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Asia Pacific: Perspectives is a peer-reviewed journal published twice a year in May and November. It welcomes submissions from all fields of the social sciences and the humanities. In keeping with the Jesuit traditions of the University of San Francisco, *Asia Pacific: Perspectives* commits itself to the highest standards of learning and scholarship.

Our task is to inform public opinion through a broad hospitality to divergent views and ideas that promote cross-cultural understanding, tolerance, and the dissemination of knowledge unreservedly. Papers adopting a comparative, interdisciplinary approach to issues of interrelatedness in the Pacific Rim region* will be especially welcome. Graduate students, as well as established scholars, are encouraged to submit their work.

* 'Pacific Rim region' as used here includes North America, Pacific Central and South America, Oceania, Australia, New Zealand, Southeast Asia, East Asia, South Asia (India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, and Sri Lanka), and the Russian Far East.

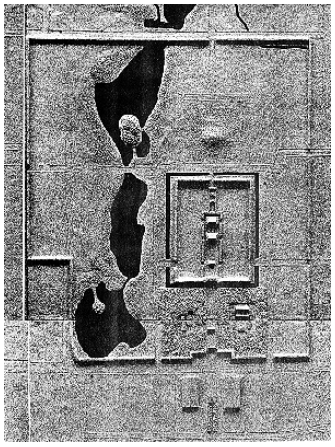
Vatican City and St. Peter's Square, The Forbidden City and Tiananmen Square: A Comparative Analysis

by Lauren Mallas, M.A. candidate

Abstract

Architecture reflects the political, social, and religious forces at work within the society out of which it has evolved. Both the Vatican City in Rome, with Basilica and Piazza San Pietro, and the Forbidden City in Beijing, with Tiananmen Square reflect this principle; both were built by powerful autocrats as large-scale capital cities superimposed on the ruins of previous regimes, and both embody universal world views in the form of microcosms deliberately and clearly set off from the mundane world around them. There are also important differences between the two complexes, differences that grow out of the particular cultural and historical milieus out of which each has emerged, and which continue to play themselves out in the contemporary context.

Vatican City in Rome, Italy



Forbidden City in Beijing, China

> "In the history of world architecture, politics and religion are always the main forces developing grand architecture."[1]

One of the most interesting aspects of architecture is the extent to which it reflects the political, social, and religious forces at work within the society out of which it has evolved. A subset of this phenomenon is the degree to which powerful individuals can use the built environment as their own rhetorical instrument. Furthermore, it is remarkable to what extent the cities and monuments they build then have the capacity to become poetic symbols in history. It has long been the goal of world rulers, both governmental and religious, to create environments which will enhance their personae, which will both awe and inspire and which will move the physicality of their functions up a step into the metaphysical realm. At the most evolved level, such structures may create an atmosphere in which one can not help but ponder the nature of the world. Both the Vatican City in Rome, with Basilica and Piazza San Pietro, and the Forbidden City in Beijing, with Tiananmen Square, are such numinous places.

Similarities between Vatican City and the Forbidden City:

- Both were built by men whose power was both politically and religiously derived; both the Catholic popes and the Chinese emperors were held to be God's (or Heaven's) absolute earthly agents.
- Both were built in capital cities where they were superimposed on the historic remains of previous great societies:, St. Peter's was built on the foundations of the Circus of Nero, the Imperial Palace was built on the foundations of the winter palace of the Mongol Empire.
- Both were built on gargantuan scales.
- Their designs intended to convey the idea that each is a microcosm of the universe as a whole.
- Each functions as a "closed" city within a larger urban context.

Differences between Tiananmen Square and St. Peter's Square:

- Piazza San Pietro was designed by Bernini as an expansion of the Basilica. It serves as a great anteroom for the church, both physically and figuratively. It is enclosed, yet open—huge, yet beautifully defined. It is a gathering place for vast numbers of people during the holy days. It honors and aggrandizes the basilica which rises behind it.
- Tiananmen Square is conspicuously lacking in design sensibility. It is a gathering place for vast numbers of people during political holidays. Its enormous dimensions have been established, perhaps, as a confrontation to the Forbidden City which sits before it, or behind it, depending on one's point of view. It provides a place for the citizenry to gather, a function that was purposefully not incorporated into the design of the Forbidden City.[2]

Historical Background

Vatican City: St. Peter's Basilica and Piazza and the Vatican Palace, Rome

The Emperor Constantine (306-337), the first Christian Emperor of Rome, issued the edict for building the first Basilica of St. Peter's on the site of Caligula's famous circus, where Nero staged his spectacles and martyred the early Christians. It was believed that Peter the Apostle had been crucified and buried there.[3] The obelisk which now stands in the Piazza of St. Peter's was moved to its present position by Sixtus V in 1586. It is the only relic left of the famous Gardens of Agrippina, the mother of Caligula.[4]

In 1506 Pope Julius II hired the foremost architect in Rome, Donato Agnolo Bramante to design a replacement for the old basilica which was in precarious condition.[5] The plan was based entirely on the circle and square and was rigidly symmetrical. This, presumably, was a representation of the church as a "microcosm reflecting the whole cosmos. According to the Platonic view, the cosmos is represented by the sphere and has completely autonomous characteristics."[6] Therefore the ideal type of Renaissance church was central in plan and surmounted by a dome; the centrally planned

building was the embodiment of complete unity and self-sufficiency.[7]

The proposed structure was of such overwhelming size that ancient Roman techniques using concrete had to be revived for its construction. Construction progressed at a slow pace until 1546 when Michelangelo took charge of the project. The current appearance of the Basilica, finally completed in 1626, is largely shaped by his ideas.[8] In 1612 Architect Carlo Maderna oversaw the construction of the main facade and extension of the plan to an assymetrical configuration.

