

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SIX CITY-STATE CULTURES



*Edited by
Mogens Herman Hansen*

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The Lykian silver coins on the cover, struck ca. 410-375 B.C., illustrate the plurality of polities in Lykia during the Dynastic period (ca. 540-360 B.C.). The rich Lykian coinage from ca. 520-375 B.C. testifies to a strong Hellenic influence. All legends are in the Lykian alphabet which was probably derived from the Greek alphabet of adjacent Rhodes. The types are very Greek in style and the master of no. 5 was almost certainly a Greek from Syracuse. Nos. 1 and 3/4 are even on the Attic weight standard.

However, bilingual inscriptions disclose that the Athena on nos. 3/4, 5 is in fact the local goddess Malija. The portraits on nos. 1, 6 and 7 of named 'dynasts', reveal a political culture, very different from the Greek. Kherēi on no. 1 wears the Persian tiara, a clear sign of his dependency of the Achaemenid lordship. The Persian satrap Tis-saphernes even minted himself in Arñna (gr. Xanthos), no. 3/4. Characteristic and enigmatic is the variety of the legends: either the name of the town (no. 5), or the name of the dynast (nos. 1, 6, 7/8), or the names of the dynast and the town combined (nos. 2, 3/4). The triskeles on nos. 6 and 7 is very characteristic of Lycian coins from the beginning of the 5th cent. B.C. onwards and may well denote a certain ethnic or political distinctiveness. The names of the 'dynasts' on nos. 1+2, 6 and 7/8, being, respectively, Lycian, Persian and Greek, sum up the constituent cultural components of the small region of Lykia situated between the Greeks and the Persians, see *infra* 8-10 and 57-72.

The coins are from The Royal Collection of Coins and Medals, The Danish National Museum, and are published in *Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum* Suppl. (2002). Photo: Jesper Nørgaard Weng. Courtesy of The Royal Collection of Coins and Medals, The Danish National Museum, Copenhagen.

1. (bottom right) *SNGCop* Suppl. 450: Portrait of *Kherēi* wearing a diademed tiara. **2.** (top left) *SNGCop* Suppl. 451: Head of Herakles. Minted by *Kherēi* in *Telebehi* (gr. Telmessos). **3-4.** (bottom left) *SNGCop* Suppl. 460: Persian equestrian. Minted in *Arñna* (gr. Xanthos). – Head of Malija (gr. Athena). Minted by *Zisa[prñ]na* (gr. Tis-saphernes). **5.** (top centre) *SNGCop* Suppl. 469: Head of Malija (gr. Athena). Minted in *Zakhabah*. **6.** (top right) *SNGCop* Suppl. 472: Portrait of *Mithrapata*, besides a triskeles. **7-8.** (centre) *SNGCop* Suppl. 478: Portrait of Perikle, laureate. – Naked warrior, besides a triskeles. Struck by [P]eri[k]le. — The coins are magnified to 2.3 times the normal size. (Caption by Jan Zahle).

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Abstract

The present volume is a supplement to *A Comparative Study of Thirty City-State Cultures*. Filosofisk-historiske Skrifter 21 (2000). Since the publication of that volume I have become aware of four more City-State Cultures: (a) one in northern Syria in the Neo-Hittite period (ca. 1200-700 B.C.), (b) one in Lykia in south-west Asia Minor in the Dynastic period (ca. 540-360 B.C.), (c) one in the Bènizàa region in Mesoamerica in the Post-Classic period (ca. 800-1600), and (d) one in Nepal in the years 1480-1768. Two further contributions deal with civilisations

already treated in the previous volume, *viz.* (e) the Sumerian city-states, and (f) the German city-states. The volume concludes with a contribution about defence as the principal motive behind the formation of city-states.

MOGENS HERMAN HANSEN
The Copenhagen Polis Centre
94 Njalsgade
DK-2300 Copenhagen S.

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Contributors

Dr. Björn Forsén
Institutum Historicum
PB 59 (Unionsgatan 38)
00014 Helsingfors Universitet

Prof. Azar Gat
Department of Political Science
Tel Aviv University
Tel Aviv 69978

Dr. Mogens Herman Hansen
Copenhagen Polis Centre
Njalsgade 94
2300 Copenhagen S

Dr. Thomas Marksteiner
Institut für Klassische Archæologie
der Universität Wien
Franz Klein-Gasse 1
A-1190 Wien

Dr. Michel R. Oudijk
Institut for Religionshistorie
Copenhagen University
Artillerivej 86
2300 København S

Dr. Ingolf Thuesen
CNI for Nærorientalske Studier
Copenhagen University
Snorresgade 15-17
2300 København S

Prof. Gérard Toffin
Centre André-Georges Haudricourt,
Centre d'études himalayennes, CNRS
7 rue Guy Môquet
94801 Villejuif

Dr. Aage Westenholz
CNI for Nærorientalske Studier
Copenhagen University
Snorresgade 15-17
2300 København S

Introduction¹

MOGENS HERMAN HANSEN

The present volume is a supplement to *A Comparative Study of Thirty City-State Cultures. An Investigation Conducted by the Copenhagen Polis Centre* (Copenhagen 2000). The investigation mentioned in the title goes back to a Research Programme submitted to the Danish National Research Foundation in 1991 in which I coined the concept of city-state culture and suggested a preliminary description.² The programme listed a dozen examples of city-state cultures plus half a dozen civilisations which ought to be further studied before one could determine whether they were city-state cultures in the sense suggested in the research programme. The investigation culminated in a large international symposium on city-state cultures in world history, held in Copenhagen in January 1999, and in the publication of its acts in 2000, entitled *A Comparative Study of Thirty City-State Cultures*, hereafter abbreviated *30 CSC*.³ In that volume a much refined description of the concepts of city-state and city-state culture (*30 CSC* 16-19) is based on thirty-four case studies of individual civilisations, of which thirty seem to have had a system of political organisation and a degree of urbanisation that meet a sufficient number of the criteria used to describe the concepts of city-state and city-state culture (*30 CSC* 22).

In the introduction to the volume I admit that “it is most unlikely that I have succeeded in finding all examples of this peculiar form of state formation. I have to confess ignorance of how many more examples I could have found by reading deeper into the historical literature. And I am equally ignorant of how many more can be found by historians, archaeologists and anthropologists who happen to be persuaded by the present volume and become convinced that its key concepts can reasonably be applied to other civilisations not yet studied from this particular point of view” (*30 CSC* 25).

As is apparent from this quote and from the publication of the present volume, it is the aim of the Polis Centre to spot and describe all identifiable city-state cultures in world history. We do not know how many city-state cultures there have been, and we have to admit that there must have been a number of city-state

cultures which can no longer be identified. If, in a region, we have ancient remains of a number of urban centres, but no decipherable written record and no other symbolic source material testifying to political organisation, we are unable to make any inference about the political structure. The region may have been a macro-state with multiple urban centres, or each city may have been the urban centre of a city-state. In such cases we shall never know. One example is Middle Bronze Age Crete. There is no longer any doubt that each of the palaces was the centre of an urban settlement;⁴ but it is still a moot point whether Crete during the New Palace Period was one state with, probably, five major urban centres, or was carved up into five micro-states, each composed of a town centred on a palace and its immediate hinterland.⁵ The decipherment of the Linear A script may solve the problem, but the number of preserved tablets is so small that the script may defy decipherment. A number of identical clay sealings found all over central and eastern Crete may favour the view that there was one Cretan state governed from Knossos,⁶ but not necessarily;⁷ and there are no other symbolic sources which allow us to make a choice between the two scenarios outlined above.⁸

In other cases new excavations and the ongoing decipherment of recently found documents may provide us with solid evidence of yet another city-state culture, although it is too early to be certain. One such example is the Early Bronze Age settlements found in northern Syria. In upper Mesopotamia, in the eastern part of modern Syria, there is a plethora of fairly large circular tells, each surrounded by the remains of an even larger circular fortification wall. In recent years some of them have been excavated and von Oppenheim, who excavated one and surveyed several others, coined the term *Kranzhügel* to describe such a tell and the term *Kranzhügelkultur* to describe the civilisation responsible for the settlements. It flourished in the first half of the 3rd millennium B.C. but all the settlements suffered a decline ca. 2300 B.C. and several seem to have been abandoned. Three of the best known sites are Tell Beydar (ancient Nagada),

Tell Brak (ancient Nagar) and Tell Chuera (Bretschneider [2000]). The sites can reasonably be described as fortified towns centred on a palace, but were they city-states or towns of a larger territorial state? In 1994-95 the excavation of Nagada brought to light 170 tablets inscribed with a Sumerian cuneiform script but in a Semitic language. They are not yet fully deciphered, but one text mentions the king of Nagar who apparently ruled Nagada ca. 2350 B.C. (Bretschneider [2000] 66-67). This piece of evidence points to a macro-state with several urban centres all ruled by the same king. But we cannot preclude the possibility that Nagada was a former city-state now conquered by Nagar, or that it was still a dependent city-state dominated by Nagar.⁹ Only future discoveries can shed light on the issue.

A third scenario emerges when the little written evidence we have seems to be contradicted by the archaeological evidence. One example is the history of the Medes in the 7th century B.C. According to Herodotus there was a large Median state ruled by a dynasty of kings, and the names of two of the kings appear in Babylonian chronicles. But the three major excavated sites of the 7th century seem to have been urban centres each ruled by a local dynast.¹⁰ The Medes may have been organised into city-states before they were unified into a large state centred on Ekbatana (modern Hamadan).

The Six City-State Cultures Described in this Volume

In addition to unidentifiable city-state cultures and city-state cultures that may be properly identified in future, there are some which were not included in *30 CSC* although the available sources suffice for at least a preliminary description. Since the publication of *30 CSC* in 2000 I have become aware of four such civilisations: (a) one in northern Syria in the Neo-Hittite period (ca. 1200-700 B.C.), (b) one in Lykia in southwest Asia Minor in the Dynastic period (ca. 540-360 B.C.), (c) one in the Bènizàa region in Mesoamerica in the Post-Classic period (ca. 800-1500), and (d) one in Nepal in the years 1480-1768. For reasons explained below I decided to add to these four contributions two contributions about civilisations already treated in *30 CSC*, viz. (e) one about the Sumerian city-states, and (f) one about the German city-states. Let me start with a presentation of each of the six chapters and the scholars who kindly accepted my invitation to write them for this publication.

(a) All scholars seem to agree that the Hittite state

developed into an empire ruled from Hattusa. But the Hittite kings were not absolute monarchs in full control of the government of all the provinces. There is a great number of surviving vassal-treaties, each defining the relations between the Great King in Hattusa and a vassal king ruling one of the subject provinces. The treaties show that many provinces were allowed a considerable amount of self-government.¹¹ They were, in a sense, member states rather than just provinces. In modern accounts of the Hittite state these vassal states are never described as being city-states. It may be suggested that some of them, e.g. Ugarit and Karkamis, were dependent city-states, but it would be grossly misleading to describe the Hittite state as a city-state empire, like that of the Romans or that of the Aztecs, i.e. an overarching power structure centred on a capital and ruling a large number of dependent city-states.

Historians agree on the absence of city-states during the Hittite period, but many scholars are also in agreement about the view that Anatolia and northern Syria were carved up into city-states in the Old Assyrian period before the Hittites (ca. 2000-1800 B.C.)¹² and again in the period that followed the break-up of the Hittite empire (ca. 1200-700 B.C.).¹³ As explained in *30 CSC* I have doubts about the justification of applying the concepts of city-state and city-state culture to Anatolia around 2000 B.C. (*30 CSC* 23), but I find it attractive to describe northern Syria in the Neo-Hittite period as a city-state culture. The obvious person to ask to write that chapter was Ingolf Thuesen, the author of the chapter about the Syrian city-states in *30 CSC*.¹⁴ In the opening of his new chapter Thuesen suggests that, like western Syria, northern Syria may have passed through a consecutive series of city-state cultures of which the Neo-Hittite phase is the only one sufficiently attested to allow of a proper description. A corollary of this view is that the *Kranzhügelkultur* (mentioned *supra* 7) may have been one of the earlier phases and I shall not be surprised if a future supplement volume will include a description of the *Kranzhügelkultur*.

(b) In 1998 Professor F. Kolb of Tübingen University visited the University of Copenhagen. His team has conducted an impressive survey in central Lykia of the town of Kyaneai and its territory. His lecture was a fascinating account of many of the indigenous aspects of Lykian culture, and in the discussion I suggested that it might be a good idea to distinguish an earlier Lykian indigenous city-state culture from a later city-state culture in the Hellenistic period when the Lykian towns had developed into Greek *poleis*.

This volume is the place for such an investigation. Through Jan Zahle, the Danish specialist on Ancient Lykia, I established contact with the Austrian archaeologist Thomas Marksteiner. He accepted my challenge and wrote the present chapter about the indigenous Lykian city-state culture. His contribution is a magisterial survey of the archaeological evidence of urbanisation during the Dynastic period (ca. 540-360 B.C.). Furthermore, he argues persuasively that it would be a mistake to analyse the early Lykian towns as Hellenic *poleis*. However, describing himself as an archaeologist specialising in *Bauforschung*, he desisted from an analysis of the political aspects of the Lykian city-state culture and left that to me. My introduction to his contribution is therefore going to be much longer than my short presentation of the other five city-state cultures.

Lykia is the coastal region of south-western Anatolia lying between Karia to the west and Pamphylia to the east.¹⁵ The Lykian people are known especially from their characteristic sepulchral monuments, from their coins, and from inscriptions in the Lykian language, an Anatolian Indo-European language, attested in some 200 inscriptions written in an alphabet related to the Greek and presumably derived from it.¹⁶

If we omit the pre-Persian period, the history of Lykia is conveniently subdivided into three periods: (a) the Dynastic period from the conquest of Lykia by the Persians in the 540s to ca. 360 when Lykian dynasts disappear from the sources; (b) the Hekatomnid period ca. 360-334 when Lykia was under Karian domination exercised by the Hekatomnids, the family of Karian rulers who in their capacity of Persian satraps ruled all of Karia and Lykia; and (c) the Hellenistic period from Alexander's conquest of Asia Minor in 334 onwards.

In the course of the Hellenistic period the Lykians became completely Hellenised; the urban centres developed into Greek *poleis*, and in the 2nd and 1st centuries B.C. twenty-three Lykian *poleis* formed a federation, mentioned by Montesquieu in *De l'esprit des lois* alongside the Dutch cities as the prototype of a federal state composed of urbanised micro-states.¹⁷

Hellenistic Lykia became an integral part of the Hellenic city-state culture, but what about Lykia in the Dynastic period? was the region urbanised? and if so, were the towns just central places in the social and economic sense, or were they political centres as well? and if so, were they organised like a Greek *polis*?

Some of the urban centres in Lykia can be traced back to the Archaic period, but then the settlements

were much too small to be proper towns. A not insignificant urbanisation seems to have taken place in the course of the Classical period, starting in the first half of the 5th century.¹⁸ The main centres, principally known from excavations and surveys, are: Xanthos, Limyra, Telmessos, Myra(?) and the site of Avşar Tepesi (probably to be identified with Lykian Zagaba). All these settlements were fortified; their walls enclosed an area of between 10 and 25 ha. All seem to have been inhabited by some 1,000-1,500 persons, and in Xanthos perhaps as many as 2,500. There may have been more urban settlements of the same type and size. Tlos, Pinara, Phellos and Apollonia were important dynastic centres too, but the sites have not yet been surveyed or excavated.¹⁹ The differentiated nature of the remains found in the five known settlements indicates that, in spite of their small size, they can all be regarded as proper towns or cities in the historical sense of these terms. On the other hand, there is no evidence that the Lykian towns of the Dynastic period were copies of Greek towns. The German excavations of Avşar Tepesi, for example, show that it was an indigenous Lykian town that was deserted in the mid 4th century; the population was probably moved to Kyaneai, the nearby dynastic centre which in the Hellenistic period became a proper Greek *polis*.²⁰ The conclusion seems to be that Lykia was urbanised before it was Hellenised. In addition to the towns, the Lykian landscape was dotted with small fortified hill-top settlements.²¹

The political organisation of Lykia is still enigmatic and the following account is little more than a sketch. After the Persian conquest in the 540s Lykia was part of a satrapy and under the suzerainty of the Achaimenid kings (Herodotos 3.90.1). But like many other subjects of the Persian empire the Lykians seem to have enjoyed a considerable degree of autonomy.²² The oldest coins, struck on the so-called middle standard, point to some regional political co-operation;²³ but Lykia was not a unified political entity settled with towns which were only economic and administrative centres. The region was presumably split up into a number of small polities, each ruled by a "dynast", a term not attested in any source dealing with Lykia, but conventionally used by modern historians to describe the Lykian rulers. In Lykian inscriptions the only equivalent term found is *khñtawata*, a noun which probably means "authority" or "rule".²⁴ The centre of a polity was either a fortified hill-top settlement or a town, and the towns of Xanthos, Limyra, Telmessos, Myra and Avşar Tepesi are known to have been residences of local dynasts.

Our sources for the Lykian dynasts are (a) literary sources, (b) inscriptions, (c) tombs, and (d) coins. (a) There are a few scattered references to Lykian rulers in classical Greek authors;²⁵ (b) the Lykian inscriptions provide us with the names of half a score of dynasts.²⁶ (c) Dynasts seem to have been buried in pillar tombs or heroa, of which altogether some 40 are known today.²⁷ (d) The coins are by far the most important source for the simultaneous existence of a plurality of polities. The names of some 50 dynasts are attested on coins struck by some 12 different mints.²⁸ Given that these coins span a period of ca. 120 years, the numismatic evidence supports the view that the dynasts were actually rulers and not just members of an aristocracy,²⁹ and this view is corroborated by the small number of tombs of dynasts. All the towns mentioned above seem to have had a mint, and the names of the towns are often found on the coins, usually alongside the name of the dynast who issued the coin and, obviously, ruled the town.³⁰

We have no precise information about the powers of the dynast. From some sources we can infer that he was commander-in-chief of the armed forces,³¹ and from this information combined with the coins it is a qualified guess that a dynast had legislative and judicial powers as well. The coins also show that a dynast of a major town could strike coins in several different towns. Thus, Kuprilli of Xanthos had coins with his name struck in all the major Lykian mints in the period ca. 470-430, and he must have been the ruler of Lykia for several decades.³² In the period ca. 380-360 Perikles of Limyra set himself up as the ruler of eastern Lykia and struck coins in several places on the east Lykian heavy standard.³³ But the coins show also that the plurality of mints and dynasts persisted to the end of the Dynastic period.³⁴

The Lykian towns seem to have been political centres of micro-states, sometimes independent, sometimes hierarchically organised and ruled by a leading dynast. These micro-states have been interpreted by some scholars as *poleis*, and the process of Hellenisation has been retrojected from the Hekatomnid and Hellenistic periods back into the Dynastic period.³⁵ However, recent research has demonstrated that there is no support in the sources for such an interpretation.³⁶ There is no evidence that any of the towns was a citizen community or had magistrates or a council as virtually any *polis* had. There is no trace of a *prytaneion* or a *bouleuterion*, or a theatre or a stoa,³⁷ all characteristic of the Greek *polis*, whereas remains have been found of what was probably the residence of the local dynast;³⁸ again by contrast with

the *polis* where no remains of a “palace” can be found before the Hellenistic period, not even in *poleis* governed by a tyrant.³⁹ Nor were there any monumental temples, another characteristic of the *polis*. Admittedly, the style of the coins betrays some Greek influence, but all legends are in the Lykian language and alphabet.⁴⁰ There are very few inscriptions in Greek from the Dynastic period, and most of those found are bilingual (with similar texts in Lykian and in Greek) or even trilingual (with Aramaic as the third language).⁴¹

It is undoubtedly true that the Lykian cities of the Dynastic period were not *poleis*. But Lykia may still have been a city-state culture, i.e. a network of micro-states, most of them with a (small) town as the economic, religious, social and political centre. The name of the town seems to be the same as the name of the state. Thus, Ar̄na (Greek: Xanthos) and Z̄muri (Greek: Limyra) were the names of urban centres and of polities ruled by dynasts.⁴² Whenever that happens it is an indication that the region is organised into city-states.⁴³ In world history the majority of the attested city-states have been ruled by dynasts and kings.⁴⁴ To have city-states organised as citizen communities is a prominent feature of some city-state cultures, but it is far from ubiquitous.⁴⁵ Another feature characteristic of city-state cultures is the oscillation between periods in which all of Lykia or part of Lykia was under one dynast, typically the dynast of Xanthos perhaps representing the King of Persia,⁴⁶ and periods in which Lykia was divided among many dynasts. In most city state cultures “none of the city-states is so powerful that it can conquer all the others and transform the region into one political unit”.⁴⁷

Instead of asking the question: were the Lykian polities of the Dynastic period *poleis* testifying to an early Greek influence in Lykia? one should ask the question: were they city-states? The important studies in recent years by i.a. Kolb, Domingo-Gygax, Marksteiner and several others indicate that, in the Dynastic period, there may well have been an indigenous Lykian city-state culture based on local Anatolian traditions, and Karian and Achaimenid influence may have been as important or even more important than the Hellenic impact on Lykian civilisation.⁴⁸ Hellenisation gathered momentum in the Hekatomnid period, and in the Hellenistic period the indigenous city-states were transformed into *poleis* which eventually formed a federation like that of the Achaian or Aitolian *poleis*.

(c) Whereas – so far – no city-states have been found in North America and South America, Meso-

america seems for long periods to have been a patchwork of city-state cultures. The three best known are described in *30 CSC*, viz. the Maya (by Nikolai Grube), the Mixtec (by Michael Lind) and the Aztec (by Michael Smith). But, as already pointed out by Lind (578) and Smith (592-93), there were probably several others. Only, they are fairly unknown and have attracted so little attention that a proper account must await future research. There is, however, one exception: the Bènizàa who in the Post-Classic period lived in what can reasonably be described as city-states. In 2000 Michel Oudijk, one of the leading specialists on the Bènizàa region, was appointed lecturer in religious studies at Copenhagen University, and only a fortnight after his arrival in Copenhagen he accepted my invitation to join the team and write an account of the Zapotec city-state culture. He prefers to call it the Bènizàa city-state culture and I shall hereafter adopt his terminology.

(d) From ca. A.D. 1200 the Kathmandu valley in Nepal was ruled by the so-called Malla dynasty. The history of the dynasty is conveniently subdivided into two periods: from ca. 1200 to 1482 all of the valley was ruled by a succession of kings, but when Yakṣa Malla died in 1482, his kingdom was divided among his three sons, and for the next three centuries the valley was split up into three minute kingdoms, each centred on a fortified city: Lalitpur, Kathmandu and Bhaktapur. In 1768-69 the Malla dynasty was overthrown by the Gurkhas under Prithvi Narayan Shah and the three small kingdoms became part of Nepal. The Kathmandu valley covers some 550 km², and the three Malla kingdoms constitute the smallest city-state culture so far attested, but there seems to be no doubt that it was, essentially, a city-state culture and thus deserves a full description in this context, written by Professor Gérard Toffin who works in the leading centre in Europe for the study of the history of Nepal: the Centre André-Georges Haudricourt, Centre d'études himalayennes, CNRS.

The two remaining contributions are about city-state cultures which have already had a full chapter in *30 CSC*: viz. the Sumerian and the German city-states.

(e) Planning the 1999 symposium about city-state cultures, I entrusted the chapter about the Sumerian city-states to the eminent professor Jean-Jacques Glassner. At the symposium it turned out that, in opposition to the great majority of his colleagues, he denied that the concept of city-state was of any value at all in an analysis of the Sumerian micro-states. Like Fineman and Marcus, he argued that "city-state" was just the modern historians' synonym for the ancient

Greek *polis*.⁴⁹ He refused to acknowledge any difference between the modern heuristic concept of city-state and the ancient Greek concept of *polis*; and he suggested that the concept of city-state be restricted to an analysis of the *polis* and, accordingly, avoided in a study of the Mesopotamian polities, which he preferred to call micro-states (*petits états*).

It is always a refreshing challenge to have the Devil's advocate in a team of scholars; and it is not at all bad in the *Comparative Study of Thirty City-State Cultures* to have one chapter which openly contests the value of the methodology and the model on which the volume is based. But in this case the result has also been that the readers of the book are left with a highly personal account of the Sumerian civilisation, and without any information about the prevailing interpretation of the political structure of Babylonia in the late fourth and third millennia B.C. In almost all other accounts of the Sumerians their polities are described as city-states (*30 CSC* 31 n. 93); and several anthropologists have even preferred the Sumerian polities to the Greek *poleis* or the Italian *città* as the best model for what a city-state is.⁵⁰ Furthermore, in the chapters of *30 CSC* about the city-state of Assur and the Syrian city-states, the existence of Sumerian city-states is taken for granted and not even problematised.⁵¹

Therefore, to balance Glassner's chapter in *30 CSC* I invited Aage Westenholz of the Carsten Niebuhr Institute to submit for this volume an alternative interpretation based on the assumption that the Sumerian polities were city-states, i.e. self-governing micro-states, each composed of one major urban centre with its immediate hinterland, often dotted with sanctuaries and second-order settlements, so that all of Babylonia constituted a city-state culture composed of a network of some 25-50 such city-states. Westenholz is as eminent an expert as Glassner; as in the previous volume I believe that the city-state model does fit the Sumerian civilisation (*30 CSC* 20); but with two opposed interpretations it is up to the readers to study both and make up their minds for themselves.

(f) The reason for having a new chapter about the German city-states is different. The author of the chapter in *30 CSC* is Professor Peter Johanek, the head of the *Institut für vergleichende Städtegeschichte* in Münster.⁵² He argues judiciously that no clear line can be drawn between, on the one hand, the imperial and free towns and, on the other hand, the territorial towns. The former were presumably city-states, by contrast with the latter who recognised a prince or a bishop as their lord. Nevertheless, some of the territorial towns enjoyed more autonomy than some of the

imperial towns. So Johaneck finds it problematic to apply the concept of city-state to the mediaeval and Early Modern German towns, especially since the imperial towns lay scattered between bishoprics and principalities and did not form a network that can reasonably be described as a “city-state culture”. The largest network of towns in Germany was the Hanseatic League, which was dominated by territorial towns and had only a few large Imperial towns among its members. Only in Switzerland, the southernmost part of mediaeval Germany, did a proper city-state culture emerge in the course of the Middle Ages, as described by Martina Stercken in *30 CSC*.

Much of Johaneck’s chapter is about northern Germany, but by far the majority of the imperial and free towns were to be found in southern Germany.⁵³ In Swabia, Franconia and Thuringia there were in fact clusters of imperial cities, and, for shorter or longer periods, they did form leagues (briefly mentioned in *30 CSC* 23). So, moving the focus from North to South Germany one might perhaps find evidence of what can be described as a city-state culture, comparable to those in Switzerland and northern Italy. The scholar who undertook to write this chapter was the Finnish historian Björn Forsén. He has been affiliated with the Polis Centre in connection with the Centre’s study of the Greek *polis* and my endeavour to find someone who could write about the south German city-states matched his plan to conduct comparative investigations of ancient and Mediaeval city-states.

The Concept of City-State Culture

I believe that each of the six civilisations described in this volume meets a sufficient number of the criteria set out in *30 CSC* 16-17 as characteristics of a city-state culture. As explained in the final chapter of that volume, the method we use in our study of the concept of city-state culture and the civilisations described as city-state cultures involves a constant oscillation between the intension and extension of this concept, or, to put it differently: between the concept itself and its denotata (*30 CSC* 597, 600-01). One can therefore turn the investigation upside down and examine to what extent the descriptions of these six civilisations can shed more light on the concept of city-state culture.

Emergence. “City-state cultures emerge in one of the three following ways: (a) In a period of demographic and economic upsurge, urbanisation and state formation take place simultaneously or in close sequence. The city-state period is preceded by a pre-

state period. The formation of city-states is gradual and often imperceptible. (b) Colonisation of a region takes the form of the foundation of a number of city-states. (c) In a period of decline, an urbanised macro-state disintegrates in such a way that each of its major urban centres becomes a city-state” (*30 CSC* 16-17). The six civilisations studied in this volume induce me to treat the three possibilities in the reverse order. Four of the city-state cultures owe their origin to the collapse of a macro-state, colonisation is an additional factor in one of these civilisations, and in one case the city-states arose gradually after a pre-state period.

It is still a moot point how and when the Sumerian city-state culture emerged but, as pointed out by Westenholz, “it is possible that, around 3200 to 3000 B.C., there was an integrated territorial state in Babylonia, with Uruk as its capital, and that the later Sumerian city-state culture was but the decayed remains of that state” (*infra* 23).

There is no doubt that the emergence of the Neo-Hittite city-state culture in north Syria was a direct result of the collapse of the Hittite empire ca. 1200 B.C. (*infra* 44-45).

In Mesoamerica the Bènzàa city-state culture grew up in the 9th century A.D. following the fall in ca. 800 of Monte Albán, the urban centre and seat of the rulers of the Bèngolazàa state (*infra* 75, 87).

The city-state culture in the Kathmandu valley emerged by King Yakṣa Malla’s decision in A.D. 1482 to divide his small kingdom among his three sons so that each became the ruler of a micro-state centred on a town (*infra* 108).

The Bènzàa city-state culture emerged in the 9th century A.D. in the Valley of Oaxaca after the fall of Monte Albán. But in the second half of the 15th century there were large-scale migrations from the Valley of Oaxaca to the Sierra Zapoteca and the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. The colonisation of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec and to a lesser degree of the Sierra Zapoteca took the form of the foundation of city-states (*infra* 79-80).

The Lykian cities and, consequently, the Lykian city-state culture developed gradually in the course of the Dynastic period and there is no evidence of any important state formation in Lykia antedating the 6th century B.C. (*infra* 69).

The south German city-state culture seems to be a case apart, and it would be unwise to force it into one of the categories: “There was no single way in which the city-states of central Europe acquired their free status: indeed almost every one did so in a slightly different manner.”⁵⁴

To the four new examples of city-state cultures emerging by devolution rather than evolution must be added the six examples recorded in *30 CSC*;⁵⁵ it can be argued that the north Italian city-states constitute a seventh example.⁵⁶ These eleven attestations are sufficient, I think, to disprove a common evolutionist model which still has many adherents. It is held that early cities were all city-states and that the territorial state dotted with cities is a later phase of a universal development. The fact that urbanisation and state formation were usually co-eval (*30 CSC* 15) has led to the theory that a pre-state phase is commonly followed by a city-state phase which again leads to the formation of a territorial state.⁵⁷ I believe that the civilisations studied in *30 CSC* and in this supplement disprove the model: there are many states which emerged as macro-states without passing through a city-state phase, and there are many city-state cultures which emerged in consequence of the disintegration of an earlier macro-state.

Disappearance. “A city-state culture ceases to exist either (a) by the (temporary) disappearance of the urban centres which, of course, is associated with the disappearance of the political structure of the cities as well; or (b), the city-state culture disappears by being conquered by a neighbouring Great Power: the city-states are transformed into cities, sometimes abruptly, but sometimes the city-states are allowed to persist for some time, and the transformation from city-states to cities is slow and almost imperceptible” (*30 CSC* 17). Five of the six city-state cultures examined here disappeared by being conquered by neighbours:

The Sumerian city-states of the early Dynastic period were conquered by Sargon of Akkade ca. 2330 and turned into municipalities of the macro-state he created (*infra* 38).

The Neo-Hittite city-states were conquered by Sargon II (721-705) and incorporated into the Assyrian empire (*infra* 54).

The Lykian dynasts disappeared ca. 360 B.C. when Lykia came under Karian rule (*supra* 9).

The Bènizàa city-states were subjected by the Spaniards in 1521; they were allowed to persist as dependent city-states for some generations, but by ca. 1600 they had become units of the Spanish colonial administration (*infra* 75-76).

The three small kingdoms in the Kathmandu valley were overrun by the Gurkhas in 1768-69 and incorporated into Nepal (*infra* 107-08).

Again, the south German city-states are a case apart: in form they persisted until the dissolution of

the Holy Roman Empire in 1806 but in fact they had lost most of their self-government long before (*infra* 98, 101).

Clusters of city-state cultures. The civilisations studied in *30 CSC* show that city-state cultures tend to appear in clusters: the most conspicuous are found (a) in the Fertile Crescent in the Near East, (b) in Mediterranean and Central Europe, (c) in Mesoamerica, and (d) in West Africa (*30 CSC* 17). The city-state cultures studied in this volume fit into the picture. The Sumerian, north Syrian and Lykian city-state cultures belong with the west Syrian, Palestinian, Assyrian, Phoenician, Neo-Babylonian and Philistine city-state cultures (*30 CSC* 35-139). The south German city-states lie next to the Swiss and the north Italian (*30 CSC* 30 n. 74; 277-342), and the Bènizàa city-states constitute the fourth attested city-state culture in Mesoamerica alongside the Maya, the Mixtec and the Aztec city-states (*30 CSC* 547-95). Nepal is different, but perhaps just a harbinger indicating that other city-state cultures may be found in this part of Asia. In *30 CSC* Dilip Chakrabarti rejected the Indus civilisation (ca. 2600-1900 B.C.) and the Mahajanapadas (ca. 600-300 B.C.) as proper examples of city-state cultures.⁵⁸ He added, however, that India has had a long tradition of political fragmentation. Scores of the fortified urban settlements found in the Indus valley may have been city-states and not just second-order settlements in the territories of four large states: Harappa, Mohenjodaro, Ganweriwala and Rakhigarhi (*30 CSC* 375-76). If so, the Indus civilisation may after all have been a city-state culture composed of scores of city-states, and there may have been other city-state cultures not yet discovered and described.

Cycles of city-states. “In some cases a region is split up into city-states only once in history, but there are examples of regions which at least twice and sometimes three or four times in world history have been a city-state culture” (*30 CSC* 17).⁵⁹

Westenholz’ paper is focused the Sumerian city-states in the Early Dynastic period, but there is evidence of no less than three later phases of city-state organisation: (1) in the fairly short period between the breakdown of Sargon’s and Naramsin’s empire and the emergence of the Third Dynasty of Ur (ca. 2150-2100), (2) during the Isin-Larsa period after the fall of Ur (ca. 2000-1800), (3) during the Early Neo-Babylonian period after the Kassite dynasty in Babylon had been deposed by Elamite tribes and until the Assyrian conquest of Babylonia in the mid 8th century (ca. 1100-750).⁶⁰

Future studies may show that the Neo-Hittite city-

state culture of the Iron Age was preceded by a city-state culture in the early Bronze Age, viz., the *Kranzhügelkultur* dating from ca. 2800-2300 B.C. (*supra* 7-8).

The indigenous Lykian city-state culture of the Dynastic period (ca. 540-360) was followed by the Hellenic city-state culture of the Hellenistic period inaugurated by Alexander's conquest in 334. In this case the transition from one city-state phase to the next one was gradual, and one can speak of an overlap in the Hekatomnid period (ca. 360-334) with its much more intensive process of Hellenisation (*infra* 69-70).

Germany and Nepal belong with the civilisations which only once in history were organised into city-states. Ignorance of the early history of the Bènzàa region forces us to suspend judgement (*infra* 73).

Names of city-states. In a city-state culture the name of the state is almost invariably identical with the name of its urban centre, whereas in macro-states the name of the state is different from the name of its capital and usually denotes the territory, i.e. the whole country dotted with a number of urban centres (30 CSC 18 with n. 80).

In Sumerian sources toponyms such as Uruk, Umma, Nippur, and Shuruppak sometimes denote a polity and sometimes its main urban centre.⁶¹ Karkamis and Hamath are names of Neo-Hittite states as well as of cities (*infra* 46, 51). The names of Lykian towns, e.g. Arñna (Greek: Xanthos) and Zêmuri (Greek: Limyra), are found on coins where they seem to denote the community rather than just its urban centre (*supra* 10). Zaachila and Tehuatepec are the designations of Bènzàa towns as well as of the city-states ruled from these urban centres (*infra* 80). Rothenburg and Dinkelsbühl were walled towns but also imperial cities which had joined the Swabian League (*infra* 95). The three petty kingdoms in the Kathmandu valley were named after their capitals: Lalitpur, Bhaktapur and Kathmandu (*infra* 108).

Dependent city-states. The city-states of a city-state culture are not necessarily independent peer polities, but can be hierarchically organised systems of polities, of which some are hegemonic, some independent, and some dependencies. Dependent city-states are self-governing communities which usually have to pay tribute and provide troops to a neighbouring overlord, or a hegemonic city-state within the region, or a central government in regions in which the city-states were united in a federation (30 CSC 17). Five of the six city-state cultures described in this volume testify to the existence of dependent city-states.

Wars between the Sumerian city-states are attested throughout the Early Dynastic period, and for shorter periods Lagash, Umma, Ur and Uruk succeeded in dominating some of the neighbouring city-states (*infra* 33, 36). However, the Sumerian city-states seem not normally to have attempted a full incorporation of the city-states they conquered but allowed them to persist as dependent city-states; sometimes they regained their independence when the city-state to which they belonged lost its hegemonic position.

During the 9th and 8th centuries the Neo-Hittite city-states often had to pay tribute to the Assyrians and can therefore in this final phase be seen as dependent city-states (*infra* 49, 54).

The Lykian city-states of the Dynastic period were under the suzerainty of the Persian King and formed part of the satrapy of Lydia (*supra* 9).

In the Bènzàa region in Mesoamerica each of the major city-states seems to have ruled a number of dependent city-states. In the mid 13th century Zaachila was the hegemonic city-state in the Valley of Oaxaca; and two centuries later the isthmus of Tehuatepec was dominated by the city-state of Tehuatepec. It controlled a number of dependent city-states in the Isthmus itself and even succeeded in turning six of city-states in the Valley of Oaxaca into tributary dependencies (*infra* 83).

The south German Reichsstädte were self-governing polities but still part of the Holy Roman Empire and ruled by the emperor (*infra* 98).

Leagues and federations. Related to the existence of dependent city-states is the inclination to form leagues and federations. A city-state is by nature a micro-state, and a city-state culture consisting of disconnected city-states has always been an easy prey to larger neighbours. At the same time the wish to remain city-states seems to have prevailed in all city-state cultures, and the obvious compromise was to form alliances which sometimes took the form of a league, but often developed into a confederation or even into a federal state in the full sense (30 CSC 17, 612-13). The importance of leagues and federations is attested in four of the six city-state cultures described in this volume.

The so-called Sumerian kinglist of ca. 2000 B.C. testifies to some kind of council in which most of the Sumerian city-states were represented. It was headed by the leader of one of the city-states, and the hegemonic position passed from city-state to city-state (*infra* 32). Furthermore, each city-state had its own patron divinity, but the Sumerian gods formed a Pantheon with Enlil of Nippur as the principal god

(*infra* 35). Thus, the oldest of all city-state cultures is also the first to provide us with information about formalised co-operation between the city-states.

The oldest Lykian coins were issued by different dynasts but all were struck on the so-called middle standard, and almost all had the triskeles on the reverse. It is tempting to assume some co-operation between all or most of the dynasts;⁶² but we do not know whether it took the form of a league or a federation.⁶³ That it did not last is indicated by the later coins, which were struck on either the light west Lykian or the heavy east Lykian standard and with a plurality of reverse types.

In the second half of the 14th century the ruler of Zaachila formed a federation of Bènizàa city-states, but two Mixtec city-states became members as well. The members paid tribute and provided contingents to the federal army but continued to be politically and administratively autonomous (*infra* 85-86).

In the course of the 14th century the south German cities formed a number of successive leagues which, by contrast with the Hanseatic League in the north, consisted of imperial and free cities only. The largest was the Swabian League, which in 1485 had 40 members and in the same years it concluded an alliance with a league of imperial and free cities along the Rhine and with the major Swiss cities. Together the three leagues constituted a network of 59 free and imperial cities (*infra* 95). The apogee of the leagues was reached in the early 15th century. Soon after, the two German ones lost their importance whereas the Swiss developed into a fully fledged city-state culture.

Urbanisation. While Max Weber's functional description of "the city" (*die Stadt*) is still largely valid,⁶⁴ the restriction of this *Idealtypus* to the western world has been one of the main obstacles to the recognition that city-states and city-state cultures have existed outside Europe and the Near East.⁶⁵ If the city-state is a micro-state centred on a city, and if there have been no cities outside the western cultural sphere, the early micro-states attested in other continents cannot have been city-states. According to Weber a true city had to be a *Stadtgemeinde*, and *die Stadt des Okzidents* was in his opinion the only *Stadtgemeinde* in the true sense. In Weber the counterpart of the true western city was the Asian or oriental city.⁶⁶ As in Burckhardt's work⁶⁷ the opposition between western freedom and oriental despotism can be discerned behind the two types of city.⁶⁸ But the opposition between the western and the oriental city has been made obsolete by modern archaeological, anthropological and historical research and "nobody

should need any longer a type or model of the 'Oriental' city as opposed to the western city, since this type was the product of a Euro-centric view and a colonialist attitude."⁶⁹ Thus, there is no longer any reason to question the application of the terms town and/or city⁷⁰ to the Sumerian, Neo-Hittite, Lykian, or Kathmandu valley urban centres. They all fit Weber's ideal type, which he constructed from a study of the mediaeval cities north of the Alps, i.e. the towns of the Holy Roman Empire, cf. n. 66 *supra*.

The problematical civilisation in this context is the Mesoamerican, i.e. the Bènizàa city-state culture in the Post-Classic period. There is no discussion in Weber of indigenous African or American urban settlements.⁷¹ Excavations, historical studies and fieldwork have provided us with a rich literature about African urbanism,⁷² and no less than seven African city-state cultures are included in *30 CSC*.⁷³ Again, during the last two generations the numerous studies of urbanism in pre-Columbian America have revolutionised our understanding of American society before the Spanish colonisation, and it is especially the Mesoamerican city which has been in focus.⁷⁴ Recognition of the nucleated settlements as proper cities rather than ceremonial centres was long obscured by the contrast between the monumental stone architecture and the ephemeral character of habitations built of perishable materials.⁷⁵ Furthermore, the open texture of the centres raised doubt about whether they were nucleated settlements at all. The Maya cities had, on average, 6-10 inhabitants per ha and that is very different from the towns of ancient and mediaeval Europe where a density of 150-250 inhabitants per ha is frequently attested.⁷⁶ On the other hand, even in Mesoamerica there is a marked difference between nucleated and dispersed settlement, and the nucleated settlements seem to have been towns in the functional sense: they were centres of trade, they gave rise to a considerable division of labour and specialisation of function, and they were genuine *Zentralorte* not only in the economic but also in the social and political sense.

A different set of problems concerns the relation between centre and hinterland, and between the urban and the political aspects of the town or city. In a valuable discussion of the nature of the Mesoamerican city, Joyce Marcus points out some essential differences between the western and the Indian view of the city. The western city is defined "on the basis of such variables as population size, percentage of population not engaged in extractive subsistence activities, or presence of public institutions ..." In Mesoamerican

civilisations “the term clearly referred not only to a nucleated settlement (in our terms a town or city), but also to its ruler, its inhabitants, and the territory ruled, including outlying dependencies and landholdings” (Marcus [2000] 54-55). Marcus shows that this view of the city was held by the Aztecs, the Maya, the Mixtec and the Zapotec⁷⁷ and adds that it was shared by the Yoruba in west Africa as well. The last observation is crucial. The Yoruba was one of the west African city-state cultures.⁷⁸ The similarity between the Yoruba and the Mesoamerican concept of the city indicates that the difference is not between the western and the Mesoamerican concept of a city, but between the city in a modern macro-state and in a city-state culture. In ancient Hellas the term *polis* clearly referred not only to a nucleated settlement (in our terms a town or city), but also to its rulers (or political institutions), its inhabitants, and the territory ruled, including outlying dependencies and landholdings.⁷⁹ In mediaeval Italy *civitas* signified not only the city, but also the territory, and again the citizens united in a community, the body politic, the state.⁸⁰ In China in the Spring-and-Autumn period the most common term for state – *guo* – referred both to the state and to the capital city, and the written graph for *guo* also insisted on its urban status, for it was composed of elements representing a city wall and a weapon, later supplemented by an element indicating inhabitants.⁸¹ Thus, what Marcus identified as the Mesoamerican view of the city re-appears in city-state cultures all over the world, in west Africa, in Europe and in Asia.⁸² The difference is rather between a macro-state and a city-state view of the city.

Summing up, the six studies printed in this volume corroborate most of the features singled out in *30 CSC* as essential characteristics of a city-state culture. For further comparisons, see the general index *infra* 140.

The Weberian ideal types I have constructed and called “city-state” and “city-state culture” are modern heuristic concepts to be used by historians, archaeologists and anthropologists in their descriptions of historic civilisations. Of course, none of the peoples described called their polities “city-states” and their civilisation a “city-state culture”. Each people had their own individual perception of their own social organisation, and used their own terms. The term and the concept behind it varied from civilisation to civilisation. And in most cases the people of one civilisation were ignorant of the existence of other similar civilisations in other periods and/or in other parts of the world.⁸³ No two individual concepts were iden-

tical, nor were the polities to which the concepts referred; but they betray, I hold, a number of striking similarities, and the concepts of city-state and city-state culture are constructed by detecting and putting together these similarities. In doing this we have moved from each civilisation’s self-perception to a modern detached artificial perception of a *type of civilisation*. Our *city-state* is the generic term for what the Greeks called *polis*, the Romans *civitas*, the Chinese *guo*, the Malay *negeri*, the Yoruba *llu*, the Maya *ahawlel*, the Mixtec *yuhuitaya*, the Aztecs *altepetl*, the Zapotec *queche*, etc. – In some cases we do not know the term any longer, in other cases there may not have been a specific term. – By creating the generic concept and the equivalent term, we have moved from what today is often called the *emic* view of a civilisation to the *etic* view: while each of the individual city-state cultures is probably best described in accordance with the *emic* view, the comparison between city-state cultures necessitates the *etic* approach and, being purely heuristic concepts, city-state and city-state culture are constructed and analysed in accordance with an *etic* view. As in any other comparative study, the combination of the two approaches at different levels is inevitable.

Why City-States Existed

In the preface to *30 CSC* I invited those participants in the 1999 symposium who wanted to continue the theoretical debate about the concepts of city-state and city-state culture to submit their contributions to a forthcoming volume. So far, none of the participants has taken up the invitation, but Professor Azar Gat of Tel Aviv University has volunteered and submitted a paper in which he argues that the principal motive behind the formation of city-states was defence. His paper is a valuable contribution to the debate over the origin of city-state cultures, and I can agree with much of what he says. I note, however, that some of his examples concern cities which, in my opinion, were not city-states but urban centres of macro-states.⁸⁴ If this is so, defence was a principal motive behind urbanisation as such, not just the formation of city-states. Is there, then, some factor which in regions that eventually became city-state cultures made defence purposes a stronger incentive than in regions organised into macro-states? It seems reasonable to assume that the large number of city-states in a city-state culture results in a higher number of wars than those which occur in macro-states with many towns. Macro-states fight one another, but internally they

enjoy peace. A city-state culture suffers from war with neighbouring macro-states, but, in addition to that, it suffers from numerous wars between the city-states themselves. That is probably why nucleated settlement and defence circuits become even more important here than in macro-states.

Appendix. The Origin of the North Italian City-States

The universally accepted view is that the north Italian city-states emerged ca. 1100 and disappeared again in the course of the 14th century. What marked the beginning of the city-states was the election of consuls and the self-conscious description of cities as communes.⁸⁵ The demise of the city-state is commonly dated to ca. 1400 when princes had come to power once again and the commune was replaced by the *signoria*.⁸⁶ Thus, with the exception of some city-republics that still existed in the age of Machiavelli and even later, the city-state period in northern Italy covered the three centuries from ca. 1100 to ca. 1400.⁸⁷

According to this view the city-state is defined by its constitution: ca. 1100, in the rapidly growing urban centres, republican rule replaced the rule of a bishop or a count, but ca. 1400 republican institutions had been suppressed by a monarchical form of rule exercised by princes and tyrants. Two of the most influential general accounts in English of the Italian city-states are Daniel Waley's *The Italian City-Republics* (2nd edn 1978) and Philip Jones' *The Italian City-State from Commune to Signoria* (1997). Both titles reveal that the central aspect of the city-state is the *form* of state rather than the *type* of state. One gets the impression that only city-republics counted as city-states. But such a view has to be modified by a study of city-states in which the emphasis is on the *type* of state.

Throughout world history until the second half of the 18th century all macro-states were monarchies, but the majority of city-states were monarchies too; due to the small size of the city-state, however, quite a few became republics, i.e. states ruled by councils, and/or assemblies in which decisions were made by vote after a debate. Again, of the republican city-states the majority were aristocracies (or oligarchies), and the democratically governed city-state, though attested in a number of city-state cultures, is undoubtedly less common than the monarchical or aristocratic city-state. Thus, most city-states were monarchies, many were oligarchies, some were democracies and

the specific form of government is not an essential aspect of the concept of the city-state as such.⁸⁸ The city-state is a micro-state composed of one town with its immediate hinterland, and a city-state culture is a civilisation which, politically, is organised as a system of city-states.⁸⁹ The counterpart of a city-state is a macro-state which usually has a number of cities within its borders; they are administrative units, and one of them may be a capital; but none is in possession of self-government to such a degree that it counts as a "polity" or a "state".⁹⁰

If this model of the city-state is adopted, the history of the Italian city-states appears in a new perspective. The crucial question is not: when did the Italian commune emerge? but rather: when was northern Italy split into a large number of small political units, each consisting of a town with its immediate hinterland? This question can be split up into two: (a) when had urbanisation reached a point that would allow a town with its immediate hinterland to function as a polity? and (b) when did the ruler(s) of an Italian city acquire the powers that constitute a state, i.e. legislative and judicial powers, the right to levy taxes, strike coins, have its own army and enter into relations with other similar cities?

Re (a). There is no agreement about the re-appearance of cities in mediaeval Italy, and a long scholarly battle has been fought between two opposing groups of scholars called, respectively, "optimists" and "pessimists". The optimists emphasise continuity and believe that the ancient cities undoubtedly dwindled in the Early Middle Ages but never disappeared completely.⁹¹ The archaeological evidence, however, points to discontinuity and the available data marshalled by the pessimists are now, I think, so overwhelming that the optimists are well advised to accept what can be learned from the physical remains. The Italian towns survived during Late Antiquity until the early 7th century, but thereafter "in the hundreds of trenches excavated in towns throughout Italy the commonest, if most prosaic discovery, is not the remains of buildings but 'dark earth'... However, the era of 'dark earth' ended in the ninth century".⁹² No matter whether one follows the "optimists" or the "pessimists", there is no doubt that northern Italy became urbanised once again in the course of the 9th century, and that, alongside Spain, Italy was the most urbanised country in Europe at the beginning of the second millennium.⁹³ The question is: how were the cities governed? From the late 8th to the late 9th century northern Italy was part of the Carolingian empire; but with the death of Louis II in 875, cen-

tralised government disappeared. “nowhere, however, did state authority simply collapse into anarchy; it merely became more localised and more focused on individual cities”.⁹⁴

Re (b). Between the 9th and 11th centuries many north Italian cities were ruled by bishops. They resided in palaces in the urban centre and ruled the city assisted by an advisory *consilium*; the bishop presided over meetings of the general assembly; he was sometimes commander-in-chief of the town’s armed forces; he had judicial and legislative powers, he levied taxes and he struck coins.⁹⁵ Each episcopal city controlled the immediate hinterland of the town.⁹⁶ The bishops had acquired these powers with the support of the Carolingian rulers, and during much of the 9th century the north Italian towns were probably urban centres of the Carolingian empire rather than polities. But with the power vacuum from the late 9th century onwards, the north and central Italian bishoprics and counties became polities rather than municipalities. Furthermore, in the course of the 10th century the bishops, some 120 altogether, had the advantage of the counts, many of whom left the cities and settled in the countryside.⁹⁷ This is when the Italian city-states emerged – what happened around 1100 was not the emergence of the city-state but the emergence of the city-republic: elected consuls took over the judicial powers previously held by bishops. The Italian cities were under the suzerainty of the German king or, since 962, the emperor; but that was a matter of form both before and after 1100, and in this respect there is no difference between the 11th and the 12th centuries. Thus, the emergence of the Italian city-state should probably be pushed back some 200 years and, on this interpretation, mediaeval north Italy is yet another example of a city-state culture which emerged by the fragmentation of an urbanised macro-state into a large number of micro-states, each consisting of a town with its hinterland.⁹⁸

Again, if the type of state is in focus rather than the form of state, the demise of the Italian city-state was not caused by the transition from commune to *signoria*. It was caused by small city-states being swallowed up by the larger ones, whereby the large city-states became “territorial” states, each with a plurality of towns inside a territory that covered a five-digit number of square kilometres.⁹⁹ The two phenomena were, of course, interconnected, but the change of emphasis results in a change of analysis. The difference between the two interpretations is most apparent in the case of Venice. If one takes the opposition between republic and *signoria* to be the crucial

criterion, Venice remained a city-state until 1797.¹⁰⁰ If one prefers to emphasise the conquest of small city-states by the larger ones and the ensuing formation of territorial states, then Venice was transformed from a city-state into a territorial macro-state in the years 1404-28 when it conquered all the cities in the Veneto and acquired an urbanised territory of some 30,000 km².¹⁰¹

Notes

1. I would like to thank Prof. Michael Wörrle and Dr. Jan Zahle for reading and commenting on the section about Lykia (*infra* 8-10).
2. The Programme was published in Hansen (1994) 10-13.
3. For the symposium, see *30 CSC* 4, 9-10.
4. van Effenterre (1985) 103-13; Knappett (1999) 621-24.
5. Cherry (1986); Knappett (1999); *30 CSC* 22. According to Cherry (1986) 21, the five Cretan states were centred on Khania, Phaistos, Knossos, Mallia and Kato Zakros.
6. Hallager and Hallager (1995); Hallager (1996).
7. Cherry (1986) 26.
8. One of Cherry’s principal arguments is the analogy with the Mycenaean palaces in Greece, each of which was indisputably the centre of a polity ([1986] 24-25).
9. Bretschneider seems to believe that they were city-states (64). He may be right, but he does not provide any evidence in support of this classification.
10. Herodotos 1.95-106; the three sites are Godin Tepe, Tepe Nush-i Jan, Baba Jan. For a brief account, see Kuhrt (1995) II: 652-56.
11. Kuhrt (1995) 266-70; Macqueen (1986) 77-78.
12. Kuhrt (1995) 225-29; Macqueen (1986) 18, 75-6.
13. Kühne (1994) 59. When I wrote the introduction to *30 CSC* I listed Karkamis as an isolated city-state (19) because I had not yet realised that it belonged to a whole Neo-Hittite city-state culture.
14. I. Thuesen, “The City-State in Ancient Western Syria”, in *30 CSC* 55-65.
15. Ps.-Skylax 100; Zahle (1980) 37-49 shows that the Lykian people inhabited the region from Telmessos in the west to Gagai in the east.
16. Tombs: Zahle (1983). Coins: Mørkholm and Neumann (1978); Vismara (1989-96); Kolb and Tietz (2001). Language: Bryce (1986) 42-98.
17. Strabo 14.3.3; Larsen (1968) 240-63; Behrwald (2000).
18. See Marksteiner *infra* 63-68.
19. Wurster (1976). The ongoing Turkish excavations of Tlos and Patara have not yet been published.
20. Thomsen (2001).
21. Marksteiner, *infra* 63-64.
22. Marksteiner, *infra* 57.
23. Zahle (1989) 170-71.
24. Domingo Gygas (2001) 76. In Lykian inscriptions this term is applied to, e.g., the fourth-century dynast Perikles (Domingo Gygas [2001] 74), who in Greek sources is called “king” (*Basileus*), *SEG* 41 1282; Wörrle (1991) 206.
25. See note 31 *infra*.
26. Bryce (1986) 133-34; Keen (1998) 46-48.
27. Zahle (1983) 108; (1991) 151.

28. Kolb and Tietz (2001) 373.
29. Kolb and Tietz (2001) 373.
30. Domingo Gyax (2001) 83; Kolb and Tietz (2001) 348, 377.
31. *TAM* 1.104.b.2-3; Herodotos 7.98; Theopompos (*FGrHist* 115) fr. 103.17; *SEG* 39 1414. Keen (1998) 87-90.
32. Keen (1998) 112-24; Kolb and Tietz (2001) 369-71.
33. Keen (1998) 148-74; Kolb and Tietz (2001) 398-401.
34. Kolb and Tietz (2001) 377.
35. In his monograph about the Athenian fifth-century empire, Meiggs (1972) 208 takes it for granted that the Lycian cities were a kind of Greek *poleis*: "In parts of Caria and Lycia tyrants could be expected and accepted long after they were an anachronism elsewhere".
36. Marksteiner, *infra* 68, 70-71; Domingo Gyax (2001) 83, 85, 87, 89, 91-92.
37. A *prytaneion* is known from Tlos (*TAM* II 582) and Telmessos (*TAM* I 5), probably to be dated to the 1st century B.C. and the remains of a late Hellenistic *bouleuterion* have been found in Antiphellos (Gneisz [1990] 304-5). Hellenistic theatres are found in no less than thirteen Lykian cities (Frederiksen [2002] 111-20).
38. Marksteiner *infra* 59 (Xanthos).
39. Hansen and Fischer-Hansen (1994) 25-30.
40. Mørkholm and Neumann (1978).
41. Of the bilingual inscriptions (Lykian and Greek), the most important from a political point of view is an edict concerning exemption from commercial taxes, granted to four communities which in this context are described as *poleis*, viz., Xanthos, Tlos, Pinará and Kadyanda (Bosquet [1986] 101-06). It was found in Xanthos and shows that there must have been both a Lykian and a Greek-speaking population in Xanthos. The queen of early Lykian inscriptions is a trilingual decree from Xanthos (Lykian, Greek and Aramaic) concerning the foundation of a cult (Neumann [1979] 320).
42. Arīna on coins: Keen (1998) 57, cf. Melchert (1993) 6; *SNG Suppl.* 496 (Arīnahe); Domingo Gyax (2001) 83-84.
43. Hansen (2000) 18 with note 80.
44. Hansen (2000) 611.
45. Hansen (2000) 612 with note 81.
46. Bryce (1986) 103; Zahle (1991).
47. Hansen (2000) 17.
48. Zahle (1991)
49. Glassner (2000) 35-36; Marcus and Fineman (1998) 8-9, cf. Marcus (1998) 80, 90, 91-94. For a reply to this view, see Hansen in *30 CSC* 598-601.
50. Maisels (1990) 131-98, 269-74, 310-12; Trigger (1993) 8-14.
51. Thuesen (2000) 59; Larsen (2000) 117.
52. P. Johanek, "Imperial and Free Towns of the Holy Roman Empire – City-States in Pre-Modern Germany?" in *30 CSC* 295-319.
53. Emphasised by Johanek in *30 CSC* 296-97.
54. Friedrichs (1981) 113.
55. Cf. *30 CSC* 611. The Sumerian city-states in the Isin-Larsa period (ca. 2000-1800 B.C.) emerging by disintegration after the breakdown of the Ur III dynasty (Postgate [1992] 43-45; Kuhrt [1995] 74; Baines & Yoffee [1998] 208). The Syrian city-states after ca. 1000 B.C. (*30 CSC* 62); the Neo-Babylonian city-states in the 9th and 8th centuries B.C. (*30 CSC* 117-18); the Swiss city-states emerging after the extinction of the Dukes of Zähringen in 1218 (*30 CSC* 322-23); the Chinese city-states of the Spring-and-Autumn period (*30 CSC* 359, 361); the Maya city-states of the Post-Mayapan period (*30 CSC* 561); the Mixtec city-states of the Post-Classic period (*30 CSC* 578).
56. Cf. *30 CSC* 30 n. 65 and the appendix *infra* 17-18.
57. Wheatley (1971) 398; Hammond (1972) 2; Southall (1998) 4. Cf. *30 CSC* 605.
58. D. Chakrabarti, "Mahajanapada States of Early Historic India", in *30 CSC* 375-91.
59. Sumerian/Neo-Babylonian; Syrian (2600-2300, 2000-1800, 1000-720 B.C.); Palestinian (2900-2300, 2000-1200 B.C.); Phoenician homeland (Middle Bronze Age and Iron Age); Etruscan/Italian; Taklamakan; Sriwijaya/Malay; Maya (250-900, A.D. 1450-1600).
60. For repeated cycles of Sumerian city-states, see Postgate (1992) 43-45; Kuhrt (1995) 74; Baines and Yoffee (1998) 208. Cf. *30 CSC* 20, 22, 117-27, 611. For the Neo-Babylonian city-states, see Larsen in *30 CSC* 77-87.
61. *Infra* 26. The exception is the city-state of Lagash which in the 3rd millennium had its main urban centre at Girsu (Glassner [2000] 39). But Lagash – which in historical times was a ceremonial centre only – may once have been the capital, see *infra* 40 note 10.
62. Zahle (1989) 170-71; (1991) 146.
63. See the cautious remarks in Domingo Gyax (2001) 81-82.
64. Weber (1999) 59-62, cf. *30 CSC* 11-12.
65. *30 CSC* 602-3.
66. Weber (1999) 100: "Im auffallendsten Gegensatz namentlich zu den asiatischen Zuständen stand nun die Stadt des mittelalterlichen Okzidents, und zwar ganz speziell die Stadt des Gebiets nördlich der Alpen da, wo sie in idealtypischer Reinheit entwickelt war." Cf. also 84, 88, 108, 121. Cf. Nippel (1999) 1, 16, 18-19.
67. Liverani (1997) 86-88.
68. Nippel (1999) 6.
69. Liverani (1997) 107.
70. For the synonymous use of these two terms in most historical studies, see *30 CSC* 25.
71. Note, however, that Weber once refers to the Fante cities on the Gold Coast (Weber [1999] 108).
72. Shaw *et al.* (1993); Coquery-Vidrovitch (1993).
73. The Mzâb in Sahara; the Hausa, the Yoruba, the Fante, the Kotoko and the Ijo in west Africa; the Swahili in east Africa, *30 CSC* 445-545. For a recent discussion of African city-states, see Holder (2001) 24-37.
74. Marcus (2000); *30 CSC* 553-56, 603-04 (Maya cities), 572-73 (Mixtec cities); 585-87 (Aztec cities).
75. Adams (1960) 273.
76. An average of 6-10 inhabitants per ha in Maya cities (*30 CSC* 553-56, 604); an average of 150-250 inhabitants per ha in Greek *poleis* of the Classical period (Hansen [1997] 28, 74 n. 153); an average of 175-190 inhabitants per ha in early modern European cities (Bairoch [1988] 21-24).
77. The Zapotec is commonly used as a designation of the inhabitants of the Bènzàa region, see 73 *infra*.
78. Peel (2000) 506-17. For the meaning of *Ilu* ("city" or "state" or both at the same time), see 508.
79. Hansen (1998) 17-34, 31-54 in the French edition.
80. For *civitas* in the sense of city, see the examples in Niermeyer (1984) 184; for the sense of territory, see the statutes of the Florentine republic quoted in Brown (2000) 34-35; for the sense of community, people, state, see Bartolus *ad D.* 4.4.3 n.1: *quia ipsamet civitas sibi princeps est*.

81. Lewis (2000) 367-68.
82. See 30 CSC 625: General Index s.v. *term used for city and city-state*, with references to all the relevant chapters.
83. In some city-state cultures belonging to the same cluster of city-state cultures, there is explicit evidence of knowledge of earlier city-state cultures and, possibly, an acculturation: the Neo-Babylonian city-states evidently copied some of the Sumerian institutions (Larsen [2000] 122). The Philistine city-states seem to have been modelled on the Palestinian and Phoenician city-states to the north (Strange [2000] 132). It has been argued that the Greeks acquired not only the alphabet but also the *polis* from the Phoenicians (Niemeyer [2000] 109). Again, the Etruscan and Latin city-states may to some extent have been modelled on the Greek city-states in Sicily and southern Italy; and there is no doubt that the medieval Italian city-states were conscious about their heritage from the Roman *civitas* and the Greek *polis*.
84. In Europe: the Celtic *oppida*. In Asia: the cities of the Indus civilisation, Hattusa in Anatolia, and the cities in Japan. In Mesoamerica: Teotihuacan, Monte Albán, Mirador, and Mayapan. In Africa: the Zulu kraal.
85. Waley (1978) 27-28; Jones (1997) 134; Epstein (2000) 279-80.
86. Waley (1978) 133-40; Epstein (2000) 288;
87. Waley (1978) 5-8, 133-40; Epstein (2000) 277, 279; Chittolini (1994) 28-29. According to Jones (1997) 618-50, the transition from city-state to *signoria* took place somewhat earlier, viz., in the period ca. 1250-1300.
88. Hansen in 30 CSC 599, 611.
89. Hansen in 30 CSC 16-18.
90. Hansen in 30 CSC 16, 608.
91. La Rocca (1992) 161, 172-73; Ward-Perkins (1996), (1997).
92. Hodges (2000) 61.
93. Bairoch (1988) 158-59; Dilcher (1967) 67-71.
94. Epstein (2000) 279.
95. During the 10th and 11th centuries minting rights were granted to bishops of, e.g., Milano, Padua, Trento and Ravenna (Cavichchi [1991] 29-47).
96. Goetz (1944) 10-27; Dilcher (1967) 44-66, cf. 63: "Unter der Herrschaft des Bischofs hat sich die Stadt, zum ersten male seit der Antike, als gebiet eignen Verfassungsrechtes vom umliegenden Lande deutlich abgesetzt, sie bildet einen Rechtskörper eigener und unverwechselbarer Art."
97. Theseider (1964) 76, 93.
98. Hansen in 30 CSC 17 with note 65.
99. Chittolini (1994) 35; Epstein (2000) 287; Hansen (2000) 602.
100. Burke (1986) 142.
101. Chittolini (1994) 44; Hansen in 30 CSC 602.
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The Sumerian City-State

AAGE WESTENHOLZ

Of course, there is no such thing as the Sumerian city-state. What we do have is a number of Sumerian city-states, each with its own peculiarities, from which a generalised, non-existent “Sumerian city-state” may more or less legitimately be abstracted. In addition, from the very beginning, over-arching structures linked the individual Sumerian city-states in a manner that is poorly known and understood. It is even possible that, around 3200 to 3000 B.C., there was an integrated territorial state in Babylonia, with Uruk as its capital, and that the later Sumerian city-state culture was but the decayed remains of that state.¹

The period under consideration here spans from about 3500 to 2330 B.C.;² and the region is that of Lower Mesopotamia, also known as Babylonia. During most if not all of this period, Sumerian was the dominant language and culture in that region, so at least “Sumerian” in the heading appears to be justified.

The cities of Lower Mesopotamia are often said to be humanity’s first. Recent excavations, particularly at Tell Hamoukar and at Tell Brak, both in north-eastern Syria,³ are said to have produced evidence of urbanisation as old or even older than that of southern Mesopotamia. Whether that claim will stand the test of time remains to be seen. In any case, urbanisation appears to have been an indigenous development in Babylonia. On a background of villages and small towns, subsisting on locally available resources only, some sites suddenly grew to a size hitherto unknown around 3500 B.C. There is little doubt that, from 3200 to 2900, Uruk was by far the largest city in the world, with about 500 ha of walled area, some 40,000 inhabitants, a complex hierarchical administrative structure, skilled artisans working in materials such as stone or metals that had to be imported sometimes from far away, and the most magnificent temples supporting a redistributive economy.⁴ What caused this apparently sudden development is a much debated question without any definitive answer – often our knowledge of a given topic is inversely proportional to the discussion devoted to it.

