

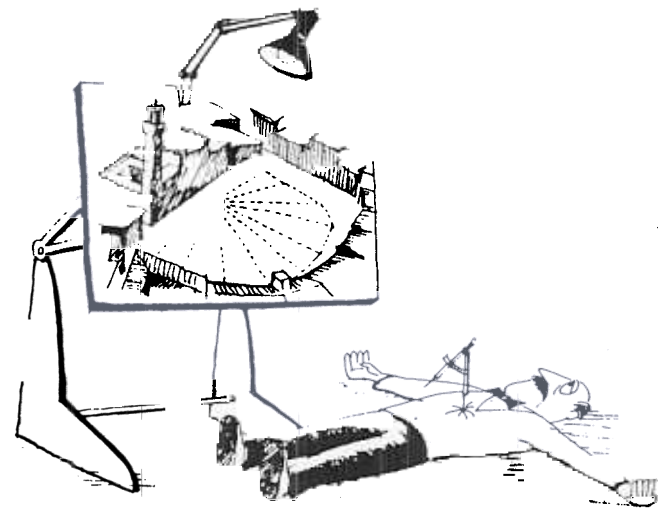
## COLLECTIVE SPACES IN THEIR HISTORICAL URBAN CONTEXT\*

«L'architecture est le signe visible des mœurs d'une nation, de ses goûts, de ses tendances, plus que tout autre art peut-être, elle laisse une trace durable de l'état intellectuel d'un peuple, de sa vitalité, de son énergie ou de sa décadence.»

E.E. Viollet-le-Duc, 1872

Viollet-le-Duc's statement holds true not only for architecture, but also for urban and rural areas as a whole, as they are an expression of a people's culture. Urban planning and urban design are consequently the design reflection of a culture and, thus, are (or should be) everybody's concern; even more so should revalorization be the concern of everyone, as its need is an indicator that something has gone wrong in the planning, design, maintenance or use of a particular area. If the built volume — architectural (including vernacular) and civil engineering — represents the positive space, collective space is nothing less than the remaining negative or outdoor space, although not all of it can be actively (e.g. by walking, standing, sitting, often while simultaneously riding or driving) or passively (e.g. looking, smelling, hearing, perceiving, feeling atmospheric conditions) directly experienced. While historic collective spaces can and often should be monuments, discussions of them are meaningless if not considered in their historic and socio-cultural contexts. By talking about collective spaces we should not focus primarily on famous plazas, parks, and spectacular squares, as these are by now often quite well cared for and no longer being used as parking spaces only, but rather on all the collective outdoor spaces in historic towns, old quarters, villages and hamlets, and homogeneous monumental groups.

While these notes are limited to collective spaces in historic and old quarters, those in newer quarters, and present-day planning and building policies and practices in this respect, also urgently need increased attention (III. 1). The totality of the collective spaces (or all its negative space) is an integral part of a quarter and should be considered as such whenever



1. - Bruno Zevi's graphic (above) and verbal explanation of present-day planning problems in this respect: "It would be extremely difficult to represent a medieval urban layout (for example, Siena's Piazza del Campo) using T-squares, compasses, and drafting machines. These tools are good only for boxy architecture, which can easily be represented in perspective" (From B. Zevi, *The Modern Language of Architecture*, Seattle 1978, p. 22).

any urban planning or revalorization measures are being considered. Although revalorization is primarily concerned with the existing physical environment and thus mainly with urban and landscape design, architecture and civil engineering, it nonetheless has to be based on urban planning concepts for the city or town as a whole, and its historic part in particular. Historic towns were built for a pre-industrial society and with its technology. We know this, but we have still treated them in the recent past as if they were required to suit present-day technology and standards. Particularly when it has come to means and modes of transportation this unfortunate but convenient forgetfulness has often resulted in the destruction of their historical characteristics and, what is worse, their physical and corresponding social structures. The disastrous effects that this has had on historic collective spaces and their meaning and use is now widely recognized.

### URBAN DESIGN IN EXISTING URBAN AREAS

Urban design as a discipline should intermediate between the human and social sciences and planning and other environmental disciplines on the one hand, and architecture on the other. For this we need a theoretical frame of reference and processes and methods that will, in the case of already built areas, enable us to maintain (preserve, revalorize, restore, renovate, renew, etc.) cities, towns and villages in a desired fashion. For use as a basis for such maintenance of built areas, the urban designer should first know the basic identity of the particular place (e.g. quarter). The derivation of such an identity includes the determination of the basic urban design and architectural structures and patterns, with their social and psychological, economic, functional (including use), legal and other characteristics in their natural setting<sup>1</sup>. From this, rules and guidelines

\* This paper was originally planned to be one third longer and with the title "The Urban Context of Historic Collective Spaces". As I was working on the notes I was informed that for reasons of space it should be shorter. I then decided, although I am an urbanist and architect and not a historian, to focus on the historical aspects only, as I feel that these were treated too briefly at the colloquium. I do not claim to make up for this, but have tried to give a sketch of the development of urban life and collective spaces over time. I would like to thank Sandra Stuber for editing this article for publication in English and for other very helpful comments.

