City as Symbol[*]

Paul Wheatley

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We are living at a culminating period in the history of the city, at a time when we can confidently anticipate the conclusion of two cycles in the process of urbanization.[1] The first is that which took its origin some five thousand years ago with the so-called (but somewhat inappropriately named) Urban Revolution,[2] the second constitutes an epicycle on this secular process which was initiated as recently as the eighteenth century, when the emergence of modern industrial technology began to exacerbate inequalities in the incidence of urbanism among the world's populations. Now, when the rate of urbanization in industrial communities is tending to decline at the same time as it is accelerating in most underdeveloped countries, we are approaching a time when not only will all men live in terms of the city, but urban dwellers will again be distributed more or less in accordance with regional population densities.[3] It seems inevitable that by the end of the twenty-first century a universal city, Ecumenopolis, will have come to comprise a world-wide network of hierarchically ordered urban forms enclosing only such tracts of rural landscape as necessary for man's survival.[4]

At this climacteric juncture it is not unnatural that the advancing frontiers of urbanism and of urbanization in recent and contemporary times should have been the subject of more intensive study than has been accorded the long periods of traditional city life. And it was to be expected that investigation of contemporary urbanism would focus on its most impressive manifestations, namely the cities of Western Europe and North America, and, to a lesser extent, those of Japan. The result is that the study of urban phenomena has been confined very largely to these realms, with only occasional tentative forays into peripheral territories—which more often than not have been the regions of exported European culture. It follows that most of the formulations and hypotheses current in urban studies are based on the Euro-American experience, and have comparatively seldom been tested in the conditions of the traditional world.

[4] This lack of attention to cities outside the cultural sphere of the West becomes all the more important when we remember that two out of every three people in the world today are living in so-called under-developed territories, territories which have as many large cities and as many dwellers in large cities as do the industrialized nations. In other words, urbanism (though not at present urbanization) is as significant a phenomenon in the under-developed as in the industrial sectors of the world. Of course, by no means all cities in the under-developed world are "traditional" in the sense in which I am using the term. Many constitute islands of Westernization in a sea of traditional society, and not infrequently all or a proportion of their

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[1] **[27]** In this lecture the term *city* will be used generically to denote any urban form, and will carry none of the ancillary connotations of size, status, or origin which are implicit in contemporary everyday American or English usage. *Urbanism* will be used to denote that particular set of functionally integrated institutions which were first devised some five thousand years ago to mediate the transformation of relatively egalitarian, ascriptive, kin-oriented groups into socially stratified, politically organized, territorial based societies, and which have since progressively extended both the scope and autonomy of their institutional spheres so that today they mold the actions and aspirations of vastly the larger proportion of mankind. *Urbanization* refers to the ratio of city dwellers to total population.

[2] The expression 'Urban Revolution' is inappropriate because, defined essentially in stylistic and technological terms, it arbitrarily delimits as a discrete event what was in fact a secular procession differentiation which had its origins deep in the era of Developed Village Farming, and which attained fruition only in centuries long subsequent to the first appearance of those archaeological assemblages which are customarily regarded as indicative of urban status. In a very real sense these latter were only incidental, and to a large extent accidental, to the process of urban genesis as a whole. For a discussion of other undesirable implications in the rubric 'Urban Revolution' see Robert McC. Adams, *The Evolution of Urban Society: Early Mesopotamia and Prehispanic Mexico* (Chicago, 1966), pp. 9–10.

[3] It should be observed that this burgeoning urbanization in the so-called Third or Under-developed World is not simply a repetition of those events which took place in the advanced nations mainly during the nineteenth century. Whereas the latter was primarily the result of migration from rural areas, contemporary urbanization in the Third World is being generated predominantly by biological increases in the population of cities themselves. It follows that, whereas in the nineteenth and early twentieth century the growth of urbanization was intimately related to economic development, in the under-developed nations of the present day it has become, as Kingsley Davis puts it, unhinged from economic advancement. The movement of people from the countryside to the city, massive in scale though it be in the aggregate, is barely compensating for the differences between the rates of natural population increase in city and country. For the statistical basis of this argument see Davis, "The Urbanization of the Human Population," *Scientific American*, 213 (1965), 41–53; Emrys Jones, *Towns and Cities* (London, 1966), Ch. 2; T. G. McGee, *The Southeast Asian City: A Social Geography of the Primate Cities of Southeast Asia* (London, 1967), Ch. 1. Although the statistical evidence presented by Kingsley Davis and Hilda Hertz Golden in "Urbanism and the Development of Pre-Industrial Areas," *Economic Development and Change*, 3 (1954), 6–26, relates to the early fifties, the principles that they expound are still largely valid some fifteen years later.

[4] This view of man's urban future has been substantially influenced by the writings of Konstantinos A. Doxiadis, *Ecumenopolis: Towards the Universal City* (Athens, 1961); *On the Measure of Man* (Athens, 1964); and *The New World of Urban Man* (Athens, 1965); and to a lesser extent by Lowdon Wingo, Jr. (ed.), *Cities and Space: The Future Use of Urban Land* (Baltimore, 1961); Richard L. Meier, *A Communications Theory of Urban Growth* (Cambridge, Mass., 1962).

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inhabitants have closer affinities with the industrial mores of the West than with the disintegrating traditions of their own cultures. Yet the fact remains that the urbanist who ignores the traditional city is rejecting something like half the data potentially available for even a synoptic study; and it is self-evident that in the perspective of history by far the greater proportion of urban dwellers have lived in traditional-style cities, among them some of the most impressive examples of urban form ever to have been constructed. Marco Polo's astonishment at *la tre nobilisme cité qui est appellé Quinsal*[5] has often been cited. According to one recension of *La Devisement dou Monde* the name of this city *vuol dire città del cielo, perchè al mondo non vi è una simile, né dove si truovino tanti piaceri e che l'huomo si reputi essere in Paradiso*.[6] Even a relatively minor Asian capital could arouse the admiration of visitors from the most advanced cities of Europe, as witness Caesar Fredericke's description of Pegu, whose streets and avenues "are the fayrest that I have seen."[7] On another continent, Hernán Cortés could find no words to do justice to the splendor of Tenochtitlán under Moctezuma II (A.D. 1502–1520). Of the buildings comprising the royal palace he, an hidalgo, dared to write to the emperor that they were "*tan maravillosas que me parecerla casi imposible poder decir la bondad y grandeza de ellas, y por tanto no me pondré en expresar cosa de ellas más que en España no hay su semejable*."[8] Nor were the words of the aged Bernal Díaz del Castillo any less explicit as he recollected, in characteristically rough-hewn phrases, the magnificence of the Aztec cities as he had known them half a century previously: **[5]**

> Y desde que vimos tantas ciudades y villas pobladas en el agua, y en tierra firme otras grandes poblazones, y aquella calzada tan derecha y por nivel cómo de encantamiento que cuentan en el libro de Amadis, por las grandes torres y cúes y edificios que tenían

dentro en el agua, y todos de calicanto, y aun algunos de nuestros soldados decían que si aquello que veían si era entre sueños, y no es de maravillar que yo escriba aquí de esta manera porque hay mucho que ponderar en ello no sé como lo cuente: ver cosas nunca oídas, ni aun soñadas, como veíamos.[9]

As a matter of fact we are so poorly informed about the traditional city that it is often difficult to say which elements of current theory are applicable to it and which are not. At the most elementary level of investigation, for example, there have been few studies of the functions of such fundamental units of urban structure as the ethnic quarter and the ward, of the way in which they articulate with municipal government, and of the instruments employed in the resolution of conflicts between them.[10] An

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[5] **[28]** From Luigi Foscolo Benedetto's transcription of *MS français* 1116 in the Bibliothèque Nationale, now known as the *F* version (but formerly often referred to as the Geographic Text): *Marco Polo, Il Milione, prima edizione integrale*, a cura di L... F... B... Comitato Geografico Nazionale Italiano, Pubbl. No. 3 (Firenze, 1928), p. 143.

[6] From the Italian version printed in vol. 2 of Giovanni-Battista Ramusio's *Navigationi et Viaggi* of 1559 [the *R* recension]. Benedetto has shown that this text, of which there is no MS version , is based on a fourteenth-century rendering of Fra Francesco Pipino's popular Latin translation, itself derived from a Venetian recension.

The original form of the name which Polo transcribed as *Quinsal* was *Hsing Tsai*, meaning 'The Temporary Abode,' the courtesy title under which the city of Hang-Chou had been known when it had served as the capital of the Southern Sung dynasty.

[7] *The Voyage and Travell of M. Caesar Fredericke, Marchant of Venice, into the East India, and Beyond the Indies...* translated out of Italian by M. Thomas Hickocke. Included in later editions of Richard Haykluyt's *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffìques & Discoveries of the English Nation*, 3 (London; New York, n.d.), 245.

[8] Hernán Cortés, *Cartas de relación de la conquista de Méjico* (2nd ed.; México, 1963), p. 55.

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[9] Bernal Díaz del Castillo, *Historia verdadera de la conquista de Nueva España*, Introducción y notas de Joaquín Ramírez Cabañas (5th ed.; México, 1960), p. 147.

[10] In the first published attempt at a cross-cultural analysis of traditional urbanism Gideon Sjoberg has assembled most of the information available on these, and a great many other, aspects of the pre-industrial city, but his labors only serve to emphasize the extent of our ignorance about numerous significant sectors of life in those cities. A recent work which has investigated the functioning of one particular genus of city in depth is Ira M. Lapidus's *Muslim Cities in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, Mass., 1967). The general structure of the Muslim city is also discussed by Xavier de Planhol, *Le Monde Islamique: Essai de Géographie Religieuse* (Paris, 1957), Ch. 1; and G. E. von Grünebaum, "Die islamische Stadt," *Saeculum*, 6 (1955), 138–153. Pioneer studies of the Chinese city were undertaken by, among others, Wolfram Eberhard, "Data on the Structure of the Chinese City in the Pre-Industrial Period," *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, 6 (1957), 253–268, and "The Structure of the Pre-Industrial Chinese City," *Collected Papers*, 1: *Settlement and Social Change in Asia* (Hong Kong, 1967), 43–64; Etienne Balazs, "Chinese Towns." *Chinese Civilization and Bureaucracy: Variations on a Theme* (New Haven and London, 1964), pp. 66–78; Miyazaki Ichisada, "Les villes en Chine à l'époque des Han," *T'oung Pao*, 48 (1960), 176–192; *Chugoku Jokaku uo kigen isetsu* (Tokyo, 1933, reprinted in *Ajia-shi kenkyu*, 1, 1957). Investigation of the external relations of Chinese cities has been virtually restricted to the Sung period: cf., for example, the relevant titles in the bibliography appended to Wheatley, "Geographic Notes on Some Commodities Involved in Sung Maritime Trade," *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 32, Pt. 2 (1961), 1–140. In September 1968 a conference on "Urban Society in Traditional China," convened at Wentworth-by-the-Sea in New Hampshire under the auspices of the Subcommittee on Research on Chinese Society of the American Council of Learned Societies and the Social Science Research Committee Joint Committee on Contemporary China, marked the first sustained attempt to present an overall view of the specifically Sinic character of the Chinese city. The implications, though not the substance, of a vast corpus of writing on the Japanese city are summarized by Takeo Yazaki in *Nikon Toshi no Hatten Katei* (Tokyo, 1962), and less fully in the same author's *Nikon Toshi no Shaki Riron* (Tokyo, **[29]** 1963); translated into English by David L. Swain, *The Japanese City: A Sociological Analysis* (Rutland, Vt., and Tokyo, 1963). Pre-Hispanic Peruvian urbanism has been survey by John Howland Rowe, "Urban Settlements in Ancient Peru," *Ñawpa Pacha*, 1 (1963), 1–28, and the Meso-American experience is summarized in several chapters of Gordon R. Wiley (ed.), *Prehistoric Settlement Patterns in the New World*, Viking Fund Publications in Anthropology No. 23 (New York, 1956). A bibliography of West African urbanism has recently been published by Ruth P. Sims, *Urbanization in West Africa: A Review of Current Literature* (Evanston, 1965), and the status of the traditional Yoruba city has been evaluated by Wheatley,

awareness of general absence of autonomous self-governing associations in the cities of Asia and pre-conquest America, as opposed to the prevalence of commune organization in Europe, is only now beginning to inform the literature of urban studies.[11] Neither do we know as much as we would like to know about the various roles, social, political, and economic, of the extended family in urban life, and in a manner in which its diverse activities are integrated with those of the quarter and of the city in general; nor has the functional and morphological significance of the powerful gentile institutions that commonly occur in traditional cities been elucidated to our complete satisfaction.[12] In the economic sphere a whole range of topics invites attention. For an adequate understanding of the nature of retailing, to mention only one of many themes, it will be necessary to achieve a measure of consensus in the continuing debate among scholars as to the possibility of the cross-cultural applicability of formal economic theory.[13] Only then will it prove practicable to explore with any degree of precision the status of marketing in the traditional city, including such topics as the relationship of central to neighborhood markets,[14] the social (as distinct from the purely exchange) functions of these institutions, the advantages of haggling where imperfect communication and **[6]** a lack of standardization of both products and measures render fixed prices impracticable,[15] and the rationale of the mobile form, as represented by the peddler, in cultural situations where minimum ranges of commodities tend to exceed maximum ranges.[16] As to the function of the shop in the pre-industrial city, I know of no comprehensive study that has been published to date. Only too obviously in, say, traditional India or China, it was not designed to afford maximal display of goods, and we are also vaguely aware that it often offered specialized credit facilities of a kind not provided by the Western-style shop; but beyond that lies only speculation and inference. Begging, frequently a subject of

