THE NATURE OF THE CITY
Max Weber

Economic Character of the City: Market Settlement

The many definitions of the city have only one element in common: namely that the city consists simply of a collection of one or more separate dwellings but is a relatively closed settlement. Customarily, though not exclusively, in cities the houses are built closely to each other, often, today, wall to wall. This massing of elements interpenetrates the everyday concept of the "city" which is thought of quantitatively as a large locality. In itself this is not imprecise for the city often represents a locality and dense settlement of dwellings forming a colony so extensive that personal reciprocal acquaintance of the inhabitants is lacking. However, if interpreted in this way only very large localities could qualify as cities; moreover it would be ambiguous, for various cultural factors determine the size at which "impersonality" tends to appear. Precisely this impersonality was absent in many historical localities possessing the legal character of cities. Even in contemporary Russia there are villages comprising many thousands of inhabitants which are, thus, larger than many old "cities" (for example, in the Polish colonial area of the German East) which had only a few hundred inhabitants. Both in terms of what it would include and what it would exclude size alone can hardly be sufficient to define the city.

Economically defined, the city is a settlement the inhabitants of which live primarily off trade and commerce rather than agriculture.


However, it is not altogether proper to call all localities "cities" which are dominated by trade and commerce. This would include in the concept "city" colonies made up of family members and maintaining a single, practically hereditary trade establishment such as the "trade villages" of Asia and Russia. It is necessary to add a certain "versatility" of practiced trades to the characteristics of the city. However, this in itself does not appear suitable as the single distinguishing characteristic of the city either.

Economic versatility can be established in at least two ways by the presence of a feudal estate or a market. The economic and political needs of a feudal or princely estate can encourage specialization in trade products in providing a demand for which work is performed and goods are bartered. However, even though the oikos of a lord or prince is as large as a city, a colony of artisans and small merchants bound to villein services is not customarily called a "city" even though historically a large proportion of important "cities" originated in such settlements. In cities of such origin the products for a prince's court often remained a highly important, even chief, source of income for the settlers.

The other method of establishing economic versatility is more generally important for the "city"; this is the existence in the place of settlement of a regular rather than an occasional exchange of goods. The market becomes an essential component in the livelihood of the settlers. To be sure, not every "market" converted the locality in which it was found into a city. The periodic fairs and yearly foreign-trade markets at which traveling merchants met at fixed times to sell their goods in wholesale or retail lots to each other or to consumers often occurred in places which we would call "villages."

Thus, we wish to speak of a "city" only in cases where the local inhabitants satisfy an economically substantial part of their daily wants in the local market, and to an essential extent by products which the local market, and to an essential extent by products which the local population and that of the immediate hinterland produced for sale in the market or acquired in other ways. In the meaning employed here the "city" is a market place. The local market forms the economic center of the colony in which, due to the specialization in economic products,

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2 Charles H. Cooley's theory of transportation took the break in communication either physical or economic as the most critical of all factors for the formation of the city.
Types of Consumer and Producer City

Similar to the city of the prince, the inhabitants of which are economically dependent upon the purchasing power of noble households, are cities in which the purchasing power of the other larger consumers, such as rentiers, determines the economic opportunities of resident tradesmen and merchants. In terms of the kind and source of their incomes such larger consumers may be of quite varied types. They may be officials who spend their legal and illegal income in the city, or lords or other political power holders who spend their non-urban land rents or politically determined incomes there. In either of these cases the city closely approximates the princely city for it depends upon patrimonial and political incomes which supply the purchasing power of large consumers. Peking was a city of officials; Moscow, before suspension of serfdom, was a land-rent city.

Different in principle are the superficially similar cities in which urban land-rents are determined by traffic monopolies of landed property. Such cities originate in the trade and commerce consolidated in the hands of an urban aristocracy. This type of development has always been widespread: it appeared in Antiquity; in the Near East until the Byzantine Empire; and in the Middle Ages. The city that emerges is not economically of a rentier type. It is, rather, a merchant or trade city the rents of which represent a tribute of acquirers to the owners of houses. The conceptual differentiation of this case from the one in which rents are not determined by tributary obligations to monopolists but by nonurban sources, should not obscure the inter-relation in the past of both forms. The large consumers can be rentiers spending their business incomes (today mainly interest on bonds, dividends or shares) in the city. Whereupon purchasing power rests on capitalistically conditioned monetary rentier sources as in the city of Arnheim. Or purchasing power can depend upon state pensions or other state rents as appears in a “pensionopolis” like Weibaden. In all similar cases one may describe the urban form as a consumer city, for the presence in residence of large consumers of special economic character is of decisive economic importance for the local tradesmen and merchants.

A contrasting form is presented by the producer city. The increase in population and purchasing power in the city may be due, as for example in Essen or Bochum, to the location there of factories, manufactures, or home-work industries supplying outside territories—thus representing the modern type. Or, again, the crafts and trades of the locality may ship their goods away as in cities of Asiatic, Ancient, and Medieval types. In either case the consumers for the local market are made up of large consumers if they are residents and/or entrepreneurs, workers and craftsmen who form the great mass, and merchants and benefactors of land-rent supported indirectly by the workers and craftsmen.

