

REVIEW ARTICLE

Cultural identity and the city: a review of Eugen Wirth's *Die orientalische Stadt im islamischen Vorderasien und Nordafrika*

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Wirth, E. (2000) *Die orientalische Stadt im islamischen Vorderasien und Nordafrika: Städtische Bausubstanz und räumliche Ordnung, Wirtschaftsleben und soziale Organisation*, 2 vols. (Verlag Philipp von Zabern, Mainz, vol. I, 584 pp.; vol. II, 168 plates, 112 in colour, 3 folded maps)

Cities and their evolution in space and time are the academic battlefield of many scientific disciplines and – analogous to the connotation of ‘urbanism as a way of life’ (Wirth, 1938) – an arena of controversial discussions and versatile interpretations. Depending on academic background and research interests, historians, architects, political scientists, sociologists and economists, to mention only a few disciplines, have developed their specific approaches towards urban studies. Geographers are no exception – quite the contrary! With specific interests in the form and function of cities, quite a few of them have also pursued the idea of identifying not only the uniqueness of individual cities by formal criteria, but also of developing regionally differentiated typologies of cities as part of, and as an expression of, cultural identity in a regional and historical perspective. The book under review represents just such an approach.

Eugen Wirth's comprehensive study on *Die orientalische Stadt im islamischen Vorderasien und Nordafrika* (Wirth, 2000) is an attempt to describe and to understand the

peculiarities and unique specificities of a city type that has been called by some authors the ‘Islamic city’. While Wirth, for good reasons, rejects the idea of religion-based urban identity, the focus is nevertheless on urban forms and structures in the world of Islam. Similarly, the origins of the Islamic realm are more or less identical with what has been called ‘the cradle of our civilization’ and the birthplace of mankind's first cities more than five or six thousand years ago. It is the author's explicit aim to understand and to interpret the city of the Islamic Near/Middle East and North Africa as an urban type in its own right in the light of its historical development and its specific form and functions. But it is also an attempt to contribute to a better understanding of the ‘very essence’ (*das Wesen einer Stadt*) of oriental cityscapes. However, talking about geographical studies and their search for the very essence of Middle Eastern/Islamic urbanism, the Turkish urban historian Inalcik reminded us, years ago, that ‘Anthropologists and geographers will discover ‘meaning’ only after the necessary ‘fieldwork’ in the court record of Islamic cities has been done’

(Inalcik, 1990).

So, what can be expected from a book written by a geographer, dealing with 'the Oriental city' in Islamic North Africa and the Near/Middle East, covering several thousand years of urban traditions in an area stretching from the Atlantic to the borders of the Indian subcontinent and focusing on the exploration of the uniqueness and the 'meaning' of its urbanism and urbanity? How and to what extent can urban forms and functions be a pathfinder to regional and cultural identities? Before answering these and other related questions, a short introduction is warranted into the specifics of German urban geography in general and to the author of this remarkable and impressive study.

Background

In 1988, Eugen Wirth, author of the book under review and at that time chairman of the German National Committee for the International Geographical Union (IGU), edited a report to the IGU on the occasion of its 26th International Geographical Congress in Sydney, Australia. In the introductory chapter of this report, entitled 'Overseas exploratory fieldwork – a specific tradition in German geography', Wirth argued that 'the central theme of scientific geography in Germany ... is systematic and organized accumulation of geographical knowledge during planned overseas fieldwork, which already in the nineteenth century characterized the scientific work of German geographers' (Wirth, 1988, p. 11). Somewhat later and specifically talking about 'German geographical research in the Middle East and North Africa', Wirth became more precise in regard to the merits of this overseas exploratory fieldwork. Comparing international geographical research on the Middle East (especially German studies with those of English-speaking countries like the United States or the United Kingdom as well as with France), Wirth (1988, p. 97) concludes that 'geographical Orient research by German speakers ... belongs to the forefront of scientific investigations in this field', sharing

'this place with French Orient research focusing more on research on the material culture'. And then he continues,

In some research fields German geographers have opened up completely new directions of research and new research priorities. They have developed innovative themes of research and have worked with methods that had not yet been applied in the Orient. Geographical field research being related to space and dealing with the material culture as well as with the reality of every day life instead of relying solely on sources of literature and archives has led to new concepts and a better understanding of a variety of scientific problems.