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"The Significance of Yoruba Urbanism," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* (in press). The genesis of city life is discussed by Robert McC. Adams, *The Evolution of Urban Society: Early Mesopotamia and Pre-Hispanic Mexico* (Chicago, 1966), and by Wheatley, *The Pivot of the Four Quarters: A Preliminary Enquiry into the Origins of the Chinese City* (in press). The urban geography of non-Western areas is surveyed by Norton S. Ginsburg in Philip M. Hauser and Leo F. Schnore, *The Study of Urbanization* (New York, London and Sydney, 1965).

[11] The best discussion of this distinction on an ecumenical, though selective, basis is that incorporated in *La Ville: Recueils de la Société Jean Bodin*, 6 (Bruxelles, 1954).

[12] Adams has delineated the function of stratified kin groups in the earliest cities of Mesopotamia and Meso-America [*Evolution of Urban Society*, Ch. III]; and Wheatley in those of China [*The Pivot of the Four Quarters*, Ch. 1]. Horace Miner has discussed their role in Timbuctoo [*The Primitive City of Timbuctoo* (rev. ed., New York, 1965), Ch. 14]; Wheatley that in the traditional Yoruba city ["The Significance of Traditional Yoruba Urbanism"]; and Edward M Bruner that in Sumatran cities ["Kinship Organization among the Urban Batak of Sumatra," *Transactions of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 22 (1959), 118–125, "Urbanization and Ethnic Identity in North Sumatra, *American Anthropologist*, 63 (1963), 508–521, and "Medan: The Role of Kinship in an Indonesian City," in Alexander Spoehr (ed.) *Pacific Port Towns and Cities: A Symposium* (Honolulu, 1963), pp. 1–12].

[13] This controversy was initiated with the publication in 1957 by Karl Polanyi, Conrad M. Arensberg, and Harry W. Pearson (eds.) of *Trade and Market in Early Empires* (Glencoe, Ill.). Since that time the field of economic anthropology has been divided into two separate spheres of discourse, in which those who believe that the differences between the representative contemporary Western-style market and primitive-subsistence exchange are distinctions of degree confront those who believe that they are differences of kind. Polanyi's position has been supported by, among others, George Dalton ["Economic Theory and Primitive Society," *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 76 (1962), 360–378; "Primitive, Archaic, and Modern Economies: Karl Polanyi's Contribution to Economic Anthropology and Comparative Economy," June Helm (ed.), *Essays in Economic Anthropology*. Proceedings of the 1965 American Ethnological Society Meeting (Seattle, 1965)]; Paul Bohannan [*Social Anthropology* (New York, 1963), pp. 229–231 and 263–265; (with George Dalton) *Markets in Africa* (New York, 1965), and "Karl Polanyi 1886–1964: An Obituary," *American Anthropologist*, 67 (1965), 1508–1511]; Marshall Sahlins ["Political Power and Economy in Primitive Society," in R. Carneiro and G. Dole (eds.), *Essays in the Science of Culture* (New York, 1960); "Review of

Bert Hoselitz's *Sociological Aspects of Economic Growth*," in *American Anthropologist*, 64 (1962), 1063–1073]. His principle critics, implicitly or **[30]** explicitly, have been Edward E. LeClair ["Economic Theory and Economic Anthropology," *American Anthropologist*, 64 (1962), 1179–1203]; Robbins Burling ["Maximization Theories and the Study of Economic Anthropology," *American Anthropologist*, 64 (1962), 802–821], C. S. Belshaw [*Traditional Exchange and Modern Markets* (New Jersey, 1965)], and Scott Cook ["The Obsolete 'Anti-Market' Mentality: A Critique of the Substantive Approach to Economic Anthropology," *American Anthropologist*, 68 (1966), 323–345].

[14] A recent paper on this topic is B. W. Hodder's "Markets of Ibadan," in P. C. Lloyd, A. L. Mabogunje, and B. Awe (eds.), *The City of Ibadan* (London, 1967), pp. 174–190.

[15] There is a preliminary analysis along these lines in Sjoberg, *The Preindustrial City*, pp. 204–209, and fuller discussions of the market mechanism as it operates in the bazaar in Clifford Geertz, *Peddlers and Princes: Social Change and Economic Modernization in Two Indonesian Towns* (Chicago and London, 1963), pp. 30–47; D. F. Darwent, "Towards a General Theory of Urban Development in the Middle East," *Aspects of Central Place Theory in the City and Developing Countries* (Institute of British Geographers Study Group in Urban Geography, Durham Conference, 1967), no pagination (mimeo.)].

[16] *The maximum range of a commodity* is the distance that the marginal consumer, defined as the consumption unit just willing to purchase the smallest divisible unit of the commodity (or in some instances purchasing with the lowest possible frequency), is located from the central facility. *The minimum range* is represented by the radius of a circle enclosing a total amount of demand just large enough to ensure the viability of a firm. Whereas the maximum range is a function of demand elasticity and transport costs, minimum range is determined by the demand density per unit area (itself a function of population density and disposable income levels) and the profit level regarded as satisfactory by the firm [*Vide* James H. Stine, "Temporary Aspects of Tertiary Production in Korea," in Forrest R. Pitts (ed.), *Urban Systems and Economic Development*. Papers and Proceedings of a Conference on Urban Systems Research in Underdeveloped and Advanced Economies (Oregon, 1962), pp. 68–88]. These factors Vary from culture to culture but, generally speaking, the prevailing high transport costs and elastic demand of the traditional world have tended to inflate minimum ranges. Nevertheless, the lowering of transport costs which is inevitably associated with economic development in recent decades has proved a powerful influence towards the immobilization of the peripatetic entrepreneurs formerly characteristic of the traditional world.

comment by visitors to a pre-industrial city, has not so far been adequately investigated as an economic, though presumably unproductive, activity. Fraternal associations and guilds, by contrast, have attracted a certain amount of attention, particularly where the craft organization has been identical with the lineage structure, but there has been little attempt at investigation on a cross-cultural basis.[17] Equally poorly understood are the roles in the urban nexus of the tea- or coffee-house, or of the various establishments that the Chinese assign to the willow lane, while only recently have some North African scholars begun to study the social and psychological implications of the *hammām* in the Muslim city.[18] The schedule of deficiencies in our knowledge could be extended indefinitely. Naturally, I do not mean to imply that no attempt has been made to investigate any of these topics, but I do assert that our knowledge of the traditional city is minuscule compared to that available to the student of Western urbanism. In these circumstances it is not surprising that more sophisticated quantified techniques that have been employed in the analysis of the internal structure and external relationships of Western cities have seldom, if ever, been applied to the pre-industrial city.[19]

The reasons for this neglect of non-Western urban patterns are complex.

The implications of the present phase in the process of world urbanization have already been mentioned in this connection, and it would seem probable that certain inadequacies of urban theory may also have exerted some influence in the same direction.[20] Generally speaking, while sociologists directed their efforts towards an understanding of Western-style urbanism, the tradi[7]tional city was the preserve of anthropology and, to a lesser extent, of geography, both disciplines in which structural-functional theory constituted the prevailing ideology, during the formative period of urban studies. But structural-functionalism was better adapted to the evaluation of equilibrium, stability, and integration than to the study of conflict and change, and I suspect that the interests of some students of the traditional world may have been diverted away from the city by the inadequacies of the conceptual tools available to them. Particularly was this likely to have been true at the time when, under the pervasive influence of the Chicago school of the nineteen-twenties and -thirties, the urban environment was regarded as primarily disruptive of the bonds of kinship, of family life, and of neighborliness at the same time as it was held to promote impersonality, anonymity, and transitoriness in personal relationships.[21] Equally important in the case of geography, I think, has been the predominantly anti-urban sentiment of the British and American intellectual tradition, which seems to have exerted a wholly disproportionate influence on students of the traditional world. Pulling on ever larger and larger boots, they scampered through the colonial countrysides, recording and interpreting all sorts of modes and ecological adaptation in exclusively rural terms, and often ignoring the fact that peasant society is, in a Redfieldian sense,[22] merely a subsystem of traditional urbanized society. It is the city which has been, and to a large extent still is, the style center in the traditional world, disseminating social, political, technical, religious, and aesthetic values, and functioning as an organizing principle conditioning the manner and quality of life in the countryside. Those who focus their regional studies on peasant society to the exclusion of urban forms are—as I have stated elsewhere—as deluded as Plato's prisoners (or in another sense, Beckett's) who mistake flickering shadows on a wall for reality. They, too, are turning their backs on the generative force of ecological transformation and seeking the causes of

[17] The following studies are fairly representative of the types of specialist investigations which have been undertaken into the working of a guild system in traditional cities: J. S. Burgess, *The Guilds of Peking* (New York, 1928); Bernard Lewis, "The Islamic Guilds," *The Economic Review*, 8 (1937), 20–37; L. Massignon, "Le corps de métier et la cité musulmane," *Revue Internationale de Sociologie*, 28 (1920), 473–489; R. C. Majumdar, *Corporate Life in Ancient India* (2nd ed., Calcutta, 1922); I. Mendelsohn, "Guilds in Babylonia and Assyria," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 60 (1940), 68–72; Nüda Noboru, "The Industrial and Commercial Guilds of Peking and Religion and Fellowcountrymanship as Elements of Their Coherence," *Folklore Studies*, 9 (1950). Most of the available information on guilds, however, has to be gleaned from incidental remarks in general studies of traditional societies.

[18] **[31]** E.g., Abdelwahab Bouhdiba, "Le hammam: contribution à une psychanalyse de l'Islam," *Revue Tunisienne de Sciences Sociales*, Year 1 (1964), pp. 7–14.

[19] The cultural hybrid of the colonial city, which typically subsumes elements of both the traditional and the modern world, and which consequently might have been expected to have excited the curiosity of urbanists, has in fact attracted little more attention than has the traditional city proper. And such studies as have been undertaken have preponderantly assumed a close functional and cultural similarity, if not identity, between colonial and Western-style cities. Only within the last year has there been any attempt to integrate it into a general theory of urbanism: *vide* Ronald J. Horvath, *In Search of a Theory of Urbanization: Notes on the Colonial City* (Paper read at the Seminar on "The Pre-Industrial City" at the Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers in Washington, D.C., 1968). Recent significant substantive contributions in this field include McGee, *The Southeast Asian City*; Robert R. Reed, "Hispanic Urbanism in the Philippines: A Study of the Impact of Church and State," *University of Manila Journal of East Asiatic Studies*, 11 (1967), i–x, 1–222; Akin L. Mabogunje, *Urbanism in Nigeria* (London, 1968); Rhoads Murphey, *Traditionalism and Colonialism: Urban Roles in East Asia from da Gama to Chiang Kai Shek* (Paper read at the Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers in Washington, D.C., 1968).

