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Following the Template of Heaven: Environmental Policies in Medieval Italy

The Christian view of nature has often been blamed for modern ecological crises, perhaps most notably in the 1967 thesis of Lynn White that attributed western environmental exploitation to a Judeo-Christian worldview.[1] The ideological assumptions of western Christianity, he argued, emphasized human dominion over the earth, replaced the spiritual significance animism had given to material nature, and laid the foundation for technological and scientific advances that had the power to destroy nature. This thesis surely has some merit, but it also has many critics. As Richard Hoffman aptly summarized its continuing impact, "the White thesis necessarily claims the attention of medievalists because it is still thoughtlessly repeated, particularly by environmental writers, not historians, and/or serves them as a touchstone for other comparisons."[2]

It is important for late medieval and early modern beliefs about the environment to figure into this debate about the intellectual roots of humanity's relationship with the natural world. And in assessing beliefs about the environment, it will also be helpful to consider medieval perspectives on urban environments as well as the natural world, which in some cases were constructed from a similar vision. Cities and rural areas had long been associated with negative connotations—cities as places of corruption, wildernesses as places of danger—but they were often viewed positively, too. Nature was highly valued for its beauty in medieval and Renaissance Italy.[3] The city as a reflection of a heavenly counterpart and nature as a reflection of paradise were common themes in art, literature, and theological treatises. Over time, they also became increasingly common justifications for public policy. This case study argues that in northern Italian city-states of the thirteenth through sixteenth centuries, positive views of urban and rural life, particularly those rooted in eschatological vision, legitimized a politically, economically, and theologically driven desire to make cities and the natural surroundings under their rule more divine.

This image of following a divine template contradicts stereotypes of medieval cities as places of filth and decay. The stereotypes are not entirely unwarranted, but neither do they tell the full story. On one hand, medieval cities are understood to have been, "unless

mediated by human authority, legitimate dumping grounds for material and body waste" and "deeply unsanitary environments."[4] On the other, Burckhardt wrote about Italians' belief that they were cleaner than other nations, and recent scholarship explores Renaissance Italy's culture of cleanliness and contradicts "the assumption of previous generations of historians" by insisting that "preoccupation with sanitation predates the early modern period."[5] Perceptions about religiosity are just as conflicted. Medieval cities, including those in northern Italy, have been said to "stand out as islands of secular rationality and materialism" and reach "ugly depths of depravity."[6] Yet some of these same cities, in certain respects increasingly sacralized in the late Middle Ages, were mentally equated with the heavenly Jerusalem, and it can be argued that communes once thought to be shedding religious traditions are better described as "cities of God" for their pervasive religious devotion.[7] The polarized opinions on the religiosity and cleanliness of these cities begs for clarification.

One explanation for such diverse assessments is the universal discrepancy between the real and ideal in virtually every area of life. Just as many medieval Christians held the saintly life as an ideal yet held out very little hope that they and their peers would attain to it—some commended the saints in heaven while fully expecting to end up in hell—many likewise looked to the new Jerusalem as a template for their cities while dumping refuse in the streets. Yet even in that contradiction between belief and behavior, community authorities could be confident in appealing to this belief and basing their policies and laws on it. Almost all could agree that it was something to strive for, even if the necessities of daily life kept pushing the goal further into the future. In any culture, ideals are embraced while realities confront them. But the ideals still hold currency.

Even with regard to lived experience, however, the stereotypes of filth and growing secularism are in need of correction. Studies on perceptions about dirt and decay, environmental statutes, and social and legal enforcement of policies have added considerable complexity to frequent assumptions about the squalor of medieval and early modern cities. Studies on devotional life of medieval Christians reveal a greater diversity of assumptions about the material world than many modern assessments have recognized. A more layered understanding of historical Christian views of the environment is emerging.

The Ideal City

Giacomino da Verona's poem "On the Heavenly Jerusalem" is an intriguing blend of religious vision and human aspirations. It depicts the walls surrounding the heavenly city in the shape of a square, each side with three gates. The city is filled with marble and gems, the streets are paved with gold and other precious materials, a river flows through the city center, and fruit trees and flowers abound. In this pleasant place, this urbanized *locus amoenus*, there is no fear. All is peaceful and beautiful within these walls.[8]

On one hand, this is an unsurprising depiction of a biblical image, hardly a departure from traditional representations of heaven. The characteristics of the heavenly city in the late medieval imagination line up with visions in Ezekiel and the Apocalypse, which had become images of paradise and heaven well before the mid-thirteenth century, when Giacomino wrote. The last picture in the Christian canon is a renewed Jerusalem descending from heaven with four walls, three gates on each side, gems and precious metals throughout, a river and a life-giving tree, and an environment of peace, beauty, and joy, just as Giacomino described. On the other hand, the poet placed this heavenly vision in a familiar frame. Its paradise "is merely a perfected and dressed-up north Italian city of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries."[9] In the ideals of poets of the late Middle Ages—and of theologians and savvy politicians too—distinctions between the heavenly Jerusalem and the earthly city were increasingly blurred.

