

Urban Rituals

A Study of Religious and Secular Rituals
as an Informer of the Built Environment

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"When something worth seeing is taking place on level ground and everybody crowds forward to look, those in the rear find various ways of raising themselves to see over the heads of those in front: some stand on benches, some roll up barrels, some bring carts on which they lay planks crosswise, some occupy a neighbouring hill..."

"To satisfy this universal need is the architect's task. By his art he creates as plain a crater as possible and the public itself supplies its decoration. Crowded together, its members are astonished at themselves. They are accustomed at other times to seeing each other running hither and thither in confusion, bustling about without order or discipline. Now this many-headed, many-minded, fickle, blundering monster suddenly sees itself united as one noble assembly, welded into one mass, a single body animated by a single spirit".

Johan Wolfgang von Goethe, *Italian Journey*, 1786

Abstract

This dissertation comprises a theoretical exploration and its application to a case study design. It identifies with the seldom-overlooked approach to urban design based on a close examination of existing context. This enables design interventions that are place specific and capable of interpretation by the people who *use* them. The investigation of the morphology of the *use* and its patterns of *use* in light of the society's *ritualized use of space* are believed to be essential in informing urban design for an African context.

With this in mind, therefore, the design process must entail not only accommodating the urban dynamics but also understanding the broad context that examines the actual living conditions based on cultural and traditional imperatives valued as enrichments of the process. Cognizance of patterns of individual and public *rituals*, for instance, is highly valued to assist in dealing with the problems of *permanence* and *change*.

As opposed to contemporary urban planning and design practice in Africa, which is often based on blind application of Western experience (Uytenbogaardt and Dewar 1991), the approach in this discourse contends that for developing cities to function efficiently, urban design must address both the ritual and functional needs of the society in question.

It is not good enough to make rhetorical statements about the importance of a culture-sensitive approach to urban design in an (economically) "developing" society unless one genuinely tries to understand its seemingly hidden inner workings.

The theoretical discussion particularly explores the spatial significance of *urban ritualism* and collective behavior as a conceptual prerequisite. A conceptual framework then identifies principles that have applicability for analysis and design.

The central area of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia is selected as the site of the case study where adopted and derived design principles are tested and evaluated in light of suitability and, possibly, their wider application.



Declaration

I declare that this dissertation is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Urban Design in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

If we look at modern European architectural history, we notice that the concept of 'use' plays a highly specific role in the design process. Ever since cities began to grow unrestrainedly in the Nineteenth Century and attempts were undertaken to control or plan urban development, architects have been facing a fundamentally new task. As soon as mass housing takes a central position in modern town planning and architecture, and architects therefore start planning and designing for the anonymous resident, the formulation of a general program of functional requirements becomes the inevitable starting point for the design process. "Efficient" design would thus meet these requirements as closely as possible. The dwelling, for instance, was presented as a machine that permitted the execution of routine operations.

With the advent of the Modern Movement, this program took on an international character; moreover its scale increased to encompass the district and even the city as a whole. The CIAM congresses resulted in a document setting out the program for the Twentieth Century City in terms of housing, work, recreation, and transportation in a manner which is "sanitized" and marginal of Ritual. The establishment of residential and urban programs streamlined urban life and the use of architecture and public space, and reduced these to a common

denominator. In effect, the modern city became a projection of abstract schemes on the ground that erased existing details and differences.

During the post-war reconstruction period, functionalism received criticism from various quarters. The mental and emotional aspects of 'use' were introduced into the functionalist framework as a result of this criticism supported by disciplines such as Environmental Psychology. A major exponent of this process was the concept of the neighborhood unit, which combined the notion of a social unit with a spatial identity. Society could then be built up by means of the spatial design of the district.

The ideas of the international TEAM X and the Dutch Forum further accentuated the criticism leveled at the functionalist program and its results. Architecture was assigned the role of an ideological authority capable of conveying new cultural values and architects are given the part of 'imaginists' of a human society. (Broadbent, 1990)

Although the impact of the purely functionalist interpretation of 'use' – based on the idea that a program of requirements coincides both with 'use' and design – had diminished through the course of time, no powerful frame of reference has arisen to replace it. Belief in the 'form follows function' doctrine, the criticisms of Team X and Forum, the 'postmodern' debate on the formal autonomy of architecture are in fact three chapters of the same story, in which space and 'use' represent quantities directly reducible to one another through the program. The legacy of functionalist thinking still determines the present, as is evident



from the rapid succession of ideas characterized by the fact that they offer an overall synthesis. An excess of 'theories' and 'philosophies' have been intermingled by designers on their own authority – still for the purpose of improving design practice. Using these ideas they persist in trying to capture heterogeneous reality in a single conceptual framework or in one universally valid concept. The 'compact city', the 'chaotic city' etc are emerging metaphors, and terms like 'individualization', 'flexibility' [and 'adaptability']* have acquired an almost magical meaning, as evidenced by the credence attached to them (De Mare and Voss 1993:6).

The aim of this discourse is neither to give yet another generalization of 'urban use' nor to arrive at another all embracing worldview. On the contrary, this study attempts to reveal that sweeping statements about the use of urban space are of little or no significance. The aim is to show in which way and by which means notions and elements of the use of urban space might be analyzed and given their due.

Against this background, the relevance of urban rituals in informing contemporary urban design becomes evident as it provides an entry for 'recognizing spatial patterns of action dictated and governed by registers other than the spatial order of the urban ensemble' (Ibid:22). Taking ritual spaces and urban rituals as a starting point offers insights into the far-reaching complexity of the interplay between the use of urban space and the spatial arrangement of the city.

* This refers to attitudes by designers that whatever is provided in physical, spatial terms, users will have some means to 'adapt' to the new situations.

The central theme discussed in this discourse will then, as a necessity, focus on the behavioral and cultural patterns in which public space is used. Special attention is given to formalized use as it is manifested in religious and secular rituals performed in the urban ensemble.

Applicability to the Case Study Area: Basic Premises

1. The Problem: Urban Dilemma

As in most other parts of the Developing World, current economic changes taking place in Ethiopia have posed a challenge to urban designers and planners. On the one hand there is the need to encouraging foreign and local investment (which usually takes the form of large-scale projects), and, on the other, of dealing with the negative effects of the same on the social and spatial arrangement of the city.

Studies of Urban Sociology in central Addis Ababa (Zewde, 1986; Pankhurst, 1962) reveal the existence of several closely-knit enclaves in traditional neighborhoods called *Sefer*s, which are historically related with the foundation and early development of the city. Further observations of social behavioral patterns demonstrate that the 'use' of urban spaces in the 'city' is of a highly ritualistic nature.

Many parts of central Addis Ababa (which include public ritual spaces and the ritual routes thereof) are widely conceived by policy makers as slums that are scheduled for demolitions "to make way" for projects under the name of "Urban Renewal" – repeating similar mistakes of the

1950s-1960s schemes of the same name in the US and Latin America. The negative effects include, among others:

- The inevitable break-up of social, economic and cultural ties in the *Sefers*, including their long-standing and emerging public rituals;
- The resulting incoherence in urban form, the main problem of which is the disruption of the inherent ritual use of spaces (i.e. the 'natural' relationship between 'use' and 'city');
- New large-scale urban interventions focus largely on functional requirements and fail to recognize the importance of Rituals in the city. This often results in the non-use and lack of vitality of the urban spaces they provide (if any), costing the economy extremely dearly.
- The increased separation of 'home' from 'work' as victims are resettled on the outskirts of the city.*

Besides the problems caused by new, insensitive urban developments, other inherent problems of 'permanence and change' can also be identified in established areas.

- Lack of spatial order in movement systems has resulted in conflicts between the interests of users of different modes of movement and different purposes of movement (e.g., Pedestrians and vehicle users; Ritual processions and other mundane activities).

* This not only affects the employed most of whom live on meagre incomes, but also families dependent on the 'informal' sector of the economy.

- Existing ritual spaces are being taken as the first option by planners to accommodate pressures of housing as a result of rapid urbanization,
- Existence and/or proper functioning of city-scale urban ritual spaces being threatened by new large-scale projects in and around.

The total urban problem as a result of the conceptual dilemma and confusion is enormous. There is not even a clear policy to direct meaningful urban design in Addis Ababa. Dewar and Uytendogaardt in a memorandum to the Urban Foundation (in Lloyd, 1989:ix) included this reassuring statement:

In the very scale of the crisis [in Third World cities], a great possibility exists to ...enhance their ability to meet the demands being made upon them.... The real challenge is to identify a new set of possibilities – finding forms and processes which are appropriate to a place and enhance the uniqueness of that place.

It is here believed that an understanding of the interplay of religious and secular rituals in Addis Ababa offers a great opportunity for reorganizing its spatial elements and achieve a more satisfying environment – in both physical and spiritual terms.



2. *The Proposal: Urban Design Sympathetic to Urban Ritualism*

Basing Urban Design on 'Rituals' (on a context typical of cities with poor infrastructure and housing) is neither a search for 'historicism' nor a desire to impose the 'niceties' of urban design. In addition to meeting spiritual needs in developing cities, it is also believed to serve a practical purpose of economically ordering space, as opposed to futile efforts to make the Third World cities resemble those of the first.

It will be contended that for the city to efficiently meet the functional, spiritual, psychological and (even) economic needs of its citizens it is of great importance to design the city using *ritual* as the conceptual and practical basis.

In a word, idea generation for urban design must derive both from the logic of urban areas and the specifics of context.

The objectives of this dissertation will, therefore, be:

- To find a balance that should exist between two ways of structuring urban space: that applied by planning authorities, which involves 'architectural signals' (DeMare and Voss, 1993), and that applied by the community which has to do with signals of a ritual nature.
- To explore present urban religious and secular rituals as an essential starting point to offer insights into the far-reaching complexity of the interplay between the *use* of urban space and the spatial arrangement of the *city*.

- To engage in a physical design exercise that makes use of the above theoretical investigation on a specific area in Addis Ababa and propose a general Urban Design Framework.

It might, then, be possible to design with the aim of reintroducing into the organization of space, the *values* of relationships between individuals, and between each individual and the environment, based on the concept of a common identity.

In this way Urban Design can represent itself as a method of organization which places man and his surroundings at the crux of the problem.



Chapter 2

Ritual as a Fundamental Element of Society

2.1 Introduction

The *mechanism* whereby cities are made is the purposeful ordering of its component systems: Technology, Economics, Sociopolitical systems, and beliefs. The *structure* of society described by Richard Sennet (1976), as being made up of Authority, Fraternity, Solitude, and Ritual is its culture—the idea that it holds of itself.

Fraternity and Solitude are the two complementary states of social life ranging from the privacy of the individual to that of the family, community, and society as a whole. The fabric of mores, custom, play, dress and behavioral codes, are the rituals which intervene between solitude and fraternity — the *cultural language of behavior*.

Whereas expression of ritual in myth, song, dance, or mourning is emotionally relieving and healthy, suppression is tantamount to the destruction of the spirit of man. It also represents suppression of individuality and related human qualities of public expression through communal joy, sadness, or cultural reiteration. (Smith in Lloyd, 1988)

Sociologists such as Roszak, in the context of the industrial city, have attacked the propensity for city 'administration' to sterilize society through technocratic and bureaucratic restriction. Roszak values those primitive societies particularly which have egalitarian and domestic social systems, which are (normally), free of domination and have a harmonious relationship with nature. The city is seen to represent rationalization and secularization, creating a break with the primitive rhythms of life, nature, communal intimacy and the mysterious and sacred aspects of existence. Roszak's urban man suffers principally from cosmic alienation, a condition of 'spiritual disconnectedness'; he is a 'transcendent religious being' whose inner self cannot be healed within the world of time and matter. Roszak says that a 'continual natural dialogue', a sequence of 'creative adjustments is constantly taking place between the individual, the social community and the natural habitat', and it is only when the seamless web of sociability is disrupted that they become isolated from the ecological whole. The disruption is wholly due to urban man's obsession with control, planning of the physical world, technocracy and 'expert' knowledge and elitism, in which progress is measured in rendering the natural habitat increasingly predictable, controllable and hence artificial. (Ibid. 1988)

Like the cultural anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss, Roszak believes that no society...not even the most secularized technocracy can do without symbolism, magic, mystery and ritual...that these are the very 'ties that bind society together'. Ritual is essentially the byproduct of spontaneous mutual participation, engendering imaginative thinking, memory, explanation, reiteration of meaning and order and spiritual

renewal. *The language of poetry, art and myth have far greater powers of the 'virtuousness' of amelioration over stress in city life, than all the material comforts and planned avoidance of disorder or unpredictability.* (Ibid. 1988)

Roszac also believes in the need to extend human sentient (cognitive) experience beyond only the seen world, so that auditory and olfactory experience make people more aware of themselves as organic beings, in touch with the earth, and thereby developing a greater metaphysical awareness. He sees in the ecological approach to planning a 'holistic, receptive, trustful, largely non-tampering process – a search for wholes – natural and social harmonies – that are greater than the sum of their parts' within which humans are in *scale, size, and pace*.

2.2 Sitte and Le Corbusier on Ritual

The Enlightenment attitude toward nature could be described as aesthetic and moral, but in their determination to make the city the ultimate and perfect environment for civilized man, they firstly looked to nature and *its* laws as a source of knowledge, leading to truth. The strategy *was to accommodate 'nature' in the city by analogy* – at the same time they 'aspired to a philosophy of ecumenical toleration; of *secularizing the ritualistic aspect of the Polis*'. The concept was of carefully constructed appearances of natural phenomena, while denying nature itself, diversity, variety, chance and organic growth: 'the mediaeval city was to become the prototype 'ex analogia naturalis' (Porphyries 1982 in Lloyd 1988:23).

Camillo Sitte developed these ideas of 'socio aesthetic naturalism' in great detail, based on studies of German mediaeval cities, and on the writings of Vitruvius and Alberti. He discovered a number of compositional arrangements of fundamental urban spatial units – public square, street, private court, and city block, and a 'determination to fracture the city into a series of self ordered spatial tableaux' (ibid. 23); so that expressed in three dimensional form, it becomes a total work of art. The basis of Sitte's philosophy was however a belief in the truth of the past, mystical association with "predecessors", and a need to create city space which expressed this.

Le Corbusier, on the other hand, in '*The City of Tomorrow*' had no illusions about the 'absurdity' of Sitte's philosophy in relation to the reality of the 20th Century industrial city, and the "surgery" which he recognized was necessary to make it livable within its own terms and context. However Le Corbusier's particular "romanticism" offered an idealistic and impossible vision of work, home and recreation in a clean and purified world which would only superficially ritualize sport and recreation as daily routine. This was a utopian vision devoid of ritual, mysticism, cultural diversity, or environmental complexity.

Both Sitte and Le Corbusier offered radical planning solutions to city design but neither related the city to Society, other than in limited perspectives. What is missing in both cases is the recognition of ritual as a fundamental element of urban society.

The next two sections will attempt at convincing the contemporary urban designer the significance of ritual and the city's inherent 'idea' in informing his/her design process.

2.3 Ritual in Informing City Design Process in Contemporary Society

It should be made clear that the desire to incorporate ritual in the city design process does not emanate from some kind of nostalgia of the past which resists change in all its forms. It is rather argued that the basis of urban design should not be the study of form in isolation, but 'a thorough understanding of ritual patterns on the one hand and the open-ended basis of technology on the other; [urban] form must emerge as the response of society's available techniques to its ritual needs with the [urban designer] as catalyst.' (Quantrill, 1974: 107)

"After the cure of mythological detoxification brought about by the Modern Movement, to speak of ritual [in architecture and urban design] borders on bold provocation, dubious esotericism or half-baked reaction" (Montes, 1983: 22).

Nevertheless urban designers must assume these risks "advisedly", without any particular pretense, and lay claim to the ritual element in architecture and urban design for the same reason that we can not afford to neglect new developments of social life representing space.

"Since ritual is nothing other than the sublimation of use, everything that calls for use - product or service - is automatically a potential subject for ritual. ... I would define rite as the preferential use of a space which is typologically constituted". (Montes, 1983: 22)

When considering rituals and ritual spaces of a city we almost automatically refer to fixed rituals and fixed spaces, i.e. rituals and spaces that remain throughout the city's history as constituent part of its historical image - before they disappear under the assault of a modern ideology or some social development. But over the course of time, ritual spaces can play a much more active, evolving and dynamic role in constituting a city's identity. "There is an interaction between the space, rituals, and historical identity of the city." (Frijhoff, 1993:93)

Ritual is then to be understood as a basic kind of collective or even individual 'recognizable, repeated action' (Rykwert, 1976) in a given spatial frame: it provides the feeling of being tied to eternal order and bliss as well as joy. Ritual is also to be seen as a kind of action ever developing into different forms. (In a sense, political demonstrations of today might be considered as 'processions').

Therefore, what is needed for urban planning and design today is the condition under which all forms of public/individual rituals - religious or secular - can be stimulated, activated, and sustained.

It is the aim of this discourse, and the subsequent design exercise, to see to it that provisions for the Rituals of a society be the primary elements

of a city, the first elements placed on the ground, within its topology, and that other physical components be arranged in deference to them. This is believed to create a truly humanist environment, a symbiosis of society, culture, urban form, nature, and mobility. Ritual in fact should define the '*capital web*' itself, so that its 'rules' mediate between the components of the city, the monument and the dwelling, between built and natural environments, between public and private, active and peaceful, and work and recreation (Lloyd,1988).

2.4 The City as an 'Idea' of Society

Rykwert (1976) thoroughly examines the notional structure of the ancient town, and how this is transmitted and understood by its citizens. He explores the anthropology of urban form i.e., its society, customs and habits, and the way that these inform their environment and sets out to prove that ancient towns were, above all, symbolic patterns, conceived in mythical and ritual terms, and that to seek a purely rational or pragmatic logic for them is futile. He sees the Roman town as a work of art, a symbolic pattern deliberately created and used by its inhabitants, its morphology and the structure of its spaces determined by beliefs and rituals. The principal institutions of the town, its walls and gates, its central shrines, and its public spaces, all formed part of the pattern. Providing the basis both for the generation and interpretation of the built environment, these rituals and myths fostered a sense of belonging in Roman citizens, placing them within a knowable world - and a 'reconcilable' universe.