[20] This paragraph owes a good deal to conversations of several years ago with Dr. Pauline Milone at the University of California in Berkeley.

[21] The classic statement of this point of view was enunciated by Louis Worth in "Urbanism as a Way of Life," *American Journal of Sociology*, 44 (1938), 1–24.

[22] Robert Redfield, *The Primitive World and Its Transformations* (Ithaca, 1953), p. 31: 'It required the city to bring [the peasant] into existence. There were no peasants before the first cities. And those surviving primitive people who do not live in terms of the city are not peasants.'

the great tides of social change in ripples on the beach of history.

On the comparatively rare occasions when urbanists have investigated the pre-industrial city they have almost invariably done so in terms of the virtues and mores of Western civilization, and **[8]** paid little or no attention to the logical structure of the culture concerned. It was this sort of Eurocentrism, for example, which led William Simpson to dismiss the superb essay in city planning which is Beijing as "only an extended village of dirty streets and crumbling walls." [23] Nor was Simpson alone in his misunderstanding of the principles of traditional city planning. James Fergusson, well-known as the chronicler of South Asian architecture, characterized the layout of the South Indian temple-city, redolent with symbolism, as "a mistake which nothing can redeem... As an architectural design," he wrote, "it is altogether detestable." [24] Both Simpson and Fergusson were ascribing to artifacts integral to one civilization, values and attitudes proper to another. Both were unaware of certain aspects of the, to them, alien culture which would have transformed these supposed congeries of benighted Asian villages into magnificent exemplars of city design. Perhaps the most influential of all such ethnocentric approaches to urban study in recent times has been that propounded by Max Weber nearly fifty years ago. By insisting on an essentially European (or at least Western) functional basis for city status he excluded those urban forms characteristic of most of the rest of the world. Those communities which failed to incorporate the salient features of the European city failed in greater or lesser measure to qualify as urban. Nor did Weber himself scruple to state this corollary in the stark phrases that have conditioned the thought of most subsequent students of urban life. "*Eine Stadtgemeinde im vollen Sinn des Wortes*," he wrote in 1921, "*hat als Massenersheinung vielmehr nur der Okzident geknnt. Daneben ein Teil des vorderasiatischen Orients* (*Syrien und Phönizien, vielleicht Mesopotamien*) *und dieser nur zeitweise und sonst in Ansätzen*." [25] In actual fact, in the perspective of world urbanism the European experience has been decidedly aberrant. In that diminutive peninsula projecting from the western marshes of Asia there has evolved in comparatively recent times a mode of urbanism that differs in many important respects from that of the rest of the world in earlier ages. It has been this genre of city which, in its modern industrialized form in Europe, American, and Japan, and in somewhat diminished export versions in a few other territories, has become the ideal-type city, the norm of contemporary urban life. It is this mode of urbanism with which **[9]** modern urban theory is almost exclusively concerned, and which, although exceptional in the perspective of both time and space, afforded a focus of enquiry for the formative theoretical work of the giants among urbanists, Louis Worth, Georg Simmel, A. Sorokin, Carle Zimmerman, Robert E. Park, N. J. Spykman, and so forth. It is, moreover, the characteristics of this mode of urbanism upon which *A Dictionary of the Social Sciences* has set its imprimatur. [26]

It is, by contrast, the relatively neglected genre of urbanism characteristic of the traditional world with which I am concerned. As it so happens I am not the first member of this department to have shown an interest in this topic. That noble and adventurous sailor, Captain Alexander Maconochie, first Professor of Geography in this College (1833–1836), in the University of London, and indeed in this country, devoted a substantial part of his life to a survey, in fair weather and foul, of the port cities of the traditional world, and I count it a signal honor to be permitted not only to work in his College, but also to share one of his main interests. It gives to my tenure of this chair a legitimacy it might otherwise have proved difficult to acquire.

I would like now to consider certain aspects of the pre-industrial city which have been even more than usually neglected. First, from the innumerable topics which offer themselves for discussion, I have selected one which has been ignored by virtually all students of urbanism, yet which is of fundamental importance because it pervades the whole range of activities focused in the traditional city. I am referring to the cosmo-magical symbolism which informed the ideal-type traditional city in both the Old and New Worlds, which brought it into being, sustained it, and was imprinted on its physiognomy. This is not the place to embark on an extended discussion of the origins and nature of this symbolism, which in any case have been the subject of elaborate expositions by, among others, Mircea Eliade[27] and René

[23] William Simpson, "The Architecture of China," *Papers Read at the Royal Institute of British Architects: Session 1873–74* (London, 1874), p. 33. Compare with Simpson's remarks Max Weber's considered dictum: [after warning that areal extent is no criterion of urban status...] *Andernfalls wäre Peking schon von Anfang en und zu einer Zeit "Stadt" gewesen, als in Europa noch nichts Stadtartiges existierte. Offiziell aber heißt es "die fünf Orte" und wird abschnittweise in fünf großen Dörfen verwaltet, so dass es keinen "Burger" von Peking gibt* [*Wirtschafisgeschichte*, (ed.) S. Hellmann and M. Palyi (München, 1924), p. 272, note 2].

[24] James Fergusson, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture* (London, 1876), p. 847.

[25] Max Weber, *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*, 47 (1921), pp. 621 *et seq.* Reprinted in Weber's *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft: Grundriss der Verstehenden Soziologie*, 2 (Tübingen, 1925), p. 744.

[26] Cf. Albert J. Reiss, Jr.'s summary of the characteristics of the normative city in Julius Gould and William L. Kolb, *A Dictionary of the Social Sciences* (Illinois, 1964), pp. 738–739.

[27] Mircea Eliade, *Le Mythe de l'Eternel Retour: Archétypes et Répétition* (Paris, 1949), Ch. 1; *Das Heilige und das Profane* (1957), Ch. 1; *Traité d'Histoire des Religions* (Paris, 1948), Ch. 10; "Centre du monde, temple, maison," *Le Symbolisme Cosmique des Monuments Religieux*, Série Orientale Roma, XIV (Roma, 1957), pp. 57–82. The **[32]** application of cosmo-magical principles specifically to urban constructions was elaborated by Eliade, *Comentarii la Legenda Mesterubui Manole* (Bucharest, 1943).

Berthelot. [28] Suffice it to say that for the ancients the "real" world transcended the pragmatic realm of textures and geometrical space, and was perceived schematically in terms of an extra-mundane, sacred experience. Only the sacred was "real," and the purely secular—if it could be said to exist at all—could never be more than trivial. For those faiths which derived **[10]** the meaning of human existence from revelation no site was, apart from a possible incidental soteriological sanctity, intrinsically more holy than another; but in those religions which held that human order was brought into being at the creation of the world there was a pervasive tendency to dramatize the cosmogony by constructing on earth a reduced version of the cosmos, usually in the form of state capital. [29] In other words, Reality was achieved through the imitation of a celestial archetype, [30] by giving material expression to that parallelism between macrocosmos and microcosmos without which there could be no prosperity in the world of men. Some of the most dramatic examples of such plastic representations of heavenly prototypes are to be found in the great cult cities of Cambodia. There successive national capitals, and particularly that now known as Ankor Thom, were nothing less than translations into stone of the cosmological myths of India. They were, as one French scholar has phrased it, "*diagrammes magiques tracés sur le parchemin de la plaine,*" [31] in the construction of which art was not an aesthetic adventure, but a technique in the service of liturgy. Although—or rather because—the whole city, indeed the whole kingdom, was dependent on the produce of its irrigated padi fields, the Khmers did not hesitate to undertake the colossal expenditure of labor, and to devise the costly solutions to engineering problems, necessary to render their city a worthy likeness of Indra's capital on Mount Meru. [32] In the eyes of the Khmer monarch a benign environment combined with careful husbandry within the framework of an irrigation-based ecotype alone were incapable of ensuring the prosperity of the capital and of the kingdom. Only those factors operating in the context of a perfect correspondence and harmony between the planes of existence could achieve that goal.

The remarkable extent to which the Khmers subordinated their technology to their symbolism has been the subject of numerous studies, mainly by the scholars of the Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient. [33] The symbolism of the central temple-mountains modeled on canonical descriptions of Mount Meru and laid out as chronograms symbolizing a sacred cosmography, [34] the myth of the Churning of the Ocean laid out in

[28] René Berthelot, *La Pensée de l'Asie et l'Astrobiologie* (Paris, 1949). Other analyses of pre-industrial modes of thought from which I have benefited include: Ernst Cassirer, *Philosophie der Symbolischen Formen, II: Das Mythische Denken* (Berlin, 1925); Rudolf Otto, *Das Heilige* (new ed., München, 1947); Henri and H. A. Frankfort, John Wilson, and Thorkild Jacobsen, *The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man* (Chicago, 1946): reprinted under the title *Before Philosophy* (Harmondsworth, 1949); Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, *Le Surnaturel et la Nature dans la Mentalité Primitive* (Paris, 1931); Claude Lévi-Strauss, *La Pensée Sauvage* (Paris, 1962).

[29] For a discussion of this polarity in the power of religions to transform secular into sacred landscapes see Erich Isaac, "The Act and the Covenant: The Impact of Religion on the Landscape," *Landscape*, 11 (1961–1962), 12–17.

[30] Eliade's phrase. *Vide* also Th. H. Gasmer, "Myth and Story," *Numen*, 1 (1954), 184–212, esp. p. 191, where the author refers to 'earthly cities, temples or religious institutions [which] have their duplicates in some transcendental sphere, often identified with the heavens'; Ernst Topitsche, *Vom Ursprung und Ende der Metaphysik* (1958). Seventeen hundred years ago Mani took cognizance of this complex of ideas in a passage in his long lost *Espistola Fundamental* which was preserved by St. Augustine in *De Natura Boni* (Migne ed. Col. 570): *In cadem [principis tenebrarum conjuge] enim construebantur et contexebantur omnium imagines, caclestium ac terrenorum virtutem, ut pleni videlcet orbis id quod formabatur similitudinem obtineret.*

[31] Bernard-Philippe Groslier, *Angkor: Hommes et Pierres* (Paris, 1956), p. 11.

[32] The hydraulic engineering projects undertaken in this cause are described by Victor Goloubew, "L'hydraulique urbaine et agricole à l'époque des rois d'Angkor," *Bulletin Economique de l'Indochine*, 1941, Fasc. 1 (1941), pp. 9–18 [cf. p. 10: "On peut dire des souverains d'Angkor qu'ils avaient poussé jusqu'à leurs extrêmes limites l'amour et le culte de l'eau"]. *Vide* also Bernard P. Groslier, *Angkor et le Cambodge au XVIe Siècle d'après les Sources Portugaises et Espagnoles*, Annales du Musée Guinet: Bibliothèque d'Etudes, tome 63 (Paris, 1958), pp. 108–112.

[33] Generalized descriptions of the temple-cities of Kambujadesa are to be found in George Coedès, *Pour Mieux Comprendre Angkor* (Paris, 1947), Ch. III; Groslier, *Angkor: Hommes et Pierres*; Henri Parmentier, *Angkor: Guide Henri Parmentier* (3rd ed.; Phnom-Penh, 1960); Victor Goloubew, "Le Phnom Bakhen et la ville de Yaçovarman," *Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient*, 33 (1933), 319–344, and "Angkor in the Ninth Century," *Indian Art and Letters*, n.s. 8 (1934–1935), 123–129; Paul Mus, "Angkor in the Time of Jayavarman VII," *Indian Art and Letters*, 11 (1937), 69–71.

