The Ancient City
New Perspectives on Urbanism in the Old and New World

o n e
Introduction

Joyce Marcus and Jeremy A. Sabloff

> The most important issue confronting the social sciences is the extent to which human behavior is shaped by factors that operate cross-culturally as opposed to factors that are unique to particular cultures.
>
> —*Bruce Trigger,* Understanding Early Civilizations

Cities are so common today that we cannot imagine a world without them. In fact, more than half of the world's population lives in cities, and that number is expected to increase to two-thirds in the next century. For most of our history, however, there were no cities. Understandably, scholars want to know why, how, and when urban life began. Was the emergence of the city just a matter of nucleating previously scattered populations, or was it more? As the diverse case studies in this book show, it was much more.

When it came time to select a title for this book, we picked *The Ancient City* for two reasons. One was to honor the scholar who conceived the first book with that title. The second was to draw attention to ancient cities, many of them innovations for their era. These diverse settlements not only have much to tell us about the social, political, religious, and economic conditions of their times but also say something about our own. Since the literature on modern urbanism continues to be far more extensive than that which exists for ancient urbanism, this book contributes to correcting that imbalance.

The database on ancient cities has been expanding as a result of ongoing excavations all over the world, but much of that work remains unpublished. These excavations are enabling scholars to document intra-city changes through time, city-to-city

interaction, and changing relations between cities and their respective hinterlands. Scholars now are able to speak more confidently about the founding and functions of ancient cities, their diverse trade networks, their heterogeneous city plans and layouts, and their diverse lifespans and trajectories.

Our sample of ancient cities—both in terms of total number and the kinds of data available on their internal diversity—is larger than ever, allowing us to reevaluate earlier assertions and inferences about specific differences and shared commonalities. Although both kinds of information are significant—data that demonstrate differences between cities and those that document recurrent patterns—recent studies show that the diversity is not infinite and that key units of analysis (such as houses and neighborhoods) can be compared from city to city in meaningful ways. Today's archaeologists are in a very favorable position to link data to models, to combine written texts with excavation data, and to compare a much larger body of data from both Old World and New World cities.

Historical and Comparative Analyses

Historians, sociologists, archaeologists, political scientists, demographers, and geographers who analyze ancient and modern cities share similar concerns, even though their datasets can vary considerably. This book focuses on ancient cities because we are interested in understanding the functions and services that early cities offered their residents and the residents of subordinate towns, villages, and farmsteads. This volume contributes the kinds of information that will broaden and deepen the comparative study of urban lifestyles and urban institutions.

The comparative study of cities began in earnest in the nineteenth century when Numa Denis Fustel de Coulanges published *La Cité Antique*. That book was later translated into English and published as *The Ancient City* (1864, 1872, 1963). Although written more than 140 years ago, Fustel de Coulanges' book has a very modern character. His focus was comparative (comparing Greek and Roman cities), historical (analyzing each city and society through time), and explanatory (discussing integrative forces such as religious beliefs, kinship, and tolerance of diversity, as well as disintegrative forces such as competition among economic classes and ethnic groups). Fustel de Coulanges discussed the roles of individuals, groups, and institutions and how all of them changed during the lifespan of a city. He noted:

> The social tie was not easy to establish between those human beings who were
> so diverse, so free, so inconstant. To bring them under the rules of a community, to institute commandments and ensure obedience, to cause passion to
> give way to reason, and individual right to public right, there certainly was
> something necessary, stronger than material force, more respectable than interest, surer than a philosophical theory, more unchangeable than a convention;
> something that should dwell equally in all hearts, and should be all-powerful
> there. [Fustel de Coulanges 1963:132]

For Fustel de Coulanges, those social ties were the worship of ancestors, the rise of laws, and a shared religion. He saw cities as the final development in an evolutionary scheme. Fustel de Coulanges' first era consisted of the family with its household gods; followed by the phratry with its god; then the tribe and its god; and finally the city, in which "men conceived a god whose providence embraced this entire city" (1963:132). In the end, the city itself was characterized by a hierarchy of creeds and a hierarchy of association.

> With the ancients, a city was never formed by degrees, by the slow increase of the number of men and houses. They founded a city at once, all entire in a day; but the elements of the city needed to be first ready, and this was the most difficult, and ordinarily the largest work. As soon as the families, the phratries, and the tribes had agreed to unite and have the same worship, they immediately founded the city as a sanctuary for this common worship, and thus the foundation of a city was always a religious act. [Fustel de Coulanges 1963:134]

Here Fustel de Coulanges was only partly right. While some ancient cities may have been founded as a religious act and "all entire in a day," others were *not* established in that way. Nevertheless, divine reasons were often added retrospectively to explain why and how a city was founded. Fustel de Coulanges noted that the Greeks, like the Italians, believed that the site of a city should be chosen by the gods and revealed by auguries. The short life of a city could be explained retrospectively by saying that the founder had dared to build a city without consulting the oracle; this was the explanation as to why the city founded by the Spartan Dorieus lasted only three years (Fustel de Coulanges 1963:138). Consider, as another example, Fustel de Coulanges' version of the founding of Rome: "Before coming to the Palatine, [the Romans] had lived in Alba, or some other neighboring city.… A man could not quit his dwelling-place without taking with him his soil and his ancestors" (1963:136). Thus, a circular pit was excavated on the Palatine Hill, and each man threw in a little earth brought from his former home. The clods of earth placed in the pit were believed to contain the souls of their ancestors, and these reunited souls kept guard over their descendants: "At this same place Romulus set up an altar, and lighted a fire upon it. This was the holy fire of the city" (1963:137).

Around this altar the city of Rome allegedly arose. To be sure, this may be revisionist history. So far, no circular pit and altar have been found, and without a written document no archaeologist could be sure that the soil in such a pit was brought from former settlements, nor that the clods of earth were thought to contain the souls of their ancestors. However, similar rites of dedication and sanctification are widely known from other times and places.

When colonists or conquerors settled in a preexisting city, they might also perform a ceremony such as establishing new sacred fires or fixing their native gods in their new home. Such rites and offerings are what we would expect to find in the Roman world, but they have been noted for other geographic areas as well.
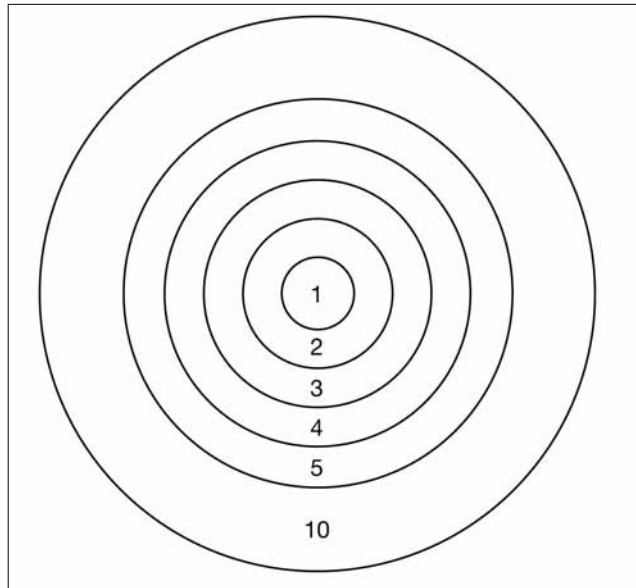
Figure 1.1. The concentric zone model consists of several rings: 1, city center; 2, factory district; 3, retrogressing neighborhoods; 4, workers' residences; 5, middle-class residences; and 10, commuters (redrawn from Burgess 1925:51).

How did the Romans view cities that fell into ruins? Camillus (cited by Fustel de Coulanges) says: "Our city was religiously founded; the gods themselves pointed out the place, and took up their abode here with our fathers. Ruined as it is, it still remains the dwelling of our national gods" (1963:141–142). Similar attitudes and explanations can be found in many parts of the world, from Italy to China to Mexico. Although both the founding and the abandonment of cities continue to be of enduring interest, most archaeologists can rarely isolate and confirm the causes. Indeed, Fustel de Coulanges was fortunate to have relevant and informative texts, an enormous advantage in understanding Greek, Roman, and other ancient cities of the world. When Fustel de Coulanges compared cities, he noted important similarities and differences, but it remained until the twentieth century for general models to emerge.