So field research, material culture and the realities of life versus archival histories, court records and *waqf* documents? Surely we need not subscribe to such a sharp dichotomy (see Ehlers, 1985). And surely Wirth does not have this alternative in mind. It remains true, however, that there is an extremely strong German tradition in geographical research in and on the Middle East and that urban studies are a prominent part of it. Similarly, much of this research is focused on urban forms and functions, and only a little is devoted to those underlying mechanisms of urban society, social structures and institutions that regulate urban life in the Near/Middle East and North Africa, as anywhere else. There is no doubt that Eugen Wirth has been the energetic promoter of this research not only by creating a focused urban studies programme at Erlangen University, but also by initiating urban studies at other German universities. These studies have sometimes been distinctly different in scope and content, and the stimuli for sometimes controversial, yet always enlightening, discussions and discourses over the nature of the 'Oriental city'.

German geographical work in and on the Middle East is embedded in a strong emphasis on questions of urban geography in general. Without going into details (for general surveys see Heineberg, 2000; Hofmeister, 1992; Lichtenberger, 1991 and,

for the Middle East, Bonine *et al.*, 1994), it must be noted that, whether specific or not, German geographers have always put great effort into identifying 'regional urban cultures'. That is, cities and city types have very often been investigated as foci of cultural and civilizational identities and as supreme expressions of cultural uniqueness and regionalisms on an almost global scale. The best proof for this specifically German interest are those seven or eight volumes that have been produced in the series 'Urbanization of the Earth' (Gebrüder Borntraeger, Berlin-Stuttgart), in which the following titles have been published so far (in chronological order):

- Hofmeister, B. (1971) *Stadt und Kulturraum Angloamerika* (outside the series)
 Manshard, W. (1977), *Die Städte des tropischen Afrika* (vol. 1)
 Schneider, K.-G. and Wiese, B. (1983) *Die Städte des südlichen Afrika* (vol. 2)
 Wilhelmy, H. and Borsdorf, A. (1985) *Die Städte Südamerikas*, 2 vols. (vol. 1: *Wesen und Wandel*; vol. 2: *Die urbanen Zentren und ihre Regionen*) (vol. 3)
 Rutz, W. (1985) *Die Städte Indonesiens* (English edition: *Cities and towns in Indonesia*, 1987) (vol. 4)
 Hofmeister, B. (1988) *Australia and its urban centres* (vol. 6)
 Schinz, Albert (1989) *Cities in China* (vol. 7).

A condensed and rather comprehensive attempt at such an approach is a collection of papers, presented by Austrian and German geographers on the occasion of a symposium in Bonn in 1991, held in honour of Chauncy D. Harris. The papers, published under the title *Modelling the city* (Ehlers, 1992) form a comparative attempt to characterize, for example, the North American city, the Latin American city, the cities of Tropical Africa, the city of the Islamic Middle East or the Chinese city, mostly by analysing the specificities of their form. The centre of attention is not the individual case study nor the contemporary problems of particular cities; rather, the historically-grown cultural specifics and the distinctiveness of regional

types, urban forms and functions, and their 'meaning' within their historic and cultural contexts.

It is against this background that the author and his monumental work on the 'Oriental city' have to be seen. Eugen Wirth, without doubt one of the best-known and most influential German geographers in the second half of the twentieth century, has spent most of his academic life on Middle Eastern studies and specifically on its urban cultures. His first trip to this region was as far back as 1953, a fact noted with pride several times in the book (see also Wirth, 1988, p. 96). And this interest and focus has persisted to the present. It reflects a deep intellectual curiosity and continuous effort to gain a better understanding of Middle Eastern urban problems and prospects, and a desire to set standards for others in their pursuit of geographical research. The ambiguity inherent in this – solid factual research, well-founded and broadly-based interpretations, and sometimes hard-to-digest moral statements and judgements – typifies not only many of Eugen Wirth's earlier publications, but also this *magnum opus* under review. To the extent that Wirth sometimes defies the well-researched findings and interpretations of others, some of his arguments may also be questionable. Considering that Wirth de-emphasizes individual city histories and archival records, one really wonders what scholars such as Edward Said would say about this publication, especially as, in quite a few instances, it provokes the feeling that this is intended as the final word on Middle Eastern urbanism and urbanity.

