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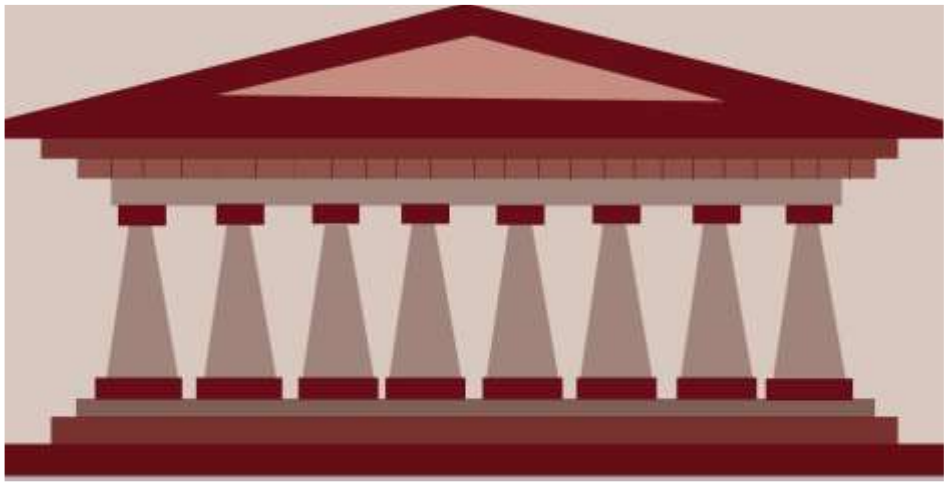

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Gregory T. Papanikos
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Higher Education for Democracy from Classical Athens to the United States: Reflections on an Unfinished Project

*By Andrew F. Erwin**

This article addresses the convergence of two related problems facing U.S. higher education and democracy today by examining how analogous problems arose in ancient Athens and by suggesting how an ancient Athenian conception of higher education for democracy can help us navigate contemporary challenges. Ancient Athens is an especially fruitful place to explore these issues because both higher education and democracy first arose there. Furthermore, because they were novel projects without historical precedent, Athenians grappled with the tensions that arose between democracy and higher education in ways that highlight the most salient issues. The argument unfolds in three parts. First, the article identifies a crisis of faith in U.S. institutions of both higher education and democracy, which has generated a populist backlash against higher education and electoral support for candidates that undermine democratic norms and institutions. These twin phenomena challenge an ideal of higher education for democracy that is commonly identified as a core aim of American higher education. Second, the article argues that institutions of higher education should draw on an underappreciated conception of participatory civic higher education that was implicit in the functioning of Athenian democracy. Doing so requires expanding our understanding of classical higher education – traditionally conceived as a struggle between Isocratean rhetoric and Platonic philosophy – to encompass the popular Athenian democratic tradition of participatory civic higher education. The article reconstructs this tradition based on recent scholarship on Athenian democracy and readings of Thucydides and Plato. Finally, a conclusion offers four recommendations for addressing the populist challenge and democratizing contemporary higher education based on the Athenian example with reference to recent work on deliberative democracy and civic education.

Keywords: *higher education, democracy, classical Athens, Thucydides, Plato*

Introduction: The Populist Challenge to Higher Education for Democracy

Across the West today, higher education finds itself besieged by various forms of populist democracy. In the United States, the problem is particularly acute.[1]

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1. Outside the United States, other Western democracies have experienced symptoms of a populist backlash against higher education similar to the U.S. case diagnosed here. While not the focus of this article, readers may find apt comparisons to developments in Hungary and Germany among others. For developments in Hungary under Viktor Orbán's Fidesz party, see Michael Ignatieff, "An Authoritarian Came for My University. His Objective Was Clear," *Washington Post*, June 2, 2025, https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2025/06/02/trump-harvard-attack-viktor-orban-ceu-hungary/; Alison Abbott, "Hungarian Government Takes Control of Research Institutes Despite Outcry," *Nature*, July 8, 2019, https://www.na

Public faith in institutions of U.S. higher education is at all-time lows.[2] Many working and middle-class Americans, who in previous generations aspired to attend university, have given up on pursuing higher education, calculating that either the cost of university is too high for its benefits or that university curricula and culture run counter to their values and interests.[3] Higher education now acts as a driver of economic inequality, rather than social mobility, and a generator of cultural division, rather than shared values.[4] This creates a vicious cycle of populist resentment toward the college-educated, which further undermines the relationship between democracy and higher education. In many populist corners, professors have become rhetorical targets of populist

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ture.com/articles/d41586-019-02107-4 ; Kovács Zoltán, "Hungarian Academy of Sciences Stripped of Its Research Network," *Index*, July 2, 2019, https://index.hu/english/2019/07/02/hungarian_academy_of_sciences_research_network_taken_away_academic_freedom_ministry_of_innovation_and_technology/. It remains to be seen if the recent election of Orban critic Péter Magyar will reverse some of these trends. For developments in Germany with the rise of the Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) party, see Emily Dixon, "What Could the Rise of the AfD Mean for German Universities," *Times Higher Education*, February 21, 2025, https://www.timeshighereducation.com/features/what-could-rise-afd-mean-german-universities; AStA University of Göttingen,"Resolutely Countering Attacks on the Freedom of Research and Teaching," February 12, 2025, https://asta.uni-goettingen.de/en/2025/02/12/resolutely-countering-attacks-on-the-freedom-of-research-and-teaching/. For a global analysis of attacks on academic freedom in universities, see Scholars at Risk, *Free to Think 2025: Report of the Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project*, (New York: Scholars at Risk, 2025), https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/resources/free-to-think-2025/.

2. Michael T. Nietzel, "Americans' Confidence In Higher Education Sinks To A New Low," *Forbes*, July 11, 2023. https://www.forbes.com/sites/michaeltnietzel/2023/07/11/americans-confidence-in-higher-education-sinks-to-a-new-low/.

3. Lydia Saad, "Perceived Importance of College Hits New Low," *Gallup*, September 11, 2025, https://news.gallup.com/poll/695003/perceived-importance-college-hits-new-low.aspx; Sareen Habeshian, "College costs the biggest barrier for most Americans, survey finds," *Axios*, April 17, 2024, https://www.axios.com/2024/04/17/college-cost-survey; Kamaron McNair, "Just 22% of Americans say college is worth it if you have to take out student loans," *CNBC*, May 23, 2024, Nicole Stephens and Sarah Townsend, "The Unseen Reason Working-Class Students Drop Out," Politico, January 16, 2019. https://www. politico.com/agenda/story/2019/01/16/first-generation-low-income-students-drop-out-000873/; William Thelin, "How the American Working Class Views the 'Working Class'," *Humanities* 8.1 (2019), 53, https://doi.org/10.3390/h8010053; Jennifer Morton, *Moving Up Without Losing Your Way: The Ethical Costs of Upward Mobility* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2021); Anthony Jack, *The Privileged Poor: How Elite Colleges Are Failing Disadvantaged Students* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2020); Kaiser Family Foundation, "Kaiser Family Foundation/CNN Working-Class Whites Poll," September 23, 2016, https://www.kff. org/other-health/kaiser-family-foundationcnn-working-class-whites-poll-old-197757/.

4. Daniel Markovits, *The Meritocracy Trap: How America's Foundational Myth Feeds Inequality, Dismantles the Middle Class, and Devours the Elite* (New York: Penguin Books, 2020).

resentment, regarded essentially as corrupters of the country's youth. These sentiments have shaped elections and federal policy in the United States. With a populist wind at its back, the current U.S. administration has initiated an all-out assault on the independence of higher education by threatening public funding, academic freedom, and autonomy in hiring practices.[5]

At the same time, democracy faces a hard problem itself.[6] Public faith in the institutions of democracy is equally low.[7] A large majority of Americans regards the U.S. Congress as ineffective and beholden to wealthy interests. Many see the courts as inaccessible, corrupt, or partisan, and federal government agencies as inefficient bureaucracies that do not serve the people's interests.[8] In the minds of populists, democratic institutions increasingly serve the interests of an elite class of college-educated experts or a cadre of business oligarchs who manipulate institutions and live

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5. PEN America, *By the Numbers: The Trump Administration's Assault on Universities*, February 2025, https://pen.org/by-the-numbers-the-trump-administrations-assault-on-universities/.

6. In referring to contemporary "democracy," I rely on a common usage of the term to denote systems of constitutional government where citizens elect representatives that make and execute laws on their behalf as well as systems that include features of direct democracy such as ballot initiatives and referenda (e.g. Switzerland, U.S. states). Contemporary usage of the term "democracy" generally assumes that popular sovereignty in the form of elections, representation, or referenda are necessary but not sufficient for democratic conditions to obtain. Contemporary usage also entails a normative assumption that the various procedural manifestations of popular sovereignty must be accompanied by the rule of law and the protection of basic rights and freedoms such as freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, freedom from arbitrary search and seizure (the rule of law), etc. This means that countries may be procedurally democratic in a modern sense but normatively deficient due to failures in the rule of law or the protection of constitutional freedoms. From an ancient Athenian perspective, modern representative government falls short of a basic criterion of democracy, which was direct citizen participation in decision making, administration, and justice. See Gregory Papanikos, "The Five Ancient Criteria of Democracy: The Apotheosis of Equality," *Athens Journal of Humanities and Arts* 9.2 (April 2022): 105-120. Part of the underlying argument of this article is that responding to populist challenges to higher education and democracy requires moving the needle of contemporary higher education and democracy closer to the Athenian conception of direct participation.

7. Madeleine Aggeler, "Trust in US institutions has 'never been lower' – here's why that matters," *The Guardian*, June 11, 2024, https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/ng-interactive/2024/jun/11/trust-us-institutions;

8. Ballotpedia, "Ballotpedia's Polling Index: Congressional Approval Rating," Updated March 5, 2026, https://ballotpedia.org/Ballotpedia%27s_Polling_Index:_Congressional_ap_proval_rating; Pew Research Center, "7 Facts about Americans' Views of Money in Politics," October 23, 2023, https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2023/10/23/7-facts-about-americans-views-of-money-in-politics/?gad_source=1&gad_campaignid=2385389731%203&gbraid=0AAAAA-ddO9FV%20YRiZhaov7vVImFCOsSrYi&gclid=Cj0KCQjwlLDQBhDj%20ARIsAPlIefG7Pmw1PoLuD47AMuV9A1deYM1RK6GvjCr8Dv1zfgMpbYHgSt9Jt0saAm0yEALw_wcB; Pew Research Center, *Americans' Dismal Views of the Nation's Politics*, September 19, 2023, https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2023/09/19/americans-dismal-views-of-the-nations-politics/.

without accountability. This has led to the paradox that a solid majority of working and middle-class Americans reelected, in a free and fair election, a twice-impeached former president who attempted to overturn another free and fair election and now regularly disregards the Constitution and the law.[9] The result is that democratic self-determination is paradoxically undermining democracy itself.

This state of affairs is disconcerting to advocates of a liberal ideal of higher education for democracy, which defines a core purpose of higher education as preparation for democratic citizenship. American thinkers from Thomas Jefferson, Frederick Douglass, and John Dewey to contemporary philosophers and university presidents give a special place to higher education in the preservation and cultivation of American democracy.[10] Yet, if growing numbers of democratic citizens are skeptical or hostile toward higher education, what does this portend for higher education's role in preserving democracy? As educators committed to democratic ideals of free speech, self-determination, and freedom from domination, we must build robust answers to the populist challenge lest we find ourselves increasingly at odds with democracy itself.

Learning from Ancient Athens: What the Traditional Account of Athenian Higher Education Misses

Fortunately, ancient Athenians faced similarly hard problems of democracy and higher education and left us a rich record of their pedagogical attempts to

9. U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, *Undermining Constitutional Limits: The Trump Administration's Unlawful Seizure of Congressional Powers, Defiance of Court Orders, and Intimidation Campaign*, August 2025, https://www.hsgac.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/hSGAC-Minority-Staff-Report.Undermining-Constitutional-Limits-FINAL.pdf; Justin Jouvenal, "Trump officials accused of defying 1 in 3 judges who ruled against him," *The Washington Post*, July 21, 2025, https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2025/07/21/trump-court-orders-defy-noncompliance-marshals-judges/; U.S. House Select Committee to Investigate the January 6th Attack on the United States Capitol, *Final Report*, Government Publishing Office, 2022, https://www.govinfo.gov/collection/january-6th-committee-final-report?path=/GPO/January%206th%20Committee%20Final%20Report%20and%20 Supporting%20Materials%20Collection.

10. Thomas Jefferson, *A Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge* (1779), in *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 2, 1777–1780, ed. Julian P. Boyd (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950), 526–535; Frederick Douglass, "At the Dedication of the Manassas Industrial School" (1894), in *Frederick Douglass: Speeches & Writings, 1881–1895*, ed. Philip S. Foner (New York: Library of America, 1992), 872–878; John Dewey, *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education* (New York: Macmillan, 1916); *General Education in a Free Society: Report of the Harvard Committee* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1950); Martha C. Nussbaum, *Cultivating Humanity: A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997); Ronald J. Daniels, *What Universities Owe Democracy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2021).

solve them. In response to the challenges of ancient democracy, Athenians developed three different traditions of institutionalized higher education: the rhetorical school of Isocrates founded in the early 390s BCE,[11] the Platonic Academy founded in the mid-380s, and the Athenian *ephebeia* founded in 335 in the last years of the democracy.[12] These traditions hold out some promise for us, if and only if, we can hold them in tension together – something Athenians themselves could not quite accomplish. A problem in our absorption of these traditions is that the two that have most influenced our intellectual life, the Platonic Academy and the rhetorical school of Isocrates, were either highly critical of democracy or directed only at its most elite members. Only the *ephebeia* was a truly democratic institution in the sense that it was directed at and open to all classes of Athenian citizens. Now, instead of looking at the well-documented fourth-century history of these institutions,[13] this article examines their prehistory in fifth-century Athens because it holds the key to understanding what we have missed. That prehistory begins with the democratic revolution of 508/7 and the great institutional, military, and cultural achievements of the new democracy. It continues with the mid-century emergence of Sophistic higher education and ends with populist demagogues, two oligarchic coups, a restored democracy, and the execution of Socrates.

The classic accounts of ancient higher education tend to divide the history into a struggle between the Isocratean and Platonic traditions.[14] On this view, Isocrates' school carries on a reformed version of the rhetorical and ethical education the Sophists had provided to wealthy elites in the fifth century, who were competing for relevance and influence in an increasingly radical democracy. Plato's Academy carries on a legacy of Socrates and founds a philosophical, scientific tradition concerned more with a search for truth and its proper method of discovery than with practical politics. The resulting narrative of ancient higher education is one that tells of a battle between rhetoric and philosophy that can be

11. All subsequent dates are BCE.

12. George Norlin, General Introduction to *Isocrates*, vol. 1, Loeb Classical Library 209 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1928), xvi–xvii; Robin Waterfield, *Plato of Athens: A Life in Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023), 123; Kenneth J. Dover, Introduction to *Aristotle: The Athenian Constitution*, Loeb Classical Library 285 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970), xxv–xxviii.

13. Thomas R. Henderson, *The Springtime of the People: The Athenian Ephebeia and Citizen Training from Lykourgos to Augustus* (Brill's Studies in Greek and Roman Epigraphy, vol. 15, 2020); John L. Friend, *The Athenian Ephebeia in the Fourth Century BCE* (Brill Studies in Greek and Roman Epigraphy, 13, 2019); Henri-Irénée Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*, trans. George Lamb (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1956).

14. Werner Jaeger, *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture. Volume I: Archaic Greece. The Mind of Athens*, trans. Gilbert Highet (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1945); Marrou, *Education in Antiquity*; Frederick A. G. Beck, *Greek Education: 450-350 B.C.* (London: Methuen, 1964); Bruce Kimball, *Orators and Philosophers: A History of the Idea of Liberal Education* (New York, NY: Teachers College Press, 1986).

traced through Roman antiquity and into the modern age.[15] This traditional narrative falls short on one crucial point, however, namely that it leaves out the late democratic Athenian *ephebeia* and its prehistory in a popular democratic conception of *participatory civic higher education*. This popular democratic tradition, which began to receive proper attention recently with the work of Josiah Ober, traces to the beginnings of the democracy and predates the rise of Sophistic higher education.[16] The relative absence of this tradition from classic accounts is due to the fact that ancient democracy and participatory civic higher education do not fit neatly into our modern conceptions of either democracy or higher education. Recovering this tradition changes the way we understand the Athenian contribution to an ideal of higher education for democracy.

The Athenian Democratic Theory of Political Competence: Participatory Civic Higher Education

One aspect of Athenian democracy that vexed its ancient critics and puzzled historians ever since was its remarkable effectiveness and longevity despite the fact that it had no chief executive or council of experts (like its rival Sparta) and was governed by a broad cross-section of citizens from all economic classes with allegedly little to no political expertise.[17] We can add to this a further temporal puzzle. The seminal political and cultural achievements of Athenian democracy occurred before the emergence of higher education in its Sophistic form in the middle of the fifth century. To name just a few achievements, one thinks of the democratic revolution of 508/7 itself, the victories at Marathon and Salamis, the establishment of the Delian League in 478, the great institution of Athenian drama, the second constitutional revolution of the 460s that gave virtually all political power to the popular Assembly, Council, and jury courts; the institution of pay for jury service shortly thereafter, which enabled greater participation by poor and working Athenians; and the architectural and artistic program instigated by Pericles in 447, which produced the Parthenon and the sculptural monuments we admire on the Acropolis today. The first self-described Sophist Protagoras was just establishing his reputation as a traveling professor when the final stages of this Athenian democratic revolution were complete. How then, without a system of higher education for self-governance

15. See especially Kimball, *Orators and Philosophers*.

16. Josiah Ober, "The Debate over Civic Education in Classical Athens," in *Education in Greek and Roman Antiquity*, ed. Yun Lee Too (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2001), 175–207; Ober, *Democracy and Knowledge: Innovation and Learning in Classical Athens* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008).

17. The classic ancient expression of this sentiment is Pseudo-Xenophon, *The Constitution of the Athenians*, written by an unknown author sometime between 441 and 424. For a discussion of implicit anti-democratic bias reproduced in modern twentieth-century scholarship, see W. G. Forrest, *The Emergence of Greek Democracy, 800-400 BC* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1966), 21-36.

in place, could average Athenians have managed to take the reins and govern their polis so brilliantly and effectively? And what was the Athenian democratic theory of political competence? How could the "uneducated people" rule themselves? The answer lies in the underappreciated tradition of participatory civic higher education.

To flesh out this answer, I want to begin in a slightly provocative place – and that is with two of Socrates' accusers, Meletus and Anytus. We know little about the two except that they were both staunch democrats. Anytus was involved in the restoration of the democracy after the reign of terror under the oligarchy of 404. Meletus' greater obscurity is itself indicative of the fact that he represented an average Athenian democratic viewpoint. In Plato's *Apology of Socrates*, we find Meletus defending a common-sense Athenian view of civic education through participation.[18] Asked by Socrates who educates Athens' youth, Meletus answers by naming in quick succession – as if it were obvious – the members of the jury, the Council, and the Assembly as the natural educators of young Athenians.[19] While Socrates' clever questioning is designed to corner Meletus into defending an absurd claim that Socrates was the only corrupter of Athens' youth, Meletus' viewpoint regarding the educative role of his fellow citizens is perfectly understandable and defensible as a statement of how Athenian democracy actually worked.[20]

Elsewhere in the *Meno*, Plato has Anytus defend a similar view in the context of a discussion about who can teach people to be good citizens.[21] There, with tongue in cheek, Socrates proposes the Sophists, but the radical democrat, Anytus, has had enough of Sophists, who he thinks corrupt the gilded youth of Athens and teach them clever skills to deceive their fellow citizens. Anytus and democrats like him were surely thinking of talented young aristocrats like Alcibiades, who had all the promise of a Pericles but none of his discipline or devotion to democracy. Alcibiades, whom Plato depicts as a student of Sophists in *Protagoras* and elsewhere as a companion of Socrates, had coaxed Athens into the disastrous Sicilian campaign and betrayed the democracy several times over during the war. Other Athenian aristocrats such as the shadowy figure of Antiphon – a sophist, logographer, and intellectual back-room dealer among the aristocrat clubs – had taken part in the oligarchic coup of 411, leading a violent propaganda campaign that set up the coup.[22] Of course, not all Sophists could be blamed for aristocratic chicanery.

18. On Meletus' answers as representing a widely-shared Athenian viewpoint, see Ober, "The Debate over Civic Education in Classical Athens," 180-181.

19. Plato, *Apology of Socrates* 24e-25a.

20. This seems to be the implication of Ober's work in *Democracy and Knowledge*.

21. Plato, *Meno* 89e-95a.

22. On the identity of Antiphon the orator and Antiphon the sophist, see Michael Gagarin, *Antiphon the Athenian: Oratory, Law, and Justice in the Age of the Sophists* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2002). A recent volume on the Sophists treats the matter as settled: Joshua Billings and Christopher Moore eds., *The Cambridge Companion to the Sophists* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022). On Antiphon's role in the oligarchic coup, see Thucydides, *History* 8.54, 65, 68.

Protagoras had been a confidante of Pericles, who had recruited him to write laws for the Athenian colony of Thurii. In Plato's depiction of him, Protagoras could offer sophisticated defenses of the common-sense Athenian view defended by Meletus and Anytus. But after Alcibiades, Antiphon, and the Thirty, the uses to which aristocrats put Sophistic higher education had driven the movement into disrepute. With this background in mind, Anytus' skepticism of Sophists was perfectly understandable. Feigning surprise at Anytus' reaction, Socrates wants to know whom else a young man should seek out to learn how to be a good citizen. Like Meletus, Anytus responds as if the answer ought to be obvious: "I don't see why we need to name anyone in particular. The fact is, any good Athenian he meets, every single one, will make him a better citizen than Sophists ever could, as long as he follows his advice."[23] The exchange ends with Anytus warning Socrates himself that he ought to be careful about his habit of questioning the competence of Athenians to educate their sons in civic virtue. Plato positions Anytus here between the Sophists and Socrates as representing the common-sense democratic view, which holds that every Athenian citizen is a politically competent teacher.

In his famous funeral oration recorded by Thucydides, Pericles had articulated a grand version of this same common-sense view. In the speech, Pericles dismisses the potential objection that a body of amateur citizens could not possibly have sufficient political knowledge or time to participate and govern competently. "Each of us is perfectly capable of managing his own household and public affairs; and those devoted to private business can nonetheless acquire a full knowledge of politics." He then reminds Athenians of the value they place on civic participation. "Anyone who does not participate in public life: you call that, not a quiet life, but a useless one." Participation in politics was a social norm, and failure to do so brought public shame. He goes on: "We are all involved in either the proper formulation or at least the proper review of policy." Part of Pericles' implicit argument in the speech is that participation in democracy itself provided an education for all citizens. He concludes the speech by envisioning the whole life of the city of Athens as an educational institution: "In summary, I declare our city as a whole to be the school of Hellas."[24]

How Athenian Democracy Worked: Levels of Citizen Participation

So, how exactly did the common-sense view of Meletus and Anytus and the sweeping vision of Pericles work? Part of the answer lies in the exceptionally high level of democratic participation itself. The democracy required extraordinary levels

23. Plato, *Meno* 92e. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations of classical Greek texts are from the editions cited in the bibliography.

24. Thucydides, *History* 2.40-41. Translation modified.

of adult male participation across the socio-economic spectrum.[25] Out of a total population of perhaps 250,000 at its height in the fifth century, 30,000 to 50,000 adult males played an active role in governing the polis.[26] While certainly not all citizens participated equally, the method of appointment by lot for service on the Council and the jury courts ensured that a high percentage of Athenian citizens had to take on central administrative roles or render legal judgements of constitutional significance many times in their lifetimes. If we take the thirty-year period from

25. Athenian democracy was not without its limitations. Women were excluded from democratic political institutions. They could not vote in the Assembly, serve on the Council or on juries. However, recent scholarship has shown that women played significant leadership roles in the religious sphere. Given the prominence of religion in Greek life from the everyday to high politics and the military, this sphere represented a significant space for female social and political agency. See Joan Breton Connelly, *Portrait of a Priestess: Women and Ritual in Ancient Greece* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007); Matthew Dillon, *Girls and Women in Classical Greek Religion* (New York: Routledge, 2001). That Athenians were aware of and considered the ramifications of excluding women from formal politics is evident in works of theatre such as Sophocles' *Antigone*, which dramatized for male Athenian audiences the perils of ignoring female voices who might defend the moral claims of religion and family. For a reading of Antigone's character as an "exemplar of democratic free speech," see Judith Fletcher, "Sophocles' Antigone and the Democratic Voice," in *Interrogating Antigone in Postmodern Philosophy and Criticism*, ed. S. E. Wilmer and Audronė Žukauskaitė (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 168–184. Slavery was also endemic to the ancient world, and Athens was no exception. State-owned slaves worked the mines in Laurion, generating significant revenue for Athens at the height of its power. Wealthy Athenians relied on slave labor to generate significant leisure for sport, philosophy, and political leadership. For a review of the extensive scholarship on the link between slavery and democracy in Athens, see Peter Hunt, *Ancient Greek and Roman Slavery* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2018), 69-76. Despite these limitations, Athenian democracy was radical in terms of the level of direct power wielded by ordinary citizens and the inclusion of poor and middle-class citizens in the decision-making machinery of the polis. Indeed, ancient Athenian democrats would have viewed the inequities of power among citizens in modern representative democracies as morally defective limitations much as we regard ancient slavery and gender inequity as marks against ancient democracy. Recent work on deliberative democracy (discussed in the final section below) has demonstrated that the radical features of Athenian direct democracy can be integrated into modern representative democracy to create a hybrid political model that addresses both moral demands. These efforts meld the popular empowerment and class inclusivity of Athenian direct democracy with the liberal freedoms and gender and racial inclusivity of modern representative democracy.

26. The classic study for Athenian population estimates is A.W. Gomme, *The Population of Athens in the Fifth and Fourth Centuries BC* (Oxford: B. Blackwell, 1933). Subsequent work has refined and revised but not fundamentally altered Gomme's estimates: see Mogens Herman Hansen, *Demography and Democracy: The Number of Athenian Citizens in the Fourth Century BC* (Herning: Systime, 1986); Ben Akrigg, *Population and Economy in Classical Athens* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019). Ober, *Democracy and Knowledge*, 80, 141 works with the classic figures of 250,000 for total population and between 30,000 - 50,000 citizens.

461 to 431 BCE, for example, 15,000 individual Council seats had to be filled. Given the lifetime limit of two terms, a bare minimum of 7,500 different individuals were required to serve on the Council in this period. Given deaths, the entry of new citizens, and the likelihood of at least some citizens only volunteering for selection once, the number of different individuals who served at least one year-long term on the Council was likely closer to 10,000. The math is even more stunning for participation in jury service. Over the same thirty-year period, 180,000 jurors had to be selected by lot. If we assume 20,000 of an estimated 50,000 total citizens volunteered for annual service, each citizen who volunteered would have had a 30% chance of being selected that year.[27] Over thirty years, the probability was that one would serve nine times and there was almost zero chance that any citizen who wanted to serve could not do so. Some citizens who served as jurors multiple times might hear hundreds of individual cases over a lifetime.

Beyond wide distribution of experience, significant knowledge and skill could be developed in the process of participation. Active citizenship meant receiving an ongoing education in practical administration and the values, norms, history, and theory of democracy. Council members, working in small teams, drafted decrees, made daily administrative decisions, delegated responsibilities to other individuals and entities, and directed complex projects involving the logistics of a maritime empire.[28] A year of Council service was an education in carrying out the duties of an executive officer. Jury service was both legal clinic and constitutional law seminar. Jurors listened to hundreds of prosecution and defense speeches in the law courts. They heard Athenian history recounted. Speakers explained the laws, their basis in democratic values, and expounded on the process of law-making itself through the jury trials. Serving a year as a juror was equivalent to hearing hours of public lectures in law, legal theory, history, and moral philosophy. In the Assembly, orators acted as public experts – informal professors for the Athenian citizenry.[29] In juxtaposing so many of the opposing speeches made by Athenian politicians during the Peloponnesian war, Thucydides preserves a sense of the intellectual experience of the Assembly and the discipline required to listen to and judge between skillful and often equally compelling arguments.

From this perspective, it is no stretch for Anytus to assume that every Athenian citizen would have possessed a respectable level of political and ethical know-how. The overwhelming majority of citizens certainly would have had at

27. Only citizens 30 and over could volunteer for service, which might have reduced the pool by approximately 30%, and not all of these would have volunteered. On estimates for jury participation, see Hansen, "The Concepts of *Demos*, *Ekklesia*, and *Dikasterion* in Classical Athens," *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 50.4 (2010): 531. See also Hansen, *Demography and Democracy*, 9-13 and "The Political Powers of the People's Court in Fourth-Century Athens," in O. Murray and S. Price eds., *The Greek City from Homer to Alexander* (Oxford 1990), 222-224.

28. Ober, *Democracy and Knowledge*, 118-167.

29. On the advisory role of elite orators, see Ober, *Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens: History, Ideology, and the Power of the People* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989).

least a functional knowledge of good city administration and a grasp of the constitutional implications of individual legal cases. And the experience of witnessing and living with the consequences of democratic decision-making and legal judgments would have provided a moral education to rival any ethics seminar. By comparison to modern democracies, the Athenian citizenry as a whole possessed an extraordinary amount of collective political expertise with each citizen holding a degree of individual expertise. Any one citizen who lacked knowledge in a specific area could easily find another citizen with the relevant experience and know-how.[30]

As alluded to earlier, the Sophist Protagoras had actually defended and given theoretical backing to the common-sense Athenian view in his time. His whole theory of society explained that human communities could not exist at all if it were not for a general and widely dispersed human capacity for moral and political judgement and the ability to teach it to others. A crucial point in Protagoras' argument is his claim that the city takes over educating its citizens when they are done with formal schooling. "But even when they do finish with teachers, society takes over; society makes them learn its laws and live their lives according to the standards set by those laws […] and it compels people to govern, and to accept government, according to those laws."[31] Here, Protagoras treats the very act of governing according to the laws – through participation in the institutions of democracy – as an educative experience.

