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HISTORIOGRAPHY AVANT LA LETTRE?

On the Uses of History in Early Town Planning Manuals

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It is widely recognized among planning historians that “the history of planning has always been part of planning” (Freestone 2000: 1). As integral parts of planning concepts and ideas, references and historical accounts in diverse forms have been put in circulation since the close of the nineteenth century. With the establishment of an independent British town planning literature and, as a potential result of this, also the rise of English as *lingua franca* within the town planning discourse, exemplary models and historical narratives were increasingly discussed on an international level. The release of seminal books, the foundation of the first Anglophone professional town planning journal, and personal interactions at conferences and exhibitions in Berlin, Düsseldorf, and London led to the culmination of this process around 1909/1910. The remarkable knowledge exchange finally achieved a global impact and resulted in a canonization of historical narratives in town planning literature.

This tacit quasi-mandatory agreement to include a historical introductory chapter to comprehensive town planning literature has been raised in several papers over the last two decades (e.g. Freestone 2000; 2018; Hebbert and Sonne 2006; Ward, Freestone and Silver 2011). As these largely focus on Anglophone writings published since the eventful years of 1909/1910 and later, this study complementary aims at assessing the use of history in writings published in the prelude to this decisive juncture. As the largest group of precursor writings comprise of initial German town planning manuals, this study focuses on these, compares them with early British handbooks, and connects them with the starting point of the above-mentioned papers.

This chapter firstly discusses related methodological approaches of literature-based analysis in planning history in general and the value of handbooks as research subjects for such an inquiry in particular. It then traces the emergence and increase of historical accounts and references in early town planning manuals and examines, in which way German and British handbook authors implied a view on the past and for what purpose they made use of history. In comparison with further contemporary writings, this chapter evaluates the preconditions and the specific context, in which these historical narratives arose and how they were perceived in the contemporary town planning discourse. Resuming some observations of the abovementioned previous papers, this chapter finally discusses to what extent the debate on history mirrored or even informed the formation process of modern town planning as an academic subject and profession.

Planning Theory as Means in Planning History

Besides the omnipresent maps and plans, written sources have also been a highly valuable communication channel in modern town planning. Planning theory in diverse formats such as journal articles, plan descriptions, reports, treatises, or manuals served as documented manifestations of a growing interdisciplinary town planning discourse and was received widely by contemporary practitioners, trainees, local authorities, as well as an interested public.

State of Research and Related Methodological Approaches

In the early years of planning history, theoretical writings were often neglected as a sole source in planning history. An explicit focus on these only emerged in the mid-1970s, when Gerd Albers released his *Entwicklungslinien im Städtebau* (1975), in which he traced the development of town planning on the basis of international planning theory. The collected volume *Stadt und Text* by Magnago Lampugnani, Frey, and Perotti (2011), which further examined the history of town planning ideas in the mirror of theoretical writings, resumed the use of written sources as research subject and, together with their comprehensive multi-volume town planning anthology (Magnago Lampugnani, Frey and Perotti 2005; 2008; 2014), consolidated this literature-based research approach in German-language planning history publications. A comprehensive study focusing specifically on town planning manuals was published more recently in the same research group (Magnago Lampugnani *et al.* 2017).

In a cognate yet distinct manner, several Anglophone papers applied a bibliographic approach. Anthony Sutcliffe paved the way with his comprehensive annotated bibliography (1977; 1981), presenting the state of the art of planning history within an international scope, whereas a decade later various bibliographic essays (e.g. Cherry 1991; Monclús 1992; Freestone and Hutchings 1993) displayed its progression relying on literature at a national level. Since the turn of the millennium, specific long-range histories of planning ideas drew upon achievements of key town planning literature (e.g. Freestone 2000; 2018; Hebbert and Sonne 2006). However, the retrospective and simultaneously prospective paper on “the ‘new’ planning history” (Ward, Freestone and Silver 2011) did not include the analysis of town planning literature in their list of key planning history genres. Given this fact, it may be concluded that so far theoretical writings played a relatively minor role as main research subject in the Anglophone planning history discourse. A revision of these circumstances constitutes a desideratum to which the current author aims to contribute.

Town Planning Manuals and Their Specific Characteristics

Theoretical writings on town planning may not only be regarded as an effective medium to disseminate new ideas, but also as a mirror of the professional debate. In this sense, journal articles largely address thematically restricted but up-to-date topics and therefore allow quite appropriate insights to the current contextual setting, whereas more extensive writings represent a rather approved, supra-individual technical knowledge. Soberly formulated and structured with a didactic intention, town planning manuals in particular represent an authoritative and far-reaching type among the latter and depict a comprehensive perspective on the (emerging) discipline. According to Robert Freestone’s argumentation in his examination of town planning exhibitions, manuals may, along the same lines, be regarded as more than individual entities and, beyond their originality and inherent divergence, collectively serve well as “variegated expressions of broader cultural and professional development” (Freestone 2015: 434). As these specifics fit well for an investigation on the emergence and consolidation of references and historical

narratives, this study decidedly concentrates on handbook literature, yet verifying identified tendencies by consulting other written source formats.

Assessing the Use of History in Early Town Planning Manuals

Before 1910, town planning manuals have been published in Spain, France, Germany, the USA, Italy, and Great Britain (Magnago Lampugnani *et al.* 2017: 375–385). Among them, German and British publications by far form the largest group, wherefore they are selected as representative objects of investigation for this study. In either of the following sections that are sorted by linguistic context, the initial handbooks – which are the ones published by Reinhard Baumeister (1876) and by Alfred Richard Sennett (1905) respectively – will lead into the discussions on the uses of history. They will be followed by the manuals by Josef Stübben (1890; 1907) and Rudolf Eberstadt (1909), as well as by Raymond Unwin (1909) and Inigo Triggs (1909). These authors played a significant role in the emerging town planning discourse at that time and displayed – corresponding to their professional background and specific overarching ambitions – an instructive range of individual approaches for the use of exemplary references and historic narratives. The end of the envisaged time frame is marked by the year 1909, in which the last three of the selected handbooks were released. At the same time, the publications by Triggs and Unwin form the connecting point to the abovementioned previous studies.

