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Citizens and Subjects

City and State

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF CITIZENSHIP? How do you get it? Where does it come from? What good is it? How do you lose it? These are some of the questions that prompt this chapter.

We examine an argument, first enunciated by the great German sociologist Max Weber almost a hundred years ago, that citizenship was the product of the medieval European city. It resulted, according to this view, from the political demand of a rising middle class of merchants, craftspeople, and professionals that they be able to control their own environment.

In order to explore this idea, we begin by looking at two other societies for the purposes of comparison. We focus first on the Chinese city. Chinese capital cities of the period 700–1300 were the largest and most powerful in the world. Did they offer citizenship? Did they have a middle class of merchants, craftspeople, and professionals? Was there an urban class that was different from the people of the country? Was there an interest in urban autonomy, independence, or self-government? If not, why not? If not, did the Chinese city offer a different sort of political participation? These are some of the questions we ask.

We then turn briefly to the second great world civilization of this period, Islam.

How autonomous were Muslim cities? Who were the real powers in the Muslim city? Did Muslim cities encourage citizenship? If not, why not?

Finally, we look at the development of the city in Europe. Here we see the import of Weber's thesis. How was the European city different from the cities of China and Islam? What were the causes of these differences? What were the advantages and disadvantages of European cities? What has happened to citizenship and community since?

CITY AND COUNTRY: CHINA AND EUROPE

Today the great cities of the world look increasingly alike. The international style of high concrete and glass boxes creates the same skyline from Chicago to Canton. But that was not always the case. Even ten years ago, one could enter Beijing, the capital of China, without knowing it. Suburban countryside faded imperceptibly into city streets. There was no dramatic increase in the height of the buildings, no sudden end of parks and gardens, not even a visible increase in population density. One who is used to seeing the protruding skyline of an American city from a distance could easily miss the distinction between city and countryside in China. After miles of similar architecture on the road to Beijing, you turned a corner and suddenly you were in Tian An Men Square, the center of the city, in front of the Imperial Palaces.

Traditional Chinese architecture favored the horizontal plain and the lay of the land. In city and country, natural building materials—stamped earth, baked brick, plaster, wood, and tile—were preferred for the living. Concrete and stone were thought more appropriate for the construction of more “permanent” structures—tombs, roads, or fireproof warehouses. According to Joseph Needham:

Chinese architecture was always with, not against nature; it did not spring suddenly out of the ground as if aiming to pierce the sky like European “Gothic” building. . . .¹

But the different look of Chinese and European cities is more than an aesthetic difference. The absence of buildings like Gothic cathedrals in China suggests much about the difference between the two cultures. Not only was Chinese architectural space more horizontal than vertical, the materials more natural than permanent, and the size on more of a human scale. Chinese religion was different from European. Chinese religious buildings did not have to reach up to the skies because Chinese ancestral spirits walked the earth. Ancestor worship, emperor worship, even Buddhist and Daoist reverence for nature, were more “immanent” than “transcendent” religious traditions: God was not in the sky.

Chinese religion was also not primarily urban. Christians called the unconverted “country people” (pagans). Muslims required a mosque in every city. The Chinese

often built finer temples in the country than in the city. Chinese religion was also nonhierarchical. There were no equivalents of bishops, archbishops, or popes in Chinese religions. A cathedral in Europe was a “bishop's church,” situated at his principal city.

There is perhaps a more important reason why city and country were so sharply distinguished in Europe and barely separated in China. Socially and politically, as well as aesthetically and architecturally, the Chinese city was not a different place from the countryside.

Max Weber (1864–1920) alluded to this difference at the beginning of this century:

In contrast to the West, the cities in China and throughout the East lacked political autonomy. The Eastern city was not a “polis” in the sense of Antiquity, and it knew nothing of the “city law” of the Middle Ages, for it was not a “commune” with political privileges of its own. Nor was there a citizenry in the sense of a self-equipped military estate such as existed in Western Antiquity.²

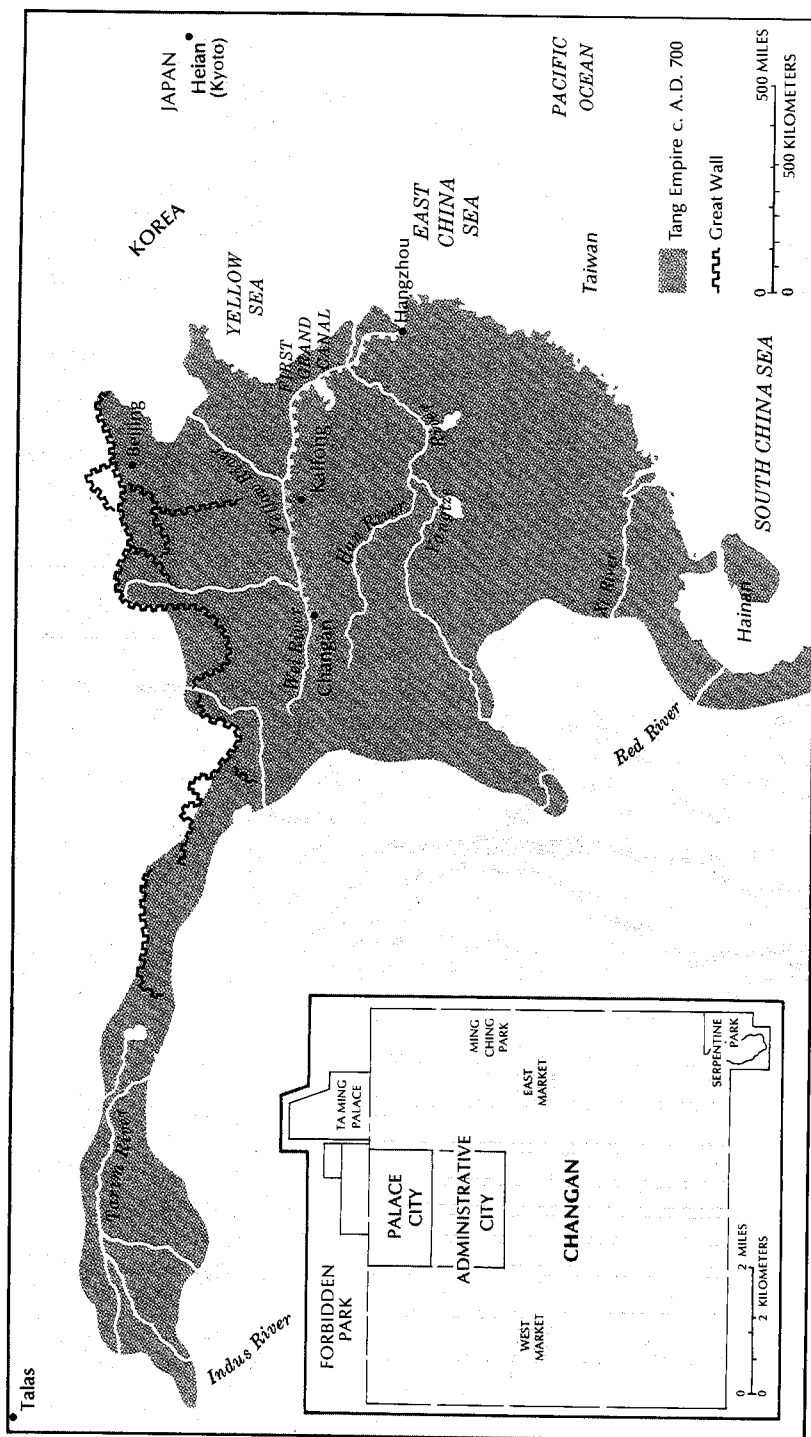
A contemporary historian of China, Frederick W. Mote, agrees with Max Weber's observation:

The Chinese city . . . had no “citizens,” nor any corporate identity, and the authority under which it was directly administrated extended beyond the city to include the surrounding countryside. It had therefore no need of a town hall as a monument to urban pride and urban group identity, or as a place of assembly where citizens could exercise political rights. Not even the defense of the Chinese city was a responsibility of the urban entity; its defenses were constituted and maintained by the central government to which all alike were subservient, and as part of its nation-wide defense installation.³

The Chinese city was a city of subjects rather than of citizens. We can see this in many cities in China's long history.

CHANGAN: SUBJECTS AND CITIZENS

The emperor Wen-di, founder of the Sui dynasty (589–618), chose the site for Changan very carefully. It was close enough to the imperial cities of the Han dynasty to remind people of past glories, but it was distant enough to be distinct. The city was built from scratch. Laid out in a grid plan with the streets running exactly north-south and east-west (see the map), it was the fitting center of the world for this Son of Heaven. At its fullest development under the Tang (618–907) the city contained about one million inhabitants inside the walls and another one million outside. Its life and its inhabitants were as varied as any city in the world.



TANG CHINA AND CHANGAN A.D. 700
Changan was the imperial ideal of a city, laid out to pay homage to the Son of Heaven. It was the capital of the vast Tang dynasty.

But everything—even the business of the poorest street sweeper or most foreign merchant—was directed toward the pleasure of the emperor and his court.

No buildings in Changan were built from what we call “civic pride.” Building and rebuilding were first of all at the initiative of the imperial family, which commanded the resources and could confiscate and relocate property at will. . . . Officials in their public role would frequently petition for funds to build or remodel a particular bureau or to dig a canal. But they argued for these projects in terms of improving the efficiency of imperial administration, not in terms of civic pride or “civic improvement.” Although we read much of the parks and pleasures of the great, of their ball-fields and archery halls, there is no mention of any such facilities for the populace. Philanthropy expressed itself through the Buddhist temples with their charitable functions, but the “bread and circuses” of Rome and Constantinople are not to be found. Nor is there anything comparable to the forums, public baths and arcades built by the Roman emperors for the pleasure and convenience of the citizenry. The residents of the city were not “citizens” but the emperor’s subjects. This is reflected in the layout of the city, in its administration and in its functioning. . . . There was neither mayor nor city council, and there was no charter. The city and its populace were controlled by the throne through officials of the imperial bureaucracy.⁴

Instead of neighborhoods, there were districts administered by an imperial appointee. Laws forbade the construction of housing facing the main avenues. The gates of each district were closed at sundown, and no one was allowed out on the avenues until the drums were beaten in the morning. Any commoner who crossed the wall of a district or entered an official compound without authorization was to be punished with seventy lashes. The large east and west market areas were also strictly regulated: opened at noon, closed at sundown; activity, transactions, and prices checked and regulated.

