

presentation, clearly rendered an artistic, singular, and easily-read form for a modern capital city that was absolutely shaped by the site, thereby making the other proposals seem like mere illustrative diagrams of general urbanistic theories. Costa was Le Corbusier's personal friend, and seems to have adopted the French architect's design strategy of 'interpretative form giving' (Neumeyer, 1991, p. 92) in order to shape the new city, designed as a complete entity, an ideal object.

O concurso de Brasília was originally written in 1999 as an academic dissertation for a Master's degree at the University of São Paulo, where the author teaches building design at the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism. Milton Braga is himself a successful architect who has collaborated with Paulo Mendes da Rocha, the 2006 Pritzker Architecture Prize winner. This published version of Braga's dissertation is divided into two parts. The first part simply reproduces the competition call for entries and describes each of the seven awarded submissions, all of them immediately followed by the jury's comments. The second part compares the different proposals and contrasts the award-winning layout with the city that was actually built. Biographical details of the competitors, as well as of the jury members, are provided in an appendix, not only revealing their professional backgrounds but also aiding understanding of the context of the competition.

Richly illustrated, the book includes original sketches, models and plans scattered in various public and private archives. It also displays recent photographs of Brasília taken by the photographer and architect Nelson Kon, renowned for his astonishing snapshots of Brazilian modernist architecture. Kon's pictures reveal a contrasting city, different from that of the familiar postcards and monuments. They feature bucolic townscapes, where six-storey slabs are orthogonally placed on dense green open public ground, isolated pedestrian paths and desolate six-lane roads – once the pride of the industrial society – vast public squares, colossal lawns upon which Niemeyer's grand sculptural buildings rely for artistic effect, and massive, miserable, crowded open-air car parks nearby. Kon's raw pictures of Brasília seem to state that modernism also made mistakes.

O concurso de Brasília offers an important contribution to the international history of modern town planning. It depicts the diffusion of international principles and their local construction. Also, in the national context, the book endorses the synergic collaboration of State and the Modern Movement in Brazil in order to build an image of a

modern country. The mere shift of the capital city and the awarded entries' near consensual adherence to modernist principles of architecture and urbanism not only signalled industrial, social and technological development, but also the national desire to play a significant role in the modern world. In spite of living in times of environmental concern, and despite the fact that the paradigms that built different Brasília's are now long gone, the publishing of pictures of Brazil's new capital city, along with the competition entries, does expose the spirit of the era, the modernist ambition and the urbanistic knowledge accumulated during its subsequent crisis.

Reference

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Hungarian atlas of historic towns (Magyar várostörténeti atlasz), No. 1 Sopron by Ferenc Jankó, József Kücsán and Katalin Szende, with contributions by Ferenc Dávid, Károly Goda and Melinda Kiss, Sopron, Hungary, 2010, 86 pp. ISBN 978-963-8327-32-1.

This volume on Sopron, a west Hungarian town situated near the present-day border with Austria, must be regarded as a major achievement. First of all, the atlas makes a substantial contribution to research on Sopron's historical geography. Moreover, with its wealth of material – an extensive collection of maps accompanied by a booklet and a CD-ROM – it provides a solid basis for further studies of the town. Most importantly, however, as the opening issue of a new book series, *The Hungarian atlas of historic towns*, it is the first Hungarian contribution to an all-European effort of providing cartographic sources for comparative studies on urban form co-ordinated by the International Commission for the History of Towns (ICHT).

Comprising an impressive 86 pages, this volume provides an interpretative text on Sopron's historical topography. Following a description of the geographical setting, the text traces the stages of the town's development from its emergence as a trading centre along the Amber Road in Roman times to a royal town in the later Middle Ages, and through other phases of development up to today. The initial layout of the town, its building structures, suburban integuments, and internal changes are all covered comprehensively with reference to the emerging plot structure. The text closes with remarks on the objectives of future urban planning and conservation measures. Apart from the gazetteer, it is rendered both in Hungarian and in a sound English translation. Occasional comments on comparative aspects of settlements in Central Europe will no doubt be handy for readers unfamiliar with these contexts. The text is very well balanced and illustrated by black-and-white photographs, tables, diagrams and maps, conveying a complex but clear picture of townscape development.

Illustrative sources come in three series: A, B and C. Series A is made up of maps that follow the recommendations of the ICHT and the experiences of other national Historic Towns Atlas (HTA) projects. Based on the cadastral map of 1856, it comprises a large multi-coloured plot plan which shows the built-up area and other forms of land use. Plate A.3 depicts the town's spatial development in four separate maps. These are complemented by several reproduced historical maps. Two of them, of the eighteenth (1763-85) and nineteenth (1819-1869) centuries, reveal Sopron's topographical setting at a scale of 1:50 000. On another large sheet there are two additional maps, one with the plot structure of 1900-1910, the other showing the recent situation (2005), albeit without the plots. The series is concluded by a vertical aerial photograph of 2005.

Series B features an impressive collection of 26 thematic maps with legends in Hungarian and English, many of which are based on historical evidence painstakingly distilled from primary sources such as tax registers and then projected onto the historical plot plan. These maps and additional interpretative texts offer a remarkable and comprehensive picture of Sopron's social topography, demography, house valuation and plot ownership. Other maps pertain to the material fabric of the townscape – the buildings' construction types, heights and ages – and are based on a modern plan.

