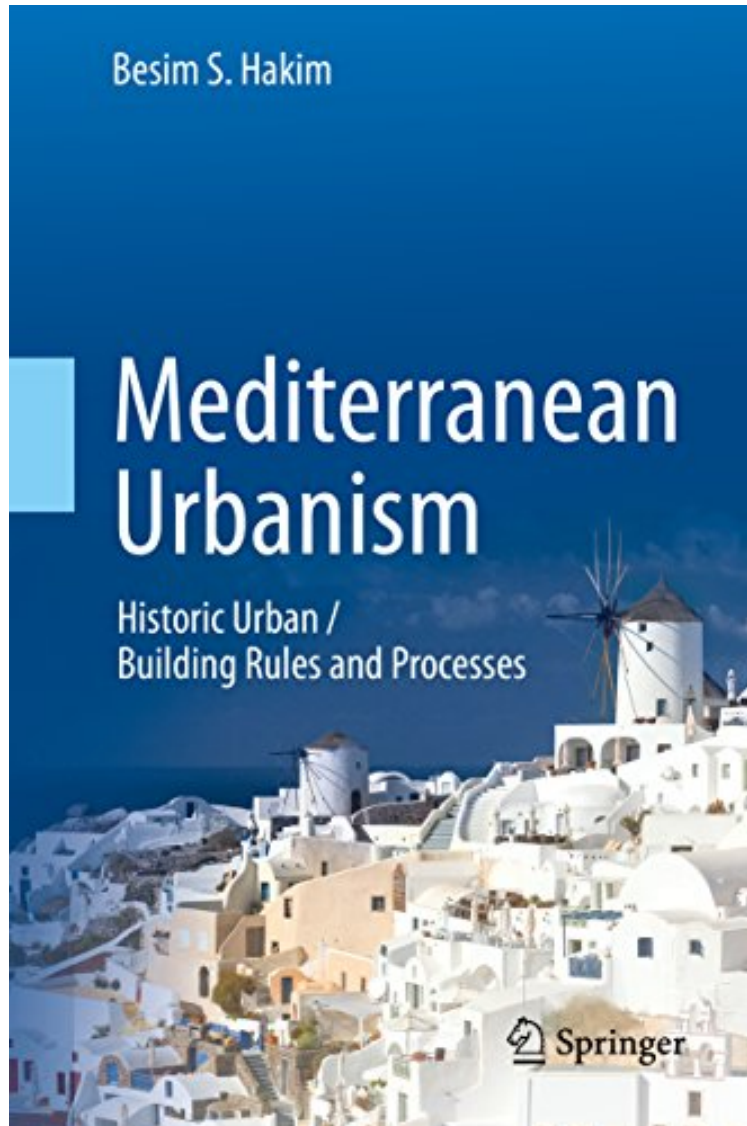


[Pdf free] Mediterranean Urbanism: Historic Urban / Building Rules and Processes

Mediterranean Urbanism: Historic Urban / Building Rules and Processes

Besim S. Hakim

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Besim S. Hakim : Mediterranean Urbanism: Historic Urban / Building Rules and Processes before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Mediterranean Urbanism: Historic Urban / Building Rules and Processes:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A remarkable tour-de-force of scholarship on historic urban codesBy Nikos A. SalingarosProfessor Besim Hakim presents here a remarkable and comprehensive work on historical urban codes. His field of inquiry is the entire Mediterranean basin, which includes those cities and portions of built urban

fabric that everyone today seems to find so wonderfully human and organic. How was this built? The method is very simple. By following legislated codes laid down by the local authorities (or, in the case of an empire, imperial urban codes). Use the right codes and the city grows and evolves, and in several hundred years, you are guaranteed to have a living, organic city. Prof. Hakim has gone over, compiled, translated, and collected urban codes from Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Islamic, and Medieval European sources (Italian, French, and Spanish), showing that they are mostly related. Today's New Urbanist movement relies upon a set of form-based codes to shape our contemporary built environment, therefore this book reveals both the origin of codes, and the proof that they work to create living city form. I was struck by the clear explanation of how "prescriptive" codes impose rules for city form, whereas "proscriptive" codes are meta-principles that allow complete freedom within carefully-defined constraints. This book must be read -- or at least looked at very carefully -- by every urbanist who wishes to understand how historical living cities evolve on their own, and how to apply those mechanisms to humanize urban form today.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A map to the underlying processes of the most mysterious urban emergence

