

Sculpting Civilizations: The Influence of Artwork in the Maintenance of Ancient Cities

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Abstract

The role of art in the development of urban life is an important topic relating to communication, creativity, and the Great Traditions of urbanism. Art is a necessary way to communicate ideals and traditions; for example, stained glass in orthodox churches is used as an alternative to the Bible to teach the illiterate the stories about orthodox religion. Trends in art forms, styles, and subject could indicate a lot about urban values and how these values change over time as cities develop. This free range of expression gives insight into what city populations valued. Styles reveal how conservative a community is, or what mindsets and way of thinking people have. For instance, abstract styles tell us about the more scattered ways people approach issues and themes, while something like pop art can tell us about the value of cultural revolution and a progressive mindset. Art, particularly public art, illuminates political ideologies, inequalities, public consciousness, narratives, and religions. The study of urban art can also simply help us visualize and recreate what experiencing a city is like in the viewpoint of the citizens living there. Through a close analysis of the impact of artwork in Ancient Egypt and Ancient China, we can see which famous theories on the development on ancient cities can be applied to explain the role of art in its maintenance.

Theories on the Relevance of Ancient Artwork

Art is sustained through surplus and the desire for social organization

Gordan Childe, an Australian archaeologist specializing in the study of European prehistory, suggests that art can be a defining characteristic of a city. Childe (1950) initially considers the consequences of art when defining the urban. He connects back to the concept of social surplus, which is produced by the lower class living in the city and dependent villages to support specialists and higher classes. He hypothesizes that while art dates to the time of savages, who depicted animals and men in a naturalistic form with few patterns and traits, advanced city craftsmen created “conceptualized and sophisticated styles which differ in each of the four urban centres” (Childe 1950:15). If Childe (1950) is accurate in asserting that different cities have different styles of art with a level of conceptual thought to them, then we can expect to see full time artists in the early cities, supported by surplus collected by temple and palace institutions. As artists receive a stipend that allows them to freely work on their artistic endeavors, art would develop that extends beyond simple representations of the world; simply said, people will place more value on expression, ideas, and opinions instead of simply trying to replicate their subjects. Early urban art should take the form of “conceptualized and sophisticated styles” that appear as well-developed artistic genres and canons. Childe (1950) suggests a surplus is essential to maintaining a community “because each [class/role] performed mutually complementary functions, needed for the well-being (as defined under civilization) of the whole” (Childe 1950:16). There was a sustained, clear division of labor and roles among early communities because people had a demand for artwork and were willing to provide for craftsmen so that this artwork could be produced. The idea that people were willing to use their surplus to provide for art implies that artwork/crafts were considered valuable or indicators of being elite; the concept that craftsmen would need to be supported by a social surplus also suggests that art had a substantial cost that perhaps only the wealthy or socially powerful would be able to obtain as controllers of said surplus. If Childe (1950) is right in assuming that those who controlled the surplus would be patrons of craftspeople, then we would expect early city elites to sponsor and own art in abundance compared to lower classes. Interconnectivity is a true representative on how dependent the citizens of a city were on one another, meaning we can also assume that these well integrated craftsmen and artists were a true representative of the ideals of a city and that their work would be widespread among important locations and people. As a result, we can use their art as an indicator of community values, along with community change.

Art as Religious Storytelling

Robert Adams (1960) does not hold as much of a focus on the arts in analyzing early urban life. As a American analytic philosopher specializing in religion, he brings attention to the presence of temples and the role of religion in creating a community. He specifically studies the ritual activities of some specialized priests that appear in Protonitrate seals and stone carvings. For instance, he includes images such as a war chariot limestone carving from the city of Ur which indicates methods of warfare during those times and a Mesopotamian stone cylinder seal showing the idea that a man was fashioned to worship the gods. Adams also brings up pottery and beads found within later tombs of Ur that serve as grave offerings to indicate the wealth of the deceased (Adams 1960:165).



1. *ROYAL WAR CHARIOT* - limestone plaque from city of Ur reflects concern of Mesopotamian cities about methods of warfare in middle of third millennium B.C (Adams 1960).



2. *ROYAL GRAVE OFFERINGS* - later tombs in Ur indicate the concentration of wealth that accompanied the emergence of a kingly class (Adams 1960).



3. *RELIGIONS* - Ancient Mesopotamia was dominated by the idea that man was fashioned to serve the gods (Adams 1960).

If Adams (1960) intends to use artistic expression to further his ideas on religion/war leading the development of ancient cities, then we can expect to see early city artwork covering the subject matters of military proceedings and the dominant religion; alongside this artwork, we should be able to spot artwork or crafts made for the purpose of honoring the dead or bringing items to the afterlife. We can also, in turn, expect to see temples and people of social power that potentially employ specialized artists for this sole purpose, perhaps using the social surplus that Chide proposes fuels the creation of art in the first place.

Artist homes to reveal importance of artwork

Gideon Sjoberg (1965) also discusses important aspects of characteristics establishing a city as an renowned author focusing on the divisions of urban centers. As he analyzes the structural layout of a city, he discusses a creation of a class system, social organization through surplus, and the presence of artisans. He mentions that “artisan groups, some of which even in early times may have belonged to specific ethnic minorities, tended to establish themselves in special quarters or streets” (Sjoberg 1965:58). If there are specialized artisan groups within a city, we would expect to see dwellings for artists that would be outside of the center of the city (as the center is often reserved for the elites and for temples). There would also be a good chance that these artists would work to serve the elites or to create crafts as their share of the communal division of labor.