The Chinese imperial city was to be treated, according to at least one edict at Changan, as the “Mansion of the Emperor.” Not only the palaces and imperial offices and gardens, but the whole city was the emperor’s preserve. “Long ago, among the flowers and willows,” Li Bo [Li Po] (701–762) recalled, “we sat drinking together at Changan.”

*In the arts and graces of life we could hold our own
 With any dandy in the town—
 In the days when there was youth in your cheeks
 And I was still not old. . . .*

*We thought, you and I, that it would be always like this.
 How should we know the grasses would stir and dust rise on the wind?
 Suddenly foreign horsemen were at the Hsien-Ku Pass
 Just when the blossom at the palace of Ch'in was opening on the sunny boughs. . . .⁵*

The poet's Changan was overrun in a rebellion aided by Turkic horsemen under An Lushan (755–763). The emperor Xuan-Zong [Hsüan-tsung] (r. 713–756) was forced to flee to Sichuan [Szechwan]. While Changan and the dynasty continued for another two hundred years, it did so on a much smaller and more feeble scale.

KAIFENG: COMMERCE AND CIVIL SERVANTS

The Song [Sung] reunified China in 960, establishing their first capital at Kaifeng. Near the juncture of the Yellow River and the start of the Grand Canal to the southeastern coast, Kaifeng was an existing merchant city. It did not have the classic grid outline of Changan. It lacked the geometrical order and spaciousness of the earlier capital. But its disorder and congestion may have been appropriate, since the Northern Song Empire crammed twice the population of the Tang into shrinking frontiers. Like other merchant cities, Kaifeng was originally unwalled. When walls were constructed during the Tang dynasty they were erected rather haphazardly, and the Song never properly realigned them. The palace compound of the Song emperor was neither central nor spacious. It measured less than half the size of the palace grounds at Changan. The main difference between Kaifeng and early capitals, however, is conveyed by a single event in the beginning of the dynasty. With a view toward enlarging his quarters for his large retinue, Emperor Tai-zong [T'ai-tsung] commissioned a survey of the city in 986. But when he discovered that his plans would inconvenience too many of his neighbors, he canceled them. Founded by soldiers, the Song dynasty rejected the military expansion of the Tang for prosperity in a smaller home.

The existence of a large artisan and merchant class in early Kaifeng of Tang times made it less necessary for the Song royal family and court to import retainers for all of their needs, a practice that had been common in capitals designed from scratch. Nevertheless, the population increased from about a half-million registered inhabitants within the walls (and twice that, counting the suburbs) in 1021 to over a million in the 1120s (probably two million including those unregistered and beyond the walls).

Wealthy merchants were not the only influential class in Kaifeng. The capital of the Northern Song also made extensive use of the civil service examinations in order to fill appointments at court. The exams were used more regularly and widely than in any dynasty before or since. They became in Song Kaifeng the principal means of filling high government offices.⁶ In a sense, the civil service examinations were a commercial society's challenge to the domination of the government by the sons of landed aristocrats. Success could now be measured and was less dependent on family connections. But since examinations measured only what was already learned, a national university was established in the capital by Wang Anshi [Wang An-Shih] (1021–1086), chief minister of emperor Shen-zong [Shen-tsung] (r. 1068–1086). As long as it was well funded (during the Song dynasty), its doors



A busy bridge in Kaifeng in the twelfth century. (Werner Forman Archive)

were open to capable poor students as well as the heirs of the wealthy, and education shaped the exam instead of vice versa.⁷

Kaifeng shows us the beginning of a new kind of Chinese city, especially a new kind of imperial capital. The palace is not the absolute center. Order is not the only value. A new class of people that can only be called urban appears: actors, singers, prostitutes, fortune-tellers, and jugglers. The Tang curfew is ignored. Night markets are allowed.

We are fortunate in having lively contemporary descriptions of daily life in

Northern Song Kaifeng and the later Southern Song capital at Hangzhou, but, as Etienne Balazs reminds us, these are not typical of the enormous body of Song literature.

It is both interesting and revealing to note that it is precisely works such as these that . . . were written not by scholar-officials but by private individuals with no official function who remained unknown or anonymous. This is not fortuitous. The professional honor of a scholar or an official—in short, of a gentleman—would never have permitted him to take an interest in such frivolities, and the authors could only have come from bourgeois, plebeian, nonofficial circles. Their social origin is in fact clearly revealed by the obvious affection and even pride with which they describe every detail of the streets, shops, traveling shows, pleasure grounds, inns, and taverns.⁸

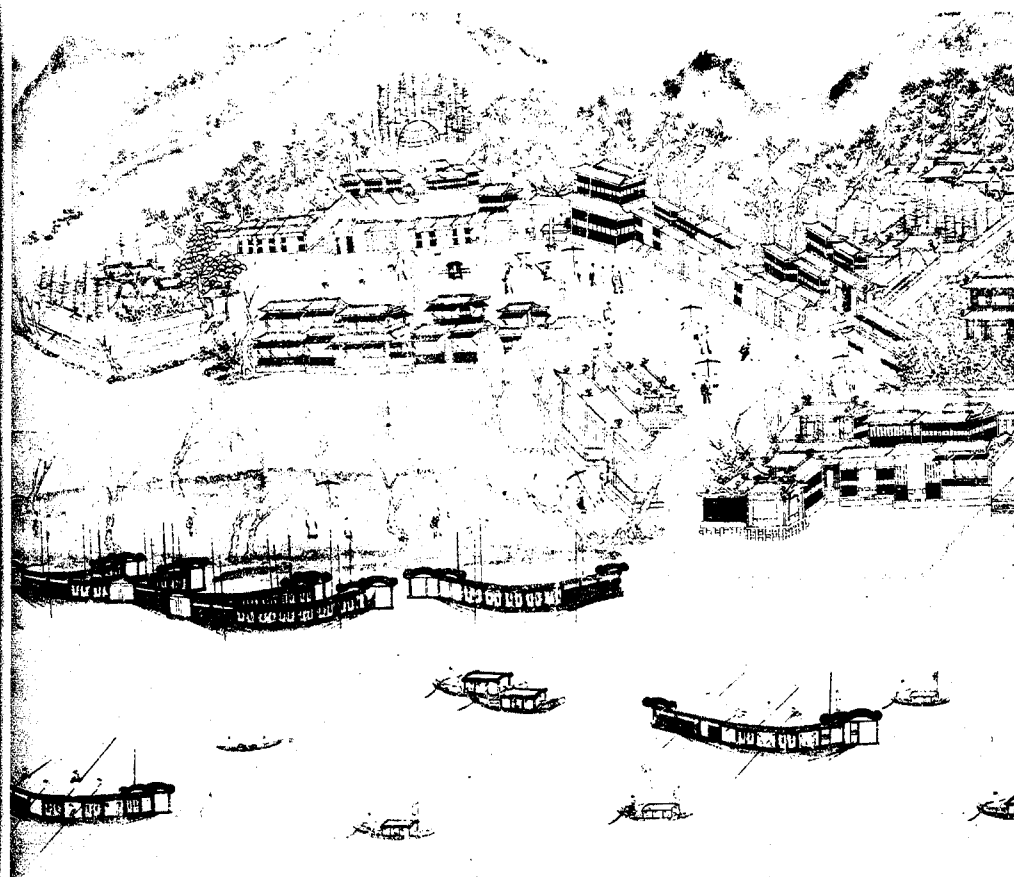
HANGZHOU: MIGRANTS, MERCHANTS, AND MANDARINS

Kaifeng was sacked by invasions from the steppe in 1127, and the Song dynasty gave up the northern third of China, retreating to the Yangtze Valley, where it established a new capital at Hangzhou [Hangchow]. At first thought to be a temporary home until the north could be reconquered, it eventually became accepted as the permanent capital of the Southern Song dynasty (1127–1279). New invasions by the Mongols in the north not only made reconquest of Kaifeng impossible, but also eventually conquered Hangzhou and ended the Song dynasty.

While the northern Yellow River Valley had been the traditional home of Chinese civilization and the site of all imperial capitals before 1127, large numbers of Chinese had migrated south to the Yangtze Valley since the Sui dynasty. In the year 606 only 23 percent of the registered households were in the south. By 742 the southern population had grown to 43 percent of the empire. By 1078 a decisive 65 percent of the Chinese population were in the south. Initially, this migration had been fueled by the availability of fertile lands in the south, but increasingly in the Tang-Song period migrants came south as refugees from invasion and war.

One result of this enormous migration was the rapid development of new cities in the Yangtze Valley. These were economic, trading centers rather than political, administrative cities and were therefore left to develop in terms of local needs, which were largely commercial. In contrast to imperial capitals, each city did not have to be self-sufficient. Each was allowed to develop regional specializations and to engage in trade with the other cities. As a consequence, a far-flung regional economy developed along the Yangtze and the Grand Canal.

While Hangzhou was designed almost from scratch by the emperor, it is important to note that its location at the terminus of the Grand Canal made it a natural center of trade and communications, which it remained long after it ceased to be the capital. As did the other cities of the Lower Yangtze Valley, Hangzhou



This Chinese painting of Hangzhou as seen from the West Lake shows only a small part of the city, but it captures the accent on pleasure and the beauty of the tamed natural environment.
(Freer Gallery of Art)

had uncontrolled markets, merchant and craft guilds, and a growing “‘city bourgeoisie’ that created their own new culture.”⁹

The Southern Song was a “financial” state in a way the northern dynasty could never have been; wealthy city-dwellers came powerfully close to establishing a distinctive urban class, and social leadership in the countryside was lodged firmly in the hands of men whose only common characteristic was their wealth.¹⁰

By the end of the Song dynasty, Hangzhou was probably the largest city in the world. Estimates of its population (including suburbs) range from 1.5 to 5 million. Marco Polo visited Hangzhou in 1275, the year before Kublai Khan moved to

incorporate the Song capital into his expanding northern empire. The visitor from Venice wrote that Hangzhou "is the greatest city which may be found in the world, where so many pleasures may be found that one fancies himself to be in Paradise."

