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Summary

The discussion of cities, urban design and settlements freely moves across the man-made environment. In this context, it is worthwhile to emphasize that this physical canvas not be rent because of ideological or scholarly agendas, To see the interdependence of two landscapes and two ways of life—urban end rural—is an urgent scholarly strategy, to study the environment as one, not as village versus town or high style versus low. Tradition has no end: it cannot be superseded, The only enduring truth is in the seamless continuities of time and place.

Key words

architectural history, rural landscape, settlement patterns, *synoecism,* townscape

Fig. 1. Siena city wall of 1326.

Junctions of town and country

The prevailing sentiment, popular as well as scholarly, has always been to consider town and country one of the classic dichotomies of culture. In my own discipline, the history of architecture, the visual contrast of the two is ineluctable (Figs. 1 and 2). Primal images of the walled city, a densely packed structure of buildings and streets, are among our commonest documents. The open countryside with its patterns of field and cottages has never held the same interest, save for the architecturally distinguished villa and its landscaped setting. Even in the study of cities, architectural historians have been preoccupied with urban design in the sense of self-conscious and formal solutions of city form—a preoccupation that parallels our long-held exclusive claim to pedigreed buildings, to architecture as art. The more recent fascination with what urban designers like Gordon Cullen call "townscape" is equally conditioned by visual incident, albeit of a more informal, and anonymous sort.

My professional scrutiny for some time has been directed, instead, at physical continuities of time and place. I am interested in the built environment as a whole: in all buildings, the common place and the fancy, and their arrangements into landscapes of form subject to perennial change. For this effort, it has increasingly become evident, the disjunction of town and country is counterproductive, and the habit of viewing the city as a distinctive unit of analysis is quite possibly wrong-headed. We should be studying the history of settlement patterns, in which cities are merely accents, spontaneous or imposed by origin, that possess uncommon size and complexity, Physically, city-form is most beholden to prior systems of land division and settlement, farming practices and the disposition of common fields and pastures.

I PREAMBLE: THE CASE OF SIENA

To introduce some of the themes I wish to address here, it might be useful to start in medias res, with a well-known and beloved specimen of urban form—the medieval commune of Siena.

Siena, at the end of the thirteenth century, was a powerful and wellrun North Italian city-state, locked in fierce competition with its neighbor, Florence, to the north, and holding its own. Its territory stretched south and west almost to the edge of the Tyrrhenian Sea and the swampy coastal lowlands of the Maremma, in total an area of about a thirty-mile radius from the city. This hilly, poorly watered area included forests, good farmlands, pastures, and more than three hundred small towns, rural communities and feudal castles that recognized Siena's authority.

The city lay on the Via Francigena or Romea, a branch of the great Roman highway, the Via Emilia, connecting Parma with Rome. This tract ran right through the city, forming its north-southeast spine, and was dotted with inns and hospices, which served the crowds of pilgrims and other travelers who came down from the north and, under Sienese protection, headed toward the papal city. With another leg of this spine to the southwest, the city had the shape of an inverted

Fig. 2. Ambrogio Lorenzetti, *Effects of Good Government in the Town and Country*. Siena, Palazza Pubblico ca. 1340.

"Y" whose tips were marked by three hills—the domed Castlevecchio and San Martino, and the linear stretch of Camollia (Figs. 3 and 4). The story of the city of Siena begins with the merger of the communities on these three hills and the transformation of the harboring dip in their midst, the Campo, into a civic center—a process that started in the sixth or seventh century but was not formalized politically until the eleventh.

The walls were expanded several times as they grew. The last, begun in 1326, loosely hugged the city. There was a lot of agricultural land within, and even the built-up area was liberally punctuated with vegetable gardens and orchards. In prominent locations all over the hilly townscape, the principal families, many of them feudal nobility, had their *castellari,* fortified compounds with towers and other defensive appurtenances. These were rambling households with servant quarters, stables and warehousing facilities. The type was essentially the land-based feudal nucleus of the countryside, brought within the urban fabric by the magnates when the action moved from the countryside into the city and the agrarian economy of the earlier medieval centuries was superseded by an urban economy of banking and long-distance trade. To force these feudal lords to live within the walls, subject to the law of the city-state, was a main goal of the communal government. The defensible *castellare,* however, was a threatening unit for the city's self-government—an undigested lump in the urban body. The commune in time will run streets right through these enclaves, forcing them to open up and front the public space civilly with perforated facades.

The example of medieval Siena, and the few points I have selected to mention about its physical appearance, help to introduce several abiding lineaments of the mutual dependence of town and country.