Artists as a method of unifying communities

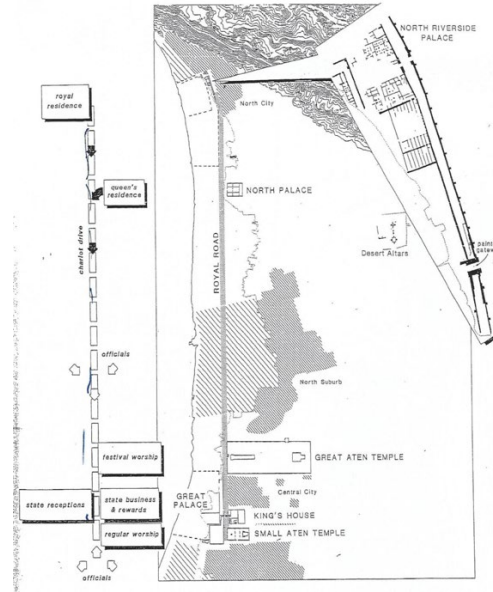
On the other hand, Robert Redfield and Milton Singer (1954) discuss the Great Tradition, or the way of life that grows out of common interactions in a city and creates a universalizing, standardized value system. The two anthropologists were collaborators on the Comparison of Cultures Project and other works, looking into how the Great Tradition maintains the interconnectivity and community of a city. They mention that “the embodiment of the Great Tradition [is] in “sacred books” and secondarily in sacred monuments, art, icons, etc.” (Redfield Singer 1954:66). For instance, we might expect to see artwork with prominent themes that resembles religious figures, rituals, and holidays that the general masses can easily view or learn from. If Redfield and Singer (1954) are right in emphasizing the importance of art in embodying traditions, then we should expect to see artwork in early cities takes on Great Tradition characteristics such as having a standardized doctrine through consistent subject matter and overarching themes through suggestive stylistic choices that define political, moral, social norms. As a result, we could

get more insight on what lower classes learned their traditions from and how they established cultural consciousness and a civilization from folk societies. Redfield and Singer (1954) also discuss how sacred scripture and an educated literati class that controls these Great Traditions are crucial for the creation of culture. These factors lead to “the universalization of cultural consciousness [which] is a necessary ingredient in formation and maintenance” (Redfield Singer 1954:68). If they are accurate in their beliefs that these mediums are essential for the creation of community, then we can expect to see art used in some linguistic form to convey Great Tradition themes and rituals. Perhaps these artists would work permanently in temples and homes to mass produce accessible artwork for a unifying religion through the usage of images.

Case Study on the Role of Egyptian Artwork in the City

The Development of Amarna

The early Egyptian region serves as a good area of focus in determining whether the previous authors’ assertions of the creation of artwork and its role in early cities is well-founded. The Egyptian city of Amarna, for one, depicts the mass circulation of artwork in the city as a center of mass pottery production and foreign trading of art, giving a multitude of craft sources through tombs, found pieces of work, and murals. Amarna was founded in a harsh, “untainted” region near the Nile by Akhenaten as a way of worshipping the Sun Disk God, Aten. Amarna’s rapid growth relied heavily on manual labor and an organization of vascularized networks of streets and dense neighborhoods, suggesting a level of planning in its development compared to the organic growth of Sumerian cities. The city existed without walls or boundaries but was surrounded by crisscrossed tracks meant to connect different regions of the cities and the Nile River on the other side (Kemp 2012:155). The Royal Road ran from the Small Aten Temple up to the North Palace (Queens Residence) and North City, with houses near the road being larger and luxurious than those farther from it. The most northern region of the road started with the royal residence, leading down to the queen’s residence and chariot drive. Towards the southern side of the road was the Great Aten Temple, where festival worship occurred. Then followed the Great Palace for state business, receptions, and rewards. The Small Aten Temple, responsible for regular worship, stood right next to the Kinds House and Great Palace. The Great and Small Aten Temple stood in the center of the city. Built around the temple, the central city consists of the military post, records office, the bakery, and the House of the King’s statue. A little past the central cities lay neighborhoods and houses such as the house of Thutmose, a chief sculptor, among many other neighborhoods and workers villages. To the South lay villages and southern tombs.



4. *Principle Structural Elements - This diagram of El Amarna shows the royal procession route*

Residents of Amarna lived not by choice but by force through orders from the pharaoh Akhenaten. More than 40,000 people from Egypt were uprooted to live in this new harsh land; this facilitation appears more obvious when we notice Egyptian elites built their houses all over the capital as opposed to near a valuable central temple like prior cities with pious citizens. Because the city and its domineering religion were forced upon its citizens, propaganda through forms of artwork became essential to truly convincing residents to worship the Sun Disk God with genuineness like Akhenaten wanted. Although this artwork was sufficient in maintaining Akhenaten's revolution for around 17 years towards the end of the 18th Dynasty, Akhenaten's successors eventually renounced his religion to travel back to Thames, the capital of Egypt.

