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## **The phenomenon of the city in the contemporary discourse of urban history**

**Abstract.** The current approach to presenting the history of urban planning is biased by old narratives about understanding the nature of city development as a unique object with a thousand-year history. As Ukraine reconstructs and restores war-torn places, it is necessary to identify specific signs and develop an understanding of this kind of phenomenon according to the challenges of the present. Considering them globally will help develop ideas based on Ukrainian cultural values and continue to establish a national identity in architecture and urban planning. The purpose of the research is to comprehend the processes of city design over five thousand years and to highlight those aspects that are evidence of a phenomenal breakthrough in the development of mankind. The research methodology is based on the principles and methods within the framework of logical and epistemological and philosophical approaches. The research resulted in the identification of the characteristics of the material and spatial content of the ancient cities of the world that have survived a thousand-year history, specific to a particular era and culture, and the qualities that have become decisive for assessing their development. The focus is on the development of Homo sapiens and the emergence of writing, without which the existence of cities would be impossible. A comparative description of ancient cities is presented on the example of such settlements as Carnacus, Babylon, Athens, Venice, Jerusalem, and the Roman Empire, which had a stable urban planning framework for several centuries. These settlements occupy a particular place in history, as they represent specific evolutionary approaches to the establishment and development of the material and spatial environment of human activity. The changes in their formal states varied, but each time they resulted in qualitative transformations. Therefore, the authors propose to delve deeper into understanding the development of ancient cities through the categories of linearity, progressiveness, and regressiveness, and to emphasise the deepening of the usual approaches to the city's study

**Keywords:** theory; human settlement; development; linearity; spontaneity; identity

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the existing discourse, the history of development occupies a particular place and is fundamental to its comprehension. Development is understood as a series of things that denote both the events that caused the changes and the states that reflected them.

The issue of development becomes even more exceptional when it comes to a city that is five thousand years old. Regardless of the time, any achievements that resulted in its development were isolated, their essence was clarified, and they were consciously applied. These are those that

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indicate the nature of development and are expressions of the historical identity of the city through the specifics of functioning, conditions of continuity, signs of orderliness, possibilities of self-organisation and attractiveness. As experience demonstrates, this resulted in another level of change, which is commonly referred to as evolution.

Without exaggeration, it is unique for the contemporary discourse of urban planning theory, which requires a deepening scientific and cognitive understanding of the substantive features of human architectural and urban planning activities and the results of such actions throughout history. The problematic nature of the research is further exacerbated by the fact that knowledge about the city in Ukrainian education was developed under the influence of narratives that emphasise the change in the status of ancient settlements in a specific chronological sequence. Therefore, with the reconstruction and restoration of war-torn places in Ukraine, it is necessary to design a new vision of the nature of urban development in the global dimension to further present ideas based on Ukrainian cultural values and continue to design a national identity in architecture and urban planning.

The theoretical basis of the research was based on the fundamental works of classical scholars (Benevolo, 1993; Lavedan, 1959; Mumford, 1979), who harmoniously combined the concepts of “city” and “history” and gave them a special significance in urban studies. Despite the passage of time, these works have continued to influence the nature of the development of a holistic conception of the city for several decades. Their influence is explained by a logical presentation of the material and is based on the application of the author’s methods, giving a scientifically sound assessment of the functional and planning structure of historically founded cities. Therewith, their understanding of urban development does not go beyond the ideals embodied in the image of a medieval city. For this reason, well-known popular science publications were considered. The authors of these publications emphasised the global problems of humanity, touching upon the issues of science and philosophy (Hoking & Mlodinov, 2016), describing socio-economic factors (Burdett & Sudjic, 2007), which, in the authors’ opinion, are crucial for the development of cities in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the specifics of human development, in particular, those aspects that have driven the transition of humans to a qualitatively new stage of development (Harari, 2016; 2018; Harald, 2002) or gave impetus to changing the old way of urban life (Harper, 2020). In addition, the stated problem obliged the author to turn to works from the genre of “urban biography.” They provided information on a comprehensive historical portrayal of specific settlements (e.g. *Babylon. The Great City* (Pedersén, 2021)), and media that develop a holistic presentation of the urban past supported by historical facts (e.g., the UNESCO Official site).

Considering the significant variations in approaches to the research of urban history (McTominey, 2022) and based on the above theoretical works and empirical studies, a new way of thinking about the history of urban planning

is proposed. It will allow expanding the understanding of the features

The purpose of the research is to clarify the essential features of the formal characteristics of the material structure of ancient historical cities through the prism of their consistent change. Such cities absorbed the signs of a particular state system with specific political, economic, social, and cultural conditions that persisted for a long period.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The methodological foundation of the research is based on the principle (correspondence) and methods (theoretical, historical-comparative and historical-typological analysis, morphological description), which are logical, epistemological and philosophical.

To summarise and systematise knowledge about the development of ancient cities, *the principle of correspondence* is used, which is based on the theorisation of the current state of research in the field of urban history. Therefore, the objects of ancient urban planning, which are perceived by the senses and are consistent with the philosophical category of materiality, were considered. In this situation, the object of cognition is the material structure of ancient cities, which is manifested formally and described by qualitative and quantitative characteristics.

Particular attention is devoted to the implementation of *the method of theoretical analysis*. It is reduced to choosing a research subject, determining the etymology and essence of the key concepts for the research, and systematising and summarising facts about the specifics of functioning and the specific features of the design of the most historically significant material and spatial structures for the development of mankind.

*The historical – comparative analysis* of ancient urban developments was based on *the method of morphological description*. It was designed to identify the characteristic features of the formal expression of the material structure of ancient cities. In this research, this method was implemented in the following sequence: selection of an ancient settlement → identification of spatial and temporal boundaries → identification of the material structure and selection of morphological units → identification of characteristic morphological features.

The general theory of urban planning has established two main types of urban planning structures: regular and irregular. They provide the foundation for classifications of ancient cities, and their specificity was manifested in the following features: the allocation of urban structures by formal qualities (Morris, 1994), the identification of urban artefacts that have withstood the passage of time (Rossi, 1966), and the establishment of perceptual elements of the urban environment (Lynch, 1984). According to these types, the historical-typological method allowed identifying homogeneous properties and features in the examined cities.

To achieve this purpose, a *methodology* has been developed to clarify the essential features of the city as a unique phenomenon in historical retrospect and to develop the existing theoretical and methodological tools (principles,



methods and approaches) in the history of urban planning. The research was conducted in *five stages*:

*I stage* – considered and explored relevant issues of the history of urban planning and fundamental works that are fundamental to understanding the formal characteristics of the material structure of ancient cities. These are L. Benevolo (1993), R. Burdett & D. Sudjic (2007), H. Harald (2002), Y.N. Harari (2016; 2018), S. Hoking & L. Mlodinov (2016), A. McTominey (2022), I.P. Morris (1994), L. Mumford (1979), P. Lavedan (1959), A. Szmelter & J. Zdunek-Wielgołaska (2019) etc. Due to the great attention to urban research, there is a lack of work on the highest achievements of humanity and their impact on the establishment and development of ancient centres of urban civilization. It is identified that currently there is a sharp distinction between applied urban planning, the research of the city as a unique form of settlement in ancient times and the history of its development.

*II stage* – the prerequisites for the development of ancient cities are identified. It is emphasised that urban settlements – are a unique form of social organisation associated with the emergence of writing and a new way of management. Compared to the development of homo sapiens, the age of the city is quite short, even though it is five thousand years.