Current References and Historic Narratives in Early German Town Planning Manuals

In the aftermath of first critical disputes on precarious housing conditions in Berlin and Vienna in the early 1870s (Bruch 1870; Arminius 1874; Orth 1875), engineer Reinhard Baumeister (1833–1917) compiled his considerable experience with railway and urban development into the comprehensive writing *Stadt-Erweiterungen in technischer, baupolizeilicher und wirtschaftlicher Beziehung* (1876). In this initial handbook specifically devoted to modern town planning, he condensed technical, legislative, and economic issues into a general groundwork to regulate the extension of towns. In Baumeister's opinion, aesthetic criteria should not be included in town planning legislation as they could not be traced scientifically. He moreover claimed that the picturesque appearance of medieval cities could not be repeated in modern town extensions and therefore argued to avoid direct adoptions of historic models. Consequently, he assessed practical and artistic questions of squares by analyzing geometrically configured street intersections, and refrained from illustrating the few built examples he mentioned in his text (Baumeister 1876: 182).

However, in 1890 – only a year after Camillo Sitte had argued against Baumeister's previous neglect of artistic requirements in town planning in his far-reaching treatise *Städte-Bau* (1889) – Baumeister published *Städtisches Strassenwesen und Städtereinigung*, a second manual on street systems and the cleaning of cities. In the first three chapters, Baumeister discussed general town planning issues and further developed earlier ideas. In his visual argumentation, he assigned city names to square layouts that appear strikingly similar to those shown in the previous manual. The comparison between these two publications (Figure 1.1.1) reveals that he – in contrast to his declared convictions – has in fact already in 1876 analyzed and depicted slightly modified built examples, such as the displayed squares of Berlin, Dresden, and Brussels. He furthermore added and discussed finer elaborated plans of considerable historic model squares, such as the Piazza del Popolo in Rome or the forecourt of St. Trinité in Hausmann's Paris. Noteworthy, most of these vignette plans and their brief descriptions appear in the book, when Baumeister – after explaining open spaces and traffic junctions in a rather technical manner – discussed architectonic

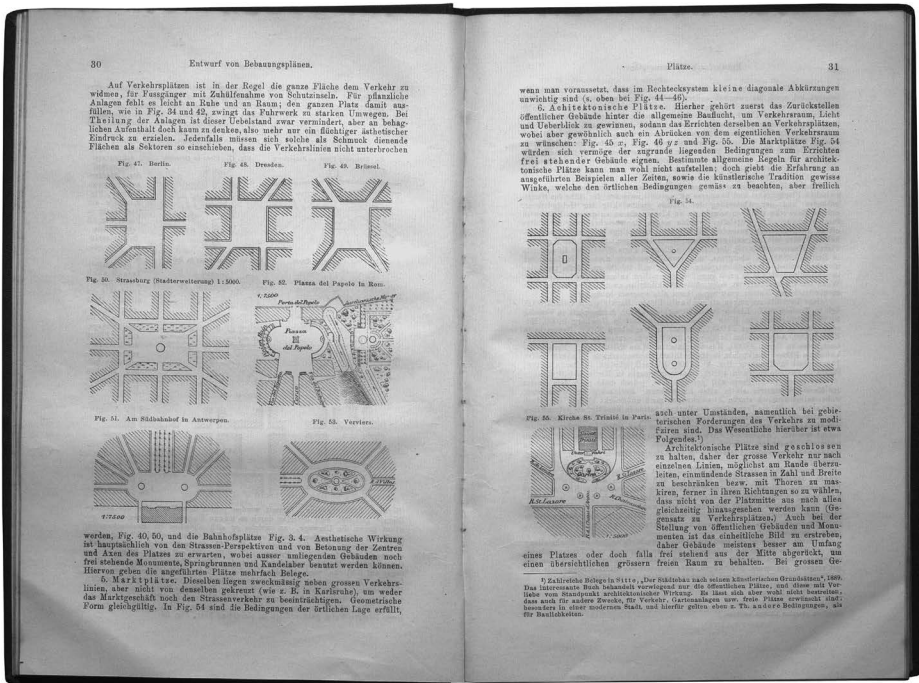
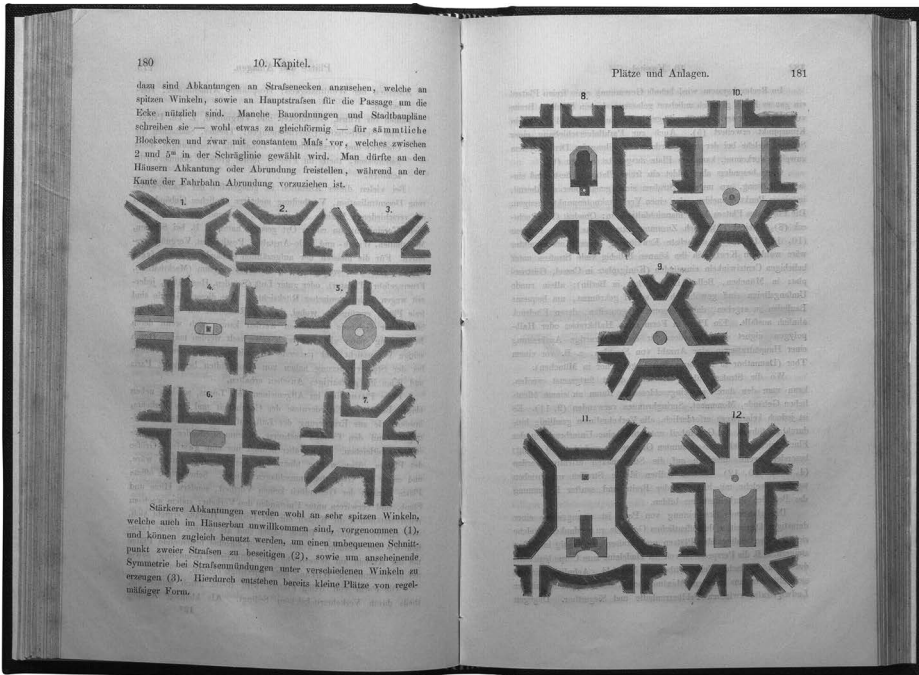


FIGURE 1.1.1 Reinhard Baumeister (1833–1917) discussed street intersection layouts in his manual *Stadt-Erweiterungen* (1876) only regarding their geometrical constellation (on the upper double page). Yet, he disclosed the locations of strikingly similar drawings in his second manual *Städtisches Strassenwesen und Städtereinigung* (1890) and depicted even more historic models by showing a set of graphically more detailed best practice examples on the lower double page.