> "The native Roman sense of monumentality had been given a new impetus in the Renaissance by the grandiose building projects of the popes. The most important single building was St. Peter's. Here was a new standard which suddenly made all earlier buildings seem small and provided a great and perpetual challenge for the enthusiastic church builders of the Counter-Reformation."[9]

The Vatican Palace, home of the pope, is a miniature city within a city and is complete with its own currency, post office and franking, police guard, diplomatic corps, railroad station, gas station, butcher shop, radio station, printing office, and Palace of Justice. It has its own daily newspaper and issues passports and visas. In size, luxury of appointments and value of artworks incorporated, it is in some ways the European equivalent of the Imperial Palace in Beijing as it existed during the Ming and Qing dynasties.

> "...the Vatican was finally made what it is by Sixtus V and Clement VIII–the largest and grandest palace in the world, with 11,000 rooms, halls, and chapels, 8 grand staircases and 200 smaller ones, 20 courtyards, most beautifull (sic) gardens, and a great hall, 1151 feet long by 767 feet wide."[10]

The list of architects and artists who were responsible for its design and realization includes many luminaries of the Italian Renaissance and Baroque including Bramante, Michelangelo, Maderna, Bernini and Raphael.

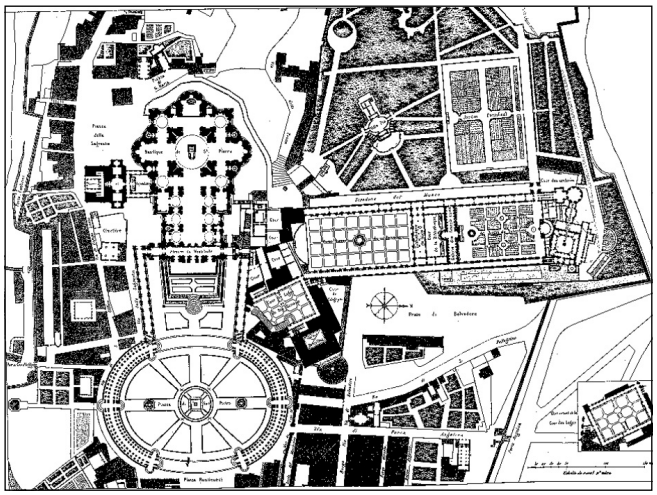


Figure 1: Plan of the Piazza, Basilica, and the Vatican Palace

In 1657 Pope Alexander VII selected the oval design of Giovanni Lorenzo Bernini for the main piazza of St. Peter's. The plan of the piazza is an oval which measures 340 x 240 meters and is enclosed by two grand colonnades. The central obelisk is flanked by two fountains, and the colonnades, which are four columns deep, are crowned with balustrades and statuary.

> "Virtually no other square has been analyzed more often...What makes the Piazza San Pietro one of the greatest squares ever conceived are its general spatial properties...it shows how a system of 'places', which is related to its environment in a particular way, is capable of symbolizing a content that embraces the deepest problems of human existence."[11]

The pontificate of Alexander was characterized by a revival of pomp and circumstance in religious ceremonies. He had an insatiable craving for appearances, had his grooms and servants formally outfitted, and selected a thousand soldiers from the infantry to be posted in conspicuous places throughout Rome and marshaled to attention whenever the pope passed in his sedan chair. His goal was to demonstrate his authority in unmistakable ways and he strove to restore the essence of monumental Rome. He had the nickname '*il papa di grande edificazione*', which translates as 'the pope of great learning' and also as 'the pope of great building'. Bernini had both the technical and artistic ability to fulfill Alexander's passion for brilliant imagery in the design for Piazza San Pietro:

Figure 2: St. Peter's, Aerial View

Figure 3: Colonnade of Piazza

> "At most times of day the sunlit columns nearest the viewer in the piazza gradually fade into darkness row-by-row, in three installments. Behind the line bathed in brightness, the shafts fall into progressively deeper shadow. The High Renaissance chiaroscuro...is here elaborated into a compelling hierarchy of depth and illusion, and the result is a flickering effect of solid and void, light and dark. Moreover, because the row of columns closest to the viewer passes the eye more quickly than the rows behind it, the visual impact is stereoscopic: the more distant rows appear to move backward as the line of columns in front moves forward... Complementing these effects, the terrain of the Piazza Obliqua is contoured in dish-like fashion, shrinking the apparent distance between the basilica and the far rim of the piazza...As a result, the magnetic force of Saint Peter's appears to have contracted the space between itself and the larger city."[12]

The Imperial City, Beijing

The Imperial Palace was initially built from 1407-20 by the Yongle (Yung-lo) Emperor, Zhu Di (1403-24) who moved the capital from Nanjing and changed its name from Beiping, 'Northern Peace', to Beijing, 'Northern Capital'. It was built in-part on the foundations of Khanbalik, the former winter capital of Kublai Khan (1267).[13] The initial construction took 14 years and 200,000-300,000 workers and artisans. The