[34] Cf. Paul Mus, "Symbolisme à Angkor Thom: Le 'grand miracle' du Bàyon," *Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-lettres: Comptes-rendus des Séances* (1936), pp. 57–68. One of the subtlest of these representations was built relatively early in Khmer history. In A.D. 893 Yasovarman I laid out a grandiose ceremonial capital which, according to Khmer principles of honorific nomenclature, receive the title of *Yalodharapura*. The city exhibited perfect cardinal directions and axiality, and pivoted about the central hill of *Yalodharagiri* on which was erected the national temple and palladium of the state known as the Bakhen. This temple, with its five terraces surmounted by a quincunx of towers, was a plastic representation of both cosmic space and Mount Meru, home of the gods. Basically a total of 108 towers were arranged symmetrically on the terraces round the one hundred and ninth, which **[33]** occupied a central position on the summit; but from a point opposite the middle of any side, only thirty-three towers were visible at any one time, these representing the abodes of the thirty-three gods of Indra's heaven. The parallelism was carried further in the convention of seven levels, corresponding to the seven heavens, this number being achieved by adding the ground level and the summit to the five terraces already mentioned. Of the five towers soaring from the summit platform towards the clouds, to an observer posted at one of the cardinal points only three were visible, symbolizing the three particular peaks of Mount Meru on which were sited the heavenly cities of Visnu, Brahma, and Siva. Moreover, the 108 towers, considered in their entirety (4 x 27), represented the four phases of the moon and the twenty-seven lunar mansions. Finally, the sixty towers arranged in five sets of twelve, one set on each of the five terraces, represented the approximately twelve-year *Brhaspati-cakra* or Jupiter cycle which, in multiples of five,

stone over an area of six square miles,[35] the towers of the Bàyon each bearing four faces of **[11]** Jayavarman VII in the likeness of Vajradhara and so arranged as to simulate the miracle of Sravasti,[36] the outer wall of the city and its moat representing the Cakravala mountains and the Ocean bordering the Buddhist universe[37]—all this and much else besides has been elicited and amply documented, primarily by members of the Ecole. But, although the material expression of this symbolism is perhaps better preserved in Cambodia than in most other realms of nuclear urbanism, and interpretations there more readily endorsed by epigraphic prescription, analogous modes of symbolism are clearly apparent in cities throughout much of the rest of Asia, though naturally they are mediated through a variety of cultural traditions. I need only to draw attention to certain traditional Indian urban forms which were modeled on that city where in the age of gold the Universal Sovereign had dwelt,[38] to Arthur Pope's expositions of the architectural symbolism of Persepolis,[39] to the magistral papers of Roscher[40] and Wensinck[41] on the

concept of the *omphalos* among the Western Semites, as well as to the works of Walter Krickeberg,[42] Paul Westheim,[43] and Michael Coe[44] on the cosmological symbolism of ancient Mexican cities.

It is a truism that every ritual has a divine archetype, that is an attempt to achieve what the gods did *in illo tempore*. By reactualizing the mythic moment when the cosmogonic act was first revealed, traditional man obtrudes a sacred instant into the flow of profane time, and in so doing initiates a new era in the cyclic regeneration of the world as he or she perceives it.[45] As the construction rituals associated with capital [sc. sacred] cities were, in the traditional world, commonly simulations of the cosmogony, it is natural that the archetypes on which they were patterned should have been drawn from the past. Indeed, the past was normative and conformity with its precepts required no justification. King **Mjwen (Modern Standard Chinese = Wen), when founding the capital of Shang, mindful of the past, "retained the design of his predecessors;"[46] and on another occasion, "Heaven charged the corps of princes / To establish the capital where **Gjwo (MSC = Yü) [the Great] had wrought his works."[47] In the same way Sennacherib constructed Nineveh according to "the image delineated from distant times," and Pharaoh could say of his temple-city, "It was according to the ancient plan."[48] In somewhat later **[12]** times, the city of Jerusalem seen by the prophet in the Syriac *Apocalypse of Baruch II* (Ch.

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used as a dating era from early in the fifth century A.D. We can also be certain that in the present context the series of twelve towers served to recall the Cambodian version of the twelve-animal cycle. Thus, while in elevation the Bakhen was a plastic representation of Mount Meru, the axis of the universe, the kingdom and the capital, in plan it constituted an astronomical calendar in stone, depicting from each of the four cardinal directions the positions and paths of the planets in the Indian conception of cyclical time [Jean Filliozat, "Le symbolisme du monument du Phnom Bakhen," *Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient*, 44 (1954), 527–554.

[35] *Vide* Coedès, *Pour Mieux Comprendre Angkor*, p. 101.

[36] Bernard-Philippe Groslier, *The Art of Indochina* (New York, 1962), p. 183.

[37] Robert von Heine-Geldern, "Weltbild und Bauform in Südostasien," *Wiener Beiträge zur Kunst- und Kulturgeschichte Asiens*, 4 (1930), 28–78.

[38] *Vide*, for example, Prasanna Kumar Acharya, *Indian Architecture* (Oxford, 1928); Binode Behari Dutt, *Town Planning in Ancient India* (Calcutta and Simla, 1925).

[39] The official report of the excavations of the Oriental Institute of Chicago at Persepolis is contained in two magnificent volumes by Erich F. Schmidt: *Persepolis*, vols. 68 and 69 of the Oriental Institute (Chicago, 1953 and 1957); but for the elucidation of the symbolism of this cult center we are indebted to Arthur Upham Pope, "Persepolis as a Ritual City," *Archaeology*, 10 (1957), 123–130, and "Persepolis—Considered as a Ritual City," in Zeki Velidi Togan (ed.), *Proceedings of the Twenty-Second Congress of Orientalists Held in Istanbul, September 15th to 22nd, 1951*, 2 (Leiden, 1957), 58–66.

The building of Persepolis, the rival capital of the Archaemenid dynasty, was begun by Darius in 518 B.C., and construction continued through most of two centuries until the city was sacked by Alexander the Great in 330 B.C. Although it was of enormous size and unrivaled opulence in its day, it was little known outside of Persia. There is no reference to it in the Old Testament, or in Babylonian, Assyrian, or Phoenician documents. Nor is it mentioned in any surviving fragments of Ktesias, the Greek physician who resided at the Persian court for no less than twenty-four years. This exclusivity stemmed from its role as the quintessentially sacred enclave of the Persian culture realm, a *Civitis Dei* designed as an appropriate setting for hierophanies of Ahura Mazda himself. There is scarcely a foot of wall which does not bear the stamp of this grand essay in the establishment of a parallelism between the worlds. With its acres of buildings, its sacred groves in stone, its hundreds of feet of tribute bearers carved in

relied, its man-slaying bulls, sphinxes with paws uplifted in adoration before the tree of life, throne-room scenes, and all-pervading symbolic **[34]** emblems, Persepolis constituted a magnificent demonstration of abundance, the contribution of the Persian people to the maintenance of harmony between the heavens and the earth, an unequivocal declaration that they were enacting their assigned roles in the cosmic process. Persepolis was the instrument by which this colossal effort was communicated to Ahura Mazda, an irresistible inducement to Him at the midwinter solstice to begin again his fructification of the earth.

[40] W. H. Roscher, "Neue Omphalosstdien," *Abhandlungen der Könlich Sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaft, Phil-hist. Klause*, 31 (Leipzig, 1915).

[41] A. J. Wensinck, "The Ideas of the Western Semites Concerning the Navel of the Earth," *Verhandelingen der Koninklijke Academie van Wetenschappen ie Amsterdam*, Afdeling Letterkunde, n.s. 17 (1916).

[42] Walter Krickeberg, "Bauform und Weltbild im alten Mexiko," in *Mythe, Mensch und Umvelt*, Beiträge zur Religion, Mythologie und Kukurgeschichte (Bamberg, 1950).

[43] Paul Westheim, *Arte Antiguo de México* (México, 1950).

[44] Michael D. Coe, "A Model of Ancient Community Structure in the Maya Lowlands," *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology*, 21 (1965), 97–144.

[45] In addition to the works of Eliade cited above, see the classic presentation of H. Hubert and M. Mauss, "La représentation du temps dans la religion et la magie," *Mélanges d'Histoire et Religions* (1909), pp. 190–229; H. Reuter, *Die Zeit: Eine Religionswissenschaftliche Untersuchung* (Bonn, 1941); G. Van der Leeuw, "Orzeit und Endzeit," *Eranos-Jahrbuch*, 17 (1950), 11–51.

[46] *Shih Ching*, **Mjwan Gjwang gjug ljeng*: Mao CCXLIV.

[47] *Shih Ching*, **Jan-Mjwo*: Mao CCCV.

[48] James H. Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt*, 2 (Chicago, 1906), para. 339.

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4, v. 2–7) had been "prepared aforehand here from the time when I took counsel to make Paradise,"[49] and Solomon's temple had been "prepared aforehand here from the beginning."[50] When St. John the Divine witnessed "the Holy City, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of Heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband,"[51] his vision was one which had already had a long history among the Western Semites.

The establishment of a capital as an imitation of a celestial archetype in the way that has been described also required its delimitation and orientation as a sacred territory within the continuum of profane space. This was customarily effected in relation to that point, the holy of holies, whence the sacred *habitabilis* had taken its birth, and whence it had spread out in all directions. This central point, the focus of creative force, was the place where communication was achieved most easily between cosmic planes, between earth and heaven on the one hand, and between earth and the underworld on the other. It was through this point of ontological transition that there passed the axis of the world, represented in most instances by the capital city. In Eliade's phrasing, Reality had been achieved through participation in the Symbolism of the Center. The cosmic axis most familiar to the Western world was probably that of Delphi, the seat of the Greek national oracle, of whom Plato, after warning that no one else could give adequate guidance on the founding of the city, said

οὗτος γὰρ δήπου ὁ θεὸς περὶ τὰ τοιαντα πασιν ἀνθρωποις ὑπτριος ἐξηγητὰς ὃν μέσῳ τῆς γῆς ἐπι του ὀμφαλου καθημενος ἐξηγειται.[52]

In the cities of the ancient Middle East, south India, Ceylon, and in those of Hindu and Mahayana South-East Asia, it was a temple which occupied this most sacred site at the axis of the kingdom. In China, by contrast, this mode of urban design was refracted through the lens of a Great Tradition whose primary concern was with the ordering of society in this world rather than with personal salvation in a future life, so it comes as no surprise to find that the centrally situated temple of the archetypal South and South-East [13] Asian city was replaced in the Chinese culture realm by the seat of secular authority. In the case of the *hsien* city this was often the *ya-men*, not infrequently a somewhat undistinguished building, but in the imperial

capitals the symbolism of the center was more strongly developed. It was at this quintessentially sacred spot that was raised the royal palace which corresponded to the Pole Star (pei-Ch'en), the residence at the axis of the universe whence T'ai-j watched over the southerly world of men.[53] In the *Chou Li* (*Rituals of Choe*) it is explained how an official known as the **T'dd-sjeg-d'o (MSC = Ta-ssu-t'u) calculated the precise position of this *axis mundi* (*ti chung*), which is there characterized as "the place where earth and sky meet, where the four seasons merge, where the wind are gathered in, and where *ying* and *yang* are in harmony."[54] A gnomon erected there was held to cast no shadow at the summer solstice, a belief to which there were numerous parallels in other parts of the world. The Icelandic pilgrim Nicholas of Thverva, for example, in the twelfth century reported that in Jerusalem (which was built on the rock that constituted the navel of the earth) "on the day of the summer solstice the light of the sun falls perpendicularly from Heaven."[55] We may note in passing that the Pole Star was also held to be situated directly above Mount Meru, the sacred axis of Indian cosmography,[56] as indeed it surmounted Sumbu, the holy axial mountain of the Uralo-Altaic peoples,[57] and Haraberezaiti (Elburz), sacred to the Iranians.[58] In the Muslim world we find al-Kisa'i of Kufah, early in the ninth century, arguing that the Ka'bah constituted the culmination of terrestrial topography because, being below the Pole Star, it was consequently "over against the center of Heaven."[59]

Once again it is ancient Cambodia which provides some of the most impressive manifestations of the centripetality of capital cities. At the heart of the ceremonial city of *Yasodharapura*, for example, the Bàyon was constituted as a pantheon of the gods of the personal and regional cults practiced in the various parts of the kingdom. By assembling them at the sacred axis of Kambujadesa, Jayavarman VII channeled these potentially

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[49] R. H. Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English*, 2 (Oxford, 1913), p. 482.