Ambrogio Lorenzetti's *Allegory of Good and Bad Government* in Siena's Palazzo Pubblico does not overtly refer to the heavenly Jerusalem, but it does make a clear connection between the earthly city and a heavenly agenda. Painted less than a century after Giacomino wrote, it depicts city government, urban and natural environments, and the spiritual forces at work in the whole civic project. His rendering of bad government includes debris in the streets and ruins in the countryside, as well as darker and dingier hues than in his corresponding renderings of urban life under good government. Crops are not growing, the land looks exploited and exhausted, and the scene is largely deforested except for a few browning trees. In the scenes depicting a city under good government, however, the streets are immaculate and the countryside is flourishing—fruitful wherever it is being

Image 1: The effects of bad government in urban life, *Allegory of Good and Bad Government*, Ambrogio Lorenzetti, Siena, 1338–39. Source: This work is in the Public Domain at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ambrogio_Lorenzetti_-_Bad_Government_and_the_Effects_of_Bad_Government_on_the_City_Life_-_WGA13499.jpg.

Image 2: The effects of bad government in rural life, *Allegory of Good and Bad Government*, Ambrogio Lorenzetti, Siena, 1338–39. Source: This work is in the Public Domain at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ambrogio_lorenzetti,_effetti_del_cattivo_governo,_siena,_palazzo_pubblico,_1337-1340.jpg.

Image 3: The effects of good government in urban life, *Allegory of Good and Bad Government*, Ambrogio Lorenzetti, Siena, 1338–39. This work is in the public domain at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ambrogio_Lorenzetti_-_Effects_of_Good_Government_in_the_city_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg.

Image 4: The effects of good government in rural life, *Allegory of Good and Bad Government*, Ambrogio Lorenzetti, Siena, 1338–39. This work is in the public domain at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ambrogio_Lorenzetti_-_Effects_of_Good_Government_in_the_countryside_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg

cultivated by industrious laborers and forested among the hills. The angel Securitas holds a banner that promises safety to all coming in and going out—a scene that might easily fit the description of paradise restored.[10] This all happens, of course, in alignment with the seasons, the planets, and the movement of the heavenly spheres, and under the watch of angelic beings and the virtues they represent. Heavenly and earthly realms converge in the well-governed city and its environs, evoking the canonical bookends of human history—both the pristine environment of Eden and a restored creation in the heavenly Jerusalem.

The desire of community leaders to maintain a clean environment is understandable. Having healthier and more beautiful surroundings is a familiar concern, not unique to any particular culture or period of history. Civic authorities generally have not needed a philosophical or religious justification for efforts to promote or maintain a pleasant urban environment. In matters of the common good, no deeper motivation than the common good is necessary. Civic pride can be a powerful impetus for change.

But in many of the late medieval cities of northern Italy, something more than civic pride, honor, or an effort to improve the lives of inhabitants seems to have been at work in policies regarding cities' physical environments. Hints of greater aspirations appear in panegyrics describing the ideal city, political speeches that embraced a God-given role for governments, theological treatises on humanity's role as stewards in partnership with God over creation, and even occasionally in municipal statutes, which codified religious principles in multiple policy arenas, including urban planning and the stewardship of land and resources.[11] The impulse to experience a well-managed urban environment, reflected in works like those of Giacomino and Lorenzetti, seems to have had deep philosophical and theological roots.

Idealizations of the city evolved from a long history of biblical, classical, and patristic themes. Biblical texts placed human origins in an idyllic earthly garden and human destiny in a gleaming heavenly city. The notion of paradise was usually associated in the Middle Ages with an earthly ante-heaven, a place of rest in preparation for final destiny, but was frequently conflated with heaven itself. Descriptions of paradise and heaven in otherworldly literature—visionary tales of travels to hell, paradise, and heaven common in late antiquity and the early Middle Ages—often used similar language for both, pointing toward tamed nature or the radiant streets and walls and perfect dimensions of the holy city of the last two chapters of the Apocalypse. "Nothing unclean" would enter this city, and it would be surrounded by a fruitful and safe natural environment.[12] This ideal—no matter how imperfectly reality measured up to it—was embedded somewhere in the thoughts of every medieval civic leader and political theorist, probably as part of their formal instruction, and certainly as an inherited worldview.