Contents

So, what about the contents of this book, its intent and working hypotheses, its foci of interest and arguments, its methodology and its theoretical considerations? The author himself gives a clear picture regarding what he wants to examine and where the ultimate balance shall lie: it is an investigation into the typology and characteristic features of the 'Oriental city' and its 'meaning' (*Wesen*).

His approach is based predominantly on empirical geographical field research, on the material culture of cities, and on comparative studies of a great number of characteristic urban examples. And it is, in the author's own words, less rational recognition and objective perception (*Erkennen*), and more personal confession (*Bekennen*) and subjective judgement (*Entscheiden*) that underlie many of the interpretations and scientific statements concerning the specifics of the 'Oriental city'. Such statements, outlined and substantiated in great detail in the book's introduction (especially pp. 7-12), give a charming as well as a challenging personal touch to this scholarly publication and its contents.

The book is unquestionably strong whenever and wherever the author deals with facts and figures – and there are plenty of them. Facts and figures are not only the fruit of those aforementioned decades of intensive personal field research on the many facets and regional variations of the 'Oriental city', but also of a superb command of the relevant scientific Western literature, both in an international and in a transdisciplinary context. Thus, Wirth never fails to draw fascinating insights from seemingly disconnected details, to formulate thought-provoking hypotheses about specific aspects of this urbanism and urbanity. He can stir disagreement when he presents those personal 'confessional interpretations' of phenomena that still lack clear and undisputed explanation, especially when consideration of archival records or non-material field research might have been helpful. This is particularly true for questions about urban society and its interconnections, as well as the roles played by religious, political, social and economic institutions and their impacts on urban structures and societies. Let us scrutinize the contents in selected details.

Chapter 1 (Origins, heydays and changes of the 'Oriental city') examines the urban origins and legacies of the ancient past and the Graeco-Roman period. New city foundations under the influence of an expanding Islamic empire and enlargements of inherited

urban designs are treated here, as well as those changes brought about by colonial influence and by westernized *villes nouvelles*. Tapping into the rich and versatile literature of archaeologists, historians, and the wide range of regional specialists, Wirth succeeds in suggesting a convincingly coherent development process for North African, Near and Middle Eastern urbanism from its very beginnings to the present. Although arguing that the 'Oriental city' is a distinct urban type with characteristics different from the urbanity of classical antiquity and of western-occidental cities, it also has close ties with the urban heritage of the Ancient Near and Middle East. The leitmotif behind this historical reconstruction is the somewhat controversial hypothesis that all urban developments in the Near/Middle East and North Africa were more or less planned, not only in pre-Islamic periods, but even under the influence of Islamic urban planning, and the later deteriorations of these designs.

Chapters 2, 3 and 4 (Functions of the 'Oriental city'; Urban economy – locations, spatial differentiations and spatial impacts; and Important building types) constitute by their sheer size the most important sections of the book. Covering a total of 265 pages (half of the entire text), Wirth elaborates extensively on the various formal aspects of North African and Near/Middle Eastern cities. This is urban morphology at its best! Referring back to its ancient predecessors and pointing to the surprising analogies of urban forms and designs over millennia (compare Fig. 42 with the residential quarters of ancient Ur, 1800 BC!), Wirth argues that intimacy and privacy of the personal or family sphere may always have been a specific characteristic of pre-Islamic urban developments in the regions under review. To be sure, they are one of the few specific determinants of the traditional spatial order of North African and Near/Middle Eastern cities in Islamic times. If there are differences in the applicability of this overall principle, then they are based on social determinants which express themselves in such things as the quality and social prestige of buildings, the availability of land,

and related issues. However, neighbourhood advantages, social prestige, and proximity to the centres of power are components of a differentiated urban order by no means unfamiliar to other urban cultures.

