

Hubertus Fischer, Sarah Ozacky-Lazar, Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn

Introduction

This volume is the result of an intensive and fruitful cooperation between several institutions. The conference “Environmental Policy and Landscape Architecture” was initiated by The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute and The Centre of Garden Art and Landscape Architecture, CGL (Zentrum für Gartenkunst und Landschaftsarchitektur) at Leibniz University Hannover. The basis of this cooperation were two preceding conferences: The first, held in September 2006 in Hannover at the former “Jewish Horticultural School Ahlem”, had dealt with the topic “Gardens and Parks in the Lives of the Jewish Population after 1933”¹, a hitherto neglected area of research in the context of refuge and persecution. The second, held in October 2008 at The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute, was a cooperative project between the CGL and The Franz Rosenzweig Minerva Research Center for German-Jewish Literature and Cultural History, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The subject of the conference, in which scholars from ten universities in Israel and Germany participated, had been a desideratum in the newer cultural history: “The Perception of Nature and Landscape in German Jewish and Christian Literature in the first Half of the 20th Century”.²

The conference “Environmental Policy and Landscape Architecture”, developed with assistance of Gerd Michelsen from the Institute for Environmental Communication (Institut für Umweltkommunikation) at Leuphana University of Luneburg, dealt with a topic of immediate interest. It brought together scholars of various disciplines such as landscape architecture, urban planning, technology assessment and philosophy of science, environmental communication, planning and psychology, ecology, geography, and biology. The participants were scholars from various countries including Israel, Palestine, USA, Norway, and Germany. Some of the scholars from European countries and the USA have had long experience in working in Israel, Palestine, Gaza, South Asia and the Middle East. The same goes for the German Federal Foundation for Environment (Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt), which had sponsored projects in Cyprus, Israel and Lebanon and their representative took part in the conference. They therefore were particu-

1 Hubertus Fischer and Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn (eds.), *Gärten und Parks im Leben der jüdischen Bevölkerung nach 1933* (CGL-Studies 5), Martin Meidenbauer Verlagsbuchhandlung, Munich, 2008. – Cf. Ekkehard Böhm, Die Gärten des Gettos. Ein hannoversches Buch über jüdische Gartenkultur, in: *Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 7 February 2009; Frank Keil, Rasen betreten verboten. Juden und öffentliche Gärten nach 1933, in: *Jüdische Allgemeine*, 23 March 2009.

2 Hubertus Fischer, Julia Matveev and Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn (eds.), *Natur- und Landschaftswahrnehmung in deutschsprachiger jüdischer und christlicher Literatur der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts* (CGL-Studies 7), Martin Meidenbauer Verlagsbuchhandlung, Munich, 2010.

larly interested in the problems and strategies for finding solutions presented by their colleagues from Israel and Palestine.

One objective was to find out issues of joint interest and to develop an international research program with the focus on the Middle East. The lectures, discussions and stimulating reflections of the conference offered excellent opportunities to achieve this. The articles of the first section attend to some comprehensive questions of sustainable development in regard to education and landscaping. The following contributions are discussing connections between environmentalism and landscape architecture at a local level: Tel Aviv, Hannover, and Nazareth. In the third part one can learn various aspects of shaping the public space considered by environmental psychology, landscape architecture and topographic thinking and designing. Difficult and complex problems of spatial planning in Israel/Palestine are the topic of three articles dealing with spatial planning, violence, and tradition.

In connection with this the next article by Karsten Jørgensen, and the last section try to give answers to some urgent questions, e. g., how can the Palestinian society meet the challenge posed by the dynamic development of urban structures through capacity building in landscape architecture. And, how important are religions and ideas about environmentalism in historical and actual debates. The article by James L. Wescoat Jr. is renewing the lines of reflection across the diverse biblical landscapes of Abraham, and in doing so it might help to design new water-conserving places and policy options in arid regions. A more empirically based answer regarding the water crisis in Israel is given in the penultimate article, whereas the last refers to an economically meaningful strategy for soil conservation in arable fields as a part of agricultural sustainability in semiarid-arid areas.