Sources: Baumeister 1876, 180–181 (top); Baumeister 1890, 30–31 (bottom).

squares. At this point, he furthermore confessed that, even if “no general rules could be defined for such squares, experience and examples from all epochs as well as an artistic tradition may still give certain references” (Baumeister 1890: 31).

Cooperating with Baumeister and building upon his and Sitte’s achievements, Cologne master builder Josef Stübben (1845–1936) also relied on textual and illustrative descriptions of references in his manual *Der Städtebau* (1890). In his contribution to the encyclopedic and lavishly illustrated *Handbook of Architecture* series, he analyzed and compared hundreds of mostly nineteenth-century square layouts and street sections in order to decode and classify them for further practice. Extending and, regarding the use of references, by far surpassing Baumeister’s writings, Stübben deduced appropriate dimensions that are further developed and more differentiated than the rather rough guidelines provided by the Prussian Law on Building Lines of 1875, which defined the authoritative principles of their time. Noteworthy, he included a short, three-page subchapter rendering a “historical review” of public squares in artistic respects spanning from ancient Greece to contemporary times. In this context, Stübben reaffirmed his attitude to consider the design and implementation of public squares as the main artistic challenge of modern town planning. To successfully realize these, he collected aesthetic requirements of public squares and systematically examined criteria for their planning (Stübben 1890: 189).

Stübben extended and rearranged the content of his manual for the second edition (1907), especially by splitting the section “design of town development plans” and creating a separate one on “comprehensive town plans”. On almost 40 pages, he presented a further “historical review” as introductory chapter for the new section, neatly structured by epochs from pre-Greek antiquity to the recent times. Supported by a great wealth of plans of historic towns (Figure 1.1.2),

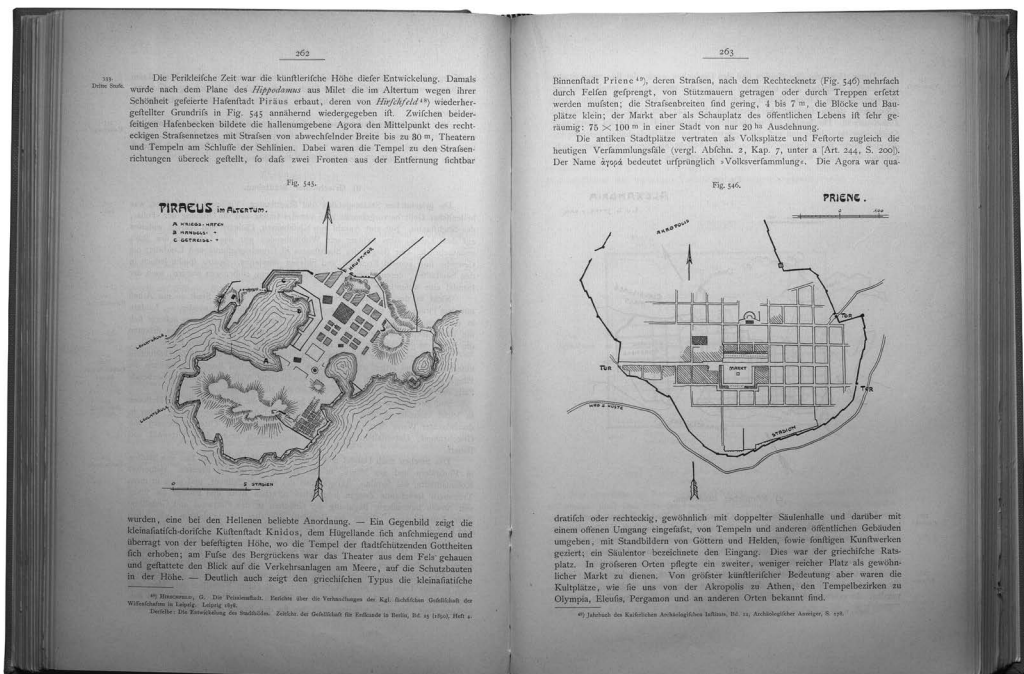


FIGURE 1.1.2 “A history of town planning has not yet been written” states Josef Stübben (1845–1936) in the second edition of his widely-recognized handbook *Der Städtebau* (1907, 260). With his historic outline he did not intend to accomplish this task and, instead, regarded his retrospect as support for practitioners dealing with current planning issues.

Source: Stübben 1907, 262–263.

he particularly evaluated their structural layout and distinguished between straight and curved street patterns, the most controversially discussed topic in the German town planning discourse of the 1890s. Stübßen regretted that the history of town planning has not yet been written, but refrained from filling this gap himself. Instead, he underlined that he “only intended to present an idea of the development of town planning in historical times” and at the same time disclosed his aim to “provide a certain framework to approach current town planning duties on the basis of earlier achievements” (Stübßen 1907: 260).

