

point of the River Rhine. Following the destruction of the city by the Vikings in 847, the medieval structure evolved into a 'cross of churches', as an evolution of the *kardo* and *decumanus* grid or, more precisely, as a *sacred* and *symbolic* medieval town planning system (Guidoni, 1974). Hinse recognizes here the role of the guilds and the city council in the city's medieval development before the Woheelse expansion changed its direction and shape in 1664. It is in the German cities though that the author finds a new 'morphology of times', as outlined in the medieval period by a collective and rational urban policy, perhaps more modern than the ancient and distant Roman grid.

All the cities analysed were considered through a modern prism, and from a northern European perspective. This can be problematic and misleading at times, when contemporary representations are superimposed on contexts framed according to other rationalities.

There are no footnotes to the text, and references to the literature of urban morphology are lacking. Connections to the general history of the evolution of cities are made without considering the history of town planning. It is therefore an introductory text, useful in engaging readers with discussions on the diachronic transformation of urban form. A diachronic approach to the evolution of urban form, has for long been a marked characteristic of the Italian school of urban morphology (Caniggia, 1963; Cataldi, 2003; Maretto, 2013). The strong disciplinary connection between history and urban morphology (Strappa *et al.*, 2016) is a key to the proper understanding of city form as an evolving *organism*, and consequently to the approach to urban design as the continuation of a continuing process (Strappa, 2014). It starts with the Islamic city, and continues with the city of the guilds and municipal councils. The circulation of knowledge and design models between the Nordic culture and the Mediterranean area influences, throughout the Middle Ages, the European cities we like and live in today.

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Trees in towns and cities: a history of British urban arboriculture by Mark Johnston, Windgather Press, Oxford, UK, 2015, 270 pp. ISBN 978-1-909686-62-5.

Trees and other types of vegetation can easily be neglected in studies of the elements of urban form and their contribution to urban landscape character. Mark Johnston's book therefore provides a welcome introduction to the history of Great Britain's urban trees and their management from the Roman occupation to the present day.

The book is organized in thematic chapters dealing with the history of urban arboriculture as a discipline, matters of law and governance relating to trees, trees in particular spaces (gardens, public parks and other open spaces, and along streets), threats to urban trees, and the role of trees in utopian urban planning.

These themes are inevitably interlinked and the story of public access illustrates this well. Before the advent of municipal parks, access to urban green spaces was restricted by the wishes of those who controlled them (the Monarchy in the case of Royal Parks; developers and residents in the case of garden squares and walks) or ability to pay (in the

case of pleasure gardens, for which admission was charged). Notwithstanding this they were spaces of a particular urban character in which different social classes could come into contact with each other. As Johnston points out (p. 147): 'As well as providing some contact with plants and nature, the pleasure gardens also packaged the most exciting aspects of city living, such as encounters with the elite and the latest music, fashions and novelties'.

Later, many pleasure gardens and garden squares were transferred to municipal control and a main subject of the book is the growing role played by local authorities in the planting, management and care of urban trees, both those under their direct control and those in private hands, and in the history of urban arboriculture as a discipline. The thematic structure of the book emphasizes this point as changes in governance covered in Chapter 2 (the growing powers granted to local authorities in response to nineteenth century urbanization and its associated social changes) are seen being utilized in the development of public parks (Chapter 5) and the planting of street trees (Chapter 6). Changes to planning legislation also gave local authorities powers to protect valuable trees irrespective of who owned them, particularly through Tree Preservation Orders, and to control how existing trees and new planting were dealt with when planning permission for new development was granted.

However, throughout the book change is described as being incremental and iterative. The acquisition of land for the first public parks was achieved in a number of ways: use of common land (Preston, created in 1833 and widely recognized as the first British municipal park), philanthropic donation (Derby), public subscription (Manchester) and, most significantly, by Private Act of Parliament enabling the local authority to use public funds for the purpose (Birkenhead). Only subsequently did legislation give local authorities more general powers to act in this way and, critically, to use public funds to do so. Similarly, local authorities gradually acquired increased powers over roads and their design. Borrowing from French design ideas, and vocabulary, such as avenues and boulevards, certain thoroughfares have always included trees. Street trees have subsequently developed their own characteristics, for example in the frequent use of particular species such as plane, lime and horse chestnut in municipal planting, and the promotion by local authorities of design guidance for new private developments.

There is much in the book to interest those engaged with urban morphology and the history of urban planning and urban design. Some of these topics are described explicitly and are likely to be familiar, such as the story of the Garden City Movement and the New Towns Movement, and the importance of garden squares in planned residential developments particularly in London and Edinburgh. Also explored in the book is the role of particular individuals in the story of urban arboriculture. John Claudius Loudon (1783–1843) emerges as particularly influential as a writer and publisher of works on horticulture and landscape architecture, and a designer and promoter of the value of public open spaces.

Elsewhere the book suggests thoughts that chime with morphological ideas. For example, trees are persistent components of the urban landscape and, as with other elements of urban design, fashions in tree planting vary over time. Johnston describes how conifers and other evergreens including cedars, cypresses and redwoods were commonly used in tree planting schemes in the mid-nineteenth century, whereas flowering cherries became popular in the 1950s. This suggests that it is possible both for these variations to persist and to form part of what distinguishes the townscapes of different morphological periods.

There is also a fascinating chapter on other types of urban green space in which urban trees are to be found. Of these cemeteries and arboretums are particularly important in the history of urban arboriculture. These and other examples, such as botanical gardens, educational and medical institutions, and golf courses, were often developed on the edge of the existing urban area and are examples of the characteristic land uses associated with urban fringe belts, with which urban morphologists will be familiar.

The author has succeeded in his objective and produced a well-illustrated and well-referenced introduction to the history of Britain's urban trees suitable for students, academics and the general reader. The rich source of examples it offers shows the historical knowledge of the author and will hopefully also provide a starting point for further work to integrate trees and vegetation into morphological study.

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