

ISUF President's Report

This communication covers the months from ISUF's International Conference in Guangzhou through the summer of 2011. My predecessor as President of ISUF, Prof. Gian-Luigi Maffei, not only steered the association successfully through a critical period of consolidation, but has continued to make valuable contributions to its scholarly activities since, from which we can all draw much pleasure. Last year our able Secretary-General, Prof. Nicola Marzot, yielded his place to Prof. Kai Gu, whose initiative in guiding the month-to-month business of the association has already been felt.

The internationalization of ISUF proceeds apace, driven by rising interest and modern web-driven communications. The journal has since its inception striven to include material of global provenance and coverage, and now the annual conferences are making their own statement about worldwide engagement. Once based largely in Western Europe, recent meetings have been hosted well beyond in Brazil (Ouro Preto), China (Guangzhou), and, by the time this report is published, in Canada (Montréal). Further continent-hopping is under consideration. Meeting sites always depend to some extent on local conditions, and it is particularly hoped that interest in exploring urban morphology through ISUF conferences in regions so far least represented will continue to emerge.

This is a good place to record an official, public thank-you to the organizers of the most recent ISUF conferences: Profs Yinsheng Tian (South China University of Technology) and Kai Gu (University of Auckland) for the 2009 Guangzhou meeting; Prof. Jürgen Lafrenz and Alex Rostkowski (University of Hamburg) for the 2010 Hamburg meeting; and Profs Pierre Gauthier (Corcordia University) and Jason Gilliland (University of Western Ontario) for the 2011 Montréal meeting. No participants can be unaware of the immense work that goes into the planning and conduct of these international conferences, and these sustained volunteer efforts are greatly appreciated.

Regional networks of urban morphologists under ISUF's wing have continued to emerge. Besides the Nordic Network of Urban Morphology and ISUF Italia, another group, the Portuguese Network of Urban Morphology, was formed in 2010. We welcome our Portuguese affiliates and congratulate them on their most energetic first year of activity. Together with the granddaddy of all regional groups, the Urban Morphology Research Group

founded in Britain in 1974 (while not officially registered as an ISUF regional network, but in reality serving a somewhat similar function and fraternal to ISUF in all practical respects), it might be said that the International Seminar on Urban Form can count on four such active clusters of regional urban-morphological activity, and we hope for more to materialize.

After a year of observation and signs of elevated member interest in the organization of ISUF displayed at the Hamburg meetings in August 2010, I felt it timely to create several task forces to review the structure and functions of the group, and make recommendations to Council about desirable changes. Four initial task forces were set in motion, concerned with conference management, the journal, ISUF's website, and the idea of a didactic 'morphopedia' to be developed for the website that would define concepts in urban morphology in a rigorous way and explain its internal intellectual architecture as a systematic interdisciplinary approach to the study of urban form.

The first three task forces were given relatively short deadlines to report, and have now done so. Their detailed proposals were forwarded to Council for consideration in Montréal, and will be reported on further. The fourth, to create an on-line urban-morphological lexicon, has been given a longer time frame in order to set up a broad-based editorial board for implementation. This activity has spurred thinking toward a fifth task force, to consider ways in which ISUF might improve the interchange between urban morphological theory and practice in relevant professional fields of endeavour. It is hoped within the next year to share the fruits of this round of reflection and retooling for future effectiveness.

I should like to close this report by thanking members of the task forces very warmly for their efforts, the editorial and management team of *Urban Morphology* for its unstinting work continuing to produce our high-quality journal, and, finally Richard Whitehand, whose extensive volunteer work in a sensitive and urgently needed reconfiguration of the website has been absolutely outstanding, and for which our association is deeply grateful.

Michael P. Conzen, Committee on Geographical Studies, University of Chicago, 5828 S. University Avenue, Chicago, IL 60637-1583, U.S.A. E-mail: m-conzen@uchicago.edu

Portuguese Network of Urban Morphology: Report

The Portuguese Network of Urban Morphology (PNUM) was established at the ISUF Conference in Hamburg in August 2010. It is the third national/regional network of ISUF to be created, after the establishment of the Nordic Network of Urban Morphology and ISUF Italia. This report describes the main activities of PNUM between September 2010 and June 2011.

Drawing on an initial framework established by fourteen researchers, PNUM currently comprises more than 260 members. Bringing together researchers from fourteen universities and institutes in Portugal, the network includes the classical core of disciplines constituted by architecture, engineering, geography, history and planning, but also disciplines not strongly represented in ISUF, such as anthropology, economics, landscape architecture, and sociology. The diversity of the network is also generational, spanning from MSc students, undertaking their first steps in scientific research, to widely-known researchers and practitioners in Portuguese urban morphology. It includes 50 members with doctorates, and its practitioners come from both private enterprises and public administration, at local and regional levels. It is most rewarding that the network has already attracted, in its first year of existence, the interest and membership of Brazilian and Spanish researchers.

