

modulated exchanges between them: the openings, alcoves and niches are the mediating signs. In its material and weight, the masonry wall speaks of past, present and future times: of geological time, as well as of the more limited period during which a wall will continue to circumscribe and encapsulate a portion of space. By making space its main material, modernist architecture became self-referential and inward-looking. The shift entailed trading interface and mediation for a spatial logic of fragmentation, from architectural to urban form and territorial landscapes.

The author also makes the case for a review of twentieth-century architectural 'doxa'. Architectural theories, ideas and experiments are explored through a series of international projects. The broad set of examples and the extensive accompanying bibliography is impressive, and exemplifies the erudition of the author. Wall design and construction, as spatial and material statements, are the objects of the investigation. Intentions and material manifestations are deciphered in order to reconstruct the process of development of modernist architecture. Architecture is not exactly on trial, although the term '*processo*' might signify that as well. What is questioned, however, is the conventional theoretical framework as applied to the architectural history of the past century in particular, and notably in Anglo-Saxon academic circles.

Comparisons in this book are made on the historical *longue durée*, looking in particular for timeless, or time-free, architectural principles that could inform today's practices and reflexions. Strappa's investigative and interpretative work is a powerful demonstration. There was no need to frame this volume as an answer to the modern movement or as a critique of the current weight given to images in the assessment of 'performing' architecture. The international style and the modernist dogma are historically set and destined to become dated, as soon will be 'virtual' architecture, given its limitations. As Strappa presents it, architecture is about 'being and acting' in people's everyday experience. The built environment serves as a device and a principle for anyone crossing the wall of time and space.

Reference

Semper, G. (2011) *The four elements of architecture and other writings* Research Monographs in Anthropology and Aesthetics, translated by Mallgrave, H. F.

and Herrmann, W. (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge).

François Dufaux, École d'architecture, Université Laval, 1 Côte de la fabrique, Québec G1R 3V6, Québec, Canada. E-mail: Francois.Dufaux@arc.ulaval.ca

Lords and towns in medieval Europe: the European Historic Towns Atlas Project edited by *Anngret Simms* and *Howard B. Clarke*, Ashgate, Farnham, UK, 2015, 552 pp. ISBN 978-0-754-66354-6.

Lords and towns in medieval Europe is a thorough and detailed examination of the founding and development of European towns during the medieval period. It is divided into five sections comprising chapters written by experts in their field. Part I includes an introduction to the European Towns Atlas Project, to which this volume is intended to contribute (p. 9). Chapter 1 by Anngret Simms examines the history and goals of the project. Chapter 2 by Dietrich Denecke covers the analytical methods employed, with particular emphasis on historico-topographical comparative analysis. Part II of the book provides detailed case studies that focus on towns in the core area of medieval Europe, many of which were built on Roman foundations. Francesca Bocchi, in Chapter 3, focuses in detail on political power in Italian towns, beginning in antiquity and proceeding chronologically to the high Middle Ages. As case studies, Bologna and Florence are examined. From here, the examination moves to France, and specifically Bordeaux, in Sandrine Lavaud's Chapter 4. In Chapter 5, Daniel Stracke and Thomas Tippach provide an overarching examination of the development of the German towns atlas, immediately preceding Peter Johanek's comprehensive discussion of towns, urbanization, trade, law and territorial consolidation in the Holy Roman Empire in Chapter 6. This is followed by Josef Žemlička's consideration of the development of the Bohemian town of *Litoměřice* (Leitmeritz) in a concise Chapter 7. Chapter 8 by Ferdinand Opll explores the founding and medieval urbanization of Vienna and Wiener Neustadt, Austria, providing an example of how geometry may be used to explain the general layout of medieval towns. The geometric interpretation is continued by Martina Stercken in Chapter

9 with a more detailed examination of Freiburg, Germany (pp. 201–4). The final chapter of the section, Chapter 10 by Terry R. Slater, examines a wide-ranging selection of market towns in the UK, including Cambridge, Gloucester, Ludlow, Norwich and Salisbury. It considers the geometry and economics of markets as well as market buildings, the proximity of churches, defence and local justice.