That inheritance was handed down through layers of reinforcing iterations and variations from late antiquity and the early Middle Ages—from patristic imaginings of the appearance of the heavenly city (and its contrasting character with the earthly city in

Augustine's *City of God*); from early monastic communities that envisioned the cloister as an enclosed paradise; from Gothic forms that applied that concept to cathedrals, reliquaries, and other sacred spaces; from pilgrimages and processions that sacralized spaces outside the church and suggested that any earthly location could become a site for heavenly activity; and from scholastic theology that viewed creation as a sacred expression of divine truth and human beings as stewards of that expression. As Europe urbanized, monks and theologians gravitated toward biblical imagery of the city as a frequent symbol of heaven, not as a replacement for garden imagery but alongside it. Bernard of Cluny, for example, agreed that the earth would be restored as a luxurious garden of paradise but would also include Revelation's gleaming city with huge walls, precious stones, golden roads, jeweled gates, and multitudes of saints feasting—a vision accommodating both Cluniac preference for towns and Cistercian preference for remote settings.[13] The latitude provided by diverse biblical metaphors gave space for shifting medieval concepts and experiences. Negative perceptions of the material world—eschatological contempt for all things material and fear of an adversarial nature—persisted, but they were not the only perspectives.[14] Both nature and cities could point to paradise and eternity.

As in late antiquity, images of the heavenly city were seen as allegorical depictions of the church in the Middle Ages. But they were also seen as something more: a means of moving toward or experiencing heaven anagogically—i.e., not only with a view of the afterlife but advancing upward from the material to the immaterial.[15] Gothic cathedrals and iconography became not mere visual representations of heaven, as we commonly think of symbols, but potential encounters with the real thing. It is a small step from these allegorical and anagogical uses of the heavenly Jerusalem to seeing entire cities—with church or cathedral at the spiritual center—as representations of heaven on earth, at least theoretically if not in practice. And many such small steps were made by scholastic thinkers. Aquinas' natural theology emphasized order, planning, and design—nature as a reflection of God's goodness and glory. His political theology described the location of the ideal city in thoroughly Edenic, paradisiacal terms and its ruler as God's representative who should pattern his government after the divine template.[16]

One of the key steps between the church as an experience of heaven and the entire city as a bearer of the same connotations may have been the feast of Corpus Christi—a celebration of the Eucharistic elements (having become the body and blood of Christ) beyond church walls. The feast, which began unofficially in the late twelfth century and was formally instituted in the mid-thirteenth, represented an outward thrust of sacred things, a taste of heaven moving from the internal space of the church to the cityscape and countryside, a sacralization of the secular all along the processional route. Processions were nothing new, occurring in liturgical cycles at various times throughout the year, including Palm Sunday, in which reenactments of Christ's entrance into Jerusalem enabled the faithful to identify their own city as the heavenly Jerusalem.[17] These processions likely served as a

template for Corpus Christi processions, but the latter significantly exceeded their models in scope.[18] The drama of the faithful envisioning and performing their city's connection with heavenly realities took on greater weight in the feast that celebrated the presence of Christ and prefigured the beatific vision. Eyes trained to see "the bread of heaven" at work in fields and streets along the processional route might soon come to see those fields and streets as having higher meaning.

Regardless of the particular means, a composite theology of the city grew over time from several conceptual streams, most clearly from Christian imagery but also from a longing for the past (in renewed interest in classical philosophy and architecture), from new discoveries of other cultures, and from a balance of Aristotelian and Neoplatonic interpretations of the material world. The ideal medieval city was beautiful (full of marble and gems, as in the Apocalypse); orderly and hierarchical (as in Augustine, Aquinas, and the mystical theology of Pseudo-Dionysius); and characterized by peace, harmony, and purpose.[19] Or, as some have put it more vividly, it was a combination of the heavenly Jerusalem, Augustine's City of God, ancient Rome, and Marco Polo's Cathay.[20]