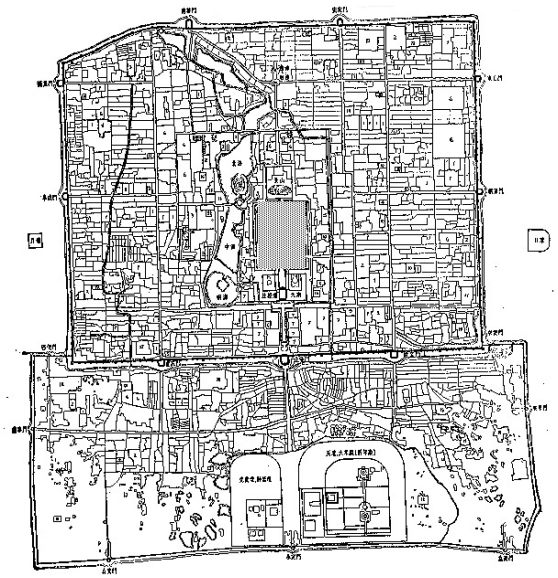


Figure 4: Beijing Plan circa 1553; Forbidden City shaded at center

layout was not original, as it was based on Chinese planning principals which had been evolving for many centuries. The planning principles of the Zhou dynasty, recorded in the *Kao Gong Ji,* and subsequently used for the planning of Han capital cities, are apparent in the layout of Beijing. The schema for the Imperial City can be understood as the culmination of the traditions of many dynasties and as the perfection of Confucian principles as influenced by cosmology. However, within this strict framework certain extraordinary facets of the design did emerge.

Terraces are a major feature of Chinese palace construction. They reflect the influence of Buddhist design in which high ranking buildings are built on elaborately tiered terraces.[14] The common practice, as published in the architectural treatises of the time, was the construction of double terraces. However, three-tiered terrace construction was achieved for the three buildings of highest tank within the Imperial City. The resulting edifices were spectacular in their grandeur:

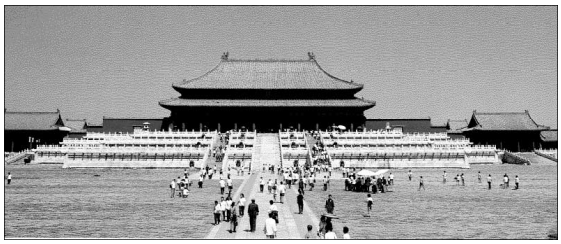


Figure 5: Taihedian, the Hall of Supreme Harmony

> "The T'ai-ho-tien (Taihedian, Hall of Supreme Harmony), the principal audience hall of the palaces and the focal point of the entire Forbidden City, is the grandest individual building...the walls, columns, doors, and windows are painted vermilion, the ton-kung and architraves are blue and green accented with gold. The entire structure is crowned by a roof of glazed yellow tiles, glistening like gold in the bright sunshine against the blue norther sky. Surmounting the white marble terraces that seem to vibrate with their exuberant carvings, the great hall is a rare feast for the eye, an unforgettable apparition of grandeur, dignity, and beauty."[15]

Another outstanding design feature is the enormous size and complexity of the plan, apparently of dimensions not previously or subsequently achieved in other Chinese imperial palaces. The imposition of uniformity of construction on such grand scale produced an awe-inspiring effect.

> "The mere idea of laying out an axis nearly two miles in length from south to north with an endless series of avenues, courts, bridges, gates, colonnades, terraces, pavilions, halls, palaces, balanced with perfect symmetry on both sides, and all built in exactly the same fashion, in strict accordance with the *Kung-ch'eng-tso-fa-tse-le* is a most appropriate expression of the Son of Heaven and of a powerful empire. Here, the uniformity induced by the strict rules turns out to be more of a merit than a defect. Without such rigid restrictions, dignity and grandeur of such magnitude could never have been achieved."[16]

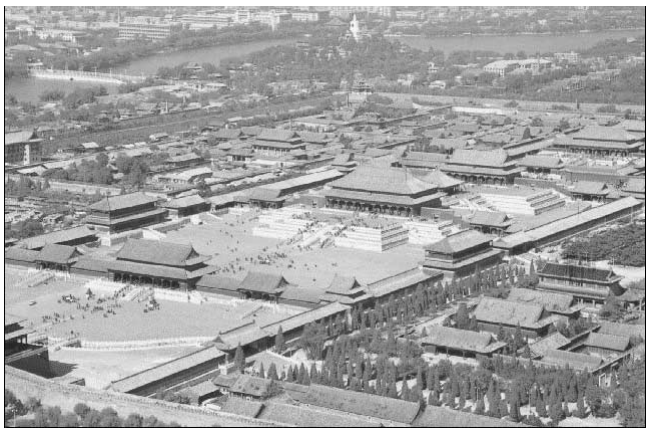


Figure 6: Forbidden City Aerial View

The overall layout was established by use of '*fengshui*'. Astrologer Liu Bowen drew a blueprint in which buildings and open spaces of plan related to parts of the human body. There are three primary gardens, designed to create a microcosm of '*shanshui*', mountains and water of the wilderness.[17] The Chinese Garden existed primarily as a place for contemplation and as inspiration for painting and writing poetry.

