

communal plans, which was deemed problematic. The adoption of the zoning, perceived as a magical tool of modern planning, led to segregation of major urban functions, such as industry, recreation and trade. Le Corbusier's famous iterations of the OBUS plan (1932–1942), conceived as an alternative to the Algiers master plan, have become a source of inspiration for modern Algerian architects. This marks the beginning of a new stage in colonial architectural history in Algeria, with the introduction of a new material: reinforced concrete. In the period after the Second World War, from 1945 to 1962, the housing question came to the fore in the context of rapid demographic growth. As an answer to the surge of slums around the city, large low-rent housing estates were systematically built. However, these types of housing were judged unsuitable for the native population, which triggered some experimentations, from architects such as Pouillon and Simmonet, aimed at combining Western and indigenous architectural traditions for the creation of new housing forms.

The last part of the book consists of a chapter concerned with the 1962–2000 post-colonial period. In spite of the departure of the settlers, the built environment inherited from the colonial period continued to shape the society, as a field of confrontation arose between the natives and a colonial space not designed for them. The first triennial development plan of 1967–1970 reflects such tensions, while attempting to establish a new urban system, including the industrialization of the construction sector, based on socialist ideals. However, the progressive ideology of the period has not been kind to architectural heritage, leading to further degradation of the traditional built environment.

Recently, the revival of a market economy has instigated a new phase of urban development. Algiers has been transformed into an architectural laboratory, where large firms are solicited to conceive 'prestigious projects'. The status of the rich architectural heritage of Algiers remains in flux. The preservation of vernacular architecture requires massive investments, while the colonial heritage is often seen as a cultural burden, rather than as an asset. It places the unresolved issues of cultural identity at the forefront of urban planning discussions.

Though essentially based on secondary sources, this book brings clarity to the intricate and rich architectural history of Algiers and the Maghreb. The abundance of ancient and contemporary examples set in their contexts sheds new light,

while opening new avenues for the understanding of this unique city. This work will benefit those teaching and studying in the fields of architecture and planning.

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Teaching Urban Morphology, edited by *Vitor Oliveira*, Springer International Publishing, Cham, Switzerland, 2018, 338pp. ISBN 978-3-319-76125-1.

Editor and contributing author Vitor Oliveira captures a rich spectrum of disciplinary perspectives in the multi-authored book *Teaching Urban Morphology*. The book's diverse portfolio of theory and pedagogy, as professed by a distinguished field of faculty, fulfils an important need for a core resource to support teaching the multidimensional subject to an equally diverse audience of students.

The book's eighteen chapters are organized as three sections in response to the overarching questions: why teach, what to teach, and how to teach urban morphology. Both the collective work and, to varying degrees, individual chapters examine these three questions through the lens of each contributor's area of academic expertise.

Part 1 directly addresses the question of 'why teach urban morphology?' from the viewpoints of geographers Michael Barke and M. R. G. Conzen (edited by J. W. R. Whitehand), urban planners Tolga Ünlü and Meta Berghauer Pont, and architects Giancarlo Cataldi and Nicola Marzot. Barke's opening chapter offers an expansive view of underlying motivations for teaching the subject. Epistemologically, urban morphology seeks to explain formative and transformative processes and the spatial structure of towns and cities. An enriched understanding of urban development contributes to a student's ability to 'interpret layers of meaning that are invested in townscapes' and to develop more integrative 'ways of seeing' (p. 12). By cultivating heightened awareness, urban morphology enhances student capacity to become better stewards of inherited built environments. Practical relevance resides in urban morphology's role to better inform design and planning processes

for future professionals who will engage directly in policy making and design interventions for inherited environments.

Contributing authors to Part 2 present a variety of content areas to consider for course development in urban morphology. Multiple chapters pair proposed content with pedagogy and associated teaching settings including field laboratories, seminars and design studios.

Michael P. Conzen presents a concise overview of core concepts in town-plan analysis as developed by the British school of urban morphology. The chapter discusses the value of town-plan analysis as an investigative tool to identify key spatial components comprising historical townscapes and their transformation using cartographic analysis and methods of field observation. Associated classification systems and terminology facilitate interpretation of formative and transformative processes. Key concepts that have proven particularly useful for interpreting urban development patterns are highlighted.

Kai Gu discusses engagement of his urban design students in the use of morphological methods to demonstrate the value of morphologically-based design processes to professionals. Discussion highlights issues of practicability surrounding integration of evidence-based research into the design process and the need to make strategies for morphological analysis more user friendly. The central relationship between urban morphology and urban design pedagogy is further explored in Emily Talen's chapter. Talen illustrates how urban morphology can support rationale for normative decision making about where and why an urban design intervention is proposed. The resulting design outcome, which is further shaped by influences such as public participation and creative intuition will differ significantly from design processes derived exclusively from aesthetic reasoning.

Working within Rome's extremely complex palimpsest, Giuseppe Strappa illustrates methods for architects and planners to 'read' the urban fabric's layers, poles, routes and evolving house typologies as part of an architectural design process. According to Strappa, the rules derived from reading the underlying fabric formation can be used recursively to generate new design interventions for fabric transformation (p. 179). Frederico de Holanda demonstrates the value of teaching urban morphology in the radically different teaching context of Brasilia. Students who may have limited exposure to traditional urban environments are challenged to introduce dimensions of human

scale and finer grained morphological elements into an urban landscape shaped by modernist ideology without diminishing the city's iconic identity.