The Populist Critique of Sophistic Higher Education

If Sophists such as Protagoras could contribute to democratic projects and articulate so clearly the popular democratic viewpoint, why had the movement fallen into such disrepute by the end of the fifth century? The answer holds one key to understanding the direction that higher education would take in the fourth century. Plato was most perceptive in depicting Anytus' outrage at Socrates' tongue-in-cheek proposal that the Sophists could teach civic virtue. For Anytus' reaction was indicative of a conflict that had arisen between democrats and aristocrats at the end of the fifth century – one to which both Plato and Isocrates were responding when they founded their educational institutions and embarked on their respective writerly careers. As Athens had stumbled into the disastrous Sicilian campaign and the democracy was twice overthrown and restored, the popular conception of participatory civic higher education had come into direct conflict with the effects of elite Sophistic education. Average Athenians had begun to recognize that the uses to which the Sophists' aristocratic students could put their training might undermine as often as reinforce the proper functioning of Athens' deliberative democracy. If democratic institutions had been designed to educate the citizenry through

30. Ober, *Democracy and Knowledge*, 118-167 is particularly valuable on this point.
31. Plato, *Protagoras* 326c-d.

participation in debate and decision-making, expert orators could also manipulate the demos through soaring rhetoric or subtle argument. And since decisions in the Assembly and judgments in the jury courts had to be rendered on the same day that measures were proposed and defendants were prosecuted, skilled orators could exploit the short-time horizon between debate and decision. As Athenians grappled with the impact of the new Sophistic arts, they struggled to keep up with the force and pace of argument, a fact which led some populist politicians to admonish Athenians for a tendency toward passive consumption of rhetoric and argument.

In the 420s, for instance, a populist such as Cleon, who was wealthy by trade but did not come from the traditional political class, inveighed in the Assembly against the Athenians' growing fondness for oratorical display and their tendency to become enraptured by the brilliance of one speaker and then the next to the detriment of thoughtful reflection on policy. The deliberative and free-thinking society Pericles had praised at the beginning of the war was drifting toward intellectual indulgence, passive consumption, and indecision as average Athenians, untrained themselves in the Sophistic arts of eristic and rhetoric, lapped up speeches like "spectators at the Sophists' displays."[32] Whiplashed one way then the next by clever arguments, Athenians could make consequential foreign policy decisions on one day that would then be reversed the next – as the infamous case of Mytilene showed.[33] Mark Munn has noted insightfully that Cleon gave his speech admonishing Athenians in 427, the same year Gorgias delivered his famous speech to widespread acclaim in the Assembly. This was a high point in tastes for soaring rhetoric, and there was no small irony in the fact that Cleon delivered his rebuke in brilliant oratorical form.[34] Athenians of his persuasion had to compete on the same stage and so, given their "lack of studied learning" (*amathia*), leveraged appeals to old-fashioned Athenian "good sense" (*sophrosyne*), decisiveness based in a constancy of moral sentiment, and respect for the collective wisdom of the laws rather than individual brilliance. As Cleon explained,

> Generally it is the ordinary folk who make better citizens compared with their cleverer fellows. The clever ones want to appear wiser than the laws and to win in any public debate, as if this was the most important way of displaying their intellect, and the result of such behavior is usually the ruin of their city. The ordinary folk, on the other hand, with no confidence in their own intelligence, accept the superior wisdom of the laws and do not presume the polished debater's ability to dissect a speech: but as impartial judges rather than competitors they generally reach the right conclusion.[35]

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32. Thucydides, *History* 3.38.

33. After being persuaded to exact a harsh punishment of death and slavery upon the Mytileneans who had revolted, the Athenians reversed their decision after a second round of oratorical debate on the next day and had to send a second fleet to chase after the first one that had been sent to deliver their original judgment. Thucydides, *History* 3.49.

34. Mark Munn, "The Sophists between Aristocracy and Democracy," in Billings and Moore eds., *The Cambridge Companion to the Sophists*, 84-85.

35. Thucydides, *History* 3.37.

Cleon opens his speech with praise for the practical intelligence of the common man and the collective wisdom of the democracy's institutions. After initially praising the people's better qualities, he proceeds to deliver a remarkable example of Athenian *parrhesia*: a brutally frank critique of their enthrallment to the Sophistic arts. Cleon's views on the specific issue up for debate (how to punish Mytilene for its rebellion) would not carry the day on this occasion, but his praise of Athenian good sense and his broader critique would prove prescient in two ways.

In the near term, the Athenians decided, against Cleon, not to execute all the men of Mytilene and enslave the women and children. Ironically, they would resist Cleon's morally suspect recommendation on this occasion in favor of a more merciful and prudent course of action. In the long term, however, they would fall prey to the bad advice of other demagogues – foremost among them the charismatic young aristocrat Alcibiades. As a member of one of Athens' most distinguished political families, he had access to all the Sophistic training he would have needed to put a sophisticated finish on innate charisma and hone natural gifts in public speaking. Plato depicts him as a member of the elite crowd surrounding Protagoras, Hippias, and Prodicus at the home of Callias, and Xenophon shows him in eristic debate with his guardian, Pericles.[36] Alcibiades was an early associate of Socrates as well, but little of Socrates' Athenian *sophrosyne* seems to have rubbed off on him. Instead, he indulged his worst instincts in pursuit of a decadent vision of aristocratic *arête* and reveled in his ability to enthrall the Athenian Assembly. In 415, he persuaded the Athenians to undertake a disastrous campaign to conquer Sicily, leading to the total destruction of their navy and the death of tens of thousands of seamen and hoplite citizens.

The Sophistic Paradox

At the end of the fifth century, after two oligarchic coups and a humiliating defeat in the war with Sparta, most average Athenians were fed up with the power of the Sophistic arts to deceive them and corrupt the privileged youth of Athens, who in their view ought to be contributing to democratic prosperity, security, and greatness rather than humiliation. Athenian democrats had made a bargain with their elite compatriots. So long as they used their talents, education, and expertise for the benefit of the democracy and the edification of its citizens, elites could compete for glory on the verbal battlefield of Athenian politics.[37] But Sophistically-trained aristocrats had broken their end of the bargain. As Athenians entered the fourth century, they faced a paradox raised by their open, free-thinking society and the intellectual dynamism of their democratic institutions. Freedom of speech in political institutions (*isegoria*) and a general culture of frank speech (*parrhesia*) had encouraged the rise of the Sophistic movement itself. At its best, Sophistic culture could lead to

36. Plato, *Protagoras* 316a; Xenophon, *Conversations of Socrates* 1.2.40-46.

37. On the contours and unspoken rules of this bargain, see Ober, *Mass and Elite*.

the ennobling rhetoric of a Pericles or the robust intellectual justification of democratic rule by a Protagoras. But now, little more than a century after the beginning of their great political experiment, average Athenians could see that their culture of openness and intellectual dynamism was devolving in public into a head-spinning game of verbal competition, which diminished the quality of deliberative debate and the aggregation of collective expertise, and in private into a shadowy elite underworld of amoral and clever schemers who were constantly threatening to overthrow the democracy. This Sophistic paradox reflected a broader paradox endemic to the liberal culture of democracy. The very values of free speech and thought that made democratic rule possible could be the source of forces that undermined it.[38] Navigating this paradox and reestablishing a durable equilibrium between a liberal intellectual culture and the common democratic cause would be the work of the next century and would shape the institutionalization of higher education.

The Search for Deliberative Distance and the Unfinished Project of Athenian Higher Education

Both Isocrates and Plato recognized that a new educational orientation was needed that would create some distance between democratic deliberation and decision making. As the story of institutionalized higher education unfolded in the fourth century, they established a critical and sometimes heated dialogue among elite critics of existing democratic practice and between those critics and the broader citizenry. The inter-elite dialogue took shape in the form of the famous battle between Isocratean rhetoric and Platonic philosophy and would play out first in the schools and in written texts that were circulated among a limited circle of highly educated elites. In this way, early institutionalized higher education established a critical distance on the pragmatic immediacy of both elite Sophistic education and popular democratic education through participation. At the same time, Isocrates and Plato both wrote to influence the democracy from a position one step removed from direct political participation. Neither Isocrates nor Plato are known to have delivered speeches in the Assembly or the courts, but their teaching and writing influenced politicians and democratic discourse especially in the latter

38. One might argue that Socrates, whose incessant interrogation of Athenian common sense and his popular association with the Sophistic movement put him squarely in democratic crosshairs, fell victim to the anxieties created by this Sophistic paradox. For an interpretation of Socrates' death that attempts to make sense of the jury's decision to convict him in light of political and cultural threats to the democracy, see Robin Waterfield, *Why Socrates Died: Dispelling the Myths* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2009).

half of the fourth century.[39] Isocrates, who had praised the Areopagus' educative role in the early days of the democracy and advocated restoration of some of its powers in 355, saw Demosthenes advance and secure reforms that restored some of those powers.[40] Plato, who had imagined a formative role for military and civic training in the *Laws*, saw Lycurgus implement a strikingly similar program in the 335 institutionalization of the *ephebeia*.[41] After Athens' defeat to Philip of Macedonia at the battle of Chaeronea in 338, Lycurgus advanced his broader vision to reform the democracy in a Platonic vocabulary that suggested Plato's thought could be compatible with a certain vision of managerial democracy.[42]

Nevertheless, throughout the fourth-century institutionalization of elite higher education and the establishment of a critical dialogue on democratic practice, the primary mode of higher education for the vast majority of Athenian citizens remained the fifth-century tradition of participatory civic higher education. Though the *ephebeia* attempted to formalize aspects of civic higher education that had been implicit in the functioning of the democracy, its primary focus in the last days of the democracy was on military training.[43] It was not until after the democracy fell and the *ephebeia* evolved into an institution for the preservation and propagation of Greek culture in the successor states of Alexander the Great's empire that the remnants of participatory civic higher

39. Takis Poulakos, ed., *Isocrates and Civic Education* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997); Paul Cartledge, *Ancient Greek Political Thought in Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Mark A. Ralkowski, *Plato's Trial of Athens* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020).

40. Isocrates, *Areopagiticus*. Hansen dates the reintroduction of the Areopagus' powers of investigation to the period after Isocrates' publication of *Areopagitcus* in 355. See Mogens Herman Hansen, *The Athenian Democracy in the Age of Demosthenes: Structure, Principles, and Ideology* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 290–291. Allen supports Hansen's dating with additional compelling arguments. See Danielle Allen, *Why Plato Wrote* (West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 111, 199-200.

41. Plato, *Laws* 760b-763b, 765d-766c. Allen, *Why Plato Wrote*, 124.

42. Allen, *Why Plato Wrote*, 133-140.

43. See Pseudo-Aristotle, *Athenian Constitution* 42, which describes the *ephebeia* as a process of citizenship registration and confirmation followed by active duty military training under the guardianship of *sophronistai* or "moderators," who were well-regarded citizens chosen by the cadets' fathers and elected by the people for each tribe of cadets. Active duty involved a brief cultural tour of sanctuaries, followed by weapons training and guard duty for two years in the Piraeus and on the frontiers. Certainly, based on the content of the ephebic oath, moderators must have provided mentorship in the rights and duties of citizenship, but the real civic education would have come when *ephebes* completed active duty and began their participatory education in the Assembly, the Council, and, once they reached the age of 30, the jury courts. On the history of the ephebic oath, see P. Siewart, "The Ephebic Oath in Fifth-Century Athens," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 97 (1977): 102-111. Siewart observes that fifth-century authors seem to have known a version of the oath, suggesting that the pre-history of the institutionalized *ephebeia* was linked to a broader process of initiation into the rights and duties of citizenship.

education would find their way into the formal organization of the Hellenistic *ephebeia*.[44] Yet, by then, lacking the necessary political context for meaningful development, the popular Athenian tradition remained a mere formal echo of what had been an emerging possibility. The Hellenistic *ephebeia* would revert to the familiar cultural pattern of most ancient higher education. It became a finishing school for the elite.[45] The project and possibilities of institutionalized civic higher education for a mass of democratic citizens, which Athenians had begun to develop in the waning days of the democracy, would remain incomplete. Western higher education would develop along the elite lines established by Isocrates and Plato for the next two millennia. Popular higher education for democracy would remain a dormant ideal until its revival in the late eighteenth century and the age of popular revolutions across the Americas and Europe.

There is of course much more to say about the critical dialogue Isocrates and Plato established with Athenian democracy in the fourth century, but this article has focused on the tradition of participatory civic higher education because it suggests that higher education for democracy needs more than the critical philosophical tradition of Plato and the elite rhetorical-ethical tradition of Isocrates. Addressing the populist challenge today requires drawing equally on the popular Athenian conception of participatory civic higher education. In essence, it means finishing the incomplete project of Athenian higher education for democracy.

Higher Education for Democracy Today: Four Recommendations Inspired by the Athenian Example and Contemporary Practice

The Athenian example suggests four areas for revitalizing higher education for democracy today. First, in countries such as the United States where higher education has become unaffordable and ranking systems incentivize low admission rates, both private and public institutions should prioritize affordability and accessibility. In countries where tuition remains affordable and access is more open, advocates of higher education for democracy must fight to keep tuition low by resisting corporatization and by forcefully defending the civic mission of higher education.[46] Given the great diversity of university systems and models in the United

44. Marrou observed that the Hellenistic *ephebeia* was "organized like a miniature city, with an assembly, elected magistrates, debates, voting and so on." For his foundational discussion of the *ephebeia*, see Marrou, *Education in Antiquity*, 105-110.

45. Marrou, *Education in Antiquity*, 109; Éric Perrin-Saminadayar, *Éducation, culture et société à Athènes: Les acteurs de la vie culturelle athénienne (229–88). Un tout petit monde. De l'archéologie à l'histoire* (Paris: De Boccard, 2007), 51-52, 82-83.

46. For relevant critiques of corporatization in U.S. higher education and its impact on the civic mission, see Ellen Schrecker, *The Lost Soul of Higher Education: Corporatization, the Assault on Academic Freedom, and the End of the American University* (New York: The New Press, 2010); Robert J. Soucy, *A Critique of the Customer Model of Higher Education* (New York:

States and other Western democracies, a commitment to principles of affordability and accessibility is more important than one-size-fits-all policy prescriptions. Openness to different models for achieving the same end can encourage innovation. Systems that already have the benefit of strong public funding may prioritize serving more students. Other systems that face public skepticism about the cost of higher education can begin rebuilding trust by simplifying financial aid so that students understand their actual costs, which are often lower than published tuition.[47] Though limited in scalability, models that rely on endowments and work-to-study programs in order to provide a free university education may also be part of affordability solutions.[48] Specific solutions may vary, but the singular shift required is a reorientation around a public service mentality that eliminates cost as the primary determinant of access and prioritizes civic education as a core mission of higher education. For higher education to serve democracy, all citizens must be able to afford a high-quality university education that does not constrain their intellectual freedom through economic fear and the burden of high long-term debt. The Athenian example is illustrative. For ancient Athenians, higher education emerged to meet the demands of democratic governance and evolved to address the internal challenges that threatened to undermine democracy. By the end of their democratic experiment, Athenians had recognized the urgent need to extend a formal institutional higher education to all citizens without exception, not just those who could afford it.

Second, in the spirit of public service, higher education must find more ways to engage directly with the public to create tangible value for democratic society. Supporting and cultivating the deliberative democracy movement that has taken root in some Western democracies is a promising avenue for productive engagement.[49] Deliberative democracy responds to a core discontent of modern representative democracy – citizen disengagement – by involving regular citizens in deliberative

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Peter Lang, 2018); Howard Karger and David Stoesz, *Failing Universities: How Higher Education Became a Commodity and What We Can Do About It* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2024).

47. A recent report by Yale University noted that a majority of the public perceives the cost of university to be higher than what most students actually pay since only wealthier students pay the full advertised tuition at many American universities. *Report of the Yale Committee on Trust in Higher Education* (New Haven, CT: Yale University, April 10, 2026), 10, https://president.yale.edu/sites/default/files/2026-04/Report-of-the-Committee-on-Trust-in-Higher-Education.pdf.

48. See, for example, Berea College in the U.S. state of Kentucky. *A Model for Working and Learning in Liberal Arts Colleges of the Future* (Berea, KY: Berea College, 2022), https://legacy.berea.edu/president/wp-content/uploads/sites/11/2022/12/2022-10-25-BC-Whitepaper.pdf.

49. On the deliberative democracy movement, see David M. Farrell and Jane Suiter, *Reimagining Democracy: Lessons in Deliberative Democracy from the Irish Front Line* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2019); Patrick Fournier, Henk van der Kolk, R. Kenneth Carty, André Blais, and Jonathan Rose eds., *When Citizens Decide: Lessons from Citizens Assemblies on Electoral Reform* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2011).

political processes that directly shape policy, elections, and governance.[50] Deliberative democracy traces its modern theoretical roots to the philosophy of Jürgen Habermas and others such as Joshua Cohen as well as work by Peter Dienel on planning cells in Germany and Ned Crosby on citizen panels (also called citizen juries) in the United States.[51] The movement has also drawn inspiration from ancient Athenian democracy, most notably in the use of sortition to constitute mini-publics.[52] As the movement has evolved, recent work has focused on citizen assemblies. The work of political scientists David Farrell and Jane Suiter to cultivate deliberative democracy through citizen assemblies in Ireland offers a compelling contemporary model of participatory civic higher education. Their project demonstrated that academics can play a leading role in designing and facilitating successful democratic processes and outcomes. In Irish citizen assemblies and the constitutional convention of the 2010s, regular citizens, academic experts, and elite politicians came together in an inclusive process that yielded real policy outcomes with broad public support.[53] This recent Irish example shows that modern democracies do not have to make a false choice

50. Deliberative democracy – as distinct from representative democracy – can be defined as a political process whereby free and equal citizens are able to engage in informed deliberation, expressing views and preferences with adequate information, time, and opportunity, in order to reach mutually agreeable decisions that are collectively binding. The movement emerged in response to a core discontent of contemporary representative democracy: disengaged citizens increasingly alienated from political institutions dominated by elites who govern for special interests rather than in the public interest. Limited citizen engagement through infrequent elections further reinforces elite domination, which contributes to a rising trust gap between elites and ordinary citizens. Disengaged citizens, in turn, become low-information voters susceptible to populist demagoguery and political polarization. See Farrell and Suiter, *Reimagining Democracy*, 12-13; Amy Gutman and Dennis Thompson, *Why Deliberative Democracy?* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004); James Bohman and William Rehg, *Deliberative Democracy: Essays on Reason and Politics* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997).

51. Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger with the assistance of Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989), originally published as *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* (1962) and *The Theory of Communicative Action*, trans. Thomas McCarthy, 2 vols. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984–1987); Joshua Cohen, "Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy," in *The Good Polity: Normative Analysis of the State*, ed. Alan Hamlin and Philip Pettit (Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 17-34; Peter Dienel, *Die Plannungszelle – Der Bürger Plant seine Umwelt – Eine Alternative zur Establishment-Demokratie* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1977); Ned Crosby, Janet M. Kelly, and Paul Schaefer, "Citizen Panels: A New Approach to Citizen Participation," *Public Administration Review* 46.2 (1986): 170-178.

52. David Farrell and Peter Stone, "Sortition and Mini-Publics: A Different Kind of Representation" in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Representation in Liberal Democracies* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2020), 228-246.

53. Farrell and Suiter, *Reimagining Democracy*, 19-32.

between government by "out-of-touch" elites and government by "uninformed" common citizens – especially when higher education plays a constructive role in empowering regular citizens with the requisite knowledge, time, and space to deliberate. The deliberative democracy movement also suggests that modern representative democracies can successfully integrate features of direct democracy, building a hybrid twenty-first-century model that gives citizens more direct power, in line with the Athenian model, while addressing ancient democracy's limitations through modern commitments to gender and racial equality.

Third, higher education can play a leading role in facilitating democratic renewal, not only through specialized work by political scientists as in the Irish case, but also through teaching that educates students in the broader values and culture necessary to sustain democracy. Such teaching can include introducing students to concepts and principles such as deliberative democracy as well as other theoretical and disciplinary perspectives on democracy and the practices that have historically sustained it. From a curricular standpoint, general education requirements should include courses in civic engagement that connect democratic theory with practice outside the classroom. Experiential learning or internships in civic participation should be offered alongside career internships.[54] Community colleges may be well-positioned to offer continuing civic education beyond college to working adults.[55] For such efforts to succeed, colleges and universities must foster what The American Academy of Arts and Sciences has called a "whole-campus commitment to democratic citizenship."[56] Promising work is already underway on many campuses, but as the Athenian example suggests, long-term success will require elevating a broadly inclusive, participatory dimension of civic higher education and bringing it into critical dialogue with received models of elite civic higher education.

Indeed, higher education today must become a staunch defender of a fundamental democratic principle that elite classical traditions leave out. The right to self-determination, which ultimately means political power, does not depend on one's educational qualifications. When democratic elections generate results that threaten the independence of higher education and democratic institutions themselves, a robust commitment to democracy requires assessing election results

54. For example, Longwood University in the U.S. state of Virginia offers a civic experiential learning course that complements the general civic education curriculum. The "Brock Experience" takes students into the field to grapple with a politically contentious issue in its local context. See American Academy of Arts and Sciences, *Preparing Students for Civic Life: A Guide for Higher Education Leaders* (Cambridge, MA: American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2025), 11-12, https://www.amacad.org/sites/ default/files/publication/downloads/2025preparing-students-for-civic-life.pdf.

55. The Maricopa County Community College District in the U.S. state of Arizona developed a free "Creating Community" workforce development tool that organizations have used to provide working adults with continuing education on the value and skills of democratic citizenship. See American Academy of Arts and Sciences, *Preparing Students for Civic Life*, 15-16.

56. American Academy of Arts and Sciences, *Preparing Students for Civic Life*, 3.

as empirical feedback. The populist challenge is a wakeup call to revive the unfinished Athenian project of higher education for democracy as a means of furthering the core democratic principle of self-determination. Only by reviving this project can higher education defend its own intellectual freedoms and invite more people into the great conversation of higher education and democracy that began with the Greeks.

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The Issue of Wrocław's Expansion Following the First World War, and Urban Planning Concepts and Housing Estates of the Interwar Period

By Jadwiga Urbanik[*] & Jerzy Ilkosz[±]

This text presents part of the research on the history of Wrocław's expansion during the interwar period and the construction of modern housing estates and residential complexes, most of which have survived to this day.[1] The aim of this study is to highlight the specific merits of residential architecture in the German part of Wrocław. The objective of the research, however, is to produce a report in line with the European Union's long-term strategy on architecture and urban planning, as well as heritage protection and conservation. This stems from an awareness of the significant role of heritage in shaping the identity of Europeans, countries and regions. It was not until 1921 that an urban planning competition was announced for the expansion of Wrocław, resulting in two concepts by the eminent architects Adolf Rading and Ernst May. Housing associations were soon established, which initiated the creation of the three largest estates: Sępolno (Zimpel), Popowice (Pöpelwitz) and "Eichborn Garten". A significant expansion of Wrocław's territory did not take place until 1928. The economic crisis and the Nazis' rise to power in 1933 halted the development of modern urban planning, although the construction of housing estates continued until 1941. The research hypothesis that the characteristics of interwar residential buildings remain relevant to this day was adopted.

Introduction

Wrocław, located in south-western Poland, was part of the German Reich until 1945. During the interwar period, between 1918 and 1933, the city was home to many distinguished architects and urban planners, such as Hans Poelzig, Max Berg, Adolf Rading, Hans Scharoun and Ernst May. Thanks to their work, Wrocław was regarded as a major centre of modernist thought under the banner of "Neues Bauen".

At the beginning of the 20th century, Wrocław, alongside Dresden, Leipzig, Cologne and Frankfurt am Main, was one of the most densely populated cities in Germany. Overcrowding was primarily due to the limited area occupied by the city. In1914, it had 540,000 inhabitants and covered an area of approximately 4,910 hectares. Other urban agglomerations with a similar population had areas three, four, or even five times larger. Wrocław was severely affected by excessive population density (there were approximately 90 square metres per inhabitant, whereas in

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Cologne, for example, this figure was 310 square metres).[2] This situation significantly hampered the development of the capital of Lower Silesia.

As a result of the First World War, parts of East Germany, including areas of Greater Poland, Pomerania and, above all, Upper Silesia, were incorporated into the Polish state, which had been restored in 1918. This led to a massive migration of people moving from the former territories of the German Empire to the Weimar Republic, which was then in the process of being established. Most migrated to Lower Silesia, including its capital, Wrocław. The city authorities had to resolve new, serious social and economic problems, and above all, provide housing for the new settlers. The difficult situation was exacerbated by rampant inflation, as well as revolutionary sentiments amongst the population.

The need to provide new housing and to reduce the density of existing buildings posed a significant challenge for the city authorities. Even before the First World War, the city's then building councillor, Max Berg, sought to resolve this problem by seeking the German government's approval to expand the city to include neighbouring villages. However, such efforts were effectively thwarted by the authorities of the Wrocław County. After the First World War, the problem had become so acute that the Wrocław municipality established a separate Department for Urban Expansion and Development (Stadterweiterungsamt). Fritz Behrendt was put in charge of the city. Max Berg described the situation in Wrocław as follows: "The most common form of housing in Wrocław is tenement blocks (Mietkaserne), even for the affluent middle class, whilst low-rise buildings and detached houses can only be found in the affluent villa districts. […] Whilst cities of a similar size in western Germany cover a larger area – for example, Frankfurt am Main covers 13,500 hectares and Cologne 12,000 hectares – Wrocław's administrative area is a mere 4,900 hectares."[3]

It was emphasised at the time that "in addition to high-rise and high-density development, the area is dominated by very small, even tiny flats, which significantly increase the overcrowding of residents within a small area."[4] In 1928, the architect Fritz Behrendt described the dire housing situation in the capital of Lower Silesia: "Wrocław, the most densely populated German city, the city with the highest number of flats on the fifth or even sixth floor, a city where infant mortality and the incidence of tuberculosis reach, if not the highest, then certainly alarming levels, a city which,

2. Behrendt F (1922) Der Wettbewerb zur Erlangung eines Bebauungsplanes der Stadt Breslau und ihrer Vororte. *Der Städtebau* 19 (3/4): 21.

3. Berg M, Konwiarz R (1922), Wettbewerb für Vorentwürfe zu einem Bebauungsplan der Stadt Breslau und ihrer Vororte. *Zentralblatt der Bauverwaltung* 42: 257.

4. Ibidem: According to the 1916 census, for every 1,000 dwellings there were on average 731 small dwellings with only one or two rooms suitable for heating, 213 medium-sized dwellings with three or four rooms suitable for heating, and only 56 dwellings with more than four rooms suitable for heating. In 1916, 22.4% of all dwellings in Wrocław consisted of only one heated room and dark rooms or unheated chambers as adjoining rooms, and 190 dwellings per 1,000 dwellings in Wrocław had only one living room (76 in Berlin, 46 in Bremen, in Halle 25, and even in Essen only 24).

in terms of housing shortages, occupies an inglorious place on the podium, where at least 130,000 inhabitants live in dwellings that do not meet even the most basic sanitary and housing requirements – this is the sad result of a century-long stage of development".[5]

To draw up a development plan for Wrocław, an urban planning competition was launched in 1921 for the expansion of the city and its suburban districts. As part of the Wrocław competition, two concepts were developed by the eminent architects Adolf Rading and Ernst May. Outside the competition, Max Berg (Wrocław's city architect and designer of the famous Centennial Hall) presented his own design for the city's redevelopment.

The competition had a significant impact on German urban planning circles and on the development of new concepts for the design and redevelopment of cities and housing estates. The eminent architect and urban planner Fritz Schumacher stated that the competition was one of the most important in the development of modern urban planning thought in Germany at that time.

At the same time, the Department of Housing and Housing Estates (Deputation Siedlungs-und Grundstückswesen) was established, and construction of the first housing estates began in 1919. Soon, the first housing associations in Wrocław were established, which initiated the creation of the three largest housing estates: Sępolno (Zimpel), Popowice (Pöpelwitz) and "Eichborn Garten", within the city's narrow boundaries, making maximum use of the available land.

Due to a dispute between the city authorities and the district administration of the suburban municipalities, the city's territory was not significantly expanded until 1928. In Wrocław, the economic crisis and the Nazis' rise to power in 1933 brought the development of modern urban planning to a halt. It was not until after the Second World War that some of the ideas contained in the competition entries were put into practice.

Literature Review

The residential developments in Wrocław from the interwar period have not yet been catalogued or described, nor has a comprehensive monograph been published on the subject. The merits of this pre-war housing have not been described in detail.

Particularly noteworthy is a multi-authored work in the form of an architectural lexicon on Wrocław.[6] However, it contains only brief descriptions of some of the topics covered in the work.

The urban development of Wrocław during the interwar period and the competition for the city's expansion were presented by Wanda Kononowicz,[7]

5. Behrendt F (1928) Die Breslauer Eingemeindung. *Schlesische Monatshefte* 5(1): 2.

6. Eysymontt R, Ilkosz J, Tomaszewicz A, Urbanik J (eds.) (2011), *Leksykon architektury Wrocławia*, Wrocław: Via Nova.

Jerzy Ilkosz,[8] Winfried Nerdinger,[9] Claudia Quiring, Wolfgang Voigt, Peter Cachola Schmal, Eckhard Herrel.[10]

The subject of Wrocław's housing companies and cooperatives has rarely featured in the literature; there are only brief references to the activities of the best-known ones, such as Wrocław Housing Association Ltd (Siedlungsgesellschaft Breslau Aktien-Gesellschaft), The "Own Home" Housing Cooperative – Eichborngarten Ltd. (Siedlungsgenossenschaft Eigenheim Eichborngarten G.m.b.H.) and the A Silesian Homestead cooperative, a provincial housing development company with limited liability (Schlesische Heimstätte, provinzielle Wohnungsfürsorgegesellschaft m.b.H).[11]

Among others, Wanda Kononowicz[12] has written about selected housing estates in Wrocław.