A highlight of all these discussions is, without doubt, Wirth's analyses of the *bazaar/sûq/carsi* as the traditional economic centre of any historical Middle Eastern city. Drawing upon his almost four decades of personal research and on the rich literature available in a great number of academic disciplines, this chapter alone covers 50 pages. The author concludes that the existence of a bazaar is a decisive characteristic and precondition for the identification of any city as an 'Oriental-Islamic city' (p. 151). The arguments Wirth has marshalled are convincing. His conclusion that the bazaar may be considered as the only original contribution of medieval Islamic culture to urban development at large, and that we may speak of an 'Oriental city' only when a bazaar is there, is one of the main arguments in favour of the uniqueness and specificity of the 'Oriental city' compared to the urban cultures of other parts of our globe. It is no exaggeration to argue that this chapter best demonstrates Wirth's basic conviction that the analysis of urban forms contributes to a fresh and better understanding of the uniqueness of the city-type under review. This is all the more so as Wirth concludes that the bazaar is a unique and authentic invention of the Islamic Middle Ages, an Islamic cultural heritage (Wirth, 1975).

In view of the author's outspoken interest in traditional, pre-modern urbanity and urbanism, it is understandable that Wirth's analyses of the modern commercial quarters of North African and Middle Eastern cities are comparatively short, as are those of urban trades and industries, and those of present-day urban infrastructure and services. But while these items may not be of central importance for a typology of the urbanism and urbanity of the Islamic world, they are all covered. Whether they wish to be informed about water and sewage, energy

supplies for urban households, public transport or aspects of scavenging, garbage collection and garbage removal, readers will not be disappointed and will find information. Based on a fairly substantial literature and on his own observations, Wirth gives local and regional examples. To what extent these can be generalized and connected with the Oriental city as a whole, however, remains open to question.

Beyond this, there are additional common traits in the urbanism and urbanity under review – beyond the role of the bazaars and the morphology of the traditional cities. For those familiar with the specific German discussions concerning Bobek's concepts of rent-capitalism and the parasitic role of city-hinterland relationships, Wirth's conclusions and arguments may be of special interest, and they give a wonderful insight into Wirth's style of argument. In line with his sense of research as a kind of personal confession rather than a rational analysis (p. 10), Wirth discusses a set of thoroughly-investigated case-studies and their conclusions with reference to a very specific (rent-capitalistic) city-hinterland relationship. These studies, by Bobek, Momeni, this reviewer, and others, show beyond doubt that rural production has been – and in parts of the Near and Middle East still is – a decisive factor behind urban wealth. Not only are many rural landlords in fact urbanites, consuming and investing their agricultural income within the cities, but the traditional political and religious cultures of the Near and Middle East are also so urbanized that rural development in the region has always lagged behind urban growth in all times and places. Conspicuous urban architecture, urban centres as places of political, religious and military dominance and very probably the 'invention' of the city itself are understandable only in the light of such city-hinterland relationships, for which the term 'rent capitalism' has been coined.

Wirth is at pains to criticize its validity in the light of new and barely comparable research findings. Apart from the fact that, of course, city-hinterland relationships are not the same as 30 years or 300 years ago, and

that new interpretations of older research data are legitimate, the question remains as to what kind of urbanism and urbanity the author is focusing his interest upon! If his hypothesis is that we do have, at least historically, a culturally specific type of 'Oriental city', then one should probably stick to its historic specificities which, nowadays, are without doubt fading away under the overall impacts of 'western-ization' or 'globalization'. That city-hinterland relationships comparable to those of the ancient and Islamic Near and Middle East may be found in other urban cultures as well is probably unquestioned. But is that reason enough to denounce an extremely fruitful geographical concept promoting a better understanding of the 'meaning' of Near/Middle Eastern urbanism only because it may not be valid any longer?

It would go beyond the limits of this survey if the reviewer would dive into all those details that fill the remaining chapters: a survey of the most important functional building types of the city and their formal characteristics (chapter 4, pp. 241-324); the short, but nevertheless very interesting and challenging interpretation of 'privacy as a dominant trait of urban life in the Orient' (chapter 5, pp. 325-36) which, according to Wirth, is an outstanding phenomenon in contrast to the public nature of occidental urban life since antiquity (Wirth, 1992). Chapter 6 (pp. 337-402) is devoted to urban residential quarters, their spatial and architectural designs and social interactions; chapter 7 (pp. 403-30) is on urban spaces under open skies. The final chapters, 8 (pp. 431-58) and 9 (pp. 459-514) deal with urban planning and urban designs with respect to the regional variations of the 'Oriental city' and its bazaars.

