Political Landscapes of Capital Cities

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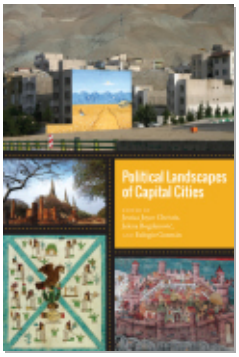

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Conclusions

Ontological Relations and the Spatial Politics of Capital Cities

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and Eulogio Guzmán

The frontispiece to this this volume, an example of an urban beautification mural project with a view of the Alborz Mountains in southern Tehran, visualizes the focus of this book on political landscapes of capital cities; the essays presented here assess the actual, imagined (illustrated by the mural), and constructed (present in the infrastructure) qualities of space across cultures to explore the ways governments create relational social networks that effectively convey, maintain, and negotiate their political ideals and sovereign authority.[1] We present case studies that focus on capital cities because they represent the principal jurisdictional location where regimes assert their sovereignty.[2] Our results promote a pluralist vision of the role of architecture, urban planning and spatial gesticulation (actual and symbolic) play in forming social meaning within complex and at times diversified constellations of political authority. Using Adam T. Smith's work *The Political Landscape* as an intellectual springboard, our essays also show that political space can accommodate a plethora of agendas that are neither static in relation to time nor unique to any given place or people.

Given the diversified geohistorical contexts, the contributors to this volume apply a variety of methodological approaches that zero in on the relational social ontology of modified spatial settings to articulate a more nuanced understanding of the intimate relations that exist between space and politics.[3] As Smith proposes in his book, and as we augment here,

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the principles encapsulated in the term *political landscape* unavoidably bind space and politics in ways that blur distinctions between material and imagined perceptions of space.[4] In other words, such an ontological relational analysis identifies a direct correspondence between ideation and political execution in spatial environments. Furthermore, we show these interests can be mined through a number of analyses: visual, textual, and phenomenological (to name only three of several approaches presented herein). The rich empirical results relayed here through divergent evaluations of spatial constructs for different cultures present a wealth of knowledge on the material and spatial expressions politics take within competitive social processes.

Our divergent analyses prove that no single, definite "blueprint" can be devised as a supermodel to study space across cultures because local political interests take different expressions in architecture and the built environment, making it impossible for local (physical) and phenomenological realities to be exactly replicated across time and space. For example, in her study of Constantinople and cities modeled after it, Jelena Bogdanović (chapter 3) demonstrates how those who were inspired by medieval Constantinople did not accurately recreate its physical reality in their capital cities; instead they settled on replicating a few distinct features from this famed city in a local flavor, which generated a set of idiosyncratic architectural features that served as models of social importance for medieval capitals in general. This practice shows that architectural and spatial particularities of capitals were intertwined with rhetorical meanings that can orchestrate the experiences of audiences in one particular city to others beyond.

This volume likewise shows that political interests are never uniform; whereas many cities copied Constantinople because of its political authority, they did not do so necessarily to supplant or challenge its political eminence. Even when spatial replication is evident, the political interest for such actions can vary widely. Melody Rod-ari (chapter 4) shows that King Rama I's appropriation of architectural, cultural, and spatial elements from earlier prominent centers of the Sukhothai realm was done to firm up his claims of authority for the Kingdom of Siam and therefore exemplifies a different process from mimicking Constantinople.

The links between the production and reception of capital cities and their associations with politics are important and reveal ways official authorities, usually residing in capitals, constructed socio-ideological environments.[5] This point is articulated in Stephanie Zeier Pilat's (chapter 9) examination of Fascists' urban transformations of Rome, Eulogio Guzmán's essay (chapter 7) on the foundation and constant renewal of the capital of Mexico-Tenochtitlan,

and Jessica Christie's assessment (chapter 6) of the strategies the Inka developed to claim the natural terrain. In their studies of Rome and Tehran, Gregor Kalas (chapter 2) and Talinn Grigor (chapter 10) highlight the difficulties in recovering competing narratives about the city. Analyses of contemporary cities can benefit from the range of studies that center on urban development and the social events that led to their formation: Anne Parmly Toxey demonstrates (in chapter 8) that the ethnographic interviews she conducted in Matera present a comprehensive view of the ways social opinion associated with this capital cognitively transformed through a socioeconomic re-arrangement of space.