The palace was the residence of twenty-four emperors of the Ming and Qing dynasties from 1368 to 1911. In Mongol times it was the 'Great Within'. It was the residence of the emperor, the focal point of the empire and the middle of China. Entry was forbidden to all but those on imperial business.[18] Anyone caught inside the Forbidden City without proper authorization incurred a severe beating. If a trespasser dared to enter the imperial apartments, they would be put to death at once.[19]

The Imperial Palace was divided into the Outer Court, where government offices and reception pavilions for official receptions were located, and the Inner Court which was the residence of the emperor, the empress and the emperor's concubines. The Outer Court consisted of three front halls: 1) the Hall of Supreme Harmony, in which the most important rituals of an emperor's ceremonial life were enacted including enthronement, 2) the Hall of Central Harmony, anteroom to the main audience hall, and 3) the Hall of Preserving Harmony, a reception room for envoys, scholars and ambassadors.

> "To the east and west of the central trio of halls are other groups of buildings, some of them set around courtyards... many of them were storehouses, offices, or archives. The Grand Secretariat had its quarters east of the Meridian Gate, and a well for the imperial kitchen was located on the same side. The Imperial Household Department, which looked after the emperor's personal property including land, bullion, and other palaces had offices to the west of the Hall of Central Harmony."[20]

Beyond the Three Front Halls, one passed from outer to inner court through the Gate of Heavenly Purity into the domestic quarters of the Palace, the innner court.

> "...In design the halls of the Inner Court, apart from the three rear palaces, are actually the traditional Chinese courtyard house...(but very large)...they consist of a central open space flanked by halls on the sides and at the back, and sometimes a garden. Each group of halls and courtyard comprised a separate apartment, a clearly defined living spaces for the emperor, his empress, consorts, and concubines, so that they all had, as it were, their own house... Every household had its own kitchen, with a complement of cooks and servants."[21]

The emperor rarely left the palace walls. The total number of rooms in the palace is said to be 9,999. (The total number of rooms in Vatican City is recorded as 11,000.) In 1912 when China became a Republic, the last emperor Puyi was allowed to live on in the rear portion of the Forbidden City, but a wall was built to separate the Outer and Inner Courts. The palace became a museum in 1925.

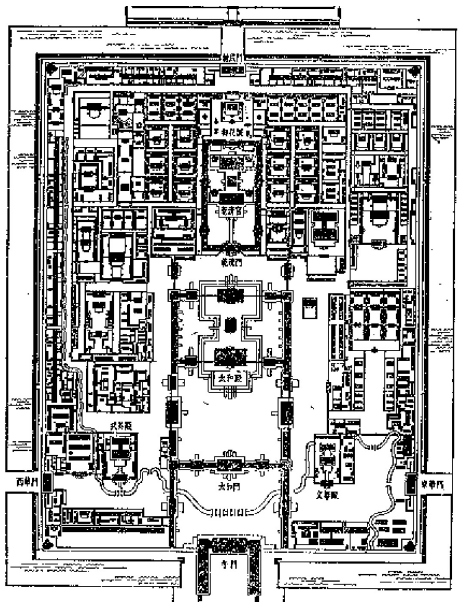


Figure 7: Plan of the Forbidden City

There was no single architect or designer in charge of the design of all or part of the city. Rather, the overall design and planning was a collaboration of the experts of the different trades and was then examined by the Ministry of Works, and finally submitted to the emperor through the eunuchs. The names of the experts who worked on the original design have been recorded as follows: master mason, Lu Xiang; master tiler, Yang Qing; master carpenter, Kuai Xiang; master builder, major designer and manager, Cai Xin; expert planners, Chen Gui, Wu Zhong, Ruan An.[22]

Notes on Ming Style Architecture

The Ming Style was characterized by monumentality and emphasized symmetry, horizontal line, and the use of kilned brick and tile as building materials.[23] A heightened sense of permanence reflects the seemingly eternal aspects of natural phenomena. The palace was symbolically a microcosm of the universe. The planning expressed the patriarchal clan system and social hierarchy of the feudal system.

> "....the city's axis ran trough the centrally-located palace....This carefully planned axis symbolized the greater axis from heaven to earth, which connected the supernatural god to the human emperors, who were the channel of authority.....High massive walls, the wide, deep moat around the city and palace, and the high tower above the wall served to symbolize security and protection, while imparting the feeling that the emperor was not approachable by the common people.....there was no public square in the ancient city as the government or emperor discouraged public gatherings....the lack of public gathering areas indicated that in the autocratic system of ancient China there was no place (or reason) for individuals to express their political opinions."[24]

Ming and Qing dynastic architectural design stagnated at some point in the early 15th century. It became locked into a restrictive code of construction from which it could not evolve. The will of the emperor to build larger structures was not sufficient in and of itself to propel the technology to a higher level. "

> "...the degree of maturity and sophistication classical Chinese city design had attained was so high, it had become a completely self-referential system, a perfect expression of codified aesthetics that had gone static. Unable to make the next leap– to revolutionize itself–it had been dwelling on increasingly minute modifications of details...The problem is, raising consciousness about what exactly one is departing from, or emphasizing what is incompatible between two separately evolved systems, doesn't quite answer the question of how one should proceed from there.[25]

Tiananmen Square, Beijing

During the Ming and Qing dynasties the square was narrower and in addition to the Tiananmen there were two more gates. It was surrounded by a red brick wall beside which ran a covered corridor for use by officials. To the east and west were the imperial ministries. The square was subsequently widened and narrowed again, but until the establishment of the PRC, the Imperial or Heavenly Way was left continuous and unbroken from the south of the city to the outer entry gate of the Imperial City.