There are numerous links between the articles, regardless the assignment to separate sections. The general discussion of the importance of public space for people of varied characteristics meets a response in the report about capacity building in landscape architecture in Palestine, with a local project in Nablus, “so that women can use these spaces comfortably and take part in urban and public life”. The thought-provoking words “Views are not neutral, a view can be a way of taking possession by sight” in the article about “Tayelet”, a distinct Israeli landscape type, corresponds in some ways to observations made in Israeli tourism and recreation sites.

We hope that this volume contributes to the growing discourse on cross-border environment in the Middle East and the need to overcome political disputes in order to create a better environment and sustainable future to all residents of the region.

Hubertus Fischer, Gerd Michelsen, Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn

Environmental Policy and Landscape Architecture

Environmental policy in the context of sustainable development

Environmental policy in the sense of all political efforts that serve to preserve the basis of man's sustainable living conditions is no longer thinkable today without relating it to sustainability and sustainable development. This has been the case since 1992 at the latest, when the world conference on "Environmental and Development" was held in Rio de Janeiro, at which 178 countries agreed to the Agenda 21¹ to counteract a further deterioration of the situation of mankind and the environment and to ensure a sustainable use of natural resources. Following the example of the Brundtland Commission report (1987), sustainability or sustainable development is understood as "a development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".²

In the concept of sustainable development various social visions interact with one another, each weighted differently, including those of the equity of a moderate style of life, freedom and self-determination, the well-being of all people and responsibility for the future. Governments, business organisations, NGOs as well as national and international conferences all declare sustainability to be an important objective. Since sustainability plays a role in different areas of interest and contexts, the term itself and its understanding are characterised by inaccuracy, ambiguity and at times by contradictions.

The discussion surrounding sustainable development is embedded in cultural patterns of perception and behaviour (e. g. the question of equity and equality). In addition, research into mentality and risk awareness also reveals that for example the perception of environmental phenomena as environmental problems is dependent on cultural context, whereby questions of cultural differences and an awareness on these also play an important role. Closely connected with the concept of sustainable development is the idea of modernising and reshaping society that demands stronger involvement of its citizens. Citizen participation is therefore frequently understood as a new challenge for the political culture and is seen in close connection with sustainable development.

1 Bundesministerium für Umwelt, Naturschutz und Reaktorsicherheit (BMU), *Umweltpolitik. Agenda 21*, Bonn (s. a.).

2 Volker Hauff, *Unsere gemeinsame Zukunft. Der Brundtland-Bericht der Weltkommission für Umwelt und Entwicklung*, Greven, 1987, p. 47.

The dispute about the concept of sustainable development presumes an awareness of the problems that a non-sustainable development had caused in the first place. These generally have very variable effects at local, regional, national and international levels, which in turn implies that a diversity of options is available for taking action to solve the problems. Key problems of non-sustainability that play a global role are climate change, soil degradation, loss of biodiversity, desertification, water shortage and the conflicts ensuing from this, but as well unemployment, population explosion, hunger, violation of human rights or social injustice within a generation or between generations.

Putting the models of sustainability and the concept of sustainable development into action requires a variety of political instruments. Since the idea of the environment and the aspect of development are both significant in the concept of sustainable development, the former “hard” and “soft” instruments of environmental policy have to be modified in the interests of an environmental structural policy. In doing so, particular importance needs to be accorded to the participation of civil society, alongside the market economy and government, as a significant instrument of control in realising sustainable development. In other words, participation should be seen as a further instrument of structural politics.

In recent years an increasing amount of importance has been attached to sustainability communication in the context of “soft” political instruments. Whilst there was talk first of environmental communication, in the meantime the insight has prevailed that communication about environmental issues can no longer be undertaken without linking it to the model of “sustainability” and that discourses therefore have to be located in the context of the debate on issues of sustainable development.