First, both administratively and politically, the structure of human settlement has frequently engaged total landscapes. In this case, the Sienese commune itself is an extended pattern of townships, villages, and cultivated rural land. Second, the agricultural and pastoral uses of towns have always been important, especially in the so-called pre-industrial city. Third, the issue of topography is indeed central—not only in the primary sense that hills and valleys determine the configuration of settlements, which Siena's "Y" plainly demonstrates, but also in the

additional and more significant sense that pre-extant rural order inevitably affects the developing city-form. In the case of Siena, urban morphogenesis is traceable to the coming together of three independent villages and their network of roads. The final lineament is that acclimation of rural housing patterns to city streets is an enduring theme of urban process for which the example of the Sienese *castellare* provides a dramatic illustration.

There are other aspects of my subject, coming to maturity in relatively recent times in the context of the modern city, which do not find prototypes in Siena. Chief among these is the history of Western experiments in urbanism that try to reconcile town and country, experiments that range from the Anglo-American picturesque suburb to the various formulations of the linear city.

2 RURAL/URBAN RELATIONSHIPS

It would be futile to attempt to deny the very real differences between cities and the countryside. The traditional labor of the farmer and the husbandman, set in the plains and pleats of the land and subject to seasonal rhythms, stands in millennial juxtaposition to the affairs of the city. The sociologist's distinctions must retain their qualified validity. It is surely not idle to recognize the informal social organizations of villages, with their static slow-changing ways, their low level of labor-division and their elemental sense of community of *Gemeinschat,* and to set this against the city's enterprise, its *Gesellschaft,* impersonal and dynamic, with a refined division of labor and a dependence on advanced technologies and industrial processes,

Long before sociology was born, these contrasts were eloquently articulated and enjoyed. The Renaissance in Italy, for example, set great store by the perfect life of the privileged classes balanced between *negotium* and *otium philosophicum*. That philosophical calm, for the rich and powerful Florentine merchants, could only be had in the country, where the villa engaged Nature, her flowers and trees and meadows, her secret springs and scurrying creatures. At Poggio, at Caiano, at Careggi and Caffagiolo, friends of Plato, lovers of his soul and students of his text, gathered to contemplate Truth. These were good men who had to be merchants and bankers and politicians in the city, but who

slipped away here to a rustic, basic age, where pleasures were simple and thoughts deep. "Blessed villa," Alberti rhapsodized, "sure home of good cheer, which rewards one with countless benefits: verdure in spring, fruit in autumn, a meeting place for good men, an exquisite dwelling." Many cultures put store by this restorative balance between one's trade and one's sanity.

By the same token, the arguments of the present day also are well taken, which see a thorough interdependency between town and country, between agriculture and industry, and which point to the decline of the farming population, to the mechanization of farming processes and to the leveling influence of radio, television and tourism. And like Alberti's celebration of the country, they are also, for the purposes here, largely beside the point.

My concern here is man-land relations as manifested in physical planning, and my point is prismatic, How do we record the continuous processes of settlement and analyze its patterns? How do we resist seeing urban form as a finite thing, a complicated object, pitted against an irreconcilable, and allegedly inferior, rural context?

The architectural historian, I have already acknowledged, is congenitally handicapped in these matters. He or she is unwilling to accept that in the study of the built environment we are all recorders of a physicality akin to that of a flowing river or a changing sky.

Come the urban geographers, who are also fascinated with the city as an intricate artifact. Their methods and traditions are sufficiently different, however, to make their analysis of the form and internal structure of cities at once more comprehensive and more specialized. At the very least, their insistence that we pay attention to land parcels and plots and the particular arrangement of buildings within them—that the street system and plot pattern belong together—has enabled them to study urban fabric and its transformations with more thoroughness than the conventional approach of the architectural historian—to go beyond formal questions to a discussion of land use. And the steady interest they have shown in the distribution pattern of towns, and the flow of goods and people within that pattern, has led them to consider larger physical frames than the city itself. For the case I am pleading here, this of course is good.

But the emphasis is mistakenly on cities, and the preoccupation is with generating theory. The urban geographer is intent on discovering standard behavior, independent of particular historical circumstance. The historian of the rural landscape, on the other hand, has long been fascinated with methods of farming, enclosure, estate ownership and the like, all of which stop short at the city gates. As for other allied fields, it is symptomatic of what I propose we redress that there should be a "Rural Sociological Society" with a journal called *Rural Sociology,* even though, in the fifties at least, there were occasional papers in it on the "rural-urban continuum." In the fifties, that phrase meant primarily the rural-urban fringe in the parlance of the sociologists, or the "rurban" fringe, as they liked to call it. They inherited this interest from land economists who recognized the dynamic mixture of agricultural and urban (mostly residential) uses as something vital and worth studying.

