

Historic Cities in the Age of Globalisation

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1. Thank you for this very kind introduction. Let me first of all express my appreciation to the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design for this invitation and to all of you for being here today. The theme I will address in my presentation, “Historic Cities in the Age of Globalisation”, is quite vast and it could result in a series of very general and inconclusive statements. In the end, to avoid this risk, I decided it was important to try and convey as best I can three very simple messages:
 - **1.1** the first is that our urban heritage is shrinking dramatically; and that there is enough evidence to state that our great grand children may not see much of it left;
 - the second is that, in order to really understand why it is shrinking, we need to examine and face what has gone wrong in our planning practices;
 - and the third message is that we urgently need a change of course in the way of developing and managing cities if our urban

heritage is to survive. This change must start with our historic areas, as they are at the very centre of what is today a global storm.

I hope you will excuse me if I follow my script closely, as the issues at hand are many, and I am going to pack a lot into the next 45 minutes.

Expanding Cities

2. Let me say first that cities are going strong. In fact, they have never 'gone so strong' in human history and never set so many Guinness records as today. It is not by chance that the 21st century is being called the "Urban Century".

In 2007, for the first time in history, half of the world's population of 6.8 billion lives in cities. This trend will continue. By 2030, urban dwellers will increase by another two billion, so that people living in cities will be 63 percent of the world's population.

3. This urban phenomenon encompasses all regions of the world, from rich Western countries to the poorer parts of Africa, Asia and Latin America. Four of the twenty greatest world metropolises are located in the more developed countries. The other sixteen are in the developing world, with an average of 12 to 13 million inhabitants and a surface area of 100,000 hectares.

4. The great cities of the ancient world pale in comparison to these numbers. Imperial Rome, at its peak, had only one million inhabitants

and a surface area of 1,400 hectares, almost 80 times smaller than any of today metropolises.

A Shrinking Urban Heritage

5. As cities expand to ever-more staggering dimensions, historic city centers continue to shrink in both relative and absolute terms. But, in spite of the many books and international symposia on historic cities, we cannot really quantify the global dimensions of this worrisome trend. And yet, I firmly believe that some general answer, however tentative, must be provided.

6. We began to care about the disappearing tropical forests and coral reefs only when the rate of their disappearance could be quantified and monitored. Similarly, some international indicator of loss for our urban historic heritage must be defined if we want to really understand the phenomenon and begin to counteract it.

7. In the meantime, we can only offer partial and incomplete answers. Today, I hope to briefly demonstrate, through a number of examples, that our collective urban heritage is indeed shrinking, and at a rate which, in relative terms, is as staggering as the exponential growth of our metropolises.

8. I also hope to be able to show that the shrinking of our historic urban heritage is a global phenomenon, which affects all parts of the world and which so far has proved unstoppable. Its causes can be addressed only

through a profound re-evaluation of the way in which we plan and develop historic cities. It is a matter of great urgency, and it calls for immediate action on the part of all who have direct and indirect responsibility.

9. We were all rightly shocked by the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas in Afghanistan a few years ago and condemned it as an act of unspeakable barbarism. But we must not overlook our own faults closer to home. What we seldom recognize is that countless historic cities everywhere are losing hectares and hectares of irreplaceable fabric every year, due to haphazard and unscrupulous development, carried out with the support of city authorities, administrators, architects and planners.

A Partial Inventory of Destruction

10. Let us start by reviewing, however incompletely, the extent of destruction of the world's urban heritage. The beginning of World War II seems a reasonable starting date.

11. Up to this time, now more than 70 years ago, cities had been relatively stable, unaffected by major conflicts or the enormous social and economic transformations of our times. A person born in the nineteenth century could still imagine for his children and grandchildren a uniform life lived "in the same country, in the same city and nearly always in the same house."

12. The novelist Stefan Zweig, quoted in this passage, saw first hand the global destruction of World War II. The bombing and devastation, which ravaged Western European, Russian and Japanese cities with unprecedented brutality, was a first in human history.

13. A few examples will suffice: German cities, whose historical legacy was largely unimpaired at the time, lost an average of 40 to 50 percent of their urban heritage.

14. Especially sad is the case of Dresden. Following two days of bombing in February 1945, 60 percent of the city's historic core was destroyed, some 640 hectares of historic property, more than 7 times the size of the old city of Jerusalem.