Two years later, national economist Rudolf Eberstadt (1856–1922) published his manual *Handbuch des Wohnungswesens und der Wohnungsfrage* (1909), which embedded his central topic – the housing question – in a larger town planning context. Starting with the chapter “Entwicklung der städtischen Bauweise” that examines the development of housing and urban construction, he concentrated on the interplay of legislative frameworks, technical measures, and economic conditions in a historic perspective and hence demonstrated his scientific approach to town planning. His historic elaborations distinguished between founded and grown towns and at first discussed towns in ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, Greece, and Rome. Starting from the middle ages (Figure 1.1.3), over the early modern times up to the present, Eberstadt changed his scope of observation and focused decidedly on German towns. This confined historical analysis led him to the conclusion that the current town planning problems are either the result of a natural

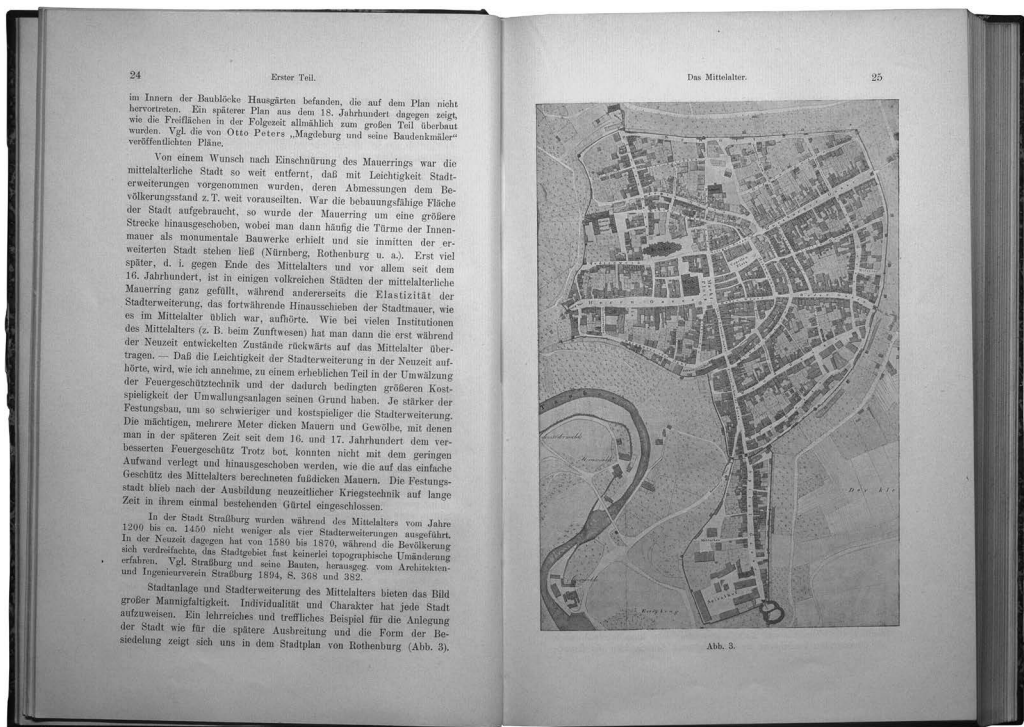


FIGURE 1.1.3 This plan of Rothenburg is one of the few characteristic illustrations accompanying the historic analysis in the manual of Rudolf Eberstadt (1856–1922). He discussed its street network, the layout of building blocks, and the plot division as essential factors regarding the housing conditions.

Source: Eberstadt 1909, 24–25.

development and are therefore unchangeable, or are based on an arbitrary administrative system and thus may – and need to – be changed. This observation served him as a starting point for later discussions in his manual (Eberstadt 1909: 58, 62).

In his fourth chapter “the practice of the town planner”, Eberstadt focused his argumentation on the promotion of his preferred town planning element: the residential street. In this context, he particularly referred to specific previous examples. Recapitulating his observations conducted in the introductory historic analysis, he subsumed that such references certainly provided an “inspiration for the present” (ibid.: 183, 191). It is remarkable that in the context of the residential street, Eberstadt untypically argued on a rather emotive level: additionally to his descriptions of the historic value, he emphasized the sublime aesthetics of such street sceneries and furthermore justified it by the safety of playing children – instead of exemplifying his scientific claim with legislative, technical, or economic facts.

Engaging with History in Early British Town Planning Manuals

Although most British cities were already suffering from overcrowding and congestion during the entire nineteenth century, the British town planning discourse emerged only in the context of Ebenezer Howard’s seminal writing *To-Morrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform* (1898) and the establishment of the Garden City Association a year later. In 1905, electrical and civil engineer Alfred Richard Sennett (1858–1926) published the extensive two-volume study *Garden Cities in Theory and Practice* as the first comprehensive writing on town planning matters in Great Britain. After an impassionate plea for Garden Cities in his introductory chapter, he introduced Howard’s idea and its – as he explicitly emphasized – “circular” model. Questioning its proposed form that he took literally, Sennett rendered examples of “ancient” cities such as Athens, Piraeus, and Rome as well as cities shaped in “modern times”, namely Athens’ modern transformation (Figure 1.1.4), Washington, New York, Turin, Vienna, and Munich. Finally, he completed his historical elaborations with local proposals as the reconstruction plans for London after the Great Fire of 1666 by Sir Christopher Wren and John Evelyn, as well as John Nash’s Regent Street. This instructive digression of carefully selected historic examples – all largely based on a rectilinear street pattern – taught him that “the trend, during the last couple of centuries, [has] been towards a more and more rigidly rectangular plan” (Sennett 1905: 66), which he concluded to be more impressive, more practicable, and in general superior to the “circular” Garden City model (ibid.: 94–95, 98–99).

In the third chapter, Sennett thoroughly described the “rectangular” ideal city of James Silk Buckingham (1849) as second and complementary example before he presented his own plan for the laying-out of the First Garden City, which he considered as a practicable compromise between Howard’s and Buckingham’s ideal conceptions (Sennett 1905: 135). Underlining the potential for its implementation, Sennett adapted his proposed plan directly to the actual site purchased by the Garden City Association (ibid.: 124), but did not mention the latest developments as the competition for Letchworth in 1904 and the subsequent planning by its winners Barry Parker and Raymond Unwin. For his Garden City model, Sennett presented a rigid street structure around the municipal center with parallel promenades and an innovative hexagonal plot distribution. Inviting the reader to a virtual “walk through the city” (ibid.: 201), he illustrated his vision with historic examples of different building types, building methods, and materials that are meant to fit into this framework. In each case, he strongly built upon textual and visual explanations of built examples. These detailed architectural observations, together with his further chapters on sociological, economic, infrastructural, and agricultural aspects of urban coexistence, display “the potentials of applied science in a Garden City” – the title of a