*III stage* – historical and typological analysis of the formal expression of the material structure of ancient cities. The essential features in the functional and planning structure of such ancient cities as Babylon, Athens, Jerusalem and Venice are identified and classified into one of two types.

*IV stage* – based on the results of the historical and comparative analysis, the characteristic features of the material and spatial content of Babylon, Athens, Jerusalem, and Venice in space and time are compared.

*V stage* – the role of the city in the history of humanity is determined and the trends in the development of urban planning history in modern conditions are considered.

To accumulate information about the prerequisites for the establishment of ancient cities and to conduct a historical and comparative analysis, an updated source base in the form of graphic materials, tables, and quotations on the quantitative characteristics of the material structure of ancient cities was used. Statistical data became important for determining the real state of urban centres. Photographic materials taken by the author (Bohdan Cherkes) during research expeditions (2015-2020) and obtained from other open sources allowed emphasise the importance of ancient centres of urban lifestyle and provide a visual assessment of the physical attributes of such settlements.

## RESULTS

The beginning of the solution to the scientific problem should be considered the authors' previous research (Cherkes, 2008; 2020; Cherkes & Linda, 2019; Idak, 2021), dedicated to the study of concepts and categories of identity in architecture, the specific features of the design of the material-spatial environment of human activity and the understanding of the patterns of its development.

This work is largely concerned with enriching knowledge about the nature of the development of urban objects and strives to understand spiritual values in the inevitable restoration of Ukrainian cities, considering national identity and historical continuity. The main part of the research is devoted to a comparative analysis of the world's cities that have survived a thousand years of history and identifies the qualities that have become crucial for assessing their development. Attention is centred on the formative aspects of cities, which, despite time and their actual condition, remain evidence of a high level of human development.

The process of development itself can be described as permanent, during which, for five thousand years, the city as a phenomenon has evolved from small settlements to multimillion-dollar megacities. And the figure of *five thousand years* is key, since, on the one hand, it demonstrates a relatively short period compared to the evolution of homo sapiens (which is two hundred thousand years), and on the other hand, it is a rather long process (Human Evolution..., 2021), accompanied by both material and spiritual development. In this work, the city as a fundamental category of urban planning theory in its historical retrospective is a type of settlement that was distinguished by its size, density of buildings, and its structural organisation characterised by stability in space for a relatively long period.

Thus, compared to the millennial history of man, the age of a city is a short period in which typical functional features and certain patterns can be traced that have affected both the states of the structural organisation and the processes of their development.

### ***The socio-historical background of the city and the consequences of its development***

If considering the specifics of the development of human settlements through the prism of the history of *Homo sapiens*, then it is necessary to start with it, since without its appearance the development of the city would not have been possible. Current research confirms the emergence of homo sapiens 200,000 years ago and traces the nature of its migration from southeastern, mainly east Africa to the north (Litt *et al.*, 2021). The reasons for such movements are still unknown. Such processes can probably be connected to climate change or some kind of impetus in ancient society.

Approximately 100,000 years ago, ancient people appeared in the Mesopotamian region and, relatively recently, 40,000 years ago, reached Europe. Therewith, Europe was home to another type of humanoid – the Neanderthals. Since for some time, these two groups of ancient people were simultaneously in a particular territory, it is assumed that they could intermingle. This conclusion is reached by many modern archaeologists and confirmed by numerous artefacts found during research expeditions (Choi, 2020). In addition, D. Reich (2019) concludes that the mixing of the two types of ancient people is a consequence of their continuous migrations.

However, such transformations were not equivalent but occurred under rather strange circumstances, which



resulted in the complete extinction of Neanderthals (approximately between 41,000 and 39,000 years ago (Higham *et al.*, 2014). For a long time, scientists have argued that the reason for this could be the aggressive behaviour of intelligent humans (Churchill *et al.*, 2009) and their ability to adapt better to change (Massey, 2013). Researchers have suggested that *Homo sapiens* had better-developed brains and were more organised (Ghosh, 2022).

Nowadays, there is sufficient evidence that the process of transferring cultural, technological, and biological codes from one group of ancient people to another occurred on the territory of ancient Europe. It was long and complicated (Higham *et al.*, 2014).

In 10,000 B.C., the agricultural revolution occurred – man became a nomad, as he had been until then, and began to live a sedentary lifestyle. Ian Hodder (2018) explains the connection between the agricultural revolution and the settled way of life through the emergence of dependence between people and things and even certain limitations that determined the nature of the development of the material-spatial environment of their life. As a result, the first permanent settlements emerged (Carbonell *et al.*, 2008), which differed in the number and density of the population, the way they were built, and the type of activity they performed. Archaeological findings that include more than a simple statement of the existence of a culture (Hodder & Hutson, 2003) are evidenced by a large number of works and information resources that declare a much broader way of life of ancient society. As for their location, archaeologists have different opinions: some suggest that they originated near the Mediterranean Sea, from where they spread, while others argue that there were several independent places of settlement.

Thus, speaking of 200,000 years of *Homo sapiens*' existence, the history of urban development in 5,000 years – is a relatively short stage. Settlement is an absolute know-how that arose at a relatively late stage of the development of homo sapiens and is associated with a new way of managing the economy that began to spread in 10,000 AD. Therefore, it was characterised by sedentarisation, the transition to agriculture and conscious animal husbandry. Thus, at an early stage, conditions were established here that resulted in specific patterns of action, which were expressed in agricultural activities, the transfer of spiritual and material values from one generation to another, and the need to have a properly arranged and ordered material and spatial environment as a condition for a safe existence.

Approximately 4 million people lived on the earth 10,000 years ago (Mathieu, 2022). To understand this value, for example, it can be compared to the scale of Ukraine, where as of 2021, almost 4 million people collectively lived in Lviv (2.497750 million) and Ivano-Frankivsk (1.361.109) regions (Timonina, ed., 2021); or with the population of 2.603.813 (Numărul populației..., 2022) in Moldova or 3.728.600 (Population... 2022...) in Georgia.

The first cities as a special form of settlement with a clear structural organisation characterised by stability in space over a relatively long period appeared around 3,000 BC.

The structural-functional analysis of ancient historical settlements identifies a set of constituent elements that have a specific functional purpose and a complex system of interconnections between them. In most cases, the set of such elements has been well-established and is now crucial for the study of the material remains of humanity (Idak, 2020). These include defensive fortifications, neighbourhoods, religious buildings, and other public facilities that were built gradually and were conditioned by sociocultural, political, economic, natural and climatic conditions. In archaeology, when exploring material remains (Hodder & Hutson, 2003), including settlements, a set of features is considered characteristic and stable if their existence is more or less extended in time and space.

Thus, it took humanity seven thousand years of development to establish the first centres of urban lifestyle as a special form of spiritual and material-spatial reality.

In the year zero of the new era, 170 million people lived on earth (Mathieu, 2022). The first billion appeared in 1815 after the Napoleonic Wars and after the beginning of the industrial revolution in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. It is another piece of evidence that human history is associated with hard struggle and, ultimately, with great progress, especially during the agricultural revolution, later the industrial revolution, during a period of dramatic changes in medicine, humanism, philosophy, logic, natural science, technology, etc.

