
ISUF President's Report

As members of ISUF will know, I was elected President for 4 years at the ISUF symposium in London, UK in August 2005. As well as being an acknowledgement of my own contribution to the founding of ISUF, my election as President is a tribute to the role of the Italian morphological school. I wish to thank my colleagues M.P. Conzen and J.W.R. Whitehand for their support in the achievement of this recognition, which has been accomplished despite language barriers, not least my own limited ability to communicate in English.

At the meeting of ISUF's Council in London, and subsequently in discussions between myself and my Italian colleagues, a number of proposals concerning ISUF's future development found favour and I propose to limit myself in this my first report to summarizing these.

First, it is proposed that a number of regional groups be set up. Each group might, for example, cover a particular linguistic area. Each would promote, especially among young people, research, meetings and discussion among researchers, practitioners and educationalists across the range of disciplines that contribute to urban morphology. Exploratory discussions among, for example, Canadian, French, Scandinavian and Spanish colleagues suggest support for this idea.

Secondly, a committee, containing a representative of each regional group, should be set up. An important role for this committee would be to choose an appropriate venue for the major biennial meetings of ISUF, from 2007 onwards. Proposals for these meetings should be submitted to this

committee according to an agreed format.

Thirdly, the range of ISUF's publications should be extended to include a regular newsletter or bulletin and a series of monographs. An important function of these publications would be to communicate the progress and results of ISUF's commissions and working parties.

There is evidence that the first of these proposals is already being adopted spontaneously – for example, the exhibition organized by the Bari School of Architecture in La Valletta last February and the conference organized by the Nordic Network of Urban Morphology in Stockholm, Sweden in September of this year.

I should welcome the views of all members of ISUF on the future development of our association in general and on the proposals that I have outlined here in particular.

Last but not least, in a report that is essentially forward looking, I should like to pay tribute to the former President, Anne Vernez Moudon. Her contribution over the 8 years of her two Presidential terms has provided a major part of the foundation on which we are now seeking to build. I wish to thank her wholeheartedly and I hope she will continue to participate in ISUF's activities.

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Shaping urban space over time: European Historic Towns' Atlases Conference, Dublin, Ireland, 8-10 June 2006

This conference, organized by Anngret Simms (Dublin) and supported by the Royal Irish Academy, gathered together some of the editors and contributors to the European Historic Towns' Atlases to engage in comparative urban studies using the atlases as source material. It commenced with due ceremony in the library and lecture room of the Academy building where Derek Keene (London) had been invited to present an 'Academy Discourse' on 'The idea of the metropolis'. This ranged widely in time and space exploring what the term 'metropolis' had meant to particular societies in particular times from the Greek 'mother city from which others had been founded'; through the medieval 'seat of an archbishop'; to the 'imperial metropolis' that was London in the late-nineteenth century, and on to post-metropolitan Los Angeles. For many delegates it was his questioning of the difficulties of mapping the metropolis that surprised: Cologne in 1550 takes a map of a square metre in size at 1:5,000; London in 1800 needs a map of six square metres at the same scale!

The next day comparative analysis began with a paper on 'The Italian town as a model of European urbanization' by Francesca Bocchi (Bologna). Her thesis was that the Roman idea of the city had dominated European urban ideals from Hellenic times right through to the Renaissance. Again, examples were drawn from across Europe to support her arguments and good use was made of air photographs, but not atlas maps! One of the reasons for this came from Howard Clarke's (Dublin) presentation which showed that the Historic Towns' Atlas project had mapped very few metropolitan centres: Dublin (before 1610); London (before 1520); Bologna, Cologne and Vienna. Clarke provided a comparison of the material in the atlases for these cities and concluded that comparison of their metropolitan dimensions was very difficult because many publications lacked both gazetteers and texts of sufficient depth.