Hangzhou offered lowly officials, foreign merchants, and native working people a variety of recreational facilities and amusements that had been unavailable in more circumspect Changan. There were many specialized restaurants: some served everything ice cold, including fish and soups; some specialized in silkworm or shrimp pies and plum wine; even teahouses offered sumptuous decor, dancing girls, and musical lessons of all kinds. On the lake there were hundreds of boats, many of which could be rented, according to Marco Polo, "for parties of pleasure."

These will hold ten, fifteen, twenty or more persons, and are from fifteen to twenty paces in length. . . . Anyone who desires to go a-pleasuring with the women or with a party of his own sex, hires one of these barges, which are always to be found completely furnished with tables and chairs and all other apparatus for a feast. The roof forms a level deck, on which the crew stand, and pole the boat along whithersoever may be desired, for the Lake is not more than two paces in depth. The inside of this roof and the rest of the interior is covered with ornamental painting in gay colours, with windows all round that can be shut or opened, so that the party at table can enjoy all the beauty and variety of the prospects on both sides as they pass along. And truly a trip on this Lake is a much more charming recreation than can be enjoyed on land. For on the one side lies the city in its entire length, so that the spectators in the barges, from the distance at which they stand, take in the whole prospect in its full beauty and grandeur, with its numberless palaces, temples, monasteries, and gardens, full of lofty trees, sloping to the shore. And the Lake is never without a number of such boats, laden with pleasure parties; for it is a great delight . . . to pass the afternoon in enjoyment with the ladies or their families, or perhaps with others less reputable, either in these barges or in driving about the city in carriages.¹¹

Even the soldiers and poor had their "pleasure grounds"—almost two dozen in all. Each was a large fairground with markets, plays, musical groups, instrumental and dance lessons, ballet performances, jugglers, acrobats, storytellers, performing fish, archery displays and lessons, snake charmers, boxing matches, conjurers, chess players, magicians, imitators of street cries, imitators of village talk, and specialists in painting chrysanthemums, telling obscene stories, posing riddles, and flying kites. Gambling, drinking, and prostitution were also part of the scene here as elsewhere in the city.

Market areas were equally a source of entertainment and business. Marco Polo saw so much fish in a single market that he could not imagine it would ever be eaten, but it was all sold in a couple of hours. There were markets devoted to specialized goods and crafts that could hardly be found in the rest of China. Fortunately, one "guidebook" has survived, which tells us where we can get the

best rhinoceros skins, ivory combs, turbans, wicker cages, painted fans, philosophy books, or lotus-pink rice.

The invention of movable type in the tenth century (five hundred years ahead of its invention in Europe) may not have actually increased the number of books available because there were over seven thousand Chinese characters (compared with the European twenty-six letters) and hand printing had become a work of art that was appreciated in itself. Nevertheless, the resident of Hangzhou could find books (hand or mechanically printed) on a fantastic variety of subjects: curious rocks, jades, coins, bamboo, plum trees, special aspects of printing and painting, foreign lands, poetry, philosophy, Confucius, and mushrooms, and there were encyclopedias on everything.

Marco Polo, of course, did not know Changan, but he tells a couple of stories that suggest that the imperial capital at Hangzhou, for all of its luxury and variety, was not entirely different from the ancient capital of the Tang.

And again this king did another thing; that when he rides by any road in the city . . . and it happened that he found two beautiful great houses and between them might be a small one . . . then the king asks why that house is so small. . . . And one told him that that small house belongs to a poor man who has not the power to make it larger like the others. Then the king commands that the little house may be made as beautiful and as high as were those two others



The Diamond Sutra (868) is the earliest known printed book. It is a Chinese translation of an Indian story of the Buddha. Each of the six "pages" of the scroll was printed with a separate wooden block. The tenth-century invention of movable type permitted each Chinese character to be printed separately, but there were too many characters for movable type to replace block printing. (Granger)

which were beside it, and he paid the cost. And if it happened that the little house belonged to a rich man, then he commanded him immediately to cause it to be taken away. And by his command there was not in his capital in the realms of . . . Hangchow any house which was not both beautiful and great, besides the great palaces and the great mansions of which there were great plenty about the city.¹²

Hangzhou, like Changan, was the emperor's city. And the emperor and his scholar-officials (mandarins) were aware of everything:

There is another thing I must tell you. It is the custom for every burgess in this city, and in fact for every description of person in it, to write over his door his own name, the name of his wife, and those of his children, his slaves, and all the inmates of his house, and also of the number of animals that he keeps. And if anyone dies in the house then the name of that person is erased, and if any child is born its name is added. So in this way the sovereign is able to know exactly the population of the city.¹³

Perhaps Max Weber was right, after all. The inhabitants of Hangzhou seemed to be more subjects than citizens. Ultimately, it was the emperor's city. Ultimately, perhaps, the mandarins were more important than the merchants. A Song magistrate wrote,

Those who are not capable of being Confucian scholars may make their living without disgracing their ancestors by working as spirit-mediums, doctors, Buddhists, Taoists, farmers, merchants or experts of some sort. It is the greatest disgrace to the ancestors if sons or younger brothers degenerate into beggars or thieves.¹⁴

Better to be a merchant than a thief. Those who can do, teach; others must find an occupation that won't disgrace the ancestors. These are traditional Chinese attitudes.

But this is not just a matter of merchants versus mandarins, though there undoubtedly were conflicts. Weber's point is that merchants were more likely than mandarins to seek self-government, political autonomy, or citizenship. As we shall see, that is what happened in Europe.

We may ask, however, if the Chinese did not find other ways to participate politically. Was not the civil service examination system, with its emphasis on education and its role in staffing the bureaucracy, an alternate route to political participation? Might not civil service be an equivalent of citizenship? Is it possible that the Chinese emphasis on learning created better-informed subjects than did European cities of citizens? Is it possible that the openness of the examination system to talent and learning, regardless of wealth or birth, made for greater social

mobility in China than was true in European cities of citizens? These are questions to consider.

ISLAM AND CITIES

If Chinese cities were the largest in the world, Chinese culture remained predominantly agrarian. This was not true of the second great civilization of the traditional world, Islam. The culture of Islam was distinctly urban.

It might seem odd that a religion that originated among desert nomads "has been able to multiply cities almost at will,"¹⁵ but one does not have to look far for reasons. Even the nomads required temporary settlements, oases, caravan stops, and trading centers. Islam needed the city to realize its religious and social ideals. Its history began in the *hegira* from one town, Mecca, to another, Medina. One of the five pillars of Islam was the *haji* to the holy city of Mecca. Another was the participation five times a day in community prayer. A third was the fasting of

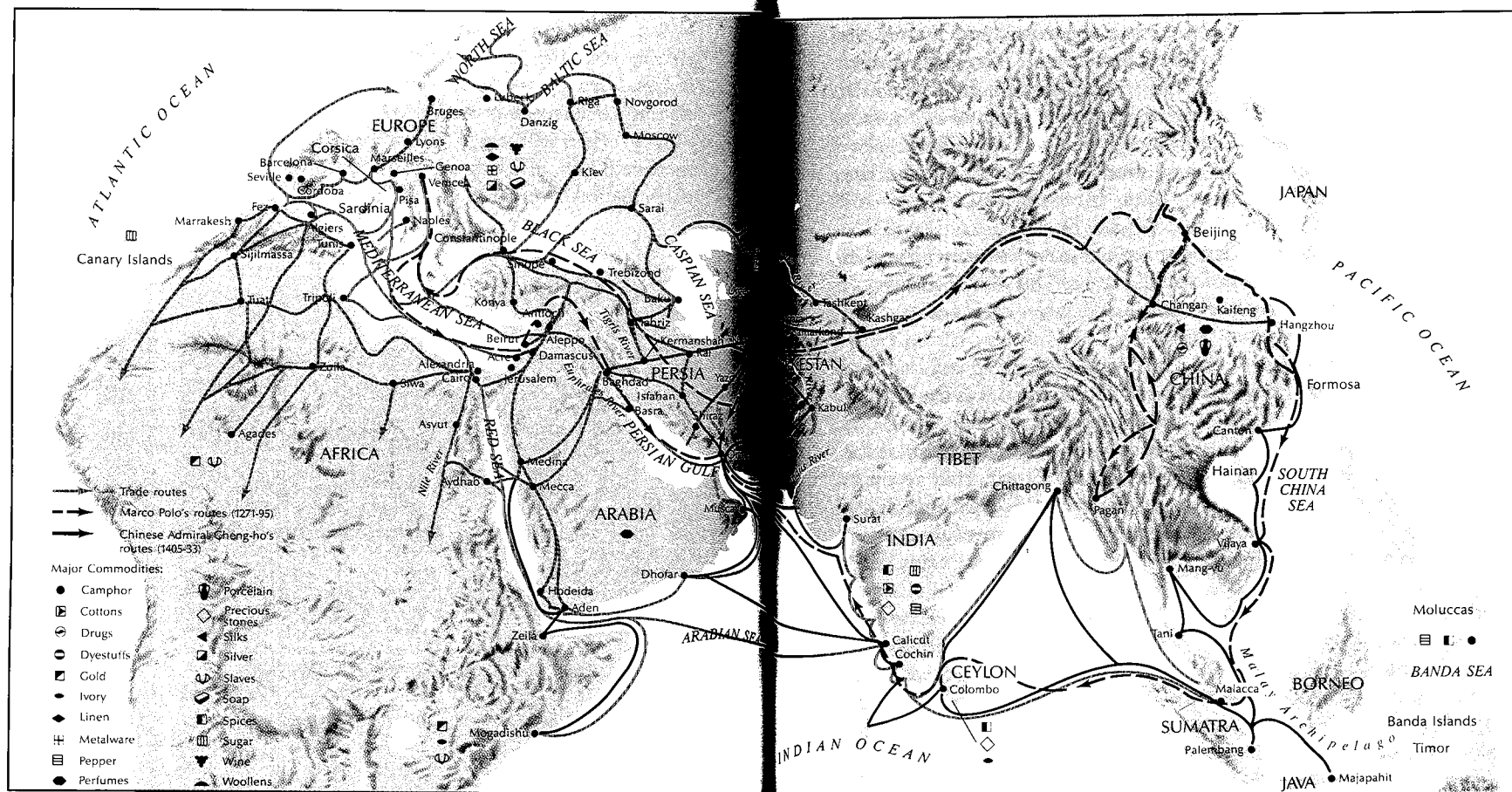


The Muslim city of Timbuktu in Northwest Africa. Islam thrived on cities, especially the important oasis cities, which made possible the desert trade of North Africa. (Granger)

Ramadan; a fourth, the giving of alms. All of these made more sense in an urban community. Only the other pillar, the declaration of belief in God, might be as potent in solitude as in a community. Islamic legends abounded about pious Muslims who founded towns. To found a town was to build a mosque, and every mosque meant the spread of Islam. Perhaps with a sneer for the nomadic world of makeshift camps and portable gods, some strict Muslims held that a Friday prayer was effective only when offered in a permanent, completely built mosque.