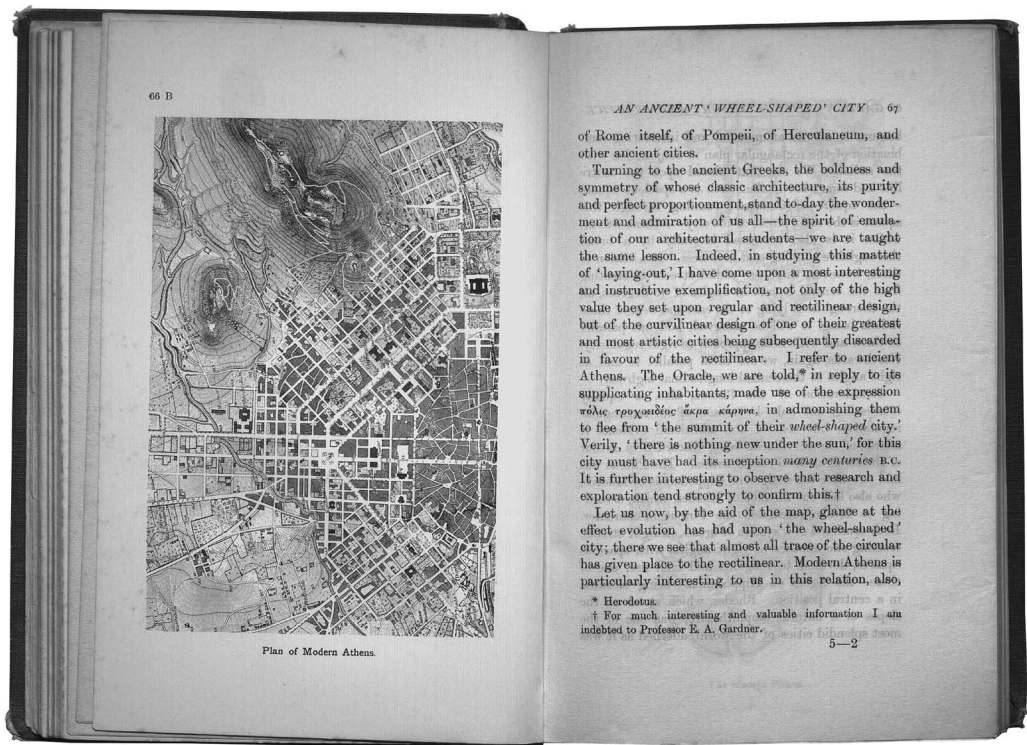


FIGURE 1.1.4 Alfred Richard Sennett (1858–1926) chose only cities for his historic argumentation that are based on a rectilinear layout or such examples as Athens, which has been reshaped with a rectangular structure in the early nineteenth century.

Source: Sennett 1905, 66B–67.

paper Sennett read before the British Science Association in 1903, which he amplified into his comprehensive volumes on Garden Cities.

In 1906, architect and garden designer Harry Inigo Triggs (1876–1923) won the Godwin Bursary, a respectable travel grant awarded by the Royal Institute of British Architects, which allowed him to explore modern continental town planning *in situ*. Basing upon this study tour to Paris, Berlin, Vienna, and Munich, as well as previous sojourns on the Continent, Triggs compiled his experiences into the manual *Town Planning, Past, Present, and Possible* (1909). Referring widely to existing planning theory, Triggs introduced key town planning matters of French, German, and Austrian pioneers such as Eugène Hénard, Josef Stübben, and Camillo Sitte. After his introduction, Triggs provided a historical chapter, which largely draws upon Stübben’s comprehensive 1907 “historical review”. Its title “Types of Ancient and Modern Towns” already indicates his interest in a classification of historic towns. This becomes even more evident considering that Triggs merged Stübben’s review chapter with the following one on “General Principles of Building Cities”, especially its part describing three different categories of street systems. He thus blended Stübben’s historical survey with a structural analysis. Triggs in general adopted Stübben’s text structure fairly accurate and only omitted several examples or in few cases added some further information in order to adjust it for his intended readership. But he dropped a complete chapter, noteworthy the one on Garden Cities – an interesting detail underlining his apparent preference for a continental grand manner metropolitan development.

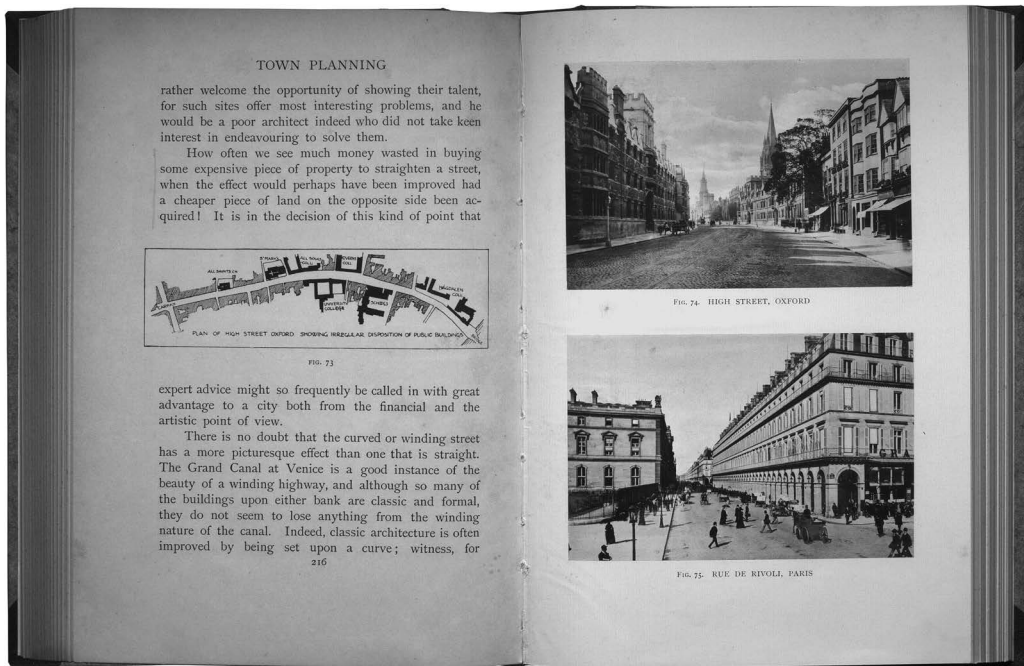


FIGURE 1.1.5 Harry Inigo Triggs (1876–1923) devoted a whole chapter on the historical development of towns. He furthermore introduced both chapters in his book that address his concept of town planning and visualized his mental picture of streets and open spaces with detailed descriptions and photographs of historic examples.