Egyptian Art as a status of Wealth

We can acknowledge Childe's (1950) argument that we would expect early city elites to sponsor and own art in abundance compared to lower classes by analyzing Egyptian tombs and burial sites; tombs were divided by class, with the more Elite being buried with a multitude of pottery, masks, and beads to symbolize their wealth and status. For instance, we can look at "the burial of one man (most likely a local chief) at El Omari [which] included necklaces and pendants made from Red Sea shells...as well as a wooden scepter similar to the staffs carried by later Egyptian kings. The painted scenes found in some of the more elaborate tombs in Upper Egypt- especially at Hierakonpolis- also provide strong evidence of the emergence of powerful rulers" (Andrews 1995:46). We can use the wealth and luxury of the objects that one was buried with, or the decorations within their tombs, to create a level of social differentiation and the growth of an elite class. To fund a growing demand for luxury goods, merchants and full-time specialists had to arise as a source for patrons to acquire artwork such as pendants, necklaces, pottery, etc. This emphasis on artwork as a symbolic form of status in burial sites proves that Childe (1950) is accurate in his remarks that as a controller of surplus and overall city wealth, the elite would obtain a greater multitude of artwork that was more costly/sophisticated. We can also establish that there would be the rise of full-time specialists, not just because of the demands of the upper classes, but because of the demands of temples, the most valued site in an ancient city. "The survival of a series of monolithic shrines with unusual decorative schemes...indicates a growing interest in codification and representation of local

cosmogonies. Priests must have been key protagonists in such developments, which includes “catalogues” of divine images held in temples” to become a symbolic place filled with religious images for the general public to worship and learn from. (Spencer 2010:267). Thutmose, an ancient Egyptian sculptor, serves as an example of a specialized full-time artist who served to work under the elite; pieces excavated from his supposed sculpture workshop include the famous bust of Nefertiti, among other busts of older noblewomen of Amarna. Sculptures of Nefertiti in different lights, including one with her abdomen showing that she had several children as a sign of fertility, shows that Thutmose’s sculptures were being used to spread the concept of worshipping the Egyptian royal family through divine images. We can safely establish that Childe (1950) is correct in this case that there is a rise of temples and higher social classes relying on artists to create sustainable works and sculptures; an assumption can be made that these artists were full-time artisans/craftsmen to be able to do keep up with the demands of temples and private clients. Additionally, its most likely that these priests, as the catalyst of change in temple décor, were acting upon a social surplus of donations and offerings to fund these schemes and images held in temples. This theory would further Childe’s (1950) thoughts on why full-time specialists/craftsmen were sustainable roles within the community.

Artwork surrounding War and Religion

Adams (1960) suggests certain subject matters such as warfare and religion within the art of ancient cities as those were prominent themes of urban life at the time. In this case, he is accurate as Egyptian cities, despite a lack of warfare and development, created artwork portraying some level of military proceeding in the Late Predynastic Period. For example, we can analyze a stone palette which celebrates the victories of King Narmer in unifying Upper and Lower Egypt into a single state; a depiction of past battles or conquests falls within line of using the military and warfare as a theme of art (Andrews 1995).



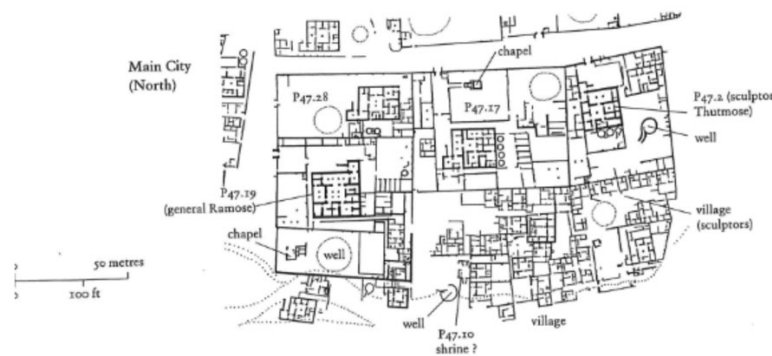
5. *CELEBRATIONS- The Stone Pallet commemorates the victories of King Narmer...in the top portion, the king's name is flanked by the two bulls heads-symbols of pharaonic power. In the lower portion, Narmer inspects the decapitated bodies of his enemies (Andrews 2005: 41).*

Many tombs of kingships or powerful chiefs display scenes of warfare and hold depictions of weapons to encapsulate the themes of violence and conquest (Andrews 2005:47). This type of artwork not only becomes a reminder of power and authority of current rulers, but a way of unifying the rest of the community through an act of patriotism. However, as Egypt develops and warfare becomes less of an imminent threat/concern of, the themes of warfare within art were replaced with whatever values and concerns citizens thought were more important. Religion continues to be a major theme in artwork as

Adams (1960), with his emphasis on temples being the major cause of the origin of cities, would expect. As Pharaohs or kings were the divine instrument between members of the city and God, it became one of the Early Dynastic kings' duties to construct new shrines and temples, including the creation of divine statues (Morris 2013:48). This trend continued into the city of Amarna, where many "poor communities were a vital part of a loosely structured factory system that turned out glass inlays to be used to decorate Akhenaten temples and palaces" (Pringle 2014: 29). Regardless of the evolution of ancient Egyptian religions, art was continuously used to create depictions of deities for worship, especially at temples or shrines. Therefore, we can accept Adams argument that we can expect to see temples and people of social power that employ artists for the sole purpose of religious artwork.

