, the rearrangements for internal convenience and for security, have come gradually into being as suited the situation and needs of the body of politic, and the result is a complete and harmonious picture, the preservation of which is an object to

all people of sense and feeling. The 'Stadtbild'<sup>178</sup> does not depend on the few outstanding monuments but on the general physiognomy of the place."<sup>179</sup>

(G. Baldwin Brown, *The Care of Ancient Monuments*)

With good reason, the work of Camillo Boito and Alois Riegl is considered testimony that, at the turn of the nineteenth century already, heritage conservation had become a discipline in its own right.<sup>180</sup> In addition, it is certain that their ideas of a wider encompassing notion of heritage, embodying more than simply historical or artistic values, has been paramount for the evolution of urban conservation as an integrative approach to the historic urban fabric.

This is the period in which urbanism, as a holistic study of the city, was established as a discipline too, despite the avant-gardist *Teoría General de la Urbanización* by Ildefonso Cerdá (1815 - 1876), who coined the term 'urbanism,' already in 1867.<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> 'Stadtbild' is here used in the sense of the characteristic aspect of city.

<sup>179</sup> G. Baldwin Brown, *The Care for Ancient Monuments*, 23.

<sup>180</sup> Camillo Boito, "I nostri vecchi monumenti: Conservare o restaurare?" *Nuova Antologia* 87(1885): 480–506 and Alois Riegl, *Der moderne Denkmalkultus, sein Wesen und seine Entstehung* (Leipzig and Viena, 1903) discussed in Choay, *Allegorie du Patrimoine*, 124.

<sup>181</sup> Ildefonso Cerdá, *La Theorie Generale de l'Urbanisation* [1867], tr. Antonio Lopez de Aberasturi (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1979). Coincidentally, Cerdá's book had to suffer a time-lapse similar to Giovanonni's *Vecchie Cita ed Edilizia Nuova* until it was first translated into another language – this French edition. Choay, Introduction to *Allegorie du Patrimoine*, 1-2.



**Figure 57. Superimposition of Wren's proposal over an early 20<sup>th</sup> century plan of London, Paul Waterhouse, 1912**

Source: Paul Waterhouse, "Old Towns and New Needs," in *Old Towns and New Needs*, 11.

Two complementary lectures given at the University of Manchester in 1912 show contemporary concern between architects and planners for the role played by the study of the historic urban environment. On one hand, Paul Waterhouse (1861 - 1924) is concerned with the rehabilitation of old town in order to fulfil the new needs of the society, and how town planning – in its traditional sense of brand new planning on virgin land – is inadequate for addressing these problems. Waterhouse used a superimposition of Wren's proposal over a contemporary plan of London in order to demonstrate the lack of foresight of Wren's plan, and indeed of this type of plan in general.



**Figure 58. Aerial view of Wren's proposal area today**

Source: Google Maps, <http://maps.google.uk> (accessed 22/02/2006)

He argues that they are 'static' and, because of this, even when they are offering the best solution for that time, they are doomed to become obsolete in a very short period of time due to the evolving nature of the urban environment and society.<sup>182</sup> Waterhouse tries to define town planning as a discipline, in the Aristotelian paradigm, as having an object and a method: it has as an object "the creation of perfect towns" and, as for the method, "the application to a town of that process of ordered forethought which we habitually apply to individual buildings"<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>182</sup> Paul Waterhouse, "Old Towns and New Needs," in *Old Towns and New Needs: also the Town Extension Plan: being the Warbutrton Lectures for 1912, Delivered by Paul Waterhouse, MA and Raymond Unwin, FRIBA* (Manchester: University Press, 1912), 3-30.

<sup>183</sup> Waterhouse, "Old Towns and New Needs," 3.

On the other hand, Raymond Unwin (1863 - 1940)<sup>184</sup> emphasizes the necessity of a thorough study of the community for whom an extension is planned as the key element for successful planning.<sup>185</sup> By analysing and understanding the historic town and its community, the architect can pertinently make proposals for a new extension, maximising the chances of such an extension of being appropriated by the community. Unwin sees therefore the Gedessian 'civic survey' not only as a mean of decoding the rules and particularities of a given historic urban environment in order to make informed proposals for its future, but also for informing extension proposals.

Only the course in town planning at the École des Hautes Études Urbaines in Paris offered in the 1920s a training that existed nowhere else in Europe at the time, focusing on the preliminary study, a systematic *dossier urbain*.

Landscape – that, in fact, is what Paris becomes for the flâneur. Or, more precisely, the city neatly splits for him into its dialectical poles: it opens up to him as a landscape, even as it closes around him as a room.<sup>186</sup>

(Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*)

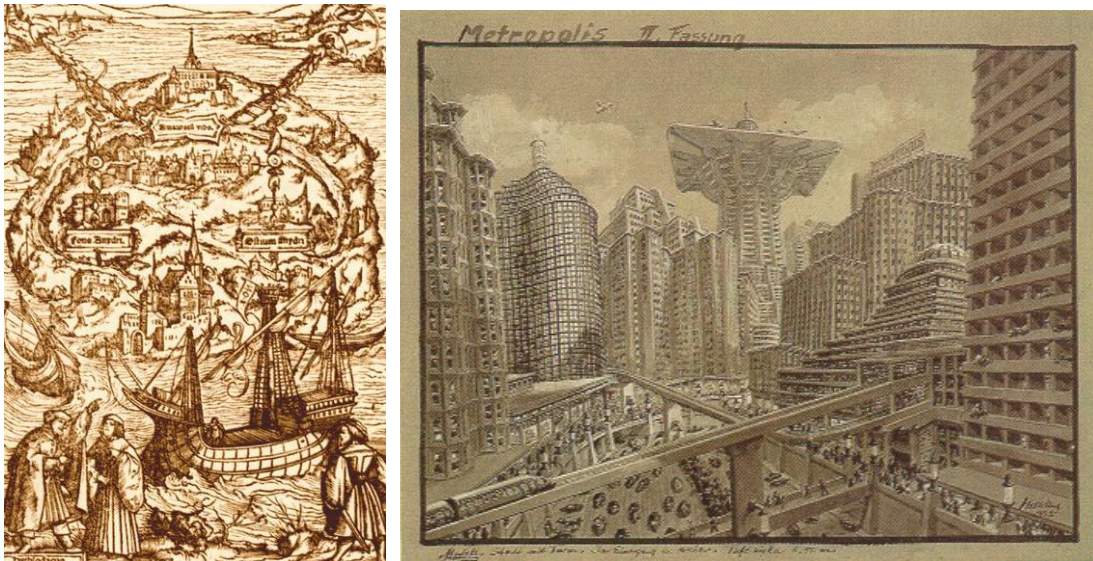
By contrast with earlier approaches, but in close connection to previous utopian visions, modernist movements in urbanism have promoted the *tabula rasa* concept discussed in the previous part.

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<sup>184</sup> Raymond Unwin, "The Town Extension Plan," in *Old Towns and New Needs: also the Town Extension Plan: being the Warbutrton Lectures for 1912, Delivered by Paul Waterhouse, MA and Raymond Unwin, FRIBA* (Manchester: University Press, 1912), 33-62.

<sup>185</sup> Unwin, "The Town Extension Plan," 35.

<sup>186</sup> Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project* [1935], ed. Rolf Tiedemann, tr. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), 880.



**Figure 59. 'Island of Utopia' by Thomas More (1518) and Drawing by Erich Kettelhut for Fritz Lang's 'Metropolis' (1927)**

Sources: Cityscape for Metropolis, Version 2, Film Museum Berlin - Deutsche Kinemathek.

They negate the site, both topographically and historically, and like their great predecessor, Thomas Moore's (1779 – 1852) island of Utopia, address an idealised society. Most of these visionary ideas have never been realised; however, their rationale has significantly contributed to the development of urbanist thought, both directly and through their criticism. Le Corbusier's (1887 – 1965), fortunately unbuilt, Plan Voisin for Paris is iconic for this attitude. He proposed to demolish a neat quadrangle at the very heart of the historic centre in order to erect a new civic centre designed according to the principles of scientific rationalism which he advocated through the *Congres Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne* – CIAM, which he founded three years later. Listed monuments are spared demolition, but they remain isolated, lost within the gridiron order of his plan.



**Figure 60. Le Corbusier ‘obliterating’ demonstratively a part of the historic centre of Paris, to be replaced by his Plan Voisin**

Source: Still from “Designs for Living,” The Genius of Design, Part 2, BBC One, 29 June 2010.



**Figure 61. The few historical monuments that would be left within the quadrangle appear as anomalies on Le Corbusier’s Plan Voisin, 1925**

Source: Fondation Le Corbusier, <http://www.fondationlecorbusier.fr> (accessed 01/06/2011)

Underpinning the different sources, but parallel evolutions of urbanism and conservation, the isolated monument was still prevalent over urban space in interventions of that period within historic texture. Gustavo Giovannoni's idea of a holistic approach, integrating urban conservation with urban development, did not have the impact one would expect when reading them over seventy years later.<sup>187</sup>

Giovannoni opposed contemporary utopian and functionalist trends; his *credo* was that a comprehensive knowledge of the historical development of cities and their regions should form the basis of urban interventions. He argued that the historic urban fabric, by virtue of its morphogenesis, has the inherent capacity to adapt to the changing requirements of the community that inhabits it.<sup>188</sup> His idea of *diradamento* is very similar to Patrick Geddes' concept of 'conservative surgery:' both refer to methods of selecting parts of the urban fabric which are 'nocive' and without which the urban fabric can attain a continuity of use and adaptation to contemporary standards without compromising its characteristics.

Traditionally, urbanists have denied the role played by historic areas for urban development. Georg Dehio (1850-1932) denounces the extremist positions of the nineteenth century: preservation for its own sake and sacrificing truth to beauty on one hand, promotion of modern civilisation and technology and tolerating monuments only in 'historical reserves' on the other.<sup>189</sup> At the same time and in a similar way, conservation develops as a discipline for caring of monuments, still isolated, still dead butterflies in Durand's 'insect-cabinet.'

As the crisis between the radically changing needs of the society and relatively slow adaptability of the urban environment deepened, urbanists seem to

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<sup>187</sup> Jokilehto, *A History of Architectural Conservation*, 219-22.

<sup>188</sup> Gustavo Giovannoni, *Vecchie citta ed edilizia nuova* (1931) (Milano: CittaStudi, 1995).

<sup>189</sup> Georg Gottfried Dehio. *Denkmalschutz und Denkmalpflege im neunzehnten Jahrhundert. Festrede an der Kaiser-Wilhelm-Universität zu Straßburg, den 27. Januar 1905* (Strassburg, 1905).



have turned their hopes entirely towards planned models, such as those produced by the hygienist and zoning ideologies. However, at the same time when the *Congres Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne* was summing up its controversial urbanist ideology in the *Athens Charter* of 1933,<sup>190</sup> the proceedings of another conference, which took place two years before in the same place, were published: another *Athens Charter*. It is important to note that while the 1931 *Athens Charter for the Restoration of Historic Monuments* is merely concerned with the technical aspects of monument restoration, and does not mention anything related to urban conservation, the preceding debate showed a raising interest in the historic urban fabric itself.<sup>191</sup> CIAM's *Charter* too, despite including a section regarding historic urban areas, limits its recommendations to the protection of single monuments or ensembles.<sup>192</sup>



**Figure 62. Visual juxtaposition of the historically evolved city vs. planned modernist city**

Source: Johannes Göderitz, Ronald Rainer and Hubert Hoffmann, *Die gegliederte und aufgelockerte Stadt* (Tübingen, 1957)

<sup>190</sup> Which, for obscure reasons, was only published ten years later.

<sup>191</sup> Choay. *L'Allégorie du patrimoine*, 126.

<sup>192</sup> Jokilehto, *A History of Architectural Conservation*, 285.

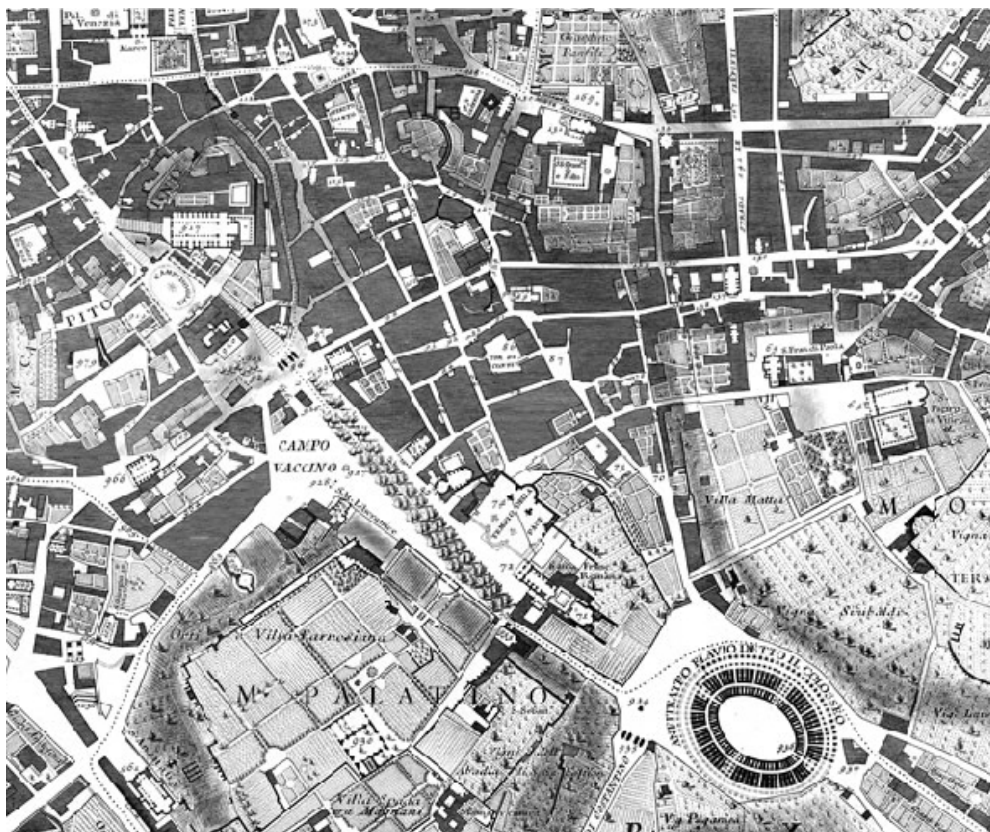
Giovanoni's understanding of 'urban heritage' as part of an original urbanist theory could have been seminal, had it not been overshadowed due to the political and ideological circumstances that found himself implicated (although arguably unjustly) in the Fascist regime of Mussolini.<sup>193</sup> But it seems that Giovanonni's concept of *diridamento* was in fact twisted to fit Mussolini's urban vision for Rome.<sup>194</sup> Medieval housing has been demolished and selected ancient monuments restored along the new Via dell'Impero, creating a residual urban space. To the east of Via dell'Impero the urban fabric has been remarkably preserved, as a comparison with Nolli's plan of Rome shows.



Figure 63. Rome, Via dell'Impero (now Via dei Fori Imperiali), 1926-32

<sup>193</sup> Ibid., 145.

<sup>194</sup> See a discussion of this in Part II. Attitudes towards the Historic Fabric over Time.



**Figure 64. Historic urban texture of the area on Giambattista Nolli's Plan of Rome, 1748**

Sources fig. 66-67: Nolli Map Engine, <http://nolli.uoregon.edu> (accessed 23/05/2005)

Giovannoni's *Vecchie città ed edilizia nuova*, published in 1931, has only seen a second edition in 1995 and it was translated in another language only in 1998 for the first, and only time so far.<sup>195</sup> In addition, the historical moment was not right for Giovannoni's avant-gardist urban theory in so far as all architects and urbanists with little exception were too preoccupied by the issues of rationalising the urban environment, which were on the CIAM's agenda, including isolation of historical monuments and demolition of the so-called minor architecture. The reality of architecture and urbanism in this period was a regrettable and wide-spread lack of awareness and understanding of the role played by the urban context in the

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<sup>195</sup> Giovannoni, *Vecchie città ed edilizia nuova*.

development and cultural significance of historic monuments and, perhaps even more importantly, *vice versa*.

Hitherto, only the broad trends have been considered, ignoring certain exceptions, and therefore giving only a general value to this historical account of the parallel development of the two arguably antagonist schools of thought, the members of which were indeed acquainted with each other's ideas and more or less rightly criticised each other: at the extremes, Le Corbusier accused Giovannoni of '*passéisme*' and Giovannoni taxed Le Corbusier for 'retrograde simplism.'<sup>196</sup>

Without this integrative understanding, the two schools of thought could not be apparently further apart from each other: CIAM and its epigone Team X – arguably more human – were concerned with invention of spatio-functional prototypes for urban planning; at the same time, conservationists – who were not perceived as a group presence in the arena of urbanist thought – were entirely devoted to providing a framework for heritage conservation.

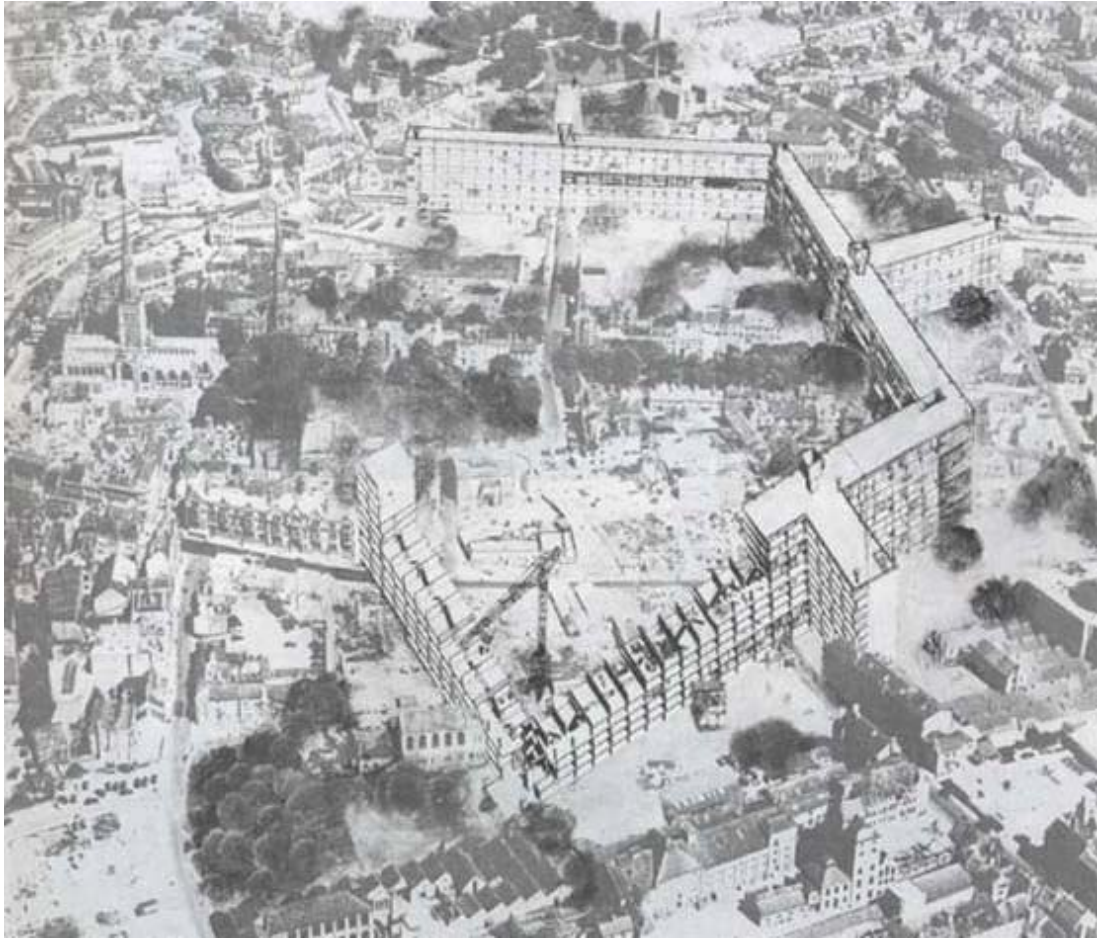
On a different level these can be seen as an attempt of making sense of the urban fabric, although an ill-prepared one. The Smithsons'<sup>197</sup> statement on Habitat borrows Patrick Geddes' Valley Section, which links the character of a community with its particular environment, but the inspiration stops here as they show no interest in studying and understanding the community, relying instead on the putatively overarching ingenuity of the architectural profession.<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>196</sup> Choay. *L'Allégorie du patrimoine*, 256 and Françoise Choay's introduction to Giovannoni, *L'Urbanisme face aux villes anciennes*, 12.

<sup>197</sup> Alison (1928 - 1993) and Peter Smithson (1923-2003) were prominent members of Team X and were involved in the overturn of the old CIAM led by Le Corbusier.

<sup>198</sup> Doorn Manifesto, Holland, 1954 in Smithson, A. (ed.), "Team 10 Primer 1953-1962," *Architectural Design* 12 (1962): 559-600.



**Figure 65. Alison and Peter Smithson's proposal for the bombed centre of Coventry: a 'Golden Lane' superstructure opening up towards the cathedral, 1952**

Source: Dirk van der Heuvel and Max Risselada, *Team 10: In Search of a Utopia of the Present* (NAI Publishers, 2005, 35)

The Smithsons seem to have been deluded, as it could be said in fact about most of the architectural profession of this period, that architecture alone can offer solutions to urban problems and utterly disregarded the other disciplines that could either help investigate such problems or indeed offer solutions: "The appropriateness of any solution may lie in the field of architectural invention rather than social anthropology."<sup>199</sup>

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<sup>199</sup> Idem.



**Figure 66. Hermann Henselmann Collective, Stalin Allee (later Karl Marx Allee), East Berlin, 1952-58**

Source: Wikimedia Commons, <http://commons.wikimedia.org> (accessed 17/03/2007).

Between the two schools, modern urbanism has been indeed favoured by the moment, and its principles have been easily adopted and served well the European governments of the period, on both sides of the Iron Curtain, who found its economically aware rhetoric rather tempting. And this was the case until the failure of modern urbanism became clear. By the end of 1950s, the majority of historical centres and quarters were heavily degraded. Europe in general had to face a dramatic urban housing demand as war had ruined its cities and many city quarters were dilapidated and insalubrious. As the existing cities failed to satisfy contemporary requirements of health, space and circulation, the hygienist ideology became a threat for them. It would have been, and indeed was in many cases, easy to apply to already damaged historic centres radical solutions of demolition and reconstruction following the zoning principle, already tested on peripheral quarters. But the destructions of World War II also triggered a crisis of national identities, leading to a reconsideration of heritage from a point of view philosophically indebted to John Ruskin and William Morris' ideas from a century before. This,

corroborated with *tabula rasa* interventions, had contributed to the gradual awakening of the heritage field to urban concerns. In consequence, new guidelines and legislation have been introduced in European countries with the aim of facilitating urban conservation as a response both to the post-war reality of European towns and to the reconstruction trend.



**Figure 67. Dresden, aerial view in 1945, 1955 and 2005**

Source: "Germany: Dresden out of the Ruins," CRIC – Identity and Conflict: Cultural Heritage and the Re-construction of Identities after Conflict, <http://www.cric.arch.cam.ac.uk> (accessed 4/07/2008)

In Italy, Associazione Nazionale per i Centri storico-artistici<sup>200</sup> was created in 1960; it formulated the Gubbio Charter in the same year, which recommended an integrated approach to historic city centres,<sup>201</sup> as well as the formulation of financial

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<sup>200</sup> the National Association for Historico-Artistic Centres

<sup>201</sup> "L'estensione a scala nazionale del problema trattato è stata unanimemente riconosciuta, insieme alla necessità di un'urgente ricognizione e classificazione preliminare dei Centri Storici con la individuazione delle zone da salvaguardare e risanare. Si afferma la fondamentale e imprescindibile necessità di considerare tali operazioni come premessa allo stesso sviluppo della città moderna e quindi la necessità che esse facciano parte dei piani regolatori comunali, come una delle fasi essenziali nella programmazione della loro attuazione." Carta di Gubbio: Dichiarazione finale approvata

measures for its implementation while retaining the original community. Renato Bonelli (1911 - 2004) observes in his definition of Architectural Restoration in *Enciclopedia Universale dell'Arte* that the shift from the traditional concept of architecture as literature and language towards its understanding as continuous creation in time, liberally situated in space as open form, signals the discovery of the formal and intrinsic value of the historic urban areas. This slow and discontinuous shift leads to the realisation that the historic city is the living image of a historical reality, the formal environment of our ordinary existence, which cannot be copied or substituted.<sup>202</sup>

But France was the first country to attempt reconciliation of the two schools of thought, urbanism and conservation in the 1962 *Loi Malraux*, which offered legislative support for conservation areas, not only in designation and protection but also in financial provisions.<sup>203</sup> This was both a heritage protection law and also an urbanism law, defending a certain understanding of towns initiated by Camillo Sitte (1843-1903), who insists that urban theory should be based on the actual extant town.<sup>204</sup> Therefore, it opposed the *tabula rasa* concept of demolition and renovation of old quarters with administrative and financial tools, allowing instead their conservation.<sup>205</sup>

Au siècle dernier, le patrimoine historique de chaque nation était constitué par un ensemble de monuments. Le monument, l'édifice était protégé comme une statue ou un tableau, L'État le protégeait en tant qu'ouvrage majeur d'une

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all'unanimità a conclusione del Convegno Nazionale per la Salvaguardia e il Risanamento dei Centri Storici, 1960.

<sup>202</sup> Renato Bonelli, "Il restauro architettonico," in *Enciclopedia Universale dell'Arte*, vol. XI (Venezia, Roma: , 1963), 344-51.

<sup>203</sup> Previously discussed in Part II. Attitudes towards the Historic Fabric over Time.

<sup>204</sup> Camillo Sitte, *Der Städtebau nach seinen künstlerischen Grundsätzen* (Vienna, 1889).

<sup>205</sup> It set up the *Secteurs Sauvegardés* with the objective of revitalising historic centres and quarters, and instituted global actions on public spaces and built ensembles.



époque, en tant que chef-d'œuvre. Mais les nations ne sont plus seulement sensibles aux chefs-d'œuvre, elles le sont devenues à la seule présence de leur passé. Ici le point est décisif: elles ont découvert que l'âme de ce passé n'est pas faite que de chefs-d'œuvre, qu'en architecture un chef-d'œuvre isolé risque d'être un chef-d'œuvre mort.<sup>206</sup>

(André Malraux, Extract of the preparatory discourse for the law, 1962)

Pan-European recommendations and charters followed shortly after.<sup>207</sup> By the end of 1962, UNESCO adopted the Recommendation Concerning the Safeguarding of the Beauty and Character of Landscapes and Sites urging Member States to adopt, in the form of national laws, measures designed to give effect in the territories under their jurisdiction to its norms and principles, but unfortunately these were limited to preservation of aesthetic values and picturesque character.<sup>208</sup> Furthermore, the Council of Europe began in 1963 to seek means to impose upon its member governments urgent measures for heritage safeguard through several Recommendations and Orders. Corroborating these initiatives and with the scope of amending the theoretical frame set up more than three decades before by the Athens Charter, the 1964 Venice International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites, drafted by Roberto Pane and Pietro Gazzola,<sup>209</sup> finally

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<sup>206</sup> Malraux, André. "Présentation du projet de loi de complétant la législation sur la protection du patrimoine historique et esthétique de la France et tendant à faciliter la restauration le 23 juillet 1962" L'Assemblée Nationale, <http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr> (accessed 7/04/2009).

<sup>207</sup> See Appendix I. Chronology of Selected Relevant International Charters.

<sup>208</sup> "Urban and rural planning schemes should embody provisions defining the obligations which should be imposed to ensure the safeguarding of landscapes and sites, even unscheduled ones, situated on the territory affected. Urban and rural planning schemes should be drawn up in order of urgency, specifically for towns or regions in process of rapid development, where the protection of the aesthetic or picturesque character of the town or region justifies the establishment of such schemes." UNESCO Recommendation Concerning the Safeguarding of the Beauty and Character of Landscapes and Sites, 1962.

<sup>209</sup> Initially intended as guidelines for the Italian Government and incorporating principles regarding historic centres formulated in the earlier Gubbio Charter, the Venice Charter was adopted by ICOMOS.

extended the concepts of restoration and rehabilitation of monuments to protected areas such as historical city centres, recommending extended legal protection worldwide.<sup>210</sup> This is considered to embody the basis of modern conservation and of the reform, according to contemporary standards, of national legislations concerning cultural heritage.<sup>211</sup> Moreover, in 1969, the Conservation Plan for the Historical Centre of Bologna pioneered, on a European scale, an approach to urban conservation corroborating both the urban fabric and also social fabric of the historical centre considered as a whole, based on the morphological and typological analysis of the urban fabric and consultation of the residents:<sup>212</sup> “After Bologna it can be said that the problem of safeguarding historical centres is no longer an aesthetic problem but a social and political one.”<sup>213</sup> However, the expropriations necessary for the implementation of the Conservation Plan, as well as the fact that the gentrification process was not avoided altogether, but rather delayed, meant the ‘Bologna experiment’ was later criticized and considered a utopian attempt.<sup>214</sup>

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<sup>210</sup> “The concept of an historic monument embraces not only the single architectural work but also the urban or rural setting in which is found the evidence of a particular civilization, a significant development or an historic event. This applies not only to great works of art but also to more modest works of the past which have acquired cultural significance with the passing of time.” Venice International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites, 1964.

<sup>211</sup> ICOMOS was founded in 1965, as a result of the international adoption of the Charter the year before. It is an international, non-governmental organization dedicated to the conservation of the world's historic monuments and sites and UNESCO's principal advisor in this matters.

<sup>212</sup> Pier Luigi Cervellati, Roberto Scannavini and Carlo De Angelis, *La Nuova Cultura delle Città: La salvaguardia dei centri storici, la riappropriazione sociale degli organismi urbani e l'analisi dello sviluppo territoriale nell'esperienza di Bologna* (Milano: Mondadori, 1977), 103-34 and Francesco Bandarin, “The Bologna experience: planning and historic renovation in a communist city,” in Appleyard, *The Conservation of European Cities*, 188-202.

<sup>213</sup> Bernard Huet, “Les centres historiques face au développement,” *Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* 180 (1975), 3. Quoted in Jean-Louis Cohen, “The Italophiles at work.” In *Architecture Theory since 1968*, 510.

<sup>214</sup> Roberto Dainotto, “The Gubbio Papers: historic centres in the age of the economic miracle,” *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 8(1) (2003): 67-83.



Figure 68. Typological analysis in the Plan for the Historical Centre of Bologna, 1969

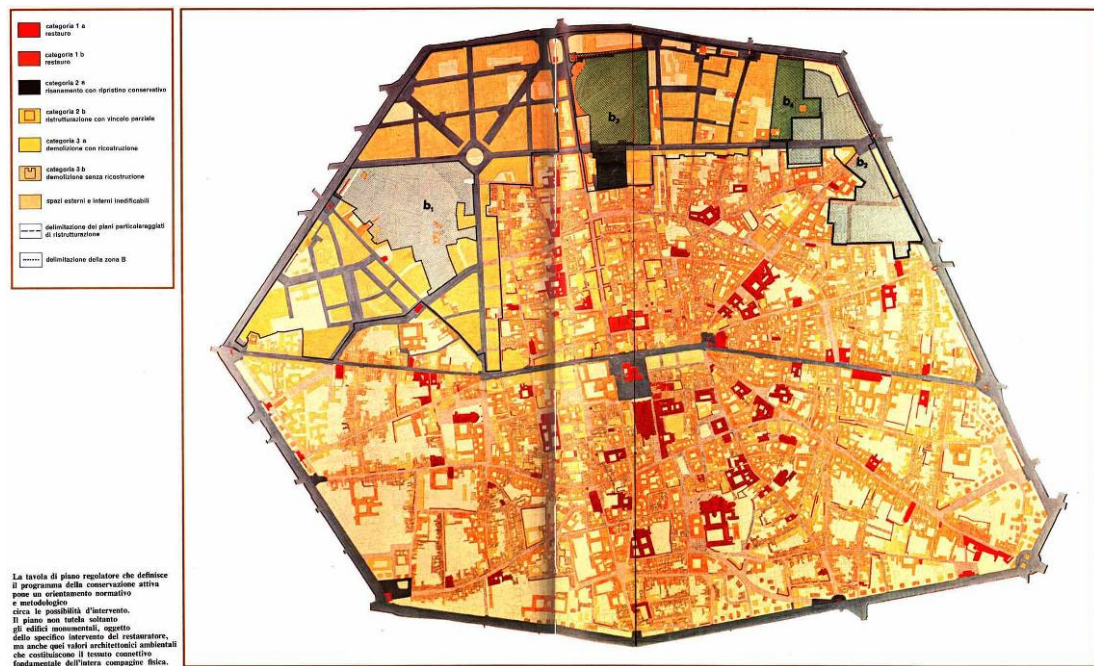


Figure 69. Conservation recommendations in the Plan for the Historical Centre of Bologna, 1969

Sources: Pier Luigi Cervellati, Roberto Scannavini and Carlo De Angelis, *La Nuova Cultura delle Città: La salvaguardia dei centri storici, la riappropriazione sociale degli organismi urbani e l'analisi dello sviluppo territoriale nell'esperienza di Bologna* (Milano: Mondadori, 1977), 125 and 129.

The Venice Charter was followed in 1969 by the CE Bath Recommendation, which adopted calls for the Committee of Ministers “to recommend to member governments that they take urgent steps to adopt special legislation or to adapt existing legislation with a view to preserving the character and general atmosphere of historic areas and the monuments they contain and to provide special funds for this purpose.” Like most of these international recommendations, its guidelines are rather vague, showing awareness of the urban heritage problems, but having limited applicability; this was because of lack of proper research that could form the basis for the proposed interventions.

The result was that, until 1975, both international documents and national legislations promoted a preservationist approach much indebted to the nostalgic hankering of Morris and Ruskin, which situated conservation at the opposite end from urbanist trends. As an official reconciliation of modern urbanism and conservation, the CE Amsterdam Declaration of the Congress on the European Architectural Heritage, concluding the Architectural Heritage Year, regulated heritage conservation’s relationship to urban and regional planning, and asked for legislative and administrative measures. It also introduced the term ‘integrated conservation’ to international specialist discussion.<sup>215</sup> Straight after, in 1976, the Nairobi UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Safeguarding and

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<sup>215</sup> “The architectural heritage includes not only individual buildings of exceptional quality and their surroundings, but also all areas of towns or villages of historic or cultural interest.

... The conservation of the architectural heritage should become an integral part of urban and regional planning, instead of being treated as a secondary consideration or one requiring action here and there as has so often been the case in the recent past. A permanent dialogue between conservationists and those responsible for planning is thus indispensable.

...Planners should recognize that not all areas are the same and that they should therefore be dealt with according to their individual characteristics. The recognition of the claims of the aesthetic and cultural values of the architectural heritage should lead to the adoption of specific aims and planning rules for old architectural complexes.” CE Amsterdam Declaration of the Congress on the European Architectural Heritage, 1975

Contemporary Role of Historic Areas reaffirmed that the protection and restoration of historic towns and areas should enhance their development and adaptation to contemporary life.<sup>216</sup> Consequently, in conservation, the 1970s and 1980s have witnessed a growing awareness of the role of processes for urban heritage, finally understood in its originally intended meaning.<sup>217,218</sup> This was a particularly productive period in many European countries for urban analysis methodologies – and their practical application – dealing with material urban fabric and its morphology, in both fields of conservation and urbanism.

The CE Granada Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage in 1985 and the CE Malta Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage of 1992 established statutory measures for integrated protection for architectural and archaeological heritage facing major urban development projects. It was only in 1987 that the ICOMOS Washington Charter on the Conservation of Historic Towns and Urban Areas stated that heritage expertise focus should broaden from historical centres to the entire built environment, identifying at the same time the need for multidisciplinary studies. Tools required for assessing

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<sup>216</sup> "Historic areas are part of the daily environment of human beings everywhere. (They) represent the living presence of the past which formed them. ... (They) afford down the ages the most tangible evidence of the wealth and diversity of cultural, religious and social activities. ... Their safeguarding and their integration into the life of contemporary society is a basic factor in town planning and land development". UNESCO Nairobi Recommendation concerning the Safeguarding and Contemporary Role of Historic Areas, 1976.