It is especially this last chapter which impressively shows both the necessity and even more the problems of a unified concept of North African and Near/Middle Eastern urbanism and urbanity – and this just from a formal-materialistic perspective. Formal differentiations between Turkish, Arab, and Persian cities may be more pronounced than

hitherto anticipated, albeit only on the basis of architectural designs and details. But such differences hardly suffice for a better understanding of the specific 'meaning' and uniqueness of the 'Oriental city' as a whole. Wirth is clearly aware of these problems, as is revealed in his somewhat hesitant and ambivalent introductory remarks as well as his somewhat indecisive conclusions on the problems of identifying the very 'essence' (*das Wesen*) of his research object.

Evaluation

In view of Wirth's intentional focus on the material culture of North African and Near/Middle Eastern cities and in view of his outspoken interest in the 'traditional' aspects of these cities, their institutions, and populations, it is obvious that the author is omitting – by purpose or necessity – themes, topics, debates, and references that one may normally expect under the title of *Die orientalische Stadt im islamischen Vorderasien und Nordafrika*. They include, for example, almost all aspects of the modern cities. Also missing is detailed consideration of the role of religious, social and economic institutions regulating the functions and interactions of urban economies and societies. And, strikingly, the relevant indigenous literature of Arab, Persian, Turkish or other native urban researchers is hardly taken into account. It is against this background that Wirth's final summary of his findings and conclusions has to be seen, and, in view of the author's self-defined focus on the material aspects of his research topic, to be judged. Thus cities in North Africa and the Near/Middle East are characterized by:

- a unique urban fabric and spatial order of the city with seven specificities, i.e. degeneration of urban ground-plans, blind alleys, courtyard houses, existence of separated residential quarters, intra-urban insecurity, centrally located commercial quarters (*sûq*) and diversified architectural building complexes;
- the dominance of the basic function of

- 'power'; and
- differences in the fabric of social order.

These findings and conclusions – so lavishly documented not only by 245 mostly whole-page figures in the text and an additional 168 maps, historical engravings, sketches, and photos (112 of which are in colour) in volume 2 of this study – are more than just an impressive personal summary of almost five decades of academic research. It is, beyond doubt, a monumental presentation and, at the same time, an invaluable state-of-the-art report on a vanishing urban culture and its stone-grown material expressions. And this, then, is the value of this book and of Wirth's merit: to have documented a specific North African and Near/Middle Eastern urbanity and urbanism, which, on the one hand, cannot be entirely disconnected from its ancient predecessors or its western-occidental successors and which, on the other hand, has its distinct and unquestioned uniqueness.

In his final remarks and especially, however, in his introduction to the bibliography of his book, Wirth repeats not only his own focus on the material aspects of the 'Oriental city', but also the merits, scientific advantages, and insights as well as the intellectual outcomes of such an approach. It is Wirth himself who, on the very last page of his book (p. 536) admits that his exploration of the very 'essence' and the specific characteristics of his research object may not be altogether satisfactory. Such a scepticism is commendable and it leads us back to Inalcik who argued that 'meaning' may only be discovered in the court records of Islamic cities.

As a matter of fact, Wirth's book really lacks extensive examples and discussions of what is lying behind all those manifestations of urban material splendour and the richness and poverty of its societies. As indicated earlier, there is not too much on traditional urban institutions and their societal foundations or impacts. Sure enough, the book deals with traditional organizational structures of trades and industries. It has

paragraphs on the city and its inhabitants. It mentions the togetherness and social interactions within residential quarters and it even has a small section on 'the urban poor'. And especially remarkable are Wirth's references to the big urban endowments (*waqf*) and their importance for urban structures and designs – a topic on which he has made two essential contributions! And still, and in spite of all these hints, a certain bloodlessness of the 'urban whole' is noticeable. We see and we understand the urban forms. We know what their bones and joints are. We get indications of how they work and interact. But do we really learn the functioning of this urban organism as a whole, its physiology? One will look in vain for a specific chapter on the urban population, on specific religious, social and political institutions and their importance for the functioning of urban systems. And this in spite of an extensive existing historical literature, not to mention relevant publications in Arabic, Turkish and Persian. Again, Wirth seems to be aware of these deficits when he is quoting himself in regard to J. Sauvaget's monograph on Aleppo (1941), arguing that the combination of a very solid archival research together with equally solid field research is the only way to unveil at least a few secrets from such a complicated structure as a city (p. 532). Wirth himself has proven the validity of this statement in his careful analyses of the bazaar of Esfahan (Gaube and Wirth, 1978) or of Aleppo (Gaube and Wirth, 1984), both studies carried out in close co-operation with an Islamologist. And it is patently clear that such accuracy and detail cannot be expected in a regionally all-embracing survey of the 'Oriental city' in Islamic North Africa and the Near/Middle East. But some more 'blood' surely would have added to a more holistic understanding of the phenomenon of the 'Oriental city'.