[50] Charles, *op. cit.*, 1, 549.

[51] *The Revelation of St. John the Divine*, Ch. 21, v. 2.

[52] *Plato. The Republic*: text, translation and notes, by Paul Shorey, 1 (Loeb edition, London; Cambridge, Mass., 1943), 344.

[53] In Theravada Buddhist kingdoms it was also ideally a palace which symbolized the very axis of the world. In Mandalay, founded as late as 1857, for example, it was the *Alye-nan-daw* or Royal Earth Place, an edifice which disseminated such powerful cosmo-magical forces that Thibaw, the last king of Burma, dared not leave it even to undertake the rite of circumambulation essential to an effective coronation.

[54] *Chou Li*, chüan 3, folio 14 verso. The *Chou Li* probably preserves a late *Chan-Kuo* elaboration of a system of government which did exist in early China but which was subsequently modified to accord the views of Eastern Chou (and later) systematizing editors.

[55] L. I. Ringbom, *Graltempel und Paradies* (Stockholm, 1951), p. 255.

[56] Willibald Kirfel, *Die Kosmographi de Inder* (Bonn and Leipzig, 1920), p. 15.

[57] Uno Holmberg-Harva, "Der Baum des Lebens," *Annales Academicae Scientiarum Fennicae* (Helsinki, 1923), p. 41.

[58] Arthur Christensen, *Les Types du Premier Homme et du Premier Roi dans l'Histoire Légendaire des Iranicus*, 2 (Stockholm, 1923), 42.

[59] Al-Kisa'i, *Aja'ib al-Malakut* (Leiden MS *Wanner* 538, folio 15 recto). Cf. Wensinck, "The Ideas of the Western Semites Concerning the Navel of the Earth," p. 15.

competitive cosmic forces into his own capital.[60] In the same way, by reconstructing in his own capital of **G'ein-djang* (MSC = Hsien-yang) the palaces of conquered rulers, Ch'in Shih-Huang-Ti diverted into the **[14]** Ch'in state those supernatural forces which had previously been diffused among rival capitals.[61] Centuries after an analogous mode of thought had been reflected in the manner in which ancient Chinese benefice holders at their investiture had been presented with clods of earth from the great state altar to the God of the Soil to use as nuclei around which to pile their own altars.[62] As Marcel Granet expressed it,

> L'Autel du Sol...*représente la totalité de l'Empire*. On est pourvu d'une domaine dès qu'on s'est vu attribuer une motte de terre, empruntée à l'Autel du Sol... Mais que survienne, par exemple, une éclipse, et que les hommes s'en inquiètent comme d'une menace de destruction! Les vassaux accourent au centre de la patrie; pour la sauver, pour reconstituer, dans son intégrité, l'Espace détraqué (et le Tempa comme lui), ils se groupent et forment le carré. Ils réussissent à écarter le danger al chacun d'eux se présente avec les insignes qui expriment, si je puis dire, sa nature spatiale et celle de son fief... L'Espace se trouve restauré dans toutes ses dimensions (et jusque dans le domaine des Astres), par la seule force des emblèmes correctement disposés dans le lieu saint des réunions fédérales.[63]

Granet's remarks on the Altar of Earth and the Temple of the Ancestors, conceived jointly as a microcosm of the empire, are illustrated by an incident which has come to epitomize the idealized properties of military conflict in Chou times. In 547 B.C. the conqueror of Ch'en state was met at the gate of the capital by the ruler and his chief of staff bearing in their arms the image of the God of the Soil and the ritual vessels used in the Temple of the Ancestors.[64] The event is probably apocryphal and certainly archetyped, but the implications are clear enough. When the invader received these two symbols, the guarantees respectively of sustenance and government, it signified that the entire state had passed into its hands.

Coming nearer to home, an analogous relationship between capital and state is surely implied by the symbolism of the Roman *pomerium* the ritually drawn line which, in Republican times, so far as the auspices were concerned was adjudged the boundary between the city and the country.[65] Tacitus tells us that an extension of the *pomerium* was admissible only when the legal boundaries of the empire were also extended.[66] According to Latin tradition, the *pomerium* followed the line of Romulus's plough as he traced out **[15]** the compass of the future city, carefully turning the clods inwards, cosmicizing and thus rendering habitable the quintessentially sacred pivot about which the *Orbis Terrarum* would revolve.[67] Still earlier, the founding of the city was alleged to have been initiated by the excavation around what later became the Comitium of a trench into which were thrown, among other things, handfuls of earth brought from each man's home locality. What gives special cosmo-magical significance to this trench is that it bore the name *Mundis*, "the same"—so Plutarch has it—"as that of the universe." It may also be remarked parenthetically that, as late as the reign of Augustus, the *Urbs* was still considered the manifestation of the power of the empire, as is witnessed by the erection of the *Milliarium Aureum* in the Forum to mark the center of the Roman oecumene, after the first map of the empire had been completed in A.D. 29.[68] It was from this point that the legions set out on their campaigns, bearing on their banners the cosmic power generated at the axis of the world. In an analogous manner the commander of the Chinese army received his commission in the ancestral temple of the ruling house in the capital of the state, and sacrificed at the altar of the state God of the Soil before undertaking a campaign.[69]

In the ancient Semitic world there were numerous places which at one time or another in various traditions were regarded as *axes mundi*. One of

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[60] **[35]** Mus, "Symbolisme à Angkor Thom: Le 'grand miracle' du Bàyon."

[61] Ssu-ma Ch'ien, *Shih Chi*, chüan 6, folio 13 verso.

[62] Cf., *int.al.*, *I Chou-shu*, Ch. 48: *Tso-lo*. *Vide* also Ch'i Ssu-ho, "Chou-tai hsi-ming-li k'ao," *Yen-ching Hsuch-pao*, No. 32 (1947), 197–226; Marcel Granet, *La Féodalité Chinoise* (Oslo, 1952); Eduard Chavannes, *Le T'ai Chan: Essai de Monographie d'un Culte Chinois* (Paris, 1910), Appendix "Le Dieu du Sol dans la Chine antique."

[63] Marcel Granet, *La Pensée Chinoise* (Paris, 1934), p. 324.

[64] *Tso Chuan*, Duke Hsiang, 25th year.

[65] Cf. Gellius, 13, 14, i: *pomerium est locus agrum effatum per totius urbis circuitum pone muros regionibus certis determinatus, qui facit finem urbani auspicii*. Also, *int.al.*, Ovid, *Fasti*, Book IV.

[66] *Annals*, Book XII, para. 23, pp. 346–347 of vol. 3 of the Loeb edition: *...more prisco, quo iis, qui protulere imperium, etiam terminos urbis propagare datur*.

[67] Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*, "Romulus," pp. 119–120 of vol. 1 of the Loeb edition. According to Varro the rites attributed to Romulus were not specifically 'Roman' but were common to all Latium and Etruria. Cato the Elder added that similar rites were carried out at the founding of the Italian cities [Cato in Servius, V, 755; Varro, *L.L.*, v, 143; Festus, v. Rituales]. F. Altheim [in Werner Müller, *Kreis und Kreus* (Berlin, 1938), pp. 60 *et seq*.] has shown that similar concepts underlay the structure of numerous medieval Germanic settlements.

[68] The cosmo-magical role of the *Milliarium* may perhaps be compared to that of the *T'ien-Shu* or Axis of Heaven, a bronze pillar, 100 ft. high and 5 ft. 3 in. in diameter which Empress Wu of T'ang caused to be erected in front of her palace in A.D. 694.

[69] *Tso Chuan*, Duke Min, 2nd year. Cf. also **Mjan* (MSC = *Mien*) Ode, *Shih Ching*, Mao CCXXXVII: 'They raised the grand altar to the God of the Soil (**tjung-t'o*: MSC = *chung-t'u*) From which the legions marched.' Note also that in a chapter of the *ku-uen*, and therefore historically suspect, version of the *Shu Ching* (**T'ad-djad*: MSC = *T'ai-shih*, Pt. 1), King Mjwo (MSC = Wu) sacrificed both to Shang-Ti and at the grand altar to the God of the Soil (at the center of the world) before setting out on his campaign against the last ruler of Shang. This tradition is valueless as fact, but it is in strict accord with Chou cosmo-magical symbolism.

these was Golgotha, in the folklore of the Eastern Christians conceived as the summit of the cosmic mountain upon which Adam had been both created and buried.[70] Another was Mount Tabor (possibly < *tabbur* = *omphalos*),[71] and the third was Mount Gerizim, of which Peter Comestor says, "*sunt qui dicunt locum illum esse umbilicum terrae nostrae habitabilis*," and which is described in the *Book of Judges* (IX, 37) explicitly as the Navel of the Earth (*tabbur eres*).[72] But the really great cosmological center of the Semitic world in later times was Jerusalem, the very *omphalos* of the world, and it was this symbolism which was subsequently transferred by Muslim *hadith* to Mecca, a point which had been in existence—according to a tradition preserved by Azraqi on the authority of one of Muhammad's contemporaries, the converted Jew K'ab al-Akhbar—for "forty years before Allah created the heavens and earth."[73] Another *hadith* accords the **[16]** Ka'bah a priority of two thousand years over the rest of creation, but the discrepancy is of little consequence. The important thing is that Mecca, or strictly speaking the Ka'bah, was held to represent the navel of the earth (*surrat al-ard*), the spot from which the creation of the world had begun. At Mecca, moreover, the point of ontological transition between the world, prayer was likely to be unusually efficacious, as witness the story of the people of Ad, who sent messengers thither to pray for rain in the place where they were most likely to be heard. On their arrival they were advised to ascend Mount Abu Qubais because "never a repentant sinner had climbed it without being heard."[74] In this same connection we may also recall the tale of Abdallah bin Abbas (d. probably 687–688) who, fearing that the unvoiced "passing insinuations of the heart" (*khawajir al-qalb*) might yet be audible to Allah from a point in Mecca, prudently transferred his residence to Ta'if, where he presumably hoped to be held responsible only for his more overt actions and speech.[75] Wensinck and von Grünebaum have collected a great deal of similar information relating to Mecca as the *surrat al-ard*, but the primary surviving

witnesses to the cosmologically induced centripetality of the city, perhaps supplemented by not negligible soteriological attractions, are the *hajj* which annually brings tens of thousands of Muslims to Mecca, and the five occasions each day when one-fifth of mankind turns towards the holy city in prayer.

There is still another aspect of this notion of centrality which deserves mention. The capital, the *axis mundi*, was also the point at which divine power entered the world and diffused outwards through the kingdom. When Jayavarman VII of Cambodia had his own face, in the likeness of Vajradhara,[76] carved on the four sides of each of the fifty-four towers of the Bàyon, he was ensuring the projection of the divine power generated at the *axis mundi* flowed out from the ceremonial complex towards the cardinal points of the compass, possessed a heightened symbolic significance which, in virtually all Asian urban traditions, was expressed in massive constructions whose size far exceeded that necessary for the performance of their mundane functions of access and defense. Most frequently, gate **[17]** towers of this character were patterned on those architectural features which denoted the axis of the kingdom. Whereas, for example, in the temple-city of South and South-East Asia the *gopura* often reproduced the temple or temple-mountain at the center of the city,[77] the Chinese gate-tower conformed to the same general architectural principles as did the imperial palace. Like so many other aspects of urban design, in the Chinese culture realm this feature is well illustrated by Beijing, where the Gate of Heavenly Peace at the entrance to the Imperial City overtops all buildings within the walls, and the Meridian Gate all those within the Forbidden City.[78] But the architectural prominence of gate-towers, instruments for the projection of authority in the four cardinal directions, is a characteristic feature of the urban hierarchy in almost all realms of Asia.