While the works of many here—Bogdanović, Christie (both essays), Guzmán, Toxey, Pilat, and Grigor—examine how physical changes in topography and urban texture reinforced or loosened social boundaries between the elite and subaltern parts of the city, Alexei Vranich's examination (chapter 5) of Tiwanaku also centers on the way these people focused their efforts on visually and experientially incorporating the natural landscape of the high plateau of the Andes into the site. Christie's analysis (chapter 1) similarly assesses the ways Akhenaten marked voids in the landscape surrounding his city with stelae filled with texts to accentuate associations made between architectural experiences and divine relationships.

Historical reconstructions are similar in abstract to the way restoration of a mosaic can rely upon the number of surviving tesserae. Theoretical models are certainly instrumental in constructively helping fill in lacunae where tiles may be missing, but it is illusory to rely on abstract theory to fill in material voids or to bolster a single vision across cases, much less across cultures. We find that methods and tools that belong to positivistic, scientific, and structural threads of research (including archaeology, ecology, formal-stylistic analysis, iconography, semiotics, and space syntax) that are socially contextualized (within economics, history, religion, phenomenology, or political science and other critical disciplines) and that consider site-specific conditions can make substantial contributions and prove critical in the seminal process of understanding the quantitative and qualitative representational capacity of capital cities. Such work can reveal unexpected sociohistorical stratification expressed in spatial settings. For example, by using close historical stratification Toxey demonstrates how sociopolitical transformations in Matera are occurring faster than the physical alterations of its landscape. It is our firm belief that increased analyses of spatial constructs can only help present a more complete picture of the past and the emerging present, which in turn will promote better understandings of spatial environments as something other than mere dependent elements of temporal processes whereby

polities are re-created and rewoven on location with constantly emerging social dimensions.[6]

In what follows we discuss some salient conceptual points of convergence among our essays that mine the spatial depths of politics and that filter through all of the studies collected here. These themes do not simplify the variety of approaches; the choice of topics actually leads to a bounty of other related discussions. These concepts offer distinct points of departure for future studies and initiate discussions of many other related themes.

LOCATING GOVERNMENT: RITUAL AND FOUNDATION EVENTS

The capacity for societies to formulate and reproduce their values in the physical and cultural landscape through ritual performances can make political authority a social construction that expresses chronologically layered relations.[7] Such geotemporal exchanges can compress the history of any one given place, making it easy to relate events in the past to present conditions. Foundation events are essential in ordering political stages; they not only validate settlements but also initiate the process of producing, reproducing, and in cases rebooting authority.[8] Foundation events demarcate and socially expand individual designs as they are physically laid out, and they are instrumental in setting up political terrain; they are acts of deliberate planning and define early visions of capital cities as artifacts and tangible places that were shaped by their creators. However, such documentation is rare in the historical record, and the scarcity of such information for cities is what makes presenting the different individual cases here exceptional.