The Artists' prevalence in Amarna

Sjoberg's (1965) implications that artists and craftsmen having residential areas outside of the center have some truth to them when applied to the city of Amarna. Amarna is unique in its layout since its pattern of colonization follows a sense of awareness of past communities, most likely because citizens were uprooted and forced to live there as opposed to naturally migrating. Its neighborhoods recognizes both the worker and its patrons, with craftsmen being no exception. Maps of the Main City show a large house hypothesized to belong to Thutmose (an elite chief sculptor), with the smaller houses representing dependent villages that house other sculptors (Kemp 2012:166).



6. *BLUEPRINTS - Plans of a group of houses illustrates the relationship between larger houses and dependent villages (Kemp 2012).*

The proximity of sculptors near each other demonstrates a sense of community and understanding that those with the same roles should reside near one another and have their separate territories. Therefore, Sjoberg's (1965) claim that there would be residential areas dedicated to artisans is not false but requires more information to explore whether they were considered politically powerful and could live near a center since Amarna's city structure does not hold much of a center but rather islands of neighborhoods.

Art as religious propaganda

We can confirm the concept of art being a significant vehicle to convey unifying motifs on religious ideas and norms mainly because of Akhenaten, the Pharaoh of Amara, and the royal family. Akhenaten was unique in his concept of ruling because he established new religious ideas emphasizing the worship of Aton, or the sun's disk. Art produced in this time was much more naturalistic, depicting everyday things in everyday consumption, which established a cohesive, canonical tradition in public presentation: the king controls his political and religious presentation and how he should be viewed in the eyes of others. We can reference a relief of Akhenaten and his family, depicted with elongated heads and

curving bodies in an unique, dominating style that differs from traditional Egyptian art. The center shows a sun that shines specifically on the Royal Family, equating the sun with the pharaoh. (Pringle 2014:16).



7. *ATON AND THE ROYAL FAMILY* - At the center of the relief is the sun, the singular deity upon whom the pharaoh focused his personal religion (Pringle 2014:16)

The overarching themes of religion and who to worship is pushed through the stylistic choice of presenting the sun shining on Akhenaten, for the family is depicted as controllers of the rays of the sun that shine upon them. Akhenaten's commissioned art takes the characteristics of Great Traditions as it spreads a religious and political norm through the constant theme of religious figures and a unique stylistic representation of people. This idea forces others to interpret Akhenaten as a divine ruler and someone who controls chaos. The political norm of worshipping the pharaoh is especially evident in the constant subject matter of the royal family through statues of these prominent figures in temples, tombs, and murals. Furthermore, art produced under Akhenaten also served to establish social norms. For example, sculptures of Nefertiti and Akhenaten together create a concept of "couples' sculptures that seems to influence other couples in the city as well. In the excavation of South Tombs cemetery in 2006, archeologists "found a carved stone grave marker depicting a young private Amarna couple seated side by side in an intimate, loving embrace", striking to the way the Royal couple is depicted in their statues (Pringle 2014: 29). This example shows a viewpoint of how the Royal Couple acted, as their depictions were loving as opposed to imposing, and how husbands and wives should be a sign of deference or support to one another. The concept that lower class individuals would do similar posing couples demonstrates them accepting the norm of relationships and the expression of a loving, supportive relationship. Once again, a Great Tradition is established to further norms, meaning that Redfield and Singer (1950) are accurate in predicting that cities would create art that served as vehicles of their unifying traditions and cultures.

Redfield and Singer (1950) are also correct in emphasizing expression is controlled by the literati, or ones that can "read and teach" Great Traditions to the rest of the city members. Egypt is distinct for using hieroglyphics as a form of pictorial litany to celebrate messages such as the establishment of upper-class power. We can acknowledge hieroglyphics that use the combinations of animals especially, such as a lion and gazelle, or a jackal and human that make it easy to identify themes and messages for the general audience.



8. *HIEROGLYPHICS- A Jackal-Human hybrid playing the flute, detail of ceremonial palate, represents the intellectual elite engaged in the production of meaning (Morenz 2014)*

These pairs “combine a dominant animal with a subordinate one, indicating a theme of dominance of the strong over the weak, one motif that is readable as conveying a variation on one major theme” (Morenz 2013: 133). These depictions of human and animal figures into an easy-to-understand way, combined with scenes of dominion and displays talents, set up a scene for rulers and the elite to demonstrate their power and knowledge. The usage of different symbols feeds back into the idea of the canonical great tradition of public presentation, alongside the political structure of kings and their power through the replacement of language with pictures.

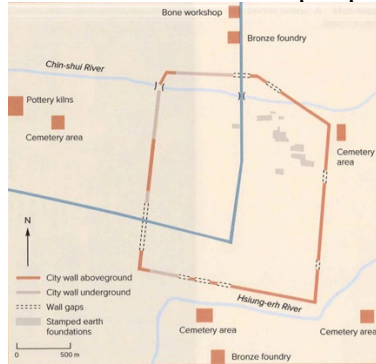
Redfield and Singer (1960) and their theories of the Great Tradition and its qualities showing up within artwork plays the most significant role in exploring the purpose of artwork in Ancient Egypt. By applying the concepts of why Great Traditions form in urban cities (a way to turn folk societies into one unified civilization), we get a better understanding of why artwork is created in the first place and with what intentions; in this case, those intentions include serving as propaganda. Resultingly, one can pull insight into the values of Egyptian cities, alongside political, social norms that explain the entire culture of a city. When the purpose of analyzing artwork is to truly understand the expression and lifestyle of the people creating it, it makes the most sense in this case to use Redfield and Singers ideology to truly comprehend the role of artisans in ancient Egypt and the impact they played on the origin and continuation of their city.