The sources for the following investigation are the

excavated remains of the cities themselves, plus whatever may be gleaned from extensive surveys about the cities’ relations with their hinterland villages and the river systems. Needless to say, no ancient Mesopotamian city has been excavated in its entirety. Many of them are still unexcavated, except for some illicit diggings; and in those that have been touched by archaeologists, usually only the large public buildings (temples and palaces) have been explored, often with quite primitive excavation techniques. Spectacular buildings and works of art have been recovered; but attention to their context has often been lacking. Many of the results, however crude, still lie unpublished in museums. From 3200 onwards, written documentation exists in the shape of sun-dried clay tablets to supplement the physical archaeological evidence. All of this written documentation comes from the large public institutions and contains above all the records of the administration of their assets. The only exception are the so-called “lexical texts”, unelaborated lists of entries belonging to the same category: one is a list of metals and metal objects, another of textiles, another of professions, and so on. Only from ca. 2700 onwards, a trickle of so-called “literary texts” (myths, hymns, proverbs and incantations) and “royal inscriptions” (mostly brief dedicatory inscriptions on votive gifts or foundation tablets, occasionally giving information on the political events of the time) allow us to glimpse snippets of the history, religion and world view of the early Sumerians. All these texts were written by and for people with the insider’s thorough knowledge of their cultural context. We have nothing comparable to the expository works of Classical literature to guide us to that inside knowledge and have to work it out all by ourselves. Many texts, especially the literary texts, are poorly understood. The earliest texts, from 3200 to 2900, are still in the process of raw decipherment.⁵ And the survival rate of the written documentation is no better than that of the archaeological remains. I reckon that of all the texts that were produced, 99 per cent were destroyed, most of it quite soon – the clay of the tablets was recycled. Of the 1 per cent that sur-

vived and is still buried in the ground, about 1 per cent has been recovered in excavations; and of that, about one-half has been made available to scholarship in often less-than-adequate publications. A sample of one in 20,000, quite unevenly distributed by random chance! Yet, Mesopotamia is unique in providing us with day-to-day administrative archives, free of any political or religious bias if properly understood within their context. But analytical work on this material has only just begun, in a somewhat haphazard fashion.

With that kind of spotty data base, the best one might say is that there is ample scope for future discoveries; the worst, that any attempt now to reconstruct anything like “the Sumerian city-state” is a woefully premature exercise in futility. Nonetheless, the material already at hand is so suggestive that the attempt must be made, however uncertain and preliminary the results may be. Obviously, there is no consensus among scholars yet on how to interpret the available data; and the following is my understanding of those data.⁶ *Caveat lector.*

The method and theory underlying the present investigation may be stated quite briefly. First, I try as far as possible to avoid ignoring pertinent but inconvenient evidence. Second, I try to reach an inside understanding of the facts, what is nowadays often called the emic view, rather than trying, for instance, to establish whether or not Sumerian society meets a number of constitutive features of the city-state defined beforehand from the outside – the etic view.⁷ This means, among other things, that I take religion seriously at face value (since there is ample documentation that the Sumerians did), not as a mere epiphenomenon of political “realities” or even a tool for exploitation.⁸ I will not deny that religion could be so used; but it cannot have been that kind of window-dressing all the time and in all places. It is better, I think, to find out what religion meant to the Sumerians themselves – and that might well have included a good part of politics too. But in principle, the gods were the masters of the world; and mankind had been created to serve them.

Finally, I must admit that the following investigation is unduly philological. Collaboration with a competent and open-minded archaeologist would no doubt have resulted in dramatic improvements.

The Mesopotamian Landscape 3500-2330

By nature, the “Land between the Rivers” is certainly no Garden of Eden. It is a flat, semi-arid alluvial steppe traversed by the numerous meandering, anasto-

mosing, ever changing branches of the Euphrates. The Tigris maintains one stream almost to the end and is difficult to harness for irrigation. In some places, especially towards the south-east, the rivers empty into extensive marshes thickly grown with reeds. The climate is hot and mostly dry, punctuated by the occasional torrential rain during the winter months. Dust storms can last for days, during which no work is possible. The only raw materials are clay, reeds from the marshes, fish in the rivers and marshes, and limestone in the outcroppings of the Arabian Plateau towards the west. In some places, bitumen can be found.

The Babylonian soil is potentially very fertile; but agriculture is only possible with artificial irrigation from the rivers. The cities, totally dependent on agriculture for their food supplies, were always situated on the river banks. The rivers also afforded convenient routes of transportation by boat. But the amount of water available for irrigation varies widely from year to year. At one extreme, destructive floods may sweep away entire fields along with the seeds sown on them; at another, the water is barely sufficient for a poor crop. Consequently, harvests may vary locally from almost total failure to bumper crops. Also, river water contains small amounts of various salts; and under the relentless heat of the sun, these salts accumulate in the irrigated soil. Eventually, cultivation is made impossible by salinisation, unless the fields are left fallow at regular intervals. As barley is relatively tolerant of salt, barley was the Babylonian staple. Other crops, as well as vegetables and date palms, require fresher water and were therefore more labour-intensive. Steps must also be taken to prevent the river from changing its course, leaving the inhabited area dry. This was accomplished by dredging the river and canal beds from time to time. “With sweat on your brow shall you eat your bread.”

During the third millennium, the river system seems to have been artificially regulated into a few large branches that ran almost straight through the land and served the main cities situated on their banks. Of course, earlier branches had to be abandoned, and their cities with them. An abandoned city soon decayed into a shapeless heap of earth – a tell. From these main branches, a network of lesser canals fanned out over the slightly sloping levees of the main branches. The cities thus lay strung along the main branches (Fig. 1), surrounded by villages in the cultivated area.

In between the river branches were wide expanses of empty steppe, where sheep could graze on the

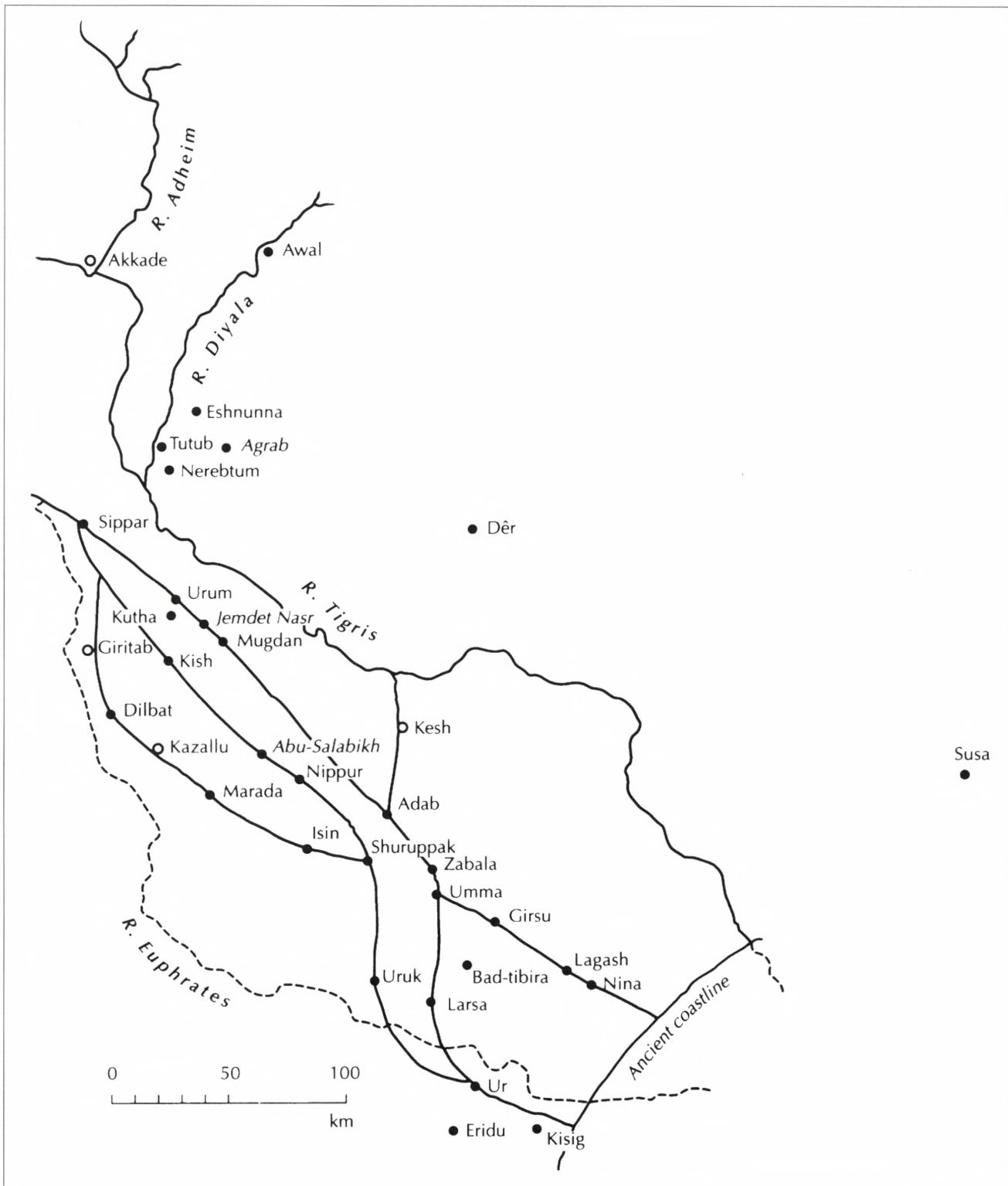


Fig. 1. Map of Babylonia, with the most important third-millennium cities shown. Ancient names are in ordinary type; modern names in italics. Cities of securely identified location are in solid black; cities of uncertain location are in outline only. The modern course of the Euphrates is indicated by a broken line; the reconstructed ancient watercourses are drawn in full. The reliability of these reconstructions is debatable.

The city-state of Lagash was in historical times (i.e. from about 2500 onwards) centred on the city of Girsu, while Lagash and Nina (conventional reading of uncertain value) were mainly ceremonial centres only. Likewise, Eridu, which belonged to Ur, was abandoned as a living city around 2900, but its temple for Enki was maintained for a millennium afterwards. The status and location of Kesh, belonging to Adab, is as yet uncertain.

Source: Adapted from J.N. Postgate, *Early Mesopotamia*, Routledge, London and New York 1994, p. 27.

sparse vegetation of thorny bushes. A shepherd's life was fraught with danger: wild animals would seek to devour his flock, and robbers or raiding enemies would try to kill him. The sheep provided not only meat and milk but above all wool, the basis of the flourishing Babylonian textile industry. Barley was the source of another Babylonian characteristic product: beer. Raw barley, beer and textiles were exported in return for all the things lacking in the land: gold, silver, copper, bronze, precious stones (indeed any stones other than limestone), spices, perfumes, resins for incense and good timber.

To the west of Babylonia was the Syrian desert, scarcely inhabited at all; to the east the Zagros mountains, home to various tribes of transhumant herds-men. These were regarded by the Sumerians as uncouth barbarians "of human form but with a dog's instincts", and with good reason: their murderous raids into Babylonia was a constant fact of life, or rather, death. To the north and north-west of Babylonia, in Upper Mesopotamia and Syria, lay other flourishing urban cultures, which the Sumerians of southern Mesopotamia regarded as alien to their own. In the time of the first urbanisation of the south, from 3500 to 3000 B.C., some of the Sumerian cities had set up colonies there;⁹ but why these colonies were established, and why they were abandoned shortly after 3000, remains unknown. One population group in that area, later known as the Akkadians, were destined to play a fateful role in the history of the Sumerians.

Such are, very briefly, the climatic and ecological constraints which shaped Sumerian society. It is clear that access to water was the limiting factor, while land was plentiful. The maintenance of the hydrological system required a high degree of collaboration between the cities depending on it; but unfair advantages taken by those upstream could lead to conflicts. The variations in harvests from year to year meant that individual family farmsteads were scarcely viable. The average output might be sufficient, but nobody can eat an average. A series of bad years would force the family to sell themselves into slavery. Only large institutions, with sufficient capacity for storage from the good years, could weather the vicissitudes of the climate. An almost emblematic illustration of the entire situation is found on the justly famous "Uruk vase" from the late fourth millennium (Fig. 2).

Sumerian Society

Babylonia was divided into a number of semi-auto-

nomous states, each usually based on one city only. Apparent exceptions to this rule will be discussed later. The name of the city-state was usually identical with the name of its capital city.¹⁰ Each city was headed by a god or goddess, or even a whole divine family, who regarded the entire city-state as their property. The borders between two city-states were fixed but could be subject to discussion among the gods. Around the cities lay their agricultural hinterland, dotted with villages; beyond that was the empty steppe, where the shepherd could graze his flock on the sparse vegetation of thorny shrubs, and where the hunter-cum-robber prowled.

The total number of the Sumerian city-states is difficult to assess and may have varied considerably over time. Sargon of Akkade (around 2330) mentions that, during his conquest of southern Babylonia, he fought Lugalzagesi of Uruk and the 50 city-state rulers allied with him. At that time, we may conclude, there were at least 51 city-states. Even though this number is only an approximation, it indicates the rough order of magnitude. The area covered by each of these city-states is also certain to have varied widely, but we have exact data on none of them. The state of Lagash, consisting of at least three cultic centres, is estimated around 2400 B.C. to have included up to 3000 square kilometers of irrigated land,¹¹ but that is probably a maximum estimate, and Lagash may well have been larger than the average. But, as already said, we are groping in the dark on this question.

Even though a large part of the population, perhaps even the majority, lived in the countryside, Sumerian culture was very much an urban one. In the city were the temples of the divine proprietors of the state and their worship and cult, considered vital for the survival of all; from the city came military protection and the management of land, water and other local resources, as well as incessant demands for food and manpower; only the city could organise the trade with foreign lands and thus procure metals, stone and timber; and only in the city were the arts, crafts and learning to be found. The villages appear to have produced nothing but the basic needs. Yet everybody depended on agriculture and husbandry for their daily bread, beer and clothing; hence the urban elites, too, were well acquainted with the facts of rural life. The traditional Sumerian literature (admittedly mostly known from much later sources) is replete with images drawn from the countryside; a "Farmer's Almanac"¹² and the "lexical texts" enumerating all sorts of cultivated plants and domestic animals belonged to

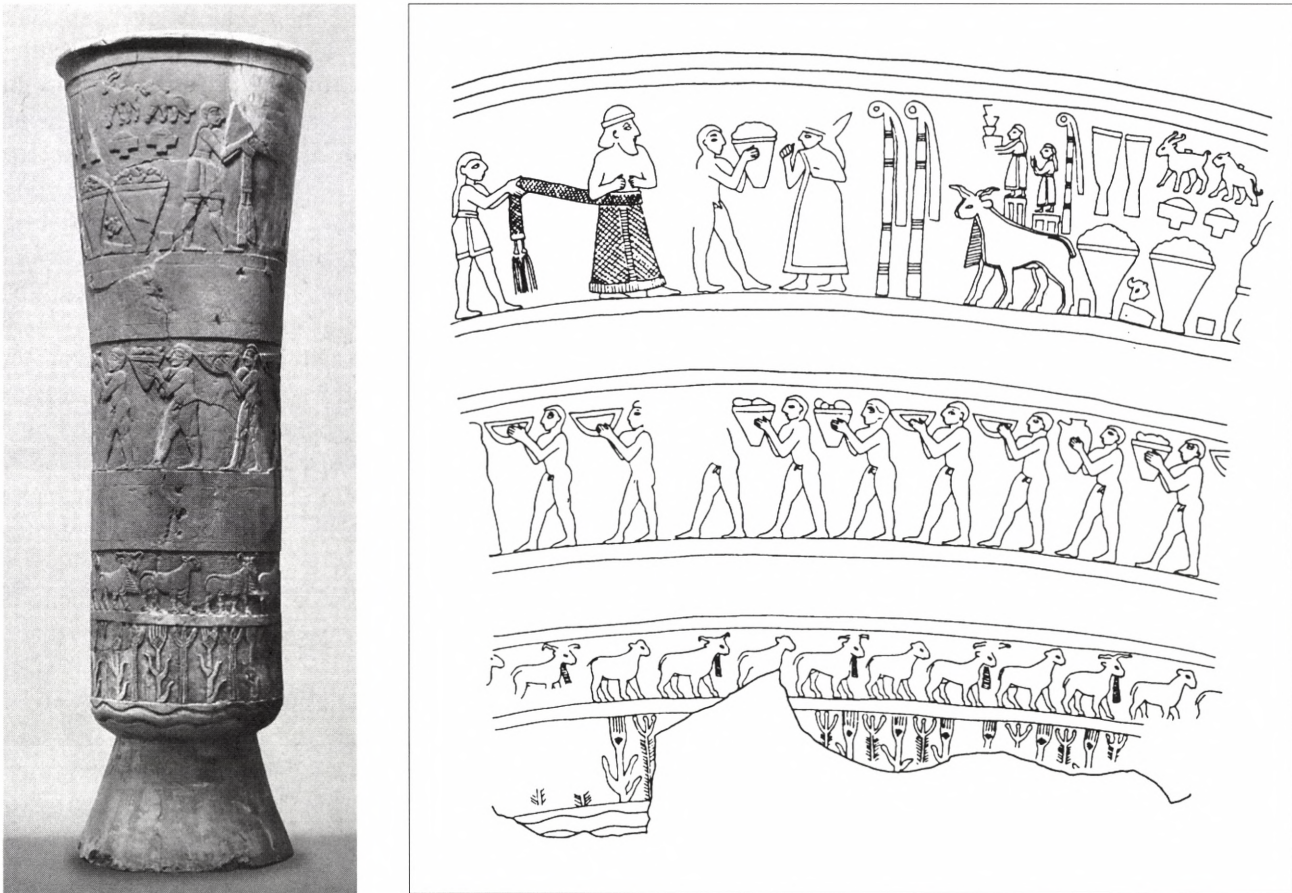


Fig. 2. The so-called Uruk Vase, in photograph and drawing. The banded relief is to be read from below like most Sumerian reliefs. In the lowest register, date palms and stalks of grain grow near a canal (the wavy lines at the bottom), while some distance from it, livestock is raised. In the middle register, naked men (priests?) bring provisions for a cultic festival, while in the upper register, the city ruler (partly restored), accompanied by his retinue, brings some of the harvest as an offering to Inanna. The goddess, standing before the entrance to her temple, receives the city ruler, while inside the temple, various cultic implements, votive statuettes and storage jars filled to the brim can be seen.

The vase is of alabaster and about 1 m high. It dates to about 3000 B.C. and was found in Uruk, within the temple complex of Eanna. It was already broken when it was deposited where the excavators found it. It is now in the Iraq Museum, Baghdad.

Sources: Photograph: E. Strommenger, *Fünf Jahrtausende Mesopotamien*, Hirmer Verlag, München 1962, Tf. 19. Drawing: M. van de Mieroop, *The Ancient Mesopotamian City*, Oxford University Press 1999, p. 32.

the scribes' school curricula. The great temples, centres of the highest urban culture, were also great land-owners.

The basic principle in Sumerian social structure appears to have been like that of a crystal of salt: no matter how finely you grind a salt crystal, each grain still has the same atomic structure as the whole. A Sumerian village was governed by a body of village elders, called "field fathers" (*abba ašaga*¹³), who presumably decided on such things as when to irrigate and harvest and kept track of who owned what fields. The city was governed by an assembly of city elders (*abba uru*) under the chairmanship of the city ruler. The city rulers met in an assembly (*unken*) under the

chairmanship of a "big man" (*lugal*) to decide on peace or war and to adjudicate disputes between city-states. This is a structure of extraordinary resilience: if by some calamity the top layers are removed, the remaining ones can continue functioning without much change. The Sumerians ascribed a similar organisation to their gods. The Sumerians also had an extraordinary gift for bureaucracy. The city administration seems to have been an unbelievably complex machinery, with innumerable officials, of whose duties we often know next to nothing; and again, the Sumerians ascribed the same principle to their gods. Each god had his or her specific function. For instance, Kulla was the divine patron of brick-making.¹⁴

Each of these structures – village, town, city, and the assembly of city rulers – however imperfectly known, deserves a closer look. It should be noted, however, that the native terminology does not distinguish between “village”, “town” and “city” – all alike are *uru* in Sumerian.

The village. To my knowledge, only a single Sumerian village has actually been excavated and studied.¹⁵ It dates from ca. 2900 B.C. but resembles a traditional modern Iraqi village so much that the excavator’s Iraqi workmen felt very much at home in it and immediately could identify the various installations they found. Otherwise, the villages have been identified only in surveys by the scattering of potsherds on the surface. The potsherds also serve to date them.

We are woefully ignorant about Sumerian village culture. At least the later urban Babylonians (ca. 1800 B.C.) thought that the village lacked even the most elementary refinements of culture: “there is no diviner in a village!”¹⁶ Similar urban sentiments may well have been a constant throughout history. Modern Iraqi parallels suggest a much more complex village life than the mere procurement of food;¹⁷ but we know nothing about the Sumerian villagers’ relations with the gods of the land. Nor do we know whether they belonged to one lineage or not. A Sumerian village does not seem to have had its own patron deities; nor did it have a defensive wall.

Villages served as the source of foodstuffs and wool for the towns and cities, and of manpower for large public projects decided on and carried out by the city, such as dredging a major canal; and the recruiting official was much feared and hated, to judge by later evidence. However, there is no evidence of physical resistance by the villagers, nor of military coercion. Modern tax-payers are no different.

Villages were not the only settlements in the countryside. There were also rural sanctuaries, presumably along the overland roads and at the junctions of canals, where travellers could offer up a small gift and pray for their safe journey.

The town. This is the modern designation of a city dependent on a capital city. Towns had temples for their patron deities and defensive walls and open squares, just like the cities.¹⁸ A town was headed by the director (*sanga*) of the main temple in its midst, who was responsible to the city ruler in the capital of the city-state. The names of the inhabitants often honour the local deity (e.g. Damu at Isin, a town

within the city-state of Nippur). Legal disputes could be referred to the city ruler if they could not be settled locally. Whether these towns had formerly been the capitals of independent statelets that were later incorporated in another one remains unknown. The following cases are instructive: around 2300, and possibly much earlier, Isin was a town in the city-state of Nippur; but later, it was independent and even became the capital of all Babylonia during the first centuries of the second millennium (the so-called Isin dynasty, ca. 2000-1850 B.C.). Kesh was a city in its own right about 3000 B.C.; but 600 years later it was apparently abandoned and was a ceremonial centre in the city-state of Adab. Zabala was a large town in the city-state of Umma; and around 2430, Il, the *sanga* of Inanna’s temple at Zabala, was the nephew of the city ruler Urlumma of Umma. When Urlumma was defeated and presumably killed in a battle with Entemena of Lagash, Il became the city ruler of Umma in his place.

The city. In physical terms, a Sumerian city, from temples to hovels, was built of mud. The sun-dried mudbrick, made from clay mixed with chopped straw, was used everywhere. Baked bricks were a luxury (in Babylonia, fuel is in short supply) and were used only in some foundations of city walls. A house built in mudbrick lasts for hardly more than 40 years. It is then demolished and a new one is built on top of the rubble of the old. In this way, a Babylonian city eventually lies on top of an enormous mound of old rubbish – its own predecessors. Some of these rubbish heaps still stand to a height of 25 m above the surrounding plain. Of course the temples, built of the same material, needed constant maintenance too, a task that fell to the city ruler.

All Sumerian cities seem to have been surrounded by a city wall for defensive purposes, though few have been found in excavations. Within the city wall, there was a crowding of houses with narrow, winding streets in between. There were also open squares, presumably market places where people could shop for their daily needs. And, towering above all the houses, there were the temples of the city’s divine owners and protectors, and (presumably) the city ruler’s residence. The main temple of course belonged to the patron deity of the city, but there were many lesser ones besides.

Within a Sumerian city we can expect to find the following institutions and population groups: the temples of its patron gods, the city ruler and his “palace” (*é-gal*), the assembly of the city elders, the free citizens, the resident aliens, and the slaves.

The temples. A Sumerian temple was of course in principle the god's abode. He or she was physically present in the shape of a statue, made of wood with gold plating and dressed in the best finery; but of course this was not the deity's only manifestation. The statue was the object of the regular cult and the recipient of the daily offerings. Only a few specially consecrated priests were qualified to approach the statue directly. Besides the main deity, there were many lesser ones: family members, servants, and even deified music instruments and cultic implements, which received offerings of their own. Also, many of the lesser deities had their own temples.

But the temple was much more than just the house of the god and the centre of the cult. It was an institution with considerable economic power. The temple owned land and employed hundreds of workers to cultivate it. These were remunerated with monthly allotments of raw barley, sometimes also wool and oil, from the temple's stores. It is worthy of note that the remunerations were not issued to the worker only. His wife, who presumably worked for the temple too, would also be paid, and even their infant children. The higher ranks in the temple staff were given prebend land which they had the right to use but not to sell. The temple's assets were managed by an administrative director (*sanga*) who apparently had no cultic functions.

It is an open question how far the temples were economically integrated in the city as a whole. Some temples – Enlil's temple in Nippur, or Bau's temple in Lagash – appear to have been largely autarkic and self-sufficient. In other cases, the temples were fully integrated in the city economy, managed by the city ruler. There were no doubt enormous variations in the relations between temple and city, but we know very little.

Some large temples lay in splendid isolation far away from the city, even though they were a part of the official cult of the city-state. They had once been the centres of cities that were later abandoned; but the cult and the temples were maintained nonetheless. As the places where they lay continue to be mentioned in the temple records of the city, we get the impression that the city-state of Lagash consisted of three urban centres; the city-states of Ur and Adab, of two each. In terms of ceremonial centres, that is a correct impression; in terms of civic and political importance, it is not. However, in a few cases, we do seem to have a multi-centre city-state before us, such as the Umma-Zabala state; but Zabala was a large town subordinated to Umma.

The city ruler. There is a bewildering array of titles for this figure. In Lagash, Umma, Nippur, Adab and various other places, he was called *ensi*, the literal meaning of which is obscure. In other cities, he was called *lugal*, literally "big man", followed by the name of his city; but as *lugal* is also used of the ceremonial head of the assembly of city rulers (see below), confusion reigns. Nor are these titles freely interchangeable. Urnanshe of Lagash (ca. 2530 B.C.) styled himself *lugal* of Lagash, as some of his shadowy predecessors had done. For unknown reasons, Urnanshe's seven successors, among them his own son Akurgal, all styled themselves *ensi* of Lagash, except that his grandson Eannatum late in his reign also claimed the title *lugal*.¹⁹ Eannatum's successors were all *ensi* of Lagash. Then Urukagina (ca. 2340) styled himself *ensi* of Lagash during the first two years of his reign, as his predecessors had done, but then changed his title to *lugal* of Lagash and counted his regnal years once again from that event on. In other words, the difference between being *ensi* of Lagash and being *lugal* of Lagash was to him obvious and important enough to merit a renewed year count; but to us it is totally opaque.

The city ruler acted as the city god's human deputy and managed the assets of the city as a whole. His residence was called "the big house" (*é-gal*), which probably came close to our City Hall. There the city's imports from foreign lands were delivered. He was responsible for the maintenance of the temples and, presumably, of the city wall and other public facilities, such as the canal system. He also acted as judge in disputes between his citizens. With the possible exception of the *en* at Uruk, and certainly the *ensi* at Lagash, he had no cultic functions. Presumably, he chaired the assembly of the city elders; but beyond the existence of those city elders, we know almost nothing about them or their powers. In part, this is no doubt due to the tendency in dedicatory and commemorative inscriptions to present the building of a temple, for instance, as done by the *ensi* personally, not as the result of a decision by the council of city elders.²⁰

The free citizens. These formed the bulk of the city's population. Many of them worked for the temples or were attached to the city ruler's "big house"; but there were also a large number of people without any permanent affiliation to the great institutions. They were artisans and craftsmen of all sorts, bankers, or tradesmen. Some, perhaps many, were absentee landowners or *Ackerbürger*, as known from other city-

state cultures, i.e. farmers who lived in the city and every day walked to their fields outside the walls.

A citizen was called “the son” of his city. We know nothing about what rights and duties citizenship actually implied. But there is no doubt that the citizens were quite proud of their city and its gods. The home city-state and its gods defined the identity of every Sumerian, as revealed by their personal names. Almost all Sumerian names are meaningful; they are usually short statements of a religious nature, such as “servant-of-DN” (= divine name), “DN-is-my father”, “DN-is-my-honour”. The divine names are almost always those of the local city-state. Also the city itself, always mentioned simply as *uru*, “the City”, is celebrated in the names, for instance, “the-City-grew-up-with-Heaven” (i.e. was primordial, created at the same time as the rest of the world), or “the-City-of-reliable-pronouncements” (meaning not exactly clear, as so much in Sumerian!). If nothing else, such names, very common, show how thoroughly urban was Sumerian culture.

None of the large institutions, including the city itself, shows any trace of a lineage-based organisation. Kinship appears to have been unimportant, except that there was a tendency – no more – that high offices, including that of the city ruler, would pass from father to son. But among the free citizens we do see extended family structures. They cut across the various groupings within the city. One member of a family may serve as a temple official, others as artisans or bankers without any institutional affiliation.²¹

Within the city, the citizens appear to have been divided into groupings called *imrua*. This subdivision occasionally appears in city administration documents and must somehow relate to the city ruler’s organisation of labour; but otherwise its significance is unknown. From later sources (1900-1600 B.C.) it is known that cities were divided into quarters (Akkadian *bābtum*), each usually associated with one of the gates in the city wall. Within a *bābtum*, people evidently knew one another and chose their witnesses in a lawsuit among them. Sumerian texts of about the same time describe a ritual where, on the ninth day of the month Abu, the young men from a *dag-gi-a* (the Sumerian equivalent of *bābtum*) arrange fist-fights and wrestling matches by torch-light in the night before the city gate, in honour of the memory of Gilgamesh. Whether all this has anything to do with the earlier *imrua*, and whether the *imrua* or the later *bābtum* are related to the extended families we see in the records, is entirely unknown, but the question seems pertinent.²²

The craftsmen appear to have been organised in trade unions of a sort, again with no evident kinship structure. For instance, the smiths (*simug*) were headed by a “chief smith” (*gal-simug*) who could take the occasional work commission from the temple or the “big house” and was paid in cash, i.e. weighed silver. “Lexical texts”, from about 3100 B.C. on, enumerate many such chief representatives of their professions.²³

One such professional organisation, that of the “merchants” (*damgar*), deserves special mention. They were the ones who travelled to foreign lands and procured much, if not all, of the city-state’s imports. They were commissioned by the temple or the city ruler to provide whatever was needed in imported raw materials, and were supplied with the domestic surplus production required for that task. That they also conducted their own private business besides, or that of their friends and relatives, goes almost without saying. In later times, at least, they also served as ambassadors to the same foreign lands, as they enjoyed international immunity. Even if two countries were at war, their citizens and their gods ought not to lack spices, incense or cedar beams!

The scribes,²⁴ to whom we owe most of our knowledge about the Sumerian city-state, appear also to have formed such a trade union. No doubt most of them worked as accountants for the great institutions and were possibly trained by them; but they were essentially freelance professionals. Enough of them are found in non-institutional contexts to show that literacy was not limited to the temple. The education of a scribe clearly went far beyond mere literacy. They mastered mathematics, law, theology and the largely religious traditional literature of their culture. Even so, contrary to what is often said, most scribes appear to have enjoyed only modest esteem and fortunes. A good musician did far better and was far more relevant to the cult in the temple and the entertainment at court. Scholars today will nod in sad recognition.

The resident aliens. These were apparently very few in number and were mainly ambassadors from other city-states, fed and clothed by the city administration. There seems to have been almost none of the lateral mobility of the population known from Old Babylonian times (1900-1600 B.C.), where members of the same family could live in several cities and yet maintain close contact.

Singers and musicians, and to some extent scribes, did travel from city to city; but they can hardly be described as “resident aliens”.

Slaves. Slavery had little economic significance. None of the great institutions employed slave workers. Slaves are only found in private households in numbers up to four or five, where they may have assisted their master in whatever profession he plied. The city ruler could of course buy a slave for his own domestic use, just as any other citizen could.

Most of the slaves known to us by name have Sumerian names and were thus native Mesopotamians. The most likely explanation for this is that these unfortunate people were once free citizens who had fallen on hard times and had had to sell themselves as slaves in order to survive. Yet their situation may not have been all that bad. A “house-born slave” was a highly valued, trusted servant. Abject chattel slavery was apparently unknown.

The Over-arching Institutions

Our understanding of the institutions that linked the individual city-states to each other is so patchy, and there are so many quite incompatible interpretations of the available data, that I think it is best to describe the disparate bits of evidence and then try to make some kind of synthesis.

The Assembly. In a hymn by King Shulgi of Ur (ca. 2050 B.C.), as well as in even later mythological texts (the extant copies are of early second millennium date), an assembly (*unken*) is mentioned where decisions are made which affect the country as a whole. In the mythological texts, the gods convene, under the chairmanship of An, the sky-god of Uruk, and Enlil, the storm-god of Nippur, to discuss such matters as the destruction of Ur. Only when everyone had said “So be it” was the decision carried out. Shulgi is more succinct: “In the assembly, they listen to me.”²⁵ The assembly that listened to Shulgi is of course not that of the gods but its earthly counterpart, the assembly of city rulers chaired by the *lugal* (on whom, see below). Both appear to have held their sessions in Enlil’s temple in Nippur.

Doubtless this institution of an assembly, in Heaven of the gods of the various cities, on Earth of their human executives, is ancient. The mythological texts are traditional, and their basic conceptions are of high, if unknown antiquity. King Shulgi of Ur was the second of a dynasty (the so-called Third Dynasty of Ur, or Ur III for short, about 2100-2000 B.C.) which sought to centralise power in the person of the *lugal* to an extent hitherto unknown; and yet he saw fit to

mention the assembly, albeit as a mere rubber-stamp institution. His remark is so brief as to suggest that everyone would know which assembly he meant; but even so he conveys an important piece of information, namely that (in theory at least) he must *persuade* the members, he cannot just give them orders.

As a matter of fact, an *unken* is mentioned in several administrative documents from Uruk as early as ca. 3000 B.C.; but the significance of this is unknown. The texts themselves are barely deciphered. References to a *ki-unken*, “the place of the assembly”, are also known from records from Shuruppak, dating to about 2600 B.C.; but again, the significance of this is uncertain.

Ki-en-gi. This is the native designation of the Sumerian land, the geographical equivalent of the institution *unken*, “the assembly”. The literal meaning of the term is unknown. From 2100 onwards, when the kings of Ur were building their empire, *ki-en-gi ki-uri* were the standard names for the Sumerian southern Babylonia and the Akkadian northern Babylonia, which we translate as Sumer and Akkad. But *ki-en-gi* is mentioned already in mythological texts from 2600 on, where it appears to be the land which the gods once divided among themselves. Enshakushanna of Uruk, who was *lugal* around 2350 B.C., described himself as “*en* of *ki-en-gi*, *lugal* of the Land”. It is tempting to interpret this double title as the cultic and the political aspects of the same entity: *ki-en-gi* was the area of the cultic confederacy of the Sumerian city states, the “land” that acknowledged the *lugal* Enshakushanna. On the *lugal*, see below.

In the course of the third millennium, *ki-en-gi* became increasingly limited to southern Babylonia. Around 2600, it encompassed all of Babylonia, from Kish in the north to Ur in the south; but around 2350, it reached no further north than Nippur. The reason for this contraction of *ki-en-gi* seems to be the steady immigration of Akkadians from Upper Mesopotamia from about 2800 on. They settled peacefully in northern Babylonia, first in the countryside and then in the cities. With them came other gods, another language, another culture. However much they took over from the Sumerians, they were not Sumerians. They could not participate in the Sumerian cult based on the Sumerian language. Enshakushanna, *lugal* around 2350, treated Kish in northern Babylonia as a foreign city: he raided it and dedicated the spoils to Enlil in Nippur. After all, one of the *lugal*’s duties was to keep foreigners in check (see below). And Lugalzagesi, the last independent *lugal*, only enumerates cities south of

Nippur in his inscription, including of course Nippur itself.

Ki-en-gi appears further in administrative records from Shuruppak (ca. 2600), in connection with some or all of six cities, namely Uruk, Adab, Nippur, Shuruppak, Lagash and Umma. In some of these contexts, a *ki-unken*, “place of the assembly”, also appears. Some of these texts list contingents of men (troops?) who are said to go to *ki-en-gi* or to reside there; others enumerate fields from some of the cities that are allotted to *ki-en-gi* or *ki-unken*.²⁶ The significance of this is not yet understood.

The lugal. As with the city rulers, we have a number of titles for this figure. Besides simply *lugal*, he was known in the earliest times as *lugal kiši*, later as *lugal kalama*, “*lugal* of the Land”. The last to use the title *lugal kiši* was Lugalkinshedudu, around 2430. What the earlier title actually means has been much debated.²⁷ Most likely, it mentions the city of Kish in northern Babylonia;²⁸ but with the possible exception of Mebaragesi, the earliest known incumbent (ca. 2700),²⁹ none of the *lugal* known to us as *lugal kiši* came from that city but from various southern centres. The local city rulers of Kish were titled, variously and confusingly, as *ensi kiši* and *lugal kiši*. The change of *lugal kiši* to *lugal kalama* may have been due to the fact that in later times, Kish was no longer a Sumerian city. A neat instance of the change is afforded by Enshakushanna of Uruk, *lugal kalama* around 2350, who defeated Yinbi-Ashtar, the local ruler of Kish (*lugal kiši.ki*) and raided his city.

Shortly after 2000 B.C., a text was composed which enumerates all the *lugal* who had ruled the land since “*nam-lugal* (“*lugal*-ship”) came down from Heaven” – the so-called *Sumerian King List*, or *SKL*. The basic structure of this text is quite simple: “When *nam-lugal* came down from Heaven, it was in city A. In city A, X became *lugal* and exercised (*nam-lugal*) for x years. Y exercised for x years. Z exercised for x years . . . City A was smitten with weapons, its *nam-lugal* was carried to city B. In city B, N became *lugal* and exercised for x years”, etc. This list of successive *lugal* is divided into two sections, one before the Flood, with five cities, and one “after the Flood had swept over the land”, down to the author’s own time. Especially those before the Flood were made of good timber: one held *nam-lugal* for 28,800 years, another for 36,000. Enmeluanna of Bad-tibira leads them all with his 43,200 years. About half of the available manuscripts omit the antediluvian section, which is therefore believed to be a later addition to the original text.

This text was clearly considered a serious scholarly work in the early second millennium. Copies have been found from Susa in Persia to Tell Leilan in Syria, with Nippur, Isin, Larsa, Sippar and Kish in between. It was evidently the backbone of the history of the land as seen by native tradition around 2000 B.C. According to that tradition, *nam-lugal* was always held by a city and exercised by the city ruler there. It passed from one city to another as the result of the military defeat of the incumbent city.

Modern scholars have not been so kind to it. They quickly noted that many “kings” (actually city rulers) of the period between 2550 to 2330, who are known from their own inscriptions, fail to appear in the *SKL*. In particular, the unbroken sequence of the nine “kings” of Lagash, whom we know relatively well from contemporary texts, is omitted entirely. Lagash is not mentioned at all in the *SKL*. Scholars also noted that some *lugal* in the *SKL* are separated by several hundred years, while we know them to have been roughly contemporary, albeit in different cities. In short, they say, the *SKL* is anachronistic in the sense that it projects back in time the concept of a unified Babylonia under one king, current around 2000 B.C., onto an earlier reality of many feuding city-states. They even say that it is a propagandistic work designed to legitimise the sole rule of some early second-millennium dynasty, only they cannot agree on exactly which dynasty.

Some of our difficulties with the *SKL* (though certainly not all) disappear if we make four assumptions: 1) that the *SKL* is a list, not of kings of all Babylonia, nor of local rulers in the cities mentioned, but of the ceremonial heads of the assembly (*unken*), i.e. the *lugal*; 2) that a *lugal* was at the same time the local ruler of one of the cities; 3) that Enlil, the storm-god of Nippur, regarded by many Sumerians as “the father of the gods”, made and unmade the *lugal*, though Nippur itself never held *nam-lugal*; 4) that Lagash for most of its recorded history in the two centuries before 2330 did not belong to *ki-en-gi*, the league of cities whose rulers met in the assembly. There is plentiful contemporary evidence for assumptions 2-4, and one piece of evidence to the contrary. I shall mention only the most important of both.

Lugalzagesi, the last independent *lugal* around 2340 B.C., began his career as city ruler (*ensi*) of Umma, as his father had been. Under unknown circumstances, he became the ruler of the far more prestigious city of Uruk and, perhaps in connection with that, he was installed as *lugal* in Nippur. For that ceremony, he had more than 60 calcite cups made and

inscribed with a long inscription.³⁰ In poetic language, it describes a reign of bliss for a number of cities under his guidance (e.g. “with him, Ur raises high its head like a bull . . . Umma, beloved by (the god) Shara, lifts its huge horns; all Zabala cries out like a mother sheep to whom her lamb has been returned”). Even the foreign lands, normally home to murderous barbarians, submit in peace. But Lagash stands out by its absence in the inscription. Most likely, the cups were made as beer mugs for the city rulers (who doubtless were all literate) and their retinue who met for the occasion in Enlil’s temple; but as these mugs were also dedicated to Enlil, they could not be removed from his temple, until the American excavators of Nippur did so between 1893 and 1900. The inscription also says *expressis verbis* that Enlil had chosen Lugalzagesi.

An administrative record from Nippur is dated to “the year when Lugalzagesi received *nam-lugal*”, no doubt referring to the same event. Similar records mention two further *lugal* in their year names; but the exploits of those *lugal* took place far from Nippur.³¹ It seems that the *lugal* had a special relation with Nippur, more precisely with Enlil, since accountants in Nippur dated their documents after them. That all three *lugal* known from Nippur year names reappear in the *SKL* is of course nice but hardly proof: the *SKL* contains well over a hundred names.

In Enlil’s temple, many dedicatory inscriptions other than Lugalzagesi’s have been found, dating from the time between 2500 and 2330 (and of course also later, but not earlier³²). Not one of them is dedicated by local citizens of Nippur, not even the city ruler. Except for a large calcite vessel dedicated by Entemena, *ensi* of Lagash (ca. 2430), all of the donors are *lugal*. Some of them are known from the *SKL*. Presenting gifts to the Most High was evidently not for everyone. And not one of these *lugal* hailed from Nippur; Enlil’s own city never held *nam-lugal*. Entemena’s gift to Enlil is only seemingly an exception. Its fragmentary inscription³³ reveals it to be a return favour for the recognition by Enlil (and presumably his *lugal*) of Entemena’s independence and the autonomous status of his city-state Lagash. In the same vein, Entemena concluded a “brotherhood” pact with the *lugal* Lugalkinshedudu.³⁴ Entemena is also known to have introduced a cult of Enlil in Lagash, which must be regarded as another *quid pro quo*.

As already said, Lagash did not belong to *ki-en-gi*, while Umma did. It had not always been so. The patron deity of Lagash, Ningirsu, appears in the religious literature and god lists from ca. 2600 along with

all the others; administrative records from the same time count men from Lagash among contingents from other cities of *ki-en-gi*; and Mesilim, who was *lugal* around 2650, had settled the dispute between Lagash and Umma and drawn the boundary between them. But for two centuries after 2530, Lagash maintained its independence and pursued its conflict with Umma on the battlefield with varying success. Perhaps a *lugal* after Mesilim had judged the conflict in Umma’s favour, and Lagash decided to opt out. But Lagash did not become an enemy of *ki-en-gi*, only of Umma. Even when Lugalzagesi, the former *ensi* of Umma, became *lugal*, he could not call on all the city-states under him to fight against Lagash but had to rely on the forces from his own cities, Umma and Uruk, alone.

Lagash is also exceptional in that it is the only city-state besides Nippur to have left “royal” inscriptions with long and detailed accounts of the political events of their time, as seen from the Lagashite point of view. No other city has produced similar accounts, only brief dedicatory inscriptions. It is tempting to see this as an indication of the independent status of the rulers of Lagash. Eventually, Lagash produced a somewhat fanciful “King List” of its own.³⁵

But if Lagash was exceptional, so was Nippur, Enlil’s own city. It never held *nam-lugal*, though we have no idea why this was so. Also, Nippur seems to have been two cities rolled into one. Ekur, the temple of Enlil at Nippur, clearly had an autonomous status within the city. The city ruler of Nippur had little, if any, authority over Ekur and its assets, nor could he dedicate votive gifts to Enlil. Enlil’s temple seems to have been the centre of all *ki-en-gi*, much as the Vatican, within the city of Rome, is the centre of the entire Catholic world.³⁶ The rest of Nippur, the domain of its city ruler, was at the same time the domain of Enlil’s son Ninurta. This god is described as *ensi-gal*, “great *ensi*”, of Nippur or of Enlil.³⁷

Against the thesis that Enlil made and unmade the *lugal*, a few facts may be noted. In one of his numerous inscriptions,³⁸ Eannatum of Lagash (ca. 2470) states that “Inanna, in her great love for him, bestowed *nam-lugal kiši.ki* on him, in addition to the *nam-ensi* of Lagash.” Inanna is here surely Inanna of Lagash, the goddess who had given Eannatum his name.³⁹ Eannatum was a valiant and ambitious warrior who, unlike his predecessors and successors at Lagash, smashed cities near and far: Kish and Akshak in northern Babylonia; Ur, Uruk, and of course Umma in the south; and various Elamite centres in the east. And yet he maintained good relations with Enlil. In

support of his claim to *nam-lugal kiši*, a small fragment of an inscription of his has actually been found at Kish.⁴⁰ I am not sure how to explain this evidence; but it is worth noting that Eannatum, who otherwise was not chary of repeating his titles and epithets in his many inscriptions, mentions this momentous honour only once. Perhaps he overplayed his hand and soon recanted. After all, his city-state Lagash was not a member of *ki-en-gi*; and yet he had claimed its highest title, on the authority of what was, after all, merely a local goddess. In any case, none of his successors at Lagash mentioned it, not even his own brother Enannatum I.

Lugalkinshedudu of Uruk and Ur (ca. 2430) donated numerous stone vases to Enlil, all inscribed with the same inscription.⁴¹ In that, he says that “ever since Enlil truthfully called him and bestowed on him both the *nam-en* and the *nam-lugal*, Lugalkinshedudu has exercised *nam-en* in Uruk and *nam-lugal* in Ur.” But in a similar vase inscription dedicated to An and Inanna of Uruk,⁴² Inanna confers on Lugalkinshedudu the very same titles. *En* was at Uruk traditionally the title of Inanna’s high priest. The *en* may also have been the city ruler there, but direct evidence for this is lacking, while both *lugal* and *ensi* are attested.⁴³

Perhaps An or Inanna of Uruk and Enlil of Nippur appointed the *lugal*. Both An and Enlil are described in Lugalkinshedudu’s inscriptions as “master of all lands,” in apparent contradiction. It seems that votive inscriptions from either city would name the local deities – An and Inanna in Uruk, Enlil in Nippur – as the sole source of *nam-lugal*. If so, we should expect to find many more statements about Inanna, or An, conferring *nam-lugal* on someone in votive inscriptions from Uruk. Maybe one day we shall – as it is, inexplicably, we have next to nothing from mid third-millennium Uruk, while we have relative plenty from Nippur. In any case, Enlil appears to have been the most important.

If, despite this ambiguity, we accept that the *lugal* was indeed the ceremonial head of the assembly (*unken*) of city rulers belonging to *ki-en-gi*, we might next seek evidence for his functions. It is willingly forthcoming.

Two “literary” texts from 2600 to 2500 B.C. mention the *lugal* dedicating objects to gods, or bringing sacrifices, in various cities not his own.⁴⁴ Some of those objects have actually been found. Fragments of alabaster bowls dedicated by Mebaragesi, *lugal ki_i* around 2700, have been found at Tutub and Tell Agrab in the Diyala Region and presumably somewhere in the south.⁴⁵ Mesilim (of Dêr?), *lugal kiši* around 2650,

left votive objects with dedicatory inscriptions in both Adab and Lagash.⁴⁶ The later votive objects from Nippur, donated by various *lugal* dating from ca. 2500 onwards, are well known.

“Royal” inscriptions from Lagash, from ca. 2470 on, repeatedly mention that the same Mesilim once had regulated the boundary between Lagash and its neighbour, the city-state of Umma, and that the rulers of Umma wilfully violated the agreement.⁴⁷ A similar regulation of the boundary between Lagash and Ur by Sargon of Akkade (around 2330) is mentioned in a letter a century later.⁴⁸ It seems that the *lugal* could judge disputes between city-states, at least if called on to do so, much as the city ruler (*ensi*) could judge disputes among his citizens, even in the various towns of his city-state.

But the most impressive testimony to the importance of the *lugal* in Sumerian culture are the innumerable personal names. As already mentioned, Sumerian personal names are almost always meaningful (see 30 above). These names of persons, high and low, which appear in their myriads in the administrative documents, constitute an almost untapped source of information chemically free of any official bias. Many names mention the *lugal* as a cultic figure: “the-*lugal*-(goes)-to-the-festival”, “the-*lugal*-(fills)-the-ceremonial-boat”, “the-*lugal*-fills-the-sanctuary”, and many more. Others describe the bliss that resulted from his cultic activities: “the-*lugal*-(brings)-life-from-Heaven”, or “the-*lugal*-(provides)-abundance-far-and-wide”. Others again stress his function as defender of the land against the barbarians: “the-*lugal*-smashes-the-foreign-lands”, or “the-foreign-lands-are-at-his-feet”. Women’s names are similar, except that they are usually based on a goddess’ name or *nin*, the consort of the *lugal*, put more stress on the caring and protective nature of the *nin*, and make no mention of defensive functions. The gods invoked in the personal names are usually those of the city-state where the person was a citizen; but names composed with *lugal* or *nin* are found everywhere, even in cities such as Nippur, Umma and Lagash, which had no *lugal*. Another large group of Sumerian personal names are based on *en*, which is a high priest of some sort, certainly a cultic figure, and at Uruk perhaps also the local city ruler. In contrast, the city ruler (*ensi*) is scarcely honoured at all in the onomasticon, except for two or three names of courtiers at Lagash.

There are some problems with these *lugal*-names. They do not extend further back in time than ca. 2900 B.C. Before that time, the very term *lugal* seems to be unknown, while we have other evidence for inter-city

relations dating two centuries earlier (the so-called “city sealings”, see below). Also, in Sumerian, *lugal* means simply “owner” or “head”; you may be the *lugal* of a boat or a house or a family. In some of the names mentioned before, *lugal* may refer to the city god, the supreme “owner” of the city state. And *nin* is not only the female counterpart of *lugal*; it is also an ordinary “sister” – and, to judge from the frequency of names mentioning the “brother” (*šeš*), we must reckon with a similar frequency of “sister”-names of females. Finally, what dictated the choice of a name for a newborn, and how much the parents thought about the literal meaning of the name, is uncertain; but what little evidence we have indicates that the literal meaning of a name was mostly unimportant. But, as already said, the study of early Sumerian personal names has barely begun, and it should be possible to sort it all out.

In conclusion, the functions of a *lugal* may be summed up as follows: a *lugal* was expected to carry out cultic functions in several cities and attend the cultic festivals there; he could adjudicate disputes between city-states; and he should keep foreign enemies and invaders at bay.

The Sumerian pantheon. However devoted the Sumerians were to the gods of their home city-state, they always acknowledged the gods of other Sumerian city-states as gods, even during war. Moreover, all these gods, whether patrons of cities or of crafts, were integrated into a comprehensive pantheon; and most considered Enlil of Nippur to be the chief god of them all, though in Uruk, An was claimed to be the head. That difference of opinion seems to have mattered little. Lugalkinshedudu of Uruk (ca. 2430) dedicated numerous stone vases to Enlil, “the master of all lands”, in Nippur; and (at least) one to An, also “the master of all lands”, in Uruk!⁴⁹

From two cities, Shuruppak and Tell Abu-Salabikh (ancient name uncertain), we have several lists of gods, all dating to around 2600 B.C. Two of these, one from each city, enumerate some 560 names of gods and goddesses, and even deified human heroes of the past. They are clearly the work of theologians attempting to list all the gods and deified heroes known in those times; and so they may not be representative of a pantheon recognized by all Sumerians. Nevertheless, almost all the names are Sumerian; and all the major city gods are found, from Zababa of Kish to Ningirsu of Lagash. The order of the names follows several conflicting principles at the same time – association by cuneiform signs, by similar nature, or by

similar location – but the beginning of the lists consists of the major gods of the pantheon. In the edition from Shuruppak, they are: An, Enlil, Inanna, Enki, Nanna and Utu; in the Abu-Salabikh edition: An, Enlil, Ninlil, Enki, Nanna, Inanna, Ningirsu. Despite some differences, both lists agree more or less on who were the “great gods”.

Literary works from the same early times confirm this picture. The clearest expression of the religious unity of all Sumerian cities are the so-called “*zà-me* hymns”, known so far only from Abu-Salabikh but in so many manuscripts that the text is almost complete.⁵⁰ After a brief introduction, in which Enlil apparently assigns cult places to the gods, the text names each of these places (often cities and towns), accompanied by a brief poetic description (most of them quite obscure to us) and concluded by “god So-and-so, praise!” In this way, Enlil indeed assigned to each god or goddess his or her place. Once again, the area covered stretches from Kish and Uruk in the north, to Lagash and Ur in the south; and once again, we see Enlil as the “father of all gods”. In the mythological texts,⁵¹ so far very imperfectly understood, it is said that the gods all descend from a primeval divine couple, Enki and Ninki (not to be confused with the “present day” gods of the same names). In short, the Sumerians attributed a common origin to all their gods. One text, known in contemporary duplicate copies from Shuruppak, Abu-Salabikh and Nippur, appears to describe how, after the Creation, the gods received their cult centres.⁵² There seems to be little doubt that all Sumerians shared the same mythological literature.

The religious literature of about 2600 B.C. was of course not written to teach us about Sumerian society. In fact, we have no idea why it was written at all, some of it even in the so-called UD.GAL.NUN secret code. That nonetheless the image of many cult centres (i.e., on the earthly level, cities) living in perfect harmony with each other under Enlil’s leadership (or An’s, if you are an Urukean) comes across so clearly in texts that are not even half understood, is a measure of its importance to the Sumerians themselves.

The “city sealings”. A “sealing” is a piece of clay with the impression of a cylinder seal on it. Many sealings appear to have served in the shipment of goods. When a jar or a basket had been filled with the goods to be sent somewhere, its opening was closed and a lump of moist clay was put on the container, around the strings that kept it closed, and a cylinder seal was rolled over the clay. In this way, nobody

could tamper with the contents without breaking the sealing until it had reached its destination. There the sealing would be broken and thrown away; but as even unfired clay is quite durable, many such fragments of sealings have survived to be excavated in modern times. Other sealings were put on doors of storage rooms. Occasionally, a seal cylinder was rolled over a tablet.

One group of such sealings has attracted much attention. Instead of the pictorial scenes that were usual on seal cylinders, this group only contains stylised cuneiform signs – the names of a number of cities arranged next to each other. These sealings have been found in Uruk, Ur, Jemdet Nasr and Urum and date from ca. 3100 to 2900 B.C. The ones from Jemdet Nasr and Urum, ca. 3100 B.C., are all impressions of the same enormous seal cylinder on tablets recording small quantities of delicatessen sent from these two cities as offerings for “the triple Inanna” in Uruk. Unfortunately, even with 14 impressions, the seal cylinder cannot be reconstructed in its entirety. The 20 or so cities named on the seal, as far as they can be identified, stretch from Urum in the north to Ur in the south. The sealings from Ur, ca. 2900 B.C., are made from different seals and mention almost only southern cities in varying order. Most of them were placed on jars.⁵³

What kind of institution or person used these seals? An interesting question without any answer! But at least they suggest that the league of Sumerian cities existed already by 3100 B.C., and that it was sufficiently formalised to possess and use seal cylinders. Why no such sealings dating later than 2900 have been found is another mystery.

Synthesis of the Above Evidence

If we attempt to reconstruct the situation about 2500 B.C., the picture emerges as follows: each Sumerian city-state was governed by a ruler, usually called *ensi*, who was sovereign within his city-state. He ruled with the consent of the assembly of city elders. Apart from building or renovating temples and equipping them with the required cultic implements and installations, his duties were purely political and administrative. With the notable exception of Lagash, the city-states were united into a loose confederacy which in times of peace was largely of a religious nature. This confederacy was headed by the *lugal*, who was at the same time the ruler of one of the city-states. On the cultic festivals, the *lugal* travelled by boat from city to city and brought offerings to the gods in each; but at

Lagash, the *ensi* had to carry out the cultic functions elsewhere fulfilled by the *lugal*. The *lugal* was appointed by Enlil in Nippur, a city which never held *nam-lugal* itself. He had no political powers, it seems, beyond that of calling the assembly of city rulers and judging disputes between them. He probably also could call on the city rulers in times of war when they were threatened by an enemy common to them all, as Lugalzagesi did when faced with the threat from Sargon of Akkade (see below). But the entire set-up had remarkably little to do with politics, as we understand it. Military alliances and feuds were no part of it but were left to the city rulers’ discretion.

Exactly how *nam-lugal* passed from one city to another is as yet unknown. The *Sumerian King List* mechanically gives military conflict as the reason; and that had indeed been the case for three and a half centuries when the *SKL* was composed. It may have been true even before that; but we have little evidence for warfare between the Sumerian cities in the third millennium, except for the protracted and bitter feud between Lagash and its neighbour Umma.

This picture is probably valid down to ca. 2330 B.C. How far it can be projected back in time is uncertain. The “city sealings” appear to belong in a similar framework, perhaps centred on Uruk rather than Nippur, and presided over by an *en* rather than a *lugal*. No doubt a confederacy of the same sort existed long before; but beyond the similarity in cultural artifacts from various places (which might be accounted for in many ways), we have no evidence. It may even be that the *en* of Uruk around 3000 B.C. ruled all the other cities in some sort of an integrated territorial state; but this remains only a distant possibility. On the one hand, the many cities in the “city sealings” suggest an assembly of equals; but, on the other, Uruk was by far the largest city back then. This problem must await future discoveries.

It will be seen that I have so far studiously avoided translating *lugal* as “king”, even though this translation is automatic in the entire scholarly literature on Mesopotamian civilisation. But there seems to have been no such autocratic figure in early Sumerian society. Decisions were made in assemblies, among gods as among villagers. The terms *lugal*, *ensi*, and *en*, are really culture-specific and therefore untranslatable and can only be explained in lengthy descriptions. But eventually, true kings did emerge in Mesopotamia.

Other Readings of the Data

Obviously, the same facts have been interpreted differently from the synthesis given above. The following is an attempt to render some of the most important of these “other readings” and to give them as fair a critique as I can.

P. Steinkeller, one of the leading experts on third-millennium Mesopotamia, recently outlined his synthesis of the data (Steinkeller [1999a]). According to Steinkeller, the Sumerian cities, from Uruk in the north to Uruk in the south, were ruled by kings called *en*, “which in Sumerian means ‘lord’ or ‘ruler’” (104) around 3000 B.C. After a gap of some 500 years with almost no sources for the political developments, around 2500 the Sumerian cities “are ruled by officials bearing the title of *ensik*, which interchanges with that of *lugal* ... The sole difference between [these two titles] is that each emphasizes a different dimension of royal power. The title *ensik*, which clearly has religious overtones, defines the status of a ruler in his rapport with the divine owner of the city-state. ... In contrast, the title *lugal*, when applied to humans, is free of any religious connotations. It describes the position of a ruler in relation to his subjects as their chief political and military leader” (112). Steinkeller then seeks to relate the question of the relationship of the earlier *en* to the more recent *ensi* (or *ensik*, as he prefers to spell it) to that of the overall ideological picture, especially the pantheon. About this, he writes that “it appears quite certain that the earliest Sumerian pantheon was dominated by female deities”, with “one dominant male figure. That was Enki, a personification of male reproductive power, the god of fresh water and creative intelligence. Enki undoubtedly was the original head of the pantheon” (113). To complete the picture, there were the three male astral deities: the sky god An, the moon god Nanna, and the sun god Utu. No Enlil here, as he was a “secondary development” in the Sumerian pantheon, possibly introduced into Nippur from northern Babylonia “in great antiquity”. Even Nippur, originally called Tummal, was the cult centre of Nin-hursag, the mother goddess (114 n. 36). But in the course of time, a number of male gods superseded the original goddesses, in new political centres. Steinkeller describes the mechanism behind this process thus: “It is as if an ambitious individual had moved out from the old capital and, in a location not too far removed from it, established for himself an independent seat of power. He then gradually wrested all real influence from the old capital, turning it eventually into a dependent religious centre.” The *ensi*,

with a military following – “this would fit what we know about the nature of the *ensik*’s office” – appropriated the *en*’s political and military powers, transferring them to the new capital, leaving to the *en* ritual functions only (115).

Much of this reconstruction cannot be documented in the sources, and some of it is plainly contradicted. It assumes a unilinear development of political power in Babylonia which is unlikely to have been ancient reality. In third-millennium Sumerian, *en* does not mean “lord”, it is a religious title. Of course, like many a cardinal or bishop in later times, the *en* may have wielded considerable political power; but only in Uruk does this seem to have been a regular feature. The *ensi*’s religious status is not confirmed by the Sumerian personal names which accord both the *en* and the *lugal* a high religious significance, while the *ensi* must languish in obscurity; and only in Lagash did the *ensi* have cultic functions. If Enlil is indeed a “secondary development”, introduced from the north (and no evidence for this is offered beyond an implausible Semitic etymology⁵⁴), he is a very early one: his city Nippur was written EN.LÍL.KI at least from 3100 B.C. onwards, literally “Enlil-place”, indicating that Enlil was well established there already then. There is no historical evidence that Tummal was the earlier name of Nippur, nor that the mother goddess Nin-hursag was its “original” deity. If Steinkeller wishes to uphold his hypothesis, he is forced back into deep prehistoric times, where any reconstruction of the “original” situation can be neither proven nor refuted.

In an earlier paper (Steinkeller [1993]), Steinkeller offered a somewhat different reconstruction. For the mid third millennium, he operates with a dichotomy between Akkadian northern Babylonia, which he says was a territorial state ruled by autocratic, secular kings; and the Sumerian south, which consisted of a number of city-states. Each of these latter was ruled by an *ensi*, who was the earthly representative of the divine owners of the city-state. The gods of the individual city-states were united into a “super extended family”, with Enlil as *pater familias*. In this capacity, Enlil “served as an arbitrator in conflicts, especially border disputes, between city-states” (without elaborating on how Enlil’s will was mediated). Southern kingship is described as weak and distinctly theocratic (116 ff). In contrast, the northern territorial state, centred on Kish, was a powerful kingdom which stretched to Mari along the Euphrates and well beyond the Tigris into the Diyala region; and a campaign by the northern cities Kish, Mari and Akshak, acting in

concert, against Eannatum of Lagash is recorded. On this background, the title *lugal kiši*, borne by several southern rulers (cf. 34 above), became also in the south “a generic term that described a particular form of kingship, namely, an autocratic and hegemonistic type that was unknown in the south, one which the southerners associated with the Kishite kingdom” (120).

This reconstruction is somewhat self-contradictory; and once again, it ignores much evidence to the contrary. Kish is described as the master of the north, and yet Mari and Akshak are presented as partners, even rivals. Besides, Kish itself appears to have been in serious decline between 2500 and 2330.⁵⁵ It is not explained why the title *lugal kiši* was abandoned by the southern rulers in favour of *lugal kalama* in the century before Sargon of Akkade (ca. 2330). It does account for the origin of the title *lugal kiši* but does not explain why weak, theocratic southern rulers would adopt the title; and the “hegemonistic” aspirations of these rulers have yet to be demonstrated. The very existence of the northern territorial state is not supported by any real evidence other than the title *lugal kiši*.

J.-J. Glassner, who wrote the predecessor to the present article (Glassner [2000]), denied that the term “city-state” can be applied to third-millennium Mesopotamia. His reasons for this are not entirely clear (35-36, 49). Apart from this, he imagined that the Sumerian states were ruled by assemblies around 3000 B.C., but that very soon afterwards the monarchy emerged. The monarch was titled *en* at Uruk, *ensi* at Lagash, and in most other places, *lugal* followed by city name. “Il est vraisemblable que les trois titres cumulés disent la totalité du concept de royauté propre à la Mesopotamie du 3^e millénaire, un concept que chaque terme, pris séparément, n’exprime que de manière incomplète,” he says (48), without going into the details of that peculiar Mesopotamian concept of kingship. The assemblies steadily lost political influence and relevance, being reduced in the end to mere juries in legal disputes. Kingship was either conferred by election (by whom?), or hereditary; and the king acquired and maintained power by the judicious use of gifts to his followers.

Glassner does not seem to consider the evidence of the early Sumerian literature or the personal names; nor does he account for the variation between *ensi* and *lugal* in the title of the Lagashite city rulers. He does provide some evidence contrary to his own thesis, that the assemblies lost political power: he describes in detail how the rebel leaders against Naramsin (ca.

2250) were elected in popular assemblies (43-44) – and this information comes from their enemy Naramsin! Also, he freely acknowledges the importance of the “city elders” (*abba uru*), who presumably sat in the assemblies, throughout the third millennium (43).

Many more “other readings” might be quoted. But this must suffice to show how far we are yet from an informed consensus on the political structure of the Sumerian city-states and their interrelations.

The End of the Sumerian City-states

In 2330 B.C., according to conventional chronology, Sargon of Akkade conquered all of Mesopotamia. Akkade was a city on the extreme northeastern periphery of Babylonia.⁵⁶ Sargon defeated the *lugal* Lugalzagesi and the 50 city rulers who accompanied him to the battlefield, and took him personally prisoner. He brought Lugalzagesi in fetters to Nippur and had him exhibited in the entrance gateway to Enlil’s temple. In this way, Sargon demonstrated to all with eyes to see that Enlil had rejected Lugalzagesi as *lugal* and had chosen Sargon instead.

The Sumerians apparently did not agree. Sargon had to conquer most of the Sumerian cities one after another and dismantle their fortifications. Only then could he wash his weapons in the Lower Sea, that is, the Persian Gulf.

Sargon introduced a new conception: kingship. As far as we can judge today, Akkadian culture did acknowledge real kingship, the concept of the powerful and largely secular monarch who could protect the weak against the strong and his people against enemies, who could organise the entire workforce of his land towards a single goal without anyone objecting. From now on, the term *lugal* acquired a new meaning, that of “the king”. “A people without a king is like a flock of sheep without a shepherd”, says a Babylonian proverb. What little is known about Upper Mesopotamian society before Sargon points to a much more centralised, “palatial” economy and administration.⁵⁷ The temples in the north were apparently of minor economic significance and were subordinate to the secular king. After his conquest of the Sumerian southern Babylonia, Sargon was the undisputed master of the land, of Sumerians and Akkadians alike; and he ruled it as a territorial state under a king. He revived the ancient title *lugal kiši*, apparently in an attempt to stress the unity of northern and southern Babylonia. He made his own city Akkade the capital of the entire land, and all the hitherto more or less autonomous city-states became mere provinces of the

centrally governed territorial state. As he could not rely on the loyalty of the Sumerian city rulers he had just defeated, he installed “sons of Akkade”, i.e., the leaders of his own power base Akkade, as city rulers. Most likely that experiment failed miserably and was never repeated; other solutions were found. Sumerian city-state bureaucracy is so intricate that it cannot be mastered by anyone who has not grown up with it. Yet the aspiration towards a centrally governed territorial state is unmistakable.