As the world became increasingly urbanized in the twentieth century, interest in the nature and development of cities grew correspondingly among social scientists. The models they developed have had a significant impact not only on scholarly studies of cities but also on practical policy making in the second half of the twentieth century. As we shall see, these studies also influenced the thinking of archaeologists who were actively assessing the effects of ancient urban growth during the later decades of the past century. We will discuss four of the most influential models (Berry and Wheeler 2005; Marcus 2000[1983b]).

1. In the 1920s and 1930s, the Department of Sociology at the University of Chicago had become home to several sociologists committed to the study of cities. Among these were Robert E. Park, Ernest W. Burgess, and Louis Wirth.
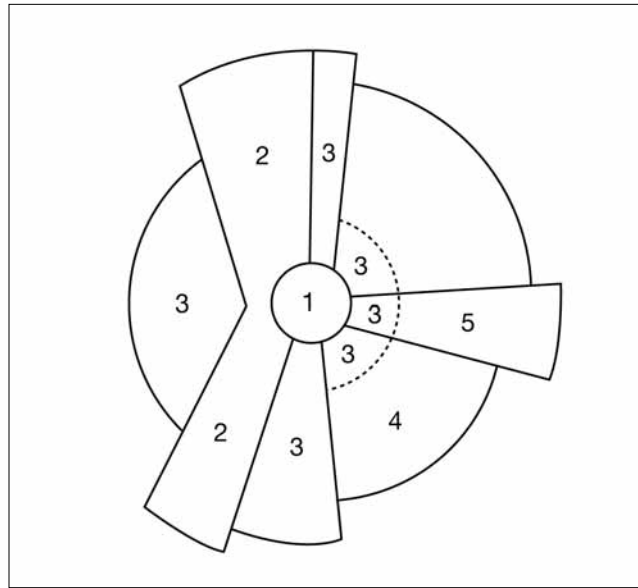
Figure 1.2. The sector model: 1, city center; 2, manufacturing district; 3, low-status residences; 4, medium-status residences; and 5, high-status residences (redrawn from Harris and Ullman 1945:figure 5).

The "Chicago School" saw the city as consisting of populations that had created a new environment. Some of the school's prominent advocates borrowed concepts from plant biology and animal ecology, such as competition and succession, and these concepts were applied in creative ways to the human environment of the city (Bulmer 1984; Burgess 1925, 1929; Park 1915; Park and Burgess 1924; Park et al. 1925; Wirth 1925, 1938).

Ernest Burgess (1925) developed the well-known "concentric zone model," based on the idea that the city has a single center from which growth proceeds outward (figure 1.1). His model—which featured Chicago and other modern cities—portrayed the city center as containing the central business district; outside of this, a zone (or ring) containing the factory district; then a zone of workers' residences; then a zone of middle- and upper-class residences; and, finally, an outer zone of commuters.

One of the key features of this concentric model was that socially and economically well-off individuals tended to move away from the center to occupy the outer ring. Critics of this model have noted that each zone is not as homogeneous as Burgess indicated. Nevertheless, as in all models, the staying power of Burgess's concentric zone model was that it was a simplified, idealized construct that was applicable to many different cities.

2. A second model, developed by the economist Homer Hoyt (1939), was the "sector model," today regarded as complementary to Burgess's concentric zone model. Hoyt's model (figure 1.2) showed that once there were differences in land use near the center of a city, those differences would often be maintained as the city expanded outward.
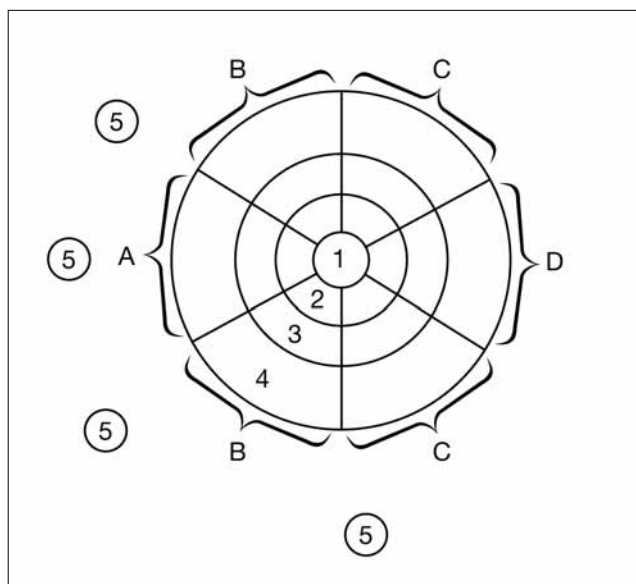
Figure 1.3. Idealized diagram of a British city that combines the principles of both the concentric zone model and the sector model: 1, city center; 2, transitional zone; 3, small houses in Sector B, large old houses in Sector A; 4, post-1918 residences, with post-1945 growth primarily on the periphery; 5, commuting-distance villages; Sector A, middle class; Sector B, lower middle class; Sector C, working class; and Sector D, industrial and lowest working class (redrawn from Mann 1965:96).

Thus, sectors of specific kinds of land use could grow outward as pie-shape wedges, crosscutting Burgess's concentric rings. Today's geographers have discovered that the sector model can be applied most readily to residential neighborhoods. For example, once an area of high-status houses has been established near a city center, new high-status residences will be constructed contiguous to them, perhaps growing outward axially along one of the major streets leading to and from the center or growing outward radially on all edges of the high-status zone. Another example comprises wards or quarters of the city that, while remaining relatively high-status, might come to be occupied by craftsmen, merchants, foreigners, or others. Within each sector there could also be gradations; for example, the sizes of factories, workshops, building lots, or houses might increase or decrease as one moves closer to the center.

Noting the value of both the concentric and sector models, later geographers sometimes combined them (figure 1.3), as Mann did (1965:96) to describe a British city.

3. A third model, developed by geographers Chauncy D. Harris and Edward L. Ullman (1945), was the "multiple nuclei model," which shows, as its name implies, that (a) a city can develop multiple nuclei and absorb pre-existing nuclei and (b) as a city grows, it can become decentralized and develop distinct manufacturing areas with specialized occupations and diverse personnel. Rather than have a single dominant nucleus or downtown, such cities can have a series of virtually equal nuclei that, once established, tend to be maintained (figure 1.4). In some cities, these nuclei have
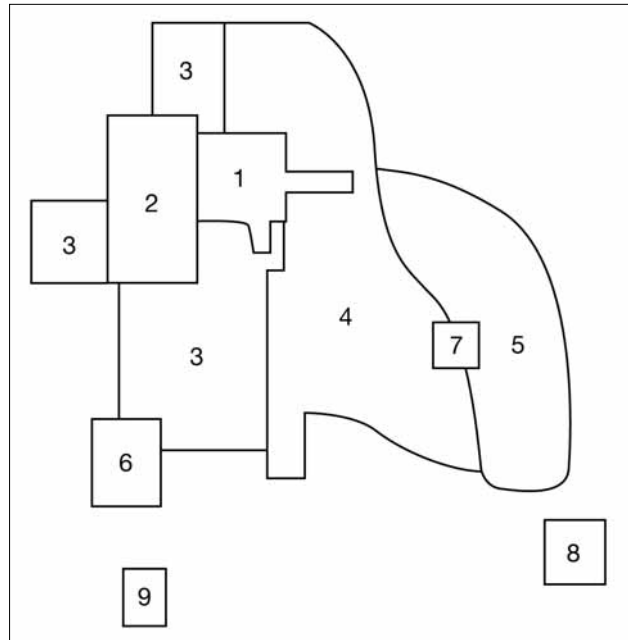
Figure 1.4. The multiple nuclei model: 1, central business district; 2, wholesale light manufacturing; 3, lower-status residences; 4, medium-status residences; 5, higher-status residences; 6, heavy manufacturing; 7, outlying business district; 8, residential suburb; and 9, industrial suburb (redrawn from Harris and Ullman 1945:figure 5).

existed from the city's beginning. In others, they developed as the growth of the city stimulated craft or occupational specialization that attracted more people to the same nucleus.

4. A fourth influential model, developed by Louis Wirth (1938), focused on residential areas in which people of similar origin, class, or occupation tended to live in the same neighborhood. Since these residents wanted to live with others of similar origin, occupation, or income, various parts of the city came to be identified with a particular social class, ethnic group, or occupation.

