LA CULTURA Y LA CIUDAD

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LOGOTYPES AND CITIES REPRESENTATIONS

Jean-Luc Arnaud

For a few decades, our perception of the world is highly determined by media. Each establishment try to enhance a specific image. If that is a common practice for companies, it is more recent for cities. In this new context, the names of the cities become brands and, as it is the case in the private sector, designers are hired to draw up logotypes. About ten percent of this production is based on images of individual buildings or sets of constructions.

This paper deals with this production. First of all, we propose a classification according to the categories of buildings that are represented by the logotypes. The second chapter is dedicated to parallels with early urban representations. The third part presents the relations between these images and the urban coats of arms. Even if these three productions were almost independent from one to others, several similarities show the relevance of these back in time. In the same context, facing the same problem, authors of the different periods have produced quite similar images.

Currently, with the growing of the communication field, all the towns and sometimes villages, are represented by one or more logotypes. A logotype is a particular image that must be identified, without ambiguity, in a very short period of time. On this basis a logotype must be a very synthetic image. It must also be a unique pattern of forms and colors.

The corpus of logotypes dedicated to cities is enormous. For this presentation, I selected about 240 examples that represent pieces of architecture or urban landscape [1]. This category is not so numerous. No more than ten percent of the logotypes dedicated to cities represent buildings or urban landscape. They refer mainly to towns of the Mediterranean countries but not only. Logotypes that compose the corpus were produced for local public authorities or for private companies. They look very different and they can be organized in several categories.

Most of them represent specific buildings that anyone can identify. But for some villages that don't have this kind of building the author chooses generic images. There are not a lot of examples in the Mediterranean ones. On the contrary this method seems to be preferred in North America (USA and Canada) where several villages or small towns doesn't have any building of importance that can be representative for the entire city [2]. In most cases, logotypes are composed by outlined images of houses organized around a

1. This corpus has been built from documentation available online. Most of the example are not under free license, for this reason they have not been reproduced here.

2. Towns: Yountville (California), Hinesburg (Vermont), Mont Tremblant (Québec), and also, in France Sansais-La Garette and Aussois.

church — identified by its bell tower. These images are very simple and we can't identify any architectural peculiarities. For example, when we compare the church represented on the logotype of Brie Conte Robert —Paris surroundings— with a picture of the church, we notice that the windows of the tower bell are totally different [3].

The same image can represent a French village as well as a Canadian village.Sometimes, we can presume that North American logotypes try to represent ideal French or European villages more than the local ones. Particularly when they want to promote a cool way of life.

When a town includes specific buildings, these are preferred for logotypes. But all the buildings are not equally relevant. First of all, the historical buildings are preferred. We have only few examples built during the contemporary period.

The most important example is for the city of Istanbul. As you know, Istanbul is plenty of first class historical constructions, from Byzantine and Ottoman periods. But these monuments are not favorite options for thelogo types. For most of them the designers or the patrons prefer another building, more recent: the suspension bridge that crosses the Bosphorus. This bridge was built in 1973, it was at that time one of the longest in the world. The distance between the pylons is more than one kilometer and these pylon are 165 meters height. A second bridge was built in 1988, the third one is under construction.

Evidently this bridge is the symbol of the capacity of Turkey to enter into modernity. Beyond this point, the Bosphorus Bridge also testifies that Istanbul is a link between Europe and Asia, between Orient and Occident. That is to say, a mandatory contact point between two civilizations. The best illustration of this sense is given by the logotype of the NATO / OTAN summit, organized in Istanbul in April 2004 (fig. 1).

The bridge frequently occupies the first plan of the composition wheareas the silhouettes of the old monuments appear on the second plan. We always found several buildings in this case. They belong to different periods, they have been built by different authorities and they represent the long history of the city. We can notice that, in the list of the buildings that can be in this position, most of them don't belong to the ottoman period. Here is the list, sorted by date of construction of the buildings: Leandre Tower, 19th century, but 5Th BC for the first construction; Basilica Aya Sophia, 4th century; Galata tower, from Genoese period, 13th century; Imperial Ottoman mosque (16th or 17th century); Main gate of Beyazit University: beginning of the 20th century; Modern height buildings, second half of the 20th century; TV tower, opened in 2002, 236 meters height.