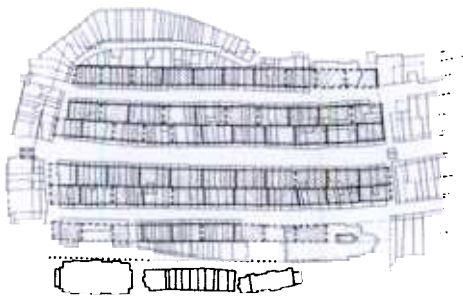
<sup>1</sup> For how such an identity can be derived and transformed into an instrument consisting of rules and measures to be taken to preserve and revalorize historic parts of towns and their town- and landscapes at large, see for example: F. Stuber, J. Lang et al., *Stadt bilduntersuchung Altstadt Lenzburg*, Zurich 1976; or M. Trieb, A. Markelin et al., *Stadt bildanalyse und Entwurf der Gestaltungssatzung für die Lübecker Innenstadt*, Stuttgart/Lübeck 1977. Both studies also include methods for analysing and planning collective spaces.

It should be pointed out that in Poland it is already common practice to work out preservation and revalorization concepts that basically include the derivation of such an identity (there are presently 100 either completed or in progress) before any work is undertaken in a historic town. These are comprehensive and thorough studies done by interdisciplinary and highly competent teams with meticulous care and with an effort which is not likely to be matched elsewhere. See for example: *Architektura* (Warsaw), 7-8, 1978, on the "Revaluation of Historic Cities"; S. Stanghellini, "Polonia. Programmazione e pianificazione del recupero di centri storici", in *Casabella* (Milan), Dec. 1978, pp. 41-48; or F. Stuber, "Notes on the Revalorization of Historic Towns in Poland", Zürich 1978 (a shortened version of this report is forthcoming in an issue of *Ekistics* (Athens) on the architectural heritage). In this context, the authoritative study of W. Ostrowski, *Les ensembles historiques et l'urbanisme*, Paris 1976, should be recommended.

For the social and psychological aspects (man-environment approach) of urban form and design, see A. Rapoport, *Human Aspects of Urban Form*, Oxford 1977; and for urban design policy, see M. Trieb, U. Grammel, A. Schmidt, *Stadtgestaltungspolitik*, Stuttgart 1979 (includes a part on its historical development).



Berne, with the market thoroughfare and main interior space clearly visible (Courtesy of the Travel Bureau of the City of Berne).



Berne. Section of plan of upper part of Old Town in Fig. 2, with original lots (60 x 100 feet) shown by heavy solid and broken lines. (See footnote.) (From R. Hager, P. Hofer, *The Zähringer New Towns*, exhibition catalog-Zürich 1966).

can be derived and developed which will guarantee the maintenance of the area in question in the fashion desired, when it is not being replaced by an entirely new urban structure and architecture (which may be imaginable, reasonable, and necessary under certain circumstances despite all the current emotions and nostalgia). It also allows the restoration of some of the area's historic characteristics where necessary. We thus have the necessary instrument for working in a given urban setting and defining the physical and natural framework in which architecture is to take place, while ensuring that the place in question can socially and economically survive by adapting to changing needs and demands at least up to a certain degree. This also helps us to determine how much planning and design can be done in a direct participatory process, and what has to be set by public authorities (varying according to the administrative level). The development of a framework for determining how much latitude (and with what restrictions) there is in what specific areas for urban design and architecture in a quarter or town is also made possible. This, of course, depends on the value of the existing structure and its substances, especially in historic quarters. The particular methods used for determining the amount of latitude are of secondary importance, but they must be easily comprehensible and logical. If they aren't, a participatory process is not possible.

This all should help provide a rational framework for the presently very emotionally debated issues of urban renewal and preservation. The emotion and nostalgia are understandable as a reaction to the at times indiscriminate destruction that has taken place in the past, but the practice of integrating urban design and architectural measures into derived or newly

established patterns is neither new nor radical. Historically speaking, it has been accepted as a matter of course in both planned and organically grown settlements. It is important not to concentrate on details to such an extent that the spontaneity and variety of a living area are throttled, but to provide as broad a framework as possible for architecture by using transparent analysis, planning, and design processes. What type of architectural «isms» (e.g. rationalist, populist, or homemade) are used then becomes relatively unimportant, but whether the architect is free to apply them or should merely renew or restore the area to its original characteristics (e.g. where integral protection of groups of buildings or even entire quarters is necessary) would be shown by these processes.

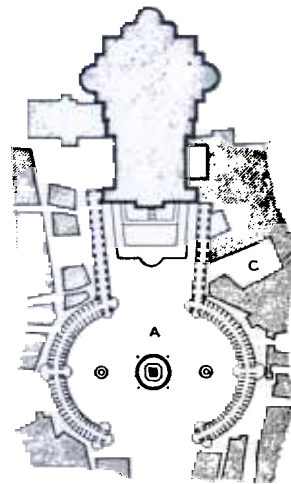
## COLLECTIVE SPACE OVER TIME<sup>2</sup>