Sargon ruled for at least four years after his conquest of the south, probably much more, and was then succeeded by his son Rimush. At Sargon’s death, the Sumerian cities (except Nippur) revolted in a victory-or-death rebellion. For thousands, it was death. Rimush gives the exact numbers of those who fell in battle, and of those who were afterwards deported into labour camps. From these numbers it appears that the rebel cities lost between a quarter and a third of their male workforce. No sane city ruler would think of further armed resistance after that; and none was in fact attempted until some 50 years later. But the numbers of the slain also show how bitter was the Sumerian resistance against Akkade and its rule. Later copies of the votive inscriptions dedicated by Rimush to Enlil, made by 19th century B.C. historians at Nippur, survive to tell us about all this.

Even though Rimush does not say why the Sumerian cities rebelled, they had two good reasons. One is that the Sumerians considered Sargon and his “sons of Akkade” to be foreigners; another, that the cities had lost their relative autonomy. All of them were reduced to towns under Akkade and its king. It was in fact the end of the Sumerian city-states and their entire culture as the city rulers knew it. For even though the Empire of Akkade collapsed a century or so later, its example was never forgotten. The ideal of a unified Babylonia ruled by one capital city and its king was brought to perfection by the kings of Ur (the so-called Ur III dynasty, ca. 2100-2000 B.C.) and survived two centuries of fragmentation during the early second millennium, until Babylon became the undisputed centre. The Akkadian Empire became the model for all future kings; the sagas about it were retold during two millennia afterwards, both as an ideal to be emulated and as a warning against human hubris. Nobody wished to follow the example of the early Sumerian city-state culture, it seems.

Conclusion

Does early Sumerian society, as described above, fit Mogens Hansen’s definition of a city-state culture? Despite my lack of interest in such questions (cf. 24 above), the answer must be a clear Yes. The only question is how much political power was exercised by the *lugal*; but as far as I can see, he had no constitutional power to impose his will on the city-states. Politically, he was acknowledged as *primus inter pares*, nothing more, despite his tremendous religious significance. Religious integration and political fragmentation is the main impression one gets from the scattered and woefully inadequate sources.

Notes

1. Elizabeth Stone (1999) argued rather persuasively that the ecological conditions of Babylonia favour the formation of city-states rather than larger, territorial states. But as such territorial states were certainly known and considered superior by the Babylonians themselves from the late third millennium onwards, I see no reason why it could not have been the same in late prehistoric times. At least, Uruk’s exceptionally large size around 3000 B.C. calls for some explanation.
2. The absolute chronology of early Mesopotamia is a most inexact science. The dates quoted in the following are informed guesses and reasonable estimates, based on various inconclusive indications, and on the datum 2330 B.C. = Sargon’s conquest of southern Babylonia. This datum is itself by no means certain.
3. So far only preliminary reports are available, see Gibson (2000); Emberling (2001) 21 ff.
4. Uruk was also ten times larger than even the largest contemporary cities in Babylonia. Only the much later capitals of Assyria and Babylonia, Nineveh and Babylon, grew beyond the size of early Uruk.
5. For a good overview of that documentation, see Englund (1998).
6. For some different opinions, see 37 below.
7. Mieroop (1999) 17, said it well: As usual, a scholarly classification obscures the details one can observe in our data. The proficiency of scholars in obfuscation as well as explanation should not be underestimated. Also, with regard to societies as poorly known and investigated as the Sumerian, it might be said that no comparative linguist would attempt to classify unknown languages.
8. This view of native religious expressions as merely politics by other means pervades almost all modern writings on ancient Mesopotamia. One recent instance of this is Mieroop (1999), who believes that religious ideology was used by the priesthood to extract produce from the rural population (32, cf. also 24 and 217). Some of us moderns apparently find it difficult to accept that the gods were in fact the movers and shakers of history, no matter what our ancient sources may say. At all costs, we must reduce the three-dimensional world view of the ancients to our own two-dimensional one to find it credible. Is that good historical method? For a lucid critique of a similar rationalist reading of Sumerian myths, see Jacobsen (1946) 150-52 = (1970) 129-31.

9. This is the so-called “Uruk Phenomenon”, which has spawned a considerable discussion. Most authors assume that the colonists came from Uruk itself; but the later presence of Enlil and Ninhursag at Mari, and of the moon-goddess Ningal at Ugarit, indicates that Nippur, Kesh and Ur took part in the colonisation as well. That the colonists were indeed Sumerians is indicated by early Sumerian loan-words in later North-west Semitic dialects, such as Proto-NWS **haikallum*, palace (from an archaic form **hai-kal* of Sumerian *é-gal*, literally “big house”), with descendants in Ugaritic, Hebrew and Aramaic; or **kurrum*, a container with a standardised capacity (Hebrew *kor*), from Sumerian *gur*. Cf. Mankowski (2000) 51-52, 73.
10. One well-known exception is the city-state of Lagash, which in historical times (from ca. 2550 B.C. on) had Girsu as its capital. Scholars usually infer, perhaps correctly, that the city Lagash, which in historical times was a ceremonial centre only, had once been the capital city.
11. Diakonoff (1956) 174.
12. See Civil (1994) for the most recent edition. In its present form, it dates no earlier than 1900 B.C.
13. To my knowledge, this term is found only once, in a legal document from Eshnunna, written in Akkadian and dating to about 2220 B.C. (UCP 9/2, no. 83 iii 3 4: 1 *sá-lim-a-ḥu dumu rí-ba-tim abba-ašas šī maš-gan.ki*, “Salim-ḥu, son of Ribatum, the village elder of Mashkan”, among the witnesses). The text is therefore both later and geographically outside the scope of this article, and even written in the wrong language. Our evidence is often like this.
14. On this god, see W.G. Lambert (1987). Kulla naturally played a large part in rituals concerned with the foundations of any dwelling.
15. See Wright (1969) 43 ff.
16. VAS XVI 22, line 28: *ina kaprim bārām ul ibašši*.
17. A good example is given by Ochsenschlager (1999). Despite its forbiddingly scholarly title, this article is a perceptive description of the changing customs and internal tensions within a village and among its neighbours.
18. Even quite small towns (about 1 ha) seem to have had all the trappings of city life. See Stone (1999) 218-19, admittedly discussing early second-millennium instances.
19. Cf. Cooper (1983) 26. Eannatum also gave his father Akurgal the title *lugal*, a title which Akurgal never claimed himself.
20. Cf. Larsen (1976) 160 ff, about similar phenomena from Old Assyrian Assur (ca. 1900 B.C.). The letter from the representative of the Kanesh colony at Assur, quoted *ibid.* 163, which informs the Kanesh colony of the decision of the Assur assembly to collect 10 minas of silver (ca. 5 kg) from each of the colonies, clearly reflects the decision by the assembly to build a (new) city wall around Assur. But if ever a commemorative inscription about that work is found, it will surely be phrased as the sole initiative of the *iššiak aššur*, i.e. the Old Assyrian king, without any mention of who paid for it.
21. Evidence of this comes from the private archives and sale contracts from ca. 2600 onwards. For the time being, see Westenholz (1987) 60, concerning a family archive from Nippur of Sargonic times (ca. 2280-2240); but the much earlier contracts from Shuruppak also offer pertinent evidence.
22. A survey of the relevant archaeological evidence is found in Stone (1999) 212 ff. Perhaps she exaggerates the internal segregation a wee bit. In (1997) 19, she seems to take it for granted that the segmentation reflects vertical divisions based on affiliation, without citing her evidence. On the other hand, Mieroop (1999) 103 and 112 finds little evidence for extended families except in rural contexts; and the inhabitants of a *bābtum*, even neighbours, were unrelated to one another. The data are all second millennium or even later.
23. ATU 3, 69 85 (Lú); 86 89 (Officials).
24. For scribes in the early periods, see Visicato (2000).
25. See Wilcke (1974) 183, with further references to the ability of Urnammu and Shulgi to persuade the members of the assembly.
26. Pomponio (1994) 10 ff.
27. Maeda (1981). Instead of a chronological change, he posits a special relation between Inanna and the *lugal kiši*, while Enlil has nothing to do with it. But cf. BE I/2, 93 = Steible (1982) II, 220-21, where no Inanna appears, only Enlil and Ninlil. The author of this inscription, Ur-zà-è, *lugal kiši.ki*, is known to be a ruler of Uruk, albeit of uncertain date.
28. The title was certainly so understood by Entemena of Lagash (ca. 2430): he refers to a boundary regulation between Lagash and Umma by Mesilim, *lugal kiši.ki* (CIRPL Ent. 28-29 i 8 = Steible (1982) I, 230), adding the place-name determinative *ki* to the earlier writing used by Mesilim himself. This certainly means the city of Kish. Similarly, an unnamed *lugal kiši.ki* appears in a literary text from about 2600 B.C. (the archaic Kesh Temple Hymn, IAS 308). However, Mesilim was probably the city ruler of Dêr, not of Kish: it was on the order of Ishtaran, the patron god of Dêr, that he drew the boundary between Lagash and Umma.
29. See Steible (1982) II, 213 for the two pitiful fragments extant. Mebaragesi is assumed to be identical with Enmebaragesi, known both from the *Sumerian King List* and from other Sumerian literary works of the early second millennium as a (female?) ruler of Kish, roughly contemporary with Gilgamesh and credited with a reign of 900 years.
30. BE I/2, no. 87 = Steible (1982) II, 315 ff, Luzag. 1.
31. Westenholz (1974).
32. Earlier inscriptions must have existed. The ones we have were found broken into fragments and scattered in fill under a pavement of the temple courtyard laid down in the 13th century B.C. that is, in a context some 1200 years later than the inscriptions themselves! The earlier inscriptions were probably broken and buried within the temple area in a similar fashion, but much earlier and in a different place, presumably now below the ruin of the enormous ziggurat built by Urnammu, ca. 2100 B.C.
33. CIRPL Ent. 32 = Steible (1982) I, 247-48.
34. See the detailed discussion of this in Cooper (1983) 31.
35. Sollberger (1967). Sollberger considers this text, which so far is known in one copy only, written about 1800 B.C., to be a parody on the *SKL*.
36. Westenholz (1987) 29.
37. See Steinkeller (1977) 51 note 37; (1992) 38-39.
38. CIRPL Ean. 2 = Steible (1982) I, 145 ff, v 23 vi 5.
39. This touches upon a difficult question: how far did the Sumerians, Eannatum in particular, consider the various local manifestations of Inanna to be the same deity? Did they regard Inanna of Uruk, in later times at least the protector of sexual abnormalities, as the same goddess as the warlike Inanna of Kish or Akkade? We don't know; but a comparison with the various local figures of Saint Mary within the Catholic world may suggest an answer of both yes and no.
40. Grégoire, apud Moorey (1978) microf. 3, D08 D09, no. 1, 1930.204.
41. BE I/2, no. 86 = Steible (1982) II, 299 ff.

42. A. Goetze, *JCS* 15 (1961), 105-6 = Steible (1982) II, 302-3. See n. 49 below.
43. Both titles occur in the same private votive inscription from Uruk, Thureau-Dangin (1923) 4 = Steible (1982) II, 307-8: Lugalkisalsi is *lugal* of Uruk; Girimsi is *ensi* of Uruk. The reason for this difference is plain: Lugalkisalsi, the donor's grandfather, had been a *lugal* recognised by Enlil, which Girimsi was not.
44. IAS 308 (on which see Biggs [1971] esp. 202) and ECTJ 219.
45. Steible (1982) II, 213; Edzard (1959) 19 ("confiscated at Kut" in southern Iraq); Jacobsen (1942) 291, no. 9. In this latter, the name of the *lugal kiši* is broken away; but it can be dated by its epigraphy to the time of Mebaragesi or even earlier.
46. Steible (1982) II, 215 ff.
47. Both Eannatum of Lagash (ca. 2470) and his nephew Entemena (ca. 2430) refer to this event in their accounts of the conflict between Lagash and Umma. See Cooper (1983) 22 ff.
48. RTC 83 = Kienast (1995) 102, Gir 26.
49. A. Goetze, *JCS* 15 (1961), 105-6 = Steible (1982) II, 302-3. This inscription was actually found at Nippur, in an Ur III context in the Inanna Temple there. However, the shape of the object, marking it as a gift to a male god, as well as its main divine beneficiaries An and Inanna, point to Uruk as its original location.
50. IAS nos. 257 77, see *ibid.* 45 ff. See also D'Agostino (1988) on the introductory section of the text.
51. For instance, SF 37 and duplicates from both Shuruppak and Abu-Salabikh describe how Enlil was the first-born of the primeval couple; but they bore seven, Enki perhaps one of them. Further generations of gods are described. Many literary texts mention Father Enlil as an almost loving epithet. On the various third-millennium creation stories in general, see also Michalowski (1998) 239-40.
52. IAS 116, with Shuruppak and Abu-Salabikh duplicates as given by Krecher (1978) 157. The Nippur duplicate, though excavated in 1893, remains unpublished and is known to me from field photographs, also unpublished. Such is life in Assyriology.
53. Matthews (1993) 33 50, with important comments by Steinkeller (2002) 251 ff.
54. Enlil, whose name was certainly pronounced *illil(um)* by the later Babylonian Akkadians, is derived from Semitic *il-ili*, 'God of the gods'. A similar idea was suggested (independently?) by Michalowski (1998) 241-42; but in the attempt to overcome the contrary evidence (which Steinkeller apparently ignored), Michalowski's argument became too tortuous to carry conviction.
55. See Westenholz (1999) 29-30, n. 58 and the references given there.
56. The exact location of Akkade has been discussed for a century, without conclusive results. See most recently Westenholz (1999) 33 ff. The location of Akkade given on the map, Fig. 1, is in agreement with the evidence presented there but is still uncertain.
57. Foster (1986); Lambert (1998) 58; Steinkeller (1999b) 299 ff. The city-state of Assur in the 20th century B.C. (Larsen [1976] 109-70) is a notable exception.

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Abbreviations

- ATU 3 R.K. Englund and H.J. Nissen, *Die lexikalischen Listen der archaischen Texte aus Uruk. Archaische Texte aus Uruk, III* (Berlin, 1993).
- BE I/2 H.V. Hilprecht, *The Babylonian Expedition of the University of Pennsylvania*, Series A: *Cuneiform Texts, I: Old Babylonian Inscriptions, Chiefly from Nippur, Part II* (Philadelphia 1896).
- CIRPL E. Sollberger, *Corpus des inscriptions "royales" pré-sargoniques de Lagaš* (Genève 1956).
- ECTJ A. Westenholz, *Early Cuneiform Texts in Jena*. Det kgl. Danske Videnskaberne Selskab, Historisk-Filosofiske Skrifter 7, 3 (Copenhagen 1975).
- IAS R.D. Biggs, *Inscriptions from Tell Abū Šalābīkh*. The University of Chicago, Oriental Institute Publications, XCIX (Chicago and London 1974).
- JCS *Journal of Cuneiform Studies*.
- RTC F. Thureau-Dangin, *Recueil des tablettes chaldéennes* (Paris 1903).
- SF A. Deimel, *Schultexte aus Fara*. Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft 43 (Leipzig 1923).
- UCP 9/2 H.F. Lutz, *Sumerian Temple Records of the Late Ur Dynasty*. University of California Publications in Semitic Philology 9/2 (1928).
- VAS XVI O. Schroeder, *Altbabylonische Briefe*. Vorderasiatische Schriftdenkmäler der Königlichen Museen zu Berlin, XVI (1917).

The Neo-Hittite City-States

INGOLF THUESEN

Introduction

In a previous paper dealing with the city-state culture of Syria I suggested that – as far as the evidence permits us to deal with those periods – the socio-political structure of Syria from the 4th to the 1st millennium B.C. exhibits a cyclic organisation: city-states developed into city-state empires, which in turn became territorial states and empires; but when an empire collapsed, city-states were formed once again (Thuesen [2000]). Apparently, the city-state culture of Syria broke up once and for all only after the conquest of the region by the Assyrian kings during the later part of the 8th century B.C.

It is tempting to expect a similar situation in Anatolia during the same millennia. However, the archaeological and historical sources do not yet allow for a full-scale application of the model. On the other hand, we now possess a substantial source material for the south-eastern provinces of Anatolia and northern Syria during the Early Iron Age. The crucial period when the region was organised into city-states covers the five hundred years from ca. 1200 to ca. 700 B.C. Based on this evidence, I will argue that there are indications that Bronze Age Anatolia in many ways followed Syria, and that the political history of western Asia may be described in very general terms as a political system fluctuating around the city-state stage as defined by Hansen (Hansen [2000]).

This contribution falls into the following parts: a brief presentation of the sources is followed by an outline of the archaeology and history, first of the whole region and then of the identifiable city-states. Finally, I discuss the political organisation of the region and assess the justice of applying the concepts of city-state and city-state culture as described by Hansen ([2000] 16-17).

Sources and Research

Neo-Hittite culture and history became known first of all from a number of monuments appearing in south-eastern Anatolia and northern Syria and dating from the period following the collapse of the Hittite empire

ca. 1200 B.C. In particular, scholars were puzzled by a peculiar hieroglyphic script which has a slight similarity to the Egyptian. Normally the script is associated with monumental architecture and was used for large conspicuous inscriptions on orthostats, steles and sculptures made of basalt. After the decipherment of the hieroglyphs the language was identified as Luwian, an Indo-European language also used by the Hittites in addition to their own Nesite (Hawkins [2000] 2). The Hittites used it for similar purposes but not on the same scale. The Luwian hieroglyphs were in particular associated with the kings and symbolised the status and power of the ruling families. There are indications, however, that the language was also used for the recording of everyday matters, as is attested by the find of lead strips with inscriptions; and it has been suggested that Luwian was a widely used *Umgangssprache* borrowed from the Luwians (Hawkins [2000] 2 note 17). Furthermore, there is the possibility that a major part of the inscriptions are lost for ever because they were written on perishable materials such as wood, wax or papyrus. Luwian monumental hieroglyphic inscriptions soon became a hallmark of the Neo-Hittites. Despite the fact that Luwian was different from the Hittite language itself, the use of Luwian hieroglyphs by the Hittite kings in Hattusa shows that the hieroglyphs were part of Hittite royal identity. One should therefore avoid linking the hieroglyphs too rigidly with the ethno-political history of the Luwians, as done by some authors (e.g. Genge [1979] 187).

Despite their impressive symbolic power, the Luwian inscriptions contain little information on the social and political organisation of the Neo-Hittite land. The inscriptions are basically dedications, mentioning names, genealogies, places, buildings and gods. There are also some examples of funerary stelae. Their contribution to our understanding of the Neo-Hittite city-state is therefore limited to the identification of kings and places. But the research is greatly facilitated by the recent publication of a comprehensive corpus of inscriptions by Hawkins (2000).

There are a number of indirect sources, however,

which can help us to reconstruct the history and political topography of the region. First, there is the recording of campaigns into Syria and Anatolia by Assyrian kings. The earliest relevant narratives date from the 12th century and then, after a long break, we have the highly informative annals of the Assyrian kings of the 9th and 8th centuries B.C., in particular those of Assurnasirpal II (883-859) and Shalmanaser III (858-824).

Another source is contemporary inscriptions in Aramaic from Syria. The Zakkur stele, for instance, offers a record of a coalition which attacked the Aramean King Zakkur of Hamath and Lu'ash (ca. 785-770 B.C.) (Riis and Buhl [1990] 36), and his building activities (Fitzmeyer and Kaufman [1992] 14-15; Gibson [1975]). Other important historical sources include the bilingual gateway inscription from Karatepe, on which the text occurs in both Luwian and Phoenician (Hawkins [2000] 45 ff.).

The material culture is more sporadically known throughout the region, and strongly biased by being centred on monumental architecture and art. Most important are the finds from Karkamis, Hama, Ain Dara and the on-going excavations in south-eastern Anatolia (Arslan Tepe) and Syria. In particular, the finds offer an insight into city-planning, architecture and monumental stone art of the Neo-Hittite kings, traditions which clearly link the material culture with the Hittites and justifies labelling the period as the "Neo-Hittite". The artwork comprises architectural elements, in particular orthostats with reliefs and inscriptions, placed on the façades of public monumental buildings in the cities. A number of free-standing sculptures are also known. Gateways were flanked with sculptures of lions, sphinxes or other mythological creatures which recall traditions known from Hittite and Assyrian palaces. However, the well-known Assyrian reliefs post-date the Neo-Hittite tradition, and that is a strong indication that this tradition originated in central Anatolia during the Hittite period. It is likely that the Neo-Hittite artisans passed on the tradition to the Assyrians. The peculiar Neo-Hittite art has been the topic of a number of systematic analyses, which have concentrated first of all on identifying the stylistic development in order to facilitate our dating of the monuments (Orthmann [1971]; Genge [1979]). More recent studies by Winter have proceeded beyond chronological issues and analysed the social and political impact of Neo-Hittite art (Winter [1983]).

An Outline of History

The Neo-Hittite era – also referred to as Late Hittite or Syro-Hittite – is relatively well delimited in time by events connected with the collapse or the founding of imperial political systems in western Asia.

The period begins around 1200 B.C. as a direct consequence of the break-up of the Hittite empire, probably caused by a demographic turbulence which hit Anatolia and the eastern Mediterranean. The Hittite capital Hattusa (Boğazköy) lost its position as the centre of an empire, and along the Levantine coast appeared migrating peoples searching for new land; in the sources they are known as the "Sea People". Egypt, another of the superpowers of the time, was also affected by the turmoil, which eventually caused the Egyptian Pharaohs to give up control over the southern Levant and return to an isolationist territorial strategy. In the east the Assyrians were rebuilding their imperial traditions, but more than 300 years were to pass before the Assyrian kings had gained enough momentum to initiate the creation of a world empire in western Asia and Egypt. It culminated with the final suppression and colonisation of the Levant and eastern Anatolia in the late 8th century B.C. and put a stop to the Neo-Hittite era.

The first two centuries of the interregnum between the empires have often been referred to as a *dark age*; and that may very well be true if history focuses on the large territorial states and empires. To judge from the traditional emphasis on monumental art and architecture and the written sources found in such buildings, that has in fact been the dominant approach of historians and archaeologists. However, the evidence from south-east Anatolia and northern Syria from the 12th to the 8th centuries B.C. indicates that there is an alternative approach to the history and archaeology of western Asia, namely an analysis focused on city-states cultures.

Until recently scholarly literature has been dominated by the idea that a fragmented and distorted political and social situation prevailed in the Hittite provinces. During this political vacuum ancient urban centres established themselves as more or less independent kingdoms. The region of northern Syria from Hama on the Orontes in the south to the present Syro-Turkish border and beyond in the north is seen as disintegrating into "city-states" (Hawkins [1995a] 1295; Mazzoni [1995] 183). Most of the authorities on the period seem to accept this terminology without precisely describing or defining what they mean by "city-states". They simply use the term in order to distinguish the new political structure, based on much

smaller territorial entities centred on a capital, from the preceding territorial state or empire. However, one author has been more careful in her use of the term “city/state” for the phenomenon, and suggests that the situation reflects not just a regression but rather a much more complex economic and political organisation (Winter [1983] 178). However, it is the definition of city-state and city-state culture by Hansen (*op. cit.*) which allows us to re-assess the archaeological and historical evidence and provides us with much more precise premises for an understanding of the political structure of the region and a discussion of a suitable terminology.

After the conquest of the region of Syria in ca. 1340 B.C. the Hittite king, Suppiluliuma I, placed a viceroy in what may be considered the most important urban centre, Karkamis. Karkamis was located on the Euphrates on the present Syro-Turkish border. It had a strategic position in the region by controlling the trade-route that connected Mesopotamia with Anatolia and the Levant. Therefore the lineage of kings controlling the Syrian province descended directly from the Hittite throne. After the collapse of Hattusa, Karkamis was ruled by the Great King Kuzi-Tesup, a descendant of the Hittite Dynasty. This arrangement reflects a pyramidal power structure with at least three steps: all power was centralised in Hattusa under the Hittite Great King. Under him were viceroys, in the case of Karkamis a direct descendant of the Great King. This viceroy governed the urban centres of the province, each probably being administered by a governor or vassal king.

The collapse of the Hittite empire meant that the uppermost tier of the power structure was eliminated and traditionally this break-up was thought by scholars to upset the entire political and administrative structure: the disintegration of the uppermost level, represented by the Great Kings of Hattusa, also caused the lower levels to fall apart, triggering a dark age. This understanding of the situation was based on unreliable Egyptian sources which also mention the fall of Karkamis, an event that cannot be confirmed either archaeologically or historically. New discoveries of seals and interpretations of text from Arslan Tepe show that Karkamis was not involved in the fall of Hatti. The royal family of Karkamis remained in power in an unbroken line of descendants of the Hittite king. But this king now appeared as the Great King, Hero of Karkamis, and apparently he was honoured as such by some of the surrounding cities (Hawkins [1995] 1300). It is uncertain why and how the Egyptians became misinformed about the situation

in northern Syria. They may on purpose have generated a picture of general chaos in order to explain their own territorial implosion and retreat from southern Levant. Or perhaps they lacked precision in their politico-geographical terminology, as did the Assyrians, who tended to apply the label “Hatti” to both the Hittite empire and the Neo-Hittite kingdoms. Alternatively, it may be argued that they accepted the king of Karkamis as a direct successor to the Hittite royal powers.

Scholars have explained the events around 1200 B.C. as caused by migrations, for instance the relocation of the Khatti from Central Anatolia to the urban centres in the south-east (Hawkins [1995] 1297) or even a migration of people from western Anatolia and Cilicia into the Neo-Hittite region (Gurney [1954] 39 ff.). This theory was primarily based on the linguistic evidence, which shows that the Neo-Hittite kings preferred the Luwian language for monumental dedicatory inscriptions.

The archaeological and historical evidence from the period shows that the region was prosperous and that Karkamis was a natural centre of a kingdom. Trade in raw materials or fabrics, particularly metals and luxury goods, turned the city into a strong economic and political centre, which for a long time avoided attacks from the Assyrian army (Winter [1983]).

But Karkamis seems soon to have lost its central position. The region tended to disintegrate into a number of independent kingdoms, each located around one of the major urban centres. The process gathered momentum with the appearance of Aramaic-speaking people, who became masters of several of the north Syrian cities and sometimes replaced the Neo-Hittite rulers. As argued by Schwartz, the Arameans were probably an imbedded and latent political factor; they had strong ties with pastoral groups in the region, and exploited the turmoil generated by the Sea People and the collapse of the Hittite Empire (Schwartz [1989]). Also, the growing troubles with Assyrian kings demanding tribute or looting the towns and cities of the region did not result in a combined effort to keep the Assyrians at distance by forming stronger territorial states, but rather seems to have stimulated alliances and intrigues across cultural and ethnic boundaries.

The Neo-Hittite period can be divided into two main phases, as suggested by Mazzone ([1995] 189). The first phase covers the period from the 12th century to the mid 9th century B.C. This period is characterised by the rise of kingdoms each centred on a town. Some of these towns were new foundations,

but some were refoundations of earlier urban centres now embellished with monumental iconography. The second period covers the ca. 150 years from the mid 9th century to the Assyrian conquest in the late 8th century B.C. This phase saw the growth of centres and also an increasing concern for security expressed in the building of fortified strongholds throughout the region. It is easy to see a direct link between this development and the increasing Assyrian economic and territorial interest in the Levant and Anatolia.

In order to understand the complexity of the political geography during the Neo-Hittite era one must take into account that the region was home to a number of language groups, which perhaps reflect a high ethnic diversity as well. The major recognisable languages are: Luwian, Aramaic, Phoenician, Hurrian and Assyrian. Traditionally, most scholars have distinguished between a Neo-Hittite and an Aramean population and/or political dominance. The argument is that the kings have names which associate them with either one or other language group. If we accept this dichotomy as evidence of political opposition, the political landscape turns out to be a very complex ethnic constellation without any geographical coherence. The northern kingdom of Sam'al with its capital Zincirli, for instance, was ruled by an Aramean king who used Hittite iconography to demonstrate his powers. Hamath in the south was ruled by a Neo-Hittite king until around 800 B.C. when a new Aramean family succeeded to the throne. The change of dynasty seems to have resulted in some changes in monumental iconography, as testified by a huge Hittite stele which was degraded and turned into a threshold stone in the entrance to what was probably a small palace or public building (see also below).

Another indication is the way alliances were negotiated in the region, for instance the conflict between King Zakkur of Hamath and a coalition of the Aramean kings of Damascus and Arpad and five Aramean or Neo-Hittite kingdoms (Dion [1995] 1285). Or the alliance of several kings in the region to protect Hamath against the Assyrians in 853 (ibid. 1285). Both examples show that the diversity of ethnic and/or language groups did not necessarily play a dominant role in the formation of political constellations. Consequently, an analysis of the city-state culture of the region ought to include some of the major Aramean kingdoms such as Sam'al and Aramean Hamath. The names of other Aramean kingdoms or "houses", however, seem to reflect tribal structures, and are perhaps better understood as a different kind of political organisation, despite the fact that they also tended

to establish themselves around urban centres like the surrounding Neo-Hittite monarchies. Finally, some of the Aramean kingdoms tended to expand geographically and became territorial states rather than city-states in the proper sense (Dion [1995] 1286).

Neo-Hittite Kingdoms

The following list of Neo-Hittite kingdoms summarises the available archaeological and historical evidence in so far as it is relevant for the description of the region as a city-state culture. The location of each kingdom is shown in Fig. 1.

Karkamis (Hawkins [1997] 423-24). The site is strategically located on the west bank of the Euphrates at modern Jerablus on the Turkish-Syrian frontier. Several important trade routes crossed each other at this point, and that made the city a major centre of the region centuries before the Neo-Hittite era. The city is already mentioned in the Ebla and Mari archives from the 3rd and 2nd millennium, and it was chosen by the Hittite kings as the seat of the viceroy ruling the Syrian province. In the Luwian inscriptions Karkamis is also described using the hieroglyphs for "city".

Due to the location of the mound literally on the modern border, most of the archaeological investigations date back to the period before World War II. Already before World War I remarkable sculptures and inscriptions were excavated by Woolley, including a Temple of the Storm-God, the Processional Entry and the Royal Buttress. The monuments were decorated with relief orthostats and monumental hieroglyphic inscriptions.

The area enclosed by the outer wall covered more than 90 ha, which made it the largest urban centre of the region (Fig. 2). The defence consisted of several walls or ramparts that protected an outer city with private houses and an inner city with gates, temples, the Great Staircase and *hilani*-buildings. A fortified citadel was located by the river at what was probably the centre of the city; but no significant remains have been identified. According to Mazzoni a new lay-out of the citadel, squares and public buildings with façade sculptures took place during the late 11th and early 10th centuries B.C. (Mazzoni [1995] 182). Thereafter there is a change in iconography marked by the disappearance of the traditional Hittite motifs such as the god on a stag, and mountain gods supporting the winged disc (ibid. 183).

The kingdom controlled the fertile plain and valleys in the vicinity of the city which had a high agricultural

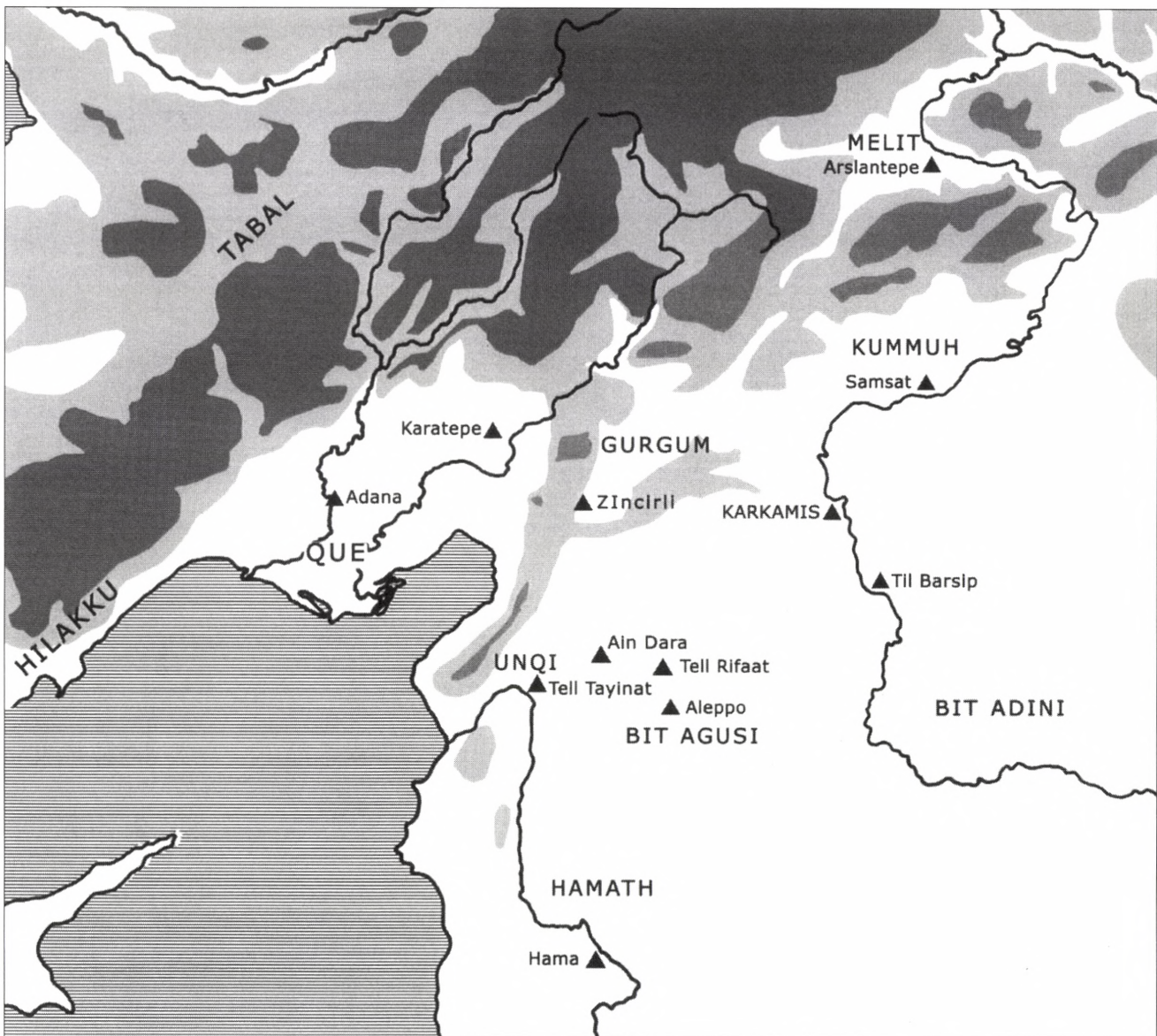


Fig. 1. Map showing the location of Neo-Hittite and Aramean city-states in northern Syria and south-eastern Anatolia during the Iron Age and some of the major sites mentioned in the text.

potential based on dry farming. The main crops were wheat, barley and wine. More than 30 smaller mounds have been identified in this area, indicating a settlement pattern of a capital surrounded by many smaller towns and villages (Winter [1983] 177-78). The land south and east of the Euphrates was controlled by the Aramean state of Bit Adini, with its capital at Til Barsip (Tell Ahmar), which was conquered already in 856 B.C. by the Assyrian king Shalmanaser III. However, stylistic affinities with the monuments of Karkamis and stelae found in Til Barsip suggest that the Aramean kingdom was short-lived and preceded by a Neo-Hittite dynasty named Masuwari (Hawkins [1995b] 91). If one identifies the agricultural hinter-

land of Karkamis with the plain and valleys west of the river and excludes the mountainous regions to the north, the territory of the kingdom can be assessed at over 750 km².

The Neo-Hittite history of Karkamis can be traced back into the Imperial Hittite period, when Suppiluliuma I installed his son as viceroy in charge of the Syrian province. His line continued to rule Karkamis after the collapse of the empire, and Kuzi-Tesup, king of Karkamis, had the titles Great King and Hero, which indicates that he was seen as the ruler of the surviving segments of the Hittite empire. The sources describe the dependent kings as Country Lords, not as kings (Hawkins [1995b] 88). The kingdom continued

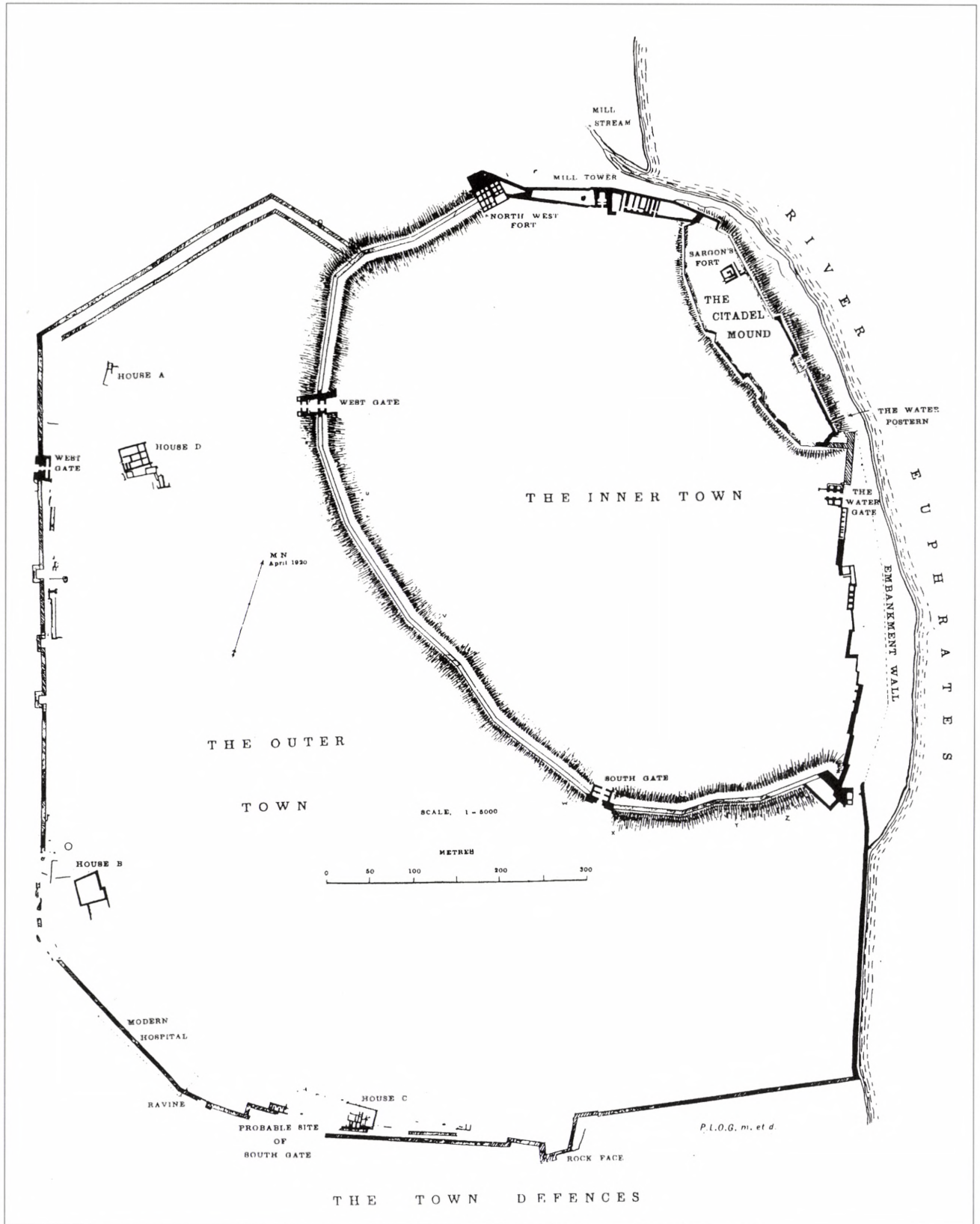


Fig. 2. Plan of Karkamis after Woolley (1921).

until 717 B.C., when it was incorporated into the Assyrian empire under Sargon II. Even though the Assyrians extended their zone of interest to the Levant and Anatolia during the 9th century, they seem to have avoided a direct confrontation with the kings of Karkamis. Apparently, the kingdom had sufficient strength to be a serious opponent to the Assyrians in the 9th century B.C. during the reigns of Assunasirpal II and Shalmanaser. By circumscribing the kingdom of Karkamis these two kings seem to have preferred a geographical solution to military confrontation in order to obtain control over the transportation of goods in the region (Winter [1983]).

Other small kingdoms were located north and west of Karkamis. To the north lay the kingdom of Kummuh with Neo-Hittite rulers, to the north west the Aramaic kingdom of Sam'al, and to the west the kingdom of Aramaic Bit Agusi with its capital Arpad, located north of Aleppo. There may not have been physical borders between the states as the Taurus mountains split the landscape up into natural enclaves.

The extraordinary wealth of the kings of Karkamis is apparent not only from the amount of tribute they paid to the Assyrians, but also from the monumental scale of art and architecture. Stylistic analysis of the monuments suggests that the symbolic imagery of Karkamis was setting the standard for the whole region, and the city seems to have housed a centre for artist-craftsmen (Winter [1983] 181). The craftsmanship was originally inspired by imperial Hittite traditions, but tended to take its own direction. The main focus was on stone carving for wall-reliefs and stelae, but on small luxury objects as well, such as objects carved in ivory and soft stone and purple-dyed fabrics. Ivory pyxides produced in Karkamis, for example, were found in Assyrian Nimrud. The main income, however, was derived from trade in copper and iron. That trade was the main concern, too, of the Assyrians living in the region, and competition was probably what caused the Assyrians to subjugate the northern neighbours of Karkamis in order to cut off its access to raw materials (*supra* 45).

Kummuh (Commagene). The Neo-Hittite kingdom of Kummuh is known almost exclusively from inscriptions. It was located upstream on the Euphrates from Karkamis, and probably comprised the plain around the modern, but now flooded, town of Samsat, the capital of the ancient kingdom. The mountains formed natural borders on all sides. To the north was located Malatya (Melid) and to the west Gurgum, both ruled

by Neo-Hittite kings. It is difficult to estimate the size of its agricultural hinterland but, to judge from the size of the plain and the catchment system for the river around Samsat, it may well have been equal in size to that of Karkamis.

The most important piece of historical information about Kummuh is that the king acted as a client of the Assyrians and probably assisted them in their attempt to monopolise the important resources of copper and iron and to divert the trade from Karkamis to centres controlled by themselves.

Malatya (Assyrian *Melit*) (Frangipane [1997] 212-15). An important kingdom north of Kummuh is known from a number of impressive archaeological monuments and inscriptions. They testify to the existence of a Neo-Hittite kingdom lying in the plain of Malatya and centred on modern Arslantepe. Earlier French and recent Italian excavations of the site as well as investigation of the region have given some insight into the physical structure and have revealed, for instance, a monumental gateway flanked by sculptured lions dating to the late 12th or early 11th century B.C. (Mazzoni [1995] 182), a number of wall-reliefs, and a large statue of a ruler of the city.

Arslantepe covers an area of 31 ha, which means that it was much smaller than Karkamis. But the city is assumed to have controlled the surrounding plain of Malatya and the plain of Elbistan too. Its location had a strategic importance in that it bordered on Urartian territory to the north-east. It is not possible to give a precise estimate of the agricultural hinterland, but a rough calculation of the land around Malatya at an altitude between 2,500 and 3,000 m above sea-level makes 800+ km².

Malatya was one of the cities that survived the fall of the Hittite empire, and the finds of seals and the Karahöyük stele show that, after the collapse, the kings of the city were dependent on the Great King of Karkamis. Later Assyrian and Urartian sources describe Malatya as either a city or a country. Malatya participated in the alliance headed by the Aramean king of Damascus and Arpad against King Zakkur of Hamath. The city fell to the Assyrian forces in 712-708 B.C., but was apparently revived as an independent state for a brief interval around 675 B.C. (Hawkins [1995b] 90).

Gurgum. The kingdom of Gurgum, with its capital Maras, was located west of Kummuh and north of the Aramean kingdom of Sam'al. Very little is known except for funerary stelae with Luwian inscriptions.

The city probably had its hinterland on the plain surrounding the city of Maras, an area of ca. 500 km². It was separated from neighbouring kingdoms by mountains, except for Sam'al, which was located further down the valley. Gurgum was annexed by the Assyrians in 711 B.C.

Sam'al. The kingdom of Sam'al with its capital at Zincirli, a site of 37 ha, does not belong properly to the list of Neo-Hittite city-states, as most of its history refers to Aramean kings. However, the architecture and the sculpture are of typical Hittite style (Hawkins [2000] 7); and the "Kranzhügel" lay-out of the town shows close affinity with other towns of northern Syria. The kingdom therefore testifies to the ethnic complexity of the region during the Neo-Hittite period and, like other kingdoms of the region, it may have had a Hittite background (Assaf [1997b] 132).

Tabal. The south-east corner of Central Anatolia was carved up into several city-states in the 8th century B.C. Unfortunately, they are poorly documented. During the late 8th century there seem to have been two larger units, Tabal to the north and Tuwana to the south. The latter bordered on the kingdoms of Hilakku and Que in the Cilician plain. The Phrygian interest zone began north-west of Tabal and Tuwana.

Que (Cilicia). During the 2nd millennium the Cilician plain formed an independent kingdom, Kizzuwatna, with a mixed Luwian and Hurrian population. The importance of the plain is, once again, connected with its strategic position as a link between Syria and Central Anatolia. The plain contained two urban centres: Hilakku in the west, and the better documented Que in the east.

The main ancient city of the region, Adana, has not yet been identified with certainty, but is known to have been attacked by the Sea People. The most important archaeological finds come from Karatepe in the north-eastern corner of the plain, where there is a hill-top fortification with two monumental gates lined with basalt orthostats, sculptures and portal lions (Hawkins [2000] 45). The orthostats are covered with reliefs and bilingual inscriptions in Phoenician and Luwian. The texts deal with the territorial extension of the state, the legitimacy of the king, and how the king brought prosperity by filling granaries and breeding horses. It is also mentioned how he strengthened the borders with walls and fortifications. The Old Testament mentions that Solomon traded horses with Que (I Kings 10:28).

Otherwise it is known that the king of Que was also a member of the alliance led by Damascus and Arpad against Zakkur of Hamath. In ca. 729 B.C. Cilicia was probably controlled by the Assyrians.

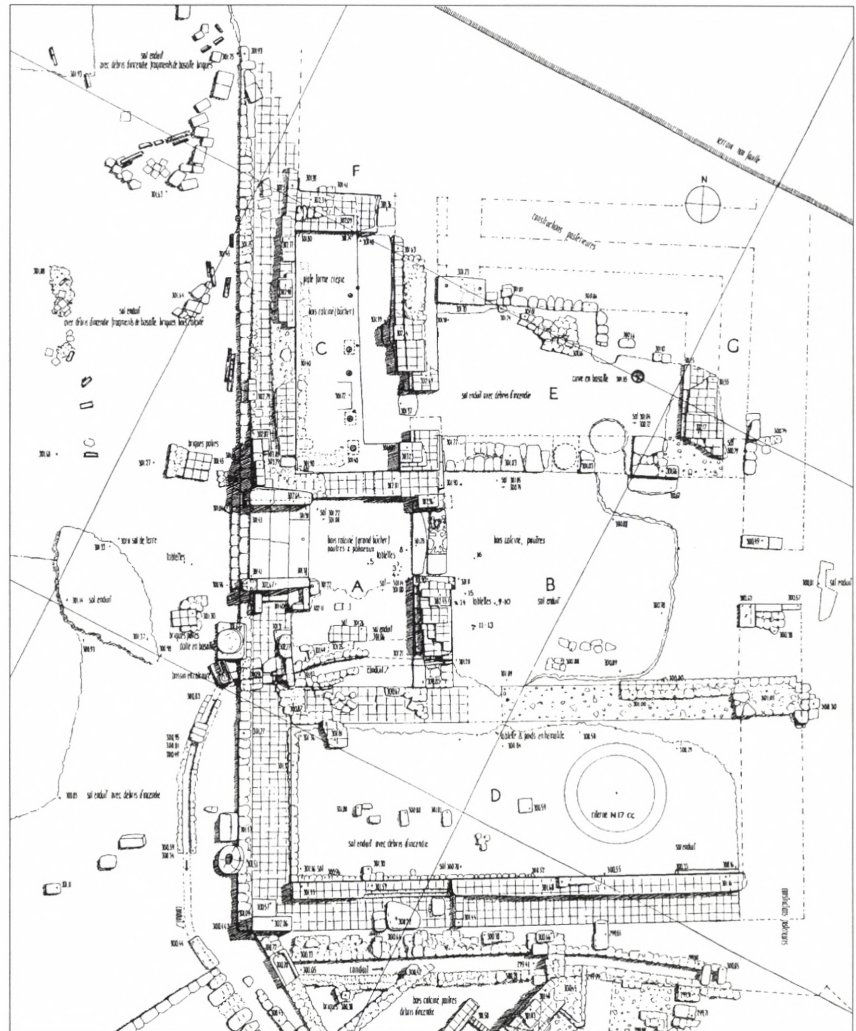
Unqi (Dornemann [1997] 115-17). The kingdom of Unqi is located in the plain of Amuq, a large plain bounded by mountains and intersected by several streams and rivers, e.g. the Afrin and the Orontes. The Amuq plain was systematically investigated between 1933 and 1937 by an American archaeological expedition and fieldwork has recently been resumed by the Oriental Institute, Chicago. Some of the more important of the numerous tells which are situated in the plain were excavated and have provided us with a good chronological framework for the history of the region. Kinalua, however, the capital of the Neo-Hittite period, has not yet been identified with certainty, although the centre was apparently moved to Tell Tayinat after the Bronze Age centre of Alalah (Tell Achana) had been destroyed by the Sea People. At Tayinat was found a series of monumental palaces of the typical Syrian *hilani*-style, built of mudbricks in timber frame and decorated with orthostats – a Hittite technology. The finds include remains of an outer town with a gateway apparently built during the 9th century B.C. (Mazzoni [1995] 188).

The most remarkable discovery, however, was the remains of a temple of Ishtar-Sawuska. It was found at Ain Dara in the Afrin valley (Assaf [1990] and [1997a] 33-35), and identified through the lions and the Mountain God depicted in the reliefs that decorated the lower part of the walls of the temple. Lions and sphinxes flanked the entrances as in contemporary Neo-Hittite buildings also showing links to Anatolia and Boğazköy. Although it was a large urban settlement during the Neo-Hittite era, the site has not been identified as the capital, but it may have been a ritual centre. A parallel is Halep (Aleppo), where the Hittite Storm God was worshipped even though the city was located in the middle of the Aramean kingdom of Bit Agusi, which had Arpad as its capital.

Recent archaeological excavations of the citadel mound in Aleppo have revealed relief-orthostats of Hittite tradition, which in future may shed further light on the relation between the Hittite and the Aramean aspects of the civilisation of the region (Khayyata and Kohlmeyer [2000] 733 ff.)

The Unqi kingdom and its capital controlled a rather large territory, *viz.* the plain of Amuq, covering more than 1,400 km². To the south it bordered on Hamath, to the east on the Aramaic kingdom of Bit

Fig. 3. Building III in the Royal Quarter of Hama. Hittite stele found as threshold in a doorway between rooms A and B.



Agusi, and to the north on the kingdoms of Sam'al and Que. That the kingdom profited from overseas trade is evident from the finds in Tell el-Judeideh of pottery imported from Cyprus, Egypt and the Aegean.

Hamath (Riis [1948]; Fugmann [1958]; Riis and Buhl [1990]). The kingdom of Hamath is relatively well documented due to the Danish excavations on the citadel mound (1931-38). A palatial area with monumental architecture was discovered, including a gateway flanked by lions. At the lower level were a huge building with store-rooms, a small palatial building of the *hilani*-type, and remains of an internal gateway indicating a subdivision of the citadel into walled quarters, as attested in Zincirli.

During the Neo-Hittite period Hamath had a history similar to other kingdoms located on the fringe of the plateau and the steppe, as for instance Til Barsip (see Karkamis, *supra* 46). The date of the establishment of

a Neo-Hittite kingdom is uncertain, but Hittite traditions were dominant already during the 12th century after the collapse of the empire. That is attested by the find of large cremation cemeteries, a tradition that is closely associated with the Hittites (Riis [1948]). After 1000 B.C. the kings are better known, and some had Hurrian names (Urhilina). However, the Neo-Hittite lineage was replaced by Aramean kings around 800 B.C. and they ruled until the city fell to the Assyrian king Sargon II in 720 B.C..

It is not clear what the shift from kings with Neo-Hittite to Aramaic names meant in terms of material culture and iconography. Apparently the city plan continued unchanged, but the re-use of a Hittite stele as the threshold in a building indicates a certain level of disrespect for the earlier rulers and their traditions (Fig. 3). However, lions continued to flank the gates and were also found as free-standing colossal sculptures (Fig. 4).



Fig. 4. Portal lion flanking the gate entrance as found in the excavation of the Citadel in Hama. Nationalmuseet Antiksamlingen.

A number of basalt stones with hieroglyphic inscriptions were found in Hama but never *in situ*. It is impossible to tell when they were removed from their original position as orthostats (Fig. 5).

The kingdom of Hama controlled the central Syrian territory from the Mediterranean to the desert. In the north it bordered on Til Agusi and Unqi, but for a period it may have been separated from the latter by the kingdom of Lu'ash (Tell Afis), located 110 km north of Hama. However, King Zakkur referred to himself as the king of both lands on the stele he erected after his victory over a coalition of neighbouring kings led by the king of Damascus.

The Neo-Hittite Kingdoms Analysed as City-States

Forming a City-State Culture

The concluding section of this contribution attempts to test the available evidence against the criteria set up by Hansen. As has been shown, the region comprising

north Syria and south-east Anatolia was split up into a number of small kingdoms during a rather long period of time, stretching from the collapse of the Hittite empire around 1200 B.C. and lasting until the Assyrian colonisation of the region towards the end of the 8th century B.C. Historical complexity reflects demographic diversity in terms of both language and ethnicity. This is in fact a major characteristic of the Syro-Levantine region throughout history, and is not specific to the Iron Age. The main languages were Luvian and Aramaic, and eventually the latter became the *lingua franca* of western Asia. One should avoid any direct equation of the linguistic complexity within the region with the simultaneous ethnic diversity. On the other hand, a number of different socio-economic structures are attested simultaneously. The two dominant strata of the population were the pastoral groups of herders attached to the steppe and the urban dwellers settled in numerous cities and towns located at points of strategic importance for trade and traffic through the region. Another important compo-

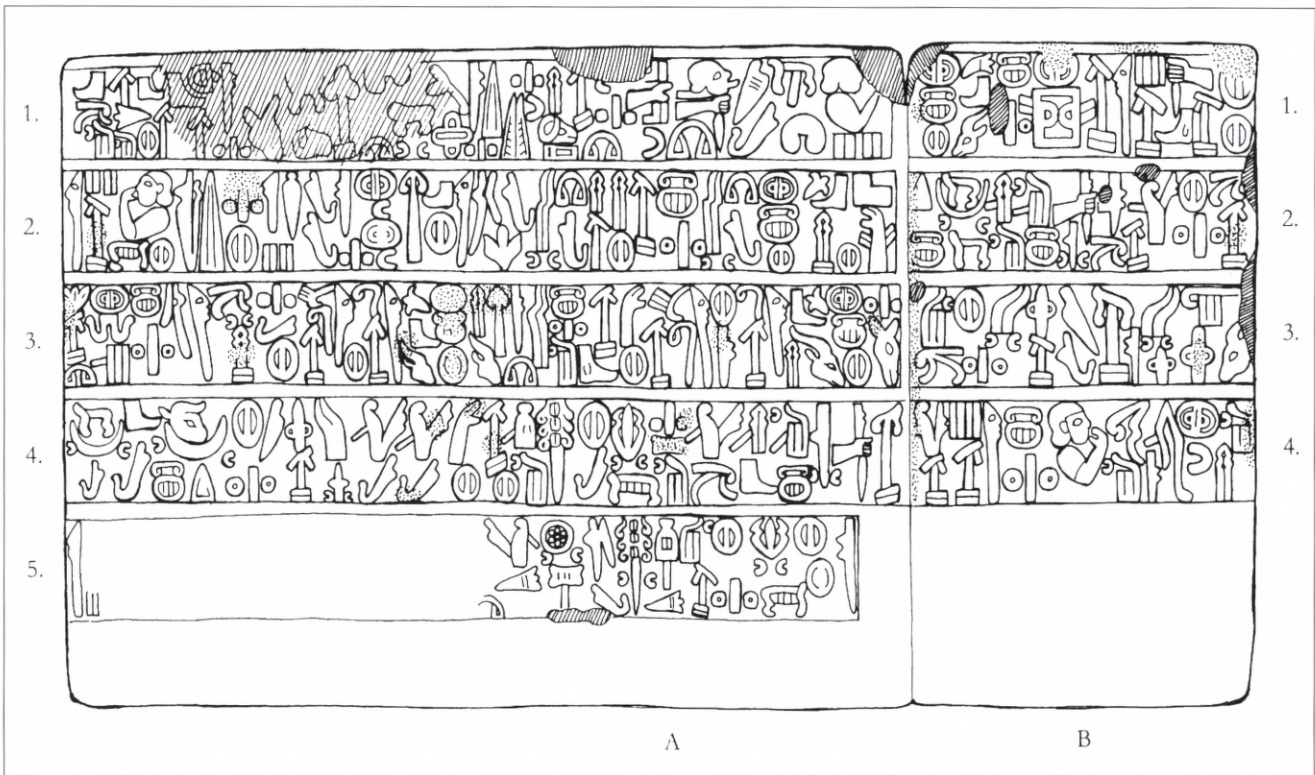


Fig. 5. Hittite hieroglyphic inscription on basalt orthostat from Hama. After Hawkins (2000).

ment is the Phoenician merchants who established a series of city-states along the Syro-Lebanese coast and opened long-distance sea-going trade in the Mediterranean (Niemeyer [2000]). Finally, the region was almost constantly under pressure from the Assyrian kings who for a long period extracted tribute from the local kingdoms until, finally, they incorporated the entire region into the Assyrian empire.

In general the characteristics of a city-state culture according to Hansen match the situation in the Neo-Hittite territory. In the following the number in brackets refers to the list of characteristics by Hansen ([2000] 16-17):

(1) The population did not speak the same language but was multilingual and shared a common culture with strong affinities to the Hittites. The king of Karkamis boasted of his linguistic abilities, claiming that he knew twelve languages and could read and write four (Hawkins [2000] 131).

(2) The region was composed of several enclaves, often situated in plains and valleys between mountain ranges.

(3) Interaction was primarily by land along thousand-year-old routes and rivers.

(4c) The rise of the city-state culture in the region clearly followed the collapse of an empire.

(5) The number of city-states or kingdoms within this region seems relatively stable throughout the period, despite the fact that some kingdoms shifted from one language identity to another. Typically the early north Syrian city-states located on the fringe of the steppe became Aramean.

(6) There were numerous instances of conflict between the kingdoms, usually independent of their cultural or linguistic affinity, cf. the alliances sometimes formed between opposing groups of kingdoms, but sometimes uniting the kingdoms in order to confront the Assyrian enemy. In some cases kingdoms were allied with the Assyrians against their neighbours (Kummuh).

(7) In peacetime there was considerable trading activity and cultural exchange. For instance, Karkamis seems to have prospered from trade and crafts, and the kingdoms of the region seem to have shared traditional centres for worship such as Halep.

(8) There are no documented examples of kingdoms swallowing up one another during the period, unless the case of Zakkur's double title as king of Hamath and Lu'ash is the result of such activities. On the other hand the formation of alliances and leagues is well attested.

(9) The only possible case of a central kingdom

dominating the entire area appears at the very beginning of the era, when Karkamis inherited – at least *pro forma* – the role of the Hittite empire, and its kings used the title of Great King. This situation, however, was short-lived, and is better understood as a reminiscence of the empire after it had received its fatal blow.

(10) This situation also reflects a hierarchical system based on the traditional prestige of, for instance, Karkamis and the wealth of the various kingdoms.

(11) During the 9th and 8th centuries B.C. the kingdoms often had to pay tribute to the Assyrians and can therefore in this final phase be seen as dependent city-states.

(12) There are no sources which allow us to say anything with certainty about the identity of the citizens and their view of outsiders. No self-designation of land, people or language has yet been found. The cultural and ethnic complexity may speak for a rather open and tolerant situation, and it is also remarkable that the kingdoms in the surviving record did not share any particular identity or political interest and culture (Kuhrt [1995] 411).

(13) The Neo-Hittite and Aramean kingdoms ceased to exist as a result of the conquest and territorial expansion of the Assyrian kings.

(14) If the Neo-Hittite kingdoms are seen as a city-state culture – and there are many good reasons to do so – it existed within a general city-state matrix of the Levant. To the south were the Aramean city-states (Thuesen [2000]), along the Levantine coast the Phoenician city-states (Niemeyer [2000]) and in southern Levant the Philistine city-states (Strange [2000]).

(15). Whether or not the Neo-Hittite city-states were part of a repeated cycle of political systems is impossible to say since we lack relevant sources. On the basis of the evidence from Syria, Palestine and Mesopotamia, it is tempting to surmise that the Anatolian region followed the same fluctuation between empire and city-states. In any case, there can be no doubt that most of the Neo-Hittite capitals had a long history as urban centres of the region, and they testify to a continuity of urbanism which links the Iron Age with the earlier Bronze Age (Mazzoni [1995] 83).

In conclusion, it can be argued that the Neo-Hittite kingdoms fulfil most of the criteria set up for a city-state culture as defined by Hansen.

The characteristics of the individual city-states in the Neo-Hittite era further confirm this identification. Most of the Neo-Hittite kingdoms conformed to the size criteria suggested by Hansen. The territory was

probably within the range of 500-1,000 km², but larger city-states (e.g. Unqi and Hamath) did exist. Often the capital was a large urban centre of 30+ ha, located centrally on a plain, with mountains as a natural border. In the capital the king resided in a fortified citadel. The typical royal city was structured around the citadel with private houses and temples situated in a separately walled lower town. Second-order towns may have grown up around religious centres, as for instance in Halep and Ain Dara. Concerning the question of self-sufficiency, the Neo-Hittite kingdoms certainly profited from an agricultural hinterland, but wealth first of all accumulated due to extensive trade of raw materials, especially metals, and luxury goods such as ivory objects and purple-dyed fabrics. The city-states of the region shared many cultural and religious traditions such as Hittite architecture with lions and sphinxes flanking the gateways and the use of hieroglyphs for inscriptions on sculpture and orthostats. There are even indications that the goddess Kubaba of Karkamis was paired with the Aramean Rakib-El of Sam'al (Dion [1995] 1290). However, according to the documented defensive alliances, the political identity did not follow any linguistic, ethnic or religious identity.

To sum up, it seems adequate to characterise the Neo-Hittite era as a period in which the north Syrian and south-east Anatolian region was split up into a number of city-states, as has often been suggested by scholars. One may even take one further step and interpret the civilisation as a city-state culture, which, in a *longue durée* perspective, re-appeared several times in western Asia. The city-state culture can be traced back to the 3rd millennium, perhaps even into the 4th millennium, as suggested by the Syrian case (Thuesen [2000]). Considering the duration of the city-state culture compared with the duration of its counterpart, the territorial states and empires, one might suggest that the history of western Asia before the Assyrian conquest in the late 8th century is better described from a city-state perspective than from the traditional view that the region was the scene of a series of empires interrupted by disintegration into a number of small kingdoms.

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For a good overview of Neo-Hittite history, see e.g. Hawkins (1995b). For the contemporary Aramean history see e.g. Mazzoni (1995) and Dion (1995). For the urbanisation of Assyria, see Kühne (1994). The best introduction to the archaeology and history of the sites mentioned in the text is *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Ancient Near East* (1997).

Städtische Strukturen im vorhellenistischen Lykien

THOMAS MARKSTEINER

Aufgrund des außergewöhnlichen Erhaltungszustandes der antiken Siedlungsbefunde, der zahlreich überlieferten Werke künstlerischen Schaffens und nicht zuletzt einer vergleichsweise guten Quellenlage kommt der im südwestlichen Kleinasien gelegenen Kulturlandschaft Lykien eine Schlüsselstellung für das Verständnis lokaler Siedlungs- und Gesellschaftsstrukturen des südwestanatolischen Raumes der spätarchaisch-klassischen Periode (zwischen ca. 540 und 334 v. Chr.) zu. In dieser Zeit wurde das politische Geschick der bis auf das Intermezzo der attischen Herrschaft dem persischen Achämenidenreich eingegliederten, dabei jedoch eine sehr weitgehende Verwaltungsautonomie genießenden Region von einer politischen Führungsschicht, den sogenannten Dynasten, bestimmt. Eine Protagonistenrolle kam dabei der wahrscheinlich von den persischen Oberherren mit einer politischen Vormachtstellung betrauten xanthischen Dynastie zu. Daneben bestanden zahlreiche, wohl häufig konkurrierende, lokale und regionale Herrschaften. Diese Herrschaftsstrukturen dürften stark von familiären Beziehungen und einem aristokratischen Gesellschaftssystem geprägt gewesen sein. Im frühen 4. Jh. v. Chr. wurde der xanthische Führungsanspruch durch einen sich konstituierenden ostlykischen Machtblock in Frage gestellt. Die führende Persönlichkeit dieser ostlykischen Expansion, der Dynast Perikles, belagerte und eroberte das westlykische Telmessos und konnte zumindest kurzzeitig seine Herrschaft auf die lykischen Kernlande ausgedehnt haben (Theopompos [*FGrHist* 115] fr. 103.17). Diese instabile durch innerlykische Auseinandersetzungen gekennzeichnete politische Situation dürfte das Eingreifen der persischen Oberherren heraufbeschworen und letztlich zu einer radikalen Umgestaltung der Verwaltungsorganisation sowie zur Entmachtung der Dynasten geführt haben. Lykien unterstand fortan der karischen Dynastie der Hekatomniden, welche die lokale Herrschaftsausübung in die Hände von Statthaltern gelegt zu haben scheinen. Mit der Eroberung durch die Truppen Alexanders wurde die Region der hellenistischen Koiné eingegliedert.

Die lykischen Dynasten und Aristokraten waren in

besonderem Maße unterschiedlichen Kultureinflüssen gegenüber aufgeschlossen. Nebst dem lokalen, in anatolischer Tradition stehenden Kultursubstrat kam dem durch die Eingliederung in das Achämenidenreich geförderten Einwirken orientalischer Kultur- und Gesellschaftsmuster besondere Bedeutung zu. Als drittes Element ist der schon ab archaischer Zeit wirksame griechische Kultureinfluß hervorzuheben, der sich in ähnlicher Weise auch für andere, an das östliche Mittelmeer grenzende Randgebiete des Perserreiches nachweisen läßt. Dieser scheint ab dem späten 5. Jh. v. Chr. das kulturelle Leben der dynastischen Oberschicht in erheblichen Umfang geprägt zu haben, wobei die Gedankenwelt der lykischen Aristokratie weiterhin stark in orientalisch-anatolischen Wertvorstellungen verwurzelt gewesen zu sein scheint. Das Amalgam dieser unterschiedlichen Kultureinflüsse läßt sich insbesondere anhand der zahlreich überlieferten Werke der bildenden Kunst und einer aufwendigen und formenreichen Grabarchitektur fassen. Aber auch inschriftliche Quellen, die ab dem späten 5. Jh. v. Chr. in zunehmenden Maße in griechischer Schrift und Sprache abgefaßt wurden, bieten wertvolle Einblicke in die lykische Lebenswelt. Während die zu meist in funärerem Kontext stehende Reliefkunst, die ungewöhnlich typenreiche Münzprägung und die Grabarchitektur seit dem 19. Jh. die Aufmerksamkeit der Altertumswissenschaftler auf sich gezogen haben und daher auch entsprechend gut untersucht sind, steht die Auseinandersetzung der Forschung mit den lykischen Niederlassungen erst am Anfang. Dank der intensiven Feldforschungstätigkeit der letzten fünfzehn Jahre scheint jedoch beim heutigen Wissensstand der Versuch einer kritischen Auseinandersetzung mit der Frage, inwieweit schon in vorhellenistischer Zeit im lykischen Siedlungsraum städtische Strukturen bestanden, einigermaßen erfolgversprechend zu sein.

