

Dreams of autonomy

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Table of contents

Introduction	2
City-state as a political abnormality	2
Research	5
Questions, materials, problems and more questions	5
Objective of the research	6
Choosing a destination	9
Commune and the city-state, controversy	12
Citizen's state of mind	14
Artwork	21
Concept	21
Materials	25
Bibliography	26
List of references	27

Introduction

Autonomy as an abstract concept is intriguing because of the ambition this term contains within itself. I tried to get a hold of this concept, when applied towards our reality. In this work, I propose taking a closer look at the problematic concept of autonomy through the prism of history. The thesis investigates city walls as a symbolic monument to absolute sovereignty, while exploring city-state as an example of autonomous entity and antithesis to the contemporary trend towards globalization. Italian city-states of the Middle Ages and Renaissance are used as a case study through which to examine economical, political and cultural points of view, with an emphasis on the evolution of aesthetics and philosophy. Furthermore, it traces the influential role of the artist as it has been changed and expanded by the urban community and its values. City-states were thoroughly examined before primarily by historians scrupulously and from many angles. The historians have covered this topic with a level of rigor and exactitude necessary to maintain the credibility of their academic discipline. On the other hand, I am at liberty to present the city-state as a metaphor for autonomy, as presented through this research.

City-state as a political abnormality

Getting in touch with the modern political reality by the means of antithesis

I have been inclined to explore the city state as a political, economic and social system primarily because of its political abnormality in the context of the modern world. Nation states have gained the ultimate power, and in doing so, excluded all the alternative geo-cultural ideologies from the realm of possibility.

Nation states are mostly heterogeneous in regulating their internal affairs, and are often divided into administrative regions in order to control their vast, highly-populated territories. They generally tend to establish intergovernmental organizations, such as the EU, to promote

global governance, accelerate interdependence in all spheres of man's life and follow the route of globalisation.

Thomas G. Weiss and Ramesh Thakur, distinguished scholars of international relations, who held various official posts in the governmental body of United Nations, suggest the following working definition of global governance in their book *Global Governance and the UN*: the complex of formal and informal institutions, mechanisms, relationships, and processes between and among states, markets, citizens and organizations, both intergovernmental and non-governmental, through which collective interests are articulated, rights and obligations are established, and differences are mediated.¹

Such a tool for preserving peace, cultural and economic development, from the global point of view, has undeniable benefits. However, if we take a look at the issues local governments face, it becomes apparent that the amount of pressure on the regional offices increases along with a loss of sovereignty, real or perceived, through the regulations established in multilateral treaties and imposed upon them by the federal government. Sovereignty is one of the crucial values in shaping national and historical identity of a country. It serves as a guarantee of ruling in favour of its citizens in any complicated political or economic situation that might emerge. Also it proves the competency of the institutions in the sphere of governing, which enables them to earn the trust of citizens, by demonstrating the level of self-sufficiency the political system is capable of.

Another angle from which to look at the idea of autonomy is the potential sense of security this concept contains. I would like to demonstrate the appeal of such promise in relation to the modern day, by referring to the "question of belonging" as posed by Kendall, Woodward and Skrbis in their publication *The Sociology of Cosmopolitanism*. Cosmopolitanism is an ethical stance, in which the individual tries to develop a receptive and open attitude towards the other, "by seeing differences as an opportunity for connection rather than a pretext for separation".² Coming back to the topic of global government, I should mention that globalization serves as a precondition for cosmopolitanism, providing it with the mandatory material conditions and context. Therefore the question of belonging is essential

¹Weiss, Thomas G., and Ramesh Thakur. *Global Governance and the UN: an Unfinished Journey*. Indiana University Press, 2010 (pp. 6-7)

² Kendall, Gavin, et al. *The Sociology of Cosmopolitanism Globalization, Identity, Culture and Government*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2009 (p. 1)

for understanding the concept of cosmopolitanism and the argument I am going to make further on.

Kendall, Woodward and Skrbis state “Meaningful belonging” is not reducible to human-focused social interaction, it can be derived from relationships with places, objects and ideas.”³ They also quote the work of Anthony Giddens *Modernity and Self-Identity* to prove that the wish to belong somewhere is not just a romantic longing, but a natural aspiration as much as a commanding power: “One of the strong social universals, that turn humans into belonging-seekers is a desire for certainty and ontological security in a world of unpredictability and risk.”⁴

Unexpectedly the concept of autonomy, bearing the notion of individuality and detachment from the whole into a self-sufficient unit, is accompanied by the idea of belonging. Belonging involves plurality in its description and interpretation, resulting in the creation of security and certainty. Bringing it to the level of abstraction, I would suggest that the framing, by delegating the closed nature qualities to the certain environment gives the opportunity to gain control and act in the setting of the particular reality. That way the restrictive framing structure is enables the launching of various initiatives and processes inside the system.

Questions of autonomy, sovereignty and freedom are as important in the diverse contexts of everyday life as they are necessary and fascinating when claiming their rightful place in the practices of contemporary artists. So was autonomy ever possible? If so then to what degree and quality?

³ Kendall, Gavin, et al. *The Sociology of Cosmopolitanism Globalization, Identity, Culture and Government*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2009 (pp. 33-36)

⁴ Kendall, Gavin, et al. *The Sociology of Cosmopolitanism Globalization, Identity, Culture and Government*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2009 (p. 34)

Research

Questions, materials, problems and more questions

What is a city state?

A city state is a state, confined within the boundaries of a single city. Its territory normally expands over the city walls into the surrounding lands, but very conservatively. As in any city, a specialisation of function and division of labour takes place there, as well as the high density population. City-states have a centralised legitimate government in the urban centre, which is normally fortified. Being completely autonomous is not a mandatory requirement, “internal sovereignty” can suffice.⁵

However, this specific geo-political form of government possesses the individualistic, closed sense of autonomy, which I find most intriguing, because its freedom ends at the walls of the city.