If we adopt Luhmann’s reflections on system theory, then the discussion about “sustainability” as a role model is also a consequence of communicating environmental issues: “Fish or humans may be dying, swimming in lakes or rivers may be causing illnesses, pumps may no longer be yielding oil and the average temperatures may be sinking or rising, but as long as this is not being communicated, it will have no effect on society”.³ The discussion about sustainable development that has been going on for a number of years can thus be interpreted as a logical continuation about environmental issues. This communication between various social systems such as politics, law, science, economy and education has shown that environmental problems and their causes are to be viewed separately from economic just as little as they are from socio-cultural developments and that problem-solving strategies are also only to be seen in this overall context.

3 Niklas Luhmann, *Ökologische Kommunikation. Kann die moderne Gesellschaft sich auf ökologische Gefährdungen einstellen?*, Opladen, 1986, p. 63.

For a conference dealing with various aspects of “Environmental Policy and Landscape Architecture” we consider it vital that a fundamental agreement is arrived at concerning the links between environmental and development issues and that the concept of sustainable development is also looked at. In our opinion this includes reaching an understanding about:

- * the concept of sustainable development and its political effects
- * key ecological problems of the region with particular attention paid to
- * “biodiversity”⁴ and “water”
- * the role of “soft” instruments such as communication on environmental and sustainability issues as well as the importance of education.

Landscape planning in a cultural context – mentality, religion and behaviour

Landscape planning and urban design (the planning of urban public space) viewed with regard to the demands of sustainability deal with protagonists and social groups whose thinking and behaviour are determined by a variety of attitudes. It is not simply a question of economic interests and political outlook. Mental attitudes and, depending on the collective formative influence, religious traditions and value judgements, too, often equally affect thinking and behaviour. A project that focuses on the topic “Environmental Policy and Landscape Architecture”, in particular one that has regional connections with Israel and the countries of the Near East, should not neglect the aspects of mentality and religion, especially since in this complex region these overlap in a special way and exercise a considerable influence not only on public and private life but also on politics and society.

It needs to be asked what kind of relationship Zionism⁵, as the founding philosophy, demonstrates to nature and in what measure it has shaped and still shapes the understanding of nature and landscape held by the traditional governing and intellectual elite. How influential has Zionism become with regard to the concept

4 Günter Altner, Heike Leitschuh, Gerd Michelsen, Udo E. Simonis und Ernst U. von Weizsäcker, *Jahrbuch Ökologie: Lob der Vielfalt*, S. Hirzel Verlag, Stuttgart, 2009.

5 Cf. in general Michael Brenner, *Geschichte des Zionismus*, Munich 2008; on aspects of particular interest here cf. Tal Alon-Mozes and Shaul Amir, Landscape and Ideology. The Emergence of Vernacular Gardening Culture in Pre-State Israel, in: *Landscape Journal*, 21 (2002), 2, pp. 40–53; Izhak Schnell, Nature and Environment in the Socialist-Zionist Pioneers’ Perceptions: A Sense of Desolation, in: *Ecumene*, 4 (1997), 1, pp. 69–85.

of landscape in the State of Israel?⁶ Which impulses did it give not only in creating a productive landscape modelled on European examples, but also in transforming this landscape into an industrial agrarian landscape?

