

Intramuros during the American Colonization

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ABSTRACT

Intramuros, located in the capital city of the Philippines, became a symbolic siting that represents one's social status and importance in society during the Spanish colonization. Also known as the "Walled City," Intramuros is home to the oldest churches, schools, and government offices in the Philippines. When the Americans decided to colonize the Philippines, they did not have to conquer all the islands of the archipelago. They just have to secure Intramuros and the entire country fell to another colonizer.

The goal of this paper is to identify the effects of creating a "center" or a city—from the way it is planned and structured—on one's way of thinking and later on the attitude of the people towards the city. Specifically, the paper will focus on the important and symbolic structures near and inside the "walled city" and its effects on the mindset of the people towards the institutions that they represent. The paper will focus on the transition of Intramuros from a prestigious and prominent place during the Spanish colonization to an ordinary and decaying "Walled City" during the American period. Significantly, the paper will discuss the development of "Extramuros" or those settlements outside the walled city. It will give focus on the planning of Manila by Daniel Burnham during the American period which was basically focused on the development of the suburbs outside Intramuros. The paper will also discuss the important establishments built outside the Walled City during the American period. Lastly, it will analyze the loss of power and grandeur of Intramuros in the hands of new colonizers.

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SETTLEMENTS BEFORE THE COMING OF THE COLONIZERS

Before the Philippine colonizers arrived, *datu*s and *rajahs* ruled the native communities that preferred living near sources of living. Often, they settled near rivers that made the land fertile or in plains where they engaged in agricultural activities.

The society, then, is somehow a meritocratic society. The leaders were expected to be the bravest and strongest in the community. It, then, has its characteristics such as: (1) A *datu* can become a slave of another barangay once captive in a war; (2) people can move from one status to another; (3) there can be an upward or downward mobility; (4) place of residence is not a manifestation of social status; (5) and houses were sometimes arranged in a linear pattern. The pre-colonial society is egalitarian: there was little difference in the attire worn by various classes as both men and women wore anklets and bracelets.²

Long before the coming of the colonizers, the archipelago has been trading with other Asian countries. The presence of the Chinese and Arab traders in the island are living proofs of this. Being a strategic location, surrounded by bodies of water, the archipelago has the potential to become the center of trading in Asia.

FROM LINEAR TO CENTER

Manila was organized as a Spanish-chartered city on June 24, 1571 on the feast of Saint John and became the capital of the country in 1595.³ When Miguel Lopez de Legazpi decided to settle in Manila, he specifically designed a city that will suit to the needs of the Spaniards. Troubled by the presence of the Chinese in Manila, the Spaniards started to build the walls of Intramuros. Arguably, Intramuros is a reflection of the colorful history of the Philippines for years. One can have a glimpse of the history and culture of the Filipinos just by looking at how the city was designed. As colonizers, the Spaniards did

² Blair and Robertson, "Act of taking Possession of Luzon," *The Philippine Islands 1493-1803*. Ebook. Project Gutenberg, 2004. p.86

³ Torres, Cristina. *The Americanization of Manila, 1898-1921*. University of the Philippines Press. 2010, 18.

not bother conquering the entire archipelago. Having the disadvantage of not knowing the terrain of the Philippines, there are some areas in the country which were not Hispanized. Hence, the colonizers concentrated on specific areas following the Reduccion policy: which is a resettlement of natives from their ancestral homes, uprooting them from their aboriginal communities and relocating them to areas under the supervision of the Spaniards. These areas were converted to cities like Cebu, Vigan, and Manila, specifically Intramuros. The Spaniards followed the principle of “Plaza Complex” which meant establishing the church, the “Palacio Real” (or the Royal Palace), and the residences of various officials around the central square. This type of planning conformed with the colonial requirement of gathering the population *Bajo De Las Campanas* (Under the shadow of the bells).



Fig.1: Manila Cathedral in Intramuros at present. Borras, Irene (May 2017).