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7. Kononowicz W (1995) Pierwszy plan generalny Wrocławia (1924) i początki kompleksowego projektowania urbanistycznego. In J Rozpędowski (ed), 301-338. *Architektura Wrocławia*, vol 2, *Urbanistyka do roku 1945*. Wrocław: Oficyna Wydawnicza Politechniki Wrocławskiej; Kononowicz W (1997) *Wrocław. Kierunki rozwoju urbanistycznego w okresie międzywojennym*. Wrocław: Oficyna Wydawnicza Politechniki Wrocławskiej; Kononowicz W (2011) Rozwój urbanistyczny i polityka mieszkaniowa Wrocławia w okresie Republiki Weimarskiej. In R Eysymontt, J Ilkosz, A Tomaszewicz, J.Urbanik (eds), 93-98. *Leksykon architektury Wrocławia.* Wrocław: Via Nova.

8. Ilkosz J (1996) Koncepcje urbanistyczne Maxa Berga na przykładzie projektów przebudowy Berlina w roku 1910 i Wrocławia w latach 1919-1920. In J Rozpędowski (ed.), 359-398. *Architektura Wrocławia*, vol. 2, *Urbanistyka*. Wrocław: Oficyna Wydawnicza Politechniki Wrocławskiej; Ilkosz J (2019) Adolf Radings städtebauliche Konzepte im Kontext des Wettbewerbs zur Erlangung, eines Bebauungsplans der Stadt Breslau 1921–1922. In J Ilkosz, B Störtkuhl (eds), 87-106. *Adolf Rading in Breslau. Neues Bauen in der Weimarer Republik*, Schriften des Bundesinstituts für Kultur und Geschichte der Deutschen im östlichen Europa, vol.72. Oldenburg, Berlin Boston: Verlag De Gruyter.

9. Nerdinger W (2023) *Architektur in Deutschland im 20. Jahrhundert. Geschichte, Gesellschaft, Funktionen*, München: C.H. Beck.

10. Quiring C, Voigt W, Schmal P C, Herrelo E (eds.) (2011), *Ernst May 1886-1970*, München: Prestel Verlag.

11. Störtkuhl B (2011) Ernst May und Schlesische Heimstätte. In C Quiring, W Voigt, P Cachola Schmal, E Herrel (eds), 33-49. *Ernst May 1886–1970.* München-London-New York: Prestel; Urbanik J (2013) Dwelling houses of building Cooperative Schlesische Heimstätte in Wrocław (former Breslau) and in Silesia in 1919-1941 as a precursor of modern ergonomics in architecture. In *Proceedings of 7th International Conference, UAHCI, held as part of HCI International - Universal access in human-computer interaction, design methods, tools, and interaction techniques for eInclusion* (Las Vegas, NV, USA, July 21-26, 2013). Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer, 376-385; Urbanik J (2014) Notheime - ergonomically designed crisis houses of the Building Cooperative "Schlesische Heimstätte". In *Proceedings of 8th International Conference, UAHCI, held as part of HCI International - Universal access in human-computer interaction, design for all and accessibility practice* (Heraklion, Crete, Greece, June 22-27, 2014). Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer, 303-313.

12. Kononowicz W (1991) Z problemów urbanistyki dwudziestolecia międzywojennego. Osiedle ogrodowe Sępolno we Wrocławiu. *Roczniki Sztuki Śląskiej* 15: 60-91; Kononowicz W (1995) Pierwszy plan generalny Wrocławia (1924) i początki kompleksowego projektowania

A single monograph by Sigurd Fleckner has been written on the activities of the Reich Research Society for Economic Efficiency in Construction and Housing (Reichsforschungsgesellschaft für Wirtschaftlichkeit im Bau- und Wohnungswesen – RFG).[13] Winfried Nerdinger also discussed this issue in a broader context.[14]

Further information was also provided by articles by Jadwiga Urbanik and Edyta Naworska.[15]

The activities of the Werkbund in the context of the WuWA housing exhibition, which included a model experimental housing estate in Wrocław, are described in a publication by Jadwiga Urbanik.[16] Regarding the Werkbund itself in the context of architecture, comparative material was drawn from the following publications by Winfried Nerdinger[17] and Vittorio Lampugnani.[18]

The Nazi era in Wrocław has been described by Jerzy Ilkosz,[19] Wanda Kononowicz[20] and Beate Störtkuhl.[21] The following studies were used for a comparative analysis of the German region.[22]

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urbanistycznego. In J Rozpędowski (ed), 301-338. *Architektura Wrocławia*, vol 2, *Urbanistyka do roku 1945*. Wrocław: Oficyna Wydawnicza Politechniki Wrocławskiej.

13. Fleckner S (1993) *Reichsforschungsgesellschaft für Wirtschaftlichkeit im Bau- und Wohnungswesen: 1927 - 1931; Entwicklung und Scheitern*. Aachen: Hochschulschrift, Technische Hochschule, Dissertation.

14. Nerdinger W (2023) *Architektur in Deutschland im 20. Jahrhundert. Geschichte, Gesellschaft, Funktionen*, München: C.H. Beck.

15. Urbanik J (2022), Towarzystwo badawcze RFG i ergonomia w niemieckiej architekturze okresu międzywojennego. In MJ Sołtysik, M Stępa (eds.), 242-253. *Architektura przemysłowa, portowa i miejska XX wieku*. Gdynia, Gdańsk: Urząd Miasta Gdyni, Wydział Architektury Politechniki Gdańskiej; Urbanik J, Naworska E (2022) RFG and the beginnings of modern living In *Proceedings of 17th International Docomomo Conference - Modern Design: Social Commitment & Quality of Life* (València, Spain, 6-9 September 2022). València: Docomomo International, 55-62.

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17. Nerdinger W (2023) *Architektur in Deutschland im 20. Jahrhundert. Geschichte, Gesellschaft, Funktionen*, München: C.H. Beck; Nerdinger W. (eds.) (2007), *100 Jahre Deutscher Werkbund 1907-2007*, München: Prestel Verlag.

18. Lampugnani V M (2011), *Die Stadt im 20. Jahrhundert*, Berlin: Verlag Klaus Wagenbach.

19. Ilkosz J (2021), *German modernism in the shadow of the NSDP – the experience of Wrocław (1933-1945)*. In J Purchla, Ż Komar (eds), 273-294. *Dissonant heritage? The architecture of the Third Reich in Poland*. Kraków: International Cultural Centre.

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Aim of the Study & Methodology

The text was compiled using the traditional methods of an architectural historian. The research was based on thorough archival searches at the Wrocław City Building Archive, the State Archives and the Museum of Architecture, as well as in German archives such as the Plansammlung Technische Universität in Berlin and the Deutsches Museum in Munich. The IRNS Institute in Erkner and the Staatsarchiv in Berlin. A review of contemporary literature concerning both Wrocław's housing developments and those across Germany was also carried out. Such studies are essential to understand the state of research on Wrocław's interwar housing estates and to present new findings against the backdrop of existing knowledge. The research undertaken has made it possible to present the history of the activities of the city authorities and the architects who designed the housing estates, to determine the contemporary value of these complexes, and to showcase Wrocław as a unique place on the map of interwar Germany and present-day Poland.

The aim of this study was therefore to examine the influence of the city authorities on Wrocław's development and housing policy during the interwar period; to highlight the specific merits of housing construction in pre-war Wrocław, taking into account the activities of the Werkbund and the State Research Society for Efficiency in Construction and Housing (Reichsforschungsgesellschaft für Wirtschaftlichkeit im Bau- und Wohnungswesen - RFG), and presenting Ch. Dawes's plan against the backdrop of the city's problems concerning the lack of land for development (the city development competition), as well as presenting the transformations in the design of housing complexes and estates during the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich.

The reason for addressing this topic is to highlight a social aspect that was so important then and remains so today. During the interwar period, housing estates were built in accordance with Clarence Perry's American theory of the "neighbourhood unit".

Another objective of the research is to prepare a report in line with the European Union's long-term strategy on architecture and urban planning, as well as heritage protection and conservation. Particular attention has been paid to listed buildings and historic urban complexes. This stems from an awareness of the significant role of heritage in shaping the identity of Europeans, countries and regions (*Davos Declaration. Towards a high-quality Baukultur for Europe, Conference of Ministers of Culture, 20–22 January 2018, Davos, Switzerland*).

The research hypothesis that the characteristics of interwar architecture remain relevant today was adopted, and an attempt was made to answer the question:

Institutionen, Wirkungen, Hirmer; Düwel J, Gutschow N (2019), *Ordnung und Gestalt. Geschichte und Theorie des Städtebaus in Deutschland 1922 bis 1975*, Berlin: DOM publishers.

Why are the interwar housing estates of German Breslau still accepted by the residents of Polish Wrocław today?

Development Concepts for Wrocław

The dispute between the Wrocław city council and the county authorities, which exercised jurisdiction over the villages and suburban settlements, prevented the city's boundaries from being extended until 1928, when pursuant to a law enacted by the government in Berlin, the area of Wrocław was expanded by approximately 12,000 hectares.[23] This gave the city the space it needed to continue developing. Unfortunately, this came too late, as the economic crisis and, later, the outbreak of the Second World War prevented Wrocław from expanding further.[24] Paradoxically, this dispute led to the emergence of innovative urban planning concepts in Wrocław, covering both housing construction and the planning of residential estates. These included: Max Berg and Ernst May's concepts of Wrocław surrounded by smaller satellite towns, as well as Adolf Rading's idea of linking the city's urban development with the economic growth of its hinterland, namely the Silesian province.

23. E Fr (1928) Entwurf eines Gesetzes über die Erweiterung des Stadtkreises Breslau. Nach der Vorlage an den Preuss. Landtag. *Deutsche Bauzeitung. Stadt und Siedlung* 62(2): 29-30; Das Breslauer Eingemeindungsgesetz. (1928) *Breslauer Zeitung*: 109; Breslaus Weg zur Großgemeinde. (1928) *Breslauer Zeitung*: 109.

24. About the conflict between the town and the county council: Ilkosz J (2025) *Gdyby. Niezrealizowane wizje nowoczesnego Wrocławia w latach 1910-1939*. Wrocław: Muzeum Architektury we Wrocławiu: 25-77.

Competition for the expansion of Wrocław

After the First World War, Max Berg, the city's architect at the time, and Fritz Behrendt, director of the City Expansion and Development Office (Stadterweiterungsamt), began preparations for a competition designed to determine the direction and manner of Wrocław's future development. The competition for the expansion of the city and its suburban municipalities, organised by Wrocław City Council in conjunction with the county authorities between 1921 and 1922, sparked a wide-ranging debate among urban planners. The competition brief covered the administrative area of Wrocław and its suburban municipalities, totalling 16,000 hectares (an area with a radius of approximately 10 km from the city centre). The Wrocław competition was the third to be organised in Germany, following the competitions for the expansion of Berlin ("Greater Berlin") in 1910 and for the expansion of Düsseldorf in 1912. Architects and urban planners from Germany and Austria were invited to the competition announced in Wrocław on 1 March 1921, and its aim was, among other things, "to draw up a development plan that would present proposals for the design and expansion of the existing road and rail network, the regulation of undeveloped parts of Wrocław and its suburbs, and improvements that could be introduced in already developed areas of the city and its suburbs. […] In the future, housing needs, commercial activity and local transport were to link the city of Wrocław with the surrounding municipalities, creating an economic unit. […] When dividing up undeveloped areas, open spaces were to be ensured to avoid overly dense development. Existing forests were to be preserved, whilst parks and meadows, cemeteries, exhibition grounds, playgrounds, sports fields and shooting ranges were to be appropriately distributed. Where the majority of the population lived in districts with multi-storey buildings, open spaces designated for allotment gardens were to be reserved within a reasonable distance. New areas for residential development were to be separated from industrial districts and divided into zones of closed and open development. The undeveloped area should be divided into residential districts in such a way that, in conjunction with existing buildings, it would accommodate the anticipated population growth up to 1950. This was intended to relieve pressure on the most overcrowded areas".[25]

Of the entries submitted for the competition, the two most interesting were the urban planning concepts by Adolf Rading and Ernst May. These proposals not only contained solutions beneficial to Wrocław, but also introduced new ideas in the field of urban planning, which were widely discussed both during the competition debate in 1922–1923 and in subsequent years.[26]

25. Der Wettbewerb zur Erlangung eines Bebauungsplanes der Stadt Breslau und ihrer Vororte. (1922) *Deutsche Bauzeitung*, 56(39): 242-244.

26. See also: about the competition, Ilkosz J (2025): 39-61.

Adolf Rading's Concept for the Development of Wrocław

Adolf Rading was a newcomer to urban planning, yet he was among the six architects shortlisted in the competition for the development and expansion of Wrocław's boundaries (1921–1922); indeed, it was his designs, much like Ernst May's plans, that were most frequently discussed within Wrocław's architectural community. Adolf Rading favoured a radial layout for the city (see Figure 1). The distinctive feature of his concept was that he based his planning on an in-depth economic, financial and demographic analysis, carried out to determine the directions of Wrocław's development. Such principles of urban design were later implemented by the Swiss architect Martin Mächler, and Max Berg also followed this approach.[27] According to the architect's plans, the Wrocław metropolitan area was to cover a radius of 60 kilometres and expand radially in three directions: along the Oder and the railway line to Brzeg (Brieg) and Opole (Oppeln) – south-east, towards Legnica (Liegnitz) and Głogów (Glogau) – north-west, and along the railway line leading to Wałbrzych (Waldenburg) – south-west.

Whilst working on the project, Adolf Rading described in detail his vision of the modern city, whose fundamental problem, in his view, was housing, even if part of the urban population had to be accommodated in densely built-up rural areas. The architect believed that the then-popular idea of small, rural-style housing estates was a reaction to the poor living conditions in tenement blocks, which lacked sanitary facilities, whilst the outbuildings formed enclosed courtyards with no possibility of ventilation. The architect argued that "all tenement blocks were targeted for demolition; instead of tackling this specific type of tenement block, no progress was made in solving the problem. It was simply sidestepped."[28] He believed that, for practical reasons, tenement blocks could serve as an equivalent to detached houses, provided the design was functionally well thought out.

However, the most important principle he sought to apply was to break away from designing within the confines of a closed housing estate. His

27. Ilkosz J (2019) Adolf Radings städtebauliche Konzepte im Kontext des Wettbewerbs zur Erlangung, eines Bebauungsplans der Stadt Breslau 1921–1922. In J Ilkosz, B Störtkuhl (eds), 87-106. *Adolf Rading in Breslau. Neues Bauen in der Weimarer Republik*, Schriften des Bundesinstituts für Kultur und Geschichte der Deutschen im östlichen Europa, vol.72. Oldenburg, Berlin Boston: Verlag De Gruyter; Göckede R (2005) *Adolf Rading (1888–1957). Exodus des Neuen Bauens und Überschreirungen des Exils*, Berlin: Gebruder Mann Verlag; Kononowicz W (1995) Pierwszy plan generalny Wrocławia (1924) i początki kompleksowego projektowania urbanistycznego. In J Rozpędowski (ed), 301-338. *Architektura Wrocławia*, vol 2, *Urbanistyka do roku 1945*. Wrocław: Oficyna Wydawnicza Politechniki Wrocławskiej; Kononowicz W (1997) *Wrocław. Kierunki rozwoju urbanistycznego w okresie międzywojennym*. Wrocław: Oficyna Wydawnicza Politechniki Wrocławskiej: 96; Störtkuhl B (2018) *Modernizm na Śląsku 1900–1939. Architektura i polityka*. Wrocław: Muzeum Architektury: 144-145.

28. Rading A (1920) Neue Kleinmiethaus Bebauungen. *Der Städtebau*, 17(11/12): 106; Rading A (1921) Kleine Miethaus Bebauungen. *Ostdeutsche Bauzeitung* 19(73): 313.

proposals for future housing estates were based on layouts in which both terraced and detached houses were situated along the street in a linear or zigzag pattern, as well as around star-shaped squares (see Figure 2).

The architect was convinced that "the fundamental requirement for urban housing development must be to start the design process with a single flat…"[29]

Figure 1. *Adolf Rading, Competition Design for the Expansion of Wrocław and its Suburban Communes, 1921-1922*
Source: Der Städtebau, (1922) 19: 39.

29. Rading A (1922), Neu Zeit - Neuer Weg. *Der Städtebau*, 19(9/10): 100.

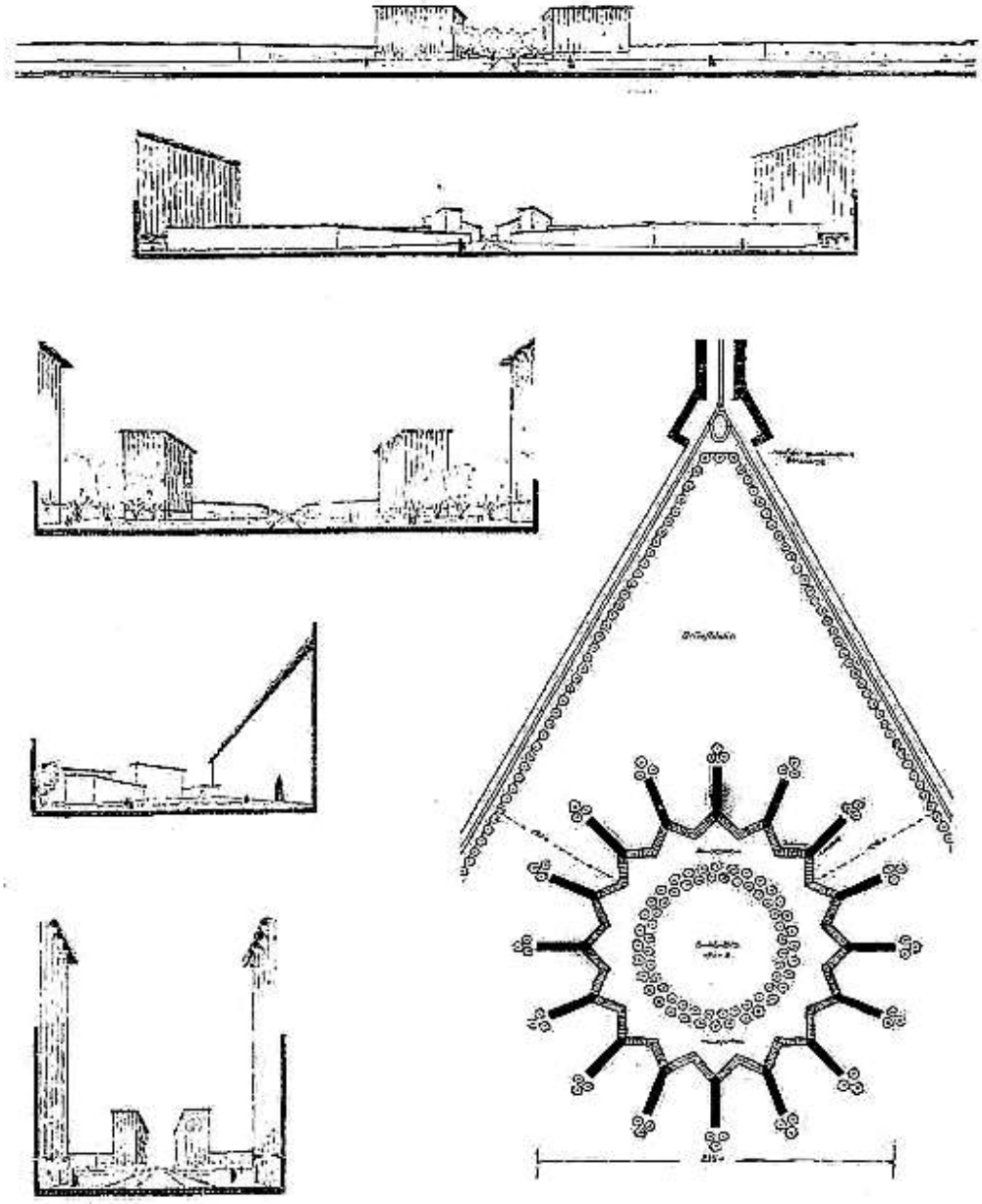

Figure 2. *Adolf Rading, Wrocław Expansion Design, Housing Development Concepts*
Source: Der Städtebau (1922) 19(9/10): 101.

The character of the houses varied greatly: from terraced single-family homes to detached multi-family blocks of two or more storeys, usually topped with flat roofs, on which the architect intended to situate recreational terraces. In areas situated away from the centre, the architect permitted low-rise development, but consistently adopted an island layout for the housing estates, which allowed individual residential complexes and existing rural centres to be separated by green spaces and parkland.

Ernst May's Concept for the Development of Wrocław

Ernst May was also a novice in the field of urban planning, and his urban design concepts were limited to the planning of suburban housing estates, mostly on a small scale. The Schlesische Heimstätte cooperative, which he headed from 1919 to 1925, had close ties with the Wrocław County Office and the Wrocław District Office.

For this reason, the architect supported the county authorities' negative stance towards the city expansion project. Consequently, he proposed the concept of satellite towns, which would allow the county authorities to retain jurisdiction over the suburban municipalities, whilst the satellite towns would form a so-called "municipal union" with the main city.

Ernst May's interest in the planning of housing estates and residential buildings stemmed from the theory of his mentor, Raymond Unwin, with whom he had undertaken an apprenticeship. His mentor instilled in him Ebenezer Howard's ideas regarding the "garden city".[30] However, the architect adapted the English concepts to the context of the local "Heimatschutzbewegung" (homeland conservation movement). The concept of satellite towns was based on the de-agglomeration of a large metropolitan area with a population of 600,000. Ernst May proposed surrounding the main city with a ring of satellite towns, each with an anticipated population of 50,000 to 100,000 people.[31] Describing his concept, he stated: "The system of satellite towns around Wrocław comprises settlements of all sizes. Whilst most of them were planned as satellite towns combining residential and commercial functions, with their own more or less developed industry, usually linked to existing enterprises, for some settlements a purely residential function was more appropriate […]. Connecting the individual satellite towns to the central city is, in the case of Wrocław, relatively easy to achieve, as most of them can be linked to the city centre by extending existing exit roads. The existing railway network in Wrocław, which in many respects requires improvement, also facilitates the development of individual satellite towns […]"[32]

He went on to explain: "Despite their full local autonomy, [satellite towns] will nevertheless remain constituent parts of a larger entity, closely linked to the central city, from which they will derive cultural and economic benefits that are lacking in the satellite towns themselves. This is the main difference between a satellite town and an ordinary small town."[33]

30. Herrel E (2011) „Stete „Reifung" Studienjahre, Villenbauten in Frankfurt und Kreiegsgräber an der Front, „Constant Marturing" Student years, house-building in Frankfurt and war memorials on the front. In C Quiring, W Voigt, P Cachola Schmal, E Herrel (eds), 15-31. *Ernst May 1886-1970.* München-London-New York: Prestel.

31. The model for the satellite towns was based on a plan drawn up by Raymond Unwin in 1909. cf. Lampugnani V M (2010), 344. On the May's concept see: Nerdinger W (2023), 216-217.

32. May E (1922) Stadterweiterung mittels Trabanten. *Der Städtebau* 19(5/6): 54.

33. Ibidem: 52-53.

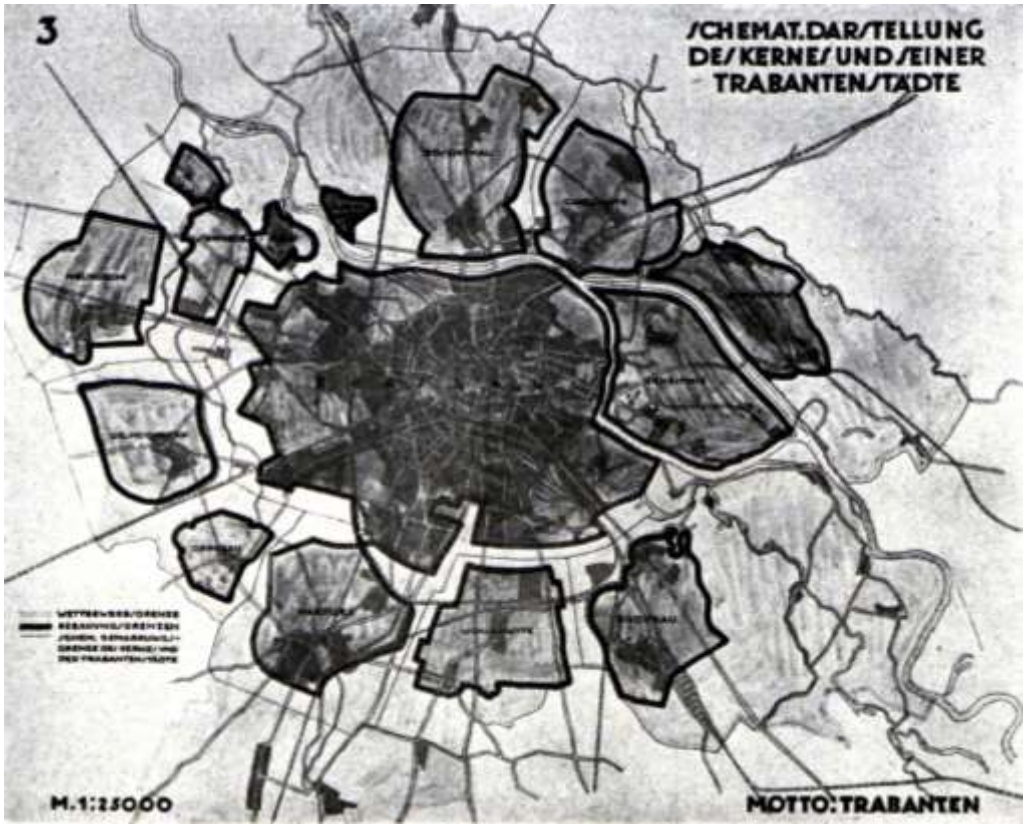

Figure 3. *Ernst May, Herbert Boehm, Competition Design for the Expansion of Wrocław and Suburban Communes, Satellite Layout, 1921-1922*
Source: Der Städtebau (1922) 19: 48.

Unfortunately, the competition brief limited the architects to an area with a 10-kilometre radius, whereas May needed an area with a 30-kilometre radius to present his concept. In his competition entry, the architect presented only satellite housing estates arranged around the city centre (see Figures 3-4). He could not come to terms with the rejection of his concept. Until his departure from Wrocław for Frankfurt am Main in 1925, he fought against the Wrocław architectural community and opposed the expansion of the city's boundaries. It was, however, a battle with no chance of success. In 1924, even his mentor Raymond Unwin advised him to seek a compromise, writing: "One cannot radically alter the character and development of a sprawling city. I believe it would be wise if you did not push the matter too hard, but sought a compromise. Then you will certainly succeed in developing satellite towns and suburbs that lie closer to the centre and are no longer so invariably self-contained".[34]

34. A letter from Raymond Unwin to Ernst May dated 26 November 1924, Deutsche Kunstarchiv Nürnberg, NL Ernst May, I.C–753 (from: Störtkuhl B (2011) Ernst May und Schlesische Heimstätte. In C Quiring, W Voigt, P Cachola Schmal, E Herrel (eds), 33-49. *Ernst May 1886–1970*. München-London-New York: Prestel).

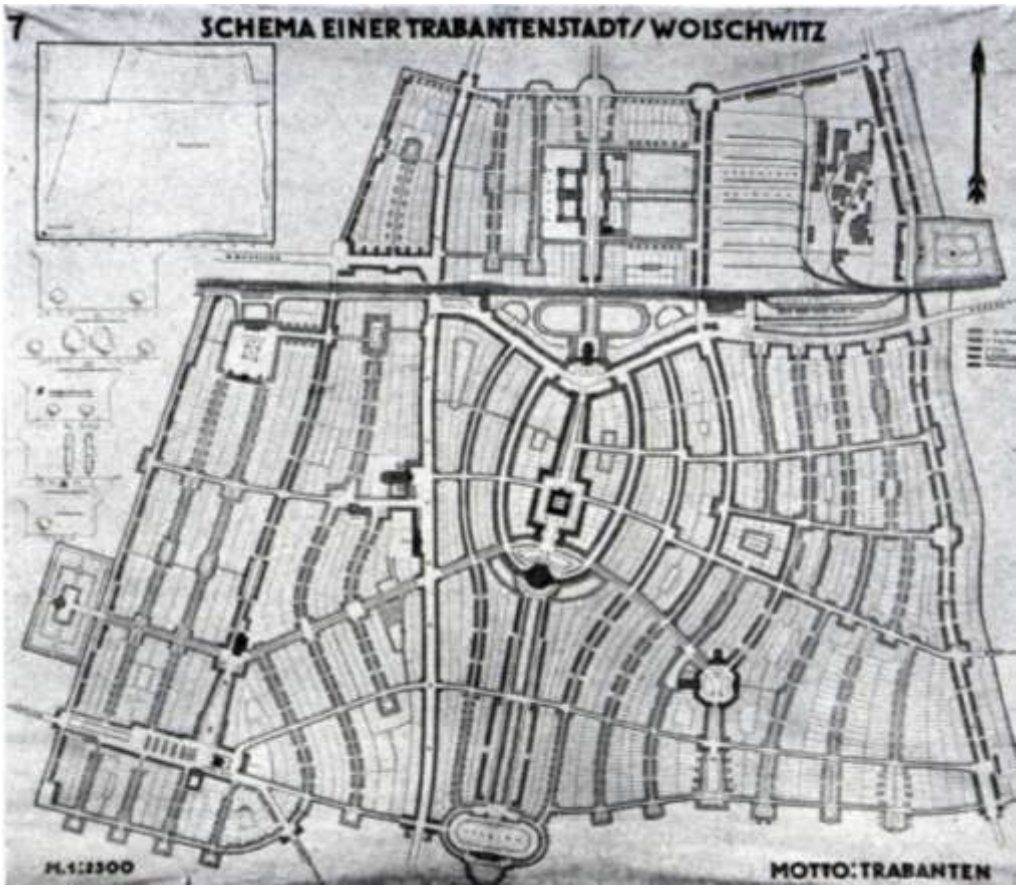

Figure 4. *Ernst May, Herbert Boehm, Competition Design for the Expansion of Wrocław and Suburban Communes, Wojszyce Satellite Housing Estate, 1921-1922*
Source: Der Städtebau (1922) 19: 47.