Source: Triggs 1909, 216–216A.

The tripartite conception of his book – divided in past, present, and possible – is not explicitly articulated in the table of content, but becomes clear at second glance. The retrospective review is followed by two chapters discussing the current issues of traffic and town extensions, in which he largely referred to recent French and German examples. The last two chapters finally form the prospective part and deal with the planning of streets and open spaces, delineating Triggs’ town planning conception. Most interestingly, each of these chapters again begins with a brief excursus into history, connecting his suggested thoughts with examples of different ages. Triggs furthermore contrasted the effect of different streetscapes, such as the curved High Street in Oxford with the perfectly straight Rue de Rivoli in Paris (Figure 1.1.5), exemplifying their respective appeal with perspective photographs, which support his argumentation.

The apprenticed engineer Raymond Unwin (1863–1940) was one of the first Britons to gain practical experience in town planning. Preparing the plans for the model village New Earswick, the First Garden City at Letchworth, and Hampstead Garden Suburb together with his Partner Barry Parker in the 1900s, he has already been a widely known and well-respected town planner when he published his manual *Town Planning in Practice* in 1909. Unwin sought to promote “civic art as the expression of civic life of the community” (Unwin 1909: 10) and searched for guidelines to achieve results that are also aesthetically relevant. In this respect, he considered that “the study of old towns and their buildings is most useful, [...] almost essential” (ibid.: 12) and aimed to “derive useful lessons from the beautiful towns of other lands and other days, not seeking to copy their features, but finding the reasons which gave rise to them” (ibid.: 154).

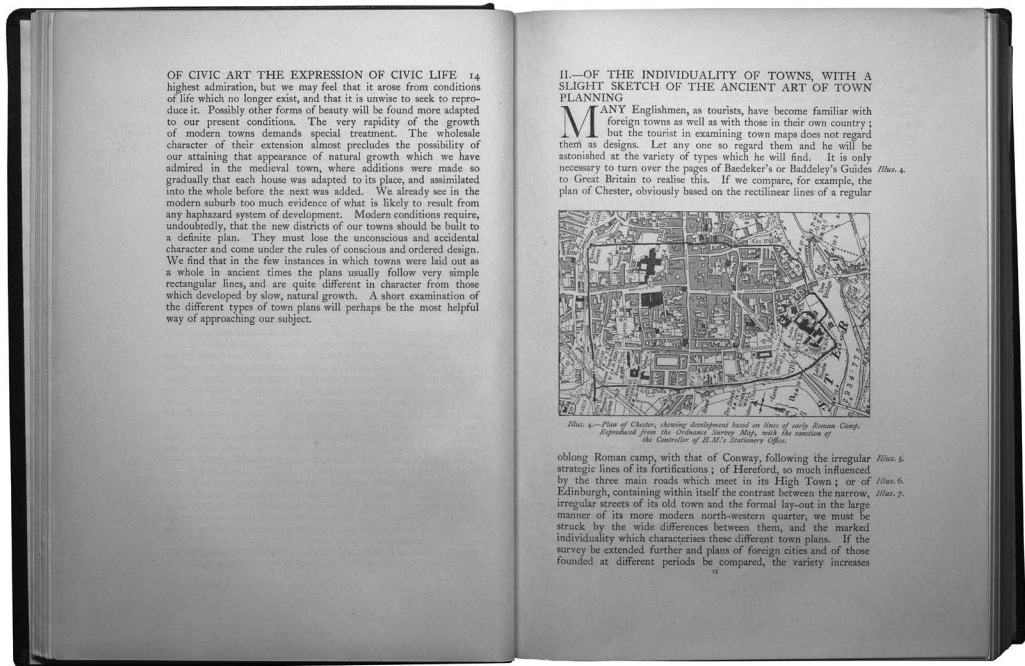


FIGURE 1.1.6 Raymond Unwin (1863–1940) regarded the individuality of a town as an important quality to work with during the process of preparing a town planning scheme. He drew on specific built examples, so when explaining, for instance, the rectangular and diagonal street systems, he argued along the plans of Turin and Washington. His historical chapter, which provides a classification system to understand particular town characteristics, is in consequence called “Of the Individuality of Towns, with a Slight Sketch of the Ancient Art of Town Planning”.

Source: Unwin 1909, 20–21.

Reviewing different planning approaches through the ages, Unwin provided a “Slight Sketch of the Ancient Art of Town Planning” by analyzing historic examples and systematically classifying them for comparison and study. He structured his analysis by epochs, but did not regard them as decisive for his systematic structure. In order to understand its particular characteristics, he instead favored the categorization, whether a town is designed comprehensively or grown successively, and examined the peculiar forms of its borders and street structure – such as the rectangular grid of Turin or the checkerboard system with diagonal thoroughfares of Washington (Figure 1.1.6). Interestingly, he equated individuality with beauty or picturesqueness, which in his opinion were created by the instinct and tradition of premodern builders (ibid.: 12). It is therefore a revealing detail that he entitled his historical chapter “The Individuality of Towns”. Unwin was aware that he was only able to invest a limited capacity for the historical analysis and therefore can “only give sufficient examples [...] and a sufficient sketch of the historical development of town planning”, to explain his findings in a comprehensible way. Nevertheless, he hoped, that “some competent authority will take in hand the complete history of town development and town planning, with a classification of the different types of plan” (ibid.: 16) which will provide an important working basis for the practical town planner.