Several other logotypes of Istanbul don't represent the bridge. In this case the most important architectural elements are the domes of the mosques —more or less symbolized— and the minarets that are always very thin and height. The images of the minarets are so appreciate that they can take the place of the pylons of the bridge to hold and support the cables [4].

Istanbul is not the unique case of promotion of modernity through the logotypes. We found another Turkish example with the town of Karabuk, a small city located 200 km north of Ankara. The old city follows the pattern of traditional town of northern

3. The logo shows a single oval window while the tower bell bears two vertical arched windows on each face.

4. That is the case in a logotype where letters I, T, U and L of the word Istanbul are upward extended and transformed in silhouettes of minarets. Curved lines join each pair of minarets to give the image of a suspension bridge.

Turkey. Numerous typical houses, composed on the basis of a three spans façade, are well preserved. But for their official logotype, the municipal council choose another reference. It corresponds to a large steel factory located a few hundred meters from the city center. Evidently, the municipal council is very proud of this factory [5].

A third example of promotion of modernity is the logotype of Nanterre, a city located a few kilometers West of Paris. Sixty years ago, it was a small suburban town without any building of interest but, during the sixties, a large part of the municipality was included into the new Business District called La Defense. Today, it's the most important business district in Europe. With this development, Nanterre has become a rich and modern city provided with a new city hall a few decades ago. The logotype corresponds to this new building that looks like a truncated pyramid shared by long series of horizontal windows.

On the basis of the rarity of contemporary buildings as reference for the logotypes, the two Turkish cases seem to represent the way followed by Turkey to integrate modernity. That is not the case for the towns of the Arabic world where all the references used in the logotypes are ancient buildings. That is also not the case of the European towns that prefer magnifying their past through historical buildings or architectural remains.

When a logotype depict a building, the largest, the biggest, the longest, the highest… are the most appreciated.

In the category of long buildings we mainly find bridges. As we have examined with the example of Istanbul, a bridge wears different symbols. This category presents also several advantages for a logotype. 1. They are relatively rare and their various silhouettes are easy to draw and to identify. 2. Bridges are civilian or secular buildings. For this reason they don't reflect any particular group or community, thus they can't be claimed by a faction of the population. That is not the case with the religious buildings, as we will examine.

The best example is the history of the bridge of Mostar (Bosnia Herzegvina). This city is shared into two parts by the river Nevetva. An Ottoman stone bridge was built over this river at the end of the 16th century. It was destroyed during the War of 1993. We notice that the name of the city has been composed on the basis of the word "most", that means "bridge" in Slavic language. The bridge was rebuilt in 2004 and become the symbol of the reconciliation of the different religious communities that compose the city. Currently its official logotype and a lot of other example, from private or public establishments, are based on the silhouette of the bridge.

When a town doesn't have a bridge, maybe it has a tower. We find towers on about a third of the logotypes that represent a building. Generally, towers are preferred to others monuments. But tower is a generic word, it can correspond to bell towers (Bailleul, France), minarets (Sivas, Turkey), clocks (Adana, Turkey - Altavista, Virginia), city gates (York, Great Britain), part of castles (Nevers and Amboise, France), buildings (Chicago), pillars (Tharros, Italy), (more rarely) chimneys (Sintra, Portugal) or lighthouses.

Into this category, the lighthouses seem to be a very good reference. The most famous in the Mediterranean is the Alexandria lighthouse, even if several earthquakes between the 4th and the 14th century destroyed it. As we have examined with the bridge, the symbol of

5. The logotype of the municipal council of Karabuk is included in a circle draws as a gear. Inside, we find the silhouette of large tanks overmastered by chimneys and an industrial building covered by shed windows.

the lighthouse is also very strong. It is not only a tower, it is a place that illuminaten its surroundings. It allows developing the navigation and long distance exchanges. And the light in question is not only the physical phenomenon, more generally the lighthouse symbolizes the radiancy and the influence of the town in different fields. In other words, a city that has a lighthouse is an important center (fig. 2).