Each of these four models builds directly on its predecessor, and all highlight general principles that have enduring relevance to our understanding of ancient cities, even if some of their specific assumptions and applications do not fit all cities or all eras. All such models, however, have been subjected to criticism, usually when they fail to explain every case. According to some critiques, these models tend to pay too little attention to the roles played by individuals (human agents) and their decision making, as well as the important roles played by culture, symbolism, ritual, and religion. Ironically, these topics were the very strengths of early studies like Fustel de Coulanges' *The Ancient City*, in which he discussed individuals, sacred symbols, and rituals as conducted in ancient Greek and Roman cities.

In this burgeoning twentieth-century literature, we also find contrasts between scholars who saw the decision making of elites as crucial in city making and those

more concerned with commoners. On the one hand, as the famous thirteenth-century and early fourteenth-century historian Ibn Khaldun once said, "dynasties and royal authority are absolutely necessary for the building of cities and the planning of towns" (quoted in Rosenthal 1958:235). On the other hand, Aston and Bond (1976:21) note: "Towns are built by and for people. Their regional and local sitings are the result of decisions taken by people and not of some inevitable physical control." Kevin Lynch (1981) affirms that cities are not organisms that reproduce or repair themselves, but rather entities built by people.

In today's postmodern intellectual atmosphere, studying an individual person or agent whose name we know is appealing, as is focusing on the unique qualities of a specific city. However, such an approach has its drawbacks, as noted by Anthony Orum and Xiangming Chen:

> Another danger is that each city, in particular, its history and institutions, is taken to be so unique that it becomes next to impossible to understand what general lessons it has to offer to the urban analyst. In brief, then, historical/institutional analyses must guard against the opposite danger of abstract theories—the danger of detail, of becoming convinced that history is all contingencies and no general process. [Orum and Chen 2003:55]

The complement to the study of individual agents was the comparative approach, as exemplified by V. Gordon Childe (1950) and Lewis Mumford (1961). These scholars sought to generalize and look for similarities and recurrent patterns. They were aware that the city shared many features inherited from towns and villages, but they isolated novel features that appeared for the first time in the urban matrix we call a city. Among the interrelated novelties discussed by Childe (1950) were greater community size, larger populations, higher densities of people, agricultural surpluses, truly monumental public buildings, full-time craft specialization, systems of counting and recordkeeping, a writing system, regular foreign trade and subsidized traders, officials, and priests. Similarly, "in the city specialized work became for the first time an all-day, year-round occupation" (Mumford 1961:103). Mumford went on to say, "With the growth of numbers and the increase of wealth in the city rose another kind of division: that between the rich and the poor, which came in with the next great innovation of urban life, the institution of property" (1961:107). Referring to the social constitution of the city, Mumford says:

> If it dismembered the whole man and forced him to spend a long lifetime at a single task, it re-assembled him in a new collective entity; so that while his individual life might be narrow and constrained, the urban pattern so woven was all the richer in texture because of the variegated threads that formed it. [Mumford 1961:109]

In addition to embracing the comparative approach of Childe and Mumford, scholars sought to describe evolutionary stages in the life of the city. A sequence of six

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stages was suggested by Leo F. Schnore (1965) and later evaluated and synthesized by David I. Scargill (1979:214–215), as follows:

1. First, a "reversed Burgess" pattern in which high-status groups live in the city center, with the poor on the periphery

2. Next, a stage in which the lowest-status groups are evenly spread throughout the city

3. Then, an intermediate stage in which the highest-status and lowest-status groups are concentrated in the center, while a middle class lives in the suburbs

4. Then, an "almost Burgess" city, which differs from Stage 5 in the concentration of the very highest-status groups in the center

5. Next, the "Burgess pattern," with low-status groups in the center and high-status groups in the suburbs

6. Finally, a stage in which low-status groups live in the suburbs

Even though Schnore's six evolutionary stages were designed to characterize modern cities, where people are able to choose where they want to live, some aspects of each stage (as well as the order of the changes) are worth evaluating against the developmental cycles and stages of ancient cities. Archaeologists are uniquely positioned to confirm, reject, or modify these stages and to formulate developmental sequences, based on the excavation of stratigraphic levels and the layout of superimposed cities.

The models developed by Burgess, Hoyt, Schnore, and others emphasized the downtown or city center. This emphasis led to the "principle of centrality," a general concept developed in several books by geographers and others. Examples of such books would be James Bird's *Centrality and Cities* (1977) and Nicos Polydorides' *The Concept of Centrality in Urban Form and Structure* (1983). This principle of centrality sought to explain the symbolic, economic, and administrative roles played by the city center and that center's impact on centripetal and centrifugal forces.

Polydorides (1983:1) defines the city center as "that particular area of the city in which urban activities and flows of people, vehicles, goods, and messages are most concentrated. The same area usually has a highly dense and conspicuous built form as well." He considers the city core to be the dependent variable, while the localization of authority is the independent variable. ("Authority" is here defined as the legitimate control of decision making in the political and economic processes of the city.) In Polydorides' model, authority and free choice are seen as complementary rather than exclusive, at least in the modern city. To be sure, some students of the ancient city have assumed that the royal family and top administrators controlled the city and made all the decisions. Other scholars, in contrast, would argue that we have continually underestimated the role of individual commoners, craftsmen, and ordinary city dwellers (Lohse and Valdez 2003; Marcus 2000 [1983b]; M. L. Smith 2003b).

In traditional or prehistoric cities, central authorities sometimes brought outside labor into the city center to construct public buildings. Among the Yoruba, for example, corvée labor was required of all those living near the city center, as well as those

living in subordinate towns. Specifically, maintenance and repairs were the responsibility of men from an inner ring of nine settlements in close proximity to the palace, while actual new construction was undertaken by men brought in from settlements throughout the territory (Ojo 1966).

What a City Is *and* Isn't

In 1950 Childe said: "The concept of 'city' is notoriously hard to define." And in 1967 Horace Miner famously said, "Everyone knows what a city is, except the experts" (1967:3). Some scholars might still agree with both of these statements, even though significant progress has been made by archaeologists who continue to document key characteristics through the careful excavation of ancient cities.

Different disciplines and subfields, however, still define "city" in a variety of ways. Many sociologists consider cities to be "*places—that is, specific locations in space that provide an anchor and a meaning to who we are.* It is this quality of cities—this sense of their placeness and our own connection to places—that is one of the most fundamental but also most unacknowledged, concepts of urban social science" (Orum and Chen 2003:1). This sense of "placeness" becomes meaningful through a sense of individual identity, of who we are; a sense of community, of being a part of a larger group, whether a family or a neighborhood; a sense of a past and a future, of a place behind us and a place ahead of us; and a sense of being at home, of being comfortable, of being, as it were, in place (Orum and Chen 2003:11). Others have argued that "place" (as opposed to "space") can be thought of as the location where people live, work, and undertake activities (Relph 1976).

Many scholars, of course, see the city as an experience rather than simply a place. A few definitions will suggest the diversity of views. Louis Wirth (1938:8) defined a city as a "relatively large, dense, and permanent settlement of socially heterogeneous individuals." Gideon Sjöberg (1960:83) specified that it had "little more than 10,000 and perhaps only 5,000 persons." For other scholars, the total number of people involved is not the main concern. Spiro Kostof focused instead on the crowding and concentration of people:

> Cities are places where a certain energized crowding of people takes place. This has nothing to do with absolute size or with absolute numbers: it has to do with settlement density. The vast majority of towns in the pre-industrial world were small: a population of 2,000 or less was not uncommon, and one of 10,000 would be noteworthy. [Kostof 1991:37]

Scholars such as Anthony Leeds (1980) refused to distinguish between cities and towns, indicating that both cities and towns are in all aspects an urban society, with "rural" referring "only to a set of specialities of an urban society characterized by being linked (under any technology known) to specific geographical spaces" (as cited in Southall 1998). Southall (1973a:6) focused on the greater level of interaction in urban

settings: "Cities and urban life have been distinguished in all times and places by a high density of social interaction relative to the wider society in which they were situated." Southall also considered the progressive differentiation of social roles, saying, "The great proliferation of differentiated roles has in the long run been more in the field of economic and occupational roles than anywhere else, with voluntary associations next in importance; so it is in these fields that the greatest heterogeneity of the urban social person has developed" (Southall 1973b:83).