The next six papers explored the role of seigniorial power in creating new towns. Peter Johaneck (Münster) and Josef Zemliska (Prague), in a stimulating paper, examined towns in the Holy Roman Empire, suggesting that the thesis of an older generation of historians, that merchants were at the centre of town-founding activities, should be rejected and that princely lordship was fundamental. As so often, it was archaeological evidence which had unearthed an early phase of medieval urban

activity preceding the mapped towns of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, which was when merchant governance, burghage rents and measured tenements had succeeded these earlier settlements. Similar evidence was available from both Westphalia and Bohemia.

Ferdinand Oppl (Vienna) provided delegates with the most recent interpretations of the medieval development of Vienna and Wiener Neustadt using both archaeological evidence and the theories of Erwin Reidinger which use church orientation and axial street metrology – fascinating stuff, and certainly new to this delegate. Roman Czaja (Toruń) concentrated on the towns of the Teutonic Order in Prussia. Of the 96 towns in this region all but 24 were founded by the Order. The Polish atlas has already provided comparative material for three of the largest: Toruń, Chełmno and Elbląg, in each of which composite multi-phase plans were analysed. Katalin Szende (Budapest) was similarly able to use the first towns to be analysed in the Hungarian atlas, all royal foundations, in her presentation. The plans were complicated but the story of Buda had much in common with the German and Bohemian towns about which we had heard earlier.

Marjetta Hietala (Tampere) provided a wide-ranging analysis of medieval Nordic towns around the Baltic, concentrating on those of her native Finland where, again, it seems that royal or episcopal foundation preceded the influx of the merchant community. In Ireland seigniorial power was more significant according to the analysis provided by John Bradley (Maynooth). He concluded with a detailed analysis of Kilkenny, which he edited for the Irish Historic Towns Atlas.

A final session of two papers examined symbolic meanings of town plans. Martina Sterken (Zürich) concentrated on the Zähringian estate towns of Germany and Switzerland, concluding that though architects and art historians had devised many ingenious theoretical ideas on the symbolic meanings inscribed into this group of town plans, hard evidence was usually lacking. Lordly ideals were very frequently overtaken by the realities of individual decision-making on the part of the occupants of these towns. Keith Lilley (Belfast) began with one of Britain's earliest urban 'maps' of Bristol c. 1480 to examine the Christian symbolism inscribed into contemporary understanding of the built and lived city that was Bristol at that time and

which was written into the 'map'. He went on to examine the locations of excluded residents such as lepers and 'night walkers' in the moral topographies of leading citizens and how these were reinforced by civic processions such as those that marked Corpus Christi.

A garden party and a full-day field excursion into the Irish countryside completed the conference. Socially and academically this was a conference of the highest standard. It is hoped that many of the papers given here, together with some of those to be presented at the forthcoming Urban History

conference in Stockholm, will be published next year. That would be good in that it is extremely difficult to keep abreast of recent scholarship in so many different European countries in so many different language realms.

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ISUF business meetings, Stockholm, September 2006

ISUF Council met on Sunday September 3 immediately before the conference organized by the Nordic Network of Urban Morphology and ISUF at the Royal Institute of Technology (KTH), Stockholm. The conference concluded with an ISUF General Meeting, and this report covers both meetings and all business.

Secretary-General's report

Michael Conzen reported that his major activity on behalf of ISUF in the past year had been in the preparation of two ISUF conferences: Stockholm (2006) and Ouro Preto, Brazil (2007). A number of other venues had also been investigated. Close collaboration was necessary between himself and the local organizers in order to structure and deliver high-quality international conference programmes.

ISUF's previous pattern of alternating small seminars and major conferences had not been followed recently owing to the opportunity in 2004 to link with the International Geographical Union meeting in Glasgow, but it was felt worthwhile to return to this sequence, and it was hoped that Ouro Preto would re-establish the 'large conference' format.