Max Berg's concept for the Development of Wrocław

Another proponent of the "satellite town" concept even before the First World War (1911) was Max Berg. He presented it in his design for the satellite "garden city" of Sobótka. This was a concept for the expansion of Sobótka in the form of a housing estate that would serve as a residential hinterland for a large urban agglomeration (see Figure 5). The architect then proposed an alternative solution for the residential zone of a city such as Wrocław. He considered it beneficial to de-agglomerate the city by surrounding its core with two rings of housing estates. The inner ring would consist of close suburbs such as Biskupin (Bischofswalde), Osobowice (Oswitz) and Różanka (Rosenthal) and Karłowice (Karlowitz), whilst the outer ring would consist of towns near Wrocław, such as Leśnica (Deutsch Lissa), Oborniki (Obernigk), Trzebnica (Trebnitz) and Sobótka (Zobten). To illustrate this concept, he chose Sobótka, due to the town's unique location amidst the forests at the foot of Mount Ślęża. In the architect's view, thanks to a rapid rail link to Wrocław and the use of local transport circling the built-up area, it would be an ideal place for living and

recreation. Sobótka was to be a typical example of a "garden city", drawing on the English model.[35]

Between 1919 and 1921, as part of the project to redevelop Wrocław, Max Berg developed numerous concepts crucial to the city's future development, in which he advocated, amongst other things, the principle of separating the workplace from the home. Even before the First World War, he had observed that the city's structure should incorporate two main elements: residential areas and workplaces. The architect proposed dividing the city into functional zones, rejecting concentric divisions and instead proposing a radial layout of zones flanked by green wedges, which were to be integrated with the city centre.[36]

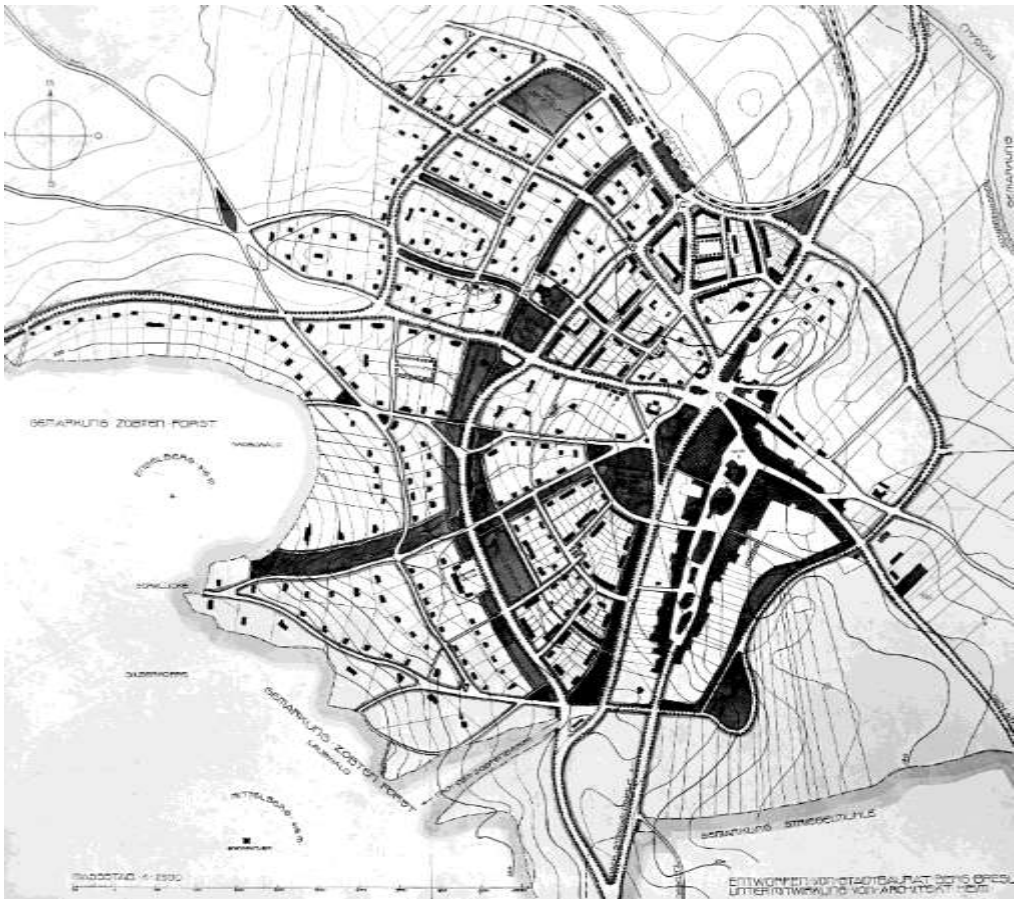

Figure 5. *Max Berg, Paul Heim, Reconstruction Design of Sobótka, Never Build, 1911*
Source: Schlesien (1911/1912) 5(18): 499.

35. Berg M (1911/1912) Die Besiedlung des Zobten unter Erhaltung seiner Landschaftlichen Schönheit. *Schlesien* 5(18): 497-501.

36. In "City", he designed skyscrapers intended to address the housing shortage by housing public institutions within them, whilst the buildings previously occupied by these institutions were to be converted into residential accommodation. Ilkosz J (2025), 124-125; Lampugnani V M, (2010), 288.

In the years 1919-1921, as part of the Wrocław reconstruction design, Max Berg created many concepts important for the future development of the city, in which he promoted, among other things, the principle of isolating the workplace from the place of residence. Even before the First World War, he noticed that the structure of the city should take into account two main elements - residential areas and workplaces. The architect proposed dividing the city into functional zones, not agreeing to concentric divisions and presenting instead a radial layout of zones adjacent to green wedges, which were to be integrated with the city center.

This approach to planning ensured good ventilation within the urban fabric and allowed for its further development. In Max Berg's view, the direction of urban development should be guided by the city's historical layout, as well as by natural and topographical conditions and demographic factors. A starting point could be the natural course of rivers, towards which the city should open up. "A residential zone, comprising both low-rise and high-rise buildings, interwoven with green spaces, gardens and playgrounds, always planned in accordance with health requirements, ideally in the rural setting of integrated suburbs and conveniently connected to the business city centre, is one objective.

Figure 6. *Max Berg, Ludwig Moshamer, Richard Konwiarz, Albert Kempter, Wrocław Rebuilding Design, 1919-1921*
Source: Siedlung und Stadtplanung in Schlesien, I. Breslau, 1. Stadtplanung, 2. Wohnung und Siedlung (1926). Magistrat der Hauptstadt Breslau (ed), Breslau: 13.

The business and work zone – a centre planned in accordance with other health requirements and with a view to maximising time efficiency and energy savings – is the second objective towards which the urban planning of the future strives." The architect also proposed: "[…] the preservation of undeveloped areas in the city centre for use as green spaces. This applies above all to Kępa Mieszczańska (Bürgwerder).

There is still the possibility of establishing a central park here, which, thanks to the creation of further bridge connections alongside the existing ones, would provide much-needed green spaces for the built-up districts of Wrocław on the right and left banks of the Oder".[37]

In Max Berg's designs, the central park in Kępa Mieszczańska would have been surrounded by a housing estate comprising five- and six-storey blocks of flats (see Figure 6). It would not have been a low-rise "garden city"-style estate, as favoured by most architects of the time. Max Berg, like Adolf Rading, did not rule out the possibility of locating large-scale housing estates with "townhouse"-style buildings near the city centre, but these were to be arranged in a loose layout and surrounded by greenery.[38]

Housing Cooperatives and Modern Housing Estates in Wrocław – First Half of the 1920s

The projects mentioned above had a significant impact on the development of modern urban planning concepts; however, the construction of new housing estates in Wrocław after the First World War looked rather bleak due to the constraints imposed by the city's boundaries. As was written at the time, "there is a growing danger that the city will suffocate within the tight corset imposed upon it".[39] The number of housing units lacking after the First World War stood at 11,500, excluding the current demand for 2,400 new homes per year.

Before the First World War, there were virtually no housing cooperatives or public utility companies in Wrocław responsible for housing construction. The construction of small flats within large tenement blocks was almost exclusively the domain of private investors, who were often lacking in professional expertise and usually heavily involved in land speculation. Projects were carried out on a small scale, without any logical connection, making full use of the available building plots.

The situation changed when, in 1919, the town hall established Department for the Construction of Small Flats (Department for Small-Scale Housing Construction), whose remit was to review applications for planning permission, administer subsidies and ensure that buildings constructed with public funding met economic, health and aesthetic standards.

37. Zukünftige Baukunst in Breslau als Ausdruck zukünftiger Kultur. (1921) In G Hallama (ed), 28-41. *Deutschlands Städtebau. Breslau.* Berlin.

38. Ilkosz J (2025): 123-129.

39. *Siedlung und Stadtplanung in Schlesien, I. Breslau, 1. Stadtplanung, 2. Wohnung und Siedlung* (1926). Magistrat der Hauptstadt Breslau (ed), Breslau: 54.

Tarnogaj (Dürrgoy)[40] was the first post-war municipal development project, designed and managed in-house, with construction overseen directly by the city's building authorities. The design was produced in 1919 by Paul Schreiber, the city council's building consultant (see Figure 7). In the south-eastern part of the city, an area of 11 hectares was designated for housing development.

The first phase involved the construction of single-storey terraced houses with high gable roofs, gardens and utility areas, arranged along two parallel streets. In addition, two- and four-family houses were built on a street running perpendicular to the previous ones. A total of 208 flats were constructed (see Figure 8). Subsequent phases took place in the second half of the 1920s and the 1930s.

In later years, the city confined itself to supporting housing construction, its financing and supervision.

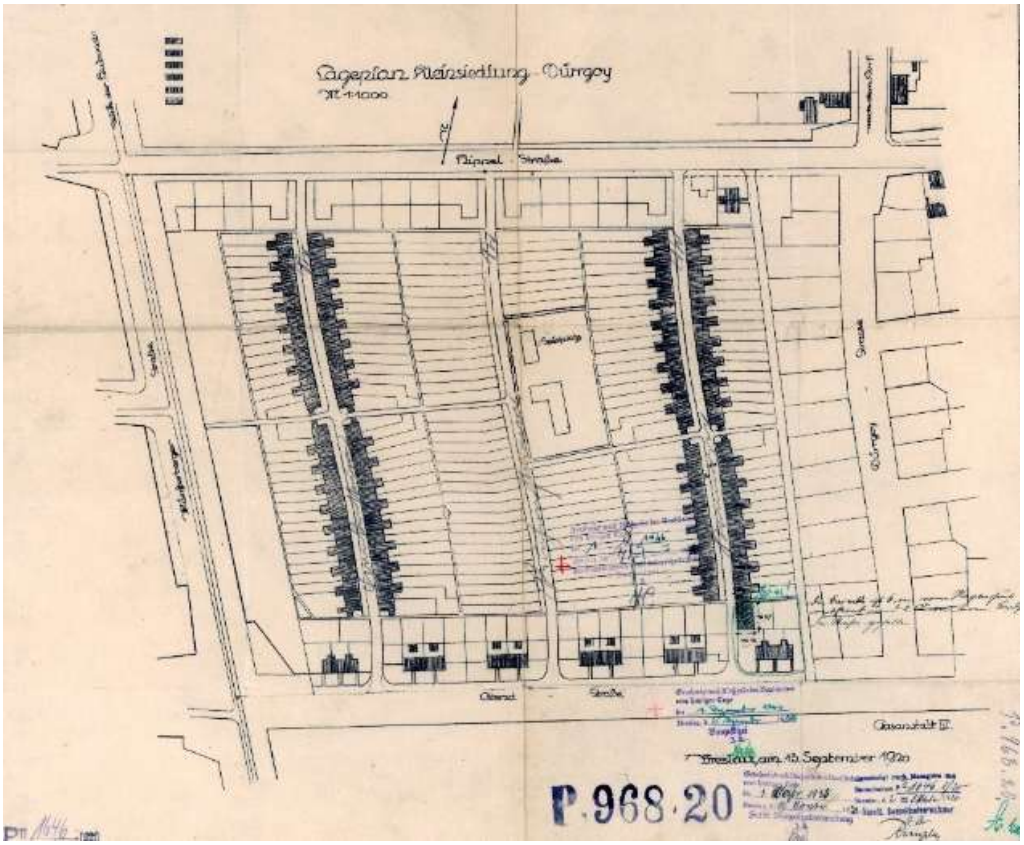

Figure 7. *Paul Schreiber, Small Houses Estate Design, Tarnogaj, Kamieniecka Street, 1920*
Source: Muzeum Architektury we Wrocławiu.

40. Eysymontt R, Ilkosz J, Tomaszewicz A, Urbanik J (eds.) (2011), *Leksykon architektury Wrocławia*, Wrocław: Via Nova: 682-683.

Figure 8. *Paul Schreiber, Small Houses Estate, Tarnogaj, Kamieniecka Street, 1920*
Source: Siedlung und Stadtplanung in Schlesien, I. Breslau, 1. Stadtplanung, 2. Wohnung und Siedlung (1926). Magistrat der Hauptstadt Breslau (ed), Breslau: 25.

Schlesische Heimstätte

During research into the housing development of interwar Wrocław, 29 housing cooperatives involved in the construction of new homes were identified. However, the most significant role was played by the following cooperatives: Schlesische Heimstätte, Provinzielle Wohnungsfürsorgegesellschaft m.b.H, Siedlungsgesellschaft Breslau AG and Siedlungsgenossenschaft Eigenheim Eichborngarten G.m.b.H.

The Schlesische Heimstätte, a provincial housing association (provinzielle Wohnungsfürsorgegesellschaft m.b.H.), sought to improve the city's poor housing situation; founded in June 1919 and led until 1925 by the young architect Ernst May, who was just starting out on his professional career. At that time, May was influenced by the work of Theodor Fischer and Raymond Unwin, as well as by the movement for the preservation of the homeland (Heimatschutzbewegung), meaning he showed an interest in architecture with traditional features.

Schlesische Heimstätte specialised in building affordable and functional homes for the less well-off. It developed a catalogue of ready-made designs. It built housing estates comprising small flats and kitchen gardens in the municipalities and towns around Wrocław and throughout Silesia. The architectural and urban planning concepts were intended to draw inspiration from the rural buildings of Silesia. The buildings were designed to resemble traditional farmhouses and farmsteads.

Siedlungsgesellschaft Breslau AG - Phase One

In the same year, 1919, a cooperative was established Breslau Housing Association Ltd, a company closely linked to the town but operating as an independent, financially self-governing public utility limited company. The majority stake was held by the town council, which, through appropriate representation on the management board and supervisory board, also secured a decisive say in all aspects of the cooperative's operations.

In line with its remit, Siedlungsgesellschaft Breslau AG incorporated a brickworks and a sawmill into its structure as subsidiaries and was involved in the wholesale supply of building materials. Design work was commissioned from Wrocław architects, who were also entrusted with overall supervision of the construction. Contracts for the actual building work were awarded through a tender process. Local craftsmen and labourers were given preference for the construction work. It was only the public authorities' oversight of housing that made possible what had been sought long before the outbreak of the war: action for the public good, large-scale economic development and building of land, uniformly arranged residential blocks, systematically designed housing estates and entire districts, and the cost-effective construction of flats thanks to the large number of projects, their standardisation and typification.

Even before the city's boundaries were extended in 1928, construction work on housing estates had begun. In 1919, Siedlungsgesellschaft Breslau AG began preparatory work for the construction of two large housing estates: Popowice (Pöpelwitz) and Sępolno (Zimpel). For the latter, the city made land available at cost price, whilst the land for the former was acquired on favourable terms.

The Popowice housing estate, situated in the west of the city, was intended for industrial workers and covered an area of 46.9 hectares. It was built between 1919 and 1927 by Siedlungsgesellschaft Breslau AG, based on an urban design by Theodor Effenberger, who designed most of the houses (see Figure 9). In addition, the houses were designed by Hans Thomas, Erich Grau and Richard Gaze.[41] The urban design blended tradition with modernity. Both a linear layout and perimeter-style block development were employed, with gaps between the blocks to ensure good ventilation. Within the estate, a church and a school were built on spacious, green squares.

A total of 1,780 flats were built to accommodate 8,000 residents, with a population density of 170 people per hectare. The development comprised a mix of buildings of varying heights, tapering downwards towards the centre of the estate, ranging from five and four storeys at the perimeter to three and two storeys in the interior. Each flat in the medium- and low-rise buildings had a garden ranging in size from 80 to 300 m^2. The flats ranged in size from 50 to 90 m^2 and consisted of 2- or 3-room units in detached houses or 2-, 4-, 6- and 8-family dwellings.

In 1926, "Siedlungsgesellschaft Breslau AG" organised a competition to design the entrance square to the Popowice housing estate from the side of what is now Legnicka Street (Frankfurter Str.), i.e. the current Wiślany Square (Manfred von Richthofen Pl.). Thirty-one entries were submitted to the competition. First prize was awarded to Ludwig Moshamer (see Figure 10), who went on to realise his design.[42] It was the only housing estate built at that time to be completely destroyed during the Second World War.

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41. May E (1922) Stadterweiterung mittels Trabanten. *Der Städtebau* 19(5/6): 32, Effenberger T (1921) Die Siedlung Breslau Pöpelwitz. *Schlesisches Heim* 2(3): 65-68; Effenberger T (1928) Wohnungsbauten in Breslau. *Deutsche Bauzeitung. Moderner Wohnbau* 62(6): 77-88.

42. Wettbewerbe. Breslau. (1926) *Ostdeutsche Bauzeitung* 24(22): 191-192, Wettbewerb-Ergebnisse. Breslau. (1926) *Ostdeutsche Bauzeitung* 24(38): 335.

The Sępolno garden estate, situated in the eastern part of the city, in the immediate vicinity of Szczytnicki Park, was built between 1919 and 1935, mainly by Siedlungsgesellschaft Breslau AG and partly by a subsidiary of GEGFAH (*Gemeinnützige Aktiengesellschaft für Angestellten-Heimstätten*).[43]

The urban design was created by architects Hermann Wahlich and Paul Heim from Wrocław, whilst the individual buildings were also designed by: Albert Kempter, Hans Thomas, Erich Grau, Richard Gaze, Paul Häusler, Fritz and Paul Röder, Kurt Langer, Wilhelm Brix, Heinrich Bussmann, Hugo Althoff and Max Schirmer (see Figure 11). The estate's plan was amended four times during construction, although its main compositional principles remained unchanged.

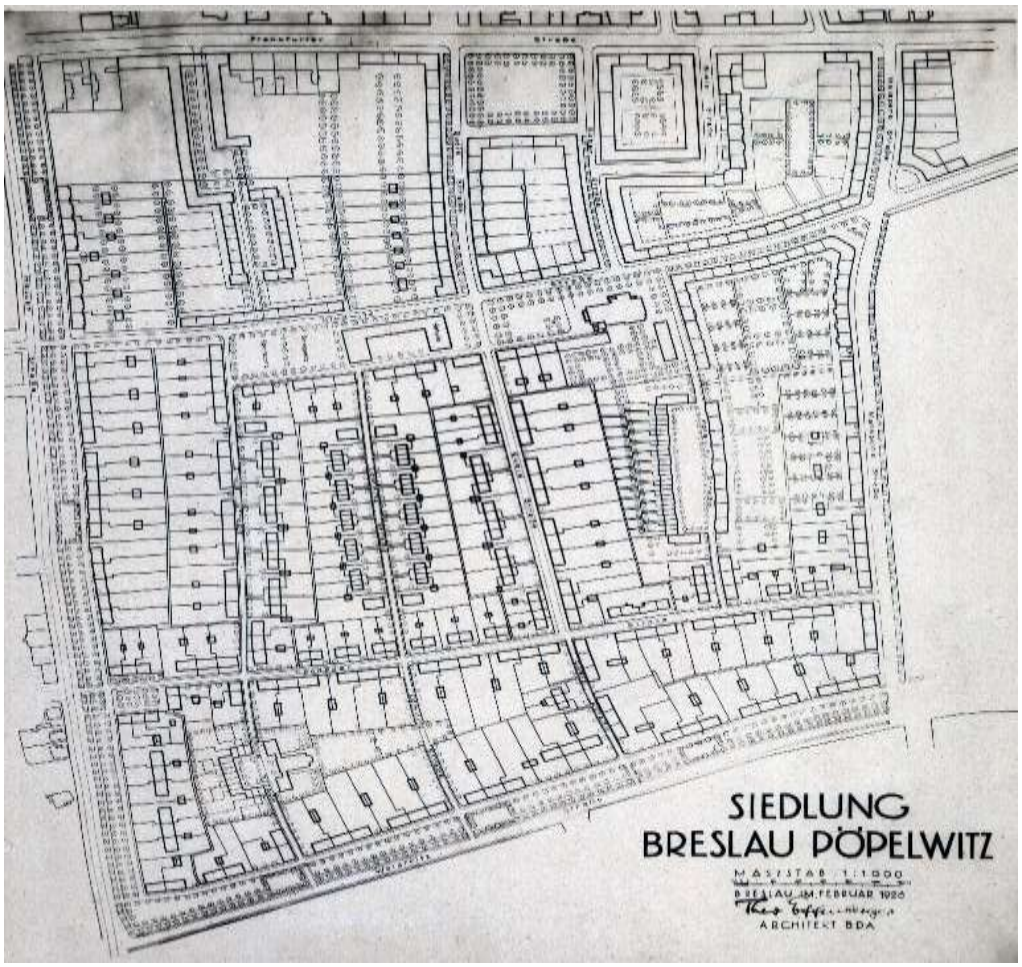

Figure 9. *Theo Effenberger, Popowice Housing Estate Design, 1926*
Source: Museum of Architecture in Wrocław.

43. *Siedlung und Stadtplanung in Schlesien, I. Breslau, 1. Stadtplanung, 2. Wohnung und Siedlung* (1926). Magistrat der Hauptstadt Breslau (ed), Breslau: 34; Wahlich H, Heim P (1920) Siedlung Zimpel. *Ostdeutsche Bauzeitung* (18)55: 241-242; Wahlich H, Heim P (1920) Siedlung Zimpel. Schlesisches Heim (1)5: 2-8. Por. Kononowicz W (1991) Z problemów urbanistyki dwudziestolecia międzywojennego. Osiedle ogrodowe Sępolno we Wrocławiu. *Roczniki Sztuki Śląskiej* 15: 60-91.

Figure 10. *Ludwig Moshamer, buildings at the Wiślany Square (Boberplatz), No Longer Standing, Postcard ca. 1930*
Source: private collections.

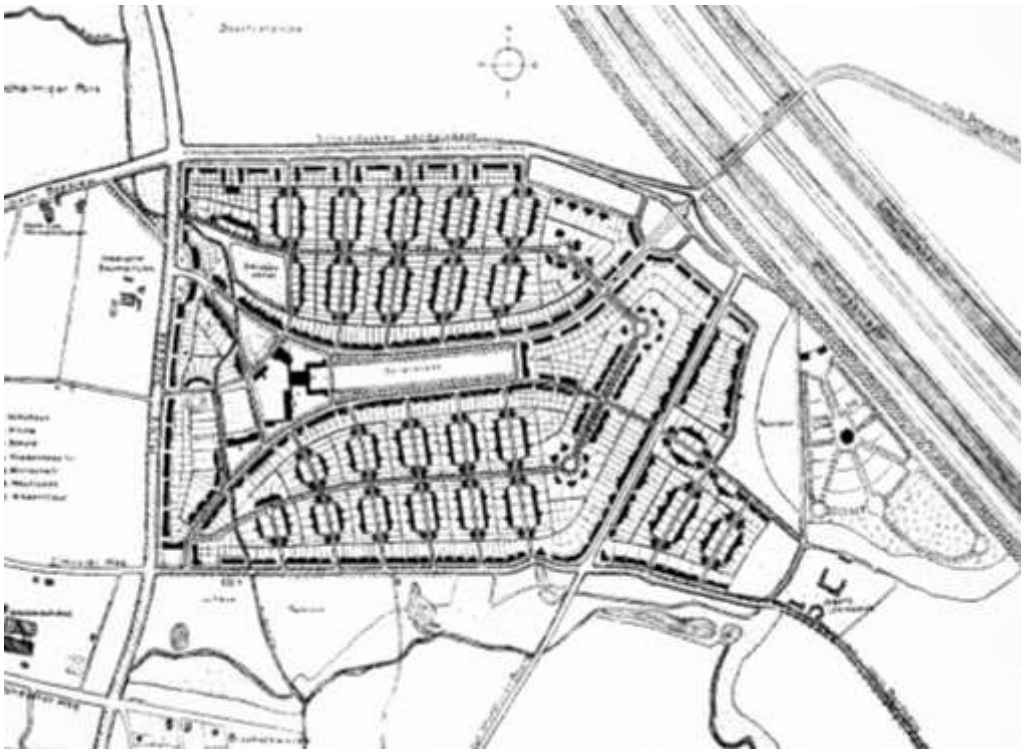

Figure 11. *Paul Heim, Hermann Wahlich, first version of the Sępolno Housing Estate Design, 1919*
Source: Schlesisches Heim (1920) 1(5): 3.

Only low-rise, two-storey buildings were constructed. The abundance of greenery became the dominant feature of the plan (see Figure 12). A school, an Evangelical church, and a range of amenities and shops were situated around a centrally located square. On an area of approximately 100 hectares, 2,200 flats were built to accommodate around 10,000 residents (see Figure 13).

Figure 12. *Herman Wahlich, Sępolno Housing Estate Design, 1919*
Source: Schlesisches Heim (1020) 1(5): 4.

The population density was 115 inhabitants per hectare. Two- to four-room flats with kitchens ranging from 50 to 125 m² were built in detached, semi-detached and terraced houses. The size of the gardens ranged from 80 to 500 m².

During the interwar period, Siedlungsgesellschaft Breslau AG built many other small housing estates and residential complexes. Between 1922 and 1925, on a 3-hectare site on Henrykowska Street, south of the main railway station, in the south-eastern part of the city, Siedlungsgesellschaft Breslau AG built, to designs by Paul Heim and Albert Kempter, a complex comprising 233 flats with 1, 2, 3 and 4 rooms plus a kitchen, ranging in size from 40 to 85 m², for around 1,000 residents. The three-storey buildings were arranged around a large internal courtyard, designed as a communal green space.

Figure 13. *Sępolno Housing Estate, Aerial Photo, ca. 2011*
Source: photo Stanisław Klimek.

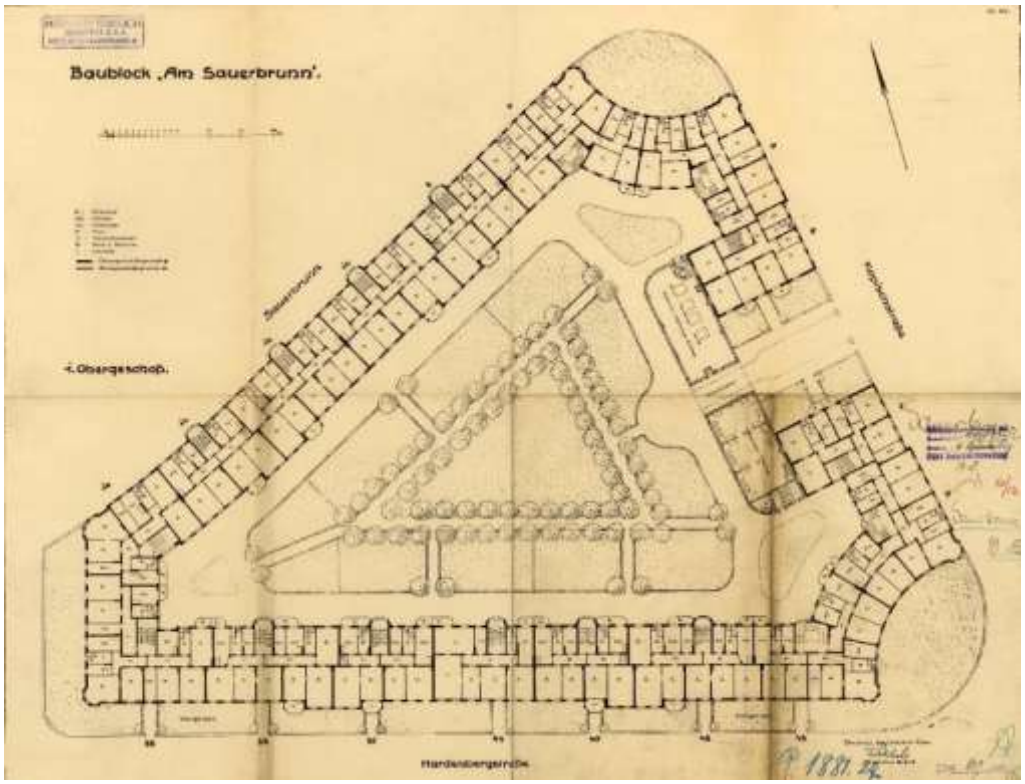

Figure 14. *Hermann Wahlich, Building Complex Design at Kwaśna Street, 1926*
Source: Museum of Architecture in Wrocław.

In the interwar period, Siedlungsgesellschaft Breslau AG implemented many other small housing estates and development complexes. In the years 1922-1925, on a 3 ha plot of land, on Henrykowska Street, south of the main train station, in the south-eastern part of the city, Siedlungsgesellschaft Breslau AG built, according to the designs of Paul Heim and Albert Kempter, houses with 233 apartments, 1-, 2-, 3- and 4-room with kitchen, with an area of 40 to 85 m^2, for about 1,000 residents. The three-storey houses were situated around a large inner courtyard, designed as a common green area.