The surviving archaeological remains at el-Amarna show the original political landscape ordained by Akhenaten and the Aten. The boundary stelae erected by Akhenaten provide exceptional textual clues of Akhenaten's original ideas; they express his relationship with the god Aten and how he chose the location and design of the city as an earthly abode for his god. The location of stelae in space demarcated the political boundaries of the city of the Aten. Indeed, rulers in other societies have likewise chosen to reproduce their authority.[9]

Constantinople circulated legendary accounts of how Constantine I first founded the new capital and his city by widening the boundaries of the ancient town and erecting new fortification walls. Constantine walked and personally traced the limits of the future capital with his spear. Oral traditions further identify the precise central spot where he ordered his city to be built on the second hill, which was marked by an honorific porphyry column that celebrated the ties between emperor, architecture, and divine authority. Within

the century, the city walls became associated with the Mother of God and city gates were inscribed with references to Christ and additionally strengthened by Christian shrines. Thus foundational elements of the city included the creation of bonds between a higher, supreme authority (God, perceived as the ultimate designer or planner of such cities) and the ruler (often touted as the architect and builder of the actual city).[10] The founding of Constantinople would become the enduring trope for establishing a capital in later medieval eastern Christendom, where the iconic role of a ruler, as earthly representative of God, pervasively embodied the regime in control.

In the Americas, we learn of foundation events for the Inka capital of Cusco and the Mexica capital of Tenochtitlan. In each case, the foundation event marks the end of long migration by foreigners. For Mexico, colonial sources attribute the foundation of the Mexica capital to a chieftain and a group of ethnic leaders who were part of the long migration.[11] Their contributions as original settlers who held specific knowledge of the physical and social layout beyond the confines of their immediate settlement would not be forgotten; the capital would take the name of the chieftain and the layout, organization, and repeated construction of the principal civic structure, the Templo Mayor, would forever incorporate the material contributions of those who first resisted and later merged into the ephemeral corporate political conglomeration centered at Mexico-Tenochtitlan. In contrast, at Cusco, the process of designing and constructing the imperial state capital is widely attributed not to the founder, Manqo Qhapaq, but to the ninth ruler, Pachakuti Inka Yupanki, who not only organized the city but set up royal estates beyond the confines of the capital, staking a greater claim to areas beyond the center through a sophisticated network of visual and ritual markers.

In Southeast Asia, the political authority and role of King Rama I in the creation of the new Siamese capital, Bangkok, was crucial. Royal figures were also critical in the creation of Tehran as the capital city of Iran. Rulers, including the last governing monarchs Naser al-Din Shah Qajar, Reza Shah Pahlavi, and Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, are perceived as creators of the identity of the capital as well as authors of its modernization. The royal ceremonial space, which stood for the 2,500-year-long monarchy in Tehran, was the public stage set for the creation of new politics and values of the Iranian Republic during the Revolution of 1979. For Rome, the supreme Fascist leader Benito Mussolini reached back across time to engage in urban projects that emphasized the rebellious nature of the Fascist movement while renewing urban terrain in ways that purposefully grafted their actions onto the foundational roots of the Roman Empire.

DIACHRONIC CONVERGENCE: CLAIMS TO SPATIAL AND CHRONOLOGICAL TOTALITY

Claims to universality/totality and unification are recurrent in the discussion of capitals and an association that distinguishes them from other cities. Messages of social unification are easily transmitted through space, and careful spatial planning can effectively establish political ambitions beyond territorial boundaries. The employment of such tactics has been an essential ingredient of geopolitics in many places. In reality, however, pretensions of regimes to geographic incorporation are often illusory and necessitate relentless action to fill in territorial gaps and mentally remap the imagination of the polity.[12] Several examples presented here underscore the practical necessity by governments to claim socioterritorial unity through space.

Quadripartite divisions formulated at a center (capital) and projecting outward to its possessed territories and beyond constitute a common theme among imperial systems throughout the world. However widespread this trope may be, the local ways each culture has married its political claims to land is cause for much study and debate. Cusco is a case par excellence. The four quarters (*suyu*) originated in the main plaza of the capital and were framed by four roads that extended outward to give form to the Inka Empire *Tawantinsuyu* (Land of the Four Quarters) which, according to the vision of Inka rulers, encompassed the world. In another part of the Americas, Mexico-Tenochtitlan's four-part division even outlived the actual representation of this capital as captured in Folio 2r of the postconquest *Codex Mendoza*. The extended use of this diagram into the colonial period confirms that this conceptual construct was an important spatial component, known to all. It expressed a variety of ancient sociopolitical, religious, and economic relations as recorded in many ethnographic sources and reflected in the disinterred parts of the city, which maintained its spatial memory even after this space had disappeared. Other fascinating applications of quadripartite divisions are discussed in chapter 2 by Kalas for Rome, chapter 5 by Vranich for Tiwanaku, and chapter 4 by Rod-ari for Bangkok.