Rykwert's analysis strongly holds that the city is not merely the rational solution to the problems of production, circulation and hygiene or the physical manifestation of market forces, but that it has to *embody* the aspirations of its citizens; that recognizable patterns and texture, public open space and conspicuous institutions can enrich the late 20th century city which has become occupied with the isolated architectural object, and market forces.

Furthermore, he contends that the lesson historical precedent offers is that the *idea of a city* must be strong enough to 'survive' the inevitable chaotic overlay of the urban experience, and that it must be of such a nature as to allow its citizens to read it through legible imagery.

Nevertheless, as has been discussed in the previous section, it is here believed that 'rituals' should not be seen in their ancient forms only - they do transform in correspondence with periodic changes in societal phenomena.

Chapter 3

Ritual, Culture, and Meaning

3.1 Introduction

The following discussion of *Culture* and *Meaning* in light of the science of Cultural Anthropology emanates from a belief that urban design should, in the wider sense, concern itself with human activity and its formal and spatial consequences and direct its efforts towards the possibilities and opportunities of maximizing positive human intercourse.

3.2 Culture

Culture is here used to describe those common values held by a group of individuals, which enable them to communicate within the group with a minimum of confusion. Their words and ideas interpreted in specific ways, by members of the group and their behavior reflects the meanings they assume. Consequently their *artifacts* [built structures included] also *reflect* these values. (Boden, 1989:84)

Goodall (1987: 107) describes culture as a "historically transmitted code of beliefs which supplements *instinctive* behavior in human beings, i.e., it

is a pattern of meanings, endlessly copied, persistently updated, [extended and displaced] through which people communicate and develop their knowledge about life and their attitude towards it."

Schneider (1976: 198) defines culture as a system of symbols and meanings that form important determinants of social action as a meaningful activity of human beings. "Culture places disparate parts of the social system together in a meaningful whole... it forms the unifying principles for the total normative system by providing a single set of symbols and meanings to which each differentiated part of that normative system is related".

The other function of culture, therefore, has to do with the establishment of *new* meanings and is termed *generative*.

"Social life is meaningful; new meanings are established with reference to old meanings and grow out of them and must be made congruent with them and in exchange, whenever and wherever it occurs, must be articulated with the existing system of meanings". (Schneider, 1976:205)

Hence continuity and coherence of meaning is attributed to the role culture plays within the system of social actions.



3.3 Meaning

In relation to the built environment, meaning refers to the ability of the environment to communicate messages to its users. For an environment to communicate effectively, meaning must be shared by the various users of that environment. And it has already been stated that shared meaning is a function of culture.

Rapoport (1990) explores environmental meaning through a study of the built environment as non-verbal communication. The environment is viewed as a stage set, with a variety of *cues*, that functions to reinforce and guide certain forms of culturally appropriate behavior. This approach relies on the assumption that, when people act in relation to objects or other people, they do so in terms of the meanings these have for them. Meanings derive from a process of social interaction and are modified through individual interpretative process. A cultural code governs the social interaction process whereby environmental cues acquire specific connotations, meanings become encoded, and behavior consequently tends to conform to predictable patterns over time. Thus Rapoport argues that the built environment acquires meaning primarily through the reactions it arouses in people. In turn, people react to environments in terms of the meanings the environments have for them.

Rapoport outlines his method of non-verbal communication in four steps as follows:

1. *Initial Observation*: The aim in this phase is to be as perceptive as possible in seeking significant differences on which to focus. He suggests a range of topics to be addressed – how is space divided up and used? What time cycles, whether periodic, ceremonial or otherwise, are there? How is communication organized, and meaning incorporated into spaces, freestanding elements, and/or enclosing buildings or structures? What entry rituals (“rites of passage”) are there, and what barrier, gradients, or transitions accompany them?
2. *Sharpened Observation*: i.e., extracting fixed features (walls, roofs, streets, vegetation...), semi-fixed features (screens, furniture...), and non-fixed features (static elements like people’s physiognomy, movement, clothing...) or cues by analysis and intuition.
3. *Developing hypothesis* explaining the meaning and role of cues.
4. *Investigating* each hypothesis systematically.
5. Finally, to add to the list, one needs to develop his/her own *position*.

The strength of Rapoport’s method is perhaps its simplicity. This applies to the nature of the paradigm, because the method does not depend on knowledge of complex, abstract and often unintelligible *theories*. Other advantages include suitability for cross-cultural work and the ability to be applied to building types and settlement reconstruction. (Boden, 1989:105)

3.4 Environmental Cognition and Behavior

What designers propose and clients build has significant influence on human behavior. To sharpen and focus that influence is a worthwhile enterprise for several reasons (Dober, 1974:4):

1. Documented insights can help avoid repetition and replication of earlier environmental disasters.
2. Identifying ways and means to use environmental research will inevitably enrich the design process.
3. Clarifying design intentions through the rigor and discipline of the social sciences means, at least, commanding more information than intuition alone permits.

Formally defined, *Environmental Cognition* refers to the awareness, images, information, impressions, and beliefs that individuals and groups have about the elemental, structural, functional, and symbolic aspects of real and imagined physical, social, cultural, economic, and political environments. It refers not only to one's image or impression of the *elements* but also to *events* (like street fairs, processions and other rituals), to *dynamic, functional and cyclic* happenings (like climate, the working of public and private transport systems, and the natural and social ecology of the area), to *patterns and conceptual similarities* (politics, economics, housing patterns, and street layouts of a city) and to the *sentiment, personal meaning, and collective symbolism* that people give to various parts of their environment (like an old childhood play area, the various homes in which one previously lived, etc). All these are aspects of persons'

conceptions of their environment, and all influence their subsequent behavior. (Dober, 1974: 5)

This field generally rests on twin assumptions that:

- i. what we know and believe about different environments affects our actions with respect to these environments;
- ii. we can therefore better understand our own and other people's actions, needs, and desires with respect to the environment and can better plan, design, and manage the environment for and with people if we know how they form an image of the world – what conceptions and beliefs that they hold about the environment, how they categorize and differentiate environments, what beliefs they have about how different physical and socio-cultural-political environments operate, and what sentiments and symbolism they invest in different aspects of the environment. (Moore and Golledge, 1976:xi)

Boulding, 1956 (in Moore and Golledge, 1976:4) discussed the subjective status of *image* and its role in behavior: "For any given organism or organization, there is no such thing as 'facts.' There are only messages filtered through a changeable value system.... Behavior depends on this image".

Commenting on the importance and ubiquity of environmental images, Kevin Lynch (1960) remarked that "a clear image enables one to move about freely and quickly.... But an ordered environment can do more than this; it may serve as a broad frame of reference, an organizer of

activity or belief or knowledge....[it] plays a social role as well. It can furnish the raw material for the symbols and collective memories of group communication....[and] gives its possessor an emotional sense of security”.

It is now evident that designing for behavior entails an understanding of the fundamental psychological processes and relate them to urban design in social and spatial terms.

3.5 Fundamental Processes of Human Behavior and the Role of Urban Design

3.5.1 Psychological Processes

Psychological processes play a functional role in enabling man to adjust to or achieve mastery over his environment. Three processes – *perception, cognition, and spatial behavior* – are particularly important in understanding man’s behavior in the environment. *Perception* is the process of obtaining or receiving input, *cognition* is the throughput function involving the processes of thinking, remembering, and feeling, and *spatial behavior* denotes the output manifested in an organism’s actions and responses. Other processes – motivation, affect, and development – modify the way in which we perceive, think about, and behave in the environment. Behavioral patterns are established through the unity of motives, thoughts, and actions. (Lang et al, 1974:83).

The social justification for understanding the environmental perception-cognition-behavior process and social interaction is put by Saarinen (in Boden, 1989). “Knowledge of people’s environmental perceptions and behavior is essential...[since] decisions to modify or change the environment are based not on the environment as it is, but rather on the environment as it is perceived and cognized by the decision maker.” People not only perceive and respond to/act on the environment, but they are simultaneously a part of it – as *people occupy or move through settings* they transform them physically and mentally.

Thus, while individual perceptions vary, they are inclined to be *refined* through comparison with reality into two sets of images – one shared and one specific to the perceiver. (Rapoport, 1977). The shared sets provide the basis for the *communal* action which has always been essential for man’s survival, dependent as he was on group action throughout history.

As a supportive theoretical base, this discourse also draws from the field of Environmental Psychology, with a focus on the Man - Environment approach, for its argument. Environmental psychology is taken to incorporate the study of the dynamic relationship between man and his environment with particular reference to his *perceptual, cognitive, memory, and behavioral* processes. (Ittelson et al, 1974)

Historical evidences that support the assumption that perceptual and cognitive processes influence man – environment relationships and hence urban development, also justify the relevance of this field.

The Greeks and Etruscans (Rykwert, 1976:86) both followed religious principles in the planning of their settlements; Roman writers described ritual, symbolic requirements before, and in a more rational fashion, than they did technical aspects, in their treatises on city building. Furthermore Rykwert argues that the Roman town grew from and around a system of custom and belief, to anchor one's views to a specific place. The home is seen as a model of the city in cultural and physical terms and that the orthogonal Roman town was an attempt to restate the structure of "house" at a larger scale.

Before the advent of the Judeo-Christian culture time was seen as cyclical, predictable and repetitive: the new outlook saw time as progressive, involving irreversible change. Biblical man was an outsider observing a hostile nature, a view which only eased up in late medieval era when increasing knowledge and confidence converted Western man's view of 'nature' into that of a rational, *manipulable* force. Similarly the development of the Romantic and Classical traditions in the late 18th and early 19th Centuries produced the reappearance of the Wilderness as a hostile, monstrous concept or as a source of equality and freedom, and punishment and hostility.

This, briefly, shows that Man's views of the world has affected his perception of reality, of changes over time, (and man's understanding of time) and his consequent actions, illustrating the role played by, and the importance of understanding the processes of perception-cognition-behavior, and its environmental need and manifestations, for a given cultural context.

3.5.2 General aims of Urban Design

Both Rapoport (1977) and Ittelson et al (1974) agree as to the aims of urban design and planning: "to reconcile professional decisions with (the existential experience of those whom they affect) so as to increase livability". Strategies in this regard would relate to:

- *Sociability and community*: the role of the physical environment in facilitating or inhibiting social and civic interaction; the importance of neighborhood and place in defining residential satisfaction.
- *Orientation and ease of movement*: the use of a city by its inhabitants based on its imageability.
- *Environmental enrichment*: the aesthetic and stimulus qualities that contribute to the satisfaction and pleasures including symbolic meanings.
- *Culture and recreation*: the city's function in providing intellectual stimulation, etc.
- *The decision process*: the urban resident's perception of the environmental decisions which affect his/her daily life.

The major problem in attempting to meet these goals for urban environments which is also central to this discourse (as discussed in Chapter 5: City and Use), however, is that people only consider the familiar when exploring solutions to urban issues: designers usually only think of the manifest (functional) use of spaces, and ignore their latent meaning (significance to occupants apart from in functional terms).

It will be the contention of this discourse that one of the most important ways of acting on the environment comprises endowing it with symbolic values sympathetic of the *behavioral patterns (rituals)* of its "users".

3.6 Conclusion

The meaning of the built environment and a fair understanding of the psychological processes at work provides a method for its users to see '*a culture in space*' (Rapoport, 1990) as a basis for design strategies which are contextually sensitive to both people and place.

Chapter 4

Urban Design as the Organization of Space, Time, Meaning and Communication

4.1 Introduction

If there is to be any collaboration between behavioral psychologists and urban designers in coming to an understanding of the effect of the designed environment on human behavior, then there must be some common understanding of meaning of the term “environment” and some agreement as to the nature of the psychological processes involved in the man-environment interaction.

The key attribute in any definition of “environment” is that “environments surround”. Man is considered to be both “; therefore, at the centre of his environment and an integral part of the environment an individual affects and is affected by his environment.” (Lang. et al, 1974:83)

Furthermore, Ittelson et al (1974) conceptualize the environment as an ecological system with seven components:

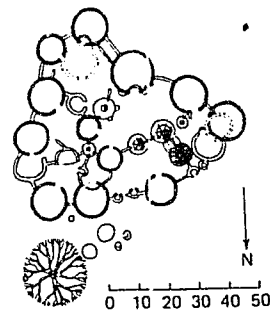
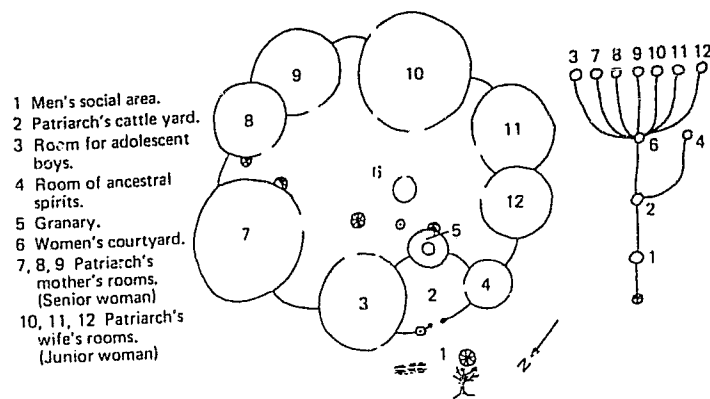
1. *Perceptual* – the ways in which individuals experience the world, which is a principal mechanism linking people and environment.

2. *Expressive* – which concerns the effect on people of shapes, colours, textures, smells, sounds and symbolic meanings.
3. The domain of *aesthetic values* of culture and the whole area of values.
4. *Adaptive* – the extent to which the environment helps or hinders activities.
5. *Integrative* – the kinds of social groupings which are facilitated or inhibited by the surroundings.
6. *Instrumental* – which refers to the tools and facilities provided by the environment.
7. The *general ecological interrelationships* of all these components.

Another formulation by Lawton, in Rapoport (1977), describes the environment as an ecological system having five components:

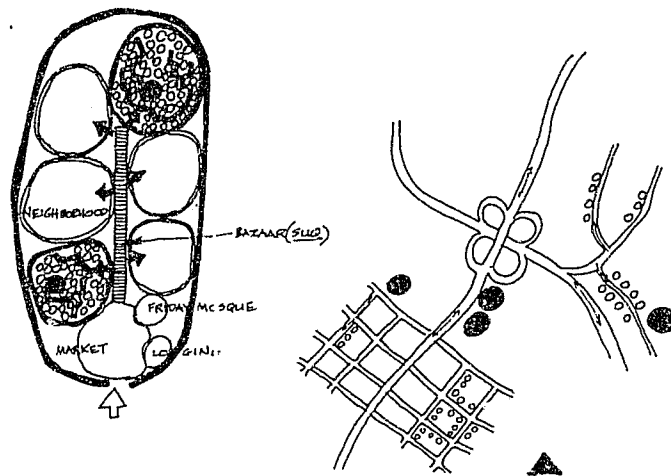
1. The *individual*.
2. The *physical environment*, including all natural features of geography, climate, and man-made features which limit and facilitate behavior, and the “resources” of the environment.
3. The *personal environment*, including individuals who are important sources of behavior control – family, friends, authority figures, peer-group members etc.
4. The *suprapersonal environment* which refers to the environmental characteristics resulting from the inhabitants’ modal personal characteristics due to grouping by age, class, ethnic origin, lifestyle or other specific characteristics.
5. The *social environment* consisting of social norms and institutions.





SOCIETIES AS
SPATIAL SYSTEMS:
Simple and complex
Talensi compounds.
(Source: Rapoport, 1977)

MOSLEM CITY: Controlled access, limited mobility. Accessible areas: Market, Suq, Friday Mosque, lodging (Source: Rapoport, 1977)



US city: General access, maximum possible mobility. Accessible areas: almost everything. (After Rapoport 1977)

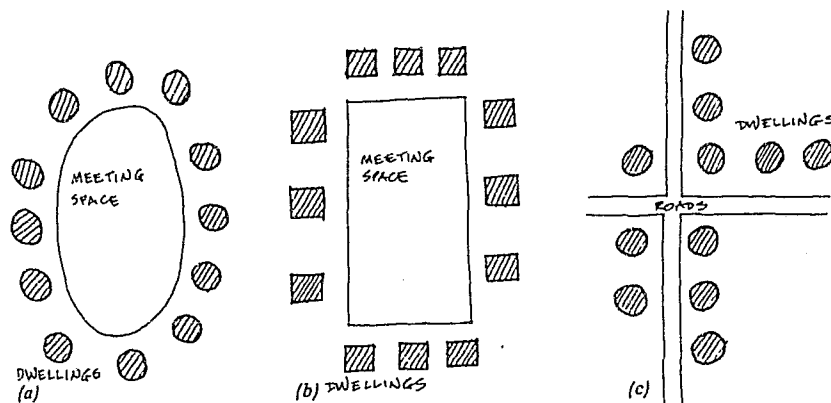
These models can be seen to have two things in common. Firstly, they suggest a multiplicity of environments – social, cultural, and physical. Secondly, they imply a link between changes in the physical environment (which the designer manipulates) and which provides a setting for people and changes in other areas – psychological, social, and the like.

“The environment is a series of relationships among elements and people and these relationships are orderly – they have a pattern. The environment has a structure and is not a random assemblage of things. It both reflects and facilitates relations and transactions between people and physical elements of the world”. These relationships in the physical environment are primarily *spatial* – basically objects and people are related by “separation *in* and *by* space”. Space is experienced as the three dimensional extension of the world which is around us – “the intervals, relationships and distances between people and people, people and things, and things and things, and space is at the heart of the built environment”. (Rapoport, 1977:9)

Thus, spatial organization is, in fact, a more fundamental aspect of the designed environment than shape, materials, and the like.