As Renfrew and others emphasize (in this volume), it is not always a good idea to create an ideal category called *the* city, and one of the reasons is that there are many different kinds of cities. The diversity of cities is one theme, and so is their internal complexity and heterogeneity. This view is illustrated by Kostof's statements. "Cities are places where there is a specialized differentiation of work—whether people are priests or craftsmen or soldiers—and where wealth is not equally distributed among the citizens. These distinctions create social hierarchies: the rich are more powerful than the poor; the priest is more important than the artisan. Social heterogeneity is also axiomatic" (Kostof 1991:37–38). Kostof (1985), in particular, phrases his list of urban elements in a way that is especially useful to archaeologists, since they involve the ground plans of buildings that could be recognizable during excavation. "The city presents us with a new set of environmental ideas, such as the street, the public square, the defensive wall and its gates. It crowds our discussion with a score of building inventions—for example, the canal and the granary, the palace and the bath, the market, the bakery, shops, restaurants, and libraries" (Kostof 1985:43).

Here, then, are some of the elements often invoked in definitions of the city:

1. Heterogeneous people, occupations, crafts, classes, and statuses

2. Diverse political, social, religious, economic, and administrative buildings, institutions, wards, neighborhoods, and associated personnel (figures 1.5–1.7)

3. Dense packing or crowding of residential and nonresidential structures (figures 1.5–1.6)

4. A monumental core of unique buildings (for example, a cathedral or temple, a library, a palace, a central market, a courthouse, or a set of administrative buildings) (figures 1.6–1.7)

5. A skyline or "city profile" that shows maximum building height at the center of the city and less and less height as one moves away from the city center (figure 1.8)

6. A central focus—sometimes a sacred center, whose access was restricted and where temples predominated, and sometimes an administrative center where governmental buildings were concentrated (figures 1.6–1.8)

7. Special organizational features, such as grid-like modules like city blocks, streets, city walls, ward or barrio walls, canals, sewers, aqueducts, parks, and public squares (figures 1.7–1.10)
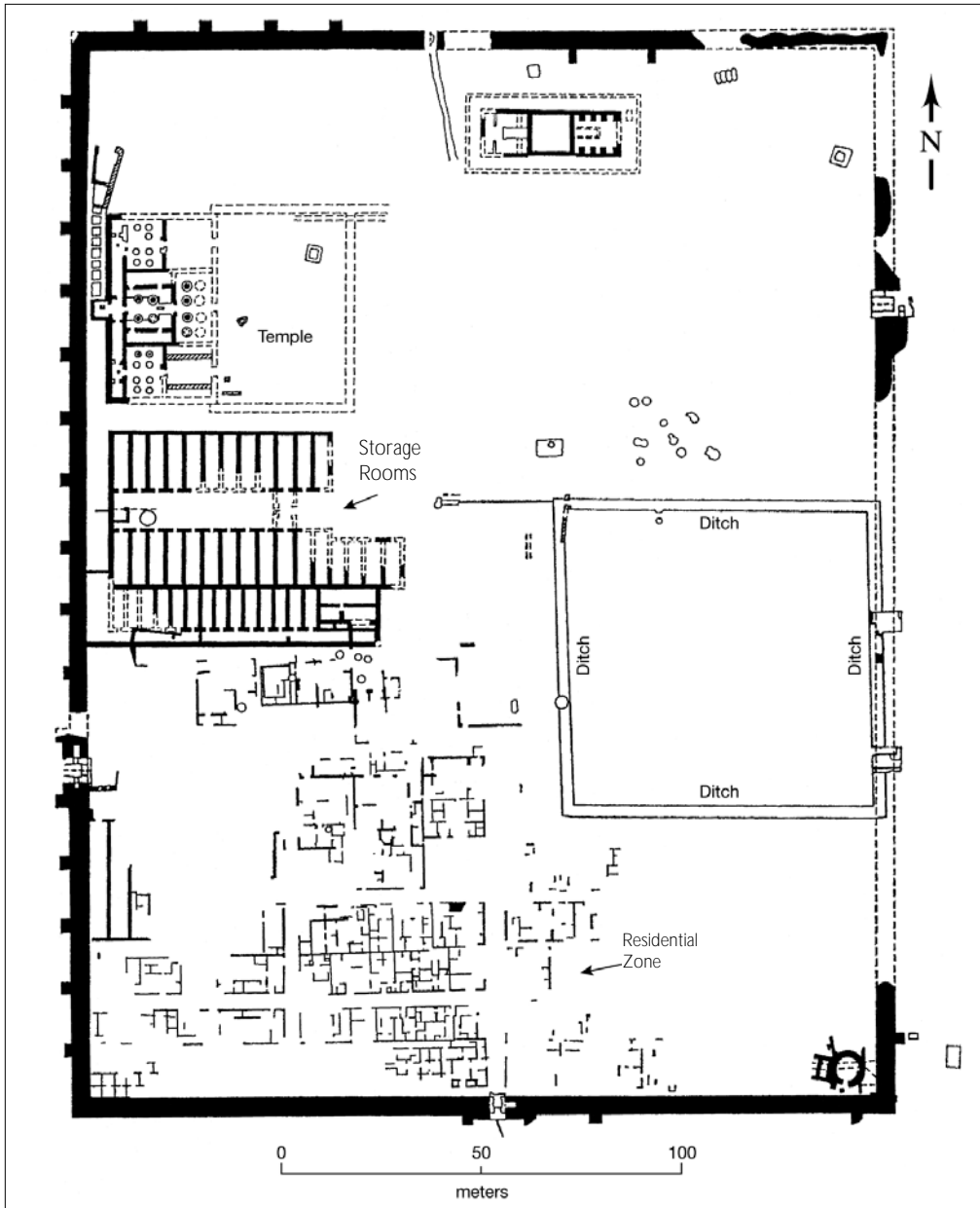
Figure 1.5. Plan of Sesebi, an Eighteenth Dynasty settlement in Nubia. Sesebi's streets were constructed on a grid, and the settlement was divided into various sectors: residential, storage, administrative, and religious. After the reign of Akhenaten, who founded the temples along the northwest wall, Sesebi grew in a more haphazard manner (redrawn from W. Y. Adams 1977:figure 34).

Inevitably, of course, scholars differ as to how these elements are linked to one another, and they differ in their explanation as to how and why such elements appear when these do in various cities. Some scholars have chosen to concentrate more on the
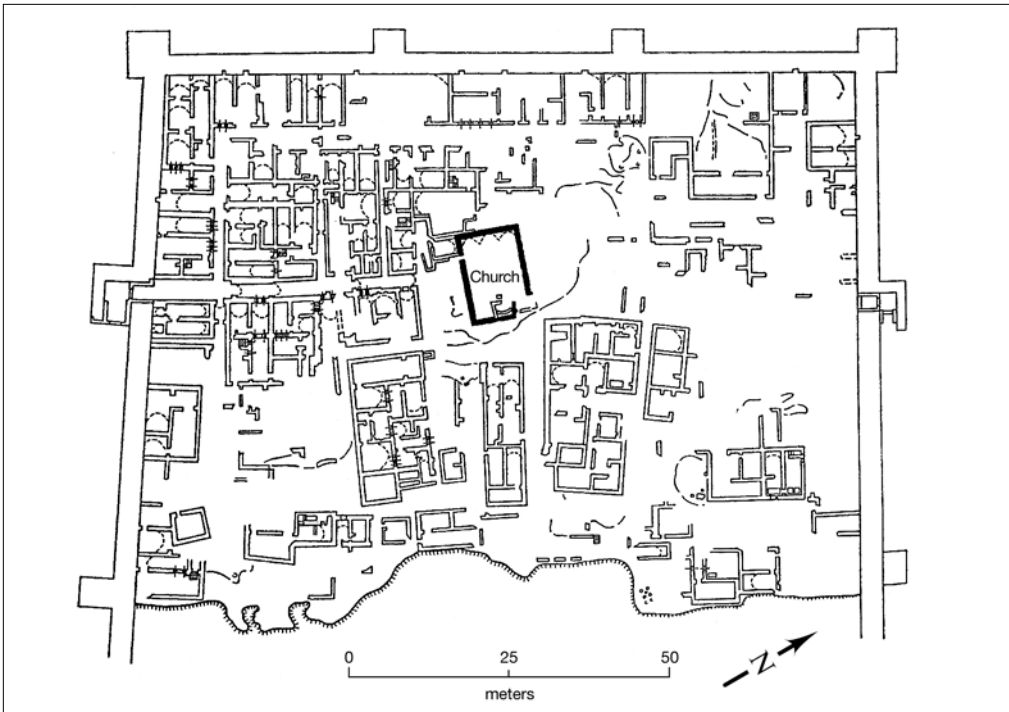
Figure 1.6. Plan of Ikhmindi, a walled city in the early Christian period, whose plan and construction differed significantly from those of ordinary medieval villages. Inside the walls we see evidence for the planning of residential units, which contrasted with the typically less structured "plan" of most contemporary Nubian communities. In addition, we see that a large square area was enclosed within a massive stone wall reinforced by external bastions and corner towers (redrawn from W. Y. Adams 1977:figure 76).