The geometric cartography that regimes project on their territories did not always match with the physical divisions of the land, as in Cusco, where the four *suyus* were nevertheless of unequal size. Individuals allowed to travel on Inka roads physically experienced leaving the city on a royal highway and in a specific cardinal direction, indicating that spatial experience was paramount among the Inka. The ideological landscape of Tawantinsuyu was ultimately a cognitive map brought to life, performed in state ritual, and reflected through social organization and the essays in this volume show this praxis was one followed in many

parts of the world.[13] Tawantinsuyu was clearly a conceptual tool employed to produce and reproduce political authority in the center, and to validate hegemonic ambitions.

Similar observations could be made with regard to the organization of sectors and causeways in Tenochtitlan; they symbolically reached out to the entire realm although the four administrative sectors were not equally sized and only three main causeways extended from the city to the mainland. Guzmán shows the incongruity between idealized mental maps and their materializations; spatial applications by necessity have to adapt to rational, pragmatic conditions often due to topographic realities, economic necessities, and social conditions that warrant flexibility on the part of the planners as they transform ideational constructs into physical actualities. In the process, conceptual constructions do not lose their authority by the hard limitation of geometric realities. Guzmán in fact indicates that the spatial divisions painted on Mendoza's Folio 2r express above all an idealized indigenous ordering principle of Mexica cunning used to incorporate spatial constructs and likewise project the Mexica political appetite for devouring the entire physical realm outside their capital.

Secular aims, religious concepts, and spatiality have been sophisticatedly interwoven to validate the legitimacy of worldly rulers. For example, a claim to incorporation underlies the importance of sacred icons for legitimizing the capital and promotes its sacred and political authorities. The icons and relics of the Mother of God, the patroness and first inhabitant of the Heavenly Jerusalem, sanctified Constantinople and subsequent capitals of emerging medieval states in Europe and the "Byzantine Commonwealth." The sun deity Aten and the Emerald Buddha added solid religious dividends to the political claims of Akhenaten and King Rama I. For Southeast Asia, the Emerald Buddha represents the most sacred Buddhist palladium in the mainland region. Its prestige is attested to by a long documented history of its travel and capture by King Rama I who installed it in his Bangkok palace in the late eighteenth century. As Rod-ari shows, the presence of this portable icon made the royal chapels of the kingdoms that possessed it the center of the Buddhist world. Its movement throughout the Sukhothai realm consecrated the sacred geography throughout Southeast Asia. Yet its sacrality was also highly political because of its association with the "Nine Precious Jewels" of the *Chakravartin*, or Universal World Ruler. King Rama's I naming of the city of Bangkok with a long list of incorporated titles referring to the Emerald Buddha and the Nine Precious Gems, and his efforts to construct his own temple to house the Emerald Buddha, were commemorated with a grandiose

installment of the sacred relic and his own second coronation ceremony to demonstrate his interest in claiming divine universal rulership.[14]

Claiming universality over time can be quite complicated, as in the case of Kalas's reconstruction of the visual culture associated with the performance of the Tetrarchy in ancient Rome. The four tetrarchs linked their regime to cosmic associations (the four elements and the four seasons) to endlessly project the renewal of their authority into eternity as substantiated by written records and iconography on the eastern and western rostra of the Roman Forum. Similarly, a primary motive for Akhenaten's settlement in the Bay of Amarna was the calculated east-west alignment between the central axis of the Great Aten Temple, with his tomb located further inland in the wadi canyon. Through inscriptions Akhenaten fused his identity to that of the Aten, the Sun, in life and death, leading to his claim that as long as the universe existed and his god rose on a daily basis he would likewise be eternally reborn.