Jerusalem, whether earthly or heavenly, could in fact be readily conflated with an Italian city, as in Botticelli's *Mystical Crucifixion*, in which the Duomo and other Florentine features fill the background of the crucifixion scene. This "conscious equation" of the two cities, in which a specific city could be identified with a more sacred location, has been attributed to the region's developed system of political theory (or theology).[21] Renaissance cityscapes or architecture frequently served as the setting for biblical scenes in visual representation, not because artists had no awareness of what the real Jerusalem might look like but because of a conceptual framework that allowed them to make profound theological statements about the universality of the biblical narrative and the place of their city in the cosmic order. Landscapes were often portrayed as Edenic, paradisiacal "pleasant places." Even wildernesses in which ancient saints fought off demonic temptations, traditionally in deserts, might depict lush, idyllic natural features, wild animals tamed, or a benign angelic presence.[22] Urban and natural environments were clearly not always exploited with a utilitarian agenda; sometimes they were seen as divine gifts modeled after higher realities.

The equation of earthly cities and their surroundings with the earthly and/or heavenly Jerusalem is also common in literary sources, particularly in panegyrics describing the ideal city. Urban encomia, which began to flourish in the twelfth century, painted "a utopian view of the city that mirrors the heavenly Jerusalem [and] rhetorically conveyed ideals of urbanity for aspiring members of the body politic to emulate."[23] One of the best known of these is Leonardo Bruni's early fifteenth-century *Laudatio florentinae urbis*, "Praise of the City of Florence," which commends the city for its "unparalleled cleanliness" and designates its beauty as its "highest and noblest adornment."[24] Though Bruni never mentions Eden or the heavenly Jerusalem in his text, his descriptions hint at those familiar images, whether intentionally or not. Those images are made explicit in many other such panegyrics.[25] A

Image 5: Sandro Botticelli, *Mystic Crucifixion*, 1497. It was not unusual for images to merge events from the earthly Jerusalem with European cities, here Florence, to express the universality of the eternal narrative and imply local inclusion in it. Source: The Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University. In the Public Domain at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mystic_Crucifixion_with_themes_from_Savonarola,_Sandro_Botticelli,_Italy,_c._1500,_tempera_and_oil_on_canvas_-_Fogg_Art_Museum,_Harvard_University_-_DSC01048.jpg.

Image 6: *St. Jerome in the Wilderness*, from the Workshop of Paolo Veronese, c. 1575–85. Images of Jerome typically included a lion, after a legend in which he removed a thorn from the paw of a lion that limped to him as he was teaching. Like the other beasts in the background, the lion is as benign as the surrounding wilderness. Source: In the Public Domain at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Workshop_of_Paolo_Veronese_-_Saint_Jerome_in_the_Wilderness_-_1947.117_-_Art_Institute_of_Chicago.jpg.

Image 7: Moretto da Brescia, *Christ in the Wilderness*, c. 1515–20. In this convergence of spiritual and material realms, heaven (represented by angels) and an austere but harmless landscape provide the context for the temptation of Christ, who sits calmly in his tamed natural environment. Provided by the Metropolitan Museum of Art under the Creative Commons CC0 1.0 Universal Public Domain Dedication at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Christ_in_the_Wilderness_MET_DT200983.jpg.

rather different sort of author in another genre plainly expressed this idealization of the city as divine sanctuary; Savonarola thought that a more thoroughly Christian city, with "a government like that of heaven," would make it a paradise on earth, "more heavenly than earthly," and its children more like angels.[26] Appearance was not his primary concern, but he reflects a belief, apparently shared by enough people to back his regime, that the visible city could mimic the heavenly template. He perhaps took that sentiment to further extremes than most, but it was not an unfamiliar one.

Monks, priests, scholastic theologians, and other instructors who taught community leaders, whether directly or in shaping the general *mentalité* in which almost all formal instruction took place, were immersed in this composite picture of the ideal city and surely imparted that vision to their students, at least into the quattrocento. These biblical images of the heavenly city, even when blended with non-Christian models, were understood to be templates for earthly life—unreachable in actual practice, perhaps, but nevertheless a God-given ideal. Just as the temple on earth (and by implication the church) was seen as a

shadow of the heavenly sanctuary, the city on earth came to be seen by many as a shadow of the heavenly city.[27] That concept provided a solid foundation for policies, statutes, and planning that might somehow, even if only in a small degree, move the city closer to its Edenic or eschatological ideal. If a city's celebrations could be seen as a sign of its paradisiacal qualities, and if its processions could be seen as an emulation of heaven's values—at least one observer of a Florentine festival saw a mirroring of angelic hierarchies in seating and processional arrangements—it is not farfetched to consider that its policies were meant to reflect such values too.[28] Its environment might become something of a foretaste of paradise.

