the survey of Alnwick undertaken in 1964.

I have remapped the two surveys on the Ordnance Survey 1:2500 plan surveyed in 1961, digitizing the plots on this plan by hand. All buildings, other than minor outbuildings, have been included as separate objects. Other features, such as gardens and parks, have been added in a more generalized way. The database has been added to this plan using unique values that link the polygons to the data.

During the process of analysis notations have been grouped based on a system that Conzen used in his keys. In the case of land use, for example, shops were divided into seven groups, of which food, household, clothing and miscellaneous were the main categories. The combinations have been mapped using a GIS, both for 1953 and 1964. Between those two dates there was an increase in the number of shops that Conzen listed as 'miscellaneous' and a decrease in the number selling 'food'. There was also a decrease in the total number of shops – a trend that was probably common in European small towns in the early 1960s.

The maps that Conzen constructed of the various townscape features – for example roofing materials, wall materials and period of construction – were similar to those used by him later as the basis for producing maps of morphological regions in Ludlow (Conzen, 1975). The published maps of Alnwick's land use and building fabric in the *Festschrift* for G.H.J. Daysh (Conzen, 1966) are highly generalized, but it is evident from comparison with the GIS based on the data from the field-books that the field survey undertaken in 1964 has been used to produce these maps.

Apart from being able to add his glossary of technical terms to the second edition of the Alnwick study, Conzen was severely limited in the revisions he was able to make in that publication. The survey undertaken in 1964 could not be incorporated.

In 2004 I was able to carry out my own survey of Alnwick, following the rules and guidelines Conzen set out half a century earlier. Alnwick underwent many changes during the intervening period. The results of this third survey are in the course of preparation.

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Space in the traditional city

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In their overview of British urban fortifications, Creighton and Higham (2005) make a number of important points of relevance to concepts about urban form and structure, and the contribution of open space. Many familiar concepts of Conzenian urban morphology were developed with reference to walled towns (Conzen, 1960, 1962, 2004), and many Conzenian-inspired analyses of English

medieval towns deal with walled, or formerly walled, boroughs (Lilley, 1994; Lilley *et al.*, 2005; Slater, 1989, 1990). However, 'no more than perhaps one third of boroughs in England, and a little over half in Wales, were fortified in some way at some stage' (Creighton and Higham, 2005, p. 218[1]). Moreover, Conzen's influential and often-adopted schema of 'plan elements' of streets, plots and buildings (Conzen, 1962) has little to say about 'space'.

Space in British towns

Yet, when many early representations of British towns are studied, there is an overall impression of open space. Many of Speed's views (Creighton and Higham use six of them), though little more than thumbnail sketches added to larger maps, suggest large expanses of gardens and other open spaces. Written accounts give similar evidence: in the sixteenth century Leland, for example, notes that the southern part of Chepstow was 'converted into little medowes and gardens' and makes similar comments about Hay-on-Wye (p. 97).

Town size is an issue here: 'very large numbers of British towns were very small indeed' (p. 215) and hence 'the synonymity of walls and urban character *and density of population* was not as clear in Britain as it often was elsewhere' (p. 216, my emphasis). Norwich, for example, was physically about the same size as London, but had only a quarter of the population 'due to the open spaces within the *enceinte*' (Campbell, 1975, p. 11). Population was, of course, substantially reduced in many places by the Black Death and subsequent plague outbreaks, with recovery being particularly slow (Gottfried, 1983; Hatcher, 1977). Hence 'the extent of the walled perimeter seems to have marked a medieval high-water mark of development, to be followed by depopulation, retrenchment and the abandonment of intramural plots' (p. 97, although writing specifically of Welsh towns).

If the representations are accurate, and plague a plausible cause, then are there consequences for the 'standard' Conzenian analysis?

Types of spaces

Polyfocal space

In some cases, 'the 'town' was the product of 'polyfocal' growth, in which a number of originally separate nuclei coalesced, with or without walls surrounding them' (pp. 211-12). Examples include Norwich and Coventry. In the early period, spaces existed between these formerly separate nuclei, but this phenomenon has been little investigated.

Intramural space: military access and maintenance

Intramural space, whether as narrow alleys, wider streets or significant spaces, is a common feature from later Anglo-Saxon urban planning onwards (p. 45). 'A lane representing the original intramural road of Hereford was known as *Behindthewalles*, being referred to in the grant of a tenement in 1364' (p. 45, quoting Shoesmith, 1982, p. 17). At Exeter, 'an open strip of land inside the wall and occupying the approximate width of the late Roman rampart still survived in places until the eighteenth century' (pp. 43-4, quoting Henderson, 2001, p. 93).

The importance and continued existence of such spaces is reflected in the royal ownership or control of many defences; 'in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the strips of land immediately inside some walls were said to be specifically royal property when threatened with encroachment ... because they had been original features crucial to access to the defences' (p. 209).