The time frame here is recent. What is being observed is the result of changes in the American city since about the middle of the nineteenth century, specifically the history of suburbanization. Now the urban geographers were soon to seize on this urban fringe as a general principle of urban development throughout history. Their term was the
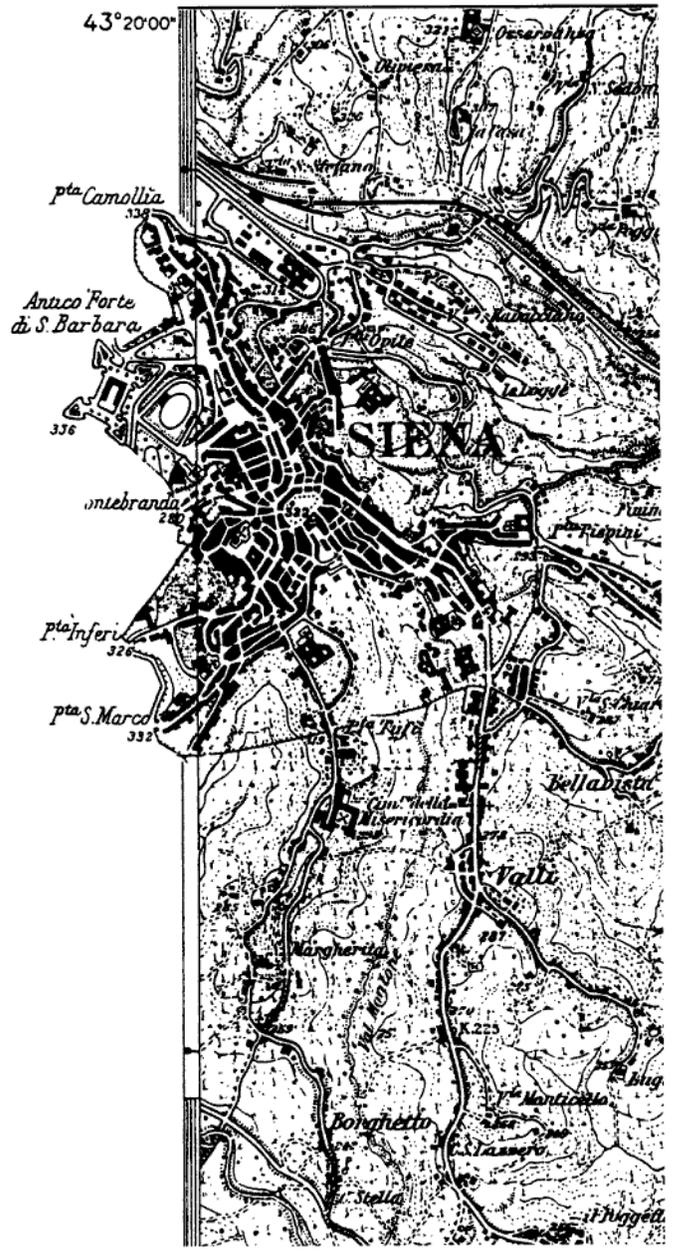

Fig. 3. Siena, plan of the city (Source: Instituto Geografico Militare, reprinted from Benevolo, *Storia della Citta,* 1976).

"urban fringe belt." The German equivalent, applied first to Berlin by H.Louis, is *Stadtrandzone*. This area contains a heterogeneous collection of land uses, and shows a large-scale, low-density building pattern that contrasts with the thickly woven fabric of its core. What kind of uses? Well, horse and cattle markets, for example, noxious manufacturing processes like tanning, institutions deemed a health hazard like suburban leper houses of medieval London, Leicester and Stamford, and religious houses like those of mendicant orders. In time, the city would incorporate this first, or inner, fringe belt, alter some of its character with an overlay of residential development, and give rise to a new fringe belt further out.

Alternating irregular rings of fringe belts and residential districts can be detected on the plans of many European cities. Each, according to
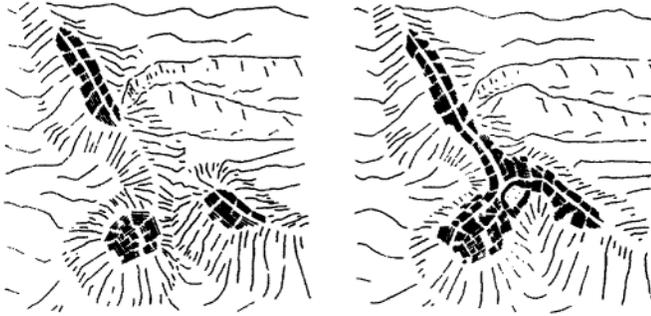
Fig. 4. The process of *synoecism,* illustrated by the merging of the villages of Castelvecchio (Citta), Camollia, and Castelmontone (San Martino) to form the city of Siena. (Drawing: R.Tobias.)
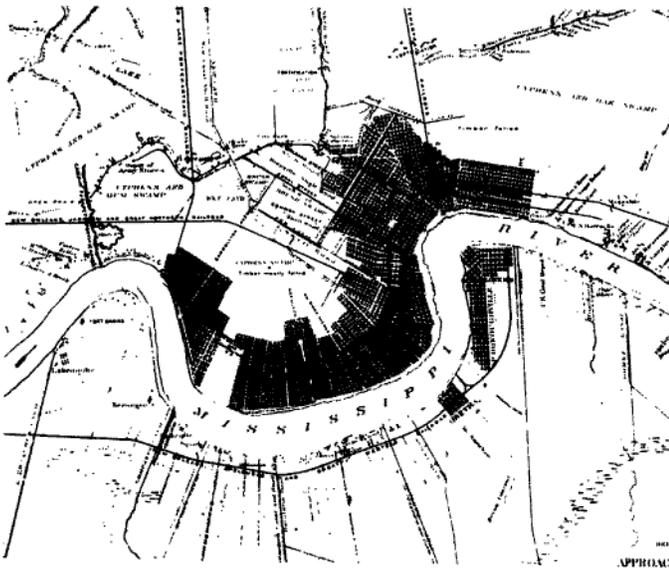
Fig. 5. New Orleans, Banks Map, 1863. Reprinted from Pierce Lewis. *New Orleans— The Making of an Urban Landscape.* 1976.