The Ideal in Practice

The 1264 statutes of Vicenza begin with an oath that outlines God's rule over angelic choirs, the eight cosmic spheres, earth's climatic zones, and his creation of animals. "It celebrates God's creation of humanity, which shares existence with stones, life with plants, sensation with beasts, and understanding with angels"—a thoroughly integrated creation in which "the authority of the popular commune came from heaven, and the commune lived in communion with it."[29] No enmity between humanity and the natural world is evident in these statements, or ideally in the laws that follow. To the contrary, all of heaven and earth converge in a good creation.

Vicenza's statutes drew an explicit theological connection between heavenly order and laws pertaining to urban and rural environments; others hinted at one. Several studies on the environmental concerns and policies of late medieval northern Italian cities have demonstrated legislative and popular efforts to sanitize the urban environment and, as these city-states controlled significant lands beyond their walls, manage the natural resources surrounding it. The image of the city and the experiences of its residents were a frequent source of contention, and not because of a binary distinction between "quality of life for citizens" or "environmental protection" in "urban environmental management" efforts.[30] The reasons were more nuanced than that and included, in addition to the above, a desire for honor and prestige on earth and a belief in the divine image for a city.

Laws pertaining to tanners and wool workers abounded because of the potent compounds they used and smells their work produced. In the late thirteenth century, Bassano limited leatherworkers to certain areas of the city and forbade cloth guilds from washing wool and soaking flax in town waterways, the latter prohibition of which Verona also enacted.[31] Ferrara and other cities placed tanners outside urban concentrations and regulated flax workers and cloth makers for the substances they used.[32] Inhabitants of Siena petitioned the government to prevent leatherworkers from using the city's fountain and hanging their skins in open air, resulting in a back-and-forth struggle between the guild and inhabitants that eventually went the way of environmental concerns over business.[33]

Butchers, too, were considered threats to healthy air and water; Ferrara regulated their workplaces, conditions, and waste production, and Bergamo prohibited them from doing their work along roads or in public places because their *putredo* and *abominatio*—terms that not only reflected strong repulsion but also hint at biblical language regarding sin and filth—should not contaminate heavily traveled areas.[34]

Much of the concern surrounding these industries was related to air quality, specifically the stench that corrupts air and could potentially bring pestilence—i.e., miasma theory, a belief in Hippocratic and Galenic medicine in which dangerous contagions were thought to be present in foul odors.[35] Bergamo, for example, instructed residents in how to burn dung properly to protect the communal air, and Pistoia prohibited some artisans from working within the walls surrounding the city for the same reason.[36] The waters were equally a concern, for obvious reasons; upstream waste was patently offensive and understood to be dangerous. As mentioned, Bassano and Verona regulated certain guilds' use of town waterways; Bassano forbade waste in the waters unless far enough downstream; Spoleto required residents in 1296 to enclose private drains and latrines for several meters from their homes in order to hide the filth; and Pirano regulated fisheries and forbade waste in communal waters.[37] And general regulations regarding the disposal of waste in the streets, squares, gutters, or other places of public concern were widespread: Ravenna's 1327 statutes aimed at protecting passersby, and Castelfranco di Sopra, Montepulciano, Pirano, and Scarperia forbade pouring water out of windows and balconies before curfew.[38] Figline and Dronero imposed severe fines for improper treatment of waste and violations of general cleanliness in the 1400s.[39] Some penitents were encouraged to invest in drains, fountains, and refuse carts as penance for their bad behavior—as if actions of physical cleanliness would compensate for their earlier actions of moral filth.[40] The goal in all of these statutes and policies was not only to keep streets and squares clean to protect health but also to beautify the city and make it somewhat closer to the ideals so often expressed in urban encomia.

Regulations not only aimed at limiting the effects of waste and cleaning up offensive compounds and smells. They also aimed at preserving resources and protecting forests and pastures from erosion, depletion, and flooding.[41] Roadways (for food supply) and waterways (for water supply, fish supply, and flooding and erosion) were particularly protected.[42] Many of these efforts were motivated by financial concerns, and they do not reflect environmental awareness with any modern understanding of sustainability or preservation. But they do demonstrate awareness of limited supply and at least some long-term effects.