In summary, Eugen Wirth's comprehensive survey is undoubtedly a milestone in the search for the specificities and peculiarities of his research object. Its achievement lies, however, not so much in the successful

unveiling of the 'meaning', the *Wesen*, of the 'Oriental city', but much more in the documentation and analysis of its physical form. And here, Wirth has succeeded in producing a work which anybody who intends to work on North African and/or Near and Middle Eastern cities for many years to come will find difficult to ignore. And it will prove to be a milestone in the research on the 'Oriental city' in Islamic North Africa and the Near/Middle East, which any serious future investigation will have to take into account.

Coming back to our own introductory statements and Wirth's own perception of the postulated merits of German research on the Islamic Orient, one final point must be addressed. It is a pity that Wirth's study is available only in German. While in Germany it is undoubtedly a success (with several reprintings since its first publication in 2000), it deserves a broader reception and recognition beyond the German-speaking academic community. But would it not be conceited to expect non-German-speakers to learn German because of a supposed or real academic highlight publication? Surely not! In a recent article, Chauncy D. Harris (2001) has argued that, especially in the international academia, it might be deceptive to read only English literature because such 'an exaggerated self-confidence ... ignores much of the best geographical literature of the world simply because it is not in English' (Harris 2001, p. 686). Wirth's book under review surely belongs in this general category; therefore, it is hoped that its publication in German may not be a limiting factor in regard to its broad international reception.

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ISUF 2004

ISUF 2004 will take the form of consecutive meetings in Glasgow, Scotland and Newcastle upon Tyne, England in August 2004. In Glasgow, at the invitation of the International Geographical Union, there will be five sessions on urban morphology at the Thirtieth International Geographical Congress (IGC). These will be on 19 and 20 August 2004 (the IGC itself lasts from 15 to 20 August). The sessions in Glasgow will be followed by a Symposium in Urban Morphology in Newcastle upon Tyne, England from 21 to 24 August. On 21 August there will be a coach excursion between Glasgow and Newcastle upon Tyne. Participants may wish to register for either the Glasgow sessions or the Newcastle symposium or both. However, the number of places available at the symposium in Newcastle will be limited.

Proposals of papers for the sessions in Glasgow should be sent (preferably electronically in WORD format) to Professor J.W.R. Whitehand, School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 2TT, UK (E-mail: J.W.R. Whitehand@bham.ac.uk). The topics covered will include the history and future of urban morphology, the changing urban landscape, and urban morphology and planning practice.

As well as marking the tenth anniversary of the inauguration of ISUF, the Symposium in Newcastle upon Tyne marks the fortieth anniversary of the urban morphology symposium organized by M.R.G. Conzen following the last

IGC held in the UK, in 1964. The symposium will include field seminars in Alnwick and Newcastle upon Tyne, two of the main 'laboratories' in which Conzen made his path-breaking advances in the middle decades of the last century.

Proposals of papers for the symposium in Newcastle should be sent (preferably electronically in WORD format) to Dr Michael Barke, Division of Geography, University of Northumbria, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 8ST, UK (E-mail: michael.barke@unn.ac.uk). The topics covered will include Caniggian and Conzenian concepts, developments in town-plan analysis, and urban landscape conservation.

Proposals, both for the sessions in Glasgow and the symposium in Newcastle upon Tyne, should have the following format: name of author(s), affiliation, postal address, e-mail address, telephone number, fax number, title of paper, and an abstract of about 250 words. The deadline for the receipt of proposals is 1 December 2003. Proposers of papers will be notified by 15 February 2004 whether their proposals have been accepted.

Intending participants in the Glasgow sessions will find information about registration at the IGC 2004 web site (www.meetingmakers.co.uk/IGC-UK2004). Information about registration for the Newcastle symposium will be available on ISUF's web site (www.let.rug.nl/isuf/) from 1 February 2004.