Known as the “walled city,” Intramuros was “The City” during the Spanish period. Inside the 64 hectares of land, one can find the most important structures representing the most influential institutions in society during the Spanish period. It occupies a pentagonal area beside the Pasig River in Southern Manila. The walls have a length of 4.5 kilometers with varying heights of 4.5 to 6 meters and a thickness of 2 to 2.5 meters. It took 250 years (1590 to 1830) to complete the construction. It is bounded to the Pasig River and the Manila Bay. It is not surprising that even before the coming of the colonizers (Spaniards and Americans), the districts around the areas of Pasig River were already flourishing as commercial districts. There are seven gates

in Intramuros: (1) Postigo (2) Santa Lucia (3) Real (4) Parian (5) Isabel II (6) San Domingo (7) Almacenes.⁵

Inside the walled city, one can see the power of the Catholic Church through their towering and glorious churches. One of the oldest churches inside the wall is the Manila Cathedral (still on its original site). Beside the towering Manila Cathedral is the *Palacio del Gobernador* and the *Ayuntamiento*; both of which housed the different government offices. The proximity of the church and a government office signifies the unity of the church and state during the Spanish colonization in the Philippines. The priests occupied a very important role in the society during Spanish colonization. They were not just in charge of the spiritual facet of the natives but were also influential in politics, education, and commerce. To quote John Schumacher:

If in all of Spain's empire the church was the most important institutional element, such a situation was most notably true in the Philippines. Nowhere else was a native people Christianized so rapidly, and nowhere else did the missionaries lead so conspicuously in fashioning the culture of an indigenous population.⁶



Fig. 2: Intramuros, 1792. On the left side of the Manila is the Ayuntamiento, on the opposite side is the Palacio del Gobernador, the two symbols of Spanish power in the Philippines.

Just near the churches are the schools such as Ateneo Municipal (Jesuit school), University of Santo Tomas (Dominican school), and San Juan de Letran. These were just among others which were housed in the Walled City

⁵ Torres, Jose Victor. Ciudad Murada- A Walk Through Historic Intramuros. Intramuros Administration and Vibal Publishing House Inc, 2005. p 1-2.

⁶ Schumacher, John N. The Propaganda Movement, 1880-1895 : The Creation of a Filipino Consciousness, the Making of the Revolution. Rev. Ed. ed. Manila: Ateneo De Manila University Press, 1997. 13.

then. These schools have produced “Westernized” *Ilustrados* who initiated reforms and independence from Mother Spain. The University of Santo Tomas, which used to be the Bureau of Education during the late Spanish period, have produced Filipino nationalists like Jose Rizal, Marcelo H. Del Pilar, Apolinario Mabini, and Antonio Luna. Indeed, Intramuros served its purpose of becoming the seat of government, refuge to Spaniards and their families, and protection to one of the most influential institutions during the Spanish period, the Catholic Church.

THE MENTALITY BROUGHT BY INTRAMUROS

Intramuros has also become a status symbol. Houses inside the walled cities are only for Spanish families. As cited in *Beyond Intramuros*, Isagani Medina pointed out that in the pre-nineteenth century, only the Spaniards and their Filipino wives, permanent domestics, and their carriage drivers could live within the confines of the Walled City.⁸ Intramuros became a symbol of exclusivity. The *Indios* (native Filipinos) were supposed to live outside the walled. *Parians* (Chinese settlements) show the status of the Chinese in the Philippines and how they were treated during the time of the time. Social hierarchy can be seen by the proximity of one’s abode to the church. The closer the house is to the church, the more influential and powerful the person is. Thus, urban planning of the Spaniards were more exclusive and enclosed and hierarchical.

INTRAMUROS DURING THE AMERICAN OCCUPATION IN THE PHILIPPINES

According to Ambeth Ocampo, the Spaniards considered Manila as their prized possession. Manila “has the best harbour in the archipelago: deep, wide, and safe. The town around the bay was really marvellous, tilled, and cultivated; such excellent conditions have not been seen in this land. It was defended by a palisade and within were many warriors. Pieces of artillery stood at the gates, guarded by bombardiers.” Through this, one can already see the potential of the place for commerce, trade, and defense. It is safe to say that the Americans enhanced this potential of Manila by building roads, bridges, and—to its advantage or disadvantage—reclaimed lands. Like the

⁸ Churchill, Bernardita Reyes. Selected papers of the annual conferences of the Manila Studies Association, 1989-1993. Manila Studies Association, Philippine National Historical Society, Inc., National Commission for Culture and the Arts, 1994. p.51

former colonizer of the Philippines, the Americans wished to leave an evident legacy on the Filipinos and this was possible by building structures that will keep them in awe and condition their minds like it was done during the Spanish period.