its time, embodies distict land uses. Parks do not predate the Baroque centuries; cemeteries, unless we are dealing with a distinct preChristian period like that of the Roman cities, are likely to start with the Enlightenment. More recently, we would find heavy industry, golf courses, universities, and in the outermost fringe, slaughterhouses, junkyards, sewage plants and oil refineries.

All of this is useful, but limited in application and method. The ruralurban continuum I am advocating as a perspective here is broader in scope, and intends to encourage the consideration of large social systems and urban-rural interdependence in the morphology of settlements. I am anxious to extend to our own professional domains of the built environment the seamless world that the United Nations presumed in terms of population when it asserted in its *Demographic Yearbook* of 1952 that, "there is no point in the continuum from large agglomerations to small clusters or scattered dwellings where urbanity disappears and rurality begins; the division between rural and urban populations is necessarily arbitrary."

3 SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS AND THEIR MUTATION

It is time to be more specific, and to elaborate the thematic lines I suggested at the beginning.

First, and at the broadest scale, we have to insist that human settlement is almost always continuous or concatenated, which means that towns and the countryside are subject to a responsive chain of design acts. If we think of cities alone, we tend to think of constellations based on some pretext or other, whether it is Walter Christhaller's or Auguste Losch's central place diagrams, or various systems of identifying urban spheres of influence like those advanced by A.E.Smailes, C.R.Lewis and others. There are other ways to group cities based on geographical logic: river or canal links, for example. Land routes and modern transportation means, like the railroad or the streetcar, are an equally effective basis of linkage. We could also cite political hierarchies of specific historical incident, for example, the designation of China of urban hierarchies by means of suffixes added to the names of towns—*fu* for a town of the first order, *chu* for a town of the second, *hieu* for a town of the third, and that is without counting elementary towns lower still.

But beyond the simple fact that a town can never exist unaccompanied by other towns, it is equally true, as Fernand Braudel put it, that "the town only exists as a town in relation to a form of life lower than its own…There is no town, no townlet without its villages, its scrap of rural life attached." And it is precisely this interdependence, as a physical phenomenon most of all, that has suffered scholarly neglect because of our persistent interest in a dualism of town and country.

We need to distinguish here between two kinds of processes. Let us call them *spontaneous* and *planned,* realizing of course that there is no aspect of human settlement that is not at least in part the result of premeditated action.

The planned process is easier to see. It is a common device of colonial enterprises when an alien land is readied for settlement by the colonizing power or agency. The city of course is the major vehicle of control and exploitation, but often the countryside is surveyed at the same time and distributed equitably and methodically. This is especially the case when the main colonial resource is agriculture rather than trade, say, or mining.

Both the Greeks and the Romans systematically divided the farming land at large, and matched urban plots for the settlers with corresponding extra urban allotments. The gridded order of the new cities was extended to the regional scale; or rather a standard matrix of all arable land provided the setting within which the cities themselves were accommodated. In the Roman system of centuriation, the module unit was 20 by 20 Roman *actus* (or 750 by 750 meters), further subdivided among farmer-colonists. An intersection of boundary lines for the *centuriae,* or square, could serve as the crossing point for the main axes— the *cardo* and *decumanus*—of the city,

The same possibilities for a uniform system of town and country planning existed for Spanish colonial rule in America, and later still for the opening up of the territories in the United States under the Land Ordinance instigated by Thomas Jefferson. And side by side with the *sitios* of New Spain and the townships of Jefferson's grid, we can recite the Japanese *jori* system, introduced in the seventh century, and the land division, or *polders,* applied by Dutch engineers to land reclaimed from the sea. In the Netherlands, where the very land is a result of

human design, distinctions between town and country are particularly vacuous.

Once again, as students of environmental design, we have done very little with these comprehensive schemes, and much with the cities themselves which are only highlights within a larger coordinated design. We have written entire books on the ingenious 1732 plan of Savannah in colonial Georgia masterminded by James Oglethorpe, for example; but beyond a descriptive sentence or two we have left unexamined the extraordinary complement to this famous grid with its wards and squares—the outer zone of farming lots, the five-acre gardens further in, the "Common round the Town for Convenience and Air," and the town proper along the Savannah River. It is only because the orthogonal distribution applied uniformly, even when the garden squares might be shared by two colonists, each with a triangular lot, that Savannah could maintain the ward and square arrangement of the original town plat as it grew in the next century and moved into its cultivated land.