The city was the setting for Islam. The city was "the pillar of the faith and a framework within which to live the good life," according to one modern scholar. And yet he writes, echoing Max Weber, there was an absence of municipal life.

And yet these Islamic cities are strangely lacking in cohesion. This is the fundamental difference which separates them as much from the cities of antiquity as from the medieval cities of Europe. The Roman city rested at the



ISLAMIC CITIES AND AFRO-EURASIAN UNITY

A single zone of trade and communication was established by the fifteenth century, principally by the merchants and travellers of Islam but also by Chinese, Mongols, and Europeans, which brought a common material culture to the inhabitants of the cities of much of the Afro-Eurasian land mass.

center of a territory which belonged to the city; the medieval town in the western world was a refuge, usually cut off from the neighboring countryside. In both cases there were a lively feeling of solidarity, a notable pride in the city, and many close forms of understanding and co-operation among the citizens. There is nothing of the sort in an Islamic city. It has no separate municipal life. No privilege of exception, no special freedom of action, attaches to citizenship.¹⁶

The cities of Islam did not have municipal governments. They were run by governors, emirs (military commanders), and market inspectors appointed by the state. Like the Chinese capitals controlled by the emperor, most Islamic cities were too important to the caliph, sultan, or other lord to be allowed independence. In most cases there was no urban party that desired independence anyway. In fact, there was usually no unified political view at all, and rarely an occasion or place to express it. Muslim cities were highly segmented. Each district of the city contained its own homogeneous community—clan, tribe, or Muslim sect—and its own market. Each group walled itself in, sometimes closing in alleyways that crossed its boundaries and sometimes taking extra space from the street, in either case leaving a tight winding maze with little public space. This was probably just as well: debated space could easily become a battlefield when divisions required walls.

The great caliphal cities, Damascus of the Umayyads (661–750) and Baghdad of the Abbasids (750–932), were tightly controlled by the caliph, just as the Chinese imperial capitals were by the emperor. Most early Arab conquests were treated as military garrison towns, with the Arab armies remaining outside. Damascus, on the other hand, was an old city in which Arabs and non-Arabs settled, each group in its district. In Damascus, it was not possible to treat Arabs as an occupying military force and non-Arabs as a subject population. Nevertheless, the successful revolt of the Abbasids gained strength not only from Shi'ites but also from many who resented Arab dominance.

The move of the Abbasids further east to Baghdad, on the Tigris, was a revival of the Persian monarchical court in Islamic dress. Here caliphs like Harun al-Rashid (786–809) and Ma'mun (813–833) ruled with a show of force and splendor that has become legendary in such tales as *The Arabian Nights*. The Abbasids relied on non-Arab troops from the eastern province of Khurasan (northern Iran and Afghanistan) who increased the distance between ruler and ruled. Beginning in the ninth century they enlisted Turkish forces from the northern steppes who were slave-soldiers (*mamluks*, literally "owned"). As a personal army these mamluks were controlled by means of lavish rewards and considerable power. Their domination further alienated the population.

In 945 Baghdad was conquered by the Buyids, who already controlled the western Iranian highlands. The Buyids (932–1062) ruled less oppressively and less completely than the Abbasids. The administration of a frontier town might be

relatively innocuous. One that has been studied, Qazvin (a mountain fortress just south of the Caspian Sea), had an emir who played little role in the governance of the town. The maintenance of law and order seems to have been the province of a local militia. Even taxes were collected by local leaders rather than by a government tax collector. "For the man in Qazvin bazaar," one historian writes, "the real and effective government must have been in local officials" while "the comings and goings of *amirs* [emirs] and their retinues were probably marginal to the day to day administration."¹⁷

A later incident in Iran, however, suggests the limitedness of a local militia's autonomy. The Buyids were challenged by Mahmud of Ghazna (998–1030) throughout Iran. The militias of two towns, Rayy (south of the Caspian and just east of Qazvin) and Balkh (further east on the Oxus River), supported Mahmud against the Buyids. Both militias were able on their own initiative to stave off enemy attacks and deliver their towns to Mahmud. His response was not what you might expect. Rather than thank them, he severely reprimanded those responsible. They should have submitted to his enemies, Mahmud said, and waited for him to save them. Mahmud well recognized that a victorious urban militia would be an independent force and a possible alternative to his own power. And this was not a case, it should be pointed out, of the city militia's attempting to rule on its own. This militia merely wanted to choose its outside master. Despite an occasional exception (Tripoli in Syria for a time), a city was to depend on the armies of an emir to keep ultimate order.

Muslim city administration varied widely. There were both tolerant officials and absolutists who oversaw every detail of city life. Sometimes absolutism was combined in the same person with an extreme commitment to social justice. Such a ruler was al-Hakim (996–1021), Fatimid dynasty caliph of Cairo. A devoted *imam* in an Ishmaili Shi'ite dynasty, he had a passion for social justice that spelled brutality to the rich or corrupt. He renounced personal comforts and rode around Cairo on a donkey. As caliph he felt responsible to impose justice on fellow Muslims. Thus, he had the vineyards of Cairo destroyed and forbade women to leave their homes. Once he insisted that the shops of Cairo be open at night, when he preferred to be active, forcing the entire city to find time during the day to sleep. On another occasion he is said to have offered a lottery in which some people would win undreamed of wealth and others would suffer sudden death. But even his most bizarre whims had a religious purpose. His reversal of day and night showed the rigor of his justice, even at night, and his lottery served as a reminder of the unpredictability of the hand of providence. His intense concern for justice for the common people was remembered long after he disappeared forever into the desert, and the wealthy returned to their luxuries, but his eventual return is one of the central expectations of the Druzes of Syria and Lebanon.

Even when Muslim cities were under the occupation of foreign forces (as long as they were also Muslim) there was usually no united opposition by the inhabitants. During the Mamluk period (1260–1517) when the Turkish slave soldiers

occupied Egypt and Syria, the inhabitants of cities like Cairo, Damascus, and Aleppo did not unite among themselves. The "Mamluk rulers and *emirs*, many of whom never learned to speak Arabic, depended on the tacit co-operation of Arabic notables and middle classes in the towns."¹⁸ Both the merchants and the religious leaders (*ulema*) found it in their best interests to legitimate the rule of the foreigners in order to protect private property and avoid anarchy.

Ironically, the Christian and Jewish quarters in these cities were often granted greater autonomy than the Muslim because the Muslim authorities could not presume to speak for them. The Christians in Mamluk Damascus had two patriarchs, one for each of the Christian denominations (Melchites and Jacobites), and each was responsible to the governor of the province. These patriarchs were selected by their communities, with the approval of the sultan. They, and the head of the Jewish community, along with their assistants, were expected to settle disputes of law, serve as the final authority in matters of religion, and report matters of concern to the community to a state-appointed supervisor of religious communities. "This system of granting some sort of autonomy to the various religious communities solved a number of administrative problems and enabled such communities to develop their own societies," according to one historian.¹⁹

For Muslims, there were some organizations that spanned the separate city segments of the city. Craft guilds, neighborhood groups, fraternities, Sufi lodges, and schools of law linked city inhabitants to a larger world.

Yet these regional associations extending outside the city walls serve to remind us once more that Islamic cities did not develop legal and military autonomy and consequently did not create a tradition of independent guilds and voluntary city-wide associations which were typical of European burgher culture. The very word *madina* [used for city] meant an administrative center within the state structure rather than "city" in the European sense. An Islamic city was first and foremost a place where government business was carried out.²⁰

Why, then, was this the case? Why did the Islamic city fail to develop its own identity and autonomy? Why were there no municipal governments in Islam? Why was there no tradition of urban citizenship and civic pride? A simple answer is because the "burgher," or middle class, was not in control. Another is that cities remained under the control of landed aristocrats and their armies. A third is that the rulers considered the cities too important to allow them independence. But these are only partial answers, perhaps because we have asked only one side of the question. We have asked what European characteristics the Muslim culture lacked. We might just as well ask what characteristics of Muslim culture made urban independence unnecessary or undesirable. What did Islam gain by not seeking urban autonomy? The answer is obvious once we ask the question. Islam abolished provincialism in favor of universalism. Muslims gained world citizenship instead of city citizenship.

Perhaps Islam was too cosmopolitan to create special privileges for residents of particular cities. In a truly universal brotherhood, why should a visiting Muslim merchant or stranger have fewer rights than a resident? Muslims were proud of their hospitality. They were world travelers, generous hosts, and accomplished guests. A culture of merchants and militant monotheists could hardly be expected to prefer local pride to membership in the *Dar al-Islam*.

