

URBAN LANDSCAPE STUDIES
EUPHORIGENIC LANDSCAPES

Euphorigenic Landscapes – issue 1.0

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LAREG



MUNICH
48° 8'0"N 11° 34'0"E

SIZE	310.43 KM ²
POPULATION	2,606,021
DENSITY	4,440/KM ²
ELEVATION	519 M
TIME ZONE	CET/CEST (UTC+1/2)

THE MUNICH LANDSCAPE

Sören Schöbel

There are two very conflicting images of the landscape of Munich. For the first image Swedish conquerors stand for, Gustav Adolf of Stockholm in 1632 and Ingvar Kamprad from Elmtaryd in Agunnaryd in 1974 (one was killed a few weeks later on the battlefield, the other built a furniture empire). The surrounding landscape appeared to them like a 'barren old horse', or as cheap building land, but Munich itself as a 'golden saddle' or as a promising market. As witnesses of the other image of the Munich landscape stand all the tourists from Prussia, Russia or Italy, the USA and Japan, who are crazy about Munich, but especially they adore the Upper Bavarian foothills, and what they can see, feel and 'perform' from the landscape in the city.

For both images is to say: the Munich area is undoubtedly euphorigenic. But what the city on the one side, the landscape of the other side contribute to this "intense state of transcendent happiness combined with an overwhelming sense of contentment" (Wikipedia) is to be discussed here.

THE LAYER OF NATURAL MORPHOLOGIES AND REGIONAL CULTURES

Munich is the capital of the Free State of Bavaria in south-eastern Germany. The Free State is the largest and the second most populous of the states. In a way, Bavaria has always played a special role in Germany. This is based on the one hand on the very attractive landscape in many places, and on the other hand, on a culture that is characterized by a peculiar connection of tradition-conscious and highly modern lifestyles. Literally, the sky over Bavaria is very blue and people wear both laptops and leather shorts [Laptop und Lederhose]. Indeed, since the reconstruction of Germany after World War II Bavaria has developed from a rather backward rural area into an internationally successful economic region and has, at the same time, remained an attractive holiday resort.

However, Bavaria is not a uniform entity but it is composed of culturally, economically and scenically very different regions. The Region of Munich is, on the one hand, clearly a growing region - unlike both the slightly declining population elsewhere in Germany and likewise the shrinking population in rural areas particularly in the north and east of Bavaria.

The natural landscape also shows important differences. In the north of

the Alps there begin the Alpine foothills, after them the cuesta landscape of the Swabian and Franconian Alb and the East-Bavarian highlands. Munich is located in the foothills [Alpenvorland]. These had originally been a huge sea-sink, which had developed on the edge of the board of the European Alps and was filled with erosion material of the mountains in the Tertiary. In their present form, however, the Alps, were shaped by the Ice Ages, when great glaciers from the Alps invaded the foothills, pushed up moraines and, retreating, re-formed the land by the flowing water. Those ages and post-glacial formations made the Alpine foothills into a succession of hilly country, large lakes, river valleys and accompanying gravel plains. Thus, the wide sloping Munich gravel plain is bordered in the south by the Alps, in the west and east by moraine and in the north and north-west by tertiary hills. In the middle of this huge gravel plain [Schotterebene] Munich is located on the river Isar.

THE LAYER OF EVERYDAY WORLD AND REGIONAL HABITUS

The landscape of the gravel plain can be seen very differently, depending from which place, movement and above all in what kind of weather it is experienced. With sky overcast it appears to

the wanderer or traveller as a flat plane structured in several landscape zones. Along the river Isar – when watching it from car or bicycle - you can experience its remarkable slope because in the south of the city the river cuts deep into the plane, in the city it builds terraces and high banks, and flows through open heaths and moors in the north. In good weather the gravel layer appears as vast flat land, impressively towered above by the panorama of the Alps.

On days without high visibility the river Isar river, the smaller rivers and streams even in the most peaceful places in the plain witness the neighbourhood of the mountains. The Würm canals in the Nymphenburg Park, flowing through Munich city down to Schleissheim, or the Eisbach in the English Garden take the power, the coolness and the limestone of the mountain waters far into the plain. Since the partly dismantling of the bank reinforcement the Isar approaching the city constantly shifts its course and pushes aside masses of debris. Even in the north, where the Isar is surrounded by dense low forest, where beyond the Isar Canal and the storage lake actually only residual water flows and the mountains are visible only in perfect weather, at the sills the river forms insurmountable water rollers

which break the silence of the forest and so remind us of the nearby Alps. The mighty panoramas and cool rivers still witness a sublime landscape that in the foothills of the Alps and in the blue land [Blaues Land] of lakes is enriched by picturesque beauty. The modern Munich inhabitant, dressed in leather pants and functional underwear, with a traditional headdress [Gamshut] and sporty sunglasses, walking stick and navigation system, adds to these two 'classical aesthetic judgements' of nature a marked self-confidence and a hedonism. This attitude regards the foothills as the 'local mountains' [Hausberge] of the city, the country towards the Alps as a large city park and the river floodplains in the city itself as a huge beer garden [Biergarten], and the alpine foothills as the front garden to Munich.

