

architectural practice and styles against the backdrop of Iraq's troubled colonial and post-colonial histories. The contribution on Sana'a by Al-Sallal (pp. 85–113) revisits urban space by contrasting the architectural style and social ideals of the old city's housing clusters with the unregulated urban growth of the post-1960s era.

The second part of the volume deals with urban centres which are aspiring to join the exclusive club of world cities. As in the previous section, all essays take a broad historical perspective linking together colonial and post-colonial urban expansion. Yet the focus is specifically on large-scale urban projects with a view to illustrating the socially and economically divisive impact of globalization. Kenzari's fascinating chapter on Tunis (pp. 114–33) concentrates on the Lake Tunis Project, a new urban zone with residential, business and leisure facilities catering for hi-tech industries and international clients. Equally absorbing is Adham's account of the influence of international capitalism and real estate speculation in the creation of spaces of leisure and consumption in twentieth-century Cairo (pp. 134–68). Elsheshtawy's concluding chapter on Dubai (pp. 169–99) offers a multi-faceted account of the negative implications of the globalization discourse surrounding the Burj al-Arab Hotel complex and the Jumeirah Palm Island resort, the two megaprojects which have become world-wide symbols of global Dubai.

Inevitably, some of the contributions are more successful than others in addressing Elsheshtawy's substantive agenda. Yet, overall this is a laudable collective effort with an excellent choice of case-studies which make a compelling argument in favour of the 'urban kaleidoscope'. This certainly provides food for thought for architects, planners, urban specialists and historians working *on* and *in* the Middle East. For the non-regional specialist this book offers a useful insight into ongoing academic debates on Middle Eastern urbanism from an insider's perspective.

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David Gordon (ed.), *Planning Twentieth Century Capital Cities*. London: Routledge, 2009 edn. 320pp. £24.99 pbk.
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This is a collection of short essays summarizing in parallel format selected world capital city histories, as its title declares. Its 15 city narratives are remarkably consistent, keeping to a narrow definition of administrative history – although one might criticize a few more impressionistic contributions (among which I would disappointedly number London) and also a few swamped by the complexity of their subject (among which would come Brussels). Editing is irregular (some incorrect English and computer glitches – Brussels again), but length and focus achieve admirable uniformity. Here lies, for me, much of the value of the book: it presents a consistent body of comparative material and I would use it as an introductory text for a city design course, around which to arrange more critical and problematic readings to explore the considerable tensions showing through Gordon's tight grid.

Introductory essays by editor Gordon and Peter Hall – both planning historians – plus a concluding essay by Hall make it clear that their interest is typology: what

distinguishes capital cities? What is their place among the emerging mega-cities of today? How is their function as capitals balanced with their nature as cities – how here are the representational and the economic balanced? This last issue is brought out by a third introductory chapter by the architect/planner Lawrence Vale on the design nature of capitals, working off the common assumption that a capital should be recognizable as such – like Washington DC and unlike (again) Brussels. Yet for Gordon and Hall size is the distinguishing factor as they insist on placing the cities among lists of the largest agglomerations on the planet in constructions familiar from econometrics and the books of Saskia Sassen. They squeeze in a last essay on New York largely on these grounds.

Not all capitals are big, and if small cities are included, why Ottawa and Helsinki rather than Pretoria and Rabat? (Africa is completely missing from the book.) If one provincial capital is included, Chandigarh, what about others like Le Corbusier's edgy Algiers projects or Nelson Rockefeller's Albany? What about war capitals: Changchun in Japanese Manchuria, Strasbourg under German control (1871–1918, 1941–44). Or purely symbolic capitals like Hendrik Andersen's 1913 *Centre mondial* manifest as Ernest Hébrard's lush Beaux-Arts drawings – the quintessence of the capital type, all the more so for Andersen's suggestion that it might be constructed anywhere on earth (providing maps to show just how).