In der Antike war die Landschaft Lykien dicht besiedelt. Die bedeutendsten und wahrscheinlich an der Entwicklung der genuin lykischen Kultur maßgeblich beteiligten Niederlassungen lagen im Xanthostal und den angrenzenden Gebieten. Hier sind ins-

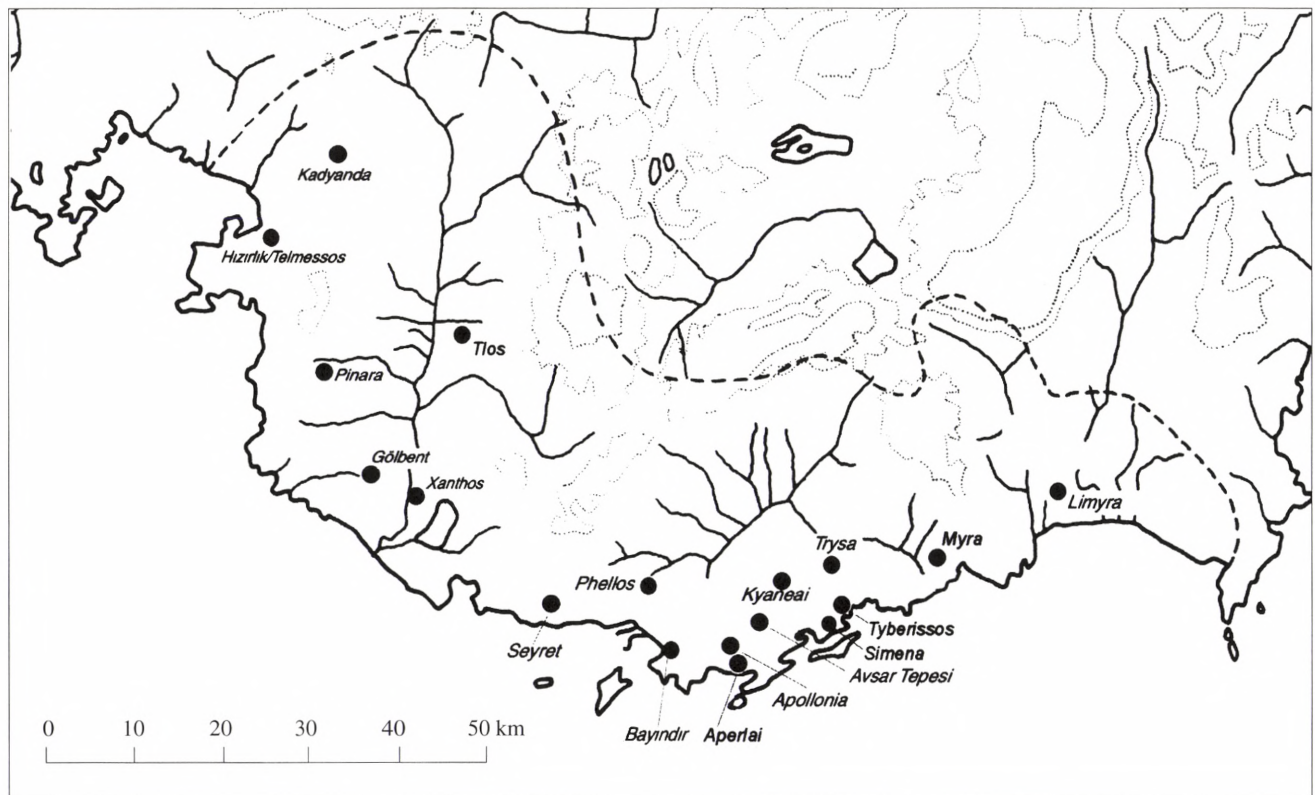


Fig. 1. Lykienkarte mit den im Text genannten Orten.

besondere der Hauptort der führenden Dynastie, Xanthos, die bedeutenden Niederlassungen Tlos und Pinara sowie vielleicht auch der Küstenort Telmessos hervorzuheben. Im Osten Lykiens wurde im frühen 4. Jh. v. Chr. der in einer ausgedehnten Küstenebene gelegene und archäologisch bis in spätgeometrische Zeit zurückverfolgbare Ort Zemuri, das spätere Limyra, zur Residenz des ostlykischen Machtblockes ausgebaut. Das benachbarte Myra lag ebenfalls in einer weitläufigen Küstenebene und dürfte ab archaisch-frühklassischer Zeit von einiger Bedeutung gewesen sein. In den gebirgigen und stark gegliederten Regionen Zentrallykiens bestanden zahlreiche, meist kleinflächige Niederlassungen, die durchwegs auf landwirtschaftlich nutzbare Binnenebenen Bezug nahmen.

Anhand der vorhellenistisch lykischen Siedlungsmuster wird der betont agrarische Charakter der dynastischen Gesellschaft deutlich. In diesem Kontext sind der durch die Siedlungslagen angezeigte Bezug auf landwirtschaftliches Nutzland und die fehlende Ausrichtung der Niederlassungen auf das Meer besonders aussagekräftig. Sogar die in Küstenregionen gelegenen Dynastensiedlungen befanden sich meist in einiger Entfernung zur Meeresküste: Diese Beobachtung hat etwa für Zemuri/Limyra, Myra und

die kürzlich bei der Lokalität Hızırlık entdeckte Vorläufersiedlung von Telmessos Gültigkeit, welche am Übergang der Ebene zum gebirgigen Hinterland gelegen waren. Erst in der fortgeschrittenen Dynastiezeit machte sich ein verstärktes Interesse an Häfen bemerkbar: Telmessos wurde in Küstennähe verlegt; auf dem Territorium des zentrallykischen Dynastensitzes Phellos entwickelte sich der Hafenort Antiphellos zu einem zweiten Siedlungszentrum; an der zentrallykischen Küste wurden mit Simena und Bayındır Limanı Dynastensitze unterer Ordnung eingerichtet. Die Bevölkerung einiger zentrallykischer Binnensiedlungen legte im Bereich der Landeplätze kleine Befestigungen an, wie dies etwa für Teimiusa auf dem Gebiet von Tyberissos und Aperlai auf dem Territorium des Dynastensitzes Apollonia/Appri nachweisbar ist.

Als Indikator für vorhellenistische Siedlungstätigkeit gilt in der Forschung in erster Linie der Nachweis von typisch lykischen Grabbauten, etwa den weithin sichtbaren Felsgräbern, den Pfeilergräbern und den Heroa, wobei die letztgenannten Typen als Grablagen führender Dynasten gedeutet werden. Die Stellung dynastischer Niederlassungen Lykiens innerhalb der Siedlungshierarchie wird zumeist aufgrund folgender Kriterien beurteilt: Anzahl, typologische Zu-

ordnung und Qualität der Gräber; Nachweis einer Münzprägung; Zahl der inschriftlichen Zeugnisse; Nennung in zeitgenössischen Quellen (Zahle [1980]). Auf diese Weise gelangt man zu einer ungefähren Vorstellung der relativen Bedeutung einzelner Siedlungen und zu einer einigermaßen fundierten Rekonstruktion der Siedlungslandschaft. Die genannten Kriterien geben jedoch über die Ausdehnung und den Aufbau der jeweiligen Niederlassungen keinerlei konkrete Auskunft. Diese Fragen können nur mittels siedlungsarchäologisch orientierter Feldforschungstätigkeit beantwortet werden, wie sie in den letzten beiden Jahrzehnten in immer bedeutenderem Umfang durchgeführt wurde. Noch sind aber grundlegende, auf einer systematischen Bestandsaufnahme der baulichen Hinterlassenschaft basierende Forschungen zu unterschiedlichen Siedlungstypen und zur urbanistischen Entwicklung ausständig.

A. Der archäologische Befund

1. Zur Forschungsgeschichte

Schon Reisende des 19. Jhs. erstellten Planaufnahmen der wichtigsten Niederlassungen Lykiens. Diese wertvollen Dokumente geben den damals vorgefundenen Zustand der über Jahrhunderte gewachsenen, immer wieder veränderten und in ihrem Erscheinungsbild in wesentlichem Maße durch Bauten später Siedlungsphasen bestimmten Stadtanlagen wieder. Da die vorrangig an Inschriften, Großbauten und Bildwerken interessierten Altertumskundler nicht über die methodischen Mittel verfügten, frühe Siedlungsstrukturen zu erfassen und auch nicht die entsprechenden wissenschaftlichen Fragestellungen hatten, bieten diese Stadtpläne nur wenige für die vorliegende Untersuchung relevante Informationen.

Als erster unternahm W. Wurster in den 70er Jahren systematische Untersuchungen mit dem Ziel, *allgemein gültige Regeln und Planungsprinzipien der Entwicklung antiker Siedlungen* Lykiens zu erfassen (Wurster [1974] 22-27; [1976a] 21 ff.; [1976b] 23-49; [1977] 193-201; [1980] 29-36). Seine Aufnahmearbeiten umfaßten nicht nur einige der wichtigsten Siedlungsstätten, wie etwa Tlos und Pinara, sondern auch kleine Gemeinwesen des gebirgigen Hinterlandes, genannt seien etwa Kandyba, Apollonia und Phellos, sowie untergeordnete Siedlungsformen des ländlichen Umlands. Der deutsche Bauforscher veröffentlichte mehrere Aufsätze, in denen er Pläne von Einzelsiedlungen, Analysen zur Bausubstanz und vorläufige Überlegungen zum Wandel des Siedlungsbildes lyki-

scher Städte vorstellte, welche bis heute ihre Gültigkeit bewahrt haben. Eines der Hauptprobleme bei der Erfassung vorhellenistischer Strukturen durch Wurster bildeten nicht nur die starke spätere Überbauung sowie der Mangel an stratigraphischen Befunden, sondern auch das Fehlen von Datierungskriterien. Daher folgten seine Beobachtungen zum klassischen Siedlungsbild vorrangig siedlungstopographischen Ansätzen. Die ursprünglich geplante, zusammenfassende Untersuchung dieses Fragenkreises blieb jedoch ausständig.

Im Bereich zweier bedeutender lykischer Niederlassungen, Xanthos und Limyra, werden seit den 50er bzw. den späten 60er Jahren des 20. Jhs. kontinuierlich archäologische Ausgrabungen durchgeführt, die auch Erkenntnisse zur vorhellenistischen Siedlungsanlage erbrachten.

In Xanthos wurden mit der sog. "Lykischen Akropolis" ein befestigter Kernbereich der frühklassischen Niederlassung sowie mehrere aufwendige Einzelmonumente dieser Periode, darunter die Unterbauten der skulpturengeschmückten "Heroa" G, F und H, freigelegt (Metzger [1963]). Auch zeigte sich, daß die ältere, in das 7. Jh. v. Chr. zurückreichende Verbauung im Bereich der "Lykischen Akropolis", hervorgehoben seien Kultbauten, Residenzen und Magazinanlagen, wahrscheinlich unbefestigt war. Eine Residenz der klassischen Periode konnte innerhalb der Mauern der "Lykischen Akropolis" nicht nachgewiesen werden. Sie dürfte den umfangreichen baulichen Veränderungen der spätantik-frühbyzantinischen Periode zum Opfer gefallen sein. Für die vorliegende Fragestellung kommt dem zuletzt erbrachten Nachweis, daß entgegen der älteren Lehrmeinung der große Mauerriegel der Niederlassung im wesentlichen dem Verlauf der frühklassischen Befestigungen entspricht, besondere Bedeutung zu (Marksteiner [1997]; [2002b]). Diese umschlossen ein Areal von etwa 25 ha. Weitere archäologische Untersuchungen an vorhellenistischen Befunden betrafen Einzelmonumente, zumeist Gräber, während die frühe Wohnsiedlung unerforscht blieb. Im Zuge der in Limyra durchgeführten Ausgrabungen wurden neben bedeutenden Einzelmonumenten der klassischen Zeit auch die Siedlungsfortifikationen untersucht (Marksteiner [1997]), sodaß die Ausdehnung der befestigten Siedlung des frühen 4. Jhs. v. Chr. bekannt ist. Diese umfaßte wiederum eine Fläche von etwa 25 ha. Im Zuge der sog. Hanghausgrabungen wurden einige auf Felsterrassen gelegene Wohnbauten der klassischen Periode erforscht (Seyer [1993]; Borchhardt [1990] 130 ff.). Es handelt sich um agglutinierende Terrassenanlagen mit integrierten

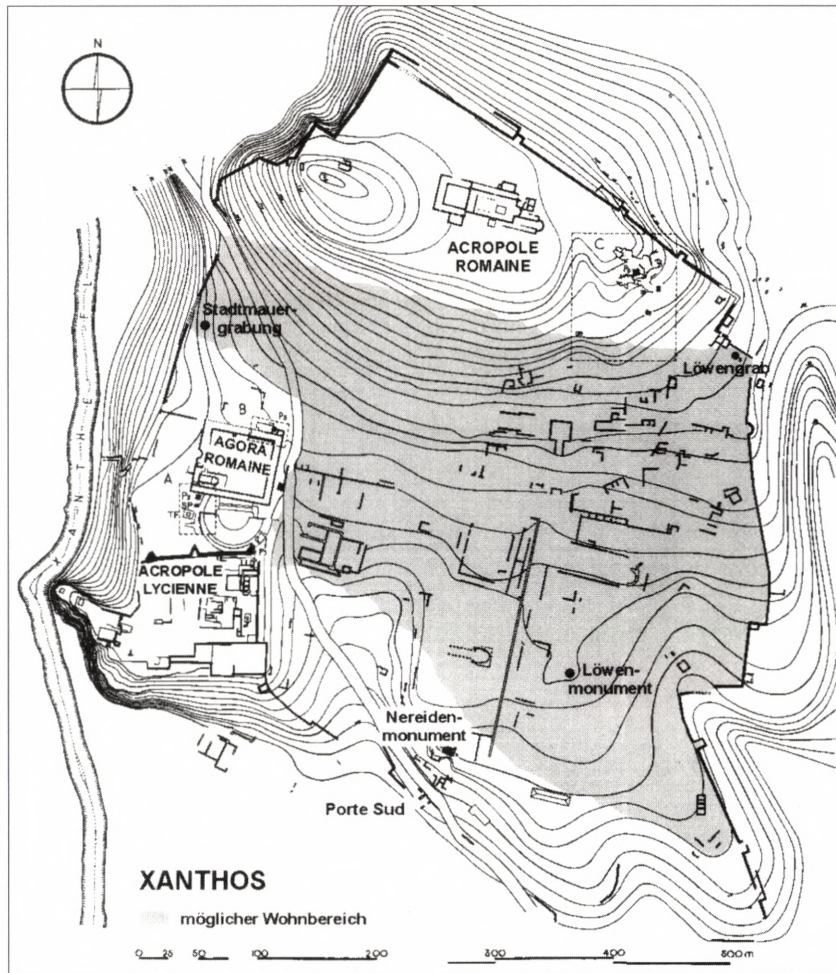


Fig. 2. Plan von Xanthos.

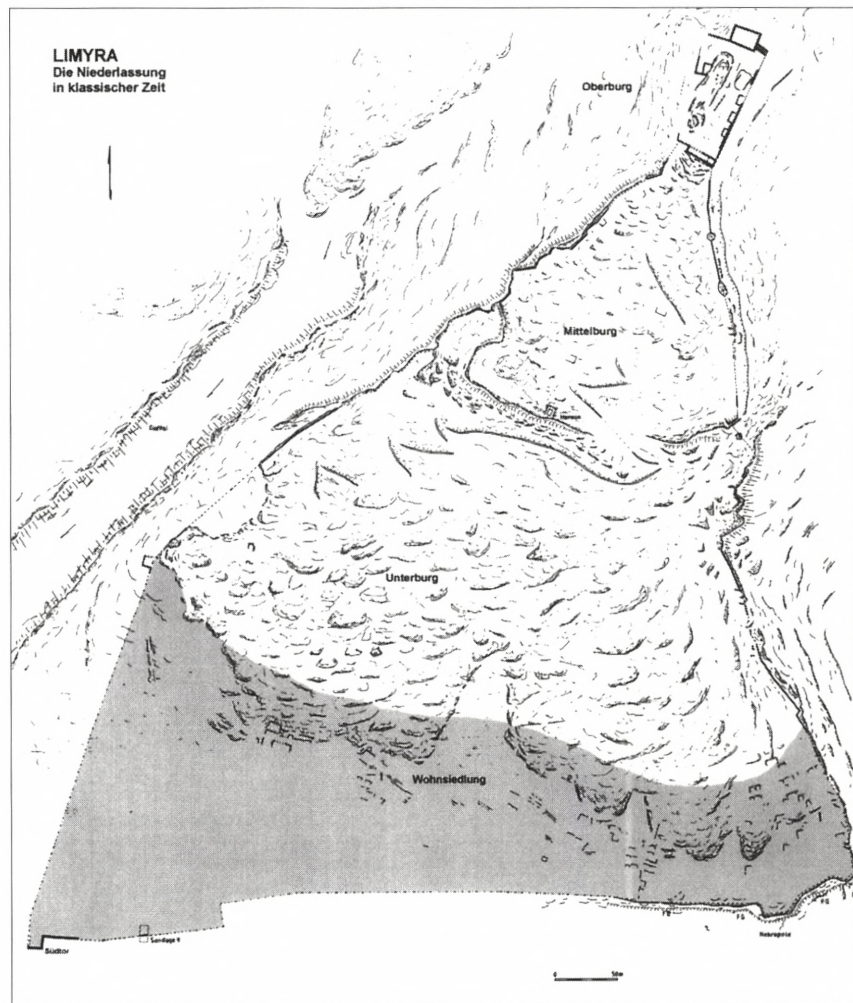
Kultbereichen, deren typologische Zuordnung von den Ausgräbern diskutiert wird. Weite Teile der Niederlassung liegen jedoch noch unter Hangschutt und den Häusern des modernen Dorfes begraben. Spätgeometrische und archaische Siedlungsspuren konnten in einer Sondage am Fuß des Siedlungshügels festgestellt werden.

In den mittleren 80er Jahren wurde die Surveytätigkeit in Lykien von neuem aufgenommen. Die Untersuchungen des Verfassers betrafen das vorhellenistische Befestigungswesen und Strukturanalysen zum klassischen Siedlungsaufbau (Marksteiner [1997]). Nebst grabungsarchäologischen und architekturhistorischen Forschungen in Limyra und Xanthos sowie einer engen Zusammenarbeit mit dem Kyaneai-Survey (s. u.) bildete von W. Wurster zur Verfügung gestelltes, damals teils noch unpubliziertes Planmaterial die Grundlage für eine systematische Auseinandersetzung mit dem vorhellenistischen Siedlungswesen der Region. Insbesondere wurden auch mehrere bis dahin

kaum untersuchte Niederlassungen Zentrallykiens, genannt seien etwa Trysa, Tüse, Büyük Avşar und Seyret, in die Überlegungen einbezogen. Nebst immer wiederkehrenden Elementen des klassischen Siedlungsaufbaus, etwa den Burganlagen mit turmartigen Kernbauten, konnte aus dem Ruinenbestand auch eine gewisse Variationsbreite und Vielfalt der Einzellösungen abgelesen werden.

Der von F. Kolb geleitete Kyaneai-Survey hatte sich die Erforschung des Territoriums der zentrallykischen Polis Kyaneai zur Aufgabe gemacht (Kolb [1993]; [1995]; [1996]; [1998]; [2000a]). Nebst dem Zentralort wurden auch die untergeordneten Niederlassungen des Umlandes eingehend untersucht. Diese hatten zumeist ihre Akmé in klassischer Zeit, sodaß sich an ihren Ruinen der vorhellenistische Siedlungsaufbau, von Umbauten weitgehend verschont, erhalten konnte. Von besonderer Bedeutung war die Entdeckung einer ausgedehnten, noch im 4. Jh. v. Chr. verlassenen Niederlassung auf dem Avşar Tepesi süd-

Fig. 3. Plan von Limyra (A. Sulzgruber).



westlich von Kyaneai (Kolb [2000b]; Thomsen [2001]). Die Ruinen dieser etwa 16 ha verbauter Fläche umfassenden Siedlung haben die Strukturen eines vorhellenistisch lykischen Gemeinwesens in einmaliger Form bewahrt. Nebst einer Burganlage, öffentlichen Plätzen, Wohngebäuden, Siedlungsbefestigungen und Gräbern zeugen auch Gewerbezone von einer differenzierten Verbauungsstruktur, auf die unten noch näher eingegangen werden soll. Das Umland ist von Gehöften überzogen, wobei ein erster Gürtel schon nahe dem Zentralort ansetzt. Erwähnt sei auch, daß die Untersuchung der auf dem Territorium von Kyaneai erhaltenen Ruinenstätten die Möglichkeit bot, die mit der Einbeziehung der Region in die hellenistische Welt verbundenen Veränderungen der Siedlungsstrukturen zu erfassen. Mit der Einrichtung einer Polis nach griechischem Muster war auch die Gründung eines städtischen Zentralortes (Kyaneai) verbunden, während die dynastischen Burgsiedlungen des Territoriums zwar als Niederlas-

sungen zweiter Ordnung weiterbestanden und auch eine gewisse politische Eigenständigkeit und Zentralortfunktion beibehielten, insgesamt jedoch erheblich an Dynamik einbüßten.

Die Entdeckung der Vorgängersiedlung von Telmessos/Fethiye durch K. Buschmann in den frühen 90er Jahren des 20. Jhs. erweiterte unsere Kenntnis der lykischen Siedlungslandschaft um die Lage und Ausdehnung einer bedeutenden dynastischen Siedlung (Buschmann [1992]). Das vom ansteigenden Bergmassiv durch einen schwach ausgeprägten Sattel abgesetzte Siedlungsareal bei der Lokalität Hızırlık umfaßt etwa 15-20 ha ummauerter Fläche. Im Bereich *intra muros*, in dem auch heute noch Karstquellen entspringen, lassen sich allenthalben Hinweise auf Terrassierung feststellen. Diese dürften mit Wohnverbauung in Zusammenhang stehen und belegen, gemeinsam mit einer vielleicht als Burg zu deutenden Anlage und zahlreichen, meist außerhalb der Ringmauer gelegenen Gräbern, den residenziellen Charakter der Nie-

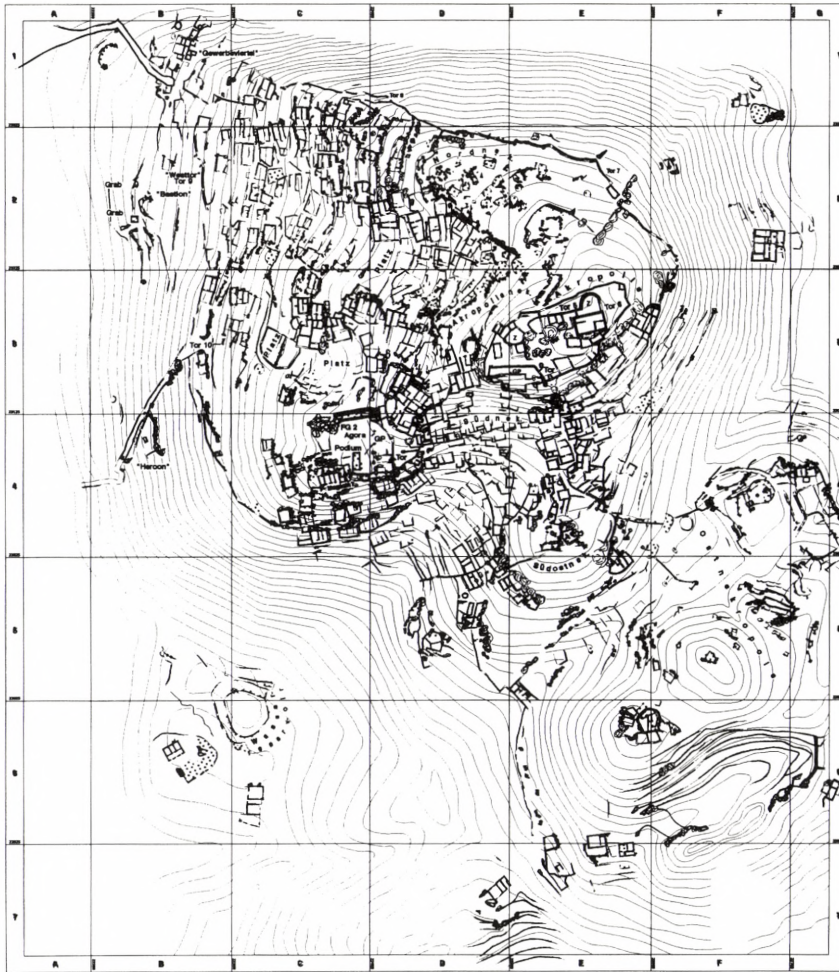


Fig. 4. Plan der Niederlassung auf dem Avşar Tepesi (Lykienarchiv, Tübingen).

derlassung. Diese dürfte im 4. Jh. v. Chr. zugunsten der küstennahen Siedlungslage des in der Forschung längst bekannten und wohl schon seit ältester Zeit als Hafen genutzten Ortes Telmessos/Fethiye aufgegeben worden sein.

2. Analytische Überlegungen zum archäologischen Befund

Die Vorgeschichte der lykischen Kernlande ist ungeachtet der Funde einiger Steinbeile und Keramikscherben weiterhin unerforscht. Überraschenderweise wurden auch im Zuge der Grabungen in Xanthos und Limyra keine vorgeschichtlichen Straten angeschnitten. Dies ist um so verwunderlicher, als nunmehr dank einer Neulesung der hieroglyphenluvischen Yalbur-Inscription die These, wonach die spätere Landschaft Lykien zu den in hethitischen Texten genannten Lukka-Ländern gehörte, als gesichert gelten kann (Poetto [1993]). Das Narrativ eines Feldzuges Tutaliyas IV. nennt Ortsnamen in der Reihenfolge der mit dem Vor-

marsch verknüpften Ereignisse, wobei sich deutliche Übereinstimmungen mit der antiken Toponymie des Xanthostales und der siedlungstopographischen Lage insbesondere der Orte Tlos, Pinara, Xanthos und Patara ergeben. Auch wurde Zemuri, die lykische Bezeichnung für die ostlykische Metropole Limyra, verschiedentlich mit dem Toponym *zumarri* der hethitischen Texte verbunden. Unedierte Tontafeln aus Ortaköy/Shapinuwa, in denen *zumarri* als Wasserreich apostrophiert wird, scheinen diese These zu stützen. Es kann also kaum Zweifel daran bestehen, daß im Lykien des 2. Jahrtausends v. Chr. ein Siedlungsweesen bestand, über dessen Charakter und bevorzugte Siedlungslagen jedoch zum jetzigen Zeitpunkt keine Aussagen getroffen werden können.

Im Zuge der Grabungen in Xanthos und Limyra wurde bis in das 8. Jh. v. Chr. zurückreichendes Keramikmaterial geborgen, Aussagen zu Struktur und Ausdehnung der dadurch angezeigten Niederlassungen sind jedoch bislang nicht möglich. Bei den Grabungen im Bereich der "Lykischen Akropolis" von Xanthos

wurden Grundrisse von Bauten des späten 7. bzw. frühen 6. Jhs. v. Chr. freigelegt, welche zu einem Residenzviertel mit Kultbauten gehören dürften. Der Befund ist jedoch zu ausschnitthaft, um Schlüsse auf die Struktur der Gesamtniederlassung und daher Aussagen zu deren städtischem Charakter zu erlauben. Der Bericht Herodots (1.176) über die Eroberung von Xanthos durch die Perser erlaubt es immerhin, auf das Vorhandensein einer verteidigbaren Wohnsiedlung und einer Art Zitadelle zu schließen. Es dürfte sich jedoch kaum um eine städtische Siedlung im Sinne des durch M.H. Hansen für die vorliegenden Untersuchungen vorgegebenen heuristischen Ansatzes gehandelt haben. Auch in Limyra und auf dem Avşar Tepesi wurden Baureste dieser Periode freigelegt, die jedoch keine Auskunft über Struktur und Ausdehnung der betreffenden Niederlassungen geben.

Für die spätarchaische Zeit ist die Befundlage zur Siedlungslandschaft Lykien erheblich besser, als für die vorhergehenden Epochen. Die Lage mehrerer zentrallykischer Niederlassungen wird durch reliefgeschmückte Pfeilergräber der zweiten Hälfte des 6. Jhs. v. Chr. angezeigt. Eine bedeutend größere Siedlungsdichte ergibt sich, wenn auch die ungeschmückten Gräber diesen Typs, die größtenteils ebenfalls in dieser Periode bzw. am Übergang zur klassischen Zeit errichtet worden sein dürften, in die Überlegungen einbezogen werden. Es zeigt sich, daß ein nicht unerheblicher Teil der in klassischer Zeit genutzten Siedlungsplätze auf spätarchaische Niederlassungen zurückzugehen scheint. Bauliche Befunde der spätarchaischen Periode wurden in Limyra, Xanthos und auf dem Avşar Tepesi grabungsarchäologisch erfaßt. Während der Befund in Limyra nur einem kleinen und wenig aussagekräftigen Schnitt entstammt, sind genügend Informationen verfügbar, um Überlegungen zur Ausdehnung von Xanthos in spätarchaischer Zeit anzustellen. Im Zuge der Grabungen im Bereich der "Lykischen Akropolis" wurde eine aus einem Wohnbau, Magazinen, Kultbauten und einer Umfassungsmauer bestehende Nachfolgeranlage der früharchaischen Residenz freigelegt (Metzger [1963]). Die französischen Ausgräber schlugen vor, einen nur abschnittsweise ergrabenen und heute nicht mehr auffindbaren Mauerzug nördlich der Residenz als Teil einer Befestigung zu deuten, Sicherheit konnte in dieser Frage jedoch nicht gewonnen werden. Der Fund eines spätarchaischen Reliefs auf der nahegelegenen "Römischen Agora" weist auf das einstige Vorhandensein von dynastischen Grabbauten in diesem Gebiet. Bei Grabungen an der westlichen Stadtmauer, etwa 120 m nördlich der "Lykischen Akropolis" wur-

den bedeutende Mengen vorklassischer Keramik aus klassischen Schüttstraten geborgen, die auf frühe Siedlungstätigkeit in diesem Bereich schließen lassen. Im Nordosten des späteren, ummauerten Stadtgebietes erhob sich das sogenannte Löwengrab, das älteste der dynastischen Pfeilergräber Lykiens. Ob dieses mit herrschaftlicher Wohnverbauung im Verband stand, läßt sich beim heutigen Wissensstand nicht aussagen, diese Möglichkeit sollte jedoch nicht ausgeschlossen werden. Durch den Neufund zweier, wahrscheinlich in spätarchaische Zeit datierender und aus einem polygonalen Mauerverband stammender Reliefblöcke mit Löwendarstellungen ist auch für den Südosten des späteren Stadtgebietes vorklassische Verbauung gesichert (des Courtils [1995]). Diese punktuellen Beobachtungen belegen spätarchaische Bautätigkeit in weiten Teilen des späteren Stadtgebietes, erlauben es jedoch nicht, Schlüsse auf die dieser zugrundeliegende Verbauungsstruktur und -dichte zu ziehen. In dieser Periode nahm die Niederlassung aber jedenfalls schon eine bedeutende Grundfläche ein und verfügte über eine monumentale und vielfältige Bauausstattung.

Für das klassische Lykien ergibt sich aus dem archäologischen Befund trotz starker allgemeiner Übereinstimmungen im Aufbau der Niederlassungen das Bild einer durchaus differenzierten Siedlungslandschaft. Zu den Anlagen unterer Ordnung zählen nebst zahlreichen, bisweilen großflächigen Gehöften auch freistehende kleine Burganlagen, die oft eine bemerkenswerte Bauqualität aufweisen können. Auch sind offene ländliche Siedlungen im Ruinenbestand nachweisbar. Ein charakteristisches Element der lykischen Siedlungslandschaft bilden Burganlagen mit angeschlossenen, häufig von einer Ringmauer umschlossenen Wohnbauten. Bei diesen eher kleinflächigen Anlagen (1 bis 5 ha Flächenausdehnung) nimmt die in Gipfellage situierte Burganlage zumeist nicht nur einen bedeutenden Teil der verbauten Fläche ein (Thomsen [2002]), sondern hebt sich in der Regel darüber hinaus auch aufgrund der sorgfältigen Bauausführung von der umgebenden Hangverbauung ab. Zu einer dritten Kategorie zählen die Großsiedlungen Xanthos, Limyra, Telmessos/Hızırlık, Myra (?) und Avşar Tepesi mit Grundflächen von 10-25 ha. Soweit der heutige Forschungsstand diesbezügliche Aussagen erlaubt, könnten nur die letztgenannten Niederlassungen eine ausreichende Bevölkerung beherbergt haben, um als "städtische" Zentralorte in Frage zu kommen. Es muß jedoch darauf hingewiesen werden, daß einige bedeutende Siedlungen der Dynastienzeit, genannt seien etwa Tlos, Phellos und Apollonia, noch

nicht eingehend genug untersucht sind, um einigermaßen gesicherte Aussagen über ihre Ausdehnung in vorhellenistischer Zeit zu erlauben. Zwecks Abrundung des Bildes einer differenzierten Siedlungslandschaft sollte an dieser Stelle auch noch ein weiterer Siedlungstyp angesprochen werden, die Streusiedlung mit einer kultische, militärische und sepulkrale Funktionen wahrnehmenden zentralen Örtlichkeit. Die einstige Existenz einer solchen Siedlungsform ist zwar für Lykien nicht völlig gesichert, aber doch plausibel erschließbar: Bei der Ortschaft Gölbent nahe von Xanthos haben sich die Ruinen einer fluchtburgartigen Befestigungsanlage, mehrere, teils aufwendige Gräber und ein Kultbau mit platzartiger Freifläche, wohl ein Fest- bzw. Versammlungsplatz erhalten, während Hinweise auf das einstige Vorhandensein eines ausgedehnten Habitates fehlen (des Courtils – Marksteiner [2000]). Ähnlich stellt sich vielleicht die Situation in Isinda im östlichen Zentrallykien dar. Von einigem Interesse für das Verständnis der Vielfältigkeit der lykischen Siedlungslandschaft klassischer Zeit ist wohl auch die wohl etwas mehr als 3 ha ummauerter Fläche einnehmende Niederlassung bei dem türkischen Ort Seyret im westlichen Zentrallykien (Marksteiner [1997]). Die Siedlung setzt sich aus mehreren, auf Felskuppen gelegenen Turmbauten repräsentativen Charakters sowie einer diese verbindenden und das in einer Senke befindliche Wohngebiet umfassenden Ringmauer zusammen. Das Nebeneinander mehrerer herrschaftlicher Wohntürme, welche die Funktion der Burganlage anderer lykischer Niederlassungen übernommen haben dürften, innerhalb einer Niederlassung kann vielleicht als Hinweis auf eine dezentrale, wohl oligarchische Führungsstruktur des Gemeinwesens gewertet werden. Man möchte das Siedlungsbild von Seyret als das Ergebnis des Zusammenschlusses mehrerer führender Familien verstehen, die sich innerhalb der Siedlung architektonisch streng voneinander abzusetzen suchten, aber nach außen hin gemeinsame Interessen zu verteidigen hatten.

Aufgrund der durch eine bedeutende Flächenausdehnung implizierten Bevölkerungszahl könnte es sich bei den schon erwähnten klassisch lykischen Großsiedlungen um städtische Zentralorte gehandelt haben. Die Fläche ist jedoch als Grundlage für die Berechnung der Einwohnerzahl nicht ausreichend, solange nicht ein weiterer Faktor, die Verbauungsdichte, in die Überlegungen miteinbezogen wird. Einigermaßen gesicherte Aussagen sind nur bezüglich der Niederlassung auf dem Avşar Tepesi möglich, deren verbaute Gesamtfläche knapp 15 ha betrug

(Thomsen [2001]). Davon lagen rund 8 ha innerhalb der Ringmauer, der Rest im ebenfalls dicht verbauten Vorfeld. Ausweislich der Untersuchungen von A. Thomsen machen Wohnbauten etwa 50% des befestigten Areals und 25% der Vorfeldverbauung aus. Die Gesamtzahl von etwa 130 Hauseinheiten ließ Thomsen auf eine Einwohnerzahl von 800-1000 Personen schließen.

In Limyra war aufgrund der topographischen Vorgaben ein Teil des befestigten Areals, insbesondere der Steilhang am Fuß des Heroons, baulich kaum nutzbar. Im Bereich der sog. Mittelburg haben sich zwar punktuell Bebauungsreste erhalten, das felsige Gelände scheint jedoch eine dichte Verbauung nicht erlaubt zu haben. Die eigentliche Wohnsiedlung konzentrierte sich wohl auf den unteren Hangbereich und umfaßte etwa 8 ha dicht verbauter Fläche. Aus den bekannten Fakten ergibt sich eine vorsichtige Schätzung der Einwohnerzahl der klassischen Niederlassung von höchstens 1200-1500 Seelen, wobei unterstrichen werden muß, daß aufgrund der Überbauung und des hohen Grundwasserspiegels eine gesicherte Aussage bezüglich des Vorhandenseins einer offenen Siedlung im Vorfeld nicht möglich ist. J. Borchhardt rekonstruierte im Vorfeld des sog. "Lykischen Tores" dichtverbaute und durch eine Mauer geschützte Viertel, für deren einstiges Vorhandensein jedoch keine ausreichenden Belege vorgebracht wurden (Borchhardt [1990] 130-31). Diese Überlegungen boten auch die Grundlage für eine m. E. unrealistische Schätzung der Einwohnerzahl auf etwa 4000 Seelen.

Die Befestigungen von Xanthos umfassen nebst der "Lykischen Akropolis" eine weitere, ausgedehnte Kuppe, auf welcher sich nur wenige und zumeist späte Verbauungsreste erhalten haben. Dieser nahezu unbebaute Bereich der sog. "*acropole romaine*", der etwa ein Viertel der Gesamtfläche ausmacht, darf wohl aus den Überlegungen zur Einwohnerzahl ausgeklammert werden. Bei der "Lykischen Akropolis" und dem nördlich anschließenden Gebiet, welches auf dem Inschriftenpfeiler als "*Agora*" bezeichnet wird, handelte es sich wohl, sieht man vom eigentlichen Wohnbereich des Dynasten einmal ab, um öffentliche Bereiche, sodaß mit einer besonderen Einwohnerdichte kaum zu rechnen ist. Ein Gleiches gilt auch für die Nekropolenzone im Nordosten. Als potentieller Wohnbereich verbleiben demnach knapp zwei Drittel der ummauerten Fläche, also etwa 15 ha, wobei es der Forschungsstand nicht erlaubt, Aussagen über die Verbauungsstruktur dieser Bereiche zu treffen. Zieht man als Bemessungsgrundlage die am Ruinenbestand ablesbare Verbauungsdichte und Struktur der Nieder-

lassung auf dem Avşar Tepesi heran, erscheint eine Schätzung von etwa 250-350 Hauseinheiten denkbar. Daraus mag eine Einwohnerzahl von etwa 1500 bis 2500 Personen erschlossen werden, welcher angesichts der Bedeutung der Niederlassung und der Ausdehnung des zu bemannenden Mauerringes eine gewisse Plausibilität zukommt.

Das ummauerte Areal der Niederlassung Telmessos/Hızırlik bietet insgesamt gutes Baugelände, so daß einer weitgehenden Verbauung nichts im Wege gestanden wäre. Aus einem Vergleich mit den Strukturen auf dem Avşar Tepesi, insbesondere dem Verhältnis von öffentlichem Raum zu den Wohnbereichen, ergäbe sich eine hypothetische Einwohnerzahl von maximal 1000 Personen. Obwohl der archäologische Oberflächenbefund keine Aussage über das tatsächliche Ausmaß der baulichen Nutzung erlaubt, unterstützt sowohl die aus historischen Quellen erschließbare politische und wirtschaftliche Bedeutung der Niederlassung – Telmessos wird auf den attischen Tributlisten eigens aufgeführt und verfügte über eine reichhaltige Münzprägung – als auch der Umfang und die bauliche Qualität ihrer Ringmauer die Plausibilität dieser Schätzung. Die Niederlassung dürfte wohl zu den größten Plätzen Lykiens gezählt haben. Mangels einer modernen Ansprüchen genügenden Planvorlage erweist sich die Berechnung der in klassischer Zeit ummauerten Fläche der bedeutenden ostlykischen Niederlassung Myra als schwierig, sie mag jedoch im Bereich um 10 ha gelegen haben. Aus dem Ruinenbestand läßt sich ablesen, daß der Hang von der Burg bis nahe an die Ebene unterschiedlich dicht verbaut war, wobei eine Analyse der Zeitstellung dieser Verbauung aussteht. Eine Einwohnerzahl von etwa 700 Personen erschiene jedenfalls durchaus vorstellbar.

Zusammenfassend darf festgestellt werden, daß selbst die lykischen Niederlassungen mit der größten Flächenausdehnung eine Bevölkerung beherbergt haben dürften, welche sich zahlenmäßig eher an der unteren Grenze der für städtische Siedlungen vorauszusetzenden Größenordnung befand. Diese Siedlungen konnten dennoch unter demographischen Gesichtspunkten als Städte gelten (Kolb [1986]; Hansen [2000]). Ein Vergleich mit den Bevölkerungszahlen gleichzeitiger Poliszentren des griechischen Raumes macht jedoch deutlich, wie klein die Einwohnerschaft dieser lykischen Zentralorte war. Ob dies mit den beschränkten landwirtschaftlichen Ressourcen der Region, der geringen Bedeutung des Handels oder mit den eine siedlungsgeographische Aufsplitterung begünstigenden politischen Strukturen, bzw. mit einem Zusammenspiel mehrerer dieser Faktoren in Zusam-

menhang stand, werden vielleicht spätere Forschungen zeigen. Von einiger Bedeutung erscheint die Feststellung, daß die hervorragende Stellung der aufgrund ihrer Ausdehnung und Einwohnerzahl als lykische Großsiedlungen erschließbaren Niederlassungen Xanthos, Limyra/Zemuri und Telmessos innerhalb der lykischen Siedlungshierarchie auch durch andere Bewertungskriterien, etwa die Nennung in historischen Quellen, die Qualität der Grabbauten oder auch die Zahl der Inschriften, gestützt wird (Zahle [1980]). Nur die Siedlung auf dem Avşar Tepesi, die allerdings vielleicht mit der Prägestätte *Zagaba* identifiziert werden kann (Kolb [2000b]), fällt etwas aus dem hier gezeichneten Rahmen. Der Denkmalbestand belegt aber darüber hinaus, daß die Siedlungsgröße nicht unbedingte Voraussetzung für die politische Bedeutung eines lykischen Gemeinwesens gewesen sein dürfte, da einige der kleinflächigen dynastischen Burgsiedlungen Zentrallykiens innerhalb der politischen Siedlungshierarchie eine hervorragende Stellung eingenommen zu haben scheinen. Dies wird etwa durch den in vorhellenistischer Zeit bedeutenden und als wichtige Prägestätte überlieferten Dynastensitz Phellos, dessen Ruinen allerdings noch kaum untersucht sind, oder durch den im frühen 4. Jh. v. Chr. großzügig ausgestatteten Dynastensitz Trysa auf dem späteren Territorium der Polis Kyaneai belegt. Letzterer dürfte wohl für einige Jahrzehnte im östlichen Zentrallykien eine politische Zentralortfunktion wahrgenommen und diese vielleicht auch von der bedeutend größeren Niederlassung auf dem Avşar Tepesi übernommen haben (Kolb [2000b]; Marksteiner [2002a]).

Als weiterer, für die Bewertung als städtische Niederlassung ausschlaggebender Faktor ist das Vorhandensein einer differenzierten Bauausstattung zu nennen, welche als Indikator für Zentralortfunktionen wirtschaftlicher, kultischer, militärischer und politischer Natur gelten darf. Befestigte Anlagen sind in der lykischen Siedlungslandschaft der klassischen Zeit allgegenwärtig. So bilden Burgen bzw. Zitadellen einen konstituierenden Bestandteil von Siedlungen aller Größenordnungen und kommen im ländlichen Siedlungsraum auch freistehend vor. Für die klassische Zeit sind im Denkmalbestand darüber hinaus auch die Wohnbereiche umfassende Ringmauern nachweisbar; es ist derzeit jedoch noch unklar, ob vergleichbare Schutzbauten nicht auch schon früher errichtet worden sein könnten. Die genannten Verteidigungseinrichtungen dienten sicherlich vor allem der Eigensicherung, man darf aber davon ausgehen, daß derart geschützte Gemeinwesen auch über ein gewisses Maß

an politischem Freiraum verfügten. Diese Burgen und befestigten Siedlungen könnten darüber hinaus in ein System der Territorialverteidigung eingebunden gewesen sein. So erschlossen F. Kolb und A. Thomsen für das Gebiet des Avşar Tepesi ein System von Grenzfestungen, die zur Sicherung eines Territoriums eingerichtet bzw. genutzt worden seien, das ungefähr die Ausdehnung der späteren Polis Kyaneai vorweggenommen habe (Kolb [2000b]; Thomsen [2001]). Die für eine derartige Lesung des Befundes vorgebrachten Argumente lassen jedoch einige Fragen unbeantwortet und vermögen daher auch nicht völlig zu überzeugen. So ist auf die unterschiedliche Entstehungszeit und die geringe größenmäßige und strukturelle Einheitlichkeit dieser Anlagen hinzuweisen. Auch macht der Umstand stutzig, daß einige dieser Burgsiedlungen den Zentralort auf dem Avşar Tepesi in baulicher Qualität übertroffen haben dürften und ausweislich fürstlicher Nekropolen im Laufe ihrer Geschichte Sitze bedeutender Aristokraten bzw. lokaler Dynasten gewesen müssen. Diese heterogenen Anlagen könnten jedoch durchaus zeitweise unter der Führung des Avşar Tepesi gestanden haben und in die militärische Sicherung von dessen politischer Einflußzone eingebunden gewesen sein. Zusammenfassend sei festgestellt, daß der Niederlassung auf dem Avşar Tepesi ungeachtet der mit archäologischen Mitteln kaum zu klärenden Fragen nach der Ausdehnung ihres Herrschaftsgebietes und den Strukturen der Herrschaftsausübung zweifelsfrei eine Rolle als militärisches und politisches Zentrum eines ausgedehnten und dicht besiedelten Umlandes zukam. Ähnliches gilt wohl auch für andere lykische Städte dieser Periode: So ist Xanthos als Sitz einer Dynastie überliefert, welche zeitweise in persischem Auftrage überregionale Führungsaufgaben erfüllte, und dürfte jedenfalls militärische, politische und administrative Zentralortfunktion für das Umland und darüber hinaus wohl auch für das dynastische Herrschaftsgebiet übernommen haben.

Die Frage nach der kultischen Ausstattung lykischer Niederlassungen läßt sich am besten anhand der Ruinen von Xanthos und der Siedlung auf dem Avşar Tepesi beantworten. Auf der "Lykischen Akropolis" wurde ein wahrscheinlich dreicelliger Kultbau freigelegt, der ausweislich einer favissaartigen Grube als Kultplatz auf das 7. Jh. v. Chr. zurückgehen könnte. Seine erhaltene Bausubstanz datiert allerdings erst in die 2. Hälfte des 6. Jhs. v. Chr. (Metzger [1963]). In klassischer Zeit wurden in diesem Bereich mehrere aufwendige Bauten errichtet, von denen einer als Tempel, andere als sog. Heroa bzw. fürstliche Gräber

gedeutet werden. Auf die mögliche Verbindung von Grabbau und Götterkult weist das griechische Epigramm auf dem nahegelegenen Inschriftenpfeiler hin, in dem festgehalten ist, daß das Monument im Temenos der Zwölfgötter auf der Agora errichtet worden war. Auch in der Niederlassung auf dem Avşar Tepesi wurden mehrere, als Kultbauten gedeutete Monumente entdeckt. Innerhalb der Burgmauern befindet sich ein monumentaler, rechteckiger Unterbau, ein weiterer Podiumsbau liegt nahezu mittig im Bereich einer als Agora angesprochenen Platzanlage im Zentrum der Siedlung (s. u.), während ein in drei Längsräume und einen vorgelagerten Querraum geteiltes Gebäude im Vorfeld vielleicht Anklänge an den dreicelligen Kultbau von Xanthos erkennen läßt (Thomsen [2001]). Auch fanden sich auf dem Avşar Tepesi verschiedentlich hypaithrale, mit zumeist anatolischer Tradition entsprechend aus dem Felsen gearbeiteten Kulteinrichtungen versehene Heiligtümer. Zumindest ein Teil der Kultbauten lag im öffentlichen Bereich der Niederlassung und kann als Hinweis auf die Bedeutung des Zentralortes für das religiöse Leben nicht nur der Einwohnerschaft, sondern auch der ländlichen Bevölkerung des Umlandes gedeutet werden. Darüber hinaus sind im Denkmalbestand des Kyaneai-Gebietes auch mit dörflichen Niederlassungen und großen Gehöften verbundene Kultplätze überliefert. Diese entsprechen wohl funktional den verschiedentlich in Wohnhäusern im Siedlungsverband festgestellten, vielleicht einer privaten Kultausübung dienlichen Einrichtungen. Hier seien beispielsweise die mit Altären und Kultnischen versehenen Terrassen im Bereich der Hanghäuser von Limyra genannt. Erwähnt werden soll hier noch der verschiedentlich nachweisbare Grabbau, der sicherlich vorrangig privater Natur war, im Fall eines dynastischen Kultes jedoch wiederum politische Konnotation gewinnen und vielleicht auch auf die eine oder andere Weise eine Verbindung mit Götterkulten eingehen konnte.

Es darf angenommen werden, daß der Kultbau auf der "Agora" des Avşar Tepesi und möglicherweise auch das dreigeteilte Gebäude im Vorfeld aufgrund ihrer Lage in den öffentlichen Bereichen der Niederlassung der Gesamtgemeinde zur Verfügung standen und quasi öffentlichen Charakter hatten. Dagegen erlaubt es die verschiedentlich feststellbare räumliche Verbindung von Residenz, Burganlage und Kulteinrichtungen auf das Bestehen eines in altorientalisch-anatolischer Tradition stehenden Zusammenspiels von politischem Machtanspruch und Übernahme religiöser Funktionen durch die Dynasten zu schließen. Diese Überlegungen werden auch durch die Bedeu-

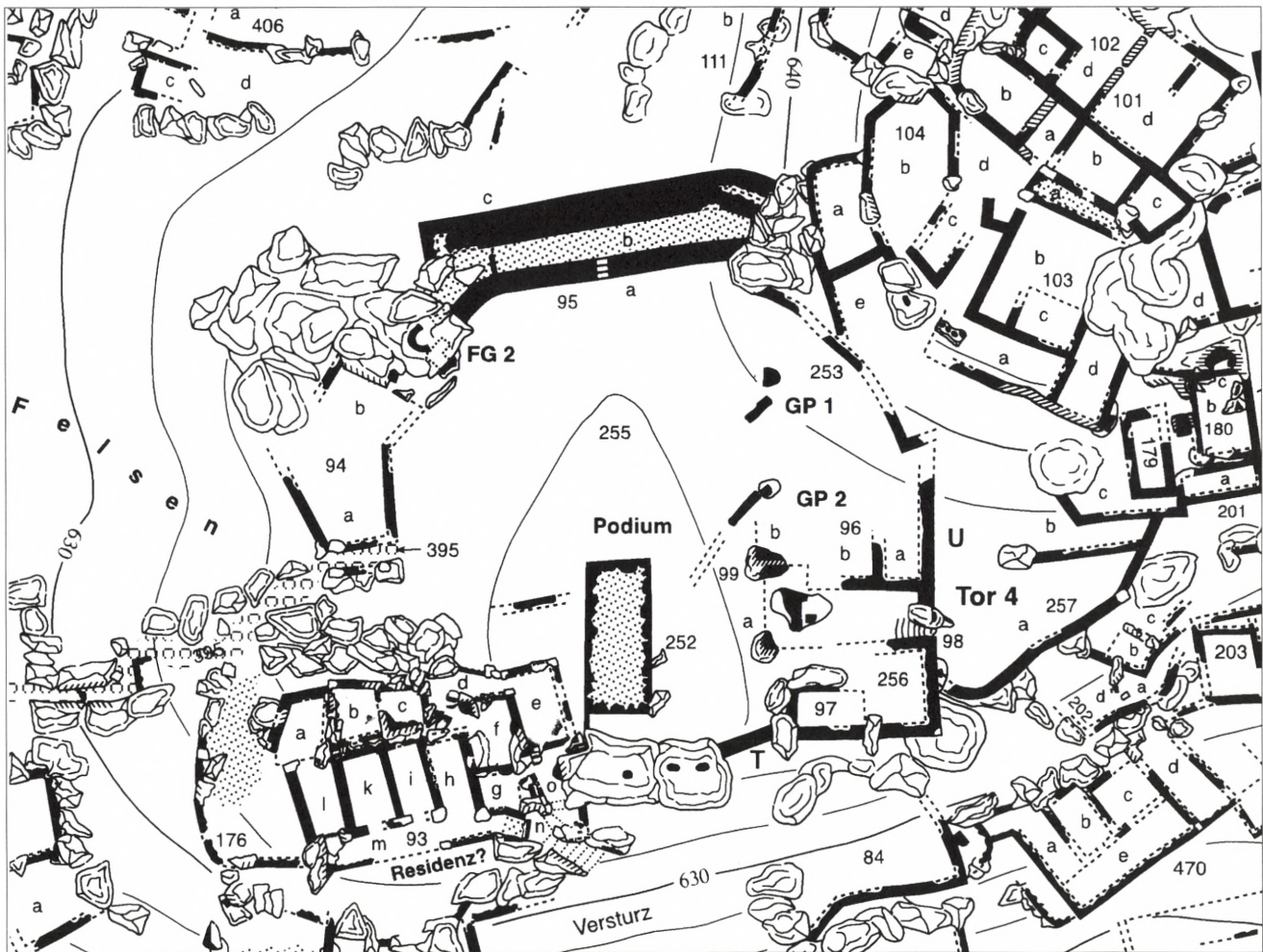


Fig. 5. Die "Agora" auf dem Avşar Tepesi (Lykienarchiv, Tübingen).

tung des Motivs der Opferdarstellung in der dynastischen Kunst und dessen Rolle bei der Selbstdarstellung führender Persönlichkeiten unterstrichen (Marksteiner [2002a]). Aufgrund der hier angesprochenen politischen Konnotation erscheint es wahrscheinlich, daß die Kultausübung in dynastischen Zentren nicht nur der Befriedigung lokaler religiöser Bedürfnisse diene, sondern darüber hinaus auch "staatstragende" Funktion hatte. Es läßt sich folglich nicht nur kultische Zentralortfunktion der betreffenden Niederlassungen für ihr Umland, sondern auch für das jeweilige dynastische Herrschaftsgebiet wahrscheinlich machen.

Aus dem griechischen Epigramm des zur Randverbauung eines in der Kaiserzeit monumental ausgebauten Platzes gehörigen Inschriftenpfeilers von Xanthos (TAM I.44b) ist bekannt, daß zur Bauausstattung lykischer Niederlassungen auch eine als Agora bezeichnete, wohl platzartige Einrichtung gehören konnte,

auf deren architektonische Gestalt sich vor Ort jedoch keine Hinweise erhalten haben. Die noch unpublizierte Strafandrohung mit Nennung der *theoi agoraioi* auf einem Sarkophag des frühen 4. Jhs. v. Chr. im Nahbereich der späteren Agora von Kyaneai weist nicht nur in dieselbe Richtung, sondern erlaubt es auch in dem in Lykien inschriftlich bezeugten *nelezi Trqas* einen lykischen *Zeus Agoraios* zu erkennen (Kolb [2000a]). Auf dem Avşar Tepesi hat sich eine zentral gelegene Platzanlage erhalten, die einen Eindruck von der Ausgestaltung einer solchen lykischen Agora zu vermitteln vermag (Thomsen [2001]). Auf einer etwa 2000 m² Grundfläche einnehmenden, durch Mauerzüge bzw. Bauten abgegrenzten Freifläche erhoben sich ein als Tempel zu interpretierender Rechteckbau und zwei Pfeilergräber. Eine substruktionsartige Einrichtung im Norden könnte eine Holztribüne getragen haben. Ein Gebäude im Westen diente wahrscheinlich als Magazin, mag aber auch

Verwaltungsräume beherbergt haben. Aufgrund der aus der architektonischen und inschriftlichen Ausstattung erschließbaren Verbindung von Götter- und Heroenkult weisen diese lykischen Anlagen eine gewisse Verwandtschaft mit frühen griechischen Agoraï auf, es muß jedoch offen gelassen werden, inwieweit die lykischen Plätze auch für politische Zusammenkünfte dienten. Da sich ganz allgemein in der Struktur und der Bautypologie spätarchaischer und hochklassischer Niederlassungen Lykiens nur geringer griechischer Einfluß festmachen läßt, darf es als wahrscheinlich gelten, daß es sich bei diesen Platzanlagen um eine den Anforderungen lokaler Gemeinden entsprechend entwickelte Bauform handelt. Dieser sind vielleicht auch Pendants aus anderen anatolischen Landschaften zur Seite zu stellen (Thomsen [2001]).

Mit Ausnahme der Ruinen auf dem Avşar Tepesi bietet der lykische Denkmalbestand nur wenige Informationen, die einer Einschätzung der Form und des Umfangs wirtschaftlicher Aktivitäten der Bewohnerschaft lykischer Siedlungen der Dynastienzeit als Grundlage dienen könnten. Also soll die zentrallykische Niederlassung als Ausgangspunkt diesbezüglicher Überlegungen genommen werden. An ihrer Peripherie haben sich ein kleines Gewerbeviertel und ein vielleicht als Viehmarkt zu interpretierender ummauerter Platz erhalten. Auch weisen für den Viehtrieb besonders geeignete Wege mit trichterförmiger Ausgestaltung der Mündung auf die Bedeutung der Viehwirtschaft und mit dieser verbundener Tätigkeiten, wie etwa der durch mehrere Becken angezeigten Gerberei, für die Ökonomie des Gemeinwesens (Thomsen [2001]). Erwähnenswert sind auch die unterschiedlichen vorhellenistischen Perioden zugehörigen Magazinbauten im Bereich der lykischen Akropolis von Xanthos, die in palatiale Kontext gestanden haben und damit vielleicht als schwacher Hinweis auf eine Form zentralisierter Vorratswirtschaft gelten könnten. Weitere Gewerbe müssen aus sekundären Quellen erschlossen werden. So gab es in zahlreichen lykischen Niederlassungen Prägestätten, ein Umstand, der wohl eine Mindestausstattung mit Werkzeugen zur Metallbearbeitung und die Verfügbarkeit geschulten Personals voraussetzt. Derartige mit Herrschaftsrechten verbundene Einrichtungen weisen jedoch vielmehr auf die Wahrnehmung politischer als auf die wirtschaftlicher Zentralortfunktion. Schmiedewerkstätten wiederum waren nicht nur für die Herstellung von Metallgerätschaften notwendig, sondern auch bei Durchführung der bei der Errichtung lykischer Steinbauten anfallenden Steinmetzarbeiten im Bruch und am Bau tätig. Es sei auch festgehalten, daß

auffällige Unterschiede des in Limyra, Xanthos und auf dem Avşar Tepesi ergrabenen keramischen Formen- und Warenspektrum auf das Bestehen lokaler Keramikwerkstätten weist. Deren genaue Lokalisierung ist allerdings nicht bekannt, sie könnten jedoch durchaus im Weichbild der Niederlassungen gelegen haben. Der nicht unbedeutende Anteil importierter Schwarzfirnisware an der Fundkeramik aus Xanthos, Limyra und vom Avşar Tepesi belegt wiederum Handelskontakte, über deren Umfang zur Zeit noch keine Aussagen getroffen werden können. Aus den genannten Beobachtungen ergibt sich der Schluß, daß der agrarische Bereich zwar, wie eingangs festgestellt, die ökonomische Grundlage der lykischen Wirtschaft bildete, in den politischen Zentralorten aber auch ein einigermaßen differenziertes und spezialisiertes Gewerbe bestanden haben muß.

Ausweislich des archäologischen Befundes ist es legitim, einige besonders großflächige lykische Niederlassungen der Dynastienzeit aufgrund ihrer Bevölkerungszahl, des Nachweises einer differenzierten Bauausstattung und des Vorhandenseins deutlicher Hinweise auf die Wahrnehmung politischer, militärischer, kultischer und ökonomischer Zentralortfunktionen als Städte zu bezeichnen. Auch belegen Feldforschungen, daß das Umland dieser im allgemeinen auf ausgedehnte Fruchtebenen hin orientierten lykischen Zentralorte dicht besiedelt war. So lagen in dem vergleichsweise fruchtbaren Gebiet um den Avşar Tepesi zahlreiche geräumige und teils auch befestigte Gehöfte (U. Hailer in Kolb [1998] und Kolb [2000a]). Ein ähnliches Bild ergaben extensive Untersuchungen in der Umgebung von Limyra (Marksteiner [1994]). Da diese städtischen Niederlassungen in der Regel auch bedeutende Dynastensitze waren, stand wohl nebst dem direkten Einzugsgebiet zumindest zeitweise auch ein weiteres Territorium in einem Verhältnis politischer Abhängigkeit. Auch scheint zwischen der politischen Bedeutung und der demographischen Entwicklung fallweise eine Korrelation bestanden zu haben. Der Siedlungstyp mit "städtischem" Zentralort und Umland stellte jedoch im Lykien der klassischen Zeit eher die Ausnahme dar, da in weiten Gebieten ein von kleinflächigen Burganlagen geprägtes, dezentrales Siedlungsschema dominierte. Dieses könnte der lokalen, südwestanatolischen Tradition entsprochen haben, wie sie etwa auch für die westliche Nachbarlandschaft Karien nachweisbar ist.

B. Der historische Befund

Die Geschichte Lykiens unter der Herrschaft der

Achämeniden wird in der Forschung zumeist in zwei Perioden unterteilt: Die kurz nach der Eroberung durch die Perser in den 40er Jahren des 6. Jhs. v. Chr. einsetzende und durch spezifische, zum jetzigen Zeitpunkt nur in Umrissen erfaßbare politische Organisationsformen gekennzeichnete Dynastiezeit und die Periode der sog. "karischen Herrschaft". Letztere bezeichnet die den Wirren des sogenannten Satrapenaufstandes folgende und mit einer Zerschlagung der lokalen Verwaltungsstrukturen verbundene Phase, in der Lykien durch Statthalter der karischen Dynastie der Hekatomniden direkt verwaltet wurde. Der mit dieser Entwicklung verbundene Hellenisierungsprozeß scheint, wie noch darzustellen ist, der Einrichtung von Poleis griechischen Typs den Weg geebnet zu haben. Die im Anschluß an die Eroberung Kleinasiens durch Alexander erfolgte Eingliederung Lykiens in die hellenistische Koiné des östlichen Mittelmeerraumes führte sodann zu einer weitgehenden Übernahme griechischer Kulturmuster, die auch die politische Organisation und die bauliche Ausgestaltung der städtischen Zentralorte betraf.

Im folgenden Abschnitt werden die verfügbaren historischen und epigraphischen Quellen nach Hinweisen auf die Existenz von städtischen Strukturen im vorhellenistischen Lykien analysiert und mit den Ergebnissen der oben durchgeführten Sichtung des archäologischen Materiales verglichen. Auch soll die Frage nach dem Vorhandensein von den griechischen Polisstrukturen verwandten Organisationsformen im dynastiezeitlichen Lykien angesprochen werden.

In der Forschung wurden verschiedentlich Münzmissionen mit der ausschließlichen Nennung von Ortsnamen und gelegentlich Ethnika im Genitiv-Plural als Beleg für die Existenz politisch aktiver Bürgergemeinden in lykischen Gemeinwesen der Dynastiezeit interpretiert. Zuletzt wurden jedoch wiederum erhebliche Zweifel an einer derartigen Lesung des Befundes geäußert. So wies M. Domingo Gygax (2001) darauf hin, daß derartige Emissionen gemeinsam mit den Dynastieprägungen abrupt abbrachen, also an diese gekoppelt gewesen sein dürften. Zu einem ähnlichen Ergebnis gelangten auch F. Kolb und W. Tietz im Rahmen einer analytischen Untersuchung des dynastiezeitlichen Münzwesens des zentrallykischen Raumes (Kolb und Tietz [2001]). Sie machten darauf aufmerksam, daß in den Fällen, in denen "in der Legende nur ein Ortsname erscheint, meistens anhand von Bezeichnungen oder dem Münzbild ein Zusammenhang mit einem Dynastie oder einer Dynastiefamilie gewährleistet ist", und werteten diese Beobachtungen als Hinweis darauf, daß das Münzrecht den

Dynastie vorbehalten war und daß es keine "Städteprägungen" gegeben haben dürfte.

Das Bestehen eines dynastiezeitlichen Vorläufers des lykischen Bundes und damit implizit auch von politisch aktiven Gemeinwesen erschlossen O. Carruba und N. Vismara aus dem in der Münzprägung aufscheinenden Namenmaterial (Vismara [1996]). Den diesbezüglichen Überlegungen, die auf einer durch das Vorkommen einer großen Zahl von Personennamen auf klassisch lykischen Münzen angeregten Interpretation einzelner Namensträger als Präbeamte basieren (Carruba [1993]), wurde jedoch zuletzt mit guten Argumenten widersprochen (Kolb und Tietz [2001]; Domingo Gygax [2001]). Insbesondere die lange Zeitspanne lykischer Dynastieprägung und die große Zahl der als Präeorte bekannten und daher als Dynastiesitze in Frage kommenden Niederlassungen würden es durchaus erlauben, die in der Münzprägung aufscheinenden Personennamen mit dynastischen Herrschaftsträgern zu identifizieren. Das numismatische Material erlaubt folglich keinen einigermaßen gesicherten Schluß auf das Bestehen politisch aktiver Bürgergemeinden bzw. "städtischer" Verwaltungsstrukturen im vorhellenistischen Lykien. Auch ergab eine jüngst erschienene Untersuchung zum "Lykischen Bund" keine tragfähigen Hinweise auf eine in der Forschung verschiedentlich postulierte föderative, auf dem Zusammenschluß städtischer Gemeinwesen basierende Organisationsstruktur in vorhellenistischer Zeit (Behrwald [2000] 10-39).