International guests like to adopt this attitude of nature. But in tragic moments again and again it is shown how all-powerful nature can be in this garden. In summer, newspapers report weekly how bodies have been recovered from the steep walls of the local mountains or from the water-rollers on the weirs of the rivers Isar and Eisbach. One could say that the inner city of Munich actually has no particular landscape qualities and is safe to some

extent in comparison to other cities - but that landscape and nature, in both the sublime and a tragic sense lie just around the corner and, so to speak, rise out of the blue.

Weather and sight, however, do not only portray the surrounding landscape of Munich in very different ways, but they seem to connect this city, situated on the border of southern Central Europe, across the Alps with Italy when the down winds [Föhn] blow and open a foehn window with fantastic views. People like to call Munich 'the northernmost city of Italy'. In some of the established lifestyles you can actually feel Italian mentality, which, however, comparable to the transformation of the foehn air in crossing the Alps, perhaps appears to have caught a light cold, needs to be warmed and is a bit dried up. The Italian lifestyle experiences, in everlasting ice, sheer wall of rock and the rich pastures experienced a multiple change of its physical state, namely 'freeze-drying'. This also applies to the Mediterranean light which is known to be refined by a special white-blue sky in that region.

Perhaps this relationship of the sublime, beauty, hedonism and the tendency of risks, as it is experienced in the Munich landscape also forms the lifestyle, mentality, or even 'regional

habitus' and thus the economic culture of the metropolitan region.

All the intensity of the natural landscape is noticeably diminished towards the north, especially beyond the city.

In front of the magnificent Alps, the picturesque lakes, the hill country and the urban terraces in the city now a wasteland opens which, based on natural landscape, seems to be interpreted by a suburban cultural landscape. The landscape here originally consisted of large heaths, and where the gravel plain slowly submerges into the layers of ground water of shallow marshes, which are called [Moose] here. Heaths and mosses still exist where until recently they were used by the military or are now under conservation.

This great distinction between the southern and the northern landscapes of Munich, have fostered very different social milieux. If you were blindfolded to the outskirts, it would be possible only by 'reading' the car marques, the dog breeds, even the walking style of pedestrians, whether south or north of the city one is located. In contrast, differences between East and West not only in terms of topography, but also in the habitus of the milieux are hardly to distinguish - at least for an uninitiated like the author.

This differentiated geography of the gravel plain - a solid distinction between North and South, a subtle difference between East and West - also characterizes all processes of suburbanization, which take place in the euphoria of the Munich landscape in a particularly uninhibited extend, but produce very different pictures. To understand this, another level is considered, which is controlled by the national and global power and which forms infrastructures.

THE LAYER OF GLOBAL AND AUTONOMOUS SYSTEMS

The genesis of the new layer began in the Region of Munich presumably with the construction of castles and gardens by the former Prince Electors of Bavaria. With the Castles of Schleißheim and Nymphenburg they wanted to realize ideal models of art and dominance in front of the western and northern gates of the city. These were intended to put the city itself in the background. Taking this as an example the city, especially in the second half of the 20th century, pushed all the 'incompatible' buildings and functions into the same area.

In this era of growth and euphoria of prosperity the adjoining communities have taken this up: commercial and industrial areas, settlements of single

and multi-family houses, furniture markets, sewage treatment plants and dumping grounds, but, above all, the major airport. This airport has 'hy-perventilated' the former 'phlegmatic', mostly misty landscape of the Erdinger Moos and replaced the barrenness of the moorlands by the wasteland of asphalt and grass. And now it is Lufthansa which lets its 'cranes' land here.

Our measurement of the morphology and regional particularities again and again tracks a basic south-north line. Along this, the Munich landscape is extremely different. Between East and West there is less dramatic change. That is because the transition from the gravel plain to the final moraines in the south-west and east mostly takes place hidden in the forest or settlements. In the north-west, a small river called Amper enters the tertiary hills. On the escarpment the towns of Dachau and Freising make real 'thrones' 'from which one can see far out into the plain - but this protrusion is again more on the basic line between south and north. Unlike in the west the transition from the gravel plain to the hilly landscape in the north-east is not marked by a natural river, but by an artificial canal. On the border of the town it branches off most of the Isar's water and feeds power plants. Along

with the huge reservoir there this Isar Canal is therefore a part of the previously described functional suburban area [suburbaner Funktionsraum] that has been formed in the north of Munich.