By spontaneous settlements, I mean a natural promotion of towns within a previously even, unaccented landscape. I am aware that this may sound very much like a return to the old favorite, the rise of cities, that has sustained those urban historians and geographers concerned with the pre-Classical world or the Middle Ages for several generations. But I am less interested here in the vast literature about when a town is a town—questions of size, density, economic activity, administrative function or occupational structure, and so forth—as I am in rare studies like those of Robert Adams concerning Mesopotamia (Adams, 1972, and Adams, 1981).

Adams' meticulous and demanding fieldwork to chart the ancient watercourses in the "birthplace of the city" (which, as we would expect, turned out to be totally different than the present pattern of rivers and canals) is as important for the physical history of human settlement as the more spectacular and photogenic archaeological discoveries of Leonard Wooley and his confreres have been for the history of Mesopotamian civilizations. I would also go so far as to claim, for our purposes, that the hesitant, tentative dotted lines of Adams' maps—carefully plotting ancient levees, variations of river discharges, and settlement patterns—are far more critical than the diagrams of Christhaller or Thyssen.

To my knowledge this sort of documentation and analysis does not as yet exist for that other period of nascent urbanization that has intrigued urban historians of Europe, namely the several centuries in the Middle Ages when, after the subsidence of Roman urban order around the Mediterranean and the northern provinces of the empire, new towns emerged out of non-urban cores in the rearranged countryside. We have a lot of theory, an increasing volume of case studies, especially for England, and promising new directions based on the archeology of early settlements. What we don't have is a scanning of regions, small or large, through that combined perspective of physical, political and social inquiry, to document and interpret transformations of the historic landscape of Europe.

Fieldwork may not be as helpful in writing the other aspects of the spontaneous process. *Synoecism,* the process behind the creation of medieval Siena, is one of these (Fig. 5). The term, according to Aristotle, describes the administrative coming together of several proximate villages to form a town. Translating his words: "When several villages are united in a single complete community, large enough to be nearly or quite self-sufficing, the *polis* comes into existence." This

is how Athens was born and Rome and Venice and Viterbo and Novgorod and Calcutta, and a number of towns in Muslin Iran like Kazvin, Qum and Merv. In fact, *synoecism* is beginning to figure as one of the commonest origins of towns coming out of a rural context, and it is therefore unfortunate how little there is to read about the process.

The case of Islam is especially interesting in this context. Throughout its history, the Islamic city has given proof that it was conceived not so much as a tidy walled package contrasting with the open country side, but as a composite of walled units. Twin cities, where the two settlements slowly grew together across the intervening space, were not uncommon (*e.g.,* Isfahan, Raqqa). Ira Lapidus suggested some time ago that in some Iranian oases, entire regions might be considered composite cities, "in which the population was divided into noncontiguous, spatially isolated settlements." However you choose to categorize this constellation, it was a fully self-conscious system of settlement, in that the entire region would be surrounded by an outer wall, and "urban functions were not concentrated within the walls of the largest settlement, but were often distributed throughout the oasis" (Lapidus, 1969, p. 68).

The form of a synoecistic town absorbs the shapes of the original settlements, along with their road systems, and the open spaces that existed among the settlements are turned into marketplaces and communal centers. This is the origin of the Roman Forum and the Athens *agora* and Siena's Campo. In German lands during the Middle Ages, towns sometimes absorbed an adjacent rural parish, or *Landgemeinde,* in order to acquire common pasture in some cases "shifted their homes into the town and became fully privileged townsmen" (Dickinson, 1961, p. 331).

In Africa, traditional Black cities can be described as groups of village-like settlements with shared urban functions rather than a single center. These cities were very spread out. They consisted almost entirely of one-story structures arranged in residential compounds, no different an arrangement than the village. These compounds were often located with no particular care for alignment with the streets. Sudanese Muslim cities, Al Ubayyid, for example, have this same Black African pattern. In the nineteenth century Al Ubayyid was a city made up of five large villages, originally separated by cultivated areas which the Ottoman regime (*ca.* 1820–1884) partially filled in with barracks, mosques, a prefecture building and government worker's housing.

4 RUS IN URBE

The next two themes I set for myself at the start of this article follow logically from this discussion. One has to do with the agricultural and pastoral uses of urban land. The other has to do with the impact of rural land divisions on urban form in those spontaneous cases where an orderly regional matrix, like Roman centuriation or the American Land Ordinance grid, does not predetermine the pace and shape of suburban development.