In addition, "Siedlungsgesellschaft Breslau AG" developed housing estates in various parts of the city along Kwaśna Street (Am Sauerbrunn) (see Figure 14), Jantarowa Street (Agathstraße), Głogowska Street (Glogauerstraße), Czarnieckiego Street (Alsenstraße), Zajęcza Street (Wildestraße) and Żeglarska Street (Katzbachstraße). The buildings were designed to match the number of storeys and height of neighbouring buildings and, where the size of the plot allowed, they also featured gardens attached to the flats.

Housing associations were established to manage the flats in gated communities; their boards were elected by the tenants from among themselves. The housing associations were subordinate to Siedlungsgesellschaft Breslau AG; they remitted rent payments to it and handled local administration. The boards served in an honorary capacity, whilst support staff were paid by the Cooperative.[44]

Siedlungsgenossenschaft Eigenheim Eichborngarten G.m.b.H.

Particular mention should be made of the project carried out by the Siedlungsgenossenschaft Eigenheim Eichborngarten G.m.b.H.), which operated independently of the city. In 1919, the cooperative purchased 30 hectares of former agricultural land in Grabiszyn (Gräbschen).

Grabiszyn Estate[45] was built between 1919 and 1926 in the southern part of the city, designed by Paul Heim (see Figure 15). The houses were co-designed by Albert Kempter (see Figure 16). The estate is surrounded by 3- and 4-storey perimeter buildings; the interior is largely made up of detached houses as well as 2-, 3- and 4-family terraced houses with gardens ranging in size from 80 to 600 m^2. Along Józefa Hallera Street (Kürassier Str.), three-storey six-family houses were built, whilst on Grabiszyńska Street (Gräbschener Str.), buildings were constructed in which the ground floor was occupied by shops, with the next three storeys serving as residential accommodation. A total of 790 flats were built. According to the 1919 plan, the estate was to include a community centre, two churches (Protestant and Catholic) and a school. Ultimately, the Catholic church, the Protestant parish hall and the school were built.

44. *Siedlung und Stadtplanung in Schlesien, I. Breslau, 1. Stadtplanung, 2. Wohnung und Siedlung* (1926). Magistrat der Hauptstadt Breslau (ed), Breslau: 34.

45. Eysymontt R, Ilkosz J, Tomaszewicz A, Urbanik J (eds.) (2011): 493-494.

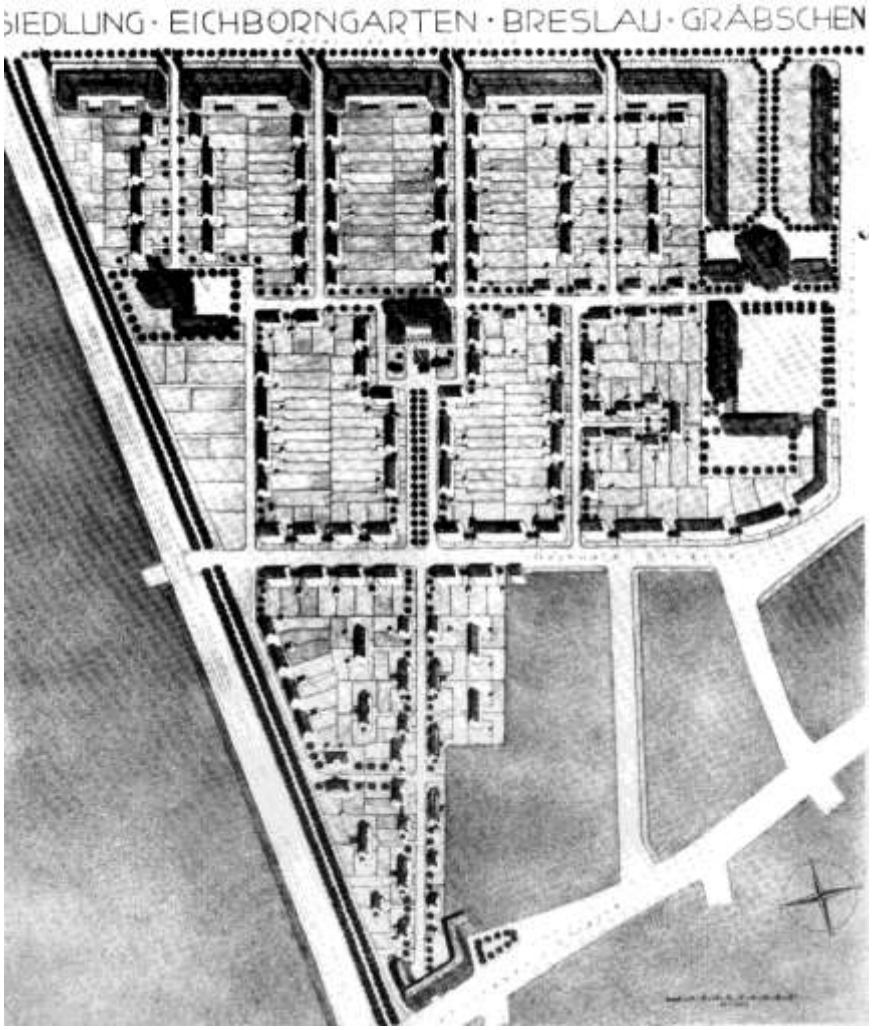

Figure 15. *Paul Heim, Grabiszyn - Eichborngarten Housing Estate Design, 1922*
Source: Siedlung und Stadtplanung in Schlesien, I. Breslau, 1. Stadtplanung, 2. Wohnung und Siedlung (1926). Magistrat der Hauptstadt Breslau (ed), Breslau: 36.

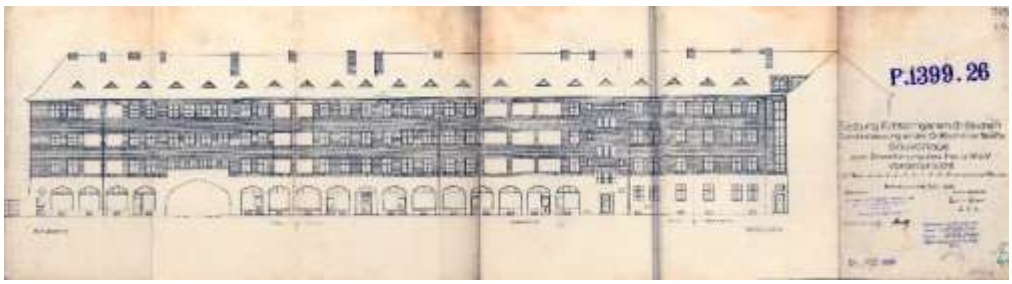

Figure 16. *Paul Heim, Albert Kempter, Grabiszyn – Eichborngarten Housing Estate, Design of Houses at Grabiszyńska Street (No Longer Standing), 1926*
Source: Museum of Architecture in Wrocław.

Housing Cooperatives and Modern Housing Estates in Wrocław – The Second Half of the 1920s

By 1 April 1924, compulsory subsidies from the Reich, the state and the municipality, as well as voluntary municipal subsidies, had been introduced; in addition, loans from state and private employers were made available if the construction costs could not be covered by mortgage loans on a profitable basis.

As a result of the progressive and ultimately complete devaluation of the currency, the housing finance system found itself in an ever-deepening crisis, which threatened to bring all construction investment to a standstill and, by the end of 1923, had indeed led to its stagnation.

The situation changed dramatically following the introduction of the Charles Gates Dawes Plan (foreign capital injected into the German economy); from April 1924, a period of economic recovery began on a scale previously unknown in Germany – the "Golden Twenties" (Goldene Zwanziger Jahre). Massive subsidies to building societies led to a boom in social housing. Between 1925 and 1930, over 1 billion marks of public money was allocated annually in Germany to the development of housing.

Once the currency had stabilised, the financing of new buildings constructed with public subsidies was carried out in accordance with the guidelines on the use of the portion of the municipality's property tax revenue earmarked for construction projects. From this source, the municipal treasury received funds in 1924 that could be allocated to supporting housing construction, amounting to 5,261,052 marks, and in 1925 – 6,006,862 marks.[46]

To address the housing shortage in the country, the Reichstag passed a law in March 1926 to promote housing construction. To this end, a commission was set up to investigate new ways of rationalising and financing construction. In 1927, Marie-Elisabeth Lüders, then a member of the Reichstag, applied for a portion of the funds to be allocated to experimental projects. Her proposal was accepted, and the Reichstag commission was transformed into a new association.

In 1926, the Reichsforschungsgesellschaft für Wirtschaftlichkeit im Bau- und Wohnungwesen (RFG – State Research Society for Efficiency in Construction and Housing) was established in Germany,[47] to conduct and fund research into rational

46. *Siedlung und Stadtplanung in Schlesien,…*: 35-37.

47. Urbanik J (2022), Towarzystwo badawcze RFG i ergonomia w niemieckiej architekturze okresu międzywojennego. In Sołtysik M J, Stępa M (eds.), 242-253. *Architektura przemysłowa, portowa i miejska XX wieku*. Gdynia, Gdańsk: Urząd Miasta Gdyni, Wydział Architektury Politechniki Gdańskiej; Urbanik J, Naworska E (2022) RFG and the beginnings of modern living In *Proceedings of 17th International Docomomo Conference - Modern Design: Social Commitment & Quality of Life* (València, Spain, 6-9 September 2022). València: Docomomo International, 55-62. See. Nerdinger W (2023), 237, who wrote: „29 czerwca 1927 Reichsforschungsgesellschaft für Wirtschaftlichkeit im Bau- und Wohnungswesen (RFG) (Państwowe Towarzystwo Badawcze do spraw Ekonomiki Budownictwa i Mieszkalnictwa). 24 RFG committees, which once again included Gropius and May, allocated substantial grants and aid funds and supported the

housing development and to support exemplary housing projects. The members of the RFG were the most distinguished architects of the time, who sought to incorporate the Society's guidelines into their designs and projects. The RFG dealt not only with the internal layouts of flats and their floor areas, and with new materials and technologies introduced to reduce the cost of building houses, but also with their correct orientation in relation to the cardinal directions, which ensured adequate sunlight in the rooms and, consequently, healthy living conditions. As a result of research conducted by the RFG, optimal flat sizes were established, corresponding to a specific number of people in the family: 45 m^2, 57 m^2, 70 m^2. The RFG's activities also influenced the design of many German housing estates not under the Society's supervision. These were often co-designed by architects who considered the RFG's guidelines to be sound, or who were themselves members of this research organisation and felt a duty to implement its programme.

Although RFG existed for only five years, being dissolved on 5 June 1931, its guidelines permanently transformed housing architecture in the Weimar Republic. Through its activities, it contributed to laying the foundations of modern ergonomics, which deals, amongst other things, with adapting dwellings and their fittings to the needs of future occupants. In the very first year of the RFG's existence, the state made 10 million marks available to the society for research into the rationalisation of housing and the reduction of construction costs.

Siedlungsgesellschaft Breslau AG - Phase Two

In Wrocław, in the late 1920s, housing estates were also built in Księże Małe (Klein Tschansch/Ohlewiesen) and Pilczyce (Pilsnitz). Both can be classified as fully modernist developments.

The Pilczyce housing estate was built on land incorporated into the municipal area of Wrocław in 1928. The land was purchased by housing cooperatives, with Siedlungsgesellschaft Breslau AG acting as the largest investor. Had the company's original plan been realised, it would have been Wrocław's most modern housing estate, designed by Paul Heim and Albert Kempter. The design envisaged a grid-like layout of the estate with two- and three-storey houses featuring flat roofs in the Neues Bauen style, interspersed with green spaces (see Figure 17). The flats were intended for low-income workers employed in the industrial plants located in the

construction of experimental housing estates where new solutions were to be tested and evaluated by the RFG. Due to the concentration of power and resources, the RFG became the leading institution working towards the rationalisation of building. In April 1929, a conference attended by 40 trade associations drew over 1,500 participants. Conservative architects such as Paul Schultze-Naumburg, Emil Högg and Cornelius Gurlitt had opposed the RFG from the moment of its inception.

neighbourhood. The plan was to build 1,600 flats for 6,400 people on a 32-hectare site. By 1933, only the houses on Górnicza Street (Richthofen Str.) had been completed.[48]

Figure 17. *Fritz Behrendt, Heinrich Knipping, Paul Heim, Albert Kempter, Pilczyce Housing Estate Design, 1929*
Source: Museum of Architecture in Wrocław.

Another housing estate Księże Małe[49] was built between 1928 and 1929 according to an urban design by Paul Heim and Albert Kempter, on land incorporated into the

48. Eysymontt R, Ilkosz J, Tomaszewicz A, Urbanik J (eds.) (2011): 483.

city in 1928. It formed part of Hugo Althoff's (then city architect) programme for the construction of rational social housing estates. The developer was Siedlungsgesellschaft Breslau AG. The house designs were created by Paul Heim, Albert Kempter, Hans Thomas, Gustav Wolf and Rudolf Sack. On an area of 12.3 hectares, 762 two- and three-room flats with floor areas of 45 m^2, 57 m^2 and 70 m^2 were planned for 3,048 residents, most of which lacked bathrooms. Rows of houses, situated parallel or perpendicular to one another, were built around a large rectangular green recreational area. Only on the side of the main access road (Opolska; Oppelner Str.) were the houses arranged in a zigzag pattern and at an angle to the orthogonal layout (see Figure 18). The amenities plan included: a pavilion with a community hall (unrealised), shops, a nursery, and a central heating boiler house with a communal bathhouse and laundry. Księże Małe was the first fully realised housing estate of the Neues Bauen movement. The architects adapted the flats' specifications to the RFG guidelines. It represented Wrocław at an exhibition entitled "Wohnung für das Existenzminimum" during the 2nd International CIAM Congress in Frankfurt am Main.

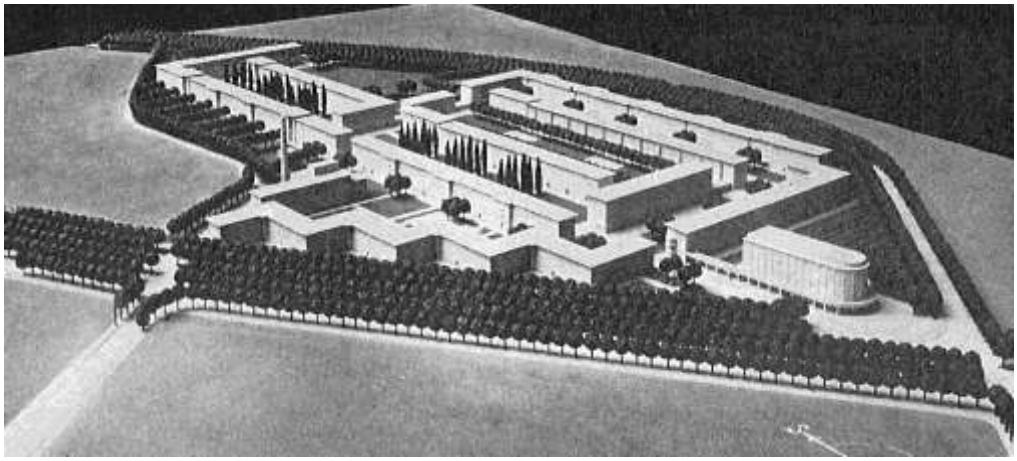

Figure 18. *Fritz Behrendt, Heinrich Knipping, Paul Heim, Albert Kempter, Księże Małe Housing Estate Design, Model, 1929*
Source: Deutsche Bauzeitung (1929) 67(67): 579.

In 1929, the Silesian Branch of the Werkbund organised an exhibition in Wrocławunder the slogan "Home and Workplace" ("Wohnung und Werkraum" Exhibition - WuWA).[50] Its main aim was to showcase various approaches to housing construction in Germany and abroad. The initiative was launched by Heinrich Lauterbach, founder and chairman of the Silesian Branch of the Werkbund. An important part of the exhibition was a model, experimental housing estate,

49. Ibidem: 484-485, Kononowicz W (1995) Ewolucja osiedla mieszkaniowego we Wrocławiu okresu Republiki Weimarskiej - Księże Małe. In J Rozpędowski (ed.), 445-478. *Architektura Wrocławia*, vol. 2, *Urbanistyka do roku 1945*. Wrocław: Oficyna Wydawnicza Politechniki Wrocławskiej.

50. Urbanik J (2019) *1929 WUWA 2029. The Werkbund Exhibition in Wrocław*. Wrocław: Muzeum Architektury.

financed and built by Siedlungsgesellschaft Breslau AG (see Figure 19). The programme regarding the types and sizes of flats, as well as construction techniques and materials, was agreed with the RFG. Eleven Silesian architects were invited to take part in the project. They were Paul Heim, Albert Kempter, Theodor Effenberger, Ludwig Moshamer, Heinrich Lauterbach, Paul Häusler, Moritz Hadda, Emil Lange, Gustav Wolf, Hans Scharoun and Adolf Rading.

The aim of building the housing estate was to showcase new types of affordable small and medium-sized flats, and in particular new house designs, new technologies, new building materials, new interior fittings and a new colour scheme. The completed houses, with their interiors already fitted out, were open to the public for three and a half months, and were then let for two years to test the new solutions. The estate was designed by Adolf Rading and Heinrich Lauterbach, who planned it in accordance with new urban planning principles ensuring residents free access to fresh air, sunlight and green spaces. The complex also included a single-storey nursery. A total of 132 flats were presented, including 103 small ones (with an area of 45–60 m^2) and 29 larger ones in multi-family and single-family homes – detached, semi-detached and terraced. Most of the houses were in the Neuse Bauen style. They were designed according to Le Corbusier's five principles of modern architecture.

It was the last major display of modernism in architecture in Wrocław.

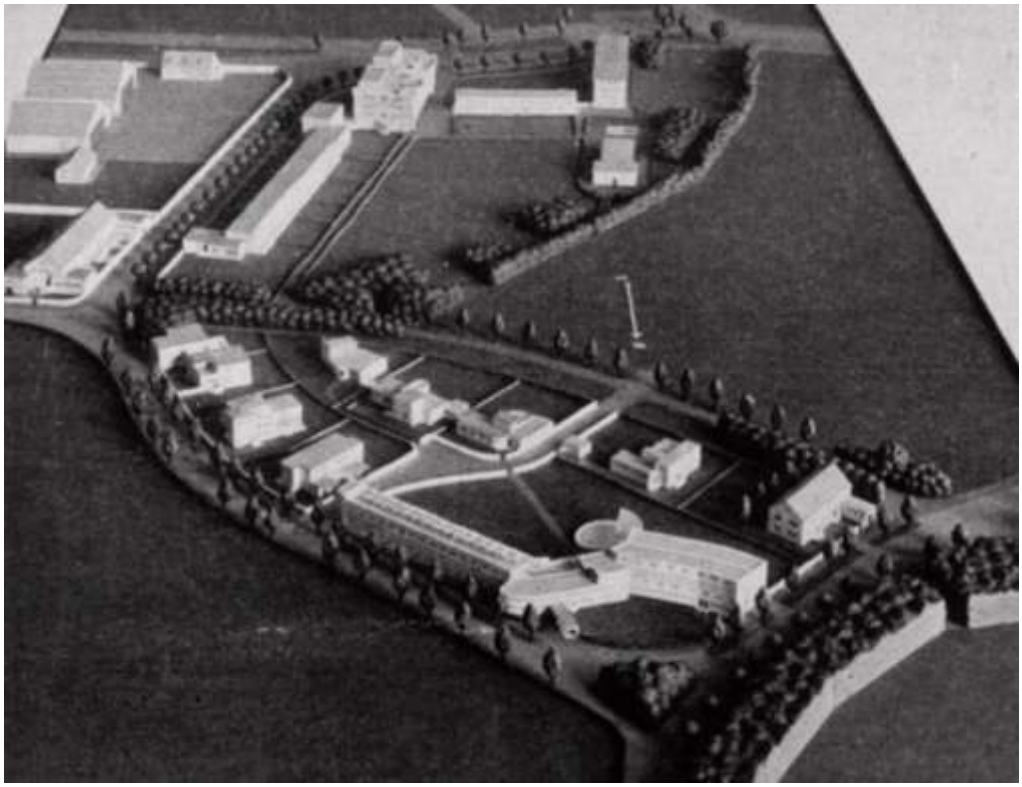

Figure 19. *Heirich Lauterbach, WuWA Werkbund Exhibition Housing Estate Design, Model, 1929*
Source: Die Form (1929): 97.

Housing Estates from the 1930s under National Socialism

Soon afterwards, in 1932, the Wrocław Academy of Art and Design was closed for financial reasons, leading many distinguished architects and artists to leave the city.

After 1933, between 1933 and 1936, during the early years of the Third Reich, the concept of small-scale housing estates and private homes (Kleinsiedlungs- und Heimstättengedamke) was promoted under the new political conditions, as part of suburban housing developments (Stadtrandsiedlungen), thus repeating the crisis-era solutions from the early period of the Weimar Republic. The aim of tying urban workers to the land and providing them with food from their own plots was to mitigate the effects of the economic crisis. The idea of small settlements was ideologically motivated. As early as 1931, they were intended for the unemployed and workers on reduced hours. From 1934, the housing provision was mainly taken up by full-time workers with more than four

children. The estates consisted of monotonous rows of identical detached houses on plots of land, arranged in an east-west or north-south alignment.[51]

Between 1936 and 1940, so-called "people's housing" (Volkswohnungen) was built for workers at factories involved in the Four-Year Plan and for members of the Wehrmacht, in the form of housing estates modelled on garden cities.[52] It was recommended that streets be designed with soft, flowing alignment lines. These were cheap flats with minimal floor space and furnishings. The Act on the New Shaping of German Cities (Gesetz zur Neugestaltung deutscher Städte) of 4 October 1937 was a new piece of legislation concerning the 41 Reich cities listed in the Führer's decree and all the capitals of the individual regions. Wrocław was also included on this list. The redevelopment plans concerned not only the city centre but also housing estates situated on the outskirts of the city, for families living in the centre.[53]

It seemed that following the expansion of Wrocław's boundaries in 1928 and the end of the economic crisis of 1929–1930, new opportunities had emerged for the development of new housing estates, particularly as the unresolved problem of housing shortages persisted. Radical changes took place in the housing policy of the new Nazi government. Social housing associations, such as Schlesische Heimstätte, which had previously been under the Ministry of Social Welfare, were placed under the authority of the Reich Ministry of Labour. In turn, all housing cooperatives were taken over by the German Labour Front (Deutsche Arbeitsfront, DAF). There was a change in the way housing construction was financed. State aid was directed mainly towards private owners, rather than, for

51. "To address the severe housing shortage, private housing construction was supported through loan guarantees on the capital market and a drastic reduction in interest rates of over 50 per cent. As state funds were to be allocated to rearmament, in accordance with Hitler's uncompromising directive – "Everything for the Wehrmacht" – housing construction, like consumer supplies, was largely handed over to the private sector. Whilst in the Weimar Republic between 1924 and 1930 around 50 per cent of new residential buildings received direct state funding, during the National Socialist era only around 12 per cent of residential buildings received support. Housing cooperatives taken over by the German Labour Front (Deutsche Arbeitsfront – DAF) lost their social character. Following the simplification of complex guarantee schemes, and thanks to incentives and the steering of the private economy, over 330,000 dwellings were built in 1936 and 1937. However, as early as 1937, due to the further intensification of construction activity in the armaments sector, shortages of construction workers and materials began to emerge, which led to a renewed decline in the number of flats being built and a steady increase in the housing deficit.", cf. Nerdinger W (2023), 282.

52. "Housing construction companies lost their role as businesses and were transformed into trustees of the National Socialist Settlement Association (Nationalsozialistischer Siedlungsverband), which was to carry out its tasks in accordance with the guidelines of demographic policy, racial hygiene, economic policy and culture. The German Labour Front (Deutsche Arbeitsfront – DAF) took over the organisation of housing estates within the framework of its housing office.See Lampugnani V M (2010), 591.

53. cf. Planen und Bauen im Nationalsozialismus – Voraussetzungen, Institutionen, Wirkungen (2023), 433-477; Düwel J, Gutschow N (2019), 226-313.

example, housing cooperatives which built flats for rent. Consequently, estates of owner-occupied detached or semi-detached houses were built, primarily to meet the housing needs of every "comrade" (Volksgenosse).[54] Although Nazi ideologues distanced themselves from the architecture of the Weimar Republic, in terms of social amenities they adopted the concept of the so-called social minimum, which had already been implemented in Silesia and Wrocław since 1919 in projects by Ernst May, Herbert Böhm and the Schlesische Heimstätte cooperative.

The housing estates from the 1930s were situated in Wrocław's Maślice (Masselwitz), Stabłowice (Stabelwitz) and Żerniki (Neukirch) districts – the very areas that Ernst May had sought to develop between 1919 and 1925, designing small housing estates for them.

The first of the two largest housing estates was the Nowy Dwór (Mariahöfchen) estate, situated in the south-west of the city and designed in 1935 by Heinrich Knipping for the employees of the nearby rolling stock factory Linke A.G (see Figure 20). This concept was revised at the City Planning Office in 1937 by Herbert Boehm. The estate was laid out on a plan resembling a triangle. The large scale of the development was comparable to housing estates from the Weimar Republic era, such as Sępolno, Grabiszynek and Popowice. Herbert Boehm planned the construction of multi-family, two-storey or single-family terraced houses, situated in the eastern part of the estate.

In its western section (which was never built), the architect envisaged a development of semi-detached houses. Individual sections of the estate were designed by Franz Auer, Herbert Wiehr, Hans Stosberg and Albrecht Jaeger. The latter, a pupil of Adolf Rading and partner of Hugo Leipziger-Pearce, was a talented architect whose work was part of the Neues Bauen movement. The other architects based their careers on collaboration with the new authorities. Hans Stosberg, who between 1940 and 1943 designed, among other things, houses for officers and officials on what are now Henryka Arctowskiego Street (Tirpitz Str.) and Podróżnicza Street (Skagerrak Str.), located within other housing estates in Wrocław, was the principal designer of the model town of IG Farben in Oświęcim.[55] With the outbreak of war, construction work was halted and the housing estate was never fully completed.

The second major housing estate was built between 1935 and 1938 in Muchobór Mały, as part of a development project carried out by Niederschlesischer Kleinwohnungsbau GmbH, Neuland-Gemeinnützige Wohnungsbau GmbH and DEWOG (Deutsche Wohnungsfürsorge AG). The estate was designed by Heinrich Knipping, Paul Häusler and the architectural firm Buchwald & Hesse (see Figure 21).

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54. Beate Störtkul described the housing problem during the Nazi era: Störtkuhl B (2018) *Modernizm na Śląsku 1900–1939. Architektura i polityka*. Wrocław: Muzeum Architektury: 355-361; Störtkuhl B (2021) Practices in building housing and settlements in the Nazi era. Case study Breslau. *Architectus* 26(3): 25-34.

55. cf. Ilkosz J (2021), *German modernism in the shadow of the NSDP – the experience of Wrocław (1933-1945)*. In Purchla J, Komar Ż (eds), 273-294. *Dissonant heritage? The architecture of the Third Reich in Poland*. Kraków: International Cultural Centre: 289.

The third project was a housing estate intended for employees of the Rheinmetall-Borsig arms factory, located in the Psie Pole district in the north-western part of the city (see Figure 22). It was designed in 1940 by Herbert Boehm, who justified the construction of the estate on the grounds of maintaining the factory's production, thereby exempting it from Fritz Todt's decree suspending all construction work except for projects "of key importance to the war".[56]

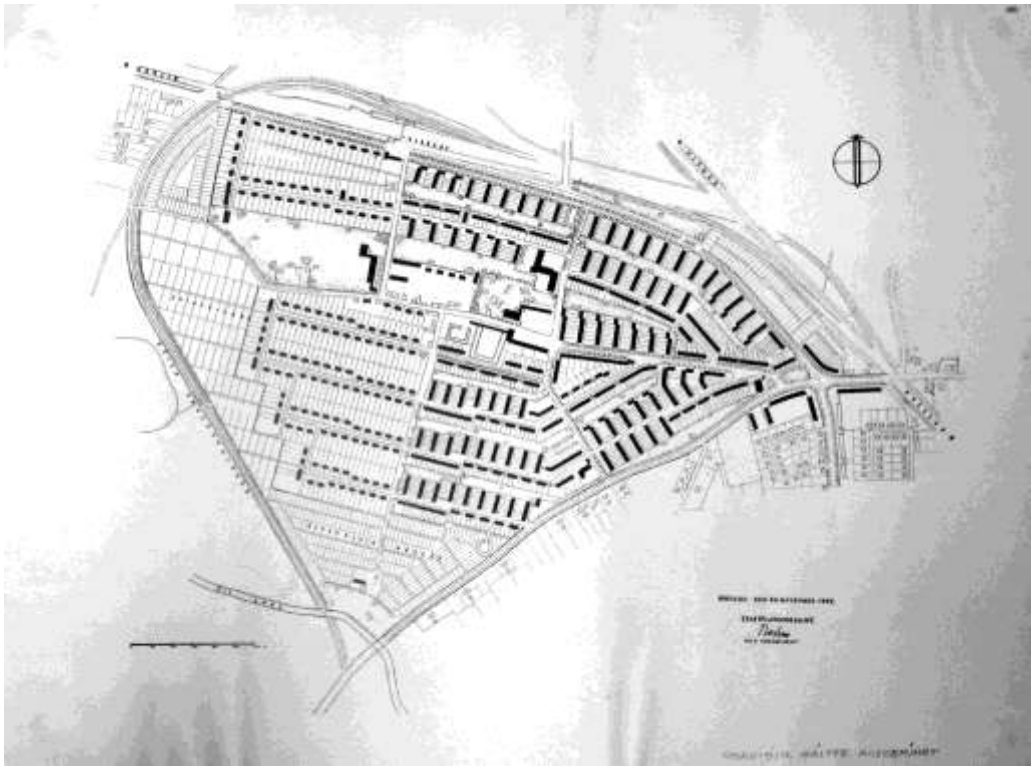

Figure 20. *Herbert Boehm, Nowy Dwór Housing Estate Design, 1937*
Source: State Archives in Wrocław.

