



BOOK REVIEWS

Village et ville au Moyen Age: les dynamiques morphologiques by *Bernard Gauthiez, Elisabeth Zadoro-Rio and Henry Galinié* (eds), Presses Universitaires François Rabelais: Maison des Sciences De L'homme, Tours, France, 2003, vol. 1 'Texte', 485 pp, vol 2 'Plans', 413 pp. ISBN 2-86906-178-1.

This edited work contains eighteen essays on urban and rural settlement form, chiefly relating to France across the span of the Middle Ages. It consists of two volumes, the first containing the essays, and the second containing plans and illustrations. *Village et Ville* is the outcome of a programme of research carried out between 1995 and 2000 to examine the morphogenesis of medieval settlement, looking on the one hand at the role of 'planning' in the process of settlement evolution, from village to town, and on the other at regional variations and differences in medieval settlement form and chronology.

The project and its historiographical context are set out by Elisabeth Zadoro-Rio in her introductory essay. This usefully reviews themes dominant in French morphological literature, such as the classification of settlement form, particularly the continuing influence of Pierre Laveden and his typologies of plan-forms. She also identifies and summarizes the Conzenian approach, noting in particular its usefulness for studying the development of urban landscapes, but pointing out too that Conzen's work has for a long time rarely entered the lexicon of French urban archaeology and history, except through the work in particular of Galinié and Gauthiez, both of whom are contributors to the project and this volume. Indeed, the study of settlement form in general, she suggests, has been rather absent in past archaeological and historical work on medieval towns and villages in France. A tendency among urban historians, for example, is to use plans to illustrate historical information rather than as a source for research. Her comments on these

disciplinary traits make interesting reading, for they have resonance with the use of morphology among medieval historians and archaeologists in the UK. In France, as in the UK, things started to change in the 1990s, as the analysis of medieval settlement form received more serious attention. This has raised questions about the processes of settlement formation, and in particular 'planning' in the Middle Ages. This is the focus for the subsequent essays in the volume, presenting the results of a number of studies using the analysis of form as a guiding principle, and addressing processes that were at work changing settlements in France during the Middle Ages.

The essays are divided into a series of sections. The first of these covers issues of 'planning', the second is on development described as 'spontaneous', the third considers political and jurisdictional influences on settlement form, and the fourth addresses 'variations' in form over time and space. The final section reflects on three themes (forms, actors, and sources) emerging from the essays. Each of the sections has its own introduction, identifying issues explored in the essays. The division between 'planning' and 'spontaneous' development is one that is questionable, as the editors recognise, suggesting that they are not 'distinct categories' (p. 31). They note, too, the importance of antecedent features in influencing the forms of settlements to different degrees.

The first section includes a study of towns in Normandy by Bernard Gauthiez, in particular Verneuil sur Avre, Falaise, Pont-Audemer, and Lisiuex, places he has covered previously in his detailed *Atlas morphologique des villes de Normandie* (1999). He offers quite detailed plan-analyses of the four towns, dealing with their plans and written sources, and offering interpretations of the changing forms and also considering matters of agency, particularly the influence of lordship. The model used in Gauthiez's chapter is also used in two subsequent chapters in this section, one on Montferrand and Riom (by Josiane Teyssot), and

another on towns and villages in the central Languedoc region (by Laurent Schneider). The other chapters, on Montpellier (by Gislaine Fabre and Thierry Lochard) and towns of the Aude valley (by Jean-Loup Abbé) take a slightly different approach. However, what all demonstrate is that 'planning' took different forms, and gave rise to morphologically composite plans, a conclusion that has resonance with recent studies of English medieval 'new towns' and their urban forms. Since apparently 'planned' towns have plans showing period-growth (themselves 'planned'), the validity of the idea of 'spontaneous' urban development has to be doubted.

The essays of the second section, on development described as 'spontaneous', deals with larger urban places with complex forms and Roman antecedents. These include Grenoble (by Alain Badin de Montjoye), Rodez (by Jean Catalo), Angers (by François Comte), Lodève (by Laurent Schneider), and Poissy (by Luc Bourgeois). These chapters also make fascinating reading, in part for the interesting application of morphogenetic principles to morphologically complex layouts, as in the case of Rodez with its clearly-defined enceintes, which Catalo uses to trace through the city's medieval development. Again, these examples provide a firm basis for Anglo-French comparative study, not least because the methods being employed are themselves comparable with those used in Anglophone urban morphology. Indeed, rather than being spontaneous, these places show, through their plan units, similarities with the 'planned' forms of the towns of the previous section, and like them reflect period-growth phases.

Chapters in sections three and four are somewhat different in character to the detailed case studies of sections one and two. The emphasis shifts more to matters of interpretation, firstly in terms of political influences on form, and secondly what can be deduced from spatial and temporal variations in form. On the former, attention is given to the role of particular agents and their urban jurisdictions, especially ecclesiastical ones. For example, the role of the Church is considered in the morphological development of Tours, Saint-Denis and Fécamp. Section four, on 'Variations', then looks at forms more comparatively in different regional contexts, including one chapter on the new towns of King Alfred of Wessex, in southern England. These two sections try to explain urban forms through connecting them to contemporary social and cultural processes. In his chapter on Normandy towns, for example, Gauthiez identifies certain traits in their urban form, such as triangular

market places and 'harmonious' street plans appearing in the twelfth century. These he then relates to geometrical knowledge circulating at the time at which these forms were appearing. His discussion touches upon issues of symbolism and meaning of urban forms, a matter also explored in this journal a few years ago (see Lilley, 1998, 1999). Again, these thematic and comparative chapters further point to the potential for collaborative study of medieval urban forms in France and England, and certainly they provide a sound starting point for those wishing to see how town plans and planning are currently being considered in France. The final section draws together the previous chapters and examines three related themes, 'forms', 'actors', and 'sources'. Here again there are important and complex matters being discussed, for instance on the 'promoters of urbanism', the role of surveying, and the 'question of planning'. These, too, would provide fruitful areas for further discussion. In all, this is a well-researched and timely collection of essays that for urban morphologists interested in the Middle Ages offers not only useful empirical insights but also methodological reflections. It deserves to be widely consulted and certainly institutional readers of this journal should encourage their libraries to acquire a copy.

References

- Lilley, K. D. (1998) 'Taking measures across the medieval landscape: aspects of urban design before the Renaissance', *Urban Morphology*, 2, 82-92.
 Lilley, K. D. (1999) 'Geometry and medieval town planning: a reply', *Urban Morphology*, 3, 111-114.

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Dublin 1745-1922, hospitals, spectacle and vice by *Gary A. Boyd*, Four Courts Press, Dublin, Ireland, 2006, 224 pp. ISBN 1-85182-960-1 hardback; ISBN 1-85182-966-0 paperback.

This is the fourth volume in the series *The making of Dublin city* (series editors, Joseph Brady and Annegret Simms). It is an original and ambitious study that is difficult to categorize. It is an