Case Study II: Analyzing Art and Craftsmanship in Ancient Chinese Cities

Chronological History of Ancient Chinese Cities

Another region that is particularly known for its craftsmanship is Ancient China. Our analysis first examines Longshan cultures (3000-2200 BC), which consisted of small farming villages that grew millet and wheat. These villages grouped around a larger communal building and began prominent creation of craft specialists, storage pits, and scapulimancy (using the cracks of bones for divination). Soon after Longshan cultures fell apart, the Xia era began with larger communities and temples; alongside a regional level kingdom, bronze workings began to play a larger role in everyday life as cities like Erlitou began to hold state monopolies of bronze workings and workshops began to grow alongside palaces. Earlier Neolithic cities such as Taosi also demonstrated Chinese city patterns and the presence of craft production

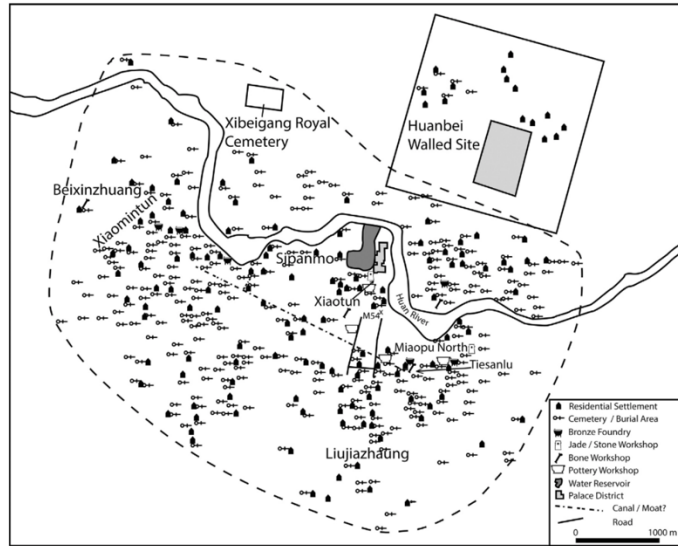
workshops. However, even this era began to decline as the Shang dynasty (1700-1122 BC) began to dominate with cities such as Zhengzhou and Anyang. The Shang dynasty had up to 30 rulers, with true cities appearing with a supreme king and a privileged class of priests and warriors/armies. Craft specialization truly evolved as artisans with distinct but unified styles in bronze and jade become prominent (Andrews 1995:93). Zhengzhou is one example where the quantity of artifacts indicates a high level of artisans and concentrations of broken potteries in certain areas suggest a region dedicated solely to pottery and production of art right outside the walls of a temple-palace complex.



9. *ZHENGZHOU MAP - The central precinct of Zhengzhou is enclosed by a huge earthen wall. Craft workshops have been found in many areas outside the city wall (Price and Feinman 2019)*

As ancient Chinese cities continued to expand, structural planning began placing an abundance of workshops close to centers. For instance, excavations at Yin, a Shang dynasty city, “show a neighborhood that contained ceramic production debris and installations...framed by a major road that led to the Siztun palace-temple district” (Flad 2018: 127).

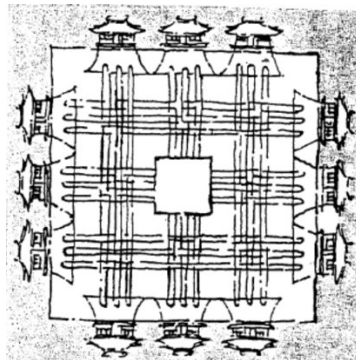
Anyang, like other ancient Chinese cities, was a dispersed city with low density nucleation’s; these cities had a walled religious/regal center with a network of royal compounds, villages, and cemeteries covering approximately 9 square miles. The core of the city holds the main Royal Compound with foundations of at least 53 large structures and burial regions; besides a temple sector, the complex includes royal residences, regions of ritual sacrifice, and a multitude of semisubterranean pit houses for storage and crafts workshops (Andrews 1995:94). To the north lay the Royal Cemetery and to the right of the palace temple lay a large grave. Industrial workshops in the form of villages surrounded the outside skirts of Anyang. Bronze, jade, stone, pottery, and bone workshops scatter around the walled temple complex among residential regions that resemble lineage or social status-based neighborhoods (Flad 2018:216).



10. YINXU - This map depicts the Yinxu site at Anyang (Flad:2018:216).

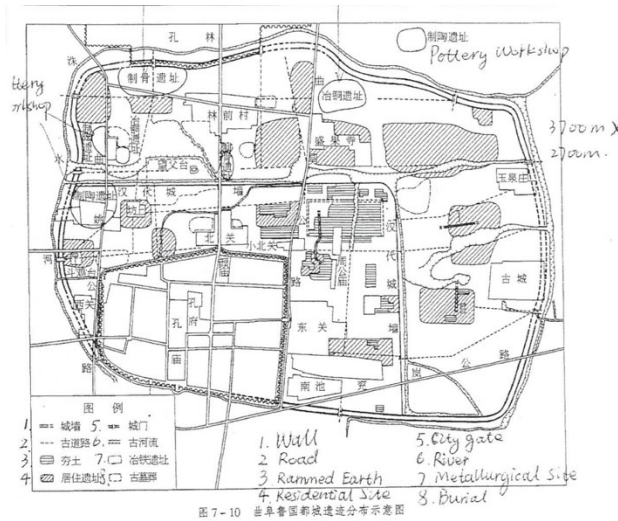
The Notable features of the Shang Dynasty include the continued prominence of bronze and crafts workshops and the continued development of writing/oracle bone inscriptions.

