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Utopia, university and architecture : a journey that changed the design of contemporary universities

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Abstract

In 1927, a group of advisors to King Alfonso XIII of Spain, led by the architect Modesto López-Otero, set out for the United States and Canada. Previously, they had visited a number of European cities where they examined the medieval architectural form of some famous universities. Inspired by a Utopian vision, the journey to the New World studied the American University as a possible model ? in terms of lifestyle and physical layout ? for the design for the new University City in Madrid. Searching for inspiration, the group visited New Haven, Boston, Ann Arbor, Rochester, Washington, Baltimore, Princeton and New York, as well as Toronto and Montreal in Canada. The outcome of so significant a journey was the establishment in Spain's capital of the first University campus in Europe to be planned along American lines. This article focuses on the Utopian origins of this inspired quest, the results of which created a new bridge between the university cultures of Europe and America. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)