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ALBRECHT DÜRER'S IDEAL CITY

DECONSTRUCTING ITS BIASES, MEANINGS, AND IMPLICATIONS

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Prompted by the threat of Ottoman invasion and the recent peasant revolts, in 1527 Albrecht Dürer dedicated his Etliche Unterricht zur Befestigung der Städte, Schlösser und Flecken (Instruction on the Fortification of Cities, Castles, and Towns) to King Ferdinand I. Included in his treatise was a plan for a city that he claimed would successfully respond to these issues. This paper takes a close look at this understudied plan specifically in relation to the latter issue – the internal social tensions splintering Ferdinand's territories – to unveil some of its problematic elements, including an unfavourable attitude towards the lower class pervading it. Examined alongside other "ideal" cities created in the period, and within the historical context in which it was produced, Dürer's city is one of several influenced by its creators' disregard for the poor, his penchant for social and economic distinction, and his preference for authority. Responding to the peasant unrest that many perceived as a crisis, Dürer designed a city that he saw as ideal for the craftsmen it was built for and for the King, who desired fortified, cooperative towns. As we will see, however, the borders that he, and others working under similar conditions, drew were not ideal for everyone.

INTRODUCTION

In 1526, Ferdinand I was elected King of Bohemia and Hungary after his brother-in-law, King Louis II, died at the Battle of Mohács against the Ottoman

Turkish Army the previous year. Since the Ottomans had taken Constantinople in 1453, the Holy Roman Empire feared their hastening advance. Louis' death only exacerbated the threat in Ferdinand's mind. Making matters worse, thousands of peasants took part in various anti-tithe rebellions in the summer of 1524 and the later, more devastating revolts of 1525. These uprisings stirred tensions between peasants, members of the upper and middle classes, and the aristocracy. The social and infrastructural damage that resulted made many areas susceptible to possible Ottoman attacks. The King began implementing administrative and financial reforms to centralize the government and unite his territories.[1] He also began strengthening the fortifications of towns and cities at his borders.[2]

A member of the Nuremberg City Council since 1509, Albrecht Dürer knew about the Ottoman threat and the social fractures within Northern Europe.[3] In an attempt to aid Ferdinand in solving these perceived crises, in 1527 Dürer dedicated his *Etliche Unterricht zur Befestigung der Städte, Schlösser und Flecken (Instruction on the Fortification of Cities, Castles, and Towns)* to the King.[4] He addressed the issues immediately, in the first sentence of his introductory paragraph: "…so that not only is one Christian protected from another but also that those lands bordering on the Turks be saved from their aggression and bombardment.".[5] The book contains approximately 60 folios of instructional text in which Dürer advised the King on constructing bastions, a protected fortress, and a fortified town, as well as improving existing fortifications. Dürer complemented his writing with several woodcut illustrations. Unlike his previous books on measurement and human proportion, Dürer's fortification treatise was disorganized. It did not contain section headings and his text was "clumsily written".[6] To suggest that Dürer wrote it in haste is not to imply that his instructions were not well thought out, but rather to prove that he saw the Turkish threat and the widespread social tensions as significant issues that urgently needed to be resolved.

Near the end of his treatise, Dürer proposed a solution for the latter issue by including an incredibly detailed plan for an ideal city. Alongside approximately

1 Jean Berenger, *A History of the Habsburg Empire 1273-1700* (London: Longman, 1994), 166-168.

2 Jeffrey Ashcroft, ed. and trans., *Albrecht Dürer, Documentary Biography,* vol. 2 (London: Yale University Press, 2017), 833; Rainer Schoch et al., *Albrecht Dürer: das druckgraphische Werk,* vol. 3 (München: Prestel, 2001), 283.

3 Jane Campbell Hutchison, *Albrecht Dürer: A Biography* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press), 98.

4 Albrecht Dürer, *Etliche vnderricht zu befestigung der Stett Schlosz vnd flecken* (Nuremberg: Hieronymus Andreae, 1527), https://daten.digitale-sammlungen.de/~db/0008/bsb00084366/images/

5 Ashcroft, Albrecht Dürer, 2, 837.

6 Ashcroft, *Albrecht Dürer,* 2, 834; Schoch et al., *Dürer*, 3, 283.

Fig. 1. Albrecht Dürer, Plan for an Ideal City. Woodcut
Dürer, Etliche vnderricht zu befestigung der Stett Schlosz vnd flecken
(Nuremberg: Hieronymus Andreae, 1527).

10 folios of text describing his plan, Dürer added a woodcut image of it (Fig. 1). A fortified royal residence is anchored at the centre of his city. Surrounding the palace is a large area delimited by a square border in which Dürer instructs that the King's counselors, servants, and craftsmen are to live.[7] Every area in Dürer's city serves a purpose. Most buildings are hybrid residences-workshops for inhabitants, though he also includes a marketplace (area 12), a religious sector (buildings 1-7), residences for the King's visitors (buildings 40, 41, 44, and 45), and twelve taverns (buildings 29, 33, 40, 45, 53, and 54). Dürer left only a few dwellings unspecified for the King to house essential people whose trades do not require special buildings.[8]

Dürer prioritized the needs and comfort of the artisans for whom he designed his town. He located the four foundries in corner C so that the winds blow the poisonous fumes away from the city.[9] He also housed artisans close to their shops or work sites. Near the church, Dürer designated buildings 19, 20, and 21 - each containing multiple dwellings - for "people whose trade lets them live a quiet life".[10] He housed the carpenters and woodworkers in separate dwellings in buildings 27 and 31, close to their factory and storage (building 34). The six dwellings attached to the factory (building 35) are to house workers permanently employed there.[11] Similarly, coppersmiths, molders, turners, and other "smithy workers" are to live in buildings 22, 23, 24, and 25 near the foundries where they work.[12] Dürer's own experience as an artisan and as the son of a goldsmith surely made him more aware of the importance of these accommodations.