4.2 Organization of Space

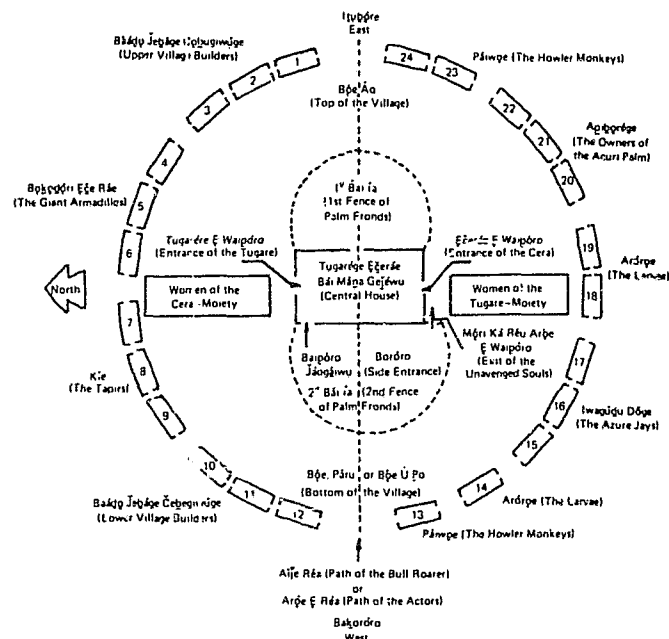
Spatial organization, it has been shown, is a more fundamental aspect of the built environment than shape, materials, colours etc.- i.e. the architecture of a single building or structure. Rather it is its relationship



▲ Centralized arrangement of houses (a and b) verses street based arrangement (Rapoport, 1977)
 ▼ Diagram of a Bororo village, Rapoport, 1977(after Levi-Strauss)

The analysis of settlement layouts

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(organization) with other structures or buildings that determines the spatial character of the built environment.

A village surrounding a central space can be taken as an example. The shape and materials of the houses and even the shape of the central space might be changed without basically changing the nature of the organization. However, by arranging the traditional houses along streets, a fundamentally different settlement results. Or a city based on courtyards or compounds may be considered — such as a Moslem, Yoruba, Latin American, or Japanese city. This is fundamentally different to cities where houses face, and are related to, streets, whatever the materials or forms of the houses.

Changes in the shape of the domains and the materials used to construct them is less fundamental than a change in the relationship into one with a permeable boundary and no controlling point. One can in fact see *design and planning* form landscape to the furniture arrangement of a room as the *organization of space* for different purposes and according to different rules which reflect the needs, values and desires of the groups or individuals designing the space and represent the congruence (or lack of it) between social and physical space.

This view does not to deny the importance of the shape, proportions and sensory qualities of spaces and their enclosing elements, as well as their symbolic meaning, but these all occur within a spatial framework of the type that has been just described and space organization is hence the

key element and the most useful for comparing environments and studying the rules of their organization.

4.3 Organization of Meaning

The built environment does, of course, have other properties. For example, it is also, and importantly, the *organization of meaning* and in this connection, materials, forms, and details become important. While spatial organization does express meaning and has communicative and symbolic properties, meaning is "frequently expressed through signs, material, colours, forms, landscaping and the like – i.e., through the ikonic aspects of the built environment.

Thus meaning may coincide with space organization or may represent a separate, non-coinciding, symbolic system through which different settings become indicators of social position and a way of asserting social identity to oneself and others (Rapoport, 1977:11). This means, of course, that physical elements in the environment take on varying meanings and their influence and importance, and their effect on behavior, change accordingly.

4.4 Organization of Time

The environment is also temporal and can be seen as the *organization of time* (or, at least as influencing and affecting the organization of time). This may be understood in two ways. The first refers to large scale cognitive structuring of time such as linear flow, how it is subdivided into units and so on. The second refers to the rhythms of human activity and their congruence or incongruence with each other. Thus people may be separated in time as well as, or instead of, by space, so that groups with different rhythms occupying the same space may never meet. Clearly spatial and temporal aspects interact and influence one another; (one should probably speak of space-time).

4.5 Organization of Communication

The spatial characteristics of the built environment also greatly influence and reflect the *organization of communication*. Thus who communicates with whom, under what conditions, how, when, where and in which context is one important way in which the built environment and social organization are linked and related. In the case of urban environments this can also be understood in two ways – as being concerned with the movement and communication systems or with human communication face to face.

4.6 Conclusion

The above described four aspects of the built environment – space, time, meaning and communication are, of course, related, and the built environment and its organization (i.e., URBAN DESIGN) can be seen as a way of controlling interaction – its nature, direction, rate and so on.

Urban Design should, therefore, not be viewed as a mere provision of form; it must be relevant to specifics of *space, time, meaning, and communication.*

Chapter 5

City and Use: an Approach to Urban Design based on "Urban Use"

5.1 Introduction

As has been tried to indicate in the preceding chapters, the main thrust of this discourse is that there is more to the term "use" of a space than its mere "functional" use.

Urban use is to be understood as having two constituent parts of "*use*" and "*city*" rather than being a unit in itself. Use and City are seen to be two complex, stratified phenomena, neither of which is reducible to the other. Urban use is *subject to rules of its own and changes according to its own dynamics*, in contrast to the rule of the dynamics governing the production and transformation of the city.

"Use", therefore, is more governed by rituals and habits rather than by pure utility or function. Space and use are qualities not reducible to one another through the "programme", as in some contemporary architectural or urban design practice.

It is contended here that urban design must adopt an approach which is based on the "unintended", habitual, ritualistic use of the city rather than attempting to meet its functional requirements alone.

5.2 "City" And "Use"

Following is a system of classification by which the complex stratification of *city* and *use* might be analyzed separately as developed by De Mare and Voss (1993).

The city may be seen as consisting of three levels.

1a. The first is the condition of the physical topography. It often appears that the conditions of the soil and the presence of all kinds of natural elements and dividing lines (hills, rivers, etc.) become apparent in the environmental and social arrangement of the city.

1b. The second level is the urban ensemble consisting of an historical collection of urban and architectural elements that may be connected typologically. Through all kinds of interventions, whether they be motivated by economics, politics, military considerations, urban planning, or religion, the city becomes an arranged and divided territory. The present-day city originated from a historical accumulation of urban elements such as parcels, streets, public areas, architectural markings and objects (Rossi, 1966).



1c. The third level is the city's *topology of significance*. This level, which is concerned with the production of meaning, i.e. the *signifying practice*, itself consists of different sublayers. It appears not only to include the city's toponymy, the nomenclature of streets and squares, the bad (or good) reputations of particular city districts, and the urban facilities that have ended up there (slaughterhouse, cemetery, etc.), but also the attribution of sacred or profane values. Myths and stories featuring the city belong to this level as well. Along with many types of symbols, these myths and stories are capable of legitimizing and making permanent all the possible religious and political meanings, or, more in general, the ideological meanings which were attributed to the city in the past. Finally this level also includes cultural products like novels, moralistic writings and paintings. These codes of the signifying practice, all in their own way, assign meanings to urban spaces and architectural forms; in other words, they transform the physical city into a meaningful ensemble.

It is also possible to distinguish three levels in the use people make of urban space.

2a. The first involves the physical circumstances and the conditions of existence that determine the life cycle. All human beings are confronted with the boundaries of life and death, with becoming an adult, and with the birth of new life. They need to *sustain life*, acquire food, and dispose of refuse. These physical circumstances affect the other two levels.

2b. The second level consists of what people do, their gestures, and the way in which their behavior is oriented spatially. These spatial patterns

might be associated with routine and trivial activities that are repeated daily or weekly but also with more public ceremonies by which the normal course of life is periodically (annually for instance) interrupted, turned around, and confirmed (the religious calendar, national, or political festivities).

2c. The third and final level, analogous to the third level of the city, concerns the production of meanings: the values and meanings that are assigned to what people do. What people observe, experience, think, feel, tell, write – in other words, *produce* in response to what they do or are.

This preliminary outline enables one to unravel the various phenomena of historical and present-day reality, phenomena which we perceive as a unity. Each of the different levels has its own duration, rhythm, and logic, on the basis of which interplay with other levels is possible and “takes place”.

The primary goal of this outline, therefore is to clarify that the arrangement of the “city” and the arrangement of “use” are two different “materials”, each characterized by a multi-layered structure. These structures do not emanate from each other. This is “in spite of the fact that, in reality, cities are built by people and it is people who ascribe meanings to the city, and also in spite of the fact that people take their identity from their position in the urban community.” (DeMare and Voss, 1993:12). In the same fashion, it is possible to argue equally that the majority of “cities” – their “use” and their significance – existed before the people of the present day started to live in them.



5.3 Rituals and Collective Memory

Certain places in a city have a special – although not always symbolic – meaning. The use of spaces appears to be persistent. The uses to which particular locations were put in the past, or the events that occurred there, affect their significance in the city today. Such places may have a certain ‘name’ or may be ‘disreputable’. There may be places where, in the past, disputes were settled (peacefully or otherwise), but also places where distinguished citizens already enjoyed themselves in bygone days. Mass events and demonstrations confirm the special significance of particular squares and routes through the city, a significance they often derive from processions and ceremonies in the past. (Reijndorp, 1993)

During the past few decades, architects and town planners, in particular, have drawn attention to the persistence of the urban structure. By means of morphological studies, they have unearthed the historical or landscape structures underlying the present situation. These older landscape structures turn out to be vital supports of the city’s social structure. These morphological studies have certainly made an enormous contribution to the insight into the specific structures of different cities. They provide an explanation for the existence of the routes mentioned above and the specific social differences between areas of the city.

Morphological analysis by itself, however, does not explain the meanings of all ritual actions today. “Some locales in a city seem, mysteriously, to evoke certain actions, to reproduce certain practices and thus express another ‘magical’ urban structure”. (Reijndorp, 1993 :146).

Aldo Rossi also suggests a similar structure when he states that the architecture of the city stores ‘permanence’s which ensure that both daily and urban (public) events can take place as a matter of course and often unconsciously. (Rossi, 1966). In this way the architecture of the city forms a ‘local memory system’ or a ‘collective memory’.

However, as Bourdieu (1988) in Reijndorp (1993) states, the effectiveness of all magic springs from the range of actors and institutions in the production and reproduction of a collective belief in certain meanings, which are handed down from generation to generation. They are passed on in different ways: firstly through the historiography of the city; secondly in the stories that constitute the domain of memory. The city as a material space provides the prompts for these stories. Thirdly, the endless repetition of everyday routines sets routes and links places in the city to events recurring daily, weekly, monthly, or annually. And finally there are the special events, demonstrations, ceremonies, and rituals that give special significance to certain places in the city. The architecture of the city therefore “does not ... form a collective or local memory system in and of itself. It does so because it is related to history as recorded books and articles, to stories and reminiscences passed on by inhabitants of the city, to the daily routine of shopping and going out, and lastly, to ceremonies and other special events”. (Ibid. :146)

History, memory, routine, and ceremonies, therefore, ensure that the meanings of specific places in the city are reproduced. Rituals play a pivotal role in the production and reproduction of meanings attributed to specific

places in the city. They seem to constitute the link, the common denominator of the four factors mentioned here: history, memory, routine, and ceremonies. Douglas (1966) in Burke (1993) remarks that social ritual, "everyday, symbolic enactment", creates a reality that otherwise would not exist, and achieves three things. It provides a mechanism to determine one's thoughts, a method to support memory, and a means to regulate experiences. "So ritual focuses attention by framing; it enlivens the memory and links the present with the relevant past. In all this it aids perception. Or rather, it changes perception because it changes the selective principles" (My emphasis).

About the use of the term 'ritual', there seems to be some disagreement among scholars. Nevertheless, in studies of rituals and the city, rituals are considered first and foremost as religious or profane spectacles, i.e. 'ceremonies' such as marches, processions and parades. Their social significance is a matter of debate. While some draw attention to those ceremonies that express differences in power and status, others emphasize precisely those manifestations that open these differences to discussion, such as Carnival, or more recently, various types of protest such as the rally or the sit-in. (Muir, 1981),

"Ritual thus becomes an inclusive term describing stylized, formalized, regularized, actions of many sorts, and ceremony refers to those actions having a peculiarly, distinctively, and exclusively political character". (Muir, 1981:58)

What these urban rituals have in common is, therefore, their exceptional character: they interrupt daily life for a certain length of time. Ritual, functioning either as a testimony to usual run of events or as protest against it. Rykwert (1982), surveying the meaning of urban ceremonies, points out that ritual is indeed characterized by rhythmic repetition, but also by its exceptional nature. The outstanding nature of everyday ritual, then, is precisely its uncommon nature. Its exceptional character demands certain privileged places and times. It differentiates certain, otherwise routine, actions, and interrupt everyday life for a while. Everyday ritual directs the attention and refreshes the memory. In short it constructs a framework, introduces a system, and creates order.

Chapter 6

Urban Space and Ritual: Some Historical Precedents

6.1 Introduction

The correlation of “ritual” and “urban form” in a society permits urban design “statements” to be made. Thus if there is an understanding of the concept of “church” and its surrounding spaces, for instance, then it is possible to express the essence of that concept in its design. But a building, or a space in use is “more than structure, form and color; the added details of furnishings, paintings, particular ritual [elements], the very mode of life which is enacted in the [structures and spaces], all these things together interact to make the full...statement” (Quantrill, 1974:107)

It might, of course, be dangerous, as Quantrill (1970) says, to base a study of architectural (and by implication urban) form on past historical examples as some of them can only be observed in their incomplete, i.e. unused state. However, he concedes that indigenous architecture and urban form provides “more rewarding material since it shows the direct relationship of life-style to built form” and that the study of this direct relationship “may help us determine our own ritual patterns in time to respond to them intelligently and perceptively. It is the underlying ritual

patterns of our society that provide the key to formal intentions”(Ibid:107)

A comparison between the following examples again reveals that “the city” may have two meanings as described in the previous chapter. On the one hand, it represents the physical, spatial arrangement of diverse urban elements, whose three-dimensional shapes and architectural manifestations are of primary concern. These elements may take the form of closed housing blocks with central courtyards, cellular buildings, arcades, a garden city with all its spatial characteristics, a house with a remarkable façade arrangement, etc. On the other hand, the city appears as a spatial setting in which the urban community has its place and which is characterized by a meaningful topology. In this case, the city consists of a socio-cultural arrangement of urban facilities, religious sites, political or symbolic areas, which are connected by its residents at set times: for instance a transfer and distribution centre, working class housing, places of worship, marketplaces, a community centre, modern residential areas, etc. The city is interpreted here as designed *society*. Whatever the city counts as part of its own domain, whatever it situates outside that domain or in between, and “wherever the city ends and the house begins”, all of these aspects determine the nature of the urban community.

Although in all cases the object of discussion is “the city”, the city as a spatial structure (1b, chapter 4) is at a different level than the meaningful city (1c), in the same way that traversing certain routes or occupying

particular locations (2b) is distinct from the meanings people ascribe to these activities (2c).

It is also possible to ascertain that "urban use" both historically and at present, is largely independent of urban structure. Ritual acts may demarcate areas, by marking them symbolically and sometimes physically. (DeMare and Voss, 1993). Rituals may take place in suitable locations, even though the latter may not have been designed for ritual purposes; rituals may employ specially designed locales in a way that they are not meant to be employed. At the same time it appears that in the past urban locales have been transformed to enable the performance of public rituals.

Finally it seems that urban use persists, even when the original urban context has been destroyed or assigned a different purpose. It is true that the physical urban environment (1b) is used, but this use (2b) is not necessarily the product of the environment. *Urban use is not simply evoked by the environments three-dimensional form. The existence of a great public city life depends neither on the presence of spatial facilities, nor on the climate. The driving force behind public behavior is generated elsewhere!*

All these examples point out that spatial use of the city is not derived from the spatial structure of the city, but has a design of its own. *Who* the participants and spectators are may vary per public ritual or collective spatial action. This applies as well to *when* and *where* in the city rituals are performed. Youngsters and "juvenile gangs", the rich and the poor, lovers and soldiers, alcoholics and housewives, merchants and animals,

foreigners and the unemployed: they are the urban residents and visitors who come into action publicly and recreate urban space, producing *socio-culturally ordered space*. The physical ensemble is thus transformed into a symbolic and urbane community.

Formalized use, whether explicitly ritual or not, generates the city as the location for urban community. Routes laid out across the city connect certain religious, political, or otherwise meaningful locales. The same takes place when the physical borderlines in the city are being defined. In both cases symbols are ratified by these acts, although the meanings ascribed to them will differ from group to group. So the function of such ritual habits goes beyond the actual motivation that any participant will be able to state, or beyond the opinion of any random spectator. The function of this ritual behavior is of a collective nature. Internally it joins individuals in an urban group; externally, it brings about a separation from other social groups. Ultimately all groups are tied to the city making it possible for the city to function as a meaningful socio-cultural ensemble. (DeMare and Voss, 1993)

Finding any order at all in the apparently arbitrary phenomena discussed in the following examples also helps to view the possible interpretation of *change* in a different light. Since the advent of the Modern Movement – which judges the new and the different to be right, and the traditional and the continuous to be wrong (Woud 1992 in DeMare and Voss 1993:17) – the underlying principle of the design discipline has involved intervening in the urban ensemble on behalf of a society in transition. In short design practice exists by the grace of change. The nature and pace

of cultural change, today and in the past, appear to vary, however, at the various levels of the city and of urban use mentioned before. Instead of monolithic revolutions, the intention here is to deal with stratified transformations.

Fundamental changes, like economic growth, the migration of villagers to the big city, etc., do not appear to be simple signs of progress. Areas traditionally reserved for exceptional events may be used to accommodate new growth. The outer metamorphosis of a section of the city does not imply that there will also be an immediate change in the way in which this section is used. Rituals themselves may undergo changes, though the transformation of such formalized action is slower than that of other kinds of use; at the same time, new rituals may emerge, and bridge centuries in some cases. Whenever there is change, it by no means occurs at random, because the structure and shape of rituals guarantee "regulated" modifications. Rituals are seldom entirely new, and are often the result of minor modifications made to a basic pre-existing socio-cultural pattern. (DeMare and Voss, 1993)

6.2 Cities, Spaces and Rituals in History

The following examples discuss the relation between rituals and the spaces in which they took place in a number of cities around the world based on the historical accounts of Burke (1993).

6.2.1 Early Modern Venice

Venice is an appropriate focus of attention not only because its history is "extremely well documented", but also because the city's "remarkable degree of autonomy was symbolized by an equally remarkable set of public rituals". Its rituals were among other things a "celebration of its political system, supporting what historians have often called the 'myth of Venice', not only the idea that it enjoyed unparalleled social harmony and good government, but also that it was a holy city, a new Rome and a new Jerusalem". (Burke, 1993:30)

Official ritual in Venice was concentrated on Piazza San Marco, at once the sacred centre and the civic centre (the church, which was the doge's chapel, and his palace, where the senate and the great council met). The theatrical appearance of Piazza San Marco and the adjoining Piazzetta has often been remarked on, especially as seen from the doge's palace.