Which disciplines take the most interest in this concept?

History, economics, politology, law, sociology, anthropology, philosophy, philology, art history, urban studies. Why? Because a city-state is a self-governing society with a large amount of resources. As a closed entity it is perfectly suited for researchers to identify its functional elements and connections between them. It serves as an anticipated meeting point for multiple academic disciplines. And if it is possible to paint a whole picture of a viable system, then there is a space to theoreticise and build model after model, varying their placement on the reality-utopia spectrum.

Tommaso Campanella's philosophical 16th century work *City of the Sun* serves as a strident example of an utopian vision framed within the city-state construct. The *City of Sun* is

⁵ Hansen, Mogens Herman. *A Comparative Study of Thirty City-State Cultures: An Investigation Conducted by the Copenhagen Polis Centre*. Det Kongelige Danske Videnskabernes Selskab, 2000 (p. 18)

perceived more like a conclusion, a commentary on a topic that was not just been actively discussed, but was being developed throughout the last couple centuries before him in practice on the territory of modern Italy.⁶ His main goal was universal scientific synthesis which would combine philosophical, natural and humanitarian sciences. Campanella was also attracted to empiricism, believing that valid knowledge is obtainable from the senses. Hence his idea of the ideal city is illustrative and describes the experience of a citizen living there. This example is a proof of how useful and precious this framing is for exercises in philosophy.

Objective of the research

When entering the first stage of my research I realised that it would be more interesting and interpretive to restrict the area of my study to a certain topic allows the idea of sovereignty to acquire depth through the framework I propose.

The decision to choose a city state for this purpose seemed logical and my reasoning for the exploring autonomy using this particular topic followed as such: First of all a city-state is compact topic to approach, because it is a closed entity by nature, distinguished from everything else through its nuclearity. It's a city, framed by its walls, immovable, set in stone. Secondly, since this phenomenon is uncommon nowadays, we can find examples of city states conserved in history, and in this way preserved for detailed examination.

The factual framing for the subject of my study is very important, because I would like to avoid excessive generalisation and idealization at the early research stage, which leaves little space for creative analysis.

So the invaluable source material, that tracked case studies of city-states throughout the history of mankind was the book *A Comparative Study of Thirty City-State Cultures* written by Mogens Herman Hansen. It was a major project of The Copenhagen Polis Centre, set up by the Danish National Research Foundation in 1993. The book was produced as a result of the Symposium, the main objective of which was to define what a city-state was, by searching for all occurrences in history, and re-establishing the concept by conducting a meticulous

⁶ Rutenburg, Viktor Ivanovic. *Ital'janskij Gorod: Ot Rannego Srednevekov'ja Do Vozrozhdenija: Ocerki*. Nauka, 1987 (pp. 147-149)

comparative analysis of diverse cases. With forty two contributors from fifteen countries overall in fields such as history, philology, theology, archeology, anthropology and sociology, this massive work substantially helped me to navigate through my research.

It also inspired me to start looking for entrance points to participate artistically in the construction or interpretation of this concept. I did this namely by referencing the circumstances that contributed to the formative processes of this particular geo-cultural ideology, in a medium that conforms to my artistic abilities and perception. For the reasons outlined further on I have chosen Italian city-states in the Middle Ages and Renaissance as a subject of my study, therefore all the general conditions of the city-state will be modified slightly and will acquire the details necessary for the demonstration of special characteristics of such political entities at the time span proclaimed.

There was another reason why choosing a topic of city-states seemed modern to me in some degree: today a state is a nation state. And as Geoffrey Parker pinpoints among all the other features and qualities of it: “The principal feature of that particular geopolitical category we call the nation-state is the existence, or the aspiration towards, a high level of homogeneity within its boundaries. This homogeneity may take the forms of language, culture and history, or indeed all three of them, and together they encapsulate the term “nation”. Since the Latin *natio* signifies birth or common origin, this also implies an ethnic basis to this type of state. The people of one nation thus come to see themselves as being fundamentally different from those who are members of another nation. The french political geographer Vidal de la Blache regarded the existence and nature of “we” as being essentially defined by the presence of the “other”. ”⁷

It was my guess, that to my surprise was supported by Mogens Herman Hansen in his work on city states that I want to quote: “By contrast with a modern nation-state, the population of a city-state has a political identity which is different from its ethnic identity (language, culture, religion, history etc.) with a number of other city-states, whereas its sense of political identity (including patriotism) is primarily centred on the city-state itself rather than on smaller entities (municipalities) or larger entities (ethnically based political organisations, federations, monarchies)”.⁸ Let me now remind you of the “question of

⁷ Parker, Geoffrey. *Sovereign City: the City-State through History*. Reaktion Books, 2004 (p. 9)

⁸ Hansen, Mogens Herman. *A Comparative Study of Thirty City-State Cultures: An Investigation Conducted by the Copenhagen Polis Centre*. Det Kongelige Danske Videnskabernes Selskab, 2000 (p.18)

belonging” introduced earlier and suggest that in my opinion it surely resonates well with the city-state ideology. This way the idea of patriotism and civil liberties of citizens are seen as the highest value, offsetting the potential for racial or ethnic discrimination.