functions and roles of the city than on a list of elements. For example, in speaking of ancient Greek and Roman cities, Owens says:

> Within the Graeco-Roman world the city fulfilled various functions, and these functions affected its physical and architectural development. Until the reality of the pax Romana, the need for defence remained paramount. Cities were located with a view to the natural defensive qualities of the site.… The political, economic, social and religious functions of the city are reflected in its public buildings and their location within the urban environment. [Owens 1991:3]

The city, adds Eric Wolf (1966:11), is "a settlement in which a combination of functions are exercised, and which becomes useful because in time greater efficiency is obtained by having these functions concentrated in one site." Some scholars single out the symbolic and religious role of the city, showing how the city symbolizes the imposition of order on the landscape. For example, in speaking of the Chinese city, Tuan says:
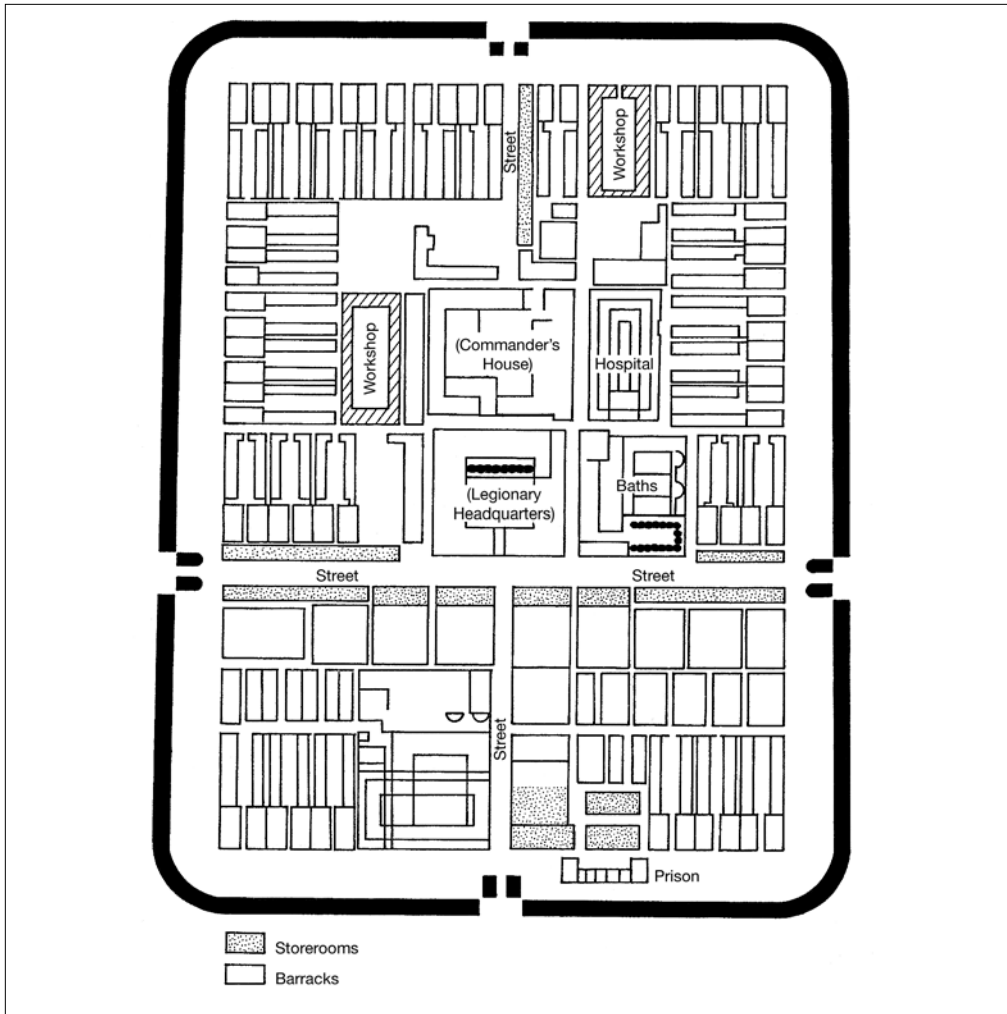
Figure 1.7. Army camps (castra) were established by the Romans throughout their territory, and this fort, Novaesium, in Germany, is a good example of a standardized plan with straight streets, the commander's headquarters in the center, and barracks and workshops around the periphery (redrawn by K. Clahassey from Gates 2003:figure 19.3).
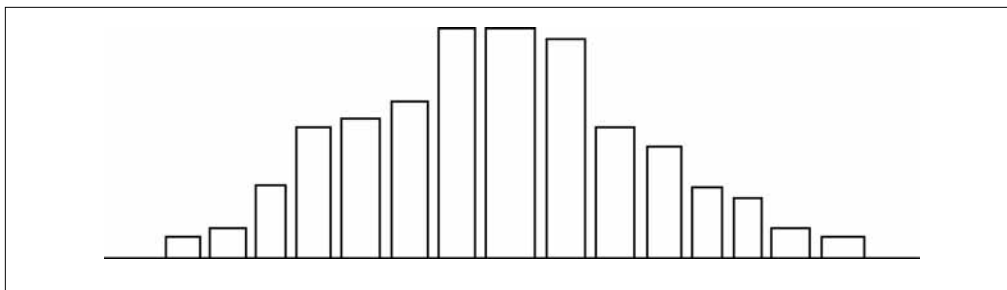