Finally, the Zhou period (750 BC) emphasizes the usage of geomancy, or land mapping to control the flow of chi (cosmic breath) throughout the landscape, which can be assumed to influence architectural design and the structure/placement of houses.



11. IDEAL CITY - The “Ideal city” described in the Zhouli has several zones (Wang 1995:122).

These ideal cities had specific characteristics, such as a square shape subdivided into several zones for different professions and statuses. The palace would be in the middle and the city would have nine streets and nine gates with temples to the right and markets/workshops in the back. Geomancers would pick a landscape that best suited these elements in order to create a harmonious balance between yin and yang. Prior to the Zhou period, there is no archeological evidence demonstrating that fengshui and the ideal city influences ancient city structure. Even cities in the Shang dynasty only partially demonstrate the layout like the ideal city requirements. For example, Qutu City (1149 -249 BC) does have a city organized in a square like structure with central grid like roads and three or more gates on each side.

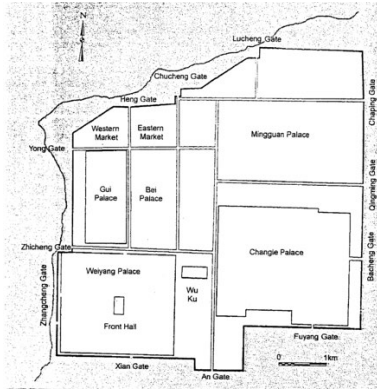


12. MAP of QUTU CITY - #7 in the key refers to bronze or copper workshops.

The Zhou period was overtaken by the short-lived Qin dynasty as Zhou policy weakened (221-206 B.C).

The Presence of Surplus in China

Childe’s (1950) implications that the distinct presence of art would lead to the presence of full-time artists supported through temple/palace surplus applies in bits and pieces to the different cities of Ancient China. Longshan cultures, being small, subterranean villages grouped around a larger communal building, focused on farming. As a result of the ease of irrigation and agricultural diversity the villages had, surplus became a staple part of the city that led to “the appearance of widespread craft specialization throughout northern China” (Andrews 1995:86). The presence of diverse bronze vessels and copper trinkets suggest the presence of artisans that were skilled in creating a new style of art and material that would take time to work with. However, Longshan cultures currently lack enough evidence to concretely prove that there was an elite class controlling a surplus leading to full time artists. More developed Chinese cities demonstrate a proximity of workshops and markets to temples and palaces, institutions representative of the upper class. Cities like Taosi hold a distinct surplus storage area, alongside multiple craft production workshops, suggesting that the surplus could be responsible for sustaining such workshops. The Shang Dynasty financed the wealth of the elite through a “tribute system in which provincial lords supplied the capital with everything from grain to products of their craftsmen” (Price and Feinman 2019: 96). Some city markets can be tied to a concept of craft production that is controlled through a surplus. For instance, “improvements in agricultural technology, eg. the use of iron tools, resulted in surplus which allowed trade to develop” in Chang’an; commercialism encouraged craftsmen and artists to serve their functional role in the community as their labor and products could be exchanged based on the demands within society (Wang). The proximity of these markets and bronze/ceramic manufacturing centers implies that palaces played a role in monitoring craft production and labors. Excavations suggest that the government set up offices within the markets to facilitate and control trade.



13. HAN – This map depicts the layout of the Han dynasty capital Chang'an (Wang)

Here, agricultural surplus seems to drive and sustain these markets once they were developed so that artists can continue to produce their craft through trade. The demands of the elite or upper class to control labor itself seem to drive the creation of full-time craftsmen and bronze manufacturing centers. As a result, we can assume that these city leaders must have control of agricultural surplus in order to control craft production and the labor of full-time artists. Consequently, we can more concretely place Childe's (1950) thoughts on the concept that the elite would have a higher surplus and therefore be the patrons of city artisans. In other words, we should expect to see upper classes having more art in their possessions than lower classes. This concept is most evident in burial tombs as only those with high status could possess high quality bronzes in high multitudes. In Anyang, for example, someone with high status could have 40-pound bronze pieces in their grave, signifying intricate works that required specialized labor in bronze foundries. We can analyze "the 11 large royal tombs at His-pei-Kang" of the Shang dynasty where kings were buried with "large quantities of luxury items, including bronze vessels, shell and bone ornaments, jade, and pottery" (Price and Feinman 2019: 467). These pieces of artwork are not used for display or education, as they remain exclusive to those with the funds to purchase them and remain hidden in tombs. As a result, they serve the purpose of serving as goods of luxurious and serve as vehicles of maintaining social classes through consumerism. Artwork became a method of sumptuary as a result, as private expenditures often included and centered around these bronze workings.



14. JADE DRAGON - Jade ornaments, such as this high status dragon pendant, were decorated with the comma pattern which was popular between the sixth and third centuries B.C (Andrews 1995).

