

origin; the foundation roads; the ring boulevards associated with successive fortification walls; the interstitial areas, composed of tissues stemming from the foundation roads as well as urban fringe tissues; and finally the breakthrough routes (avenues and boulevards) and what Darin terms the *entrailles* or technical ‘entrails’ of the city, composed of canals and railways. Each of these chapters focuses first on the formation and transformation of the components under consideration before looking at their current ‘physiognomy,’ that is their associated architectural and urban forms. The sixth and last chapter retraces the general evolution of the street network, from the rudimentary composition of its origin to its current complex network of more than 6300 routes in relation to the city’s *site*, understood here as its general geomorphological context.

Paris, la forme d’une ville contributes to urban morphology by its original approach to the interpretation of urban form and city genesis, seen here through the prism of one of its most fundamental and structuring components: the street. The method seeks to understand the street network as a system, while considering its relationships with other components and systems of urban form, such as the plots and the building fabric. The approach allows the interpretation of highly complex realities (Paris’ evolution over 2000 years) in a relatively economical manner. The book will be of interest to a varied readership, including researchers in urban morphology, urban history, urban geography and planning, as well as to a broader public interested in the history of this extraordinary city.

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The imagined cities in the urbanization plans: Cape Verde, 1934–1974 by *Sergio Padrão Fernandes*, Argumentum, Lisboa, Portugal, 2016, 195 pp. ISBN 978-972-8479-90-9.

This book addresses a significant knowledge gap within Portuguese urban morphology. It considers Portuguese overseas territories focusing on the Cape Verde archipelago. It interprets the evolution

of the proposed urban design tools for the main settlements of this former Portuguese colony, over a 40-year period. This was the time-span between the implementation of a specific decree establishing the General Urbanization Plan as the main reference for national urban development and the closure of the Portuguese colonial administration. These were two milestones in the development of the Portuguese city, both in the homeland and in overseas territories (Mendes *et al.*, 2005).

There is a simple, clear structure to the book. After a synthetic contextualization, the reader can readily engage with the core subject. The text is practical in its selection of relevant information. In the first chapter, the underlying geo-strategic importance of the archipelago for consolidation of the Portuguese Empire is established. This is largely related to the domination of the Atlantic maritime routes. The ‘Background elements of the urban plans’ are established for the 30s, 40s and 50s. These decades reflect the transition from a simple territory occupation policy, when territorial planning was undertaken by military engineers and surveyors, to firmer attempts to extend and consolidate existing settlements. At this time, architects, clearly influenced by the French formal school, dominated urban planning. Urban proposals relied on the importation of a European city model, though the colonies presented a wider experimental field, and some places appeared largely free of constraints from the past. The diversity and extent of the Portuguese colonies led, in 1944, to the creation by the central government of a specific colonial office, mandated to address all the relevant overseas interventions. This Colonial Urbanization Office was a key influence for more than a decade. João Aguiar, a prominent Portuguese architect, had a dominant role until the formal dismantling of this office. His interventions were generally characterized by a consolidation of existing urban centres, framed by a wider urban expansion, inspired by garden-city models of low-density housing. The draft plan of 1959 for the city of Mindelo is taken as an example (Lôbo, 1995).

The following chapter explores what the author defines as the ‘Foundations of urban production in the 1960s and 1970s’. He contends that the urban interventions of that period are broadly based on, or associated with, six fundamental premises: the incentive plans; the areas for immediate occupation; the occupation of the colonies and the incentive for emigration; the racial integration experiences; the beach urbanization plan; and the influence of the Modern Movement.

This analytical framework establishes the key aspects against which the cases inventoried and classified by place are interpreted, allowing us to understand not only the proposed formal solutions but also the evolution of concepts and the circumstantial shifts that influenced them over the 40-year period. An *inventory* constitutes the main documentary body for the research. Each urban intervention is presented using the same descriptive matrix, allowing an individual characterization of each plan at the relevant urban scale. The plans for the cities of Praia and Mindelo, the largest and most important settlements of Cape Verde in demographic, social and economic terms, constitute the largest part of the inventory, relegating the interventions in other locations to a general chapter.

The plans are classified in three basic categories: *foundation*, *expansion* and *transformation*. The focus is on their nature, chronological order and relationships.

Most of the documentary material presented in the book is published for the first time. The existence of a significant part of the documentation was previously almost unknown. The research included the groundwork of identifying and registering previously uncatalogued documents of various formats. Indeed much of this documentary material was all-but-lost following the dismantling of the fascist regime. The graphic reproduction of the plans and their dissemination alone constitutes a major contribution to knowledge.

The final part of the book refines the interpretation by comparing the cities of Praia and Mindelo with the aim of tracing parallels and highlighting singularities in the evolution of approaches to urban development. Unlike other contexts in which the implementation of a European city model prevailed over a long time-span, in the case of Cape Verde the singularity of the topography and the scarcity of natural resources soon led to adjustments to the urban design strategies.

In both its content and approach, the present publication can provide useful support in the interpretation of other former colonial territories, enhancing the study of one of the most widespread, yet poorly explored, aspects of modern urbanism.

References

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Abitazioni primitive. Primitive dwellings by Giancarlo Cataldi, Aiòn Edizioni, Florence, Italy, 2015, 175 pp. ISBN978-88-98262-34-2.

Primitive dwellings, which is subtitled *the evolutionary process of building types in the world*, is delving into the origin of built forms. Faithful to the Italian approach to built environment morphology, Giancarlo Cataldi, the current President of ISUF, explores the formative period of initial human dwellings and the process through which rudimentary archetypal forms evolved within increasingly complex typological streams. Even the seemingly simplest manifestations of the material culture connote deep cultural significance, enmeshed as they are with cultural habits, religious beliefs, and social, family and gender relationships, and informed by a geographical context and a culturally-embedded building tradition. While acknowledging that reality, Cataldi's efforts are centred on the artefacts, and more specifically on their general morphometric properties as well as on their materials and associated modes of assemblage.

In an impressive synthesizing effort, the work defines and tabulates sixteen main stages in the development of four idiosyncratic types, based on cycles in which shelters gradually evolve into huts and thence houses, and eventually urban houses. The dwelling types are associated with what Cataldi terms geo-material areas, namely the wood areas, the earth areas, the stone areas and the special materials areas. Building cultures and traditions have stemmed from the said areas, based on weaving techniques and carpentry, mud construction, masonry, and techniques making use of animal skins and fabrics for instance. A plethora of cases from Africa, Asia and the Arabic peninsula, the Americas and Europe is used to illustrate various manifestations of these techniques and