Figure 1.8. Idealized "city profile" that shows the tallest buildings in the center and decreasing building height as one moves away from the city center (created by K. Clahassey).
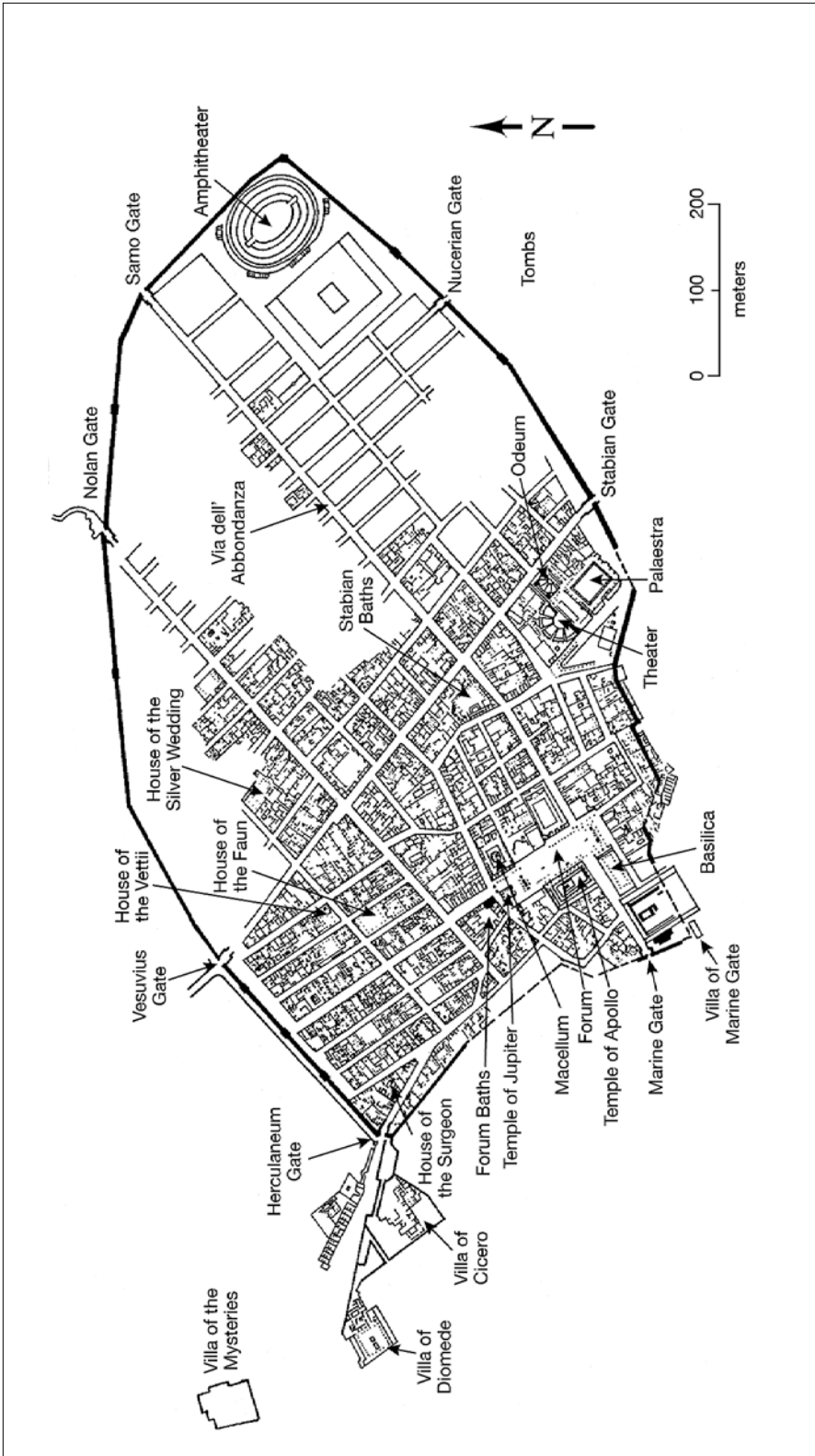
Figure 1.9. The city of Pompeii, with its ca. 15,000 people, was destroyed by a volcanic eruption ca. AD 79. Its streets, residences, public buildings, temples, baths, amphitheater, theater, and basilica all show planning (redrawn by K. Clahassey from Gates 2003:figure 21.2).
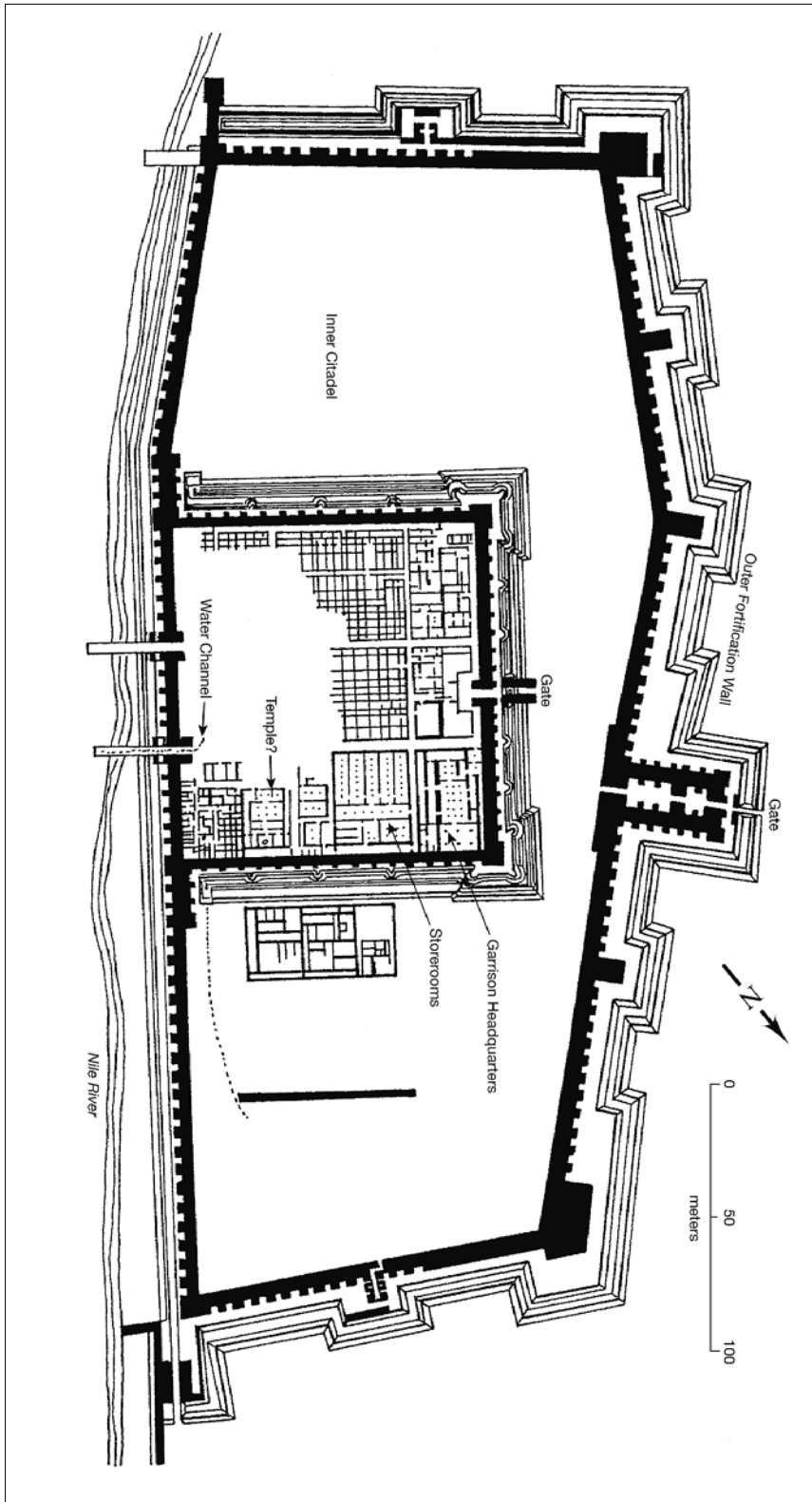
Figure 1.10. Plan of the Buhen fortress erected by the Egyptians ca. 1967 BC on their southern frontier in Nubia. The plan consisted of an inner citadel, an open yard, and a massive outer wall of mud brick that was 5 m thick and 9 m high. The inner citadel includes reception rooms, garrison headquarters, housing, storerooms, and a temple. The interior of the citadel had brick buildings arranged on an orthogonal grid (redrawn by K. Clahassey from Gates 2003:figure 6.2).

> The regular motions of the stars were to be translated architecturally and ritu-
> ally to space and time on earth. The walled city oriented to the cardinal direc-
> tions, the positioning of the twelve city gates, the location of the royal
> compound and the alignment of the principal axial street were given a geo-
> metric pattern that reflected the order to be found in heaven. The key concept
> was built on the related notions of rectilinearity, order, and rectitude. This key
> concept acquired architectural and social forms that were then imposed on
> earth, for the earth itself lacked paradigms of perfect order. [Tuan 1968:185]

Indeed, scholars like Wheatley (1971) have noted that a Chinese city can be thought
of as a microcosm of the cosmos.

Inevitably, there have been scholars who find ancient and modern cities too differ-
ent from one another to be classified in similar ways (Sjöberg 1960; Wheatley 1972).
However, Monica Smith, who has studied South Asian cities, disagrees:

> Rather than seeing cities as fundamentally changed by the advent of the
> Industrial Revolution and the global connections of the modern world, new
> anthropological research suggests that both ancient and modern cities are the
> result of a limited range of configurations that structure human action in con-
> centrated populations. [Smith 2003a:2]

If Monica Smith is correct, the majority of cities (one always hesitates to say "all")
are the result of a limited range of configurations once people are concentrated in one
place. This limited range of configurations will likely be evident to the readers of this
volume, who will indeed see many similarities despite regional differences. The sig-
nificance of this point is that if a limited range of configurations does exist, a single,
widely agreed-upon definition for the city may one day be possible.