Some of these spaces developed non-military uses. At Northampton, an enquiry following the Carmelites' request in 1278 to enclose part of the city wall for their precinct was opposed as 'in summer the sick used the airy wall-walk as a perambulation, and in the winter it allowed escape from the muddy streets' (p. 109). In late-medieval Exeter, 'the use of this intramural strip ... for drying manufactured cloth is well documented' (p. 46).

In terms of urban form, these spaces were more than mere streets or accesses, particularly in the later medieval period. But what was their relationship to the plots which undoubtedly had access to them? Were they multi-functional from the start, or did their function change over time? Did they act as back lanes, as seen in some plans of unfortified towns and villages? Did they enable plot subdivision, with the creation of new plot frontages facing the walls? Later buildings in such positions can be seen in many places, but when did this process occur? What process permitted the occupation of this sensitive space?

Ecclesiastical and high-status precincts

It is well-known that monasteries, abbeys, friaries

and hospitals tended to occupy extensive urban spaces, sometimes themselves walled. Some of the latecomers – friaries and hospitals especially – had sites on the urban fringe, both intramural and extramural. Their fringe location is an essential part of Conzen's fringe-belt model. Spaces in these precincts can be large, and could be private or semi-public. But most such precincts appear to predate the 1348 plague, and some demonstrate the impermanence of town walls as fixed boundaries: they may be Conzenian fixation lines in many respects, but they could be permeable.

Some high-status occupiers reflected their privileged status 'through petitioning to create small gates providing private access to the extramural zone in a manner not available to the population at large' (p. 171). It is important to recognize that precinct spaces could be linked in this way, at some periods, through the barrier of a town wall.

Markets

> 'Marketplaces may have existed outside the defences of some early medieval *burhs*, including Hereford, Northampton, Oxford and Stamford, some of which were later embraced in expansions to the walled areas. Others developed in the later or post-medieval periods, such as the commercial focus outside Leicester's east gate that grew up in the sixteenth century. Certain types of marketing, such as trade in cattle or horse, would tend to lend themselves to extramural locations ... In contrast, the marketplaces of most post-Conquest walled medieval towns lay within the circuit and often near the centre of the town' (p. 45).

Hence there are distinctions in location and use, with the former being possibly affected by date of town foundation. Conzen's examples tended to demonstrate markets in widened streets, sometimes at T-junctions (Alnwick, Newcastle). But some towns had extensive 'market squares', clearly a type of open space distinct from a street (Northampton).

The piecemeal development on market space ('market concretion') is well known, including the substantial encroachment on Ludlow's hypothesised enormous market space (the core of the High Street plan unit: Conzen, 2004, pp. 128-30). Conzen (2004, Figure 10.3) is only able to suggest that 'major island and lateral encroachments on [the] street market' occurred in the late-medieval and early-post-medieval periods. Closer examination of this process might suggest whether this reduction of open space results from pressure on urban space, or solely from increased convenience to market stall-holders: the permanent replacement of temporary market stalls being an often-cited reason.

Walls and street spaces

The creation of defences could have indirect impacts on urban spaces. The later wall at Southampton 'truncated a series of merchants' houses' (p. 211) and the remains of one still abut the new wall, notwithstanding the more usual requirement for intramural space and access. Hence, did some walls truncate districts and condemn them to decline (p. 214)? Further, it is suggested that ''dead end' side streets that terminated at the wall would tend to be less favoured and were not usually as well developed' – hence Winchester's 'funnelled' street plans, 'attributable to the gradual encroachment of buildings onto the street frontage nearer the central spinal street, and the widening out of the street closer to the line of the wall because of less pressure on land' (pp. 44-5).

But was this type of encroachment a more general urban phenomenon, seen also in non-walled boroughs?

Comments

This brief note has no more than suggested that the urban designer's concept of 'space', whether public or private, has been under-regarded in studies of British historical urban form. Common representations may have been misleading. More consideration of types of space, how they were used, by whom, and how and when they changed over time, could add a significant dimension to our understanding of the richness and complexity of medieval and early-modern urban form. Walled towns provided the impetus for this comment, as they have dominated Conzenian plan-analyses and have particular types of and pressures on space with the distinction between intramural and extramural being important. But the nature of space in the unwalled majority of towns should also be subject to investigation.

Note

1. Creighton and Higham (2005) is cited so frequently that, hereafter, only page numbers will be given.

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Approaches in urban morphology

The Proceedings of the New Researchers' Forum held in Newcastle upon Tyne during the 2004 ISUF Conference were published in 2005. Entitled *Approaches in Urban Morphology,* the volume of proceedings is edited by Michael Barke and published by Northumbria University, Newcastle upon Tyne (ISBN 1861353294). Aspects covered include GIS and Caniggian ideology; French fringe belts; morphologies of fragmentation and continuity; the delimitation of morphological regions; and alternative approaches to urban conservation. The volume is available from Dr M. Barke, Division of Geography, School of Applied Sciences, University of Northumbria, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 8ST, UK. The price is £5.00 (plus postage and packing).