<sup>217</sup> ICOMOS General Assemblies of the 1970s: 'Modern architecture in historic ensembles,' 'The small town,' and 'The protection of historical cities and historical quarters.' Also the 1987 ICOMOS Washington Charter sets a very broad framework for conservation of historic town and urban area, pointing to the connections of this to urban development but without being very specific.

<sup>218</sup> "Planning for the conservation of historic towns and urban areas should be preceded by multidisciplinary studies....Conservation plans must address all relevant factors including archaeology, history, architecture, techniques, sociology and economics. The principal objectives of the conservation plan should be clearly stated as should the legal, administrative and financial measures necessary to attain them. The conservation plan should aim at ensuring a harmonious relationship between the historic urban areas and the town as a whole." ICOMOS Washington Charter on the Conservation of Historic Towns and Urban Areas, 1987.

integrated urban conservation, identified by these documents include: policy and planning framework, management and regeneration action, environmental management, tourism and heritage management, and sustainability.

But this burst of international charters and national legislations from the 1960s onwards have emerged on a background of a theoretical shift in the way architecture and urbanism and all other connected disciplines address the urban environment. However the practical approach remained a static one through the 1990s, chiefly analysing the city by isolating and examining successive periods of urban development. As a result, the operational value of this type of analysis was still limited. Despite the fact that theoretical issues formed the basis of standard urban analysis methodologies, they often were ignored in the actual analyses. Nevertheless, as a result of this theoretical and methodological development, the integrated conservation approach towards urban heritage, much sought after in the last century, finally became possible.<sup>219</sup>

The International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property – ICCROM pioneered the intellectual process of constructing an answer to the questions posed by the new paradigm. In 1995 - 1996 it designed a new program Integrated Territorial Urban Conservation – ITUC, which took the concept of ‘integrated conservation,’ elaborated in 1975, as the starting point to build a methodological approach addresses the above challenges in two directions:

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<sup>219</sup> The 1985 CE Granada Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage and 1992 CE Malta Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage established statutory measures for integrated protection for architectural and archaeological heritage facing major urban development projects. On a different continent, in 1987, the ICOMOS Washington Charter on the Conservation of Historic Towns and Urban Areas stated that heritage expertise focus should broaden from historical centres to the entire built environment, and most importantly identified at the same time the integrated urban conservation need of multidisciplinary studies in the field of: policy and planning framework, management and regeneration action, environmental management, tourism and heritage management, and sustainability. In the same year, the ICOMOS Brazilian Committee, in its Basic Principles for Preservation and Revitalisation of Historic Centres, affirmed the importance of intangible phenomena within the historic city, alongside with its material urban form.

heritage management (to offer some methodological directives for integrating the conservation of cultural values in the urban planning and management process of cities and territories) and capacity building (to organize learning and training processes to help in the human building capacity effort of localities, and national and regional conservation institutions).

The ITUC definition of 1995 was:

INTEGRATED – Approach: sharing, coordinating vision, increasing synergy;

TERRITORIAL – ‘Cultural landscape’ approach including social and economic considerations, organization of systems and processes;

URBAN – Deals with groups of buildings rather than single monuments, planning embraces heritage;

CONSERVATION – Assuming management of development rather than ‘restoration.’

In 1996, the UN HABITAT Agenda or Istanbul Declaration<sup>220</sup> acknowledges that cultural heritage is indeed an important element for sustainable human settlements development.<sup>221</sup> Although this has been advocated by the Amsterdam Declaration since 1975, it is for the first time that a charter of Sustainable Urban Development recognises it too. Its chapter on conservation proposes, in fact, more comprehensive recommendations for urban conservation policies than all conservation charters and declarations:

**153.** To promote historical and cultural continuity and to encourage broad civic participation in all kinds of cultural activities, Governments at the appropriate levels, including local authorities, should:

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<sup>220</sup> Crossreference with Doxiadis and UN Habitat in Urban Form chapter p 126.

<sup>221</sup> Chapter III – Commitments, part C. Sustainable human settlements development in an urbanizing world, point 8. Conservation and rehabilitation of the historical and cultural heritage, Habitat Agenda, <http://www.unhabitat.org> (accessed 30 December 2008), 67-8.

- (a) Identify and document, whenever possible, the historical and cultural significance of areas, sites, landscapes, ecosystems, buildings and other objects and manifestations and establish conservation goals relevant to the cultural and spiritual development of society;
- (b) Promote the awareness of such heritage in order to highlight its value and the need for its conservation and the financial viability of rehabilitation;
- (c) Encourage and support local heritage and cultural institutions, associations and communities in their conservation and rehabilitation efforts and inculcate in children and youth an adequate sense of their heritage;
- (d) Promote adequate financial and legal support for the effective protection of the cultural heritage;
- (e) Promote education and training in traditional skills in all disciplines appropriate to the conservation and promotion of heritage;
- (f) Promote the active role of older persons as custodians of cultural heritage, knowledge, trades and skills.

**154.** To integrate development with conservation and rehabilitation goals, Governments at the appropriate levels, including local authorities, should:

- (a) Recognize that the historical and cultural heritage is an important asset, and strive to maintain the social, cultural and economic viability of historically and culturally important sites and communities;
- (b) Preserve the inherited historical settlement and landscape forms, while protecting the integrity of the historical urban fabric and guiding new construction in historical areas;
- (c) Provide adequate legal and financial support for the implementation of conservation and rehabilitation activities, in particular through adequate training of specialized human resources;
- (d) Promote incentives for such conservation and rehabilitation to public, private and non-profit developers;



- (e) Promote community-based action for the conservation, rehabilitation, regeneration and maintenance of neighbourhoods;
- (f) Support public and private sector and community partnerships for the rehabilitation of inner cities and neighbourhoods;
- (g) Ensure the incorporation of environmental concerns in conservation and rehabilitation projects;
- (h) Take measures to reduce acid rain and other types of environmental pollution that damage buildings and other items of cultural and historical value;
- (i) Adopt human settlements planning policies, including transport and other infrastructure policies, that avoid environmental degradation of historical and cultural areas;
- (j) Ensure that the accessibility concerns of people with disabilities are incorporated in conservation and rehabilitation projects.

(The Habitat Agenda Goals and Principles,  
Commitments and the Global Plan of Action)

The search for integrated urban conservation, however, had just begun and its main difficulty was – and still is – to identify and determine the nature and importance of the relation between material and immaterial – tangible and intangible – inputs in the ever changing urban form, and furthermore to correctly evaluate the necessity and opportunity to intervene.<sup>222</sup> The 2008 ICOMOS Quebec Declaration on the Preservation of the Spirit of Place acknowledges this and makes an important contribution to transferring these ideas from the theoretical realm into practice.<sup>223</sup>

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<sup>222</sup> Choay, *L'Allégorie du patrimoine*, 120.

<sup>223</sup> "The spirit of place offers a more comprehensive understanding of the living and, at the same time, permanent character of monuments, sites and cultural landscapes. (...) [It] is a continuously reconstructed process, which responds to the needs for change and continuity of communities, we uphold that it can vary in time and form from one culture to another according to their practices of

Georges Teyssot (b. 1946) pointed to the role of the intertextual relationship for understanding the emergence of urban discursivity: "Architectural discourse is not enough in itself to explain the appearance of specific forms, the derivation of typologies, and the whole concatenation of a spatial genealogy. And the reason for this is that the discourse only makes itself felt within a context that is provided by a network of interactions combining various levels of action and transformation."<sup>224</sup>

In spite of this, the postmodern urbanistic approach tends to be a revival of previous heterotopia, nevertheless based on a completely different ideology. If one considers Colin Rowe's (1920 - 1999) so called "stimulants" for a postmodern approach to architecture, and indeed urbanism, as a theoretical *summa* of creative techniques used by architects well before and after the publication of his *Collage City*, one can only conclude that the ludic aspect of them all overwhelms any concern about place and identity.<sup>225</sup> He criticises contemporary theories of urbanism and architecture and their megalomaniac utopian visions of "total planning" and "total design," but, at the same time, proposes a "collage city" assembled from a whole range of miniaturized utopias; it combines "a critique of modern utopianism and a proposal for radical heterogeneity of appropriated form."<sup>226</sup> In spite of using, or maybe misusing, contextualism and historical references to create these small-scale utopias, postmodern concerns are apparently limited to a superficial visuality.

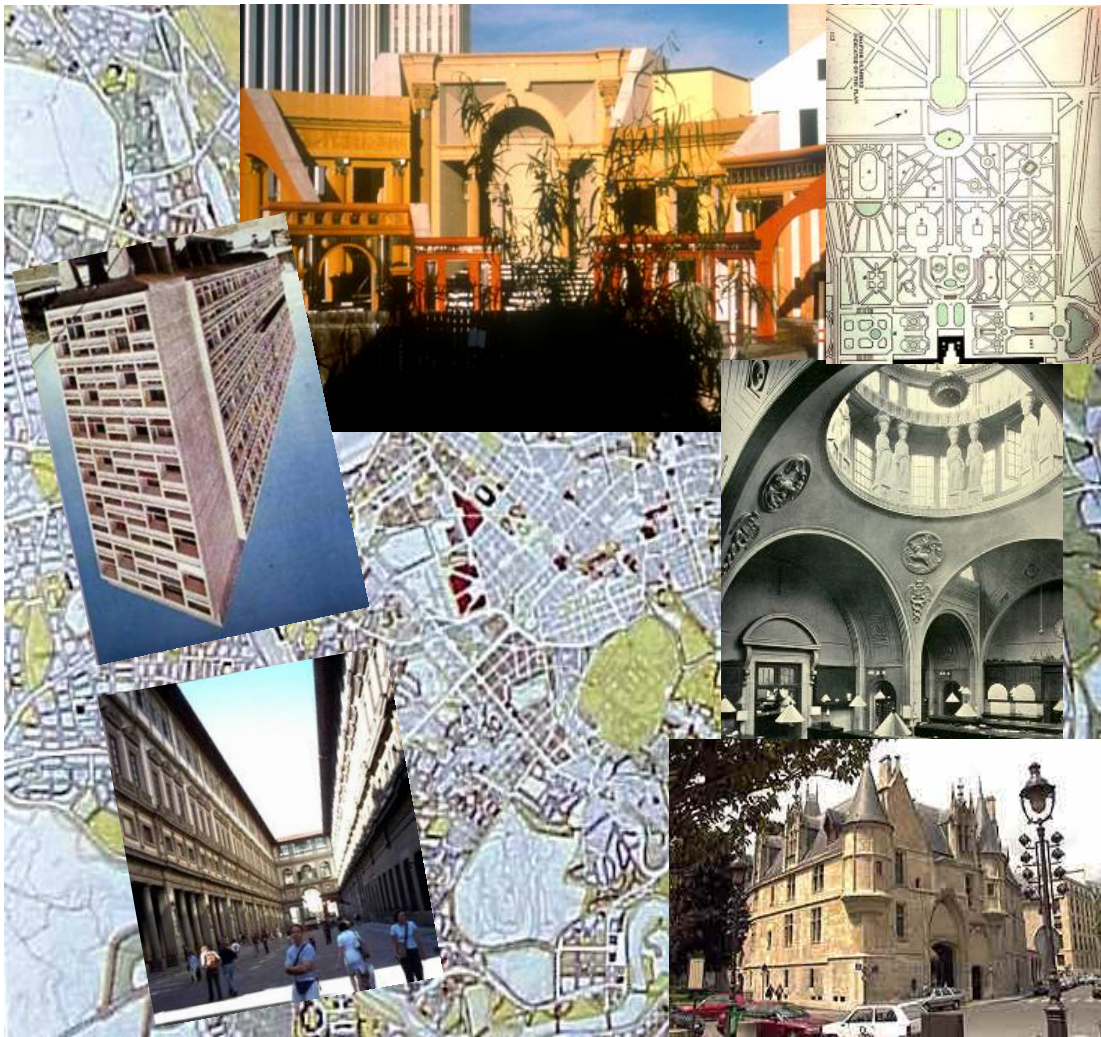
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memory, and that a place can have several spirits and be shared by different groups." *International Journal of Cultural Property* 15 (2008): 393-6.

<sup>224</sup> Georges Teyssot, "Heterotopias and the history of spaces" [1977], *A & U* (October 1980): 79-106.

<sup>225</sup> Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter, *Collage City* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1978).

<sup>226</sup> K. Michael Hays, *Architecture Theory since 1968*, 89-90.



**Figure 70. Stimulants: (1) Plan of Rome, (2) *Unité d'Habitation & Uffizi*, (3) *Parisian Hôtel & Bank of England*, (4) *Piazza d'Italia*, and (5) *Versailles' gardens***

Source: Author's collage.

Read thirty years later, Rowe's 'stimulants' seem rather ironically relevant today:

- (1) reconsider the dense texture of traditional cities such as Rome "in order to reduce the mental inflammation which has always demonstrated itself as moral excess and undue preoccupation with over-articulated solids;"
- (2) invert objects to obtain figurative voids, as Vasari's Uffizi palace is the inversion of Le Corbusier's Marseille Unité;
- (3) look to the French *hôtel* for "habitable *poché*" and Soane's Bank of England for a collision of set pieces;

(4) use “magically useless stabilisers” and “nostalgia-producing instruments;”

(5) reconstitute the urban garden.<sup>227</sup>

(K. Michael Hays, *Architecture Theory since 1968*)

One can argue that this is nothing but the same “typological” approach to architectural history from two centuries before, inside the same paradigm of a closed system within which form is generated solely through rational processes, albeit associated with a more ‘frivolous’ methodology for informing urbanism.

Moreover, the 1980s and 1990s have seen the rise of a ‘New Urbanism’ movement tributary to Constantinos A. Doxiadi (1913 - 1975) ekistics<sup>228</sup> and concerned with offering an alternative to planning suburbiae and new towns in the United States and embracing an ecological political credo.<sup>229</sup> While this is a solution characteristic to the United States, developed to respond to a typical development there, the latest developments of the Congress of New Urbanism – CNU are, similarly to its predecessor CIAM, actively building a strong political support, not only in the United States, but, more recently, in Europe too. The movement, in fact, bears many similarities with CIAM: at its origin it offers a ‘scientific’ solution to the issue of building successful new urban areas from scratch, the solution is based on a social engineering algorithm (although, granted, the source of inspiration is different), is organised as a ‘noisy’ movement with considerable publicity and skilful ‘preachers’ and has a very clear political approach by seducing first those in power and then making a public appearance already backed by them (this is how, to put it simply, the CNU has made its appearance on the European scene a few years ago).

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<sup>227</sup> Idem.

<sup>228</sup> See discussion on this in Part IV. Issues in Urban Conservation.

<sup>229</sup> Leccese, Michael and Kathleen McCormick (eds.), *Charter of the New Urbanism* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2000).

The CNU credo is based on the principle of mixed-use ‘walkable’ planning with neo-traditional architectural design. But a large part of the New Urbanist discourse seems to be not only flawed, but, more gravely, misleading. Andres Duany (b. 1949), co-founder of the Congress for New Urbanism, argues that the New Urbanist use of the urban transept is akin to Patrick Geddes’ Valley Section,<sup>230</sup> however the concepts are fundamentally different in their meaning and use. In his interpretation, the taxonomy deriving from a Valley Section – which Patrick Geddes uses as an heuristic device for understanding the particularities of urban development historically—is used for producing a ‘code’ for planning; in this way, all features to be found in one segment of the transept are codified so that they can be repeated indefinitely. In a way this acts as a kind of ‘genetic code’ and its components are the genes. Much like in the case of nature, where a restriction of future features to existing genes in a population leads in time to loss of genetic diversity and all the malfunctions deriving from there, in the case of human settlements that would have a similar effect.

New Urbanism is very keen on their identification with what they call Traditional Urbanism. But, what New Urbanism calls traditional urban design is in fact a euphemism, because there is no such thing; whenever urban design was employed in history for building new towns or re-organising old ones it has always been based on geometric, esthetical and technical principles characteristic for their particular era. Due to this there is little continuity in the history of urban design, although from a more formal point of view one could argue that there is some. Moreover, the urban form of the new ‘communities’ as they are called, new neighbourhoods or new towns, of the New Urbanism are, in fact, a mere mimetism of the traditional town, i.e. the organically developed town.

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230 Andres Duany, “Calibrating Edinburgh” (Public Lecture at the Edinburgh College of Art, 1 November 2007)



Figure 71. Seaside, Florida, A. Duany and E. Plater-Zyberk (DPZ), 1984-91

Source: Stills from the movie "The Truman Show," directed by Peter Weir, 1998

Seaside, Florida was the first New Urbanism town. It has a layout reminiscent of Wren's plan for London and pseudo-historic architecture. But the real problem is that, instead of being a living community, it is in fact a second-home, seaside holiday resort and is used accordingly. The second generation New Urbanism town of Celebration, Florida was built in the 1990s, but is a far cry from the utopian town envisioned by Walt Disney in the 1960s, EPCOT (Experimental Prototype Community of Tomorrow), although even the original project included pastiche streetscape and architecture from around the world as an architectural display.

The first manifestation of the New Urbanism doctrine on a settlement scale in Europe was Poundbury, planned by Leon Krier (b. 1946) for the Prince of Wales on the land owned by the Duchy of Cornwall. Here again, the plan pretends to be that of a historically evolved settlement and it is populated with pastiche architecture.

But this approach did not stop at new settlements or extensions; it has infiltrated the historic centre too, as illustrated by the Paternoster Square redevelopment in 1996, to replace Sir William Holford's wind-swept modernist slabs, which were erected post-war in the area destroyed in the 1940 blitz.



**Figure 72. Poundbury, Dorset, Leon Krier, 1988-93**

Sources: INTBAU, [www.intbau.org](http://www.intbau.org) and Poundbury, [www.poundbury.info](http://www.poundbury.info) (accessed 2/06/2011)



**Figure 73. Aerial view of Paternoster Square, London.**

Source: Wikimedia Commons, <http://commons.wikimedia.org> (accessed 17/04/2005)

The methodology that informs this approach is highly questionable. In Tornagrain, for example, a planned new settlement in the Scottish Highlands for which DPZ have been consultants, the project was based on a preliminary study of Scottish settlements. As in 'fast urbanism,' the study took a mere ten days to identify local characteristics, and was then supposedly based on this. But, in total oblivion of the great diversity found in European settlements, towns from further afield, albeit Scottish, were used as 'code' providers: the Edinburgh New Town (sic) and Dunkeld. Both have very different circumstances that created and have shaped their urban fabric over time and, therefore, their particularities of urban form are of little assistance in designing a new town near Inverness.

As stated in the pre-charrette document, in studying old towns, new towns, garden cities, post-war new towns and suburbia in United Kingdom, Denmark, the Netherlands and United States, "the main focus has been on the nature, layout and urban form of places rather than individual building design" – as if by replicating what is judged as successful elements of these elsewhere would be sufficient to achieve a similar effect. Nothing can be further from the truth, and curiously enough, this seems to be a perpetual misunderstanding for architects and urbanists. In terms of problems found in these places that it is desirable to avoid, they all seemed to centre on the car, both as a way of access and the space required by its infrastructure – can this be an example of a situation in which one only finds what is looking for, remaining insensitive to other potential issues?

The transect approach used by Duany claims to have its origin with Patrick Geddes' valley section, but it cannot sustain, as a method, the diversity and variation found in the organically developed European towns. As any other method of this kind it is prone to produce not diversity, but, instead, a controlled variation, which is ultimately uniformity. A recent article discusses the same shallowness of



New Urbanism in the use of 'public participation' in their planning, although this is widely publicised as one of the important virtues of this approach.<sup>231</sup>

As we have seen, conservation and urbanism have shown over the last two centuries an equal difficulty in understanding of the importance of approaching the urban fabric as a whole, in all its spatial and historical dimensions, and in considering the inevitable tension between its context and its individual parts. However, the concept of 'urban heritage' expanded from isolated monuments to urban fabric around the turn of the nineteenth century with the writings of Camillo Boito, Alois Riegl, Georg Gottfried Dehio and Gustavo Giovannoni, adding new layers towards a more integrated understanding of conservation. But conservation practice developed from mere preservation towards integrated conservation only a century later. And in spite of these anticipatory ideas, most notably Gustavo Giovannoni's, only by the end of the twentieth century, had conservation policy extended internationally to entire urban areas and historic towns, leading to the integration of cultural values into the planning process. Like any planning activity, conservation is highly political and it cannot succeed without political support, hence proper legislation and regulations. In the same way as modern urbanism was the choice of European governments in the first half of the twentieth century, urban conservation came into being as an equally political choice, only this time imposed/recommended by organisations such as the UN and the EC.

As after the destructions of World War II, attention focused once again, and more acutely, on historic city centres. The temptation of the *tabula rasa* made itself visible in various radical plans for urban reorganization; at the other extreme, theories of identical reconstruction of affected towns have been put into practice in a few isolated cases. The challenges put to urban conservation by the post-war

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<sup>231</sup> S. Bond and M. Thompson-Fawcett, "Public participation and New Urbanism: a conflicting agenda?" *Planning Theory and Practice* 8, no. 4 (2007): 449-472.

situation have also been corroborated with those raised by other man-made destruction, such as the prevalent approach in urban archaeology in the 1950s (where rather large parts of urban areas were 'cleared' of their mediaeval and later buildings in order to expose antique ruins), or natural disasters such as the great flood in Venice in 1966.

However, on a more theoretical level, there was an attempt of architectural theory to make sense of the urban texture. But instead of concentrating on the research of the traditional city and the reasons and mechanisms of what were perceived as its failures at the time, the focus was taken by prescriptive models of what the urban society and therefore fabric should work like - models based on a hygienist school of thought and henceforth influenced by contemporary research in biology and other sciences that seemed to offer an answer.



**Figure 74. London: cellular representation in a social and functional analysis by P. Abercrombie and J.H. Forshaw**

Source: P. Abercrombie and J.H. Forshaw, *The County of London Plan* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1943), 21.

Unfortunately the answer was far too simple to be able to deal with the complexity of human nature as mirrored in its urban habitation. The ‘mystery’ of culture, as George Steiner (b. 1929) put it,<sup>232</sup> which is reflected in the wide diversity of cultures and languages of just one biological species, even where exposed to the same natural (geographic and climatic) conditions, is ignored by this approach. As a result, while a concern with contextualisation and understanding of the functioning of the urban environment, is persistent in architectural theory, the most important problem remains the difficulty of understanding the ‘organic’ processes at the level of urban environment, processes resulting simply from the qualities of the ‘human nature,’ as distinct from its biological qualities.

The architects’ concern with the society is of course not new.

The formation of the architect as an ideologist of society; the individualization of the areas of intervention proper to city planning; the persuasive role of form in regard to the public and the self-critical role of form in regard to its own problems and development; the interrelationship and opposition – at the level of formal research – between architectural ‘object’ and urban organisation: these are the constantly recurrent themes of the ‘Enlightenment dialectic’ on architecture.<sup>233</sup>

(Manfredo Tafuri, *Architecture and Utopia*)

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<sup>232</sup> Referenced by Alberto Pérez-Gómez, “Architecture and Ethics beyond Globalization,” Lecture delivered at University of Edinburgh, 5 June 2003.

<sup>233</sup> Tafuri, *Architecture and Utopia*, 3.

## **IV. ISSUES IN URBAN CONSERVATION**

*The characteristics of urban conservation and particularities of its problematic*

I could tell you how many steps make up the streets rising like stairways, and the degree of the arcades' curves, and what kind of zinc scales cover the roofs; but I already know this would be the same as telling you nothing. The city does not consist of this, but of the relationships between the measurements of its space and the events of its past: the height of a lamppost and the distance from the ground of a hanged usurper's swaying feet; the line strung from the lamppost to the railing opposite and the festoons that decorate the course of the queen's nuptial procession; the height of that railing and the leap of the adulterer who climbed over it at dawn; the tilt of a guttering and a cat's progress along it as he slips into the same window; the firing range of a gunboat which has suddenly appeared beyond the cape and the bomb that destroys the guttering; the rips in the fishnet and the three old men seated on the dock mending nets and telling each other for the hundredth time the story of the gunboat of the usurper, who some say was the queen's illegitimate son, abandoned in his swaddling clothes here on the dock.

(...) The city, however, does not tell its past, but contains it like the lines of a hand, written in the corners of the streets, the gratings of the windows, the banisters of the steps, the antennae of the lighting rods, the poles of the flags, every segment marked in turn with scratches, indentations, scrolls.

(Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*)<sup>234</sup>

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<sup>234</sup> Calvino, *Invisible Cities*, 9.

## IV. 1. Urban Processes

Urban processes describe an urban phenomenon that is happening, is continuous, is becoming, a continuous transformation resulting in permanently changing urban form (structure, morphology, actual substance). Conversely, urban form changes step by step: urban processes trigger a change in the urban form and in exchange urban form trigger changes in the urban process (slower, society needs some time to adapt to them).

Nothing is more changing and ephemeral than landscape.  
Not only nature is changing, but also humanity, who lives  
scattered within it, makes visible its own agency, either  
corrosive or constructive.<sup>235</sup>

(G. M. Cantacuzino, Lectures, 1955-9)

Landscapes, and indeed urban ones, are testimony through their changes to the dynamic relationship between society and its environment, which at the same time reflect and condition each other's characteristics and development over time. If the issue of identification of what heritage consists of is somewhat simpler for architectural objects – whether buildings or ensembles, in any state of conservation, from ruins to standing structures – for urban areas or historic cities the problem is

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<sup>235</sup> G. M. Cantacuzino, *Introduction to Vitruvius' Work*, 93.

far more complex and difficult. As far as buildings and ensembles are concerned, we are looking for epitomes of architectural styles or at least of *Zeitgeist* – from a social, cultural, political, or economic point of view, – but when it comes to urban areas, we are concerned more about processes that transcend periods, yet remain coherent and recognisable.

These processes are understood here, in the philosophical sense of the word, as designating the course of becoming rather than being, or, as Aristotle puts it, in trying to explain the world as a changing world, the fusion of being with non-being. In applying this meaning to the city, we acknowledge its continuous transformation, which is defined by both actual urban features and also the simultaneously input of an immaterial kind (communities' changing patterns of use of and meaning attached to these urban features), resulting in permanently changing urban form. Urban processes are indeed responsible for the diachronic evolution of urban form. At the small scale of isolated buildings it is possible to identify successive stages of form and analyse them separately against their historical background; on the contrary, at city-scale, the inherent complexity of the city determines the necessity of analysing its dynamic urban processes – as opposed to static successive stages – which are in line with wider social, cultural, political and economic dynamics. But while this essential difference is acknowledged at conceptual level, it lacking at operational level.

This means that even when urban analyses identify these processes and their evolution over time, it proved difficult to transpose them into criterial categories and quantify and evaluate them for conservation proposes.<sup>236</sup> Moreover, these processes are ongoing and continuously transform the urban environment – which is ultimately defined by them. Therefore, urban areas and historic cities, as dynamic

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<sup>236</sup> Even now UNESCO's criteria for listing World Heritage Sites fails to acknowledge essential differences between cities and any other types of heritage.

organisms, would be firstly part of contemporary human life and only subsequently testimonials of its past. This point of view is crucial when trying to pinpoint essential characteristics of urban conservation.

But, as they are part of contemporary human life at any moment in time, throughout their history, this means they encapsulate each moment's ideal within their 'composite' reality. Michel Foucault's manuscript entitled "Of other spaces," encapsulates this paradox:

First there are the utopias. Utopias are sites with no real place. They are sites that have a general relation of direct or inverted analogy with the real space of Society. They present society itself in a perfected form, or else society turned upside down, but in any case these utopias are fundamentally unreal spaces. There are also, probably in every culture, in every civilization, real places - places that do exist and that are formed in the very founding of society - which are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted. Places of this kind are outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality. Because these places are absolutely different from all the sites that they reflect and speak about, I shall call them, by way of contrast to utopias, heterotopias.<sup>237</sup>

Michel Foucault, "Des Espaces Autres" (1967)

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<sup>237</sup> Michel Foucault, "Des espaces autres," paper given at Cercle d'études architecturales, 14 March 1967 and published in "Correspondance Dits et écrits," *Architecture, Mouvement, Continuité* 5 (1984): 46-9 and translated by Jay Miskowiec in *Diacritics* 1 (1986):22-27. An earlier, oral version of this reveals the origin of this idea in Foucault's analysis of 'imagined' spaces such as those of the theatre or cinema, but the eventually published version in 1984 has already extracted the essence of the notion of 'heterotopia' to a level which lends itself more readily to generalisation beyond the 'imagined' spaces and into the realm of 'real' spaces. "Les Utopies réelles: lieux et autres lieux; Le Corps utopique" in the second part of the radiophonic series "L'utopie et la littérature. Littérature sur l'utopie," 7 December 1966, <http://foucault.info> (accessed 23/08/2009).



The urban processes, or urban phenomena, are happening, are continuous, and are defining a state of becoming rather than simply being: a continuous transformation resulting in diachronically changing urban form. The urban form, however, changes step by step: the urban processes trigger a change in the urban form – either to its structure, morphology, or to its material substance – and in exchange the urban form brings about changes within the urban processes – a slower action, however, as society needs some time to adapt to them. These dynamic urban processes are characterized by ‘centrality’:<sup>238</sup> spatially, they take place in a delimited area focused on a communitarian space – urban form has, in response, places configured in such a way that they form, visually, focal points where people gather, towards which they go. This is especially visible in the European town – processes take place in a delimited place – follow people’s movement in space will map the area where these processes take place, focused on the communitarian space – will show how urban forming response has places configured in such a way that they form focal places where people gather, towards which they travel.

This phenomenon of centrality, as well as the notion of boundary, has been discussed over time from Plato, to Heidegger, to Jose Ortega y Gasset, and their relevance for urban conservation will be taken into consideration later in this part. The urban processes are also characterized by a permanent conflict between the changing life of the community and the way the town is configured, which triggers then changes in the urban form, and simultaneity, when changes happen at the same time in different places or overlap in the same place at different levels.

As a result of these, urban form shows a kind of historic selectivity by evolving over time, neither developing nor regressing in particular, only retaining

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<sup>238</sup> In fact this notion is so important that we have several different levels of space centred on self. Hall, *The Hidden Dimension*.

features that outlive their contemporary context, by continuing to serve the needs of the community or being more adaptable. These features can be actual structures, directions, or relationships – virtually any element of which the urban fabric is made of, be it material or abstract. In these cases, urban form adapts to new uses, by reuse and adaptation if old structures fit the new spatial hierarchy of use and form, responding in this way to changes in society.

For example, *Santa Maria degli Angeli e dei Martiri* by Michelangelo reused the *tepidarium* of *Thermae Diocletiani* not only because their building's enduring substance and structure, but, more importantly, because its peculiar position as a focal point in the urban texture formed by the traces and ruins of the monumental and symmetrical layout of the ensemble of the *Thermae*. This has been recognised as the grandest public bath in Rome and indeed the whole empire and its structure has survived the centuries even if it has been pillaged for *spolia*, just like all the other Roman antiquities during the depopulation of the area in the Middle Ages. The *Thermae Diocletiani* were built to serve the population of the Quirinale, Viminale and Esquiline hills, therefore their position in relation to Rome's topography was carefully chosen. The subsequent development of the city has been conditioned by this topography and therefore the *Thermae* have retained their strategic position, lending the site to a new public use as a church.



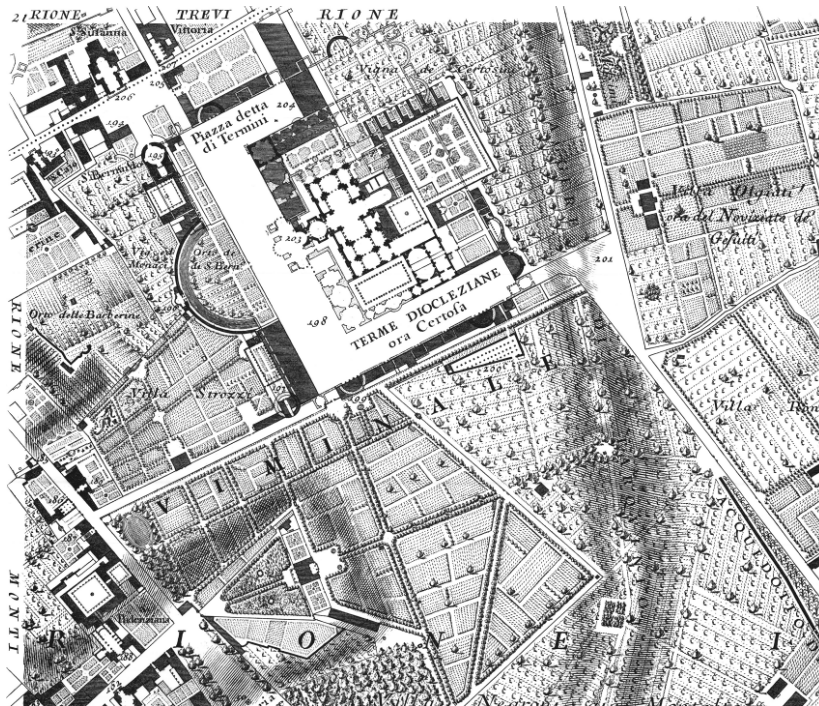
**Figure 75. Terme di Diocleziano by Giovanni Batista Piranesi, *Vedute di Roma*, vol. XVII [1745-50], plate 40**

Source: Opere di Giovanni Battista Piranesi, Francesco Piranesi e d'altri, Paris: Firmin Didot Freres, 1835-1839.



**Figure 76. Entrance of Santa Maria degli Angeli e dei Martiri (Michelangelo, 1561 with façade after the 1911 restoration, stripped of the Neoclassical layer added by Luigi Vanvitteli, 1748-65)**

Source: Author's digital images collection.



**Figure 77. The ruins of the *thermae* with Santa Maria degli Angeli in the eighteenth century**

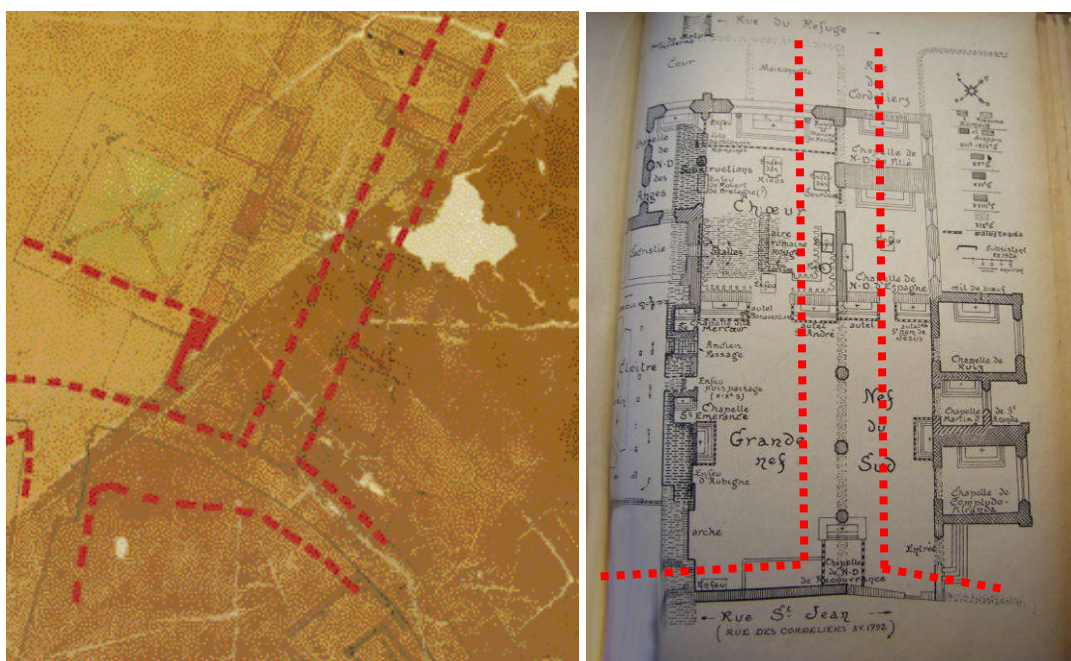
Source: Giambattista Nolli's Plan of Rome, 1748



**Figure 78. Aerial view of Piazza Esedra (today della Repubblica) with the axial access, 1864-70 and the two portico buildings of the exedra by Gaetano Kokh, 1896-1902**

Source: Maria Letizia Mancuso, "Le terme di Diocleziano," in *Ordine degli Architetti di Roma e Provincia, Documenti di Architettura*, <http://www.casadellarchitettura.it/monitor/d/didatticaurbana> (accessed 2/06/2011).