In 1815, the world's population reached the first billion (Mathieu, 2022), and subsequently, the human population began to grow exponentially (Starkey, 2022). Already in 1900, i.e., at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, during the scientific revolution, and later before the digital revolution (Stengel *et al.*, 2017), the world's population amounted to 1 billion 650 million people (Mathieu, 2022). If considering the fact that today the world's population is about 8 billion, the number is called about 8 billion, and in 2050, calculations demonstrate that, unless there are huge changes and revolutions, the world's population will reach 9 billion.

Thus, while it took humanity two hundred thousand years to reach the first billion, it took only two hundred years to reach the level of 8 billion. It is undeniable that such an energy-intensive lifestyle, accompanied by devastating disasters caused by human negligence and the irrational use of mineral reserves and resources, cannot continue. For this reason, in academic circles, the issue of population dynamics is the subject of in-depth historical and demographic research and various discussions by prominent scholars of the present day.

The British theoretical physicist Stephen Hawking said (Fecht, 2017) that if humanity continues to develop at this rate, the earth will not be able to feed everyone and people will have to move to other planets and develop them. Therefore, these recent processes of space exploration, such as the American and Chinese expeditions to the Moon and Mars and plans (NASA's Lunar..., 2020) to establish a nuclear power plant on the Moon's surface by 2024, are not just whims and adventures, but a plan to prolong human existence and intentions to survive the threat of natural disaster.



In terms of exploring the history of the city's development, it is important to concentrate on modern research areas and follow the trends of world science. It is how one of the world's leading universities, the *London School of Economics and Political Science*, together with *Alfred Herrhausen Gesellschaft* (URBAN AGE, 2020), is exploring the city in a global context. Since 2005, with its support, research has been conducted on cities (Addis Ababa, Delhi, Rio de Janeiro, London, Hong Kong, Istanbul, São Paulo, Mumbai, Mexico City, Johannesburg, Berlin, Shanghai and New York City) to assess the quality of form, governance, transportation, natural environment, public spaces, social accessibility, health, housing and economy. The results of such research, and a complex discussion among architects, urbanists, politicians, and scholars, were published in a book (Burdett & Sudjic, 2007). Here, the authors argue that the 21<sup>st</sup> century will be the age of the city. They discuss the dynamics of population change, noting that in 1900, 10% of the population lived in cities, in 2007 – 50%, and in 2050 when the world's population is theoretically expected to grow to 9 billion, 75% will live in cities. As a result, questions about the shape, size, density, and distribution of the city are becoming increasingly complex and politicised, and the impact of the built environment on social inclusion and quality of life is central to urban planning discussions.

To understand the course of human history and to understand the role of the city in its development, the work of Y.N. Harari (*Sapiens...*, 2016) deserves attention. In the research, the author describes, on the one hand, the history of the development of *Homo sapiens*, and, on the other hand, emphasises the risks and challenges associated with the massive increase in population and the prospects for survival and threats that await it in the future. The author divides the history of *Homo sapiens*' development into four stages: cognitive → agricultural → the process of humanity's unification and colonisation of the Earth → scientific, and modern, which has been reduced to the development of new opportunities and technologies.

#### **Specific features of the development of ancient settlements – centers of urban lifestyle**

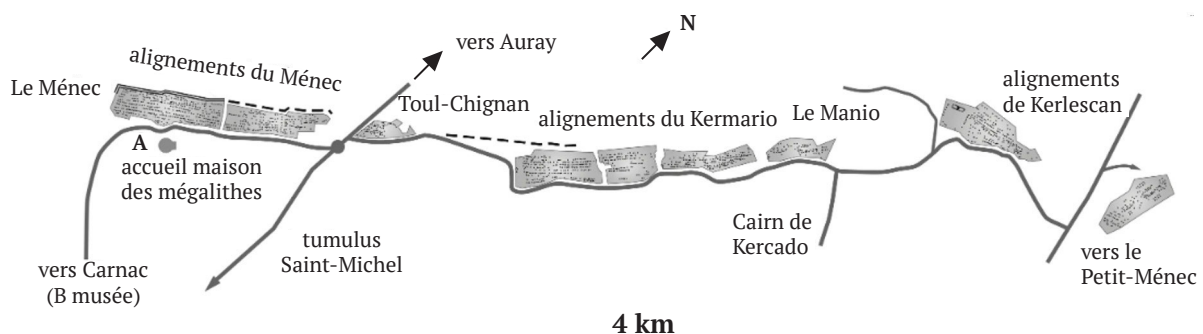
One of the most controversial issues was and still is the range of questions about the reasons and intentions of the founding of cities. One of the theories about the reasons

and ideas for the establishment of cities was developed by the prominent American architectural critic, urban planner, and historian L. Mumford (1961). His main interest was the impact of technology and urbanisation on the development of human society throughout history. The scientist believed that the first cities emerged near necropolises established by nomads. They constantly returned to the burial sites of their ancestors. Over time, altars were established there, with permanent residences for those who cared for them.

On the other hand, the economic revolution occurred approximately 10,000 years ago (Larson *et al.*, 2014, p. 6140). The practice of breeding animals and cultivating plants spread, and the need for cooking, caring for children and the elderly, etc. arose. Some specific ties and restrictions resulted in the emergence of special organisations. They were characterised by a relatively stable set of constituent elements, most of which were places of permanent residence. Gradually, progress has been made in farming and improving living conditions.

As for Europe, the Neolithic period saw a more intensive development of the agricultural and pastoral form of reproductive economy, which determined a mobile-settled way of life. For example, Ukraine was home to the farming and pastoralist tribes of the Trypillian archaeological culture, which was established in the 6th millennium BC and lasted for about 2,500 years and is known for building giant settlements (Videiko *et al.*, 2005).

One of the most secretive places in modern Europe is the **Brittany** (*Bretagne*) region in northern France (Fig. 1). This picturesque corner is known for human settlement in the Early Paleolithic period. The foundation for this is the megalithic complex, which is considered to be one of the oldest in Europe, established in the region in the city of Carnac between 5,000 and 3,000 BC. The complex acquired its present appearance, which includes 40 hectares of land and a set of 4,000 menhirs stretching for almost 4 km (UNESCO Official Site), *five thousand years ago* (Lageat, ed., 1994, p. 108). It consists of 2,800 stone blocks ranging in height from 0.5 to 4 meters. It is not known for certain what function this giant object performed. Therewith, the connection with the level of development of the first intelligent people, the megalithic architecture that was being developed on the European continent at that time, and the culture of the Celts and other related peoples are quite logical.



**Figure 1.** Schematic of the megalithic complex consisting of menhirs, dolmens, mounds and individual menhirs, Carnac (Brittany region, France)

Source: Les alignements de Carnac, 2020-2021



The research problem would not be fully stated if the connection between the city and writing were not considered, and it is not accidental. The criterion of having a written language or a city is generally accepted as a key feature in classifying a cultural entity as “highly developed” or “civilised”. Notably, the history of the city, writing, and font goes back five thousand years. The discovery of writing in 3,000 BC is a huge revolution, which is associated with the complication of trade relations and administrative management. It was necessary to reliably account for finances and record some type of information on mandatory payments by the population, whose number was growing rapidly and was significant in some areas (Boudreau, 2004; Harald, 2002).

The history of writing is not unreasonably associated with records on clay tablets found in Mesopotamia, where the first cities were discovered and established. There was a clear control of financial flows and food. Such data were initially reproduced in separate small figures and with specific markings, and over time, they were marked on clay tablets or other specially made figures (Fig. 2).