Figure 8: Tiananmen, 1935

Figure 9: Tiananmen, 1997

> "Standing in the centre of the stone-flagged square and looking south, there looms up before us the Ch'ien Men (Front Gate), the central south gate of the Tartar city, through which you can

> nowadays see in the far distance the gate of the Southern city. In the old Imperial days this was not possible as the outer middle gate was kept closed except when the Emperor paid his state visits to the Altar of Heaven."[26]

In 1935 the long view north from Qianmen (Ch'ien Men) to Tiananmen was of a broad avenue defined by flowering shrubs. In October 1949, the civil war ended at the Tiananmen when Mao stood with his supporters on the gate of the Forbidden City and proclaimed the founding of the People's Republic. After 1949, the square was extended with much destruction of old buildings ultimately reaching its present size in 1958. At present the long view from Qianmen has been usurped by both the huge obelisk which is the Monument to the People's Heroes, and also by Chairmen Mao's Memorial Hall (which is also Mao's Tomb where he lies in state).

Figure 10: Monument to the People's Heroes

Figure 11: View from Tiananmen to the Museum

In 1958, as part of the 'Ten Big Projects for National Celebration' effort, the Great Hall of the People and the Museum of Revolutionary History were built along the east and west sides of the enormously broadened Tiananmen Square. The architecture of these structures, as well as that of Mao's Tomb, can best be described as 'Modern Totalitarian', suffering as they do from Soviet architectural design influences left over from the 1930's, and is reminiscent of Stalin in St. Peterburg, Hitler in Berlin and Mussolini in Rome.

The enormous changes made to Tiananmen Square were only a part of the vast program of urban renewal projects imposed upon the Beijing city fabric in the years following the founding of the Peoples Republic. In retrospect, the volition to instantly modernize at the expense of all that had evolved over the previous five centuries was a reactionary philosophy which is now widely regretted.

> "There is a sense of loss about Beijing. There are people who say the loss the city has endured in the past forty years is so horrible it's beyond speech. Some people say what the communists did to the city is a crime, and that they should be held as *qianguzuiren*, criminals of eternity, because they dismantled the magnificent city walls, an architectural wonder of history, and used the bricks to build useless anti-air-raid tunnels; and because they let the Red Guards run wild during the cultural revolution."[27]

Today's grandiose space was the scene of a momentous student uprising and massacre in 1989. The 50th year anniversary celebration of the PRC was held in the square in 1999. The reviewing stand for the President of the Republic and other high ranking governmental and military leaders was the Tiananmen. A great portrait of Mao Zedong now hangs there, flanked by slogans: "Long Live the People's Republic of China" and "Long Live the Great Union Between the Peoples of the World." The president, standing in the same position from which the emperors' officials had delivered their imperial edicts to the people, smiled and waved to hundreds of thousands of parading military and citizenry.

Discussion

Vatican City is today a fully-operational and functioning city complex. It exists much as it has for the past several centuries, as the capital city of the Catholic church, as a museum, as a basilica, and as a destination for tourists as well as pilgrims. It is used for religious purposes and several times a year is the site for mass gatherings, but it is not, arguably, used for public displays or parades by the Vatican City government. In the past the Forbidden City was both the governmental and religious capital, however now it is strictly a museum. Tiananmen Square, while adjacent, is not an extension of the old city in the way St. Peter's Square is an extension of the Basilica. Rather, it is a public square which has become a huge outdoor theater for governmental and political performance.

A question presents itself in regards to the location of this square. Why, given the history of The Forbidden City and of Tiananmen, did Mao decide to place the center of his new industrial capital here? Architect Liu Susheng had urged him to build in the northwest sector of the city or on the outskirts of the urban development. Apparently Mao could not resist the temptation to impose his authority directly on the physical entity which had come to symbolize domination in imperial China. Perhaps he thought he could "capitalize" (no other word comes to mind) on the architectural success of the Forbidden City. The result reveals a striking contrast, a double center of the capital in Beijing. It is a juxtaposition of the Forbidden City, once the center of power of the Chinese Empire, with Tiananmen Square, now the center of the People's Republic of China.

Was the square purposely made larger than the Forbidden City to demonstrate the desire to surpass even the greatest monument of the past? What has evolved is a fusion of opposites, each acquiring the characteristics of the other. Traditional imperial style and modern socialism present themselves in a grand duet, displaying together a "megalomaniac vastness of scale."[28] The design of each is linked to the power of the rulers who created them.

As a political artifact the imperial city is a relic of the past. It functions as a museum, but physically it retains a certain amount of power. It's sheer physicality, that is, its size, its grandeur, its symmetry, its polychromatic detail and artistry all combine to inspire awe. The architecture is able to communicate messages to us which are obvious even through the distance of time. How we interpret these communications from the past may vary with our individual cultural predispositions, but the basic concepts of power, self-sufficiency, and universality are unmistakable. There is little one can do to erase the power of such places to evoke these images, short of demolishing or defacing them. This fact may have been apparent to Mao and others whose political agendas were to overcome the past and to start a new era. The brutality with which they attacked the built environment of old Beijing can be assessed in this regard.