While Dürer focused most of his treatise on fortification strategies that Ferdinand could implement to defend his towns against Ottoman attack, Dürer's city plan dealt also with the other pressing issue: the "peasant problem" in Northern Europe. His was one model within a larger set of approaches to city design that reveal a negative public perception of the lower class during the period, in addition to a widespread fondness for centralized authority and

7 Ibid., 855.

8 Ibid., 850.

9 Ibid., 845.

10 Ibid., 845.

11 Ibid., 848.

12 Ibid., 847.

tightly controlled civic life. Analyzing Dürer's plan for his ideal city alongside other built and unbuilt "ideal" towns uncovers that Dürer and his contemporaries valued distinction, a side effect of their socio-political environment, and this shared value pervaded their approaches to city planning. Urban design became foremost about structuring social order, and urban designers capitalized on planning's potential to elevate some groups and suppress others, Dürer being no exception.

INTRODUCING IDEAL URBAN DESIGNS IN THE AGE OF DÜRER

Dürer was one of many artists interested in city planning during the period. The socio-political turbulence of the sixteenth century and the colonization of the New World, during which the Spanish restructured many indigenous towns, demanded that artists thought more about how to construct "orderly" and productive cities. Issues of urban design and structuring social order within cities were at the forefront of humanist thought.

A critical publication on civic theory was Thomas More's 1516 fiction, *Utopia.* Scholars often cite *Utopia* as a source for Dürer's plan.[13] While the evidence that Dürer referenced it to create his city is speculative, the vast influence of More's text in Northern Europe makes it a valuable point of comparison for Dürer's ideal plan. *Utopia* tells us how theorists envisioned a "perfect" society and how an egalitarian social order would function. By reading Dürer's ideal city against this "baseline" example of an equal civilization, we can identify the ways that he implemented social- and class-based stratification in his plan.

DEFINING UTOPIA: DEFENSES AND SOCIAL LIFE

Dürer's entire treatise is about fortifying and defending. He provides explicit instructions for barricading cities with high walls and rock-filled ditches. The only weapons that he designed are made to sit in these protective walls and

13 Tessa Morrison, "Albrecht Dürer and the Ideal City," *Parergon* 31.1 (2014), 137-138; Ashcroft, *Albrecht Dürer,* 2, 854.

counter approaching attacks. Dürer did not advise the King on offensive strategies nor did he suggest sending armies to engage the Ottomans. One similarity between Dürer's town and More's description of the fictional city "Amaurot", the capital of Utopia, is their reliance on fortification and defensive war strategies over combative ones. More wrote that the Utopians detest war. They refuse to rashly engage in it, yet both soldiers and workmen train daily so that they can defend Amaurot if it is attacked.[14] Moreover, Amaurot is protected by "high and thick wall[s], in which there are many towers and forts" and a broad, deep, and dry ditch filled with thorns.[15] Aside from storage arsenals for weapons and artillery and housing the soldiers close to the city gate, the military presence inside Dürer's city is small. Dürer and More's philosophies are nearly identical in that they embrace offensive strategies only when necessary.

More and Dürer's cities are also similar in that every citizen has a role. In Amaurot, "no man may live idle".[16] A citizen may learn more than one trade, but settles with the one that they prefer or society has a greater need for.[17] It makes sense that Dürer was drawn to More's city, which is not threatened by civic unrest and where the king lives respected by his people. More's tradesmen have so much civic pride that they never revolt, an ideal state which would eradicate uprisings like those that Dürer witnessed.

However, Dürer's city differs from More's in terms of social order. More envisions his perfect society as one characterized by egalitarianism and limited noble control. On the other hand, Dürer positions citizens within his city according to their status and puts princely authority at its core. Amaurot's citizens are equals and their king lives among them, distinguished only by his title, while Dürer's model revolves around a prince physically and hierarchically at its centre. Dürer instructed the King to locate the most prestigious trades closest to his castle.[18] He also advised that "the best places there on the king's moat shall be occupied by the shops of the richest ones...."[19] Vendors who do not sell expensive goods are to build smaller shops at lesser locations.

14 More, *Utopia,* 155.

15 Ibid., 73.

16 More, *Utopia,* 80.

17 Ibid., 80.

18 Ashcroft, *Albrecht Dürer,* 850.

19 Ibid., 850.

Merchants, on the other hand, are entitled to superior, stone-vaulted spaces.[20] These instructions oppose More's, who wrote that in Utopia no trade is more esteemed than others.[21]

Separating craftsmen of fine goods from vendors of inexpensive ones was not a result of Dürer imparting unsubstantiated class biases to his plan. Rather, this was the system that he knew. Nuremberg was commercially successful. Its central location meant that the town exported many goods throughout the Holy Roman Empire. Artisans mastered niche crafts to set themselves apart from competitors, but society was divided.[22] The patricians were smaller in number than the middle and lower classes but owned most of the wealth, and the poor were property-less and politically uninvolved.[23] Artisans existed on either side of this division (i.e. Dürer as a wealthy council member). However, for the most part, craftsmen belonged to a lower middle class, the *Kleinbürger*, who were distinct from both the patricians and the proletariat.[24] Wealth distribution varied widely in this middle class, but even within individual professions, some artisans were more financially successful than others.[25]

While Dürer's delineation of these hierarchies in his town was a product of his environment, it may have been exacerbated by his personal biases. In his letters to Pirckheimer from Italy, Dürer frequently remarks on the fact that there he is a *zentilam* (gentleman, nobleman) while in his native Germany he is viewed as merely average.[26] In the diary from his trip to the Netherlands, Dürer praised the opulence of Antwerp: "At Antwerp they spare no expense… for they have money in abundance".[27] In that same entry, he documents his experience watching the great procession from the Church of Our Lady in August 1520. He specifically noted that the traders were "most richly dressed according to their status" and that each rank and guild wore an identifiable badge.[28] These examples demonstrate that Dürer valued wealth and status. His frustration that only in Venice did his talent and prestige set him apart from other artisans, and the fact that he felt it important to relay to Pirckheimer

20 Ibid., 850.

21 More, *Utopia,* 79.

22 Gerald Strauss, *Nuremberg in the Sixteenth Century* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1966), 129.

23 Christopher R. Friedrichs, "Mobility and Class Formation in the Early Modern German City," *Past & Present* 69 (1975), 24-25; Thomas F. Sea, "Imperial Cities and the Peasants' War in Germany," *Central European History* 12.1 (1979), 7.