Four events should be highlighted from this first year of activities. The first was the creation of a website (<http://pnum.fe.up.pt/>). This bilingual website contains general information about the Portuguese Network and how to join PNUM, and information about conferences, resources, a bibliography, the constitution and the newsletters.

The second event was the launching of a first common project of PNUM; a book on the study of urban form in Portugal, mainly developed by its founding members. The first part of the book is an overview of Portuguese urban morphology, dealing with the three disciplinary backgrounds that are most relevant in the national context: historical, geographical, and architectural. The second part focuses on a set of specific morphological approaches, including space syntax, cellular automata, agent based modelling, and shape grammars. Finally, the third part explores the relationships between morphological analysis and the design of present-day cities.

The third event was the realization of the first PNUM Conference, on 'Urban morphology in

Portugal: approaches and perspectives'. It was organized by the Scientific Council of the network, and it took place at the Faculty of Arts in the University of Oporto, on 8 June. Sixty papers were divided into twelve thematic sessions as follows: i) morphological approaches; ii) morphological techniques; iii) the history of urban form – I; iv) the history of urban form – II; v) morphological elements: the street; vi) morphological elements: the street / infrastructure; vii) morphological elements: the square / public space; viii) morphological elements: urban tissues; ix) interdisciplinary perspectives; x) planning and development control; xi) urban form and sustainability, and finally, xii) the metropolitan scale. This one-day conference attracted 190 participants, and it constituted an important arena for debate on the description, explanation and prescription of Portuguese urban forms and structures. The second conference, on 'Urban morphology in Portuguese-speaking countries' will take place in Lisbon University Institute, in June 2012.

Finally, the last event was the launching of a bilingual (Portuguese and English) Newsletter, to be published twice a year, in June and December. It includes an editorial and information on research projects, publications, and participation in conferences, and the organization of meetings and conferences.

In the next year, the Network will continue to promote the study of urban form in Portugal. PNUM is the first national research network in the field of urban morphology in Portugal. In 2012 the consolidation of the Network will continue through the organization of meetings and the second annual conference, the publication of the Newsletter, and the launching of new research projects. It is our goal that the strengthening of the relationship with the International Seminar on Urban Form will be expressed by an increasing Portuguese participation in ISUF activities, particularly in the 2012 ISUF Conference, on 'New urban configurations', taking place in Delft, and in *Urban Morphology*.

Vítor Oliveira, CITTA – Centro de Investigação do Território, Transportes e Ambiente, Faculdade de Engenharia, Universidade do Porto, Rua Roberto Frias 4200-465 Porto, Portugal. E-mail: viform@fe.up.pt

Spatial technologies and the medieval city: seminar and workshop, Padova, Italy, 24 March 2011

Over the past decade or so, urban morphologists have taken a lead in using digital cartography and spatial technology in mapping and analysing urban landscapes and built environments. Some of these contributions have been technical and applied in nature, while others have focused more on the opportunities computer-based urban morphology offers for understanding the processes that shape towns and cities both now and in the past. This one-day seminar was more concerned with the latter but not without recognizing the important role that academic study of a historical urban landscape can have for its management and conservation. The seminar was held at the University of Padova and convened by Alexandra Chavarria in the University's Department of Archaeology. The event included a series of research papers given by geographers, historians and archaeologists from universities around Europe who each share a common interest in using spatial technology as a means of mapping and analysing the medieval city. This technology includes Geographical Information Systems (GIS) as well as other kinds of digital platforms available for mapping and visualizing medieval urban landscapes.

The aim of the seminar was to provide an opportunity to reflect on the technical implications of applying spatial technology in historical urban contexts, as well as to draw out the conceptual and empirical consequences of using such approaches, especially in the study of medieval urban landscapes and built environments. For both reasons the papers given will be of interest to readers of this journal. Indeed, the first contribution on 'Urban morphology, spatial technologies and the medieval city' (Keith Lilley, Queen's University Belfast) sought to connect the use of spatial technology – particularly GIS and GPS – to specific research questions on the design and planning of medieval urban landscapes, using the findings of a research project carried out on the 'new towns' of King Edward I (see http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/atlas_ahrb_2005/). This highlighted the analytical potential of using GIS to analyse urban landscapes and their formation, an issue pursued further by Gareth Dean (University of York) who spoke on his doctoral research on 'Archaeology, GIS and the study of neighbourhood'. Drawing upon the rich archaeological work on York, Dean focused on a particular part of the city and using GIS

demonstrated how his approach has revealed a sequence of complex urban transformations from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries, driven particularly by the church in the city. The paper by Bastien Lefebvre (University of Toulouse III Le Mirail), on 'How to describe and show dynamics of urban fabric', also tackled these issues through a detailed examination of the city of Tours, and in particular the transformative changes that occurred over two millennia within the city's Roman amphitheatre after its demise. This impressive longitudinal study of fabric changes derived from a corpus of urban archaeological data, and using the analytical power of GIS software derived a spatial and temporal model of how urban landscapes change – a model that has wider applications.