Context, Correlation, and Plausible Progression of Identified Uses of History

The examination of the selected early town planning manuals traced the emergence and increase of references and historical accounts within the German and British publication contexts and displayed various aims and purposes for the use of history. But where did these historical accounts originate? To what extent did the handbook authors and their positions relate on each other? And can a certain trend be observed? The following chronological consideration will approach these questions.

While Reinhard Baumeister avoided to refer to actually built examples in general and only discussed them tacitly in his 1876 manual, he reevaluated his strategy in the town planning part of his second manual (1890) and exemplified his principles with descriptions and specifications concerning the dimensions of actually built references. It is not clear, if this decision was due to publication requirements of the *Handbook of Building Lore* series, in which Baumeister was invited to contribute and whose argumentative strategy in general appears to rely upon a rich set of examples, or if it was encouraged by the ongoing corporation with Josef Stübben. However, in 1890, Baumeister openly acknowledged the potentials of experience and tradition in town planning by means of references from all epochs, but neither provided historic narratives in his manuals nor – for the time being – seemed to strive for any historical embedding of his town planning principles. Since his second manual remained disregarded unjustly, his reconsidered approach to historic examples did not receive particular recognition.

As Stübben's first edition (1890) only showed initial attempts of a historic review when suggesting artistic principles of public squares, it is Alfred Richard Sennett's comprehensive manual (1905), which presented the first lengthy historical chapter among the examined manuals. However, due to an early partial translation into Japanese, the double volume seemed to be wider recognized in the Far-Eastern town planning context than within the British Garden City movement (Miller 2016: xxxii). This circumstance enhances the impression that Sennett's book has been rather disconnected from the emerging local Garden City or town planning discourse, even though Sennett became one of the association's first members in 1906 ('Garden City Association. List of Subscriptions' 1906). But it could also be the result of the idiosyncratic approach particularly of his review chapter. Whereas later manual authors applied a look on the past to promote their own town planning ideas, Sennett used his historic flashback to support his arguments against other proposals. By compiling only rectilinear town schemes, he directly affronted Ebenezer Howard's Garden City scheme, which he misinterpreted as a "circular" premise. Sennett's manual was considered in notable book reviews (*Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects* 1906; Geddes 1906) and therefore must have been noticed within the town planning movement – especially with regard to the modest number of extensive works devoted to Garden Cities at that time. But scarcely any later author referred to his writing. However, the only feature he introduced, and which – whether or not by his influence – found distribution soon after, was the position of the historic chapter right after the introduction.

Stübben, who ambitiously listed any available writing on town planning and Garden Cities in his chapter-wise arranged bibliographies, did not take notice of Sennett's publication in his second edition (1907). In general, he largely referred to German-language and some Francophone writings, with only very few references to Italian and British publications, among them Howard's *Garden Cities of To-morrow* (1902), an article by Thomas Horsfall, and specific papers on sanitary engineering and public parks.

Regarding Stübben's approaches to use history, it is worthwhile to reconsider his first edition (1890), in which he exceeded Baumeister's tentative use of built examples as basis for his analysis

of proper streets and square dimensions – a strategy he has already applied in journal articles since the late 1870s. It is therefore not surprising that Stübben also based the comprehensive historical chapter of his second edition (1907) on a growing engagement with the subject, which in this case comprise of several papers published around the turn of the century. The first of this series is “Alte Stadtanlagen” (1894), his review of a publication by Johann Fritz on the legal history of several German towns. Stübben emphasized Fritz’ discovery of distinctive layout patterns of gradually grown and comprehensively designed towns and expanded the discussion to include the dichotomy of straight and curved streets. A year later he developed these ideas further in the ceremonial address “Der Bau der Städte in Geschichte und Gegenwart” (1895), which he gave at the festivities in honor of Karl Friedrich Schinkel. Stübben connected his historical examination of the construction of towns with observations on recent town extensions and an introduction to general town planning principles. Noteworthy, this celebratory lecture today reads like a founding speech for modern town planning. The last of Stübben’s identified templates is *Stadtbaupläne in alter und neuer Zeit*, an extensive essay published by Baumeister in 1902, in which he thoroughly narrated the evolution of towns and their layout plans through the ages, linking the development of towns with the emergence of modern town planning. On the basis of these three related papers, Stübben finally compiled his sound historical chapter, which – as his second edition has been broadly distributed even beyond language borders – also attracted international recognition.

The last three examined handbooks by Rudolf Eberstadt, Inigo Triggs, and Raymond Unwin were all published in 1909 and have several common features regarding their historical accounts. Openly referring to Stübben’s second edition (1907), they all arranged their comprehensive and consistently chronological historical review chapter after the introduction, they combined it with a morphological analysis, and – most interestingly – they all built their own town planning idea upon it. With his interest mainly in housing in a national economist perspective, Eberstadt analyzed the development of housing conditions and their legal and administrative preconditions in Germany, in order to guide the reader to his structural town planning proposals. Both Triggs and Unwin, who particularly addressed architectural aspects of town planning, firstly presented a fairly similar narration of town development during the Mediterranean antiquity. Yet striving for an undogmatic attitude, they took a slightly different path starting from the Middle Ages, selecting particular references that led to their individually preferred town planning concepts: the ‘formal’ Continental metropolis or the ‘informal’ Garden City, respectively.

Beyond that, basically all authors of the selected early town planning manuals have in common that they referred specifically to historic references in situations, in which they could apparently not convince with purely analytical reasoning. These situations include arguments for elusive topics such as artistic principles – often proffered by the architects among the authors as Stübben, Triggs, or Unwin, but noteworthy also by the engineer Baumeister (1890) – or individual preferences, as significantly pronounced by Eberstadt proposing the residential street or Sennett favoring rectilinear street patterns. Since 1890, there have been independent yet converging opinions among the selected authors that the study of old towns served well as reference or inspiration, not in order to copy these, but to deduce general principles that need to be adopted according to current requirements.

Historiography *avant la lettre* in Early Town Planning Manuals?

