

citizenship and the rise of the public sphere reveal unmistakable parallels between the experiences of Izmir and those of contemporary cities across the globe' (p. 193). Good quality maps are provided as well as a variety of analytical visuals, so that cartographic sources such as those produced by Graves (c. 1836), Georgiades (c.1885), Storari (c. 1855), and Saad (c.1876) can be read with reference to morphological transformations. Other visual materials have been painstakingly compiled from rare collections or significant archives.

Zandi-Sayek approaches sources both as historian and detective, meticulously and judiciously weaving together civic and cultural events and aspects of the built environment. There are parallels with *Civic realism* by P. G. Rowe (1997) in regard to the relation between civic matters and the built environment (Cetin, 2000), and Zandi-Sayek's book may be of special interest to readers familiar with the work of Rowe.

This book successfully addresses a variety of issues that shaped Izmir during a significant era in its past. It is a major contribution to the literature on Izmir, and for scholars wishing to study the socio-spatial dimensions of urban form more generally it is an excellent starting point.

#### References

- Cetin, M. (2000) Review of *Civic realism* by P. G. Rowe, *Urban Morphology* 4, 38-9.  
 Rowe, P. G. (1997) *Civic realism* (MIT Press, Cambridge, MA).

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**The greatest grid: the master plan of Manhattan 1811-2011** edited by *Hilary Ballon*, Museum of the City of New York and Columbia University Press, New York, USA, 2012, 226 pp. ISBN 978-0-23115-990-6.

The principle by which urban streets and ownership plots are arranged with geometrical gridiron regularity, situating urban life within repetitive modules of rectangular demarcation, reaches back to antiquity. Through history it has been favoured alike by dynastic rulers imposing order from above

and democratic entrepreneurs seeking personal profit from below. Yet in no region on earth has the urban grid plan been more widely nor explosively diffused than in the United States. And nowhere in America has the grid assumed so pivotal a role in the urban consciousness of a city's population and as a model for emulation elsewhere than in New York City.

Though begun with the more relaxed layout of Dutch New Amsterdam at the southern tip of Manhattan Island, most of the city's subsequent layout became fixed in 1811 by a commission of three specially appointed city officials. As a result, the bulk of the island was laced with a street-grid without parallel. The circumstances surrounding this unique event and the significance it had for the city's development, given its historical success as a global economic centre, are the subject of this stimulating book. Created to accompany an exhibition at the Museum of the City of New York celebrating the bicentennial of the Commissioners' Plan, it explores critical aspects of the plan's genesis, prolonged and contested implementation, multifarious alteration, and profound impact on the city's evolving urban life.

The book's arrangement traces that of the museum exhibit, namely thirteen major themes arranged within a broad chronological sequence: Manhattan before the grid; elements of the 1811 Plan; executing the plan by ground survey; opening the streets as public ways; selling the new ownership plots; creating open public spaces; developing the East and West Sides; restoring and reinserting Broadway as a common highway; alterations to the grid north of 155th Street; modern reforms; electric and subway infrastructure tied to the grid; and the grid in contemporary thought. The book contains in bound form much of the exhibition's substance and organization, namely clusters of graphic displays on individual topics with accompanying label text, introduced by abbreviated essays on the themes. The topical text has been written by a mix of eighteen specialists on New York's planning history drawn from the fields of architecture, architectural history, cartography, geography, history, historical preservation, journalism, urban planning, and wildlife conservation. Sprinkled among these substantive sections are seven casual 'reflections', most of them about three paragraphs in length, from 'names' associated with institutions concerned in some way with New York's built environment, including the current mayor.

Reading this book is akin to roaming the exhibition itself, except from the comfort of an

armchair, and with its great potential for shelf life. It offers a provocative tour of the historical issues surrounding the Manhattan grid, rather than a complex and sustained inquiry that a conventional analytical book might provide. Yet, for what it does, it succeeds superbly. The full colour reproductions of maps, scenic sketches and paintings, portraits, and historical and contemporary photographs, together with pertinent and well-researched textual commentary, amply bring to life the changing landscape that imposition of the street grid produced.

The value of this book for urban morphologists lies in the wealth of specific detail presented concerning the planning, technical implementation, and disputes over the framing of a street pattern across a large stretch of rural land held in the form of large estates. For a cultural context in which laissez-faire economic forces have long held sway, this was a bold assertion of urban planning without existing legal precedent. The sustained effort required over decades to continue carrying out the project until the whole island was covered in built-up streets, creating in the process a modern and massive real estate market, is well set out. Further, the concessions to local practicalities, such as the restitution of Broadway following its initial suppression and the radical insertion of Central Park, illuminate the cut-and-thrust of decision-making and exemplify the degree of flexibility evident in what otherwise was a monolithic reordering of the urban fringe. Another useful feature is the brief comparisons of the Commissioners' Plan, under 'Precedents and Context', with the ground plans of Lima in Peru (representing urban planning under the Spanish Laws of the Indies), Philadelphia, Savannah, Albany (as part precedent for the New York grid), the US rectangular survey system, London, Edinburgh, and Washington, DC.

The treatment of this grid as a product of planning and specific design is neither adulatory nor severely critical. The creation of long shallow street blocks, favouring east-west communication between the island's two long shores when it is north-south communication that has proved imperative, simply demonstrates the difficulty in correctly anticipating the future. The absence of median alleys within blocks, beneficial for urban services and infrastructure and found in many contemporaneous urban grid designs elsewhere, is harder to explain, and excuse.

This book provides a ringing endorsement of the truism well known to urban morphologists that the urban ground plan shapes the mobility of a city for

generations and centuries, and confines development in ways that have often hampered increasingly large-scale designs – it is striking how little altered the Manhattan grid remains in the face of the relentless pressure for height and horizontal plot amalgamation. That the book treats with sumptuous visual accompaniment the signal street and property system of one of the world's most renowned and dynamic cities is a matter for congratulation. Yet much analytical work remains to be done on the historical legacies of New York City's 1811 Plan, work that goes beyond mere illustration to reveal subtler, systematic patterns of influence and resistance, and the geographically variable consequences of its superficial uniformity. This appealing volume should serve as inspiration for that work.

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**The historic urban landscape: managing heritage in an urban century** by *Francesco Bandarin* and *Ron Van Oers*, Wiley-Blackwell, Oxford, UK, 2012, 236pp. ISBN 978-0-470-65574-0.

Too often new declarations and recommendations by UNESCO appear to materialize out of a vacuum for those not closely involved in the meetings and seminars that led up to them. This book aims to demystify both the context and the underlying principles associated with a recent UNESCO initiative – the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) approach – linked to the adoption of the 'Recommendation on the historic urban landscape' by the General Conference of UNESCO in November 2011. The book also aims to influence a wide range of decision-makers to endorse the HUL approach to complement and enhance existing policies and practices for conservation of the built environment. The authors argue that these policies and practices will be reaping the best of an evolving paradigm in urban heritage planning as the HUL approach is 'a new way to include all these aspects of conservation in an integrated framework' (p. xvi).

So, first of all, how does *The historic urban landscape: managing heritage in an urban century* fit into the literature on urban heritage conservation