Series C consists of reconstruction drawings that

illustrate archaeological interpretations of the town's early development, and reproduced images of several historical town views, plan sketches, and maps from several different archives and libraries.

The Sopron atlas is a great accomplishment both in form and content. The extensive facts of the town's history and morphology in the text as well as in the series B maps are well presented, and a great advance to our knowledge in these fields. Series A and C provide cartographic and pictorial evidence that will aid and stimulate further research on many different aspects. From a comparative point of view, the Hungarian HTA's Series A is the most important one since it contains material that is to be part of every national HTA according to ICHT guidelines. Although there is much variation among the 20 or so European HTA projects (Conzen, 2008), this basic core should comply with the standards recently discussed by Howard Clarke (2008). In this respect, future issues of the Hungarian atlas may benefit from inserting a topographical map at 1:25 000 scale and a modern town plan (1:5000) that includes the plot pattern. Both maps are integral parts of the *Österreichischer Städteatlas*, the HTA project in adjacent Austria.

The Sopron atlas is an impressive and very promising start to the new *Hungarian atlas of historic towns*, and sets a fine example to those still lacking their own national HTAs (Opll, 2011). The continuation of the Hungarian work alongside other projects is essential to lay a sound foundation for the comparative study of urban form in Europe in the future.

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Sustainable urban form, accessibility and travel: the relationship between polycentric urban development and commuting in Lisbon by David Vale, Lambert Academic Publishing, Saarbrücken, Germany, 2010, 264 pp. ISBN 978-3-8383-2019-9.

This book, an outcome of a Glasgow University PhD thesis, considers, separately and in conjunction, definitions, models, and issues of sustainability, urban structure, transportation modes and accessibility. The last three chapters deal with the 'Park of the Nations' (PN), a new neighbourhood in Lisbon resulting from the 1998 international expo. *Sustainable urban form* sets out to investigate various specific questions relating to urban form and commuter behaviour.

The opening chapters probe deeply into recent concepts of sustainable cities and also delve into a large number of related concepts, in so doing referring to a substantial number of authors. The fourth chapter, on methodology, explains the author's research design in detail, namely the cross-sectional statistical model used for the metropolitan area of Lisbon (AML) relating land use and commuting by car and by public transport, and quasi-longitudinal analysis measuring the impact of residential and workplace relocation. Empirical data and their treatment as well as discussion of findings make up the last chapters. Chapter 5 presents a statistical treatment of commuting patterns in AML; chapter 6 deals with the residential mobility patterns of the new inhabitants of PN; and chapter 7 presents the commuting impacts resulting from home and workplace relocation to PN. These last two chapters use an abundance of information obtained from institutional interviews and questionnaires.

Sustainable urban form is thoroughly researched and contains a profusion of bibliographical and statistical data. It is not problem free, however. The preponderance of Anglo-Saxon academic sources and the reliance on almost entirely previous research on highly-developed Western countries in northern Europe and North America is an issue, given the different nature of the city of Lisbon and its metropolitan development in comparison with the other cities mentioned in the study. For example, there is the preference for living in suburbs that is brought out in many of the publications the author refers to, yet this preference is contrary to that of most residents of Lisbon's metropolitan area. Lisbon, in fact Portugal itself, is at the meeting point of the Atlantic and the Mediterranean worlds, as has been made clear by Orlando Ribeiro in relation to the geography and

culture of the land. This 'overlap/frontier' paradigm devised by Ribeiro is still relevant to today's urban structural developments. The suburban living preference in Lisbon is contradicted in the analysis of 'alternative residential location' preferences (6.5.2), the outcome of the survey being that 'location within Lisbon was a determinant factor for households' (p. 170). This was also shown in previous studies, such as that by Barata Salgueiro (2001): 'high standing housing areas are not only detached houses in the western suburban sector (the 'Estoril sector'), but also renewed apartments and gated communities located in the city centre' (p. 29). The preference of many for city centre living is at odds with the findings of most of the cited publications on northern Europe and America.

The use of the term 'urban form' throughout the book and in the title itself requires a definition of its significance in the context of the range of concepts examined. It is misleading to use the expression 'urban form' when what is under consideration is really the distribution of land uses rather than physical form. Moreover, the term is used with various meanings. Sometimes it denotes land use; sometimes urban structure. The penchant for avoiding the materiality of the city is also at work in the substitution of the physical metaphor of the compact city by the more abstract 'multimodal accessible city', which is certainly productive when focusing on accessibility and large-scale governance policies but is hardly an appropriate model for urban design and the neighbourhood scale.

The choice of Parque das Nações is perplexing. It was selected as an 'example of a new mixed-use, dense and accessible centrality' created for the reinforcement of the polycentric structure of the metropolitan area (p. 5) and as an 'archetypal new centrality of a metropolitan area' (p. 220), and even as a 'typical suburban environment of AML' in terms of building and dwelling types (p. 151). But PN has a singularity that should perhaps make one cautious about claims for generalizations based on it. No other single area in the city, in fact in the whole metropolitan area, has received the public investment, the speed of infrastructure installation, the meticulousness of its green and leisure areas, or the massive publicity it obtained from being the successor of Expo 98. This is not to mention the exceptional natural conditions. With regard to the resident population it attracted, the uniqueness is not as pronounced but it has exceptional social, economic, educational and demographic homogeneity that is not common in Lisbon's neighbourhoods, either old or new. Moreover, PN was still in process of installation at the time of the