The third aspect of cosmo-magical urban symbolism which I shall mention was the emphasis on the cardinal compass directions resulting from

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[70] *Vide* Holmberg-Harva, "Der Baum des Lebens," p. 72, citing Mansikka on traditions of the Little Russians.

[71] Cited by Eliade, *Le Mythe de l'Eternel Retour*, p. 18.

[72] Rendered in the Authorized version of the Bible as 'See there come people down by the middle of the land.'

[73] Azraqi (d. ca. 858), *Akhbar Makkah*, Wüstenfeld's edition (Leipzig, 1858), p. 1; cf. also Wensinck, "The Ideas of the Western Semites," p. 18.

[74] The tale of the messengers of 'Ad is related by the Murcian Ibn Sab'in (Quib al-Din, c. 1217–1269) in *al-Ajwibah 'an al-As'ilah al-Siqilliyah*. This work is still unpublished, but see Wüstenfeld, *Die Chroniken de Stadt Mekka*, 3 (Leipzig, 1857), 442. The incident is summarized in Wensinck, "The Ideas of the Western Semites," p. 25, and G. E. von Grünebaum, "The Sacred Character of Islamic Cities," in *Mélanges Taha Husain* (Cairo, 1962), p. 33.

[75] *Vide* 'Ali ibn Burhan al-Din al-Halabi (d. 1634), *As-Sirat al-Halabiyya*, 1 (Cairo, A.D. 1329/A.D. 1911), 196.

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[76] The aspect of Vajrapani assumed by Lokesvara when expounding the Law. **[36]** *Vide* Coedès, *Pour Mieux Comprendre Angkor*, Ch. 6, and Jean Boistelier, "Vajrapani dans l'art du Bàyon," *Proceedings of the Twenty-Second Congress of Orientalists*, 2 (Leiden, 1957), 324–332.

[77] Whereas the *Manasdra-Silpalastra* authorized the building of religious and residential edifices only up to twelve stories in height, *gopuras* could be constructed up to sixteen or seventeen stories (Chs. XX–XXX and XXXIII). South Indian temple-cities which exhibit massive *gopura* are illustrated in Percy Brown's *Indian Architecture* (*Buddhist and Hindu Periods*) (Bombay, 1959), plates LXXIV (Tiravuhur and Mandurai) and LXXV (Srirangam), and interpreted by Nelson I. Wu [Wu No-sun], *Chinese Architecture: The City of Man, the Mountain of God, and the Realm of the Immortals* (New York, 1963), pp. 26–27.

[78] Osvald Sirén, *The Walls and Gates of Peking* (London, 1924); Andrew Boyd, *Chinese Architecture and Town Planning 1500 B.C.–A.D. 1911* (Chicago, 1962), pp. 60–72.

the techniques of orientation involved in the delimitation of sacred (that is, habitable) territory within the continuum of profane space. The sacred enclave defined in this manner provided the theater within which could be conducted the seasonal rituals and ceremonies necessary to maintain that harmony between the macrocosmos and the microcomos on which depended the fortunes of the kingdom. The resulting cardinal orientation and axiality which characterized a high proportion of the cities of the traditional world has often been discussed at length, so I shall mention one point only. Despite the fact that Chinese and Indian cities were expressions of affinal attitudes towards the cosmological ordering of space, there was a difference of emphasis in one important feature: in the Chinese city the main processional axis running from south to north, "the celestial meridian writ small" was—as befitted a culture permeated with the symbolism of an ominous, threatening north opposed to a benign, auspicious south—of greater significance than any avenue running from east to west. And on this longitudinal axis were ranged the more important official buildings, which themselves faced south towards the Red Phoenix of Summer. It should , incidentally, be noted that the function of the master north-south axis of the Chinese city was quite different from that of the vista avenue in the Baroque city **[18]** of Europe. Whereas the latter was designed to impress by the prospect it afforded of a distant architectural feature of central importance, the Chinese processional way was of a symbolic rather than visual significance. In fact, its full sweep was never revealed at one time or from one place. It afforded not so much a vista as a succession of varied spaces integrated into an axial whole in a manner inevitably reminiscent of the Chinese scroll painting. This axial design also is superbly executed in Beijing, where the official visitor was formerly confronted in his progress along the processional way by seemingly interminable succession of gates, towers, and walls, the passing of each of which brought him nearer not only to the center of the city but also to the *omphalos* of the kingdom, of the world, and of the universe, the point where the Son of Heaven, in the words of Mencius (VIIA, xxi, 2), "stood in the center of the earth and [thereby] stabilized the people within the four seas."[79]

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[79] Cardinal orientation and axiality, evident in the fragmentary plans of some of China's earliest urban forms [cf. Wheatley, *The Pivot of the Four Quarters*, Chs. 1 and 2], were, not unexpectedly, most apparent in the imperial capitals, but even *hsien* cities customarily preserved at least the rudiments of the schema [*Vide* Hang Te-chou, Lo Chung-ju and T'ien Hsing-nung, "T'ang Ch'ang-an Ch'eng ti-chi ch'u-pu t'an-ts'e," *K'ao-ku Hsüch-pao*, No. 3 (1959), pp. 79–93; Ma Te-chih, "Tang-tai Ch'ang-an Ch'eng k'ao-ku chi-lüeh," *K'ao-ku*, No. 11 (1963), pp. 595–611; Albert Hermann, *Historical and Commercial Atlas of China* (Chicago and Edinburgh, 1966), p. 13, iv and v, p. 45, iii and v; Ch'eng Kuang-yü and Hsü Sheng-mo (eds.), *Chung-Kuo Li-shih Ti-t'u-chi* (Hong Kong, 1956), pp. 54–64]. Perhaps the best example of an imperial capital where the full expression of the cosmic pattern was severely repressed by an intractable

These Asian capitals were not, as is sometimes supposed, solely—or even primarily—expressions of pomp and glory, though these considerations did enter into their construction. Rather they were the material instruments of a particular political theory, and the symbolism inseparable from that role was not a mere decorative veneer but one of a functionally interrelated core of urban institutions. Not only is the cosmo-magical basis of this theory evident in the design of such cities as well as in textual and epigraphic prescriptions, but a re-reading of the classical literatures of the several Great Traditions of Asia sometimes reveals evidence of this symbolism in

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terrain is afforded by Hang-Chou [Cf. A. C. Moule, *Quinsai, with Other Notes on Marco Polo* (Cambridge at the University Press, 1957), fig. 1; Hermann, *op. cit.* (1st ed. Cambridge, Mass., 1935), p. 48; Ch'eng and Hsü, *op. cit.*, p. 65]. During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries this city was squeezed on to a neck of land about a half mile in width between the West lake and the Che river, but even here the rulers of the Southern Sung dynasty made every effort to maintain the roughly rectangular form and approximate cardinal orientation of the original ramparts that had been laid out in the seventh century A.D.; while the congestion and disorder of a century of rapid change that transformed this provincial town into the most populous city in the world failed to disrupt the axial predominance of the Imperial Way, the great thoroughfare that ran longitudinally through the city. Evocative descriptions of Hang-Chou in the thirteenth century are to be found in *T'u -ch'eng chi-sheng* (1253), *Meng-liang lu* (1275), and *H'u-lin chiu-shih* (1280), all available in an edition published in Shanghai by the Ku-tien Wen-hsüeh Ch'u-pan-she in 1956 under the title *Tung-ching meng-hua hi* and edited by Meng Yüan-lao *et al*.

It is instructive to observe how a shared cosmo-magical symbolism sometimes induced a degree of uniformity in different travelers' descriptions of cities in widely separate parts of the world. Consider, for example, Marco Polo's remarks on the street plan of the ritual city of *Taidu* (< *Ta Tu*) which had been completed for Qubilai during the last months of 1273:

Et si vos di que les rues de la ville sunt si drois et si large que l'en voit de l'une part a l'autra;
et sunt ordree si que chascune porte se voit de les autres.

(Benedetto's transcription of *MS français* 1116, *Il Milione*, p. 77)

[37] [Or, in Ramusio's recension: *le strade generali dall'una parte all'altra sono così dritte per linea che s'akuno montasse sopra il muro d'una porta e guardasse a dirittura può vedere la porta dall'altra banda a riscontro di quella*].

and the close similarity of Polo's language to that employed by Caesar Fredericke in his account of Pegu, here translated into English by Thomas Hickocke:

[the streets thereof] are as straight as a line from one gate to another, and standing at the one gate you may discover the other.

These grand avenues, 'as broad as 10 or 12 men may ride a breast in them' (Fredericke), were, of course, the *viae sacrae* that served to define sacred urban space in the continuum of profane space and, as such, were quite atypical of the normal urban thoroughfare.

From the fringe of the Hellenistic world we may cite, from the *Milindapanha*, Thera Nagasena's use of the axially symmetrical city plan to an illustration:

It is like the case of the guardian of a city who, when seated at the cross-roads in the middle of the city, could see a man coming from the East or the South or the West or the North.

[T. W. Rhys Davids, *The Question of King Milinda*, 1 (1890)., 95: Trenckner's Pali text, p. 62].

These phrases are echoed by Strabo (XII, 566) when he says that 'from one stone in the middle of the gymnasium [in Bithymian Nicae] a man could see the four gates.'

somewhat unexpected contexts. Take, for example, this stanza from one of the odes in the *Shang Sung* collection.[80]

商 邑 翼 翼

四 方 之 極

赫 赫 厥 聲

濯 濯 厥 靈

壽 考 且 寧

以 保 我 後 生

[19] Arthur Waley's version is fairly representative of the way in which this verse has been rendered in European languages. He translated the first two lines as:

Splendid was the capital of Shang,
A pattern to the people on every side.[81]

To a large extent any interpretation of this verse must turn on the significance attached to the reduplicative **gjak-gjak* (MSC = i-i) at the end of the first line, for which Waley adopted what might be considered the orthodox translation.[82] However, the original meaning of the doublet was "to spread the wings over" or perhaps "regular movements like those of wings," from which, as long ago as the twelfth century, Chu Hsi had adduced the implications of "orderly." In the last century James Leggae adopted this interpretation and rendered the lines as:

The capital of Shang was full of order
The model for all parts of the kingdom.[83]

and a couple of decades ago Bernhard Karlgren retained this sense in the first line, while providing a rather more accurate translation of the second:

The city of Shang was (orderly)—carefully laid out,
It is the center of the four quarters.[84]

I think we may go further and regard the doublet as implying a high level order, an existential ritual order, rather than simple regularity of arrangement: in the present instance the cosmo-magical order proper to temple and capitals.[85] I would also abandon any mention of "people" in the second line and follow Karlgren in rendering precisely what the graphs imply.

The capital of Shang[86] was a city of cosmic order,
The pivot[87] of the four quarters.
Glorious was its renown,
Purifying its divine powers,
Manifested in longevity and tranquility
And the protection of us who come after.

[20] I would suggest that a translation something after this fashion not only elicits a unity in the stanza which is less evident in previous versions,

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[80] *Shih Ching*, **Ion -Mjwo* (MSC = Yin-Wu): Mao CCV, stanza 5. This ode is included in the *Shang Sung* section of the *Shih Ching*, and as such may preserve a tradition of the ruling house of the old principality of Sung, which traced its ancestry to the last Shang ruler, when it was still only imperfectly assimilated to Chou culture: *vide* Herrlee Glesner Creel, *Studies in Early Chinese* (London, 1938), pp. 49–54.

[81] Arthur Waley, *The Book of Songs* (London, 1937), p. 280.

[82] Cf. William Jennings [*The Shi King, the Old 'Poetry Classic' of the Chinese: A Close Metrical Translation, with Annotations*, Sir John Lubbock's Hundred Books Series (London and New York, 1891)], p. 382]:

His city, nobly built on every side,
Was model to all countries far and wide.

and F. S. Couvreur [*Chen King: Texte chinois avec une double traduction en français et en latin avec une introduction et un vocabulaire* (Imprimerie de la Mission Catholique, Ho Kien fou, 1896), p. 468]: 'La capitale des Chang fut admirablement gouvernée et devint le modèle de tourte les countrées de l'empire,' and 'Chang urbs praecipuo optime composita est; fuit quatnor imperii regionum fastigium (et exemplar).'