When compared to the opposite end of the social scale, where burials were simple and contained less decorative items and furnishings, the elite seem to have a greater portion of artwork produced in the city. This artwork was used as an indicator of status and wealth, meaning the more bronze products one was buried with, the better. It is likely then that the elites oversaw employing or trading with artisans to acquire these products and used their control of agricultural surplus to do so in at least some Ancient Chinese cities. This production would be for the sole purpose of creating a visual division in social classes as only those with the physical indications of luxury would be considered the elite.

Chinese Artwork focusing on War

Adams' (1960) ideas, which emphasize themes in artwork such as military proceedings and religions, serve as prominent indicators of what designs and subject matters one could expect to see in Ancient Chinese craft. Not only do bronze productions include objects such as ceremonial weapons meant to commemorate concepts of warfare or religious eating vessels, but these bronze productions are often put in burials for people to take into the afterlife. The burial tomb of Shi Huangdi from the Qin era serves as an example of military appearing in artwork; his tomb includes some 8000 terracotta warriors, each with their own unique facial expression and large size to mimic a real-life honor guard. "The names of more than 80 master craftsmen, drawn from imperial workshops, have been identified on the backs of figures in the gallery", indicating that a large sum of craftsmen was employed for the sole purpose of creating militaria artwork (Price and Feinman 2019: 475).



15. FIGURINES - Rows of terracotta soldiers in the large rectangular gallery guard the emperors tomb (Price and Feinman 2019: 476).

Based on historical records, we can assume that Shi Huangdi established China's first standing army and went through measures to ensure a level of centralization through warfare by regulating chariot wheels to make them more homogenous (Price and Feinman 2019: 475). Since the emperor played a large role in military proceedings to unify and expand urban life in the dynasty, it logically follows that his tomb would have themes of war as well. Ritualistic drinking and eating vessels also indicate a religious dominance in artwork. "Fantastic or mythical animals were crafted on objects of pottery, wood, and jade", with many of these objects associated with rituals that were important to the Shang Dynasty (Price and Feinman 2019:465). Ceremonial bronzes found in tombs, temples, and palaces tended to follow the same thematic ideas of animals to represent gods and spirits. The presence of ritual items was another indicator of status and identity, as the upper classes had the opportunity to be more pious and be patrons of religious artwork. For example, the Erlitou cultural tombs demonstrate that "the ritual assemblage consisted of bronzes, lacquers, and ceramics" which became an important characteristic of its ritualistic system in Erlitou culture (Xu and Sang 2022:156); as a result, the elite were buried with said jade and bronze products.



16. *POTTERY - Elegant tripod vessels known as ding held offerings to the gods and spirits. The vessels varied in size from tiny to enormous and usually bore decorations of zoomorphic designs (Andrews 1995).*

Although we can't confirm Adam's (1960) beliefs that it was temples themselves that played a pivotal role in city development or that temples were directly responsible for this religion becoming a common subject matter within bronzeworking, we can confirm that religion is a common spread theme that patrons of ancient Chinese artwork desired. Adam's (1960) predictions on the themes of artwork could, moreover, support that those in power were in control of artistic labor and production, as artisans would be responsible for creating crafts that would follow the thematic ideas desired by emperors or temples.

Artist's Territory in Chinese Cities

Sjoberg's (1965) beliefs that we would expect to see dwellings for artists that would be outside of the center of the city as a result of the specialization of artisans is essentially accurate in most eras of Ancient China. Bronzeworking and crafts production was a staple of Chinese culture and production, growing prominently from the Erlitou development of pottery and bone working villages to greater productions of craft workshops and kilns in the Shang dynasty and beyond. For this reason, we would expect craft production to function circling the center of a city, close to palace or temple institutions that could be high in class and utilize the specialization of the artisans to sponsor their work. Zhengzhou's concentrated regions for craftsmen serve as an example of Sjoberg's (1965) theory; a neighborhood created specifically for the productions of ceramics suggests that specialized artisans for pottery and bronzeworking's had their own private dwellings that lay in easy access to elite institutions. Late Shang dynasty, when the capital moved to the city of An-yang, held cities with "a large ceremonial and administrative center with monumental architecture surrounded by craft areas, including bronze foundries, stone and bone workshops, and pottery kilns" (Price and Feinman 2019: 467). Again, we can note that as the Shang dynasty grew and the diversity of artisans and their specializations became more extensive, the growth of living areas and workshops near the center also increased. As a result, we can conclude that Sjoberg (1965) is accurate in saying that the structure of a city will accommodate for full time artists by giving them their own residence to work and or live in.

Chinese Art as a vehicle for Community Traditions

Finally, we can analyze Redfield and Singer (1954) and their arguments on the presence of a Great Tradition embodying works of art. "Food and drinking vessels are the most common bronze items, but some weapons, chariot and cavalry fittings...also were made of bronze" are subject matter that define a unifying political and religious norm through studio art. The creation of things such as combat knives in masses creates a homogeneity of weaponry that brings citizens of the city together through the concepts of warfare. As a result, government/palace institutions can easily encourage conflict or assemble military proceedings with more ease because of this unifying, patriotic concept of traditional weaponry and army wear. The same concept can be applied to ritual artwork such as ceremonial knives: temples and priests can share religious concepts and emphasize the importance of staying pious through artwork depicting and summoning the gods.



17. *WEAPONRY* - Two distinct types of bronze weapons have been unearthed from Shang Dynasty burials- those designed for combat and those crafted for ceremonial use. The intricate turquoise inlay of this knife's handle is thought to represent the ceremonial style (Andrews 1995).