Some Venetian rituals were explicitly political. The election of doge's and other high dignitaries was marked by processions and by the throwing of money to the crowd. The doge was also crowned, shown to the people in the church of San Marco, and carried around the Piazza. The doge's funeral rite's included a procession to Piazza San Marco and then to a church. (Muir, 1981)

Other rituals might be described as implicitly political. The festival of Corpus Christi, for example, was as much a civic as a religious festival. It was celebrated by pageants as well as by a procession to the sound of

music around Piazza San Marco. In Venice, even Carnival included an element of civic ritual – the solemn execution of animals on the Piazzetta, in the presence of the doge, the senators and foreign ambassadors, the animals being provided as a tribute from the provinces.

6.2.2 Early Modern Italy

Many Italian cities performed rituals similar to the ones mentioned for Venice; they were dialects of the same ritual language. In Florence, for instance, the great day was the feast of Saint John the Baptist in late June, which included pageants. The festival also included secular elements of a kind to be found in many parts of Europe at this time, such as giants, men walking on stilts, races, bull baiting, and bonfires. A more unusual feature of the festival was the ritualized presentation of tribute by the cities under the dominion of Florence to St John. It seems reasonable to suggest that the saint was seen as a personification of the city he protected, and that this ritual was essentially a celebration of the dignity and power of Florence itself.

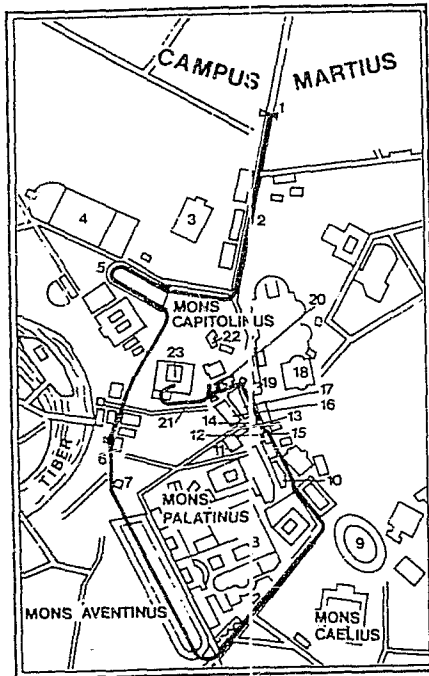
Carnival was a major festival in most Italian cities. In Rome, there were duels and bullfights on Piazza San Pietro, Piazza Navona and up on the Capitol, while the Corso was the central place for races. In Florence, the most important element was a procession through the streets with many floats.

Ritualized combats between factions of the citizens were not uncommon in other cities and other occasions. In Piza, like in Venice, there was the “game of the bridge”: a mock battle between the North and the South in which armour was worn, although no weapons were allowed. Once again we find links between aggression, territoriality, and the importance of symbolic boundaries.

What were the most important changes in Italian urban rituals and the spaces in which they were performed? In the case of Florence, Texter (in Burke, 1993) has emphasized the way in which ritual and civic life declined together as the city lost its independence in the sixteenth century, reduced to the position of the capital of a territorial state.

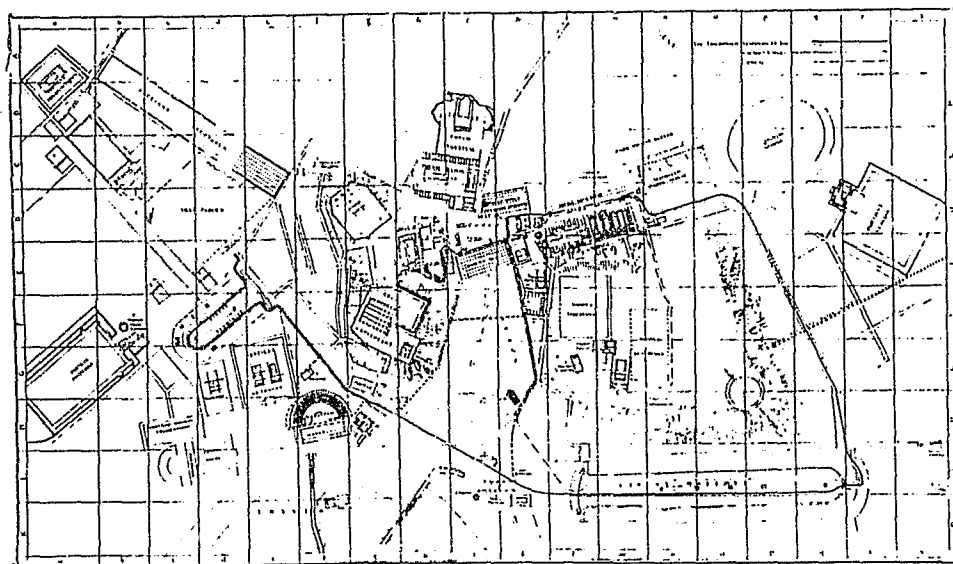
In the case of Milan, changes can be seen with particular clarity in the age of the reforming archbishop Borromeo, from the time he made his official entry into the city in 1565, riding a white mare, in imitation of the popes and their model, Christ entering Jerusalem. Borromeo did his best to destroy the local Carnival and instituted a pilgrimage to the seven basilicas of Milan, based on the Roman model, as well as celebrations for the holy year in 1976. He encouraged the erection of images in the streets and also of columns, symbolic markers in order “to turn the city into a huge church.” (Cattaneo, 1958; Buratti; 1982 in Burke 1993:32)

Milan in Borromeo’s day has been described as the “ritual city”, but this title surely belongs to Rome, a holy city and a ritual centre to which pilgrimages were frequent. The pilgrimage to Rome may be interpreted in itself a ritual, indeed as a kind of initiation ritual. (Ibid.: 33). The



*The Roman Forum and the Imperial Fora,
Rome (Source: The Princeton Journal)*

*The triumphal route of Titus and
Vespasian (Source: The Princeton Journal)*



pilgrims were expected to go to confession in order to purify themselves before making their visits to the seven major churches. The visits were supposed to be carried out in a prescribed order and manner and included, like many initiations, an element of suffering (pilgrims were expected to ascend the Scala Santa on their knees). The climb from Piazza San Pietro to the church itself is one of the many multi-cultural examples of the ascent of a holy mountain. There were particularly holy times for visiting sacred places, notably Christmas and Easter, when the Pope would give his blessing (as he still does), from his loggia, to the crowd assembled on Piazza San Pietro.

In the course of the sixteen and seventeenth centuries Rome was physically restructured by order of the popes, to provide a more appropriate setting for rituals. Pius V moved Carnival away from Piazza San Pietro to the Corso, to segregate the sacred and the profane ritual spaces of the city. But the most spectacular of these changes were made in the Roman townscape in the 1660s by order of Pope Alexander VII, notably the construction of the Bernini colonnades around Piazza San Marco and the erection of Egyptian obelisks with crosses on top to symbolize the "triumph" of Christianity over paganism.

However, it was the Counter-Reformation Pope Sixtus V, in the late sixteenth century, a few years after Borromeo in Milan, who commanded the construction of a network of new streets to facilitate the access of pilgrims to the seven churches, as well as the erection of obelisks on numerous Piazzas of the city. (See section 7.7.2)

6.2.3 Early Modern Europe

In the late Middle ages, the ritual idiom was extremely similar all over Europe. Northern cities may have been less autonomous and smaller than the Italian city-states, but they too had their privileges and their pride and they celebrated themselves with similar rituals, notably at Corpus Christi; the late medieval festival in which the body of Christ functioned as metaphor for the social body. Processions were as "a statement ... through which the city represents itself to itself". (Ibid.: 34)

However, at the Reformation the paths of North and South divided. Catholic Europe, more or less Mediterranean Europe, remained "a procession culture", in which Catholic festivals structured the civic year. For the Catholics, the space of the city had its sacred and profane areas. In Protestant cities, matters were rather different. Protestants rejected such rituals, or at any rate they were suspicious of religious rituals. They disliked holy places and so made urban space more uniform. (Davis 1981 in Burke 1993:34). They did not abolish public ritual altogether, but they reduced its importance and they secularized it. In London, for example, the traditional civic-religious rituals disappeared after the Reformation, to be replaced by a more elaborate Lord Mayor's show (Bergeon 1971 in Burke, 1993). By the eighteenth century an elaborate May Day ritual had developed in London.

In other European cities, Catholic as well as Protestant, more spectacular urban rituals were devised in the eighteenth century. Long ago Lewis Mumford (1961) emphasized the relation between ritual and changes in

urban planning in the age of baroque, drawing attention to the rise of avenues "were a victorious army could march with the maximum effect upon the spectator" – the rise of the military parade as an urban ritual.

6.2.4 The Islamic City

The traditional Islamic city also offers another demonstration how urban spaces are shaped by ritual behavior. In the typical Islamic city, religious gatherings, traditionally, took place in mosques, and secular gatherings outside the city, on an open space or *maydan* (Elisseeff 1980 in Burke 1993). The Muslim City was and is inward looking, just as the Muslim house is inward looking. The different quarters were more isolated from one another than was usual in European cities. (Ibid.: 35)

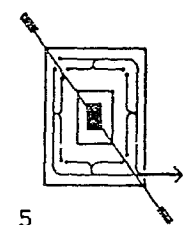
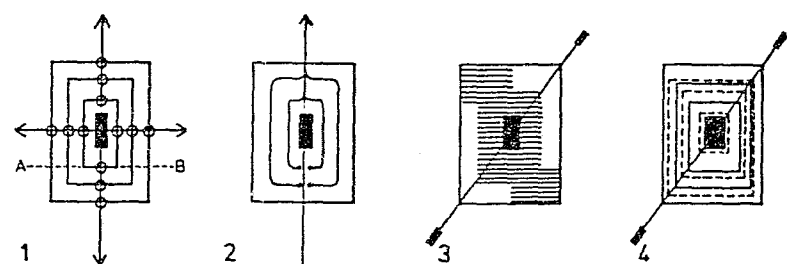
The contrast is most obvious in the case of the changes which took place in the organization of space in the Byzantine city of Constantinople (Istanbul) after it was captured by the Turks in 1453 and became the Ottoman capital of Istanbul. Wide avenues disappeared, to be replaced by narrow alleys, and covered bazaars took place of open squares or forums. (Ibid.: 35)

This spatial configuration reveals a number of important features of Moslem culture. The inward-looking courtyard houses may be seen as an expression of the Islamic idea of the family. Women are secluded, so they "talk across the roofs" rather than in the street. The narrow winding streets are associated with horse and camel transport rather than wheeled

transport. The importance of the quarters as the true communities is related to the segmentation of urban society (e.g. Damascus) into different ethnic and religious groups; a segmentation which in itself may be a reaction to conditions of security.

In such cities, religious festivals are important – in particular the Great Festival and the Little Festival, the breaking of the fast at the end of Ramadan. There are also festivals for the patron saints of cities and shrines. On these occasions a good deal of the ritual takes place in the interior space of mosques and private houses. Processions to Muslim shrines take place on occasions, with participants holding candles. Religious fraternities are important in the organization of festivals, which may include dancing in the open air outside the mosque. (Ibid.:35)

The contrast between the urban ritual spaces of two parts of the Mediterranean world, Morocco (for example) and Italy, remains a dramatic one. This contrast cannot be reduced to the difference between Christianity and Islam, but it cannot be explained without it. "Space speaks" as Hall, 1959 (in Burke 1993) puts it, and in this case differences of spatial organization express differences in Christian and Muslim conceptions of religious and secular rituals.



The symmetric principles which dominate the spatial structure of Srirangam.

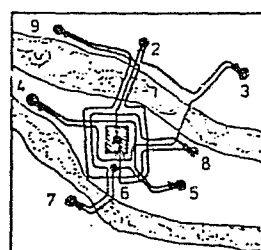
1. The axial symmetry of *gopurams*, walls and concentric zones. A, B, Ranganatha Swami Mandap, and Singa Perumal Kovil.

2. The axial symmetry of the Brahmin system of funeral routes.

3. The social topography, symmetrically arranged to the northeast-southwest diagonal.

4. The ringroads (hatched), also symmetrical to the northeast-southwest diagonal.

5. The non-Brahmin system of funeral routes, symmetrical to the northwest-southeast diagonal. In the southeast: the funeral gate.

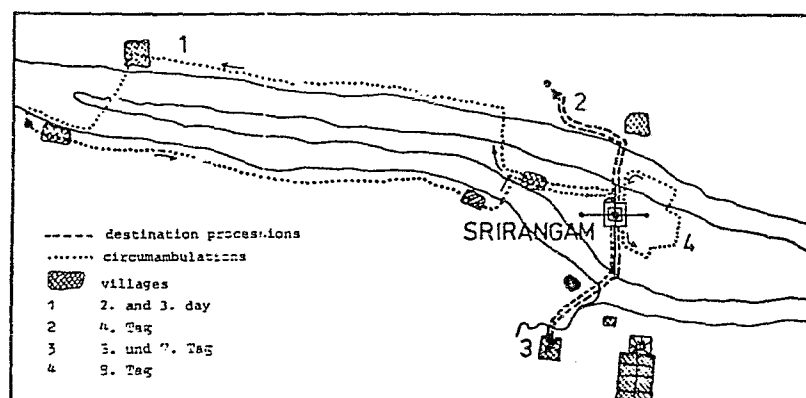


left:

The nine tirthas (pools) for the ablutions of the pilgrims, which take their bath in them in a prescribed sequence (nos. 1-9) and circumambulate on their way the town three times.

bottom:

The field processions in the month of Pharguni, which consist of circumambulations (1,4) and destination processions (2,3) and comprise the entire *ksetra*. The circumambulations are anticlockwise (note arrows!).



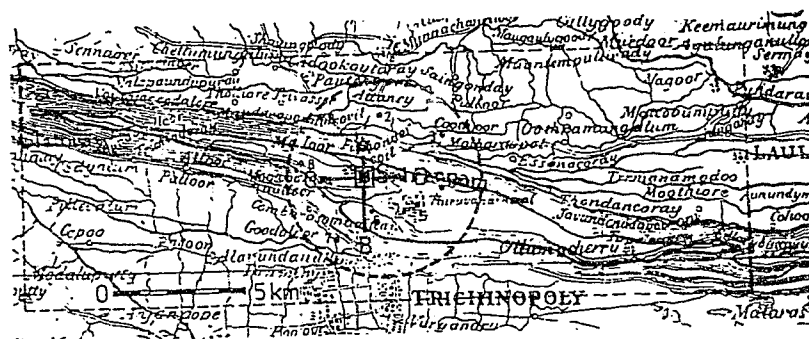
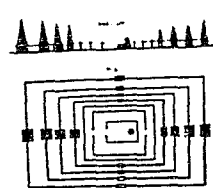
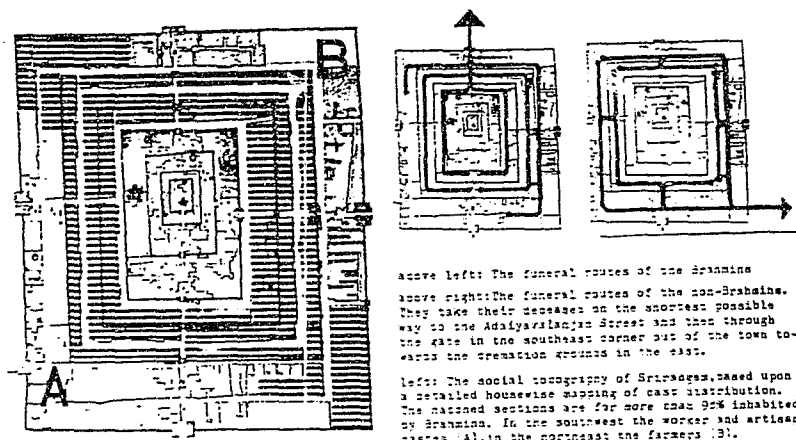
Ritual movement and spatial arrangement in Srirangam, India (Source: Pieper, 1978)
Architectural layout, above; and relationship of village to topography in Srirangam, India (Source: Pieper, 1978)

6.3 Srirangam, India: Ritual Movement and Urban Space

What follows is a structural analysis by Jan Pieper (in Gutschow and Sieverts, 1978) of the spatial system of Srirangam, a town in South India. This sheds more light on the complex *spatial organization and use of urban space* with regard to movement between its spatial elements by means of urban rituals – i.e., **ritual movement**.

Srirangam is laid out on a principle which follows and concludes the same tendency of what may be called “inward directed geometrization”, the tendency to make use of more rigid and precise geometrical forms in spatial design the further one comes to the centre. The urban fabric is composed of seven concentric wall enclosures, of which the outer three are residential quarters. The whole is arranged symmetrically around two axial streets crossing at right angles, and this spinal structure is not only discernible from the plan, but also visualized in actual urban space, since a sequence of enormous towers placed over the gates of the enclosures and visible from all parts of the town, marks the spatial nodes of the layout.

This system has found its physical expression in the layout of the three outer ring roads, which are symmetrical to the southwest-northeast diagonal. The mapping of the caste distribution shows that social topography of Srirangam is also symmetrical to the southwest-northeast diagonal. Similar relations may be shown in the distribution of housetypes, plot sizes, block structures and numerous other details of the settlement pattern.