Under Islam, with its cosmopolitan outlook, such parochial rights and duties were not judicially recognized. A person was not a citizen of a particular town, with local rights and responsibilities determined by his local citizenship; as a free Muslim he was a "citizen" of the whole *Dar al-Islam*, with responsibilities determined by his presence before God alone.²¹

THE REVIVAL OF CITIES IN THE WEST: THE COMMUNE

It may have been the very destructiveness of the barbarian invasions in the West that made regeneration of Rome or any imperial city impossible. City life virtually disappeared, if not completely with the fall of Rome, at least with the rise of Islam in the seventh century. By then there was no one with the power of a Wen-di to reorganize the empire, or there was little to reorganize. Justinian, the Byzantine emperor (527–565), codified Roman law and attempted to reorganize the Western Empire of the Caesars, but it was hopelessly fragmented. For almost the next thousand years, the West lagged far behind the prodigious accomplishments that continuity gave Chinese civilization, but the West enjoyed the rare luxury of a fresh start. The village again became the center of Western life. The lessons of village community could be relearned. Town and city life could mature gradually and autonomously (we might almost say organically) from the soil of village institutions. There was no emperor around to lay out the grid plan of a new metropolis and then proceed to fill it with subjects. After Charlemagne there were Holy Roman emperors who were sometimes able to actually govern the peasants of a small German state. But none of these feudal lords had the resources of a Wen-di. And there were other kings to reckon with, too many to name. There were minor princes and barons, each in charge of miles of field and a few villages. And, of course, there was the pope. The medieval Western towns profited from the feuding of the feudal lords, and took the initiative in carving out their own jurisdictions.

Increasingly after the tenth century old towns won from feudal lords grants of independence and self-government that were often put in written, charter form. Towns won the right to hold a regular market, to coin money, to regulate weights and measures, to try their citizens in their own courts, to write their own law, and to protect their cities with their own militia. In return the burghers (inhabitants

of the burg, or town) offered the feudal lord the services of the militia in case of invasion. The town also provided a variety of crafts, manufactured goods, even foreign luxury commerce that could enhance the lord's style of life on the manor. In many cases the lords founded new towns for these advantages as well as the rent revenue of the land they owned. In short, the lords often gave the towns political freedom in return for military help, economic prosperity, a larger population, and cultural resources that the greatest castle could not afford.

The history of the rise of the medieval town is full of stories of conflict between lord and citizen; towns often demanded rights that threatened even far-seeing feudal lords; and the military and economic power of towns eventually proved more deadly than gunpowder to the feudal regime. But the conflict was often over particulars; many lords built and nourished new towns, and it was the very weakness, poverty, and decentralization of the feudal regime that made free towns possible: the lords, after all, had little to grant but land and rights.

Freedom was in the city air. The serf who remained in the city for a year and a day was legally free. The citizen was free of feudal dues and services. Citizenship itself meant freedom of association, freedom of movement, freedom to own, make, spend, and marry without the lord's permission or dues. Citizenship replaced the ancient ties of blood and soil, family and feudal allegiances. The citizens became autonomous individuals who freely gathered together to establish their own governments and laws, united in a corporate effort, allied in common associations, for the good of the commune.

The medieval city was a "commune" from the beginning, Weber said. He meant that it was a corporate or collective association of equals that did not have to be based on ties of family, clan, or tribe. "Commune" was a good word to express common citizenship. A city would call itself, for example, "The Commune of Florence" (or Pisa or Milan or whatever). It is interesting that we in modern America think of the commune as the antithesis of the urban settlement. Our cities seem so impersonal and competitive that we cannot imagine commune or community away from the countryside. It is also interesting that when American sociologists asked Weber at a meeting in Saint Louis early in this century to speak about "rural community" he replied that the phrase was a contradiction in terms. Weber had studied the history of the city well enough to know that it was the only place that had made genuine community possible.

LATE MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE CITIES: PAGEANTRY AND PARTICIPATION

Late medieval and Renaissance towns and cities created a new corporate life that rivaled the best of the ancient city-states. The acropolis returned in the form of the parish church, built by the townspeople, not by imperial decree. Many villages or city parishes of fewer than a hundred families had their own church. The

churches were often named for local saints (whose tombs they frequently were). Their construction and maintenance were a source of civic pride and common work. The village church or the bishop's cathedral offered opportunities for charitable care, refuge, meditation, sociability, and festivity. Hospitals, poor houses, homes for the aged, sanitariums, previously available only to the wealthy or in the monastery, became typical features of the new urban landscape—often forming common neighborhoods with chapel, gardens, and fountains. "All that the territorial state now seeks to do on a wholesale scale was first done," Lewis Mumford points out, "in a more intimate way, often probably with more feeling for the human occasion, in the medieval town."²²

In one important respect the medieval towns and Renaissance city-states were more genuine communities than had existed ever before—even in ancient Athens. The majority of the inhabitants were free citizens, working side by side, without an underlying slave population. Christianity had made work more respectable than it had ever been before. "To labor is to pray," was the way the Benedictine monastic order expressed the Christian attitude. Working associations were as important as religious associations. The first guilds were actually religious fraternities. They never lost their religious coloring. Merchant and producer guilds served the interests of their members and consumers in insuring the quality of work, just prices, and the economic prosperity of the town. But they were equally engaged in planning and performing religious plays for fellow townspeople; building schools, chapels, and meeting halls for citizens; and providing their members with insurance, feasts, and festivals.

Festivity and pageantry were the drama and elixir of communal city life. Religious holy days, celebrations of peace, guild-sponsored dances, the completion of the harvest, and the safe return of a ship were all occasions for collective rejoicing. The drama, the pageant, the sports contest, and even the parade were participatory, not spectator, activities. The painter Albrecht Dürer tells us about a parade in sixteenth-century Antwerp:

On Sunday after Our Dear Lady's Assumption, I saw the Great Procession from the Church of Our Lady at Antwerp, when the whole town of every craft and rank were assembled, each dressed in his best according to his rank. And all ranks and guilds had their signs, by which they might be known. In the intervals, great costly pole-candles were borne, and three long old Frankish trumpets of silver. There were also in the German fashion many pipers and drummers. All the instruments were loudly and noisily blown and beaten.

I saw the Procession pass along the street, the people being arranged in rows, each man some distance from his neighbor, but the rows close behind the other. There were the Goldsmiths, the Painters, the Masons, the Broderers, the Sculptors, the Joiners, the Carpenters, the Sailors, the Fishermen, the Butchers, the Leatherers, the Clothmakers, the Bakers, the Tailors, the Cordwainers—indeed, workmen of all kinds, and many craftsmen and dealers who work for their livelihood. Likewise the shopkeepers and merchants and their assistants

of all kinds were there. After these came the shooters with guns, bows, and crossbows, and the horsemen and foot-soldiers also. Then followed the watch of the Lord Magistrates. Then came a fine troop all in red, nobly and splendidly clad. Before them, however, went all the religious orders and the members of some foundations, very devoutly, all in their different robes.

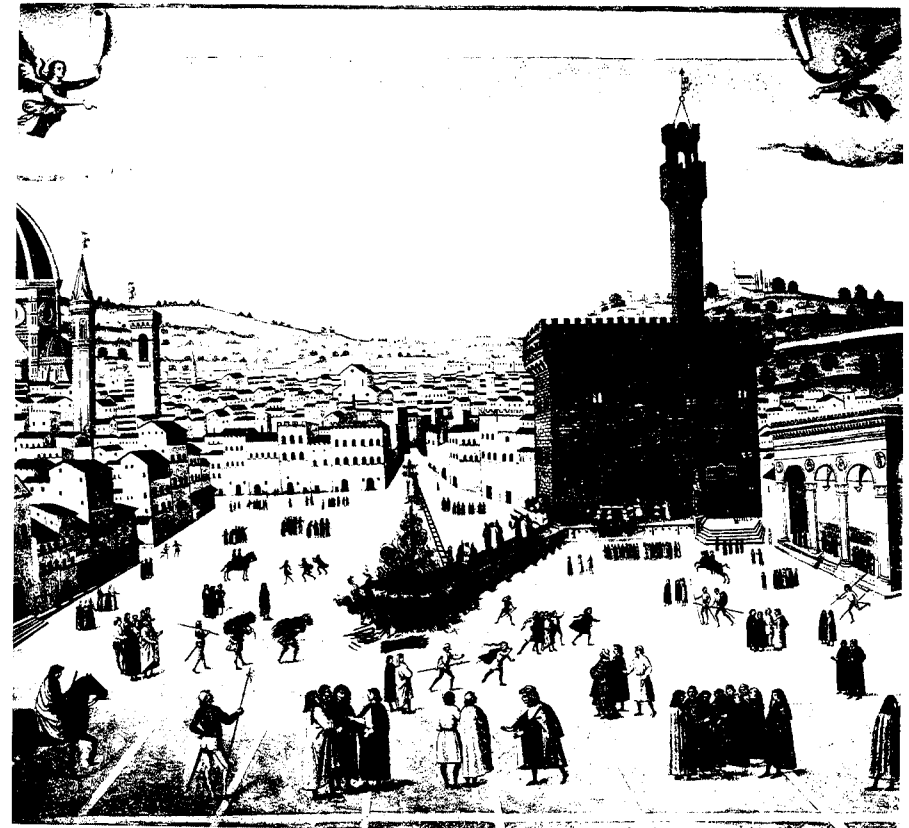
A very large company of widows also took part in the procession. . . . Wagons were drawn along with masques upon ships and other structures. Behind them came the Company of the Prophets in their order, and scenes from the New Testament. . . . From the beginning to end, the Procession lasted more than two hours before it was gone past our house.²³

Like the parade, "singing, acting, dancing were still 'do-it-yourself' activities." Music was composed primarily for the voice, that is, for the singers rather than the listeners. Guilds had their own choral groups. Even the wealthy insisted that an ability to join a family sing—and hold a part—was a prime requirement for a young serving maid.

It would seem as if the city commune were designed for social interaction. Actually, however, the sociability of the commune was due as much to the absence of large-scale planning as it was to the creation of piazzas, plazas, courts, parks, and open space. These meeting and walking areas were not laid out to magnify the power of a prince or to expedite the flow of traffic (as was the case in the later baroque cities). They were instead piecemeal clearings by the citizens that enhanced rather than abolished neighborhoods. Even the winding medieval streets served to unite neighbors and freshen the view at every turn.