Another reason for the recording phenomenon is related to the control of specific groups of people. In the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, the American psychologist G.A. Miller (1956) summarised the evidence that people can remember about seven fragments in short-term memory tasks. According to G.A. Miller (1956), a person can process information consisting of 7+/-2 elements in their memory; if the number of elements exceeds this number, they will divide them into groups, each containing 7+/-2 elements, for better memorisation. Later, another thesis about the limited capacity of human working memory gained popularity (Cowan, 2001). Probably considering the nature of human memory, there was a need to record the inhabitants of settlements, whose number could range from several to tens of thousands of people. Thus, the need to record information about the number of people living within the walls of a city, the names of people, their status, and the nature of their economy prompted the discovery of writing. Only under such circumstances could the first rulers, princes, kings, and tsars control the masses, and so society became civilised, which meant controlled (Fig. 2).



**Figure 2.** Clay tablet, one of the oldest written documents, 3.100-3.000 BC, Mesopotamia. The text refers to beer provided to employees as part of their daily rations

Source: Sumerian... (2022)

In parallel with writing, the system of graphic signs and letters developed. Thus, cuneiform, as an ancient form of writing, went through several stages of evolution and covered the period from the 14<sup>th</sup> century BC to the first century AD. In the process of development, figurative images were replaced by abstract ones. For example, in 3300 BC, which is the era of the first highly developed cultural centres or cities, the head designation reflected the form in its typical features (Fig. 3). It was the same in 3,000 BC. Already in 2.500 BC, the natural figure of the sun gradually changed its shape, and in 700 BC, it was completely replaced. This process is related to technological aspects – in the process of collecting taxes or recording some data about the city’s residents, it was necessary to make a quick record (Harald, 2002). Such changes are observed concerning the shape of the head, arm, goose, fish, cow, etc. Thus, the change in writing related to technology is nothing more than a continuation of digitisation, which began around 3,300 BC and has been going on for *five thousand years*, just like the development of the city.

	3100 BC	3000 BC	2400 BC	1000 BC
head				
mouth/speak				
water				
drink				
go/stand/bring				
heaven/god				
earth/land				
woman				
mountains				
slave-girl				

**Figure 3.** Changes in Sumerian Cuneiform script (adapted from G. Sampson, 1985)

Source: Fay et al. (2014)

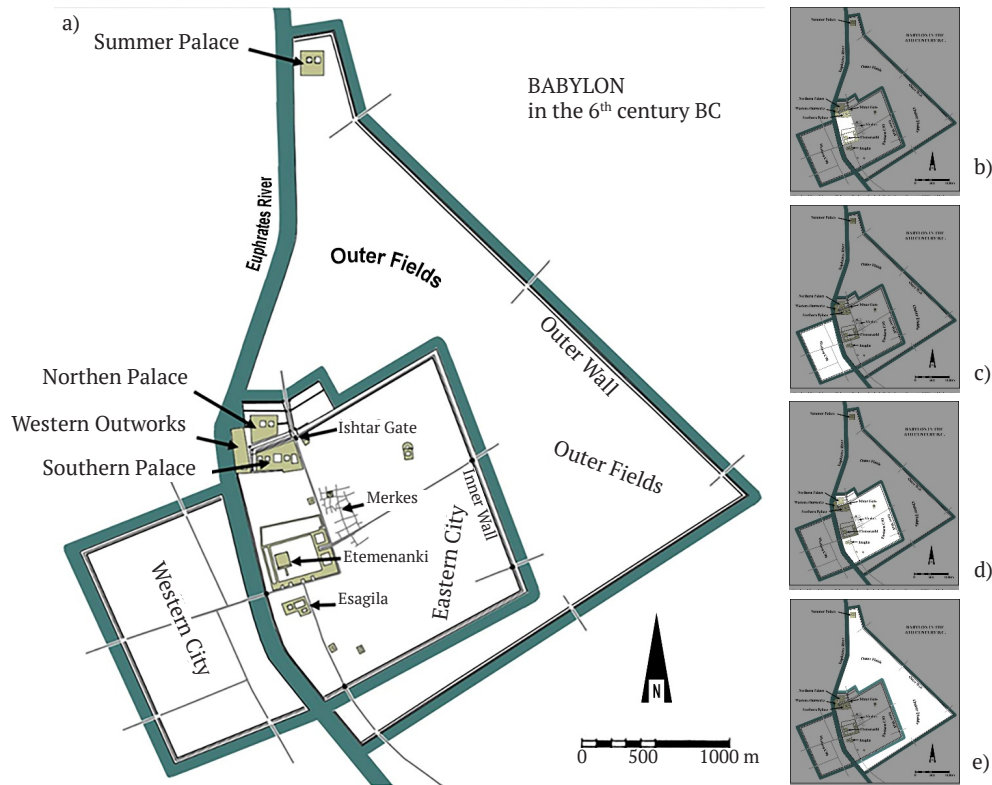
It can be assumed that the change from figurative to abstract representation in writing influenced the creation of the largest and most powerful metropolis of the time, **Babylon**. This happened between 605 and 562 BC in the era of King Nebuchadnezzar II, which existed in its best manifestations between 3300 BC and 500 AD. Thus, if examining the first laws of Hammurabi, it is evident how the writing looked and what the font was like at that time. It is the first real mention of architects: “*When builders construct a house for a citizen, but their work is not based on a solid foundation, the*



house will fall and cause the death of the owner – this results in that builder or architect being killed or murdered” (King, 1915, §229). Since this text was contained in the first font laws, some precedents made them highly liable for any violations.

The city plan (Fig. 4) allows for estimating the size of

Babylon (Fig. 4 a) in the era of its greatest design and tracing the process of territory development in historical retrospect. The plans of the city identify four parts surrounded by an independent system of defensive fortifications (Fig. 4 b, c, d, e).



**Figure 4.** Schematic diagram of the city of Babylon in the era of King Nebuchadnezzar II with the identification of parts corresponding to the stages of its development: a – general plan; b – part of the city associated with its emergence; c – part of the city that demonstrates rapid development; d – part of the city associated with its establishment as a metropolis; e – outer part of the city

**Source:** Map of Greater Babylon. Redrawn by J.A. Parkoff after Parapetti (2008: 141, Fig. 13); archaeological & theoretical gate locations based on George (1992: 141, Fig. 7); b, c, d – processed: Idak, Y., 2022

The first part is related to the emergence of the city and corresponds to the stage of its development.

The second part – the forbidden or closed city – is a testament to the rapid development of the city’s territory and its large-scale transformations. During this time, the city received a regular layout. The centrepiece is a complex of religious buildings, including the *Etemenanki* ziggurat. This sacred part was connected to the Ishtar gate by a precession axis marked by Procession Street, which was ritually used several times a year. In addition, a country palace adjoined the Ishtar gate.

Relatively later, the third part of the city was completed, which was called the “new city” (Western City on the city plan). This stage can be associated with the city’s establishment as a global metropolis. The new city was surrounded by a moat filled with water and three-membered city walls, which were monumental and, due to their size, were part of the urban ensemble (Nesselrath, 2020). In the process of developing the territory of the new city, the precession axis was lengthened and now symbolically connected the Ishtar

Gate and another city gate named after the patron god of Babylon, the Marduk Gate.

Water canals were constructed through and around the city, passing through the entire territory of the city and being part of a complex irrigation system.