The large-scale social structure shows a south-north gradient in the purchasing power in the municipalities of the region, whereas in the urban areas of Grünwald and Bogenhausen along the Isar a 'line of prosperity' stretches to the north. Since in the course of the migration to the suburbs even colonies of villas have protruded from the cities there have been formed in the west two more islands of prosperity with Pasing and Nymphenburg .

This topography of wealth is overlapped by another separate layer. Households with children move to settle down in concentric circles around the city. A 'family belt' has been set up that extends far into the region. This must be differentiated according to the local and long- distance commuter rings. So it surpasses public transport tariff rings deep into the region.

With the explosive growth of cities since the second half of the nineteenth century, they have systematically been provided with infrastructure. Autonomous systems of transport and supplies have been formed which determined the development of the city so

that on this layer cities arose friendly to transport and supply. Munich has developed seven such key-systems: the express railway axis, the main regular line and the subway network, the urban and regional Isar canals, the motorway ring, the central ring road, the hub airport and the landscape of dumping grounds [Entsorgungslandschaft] at Fröttmaning - Ismaning. In addition to those systems that clearly shape the area, there are more functional systems attached to those: the soccer arenas and trade fairs, the logistics centres. Along the railway lines and highways band-like business parks are being developed.

Those systems are certainly embedded in the city and the landscape, but they follow only their own laws. So everywhere there is confrontation: through noise, obstruction and cuts, through stigmatization and increased pressure on the system which arises at access points and junctions like railway stations and motorway exits. Compared to natural morphology and social topographies, however, these systems do not behave as indifferently. They ignore the urban fabric and the cultural landscape layers but follow the large-scale morphologies and social structures.

So the systems all reinforce all the north-south differences in the Mu-

nich area. The ring road has not been completed in the south because of morphological and social reasons. The deep cleft of the river Isar and the wealthy people here are stronger than the rules of the highway system. The water is supplied from the mountains and the forests of the south with their clean soil. The contaminated landscape of the northern gravel layer can no longer provide a comparable quality of water. In this direction however, runs only the sewage disposal. Landfill sites and sewage treatment plants are found there.

Not only the family belts in the suburbs but also modern urban extensions are created on the principle of the system. One example for that is the exhibition center of Riem, which was built on a former airfield in the past decade. It was not planned according to the network of the Greek polis, but according to the system of a Roman military settlement, with *Cardo* and *Decumanus* not being justified by necessary troop movements or cosmic systems but by weak winds and flows of cold air. Even the borders between public and private space have not been formed by an urban texture but by a 'graded system of open spaces'.

As indicated earlier, systems were created before industrialization. They

can be described for example in the landscape of the time of absolutism, in which princes started the migration of city functions to the suburbs. Starting from the hunting stars in the forests and along the lines of the model of French Baroque, the castles with their large gardens were connected for miles through the countryside by a network of visual axes both with each other and with numerous steeples - a symbolic system of secular and religious rule. The North Munich Canal System of the same time served both for transporting building materials to the palaces as well as for baroque pleasures playfully imitating Venetian canal cruises - an early leisure park in the landscape.

Such systems - now without function - are waiting to become part of the city and part of the landscape on a different layer.

THE MEDIATING LAYER, THE FABRIC OF THE CITY AND THE PALIMPSEST OF THE LANDSCAPE

Over the Everyday worlds and regional habitus on the one, the autonomous systems on the other side lies, as described in the introduction of this book, the layer of the natural morphologies and regional cultures. Between the everyday worlds and the system, there is another layer. City and

countryside form a fabric of places for living, for activities and consuming, and thus an layer for mediation between everyday life and the other two layers, Globalization and the autonomous systems. Regarding the city this network has been called a fabric (texture - Colin Rowe, Fred Koetter, tissu urbaine - Henri Lefebvre) in order to emphasize the fact that here actions and relationships overlap in high density. Concerning the landscape the texture was named a palimpsest (André Corboz) in order to emphasize the overlapping there of historical enrollments and layers. Yet it has been noted that city can be a palimpsest and landscape can make a texture. Among many others, streets and blocks can most easily be recognized as structural elements of this layer in towns as well as ways and fields in the landscape.

The fine structures of cultural landscape that have developed in field boundaries, road networks and what in them is the mosaic of agricultural uses, do not play any special role in the Munich area. Impressive descriptions, as they usually occur in other landscapes, of the open fields, hedgerows, orchards, vine terraces, cabbage fields, sewage farms and many other things do not exist for Munich.

The French landscape architect Gilles Vexlard, in his design of the great

landscape park of Munich-Riem, re-constructed old field boundaries and rebuilt them as axes in the park. However, it can be observed that this means a great challenge to the visitors because they do not at all expect historical construction lines in the Munich landscape. Instead people erroneously like to relate this Frenchman to the Baroque axis systems, such as those described for the north of Munich, and one is disappointed accordingly that the supposed visual axes do not have any symbolic starting or destination points. But the other layer exposed by Vexlard, namely the transition from forest and settlement enclaves in the south to the open heath plains in the north of Munich, is easily understood in Riemer Park.