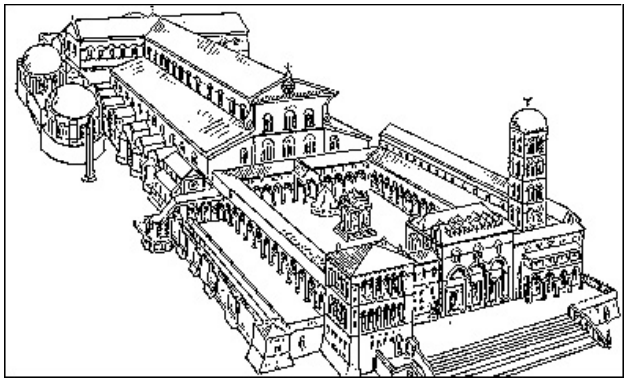


Figure 12: Old St. Peter's

The history of St.Peter's Basilica has a parallel history; the Bramante scheme of 1506 was considered a travesty by those who admired the old basilica. The previous church had been an extra- ordinary structure:

> "395 feet long by 212 wide, covering 114,000 square yards, connected with all the other great Roman Basilicas by an unbroken series of covered colonnades, and containing 52 altars and chapels adorned with 700 lights."[29]

After 1100 years of service it had become so "ruinous" that pope Julius II decided to tear it down and start over. Many, even to this day, regret that decision and wish the old basilica had been restored. But Julius II had other ideas which may have originated from the same compulsions that motivated Mao.

The wish to transform Beijing by shear force of will, the wish to translate the idea of revolution into the built environment of the city was, in hindsight, probably a misguided notion. Centuries old walls, buildings, streets, alleys, shops and homes were demolished to make way for new factories, modern transportation, gigantic new public monuments, and for the enlargement of Tiananmen Square. All this was done with the same undue haste and vengefulness which historically has been characteristic behavior of conquerors when they take over a capital and want to make it their own. In this sense Mao was repeating only what past centuries of emperors had done before him.

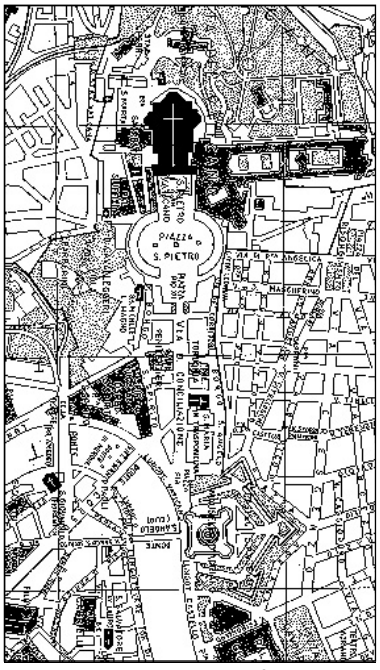


Figure 13: Axis to St. Peter's

Interestingly, the message of the Heavenly Way, that axis which is the spine of the Beijing plan, was not destroyed. In the past this was the processional route of the emperor and connected the Imperial Palace with ceremonial complexes to the south.

> "Peking was laid out around the sacred way, a great processional road which led straight through the city from the great throne hall of the imperial palace to the 'Temple of Heaven' in the south of the city. It was an extremely broad road, at least 100 meters wide, paved with great slabs of stone. That it was no ordinary highway was clearly indicated."[30]

Conceptually, this axis is different than the axis which connects the Castel d'Sant Angelo with Saint Peters. In Rome, the great concourse leads sequentially through Piazza San Pietro, into the Cathedral, and stops there at the altar. In a sense, the altar is the final destination of the processional route.

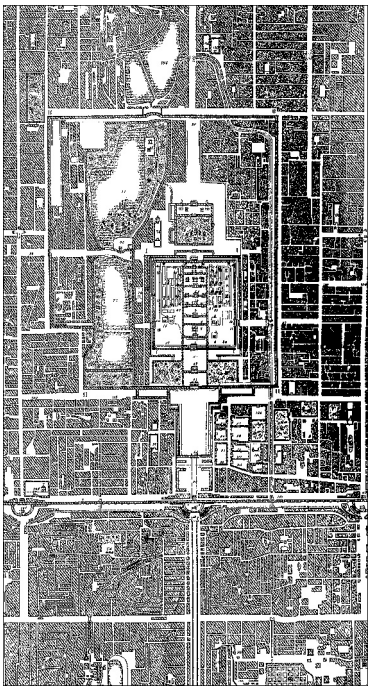


Figure 14: Axis thru the Forbidden City

But the Heavenly way is not this type of axis. In ancient Chinese cities these type of broad boulevards are symbols of eternal progression through time and space. As such, they do not visibly start and stop anywhere. Abstractly, the Heavenly Way is an axis which simply passes through the city, and does not end at the Imperial Palace at all. The plan of the city reveals that the road does, in fact, continue through the Forbidden City to the north walls. There is, inherent in the design of the axis, a concept of the 'beyond', along which spine the emperor is only one event. The series of gates placed along the spine to demarcate the movement from outer to inner rings of walls further support this concept. Clearly, Mao wished to place himself along this axis, and he did so, even in death. His tomb is directly on the center of the axis, a kind of counterpoint to the throne of past emperors.