### Medieval Towns

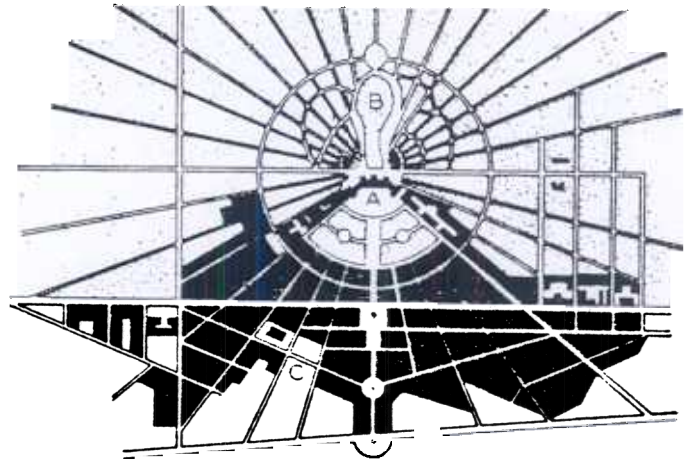
If one follows A.E.J. Morris' classification, which is based on origin, medieval European towns of the 11th to 15th centuries fall into five general categories: "(1) Towns of Roman origin — both those which may have retained urban status throughout the Dark Ages, albeit considerably reduced in size, and those which were deserted after the fall of the Empire, but which were re-established on their original sites; (2) Burgs (borough, burk, bourg, burgo), built as fortified military bases and acquiring commercial functions later; (3) Organic growth towns, developed mostly from village settlements; (4) Bastide towns, founded in France, England and Wales; (5) Planted towns, founded throughout Europe generally"<sup>3</sup>. Morris' first three categories are organic towns; the remaining two are new towns which were established formally at one stroke, with full urban status, though not necessarily with a predetermined plan. The sequence follows the approximate chronological order in which the types of towns arose. Building done on the classic scale disappeared from Western Europe, and rational and organic principles in urban design were followed which led to the small and small-in-scale medieval towns.

Most medieval towns in all five categories had irregular street patterns and were contained by heavy walls within which the town grew. As the population increased, buildings were packed more closely together and the open space was filled in. Contrary to what most people in this nostalgic day and age seem to believe, living conditions for most people were extremely unpleasant. Population growth led to overcrowding and congestion within a rigidly contained area. There was almost a total lack of hygiene and no sewage systems (refuse was thrown into the streets to be washed away by the next rain), and a correspondingly low standard of health and high mortality rate prevailed. Most buildings were made out of wood and burned down frequently. Up to the late Middle Ages they also had no windows as glass was very scarce and expensive; in the winter, the wall openings were closed with wood and towels. There was no street lighting and when it got dark people stayed inside.

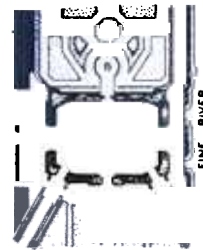
The only collective spaces per se (aside from interior courts) inside the town walls were the streets, the church plaza and the market square, the last usually containing market halls. Market streets instead of squares were unusual with the most prominent example of such being the Zähringer towns in Switzerland and the southern part of Federal Germany. The market was a thoroughfare 100 feet wide that stretched continuously from town portal to town portal and was the town's main interior space, and



4. - Piazza of St. Peter in Rome, carved out of the medieval town. (A = piazza, B = cathedral, C = Vatican.) (From A.B. Gallion, S. Eisner, *The Urban Pattern*, New York 1975, 3rd ed., p. 48).



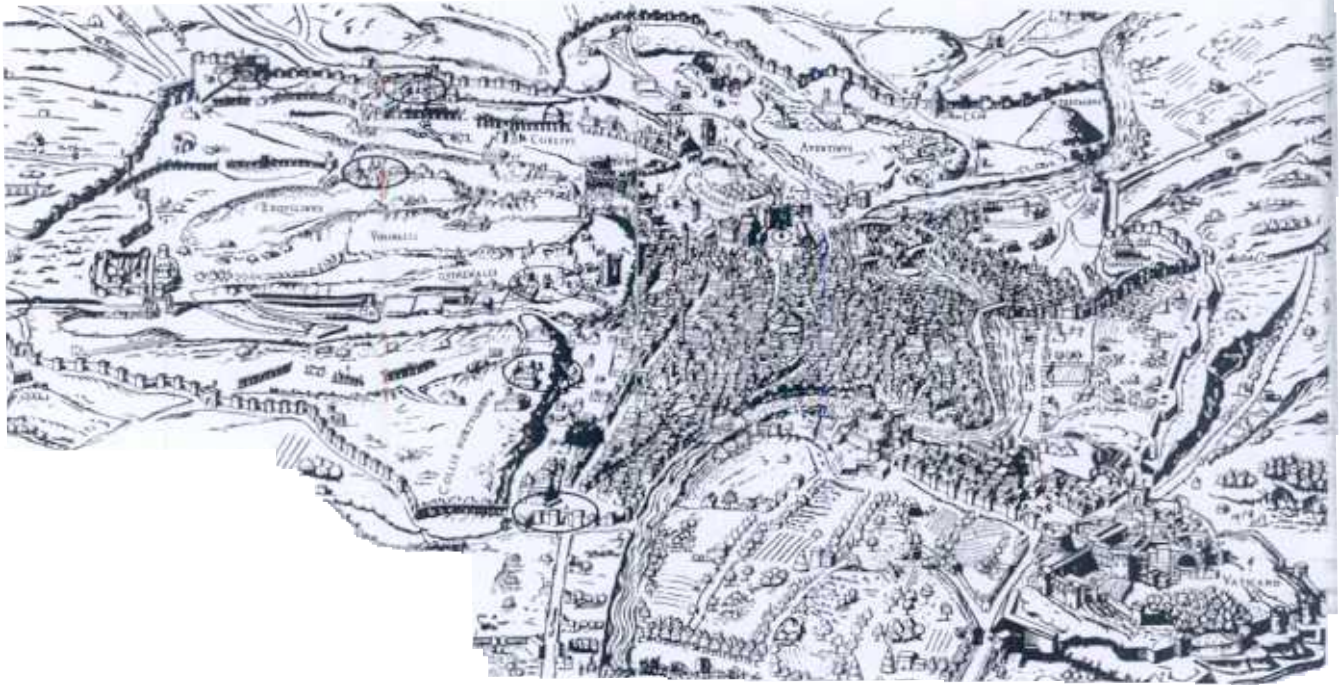
5. - Karlsruhe, an extreme example of an entire town oriented around the ruler's palaces and gardens. (A = palace, B = gardens, C = town.) (From A.B. Gallion, S. Eisner, *The Urban Pattern*, New York 1975, 3rd ed., p. 50).