An important component of Babylon was the so-called fourth outer part of the city. Its importance is evidenced by the fact that it was surrounded by a deep moat and walls consisting of a large number of square towers (Willson, 1856). In combination with the fortifications of the old and new city and water canals, the outer walls were an equivalent part of the city’s defence system. Its territory included agricultural land. Due to water canals, this part ensured food independence. The importance of the water channels and the outer part of the city was equally and strategically important for the security and development of the city’s economy.

For the history of urban planning, such data is particularly relevant when it comes to exploring the specifics of the functioning and nature of the development of urban planning objects over several thousand years. The first

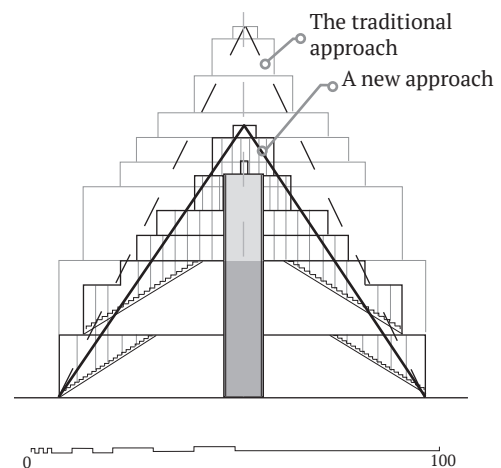
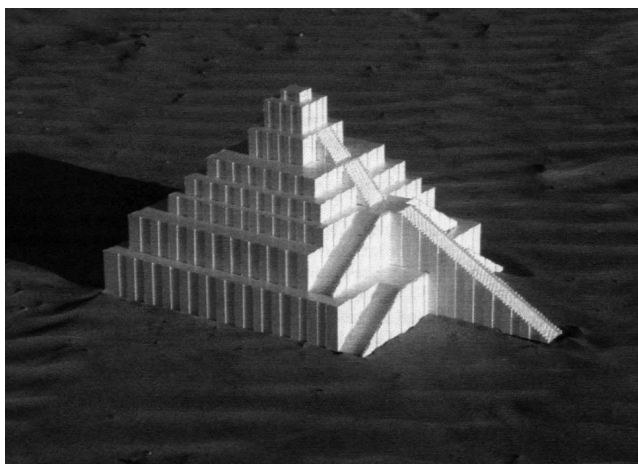




three parts of Babylon, which are based on the layout of this ancient city, correspond to the three stages of its development and testify to the transition from one qualitative state to another. The role of the fourth part is determined by the specifics of its functioning. At each stage, the changes that resulted from effective socio-economic policy and a high level of technology development, including construction, can be traced. The consistent change of such states in the process of city development provides opportunities for rethinking past worldview ideas and methodological approaches from the perspective of the present. It demonstrates consistency in building a new, at the time, urban planning culture.

As already noted, since ancient times, historical settlements have been characterised by a well-established set of constituent elements. The main ones acted as expressors of the city's integral identity (Cherkes & Yuryk, 2014, p. 36).

The centrepiece of the city of Babylon was the *Etemenanki* ziggurat (Fig. 5). There are records of it sparkling in the sun and being visible two kilometers away from the city. Therefore, it attracted foreign travellers like a magnet, who left stories and legends about the existence of the mysterious object. Its image has excited more than one generation of artists, architects, historians, and other experts in the study of antiquities, which is why the Tower of Babel has received numerous interpretations of its symbolic meaning. And here it is logical to explain that the process of constructing identity is based on the revision of history, the restoration, partial or complete falsification of the historical past. They naturally result in the revision of mythology, "inventing" new myths (pseudo-myths) or reanimating old myths that are convenient for the current conditions (Cherkes, 2008, p. 29).



**Figure 5.** Hypothetical reconstruction of the Etemenanki: a – general appearance of the tower; b – diagram of the analysis of new and old approaches to the reconstruction of the tower

**Source:** Fenollós *et al.* (2005)

It has been suggested that Babylon was the largest city in the ancient world and the first city to have a population of more than 200,000 inhabitants (Chandler, 1987). Many years of archaeological research conducted by German, Iranian, and Italian expeditions (Pedersén, 2021, p. 15) have yielded data on the exact location, size, and nature of the ancient city's buildings. Its area was about 850 hectares (McEvedy, 2011). To imagine this size in the context of historical cities, it is enough to compare it with the area of the ancient city of Athens, which in its heyday was 215 hectares; and the area of the capital of the Roman Empire, the Eternal City of Rome, in its heyday in the second century AD, was 1,500 hectares, which is 3,000 years later than the first cities were founded.

According to the available archaeological research and graphic materials developed based on it (Pedersén, 2021, p. 15), it is demonstrated that the city of Babylon was developed in the Mesopotamian lowlands and had a regular layout and a simple shape – an almost perfect rectangle divided in the middle by the Euphrates River. In part, this configuration can be traced in the landscape. The river

divided the city into western and eastern parts. Over time, the river changed its course and now flows through the ruins of the Western City.

According to the German archaeologist *Robert Johann Koldewey*, the total length of the city walls of Babylon in the sixth century BC was 18 km (Nesselrath, 2020, p. 191), of which 8 km were the walls of the inner city (Al-Dulaimi *et al.*, 2018). To understand the actual size of the ancient metropolis in the context of a modern city, a comparison can be made, for example, with the historic centre of Lviv, which developed around Rynok Square. Google Maps aerial photography (Google Earth..., 2022) allowed for estimating the size of the area, and a historical map (Austrian War Archive, 1777) helped to identify the walls. The area of the historic city centre is on average 500 x 500 meters; the approximate length of the ancient city defensive walls is 1.6 km, which is more than 10 times less than the length of the walls of Babylon as of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC.

The data concerning the size of the defensive fortifications and other important objects of the city of Babylon are not unreasonably impressive. The height of the defensive



walls was 27 meters (Asheri *et al.*, 2007, p. 199). Within their boundaries, in addition to the main temple of the entire Babylonian kingdom, the *Etemenanki* ziggurat, the city had 52 more. In addition, the longest bridge in the ancient world was built in the city, with a length of 115 m and a width of 5-6 m (Asheri *et al.*, 2007, p. 205).

The successful economic policy of Babylon contributed to its active development and the accumulation of significant reserves of wealth, which is why the city attracted an incredible number of conquerors. But all of the conquerors knew little about agriculture, horticulture, or the infrastructure of cities in the East Asian region. As a result, cities fell into decline after significant interventions. The city of Babylon was no exception.

Thus, a characteristic feature of Babylon is the rational development of the settlement territory and its regular planning. They were caused by a uniform change in the formal states of the urban environment in time and space and demonstrate a specific stage, due to the relative

independence of the stages of development, which had characteristic manifestations in the functional organisation and planning structure of the city.

#### ***Urban development is influenced by political, economic, and cultural values***

History knows numerous examples of when cities were developed based on the principles of harmony with nature. A striking example of such developments is the city of *Athens*. Here, the initial use of space was dictated by the nature of the area, and the development adapted to it (Dimitriadou, 2019, p. 19).

Thus, if the history of the development of the material and spatial environment of Babylon is rethought using formal criteria discovered during archaeological research and initiated by Robert Koldewey in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (Boiy, 2004, p. 8), in the case of Athens the key role is played by the Acropolis, which is in the visual focus of the established urban space (Fig. 6).