When the Americans took over the country in 1898 via the Treaty of Paris, Intramuros did not immediately lose its importance to the Philippine society. During the first years of the American occupation, Intramuros was still a refuge to the new colonizers. The *Ayuntamiento* was still used by the Philippine Commission. Fort Santiago was still the headquarters of the Philippine Division of the U.S. army. Thus, it is safe to say that it was able to maintain its image up to the 1920's. It was when W. Cameron Forbes, also known as *Caminero* or road builder, and War Secretary William H. Taft commissioned Daniel Burnham to prepare plans for the City of Manila. Part of the agenda is to create a city suitable to the needs and future plans of America for the Philippines. Recognizing perhaps the strengths of Intramuros (its location and significance), Burnham did not disregard Intramuros. According to him, "The old walled city of Intramuros at the mouth of the Pasig River is one of the best preserved medieval cities anywhere in the world."⁹

Unlike the Spaniards, the Americans placed more effort in penetrating some other parts of the archipelago. Baguio, the summer capital of the Philippines, was turned into a city during the American period to suit their need for a cooler place to stay.

By 1904, Burnham visited Manila and he immediately had a vision for the city. His plan was approved immediately by the American government in 1905. Burnham's impression and vision of the city after his visit can be seen in his report to the American government:¹⁰

1. "Manila possesses the greatest resources for recreation and refreshment in its river and its ocean bay. (These areas of the riverside and bayside) should be developed and forever maintained for the use of the enjoyment of the people. The bay front from the present Luneta southward should have continuous parkway extending, in course of time, all the way to Cavite."

⁹ "Ciudad Murada: Intramuros de Manila." Nostalgia Filipinas: A tribute to the Pearl of the Orient Seas. 2012. <http://nostalgiafilipinas.blogspot.com/2012/04/ciudad-murada-intramuros-de-manila.html>.

¹⁰ Alejandro, Reynaldo, Santos, Vicente Roman, and Yuson, Alfred. Manila Bay: The Crossroads of Asia. Unilever Philippines. 2006. P. 76-86

2. “The Boulevard, about two hundred and fifty feet in width with roadways, tramways, bridle path, rich (landscape), and broad sidewalks, should be available for all classes of people...and so well shaded with palms (and trees) as to furnish protection from the elements at all times.”
3. Possessing the bay of Naples, the winding river of Paris, and the canals of Venice.

Manila has before it an opportunity unique in the history of modern times, the opportunity to create a unified city equal to the greatest of the Western World with the unparalleled and priceless addition of a tropical setting.”

However, it had to keep up with the changes of the times. During the American period, there were advancements in terms of artillery and military technology. The moats became an aesthetic irritant. The moat on the western part was turned into a nine-hole golf course. The milieu was different; the walls became obsolete. The influx of automobiles forced the Americans to open some parts of the wall and create wider streets.

THE ENHANCEMENT OF THE EXTRAMUROS

Even before the coming of the colonizers, the districts that is known today as “Extramuros” were already existing and flourishing. When the Philippine Commission enacted Act 183 in 1901, it created new districts outside Intramuros; thus creating a bigger Manila. They used the strategic location of Intramuros to create a bigger and modern version of itself outside the walled city. Under the new charter during 1901, Manila is now composed of 11 districts namely: Tondo, Binondo, Santa Cruz, Sampaloc, San Miguel, Pandacan, Santa Ana, Paco, Malate, Ermita, and Intramuros. The Americans did not isolate Intramuros in creating new districts.

Although the Americans introduced a land-based culture and lifestyle among the Filipinos, the areas around Pasig River flourished even before the coming of the colonizers. In 1859, the Eastern bank of Pasig River saw the development of various districts such as Binondo, Tondo, San Jose, Santa Cruz, Quiapo, Sampaloc, and San Miguel outside Intramuros. Until the 1930’s, these areas thrived on maritime activities and culture. Making the most of

their proximity to the Pasig River, they gained more popularity among Filipinos who wished to create a life outside the walled city.¹¹