6. - Place de la Concorde in Paris, where the space was almost completely released and opened. (A = Place, B = Tuileries Gardens, C = Champs-Élysées.) (From A.B. Gallion, S. Eisner, *The Urban Pattern*, New York 1975, 3rd ed., p. 52).

<sup>2</sup> For further study of the historical aspects see for example: A.B. Gallion, S. Eisner, *The Urban Pattern*, New York 1975 (3rd ed.); and A.E.J. Morris, *History of Urban Form*, London 1972, on whose works this article is partly based. Both of these works are particularly suited for people interested in an introduction to the history of urban form, and the latter includes an excellent select bibliography. For detailed study of historic collective spaces see for example: C. Sitte, *Der Städtebau nach seinen künstlerischen Grundsätzen*, Vienna (1889) 1965 (*City Planning According to Artistic Principles*, New York 1965); and P. Zucker, *Town and Square*, New York 1959.

<sup>3</sup> A.E.J. Morris, *History of Urban Form*, p. 63.



ie. Lithograph by Antonio Bosio, 1561, before Sixtus V's intervention.  
N. Bacon, *Design of Cities*, New York 1967, pp. 126-127).



e, 1880, as changed largely on the basis of Sixtus V's plan. (Author of  
unknown.) (From E.N. Bacon, *Design of Cities*, New York 1967,  
13).

there was a corresponding absence of central squares (Ill. 2 and 3)<sup>4</sup>. The street patterns in most medieval towns were irregular, most likely deliberately so in order to confuse any enemy who might gain entrance to the town. They usually radiated from the church plaza and market square to the wall's gates, with secondary connecting arteries. The church or cathedral was given a commanding position, usually standing in its spatial setting, which gave a singular unity to the town. Collective spaces and plazas developed as integral parts of the sites upon which these buildings were erected. The Zähringer towns beautifully show that collective space was a very conscious and integral part of this city building system (which is really what it was). This was the same with many of the organically grown towns, whose implicit conscious and subconscious principles and rules also led to unique harmonies that we have to be able to define in order not to destroy them when we intervene.

With the exception of the few major arteries, the streets were used for pedestrian circulation (rather than traffic arteries as they are for us today — so far only the Dutch seem to remember this principle in revalorizing their historic towns). People met and mingled informally in the streets and at the church plaza and market square as well as inside the church and guild halls. A human scale prevailed in the town's informal environment. The picturesqueness of the medieval towns is an expression of this informality, which in turn is an expression of a sense of participation (this also seems to be remembered only by the Dutch). If one looks at quarters that go back to the Middle Ages and which have not yet become more or less monofunctional in use or snobbish, but are still living neighbourhoods, this informality of life, particularly with respect to the function and meaning of collective space, still prevails.

Many medieval towns had only a few hundred people and seldom exceeded 50,000 inhabitants. Their physical size was restricted by the girth of the fortifications, the water supply (available only at the town fountains), and the sanitation facilities. For these reasons the distance across town rarely exceeded one mile. Communication between towns was slow and transportation cumbersome. Mutual assistance between towns in times of conflict was essential and thus the distance between them usually did not exceed a day's journey. Increasing travel and trade brought a concentration of people and the creation of major crossroads, and thus of larger cities (Florence reached nearly 100,000, Paris 200,000, and Venice 240,000 by the end of the 14th century). With the expansion of the mercantile economy the power of the feudal lords declined and ownership gradually shifted to the wealthy merchants and the Church. The feudal economy, which was rooted in the land, was replaced by a new economy dominated by the possession and control of money.

The concentration and further congestion led to new building types of three and four stories on the same plots as before. The upper floors projected beyond the first floor and the roofs often spanned the street width, and collective spaces in interior blocks were often eliminated by being built upon. All this took place without a corresponding expansion in the water supply and sanitation facilities. The already narrow streets and remaining collective spaces became congested, dark, and filth-ridden from refuse thrown down from windows. The odours from the filth in the



9. - Collective space in New York City in 1888. (Photographer: Jacob Riis) (From A. Alland, *Jacob A. Riis: Photographer and Citizen*, New York 1974, p. 97).

streets were so strong that the shutters and windows had to be kept closed and ventilation was possible by way of the chimney only. Disease spread rapidly; the Black Death took the lives of nearly half of Europe's population in the 14th century. Fire hazards were prevalent everywhere. Cities reverted to a condition inferior to that of the days of Rome, 1000 years earlier.

After the invention of gunpowder in the 14th century, fortifications were extended and became off limits for the public. Heavy bastions, moats, and outposts were built. The separation between town and country became more and more distinct, and open space outside the walls further removed from the urban dweller. People came into the towns in large numbers to participate in the expanding commercial enterprise and to fill the ranks of the professional armies.