Sometimes the *longue durée* approach to capital cities thriving into the present may also be useful as it reveals how major temporal layers of relations between specific periods constructed over the original foundations variously referenced in historical documents, the iconography of monuments, and the media were compressed. For example, Toxey's historic and ethnographic analysis unveils Matera as a long-lived settlement of prime regional importance from prehistoric times until the present.

Claims to geohistorical totality via religion and performance are attested in Constantinople. The political landscape of the new capital city of Constantine was focused on the embodiment of Roman imperial values and bonds between the divine and the ruler as exemplified by the emperor's honorific column that marked the public locus of the city. Crowned by a statue of the emperor in disguise as the pagan Sun god and enshrining the precious ancient Roman palladium, the Old Testament and Christian relics within this public monument proclaimed an aura of tradition and all-encompassing sanctity. By the sixth and seventh centuries, the capital as the microcosmic center enclosed by monumental fortifications, framed ceremonial rituals and acquired apotropaic Christian references as celebrated in the naming of the Mother of God the heavenly protectoress of the capital. In the post-ninth-century period, the role of icons, relics, and theophanic consecration ceremonies of emerging capitals suggested ways of mapping the long-lived Constantinopolitan landscape and universal authority of Christian Orthodoxy in territories beyond the Byzantine Empire. Under the Ottoman Turks, Constantinople became the capital of the Ottoman Empire; its skyline marked by domed mosques and tall minarets visually and symbolically replaced the cityscape crowned by

church domes and honorific columns on top of seven hills. Constantinople became Istanbul, but continued to be known also as the city of Constantine—Konstantiniyee as late as the nineteenth century.[15] Thus we note a curious and enduring political authority of city architecture and the embodiment of the regime in a ruler, which were clearly established in foundation narratives that were diachronically reproduced and renegotiated in different systems.

Another example is Mexico City, which became the capital city of the republic that entombed Mexico-Tenochtitlan. Although the ruins of the Templo Mayor mark the major archaeological remains of this buried city, mythohistorical accounts of the founding of Tenochtitlan are still retold in the Zocalo, where in one corner of this modern plaza a bronze sculpture reenacts the vision of the eagle on the cactus first witnessed by Mexica settlers and commemorated on Mexico's national flag. Foundation narratives of the Mexica are therefore coopted by the modern nation of Mexico as well. Inka heritage has played a key role in the construction of local Cusqueño identity. Cusco, now the capital of the Departamento/State of Cusco, continuously celebrates its Inka past in visual, literary, and performance cultures. A monumental, larger than life-size bronze statue of Pachakuti greets visitors on their way from the airport to the city center and, since 2012, a second statue crowds the reconfigured usnu stone in the center of the Plaza de Armas. The material essence of stone used to build the Inka, colonial, and modern portions of Cusco forge these three temporal layers together while important religious festivals, such as the Corpus Christi celebration, merge them in colorful performance engaging the hearts and minds of Cusqueños.[16] Cusco municipal institutions are embodying a new form of authority that construct the city as a modern *paqarina* (Quechua for "origin place"), which spatially rises above the Inka and colonial ruins of the past.[17] This new Cusqueño authority connects the Inka memories of the past with the challenges of the twenty-first century by building a new culture, both indigenous and transcultural. Thus in complex ways and through many temporal and spatial layers, initial Inka foundation events continue to reproduce political authorities and help accumulate economic power.