15. It was a "deliberate act of cultural desecration" in response to the German bombing of Coventry in England, which had destroyed some 60,000 buildings four years earlier.

These and the other cities listed on the screen were not exceptional or isolated cases, but part of a long list of old European cities that never recovered their lost heritage. The effects of World War II are still with us, and have dramatically shaped the development of our cities ever since.

But the destruction of the urban heritage caused by war is only part of the story. Let us look at a city largely spared by World War II and we will discover something quite surprising:

16. The old city of Rome lost an astonishing 25 percent of its historic street network and buildings, adding up to one hundred hectares, between 1870 and 1970, when further demolitions were banned.

More significant still is the disappearance of Rome's many parks, vineyards and archaeological areas, some one thousand hectares contained within the old Roman city walls.

17. This unique heritage, which included the incomparable Ludovisi Gardens, considered one of the most beautiful in the world, was subdivided and developed into city blocks in less than a generation.

18. Less than a quarter of this urban green heritage remains today, over 750 hectares "gone forever".

19. The case of Rome and its losses brings us to what I call the era of 'pick-axe', whose uncontested hero is Benito Mussolini, the dictator who ruled Italy from 1922 to 1943. He added a new ideological twist, using the city's architectural and archaeological heritage as a stage for political propaganda.

20. Today, there is no trace and no memory of the many buildings and streets, and the life they contained, destroyed by Mussolini. By the time he was through and the Fascist Age over, some of the liveliest areas of historic Rome had been completely erased.

21. In their place, pretentious public buildings and oversized roads still convey a sense of staged emptiness and alienation that 65 years of city life have not been able to fill.

In case you think that Mussolini's brutal demolitions are a thing of the past and that nobody would dare do similar things these days ...

22. ...let me mention Bucharest, the capital of Romania, whose center was razed to the ground by Nicolae Ceausescu and replaced with modernist blocks only twenty-five years ago. Also in this case, the motivation was nationalistic pride and ideological propaganda. Bulldozers flattened within the span of five short years more than 250 hectares of historic property, almost 25 percent of old Bucharest. This must have been one of the "largest peacetime urban destruction (...) in recorded history."

More recent examples of such autocratic urban policies include Samarkand in Uzbekistan and Kashgar in China.

23. In the first case, an entire traditional neighborhood in the Gur-i Emir district, comprising 22 hectares and more than 550 traditional mud brick structures, was demolished in 1997 to isolate the monuments and create these empty and rather sad gardens.

24. In the case of Kashgar, the scale of destruction is even greater. As we speak, more than 51 hectares, equal to 85 percent of the historic

walled city, have been demolished, ostensibly to prevent the consequences of future earthquakes.

Such policies highlight a second aspect of the demolition doctrine, whereby the destruction of historic fabric can be justified on the grounds of safety, hygiene, facilitation of traffic, and social and economic progress.

25. We can begin our round-up of destruction in the name of progress by looking at Istanbul, Rome's eastern successor in the ancient world, and the much-admired capital of the Ottoman Empire. Fire safety was the reason for obliterating much of the densely built up historic Golden Horn, an area of one thousand five hundred hectares.

26. Historic photos and city plans from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries provide a glimpse of Istanbul's former beauty. A city that, with the exception of its major monuments and covered bazaars, has largely vanished today.

27. Its destruction began in the 1950s, spurred by massive rural immigration and facilitated by the total surrender of public development controls to private initiative. Then as now, fire prevention and other potential disasters were used in good and in bad faith to demolish entire neighborhoods.

28. The result of these policies is that, of the over 150,000 timber houses standing in Istanbul in the 1950s, hardly one percent survives today.

29. Historic Istanbul's wholesale destruction can only be compared to the massive demolitions promoted by the social and transportation engineers of twentieth century North America. In particular, the redevelopment of large sections of New York City by the legendary Highway and Parks Commissioner Robert Moses.

30. The planning methods applied by Moses, meant to cut through the center of lower Manhattan like a 'meat axe', are largely discredited today. However, the scars these practices left on older North American cities remain.

31. An instructive example of the negative impact of these urban renewal policies is Boston. In 1958 the newly established Boston Redevelopment Authority decided to demolish the city's historic West End, which was, they said, "shabby and tumble-down".

32. Almost 23 hectares of historic fabric were condemned. As a result, between 1958 and 1960, 3,000 housing units were demolished and 20,000 residents displaced, in spite of strong resistance and widespread protest.