#### *Renaissance Towns*

It was first during the Renaissance that rulers became ambitious to display their affluence and power — which had grown and become more consolidated since the Middle Ages — in the shaping and improvement of their cities, and particularly of their seats of power. They engaged in intellectual pursuits, drawing upon the classic heritage of Rome for inspiration in their cultural activities. Kings, nobles, merchants and popes became patrons of the arts and bid heavily to win the services of the growing number of artists and artisans. The anonymity of the master builder of the medieval town — which led to an image of comprehensiveness and totality, one of the most important contributions of medieval urban design — no longer prevailed. The formal plazas and squares of the Renaissance were carved out of the medieval town, sometimes brutally, accompanied by the callous destruction of the surrounding neighbourhood structures and buildings, and given monumental scale and form (Ill. 4)<sup>5</sup>. Their exterior space was enclosed by formal facades, and their shapes were modelled like sculptured pieces isolated from the rest of the city. The monumental character of the Greek and Roman classical period returned to the city and replaced the structural quality of the Middle Ages with a

<sup>4</sup> The dukes of Zähringen synthesized the 12th century's knowledge of town building into a coherent, flexible, adaptable, and probably one of the most enduringly successful concepts of urban design ever implemented. This consists of eight basic principles and rules (including the two concerning the market thoroughfare and central squares mentioned) which were applied to varying sites: "the homestead (area) as module for building and at the same time as a basic unit for calculation of ground taxes (census areanum); the orthogonal geometry used in the planning of town quarters, homestead, and street widths in the harmonic proportions of 2:3, and 3:5; the keeping of the market thoroughfares free from public buildings, including church and town hall; the placing of the town fortress on the corner of the flank; and the building of a town sewage system". From P. Hofer, "The Zähringer New Towns", in the exhibition catalogue with the same title by R. Hager, P. Hofer, Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, Zürich 1966. (The catalogue includes a bibliography.)

<sup>5</sup> Some of today's advocates of complete preservation — who are at the same time often admirers of this Renaissance heritage — should study more closely some of these brutal interventions into the physical and social structure of the cities, which led to most of the spectacular and well known spaces.

pure, symmetrically modelled sculptural form. This development symbolized the growing concentration of power: the French kings became monarchs, Italy's wealthy merchants became autocratic dukes, the large landowners in England became land barons, the popes served as benevolent partners of all secular rulers; and the towns grew to cities and the cities became monumental.

When the introduction of long-range artillery made town walls obsolete, they were levelled. The cities began to open up, boulevards and promenades were laid, and the town of the Middle Ages was released of its clutter. The transition from the Renaissance to the Baroque period was in process.

#### *Baroque Towns*

The feeling of grandeur led to unparalleled extremes in proportion, scale, and size. The ruler's egoism knew no limits. The cities expanded and the dominance of the central power intensified. This was symbolized in the whole city's orienting itself around the palaces and gardens of the ruler (Ill. 5). As the cities opened up, the focus shifted from walled-in architectural forms to an extension of open space, and continuity replaced enclosure as the new direction in urban design. While 17th-century plazas had been designed as isolated, enclosed spaces, they were now open and less confined, and more oriented towards the countryside. In many instances squares were connected and the continuity of the open space emphasized by colonnades and tree-lined avenues. A dramatic example of this is the Place de la Concorde in Paris where the space was almost completely released and opened up (Ill. 6). It flowed from the gardens of the Tuileries and the Louvre to the broad avenue of the Champs-Élysées, connecting Paris with the palace in Versailles, the Seine amplifying the scale of this enormous square. A rare exception to the mere grandeur concept of urban design was the carefully worked out plan by Pope Sixtus V for the revalorization of Rome, developed while he was still a cardinal, which went beyond the individual monuments to contain a concept for the whole city. This plan, which would most likely never have been implemented if he hadn't become pope, and which Edmund Bacon has called a "colossal intellectual feat of an imposition of order on an environment of chaos" and "one of the most remarkable design processes in history"<sup>6</sup>, particularly focused on collective space (including streets) as a catalyst for introducing a new basic structure into the city. It transformed Rome from a crowded, jumbled city with its monuments scattered about (Ill. 7) into an at least visually well organized city by using the potential of its topography (seven hills) to the fullest, and integrating the self-contained building complexes of the classical period into the overall urban design in order to use their potential as urban landmarks to the fullest too (Ill. 8). Sixtus V's ideas and clearly thought out strategies for their most economical implementation were so forceful that they were followed over the next few centuries<sup>7</sup>.

Behind all this grandeur and monumental open space, however, the lower class urban population continued to dwell in congestion and appalling poverty. Their quarters had not improved from those of the Middle Ages and most still lacked sanitation, sewers, water distribution, and drainage. The gap between the aristocracy and the poor was continuously widening, and this plus oppression led to the revolutions of the 18th century<sup>8</sup>.

#### *Industrial Period*

The introduction of mechanical power and the rise of capitalism — enhanced by Adam Smith's theory of the "invisible hand" — led to a new era of urban evolution. Towns and cities grew at an ever-increasing pace;



10. - Housing development near Copenhagen. (Photographer: Jan Gehl.) (From J. Gehl, *Leven Tussen Huizen*, Zutphen 1978, p. 64).

and so did congestion. With the parallel changes in and increase of transportation by horse-drawn carriage, omnibus and street car, the function and meaning of collective space changed. Traffic pollution and congestion were present even before the introduction of the electric railway and the combustion engine at the end of the 19th century. The automobile "split the city open at the seams and to this day we are frantically trying to hold it together with patches on a worn-out fabric"<sup>9</sup>.

It is for these reasons that one must differentiate between the development of urban form and the function and meaning of collective space in pre-industrial and post-industrial quarters, towns and cities; and that, as mentioned previously, pre-industrial quarters cannot and should not be required to suit present-day technology and standards. The study of the history of urban form in industrialized countries needs to take this clear break in their socio-cultural and technological development into consideration when examining the development context of collective spaces and their preservation or revalorization.