Instances as that of Santa Maria degli Angeli are very important for understanding the nature and characteristics of the urban fabric in a given case, since the more common situation is that where traces of previous development, even if still visible, are rather coincidental. The latter can be exemplified by the Convent of the Cordeliers, built in the thirteenth century against the Gallo-Roman wall, which was ravaged during the Revolution and subsequently the southern nave of its bi-naval church was demolished in 1835 to make room for a new street.<sup>239</sup> The northern nave remained in use until 1874, after which, at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, a tenement and a school have been built, incorporating the walls of the church on both sides of the street.



**Figure 79. Superimposition of the current cadastral lines onto a detail of the plan of Nantes by Nicolas Portail, 1739 and Reconstruction of the plan of the convent after archaeological research in 1923.**

Sources: "Restauration urbaine a Nantes: Un vestige du Couvent des Cordeliers XVe," Nantes Renaissance, 2007 and François Brault, "Le couvent des Cordeliers de Nantes," *Bulletin de la Société archéologique et historique de Nantes et de Loire-Inférieure* 65 (1925):165-93

<sup>239</sup> Stéphane de la Nicollière, "Essai historique sur l'église des Cordeliers de Nantes détruite en 1874," *Bulletin de la Société archéologique et historique de Nantes et de Loire-Inférieure* 16 (1877): 137-71.



**Figure 80. Rue des Cordeliers in Nantes. Details of the walls of the former church on both sides.**

Source: Otilia-Gabriela Stoica, digital photographs collection

Incremental transformation results in traces in the urban form that do not correspond anymore to the contemporary spatial hierarchy of use; however, these traces are reused and adapted if they are compatible with the new hierarchy of use and form. For example, ancient texts describe the grandeur of *Campus Martius*,<sup>240</sup> the plane between the hills of Rome and the river Tiber; this corroborates with

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<sup>240</sup> Strabo, *Geographia* [7-18 AD], Book V, Chapter III, section 8 (translated by H. C. Hamilton and W. Falconer, London: George Bell & Sons, 1903), available online at <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.01.0239>

cartographical and archaeological evidence to reveal a highly formalised site, with many public buildings lining major routes connecting with the centre of Rome and with a more informal area of insulae on its eastern fringe. A virtual reconstruction of the evolution of the southern part of *Campus Martius* from Antiquity to the Middle Ages shows in the centre *Porticus Minucia Frumentaria*, where grain was distributed, enclosing an earlier temple.

But *Campus Martius* of Imperial Rome lost its public function and was abandoned when Rome shrunk and this remained outside the city. Only between the tenth to fourteenth centuries was it re-colonised by medieval housing which selectively reused the ruined Roman fabric (not individual buildings, but parts of them or of the former public spaces, streets and directions). Indeed, the Roman formal layout had no meaning anymore, and the ruined fabric was used in the same way in which the natural topographical features of a site are used in the process of urban development: special forms and positions are taken advantage of for the functions they have to serve within the newly formed urban texture.

After Theodoric had sacked Rome, he asked for the Roman monuments to be preserved – but this is not common. Today, the street pattern has largely survived unchanged, but the curved shape of *Teatro Balbus* is barely visible on the roofline of the buildings amalgamated on its site.

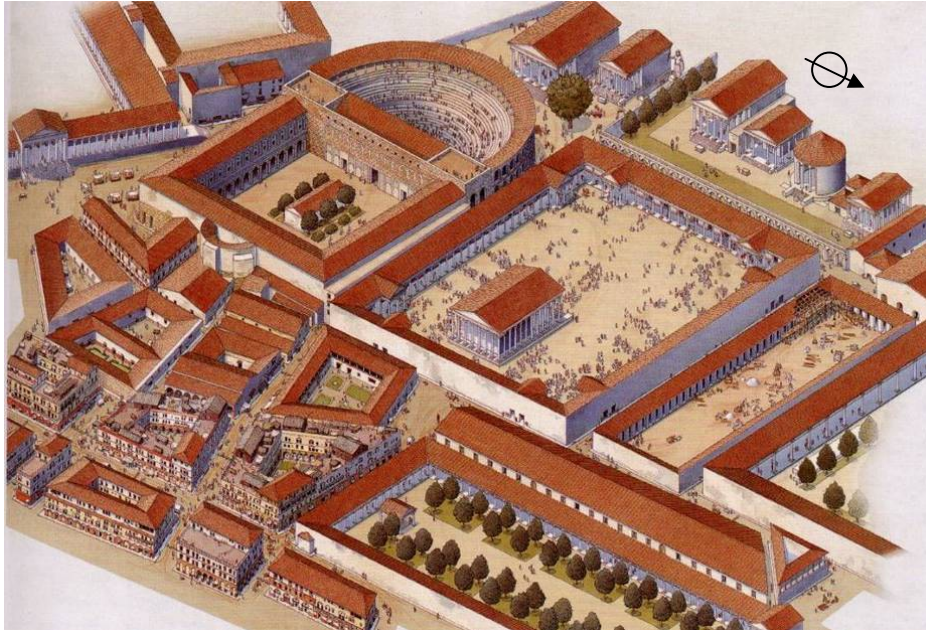


Figure 81. Antiquity, Imperial Rome (1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> centuries)

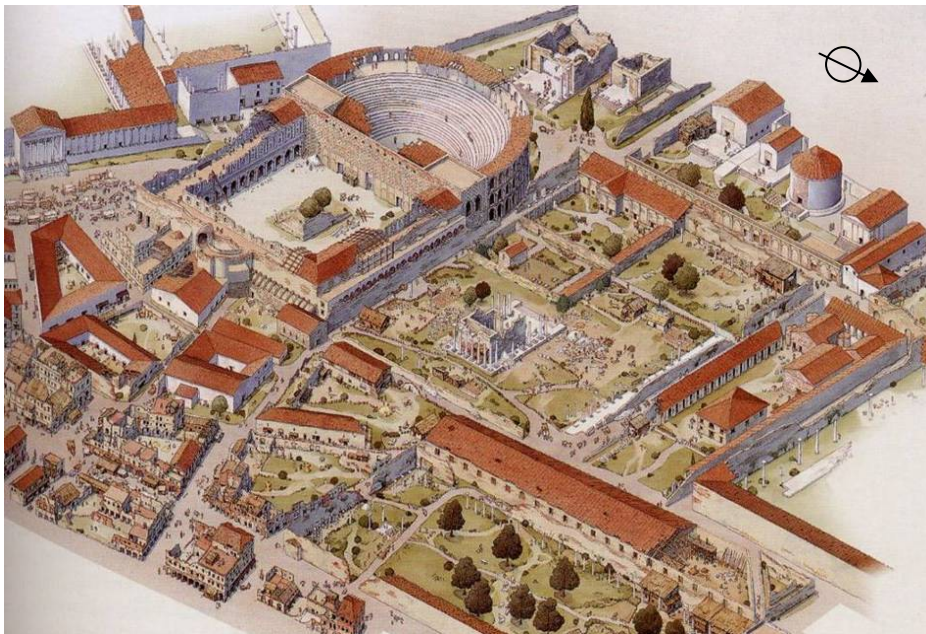


Figure 82. Late Antiquity (5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> centuries)



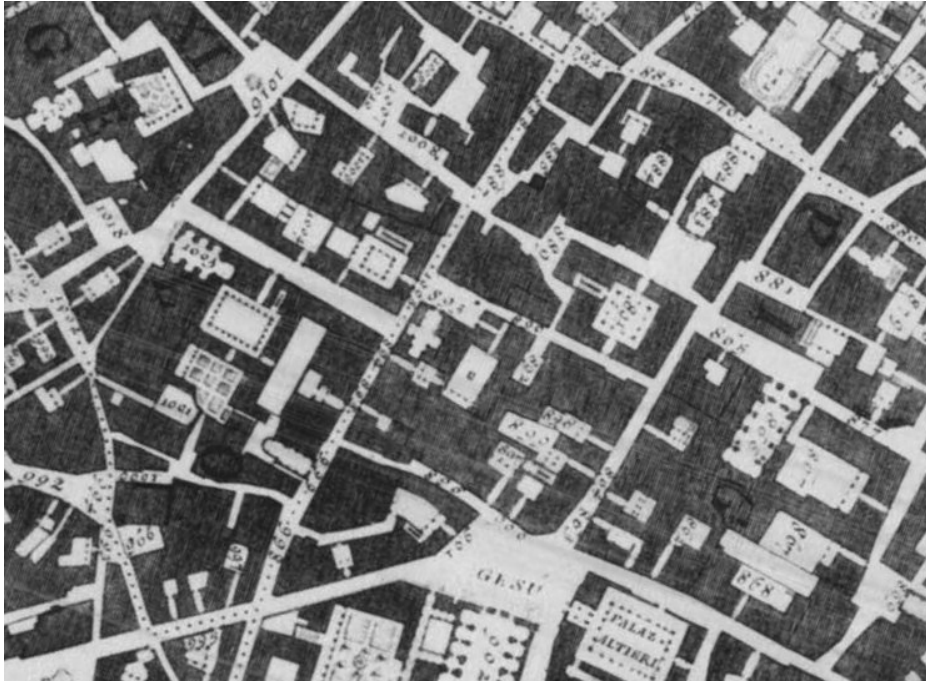


**Figure 83. Middle Ages (10<sup>th</sup> century)**



**Figure 84. Middle Ages (14<sup>th</sup> century)**

Source fig. 86-89: Museo Nazionale Romano Crypta Balbi



**Figure 85.** The same area shown on Giambattista Nolli's Plan of Rome, 1748

Source: *The Interactive Nolli Map Website*, <http://nolli.uoregon.edu> (accessed 20/11/2005)



**Figure 86.** Aerial view of the same area today

Source: Google Maps, <http://maps.google.it> (accessed 25/04/2010)

Due to the change in scale of the urban fabric from one period to another, the traces of a previously single monumental building can become important factors for the shaping of the subsequent urban tissue, determining the physical aspect of the urban form. For example, an urban form fit for gathering, a quintessentially communal use, the *Stadium Domitiani* was transformed in the largest medieval market and, thereafter, in a piazza.

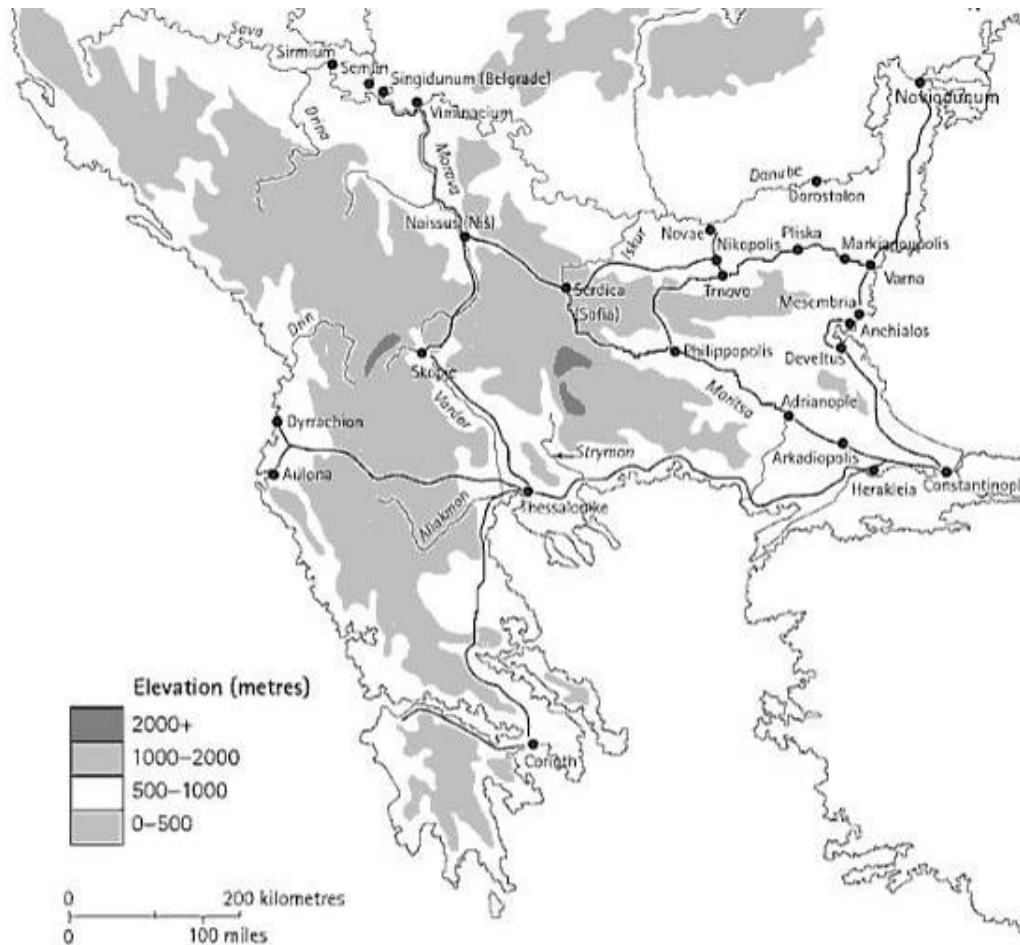


Figure 87. Piazza Navona. Drawing by Giovanni Maggi, 1625.



Figure 88. Aerial view of Piazza Navona

Sources fig. 92-93: Vedute di Roma, <http://www2.siba.fi/~kkoskim> (accessed 2/06/2011) and Google Maps, [www.maps.google.it](http://www.maps.google.it) (accessed 12/08/2007)



**Figure 89. Major Roads in the Balkans, 7th-12th centuries**

Source: *The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies*, edited by Elizabeth Jeffreys *et al.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2008, 297).

In the same way, at a territorial level, an important number of Roman roads have survived, while other historical trails disappeared – in a lot of cases due to the advent of railway transportation taking different routes and, as a result, changing completely the life of towns on their way, which collapsed economically, unless there was conscientious action to counteract this. These Roman roads, as strategic routes, survived through Middle Ages to the modern period in continuous use; however, it is not necessarily their Roman fabric that survives, but their itinerary, because it has been determined by the geology and geography of the places it goes through, as well as the settlement networks and the evolution of their hierarchy over time. For example the antique *Via Militaris* or *Via Diagonalis*, which was about

six meters wide and run around 1000 km following mostly river valleys from *Singidunum* (Belgrade) to *Byzantium* (Istanbul), via *Serdica* (Sofia), *Philippopolis* (Nicomedia) and *Adrianopolis* (Edirne), was later used by Medieval crusaders and is now overlapped by the modern European roads E75 and, for the greatest part, E80.<sup>241</sup>

Unlike the archaeological layers of a garbage pit, which are neatly laid one on top of the previous, well defined and separated, in urban archaeology we are dealing with entangled three-dimensional layers, reflecting the complexity of the transformations the urban fabric goes through. Only occasionally, in cities inhabited continuously from the Antiquity to nowadays, ruinous sites are intentionally levelled, become sunken by *alluvium*, earthquakes, landslides or volcanic matter, or are simply reused temporarily as agricultural land leading to a complete rupture between the earlier and the later urban development on the site. More commonly, the buildings of the ancient city have been abandoned or reused, but many have also been intentionally demolished, leading to an accumulation of debris. Remaining structures, as well as debris have not usually been removed, but instead have been left on site and reused as *spolia* in the construction of new buildings and thus placed at a higher level than their original ancient situation. Moreover, the boundaries of buildings and urban spaces from different periods are consistent through time only in special situations; more usually their features overlap. These two processes lead to the entanglement of stratigraphic levels, as exemplified by the situation of Via delle Botteghe Oscure. As such, in the reuse of existing Roman structures or medieval substructures, they are not simply individual buildings that are being re-used, but rather a more general 'urban fabric;' the result includes sometimes layers overlapping only partially within the same building.

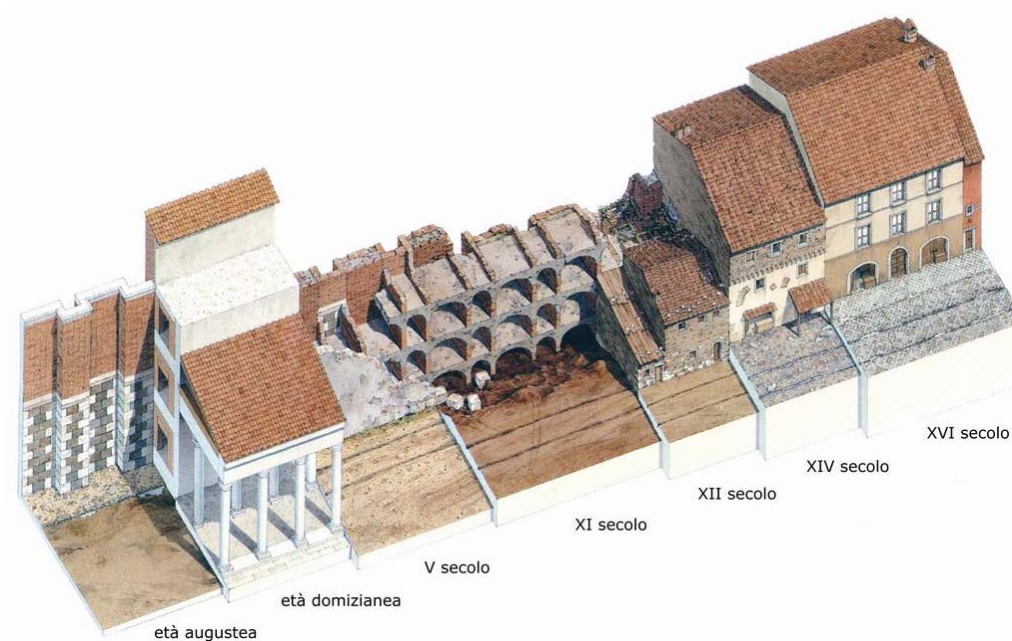
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<sup>241</sup> Klaus Belke, "Communications: Roads and Bridges," in *The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies*, edited by Elizabeth Jeffreys *et al.* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 296.



**Figure 90. Virtual section through Via delle Botteghe Oscure showing its transformation through the ages, from Roman Antiquity to today**

Source: Museo Nazionale Romano Crypta Balbi (Rome: Electa, 2000), 19



**Figure 91. Sequential reconstruction of Via delle Botteghe Oscure showing its transformation and change of level through sixteen centuries**

Source: Il Tempio di Via delle Botteghe Oscure: Archeologia, storia e progettazione urbana, Fondazione Roma, Università degli Studi Roma Tre, Università degli Studi di Siena, <http://www.porticusminucia.it> (accessed 12/09/2009)

Another example, the Roman amphitheatre in Lucca is now an elliptical piazza surrounded by houses. It epitomises the transition from the ancient Roman urban landscape, formally hierarchised – with grand public buildings for the public life, in prominent position within the city, having special form and employing special materials – to a medieval urban landscape, which retained the shape but cancelled any formal hierarchy, with buildings of a smaller scale, with almost no differentiation in shape, position, form, style, or materials. During the Middle Ages the central area of the amphitheatre became a public square and the structure of the amphitheatre was fortified and subsequently rebuilt as housing, with structures invading the central area as well. A nineteenth century restoration by Lorenzo Nottolini (1787-1851) has ‘enhanced’ the visibility of the shape of the ancient amphitheatre by demolishing the latter.



**Figure 92. Aerial view of Piazza dell' Anfiteatro in Lucca**

Source: Google Maps, <http://maps.google.it> (accessed 18/08/2009)



**Figure 93. Façades in Piazza dell' Anfiteatro in 1958, before restoration**

Source: Gianni Berengo Gardin. *Toscana, gente e territorio*, Mostra monographica 16/07/2004-10/10/2004, <http://web.rete.toscana.it/traartsite/appuntamenti/appuntamentoDetail.jsp?objId=113> (accessed 28/11/2004)

An example on an even larger urban scale, at Spalato, the former Palace of Diocletian which remained derelict and was eventually colonised by the refugees of Salona in the Middle Ages: the same phenomenon of cancelling the formal hierarchy, with medieval housing of a much smaller scale reusing the Roman structures. However, certain significant spaces of the former palace have been reused for prominent functions, such as the Peristyle being used as the medieval market place, temples being used for churches. This is another example of adaptation of the antique urban form to suit the medieval spatial hierarchy of use.



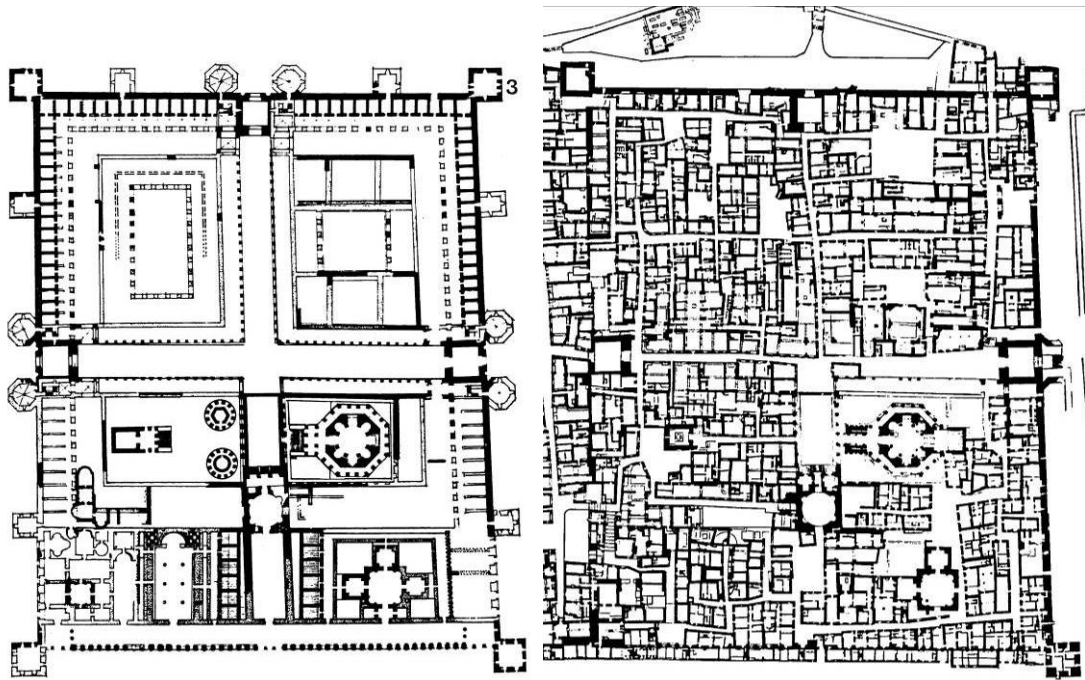


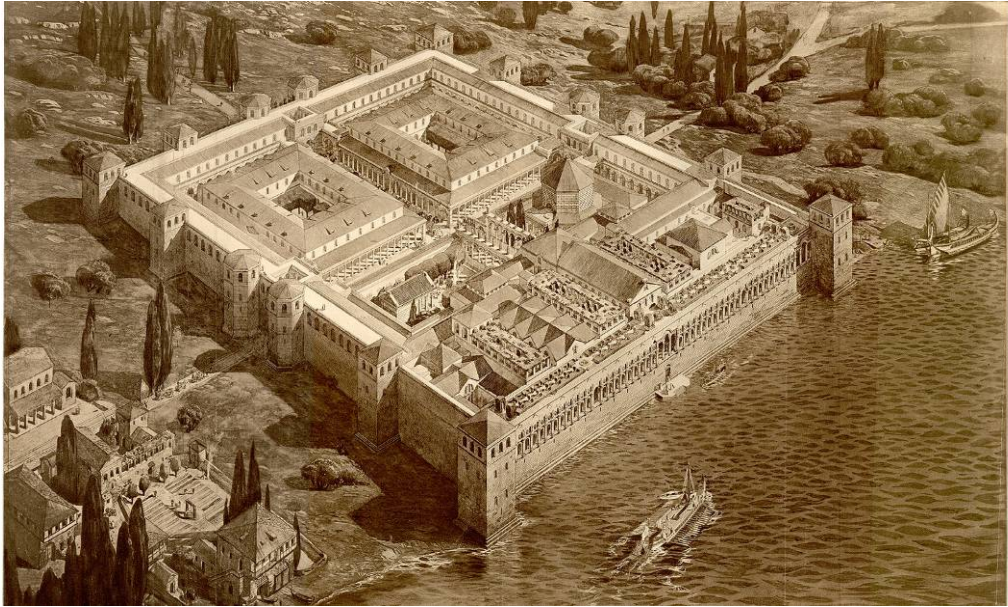
Figure 94. Reconstructed plan of the Palace of Diocletian at Spalato

Figure 95. Partial plan of Spalato (now Split) now



Figure 96. Aerial view of Split

Source fig. 99-101: Brief for the Europa Nostra International Seminar and Workshop for Young Heritage Professionals, Split, 2003



**Figure 97. Aerial view of the hypothetical reconstruction of the Palace of Diocletian**

Sources: Ernest Hébrard and Jaques Zeiller, *Spalato: le Palais de Dioclétien* (Paris, 1912)



**Figure 98. Amalgamation of Roman structures from the Palace of Diocletian into the built fabric of the medieval town of Spalato and Re-use of the octagonal Roman temple as Gothic cathedral**

Source: Author's slide collection

These examples have shown a varied range of instances displaying elements of continuity in the development of the urban form through the continuous re-use of traces of the preceding urban fabric. On the other hand, discontinuity, due to catastrophic events – such as fire, earthquake, war, etc. – provokes ruptures of the urban form. For example, in the case of Edinburgh’s 2002 fire site, large parts of the urban texture were destroyed and the new build will most likely take advantage of this by inserting a new use/form corresponding to the current perceived hierarchy of urban form (as seen in the winning entries to the after-fire competition), resulting in discontinuity of the traditional urban form that would otherwise be more likely to survive successive replacements of its buildings.



**Figure 99. Edinburgh 2002 fire site in Cowgate before and after the demolition of the façades**

Source: *Edinburgh Architecture*, <http://www.edinburgharchitecture.co.uk> (accessed 12/09/2003)

In conclusion, it is rather unusual that a place preserves its quality unchanged over time, at a historic scale. By continuous transformation due to urban processes, elements of the earlier urban form are incorporated and reused by the

new urban form, often with modification to the hierarchy of use. As a result, certain transformations produce the reduction or even cancellation of the previous hierarchy.

The resulting urban form is, therefore, ultimately heterotopic: as a result of historic selectivity a place ends up comprising divergent elements deriving from different community systems or periods. It is important to acknowledge that these different community systems can occupy the same place either coincidentally or successively in time. They are the result of specific circumstances determined by both internal and external factors, rather than simple stages of a cultural evolution (as can only be the case of an isolated culture). Therefore, these elements might be incompatible. This is due to the fact that the urban processes are continuous, while urban form is discontinuous and has times of stagnation due to political, historical, financial or other reasons. This continuous interplay and adjustment between the hierarchy of urban form and the hierarchy of use is the essence of the urban processes, and ultimately the core concept for the urban conservation ideology. It is true, nevertheless, that this interplay is a rather recent concern if looked at a historical time-scale, and is due in fact to a contemporary seeming failure to adjust.

A contemporary philosopher of urban architecture is faced then, at the end of the twentieth century, not so much with the absolute dialectic of ancient and modern posed by the avant- and rear gardes of the last eighty years, as with the more subtle and difficult task of calculating the limits of intervention according to the resistance of the city to change.<sup>242</sup>

(Anthony Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny*)

In Vidler's perspective, the 'resistance of the city to change' is not merely a resistance resulted from the endurance of its physical substance, but rather

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<sup>242</sup> Anthony Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994), 199.

addresses directly the perennality of the urban context, woven slowly, over long periods of time; the urban context is modelled by its community and will only accept change if responding to changes in the community's life.

## IV. 2. Urban Form

Within the urban fabric, the urban structure is materialised functionally and spatially in the urban form. Therefore, the historic urban form aggregates all the material traces of the urban phenomenon, whose essence and substance determine the physical configuration of the urban form. This empirical observation has led to the development of a regressive methodology, proceeding from effect to cause: by studying the historic urban form, one can propose a likely scenario for the evolution of the urban phenomenon through time. This methodology is now commonly called 'urban morphology'<sup>243</sup> and, while the width of its field varies from one researcher to the other, one can say that it is generally concerned with the study of physical and spatial characteristics of the urban form. It is important to note, however, that this methodology cannot be efficient in isolation, but should be corroborated with other sources, such as written, iconographical or archaeological sources, in order to

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<sup>243</sup> According to the International Seminar on Urban Form - Glossary , <http://odur.let.rug.nl/ekoster/isuf2/glossary/online.html> (accessed 12/09/2006), the term 'urban morphology' seems to have been coined by John Leighly in "The towns of Mälardalen in Sweden: a study in urban morphology," *Publications in Geography* 3, no. 1 (1928).

provide a comprehensive survey of the evolution of the urban phenomenon, not only in its physical and spatial dimension, but also its social, cultural, economic and political dimensions. While these dimensions could be of academic interest even on their own, for the purpose of urban conservation they need to be corroborated. But this corroboration proves rather difficult to put in practice due to the reality of a sectorial approach dominating urban conservation projects, and the over-emphasis placed on the urban form itself, to the detriment of all other elements constituting the urban texture. This being said, the development of urban morphology over the last century and its application in urban conservation since the 1980s has played an important role in understanding the urban texture and widening the role of urban conservation.

Within the more general interest in what we call today 'urbanism' and the proliferation of studies about settlements, urban morphology also took off at the end of the nineteenth century. Its origins have been identified in the studies of Otto Schlüter from 1899, which led to the development of a new branch in human geography concerned with the 'urban landscape.'<sup>244</sup> The comprehensive studies of Pierre Lavedan, Lewis Mumford, Leonardo Benevolo, E.A. Gutkind, and J.L. Harouel have tried to offer a comparative geographical and historical picture of the development of settlements.

Urban morphology has developed rather in parallel in different countries in the second half of the twentieth century. In France, urban morphological research has developed mainly since the early 1970s, spinning from an earlier tradition in the study of urbanism and topography and 1960s research in anthropology and other

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<sup>244</sup> Jeremy W.R.Whitehand, "Conzenian Urban Morphology and Urban Landscapes," *Proceedings, 6th International Space Syntax Symposium, Istanbul, 2007*, [http://www.spacesyntaxistanbul.itu.edu.tr/papers%5Cinvitedpapers%5CJeremy\\_whitehand.pdf](http://www.spacesyntaxistanbul.itu.edu.tr/papers%5Cinvitedpapers%5CJeremy_whitehand.pdf) (accessed 8/05/2008).

disciplines.<sup>245</sup> Pierre Lavedan's *History of Urbanism*<sup>246</sup> published in three volumes between 1926 and 1952 opened a new route for the study of cities, although his aim was simply to provide a much needed background for the study of urban architecture as part of an art history research tradition: the city being considered as a 'work of art'.<sup>247</sup> A number of urban morphological studies were carried out independently since the 1970s as academic research or more empirical case-studies. These have been generally published only locally, so the field is still dissipated today, with no prominent methodology. Philippe Panerai (b. 1940) insists that, by tracing the stages of the transformation of the urban fabric, it is possible to understand the complex relationships between its elements.<sup>248</sup>

In Italy, Saverio Muratori (1910 - 1973) initiated the typological analysis of the built environment with two landmark studies of Venice and Rome; these established the fundamental concepts of his analysis: type, fabric, organism and operative history. Through their analysis he aimed to identify the values of the urban fabric through time. He was followed by Gianfranco Cannigia (1932 - 1987) who identified, through his study of Como, the value of a regressive approach in understanding the evolution of type.<sup>249</sup> The Italian school of urban morphology was however not only interested in the study of urban form, but also in the way in which its understanding can contribute to interventions within the contemporary

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<sup>245</sup> Michael Darin, "The study of urban form in France," *Urban Morphology* 2(2) (1998): 63-76.

<sup>246</sup> Pierre Lavedan, *Histoire de l'urbanisme*, Vol.I Antiquité-Moyen Âge (Paris: Laurens, 1926), Vol.II Renaissance et temps moderne (Paris: Laurens, 1941), Vol.III Epoque contemporaine (Paris: Laurens, 1952).

<sup>247</sup> Pierre Lavedan, *Qu'est-ce que l'urbanisme?* (Lille: A. Taffin-Lefort, 1926)

<sup>248</sup> Panerai, Philippe; Depaule, Jean-Charles and Demorgon, Marcelle. *Analyse urbaine*. Marseille: Editions parenthèses, 1999.

<sup>249</sup> Giancarlo Cataldi, Gian Luigi Maffei and Paolo Vaccaro, "Saverio Muratori and the Italian School of Planning Typology," *Urban Morphology* vol. 6 no. 1 (2002), 3-14.



city.<sup>250</sup> Building typology and urban morphology, rather than architecture, were seen as the most important ways in which the urban fabric can be characterized. This approach became well known internationally through Pierre Luigi Cervellati's study of Bologna, where the typological approach offered detachment from aesthetics and cultural trends, which was hoped to prevent the gentrification of the urban fabric. One of the criticisms of the way in which the method was applied is that it transferred the typological methodology to all scales of analysis, resulting in 'stylistic restoration' or addition.<sup>251</sup>

In the United Kingdom, M.R.G. Conzen has had a fundamental contribution to the development of urban morphology. He approached the study of urban form through the field of geography, his scope being to characterize the urban structure with a view to building models of territorial organisation. Conzen defines urban form as the result of the interaction of three essential elements: the street network, plots structure and built environment. A significant part of his contribution to urban morphology is the conceptual model of the evolution of urban form. For this, he developed the concept of 'fringe belt' to describe the boundaries of the city, which are predominately stagnant from an urban development point of view.

The other important concept that facilitates his model is 'burgage cycle,' which describes the mechanism of densification in the centre of the city.<sup>252</sup> These two concepts are essential for Conzen's understanding of the urban processes, but in order to explain the perennial nature of some features of the urban fabric despite these processes, he also coined the concept of 'morphological frame.' This refers to

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<sup>250</sup> Nicola Marzot, "The Study of Urban Form in Italy," *Urban Morphology* vol. 6 no. 2 (2002), 59-73.

<sup>251</sup> Giorgio Piccinato, "Words and History: Controversies on Urban Heritage in Italy," in *Culture, Urbanism and Planning*, edited by Francisco Javier Monclús and Manuel Guardia (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 113-54.

<sup>252</sup> Peter J. Larkham, "Urban morphology and Typology in the United Kingdom," in Attilio Petruccioli (ed.), *Typological Process and Design Theory* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture, 1998), 163.

the fact that streets and plots, by surviving largely unchanged over long periods of time, lead to the appearance of 'residual' features. Conzen tried his methods on a number of towns and his stated aim is to use the results of such surveys for conservation. For this he tried to define the urban texture through morphological regions, within which there is reasonable unity in terms of urban morphology, between which there are boundaries of various strengths.<sup>253</sup> However, his tripartite hierarchical explanation of the urban texture as 'building forms' contained by 'land use,' and all fitting within the 'town plan,'<sup>254</sup> omits, notably, other aspects of its social dimension.