24 Friedrichs, "Mobility and Class Formation," 25.

25 Strauss, *Nuremberg in the Sixteenth Century*, 205-208.

26 Jeffrey Ashcroft, ed. and trans., *Albrecht Dürer, Documentary Biography,* vol. 1 (London: Yale University Press, 2017), 152.

27 Ashcroft, *Albrecht Dürer*, 1, 557.

28 Ibid., 557-558.

that tradesmen were grouped by status in the Antwerp procession, suggest that Dürer was not interested in abolishing the strata among artisans. While he advocated making their lives and work easier in his plan, he did not champion to make them equal.

Dürer's town also seems to deny its inhabitants any control of their own lives or work. As Jeffrey Ashcroft somewhat cynically posits:

> The functional grid he sets out…programmatically excludes the vibrant mixed neighbourhood community he grew up in…Military hegemony bars any civic structure that could give recognition to the public value and functions of art, which could confer marks of meritocratic social esteem on the artist. Whatever impelled [Dürer] to include the description of this embattled encampment for the subjects of a royal military dictator, it denies all that in reality he must have valued in the city in which he lived his creative life.[29]

In Ashcroft's view, Dürer designed an authoritarian society. He removed autonomy from the craftsmen, who only live there if the King decides that he needs a settlement on the land surrounding his castle in the first place.[30] Ashcroft is right to observe this strict power structure. It opposes the Council system that governed imperial Nuremberg in the sixteenth century.[31] In Dürer's Nuremberg, the patrician Lesser Council (the *Rugsherren*) tightly regulated the trades deemed "sworn crafts", which encompassed those that served the city's economic and military needs, such as blacksmithing or shoemaking. Artisans of sworn crafts were denied any legal or political autonomy and prohibited from forming guilds after the craftsmen rebellion of 1348-1349.[32]

By contrast, artisans of the "free arts" (i.e. painters and sculptors) answered directly to the Council. While they were also prohibited from forming guilds, they were not constrained by as many regulations because the patrician council

29 Ashcroft, *Albrecht Dürer,* 2, 855.

30 Ibid., 854.

31 Rainer Brandl, "Art or Craft? Art and the Artist in Medieval Nuremberg," *Gothic and Renaissance Art in Nuremberg 1300-1550,* ed. John P. O'Neill and Ellen Shultz, trans. Russell M. Stockman (Munich: Prestel Verlag, 1986), 51-53.

32 Ibid., 52.

members realized Nuremberg could attract more artists to the city with an "open market" system.[33] The absence of guilds gave patrician families and council members the power to make decisions that benefited Nuremberg's economy above the craftsmen. Since there was no recognized collective to advocate for the craftsmen's needs and wants, the council could, for instance, implement policies to increase production, even if this meant abusing the craftsmen's labour and reducing their profits.

As the son of a goldsmith and himself a tradesman before becoming a free artist, Dürer was conscious of the rules that constrained sworn artisans. As an artist, he benefited from the Council's laissez-faire attitude towards the free arts. But as a patrician council member, he favored a system that suppressed the craftsmen's autonomy. For Dürer to design a city with a king at its nucleus suggests that the latter guided his thought process. As Ashcroft argues, since Dürer did not describe a Council in the text accompanying his plan, we assume that the ruler, likely aided by some elite group, closely regulates all trades, even the prestigious ones closest to his castle. The ever-present surveillance of a king would also discourage any uprisings. Dürer's preference for centralized authority in his plan must have been reinforced by the circumstances in which it was produced. Still, from it, one can distill issues of control. Dürer's preference for centralized authority in his plan must have been reinforced by the circumstances in which it was produced.

Further qualifying Dürer's plan as a problematic response to the peasant uprisings is the fact that, aside from a brief sentence in his introduction, he did not propose a meaningful solution for the peasants' economic concerns. In a small section dedicated to justifying the cost of his designs, Dürer wrote: "Should the lords have many poor subjects who otherwise are dependent on charity, then pay them wages by the day, so they will not need to beg and will have less excuse to rebel.[34] While this is, technically, a solution benefiting the lower class, it does not address the extent of their concerns leading up to the rebellions.

33 Ibid., 52-53.

34 Ashcroft, Albrecht Dürer, 2, 838.

While economic tensions had been growing since the late fourteenth century, the peasants' frustrations about taxes on agriculture and an overall lack of support from city authorities erupted in a series of violent uprisings in southern Germany in 1525.[35] The Nuremberg authorities restrained these revolts and the city was relatively unaffected by them.[36] However, it was shaken by the anti-tithe rebellions of the previous year. Poor citizens outside the city gained support from lower-middle-class residents inside it and this large body of dissenters threatened Nuremberg and its council members, who eventually abolished the tithe collection in 1525 to appease the protestors.[37]

The 1525 revolts damaged many towns besides Nuremberg.[38] Nobles eventually (and forcefully) suppressed the peasants, but this result was expensive and tiresome.[39] They, including Ferdinand, deployed their militaries and had to pay to repair fortifications and infrastructure within the city.[40] As a member of the Nuremberg council, Dürer was dealing firsthand with the social and financial ramifications of these uprisings. The revolts drained resources that were necessary to defend against the Ottomans. It is reasonable to assume that Dürer disliked the peasants for having damaged Nuremberg in ways that he then needed to fix. Perhaps, then, it was his lack of sympathy for the peasants' cause and his negative opinion of the class that deterred him from pondering social reforms that would eliminate the economic divisions and instead compelled him to exclude the peasants from his town and fill it with what he saw as productive, unproblematic citizens: craftsmen. We can read this exclusion, as Ferdinand or one of Dürer's contemporaries would have, as Dürer blaming the peasants for the rebellions in Germany. His decision to ostracize them from his town instead of calling on the nobility to implement fairer economic policies reflects his unsympathetic attitude towards the community.