The possibilities for social and technological progress benefitting the urban population advanced further in the first 100 years of the industrial revolution than in all of previous history, but there was a sharp contrast between the possibilities opened up and the actual progress made by the industrial proletariat. Most amenities that were existent in pre-industrial urban life were sacrificed to the requirements of industrial production, and the exploitation of the poor during this period led to poverty-stricken new industrial slums (Ill. 9) that were added to the traditional slums. Public and collective urban life took place in the slums by sheer necessity, caused by the extremely high densities. In our most recent and more affluent developments, it has been further reduced to being a mere function of transportation and communication; and the experiencing of collective spaces has become for most of us something closer to the consumption of commercial or social goods and services (public and collective urban life is usually only consumed in this context) than what could be called an integral part of urban life (Ill. 10).

<sup>6</sup> E.N. Bacon, *Design of Cities*, New York 1967, pp. 127-128.

<sup>7</sup> See E.N. Bacon, *Design of Cities*, for "Baroque Rome and Sixtus V", pp. 126-45.

<sup>8</sup> Some of us don't really want to be reminded of what all the grandeur of this period that we nostalgically admire really stood for. I have even heard French officials complain that the scale and dimensions of Paris squares and public spaces were almost inviting of social upheaval in themselves.

<sup>9</sup> A.B. Gallion, *The Urban Pattern*, p. 69.



11. - "Detroit reborn", in the "spirit of the Renaissance". (Photographer: Tom Gorton.) (From *Planning*, Chicago, July 1979, p. 14).

## CONCLUSION

"For us it is much more normal to imagine the Chinese, Indians or Africans as a kind of candidate Europeans or North Americans"<sup>10</sup> rather than to think ourselves into their socio-cultural frameworks. We should be aware of this by now, but from observing what is being done with the export of services, technology and money, and reactions to this in Third World countries, this statement of Shadrach Woods still holds true. As mentioned, these notes are limited to collective spaces in historic and old quarters and towns and, for the most part, to Europe. The various movements and numerous schools of thought, personal philosophies and formalisms of planners and architects since the industrial revolution, and their impact on the planning and design as well as function and meaning of collective space, if any, would go beyond the scope of these notes<sup>11</sup>. Also not covered are the even more important factors — the most determinant ones, actually — of ownership and control of land and real estate, and the increasingly utilitarian and technocratic orientation of industrial societies and their urban life, and thus of urbanism and its architecture. This orientation seems to be characteristic of both capitalist and socialist countries, with the degree of industrialization and wealth and a bit of local cultural flair or cosmetic as almost the only factors serving to differentiate the architecture. Collective space is here often only a function of what is left between relatively arbitrarily placed buildings (Ill. 11).

With the indiscriminate export (and import) of the sad state of the art we often promote the destruction of irreplaceable cultural values and identities in Third World countries through the inappropriate planning and design of new quarters and towns, and recently by the revalorization and "renewal" of historic and old quarters and towns. Clashing foreign elements and mass technology imported from the highly industrialized countries are indiscriminately used. The results are often not only unsuitable to the socio-cultural traditions and conditions in these countries, they are frequently even in disharmony with their climatic conditions. Public life or life in collective spaces, which is often much more intense than ours, is often not considered at all.

While we promote the destruction of other cultures, we nostalgically fight for each individual monument (or what we consider to be one) at home and ignore the social and economic conditions that led to the destruction of entire neighbourhoods and their social quality. This concentration on at times irrelevant detail could easily be an indicator of an avoidance of dealing with the real problems at hand or of capitulation and resignation. But forces and movements provoke reactions, both among the urban population and the professionals in the field, resulting in innovation and reaction following each other in a perpetual cycle, varying somewhat in interval from country to country. It could also be that people get tired of trying to tackle the real problems at hand, preferring to debate about facade details and street furniture than about urban structures and collective space with all their correlations and implications. Presently we seem to be in a phase of reaction, both socio-politically and technologically; but historically speaking, attitudes, mentalities and interpretations change — and often fast. It is no use depending too much on today's nostalgic sentiments in hoping for the best for the urban structures of our historic and old quarters. The increasingly emotional affinity to historic quarters and buildings of the population over the last decades also symbolizes an increased danger in many instances, as the original inhabitants and social groups are pushed out of these neighbourhoods by the increased demand coming especially from the side of wealthier socio-economic groups. Historic, irreproducible quarters and buildings in which the original specific historic social constellations are mirrored should serve as the basis for the people's consciousness of their town's or city's history. Aside from the political indefensibility of such a process, this is destroyed when there is a fast turnover of a neighbourhood from one socio-economic group to another. But attachment should go beyond that mere aesthetic charm. The increased affinity to historic and old quarters also indicates that we should concentrate more on the qualitative aspects of environmental design instead of concentrating mainly on quantitative and technological aspects. As individual monuments (including plazas and squares) are by now quite well taken care of in many countries, and the identity of a quarter or town does not consist of an image frozen at any one point in time, we'd better get off the detail "kick" and concentrate on defining the historical constants of the quarters in question so as to enable their survival as urban entities.

Fritz Stuber

<sup>10</sup> S. Woods, "The Incompatible Butterfly", in *Proceedings of the 12th Urban Design Conference*, Cambridge, Mass. 1968, pp. 13-14.

