

the themes and all the projects in her story, leaving the minor characters and their perspective, lives and contributions to raggedly construct the narrative. The text jumps around from topic to topic, year to year, place to place, theme to theme, even in one paragraph. The story loses its thread and restarts with every new minor character, and tediously reproduces every titbit of trivia that the author has accumulated in her 10 years of research (What *does* Marion serve at her dinner parties?) This is very unfortunate, because the story is a well-chosen one, with interesting themes that are timely and ultimately very applicable to the urban morphologist.

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Açores, cidade e território. Quatro vilas estruturantes, by *Antonieta Reis Leite*, Instituto Açoriano de Cultura, Angra do Heroísmo, Portugal, 2014, 494 pp. ISBN 978-989-8225-41-2.

Açores, cidade e território. Quatro vilas estruturantes (Azores, city and territory: four 'structuring' towns) is based on a PhD thesis presented to the Department of Architecture at the University of Coimbra in 2012. It considers the evolution of land planning in the Azores from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century, revealing the practices of urbanism in four so-called structuring towns. It is part of a series of investigations carried out in the University of Coimbra on the nature of the Portuguese city, in both Portugal itself and overseas, which seeks to unveil cultural identity as manifested in the territories and cities subject to Portuguese influence.

Colonization proved to be fundamental as it served to establish specialized practices as an instrument for the establishment of urban nuclei and land-use planning. Urbanization in the Azores is at the beginning of Portuguese expansion in new territories. It consolidates and refines practices already used in Portugal and it defines paradigmatic models, encouraging and assisting settlement processes that were to continue in the overseas lands from Brazil to the Far East.

Chronologically, the study is framed by the Azores islands discovery dates (1427–1452) and

the separation of the crowns, which takes place in the archipelago in 1642. The author aims at 'understanding the original installation and consolidation processes of the Azores main cities and territory' and unveiling the structuring of the primary urban network. She presents the phenomenon of insular urbanization through an analysis of the territorial planning process, identifying the main actors and their achievements. For that purpose, four case studies are conducted on the formation and transformation of the towns of Angra, Praia, Horta and Ponta Delgada.

The results of the research are presented in two parts, which take different approaches regarding the focus and scale of the analysis. In the first part, which corresponds to the first research phase, the focus is on individual cases. Each city is studied in concrete terms and is the subject of a well-illustrated discussion of its history and morphological evolution, from the formation phase through to that of consolidation. The second part aims at addressing the broader theme of Portuguese urbanism. The territory's composition, occupation, planning and management are examined, taking into account the actors and their practices. A comparative assessment of the previously analysed cases is then conducted. A reflection on the territory is presented, based on an iterative interpretation, both deductive and inductive, according to which the initial understanding of the material produced in the case studies is questioned. This leads to clarification and amendment, and fresh interpretations.

In research on architecture and urbanism, analytical drawings are central. Beyond illustration, they contribute to the understanding of the argument. Drawings are used to enable consistent reading, of general, detailed and complex spatial contexts. The graphics present a diversity of data, stemming from thorough documentary research.

The methodology used – referred to as 'drawing history' – entails the production of analytical drawings that are an integral part of the historical research and interpretation. Illustrating urban evolution and growth, these drawings are based on rigorous contemporary surveys and are carefully substantiated and validated by various sources and historiographical material.

The production of cities from models grounded in the culture of European urban foundations is central to the discussion: '... it is on the islands that the medieval foundational urbanistic practices will continue, as well as the colonizing tactics previously experienced in the lands of the reconquest'. The author contends that the Portuguese

overseas experience ‘never was a new beginning, but rather a continuity’, that is, a transfer of social and administrative structures and of knowledge and common practices. This study reveals that the strategy of colonization and urbanization first implanted in the Atlantic archipelagos was essential, since it would influence the urban experience developed in other territories of Portuguese expansion, for example in the case of Brazil – where the administrative formula of the ‘Senhores da Terra’ (Lords of Land) was extended.

The ‘Lords of Land’, who were given powers to govern the new territories by the Crown are presented as key actors for the ordering of Portuguese colonial matrix cities. Evidence is produced that points to the mobilization of knowledge and practices known *a priori* in conjunction with experimentalism related to adaptability to the circumstances encountered. The author notes that what is ‘demarcated in a virgin territory endures and influences forever’. She speaks of the persistence

of traces of the very first actions in these territories, concluding that ‘the territory of today is the one of yesterday, although with the records of its continuous transformation’.

This is a work that is interesting for the community. It is also in some respects a model for other researchers. The scientific investigations are executed exemplarily. The knowledge produced is duly pondered, and carefully substantiated, served by a wide range of sources, which cover topics of interest beyond urbanism and architecture. The way is paved for promising work on the study of the forms of colonization and on the knowledge and practices that led to the establishment of new territory.

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