56. Störtkuhl B (2021): 32.

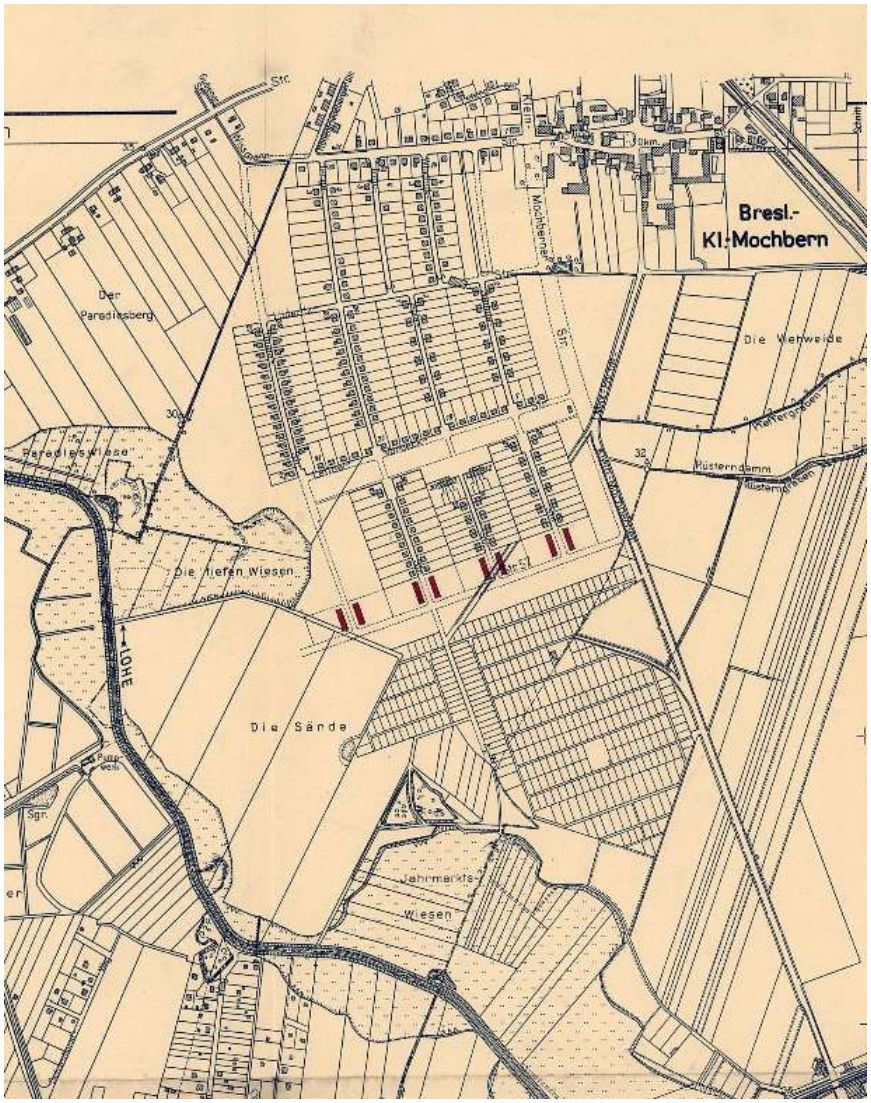

Figure 21. *Muchobór Mały Housing Estate Design, 1933*
Source: Museum of Architecture in Wrocław.

Figure 22. *Herbert Boehm, Housing Estate Design in Psie Pole for Employees of the Rheinmetall-Borsig Arms Factory, Model, 1940*
Source: private collections.

The housing estate was developed by the Deutsches Heim cooperative, and the construction work was supervised by the cooperative Schlesische Heimstätte Provinzielle Treuhandstelle für Wohnungs- und Kleinsiedlungswesen GmbH. Herbert Boehm's design envisaged a linear layout of two-storey, multi-block multi-family houses, comprising 1,800 flats, surrounded by green spaces and complete with administrative facilities, including: a youth centre, a church, a school, a community centre, a nursery, a cinema and shops. The individual buildings were designed by Franz Auer and Herbert Wiehr – architects associated with the Schlesische Heimstätte cooperative. Like the estate in Nowy Dwór, this development was never fully completed after work was halted in 1943. Only one-sixth of the planned development was finished. The completed section is located on what is now Majora Jana Piwnika-Ponurego Street.[57]

Herbert Boehm produced many other housing estate designs that were never realised. These included, amongst others, housing estates in Pilczyce (Pilsnitz, 1937), Biskupin (Bischofswalde, 1939), Partynice (Hartlieb, 1939) and Żerniki (Neukirch, 1940).

Conclusions

To date, around 150 housing estates and residential complexes from interwar Wrocław have been identified, designed by such eminent architects as Paul Schmitthenner, Ernst May, Adolf Rading, Hugo Leipziger-Pearce, Alfred Jäger, Heinrich Lauterbach, Theo Effenberger, Herman Wahlich, Paul Heim, Albert Kempter, Hans Thomas and Gustav Wolf. This is the city's difficult and degraded architectural heritage.

In today's world of property development, where housing estates are built with profit as the primary consideration, it is worth taking a closer look at the housing estates constructed in the interwar period, which still exist today and remain in use. What is more, they are greatly appreciated by residents. In a poll for the most liveable places in Wrocław, the top three spots on the list were taken by pre-war housing estates, despite their progressive deterioration and the lack of proper maintenance. It would therefore be worth identifying the reasons for this state of affairs.

The flats designed during the interwar period largely comply with RFG guidelines, regardless of whether they date from the Weimar Republic or the Nazi era.

Moreso, they meet the expectations of the modern middle class. It was during the interwar period that functional principles of housing design were established, such as the orientation of rooms in relation to the cardinal directions. These principles remain relevant to this day. Although modern, the architecture of these houses often drew on traditional forms. This appealed to the average homeowner then, and continues to do so today. The most distinctive feature of pre-war housing estates is their urban planning. Low-rise houses, up to two or three storeys high, are accompanied by private gardens allocated to each flat, as well as suitably

57. Ibidem.

large communal green spaces serving as recreational areas and meeting places that foster neighbourly bonds. This is an essential condition for the formation of a housing estate community. Moreover, all interwar estates were equipped with so-called basic services - schools, churches, shops - so they fully meet Clarence Perry's guidelines for a housing estate (neighbourhood unit). Perhaps this is precisely why the new residents of post-war Wrocław came to appreciate these places so much. Despite their undeniable advantages, the technical condition of the houses is not perfect.

The deterioration of this heritage and the need for proper restoration necessitate the launch of programmes to safeguard this valuable part of the city's heritage, modelled on those already in place for Wrocław's exemplary Werkbund WuWA housing estate. These programmes must be underpinned by a thorough gathering of knowledge (historical studies and archival research). The issue of housing construction from that period has not yet been comprehensively studied; no inventory of housing estates has been carried out, particularly those destroyed during the war, and these too played a decisive role in how the authorities and the society of Wrocław at the time addressed housing problems.

It is also worth examining this issue through the lens of the European Union's long-term strategy, particularly with regard to research in the fields of architecture and urban planning, as well as heritage protection and conservation, which aims to respect the aesthetics and architectural quality of existing buildings. Particular attention has been paid to listed buildings and historic urban complexes. This stems from an awareness of the significant role heritage plays in shaping the identity of Europeans, countries and regions (*Davos Declaration. Towards a high-quality Baukultur for Europe, Conference of Ministers of Culture, 20-22 January 2018, Davos, Switzerland*).

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East of Empire. Byzantium, the "Greek Empire" and the Catalan Company in Fictional and Historical Iberian Literatures (14th to 17th Centuries)

*By Andreu Ortí-Mondéjar**

This essay is devoted to discovering and analysing the transmission of the Byzantine Empire and its association with the Greek cultural identity in the Iberian (Catalan and Spanish) literatures from the Late Middle Ages until the Early Modern Times. We have connected the historical experience of the "Catalan Company" of mercenaries in the beginnings of the 14th century with its representation in chronicles and historical books. Afterwards, we put our attention on the inspiration that Catalan and Spanish writers took from this episode in order to create chivalric fictions and other literary works.

Keywords: *Byzantium, Empire, Crown of Aragon, Chivalric Literature, Early Modern Spain.*

Introduction

At the "18th Annual International Conference on Mediterranean Studies", a question arose concerning the use of "Greeks" as a demonym for the inhabitants of the Byzantine Empire at the end of Middle Ages and of the naming Byzantium as the "Greek Empire". First of all, the mistake must be attributed to the Catalan writers and historians from the Crown of Aragon in the 14th and 15th centuries. Also, the official documents conserved in the Royal Archive of Barcelona —nowadays, Archive of the Crown of Aragon (ACA)— about military expeditions and commercial deals consider the Eastern Roman Empire as a Greek empire, with a Hellenic cultural identity clearly distinguished from the Roman imperial past[1]. The main purpose of this article is following the literary representation of the Byzantine Empire in the Catalan and Spanish chivalric romances and other historical sources in order to discover how the "Greek" identity was implicitly conceived and defined.

To deal with this question, the paper is enhancing the political context that concerned the mentioned authors while writing their fictions, on the one hand, and the impact of the cultural image created by them in the Iberian perception of the Eastern imperial scenery. Did Catalan and Spanish writers create a Greek cultural identity in the romances written around the dream of "saving" a Christian Byzantium? How does this perception change in the Iberic cultural memory when

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1. José M. Floristán Imízcoz, *Fuentes para la política oriental de los Austrias* (León: Universidad de León, 1988); Antoni Rubió i Lluch (ed.), *Diplomatari de l'Orient català (1301-1409)* (Barcelona: IEC, 2001).

the military confrontations between the Spanish Monarchy and the Ottoman Empire increased along the central decades (siege of Viena, 1532; battle of Lepanto, 1571) of the 16th century?[2]

Methodology

The representation of the imperial ideology in Medieval literature has a vast tradition of studies from different intellectual approaches[3]. However, the "cultural turn" of the 1990's has provoked an academic point of non-return[4]. When we approach to a specific political context of the past, we must understand the cultural networks of references about principles and values of the historical subjects. That is what allows us to understand the specific motivation of each political process. And fictional literature is an unavoidable source for the intellectual construction of the cultural history about Late Medieval and Early Modern polities[5]. Chivalric romances were one of the most spread literary genres before and after of the origins of the movable-type printing[6]. Medievalists have also demonstrated the capacity of the "chivalric spirit" for explaining the goals and aspirations of the societies that read those books in Western Europe[7].

We have recently devoted a special attention to the inspiration taken by some Catalan writers from the Greek scenery around the conquest of Constantinople in

2. For these concepts, see also: Nikolas Rose, "Identity, Genealogy, History", in Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay (eds.), *Questions of Cultural Identity* (London: SAGE Publications, 1996), 128-150; Jan Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Ancient Civilization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Various Authors, *Memory before Modernity. Practices of Memory in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2013).

3. Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies. A Study of Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957).

4. Paul Ricoeur, *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), edited by George Taylor.

5. Francis Oakley, *The Watershed of Modern Politics. Law, Virtue, Kingship and Consent (1300-1650)* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), 14-50.

6. For this Western Medieval universe and its literature: Johan Huizinga, *The Autumn of Middle Ages* (Various Reprints, 1919), Spanish translation: *El otoño de la Edad Media* (Madrid, Alianza, 1978); Maurice Keen, *Chivalry* (New Heaven-London: Yale University Press, 1983); Josef Fleckenstein, *Rittertum and Ritterliche Welt* (Berlin: Siedler Verlag, 2002), Spanish translation: *La caballería y el mundo caballeresco* (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 2006); Pedro M. Cátedra, *Le songe chevaleresque. De la chevalerie de papier au rêve réel de Don Quichotte* (Paris: Collège de France, 2005); Dani Cavallaro, *The Chivalric Romance and the Essence of Fiction* (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, 2016); Leticia Álvarez-Recio (ed.), *Iberian Chivalric Romance. Translation and Cultural Transmission in Early Modern England* (Toronto-London-Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2021).

7. José Enrique Ruiz-Doménec, *La novela y el espíritu de la caballería* (Madrid: Taurus, 2023).

1453 by the Ottoman Sultan Mehmet II (1451-1481)[8]. The central role of the Crown of Aragon in the Western and Central Mediterranean politics in the middle of the 15th century was attached to the composition of some romances that are considered nowadays as the "Golden Age" of Catalan literature. The presence of the Byzantine horizon in that sources remarks its importance in the political vision of the Catalan —and even of the Spanish— writers in the next century. Nevertheless, the aim of that analysis was discovering the roots of some political concepts depicted in fictional works, such as the "empire" [9]. In addition, we confirmed the existence of a dialectic confrontation between the Catalan-Aragonese subjects (Latin Roman Church) and the population of the Byzantine Empire (Orthodox Church) in many historical and fictional texts. Consequently, the question of the "Greek" identity attributed to Byzantium in the Western Mediterranean —Iberian— shores and its political meanings is still needed of deeper research.

Answering the initial questions involves analysing the chronicles that include notices around the Greek people and the Byzantine Empire and, in the same way, some chivalric romances where a fictional Eastern empire mentioned as "Greek empire" appears. That is the case of *Tirant lo Blanc* (1490), the major book of the Golden Age in Catalan literature and still well considered by Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quijote de la Mancha* more than one century later (1605-1615)[10]. Furthermore, we will also reconstruct the Greek inspiration —translated in different names: "empire of the Greeks", "emperor of Constantinople"— in the Spanish chivalric romances of the first decades of the 16th century. Many of them situate the end of the narration in the acquisition of the imperial throne in Constantinople, and their authors choose in different occasions the royal surname "of Greece" for their fictional dynasties. According to our sources, firstly, we would like to precise the attribution of that Greek identity to Byzantium by the Iberian writers in the 14th and the 15th centuries and, secondly, the changes and continuities on its political significance after the vanishing of the Empire, in the 16th and the 17th centuries.

Literary sources give us an interesting opportunity to access into the complexities of the identity in the premodern world. Identity is built above the past of the single and collective subjects, but that past is always an intellectual and

8. Steven Runciman, *The Fall of Constantinople 1453* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1965).

9. Andreu Ortí-Mondéjar, "Greece and the Idea of Empire through Fictional Literature. From Medieval Catalonia to Early Modern Spain", in *Athens Journal of Mediterranean Studies* 11 (Issue 3, June 2025): 211-226.

10. Joanot Martorell, *Tirant lo Blanch. Text original (València, 1490)* (Valencia: Tirant lo Blanch Editions, 2008), edited by Albert Hauf; Joanot Martorell, *Tirant lo Blanc* (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 2016 [1979]), edited by Martín de Riquer. The Catalan quotes are taken from the 2016 Riquer's edition and we will add in brackets the corresponding pages of the English shortened version by Robert S. Rudder, *The White Knight: Tirant lo Blanc* (RSR, 1995): Martorell, *Tirant*, 2016, chapter in Roman numerals, page in Arabics (Rudder, *White Knight*, 1995, chapter in Roman numerals, page in Arabics).

permanent rework. Judit Pollmann and other historians have recently developed studies around the practices of memory in the Early Modern Times, focusing on different regions all around Europe[11]. Nevertheless, as Nikolas Rose wrote, we must consider the relevance of the connections between history and genealogy for building an identity, even more in the societies of our chronological framework. For this reason, we are going to detail the interpretations of the past that we can find in chronicles ("Interpretation and Imagination") and also to confront them with the resources of the literary fiction ("Fiction and Literature").

Contemporary historiography is perfectly conscious of the political identity of the Byzantine Empire as the heir of the Eastern Roman Empire in Medieval times. Obviously, the Greek modern identity was born in the first third of the 19th century, and this proposal will not discuss that question. However, the modern Greek nationalism has a dialectic relationship with its Byzantine past, as it has been studied[12]. This work intend is to go deeper in the cultural memory of the Byzantine Empire in the Iberian Renaissance both in Catalan language under the rule of the Crown of Aragon and in Spanish texts produced in the times of the Habsburg dynasty[13]. This way, we can extract a perception and a concept of Greek people managed in transnational sources, but we cannot attribute a strong political — even less, national— Greek identity[14].

11. Various Authors, *Memory before Modernity. Practices of Memory in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2013).

12. Despina Christodoulou, "Byzantium in Ninetheenth-Century Greek Historiography", in *The Byzantine World* (London-New York: Routledge, 2011), edited by Paul Stephenson, 445-461; Roderick Beaton, *Greece. Biography of a Modern Nation* (London: Allen Lane Publishers, 2019).

13. José M. Floristán Imízcoz, "Bizancio y la herencia Paleóloga en la política exterior de los reinos peninsulares (1400-1502)", in Various Authors, *Perfiles de Grecia y Roma. Actas del XII Congreso Español de Estudios Clásicos* (Valencia: Sociedad Española de Estudios Clásicos, 2009, 3 vols.), III: 13-52; José M. Floristán Imízcoz, "«Bizancio después de Bizancio»: La herencia imperial de Constantinopla y la política exterior de los Austrias españoles (1517-1621)", in Various Authors, *Baetica Renascens* (Cádiz-Málaga: Federación Andaluza de Estudios Clásicos – Instituto de Estudios Humanísticos, 2014, 2 vols.), II: 863-875; Miguel Ángel de Bunes Ibarra, "La conquista turca de Bizancio según los cronistas europeos de los siglos XVI y XVII", in *Erytheia* 13 (1992): 89-102.

14. Gregory T. Papanikos, "The national identity of ancient and modern Greeks", in *Athens Journal of Mediterranean Studies* 10 (Issue 1, 2024): 63-80.

The Facts

Ramon Muntaner (1265-1336) was one of the Catalan and Aragonese soldiers who disembarked in Monemvasia in 1303. The expedition had departed from Messina, in the kingdom of Sicily, ensured under the rule of a secondary branch of the Aragonese dynasty after the Peace of Caltabellotta (1302). The struggle for the island had started in 1282, when Peter III "the Great" of Aragon (1276-1285) invaded Sicily to support a riot broken out in Palermo against the king Charles of Anjou, also count of Anjou and Provenza and king of Naples —together with Sicily in the period 1266-1282. When Sicily rioted against his power with the support of Peter of Aragon, Charles untied an offensive that lasted for 20 years, sometimes interrupted by diplomatic truces. After his death in 1285, his son Charles II continued the war against the following kings of Aragon —Alphonse III (1285-1291) and his brother James II (1291-1327)[15]. Indeed, James —former king of Sicily— renounced to the insular throne in order to obtain a diplomatic agreement with France, the Pope and Charles II of Anjou (Treaty of Anagni, 1295). However, the Sicilian Parliament elected his youngest brother Frederick (1296-1337) as the new king, and he reached the independence of the island in the cited Peace of Caltabellota (August 1302)[16].

The diplomatic agreement had some unexpected consequences. The end of the war left many Catalan and Aragonese soldiers without incomes, so many of them joined to a company commanded by the Italian captain Roger de Flor. And the Company set sail towards the Byzantine Empire paid by the emperor Andronikos II Palaiologos (1282-1328)[17], whose reign was threatened by the conflicts between Genoese and Venetian fleets and, specially, by the increasing attacks of Turkic groups of population[18]. One of his officers was Ramon Muntaner, author of an essential chronicle for the Catalan Medieval literature (c. 1330)[19]. In the book we can

15. Steven Runciman, *The Sicilian Vespers. A History of the Mediterranean World in the Later Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge: University Press, 1958); David Abulafia, *The Western Mediterranean Kingdoms 1200-1500. The Struggle for Dominion* (London: Routledge, 1997), Spanish translation: *La guerra de los doscientos años. Aragón, Anjou y la lucha por el Mediterráneo* (Barcelona: Pasado y Presente, 2017), 83-105; Stefano M. Cingolani, *Pere el Gran. Vida, actes i paraula* (Barcelona: Base, 2010), 149-198.

16. Cingolani, *Pere el Gran*, 199-319.

17. Franz Georg Maier, *Byzanz* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Verlag, 1973), Spanish translation: *Bizancio* (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1974), 340-342; Judith Herrin, *Byzantium. The Surprising Life of a Medieval Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 201, 276 and 291.

18. They were structured and organised by the mythical leader Osman at the beginning of the 14th century, afterwards known as the founder of the Ottoman —Osmanli— Empire: Colin Imber, *The Ottoman Empire 1300-1650. The Structure of Power* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2002), 8-9.

19. Ramon Muntaner, *Les quatre grans cròniques. III. Crònica de Ramon Muntaner* (Barcelona: IEC, 2011), edited by Ferran Soldevila, Jordi Bruguera and Maria Teresa Ferrer i Mallol. An English translation can be found in: Ramon Muntaner, *Chronicle* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1921), translated by Anne Goodenough (Ontario: Publications Catalan Series, 2000). The chapters

find the account of the achievements reached by the monarchs of the Crown of Aragon since the naissance of James I (1208-1276) until the coronation of Alphonse IV in 1327. Muntaner's intention was to glorify the military expansion in the Iberian Peninsula (Valencia, Balearic Islands) and the Western Mediterranean Sea (Sardinia, Sicily)[20] and he still provokes that effect on the reader, thanks to his vivid literary style and the introduction of some writing techniques taken from chivalric romances and *chansons de geste*. Certainly, it happens because he lived and could testify —despite the bias of his political ambitions— about the campaigns, such as the presence of the "Catalan Company" —*exercitus Cathalanorum*— in Sicily, Greece and Anatolia.

That military campaign started as an independent initiative driven by De Flor as a way of offering economic benefits to the unoccupied groups of mercenaries in Sicily. Ramon Muntaner was one of those vacant soldiers. More than 20 years later, he introduced this episode in his chronicle about the Aragonese monarchy's expansion because it had both a political and a biographical significance. Muntaner himself tells us the origins of the expedition to "Romania" departed in order to support the "emperor of Constantinople" against the spreading of Ottoman population and armies throughout Anatolia and the Minor Asia. These zones were theoretically under the rule of Byzantium.

> He [De Flor] had a galley equipped and called two knights whom he trusted, and told them all he had planned; and also told them that, above all, they should make a treaty by which he would obtain, as wife, the niece of the Emperor of Lantzaura [dynasty Asen of Bulgaria], and also that he be made Grand Duke of the Empire; and again, that the Emperor give pay for four months to all those he would bring…
> ell [De Flor] féu aparellar una galea e hac dos cavallers en què es fiava e dix-los tot lo fet que s'havia pensat. E encara los dix que de tot en tot tractassen que ell hagués per muller la neboda de l'emperador, filla de l'emperador de Lautzara [dynasty Asen of Bulgaria]; e, encara, que fos megaduc de l'emperi; e, encara, que l'emperador faés paga a tots aquells que ell menaria, de quatre meses[21]

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devoted to the Catalan expedition to the Byzantine Empire have been independently published: Ramon Muntaner, *L'expedició dels catalans a Orient (Extret de la "Crònica")* (Barcelona: Barcino, 1951). English translation: *The Catalan Expedition to the East: from the* Chronicle *of Ramon Muntaner* (Barcelona-Woodbridge: Barcino-Tamesis, 2006), translated by Robert D. Hughes. We will take quotations from the IEC's 2011 edition, adding the pages of the English translation in brackets: Muntaner, *Crònica*, 2011, chapter in Roman numerals, page in Arabics (*Chronicle*, 2000, page in Arabics).

20. Ernest Belenguer and Felipe V. Garín (eds.), *La Corona d'Aragó. Segles XII-XVIII* (Valencia: Generalitat Valenciana, 2006); Flocel Sabaté (ed.), *The Crown of Aragon. A Singular Mediterranean Empire* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2017).

21. Muntaner, *Crònica*, 2011, CXCIX, 333 (*Chronicle*, 2000, 402). We can compare this negotiation with the fictional representation of the origins of the Greek adventure in *Tirant lo Blanc*: Martorell, *Tirant*, 2016, CXVI, 251-252 (Rudder, *White Knight*, 1995, IV, 58-59).

Monemvasia was the harbour where De Flor's fleet had to arrive in Greece, and he also required to find there the advanced reward for their military service. It is easy to understand that the emperor Andronikos II accepted those hard conditions because he had no alternative to continue his fight. Nevertheless, the position of the mercenaries was mainly rejected by the co-emperor Michael IX (1295-1320), son of Andronikos, and he was not alone. The Byzantine court also considered De Flor — who had received the honorific title of Caesar of the Empire[22] — as a growing menace for the stability of the Empire. Leaving the rule of war in Eastern provinces in the hands of Catalan mercenaries was a risk for the bureaucratic Byzantine system[23]. In addition, the irruption of the Company exacerbated the rivalry between the Catalans and the Genoese group stablished in the same Constantinople, due to the previous challenges that both merchant communities had settled in other commercial sceneries across the Mediterranean Sea.

The political stress exploded two years later. De Flor had commanded a successful campaign in Anatolia accepting little orders from the old emperor. As a response, Michael IX organised a meeting with him and other Catalan leaders in Edirne. It was not a celebration, but a betrayal. At least, Muntaner and posterior writers such as Moncada considered it was so. The 30th April 1305, De Flor and his main officers were murdered by the soldiers of Michael, and Muntaner described the scene with his characteristic and pathetic style:

> Skyr Miqueli [Michael IX] summoned Gircon to Adrianople [Edirne], chief of the Alans, and Melech, chief of the Turcopoles, so that they were altogether nine thousand horsemen. And on that day he invited the Caesar to a banquet. And when they had eaten, this Gircon, chief of the Alans, entered the palace in which Skyr Miqueli and his wife and the Caesar were; and they drew their swords and massacred the Caesar and all who were with him; and then, throughout the city, they killed all who had come with the Caesar; not more than three escaped…
>
> al setèn jorn xor Miqueli [Michael IX] hac fets venir a Andrinòpol [Edirne] Girgan, cap dels alans, e Melic, cap dels turcoples, així que foren entre tots ben vuit mília hòmens a cavall. E aquell dia ell convidà lo cèsar; e, con hagren menjat, aquell Girgon, cap dels alans, entrà en lo palau on estava xor Miqueli ab sa muller e el cèsar, e van trer les espaes e van tot especejar lo cèsar e tots aquells qui ab ell eren; e puis per la ciutat mataren tots quants ab lo cèsar eren venguts, que no n'escaparen mas tres [24]

22. In the 14th century, it had become a courtly dignity without determining the heir or co-emperor of the reigning emperor or *Basileus*. I would like to thank the blind peer-reviewers for their remarks about this title.

23. Michael Angold, "The Byzantine Political Process at Crisis Point", in Paul Stephenson (ed.), *The Byzantine World* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010): 5-21 (6); Leonora Neville, *Authority in Byzantine Provincial Society, 950–1100* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004): 39.

24. Muntaner, *Crònica*, 2011, CCXV, 353 (*Chronicle*, 2000, 427-428).

After the murder, the Company attacked the Byzantine troops and other mercenaries such as the Alans —episode known as "the Catalan Revenge"— and they contributed to the political instability in the centre of the Empire and in the Peloponnese. The region had been divided along the period that started with the Fourth Latin Crusade against Constantinople (1204) until the dynastic restoration of the Palaiologos with the emperor Michael VIII (1261-1282). Many groups of Western knights had stablished little feudal states and there was a multilinguistic —and troublesome— coexistence of Greek and Latin communities[25]. In that context, the Catalan mercenaries defeated the Frankish chivalry of Gautier V of Brienne, duke of Athens, and occupied the Acropolis —known by them as the "castle of *Cetines*"— and all that feudal state in 1311. Finally, in 1319, the Sicilian prince Alphonse Frederick (c. 1290 – c. 1335) joined to the Catalan Company, so they conquered also the duchy of Neopatras and defeated the Frankish lords of the region. Both states remained under the undirect sovereignty of the monarchs of Sicily until its transfer to the protection of Peter IV of Aragon (often called "the Ceremonious", 1336-1387) in 1377[26].

This political process conditioned the literary presence of the Greek domains in the Crown of Aragon —and in the Spanish Monarchy of the Early Modern Ages— in chronicles and historical texts. Muntaner's chronicle is the paradigm of that historical and even biographical literature. Here we examine the epic translation of the facts written by Muntaner —and its influence in historical books that hoped to recover ancient glories for the Spanish monarchy in the 17th century, as Francisco de Moncada did. The political interest on the Eastern Mediterranean regions conditioned also the imagination of the Catalan writers in the following two centuries, and *Tirant lo Blanc* (1460-1464) is the perfect example of the chivalric dream of preserving Byzantium from the Ottoman invasions in the same moment of Mehmet's conquest. Despite the differences in the geopolitical scenery, this literary pattern created a permanent aim in the Spanish chivalric books of the 16th century, in which knights and princes wanted to reach the throne of Constantinople as the award for their military efforts. We will analyse it in the last pages of this article.

25. The *Chronicle of Morea* is a great reflect of that era, and we have an accurated Spanish translation: Gregoria Núñez Esteban, *La Crónica de Morea: versión castellana del texto medieval griego y estudio preliminar* (Madrid: Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 2015), PhD Dissertation.

26. José M. Floristán Imízcoz, "La Corona de Aragón y el Imperio Bizantino de los Paleólogos", in Various Authors, *Mallorca y Bizancio* (Palma de Mallorca: Aula General Weyler, 2005), 103-156 (110-114).

Interpretation and Imagination

It is important to keep in mind this conflictive episode when we read the Muntaner's chronicle. Muntaner is not only a military responsible of De Flor's troops; he is also an officer who loses the influence that he had in the first structure of the Company before the murder of Roger De Flor. Therefore, his descriptions of Byzantium, its political system and its population are extremely critical. Those descriptions help us to discover and precise how the Empire and its people were perceived in the Western side of the Mediterranean Sea. We are going to analyse the uses of three concepts: "Romania", "emperor of Constantinople" and "the Greeks". Studying the commercial influence of the Aragonese Crown in the Eastern Mediterranean, Damien Coulon remarked recently: "the old Byzantine Empire, which it is better to call 'Romania', the name used in Western documents from the epoch"[27]. That is the same concept that Muntaner uses in the first lines explaining the expedition in the Chapter CXCIX: "How Frey Roger began to treat the passage into Romania…".