How might one organize a survey like this one to give it cohesion and force? Wolfgang Braunfels (1976) defined city types (Cathedral Cities, City-States, Princely Seats ... Capital Cities); Thomas Hall (1997) sped through a string of nineteenth-century European capitals as here, but sandwiched this between a general introductory chronology and a series of shared issues (Motivation for Plans, Authors, Decision Processes, Content and Purpose, Elements of Plans ...); Wolfgang Sonne (2003) focused on a group of examples around 1900 to explore the architectural idea of the capital *Gestalt*. Donald Olsen (1986) made issues – expanded to broad, cultural ones – the centre of his study, using only three European capitals (London, Paris, Vienna); Carl Schorske (1980) famously used only one example, Vienna, but explored cultural character with tremendous precision. But in the case of capitals, things seem inevitably to topple back into narratives of plans broached, drawn, debated and set aside as in Hall's chapter on decision making, Arturo Almandoz's edited *Planning Latin America's Capital Cities* (2002) and now in David Gordon's book under review here.

This emphasis on typology and administrative organism deflects discussion from several basic and illuminating tensions making themselves felt as one moves from essay to essay: 1. The steadily increasing isolation of capital complexes within the immensity of most twenty-first-century agglomerations like New Delhi; 2. The counter-model of capitals with representational buildings scattered across their texture, as in London, Paris and especially Brussels; 3. The un-naturalness of fixed representational complexes to begin with. At the heart of these issues may be a fact that this book avoids: centres of power in recent history have been remarkably evanescent. For example, in South Africa since union in 1908, the legislature meets in Cape Town, the judiciary in Bloemfontein, the administration sits in Pretoria (in a complex resembling a capital – which it isn't – with a counter-symbol, the Afrikaner Voortrekker Monument, facing it across the valley). Brussels is really more a figure of speech for the seat of the European Community, with Strasbourg, Luxemburg and Frankfurt functioning parallel to it while it remains capital of Belgium.

Perhaps this imprecision is the whole point: maybe capitals are fundamentally unstable as an idea and as a reality in 2010. This might be why corporate headquarters buildings like the UN or Berlaymont in Brussels can serve perfectly well as seats of power – there are many parallel sorts of power today in different sorts of clothing. The quaintness of the New Delhi ‘bungalow district’ protecting Lutyens’ and Baker’s marble confections makes one aware of the wall of skyscrapers ever thickening around the Paris Boulevard Péripherique signalling its Haussmannian core as a huge symbolic indulgence. Perhaps what we need is a blunt analysis of the capital illusion at its roots. Brussels beckons – it might be time to follow.

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Richard Plunz and Maria Paola Sutto (eds.), *Urban Climate Change Crossroads*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2010. xi + 172pp. 34 figures. 3 tables. Bibliography. £25.00 pbk.
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This edited volume is the product of a forum held in Rome in February 2008 which drew participants from a variety of sectors and disciplines, including architecture, geography, journalism, risk management, medicine, urban planning, medicine, communications and environmental science. The participants mainly came from Italy (16), along with a few participants from the United States of America (6), the United Kingdom (2), Belgium (1) and France (1) to discuss ‘Urban climate change at the crossroads’. The volume is based on the conviction that the world today finds itself at two crossroads: first, the historical crossroad where ‘we either head off the worst of ecological collapse through concerted and forward-looking action, or we face a “Mad Max future” of dystopia, violence and upheaval’ (p. ix). The second crossroad is intellectual in nature and is based on the belief that individual sciences and fields are unable to grasp the magnitude of the economic and environmental challenges that will result from climate change in the near and distant future. Instead, the volume advocates a holistic approach to urban climate change studies and planning, and sustainable urbanization to deal with these economic and environmental challenges, both current and in the future.

The contributions to this volume differ greatly and include theoretical contributions that cross disciplinary fields such as those by Bettina Menne, Harriet Bulkeley, Richenda Connell and Lieven De Cauter. Others focused more narrowly on their specific fields such as communications, architecture, urban planning and governance, to highlight just how approaches in their respective fields should be changed and reoriented in order to make meaningful contributions to urban climate change studies. Case-studies were limited to just two very interesting chapters that discussed the ways in which New York City is addressing climate change through its PlaNYC 2030 programme, and the city’s disaster management planning, in particular the provision of emergency housing should the city be hit by force 3 and 4 hurricanes (against the backdrop of the chaos in New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina). A theme that runs throughout the volume is the need to move away from current climate change approaches that focus overwhelmingly on mitigation (e.g. the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions) to a model which includes adaptation