



BOOK NOTES

Cruelty and Utopia: cities and landscapes of Latin America edited by *Jean-Francois Lejeune*, Princeton University Press, New York, NY, USA, 2003, 264 pp. ISBN 1-56898-489-8. *Cruelty and Utopia* begins with Gwendolyn Wright's statement that 'we usually forget that modernism came into being in a world framed by colonialism' (Wright, 2002, p. 125). This single quotation reveals the primary theme of this book as its 21 interdisciplinary, illustrated essays move from discussions of pre-colonial urbanism and the influences of the Laws of the Indies (as a representation of 'Renaissance modernity') to the linkages between these early forms and modernist interventions in twentieth-century Latin American cities. The book is based upon an exhibition of the same title presented at the International Centre for Urbanism, Architecture and Landscape in Belgium; its 323 illustrations and photographs bring the material of the exhibition to a world audience. The essays, while varying considerably in style, adhere remarkably well to the task of linking historical urban form with the urban transformations of the recent past. Most of the essays are grounded in specific case studies, including those of Quito, Sao Paolo, Havana, Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro, Mexico City, Caracas, Santiago and Tijuana.

The book's editor, Jean-Francois Lejeune, is an associate professor of architectural design theory at the University of Miami, and both he and the book's contributors are specifically concerned with architecture and architects. The strength of the book is the author's ability to place architecture within its historical and urban contexts.

Wright, G. (2002) 'Building global modernism', *Grey Room* 7, 124-34.

Place, meaning, and form in the architecture of eastern Islamic cities by *Bashir A. Kazimee* and *Ayad B. Rahmani*, Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, NY, USA, 2003, 207 pp., ISBN 0-7734-6669-X. This book was written by Bashir Kazimee, a native of Afghanistan who is a professor of architecture at Washington State University in the United States, with the assistance of a colleague, Ayad B.

Rahmani. It addresses aspects of urban form in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iran. The authors hope to de-mystify the relationships between Islam and settlement space for non-specialist readers. They argue that 'place' (*makan*), with its sense of social coherence and physical unity, is a better term than 'city', which has large-scale, bureaucratic overtones, for describing settlements in the eastern Islamic realm. They carry this argument through six chapters, each devoted to an element of Islamic place and architecture: walls and orientation, unified places/spaces, courtyards, streets, Afghan courtyards, and vernacular culture. The book is infused with discussion of Islam as it is practised in these regions. Forty-four photographs and 11 maps and diagrams complement the discussion. Some of Kazimee's field study was carried out in the mid-1970s, before the recent ravages of war in Afghanistan. Where appropriate, he notes the changes brought about by the war to the landscapes of Kabul and Kandahar, which constitute the primary examples for a number of his discussions. Although the book engages with academic literature on place, the built environment, and Islam it does not explicitly take up the wider literature on Islamic urban form.

Cities of the world: a history in maps by *Peter Whitfield*, The British Library, London, UK, 2005, 208 pp., ISBN 0 7123 4868 9. Compiled by a map historian, this is a selection of 64 urban maps largely drawn from the British Library's map collection. They are selected primarily for their graphic qualities; geographically they are dominated by European cities although there is a sprinkling from other continents; and the dates of the maps vary considerably. The author gives a short introduction to 'the city in history', which contains some short discussion on the map-making styles, and brief commentaries on each city. Most cities have a double-page spread, approximately two-thirds illustration and one-third text. The illustrations are well reproduced, although most of the maps cross the binding of the large-format pages. The text is historically informed but heavy in value judgements. Nevertheless, this is a useful overview and teaching resource.