Conzen's methodology has led to the establishment of a Conzenian school within the field of human geography in the UK. The study of urban form has developed in several directions, the most important one being the history.<sup>255</sup> The interest in the historical evolution of urban form extended beyond an academic preoccupation with the past – which concentrates on the forms created by past periods – to the inclusion of geographers and others involved in the design and management of urban areas. At the same time, this led to an understanding of the significance of the history of urban form for the future design of urban areas, although there was still a lack of interdisciplinary integration in the urban morphological approach.<sup>256</sup>

These three important schools, which previously worked in isolation from each other, were united in 1994 in the International Seminar on Urban Form. This has afforded more exposure of their ideas internationally, as well as an opportunity for

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<sup>253</sup> J.W.R. Whitehand, "British urban morphology: the Conzenian tradition," *Urban Morphology* 5, no. 2 (2001): 103-9.

<sup>254</sup> M.R.G. Conzen, "Alnwick, Northumberland: a study in town-plan analysis," *Institute of British Geographers Publication* 27 (1960): 3-4.

<sup>255</sup> Larkham, "Urban Morphology," 159.

<sup>256</sup> Whitehand, "British urban morphology," 103

collaboration and exchanges, leading to a revived interest in urban morphology methodologies.

In Greece, Constantinos Apostolos Doxiadis, minister responsible for housing and reconstruction immediately after World War II, coined in 1959 the term *ekistics*<sup>257</sup> to define the descriptive study of the development and adaptation of settlements to changing circumstances.<sup>258</sup> His aim was a more comprehensive approach than urban morphology, the ultimate scope of which was to be used for the solving of the ills of the contemporary cities and their prevention in new ones. Although ekistics is geared towards the analysis of the contemporary settlements and their relationships, historic settlements are used in order to demonstrate the filiations of various observations. 'Ekistics' is in reality no different than the field of 'urbanism,' already established much earlier, at the beginning of the twentieth century. The only difference comes from the fact that since the beginnings of 'urbanism' as a field of enquiry, many connected sciences and disciplines have established themselves too, as separate fields of enquiry, albeit with sometimes overlapping scopes. 'Ekistics' comes to try and coagulate the study of settlements through all the related scientific fields: social sciences, cultural disciplines, economics, technical disciplines and politico-administrative sciences.<sup>259</sup>

Although Doxiadis died in 1974, his colleagues in the World Society of Ekistics were extremely influential at HABITAT, the UN Conference on Human Settlements held at Vancouver, Canada in 1976 with the scope of exchanging experiences, the creation of financial resources and formulation of an international program to assist governments to meet the growing complexity of human

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<sup>257</sup> From the Greek *οἰκιστική* meaning 'relating to settlement.' *OED Online*.

<sup>258</sup> A.C. Doxiadis, *Report of proceedings of the Town and Country Planning Summer School* (London: Town Planning Institute, 1959), 119.

<sup>259</sup> C.A. Doxiadis, *Ekistics: An Introduction to the Science of Human Settlements*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 55.

settlement problems around the world. While in general terms Doxiadis' ekistics theory seems legible – and overlaps in fact the much earlier notion of urbanism as an interdisciplinary field dealing with human settlements – his writings reveal an empirical approach arguably pushed to the extreme, with questionable attempts to systematise observed phenomena and sometimes almost irrational simplifications.<sup>260</sup>

The study of urban form has led to a few different research schools as well as individual approaches, which tried to deconstruct it each from their own viewpoint: architecture, urban history, human geography, and more recently science. The attempt to create typologies implies an inherent simplification, so despite criticism, each of these different approaches is arguably as good as the other. The most recent addition to the urban morphological discourse is Bill Hillier's space syntax which manages, for the first time, an accurate quantification and qualification of movement, of directions and routes within the urban form.

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<sup>260</sup> As a result, his article "Ekistics, the Science of Human Settlements" in *Science* vol.170, no.3956 (23 Oct.1970), 393-404 has been received with harsh criticism by the scientific community (Letters, *Science* vol. 171 no. 3971 (12 Feb. 1971), 521).

### IV. 3. Methodologies

The values within a city are associated with the capacity of the city to regenerate itself in forms that permit its citizens to identify a line of continuity between past, present and future. This requires the upkeep and control of all types of values, both related to states and processes.<sup>261</sup>

'Regressive history' is an analytical approach that draws inferences from the present to the past based on two major *a priori* assumptions: the natural endurance of urban texture on one hand, and the determinism of urban development on the other. The first assumption is the result of historical studies that have proved the perennality of the essential elements of the urban texture on one hand and a significant time-lag in their change, compared with changes in the society, on the other. The second assumption is based on human geographical studies demonstrating the way in which elements pertaining to the natural topography and

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<sup>261</sup> Silvio Mendes Zancheti and Jukka Jokilehto, "Values and Urban Conservation Planning: Some reflections on Principles and Definitions." *Journal of Architectural Conservation*, Vol.3 No.1 (1997): 37-51.

wider settlement context, and their changes, determine the urban evolution from the genesis of a settlement and thereafter in time.

Unlike architectural objects, which are realised in a limited chronological interval, settlements are the result of a long constituting and developing process, whether they are spontaneous or planned. The genesis and subsequent development of cities have sparked much discussion between urban historians and geographers, interested in finding a suitable typology. A common distinction is made between spontaneous, organically developed cities and planned, designed ones. However, Spiro Kostoff denounces this typology as misleading and superficial since an element of deliberate planning is intrinsic to both types, even if in different proportion.<sup>262</sup> The extension of designed vs. vernacular urban environment has no meaning from the point of view of the architectural historian; both types of intervention are the result of certain cultural and political circumstances. This is also true from an urban conservation point of view insofar that the aim of conservation is in both cases to retain those elements and characteristics of the urban texture that contribute to and are important for the formation of a community's identity.

The misconception that a planned environment has to be conserved in a state as close as possible to its original concept is nevertheless quite widespread and originates with the art and architectural conservation philosophies which protect the authenticity and integrity the original work of art or architecture as conceived by its author. But the nature of the urban environment is fundamentally different, and while it is of course important that the original concept is properly recorded and studied, the aim of conservation is not geared simply towards the originally planned or designed environment, but equally towards all those elements and characteristics, however alien to the original concept, that were grafted onto the

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<sup>262</sup> Spiro Kostoff, *The City Shaped: Urban Patterns and Meanings through History* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1991), 43-46.

planned environment by the community inhabiting it. It is important to note here that we are speaking of an original 'concept' rather than an original 'work' because in the vast majority of cases the appropriation of the environment by it inhabiting community started even before an area was fully built as planned and therefore has never materialised as originally planned /designed. The only relevance the two types of cities, spontaneous and planned, have for urban conservation is in their analysis.

Gheorghe Curinschi-Vorona argues that both types have a certain "genetic code" which gives their objective development rules, humans only interpreting these objective rules and their voluntary interference generating nothing else than disfunctionalities and anomalies.<sup>263</sup>

By determining the nature of the urban development in a particular case it is possible to pursue its systemic analysis, identifying its morphological elements and their spatial, temporal and semantic relationships. The next step would be the recognition of any external elements or constraints induced into the system and analysis of the assimilation or rejection processes resulting from this. A systemic analysis of the city has to be multicriteria, correlating several different levels in order to fulfil the needs of a hypothetical reconstruction of its evolution: a diachronic analysis of the urban development in relationship to the territory, several synchronic analyses of the morphological elements of the settlement at crucial moments in time, and an analysis of the organizational pattern of the settlement structure.

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<sup>263</sup> Gheorghe Curinschi Vorona, *Arhitectură. Urbanism. Restaurare* (Bucharest: Editura Tehnică, 1995), 382

## Sustainable urban development

URBAN CONSERVATION ↔ PLANNING & ARCHITECTURE

- I. Understanding and evaluating the significance of place
  1. Existing situation
  2. Planned developments
  3. Evolution trends
  
- II. Drawing out management implications for
  1. Protecting its significance
  2. Identifying opportunities for change

**Figure 100. Necessary steps in urban conservation research**

Charters over the past two decades call for an integration of planning and area conservation based on an appraisal of the urban fabric, which will eventually provide a more efficient system for urban development. This means understanding and evaluating the significance of place, on one hand, and drawing out management implications for protecting this significance and identifying opportunities for change, on the other.

Every previous development has left a trace, whether physical or social. Time and natural/manmade disasters have obliterated many of the physical traces, but their original presence determined subsequent developments, starting a causal sequence. Thus the trace is both the result of the process and at the same time a cause of later developments; it thereby becomes a new context. To identify these traces means to understand the significance of the place and be able to foresee its future potential. The successive, but interconnected layers of the historic urban fabric represent a complex and challenging problem for urban conservation. They are much like the layers of a palimpsest manuscript where each document is not only inscribed on top of an older one – after the previous was carefully scrapped



away to provide a good enough base for the new layer, but not quite obliterating it in its totality so not much substance of the parchment is lost – but also the new layer's content of knowledge is often, even if subtly, influenced by the older writings being surrendered for the sake of the new one.

### **IV. 3. 1. Diachronic analysis of the urban development in relationship to the territory**

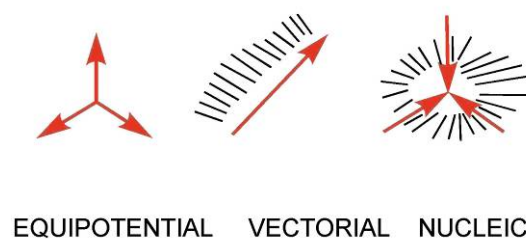
The physical setting of a town is defining for its structure and morphology. Therefore it is worth studying not only the features of the natural site contemporary with the foundation of a town but also their changes over time in relationship to urban development. The sites of early towns were determined by the availability of water, building materials, and suitable building land. As the settlements' system develops within a region, the road network determines the evolution of other settlements into towns. This may happen either as natural routes foci, or else, through their development into an advantageous trading position by attracting routes to themselves. For these, while the natural desiderata are still required, the factor of nearness is no longer crucial. Other features of the physical site will play the foremost role: vicinity of fertile agricultural land, of important underground resources, or position on a river or seashore as ports, etc. The access to food surplus plays a determinant role in the evolution and involution of towns.

A study of the changes of the features of natural site over time in relationship to urban development needs a diachronic analysis, where the spatial-temporal dimension is introduced. This is a dynamic analysis of the development of the town; it represents a permanent superimposition of a sequence of states and phenomena. One of the levels of a diachronic analysis of the urban development is concerned with the relationship of the town to the territory. This relationship makes itself visible in the way in which the progressive evolution of the localization of the town corresponds to the features of the natural landscape and the human development of the site, features such as the commercial road network and defensive works.

The nature and quality of the soil itself influences the size of the buildings, the visual features of the open space, the street network. The urban space as a whole is a space containing agglomerations and concentrations in the urban fabric, lines of

power, focal points, routes or courses, multiplied spaces, and transition spaces. These features determine the context of an urban development. In architecture and urbanism, the context is perceived in relationship with a form or a purpose, every context having *a priori* a vocation. In other words, a specific context should be expected to determine and condition the urban form in a unique way. The context of the emergence of a town has as defining element its specific natural landscape.

The features of a spontaneous urban structure are organic and determined by the natural landscape as well as by the human development of the site. Topographical features of the site are fundamental conditional factors: elements such as rivers, hills, and valleys, geology of the site, defines the nucleic energy of the natural landscape. When related to the morphological type of the site, the energy of a natural landscape can be defined as equipotential, vectorial, or nucleic, according to its influence on the process of habitation. Socio-historical factors such as commercial growth and political-administrative function: trade routes, defensive structures, etc. further influence this development.



**Figure 101. Types of energy of the natural site**

#### IV. 3. 2. Analysis of the organizational pattern of the settlement structure

The organisational pattern of the settlement structure comprises typically of one or more *nuclei* and their areas of influence manifested through a densification of the urban fabric and sometimes proliferations of certain functions within these, as well as important routes through the urban fabric – usually connecting the settlement at territorial level – and directional vectors defined by the constraints of the site, which determine the preferred directions of development in time.

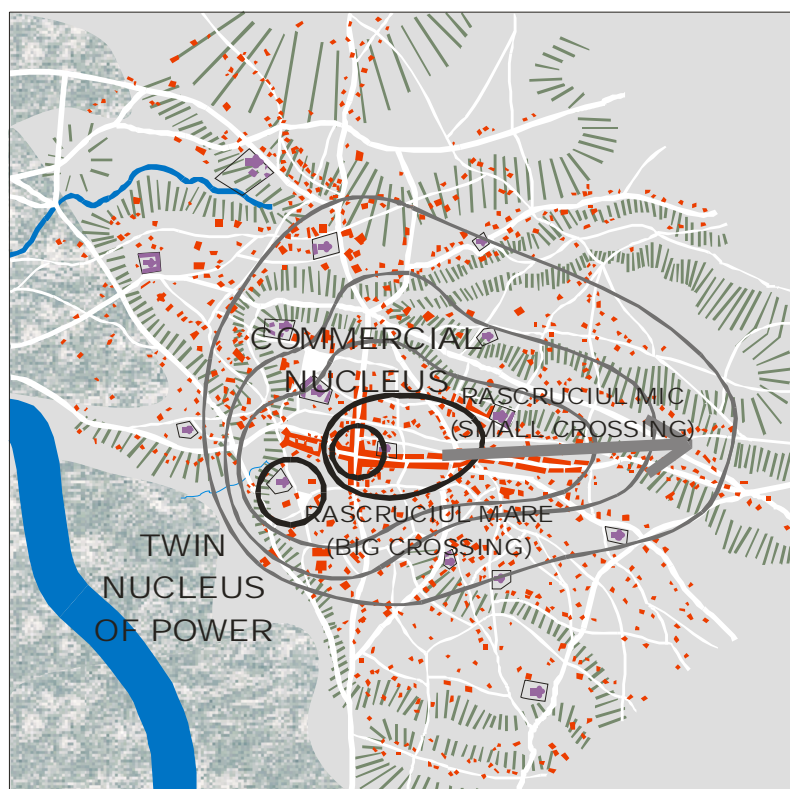
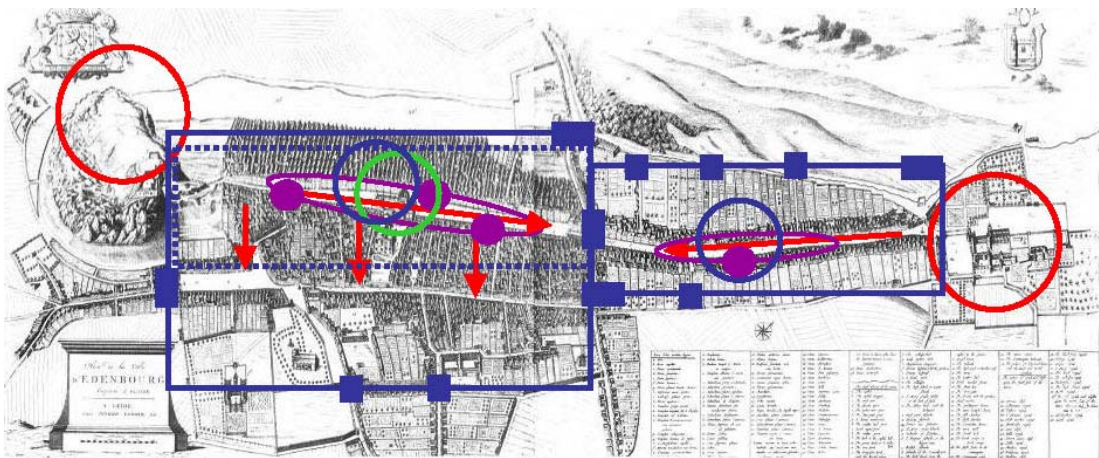


Figure 102. Craiova, Diagram of the settlement organisation and evolution in time <sup>264</sup>

<sup>264</sup> This and the following diagrams of Craiova, included here to illustrate the multi-criterial analysis, were drawn by the author for "Medieval Urban Development in Wallachia: Craiova," MA Thesis in Medieval Studies.

Medieval Craiova displays a dual power nucleus (ruler and church) situated on the highest terrace of the localization and, at the same time, a further commercial nucleus. The polarizing function of both nuclei is stressed by the street network pattern, therefore the phenomenon of centrality can be seen in the structure of the settlement. The one major directional vector follows the main commercial road to the east, linking Craiova with the province's capital, Bucharest. The location of the Friday Market was gradually moved towards the east by the establishment of more stable commercial premises along this important road, leading to this peculiarity.



**Figure 103. Edinburgh, diagram of the settlement organisation and evolution in time**

The structure of Edinburgh Old Town shows clearly the formation of two separate boroughs, both with non-central nuclei due to the topography of the place: the Castle on the highest rock for Edinburgh and Holyrood Abbey for Canongate. The principal directions of development are determined by the spatial relationship between the boroughs, as well as the topography – towards south in the case of Edinburgh, since the northern side is bordered by a loch. The community spaces are clearly central to the structures: the parish church next to the tollbooth and Mercat Cross in Edinburgh, with two further weigh beams at the extremities, the tollbooth and Mercat Cross in Canongate – part of the Holyrood Abbey church would have served as parish church.

### IV. 3. 3. Sequential analysis of the morphological elements of the settlement

The analysis of the material substance of the settlement encompasses a wide number of elements, the importance of which varies from one case to the other. The most common elements that need to be addressed can be grouped in the following categories:

- urban fabric (patterns, homogeneity, directions)
- built environment and open space (densities; patterns: continuous, discontinuous, punctual; typologies; public/private)
- street network (structure and configuration; typologies: organic, geometrical, intersections; unique places)
- plot system (patterns – most rigid urban element; shapes, dimensions; ownership & evolution)
- buildings (age, state, styles; shape, height, scale, orientation: light, wind, etc.; architectural programs; building materials and techniques)
- streetscape (typologies: enclosed/open; specific elements – squares, crossings, alveoli; composition, perspectives)
- skyline (perspectives from & to)
- function (use of space/compatibility; trajectories; daily, weekly, annual cycles; processions, rituals)

The analysis of these elements will provide a good insight into the physical substance of the settlement, but it is important to determine any other specific elements. For example, trees could be another element of importance, and they could be analysed according to their different species, formal characteristics and age.

For settlements that have a long history of urban interventions, such analyses should be carried out also for the key periods of the settlement in order to allow the identification of historic traces in their urban form and structure and their

meaning. This contributes to a better understanding of the evolution in time of the different constitutive elements of the urban fabric and the relationships between them in a given case which will allow an informed evaluation of the importance of these in order to establish a hierarchy of degrees of intervention.

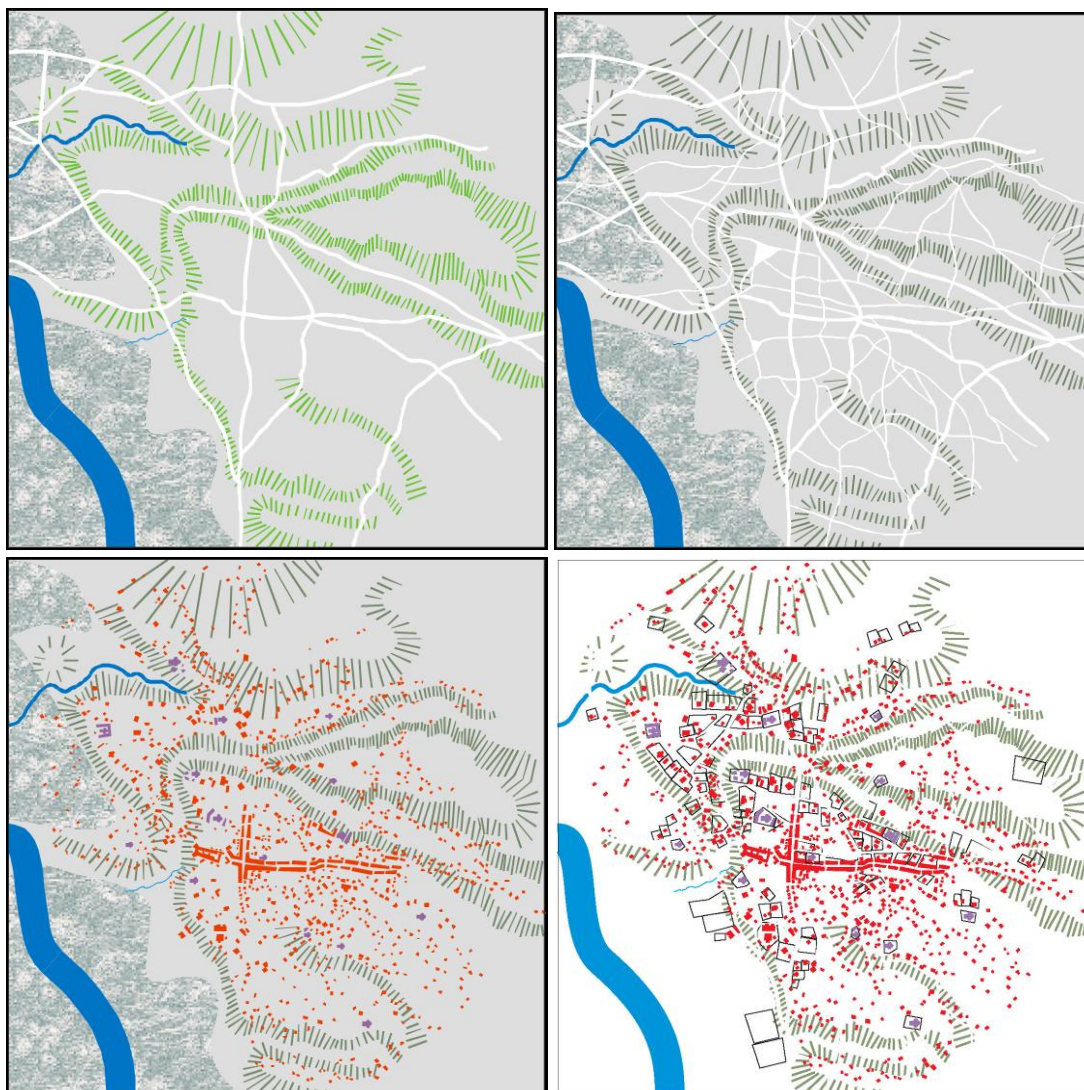
While cultural values are physically embodied by distinct, recognisable and consistent patterns in the above morphological elements, they are also influenced by a number of objective factors at any given moment:

- the geographical space (pure and antropic)
- economical space
- politico-institutional space
- social space
- architectural-urban space

These factors influence further the decisions regarding the hierarchy of degrees of intervention and, while it is virtually impossible for such analyses to be objective, the awareness of these factors help the specialist to better evaluate the impact and success of conservation interventions.

A complete analysis of the current situation of a settlement should include, beside structure and morphology over time, a close assessment of the planned developments, as envisioned by central and local government, especially where these have not benefited of an integrated approach considering cultural heritage along with all the other concerns of urbanism.

Past and current trends in human activity are reflected in the community life and its built environment, therefore it would be foolish to ignore their analysis from the methodology of urban conservation. To some extent, this methodology has to include the analysis of possible scenarios in order to mitigate any possible conflicts that could result from un-regulated urban trends.



**Figure 104. Craiova, Natural features of the site and main roads; Street network; Density of the built environment in relation to the topography; Plot system**

The street network of Late Medieval Craiova demonstrates an interesting spontaneous, organic nature determined both by the topography of the site and the commercial roads network, which in turn also follow the natural features of the site. The site is of the equipotential type, with the spontaneous urban fabric having a tendency to spread in all directions, uninhibited by fortifications; the only barrier are the river marshes bordering the east side, which result in the asymmetrical shape of the settlement. The built environment of Late Medieval Craiova has a scattered form due to the lack of fortifications, with a preference for the higher ground and concentration along the two main commercial roads peaking at their



crossing. The plot system reveals a situation where very few, but large building plots within the settlement are in fact delimited, the bulk of the land belonging to the ruler and being feued out to the inhabitants.



**Figure 105. System of closes in Edinburgh in 1742 and in 1884.**

Source: Ian Begg et al., "Edinburgh Old Town Study 1984," (report for the Edinburgh City Council, 1984)

The fish-bone pattern is typical for the Scottish boroughs laid out in the 12th century under King David I, generally with a central High Street bordered by narrow, very long plots which developed subsequently to form the specific urban form of the close allowing access to the different properties built in the depth of the plot. Despite the fact that the streetscape looks as if the fish-bone pattern is still behind the façades, already in 1984 a very small number of closes were still in existence.

#### IV. 3. 4. Identification of problems

While the above morphological and structural analyses provide the means for identifying cultural values in the historic urban context, they are not ends in themselves; further analysis should seek to forecast their evolution in different scenarios and recommend best course of action based on this.

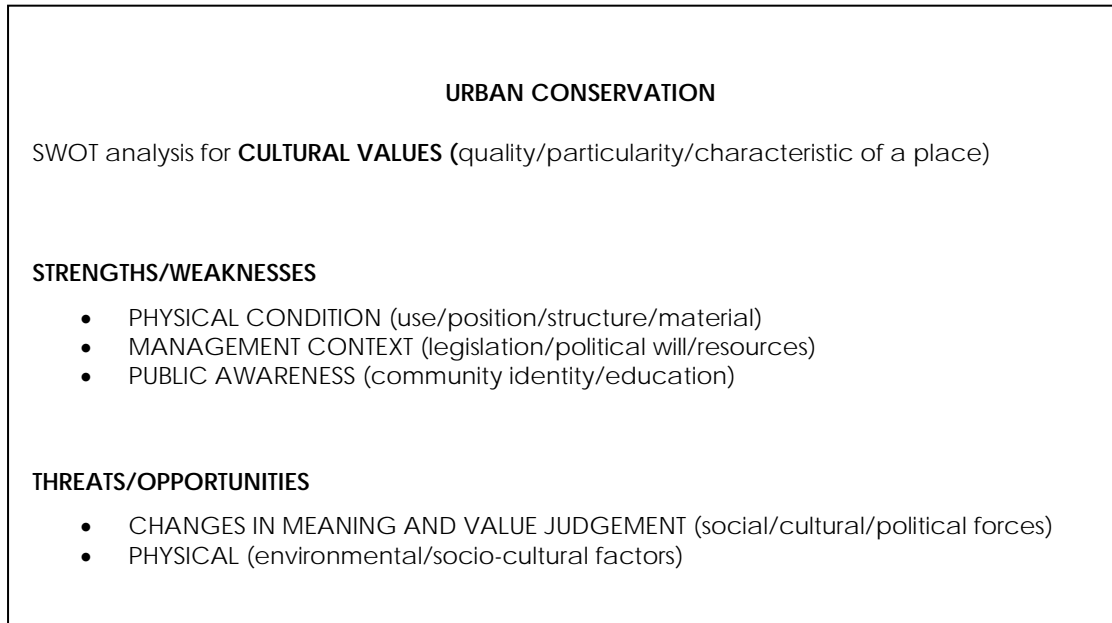
	(+)	(-)
INTERNAL FACTORS	Strengths	Weaknesses
EXTERNAL FACTORS	Opportunities	Threats

**Figure 106. Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats – SWOT matrix**

The SWOT<sup>265</sup> analysis can be adapted for urban conservation purposes, and provides a valuable heuristic tool: it helps with the identification of the strengths and weaknesses within the system and the threats and opportunities external to the system that can affect it.

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<sup>265</sup> The SWOT – Strengths and Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats analysis is a management tool for analysing a given system by rapport to an aim and devising and evaluating possible solutions.



**Figure 107. Categories for an urban conservation SWOT**

The strengths and weaknesses of a historic urban area are given by its physical condition, its management context and public awareness. The physical condition of a historic urban area needs thus a thorough survey in terms of use of its buildings and open spaces, position and access, physical structure and materials. The management context is also a factor internal to the historic urban area and is concerned with: the specific conservation legislation covering the given area and available technical documents; the political will of the local authority in relation to conservation, patterns of power and influence; and available resources, grants' schemes, etc. In terms of public awareness there are two interrelated factors that can result in opportunities or weaknesses: the recognition of a sense of identity within the community, built usually over long periods of time, and the education of the younger generations about the special cultural values of their historic urban area.

All these help an understanding of the situation of the historic urban area, but its evolution in time is furthermore influenced by external factors, threats and opportunities, such as external physical factors, but also changes in meaning and value judgement.

### Physical threats

The external physical factors can be the result of either environmental or socio-cultural forces. Environmental forces that pose a threat to historic urban areas encompass disasters such as earthquakes, floods, landslides, volcanic eruptions and hurricanes. But there are as well phenomena with a less dramatic manifestation, although with an equally dramatic impact over time, such as those triggered by climatic change or other factors that build up in time.



**Figure 108. Aerial view of the Venice lagoon**

Source: Google Maps, [www.maps.google.it](http://www.maps.google.it) (accessed 3/05/2009)

The Venice lagoon ecosystem is the result of both natural and man-made processes over time.<sup>266</sup> After the disastrous storm surge of 1966, ten years after the adoption of a 'Special Law' for Venice, Italian authorities, in collaboration with UNESCO, have strengthened their efforts to stop the deterioration of the city's historic fabric and repair the damage already done.<sup>267</sup> The measures included capping of the wells in order to limit subsidence (and replacement of the water supply via an aqueduct from the mountains), permanent monitoring of industrial pollution and reactive measures, replacement of the domestic heating fuel with a non-polluting one and installation of a flood early-warning system, at the same time with the initiation of a heritage inventory and conservation-restoration interventions. This also led, remarkably, to the halting of 'urban renewal' plans for the historic city of Venice. A complex system of protection against flooding of the lagoon, comprising of an underwater mobile barrier, designed in 1971, in conjunction with 'soft' and 'hard' measures is due to be finished by 2011. The barrier lies on the seabed and only rises at times of high water closing off the three lagoon inlets.<sup>268</sup>

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<sup>266</sup> "From '300 to '900 the evolution of the lagoon," SAL.VE (website of the Venice Water Authority, Ministry for Infrastructure, online at <<http://www.salve.it/uk/eco/destra/faunave/evoluzione.htm>> (Accessed 10 September 2008))

<sup>267</sup> Fielden, *An Introduction to Conservation*, 34-5.

<sup>268</sup> See Gianfranco Pertot, *Venice: Extraordinary maintenance. A history of the restoration, conservation, destruction and adulteration of the fabric of the city from the Fall of the Republic to the present* (London: Paul Holberton publishing, 2003) and C. A. Fletcher and T. Spencer (eds.), *Flooding and Environmental Challenges for Venice and its Lagoon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005)

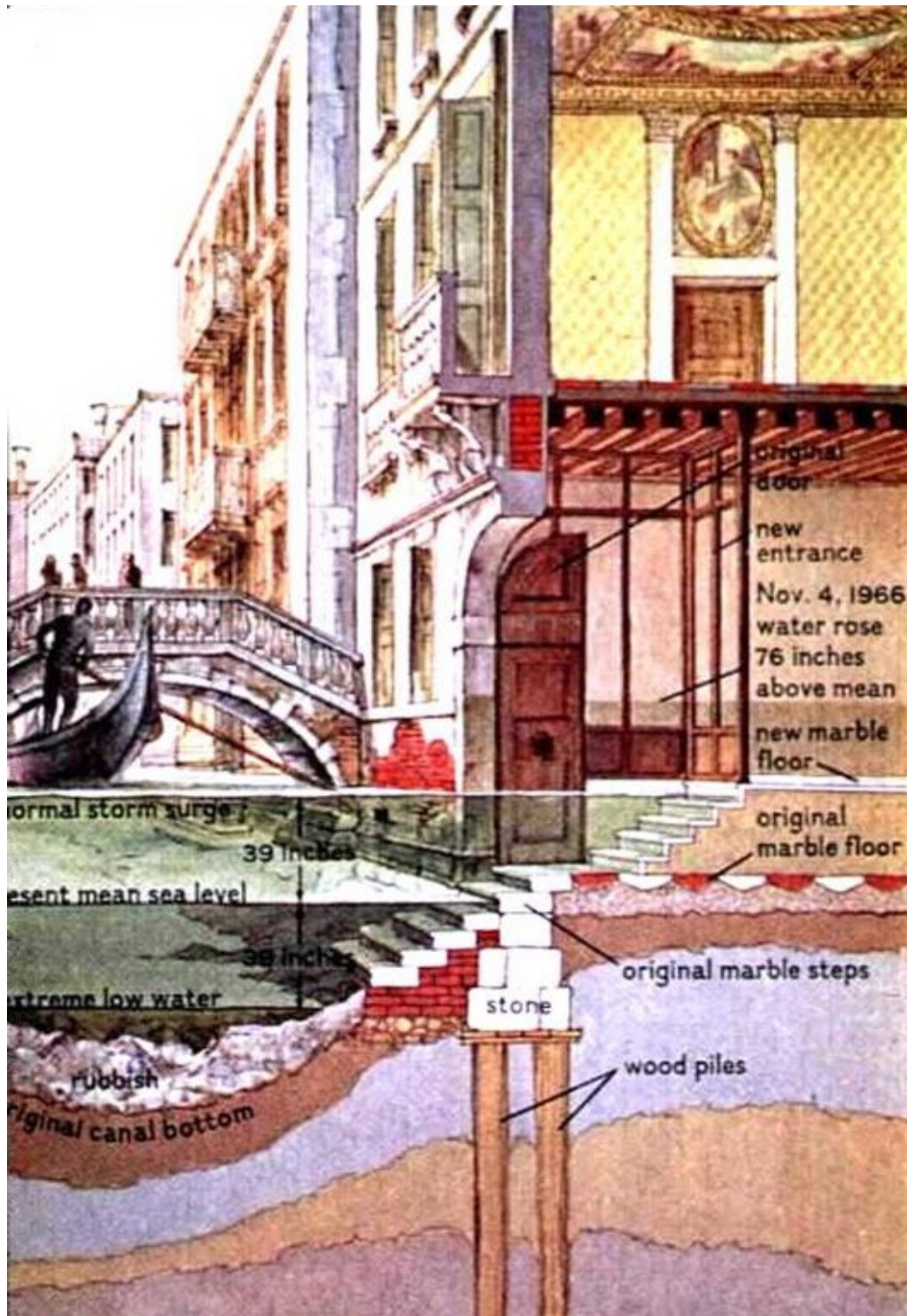
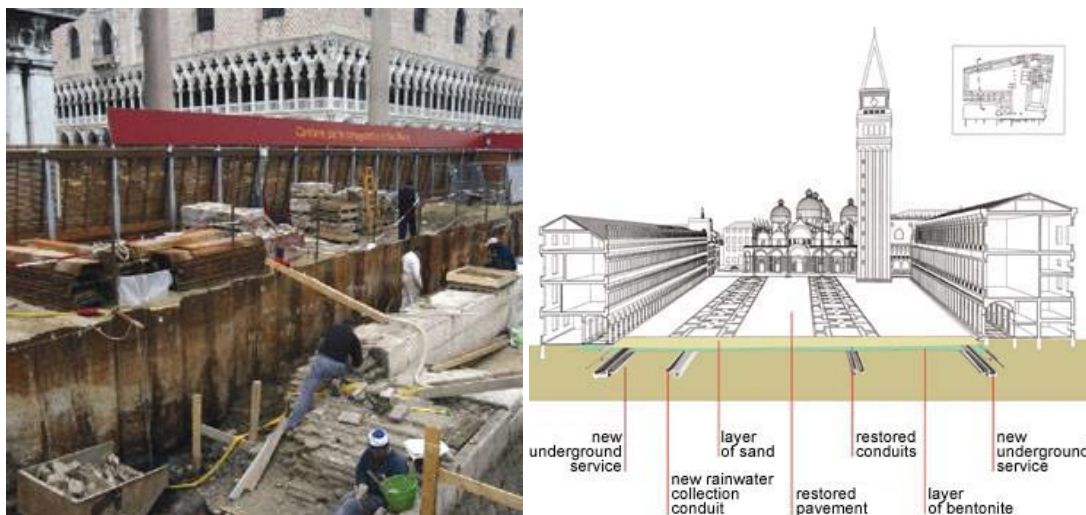


Figure 109. Section through a Venetian house The original marble floor has been superseded by a new floor at about 1m above in order to cope with the normal storm surge. The November 1966 water level was still a further meter above the new floor.



