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Contents

Preface	vii
1 At the crossroads of urban reform	
1.1 An international gathering in Amsterdam	3
1.2 The many faces of the IFHTP	3
1.2.1 Ignored proprietor of congresses	4
1.2.2 Garden city militant	5
1.2.3 International study platform for housing and planning	9
1.2.4 Conduit for professional affiliation	11
1.2.5 An exponent of the Urban Internationale	12
1.3 Towards a better understanding of the IFHTP and international town planning	21
1.4 Research design	28
1.4.1 Objectives and research questions	28
1.4.2 Methodology	29
1.4.3 Outline of the thesis	32
2 Garden cities to the world 1913-1920	
2.1 Introduction	35
2.2 International garden city propaganda under GCTPA control	35
2.3 The international network of the GCTPA formalized	45
2.4 Transnational civil society	67
2.5 Ad hoc activities	68
2.6 The mission dictated	75
2.7 Conclusion	92
3 Exploring the region 1920-1926	
3.1 Introduction	98
3.2 From British extension to international body	100
3.3 Converging networks	105
3.3.1 Officials and professionals	105
3.3.2 Interwoven nebulas	112
3.4 Transnational civil society	116
3.5 Towards a golden formula	119
3.5.1 Professionalization and expansion	119
3.5.2 Rivalry and collaboration	121
3.5.3 An outline of the activities	123
3.5.4 CityEvents	127
3.6 The mission redefined	132
3.6.1 Satellite towns	133

3.6.2 Decentralization in the region	138
3.6.3 Dissidents	145
3.7 Conclusion	149
4 Housing versus planning 1926-1937	
4.1 Introduction	153
4.2 Internal struggles	154
4.3 Membership re-arranged	163
4.3.1 Old hands and newcomers	165
4.3.2 Marginal centrality	172
4.4 Heavy weather for transnationalism	176
4.5 Receding activity	179
4.5.1 Rivalry and evasion	179
4.5.2 Outline of the activities	181
4.6 The mission bisected	185
4.6.1 The housing path: triumph of the one-family house	185
4.6.2 The town planning path: from decentralization to re-centralization	189
4.7 Conclusion	202
5 'Raumplanung' imposed 1935-1945	
5.1 Introduction	207
5.2 German annexation	207
5.3 Active membership marginalized	221
5.3.1 German domination	221
5.3.2 Disintegrating networks	225
5.4 Transnationalism postponed	227
5.5 From external to internal activity	229
5.5.1 Political tensions and struggle for power	230
5.5.2 Outline of activities	231
5.6 The mission confined	237
5.6.1 The housing path: diversification and emergency dwellings	238
5.6.2 The planning path: national planning and reconstruction	244
5.7 Conclusion	259
6 Conclusion	
6.1 Introduction	264
6.2 Research methodology	264
6.3 Research questions	267
6.4 Scientific relevance	270
6.5 Future research	273
6.6 Social relevance	277

Endnotes	279
Source of illustrations	297
Bibliography	301
Summary	325
Samenvatting	333

Preface

The journey is more important than the destination. Greek poet C.P. Cavafy has beautifully expressed this universal truth in his poem *Ithaka* (1911).ⁱ “As you set out for Ithaka hope the voyage is a long one, full of adventure, full of discovery.” He urges us to enjoy our journey, to take the time to explore and to learn and not let our demons hold us back. But we must never lose sight of our goal. Colored by life experience, we will arrive as older, wiser and richer individuals. “Ithaka gave you the marvelous journey. Without her you would not have set out. She has nothing left to give you now. And if you find her poor, Ithaka won't have fooled you. Wise as you will have become, so full of experience, you will have understood by then what these Ithakas mean.”

My PhD research certainly has been a long and challenging journey. Although, strictly speaking, my academic wanderings did not quite reach the epic proportions of the *Odyssey*, I nevertheless often felt like a modern *Odysseus*. More than eight years ago I set out to explore the history of the IFHTP, driven by the desire to learn how planning ideas and experiences circulated across the globe, how international planning history was constituted. I have made many detours and discoveries, experiencing good fortune and setbacks. Seasoned travelers will tell you that you are largely on your own if you want to reach your destination. Academic research can be a solitary occupation, requiring focus, commitment and endurance to complete the journey. Nevertheless, the wandering traveler needs help from others: directions from guides, hospitality from locals, camaraderie of fellow travelers and, last but not least, continuous support by family and friends. Now that I have reached the final stage of my journey, it is time to pay respect to all those people and institutions who provided a helping hand and made my voyage all the more enjoyable.

