

Urban History Review Revue d'histoire urbaine

URBAN HISTORY REVIEW
REVUE D'HISTOIRE URBAINE

Bacon, Edmund N. *Design of Cities*. New York: Penguin Books, 1976. Pp. 336. Maps. Illustrations. \$9.95

A. F. J. Artibise

Number 3-76, February 1977

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1019485ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/1019485ar>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine

ISSN

0703-0428 (print)

1918-5138 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this review

Artibise, A. F. J. (1977). Review of [Bacon, Edmund N. *Design of Cities*. New York: Penguin Books, 1976. Pp. 336. Maps. Illustrations. \$9.95]. *Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine*, (3-76), 77-78. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1019485ar>

first time surpassed by the population of the suburbs. By 1975, there were over 13 million more people in the suburban rings than in the cities which they surround. At the same time, there appears to have been no basic change in the social organization of the suburbs. Metropolitan territory beyond the core city remained as fragmented as ever, partitioned into small independent communities. A growing demographic force thus seemed to be colliding with a relatively static social structure.

The Changing Face of the Suburbs attempts to deal with this process in a series of twelve essays. The first six essays chart the magnitude of suburban growth, identify the sectors of the population which have contributed most to that growth, and specify the regions in which it has been most and least pronounced. Part II, which also contains six essays, deals with the issues of social organization and social interactions, and portray the social climate and life styles that have emerged in the suburbs.

For urban historians, the most interesting papers are contained in Part I. Of particular note are three contributions: "Components of Suburban Population Growth", "Black Suburbanization, 1930-1970", and "Suburbanization and the Development of Motor Transportation: Transportation Technology and the Suburbanization Process".
[A.F.J. Artibise, University of Victoria].

* * *

Bacon, Edmund N. Design of Cities. New York: Penguin Books, 1976.
Pp. 336. Maps. Illustrations. \$9.95.

First published by the Viking Press in 1967, and re-issued in a revised edition in 1974, Design of Cities is now available in a relatively inexpensive paperback edition. Among its many noteworthy qualities, this book is superbly produced and contains dozens of plans, diagrams and illustrations, many in colour. Compared to other books selling at much higher prices, Design of Cities is well worth the price.

Yet this volume also merits attention for other reasons. In a brilliant synthesis of words and pictures, the author presents a detailed account of the development of urban form from ancient Athens to modern Brasilia. Throughout, historical examples are related to modern principles of urban planning. Bacon vividly demonstrates how the work of great architects and planners of the past can influence subsequent development and be continued by later generations. By illuminating the historical background of urban design, Bacon also details the fundamental forces and considerations that determine the form of a great city. Perhaps the most significant of these are simultaneous movement systems - the paths of pedestrian and vehicular traffic, public and private transportation - that serve as a dominant organizing force. In the book, Bacon looks at movement systems in cities such as London, Rome and New York. He also stresses the importance of designing open space, as well as architectural mass, and discusses the impact of space, color, and perspective on the city-dweller. That the centers of cities should and can be pleasant places in which to live, work, and relax is illustrated by such examples as Rotterdam and Stockholm.

Although the book devotes most attention to such great cities as Athens, London, Paris, Peking and Rome, two Canadian cities - Ottawa and Montreal - are also mentioned. [A.F.J. Artibise, University of Victoria].

* * *

Lees, Andrew and Lynn, editors. The Urbanization of European Society in the Nineteenth Century. Toronto: D. C. Heath and Company, 1976. Pp. xix, 237.

This volume in the Problems in European Civilization series consists of sixteen essays organized around four broad themes: "The Growth of Cities"; "Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Views of the Big City: Positive and Negative"; "The Urban Middle Classes"; and "The Urban Lower Classes". Included in each section are a wide range of