Progress and stagnation appear to be clearly separated, when one looks across the “Green Line”. But one needs to ask whether the pre-industrial notion of landscape on the Palestinian side might not also be interpreted differently: as the expression of a knowledge that has been accumulated over generations about that scarce commodity, water, and of how to use it in a sustainable manner as represented by an ingenious irrigation system in a landscape otherwise characterised by stony arid terraces. In view of the great contrast in the different manner of dealing with water, one will also have to inquire into water from the perspective of cultural and religious history⁷ to recognise the overall context and to sound out future options. “What might impress us from a present-day perspective about the Islamic world’s archaic irrigation system is less its technical capacity than its ecological balanced character and the social harmony that was achieved in coping with the scarce natural water supply.”⁸

It may be helpful to make sure of the Torah’s ecological message.⁹ But above all it will be necessary to look into the significance of nature conservation in Jewish spheres during the 20th century¹⁰ when looking into landscape planning under conditions of sustainable development. For Palestine and for the later state of Israel one should take into account a basic genetic conflict between the needs of a society geared from the outset to growth and to immigration and the requirements of nature conservation and environmental protection on the soil of a cultural landscape thousands of years old with different climate and vegetation zones. It

6 On architecture cf. Ita Heinze-Greenberg’s instructive essay: Von Dessau nach Haifa: Neues Bauen im zionistischen Kontext, 1918–1949, in: *Munio Weinraub/ Amos Gitai, Architektur und Film in Israel*. Ed. Winfried Nerdinger in collaboration with Mirjana Grdanjski, Ita Heinze-Greenberg and Anna Schlieben (Publikation zur Ausstellung des Architekturmuseums der TU München in der Pinakothek der Moderne 6. November 2008 bis 8. Februar 2009), Edition Minerva, Munich, 2008, pp. 30–49.

7 Cf. Annemarie Schimmel, The Water of Life, in: *Environmental Design: Journal of the Islamic Environmental Design Research Center*, 2 (1985), p. 9; James L. Wescoat Jr. and G. F. White, *Water of Life: Water Management and Environmental Policy*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003; Robert H. W. Wolf, *Mysterium Wasser: Eine Religionsgeschichte zum Wasser in Antike und Christentum*, V&R Unipress, Göttingen, 2004.

8 Stefano Bianca, *Hofhaus und Paradiesgarten. Architektur und Lebensformen in der islamischen Welt*, 2nd, revised ed., C. H. Beck, Munich, 2001, p. 42.

9 Cf. Aloys Hüttermann, *The Ecological Message of the Torah Knowledge, Concepts and Laws which Made Survival in a Land of “Milk and Honey” possible* (USF Studies in History of Judaism), Scholars Press, Atlanta, Georgia, 1999.

10 Cf. the contributions by Uwe Puschner, Tal Alon-Mozes, Gert Gröning and Aloys P. Hüttermann on the complex “Religion, das Beispiel des Judentums” in: Gert Gröning and Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn (eds.), *Naturschutz und Demokratie!? Dokumentation der Beiträge zur Veranstaltung der Stiftung Naturschutzgeschichte und des Zentrums für Gartenkunst und Landschaftsarchitektur (CGL) der Leibniz Universität Hannover in Kooperation mit dem Institut für Geschichte und Theorie der Gestaltung (GTG) der Universität der Künste Berlin (CGL-Studies 3)*, Martin Meidenbauer Verlagsbuchhandlung, Munich, 2006, pp. 121–154.

needs to be investigated in greater depth which mental barriers have to be overcome in view of the continuing immigration from different countries and cultures and which impulses might be gained from the Jewish tradition in order to at least mitigate this conflict.

But the question is also which consequences current developments in religion and the lives of religious groups have on the shaping of the landscape and environmental policies? Is the “Religious Revival in the Modern Age”¹¹ an inhibiting or fostering element in the process of a landscape planning and urban design oriented towards sustainable development? This is related to the question of life styles and ways of living, but also to the practical effects of ritual prescriptions and certain behavioural models. Which role does religion play in the radical settler movements and how does this ‘wild’ form of ‘shaping’ the landscape on the one hand relate to the official landscape design on the other? These are difficult questions, but they should not be omitted where the question of an environmentally friendly landscape architecture is concerned.

The “erection of the ‘separation wall’, which will obstruct the last remaining spatial landscape connections”, is becoming a question of compatibility or rather incompatibility in a religious sense, too.