<sup>11</sup> For a constructive critique of present-day planning and design of collective spaces with numerous sensitive observations and proposals, see J. Gehl, *Livet mellem husene*, Copenhagen 1971 (Danish; Dutch edition of same work: *Leven tussen huizen*, Zutphen 1978. Both editions are profusely illustrated and have an extensive English summary). On the Dutch experience with residential precincts, see: *Woonerf: A Different Approach to Environmental Management in Residential Areas and the Related Traffic Legislation*, The Hague 1977 (also profusely illustrated, and trilingual — French/German/English).

## LES ESPACES COLLECTIFS DANS LEUR CONTEXTE URBAIN HISTORIQUE

Fritz Stuber (résumé de Sandra Stuber)

Si le volume construit (l'architecture par exemple) d'un territoire représente son espace positif, l'espace collectif en est l'espace négatif ou extérieur restant, bien que la totalité de l'espace ne puisse être directement appréhendé soit activement (par ex. en marchant) ou passivement (par ex. en ressentant les conditions atmosphériques). Il comprend non seulement des places célèbres, des parcs et des jardins mais tous les espaces collectifs extérieurs des villes, quartiers, hameaux ou ensembles monumentaux. Tout propos qui ne tient pas compte de leur contexte historique et socioculturel est dépourvu de sens. Ces espaces forment également partie intégrante d'un quartier et doivent donc être considérés lorsqu'on étudie des mesures de planification et de mise en valeur. Cette nécessité est souvent ignorée et oubliée, surtout lorsqu'un développement de la circulation est envisagé, ce qui a souvent eu pour conséquence la destruction des caractéristiques historiques d'un quartier, ou même pire, la destruction de leurs structures physiques et sociales. L'identité de base d'un lieu doit être cernée de façon à déterminer ce qui doit et peut être changé, jusqu'à quel point, et dans quelle mesure ce processus peut être effectué par une planification concertée avec la population ou par décision des pouvoirs publics. L'exposé développe brièvement ce que cela signifie et comment on peut y arriver. Ensuite cet exposé trace un tableau de l'évolution des espaces collectifs dans les villes et cités européennes depuis le Moyen Âge jusqu'à la Révolution Industrielle. A ce moment-là, des changements radicaux sont intervenus dans de nombreux domaines, causant une rupture avec les formes et les façons du passé et, justifiant que l'on fasse appel à des considérations et des critères différents, suivant qu'il s'agit de quartiers pré ou post-industriels.

Bien que l'auteur ait pris l'Europe comme exemple concret, ceci ne signifie pas qu'il croit qu'elle doit servir de modèle ayant une valeur universelle. Au contraire, l'une des erreurs les plus sérieuses et les plus typiques a été de considérer les peuples des autres continents comme des candidats européens ou nord-américains, plutôt que de chercher à nous replacer dans leurs propres cadres socioculturels. Entre autres choses cela a contribué à détruire d'irremplaçables valeurs et identités culturelles dans le Tiers monde par la planification et le design inappropriés de nouveaux quartiers et villes, ou par une revalorisation des quartiers anciens historiques accompagnée d'une utilisation aveugle d'éléments étrangers choquants et d'une technologie de masse importée. La vie publique ou la vie dans les espaces collectifs, souvent plus intense dans ces pays que chez nous, n'est pas prise en compte du tout.

En même temps les sociétés industrielles et leur mode de vie urbain ont pris une orientation de plus en plus utilitaire et technocratique, autant dans les pays capitalistes que dans les pays socialistes. Il en résulte une

uniformité architecturale poussée, les seuls éléments de différence se trouvant dans le degré d'industrialisation et de richesse, et dans un certain parfum de culture locale. L'espace collectif n'est souvent ici qu'un reliquat entre des bâtiments disposés de façon relativement arbitraire, réduit à une simple fonction de transport et de communication, plus proche par nature de la consommation de biens et de services que partie intégrante de la vie urbaine.

Une vague de nostalgie a conduit en certains endroits à des luttes pour préserver des monuments ou bâtiments isolés, mais par ailleurs les conditions économiques et sociales ont conduit à la destruction de quartiers entiers dont la valeur sociale continue d'être ignorée. Il est difficile de mesurer ces facteurs mais nous ne pouvons pas compter sur la seule nostalgie du passé pour espérer un avenir meilleur pour nos quartiers historiques. La nostalgie en elle-même constitue un danger dans la mesure où elle conduit à fabriquer des quartiers « à la mode » à partir de quartiers anciens bien vivants. Il serait beaucoup plus constructif de se concentrer sur la définition des constantes historiques des quartiers en question afin de permettre leur survie en tant qu'entités urbaines.