However, the most important Great Tradition that defines a social norm of ancient Chinese cities refers to feng shui, or a method of mapping and harnessing the flow of qi to a point where yin and yang are in harmonious balance. Ancient Chinese imperial cities were seen as to live on an axis, with the city living on the living world plane and the celestial and underworld living on planes above and below them respectively. This axis connects the living world with the supernatural, allowing cities to follow cosmic principles if they follow the rules and guidance of this Great Tradition religion. The influence of fengshui would theoretically be most prevalent in the structural layout of the city and the architectural design of the “ideal city” because we would expect to see structural elements and design specific to the rules and directions of feng shui. However, we cannot say with certainty that art and architecture were used to embody the traits of this Great Tradition as they do not completely mimic the characteristics of using cardinal directions to maximize qi. Qutu City serves as one example as workshops do seem to sit behind a central temple as expected, but the cardinal directions of some institutions seem inaccurate; there are God temples, for one, to the left of the palace center instead of the right.

Redfield and Singer (1954) also emphasized the role of art in expression that is controlled by the literati, or ones that can “read and teach” Great Traditions to the rest of the city members. The origins of Chinese writing can be traced to the Langshan period through “ideographs (a pictorial symbol denoting an object) used in rituals (Andrews 1995:87).



18. *FORTUNE TELLING* - A Diviner would examine the patterns of cracks that were created by the application of heat to a specially treated bone, such as this ox scapula (Andrews 1995:87).

The Great Tradition of Oracle Bone Inscriptions from Huayuanzhuang East used turtle shells and scapulae and their cracks that were used by geomancers to predict and answer specific questions that had

been written on the bone. Through of scapulimancy, which could only be interpreted by the literati priests, the cracks and fissures began to take a pictographic meaning, creating an ideographic script. As a result, the earliest image looking texts dealt with religious matters and a variety of information of history and way of life of Chinese life that others could look upon and learn from. This use of pictorial language allowed rituals involving communication with ancestors, along with general divinations and decisions in everyday life to be made and controlled by priests. Because these bones could only be read by literati, Redfield and Singer's (1954) theory of the role of art or some sort of pictograph in creating a readable teaching of a Great Tradition is applicable in Ancient China.

The Multifaceted Role of Art in Ancient Cities

Both Ancient Egyptian and Ancient Chinese cities used artwork extensively in their society and daily life, but the true functions of the major works produced differ. Full time specialists sponsored by the elite seems to be a common in both cities; we can also note the presence of artwork in the burial tombs of high-status citizens in both cities. These similarities confirm a correlation between the production of artwork, the creation of craftsmen jobs, and the desire to associate artwork with social status. Even the themes and subjects of artwork seem to be common between the two cities. Although the materials and modes differ between the two as Ancient China had a larger focus on bronzeworking while ancient Egypt focused largely on sculptures and stonework, the subject matters of military proceedings and religious ideas appear in both cities.

However, there is a unique difference in Great Traditions and the real usage of this art. Ancient Egypt used artwork to establish a way of life and to encourage the worship of the dominant religion in Amarna; in other words, artwork was used as a form of propaganda and held a hidden curriculum. The royal family produced artwork to teach commoners about what they deemed significant to Egyptian society. These methods included aggrandizing their role as rulers by creating artwork that associated them with wealth and the gods and creating crafts and hieroglyphics that would describe messages on the proper way of life so that citizens of Amarna learnt to respect and follow the religion of Aten as the truth. As a result, Redfield and Singer's (1954) ideas on Great Traditions are the best method of analyzing art in Ancient Egypt because it allows for analysis of a hidden purpose of the art that is not obvious to the public using it.

On the other hand, Ancient China does not intentionally cultivate religious or palace norms in the city through the usage of art under the control of the elites. In fact, a lot of artwork fails to follow some of the major Great Traditions or norms that could potentially be established, such as the concept of feng shui. Those that held any form of wealth were able to control artwork through their patronage, and so art became not a message for the commoners but an indication of status. Adams' (1960) analysis on the role of art in an ancient city makes more sense in this situation; religious and warfare subjects appear consistently in Ancient Chinese artwork regardless of the era it is from. We can understand how these matters unified citizens of ancient China into one city despite living a little more segregated from one another. As a result, we can speculate what aspects the elites valued based on the artwork they funded, getting a better insight how consumerism/early forms of capitalism created classes and the idea of the "elite".

Ultimately, the significance of artwork varies depending on the region, meaning that no one theory alone can clarify the nuances of the role art and artists have. While these theories mentioned above can elucidate some evidence on the purpose of art in an ancient city, they are a few out of many interpretations. Further exploration and digs in new cities can reveal more details about the artwork in a city. For instance,

Angkor Wat is one of the largest known ancient cities, uniquely known for its low-density population and various religious artwork influenced by Buddhism. However, there are still questions on whether temples and palace institutions held the main influence in art production, and if its traditions were unified throughout the region like in Ancient China or Egypt. Research in further exploring the presence of Angkor Wat artwork through further excavations in residential homes and underneath temples can explore job specializations/maintaining social structure, the value that arts held within Angkor, and whether it was crucial in spreading the dominating Hindu/Buddhist religion. Nevertheless, it is likely that we will see these four theories hold credible in some sense regardless of the city we choose to analyze.

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