During the Spanish period, Binondo was established as a Chinese town in March 1594. In 1870, it was the largest arrabal outside the walled city. Both Binondo and Sta. Cruz were created for Christianized Chinese. Moreover, because commerce and trade were tagged as “profane,” these kinds of activities had to be done outside the wall. With the advantage of being near Pasig River, Binondo became a home to local establishments. Escolta (in Binondo) became a shopping district; a home to the oldest banks in the country. It is the first to have a building with an elevator. Also, the Perez-Samanillo Building (1928) was built by Andres Luna de San Pedro, no less that the son of Juan Luna. Regina Building (1934) housed the Madrigal Shipping, the world’s largest tramp steamship company during that time. Burke Building was the first establishment to have an elevator in the Philippines. It was named after William J. Burke, a cardiologist who first introduced electrocardiograph in the country. Escolta was considered the commercial district in Manila during that time. Cinemas showed Hollywood movies (the Lyric and Capitol Theaters). Lyric Theater (demolished) was an art deco masterpiece of Pablo Antonio and Capitol Theater (1935) and was designed by Juan Nakpil.¹²



Fig. 3: Escolta with horse-drawn tranvia (1910) and Escolta (1935)

¹¹ Travelfilmarchive. Manila Queen of the Pacific 1938. YouTube video, 10:52. Posted (May 2008). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dvpbsyNcl3I&t=147s>

¹² “Traveler on Foot: Photo-Essays and Travel Narratives.” <https://traveleronfoot.wordpress.com/tag/william-burke-building/>

There was already a harbour in Manila even during 1880. But during the American period, they extended these harbour at the junction of Pasig River and Manila Bay. Establishment of Neo-classical, Commonwealth-era style houses and buildings along the Harbour area, specifically the South Harbor (Left side of Intramuros), can also be viewed. Most of these harbours are still existing until today which paved the way to the development of the maritime industry in this part of Manila.

Today, Don Miguel Magsaysay, one of the pioneers in the history of post-war shipping in the country, has left a legacy in the country. Magsaysay Group of companies, the company that they established, is still devoted to the training and employment of seafarers in the Philippines. Now the company has expanded to cruise ship tours allowing *Manilenos*, foreigners, and other Filipinos from the nearby provinces to see and explore the nearby island of Corregidor.

Considering that the Filipinos were conditioned to believe that living inside the wall is a privilege given to the few families then, during the American period, Burnham, whether intentionally or unintentionally created a new "Intramuros" outside the walled city. This time, it is wider, encompassing various districts of the city. To materialize his plan, various establishments were built outside the walled city. Anticipating the increase of population, the Americans created wider roads with open spaces. Indeed, Urban population in the area increased from 1903-1939. Rural-urban migration before World War II caused the increase in population in residential districts like Binondo, Sta Cruz, Quiapo and San Miguel. In 1903, the urban population (in thousand) was about 256.7. In 1939, however, it ballooned to 903.3 (in thousands).¹³ Malate and Ermita became home to middle class families in the Philippines. Ermita is still a destination of night clubs for foreigners and Filipinos. Until today, it has maintained its image as a district of entertainment and leisure for millennials and young professionals.

When the Americans were still present in Manila because of the joint military exercises between America and the Philippines, the part of the boulevard from Pasay (South) to the area of Intramuros was developed and known for its "Las Vegas" style resemblance because of its casinos, hotels and night clubs.

¹³ Caoili, Manuel. *The Origins of Metropolitan Manila: A Political and Social Analysis*. University of the Philippines Press. 1999. P. 68

Long before the concept of “Metropolis”, Manila, with the exception of the multi-million populations, can already be considered a metropolis. Although it is inappropriate to associate the concept of “metropolis,” a modern term to for cities, one cannot deny the role of Manila even before the coming of the colonizers to the archipelago.

It was also the main objective of the Americans to establish open spaces and summer resorts in the Philippine. Thus, they reclaimed large areas around Manila Bay. Hence, the districts of Pasay, Malate, Ermita, and Bagumbayan were adjusted to make way to a boulevard which will be named after Admiral George Dewey, which was renamed to President Manuel Roxas Boulevard

The plan to redesign Manila during the American period followed a more practical and secular policy. Following the principle of the separation of Church and State, which the Americans promoted, the Church lost its former “status” in society. This can be seen in how the new districts outside the walled city were designed. Still, Burnham specifically integrated the Intramuros area to the other districts of Manila. To add prestige to the area near the Walled City, Manila Hotel was built to cater to the needs of the new colonizers for a more comfortable accommodation in the country. From the medieval and archaic architectural designs to neo-classical with Greek and Roman columns, Government offices were built along Taft Avenue to Luneta. The following gave the districts around Intramuros more prestige and importance.