Choosing a destination

Criteria, details

Northern and central Italy were chosen for the reason of being extremely rich with artistic references and cultural treasures influenced by the ideology of sovereignty. Some might be surprised that the city of Rome is left out of this equation and the reason is that since it was the city where the Vatican was located, the influence of the Papacy was too strong there to represent a prime example of a city-state. The time period I am interested in is the 11th to 15th century, the period of the city communes and the free cities, the emergence of which Marx considered the Glanzpunkt of Middle ages.⁹

Of course realization of those cities wasn't entirely self-sufficient, many preconditions fell into place to create an advantageous environment. Let me walk you through some of them. For my main source of factual information I will be using the S.R. Epstein's article "The rise and fall of Italian city-states" from *A Comparative Study of Thirty City-State Cultures* edited by Mogens Herman Hansen and the essays of the Russian historian V.I. Rutenburg.¹⁰ The former source provides a structure for the virtual comparison of Italian city-states to the universal theoretical model of the city-state which so far doesn't fully exist, and the later goes into individual cases of every city's history and tries to present the reader with the image of major events and environments, which conditioned the zeitgeist of that time.

From here on i would like to turn to the material side of the Italian city-state phenomenon. As it was mentioned earlier most of the cities that had grown into city-states in the Middle Ages were founded by Romans, and have existed more or less continuously since that time. The term "persistenza vitale", was introduced by Lopez R.S. in his *Intervista sulla citta medievale*¹¹ and translates to "permanence of life". Rutenburg interprets it as the alternative term used to describe the urban architectural environment of italian cities in that period. The persistence of life occurs parallel to the major political, social, cultural revolutions

⁹ Rutenburg, Viktor Ivanovic. *Ital'janskij Gorod: Ot Rannego Srednevekov'ja Do Vozrozhdenija: Ocerki*. Nauka, 1987 (p. 3)

¹⁰ Rutenburg, Viktor Ivanovic. *Ital'janskij Gorod: Ot Rannego Srednevekov'ja Do Vozrozhdenija: Ocerki*. Nauka, 1987

¹¹ Najemy, John M., and Roberto S. Lopez. *Intervista Sulla Citta Medievale*. Edited by Marino Berengo. *The American Historical Review*, vol. 92, no. 2, 1987, p. 397

of that time. The infrastructure of the city, material functional elements such as walls, towers, markets, palaces, cathedrals, streets, bridges and etc., are essential to the city as a central, individual unit, a closed system in itself. However, it is mostly a stage environment that could be modified according to the needs of its citizens. According to this culturological view the functional elements are almost put lower in the hierarchy than the processes that they attend.

It's the citizens' state of mind that is of primal interest and importance for the researcher and makes the difference. It is naturally not the intention to investigate all of the citizens' doubts and fears on a personal level, but more to follow the occupations, economic activities, and political involvement of the inhabitants of the city. In the case of Italian city-states the focus is mostly on the artisans and merchants.

This being said, I would like to introduce here the position of a citizen in relation to the city as a closed entity. As we saw earlier, the infrastructure effects, but doesn't necessarily dictate the social change. A city wall is one case I will describe.

First, however, i would like to present an example of an analytical artistic work *Morphologie: City Metaphors*¹² of the contemporary artist and architect Oswald Mathias Ungers. In it, he took the general abstract notions and found a material meaning behind them, in doing so rediscovering and redefining the concepts. He pursued the exploration of city elements through visual metaphors, leaving it for the reader to take an imaginative leap from one category to another. Metaphors are transformations of an actual event into a figurative expression, evoking images by substituting an abstract notion for something more descriptive and illustrative.