**Figure 110. San Marco Piazza, works to protect the area from the most frequent flooding, restore paving and improve the subsoil.**

Besides the problems of storm surges, there are the frequent high waters – over 250 times a year the tide reaches a height of 60cm – against which more localised measures, such as anti-infiltration systems and elevation of pavements, can be taken.<sup>269</sup>

Another example – this time man-made, but just as difficult to control – is the historic citadel of Sibiu, built atop a defensible height by the Saxons. One of the main threats to the historic urban fabric is the fact that the area within the fortification, which has become densely built up, is now at risk due to landslides which are mainly caused by ‘rebel’ water sources, i.e. unidentified pipes from older water systems leaking within the versants.

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<sup>269</sup> “Protection of the San Marco area in Venice,” SAL.VE (website of the Venice Water Authority, Ministry for Infrastructure, online at <[http://www.salve.it/uk/soluzioni/acque/locali\\_sanmarco.htm](http://www.salve.it/uk/soluzioni/acque/locali_sanmarco.htm)> (Accessed 10 September 2008))



**Figure 111. Sibiu, Lies' Bridge retaining wall propped with wooden beams to reduce bulging and avoid collapse due to land sliding**



**Figure 112. Sibiu, Lies' Bridge under restoration.**

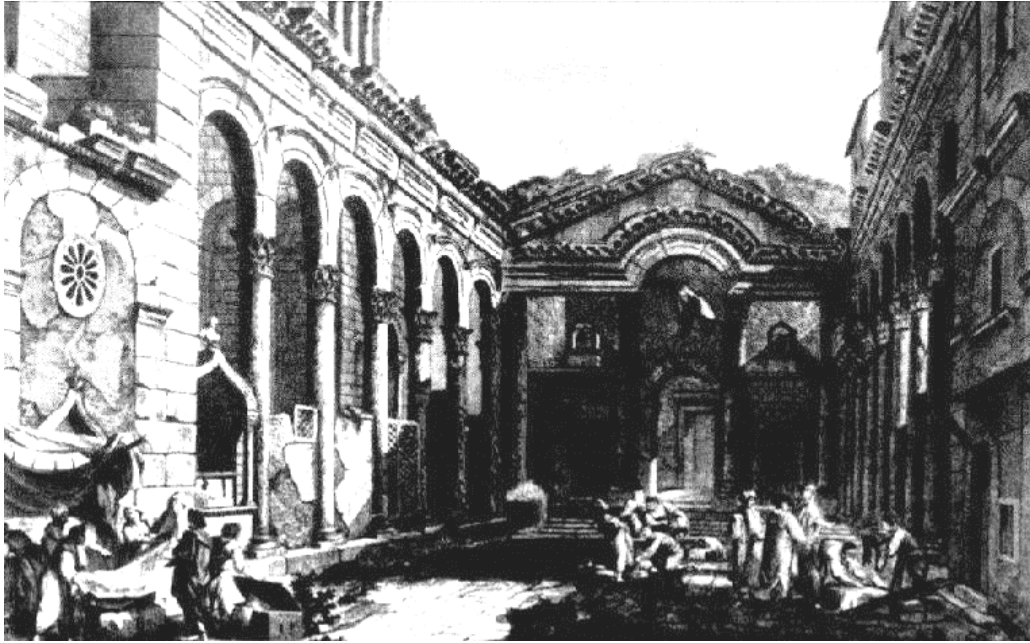
Sources: Author's slide collection



The socio-cultural factors, which determine threats or opportunities by deteriorating cultural values or, conversely, offering the prospect of their strengthening, are essentially represented through structural or morphological changes within the urban texture.

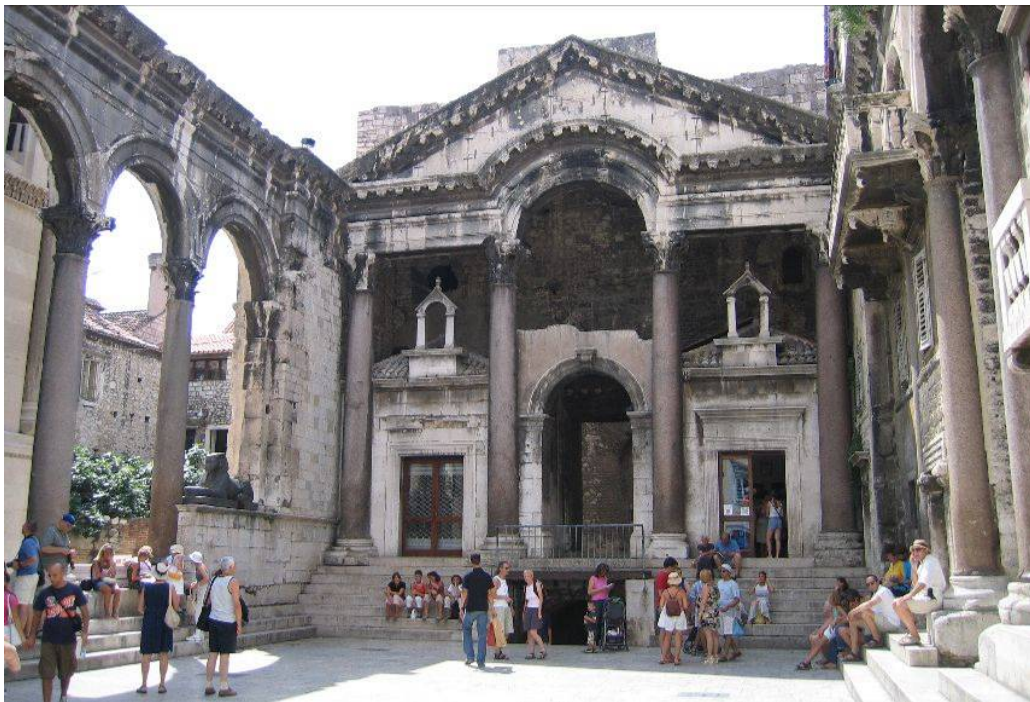
These changes and future tendencies can be revealed through a synthesis of sequential analyses presented above. There can be structural alterations of the movement of people through the public space within the historic urban area; these are determined by new types of transport, new flows of traffic or new focal points.

For example, the main access into the historic centre of Split is today from the former sea gate (now the at the level of the promenade), through the Roman underground structures of the Palace of Diocletian and up, through an opening in the main stairs, straight inside the Peristyle, which now plays the role of the main square. This new, ad-hoc access under the main stairs to the Vestibule is the result of the excavation of the Roman under-structures and the desire of directing people's flow through them, as well as the presence of the new train and bus terminals next to the port. While the original Palace had an access from the sea into its deposits, the main approach was from the land, from the opposite side through the Golden Gate or from the lateral gates – even as a Medieval city – via *cardo* and *decumanum* leading to the Peristyle, with the entrance Vestibule at the south end. The result of this inversion is not only a awkward access to the centre of the historic city, but also an isolation of the south side, while there are other options available for emerging from the underground deposits through ancient stairs on both sides.



**Figure 113. Split. The Peristyle, Clerisseau, 1757, published in Robert Adam's volume on the Palace of Diocletian**

Source: Wikimedia Commons, <http://commons.wikimedia.org> (accessed 23/08/2006)



**Figure 114. Main access into the historic city, at the back, through a gap in the Vestibule stairs and up into the Peristyle, Split**

Source: Author's slide collection

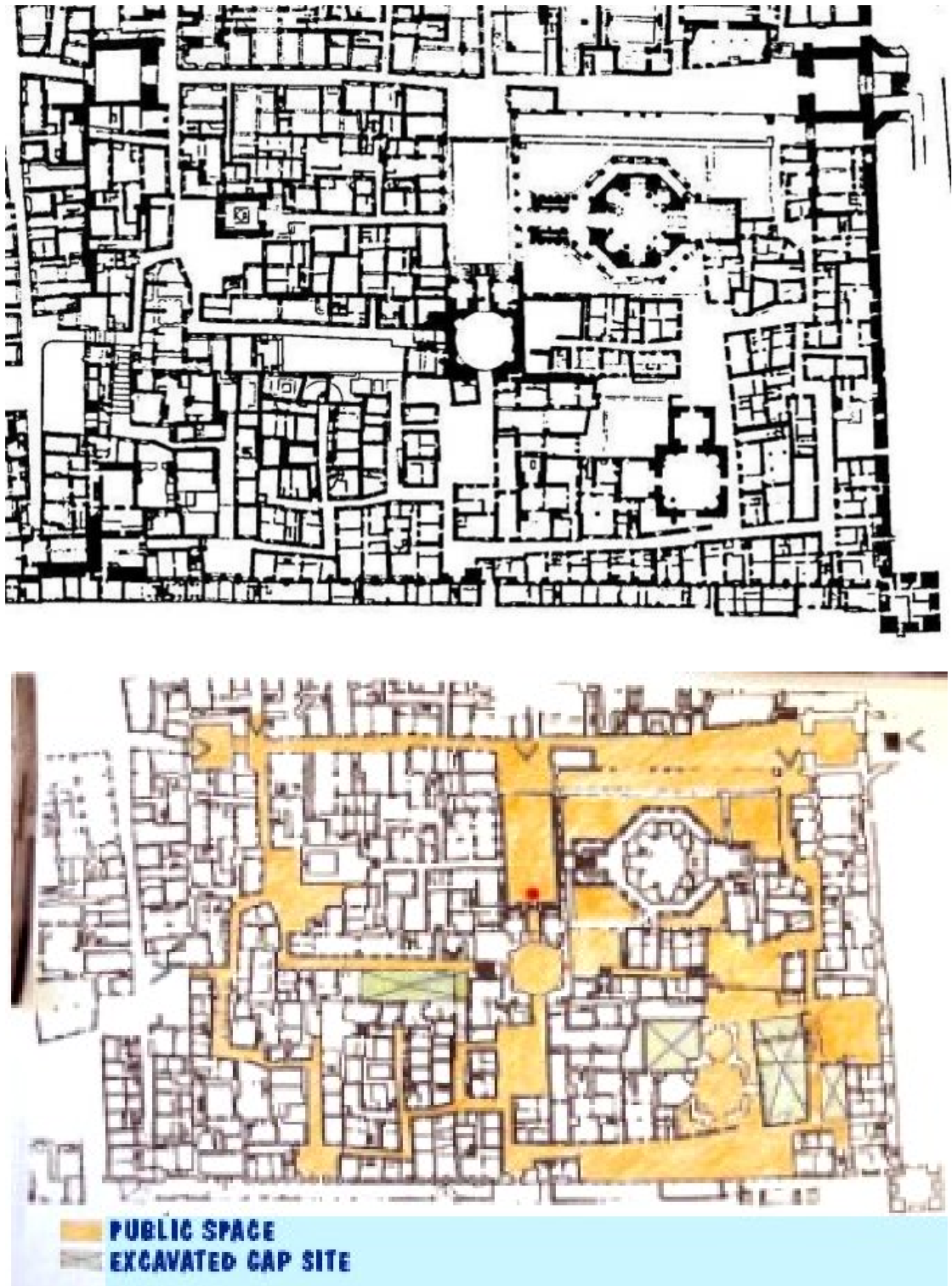


Figure 115. Split historic centre, the south-east corner before and after demolitions

Source: Lester Borley (ed.), *Europa Nostra Young Heritage Professionals Split Report* (Edinburgh, 2003)



**Figure 116. Aerial view of the historic centre of Split.**

Source: Google Maps, [www.maps.google.co.uk](http://www.maps.google.co.uk) (accessed 2/06/2011)

The structure of the former palace is still visible in the urban fabric, while the gap-sites are in fact archaeological excavation sites where the medieval and later structures were cleared. The sites have been left open and neglected, being today overrun by weeds.<sup>270</sup> This happened because the prevalent interest of the local authorities in the Roman archaeology of Split since 1950s allowed extensive archaeological digging within the historic town with the demolition of the medieval and later structures in order to allow the opening of the Roman substructures especially in the South-Eastern corner of the palace. The result is now a de-structured urban fabric with partly demolished medieval and Renaissance housing and residual open spaces. This, and the fear that the digging will continue and more houses will be demolished, led to lack of maintenance of the houses and gradual dislocation of population, leaving vacant many still standing buildings, prey for dereliction, vandalism and eventual death of the area. This situation has further reflected in the state of the adjacent public spaces and composed with the short-cutting of the south side of the Palace through the new underground access directly into the Peristyle leads to an irreversible erosion of the urban fabric.<sup>271</sup>

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<sup>270</sup> This situation proliferated for the past thirty years since it was already noted by Ivan Zaknic, "Split at the Critical Point: Diocletian's Palace, Excavation vs. Conservation," *Journal of Architectural Education*, vol. 36, no.3 (1983), 20-26.

<sup>271</sup> The cleared south-east corner of the wall become the preferred hang-about area for drug users.

On the contrary, in the case of Perugia's historic centre, a new way of accessing it has ensured its continuing viability. As part of a program of pedestrianisation of the historic core in the 1970s, escalators and lifts were built to connect the new urban area at the foot of the hill with the centre on the top.<sup>272</sup>



Figure 117. Perugia, Schematic section showing the system of escalators.



Figure 118. Pedestrianised streets and escalators in the historic centre of Perugia

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<sup>272</sup> Mario Belardi et al., "Una città storica: Perugia," in Luisella Gelsomino, *Il recupero dell'ambiente urbano* (Bologna: [Ente autonomo per le fiere di Bologna](#), [Centro internazionale di studio, ricerca e documentazione dell'abitare OIKOS](#), 1985), 205-221.

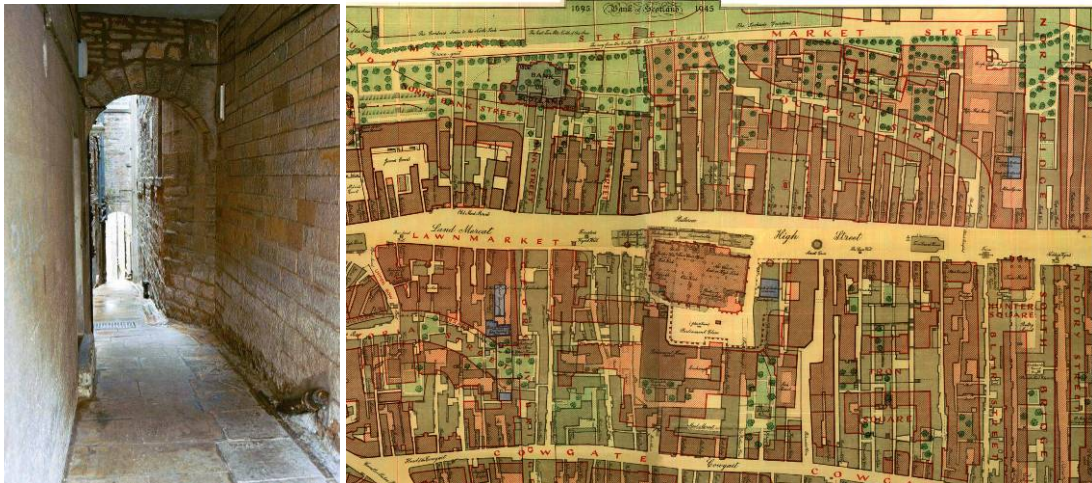
A typical case is that where former public spaces, which are situated in prominent positions within the urban fabric and display a corresponding urban form, are reused for incompatible functions, such as parking, which is essentially a storage function. The Piazza Anfiteatro in Lucca is one of the many cases.



**Figure 119. Lucca, The amphitheatre piazza used as a parking space, now protected, only compatible functions being allowed**

Other structural alterations at the level of the plot system can affect the transition between public and private space. For example, the wide-spread hygienisation of the interior of the insulae and its transformation from a small community space – semi-private – into a large semi-public space where this is not a characteristic feature of the urban fabric, represents a threat to its integrity.

In the case of the Edinburgh Old Town the urban fabric is characterised by the fish-bone pattern of semi-private closes leading down from the High Street to the city walls. The street system has been largely preserved in the urban form, although the great majority of the building stock has been repeatedly replaced in time and the actual function of the closes has changed to public thoroughfares or gated private spaces.



**Figure 120. Edinburgh Old Town closes; the plan shows the situation in mid-twentieth century superimposed over that of the seventeenth century**

Sources: Author's slide collection, Bank of Scotland Commemorative Map 1695-1945 by Thomas McRae and in *Edinburgh Maps and Plans 1544-1851*, CD-Rom (Edinburgh: West Port Books, n.d.)

In a historic major alteration of this structure, urban developments in the seventeenth century had chosen a more 'continental' solution to modernise the residential quarters along the Royal Mile: the court. Mylne's Court, James Court and Wardrop's Court have been 'hygienised' in order to allow their gentrification, onto the background of growing interest in a socially segregated urban landscape. Although the facades towards the Royal Mile have preserved some of the former close accesses, the plots have been unified and only buildings perimetral to the newly formed, larger plot have been kept and remodelled under unified facades.<sup>273</sup>

In the 1890s, these courts had passed through a second 'hygienisation' under Patrick Geddes, who applied to them his principles of 'conservative surgery.'

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<sup>273</sup> However, the unified design has been only moderately implemented and integrated with more informally laid out buildings.





**Figure 121. Edinburgh. Mylne's Court, James Court and Wardrop's Court**

Source: Google Maps, [www.maps.google.co.uk](http://www.maps.google.co.uk) (accessed 20/12/2004)



**Figure 122. James Court, James Brownhill, 1723-7, remodelled for Patrick Geddes in the 1890s**



**Figure 123. Patrick Geddes carried out a second ‘hygienisation’ of these courts.**

Sources: Author’s digital images collection

But, while this resulted in a totally different space – large public spaces within the built fabric, accessed through what is left of the former closes – the previous limits of the different plots/feus are marked on the pavement and still provide information on the transformation these spaces went through.

Beside alterations to the very structure of the urban fabric, there are morphological changes that affect the hierarchy of form and/or purpose within the historic urban area. These changes manifest themselves initially as isolated cases, and evolve usually into generalised patterns. Therefore it is essential that they are correctly mapped even at incipient stages, in order to allow accurate forecast scenarios for urban conservation. The common trigger for morphological alterations is social change that leads to dereliction, disuse or misuse of the built fabric or open space through neglect or poor management; interventions, extensions or new built through economically driven development that disregards the cultural values of the place, and even their economic potential; and the extreme, which is vandalism or violence as a result of social instability of the community inhabiting or using the historic urban area.



**Figure 124. Bucharest, Calea Mosilor**

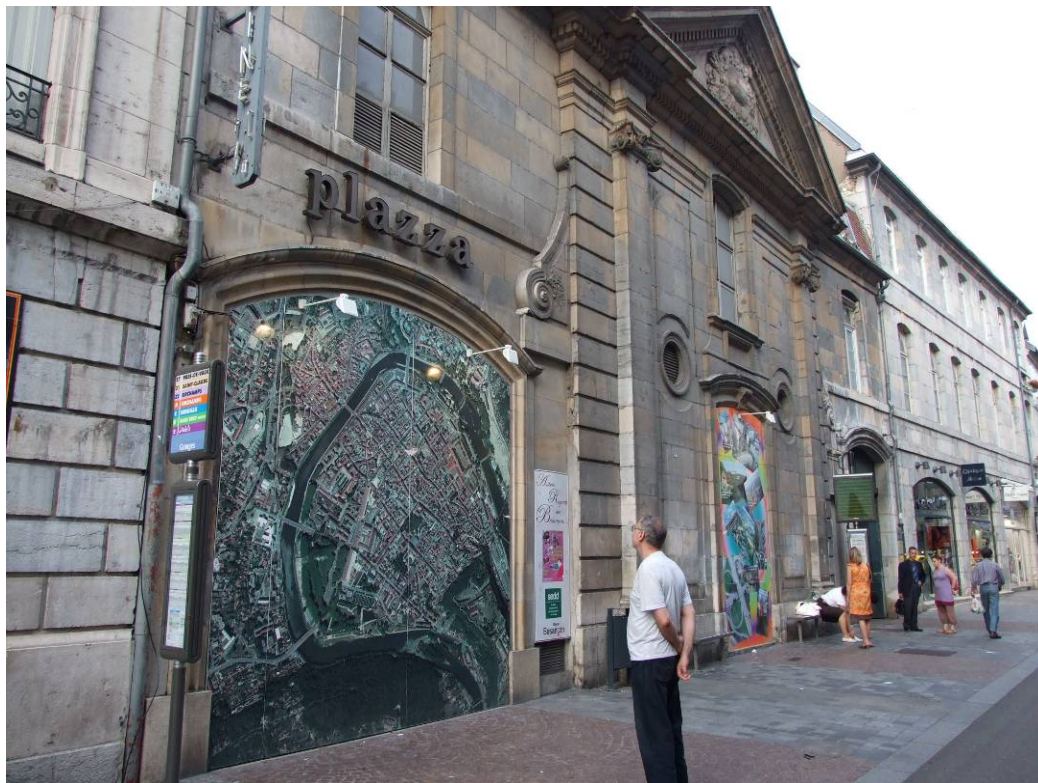
Source: Author's digital images collection

For example, in the case of the derelict parts of Calea Mosilor in the historic centre of Bucharest, an investigation carried out in 1998 revealed that one of the main causes of degradation is the uncertainty of ownership of buildings in the area.<sup>274</sup> This is a problem characteristic to the countries of the former Eastern Block after the fall of the Iron Curtain: private properties have been nationalised during the communist regime in a variety of circumstances – ranging from legal nationalisation, where a paper trail still exists, to illegal disowning, without any proper records; the situation is furthermore complicated by the time lapsed since this has happened, with many claimants being second or even third generation successors of the original owners. Current legislation prevents listed buildings from

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<sup>274</sup> Project of the author's for the MUrb programme at Ion Mincu Institute of Architecture and Urbanism, Bucharest

being sold and bought, which should in theory simplify the restitution process; but in practice, the restitution of nationalised houses is ever delayed through corruption and fraud. This situation results in accelerated degradation of these houses with current 'owners' not investing in their repair for fear they will eventually lose them to the rightful owners.



**Figure 125. Besançon – empty building, but good temporary use of the blocked-up shop windows**

Source: Author's digital images collection

The physical threats can be triggered by other socio-cultural factors too, such as the decline of a traditional agricultural practice in the case of Cinque Terre, where the peculiar geology of the place formed the characteristic landscape of numerous small inhabited peninsulas.



**Figure 126. Cinque Terre's traditional settlement overseen by its terraced vineyards**



**Figure 127. Cinque Terre terraces in an advanced state of erosion and new large hotels creeping above the village**



**Figure 128.** The versants are further eroded and become covered in shrubs



**Figure 129.** Cinque Terre in 2006

Sources: ICCROM and Getty Images

The sunny slopes of Cinque Terre have been developed since the late Middle Ages as cultivation terraces of narrow strips of land with retaining dry walls. From the 1870s onwards after the building of the railway, economic changes led to the decline of the traditional cultivation. Moreover, at the end of the 20th century, a new threat has been posed by the tourism industry. The versants of the mountain have been left prey to erosion of rain waters, the main livelihood of the community has changed from winemaking to tourism services and new large hotels have sprouted in the landscape. Wider cultivating terraces were introduced and encouraged through a governmental programme, which allow a more efficient, mechanized work that revived Cinque Terre.

The above examples have only attempted to give an overview of the wide range of situations that can be encountered in urban conservation. They are usually easy to identify because they affect the historic urban fabric immediately and visibly, but there are also other threats that do not manifest themselves in this direct way; they undermine the urban fabric in an indirect way, being triggered by an extraneous cause which is sometimes far beyond the protected areas.

Such a situation appeared when a Dracula Park was proposed outside the historic citadel of Sighișoara, listed in 1999 as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.<sup>275</sup> While usually threats to historic cities come from uncontrolled development pressures inside the perimeter of the conservation areas, in the case of Sighișoara, the threat was posed by a project for an amusement park just outside the town. Concern might seem disproportionate at first sight; nevertheless a closer analysis of

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<sup>275</sup> Sighișoara is "testimony to the culture of the Transylvanian Saxons, a culture that is coming to a close after 850 years and will continue to exist only through its architectural and urban monuments. The apparently unstoppable process of emigration by the Saxons, the social stratum which had formed and upheld the cultural traditions of the region, threatens the survival of their architectural heritage as well." Inscription criteria for the Historic Centre of Sighișoara, (World Heritage List [online], UNESCO, 2003), <<http://whc.unesco.org/sites/902.htm>> (7 May 2003)

the actual situation showed beyond any doubt that such an intervention would have endangered the authenticity and integrity of this important historic settlement.



**Figure 130. Aerial views of the Conservation Area**

Source: Author's slide collection





**Figure 131. Digital model of Dracula Park**

Source: "Dracula-Park bei Schassburg?," *Siebenbürgische Zeitung* 25 March 2002, [www.siebenbuerger.de](http://www.siebenbuerger.de) (accessed 23/06/2003).

The threat was on several levels:

- cultural identity, by presenting it as the former residence of a fictional character from Bram Stoker's nineteenth century Gothic novel;
- tourism, because of the proximity of a consumerist tourist target would have triggered uncontrolled development and this type of mass tourism market, contrasting to cultural tourism, would have misused the historical site;
- structure and urban fabric, because an out-of-town theme park might have led to sprawl urbanism and the destruction of the landscape and character of the area;<sup>276</sup>

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<sup>276</sup> "Dracula threatens Transylvania: Government-sponsored theme park scheme may kick off sprawl development in Romania" (News Archive, INTBAU [online], December 2001), <<http://www.intbau.org/newsarchive.htm>> (7 May 2003)

- ecology, since , the park was intended to be right on the Breite Plateau – which is a protected area of ancient oak trees, many of which are 400 to 500 years old – in flagrant violation of the nature conservation laws.

Given that the project was a government undertaking, and had got well underway with the sale of shares, there was a risk that permits necessary for the start of the project could have been blindly issued. Sustainable Sighișoara Group, Pro Patrimonio British-Romanian Foundation, Mihai Eminescu Trust, ICOMOS, UNESCO, and Greenpeace, other heritage and ecologist organisations, along with individual professionals, including the Prince of Wales, started in autumn 2001 an anti-Dracula Park and pro-heritage conservation campaign in mass media. Following the UNESCO evaluation in June 2002, the World Heritage Committee rejected the proposal.<sup>277</sup> The result was that the Romanian Government contracted an auditing firm to conduct a feasibility study of the project considering alternative locations.<sup>278</sup>

### **Changes in meaning and value judgement**

The meaning of the historic urban fabric changes over time as elements of it are transformed or replaced in order to remain relevant to the needs of its community. Moreover, even parts or elements of it that remained unchanged hold a different value for a permanently changing society. Such is our human nature that these two aspects, composed, lead to a continuous selection process through which some of these elements are emphasised to the detriment of others who are

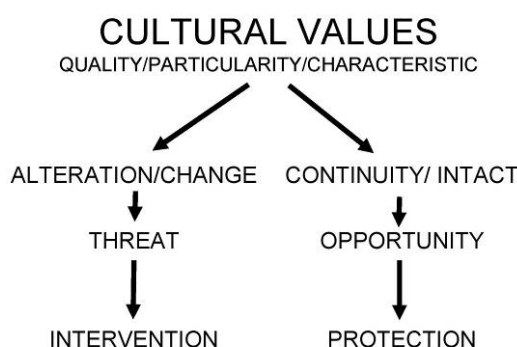
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<sup>277</sup> Romania (Heritage @ Risk [online], ICOMOS, 2002-2003),  
<<http://www.international.icomos.org/risk/2002/romania2002.htm>> (7 May 2003)

<sup>278</sup> Zahra Sethna, "Plans for 'Dracula Park' postponed" (UN Chronicle [online], 2002, issue 2)  
<[http://www.un.org/Pubs/chronicle/2002/issue2/070302\\_dracula\\_park.html](http://www.un.org/Pubs/chronicle/2002/issue2/070302_dracula_park.html)> (10 May 2003)

destroyed.<sup>279</sup> The changes in meaning and value judgement are more pervasive but also difficult to identify due to the inherent bias of the community and researcher alike; they are triggered by social, cultural and political forces at a macro scale.

This situation subsumes the modern curatorial practice where collections are permanently re-evaluated and shaped with the aim of continuing to remain relevant for contemporary public. However, this approach can be dangerous and lead not only to the irreversible destruction of artefacts whose values might have been reconsidered later, but also to the proliferation of pseudo-values whose acceptance by the public is promoted by other, non-cultural, economic forces. But the question remains whether values can be divided in unique, non-negotiable values and negotiable values, which would allow change without actual loss. This issue should also take into consideration the degree of vulnerability of these values in terms of changes in meaning for the society.



**Figure 132. Vulnerable values / resistant values.**

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<sup>279</sup> David Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) and "Stewarding the Past in a Perplexing Present," in Erica Avrami, Randall Mason, Marta de la Torre, *Values and Heritage Conservation* (Los Angeles: The Getty Conservation Institute, 2000) 18-25.

Generally, the survey of the status of the essential cultural values of an urban area will highlight, on one hand, which ones are most prone to alteration and change as a result of specific threats and therefore require some sort of intervention; on the other hand those values that are found to be intact – in terms of both authenticity and integrity – and show consistent continuity over time as a result of a conjunction of specific opportunities and lack of threats, only require protection, rather than any special intervention.



**Figure 133. Menton today and in an 1810 sketch**

For example, the *secteur sauvegardé* of Menton had shown consistent integrity of the urban texture and skyline when it was created in 1993.



**Figure 134. Toulouse roofscape**

The roofscape within the *secteur sauvegardé* of Toulouse represents an important element of the urban fabric and has been, therefore, placed under protection regarding its form, materials and visual quality.



**Figure 135. Sibiu roofs' 'eyes' are placed under protection**

The identification of threats is, however, not enough on its own; it is important to carry out also an evaluation of problems in terms of scale, extension in space and time, vulnerability to intervention and forecast evolution in case of non-intervention as well.

The results of such a comprehensive multicriteria analysis need to be expressed in a way that facilitates the use of these specialist recommendations by the other professions involved in the administration of the historic urban fabric. The Italian and French traditions rely on detailed Conservation Management Plans which define the limits of intervention for each feature of the urban form, item by item. In the UK the recommendations are formulated in more general terms in a Character Appraisal and rely on another level of planning to translate these into planning regulations. These differences are due to the inherent nature of the legislative system in these countries, with the continental European one being more prescriptive, so it is difficult to say whether one or the other of these practices have better success in practice, since the culture within which these approaches is different too and reflects the legislative practices as well in mentality and behaviour.



Figure 136. *Plan de sauvegarde et de mise en valeur* for the *secteur sauvegardé* of Bordeaux

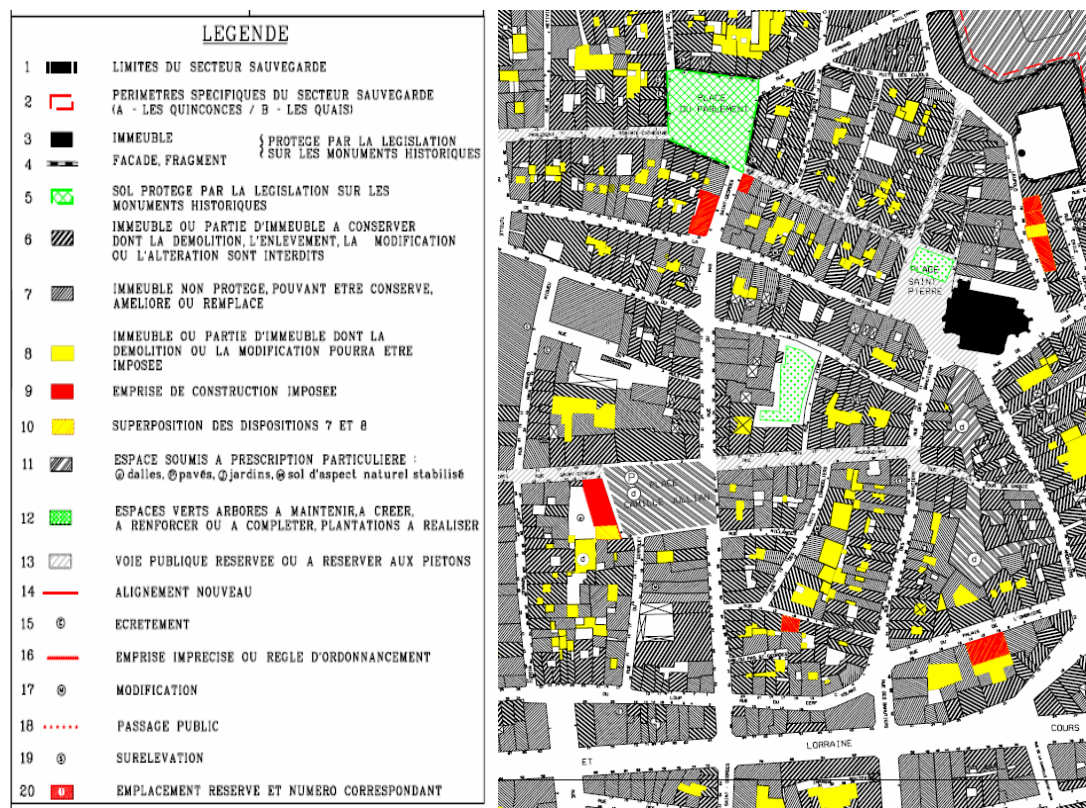


Figure 137. Detailed restrictions and permissivities requirements for the built and open space in the *Plan de sauvegarde et de mise en valeur* for the *secteur sauvegardé* of Bordeaux

## **V. THE INTELLECTUAL CONTEXT OF URBAN CONSERVATION**

*Investigation of the values of historic urban areas and their theoretical construction*



The power of place will be remarkable.

(Aristotle, *Physics*)<sup>280</sup>

The form, structure, and *modus operandi* of the historic urban areas are inextricably linked between them. The urban context mirrors, therefore, the essence and dynamics of the changes in the society. Traditionally, architecture and urban history have built up their own canons for judging architecture and urbanism, but these also were subject to change over time - this explaining the (sometimes widely) differing attitudes towards the historic urban fabric. While in use, however, these canons represented the authoritative way of identifying the values of the historic and contemporary urban fabric. So, the way in which changes in the society have an impact onto the urban fabric can be seen in particular, in its changing value judgements. In philosophy, a key issue of axiology<sup>281</sup> is the rational status of these value judgements.<sup>282</sup> This displays three key positions: one in which value judgements are *absolute* or *objective* on the basis of either divine or other authority, either standards that rationally or otherwise transcend human decision or divine authority; another position is that value judgements are *relative* social constructs or conventions and consequently their relevance is limited, specific; and yet another position considers value judgements completely *subjective* non-rational expressions of personal preference and therefore of no more than personal relevance.<sup>283</sup> It is important to note that, in fact, these categories only exist through each other.

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<sup>280</sup> Edward S. Casey, *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 1997), ix.

<sup>281</sup> Axiology is the epistemology of values.

<sup>282</sup> The two main branches of axiology, ethics and aesthetics, are isomorphic from this point of view.

<sup>283</sup> David Carr, "Values in the Arts and Architecture: From Aesthetics to Ethics" (Paper presented at PROKALÓ Postgraduate Seminar Series in Architecture, The University of Edinburgh, 2004/2005).

Leaving aside the third position, which is unsuitable for a programmatic analysis due to its very limited scope and subjectivity (nevertheless its potential of influencing the first two categories should not be ignored), the first two positions are indeed relevant for an attempt at quantifying and qualifying the 'resistance of the city to change,' to the extent to which value judgements are intrinsic to the urban context, in both its production and perception. The evaluation of the urban context for the purpose of identifying what is urban heritage, and what are its values should attempt to examine it through each of these positions, in order to ensure a comprehensive, if not exhaustive, investigation. This means, beside the well established comparative, typological and morphological methods of architecture and urban history that represent an 'objective' value judgement, attention should be paid to the more 'relative' value judgements produced by the societies who in fact build and use a particular urban context. These value judgements will be, of course, beyond any typology that can be constructed through a cross-cultural comparison and might seem meaningless or difficult to make sense of for professionals, unless they are themselves members of that particular society.