The trade city and merchant city are confronted by the consumer city in which the purchasing power of its larger consumers rests on the retail for profit of foreign products on the local market (for example, the woolen drapers in the Middle Ages), the foreign sale for profit of local products or goods obtained by native producers (for example, the herring of the Hansa), or the purchase of foreign products and their sale with or without storage at the place to the outside (intermediate commercial cities). Very frequently a combination or all these economic activities occurred: the commenda and societas maris implied that a tractator (traveling merchant) journeyed to Levantine markets with products purchased with capital entrusted to him by resident capitalists.3 Often the tractator travelled entirely

in ballast. He sold these products in the East and with the proceeds he purchased oriental articles brought back for sale in the local market. The profits of the undertaking were then divided between tractator and capitalist according to prearranged formulas.

The purchasing power and tax ability of the commercial city rested on the local economic establishment as was also the case for the producers' city in contrast to the consumers' city. The economic opportunities of the shipping and transport trade and of numerous secondary wholesale and retail activities were at the disposal of the merchants. However the economic activity of these establishments was not entirely executed for the local retail trade but in substantial measure for external trade. In principle, this state of affairs was similar to that of the modern city, which is the location of national and international financiers or large banks (London, Paris, Berlin) or of joint stock companies or cartels (Duesseldorf). It follows that today more than ever before a predominant part of the earnings of firms flow to localities other than the place of earning. Moreover, a growing part of business proceeds are not consumed by their rightful owners at the metropolitan location of the business but in suburban villas, rural resorts of international hotels. Parallel with these developments "city-towns" or city-districts consisting almost exclusively of business establishments are arising.

There is no intention here of advancing the further casuistic distinctions required by a purely economic theory of the city. Moreover, it hardly needs to be mentioned that actual cities nearly always represent mixed types. Thus, if cities are to be economically classified at all, it must be in terms of their prevailing economic component.

Relation of the City to Agriculture

The relation of the city to agriculture has not been clear-cut. There were and are "semi-rural cities" (Ackerburgerstaedte), localities which while serving as places of market traffic and centers of typically urban trade, are sharply separated from the average city by the presence of a broad stratum of residentburghers satisfying a large part of their food needs through cultivation and even producing food for sale. Normally the larger the city the less the opportunity for urban residents to dispose of acreage in relation to their food needs at the same time without controlling a self-sufficient pasture and wood lot in the manner of the village. Cologne, the largest German city in the Middle Ages, almost completely lacked the Allmende (commons) from the beginning though the commons was not absent from any normal village of the time. Other German and foreign medieval cities at least placed considerable pastures and woods at the disposal of their burghe.rs.

The presence of large acreages accessible to the urbanite is found more frequently as one turns attention to the South or back toward Antiquity. While today we justly regard the typical "urbanite" as a man who does not supply his own food need on his own land, originally the contrary was the case for the majority of typical ancient cities. In contrast to the medieval situation, the ancient urbanite was quite legitimately characterized by the fact that a kleros, fundus (in Israel: chelek) which he called his own, was a parcel of land which fed him. The full urbanite of antiquity was a semi-peasant.

In the Medieval period, as in Antiquity, agricultural property was retained in the hands of merchant strata. This was more frequently the case in the south than in the north of Europe. In both medieval and ancient city-states agricultural properties, occasionally of quite exorbitant size, were found widely scattered, either being in the possession of eminent individual citizen landlords. Examples politically dominated by municipal authorities of powerful cities or are supplied by the Chersonesian domination of the Miltiades or the political or lordly estates of medieval aristocratic families, such as the Genoese Grimaldi, in the provinces or overseas.

As a general rule interlocal estates and the sovereign rights of individual citizens were not the objects of an urban economic policy. However, mixed conditions at times arose such that according to the circumstances estates were guaranteed to individuals by the city. In the nature of the case this only occurred when the individuals whose estates were guaranteed by the city belonged to the most powerful patricians. In such cases the estate was acquired and maintained through indirect help of civic power which in turn might share in its economic and political usufruct. This was frequently the case in the past.

The relation of the city as agent of trade and commerce to the land as producer of food comprises one aspect of the “urban economy” and forms a special “economic stage” between the “household economy” on the one hand and the “national economy” on the other. When the city is visualized in this manner, however, politico-economic aspects are conceptually fused with pure economic aspects and conceived as forming one whole. The mere fact that merchants and tradesmen live crowded together carrying on a regular satisfaction of daily needs in the market does not exhaust the concept of the “city.” Where only the satisfaction of agricultural needs occurs within closed settlements and where—what is not identical with it—agricultural production appears in relation to nonagricultural acquisition, and when the presence or absence of markets constitutes the difference, we speak of trade and commercial localities and of small market-towns, but not of cities. There were, thus, hidden noneconomic dimensions in the phenomena brought under review in the previous sections. It is time to expand the concept of the “city” to include extra-economic factors.