I was fortunate to receive directions from several guides. Throughout the journey my supervisor prof. dr. Koos Bosma has acted as a dedicated mentor. Once I secured a position at the VU University prof. dr. Karel Davids entered the picture as second supervisor. Together Koos and Karel have continuously stimulated me to push the envelope. Their support and advice, both academic and personal, was vital for the completion of this PhD thesis. In 2005 I ran into dr. Pierre-Yves Saunier at a conference in Groningen. Pierre-Yves initiated me into the Urban Internationale and provided valuable advice and support in the following years as I explored the contours of this international network society. The PhD training programme of the Posthumus Institute provided welcome directions for the structure and methodology of my research. I also must mention prof. dr. Pieter Uyttenhove who provided a new sense of direction when one of my many detours turned into a dead end. I want to credit the members of the defense committee that have guided me through the final stage of my academic travel: the rector magnificus, dr. Gerrie Andela, prof. dr. Koos Bosma, prof. dr. Jean-Louis Cohen, prof. dr. Karel Davids, prof. dr. Hartmut Frank, prof. dr. Susan Legène, prof. dr. Pieter Uyttenhove and prof. dr. Stephen Ward. Finally, I want to thank Jim Rijper and Dingmar van Eck for acting as my paranymphs.

Much of my research was spent ‘on the road.’ I have scavenged many archives and libraries in Belgium, England, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Scotland and Switzerland. Everywhere I received a warm welcome. The hospitality and valuable suggestions by the local staff made my research on location all the more enjoyable and effective. I want to

sincerely thank all my hosts in general, and the archivists and librarians Melissa Wyatt (Royal Town Planning Institute, London), Kirsteen Croll (Strathclyde University, Glasgow) and Renée Berthon (ILO, Geneva) in particular. A special thanks goes out to the former secretary general of the IFHP, Elsbeth Hylckema Vlieg, not only for hospitality at the IFHP, but also for opening doors that otherwise would have remained shut.

Throughout my research I have enjoyed the companionship, collaboration and discussions with fellow researchers, colleagues and students. These contacts not only enriched my journey, but also contributed to sharpening my methodology and conceiving alternative perspectives. I want to thank my former roommates and colleagues at the VU University, my fellow researchers in the Urban nebula project, my fellow PhD candidates participating in the training programme of the Posthumus Institute, the students I was privileged to tutor and the many researchers whose investigations touched mine. Of all these valuable contacts I want to credit some explicitly. I enjoyed tutoring a seminar on architecture and morality at the VU University alongside my colleague Petra Brouwer. My research has benefitted greatly from the many discussions with Abdel el Makhloufi, post doctoral researcher of the Urban Nebula project. And finally I want to thank fellow PhD students Iris Burgers, Mathijs Witte and Dingmar van Eck for their companionship during our shared academic pursuit.

This research was made possible by financial support by the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) and the Free University. Additionally, I have to thank my current employer Architectuur Lokaal for material support in the last years. Especially my colleague Bram Talman at Architectuur Lokaal has been instrumental in helping me with the ICT aspect of assembling a final manuscript.

Last, but not least, I have to thank my friends, colleagues and family for their support over the years. Time management was always an issue during my research. Combining a PhD research with a new job, family life and social contacts is always difficult. It were the people closest to me that suffered the most from my lack of time. However, they never complained and urged me to complete my academic journey. A special thanks goes out to my wife Hinke and our lovely daughter Fenna for their undying support. Without their love and support I would never have reached my destination.

Utrecht, February 2012

Michel Geertse

ⁱ C.P. Cavafy, *Collected Poems*. Translated by Edmund Keeley and Philip Sherrard. Edited by George Savidis. Revised Edition, Princeton University Press, 1992.