33. Boston became a symbol of all that was wrong with urban renewal. The result is universally considered an urban flop, and exemplifies one

of the major blunders by city planners and administrators, repeated constantly, and this in spite of the abysmal results obtained.

It is the belief that the existing city fabric--which is the result of a long, and complex historic process—can be erased and replaced in a single stroke with “distinguished architecture and imaginative design.” As we shall see later, the sum of grand new buildings does not make a city. Even the man in charge of the Boston operation at the time thought people might wonder whether “the new is in fact better than the old.”

And this is not just a matter of aesthetics. The new developments were largely beyond the means of the former residents, who had to pack and go. This aspect was harshly criticized, and eventually it weakened the credibility of the urban renewal programs in the United States and in Europe.

34. Not so in other parts of the world, where the so-called ‘slums’ often coincide with the historic parts of cities, with names that still resonate, such as Mumbai, Lahore, Cairo, Lhasa, and Zanzibar, to mention just a few. Over the past 50 years, many of these historic areas have gone through a highly destructive process of deterioration, triggered by exploding demographics and failing infrastructure.

35. In the case of Zanzibar, for example, approximately 85 percent of the buildings in the historic area were in deteriorating or poor condition when we carried out a survey in 1992. In addition, we ascertained that,

between 1982 and 1992, almost half of the 1,450 historic structures were lost or had been substantially altered.

36. In the case of Cairo, a detailed study carried out in 1998 in one of its historic districts, showed that 64 percent of the buildings were in poor or deteriorating conditions, and an additional 16 percent in ruins or abandoned. Overall, more than half of the registered buildings in Islamic Cairo were lost during the second half of the twentieth century.

37. In the case of Lahore, less than half of the 1,400 registered buildings recorded within the walled city in 1987 survive today. The decline in population in Lahore's historic area is also staggering. A drop of 60 percent has taken place since 1947 as a result of unregulated commercial development.

38. If we look at Europe's historic cities during the same post-war years, we can observe a new wave of transformations resulting from commercial development and tourism. Looking at tourism, a good case in point is Venice. It exemplifies the risk many historic cities face today. That of becoming a museum and a theme park, deserted by its residents and besieged by hordes of visitors.

39. If we look at commercial development, we can mention the case of the Marais area in Paris. Here a combination of building substitutions and selective demolitions, forced a process of commercial and social transformation that became one of the best known examples of

gentrification. After the so-called *mise en valeur* of the Marais, 25 percent of the residents, some 20,000 people, were displaced.

40. The practice of façade-ism is often associated with these developments, particularly in northern Europe. It consists of “changing interiors and keeping the exteriors almost unchanged” in order to increase the value of properties and maximize flexibility in commercial use. It can be considered a form of demolition in disguise.

The changes induced by façade-ism are more difficult to quantify because they are less immediately apparent. In 1979, while a student in Bruges, I watched entire blocks gutted and rebuilt behind skin-deep historic facades. I measured the surface of what seemed the largest development:

41. It was huge: 45,000 square meters, the size of nine American football fields strung together. I have wondered ever since: how many football fields if we add up all the voids carved out of our cities’ historic fabric and hidden behind these fragile stage-set facades?

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There is however no need to wonder about the next and last case of our enquiry. Here quantitative information can be found quite readily. What I refer to is an explosive combination of tourism, commercial development, gentrification, staged happening, universal fair and international celebration, also known as:

42. the Mega-Event. Mega-events share several important characteristics: a high international profile, and a fixed deadline and duration. Further, they generate enormous economic returns, involve governments in a big way and can change the face of the places in which they are held.

And herein lies the crux of the matter. These short-term mega-events can have long-term mega impact on the cities concerned.

The Beijing Olympic Games of 2008 are a perfect illustration of the downside of mega-events on the historic urban heritage and the city as a whole.

43. In 2006, UNESCO estimated that, in the short span of three years, approximately one third of the central part of Beijing's old city had been destroyed, including its famous 17th century courtyard houses and old alleyways. This is equal to a surface area of over 2,000 hectares, or twenty-three times the size of old Jerusalem. The social dimensions of this tragedy are equally worrisome, with 580,000 people displaced and resettled.