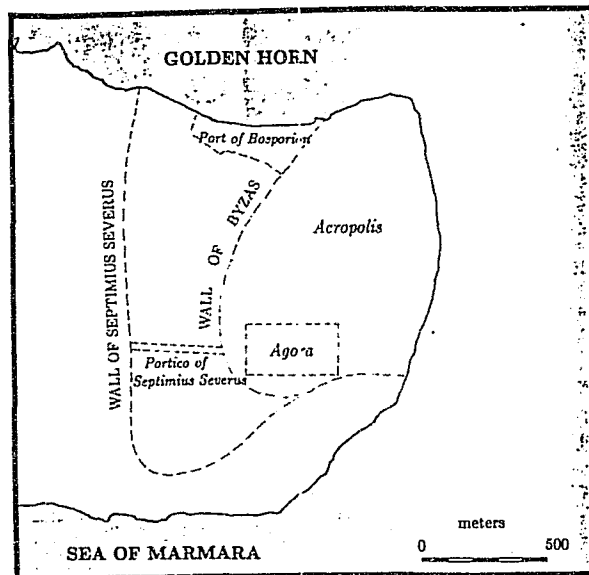


Architectural layout, above; and
relationship of village to topography in Srirangam, India
(Source: Pieper, 1978)

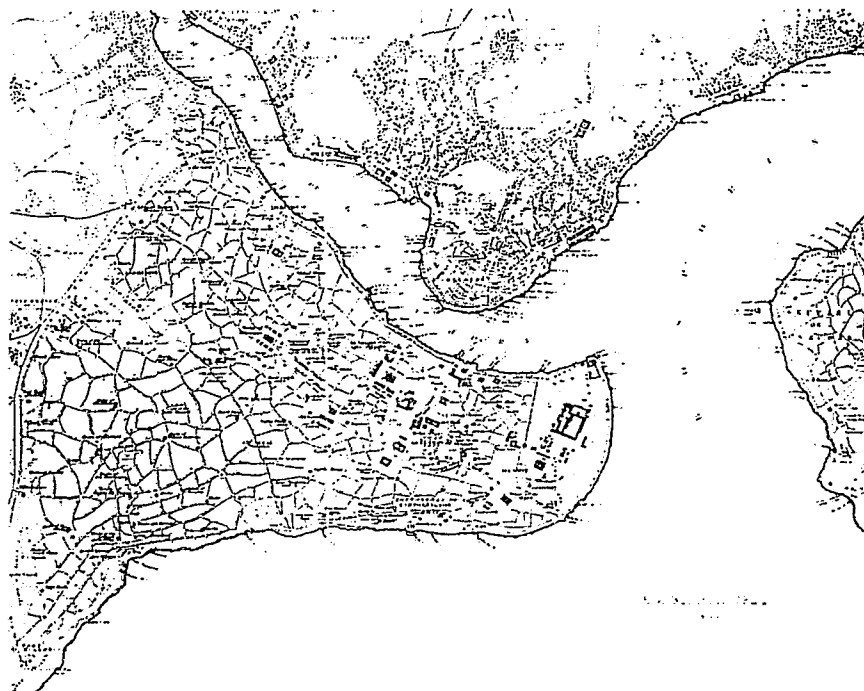
The architectural layout of Srirangam is the static and permanent configuration, a complex elaboration of the modes of "placement" in the above-defined sense, which avoids everything coincidental and thus distinguishes the town as a place of eminence, reflecting the architectural order. Corresponding to these physical characteristics, there is a dynamic counterpart: the temporary 'stagings' and activities of urban ritualism. The term "urban ritualism" here again denotes all traditionally and seasonally prescribed actions, which are not restricted to the temple precincts but involve the participation of people in the streets and fields.

Some routes (e.g. Funeral, Wedding) can also be described which are not essentially part of urban ritualism as they are not performed at regular intervals, but which correspond in similar manner to the characteristics of the town.

One conclusion, which may be drawn, is that the function of such systems is not primarily the transmission of messages, which are not themselves part of the system. The forms resulting from the elaboration of the basic principles mentioned have functions founded in the system itself. They are not the byproduct of creative intentions, which essentially follow different ends, but their primary function is the reception and manipulation of the dimensions of space. This dimension is naturally unstructured, unlimited and only vaguely shaped by topography and plant cover. Space has no inherent, predisposed system of order, unlike time, and as such, it is a much greater challenge to the structuring capacities of the human mind. The organization of space, from an inconceivable totality to a structured whole is the fundamental raison



The ancient city of Istanbul (Source: Celik, 1986)
Map of Istanbul, 1840 engraving (Source: Celik, 1986)



de`etre for a[?] such systems, and it is this which may be more important in the understanding of architecture and other spatial phenomena.

6.4 Religion and Urban History

6.4.1 Istanbul, Turkey

Istanbul offers an interesting example because its response to external influences was unique, shaped by a complex ritualistic (Byzantine Christian and Turkish Islamic) heritage and a non-colonial status. Istanbul also shows an intensity in “inventing traditions” and a process of “formalisation and ritualization” more frequently when a rapid transformation in a society weakens the social patterns that operated within a network of old traditions. (Celik, 1986:xxi)

The modern era had not yet left its mark on the Ottoman capital in the early decades of the nineteenth century. The city, unaffected by contemporary Western developments in urban design and architecture, maintained its Turkish-Islamic character. Except for the commercial centre, where people of different religions and ethnic groups worked side-by-side, the neighbourhoods of Istanbul were ethnically organised. Muslims, the largest group, lived in the central part of the peninsula; Armenians, Greeks and Jews were concentrated along the shores. In the centre of town, At Maydani (the Hippodrome), was the most important public square, a place for recreation and equestrian exercises. The majority of public open spaces were contained in the building

complexes, such as courtyards of *Kulliyes* (complexes consisting of a mosque, *Medreses* or religious colleges, a bath, a hospice, a soup kitchen, and a hospital) and mosques which doubled as secular spaces.

The monuments, with their regular plans and impressive scale, formed a contrast to the dense, haphazard street network. Several complexes, such as the Topkapi Palace, the *Kulliyes*, and the Grand Bazaar stood out in the urban fabric then, as they still do today.

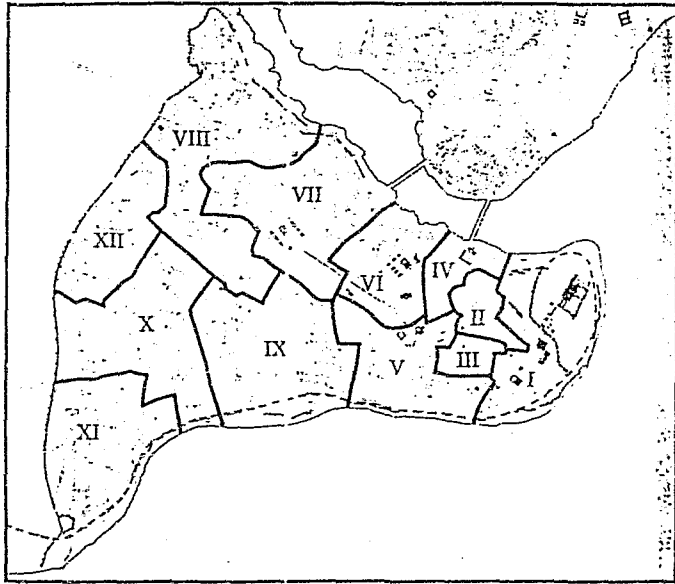
The neighbourhoods (*mamallas*) of Istanbul were organic developments that grew around religious cores (mosques, churches and synagogues). However, social and cultural values determined the physical structure of the neighbourhoods. As there was no segregation according to income or sociopolitical status, the various house-types often existed next to each other. The Islamic principle of privacy of women (hence privacy of the family) was another important factor in the formation of the neighbourhood structure. The search for the maximum segregation of individual houses within the dense urban setting "led to the organisation of residential pockets around dead end streets, which acted as semi-public paths"

The irregular street pattern, still evident, was a phenomenon that went back to Byzantine days. But Islamic law, which puts private property rights above public property rights (Celik, 1986), assured its preservation by allowing encroachments upon the public way so long as they did not interfere with the right of others.

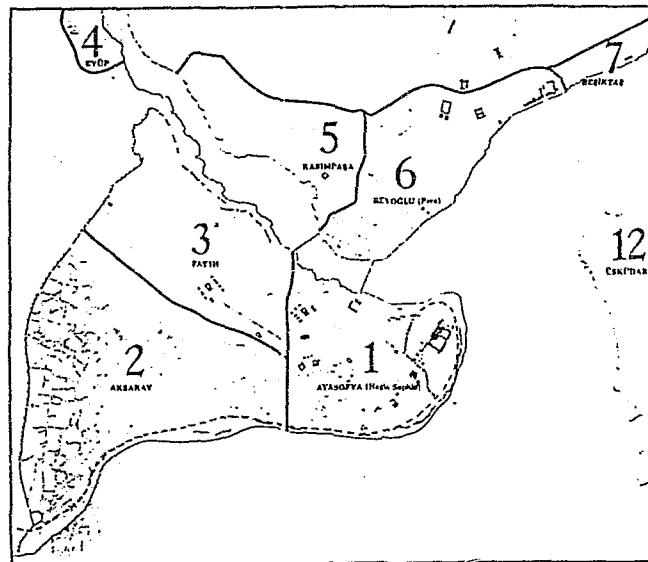
On 30 May 1453 Mehamet II made his ceremonial entry into Constantinople and, declaring it to be his capital, inaugurated a new era of building activity aimed at making the city the economic, administrative, cultural, and religious centre of his empire.* The fundamental goal in the development of Istanbul after the conquest was to create a Muslim city in which the communities could live in accordance with the philosophy of Islam. Muslim neighbourhoods grew around religious complexes. To bring more of the physical city under the jurisdiction of Islamic social codes, property owners established permanent endowments of land or other immovable property by a deed of restraint. Through this act, called *vakif*, the owner surrendered his power over disposal of the property with the stipulation that the property be used for good purposes, namely for those compatible with Islam. (Ibid.:23).

The definitive change in the street fabric of the Byzantine city "must have begun during Mehamet II's reign" (Celik, 1986). We have noticed earlier that the back streets of Constantinople formed an irregular and very dense pattern. "However, there were large arteries that connected the great public squares. As the fifteenth-century city developed around self-contained *nahiyes* and their subunits, *mahalles*, each originating from a central node, the importance of large public open spaces and wide avenues diminished; they were gradually absorbed by the incremental growth (Celik, 1986).

* "Istanbul" derives from the Greek word "stanbulin" (meaning "to the city"), used by the inhabitants of Constantinople since the tenth century. In some fifteenth century documents, the name "Islambul" ("where Islam bounds") was used. ... (Celik, 1986)



*Nahiyes of Istanbul established by Mehmed II
(Source: Celik, 1986)*



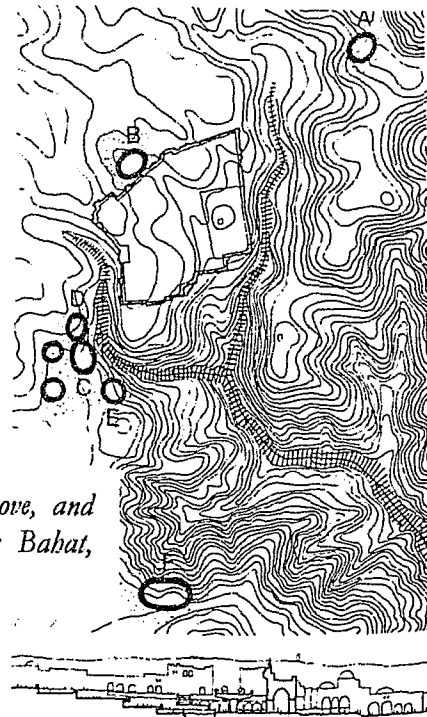
Districts of Istanbul, 1857 (Source: Celik, 1986)

The monumentality of sixteenth-century Istanbul is closely associated with the work of the architect Sinan and his royal patron Sulleyman I. Sinan's *kulliyes* "brought the ultimate Islamic and Ottoman definition to Istanbul's urban form – a process, which had begun immediately after the conquest with the construction of the *kulliye* of Mehmed II. The *kulliyes* break up the irregular fabric of the city by their geometric and axial schemes. They are integral units organised around a central structure and have no major arteries connecting them to the surrounding environment. Hence, "they repeat on a monumental scale the overriding theme of introversion in Ottoman urbanism" (Celik, 1986:27).

What we learn from Istanbul is the degree to which the relationship between religion and urban form have been taken in history. The *Suqs* (marketplaces) related in some way to the mosque are also an example of the close relationship that exist between ethic and daily mundane activities, in this case commerce.



Jerusalem: Topography and early founding (Source: Bahat, 1984)



Jerusalem: during the Turkish period, above, and the Old city during Constantine (Source: Bahat, 1986)

6.4.2 Jerusalem, Israel

Jerusalem had its beginnings on the hilltop known as the City of David. Later it expanded northward to embrace also the Temple Mount. In the course of time, Jerusalem continued to expand in the direction of Mount Zion and the hills to the west and north of the original city. All of these elevations are located in the area of the Kidron Valley drainage basin. Indeed it is the course of the Kidron and that of the other streams draining into it that had a decisive influence on the fixing of the city's boundaries on all sides (Bahat, 1986:4)

One cannot fully understand the rituals of the city and their impact on the morphology of the city without (at least briefly) looking back at some of the events that took place since its founding.

The history of Jerusalem dates back to as early as pre-historic times. It was located in the crossroads traversed by each of the major civilisations as they explored, conquered, and expanded their influence in the region.

The old city of Jerusalem had always been confined by walls. But the footprint was never constant throughout history. Change and expansion of the border of the ancient city has been part of its development. The Jerusalem of David (996 BC) was confined to a smaller hill of the Kidron Valley, next to the water source. Followed by extended northward growth to the Temple Mount, subsequent shifts in the footprint had occurred. The built form of the city, in parallel saw a vast range of styles and modifications.



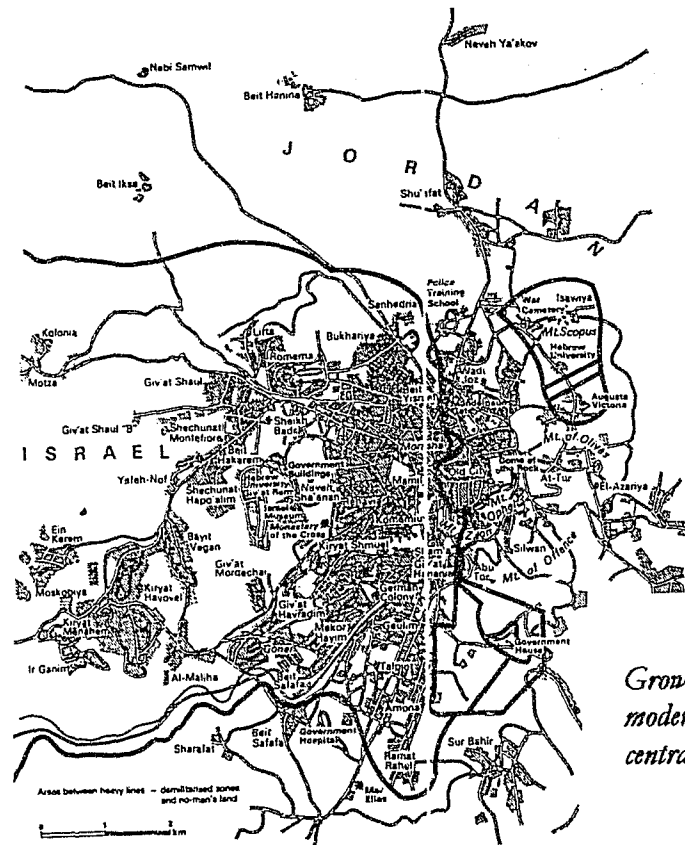
*Key map of Jerusalem showing the Old city
and the Quarters (Source: Bahat, 1986)*

Legend has it that the Romans ran a plough over Jerusalem and sowed it with salt, imposing upon it the doom of Sodom and Gomorrah. The Romans razed the city's battlements, leaving a few towers and a section of the western wall of the Temple. They left the city out of bounds to its inhabitants and replaced it by the city of Aelia Capitolina that was built on the ruins.

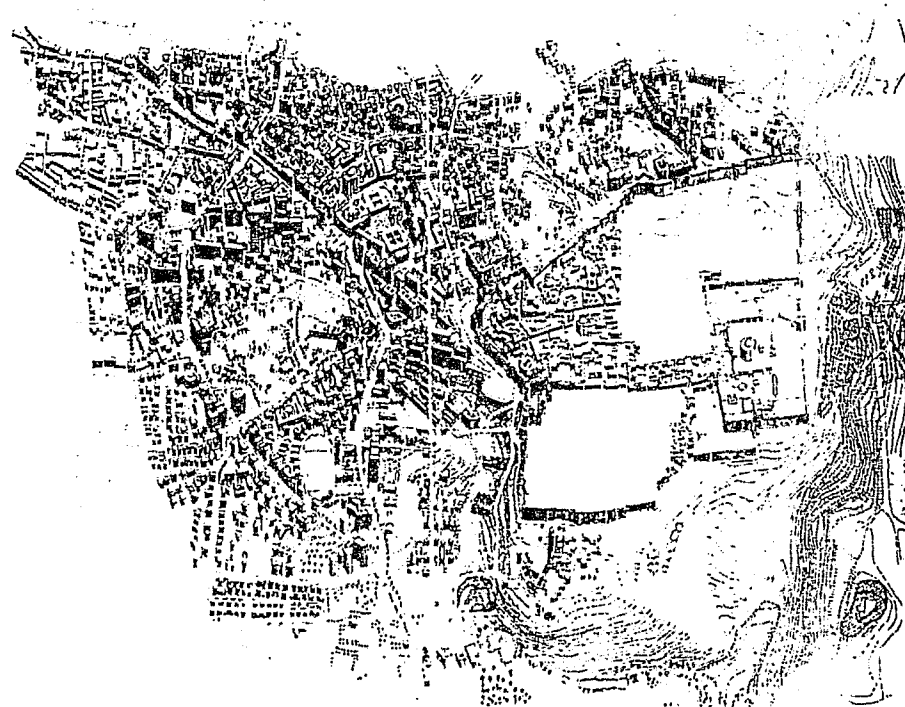
With the advent of the first Christian emperors of Rome, Jerusalem once again saw a new turn in history. The name "Jerusalem" was restored by the Emperor Constantine, following his conversion to Christianity in 325 CE. Christianity was hence to be made a state religion, and Jerusalem became a religious and spiritual centre for the entire Christian world. This period (Byzantine) is distinguished by a great upsurge of building activity; with the accent on monumental and the magnificent. Commemorative buildings were erected on sites which designate localities sacred to the faith.

The split, in 379 CE, of the Eastern Empire, with Constantinople as its capital, from the Western, with Rome as its capital left Jerusalem under the sway of the Greek Church of the East. This now further ensued a remarkable influx of pilgrims eager to live in the places consecrated to their faith.

As in Roman times, the Byzantine city was divided into quarters. The Temple Mount, considered the holiest was one. Today's Jewish quarter existed as the Southeastern quarter of the city in the period. A stretch of dense residential area of that period existed in this quarter of the old city.



Growth of the city of Jerusalem during modern times, left; an Isomeric view of the central area (Source: Babat, 1986)



The attractions for the Christian pilgrims had been the northern quarter which included sacred sites of miracles ascribed to Jesus.

Today's major ritual routes in Jerusalem such as the Easter route are an example of the concept of ritual as a basis for an urban framework.