1. The Manila City Hall - From the *Ayuntamiento* inside the walled city, the transfer of the city government outside the walled city is a manifestation of a different order during the American period. Its construction away from any religious infrastructure is a clear indication that the Americans proposed a secularized lifestyle, practicing the separation of church and state and embodying it in their urbanization plans. Manila City hall was first built in 1904 under the administration of late Arsenio Cruz Herrera.
2. Legislative Building (Presently the National Museum Building)- The construction of the building began in 1918 and was inaugurated in July 1926. The second, third, and fourth floors housed the Senate and the House of Representatives offices while the ground floor was designated as the National Library.

3. Philippine General Hospital - When the Philippine Commission passed Act No. 1688, for the construction of PGH, Philippines had a centralized health care. It opened its door to the people in 1910.

Burnham planned for the beautification of Manila. He had in mind that Intramuros was an important aspect on the Filipino culture. Architect and city planner Daniel Hudson Burnham planned to create a “wide and long tree-lined boulevard that would begin at the park and at the spit’s end of the bay, a boulevard that would be dominated on one end by a hotel (Manila Hotel).”

During the American period in the Philippines, Education became a powerful tool in introducing and popularizing the American culture. To achieve this goal, The Americans created the following:

1. Department of Public Instruction. On May 20, 1865, during the latter part of Spanish colonization in the Philippines, the University of Santo Tomas, through a royal order from Queen Isabella II, became the Bureau of Education. Thus, the university was given the right to direct, supervise, and approve the issuance of diplomas by other schools.¹⁴ The Public School system was centralized in 1901 by the Philippine Commission by virtue of Act No. 74. In addition, through the Organic Act Law of 1916 (Jones Law), it created the Department of Public Instruction which administered the Educational system in the country especially in the basic educational level.¹⁵
2. Philippine Normal School (Manila) located between Padre Faura and Herran Streets was mandated to teach the natives the science of teaching. Created by Act No. 74 of the Philippine Commission, the first institution of higher learning established during the American occupation,¹⁶ the School opened on September 1, 1901. The school was elevated to a full-fledged university on 1992 (Philippine Normal University). At present, PNU still concentrates on academic programs related to teaching. It was also designated as the National

¹⁴ “History.” University of Santo Tomas. <http://www.ust.edu.ph/about/history/> (Date accessed: April 2, 2017)

¹⁵ “Historical Perspective of the Philippine Educational System.” Republic of the Philippines, Department of Education. <http://www.deped.gov.ph/history> (Date accessed: April 2, 2017)

¹⁶ “History and Milestone.” Philippine Normal University. <https://www.pnu.edu.ph/about-pnu/history-and-milestone/> (Date accessed: April 2, 2017)

Center for Teacher Education by virtue of R.A. 9647 on June 30, 2009.

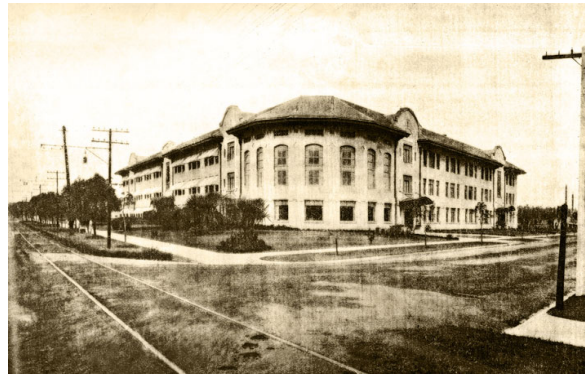


Fig. 4: Philippine Normal School (1900's)

3. University of the Philippines – Through the passage of Act No. 1870 on 1908 by the Philippine Legislature, the act called for a university for the Philippine Islands with the task of providing advanced instruction in literature, philosophy, the sciences and arts.¹⁷ Specifically, the University of the Philippines-Manila became an extension services in the health sciences, health professional education, arts and sciences.¹⁸ The Ermita campus of UP became the center of excellence in the fields of health sciences, technical training, among other fields. When the Americans came to the Philippines, there was a general notion that the country was stricken because of various diseases caused by the unhygienic practices of the Filipinos, the lack of knowledge in the field of medicine due to superstitious beliefs regarding certain illnesses. Thus, the role of UP Manila

¹⁷ Boncan, Celestina. Beginnings: University of the Philippines Manila. University of The Philippines. <http://www.up.edu.ph/beginnings-university-of-the-philippines-manila/> (February 4, 2017).