Sociologists and geographers have occasionally been able to characterize an entire
city from the detailed information that can be gleaned from a city map; census data;
lists of payrolls, taxpayers, or property owners; or comprehensive questionnaires cov-
ering all households, their occupants, and their incomes. Unfortunately, comparable
data are virtually impossible for archaeologists to obtain, because they can never dig
whole cities. Instead, archaeologists have to characterize a huge city from the small
percentage (perhaps 1–10 percent) of the site that they have meticulously excavated.

One productive strategy has been to excavate units small enough to be exposed in
their entirety—houses, features, and production areas of various kinds. Since some of
the diversity within a city can be revealed by house-to-house inventories, such house-
hold data are providing insights on intra-neighborhood heterogeneity. We believe that
more attention should be paid to the neighborhood, an intermediate-size unit that
falls part way between the house and the city. Excavating neighborhoods complements
both the data from the city as a whole (resulting from surface collections, aerial pho-
tos, and mapping) and the data from individual houses. So far, however, projects
devoted to the excavation of whole neighborhoods are still rare (Stone 1987; Woolley
and Mallowan 1976).

There was general agreement at the Sackler Colloquium that large size alone does not make a city. To be a city, a place has to have the services, public institutions, and internal diversity that set cities apart from large villages. While some writers have proclaimed Jericho on the West Bank, Khirokitia in Cyprus, and Çatal Höyük in Turkey to be "cities," most seminar participants did not agree. As Renfrew notes in chapter 2, Çatal Höyük lacks a monumental core and has no administrative center with public buildings and public administrators, simply a large number of residences. Reader (2004:16) had already called Çatal Höyük "more of an overgrown village than a city" and went on to say:

> The point is that for archaeologists and historians the most meaningful difference between a village and a city has nothing to do with size; it is instead a measure of social and economic differentiation within the communities. In this scheme of things, a place occupied exclusively by people who had left the land to become full-time craftsmen, merchants, priests and civil servants was a city, while anywhere occupied principally by farmers was a village. [Reader 2004:16]

For John Reader (2004:17), "the most remarkable feature of Çatal Höyük is that families lived in such close proximity to one another." While Reader would not necessarily agree, many Near Eastern archaeologists have pointed out that Çatal Höyük presented continuous blank, doorless walls to the outside world, as if defense were a consideration. In effect, the Neolithic farmers of the Konya Plain chose to live in one, large, less vulnerable settlement rather than in multiple, small, vulnerable villages (Hodder 2006).

The Origins of Cities

In addition to describing the form and function of cities, scholars are interested in determining why and how cities originated. "Precisely how it all started is unclear. Revolution implies a sudden break, but it may have been in several places at once, and with varying motives, that the idea of the city gradually took root. At this stage of our knowledge, we must assign the origin of the city-form to western Asia" (Kostof 1985:46).

Why would people leave a rural lifestyle characterized by open spaces and less crowding? In some parts of the world, such as 'Ubaid-Uruk Mesopotamia and highland Mesoamerican valleys in Oaxaca and Morelos, it is strongly suspected that one motivation was protection from raiding. The archaeological evidence sometimes consists of a defensive ditch, moat, palisade, or wall.

V. Gordon Childe (1950) saw cities arising where people lived next to rivers, where irrigation agriculture was practiced, and where agricultural surpluses could be produced to support craft specialists. Steady surpluses allowed some members of society to become full-time administrators, officials, scribes, and priests. The presence of

elite residences and discrete types of monumental public buildings may suggest that urbanization was directed from the top down by political and religious leaders. Within the early city, craft specialization could lead to densely packed houses and associated workshops. Public temples could attract people to the center of an emerging city, where political agendas cloaked in religion were disseminated. In at least a few cases, the city itself was viewed as a sacred symbol or cosmogram to which people were drawn (Laur 2002; Malville 2000; Singh 1994; Wright 1977).

> The Chinese city was established only after an array of geomantic considera-
> tions had been satisfied; it was constructed as an axis mundi, an omphalos
> incorporating the powerful centripetality of that symbol; and it was laid out
> as a terrestrial image of the cosmos, a schema involving cardinal axiality and
> orientation, and, as a corollary, strong architectural emphasis on the main
> gates. [Wheatley 1971:481]

Thus, various concerns—the safety and defense of the rulers or general population, economic gain through craft production, the promotion of state religion through urban cosmograms, and the legitimization of new sociopolitical institutions—played greater or lesser roles at different times and places.

Another less tangible, but nonetheless important, motivation for migration to cities may have been the sheer concentration of diverse functions, services, and activities in the new urban centers. This magnet was the exciting variety of new experiences available (or what might be termed the "How are you going to keep them down on the farm once they have seen Paree?" perspective).

Even such archaeological features as city walls had diverse functions and changed over time. Some cities most likely had constructed walls for protection against attack (Flannery and Marcus 2003; Zou Heng 1987). Others did it to define sacred space at the center of a ceremonial center (Malville and Gujral 2000; Wheatley 1971) or to restrict access to the residence of the elite who occupied the inner city (Marcus 2000 [1983b]). In some settlements, the wall restricted access only to a monumental core or center; most of the private houses extended for a considerable distance outside the wall.

In some cases, "safety in numbers" resulted in cities so large that a wall was rendered unnecessary. Such cities deliberately became so large that they depopulated the surrounding hinterland, thereby creating a buffer zone that may also have discouraged attack. As von Falkenhausen notes in chapter 11, one of the largest unwalled settlements from China's Longshan period is Xinzhai in Mi Xian (Henan), which, with a size of 70 ha, is more than thirty times the size of the only known contemporaneous walled enclosure in the area, Wangchenggang. In Mesoamerica, Teotihuacan may have achieved the same level of invulnerability by growing to 20 sq km.

Conversely, having defensive works did not make a place a city. Many of the world's early villages had such works—a palisade at San José Mogote in Mexico, a wall at Tell Maghzaliyah in Iraq, and ditches and moats at the early Chinese villages of Banpocun and Jiangzhai.

How the Ancients Saw Cities

Kenneth Hirth's use of the term *altepetl* for the Aztec city and its hinterland (chapter 14) brings us to another important topic: ancient peoples saw their cities very differently from the way modern Western scholars see them. Indeed, a case could be made for using the ancients' own terms and definitions rather than our own. Let us look now at a sample of some of the ways non-Western cultures have defined their cities.

Among the Yoruba of West Africa, it was the presence of an *oba* (sacred king) living in a royal palace (*afin*) that defined the city (*ilú*). The Yoruba ilú did not stop at the walls of the city but extended out into farmland that supported and sustained it (Krapf-Askari 1969). This is reminiscent of the Aztec term *altepetl*, which referred simultaneously to the city and its province or political realm. The Aztecs' neighbors, the Zapotec, used the term *queche* for "city" or "populated center." *Queche* was also the root of other words, including *quechenatale*, which referred to the province headed by the city, showing us that, as in the Aztec case, a province was defined as the territory controlled by the ruler of a city.

Similarly, the Maya term *cacab* referred both to the town and to the land belonging to it. Like the Yoruba, the Maya consider the land, people, and minor settlements controlled by one ruler (who usually lived in a city) to be the meaningful unit. The fact that city and province could all be subsumed under the same term is important; it shows that the conceptual link between the ruler and his territory transcended urban space. Elsewhere in Mesoamerica it was equally difficult to remove the city from its political and economic landscape, including its regional hierarchy. Among the Quiché and Pokom of highland Guatemala, the term *tinamit* meant that "the town name extended over all the lands belonging to it; the names of hamlets and areas were subsumed" (Miles 1957:771).

In their hieroglyphic texts, the Classic Maya recorded the names of both the capital cities and the polities administered by their rulers. For example, the ruler of the city we call Calakmul (whose ancient name was Oxte Tun) controlled a state called Kaan. The ruler of Mutal (known today as Tikal) also controlled a state of the same name. These large Maya cities might have held 50,000 or more people at their peak, and estimates of their entire polities' populations would number in the hundreds of thousands, if not more.