Das dynastiezeitliche Inschriftenmaterial Lykiens umfaßt Zeugnisse in lykischer, griechischer und aramäischer Sprache. Während die lykischen Inschriften aufgrund des Überwiegens sepulkraler Texte und noch immer fortbestehender sprachlicher Verständnisschwierigkeiten nur geringfügige Informationen für die vorliegende Fragestellung bieten, wird in mehreren griechischen Schriftzeugnissen direkt auf Niederlassungen Bezug genommen. In den in Gedichtform gefaßten Tatenberichten des Arbinas (CEG 888i-ii, iii; 889) wird die Zerstörung von Xanthos, Pinara und Tlos durch den Dynastie gepriesen, wobei bei der Darstellung dieser Geschehnisse zweimal der Begriff *astu* und einmal die Bezeichnung *polis* Verwendung finden. Mangels detaillierter Informationen entziehen sich die geschilderten historischen Ereignisse einer weiterführenden Analyse, und auch der Kontext erlaubt keine Schlüsse auf die Verfassung oder den politischen Status der zerstörten Niederlassungen. Durch die Austauschbarkeit der Begriffe wird aber nahegelegt, daß im gegebenen poetischen Rahmen einer Charakterisierung der politischen Organisation dieser

Gemeinwesen keine Bedeutung beigemessen wurde. Es ging dem Dynasten Arbinas wohl vorrangig darum, die Eroberung und Zerstörung bedeutender Siedlungen im Sinne von strategischen und machtpolitischen Zentren und damit seine militärische Schlagkraft kundzumachen.

Die Deutung des in einigen lykischen Inschriften überlieferten und in der Forschung als *polis* bzw. *politai* übersetzten Schlüsselbegriffs *teteri* bereitet weiterhin Schwierigkeiten. Die vorgeschlagenen Übersetzungen basieren auf vergleichenden Lesungen der griechischen und der lykischen Fassung der sog. Letoon-Trilingue, eines während der Periode der hekatomnidischen Herrschaft verfaßten und die Einrichtung eines Kultes regelnden Dekretes. In eine frühere Phase lykischer Geschichte könnte die wahrscheinlich ebenfalls mit kultischen Fragen befaßte lykische Inschrift TL 65 aus Isinda führen, in welcher an prominenter Stelle dieser Begriff vorkommt. Die Datierung des sehr beschädigten Dokumentes ist allerdings umstritten, da eine chronologische Zuweisung sowohl in die fortgeschrittene Dynastiezeit als auch in den frühen Hellenismus möglich erscheint. Auch wies M. Domingo Gyax zuletzt darauf hin, daß in dem Text aus Isinda der Name des Dynasten Kheziga viermal Wiederholung findet und damit den Inhalt zu prägen scheint (Domingo Gyax [2001]). Daraus zog er den Schluß, daß die erwähnte Gemeinde kaum „von der dynastischen Herrschaftsform befreit gewesen sein“ dürfte. Dies erlaubt zwar keinen Schluß auf den fehlenden „städtischen Charakter“ der Niederlassung und den Status des Gemeinwesens innerhalb der lykischen Siedlungshierarchie, belegt aber wohl dessen Einbindung in das politische Gefüge der Dynastieherrschaf-ten. Das Wort *teteri* findet sich auch auf weiteren, allerdings bruchstückhaften lykischen Inschriften, deren Datierung in die Dynastiezeit allgemein akzeptiert wird (TL 149; N 320). Es stellt sich allerdings die Frage nach der Bedeutung des Begriffes in der betreffenden Periode, da eine Projektion des in der Letoon-Trilingue für einen späteren Zeithorizont überlieferten Begriffsinhaltes nicht als selbstverständlich angenommen werden darf.

Auf sichererem Boden befindet sich die Forschung bei der Lesung und Analyse der schon erwähnten Trilingue vom Letoon. Die Datierung dieses Dekretes der Xanthier unterliegt zwar ebenfalls der Diskussion; der zeitliche Spielraum – eine Zuweisung an die Jahre 358 oder 337/336 wäre möglich – ist jedoch für die vorliegende Fragestellung ohne besondere Relevanz. Die Formulierung der griechischen Textfassung, zu der aus Lykien auch frühhellenistische Gegenstücke

überliefert sind, weist jedenfalls deutliche Anklänge an Dekrete griechischer Staaten auf. Folgerichtig wird das dekretierende Gemeinwesen auch ausdrücklich als Polis bezeichnet. Bei den in der Inschrift neben den Xanthiern genannten Perioikoi handelte es sich um eine Bevölkerungsgruppe, der in griechischen Verfassungen kein Equivalent gegenüberstand (Wörrle [1978]). Es scheint hier eine lykische Sonderentwicklung vorzuliegen, deren Wurzeln vielleicht in der Adaptation dynastiezeitlicher Verhältnisse an eine neue Ordnung zu suchen sind. Jedenfalls tritt hier eine Bürgergemeinde als beschlußfähige Körperschaft auf. Auf etwa gleichzeitigen Stelenfragmenten aus dem Letoon haben sich Ausschnitte aramäischer Texte erhalten, in denen von den Bürgern von Xanthos und Pinara die Rede ist und vielleicht ebenfalls eine Beschlußformel vorkommt. Im epigraphischen Material zeichnet sich also auch betreffs weiterer lykischer Gemeinwesen eine mit Xanthos vergleichbare Entwicklung ab.

In der Forschung wurde schon verschiedentlich darauf hingewiesen, daß die lykische Gesellschaft während der Periode der hekatomnidischen Herrschaft einen forcierten Hellenisierungsprozeß durchgemacht haben dürfte. Dieser betraf nicht nur die zunehmende Verwendung der griechischen Sprache, sondern wahrscheinlich auch die Einführung von Polisinstitutionen nach griechischem Vorbild. In diesem Zusammenhang ist wohl die Einrichtung politischer Territorialeinheiten mit Zentralort und Umland zu sehen, die in der Beschlußformel der Trilingue vom Letoon ihren Niederschlag gefunden hat.

Es sollte an dieser Stelle noch erwähnt werden, daß in zeitgenössischen Quellen des griechischen Raumes bzw. bei aus diesen rezipierenden späteren Autoren verschiedentlich in Verbindung mit lykischen Niederlassungen der Dynastiezeit die Begriffe *poleis* bzw. *polismata* aber auch *komai* Verwendung fanden (Keen [1998]). Diese durch griechische Terminologie und Tradition geprägten Zeugnisse, bei denen unklar ist, ob sie sich eher auf siedlungstopographische oder auf politische Aspekte beziehen bzw. inwieweit sie überhaupt eine reale Kenntnis lykischer Bedingungen widerspiegeln, sind keinesfalls an einer Definition im modernen Sinne orientiert und sollten – wie auch die Arbinas-Epigramme – entsprechend kritisch betrachtet werden. Es ist daher wohl vorzuziehen, sie aus den vorliegenden, vom lykischen Denkmalbestand ausgehenden Überlegungen auszuklammern.

Zusammenfassend sei festgestellt, daß sich zwar für die lykische Dynastiezeit keine Institutionen nachweisen lassen, wie sie für das griechische Polis-

system typisch sind, daß aber die strukturellen Voraussetzungen für das Bestehen einer „city-state culture“ im Sinne der Definition von M. H. Hansen gegeben gewesen sein dürften. Die politische Führung lag in den Händen einer aristokratischen Oberschicht, deren Protagonisten als Dynasten bezeichnet werden. Diese formulierten vor allem in der ersten Hälfte des 4. Jhs. v. Chr. auch monarchische Ansprüche. Die Rolle der Gemeinwesen in diesem politischen Gefüge bleibt indessen weitgehend im Dunkel. Es ist aber festzuhalten, daß die Siedlungen nicht nur Dynastensitze waren, sondern Gemeinden, deren Namen als Ethnikon genutzt werden konnte. Einige dieser Niederlassungen erreichten demographische Größenordnungen und eine strukturelle Differenzierung, wie sie für städtische Gemeinwesen vorausgesetzt werden müssen. Auch dürften sie Zentralortfunktionen für ein weiteres Umland übernommen haben. Es könnte eine Korrelation zwischen der politischen Bedeutung und der demographischen Entwicklung einzelner Niederlassungen bestanden haben. Einschränkend ist jedoch festzuhalten, daß mit dynastischen Burgsiedlungen ein weiterer Siedlungstyp von der Spitze der Siedlungshierarchie überliefert ist, der keine vergleichbaren demographischen Entwicklungstendenzen aufgewiesen zu haben scheint. Xanthos durfte jedenfalls spätestens in der ersten Hälfte des 5. Jhs. v. Chr. als städtische Niederlassung gelten, deren Struktur in hohem Maße durch die Rolle als Sitz der führenden lykischen Dynastie bestimmt wurde. In Limyra/Zemuri scheint der Impetus zum um 400 v. Chr. erfolgten „städtischen“ Ausbau mit einer Verschiebung des regionalen politischen Gleichgewichtes zugunsten der mit dem Namen Perikles verbundenen ostlykischen Dynastie in Zusammenhang gestanden zu haben, deren Hauptresidenz die Niederlassung wohl gewesen sein dürfte.

Erst mit dem Ende der Dynastenherrschaften in der Zeit um die Mitte des 4. Jhs. v. Chr. werden die Bürgergemeinden als Träger politischer Funktionen und die Verbindung von städtischem Zentralort und Umland als politische Einheit faßbar. Diese Entwicklung dürfte mit der Umstrukturierung der lykischen Gesellschaft durch die Hekatomniden in Zusammenhang gestanden haben. Die Reibungslosigkeit, mit der sich dieser Prozeß vollzogen zu haben scheint, könnte jedoch als Hinweis darauf gewertet werden, daß die Wurzeln dieser Strukturen schon in den Organisationsmustern der Dynastenezeit, welche dem durch M. H. Hansen definierten Typus der „city-state culture“ nahegestanden haben dürften, vorgezeichnet waren („Introduction“ *supra* 8-10).

C. Städtische Strukturen im hellenistischen Lykien

Die ab spätclassischer Zeit faßbare Gliederung der Bevölkerung lykischer Poleis in eine „städtische“ Bürgerschaft und Periöken verliert sich ausweislich des Inschriftenmaterials in der Mitte des dritten Jahrhunderts v. Chr., sodaß spätestens ab dieser Zeit die Konstitution geschlossener Polisterritorien abgeschlossen gewesen sein dürfte. Innerhalb der neuorganisierten Poleis behielten jedoch zumeist aus klassischen Burgsiedlungen erwachsene, untergeordnete Gemeinden des ländlichen Umlandes eine gewisse Verwaltungsautonomie und bestimmte Zentralortfunktionen (Schuler [1998]). Eine weitere, im Inschriftenformular durch die fehlende Nennung des Rates (*boule*) faßbare lykische Sonderentwicklung blieb allerdings bis in das frühe 2. Jh. v. Chr. wirksam. Erst ab dieser Periode scheinen sich die politischen Institutionen lykischer Poleis weitgehend griechischen Mustern angeglichen zu haben.

Während nun das epigraphische Material eine einigermaßen konzise Vorstellung der Ausgestaltung des Polissystems im hellenistischen Lykien vermittelt, erlaubt es der Forschungsstand nicht, weitreichende Aussagen zum Ausbau der urbanen Infrastruktur lykischer Städte in hellenistischer Zeit zu machen. Grundsätzlich sind zwei unterschiedliche Entwicklungsmuster zu unterscheiden. Häufig begnügte man sich damit, bestehende Niederlassungen den neuen Bedürfnissen entsprechend zu adaptieren. In einigen Fällen kam jedoch dieser mit einer strukturellen Umgestaltung verbundene Ausbau einer Neugründung gleich. Dies scheint insbesondere für Hafenstädte gegolten haben, die im Hellenismus einen bedeutenden Aufschwung nahmen. Insgesamt dürften geänderte Faktoren, wie das Vorhandensein eines geschützten, zum Hafen ausbaubaren Landplatzes bzw. ein verkehrstopographisch günstiges Verhältnis zum Hinterland die Prosperität der Niederlassungen bestimmt haben.

Im Zuge der Ausstattung bestehender Siedlungen mit Großbauten griechischen Musters erwies es sich für die Bürgerschaft zahlreicher Niederlassungen als notwendig, Baugrund im Vorfeld zu erschließen. Diese Stadtvergrößerung war bisweilen mit einer Erweiterung des Mauerrings verbunden. In vielen Fällen wurden aber die Monumentalbauten einfach an günstiger Stelle außerhalb der Befestigungen errichtet. Die Sonderstellung von Xanthos innerhalb der klassischen Siedlungshierarchie wirkte auch in hellenistischer und römischer Zeit weiter, da die Niederlassung die Grenzen der bestehenden Stadtmauern nicht

gesprengt zu haben scheint. Das Areal der dynastischen Niederlassung war anscheinend ausreichend großzügig bemessen und als Bauland geeignet, um den Ansprüchen hellenistischer Urbanistik zu genügen.

Die archäologische Evidenz und inschriftliche Quellen belegen, daß die städtischen Zentralorte Lykiens in hellenistischer Zeit mit Großbauten griechischer Prägung, genannt seien etwa Kultbauten, Theater, Platzanlagen, Gymnasien, Badegebäude usw., ausgestattet wurden. Der Forschungsstand erlaubt es jedoch nicht, Aussagen zu den dieser Umgestaltung zugrundeliegenden urbanistischen Konzepten, etwa die Anwendung eines Rasternetzes und/oder die Einrichtung eines Systems sich rechtwinklig kreuzender Straßen, zu machen. Da die verfügbaren Zeugnisse für eine Urbanisierung zumeist relativ spät sind, sollte man vielleicht davon ausgehen, daß es sich bei der Einrichtung einer städtischen Infrastruktur griechischen Typs um einen langwierigen Prozeß gehandelt hat. Es wäre jedenfalls durchaus vorstellbar, daß die bauliche Ausstattung der meisten lykischen Städte bis in hoch- und späthellenistische Zeit vergleichsweise einfach blieb. Ein massiver und den heutigen Denkmalbestand prägender Urbanisierungsschub läßt sich erst für die römische Kaiserzeit festmachen.

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The Zapotec City-State

MICHEL R. OUDIJK

The Bènzàa Region

The region in which the Bènzàa live today is as diverse as the people themselves (Fig. 1). It consists of the rugged mountain ranges of the Sierra Zapoteca, the steaming hot flat lands of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, and the fertile river beds of the Valley of Oaxaca. The people speak Didxazá, Diidxza, Dizaa, Titsa'sá or Tíchazàa. All are closely related language variants which nonetheless can be mutually unintelligible. All these people, however, have been called "Zapotec" as if it were a uniform group with fixed characteristics and easily recognisable cultural aspects. But the Bènzàa from the Isthmus dress more like the Huave or lowland Ayuuk than like the Bènzàa from the Sierra Zapoteca. The same goes for the food they eat and the houses they live in. However, a shared cultural and historical background explains the existence of a Bènzàa identity.¹

In both the Isthmus of Tehuantepec and the Sierra Zapoteca people claim to have their origins in the Valley of Oaxaca (AGIE 160b, Exp. 1:249r; Lorenzo [1984] 66-67) as I have shown recently using other historical records (Oudijk [2000]). As such they are all descendants of the people who produced the culture that we recognise as that of the Bèngolazàa or ancestors of the Zàa.² Thus the Bènzàa of today are carriers of a culture that began as early as 500 B.C., a cultural continuity of almost 2,500 years. Their history began at the time Monte Albán was founded on the hills in the heart of the Valley of Oaxaca. After a long period of flowering and expansion, the influence of the political powers situated in Monte Albán diminished until the main plaza was finally abandoned around A.D. 800. Smaller, yet locally powerful, polities, such as Zaachila, Lambityeco and Cuilapan, sprang up throughout the Valley of Oaxaca creating a new, apparently unstable situation in which political alliances and rivalries seem to have determined the historical process. Flannery and Marcus (1983) 217 called this period one of "Balkanization", that is "the division of a region into numerous small states that are hostile to each other". It is exactly this period which will be the focus of discussion here.

Research on Bènzàa City-States

The pre-hispanic history of the Valley of Oaxaca is dominated by the Classic period city of Monte Albán, which is built on the mountains rising up from the centre of the valley floor. The site has been an obvious point of interest ever since serious archaeological and historical research in the region began.³ Although many questions have still to be answered regarding this "capital", there is no doubt that Monte Albán represented the political power, and was the actual seat of the rulers of the Bèngolazàa state (e.g. Marcus and Flannery [1996]; Blanton et al. [1999]). Recently, Joyce Marcus (2000) discussed Monte Albán as a city, describing it according to the sector model of Homer Hoyt (1939) but making the important distinction between Western and non-Western concepts of the city. According to Marcus, the Mesoamerican city refers "not only to a nucleated settlement, but also to its ruler, its inhabitants, and the territory ruled, including outlying dependencies and landholdings" (Marcus [2000] 55-56). Thus the Mesoamerican concept of the city is what is known as the Nahuatl *Altepetl*, Ñuu Dzavui *Yuvui Tayu*, Maya *Ahawlel* and Bènzàa *Queche*, terms also used to refer to the Mesoamerican city-state (Smith [2000]; Lind [2000]; Grube [2000]). It should be noted, however, that we have to be careful about applying these post-Classic and colonial terms to Classic period phenomena. That is, it is not clear how far the post-Classic concept of *queche*, which will be used here to refer to the Bènzàa city-state, was also used to refer to the Classic Bènzàa state. If so – which is impossible to verify with present knowledge – it would be a clear example of disjunction since the same term would have been used at two distinct moments to refer to two distinct phenomena. As the evidence stands, it is premature to apply the concept of "queche" to the Classic period Monte Albán state.

Research on the fall of this political and religious centre was the reason for excavations in the Valley of Oaxaca. When the grandfather of Oaxacan archaeology and history, Alfonso Caso, was working in Monte Albán to establish a ceramic typology and

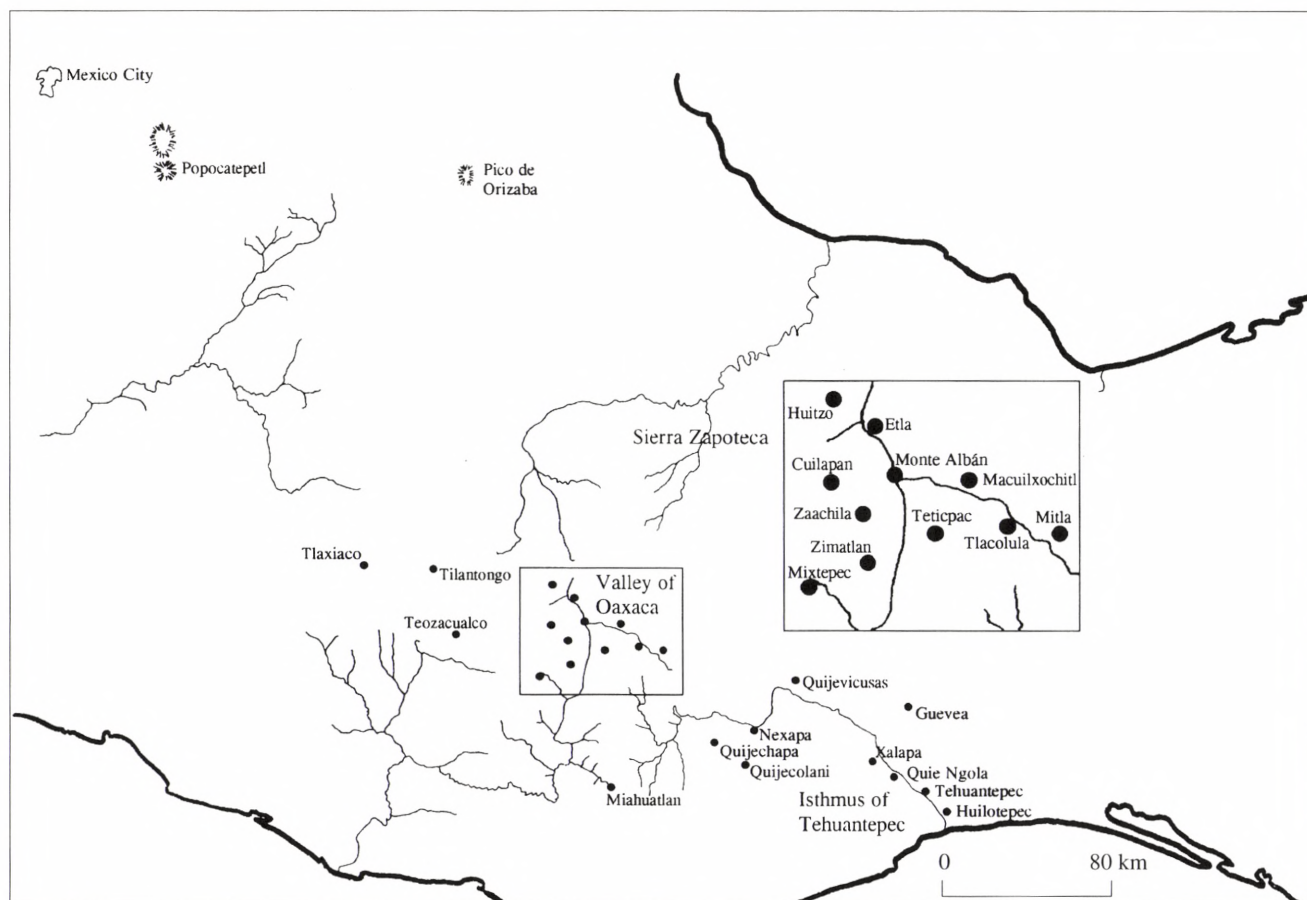


Fig. 1. Map of the Bènzàa region.

chronology, he and his colleagues found that the same ceramic complex was in use before and after the fall of Monte Albán. It was decided nonetheless to divide the complex into two “phases” and call the first Monte Albán (MA) IIIb and the second MA IV (Caso, Bernal and Acosta [1967]).⁴ However, to define MA IV better, Caso’s colleagues went out to excavate at the new political centres in the Valley which had sprung up during this particular phase. Although several of these sites were excavated (Paddock [1955]; [1957]; [1960]; [1983]; Bernal [1958]; [1964]; Bernal and Gamio [1974]; Bernal and Oliveros [1988]), the ceramic differences between the two phases continued to be one of “percentages or proportions of one type to another, [and] not simple presence or absence” (Marcus and Flannery [1990] 195).

During the 1970s and 1980s the Oaxacan Settlement Pattern Project (OSPP), a full surface survey of the Valley floor, produced a lot of new information on Bènzàa history (Blanton et al. [1982]; Kowalewski et al. [1989]; Marcus and Flannery [1996]). Although it has exercised a formidable influence over the last two

decades, this project has made the MA IIIb-IV problem even clearer and at the same time has deepened the controversy about it among scholars. Whereas the members of the OSPP should have corrected Caso’s methodological blunder of having an event determine the division of two ceramic complexes which cannot really be distinguished, they simply continued using his categories. The consequences are obvious when looking at the maps of settlement patterns related to the two phases: phase MA IIIb is present in the western part of the valley but absent in the eastern part, while in phase MA IV the opposite is the case (Kowalewski et al. [1989] 266, 291). In the following MA V phase the whole Valley is occupied evenly again (*ibid.* 316). Instead of concluding that we clearly have a functional rather than a chronological difference, the OSPP recognised the problem but chose to ignore it completely in their further analysis (*ibid.* 251-54). Consequently, they suggested an apparently massive population movement from the eastern to the western Valley in about A.D. 500, leaving the east virtually depopulated. Then in about

A.D. 750 the population moved from the western part of the Valley to the eastern part, this time leaving the west virtually depopulated. Finally, for reasons unknown, in approximately A.D. 1000 the population spread out evenly over the whole Valley floor.

A second problem continued by the OSPP concerns the chronology of the different phases. Although the fall of Monte Albán, i.e. the beginning of MA IV, had not been dated satisfactorily by Caso, it was now firmly dated as A.D. 750 and the end put at about A.D. 1000. This left a period of over five hundred years (A.D. 1000-1521) for the so-called MA V. The map of the settlement patterns (*ibid.*) and the proposed theories on related social and political matters of this last period reveal a considerable stability. This is, however, contrary to information from the historical sources produced after the Spanish conquest of 1521, which present a situation of continuous fighting, factionalism, and even large-scale migrations, especially after about A.D. 1350 (Whitecotton [1977]; Zeitlin [1994]; Oudijk [2000]). So in this particular case the academic conclusions based on the archaeological record do not concur with the historical record due to its coarse periodisation. OSPP's results do not distinguish between sites of A.D. 1100 and 1500, or rather, suggest they were contemporary. The historical record, however, shows that communities may very well have disappeared, or at least declined significantly, during this tumultuous period. Thus the MA V phase settlement pattern, as identified by the OSPP, does not represent a contemporaneous existence but rather a cumulative record of possible non-contemporaneous occupation and is, as such, of limited use for a discussion of socio-political developments during short periods within MA V.⁵

Beginning shortly after Kowalewski et al.'s key publication (1989) and continuing through the 1990s, a new chronology and categorisation has been proposed (Winter [1989]; [1990]; Lind [1991-92]; [1994a-b]; Martínez López et al. [2000]). First the names and chronology of the phases were changed to Xoo (A.D. 500-800), Liobaa (A.D. 800-1250), and Chila (A.D. 1250-1521). The fall of Monte Albán is situated at the end of the Xoo phase, which at the same time incorporates the ceramics of both former phases MA IIIb and MA IV. Although this seemingly solved the problem that was created by Caso and continued by the OSPP, it has created a major new problem. The MA V phase is now divided into the Liobaa and Chila phases; as regards ceramics, the latter is well defined and basically consists of the original MA V ceramic phase (Martínez López et al.

[2000] 7-8). The Liobaa phase, however, is left largely undefined with regard to ceramics, i.e. it represents a hiatus and therefore does not exist archaeologically. This has left us with the unacceptable situation of not being able to use the information about MA V/Liobaa/Chila phases or phases from earlier publications because it is not clear how these relate to the new chronology.

The present situation of the archaeology of the Valley of Oaxaca is particularly unfortunate for the purposes of this contribution. After the fall of the Monte Albán state it is unclear what happened in the Valley.⁶ However, since the historical record clearly shows the existence of Bènizàa city-states during the period A.D. 1250-1521 (the Chila phase), we have to assume that these had their origin in the Liobaa phase, which is not defined. It is thus impossible to give an account of the origin of the city-state in the Valley of Oaxaca. Furthermore, it has become increasingly clear that, due to the short-term character of colonial historical information (later than 1521) it is difficult to relate it to archaeological data which cover a much longer span of time. This is particularly the case in the Bènizàa political landscape since it had been in turmoil for some 100 years when in 1519 the Spanish troops of Hernán Cortés landed on the shores of what they were to call "New Spain".

Having explained the problems concerning the particular period under discussion here, the question should be how to produce a relevant account of city-state culture in the Valley of Oaxaca. Since there is no solid information on the period A.D. 1450-1521 for reasons which will be discussed below, I have decided to discuss principally the situation around 1440 and make several suggestions about that of 1540. The information for these descriptions is based, on the one hand, on the data related to the MA V phase as produced by the OSPP but treating it as if it represents the Chila phase, and on the other hand on the information as presented in colonial documents. In order to give a full account, I will transpose information backwards and forwards from one period to the other if necessary. Of course, this approach suffers from various methodological problems, of which I am well aware, but at this stage it is the only reasonable manner in which to discuss Bènizàa city-state culture.

I will first give a brief historical overview of the last 250 years before the Spanish conquest. This is necessary in order to put the descriptions of the Bènizàa city-state culture into context. Then will follow a discussion of the different elements that make up the city-state as put forward by Hansen (2000) 17-

19. If possible, these will be described within the context of each of three Bènizàa subregions: the Valley of Oaxaca, the Isthmus of Tehuantepec and the Sierra Zapoteca.

The Chila Phase (A.D. 1250-1521)⁷

The few historical accounts at our disposal seem to indicate that around A.D. 1250 a new dynasty was founded in Zaachila, the main Bènizàa polity of the Valley of Oaxaca at the time. Its founder immediately began to build political ties with other polities and consequently had his son marry a noble woman from Teozacualco, an important city-state in the Mixteca (see Lind's article (2000) on the Ñuu Dzavui city-state). Through this alliance his grandson became the founder of the fourth dynasty of Teozacualco, thus securing a network of contacts and influences reaching far beyond Zaachila's direct political control. During the second half of the 14th century Zaachila was ruled by Lord Cosijoeza 11 Water. He and his son and successor, Lord Quixicayo 6 Water, followed the policies of expansion through various marital and military alliances. They continued to have close ties with the Ñuu Dzavui city-states of Teozacualco and Tlaxiaco. During these years new Bènizàa communities were founded in the Sierra Zapoteca. Simultaneously, it was Cosijoeza who made the first incursion into the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. Uniting his own army with that of his allies, he conquered various towns in order to establish strongholds that were to guard the commercial route to the southern lands of Xoconusco and Guatemala. It seems that during this campaign a number of villages were founded in the Isthmus, among which are Guevea, Xalapa, and possibly the beginnings of the fortress of Quiengola. Although very little archaeological research has taken place, it seems likely that the region which connects the Valley of Oaxaca with that of the Isthmus was also conquered during this period. According to an early 17th century chronicler it was the ruler of Zaachila who took the region from the Ayuuk and established four fortified garrisons to secure it (Burgoa [1989] II: 235-36). Quijevicusas in the north was to hold off the Ayuuk, Quijchapá and Quijcolani in the south were to guard the Chontales, while Nexapa in the centre closed off the corridor. We can place the establishments of Guevea, Xalapa and Tehuantepec in the Isthmus in the same context. The first lies to the north of the route, the second to the south, and the third controls the whole lowland area to which this corridor gives access. Furthermore, only some 7 km north-east

of Tehuantepec the spectacular fortress of Quiengola was built probably to control the region very much as Nexapa did further north.

When, after a long reign, Cosijoeza's son and successor Lord Quixicayo died without a son to follow him on the throne, a halfbrother of Cosijoeza, Lord 1 Grass, was installed as ruler of Zaachila. This was, however, not without considerable problems with other factions of the Zaachila royal family. These problems crystallised in the mid-15th century when Lord 1 Grass died. A dynastic struggle broke out that was to divide the whole of the Valley of Oaxaca into rival factions until the arrival of the Spaniards in 1521. Cuilapan seems to have profited most as it took over the prominent political and economic position of Zaachila. This factionalism and the related social insecurity also led to large-scale migrations to the Sierra Zapoteca and the Isthmus of Tehuantepec during the second half of the 15th century. The reason for all these problems seems to have been that Lord 1 Grass did not have a (legitimate) son, or that his son was not accepted as ruler by other factions. Pictographic documents present a son called Cosijopii who moved to the Isthmus of Tehuantepec after he had lost the power struggle in Zaachila. Using Cosijoeza's settlements as bases he began a conquest of the Isthmus, where he founded many new towns and firmly established his court in Tehuantepec, which soon became a large city. Because the royal house of Zaachila had a legitimising effect on the lesser houses all through the Valley of Oaxaca, the dynastic crisis and consequent move of Cosijopii to the Isthmus had a devastating effect on these related houses. It seems that factionalism was widespread during this period, causing many people to opt for migration to other places. This development led to a large-scale colonisation of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec and to a lesser degree that of the Sierra Zapoteca. In the case of the Isthmus, Cosijopii received these people with open arms and gave them land to found new communities displacing the Huaves, Mixes and Zoques who used to live in the region.

The son of Cosijopii was called Cosijoeza II and he seems to have continued his father's conquests until his death in 1502. Cosijoeza II fought against the Mexica or Aztec armies of Ahuitzotl and Moctezuma Xocoyotzin and eventually married the sister of the latter. Don Juan Cortés Cosijopii II was born from this marriage and ruled in Tehuantepec at the time of the Spanish conquest until he died in 1562.⁸

City-State Organisation

All scholars agree that the city-state was the prevailing type of state during the Post-Classic period (Blanton et al. [1981]; Kowalewski et al. [1989]; Marcus [1989]; Winter [1990]). It is thus important to explore the way in which the Bènizàa city-states were organised because it has considerable consequences for our understanding of the size and population of these units. I use the word “explore” because very little has been done in the study of pre-hispanic or early colonial Bènizàa social relationships and its closely related land tenure. This is in stark contrast to some other important Mesoamerican peoples like the Mayas, Nahuas and Ñuu Dzavui (Farriss [1984]; Lockhart [1992]; Terraciano [1994]). Whereas these modern studies of social organisation are based on indigenous documents, it is only today that studies of the Bènizàa are using these sources but the results are not yet known.⁹

Based on my own studies of Bènizàa manuscripts and some early colonial Spanish documents, the following situation can be sketched for the Valley of Oaxaca and the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. The main political unit was the *queche*, which was normally a nucleated settlement where the hereditary ruler had his palace, surrounded by a number of communities subject to this ruler. However, very often the hinterland was dotted with numerous mere farmsteads, but these were integrated in some way and, as such, formed constituent parts of the *queche*. It is the *queche* that we shall regard as the Bènizàa city-state.

The different parts of the city-state were simply called *tòbilàoqueche* or *chacuèqueche*, which means “one thing [of the] *queche*”. Each of these parts was governed by the *Xoana*, who was the head of his *yoho* or house. The main legitimating aspect of this *yoho* was the possession of a sacred bundle or *quiña*, i.e. an actual bundle of paper, cloth or vegetable material which contained a sacred object symbolising the deified founder of the *yoho*. Because the *Xoana* was an imaginary or real descendant in direct line of this founder, he was accepted as lord of his house. As such, the *quiña* represented the “root or trunk of descent” of the *yoho* (AGIM 882:156r). This becomes clear in another term that was used in reference to the parts of the city-state, namely *tobiquiñaqueche* or “one box [of the] *queche*”.

Judith Zeitlin (1994) excavated part of the political-religious centre of Tagolaba, a *tòbilàoqueche*, *barrio* or *estancia* in colonial terminology, of Tehuantepec. She describes it as a corporate community of about 200 households which were physically separated from

the other *yohos*, an identity reinforced by its own administrative and religious centre. Within the region there seems to have been a settlement pattern of dispersed hamlets and households very similar to what seems to have existed in the Valley of Oaxaca (Zeitlin and Zeitlin [1990] 429-31).

The most important *yoho* was called *quihui*¹⁰ or palace. This is the place of origin of the *Coqui* or hereditary ruler of the *queche*. Of course, it also had a sacred bundle, and normally the *quiña* of the other *yohos* were subject to that of the *quihui*, i.e. the founders of the *yohos* all shared descent with the *quihui*, but only in a secondary line. Consequently, the *Xoanas* had to provide the *Coqui* with tribute and personal services, as well as with soldiers and arms in time of war. However, besides these obligations, the *Xoana* governed as an autonomous ruler of what can be regarded as a sub-polity of the *queche*. The *Coqui*, and in powerful city-states the *Xoanas* too, resided in the palace, which consisted of one or more connected patios closed off on all four sides by raised mounds on which rooms were built. This emphasis on closure and privacy of the elite is a particular characteristic of the Post-Classic period (Kowalewski et al. [1989] 329) and it was reinforced by privileges like the consumption of certain foods and drinks and the exclusive right to wear certain clothes (Acuña [1984] II: 96-97).

Another important title used in Bènizàa society was *Pichana*. It seems that it refers to the ruler of a dependent city-state – dependent on a *quihui* or *Coqui*. Within his own polity the *Pichana* had his *Xoanas*, who had the same relationship to their lord as that described for the *Coqui* and his *Xoanas*. It seems that the relationship between a *Coqui* and a *Pichana* consisted in an unequal alliance in which the latter had to provide the former with soldiers and arms at times of war, but these obligations probably differed from case to case. The alliance was affirmed and reaffirmed by the exchange of nobility through marriage. Within their respective communities the *Coqui* and *Pichana* justified their position by claiming direct descent from the founding couple of the house. In large public displays, which included dance and theatre-like plays, the rulers showed pictorial documents that proved their descent as well as other regalia inherited from their ancestors (Oudijk [2000] 62). Within their *queche* these rulers had absolute power, their word was law (Acuña [1984] I: 215, 330-31; II: 79, 94, 172, 257).

These lords, the *Coquis* and *Pichanas*, had intermediaries who collected tribute, organised the workforce, controlled the fields, and were in charge of mili-

tary divisions. We have evidence for two distinct titles: the *collaba* and the *copa*. The first seems to have been more of an overseer (*tillàbaya* = to order; CV 256v) while the second was a guardian (*tàpaya* = to guard; CV 209v).

This brings us to the relation of these rulers with their people, a subject in Bènizàa history yet to be studied.¹¹ It seems that there were at least three different kinds of *pèniquèche* or commoners: 1) those who “belonged” to the *quihui*, 2) those who belonged to the *yoho*, and 3) so-called slaves. The first category was made up of people who worked on the fields of the *quihui* and paid tribute to the Coqui in the form of corn, clothes, precious materials, etc. They also had to provide their lord with food, drink and servants. Furthermore, they had to perform personal services like restoring and cleaning the palace, bringing wood and water, and taking care of the Coqui’s personal fields. In the literature the commoners in general are often called *terrasguerros*, but this term masks the indigenous distinctions. For example, it seems that there was some difference between those who were conquered and those who were not. The first were called *copàci*, which comes from *tònixicopàcia* = “to conquer” (CV 203v, 87v), while the second were called *huènichijna* from *tòniachijna* = “to work” (CV 286r, 407r).

The commoners of the *yoho* basically did the same as those of the *quihui*, i.e. they paid tribute and provided personal services to their lord, the Xoana. However, an important difference was that the Xoana had to pay part of the tribute he received to the Coqui. He had to pay this tribute because he had received land from the Coqui at the time of the conquest or at a later moment when he (or one of his ancestors) and his people had arrived in the region to settle. Thus, the *quihui* and *yoho* are similar entities but at different levels in the hierarchy. During the colonial period this difference became evident. As the Coqui was exempted from paying tribute to the Spanish Crown, the people of the *quihui* consequently only had to pay tribute and services to their Coqui. However, those of the *yoho* paid tribute to their Xoana or Pichana, and also to the King of Spain.¹²

The last group of commoners are the *chóco*, *pinijni*, and *xillàni* or slaves.¹³ Very little is known about these people so that the difference between them is not clear. However, they are attested in Bènizàa society and the few extant references indicate that they were prisoners of war who could be bought and sold (Acuña [1984] II: 77). Apparently the status was inherited (AGIE 160b: 218r), which suggests that the

slave, like the other commoners, belonged to the palace or house. In pre-hispanic times some of these people were used for human sacrifice. As such this information fits fairly well with that from the *relaciones geográficas* (Acuña [1984]).

The internal organisation of the city-states in the Sierra Zapoteca is still unknown at the moment. As explained above, it seems that the conquest of the region took place only shortly before the Spanish conquest. Unlike the Isthmus, where the colonisation was organised under the leadership of a powerful Coqui who personally took control of the land and then divided it among his warlords and groups that arrived later, the Sierra was conquered by so-called *parentelas* or groups of relatives. Each of these “brothers” founded his own town with his own people and became Coqui immediately after. Although political and probably marital relationships continued to exist after the initial conquest, these towns functioned as autonomous polities. From the colonial records it seems that one of the Coquis was more important, or at least had greater prestige, than the others, but it is not at all clear if this also had political consequences, nor whether this was a hereditary characteristic or not (Chance [1989] 13-14). As the conquest took place shortly before the Spanish conquest there does not seem to have been time for the development of a clear settlement pattern. That is to say, very few of the towns in the Sierra have subject communities.

In colonial times the social organisation in the Bènizàa regions changed dramatically because the Spanish introduced a new system. During the 16th century, the Spanish authorities established the so-called *cabildos* or town councils. Initially, most of them were firmly controlled by the Coquis, who were called *cacique* or *señor natural* by this time, but little by little the power of the *caciques* eroded and the Xoanas now called *principales*, gained the upper hand. They began to control the *cabildo* and with it the political power in the community. This process was reinforced by the Spanish authorities, who wanted to break the (feudal) power of the *caciques* and thus favoured the *principales*. At the same time another process was undermining the power of the *cacique*: the tribute that the commoners of the *yoho* had to pay to the Coqui before the Spanish conquest now went to the King of Spain.

Closely related to social organisation is the possession of land. Theoretically the founder of the *quihui* had taken possession of the land when he conquered the region. He then distributed it among his warlords, who in their turn distributed it to their people. Of

course, although quite different in nature, in the Isthmus and Sierra Zapoteca this process is fairly clear because these regions were conquered relatively late (since the mid-15th century). However, in the Valley of Oaxaca this is not the case at all because it was occupied by Bènizàa since 500 B.C. and more recent foundations occurred during the 10th and 11th centuries after a confusing period that followed the fall of Monte Albán. Studies in other parts of Mexico have shown that land tenure was extremely complex (Lockhart [1992] 141-76; Prem [1978] 50-116), as it probably was in the Bènizàa region, but the position is uncertain without any detailed studies based on indigenous documentation.¹⁴ Certainly in the early colonial period there does not seem to have been any private ownership by commoners, a situation probably due to a continuation of pre-hispanic customs.

So in pre-hispanic times the *queche* was a loosely distributed system of related, but relatively autonomous communities of varying size. As such, the *queche* was divided into different *yohos*, each of which was devoted to a cult of its particular Sacred Bundle and was controlled by a Xoana. These *yohos* together were subject to a Coqui, lord of the main *yoho*, which was called *quihui*. In colonial times this changed to a system based on the *pueblo*, consisting of various geographical units called *barrios*, each with its own cult related to a Catholic saint maintained by a *cofradía*. The political power of the *pueblo* was in the hands of the *cabildo*, whose seats were occupied by the *principales*. Some *caciques* continued to wield considerable political and economic power through their ownership of large tracts of land, but most disappeared under pressure from the *cabildo* and the Spanish authorities. The Bènizàa city-state had ceased to exist.

Identity

The ethnic and political identity of the city-states in the region under discussion here is considered to be Bènizàa, which is based on a common language called Tíchazàa, a common history from the Pre-Classic period onward (500 B.C.), and a common cultural background (Marcus and Flannery [1996]). During the Late Post-Classic period intensive contacts existed with other groups, particularly the Ñuu Dzavui and Nahuas. Although this made possible the intrusions and foundations of ethnically distinct communities in the Valley of Oaxaca and the Isthmus of Tehuantepec which apparently existed together with the Bènizàa villages, scholars have continued to identify the dif-

ferent city-states as ethnically distinct polities. My own studies have called these conclusions into question. It has become clear that members of the supposedly Bènizàa elite were actively intermarrying with the elite from other ethnic groups in order to create a network of political allies. Obviously, their choices were guided not by ethnicity but rather by political and legitimating power. Of course, as a consequence of this policy ethnic identity became less important, especially if we take into account that descendants of inter-ethnic marriages were used in either place of origin as candidates for rulership. Focus on ethnic identity would thus have been counterproductive. On the other hand, this policy fits perfectly with one of the characteristics of the city-state: it shares its ethnic identity with a number of other city-states, whereas its sense of political identity is primarily centred on the city-state itself rather than on smaller or larger entities (Hansen [2000] 18).¹⁵ Independently I came to the same conclusions in relation to the Bènizàa polities (Oudijk [2000] 111-12).

In order to discuss the identity of the city-states we first have to identify what we include in the term. Generally, archaeologists and ethnohistorians use the so-called *relaciones geográficas* for this purpose. These are long questionnaires which were sent to the different towns in the Americas (and Spain) by Philip II at the end of the 1570s in order to compile an inventory of his possessions in the empire. Although the answers were written down some 60 years after the Spanish conquest, the political organisation of these colonial municipalities and their subject towns is considered to be a good reflection of the pre-hispanic political organisation (Gerhard [1986]; Taylor [1972]; Carrasco [1999]). According to the *relaciones* the Valley was divided into 14 political entities,¹⁶ while the Isthmus of Tehuantepec was one large city-state. Each consisted of a main town and various subject communities (Table 1), which concurs very well with the description of the *queche* given above. However, the *relaciones* were written from the point of view of the main town and are consequently not very useful for determining the political identity of the subject communities. The names of the subjects are not related to the name of the main community either, but that does not necessarily mean that they did not centre on the city-state.

The archaeological record of the Valley of Oaxaca also gives an indication of city-state culture in the region. Kowalewski et al. ([1989] I: 344-48) give a division of the Valley into 10-20 "petty kingdoms" largely matching the information of the *relaciones*

geográficas. It could be assumed that if the subject communities centred on the city-state, this would be visible in their material culture. However, because no detailed study has been made of these individual political units to determine whether they can actually be distinguished archaeologically, the archaeological record cannot be used to identify the political identities of subject towns.

The indigenous sources give better indications of the political identity of the subject communities. Of particular interest are pictorial manuscripts like the Lienzo de Huilotepec from the Isthmus and the Genealogy of Quialoo from the Valley (Oudijk [2000] 79-96, 159-81). The first depicts the lands of the town of Huilotepec and a scene in which the elite are paying tribute to the Coqui of Tehuantepec. This can be read in various ways: it shows the subject-patron relationship but it also shows that the Xoanas of Huilotepec received their legitimacy from the Coqui since he recognised them as lords of their town. The Xoanas then obviously identified themselves with the city-state of Tehuantepec because it gave them the right to rule. Since it seems that all subject communities in the Isthmus have had at some point in their history a similar document, we can say that the political identity of the region was centred on Tehuantepec, even though some of the towns had a distinct ethnic background. The Genealogy of Quialoo is different since it depicts the lands and a genealogy of Xoanas of the subject town of San Matheo Mixtepec, and a genealogy of Coquis of the main town, Santa Cruz Quialoo (Mixtepec). San Matheo was founded by the second son of the founder of Santa Cruz, i.e. a secondary line, and probably received noble women from the *quihui* as marriage partners at later times too, although women are not depicted in the pictorial. But the fact that the Xoanas of San Matheo depicted the lineage of Santa Cruz in its document shows clearly that its legitimacy came from these Coquis and therefore from being centred on the city-state.

Finally, there is some etic information from Ñuu Dzavui pictorials. In these documents Zaachila's territory is pictographically represented as the Valley of the Cacaxtli, a carrying device. When Cuilapan is given away as a dowry by the Coqui of Zaachila it is depicted as "Cuilapan in the lands of the Cacaxtli", i.e. it was subject to Zaachila. Another representation makes this even more clear when a "Valley of Flowering Maguey" is shown in relationship with a temple from which a hand extends holding a cacaxtli. Here the hand should be read as "servant of" or literally "being the hand of".¹⁷ Although the Valley of Flow-

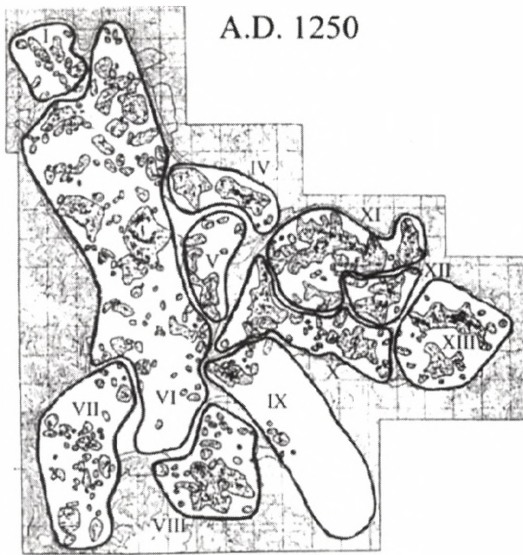
ering Maguey has not yet been identified, it is likely that it was a servant or subject of the Zaachila city-state. These references make clear that these communities were seen as part of the city-state and actually received the name of that city-state as part of their own name.

So there are good reasons to believe that in the Bènzàa region the city-state was named after its main political centre and that the subject towns had their political identity focused on the city-state. From the Isthmus of Tehuantepec it is clear that the political identity can be distinct from the ethnic identity. I have gone so far as to avoid referring to the rulers of these city-states as being Bènzàa, but instead denominating them in reference to their city-state only (Oudijk [2000] 111-12).

Population and Territory

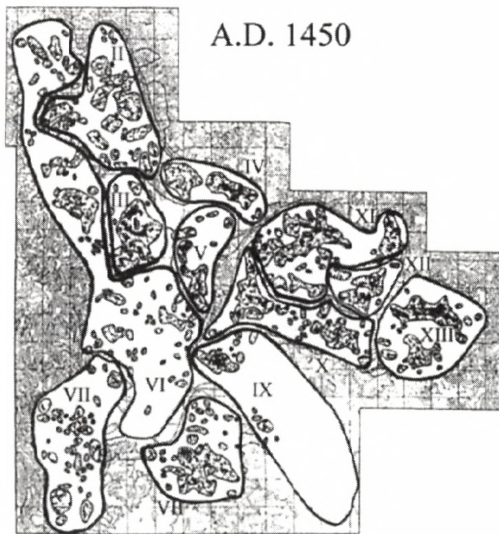
The Valley of Oaxaca was divided into between 11 and 13 polities which are called here city-states (Figs. 2-4).¹⁸ Due to continuous warfare and the formation of shifting alliances, the actual size of their population and territory changed considerably over time. This seems particularly to be the case in the central and eastern parts of the Valley, but this impression of a different character of the western part may be the result of our limited knowledge of the historical process in this region (Tables 1-2).

The only evidence-based population estimates we have for the Post-Classic period were produced by Kowalewski et al. (1989) I: 320-22. It has to be said, however, that they are low estimates since much of the population lived dispersed across the hinterland and is consequently not included in Kowalewski et al.'s Table 10.2, which concerns the central places. Furthermore, their estimates are based on mound volume, size of site area, and sherd density (Blanton et al. [1982] 10-12). We can assume, however, that certain factors influenced the population estimates. For example, the territory controlled by Zaachila consisted of large tracts of land occupied by scattered farmsteads inhabited by commoners working for the Coqui of Zaachila. As these are not included in Kowalewski et al.'s estimates there seems to be a mismatch between the size of the city-state and its population. For example, in the 13th century Zaachila had a large territory but a relatively low estimated population (42.25 persons per km²), while Tlalixtac had a much smaller territory with a relatively high estimated population (133.91 persons per km²). It must be added that the estimates are heavily influenced by historical



I	Huitzo	VIII	Ocotlan
II	Etlá	IX	Chichicapan
III	Cuilapan	X	Tetipac
IV	Tlaxiáctac	XI	Macuixochitl
V	Coyotepec	XII	Tlacolula
VI	Zaachila	XIII	Mitla
VII	Tepezimatlan/Ixtepec		

events. In A.D. 1250 Zaachila's territory stretched from the Zaachila Valley through the Central Valley, into the Etlá Valley. Both Cuilapan and Etlá were part of this territory.²⁰ In A.D. 1450 Cuilapan had become an independent city-state following the dynastic problems in Zaachila and the migration of its main faction. So Zaachila's population dwindled between 1250 and 1521, while that of Cuilapan shows a contrary trend during the same period.



Still, it is clear that Zaachila was the largest and economically most important city-state in 1250. Its 736 km² was almost three times the size of the second largest polity, Chichicapan, which had most of its territory in the mountains south of the valley. It therefore did not have such a large population and probably not as large an agricultural output as Zaachila. These were followed by a group of five medium-sized city-states (128-216 km²), mostly in the eastern part of the Valley, and finally a group of four small polities (48-64 km²). Almost 300 years later, however, the situation looked quite different when Cuilapan had taken over large tracts of land from Zaachila, but more importantly, it had become the most populous city-state in the Valley.



On the basis of her excavations in Tagolaba and a study of historical sources, Judith Zeitlin ([1994] 284-87) gives the "extremely conservative" estimate of 25,000 but clearly favours a number like 50,000 for population of the city-state of Tehuantepec. Those are the only estimates for the Isthmus of Tehuantepec during the pre-hispanic period. As to the colonial period, there is a little more evidence. We have the *Suma de Visitas* from 1550, which gives a population of 11,845, and the 1580 *relación geográfica* gives 1,200 for the town of Tehuantepec and another 2,000 for its subject towns. It continues by informing us that in 1550 this number was more like 20,000, but that many people died in epidemics. The problem of estimating the indigenous population for both the pre-hispanic and colonial period is notoriously complex and difficult, so I will not pursue this subject. The figures are offered simply to give an idea of the size of the city-state of Tehuantepec. However, what is clear is that the Bènzizàa population of the Isthmus came from the Valley of Oaxaca during the period 1450-

Figs. 2-4. The city-states in the Valley of Oaxaca.

City State	Suma de visita	Oudijk	Territory	Subject towns
I Huitzo (Huajilotitlan)	5,917	3,127	64	9
II ETLA	4,696	9,296	176	–
III Cuilapan	34,800	24,737	304	17
IV Tlalixtac	3,369	7,433	48	4
V Coyotepec	2,333	2,707	48	–
VI Zaachila Estancias	2,253 3,486	1,142	256	9
VII Tepezimatlan Estancias Zimatlan Ixtepec Estancias	640 1,961 2,637 937 2,579	5,159	216	4
VIII Ocotlan Estancias	1,499 3,208	12,248	144	–
IX Chichicapa	4,802	8,794	272	7
X Tetipac (Titicapa)	6,864	11,163	128	8
XI Macuilxochitl (Teotitlan del Valle, Tlacoahuaya)	2,822	21,804	176	5
XII Tlacolula (Yagul)	1,643	9,729	56	1
XIII Mitla (Miquitla)	2,369	16,179	160	11
Total	88,814	133,518	2,03	

Table 1. Population estimates for the city-states in the Valley of Oaxaca.¹⁹

1521, which must have had its effect on that region, as was also made clear by Judith Zeitlin ([1994] 287-91). Our archaeological and historical information is not detailed enough to describe this process satisfactorily.

The Sierra Zapoteca is again a problem because the

information about this region is so scarce. No population estimates exist for the pre-hispanic period; however, the colonial period has been exhaustively investigated by Chance (1989). Of course, he could not overcome the lack of documentation either, but

	P. 1250	P. 1450	P. 1521	T. 1250	T. 1450	T. 1521
Huitzo	3,127	–	3,127	64	–	64
Cuilapan	–	15,700	24,737	–	64	304
Tlalixtac	10,713	10,713	7,433	80	80	48
Coyotepec	3,507	3,507	2,707	76	76	48
Zaachila	31,095	18,522	1,142	736	672	256

Table 2. Development of population and territorial estimates for the city-states in the ETLA and Zaachila Valleys.

according to his figures in 1548 the three distinct groups of Sierra Bènizàa consisted of 7,382, 19,586 and 18,137 people, respectively (*ibid.* 48-63). The first estimate is very low because figures are known for only nine communities, which is about 30% of the total number of communities. Considering the enormous drop of 68% of the population between 1548 and 1568, probably caused by European diseases, the pre-hispanic population in the region was considerably higher than the 45,000 at the mid-15th century. However, it has to be said that few settlements had more than 1,000 inhabitants and many villages had a population of only between 500 and 1000.

Self-sufficiency

Although our idea of this period in the Valley of Oaxaca still needs much research as it suffers from large gaps, certain assumptions can be made. It seems that this region was typically divided into functionally distinct entities, i.e. the main political centre was the town of Zaachila (Acuña [1984]), which had the status and prestige that allowed its main house to provide lesser houses with legitimate power, and to found new houses (Oudijk [2000]; Zeitlin [1994] 287-88).

On the other hand, there were at least two religious centres in the Valley: the towns of Mitla and Teticpac (Burgoa [1989]). The latter seems to have been founded at some point by the rulers of Zaachila and functioned as the burial place for the nobility. Mitla was the town in which the great priest or Huijatoo resided and where the "Great Lords" or Coquis were buried (Acuña [1984] II: 258-64). The Huijatoo was probably the medium of the oracle of Mitla, which is actually a *quiña* or bundle (Romero Frizzi [1994] 237). We may tentatively identify this oracle as the bundle called the "Heart of the Village", which in colonial times was guarded in a cave with some 300 other ancestor bundles. Before the arrival of the Spaniards, these were almost certainly kept in the sanctuaries of Mitla. Considering the importance of these oracles in pre-hispanic Oaxaca (Jansen and Pérez Jiménez [in press]; Pohl [1999]), it seems quite possible that this was the origin of Mitla's fame.

At an economic level the Bènizàa regions are quite diverse. Again our ideas about this are shaped by the scarce and particular information.²¹ Most energy went into subsistence agriculture, which did not vary much between the Isthmus, the Valley, and the Sierra. The most important crops were corn, beans, chilli and squash, and in some regions other foods were added

like fish, chicozapote, aguacate, etc. In general we can consider the tribute to the rulers an important factor in the movement of goods, particularly elite goods. Among these were precious stones and feathers, gold, jewellery and jaguar skins, apart from the more regular foodstuffs. The rituals of the cult were another factor: the bundles and images were honoured with incense, tobacco, feathers, and the blood and hearts of many animals.

The Isthmus seems to have been dominated by the town of Tehuantepec and its Coqui, which entailed a predominant flow of goods towards the centre. However, the influence of this Coqui also reached the Valley of Oaxaca, where in 1580 no less than six of the major *queche* are said to have paid tribute in pre-hispanic times (Acuña [1984]). While the far-away subject towns had to pay in luxury goods like jewellery, gold and cloths, the ones closer to Tehuantepec paid with personal services and bulky foods. Long-distance trading was certainly going on between the Isthmus and other regions (Acuña [1984] II: 107-25), but it is not clear how far this was controlled by the Coqui. In any case, it brought in many items from all over Mesoamerica and these were probably distributed through the market in Tehuantepec. The scarce information at the *barrio* level shows polychrome pottery and obsidian in a Xoana(?) context (Zeitlin [1994] 283).

When the rulers of Zaachila moved to Tehuantepec they took the Huijatoo with them, which suggests that from about A.D. 1450 onwards this Isthmus settlement became an administrative, economic and religious centre.

The Late Post-Classic period in the Valley of Oaxaca is characterised by specialised craft production, and a distribution network in or close to the main political centres (Kowalewski et al. [1989] 348-64). This can be seen, for example, from widespread ceramic traces, relatively high frequency of obsidian at all levels of society, and a relatively large presence of elaborate polychrome pottery at different social levels. This system of exchange and economic relations meant that the different city-states existed in a network of dependency. At a local level we can see this in the Valley of Oaxaca, where wares have a broad distribution but the decoration and shapes mark the sub-regions (Kowalewski et al. [1989] 353). As the potters were situated in between the different city-states rather than within their centres, the production and distribution was limited only by the means of transportation rather than by political borders.

Along the Río Salado of the Tlacolula branch of the

Valley, salt was extracted and distributed throughout the region (Acuña [1984] I: 80; Kowalewski et al. [1989] 361-62). Although in the *relaciones geográficas* of various communities it is noted that salt came from the Isthmus, where rich saltbeds were situated under the control of the *cacique* family of Cortés of Tehuantepec (AGIE 160b: Exp. 1), the *relación* of Miahuatlan clearly states that these saltbeds were not exploited until after the arrival of the Spaniards (Acuña [1984] I: 80). The new economic possibilities offered by the introduction of pack-animals like mules and horses were seized eagerly by the indigenous elite and commoners (Taylor [1972] 35-66), which must have caused considerable changes in the trading system and consequently its production system. As bulky foodstuffs could now be transported over large distances, supported by a regional marketing system of agricultural staples, this may have encouraged specialisation in agricultural products and crafts in particular regions. This would mean that in pre-hispanic times the distribution of luxury elite products, like feathers, cacao, luxury ceramics, etc., took place at a regional level, while that of foodstuffs was of much more local importance (Zeitlin [1994] 290-91).

As far as the economy of the Sierra Zapoteca is concerned, we are largely groping in the dark (Chance [1989] 111-21). Obviously, the area relied mainly on subsistence agriculture, which in times of surplus production may have generated some local trading, but this can be considered of minor importance. If we transpose some of the colonial information to the pre-hispanic period (*ibid.*), the Sierra would have been a producer of cloth and mantles. These, probably together with other products, were carried to places of distribution inside and outside the region. Such a model seems to be confirmed by the existence of a corridor passing through the Cajonos river valley connecting the Valley of Oaxaca with the coastal region of the Gulf of Mexico (Gutiérrez Mendoza et al. [2000]). A comparison of the clay composition of ceramics from archaeological sites along this corridor show convincing similarities, confirming the existence of such a corridor (Ortiz Díaz et al. [2000]).

Urbanisation

Its urban character is yet another tricky aspect of the Post-Classic Bènzàa city-state. As discussed above, the city-state consisted of a political cum religious cum administrative centre where the Coqui had his palace surrounded by scattered communities and farmsteads. But what the centre actually looked like is

not very clear. Various factors make a solution to this problem particularly elusive. First of all, the present-day cities and towns are mostly built on top of the pre-hispanic city-states, which makes archaeological surveying and excavation virtually impossible. Furthermore, today, as well as throughout their colonial history, most Bènzàa communities testify to a nucleated settlement pattern but this was often caused by the Spanish policy of “congregation”: it was the policy of the Spanish Crown and church to bring together indigenous people in nucleated towns in order to make it easier to convert them to Catholicism. That was especially the case after European diseases began to wipe out entire communities. Finally, pre-hispanic and early colonial pictorial documents that show communities represent only the main building(s), that is, the pre-hispanic temple and/or palace, or the Catholic church. The painters of these manuscripts were not interested in representing the houses of the towns, and these sources are therefore of limited use for the issue under discussion here.

For the Valley of Oaxaca, Kowalewski et al. ([1989] Chapter 10) suggest that the Post-Classic period was characterised by a scattered rural settlement pattern of small extent (310); but at the same time there were also large towns and cities. Yet, by European standards, these towns had an open, almost dispersed internal settlement pattern.²² As the evidence stands, the Post-Classic city-state was focused on the palace of the Coqui or Pichana not only politically and “ethnically”, but also urbanistically. From Kowalewski et al.’s maps (*ibid.* Appendix IX) we may deduce that the palace was built around a patio. Close to the palace we often find a more open structure which may have been the civic buildings and a temple platform; they would constitute the centre of the settlement. The use of adobe or sun-dried bricks seems to have been restricted and used mostly in combination with mounds (= palace/civic building). Due to the fact that the commoners’ houses were built of perishable materials, it is impossible without archaeological excavation to say whether the centre consisted of a conglomeration of houses that became more dispersed as towards the periphery, or whether the whole settlement was rather dispersed. However, the formation of terraces around the central buildings seems to suggest that at least in some cases houses were densely built around the palace. These terraces “often represent individual household architectural units” (*ibid.* 931).

The existence of such “terraces” is also attested in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, or rather, in the city of

Tehuantepec itself. Although it is impossible to ascertain the character of this city today due to the fact that present-day Tehuantepec is built on top of the pre-hispanic site, excavations in one of its *barrios* has given some ideas about the nature of the outer parts. Judith Zeitlin's excavations in the *barrio* of Santa Cruz Tagolaba (1994) show that this particular part of the city was occupied by approximately 200 houses in an area of about 400 x 1500 m. The focus of the *barrio* was on the palace of the Xoana, a building measuring 24 x 5 m with adobe walls and painted stucco, and a two-room temple, which seems to be facing a square. It is not clear whether the density of the housing in the immediate surroundings of this palace was greater than further away, but if we assume an even distribution, this would give an area of 50 x 60 m per household, which is very close to what Zeitlin reports (*ibid.* 284). Such spacing would suggest one or two houses facing a patio with fields or gardens beside them. Considering that Tehuantepec had 49 of these *barrios* and all of them were in some way tributaries to the Coqui, it seems very likely that the main palace, temple(s), central square, and possibly market, gave Tehuantepec the status of a city.

Information about the pre-hispanic Sierra Zapoteca is lacking, and a discussion of the settlement characteristics must therefore be considered tentative. John Chance ([1989] 12) claimed that the Sierra villages were "simple peasant settlements" which could not be "classified as urban". The internal settlement pattern of Sierra Bènizàa communities has received somewhat greater attention but no consensus has been reached (Schmieder [1930]; Gerhard [1977]; Fuente [1965]; Chance [1989]). It is not clear whether these settlements were dispersed or nucleated in pre-hispanic times; and we will probably not know the answer until archaeological surveys and excavations can be conducted in the region. However, a particularly interesting characteristic is the ease with which Sierra Bènizàa vacated and moved their communities. Both Chance (1989) 69 and Nader (1964) 205 observed that few present-day towns were situated in the same place as in the 16th century.

War and Defence

Of the seven dependent city-states which in their *relaciones geográficas* mention that the Coqui of Zaachila was their supreme lord to whom they had to pay tribute, four say that the nature of this tribute was providing Zaachila with soldiers in times of war. Such an agreement suggests that an important function of

the *quihui* of Zaachila was to organise military expeditions and protect the Valley city-states against outside intruders (Blanton et al. [1981] 103). Although an unequal alliance, it was particularly profitable for all parties. The investment of resources in a military confederation of relatively autonomous members is quite small in comparison with what each member would have to put in if they were not in such an alliance. That is to say, a neighbouring political unit will think twice before attacking a member of a confederation because it knows it will have to fight all members rather than just the one. Furthermore, to raise a considerable army among the members of a confederation is much easier than if one political unit has to do it. On the other hand, in the case of a military campaign a large army of a confederation has a much better chance of being victorious than the small one of a single polity. Since war and conquest was an important source of prestige and economic wealth in pre-hispanic Mexico (Acuña [1984] II: 95; Hassig [1988] 17-47), a confederation was an attractive option.

During the second half of the 14th century the *quihui* of Zaachila was forming a major confederation of different city-states. Ethnic identity played no significant role in this confederation, which was based instead on the marital relationships between the members of the different city-states. In this way at least two city-states from the Mixteca, Tlaxiaco and Teozacualco, were incorporated as members. All members continued to be politically and administratively autonomous, although the *relaciones* suggest that each had to make a separate contribution. This large army succeeded in conquering the corridor that connects the Valley of Oaxaca with the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, as well as making a first incursion into the Isthmus itself. As described above, the objective was to secure control of the important commercial route to the south and the rich lands and saltbeds of the Isthmus. A firm hold of the region was established through the foundation of fortresses and villages, probably by the various members of the confederation.²³

Another example of such alliance building that we find in the *relaciones geográficas* is that between Zaachila and Macuilxochitl (Oudijk [2000] 113-35). Around 1370, Coqui Cosijoeza I Water gave a noble woman from Cuilapan, still a subject town of Zaachila at this time, to be married to the Pichana of Macuilxochitl. This Pichana then helped Cosijoeza's son, Coqui Quixicayo, in the conquest of Huitzo and Mazaltepec in the Etla Valley and consequently received a noble woman from Zaachila as wife. This policy of the two succeeding Coquis was probably part of the formation

of a confederation by the Zaachila city-state. The *relación geográfica* of Macuilxochitl refers to the obligation to fight against villages when ordered to do so by the lord of Zaachila (Acuña [1984] I: 331).