Moshe Safdie (1986) likens the history of Jerusalem with the biological process. "Set on the mountain plateau at the edge of the Fertile Crescent, a major centre of civilisation of the emerging literate humanity, it was then fertilised by waves and counterwaves of civilisations with their cultures, their beliefs, their rituals, their skills. With the birth of the first Monotheistic religion, with Jerusalem as the first cell, the inevitable and unarrestable process began."

In a word, the history of the urban form of Jerusalem (as the origin of three of the world's major religions) testifies to the influence (past and present) of the concept of ritual as a basis for urban form.

Chapter 7

Design Theory

7.1 Introduction

The primary aim of urban design practice is the achievement of order in the built environment emanating from its understanding of the relationship between the organisation of the environment and man. Order is not easily assumed in simplistic mechanical or geometric terms.

The essence of observed order, as harmony of man in nature is characterised by complexity rather than simplicity and by the idea of what one observes, of what one 'cognises' (knows) is there rather than what is apparent. In other words, man acts on the basis of an "environmental image" which is a relationship between the spatial organisation of the environment and himself. (Levi-Strauss, 1978)

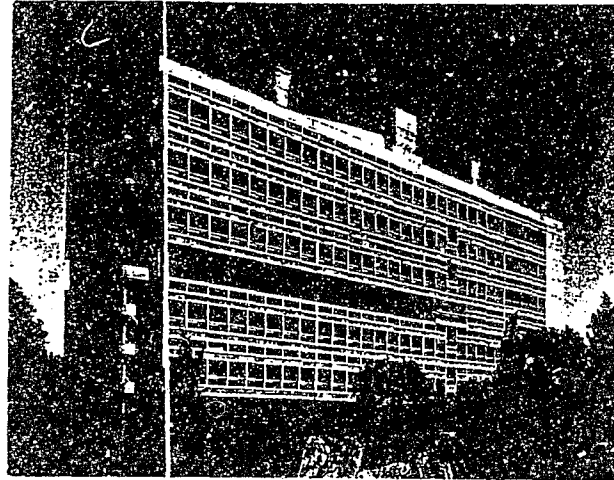
In urban design, where the determination of the physical world in which a society may successfully interact, it is necessary to transcend the limiting notion that organisation of space can be achieved through the separation of its problems in the physical/geometric sense in favour of the recognition of 'place' and 'space' as socially meaningful. This should clearly be a product of understanding empirically, the conditions unique to a particular society.

In an attempt to develop urban design principles to be tested in the case study, this chapter explores some relevant design theories appropriate to the line of argument.

7.2 Ritual and the Empirical Evaluation of Space

Christopher Alexander's approach (1977) to planning problems did accept that ritual is the generator of plans which in turn generate architectural form, the plan being the "the footprint of the building". His Centre for Urban Structures made proposals for housing to be built in Lima, Peru, and these proposals embodied a useful example of their working methods. As they were designed for low-income families, Alexander and his colleagues each lived with a Peruvian family in this social stratum. Then, using the classical field-work techniques of the social anthropologist, they plotted the behavioural patterns (rituals) of these families. This allowed them to establish the car-pedestrian symbiosis, an intimacy gradient within the dwellings (from the 'public' formal area closest to the entrance through to the more intimate and private informal areas at the rear) and a pattern for bed clusters based on the segregation of boys from girls with the parents' bedroom placed between the children's areas. (Quattri, 1974:15).

This systematic approach by the CUS produced an analysis of ritual that allowed a solution relating each individual bedspace to the neighbourhood pattern as a whole. The studies undertaken by the CUS gave room for some optimism about the future of this design strategy,



*Unite de Habitation, Marseilles, Le Corbusier
(Source: Quantrill, 1974)*

and they demonstrated quite clearly the difference between Le Corbusier's* superimposed forms and Alexander's concern with anthropological factors. "If such studies were always undertaken we might avoid the consequences of uprooting central urban populations and decanting them to remote suburban site where they have none of the facilities or environmental associations of their previous way of life. (Quantrill, 1974: 15)

Alexander's approach, however, had its shortfalls. He attempted to create a "pattern language" as a universal design order, based on reduction of Architectural and planning design to the smallest components. This deductive process is based on a typically Cartesian scientific method and rationality. "Context" defines the problem, while "form" is the solution. Design must be traced rigorously to its origins to reveal the inherent nature of its pattern.

This is one of the many of theories (Lynch 1981; Rossi 1966; Norberg-Shultz, 1984 etc) that attempted to develop 'systems'. Despite the availability of this multiplicity of 'systems', there is no "overall discipline to develop our sense of space, structural integrity and a spirit of joy". (Quantrill, 1974:15). The dilemma, it is suggested here, is the lack of an empirical correlation between ritual and urban form especially in major urban interventions.

* The main ingredient missing in Le Corbusier's Unite in Marseilles, for example was an understanding of ritual that generates urban life-style. For this reason it did not catch on with the French people: its apartments rented slowly and this pace was not improved by the reluctance of the shopkeepers to take over shopping units so remote from the traditional street level. (Quantrill, 1974:14)

7.3 Memory, Permanence and Change

Rationalist designers such as Aldo Rossi (1966) have brought the deductive process to design but at a more platonic or intellectual level. Essentially, their aim is to develop or retain 'retentive' devices in the city and to create familiar archetypes, thereby invoking the process of *memory* as a disciplinary 'ordering device' in society. This is similar to the *relatedness* and *familiarity* of Alexander's philosophy, but in contrast to Alexander, Rossi's view is more strongly related to the 'whole', to the city as a whole, rather than an individual component. Architecture, for Rossi, is the physical expression of certain thoughts and the architect's task, therefore, is to explain those thoughts and convert them into built reality. "The city ... is to be understood ... as architecture. By architecture, I mean not only the visible image of the city and the sum of its different architectures, but architecture as construction, the construction of the city over time". (1966:21)

Construction for Rossi here means not the physical structure of the city's buildings, but it means 'to act on the basis of reason'. Rossi also describes the elements of which cities are made, i.e. the different building *TYPES*. *Type* for Rossi is that which remains constant and unchanging behind and underlying all the particular built examples: houses, churches, schools, etc. Having established his building 'types' he hopes to determine the laws by which each type was constructed. He then hopes to establish the further laws by which building 'types' are grouped – constructed – together that much more complex entity, the city itself.

Within the lifetime of the city as a whole, of course, there will be constant changes to the buildings it contains, the architectural 'facts' of which it is composed. Each building will have been designed, built, used for a while and then, perhaps, demolished. But the city itself will continue to exist through all these changes and our concept of it as a particular city will be founded in our *memories*. Our memories will depend in particular on the presence of certain *monuments*, particular architectural 'facts' which, because of their sheer quality, have withstood the ravages of time. A true monument for Rossi, adds far more to the city than merely its physical, atmospheric and visual presence, as a locus of the city's memory. So-called functionalist critics, of course, denounce the 'monument' as individualistic and rhetorical. They want to see the monuments torn down, to be replaced by neutral, commonplace buildings designed to meet their specific, so-called 'functional' programmes. (Kostof, 1990:168 - 169)

Rossi also, in a different way to Alexander, is suspicious of the relevance of inventing radically new typologies. Essentially he believes that architectural form is what buildings 'owe' to the city while their function is an 'internal' affair. It is the importance of the collective history, which is the ordering discipline of memory which gives society structural devices.

Modernists saw the city as something that can be created in functional terms only, such as light, air and movement, of housing for the masses, all in terms entirely new typologies. It was as though society as such did

not exist or if they did they would have to be dispensed with. Much of the failure was not primarily in Modernism's ideals and principles, but in application that did not acknowledge the interrelationships of city fabric and culture and to focus only on what is in fact a narrow view of urban life.

7.4 Society And "The Logic of Space"

The recognition of 'place' and 'space' as socially meaningful is clearly a product of understanding empirically the conditions unique to a particular society. We read space and anticipate a lifestyle, different types of social formation require a characteristic spatial order, just as different types of spatial order require a particular social formation to sustain them. This, essentially, is the position adopted by Hillier and Hanson (1984) in their search for an empirical method to analyse and then attempt to physically intervene in the urban environment.

We recognise ethnicity, behaviour and culture in space; and more especially, where reiteration of recognisable spatial syntax exists, the associated society has clearly generated a unique morphological language. However the recognition of culturally compatible space and the process of re-creating it requires that some system of logic be understood in terms of generic principles. (Hillier & Hanson, 1984)

In this search for a universal social logic in urban space, Hillier and Hanson analyse existing view on morphology as socio-cultural expression emphasising their particular limitations in the following order:

1. *Territoriality*; this is a factor which is not consistently significant in all societies in terms of either individual or group spatial definition.
2. *Structural Anthropology*; the idea of meaningful space, while contextually relevant, has been admitted (Levi-Strauss 1967) as not having universal application to different societies.
3. *Cognitive theories*; these theories link cultural behaviour and belief with spatial form and morphology on an empirical basis. The casual link however is missing i.e., whether space influences culture or vice-versa.
4. *Semiology*; these theories interpret signs and images (displayed through building language) as relating culture to the artefacts of urban space as form.

"In spite of considerable divergences, these approaches all seem to sidestep the central problem of buildings in the sense that ... they do not first conceptualise buildings as carrying social determination through their very form as objects". Hillier and Hanson generalise the above theories and categorise them under the "man-environment paradigm". This, they say "misrepresents the problem at a very deep level, since it makes unavailable the most fundamental fact of space: that through its ordering of space the man-made physical world is already a social behaviour. It constitutes (not merely represents) a form of order in itself: one which is created for social purpose, whether by design or *accumulativity*, and through which society is both constrained and

recognisable. It must be the first task of theory to describe space as such a system". (Ibid.:8-9)

7.4.1 Social Space and Spatial Logic

According to Hillier and Hanson **social space** has the characteristics of:

- a) *Morphology* – dense or open, solid or void
- b) *Order* – hierarchical or random
- c) *Form* – ordered or disordered
- d) *Definition* – articulated or broad
- e) *Meaning* – significant or bland
- f) *Movement* – static or dynamic.

In this regard, our experience and recognition of settlement lies in the relationship between buildings "by the way in which they are collected together, create a system of open space – and it is the form and shape of the open space system as everywhere defined by the buildings that constitutes our experience of the settlement" (Hillier & Hanson, 1984:9)

To discover the logic of that relationship in generic terms, "*the genotype*", we have to determine simple rules which are consistently applied. A number of village plans in one region, having apparent homogeneity on visual inspection, will have a similar balance of "randomness" in plan; i.e., the balance between the degree of order and of randomness in the logic of space.

The simplest planning application may be a "rule", for instance, that all cells join one another along one wall only, while two sides face onto shared open space, one of which is permeable. The cells are completely interchangeable within the global form, (as against a strict symmetrical layout in which little interchangeability exists).

The description of the "rules", which indicates the degree of nomenclature necessary to identify each cell, (to locate it exactly), is a semantic process, described as *Syntax*. The globular description of the whole, regardless of individual components, is a procedure of *Transpatial Integration*. (pp40-48). Having determined the *Genotype*, the specific application is modified by physical particularities of site and will become the *Phenotype*, in that place and time.

7.4.2 Perception of Space

Visual perception of space, by being "accessible" to a stranger makes that space "public", or integral with his axis, (or path of access) – this is **symmetrical space**. Space which is asymmetrical is less perceived or clearly visible by strangers, and correspondingly more socially significant to the occupants, who are static or place-bound. This is similar to the term "Pragmatic Space" discussed by Norberg-Shultz for space which is familiar and under control or "integrated" to a city dweller, principally around his or her threshold, with connotations also of the idea of "existential space" or "assimilated space". (Wheatly 1976)

Hillier and Hanson recognise Convex ("bead" systems), and Axial (string systems) of spatial forms. Convex forms have a high degree in the extension of two-dimensional space, while Axial space is primarily one-dimensional. An "axial map" would indicate "the least set of straight lines which pass through each convex space and makes all axial links; and a convex map – the least set of "fitting spaces".

Strangers are therefore drawn directly along axial links, in which they impose surveillance. Arriving at the main square or convex space they are under the surveillance of the occupants.

7.4.3 Permeability and Control

Access to and egress from and permeability of space compounds the simple rule of syntax. The points of permeability control the space, especially for movement by 'outsiders' as against occupants.

In terms of morphology the idea of a single entrance to each cell (or house) implies a special space at the threshold, the interface zone between private and public. A number of such unrelated entrances creates an "elaboration of the sociology of outside", which is 'probabilistic' and less controlled.

Where a number of entrances is related within a small space there is an "elaboration of the sociology of inside" which is deterministic and implies control. The degree to which the system is controlled as between 'global' (outsider to occupant) and 'local' (occupant to occupant)

indicates the extent of socio-political control by that society, expressed in the spatial layout of the settlement.

Hillier and Hanson's process is relevant in its application, where not only can space be analysed in social terms but more importantly the social system can be expressed in spatial terms through logical process in planning and design.

However, a more rigorous and valid empirical approach to the history of the built environment for the purposes of design intervention is that provided by Rapoport (1990) which will be the subject of the next section.

7.5 The Use of Historical Precedents in Design

Whereas Hillier and Hanson "at least implicitly" interpret the street pattern, particularly at what Rapoport calls the "fabric" level, in terms of legibility, easy learning, and *attracting* people, and hence encouraging social interaction, Rapoport emphasises the **perceptual** ones. Moreover the former do not deal with other characteristics that Rapoport examines. However he concedes that these two hypotheses are "potentially complementary rather than conflicting". (1990:455)

Social interaction mechanisms tend to be less invariant than perceptual ones, for example, and in terms of desired levels of interaction and, even more, in the appropriateness of streets for such interaction. This is why

Rapoport tends to classify them among cultural aspects of street use. As a result, other precedents may be less directly applicable and they would depend, in the first instance, on whether social interaction is desired and whether streets are seen as appropriate settings for this. There would also be limitations due to the extent of the effect of environment on social behaviours. (Ibid.:455)

Hence, Rapoport's approach is a better way of studying the history of the built form and of using historical data in any theory of urban/environmental design.

As indicated above, Rapoport's study is about *the use of historical data to derive precedents useful to design generally and to urban design specifically*. In urban design, such data have been of some interest to analysts of urban spaces and urban landscapes (e.g., Cullen 1961; Sitte 1965; Bacon 1967; Anderson 1978; Krier 1979). This study, however, adopts an Environment-Behavior Study perspective more rigorously with a particular orientation toward learning from past environments.

The basic argument is that the learning of "... precedents cannot be done directly by copying forms but must proceed by analysis using concepts from which generalised lessons can be derived. Only in this way can one relate the past to contemporary (and future) work". (Rapoport 1990)

7.6 Some Aspects of Pedestrian Behaviour and Environmental Settings

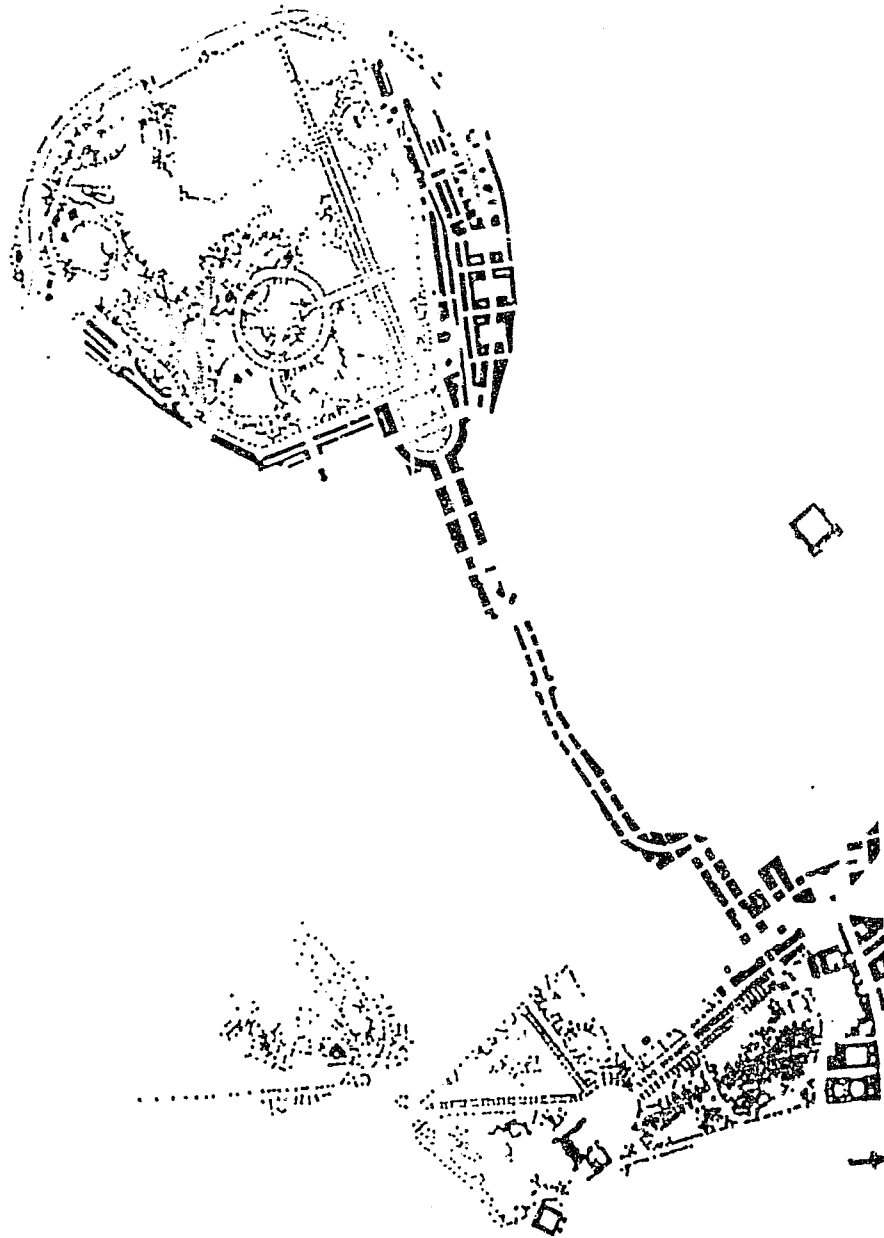
From an Environment-Behavior Study (Rapoport,1990) perspective, the relation of environments and people is the result of complex interactions among cultural, perceptual, and environmental (physical) variables. This, then, also applies to "walking", for instance. In the case of walking, human characteristics include the speed of walking, the nature of perception, information processing, the need for interest and hence appropriate levels of complexity, certain evolutionary characteristics, cultural rules and so on. The settings are selected according to their appropriateness: cultural, perceptual, and physical. They can be supportive or act as catalysts. In these terms, a number of factors may be involved in the use that people make of streets and other urban spaces. For example, Rapoport (1990:249) identifies:

1. *Technology*. In cases where wheels, or even riding animals, are little used, walking is extremely prevalent.
2. *Safety*, whether from traffic or crime, although the major impact is, of course, *perceived* than actual safety. Another example is the effect of town size on children's mobility affected by parents' perceptions of safety.
3. *Environmental variables* such as noise, fumes, congestion, quality of paving (if any), and so on.
4. *Climate and weather*, season, rain, snow heat, and so on, although these are clearly modified by culture; these would also include shade or sunlight and so on.
5. *Topography*, such as hills and slopes, which may, however, affect people differently, for example, the elderly or handicapped.