By Mathieu Heacut;lieThe modern history of urban planning consists of many attempts at preventing chaos resulting from urbanization. These attempts have produced landscapes that are spiritually empty at best, catastrophically wasteful at worst. In light of such results, the existence of places such as Santorini, Siena or Cordoba, places that not only prevented urban chaos over centuries in sometimes geographically challenging situations, but harnessed the work of generations of builders into cultural artifacts more than the sum of their parts, is both baffling and mystifying. While architects have often studied the forms of these places for inspiration, what they have observed is only a slice in time of their growth process. Besim S. Hakim has pursued an alternative hypothesis - that one must investigate the record of time to explain their form, and in particular the record of time they most share in common: their legal codes. Investigating this record led him to find similarities in urban planning codes, some dating back to the Roman era, and further on to compare these codes for aspects they agree upon. The result of this archeology of process is this masterwork, which, along with Hakim's publications on Arabic-Islamic planning codes, forms the most complete body of knowledge we have on the legal morphology of the Mediterranean. Among the most useful lessons to be learned is that the codes were successful due to their focus on protecting the features of the city that brought the most cultural value, such as views of the sea, and least successful when they detailed precisely what shape things should take. This allowed the codes to remain relevant for centuries and for new features to emerge under the protection of the codes. These features and their complexity are therefore not truly intentional, yet not fully accidental either. This book, and its Arabic-Islamic companion, will grow to become an increasingly important foundation for urban planning theory as our understanding of complexity science and urban morphology grows over the coming decades. Let's hope that the aforementioned future scholars will see fit to pursue the same hypothesis.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A landmark contribution to understanding the DNA of great settlements

By Michael MehaffyThis is a book that ought to be in the library of any serious student of urbanism and urban morphology and anyone else who believes that in meeting our modern urban challenges, we have much to learn from centuries of urban history. Although the book is a bit pricey, make no mistake: it is a rich treasury of knowledge about how some of the most-loved places in history were formed, and how we might learn again from this wisdom. In fact, a central thesis of the book is that the forces that shaped these beloved places -- particularly their codes, laws and practical methods -- were surprisingly sophisticated and intelligent, and we ought to be able to learn some important lessons from them today. The book is also a sheer pleasure to read. Professor Besim Hakim writes in a very lucid and accessible style, and his book is beautifully illustrated. There are three major sections, focusing on contributions from Greece, Italy and Spain, with a key sub-focus on the codes and legal structures that so often shaped urban form. In the Greek section, Professor Hakim discusses Zeno's and Julian of Ascalon's "generative" codes, Byzantine law, and "customary" laws from the Greek Islands. The section on Italy covers the tenth to fourteenth centuries, when so much of the splendid medieval urbanism we know today was shaped, including many beloved Italian hill towns. The section on Spain includes the seminal influence of Islamic patterns and codes, and gems like the Alarife rules for building activities in Cordoba. The conclusion draws key themes together, and applies them as "lessons for contemporary and future practice." This section is particularly insightful and profound, drawing comparisons to the recent scientific insights into complex adaptive systems, including the workings of generative rule-based systems. As is the case with many complex systems, the rules that produce them can be quite simple and common-sense. Professor Hakim points out that the goal of these and other city-builders is, very simply, to maximize the freedom of individual builders while mitigating the negative consequences of growth. This goal can be met, he notes, with a relatively elegant set of prescriptive and proscriptive rules, applied iteratively to context to produce remarkably diverse and successful forms. The rules serve to enforce what he terms "interdependence rights" -- the right to enjoy both one's own private realm, and the harmony of the interconnecting urban spaces, together with the public realm they help to shape. As we struggle with "byzantine" planning laws and standards that are increasingly dysfunctional and inadequate to our challenges, Professor Hakim makes an eloquent case that we have much to learn from the elegant, harmonious systems of the real Byzantine era, and others -- systems that these clever builders employed so successfully, to generate so many splendid settlements.

This book brings together historic urban / building rules and codes for the geographic areas including Greece, Italy and Spain. The author achieved his ambitious goal of finding pertinent rules and codes that were followed in previous societies for the processes that formed the built environment of their towns and cities, including building activities at the neighborhood level and the decision-making process that took place between proximate neighbors. The original languages of the texts that were translated into English are Greek, Latin, Italian, Arabic and Spanish. The sources for the chapter on Greece date from the 2nd century B.C.E. to the 19th century C.E. Those for the chapter on Italy date from the 10th to the 14th centuries C.E. and for the chapter on Spain from the 5th to the 18th centuries C.E. Numerous appendices are included to enhance and elaborate on the material that make up the chapters. This book provides lessons and insights into how compact and sustainable towns and cities that are greatly admired today were achieved in the past and how we and future generations can learn from this rich heritage, including the valuable insight provided by the nature of the rules and codes and their application through centuries of continuous use.

“This is a book that ought to be in the library of any serious student of urbanism and urban morphology and anyone else who believes that in meeting our modern urban challenges, we have much to learn from centuries of urban history. The book is also a sheer pleasure to read. Professor Besim Hakim writes in a very lucid and accessible style, and his book is beautifully illustrated.” (Michael Mehaffy, .com, March, 2015)

“Besim Hakim presents here a remarkable and comprehensive work on historical urban codes. This book must be read by every urbanist who wishes to understand how historical living cities evolve on their own, and how to apply those mechanisms to humanize urban form today.” (Nikos A. Salingaros, .com, February, 2015)

From the Back Cover

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About the Author

Besim S. Hakim is an architect and urban planner. He has worked as a professor / scholar and as a consultant / practitioner. He is a Fellow of the American Institute of Certified Planners and member of the American Institute of Architects. He studied architecture at Liverpool University, UK and urban design at Harvard, USA. Since 1975 he has researched and uncovered the underlying processes, codes, and management systems of traditional towns and cities located in the countries that surround the Mediterranean Sea. His book on Arabic-Islamic Cities and subsequent other studies, published from the early 1980s onwards, have been influential on numerous studies undertaken in academia and professional practice.