The tradition of recognising a supreme lord and providing him with soldiers in times of war was also continued when the Spaniards arrived in New Spain. It is well known that various indigenous groups, among which were Tlaxcaltecs, Quauhquecholans, Mixtecs and Zapotecs from Tehuantepec, fought on the Spanish side against other indigenous groups. One particular document from 1570 (AGIJ 291) explains in great detail that each of these city-states provided a number of captains who would bring their own people and during the whole conquest would continue to fight as a unit (*capitanías* and *cuadrillas*). It seems likely that these captains represented particular *yohos* from which the soldiers were combined to form a squadron. As such, each individual city-state could raise an army from its constituent parts, but, as in the case of the Valley of Oaxaca, the different city-states could form a larger confederation in which each army was regarded as a group with its own identity and military leader while fighting under the leadership of the supreme ruler. Normally, that is in pre-hispanic times, these leaders would receive lands to found new communities and (conquered) people to serve as tributaries, which did not happen with the Spaniards.²⁴

Defensive sites in the Valley of Oaxaca during the Late Post-Classic period are mainly small citadels outside the centre which may have been for the sole use of the elite (Elam [1989] 407). The fact that they are oriented towards the Valley rather than towards the mountains suggests furthermore that they were built to control internal tension instead of external threats. This would point to a fairly unstable political situation during this period, which confirms what we know from the historical sources. The fortresses built in the Nexapa corridor have received very little attention. Eduard Seler visited them at the beginning of the 20th century and there are brief references in Gerhard [1986] 200-5), but no archaeological surveys or excavations have been done. It seems, however, that they were constructed to control both the passage between the Valley of Oaxaca and the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, and at the same time prevent the hostile Chontales and Mixes from attacking this trade route. The largest fortress of this type is Quie Ngola in the lowlands of the Isthmus. Situated on a steep high hill just north of Tehuantepec, it is a large site with two high temple platforms flanking a patio and a ball court, a 11,000 m² palace with 14 patios and a terrace overlooking the

Isthmus lowlands, and massive walls 1.5 m thick and at times 3 m high (Peterson and MacDougall [1974]; Peterson [1990]). The site is dated to the Late Post-Classic period, which is not precise enough for our purposes here. Since it has merely been mapped and no excavations have taken place, there is little we can conclude from the relatively scarce information. Various pits left by looters show that Quie Ngola seems to have been constructed as one project. I have suggested that it was first built in order to control the Isthmus trade route (Oudijk [2000]), and the historical record informs us that it was the site of a major battle between Mexica and Bènizàa armies at the end of the 15th century. On this occasion the latter sat out a siege of the former and emerged victoriously. The well-planned and well-executed large living quarters, temple platforms, a ball court, and palace make this site quite unlike the small citadels of the Valley of Oaxaca. Quie Ngola was clearly built to hold a relatively large number of people and resist an attacking army for a long period of time. In the end it was part of a strategy based on external threat and a stable internal political situation.

City-State Culture

The city-states situated in the region dominated by the Bènizàa seem to have existed in a dynamic system of interdependency in which, at the same time, they continued to possess a political, administrative, military and “ethnic” autonomy. As such, this system can be considered a city-state culture (Hansen [2000b]).

On a broader scale, the Bènizàa city-state culture was part of a large interregional network of economic and political ties between the different Mesoamerican city-states and city-state cultures (Blanton et al. [1981] 101-6; Kowalewski et al. [1989] 307-65; Nicholson and Quiñones Keber [1994]). This network really comprised what we know today as Mesoamerica, the region from northern Mexico to Honduras. Due to the continuous social, political, economic and military contacts between the different city-states and city-state cultures, a general elite society emerged which saw its cultural expressions in a style that is known as Mixteca-Puebla (Nicholson [1960]; Nicholson and Quiñones Keber [1994]), International Style (Robertson [1970]), or Post-Classic International Style (Smith [in press]). The sub-styles, i.e. expressions of distinct city-state cultures, have not been defined very well in Oaxaca (cf. Lind [1994]).

Although the elite in Bènizàa city-states spoke predominantly Tíchazàa, it was by no means the only

language they used. Due to the continuous intermarriages and other social contacts it seems to have been more the rule to have been bi- or trilingual rather than monolingual. It is not clear what the situation at the commoners' level was like.

The nature of the city-states in the three Bènzàa regions is distinct. In the Valley of Oaxaca, the development of the city-state is clearly related to the downfall of the Monte Albán macro-state: several polities emerged to fill the power vacuum left by Monte Albán, creating the different city-states discussed above. In the Isthmus of Tehuantepec and the Sierra Zapoteca a different process gave rise to their city-states. After a period of expansion by Zaachila, the most important city-state in the Valley of Oaxaca, its collapse caused conquests and related large-scale migrations to these two regions. In the Isthmus one large city-state was founded by a paramount leader of the Zaachila ruling house who chose Tehuantepec as his centre. The smaller dependent city-states had some autonomy but were clearly centred on Tehuantepec. In the Sierra, however, small city-states were founded by groups of related warlords who continued to rule independently until the Spanish conquest.

Notes

1. Based on a short reference by the 17th century friar Francisco de Burgoa ([1989] II: 119, Chapter 53) the name Bènzàa is generally translated as "People of the Clouds" from *beni-* or "person" (CV 312r) and *-zàa* or "cloud" (CV 285r), which is very similar to the name of the ethnically distinct neighbours of the Bènzàa, the Ñuu Dzavui, which translates as "People of the Rain". Oddly enough, the Ñuu Dzavui received the Nahuatl name "Mixteca" or "People of the Clouds", while the Bènzàa received the name "Zapoteca" or "People of the Sapote", a native fruit of Mexico (*Casimiroa*). How this Nahuatl name is related to the Tichazàa name has not been explained satisfactorily. In Tichazàa the zapote is called *quelaquè*, *pillàhui*, *quia*, *quèlachiña*, or *quelapèche* (CV 104r), which does not have any possible etymological link with Bènzàa. It is not known what the Mexica were actually doing when they gave the Bènzàa a name, but it is intriguing that Sahagún ([1992] I, Chapter 18:45) noted that the god Xipe Totec was honoured by those from Tzapotlan, Jalisco in the north-west of Mexico. As Xipe was the main god in the Bènzàa capital of Zaachila (Codex Nuttall [1992] 33), it seems that the Nahuatl name of the Zapotecs is in some way related to the worship of Xipe Totec and reflects a political or consanguineous relationship with Zaachila.
2. For Bèngólazàa archaeological material, see Caso (1928); (1969); Caso and Bernal (1952); Caso, Bernal and Acosta (1967); Scott (1978); Blanton (1978); Blanton et al. (1982); Urcid Serrano (1992); Flannery and Marcus (1994). For an overview of Bèngólazàa pre-hispanic history, see Flannery and Marcus (1983); (1996); Winter (ed.) (1990). For Bèngólazàa colonial history, see Taylor (1972); Whitecotton (1977); Chance (1989). For Bènzàa ethnography, see Parsons (1936) and Fuente (1949).
3. For an historical overview of archaeological research in Oaxaca, see Bernal (1980).
4. Monte Albán IIIb and its following phases MA IV and V are also called the Early and Late Post-Classic period respectively, referring to the period after the Classic period during which Monte Albán rose and fell (MA IIIa-IIIb).
5. See also Chase and Chase (1988) on archaeological models and interpretations based on surface surveys.
6. In a valuable contribution, Joyce Marcus (1989) discussed the origin of the city-state in the valley using the data as presented by the OPSS. It makes the problem we are dealing with very clear. Marcus argues that the origin of the city-state can be dated to MA IV (A.D. 600-1000) but the material she is working with should, according to Martínez López et al. (2000), be related to the Xoo (A.D. 500-800) and Liobaa (A.D. 800-1250) phases. It is, however, impossible for the reader to determine which of Marcus' assumptions are actually based on Xoo phase material and which on Liobaa phase material, making it largely impossible to use the article as a source.
7. See Oudijk (2000) for the most recent discussion of Bènzàa history and historiography. The following account is based on that work.
8. During the last years before the conquest two more Cosijoezas lived in the Valley of Oaxaca: one at Zaachila and another in Cuilapan. This confusing profusion of rulers with the same names has led to what is called "structuring" in the oral tradition, which is a process that simplifies history by attributing events from large periods of time to one particular person (Vansina [1985]). This takes place especially when different historical persons have the same name or have done more or less the same things, as is the case in Bènzàa history (Oudijk [2000]).
9. The references to social organisation in earlier studies are all based on entries in the 16th-century Spanish-Tichazàa dictionary of the Dominican Friar Juan de Córdoba without a thorough philological and linguistic analysis (Whitecotton [1977] 142-57; Spores and Flannery [1983]; Marcus and Flannery [1996] 13-14). A serious problem of this method is that because the dictionary follows European categories, typically indigenous ones can be and are easily missed (see Lockhart [1992] 5-9 for a fuller discussion). As a result of this pernicious method, Bènzàa society has been presented as relatively simple but, as was shown for the Mixteca in Terraciano's study of Ñuu Dzavui documents (1994), this may very well not have been the case.
10. Variants of this word exist: quihue, quehue, queve, gueve.
11. The following analysis is based on my own study of a particularly interesting set of documents relating to Don Juan Cortés Cosijopii of Tehuantepec, various other documents from the Bènzàa regions, as well some comparisons with work by Lockhart (1992) and Terraciano (1994). However, it has to be regarded as provisional, and may be tentative, in some aspects. Most of the information we have concerns the early colonial period and it is not yet clear how it relates to the pre-hispanic situation.
12. It seems that the tribute paid to the Crown was much higher than that which used to be paid to the Coqui in pre-hispanic times. Of course, this meant a considerable erosion for the wealth of the lower nobility. There are indications that several of these lords tried to raise the tribute in order still to receive the same amount as before. This obviously meant that if they

- succeeded their subjects suffered a considerable loss of income during the early colonial period, which caused many complaints by the commoners in the colonial courts.
13. The *pinijni* and *chóco* are clearly related to captivity in war (C75v) while *xilláni* does not have that connotation at all. It is even used in a respected form as in “servant” of God (C379v).
 14. The only studies seem to be Taylor (1972) and Romero Frizzi (1988), but they hardly discuss the early colonial period and are fairly general in their discussion of possession of land or deal particularly with the 17th and 18th centuries.
 15. Of course, this also converts the title of this contribution into a contradiction in terms, as well as many of the contributions in this book and the earlier one on city-states (Hansen [2000a]). I have, however, decided to keep it the way it is rather than changing it into a long title describing the region under discussion.
 16. Only nine *relaciones* from the Valley have survived, of which two are composite *relaciones*, that is, they contain the *relaciones* of two towns. Three are missing: Etlá, Coyotepec and Ocotlán. There are no *relaciones* from the Sierra Zapoteca.
 17. Maarten Jansen, personal communication. See also a similar scene in the Tira de la Peregrinación p. 21 in which the Mexica are represented in a temple with a hand on its roof. This temple is situated in front of the ruler of Culhuacán, Coxcox, to whom the Mexica were subject at the time. Here the hand is related to *māye* which means both “hand” and “servant” (Molina [1944] 51v; Lockhart [1992] 97).
 18. Figures 2-4 are based on Kowalewski et al.’s Figure 10.2 (1989) 316, which shows the Period V site clusters. The borders I have drawn are quite impressionistic and should be considered working hypotheses rather than conclusions. A comparison of my discussion here with Kowalewski et al.’s Figure 10.8 and their discussion of territorial organisation (1989) 344-48 gives a good idea of the problems and possibilities of the material concerning the Late Post-Classic period. One important determinant factor is the disciplinary focus of the scholar. Whereas Kowalewski et al. has an archaeological focus, mine is more ethnohistorical.
 19. This table needs some explanation as to how I arrived at these numbers. Based on the discussion of the territorial organisation in the Valley of Oaxaca by Kowalewski et al. (1989) 344-48 and my own studies of ethnohistorical documents, I drew borders on their Figure 10.2 (*ibid.* 316) creating maps for three different periods in the Late Post-Classic. To reach a population estimate I took the numbers given in Table 10.2 (*ibid.* 320-22) and plotted these on my maps. Similarly I could give an approximation of the territories of the city-states since all maps in Kowalewski et al. are given with grids of 4x4 km.
 20. Coqui Cosijoeza 11 Water of Zaachila gave Cuilapan as a dowry to the royal house of Tlaxiaco when his son married a noble woman from that city-state (Oudijk [2000] 118). This clearly shows that it was part of the Zaachila realm. As to Etlá, since the Classic period the Etlá Valley seems to have been the region used for cultivation to provide the Monte Albán state with the food it needed. As Zaachila seems to have been the successor of the Monte Albán state, it also seems to have taken over the Etlá Valley, which became the most important source of income and power for its royal house. After the members of the Zaachila *quihui* moved their court to Tehuantepec, Etlá became an independent city-state with a widely scattered population. This is consistent with the *Genealogías de Etlá*, which show the foundation of its royal house only five generations before the Spanish conquest of 1521, i.e. at some time during the first half of the 15th century. The city-state of Huitzo is another case in point. Between 1372 and 1450 it was part of the Zaachila realm because it was conquered by Lord Quixicayo 6 Water. This would mean that it was independent before its conquest, and it seems to have become independent again after the dynastic crisis in Zaachila in the mid-15th century. It is tempting to interpret the ceramic differences between MA IIIb and MA IV as proposed by Kowalewski et al. (1989) 251-306 as an early indication of the territorial separation of the Valley of Oaxaca. That is to say, MA IIIb would represent the precursor of what was to become the Zaachila city-state, and MA IV would represent the other independent city-states. Of course, I am of the opinion that these periods were contemporaneous.
 21. In the case of the Isthmus the information basically comes from the *Relación Geográfica* of Tehuantepec, which dates from 1580. By this time the economic relations and production had possibly changed considerably due to Spanish influences, as was the case in the Valley of Oaxaca (see *infra*). This may influence our ideas about the period. Besides the *relaciones*, the information about the Valley of Oaxaca is also based on the archaeological surveys (Blanton et al. [1982]; Kowalewski et al. [1989]), but they do not necessarily give a fuller view on the period. The Sierra Zapoteca is again a problematic region due to the general lack of information (Chance [1989] 111-21).
 22. Again, I have considerable reservations about Kowalewski et al.’s methods. Based on all sites they identified during their survey, the characteristics of a Typical Valley Site were defined. This TVS was then used in the discussion of site characteristics for each period in order to see in how far these agreed or disagreed with the TVS. The problem is, however, that almost 40% of the total number of sites encountered in the Valley of Oaxaca are identified as belonging to Monte Albán phase V. It is, therefore, obvious that the TVS is very similar to the Typical MA V Site. This overrepresentation of MA V sites is directly related to the chronological problems. Whereas all phases in the chronology of the valley are between 150 and 300 years long, MA V is 500 years long! It is thus not surprising that one finds more sites in MA V than, for example, in MA IV. However, it has to be said that if we compare similar time periods, MA V would still have more sites than any other. Yet it is clear that we need either a more detailed division of MA V into an early and late sub-phase, or to resolve the problem of the non-identified Chila phase. This should then be followed by a designation of the old literature to the subperiods or phases.
 23. One of the subject villages of Tehuantepec is called Mixtequilla or “Little Mixteca”. It is, however, not clear if this was a Ñuu Dzavui community. In 1595 it produced a document in Tíchazàa, which does not necessarily say anything about its ethnic identity either since it simply may have been one Tíchazàa-speaking person in a Ñuu Dzavui community.
 24. Consequently the frustrated indigenous leaders complained to the Spanish authorities, which produced the document that is our source of information now.

Bibliography

- AGIE – Archivo General de Indias, Ramo Escribanía
 AGIJ – Archivo General de Indias, Ramo Justicia
 AGIM – Archivo General de Indias, Ramo México
 CV – See Córdova (1987a)
 CA – See Córdova, Fray J. de; *Arte en lengua zapoteca*

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Was There a South-West German City-State Culture?

BJÖRN FORSÉN¹

“Le città di Alemagna sono liberissime, hanno poco contado, et obediscano allo imperatore, quando le vogliano, e non temeno né quello né altro potente che le abbiano intorno: perché le sono in modo fortificate, che ciascuno pensa la espugnazione di esse dovere esser tediosa e difficile. Perché tutte hanno fossi e mura conveniente, hanno artiglierie a sufficienzia: tengono sempre nelle canove publiche da bere e da mangiare e da ardere per uno anno; et oltre a questo, per potere tenere la plebe pasciuta, e senza perdita del pubblico, hanno sempre in comune per uno anno da potere dare loro da lavorare in quelli esercizi, che sieno el nervo e la vita di quella città, e delle industrie de’ quali la plebe pasca.”

In Chapter 10 of his *Il Principe*, Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527) describes the German cities as totally free, with small territories, and as obeying the Emperor only when they want to. According to him the cities do not fear the Emperor or any other potentate in their neighbourhood, because they are so well fortified (with walls, moats, artillery and food supplies) that everyone considers besieging them as a tedious and difficult undertaking. Moreover, he explains that the cities, in order to maintain the common people without public expense, always have enough raw materials in storage to keep the people engaged in those occupations essential to the life of the city.

On the basis of Machiavelli’s description of the German cities, it is clear that he considered them to be similar to contemporary cities in northern Italy. The concept of a city-state is a modern invention,² but Machiavelli’s description includes the main characteristics of a city-state put forward by Mogens Herman Hansen in *A Comparative Study of Thirty City-State Cultures* (Hansen [2000a] 17-19). Each city was a self-governing micro-state consisting of a fortified city with its immediate hinterland. The politically privileged part of the population was apparently small and excluded the common people, who specialised in different sorts of production, on the basis of which the existence of the city depended. Thus, Machiavelli’s description can be used as a proof that

there existed German city-states in the early 16th century.

Apart from clarifying the definition of a city-state Hansen has also coined the expression “city-state culture”. A city-state culture is defined as a cluster of city-states in a region inhabited by people who speak the same language and share a common culture. Although war between the single city-states is endemic, the city-states interact politically during peace by having close diplomatic contacts, by concluding alliances, and by forming leagues or federations, often of a hegemonic type. City-states tend to occur in such clusters, but there are also occasional cases of “isolated city-states”, such as for instance modern Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco and San Marino.³

On the basis of the criteria put forward by Hansen, Martina Stercken in *A Comparative Study of Thirty City-State Cultures* considers the Swiss cities Basel, Bern, Fribourg, Geneva, Luzern, Schaffhausen, Solothurn, St. Gallen, Zug and Zürich to form a city-state culture from the 14th/15th century until 1848.⁴ According to Peter Johanek, who in turn contributed an article on German cities to the same publication, the imperial cities (*Reichsstädte*) and free cities (*Freie Städte*) came closest to the definition of a city-state (Johanek [2000] 295-319, esp. 308). Imperial cities are towns which either were founded by the Emperor or had grown up on imperial territory, and thus owed no obedience to local or regional overlords. Free cities again were mostly cathedral cities, in which the citizens had managed to take over the control of government of the city from its lord (a bishop or archbishop). The imperial and free cities were thus politically equal in status to the duchies, counties, bishoprics and abbeys of the Holy Roman Empire.⁵

Machiavelli’s description of German cities must refer primarily to the imperial and free cities, which together with a few of the territorial cities, had the largest degree of autonomy. Thus Machiavelli clearly regarded the German imperial and free cities as similar to the north Italian city-states. As far as I know, nobody has objected to considering the German

imperial and free cities as city-states – even Johanek, who is critical of using the term city-state in Germany, admits that they come close to the definition of city-states.⁶ However, as they were not gathered together in a single continuous region with adjoining territories, but rather were interspersed among princely territories, and played no prominent role in the constitutional structure of the Empire, nor had any decisive influence on the Empire's policy-making, Johanek concludes that they cannot be considered to form a city-state culture, but rather constitute a special case of their own in the history of city-states (Johanek [2000] 308).

Of the German imperial and free cities the large majority (around 75%) was concentrated in a region consisting of the following modern countries and districts: Baden-Württemberg, Alsace (Elsass), the Bavarian districts (*Regierungsbezirke*) Schwaben and Mittelfranken, and a small part of south-eastern Rheinland-Pfalz. Consequently, I am here going to test whether they theoretically could be seen as forming a specific south-west German city-state culture. While trying to answer that question I will proceed in the following way. First I am going to discuss whether the existence of adjoining territories between city-states has to be taken as a definite prerequisite for the identification of a city-state culture. Thereafter I will review the known cases of concluded alliances or formed leagues between the city-states in our study-area, as well as their role in the constitutional structure and policy-making of the Empire. Finally I will briefly discuss in which way the south-west German city-states relate to the Swiss and Italian city-states, and whether they could not all be seen as forming part of one and the same city-state culture.

Do the Single City-states in a City-state Culture Need to have Adjoining Territories?

According to the definition of the Copenhagen Polis Centre, a city-state culture consists of a region which for a long time is divided into single city-states. This is clearly one of the more important characteristics of a city-state culture, because it helps us to distinguish between city-state cultures and isolated city-states. The question is, however, whether the definition necessarily requires the single city-states to have adjoining territories, or whether a region densely dotted with city-states alongside areas belonging to the nobility and the church could also be considered as a city-state culture. One of the arguments used by

Hansen to exclude the mediaeval consulate cities in southern France as forming a city-state culture is that “they were scattered and lay between fiefs ruled by counts and bishops” (there are also other arguments, as for instance that all the consulate cities were vassals with a count or a bishop as their feudal lord) (Hansen [2000a] 24). Similarly, the fact that the German city-states were interspersed between principalities and episcopal states has, as we have seen above, been used as an argument against the existence of a German city-state culture.

Even though there is a clear concentration of imperial and free cities in our study-area, these do not have adjoining territories, but are rather interspersed among areas belonging to princes, bishops, abbeys, counts, knights and occasionally free peasants. Is this then a situation which rules them out as a city-state culture, or can we see similar traits for instance in the Swiss and/or Italian city-state cultures? It is a common mistake to see the map of at least the Italian city-state culture as consisting exclusively of powerful city-states with vast adjoining territories. According to Daniel Waley in his well-known book on the Italian city-states, it is “only necessary to blink one's eyes for this map to become one of wide feudal lordships, in the interstices of which communes struggle to maintain a fugitive independence” (Waley [1988] 159). It is only in Tuscany that the city-states managed to eradicate the feudal lordship, but not until the mid-14th century, at a time when the larger city-states already had started to incorporate the smaller ones, thus transforming into small territorial states or macro-states, a process which finally around 1400 led to the end of the Italian city-state culture (Epstein [2000] 287-89; Hansen [2000b] 602). In Lombardy the city-states had to compete with *seignorialism* all the time, and in the more peripheral and mountainous regions like Piedmont, parts of Veneto, Friuli and Romagna, the feudal power was always the dominant one, coexisting with the city-states.⁷

What about the Swiss city-states, then? By succeeding the nobility in their hinterland, these mostly obtained adjoining territories during the 15th century. However, Bern and Zürich never reached that stage, because part of the Aargau and Baden dividing them from each other was held in common by the members of the Swiss Confederacy. And St. Gallen, Rottweil and Mülhausen, all with the same status within the Swiss Confederacy (*Zugewandte Orte*, Rottweil only 1519-1632), always remained separated from the other Swiss city-states by abbeys or principalities. Bern and Geneva finally did not achieve adjoining

territories until the 1530s, when Bern occupied the Vaud.⁸ At this time Bern had a huge hinterland of 7,000 km², i.e. was actually too large to fit the definition of a city-state.⁹ After the occupation of the Vaud there were a total of 29 subjected towns in the Bernese hinterland, out of which the largest one, Lausanne, had a population of nearly the same size as Bern itself.¹⁰ Bern was from now on clearly not a city-state, but had rather, like the largest Italian city-states, developed into a small macro-state. Thus Bern and Geneva only achieved adjoining territories when Bern had outgrown the limits of a city-state.

Mediaeval and Early Modern city-states in Central Europe existed side by side with feudal lordships. Adjoining territories were often not achieved until a late stage, when the largest city-states already had expanded so much that they had been transformed into small macro-states. Thus, the existence of adjoining territories cannot, in my view, be used as a main prerequisite for defining city-state cultures in mediaeval and Early Modern Central Europe. Therefore I would suggest that Hansen's criterion of a city-state culture as a region which for a long time is divided into single city-states should instead be seen as fulfilled when a majority of the cities in a region developed into city-states.

How large a percentage of the cities in our study-area developed into city-states, or rather into free and imperial cities? Thanks to the impressive publication *Deutsches Städtebuch* we have a good picture of the urban development in Germany in the late mediaeval or Early Modern period. Unfortunately Alsace is not included in the *Deutsches Städtebuch*, but if we concentrate on modern Baden-Württemberg and the Bavarian districts Schwaben and Mittelfranken we still get a representative picture of our study-area.¹¹ As shown in Table 1, there were in the mid-16th century a total of 294 towns in modern Baden-Württemberg and the Bavarian districts Schwaben and Mittelfranken, of which 37 had the status of imperial cities (none was a free city). This does indeed represent quite a low percentage,¹² but on the other hand one should note that nearly two-thirds of the towns had a population of less than 1,000 inhabitants (many of them only a couple of hundred) and were, in spite of the fact that they had received town privileges, hardly more than small villages, and should perhaps be excluded from further consideration.

The percentage of towns that had imperial rights increases among the larger towns. Roughly one-third of all towns with a population over 1,000 were imperial cities, whereas two-thirds of the towns with a

Population	Cities	<i>Reichsstädte</i>	Percentage
>12,000	3	3	100%
6,000-12,000	6	3	50%
3,000-6,000	23	16	69.6%
1,000-3,000	79	11	13.9%
<1,000	183	5	2.7%
Totals	294	37	12.6%

Table 1. Number of imperial cities (*Reichsstädte*) as compared with the total number of cities in the mid-16th century within the borders of modern Baden-Württemberg and the Bavarian districts Schwaben and Mittelfranken. Based upon *Deutsches Städtebuch* IV.2 and V.1-2. Due to the varying quality of sources used by *Deutsches Städtebuch*, the number of cities belonging to the groups with 1,000-3,000 and less than 1,000 inhabitants, especially, should be taken as approximations.

population over 3,000 had that status (Table 1). All three cities with a population larger than 12,000 were imperial cities, whereas the percentage of imperial cities among the second largest towns is reduced slightly by the fact that Stuttgart and Heidelberg, two residential cities of princes, belong to the towns sampled (Table 2).¹³ In any case, the sample clearly shows what an important role in the urban and economic life of our study-area the imperial and free cities played.

In conclusion, I would argue that our study-area almost fulfils the criterion of a city-state culture as consisting of a region divided into single city-states, or rather according to my definition, of a region in which the majority of the cities develop into city-states. Let us now turn to look at whether the city-states of our region dominated the political agenda by collaborating with each other.

Did the South-west German City-states Form Leagues with Each Other?

Starting in the 13th century, but above all in the 14th and 15th centuries, the German towns formed leagues (*Städtebünde* or *Landfrieden*), either together with territorial princes, or only among themselves.¹⁴ There were different reasons for these leagues, which typically were formed for a short time, usually a couple of years. In the 13th century, when the institution of imperial cities had hardly been established, the leagues concentrated upon protecting the safety of trading routes. Leagues with this as their main goal also included those ruled by princes and bishops, and

<p>More than 12,000 inhabitants Nürnberg Ulm Augsburg</p>	<p>3,000-6,000 inhabitants *Lauingen Reutlingen Schwäbisch Hall Rottweil Memmingen Heilbronn Ravensburg Kempten Donauwörth Kaufbeuren *Schorndorf</p>	<p>*Tübingen Schwäbisch Gmünd *Breisach Rothenburg o.d.T. Dinkelsbühl Biberach Windsheim Überlingen *Pforzheim *Wertheim Isny *Rottenburg am Neckar</p>
<p>6,000-12,000 inhabitants *Stuttgart Nördlingen Esslingen Konstanz *Freiburg i.Br. *Heidelberg</p>		

Table 2. The largest towns within modern Baden-Württemberg and the Bavarian districts Schwaben and Mittelfranken during the mid-16th century in an approximate diminishing order of size. All towns apart from those marked with an * are imperial cities. Based upon *Deutsches Städtebuch* IV.2 and V.1-2.

were often proclaimed by the king. One of the oldest and largest leagues of this kind was the *Rheinischer Bund* (1254-57), which included cities, principalities and bishoprics, mainly along the Rhine, stretching all the way from Zürich to Lübeck.¹⁵

During the 14th century the leagues developed in two different ways. Firstly, there appear leagues formed only by imperial and free cities. Secondly, the treaties start to include paragraphs protecting the privileges of the cities and prohibiting or restricting the right of the king to mortgage the cities. These changes were due to the fact that in order to obtain funds the Holy Roman Kings and Emperors had started to mortgage imperial cities to princes, and some of the smaller cities that could not afford to buy their freedom lost their privileges once and for all. In this way several smaller imperial cities close to the Palatinate and in the Breisgau were turned into ordinary territorial cities (*Territorialstädte* or *Landstädte*).¹⁶ Other small imperial cities, for instance Offenburg, Gengenbach and Zell am Harmersbach, managed to regain their imperial rights after having been mortgaged for most of the 14th-16th centuries. However, it was not only small imperial cities that were mortgaged: in 1330 Lewis the Bavarian mortgaged Zürich, Schaffhausen, St. Gallen and Rheinfelden to the Habsburgs. The two largest of these cities, Zürich and St. Gallen, both with between 3,000 and 6,000 inhabitants, managed to annul the mortgage, but the realisation that now medium-sized imperial cities were also in danger must have come as a shock to the imperial cities.¹⁷

Among the first leagues consisting only of imperial and free cities were one between Konstanz, Zürich,

St. Gallen and Schaffhausen in 1312 (in 1315 enlarged to include Lindau und Überlingen),¹⁸ another one between nine lower Swabian towns in 1330¹⁹ and finally one between seven Alsatian towns in 1342.²⁰ These three leagues also represent the three different factions into which the south-west German imperial cities tended to split: the towns around the Bodensee, the Swabian towns and the Alsatian towns. The first treaty, which included paragraphs protecting the rights of the imperial cities, was the Swabian *Landfrieden* of 1331. It encompassed the sons of King Lewis the Bavarian and some princes, as well as 22 imperial cities, stretching from Zürich and St. Gallen in the south to Wimpfen, Schwäbisch Hall and Nördlingen in the north.²¹ Apart from the general paragraphs regarding safety on the roads, this *Landfrieden* includes a paragraph in which Lewis the Bavarian promised not to infringe any of the privileges of the towns or to mortgage any of them during the duration of the treaty.

Lewis the Bavarian's Swabian *Landfrieden* was renewed in 1340. The paragraphs included in this treaty were similar to the ones of 1331, but this time a larger number of princes were included.²² Konstanz, Zürich and St. Gallen were apparently not pleased with the new *Landfrieden* and only shortly afterwards formed a league among themselves, stating their intention to protect themselves and their rights against anyone threatening them, not even excluding the King.²³ A similar formulation was included in the Swabian league of 22 towns (not including Konstanz, St. Gallen and Zürich or any princes), which was founded shortly after the death of Lewis the Bavarian in 1347. If there were two rival candidates, the mem-

Fig. 1. The members of the Swabian and Rhenish town leagues in 1385 and the five Swiss towns with which an alliance was concluded in the same year



bers of the Swabian league would accept as king the one chosen by the majority of their *Bundesversammlung*. They promised each other to protect their privileges if the king tried to infringe them, but there was no need for it as the new King Charles IV already in 1348/9 accepted their privileges despite his apparent dislike for leagues consisting exclusively of towns. Thus, in 1350 he abolished a new league of 1349 consisting of 25 Swabian towns (including Konstanz and St. Gallen, but not Zürich) and promulgated instead several consecutive Swabian *Landfrieden* treaties, which apart from imperial cities also included the principalities of the area. In the Golden Bull of 1356 he even forbade by law the formation without his consent of leagues consisting solely of imperial cities.

In the 1370s the threat against the imperial cities increased again. In order to be able to influence the election of his successor, Charles IV, who had been crowned Emperor, persuaded the seven electors to choose his son Wenceslas as king in 1376, at a time when he himself was still alive. Persuading the elec-

tors was, however, expensive. Already in 1373 Charles IV tried in vain to mortgage Nördlingen, Donauwörth, Dinkelsbühl and Bopfingen. Unsuccessful in this endeavour, he instead mortgaged Donauwörth, Feuchtwangen and Weil der Stadt in 1376 and commissioned the count of Württemberg to collect more taxes from the remaining imperial cities. As a reaction, 14 Swabian imperial cities the same year formed a league with the aim of protecting their privileges against Charles IV.²⁴ When Charles IV failed to abolish the league and, moreover, it won a battle against the count of Württemberg in 1377, more towns wanted to join. In 1377 the number of members had grown to 27,²⁵ in 1381 to 34²⁶ and finally in 1385 to 40²⁷, then stretching from Basel in the west to Regensburg in the east, and from St. Gallen and Wil in the south to Schweinfurt in the north (Fig. 1).

The Swabian Town League broadened its influence in 1381, when it concluded an alliance with a new *Rheinischer Städtebund* consisting of imperial and free cities along the Rhine. In 1381 this league con-

sisted of only seven towns, but within a couple of years it had been enlarged to include a total of 14 towns.²⁸ Two years later, in 1385, the Swabian Town League concluded an alliance with the Swiss towns Zürich, Luzern, Zug, Bern and Solothurn.²⁹ Thereby a total of 59 free and imperial cities in the south-western part of the Holy Roman Empire, the largest number ever reached, were cooperating with each other (Fig. 1). Because of differing interests the cooperation between the Swabian Town League and the Rhenish and Swiss towns proved not to work very well. The Swabians, for instance, never sent help to the Swiss when the Habsburgs in 1386 once again threatened them. Nevertheless, the Swiss won the battle at Sempach, whereas the Swabians were thoroughly defeated by the count of Württemberg in the battle of Döffingen in 1388. In the peace negotiations in Eger King Wenceslas demanded that both the Rhenish and the Swabian league should be abolished.

The imperial cities around the Bodensee and in Alsace, which had formed small leagues of their own within the Swabian Town League, ignored Wenceslas' orders. Thus, a league of seven Bodensee towns and ten Alsatian towns (the so-called Dekapolis) continued to exist also after the *Egerer Landfrieden* in 1389.³⁰ As these seven towns were not punished in any way, the rest of the Swabian towns probably felt safe once again to form a league of their own. Already in 1390 a new Swabian Town League was founded, with its centre at Ulm and with 12 members.³¹ This new Swabian Town League continued to exist into the 1480s, although its composition kept changing, and although after 1450 it had lost most of its importance. The Bodensee towns, Augsburg, the Frankish towns Nürnberg, Windsheim and Weissenburg, as well as Heilbronn, Wimpfen, Esslingen, Reutlingen and Weil der Stadt mostly stayed out of the league. The Bodensee towns as well as the three Frankish towns formed leagues of their own, whereas Heilbronn, Wimpfen, Esslingen, Reutlingen and Weil der Stadt concentrated on keeping good relations with their closest neighbours, the Palatinate and the County of Württemberg. Thus the number of members in the Swabian Town League usually stayed around ten, although at times of crisis it swelled to around 20, with a maximum of 31 (Fig. 2).³²

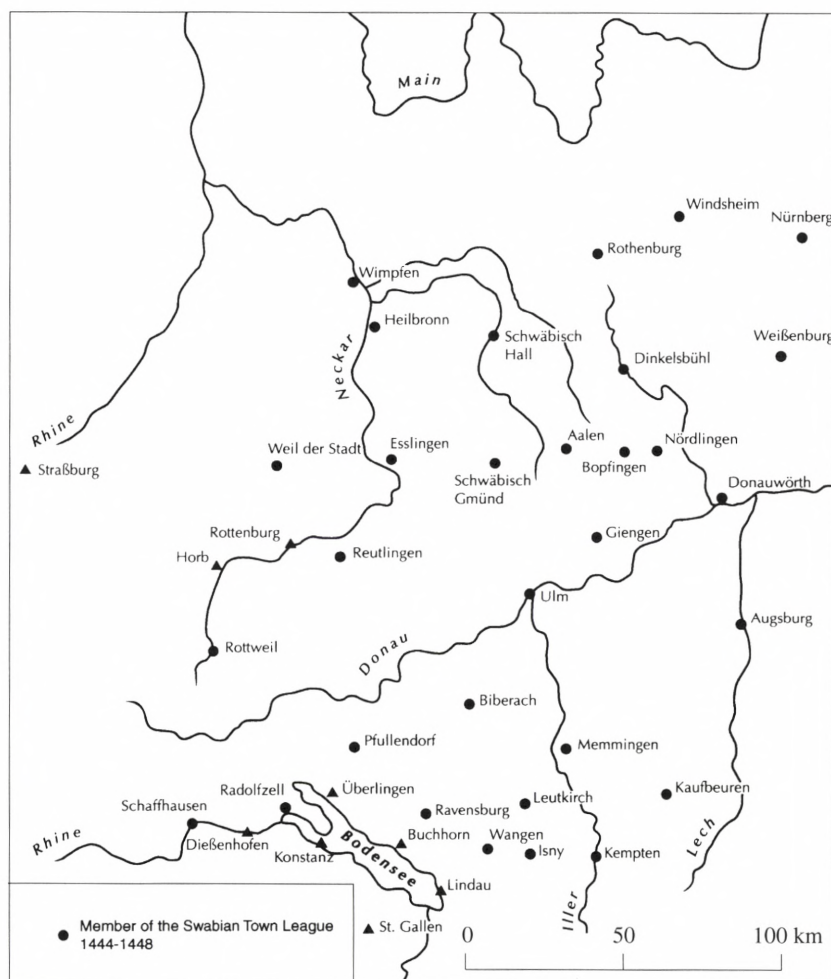
The beginning of the 15th century was in a way the heyday of the imperial cities in the south-western part of the Holy Roman Empire. Encouraged by King Sigismund's (1410-37) attempt to curtail the Habsburg influence their position grew stronger than ever before. In 1410 the Habsburgs were forced to mort-

gage the County of Herrenburg together with the towns Rottenburg am Neckar, Horb, Ehingen, Schöndorf and Binsdorf to the Swabian Town League (Blezinger [1954] 7-8). Five years later, at the Council of Konstanz, the Habsburgs were forced to cede Aargau and Baden to the Swiss Confederacy, and in addition to give imperial rights to the towns Freiburg im Breisgau, Breisach, Endingen, Kenzingen, Radolfzell and Schaffhausen.³³ Freiburg im Breisgau belonged to the handful of towns with a population between 6,000 and 10,000, whereas Rottenburg am Neckar and Breisach had a population between 3,000 and 6,000, which put them among the larger towns of the region. Still the imperial cities failed to capitalise on these gains.

At the Council of Konstanz in 1415 Sigismund suggested that the imperial cities form a large town league under his leadership against the princes. When this was not accepted by the imperial cities, in 1422 he encouraged them instead, also in vain, to collaborate with the knights, who had formed a Society of the Shield of St. George among themselves (see, e.g., Obenaus [1961]). The idea of a large town league encompassing all imperial cities in the south-western part of the Holy Roman Empire was at periods of crisis promoted especially by Ulm. Thus in 1437-38 Ulm invited a total of 46 towns, including Swiss and Alsatian ones, for consultations, and in 1445 when the Swabian Town League consisted of 31 imperial cities, it tried in vain to convince Konstanz, Lindau, Überlingen, Buchhorn, St. Gallen and Strassburg to become members as well.³⁴

The difficulties in forming a large league consisting of all imperial cities in the south-western part of the Holy Roman Empire inevitably led to the loss of the strong position the towns had gained in 1415. Thus already in 1427 Freiburg im Breisgau, Breisach, Endingen and Kenzingen were given back to the Habsburgs (Baum [1991] 103). Weinsberg was conquered by knights and lost its imperial rights in 1440,³⁵ and after the Second Cities' War in 1449/50 the great days of the Swabian Town League were over. Only a small core of towns continued to cooperate under the leadership of Ulm until the 1480s,³⁶ but they were too weak to protest when the County of Herrenburg together with the towns Rottenburg am Neckar, Horb, Ehingen, Schöndorf and Binsdorf had to be given back to the Habsburgs in 1454, or when Radolfzell lost its status as imperial city in 1455.³⁷ In the absence of a strong town league the imperial cities were forced to cooperate with the territorial princes (Angermeier [1966] 422-30), or to conclude treaties with the Swiss Confederation as St. Gallen and Schaffhausen did in

Fig. 2. The members of the Swabian Town League in 1444-48.



1454, Stein am Rhein in 1459, Rottweil in 1463 and Mülhausen in Alsace in 1466.³⁸

After the decline of the Swabian Town League, Emperor Frederick III tried to secure peace within Swabia by promulgating a *Landfrieden*, which was renewed several times and remained in force from 1467 until 1487. In the absence of an executive power Frederick III in 1487-88 forced 20 imperial cities and the knights of the Society of St. George's Shield to form a Swabian League under his leadership.³⁹ The Swabian League had both an assembly (*Bundesversammlung*) with two houses, one for the nobility and one for the towns, and a ruling council (*Bundesrat*). In 1500 a third house was formed in the assembly for the princes, thus to some extent circumscribing the influence of the towns (Brady [1985] 53). The aim of Frederick III was from the very beginning to enlarge the Swabian League. Already within a year after it was founded it had 26 imperial cities as members,⁴⁰ and negotiations were held with the Swiss and Alsatian towns. The Swiss, however, rejected the proposal of joining the

Swabian League,⁴¹ and the Alsatian imperial towns (still cooperating as a small town league of their own, the so-called Dekapolis) in 1493 decided together with local territorial lords to reorganise into a league of their own, the Lower Union (as opposed to the Upper Union, which referred to the Swiss Confederacy).⁴²

The failure to cooperate with the Swiss led finally in 1499 to a brutal war between the Swiss Confederacy and the Swabian League. As a result of the Swiss victory, Basel and Schaffhausen became full members (*Orte*) of the Swiss Confederacy in 1501, and Mülhausen and Rottweil associate members (*Zugewandte Orte*) in 1511 and 1519.⁴³ The forming of a third house for the princes in the Swabian League's assembly had to a certain degree curtailed the influence of the imperial towns, but on the other hand the position of the towns was strengthened considerably when Nürnberg, Strassburg and Weissenburg in Alsace joined the league in 1500.⁴⁴ The position of the princes was also severely curtailed when the Duke of Württemberg left the league in

1511. Thus in the war between the Swabian League and the Duchy of Württemberg, the winning Swabian forces consisted mainly of troops from the imperial cities and the Duchy of Bavaria. As Thomas Brady has shown, contemporary commentators saw the fall of Duke Ulrich of Württemberg (who was forced into exile) as the work of the imperial cities.⁴⁵

The Swabian League was dissolved in 1534 as a result of the Reformation, which split towns, principalities, etc. into new groups according to their religious faith. The south-west German imperial cities never again united into leagues. Although the Swabian League (1487-1534) was not a clear-cut town league, it still formed an organisation bringing together the imperial cities in line with the tradition set by the earlier Swabian Town League, which existed apart from short breaks between 1376 and the 1480s. As we have seen there were other town leagues in Alsace (the Dekapolis in fact continued to exist until 1648)⁴⁶ and around the Bodensee, and collaboration with the Swiss towns did occasionally take place. Thus, the south-west German imperial and free cities do, from the mid-14th until the mid-16th century, fulfil the criterion of a city-state culture, according to which its members need to interact politically in peacetime by having close diplomatic contacts, by concluding alliances, and by forming leagues or federations (Hansen [2000a] 17).

What was the role of the south-west German city-states in the constitutional structure and policy-making of the Empire?

One of the reasons why Peter Johanek cannot accept that the German imperial and free cities formed a city-state culture was that they were not a prominent element in the constitutional structure of the Holy Roman Empire and that they had no decisive influence on its policy-making. Although largely true, this is not an important reason for disregarding them as a city-state culture. Or to put it the other way: they would not fit Hansen's criteria for a city-state culture better even if they were an important element in the constitutional structure and had a strong influence on the Empire's policy-making. However, I still want to describe briefly the position of the imperial and free cities in the constitutional structure of the Empire, because it bears witness to a close cooperation between the south-west German city-states continuing for a long time after the fall of the Swabian League.

Around the turn of the 15th/16th century a new centralised institution, the *Reichstag* (Imperial Diet)

was created in the Holy Roman Empire. As Johanek correctly stresses, the Imperial Diet was largely dominated by the territorial princes, although the free and imperial cities were also summoned to it, where they formed a third house (*Kurie*) of their own but only had the right to a *votum consultativum* (Johanek [2000] 296). However, Johanek does not mention that at the same time as the *Reichstag* was established, there emerged an Urban Diet, which was an assembly of envoys from the free and imperial cities. The Urban Diet convened for the first time in 1471 in Frankfurt, after which it met at irregular intervals, usually with an interval of a couple of years, until 1671.⁴⁷ All imperial and free cities had the right to take part in the Urban Diets, although the smaller towns due to financial problems, usually allowed some of their larger neighbours to represent them. During the first half of the 16th century a total of 69 towns took part in at least one Urban Diet (Schmidt [1984] 36-65, Tabelle 1), but the number of imperial and free cities started to decrease after the mid-16th century.⁴⁸

Any of the free or imperial cities could request an Urban Diet to be summoned in order to discuss political or economic matters of mutual interest.⁴⁹ The Urban Diet sometimes met at the same time as a *Reichstag*, but was usually summoned in order to discuss questions of concern for the towns. Thus the Urban Diet constituted a forum where the imperial and free cities could discuss decisions by past and agendas of future Imperial Diets (e.g. how to be able to influence the decisions taken by the Imperial Diet, or how to respond to higher taxation demands), but also how to deal with threats against the privileges of one of its members.⁵⁰ Several attempts were made in connection with the meetings to form a more permanent town league, the last time on the suggestion of Strassburg in 1668, but they all failed.⁵¹

Although the Urban Diet encompassed all imperial and free cities it was still largely dominated by towns in our study-area. This was not only due to the fact that the majority of the imperial and free cities were located in this part of the Empire. Because of the long distance to the Urban Diets, which usually met either in Speyer or Esslingen, cities in northern Germany tended to abstain from coming to the Urban Diets as frequently. Thus, of the 27 cities, which during the first half of the 16th century took part in more than 40% of the Urban Diets, only five are located outside our study-area.⁵² And it should be noted that three of these five cities (Frankfurt, Schweinfurt and Regensburg) were located close to our study-area, and belonged to the cities which occasionally had been

Swabian bank		Rhenish bank
1. Regensburg	19. Schweinfurt	1. Köln
2. Augsburg	20. Kempten	2. Aachen
3. Nürnberg	21. Windsheim	3. Strassburg
4. Ulm	22. Kaufbeuren	4. Lübeck
5. Esslingen	23. Weil der Stadt	5. Worms
6. Reutlingen	24. Wangen	6. Speyer
7. Nördlingen	25. Isny	7. Frankfurt
8. Rothenburg o.d.T.	26. Pfullendorf	8. Dekapolis (represented by Kolmar and/or Hagenau)
9. Schwäbisch Hall	27. Offenburg	9. Besançon
10. Rottweil	28. Leutkirch	10. Goslar
11. Überlingen	29. Wimpfen	11. Dortmund
12. Heilbronn	30. Weissenburg/Nordgau	12. Bremen
13. Schwäbisch Gmünd	31. Giengen	13. Gelnhausen
14. Memmingen	32. Gengenbach	14. Mühlhausen
15. Lindau	33. Zell am Harmersbach	15. Nordhausen
16. Dinkelsbühl	34. Buchhorn	16. Herford
17. Biberach	35. Aalen	17. Friedberg
18. Ravensburg	36. Buchau	18. Wetzlar
	37. Bopfingen	

Table 3. The seating order in the Urban Diet's two banks in the 1640s. After Buchstab (1976) 219-220.

members of the town leagues of the late 14th and early 15th century. The parallels between the composition of the Urban Diet and the town leagues is even more obvious if one looks at the two banks into which the Urban Diet was divided (Table 3). The Swabian bank is nearly identical to the composition of the Swabian Town League during its heyday, whereas the Rhenish bank, in spite of the addition of several north German cities, still resembles the composition of the different Rhenish Town Leagues.

Thus, the Urban Diet could in principle be described as an informal successor to the town leagues. Although it did not have any formal power, it still constituted a forum for discussions between the imperial cities in our study-area. It is the best example of direct collaboration between the imperial cities, and clearly illustrates their political consciousness and how they continued to consider themselves as different from other towns or territorial states within the Holy Roman Empire.

Apart from the Urban Diet there was another Imperial institution in which the imperial and free cities participated and played an important role, and that was the Regional Diets. In 1512 the Empire was divided into ten regions, or "circles", of which one was Swabia.⁵³ Every region (*Kreis*) had its own Regional Diet (*Kreistag*) consisting of representatives

from all the estates. A total of 33 of the imperial cities of our study-area belonged to the Swabian region, thus excluding only Speyer, Worms and the Alsatian towns (the Upper Rhenish region) and Nürnberg, Rothenburg ob der Tauber, Windsheim and Weissenburg (the Franconian region). Although most of the duchies, counties, bishoprics, abbeys, cities, etc. of the Swabian area belonged to the Swabian region, there were exceptions – the most notable being the Habsburg dominions and the imperial knights.⁵⁴

The imperial cities of Swabia had quite an influential position in the Swabian Regional Diet and controlled 33 of the 101 votes. The meetings of the Regional Diet were always held in an imperial city, mostly in Ulm, where the financial office of the region was also located (Jäger [1975] 40-75). The most important task of the Swabian region was to maintain peace within its borders with their own military and police forces. As part of the peacekeeping obligation the region also defended the privileges and independence of its members against expanding landlords who were not part of the region, such as the Habsburgs. The Regional Diet controlled the local monetary system, economy, trade and traffic, and elected not only their own officials, but also their own representatives at the imperial courts. Finally, the Regional Diet prepared matters for the Imperial Diet and adapted

decisions made in the Imperial Diets to the local conditions.⁵⁵

The Swabian region of the Empire existed until the end of the Holy Roman Empire itself in the early 19th century, successfully preventing any larger political changes and thus also protecting the imperial cities, which did not lose their privileges until Napoleon arrived on the scene. In the same way as the Urban Diet can be described as an informal successor to the town leagues, the Swabian region can be regarded as a successor of the Swabian League, in the sense that the imperial cities here collaborated with the territorial landlords. But it should be remembered that whereas the Swabian League was a unique construction with certain rights of its own, the Swabian region was only a constitutional part of the Empire. It should also be pointed out that the imperial cities initially showed considerable interest in the decision-making of the region, but became much less active already in the 17th century.

To conclude, the imperial and free cities of our study-area continued after the fall of the Swabian League to cooperate closely with each other in the Urban Diet and the Swabian Regional Diet with the purpose of defending their autonomy and their privileges. Thus, they did not act as isolated city-states, but rather as members of a city-state culture, albeit one which since the mid-16th century became less and less active and started to stagnate.

How did the South-west German City-states Relate to the Swiss and Italian City-states?

The imperial cities of our study-area have much in common with both the Swiss and Italian city-states. They all developed within the Holy Roman Empire as a result of the central power crumbling and the growing importance of trade along the route from northern Italy via Switzerland and the Rhine to Flanders. Furthermore, they were all part of a feudal reality and had to exist alongside principalities, bishoprics, abbeys, etc. This applies to the Swiss Confederacy as well. Despite the traditional Swiss hatred for nobility, the Confederacy consisted not only of city-states but also of agrarian micro-states (*Länderorte*), bishoprics (Basel), abbeys (St. Gallen, Engelberg) and principalities (Neuchâtel). Still, the position of feudal lords was much weaker in the Swiss Confederacy and even in northern Italy than it was in our study-area. Therefore the Swiss and Italian city-states came close to achieving adjoining territories, which was not the case for the German imperial cities.

In *A Comparative Study of Thirty City-State Cultures*, the Italian and Swiss city-states have been treated as two separate city-state cultures. In spite of the few similarities regarding the development of towns into city-states in these two separate regions, treating them as two separate city-state cultures is also clearly a correct interpretation. The people of the two regions speak different languages and do not share a common culture. Moreover, city-states developed much earlier in northern Italy (around 1100) than in Switzerland (mid or late 14th century). The question is, however, whether the imperial towns in what today is the French region of Alsace and south-western Germany should be considered as forming a city-state culture of its own, or rather as being part of one and the same city-state culture as the Swiss city-states.

Our study-area shares several features with the Swiss Confederacy. Both regions are mainly populated by the Alemannic tribe, and as the north-eastern part of Switzerland used to belong to the Duchy of Swabia, part of the Swiss were considered as Swabians until the 14th century (Maurer [1991] 193-94). German was not only the language of our study-area, but also the principal language of the Swiss Confederacy in the mediaeval period. The first French-speaking areas were not added to the Swiss Confederacy until in 1481, when Fribourg became a member. The primacy of the German language is, however, well characterised by the fact that at the same time Fribourg's official language was changed to German (Carl [1991] 241). Admittedly the Swiss slowly developed their own characteristic dialect, which during the war between the Swabian League and the Swiss Confederacy in 1499 was for the first time considered a feature distinguishing Swabians from the Swiss.⁵⁶

Alsace and the south-western parts of modern Germany had more in common with the Swiss than for instance with Bavaria or Austria, for which the highly developed independence or autonomy of towns was a foreign idea. The historical development of the Swiss and south-west German city-states followed very much the same path, at least until the mid-15th century. The social structure and constitution of the towns, developing towards oligarchy, were also similar (Carl [1991] 256). Although the Swiss city-states in general occupied larger territories than their south-west German counterparts, the difference was, with the exception of Bern, really not that great. Thus Zürich and Luzern had a territory that was only slightly larger than Nürnberg's, Solothurn had a territory similar to Ulm's, Basel had one similar to Rothenburg ob der Tauber's, and Schaffhausen, Zug and Rottweil

finally had territories similar to Strassburg's (cf. Scott [2001] 211-12, Table 9.1). It is true that several of the imperial cities in our study-area never acquired any hinterland at all, but there were also several with territories which were not much smaller than that of Schaffhausen, Zug and Rottweil. Moreover, one should not forget that there existed Swiss city-states with almost no territory at all (Geneva, St. Gallen and Mülhausen).⁵⁷

Most of the Swiss city-states had during the late mediaeval period the same status as imperial city in the Holy Roman Empire as the free towns to the north of the Bodensee. Thus, Basel, Bern, Fribourg, Solothurn and St. Gallen were all still represented at the Imperial Diet in Worms in 1495. However, as a result of the war between the Swiss Confederation and the Swabian League, in 1499 the Swiss towns stopped attending the Imperial Diets,⁵⁸ and thereby practically took the step towards full independence, which finally was accepted *de jure* at the peace conference in 1648. The only exception was Rottweil, which had the status of *Zugewandter Ort* (as also Geneva, St. Gallen and Mülhausen) in the Swiss Confederacy until 1632, and at the same time continued to take part in both the Imperial and Urban Diets, thus constituting a unique link between the Swiss and the Empire (Schmidt [1984] 56). In his book *Turning Swiss*, Thomas Brady has furthermore shown how tendencies to join the Swiss cause prevailed among the German population north of the Swiss Confederacy until well into the mid-16th century (Brady [1985]). I would therefore argue that although most of the cooperation, or attempts at cooperation e.g. in the form of alliances, between imperial and free cities in our study-area and the Swiss towns came to an end in 1499, that year should still not be considered as a clear-cut dividing line.

To conclude, I would interpret the data as indicating one large south-west German city-state culture during the late mediaeval period, to which the Swiss, Alsatian as well as the Swabian city-states belonged. I am somewhat more in doubt about how to interpret the situation after the late 15th to early 16th century, when a clear Swiss identity of its own developed. Contemporary commentators from this time onwards, such as Machiavelli, clearly distinguished between the Swiss and the Germans. Whether this is a sufficient argument for speaking about two different city-state cultures depend on how the concept of a city-state culture is defined,⁵⁹ and leaves open the possibility of several different interpretations. In spite of the characteristics which clearly distinguished the Swiss, I would myself

perhaps still prefer to see the Swiss city-states during the Early Modern period as a special case in a larger south-west German city-state culture.

Conclusion

The German free and imperial cities have generally been considered city-states by previous scholars. As we have seen, even Machiavelli considered them to be similar to the northern Italian city-states. Therefore I have in this chapter refrained from repeating the arguments already presented by e.g. Peter Johanek on the extent to which the characteristics of the single free and imperial cities correspond to the definition of a city-state. Instead I focus on the question whether the concentration of free and imperial cities in modern Alsace, Baden-Württemberg, the Bavarian districts Schwaben and Mittelfranken, and a small slice of south-eastern Rheinland-Pfalz could be interpreted as a south-west German city-state culture. My conclusion is that there existed a south-west German city-state culture, comprising not only the free and imperial cities in our study-area, but also the Swiss city-states. This south-west German city-state culture developed during the second half of the 14th century and lasted until it was destroyed by Napoleon around 1800. However, beginning in the early 16th century part of the south-west German city-state culture, i.e. the Swiss city-states, developed in a different direction to the rest of its members, which stagnated and became dependent on local territorial states.

Notes

1. I owe thanks to Mogens Herman Hansen for inviting me to write this paper as well as to Christopher R. Friedrichs, Mogens Herman Hansen and Martina Stercken for comments and criticism.
2. The English term "city-state" was probably coined in 1885 as a translation of the Danish "bystat" and German "Stadtstaat", concepts introduced by the Danish scholar J.N. Madvig in 1840 and 1842 respectively. Cf. e.g. Hansen (1994) 19-22 and Hansen (1998) 15-16.
3. For the definition of "city-state cultures" and "isolated city-states", see Hansen (2000a) 16-20.
4. Stercken (2000) 321-42. Stercken actually only discusses the formation of the Swiss city-states, and does not comment upon when the city-state culture expired. The year 1848 is suggested as a date of expiration by Hansen (2000a) 20. Of the ten city-states mentioned, two (Geneva, St. Gallen) had only the status of *Zugewandte Orte* in the Swiss Confederacy. If they are still considered as Swiss city-states, I cannot see why one would not classify Mülhausen and Rottweil, also *Zugewandte Orte*, in the same way.
5. For perhaps the most comprehensive discussion of the concept

- “imperial city” and its change through time, as well as of the relationship between the imperial cities and the king and Empire, see Moraw (1979).
6. Friedrichs (1981) 110-13, who was the last person before Johanek to discuss at length whether the German towns should be regarded as city-states or not, is less critical than Johanek and does not find any problems in considering the imperial and free cities as city-states.
 7. Epstein (2000) 285. For examples of feudal power, see also Waley (1988) 159-64. Good examples from the mid-13th century are the Da Romano family, who in the mid-13th century controlled Verona, Vicenza and Padua; Pallavicini who controlled Cremona, Piacenza, Pavia and Vercelli; or the Marquis of Montferrat in Piedmont.
 8. For the gradual expansion of the territories of the city-states, see e.g. *Geschichte* (1983) 246-90, 321-22.
 9. For the size of the Bernese territory, see Stercken (2000) 326. Scott (2001) 212, Table 9.1 estimates the size of the Bernese territory after 1536 to be even larger, 9,000 km². According to the definition of Hansen (2000a) 17, the territory of a city-state should preferably not exceed 3,000 km².
 10. For the subjected towns in the hinterland of Bern, see Gmür (1984) 57. Bern had ca. 5,000 inhabitants during most of the 15th and 16th centuries, whereas Lausanne in 1416 had ca. 4,000-5,000 inhabitants (Mattmüller [1987] 199-200). For estimates of the population in several of the other smaller subjected towns between 1450 and 1550, see also *Geschichte* (1983) 218-19. According to Gmür (1984) 51, there were during the end of the 18th century ca. 400,000 inhabitants in the Bernese hinterland and only 12,000 in Bern itself.
 11. Apart from Alsace only the small part of south-eastern Rheinland-Pfalz has thus not been included. Including these parts would on the other hand hardly have changed the general picture. Strassburg, an imperial city in Alsace, is the only city with a population similar to the one of Augsburg, Nürnberg and Ulm, and the free cities Worms and Speyer in south-eastern Rheinland-Pfalz (cf. *Deutsches Städtebuch* IV.3), and possibly also Hagenau and Kolmar in Alsace are the only cities with a population between 6,000 and 12,000 (e.g. Sittler [1964] 59).
 12. On the other hand, the percentage of imperial cities of the total number of cities (12.7%) is nearly the same as the percentage of the towns within the Swiss Confederation that developed into city-states. Cf. Gmür (1984), according to whom there were 90 subject towns in the Swiss Confederation. If one counts ten Swiss city-states (as Hansen [2000a] 20 does), then 10% of the towns developed into city-states. If one also considers Mühlhausen and Rottweil as Swiss city-states then only 8.5% of the towns developed into city-states.
 13. If Alsace and the small part of south-eastern Rheinland-Pfalz were also included, there would have been a total of ten towns in the second group, seven of which were imperial or free cities (i.e. 70%). Cf. note 11 above.
 14. There exists a vast literature concerning these leagues. For a short general survey, see e.g. Isenmann (1988) 121-27; more detailed references are given in the following notes. The documents and acts of the Mediaeval town leagues in southern Germany are collected by Konrad Ruser. So far all acts before 1380 have been published (Ruser [1979] and Ruser [1988]).
 15. See Ruser (1979) 192-97 and document nos. 207-73.
 16. For the mortgaging of towns in general, see Landwehr (1967), according to whom (pp. 92-96, 216), the following towns between the Palatinate and the Duchy of Württemberg lost their imperial privileges during the 14th and 15th centuries: Eberbach, Eppingen, Feuchtwangen, Heildelshheim, Markgröningen, Mosbach, Neckargemünd, Sinsheim, Waibstadt (fought in vain for its rights as late as the 18th century) and Weinsberg. In Breisgau he mentions during the same time: Breisach, Neuenburg am Rhein and Rheinfelden.
 17. The four cities were mortgaged as a result of the Hagenauer treaty of 8 August 1330. See e.g. Schuler (1978) 660, 673-74 and Landwehr (1967) 22, 232 and 437.
 18. Ruser (1979) nos. 492 and 494. See also Füchtner (1970) 42-66.
 19. Ruser (1979) nos. 547-53. The nine towns were: Esslingen, Reutlingen, Rottweil, Weil der Stadt, Weinsberg, Wimpfen, Heilbronn, Schwäbisch Hall and Schwäbisch Gmünd. See also Schuler (1978) 661-64.
 20. Ruser (1979) no. 452. The towns were: Oberehnheim, Schlettstadt, Kolmar, Kaisersberg, Münster, Türkheim and Mülhausen.
 21. Ruser (1979) no. 555. The towns belonging to the *Landfrieden* were: Augsburg, Ulm, Biberach, Memmingen, Kempten, Kaufbeuren, Ravensburg, Pfullendorf, Überlingen, Lindau, Konstanz, St. Gallen, Zürich, Reutlingen, Rottweil, Weil der Stadt, Heilbronn, Wimpfen, Weinsberg, Schwäbisch Hall, Esslingen and Schwäbisch Gmünd.
 22. Ruser (1979) no. 570. The original founding document includes, apart from the same 22 towns as in the *Landfrieden* of 1331, also the counts of Württemberg, Öttingen, Neufen, Werdenberg, Hohenberg, Herrenberg and Tübingen. Although Konstanz, Zürich and St. Gallen are mentioned, Füchtner (1970) 130 regards it as unlikely that they ever joined the *Landfrieden*. See also Schuler (1978) 671-73.
 23. Ruser (1979) no. 499. For the league between the three towns of 31 August 1340, see also Füchtner (1970) 130-41 and Schuler (1978) 673-74.
 24. Ruser (1988) no. 596. The 14 towns were: Ulm, Konstanz, Überlingen, Ravensburg, Lindau, St. Gallen, Wangen, Buchhorn, Reutlingen, Rottweil, Memmingen, Biberach, Isny and Leutkirch.
 25. Ruser (1988) no. 658. New members were: Esslingen, Weil der Stadt, Kempten, Kaufbeuren, Schwäbisch Gmünd, Schwäbisch Hall, Heilbronn, Nördlingen, Dinkelsbühl, Bopfingen, Wimpfen, Weinsberg and Aalen.
 26. New members were: Regensburg, Augsburg, Pfullendorf, Buchau, Rothenburg ob der Tauber, Giengen and Wyl in Thurgau. For the admission of Pfullendorf, Buchau, Rothenburg ob der Tauber and Giengen (all in 1378), see Ruser (1988) nos. 707-8. For the admission of Regensburg, Augsburg and Wyl, see Vischer (1862) 137 and 141.
 27. New members were: Windsheim, Weissenburg, Basel, Nürnberg, Mühlhausen in Alsace and Schweinfurt (Vischer [1862] 146, 149 and 153-54).
 28. Vischer (1862) 37-39. The first seven towns were: Mainz, Worms, Speyer, Frankfurt, Strassburg, Hagenau and Weissenburg. Later Wetzlar, Friedberg, Gelnhausen, Pfeddersheim, Selz, Oberehnheim and Schlettstedt joined.
 29. Vischer (1862) 55-60; Schildhauer (1977) 193.
 30. Füchtner (1970) 331-35. The seven towns were: Konstanz, Überlingen, Ravensburg, Lindau, St. Gallen, Wangen and Buchhorn.
 31. The 12 founding members were: Nördlingen, Schwäbisch Gmünd, Dinkelsbühl, Giengen, Aalen, Bopfingen, Ulm, Biberach, Pfullendorf, Memmingen, Leutkirch and Isny (Blezinger [1954] 3).