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44. Where does this inventory of destruction leave us? We have seen cases of loss in various forms and various disguises, and all still taking place today. I have only presented cases known to me either because I

have read about them or actually worked on them. So this evidence is admittedly fragmentary and incomplete.

45. But it seems to indicate that, on average, between one third and one half of the historic urban fabric of our historic cities has been lost since World War II. If this global trend continues, the vast majority of our cities' historic heritage will be irreversibly impaired or lost altogether within the next two or three generations.

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Now, I am the first to underline the need for more careful investigations and the definition of reliable indicators. But does anybody in this room doubt the magnitude of the phenomenon, or its pervasive nature? Can anybody deny that we are facing a global emergency? I think not.

We now have hard data about global warming, about the disappearing tropical forests, about shrinking coral reefs, about polluted and diminishing sources of water. The survival of our much threatened historic cities and towns is also relevant for the well-being of our present and future societies. As I will try to show, in spite of the threats, historic cities are the only successful models of sustainable, balanced human settlement we have; they are the only ones we can confidently pass on to future generations as the repository of an uninterrupted tradition of city building that continues to be relevant to this day.

Cities as Works of Art

46. And, in order to go straight to the heart of the problem, let me ask: What is so special about historic cities and why do we care so much about them? Is it because they are disappearing, and quite fast as we have seen? Or are there more fundamental reasons? Answering these questions is important if we want to understand the core of the problem, and figure out what is to be done.

Strictly speaking, the concept of the historic city or 'centre' is a fairly recent construct. It never existed in the past. The city was the city and that was that.

47. Often surrounded by high walls, it represented the limit of urban living, as opposed to life in the countryside.

48. The existence of a separate historic center begins to be perceived only after the Industrial Revolution, when more and more countryside was gobbled up by the expanding periphery and the 'centre' grew smaller and smaller. The result was the disappearance of the long-established synergy between city and country.

49. Thus the 'city' of our grandfathers, great-grandfathers and forefathers of many generations, ceased to exist, replaced by the shapeless metropolis and sprawl of modern times.

50. The paradox in all of this is that, while we proclaim the obsolescence of the past and the need for change, we continue to recognize the ever

shrinking old centers as the only truly presentable parts of our cities. They are the only places fit to represent our culture, our identity and collective memory.

51. And no wonder: who wants to identify with these desolate peripheries and call them ‘my city’? For most urban dwellers, this is home. Peripheries that all look alike: ugly, marginal, profoundly undemocratic, and devoid of significance and memory. And without memory we become confused, we feel lost.

52. Without memory, and the sense of identity that comes with it, we spiral into violence, as the riots in the French *banlieues* have shown.

52 bis. And without memory there is no art, as the ancients knew all too well when they made the goddess of memory, Memnosyne, the mother of all the arts.

53. Indeed memory lies at the core of the urban construct, undoubtedly man’s most complex artifact, produced by the cumulative efforts of countless individuals across many generations. A “total mnemonic symbol” made up of monuments and memorials, public buildings and communal spaces ...

54. ... but also of immaterial events and rituals, in which our ancestors identified themselves with their town, “with its past and its founders”.

55. Zaira, the imaginary city of memory described by Italian author Italo Calvino, can be seen as the universal paradigm of what we recognize as historic cities, cities built upon the “relationships between the measures of their space and the events of their past.”

56. Cities in which we recognize a sustained will to preserve across time and generations the social significance of a shared collective memory. I believe it is this underlying will to build for continuity that really distinguishes the cities of the past from their pale contemporary counterparts.

57. Look at this row of extraordinary private houses in Genoa’s *Strada Nuova*. So powerful was the desire for beauty and continuity that the entire street was conceived and planned as a state initiative in 1550. Intended as a civic monument, it was built under the supervision of the city administration over a continuous period of 166 years.

I could show many other examples that exemplify the role of memory and continuity in traditional urban planning. Cities that were understood and cherished by their citizens as the embodiment of a common heritage, and regarded by their visitors as veritable works of art.

What Went Wrong?

And then, somewhere along the way, we seem to have forgotten the art of making cities. Worse still, we seem to have lost even the ability to appreciate and treasure the extraordinary legacy of our forefathers and

to understand that, once destroyed, this legacy cannot be brought back to life.

What happened? When did it all start to go wrong?

I don't think there was a single moment in history when our societies' ideas and approach to the making of cities changed once and for all. Rather, it is the result of many interrelated factors, spanning a period of 200 years and more.