According to the author of a fourteenth-century work in praise of the city of Pavia (a new popular literary style that shows the extent of civic pride), the fifty thousand inhabitants of this Italian city "know each other so well that if anybody inquires for an address he will be told it at once, even if the person he asks lives in a quite distant part of the city; this is because they all gather twice a day, either in the 'court' of the commune or in the (adjoining) cathedral piazza."²⁴

In some cities (usually smaller than Pavia) the citizens came together in a general assembly to make the laws, very much the way the Athenian citizens had at the Ecclesia. More often, though, in cities of over twenty thousand inhabitants, the citizens would elect representatives to serve (usually for no more than six months or a year) as a legislative council. Sometimes the members of a guild or neighborhood would each choose one of their number (by election or lot) to serve or elect others to serve. The processes of selection varied enormously, as did the size of the councils. Italian city-states, for instance, often had a "great council" of four hundred or a thousand (Modena had sixteen hundred), and an inner council normally closer to forty. The meetings of the great councils were not limited to formalities, nor were they necessarily passive rubber-stamping affairs. A council of about six hundred members met in Genoa in 1292 to discuss deteriorating relations with France; over a hundred councillors gave speeches in seven days of sessions.



The piazza of Italian Renaissance cities was a public meeting place, a focus of civic pride, or (in darker days) the sight of an execution. In this case the people of Florence put their former monastic leader Savonarola to the stake in 1498. (Alinari)

The degree of political participation must have surpassed that of ancient Athens, considering the commune's larger citizen body and the relative absence of slaves. It has been estimated that Florence drew over two thousand of its ninety thousand inhabitants each year for official positions. Smaller cities no doubt required a larger percentage to serve in public office. A budget for the city of Siena in 1257 mentions 860 public offices including 171 night watchmen and others we might call "police," but excluding military—and this in a city whose adult male population could not have been more than five thousand.

But the unpaid citizens, giving speeches in the council and voting on every imaginable question of public interest, are a better clue to the vitality of communal life than are the paid officers. It is difficult for us to imagine how these citizens could take time out from their busy lives to deal with all of the vexing questions of public policy. The answer is that the life of the commune was a very important



THE STATES OF ITALY, 1494

On the eve of the French invasion of Italy in 1494, a few Italian states had already conquered much of Italy. Milan, Venice, Florence, the Papal States, and the Kingdom of the two Sicilies continued their expansion in the early 1500s.

part of their business; the give-and-take of debate and the burdens of decision making were all of the civic training that they needed.

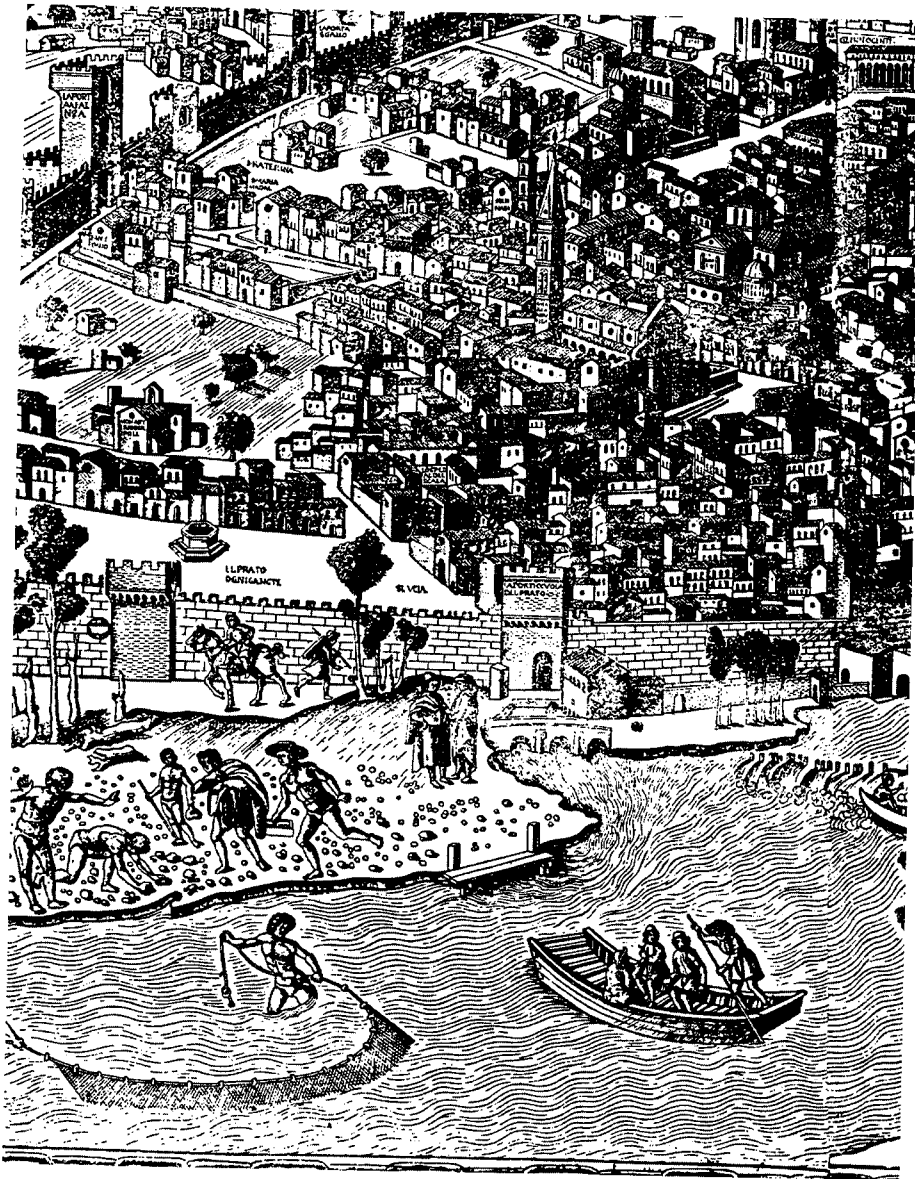
Since the city-state was itself both a city and an independent state (with surrounding countryside and possibly allied or subordinate villages and towns), questions of war and peace were most crucial. But the records of council debates (carefully recorded by one of the dozens, sometimes hundreds, of the cities' "notaries") show a phenomenal range of interest and legislation. Hygiene and sanitation was perhaps the second most important concern. No one could build without permission in Siena in 1309. At Cremona "no man is to demolish his house except for the purpose of building a better one."²⁵ Most communes had ordinances requiring the regular cleaning of streets, forbidding the careless disposal of wastes and fouling of the rivers, and preventing the dryers or tanners from contaminating public water sources and hanging their cloths and hides over the street.

On the assumption that the rich man's wasteful expenditure was the people's loss, there were also often ordinances against gluttonous eating in taverns or the wearing of ostentatious crowns of pearls. When class divisions became extreme and when the people's parties outvoted the nobles, there were even attempts to use legislation to counterbalance the economic power of the wealthy. Thus, on the assumption that the rich could always find a way to buy their freedom, the popular party made the fines of the wealthy double or triple the fines for poorer citizens convicted of the same offense.

THE RENAISSANCE CITY: A SCHOOL OF ART

The commune was an education in more than politics, government, and social relations. It was also a school of art. The beauty of the city was part of the "job" of the citizen. The citizens of Florence voted to decide the type of column that was to be used on their cathedral. A responsibility like that certainly did not turn all Florentines into art critics, but it must have lifted the minds and aesthetic feelings of many. The city of Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo could have easily called on "experts," but the city that turns all questions of taste into questions of expertise and hires professionals as decision makers ends up with a pretty apathetic public.

Cities like Florence hired artists—the way our cities hire engineers. The great Renaissance painter Giotto, called by many today the founder of the modern style of painting, was hired by Florence as architect for many churches, walls, and bridges. He implemented the desires of the public and also broadened their education. Florence could rely on native craftsmen and artists to serve as chapel architects or overseers of public buildings. The artist was another of many craftspeople who was expected, like other citizens, to devote some of his efforts to communal needs. In a city like Orvieto that had to hire outside artists for such work, the citizens would sometimes welcome the newcomer with five or fifteen years of tax exemption—the way our cities attract businesses.



Florence in 1490, a quarter of the city-state, surrounded by its wall and nurtured by its river and its citizens. (Granger)

Even the most business-oriented city-states, like Florence and Venice, were works of art. The leading merchants or bankers (like the Medici family of Florence) might direct the finances of distant kings and nations, but the beauty of the public spaces and buildings of their own cities was often more important than their commercial possibilities. With the dedication of a modern city administration that has been sold a bill of goods on a downtown parking lot, office tower, or shopping center, the council of Siena would decide to have a public meadow in the city because

among those matters to which the men who undertake the city's government should turn their attention, its beauty is the most important. One of the chief beauties of a pleasant city is the possession of a meadow or open place for the delight and joy of both citizens and strangers.²⁶

And beauty was as necessary for the homes of the officials as it was for public space, according to the council of Siena:

It is a matter of great honor to the various communes that the officials occupy beautiful and honorable dwellings, both for the sake of the commune and because foreigners often go to their houses upon affairs. This is of great importance for the commune [of Siena] according to its quality.²⁷

Siena and Florence show us that small, independent city-states could retain the community and democracy of the village without necessarily succumbing to the tedium and creative stagnation that is all too often typical of village life. Culturally, artistically, and intellectually, Siena and Florence were more dynamic and creative than most cities of any size before or since. Community does not necessarily mean conformity.

The remarkable thing is not only that a Siena or Florence produced giants—Giotto, Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, Botticelli, Machiavelli, Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, to name a few—but that it created an environment in which genius was almost institutionalized and expected. The public service required of the artist, and the personal encouragement of artists and philosophers by the Medici family in the fifteenth century, made art and intellect an inspiration to all. Schools (probably half of the male population in Florence had attended), libraries (among them the first public library), Verrocchio's art institute-workshop (where the young Leonardo learned mechanics, mathematics, and music, as well as architecture, bronze casting, goldsmithing, painting, and sculpture), Lorenzo Medici's finishing school for sculptors (where Michelangelo studied), and the city itself were living lessons of a new ideal: beauty and creative expression as the goal of human life and the commune.