¹² Ungers, Oswald Mathias. *Morphologie: City Metaphors*. Walther König, 1982

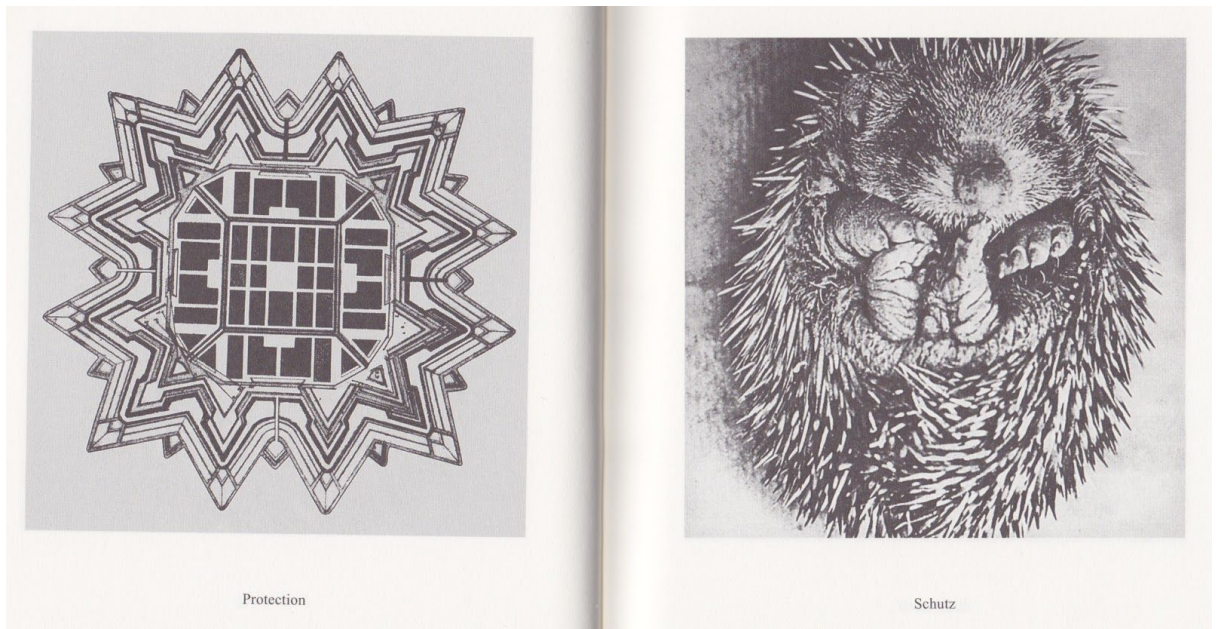


Figure 4. O.M. Urgens, *Protection*, 1982

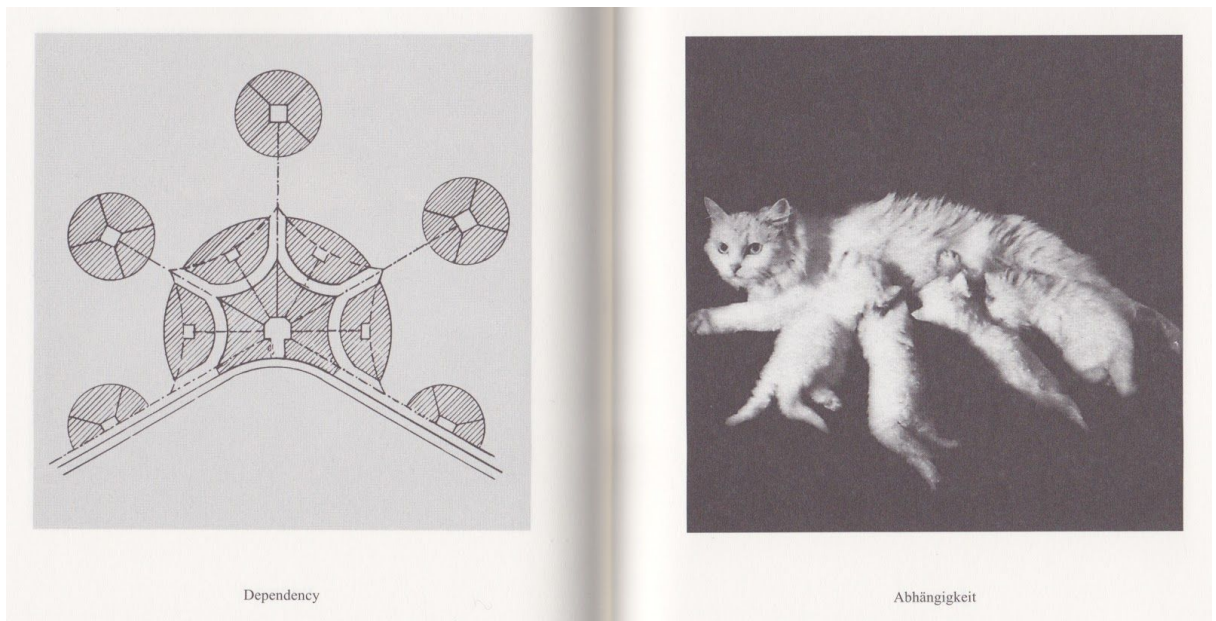


Figure 5. O.M. Urgens, *Dependency*, 1982

This art reference was necessary to elevate the perception of urban infrastructure from factual to more abstract level. While being directed by this idea, I wish to propose the following approach to the city walls.

Inside the city walls there were ever-changing rules governing landlords, merchants, bankers, students, artisans, labour force, money, and power. When the riots happened, they started in the city centre and ended at the city gates.

Outside of the city walls there was an enemy, often a neighboring city fighting for the trade dominance in the region. Attacks were accompanied by sieges, starting at the city gates and ending in the city centre.

There was also a movement going through the city walls. What is important to remember is that because of trade being an essential part of the city's sound financial state, the caravans need to be constantly going in and out the city through the city gates in both directions.

When we keep in mind those dynamics, it becomes obvious, that the city walls were not just a line, encircling the city, it was a space of its own, which kept its ground and had immense symbolical meaning.

Commune and the city-state, controversy

To begin with, we should differentiate between a commune and city state because, to quote Epstein,

“City-states were a special kind of commune that in addition to municipal self-rule practised their own foreign policy, were fiscally independent, could raise an army and enforce the death penalty, and could mint coins, sign commercial charters with other independent states, and requisition foreign merchants' goods. Self-ruling urban communes were ubiquitous in the late medieval and early modern West; city-states were not.”¹³

¹³ Hansen, Mogens Herman. *A Comparative Study of Thirty City-State Cultures: An Investigation Conducted by the Copenhagen Polis Centre*. Det Kongelige Danske Videnskabernes Selskab, 2000 (p. 277)

The definitions that Epstein proposes have a direct correlation to the paradox of extreme closeness and extreme openness being in such proximity to each other and occupying the same physical and mental territory:

”City-state has been defined primarily as a form of institutionalised power and as a self-contained institution, a closed society in political and economic relation with the outside world. The commune has been examined instead as a way of life whose most distinctive features were political, economic, religious and cultural openness and high rates of social mobility.”¹⁴

Epstein admits that it is impossible for such a complex and self-contradictory system to be perfectly functional, and confirms that such state of affairs in practice created conditions of “permanent revolution”¹⁵ that threatened the city-state as a viable mode of organised power during its existence. Revolution is understood as a drastic change, in this case I would offer a slightly different approach and call it an ongoing experiment.

It all started with the communal movement in Italy, which had found a strong base for development in the Roman tradition of municipal government that had been translated from late Antiquity by the bishops: specifically “the related cultural and occasionally political hegemony of urban over rural life” The first communes began to appear in northern-central Italy in such cities as Cremona, Pisa, Genoa, Verona, Florence, Siena, Bologna and Ferrara in the late eleventh century, when the struggle between the German emperor and the papacy created a power vacuum and gave away the opportunities for political autonomy in the region.