The Politico-Administrative Concept of the City

Beside possessing an accumulation of abodes the city also has an economic association with its own landed property and a budget of receipts and expenditure. Such an economic association may also appear in the village no matter how great the quantitative differences. Moreover, it was not peculiar to the city alone, at least in the past, that it was both an economic and a regulatory association. Trespass restrictions, pasture regulations, the prohibition of the export of wood and straw, and similar regulations are known to the village, constituting an economic policy of the association as such.

The cities of the past were differentiated only by the kinds of regulations which appeared. Only the objects of political economic regulation on behalf of the association and the range of characteristic measures embraced by them were peculiar. It goes without saying that measures of the “urban economic policy” took substantial account of the fact that under the transportation conditions of the time the majority of all inland cities were dependent upon the agricultural resources of the immediate hinterland. As shown by the grain policies of Athens and Rome this was true for maritime cities. In a majority, not all, of urban trades areas, opportunity was provided for the natural “play of the market.” The urban market supplied the normal, not the sole, place for the exchange of products, especially food.

Account also must be taken of the fact that production for trade was predominantly in the form of artisan technology organized in specialized small establishments. Such production operated without or with little capital and with strictly limited numbers of journeymen who were trained in long apprenticeships. Such production was economically in the form of wage worker as price work for customers. Sale to the local retailers was largely a sale to customers.

The market conditions of the time were the kind that would naturally emerge, given the above facts. The so-called “urban economic policy” was basically characterized by its attempt to stabilize the conditions of the local urban economy by means of economic regulations in the interest of permanently and cheaply feeding the masses and standardizing the economic opportunities of tradesmen and merchants. However, as we shall see, economic regulation was not the sole object of the urban economic policy nor, when it historically appears, was it fully developed. It emerges only under the political regime of the guild. Finally it can not be proved to be simply a transitional stage in the development of all cities. In any case, the urban economic policy does not represent a universal stage in economic evolution.

On the basis of customer relations and specialized small establishments operating without capital, the local urban market with its exchange between agricultural and nonagricultural producers and resident merchants, represents a kind of economic counterpart to barter as against systematically divided performances in terms of work and taxes of a specialized dependent economy in connection with the oikos, having its basis in the accumulation and integration of work in the manor, without exchange occurring inside. Following out the parallel: the regulation (urban economic policy) of the exchange and production conditions in the city represent the counterpart to the organization (traditional and feudalcontractual) of activities united in the economy of the oikos.

The very fact that in drawing these distinctions we are led to
use the concepts of an “urban economic area” and “urban area,” and “urban authority,” already indicates that the concept of the “city” can and must be examined in terms of a series of concepts other than the purely economic categories so far employed.

The additional concepts required for analysis of the city are political. This already appears in the fact that the urban economic policy itself may be the work of a prince to whom political dominion of the city with its inhabitants belongs. In this case when there is an urban economic policy it is determined for the inhabitants of the city not by them. However even when this is the case the city must still be considered to be a partially autonomous association, a “community” with special political and administrative arrangements.

The economic concept previously discussed must be entirely separated from the political-administrative concept of the city. Only in the latter sense may a special area belong to the city. A locale can be held to be a city in a political-administrative sense though it would not qualify as a city economically. In the Middle Ages there were areas legally defined as “cities” in which the inhabitants derived 90 percent or more of their livelihood from agriculture, representing a far larger fraction of their income then that of the inhabitants of many localities legally defined as “villages.”

Naturally, the transition from such semi-rural cities to consumers’, producers’, or commercial cities is quite fluid. In those settlements which differ administratively from the village and are thus dealt with as cities only one thing, namely, the kind of regulations of land-owning, is customarily different from rural land-owning forms. Economically such cities are differentiated by a special kind of rent situation presented in urban real estate which consists in house ownership to which land ownership is accessory. The position of urban real estate is connected administratively with special taxation principles. It is bound even more closely to a further element decisive for the political-administrative concept of the city and standing entirely outside the purely economic analysis, namely, the fortress.

Fortress and Garrison

It is very significant that the city in the past, in Antiquity and the Middle Ages, outside as well as within Europe, was also a special fortress or garrison. At present this property of the city has been entirely lost, but it was not universal even in the past. In Japan, for example, it was not the rule. Administratively one may, with Rathgen, doubt the existence of cities at all. In contrast to Japan, in China every city was surrounded with a gigantic ring of walls. However, it is also true that many economically rural localities which were not cities in the administrative sense, possessed walls at all time. In China such places were not the seat of state authorities.

In many Mediterranean areas such as Sicily a man living outside the urban walls as a rural worker and country resident is almost unknown. This is a product of century-long insecurity. By contrast in old Hellas the Spartan polis sparkled by the absence of walls, yet the property of being a “garrison-town” was met. Sparta despised walls for the very reason that it was a permanent open military camp.

Though there is still dispute as to how long Athens was without walls, like all Hellenic cities except Sparta it contained in the Acropolis a castle built on rock in the same manner as Ekbantama and Persepolis which were royal castles with surrounding settlements. The castle or wall belonged normally to Oriental as well as to ancient Mediterranean and ordinary medieval cities.