However, it is also possible that Dürer remained silent about the peasants' concerns not out of spite, but out of ambivalence. Dürer's design for his so-called *Peasant Monument (Bauernsäule)* in his *Painter's Manual* of 1525 gives us a hint

35 Sea, "Imperial Cities," 5; R.W. Scribner, "Images of the Peasant, 1514-1525," *The German Peasant War of 1525,* ed. János Bak (London: Routledge, 1976), 31-32.

36 Sea, "Imperial Cities," 9-10.

37 Lawrence P. Buck, "Opposition to the Tithes in the Peasants' Revolt: A Case Study of Nuremberg in 1524," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 4.2, 11-13.

38 Smith, *Dürer*, 327; Thomas F. Sea, "The German Princes' Responses to the Peasants' Revolt of 1525," *Central European History* 40 (2007), 219-220, 226-229.

39 Smith, *Dürer,* 327.

40 Sea, "The German Princes' Responses," 226-227.

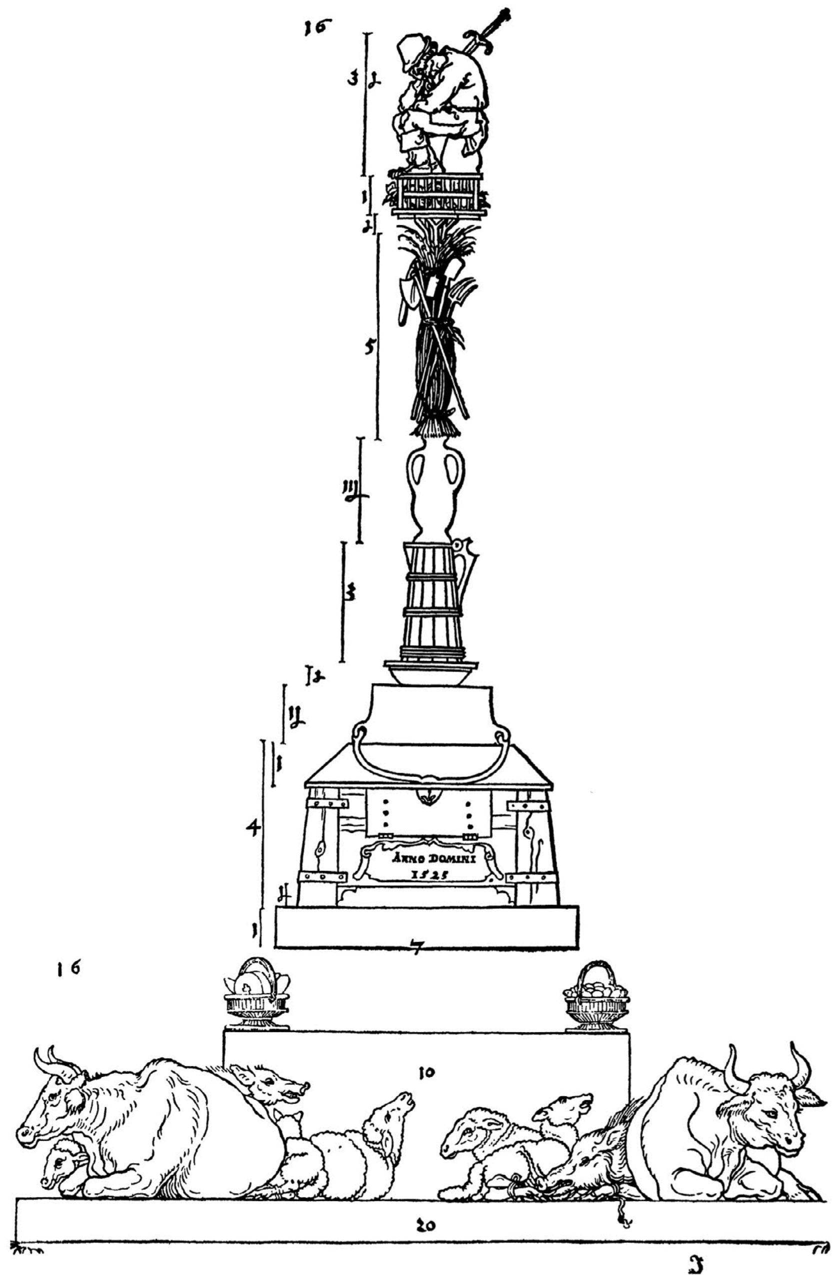

Fig. 2. Albrecht Dürer
Design for Peasant Monument
("Monument to Commemorate
a Victory"). Woodcut
Dürer, The Painter's Manual (1525).

of such a possibility (Fig. 2). Scholars have long debated whether this monument commended the peasants or satirized them, though the claim that Dürer meant to celebrate the peasants' defeat and decry the uprisings is most common.[41] What caused such a fluctuation in scholars' opinions is that Dürer included design elements that both contemporary viewers and modern critics could interpret as either pro- or anti-peasant. The most debated of these elements is the stabbed peasant figure at the top who could either symbolize a helpless and defeated class or recall the "Christ in Distress" pose, eliciting a sympathetic response from the viewer. Had Dürer truly detested the peasants, this would have been the opportunity for him to declare that, and he would have left no room for viewers to debate his opinion. Instead, the work's ambiguity suggests that even if Dürer looked down upon the peasants, he remained partially sympathetic towards them.

If we consider the monument in this way, then we might observe a similar uncertainty characterizing Dürer's city plan. Perhaps omitting peasants from his town was not to suggest that they were disposable, but was instead the result of Dürer's own cognitive dissonance. Knowing that Ferdinand likely shared the societal bias against the "disruptive" lower class, Dürer might have been cautious in proposing a solution for their concerns out of fear that he may have come across as "on their side". So, he chose instead to underscore the importance of a *productive* population. Such is the case when he instructed, "The king should not have useless people living in his castle, rather skilled and capable, intelligent, brave, experienced, and resourceful men, good craftsmen…"[42]

Regardless, Dürer's "solution" remains problematic because it was impractical. Pushing the peasants out of his ideal city may have seemed to Ferdinand and other elite viewers a viable short-term solution for avoiding uprisings, but the residents of the city would not survive without them cultivating their food. Dürer would eventually need to address, at length, the peasants' many valid concerns for his city to have a consistent food supply, in addition to it being the moral thing to do.