Part III of the book presents case studies focusing on countries peripheral to Eastern Europe as well as Ireland and Scandinavia. These regions were not colonized by the Romans and consequently urbanization was non-existent prior to the Middle Ages (p. 356). Roman Czaja's Chapter 11 features a comprehensive discussion on town formation in Poland, placing considerable emphasis on the Teutonic Order in town foundation and control. Katalin Szende and András Végh relate royal power to the spatial structure of medieval settlements in Hungary in Chapter 12, and Paul Niedermaier thoroughly considers the plans of medieval towns in Romania in Chapter 13, focusing on the importance of the seigneurial residence and fortifications. Medieval planned towns in Croatia are examined in Chapter 14 by Mirela Slukan Altić, followed by Howard B. Clarke's examination of the successive twelfth-thirteenth century Anglo-French and sixteenth-seventeenth century English periods of town formation and planning in Ireland in Chapter 15. Urban Scandinavia is examined in depth by Marjatta Hietala in Chapter 16 with examples from Denmark, Finland and Sweden. Urban development in the region is considered both before and after 1250 when the influence of the local kings became prominent.

Part IV focuses on the symbolism related to town plans. Chapter 17 by Bram Vannieuwenhuyze and Reinout Rutte examines medieval urban forms in the Low Countries, concluding with a discussion on the symbolic meaning of town plans through two case studies. Keith D. Lilley thoroughly examines symbolism in medieval urban cartography through modern and medieval mappings in Chapter 18, and in Chapter 19 Derek Keene examines in depth the symbolic landscapes in early-medieval Winchester. Topics covered include the street network, the church, political influences, links to Jerusalem and Rome, cults and pilgrimage.

The final section of the book includes approaches to interpreting town plans. Chapter 20, authored by Matthias Untermann, examines the foundation of towns from a uniquely archaeological perspective. Topics covered include town foundation in

the twelfth century and later-medieval periods as well as settlements pre-dating the twelfth century (p. 457). Chapter 21 by Jürgen Paul takes a different approach to town development by considering art work. Mark Hennessy explores in Chapter 22 the adaptation of a medieval urban centre in nineteenth-century Ireland.

There is much to recommend in this volume. Its strong points include the scope of the material presented, and its focus on a multitude of time periods. Other strengths include the detailed maps presented, which contain extensive labels of various parts of the towns including the neighbourhoods and town gates. A number of maps go so far as to incorporate dates for neighbourhoods which suggest how the towns developed over time. Additionally, there are also a number of cartographic representations based on historical maps. This design decision offers a context of the towns in question before industrialization and modern urbanization. Finally, it was intriguing to understand how geometry was employed to explain the foundation or layout of a number of towns.

However, there are a number of drawbacks as well. While broad in scope, the book's 22 chapters are presented with little or no attempt on the part of the editors to link them or to provide a contextual thread. In addition, much of the material, including notes and maps in some chapters, assumes a working knowledge of the German language, which many readers may not possess. This deficiency could have been remedied by including translations of the titles in the notes as is done with titles in other languages in the book. With regard to the cartographic depictions and graph on page 143, translated legends could be provided which would enable the detail collected in these figures to be accessible to a larger audience. Another drawback was a number of maps were placed in the text without proper explanations. This is a significant limitation because to fully appreciate the arguments presented, the associated maps must be sufficiently labelled.

Despite its drawbacks, this book is an excellent resource for researchers in a variety of disciplines, from history to geography to anthropology. Its comprehensive format and universal coverage recommend it to anyone interested in the history and evolution of medieval Europe.

Christopher Macdonald Hewitt, Department of Geography, University of Western Ontario, 1151