"And sent messengers to the Emperor of Constantinople" [28], it continues the previous quote. On the one hand, the name of "Romania" goes referred to all the lands once upon a time ruled by the Byzantine Emperors —but lost some centuries ago: Levant (Siria and Lebanon), Minor Asia. Thus, it is a geographical concept with a non-precise delimitation. One the other hand, "emperor of Constantinople" is the name used when it only pretends to identify the Byzantine sovereign. Its precision —mentioning only the capital city— reveals that Western writers had perceived the loss of lands and influence of the Empire after the Fourth Crusade of 1204. If we inspect the documents conserved about the relations of the Crown of Aragon and its Eastern affairs, we will find that official terms to design the Byzantine Empire were very similar to those of the chronicle.

For instance, the Catalan commander Berenguer d'Entença writes to the Dux of Venice to apologise and compensate an attack of his ships to a Venetian galley "*in mari portus de le Guayle* [Quaglie] *imperii Romeorum*"[29]. In the same month, 22nd September 1304, the king James II of Aragon is writing to his brother Frederick of Sicily "*super negocio Romanie*"; the same "*predicti imperium Romanie*" that Entença mentions again in his new letter to the Dux[30]. The diplomatic documents give us a powerful title: "*imperium Romanie*" (Empire of Romania) and "*imperium Romeorum*" (Empire of the Romans, similar to the Greek title "*Basileía Romaíon*"). Both reinforce the identity of the Empire with its Roman past, with its political origins being the Eastern Roman Empire, whose capital city was

27. Damien Coulon, "The Commercial Influence of the Crown of Aragon in the Eastern Mediterranean (Thirteenth – Fifteenth Centuries), in Flocel Sabaté (ed.), *The Crown of Aragon. A Singular Mediterranean Empire* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2017), 279-308 (281).

28. Muntaner, *Chronicle*, 2000, 400.

29. Rubió, *Diplomatari*, XII, 13 (10th September 1304).

30. Rubió, *Diplomatari*, XIII, 14 (James II to Frederick of Sicily) and XIV, 15 (Entença to the Dux).

stablished in the little place of Byzantium and renamed as Constantinople by Constantine the Great (306-337 A.D.).

The third title that we find is "*imperator Constantinopolitanus*", as we read in Muntaner's quote ("emperor of Constantinople"). It can be found also in many chivalric romances detailed in the fifth section of this essay. An anonymous account of the campaigns in 1303-1305 is registered in the Archive of the Crown of Aragon, and it tells the history of the "*multitudine almugavarorum*"[31] in "*partibus Romanie*", who had helped the emperor Andronikos until the murder of Roger de Flor and the prison of Berenguer d'Entença[32]. This way, official documents and historical accounts are expressing their political perception with the same words. Nevertheless, we said that "Emperor of Constantinople" is an unofficial naming that reveals the reduction of the political horizons of Byzantium since the 13th century. But that approaches us to another way of designating the rival troops of the Company and, at least, a part of the population ruled by the Byzantine emperors: the "Greeks". Muntaner mentions this name 17 times along his chronicle, and he does it generally to express a negative opinion.

Being Greek, for Muntaner, is more a cultural or ethnic question than a political one; they are one more group of soldiers —together with mercenaries such as some Turkic groups, the Alans or the Venetian and Genoese communities— under the orders of Andronikos and Michael Palaiologos. The Greeks are the inhabitants of the Ancient Hellenic (or even Balkan lands) that obey the Orthodox Church and usually the Byzantine emperor. It is a cultural and linguistic community that represents and, in the end, identifies all the empire. However, there are also Greek communities under the sovereignty of other princes and lords in Anatolia or even in the Peloponnese. They are the vassals of the monarch who paid the Company, but also the monarch who broke the *pacta, que eis fecerat et promiserat*. And that affair surely provokes these lines by Muntaner:

> And this happened owning to two conspicuous sins to which they are given. One is that they are the most arrogant people of the world; there is no people in earth they esteem and value, but only themselves, yet they are worthless people; the other is that they are the less charitable people to their neighbour to be found in all the time.
> e açò esdevé per dos pecats senyalats qui en ells regnen, ço és: la un, que són les pus ergulloses gents del món, que no ha gents al món que ells preen res sinó ells mateixs, e res no valen; d'altra part, que han la menys caritat de llur proïsme que gents que sien en el segle.[33]

31. "*Almogàver*" is the Catalan word for those mercenary warriors.

32. Rubió, *Diplomatari*, XV, 17: "*quod imperator Constantinopolitanus non quitabat dictos armigeros nec etiam pacta, que eis fecerat et promiserat*". The account is written with a poor Latin vocabulary and grammar, but it is very useful to undertand the Catalan point of view.

33. Muntaner, *Crònica*, 2011, CCIII, 339-340 (*Chronicle*, 2000, 410). The following quotes can be found in the same page and the next ones.

The chronist is also a defeated soldier after 1305. When he writes his famous book 25 years later, he has not forgotten the death of De Flor and hundreds of his comrades. For this reason, Muntaner throws the "wrath of God [*los grecs han la ira de Déus sobre ells*]" over the Greeks in his narration, along which Greeks are conceptualized as victims of the Turks or defeated soldiers. When there is an epidemy of "pestilence upon the Greeks that anyone could have defeated them [*sobre los grecs ha Déus tramesa tanta de pestilència, que tothom los confondria*]". According to the modern editor of the text, Muntaner expresses the "hatred and contempt for the Greeks"[34] of the Catalans.

Anyway, the use of the demonym "Greek" to define that community is very common, but it is not only used for the vassals of the Byzantine emperor. When Athens and Neopatras are taken under the direct Aragonese protection, Peter IV of Aragon designs the viscount of Rocabertí as lieutenant of the Crown in both duchies and the king writes instructions directed to *axí Franchs com Grechs* ("both Frankish and Greek people")[35]. So, the Greeks are a collective of traditional population before the arrival of the Catalans, but not the only one —we also have there the Frankish states in Morea or Peloponnese. In this case, these "Greeks" are under the rule of the Aragonese king.

To sum up, we must remember that the contact between the Crown of Aragon and the Greek communities begins in a warlike context that leads to a delicate political equilibrium. And written sources represent and transmit a tough and heated message. From an Iberian point of view, the expedition of the Catalan Company commanded by Roger de Flor in 1303-1305 represents a successful episode of military history that conferred two feudal states —duchies of Athens and Neopatras— to the Aragonese kings for 80 years long. On the other side, the subjects of Andronikos II and Michael IX Palaiologos only turned to the Catalan mercenary troops in a very particular situation of extreme military necessity against the Ottoman invasion of Anatolia. The cost of the Company, its presence —and abuses— against population and the requests of De Flor and other mercenary leaders provoked their murder by the hands of Michael IX[36]. Obviously, the combination of epic and betrayal laid the foundation of a heroic narrative that we can follow in chronicles, chivalric romances and, even, historical Spanish texts some centuries later.

Of course, the frontiers between these three genres are confuse in the Medieval and Early Modern literature. Indeed, historiography in the premodern times is a part of a wider written culture and it is placed "between History and Literature"[37]. It is a genre that connects some mythical and religious origins of the humanity, the dynasties and the states with the account of the facts in which they have been

34. Muntaner, *Chronicle*, 2000, 215 (note 97 of the English editor).

35. Rubió, *Diplomatari*, DCCXII, 743.

36. The version of the Byzantine historians about this period is a question that we cannot detail in this paper. Georgios Pachymeres (1242 – c. 1310) gives information about Roger de Flor and his Company, but Nicephorus Gregoras (1295 – c. 1360) lives almost entirely the era of the Catalan duchies.

37. Jaume Aurell, *La historiografía medieval. Entre la historia y la literatura* (Valencia: PUV, 2016).

involved, using many literary and rhetoric figures for that. The same procedure can be also found in fictional literature, but with the obvious imaginative ingredient added, which was no absent in the chronicles. In the next section we will go deeper in that topic. However, it is important to understand that some less fictional texts (such as the chronicles and other books devoted to reconstructing the past) are also part of the Catalan and Spanish literatures. We have seen that in Muntaner's chronicle, and we are going to analyse the same situation in a book that sets the episode of the Catalan Company in the written memory of the Spanish culture in the decade of 1620. That was the beginning of an enchained series of military conflicts that lead the Spanish Monarchy to play a central role in the Thirty Years War (1618-1648) and to fight against the second European power: the monarchy of France (1635-1659).

The delicate diplomatic and warlike scenery reinforced the interest in some historical episodes of glory for the Iberian Medieval kingdoms. The *Expedición de los Catalanes y Aragoneses contra Turcos y Griegos* ["Expedition of Catalan and Aragonese soldiers against Turks and Greeks"] was written and first published in 1623 by Francisco de Moncada (1586-1635)[38], marquis of Aytona, count of Osona and influent politician in the Spanish court. He also wrote some historical books, but his main work was this one reflecting the influx of Muntaner, as we can see in the title. Moncada tells the episode of the Catalan mercenaries hired by "*Andrónico Paleólogo Emperador de Griegos* [Emperor of Greek People]"[39], but the title stablishes both Ottomans —initial opponents— and Greeks —vassals of the emperor— as enemies. Or as allies, according to the diplomatic evolution of the complex political situation in the South of the Empire (Peloponnese or Morea). As we can see, for Moncada, the Palaiologos and the Empire are attached to the Greek people, forgetting the ethnocultural diversity of the Eastern Roman Empire. In the end, here we have another statement of the Greek identification of Byzantium in the Spanish literature of the 17th century —also edited in the 18th (1777, second edition of the book).

Moncada is the author of this book, more serene than Muntaner's one. The Hispanic nobleman gives a heroic account of the battles of the Catalan army in Anatolia and Morea, but he also talks about their "ambition" and "avarice"[40]. Nevertheless, after "defeated the Turks in the first increase of their Ottoman rise", the weapon were "turned against the Greeks". And the main community of the Byzantine Empire did not receive a better consideration in the following chapters: "The Greeks were so jealous and superb that they were plotting betrayals and treacheries. They were requesting with mouth and hands to Michael [IX] a

38. Francisco de Moncada, *Expedición de catalanes y aragoneses contra turcos y griegos* (Madrid: Antonio de Sancha, 1777). We cite according to the second edition of the book. Translation of the quotes by the author of the paper.

39. Moncada, *Expedición de catalanes y aragoneses*, 1.

40. Moncada, *Expedición de catalanes y aragoneses*, 3-4.

disaffection against us […]"[41]. The association between the historical characters (Catalan soldiers) and the identity of the 17th century writer —with his use of the plural subject ("against us")— explains Moncada's "disaffection" against the Greeks in the text.

In the following pages we are going to analyse, on the other side, the almost positive representation of the Greek people in the fictional literature of the Spanish Golden Age. Many chivalric romances in the 16th century depict an empire in Constantinople or in "Greece", creating a political system whose throne was the final desire or a friendly place in the adventures of the main character. Sometimes, Greece is the name of the dynasty of princes and knights, and we will prove it with some examples provided by chivalric romances and travel literature.

Fiction and Literature

Tirant lo Blanc is the major book of the Catalan Medieval literature, but that is not the reason to consider it here. This literary masterpiece, as it has been considered, is also the main source to see how Greek people were seen by the Iberian writers in the 15th century. Written in the period 1460-1464 (published in Valencia, 1490), the novel is constructed around the figure of a young Breton knight, Tirant lo Blanc ("the White"), who travels with Christian troops to Constantinople and reaches to save the Emperor from the Ottoman enemy. The inspiration taken from Muntaner by his author, Joanot Martorell (c. 1400 – 1465) is evident. This romance, published in the last moments of the Christian conquest of the emirate of Grenade[42], creates a Latin Western identity for Greece. It allows to rejoin the Orthodox Byzantium with the Western Latin Christendom to express a military success in response to the defeat of 1453.

Tirant defeats the Ottoman army many times and he also receives the title of Caesar, as imagined heir of the Empire: "The emperor sent a proclamation throughout the city, with many trumpets and drums, that they should all consider Tirant his successor and the Caesar of the empire. And he made them swear that after his death they would hold him as their emperor and lord. And from that time forward the new Prince Tirant was named Caesar of the Greek Empire"[43]. It allows him to marry the

41. Moncada, *Expedición de catalanes y aragoneses*, 116, with the original Spanish text: "*Estaban los Griegos tan envidiosos y soberbios, que con rabia y furor increíble, aunque con algún secreto, andaban maquinando trayciones y alevosías; con lengua y manos solicitaban a Miguel ya mal afecto contra nosotros, encareciendo la gran reputación de las armas de los Catalanes, y que ocupaban los grandes cargos de su Imperio, en grande mengua de Su Majestad, y deshonor suyo*".

42. More information about its political context in: Martín de Riquer, *Tirant lo Blanch, novela de historia y de ficción* (Barcelona: Acantilado, 2013); Andreu Ortí-Mondéjar, "La cultura política de la Corona d'Aragó al *Tirant lo Blanc*. L'ofici de príncep i la institució del consell a través de la literatura de ficció", in *eHumanista/IVITRA* 27 (2025): 347-360.

43. Rudder, *The White Knight*, 1995, XIII, 233. Original Catalan text: "*E l'Emperador cridar féu per tota la ciutat, ab moltes trompetes e tabals, que tots tinguessen a Tirant per primogènit seu e Cèsar*

only daughter of the old emperor, but he cannot assume the imperial crown because of his unexpected death. This romance, in this point, projects another feudal desire: the ascension in the feudal scale of power until reaching the royal throne.

However, Tirant's expedition is not inspired by avarice, but by religion and political ambition. Indeed, the development of the plot is a counterfactual: while the Byzantine Empire disappears in 1453, the "Greek Empire" of *Tirant* is finally rescued for Christianism. That reflects the ideology of the author, a little nobleman of the Crown of Aragon who lived in the 15th century. He survived in the court of Alphonse V of Aragon (1416-1458), the Aragonese monarch who conquered the reign of Naples (1443) and played an important diplomatic role in the years of the fall of the Palaiologos' Empire[44]. In the end, the proximity of this kingdom to the Balkan frontier and to the Ottoman Empire lets us to understand the ideological and political background of Martorell's book.

In the novel, the literary shadow of Byzantium is called the "Greek Empire". The link between the Greek community and the Palaiologos' throne that we mentioned when reading Muntaner is here complete. "We, Frederick, Emperor of the Empire of Greece by the immense and divine majesty of the sovereign and eternal God"[45], it starts the letter in which the literary emperor of Greece asks for military aid to the court of the king of Sicily —the knight Tirant was serving him. That is another parallelism with De Flor and the Catalan Company, who left the Sicilian kingdom in 1303 towards "Romania". Remembering the arrival of De Flor:

> Then God gave them good weather and in a few days they landed in Monemvasia and there they found those who showed them great honour, and they were given great refreshment of all things. And they found there an order from the emperor to go straight to Constantinople, and so they did. They left Monemvasia and went to Constantinople. And when they were at Constantinople, the emperors, the father and the son, and all the people of the Empire, received them with great joy and pleasure.
>
> E Déus aprés donà-los tan bon temps, que dins poc temps preseren terra a Malvasia; e aquí los fon feta molta d'honor e los fo donat gran refrescament de totes coses. E atrobaren aquí manament de l'emperador que dretament se n'anassen en Contastinoble; e així ho compliren, que partiren de Malvasia e anaren-se'n en Contastinoble.
>
> E, con foren en Contastinoble, l'emperador, lo pare e el fill, los reeberen ab gran goig e ab gran plaer, e totes les gents de l'emperi.[46]

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de l'Imperi. E féu-lo jurar que, aprés son òbit, lo tinguessen per Emperador e senyor llur. E així fon fet, que d'aquí avant lo novell príncep Tirant fon nomenat Cèsar de l'Imperi grec" (Martorell, *Tirant*, 2016, CDLII, 961, and see also CDLIII, 962).

44. Santiago Sobrequés Vidal, "Sobre el ideal de cruzada en Alfonso V de Aragón", in *Hispania* 12 (1952): 232-252.

45. Rudder, *The White Knight*, 1995, IV, 58. Original Catalan text: "*Nós, Frederic, per la immensa e divina majestat del sobiran Déu eternal, Emperador de l'Imperi grec* […] *que vós vullau ab molta amor e voluntat anar a servir l'estat imperial*" (Martorell, *Tirant*, 2016, CXV, 248 and CXVI, 251).

46. Muntaner, *Crònica*, 2011, CCII, 335-336 (*Chronicle*, 2000, 406).

We can find a similar —extensive— account in Martorell's novel:

Tirant took his leave of the king and queen, and of Philippe and the infanta. And with all the men on board, they let a favorable wind fill the sails, and they sailed quickly over a calm sea until one morning they found themselves before the city of Constantinople.
When the emperor heard that Tirant had arrived, he was happier than he had ever been, and he said that he felt as if his son had come back to life. As the eleven galleys neared shore, all the cries of happiness made the entire city resound. The emperor went up on a great cenotaph to watch the galleys come in. When Tirant learned where the emperor was, he had two large flags of the King of Sicily brought out, and one of his own. He had three knights come out in armor, each of them with a flag in his hand, and every time they passed in front of the emperor they lowered the flags until they nearly touched the water, while Tirant's touched it each time.
This was a sign of greeting, and because of the emperor's dignity they humbled themselves so lowly before him. When the emperor saw this, which was something that he had never seen before, he was very pleased.
When Tirant was on land he found the Count of Africa waiting for him on shore with many men, and he welcomed him with great honour. They then made their way to the platform where the emperor was. As soon as Tirant saw him he knelt to the ground, along with all his men, and when they reached the middle of the platform they bowed again. When he was six feet away he knelt and tried to kiss his foot, and the worthy lord would not permit it. He kissed his hand, and the emperor kissed him on the mouth.
Tirant pres comiat del Rei, de la Reina, de Felip e de la Infanta. E, recollida tota la gent, donaren les veles al pròsper vent e navegaren ab bon temps e la mar tranquil·le, que un matí se trobaren davant la ciutat de Constantinoble.
Com l'Emperador sabé que Tirant era vengut, en los dies de sa vida no mostrà major alegria e dix que, al parer seu, que son fill era ressuscitat. Les onze galeres vengueren ab tants de sons e d'alegria que tota la ciutat feien ressonar. Lo poble, qui trist estava e adolorit, s'alegrà tot, que els paria que Déu los fos aparegut. L'Emperador se posà en un gran cadafal per mirar les galeres com venien. Com Tirant sabé que l'Emperador estava en aquell lloc, en lo cadafal, féu traure dues banderes grans del rei de Sicília e una de les sues; e féu armar tres cavallers tots en blanc sens que no portaven sobrevestes e cascú tenia una bandera en la mà, e cascuna volta que passaven davant l'Emperador baixaven les banderes fins prop de l'aigua, e la de Tirant la feien tota tocar en l'aigua. Açò era en senyal que el saludaven e per la dignitat que l'Emperador tenia s'humiliava tan baix a ell. L'Emperador, com véu açò, que era cosa nova per a ell, lo que jamés no havia vist, fon molt content d'haver vista tal cerimònia, e molt més de la venguda de Tirant.
Com les galeres hagueren bé voltejat, una amunt, altra avall, vengueren a dar l'escala en terra. E ixqué vestit aquell dia Tirant ab un jaseran de malla e les mànegues de franja d'or, e sobre lo jaseran una jornea feta a la francesa, ab espasa cenyida, e al cap portava un bonet de grana ab un gros fermall guarnit de moltes perles e pedres fines de gran estima. Diafebus ixqué en semblant manera, sinó la jornea que era de setí morat, e Ricard ixqué tan bé abillat com negú de tots los altres, e portava la jornea de domàs blau. Totes aquestes jornees eren brodades d'orfebreria e de perles orientals molt grosses. E tots los altres cavallers e gentilshòmens anaven molt ben abillats.

> Com Tirant fon en terra trobà a la vora de la mar lo comte d'Àfrica qui l'estava esperant ab molta gent, qui el rebé ab molta honor. Partiren d'aquí e feren la via del cadafal on l'Emperador era. Com Tirant lo véu ficà lo genoll en terra, e tots los seus com foren a mig cadafal tornaren a fer altra reverència. Com fos als seus peus, agenollà's e volgué-li besar lo peu, e lo valerós senyor no ho consentí. Besà-li la mà e l'Emperador lo besà en la boca.[47]

The long account of Tirant's arrival in Greece not only shows many chivalric customs and traditions. It is also the demonstration of a better consideration of the imperial court in the fictional Byzantine Empire. For Martorell and the Catalan writers of that century, we are talking about the Greek Empire. But an imagined empire needs an imagined history, and the writer creates it in a dialogue between the emperor and the knight. According to the monarch, Constantine would also have built the city of Constantinople, but this reference is the only coincidence with the historical facts. Frederick, in a novel set around 1450, is stating that the emperor Constantine —who "returned to Greece and became its emperor"— is his grandfather and that he became lord of Greece. Obviously, this kind of statements have no pretension to credibility. Its specific mission is legitimating the actions of the main character in defence of a millenary empire whose roots are in the antique times of the "destruction of Troy"[48].

The romance starts with a Muslim invasion in England and it ends with the total defeat of the Ottomans in front of the Greek-Byzantine Empire. The novel remained 35 years as a manuscript, and it was finally printed in 1490. With the end of the book, it also finished the dream of many Christian Western readers of conquering Constantinople after its fall in the hands of Mehmed II. Regardless, the image of Greece as the centre of the lost Byzantine Empire remained in its written culture. The historical book of Francisco de Moncada was an example of that, but we can see how an "empire of Constantinople" and the use of "Greece" as a royal surname remain in the Spanish chivalric literature. Maybe the most significative case would be the romance *Claribalte* (Valencia, 1519)[49]. Its author, Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo (1478 – 1557), became the first chronicler of the Spanish conquest of America thanks to some books in which he reconstructed the history of the "West Indies" and its human and natural world. But first of publishing these volumes, he wrote the short chivalric romance of Claribalte, an

47. Martorell, *Tirant*, 2016, CXVI, 251-252 (Rudder, *The White Knight*, 1995, IV, 59).

48. Original Catalan quote: Martorell, *Tirant*, 2016, CXXVI, 284. The English translation of the source is in my recent paper: Ortí-Mondéjar, "Greece and the Idea of Empire", 218. More about the ideological forms of *Imperium* in Renaissance that fluctuate between the "legacy of Rome" and the *monarchia universalis*: Anthony Pagden, *Lords of all the World. Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain and France c.1500-c.1800* (New Heaven-New York: Yale University Press, 1995), 11-62.

49. Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, *Claribalte* (Alcalá de Henares: Centro de Estudios Cervantinos, 2001), edited by Alberto del Río Nogueras.

Albanian prince who recovered the throne of Constantinople from the hands of his tyrannic uncle[50].

Let's put our attention around 1500, in the first decades of printing activity in the Iberian world. The Spanish translation of *Tirant* was printed in 1511, but three years before *Amadís de Gaula* was born in the printing houses of Zaragoza (1508)[51]. This book was a Medieval chivalric romance whose manuscript versions have not been preserved. Garci Rodríguez de Montalvo extended the original from three to four parts published in one thick volume, and along the 16th century it was continued by different authors in Spain and other European countries (France, Italy, German Empire). It will become in a genealogical story related in many parts and continuations or sequels[52]. This fictional genealogy is essential for the cultural memory of the Greek identity attributed to the Eastern empire in the Spanish Golden Age of literature. While *Tirant lo Blanc* has been considered by the recent research as a "realistic" novel with solid inspiration from the historical past (for instance, by Martín de Riquer), *Amadís* sets up the style of a fanciful chivalric literature. This second variety filled its plots with a lot of supernatural elements —such as witchcraft, giants o enchanted weapons—, set in an unrealistic geography[53].

Despite that fantasy turn, the Early Modern chivalric romances preserve some remnants from a Byzantine past. Moreover, the Byzantine memory is named as "Greek" or, at least, identified with a fictional empire with its capital city placed in Constantinople. Let's read the third book of *Amadís*. The hero starts his travel "towards Greece [*contra Grecia*]" to obtain the glory after having a son with his beloved princess Oriana. As there was a diabolic monster in the "islands of Romania [*ínsolas de Romanía*]" —under the rule of the "emperor of Constantinople"—, Amadis sailed to the islands and killed the monster. After that, he was received by the emperor and received many honours until his departure to the native lands of his fiancée Oriana. And the court of Constantinople is also considered in the novel as a cultured centre, where "a book owned by the emperor of Constantinople [*un libro que el emperador de Constantinopla tiene*]" has the information necessary for settling some of the problems that Amadis must risk[54].

50. The ideological and political principles of the novel have been analysed in my paper: Andreu Ortí-Mondéjar, "La encrucijada sucesoria de Carlos V desde la literatura. Tiranía, resistencia, sucesión y Cortes en un libro de caballerías", in *Tiempos Modernos* 15 (Issue 50, 2025): 40-63.

51. Juan M. Cacho Blecua, *Amadís: heroísmo mítico cortesano* (Madrid: CUPSA, 1979).

52. Cacho Blecua, *Amadís: heroísmo*, 401-406. See also: José M. Lucía Megías and Emilio J. Sales Dasí, *Libros de caballerías castellanos (siglos XVI-XVII)* (Madrid: Laberinto, 2008).

53. Lucía and Sales, *Libros de caballerías*, 219-240.

54. Anonymous, *Amadís de Gaula* (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 2015), edited by Juan Bautista Avalle-Arce, Book III, Chapters LXX-LXXV, 595-658 for all the Greek episode (quotes in pages 618 and 629).

The Greek-Byzantine footprint[55] remains in the sequels of *Amadís de Gaula*, in which we can find the story of his successors. The bibliographical chronology is difficult to follow, so we will only cite some facts for demonstrating it. The volume compiled by Rodríguez de Montalvo in 1508 contains four books, but we can find at least ten sequels more. The 7th one talks about the grandson of Amadis called *Lisuarte de Grecia* ("Lisuarte of Greece", 1514)[56]. We know that it was extremely popular in the Spain of the 1500's because of its many reprintings in: Seville (1514, 1525, 1548, 1550), Toledo (1534, 1539), Zaragoza (kingdom of Aragon, 1587) and Lisbon (Portugal, 1589)[57]. There were also translations and reprintings in many European languages of this 7th sequel written by Feliciano de Silva (c. 1490 – 1554).

De Silva wrote more sequels of famous books such as *Amadís* and he also placed his literary adventures in Greece, as we can see in the titles and characters of the 9th and 11th sequels: *Amadís de Grecia* ("Amadis of Greece", 1530)[58], to whom he attributed again the title of "emperor of Constantinople"; and Rogel de Grecia ("Roger of Greece", main character in the third part of the book *Florisel de Niquea*, 1535)[59]. However, there were more authors who chose the Balkans to place their chivalric plots. The last example of this genre that we are going to cite, it is *Belianís de Grecia* ("Belianis of Greece", 1547), written by Jerónimo Fernández. The hero Belianis is interesting for our topic because he is a knight who needs to reach glory in the exercise of weapons in order to inherit his father's Greek empire. He must confront even a war as a commander of Greek armies against Persia, episode that reflects the ancient clash between East (in this case, Persia) and West (Greece)[60] that we found in *Tirant lo Blanc* some pages before.

To close this essay, I would like to add an example provided by travel literature. The anonymous book *Viaje de Turquía* ["Travels of Turkey"], supposedly by the Spanish humanist Cristóbal de Villalón, was written around 1557 and it has the rhetorical form of a fictional dialogue[61]. In that dialogue, the character of Pedro de Urdemalas tells the

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55. In fact, these romances have been englobed in a subgenre of chivalric literature called "Greek-Asian romances" by the Spanish critics.

56. Feliciano de Silva, *Lisuarte de Grecia* (Alcalá de Henares: Centro de Estudios Cervantinos, 2002), edited by Emilio J. Sales Dasí.

57. The kingdom of Portugal was added politically to the Spanish Monarchy from 1580 until 1640. Printing information: Pascual de Gayangos, *Libros de caballerías, con un discurso preliminar y un catálogo razonado* (Madrid: Rivadeneyra, 1874), 68.

58. Feliciano de Silva, *Amadís de Grecia* (Alcalá de Henares: Centro de Estudios Cervantinos, 2004), edited by Ana Bueno and Carmen Laspuertas.

59. Feliciano de Silva, *Florisel de Niquea. Parte III* (Alcalá de Henares: Centro de Estudios Cervantinos, 1999), edited by Javier Martín Lalanda.

60. Nevertheless, religion is not the most decisive cause of the cited literary war: Laura Gallego García, *Belianís de Grecia (Tercera y Quarta Parte): Edición y estudio* (Valencia: Universitat de València, 2013), PhD Dissertation, 22-24.

61. Cristóbal de Villalón, *Viaje de Turquía* (Geneva-Barcelona: Ferni, 1973), edited by Federico C. Sainz de Robles. For the Mediterranean scenery of wars between the Spanish and the Ottoman empires: Andrew C. Hess, *The Forgotten Frontier: A History of the Sixteenth-Century Ibero-African Frontier* (Chicago-London: Chicago University Press, 1978).

story of his life and he specially remarks the years when he suffered as a captive in the Ottoman Empire. At the end of the book, we can find an abridged description of Constantinople[62]. A hundred years after the Ottoman conquest, the voice of Villalón-Urdemalas recognizes clearly the Greek people under the Islamic government. The traveller distinguishes them from other communities ("there are a lot of Greeks and Armenians [*Griegos y armenos hay muchos*]")[63] and he even remembers some Greek words to identify products and customs that are different from the Spanish —and Ottoman— ones.

Conclusion

All in all, the cultural memory of the Byzantine empire is becoming vaguer in the Spanish Golden Age, but the Greek people are still alive in its literature. And that is not a question concerning to stylistic details. The identity of the Greeks contributes to change through literature the role that each political system is playing. On the one hand, the Crown of Aragon had fought against both Ottoman and Byzantine troops in the early 14th century, so it could be considered as a glorious episode in their chronicles (Muntaner) and an example for the Iberian writers in crisis periods (Moncada). But romances like *Tirant* show that religious rivalry against Muslim powers was stronger enough to articulate a new Greek identity in the Catalan literary masterpiece founded in a supposed common (Latin) Christendom. Some decades before, on the other hand, Spanish chivalric romances translated into fiction the principle of defending the Catholic faith in the Mediterranean by placing there the fight against the religious otherness. Between those two Manichaean worlds, the Greek identity became a soft literary presence that symbolised the political expectation of triumph in that crusade.