32. For the best general treatment of the new Swabian league, see Blezinger (1954). Periods of crisis when a larger number of members joined the league were 1405-14, 1422-37 and 1444-50. In addition, the Swabian Town League collaborated with the towns around the Bodensee in 1404, 1420 and 1441-42. The 31 members in 1444-48 were: Augsburg, Nürnberg, Ulm, Esslingen, Reutlingen, Nördlingen, Rothenburg ob der Tauber, Schwäbisch Hall, Schaffhausen, Memmingen, Rottweil, Ravensburg, Schwäbisch Gmünd, Heilbronn, Biberach, Dinkelsbühl, Donauwörth, Weil der Stadt, Pfullendorf, Wimpfen, Windsheim, Weissenburg, Kaufbeuren, Kempten, Wangen, Isny, Leutkirch, Giengen, Aalen, Bopfingen and Radolfzell.
33. Landwehr (1967) 118-19 and Baum (1991) 94. In *Deutsches Städtebuch* IV.2 Bräunlingen is also included among the Breisgau towns that enjoyed imperial rights in 1415-27. In addition, the Swiss towns Diessenhofen, Rapperswil and Winterthur were declared imperial towns in 1415, a position they lost in 1442 (Landwehr [1967] 118-19).
34. For the attempts made by Ulm in 1422/23, 1437/38, 1439, 1441-42, 1444 and 1445, see Blezinger (1954) 37-40, 53, 67-68, 73, 88-89, 118. Konstanz, Lindau, Überlingen and Buchhorn instead in 1445 chose to form a new Bodensee town league, which functioned until the 1450s (renewed in 1454 and still working during the so-called Plappartkrieg in 1458 – cf. Kramml [1991] 310 and Maurer [1991] 208).
35. Blezinger (1954) 63; Landwehr (1967) 93.
36. There is still no thorough study of the Swabian Town League after 1450. See e.g. Hesslinger (1970) 51-52 or Angermeier (1966) 421-22. The number of the members varied between five and ten, after 1484 there were only four left. Ulm, Memmingen and Leutkirch are always mentioned as members. Other towns that occur often, although not always, are: Kempten, Isny, Biberach, Aalen and Schwäbisch Gmünd. Augsburg, Nördlingen, Kaufbeuren, Giengen, Ravensburg and Wangen occur only occasionally.
37. For the County of Herrenburg, see Blezinger (1954) 8; for Radolfzell, see Landwehr (1967) 119.
38. *Geschichte* (1983) 282-82. The treaties of Schaffhausen, Stein am Rhein and Mülhausen were however only for 25 years, and the treaty with Rottweil only for 15 years.
39. Hesslinger (1970) 32-33 for the *Landfrieden*; 86-87 for the founding members, among which were the following towns: Ulm, Esslingen, Reutlingen, Überlingen, Lindau, Schwäbisch Hall, Nördlingen, Memmingen, Ravensburg, Schwäbisch Gmünd, Biberach, Dinkelsbühl, Pfullendorf, Kempten, Kaufbeuren, Isny, Leutkirch, Giengen, Wangen, Aalen. The Duke of Austria and the Count of Württemberg were also among the founders of the league, but they became attached to the league through special treaties.
40. The new six towns were: Weil der Stadt, Bopfingen, Heilbronn, Wimpfen, Augsburg and Donauwörth (Hesslinger [1970] 120 and 123).
41. The negotiations dragged on between 1487 and 1489 (Hesslinger [1970] 134-37, 148-49).
42. Brady (1985) 49-51. The Lower Union was reorganised along the lines of the league of the same name which existed between 1474 and 1484.
43. Cf. e.g. Brady (1985) 70 or *Geschichte* (1983) 321. Before 1519 Rottweil had renewed its 1463 treaty with the Swiss twice, in 1477 and 1490 (*Deutsches Städtebuch* IV.2). Rottweil kept its position as a *Zugewandter Ort* until 1632 and Mülhausen until 1798.
44. Brady (1985) 67, 69-70. Strassburg and Weissenburg, however, left the league again in 1512 (Brady [1985] 92-93). The importance of Nürnberg's admission to the league is clear from the fact that in 1512 it paid 23.3% of the contributions of the imperial cities in the Swabian League (Schmidt [1984] 421, Tabelle 19).
45. Brady (1985) 92-100. See for instance the contemporary local song, translated by Brady, 97-98: "O Württemberg, you poor land/Long and loudly I protest your fate/The bath attendant from Ulm is your lord/From Nördlingen the cloth-dryer/And from Weil der Stadt the tanner/The fancy baker from Nuremberg/And Augsburg's weaver lord is over you/And then the papermaker from Ravensburg/The patrician, too, from Schwäbisch Hall/The Kempten teamster, he's there too/And from Aalen the shepherd in the Hertfeld/From Wimpfen the fellow who cuts the hay/And from Isny the pastry gobblers/From Lindau, too, the shipbuilders/Along with Giengen's baker of crullers/There are others whom I won't name here/For the gang is big, and I weary of it/ /These and others I leave unnamed/They now rule over poor Württemberg". Another version of the same song, Seckendorff (1863) 81, includes the names of 25 towns.
46. For the small Alsatian town league (Dekapolis), to which Strassburg did not belong, see e.g. Sittler (1955) or Sittler (1964). The Dekapolis was since 1414 a league running for "ewige zite".
47. For the history of the Urban Diet until the mid-16th century, see Schmidt (1984). Brady (1985) 231-33 gives a list of all Urban Diets until 1585. For the later history of the Urban Diet, see e.g. Buchstab (1976).
48. Thus Konstanz lost its privileges in 1548, Metz, Toul and Verdun were taken by France in 1552 and all the Alsatian towns, except Strassburg, met the same fate in 1648. Besançon became Burgundian in 1651, and Herford finally lost its privileges in 1652.
49. Schmidt (1984) 17-29. There were, however, only four corresponding cities (*ausschreibende Städte*) that handled the communication: Frankfurt, Strassburg, Nürnberg and Ulm (in the beginning Augsburg for some time held the position of Ulm).
50. For a detailed discussion of the different issues discussed by the Urban Diet, see Schmidt (1984) 173-525. For a good short summary in English, see Brady (1985) 134-35. As an example of an occasion when the Urban Diet tried to help member cities whose privileges were threatened, one could mention, the conflict between the Duke of Württemberg and Esslingen in the 1540s. The Urban Diet tried to mediate between the two parties and appealed to the Emperor on behalf of Esslingen.
51. Schmidt (1984) 144-72 and Buchstab (1976) 47-48.
52. Schmidt (1984) 38-39, Tabelle 1. The 27 cities were (in descending order): Nürnberg, Ulm, Augsburg, Frankfurt, Strassburg, Hagenau, Speyer, Köln, Worms, Dinkelsbühl, Heilbronn, Nördlingen, Esslingen, Rothenburg o.d.T., Schwäbisch Hall, Regensburg, Memmingen, Schwäbisch Gmünd, Wimpfen, Schweinfurt, Reutlingen, Metz, Konstanz, Rottweil, Windsheim, Kolmar and Weil der Stadt.
53. For a good synopsis of the present standing of research concerning the regions of the Empire, see Dotzauer (1998).
54. For the members of the Swabian region, see Jäger (1975) 22-25 and Dotzauer (1998) 143-44. The 33 imperial cities were: Augsburg, Ulm, Esslingen, Reutlingen, Nördlingen, Schwäbisch Hall, Überlingen, Rottweil, Heilbronn, Schwäbisch Gmünd, Memmingen, Lindau, Dinkelsbühl, Biberach, Ravens-

- burg, Kempten, Weil der Stadt, Kaufbeuren, Wangen, Isny, Pfullendorf, Offenburg, Donauwörth, Leutkirch, Wimpfen, Giengen, Aalen, Gengenbach, Zell am Harmersbach, Buchhorn, Buchau, Bopfingen and Konstanz. Of these Konstanz lost its imperial rights in 1548. For the Franconian region (which, apart from the above mentioned imperial cities, also included Schweinefurt which, however, is located outside the borders of the study-area) and the Upper Rhenish region (also including Frankfurt, Friedberg and Wetzlar, likewise outside the borders of the study-area), see Dotzauer (1998) 82 and 207.
55. Laufs (1971) 210-12 and Jäger (1975) 30-31, 78-282.
56. Maurer (1983) 35, referring to how a woman from Konstanz visiting Überlingen was suspected of belonging to the enemy because she had "der Eidgenossen sprach gehebt".
57. In the absence of a thorough study regarding the size of the territory occupied by imperial cities, we still have to rely on general works such as Bader (1950) or Blickle (1974). According to Blickle (1974) 56, Memmingen, Pfullendorf, Überlingen, Ravensburg, Lindau, Wangen and Kaufbeuren all had a territory of roughly similar medium-large size (he never gives precise measurements). For St. Gallen, Mülhausen and Geneva, see Gmür (1984) 55-56. For a recent collection of papers on the special status of Mülhausen and Geneva within the Swiss Confederacy, cf. also Kaiser et al. (2001).
58. Schmidt (1984) 66. St. Gallen was still represented at the Diet in 1510 and 1529.
59. The Hellenic city-state culture, as described by Hansen, is also divided into different factions, which are far from identical to each other, and which have identities of their own. Thus, for instance, the Aitolian League and the Achaian League were during the Hellenistic period in nearly constant war with each other, and the Aitolians were despised by the Achaians and most of the other Greeks as plunderers. See e.g. Scholten (2000).
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Les Cités-Royaumes de la vallée du Népal ca. 1482-1769

GÉRARD TOFFIN

Introduction

Jusqu'à la fin du XVIII^e siècle, le Népal – ce petit royaume himalayen coincé entre l'Inde et les plateaux tibétains – est un pays politiquement divisé en une constellation de petits royaumes indépendants et de chefferies tribales. L'Ouest, c'est-à-dire les bassins de la Seti, de la Karnali et de la Kali Gandaki, était sous le contrôle de deux confédérations, celle des Baisi, les "Vingt-deux royaumes", et celle des Chaubise, "les Vingt-quatre royaumes". C'était de petites principautés hindoues peuplées majoritairement par des castes indo-népalaises parlant le népali comme langue maternelle. L'Est était aux mains de populations Kirant, aux traits mongoloïdes et aux langues tibéto-birmanes. Le modèle politique tribal, segmentaire, de type chefferie, différait grandement de celui de la royauté hindoue. Le Sud, quant à lui, cette longue plaine du Téraï et ses bassins intérieurs, était sous la tutelle de petits royaumes, tels ceux de Makwanpur, Chaudandi et Vijayapur, issus le plus souvent des familles royales indo-népalaises de l'ouest. Leur système politique était basé sur un modèle hindou. Entre ces diverses principautés, les frontières étaient mal établies et des conflits fréquents opposaient les familles royales concurrentes.

Nous nous en tiendrons dans cette contribution au centre du pays, tout particulièrement à la vallée de Kathmandu, qui, depuis le début de l'ère chrétienne, constitue le centre de civilisation le plus ancien et le plus riche de l'ensemble népalais. C'est en effet dans cette zone géographique que la notion de Cité-Etat (ou Cité-Royaume, cf. *infra*) s'applique le mieux, du moins pour la période médiévale tardive (XV-XVIII^e). À l'époque, cette haute plaine de 550 km², cerclée de collines, était appelée la vallée du Népal. Le mot Népal ne prit en effet son acception actuelle qu'à la fin du XVIII^e et au début du XIX^e, lorsque Prithivi Narayan Shah, un prince venu de la principauté de Gorkha, dans l'ouest du pays, conquiert les royaumes existants les uns après les autres et unifia le Népal tout entier. Les trois capitales de la vallée du Népal, Lalitpur (= Patan), Bhaktapur et Kathmandu, tombèrent entre ses mains en 1768-69 et furent inté-

grées dans le nouvel Etat népalais. Prithivi Narayan établit alors sa capitale à Kathmandu et y transféra les organes de son administration et de son gouvernement.

À l'époque, la vallée du Népal, appelée *nepālmaṇḍala* dans certains documents, était peuplée très majoritairement par une population aux origines composites et aux traits mongoloïdes, les Néwar, parlant une langue tibéto-birmane, le néwari, ou *nepā bhāṣā*, "la langue du Népal". Ces habitants aux origines obscures et composites semblent s'être installés dans ce bassin au cours du premier millénaire avant J.-C., au moins pour sa couche ethnique la plus ancienne. Ils ont été très vite en contact avec l'Inde et ont été profondément influencés par la civilisation indienne au cours des âges. C'est de l'Inde qu'ils ont reçu les principaux éléments de leur culture, les bases de leur système social et leur religion. La conception de la royauté en particulier et les structures politiques, dont il sera question ci-après, étaient directement dérivées du puissant voisin du sud.

Du point de vue socio-économique, les Néwar sont un groupe ethnique fondamentalement urbain, avec une large proportion de commerçants et d'artisans. Il compte également de nombreux agriculteurs, établis soit dans les villes soit dans les villages alentour. Précisons que ce peuple n'a pas disparu avec la chute des petits royaumes de la vallée de Kathmandu. Il constitue toujours aujourd'hui une part importante de la population de la région. De même, la majorité des habitants des actuels cœurs historiques des trois Cités-États dont il sera question ici appartient à cette ethnie.

Les premiers documents historiques disponibles sur la région datent du Ve siècle après J.-C. C'est le début de la période Licchavi, du nom de la dynastie régnante, affiliée apparemment à la dynastie du même nom qui régna sur une partie du nord de l'Inde à l'époque du Bouddha (Ve siècle avant J.-C.). Dès cette date, la vallée du Népal apparaît comme un foyer de civilisation important, avec des capitales royales, des palais et des temples, objets d'une grande vénération. Plusieurs familles royales se succédèrent jusqu'au XII^e siècle, date à laquelle un membre d'une

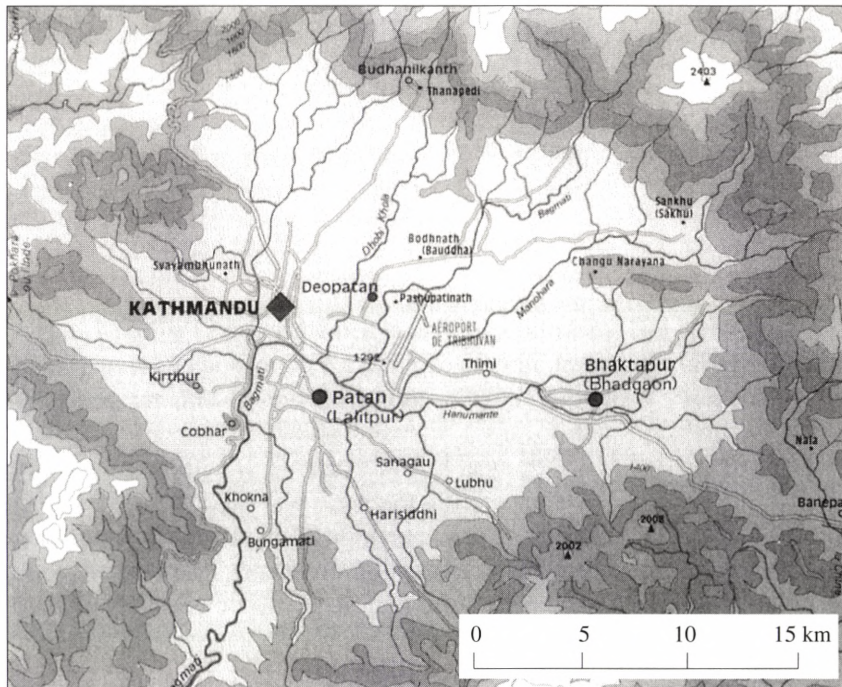


Fig. 1. Carte actuelle de la vallée de Kathmandu (Népal).

dynastie précédente, celle des Thakuri, prit le titre de Malla, une épithète indienne signifiant “courageux, brave”, et fonda une dynastie, qui, à quelques accidents près, resta au pouvoir jusqu’en 1768-69, c’est-à-dire jusqu’à la conquête de la vallée de Kathmandu par Prithivi Narayan Shah.

La première période Malla, de 1200 à 1482, fut marquée par une grande instabilité politique, hormis sous le règne de quelques grands rois, tels Jayasthiti (1382-1395) et Yakṣa Malla (1428-1482), dont les noms restent célèbres encore aujourd’hui. De multiples raids venus du sud et de l’ouest affaiblirent le pays. Deux capitales royales dominèrent durant cette époque: Lalitpur (= Patan), une très vieille cité à majorité bouddhiste, entourée de quatre *stūpa*, édifices bouddhistes, de style archaïque, et Bhaktapur, à l’est de la vallée, une cité majoritairement hindoue, à fort substrat rural, qui commença à jouer un rôle politique important à partir du XIII-XIV^e siècle.

À la fin du XV^e siècle, en 1482 exactement, Yakṣa Malla, divisa son royaume entre ses trois fils: à l’aîné, il donna le royaume de Bhaktapur, au cadet, il accorda celui de Kathmandu qui englobait à l’époque celui de Lalitpur, le benjamin eut droit à celui de Banepa, situé à l’est de la vallée. En 1550, Banepa fut rattachée à Bhaktapur, et en 1620 Lalitpur devint autonome. Ces trois cités: Lalitpur, Kathmandu et Bhaktapur, qui correspondaient à trois royaumes distincts, dominèrent la vallée du Népal jusqu’en 1768-

69, date à laquelle elles furent conquises l’une après l’autre par Prithivi Narayan Shah.

Les noms de ces trois villes sont des noms népalis dérivés du sanskrit, sans doute assez récents. Le mot Patan, du sanskrit Lalitapaṭṭana, qui vient lui-même de Lalitapura, employé dès le début de la période Malla, ne date, par exemple, que du XVII^e siècle.¹ Kathmandu (ou Kāntipur²), de son côté, vient du mot sanskrit Kāṣṭhamaṇḍapa, employé dès le XII^e siècle dans les inscriptions. Aujourd’hui, ce mot désigne un temple édifié au cœur de la cité. C’est ce temple qui a donné son nom à la ville. Il faut cependant savoir que chacune de ces villes avait, et a encore aujourd’hui, un autre nom, néwari celui-là, aux consonances tibéto-birmanes, sans doute plus ancien. Kathmandu est ainsi connue en néwari sous le nom de Yeṃ, Bhaktapur de Khvope, et Lalitpur sous le nom de Yala ou Yela. On suffixait parfois au nom de la cité le mot *deśa* (“pays, localité”), exemple: Yeṃ deśa. Notons que les noms néwari de Kathmandu et de Lalitpur sont vraisemblablement dérivés de noms de points cardinaux. En vieux néwari, *yeṃ*, désigne le nord, et *yala* vient de *ye*, qui veut dire le sud.

C’est sur ces trois villes, et sur elles seules, qu’est concentrée cette étude. Banepa, vite abandonnée comme siège royal, n’a pas connu les embellissements et les agrandissements dont ont bénéficié ses trois rivales durant la fin de la période Malla. Elle fut complètement éclipsée par Bhaktapur. À la différence

des trois autres cités, le souvenir de son règne éphémère ne s'est pas conservé très nettement dans les mémoires. C'est également le cas de Pharping ou de Panauti³ qui furent elles aussi à des époques plus anciennes le siège de petits royaumes ou de capitales secondaires. Quant à Kirtipur, une place forte perchée au sommet d'une éminence, à quelques kilomètres de Kathmandu, ce ne fut jamais le siège durable d'une administration royale.

On traitera avant tout de la période 1620-1769. C'est en effet au cours de ces années que les trois Cités-Royaumes de Lalitpur, Kathmandu et Bhaktapur constituèrent des unités politiques indépendantes et bien délimitées.

Les trois Cités-Royaumes de Lalitpur, Kathmandu et Bhaktapur (1620-1769)

Ces trois capitales étaient à l'époque de petites villes serrées derrière leurs murs de fortification. Elles ne couvraient pas plus d'un à deux km² de superficie. On pouvait en faire le tour à pied, lors de certaines processions religieuses par exemple, en moins de deux heures. Comme la plupart des agglomérations néwar de la vallée de Kathmandu, ces villes étaient localisées sur des terres surélevées par rapport au niveau d'écoulement des rizières. Elles étaient situées sur des terrasses, appelées *tar* en népal, formées de sables et de graviers laissés par l'eau lors des périodes de dépôts. Les sols alluviaux les plus riches, situés en contrebas, étaient consacrés à l'agriculture, tout particulièrement à la culture de la rizière inondée. Ce n'est qu'au cours des dernières décennies que les villes se sont étendues dans ces terrains de vallées et de zones irriguées.

De 1620 à 1769, Kathmandu, Lalitpur et Bhaktapur furent par ailleurs des capitales de petits royaumes qui s'étendaient chacun sur un arrière-pays agricole de 120 à 200 km² de superficie. Les villages de cet arrière-pays étaient maintenus sous l'influence politique et religieuse de leur capitale respective. Leurs habitants vénéraient le roi et les principales divinités de la ville dont il dépendait. Ils étaient tenus de payer certaines taxes, en argent ou en nature, au palais et aux principaux temples du royaume. Ils fournissaient également la capitale en produits agricoles, ainsi qu'en main d'œuvre pour la construction des maisons et des édifices publics.

Chacun de ces royaumes possédait également une zone d'influence, plus vaste, de quelques centaines de km², qui couvrait des régions situées au-delà de la vallée de Kathmandu. Le royaume de Lalitpur par

exemple s'étendait au sud jusqu'aux piémonts de la chaîne du Mahabharat et à la vallée de Chitlang. Celui de Bhaktapur exerçait sa tutelle jusqu'à la petite ville de Dolakha, située à deux jours de marche de la Vallée, sur la route de commerce menant à Kuti. Quant au royaume de Kathmandu, il contrôlait en principe à l'ouest Nawakot, ville frontière avec Gorkha.

Comment ces trois royaumes étaient-ils répartis géographiquement dans la vallée de Kathmandu? Le royaume de Lalitpur était localisé au sud de la rivière Bagmati, la rivière principale de la Vallée. Plusieurs localités ou villages importants tels Sunaguthi, Chapaon, Theco, Bungamati, Khokana, Baregaon, Harasiddhi, lui étaient rattachés. Le royaume de Kathmandu était localisé, lui, au nord de cette même rivière. Les deux capitales, Lalitpur et Kathmandu, n'étaient distantes que de quatre kilomètres. S'agissant de Bhaktapur, situé à 15 km de Kathmandu, son royaume couvrait l'est de la vallée du Népal ainsi que la vallée adjacente de Banepa et de Panauti. Les limites actuelles des trois districts de Lalitpur, Kathmandu et de Bhaktapur, entre lesquels la Vallée est divisée aujourd'hui, recoupent plus ou moins les frontières de ces anciens royaumes.

Cette partition de la Vallée en trois principautés très proches les unes des autres et cependant indépendantes durera jusqu'à la conquête. Elle correspond à l'âge d'or de la civilisation néwar, à sa pleine indépendance politique, à son apogée économique et culturel. C'est durant cette seconde période Malla notamment que les trois villes néwar de Lalitpur, Kathmandu et Bhaktapur prirent leur physionomie actuelle et que les principaux éléments de leur structure spatiale furent dessinés. Elles connurent chacun de grands rois: Siddhinarasimha Malla (1619-1661) et Śrinivās Malla (1661-1684) pour la première, Jitāmitra Malla (1673-1696) et Bhūpatīndra Malla (1696-1722) pour Bhaktapur, Pratāpa Malla (1641-1674) pour Kathmandu. Dans un esprit d'émulation et de concurrence, ces souverains embellirent leurs villes, ils couvrirent d'or les toits des temples et construisirent de très nombreux monuments religieux, ceux-là même qui constituent les édifices marquants des trois cités d'aujourd'hui. C'est à eux, et à certains de leurs successeurs, que l'on doit ces majestueuses places, des plus harmonieuses, appelées aujourd'hui Darbar Square, qui, dans chacune des trois villes, entourent toujours les palais royaux. Les tremblements de terre, fort courants dans cette région du piémont himalayen, ont, il est vrai, causé de graves dommages à ces villes et à leurs édifices. Mais la coutume était de les recons-

truire plus ou moins à l'identique, de sorte qu'ils n'ont pas trop changé au cours des siècles.

Les structures politiques de l'époque nous sont connues par un grand nombre d'inscriptions, des manuscrits, ainsi que par le témoignage des premiers voyageurs européens, des missionnaires jésuites et capucins pour la plupart. Disons en quelques mots que la monarchie était en principe héréditaire et que le droit de primogéniture était reconnu, comme aujourd'hui dans la maison royale qui a succédé aux rois Malla. Le roi et les membres de sa famille détenaient l'essentiel du pouvoir et prenaient les décisions importantes. Le souverain gouvernait son royaume avec l'aide d'un premier ministre, *mahāmantrī* ou *chautārā*, et divers ministres, *pramāṇa* ou *amātya*, qui se répartissaient les différentes fonctions: la conduite des armées, les fêtes religieuses, la frappe de la monnaie, etc. D'autres fonctionnaires royaux, comme des médecins, des chambellans, des gardes, des officiers militaires, etc., étaient attachés au palais. Les hautes castes néwar, les Chatharīya notamment, jouaient un rôle décisif dans l'administration du royaume et la direction des affaires commerciales. C'étaient des hommes puissants, souvent très riches du fait du commerce trans-himalayen qu'ils contrôlaient. Ils avaient droit au titre honorifique de *bhāro* ou de *bhā* et monopolisaient les postes de ministres. En période d'affaiblissement de la maison royale, c'est eux qui détenaient l'essentiel du pouvoir. Le roi était enfin entouré de brahmanes, qui occupaient une position importante, notamment en ce qui concerne la direction des affaires religieuses du royaume et la justice. Le *rāj guru*, notamment, le maître spirituel du roi, avait une position prééminente et présidait le conseil de brahmanes qui assistait le roi dans l'exercice de sa fonction (Regmi [1966] 438).

Quelles relations entretenaient les trois royaumes? Bhaktapur, Lalitpur et Kathmandu étaient unis par des liens de consanguinité, d'alliance et de guerre. Les trois familles royales, issues de Yakṣa Malla, étaient cousines. Elles se rendaient des visites fréquentes, elles assistaient à leurs cérémonies du cycle de vie, initiation masculine, mariage, funérailles, etc., ainsi qu'au couronnement de leurs rois respectifs. Elles se mariaient également dans les mêmes familles et avaient de ce fait des liens d'alliance fort développés. Cependant, bien que distantes d'à peine quelques kilomètres et peuplées par des populations de même langue, de même culture, ces trois villes furent très souvent en guerre pendant les deux siècles que couvre la période considérée. Les conflits avaient principalement trait au contrôle des deux voies de commerce,

celles de Kuti et de Kyirong, qui permettaient d'accéder au Tibet par le Nord. C'est de ces deux voies commerciales que les royaumes Malla tiraient l'essentiel de leur richesse.

Les opérations militaires étaient quasi permanentes et mobilisaient des mercenaires venus des collines voisines, principalement des Chetri et des Magar. Elles donnaient lieu à des alliances, deux royaumes s'unissant pour lutter contre le troisième le plus souvent, suivies par des traités de paix et de brusques retournements de situation. Les relations entre souverains étaient toujours entachées de jalousie et de suspicion. Les intrigues allaient bon train, attisées par les ministres *chautārā*, qui défendaient eux aussi leurs intérêts. Les rois Malla n'hésitaient pas à s'allier momentanément à des puissances extérieures à la vallée du Népal, Gorkha, Lamjung, Tanahu par exemple, pour lutter contre leurs parents voisins. C'est à cet état de division et de trahison qu'il faut imputer la lente chute des royaumes Malla à la fin du XVIIIe siècle. Les armes utilisées dans les combats étaient le sabre, la lance, les arcs et les flèches, ainsi que le mousqueton à partir du XVIIe siècle.

L'état d'hostilité entre les trois maisons royales, la menace d'interventions extérieures expliquent les fortifications (sanskrit: *prākāra*) dont les trois capitales étaient, on l'a dit, entourées. Lalitpur et Bhaktapur possédaient également des douves, au moins partiellement (Slusser [1982] 63). La vallée du Népal comportait par ailleurs de nombreux forts, *kvāṭha*, *garha* ou *dranga*, en dehors des trois cités. Ceux de Thankot, de Pharping, de Kirtipur étaient parmi les plus connus. Au cours des siècles, Kathmandu profita de sa position centrale dans la Vallée, à l'intersection des grandes voies commerciales. Elle prit progressivement de l'importance au XVII et au XVIIIe siècle, au point de surpasser en pouvoir et en magnificence les deux cités voisines.

Le concept de Cité-État, tel que Mogens Herman Hansen le définit dans son volume *A Comparative Study of Thirty City-State Cultures* (2000) s'applique relativement bien à ces trois villes de la fin de la période Malla. Il en est ainsi des critères de taille, de peuplement, de structure politique, d'inscription dans un (petit) territoire donné. Il s'agissait bien de cités dans la mesure où ces agglomérations relevaient de mondes préindustriels, qu'elles étaient régies par un ordre socio-cosmique englobant et que le religieux prédominait à tous les niveaux de l'organisation sociale. La seule réserve qu'on peut avoir concerne le mot État. Cette notion pouvant recouvrir des acceptations et des réalités fort différentes, je préfère em-

ployer ici l'expression "Cité-royaume", qui correspond mieux aux spécificités politiques de l'aire géographique indienne et himalayenne de cette époque.

On traitera dans les pages qui suivent de l'histoire de ces villes, de leur développement, de leurs structures sociales, de leur morphologie. On insistera aussi sur les représentations religieuses, les réalités mentales, qui font d'une ville non pas seulement une réalité matérielle mais aussi un ensemble vécu et pensé, un fait culturel à proprement parler. Ces villes, toujours vivantes de nos jours, continuaient en effet d'être accordées il y a encore une cinquantaine d'années à des modes de vie assez proches de ceux de la fin de l'époque médiévale. En conséquence, on se réserve le droit d'utiliser, en plus des sources historiques de l'époque Malla, certaines données tirées de l'ethnographie contemporaine. Il est clair que l'observation actuelle de ces ensembles urbains permet de dégager des modèles culturels anciens, des conceptions religieuses qui fondaient l'unité de ces Cités-Royaumes (Toffin [1993]). Il est également clair que le présent pourrait dans de nombreux cas se substituer à l'imparfait, utilisé de manière continue dans le texte.

Les origines et le développement des trois Cités-Royaumes

Les origines et le passé ancien de ces trois villes restent obscurs. Nous possédons peu de données archéologiques sur les territoires urbains de la région et les savants, réduits à de maigres indices, en sont encore à discuter de l'emplacement des premières capitales. L'archéologie locale reste au Népal une discipline embryonnaire attachée avant tout à la conservation et à la restauration des monuments religieux. Aucune fouille d'importance n'a jusqu'ici été menée dans cette haute plaine rizicole, hormis celles entreprises au cours des années 80-90 par l'Isméo (Rome) à Hari-gaon, dans les faubourgs de l'actuelle ville de Kathmandu.

Les mythes d'origine de ces trois cités, consignés dans des chroniques tardives (XIXe) mais reposant sur des éléments oraux plus anciens, font état de création *ex nihilo* par décision royale. Kathmandu par exemple aurait été fondée par le roi Guṇakāmadeva, au X-XIe siècle après J.-C., à la suite d'un rêve au cours duquel la déesse Mahālakṣmī lui enjoignit de créer une ville en forme de sabre (*khadga*), à la confluence de la Bagmati et de la Visnumati, à l'endroit précis, d'une grande pureté, où résidait le dieu Kāmeśvara. Le roi édifia une ville de 18 000 maisons à l'endroit prescrit et y consacra une statue en l'hon-

neur de Lakṣmī. Il établit un lieu de crémation à l'Ouest et fit construire plusieurs temples ou sanctuaires qui restent encore importants dans la topographie religieuse de la cité. Lalitpur aurait été créée plus tôt, au VIIe siècle, par le roi Birdeva, et Bhaktapur au XIIe siècle par le roi Ānanda Malla, en même temps que sept autres localités, dont Panauti et Banepa déjà cités plus haut. Dans tous les cas, la fondation de la ville va de pair avec l'édification de plusieurs temples sous la protection desquels la cité se met. Tout se passe comme si la création d'une cité nécessitait une certaine ordonnance religieuse, un souci de structuration sacrée de l'espace urbain.

Dans les représentations religieuses, la Cité-Royaume apparaît donc comme un fait royal: pas de ville digne de ce nom sans roi, pas de roi sans une capitale reconnue. La structure de la cité elle-même, centrée autour du palais, appelle la royauté comme instrument coordinateur éminent. Les rares témoins archéologiques, l'analyse des inscriptions et du tissu urbain conduisent cependant à nuancer ce point de vue. Il semble qu'en réalité les trois villes concernées soient nées non pas à partir de rien, mais par agglomération de villages préexistants.

Selon les analyses de N. Gutschow et B. Kölver (1975), Bhaktapur aurait ainsi été formée par la coalescence de plusieurs villages qui se seraient développés à cet endroit vers le IIIe siècle après J.-C. On aurait eu: 1) au nord-ouest, sur le site de l'actuel Tulacchē ṭol, Khṛpuṇ; 2) au centre: Mākhodul; 3) à l'est, une autre localité (Mākhopṛṇ), qui correspondait à un fort militaire. Selon ces deux auteurs, la partie la plus ancienne de la cité était localisée à l'est, dans ce qui est aujourd'hui la ville "haute", autour du quartier de Tacapāḥ. La ville se serait ensuite étendue progressivement vers l'ouest, le long d'une route de commerce, absorbant les villages les uns après les autres.

Pour Kathmandu, les inscriptions et les manuscrits mentionnent trois localités antérieures: Kolīgrāma, Dakṣiṇakolīgrāmadraṅga et Vaidyagrāma, qui dateraient toutes de l'époque Licchavi (V-VIIIe siècle). La première aurait été située sur l'emplacement actuel de Kel ṭol, le long de la route commerciale nord-est/sud-ouest d'où est née la ville; la seconde, un village de quelque importance, était située au sud; Vaidyagrāma enfin s'étendait au sud-ouest d'Asan ṭol. Kolīgrāma serait à l'origine de la partie nord de la ville, connue en néwari sous le nom de Yambu; Dakṣiṇakolīgrāmadraṅga de la partie sud appelée *yaṅgala*, mot dont l'étymologie nous est inconnue. Lorsque la cité s'unifia, elle prit le nom de Yambu – qui a donné Yeṃ, nom néwari actuel de Kathmandu. Le mot *yaṅgala*,

lui, a disparu au XVIIIe; on ne le retrouve plus aujourd'hui que dans le nom d'une fontaine et d'un quartier, tous deux situés dans la partie sud.

Le processus urbain résulte donc de la coalescence d'unités villageoises. Le fait royal ne doit pas être gommé pour autant: c'est toujours à un roi particulier que revient l'acte de fondation de la cité en tant que telle. Pour qu'il y ait eu ville, il a toujours fallu, à un moment donné de l'histoire, qu'un souverain réunisse les habitants de sa capitale autour d'une image commune. Cette image, le roi l'imposait en plaquant des notions religieuses tirées de cosmogonies hindoues ou bouddhistes. Nous y reviendrons.

La religion et la société urbaine

La religion néwar de l'époque, celle des villes comme celle des campagnes, se caractérisait par la coexistence d'éléments hindous et bouddhistes. Présentes dans la vallée du Népal depuis le début de l'ère chrétienne, ces deux religions ont évolué de leur vie propre avec le temps; elles se sont mêlées, sans se recouper entièrement. La royauté par exemple a toujours été hindoue: les rois étaient couronnés selon des rites tirés des Védas et des différents textes indiens canoniques shastras; ils étaient choisis en principe dans la caste de Kṣatriya, l'ordre des guerriers dans le monde hindou, et ils recevaient l'initiation hindoue *upanayana*. Les prêtres brahmanes jouaient, on l'a vu, un rôle éminent dans la cité, en particulier dans les affaires judiciaires et religieuses. Les divinités tutélaires du royaume, si importantes comme on le verra pour la protection des capitales, appartenaient elles aussi pour la plupart au panthéon hindou.

Une large partie de la population urbaine professait cependant le bouddhisme ou se rattachait à des pratiques qualifiées de "bouddhistes". De quel bouddhisme s'agissait-il? Celui du Grand Véhicule, Mahāyāna, basé sur des textes sanskrits, très proche du bouddhisme indien médiéval qui avait fleuri dans l'Inde du Nord au X-XII^e siècle et qui fut balayé du bassin Indo-Gangétique par les invasions musulmanes au XIII^e siècle. Lalitpur et Kathmandu comptaient ainsi chacune des dizaines de monastères bouddhistes (sanskrit: *vihāra*, néwari: *bāhā*), tous conçus sur un même plan architectural, carré ou rectangulaire. La première de ces villes en comptait 150 environ, la seconde 120.⁴ Coupé de ses bases, vivant dans un milieu hindou et shivaïte dominant, ce bouddhisme avait toutefois fini par perdre du terrain et par incorporer nombre d'éléments hindous. L'hindouisation des conceptions et des pratiques s'accéléra tout parti-

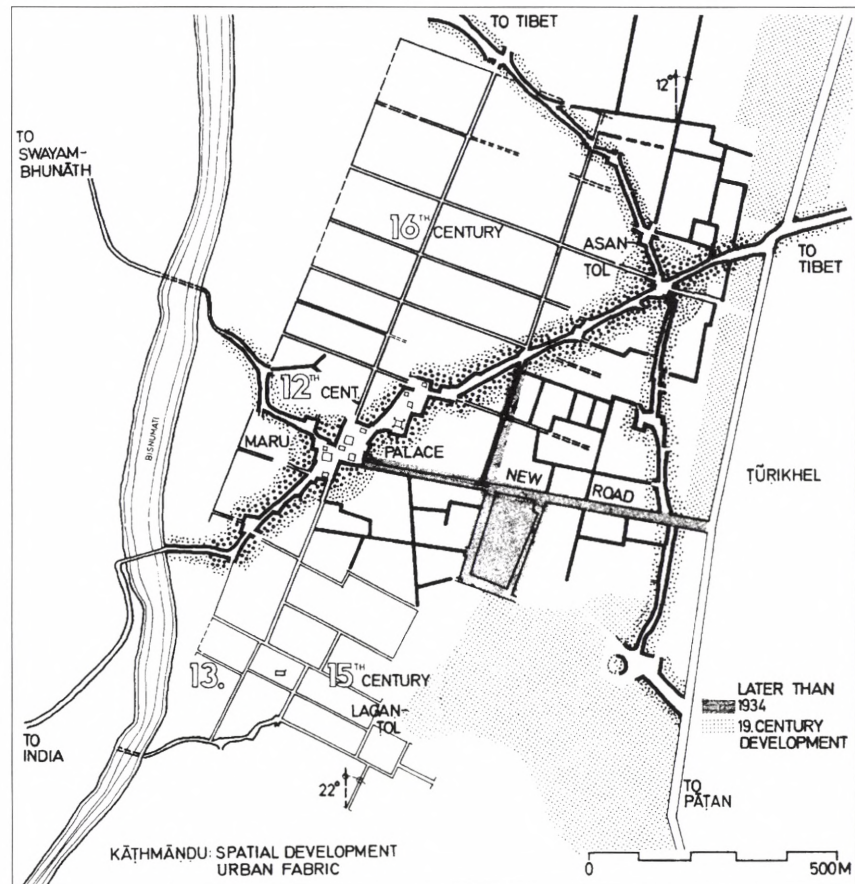
culièrement à partir du XIV^e siècle. Au XVII^e siècle, les moines avaient déjà abandonné le célibat et s'étaient mariés. Ils avaient adopté le système des castes et en avaient appliqué les principes à l'intérieur de leur communauté. Bien que leur inspiration monachique se soit pour une large part éteinte, ces monastères continuaient de se revendiquer comme bouddhiste. Ils jouaient aussi un rôle important dans la structuration et le fonctionnement de la cité néwar.

Très caractéristique de la religion de la vallée du Népal du XV-XVIII^e siècle, est, déjà, la prépondérance d'éléments tantriques, aussi bien dans l'hindouisme que dans le bouddhisme. Le chemin supérieur des bouddhistes néwar est dès cette époque considéré comme celui des maîtres du *vajra*, Vajrācārya, les tenants du Vajrayāna, qui acquérèrent des statuts et des pouvoirs religieux supérieurs aux anciens moines *bhikṣu* maintenant mariés. De même voit-on apparaître, côté hindou, des prêtres spécialisés dans le culte des divinités tantriques, les Karmācārya. Même les plus grands brahmanes de l'époque étaient initiés aux *Tantra*. Le tantrisme, c'est un fait, a rapproché des points de vue doctrinaux très opposés au départ. Même place essentielle accordée dans les deux cas au culte de la déesse, à la notion de *śakti*, force et pouvoir, à l'initiation tantrique, *dīkṣā*, au culte des divinités royales secrètes et surpuissantes, aux rituels ésotériques, aux formules magiques *mantra*. Les textes rituels ont beau être différents, cultes et panthéons sont basés sur des notions assez proches.

La société urbaine quant à elle – largement dominée, on l'a vu, par les Néwar – était déjà organisée en castes, selon un système peu différent de celui qui existe encore aujourd'hui. On attribue l'origine de cette division sociale à Jayasthiti Malla, roi de Bhaktapur qui régna au XIV^e siècle. En fait, les castes néwar sont beaucoup plus anciennes; elles sont attestées dès le V-VI^e siècle après J.-C. Le roi très hindou Jayasthiti Malla ne fit vraisemblablement que reformuler l'ensemble du système, le codifier, peut-être l'assortir de bases judiciaires plus précises et détaillées. La société était divisée en une trentaine de castes, elles-mêmes subdivisées en une série de groupes de statuts ou de sous-castes, le plus souvent strictement localisés. Les castes, *jāt*, étaient strictement hiérarchisées selon les règles du pur et de l'impur. Elles jetaient les bases d'une large division rituelle de la société.

L'originalité de ce système social népalais, largement dérivé de l'Inde, tient à ce qu'il est duel: pour partie bouddhiste, pour partie hindoue, et qu'il fonc-

Fig. 2. Kathmandu (Gutschow [1982]).



tionne selon une hiérarchie double, sans accord entre les deux groupes sur la place de chacun dans l'ensemble. À de hautes castes hindoues (brahmanes, aristocratie royale Chatharīya, commerçants Śreṣṭha) s'opposaient ainsi de hautes castes bouddhistes (maîtres Vajrācārya, orfèvres Śākya, commerçants et artisans Udās). Au niveau moyen et inférieur, une grande majorité de castes se réclamaient du bouddhisme, en particulier les agriculteurs Jyāpu qui constituaient une partie importante de la population. Le critère décisif de l'affiliation confessionnelle était celui du prêtre employé pour les rituels domestiques. Les castes qui se disaient hindoues, *śivamārgi*, faisaient appel à des brahmanes Rājopādhyāya (ou Dyabhāju), celles qui se disaient bouddhistes, *buddhamārgi*, appelaient des prêtres Vajrācārya, experts en rituels tantriques bouddhistes. La religion autrement dit se définissait pour une large part par le type de prêtre.

Tissu et morphologie urbaine

Les trois capitales de la vallée du Népal étaient de petites cités. Les chiffres précis manquent. Mais

d'après les données fournies par les missionnaires capucins ayant séjourné dans la Vallée au XVIIIe, et les premiers voyageurs anglais à la fin du XVIIIe et au début du XIXe siècle, on peut estimer le chiffre de la population de chacune de ces villes à quelque 25 000 ou 30 000 personnes.⁵

Les rues étaient étroites, de 4 à 5 mètres de largeur en moyenne, pavées de briques ou de pierres, et comportaient de chaque côté des égouts à ciel ouvert pour évacuer les eaux usées. Dans certains cas, lorsque la ligne de pente le permettait, des canalisations souterraines étaient aménagées. Les maisons qui bordaient ces rues étaient mitoyennes. Elles formaient des bandes continues. Construites en briques cuites et non cuites, parfois vernissées pour les familles les plus aisées, elles étaient constituées de quatre niveaux aux fonctions bien séparées. Au rez-de-chaussée, l'étable, les entrepôts ou la boutique. Au premier niveau, les chambres. Au deuxième niveau, la pièce de réception, parfois un oratoire privé. La cuisine était toujours, comme il y a encore peu, située à l'étage supérieur, sous le comble. Les encadrements de bois des portes et fenêtres comportaient de nombreux éléments décoratifs; c'étaient de véritables œuvres d'art qui faisaient



Fig. 3. Lalitpur (Gutschow, Khumbu Himal [1981]).

la renommée des menuisiers et graveurs sur bois néwar à travers tout le Népal et même au-delà.

Le tissu urbain ne différait guère de celui que l'on peut encore observer aujourd'hui dans les quartiers historiques des villes de la vallée de Kathmandu. Les axes principaux se coupaient généralement à angle droit pour former des îlots. Sur les plans de Kathmandu et de Lalitpur par exemple, on note des séries de blocs parallèles de 100 m sur 250 m, couvrant des superficies de deux à trois hectares. Ailleurs, la superficie des îlots atteint tout juste 500 m². Les voies qui encadraient ces ensembles constituaient les axes principaux de l'agglomération le long desquels on se déplaçait à pied. C'est là que se concentraient les points d'activités commerciales les plus intenses, les boutiques, certains ateliers, et que la composition urbaine était la plus poussée.

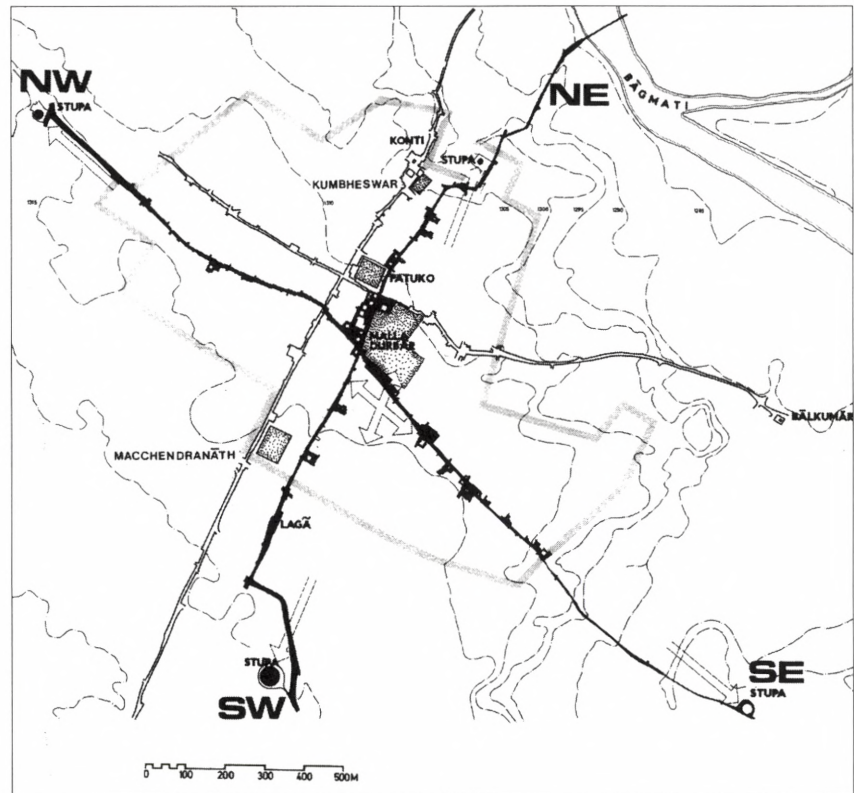
À l'intérieur des îlots alternaient des jardins, où l'on cultivait toutes sortes de légumes, d'épices et même parfois des céréales, et des ensembles de maisons, centrés sur des cours plus ou moins grandes, de forme rectangulaire ou carrée, *cok* en népali, *cuke* en néwari, qui desservaient plusieurs habitations. Ces

dernières étaient à leur tour percées par d'autres passages qui livraient l'accès à la cour suivante. Les îlots les plus grands étaient ainsi constitués par des enfilades de cours donnant à l'arrière des maisons sur des jardins. Toute une vie sociale, repliée autour d'espaces semi-domestiques, souvent lignagers, se trouvait de la sorte cachée des zones les plus fréquentées. De la rue, on accédait à ces espaces par des voies étroites (nép.: *galli*) ou des passages sous maisons mal distingués des portes des habitations. Comme aujourd'hui, ces parcours suivaient des itinéraires compliqués, dans un dédale de ruelles, de cours, de venelles, constamment remodelées par l'expansion ou la ruine. Le tissu ne comportait ici pas de perspective nette, il s'était développé sans modèle préconçu. Dans le cœur des villes, le tissu bâti s'intensifiait au détriment de ces jardins. L'horizon se bouchait très vite, rendant les sources de lumière plus rares.

La structure spatiale et religieuse

Les palais royaux (néwari: *lāyku*, du sanskrit *rājā-kula*) occupaient le plus souvent le centre de la cité, à

Fig. 4. Lalitpur (Gutschow, Khumbu Himal [1981]).



la croisée des principaux axes de circulation. On a là une transposition à l'échelle spatiale de la place centrale, éminente, du roi dans la société locale. Bien que le souverain fût statutairement inférieur au prêtre brahmane selon les canons hindous, la fonction royale était essentielle dans l'organisation sociale néwar de l'époque Malla. Les rois constituaient le centre actif du royaume, ils en maintenaient ses différents éléments rassemblés, toute la société gravitait autour d'eux. Cette disposition centrale dans l'espace urbain prévaut à Lalitpur et à Kathmandu, ainsi que dans d'autres petites villes, plus périphériques, qui ont été par le passé la résidence temporaire d'un roi. A Bhaktapur, la situation était différente. Dans cette ville, le palais était édifié à l'extrémité nord-ouest de la localité, sur la vieille route menant à Kathmandu. Il semble qu'il y ait eu déplacement du centre politique d'une partie à l'autre de la ville à un moment donné de l'histoire. Mais les raisons qui ont présidé à ce déplacement restent pour l'heure inconnues.

Significativement, ce centre ressortissait à la fois au politique, c'est-à-dire à la direction des affaires publiques, et au religieux (Toffin [1993]). La souveraineté royale à l'époque Malla comportait en effet des aspects sacrés essentiels, à l'instar de ce qui se passait dans nombre de régions de l'Inde médiévale. Les sou-

verains Malla étaient conçus simultanément comme des êtres divins, incarnation de Viṣṇu et en étroit contact avec Bhairava, et les dévots respectueux de dieux tutélaires qu'ils s'étaient choisis: Pasupatināth, Matsyendranāth et Taleju, divinités que nous retrouverons plus loin. Les souverains tiraient une partie de leur pouvoir de leur association avec ces puissances divines.

Religieusement, du reste, le lieu le plus sacré du palais (et de la ville) était moins la résidence du roi proprement dite que le temple adjacent de Taleju, une déesse secrète venue d'Inde au XIV^e siècle. La divinité fut d'abord établie à Bhaktapur. Les autres capitales, y compris les plus petites ou les plus temporaires, comme Sankhu ou Panauti, l'adoptèrent ultérieurement. Taleju appartenait à la catégorie des *iṣṭa-devatā*, divinités personnelles d'élection de la famille royale. On la désignait aussi par l'expression *āgama-devatā*, qui s'applique à des divinités tantriques ne pouvant être approchées que par des initiés. Cette déesse tutélaire de la famille royale Malla, identifiée à Durgā, devint rapidement un symbole de l'ancienneté et de la force de la dynastie au pouvoir. Son temple, dont l'accès était restreint à un petit nombre d'initiés tantriques, surpassait en hauteur tous les autres édifices religieux de l'agglomération. Personne n'avait le

droit de construire un édifice plus élevé, y compris le souverain. Les formules magiques *mantra* qui servaient à invoquer la déesse étaient considérées comme des instruments essentiels du pouvoir royal et un moyen de légitimation pour l'accès au trône: elles passaient régulièrement du roi à son héritier avec les insignes de la royauté.

Le clergé tantrique en charge du rituel de cette divinité était choisi parmi plusieurs castes de la ville. La charge se transmettait de manière héréditaire, bien qu'il soit arrivé que des conflits d'intérêts ou des querelles religieuses aient entraîné des modifications. On trouvait des prêtres tantriques Karmācārya, des brahmanes Rājopādhyāya, des astrologues Joṣī, des familles patriciennes Chatharīya, des agriculteurs Jyāpu venant des différents quartiers de la ville, des bouchers Nāy, des musiciens Jugi. Un concentré de la société néwar en quelque sorte, issu non seulement de castes hindoues mais aussi de quelques castes bouddhistes. Toutes ces personnes avaient un rôle religieux précis et étaient indispensables à la célébration des cérémonies. D'une certaine manière, la ville dans sa totalité se trouvait ainsi associée au culte de la déesse. Aux côtés du roi, avec lequel elle entretenait des relations intimes, Taleju régnait en fait sur la cité et la défendait contre les envahisseurs.

Le palais royal divisait la ville en deux moitiés: le haut, *thaḥne*, et le bas, *kvahhne*. Ces deux parties, complétées à Kathmandu par une partie centrale (néwari: *dathu*), ne correspondaient pas forcément à une différence de niveau topographique. Elles étaient fixées comme aujourd'hui par la direction de la rivière la plus proche: le "haut" était lié à l'amont, le "bas" à l'aval. À Kathmandu par exemple, le haut est au nord, le bas est au sud, selon l'orientation de la rivière Visnumati qui coule du nord vers le sud, à l'ouest de la vieille ville. Cette disposition géographique n'avait aucune implication sociale ou économique: les deux moitiés étaient égales du point de vue du statut, elles ne regroupaient pas des populations ou des castes différentes. La division en deux a cependant toujours joué un rôle important dans l'espace urbain: les citadins s'y réfèrent constamment lorsqu'ils ont à situer un lieu dans la ville et le fait d'appartenir à l'une des deux parties constitutives de la localité est un élément important de son identité.

Les moitiés s'opposaient surtout d'un point de vue religieux et étaient associées chacune à des divinités particulières. À Bhaktapur, Bhairava veillait sur le haut, Bhadrakālī sur le bas. À Kathmandu, Lūtī Ajimā (= Indrāyaṇī) était en rapport avec le haut, Kaṅkeśvarī (= Kaṅga Ajimā) avec le bas. À l'époque Malla dont

nous parlons, ces deux dernières divinités, qui requéraient des sacrifices humains, intervenaient d'une manière particulièrement macabre lors du Sithi nakhaḥ, fête du sixième jour de la quinzaine claire de Jeṭh (mai-juin). Après un violent combat de pierres, les habitants du haut de la cité sacrifiaient à Lūtī Ajimā les prisonniers qu'ils avaient pu faire pendant la mêlée, tandis que les habitants du bas immolaient leurs captifs sur l'autel de Kaṅkeśvarī. De tels combats rituels, moins sanglants, existaient dans les autres cités et témoignent d'un enracinement profond dans les conceptions populaires. Signalons d'ailleurs que ces moitiés citadines ont très probablement correspondu, à certaines époques de l'histoire népalaise, et notamment durant la période médiévale considérée ici, à deux territoires royaux associés quoique distincts. L'institution du "royaume dédoublé", *dvairājya*, dans lequel le royaume et sa capitale étaient divisés en deux, gouvernés simultanément par deux frères, le père et le fils, ou l'oncle maternel et son neveu fut, on le sait, particulièrement développée dans la vallée du Népal durant les périodes Thakuri et Malla (Petech [1984]), y compris durant la période médiévale la plus tardive que nous considérons ici (Burleigh [1976]).

Venons-en à la périphérie. Lalitpur, Kathmandu et Bhaktapur étaient, on l'a dit, des villes murées. Les remparts furent démolis lors de l'annexion des royaumes Malla à la fin du XVIII^e siècle; il n'en reste plus de vestiges aujourd'hui. Ils étaient percés de portes dont la défense incombait en cas de conflits aux paysans Jyāpu des quartiers avoisinants. Ces murs défensifs formaient une frontière bien matérialisée avec l'extérieur. Encore aujourd'hui, les expressions *dhvākā pine* et *dhvākā dune*, "en dehors des portes" et "à l'intérieur des portes", sont couramment employées par la population néwar. Elles forment une limite invisible autour de l'agglomération.

Cette barrière se voyait renforcée par une seconde enceinte, entièrement symbolique celle-là, constituée par une série de huit temples ou sanctuaires, appelés *pīth*, dédiés aux déesses Mātrikā (appelées aussi localement Ajimā). Représentées par des pierres brutes, non sculptées, ces divinités sont considérées comme des sœurs. Leur emplacement se situait dans certains cas au-delà des remparts, parfois en deçà. Les temples en question circonscrivaient en tous les cas un espace interne, sanctifié et civilisé, par rapport à une campagne ou à une forêt extérieure conçue comme un monde sauvage et impur. Les textes religieux et les prêtres assignent à chaque Mātrikā un orient particulier: Brahmāyaṇī est associée à l'est, Indrāyaṇī au

nord-ouest, Maheśvarī au sud-est, Vārāhī à l'ouest, Kumārī au sud, Cāmuṇḍā au nord, Vaiṣṇavī au sud-ouest et Mahālakṣmī au nord-est. Bien que ces prescriptions ne correspondent pas tout à fait à la réalité topographique, le sens de cette enceinte sacrée autour de la ville est clair: il s'agit de défendre l'espace urbain contre les dangers extérieurs. Les Mātrikā font fonction en quelque sorte de gardiens des orient. Elles sont là pour veiller sur le territoire qu'elles délimitent, protéger des maladies les habitants qui y résident et défendre la ville contre les envahisseurs éventuels.

À Lalitpur, la plus bouddhiste des trois anciennes capitales Malla, le cercle formé par les huit temples de Mātrikā était doublé par une seconde enceinte symbolique de forme carrée, délimitée par quatre *stūpa*. Ces édifices aux dômes très aplatis étaient censés avoir été construits par le roi Aśoka (280-232 avant J.-C.). Chacun est associé à un Buddha particulier et à une direction spécifique de l'espace. Un cinquième *stūpa*, dédié au Buddha du centre, Vairocana, aurait été édifié au centre de la ville. Les cinq Buddha, ensemble canonique du Vajrayāna néwar, étaient donc présents aux points névralgiques de l'espace urbain. Ils donnaient à la ville une dimension cosmogonique évidente.

Tous ces éléments architecturaux transformaient une réalité géographique en un territoire symbolique. Ils fixaient au sol une représentation de l'univers et donnaient à la ville une signification cosmique. Ces espaces urbains étaient en réalité de véritables *maṇḍala*, diagrammes dont se servent les prêtres pour méditer ou vénérer une divinité et qui représentent le monde de façon géométrique. Aussi bien le palais matérialisait-il le centre de l'univers, trait d'union entre le ciel et la terre. Il renvoyait au mont Meru (Kailāśa), point focal des cosmogonies asiatiques. Quant aux enceintes défensives et à leurs portes, elles étaient identifiées aux limites du cosmos et à leurs voies d'accès. Selon un principe largement répandu en Asie, la ville royale tout entière était ici vue à l'image du cosmos; elle se voyait élevée au rang de ville céleste. En reproduisant le macrocosme dans le microcosme, ou plus exactement dans le "mésocosme", comme il a été proposé d'appeler cet espace intermédiaire entre univers et individu, les Néwar cherchaient à établir une correspondance bénéfique entre les dieux et les hommes.

À cette conception du "mésocosme" correspondait une répartition spatiale de la population urbaine dont on peut encore observer les traces aujourd'hui. La hiérarchie des castes s'inscrivait en effet très précisément

dans ces espaces. Les hautes castes, Kṣatriya (Catharīya) et brahmane (Rājopādhyāya), étaient regroupées au centre de la localité. Les castes de statut intermédiaire, assimilées aux Vaiśya et aux Śūdra, étaient disposées en deux ou trois anneaux concentriques, plus ou moins proches du centre suivant leur degré de pureté. Les castes impures (bouchers Nāy, pêcheurs-balayeurs Poḍe, vidangeurs Cyāme) vivaient, elles, à l'extérieur de la cité et à gauche des grands circuits de procession empruntés par les citadins autour de l'agglomération une ou deux fois l'an, lors des fêtes, dans le sens des aiguilles d'une montre. À chaque anneau correspondait en outre un type de temples et de divinités desservis par des castes particulières. Une telle configuration trouve son symétrique dans les emplacements des lieux de crémation en dehors de la ville: chaque caste ou groupe de castes possédait son propre site d'incinération, plus ou moins éloigné de l'agglomération selon son statut dans l'échelle sociale. Ces villes se définissaient en définitive par une très forte intégration des fonctions politiques, symboliques et économiques. C'était des totalités organiques.

Les fonctions économiques: commerce, artisanat, agriculture

Ces villes avaient des fonctions commerciales très affirmées et rayonnaient sur une grande partie du territoire népalais et de l'Himalaya central. À cette époque, en effet, le commerce trans-himalayen passait pour une part importante par la vallée du Népal. Du nord venaient le sel gemme, l'argent, les herbes médicinales, la laine, le musc, l'or, le borax. De l'Inde: les épices, la soie, le sucre, le tabac, les pierres précieuses (émeraude, saphir, lapis-lazuli), des conques, de l'indigo. Les marchandises étaient transportées à dos d'homme dans la partie népalaise, à dos de mulet et de chevaux sur le plateau tibétain. La vallée du Népal exportait peu de produits par elle-même: des statues, des objets rituels en bronze et en laiton, des bijoux en or et en argent, quelques tissus tissés sur place. Elle servait plutôt d'entrepôt et de centre de transformation des produits. Quant aux commerçants néwar, ils faisaient fonction de courtiers et de transitaires.

Durant la période qui nous intéresse, les Néwar contrôlaient étroitement le commerce qui se dirigeait vers le nord ou venait de cette direction. Ils avaient réussi à arracher aux Tibétains des clauses commerciales extrêmement favorables et ils avaient au Tibet des avocats, *wakil*, qui défendaient de près leurs intérêts. Dès le XVII^e siècle, les rois Malla obtinrent de surcroît le monopole de la frappe de la monnaie tibé-

taine. L'argent venait du Tibet en lingots; il était frappé à Kathmandu ou à Bhaktapur, puis les pièces étaient réexportées vers le nord. Cette activité était une source d'enrichissement essentiel et contribua à l'essor artistique et culturel général. Les pièces de monnaie étaient du même type de celles qui avaient cours dans la "Vallée"; seuls les caractères et les chiffres étaient en tibétain (Boulnois [1983]).

Ces activités commerciales remontent au tout début de l'ère chrétienne, peut-être même avant. Il semble d'ailleurs que la localisation des trois Cités-Royaumes étudiées soit liée à la configuration des routes de commerce entre l'Inde et le Tibet à l'intérieur de la vallée de Kathmandu et que les axes principaux de ces villes aient été fixés par ces routes. C'est le cas par exemple de la diagonale sud-est/nord-ouest qui forme l'axe principal, primitif, de la ville de Lalitpur, et de la diagonale sud-ouest/nord-est qui joue le même rôle pour Kathmandu (route de commerce de Kirtipur à Sankhu). Le carrefour d'Asan ʒol, dans la partie haute de Kathmandu, la partie la plus commerciale de la cité, a sûrement lui aussi à voir avec une croisée de vieilles routes commerciales, celles mentionnées ci-dessus et une autre, nord-sud, qui reliait Trisuli à Patan. L'emplacement du palais royal à Kathmandu aurait correspondu à un autre croisement, simple variante par rapport aux axes précédents. Ces axes gardent encore une très grande lisibilité dans l'espace urbain contemporain.

Les activités artisanales étaient particulièrement nombreuses et variées. Les villes néwar regorgeaient d'ateliers, situés le plus souvent au rez-de-chaussée des maisons, le long des rues ou à l'intérieur des cours. Parmi ces artisans, mentionnons: les orfèvres, les chaudronniers, les bronziers, les menuisiers, les peintres, les sculpteurs sur pierre et sur ivoire, les graveurs sur bois, les tuiliers, les potiers, les imprimeurs sur tissu, les tailleurs, les presseurs d'huile, les fabricants d'instruments de musique, tambours et hautbois notamment, etc. Comme on le voit, nombre de ces artisans travaillaient le métal ou d'autres produits manufacturés non agricoles. Nous sommes donc en présence d'une économie très diversifiée, dépendante d'un commerce au long cours pour ses approvisionnements. La proportion totale des artisans atteignait au minimum 40% de la population urbaine, sûrement plus de 50% à Patan. Ils étaient particulièrement nombreux dans la communauté bouddhiste. Les ateliers fonctionnaient sur une base familiale, avec, selon les cas, une division du travail entre hommes et femmes et une participation des enfants. La transmission des savoirs spécialisés se faisait principalement de père en fils, sauf peut-être en ce qui concerne les métiers d'or-

fèvres ou de bronziers, où quelques maîtres semblent s'être imposés à l'échelle du quartier ou de la ville.

Tous les artisans étaient, et sont toujours regroupés en castes ou en sous-castes, de statut relativement élevé dans la hiérarchie, à l'exception des tailleurs et de ceux qui manipulaient des substances impures (peau de bêtes, divers excréta). Ces corps de métier ont contribué pour une part décisive au développement de l'art et de l'architecture néwar. L'orfèvrerie, les techniques de fonte et de cire perdue, le travail du repoussé, la peinture étaient particulièrement développés. La renommée de la vallée du Népal en ces domaines s'étendit très vite aux pays voisins. Dès le XIIe siècle, l'empereur de Chine Kubilai Khan fit appel à des artisans néwar pour construire et décorer des édifices religieux bouddhistes. Nombreux furent les bronziers et peintres néwar qui participèrent durant la période Malla à la fabrication d'objets de culte tibétains et qui s'installèrent au Tibet.

Les trois Cités-Royaumes de la vallée du Népal comportaient en outre une dimension paysanne importante, témoignage de leurs vieilles origines rurales. Des quartiers entiers avaient des allures villageoises et étaient habités par des agriculteurs Jyāpu. Ce phénomène persista longtemps après la période Malla. Jusque vers 1950, une large partie de la population urbaine était en fait composée de paysans et vivait principalement de l'agriculture.⁶ Tout donne à penser qu'il en était de même à l'époque Malla. Les paysans citadins partaient le matin cultiver les rizières situées tout autour de la ville et revenaient chez eux le soir. Les déplacements se faisaient à pied, le portage animal étant pratiquement inconnu dans la vallée de Kathmandu. Blé et riz, les deux principales plantes cultivées de la région, étaient récoltés, battus dans les champs avoisinants, puis portés au balancier dans des paniers pour être vannés et stockés à l'intérieur de la cité. Quant aux buffles, une ressource importante pour les paysans Jyāpu néwar, ils étaient gardés, comme dans les villages, au rez-de-chaussée des habitations. Insistons enfin sur le rôle des jardins, *keba* en néwari, fort nombreux à l'intérieur des enceintes urbaines (Regmi [1966] 554). Les paysans néwar, ainsi que d'autres castes, y cultivaient des légumes, des fruits et des épices. D'une certaine manière, ces trois capitales néwar étaient des cités agraires, des "agrovilles", une situation assez typique des anciennes villes d'Asie.

Les fêtes urbaines

Lalitpur, Kathmandu et Bhaktapur possédaient à l'époque chacune leur fête, une fête locale, patronale

en quelque sorte, appelée en néwari *des jātrā*, “la fête du pays”, ou *mul jātrā*, “la fête la plus importante”, ou encore plus simplement *jātrā*, “la fête”. Ces célébrations ont été profondément remodelées, voire créées (cf. *infra* Bisket jātrā), durant la période qui nous intéresse. Elles se tenaient à des dates particulières du calendrier lunaire ou solaire et jouaient un rôle essentiel dans la définition ainsi que dans l’identité des trois Cités-Royaumes. Tous les habitants de la cité y participaient, sous la direction de prêtres, d’astrologues et du souverain. Les paysans des environs également avaient coutume d’y assister et y donnaient parfois des représentations de danses sacrées. Fondamentalement religieuses, ces fêtes étaient centrées sur une ou plusieurs figures du panthéon qu’on honorait et qu’on célébrait. Elles comportaient également des aspects plus laïques, des moments de réjouissance où intervenaient les différentes unités territoriales constitutives du royaume. Observons que ces célébrations festives continuent, deux cents ans après la chute des royaumes Malla, à être célébrées avec la même ferveur que par le passé. Elles contribuent pour une large part à préserver la mémoire de ces anciens royaumes, incorporés depuis deux siècles au nouvel État népalais.

Lalitpur célébrait sa fête en l’honneur du dieu Rāto Matsyendranāth, grande divinité syncrétique de la vallée du Népal, appelée Būgadyaḥ en néwari.⁷ Pour les bouddhistes, qui forment la majorité de la population à Lalitpur, cette divinité n’est autre que Karuṇā-maya, le Bouddha plein de compassion. C’est une grande divinité agricole, dont les Néwar attendent en particulier l’arrivée des pluies de mousson. La fête se déroulait au printemps, juste avant la saison des pluies, durant une période de deux mois, de mai à la fin juin. Un grand char rituel de plus de 30 m de hauteur était reconstruit pièces par pièces tous les ans. On y installait la statue du dieu et on le tirait en procession, *ratha jātrā* (de *ratha*: char), dans toute la ville selon un itinéraire fixe. Le roi en personne participait à la fête et se tenait en tête du cortège, un sabre à la main. La cérémonie était censée commémorer l’arrivée du dieu Rāto Matsyendranāth dans la vallée du Népal il y a plus d’un millénaire et la fin d’une sécheresse dramatique qui avait duré douze ans. Les Néwar soutiennent toujours aujourd’hui que la pluie se met soudainement à tomber lors du rituel final de Jawalakhel, *bhoto jātrā*, événement auquel le roi de Lalitpur (celui du Népal de nos jours) vient assister.

La grande fête de Kathmandu, l’Indra jātrā, se tenait, elle, à la fin du mois lunaire de Bhādra (juillet-août) et au début du mois suivant d’Āśvin (août-sep-

tembre), sur une période de huit ou neuf jours. Comme son nom l’indique, elle était dédiée à Indra, le roi des dieux dans le panthéon hindou, une figure populaire parmi les agriculteurs néwar et tout à fait essentielle vis-à-vis de la royauté. Des mâts étaient érigés en l’honneur du dieu dans les deux parties de la ville, haute et basse, ainsi que dans son centre, devant le palais royal. Cette fête était également liée de très près à Bhairava (Bhaldyaḥ en néwari), la face terrible de Śiva. Des masques de cette divinité irritée, les crocs sortant de la bouche de manière menaçante, étaient sortis des oratoires familiaux et exposés dans les rues aux yeux de tous. À heures fixes, on faisait couler de la bière de riz par un trou percé dans la bouche du masque. Des centaines de jeunes gens se précipitaient alors pour boire de cette bière, considérée comme sacrée, et s’approprier ainsi les bienfaits dispensés par cette divinité. Signalons que dans la seconde moitié du XVIIIe siècle, le dernier roi de Kathmandu, Jayaprakāśa Malla (1736-1768), introduisit la coutume de porter en procession, durant cette fête, la déesse vivante Kumārī, incarnation de Taleju, dans les rues de la cité, montée sur un char à quatre roues pleines, du même style que celui utilisé pour le dieu Rāto Matsyendranāth à Patan. Le dernier jour de l’Indra jātrā, la déesse vivante (choisie parmi la haute caste bouddhiste des Śākya) accordait sa bénédiction au roi et lui apposait une marque rituelle *ṭikā* au milieu du front. On peut voir dans cette bénédiction un rituel de reconduction du pouvoir royal pour l’année à venir.