41 Stephen Greenblatt, "Murdering Peasants: Status, Genre, and the Representation of Rebellion," *Representations* (1983), 5-9; Erwin Panofsky, *Albrecht Dürer*, vol. 1 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1943), 233.

42 Ashcroft, *Albrecht Dürer,* 2, 843.

HISTORIC UTOPIAS AND CONTEMPORANEOUS URBAN MODELS

More and Dürer were not the first to be engrossed by the challenge of creating the ideal city. Ancient theorists often tried to conceptualize the perfect spiritual and moral sites. Plato described an ideal town in the Fifth Book of his treatise on *Laws* and revisited his imaginary plan for his island of Atlantis in his books *Timaeus* and *Critias*.[43] Ezekiel described the Messianic Temple and its surrounding city (chaps. xl-xliii).[44] A description of the "Heavenly City" is included in the Book of Revelation and Moses recounts distributing the Promised Land to the twelve tribes of Israel, coining six areas "cities of refuge" that Israelites guilty of manslaughter could flee to.[45] Artists and theorists remained interested in designing the ideal city throughout the Middle Ages. During this long period of social and religious upheaval, they began to shift their focus from theorizing the perfect spiritual sites to inventing towns that benefited real people.[46] Renaissance theorists furthered this medieval effort to create more secularized societies, though there remained some interest in visualizing biblical sites. Anton Koberger printed a woodcut of Nicolaus de Lyra's *Floor Plan of the Temple of Solomon* in 1481.[47] For the most part, Renaissance plans were influenced stylistically by the precision and organization of ancient architectural principles and thematically by a society more defined by economic strata.[48]

The sources that could have influenced Dürer are numerous. We know that he drew on Vitruvius's city description from his *De Architectura Libri Decem* because he referenced Vitruvius in the text accompanying his plan.[49] However, he was unclear about what elements from *De Architectura* inspired him, and according to Ashcroft, this source could not have provided him with more than ancient generalities.[50] Dürer did not specify any authors, other than Vitruvius, that impacted his writing. This uncertainty has frustrated scholars of Dürer's treatise who have devoted much of their attention to pinpointing his influences.[51] My objective here is not to argue which sources I believe inspired Dürer, but rather to analyze his city against those produced by his

43 Helen Rosenau, *The Ideal City: Its Architectural Evolution in Europe* (Abingdon; Oxon: Routledge, 2007), 11.

44 Ibid., 18.

45 Ibid*.,* 18; Lewis, *City of Refuge*, 11.

46 Rosenau, *The Ideal City,* 23-39.

47 *Dureriana: Neuerwerbungen der Albrecht-Dürer-Haus-Stiftung e. V. Nürnberg,* exhibition catalogue, 21 May-30 September 1990, Albrecht Dürer Haus and the Stadtgeschichtlichen Museen, Nürnberg, 18.

48 Rosenau, *The Ideal City,* 42-43 and 66.

49 Ashcroft, *Albrecht Dürer,* 2, 835; Morrison, *Unbuilt Utopian Cities,* 37.

50 Ashcroft, *Albrecht Dürer,* 2, 835; Morrison, *Unbuilt Utopian Cities,* 43.

51 See Ashcroft, *Albrecht Dürer,* 2, 834-835, Schoch et al., *Dürer,* 3, 284, and Morrison, "Dürer and the Ideal City," 152. Johann Tschertte (1471-1552), a friend of Pirckheimer and Dürer, may have advised Dürer on fortification design. Dürer may have heard of Leonardo's ideas through Lorenz Beheim or Galeazzo de San Severino. Christoph III (1479-1537) and Johann von Schwarzenberg (1463-1528) may have also influenced Dürer. Other suggestions include Niccolò Machiavelli's

contemporaries, who lived in similarly tumultuous environments, to deduce whether Dürer's approach to fixing the "peasant problem" was in line with how others perceived the issue, and the lower class at large, during the period. These comparisons ultimately reveal that others shared Dürer's preference for centralized noble authority and undertook similar approaches to relegate peasants to spaces unheard and unseen.

The most commonly identified source is Leon Battista Alberti's *De Arte aedificatoria* (1486).[52] Alberti's treatise comprises ten books that he wrote over the course of several years.[53] Alberti was not driven by any specific stimuli as Dürer was. This book was one of the various treatises that he authored throughout his career.[54] Alberti discussed information relevant to constructing an ideal city in three of his books. In the others he instructed the reader on using materials, decorating different types of buildings (sacred, public secular, private), and restoring existing buildings. Though he was not as focused on military architecture as Dürer, he did advise on building defensive walls, gates, bridges, drains, and a harbor, and the importance of building a city on terrain that is fruitful but not coveted by potential foreign attackers.

As the foundation of his ideal city, Alberti relies on demarcating different social groups. In Book 4, he identifies three building types that are necessary for an ideal plan: those appropriate for society as a whole, others for foremost citizens, and those for the common people.[55] He expounded upon these building types in Book 5. A just king should have his residence in the centre of the city, decorated elegantly and not ostentatiously, as opposed to a tyrant who should site his fortress neither inside nor outside the city to protect himself from both foreign and internal citizen attacks.[56] Alberti divides his city into two concentric circles delineated by a wall.[57] The wealthier citizens are to reside in the larger outside circle since they favour "more spacious surroundings and would readily accept being excluded by an inner wall".[58] Poulterers, butchers, cooks, and other poorer citizens are to reside in the smaller inner circle, but far enough

Libro dell'arte della guerra (1521), Francesco di Giorgio Martini's *Trattato di architettura civile e militare,* which was completed in 1482 but remained in manuscript form until being published in 1841, and Filarete's *De re aedificatoria* was written around 1464 but was not printed until the nineteenth century. There is little evidence that Dürer saw any of these.

52 Joseph Rykwert et al., trans., *On the Art of Building in Ten Books / Leon Battista Alberti; translated by Joseph Rykwert, Neil Leach, and Robert Tavernor* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1988), xviii.