The city was neither the sole nor oldest fortress. In desputed frontier territory and during chronic states of war, every village fortified itself. Under the constant danger of attack in the area of the Elbe and Oder Rivers Slavic settlements were fortified, the national form of the rural village seems early to have been standardized in the form of the “hedge-enclosed” circular area with a single entrance which could be locked and through which at night cattle were driven to the central protection of the village area. Similarly, walled hill retreats were diffused throughout the world from Israelite East Jordan to Germanic territories. Unarmed persons and cattle took refuge within in times of danger. The so-called cities of Henry I in the German East were merely systematically established fortresses of this sort.

In England during the Anglo-Saxon period a “burgh” (borough) belonged to each shire whose name it took. Guard and garrison duty as the oldest specifically “civic” obligations were attached to certain
persons of pieces of land. When in normal times such fortresses were occupied, guards or vassals were maintained as a permanent garrison and paid in salaries or in land. There were fluid transitions from the permanently garrisoned fortress to the Anglo-Saxon burgh, the “garrison-city,” in the sense of Maitland’s theory, with a “burgess” as inhabitants. The burgess received its name from its political position which like the legal nature of its civic land and house property was determined by the duty of maintaining and guarding the fortress.

However, historically neither the palisaded village nor the emergency fortification are the primary forerunners of the city fortress, which was, rather, the manorial castle. The manorial castle was a fortress occupied by the lord and warriors subordinated to him as officials or as a personal following, together with their families and servants.

Military castle construction is very old, doubtlessly older than the chariot and military use of the horse. Like the war chariot the importance of the castle was determined by the development of knightly and royal warfare. In old China of the classic songs, in India of the Vedas, in Egypt and Mesopotamia, in Canaan, in Israel at the time of the Song of Deborah, in Greece during the period of the Homeric epics, and among the Etruscans, Celts, and Irish, the building of castles and the castle-principality were diffused universally. Old Egyptian sources speak of castles and their commanders and it may be assumed that they originally accommodated just as many small princes. From old documents it can be inferred that in Mesopotamia the development of the provincial kingdoms was preceded by a castle-dwelling princedom such as existed in Western India at the time of the oldest Gathas. The castle was certainly universally dominant in Northern India on the Ganges during the time of political disintegration. In this last instance, the old Kshatriyas whom the sources show to be peculiarly sandwiched between the king and nobility, were obviously princes.

In the period of Christianization, castle construction was pressed in Russia. It appears also during the dynasty of Thutmose in Syria at the time of the Israelite confederation (Abimelech). Old Chinese literature also provides irrefutable evidence of its original occurrence. The Hellenic and Asia Minor sea-castle was as universally diffused as piracy. There must have been an interim period of especially deep pacification to allow the Cretan unfortified places to arise in the place of the castle. In this area later castles like the Decelia, so important in the Peloponnesian Wars, were originally fortresses of noble families.

The medieval development of a politically independent gentry opened with the castelli in Italy. In Northern Europe the independence of the vassals was also bound up with enormous castle construction as established by Below. Even in modern times individual deputyship in Germany has been dependent upon possession by the family of a castle, even if only the meager ruins of one. Disposal of a castle originally signified military dominion over the country. The only question was: In whose hands? It could be in the hands of the individual lords, or confederations of knights, or of a ruler who could depend on the trustworthiness of his vassals, ministers, or officers.

The City as the Fusion of Fortress and Market

In the first stage of its development into a special political form the fortified city was incorporated in or dependent upon a castle, the fortress of a king, noblemen, or association of knights. Such nobles either resided in the fortress themselves or maintained a garrison of mercenaries, vassals, or servants therein. In Anglo-Saxon England the right to possess a “haw,” a fortified house in a “burgh,” was bestowed as a privilege on certain landowners of the surrounding countryside. In Antiquity and in Medieval Italy the city-house of the nobleman was held in addition to his rural castle. The inhabitants or residents adjoining the castle, sometimes all, sometimes special strata, were bound as citizens (burgess) to the performance of certain military duties such as building and repair of the walls, guard duty, defense service and, at times, other military services such as communication and supply for the urban military noble. In this instance the burgher is a member of his estate because, and insofar, as, he participates in the military association of the city.

Maitland has worked this out with especial clarity for England. The houses of the “burgh” were in the possession of people having

1Hill commanding the pass between Pentelicus and Poenes occupied by the Spartans in 413.
the duty of maintaining the fortification. This contrasts with the village. Alongside royal or aristocratically guaranteed market place appears military jurisdiction. The politically oriented castle and economically oriented market with the market area of the towns at times simultaneously serving both functions, again drill field and assembly area of the army and the place of pacific economic exchange on the other, often stand in plastic dualism beside one another.

The military drill field and economic market are not everywhere spatially separated. The Attic pnyx was a much later development then the agora which originally served the economic traffic as well as political and religious activities. On the other hand in Rome from ancient times the comitium and Campus Martius were separated from the economic fora as in the Middle Ages the piazza del campo at Siena (a tournament place still used today as a place for holding races between the wards of the city), as the front of the municipal place, is distinct from the mercato at the rear. Analogously in Islamic cities the kasbeh, the fortified camp of the warriors, was spatially separated from the bazaar. In Southern India the political city of notable men appears separately alongside the economic city.

