

Edinburgh, from the Royal Mile to the spread-out city.

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ABSTRACT

Edinburgh, from the Royal Mile to the spread-out city, is a work about the Edinburgh's historic urban evolution and about the origin and changes experienced by its society. The spirit of this thesis has been to try to achieve the understanding of the experiences lived throughout an unforgettable Erasmus in Glasgow. From the distance of Barcelona, from the Mediterranean, few months after the return, the memory reaches the perspective of the reflection, not without certain nostalgia.

Edinburgh, capital of Scotland, subject to continuous transformations captures perfectly in each one of them the variations of its society and its power structures throughout the time. The history of this country is the transit from the Celt World to the Modernity. If for something I consider this dissertation especially interesting is because it analyzes how after the beginning of this process of changes 900 years ago, it still keeps alive in its people the primary folk of a very primitive conception of life, that in full Postmodernity allows them to achieve the prime of life. Understand the Scottish character without know its origins, its history and its weather is just impossible.

The reader is going to find the thesis divided in two parts: *Edinburgh and the Old World* and *Edinburgh towards the Modernity*. With this structure I try to help to understand where Edinburgh comes from and towards it goes.

The first part is devoted to the origins of Edinburgh, to the circumstances, to the conditions and to the limitations that are its reason to be. Unlike of another big European capitals Edinburgh is not allocated in a big natural port or in a strategic cross of a river. What prevailed here was the security of the Rock. This advantageous position attracted the belligerent Scottish monarchy to the old Celt fort of Din Eydin. Until the Normand arrival to the Great Britain at middle XI century the village was reduced to this walled seed nucleus with a rural social structure typical of the Metal Age. David I was who, with the foundation of Holyrood Abbey in 1128 and the burghs of Edinburgh and Canongate in 1130, broke the ancestral limits of Edinburgh's imaginary. Castle and Abbey defined the Royal Mile, the axis upon was going to pass the public life and was going to decide the fate of the country. It was given the definitive impulse to consolidate this town as the focus of the politic, military, religious, economic, administrative and cultural power. It was going to be the capital of the unfortunate Stewart dynasty. In the Old Town, from the Castle to Holyrood, between its walls and the Canongate mansions, it was going to make the plots of the fight for the power.

The second part of this description starts with the departure of James VI to London in 1603. Edinburgh, the proud capital, was suffering the hardest and depth crisis of its history. It had lost its paper, its justification, it was now in the margin of the map, it didn't know who was at all, but it offered resistance. Hence, the XVII century was the one of the fight for the legitimacy. After the Union Act of 1707, Scotland lost definitively its politic and administrative independency, moving its parliamentary powers to London. Edinburgh needed to reinvent itself. The economical improving resulted of the union with England and the great generation of Scottish intellectuals of the second part of the XVIII century were going to convert Edinburgh in one of the European capitals of the Illustration. It was then when with the New Town of James Craig it was going to recover the lost prestige. Edinburgh was again the suitable place to make business, be close to the power and have influences. After the success of the first expansion out of the medieval limits there were no reasons to stop the constructions, appearing the biggest neoclassic urban area of the XVIII and XIX centuries of the World, declared by the UNESCO as *World Heritage Site*. The dissertation is closed with a brief reflection about the urban develop of Edinburgh during the XX century following the scheme of a spread-out city. With it Edinburgh goes back to its folks.