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INTRODUCTION: BUILDING THE CITY IN EUROPE

A city is a complex entity. More than an assemblage of buildings and open spaces, cities are the product of a conflation of different processes, be they social, cultural, political, or economic. Over the course of centuries, different approaches have strived to both understand and harness the power of cities, with cities being described as machines, as organisms, or simply, as systems. But despite their different approaches, all these models have had at their core (some more explicitly than others) the very basic understanding that a city is always a dynamic entity. Since control of all the processes that define a city is, at the very least, difficult, efforts to shape the development of the city have thus been mostly based on attempts to understand its formal expression in hopes that by altering it, the city would also accordingly adapt its course. Either by starting with comprehensive plans or individual buildings, changing the urban fabric has been commonly perceived as the key to directly influencing the development of the city.

Throughout the following chapters, and through the use of examples and historical context, a variety of issues regarding the relation between architectural and urban expression with social structures, economic development, political ambitions and cultural landscapes will be discussed and analyzed. This textbook thus primarily focuses on historical forces and how these have produced cities by both informing models of urban analysis, as well as influencing the implementation of strategies.

By presenting a sequence of different historical episodes, these reflections on particular moments in the development of European cities aim to establish the crucial understanding of the progression of architectural and urban thought since Classical Antiquity. Beyond that, through the continued use of paradigmatic examples of cities across the continent, it will also become clear how these abstract concepts and theoretical ideas became articulated in Europe. This is intended to provide a perspective into the structure of European cities and how they have been changed throughout the past few centuries, thus establishing a clear correlation between abstract intentions and architectural/urban form. In this regard, it is important to remember that the design and construction of cities is also a lengthy and protracted process, in which ideas and theoretical concepts often take considerable time and effort before they are filtered down to application and implementation.

A crucial – and ever changing – element in the development of the city has always been the relation between urban planning and architecture, as central elements in the development and application of various models to the city. The two disciplines

and practices are inherently entangled, since any urban plan requires buildings to be materialized, and the composition of any assemblage of buildings immediately shapes (urban) space. In the Renaissance, for example, the harmonious effect of a balanced and symmetrical composition was particularly valued, but the creation of such strong visual structures was dependent on a tight integration between buildings (in relation to one another) and urban space. Thus, the urban composition in the *Piazza della Annunziata* (1419-1608) was entirely based on the generating architectural element of the arched arcaded portico of the *Ospedale degli Innocenti* (1419-1425). Conversely, in Ildefons Cerdà's expansion plan for Barcelona (1859), the specificity of buildings was all but completely ignored in favor of the definition of a rational organization of the urban fabric.

While the focus of this textbook is geographically limited to the specific European expression of architectural and urban thought and form, often these have shaped and have been shaped by models well beyond the European borders. However, these European developments must not be understood as being universal since across the globe, from the dawn of civilization, cities have thrived and collapsed, within varied political and cultural systems and often represented by unique formal expressions. These histories are significant and worthy of attention, and with every new work that elucidates and fosters greater understanding of those unique urban ideas and architectural expressions, we are continually reminded not only of how European developments constitute but one of multiple histories of urbanism, but also of our own ignorance of those expressions.

Furthermore, the particular history of urbanism in Europe that is conveyed through the description, analysis, interpretation, and historicization of several urban plans in the following pages must also be acknowledged as being merely one of multiple histories of urbanism in Europe and thus must be complemented by many others. This is a foundational concept for this textbook and accompanying digital platform since they have been conceived as a starting point rather than an end point for a conversation that must be diverse and inclusive. Therefore, other histories of urbanism in Europe — their formal expression as well as their political and cultural frameworks — will be continuously documented and discussed in the more dynamic medium of the digital platform accompanying this book.

These additions will focus not only on canonical, but also forgotten or undervalued examples that can express the wealth of ideas and urban developments experienced in Europe in any given historical period since classical antiquity. With every new addition to this ongoing project, the geopolitics of urban and architectural production in Europe will be, inevitably, reconsidered, effectively both challenging and expanding existing histories. Notably, such an assemblage of multiple histories of urbanism is

intended to not only inscribe into our collective memory the multiple ways in which the city has developed in Europe, but also to dismantle (still) perceived hierarchies of power and domination in the dissemination of urban and architectural ideas across the continent, which each example being understood within its own context and structures.

The assemblage of such a multitude of urban thought and models should already provide an indication of the wider range of expression and discourses that are often interconnected. Sometimes, the underlying goals and spatial intentions of European architectural vocabulary and urban models have found a more direct and apt application somewhere else. Brasília, for instance, although built in Brazil, designed and developed by Brazilian architects and planners, and symbolizing the country's modernization project, undeniably projects the underlying specter of European modern ideas. Similarly, the design of the US capital, Washington DC, was clearly inspired by the urban organization of movement and monuments of Pope Sixtus V's plan for Baroque Rome.

As the last example already indicates, urban models and architectural form have commonly traveled not only from and to other regions of the globe, but also to other periods as well. Effectively, it is possible to trace a continuity and rejection of different urban planning practices and architectural design traditions throughout different periods. However, it is important to note that as models are co-opted to the different context of a period other than that in which it was devised, models also inevitably change as a result of specific interpretation and appropriations of history.

Often, the appropriation of past models and forms is procured in an attempt to return to an idealized past, or to revive former societal norms and qualities. In that sense, the revival of Classical Antiquity was a constant in the historical arch of European architecture and urbanism, but was perhaps most explicit during the Enlightenment with the emergence of Neo-Classicism. And Neo-Classicism is a particular apt example of this condition, since while the components, expression, and ideas of Classical Antiquity are readily identifiable, they have also been substantially adapted to suit the specific questions and demands posed by 18th century society.

Although the understanding of the inevitable cross-pollination of ideas is always present, the urban models and architectural principles presented in the following chapters are discussed within the specific context of the period in which they were first devised. This allows not just for a clear understanding of the original intentions of these urban models and architectural forms (including their relation to their contemporary societal context), but also provides a basis for interpretation of how these elements have been co-opted, enhanced, challenged or subverted in other locations and periods.

The analysis of these historical forces and how they have influenced the development of the city in Europe has been organized in this textbook through a chronological sequence of modules. Each of these modules not only provides a comprehensive analysis of a particular period—from Classical Antiquity to the contemporary time—they are all also structured in a progressive fashion, from a broad view to particular case studies. Specifically, each module is introduced by a historical framework in which societal conditions and cultural forces of that period are discussed, and the connection between those and the development of the city is discussed. These introductory chapters are followed by critical comparative analyses of various urban plans and approaches towards the city that sharply define the breadth of architectural and urban responses during any given period. Finally, these are complemented by thorough discussions of exemplary cases in which the previous discussions and issues are understood through their expression as urban plans and architecture.

Ultimately, a clear historical awareness is one of the fundamental tasks of this textbook and its accompanying online platform. However, it is not intended as an unabashed instrumentalization of history to validate contemporary design approaches, but instead as a way to allow history to inform new architectural and urban production. Therefore, a reflection on the history of European architecture and urbanism is not only necessary, but it should also definitely be welcomed.

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