In the twenty-first century, space has become at the same time globalized and relativized via the Internet and global capital. With the dynamics of digital global technology, authority becomes even more de-spatialized and evanescent.[18] Cusco and Matera serve here for discussion. City government in Cusco has appropriated the Inka landscape and is marketing itself across the globe, in cyberspace, as a regional cultural heritage site in the tourism industry. The municipal institutions in Matera, designated as a provincial capital of Basilicata in 1926, have revitalized the Sassi sector of caves and turned their

historically shunned dwellings into an upper-class residential and commercial zone that attracts visitors. Capital status brought socioeconomic benefits to Matera: regional government offices and their influential families, a boost in commercial investment, and public and institutional funding for preserving and gentrifying the once-impoverished residences (Sassi) of the working peasants as a full tourist attraction. But not all Sassi are the same; surrounding towns with similar cave dwellings have not received such economic windfalls. Similar economic prosperity came to ancient capitals but precise historical contexts are often difficult to reconstruct.

Today, many old cities—such as Bangkok, Cusco, Rome, and Tiwanaku—and newly revised ones—Sassi Matera and Istanbul—are advertised globally as must-see destinations. Thus, political authorities represented through various institutions are continuously at work producing and reproducing sociopolitical and economic landscapes by any means possible, often including typical essentialist tourism tropes that collapse, suspend, or compress history to redefine human experiences and perceptions of capitals over time.

SIMULACRA AND EMULATION OF MODEL CAPITAL CITIES

Memorable visual and spatial experiences can commemorate bonds between the city and its complex network of social relations that are fused to political forms of representational discourse on several levels. In our empirical studies, combinations of the visual and tectonic authority often define capital cities in potent ways that are identifiable through variably selected architectural elements with an attached myriad of sociopolitical relations. Such a cohesive perception of the capital as a spatially unified place allows for use and reproduction of an imagined understanding of this entity as a coherent unit.[19]

Visually recognizable architectural components and spatially memorable planning, as well as other elements of spatial syntax, can be used by regimes to produce the environmental aesthetics of political authority.[20] The capital city and its related urban fabric are perceived as a locale unified by its actual physical features (such as walls or river canals, as in the case of Bangkok, Tehran, or Constantinople). Order could likewise be expressed in vertical layers as is the case with the raised plazas of Tiwanaku, which related to celestial bodies and snowcapped mountain peaks of the Andes marked by shrines (*wa'kas*) that extended dominion to a vertical, spiritual, plane. The prominently raised church domes on top of natural or human-made hills in Constantinople and medieval Belgrade, Kiev, Moscow, Novgorod, Smederevo, or Veliko Tŭrnovo fulfilled a similar visual purpose.

A vital theme of this book relates to the ways regional centers or foreign capitals emulated other principal cities as models of specific values and political systems. The clearest example in the United States is the set of relations between the Capitol Building in Washington, DC, and its micro-units in all state capitals. Instead of focusing exclusively on palace and incorporated seats of government (such as capitol buildings),[21] contributors here focus on points of congruency between horizontal ties present among the many locales of authority (such as temple/chapel/church, monument, and palace) and cellular ties to social positions diffused across the city and its environment (from residential neighborhoods or natural landscape to governmental and monumental civic architecture). These nucleated and dispersed centers occasionally cross at spaces designed for public performance and display of political theater, including public and open spaces in the urban fabric that are often marked by monuments.

Ultimately, some of these points of congruence define spatially expressed metonymic relations to the city itself. That is, each separate entity stood in for the whole city center and its political enterprise. Palaces as the residences of the ruler and the seat of government, civic monuments, or religious structures are often perceived as proxies of the incorporated geography, as evident in studies on Bangkok, Constantinople, Mexico-Tenochtitlan, Rome, and Tehran. The macrocosmic spatial metonyms are also exemplified in Bangkok, Constantinople, Cusco, el-Amarna, Mexico-Tenochtitlan, and Tiwanaku.

