



BOOK NOTES

Architettura moderna mediterranea: atti del convegno internazionale, Bari, 10 aprile 2002 edited by *Giuseppe Strappa and Anna Bruna Menghini*, Mario Adda Editore, Quaderni ICAR/4, Bari, Italy, 2003, 200 pp. ISBN 88-8082-524-0. Fifteen papers in three languages, organized in three sections, perpetuate a record of a conference concerned with architecture in modern times in the Mediterranean region, well edited in this elegant Politecnico di Bari volume. An opening section offers papers on general building themes in the Mediterranean, including the experience with earthquakes. A larger central group presents studies of architectural developments in Turkey, the Dodecanese (mostly the town of Rodi), Tripoli, Algeria, and Spain, mostly of periods in the twentieth century, though one, by Attilio Petruccioli, offers a typology of Algerian dwellings from 1830 to 1930. A third section presents five papers on Apulian themes, especially architectural studies in Bari. The collection runs the gamut, from studies focused on individual buildings, to ensembles, to the morphological structure of whole settlements (such as the Tripoli piece by Ludovico Micara concerning issues of modern building in a historical townscape).

Urban Europe, 1100–1700 by *David Nicholas*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, UK, 2003, 239 pp. ISBN 0-333-94983-8. This survey of urban development over six centuries stresses the links, rather than the breaks, between medieval and early modern towns in Europe. The author, a U.S. historian, makes use of interdisciplinary concepts, especially geographical systems theory, to trace urban change from its roots in local market relations to more complex regional ones. Most unusual for a general historical text on this subject is a chapter entitled ‘The morphology of the urban plan’, which considers organic and planned towns, walls, markets and public spaces, and the occupational geography of the pre-modern town, closing with a section that argues for a social explanation of the urban plan. What is meant here is the nature of the town’s social geography rather than the intricate character of the built environment

as such, though the spatial relations of functions, together with their own building types, are clearly of interest.

New urbanism and American planning: the conflict of cultures by *Emily Talen*, Routledge, New York, USA, 2005, 318 pp. ISBN 0-415-70133-3. This book sets the New Urbanist movement within the historical context of four distinct planning cultures that have energized proponents and critics of American urban form over the last century. Talen sees New Urbanism as essentially the culmination of a string of ideas in search of the ‘good city’ on American soil. The four ‘cultures’ are incrementalism, plan-making, planned communities, and regionalism, and they have often been in tension and conflict with each other. This study demonstrates how these cultures have related to each other and overlapped, and how many ideas about good city form have common roots and recur, often in different guises. A strong positivist theme throughout the book argues for the integration of all four cultures if future contributions to American urbanization are to be beneficial.

Palazzi Romani: luogo e linguaggio by *Maria Grazia Corsini*, Edizioni Kappa, Rome, Italy, 2004, 227 pp. ISBN 88-7890-576-3. The theme of this book is the rediscovery of an architectural language that expresses the cultural identity of place. This is a study of organic architecture, exemplified by the tradition of Roman building from the sixteenth century to the present, that demonstrates the continuity of certain features that serve as the ‘language’ of its cultural milieu and reveals fundamental principles through plans that fully engage the present built environment and the process of its historical transformation. Such an architecture celebrates, as it has done in the past, the spirit of place of a civilization and its history. The book is lavishly illustrated with city maps, building plans and elevations, and photographs of individual structures and representative streetscapes.

The birth of city planning in the United States, 1840–1917 by *Jon A. Peterson*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, USA, 2003, 431 pp. ISBN 0-8018-7210-3. This is a meticulous scholarly history of the development of American urban planning from its mid-nineteenth-century antecedents to its initial professionalization in the early twentieth century. Beginning with a look at sanitary reform and landscape values from 1840 to 1890, and civic art in the last decade of the century, the focus turns to what the author terms the birth of an ideal around the turn of the century, including consideration of the McMillan Plan for Washington, D.C. (the nation's first comprehensive city plan), the birth of the 'city beautiful' movement, and great civic schemes up to 1905. This is followed by chapters on 'city beautiful' planning to 1909, the social progressive challenge, and the transition to 'city planning' as a novel field of public endeavour. Three chapters close the work under the rubric of 'the problem of workability', bringing the story up to 1917, with an epilogue viewing American urban planning as a fragmented art.

Tempore Romanorum constructa: Zur Nutzung und Wahrnehmung antiker Überreste nördlich der Alpen während des Mittelalters by *Lukas Clemens*, Anton Hiersemann, Stuttgart, Germany, 2003, 565 pp. ISBN 3-7772-0301-7. A thorough examination of physical Roman remains in medieval settlements north of the Alps, both for their direct influence on the building pattern and urban forms of these places, and for their social significance in the specific communities affected as well as for medieval society at large. Regarding the first theme, the survival and continued use of structural remains of Roman building encompassed monumental structures such as walls, amphitheatres, baths, forums and capitols, aqueducts and fountains associated with towns and fortresses, as well as suburbs, villages, forts, and temples in rural settings. Re-use of Roman remains extended from direct incorporation in medieval buildings to ruins as stone quarries, sources of lime for plaster and roof tiles for recycling, and the export of building materials as a commercial activity. Marble blocks from aqueducts in the Eifel-Koln region were traded as far as Canterbury (for use in the cathedral) and Dalby, Sweden. Particular attention is paid to

the urban morphology of Metz, Besançon, Reims, Koln, Mainz, and Trier.

Bourgeois nightmares: suburbia, 1870-1930 by *Robert M. Fogelson*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 2005, 264 pp. ISBN 0-300-10876-1. This small book presents a detailed overview of the role of restrictive covenants in shaping American suburbs. This means of control had a role in shaping suburban form, but the book's strength is its combination of this with the social and economic elements shaping the residents of suburbia. In particular, suburb developers and suburban residents used these legal restrictions in efforts to control unwanted – and even feared – change, including various encroachments, undesirable uses and activities, and undesirable people. This is a detailed perspective on the shaping of suburbia, considering minutiae such as building lines and setbacks, architectural types and styles, garden fences, wall colours, and so on.

Biography of a tenement house in New York City: an architectural history of 97 Orchard Street by *Andrew S. Dolkart*, Center for American Places, Santa Fe, USA, 2006, 141 pp. ISBN 1-930066-57-0. This book blends building history with social history in an innovative way (in the form of a building's biography) that is rare in American literature on the history of the urban built environment. It traces the construction history of an 1860s New York brick row-house pre-'dumbbell' tenement in conjunction with the rich history of its changing owners and tenants, and interprets both in relation to the perpetually shifting character of the surrounding neighbourhood and the wider city's dynamics since that time. Making use of maps, building and fire insurance plans, historical photographs, and city and other archival records, the author (a professor of historic preservation) reconstructs the building's exterior and interior evolution from its unregulated origins – when it and two similar structures replaced a Universalist church – through periods of increasingly strict municipal tenement laws, to its current incarnation as a tenement house museum. The study offers a good starting point for a typomorphological examination of New York's most characteristic residential building type.