I need not say much about the first of these themes. The urban accommodation of cattle has a history that stretches from Nineveh, where large open areas within the walls were set aside for the daily use of herds, down to the New England common. Little need be said, too, about agriculture in the city, except to point out again how radically an agricultural presence within the city challenges any strict
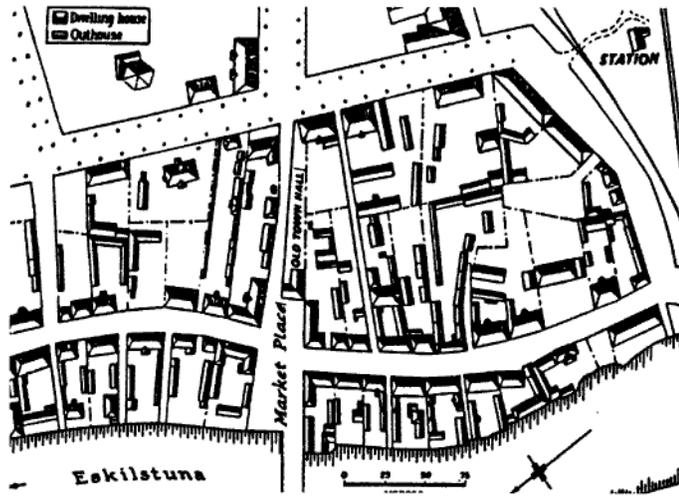
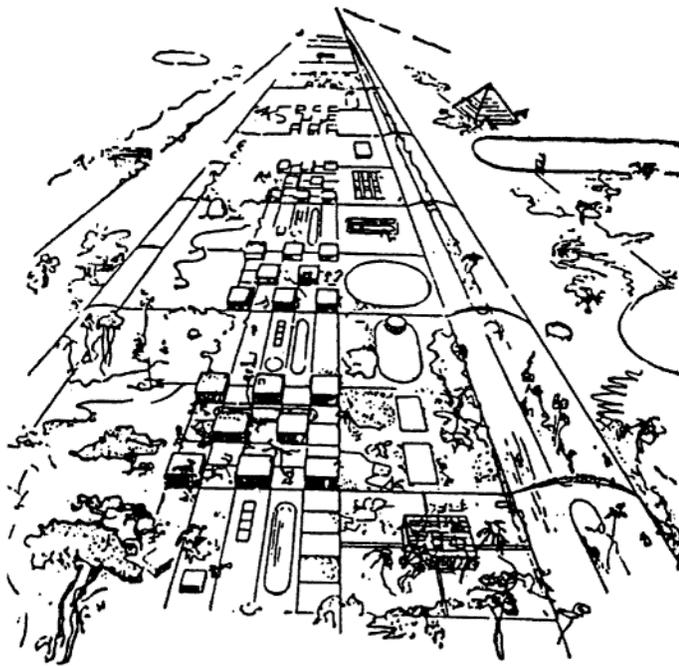**Fig. 6.** Eskilstuna, Sweden. Distribution of buildings in the older quarter of town (Leighley, 1928).

Fig. 7. Plan for Magnitogorsk, Ernst May, 1930, aerial view. A linear scheme that reflects Lenin's goals for Soviet development: "We must aim at the fusion of industry and agriculture...by means of a more diffused settlement pattern for the people." Reprinted from D.Lewis, ed., *Urban Structure: Architects' Yearbook 12, 1968.*

separation of urban and rural domains. Sometimes a city would make its gardens and fields a walled component of the urban structure, as in the old nucleus of Cahors in a meander of the river Lot. In Yoruba cities, farmers and city-dwellers and the urban edge consists of a farm belt as much as fifteen miles wide. At other times, the producing garden is a regular component of houses throughout the city. In China, not only was intensive truck gardening found within the city, but also most houses devoted a small portion of their yard to gardening. We have only spottily written history of the transformation of producing gardens into idealized pleasure gardens. For Europe, the critical time for this was the sixteenth century (Jackson, 1980).

5 LAND DIVISION

The relation of rural land divisions to the urban form that supersedes them is a vast, critical subject, and we have not scratched much beyond the surface. I can point to some exemplary case studies to demonstrate how much we miss by neglecting this line of inquiry.

One instance is Pierce Lewis' classic study, *New Orleans—The Making of an Urban Landscape,* where we are shown the transformation of the narrow fan-shaped French plantation lots within the convex meander of the Mississippi into the radial boulevards of the expanding city (Fig. 5). Another instance is an article by Michael E. Bonine on "The Morphogenesis of Iranian Cities," where the loose grid of towns like Shiraz and Yazd, detectable through the so-called organic city form, and the long linear streets with their rows of courtyard houses, are derived by him from the channels of subterranean watercourses, or *qanat,* and a system of strip irrigation and rectangular field division (Bonine, 1979, pp. 208–224).

Now the documentation of this process whereby an antecedent rural landscape translates itself into urban form is exceedingly difficult. In most cases it is impossible to reconstruct this landscape except in relatively recent history. The English have started to rediscover, for example, how the common lands and open fields that surrounded towns were first alienated to individual ownership, beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, and were then transformed into a belt of urban extension. We can see there, if we know how to read the evidence, the medieval footpaths and the furlongs of the old open fields underneath the modern network of streets.