The relation between the garrison of the political fortress and the civil economic population is complicated but always decisively important for the composition of the city. Wherever a castle existed artisans came or were settled for the satisfaction of manorial wants and the needs of the warriors. The consumption power of a prince’s military household and the protection it guaranteed attracted the merchants. Moreover the lord was interested in attracting these classes since he was in position to procure money revenues through them either by taxing commerce or trade or participating in it through capital advances. At times the lord engaged in commerce on his own, even monopolizing it. In maritime castles as shipowner or ruler of the port the lord was in a position to procure a share in piratical or peacefully won seaborne profits. His followers and vassals resident in the place were also in position to profit whether he voluntarily gave them permission or, being dependent on their good will, was forced to do so.

The evidences of the participation of the ancient city lords in commercial activities are many. Vases from old Hellenic cities like Cyrene picture the king weighing goods (siphion). In Egypt at the beginning of historical time a commercial fleet of the Lower-Egyptian Pharaoh is reported. Widely diffused over the world, but especially in maritime “cities” where the carrying trade was easily controlled, the economic interest of resident military families flourished beside the monopoly of the castle chieftain, as a result of their own participation in commercial profits. Their capacity to participate in the civic economy often shattered the monopoly (if it existed) of the prince. When this occurred the prince was considered only to be primus inter pares in the ruling circle or even simply as equal. The ruling circle comprised the urban sibs domiciled through landed property and deriving capital from some form of peaceful commerce, especially the commenda capital in the Middle Ages, or from personal participation in piracy or sea war. Often the prince was elected for short times and in any case he was decisively limited in power. In ancient maritime cities since Homer’s time yearly municipal councils gradually appeared. Quite similar formations often occur in the early Middle Ages. In Venice they formed a counterbalance to the doges though with very different leadership positions depending on whether a royal count or viscount or bishop or someone else was lord of the city. Equivalent developments also appear in other typical commercial cities.

Thus in early Antiquity and in the Middle Ages the urban commercial capitalists, the financiers of commerce, the specific notable persons of the city, have to be separated in principle from the domiciled holders of commercial “establishments,” the merchants proper. To be sure the strata often blended into each other. However, with this we already anticipate later explanations.

In the hinterland, shipping points, terminals, crossings of rivers, and caravan routes (for example, Babylon) could become locations of similar developments. At times competition arose between the priest of the temple, and priestly lord of the city, for temple districts of famous gods offered sacred protection to inter-ethnic settlements. Such areas could provide locations for politically unprotected commerce. Thus a city-like settlement, economically supplied by temple revenues, could attach itself to the temple district in a manner similar to the princely city with its tributes to the prince.

Individual cases varied depending on the extent to which the prince’s interest in monetary revenues predominated in the granting of privileges for merchandising and manufacturing independent of the lordly household and taxed by the lord. On the other hand, the lord could be interested in satisfying his own needs hence in acting in ways
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strengthening his own powers and monopolizing trade in his own hands. When attracting foreigners by offering special privileges the lord also had to take into consideration the interests and "established" ability (which was also important for himself) of those already resident, who were dependent on his political protection or manorial supplies.

To this variety of possible development must be added the effects of the political-militaristic structure of the dominating group within which the founding of the city or its development occurred. We must consider the main antitheses in city development arising therefrom.

Association and Status Peculiarities of the Occidental City

Neither the "city," in the economic sense, nor the garrison, the inhabitants of which are accoutred with special political-administrative structures, necessarily constitute a "community." An urban "community," in the full meaning of the word, appears as a general phenomenon only in the Occident. Exceptions occasionally were to be found in the Near East (in Syria, Phoenicia, and Mesopotamia) but only occasionally and in rudiments. To constitute a full urban community a settlement must display a relative predominance of trade-commercial relations with the settlement as a whole displaying the following features: (1) a fortification; (2) a market; (3) a court of its own and at least partially autonomous law. (4) a related form of association; and (5) at least partial autonomy and autocephaly, thus also an administration by authorities in the election of whom the burghers participated.

In the past, rights such as those which define the urban community were normally privileges of the estates. The peculiar political properties of the urban community appeared only with the presence of a special stratum, a distinct new estate. Measured by this rule the "cities" of the Occidental Middle Ages only qualify in part as true cities: even the cities of the eighteenth century were genuine urban communities only in minor degree. Finally measured by this rule, with possible isolated exceptions, the cities of Asia were not urban communities at all even though they all had markets and were fortresses.

All large seats of trade and commerce in China and most of the small ones were fortified. This was true also for Egyptian, Near East-ern, and Indian centers of commerce and trade. Not infrequently the large centers of trade and commerce of those countries were also separate jurisdictional districts. In China, Egypt, the Near East, and India the large commercial centers have also been seats of large political associations—a phenomenon not characteristic of Medieval Occidental cities, especially those of the North. Thus, many, but not all of the essential elements of the true urban community were at hand. However, the possession by the urbanites of a special substantive or trial law or of courts autonomously nominated by them were unknown to Asiatic cities. Only to the extent that guilds or castes (in India) were located in cities did they develop courts and a special law. Urban location of these associations was legally incidental. Autonomous administration was unknown or only vestigial.