**Figure 6.** A general perspective of Athens, with the acropolis in the geometric centre of the image as its central element  
**Source:** photo by Bohdan Cherkes, 2018

The process of developing Athens was not ordinary and occasionally complicated. The starting point for its establishment was a natural hill and in the future the Acropolis of Athens, which played a decisive role in the development of the city. Nowadays, the Acropolis of Athens is a special place of magnificence and veneration for visitors (Midgette & Josing, 2000, p. 14), and for researchers, it is endowed with special attention, as it has become a landmark for rethinking ancient approaches to the development of urban structures.

Archaeological research proves that the Acropolis of Athens (from Greek *Ἀκρῶς* and Greek *Πόλις* – *upper city*) was already inhabited in the 4<sup>th</sup> millennium BC (DeVries, 2006, p. 352). Initially, there was a palace here, which was surrounded by a powerful wall in 1.250. Later, the Athenians claimed that it was due to it that the city never fell into the hands of invaders and later became the capital of Attica (Castleden, 2005, p. 64). Thus, as the centre of the city's design, the acropolis began to develop around the 13<sup>th</sup> century BC, i.e., 2,000 years later than the cities of Mesopotamia.

Over time, a settlement grew around the Acropolis. The remains of an ancient settlement are found in three

places: on the summit, high on the north slope, and low in the northwest (Dimitriadou, 2019, p. 20). Eventually, a new addition in the northwest became the site of the agora, and the Acropolis became a spiritual centre (DeVries, 2006, p. 352). At this time, the city's territory is defined by a variety of structural elements and functional content: new urban developments appear and are extended by public buildings that arrange around them a space publicly accessible to city residents, such as an agora. Ian Peter Morris (2009) noted that until the end of the first millennium BC, Greek cities were weak politically and militarily and, therefore, remained small. It was only when the Greeks became part of the Persian Empire that supercities became possible.

The relatively modern appearance of the Acropolis of Athens was obtained in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC (Daly & Riccardi, ed., 2015, p. 137-138) (Fig. 7), which is known as the *Golden Age of Athens*. As a result, an ensemble was designed according to a single plan, uniting several buildings: The Parthenon, the Propylaea, the Temple of Nike Apteros, the Erechtheion, and the bronze statue of Athena Promachos (The Acropolis of Athens, 2008). In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Acropolis of Athens is a 156-meter-high hill rising above the city, approximately 300 meters long and 170 meters wide (Jarus, 2013).





Figure 7. Model of Ancient Athens, 5<sup>th</sup> century, the Acropolis Museum

Source: Bohdan Cherkas archive, 2018

In the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, events occurred that changed the course of the history of the entire city. The threat of military attacks necessitated the construction of additional fortifications (DeVries, 2006, p. 352). Such measures fixed the city's boundaries and formally limited its territorial development. However, the city was destroyed.

In the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, after the war between the Persians and the Ionian Union of Cities, the Athenian Maritime Union was established under the patronage of *Athens*. The city became the centre of economic, political, and cultural life in ancient Greece. The first democratic foundations of the city's development began to develop here: public spaces were established where democratic processes occurred, theatres, stadiums, democratic temples, later forums, etc. (Connolly & Dodge, 1998). All of these components are not present in the ancient cities of Eastern cultures, which until the 19<sup>th</sup> century did not know public spaces other than markets. It makes the ancient European city significantly different from those established in Mesopotamia, Ancient Egypt, Ancient China, Ancient India, etc.

Subsequently, conditions were established that favoured reconstruction and caused its transition to a new period (Sofroniou, 2015). From 470 to 430 BC, Athens experienced a golden age (Bancroft, 1876, p. 85). At that time, the city's area was approximately 215 hectares (McEvedy, 2011), of which 150 hectares were developed with private houses (Kolb, 1984, p. 80-81). In addition, many public buildings were constructed, which reinforced the importance of the Acropolis and the agora (DeVries, 2006, p. 353). All the buildings were harmoniously combined; the city's territory has not changed. However, even this time was not calm in the history of the development of this city, as at the end of the 5<sup>th</sup>-century wars between the Athenian Maritime Union and the Peloponnesian Union began, which resulted in a crushing defeat and a reduction in the territory of Athens. However, this reduction was relatively minor, as the city's territory was previously quite large – 1.6 km in a straight line between the southern and northern parts.

During the era of Roman rule in 290 BC, the city declined, and its size decreased (Ehrlich & Vanderpool, 2022) to 180 hectares. Gradually, after the destruction of the

Byzantine Empire by the Ottomans in 1453, the city turned into a village. It was only in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, due to the fascination in European society with ancient civilisation, democratic civilisation, and Greek independence after 1830, that Athens was rediscovered. Large-scale excavations began, and it came to life again and began to function in the consciousness of the scientific and later public world. Thus, it can be said that for almost 1,800 years this city as a capital, and the cradle of European urban culture, has been disappearing from consciousness.

Thus, the nature of the development of Athens was slightly different from that of Babylon, for example. The process of changing from one qualitative state to another was unpredictable, driven largely by political reasons. Although they caused rapid territorial development, the transition itself was accompanied by a complex combination of planning elements of different configurations. They became decisive in the design of a special form of aesthetic development of the urban environment.

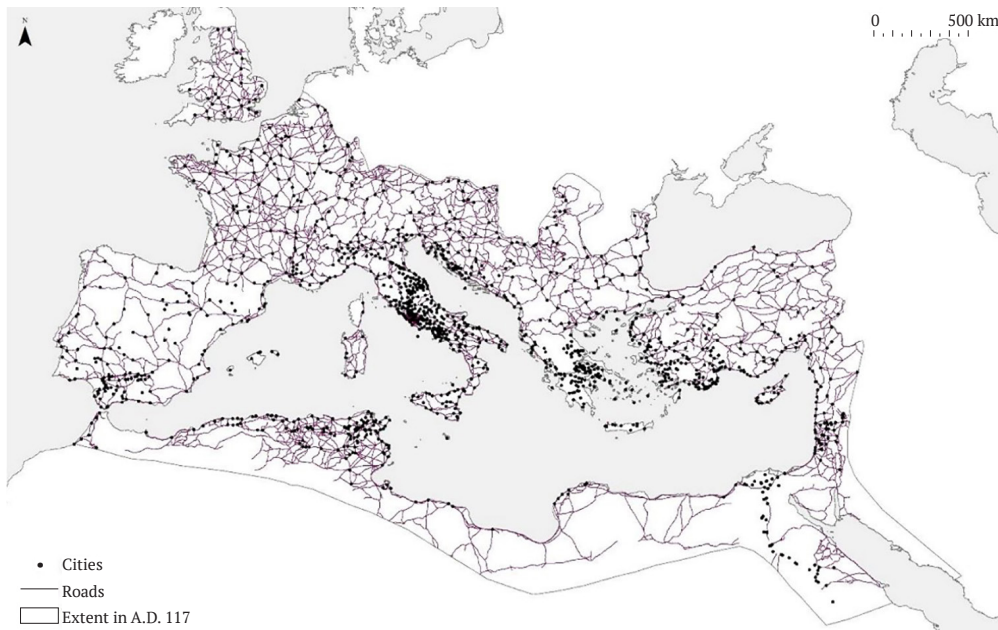
In ancient times, the development of humanity and the construction of cities were not uniform. The process of change was accompanied by frequent epidemics, which states did not fight, but were perceived as natural disasters, which, in most cases, caused degradation and decline. As a result, the emergence and prosperity were replaced by an era of decline, which, according to scholars, is a natural process. In this context, a book by the American author K. Harper (2020), where argues that climate change and pandemic diseases were an integral part of the fall of the Roman Empire.

