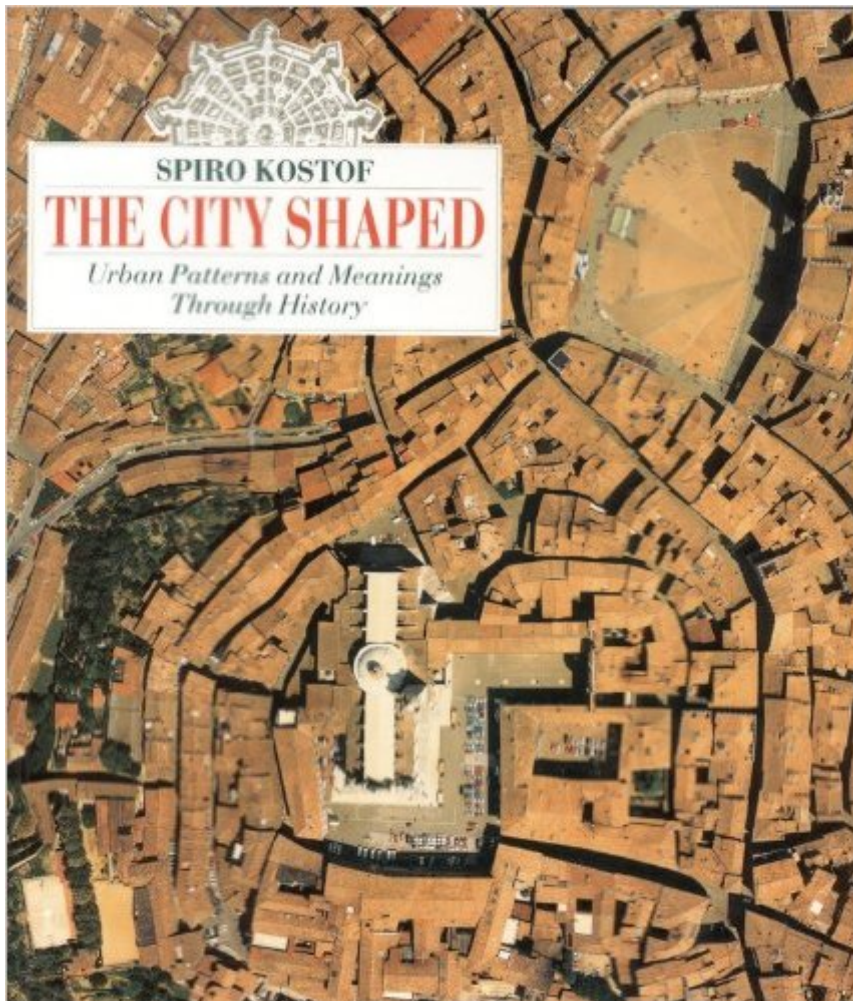


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The City Shaped: Urban Patterns And Meanings Through History



Synopsis

Spanning the ages and the globe, Spiro Kostof explores the city as a "repository of cultural meaning" and an embodiment of the community it shelters. Widely used by both architects and students of architecture, *The City Shaped* won the AIA's prestigious book award in Architecture and Urbanism. With hundreds of photographs and drawings that illustrate Professor Kostof's innovative ideas, this has become one of the most important works on urbanization.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (15 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

Well written, consistently interesting and structured around the challenges of topography and the urban form demands invoked by market needs, political architectures and cultural expectations through history, this beautifully illustrated book delivers the promise of its title and a lot more. Because the author, Spiro Kostof, organized his book by patterns and topological relationships, the text compresses history and geographies into a comparative perspective. This presents a disadvantage to the reader if he/she is interested in only one time, one culture or even just one architectural movement. On the other hand, the comparative perspective lends authority to Kostof's overarching theoretical approach of connecting urban forms to content and how those relationships persist across the spectrum of the human experience. A must for any architect's or planner's library.

Spiro Kostof's book is a fantastic and intelligent foray into urban form. What I found most appealing about the book was his approach in grappling with the WHY of things; in describing how certain

urban forms have come to pass, he offers the requisite determined factors as any architect of the City ought to do and then manages the neat trick of gracefully acknowledging that these factors do not necessarily lead to a single outcome. But he is intrepid in his analysis and his approach. Beginners may find this book difficult because it does assume a basic understanding of cities and city planning; however, ambitious readers should give it a try. Mr. Kostof's cultural and historical references and his non-linear style are extremely appealing and intriguing, so much so that I will continue on to "The City Assembled", the companion piece, with great eagerness.

Perhaps part of Kostof's category for urban patterns(as organic, grids, grand manner....) is arguable, but his wonderful analyses for each individual sample lead us into deeper understanding of urban patterns and social meanings behind. Many cities familiar to most of us (Siena, Paris, New Dehli....) appear refreshingly unfamiliar in his book.

Extremely interesting and well documented book on the different methods humans have used in their quest to create the ideal city. Although not arranged chronologically but typologically, the book covers history's clearest examples of the variety of urban design theory. A must for the urban / architecture professional and aficionado.

I really like this book, there are a lot of made up cities and towns in some of the games that I play and I find it fascinating how historical cities and fantasy cities are designed. The author lays out some different design styles for cities and then shows some examples of historical cities that match these styles. A good reference for anyone designing fantasy maps, or just students of architecture or history.

The book is very illustrative, the author is clear and uses many examples. He focuses on the physical shape of cities and how they have been altered throughout history. This is not a history book, this book is very architectural, if that is not your goal, you might reconsider it.

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no complaints

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