[83] James Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, vol. IV: *The She King* (Hong Kong and London, 1871); reprint, with notes (Shanghai, n.d., and Hong Kong, 1960), p. 643.

[84] Bernard Karlgren, *The Book of Odes* (Stockholm, 1950: a reprint of papers in the *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities*, Nos. 16–17), p. 266.

[85] Cf. *Shih Ching*, **Mjan* (MSC = Mien), Mao CCXXXVII: *Tsale mjog gjak-gjak* = they raised the Temple [of the Ancestors] on the cosmic pattern [Cp. Karlgren, *The Book of Odes*, p. 190: 'They made the temple in careful order.'].

[86] It is by no means established that the city referred to in this stanza was the old capital of the Shang dynasty near present-day An-yang in Ho-nan. As the Sung royal family were allegedly descendants of that dynasty, the term Shang became a literary honorific for the state of Sung, and the ode may have referred to a capital of the later kingdom. My own feeling, however, is that the eulogy was probably [38] considered appropriate to any Sung or Shang capital, including the Great City Shang founded by **B'wan-käng at An-yang.

[87] **G'jak* (MSC = *chi*) was an ancient technical term for the astronomical pole [*Vide* Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilization in China*, 3 (Cambridge, 1959), section 20e]. in Sung times the concept of *t'ai chi* came to play an important part in Neo-Confucian thought as expressive of 'the majesty of the universal design' (*T'ien-li-chih tsun*), an axis 'without form and existing only in existential space' [Jao Lu, *Hsing-li Ching-i*, chüan 1, folio 5 recto]. Cf. also Chu Hsi, in Li Kuang-ti (ed.), *Chu-tzü Ch'üan Shu*, chüan 49, passim, but especially folio 13 recto where the *t'ai chi* is compared to the longitudinal axis of a candlestick. The axial implications of this graph are also evident in the honorific, **T'ai-g'jak Kjung*, of T'ang Ch'ang-an and in the name of the Great Hall of State, the Daigoku-den, in Heian-kyo, a city which was modeled explicitly on Ch'ang-an.

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but also exhibits the modes of urban symbolism discussed in the preceding pages, namely, in the order in which they occur in the ode: the imitation of a celestial archetype, the *omphalos* as an instrument for the diffusion of supernatural power (here = **lieng*: MSC = *ling*), and the parallelism of microcosmos and macrocosmos. In other words, the city functioned as an *axis mundi* about which the state revolved, and was laid out as an *imago mundi* in order to ensure the protection and prosperity "of us who come after."

Finally, an example of the symbolic basis of urban design from India. I have already mentioned James Fergusson's disparagement of South Indian temple-cities. The chief object of his disapproval was the manner in which the *gopuras* along the four cardinally oriented axes diminish in height with increasing proximity to the central shrine. "Altogether detestable" and "the bathos of their decreasing in size and elaboration" were among the expressions he used.[88] But to the worshipper at one of these shrines the matter appeared in a rather different light. He judged his proximity to ultimate truth by the depth to which he had penetrated into the interior of the sacred *enceinte*, not by the height of its *sikhara*. They would not expect this inner sanctum, the supremely sacred heart of reality, to be visible to the uninitiated. Only he who had purified his mind by meditation and rigorous ritual observance dare look on the face of God. As the pilgrims dragged weary feet across the plain, he would see from afar, with the eyes of the unenlightened, one of the four magnificent outer *gopuras* marking the axis of the world. As he passed through its portals and entered into the role of the neophyte, he would see plainly the next barrier to enlightenment, and beyond that the next, and so on, a series of *gopuras* diminishing in height towards the center of the sacred enclave. Finally, at the very heart of the complex, at the point of ultimate reality, he would—if he were at, say, Madurai—look on the low guilded towers of the sanctuaries of Sundaresvar and his consort Minaksi-devi. Here, at the heart of the eternal flux of creation and dissolution, architectural rhetoric would have been **[21]** of no avail. Form at this point was subject to spirit, and the structural conception at this final stage of spiritual progress was not the architectural bathos imagined by Fergusson but what another and greater student of traditional spiritual values has referred to as *el gran* pathos *inherente a la solemne invocación de Dios*.[89]

I have spoken of this cosmo-magical symbolism in city design at some length[90] as it has been so largely ignored by urbanists in the Western tradition. But the primary interest of the social scientist lies less in symbolism itself than in the nature of the city of which it constitutes a functional and organic part. Here we are immediately confronted with the paucity of investigating into the nature of pre-industrial urbanism to which I referred earlier, so that I can do no more than offer a few gross generalizations. I regret, too, that the exigencies of both knowledge and time oblige me to speak more apodictically than I would otherwise wish.

Socially these ceremonial cities were composed of relatively undifferentiated groups that tended to exhibit repetitive similarity. Society was organized in a pyramidal form at the summit of which was a political elite who, in the higher order cities of the urban hierarchy, were often largely coincident with the sacred elite. Below them were corps of officials, both civil and military, and at the base of the pyramid a broad stratum of artisans, tradesmen, and laborers, together with various marginal groups, such as slaves, entertainers, barbers (the "mean" people of traditional China), and foreigners, who existed largely outside the structural dimensions of society. All individuals were subsumed within a unitary moral system which was expressed through laws of a primarily penal and repressive character.[91] Politically these societies exhibited a high degree of centralization, with constituent territories organized unilaterally for the support of the capital, which was primarily a ceremonial city, by the various techniques of resource mobilization employed in predominantly redistributive economics. There was only a poorly developed sense of public life, and opportunities for civic communalism were restricted virtually to

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city when natural or political catastrophe indicated that the current site could no longer be considered auspicious, when in fact the *axis mundi* had been dislocated and the parallelism of the worlds disrupted. This is but one facet of the complex question of capital location which has usually received only cavalier treatment from geographers and historians alike. The other topic that deserves passing mention is the widely diffused rite of circumambulation which effected the ceremonial definition of the capital as an *axis mundi*. In ancient Egypt, for example, each new Pharaoh came to Memphis to perform the Circuit of the White Wall as it was alleged Menes had when he had first laid out this sacred city [K. Sethe, *Beiträge zur ältesten Geschichte Ägyptens* (Leipzig, 1903), pp. 121–141]. The circular rampart traced by Romulus's plough [*designat moenia suko*: Ovid, *Fasti*, Bk. IV, xi, 821–825], the ancient Hindu rite of *pradaksina* and the *cakravartin's* formal circuit of the *Dipa*, the quintessential visitation of the Chinese emperor to the cardinal point of his kingdom [*Shu Ching*, Canon of Shun; *Li Chi*, Wang Chih; and *Shih Chi*, chüan 1, folio 18 recto], and perhaps the ceremonial progress of the Ark of the Lord round the city of Jericho [P. Saintyves, "Le tour de la ville et la chute de Jéricho," *Essais de Folklore Biblique* (Paris, 1923), pp. 177–204] were all expressions of the same idea that sacred (or habitable) space required to be cosmicized.

[91] *Vide* Max Rheinstein, "Process and Change in the Cultural Spectrum Coincident with Expansion: Government and Law," in Carl H. Kraeling and Robert McC. Adams, *City Invincible: A Symposium on Urbanization and Cultural Development in the Ancient Near East* (Chicago, 1960), pp. 405–418.

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[88] Fergusson, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, p. 847.

[89] Westheim, *Arte Antiguo de México*, p. 187.

[90] In the brief compass of this paper it has been possible to discuss two other important aspects of cosmo-magical urban symbolism. The first of these was the need to move the capital

limited participation in ceremonial festivities and marketing excursions. [92] The legal sanctions mentioned above were comparatively seldom integrated into a unifying body of public law, and [22] such judicial decisions as had to be made tended to be based on the notion of a desirable level of public order derived from custom. At the same time, by contrast, there was often an elaborate corps of religious law. It follows that these societies conformed fairly closely to those which Emile Durkheim categorized as societies of mechanical solidarity. [93] Characteristically, they proved extremely brittle when subjected to the forces of political and social change, so that they tended to be relatively easily overthrown from within or without.

Culturally these cities were of the type which has been characterized as cities of orthogenetic change. [94] Moral and religious norms permeated all activities. Authority was based on the validation of absolutes, and its interpretation and implementation were in the hands of ritually qualified experts. Change was mediated by literati according to the mores of a classical tradition, and consequently was felt to be an inevitable progression from the past. The future was thus viewed as a cyclical repetition of that past, and exegesis took priority over creativity. Canonical texts provide the touchstone of truth and primacy was accorded the written word, so that in effect the dead prevailed in testimony over the living. But, by yielding the future, these cities ineluctably themselves became things of the past. With some significant exceptions, they proved incapable of adapting to the imperatives of modern industrialized society. Where their physical shells still exist they provide a framework for the operation of institutions very different from those for which they were designed.

It follows, too, from what has been said that in these ceremonial cities economic institutions were likely to be subordinated to the religious and moral norms of society. Price-fixing and self-regulating markets were by no means universal, and it was commonly non-economic factors rather than the market mechanism which set rates of exchange. [95] In fact, the main implication of the study of the market in the pre-industrial city is a rejection of the assumption that the structure of the urban hierarchy was invariably generated predominantly by tertiary economic activity. Towards trade *sensu stricto* there seems to have been an ambivalent attitude. On the one hand there was administered trade (in both its tribute and treaty forms), which was undertaken from a status [23] rather than a profit motive, so that its personnel came almost exclusively from the upper echelons of the social scale. The *dam-gar* of Sumeria, [96] the *tankarum* of Assyria, [97] the *pochteca* of the Aztecs, [98] the interpreters attached to the Yellow Gate (*I-chang shu Huang-Men*) of Han China, [99] and the hundred wives of the Alafin of Oyo who traded widely in West Africa, [100] were entirely representative of this class of elite merchants. On the other hand there was the peddling trade, whose following came from the lower end of the social scale, "floating scum" as Pirenne so ungraciously called them. Huge as the aggregate volume of such trade might be, it was made up of an infinitude of small-scale transactions, and its agents contributed to the great web of commerce predominantly labor, in the form of carrying and ferrying, rather than capital, the coin by which the noble entrepreneur purchased his entry into the world of exchange. It was the peddlers, whose peripatetic mode of life and consequent lack of allegiance to a single master caused them to be regarded by the *noblesse de robe* as a potential threat to the rigid and brittle structure of society in the ceremonial cities. In addition, they were not infrequently foreigners and therefore only too often, from the point of view of the authoritarian, aristocratic strata of society, intruders from beyond the frontiers of sanctified territory. There were, of course, intermediately situated groups whose presence served to blur somewhat this too sharply drawn antithesis: *ksatriyan* entrepreneurs from Gupta India, for example, who may have personally undertaken the disposal of their wares in the ports of South-East Asia, [101] Hellenistic merchants of metic ancestry, and factors who established themselves in various ports alongside *commenda*

[92] This paragraph owes some of its phraseology to Pauline O. Milone, *Queen City of the East: The Metamorphosis of a Colonial Capital*, Doctoral thesis submitted to the University of California, Berkeley, 1966, especially pp. 87–90.

[93] Emile Durkheim, *De la Division du Travail Social: Etude sur l'Organisation des Sociétés Supérieures* (Paris, 1893), esp. Chs. 2–3.

[94] Robert Redfield and Milton B. Singer, "The Cultural Role of Cities," *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, 3 (1954), 53–73.

[95] Cp. Polanyi's succinct statement: 'In so far as exchange at a set rate is in question, the economy if integrated by factors which fix that rate, not by the market [39] mechanism' [*Trade and Market in the Early Empires*, p. 255]. For comments on theories concerning the nature of exchange in the traditional world see Note 13 above.