Michael Conzen then reminded ISUF that his term of office had been set at two years, and he was therefore stepping down as Secretary-General. He thanked ISUF's officers and council members who had worked closely with him during a challenging period. In return, he was thanked for his hard work on ISUF's behalf.

Treasurer's report

Keith Lilley was unable to attend the meeting but sent a report indicating that ISUF's finances were healthy, but that the future pattern of income and the link between subscriptions and conference fees needed to be reviewed.

ISUF's main expenditure continues to be the production of *Urban Morphology*. In recent years, the production costs have risen such that they now virtually equal income. It would therefore be important to generate additional income from conference 'profits'. In order to simplify accounting procedures and communication with members it was agreed that the subscription year for individual members should move to January-December.

Some effort had gone into investigating the Paypal system for electronic payments, but this was not adopted owing to unresolved concerns about security. The Treasurer recommended that members should make greater use of the IBAN/SWIFT electronic bank transfer system, which was well established in Europe.

Editor's report

Jeremy Whitehand reported that the journal's move to a new binding, with other minor format changes, and the increasing electronic delivery of copy to the printer, had gone well. However, the aims established last year for increasing diversity in coverage needed further work, although quality and manuscript supply were acceptable. Submissions of papers from Africa, India and Latin America

would be particularly welcome to promote regional diversity in the journal's contents. Furthermore, if members wanted more papers published, or different topics covered, the editorial team would be delighted to receive submissions.

The new binding had allowed more pages in each issue, and the refereeing process had remained swift: the average time lag between submission of a paper and decision was now only 1.5 months. About 50 per cent of submissions had been accepted in the past year. This was a slight rise, but still not atypical for refereed journals in the social sciences.

Last year it had been suggested that thematic reviews should be sought, and two were currently in progress. National reviews were still being produced. Although Viewpoints had been forthcoming, there had been relatively few in recent issues that responded to issues raised by the journal's papers (or indeed other Viewpoints). This was felt to be a useful function of the Viewpoint section, and more were encouraged.

Finally, more subscriptions from institutional libraries were encouraged. The journal remains competitive in price for institutions, but the revenue is very significant in funding the improvements to the journal's quality.

Appointment of Secretary-General

ISUF Council unanimously approved the appointment of Nicola Marzot (Università degli Studi di Ferrara), although it noted that his substantial commitments in Ferrara and Delft in the coming year meant that individual Council members would need to support the new Secretary-General's work.

Webmaster's report

Elwin Koster sent a report on the progress being made to develop the usability and content of the

ISUF website, now www.urbanform.org. The visibility through normal search engines had improved significantly. Technical changes had been made to improve accessibility and to facilitate future redesigns. Online access to the papers of *Urban Morphology* had improved, and members will have access to scanned pages of all issues except the most recent three years.

Regional associations

Giuseppe Strappa had been investigating possible regional groupings of members: how these might work, how they might be organized, and the relationship between a national organization and 'ISUF International' as the parent body. While this investigation was ongoing, events had moved forward and the 'Nordic Network of Urban Morphology' had already been successfully launched. A draft constitution for affiliated regional groups was discussed, and it is hoped that 'ISUF Italia' will be formed during the coming year. More such groups are encouraged, and it was hoped that the 2007 Ouro Preto conference may stimulate a Latin American group.

ISUF Working Papers

A proposal from Phil Jones for an on-line Working Paper series was discussed and approved, and he was immediately appointed as its Editor. This will be developed via the ISUF website. It was suggested that the first three papers could be those produced by the ISUF Working Party on Legislation and Urban Form, which had not previously been available in electronic format.

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ISUF subscriptions for individual members

The subscription for individual ISUF members has previously been July-June, whereas that for institutional members has followed the calendar year (January-December). This has been causing difficulty in accounting and in communicating with members – especially those who do not pay their

subscriptions promptly.

ISUF Council has therefore decided that with effect from January 2007, individual subscriptions will move to a calendar year basis. The Treasurer will make appropriate arrangements for renewal notices.