So, on one hand we have professionals using established typologies elaborated by architectural and urban history, but who are prone to identify only those values of the urban context that they are looking for – "reason only perceives that which it produces after its own design."<sup>284</sup> On the other hand we have the society that produces and uses the urban context and takes the aforementioned values as identified by specialists as granted, intrinsic, but at the same time have intimate knowledge of the specificity of the urban fabric in a way in which is not possible for an outsider. However, communities encounter difficulty in spelling out these values, although reacting and protesting if they were affected by any malign

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<sup>284</sup> Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason* (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1855), xxvii.

intervention.<sup>285</sup> This distinction between what we perceive as intrinsic values and what as specificity has been defined in Medieval philosophy by John Duns Scotus (c.1266-1308): *quidditas*,<sup>286</sup> the essential nature of a thing – based on the meaning defined in antique philosophy by Aristotle – and *haecceitas*,<sup>287</sup> the individual nature of a thing – to define a non-qualitative property of a thing.

A method taking into consideration both these points of view has been developed for the study of languages first, and then cultures, a fact which renders it worthy of consideration for the study of the values of the urban context as manifestation of a particular culture. But for this, it is paramount that the urban context is regarded as an interdependence between its spatial/formal and social/political dimensions.

In this respect, this thesis investigates how the cultural values of historic urban areas and their theoretical construction can be determined in the light of what linguists and anthropologists call the etic and emic dimensions of systems of meaning. This dichotomic concept was coined by linguist Kenneth Pike in 1954<sup>288</sup> and transmuted to cultural anthropology by Marvin Harris in 1964;<sup>289</sup> since then it has proved a very useful heuristic device for many disciplines<sup>290</sup> and it has been used in many senses (universal vs. specific, objective vs. subjective, outsider vs. insider, ideal vs. actual, ethnological vs. ethnographic).

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<sup>285</sup> One method aiming so far to address this issue is participatory urbanism, but it is a rather empirical method and therefore its results depend widely of a large number of variables.

<sup>286</sup> Quiddity, what-ness

<sup>287</sup> Haecceity, this-ness

<sup>288</sup> Kenneth L. Pike, *Language in relation to a unified theory of the structure of human behavior* (The Hague: Mouton, 1967).

<sup>289</sup> Marvin Harris, *The Nature of Cultural Things* (New York: Random House, 1964).

<sup>290</sup> Thomas N. Headland, Kenneth L. Pike, Marvin Harris (ed.), *Emics and etics: the insider/outsider debate* (Newbury Park; London: Sage Publications, 1990), 13-27.

In the case of urban heritage, this etic/emic approach situates values between a *meta*-discourse – corresponding to the *absolute* value judgement in axiology – on the desirable features of the urban fabric and their meaning and a *speci(fic)*-discourse – corresponding to the *relative* value judgement – on the specificity of urban fabric and its cultural construction and significance. The two discourses are both concerned with recognising and understanding the identity of the urban fabric, and ideally complement each other: the first category of objective values is rooted in history and theory of urbanism and our desire to create better places for living, while the second, of specificity, is rooted in anthropology and an understanding of cultural diversity through hermeneutics of space.

On one hand, there are values in architecture and urbanism that can be identified cross-culturally and seem to be related to the very nature of architecture and urbanism as human agency. Therefore, the '*meta*-discourse' presupposes a philosophical perspective towards values as principles. This is characteristic for the typological approach in architectural and urban history. This means methods external to each specific culture are used, and therefore only those aspects that are comparable from one culture to another are identified and assessed. This limits in a way this approach to the study of the physical reality of the urban texture and leaves unexplored those aspects that are specific constructions of a given culture.

On the other hand, there are exactly these aspects mentioned above that are the result of specific cultural circumstances that affect the urban environment as a side-effect. These determine the '*speci*-discourse' as an anthropological approach aiming to reveal values, both existing and also latent, as created and experienced by the urban communities themselves. By considering both these discourses, this chapter seeks to uncover some of the key issues and processes that shaped the historic urban fabric to become what we perceive now as urban discursivity.

## V. 1. META-DISOURSE Firmitas, Utilitas and Venustas

The desirable features of the urban fabric and their meaning; evolution of views about these.

There are inner, objective values in architecture and urbanism, which should be correctly identified in order to provide a reliable method for choosing what should be conserved. Therefore, the etic '*meta-discourse*' involves a philosophical perspective towards values as principles. Here, the etic approach is understood as a structuring system or typology, comparable cross-culturally, that confers meaning but does not "mean" itself (just like phonetics in linguistics). The *meta-discourse* is concerned with the theoretical issues that should be considered by an analytical methodology for historic urban areas: the desirable features of the urban fabric and their meaning, as well as the evolution of views about these over time.

### V. 1. 1. Urban semiology

Traditionally, urban history distinguishes between successive epochs in urban development, each of them with their particular morphological features.

Corresponding to these, Françoise Choay proposes, in a rather simplistic way, three semiological systems historically successive:<sup>291</sup>

- the Medieval city: space for human encounter – *utilitas*
- the Renaissance city: an aesthetic city with educative function – *venustas*
- the Industrial city: a simple functional facilitator of circulation – *firmitas*.

These are not entirely post-readings of the urban fabric and ethos, but indeed rooted in the respective contemporary perception of the city. The medieval city is seen as a space for human encounter, which plays an active role in the promotion of human contact and exchanges; therefore the meaning and value of its spaces are judged according to the way they serve this specific scope – the Medieval “global semiological system.” In this way, the Medieval city can be read as embodying with predilection *utilitas* from the three Vitruvian attributes of architecture and, consequentially, urban fabric. On the contrary, the Renaissance city is regarded as an aesthetic city fulfilling an educative function; the meaning and value of its spaces being based on human perception of beauty – the Renaissance “iconic semiological system.” Henceforth, the quality of *venustas* is predominant and ultimately determines the Renaissance city. Arguably, Choay defines the industrial city as a space which actually lost its meaning becoming as in so far a simple functional facilitator of circulation – “monosemic”. From this perspective, the Industrial city is merely providing a structure for the city, having enhanced the quality of *firmitas* to the detriment of the other positions.

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<sup>291</sup> Françoise Choay. “Sémiologie et urbanisme” (in *Architecture d’Aujourd’hui*, no. 132), 8-10 and “Remarques à propos de sémiologie urbaine” (in *Architecture d’Aujourd’hui*, no. 153), 9-10.

However, the three semiological systems coexist in the contemporary historic city but they do not necessarily overlap anymore with their original morphological features. As a consequence, when a place does not have anymore a morpho-semiological coherence, hence it does not perform anymore in the way it is expected to, this influences our value judgements. Nevertheless, this categorisation, serves as an instrument for separating and reading different layers of the contemporary city and their interweaving, with the aim of identifying the values of the urban fabric. In this case value judgements are supposed to be objective and based on rational standards.

### V. 1. 2. Conceptual cities

But ideal *topoi* mirror best the historical evolution of theoretical views on the desirable features of the city. Not surprisingly, once again, each of the Vitruvian attributes is favoured in each case:

- the Great Models: cities of divine creation – *utilitas*
- the Ideal Cities: space to educate society – *venustas*
- the Utopic Cities: a tool for regulating society – *firmitas*.

*Utilitas* is at the heart of the myths of exemplar cities, believed to be of divine creation, such as Babylon, Jerusalem, or Rome; they are considered models for the function they perform in their world, and their socio-political status, rather than their actual formal or structural features. Quite the other way round, the Antique and Renaissance Ideal Cities,<sup>292</sup> designed to embody the ideal environment for civic life, put *venustas* at the forefront of their discourses on the power of beauty and order to educate society. Moreover, Utopic Cities provide spatial structure, *firmitas*, in an attempt to regulate society in accordance with contemporary aspirations: as ideal societies (Utopia, Garden City,<sup>293</sup> Cité Industrielle), or as controlled societies (Metropolis, Plan Voisin, Ville Radieuse,<sup>294</sup> Phalanstère). As in the case of urban semiological systems, in the case of conceptual cities there are some that escape these simplified categorisations, such as Piranesi's *Ichonographiam Campi Martii*, Rossi's analogical city, or Foucault's dystopias and heterotopias.

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292 Pamplona

293 Ebenezer Howard's 1898 book was entitled originally *The Peaceful Path to Real Reform*.

294 Le Corbusier in *L'Esprit Nouveau* (and then in *Vers une architecture*): "Architecture or Revolution" Simon Richards, *Le Corbusier and the Concept of Self* (Yale University Press 2003) Le Corbusier antisocial urbanism was intentional and influenced by Blaise Pascal's philosophy of the individual's withdrawal from society



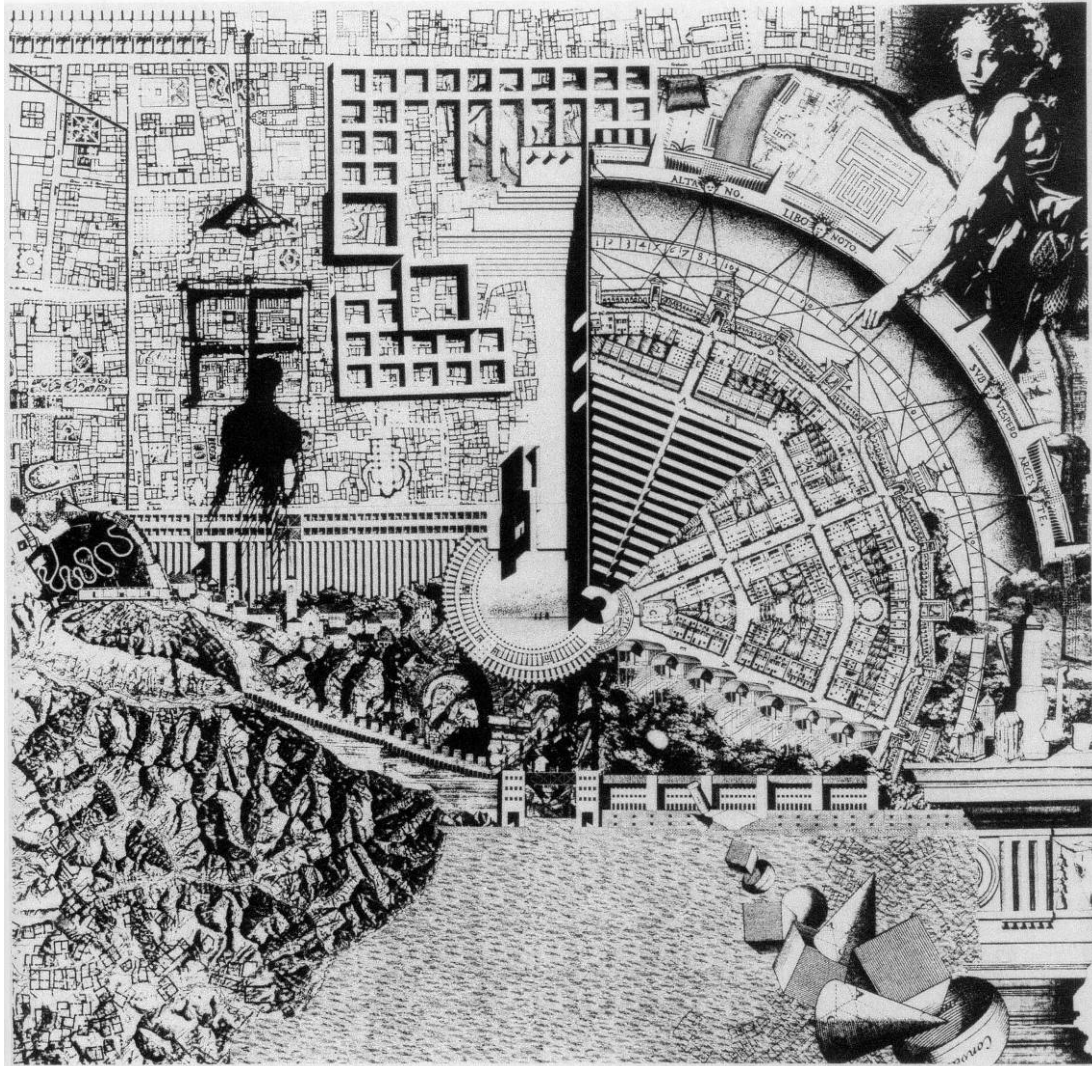


Figure 138. Aldo Rossi, *La Città Analoga*, 1976 (Carsten Ruhl, "Die Vermittlung ist das Werk: Zur Verselbstständigung des Ausstellens bei Herzog & de Meuron," *Die Zukunft der Architekturvermittlung*, *International Journal of Architectural Theory*, Vol. 11. Nos. 1-2, February 2007, <<http://www.tu-cottbus.de/theoriederarchitektur/wolke/deu/Themen/061+062/Ruhl/abb09.jpg>>)

In the case of conceptual cities as ideal topoi, value judgements are claimed to be absolute based on divine authority, in the case of the great models, and on scientific authority, in the case of the others (where this scientific authority is informed by the study of the human society and human perception).

In conclusion, between urban semiology of the actual cities and conceptual cities, this etic approach leads to generalised, non-structural observations about the urban texture. The etic perspective relies on extrinsic concepts and categories that

have meaning only for scientific observers, these being the only able to judge the accuracy and validity of an etic account of the values of the urban fabric. It is an attempt to identify and decipher its values in relation to a more general classification, which has been a recurrent concern of architectural and urban theory over time. As a result specific characteristics are only identified as variations of cross-cultural typologies, and even when singular manifestations are observed they are only explained in relation to these general classifications. This approach, therefore, while putting a specific urban fabric within its wider context of urban manifestations, actually hinders the possibility of putting it in its own cultural context.

There are some less usual methods, which might however be useful in identifying these values, among which analysis of utopian cities and new cities. While I expect utopian cities to reveal intrinsic values of urbanism by their very utopian character – best and at the same time non-existent topoi – from the new cities build from scratch in their specific circumstances I can only extract patterns recognisable as imported from the “normally” grown city. Moreover, looking at extreme situations such as colonisation of New World might prove useful at ideological level.<sup>295</sup> The fact that the newcomers chose to be surrounded by familiar forms and structures might be viewed as a proof for intrinsic values of architecture and urbanism, although later on both developed in a totally different direction from old Europe’s cities.

Once these values identified it would be appropriate to follow their fate in actual instances of “normally” grown cities and see how predominance of decisionist paradigm in urban conservation is affecting them.

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<sup>295</sup> The instance of architecture of British and French extraction in Northern America and Canada or of Spanish extraction in Central America.

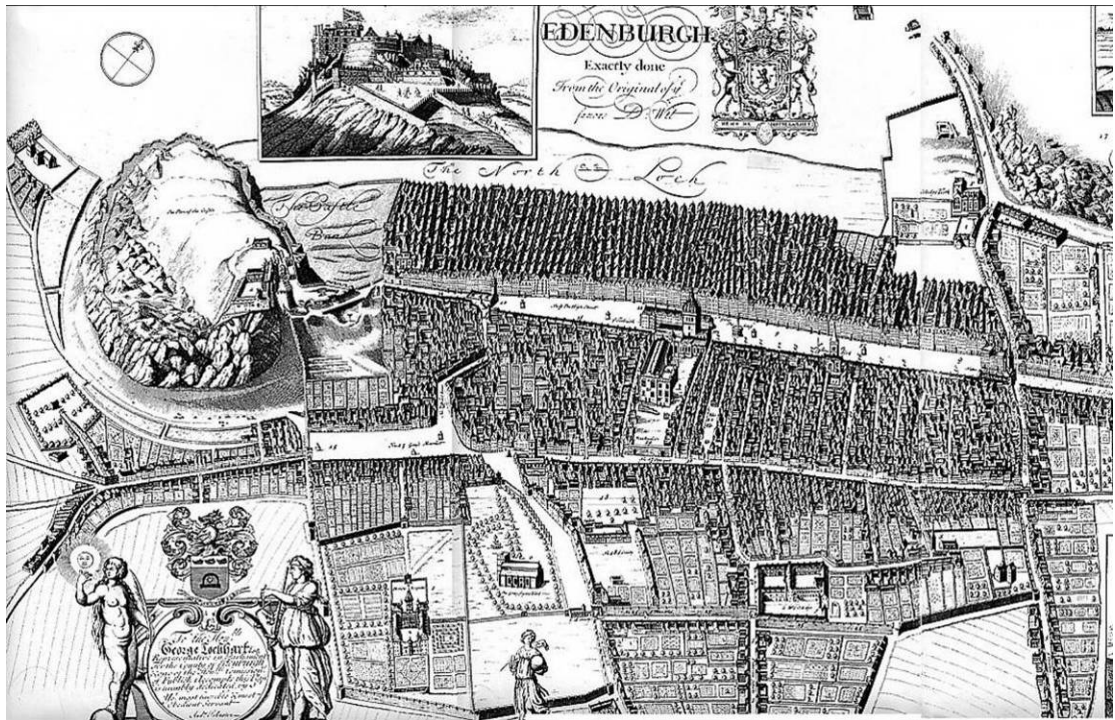
## V. 2. SPECI-DISDISCOURSE Genius loci and Axis mundi

Beside these inner, objective values of the urban fabric, there is also the result of 'happening,' of specific spatial or temporal circumstances which affect the urban environment as a side-effect. The '*speci*-discourse' is thus determined through an anthropological approach aiming to reveal values, both existing and latent, as experienced by urban communities. Urban space is essentially an existential space: human existence in the urban space is dependant of a mental image of it, which should be coherent and offer a multitude of senses and interpretations at different levels of understanding. Urban fabric has, therefore, its own identity and a structured, not chaotic, complexity, which can be read through the eyes of its inhabitants.

The specificity of urban fabric and its historical and theoretical meanings can reveal how place confers identity to humans and vice-versa. In contrast to the etic *meta*-discourse, the emic *speci*-discourse is only valid for one place at a time, being therefore idiosyncratically incomparable. The *speci*-discourse is an attempt to

identify and explain the cultural structure<sup>296</sup> of a specific urban fabric by analysing how the different values constructing it in our perception are related to each other.

Therefore, the hierarchy of urban form – buildings, plots, squares and streets – is culturally determined and differs from one culture to another or from one period to another for the same culture. The emic approach seeks what is the inner hierarchy of a community and how is that reflected in the urban form.



**Figure 139. Edinburgh Old Town. Gordon of Rothiemay, 1647 (fragment).**

The seventeenth century map of Edinburgh shows a mediated image of the urban form, in which main buildings are oversized and have more accurate details. Also, for the fishbone pattern of the urban fabric, it is not an exact representation but rather intends to show its different densities, to give an impression of it. There is no formal differentiation between dwellings: the social hierarchy is not visible in the urban form. However, the communal places are emphasised in size and form: the

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<sup>296</sup> If we admit that urban fabric is culturally structured, whether it is traditional or planned.

church, the castle, the school, the marketplace, the gates, the walls. In terms of configuration, there is a gradual transition from the communitarian space to the private dwelling.



**Figure 140. Edinburgh New Town. 1830-1 General Post Office Directory (fragment)**

In contrast, the Georgian New Town shows a planned alienation of this gradual approach: there is direct contact between the public street space and the very private space inside the house. This results in a loss of the small community structure corresponding to the semiprivate space of the closes and wynds.<sup>297</sup> Moreover, no exterior space for gathering was planned. The two large squares are gardens, for display rather than gathering, just like the large streets. Also only two churches were planned initially, as interior communitarian space. In this way, an

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<sup>297</sup> D. Bell, *Edinburgh Old Town: The Forgotten Nature of an Urban Form* (Edinburgh: Tholis Publishing, 2008), 116-21.

imposed urban form induces a change in the culture of the community itself, to the extent to which people moving in the New Town were coming from the Old Town.

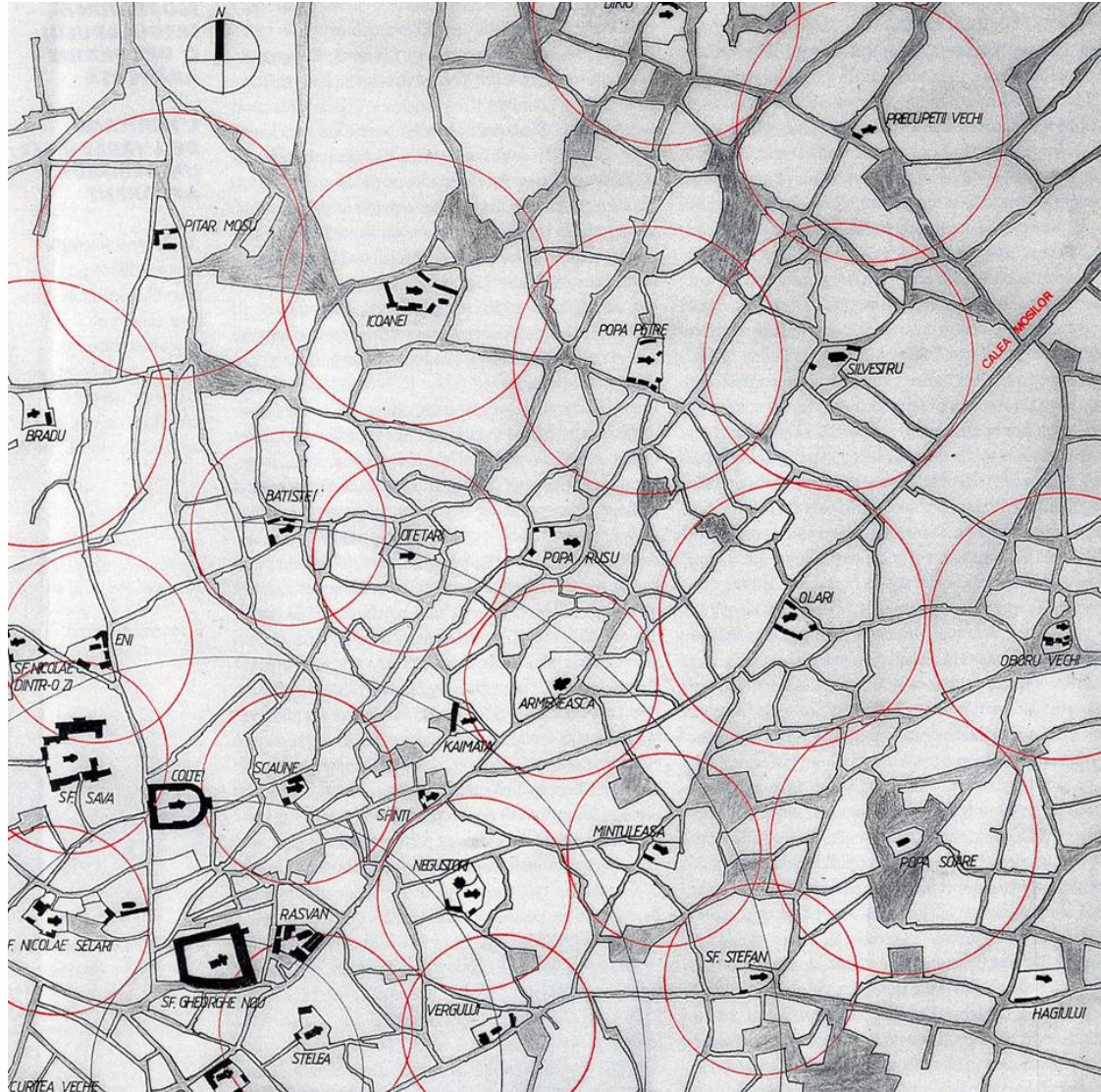
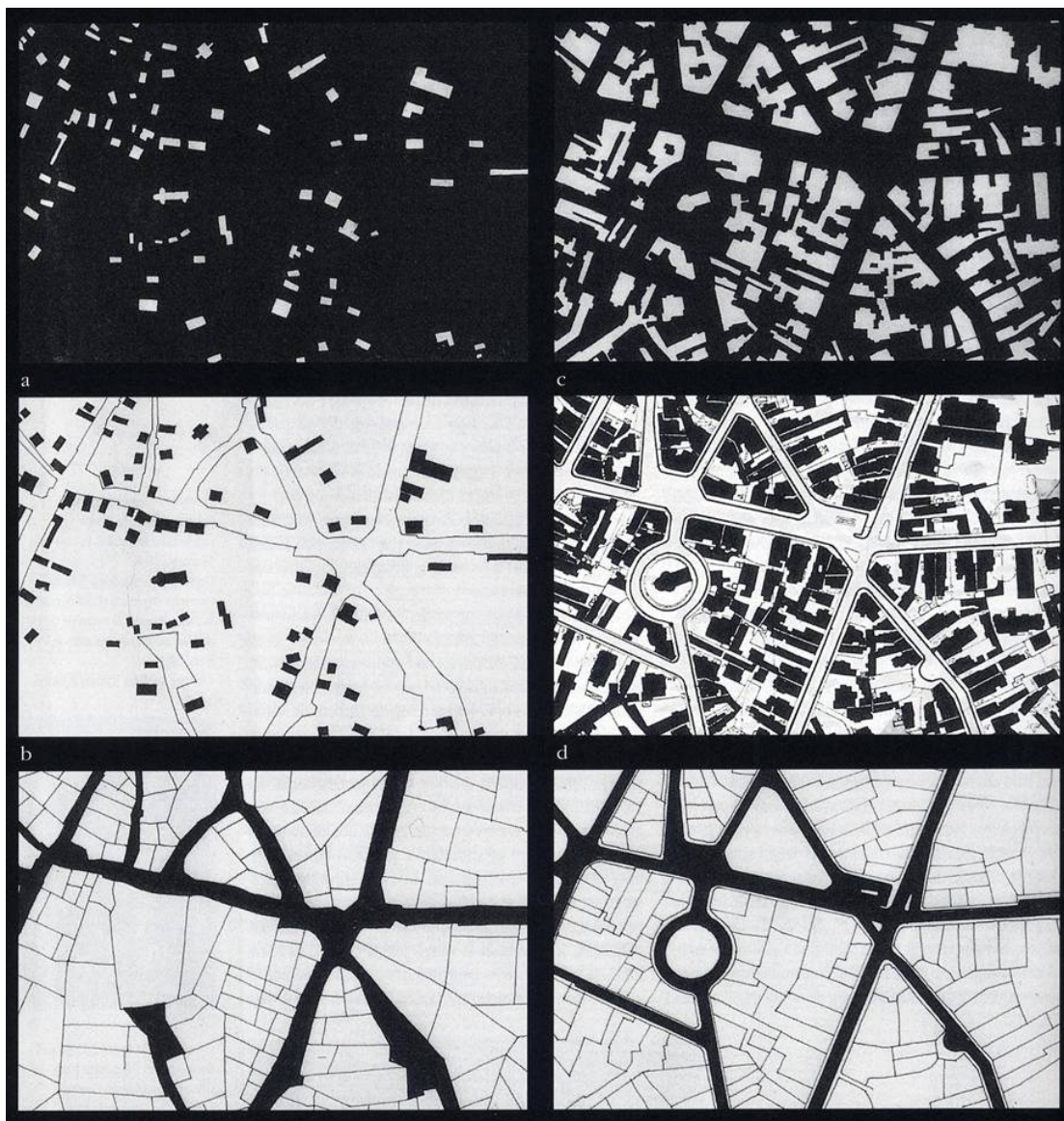


Figure 141. Bucharest. Hypothesis of the concentric development of parishes.



Figure 142. Bucharest. Reconstruction of the medieval built densities and of the medieval street pattern.



**Figure 143. Bucharest. Medieval vs. modern urban texture (buildings, streets, plots)**

Source fig. 150-154: Harhoiu, *București, un oraș între Orient și Occident/Bucarest, une ville entre Orient et Occident*, plates 17, 18, 25, 9.

Churches – the main public buildings in a society structured by its religion – give Bucharest, the parochial organisation of the town with small communities around the parish church. The hierarchy of density between commercial areas and



residential areas (isolated houses with large gardens) combines with the organic pattern with lots of gap-sites, *maidane* – informal public spaces at the crossings.<sup>298</sup> Medieval plots resulted in an irregular trajectory and margins of the streets because the private plot is more important and the streets are merely pathways between them; in the modern city, streets were regulated and enlarged, and the private plots lost in the favour of the public space. But the essential characteristic of the street network is still visible.



**Figure 144. Reconstruction of a Hungarian settlement in 14<sup>th</sup> century.**

Source: Attila Somfai, "Historical Settlements' Structure: Research in North-Transdanubia, Hungary," *Hungarian Electronic Journal of Sciences, Architecture* 2002, <http://heja.szif.hu/ARC> (accessed 3/12/2003)

The tribal organisation resulted in a similarly clustered appearance of the early Hungarian settlements in the pusta.

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<sup>298</sup> Dana Harhoiu's attempt to find a geometrical and therefore rational interpretation of the sacred spaces in Bucharest (churches constructed in the XVII<sup>th</sup> and XVIII<sup>th</sup> centuries), an interpretation which indeed does not fit. Augustin Ioan exemplifies the binary opposition Western (organized, rational) – Eastern (sprawled, hooked).

**Public/private and wealthy/poor hierarchies of urban form**

The town of Lucca shows organic growth around public spaces and the convent which are the only ones that are differentiated from the rest of the urban form. Communitarian life, the hierarchy is in style and materials, to a lesser extent in size or position.



**Figure 145. Aerial view of Trevi.**

Source: [http://www.italianvisits.com/images/umbria-im/trevi-im/trevi-aerial\\_view.jpg](http://www.italianvisits.com/images/umbria-im/trevi-im/trevi-aerial_view.jpg) (accessed 2/03/2003)



**Figure 146. Lucca now**

Source: Author's slide collection



**Figure 147. Medieval Lucca towers in a fourteenth century manuscript.**

Source: <http://galleries.friendsofsdarch.com/gallery-list> (accessed 23/09/2003)

In the medieval Italian city-states, the hierarchy within society is reflected in the hierarchy of urban form through defensible tower houses – the higher the tower the more powerful and wealthy the family.

**Ethnic and religious segregation reflected by urban form**



**Figure 148. Reconstruction of the city of Jerusalem in the 1<sup>st</sup> century.**

Source: <http://www.bible-history.com/jerusalem> (accessed 3/05/2004)

Jerusalem: upper town formally laid out, wealthy houses of the patricians, bigger houses and better materials; while the lower town shows a more organic pattern and undifferentiated hierarchy within it.

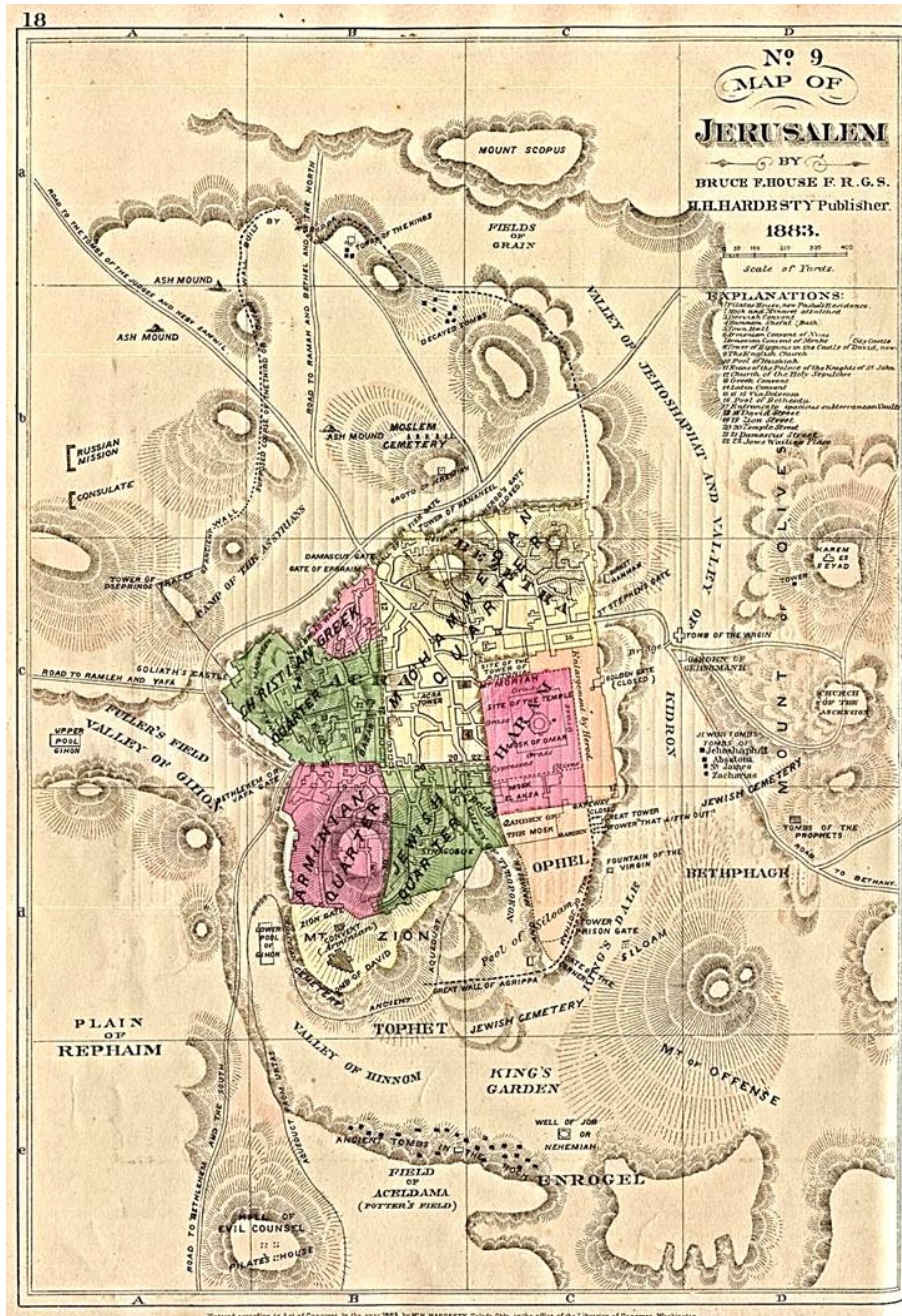


Figure 149. Map of Jerusalem, 1883.

Source: [http://www.verselink.org/maps/jerusalem\\_1883.jpg](http://www.verselink.org/maps/jerusalem_1883.jpg) (accessed 3/10/2004)

A nineteenth century map of Jerusalem shows the Jewish, Greek Orthodox, Armenian, and Muslim districts, and still nowadays the urban form shows their respective religious construct of inner hierarchy having the church, temple or mosque as their focal points. Each religious group is represented in the urban form.



**Figure 150. The Muslim quarter with Al-Aqusa Mosque.**



**Figure 151. The Jewish quarter with Tower of David.**



**Figure 152. Jerusalem Russian Orthodox church.**

**Similar manifestation in the hierarchy of form have different meanings within different cultures**

Duns Scotus' notion of 'formal distinction' offers an intermediate position between a distinction which is real, between two separate non-identical entities, and one which is mental or conceptual, and not existing objectively in things:

In the same real thing there are always formally distinct realities (be they in the same real part or the same real whole).

Duns Scotus: *Metaphysician* <sup>299</sup>

This is how in the emic discourse, we can separate identical urban forms through their meaning, while in the etic one they would have simply been co-massed within the same typology.

In the case of medieval Craiova, social hierarchy is not shown in the position of the houses within the city structure but in the size and materials used for the houses (brick masonry as opposed to entirely wooden structures). Nobility houses side by side with those of ordinary folk on the higher plateaus. But segregation from the gypsies who live in the valley by the marches in precarious structures or tents. The religious and administrative centre of Craiova is situated on a hilltop, separated from the commercial centre. On the contrary, the majority of other towns have them around the same central square.