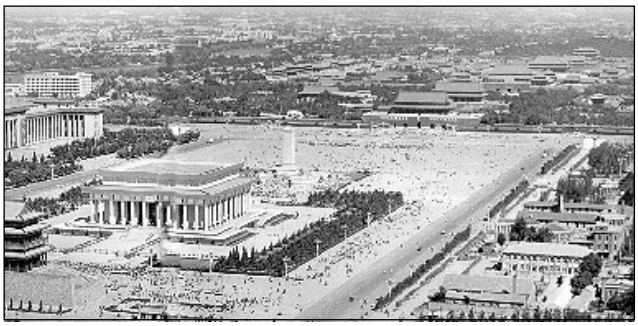


Figure 15: Mao's Tomb

Conclusion

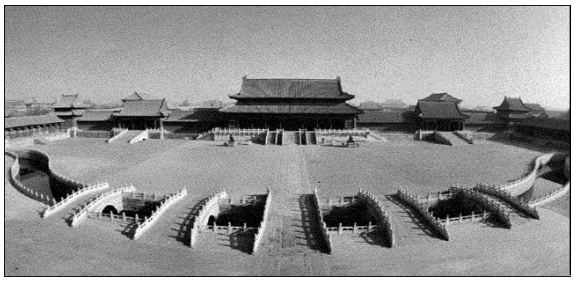
Why does Tiananmen Square lack the power to inspire thoughts of grandeur despite its extreme size? What Bernini accomplished so beautifully at Piazza St. Peters has not even been approximated in Beijing. Conceptually the 'arms' of Bernini's rotunda were seen as an enhancement of the Basilica itself. They were meant to extend the power of the church out into the square, and, in a sense, create an outdoor cathedral anteroom. The environment within the square is a protected one, carefully modulated to inspire us with feelings of permanence, order, grandeur and so forth. Every effort has been made to focus the eye on the facade of the church itself. Yet in a sense, the square is more important as a place than the church. The piazza has established a broad-based appeal which now transcends its religious connotations.

Figure 16: St. Peter's Basilica

Figure 17: St. Peter's Square

Tiananmen Square, however, was built in its current configuration not as an extension of the Imperial City, but more as an affront to it. The "negative" aspect of the space is both physical and metaphorical. Although the size is enormous, it lacks the particular architectural elements which enclose St. Peters. The building and monuments of Tiananmen reflect an aesthetic of confusion and uncertainty. In light of the political milieu from which they have come, this is not surprising, but it is unfortunate. The vast human resources needed to create the place were squandered on mediocrity and misguided planning concepts.

Inevitably Chinese architectural design will evolve and will achieve once again a high level of aesthetic refinement. As history has demonstrated, these changes will parallel political, social, religious and technological evolution. Undoubtedly the face of Tiananmen will change yet again in response to that transformation.



FIGURES

Cover: Vatican City in Rome, Italy; *The City, Form and Intent*, Richard Saul Wurman, 1963, plate XL.

Cover: Forbidden City in Beijing, China; *The City, Form and Intent*, Richard Saul Wurman, 1963, plates XXXIIA and XXXIIB.

Fig 1. Plan of the Piazza, Basilica and the Vatican Palace; *Letarouilly on Renaissance Rome*, John Barrington Bayley, 1984, pg 111.

Fig 2. St. Peter's Aerial View; *Key Monuments of the History of Architecture*, Henry A. Millon, ed., pg 386.

Fig 3. Colonnade of Piazza; *Key Monuments of the History of Architecture*, Henry A. Millon, ed., pg 386.

Fig 4. Beijing Plan circa 1553; *Pekin*, M. Fabre, 1937, pg 280.

Fig 5. Tai-ho-tien, the Hall of Supreme Harmony; *Chinese Architecture*, Laurence G. Liu, pg 249.

Fig 6. Forbidden City Aerial View; Art of China Homepage, http://pasture.ecn.purdue.edu.

Fig 7. Plan of Forbidden City; *Zhongguo gudai jianzhu shi*, Liu Dunzhen, plate 153-5.

Fig 8. Tiananmen, 1935; *Experiencing Architecture*, Steen Eiler Rasmussen, pg 139.

Fig 9. Tiananmen, 1997; *Exploring China*, Christopher Knowles, pg 64.

Fig 10. Monument to the People's Heroes; *Chiang shen ju ts'u to chiao*, pg 5.

Fig 11. View from Tiananmen to Museum; *Chiang shen ju ts'u to chiao*, pg 6.

Fig 12. Old St. Peter's; *How to See the Vatican*, Douglas Sladen , pg 84.

Fig 13. Axis to St. Peter's; *You in Rome*, Amedeo Storti, map insert.

Fig 14. Axis thru the Forbidden City; *Peking*, Juliet Bredon, pg 7.

Fig 15. Mao's Tomb; Mao Zhuxi jinian tang, *Zhongguo gudai jianzhu shi*, pp 26-27.

Fig 16. St. Peter's Basilica; *Baroque Architecture*, Christian Norburg-Schulz, pp 50-51.

Fig 17. St. Peter's Square; *Baroque Architecture*, Christian Norburg-Schulz, pp 52-53.

End: Gate of Supreme Harmony; Art of China Homepage, http://pasture.ecn.purdue.edu.

ENDNOTES

[1] *Chinese Architecture*, Liu, p. 247.

[2] The palace courtyards were closed to the public, as was the rest of the Forbidden City. The urban area outside the palace walls had broad avenues, but no outdoor spaces that could be identified as plazas or marketplaces; there were no public areas for assembly.

[3] *How to See the Vatican*, Sladen, pp 49-55.

[4] *How to See the Vatican*, Sladen, p. 49.

[5] *History of Art*, Janson, p. 354.

[6] *Rome of the Renaissance*, Portoghesi, p. 60.

[7] The Pantheon, built in Rome in 125 A.D., was an ancient precursor. According to Janson, *History of Art*, p. 134: "The use of concrete permitted the Romans, for the first time in the history of architecture, to create vast interior spaces." The plan of the Pantheon is a cylindrical drum to which a deep porch, reminiscent of a Roman temple, is attached. The drum is surmounted by a gently curved dome which is a true hemisphere. The top center of the dome has a circular opening which is the only source of natural light. The effect of this interior is astounding.