“Regardless of the topographic situation, the settlements affected are being deprived of an unobstructed view of the horizon with its sunrises and sunsets so important in everyday Islamic religious life, when the muezzin calls people to prayer from the mosque’s minaret.”¹²

The question of having space, in the broadest sense, at one’s disposal is thus significant in religious terms, because there are “basic forms of spatial ritual and behavioural patterns”¹³ in everyday life that form a community’s inner structure.

In the view of the worldwide environmental problems increasing attention is being paid to the connection between the state of non-anthropogenic nature, man’s relationship to nature and religions. For Islam, too, there are meanwhile numerous publications available that discuss “the environmental dimensions of Islam”.¹⁴ One should also investigate the links between Islam and concept of the

11 Cf. *50 Years The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute* (VLJI), Van Leer, Jerusalem, 2007.

12 Christiane Sörensen, Sehnsucht nach Heimat in der Fremde/ La nostalgie de la patrie, loin des pays d’origine, in: *Anthos*, 3 (2005), pp. 46–50, here p. 48.

13 Bianca, *Hofhaus und Paradiesgarten*, 2001, pp. 21–29 (chapter).

14 M. Dizzi Dien, *The Environmental Dimensions of Islam*, Redwood Books, Trowbridge, Wiltshire, 2000; cf. also Ahmad von Denffer, *Islam und Umwelt* (Schriftenreihe des Islamischen Zentrums München, no. 8), Munich, 1993; Akhtaruddin Ahmad, *Islam and the Environmental Crisis*, Ta-Ha Publishers, London, 1997; Richard Foltz, Is there an Islamic Environmentalism?, in: *Environmental Ethics*, 22 (2000), 1, p. 63–72; Erhun Kula, Islam and environmental conservation, in: *Environmental Conservation*, 28 (2001), 1, p. 1–9.

man-nature relationship and of nature conservation and environmental protection.

As regards “desert” seen from the perspective of cultural and religious history, one might add that the image of the desert could constitute a topic of its own at the conference. For Islam and Christianity, Dzevad Karahasan states:

“A comparison of the desert in both religions and cultural traditions could undoubtedly make an important contribution to understanding their mutual relations, the complicated and exciting game of similarities and differences ... and define them in more detail”.¹⁵

That in arid zones the economical use of water is one of the key factors when designing new landscapes, one can learn from the projects of Shlomo and Barbara Aronson.¹⁶ In recent years water has been often discussed as a source of political conflicts.¹⁷

Environmental policy and the contribution of landscape architecture at a local level

A conference that is explicitly devoted to “landscape architecture” and environmental policy should deal with how environmental policies are put into effect by landscape architecture at a regional and local level. One focus could be on the activities of municipal authorities (comparable with the municipal departments for green space management in Germany) in large cities in Israel and in neighbouring countries.

CABE Space (Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment) conducted in 2003 an investigation: “Is the grass greener ...? Learning from international innovations in urban green space management”. In the context of this investigation, case studies were carried out in large cities such as Aarhus, Curitiba (Brazil), Hannover, Melbourne, Minneapolis, Paris, Tokyo, Wellington and Zurich. The survey’s departure point was the situation in England, for which it had been diagnosed “that public parks and urban green spaces in England’s town and cities

15 Dzevad Karahasan, *Das Buch der Gärten. Grenzgänge zwischen Islam und Christentum*, Insel Verlag, Frankfurt am Main and Leipzig, 2002, p. 129; cf. Jacques Le Goff, *Die Waldwüste im mittelalterlichen Abendland*, in: id., *Phantasie und Realität des Mittelalters*, Klett-Cotta, Stuttgart, 1990, pp. 81–97 (original edition: *L’imaginaire médiéval*, Editions Gallimard, Paris, 1985).