Large-scale morphology always dominates the fine structures of the cultural landscape in the Munich area. It is Vexlard's good intention to develop parks neither as horticultural quotations nor as guidance systems for pastimes but as part of a landscape that re-connects everything. So beyond park boundaries the suburban residential landscape is offered integration, but unfortunately it is met by other developments of space which are insensitive to the fine structures of the landscape because they are planned either systematically or globally.

First of all this does not apply to the old urban textures of Munich. Unlike in other German cities, after the Second World War, the road network and the building alignments of Munich were not subjected to total revision. The road network in the Old Town and the oldest of the extensions of it follows the relief. The roads and squares correspond to the borders of the blocks so that this part of the fabric gets tight and twisty. But since these preserved parts of the town have also been subjected to road traffic with the widest possible streets, parking lanes and one-way traffic regulations, narrowness arises from density. Even some avenues with the slender column-like poplars increase the emphasis of the vertical and the necessarily somewhat stifling effect.

Apparently there is no negative impact on the people of Munich. They compensate for the urban canyons with green courtyards, and conquer the streets themselves at least one day in July by street parties. These came into existence in neighbourhoods with a committed population - Schwantalerhöhe, Schwabing, Glockenbachviertel, Maxvorstadt - and were developed in the 1970s. Nowadays in many different districts in Munich almost one hundred and fifty street parties are organised every year.

Because of the street festivals, a quality that only in the dense suburbs of the 'Gründerjahre' (period of industrial expansion in Germany from 1871 on) could be created was transferred to other districts, although these do not have the spatial qualities described. terraced housing, apartment buildings or large housing estates just do not correlate – apart from exceptions such as the Borstei in its interiors - with the spaces of the streets and squares that make them accessible so that a relationship to public space which can be used for every day life, and not (only) as a traffic area, is much more difficult to provide.

In some of these 'modern' neighbourhoods though once being a homogeneous population that consisted of workers, nevertheless a vibrant public scene has developed. Because of the heated Munich property market those districts are now subjected to the process of gentrification. The improvements of the environmental quality of neighbourhoods have contributed to this. So the football matches of the two major Munich clubs moved from the stadiums in the inner city - naturally to the northern - outskirts also for noise abatement reasons. For the district of Giesing this meant a significant loss of identity, which speeds up the decay of the old neighbourhood milieu. A

comparable effect have the tunnels of the Middle Ring. The northern section was covered by a park. As a result, the population in the adjacent residential areas has been exchanged, since rents have increased by the newly-won quality of life.

Although the socio-spatial structure of city and landscape in Munich cannot be summarized under one single aspect, still the emergence of 'semi-urban neighbourhoods' has to be stressed, neighbourhoods and suburbs that consist of relatively homogeneous milieux, especially in the 'scene' and in the family quarters. In spite of this there still exists in the area of Munich a highly urban open culture which is both capable of integration and hospitable.

This has to be ascribed to certain key locations. Not only The City with Marienplatz does belong to them, but as a counterpart also Theresienwiese at the time of the October Festival and finally some larger urban areas. also In addition to those such places as Nymphenburger Park and above all the English Garden, which is one of the most beautiful and lively parks in the world, must be named. Of quite comparable importance is the beer garden culture. Thus Munich has not a single centrality, but a landscape of various urban islands, whose centres not uncom-

monly are build by parks and gardens, a 'picturesque polycentrality'. This picturesque polycentrality makes the open city and at the same time the social glue which the semi-urban milieus and all urban extensions beyond the suburbs, the settlements and suburban landscapes cannot offer.

Munich is a contradictory landscape. There is a lack of urban and landscape fabric in the large suburban zones between the inner-city edges and the countrysides. A fabric, that could make the collision between the world of systems and the everyday worlds productive and sufferable. But the lack is enforced by the south-north-distinction of the landscape and the wealth in the region. These cracks are cotted by a collective experience of the sublime, by fine tuned differences between east and west and by a picturesque polycentrality. This can not content, because these cotters are dependent from only a few factors, especially a high prosperity level that ensures liberty of consume and mobility. To hold this level today means extraordinary stress for a large part of the population in the region.

The planning system tries to preserve a reputed contradiction of town and country at the periphery of Munich, e.g. by highlighting a 'green belt'. Instead of positioning landscape as a

force against the urban, it seems to be much more important to develop the fine structures of the existing and rising urban and suburban quarters. Understanding as the basic spatial structure in suburban spaces, Landscape - 'urban landscape' - has to be developed as careful as the City.