Rationales behind these regulations were rarely stated—the nature of statutes inhibits extended prose—but enough hints are included to suggest a connection between policy and worldview. Use of the terms *putredo* and *abominatio*, for example, included in Bergamo's statutes mentioned above, support the assertion that filth and dung were not considered merely unhealthy or even that they were often used symbols of sin and corruption, but that they were actually the embodiment of sin and corruption—"sin made material."[43] All

cultures consider filth to be undesirable; medieval Christian theology cast it as the antithesis of the divine.[44] This association explains the phenomenon of fines for improper waste disposal increasing nearer a cathedral.[45] The whole city might be metaphorically tied to the new Jerusalem, but the "temple" at its heart was most sacred and therefore most protected from pollution.

      In a fascinating study on Brescia, Robert Russell identifies a similar attitude toward ruins. At a time when new city walls were being built in the shape of a square with three gates on each side—features clearly mimicking the shape and distribution of gates in the heavenly Jerusalem—a 1251 statute prohibited the tearing down of houses in order to keep the city from being disfigured by ruins.[46] When that statute was renewed six decades later, a revealing explanation was added: "since it is said that cities have been made in the likeness of Paradise."[47] In 1339, the gates in the walls surrounding Florence actually numbered fifteen, but the city statutes of that year counted them as the sacred number of twelve, making them officially equal to those of the heavenly Jerusalem.[48] A statute from Imola in 1334 adhered to these numbers too—twelve chapels with three in each quarter, a symmetry hardly worth pointing out unless its symbolism was considered important.[49] If power was indeed derived from God, and if "all political activity [was] in some profound sense a religious concern, subject to an eternal order of values," it is understandable that city leaders would have brought that mentality into urban planning and legislative procedures.[50] The order and cleanliness of a city and the preservation of its resources could serve as affirmations of its divine purpose.

A Subtle Legacy

The legacy of this vision is mixed. On the surface, there seems to be little direct connection between this expression of environmental awareness and responses to industrialism that emerged in the early nineteenth century. It would be easy to interpret this late medieval phenomenon as just that—an isolated trend specific to a particular region and period, in which the focus was entirely local and never global (or even regional). But other cities in Christian Europe—all of which shared the religious and philosophical inheritance that associated earthly cities with the city of God—did adopt some of these northern Italian approaches (sometimes consciously, sometimes as independently developing trends) and adapted them to their own environmental concerns. Some, like Frankfurt in 1481 in response to pigs wandering the streets, did so for reasons of honor and respectability.[51] Others, including city governments in England and Scandinavia, depended on creative social strategies to develop functional sanitation systems for public health.[52] Many, like London's beadles in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, associated dirt and disease with sinful causes and therefore policed the morality of their communities.[53] For a variety of reasons, including a Christian worldview, "premodern magistrates were far from indifferent to questions of

waste management."[54] Whether many shared northern Italy's vision of earthly cities lining up with heaven's model remains a subject for further research.

Much of this mentality was integral in shaping New World colonies.[55] Unbridled exploitation of resources certainly took place, especially in the colonies—contradictions between ideals and reality were transplanted there too—and city leaders in both worlds continued to wrestle with the challenge of unclean air and water. But the idea of recreating a heavenly sort of city from the ground up captured European imaginations. This theoretical foundation for envisioning old or new cities as potential reflections of another realm remained strong.

There are hints of this continuing legacy in various Catholic and Protestant streams of thought, which all flow from the same intellectual sources. The biblical, Augustinian, and scholastic imagery of heaven (or paradise or the city of God) that manifested at times in northern Italian cities significantly influenced utopian thinkers, for example, who picked up on these visionary themes but often stripped their works of overtly religious language. Though their ideals derived from ancient sources, their works (and those influenced by them) employed a rather different vocabulary.[56] In addition, post-Enlightenment naturalists and romantic writers consciously utilized religious motifs—specifically those related to ascetic monks and wilderness landscapes—that can be traced back to early Christian monasticism and were widely depicted in Renaissance art.[57] Visions of the ideal city may have evolved over time, but the art of envisioning has a long history with many continuing motifs.

