

## 8. Modern Urbanism, Positive, Negative

### Historical in general

-polis, (Greek), civitas (Latin) originally from words poli-, civi-, meaning community, a body of cooperating people, in order to exist, to prospere

-since antiquity, most successful and resistant built physical structure of human coexistence,

natural growth, cumulated by practical necessities (climate, geography, nutrition, economy, politics, military, sanitary) together with occasional arbitrary interventions of manifestations of political and economic power

-antique and medieval city states

Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece, Roman Empire, China, America (Maya, Aztec), Europe (Florence, Venice)

### Europe until 1945

-migration period, medieval, -cooperation for defense, freedom and independence, first centres of independent knowledge and education- first universities

monasteries as alternative and complemter form of cooperation

Rule of St. Benedict relevant model for community life

-renaissance, -city, as idea, city plans. based on ideal geometries Filarete etc.

-barock– city as space for representation

-Enlightment, -social utopies and some partial realizations-Ledoux, Bath,

-modern industry,- rapid, excessive urbanization, its consequences and critics

proposals for correction and regulation - birth of modern urban planning  
positive and helpful intervention by its intention

Ebenezer Howard garden city, Patrick Geddes

Antonio San Elia, Camillo Sitte, Tony Garnier

-basically ethical, and social perspective of modernity, healty urban structures for all members of society, motivation of modern estates, settlements for workers, officials, etc. in early period of modernism

-important early 20. century reflections to modern urban development

Georg Simmel: The Metropolis and Mental Life 1903, notion of social geometry

Oswald Spengler: Der Untergang des Abendlandes 1918/1922

Fritz Lang: Metropolis 1926

Walter Benjamin: the city „flaneur” concept of promenading

-emerging tabula rasa schemes, irrational idealism, Le Corbusier Ville Radieuse

first signs of danger of planned large scale urban interventions made possible by modern building technologies

-realistic contribution by Heinrich Tessenow, the „Kleinstadt”, the alternative model of modern city life rejecting both metropolis, and the illusion of rural idylls

## USA

new city pattern, on uninhabited soil, without compromises

extent dimension and scale, transport, no historical material,

modern myths, in 19. century, the horse, and the pacific railway, in 20, century the highway and the car

birth of high rise steel-glass building, the skyscraper as symbol of the modern global building type, extrem density in land use

Chicago, „Florence” of modern architecture

dense downtowns and vast suburbs, the american way of life

## Contemporary Asia

rapid proliferation and augmentation of American high rise pattern, extrem overpopulation, danger of epidemics

collapse of modernism into colossalism and skyscraper race in Gulf states and East Asia

## Destruction

by social or natural disasters (fire, epidemic, earthquake, flood, etc.)

by man made technologies,

-warfare, (Sodoma, Jericho, Troy, Carthago, Hiroshima etc.)

- planned interventions, as manifestations of power
  - in antiquity, divine and imperial symbolic in theocratic social structures
  - early modern examples
    - barock plan of Rom V. Sixtus,
    - demolition of Paris after 1870, Haussmann
  - 20. century modern totalitarian regimes (see lecture 6)
    - nazism, Albert Speer Berlin world capital project
    - soviet type urban modernization
  - irrational obsession with „modern” technologies, the growing antagonism between the scale of man and the scale of the extensions of man (man made technologies: railway, car, subway, highway, aircraft, telecommunications)
  - WW2 milestone in history of human destruction

#### Responsible reflections after 1945

- the lesson of the terrible destructive capacity of man
- the American model and the Japanese tradition after WW2
- Lewis Mumford:
  - Art and Technics 1957
  - The City in History 1961
  - The Highway and the City 1963
- Aldo Rossi: The Architecture of The City 1966
- Rolf Keller: Bauen als Umweltzerstörung 1973
- Christian Norberg-Schulz: Genius Loci 1980
- Vittorio Magnano Lampugnani: Architecture and City Planning 1985
  - Urban Design as Craft 2011
  
- Rem Koolhaas: Delirious New York 1978
  - S, M, L, XL 1995
  - The Generic City, 1995

traditional attitude of the euro—atlantic based „world citizen”

celebration of „globalism” which means in fact the prevalence of the American high rise pattern all over the world, cynicism, following the principles the by now, obsolete modernity of the last (20.) century

-mega-projects in rapidly growing East Asia and Gulf Cities unlimited commercialism designed by European and American architects

-collapse into empty high rise formalism similar to late 19. century banal historicism skyscraper „race”, to build the tallest building of the world

*Where to find the real creative approach to architecture?*