Though this tends to be the most common explanation of the phenomenon some historians prefer to emphasize solely the economic side, saying that transformation of the northern Italian communes into city-states occurred due to the growing volume and complexity of trade. While Italian communes did not initially aim to replace the bishops rule, they soon took on quasi-public functions in order to secure commercial and other economic rights. It is

¹⁴ Hansen, Morgen Herman. *A Comparative Study of Thirty City-State Cultures: An Investigation Conducted by the Copenhagen Polis Centre*. Det Kongelige Danske Videnskabernes Selskab, 2000 (p. 277)

¹⁵ Hansen, Morgen Herman. *A Comparative Study of Thirty City-State Cultures: An Investigation Conducted by the Copenhagen Polis Centre*. Det Kongelige Danske Videnskabernes Selskab, 2000 (p. 277)

worth noting that communes' status as sworn associations of like-minded men who promised to abide by their own rules and to be sanctioned for any infringement was very similar to that of the craft and merchant guilds which were being set up in the same years.

City states' communes also made decision to found universities, increasing the prestige of the city, its financial state, acting as a subject of pride as well as providing the city with highly qualified and scholarly individuals actively engaged in public life. What is extremely interesting is that while enrolling students from different countries, assembling a very vibrant and international community, universities were autonomous and could be compared to the guilds in their political representation rights, as we can see from the example of Bologna university.¹⁶

Citizen's state of mind

By the end of 12th century there were three hundred functional city-states. "Political reform in the Italian city-states was not motivated by popular aspirations for progressive enfranchisement and for republican civic values. Civic values (and their later, humanist incarnation into "civic virtue") were not the source of communal political activity; they were its consequence."¹⁷ The experiment kept going on, the way in which Italian city-states communicated amongst themselves is normally referred to as polycentrism. Each of the cities was learning from each other through imitation, using trial and error because of their lack of experience and the "permanent revolution" taking place inside each of them.

When I think of the embodiment of civil virtues, which were reinvented in the time of city-states' rise, I find myself in front of the fresco by Ambrogio Lorenzetti from the years 1334-40, situated in Sala della Pace (Hall of Peace) at Palazzo Pubblico in the city of Siena. In my opinion it is the best representation of the values and aspirations of those times: the allegorical motive of good and bad government and the correspondent consequences of such ruling. Here we can see again an attempt to discover something by feeling and consolidating

¹⁶ Rutenburg, Viktor Ivanovic. *Ital'janskij Gorod: Ot Rannego Srednevekov'ja Do Vozrozdjenja: Ocerki*. Nauka, 1987 (pp. 112-113)

¹⁷ Hansen, Mogens Herman. *A Comparative Study of Thirty City-State Cultures: An Investigation Conducted by the Copenhagen Polis Centre*. Det Kongelige Danske Videnskabernes Selskab, 2000 (p. 284)

the findings later using the law, philosophy, art, or all of them combined. The purpose of creating this series was to demonstrate the grandiose effect that personal goodness or immorality (by the standards of medieval society shifting to humanism) of the people in the government and the citizens themselves have on the city.

Apart from the terrors that accompany bad government we can observe a dysfunctional city. The normal occupations and activities of the citizens are interrupted, the city is falling apart along with its buildings. In order to once again strengthen the understanding of city-states' civic virtues, I want to bring your attention to the fact that the economic strength and well-being of the community was no longer shameful like it was in Middle Ages.

The explanation lies in the shift of the spiritual understanding of the purpose of life that happened around that time influenced by of theologians and philosophers of the epoch. One of them, who I want to discuss is Thomas Aquinas, a philosopher and theologian of pre-renaissance. His work reflected the reality of his time and the great changes in the everyday life and ideologies of a citizen of 13th century Italy. He had proclaimed the thesis that wealth is not sinful by itself, if the possessor follows the golden rule and is modest. That way the newly acquired trading, manufacturing and banking achievements became fully justified.

Thomas Aquinas also admitted the objectivity of reality and declared the search for knowledge as the way to God and Truth. That was a ideological breakthrough, the fundamental conditions for which were laid out by the citizens in their everyday lives. Further on those ideas continue to evolve and the medieval religious morals were substituted by the principle of mutual benefit. This modification together with fostered openness and curiosity towards the world, which was announced to be real and natural for people, paved the way to humanism and Renaissance.¹⁸

¹⁸ Rutenburg, Viktor Ivanovic. *Ital'janskij Gorod: Ot Rannego Srednevekov'ja Do Vozrozhdenija: Ocerki*. Nauka, 1987 (pp. 117-118)



Figure 1. Ambrogio Lorenzetti, *The Allegory of Good and Bad Government*,
between 1338 and 1340



Figure 2. Ambrogio Lorenzetti, *Effects of Good Government in the city (detail)*, between 1338 and 1340



Figure 3. Ambrogio Lorenzetti, *Effects of Bad Government in the city (detail)*, between 1338 and 1340

In architecture, beauty and functionality existed in symbiosis. Every new building, might it be a palace or a city gate, would become a subject of pride for the citizens and would sustain their patriotic attitude. One notable aspect that I would like to draw attention to is that the success of the individual was equated with the success of the city-state as a community and entity. Thus we can see that the shift of the focus of intentions turned back to the people, and this could be observed in every sphere of life. For example, anthropocentrism led to the invention of the central or linear perspective, where the “power” was delegated to the viewer and his role as an observer was emphasized and honoured. This was in contrast with the perspective that was used in the Middle ages mainly to teach the religious moral code and hierarchy in the society.