53 Rykwert et al., *On the Art of Building*, xvi-xviii.

54 Ibid., xiv-xviii.

55 Ibid., xiv-xviii.

56 Ibid., 117 and 121.

57 Ibid., 118.

58 Ibid., 118.

away from the prince that they cannot disturb him.[59] Ensuring that poorer citizens do not socialize with the more prosperous ones will make them "less of a risk and less of a nuisance".[60] Alberti includes a granary, treasury, and arsenal in the centre of his city, as well as a military camp, senate house, multiple temples, and a separate building where the priest can bless people.[61] Unlike Dürer, Alberti identified villas outside of the city purchased by the wealthy and other countryside residences for agricultural workers.[62] Artisans who have shops located below their houses should ensure that their shops have windows to attract customers and are "better fitted out than his dining room, as would appear more in keeping with his hopes and ambitions".[63] In Book 7, Alberti argued that an unorganized city could not be commodious or charming and allocated artisans' workshops to distinct parts of the city. Silversmiths, painters, and jewelers are situated on the forum. Spice shops, clothes shops, and all trades that "might be thought more respectable" are located next to them. Any trades that produce foul smells should be located to the north to take into account the wind direction.

There are many similarities between Dürer's and Alberti's plans. Dürer seats the king at his city's centre. This decision may be the result of Dürer perceiving centralized authority as vital to maintaining order in his city, and not a conscious effort to follow Alberti's recommendation that centrality signifies justice. However, it is possible that Dürer incorporated this aspect of Alberti's plan to flatter Ferdinand by implying that he is a virtuous leader. Both planners see the necessity for organization and hierarchy among trades. Moreover, both adopt a "better unseen and unheard" attitude regarding the position of the lower class in society. For Dürer, this takes the form of making no mention of peasants in his plan. Though Alberti does specify spaces available to the poor, his approach involves locating poor agricultural workers outside his city (while still separate from the wealthy who vacation in the countryside) and separating the poor from the prosperous so that the latter may live as though the former do not exist. In their city plans, both designers render peasants invisible.

59 Ibid., 118.

60 Ibid., 118.

61 Ibid., 129-138.

62 Ibid., 140-145.

63 Ibid., 152.

Differences between the plans include Alberti relying more on individual citizens' wealth to organize his city and Dürer's layout being more specific. Alberti wrote about workshops for only two paragraphs whereas Dürer imagined an entire city *for* the king's artisans. This difference is not to be understood as a testament to Dürer's narrow-mindedness, nor to Alberti's disinterest in advocating for artisans. Rather, one might interpret Dürer's plan as a statement of advocacy for the craft class, and/or as a tribute to the honour and significance that he perceived artisans to have. For him to populate his ideal city almost entirely with craftsmen suggests that he regarded them as the ideal citizenry.

The most glaring difference is that Alberti invented a well-rounded environment that fulfilled its inhabitants' needs in daily life (i.e. education and leisure). Dürer created a plan that facilitated production and comfort for its merchants and artisans, but aside from the church district at the bottom left of his plan and some taverns, he did not consider their desire for anything but work. Michael J. Lewis makes an important distinction between an ideal city and an ideal society: "An ideal city seeks to make its physical form perfect, while an ideal society seeks to make its human relationships and social structures perfect".[64] Though in comparison to Alberti's plan it seems as if Dürer was more focused on designing a town where every space served a purpose than inventing a way of life for its inhabitants, it is an oversimplification to label Dürer's plan as an ideal city and Alberti's as an ideal society. Dürer was trying to resolve the problems of his contemporary world and make life ideal for artisans, but he did not address lifestyle to the extent of other social theorists, including Alberti and More. Perhaps this was because Dürer was not a social theorist. More likely it had to do with the Ottomans pushing rapidly westward, putting pressure on Dürer to produce something quickly for the King. Given the tumultuous circumstances under which it was produced, one cannot fault Dürer for not describing what domestic life looked like for the artisans' wives and children, or how his town fostered community among its inhabitants. However, his missing descriptions of domestic life and daily

64 Lewis, *City of Refuge,* 17.

activities do leave a viewer to ponder how he may have envisioned other aspects of his ideal society.

PREJUDICES IN PRACTICE: A REALIZED IDEAL SITE

A built ideal city close to Dürer's vision was the Fuggerei, constructed between 1514 and 1523 in Augsburg.[65] Still inhabited today, the Fuggerei is a large complex where needy Augsburg citizens reside. Rent is extremely low, and every resident is provided with a job in the community. Thomas Krebs was the architect, and Jakob Fugger sponsored the project. The Fuggers were a powerful German banking family. In addition to their extreme wealth, they possessed great political power as close affiliates of the Habsburg family. The settlement contained more than 50 houses with two flats in each and over 100 small apartments.[66] Each house could accommodate two families and the apartments at least 100 more.[67] Fugger commissioned the complex for Augsburg's laborers and craftsmen.[68] Among other qualifications, potential residents had to demonstrate their financial need to reside there.[69] In comparison to Dürer's town, which excludes poor residents, the Fuggerei invites them in.

The Fuggerei was a charitable solution for some of the same problems that plagued Nuremberg. Augsburg patricians owned most of the wealth while the poor struggled. Augsburg was also rattled by the peasant revolts and artisans faced enormous income disparity within their class.[70] The Fuggerei was a city constructed within the city, complete with a garden and open air spaces.[71]Inside the establishment, there was no obvious social distinction. The craftsmen lived equally and there were no noblemen within the walls.[72] Yet, the inhabitants' cognizance that they lived there *because* of the financial and political power of the Fugger family certainly made them hyper-aware of the power hierarchy looming over the city. Heightening this awareness, the settlement's gates were closed every night, and should someone in power have decided to get rid of the Fuggerei, its citizens would have had nowhere to go.[73]

65 Morrison, *Unbuilt Utopian Cities,* 41; Schoch et al., *Dürer,* 3, 309; Wilhelm Waetzoldt, *Dürer und Seine Zeit* (Vienna: Phaidon Press, 1935), 323; Erwin Panofsky, *The Life and Art of Albrecht Dürer* (Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005), 257.