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<sup>299</sup> *The Blackwell Dictionary of Western Philosophy* (Edited by Nicholas Bunnin and Jiyuan Yu, USA, UK, Australia: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 265

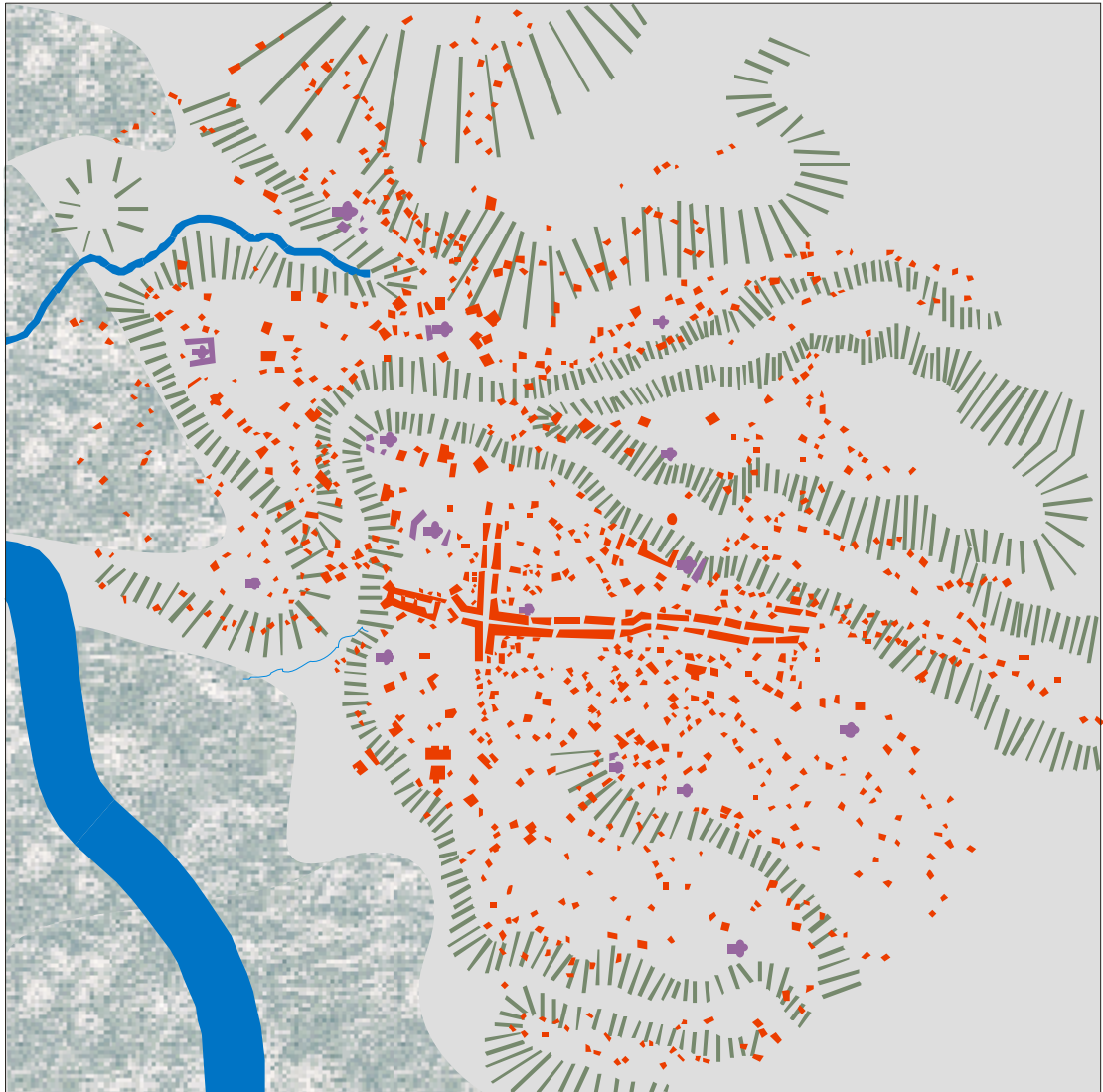


Figure 153. The built environment of medieval Craiova





**Figure 154. Hypothetical reconstruction of the built form of medieval Sighisoara.**

In Sighisoara, the fortified Saxon town situated on a hilltop has a dense texture, while Hungarian and Romanian towns in the valley have a sparse texture (houses with gardens). The patrician houses are built around the squares in the citadel (painted facades, sculptures). As one goes from the centre towards the town walls the size, materials and style of the houses changes, they become smaller and humbler.

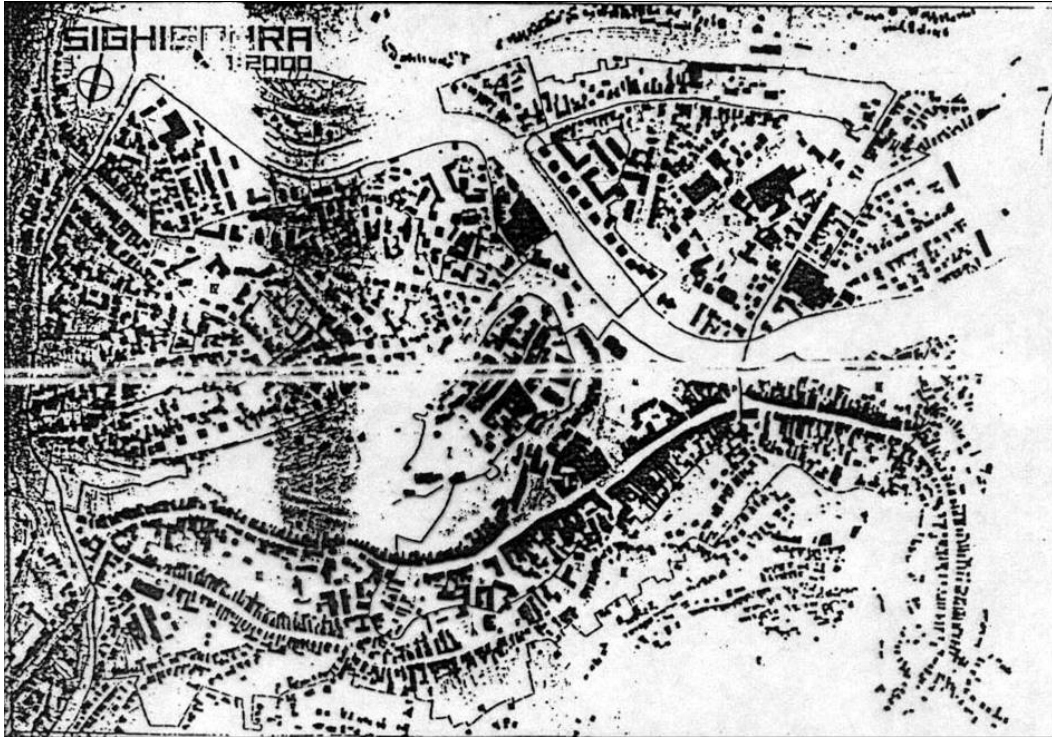


Figure 155. Sighisoara, built pattern



Figure 156. Sighisoara, plots pattern.



Figure 157. Sighisoara, square in the citadel.



Figure 158. Sighisoara, street in the citadel.

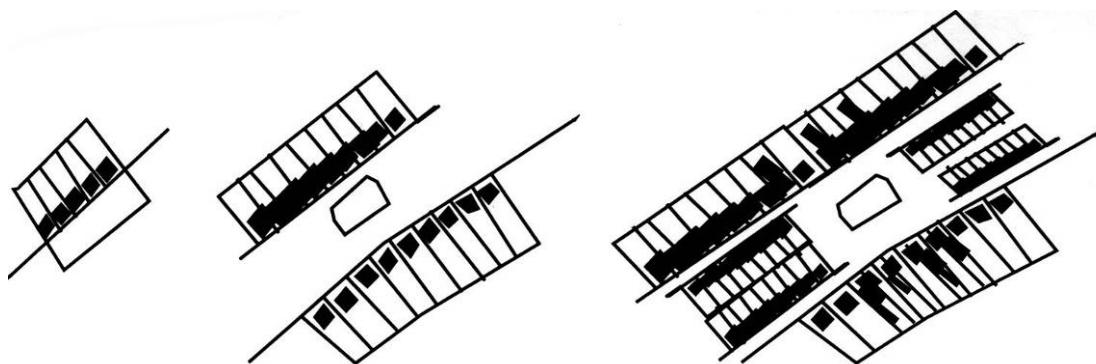


**Figure 159.** Sighisoara, street towards the outer walls of the citadel.

In the case of Saxon colonisation settlements in general, there is a very formal organisation of the community mirrored by the urban form: linear structure with an enlargement of the street in the centre. Plots are subdivided in elongated plots as they are inherited and split between heirs.<sup>300</sup> The aristocracy houses are grouped around the central square (not commercial structures like in other towns). There was a very strict community hierarchy resulting in inflexible hierarchy of urban form: when a smaller town is promoted to the rank of royal burgh, a new, larger central square is inaugurated and becomes the focal point of the community.

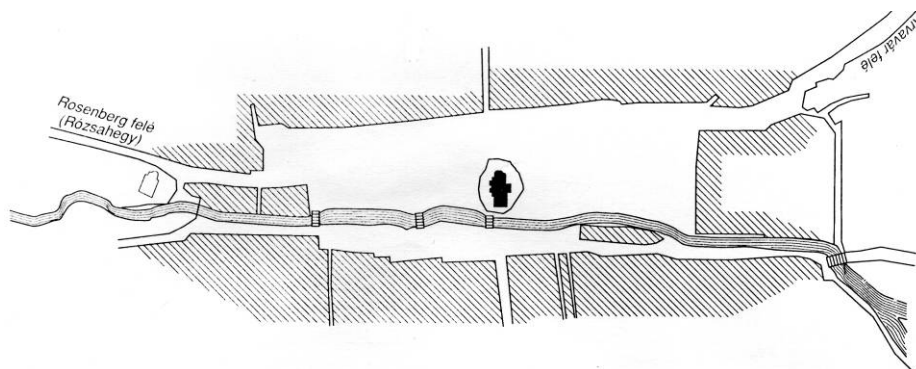
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<sup>300</sup> Stubben did a plan of Koln showing 102 parallel plots of 2 meters to the street by 200 meters deep (Collins p. 42)



**Figure 160.** Schetch of the evolution of a Saxon colonisation settlement.

For example, the plan of Partizánska Lupèa in Slovakia is characterized by rows of houses situated on long narrow plots, at the back of which various subsidiary buildings stood, occupying the entire width of the plot. In Partizánska Lupèa, the urban structure submits evidence that the square was created next to the old original settlement when this was promoted to the rang of town.



**Figure 161.** Partizánska Lupèa at the beginning of the fourteenth century.

Source: György Granasztói. *A középkori magyar város* (The Medieval Hungarian town. Budapest: Gondolat, 1980): 61.

### V. 2. 1. The mental image of the urban space

"With cities, it is as with dreams: everything imaginable can be dreamed, but even the most unexpected dream is a rebus that conceals a desire or, its reverse, a fear. Cities, like dreams, are made of desires and fears, even if the thread of their discourse is secret, their rules are absurd, their perspectives are deceitful, and everything conceals something else."

(Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*)<sup>301</sup>

#### **The city/society as mirror of the universe/nature or *vice versa***

From time immemorial people have believed that the world they inhabit, the universe is not chaotic and that there is an overarching order that connects all things together, and that this natural order is reflected also onto the human society. This belief has taken many different forms, but the essence of it is the likening of the inner order of a community with that of the universe, where the latter is considered perfect and exemplary, while the former can only reach the same perfection through human agency. Pythagoras refers to the universe, *ouranos* (οὐρανός), as *kosmos* (κόσμος) for its perfect order and arrangement,<sup>302</sup> therefore *kosmos* is the natural order. In the same way, *polis* (πόλις) is the societal order by recognizing the practices and organisation of a community, *koinoneia* (κοινωνία), have an overall

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<sup>301</sup> Calvino, *Invisible Cities*, 37-8.

<sup>302</sup> Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Revised by Sir Henry Stuart Jones and Roderick McKenzie. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940), The Perseus Digital Library, <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu> (13.08.2006)

coherence. It is, therefore, important to distinguish and understand the connection and harmony between *kosmos* and *polis*.<sup>303</sup>

In this framework, problems and ills of the human society are explained by humans failing to abide to this overarching order and, hence, the possibility of perfecting it by understanding and emulating the natural order. In philosophy, there are two kinds of teleological accounts:<sup>304</sup> one internal, which achieves goals without reference to thoughts or other intentional states (so the cause of natural order is internal to nature, as in Aristotle's natural teleology) and the other external, which explains an outcome as the result of intentional agency (and hence the cause of natural order is in fact external to that order, as in the case of Timaeus' *dēmiourgos*<sup>305</sup>). Through Timaeus, Plato attempts to show the universe to be organised for the good: he says the *kosmos* was created by a *dēmiourgos* who wanted to make it as good and beautiful as possible:

Everything that comes into being has a cause.  
Of the things that come into being, those whose cause is a demiurge who looks towards an eternal model are necessarily beautiful, while those whose cause is a demiurge looking towards a created model are necessarily not beautiful.  
But the world is the most beautiful of things that have come into being.  
Therefore the world was created by a demiurge looking towards an eternal model.<sup>306</sup>

(Plato, *Timaeus-Critias*, 360 BC)

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<sup>303</sup> Toulmin, *Cosmopolis*, 67.

<sup>304</sup> Thomas Kjeller Johansen, *Plato's natural philosophy: a study of the Timaeus-Critias* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 69-91.

<sup>305</sup> Although Johansen argues that Plato is not specific whether the demiurge is external to nature or internal, therefore leaving room for interpretation.

<sup>306</sup> Translated by T.K. Johansen, *Plato's natural philosophy*, 71. Johansen asserts that this means that Plato allows also for other causes than a divine craftsman.

There is also the possibility that Plato has envisaged creation as a continuous process in time, rather than something that happened once.<sup>307</sup>

And his *Timaeus-Critias* dialogue brings an account of Atlantis being defeated by Athens beside this of the demiurgically created *kosmos*: in the spirit of *Socrates'* requirements for admissible story-telling, *Critias* tells how Athens, in its virtuous superiority – just like the ideal city of *Socrates* –, has defeated the vicious Atlantis. And he does this only after *Timaeus* has set the framework by explaining the creation of the universe and human nature, and thus enabling the extrapolation of the Atlantis story. In this way, just like *Homer's* Shield of Achilles,<sup>308</sup> *Timaeus-Critias* put the city in perspective so that it can be understood by its place within the order of *kosmos*.<sup>309</sup>

The highly ordered image of the polis, as rendered on the Shield of Achilles in *Homer's* description offers at the same time an ideal, a vision of good government to be aspired to. Stoic philosophers were fusing the 'natural' and 'social' orders in one *Cosmo + polis*.<sup>310</sup>

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<sup>307</sup> Johansen, *Plato's natural philosophy*, 90-91.

<sup>308</sup> *Homer*, *Iliad* 18...

<sup>309</sup> Johansen, *Plato's natural philosophy*, 198.

<sup>310</sup> *Ibid.*, 68.





**Figure 162. One of the many reconstructions of the Shield of Achilles, stamp by Antoine Quatremère de Quincy, 1809.**

Source: Plate II, Antoine Quatremère de Quincy, *Le Jupiter olympien, ou l'Art de la sculpture antique considérée sous un nouveau point de vue*. Paris: de Bure frères, 1815), 72.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, John Donne, using a metaphysical conceit (an ingenious and far-fetched metaphor that combines two ideas into a single one), deplors the disruption of the organic unity that used to characterize both the cosmos and also the society by the growing political, scientific,

and philosophic doubt of the times: "People were merely social 'atoms' lacking the intrinsic relations of a truly coherent society"<sup>311</sup>

And new Philosophy calls all in doubt,  
 The Element of fire is quite put out;  
 The Sunne is lost, and th'earth, and no mans wit  
 Can well direct him, where to looke for it.  
 And freely men confesse, that this world's spent,  
 When in the Planets, and the Firmament  
 They seeke so many new; they see that this  
 Is crumbled out againe to his Atomis.  
 'Tis all in pieces, all cohaerence gone;  
 All iust supply, and all Relation:  
 Prince, Subiect, Father, Sonne, are things forgot,  
 For euery man alone thinkes he hath got  
 To be a Phoenix, and that then can bee  
 None of that kinde, of which he is, but hee.  
 This is the worlds condition now (...).<sup>312</sup>

(John Donne, *An anatomy of the world wherein*, 1611)

It is obvious that the concept of *place* is very pervasive within the urban conservation discourse; what is not so obvious is that it is used now in its whole range of meanings, as they evolved over time. It seems to today's scholars a very clearly defined meaning, as in the writings of the philosophers of the Antiquity; but Edward Casey, who has traced the history of the concept of *place* in philosophy, from antiquity to nowadays, has shown its assimilation to *space* in medieval theology, its understanding in early modern physics as a particular manifestation of *space* – the 'site' for building –, and how the temporocentrism that dominated the

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<sup>311</sup> Toulmin, *Cosmopolis*, 66.

<sup>312</sup> John Donne, *An anatomy of the world wherein, by occasion of the untimely death of Mistris Elizabeth Drury the frailty and the decay of this whole world is represented* (London: William Stansby, 1611), n.p.

eighteenth and nineteenth centuries reduced *place* to *locations* between which movements of physical bodies occur.<sup>313</sup>

### **Levels of interpretation of space: Geometrical space vs. anthropological space**

The mental image of the urban space is at the basis of the emic approach and observes several levels of interpretation of space from Plato and Aristotle, to Kant, Einstein, and Norberg-Schultz' six levels of spatial concepts. For Plato geometry is the science of space, while Aristotle reckons space as the sum of all places, a dynamic field with directions and qualitative properties. Kant considers space as a basic category for the *a priori* human understanding. Einstein opposed to the homogenous Euclidean space a space in which direction and geometry is a straightforward result of human perception and not at all natural. This is the break between the concrete physical space and the abstract mathematical one.

Furthermore, Christian Norberg-Schultz mentions six levels of spatial concepts: the pragmatic space of physical action; the perceptive space of instant orientation; the existential space which gives the image of the environment; the cognitive space of physical world; the abstract space of logical relationships which has the capacity of describing the previous ones; the artistic or expressive space created by artists, architects and urbanists. While before there were two major spatial theories – one concerned with the Euclidian abstract geometrical space which omits the subject, and the other with the human psychological perception of space which puts the subject in the centre of it – Norberg-Schultz approached urban space as existential

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<sup>313</sup> Edward S. Casey, *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 1997), x.

space by taking into consideration both its geometrical and also human dimensions at the same time.<sup>314</sup>

The urban structure is primarily determined by human activity, and at this level we have the place that confers identity to humans. The city is defined by clear limits and the appropriation of pre-existent elements within these limits, hence the mental image of a city is a circumferential enclosure. Human space is subjectively centred and has its centre marked by a more or less material *axis mundi*.<sup>315</sup>

It is very important to acknowledge that the urban environment is far from being merely an extension of the home, and from there the urban space one of the personal space; one needs to emphasize the role of the public space, as opposed to the private home, in structuring the urban environment. Both Ortega y Gasset and Heidegger<sup>316</sup> insist on the intrinsicalness of boundaries for the definition of space:

What the word for space, Raum, Rum, designates is said by its ancient meaning. Raum means a place cleared or freed for settlement and lodging. (...) Space is in essence that for which room has been made, that which is let into its bounds.

Martin Heidegger, *Bauen wohnen denken* (1951)

This twofold concept of the boundary – delimiting space from inside and at the same time from outside – was, and still is essential for the city, although the reasons have indeed changed over time: it is not anymore defence of the inside from peoples from elsewhere, but the defence of the outside environment from people from inside. But beside this material, concrete interpretation of the boundary there

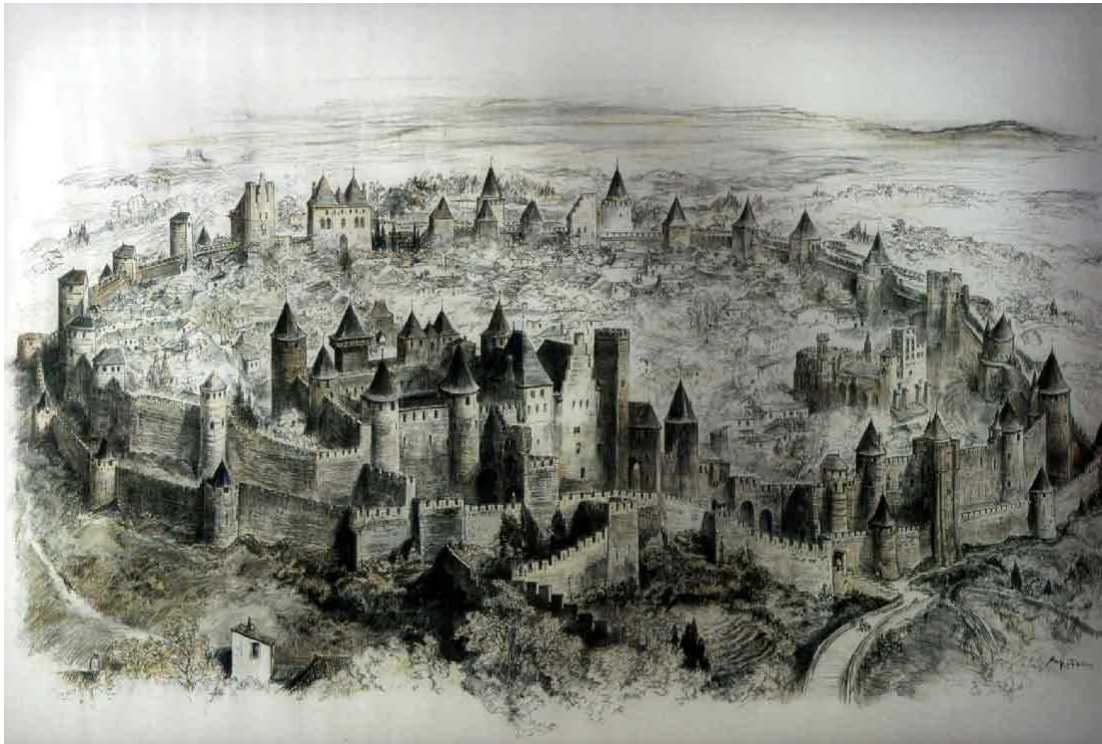
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<sup>314</sup> Christian Norberg Schultz. *Existence, space and architecture* (NY and Washington: Praeger Publishers, 1971)

<sup>315</sup> Mircea Eliade observed the cosmogonic ceremonies of consecrating a new place for habitation by means of a situated *axis mundi*. In Casey, *The Fate of Place*, 5.

<sup>316</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Bauen wohnen denken* (1951), "Building Dwelling Thinking," In Martin Heidegger: *Basic Writings from Being and Time* (1927) to *The Task of Thinking* (1964), Ed. David Farrell Krell (London: Routledge, 1993), 343-63.

is also a symbolic one that marks the difference between order and chaos, or between *civitas* and savageness – the reason for which Romulus killed Remus when leaping over his new boundary around the Palatine Hill after ridiculing and obstructing the works,<sup>317</sup> as Eco puts it in his discussion of the rational/irrational binary classification.<sup>318</sup>



**Figure 163. Carcassonne. Drawing by Albert Robida**

Even if at a more formal level, Camillo Sitte already defended the idea that boundaries in the urban texture are not only essential but also *a priori*.<sup>319</sup>

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<sup>317</sup> Plutarch, "Romulus." In *Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans (75 AC)*, Translated by John Dryden, Edited by A. H. Clough (South Australia: Adelaide University Library, 2005), ebooks @Adelaide, <<http://etext.library.adelaide.edu.au/p/plutarch/lives/>> (accessed 7/03/2006)

<sup>318</sup> Umberto Eco, *Interpretation and Overinterpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 27.

<sup>319</sup> Camillo Sitte, *Der Stadte-Bau* (Vienna: Verlag von Carl Graeser, 1889)

In his essay "*La rebelión de las masas*," when discussing the broader problem of the implications of "who rules the world" for the structuring of the society,<sup>320</sup> and indeed its cities, Jose Ortega y Gasset ascertains the formation of the Graeco-Roman city-state epitomizes the principle of the State as a genuine creation in which the equilibrium between the "internal" and the "external" is lost, with the latter taking over. He might be exaggerating when saying that "the *urbs* or the *polis* starts by being an empty space, the forum, the agora, and all the rest is just a means of fixing that empty space, of limiting its outlines;"<sup>321</sup> nevertheless this subsumes the importance of that 'empty space' for the urban environment: one more reason, perhaps, for urban conservation being concerned with the more complex structures and relationships within the urban environment rather than merely its separate elements – be they houses, ensembles, streets or even conservation areas, if isolated from the entirety of the urban organism.

Ortega y Gasset stresses here the very substance of the *synœcism*, emphasising the invention through it of the purely human space, clearly delimited from nature, and therefore characterized by an abstract, socio-political dimension: "The *polis* is not primarily a collection of habitable dwellings, but a meeting-place for citizens, a space set apart for public functions. ... Observe that this signifies nothing less than the invention of a new kind of space, much more new than the space of Einstein."<sup>322</sup> This points out that the values of the urban environment

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<sup>320</sup> "the substance or character of a new historical period is the resultant of internal variations – of man and his spirit; or of external variations – formal, and as it were mechanical. Amongst these last, the most important, almost without a doubt, is the displacement of power. But this brings with it a displacement of spirit." In Jose Ortega y Gasset, *The Revolt of the Masses* (1930) (New York, London: W.W. Norton, 1994), Chapter XIV: Who Rules the World?

<sup>321</sup> Ortega y Gasset, *The Revolt of the Masses*, Chapter XIV

<sup>322</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter XIV

should be sought also elsewhere rather than solely in purely physical qualities, i.e. intangible values intrinsic to the city as tangible manifestation of the *synæcism*.

In this way, urban space is defined as an existential space, in which human existence takes place and forms its own identity: humans shape the urban space while this, in return, shapes human existence. This processes result in the construction a mental image of the urban space and its limits able to offer multiple meanings and allowing for interpretation at many different levels of understanding. This means the very concept of urban space has existential roots, its complexity being basically defined by its orientation and contained human actions.<sup>323</sup> In this sense, the urban space is ultimately described by the Platonic concept of *chōra* (*χώρα*).

Plato distinguishes notions of space between *chōra* and *topos* (*τόπος*). Timaeus, who accounts the creation of the cosmos by a divine craftsman, says one needs three basic principles to explain the *kosmos*, the world order: *being, becoming*<sup>324</sup> (in both actuality and also potentiality), and *receptacle of coming-into-being* (dynamic notion) = *space (chōra)*.

Conversely, Aristotle<sup>325</sup> does not generally distinguish between *chōra* and *topos* (but is it the matter out of which the physical objects are composed – as

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<sup>323</sup> Norberg Schultz, *Existence, space and architecture*

<sup>324</sup> Note the relation to Aristotle's understanding of process as becoming rather than being

<sup>325</sup> "Aristotle remarks that Plato identifies the receptacle and *chōra*, and he sees that the *chōra* of Plato's discussion is (i) that which is supposed to persist during elemental change in such a way as to define the change, (ii) that which receives form, and (iii) what underlies an object: in other words, he sees that *chōra* is Plato's candidate for what the matter of something is." Benjamin Morison, *On Location: Aristotle's Concept of Space* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 116.

Aristotle suggested<sup>326</sup> – or is it the space in which physical objects are located? Timaeus never calls it matter (*hulē*).<sup>327</sup>

Hence, coming into being and destruction require bodies entering into and departing from something: that is *chōra*. Beside this, Timaeus explains that what comes-into-being comes-into-being in some place (*topos*), although *chōra* provides the seat (*hedra*) for everything that comes-into-being. But it is not necessary that everything is somewhere in some place and occupies some space (the role of the receptacle is restricted to what comes-into-being).<sup>328</sup> However, Plato uses the term *topos*, *chōra* and *hedra* as being interchangeable to some extent.<sup>329</sup> But Zeno the Stoic and Epicurus make clear distinction between the meanings of *topos*, *topos*, *chōra*, and *kenon* (*κενόν*): *topos* is the fully occupied space, *topos*, *chōra* is the partly (after Zeno) or temporary (after Epicurus) occupied space, and *kenon* is the empty space.<sup>330</sup> These are names of the same thing, intangible substance in different conditions. By being partly or temporary occupied space, *chōra* emphasises the notion of ‘possibility,’<sup>331</sup> a reality between the absolute of the universal ideas and the concrete of the substance, it is an enabler, and it is the possibility of becoming. As Alberto Pezez-Gomez puts it in his interpretation of the Platonic meaning in *Timaeus*, *chōra* is the “mimetic receptacle for truly human action (as opposed to animalized behavior), and yet reducible to neither natural substances nor universal ideas.”<sup>332</sup> To him, this

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<sup>326</sup> Aristotle, On Generation and corruption

<sup>327</sup> Johansen, Plato's natural philosophy, 117-36.

<sup>328</sup> Ibid., 117-27.

<sup>329</sup> Ibid., 127-30.

<sup>330</sup> Ibid., 128.

<sup>331</sup> Liddell and Scott, Greek-English Lexicon (13.08.2006)

<sup>332</sup> Alberto Perez-Gomez, “Architecture and Ethics beyond Globalization” (Unpublished, Simpson Lecture at the University of Edinburgh, 5 June 2003), 5.



understanding makes *chōra* the realm of language and art, the cultural reality, whose essence is its incredible diversity for a unique biological species.

Perhaps not coincidentally, the two icons in the exonartex of the Chora Monastery in Byzantium representing the Christ Pantocrator and the Virgin bear the inscriptions “land/dwelling place (*chōra*) of the living” and “container/dwelling place (*chōra*) of the uncontainable” respectively.<sup>333</sup> These phrases come from biblical and liturgical texts,<sup>334</sup> and their mystical sense seems to refer to exactly the same kind of receptacle that allows coming into being as the Platonic concept of *chōra*.

It seems relevant that the second group of more concrete meanings of the word *chōra* comprises the territory of the settlement/city (archaeology of Ancient Greece), the centre of the city/village, as well as the main settlement/city of an island.<sup>335</sup> These other meanings seem to hint to an application of the concept of receptacle to the political and architectural structures of the society.

In this way, the Platonic concept of *chōra* best describes urban space, which is not simply a place or matter, but a receptacle, a medium, a possibility. It is not limited to *topos*, but allows a process of becoming to take place: it is not finite matter with a crystallised structure and defined form, but rather something much more than this. The potentiality and dynamicity implied by the term *chōra* are exactly

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<sup>333</sup> These inscriptions are recurrent on many other early fourteenth century mosaics in the church (the earliest parts of which may date from the sixth century, but it is not yet known how early might have been erected the first sacred building of this name on the site). Paul A. Underwood. *The Kariye Djami. Volume 1: Historical Introduction and Description of the Mosaics and Frescoes* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967), 3-8.

<sup>334</sup> Underwood. *The Kariye Djami. Vol. 1*, 39-41.

<sup>335</sup> And these meanings also extended to country, its land or its people at Herodot, and even countryside at Herodot. A. Bailly, *Abregé du dictionnaire Grec-Français* (Paris: Hachette, 1901), 970. Although the etymology of the name of Chora Monastery is commonly explained as coming from this last meaning of *chōra*, being outside the city-walls of Bizantium in the time of Constantine, but later being within the wall of Theodosius, it is clear that the fourteenth century mosaics employ the more abstract meanings of this term. Whether that was the case from the very beginning cannot be categorically affirmed or rejected.

those qualities that differentiate the living urban space, where urbanity is naturally manifest, from inert, rigid planned environments, within which if urbanity takes place, it is more often despite rather than due to urban planning and design.

The concept of *chōra* has already been transmuted to architectural theory to show the cultural dimension of the man-made space, doubly coded: in its making and in its perception.

Architectural expression in the space of *chora*, understood as cultural space but also the space of human appearance, the space of the city beyond classical definitions, may thus gather the fourfold in a non-escapist way, revealing the mystery of depth that makes us human (rather than a prosaic third dimension), the mystery of Merleau-Ponty's "flesh" (rather than a world split into objective and subjective realms in which space is objective and time is merely a subjective effect of repetition or a construction of absent instants).<sup>336</sup>

Alberto Pérez-Gómez, "Dwelling on Heidegger: Architecture as mimetic techno-poiesis" (1998)<sup>337</sup>

Flesh is used by Merleau-Ponty as being simultaneously inner and outer, at the limit between the body and its surroundings (in a way, like Aristotle's concept of place): perceiving and being the object of perception.<sup>338</sup> Urban space is defined by human agency in non-material as well as material ways.

The issue of existential space has been studied by psychologists since late nineteenth century and revealed that human perception of space is subjective, being

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<sup>336</sup> Alberto Pérez-Gómez, "Dwelling on Heidegger: Architecture as mimetic techno-poiesis" (International Journal of Architectural Theory, No. 2/1998), ([http://www.tu-cottbus.de/BTU/Fak2/TheoArch/Wolke/eng/Subjects/982/Perez-Gomez/perez-gomez\\_t.html](http://www.tu-cottbus.de/BTU/Fak2/TheoArch/Wolke/eng/Subjects/982/Perez-Gomez/perez-gomez_t.html))

<sup>337</sup> Simon Richards quotes Frampton saying "the establishment of an articulate realm on which man or men may come into being." And claims he was borrowing from Hannah Arendt's *The Human Condition* (1958), when calling this 'the space of human appearance'.

<sup>338</sup> Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible* (1961) (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1968).

highly dependant by the motivation and past experience of the subject, existence is perceived as a sum of events in four-dimensional space. Spatial adaptation is defined as a state of equilibrium between assimilation – the subject’s action upon the environment – and accommodation – the environment’s action upon the subject. Therefore the understanding of space (which is a chiefly learning process for humans, as opposed to the animal’s instinctive sense of space, and therefore can be culturally influenced) presupposes a gradually formed mental image, which is different from instantaneous spatial perception, and is socially and culturally conditioned, resulting in the human’s mental image of his environment.

**Subjectivity of human perception: static vs. dynamic perception, human encounter vs. physical space, transgression of spatial boundaries**

Kevin Lynch<sup>339</sup> has coined the concept of ‘place legibility’ in order to measure the human perception of the urban environment. While his research highlighted a number of physical elements, the network of which contributes to the forming of a mental image, it does not address the question of the quality of the urban environment, in so far as the clarity of a structure is not necessarily a virtue in itself. His research sought to identify those elements that determine the ease of reading the urban environment for a specific cultural group. While his results are indeed valuable for defining the identity of place in the cultural context he had researched, subsequent practice and policy has unsupportedly extended the validity of his observations to city planning operations globally, i.e. outside the said cultural group. On the contrary, in a different cultural framework the legibility of space might have different elements contributing to it and might even not play an important role at all for the way a different cultural group perceives the quality of space and the values that add up to it.

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<sup>339</sup> Kevin Lynch, *The image of the city* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1960).

Michel de Certeau's chapter "Ghosts in the City" observes the symptomatic metamorphosis of an urbanism focused on inventing new urban spaces into 'a rehabilitation of national heritage,' 'an uncanniness of the "Already There."' <sup>340</sup> But when Anthony Vidler applied to the built environment Freud's concept of 'unheimlich,' <sup>341</sup> he brought a new perspective and level of reading of the historical illegible and therefore uncanny remainder within the legible modernist city.<sup>342</sup>

This perspective is also acknowledged by Martin Jay in conjunction with Walter Benjamin's 1930 essay "Demonic Berlin:" <sup>343</sup>

Benjamin's sensitivity to the residues of the archaic and the natural in the future-obsessed modern city of restless change has allowed a new appreciation for the value – perhaps even the utopian potential – of what modern urbanism thought it banished.

Martin Jay, "The uncanny nineties" (1998)

This took Jay a step further, to "extract the *unheimlich* out of its purely psychological and aesthetic context and make it into a category with larger social and cultural implications." <sup>344</sup> And this is the crucial moment which allows for a contrasting point to be made to Lynch's theory of the desirable image of the city: in fact these remainders of the urban past do have a strong position within our evaluation of space, although they might be interpreted as negative for our mere perception of space.

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<sup>340</sup> Michel de Certeau, Luce Giard and Pierre Mayol, *The Practice of Everyday Life, Volume 2: Living and Cooking* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 136-44.