Since the close of the nineteenth century, the interest in historic reviews on town planning grew continuously. As mentioned above, Stübben (1894; 1895) and Baumeister (1902) published an individual essay or journal articles on the historic development of towns and town planning in

anticipation of Stübben's second edition of his handbook, whereas Eberstadt resumed this issue in a paper (1916) several years after the release of his manual. Conversely, it is not recorded that their three British colleagues examined in this study devoted any other writing specifically to that topic. But were these approaches – within or beyond their manuals – meant as early contributions to a town planning historiography? And how were they perceived by their contemporaries?

Two handbook authors, namely Stübben and Unwin, precisely commented their strategic use of historical accounts, underlining the aim to provide instructions for practitioners. Stübben expressed that his retrospect was only intended to give an approximate picture of the development of town planning and was rather meant as a framework for current practice. Unwin admitted that he had only aimed to find enough historic examples to support his argumentation, preferring to leave the task of a complete history to a competent authority. In the following years, both of them concentrated on practical issues and largely refused further historic examinations. Stübben appreciated Albert Erich Brinckmann's *Platz und Monument* (1908) and discussed this study on the history and aesthetics of civic art in a detailed book review (1909). But as a guest lecturer in the Berlin Polytechnic town planning seminar Stübben himself only introduced rather practical issues or recent French and English examples, whereas seminar founders Felix Genzmer and Joseph Brix both read papers in 1910 on historical reviews of town plans and town planning respectively (both 1912). After the 1910 Town Planning Conference in London it was planned to preserve the exhibited plan collection. Even though Unwin was originally in charge of its compilation, Patrick Geddes finally rearranged the topic-wise sorted material (Royal Institute of British Architects 1911) into a chronological order and provided a comprehensive and didactic historical overview on the development of town building for the travelling "Cities and Town Planning Exhibition" (Geddes and Mears 1911). Even though Unwin also covered "The History of Town Planning and its Relation to Architecture" during his lectureship at the University of Birmingham (University of Birmingham 1911–1914), the responsibilities at the Summer School of Town Planning, which started in Hampstead in 1912, were divided: while he himself taught "The Practice of Town Planning", the course "Town Planning in the Past and in Foreign Countries" was entrusted to Stanley D. Adshead and Patrick Abercrombie, the newly appointed main exponents of the Liverpool Department of Civic Design (Syllabus 1914).

Regarding the contemporary external perception of historical accounts in manuals (and other sources), a few remarks can be found in the *Town Planning Review*. When Abercrombie, as the first editor of this journal, summarized the current extent of town planning literature in 1915, he urged to establish a "historical series" in the journal and critically remarked that "the admirable summaries that have appeared in certain general works are by no means the last word, nor have their authors been able to undertake sufficient research over so varied a field" (Abercrombie 1915: 97). In the context of the emotionally charged controversy around the adoption of examples from the mediaeval times that were "treated with characteristic abrupt condemnation by Henry Aldridge and as a grindstone for his romantic axe by Camillo Sitte", Abercrombie furthermore claimed that "we should like to see mediaeval Town planning studies for its own sake, and not made the cat's-paw of some designing enthusiasts" (ibid.: 97–98).

On the Uses of History in Early Town Planning Manuals

Coming to a conclusion, this study traced the emergence of an interest for the building of towns in history in the late nineteenth century, stimulated by an input from outside the town planning discourse. Right from the start these narratives were connected with a morphological analysis and found their way into manuals in the mid-1900s. The historical accounts in Stübben's far-reaching second edition (1907) proved to constitute a crucial junction, incorporating his and

Baumeister's earlier approaches and resonating in later manuals as those by Eberstadt, Triggs, and Unwin. All released in 1909 and unfolding remarkable similarities regarding their historical anchoring, these three handbooks marked a turning point, initiating a tacit tradition of quasi-obligatory historical preambles.

By supplementing the prelude before the starting point of the above-mentioned papers, this study thus resumes some of their previous observations. Current conclusions call into question whether historical interest in town planning was present from the very beginning, and if these historical accounts can be regarded as an "early history of planning history" (Ward, Freestone and Silver 2011: 232). At least none of the examined authors articulated this objective, nor did the contemporary external readers and reviewers in one of the most important professional journals of that time suggest this. The carefully selected narratives of town building in history might therefore need to be distinguished between parts, which largely correspond with each other, and those that differ. The more or less parallel narrations in those manuals on the town development in the Mediterranean antiquity – and therein especially the idea of the Greek *polis* as desirable form of civic coexistence – build the foundation of a common interest of the authors in the first designed plans of settlements. What follows after is an intently selected sequence of narratives, which represent a legitimizing genealogy of significant examples constructed to lead to the specific planning conceptions of the particular author.

In a nutshell, the growing use of history in early town planning manuals had two main implications on the town planning discourse: In the form of an encyclopedic source of references, history was largely applied to deduce formal design patterns, provide role models for current planning challenges, or underpin arguments for elusive topics. In its second manifestation as historical accounts, the use of history drew wider circles. Historically evaluated derivations served not only to justify the universal claim of individual town planning principals but also to legitimize town planning as academic subject and profession. Beyond that, the intertwining of the evolution of towns and the recent development of town planning finally drew a historical perspective around the rather young practice of 'modern' town planning, informed it significantly, and thus fostered the self-consciousness and identity of the emerging discipline. The common thematic grounds of early handbook authors – among them also the interest in the cradle of town planning in the Mediterranean antiquity – soon defined a set of generally accepted references and historic accounts, and resulted in the creation of a canon of town planning knowledge.

Apparently, such a knowledge canon was adopted rather quickly. As consequence of the wide international diffusion of town planning concepts and ideas, Patrick Abercrombie assumed in a survey on international contributions to town planning literature that it might seem far-fetched for European readers to see historical accounts on American cities referring to ancient Babylon (Abercrombie 1913: 114). But in contrary, the Australian planner George A. Taylor seemingly did not consider it relevant to restrict the geographical context of his historical accounts, and in a natural way began the historic elaborations in his town planning pamphlet with ancient Egypt and Babylon. Obviously regarding even far-flung antique examples as part of a town planning tradition, on which also modern cities built, he generally proposed for the ongoing planning of the new Australian capital Canberra to "pick the plums of history and plant them in Australia" (Taylor 1914: 10).

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