



PROCEEDINGS

of the workshop

**ARCHITECTURE,
ARCHAEOLOGY AND
CONTEMPORARY
CITY PLANNING**

*Reformation, regeneration
and revitalisation*

*Liisa Seppänen, Giorgio Verdiani, Per Cornell
(Editors)*

TURKU

15-18th May 2017

Turku, Finland
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Reformation, regeneration and revitalisation

The workshop took place in Turku University, Department of Archaeology, Geohouse, Akatemiankatu 1, 20500 Turku, Finland.

Workshop organizing committee:
Liisa Seppänen, Giorgio Verdiani, Per Cornell

The workshop has been realized in collaboration between University of Turku, Finland, the Architecture Department of the Florence University, Italy, the Department of Historical Studies, University of Gothenburg, Sweden.



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“Historical Sequences in Spatial Terms”: an introduction

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Keywords: AACCP, Urbanisation, City, Layers, Archaeology.

Urbanisation is, and has been, a global trend that seems to have no end. After 2008, every other inhabitant of the earth has been a citizen. Cities have attracted people throughout centuries, and urbanisation has had different temporal rhythms around the globe, with manifold spatial manifestations. Cities are like living organisms that are in a constant state of becoming; they transform as assemblages of a built environment, with historical layers accumulated on top of each other, and everyday practices that are at the heart of a city as a living entity. They also include immaterial traces of those historical layers that have been removed or destroyed but somehow still exist as superimposed maps that shine through the more recent diagrams of city space.

The fifth workshop of the network Architecture, Archaeology and Contemporary City Planning (AACCP) gathered in Turku, Finland on 15–18 May 2017 to rethink the notions of reformation, regeneration and revitalisation of urban space. It brought together architects, archaeologists and city planners to discuss the complex issues around the history and future of cities, on how archaeological expertise could be ac-

knowledged in the re-planning of historic areas in cities or in planning new residential areas. If we view urban surroundings from the perspective of spatial navigation, we could ask, for example, to what extent this navigation is a historically conscious process. How to develop urban landscapes so that they would enable the inhabitant to be aware of different temporal layers and to recognize traces of urban transformation?

This reminds me of a thought experiment Sigmund Freud made in his book *Culture and Its Discontents* in 1930. In the beginning of his book, Freud made, as he put it, a “fantastic supposition” about the city of Rome. He suggested to the reader to consider Rome not as a human dwelling-place, but as a mental entity that has a “long and varied past”, as something “in which nothing once constructed had perished, and all the earlier stages of development had survived alongside the latest”. Freud delves further in his comparison and writes:

“This would mean that in Rome the palaces of the Caesars were still standing on the Palatine and the *Septizonium* of *Septimius Severus* was still towering to its old height; that the beautiful statues were still standing in the colonnade of the Castle of *St. Angelo*,

as they were up to its siege by the Goths, and so on. But more still: where the *Palazzo Caffarelli* stands there would also be, without this being removed, the Temple of *Jupiter Capitolinus*, not merely in its latest form, moreover, as the Romans of the Caesars saw it, but also in its earliest shape, when it still wore an Etruscan design and was adorned with terra-cotta antifixae. Where the Coliseum stands now, we could at the same time admire Nero's Golden House; on the *Piazza* of the *Pantheon* we should find out only the Pantheon of today as bequeathed to us by Hadrian, but on the same site also Agrippa's original edifice; indeed, the same ground would support the church of *Santa Maria sopra Minerva* and the old temple over which it was built. And the observer would need merely to shift the focus of his eyes, perhaps, or change his position, in order to call up a view of either the one or the other."

Freud's text appeals to every traveller in Rome, not because of its "fantastic" idea of seeing Nero's Golden House at the same time with *Colosseum*, or *Santa Maria sopra Minerva* together with the temple under it but, more importantly, because this

is a mental exercise that everyone tries to achieve in front of these historic places. Freud, however, concludes that the whole thought experiment is without sense: "There is clearly no object in spinning this fantasy further; it leads to the inconceivable, or even to absurdities. If we try to represent historical sequence in spatial terms, it can only be done by juxtaposition in space; the same space will not hold two contents. Our attempt seems like an idle game; it has only one justification; it shows us how far away from mastering the idiosyncrasies of mental life we are by treating them in terms of visual representation."

I would argue, however, that Freud's experiment hits an essential problem and that he is not right in suggesting that historical sequences can only be represented "by juxtaposition in space". I find the work of the AACCP fascinating since it elaborates on the question of how the same space can, in the end, hold different contents. Some layers in time might be transparent or superimposed but can still be made present in an urban space – through the cooperation between architects, archaeologists and city planners.

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