<sup>341</sup> Sigmund Freud, "The 'Uncanny'" (1919), In *Art and literature: Jensen's Gradiva. Leonardo da Vinci, and other works* (ed. by Albert Dickson, The Pelican Freud Library vol.14, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985), 335-376.

<sup>342</sup> Rem Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*.

<sup>343</sup> Martin Jay, "The uncanny nineties." In *Cultural Semantics: Keywords of our time* (London the Athlone Press, 1998), 159.

<sup>344</sup> Jay, "The uncanny nineties," 159.

This anthropological understanding of space, pioneered by Georg Simmel's sociology of space<sup>345</sup> and Otto Bollnow's anthropology of space,<sup>346</sup> goes already far beyond a geometrico-physical one, but it is the concept of proxemics coined by Edward T. Hall<sup>347</sup> that gives it its real breadth. Hall reveals how our perception of space is determined culturally to a great extent, whether consciously or not, despite the fact that it is acquired physically through the same sensorial apparatus. This is why Hall, while developing his theory of proxemics, refers to the cultural dimension as 'the hidden dimension' of space, the one that gives the measure of the identification between people and their urban environment. He extrapolates his observations about people's attitudes and expectations about space at a personal level to the level of the urban texture. It is indeed a valuable tool which allows for a correct, virtually unbiased analysis of the role played by valuable elements of the urban texture within a certain culture.<sup>348, 349</sup> Henri Lefebvre (1901 - 1991) seems to take these cultural differences for granted and criticises the emphasis put by Hall on this; instead Lefebvre considers that the practices of everyday life and their change over time are more important in determining the nature of the urban form.<sup>350</sup> For him space is essentially a social product and criticises the Modernist Urbanism for failing to understand this. He is interested in the layering of the urban form in time, whose variety he explains through a concurrence of different factors, from our everyday practices and perception, to contemporary theories of space and the

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<sup>345</sup> Georg Simmel, "The Sociology of Space" and "On the Spatial Projections of Social Forms" (1903). In Georg Simmel, David Frisby, and Mike Featherstone. *Simmel on Culture: Selected Writings* (London; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1997)

<sup>346</sup> Otto Fr. Bollnow. *Mensch und Raum* (Kohlhammer, 2000)

<sup>347</sup> Edward T. Hall, *The Hidden Dimension* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966).

<sup>348</sup> Doxiadis. *Ekistics* 1968

<sup>349</sup> Mircea Eliade. *Sacred and Profane*

<sup>350</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* [1974], translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 154.

spatial imaginary. These are manifested in the process of replacement of parts of the social space as they become obsolete, leading to intercalation, combination and superimposition of places within the social space.<sup>351</sup> This is the nightmare of the urban history or geography, but for urban conservation this is in fact an essential characteristic that allows 'continuity' and adaptation without fractures of urban identity.

Georg Simmel	<i>sociology of space</i>
Patrick Geddes	<i>civic survey</i>
Jane Jacobs	<i>performance of space</i>
Kevin Lynch	<i>place legibility</i>
Edward T. Hall	<i>proxemics</i>
Henri Lefebvre	<i>social production of space</i>
Otto Bollnow	<i>anthropology of space</i>

**Figure 164. Key concepts in the interpretation of the meaning of space in urban conservation**

The places weaved within the urban fabric, as places to return to,<sup>352</sup> have distinct characters and significations contributing to the idea of *genius loci*. They are focal points of the city and the rest of its texture is a continuum around these nuclei, although the neighbourhood, street and square have arguably lost their landmark character due to the distorted scale of the city. One of the contemporary problems of our existence and our existential space is that rapid technological and communication development has led to new forms of mobility, leading to an

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<sup>351</sup> Ibid., 86-7 and 167.

<sup>352</sup> Mircea Eliade. *Le mythe de l'éternel retour*. (1949)

'experience of the space of flows, superseding the meaning of the space of places.'<sup>353</sup> As a result, some social historians affirm that human interactions rather than places are the essence of the city and its life, a 'social space.'<sup>354</sup> This view went as far as imagining a utopian city, mobile – a New Babylon,<sup>355</sup> the new exemplar city – in which the man is no longer returning to places, because life would be a permanent journey.<sup>356</sup> This transgression of spatial boundaries seems to be inconceivable in spite of technological advancement, because it would be altering the very essence of human interactions. (The result of such a place is a rather closed and self-sufficient community such as the one on Jules Verne's *Floating City*.) Human development would be impossible in such a city, with human connections becoming extremely weak.<sup>357, 358</sup> This whole concept of the mobile city is built on the misunderstanding that a structured city with centre and a stable routes system would diminish the liberty of human movement and his possibility of action. Mobility itself is based on a structured image of the environment and liberty does not entail chaos and renouncement of human identity, but, on the contrary, entails habitation, harmony and protection. As in the *Odyssey*, man should have a place to depart from and permanently return to, all other places becoming a continuation of this initial

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<sup>353</sup> Manuel Castells, *The Informational City* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), 348.

<sup>354</sup> J. Allen and C. Hamnett, *A Shrinking World? Global Unevenness and Inequality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press / The Open University, 1995)

<sup>355</sup> Babylon is often used as the image of the exemplar city. See *Metropolis, et al.*

<sup>356</sup> Norberg Schultz, *Existence, space and architecture*

<sup>357</sup> Piaget

<sup>358</sup> While such technological advancements enhanced long-distance human relationships, they cannot replace the role of direct, unmediated human encounter for individual and societal development. The fact that technologically mediated human interaction proves insufficient and personal contact is paramount is now more and more acknowledged, to the extent to which technology is now tested to assist personal encounter rather than replace it (as it was the case of the last decades).

existential space. Therefore, the Odyssey is still a valid narrative, and our problem as far as space is concerned remains the conservation of human identity.<sup>359</sup>

The very human existence is spatial, by that of man being inseparable from space and space habitation being essential to existence, therefore, existential space symbolises the human existence in the world.<sup>360</sup> Space is the central concept in architecture and urbanism; their history could be regarded as a succession of different spatial concepts. This makes the historic city the result of continuous superimposition of these concepts, historical layers overlapping and interacting in almost an 'organic' way. Writings in philosophy, anthropology, and their more recent extension – phenomenology have been analysed (some sooner and some later) by architecture and urban theorists, who in most instances have built upon them the denigration of modern architecture and urbanism. It is true that, even if not all has been said on the mutually contradictory essence of the traditional and the modern urban space, the subject itself remains a subject of the last century, which raises historiographical rather than theoretical interest now.

Nevertheless these theories are worth revisiting with the question of conservation in mind, as they have contributed to an understanding of the values of the historical urban texture and its cultural determinism in contrast with a certain globalization of culture to be found in contemporary conservation interventions and theoretical discourse. Therefore, these put the basis of value judgements as *relative* social constructs or conventions, a fact that draws their relevance to be limited and culturally specific. This highlights the importance of the emic perspective focusing on the intrinsic cultural distinctions that are meaningful to a given community, which is indeed the sole judge of the accuracy of this emic identification.

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<sup>359</sup> Norberg Schultz. *Existence, space and architecture*

<sup>360</sup> Martin Heidegger. *Being and time* (Albany, NY: State University of NY Press, 1996)



## V. 2. 2. Representation

Twice coded: reality coded in the urban fabric, which is then coded again in its representations, as a manipulation of the actual space, mirroring authors' ideals and/or knowledge of cities. It is useful for the identification of the role played by intrinsic values versus specificity for human perception to note the different ways of representation and their development over time. These are relevant for urban conservation because they complement the information revealed by the urban fabric itself, and consequently influence decisions concerning its values.

### **Symbolical space: Ancient and medieval plans**

“Three major components associated with walls of Biblical cities were towers, gates and open spaces. In Israelite cities, the spatial configuration between towers, gates and open urban spaces, however, does not reflect a strictly defensive functional relationship, as is the case in other Biblical settlements. Open urban spaces in Israelite cities were located in proximity of gates, serving as gathering points used for public assemblies. This is indicative not only of the socioeconomic and political preferences, but also of the cultural and religious realities in the Israelite city.”<sup>361</sup>

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<sup>361</sup> A. Akkerman, "Towers, gates and open spaces in cities of the Old Testament" (W.A. Dando, C.Z. Dando and J.J. Lu (eds.), *Geography of the Holy Land: Perspectives*. Association of American Geographers (Bible Geography Specialty Group): Washington, D.C., 2005), 246-263.

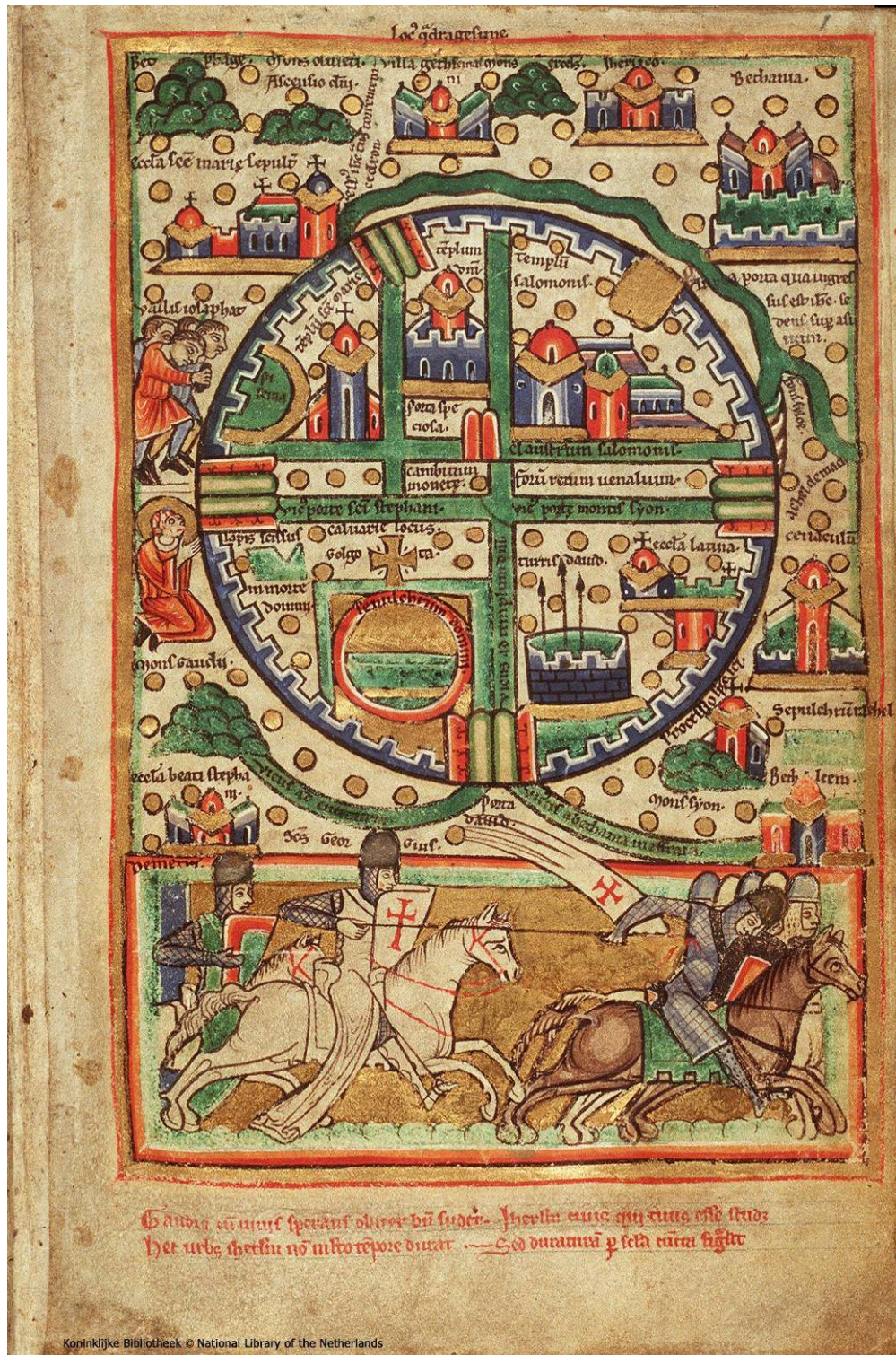


Figure 165. Jerusalem, 1200

Source: National Library of the Netherlands

### Formalised space: modern cartography and topography

Planimetrically, from symbolical space of ancient and medieval plans to more formalised one as cartography evolved. From this point of view, older plans would be sometimes quite far from the contemporary reality of the site, but rather mirroring authors' ideals and knowledge of cities considered to be perfect by means of divine circumstances. Early modern plans, on the other hand, reveal more inconspicuous issues and eventually their role within the urban texture.



**Figure 166. Plan of Edinburgh which records the general structure of the town and its main elements, as well as their relationships, but is distorted topographically.**

Source: *Civitates Orbis Terrarum*, 1575

### Cartographic semiology

Cartographical sources provide information beyond strictly topographical and geographical; they are able to reveal hierarchies and relationships between

settlement which, in the absence of or corroborated with written and archaeological sources, can be used to characterize a settlement and reconstruct its development over time.

For example, cartographical sources from the eighteenth century, although sometimes lacking in precision and containing errors,<sup>362</sup> provide evidence concerning Craiova's position in the settlement system of Early Modern Wallachia.<sup>363</sup> The first map with documentary value is that made by the High Steward Constantin Cantacuzino, published in Padua in 1700<sup>364</sup> This map contains the same errors in longitude as the earlier maps; nevertheless, the system of recording settlements provides valuable data, since these are divided into *oppida*, *villae*, *villae habitatae a Nobilibus*, and *loca Turcica*. Beside the ruler's residences, Bucharest and Târgoviște, Craiova is depicted as an *oppidum*. The first was made by Friedrich Schwantz in 1722.<sup>365</sup> Elaborated on the basis of the newest contemporary geographical principles, Schwantz's map is surprisingly accurate and provides a wealth of valuable data.<sup>366</sup>

The settlements are represented by different symbols according to their importance. As with the larger settlements, Craiova is depicted by a miniature of a church facade. This was indeed the largest settlement of the region, and its capital. Therefore its representation is significantly bigger than the others, and has more domes.

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362 Influenced by the antique tradition, these maps reproduce the errors of longitude of the maps of Ptolemy.

363 Ruxandra-Iulia Stoica, "L'urbanisation valaque médiévale et moderne vue par les contemporains," *Histoire Urbaine* 12(April 2005): 39-53

364 In Biblioteca Academiei Romane, Bucharest.

365 In Kriegsarchiv, Vienna.

366 Ana Toșa Turdeanu, *Oltenia: geografie istorică în hărțile secolului XVIII (Oltenia: Historical geography in the eighteenth century maps)* (Craiova, Romania: Editura Scrisul Românesc, 1975), 23-30.

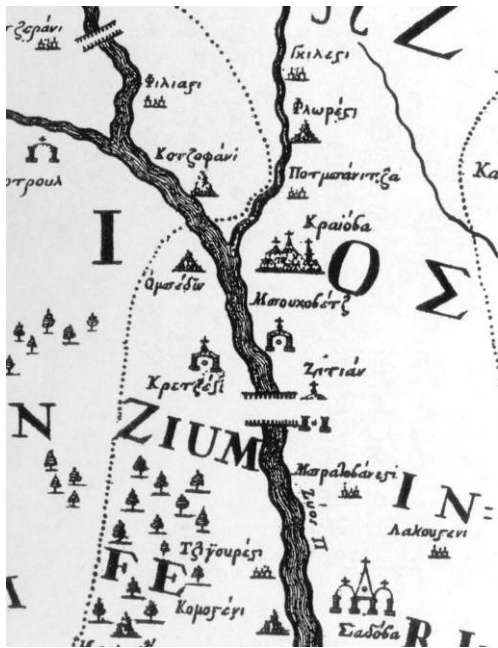


Figure 167. Constantin Cantacuzino, *Index geographicus celsissimi Principatus Wallachiae*, 1700. (detail)

Figure 168. Friedrich Schwantz, *Tabula valachiae Cis-Alutana*, 1722. (detail)



Figure 169. F. Jos. Ruhedorf, *Mappa Specialis Walachiae*, 1788. (detail)

Figure 170. *Topographische Karte der grossen und kleinen Wallachey*, 1790. (detail)

Actual cartographical sources on the Oltenia region date back to the period of the Austrian occupation between 1718 and 1739. The most accurate and comprehensive ones have been taken into consideration for the study of Craiova. A later map of Wallachia, made in 1788 by F. Jos. Ruhedorf, represents settlements according to their grouping into *Fortalitia*, *Urbes muris cinctae*, *Urbes muris destitutae*, *Oppida*, *Monasteria cum Pagis*, *Pagi*, *Kalugeriae seu Coenobia*, and *Habitationes dispersae*.<sup>367</sup> Bucharest and Craiova are depicted as *Urbes muris destitutae*, and Târgoviște as an *Urbs muris cinctae*. The latter is given less prominence on the map as regards its size. This specific representation provides data on the two different structures of the towns, with and without inner fortification, although this is a large-scale map. An unsigned *Carta der Wallachei* from 1789 makes use of the same type of representations as the map made by Schwantz. This depicts single, two or three-storey buildings according to the size of the settlement.<sup>368</sup> Significant enough is the fact that Craiova is depicted as a three-storey building, while Bucharest is depicted as two such buildings, one on each side of the river Dâmbovița, and Târgoviște as a two-storey building.

Another topographical map, made in 1790 and published in 1812, makes use of different types of representation, according to the structure of the settlements. These are grouped in *Staedte*, *Marktflecken*, *grosses Dorf mit Schloss und Kirche*, *grosses Dorf mit Kirche*, *grosses Dorf ohne Kirche*, *kleines Dorf mit Kirche*, *kleines Dorf ohne Kirche*, and *bewohntes Schloss*.<sup>369</sup> Craiova is depicted as a market town with a sparse building pattern without any definite limits, Târgoviște is represented in the same manner but surrounded by a boundary, in contrast to Bucharest, which is depicted as a hatched area, suggesting a higher density of the building pattern.

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367 In Biblioteca Academiei Romane, Bucharest.

368 In Hadtörténelmi Térképtar, Budapest.

369 In Hadtörténelmi Térképtar, Budapest.



Figure 171. Specht, *Militairische Carte der Kleinen oder Oesterreichischen und grossen Wallachei*, 1790-1791. (detail)

From the maps, which depict Craiova by means of various symbols, it is obvious that this was the third most important settlement in Wallachia, following the two residences of the ruler, Bucharest and Târgoviște. At the same time Craiova is shown as the second largest town in Wallachia on the maps depicting the surface areas of the settlements. The data concerning the settlement structure provided by these maps is at a model level, since the representations on these maps cannot be considered appropriate information on the topography of the settlements, due to the maps' scale and limited technical means available to the cartographers. However, Craiova is shown as a large town without precincts, and therefore with a dispersed pattern.

### **Space of 'individual agency'**

This is the interpretation of space through the perception of an artist or any person, revealing a structure that more often than not is different from the objectified one presented in maps and plans. Iconographically, this happens in drawings, engravings and paintings on one hand, and photography and film on the other. These display different degrees of manipulation of the actual space, which can only be revealed by confrontation.

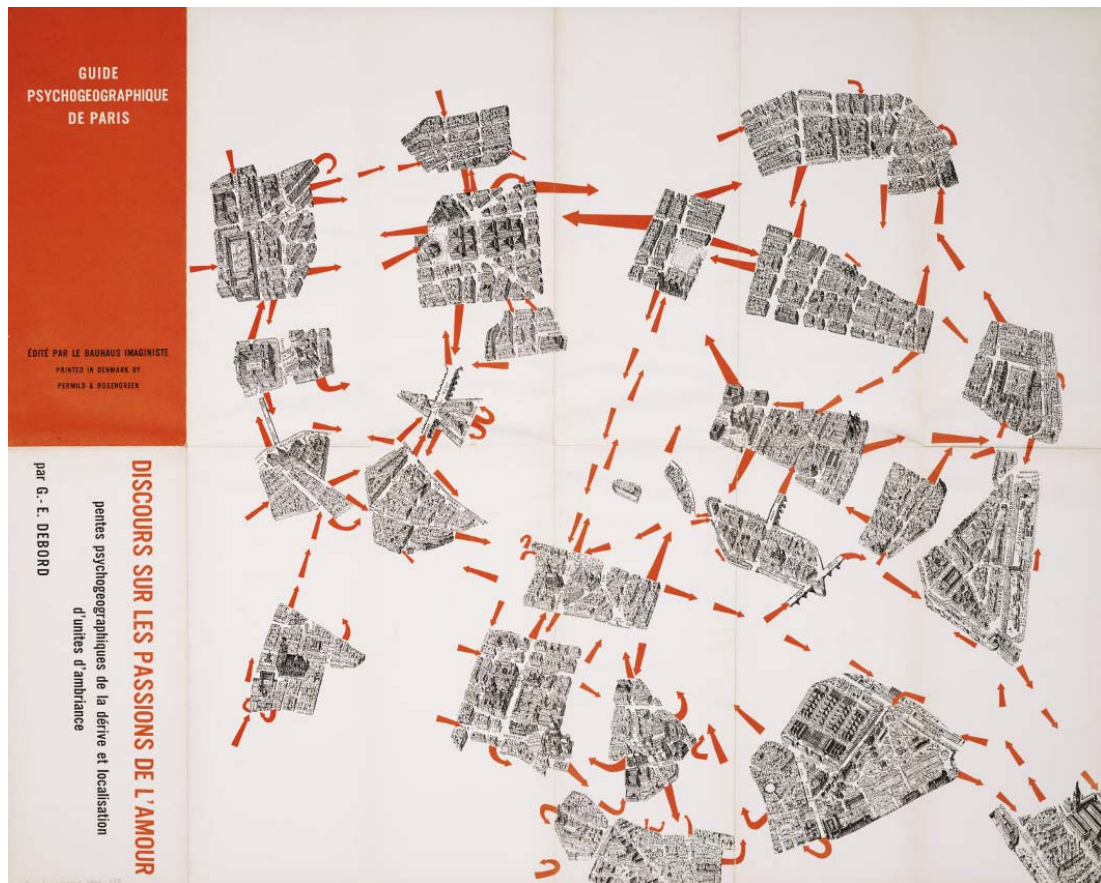
Guy Debord, one of the founders of Situationism International, defined 'psychogeography' as "the study of the precise effects of geographical setting, consciously managed or not, acting directly on the mood and behaviour of the individual."<sup>370</sup>

The sudden change of ambiance in a street within the space of a few meters; the evident division of a city into zones of distinct psychic atmospheres; the path of least resistance which is automatically followed in aimless strolls (and which has no relation to the physical contour of the ground);

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<sup>370</sup> "Definitions," *Situationist Internationale*, 1958





**Figure 172. *Guide Psychogéographique de Paris* by Guy Debord (Denmark: Bauhaus Imaginiste, 1957)**

Source : Tjebbe van Tijen, *Imaginary Museum Projects*, <http://imaginarymuseum.org/LPG/Mapsitu1.htm> (accessed 2/04/20010).

the appealing or repelling character of certain places--all this seems to be neglected. In any case it is never envisaged as depending on causes that can be uncovered by careful analysis turned to account. People are quite aware that some neighbourhoods are sad and others pleasant. But they generally simply assume elegant streets cause a feeling of satisfaction and that poor street are depressing, and let it go at that. In fact, the variety of possible combinations of ambiances, analogous to the blending of pure chemicals in an infinite number of mixtures, gives rise to feelings as differentiated and complex as any other form of spectacle can evoke. The slightest demystified investigation reveals that the qualitatively or quantitatively different influences of diverse urban decors cannot be determined solely on the

basis of the era or architectural style, much less on the basis of housing conditions.<sup>371</sup>

(Guy Debord, "Introduction to a critique of Urban Geography," 1955)

The interest of the group in architecture and urbanism seems to have been triggered by a discontent with the post-war reconstruction of European historic city centres into depersonalized, alienated products,<sup>372</sup> which in their opinion were "visual and virtual embodiment of aggressive capitalism."<sup>373</sup> As a consequence, Debord proposes the experimental method of psychogeography to the analysis of historic areas and planning of new ones; through 'dérive'<sup>374</sup> and 'détournement' he attempts to identify and challenge the triggers of a certain human behaviour within urban space, the 'summa of possibilities' embodied by the urban space.

If détournement were extended to urbanistic realizations, not many people would remain unaffected by an exact reconstruction in one city of an entire neighborhood of another. Life can never be too disorienting: détournement on this level would really make it beautiful.<sup>375</sup>

(Guy Debord, "Methods of Détournement," 1956)

A new experiment in mapping urban data by Jean-Luc Pinol and Maurice Garden, *Atlas des Parisiens*,<sup>376</sup> takes advantage of the stability of district boundaries in Paris to chart its development from the French Revolution to date; the plans produced with the help of GIS offer a visualisation of the distribution of various

<sup>371</sup> Guy Debord, "Introduction to a critique of Urban Geography," *Les Lèvres Nues* 6 (1955)

<sup>372</sup> Guy Debord, *La Société du Spectacle* (film), 1973

<sup>373</sup> Anderson, Simon. "Situationist Aesthetics." In *Encyclopedia of Aesthetics*, edited by Michael Kelly. Oxford Art Online, <http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t234/e0478> (accessed 26/05/2010)

<sup>374</sup> Guy Debord, "Theory of the Dérive," *Les Lèvres Nues* 9 (1956)

<sup>375</sup> Guy Debord, "Methods of Détournement," *Les Lèvres Nues* 8 (1956).

<sup>376</sup> Jean-Luc Pinol and Maurice Garden, *Atlas des Parisiens: De la Révolution à nos jours* (Paris: Parigramme, 2009)

criteria in time at different scales, from a single street to the whole of Paris. This opens the door for an unprecedented possibility of evaluation concentrations and patterns of a variety of social aspects, which until now have only been estimated using statistical methods, a tool rather unsatisfactory when trying to integrate these results with plan-based information on the morphology of the urban fabric.

Although the etic and emic approach are mutually exclusive, there is not necessarily a dichotomy between the *meta-* and *speci-* discourses produced by them, they merely complement each other, and only a simultaneous reading of the urban texture can possibly reveal the utmost of its values. The fact that similar features of the urban texture have different functions within the urban organism reveals etic differences between various usages of one emic element.

**PERORATION**

Oh, how many things have remained untold,  
 Old jewels scattered on the road!  
 Whence shall I gather them now  
 On the way lost, forever gone?  
 (...)  
 Oh, if I could succeed to disentangle them,  
 Their old sources to reach,  
 Maybe hidden in their depths I'll find  
 Those things which were never said!<sup>377</sup>

(Alexandru Philippide, "Oh, how many things")

The general misconception of conservation is that this is *a priori* in conflict with urban development and one should look for the balance between the two. The postmodern impulse seems to corroborate this misconception rather than challenge it. This false dichotomy, built over time, is dogmatic rather than semantic, and leads to the current misunderstanding of the nature and meaning of conservation, which is not about inert museum objects – dead butterflies in Durand's 'insect-cabinet' – , but about the living urban fabric. Urban conservation, in its active understanding, is actually part of urban development, if this is to be a sustainable pursuit. This issue has become increasingly acute over the past decade. The last issue of World Heritage is dedicated to World Heritage cities and calls for a revision of the approach to urban conservation and for new urban conservation tools.<sup>378</sup>

This research has tried to reveal the ideological context of urban conservation as an approach that relies on our understanding of the historic urban fabric and the way we relate to it. It has been in great part a theoretical, but also

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<sup>377</sup> Alexandru Philippide, *Monolog în Babilon – Monologue à Babylone*, translated from the Romanian to French by Aurel George Boeșteanu (București: Editura Meridiane, 1975)

<sup>378</sup> Francesco Bandarin, "Revisiting the approach to urban conservation" (*World Heritage Cities: World Heritage* 55(2010): 6-11)

historiographical pursuit. By looking at the concept of 'cultural capital,' the first part tried to set the scene and define the interest of urban conservation in cultural values and the way this relates to the other types of values brought to the table by the other fields participating in decisions about the city. As we have seen, the literature dedicated to the theory of urban conservation is rather scarce; much more has been written on its management and legislative context. This explains to some extent the comparatively weaker position of urban conservation in relation to economics and politics in practice. Lacking a clear theoretical basis, it is difficult to integrate with the other disciplines and, moreover, it is commonly confounded with building conservation and relegated to act in isolation within the historic urban fabric, even when a whole urban area is concerned and although much of the building conservation theory can be adapted to the field of urban conservation.

Because the focus of this research was on ideas, the analysis of extreme situations in the second part has played an important role in understanding the attitudes towards the historic fabric during the twentieth century. This period is important because, it is set against an increasingly more comprehensive understanding of the urban fabric and yet politicians, urbanists, as well as conservationists choose to ignore it in order to achieve their goals. The survey of the development of legislation in the three selected countries, France, the United Kingdom and Romania brings to light the development of urban conservation in an institutionalized way and another layer of this uncomfortable relationship to politics.

The discussion of how the heritage conservation field emerged at the end of the eighteenth century and subsequently developed clarifies the resistance of the profession to considering the urban fabric as a whole rather than isolated monuments. The concepts of art and historic values are embedded in the theory that ensued, and therefore the entirety of the urban fabric could not yet be considered. The few, but important writings addressing this issue tended to take a long time until they were actually assimilated into urban conservation methodologies. The

development of architecture and urbanism in the same period adds a further dimension to this assessment. It reveals that both fields, heritage conservation and architecture and urbanism, have developed within the same paradigm and instead of complementing each other, they reinforce the dichotomy between object and context that prevented an integral approach to the urban fabric.

Developments in other disciplines contributed to the accumulation of a number of methods relevant to urban conservation, in particular those dealing with the study of urban fabric in time. The fourth part has provided a structured overview of these options, illustrated by actual cases. However, it is not possible to apply one and the same methodology everywhere, but rather it is important to understand which are the issues that affect the development of the urban fabric over time and employ methods specific to each situation.

A look at the intellectual context within which urban conservation is situated as a field dealing with space and culture, in the fifth part, helped to further advance the idea that understanding of specificity is very important. This discussion draws on theories of space from the Antiquity to today in an attempt to clarify what is our relationship with space and the way in which culture and perception influence the creation and subsequent use of the urban fabric. The distinction between specificity and intrinsic values is essential and this part of the research offers an articulation of the emic/etic discourse within the urban conservation field. This understanding of the nature of urban fabric could hopefully allow a more meaningful use of analyses in urban conservation, going beyond the typological approach developed over the last century.

Urban conservation should therefore be perceived as a dynamic discipline, driven by the evolution of identity, which ultimately dictates the desire to intervene and change. Hence, it is crucial to comprehend this evolution of identity, and even foresee this, in order to inform integrated, active conservation (as opposed to the more traditional, static way of understanding this).

In this context, an account of the development and ideas behind our concern with urban conservation, such as the one attempted by this research, has a very important role. As the issues in urban conservation become more acute, there is a danger of 'reactive' decisions and interventions that respond to immediate pressure from other fields – usually economic or politic – without considering properly the essence of our understanding of urban areas as cultural heritage. In a way, the attempts discussed in the first part of this thesis to translate cultural values into economic terms in order to try to evaluate their relative importance, or to assimilate cultural capital with economic capital are such 'reactive' actions, whose impact in the long term can be very negative, even if on the moment they might seem to have demonstrated the worthiness of the cultural values they set out to defend in the first instance.

This research has tried to offer new urban conservation tools because conservation – in general, and urban conservation in particular – falls too often for the mechanical implementation of policy and superficial application of standardized methodologies to issues that remain in fact beyond the reach of such an approach. The knowledge and evidence needed to achieve successful urban conservation, as meaningful integration of cultural heritage concerns within urbanism, are still overseen; specialist studies are commissioned simply for conformity and disregarded in the subsequent analytical and decisional processes. This situation has changed little since the first attempts of reconciling the two parallel schools of thought at work in the city: heritage conservation and urbanism. Of course, this is not usually formally acknowledged, like in E.J. MacRae's candid introductory



declaration to his "Historical Review"<sup>379</sup> in Patrick Abercrombie's *A Civic Survey and Plan for the City and Royal Borough of Edinburgh* in 1949:

This chapter has been written independently and its inclusion does not necessarily indicate the writer's agreement with the conclusions or recommendations in the main report.

By understanding urban conservation as an approach in urbanism, rather than a separate, or even antagonistic concern, it is possible to conceive the whole range of interventions associated to it, without the need to enforce artificial boundaries between its interests and those of other fields, such as economic, social, politic, etc. In essence, urbanism should try to give proper consideration to all these interests, including urban conservation, regardless which of them is the one that triggered intervention in each situation – whereas usually the practice is that the trigger is the basis for intervention within the historic urban fabric and any other concerns come as an afterthought. Too often proposals are already developed in such isolation and only afterwards, if lucky, amended to take into consideration conservation or social interests. But it is import to acknowledge as well that the urban conservation approach is also a 'curatorial act' of selection and interpretation within the city. This 'curatorial act' is responsible, at the same time, for what is retained, which implies something has to be disposed of, the urban fabric and also for what is added to the urban fabric, which in many ways is in fact determined by what is retained. This twofold perspective, of keeping and adding to the historic urban fabric, is essential in understanding urban conservation as a holistic approach, as this research has shown to have been the original intention, when the concept was first formulated. Equally, this is the way in which urban conservation

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<sup>379</sup> Patrick Abercrombie and Derek Plumstead, *A Civic Survey and Plan for the City and Royal Borough of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1949), 5.

should be applied in practice, in the twenty-first century, although legislators and even the profession itself seem to still give this issue a very limited appreciation. In order for urban conservation to be successful it is paramount that the specific conditions of this 'curatorial act' within the city and the problems arising from these are acknowledged: the nature of the urban context as revealed by attentive examination of urban processes and form, on one hand, and our understanding of the resulting urban fabric (emic vs. etic), on the other. As the last two parts of this thesis tried to demonstrate, each of these contribute importantly to the deciphering of the past of the urban fabric and understanding of its future. Ultimately, the society as a whole acts as 'curator' of the city rather than the composed actions of architects, urbanists, conservationists or politicians – who are usually associated with the act of curation and have been historically happy to pride themselves with this.



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## Publications by the author

During the course of this research, a number of papers have been published which are either based on the work presented in this thesis, or have been independent case-studies which subsequently informed this research. They are listed here for reference.

Stoica, Ruxandra-Iulia, "Urban Conservation and the International Charters: a theoretical overview." *Mirror of Modernity: The Post-war Revolution in Urban Conservation – Docomomo E-Proceedings 2*(2009): 8-12

Stoica, Ruxandra-Iulia. "Heterotopia Urbana: A Conceptual Approach to Urban Heritage." *Cultural Landscapes in the 21st Century – Forum UNESCO / University and Heritage electronic proceedings* (2006), <conferences.ncl.ac.uk/unescolandscapes/files/stoicaruxandrai.pdf>

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## Appendix I

### Chronology of Selected Relevant International Charters

- 1960 ANCSA Carta di Gubbio concluding the Italian National Council for the Protection and Rehabilitation of Historical Centres
- 1962 UNESCO Recommendation Concerning the Safeguarding of the Beauty and Character of Landscapes and Sites
- 1964 Venice International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites
- 1968 CE Bath Resolution (68) 12 on the Active Maintenance of Monuments, Groups and Areas of Buildings of Historical or Artistic Interest within the Context of Regional Planning
- 1975 CE Amsterdam Declaration of the Congress on the European Architectural Heritage  
  
ICOMOS Bruges Resolutions on the Conservation of Smaller Historic Towns
- 1976 UNESCO Nairobi Recommendation concerning the Safeguarding and Contemporary Role of Historic Areas
- 1986 CE Recommendations No R(86)11 on Urban Open Space
- 1987 ICOMOS Washington Charter on the Conservation of Historic Towns and Urban Areas  
  
ICOMOS Brazil Petrópolis Charter on the Preservation and Revitalization of Historic Centres
- 1992 UNESCO World Heritage Convention (1972) – recognizes Cultural Landscapes
- 1996 UN HABITAT Agenda or Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements
- 1999 ICOMOS Australia Burra Charter for Places of Cultural Significance
- 2008 ICOMOS Québec Declaration on the Preservation of the Spirit of Place