The English have also been able to take advantage of two invaluable field surveys of the nineteenth century. The tithe maps were produced after the Tithe Commutation Act of 1836 in connection with changing the tax system on land holdings from tithes to a money payment—that is, to a fixed rent on each holding. Most parishes in England and Wales were surveyed for this purpose, and the maps give us a precise picture of the configuration of fields. This one can superimpose on the famous ordinance survey maps of nineteenth century towns, drawn to a uniform scale. By matching the same segments in the tithe and ordinance maps of Leeds, for example, it is possible to show how the pre-urban *cadaster* determined the lines of the urban fabric.

We have still, within the context of the pre-industrial city, to comment on the acclimation of rural housing types to city streets. The evidence, never easy to gather, is steadily disappearing and scholarly interest remains marginal. The Burgerhaus of the Swiss town is a classic case of a farmstead being brought within the urban boundaries and changing over time under pressures from urban economy, lack of building space, and new architectural styles. In Sweden too, the adaptation of the rural

farmstead to the city-form was slow and not complete until the late nineteenth century. An example, from the Malardalen towns of central Sweden, indicates the grouping of household buildings around a central yard before a single large house facing the street would absorb these scattered, individual sheltered functions (Fig. 6).

Let me site two other examples, one Western and the other Islamic. The medieval fortified court, or *curia,* has an urban apotheosis in more than one cultural sphere. The Islamic *haws,* on the other hand, was a large open courtyard with lodging on all four sides. The frequent location of this habitat on the outskirts of cities and the reported presence of cattle underscore the fact that we are dealing with the urban adaptation of a rural settlement form. Then there are those historical situations where no such adjustment was necessary, because the environmental order of the countryside and that of the city were made of the same cloth, both in terms of architecture and its arrangement into landscapes of form (Raymond, 1984, pp.86–87).

There are two points I want to pick up and emphasize here. The first is the self-conscious survival of village settlement patterns within the fabric of a city. The second is the seeming finality of city walls, and the contradiction this implies for the rural-urban continuum here espoused.

The first of these points entails both atavistic holdovers on the part of urbanized country folk and administrative control on the part of state authority. A striking modern example of the former is in squatter settlements like those of Zambian towns. The pattern may not be obvious at first, but the units are soon discovered—twenty huts or so around a common space and a physical grouping resembling a circle. In fact, squatter settlements would be a critical unit of study for those junctions of town and country under review in this essay. Are these ubiquitous formations best viewed as places in which rural people lose their traditional identity in preparation for city life, as it is so often maintained? Or do they, rather, represent a spontaneous opportunity for the city to regenerate its sense of tradition?

The administrative control has a number of rationales, all more or less coercive. In China, especially under the Han Dynasty, the aim was to integrate the lineage community into the administrative system. The same word—*li*—designated a village, a city quarter and a measure of length. The initial restructuring of the countryside may well have entailed a form of synoecism, where a number of adjacent villages were converted into market towns. The subsequent division of cities into *li* was probably intended to keep a check on the largely agricultural population by preserving village organization. How physical this affinity continued to be is hard to know. A recent study of some Florentine new towns in the fourteenth century showed how villages were forcefully de-mapped, and their inhabitants brought to live in separate corners of the new towns which, in their strictly gridded layouts, bore little physical relation to the original village nuclei.

As to the second point, note that the role of the walled edge as an emphatic divider of town and country has been overdrawn. Let me cite China. Despite the fact that any administrative town of consequence would be expected to be walled, the uniformity of building styles, and the layout and the use of ground space, carried one from city to suburb to open countryside without any appreciable disjunction, as Sinologists have persuasively argued. G. William Skinner writes, "The basic cultural cleavages in China were those of class and occupation…and of region…not those between cities and their hinterlands" (Skinner, 1977, p. 269). Indeed, we can go further and

argue that the unchanging rural environment, not the city, was the dominant component of Chinese civilization.

6 MODERN PARADIGMS

Under its present system of government, the walls of Chinese towns would have come down for ideological reasons even when they were not functionally obsolete. It may have been Rousseau who first insisted that city walls artificially segregate crowds of urbanities from the peasants spread thinly over vast tracts of land. He urged that the territory be peopled evenly. But it was the Communists who gave their own gloss to this injunction of the Enlightenment. Through their Marxist forefathers, they would object to the idea of an urban/rural dichotomy: city walls artificially severed the mighty proletariat into an urban and a rural contingent, thus eviscerating its strength.