*The Roman Empire* – a state and military-political entity that was established around the Mediterranean Sea and partly the Black Sea. Its establishment was preceded by the political strengthening and economic rise of the Roman Republic at the international level, which developed from the city of Rome. Detailed mapping material (Detailed Map..., 2015) demonstrates that in 211 AD there were more than 870 cities and settlements within the Roman Empire and more than 90 Roman cities and settlements outside the empire. Therewith, the database compiled by J. Hanson (2016) contains information on 1388 cities that



existed during the imperial period in the Roman world. The total length of roads connecting all these settlements was 120,000 km (Cartwright, 2014) (Fig. 8). In the context of

urban planning, the Roman Empire is a highly organised system consisting of many interconnected elements and a clear affiliation with one main city, Rome.



**Figure 8.** The network of cities and roads of the Roman world, 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD.

**Source:** Hanson (2016)

The Mediterranean Sea played a crucial role in the economic development and political strengthening of the Roman Empire. It was its inland lake and provided the adjacent territory with a specific type of subtropical climate, characterised by dry, hot summers and rainy, cool winters. For comparison, the Roman Empire during 250-350 was the largest in the world, covering 4,400,000 square kilometres (Taagepera, 1979, p. 222), and the Mediterranean Sea covered 2,510,000 square kilometres (Salah & Baruch, 2022), which was 57% of the total area of the entire mighty empire. With the conquest of Egypt in 30 BC. For the first time, the Mediterranean became one political unit – a large lake within one empire, the “Roman Lake” (Lopes, 2010).

After several studies by K. Harper (2019; 2020), the idea that the period of the Roman Empire’s greatest prosperity was associated with climate change (Harper, 2020), caused by an increase in average temperature by two to three degrees, has become popular. Thus, the Holocene in northwestern Europe was replaced by a period that went down in history as the Roman climatic optimum (Lacey, 2022, p. 210). It was distinguished by relative air warming, which had a positive impact on the development of agriculture and horticulture.

Already in the next period, which is approximately the time from 250 or 450 (the exact date is currently the subject of deep scientific debate), there was a cooling (Harper, 2020; Lacey, 2022, p. 210). Scientists have attested to this based on references and descriptions of poor harvests and disease susceptibility resulting from heavy rain and thunderstorms, flooding, cold winters, early cooling, and late warming (Harper, 2019).

In the period of 1,000 BC, other cities were established that can boast several thousand years of history. Such is Jerusalem (Fig. 9), one of the world’s greatest cities, with a history dating back more than 3,000 years. The city is known for such sites as the Temple Mount, which is still the site of great tension between Jewish and Islamic cultures, although Christianity has been active in its development.



**Figure 9.** A model of Jerusalem (Israel), at a scale of 1:50 (1cm=2m) of the real city

**Source:** Bohdan Cherkes archive, 2018

As for the layout of the city of Jerusalem, it was developed without a clear plan and was determined by some natural causes. Here you can trace the changes that resulted in the development of the city of David, Solomon, and the Roman





governor Herod, who introduced Roman urban elements into the urban structure, from large-scale construction to theatres. This combination of different times and different urban planning approaches have resulted in the enrichment and diversity of the city's urban culture.

Another example of a city unique in its development is Venice (Italy). Just like Jerusalem, its development was caused by events that were arbitrary and heavily influenced by political, economic, and socio-political conditions. Venice was established in the lagoon by refugees from the continent who sought refuge on the water from the barbarians who destroyed and plundered the Roman Empire (Toynbee, 1973, p. 276). These vandals did not know how to navigate. Thus, at first, it was a place for the short-term stay of people. Later, in the 5th century, the territory of almost 600 hectares began to function as a place of permanent residence.

Gradually, the continental and island territories (120 islands (Lyde, 1930, p. 99) merged into one. Through a system of bridges and canals, it has developed into a single conglomerate where harmony and an unconscious sense of identity with European culture reign.

In 1550, Venice had a population of 163,627 (Balchin, 2022.). Currently, on the same 600 hectares, the city accommodates between 45,000 and 50,000 people, demonstrating the influence of the laws of linearity and alignment, progressiveness and regressiveness in the history of urban culture.

A common feature of Babylon, Athens, Jerusalem, and Venice is that they were once world centres of urban civilisation with heterogeneous functional content and a significant volumetric and spatial scope. Therewith, the transition from one qualitative state to another and the formal expression of their material content had significant differences, in particular at the level of functional and planning organisation of the territory. This situation requires a reconsideration of existing approaches to exploring the city.

Finally, the laws of urban development can have quite unobvious signs, such as the cities of Caracas (Venezuela) and Ékmord (Provence, South of France) (Fig. 10; 11).



Figure 10. Slamsy, Caracas (Venezuela)

Source: Murzyn & Varon (2011)



Figure 11. Ekmord (Provence, South of France)

Source: photo by Bohdan Cherkes, 2018

The photograph of the city of one million people in Caracas represents the Slums that were developed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. At first glance, the city is completely regular and planned, and on the other hand, Ekmord is a city that was planned in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and is dominated by much more progressive qualities than the Slums in Caracas.

Thus, five thousand years – this is the time during which specific social groups managed to form a complex material-spatial structure that, under specific political, economic, social, and cultural conditions, was endowed with special features. Such features were expressed both at the level of formal and informal qualities in the design and development of the material-spatial environment of human activity.

## DISCUSSION

The research attempts to identify the key points for human development that are within the competence of urban planners. They are recorded by history in the form of the city as an unprecedented type of settlement that has been distinguished by its functional diversity and spatial scope for many millennia. Based on the generalised experience of urban planning and the idea of the city in the context of exploring the history of its development, it can be assumed that this approach was based on the necessity to establish a specific material and spatial environment for human activity and was accompanied by a controlled increase in the size of the territory of settlements.

As a result, settlements with heterogeneous forms and structures emerged. It is confirmed by numerous archaeological sites (Maleev, 2001), images, and descriptions. They record the formal side of the life of these ancient structures: the methods of functional design and ways of organising them, the size, nature of the layout, and the specific features of the spatial solution (Lynch, 1984). Each of these characteristics has become the foundation for the development of various classifications (for example, by configuration or layout) and the identification of specific types. Based on such data, the history of urban planning uses a classification based on the nature of the layout of ancient



settlements. Over time, ready-made schemes and methods for exploring historical objects and phenomena in urban planning emerged.

The most common methodology is the one based on the study of the city as a variable historical phenomenon and focused on identifying the specific features of the design of its constituent elements in the context of historical development and searching for general trends in the history of urban planning. Therewith, the city is considered an integral historical system (Timohin, 2008), and its research is mainly provided by periodisation, historical-systemic, and historical-typological methods. The evidence foundation is based on mechanisms (states and processes) that are logically interdependent.

Following this approach, Babylon, Athens, Jerusalem, and Venice can be described as cities associated with the development and greatness of a particular state establishment. Depending on the conditions in which each of them found themselves, cities underwent some changes or acquired specific states. Therefore, there are general trends based on *linear* or *progressive development*.

*Linear development* implied a gradual transition from one qualitative state of the material-spatial environment of human life to another. This process was marked by unity and progress in the development of the city. In a specific sequence, structural elements with a new functional purpose and formal expression appeared (Lynch, 1984). In such a situation, the functional organisation and planning structure of ancient settlements had a regular expression and was characterised by stability over a relatively long period. An example of a city with an inherent linear development is Babylon.

