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## Ströme und Zonen: Eine Genealogie der 'funktionalen Stadt'

by Christa Kamleithner, Basel/Berlin/Boston, Birkhäuser, 2020, 376 pp., £27 (paperback)

Christa Kamleithner's *Ströme und Zonen (Flows and Zones)*, provides us with a significant contribution to the history and the present of urbanism. It is, as the subtitle states, a genealogy of the Functional City, tracing the rise of the city separated by functions and linked by infrastructure that the CIAM congress of 1933 so richly illustrated. She debunks the myth of the avant-garde's agency in inventing the Functional City by showing its plans as a continuity of the conception of the city established by the 1910s. Moreover, she also traces multiple lines of emergence of ideas and concepts from various fields and disciplines, some of them reaching back to the 1800s, that underlie how we came to think about the city and its population. Informed by Foucault, Kamleithner's genealogy shows how urbanism emerged as a broad terrain of discourse through the evolution or transformation of fields and disciplines whose knowledge was based on the observation of the city's spaces and its population. Statistics, political economy, hygiene, transport, engineering, social sciences, biology and sociology are some of the fields Kamleithner draws upon to show the rise and transfer of concepts and strategies to understand, manage and regulate both the city and its population. Kamleithner also compiles an incredibly rich resource of visual materials: urban plans, city models, charts, drawings, and maps notate statistics, sewage, population densities and various

other networks. She demonstrates how the visual and graphic operate within and across these disparate domains of knowledge, thereby highlighting the significance of spatialisation in the understanding and conception of the urban. There are two key moments in the overall timeframe Kamleithner charts between the 1800s and the CIAM congress of 1933. The first is exemplified by the Greater Berlin exhibition and competition of 1910, with which she opens the book in a prologue. Tables of statistics, maps showing diverse networks of flows and zones, and urban plans spanning the city region, show a spatially and functionally differentiated organism, regulating population densities and distributing urban functions. While Kamleithner declares the competition and exhibition as the culmination and consolidation of the science of urban-ism, she rejects the idea that these represent its synthesis, as others have argued.<sup>i</sup> Instead, she posits that in the 1910 the city came to be reconceptualised through new scales and categories, initiating strategic, phased planning across scales. Despite only existing on paper in 1910, it is this understanding of the city and its planning which carries through—albeit in variations—in the CIAM plans of the functional city. The other key moment is exemplified by Ildefonso Cerdá's *Teoría general de la urbanización* of 1867 and his extension plan for Barcelona, which figures prominently in the first chapter of the book. Cerdá's functional definition of the city as 'spaces that accommodate human repose and those that facilitate movement', has become the Flows and Zones in Kamleithner's book. Cerdá argued that there is a rationality to be discovered beneath the diversity of urban forms. Along those lines, Kamleithner posits a continuity of spatial and social reasoning between Cerdá and the authors of the Greater Berlin exhibition and competition and beyond, dispersed across fields, but identifiable in various geographical contexts. Central to this conception is the understanding of the city as an organism, a concept that shifts and evolves but helps us to understand the strategic connections between space and population, shaping both norms and forms in discourse.<sup>ii</sup> The evolution and shifts of this

concept across the 10 chapters of the book are testimony to Kamleithner's rigorous breadth and depth of analysis. The first chapter deals with the conditions of emergence for this new 'science' of urbanism: the rise of the social sciences based upon the observations of the new social body, and the Prussian reforms that mobilised the movement of people, markets and capital. The juxtaposition of Cerdá's theory and his undifferentiated urban extension for Barcelona of the 1860s with Werner Hegemann's 'Der Städtebau' of 1911, written to accompany the Greater Berlin exhibition shows how urbanism addressed these conditions. The second chapter centres on the rise of the new science of statistics in England, France and Germany, and shows how its surveys and topographies rendered the regularities of the urban population visible. Kamleithner shows how they describe and inscribe the economic, moral and social propensities of the social body. This informed the statistician Ernst Bruch's critique on the levelling effect of the Berlin extension plan, which was the first foray into a differentiation of the city according to synergies of work and production; a pattern he expected to occur naturally if the urban plan became less prescriptive. In Chapter 3 Kamleithner explains different economic models, visualized through idealized plans and diagrams. These seek to readjust the seemingly natural balance between land values and urban development, often drawing on transport infrastructure as a means to mobilize the distributions of densities and uses. Chapter 4 is an excursus into the eighteenth-century, where the city was conceived as an aesthetic unity, representative of the social order and the power of the state—a dramatic contrast to the growing, self-regulating organism the city was understood as in the nineteenth century. This is the subject of the next chapter, which shows the fascinating transfer of the organic metaphor from biology to hygiene to urban planning and government. It propelled circulation and regulation as key principles releasing the blockages in the urban organism—from sewage systems and drains, to traffic and canals, to the coagulations of the urban poor. Edwin Chadwick's 'continuous circulation' and Virchow and

Hobrecht canalization system in Berlin exemplify the intersection between organic self-regulation, therapeutic intervention and technology. Also, the government followed this principle, focussing increasingly on life itself, intervening as little as possible and instead promoting self-governing principles. The role of traffic infrastructure as inciting a seemingly natural centrifugal movement of populations and functions out of the dense inner city is illustrated through examples of traffic network plans from Paris, London, Vienna and Berlin. Kamleithner also shows how traffic, hygiene and statistics underlay the first comprehensive text on urban planning written by Reinhard Baumeister in 1876. Chapter 7 deals with different theories and actors of housing reform, and argues how the negotiations around the morally, hygienic and morally secure dwelling implied also the teaching of dwelling habits serving the education of a new subject. The Greater Berlin exhibition and competition feature centrally in the next chapter as the culmination of the new science of urbanism, described alongside Vienna's extension plan of 1892 and the rise of zoning ordinances since the 1890s. All of these plan the urban organism as spatially and functionally differentiated. In the penultimate chapter Kamleithner reflects on the continuity of liberal approaches across shifting conceptions of how land ownership determined urban planning. This is reflected in schematic models of urban decentralization in the 1920s, which expand the concept of dispersal across a wider urban region evident in the 1910s. The final chapter presents how, through the process of abstraction, the 4th CIAM congress visualized and consolidated the city of Flows and Zones, based on an already established spatial organization of the city. Kamleithner also recapitulates how these plans need to be understood as a continuity of spatial and social reasoning from the mid-nineteen century onwards. The book is essential reading for those interested in the history and theory of urbanism, but it can also be understood as a fundamental resource for practitioners in architecture, urban planning or urban design. Kamleithner's genealogy positions the agency of the urban plan as operating

within a much broader discourse, not as a synthesis of knowledge but as responding to and mobilizing different problem fields that cut across disciplines, stakeholders and fields of knowledge.<sup>iii</sup> One would hope that this important book will be soon translated into English.

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<sup>i</sup> For example in Tubbesing, *Der Wettbewerb Gross-Berlin 1910*.

<sup>ii</sup> For a comparable approach, see Rabinow, *French Modern*.

<sup>iii</sup> See also Barth, "Diagram, Dispersal, Region".