[96] W. F. Leemans, *The Old Babylonian Merchant: His Business and Social Position* (Leiden, 1950), p. 41; Adams, *The Evolution of Urban Society*, pp. 155–156.

[97] A. L. Oppenheim, "A Bird's Eye-View of Mesopotamian Economic History," in Polanyi *et al.*, *Trade and Market in the Early Empires*, Ch. 3.

[98] Anne M. Chapman, "Port of Trade Enclaves in Aztec and Maya Civilizations," in Polanyi *et al.*, *Trade and Market in the Early Empires*, Ch. 7.

[99] *Ch'ien-Ham Shu*, chüan 283, folio 32 recto: commentary on this text in Wheatley, "Possible References to the Malay Peninsula in the Annals of the Former Han," *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 30, Pt. 1 (1957), 115–121.

[100] Richard and John Lander, *Journal of an Expedition to Explore the Course and Termination of the Niger*, 1 (London, 1832; New York, 1854), 109–110; The Late Commander [Hugh] Clapperton, *Journal of a Second Expedition into the Interior of Africa, from the Bight of Benin to Soccatoo* (London and Philadelphia, 1829), p. 21.

[101] The archetyped, heroized exploits of such merchants featured prominently in popular Indian tales such as those collected in the *Kathasaritsagara* and the *Jakata* corpus. There is a summary of these themes in Wheatley, *The Golden Khersonese* (Kuala Lumpur, 1961), Ch. XI.

investment in the peddling trade. Nevertheless, outside European middle-class traders have, generally speaking, been less prominent in historical times than have the noble entrepreneur on the one hand and the peddler on the other, and it was the dramatic juxtaposition of these groups in the traditional city which evoked Karl Polanyi's glittering paradox: "Whereas he who trades for the sake of duty and honor grows rich, he who trades for filthy lucre remains poor."[102] Typical of the sentiments expressed towards the low-class trader in the literatures of the Great Tradition is that which occurs in a Burmese aetiological **[24]** myth of the founding of *Arimaddanapura* (Pagan). In this myth the Lord Buddha prophesied that the inhabitants of the city, instead of tilling the soil, would "live by merchandise, selling and buying, and their speech would not be the words of truth but of falsehood."[103] A similar elitists attitude to petty commerce is evident in the legendary tale of Mencius's mother, who moved her abode from a house overlooking the market place so that her son should not copy the demeanor and acquire the dubious values of the traders chaffering there. Plato would have approved of her solicitude, for he held that the introduction of trade into a *polis* would bring about nothing less than the demoralization of the citizenry ($\eta\theta\eta\ \pi\alpha\lambda\iota\mu\beta\omega\lambda\alpha\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \delta\pi\omega\tau\alpha$ was the phrase he used: *Laws*, 705a). Even Aristotle who, by undertaking a systematic enquiry into the structure of the *polis* as a response to the multiple needs of a complex community, first established urban studies on a practicable basis, still considered it prudent to prescribe the spatial separation of the economic form from the social functions of the *agora* in the Thessalian manner (*Politics*, VII, ii, 2). Comparable disparagements of small-scale traders could be cited from most of the literary traditions of the Old World—those of China[104] and the Western Semites spring at once to mind—but this almost universal execration of low-class merchants in the literatures of the Great Traditions did not prevent them on occasion from exercising considerable

influence on the government of cities through a variety of informal channels.

Meager though our knowledge of traditional cities has proved to be when considered in ecumenical perspective, it is nevertheless apparent that in many respects they did not conform to the models devised by students of contemporary Western urbanism. In the first place they were not all characterized by contact groupings of population. Among the Maya, in pre-Chimú Peru, in the Nile valley prior to the advent of the New Kingdom, in China of the Shang and Western Chou dynasties, and through most of western South-East Asia in pre-colonial times the prevailing urban form was that which Professor S. W. Miles has categorized as the "extended boundary city," namely, "a focally situated ceremonial complex serving a population scattered through the surrounding countryside."[105] Moreover, early cities, whether of dispersed or **[25]** compact form, showed little tendency to absorb excess rural population: in fact the peasantry was seldom free to migrate to the city. Nor did the oft-cited negative relationship between degree of urbanization and density of agricultural production invariably obtain in the traditional world. More generally, it can be confidently asserted that not all types of pre-industrial city equally generated social and economic change or mediated it in the same manner as does the contemporary city, and nor did the opportunist practices of the market place always determine the prevailing urban ethic. Finally, it is evident from what has already been said that, although the pre-eminence of the central tract over the periphery is characteristic of both modern and traditional urban forms, whereas in the former it derives primarily from economic and technological considerations, in at least a substantial proportion of pre-industrial cities it was induced by a principle that may conveniently be termed proximity to the sacred. In the contemporary Western-style city, high land values in the central zones are associated with ease of intra-urban accessibility, savings in transport costs being set against higher rent payments for central locations. In the representative ceremonial city of the traditional world, by contrast, rent-distance relationships were structured on different principles, which resulted in a zoning of land use foreign to the modern city.[106] Not only were the

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[102] Polanyi, *Trade and Market in the Early Empires*, p. 259.

[103] Pe Maung Tin and G. H. Luce (trans.), *The Glass Palace Chronicle of the Kings of Burma* (London, 1923; facsimile reprint Rangoon, 1960), p. 29. The Buddha's prophecy is reminiscent of the comment of John of Ephesus on the character of two merchants trading between Byzantium and Persia: 'they abstained from the evil practices which the traders of the world are wont to follow...from oaths of all kinds and from lying and extortion' [*Lives of the Eastern Saints*, ed. Brooks (*Patrologia Orientalis*), 374 *et seq.*].

[104] In the formal social hierarchy of Imperial China, where the 'gentleman' was concerned with virtue rather than with pecuniary profit, merchants were regarded as parasites on the body politic and formally relegated to the lowest of the four social classes (below the scholar, the farmer, and the artisan). They were prohibited from sitting the civil service examinations and consequently were theoretically (though not always in practice) excluded from political power. Moreover, as the Confucian ideal of social stability was believed to be incompatible with unregulated entrepreneurial activity, the business operations of merchants, bankers, brokers, and traders were subject to rigorous bureaucratic control.

[105] S. W. Miles, "Maya Settlement Patterns: A Problem for Ethnology and Archaeology," *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology*, 13 (1957), 239–248. Cp. the remarks of John Wilson on the nature of the city in ancient Egypt [*The Burden of Egypt* (Chicago, 1951), Ch. 2. Reprinted as Phoenix Paperback No. 11, *The Culture of Ancient Egypt*]; Kwang-chih Chang, *The Archaeology of Ancient China* (New Haven and London, 1963), pp. 165–166; Michael D. Coe, "Social Typology and the Tropical Forest Civilizations," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 4, No. 1 (1961), 65–85; and John Howland Rowe, "Urban Settlements in Ancient Peru," *Ñawpa Pacha*, 1 (1963), 3. The distribution of extended boundary cities is discussed by Wheatley in *The Pivot of the Four Quarters*, Ch. 3.

[106] It may be remarked parenthetically that the ceremonial capitals of the traditional world afford only limited support for Colin Clark's generalization (derive wholly **[40]** from analyses of

location patterns based primarily to localized vertical organizations and product groupings (represented typically by producer-retailers in traditional bazaars), which were embedded as often in a superordinate, predominantly sacred central precinct, the *axis mundi*, was usually reserved for ritual purposes. Building in this zone was then restricted to habitations of gods and of those elites who, in societies structured in the image of a hierarchical cosmic order, were either conceived as occupying status positions close to divinity or were experts in the techniques of ceremonial and ritual service.

In short, the representative capitals of the traditional world were *axes mundi* where it was possible to effect an ontological transition between worlds, quintessentially sacred enclaves within which man could proclaim the knowledge that he shared with the gods and dramatize the cosmic truth that had been revealed to him. As **[26]** such they were more often than not constructed as *magines mundi* with the cosmogony as paradigmatic model, islands of sacred symbolism in the intrinsically hostile continuum of profane space. They were theaters for the performance of the rituals and ceremonies which guaranteed man's liberation from the terrors of the natural world. This was as true of the relatively foundation of Beijing as it was of the early capital of the Royal Chou, as true of Ch'ang-an as of Tiruvannamalai or Persepolis or *Yasodharapura*, or of Mandalay founded as late as 1857—or indeed as true of Mexican Teotihuacán as of Tenochtitlán a thousand years later. On these cities, at whatever level of political and administrative hierarchy they occurred, devolved the welfare of their respective territories, and in this way they became paradigms for all other cities. Not infrequently, such cities of the moral order (as Redfield called them) were surpassed in size and prosperity by rival foundations operating under a commercial ethic, cities of the entrepreneur, where the values of society were structured about the prevailingly expediential norms of the marketplace and manifested themselves in a consensus appropriate to the technical rather than the moral order. But invariably it was the city of orthogenetic change which

commanded the greater prestige, which in contrast to the viewpoint of Western culture, was considered the true city.[107]

Generalizations of this nature are too gross to do more than indicate the sort of problems involved in the study of traditional urbanism. They also rely too heavily on stylistic rather than analytical conceptions, so that they are perhaps not potentially expressive of genuine structural regularities. They certainly possess no explanatory power. Almost the only thing of which we can be sure is that a much more intensive study of traditional urbanism will be prerequisite for a full understanding of the uniqueness of the contemporary Western-style city. But this investigation will have to be undertaken in terms of the norms and values of traditional cultures; otherwise it is unlikely that its categories, devised solely on the basis of form, imposed rather than educed, will be truly homologous, and, instead of explaining the functioning of these cities, we shall merely be defining accidental intersections of essentially non-congruent systems. A general, as opposed to a Western, theory of urbanism is still some way in the future.

Western-style cities) that urban population densities decline exponentially with distance from the city center ["Urban Population Densities," *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, ser. A, 114 (1951), 490–496; "Urban Population Densities," *Bulletin de l'Institut International de Statistique*, 36 (1958), 60–68; cf. also Brian J. L. Berry, James W. Simmons, and Robert J. Tennant, "Urban Population Densities: Structure and Change," *Geographical Review*, 53 (1963), 398–405; Emilio Casetti, "Urban Population Density Patterns: An Alternate Explanation," *Canadian Geographer*, 11 (1967), 96–100], and none at all for Bruce E. Newling's density profile classification of stages of urban growth derived from a quadratic exponential model ["The Spatial View of Urban Population Densities," *Geographic Review*, 59 (1969), 242–252]. The central density craters which this author postulates as developing in Western-style cities during hypothesized evolutionary stages of Late Maturity and Old Age, in the ceremonial cities of the traditional world are in evidence from the very beginning, and appear to weaken only with the onset of modernization.

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[107] I think that it was this type of city which Oswald Spengler had in mind when he was writing the chapter of his *Der Untergang des Abendlandes*, vol. 2 (München, 1922) entitled *Der Seele der Stadt*, and which he epitomized in the famous phrases *Alle echte Stilgeschichte spiele sich in Städten ab* (p. 109) and *Jede Frühzeit einer Kultur ist zugleich der Frühzeit einer nennen Städtewesens* (p. 107). The student of today may be surprised that I should cite with approbation that monistic philosophy of history, cast in an ornate and pseudo-mystical idiom alien to the functional, unadorned style of present-day scholarship, but in his discussion of the great capitals of the past Spengler showed that he discerned, however obscurely, the essential functions of the ceremonial city. Time and again on my own pilgrimage I have come upon his footprints in what I had arrogantly presumed to be untrodden terrain, and realized that the German schoolmaster had been there before me. Another who also prospected parts of the territory, in this case as early as the seventeenth century, was the Norwich physician Sir Thomas Browne, one of the first to be intrigued by the Asian emphasis on cardinal orientation and axiality, and by the symbolism of what he called the 'Quincuncial Ordination' of the Ancients and the 'mystical Mathematicks of the City of Heaven' [*The Garden of Cyprus*, in *Religio Medici and Other Writings* (London and New York, 1965), pp. 177, 229].