6. *Distance* to a given goal or, more correctly cognised subjectively defined distance.
7. *Presence and availability of services* such as shops, cafes, food, kiosks, toilets, seats, and so on.
8. *Culture* that defines the acceptability of walking, rules for appropriate behaviours, settings, and so on.
9. *Certain physical, perceptual characteristics*, for example, adequate complexity levels, adequate interest, and so forth.

In general, though, like most activities, the use of urban spaces (such as walking) is mainly a function of the last two, particularly because many of the others can be related to those or subsumed under them. In other words, it is the function of two major sets of factors: cultural and physical. Any such activity is primarily culturally based and in that it is the result of unwritten rules and costumes, traditions, habits, the prevailing life-style, and definition of activities appropriate to given settings.

"This has to do not only with accepted levels of physical exertion but with attitudes of sociability or reserve;... if reserve and anonymity are the accepted norm, then settings encouraging sociability will be seen as inhibiting; if the contrary – as supportive. They will thus be evaluated differently. This is a matter of unwritten rules and partly of design. Thus designing the best Italian Street or Greek plaza will have no effect if people regard using them as unacceptable." (Ibid.:249)



*John Nash's design of the Regent's street route,
London linking Regent's park and St James park
(Source: Bacon, 1967)*

7.7 The Nature of Urban Spatial Design

To influence the growth of cities, the urban designer must have a clear concept of the underlying design structure that must be produced to set in motion the involved processes of city building. The methods of design used in single building or in a group of buildings are ineffectual on city scale for two reasons. First, the geographic extent of the city is so vast that the human mind is incapable of developing concurrently explicit three-dimensional plans for the entire area. And second, the city is of such a scale that its various sections are built and rebuilt over a long span of time. Therefore, any design used for part of the city should be able to be modified and extended into an ever-widening area. (Bacon, 1967:33)

From his acclaimed work on Philadelphia, Bacon concludes that a clear representation of "simultaneous movement systems" in three-dimensional terms has the quality necessary to meet the two city design requirements. By clarifying what is essential and what is non-essential, this method enables the designer to establish a central design structure without attempting to cover the entire area which encapsulates the whole city. Furthermore, this system of three-dimensional planning is capable of the extension, refinement, and enrichment of the city throughout the years — "a strong cohesive force in organising the designs of a series of individual architects into a whole..."

7.7.1 Simultaneous Movement Systems

To understand the significance of "simultaneous movement systems" or paths along which city-dwellers move or are transported, three concepts must be explained:

1. Relationship of mass and space:

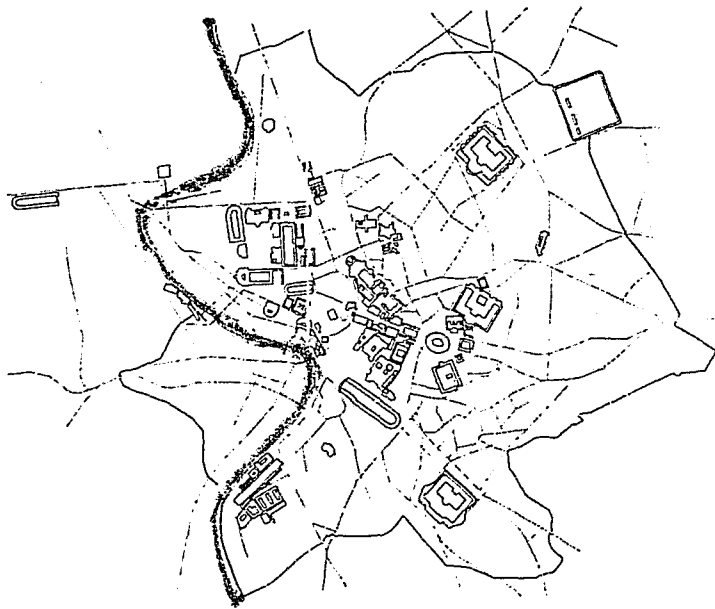
The first step is to orient one's mind as fully as possible to the concept of space as a dominating force, to respond to space as a basic element in itself, and to conceive designs within it.

2. Continuity of experience:

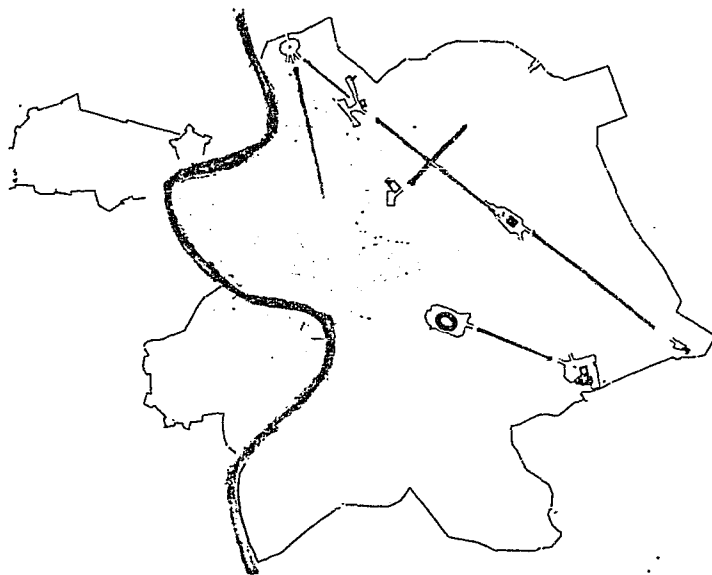
To role of design in the city should be to create a harmonious environment for each individual. Movement through space creates a continuity of experiences derived from the nature and form of spaces through which the movement occurs. If one can establish a track through space which becomes the actual path of movement of large numbers of people, or participators, and can design the area adjacent to it to produce a continuous flow of harmonic experience as one moves over that track in space, successful designs in cities may be created.

3. Simultaneous continuities:

One must Attempt to see the continuity of space experience in terms of a series of movement systems based on different rates of speed and different modes of movement, each of these interrelated with the others and each contributing its part to the total living experience in the city.



*Classical Rome, above; and Baroque Rome, below.
(Source: Bacon, 1967)*



7.7.2 Design Structure of Baroque Rome

Sixtus V, in his effort to recreate the city of Rome into a city worthy of ritual, saw clearly the need to establish a basic over-all design structure in the form of a movement system as an idea, and at the same time the need to tie down its critical parts in positive physical forms which could not easily be removed. As Sixtus V cast his eyes over the city of Rome after his election as Pope in 1585, he considered how he could make the sprawling, disorderly city into a fitting capital of Christendom.

Illustrated here is the “unfolding of one of the most remarkable design processes in history” (Bacon, 1967:128), the impingement of the ideas of Sixtus V, on the minds of clients and architects long after he was dead.

The plan of Sixtus V was not an arbitrary pattern, but a functional form in response to a specific need – i.e., the ritual procession of pilgrims over the open terrain.

There is more to the lesson of Rome than the interrelationship of planning and terrain. In this city of seven hills the problem of imposing a rational design network on such rugged countryside is a formidable one. During the classical period in Rome, when design concentrated on the establishment of self-contained building complexes, the topographical problem was that of hollowing out hills or filling in valleys to create exact geometrical planes for the formal, symmetrical buildings. The design concept of Sixtus V created entirely new topographic problems because he was concerned about a straight line a few hundred meters long, as required for his vistas and movement system.

Chapter 8

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: a Case Study Design

8.1 Background to the Study Area

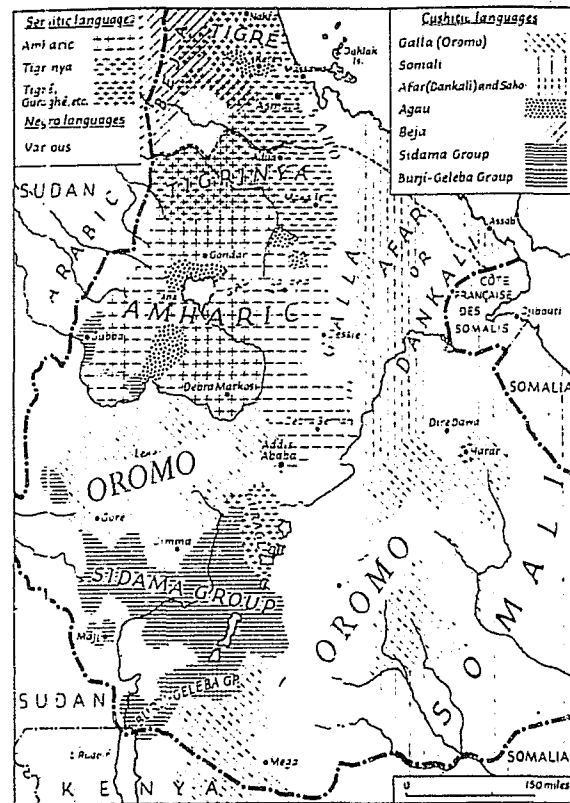
8.1.1 The Country

In terms of chronology, many historians have tended to refer to Ethiopia as the *Kingdom of Aksum* and/or *Abyssinia* for the era until late 19th century and Ethiopia since then. However the traditionally held view is that the present Ethiopia is the same country that was frequently mentioned in the *Old Testament* and in the writings of Homer and Herodotus (Ullendorff, 1960).

Early accounts of the Kingdom of Aksum and its famous port Adulis were recorded in the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* written by an anonymous navigator. In the 6th Century AD Cosmas (McCrindle in Berhanu, 1989) described the *Kingdom of Aksum* in his "*Christian Topography*". The kingdom of Aksum adopted Christianity as a state religion in the 4th Century AD, placing Ethiopia as one of the oldest *Orthodox Christian* countries in the world (Jager, 1965:26). The great church building activities of the 12th and 13th Centuries AD and the *Gondarine* Period (17th century) have left a considerable architectural heritage.



A topographical map of Ethiopia. (Source: Buxton, 1970)



Language map of Ethiopia. (Source: Buxton, 1970)

After a century of political struggle during the "Era of Princes" power evolved out of the Shewan (central Ethiopia) nobility in the second half of the 19th century, Addis Ababa became a permanent capital.

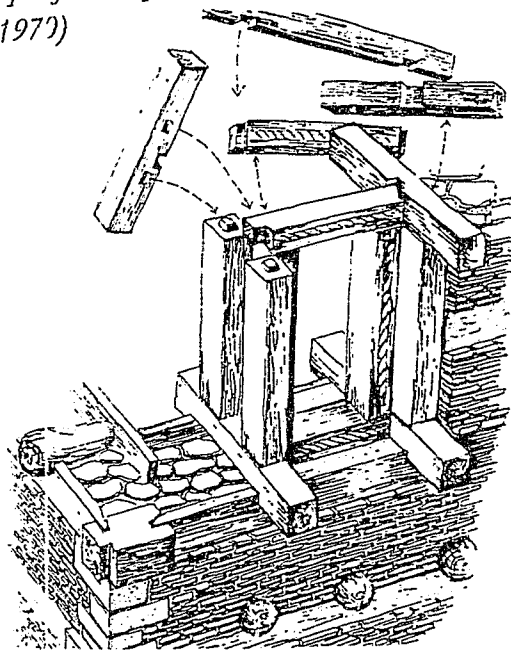
Highlands above 1500m, cover about 40 percent of Ethiopia's land area. The climate in the highlands is cool: 10-15 Celsius. Rainfall varies tremendously, but it follows the altitude and ranges from 800-1200 mm in the highlands, to 400mm below 1500m. Of the annual precipitation 75 percent falls between mid-June and early September; the rest from late February through May. The Sahel area of eastern and northeastern Ethiopia suffers regularly from severe droughts.

Forests cover about 20 percent of the country, the remainder is grassland and semi-desert. Ethiopia's long history of agricultural productivity indicates the fertility of its volcanic soils. The country has Africa's largest livestock population. The major export is coffee.

Ethiopia is a multi-ethnic mix of peoples, languages and cultures, *Amharic*, *Oromigna*, *Tigrinya* and *Somali* are spoken by more than two-thirds of the people. The main religion is Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity. The population is overwhelmingly rural and lives mainly in the central highlands. The largest city is the capital Addis Ababa meaning New Flower. It was founded in 1886 when the imperial court decided to settle down permanently in this area. It used to travel around the different regions of Ethiopia, remaining in each place until the resources of the area had been depleted. The permanent residence of the court was made possible by the introduction of the fast growing



Archeological map of Ethiopia.
(Source: Buxton, 1977)



Aksumite wall and window-frame structure based on Debra Damo. Two elements of the frame are shown both fixed and 'exploded'. (Source: Buxton: 1970)

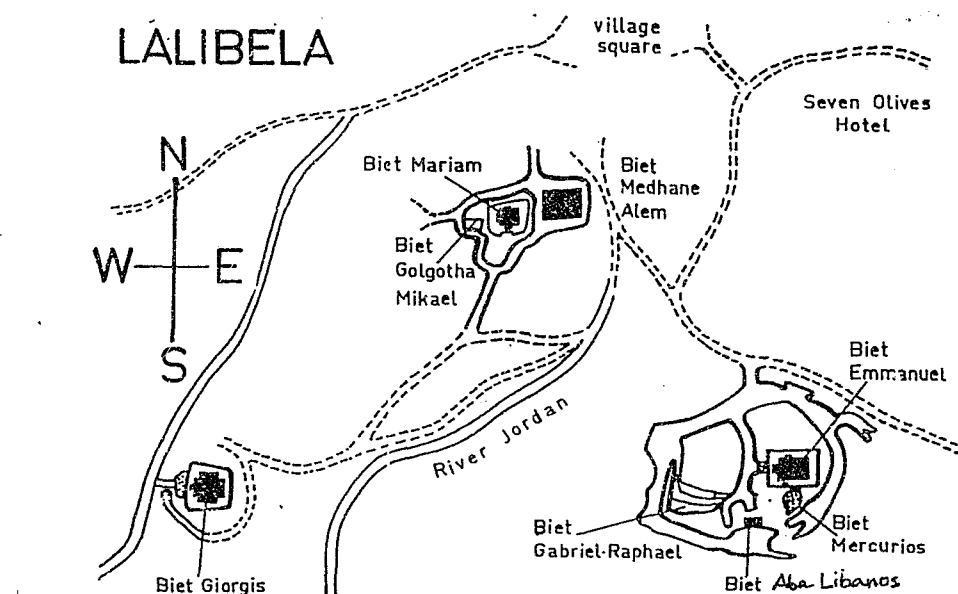
Eucalyptus tree (firewood and building material) and by the construction of the railway line to the port of Djibouti. The area was also attractive because of its warm springs and healthy climate.

Political and economic modernisation took place under Emperor Haile-Sellassie, who reigned from 1916 to 1935, when the Italian army invaded the country. After the withdrawal of the Italians in 1941 Haile-Sellassie resumed the throne until he was overthrown in 1974 by the revolutionary military council, the *Dergue*.

The Marxist regime of the council met with much opposition from the different ethnic peoples of the country, especially as the regime proved an economic disaster. It finally collapsed in 1991 through the combined forces of the opposition and in 1993 Eritrea gained independence from Ethiopia. In 1994 elections were held and a constitution was approved for a new federal government.