Quant à Bhaktapur, elle célébrait sa fête chaque année au début de la nouvelle année solaire, vers la mi-avril. Cette fête, appelée Bisket jātrā, aurait été fondée dans la seconde moitié du XVIe ou au début du XVIIe siècle. Elle est centrée sur la déesse Bhadrakālī et le dieu Akāśa Bhairava, deux grandes figures divines de la cité. Le temple du second est une construction massive, encore bien préservée aujourd’hui, qui s’élève à Taumādhi ṭol, au cœur de la cité.⁸ On tirait les statues de ces deux divinités à l’intérieur des rues de la capitale sur des chars à roues pleines. Les chars étaient entrechoqués à un moment donné de la fête. Ce combat (*khata lvākhegu* en néwari) symbolisait la joie des deux divinités de se retrouver. Certains ajoutent que le “combat”, toujours à l’honneur de nos jours, mime les ébats sexuels des deux dieux.⁹ Akāśa Bhairava et Bhadrakālī sont en effet vus comme un couple: le premier est appelé le maître, *nāyaḥ*, la seconde, sa parèdre, *nakhī* (Gutschow [1996] 288). Le quatrième jour des festivités, un mât rituel d’une trentaine de mètres de hauteur, était érigé

dans un quartier périphérique de la ville, la place de Yaḥṣimkhyah. Ce mât auquel sont suspendues deux bannières brodées d'or est censé rappeler la mort de deux serpents qui avaient pris possession d'une ancienne princesse de la localité. Son érection était l'un des moments culminants du Bisket. Il était suivi de fêtes familiales à l'échelle de chaque maisonnée et de nombreuses autres processions de puissances divines, telles Chumā Gaṇeś et diverses déesses Aṣṭa Mātrikā, dans les rues de la ville. Il importe de signaler que le Bisket jātrā s'accompagnait du culte de certaines divinités royales, telle Dvīmmāju, qui est abritée dans le palais.

Ces trois fêtes possèdent des traits communs qui permettent de mieux cerner les Cités-Royaumes de la vallée du Népal à l'époque médiévale. Elles mobilisaient d'abord toutes les castes de la ville, des plus basses aux plus hautes, autour de la figure du souverain. L'association religieuse en charge de la fête de la Kumārī, Kumārī jātrā, à Kathmandu, regroupait par exemple plusieurs catégories de personnes: des prêtres, bouddhistes et hindous, des astrologues pour fixer le moment faste des principaux rituels, des agriculteurs Jyāpu, qui, on l'a vu, constituaient une part importante de la population urbaine, des musiciens appartenant à plusieurs groupes de la société néwar, ainsi que diverses castes de services. C'était toute la société urbaine qui, d'une certaine manière, coopérait au culte de la déesse vivante. Cette participation générale était donnée à voir à la population. Elle affirmait l'unité de la ville, la complémentarité des différentes castes au-delà des divisions hiérarchiques si présentes dans la vie quotidienne. Elle renforçait le sentiment d'appartenance à un même territoire urbain, bien délimité derrière ses murs et ses enceintes symboliques. Le culte de divinités communes, aux traits locaux très prononcés, soutenait ainsi l'identité de la cité.

Ces fêtes ont par ailleurs des mythes étiologiques qui renvoient aux origines de la cité. L'Indra jātrā par exemple est censé avoir été fondé par Guṇakāmadeva, le roi fondateur de la ville au X-XI^e siècle. Matsyendranāth jātrā commémore l'arrivée du dieu Rāto Matsyendranāth dans la Vallée, un événement d'une importance capitale dans les chroniques locales, associée aux origines de la culture du riz irrigué dans ce bassin. Quant au Bisket jātrā, son mythe d'origine s'apparente à un rituel de fondation de l'autorité royale. Tout se passe donc comme si la ville tout entière replongeait à intervalles réguliers dans le temps des origines. La cité, et avec elle tout le royaume, en tirait une nouvelle force, une nouvelle jouvence.

Les quartiers

Les trois cités-royaumes de Bhaktapur, Kathmandu et Lalitpur étaient divisés en quartiers, *ṭol* en népalī, *tvāḥ* en néwari. Ces unités constituaient les unités administratives de base de la localité et servaient à percevoir taxes et impôts. À Panauti, une petite ville néwar qui a correspondu autrefois à un petit royaume éphémère, certaines maisons portent encore aujourd'hui sur leur mur de façade une plaque de bois où sont gravés leur numéro et le nom de leur ancien *tvāḥ*. Ces vestiges témoignent d'un ancien système de taxation. Le nombre de ces quartiers variait selon les agglomérations. Bhaktapur et Lalitpur en avaient chacun vingt-quatre, un chiffre faste dans le monde indien évoquant l'idée d'une totalité. Kathmandu en avait apparemment beaucoup plus, sans que nous sachions leur chiffre exact. Dans cette ville coexistait en fait une division idéale en trente-deux quartiers, liés à la population agricole de la ville, et une autre en dix-huit unités, concentrées chacune sur un monastère bouddhiste (*bāhā*) particulier.

Dans quelle mesure ces unités constituaient-elles des unités de peuplement distinctes? Les Néwar construisant de préférence à proximité de la maison des parents, la relation est évidente dans beaucoup de cas. Encore aujourd'hui, on note dans les vieux centres de ces trois villes des répartitions assez nettes de la population par castes. Nombre de quartiers *tvāḥ* de Kathmandu ou de Lalitpur étaient à l'époque Malla totalement ou principalement unicastes, avec par exemple de très fortes concentrations de paysans Jyāpu, de potiers Kumhāh, de pêcheurs Poḍe, de bouchers Nāy, ou d'orfèvres Śākya. Ailleurs, la population était plus mêlée. Le plus souvent, on avait une caste dominante numériquement et, à ses côtés, quelques maisonnées de castes de service ou d'autres castes.

Ces unités administratives correspondaient à des unités rituelles bien limitées fondées sur des sanctuaires communs. Chaque quartier était ainsi attaché à un sanctuaire de Gaṇeś, le dieu hindou à tête d'éléphant, et à un autel dédié à Nāsaḥdyah, le dieu néwar de la musique et de la danse, identifié à Nṛityanātha (= Śiva). Les femmes vénéraient le Gaṇeś de leur quartier, *tvāḥ* Ganedyah en néwari, tous les matins, ainsi qu'à l'occasion des fêtes domestiques (naissance, initiation, mariage, etc). Le lien entre les familles du lieu et ce Gaṇeś était un élément décisif de la religion quotidienne. Il s'agissait d'un lien personnel, profond, qu'un déménagement dans une autre partie de la ville ne parvenait pas à rompre. Nāsaḥdyah, lui, était honoré à certaines dates du calendrier annuel par les groupes de musiciens du quartier, des associations

masculines propres aux castes Mānandhar, Udās, Jyāpu, Kumhāḥ, etc. Le fait de vénérer la même divinité concourait évidemment à créer un sentiment de solidarité non négligeable entre les habitants d'un même quartier, quelle que soit par ailleurs leur affiliation religieuse, hindoue ou bouddhiste, ou leur caste.

À Kathmandu, les trente-deux quartiers traditionnels Jyāpu correspondaient à une structure tout à fait particulière qui révèle l'importance cruciale de la musique dans l'organisation générale des villes néwar (Toffin [1994]). Chacun d'eux était le siège d'une association musicale, exclusivement Jyāpu, dédiée au dieu Nāsaḥdyah. Ces unités musicales étaient les segments fondamentaux de la société Jyāpu locale, à mi-chemin entre groupes de parenté et groupes purement résidentiels. Elles avaient un caractère obligatoire, héréditaire et exogame. Tous les jeunes gens Jyāpu du quartier en question devaient suivre l'apprentissage d'un tambour à deux peaux particulier et apprendre le maniement d'une haute perche décorée de queues de yak. Les initiations requises dans le cadre de cet apprentissage qualifiaient le jeune paysan comme membre à part entière de son quartier. Ces unités sociales et territoriales assuraient la répartition du pouvoir. L'autel du dieu de la musique et de la danse constituait dans ce cas précis le pilier symbolique du quartier, le pôle autour duquel s'organisaient les unités symboliques de la cité.

Les quartiers se définissaient également par une divinité tutélaire, masculine ou féminine, hindoue ou bouddhiste, dont le temple s'élevait sur leur territoire. C'était un dieu du sol, protecteur de la circonscription, que tous les résidents du *ṭol* vénéraient régulièrement. À Kathmandu, le quartier tout entier fêtait son dieu au moins une fois l'an à une date fixe du calendrier religieux. Les *ṭol* possédaient également des lieux de rejet rituels communs, *chvāsa*, liés aux rituels d'exorcisme et de guérison particuliers. Les habitants d'un même quartier partageaient aussi des circuits de procession funéraires spécifiques qui menaient aux lieux de crémation *masān*, rejetés aux marges de l'agglomération (Gutschow et Kölver [1975]). Toutes ces caractéristiques faisaient des quartiers *ṭol* des unités symboliques et sociales autonomes. Ils jouaient un rôle si important dans l'identité du citoyen que leurs membres possédaient parfois des dialectes particuliers et des genres de vie qui les rendaient facilement identifiables à un habitué.

Signalons pour terminer que la somme des quartiers constituait une totalité et définissait la ville. Rien n'illustre mieux cette idée qu'un rituel accompli tous les ans à Bhaktapur, à l'occasion de la fête du Dasaī,

vouée à la célébration de la déesse Durgā. Le huitième jour de cette fête, vingt-quatre buffles sont sacrifiés dans le temple de Taleju. Or Robert Levy ([1990] 184, 535, 750) nous apprend que les buffles représentent les vingt-quatre quartiers de la ville et que les habitants de chacune de ces circonscriptions se cotisaient autrefois pour offrir une bête sacrificielle à la divinité. Cette coutume mérite d'être rapprochée d'un autre rituel, célébrée pareillement au Dasaī par les habitants de Panauti: dans cette bourgade, située non loin de Bhaktapur, le buffle sacrifié à Taleju est divisé en vingt-quatre parts qui reviennent aux différents intervenants de la cérémonie, c'est-à-dire à la presque totalité de la population locale, hindoue et bouddhiste. Ces rituels témoignent de la circularité entre les quartiers constitutifs du territoire urbain et leur centre. La déesse tutélaire Taleju, qui représente une réalité supérieure, a clairement pour rôle de maintenir les éléments ensemble et d'assurer la cohérence du tout.

Conclusion: le continuum ville-campagne

Que représentaient les trois Cités-Royaumes dans la civilisation néwar des XVI-XVIIIe siècles? C'est sur cette dernière question que nous souhaiterions conclure. Il importe de souligner ici la profonde unité de cette civilisation. Nos informations sur les agglomérations rurales de l'époque sont minces. Mais il est clair que la civilisation néwar de la période Malla tardive n'établissait pas de distinction bien tranchée entre villes et villages.¹⁰ Comme aujourd'hui, la continuité entre les zones urbaines et rurales se manifestait sur de nombreux plans. Prenons l'habitat. Il n'existait pas de différences majeures entre l'habitat urbain et l'habitat campagnard: les éléments du vocabulaire architectural, la dynamique du tissu étaient les mêmes dans les deux cas. Certes, la densité humaine devait être légèrement moindre dans les villages, mais l'alternance de bâtiments et d'espaces publics ou semi-publics, de pleins et de vides, répondaient aux mêmes principes. Tous les repères religieux qui délimitaient le quartier urbain caractérisaient également les villages et définissaient ces derniers en tant qu'unités territoriales. La maison, elle non plus, ne devait pas être très différente selon les deux milieux, au moins au niveau de la conception d'ensemble.¹¹

Au plan social et religieux, l'osmose entre villes et campagnes était très forte, au moins à l'échelle d'un même royaume. On retrouvait ici comme là la même importance accordée aux associations religieuses, *guthi*, dans la vie sociale et dans l'organisation de la vie communale. On retrouvait dans les capitales ur-

baines comme dans les villages les mêmes unités de parenté, avec des profondeurs généalogiques relativement faibles, un puissant clivage aînés/cadets, une primauté du principe de séniorité. Les rituels du cycle de la vie, en particulier ces deux rituels si spécifiquement néwar que sont le pseudo-mariage des jeunes filles avec le fruit de l'arbre *bel*, *Aegla marmelos* (= Kumāra ou Viṣṇu), et la consécration *burā jākva* pour les vieillards, étaient pratiquement identiques. Le système des castes lui aussi, même s'il apparaissait beaucoup plus développé en milieu urbain, était déjà présent dans les petites agglomérations rurales.

Ce continuum remarquable, qu'accentuaient encore les divisions entre les trois royaumes à l'intérieur de la vallée du Népal, était dû en partie à ce que villes et campagnes vivaient en rapports étroits. Les villageois fréquentaient régulièrement la capitale dont ils dépendaient: ils y vendaient leurs produits agricoles et artisanaux, ils y avaient leurs commerçants et leurs prêteurs privilégiés, ils y participaient à la fête patronale. C'est dans les cours de justice de cette localité qu'ils se rendaient en cas de besoin. De manière générale, de nombreux réseaux supra-locaux, constitués sur la base du système foncier, de l'exploitation de la terre, de la religion (spécialistes religieux, fêtes, pèlerinages), unissaient populations rurales et urbaines. Certes, les villageois devaient souffrir, comme aujourd'hui, d'une certaine dépréciation de statut par rapport aux citadins. Mais, si l'on se souvient que Lalitpur, Kathmandu et Bhaktapur ont vraisemblablement été créés à partir de villages et que la dimension agricole continuait d'y jouer un rôle important, force est de constater que l'unité de la ville et de la campagne était une caractéristique première de ces royaumes.

Notes

- Lalitpur était également connu sous le nom de Mānagriha, ou Mānigal, qui a donné plus tard Mangal, nom de l'actuel bazar, situé dans le centre de la ville, à proximité du palais.
- L'emploi du mot Kāntipur pour la ville de Kathmandu, déjà en usage au Xe siècle (surtout pour désigner la partie nord de la ville), se généralisa sous les Gorkha au XIXe siècle.
- Sur Panauti et son histoire, cf. Toffin (1984).
- Sur les monastères bouddhistes néwar (*bāhā*), cf. Locke (1989).
- Les données manquent pour citer des chiffres de densité précis. Mais il est hors de doute que la pression humaine était déjà très importante à l'époque, de l'ordre de 300 à 500 habitants à l'hectare.
- Sur ce point, cf. Levy (1990), et Toffin (1994).
- La divinité Matsyendranāth a fait l'objet d'une monographie par Locke (1980).
- La Padmagiri vamaśvalī attribue au roi Trailokya Malla (1580-1604) la fondation de la fête simultanément avec l'instauration d'un *ratha jātrā* en faveur d'Akāśa Bhairava (Hasrat [1970] 60). D'autres chroniques parlent du roi Viśva Malla (1547-1560) (Regmi [1966] 650). Il n'est pas impossible que la fête ait été centrée au départ sur Bhadrakālī et que la procession d'Akāśa Bhairava ait été introduite un peu plus tard, mais les évidences manquent.
- D'après la chronique hindoue traduite par S. Lévi, ce combat des chars fut instauré par le roi Jagatjyotīr Malla (1613-1637). "Un Bhairav entretenait de coupables pensées à l'égard d'une çakti; pour l'en punir, il (le roi) ordonna dans une procession de heurter violemment le char de Bhairav contre le char de Kālī" (1905) 1: 383.
- En sanskrit, *pura* (ville) s'oppose à *grāma* (village), mais dans la langue courante, en néwari, *de* (ou *deś*) s'applique aux deux types de localité.
- Il n'est pas impossible que la maison villageoise ait été plus fruste à l'époque qu'elle ne l'est aujourd'hui. Il semble en effet que la morphologie de la maison néwar actuelle, avec ses quatre niveaux, ait d'abord été mise au point dans les villes (elle est attestée dans les gravures pour la période Malla) et que le modèle se soit diffusé ensuite dans les campagnes.

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Why City-States Existed? Riddles and Clues of Urbanisation and Fortifications

AZAR GAT

Abstract

Why city-states existed in a pre-industrial society, where some 80 to 90 percent of the population, at least, were necessarily engaged in food production, is a mystery, which scholars have seldom addressed or even recognised. City-states neither had low rates of urbanism, nor, as a rule, relied heavily on imported food, as some scholars have assumed. Most of the city-states' population consisted of peasants who lived in the city and walked to work their land outside it, in the city's near vicinity. Rather than massive industrial and commercial concentration, which existed in only a few, high-profile, historical cases, it was defensive coalescence that mostly accounts for the fact that city-states generally appeared in clusters of tens and hundreds. City-states emerged where large-scale territorial unification did not take place early in political evolution, and the peasant population of petty-polities coalesced to seek protection against raids from neighbouring such polities. Hence the problems that scholars have regularly encountered with the concepts of "city" and even "urbanism" as applied to these often miniscule "town"-polities, which should be more adequately described as densely and centrally nucleated petty-polities. A central refuge/cultic/ chiefly enclosure, sometimes supplemented by more extensive ditches and earth and timber works at strategically and topographically exposed directions, as well as the sheer size of the nucleated settlement provided defence against raiding hosts. It took centuries of early urban evolution until continuous circuit brick and stone walls replaced more limited fortifications.

How Urban was the City-State? Pre-Industrial Society, Urbanism, and Defence

The city-state phenomenon raises some truly fundamental questions which, while surfacing here and there in the scholarly literature with reference to

particular cases, have rarely been posed systematically, let alone answered. Although most of the evidence – and some of the more general insights – presented in this article are not new, they have not been put together into a broad theoretical framework. For example, how urban was the city-state? Comparative studies of city-state systems barely address this question (Griffeth and Thomas [1981]; Burke [1986]). In recent studies, non-urban petty-polities have been conflated with city-states as a matter of course, as such a distinction seems to have been barely recognised by the authors (Nichols and Charlton [1997]; also Feinman and Marcus [1998]; but see Wilson [1997] and Gat (forthcoming). In this they have been following a growing sceptical trend in the study of some city-states systems – particularly the ancient Greek *poleis* – which, suggesting that the city-state is a misnomer, questions whether it was either urban or, indeed, a state. This trend has recently been stemmed by Hansen's exemplary work, culminating in his comparative study of 30 city-state cultures (2000). The present article agrees with Hansen that the city-state was indeed highly urban (as well as being a state), in the sense that an unusually large part of its population lived in a central nucleated settlement. On the other hand, other attributes usually associated with the concepts of "city" and "urbanism", such as population in the many thousands and economic complexity, were often missing in what was mostly town-size polities. It is this special type of urbanism that this article sets out to explain.

As mentioned, one obvious measure of urbanism is the percentage of the city-state's population that actually lived in the city, rather than in its surrounding countryside. Curiously, this highly significant variable is very rarely addressed in earnest, the most prominent case being early Mesopotamia (Hansen [2000] 614 and n. 107 for some other cases). Based on their archaeological surveys of lower Mesopotamia (Adams and Nissen [1972] 18-22, 86-87; also Adams [1972]; [1981] 130; Nissen [1988] 131) have esti-

mated that by the Early Dynastic period (ca. 2900-2350 B.C.) some 80-90 per cent of the Mesopotamian city-states' population lived in the cities, mostly in the city-state's capital city but also in a few satellite towns; indeed, it was their movement there from the countryside in the late 4th and early 3rd millennium B.C. (Late Uruk and Jemdet Nasr periods) that had made these cities into what they were. To be sure, these estimates are not free from ambiguities: rural settlement and population are notoriously elusive archaeologically; and urban population estimates are tenuously based on settlement area and analogies from pre-modern population densities in the region (e.g. Postgate [1994b] for the problems). All the same, even if the Mesopotamian level of urbanism was actually somewhat lower than that suggested by Adams and Nissen, it was still extraordinary, for the economy of pre-industrial societies was exactly the reverse of Adams' and Nissen's figures, that is, at least 80-90 per cent of the population consisted of food-producing peasants (Aerts and Klengel [1990]; Yoffee [1995]; Liverani [1996]; Driel [1998]; de Maaijer [1998] – for the Mesopotamian agricultural land). Yet scholarly opinion has not fully digested the general significance of the Mesopotamian data and their possible implications for other city-state societies.

Indeed, in relation to other city-state systems the question of the rates of urbanism has barely attracted the attention it deserves, and not always because of the paucity and inherent vagueness of the evidence; a focused formulation of the question itself is often absent. The most glaring lacuna existed with respect to the most intensively studied city-state system, that of the Greek *poleis*. It is increasingly clear that urbanisation and, indeed, the formation of the Greek *polis* itself during the Archaic period, ca. 750-500 B.C., was a protracted and gradual process (e.g. Starr [1977] 97-99; Snodgrass [1991]; Morris [1991]; Hansen [1993]). But what rates of urbanism were reached by the Greek *poleis* by the Classical period remains a much confused subject. In some recent specialised works on this subject the question does not even occur (e.g. the otherwise excellent Rich and Wallace-Hadrill [1991]). Some scholars who have referred to the question have assumed – either explicitly or implicitly – that the obvious dominance of food production and peasants in pre-industrial societies was directly expressed in very low rates of urbanism. Chester Starr ([1986] 6-7, 13; though more cautiously in [1977] 41, 98-9, 104-5), for example, has drawn on 18th century census figures from the North American colonies and

early United States, which show – as in other pre-industrial countries – that some 80 to 90 per cent of the population were farmers and lived in the countryside. He has assumed that the same applied to the Greek *poleis*. Victor Hanson ([1995] 7, 446 n.3, and *passim*; [1998] 42-49, 214-17) has made the same tacit, and sometimes explicit, assumption in his plea for a rediscovery of the rural Greeks.

As already mentioned, this assumption has accorded well with the often-expressed doubt whether the Classical *polis* was a “city-state” at all in terms of its urbanism. Historians have tended to prefer the concept of “citizen-state”, which of course it also was – indeed in close connection with its urbanism. Only in recent years has Hansen ([1997]; also [1993]; [1996]; [1998]; [2000]) deployed a formidable scholarly counter-argument, demonstrating – convincingly, in the present author's opinion – that the Classical *polis* was indeed highly urban. As the Mesopotamian city-states' estimated rates of urbanism suggest, the pre-industrial economic rationale may have been different from the one cited above, with implications also for the case of the Greek *poleis*.

Indeed, other scholars, aware that the Greek *poleis*' rates of urbanism – and those of other city-state systems – were significantly higher than those implied by analogies with other pre-industrial societies, have made different assumptions. They have assumed that the city-state had an uncharacteristically specialised economy, with a large non-agricultural craft and trading sector. The city-state's food deficit was supposedly covered by imports. Furthermore, relying on Max Weber's distinction between “consumer” and “producer” cities (Weber [1958] 68-70; Finley ([1973]; [1981]) has argued that the Greek *polis* was a net consumer, living on the labour of its close and more remote hinterland. However, rather than with the clusters of small and independent city-states, Weber's category of the “consumer city” accords best with the few metropolitan centres of large states and empires, from which large-scale tribute could be extracted. With respect to the Greeks, this applied only to Imperial Athens, which in the 5th century B.C. (but not earlier) drew much of its grain from imports (Garnsey [1985] 62-75; [1988] 89-164). All the same, although Attica was more densely populated than other parts of Greece, Athens/Attica was in fact, as we shall see, probably *less* urbanised in some significant respects than other *poleis* which did not rely on imported food as Athens did. Athens was also exceptionally commercial in Greek terms, but as Finley has rightly emphasised, only very few (though historically high

profile), heavily commercialised and particularly maritime city-states in pre-industrial times developed a truly specialised economy. To assume that this applied, for example, to the estimated 1,200-1,500 Greek *poleis*, the hundreds of city-states in mediaeval northern Italy, the thirty-odd Mesopotamian city-states (despite their much discussed long-distance trade: e.g. Algaze [1993]; Van De Mieroop [1997]) or the 40 to 50 city-states in the pre-contact Valley of Mexico goes against the evidence and is belied by the simple realities of pre-industrial food production and transportation.

The problem that both the above-mentioned – largely conflicting – conceptions of city-state urbanism have in effect tried to overcome is precisely how such clusters of urbanism prevailed in a pre-industrial world, where at least 80 to 90 per cent of the population were *necessarily* food producers if society was to be able to feed itself. Both conceptions presupposed that the rural/urban *residential* split overlapped the agricultural/manufacturing *cum* non-productive *occupational* split (also e.g. Sharma [1991] 9, with respect to early historic India). However, as scholars of different city-state systems have long known, this was not the case. Peasants could and did reside within the city. Robin Osborne (1987), as well as Alison Burford ([1993] 10, 56-64) and Hansen ([2000] 159), while also offering no estimated breakdowns into city versus country dwellers in Classical Greece, point out the familiar but all too often forgotten fact that the former were themselves mostly peasants (Garnsey [1999] 25 and 29 is unclear, though he mainly has the Roman imperial period in mind). As in early Mesopotamia, and most other city-state systems, these peasants, together with their animals, walked daily to work in their fields and farms, up to 5-10 km away (excellently in Morgan and Coulton [1997] 125-26).

If so, another question arises: why did the peasants give up dispersed rural residence and coalesce in urban settlements, through mixed processes of migration and conurbation (depending on the historical case)? All the city glitter could not compensate for the crowded living conditions, bad hygiene, high prevalence of epidemic disease, and hours' walk to the fields, which were the inseparable aspects of urban life. As I shall argue here, the principal motive was defence, as has been recognised to various degrees by scholars of several city-state civilisations, particularly early Mesopotamia. Following Adams and Nissen, scholars have widely attributed the rapid transformation of the Mesopotamian countryside and the coalescence of its inhabitants into the cities to the simulta-

neous development of more systematised, inter-state warfare (though see the lingering puzzlement in Redman [1978] 214-16, 220-43). Pre-colonial Africa is perhaps the most instructive laboratory in terms of the recent historicity of the evidence on the early city-state. Although they incorporated a substantial industrial sector, "African cities and towns were basically agrarian. At least 70 percent of their male residents commuted regularly to outlying farms" (Hull [1976] xiv). While the Yoruba of western Nigeria were "undoubtedly the most urban of all African peoples" in the pre-colonial period, their large cities were "based upon farming rather than industrialisation" (Bascon [1955] 446). Historians of Africa have generally assumed that Africa was special in this regard, but in fact it was not. The reason for the paradox of peasants' urbanism was defensive coalescence. Historical records of the Yoruba, which become fuller in the 19th century, with the more permanent arrival of Europeans, tell of heavy raids by the mounted Fulani herdsmen from the north, as well as of endemic inter-city warfare. Similar, "proto-historic" records and archaeological evidence in the form of extensive city fortifications stretch further back for centuries (Krapf-Askari [1969] esp. 3-7, 154-55; Smith [1969] 120-29; Hull [1976] 19-20; Connah [1987] 130-34; Peel [2000] 507, 515).

Let us return to the Classical Greeks. As always, the best documented case is Athens. According to Thucydides (2.14 and 2.16), most of the population of Attica had lived in the countryside before they were evacuated into Athens at the beginning of the Peloponnesian War (431 B.C.). Archaeological estimates support this (Finley [1975] 70-71; Morris [1987] 100; in his important analysis of the archaeological evidence Osborne (1985) barely addresses the question directly). However, while Athens is the best documented Greek *polis*, it is also (together with the second best documented *polis*: Sparta) the most unusual one, a widely recognised fact that nonetheless regularly distorts our perspective on the ancient Greeks. As Thucydides specifically writes (2.15), life in the countryside was characteristic of the Athenians more than of any other Greeks. This would seem to defy conventional logic, because Athens is rightly considered to have been more commercialised and industrial than the typical *polis* and, therefore, should have supposedly been more urban. However, one crucial aspect of Athens' uniqueness was that it possessed a vast territory in Classical Greek terms, encompassing as it did the whole region of Attica. This large size of the territory meant that it was in any case not possible for its

peasant population to live mostly in the city of Athens itself, even had the peasants so desired (which they probably did not), because this would have meant living an impossible distance from their fields. Most of them resided in the countryside (*chora*) and many in villages (*demoi*), some of which were walled. On the other hand, since Attica was a peninsular pocket whose only exposed land side, the north, was largely blocked by the city of Athens itself, Attica was virtually immune to threat, except for the large-scale Persian and Spartan invasions of the 5th century. The same circumstances did not apply to most other Greek *poleis*, whose territory was small and exposed, admittedly with marked regional variations.

Unfortunately, our knowledge about *poleis* other than Athens is much poorer. The relevant literary evidence has been scrutinised by scholars (Hansen [1997] is the best). One scrap of evidence relates to Plataea in Boeotia. Lying only 70 stadia (13.5 km) away from its arch-rival, Thebes, it was attacked by surprise by the latter at the beginning of the Peloponnesian War. Consequently, according to Thucydides (2.5), some Plataeans and some property (*kataskoeue*) were caught out in the fields (*agroï*). However, it seems clear from the account that the majority of the peasant population of this typical-size *polis* (which comprised about 1,000 adult male citizens) lived within the city, from which they walked to tend their fields, only a few kilometres away. Contrary to Victor Hanson's interpretation ([1998] 46), both the text and context suggest a relatively small number of people staying out in the fields rather than permanently living in farmsteads. For, as Hansen ([1997] 27-28) has calculated, if the majority of Plataea's tiny, mostly peasant, population did not live in the "city", what city was there that can fit Thucydides's description of Plataea as a walled urban residential place and the excavated walled site of some 10 ha?

In attempting to demonstrate the centrality of the *polis*' rural population, Hanson also cites Brasidas' surprise attack, during the Peloponnesian War, on the rural population residing outside Amphipolis on the Thracian coast (Thucydides 4.102-4). However, not only did Amphipolis lie on the margins of mainland Greece; the city's environs constituted a naturally protected "island", "as the Strymon [River] flows round it on both sides". Only Brasidas' capture of the bridge made his incursion possible. Indeed, from the fact that Thucydides finds it necessary to mention specifically that some of the people of Amphipolis lived dispersed in the countryside, one can actually infer that this was not the norm in other *poleis*.

Another piece of evidence on the subject (Xenophon, *Hellenica*, 5.2.6-7) relates to Mantinea, after the city fell before Sparta and its allies in 385 B.C. According to the peace terms imposed by Sparta, "the wall was torn down and Mantinea was divided into four separate villages, just as the people had dwelt in ancient times". Xenophon writes that after the initial shock the landholders in fact found this arrangement convenient, for they could now reside close to their farms. All the same, once Mantinea regained its independence in 371 B.C., urban coalescence, the *sine quo non* of self-defence by an independent *polis*, was resumed (6.5.3-5).

Despite problems of definition, sampling and interpretation (e.g. Osborne [1996]; Morgan and Coulton [1997]), the archaeological settlement surveys conducted in various parts of Greece are the principal means for generating new and highly significant information on the question of the rates of urbanisation. The Melos survey seems to offer no population breakdown into rural versus urban residents (Cherry and Wagstaff [1982]). The Kea survey (Cherry, Davis and Manzourani [1991] 279-81, 337-38) has suggested that at least 75 per cent of the population, if not more, lived in the urban settlement. According to the southern Argolid survey (Jameson, Runnels and van Andel [1994] 548-53, 561-63), close to 60 per cent of the population in the mid-4th century B.C. lived in "urban" settlements, while an estimated 36 per cent lived in villages and some 5 per cent lived in farmsteads. The estimated figures for the Archaic period are similar. The ongoing archaeological settlement survey of Boeotia barely addresses the question directly. But the authors cursorily estimate that about one third of the population of Boeotia lived in "cities", and the percentage of the urban population rises to about 40 if the satellite "towns" are added. The other 60 per cent consisted of "rural population" (Bintliff and Snodgrass [1985] 143; Snodgrass [1990]; also Bintliff [1997]). As we have already seen with respect to Attica, the seemingly paradoxical conclusion of all this is that the smaller the *poleis*, the more urban they tended to be (cf. Morgan and Coulton [1997] 125-26).

The formula for the Greek *polis*' urbanism – which generally applies to other city-state systems as well – would thus appear to be as follows: as a rule, at least 40 per cent, often the majority, and in small *poleis* the large majority, of the Classical *polis*' population lived in nucleated urban centres; and most of these urban dwellers were peasants. Indeed, I agree with Hansen that, contrary to a frequently expressed opinion in the scholarly literature, city-states were exactly what their

name implied, that is, highly urban. And as this article argues, they were so decisively and unusually urban because of the security threat posed by the presence of *other* city-states only a few kilometres away.

To be sure, archaeologists have long associated the nucleation of settlement with defence. Still, with the exception of early Mesopotamia, the full implications of this relationship for the evolution of city-states do not seem to have sunk in. It is this relationship which accounts, for example, for the highly conspicuous but hardly noted fact that city-states nearly always appeared in a *cluster*. It was in interaction and co-evolution within an inter-polity system, rather than in isolation – in what Hansen ([2000] 17) has called “city-state culture” – that city-states emerged, including those of the proverbially “pristine”, earliest civilisation: Mesopotamia. (Renfrew [1975] 32 amply stresses warfare as a central aspect of system interaction in the “early state module”, but in my view he still underestimates its central role in the formation of city-states.) Relatively small size was the key to their peculiar configuration: space was divided among small antagonistic political units, which meant *both* a high threat level from close-by neighbours and the ability of peasants to find refuge by living in the city while working outside it, only a few kilometers away. It is not surprising that scholars have regularly encountered problems with the concepts of “city” and even “urbanism” as applied to these often minuscule “town”-polities, which could be more adequately described as densely and centrally nucleated petty-polities – as opposed to rural-society petty-polities Gat (forthcoming). Hansen too ([2000] 25) runs into the usual impasse when attempting to distinguish between city and town in this context.

Where some super city-states emerged by winning control over whole regions – absorbing neighbouring communities in the process, including formerly independent city-states – the defensive imperative was somewhat relaxed, though much of the population continued to live in defended towns within the much expanded territory of the new regional polity. This was the process which took place, for example, in Athens/Attica, and to some degree probably in Thebes-dominated Boeotia. It also seems to have applied to the larger mediaeval Italian communes, such as Florence and Milan, as these city-states expanded into regional territorial states during the 13th to 15th centuries, each incorporating several formerly independent city-states in Tuscany and Lombardy, respectively. Finally, where the defensive motive barely existed at all, as in the kingdom of Egypt, which had

been unified on a grand scale very early in the development of civilisation in the Nile valley and which was largely sheltered by geography, the peasants continued to live in the countryside and around un-walled market towns, whereas cities were few and functioned as “consumptive” metropolitan administrative and religious centres. It is probably no coincidence that Egyptologists such as Trigger ([1972]; [1985]; also [1993] 10-11) and Hassan (1993) come closest to the ideas developed in this article (see also O’Connor [1972]; [1993]). It is mainly in the factor of defence rather than in the size of the industrial and trading sector that the differences between the rates of urbanisation of Egypt and Mesopotamia lay. As Hansen ([2000] 610) has suggested, city-state systems emerged where urbanisation preceded large-scale political unification. But, indeed, otherwise inexplicable massive urban nucleation occurred only *because* no large-scale political unification had taken place.

Viewed from another angle, this is also the factor which largely accounts for the much-noted “uniqueness” of the mediaeval European communes. Unlike other city-state systems, the mediaeval communes expanded politically from the city nucleus outwards. While never lacking an agricultural sector (Weber [1958] 70-72) and constantly absorbing people from the countryside as they grew, they extended their rule over that countryside (*contado*) and its peasant population only as their power increased. The main cause of this “*Sonderweg*” was that the mediaeval communes emerged within a space already dominated by large, albeit segmented and weak, feudal state systems and territorial magnates, rather than in a non-state environment, like most of the other city-state systems described here. While the weakness of central power was a necessary condition for the growth of city-states in feudal Europe, the existence of that power nonetheless in varying degrees limited both the span of the communes’ territorial control and the degree of their autonomy, particularly where power of state and magnates was relatively stronger – as, for example, in Flanders and Germany, as against Italy (cf. Epstein [2000]). This developmental history explains why the artisan guilds and boroughs played a more dominant role in the mediaeval communes. The communes’ later expansion beyond their walls (roughly during the 13th century) consolidated their political and economic control over what had always served as their agricultural hinterland. Here as well, estimated splits into the agricultural versus artisan and trading populations barely exist. However, as in other city-state systems, the vast majority of the population of these

expanded city and countryside communes appears to have consisted of peasants. Nevertheless, politically the peasant population was only partly incorporated, in an inferior and subservient status, and the social and political gulf between them and the artisans and merchants never closed (e.g. Nicholas [1997] 117-25, 177, 253-55). Because of this special formative history and as the peasants continued to count for less, a larger than usual proportion of the peasants went on living outside the city and the city walls, exposed to the ravages of raiding and war (largely the same thing). Thus, it would appear that after their expansion to control their rural environment, the communes were politically and occupationally more – while residentially less – urban than most other city-state systems.

To be sure, in other evolving city-state systems as well, city-coalescence gave impetus to increasing craft and trade specialisation by creating a concentrated market nucleus. That is, in emergent city-states, more than in any other form of urbanisation, defence functioned as a “prime mover” in a process that brought into play other, interrelated and mutually reinforcing factors. City-states often evolved around a defended chiefly/cultic/refuge centre, which in a self-reinforcing process became the site of the local market and attracted an ever-larger population. Our knowledge of the growth of the Greek city-states, for example, from the 8th century B.C. on, is sparse in the extreme. In many cases, however, the *poleis* seem to have emerged around a defended enclosure – sometimes the seat of a paramount chief – which served both as a refuge stronghold for the population and their livestock and as the location of a growing and increasingly centralised sacred site of shrines and temples, which it defended (Lawrence [1979] 112, 132-33; Snodgrass [1980] 31-33, 154-57; Fine [1983] 48-51; Donlan and Thomas [1993] 67-68; Polignac [1995] may suggest a complementary rather than contradictory process). The word itself for a city in Greek – *polis* – was derived from an Indo-European designation for a fortified enclosure (Sanskrit *pur*, Lithuanian *pilis*: Mallory [1989] 120), around which the city-state had grown and which in Classical times was known because of its often elevated location as acropolis or upper-City. The Hittite Hattusa (Klengel [1990] 46-47) and other Bronze Age Anatolian fortified centres, the Palatine and Capitoline hills in Rome, and the Gallic *oppida* are some instances of the same pattern of city growth around a chiefly/royal seat *cum* cultic centre *cum* refuge stronghold. Other designations for a city, such as the Slavic *gorod* and

the Germanic *burgh*, carry the same meaning of a fortified enclosure, around which the future city formed. The mediaeval city-states which were beginning to grow substantially in Italy, Germany and Flanders from about the 10th century A.D., emerged around castles or fortified monasteries/bishop’s seats that served as their point of refuge, some of them relying on old Roman fortifications (*castra*). Their pioneering historian Henri Pirenne ([1952]; [1963]) has stressed the centrality of this element in their formation, which constituted the basis for their subsequent commercial development. As Pirenne ([1952] 57-58) sensed and students of African urbanism suggest (Hull [1976] xvii, 23-24), the Zulu *kraal* of herdsmen and peasants represented a similar sort of defended chiefly and religious enclosure and nascent commercial centre. Archaic references to the Sumerian city of Uruk customarily describe it as “Uruk-the-(sheep)-enclosure”, which has always raised questions among translators, who have found it difficult to see how this phrase could relate to the historic city’s splendour. A recent translator (Kovacs [1985] I.10 and note) is typical in writing: “I prefer to translate the notion of a sage refuge for the weak as Uruk-Haven”. However, the literal meaning may very well have been the original one.

The early Mesopotamian case raises a key point. It used to be widely believed and is still occasionally maintained that some of the nascent urban centres were fundamentally religious and economic, evolving around a temple complex, with no apparent defensive function. The principal example of the nascent religious-economic centre was long considered to be the early Mesopotamian city-states, which are known from archaeology to have evolved in the late 4th and early 3rd millennium B.C. around the temple sites that had grown up during the Ubaid period. The title of the Sumerian kings in some cities, *en* and *ensi*, literally “priest who laid the foundation (of a temple)”, testifies to their paramount religious role until the Early Dynastic period, which supposedly brought about intensified warfare. However, in the words of one scholar (Gadd [1971] 121): “it is probable that the inhabitants were not less pugnacious in earlier times, of which little is known” (for a “pacifist” view, see Stein [1994]). For example, the excavated villages of Tell es-Sawwan and Choga Mami from about 6000-4500 B.C. were both heavily fortified (Oates [1973] 147-81, esp. 168-69), and an excavated cylinder seal from the proto-historic Uruk period shows bound captives and smitten enemies (Postgate [1994a] 24-25; also Van de Mieroop [1997] 33-34). The damage

done to the early urban centres by extensive subsequent construction over several millennia makes the archaeological markers for prehistoric warfare – in any case a notoriously difficult subject (Vencl [1984]; Keeley [1996]; Gat [2000]) – even more ambiguous with respect to early Mesopotamia.

Analogies with other supposedly “priestly” polities can help, and no case carries a more resounding moral than that of the Maya. Before the Maya’s hieroglyphic script was deciphered from the 1950s, it had been generally assumed that theirs had been a peaceful priestly society. However, once the Maya texts could be read, it has been revealed that while high priesthood was indeed one of the major roles of the Maya kings, they were also the military leaders in endemic warfare that took place among the various city-state polities. As David Webster (1976a), explicating the general theoretical significance of the Maya evidence, suggests, the kings were *simultaneously* secular, military and religious leaders. Cahokia on the Mississippi is another prime example, for while being the most advanced polity in temperate North America, it emerged as a nascent state only from the 11th to the 14th centuries A.D. (Emerson [1997]). Thus, since the Mississippi culture had no time to evolve further before the arrival of the Europeans, no later layers of civilisation were built on its sites, which uniquely preserve their nascent state form. The centre of the Cahokia polity, around which a city of tens of thousands grew, was a large ceremonial plaza and seat of the polity’s ruler. A log palisade has been excavated around the plaza and its huge earth mounds. Enclosure walls could, of course, serve many possible purposes, but the function of parapet walks on, and tower-bastions in, the wall leaves little room for ambiguity. The bastions were erected every 20 m, gates were elaborately protected, and, last but not least, plenty of arrowheads have been found around the wall (Panketat [1994] esp. 91-92; relying on Iseminger et al. [1990]). Cahokia’s seat of power was a defensive enclosure that was experiencing attacks.

Thus, defence was central to the formation of would-be city-states’ nuclei, intertwined as this element was with political, religious and economic factors. Pirenne and Weber, Hansen ([1997] 55-57) for Greece, and, in effect, Nicholas (1997), and Hull and Gutkind ([1963] 9-15) with respect to Africa – all rightly stress mixed functions in city emergence. It must be realised, however, that political fragmentation and, hence, defence was the underlying force of the whole process, in the absence of which dense clusters of nucleated urbanisation such as were character-

istic of city-state systems simply did not appear in pre-industrial, largely agricultural, society.

Puzzles of Early City-State Fortifications

Pre-Columbian America brings us to the vexed question of early city-state fortifications – or their elusiveness – which has been the cause of considerable confusion. The principal reason why before the decipherment of the Maya script scholars believed in the pacific nature of these polities was the apparent absence of city walls around them and the initial inconspicuousness of other sorts of fortifications. On the whole, urban centres throughout pre-Columbian America seemed to have lacked circuit city-walls on a scale that even remotely resembled the familiar Old World pattern, although the evidence not only from the Maya but also during European contact, most prominently in the case of central Mexico, clearly shows that the local city-states were regularly at war with one another. This apparent difference between the New and Old Worlds has remained a puzzle.

In reality, however, there was little difference between the two worlds, for the pattern *everywhere* was that city fortifications evolved gradually, in step with urban evolution, with the familiar circuit stone walls taking shape only after centuries of evolution. Our knowledge of later developments in the Old World distorts our perception of the evolutionary course that had led to them. In the case of early Mesopotamia, for example, scholars tend to associate the pre- and proto-historical emergence of cities during the Uruk to Early Dynastic periods with the construction of circuit city walls. However, in early Mesopotamia, too, the very large circumference of the enclosed area indicates that the walls were erected only after substantial initial city evolution had taken place. Several centuries are a long time even in pre- and proto-history and around 3000 B.C. The renowned Uruk city walls, erected in the Early Dynastic period, are 9 km long, encompassing an area of 400 ha, with an estimated population of 40,000 at the minimum (Nissen [1972]; Postgate [1994a] 74-75, 80; Redman [1978] 255, 264-65). This had already been a highly developed city by any standard. In the Indus civilisation as well, the massive city walls familiar from the second half of the third millennium B.C. (Mature Indus Civilisation), which encompassed large, highly populated, and remarkably well-planned urban spaces, indicate a late construction, after considerable formative urban development had already taken place. In smaller sites, only the acropolis was

fortified, whereas the surrounding lower city remained unwallled, strongly suggesting the initial stages of development in all urban fortifications (Kenoyer [1997] 56-62; Allchin and Allchin [1993] 133-34, 146, 150, 157, 162, 171-76; Possehl [1998] 269-72, presenting the evidence for warfare but curiously forgetting fortifications). A thousand years after the collapse of the Indus civilisation, as urbanism gradually revived in Early Historic India from the 6th century B.C., a clear sequence of evolution can be discerned from towns and earthen, mud and timber fortifications to regularly laid out cities surrounded by walls, some made of stone (Ghosh [1973] 51, 61-67; Allchin et al. [1995] 62, 70, 106-11, 134-36, 142-46, 202, 222-26; Erdosy [1988] 109, 113-14). In western Nigeria, the excavated fortifications of the Yoruba cities reveal several concentric lines, erected in step with the cities' growth. All the same, even the Yoruban Ife's earliest circuit fortifications, which have a circumference of more than 5 km, indicate the existence of a large coalesced site by the time of their construction. In Benin City, the circuit fortifications, consisting of a massive earthen bank and ditch, have a circumference of 11.6 km. A trend from ditches and stockades to earthen ramparts and, then, more solid walls is universally discernible (Ajayi and Smith [1964] 23-28; Smith [1969] 22, 125-26; Connah [1987] 131-36; [2000]; Hull [1976] 41).

The overwhelming majority of Greek *poleis* appear to have had no circuit walls until the 6th century B.C. in Ionia and southern Italy, and until the 5th century in mainland Greece, after centuries of urban growth (Winter [1971] esp. 54-55, 60, 101; Lawrence [1979] 113-14; Snodgrass [1991] 6-10; also cf. Herodotus 1.141 and 163; but see Hansen [2000] 161 for some earlier cases). Athens, for example, the largest Greek *polis*, was evacuated without resistance by its population and burned down by the Persians in 480 because it still had only the Acropolis walls and possibly the beginnings of further fortifications encompassing a larger public area around the centre (Winter [1971] 61-64). It acquired its celebrated circuit walls only after the Persian War and despite Spartan objection to the novelty. Not until the time of the Peloponnesian War had most Greek city-states erected circuit walls, with the unwallled Sparta remaining as an exception and reminder of earlier times. As late as the second half of the 4th century B.C., Aristotle, writing that "a citadel (or *acropolis*) is suitable to oligarchies and monarchies; a level plain suits the character of democracy", still found it meaningful to discuss the question whether it was good or not for a *polis* to have a fortifi-

cation wall (*Politics* 7.11.5-12 1330b-1331a). The emergent Latin city-states of the same period followed a similar pattern (Holloway [1994] 91-102; Cornell [1995] 198-202, 320, 331; [2000] 217-19; Smith, [1996] 152-54). For instance, excavations show that Rome's circuit stone wall was only built after the sacking of the city in 390-387 by the Gauls, whose armed band would not have been able to take the city if it had been fully fortified. Only particularly exposed stretches of the city's perimeter appear to have been protected by discontinuous ditches and earth works (*ager*). And the Roman population took refuge on the Capitoline Hill, where some sort of fortifications probably augmented the natural stronghold. Similarly, in the mediaeval city-states a larger civic centre encompassing the market and main public buildings was fortified beyond the original stronghold in many nascent cities only in the 11th century. The residential suburb (*faubourg*, *suburbium*, *portus*) which continued to grow as an adjunct to the fortified core was only defended, if at all, by elementary timber and earthen fortifications (Pirenne [1952] 141-43). Full circuit stone walls only began to be built around the mediaeval city-states toward the end of that century and mostly in the 12th, after some two centuries of city evolution (Pirenne [1952] 177-78; [1963] esp. 4, 37; Verhulst [1999] 70-117; Nicholas [1997] 92-95, 184; Hyde [1973] 74 and plates 1a and b; Griffiths [1981] 87-88; Sznura [1991] 403-18; Benevolo [1993] 34-36, 44-46, 50).

Finally, returning to pre-Columbian America, there, too, fortifications evolved in step with urban evolution, including the gradual emergence over the centuries of circuit walls. Further excavations of the Maya sites have brought to light a sequence that eluded earlier researchers. The most ancient finds, first regarded as drainage systems, have been firmly identified as formidable earth fortifications. In Los Naranjos an earthwork system composed of ditch and embankments, approximately 1,300 m long, stretching from a swamp to a lake, defended the approaches to the main site as early as 800-400 B.C.. A second system, more than twice as long, was apparently erected around A.D. 400-550, during the Classic. In the Pre-classic site of Mirador a 600 m long wall has been discovered. At Tikal, an earth and rubble system, composed of a ditch, parapet and gates, defended the approaches to the site from the north, stretching from swamp to swamp for 9.5 km. It was built 4.5 km away from Tikal's Great Plaza and four hours' walk from its nearest large neighbour Uaxactun. The system is believed to have evolved from the Early Classic and

reached its zenith in the Middle Classic. The Edzna “citadel” was surrounded by a water-filled moat even before the Classic. Becan is the first large-scale site presently known to have been completely surrounded by a ditch and parapet from as early as the Pre- or Early Classic (A.D. 100-450). The ditch was 1.9 km in circumference with an average width of 16 m and depth of 5.3 m. The parapet behind it was 5 m high. Other fortified sites from various phases of the Classic period have been identified, though many have not yet been excavated. By the Late and Post-Classic, circuit walls evolved around many sites, particularly in the northern lowlands. While some of these fortified sites were no more than central ceremonial/civic/refuge enclosures, others encompassed a much larger urban centre. Mayapan was the latest and largest, with a 9 km long outer wall, encompassing 4.2 km², and an inner (earlier?) wall around its ceremonial civic centre. In Tulum and Ichpaatun the walls were squarely laid out and made of stone. In some sites stone walls were topped by timber stockades. Fortifications everywhere relied extensively on the natural defences of heights, swamps and sea. In the Post-Classic Maya highland, steep slopes provided the basis for formidable discontinuous defences at the approaches to urban sites (Webster [1976b]; [1977]; [1978]; Puleston and Callender [1967]; Adams [1991] 161-62).

In central Mexico, the giant city of Teotihuacan dominated the entire region during the Classic period. As the city reached its apogee, it had massive but not circuit walls, some of which were 5 m high and 3.5 m wide at the base. According to Millon ([1973] 39-40), the stretches of the city’s circumference that were not defended by walls were protected by a maze of canals, flooded areas and cactus vegetation, while the sheer size of the building compounds within the city would have functioned as “natural fortresses”. In any case, during its heyday Teotihuacan apparently had few serious rivals. Only after the city’s destruction ca. A.D. 650 was the system becoming far more competitive, as a multiplicity of antagonistic city-states was emerging in Late- and Post-Classic central Mexico. Some of the leading urban centres in this system had a fortified acropolis, while others, such as Xochicalco and Cacaxtla, were evolving circuit defensive systems, which usually relied on strong natural defences. In Xochicalco, for example, the central hilltop religious-civic enclosure was surrounded by a wall, whereas the larger perimeter of the hill was defended by a discontinuous system of ramparts and ditches that closed the gaps between steep slopes. Some cities

possessed circuit walls at the time the Spanish arrived, while in others – like the Aztec capital Tenochtitlan, lying in the middle of a lake – a strong natural location was reinforced by man-made constructions. In the Valley of Oaxaca from the late Pre-Classic and during the Classic (Periods I-III; roughly the first half of the first millennium A.D.), Monte Albán was defended by kilometres-long, discontinuous fortification walls that augmented the site’s strong hilltop position (Amillas [1951] 77-86; Hirth [1989]; Diehl and Berlo [1989]; Blanton [1978] 52-54, 75-76; Hassig [1992] 35-36, 41, 68, 100-9, 150; Lind [2000] 572). To conclude our discussion so far, it would appear that only the misleading perspective of absolute chronology – where that of relative cultural evolution would be far more appropriate – creates the optical illusion that pre-Columbian America was fundamentally different from the Old World.

All this, however, merely makes the puzzle more general: if, as argued earlier, the main motive for the coalescence of the countryside population and nucleation of settlement that characterised the growth of city-states was defence – in the Old World as well as in America – why were they not fully surrounded by continuous circuit walls from the start? Indeed, what defensive use was there in settlement aggregation in the absence of such walls? Underlying this puzzle are the generally unfamiliar patterns of pre- and proto-state warfare which stand at variance to our historically shaped concepts of war. For pre- and proto-state warfare mainly consisted of raids, carried out by war parties (Turney-High [1948]; Otterbein [1970]; Keeley [1996]; Gat [1999]). Lives and property in scattered countryside settlements were mostly at risk. With increasing sedentism ever since the Mesolithic, nucleated village communities often fortified their settlements with palisades and ditches (Rowlands [1972]; also Keeley [1996]; Gat [2000]). Stone towers in the countryside were also widespread as a defensive measure in the Mediterranean, including the Greek world (Lawrence [1979] 187-97; Osborne [1987] 63-67; Cherry, Davis and Mantzourani [1991] 285-98). However, by coalescing around a central stronghold, people could not only find refuge in time of emergency for life and some valuable movable possessions – chiefly livestock; they also ceased to present small, isolated and highly vulnerable targets for raiders. As with herd animals, schools of fish and flocks of birds, there was increased safety in numbers. On top of all defensive works, cities and towns were protected by *size*. Substantial settlements could not be quickly eliminated in a surprise night raid. Their

inhabitants would have made up a considerable force and would have had time to wake up and resist. Indeed, taking on a city meant direct fighting of the most severe, sustained and dangerous sort: from house to house, with every building top potentially serving as a minor stronghold. This was precisely the sort of fighting that “voluntary” pre- and proto-state warriors tended to avoid.

This is not mere speculation; the evidence from both Archaic Greece and late pre-contact Mexico (as well as from pre-colonial Africa and mediaeval Europe) supports it. It has long been recognised that warfare for the Archaic Greek city-states meant ravaging the countryside or, if the enemy came out to defend his fields and orchards, a fierce but short face-to-face encounter. The encounter ended either in the attackers’ withdrawal, as seems to have happened in most cases, or, if it was the defenders who withdrew, in a resumption of ravaging. Tellingly, the cities themselves appear rarely to have been attacked. Experts on Greek warfare have recognised that occupying another city-state by force was simply beyond the capability of a 7th or 6th century B.C. *polis*. Generally, however, this fact has been ascribed to rudimentary siege-craft before the late 5th century B.C. and to the short staying power of the citizen militia, both factors being valid for most of the 5th century; curiously, the fact that the *poleis* of the Archaic period still had no circuit walls has somehow not sunk in. Victor Hanson, for example, seems to be entirely unaware of this paradox in his otherwise admirable interpretation of hoplite warfare, which deals mainly with the early Classical period ([1989]; [1995] esp. 145, 251-52; [1998] 8). Hanson does, however, stress the prominence of the raid in the Classical period ([1995] 143-44), and it was undoubtedly even more central during the Archaic period (cf. Osborne [1987] 138-41, 145), as it continued to be in the non-*polis* parts of Greece. Josiah Ober ([1991] esp. 186) comes closer but still fails to factor in the absence of circuit city-walls during the Archaic period.

But, indeed, if such walls were absent, why were Archaic *poleis* not regularly conquered? Again, with the actual elements of this puzzle remaining imperfectly recognised, the question itself simply did not present itself in all its starkness. The phalanx hoplite warriors are justly celebrated for their unique bravery in accepting and withstanding face-to-face encounters. However, they regularly did so on a level plain and equal terms, while avoiding attack on enemy forces which held superior positions, for example on higher ground. Evidently, they all the more recoiled

from unequal out-and-out urban street fighting. It will be noted that even after the crushing Theban victory of Leuctra in 371 B.C., during a period in which sieges had already become more common, the Thebans and their allies, having invaded the Peloponnese and Laconia, recoiled on two different occasions from an attack on the still unwallled Sparta for precisely these reasons (Xenophon, *Hellenica*, 6.5.27-31, 7.5.11-14). Rather than the routinely evoked notions of “ritualised” warfare and customary restraint, it was an aversion to the dangers that such an attack involved – in conjunction with the weakness of coercive central command and of organisational stamina in the early city-state – that accounted for the inherent indecisiveness of Greek warfare; there was very little restraint and much viciousness and cruelty in early Greek (or Mesoamerican) inter-city-state warfare (e.g. Pritchett [1991] 203 ff).

Among the Maya, raids led by aristocrats (and aristocratic single combats) were the principal form of warfare, making it inherently indecisive and protracted for most of Maya history. Cities were rarely occupied until very late in the evolution of the Maya polities (Webster [1977] 357-59; also [1998] and [2000]; Hassig [1992] 74-75; Schele and Freidel [1990]; Schele and Mathews [1991] 245-48; Freidel [1986] 93-108). And despite the reputed viciousness of Aztec warfare, large-scale ravaging raids, rather than the indecisive battles of the “flowery wars”, served as the principal means for achieving enemy compliance. Weaker victims gave in to the pressure, and, as the Aztec hegemonic empire and armies grew, their enemies’ cities and central cultic-civic strongholds became more vulnerable to storming or to the threat of it. All the same, only recently have scholars begun to come to terms with the highly conspicuous fact that despite some 70 years of rivalry the Aztecs never managed actually to conquer the city of their implacable arch-rival, Tlaxcalla, and its allies in the Valley of Puebla, which were protected by natural defences, supplemented by border fortifications and refuge strongholds, yet possessed no circuit city walls (Barry [1983]; Hassig [1988] 105-9, 129-30, 254-56; [1999] 378-80). Nor, for that matter, did Sparta ever manage to conquer its own main enemy since the Archaic period, Argos. Among the Yoruba as well, of western Nigeria, inter-city warfare mostly consisted of raids and skirmishes (Smith [1969] 126-27), as it also did among the communes of mediaeval Europe.

In the exceptional case of the worse coming to the worst and the enemy forcing its way into the early city, the city’s population would withdraw to the cen-

tral ceremonial-civic stronghold. If this was a hilltop enclosure (or a small peninsula), its natural defences would be augmented by the simplest forms of fortifications, such as ditches, and earth, timber, and (often uncut and free-standing) stone ramparts, which everywhere served as the most readily available and most easily handled materials. Regularly laid brick and stone construction became more widespread only later, or in environments where stone or clay mud were plentiful while wood and even earth were scarce. Even in those regions, such as Mesopotamia and, to a lesser degree, the Maya lowland, where a flatter topography dictated that the ceremonial-civic centres would not possess the natural protection of commanding height, they still served as refuge strongholds, as the Mesoamerican evidence at any rate extensively shows. The monumental buildings themselves constituted the last line of defence, and they were further surrounded and connected by permanent or hastily improvised ditches and ramparts. In the prehistoric Andean civilisations of South America as well, the widespread prevalence of hilltop refuge strongholds and citadels in the mountain polities and of fortified urban ceremonial-civic centres in the coastal plain tell the same story (Haas, Pozorski and Pozorski [1987] esp. Chs. 5-7; also, Parsons and Hastings [1988] 152, 204-17). Indeed, it was the capture and destruction by fire of the city-state's refuge-cultic stronghold that everywhere – in both the Old and New Worlds (e.g. Millon [1988] 149 for Teotihuacan) – signified supreme victory, not only symbolically, as some scholars have assumed, but also practically, for it was the main and last point of resistance for the city's elite and population. All in all, a sequence in the evolution of city fortifications is discernible more or less world-wide (Japan is another instructive example): there was evolution from earth, rubble and timber construction, through “intermediate forms” such as the *murus gallicus* of the *oppida* which added stone facing, to brick and stone, and finally to pure stone; in parallel, there was evolution from defended central enclosures, often through somewhat larger fortified civic centres, to full circuit walls (Weber [1958] 75-80, is insightful on this as well).

What then were the factors that fuelled this evolutionary sequence and brought the familiar brick and stone city circuit walls into being? Again a broad interrelated process was at work, tied up with the consolidation of mass urban society/polity. The larger and more organised and resource-rich the city-states had grown to be and the more capable they had become of long-term, sustained military effort in enemy

territory (which in Greece, for example, only happened in the 5th century B.C.), the more were they capable of undertaking attacks on cities, and indeed of holding them after they had been occupied. At the same time, however, the very same factors that had enhanced offensive capability and threat had also increased defensive capability. Capability and necessity grew together. For example, money payment to recruits for protracted campaigning away from home – a crucial offensive upgrade – was introduced in Greece, Rome and the mediaeval Italian city-states alike at roughly the same time that circuit city walls were erected. Taxes to pay for both were more or less simultaneously imposed: during the Peloponnesian War in Greece (Pritchett [1974] Ch. I), in 406 B.C. in Rome (Cornell [1995] 187-88), and from the 12th and mostly during the 13th century A.D. in mediaeval Europe (Hyde [1973] 182-84; Jones [1997] 385-86; Waley [1968] 94-96; Nicholas [1997] 255-58; Contamine [1984] 91). Kilometres-long circuit brick and stone city walls now made their appearance where only ditches and earth and timber palisades, or stone citadels at most, had existed. This was a massive construction, necessitating both investment and political coordination. A growth in state power, integrating earlier, loose, agricultural *cum* nascent urban kintribal society, was reciprocally both a cause and result of all these interrelated processes.

In the Mesopotamian epic tradition, the erection of Uruk's circuit city walls was associated with the reign of a more powerful king, Gilgamesh (sometime between 2700 and 2500 B.C.), whose authority rested on broader popular support and whose power grew as a result of his resistance to the hegemonic rule of another powerful city-state king, Agga of Kish (Kovacs [1985] I: 10 and 17-22; George [1999] 143-48; Pritchard [1969] 44-47). The growth in offensive, defensive and political power was intertwined and self-reinforcing. In western Africa “the first set of walls in Kano were begun by Sarki (king) Gijinmasu (ca. 1095-1134) and completed by his son. In about 1440 Eware the Great, ruler of the Benin kingdom, constructed high walls and deep protective trenches around Benin city” (Hull [1976] 40).

Among the Maya as well, more elaborate defences, including stone circuit walls, evolved during the Late and Post-Classic together with the growth of larger city-state polities, mercenary service, more systematic state warfare, and wars of conquest (Webster [1977]; Schele and Freidel [1990]; Freidel [1986]). In both Ionia and Magna Graecia, the advanced peripheries of the Greek world, city fortifications came in the 6th

century with the new autocratic power of the tyrants (again resting on popular support) and the threat of great powers' professional armies: the Lydian and Persian in the east and the Carthaginian in the west (e.g. Herodotus 1.141 and 163). The rise in state power did not, however, always and necessarily take autocratic form. By the time Athens acquired its circuit walls, the work of a popular tyrant, Peisistratus, had been followed by a democratic reformer, Cleisthenes, who substituted a territorial political organisation for the earlier kin-based structure of the Athenian polity. Similarly, although archaeology does not support Roman traditions that the city's walls were erected by King Servius Tullius in the mid-6th century B.C., it is interesting to note that it was to the same king that the reorganisation of the Roman state from kin to territorial basis, as well as the institution of the legionary army, were ascribed. Probably, as scholars tend to believe (Cornell [1995] 173-96), a series of political and military reforms over two centuries of Roman state formation during the monarchy and early Republic were compressed by later Roman traditions and ascribed to the proto-historical king, who may have launched the initial steps. In the mediaeval communes, the expulsion of the local archbishop/prince and the establishment of the commune as an organised self-governing civic community coincided with the erection of circuit walls in the 12th century.

Conclusion

The thrust of this article is theoretical, aiming as it does to synthesise often familiar materials and observations into a comprehensive explanation of a major enigma. Why city-states existed in a pre-industrial society, where some 80 to 90 per cent of the population, at least, were necessarily engaged in food production, is a mystery, which scholars have seldom addressed or even recognised. City-states neither had low rates of urbanism, nor, as a rule, relied heavily on imported food, as some scholars have assumed. An unusually large part, often the majority, and sometimes the large majority, of the city-state's population lived in nucleated urban settlements: mostly in the "city" itself and partly in its dependent "towns". And even if in some city-states, particularly those with a developed maritime economy, urbanism did result in a more specialised craft and trade sector, this alone – in view of the realities of food production and transportation – cannot account for their high rates of urbanism, nor for the high rates of the scores and

hundreds of "ordinary" city-states. Most of the city-states' population consisted of peasants who lived in the city and walked to work their land outside it, in the city's near vicinity. Indeed, rather than massive industrial and commercial concentration which only existed in a few, high-profile, historical cases, it was defensive coalescence that mostly accounts for the fact that city-states generally appeared in clusters of tens and hundreds and that, as if paradoxically, smaller city-state's size correlated better with higher rates of urbanism. It is therefore not surprising that students of city-states have regularly encountered problems in applying the concepts of "city" and even "urbanism" – usually associated with very large size and with economic complexity – to these often miniscule "town"-polities. The view that the concept of city-state is a misnomer has gained popularity for this reason. Yet, although the concept may indeed be somewhat misleading in this respect, it remains a perfectly valid shorthand if what is meant by urbanism in this context is properly understood. City-states should be more adequately described as densely and centrally nucleated petty-polities. They emerged where large-scale territorial unification did not take place early in political evolution, and the peasant population of petty-polities coalesced to seek protection against raids from neighbouring such polities. A central refuge/cultic/chiefly enclosure, sometimes supplemented by more extensive ditches and earth and timber works at strategically and topographically exposed directions, as well as the sheer size of the nucleated settlement provided defence against raiding hosts. Over time, both offensive and defensive capability developed in step with organisational and coercive state power. It took centuries of early urban evolution until continuous circuit walls replaced more limited fortifications, while earth and timber gave way to brick and stone.

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Abbreviations

Ben. – Bènzàa
Ger.- German
Lyk. – Lykian
Nep. – Nepalese
Sum. – Sumerian
Syr. – Syrian

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The present volume is a supplement to *A Comparative Study of Thirty City-State Cultures* (2000) and comprises accounts of four new city-state cultures and new descriptions of two city-state cultures treated from a different point of view in the earlier volume. The four new city-state cultures are: (1) the Neo-Hittite city-states in northern Syria ca. 1200-700 B.C. (2) The Lykian city-states in south-west Asia Minor in the Dynastic period ca. 540-360 B.C. (3) The Zapotec city-states in the Bènzàa region in Mesoamerica in the Post-Classic period ca. 800-1600. (4) The city-states in the Kathmandu valley in Nepal in the years 1480-1768. The two city-state cultures treated once again are: (1) the Sumerian city-states ca. 3100-2330 B.C. (2) The south-west German City-States ca. 1350-1550. The volume is introduced with an analysis of what the six chapters can contribute to the concepts of city-state and city-state culture; and it is concluded with a contribution about defence as the principal motive behind the formation of city-states.