If anything, even more important than the relative absence of autonomous administration, the appearance in the city of an association of urbanites in contradiction to the countryman was also found only in rudiments. The Chinese urban dweller legally belonged to his family and native village in which the temple of his ancestors stood and to which he conscientiously maintained affiliation. This is similar to the Russian village-comrade, earning his livelihood in the city but legally remaining a peasant. The Indian urban dweller remained a member of the caste. As a rule urban dwellers were also members of local professional associations, such as crafts and guilds of specific urban location. Finally they belonged to administrative districts such as the city wards and street districts into which the city was divided by the magisterial police.

Within the administrative units of the city, wards and street districts, urban dwellers had definite duties and even, at times, rights as well. In the attempt to secure peace, city or street districts could be made liturgically responsible collectively for the security of persons or other police purposes. It was possible thus for them to be formed into communities with elected official or hereditary elders. This occurred in Japan where one or more civil-administrative body (Machi-Bugyo) was established as superior to self-administered street communities. However, a city law similar to that of Antiquity or the Middle Ages was absent. The city as corporate per se was unknown. Of course, eventually the city as a whole formed a separate administrative district as in the Merovingian and Carolingian Empires, but as was still the case in the Medieval and Ancient Occident, the autonomy and
participation of the inhabitants in local administration were out of the question. As a matter of fact, local individual participation in self-administration was often more strongly developed in the country than in the relatively large commercially organized city.

In the village, for example, in China, in many affairs the confederation of elders was practically all-powerful and the Pao-Chia[^10] was dependent on them, even though this was not legally expressed. Also in India the village community had nearly complete autonomy in most significant circumstances. In Russia the mir enjoyed nearly complete autonomy until bureaucratization under Alexander III. In the whole of the Near Eastern world the “elders” (in Israel, sekenim)[^11] originally of family and later chiefs of noble clans were representatives and administrators of localities and the local court. This could not occur in the Asiatic city because it was usually the seat of a high official or prince and thus under the direct supervision of their bodyguards. However, the city was a princely fortress and administered by royal officials (in Israel, sarim[^12]) who retained judicial power.

In Israel the dualism of officials and elders can be traced in the royal period. Royal officials everywhere triumphed in bureaucratic kingdoms. Such royal bureaucrats were not all-powerful but subject to public opinion often to an astonishing degree. As a rule the Chinese official was quite powerless against local associations when they united in a particular case. At every serious united opposition of the clans and local associations the Chinese official lost his position. Obstruction, boycott, closing of shops, and strikes of artisans and merchants in response to oppression were a daily occurrence, setting limits on power of officials. However, such limits on official power were of a completely indeterminate kind.

In China and India the guilds and other professional associations had competencies with which the officials had to reckon. The chairman of the local associations often exercised extensive coercive powers even against third parties. However all their powers involved only special competencies of particular association in particular questions of concrete group interest. Moreover, there was ordinarily no joint association representing a community of city burghers per se, even

[^10]: Even until recent times every ten families constituted a “pao” formally under a headman. A hundred families constituted a “chia” under a “Pao Chia” also called “Ti Pao”. We read Pao-Chia for Taotai.


the concept of such a possibility is completely lacking. Citizenship as a specific status quality of the urbanite is missing. In China, Japan, and India neither urban community nor citizenry can be found and only traces of them appear in the Near East.

In Japan the organization of estates was purely feudal. The samurai (mounted) and kasi (unmounted) ministerial officials confronted the peasant (no) and the merchants and tradesmen who were partly united in professional associations. However, here too, the concepts of a “citizenry” and an “urban community” are absent. This was also true in China during the feudal period. After the feudal period in China a bureaucratic administration of literati qualified for office in terms of examinations leading to academic degrees confronted the illiterate strata among whom appeared economically privileged guilds of merchants and professional associations. But in this period in China, too, the ideas of an “urban citizenry” and “urban community” are missing. This was true even though in China as well as in Japan the professional associations were self-administered. Moreover while the villages were self-administered the cities were not. In China the city was a fortress and official seat of imperial authorities in a sense completely unknown in Japan.

The cities of India were royal seats or official centers of royal administration as well as fortresses and market places. Guilds of merchants and castes largely coinciding with professional associations were present, enjoying considerable autonomy especially with respect to their own legal competence and justice. Nevertheless, the hereditary caste system of Indian society with its ritualistic segregation of the professions, excluded the emergence of a citizenry and urban community. And though there were numerous castes and subcastes of traders and artisans they cannot be taken together and equated with the Occidental burgher strata. Nor was it possible for the commercial and artisan castes of India to unite in a form corresponding to the medieval urban corporations, for caste estrangement hindered all inter-caste fraternization.