Creativity is still possible in a communal city when culture is as important as business. What about larger cities? Are neighborhood communities and a human scale of life impossible in large cities?

THE RENAISSANCE CITY: THE LESSONS OF VENICE

At least one Renaissance city-state, and perhaps the most beautiful one, still says no. Out of necessity as much as foresight, the Republic of Venice found a way to preserve the human dimensions of the neighborhood in a large and most prosperous city. The islands that make up the city of Venice are separated by canals and lagoon waters. Each of the island neighborhoods has its own parish, its square, its school, and its guildhall—for each was originally the site of one of the city's six guilds. As Venetian population and prosperity grew, it was impossible to abolish the original neighborhoods by filling in the waters that divided them. Consequently, the Venetians had the good sense to allow each island to perform the function that it did best. One became a shipbuilding center that built the Venetian merchant and warships with a new canal "conveyor belt" system that startled visitors. The Arsenal, as it was called, housed the workers in the shipyard, their magistrates (or elected officials), and their own class of wealthy citizens. On another island, Murano, the Venetian glass industry was established, by an act of the Grand Council, by 1255. It was settled by the workers, merchants, and artists active in the industry. Again, they had their own neighborhood organizations, markets, and facilities. In this way the central business and administrative district did not become overly congested and eventually suffocated. This district, the area of the largest island, around Saint Mark's church, became the center for international merchants, specialized shops and restaurants, hotels, tourism, and city wide politics. The larger square in front of Saint Mark's and the administrative Ducal Palace also became the scene of citywide festivals. It could be enjoyed by the whole population, but they did not have to "commute" there daily to work or shop. Finally, other island neighborhoods were clustered around the separate concerns of religion (the convent of San Giorgio), burial (the cemetery of Torcello), and later, in the nineteenth century, a beach (the Lido).

The great modern architect Corbusier called Venice "an object lesson for town planners." It shows, even today, how neighborhood communities can be retained, how functional zoning can organize the separate concerns of the city, how major thoroughfares can be separated from local streets, and how a large urban area can avoid high-density sprawl. Venice's population has rarely risen beyond the Renaissance peak of one hundred and ninety thousand. There are still no cars permitted beyond the entrance to the city. The Venetian or tourist can take a fast public *vaporetto* up the Grand Canal or out to one of the smaller islands, or hire a gondola to wander. On the island he or she can walk. Nothing is very far from the water's equivalent of a subway, bus, or taxi stop. Places to walk and places to ride: the

sea has forced Venetians to distinguish between getting there and being there. As a result, each "place to be" has retained its particular identity, its neighborhood, and its community.

The model, but not the necessity, is there for any large city to follow. With modern high-speed public transit, even with our socially expensive expressways, the Venetian model might suit a city of ten or twenty times the size. Today we have the capacity to design our cities to achieve what came to Venice naturally. Large parks, woodlands, lakes, or rivers (instead of the canals and the lagoon) could provide relief from mass sprawl and the refuge of the neighborhood. Separate functions could be separated by location without, at the same time, forcing people to commute long distances to work. Spaces could be designed for social interaction, public activity, and walking and wandering. Instead, we turn every alley into a street, every street into a thoroughfare, and every neighborhood into a block. We forget how to walk, we don't know who our neighbors are, and we find our way by counting the numbered streets. Every part of the city looks the same, and the monotony continues for miles. The city has lost its human scale, and it is not ours.

THE CITY SINCE COMMUNITY: THE BAROQUE AND THE BROKEN

Two things have happened to the city-state community in the last few hundred years. It has lost its independence, and the new rulers from outside have broken it up with streets, avenues, and boulevards for easy entry, control, and exit. The two developments are obviously related. Independence went down the avenue.

There are still a few city-states left. At least places like Monaco, Liechtenstein, and Andorra have preserved much of the independence of city-states. Many of the Swiss cities are also relatively free and self-governing. In general, however, the city-state has been consumed, and replaced, by the nation-state. Cities have come to be governed from outside—first by the princes and kings who welded them together as capitals or subjects of the new nation-states, then by national governments, and more recently by national and international corporations. The "corporate community" now refers to something very different from the assembly of citizens in the town council. The new corporate community may run many cities, but has no particular allegiance to any.

The communal city was defeated, however, long before the rise of corporate capitalism or the industrial revolution. It was first sacrificed to the baroque quest for power and opulence by the monarchs and ministers of the nation-state. In some ways the city-states defeated themselves. Like the Greek city-states, they experimented with alliances and confederations. Some such larger organization of cities seemed necessary. In half of Italy in 1300 there were more self-governing states than could be counted in the whole world in 1933. Their rivalries often led to war, but even in good times they were frequently unable to keep the peace in the

countryside or agree on uniform laws, coinage, or standard weights and measures. The independence of cities was particularly frustrating to the rising class of national and international merchants: the number of tolls that merchants had to pay feudal lords and municipalities along the Rhine River, for instance, increased from nineteen at the end of the twelfth century to sixty-four at the end of the fourteenth.

Confederation was not impossible. In fact, it worked pretty well in Switzerland and Holland. It was not a viable alternative where there was already a strong monarchy, as in England. But even in Italy, where the alternative to civic independence was alliance with a German emperor or a French king, the Italians often chose the foreign monarch. The reason for such a choice probably had a lot to do with divisions within the Italian city-states themselves. Class and economic differences tended to increase during the Renaissance, forcing a noble, merchant, or popular party of "outs" to bargain for foreign intervention. Venice, one of the most stable but least democratic of the Italian city-republics, remained independent until conquered by Napoleon in 1797.

In some cities the merchants and national manufacturers and bankers formed alliances with kings to make the national economy more efficient. In Germany, Scandinavia, and England (but not in Switzerland or the British colonies in America) the Protestant Reformation served the national interest of kings and princes at the expense of city independence. But the most centralized nation-states to be organized in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries were probably in Catholic France, Spain, and Austria, and in Russia. In any case, the king's capital replaced the commune as the nation-state became the dominant form of political organization. By commanding the main routes of trade, the bureaucracy, and professional armies, the capital city was able to unify the state. The capitals and their subsidiaries (where the king's court ruled) virtually monopolized the population increases of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. The capitals' populations reached the hundreds of thousands (London and Paris almost a million), while older cities languished and very few new ones (outside the colonies) were built.

Old cities were transformed and new cities were created often by a single monarch: Henry IV's Paris, Louis XIV's Versailles, Ivan III's Moscow, Peter the Great's Saint Petersburg, Philip II's Madrid, Manuel's Lisbon. Magnificent palaces were built or redesigned or enlarged in line with baroque style and ambitions: opulence, majesty, extravagance, order, and power—to tame the nobility and intimidate the populace. Gathered around the palace in the center of the city were the new town house mansions of the aristocracy (under the king's watchful eye), the official bureaucratic buildings, and the army citadel. Everything was purposely designed on a scale larger than life. These were monumental buildings, which were not to be approached by ordinary mortals. Their uniformity of arches, columns, and endless walls and windows is still a forbidding or awe-inspiring sight. The monotony, impersonality, and anonymity of modern city or bureaucratic life is neither accidental nor inevitable. Peter the Great asked that the twelve large office buildings of Saint Petersburg look exactly alike. Henry IV advised his minister in

charge of the construction of a street in Paris to make the fronts of the houses alike, "for it would be a fine ornament to see this street with a uniform facade from the end of the bridge." The king's view was what mattered, and his tastes ran from the uniform-regular to the uniform-extra-large.

Baroque city building was like theatrical stage design. Indeed, many of the new planners got their start by designing stage scenery and props. The monarch's city was to be, as one said, "like a single building," and that, presumably, the theater. Everything was done for effect. Broad vistas of unbroken columns moved the eye to the distant focal point of the palace. The ideal street plan for baroque tastes was radial (a plan Aristophanes had proposed almost two thousand years before as a joke, thinking that the idea of bringing all traffic crashing together at the same spot was a sufficiently obvious satire on the megalomania of ancient planners). Broad avenues converging on the palace, the citadel, or a monumental arch was a theatrical way of attracting attention to the monarch's power, but it was also a very practical way of maintaining that power. Troops could be marched from the central precinct in any direction, for a parade—or for an attack. The architect Alberti distinguished between secondary streets and avenues; the latter he called *viae militares*. Another architect urged that all streets be wide enough so "that there be no place in them where armies may not easily march."

The broad avenue also served the purpose of breaking up the medieval tangle of streets that might be barricaded by the last holdouts of urban liberty. As Mumford remarked, "soldiers cannot fire around corners, nor can they protect themselves from bricks heaved from chimney tops immediately overhead: they need space to maneuver in."²⁸

If the baroque style of cities reminds us of the ancient imperial capitals, it is because their rulers sought to emulate the pharaohs, Ptolemies, and Caesars. Louis XIV styled himself *Le Roi Soleil* ("the Sun King"). Like lesser monarchs of the period he got his theoreticians and writers to work out new theories of absolute sovereignty and "divine right," ideas that no European since the Caesars had dared to propose. Although some medieval communes had gotten along without any explicit sovereign (or final power) and many others had assumed that the only sovereign was the people or the law, the new theorists, like Jean Bodin, argued that a true state exists only when there is a sovereign and that *he* (or *she*) must exercise "supreme power over citizens and subjects, unrestrained by law."

As an artistic style the baroque has been dead about three hundred years. The age of absolute monarchy has been replaced by parliaments, congresses, presidents, and prime ministers in the last couple of hundred years. Few presidents these days think they are above the law. But most of our cities are direct descendants of the baroque capitals. The sovereign state is often as absolute as absolute monarchs. City life still means subjection to outsiders.