*Progressive development* is more common in cities with a sharp change in the urban environment. In contrast to linear development, it is characterised by spontaneity and emerged under the influence of unplanned actions and needs (Morris, 1994). This order arose naturally, inseparably from the existing elements of natural origin: hills, water bodies, etc. An example of a city with inherent progressive development is Jerusalem.

However, the development of ancient cities was not always linear or progressive. It is demonstrated by the wide palette of architectural and urban planning objects of antiquity (Rossi, 1966). History knows numerous examples when, at certain stages, cities developed rapidly, and later, just as rapidly, they declined. Therefore, if cities are analysed in general, in addition to linear development, a development that corresponds to the nature of the regression can be traced. An example is Athens, which lost its significance and degraded during the Roman Empire's rule, but its territory and attributes have not changed significantly.

After all, such examples in history are not isolated and frequently involve powerful cities. Thus, at one time, the eternal city of Rome turned from a mighty capital, the administrative, cultural, and political centre of the sacred Roman Empire, into a small settlement with a destroyed and looted forum, where, according to travellers' stories, shepherds grazed cattle and marvelled at the scattered stones.

Therewith, with this approach, ancient cities, each of which is unique in its various manifestations (Mumford, 1979), lose their special role in the process of cognition. Generalisations and commonly accepted classifications impede the identification of facts that would confirm the specificity of a particular historical object. In this context, it is advisable to develop an approach to the research of the city based on the idiographic method designed to describe individual features of historical facts (Kovaliv, 2007, p. 405). Without emphasising the logical change of states and processes, all the possible features of a city that mark its natural originality can be identified. Therefore, there is an assumption that this approach will strengthen the connection between the theory and practice of urban planning.

Thus, in his time, Professor Anthony Edwin James Morris of London South Bank University published a thorough work "History of Urban Form: Before the Industrial Revolutions" (1994). Here the author emphasised the states that characterised the physical features of the city. He explained and developed the concept of "unplanned" cities that grew organically, as opposed to "planned" cities that were developed according to the determinants of urban form.

Most ancient settlements in the history of urban planning are synergistic. To explore them, it is not enough to apply classical models of design and ways of development. Therefore, there is a necessity to consider the city as something specific through the categories of destruction, randomness, imbalance, and excluding the possibility of causal relationships.

Historical and comparative analyses of the formal expression of urban centres such as Babylon and Athens (Egli, 1959) have confirmed that functional diversity and spatial scope were important characteristics for representing their greatness and power. However, quantitative characteristics are not always representative of originality. Thus, in the case of the complex history of Athens, it is of interest to identify the accidental factors that influenced its development and functioning even during its decline.

Such examples suggest that the approach to exploring the history of urban planning should go beyond complexity when history considers the city as an interconnected and proportionally coordinated development within one holistic historical system. It is important to emphasise how information is presented and to develop approaches that will determine the essential features of an ancient urban development on a particular example, identifying the processes and conditions that contributed to their change, regardless of whether its original qualities have been preserved or not.

Another important point in the history of urban planning is the fact of understanding the self-expressive qualities of the ancient city through the category of identity (Cherkes, 2008). The modern understanding of identity in architecture and urban planning is quite conscious and diverse. Therefore, the process of establishment is largely coordinated and balanced. In the historical dimension, self-expression in urban planning was ensured by the level of political, economic, social, and cultural development. In this context, Babylon is an example where all the processes associated





with the establishment and development of the material and spatial environment of human activity did not deny the old and established a new one adapted to the existing natural conditions.

## CONCLUSIONS

Nowadays, the history of urban planning demonstrates a heterogeneous palette of techniques and methods of organising urban centres that have been established for five thousand years: from the beginning of the development of settlements to the evolution of *Homo sapiens*, from *Homo sapiens* to *Homo urbanus*, from the enormous problems that humanity has today due to the demographic explosion and the challenges that humanity faces today. In this five thousandth minimum, one can understand the essential features of ancient urban centres and the prospects for the development of Ukrainian cities as conventional places of residence for a large number of people and the coexistence of heterogeneous functions.

The research allowed expanding the understanding of the essential features of the mechanisms of development of ancient urban centres, which occupy a special place in the history of urban planning on a global scale. It allowed the development of an opinion on the importance of developing different approaches to exploring the city in a historical context.

In the presence of a significant amount of data on the physical condition of ancient cities, it is necessary to adjust the usual methodology for exploring the city. In particular,

it is proposed to develop two areas. The first, the classical one, should be further designed in the context of the search for general trends in urban development in historical retrospect. The second is to develop it as opposed to the first. In this case, when exploring a city, you should not compare its data with others or rely on generally accepted classifications. Here it is necessary to look for those features that can define its uniqueness and find a place in the past of humanity.

Although historical research employs a large number of methods, it is appropriate to devote attention to the implementation of a synergistic approach. It will allow defining a new paradigm of the history of urban planning in modern conditions. By changing the usual approaches to the city's research, a new model of the city in history will become widespread.

The purpose of the research is to obtain the essential characteristics of historically significant cities with an emphasis on the formal qualities in the organisation of their material and spatial environment. The material developed substantiates the necessity of deepening the theoretical and methodological tools. In the future, it will be the foundation for a new classification of ancient cities and will contribute to adjusting the approach to the presentation of educational material in the history of urban planning.

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## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None.

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## **Феномен міста у сучасному дискурсі історії містобудування**

**Анотація.** Сучасний підхід до викладу історії містобудування є заангажований старими наративами щодо розуміння природи розвитку міста як деякого унікального об'єкта із тисячолітньою історією. За умови відбудови та відновлення зруйнованих війною населених місць України необхідно виявляти специфічні ознаки та розвивати розуміння такого роду явищ відповідно до викликів сьогодення. Розгляд їх у глобальному вимірі, допоможе розвивати ідеї на засадах українських культурних цінностей і продовжить формувати національну ідентичність в архітектурі та містобудуванні. Мета статті спрямована на осмислення процесів формування міста протягом п'яти тисяч років та виокремленні тих аспектів, які є свідченням феноменального прориву у розвитку людства. Методологія дослідження ґрунтується на принципах та методах у межах логіко-гносеологічного та філософсько-світоглядного підходів. Результатом дослідження стало виділення специфічних для певної епохи та культури характеристик матеріально-просторового наповнення давніх міст світу, які пережили тисячолітню історію, а також позначені тих якостей, що стали визначальними для оцінки їхнього розвитку. Увагу зосереджено на формуванні *Homo sapiens* та виникненні писемства, без яких існування міст було б неможливим. Порівняльну характеристику давніх міст зроблено на прикладі таких поселень як Карнак, Вавилон, Афіни, Венеція, Єрусалим, а також Римської імперії, яка мала сталі містобудівні засади протягом декількох століть. Для історії ці поселення займають особливе місце, так як є репрезентантами специфічних еволюційних підходів у становленні та розвитку матеріально-просторового середовища життєдіяльності людини. Зміна їх формальних станів була неоднаковою, проте кожен раз вона призводила до якісних перетворень. Через це автори пропонують заглибитися у розуміння розвитку давніх міст через категорії лінійності, прогресивності та регресивності, а також зосередити увагу на поглибленні звичних підходів до вивчення міста

**Ключові слова:** теорія; *human settlement*; розвиток; лінійність; спонтанність; ідентичність