Occasionally, some scholars have referred to such large states as "city-states," but we find it inappropriate. Such authorities on the polis as Mogens Hansen (2000a:17) define the "city-state" as a micro-state. Thus, "the city-state is what we today would call a specific type of micro-state and its smallness concerns the size of its territory as well as its population" (Hansen 2000a:17). Hansen goes on to say that "there is virtually no limit to how small a city-state can be, and city-states with a territory of less than 10 km^2 are attested"; at the upper end of the scale "the territory of a city-state may cover ca. 3,000 km^2 max. Larger city-states are indeed attested, but then they are no longer city-states to the same extent as their smaller neighbours" (2000a:17).

Clearly, the territories controlled by Tikal and Calakmul do *not* fit Hansen's defi-

nition of a "city-state," but there were some micro-states wedged in between some of the larger Maya states. To draw an analogy with Europe, consider Andorra, which Hansen (2000a:19) calls a micro-state and a city-state covering 470 sq km, whose entire population is only 46,000 people, wedged in between France and Spain. Similar micro-states were known among the Postclassic Mixtec and Aztec of Mexico and the Highland Maya of Guatemala. There is growing evidence that many of the city-states were created by the breakup of earlier large states (Marcus 1992a, 1998). Recently, Hansen (2000a:29) noted: "Emergence of a city-state culture by disintegration of a larger political unit is much more common than I imagined in 1991."

Separating a city from its politically controlled territory may be heuristically useful for the creation of a "city" category, but as we have seen, such an exercise does not conform to the reality of indigenous categories. The important point for many ethnic groups was that an individual belonged to a region controlled by a specific ruler, to whom he owed allegiance and tribute and from whom he received protection and civic-ceremonial leadership. Unless the city had a wall surrounding it, the boundary between "city" and "countryside" was far less striking to native peoples than to today's archaeologist. Indeed, the residence of the ruler (and the associated buildings in which he was active) was probably a more important unit for the purpose of determining the top of regional hierarchies than the mass of commoners.

To be sure, the dichotomies of urban/rural and urban/folk were important to scholars like Louis Wirth (1944) and Robert Redfield (1941) (see discussions in Miner 1952; Wilcox 2004). But Redfield later changed his dichotomy to a "folk–urban continuum" to emphasize the interdependent relationship of city and countryside. Yi-Fu Tuan (1978) also went beyond the dichotomy of "city" and "countryside," suggesting that we employ a continuous scale to evaluate each settlement along three dimensions—how close to nature and food production each city was, how close to the natural rhythms of day and night, and how much each city was affected by the seasons.

Others such as Dyos and Wolff (1973:899) have noted that even "in the nineteenth century no English city had severed itself from rural connections. The largest of them still conducted extensive backyard agriculture, not merely half-a-dozen hens in a coop of soapboxes, but cow-stalls, sheep-folds, pig-sties." Similarly, Kostof says:

> Cities are places that are intimately engaged with their countryside, that have a territory that feeds them and which they protect and provide services for. The separation of town and country…is thoroughly injudicious. Roman towns do not exist apart from their centuriated land roundabout; great Italian communes like Florence and Siena could not exist without their contado; and the same is true of New England towns and their fields and commons. Polis, civitas, commune, township—all these are terms that apply to an urban settlement and its region. [Kostof 1991:38]

Scholars are not in agreement as to whether a society can have urbanism before the state emerges or whether the state must come first (Possehl 1998). One reason for this

lack of agreement is the diversity of cases worldwide. For the Middle Niger River of Africa, for example, McIntosh and McIntosh (2003:105) believe that cities appeared before the state and without a centralized hierarchy of any kind.

The Value of Comparative Studies

"Each city, like every other object in nature, is, in a sense, unique," said Louis Wirth (1925:175). Harris and Ullman (1945:7) agreed that "each city is unique in detail" but reminded us that each "resembles others in function and pattern." Most scholars today, with the exception of postmodernists, concur that while noting the differences between cities, we should also focus on similarities in pattern and function. Beyond this concurrence, however, lies a wide variety of cautionary statements, as the following sample of opinions would indicate:

> Comparative study of urbanism is of course essential, and when adequately informed about the Chinese case, it will be fruitful. Abstracting the seemingly comparable elements to construct broad generalizations, however, must be done with considerable understanding of peculiarly Chinese conditions. [Mote 1977:110]

> The sociology of urban history develops categories which are useful as guides in the study of cities. Without such guideposts, we would not be in a position to bring order and direction into the multitude of facts which we encounter. However, the directive principles are derived from a comparative study of the phenomena themselves and the accepted categories, in turn, must be subject to revision at all times. One might say that they are the forests which do not exist without the trees. [Comhaire 1962:39]

> The key, then, is to seek to enter the essence of each place at the time of its belle époque: to understand the precise conjuncture of forces that caused it to burst forth as it did. Out of that, it should be possible to tease out the general, the basic, the structural forces from those that are merely contingent and complementary; and then, as a result, to generalize as to the degree of commonality these places share, and on the other hand the residual forces that are special to each case. [Hall 1998:21]

> The fact is that the constructed-types approach assumes a coincidence in covariation among key variables that seldom obtains in the real world. In my view, a more productive approach to understanding phenomena within any domain is to ask what covaries with what. To what extent does a particular function vary with scale? How do morphological features change along with the different types of urban functions? If we could ascertain which empirical and analytical features of urban phenomena in China varied together in time and space, we would be in a better position to say something about cause and effect, about the direction of change, and about systemic relationship within

the domain of Chinese cities. We would find, furthermore, that many propositions concerning covariation that hold for Chinese cities would also hold, or on first principles ought to hold, for analytically or geographically more inclusive urban domains. [Skinner 1977:5]

If structural regularities are ultimately elucidated, then it is practically certain that they will be manifested in shared functions and in trends in systemic change rather than in form. [Wheatley 1972:601]

This book's case studies augment the growing database on ancient cities, allowing us to reevaluate what have been regarded as similarities and differences (Adams 1960, 1966, 1972; Andrews 1995; Arnauld and Michelet 2004; Benet 1963; Benevolo 1967, 1980; Braidwood and Willey 1962; Chakrabarti 1995; Doxiadis 1968; Fox 1977; Hall 1998; Hardoy 1968, 1973; Hauser and Schnore 1965; Kenoyer 1998; Kostof 1985, 1991, 1992; Kraeling and Adams 1960; Nas 1993; Nichols and Charlton 1997; Reader 2004; Redfield and Singer 1954; Robson and Regan 1972; Sanders et al. 2003; Scargill 1979; Sennett 1969; Sjöberg 1960; M. L. Smith 2003a, 2006; Southall 1998; Southall et al. 1985; Trigger 2003; van de Mieroop 1997; Weber 1962 [1958]; Wheatley 1978, 1983; Whitfield 1969).

Conclusion

Many scholars in fields as disparate as architecture and urban planning, economics and geography, history and archaeology, have expressed an increasing interest in the growth and development of ancient cities. One factor leading to this burgeoning interest was that much of the modern world was being converted into cities. A second factor was the growing intellectual curiosity about how many kinds of cities had existed in the past and how many diverse functions they had served. Still a third factor was an interest in trying to answer two major questions: how do cities operate, and why do some cities thrive while others shrivel?

It became clear that data from various parts of the world would allow us to modify or reject former "truths" and provide new inferences about the life cycle of the city, from its founding, through its growth and demise, and in some cases into the present. We therefore decided to invite ten scholars to discuss their recent fieldwork in different ancient cities, and these diverse case studies can be seen in chapters 6 through 15.

To put those case studies into comparative perspective, we asked two scholars (Renfrew and Trigger) to develop broad overviews (see chapters 2 and 3, respectively). We asked two scholars (Hansen and Butzer) to comment on the ten case studies in this book, as well as suggest new directions to enhance the study of prehistoric urbanism (see chapters 4 and 5, respectively).

The study of ancient cities is a field in which archaeologists are uniquely positioned to speak to a wider audience, one stretching far beyond the limits of their discipline. In this volume, anthropological and Classical archaeologists have worked side

by side. Their efforts have been aided by geographers, geologists, historians, and philologists, as well as by participants who attended the colloquium. The resulting chapters will give the reader a worldwide perspective on the ancient city, and the understanding of future archaeologists—having been broadened by the aid of colleagues from other fields—will be lifted beyond its original confines.