¹⁸ “History of UP Manila.” University of the Philippines Manila. <http://www.upm.edu.ph/node/36> (accessed April 2, 2017)

Campus along with the Philippine General Hospital in producing and training medical practitioners.

There are two effects of the “creation” of Extramuros. One, it highlighted the other parts of Manila outside the walled city. Each district has their own uniqueness in terms of topography, inhabitants, and culture. At present, these districts continue to flourish and serve as a refuge for migrants either from the rural area or just in the nearby districts. Unfortunately, most of these districts are now considered as part of the “old Manila.” Suffering from urban decay, the districts outside the walled city are on the verge of experiencing what Intramuros experienced during the latter part of the American period in the Philippines. With the “discovery” and enhancement of new districts and cities such as Bonifacio Global City, Taguig, they might just again become part of the history of Manila.

Second, when the districts outside Intramuros were given prominence during the American period, Intramuros slowly lost its grandeur among the Filipinos.

Intramuros, therefore, lost its centrality in Philippine affairs during the American period. In the push for Americanization, the American colonial government moved all political, social and economic life outside of Intramuros and left within its walls only the churches and schools founded by its priests.¹⁹

CONCLUSION

If Burnham is alive today, he will surely be amazed with how his visions turned into a reality. There are new “residents” inside the walled city, from schools to hotels to restaurants. Despite the reality that life inside the wall may not be as glamorous compared to the Spanish period, Intramuros remains to be a significant part of the history, culture, and soul of each Filipino.

On the part of the Spaniards, entrance to the wall means subjugation of the natives to the Spanish government. As years passed, people decided to live

¹⁹ Mayshle, Peter. “Walled Memoria: Presencing Memory Sites in Intramuros, Manila.” Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2014), Done34.

outside the wall by finding new opportunities and by slowly breaking their ties from mother Spain. During the American period, the wall witnessed how Filipinos adopted the American way of life and slowly forgot the Spanish influences. When World War II broke out, the wall experienced the fury of the Japanese forces due to America's presence in the Philippines. If the walls of Intramuros could just speak, it will remind the Filipinos to reminisce the period of their history when they strived to "enter" the wall and prove to their colonizers that they should be considered as equals rather than inferiors. Today, sadly, Intramuros is also a reminder of how Filipinos failed to protect their heritage and culture.

One disadvantage of Burnham's plan for Manila is that it focused on land-based culture. Burnham, who was born in New York and raised in Chicago, had in mind a city that would be similar to his home. However, Manila is different and so are the Filipinos. Being an archipelagic country, the Filipinos take pride in being surrounded by bodies of water like in the pre-colonial period where the natives would prefer to live near their source of living (e.g. river). Today, Filipinos still live a land-based culture. The 333 years of Spanish colonization and more than 40 years of American colonization, shaped the minds of the Filipinos to adapt to the lifestyle that our colonizers have introduced to us. Filipinos got used to the public means of transportation like trains, jeepneys and buses. The number of cars in the street made "Manila traffic" popular to either foreigners or the locals. Benigno Simeon "Noy" Cojuangco Aquino III, former president of the Philippines, suggested to utilize the other means of transportation in Manila. Now through the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission, the Pasig River Ferry is already operational making it possible to travel faster to different cities in Metro Manila. In addition, Cavite, a nearby Southern province, is now more accessible through a ferry.

Unlike other Southeast Asian cities, the activities in the Philippines, specifically in Manila, are concentrated on cities. As a result, it has led to overpopulation in the cities, which resulted to poverty, petty crimes, informal settlers among other things. Today, the Filipinos continue to live a life patterned on how the Americans have designed it, which, until today, can still be seen in how cities were designed along with the implicit meaning behind it.

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