Towers and other vertical constructions are preferred to other monuments because they have a strong visual impact on the urban skyline [6]. And more their silhouettes are specific, more they are easily recognizable, more they are used in logotypes. The tour Eiffel is certainly the best example because its silhouette is so specific that it can be represented in a lot of different ways. The TV tower of Berlin is also very used and we have several different representations. Some of them are very elusive but the sphere that characterizes his figure is so easily recognizable that its image can be used in very different contexts. For example the sphere is used, without other reference to the tower, in a calligraphy of the word Berlin.

These two examples show that the towers drawn on the logotypes are not necessarily ancient buildings. On this basis we can infer that they have the same sense than the suspension bridge for Istanbul but they are not very numerous.

Sometimes, we find several towers on the same logotype. And we have an example where the towers are used as a brand. The town Cambrais, north of France, is generally depicted by the formula "la ville aux troisclochers", that is to say "The city of three towers bell". Its official logotype is based on these few words: it is composed by a three vertical buildings set on a slightly curved horizontal line that represents the profile of the Earth.

Towns that don't have any bridge or tower must choose others buildings for their logotype.

The selected one can be of any historical period. But, generally, more it is ancient, more it has chance to be selected.

In regard of this point, Cairo is the best example. In spite of its several first class monuments from the Arabic period, the pyramids are a major reference for the logotypes. Beyond their age, the have several advantages. 1. They don't refer to a particular community and, even if they are linked with the ancient religion, this religion is so far from Christian and Muslim monotheism that the pharaonic monuments are considered as secular buildings. 2. The other advantage of the pyramids is their geometric simplicity. They are the ideal buildings for a logotype. For this reason, we have a lot of very different examples. Generally the three pyramids of Gizeh are grouped one behind the other. They can be used for very different purposes, of local or international interest. The pyramids are so famous that they can also represent Egypt [7].

But, in most of the cities, buildings are rarely that famous. That is the case for a small French village Aiguefronde and for several towns, such as: Edinburgh (Great Britain), Saintes or Gisors (France). In Berlin, the Brandenburger Gate is not as famous as Egyptian pyramids but it is also a good example for the diversity of its representations. That is also

6. This peculiarity is also noticed for several views of different towns. Genova and Marseille for example. Vid. Guenièvre Fournier-Antonini, *Barcelone, Gênes et Marseille, cartographies et images (XVIe-XIXe siècles)*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2012.

7. This change of scale is facilitated by the homonymy of Cairo and Egypt in Arabic: both are designated *Misr*.

the case with the White Tower of Thessaloniki. This tower was built under the reign of the Ottoman sultan Suleiman the Magnificent (first half of the 16th century). The buildings originating from this period were not very well treated after the independence of Greece. In spite of that, the White Tower is currently one of the main symbol of the town and an important touristic spot. It houses a byzantine museum.

To a lesser extent, we find also religious buildings that, without ambiguity, refer to a particular religion. That is the case with Adapazari Council (Turkey), its logotype represents an Ottoman mosque. That is to say a group of three arched windows surmounted by a dome and framed by two minarets. Most of the people of this town, located 120 km East of Istanbul, are Muslims. But several towns are populated by different communities. In this context, it is not always possible to base a logotype on a religious building. That is the case for example with Sarajevo, capital of Bosnia-Herzegovina. For the World Meeting for Peace, held in this city in September 2012, the logotype was composed by the skyline of four monuments set under the view of a dove of peace. Each monument corresponds to a particular religious group (fig. 3). The main powers are equally represented, that is very sensitive in the context of Sarajevo a few years after the end of the war.

This article starts with the largest and the exceptional buildings. On the contrary, for few examples, we find architectural details. The most popular ones seem to be ancient columns or capitals. We have different example for Saintes (France), Byblos (Lebanon), Pergamon and Side (Turkey). These three cities were important during antiquity and they still have some remains of this period.

To a smaller scale, we find also architectural details as galleries or windows. In south of France, several cities established during the medieval period are organized around a central place surrounded by galleries delimited by arched openings. The logotype of Figeac is based on this specific public space that is somehow a reversed monument.

The smallest architectural references we find are windows, but not ordinary windows. Indeed they are very specifics and these peculiarities work like symbols.