In Catalan (and Spanish) literature of the 14th to 17th centuries, the Byzantine Empire was referred to as the "Greek Empire". This statement spreads out the period — and also the language of the books— asked to me by Dr. Gregory Papanikos. If we want to be precise, the expression "Greek Empire" is only mentioned this way in *Tirant lo Blanc*. However, it is a story that inspired Miguel de Cervantes in his immortal classic *Don Quijote* (1605-1615) and that has been considered as a "realistic" and "total novel" by contemporaneous writers (such as the Peruvian Mario Vargas Llosa, Nobel Prize in Literature 2010)[64] and critics. So, its impact allows us to remark the importance of the fictional world evoked by Joanot Martorell. And we can find other footprints of the Byzantine Empire in the Spanish chivalric romances —and their sequels— along the 16th century.

Moreover, the compared analysis of the fictional literature with administrative documents and other literary genres, such as chronicles and historical or travel books,

62. Villalón, *Viaje de Turquía*, 297-313. See also: Bunes Ibarra, "La conquista turca de Bizancio".

63. Villalón, *Viaje de Turquía*, 298.

64. Mario Vargas Llosa, *Carta de batalla por* Tirant lo Blanch (Madrid: Debolsillo, 2015).

gives us the possibility of recognizing a complex Greek identity from an Iberian point of view. The Greeks are a cultural community that fill with their identity the political system of the Byzantine Empire in the Late Middle Ages. Catalan writers have this perception in their chronicles (Muntaner) after the military adventure of the Catalan Company. Some decades later, the Spanish men of letters in the Renaissance reproduce these historical facts connecting them with the Spanish monarchy of the Habsburgs. Finally, the novelists will use this Greek cultural tradition associated to Byzantium to create political structures that make sense in the imagined worlds of their chivalric romances.

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A Villa and a Hiding Underground Compound from the Late Second Temple Period in the Judean Lowlands

*By Daniel Varga**

Horvat Duwayma (Arabic:Khirbet ed-Duwayma) is situated on a slope near a hilltop (elevation 390 m above sea level) in the southern Judean Shephelah, approximately 7 km southeast of Tel Lachish and adjacent to the modern settlement of Amatziya. The hilltop rises about 60 m above a nearby tributary of Nahal Lachish. Excavations were conducted at the site in 2010–2011 and again in 2014 in preparation for the establishment of a new settlement for evacuees from Gush Katif. These excavations revealed remains dating from the Early Bronze Age through the Late Ottoman and British Mandate periods. Remains of a villa dating to the Early Roman period were discovered on the hilltop. The villa included bathing facilities, a pool, domestic spaces, and a mikveh (ritual bath). A cistern approximately fifty meters in length was found beneath the villa, within which several openings led to a concealment complex. The presence of a large structure combined with an underground concealment complex is a known phenomenon, identified at several sites from this period in the Judean Shephelah. The discovery of this estate villa and its associated concealment system expands our understanding of the upper class in Idumea between the two revolts, and sheds light on the preparations made prior to the Second Revolt, as well as its characteristics and regional distribution.

Introduction

Between 2010 and 2014, three seasons of salvage excavations were conducted north of Moshav Amatzia (Fig. 1), prior to the construction of the settlement of Karmei Katif. The settlement was established on the ruins of the Late Ottoman village al-Dawayima. It lies on a gently sloping limestone hill in the southern Judean Shephelah, on the southern bank of Nahal Lachish, at the boundary of the Negev loess plains, approximately 7 km southeast of Tel Lachish. The hilltop (390 m above sea level) rises about 60 m above the channel of Nahal Lachish.

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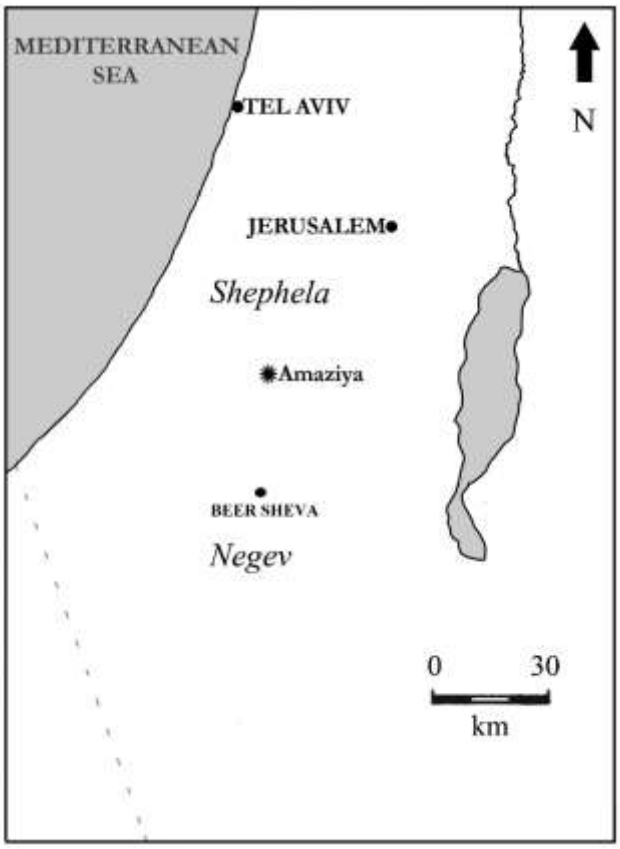
Figure 1. Location Map



During the 19th century and the early 20th century CE, various travelers visited the site and described the village of al-Dawayima and the ancient remains found there. The first survey was conducted in the 1830s by Edward Robinson and Eli Smith, who provided only a brief description of the village, noted that it lay along the road from Beit Guvrin to Be'er Sheva, and mentioned a sheikh's tomb located on the western part of the hill (Robinson and Smith, 1867).

In 1863, Victor Guérin visited the site (Guérin, 1868) and recorded that the village had 900 inhabitants. He observed that the houses were constructed from very coarse stones, incorporating dressed stones that likely originated from earlier structures. Guérin also documented a columbarium cave on the northwestern slope of the settlement.

Toward the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, Claude Conder and Horatio Kitchener (Conder and Kitchener, 1883), followed by Félix Abel (Abel, 1938), visited the site. They described the settlement and its surroundings in general terms but did not address the ancient remains.

In the 1980s, Yehuda Dagan conducted a survey at the site (Dagan, 2007), identifying pottery dating from the Chalcolithic period through Iron Age II and up to the Ottoman period. In 2006–2007, Emil Alajem carried out a development survey in the area (Alajem and Gendler, 2012), during which he identified a columbarium, an

olive press, dwelling caves, remains of both ancient and modern structures, and water cisterns, as well as pottery and flint assemblages dating to the Early Bronze Age.

The salvage excavations conducted in 2010–2011 covered an area of approximately 4 dunams, while those conducted in 2014 covered about 1.2 dunams. Six excavation areas (A–F) were opened, mainly across the hilltop and its slopes, revealing remains from the Early Bronze Age, Iron Age II, Persian, Late Hellenistic, Early Roman, Byzantine, Late Ottoman, and British Mandate periods. The present discussion focuses on the results of the excavation of a villa from the Second Temple period uncovered in Area D.

The aim of this article, in addition to presenting the results of the excavation at the site, is to portray the lives of the Jewish population in a rural area under Roman rule. It examines daily life under Roman occupation, alongside preparations for a possible revolt, and finally the consequences of that revolt, which ultimately led to the destruction of the villa.

The Excavations

In Area D, located on the hilltop, a villa measuring 35 × 43 m was uncovered and dated to the late Second Temple period (late 1st century BCE to early 2nd century CE: Figure 2). The villa's location provided extensive views over the surrounding region and control over the roads leading to the hill from the directions of Beit Guvrin and Jerusalem.

The villa consisted of four wings:

a **central wing**, containing a rectangular courtyard with a pool at its center;
a **western wing**, used for residential purposes;
an **eastern wing**, containing a bathhouse;
a **northern wing**, poorly preserved, which likely served as the entrance to the structure.

Figure 2. The Villa, Plan

It is estimated that all surviving parts of the villa were excavated—approximately three-quarters of its original extent. The villa's original size was probably around 1,400 square meters. However, large portions of the structure were almost entirely destroyed during the construction of the late Ottoman village of al-Dawayima. As a result, preservation is poor, and most of the exposed walls survived to a height of only one or two courses. In some cases, later cisterns were cut into the villa's walls, while in others, Ottoman-period inhabitants reused the Roman-period floors.

The villa was bounded by thick walls on the south, west, and east. These walls were only partially preserved, with the western wall (W50203) showing the best preservation. Walls W50200 and W50203 were partly hewn into bedrock and partly constructed from chalk stones and large flint stones; their inner faces were coated with light gray plaster. Wall W50247, an eastern continuation of W50200, was a double-faced wall built of chalk stones with a core of small stones; its outer face was plastered and decorated with a herringbone (fishbone) pattern, and reinforced with an additional layer of small stones and soil.

Wall W50501, built directly on bedrock, was also a double-faced wall constructed partly of fieldstones and partly of roughly dressed chalk stones. Its inner face was coated with three layers of plaster, the outermost decorated with a herringbone pattern. In some sections, natural depressions in the bedrock served as foundation trenches for this wall. It likely originally formed a corner with the now-lost northern wall of the villa.

To the north of the villa, along the presumed line of the missing northern wall, a drainage channel (L1308) was uncovered (18 m long, about 0.3 m wide

and 0.3–0.4 m deep), sloping from west to east. The channel was cut into bedrock, lined with rectangular stone slabs, and covered with chalk stones whose undersides were smoothed by chiseling. The stones were bonded with grayish plaster and coated with gray plaster. The channel likely continued along the northern wall and thus marks its original course. It probably drained into a cistern east of the excavation area and into another cistern (L1323) whose opening was found north of the pool in the central courtyard. This latter cistern was part of a hiding complex discovered north of the villa (Area C; not yet published).

The Central Wing

The central wing formed the architectural and functional core of the villa and was dominated by a carefully planned rectangular courtyard measuring 6.2 × 8.6 m, aligned along a north–south axis (Figure 3). This orientation, typical of well-designed Roman-period residences, may have been intended to optimize light, airflow, and spatial organization. The courtyard was enclosed on all four sides by walls (W50200, W50202, W50217, W50219), constructed of medium-sized, well-dressed chalk stones. These stones were carefully arranged and finished, reflecting a relatively high standard of construction. The inner faces of the walls were coated with light gray plaster, likely both for aesthetic purposes and to protect the masonry. Despite later disturbances, the walls survived to a maximum height of two courses, allowing a partial reconstruction of the original layout.

Figure 3. The Villa, Aerial Photo

At the heart of the courtyard lay a rectangular pool (L1157; 2.0 × 3.9 m; approximately 1.5 m deep; Fig. 4), which served as both a functional and

decorative element. The pool was enclosed by four solid walls, each approximately 0.5 m thick, which were fully preserved and coated with high-quality white plaster to ensure water retention and a clean appearance. The pool's design reflects a combination of utility and display, characteristic of elite rural residences.

Figure 4. The Pool at the Central Courtyard

Evidence for the architectural embellishment of the pool comes from imprints preserved at the tops of the surrounding walls, indicating the former presence of six column bases (each about 0.45 m in diameter). These columns likely supported a light superstructure, perhaps a pergola or partial roof—and were arranged symmetrically: four at the corners of the pool and two centered along its longer sides. This arrangement would have created a visually striking focal point within the courtyard, possibly providing shade and enhancing the aesthetic quality of the space.

Access to the pool was provided by four semicircular steps set into its northeastern corner, descending to the plastered floor. The curved design of the steps suggests careful planning and attention to comfort and visual harmony. Near the southern wall of the pool, a repair (L1196) was identified in the floor, indicating maintenance activity during the period of use. Beneath this repair, the opening of an earlier installation—a cistern measuring 1.9 × 3.8 m—was revealed. This earlier cistern had been intentionally decommissioned and incorporated into the later construction of the pool, illustrating a sequence of architectural modifications.

The cistern itself was partially plastered and covered by a vaulted ceiling, demonstrating a sophisticated approach to water storage. Five evenly spaced steps descended from south to north into the cistern, leading to a rock-cut basin resembling a

small bathtub. This feature may have been used for drawing water or possibly for specific domestic or ritual purposes, although its exact function remains uncertain.

Encircling the pool within the courtyard was a mosaic frame (L1148; approximately 30 sq m;), which added a decorative and prestigious element to the space. The mosaic featured a meander (Greek key) pattern rendered in black and red tesserae set against a white background. This geometric motif was widely used during the Herodian period and reflects broader artistic trends in the Roman world. Comparable examples are known from sites such as Caesarea Maritima, the western palace at Masada, and villas in the region of Corinth, suggesting cultural and aesthetic connections across the eastern Mediterranean (Turnheim and Asher Ovadiah, 1999).

Along the edges of walls W50200 and W50217, areas of plaster repair were observed surrounding the mosaic, indicating phases of maintenance or renovation. Beneath these repairs, a poorly preserved clay pipe was uncovered, likely part of a water management system associated with the courtyard or pool.

The Western Wing

The western wing appears to have served primarily residential and representational functions and consisted of five rooms (2–6), arranged in a coherent internal layout. The northwestern room (Room 2) was only partially preserved: its walls had not survived, and only segments of its light gray plaster floor (L1112) remained. The presence of a pier reused in secondary context at the southern end of the room suggests the former position of the missing southern wall (W50006), allowing a partial reconstruction of the room's original boundaries.

A doorway in this reconstructed wall led southward into the main hall (Room 3), a substantial space measuring approximately 8 × 10 m. This room likely functioned as a reception hall (*triclinium*), where guests would have been entertained and meals served in a formal setting. The walls of the hall (W50006, W50203, W50206, W50227) were preserved to a height of one course and were plastered on both sides, indicating their importance within the structure. The western wall, in particular, shows evidence of reuse during the Ottoman period, reflecting the long history of occupation at the site.

Although the hall suffered significant damage, likely due to later construction activities—traces of its original decoration survive. The floor itself was not preserved, but the discovery of black-and-white tesserae in its eastern part suggests that it was originally paved with a mosaic, reinforcing its role as a prestigious space within the villa.

South of the main hall lay a passage-like room (Room 4; 2.5 × 5.0 m), whose walls and floor were coated with light gray plaster. This room likely functioned as a transitional space, facilitating movement between different parts of the wing. An opening in its western wall led to another enclosed room (Room 5; 4.0 × 4.5 m), which may have served as a private chamber or auxiliary space.

From the northeastern corner of Room 4 extended a rectangular corridor (Room 6; 2 × 6 m), bounded by walls to the east and west. This corridor connected the western wing directly to the central courtyard, illustrating the integration of private and semi-public spaces within the villa's design.

The Eastern Wing

The eastern wing housed a bathhouse complex, incorporating all the essential elements of a Roman bathing facility and reflecting a high level of technological sophistication. The presence of such a bathhouse is a strong indicator of the villa's elite status and the adoption of Roman cultural practices (Figure 5).

Figure 5. The bathhouse after restauration works

Talmudeanarchaeology.com

Access to the bathhouse was provided from the central courtyard through a doorway leading into an antechamber (Room 7; 2.0 × 2.5 m). This space likely

served as a transitional area where bathers prepared before entering the heated rooms. It may originally have been paved with a fine mosaic floor, although no clear remains of such decoration were preserved.

To the north of the antechamber was a small, plastered pool (Room 8; 1.8 × 2.5 m), accessed by four steps descending into it. This pool may have functioned as a cold bath (*frigidarium*) or as part of the bathing sequence.

South of the antechamber lay the hot room (*caldarium*; Room 9; 2.5 × 3.2 m), which is among the best-preserved elements of the villa. Its floor consisted of square ceramic tiles supported by a hypocaust system—an underfloor heating installation typical of Roman baths. The hypocaust space contained numerous fragments of fired bricks and ceramic pipes, as well as some bricks preserved in their original positions, providing valuable evidence for the construction and operation of the heating system.

The hypocaust was heated by a furnace (Room 10; 1.2 × 2.0 m), located immediately south of the hot room. Built of fired bricks and preserved to a height of three to four courses, the furnace would have generated hot air that circulated beneath the floor and within the walls, heating the room above.

The eastern wall of the caldarium was partly hewn into the natural bedrock and partly constructed of chalk stones, reflecting a practical adaptation to the terrain. A doorway in this wall led into another room (Room 11; 4.0 × 4.5 m), which also contained a hypocaust system. The passage connecting the two rooms was lined with fired bricks, indicating exposure to high temperatures.

Although the furnace associated with this second hypocaust did not survive, a feeding channel (L1245) was uncovered to the east of Room 11. This channel, constructed of fired bricks and preserved to a height of approximately nine courses, likely connected the furnace to the hypocaust system. Its construction in several phases suggests ongoing modifications or repairs during the period of use.

During the Ottoman period, this channel was blocked by a later wall (W50237), which also caused significant damage to a small adjacent bathtub (L1265; 0.5 × 0.6 m) located to the north. Due to its fragmentary preservation, the precise function and relationship of this bathtub to the bathhouse complex remain uncertain.

The Northern Wing

The northern wing is the least well-preserved part of the villa. It was almost entirely destroyed during the construction of Ottoman-period buildings belonging to the village of al-Dawayima. The basements and foundations of these later structures penetrated deeply into the earlier remains, in some cases reaching down to the bedrock and obliterating the original architecture.

Despite this extensive destruction, it is likely that the northern wing originally contained the main entrance to the villa, oriented toward the north. This entrance would have provided access from the surrounding landscape and roads into the

central courtyard and the rest of the complex. However, no architectural remains of this entrance have survived, and its reconstruction is based solely on the overall layout of the villa and comparative examples.

The Finds

Pottery vessels, metal objects, and glass items dating to the Late Ottoman period and the British Mandate period were discovered on the floors of the villa and in accumulations above them (not illustrated). These finds originated from the houses of the Arab village of al-Dawayima.

From the Roman period—the period to which the villa itself is dated—only a small quantity of pottery was recovered. All of these finds were collected from above the villa's floors, and since the floors were not removed during the excavation, no pottery originating from sealed loci was found.

The Roman-period pottery discovered in the villa dates from the early 1st century CE until the time of the Bar Kokhba Revolt (132–135 CE), and it establishes this time range as the period during which the structure was in use. However, since the pottery was collected from above the floors, it represents only the final phase of occupation of the villa and does not provide evidence for the date of its construction.

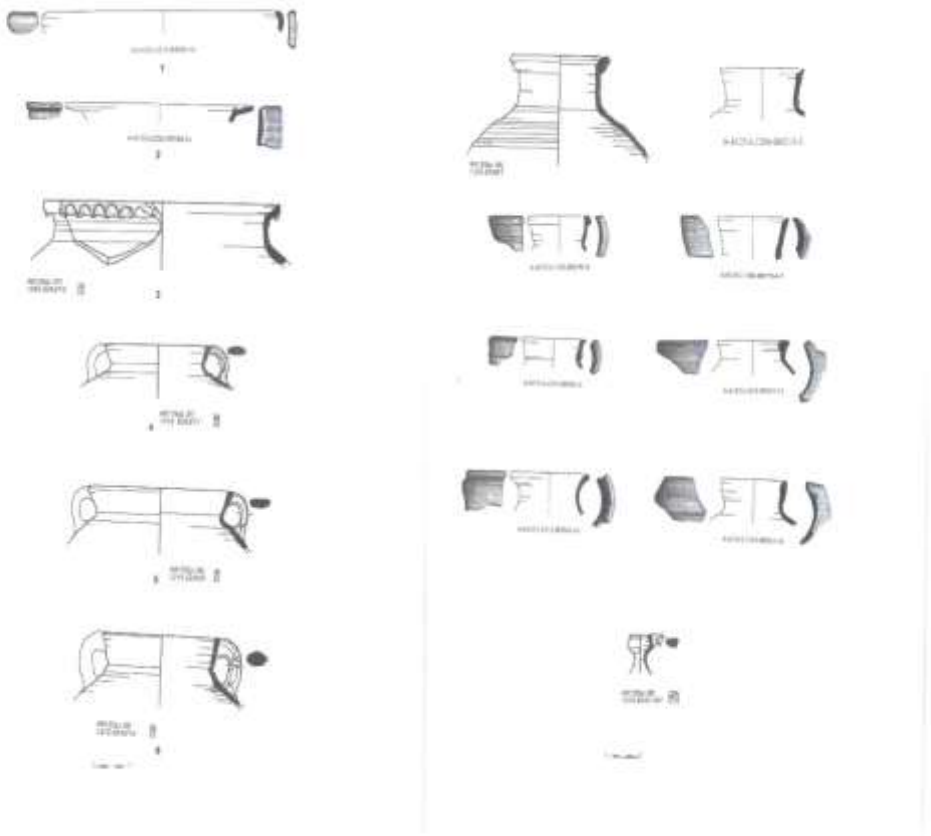
The villa's walls and floors were also disturbed during the Ottoman period, when foundations for new buildings were dug and water cisterns were hewn into the earlier structure. Some of the villa's floors were even reused during this later period, and the layers above them were cleared of earlier finds. As a result, the dating of the villa is not certain and relies primarily on architectural and stylistic considerations. The limited finds from the Second Temple period that remained *in situ* were discovered only on floors that had not been disturbed during the Ottoman period.

The assemblage of Roman-period pottery from the villa includes:

Shallow bowls and deep bowls; kraters, juglets and numerous cooking pots of three different types (Figures. 6-7)

Storage jars form the main component of the assemblage, with eight types or subtypes identified (Figure 7).

Figures 6-7. Pottery Plates



The pottery vessels are all of local production, similar to assemblages found in the Jerusalem region and the Judean Desert (De Vincenz, 2007; Magness, 2009; Tchekhanovets, 2013), as well as at Masada and Ein Gedi. It is reasonable to assume that the owners of this impressive villa also possessed imported vessels, but none were found during the excavation. These may have been removed from the structure by its inhabitants or possibly taken by the Roman army during the suppression of the Bar Kokhba Revolt.

A workshop and service area (Area C), ca. 300 sq. m. in size, was uncovered a few meters north of the villa and it may have operated as part of the villa complex. Area C was only partially excavated, and it was found to contain pits, storage silos and several rock-carved installations of different types. The ceramic, stone and numismatic assemblage from this area dates from the early first century AD to the Bar Kochba rebellion against the Romans (132-135 AD). The personnel working in Area C may have very well been the same workers who hewed the concealed rooms and escape tunnels in Area A in preparation for the revolt against the Romans (Figures 8 -9). A hoard of seventy-seven silver drachmae and tetradrachmae was discovered hidden inside a cooking pot in Cave 69 in Area A (Figure10). The coins in the hoard date from the reign of Nero (54-68 AD) to reign of Hadrian (117-138 AD).

The date of the hoard is consistent with that of the mosaic floor and the Early Roman pottery assemblage uncovered in the villa. The presence of several limestone vessels and coins of the Bar Kochba Revolt (133-134 AD), together with the presence of a ritual bath inside the villa, strongly suggest that the inhabitants of the site were of Jewish origin. A similar villa, or palace as it is called by its excavator, was revealed some five km. to the northeast of Amatzia (Damati, 1983). That building is similarly dated from the first century AD to the reign of Hadrian (117-138 AD). Both buildings provide a glimpse of the rural life of wealthy families in the region in that period, a lifestyle which enabled them to manage estates with large numbers of servants and workmen. This came to an end with the outbreak of hostilities during the Bar Kochba Revolt and it's suppression by the Romans.

Figure 8. Escape Tunnel,
Photo

Figure 9. Section of a Escape Tunnel

Figure 10. The Hoard of Silver Coins

Discussion and Conclusion

The villa uncovered at Karmei Katif occupies a location of clear strategic and economic significance. It was constructed at a junction of routes that traversed the Judean Shephelah from as early as the mid–4th millennium BCE through to the mid–20th century CE. This continuity highlights the long-term importance of the region as a corridor connecting the coastal plain, the Judean highlands, and the Negev. The villa's elevated position on a hilltop afforded it commanding views over the surrounding landscape, particularly the network of roads running through the valley below. Such a vantage point would have enabled both supervision of movement and control over agricultural lands and communication routes, suggesting that the choice of location was deliberate and carefully considered.

The broader region gained particular historical importance during the Bar Kokhba Revolt. Archaeological evidence from the site strongly reflects this context. The extensive systems of underground hiding complexes uncovered in Areas A and D indicate organized preparation for conflict or refuge, a phenomenon widely documented in Judea during this revolt. These complexes are also mentioned in historical sources such as the account of Cassius Dio (*Roman History* LXIX:12.3), which describes the use of subterranean networks by the rebels.

Additional finds reinforce the interpretation of the site's population during this period. Chalkstone vessels—commonly associated with Jewish purity practices—alongside coins dated to 133–134 CE found in Area C north of the villa, and a ritual bath (*miqveh*) discovered in Area F adjacent to the villa, all point to a population of Jewish origin. Together, these elements situate the villa within the socio-cultural and historical framework of Jewish rural life in Judea during the late Second Temple period and its aftermath.

The structure excavated in Area D has been identified as a **rural villa (*villa rustica*)**, a type of estate complex well known throughout the Roman world. Such villas typically consisted of a residential core—often large, architecturally sophisticated, and richly appointed—designed to reflect the wealth, status, and cultural aspirations of its owners (Marzano, 2004). The presence of features such as a central courtyard with a decorative pool, mosaic pavements, a bathhouse equipped with a hypocaust system, reception halls, and multiple residential rooms indicates that this villa belonged to a prosperous household that adopted elements of Roman architectural and cultural traditions.

At the same time, the villa was not merely a residence but the center of an agricultural estate (*fundus*), surrounded by cultivated lands (*ager*). Its location suggests integration into a productive rural landscape, where agricultural output would have formed the economic basis of the estate (Applebaum, 1989; Percival, 1988). Villas of this kind typically functioned as administrative and residential hubs overseeing farming activities carried out by a labor force that may have included both slaves and hired workers.

In the broader context of the Roman Empire, rural villas were commonly situated in proximity to urban centers, maintaining economic and social ties with nearby towns. In this case, the Karmei Katif villa may have been linked to Eleutheropolis (modern Beit Guvrin), a significant urban center in the region. Such a relationship would have facilitated the exchange of goods, services, and cultural influences, embedding the villa within regional economic networks.

It is noteworthy that in the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire—and particularly in the Land of Israel—relatively few rural villas from the Early Roman period have been identified, in contrast to the hundreds documented in the western provinces. This discrepancy has long been recognized in scholarship and may reflect differences in settlement patterns, land ownership structures, or levels of Romanization. The Karmei Katif villa thus constitutes an important addition to the limited corpus of such sites in the region.

Comparative material further illuminates the significance of this villa. A similar structure, known as "Hilkiah's Palace," was excavated approximately 5 km northeast of Karmei Katif. Although somewhat smaller (30 × 37 m), it shares key architectural features, including a rectangular layout ם a peristyle courtyard, and is likewise dated to the 1st century CE. Despite the presence of coins from the reign of Emperor Hadrian, the excavator attributed its destruction to Roman military activity under Vespasian in 68 CE, illustrating the vulnerability of such estates during periods of conflict.

Another comparable site at Arkan el-Khala, located about 1 km northeast of Beit Guvrin, presents a more modest example of a rural villa. Measuring 20 × 30 m, it underwent two phases of construction (Hirschfeld and Birger-Calderon, 1991). The earlier phase (1st–early 2nd century CE), contemporary with the Karmei Katif villa, consisted of a relatively simple arrangement of rooms סביב a courtyard. In a later phase (2nd–early 3rd century CE), the complex was expanded to include service installations such as a paved kitchen and plastered pools, possibly forming part of a bathhouse. This evolution reflects changing needs and perhaps increasing prosperity or adaptation over time.

Taken together, these three sites—Karmei Katif, "Hilkiah's Palace," and Arkan el-Khala—provide valuable insight into the rural lifestyle of affluent families in the Judean Shephelah during the Early Roman period. They illustrate a mode of life characterized by the management of agricultural estates, the use of substantial architectural investment to express status, and the integration of Roman cultural elements into local contexts.

Additional parallels can be drawn from other regions. A villa discovered at Ramat Hanadiv, which included a *miqveh* and was identified as belonging to a Jewish owner, was destroyed during the First Jewish–Roman War and subsequently abandoned for several centuries until the Byzantine period. This pattern of destruction and abandonment echoes the historical disruptions experienced across Judea.

Similarly, excavations at Phasaelis in the Jordan Valley revealed a wealthy residence from the Second Temple period that included a bathhouse and a large pool. The design of the pool—featuring plastered walls, semicircular steps, and surrounding

columns—closely parallels the pool uncovered at Karmei Katif, suggesting shared architectural traditions and possibly common cultural influences.

Another comparable example comes from Tel Goded, where excavations revealed structures that may represent parts of a Roman villa complex. One building contained a central courtyard with a rectangular plastered pool, complete with semicircular steps and column bases arranged in a pattern similar to that observed at Karmei Katif. These parallels strengthen the identification of the Karmei Katif structure as part of a broader architectural and cultural phenomenon.

Ultimately, the villa uncovered in the present excavation appears to have gone out of use during the upheavals associated with the Bar Kokhba Revolt and its suppression by Roman forces. The most compelling evidence for this conclusion is the complete absence of finds dating later than the mid–2nd century CE. No material remains from subsequent Roman or Byzantine occupation phases were identified within the villa itself, suggesting a relatively abrupt abandonment. Later activity at the site is represented only by remains from the Late Ottoman period and the British Mandate, which overlaid and, in many cases, damaged the earlier structure.

In sum, the Karmei Katif villa offers a rare and valuable glimpse into rural elite life in the Judean Shephelah during the late Second Temple and Early Roman periods. It reflects the intersection of local traditions and Roman influence, the economic foundations of agricultural estates, and the profound impact of historical events—particularly the Bar Kokhba Revolt—on settlement continuity in the region.

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