[8] *History of Art*, Janson, p. 357.

[9] *Renaissance and Baroque*, Wolfflin, p. 39.

[10] *St. Peter in Rome*, Smith and Barnes, p. 27.

[11] *Baroque Architecture*, Noberg-Schulz, p.57.

[12] *Bernini and the Art of Architecture*, Marder, p. 134.

[13] In fact it was Kublai who laid down the basic city plan and built the outer city walls. The following description of Kanbalu is from *The Travels of Marco Polo*, Manuel Komroff, editor, revised from Marsden's translation, pp 125-131:

Chapter 10: Of the Great and Admirable Palace of the Great Khan

The Great Khan usually resides during 3 months of the year, namely December, January, and

February in the great city of Kanbalu (Peking), situated towards the north-eastern extremity of Cathay...In the first place is a square, enclosed with a wall and deep ditch 8 miles in length each side...center of each side is a gate...Within this, 1 mile deep, is an open space for the troops....The next square is 6 miles length on each side with three gates on the north side and three gates on the south side. The middle of the 3 gates is larger and always kept closed for the emperor–those flanking are kept open always for "common passengers...Within this 2-1/2 miles deep, are meadows with...stags, roebuck, and fallow deer...The pastures have abundant herbage...The inner square is 1 mile in length each side, with walls 25' high and six gates, three on north and three on south...The whole plan of the city was regularly laid out by line, and the streets in general are consequently straight, that when a person ascends the wall over one of the gates and looks right forward, he can see the gate opposite to him on the other side of the city...In the public streets there are, on each side, booths and shops of every description.

[14] *Palaces of the Forbidden City*, Yu, p. 212. This configuration embodies the concept of *Sumeru*, the central mountain peak of the Buddhist universe.

[15] *A Pictorial History of Chinese Architecture*, Ssu-ch'eng, p. 114.

[16] *A Pictorial History of Chinese Architecture*, Ssu-ch'eng, p. 110.

[17] *The Forbidden City*, Holdsworth & Courtauld, p. 104.

[18] *Exploring China*, Knowles, p. 53.

[19] *The Forbidden City*, Holdsworth and Courtauld, p. 60.

[20] *The Forbidden City*, Holdsworth and Courtauld, p. 29.

[21] *The Forbidden City*, Holdsworth and Courtauld, p. 60.

[22] *Palaces of the Forbidden City*, Yu, p. 18.

[23] Liang Ssu-ch'eng divides the history of Chinese wood structures into three main periods. The 9th-11th centuries, late Tang through early Sung is identified as the 'Period of Vigor' and is characterized by "robustness of proportion and construction." The mid 11th-14th centuries, late Sung to beginning of Ming is identified as the "Period of Elegance" and is characterized by "gracefulness in proportion and refinement in detail." The 15th-19th centuries, Ming (Yung-lo) to overthrow of Qing by the Republic is identified as the 'Period of Rigidity' and is characterized by "general rigidity, a clumsiness of proportion."
Liang comments on the sudden departure from the Sung and Yuan dynastic architectural styles which occurred at the beginning of the fifteenth century with the founding of the capital in Peking. He observes: "The change is very abrupt, as if some overwhelming force had turned the minds of the builders toward and entirely new sense of proportion." Liang makes no conjecture about the nature of the change. It appears clear, however, that the wish of the Emperors to establish a renewed capital in their own images, larger, grander, and more extraordinary than anything that had come before was, in fact, the "overwhelming force" to which Liang referred. The clumsy proportions of the Ming resulted from the unwillingness (or inability) of designers to break from the rigid rules of construction which guided them–rules which were not appropriate for the larger scales they wished to achieve.
Parenthetically, it is of some interest to note that Liang Ssu-ch'eng, while primarily a historian, was recognized as the architect closest to Mao Zedong during the reconstruction of Beijing. He is the architect now famous for having urged Mao to build his new industrial city in the northwest sector of Beijing and to leave its historic center undisturbed. Nothing could have been further from Mao's intention, as was soon made clear. Liang died, perhaps of remorse, during the cultural revolution.

[24] *Chinese Architecture*, Liu, p. 34.

[25] "Beijing: A City Without Walls", Zha, p. 9. The inability of Qing China to move the society forward to a higher plain of technological and artistic development is discussed from an economic view point by Mark Elvin in *Pattern of the Chinese Past*, Stanford University Press. Elvin identifies this cultural immobility as the "high-level equilibrium trap". Because construction technology is directly related to the evolution of new architectural styles, it stands to reason that retardation or lack of growth in technology must inevitably be reflected in architecture. The same argument may be carried forward to the 1950's and the cultural revolution in China. The lack of a truly modernized society in which the implements of technology were dispersed throughout the culture was reflected in the poor quality of the built environment. Unfortunately, the PRC showed little or no restraint in their building programs and managed to inundate Beijing with projects which blatantly expose the lack of an evolved technology and architectural design philosophy.

[26] *In Search of Old Peking*, Arlington and Lewisohn, p. 28.

[27] "Beijing: A city without walls", Zha, p. 3.

[28] *China Diary*, Spender, p. 50.

[29] *St. Peter In Rome*, Smith and Barnes, p. 11.

[30] *Experiencing Architecture*, Rasmussen, 1959, p. 139.

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