To be sure in India during the period of the great salvation-religions, guilds appeared with hereditary elders (schreschthas) uniting in many cities into an association. As residues from this period there are, at present, some cities (Allahabad) with a mutual urban schrescht (elder) corresponding to the occidental mayor. Moreover, in the period before the great bureaucratic kingdoms there were
some politically autonomous cities in India ruled by a patriciate recruited from families supplying elephants to the army. Later this phenomenon almost completely disappeared. The triumph of ritualistic caste estrangement shattered the guild associations and royal bureaucracies in alliance with the Brahmans swept away, except for vestiges, such trends toward a citizenry and urban community in Northwestern India.

In Near Eastern Egyptian antiquity the cities were fortresses and official administrative centers with royal market privileges. However, in the period of the dominion of the great kingdom they lacked autonomy, community organizations, and a privileged citizen estate. In Egypt during the Middle Empire office feudalism existed; in the New Empire a bureaucratic administration of clerks appeared. “Civic privileges” were bestowed on feudal or prebendal office holders in localities comparable to the privileges of bishops in old Germany. However, civic rights were not bestowed on an autonomous citizenry and even the beginnings of a “city patriciate” have not been found.

In contrast to the complete absence of a citizenry in ancient Egypt were the phenomena in Mesopotamia, Syria, and especially Phoenicia, where at an early period typical city-kingsdoms emerged at intersection points of sea and caravan traffic. Such civic kingdoms were of intensified sacred-secular character. They were also typified by the rising power of patrician families in the “city-house” (bitu in the Tel-el-Amarna tablets) in the period of charioteering. In the Canaanite city an association of chariot-fighting knights possessing urban residences appeared. This knighthood kept the peasant farmers in a state of debt servitude and clientship as in the case of the early Hellenic polis. It was obviously similar in Mesopotamia where the “patrician” as a landowning full burgher economically qualified for war service is separated from the peasant. Immunities and privileges of this stratum were chartered by the king. However, with the mounting military power of the government this also disappeared. Politically autonomous cities and a burgher stratum of Occidental type are as little to be found in Mesopotamia as is a special urban law alongside royal law.

Only in Phoenicia did the landed patriciate engaging in commerce with its capital manage to maintain its dominion over the city state. However, the coins of the time am Sor and am Karthadast in Tyre


and Carthage hardly indicate the presence of a ruling “demos” and if such was ever the case it was only at a later time. Thus a true citizenry only partly developed. In Israel, Judah became a city-state but the elders (sekenim) who in the early period governed the administration as chieftains of patrician sibs were thrust into the background by the royal administration. The gibborim (knights) became royal attendants and soldiers. In contrast to the countryside, the royal sarim (officials) ruled in the large cities. Only after the exile did the community (kahal) or fellowship (cheber) appear as an institution on a confessional basis under the rule of priestly families.

Nevertheless, all these phenomena indicate that here on the coasts of the Mediterranean Sea and on the Euphrates appeared the first real analogies of a civic development equivalent to that of Rome at the time of the reception of the Gens Claudia. The city is ruled by a patriciate resident in the city with powers resting on monetary wealth primarily won in commerce and secondarily invested in landed property, debt slaves, and war slaves. The military power of the urban patriciate was a product of its training for knightly warfare, a training often spent in feuds against one another. The patricians were inter-locally diffused and united with the king or schofeten or sekenim as primus inter pares. Such a patriciate like the Roman nobility with consuls was threatened by the tyranny of the charismatic war king relying upon recruited bodyguards (Abimelech, Jepthah, David). Prior to the Hellenic period this stage of urban development was nowhere permanently surpassed.

Obviously such a patriciate also dominated in cities of the Arabian coast during the period of Mohammed, remaining in existence in those Islamic cities where the autonomy of the city and its patriciate was not completely destroyed as in the larger state. Under Islamic rule ancient oriental conditions were often preserved, whereupon a labile ratio of autonomy between urban families and princely officials appears. Resident city families enjoyed a position of power resting on wealth from urban economic opportunities and invested in land and slaves. Without formal legal recognition the princes and their

14Ibid., p. 385 f.

15In all these areas in the early period enslavement for debt appears and debt slaves are found alongside slaves captured in battles—battles at times being actually slave raids.
officials had to take account of the power of the patriciate in the same manner that the Chinese Pao Chia had to take account of the obstruction of clan elders of the villages and merchant and professional associations. However, the city was not thereby necessarily formed into an independent association. Often the contrary occurred, as may be exemplified.