59. We can note how already in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the study of fortifications took a life of its own and had a strong impact on city-planning. From that time onward, the planning of cities became increasingly the prerogative of engineers rather than artists.

60. The subsequent industrial developments led to the modern reduction of city planning to “zoning”, intended as the distribution of functions in a given space.

61. But even more fundamental was the effect of the dismembering of urban lands after the French Revolution. Together with the landed rights and privileges of the nobility and clergy, went those of the municipalities. Thus, city administrations forfeited their long-established control over urban land and, with it, the defense of the order and beauty of our cities. From this moment onward, the priority was no longer that of creating comfortable and beautiful cities, but that of maximizing profit through the maximum possible use of urban land.

One last historic passage remains to be examined if we want to really understand the unremitting erosion of our historic urban heritage: namely, the rejection of the city of the past by the Modernist *avant-garde* of the twentieth century.

62. This passage can be summed up in a single iconic and greatly influential image: Le Corbusier 1925 Plan Voisin. Our appreciation of Le Corbusier should not blind us to this simple truth: far from being a model of urban living, the city of the past was for Le Corbusier a cumbersome relic, thoroughly incompatible with the pace and needs of the modern age.

His design for the new Paris is juxtaposed to the old fabric in a fairly crude and abrupt way. It is a powerful statement about the new course of the city, as clear and simple as it could ever be.

63. Le Corbusier writings and powerful images acted both as a prediction and as a stimulus for what was to come; and they have had an immense impact on subsequent urban developments, with consequences that can only be deemed disastrous for historic cities everywhere. Perhaps the most damning criticism was expressed by Jane Jacobs in 1961, who said that, as to how the city works, Le Corbusier ideas “tell nothing but lies.”

If so, why are Le Corbusier’s visionary plans still so significant today, almost 85 years later? Because, for the first time in history, the

twentieth-century *avant-garde* produced with Le Corbusier the false idea that a ready-made all-encompassing alternative to the traditional city could be realized, and almost instantly. It was this new future prospect that justified the abrupt abandonment of a thousand-year-old tradition of city building.

64. Le Corbusier's new creed has been accepted ever since as a matter of fact, repeated like a *mantra* to generations of students in our schools of architecture. In the opinion of many of today's influential architects and planners, a new city, far more relevant and responsive to today's needs, is just waiting to be realised. From Zaha Hadid's "layered city" of tomorrow ...

65. ... to the "sublime chaos" imagined by Massimiliano Fuksas as the answer to today's urban challenges.

These extreme and obscure new urban models ignore the fact that the *avant-garde* and post *avant-garde* models of the contemporary city have been almost without exception an unmitigated failure.

66. We would be hard pressed to identify recent successful examples, while I can think of hundreds from the past. And not because of personal preferences, but because this preference is expressed by millions of visitors, who pay billions of dollars to travel to these cities every year; and by threatened residents everywhere, who fight tooth and nail not to be relocated to the squalid peripheries of our modern metropolises.

67. What is left of the *avant-garde* and of Le Corbusier's dream in our cities today is a sum of individual buildings, each more idiosyncratic than the next. An array of show pieces that display the talents of individual architects, some good, most not so good, which however, taken together, do not make a city. Of course, this post-Modernist model is eminently suitable for fulfilling the dream of any developer, small and large, honest and not-so-honest.

And for the reasons so well explained in the 1940s by Swiss planner Hans Beroulli who said that in the absence of significant public controls on the purpose and form of the city, and this is the case in the large majority of cities today, developers and architects have been extraordinarily inventive in maximizing the value of every scrap of urban land, and in taking advantage of every possible development right.

68. If these simple facts were to be recognized honestly, we would know that our attempts at city building over the past seventy years have been largely misguided; we would urgently begin to consider and re-evaluate the principles and examples of traditional urban planning; and we would humbly learn anew "how a city really works", to quote again Jane Jacob's sensible remarks.

We would also pay extra attention to ensure that what is left of our urban birthright is not foolishly forfeited for a plate of lentils, knowing all too well that, once gone, it will be 'gone forever'.

Perhaps it is time that we recognize that a radical change of course is required in the way we plan our cities and care for our urban heritage.