The fear of a conspiracy to weaken the masses by dividing them is behind Marxist doctrines of disurbanization. The Marx-Engels Manifesto of 1848 prescribed the "gradual abolition of the distinction between town and country, by a more equitable distribution of the population over the country." This was at the core of the great debate in Russia in the twenties between the urbanists—led by the planner L. Sabsovitch who advocated the construction of urban "agglomerations," vast communes that would hold four thousand people each in individual cells—and the disurbanists. N. A. Milyutin was chief among them, who proposed the abandonment of the old cities and the dispersal of the population by means of linear cities in free nature, first along the great highways that linked Moscow with its neighboring towns, and eventually across the whole extravagant spread of Russia (Fig. 7). The agricultural and industrial workers would live together, building a common proletariat, the new Communist aristocracy (Kopp, 1970).

The Russian debate thus appropriated one of the great settlement theories of modern times, which sought to erase the deprivations of the big city by bringing everyone close to nature along an open-ended transportation spine. The idea did not need Communism to support it. It was invented by a Spanish civil engineer in the 1880s, and was elaborated by the likes of Chambless, Richard Neutra and Le Corbusier for anyone who would buy it. We see its ultimate manifestation in the linear development along our freeways today, which, like the urban fringe with its suburbia, dissolved the city in open land.

The only other modern settlement concept of comparable power and seduction is the garden city, an English anti-urban dispersal fantasy of the turn of the century, which astonishingly was adopted as national policy after World War II. This is not the place to speak about Ebenezer Howard and Raymond Unwin, of Letchworth and Welwyn. In that circle, garden city and garden suburb were severely juxtaposed. Letchworth was a self-sufficient town of 30,000, a model for the future reconstruction of the capitalist/industrial environment; Hampstead Garden Suburb was a dependency of London, nothing more. For us, and for the case we are pleading, these elegances of dogma are unpersuasive. What is central to our argument is that from at least the middle of the nineteenth century, the history of the AngloAmerican picturesque suburb, not to say suburbia in general, firmly established an intermediate environment between town and country, or as Frederick Law Olmstead was to phase it, "sylvan surroundings…with a considerable share of urban convenience" (Fig. 8). So durable has this intermediate environment proved that it alone should persuade us of
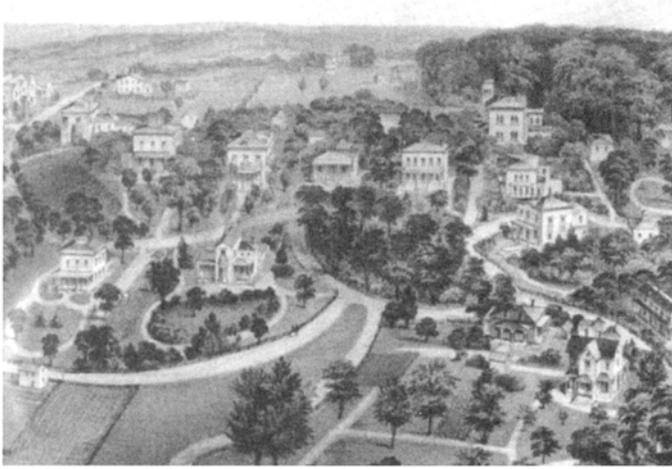
Fig. 8. View of Glendale, Ohio, ca. 1860. Planned by Robert C.Phillips in 1851, Glendale is probably the first American picturesque suburb designed in sympathy with the rural landscape ideals later popularized by Olmstead. (Source: Glendale Heritage Preservation.)

the futility of ever seeing urban and rural as two distinct worlds, but rather as two aspects of a single continuum.

7 TOWN AND COUNTRY: BEYOND DUALISM

This article has a modest aim. In the context of a broad-based discussion of cities, urban design and settlements which freely moves across the man–made environment, it seemed worthwhile to emphasize that this physical canvas not be rent because of ideological or scholarly agendas. For too long we have extolled the city as a remarkable arti–fact, and urban life as an elevated form of engagement with the forces of progress, enterprise and an entire range of civilities. A polar oppo–site was needed, one that was easy-to-handle—the countryside. The village and its ways acquired many friends of its own in time, but also a heavy aura of sentiment that had to do with naturalness and honesty and enduring value.

Today, given the radical changes in the traditional landscapes of the world, we can hardly seek comfort in such antipodes. And yet the urge is irresistible to lament a paradise lost, a sad disjunction between a time-honored way of doing things and the arrogant disrespectful arrivism of the new.

To see the interdependence of two landscapes and two ways of life is an urgent scholarly strategy, to study the environment as one, not as village versus town or high style versus low. It could also be a healing thing that softens obstinate prejudices and eases anxieties rampant in those many parts of the world that are trapped between tradition and the present.

The land spreads out as one: time flows. The breaks, barriers, and di-vorces are of our own making. Our charge now, I venture to suggest, is to find tradition in the central business district of the metropolis, to see the old irrigation ditch beneath the fancy tree-lined avenue, to recog-nize the ancient process of synoecism that brought villages together to form cities at work still in our modern conurbations. Tradition has no end: it cannot be superseded. The only enduring truth is in the seam-less continuities of time and place. ■

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