In the first example we have a group of three bays that are typical from the traditional Lebanese house. As you know, Lebanon is populated by a large number of different communities. In this context, it is not possible to find a monument that is able to represent all the population. The three bays pattern is certainly one of the rare representations that can satisfy all the Lebanese people.

The second example is more exotic. In Yemen, the stained glass that are displayed above each window in the traditional buildings, are also used in the modern constructions and they are currently considered as a sign of yemenity. The logotype of a local TV represents an arched window composed on the basis of a local model of stained glass.

To close the first part, I want to outline two points.

1. We have only very few generic representations. Most of the constructions represented in the logotypes result of representation or, at least inspiration, of existing buildings.

2. Whatever the size of the element used in a logotype, more it has a specific pattern or a particular silhouette, more it is relevant.

These two characteristics are not so far from those of early representations of the cities. Most of them don't represent the towns themselves but they are reconstructed images

according to the popular knowledge, or, sometimes, according to legends. In other words, during this period, the topography was not an important feature. When it's represented, it's very basic [8].

For example, Istanbul is surrounded by a fortification. The wall follows the sea shore along two sides, and on the third side, we have two parallel walls. Beyond this information, the topographic organization of the city seems out of interest for the authors until the first half of the 16th century. Inside the walls, the urban fabric is also of less interest. In most of the examples, it is not represented before the second half of the 18th century. The images don't seek to be exhaustive. On the contrary they present the city through a short list of remarkable elements of architecture. But this list is not the result of chance. Each selected building represents an important period or an event of the history of the city. In this sense, these representations are not so far from logotypes.

Beyond this example, the more relevant parallels are with early modern sea mapping. These documents, where cities are not the main subject, present peculiarities about the representation of cities. 1. They are not reduced to a point —as it is the case from the 17th century. 2. The space allocated to each city is very restricted. 3. As several cities are figured on the same document, each representation must be specific. For these different reasons, figurations have to be simple and reduced to the most important features [9].

In the domain of hydrography, Venice was an important center of production. And, from the end of the 15th century, Venetians developed a new category of books designated as «Isolari» – Islands books [10]. They represent a lot of ports, with symbolized images. But Europeans were not the best designers in the field of symbolization. On the contrary, from the East end of the Mediterranean, Turkish painters that were trained in the field of miniatures, developed more synthetic figurations. The most important author is the famous Piri Reis who headed the Ottoman fleet during the first half of the 16th century [11]. We have also several manuscripts that depict the military campaigns occurring at the same period [12].

After this first period, the production of symbolic representations was not abandoned but geographic iconography became cartography and became more scientific [13]. On the

8. Renda Günsel, «Representation of Towns in Ottoman Sea Charts of the Sixteenth Century and their Relations to Mediterranean Cartography», in Gilles Weinstein (ed.), *Soliman le Magnifique et son temps*, Paris, La documentation française, 1992, p. 279-297; Jean-Luc Arnaud, «Entre mythe et réalité, l'iconographie des villes du Proche-Orient durant la période moderne», in Jean-Luc Boniol and Maryline Crivello (dir.), *Façonner le passé. Représentations et cultures de l'histoire XVIe-XXe siècle*, Aix-en-Provence, PUP, 2004, p. 219-240; Paul D. A. Harvey, «L'iconografia urbana nella cartografia medioevale», in Cesare de Seta and Brigitte Marin (eds.), *La città dei cartografi. Studi e ricerche du storia urbana*, Naples, Electa Napoli, 2008, p. 10-17.

9. George Tolias, *The Greek Portolan Charts, 15th-17th Centuries*, Athens, Center for Neohellenic Research, 1999; and *L'âge d'or des cartes marines, quand l'Europe découvrait le monde*, Paris, Seuil/Bibliothèque nationale de France, 2012.

10. George Tolias, «The Politics of the isolario: Maritime Cosmography and Overseas Expansion during the Renaissance», *The historical Review*, 9, 2012, p. 27-52.

11. Piri Reis, *Kitab-i-bahriePiri Reis*, Istanbul, The Historical Research Foundation, 1988.

12. S. Çavus, *Tarih-I feth-I siklosestergonveistol[n]i-Belgrad or Süleyman-name*, Istanbul, The Historical Research Foundation, 1987.