Figure 6. Unknown author, *View of an Ideal City*, 1475-1480

In this painting we are presented with the ideal of perfection and harmony existing in accordance with symmetry and beauty dictated by knowledge and reason. The urban landscape is devised with care and attention to details, beautiful buildings are given the proportions that compliment each other. The perfect city is designed and presented, by the means of a central perspective to whoever had a chance to behold this work of art. The absence of people doesn't confuse or frighten the spectator, because he realizes that the purpose of this concept is to give space, inviting him to imagine the place where it is possible to find beauty, reason and truth.

However, in reality 14-15th century Italy was everything but a tranquil peaceful region. The effort and talent of artists were also directed towards keeping the city secure and protecting against the enemies from the outside. The scientific and experimental knowledge obtained in mechanics, physics and engineering was used to make fortifications using the artistic

observational and creative skills. The opportunities for such enterprises came from riches obtained through trade and commercial endeavors. In my opinion it would be fair to say that artists served as conduits of the city states' ideology. Most outstanding artworks of the Renaissance were ordered by the city or by noble, wealthy citizens on behalf of the city, to build up their authority among other citizens.¹⁹

¹⁹ Rutenburg, Viktor Ivanovic. *Ital'janskij Gorod: Ot Rannego Srednevekov'ja Do Vozrozdjenja: Ocerki*. Nauka, 1987 (pp. 117-137)

Artwork

Concept

In my artwork I wanted to combine the general concept, historical facts, and knowledge from different academic disciplines to create something at the crossroads of a paradox. As we learned before, the complexity of the autonomy in the case of city-states, which were the embodiment of sovereignty, may be characterized by the constant state of openness and closeness of the system.

For that reason I decided to concentrate on the idea of a border: a borderline which is separating on one hand and letting through on another. This process of filtering creates a space in between, which both does and does not have a material value. In order to explore this phenomenon artistically I switched my attention to the City Walls. I decided to look only at the material and structural decisions, made by the architects reinventing and following the defensive strategies of the Renaissance. I did that in hope to go from an abstract concept to materiality and come back to the abstraction with an insight on the initial concept.

To begin with, the walls that city-states had since the time of the emerging communes were primarily made of stone and proved themselves to be so fragile and unreliable in the siegecraft situations, that that became the most common type of a military campaign at that time. The reason for that was the use of firearms and artillery weaponry, which appeared in Europe in the mid-14th century, and by the middle of the 15th century became the most efficient tools of destruction available. The shape of the city walls that used to be organic, had to be modified for better visibility and defence strategy. The Bastion was invented and architectural structures were viewed from the point of view of a shooting angle. The knowledge of central perspective, geometry, and mathematics introduced by artists was applied and implemented by masons, and tested by bombardiers and military captains. That way the organic shape turned into a strict geometrical structure with straight and sharp angles.

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²⁰ Huber, Rudolf, and Renate Rieth. *Festungen: Der Wehrbau Nach Einführung Der Feuerwaffen: Systematisches Fachwörterbuch*. K.G. Saur, 1990, *The Military Architecture of Francesco Di Giorgio in Southern Italy*. Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, vol. 49, no. 2, 1990, pp. 161–180