The various capitals of emerging Christian states emulated selected physical and conceptual features of Constantinople, the prototype of the "ideal Christian capital." No other city actually replicated Constantinople as a whole, but only some of its attributes, like the triangular city layout framed by two rivers and set on several hills; other cities reproduced its monumental architecture and domed churches. What mattered most was that capitals earned the title of *The City* (*Polis*), a term that provided a platform for connecting some physical attributes of Constantinople with the citizenship and cultural identity of being Byzantine. Historical and social memory reinforced by both textual and nonverbal rhetorical devices blurred the material features of the prototype and framed an idealized image that was applied to real-life undertakings elsewhere.

Similar practices of spatial simulacra have been noted for Cusco, which may have likewise sampled certain elements from Tiwanaku. The Inka reproduced diagnostic features of the core area of Cusco in provincial governance centers to create "other Cuscos." An extensive amount of literature has debated this phenomenon and the explanations appear to be grounded in a multilayered geopolitical landscape engineered around regime-controlled relations between

center and periphery. In Siam, King Rama I modeled his capital Bangkok after Ayutthaya by replicating the natural setting of the capital as a moat-encircled island marked by the Grand Palace complex. By using the architectural *spolia* from the destroyed old capital Ayutthaya for building the new capital of Bangkok, King Rama I not only symbolically but also literally constructed a political landscape that figuratively erased the memory of King Taksin and the short tenure of Thonburi as capital under his reign. Therefore, diachronic emulations and human experiences account for a pluralism of political models and an understanding of "capital" not as the city but cities within the city, which can be conspicuously generated elsewhere not simply as avatars but rather as new creations with a new set of sociopolitical connotations.

RENEWAL: PROCESSES OF DEMOLITION AND RECONSTRUCTION

Since capital cities are multirelational seats of authority, strategies of demolition and rebuilding can reshape their spatial political entities. Such demolition projects are not simply practical in the sense that they destroy something that is old and no longer of use; instead, these interests are mobilized by competitive political ambitions, sometimes to erase social memories or to update the current ideological values of those in control through a visual and spatial agenda. This book details two contemporary case studies of such scenarios that transpired in the 1920s and early 1930s: Rome and Tehran. In Rome, the Fascist regime demolished entire neighborhoods that had grown atop the Imperial Fora to make way for their selective construction of a new avenue, the Via dell'Impero, which cut diagonally across the ancient orthogonally arranged fora. Pilat proposes that construction projects of this nature showcased Fascist values. On an ideological level, press coverage privileged photographs of demolition and construction in progress, underlining the Fascist work ethic of continuous action and progress.

A similar and more drastic demolition/modernization effort was carried out at the same time in Tehran under Reza Shah Pahlavi. Estimates are that between 15,000 and 30,000 residential structures were destroyed—compared to 5,500 demolished in Rome by the Fascists—in order to give way to wide avenues, urban squares, and European-style public buildings that celebrated the arrival of modernity to Tehran. The political ideology behind this urban transformation as stated by officials and observers was an attempt to completely erase the past and herald a new beginning as a modern state on a par with the West. Earlier demolition of a capital is documented for Ayutthaya

in Thailand. During construction of his new capital in Bangkok, King Rama I ordered that construction materials, such as bricks, stone slabs, and wood, be taken from the ancient capitals of Ayutthaya and Thonburi and reintegrated into the new construction of Bangkok. Rod-ari contends that King Rama I's motives were practical on one level, while on another he strove to create a geopolitical landscape that would link Bangkok with the ancient capitals.

The case studies in this book make clear that capital cities, as principal seats of government, showcased particular desires that referenced political interests and ideologies in built and modified environments. The multiple but occasionally strongly converging paths of inquiry offered in this volume provide further ways to conceive how processes of urbanization, monumentalization, ritualization, naturalization, or unification affected capitals differently worldwide without losing grasp of their distinctive architectural and spatial features. Essays in this book clearly affirm that "the creation and preservation of political authority is a profoundly spatial problem."[22] This volume is certainly not theoretically comprehensive nor does it aim to provide decisive conclusions on the politics of space in all capital cities. Our efforts clearly demonstrate that the complex social production of space morphs according to location and this above all is a call for further nuanced investigations on the topic of the political in the spatial realm of capitals and human-made environments.