Whether these northern Italian cities served as laboratories for incorporating an otherworldly mentality into municipal law or other cities of Europe and the Americas simply drew from the same conceptual well as the rest of Christian Europe may be difficult to determine. Some assert the former: that "the importance of their efforts led to the transmission of legal knowledge, concepts, and techniques across the face of Europe, through England, and over to the New World" and became a "cornerstone of the modern environmental movement."[58] Similarly difficult to discern is any direct line from these cases to the thought of certain Protestant groups that influenced proto-environmentalists of the early nineteenth century, or from the scholastic brand of natural theology to later versions of it. But the religious impulses that cultivated a concern for the urban and natural environment should serve as a counterweight to claims that environmental destruction is inherent in the Christian worldview. At times, in the government of cities, nature has been seen as a gift to steward and the urban abode as an image of sacred design.

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NOTES

1   Lynn T. White, "The Historical Roots of our Ecological Crisis," *Science* 155, no. 3767 (March 10, 1967), 1203–1207.

2   Richard C. Hoffman, *An Environmental History of Medieval Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 91.

3   Burckhardt asserted that the Italians were "the first among modern peoples by whom the outward world was seen and felt as something beautiful," at least within his European sphere of inquiry; Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, tr. S. G. C. Middlemore (London: Penguin, 1990), 192.

4   Richard Trexler, *Public Life in Renaissance Florence* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 47; Alexander Lee, *The Ugly Renaissance: Sex, Greed, Violence and Depravity in an Age of Beauty* (New York: Anchor Books, 2015), 4.

5   Burckhardt, *Civilization of the Renaissance*, 238; Douglas Biow, *The Culture of Cleanliness in Renaissance Italy* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2006); Carole Rawcliffe and Claire Weeda, "Introduction," *Policing the Urban Environment in Premodern Europe*, eds. Carole Rawcliffe and Claire Weeda (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2019), 13.

6   Paul M. Hohenberg and Lynn Hollen Lees, *The Making of Urban Europe 1000–1994* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 19; Lee, *The Ugly Renaissance*, 39.

7   Augustine Thompson, *Cities of God: The Religion of the Italian Communes 1125–1325* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005).

8   Giacomino da Verona, "*De Ierusalem celeste*," *Poeti del Duecento*, ed. Gianfranco Contini (Milan and Naples: Riccardo Ricciardi Editore, 1960), 626–637.

9   Lauro Martines, *Power and Imagination: City-States in Renaissance Italy* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), 114.

10   Apoc. 21.27, for example, depicts a city with "nothing unclean," no falsehood, and of course only the redeemed within.

11   Ronald Edward Zupko and Robert Anthony Laures, *Straws in the Wind: Medieval Urban Environmental Law—the Case of Northern Italy* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996), 42; Claire Weeda, "Cleanliness, Civility, and the City in Medieval Ideals and Scripts," *Policing the Urban Environment*, 39–68.

12   Apoc. 21:27. Pastoral and natural images in medieval literature were frequently drawn from prophetic passages like Is. 11:6–9; 65:17–25.

13   Ronald E. Pepin, "Heaven in Bernard of Cluny's *De contemptu mundi*," *Imagining Heaven in the Middle Ages: A Book of Essays*, eds. Jan Swango Emerson and Hugh Feiss (New York: Garland Publishing, 2000), 106.

14   David Herlihy categorized these negative responses to nature as eschatological and adversarial, and Hoffman adds a third perception of nature as a sign, a late medieval utilitarian view of the world as constituting symbols in need of interpretation. Hoffman, *Environmental History*, 94–101.

15   Robert D. Russell, "'A Similitude of Paradise': The City as Image of the City," *The Iconography of Heaven*, ed. Clifford Davidson (Kalamazoo: Western Michigan University, 1994), 149.

16   *Summa Theologica* 1.65.2; *De regno*, book 2, ch. III, V; Zupko and Laures, *Straws in the Wind*, 31–32.

17   Stijn Bossuyt, "The Liturgical Use of Space in Thirteenth-Century Flanders," *Defining the Holy: Sacred Space in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, eds. Andrew Spicer and Sarah Hamilton (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2005), 194.

18 Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 245.

19 Robert Anthony Laures, "Heavenly Visions, Earthly Realities: An Attempt to Replicate the Heavenly City through Municipal Legislation," in Emerson and Feiss, 205.

20 Zupko and Laures, *Straws in the Wind*, 40.

21 Russell, "A Similitude of Paradise," 150.

22 For example, see the Workshop of Paolo Veronese, *St. Jerome in the Wilderness*, c. 1575–1585; Moretto da Brescia, *Christ in the Wilderness*, c. 1515–1520.

23 Weeda, "Cleanliness, Civility, and the City," 39.

24 Leonardo Bruni, "Panegyric to the City of Florence," *Florentine Political Writings from Petrarch to Machiavelli*, eds. Mark Jurdjevic, Natasha Piano, and John P. McCormick (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019) 99–100.