Changing Course

69. Without a profound and urgent change of course our historic cities will disappear; and, without this legacy, we surrender our chance of building better and more livable cities for and in the future. This is not a question of economic development versus stagnation, as the champions of modernity and destruction would like us to believe, but a question of survival of our cities and their historic areas.

70. It is a way to counteract the insane growth and disorder of our settlements and move toward a sustainable model of urban development. One we can still appreciate in our historic cities, but have lost any hope of replicating in our dreary peripheries.

We are in fact so stultified by economic stereotypes and mental habits that we never question the fundamental premise and mother of all urban disasters: the idea that growth should be unlimited.

71. And here enters *Ivan Illich's snail*. This metaphor was used by Ivan Illich, one of the most perceptive philosophers of our times. He noted how the snail, once it has reached its limit, stops growing. Just one additional spiral would make the shell sixteen times bigger and render its growth unsustainable.

The snail's judicious growth is a good illustration of what we should aim for in planning today's cities, instead of pursuing the illusion of unending growth with its accompanying destruction and improvised reconstruction.

72. Cities should not be allowed to become unmanageable, but rather brought under control by putting to better use our urban commonwealth, no longer considered as something to exploit for maximum profit, but as a resource to be maintained and improved in the best interest of citizens and users.

This is not the expression of some socialist utopia, or a naive call for the abolition of the market economy. It is simply an acknowledgement that economics matters, but that it cannot be the only determining factor in shaping our cities in the face of diminishing resources and mounting pressures.

73. The idea that markets must be directed and regulated has begun to be accepted with the recent global economic crisis. Is it not time we also rethink our planning practices? Are cities not as relevant as financial markets for the quality of our lives and the well-being of our societies?

We should also reject the fatalistic idea that a change of course is some sort of impractical endeavor that cannot be made to happen during our lifetimes. Let us imagine for a moment that we were given the freedom to intervene on historic cities in the light of what we have seen. I think we can all agree on what a reasonable course of action would be. It can be summed up in four sentences.

74. First, we must define the limit of what is historic, which should not be an opinion based on fashion or personal preferences, but on objective assessment.

75. Then, we should put a stop to unnecessary and gratuitous demolition and replacement, knowing that the social cost cannot be justified and that the results will at best be a parody of what is already there.

76. Third, we must fix what there is with care and consideration, because it really is all you have. If lost, it will be gone forever.

77. And finally, we should mend and match what has been spoiled, wrongly altered or left incomplete in ways that are calibrated to 'repair in kind' . . .

78. . . rather than 'intervene against' by using willfully contrasting elements.

79. In this process, what are wrongly perceived as limits to unrestrained growth, become not only a necessity, but also the opportunity to embrace the only modernity that makes real sense: A modernity based on the conscious and rational assumption of responsibility vis-à-vis our shared resources and urban legacy.

80. A responsibility that must go hand in hand with a reconsideration of the symbolic and physical foundations of our historic cities and landscapes and be aimed at the recovery and ‘reparation’ of what has been lost or unduly altered.

81. And herein lays the key to intervening in our historic cities and beyond: the assumption of the fundamental role of memory in regenerating our cities and landscapes by placing a full awareness and intelligence of ‘places’ at the center of our efforts.

This is the only way to return to our communities that all-important sense of belonging that is denied by the current development trends.

82. It is an alternative course that should be actively pursued, based on the experience gained during the last sixty years of international practice in urban conservation, without fear of scaling down our ambitions and without fear of diminishing our cities’ prospects.

There is certainly enough to do for a fully-fledged recovery program spearheaded by international bodies, national institutions and local administrations, and sustained by wiser forms of public and private investment and the widest possible participation of residents and users.

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What we have seen so far poses many questions. And there are many which come to mind, but there really is only one overarching question:

83. Are we going to sit back and let the rising toll of destruction I have tried to document happen, or will we take on our share of responsibility at a time when we can clearly perceive the problem of our vanishing urban heritage, and are still in time to address it?

It is I believe a responsibility from which we cannot excuse ourselves. It is not that we lack the awareness, knowledge, methods, or the examples of good practice, or indeed the financial means. What we lack is the political will to change our way of thinking, and reject the economic model that brings the dissipation of our resources and the destruction of our heritage.

84. Indeed, we must act now to halt this senseless destruction and embark decisively upon the fullest recovery of our urban heritage.

85. For, if we allow our historic cities to vanish, the collective memory and beauty they stand for will also be utterly and irretrievably lost.