NOTES

1. See, Adam T. Smith, *The Political Landscape: Constellations of Authority in Early Complex Polities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 152–155.

2. See, for example, Lawrence J. Vale, *Architecture, Power, and National Identity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 3–43.

3. In his critique of various methodologies, Smith, *Political Landscape*, 28–29, emphasizes that his theoretical model can be applied to any political entity past and present.

4. Ibid., 5–12.

5. Ibid., 268–270.

6. Ibid., 189. See John M. Steinberg, Review of *The Political Landscape*, *American Anthropologist* 107/4 (2005): 745–746, who also emphasizes the validity of tools used in regional studies.

7. Smith, *Political Landscape*, 107–111, 279–280.

8. Ibid., 110.

9. Numerous other capitals like Ur, Rome, Lima, Constantinople, Bangkok, Tehran, or Brasilia also started as disembedded capitals—the center of political authority

outside historically dominant urban centers. On disembedded cities, see Smith, *Political Landscape*, 204.

10. Ibid., 206.

11. Elizabeth H. Boone discusses the many different versions of the Nahua foundation myths as ritual performances in her essay, "Migration Histories as Ritual Performance," in *To Change Place: Aztec Ceremonial Landscapes*, ed. David Carrasco (Niwot: University Press of Colorado, 1991), 121–151. For the Inka, see Gary Urton, *Inca Myths* (Austin: Texas University Press, 1990).

12. Smith, *Political Landscape*, 109–110.

13. For example, Tawantinsuyu was spatially reproduced on a microscale in the center of the capital: during the Inti Raymi and other major state ceremonies, delegations from the four suyu entered the main plaza from their cardinal directions. When residing in Cusco for official business, they also lived in the sector of Cusco corresponding to their quarter.

14. Nevertheless, his authority was limited to kingdoms practicing Theravada Buddhism. Thus the Emerald Buddha was the real broker of the geopolitical landscape in mainland Southeast Asia since political success was correlated with active Buddhist practice.

15. Istanbul was renamed most likely via the Greek phonetic phrase "in the city" [eis tin polin, εις την πόλιν]. The alternative explanation that the name *Istanbul* is a colloquial version of the official proclamation of "Islambol" ("Islam abounds") under Sultan Mehmed II, who conquered Constantinople in 1453, does not explain how and why the predominantly Islamic population of the Ottoman Empire would corrupt its major constitutive term "Islam." On *Islambol* and *Konstantiniyyee* see Halil İnalcık, "Istanbul," *Encyclopedia of Islam*, vol. iv, ed. P. J. Bearman (Leiden, 1978), 224–248.

16. Yazmin Lopez Lenci, *El Cusco, paqarina moderna* (Cusco: Instituto Nacional de Cultura 2007). See also Carolyn Dean *Inka Bodies and the Body of Christ, Corpus Christi and the Colonial Cuzco, Peru* (Durham: Duke University Press. 1999) and Thomas B. F. Cummins, "A Tale of Two Cities: Cuzco, Lima, and the Construction of Colonial Representation," in *Converging Cultures: Art and Identity in Spanish America*, ed. Diana Fane (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2006), 157–170.

17. Lopez Lenci, *El Cusco*, 317, 308–326.

18. David Van Zanten, "Review of David Gordon (ed.), Planning Twentieth Century Capital Cities," *Urban History* 38/1 (2011): 204–206.

19. Smith, *Political Landscape*, 206.

20. Despite his critique of location theories, Smith, *Political Landscape*, 239, also uses their tools.

21. Vale, *Architecture, Power, and National Identity*, 3–55.

22. Smith, *Political Landscape*, 20.