The baroque cult of power has been even more tenacious than the medieval ideology: it remained in being and extended its hold on other departments of

life, creating Napoleons not merely in statecraft but in business and finance. . . . Armies, governments, capitalistic enterprises took the characteristic animus and form of this order, in all its inflated dimensions. . . . Right on into the twentieth century urban planning itself, at least in the great metropolises, meant chiefly baroque planning: from Tokyo and New Delhi to San Francisco.²⁹

The baroque city has always been one of the ways the ruler displayed his power. For the absolute monarchs it was the main theater for such display. Perhaps the new rulers, the sovereign national state and the international corporation, no longer need the city as showplace. Like Louis XIV, corporations can build their own Versailles in the suburbs. They and the government can advertise well enough on television. Perhaps television and suburban cultural facilities can even provide the wealthy with the "civilization" that previously depended on cities. Perhaps.

FOR FURTHER READING

Among general approaches, Max Weber's *The City* is the classic, if somewhat difficult, starting point. Richard Sennett has edited Weber and a number of other sociological interpretations of the city in *Classic Essays on the Culture of Cities*. Gideon Sjoberg surveys *The Preindustrial City* from the perspective of modern historical sociology. Lewis Mumford's *The City in History* is still the most stimulating, interpretive history of the Western city. *Cities of Destiny*, edited by Arnold Toynbee, offers beautifully illustrated essays on some of the great cities of world history by noted specialists. Fernand Braudel's magnificent *Capitalism and Material Life 1400–1800* concludes with a fascinating chapter on the world's towns. F. Roy Willis offers an urban-centered world civilization text in his two-volume *World Civilizations*.

On the Chinese city, Joseph Needham's *Science and Civilization*, volume 4, part 3, discusses city planning. Paul Wheatley's *The Pivot of the Four Quarters, A Preliminary Enquiry into the Origins and Character of the Ancient Chinese City* discusses the symbolism. G. William Skinner's *The City in Late Imperial China* is a useful survey.

On Changan see Arthur F. Wright's "Changan" in Toynbee's *Cities of Destiny*. Edward H. Shafer's *The Golden Peaches of Samarkand* also deals with the city. On Song Kaifeng see "Sung Kaifeng" by Edward Kracke, Jr., in John W. Haeger's *Crisis and Prosperity in Sung China* and Lawrence Ma's *Commercial Development and Urban Change in Sung China*. On Hangzhou see Jacques Gernet's magnificent *Daily Life in China: On the Eve of the Mongol Invasion, 1250–1276*. *The Travels* of Marco Polo is also quite readable.

On the Islamic city, Xavier de Planhol provides a valuable geographical introduction in *The World of Islam*. Bryan Turner's *Weber and Islam* discusses many of the theoretical issues. *Muslim Cities in the Later Middle Ages* by Ira Lapidus concentrates on Egypt and Syria. Marshall G. S. Hodgson's *The Venture of Islam*, in three volumes, is full of insight and information. A series of short introductions to historical cities published by the University of Oklahoma Press includes Nicola A. Ziadeh's *Damascus under the Mamluks*, Roger Le Tourneau's *Fez in the Age of the Marinides*, and A. J. Arberry's *Shiraz*. There is also Gaston Wiet's *Baghdad: Metropolis of the Abbasid Caliphate*.

For the European city, some of the classics are still the best introductions: Max Weber's *The City*, Lewis Mumford's *The City in History*, and Henri Pirenne's *Medieval Cities* are

all well worth reading. Some of the classic interpretations are gathered in John F. Benton's *Town Origins*. Other useful introductions include Maurice Beresford's *New Towns of the Middle Ages*, M. V. Clark's *The Medieval City-State*, and J. H. Mundy and Peter Riessenberg's *The Medieval Town*.

On English medieval towns see Susan Reynolds, *An Introduction to the History of English Medieval Towns*, and on London, Christopher N. L. Brooke's *London: 800–1216*, Gwyn A. Williams's *Medieval London from Commune to Capital*, Timothy Baker's *Medieval London*, or Sylvia Thrupp's *The Merchant Class of Medieval London*. For Germany see Fritz Rorig's *The Medieval Town* or Paul Strait's *Cologne in the Twelfth Century*.

On medieval Italy, Chris Wickham's *Early Medieval Italy: Central Power and Local Society, 400–1000* and J. K. Hyde's *Society and Politics in Medieval Italy: The Evolution of the Civil Life, 1000–1350* are both valuable. Robert Brentano's *Rome Before Avignon: A Social History of Thirteenth Century Rome* shows the expansion of a noncommercial city, and William H. McNeill's *Venice, the Hinge of Europe, 1081–1797*, a preeminently commercial one.

The best introductions to the city in Renaissance Italy are *Power and Imagination: City-States in Renaissance Italy* by Lauro Martines and *The Italian City-Republics* by Daniel Waley. For the impact of the computer and the social sciences on recent histories of the Renaissance, see Gene Brucker's "Tale of Two Cities: Florence and Venice in the Renaissance," *American Historical Review*, 88 (1983), pp. 599–616.

For studies of specific Italian cities see D. Herlihy's *Pisa in the Early Renaissance: A Study of Urban Growth*, William Bowsky's *The Finance of the Commune of Siena*, and J. K. Hyde's *Padua in the Age of Dante*.

There are libraries on Florence. One might begin with the works of two who were there: Francesco Guicciardini's *History of Italy and History of Florence*, and Niccolo Machiavelli's *History of Florence and the Affairs of Italy*. Among the better modern introductions are Gene Brucker's *Renaissance Florence*, J. Lucas-Dubreton's *Daily Life in Florence in the Time of the Medici*, John Gage's *Life in Italy at the Time of the Medici*, Marvin B. Becker's *Florence in Transition*, and Cecilia M. Ady's *Lorenzo de Medici and Renaissance Italy*. J. R. Hale's *Florence and the Medici: The Pattern of Control* and Gene Brucker's *Florentine Politics and Society 1343–1378* are excellent analyses of political power. Raymond De Roover's *Rise and Decline of the Medici Bank* provides important economic background, and Donald Weinstein's brilliant *Savonarola and Florence: Prophecy and Patriotism in the Renaissance* shows the conflict between religious piety and patriotism.

NOTES

1. Joseph Needham and Ling Wang, "Civil Engineering and Nautics," in *Science and Civilization in China*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), p. 61.
2. Max Weber, *The Religion of China*, trans. Hans H. Gerth (New York: Free Press, 1951), p. 13.
3. Frederick W. Mote, "The City in Traditional Chinese Civilization," in *Traditional China*, ed. James T. C. Liu and Wei-ming Tu (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970), pp. 42–43.
4. Arthur F. Wright, "Changan," in *Cities of Destiny*, ed. Arnold Toynbee (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), p. 146.

5. Arthur Waley, *The Poetry and Career of Li Po* (New York: Macmillan, 1950), pp. 87–88. Pin yin equivalents are “Xian Gu Pass” and the “palace of Qin.”
6. Diana Gregory, “Sung K’aifeng: Some New Ideas,” an unpublished paper brought to my attention by Lynda Shaffer, Tufts University.
7. Ichisada Miyazaki, *China’s Examination Hell*, trans. Conrad Schirokauer (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), pp. 116–117.
8. Etienne Balazs, “Chinese Towns,” in *Chinese Civilization and Bureaucracy*, trans. H. M. Wright (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), p. 71.
9. Yoshinobu Shiba, “Urbanization and the Development of Markets in the Lower Yangtze Valley,” in *Crisis and Prosperity in Sung China*, ed. John Winthrop Haeger (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1975), p. 42.
10. Haeger, *op. cit.*, p. 11.
11. *The Book of Ser Marco Polo concerning the Kingdom and Marvels of the East*, Vol. I, trans. and ed. Sir Henry Yule, 3rd edition revised by Henri Cordier, 2 vols., (London: J. Murray, 1926), p. 205. Cited in Jacques Gernet, *Daily Life in China: On the Eve of the Mongol Invasion, 1250–1276* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1970), pp. 53–54.
12. *Marco Polo, The Description of the World*, ed. A. C. Moule and Paul Pelliot (London: George Routledge & Sons, Ltd., 1938), vol. I, pp. 312–313. Cited in Gernet, *op. cit.*, pp. 31–32.
13. *The Book of Ser Marco Polo . . .*, vol. I, p. 192. Cited in Gernet, pp. 28–29.
14. Yuan Ts’ai, “Yuan-shih shif-fan,” in Shiba, *op. cit.*, p. 46.
15. Xavier de Planhol, *The World of Islam* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1959), p. 2.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
17. Hugh Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates* (London: Longman, 1986), pp. 248–249. The study referred to is R. Mottahedeh, “Administration in Buyid Qazwin,” in *Islamic Civilization 950–1150*, ed. D. S. Richards (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), pp. 33–45.
18. Bryan S. Turner, *Weber and Islam: A Critical Study* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), p. 99.
19. Nicola A. Ziadeh, *Damascus Under the Mamlūks* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1964), p. 87.
20. Bryan S. Turner, *op. cit.*, p. 102.
21. Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, vol. 2 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), p. 108.
22. Lewis Mumford, *The City in History* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1961), p. 268.
23. *Ibid.*, pp. 279–280.
24. Cited in Daniel Waley, *The Italian City-Republics* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1969), p. 53.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 99.
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 147–148.
27. Cited in Helene Wieruszowski, “Art and the Commune in the Time of Dante,” *Speculum*, 19, no. 1 (January 1944), p. 31.
28. Mumford, *op. cit.*, p. 369.
29. *Ibid.*, pp. 399–401.

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Ecology and Theology

Religion and Science

ECOLOGY IS A PROBLEM that we normal society. We are not used to associating ecology history. But this chapter makes that associating problems lie very deep. Although we may have crisis only recently, its causes go back at least to the revolution of the last few centuries. The point of the revolution itself, and the transformation of the world it entailed, had even earlier causes in Western times. It was in Western Europe, of all places, that this initial chapter will explore some of the cultural traditions in this way.

Specifically, we will examine two Western traditions linked by some scholars to our ecological and religious: the Western religious, or Judeo-Christian, tradition and modern science. Christianity and modern science might be seen as part of Western culture. Although much of Western history lies between these two cultural forms, they also have