1. Dessin de Bruno Zevi et son explication des problèmes actuels de planification : « Il serait extrêmement difficile de dessiner un plan de ville médiévale (par exemple, la Piazza del Campo à Sienne) en utilisant des T, des compas et des machines à tirer les plans. Ces outils sont bons seulement pour une architecture de cubes, que l'on peut facilement représenter en perspective » (Bruno Zevi, *The Modern Language of Architecture*, Seattle 1978, p. 22).
2. Berne. On peut remarquer l'artère principale du marché et l'espace intérieur collectif. (Autorisation du Bureau de Tourisme de Berne).
3. Berne. Section du plan de la partie supérieure de la vieille ville montrant les parcelles d'origine (60 × 100 pieds) indiquées par des lignes continues et des pointillés (voir note 4). [R. Hager et P. Hofer, *The Zähringer New Towns* (catalogue d'exposition), Zurich 1966].
4. Place Saint-Pierre de Rome, découpée dans le tissu médiéval de la ville (A = place, B = cathédrale, C = Vatican) (A.B. Gallion, S. Eisner, *The Urban Pattern*, New York 1975, 3<sup>e</sup> édition, p. 48).
5. Karlsruhe, exemple extrême d'une ville entièrement dessinée autour des palais et jardins du prince (ibid. p. 50).
6. Place de la Concorde à Paris, où l'espace a été presque entièrement ouvert (A = place, B = Jardins des Tuileries, C = Champs-Élysées) (ibid. p. 52).
7. Rome. Lithographie d'Antonio Bosio, 1561, avant l'intervention de Sixte V (E.N. Bacon, *Design of Cities*, New York 1967, p. 126-127).
8. Rome, 1880, considérablement modifiée d'après le plan de Sixte V (ibid. p. 142-143).
9. Espace collectif à New York City en 1888 (photo : Jacob Riis) (A. Alland, Jacob A. Riis, *Photographer & Citizen*, New York 1974, p. 97).
10. Extension urbaine près de Copenhague (photo : Jan Gehl) (Jan Gehl, *Leven Tussen Huizen*, Zutphen 1978, p. 64).
11. Le renouveau de Detroit dans l'esprit de la Renaissance (photo : Tom Gorton) (*Planning*, Chicago, juillet 1979, p. 14).



## LOS ESPACIOS COLECTIVOS EN EL CONTEXTO URBANO HISTÓRICO

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*Sí el volumen construido de un espacio (ejemplo: la arquitectura) es el positivo, el espacio colectivo, o exterior restante, es el negativo y esto a pesar de que la totalidad del espacio no pueda ser directamente percibida, sea de manera activa (ejemplo: andando), sea de manera pasiva (ejemplo: resentir las condiciones atmosféricas).*

*Los espacios colectivos contienen por demás de las plazas celebres, los parques y jardines, todos los espacios exteriores de una ciudad: barrios, barriadas, conjuntos arquitectónicos. Todo lo que se puede decir de ellos no tiene sentido sí no se tiene en cuenta el contexto histórico y socio cultural que puede haber en ellos. Esos espacios son parte integrantes del barrio y deben ser pues tomados en cuenta cuando se estudian los medios de planificación y de valorización. Esa precaución necesaria es desgraciadamente a menudo ignorada o olvidada sobre todo en el caso del estudio del desarrollo de la circulación, lo que tiene casi siempre por consecuencia la destrucción del carácter histórico de un barrio o, peor aún, la destrucción de las estructuras materiales y sociales. La identidad básica de un lugar debe ser cernida de manera que se pueda determinar lo que debe y puede ser cambiado, hasta que punto y en qué medida el proceso de planificación puede ser efectuado, sea en concertación con la población, sea por mando de los poderes públicos. El informe expone brevemente lo que esto significa y como se puede llevarlo a cabo. Cuadra después la evolución de los espacios colectivos en las poblaciones y ciudades europeas desde la Edad Media hasta la época de la Revolución Industrial, subrayando los cambios radicales que intervinieron entonces en numerosos sectores, «lo que tuvo» por consecuencia la ruptura con las formas y maneras del pasado «lo que justifica» que se tengan actitudes, consideraciones y criterios diferentes según que se trata de barrios ante o postindustriales.*

*El informe toma Europa como ejemplo, lo que no significa que su autor crea que «deba» servir de modelo de valor universal. Al contrario, uno de los errores los más típicos y serios que se han cometido han sido el considerar a los pueblos de los otros continentes como a tantos candidatos a la «europanización» o a la «estadunización», cuando hubiera sido necesario una búsqueda de sus cuadros de vida socio culturales. Esos errores nos han conducido a destruir irremplazables valores e identidades culturales en los países dichos subdesarrollados, a los cuales se ha impuesto una planificación y formas improprias en los nuevos barrios de sus poblaciones e, igualmente, por una utilización a ciegas de elementos extranjeros que chocan en los barrios antiguos valorizados donde se ha empleado técnicas de masas puramente importadas, todo eso sin tener en cuenta que la vida pública y la utilización de los espacios colectivos es casi siempre mucho más intensa en esos países que en los nuestros.*

*Las sociedades industriales en su modo de vida urbana han tomado, de más en más, una orientación utilitaria y tecnocrática, tanto en los países capitalistas que en los países socialistas.*

*Resulta de eso una uniformidad arquitectural muy extensa, los solos elementos de diferencia se ven en el grado de industrialización o de riqueza y en cierto aire de cultura local. El espacio colectivo, en tal caso, no más que una reliquia situada entre edificios levantados de manera relativamente arbitraria, es reducido a una simple función de transporte y de comunicación más próxima por su naturaleza, del consumo y del servicio que como parte integrante de la vida urbana.*

*Una hola de nostalgia ha conducido en ciertas partes a luchar para la preservación de monumentos y de edificios aislados. Pero por otra parte, las condiciones económicas y sociales han tenido por consecuencia la destrucción de barrios enteros de los cuales el valor social fué ignorado. Es difícil medir esos factores, pero no se puede contar sólo sobre la nostalgia del pasado para esperar en un porvenir más hermoso para nuestros barrios históricos. Esa misma nostalgia constituye por ella misma un peligro en la medida en que conduce a fabricar barrios «de moda» a partir de barrios antiguos que tenían su vida propia. Sería más constructivo concentrarse sobre la definición de las constantes históricas de los barrios que se tratan, con el fin de permitir que vuelvan a vivir en tanto que entidad urbana.*