Arabian cities like Mecca were settlements of clans such as remained typical in the Middle Ages to the threshold of the present. Snouck Hurgronje has proven that the city of Mecca was surrounded by the bilad representing lordly property of an individual dewis of sibs descending from Ali—such were the hasnaitic and other noble sibs. The bilad was occupied by peasants, clients, and protected Bedouins. Bilads were often intermixed. A dewis was any sib one ancestor of which was once a sherif. Since 1200 the sherif himself belonged without exception to the Alidic family Katadahs. Legally the sherif should have been installed by the governor of the caliph (who was often unfree and once, under Harun al Rashid, was a Berber slave). However in reality the sherif was chosen from the qualified family by election of the chieftains of the dewis who were resident in Mecca. For this reason as well as the fact that residence in Mecca offered opportunities to exploit pilgrims, the heads of the class (emirs) lived in the city. Between them at times alliances obtained with agreements for preserving the peace and establishing quotas for dividing chances for gain. Such alliances were terminable at any time, dissolution signaling the start of a feud inside and outside the city. Slave troops were employed in such feuds and the defeated group was exiled from the city. However, despite defeat the community of interest between hostile families as against outsiders led to observance of the courtesy of sparing the goods and lives of members of the families and clientele of the exiles. Such courtesies were observed under the threat of general mutiny of one’s own partisans.

In modern times the city of Mecca recognizes the following official authorities: (1) On paper the collegiate administrative council (Medschlis) installed by the Turks appears as the authority, (2) In fact the Turkish governor is the effective authority, occupying the position of protector (in former times usually the ruler of Egypt), (3) authority is shared by the four cadis of the orthodox rights who are always noble men of Mecca, the most eminent (schafitic) for centuries being nominated from one family by the sherif or proposed by the protector, (4) The sherif simultaneously is head of the urban corporation of nobles, (5) The guilds, especially the cicerones, followed by the butchers, corn merchants and others, (6) The city ward with its elders is partly autonomous. These authorities competed with each other in many ways without fixed competences. A party to a legal suit selected the authority appearing most favorable or whose power against the accused seemed to be the most strong. The governor was unable to prevent an appeal to the cadi who competed with him in all matters of ecclesiastical law. The sherif was held to be the proper authority of the natives especially in all matters concerning the Bedouins and caravans of pilgrims. The governor was dependent on the willingness of the sherif to cooperate. Finally, here as in other Arabic areas, particularly in the cities, the cooperation of the nobility was decisive for the effectiveness of authority.

In the ninth century a development reminiscent of Occidental circumstances occurred when with the flight of the Tuluniden and De schafariden, in Mecca the position of the richest guilds, that of the butchers and corn merchants, held the balance of power. However, it was still unconditionally true at the time of Mohammed that only the noble koreischitic families were militarily and politically important, thus, a government by guilds never arose. Slave troops sustained by profit-shares of resident urban families continually sustained their power. In a similar manner, in medieval Italian cities power continually tended to glide into the hands of the knightly families as wielders of military power.

The idea of an association which could unite the city into a corporate unit was missing in Mecca. This furnished its characteristic difference from the ancient polis and the early medieval Italian commune. However, when all is said and done, this Arabic condition—of course omitting specific Islamic traits or replacing them by Christian counterparts—may be taken to typify the period before the emergence of the urban community association. It is also typical for Occidental commercial sea cities.

So far as sound information extends, in Asiatic and Oriental settlements of an urban economic character, normally only extended families and professional associations were vehicles of communal actions. Communal action was not the product of an urban burgher
stratum as such. Transitions, of course, are fluid but precisely the largest settlement at times embracing hundreds of thousands even millions of inhabitants displays this very phenomenon. In medieval Byzantine Constantinople the representatives of urban districts were leaders of party divisions who financed circus races (as is still the case for the horse race of Siena). The Nika revolt under Justinian was a product of such local cleavages of the city. Also in Constantinople, from the time of the Islamic Middle Ages until the sixteenth century, only merchants, corporations, and guilds appear as representatives of the interests of the burgbers beside purely military associations such as the Janitscharen and Sipahis and the religious organizations of the Ulemas and Dervishes. However, in sixteenth century Constantinople there is still no city representation. Similarly in late Byzantine Alexandria, beside the power of the patricians, relying upon the support of very sturdy monks, and the competitive power of the governor relying on a small garrison there was no militia for particular city districts. Within the districts of the city only the circus parties of rival “greens” and “blues” represented the leading organizations.

The deepest problems of modern life derive from the claim of the individual to preserve the autonomy and individuality of his existence in the face of overwhelming social forces, of historical heritage, of external culture, and of the technique of life. The fight with nature which primitive man has to wage for his bodily existence attains in this modern form its latest transformation. The eighteenth century called upon man to free himself of all the historical bonds in the state and in religion, in morals and in economics. Man’s nature, originally good and common to all, should develop unhampered. In addition to more liberty, the nineteenth century demanded the functional specialization of man and his work; this specialization makes one individual incomparable to another, and each of them indispensable to the highest possible extent. However, this specialization makes each man the more directly dependent upon the supplementary activities of all others. Nietzsche sees the full development of the individual conditioned by the most ruthless struggle of individuals; socialism believes in the suppression of all competition for the same reason. Be that as it may, in all these positions the same basic motive is at work: the person resists to being leveled down and worn out by a social technological mechanism. An inquiry into the inner meaning of specifically modern life and its products, into the soul of the cultural body, so to speak, must seek to solve the equation which structures like the metropolis set up between the individual and the superindividual contents of life. Such an inquiry must answer the question of how the personality accommodates itself in the adjustments to external forces. This will be my task today.

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