25 Weeda, "Cleanliness, Civility, and the City," 39–40.

26 Girolamo Savonarola, "Treatise on the Constitution and Government of the City of Florence," in Jurdjevic et al., 179–180.

27 Chiara Frugoni, *A Distant City: Images of Urban Experience in the Medieval World*, trans. William McCuaig (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 27. Heb. 8.5, 9.23, and 10.1 established this concept of religious forms on earth serving as shadows of heavenly realities, which could then be applied not only to sacred spaces but also to human hierarchies and urban planning.

28 Giovanni Cambi, *Istorie di Giovanni ambi, Cittadino Fiorentino*, in *Delizie*, XX, quoted in Trexler, *Public Life in Renaissance Florence*, 216, 239.

29 Thompson, *Cities of God*, 137.

30 Hoffman, *Environmental History*, 231.

31 Zupko and Laures, *Straws in the Wind*, 36–38.

32 Laures, "Heavenly Visions, Earthly Realities," 193–194.

33 William H. Bowsky, *A Medieval Italian Commune: Siena Under the Nine, 1287–1355* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 214–216.

34 Zupko and Laures, *Straws in the Wind*, 182, 100. The statute from Bergamo is from 1727 but rooted in medieval tradition.

35 G. Geltner, "Urban Viarii and the Prosecution of Public Health Offenders in Late Medieval Italy," in Rawcliffe and Weeda, *Policing the Urban Environment*, 100–101.

36 Geltner, "Urban Viarii," 100–101.

37 Zupko and Laures, *Straws in the Wind*, 36–38; Geltner, "Urban Viarii," 99–100.

38 Geltner, "Urban Viarii," 100.

39 Geltner, "Urban Viarii," 101.

40 Rawcliffe and Weeda, *Policing the Urban Environment*, 23; Martha Bayless, *Sin and Filth in Medieval Culture: The Devil in the Latrine* (New York and London: Routledge, 2012), xviii.

41 Bowsky, *A Medieval Italian Commune*, 194–195.

42 Zupko and Laures, *Straws in the Wind*, 53–56, 64–70, 82–83.

43 Bayless, *Sin and Filth in Medieval Culture*, xviii.

44 Peter Abelard, *Theologica 'Summi Boni'*, in *Petri Abaelardi Opera Theologica*, eds. E. M. Buytaert and C. J. Mews, CCCM 13 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1987), III, ch. 79, lines 1054–57, 191, quoted in Bayless, *Sin and Filth in Medieval Culture*, 7.

45 Bowsky, *A Medieval Italian Commune*, 295.

46 Russell, "A Similitude of Paradise," 152–157. Apoc. 21.12–16.

47 Russell, "A Similitude of Paradise," 157.

48 Frugoni, *A Distant City*, 27.

49 Ibid.

50 Martines, *Power and Imagination*, 124.

51 Rawcliffe and Weeda, *Policing the Urban Environment*, 27.

52 Dolly Jørgensen, "Cooperative Sanitation: Managing Streets and Gutters in Late Medieval England and Scandinavia," *Technology and Culture* 49, no. 3 (July 2008), 547–567.

53 Rawcliffe and Weeda, *Policing the Urban Environment*, 24.

54 Rawcliffe and Weeda, *Policing the Urban Environment*, 25.

55 Zupko and Laures, *Straws in the Wind*, 5; Rawcliffe and Weeda, *Policing the Urban Environment*, 17–18.

56 Much of Tommaso Campanella's *City of the Sun*, for example, is derived from Christian theology and Hermetic thought, yet the fictional city's residents knew nothing of Christian tradition and had embraced a natural theology rich in themes of health and humanity's place in the natural world. Filarete's *Sforzinda* demonstrates strong environmental concerns in its construction of waterworks, canals, drainage systems, and harbor while valuing divine proportions derived from a Christian worldview. Tessa Morrison, *Unbuilt Utopian Cities 1460–1900: Reconstructing their Architecture and Political Philosophy* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2015), 14, 47–53; Frank E. Manuel and Fritzie P. Manuel, *Utopian Thought in the Western World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), 175.

57 Judith Adler, "Cultivating Wilderness: Environmentalism and Legacies of Early Christian Asceticism," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 48, no. 1 (Jan. 2006): 8–9.

58 Zupko and Laures, 5.