16 Shlomo Aronson and Barbara Aronson, *Anthropogene Landschaften in einer Welt der Extreme/Man-made landscapes in a world of extremes*, in: Donata Valentini (ed.), *Wiederkehr der Landschaft/Return of Landscape*. With photographs by Alex S. MacLean, jovis Verlag/Akademie der Künste, Berlin, 2010, pp. 202–213; cf. Shlomo Aronson, *Aridscapes*, Barcelona, 2008.

17 The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is talking of “Wars about Water”; cf. e. g. Rainer Hermann, *Gefangene des Nils*, in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, Monday 3 August, 2009.

have suffered a widespread decline and neglect in recent years”.¹⁸ In the course of the research project, eleven large cities were examined with regard to their parks and green spaces, “focusing in particular on aspects of management and maintenance practice”.¹⁹ An older study dating to 1990 is available for Cairo.²⁰

The conference could on the one hand incorporate the insight of the CABE Space research study, also with reference to sustainability and municipal space policy.²¹ On the other hand one might discuss the situation in large towns such as Haifa, Jerusalem or Tel Aviv as well as large towns of neighbouring states.²² Park planning under changing perspectives and the significance of informal development in urban planning are further aspects and subjects of examination. But “at a local level” implies also rural settlements, the villages and the transformation of a traditional landscape by tourism and recreation sites.

Landscape, environment and the arts in Israel

Israel’s open spaces, boundaries and landscapes, how they have changed and the changes their population has undergone are uniquely portrayed in Amos Gitai’s films (born 1950). Since this trained architect and son of a well-known architect (Munio Weinraub-Gitai) began making films in the early 1970s, people have/ he has been taking a critical look at the environment (“Geography According to Modern Man and his Control of the Environment”, short film 1972/73; “Medabrin al ecologia”, short film 1973), at boundaries (“Hagvul”, short film 1977) and at the political myths connected with these (“Political Myths”, short film 1977). It would be worthwhile looking at the “landscape as a player” in selected documentary and feature films by Amos Gitai. Of the documentary films, the trilogy “Wadi” (1981), “Wadi Ten Years After” (1991), “Wadi Grand Canyon 2001” (2001) would be a possible option, in addition “Field Diary” (1982), “Ananas” (1983) and “Tapuz (Orange)” (1998). Of the feature films one could consider “Eden” (2001), “Kedma” (2002), “Free Zone” (2005) and “Disengagement” (2007).

18 CABE Space, *Is the grass greener ...? Learning from international innovations in urban green space management*, duplicated manuscript, Barlett School of Planning UCL, London, 2003, p. 4.

19 Ibid., p. 4.

20 Mohamed Younis Ali Abdalla, *Grünflächensituation in den ägyptischen Städten und Möglichkeiten zur Verbesserung der Grünversorgung, dargestellt am Beispiel Großraum Kairo* (Beiträge zur räumlichen Planung. Schriftenreihe des Fachbereichs Landschaftsarchitektur und Umweltentwicklung, vol. 24), Hannover, 1990.

21 See also the contribution by Gholam Reza Pashan-Hazrat, Sustainable Development in Tehran, in: The Aga Khan Trust for Culture (ed.), *Sustainable Landscape Design in Arid Climate*, Proceedings of a Symposium held at Dumberton Oaks on 7 December 1996, The Aga Khan Trust for Culture, Geneva (s. a.), pp. 39–48, and Abdelhalim I. Abdelhalim, Culture, Environment and Sustainability: Theoretical Notes and Reflections on a Community Park Project in Cairo, *ibid.*, pp. 49–62.

22 For Saudi Arabia cf. Dominik Geilker, *Saudi-Arabien. Landschaftsarchitektur seit den 1970er Jahren am Beispiel der Arbeiten Richard Bödekers*, ed. Zentrum für Gartenkunst und Landschaftsarchitektur (CGL), Universität Hannover, CGL, Hannover, 2005 (brochure).