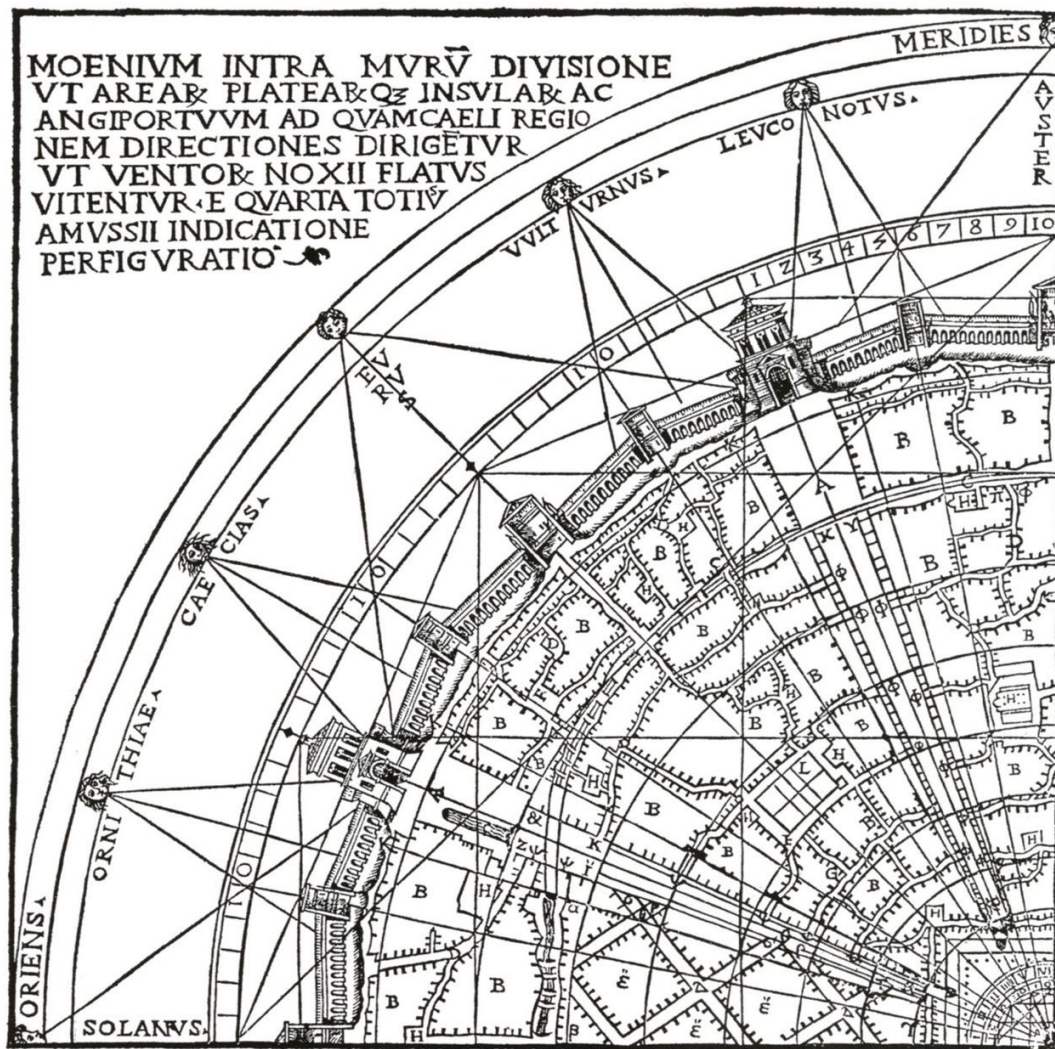
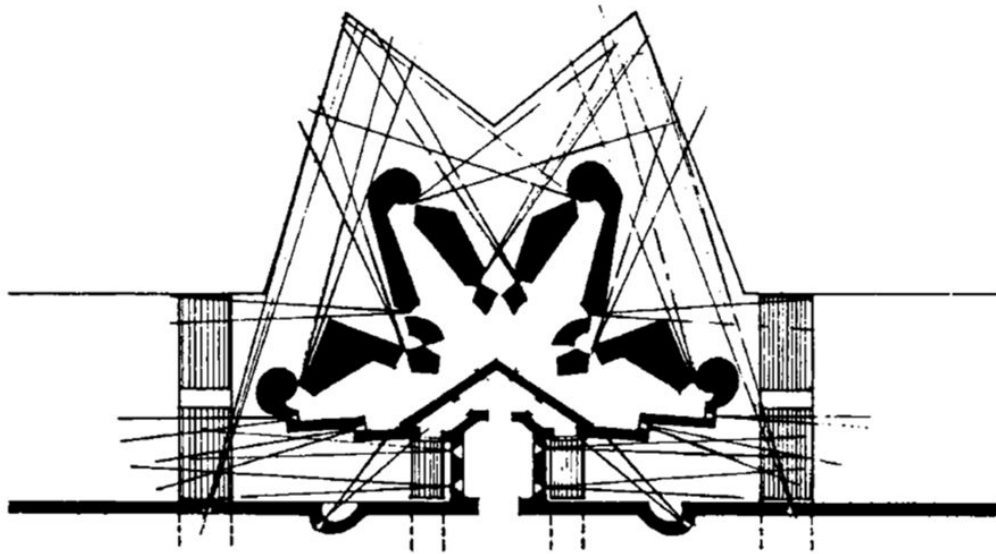
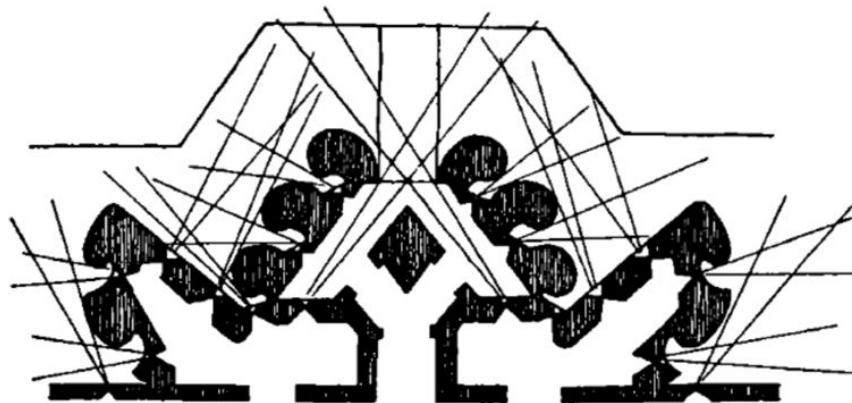


Figure 7. Cesariano, *Plan of a Vitruvian city*, 1521



Entwurf für die Porta al Prato, FLORENZ;
nach Michelangelo

Figure 8. A sketch showing the possible attack and defence angles



FLORENZ, Porta della Giustizia
Entwurf von Michelangelo, 1547

Figure 9. A sketch showing the possible attack and defence angles

Following that direction of thought, nothing could be a better metaphor of constant change and stability, closeness and openness, autonomy and dependency better, than a wall as a structure itself. I have studied multiple plans and rules, developed by the artists of Renaissance and came up with my own plan of a city wall.