Part 3 of *Teaching Urban Morphology* provides case study examples of pedagogy designed to incorporate content presented in preceding chapters. Peter Larkham stresses the importance of engaging students in field observation as a common framework for teaching urban morphology, irrespective of disciplinary focus. Multiple contributing authors use the design studio as their principal venue for testing methodologies, given the studio environment's capacity to support integrative processes and experimentation.

Co-authors Psarra, Kosturou and Krenz of 'A bisociative approach to design' demonstrate methods to integrate space syntax into the design process. The authors advocate the use of bisociative models to explore the intersections between 'analytic knowledge with design theory' enabled by space syntax analysis and other methods of mapping and classification (p. 233). Marco Maretto champions the need for design processes that help to sustain cultural continuity. Strategies are presented to identify spatial and social organization within surrounding urban fabric to reveal the lowest common denominator for defining a neighbourhood unit upon which to base urban design interventions.

Richard Hayward and Ivor Samuels illustrate processes to evaluate the relative performance of urban tissues. Using workshop or studio settings, teams of participants identify and document distinct urban tissues within the vicinity of a proposed urban development site. Figure ground representations of sample tissues are overlaid on the site for comparative analysis and critical discussion. Each team's preferred tissue sample is adapted as needed to address site constraints, programmatic needs and aspirational goals. The authors present useful hands-on strategies that are readily accessible to a broad spectrum of participants, including students, time-strapped practitioners, developers, political leaders and lay persons with a vested interest in community planning.

Karl Kropf's chapter on interdisciplinarity and design advocates strategies to render the acquired body of knowledge and application of morphological methods more accessible to a broad spectrum of learning styles. Through studio, a parallel lecture course and field work, Kropf illustrates an integrative approach using a variety of methods for morphological analysis to engage students in making reasoned, critical judgments about urban

environments. Students critique urban development sites and apply tools for investigative analysis to inform re-design of the site. As professed by Kropf and others, the studio/laboratory setting is well positioned to support multiple learning styles and encourage integrated thinking.

Vitor Oliveira's closing chapter offers a comprehensive approach to teaching an introductory course on urban morphology as a multidisciplinary subject. An outline syllabus introduces students to key topics, including urban history, principal analytical methods and their underlying theories and practical applications.

As a collective work, *Teaching Urban Morphology* provides a rich portfolio of theory, pedagogy and practice in support of comprehensive curriculum development. The editor's inclusive approach also suggests a need for further examples of integrative teaching methods to broaden the subject's reach and impact. Unrealized potential resides in cultivating an academic culture of urban morphologists willing to step outside of disciplinary comfort zones to engage students in transdisciplinary inquiry.

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Interpreting specialised buildings by Gian Luigi Maffei and Mattia Maffei, Altralea Edizioni, Florence, Italy, 2018 (first Italian edition 2011), 328 pp. ISBN 978-88-94869-08-8.

Twenty years after the publication of *Studi per una operante storia urbana di Venezia* (Muratori 1959), Gianfranco Caniggia and Gian Luigi Maffei published another book that was fundamental to the process-typological approach to urban morphology and to the field itself, *Lettura dell'edilizia di base: Composizione architettonica e tipologia edilizia* (Caniggia and Maffei, 1979). It was followed by two related books, one on the analysis and design of basic buildings by Caniggia and Maffei (1984) and the other on the reading of specialized buildings by Maffei and Maffei (2011).

'Interpreting specialised buildings' is the long awaited English translation of the last of these books. With curatorship, introduction and critical glossary by Nicola Marzot, the book by Gian Luigi Maffei and Mattia Maffei is in three parts. The first

part discusses the characteristics that influence the evolution of specialized buildings. It includes different aspects, or phases, in a progressive understanding of how specialized buildings relate to the built environment. Accordingly, it addresses various aspects of specialized buildings: as landmarks; as materializations of special types; as specialized types, and as such, as mutations of base types (one of the key messages of the book); and in their relationship to the building fabric and the urban organism. The second part of the book concerns the characteristics that influence the formation of specialized buildings and the understanding of the scale of components and compositional relationships. This part proposes the consideration of landmarks as the materialization of typical organisms, organisms as the correlation of usage and distribution systems, and systems as a combination of elementary distribution-usage systems and typical technologies and materials. The last part of the book classifies specialized buildings according to their various typological series, that is, serial specialized buildings derived from a building type (such as palaces) or from the urban fabric (collective residences) and specialized nodal buildings (with a single longitudinal axis or with multiple-axes with a central floor plan). This part of the book is mainly structured in a number of tables and fact sheets, focusing on the interpretation of compositional components, the structural parts of the architectural layout and formative axes.

The book addresses three key challenges that urban morphology faces today: establishing the core, and the limits, of each morphological approach; exploring the relation between scientific research and practice on the built environment; and, finally, making explicit the added value of urban morphology to fundamental aspects of our daily lives in cities. 'Interpreting specialised buildings' will certainly have a central role in future reviews of the process-typological approach. While focusing on one particular topic, the book gathers the main theories, concepts and methods that have been developed over 7 decades of disciplinary history by different generations of researchers, lecturers and architects. It raises issues such as the tension between intentionality/critical consciousness and spontaneous consciousness, between the elastic-wooden and the plastic-masonry approaches to construction materials, and between polar (associated with nodal) and anti-polar (associated with serial), to name just a few. The critical glossary at the end of the book effectively provides an overview of this richness.