13. Catherine Bousquet-Bressolier (ed.), *L'œil du cartographe et la représentation géographique du Moyen-Age à nos jours*, Paris, Editions du comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques, 1995.

small-scale maps, cities were represented by points or by generic icons. This kind of representation is found in many examples published by F. Dainville [14]. For the large-scale maps of cities, after a pretty long period dominated by birds eyes view, the plan —that is a vertical projection— was progressively imposed from the end of the 17th century.

But, during all the period, cities were also represented through a particular category of image: the coats of arms-blazons. Each city had its own one. In the blazons, images of the buildings are also much symbolized. On this basis, we can think that they establish continuity between the first representations and the logotypes. But an exam of the blazons (for Europe only) shows that the constructions represented are always generic. As shown by several examples [15] these representations are not constrained by architectural details. A tower is a tower, regardless of its numbers of floors or the distribution of its windows. Moreover, according to the heraldic rules, a tower is always topped by battlements. Others categories of buildings are considered on the same way. For example, we can find several different representations for the same bridge, or for the same castle.

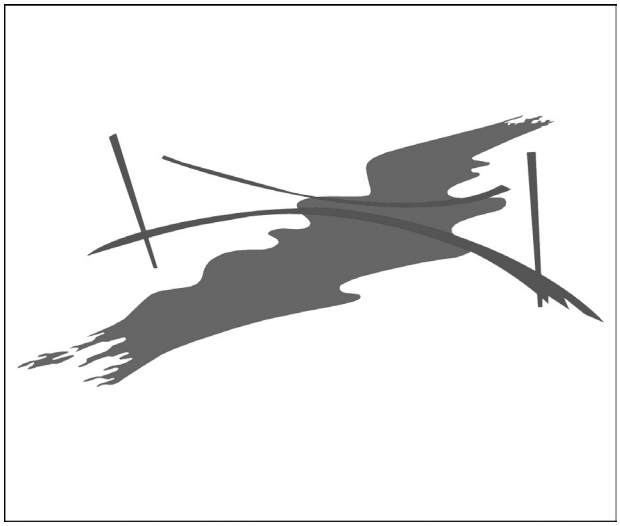
In this context, the blazon of Guadalajara, a town located 30 km North-East of Madrid, is an exception. It is the only one I found with a representation that could be based on reality. It is very different of all the others. The walls of the city, the towers and the knight lying at the first plan are represented as a miniature rather than according to the coat of arms rules.

In this sense, blazons could not have been a link between early representations of cities and logotypes. On the contrary, when we examine the categories of buildings that are represented on the blazons, we notice a strong relationship.

Indeed, heraldic is very poor in term of categories of buildings. We found only a very short list, of four main categories, that covers about 90 percent of the blazons bearing a building. They are: Tower, Castle and/or city gate —even if they are very different, these two categories are confused—, bridge and fortification. All these buildings are civilians. Blazons are mainly expressions of civil powers. On the 90 blazons of the corpus, one only represents a religious building, that of Montpellier. On the basis of this typology, we can conclude that logotypes are not so far away from blazons.

More generally, these three examples show that the sources used to build the symbolic image of a city have not been renewed during the long considered period. In spite of strong differences in their formalization, most of these images are based on a very short list of building types. The stone bridges have been replaced by the suspension one, the TV towers have been added to the long list of towers but, whatever the considered period, the list has remained unchanged.

14. François de Dainville, *Le langage des géographes*, Paris, Picard, 1964.
15. Town Curban (France) for its bridge; town Niort (France) for its tower.



Istanbul NATO summit, June 2004. In the context of this meeting, the suspension bridge over the Bosphorus is the symbol of the relation between Orient and Occident that Istanbul –and Turkey– is able to manage. (Source: Drawing of the author, from the logotype of the NATO/ OTAN summit, Istanbul, June 2004)

lexandria Lighthouse -and University-, illuminates all Mediterranean. (Source: Drawing of the author, from the logotype of the Alexandria University)

Sarajevo World Meeting for Peace, September 2012. Four religious buildings represent the city. From left to right: a dome of the synagogue, the minaret and the dome of a mosque, the tower bell of the orthodox church and the tower bell of the catholic one. (Source: Drawing of the author, from the logotype of the Meeting, Sarajevo, September 2012)