66 Ibid., 323.

67 Jacob Strieder, *Jacob Fugger the Rich, Merchant and Banker of Augsburg, 1459-1525,* ed. N. S. B. Gras, trans. Mildred L. Hartsough (New York: The Adelphi Company, 1931), 175.

68 Morrison, *Unbuilt Utopian Cities,* 41.

69 Ibid., 41.

70 Tlusty, *Augsburg During the Reformation Era,* 67-68.

71 Morrison, *Unbuilt Utopian Cities,* 41.

72 Schoch et al., *Dürer,* 3, 309.

73 Morrison, *Unbuilt Utopian Cities,* 41.

Scholars idolize Fugger for his charity, yet the act of resituating poor citizens into their own walled civilization within the larger city seems innately elitist. The financial, social, and administrative privilege available to Fugger was immense for him to be able to move the poor into a controlled environment within Augsburg while the rest of it remained inhabited by the wealthy and powerful. I do not wish to disregard the good that Fugger's contribution did and continues to do for its inhabitants, but rather to argue that even this built example of city planning is based on separating the rich and the poor. In both Dürer's city and the Fuggerei, urban design functions as a tool for social control. Similar to how Dürer removed the peasants from his ideal city, Fugger relocates them out of his inhabited one. Dürer's preference for regulation and central political authority is also echoed by the control that the Fuggerei exhibits. While there is no noble inside of the complex, citizens know that they are subjects to a more powerful authority outside of it, a sentiment still ceremoniously echoed every night when the gates lock until the next morning.

RECEPTION AND INFLUENCE

The several reprintings of Dürer's treatise prove that readers were intrigued by his work after 1527. The German scholar Joachim Camerarius printed a Latin edition of Dürer's treatise in 1535.[74] Christian Wechel, a French printer, also printed a Latin version in the same year.[75] Various German editions may have been printed in 1530 and 1538.[76] Despite this later interest, there is no evidence that Ferdinand I ever received it.[77] Dürer's plans for his bastions and towers were eclipsed by Italian inventions in military architecture, causing his contemporaries and modern scholars to overlook his work.[78] Twentieth-century scholars argued that Dürer inspired later buildings in Ulm and Ingolstadt, the Rogendorf moated castle in Poggstall, and the reconstruction of Nuremberg's own walls a decade after his death.[79] Sebastiano Serlio did recognize Dürer in his *Tutte L'opere D'architettura et Prospetiva* in the late 1530s.[80] Perhaps the most interesting of cities resembled after Dürer's plan is

74 Schoch et al., *Dürer,* 3, 283.

75 Albrecht Dürer, *Alberti Dvreri Pictoris Et Architecti Praestantissimi De Vrbibus, Arcibvs, castellísque condendis, ac muniendis rationes aliquot, praesenti bellorum necessitati accommodatissimae : nunc recens è lingua Germanica in Latinam traductae* (Paris: Christiani Wechel, 1535), https://reader.digitale-sammlungen.de/de/fs1/object/display/bsb11199644_00001.html.

76 Schoch et al., *Dürer,* 3, 282.

77 Jeffrey Chipps Smith, "The Early Collecting of Dürer's Prints," *Prayer Nuts, Private Devotion, and Early Modern Art Collecting,* ed. Evelin Wetter and Frits Scholten (Riggisberg: Abegg-Stiftung, 2017), 146.

78 Morrison, "Dürer and the Ideal City," 142.

79 Schoch et al., *Dürer,* 3, 284.

80 Ibid., 308.

Freudenstadt, a realized ideal city complex commissioned by Duke Friedrich I of Württemberg in 1598 and built by his architect Heinrich Schickhardt.[81] Friedrich intended the sanctuary for Austrian Protestant refugees, but the effort also benefited him politically.[82] He could employ the refugees that Freudenstadt attracted to work in his silver and copper mines.[83] Friedrich also hoped to conquer the bishopric of Strasburg on the other side of the Rhine.[84] Freudenstadt thus functioned as a bastion at the western edge of his territory, providing his militia with an elevated vantage point over the river and defending the border from any retaliative attacks.[85]

The Duke was motivated by different reasons from Alberti, Dürer, and More. His city appealed to citizens facing religious oppression as opposed to economic. What makes Freudenstadt fascinating concerning Dürer's city is that Schickhardt relied heavily on it throughout the construction process.[86] And, because Schickhardt recorded the entire process of Freudenstadt's construction, we can study exactly how he developed Dürer's ideas.[87] Freudenstadt also had four gates, long blocks of houses, and a fortress for the ruler at its centre.[88] Friedrich never inhabited the noble residence, perhaps having realized, for whatever reason, that it did not serve him as well as he had hoped.[89] Since Freudenstadt was intended for Protestant refugees and Schickhardt drew upon Dürer's town to build it, Dürer's plan became by association a popular reference for Protestant scholars and urban planners.

Of particular interest is Freudenstadt's shape: a perfect square that, in spite of the many changes that Schickhardt made to Dürer's plan, he never abandoned. In Schickhardt's first and second designs, the noble residence was located at the corner of his design (Fig. 3). He moved it to the centre for his final plan because its walls protruded from the town and he refused to compromise the rectilinear form (Fig. 4).[90] In the Biblical tradition, squareness represented religious ideality. For instance, when Ezekiel described the ideal plan for the Messianic Temple, it was rectilinear.[91] In the New Testament, orderly division

81 Daniel Burger, "Albrecht Dürer's »Unterricht zur Befestigung« (1527) und der deutsche Festungsbau des 16. Jahrhunderts," *Das Dürer-Haus. Neue Ergebnisse der Forschung,* ed. G. Ulrich Großmann and Franz Sonnenberger (Nuremberg: Germanischen Nationalmuseums, 2007), 273.