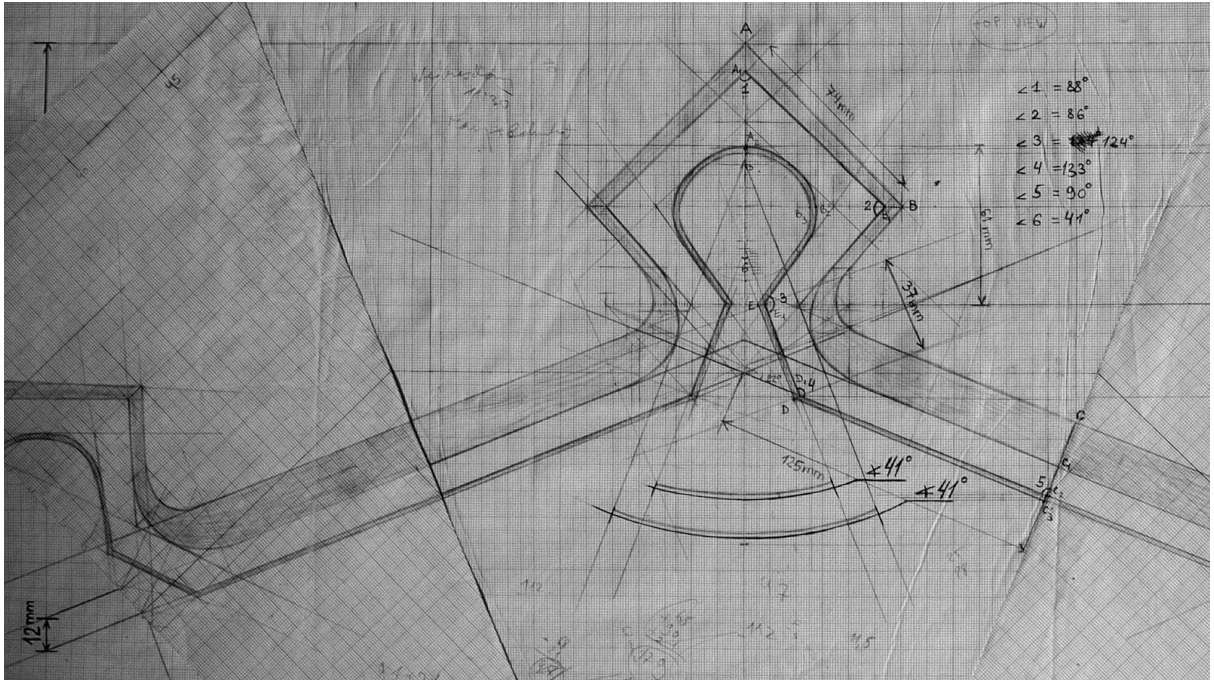


Figure 10. *Sketch of the bastion*

In order to explore the spatial aspects I decided to recreate it in ceramics, to demonstrate the space and its characteristics created by this kind of wall inside the city and outside of the city. In the process of sketching and developing this idea, i have started to realise, that by giving so much attention to the architectural, structural, spatial features, Iam forgetting about one notion that was very important to me during my research. This notion is “persistenza vitale”, the persistence of life, which while constantly undergoing changes served as a fruitful environment for the Italian urban centers throughout the centuries.

I have decided to make an art project demonstrating the “persistenza vitale” in city-states as I see it: a nonspecific urban landscape on the transparent medium, encircling the spectator, putting him into the centre. Central perspective used in the drawing to emphasize the individuality and anthropocentric views of the Renaissance. Transparent medium illustrates the dual nature of autonomy and elusiveness of the men’s believes and desires. The circle keeps the the structure and encloses the entity. The varied surface of a drawing reflects the

incomprehensible complexity and beauty of the everyday, merged into an ornamental game of visual senses.

Materials used in the artwork:

Circular aluminium frame, 2m in diameter,
Transparent paper roll 110g/m², 6m long, 0,9m wide,
Sewing thread,
Various drawing ink mixtures

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Figure 1. Ambrogio Lorenzetti, *The Allegory of Good and Bad Government*, between 1338 and 1340, fresco, Palazzo Pubblico, Siena, accessed 22 April, 2018, https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/he/thumb/7/78/Effets_du_bon_et_du_mauvais_gouvernement.jpg/1200px-Effets_du_bon_et_du_mauvais_gouvernement.jpg

Figure 2. Ambrogio Lorenzetti, *Effects of Good Government in the city*, between 1338 and 1340, fresco, Palazzo Pubblico, Siena, accessed 22 April, 2018, https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/11/Ambrogio_Lorenzetti_-_Effects_of_Good_Government_in_the_city_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg

Figure 3. Ambrogio Lorenzetti, *Effects of Bad Government in the city*, detail, between 1338 and 1340, fresco, Palazzo Pubblico, Siena, accessed 22 April, 2018, https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/74/Ambrogio_lorenzetti%2C_affetti_del_cattivo_governo%2C_siena%2C_palazzo_pubblico%2C_1337-1340.jpg

Figure 4. Oswald Mathias Ungers, *Protection*, 1982, photo collage, Ungers, Oswald Mathias. *Morphologie: City Metaphors*. Walther König, 1982.

Figure 5. Oswald Mathias Ungers, *Dependency*, 1982, photo collage, Ungers, Oswald Mathias. *Morphologie: City Metaphors*. Walther König, 1982.

Figure 6.

Unknown author, *View of an Ideal City*, tempera on wood, 1475-1480, Galleria Nazionale delle Marche Urbino, accessed 22 April, 2018, https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/d2/Formerly_Piero_della_Francesca_-_Ideal_City_-_Galleria_Nazionale_delle_Marche_Urbino_2.jpg

Figure 7.

Cesariano, *Plan of a Vitruvian city* (From Di Lucio Vitruvio Pollione de architettura, Como, 1521, fol. 26) from Croix, Horst De La. "Military Architecture and the Radial City Plan in Sixteenth Century Italy." *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 42, no. 4, 1960, p. 271

Figure 8.

Michelangelo, *Entwurf für die Porta al Prato*, Florenz
from "Festungen: Der Wehrbau Nach Einführung Der Feuerwaffen: Systematisches Fachwörterbuch."
Festungen: Der Wehrbau Nach Einführung Der Feuerwaffen: Systematisches Fachwörterbuch, by Rudolf Huber and Renate Rieth, K.G. Saur, 1990, p. 248.

Figure 9.

Michelangelo, *Entwurf für die Porta della Giustizia*, Florenz, 1547
from "Festungen: Der Wehrbau Nach Einführung Der Feuerwaffen: Systematisches Fachwörterbuch."
Festungen: Der Wehrbau Nach Einführung Der Feuerwaffen: Systematisches Fachwörterbuch, by Rudolf Huber and Renate Rieth, K.G. Saur, 1990, p. 185.

Figure 10. Mariia Panina, *Sketch for the bastion*, 2018, pencil on paper