Two papers by historians provided further insights into the visual and analytical benefits of using GIS and mapping software in linking medieval written sources to urban landscapes. The paper by Tim Bisschops (University of Antwerp) on 'Deeds, GIS, and the detailed mapping of medieval Flemish and Brabantine urban communities' used Antwerp to exemplify one approach that involves building up a large spatial database comprising series of property deeds and then tying these to the physical form of the city (using geo-referenced large-scale plans of the nineteenth century). Working with the information provided by abutments of properties recorded in deeds of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Bisschops located series of properties along streets and from this derived a map of Antwerp c.1400. This very impressive work has resulted not only in a detailed plan of the medieval city, but also, through the data attached to the mapped property parcels, has revealed otherwise hidden facets of urban landholding patterns. This was also a topic that concerned Carly Deering (University of Liverpool) in her contribution on 'Cluster and clash! Virtually bringing the late-medieval town to life', again based upon current doctoral research. Her focus on the city of Winchester uses as a basis topographical maps created by Derek Keene in his *Survey of Medieval Winchester* (1985). From these Deering has recreated a 3D version of the city, c.1417, not using GIS but by using the open source Google Sketch-Up software, the results of which are impressive. The value in 3D mapping of Winchester's late-medieval urban landscape, she shows, lies in the insights it can give on

townspeople's interactions with each other and with their local built environment. By focusing on the city's butchers, their stalls and their 'working spaces', visualizing their everyday geography in three dimensions rather than just two, reveals not just where in the city butchers lived and worked but also how the municipality and its members sought to place them under closer control, watching over them and their activities from neighbouring taller buildings.

The three-dimensional medieval urban landscape was also the focus of the paper by Vincenzo Valente (University of Padova) whose contribution on 'GIS technologies and spatial analysis' examined the city of Padova and its rich architectural legacy of medieval and Renaissance buildings. He spoke about an important project on the city, *Architetture Residenziali Medievali a Padova* (ARMEP), soon to be completed, which has involved the digital recording of historic building-frontages within the medieval walled city (see http://www.lettere.unipd.it/discant/CatMedievale/attivit%E0%20scientifica/altre%20web/ARMEP_WEB/ARMEP/INDEX%20ARMEP.htm). This photographic record is digitally linked to the two-dimensional urban landscape through the use of GIS, allowing spatial analysis of architectural fabric, and the development of building typologies. The building frontages are themselves digitized within the GIS software, and this innovative application helps to reconstruct the former façades of medieval buildings along entire streets. Again, mid-nineteenth century rectified cadastral plans, as well as modern digital cartography, form the framework for this visualization work. From a practical perspective, ARMEP's approach has had great benefits for local planning and urban conservation by providing a tool for managing the city's built heritage. This aspect of working within a digital environment was further explored by José Martín Civantes (University of Granada) in his discussion of Guadix, an historic city in Andalusia which is currently undergoing extensive archaeological

survey work and conservation. Civantes examined the technical challenges being presented by Guadix, especially in combining different data types, from archaeological material through to written sources. The previous discussions by Dean and Lefebvre offered some solutions to the on-going work in Guadix, but unlike Antwerp, York, and indeed Padova, Guadix today is a small place, though having a rich and complex urban form. This comparative dimension was an important and useful outcome of the seminar, hinting at future possibilities for collaboration and exchange. Indeed, the contributors have since formed a new research network – called 'Spatial Technologies and the Medieval City' ('STeMCity'). This will hold further seminars and meetings around Europe, with the ultimate aim of creating a forum to bring together those working on the medieval city using digital media, to share their experiences – technical, methodological, conceptual and empirical – and to use these as a basis for developing a new collaborative project that focuses on one particular European medieval city (for further information contact k.lilley@qub.ac.uk). The outcomes of such a project would be of enormous benefit to urban morphology generally, while at the same time its formulation demonstrates the important role the study of urban form has itself in the fast moving world of digital media. Meanwhile plans are afoot to publish the seminar's papers in a special issue of a new journal, *Postclassical Archaeologies*.

Reference

Keene, D. J. (1985) *Survey of medieval Winchester* (Oxford University Press, Oxford).

Keith D. Lilley, School of Geography, Archaeology and Palaeoecology, Queen's University Belfast, Belfast, UK, BT7 1NN. E-mail: k.lilley@qub.ac.uk

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).

The publication is available from Dr Michael 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).