82 Lewis, *City of Refuge,* 57-58.

83 Lewis, *City of Refuge,* 58.

84 Ibid., 58.

85 Ibid., 58.

86 Ibid., 59.

87 Ibid., 58.

88 Ibid., 59-61.

89 Ibid., 64.

90 Ibid., 10.

91 Ibid., 20-26.

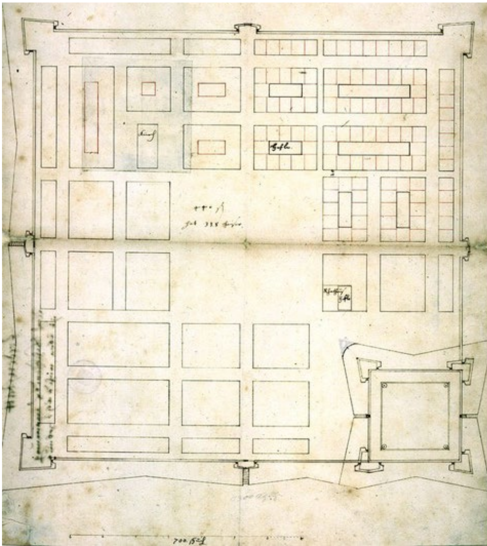

Fig. 3. Heinrich Schickhardt
Plan of Freudenstadt, First Project
Hauptstaatsarchiv Stuttgart, Stuttgart, Germany

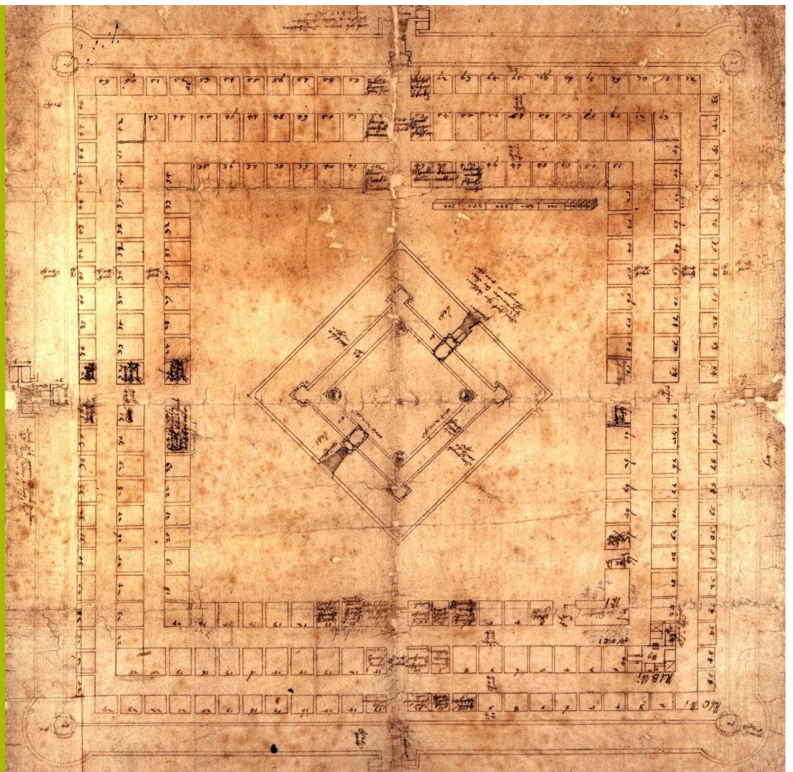

Fig. 4. Heinrich Schickhardt
Plan of Freudenstadt
Hauptstaatsarchiv Stuttgart, Stuttgart, Germany

came to symbolize the need to make "straight those things that are now crooked and irregular" to prepare for Christ's second coming.[92] Dürer's city is defined by the same 'sacred squareness' that characterized religious refugee cities such as Freudenstadt and Andreae's Christianopolis.[93] However, since he never claimed explicitly to have been engaging with this motif when designing his plan, it is just as possible that Dürer was imparting a "holiness" to his city as it is that this similarity in shape is coincidental.

In fact, Dürer told us little about how to perceive his city. The notion of the "ideal city" associated with his plan has been assigned only retrospectively by scholars. As far as the evidence tells us, Dürer's model was no more than a fast reaction, albeit a comprehensive one, to dire circumstances. When compared to other ideal cities developed by his contemporaries, Dürer's is rather average. His social hierarchy was more pronounced than More's or Fugger's, but less so than Alberti's. His solution for the peasants' concerns was not sympathetic, but he did not villainize them as nuisances or risks in his text, as did Alberti. Interestingly, the segregated living that most of these authors employed belies the "mixed-use" housing that dominated Renaissance urban planning.[94] Apart from this small circle that one finds Dürer in, planners valued a social mix that ensured the "viability of goods and services on every street".[95] Dürer's city had everything, but goods were assigned to certain parts of the city.

The absence of Dürer's own commentary alongside his plan or following its production leaves one to speculate about the significance that he wanted it to have. Perhaps Dürer's formation of a world is akin to his "playing God" in his 1500 *Self-Portrait*.[96] One might position his city as a similar exercise in blurring the lines between artistic and worldly creation. Perhaps its bland, authoritarian nature that Ashcroft described suggests that Dürer viewed the world as apocalyptic, fractured by religious strife, and thus was less concerned with artistry than humanity's survival. Or, perhaps, Dürer really did seek to create a town ideal for such artisans as himself and his family, and though he did not

92 Ibid., 29.

93 'Sacred squareness' is taken from the title of Michael J. Lewis's chap. 2, "The Sacred Squareness of Cities" in *City of Refuge.*

94 James S. Ackerman and Myra Nan Rosenfeld, "Social Stratification in Renaissance Urban Planning," *Urban Life in the Renaissance,* ed. Susan Zimmerman and Ronald F. E. Weissman (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1989), 39.

95 Ibid., 39.

96 Joseph Koerner, *The Moment of Self-Portraiture in German Renaissance Art* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993), 67; Martin Bailey, *Dürer* (London: Phaidon Press, 1995), 68; Francis Russell, *The World of Dürer, c. 1471-1528* (New York: Time Inc., 1967), 89.

have the time to idealize aspects of their lives outside of work, had their best interests at heart. What is certain is that practicality was not Dürer's only goal. This understudied plan provides an interesting glimpse into the artist's mind, and shows us what he valued, whom he valued, and who valued him.

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