

ON THE LAYOUT OF THE CITY

The layout of a city is of great importance. A city, or polis, is a group of individuals who come together with a common interest. In this way, the city is the universal of cities. The genus is the village, or district, which is part of a city's whole. The particular is the element that makes the village, and so the city. These include buildings, roads, meeting places and rural land.

The city exists for the happiness of the individual. Without the city, cooperation fails. Without cooperation, the individual fails. For a man who lives alone has the responsibility of all his actions. Finding food, protecting property, protecting his life. And so without a city, man resorts to a state of nature. And this is a game of survival, rather than the prosperity of that activity of the soul in accordance with perfect virtue called happiness.

Let us examine the city: beginning with the universal, followed by the village and then its particulars.

The city begins with the universal. As defined, a city is a group of individuals who come together to serve a common interest. An individual is an ensouled man with the capacity to reason, and the common interest is the universal goals that apply to all men at all times. The most natural, and so most valuable of these for the individual, is happiness. In the past, there have been many definitions of city. The Jews described them as 'great settlements', the early Greeks as 'associations' and the Romans left the name city for the exclusive magnificence of 'mother Rome'. The universal feature that applies to these definitions is groups of individuals living with each other, in a defined territory governed by a universal authority, in order to grow and protect the universal wants of each inhabitant. And so a city's elements include a permanent population, who may be replaced by generation or residing aliens; engagement in social activity through politics, commerce and worship in particular; territory marked naturally or artificially, by the limit of man's construction (such as the boundary between the farthest united house and the country) or a city wall; universal authority in the form of statesmen, who deliberate and judge in the affairs of the city; with happiness, and the virtue that makes it, as the common aim of its inhabitants. It is from here the city may be broken down into its villages.

Villages are the genera from cities. In a way, a village is a form of city. It differs in its municipality. As with city, there is confusion on the definition of village. Some hold a village to be another name for a city, like a town, whilst others hold village is a separate category to city. Village lies between the two extremes of city and land; in that the former greatly agrees to its definition whilst the latter its opposite. A village is like a child, an elementary polis which has the potential to become a city. This applies to a rural settlement in the same way to a district of a city. For London is defined by the association of the City, Westminster, Camden, et cetera, instead of its universal. For so to do would make London unintelligible, and yet the city is sensible to man's natural faculties. Thus a village is related to a city in this way; a necessary part of being to its whole. So much for the essence of a village.

With the universal and genus considered, the next principle of a city to examine is its particulars. Villages, and so cities, are made up of common characteristics. These include buildings, roads,

meeting places and rural land. Some cities will be affected by material causes, and so affect its form. For instance, the inner city of Florence accommodates pedestrians, whilst Paris' inner city accommodates motor cars over pedestrians. Nevertheless, these common features pertain so we shall look at each in turn.

Buildings are the trees of each city. In general, they are artificial structures with foundations, walls and roofs built for a specific purpose. These purposes especially include residential, public (including government), worship and commerce. A building is where individuals live, work, deliberate and judge and meditate on philosophical matters. These buildings, like their occupants, work together to facilitate the happiness of a city's inhabitants. They are proportional to the needs of the inhabitants; so it is common for residential buildings to have the highest quantity in cities, as natural to supplying individual happiness, whilst buildings of worship are the most used collectively, as religion unities a city in common worship. In achieving happiness, particular attention is paid to architecture. Buildings condition praiseworthy characteristics in individuals, and so imitate the praiseworthy characteristics in nature. In reason, imitation of the laws of harmony, intricacy and symmetry; in sensation, lions' courage, whales' magnificence and dogs' unity — avoiding their opposites. Constant exposure to this environment conditions virtues into their users, and with this their happiness. The opposite, their sadness.

Buildings are brought together by roads. They are like the paths between trees. It is useful for inhabitants to use large and small roads. The former to provide ease of movement: particularly for trade and movement of armies; the latter to make invading a city more difficult for enemies, and generally restrict distractions to individual happiness. In this way, a city can accommodate more inhabitants and restrict movement of individuals to benefit the common interest.

Meeting places bring roads and buildings together. A meeting place is a location in a city where persons may meet for social activity. The most common is the public square; however, in this way, some buildings — under appropriate conditions — may be called a meeting place. A meeting place is conducive to social activity. This includes public events as well as small gatherings and *tête-à-têtes*. Public squares are best made small enough for a mother to see her child playing and large enough for an individual to feel away from their house. A public square unities its buildings together; and so, with conditioning, its individuals. It has the added benefit that where one square is disruptive, the disruption is limited to the square, and so preserves the happiness of others across the city. Public squares benefit from having statues. Like architecture, depictions of famous individuals inspire individuals to imitate their actions. The most beneficial virtues to imitate for happiness are courage, justice and magnanimity; so statues of warriors, judges and kings past and present affect the greatest virtue, and so the greatest happiness, of the city.

Amongst buildings, roads and meeting places, rural land completes the common elements of a city. Rural land includes gardens, parks, forests and open land surrounding a city. This natural chaos balances the artificial order of buildings, roads and meeting places. Rural land exposes individuals to this chaos amongst order, and so teaches the mind the importance of affection and destruction in facilitating individual happiness. Statues and shrines make use of rural land. In rural privacy, individuals have space to meditate on their lives, and so identify and overcome their weaknesses. In Christendom, this is known as prayer.

So much for the common particulars of cities.

A city is a group of individuals who come together to serve a common purpose. This is the name given to the universal form understood by the Jews, Greeks and Romans. It is from its particulars we understand village, and from village city. These accord to the natural hierarchy of universal, genus and particular. A happy city is proportional to the particulars it has to facilitate virtuous activity of the soul. Sadness comes from excess or deficiency of a city's particular needs. And so a happy city depends on its particulars.