8.1.2 Architecture and Space Concepts in History

The architectural history of Ethiopia is unfortunately not yet fully researched and documented. (Berhanu, 1989). Important buildings were being built even before the 10th century AD. Early church buildings like that of *Debra Damo* retained most of the *Aksumite* building techniques in stone and wood. *Monkey-head* building techniques to reinforce masonry construction during the *Aksumite Civilisation* (1st to 4th Centuries AD) were frequently employed. Plans were usually indented, both podiums

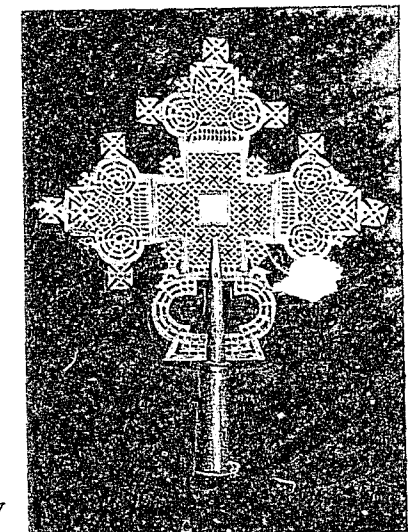
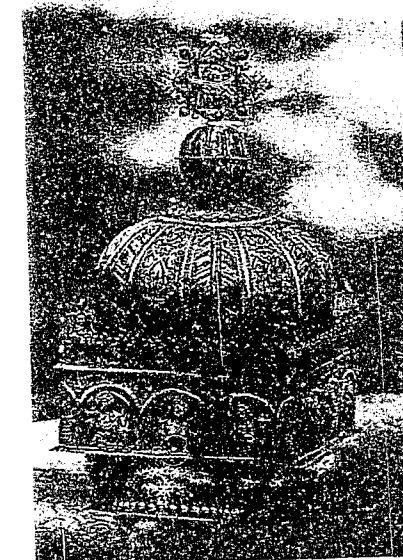
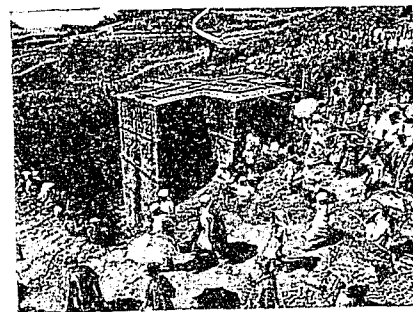
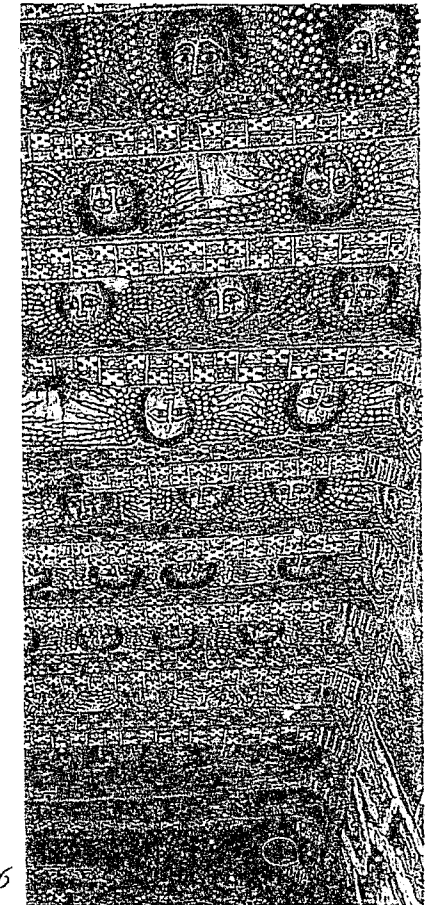
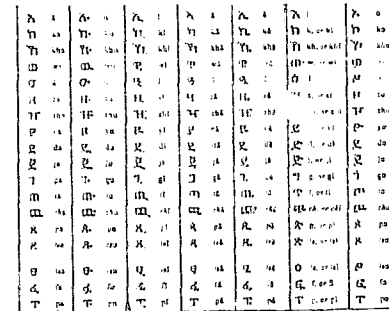
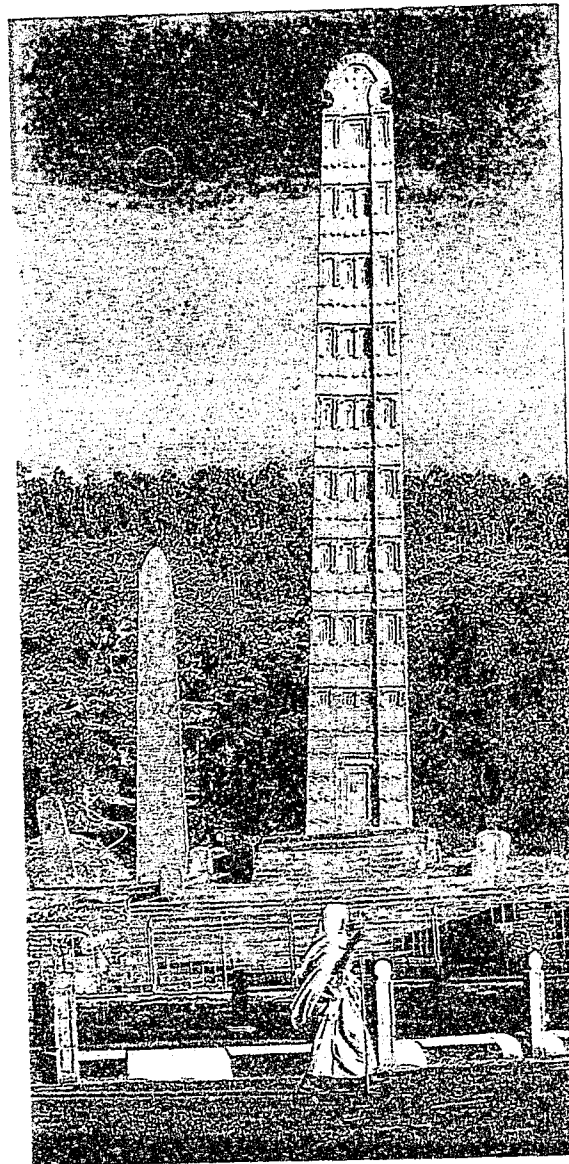


The town of Lalibela and its Monolithic stone churches (12th and 13th Centuries AD), above. An example, left. (Source: Ullendorf, 1960)

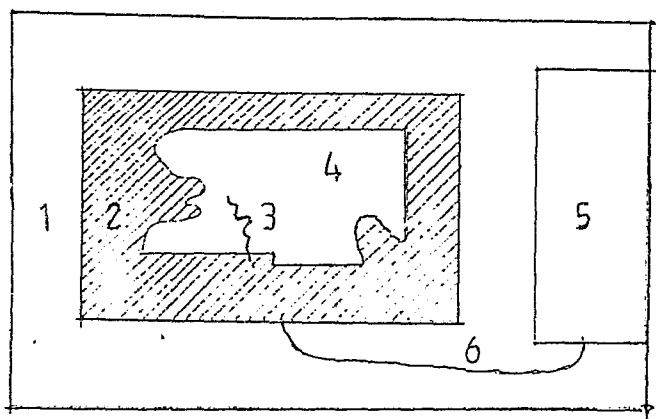
and super-structure were alternately recessed and projected; and several flights of steps had to be used to approach important buildings. Corners were specially treated and rooftops distinctly designed from the rest of the façade for reasons other than pure function. The monolithic churches of *Lalibela* carved out of stone in the 12th and 13th Century AD further developed architectural elements like the arch and repeat patterns in solid and void.

Christian customs, art and literature dominated the cultural history of Ethiopia. The church used to exercise a tremendous power even over the emperors. As a measure of power in predominantly agrarian society the church was entitled to appropriate theoretically a third of all landed property in the empire (Pankhurst, 1968:141). Until the establishment of *Gondar City* in the 17th Century nearly all buildings which deserve the *architecture* as a prefix were ecclesiastical buildings. Churches of antiquity and the most recent ones in cities are basilica in plan due to foreign influences. But the majority of rural churches are round or polygonal similar to the traditional building typology: the *tukul* or *gojo*. (Gerstel, 1970:137-40 in Berhanu 1989:10)

In Ancient Ethiopia settlements were usually located on *Ambas* (high plateau) for health and security reasons. Within the settlements the organisation of space depended on the organisation of society itself; the centre was usually reserved for socially important functions and persons. With the adoption of Christianity the church played an important role in the organisation of settlements.



- 1 *Obelisk, at Axum*
(Source: *Selamta Magazine*)
- 2 *Rock church at Lalibela*
(*Selamta Magazine*)
- 3 *Axumite stone inscription*
(Buxton, 1970)
- 4 *Modern Ethiopic Alphabet*
(Buxton, 1970)
- 5 *Royal Crown, note cross on top of crown*
(*Selamta Magazine*)
- 6 *Church ceiling painting*
(*Gataway Magazine*)
- 7 *Processional cross*
(*Selamta Magazine*)



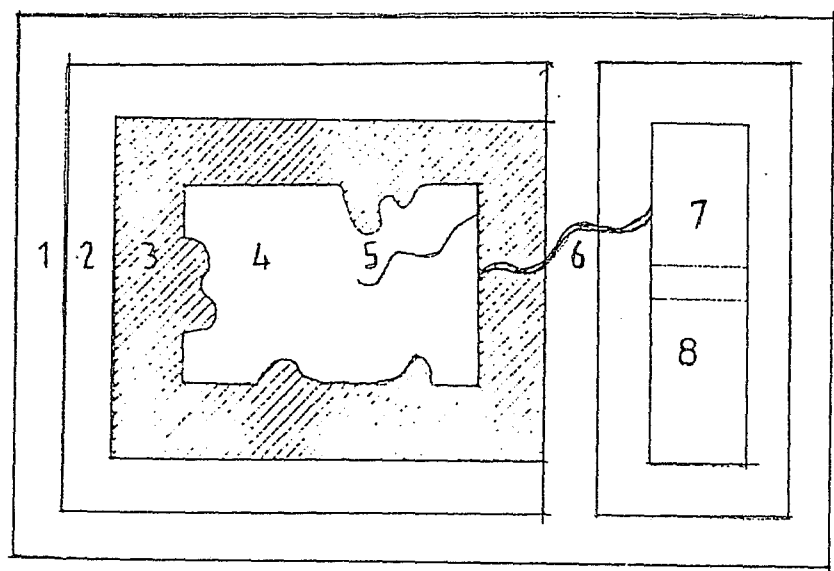
Above:

The world according to Cosmas the Christian Topographer: 1 Land beyond ocean where Man dwelt before the Flood; 2 Ocean; 3 Nile River; 4 Earth; 5 Paradise; 6 Ghion River

Below:

The world according to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church: 1 Air; 2 Fire; 3 Ocean; 4 Earth; 5 Ghion River; 6 Path to Heaven; 7 Heaven; 8 Hell

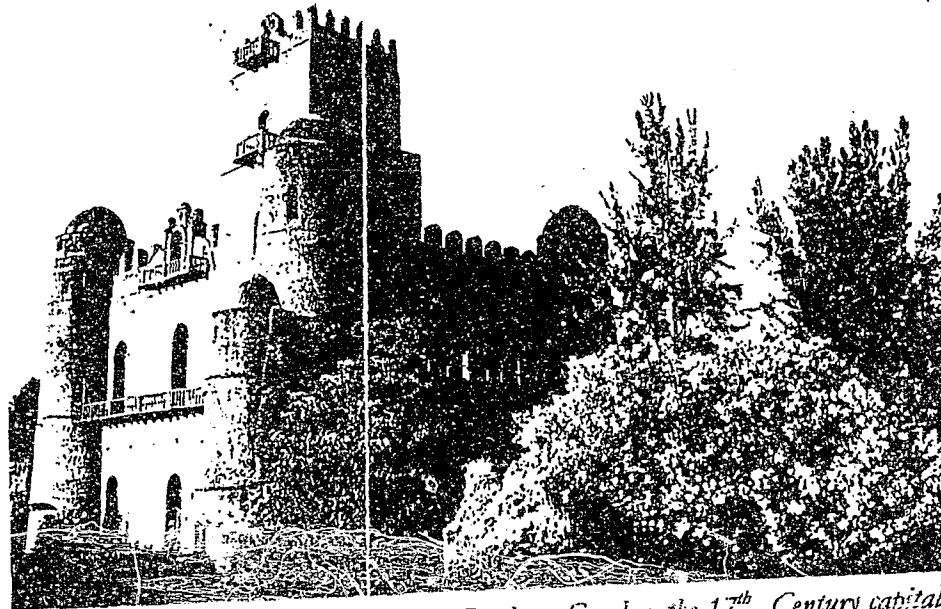
Note: The sources of the Blue Nile are in central Ethiopia and is formally called Ghion in Geez, an archaic language currently used by the Church. Pathes are made winding and perilous for religious reasons. (Source: Berhann, 1989)



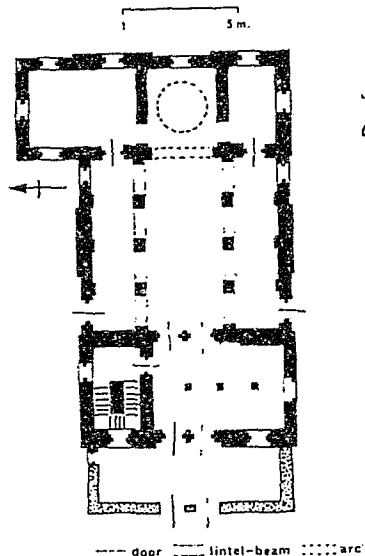
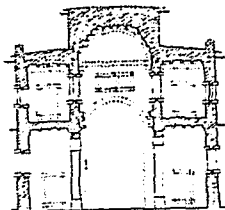
In traditional settlements the church is set among groves of trees, the natural setting taking precedence over the man-made building in most cases (Henze, 1977:77-78). The *Kahn Sefer* (priests quarter) lies adjacent to the church. The village *Adebabay* (open court) is mostly located next to the church compound, usually on the entrance side. Here law and justice is administered using the church as imposing background in physical and spiritual terms. This practice is still observed (Berhanu 1989: 11). The slow diffusion of Christianity into the belief and custom of the people has resulted in a unique religion which incorporates pre-Christian rituals (Ullendorff, 1960). The siting of churches and palaces on prominent land among groves of trees, the worship of holy water sites, the unique calendar with 13 months, the congruence of the New Year festival with the end of the rainy season and, last but not least, the unique time reckoning system based on sun rise and sun set are attributed to the amalgamation of pagan rituals with that of the Christian religion.

Traditional spaces are often incorporated in church architecture. The *Deje Selam* (lit., Gate of Peace), for example, is a traditional space where the attention of the worshiper is prepared for a more sacred place ahead. Based on this idea of space as a filter of activities and people the Ethiopian Orthodox Church has developed a three-fold spatial configuration (fig. p73) similar to the *Tabernacle of Solomon* (Ullendorff, 1960 ; Jager 1965)

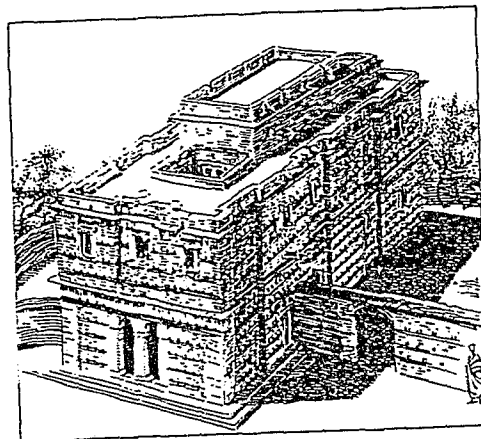
Entrances and accesses to buildings have always been given important considerations in Ethiopian architecture. Separate entrances are designated for different purposes and personalities. In ecclesiastical



Castle at Gondar, the 17th Century capital
(Source: ETC)



Section, plan and perspective view of the Monolithic church at Debra Damo (Source: Buxton, 1976)



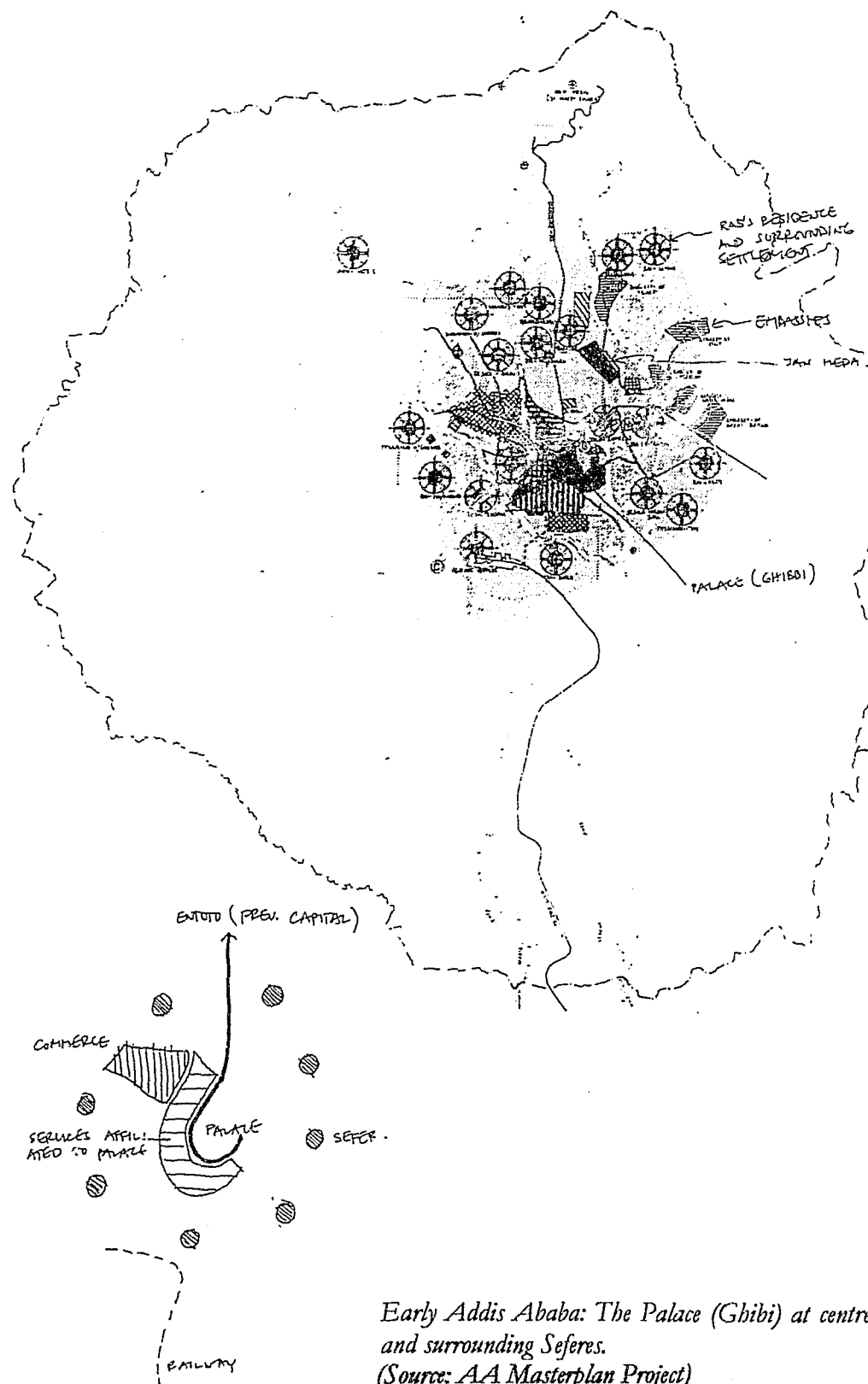
complexes these norms are duly observed. In secular architecture entrances developed metaphors: a person allowed to enter through back doors while his proper entrance is from the front is believed to have won the favour of his patron (Berhanu, 1989).

Accesses on the other hand were conceived to be defensible in the case of palaces and garrisons or to arouse expectations in the case of ecclesiastical buildings. Garrison towns were thus located on *Ambas* to make them less accessible so that they were not vulnerable to enemy attack. In the case of ecclesiastical complexes many pilgrimage places in Ethiopia are located on spectacular sites that are arduous to reach.*

8.1.3 Pre-Addis Ababa Capitals

After the decline of the power at Gondar in the mid 18th Century capital cities were no longer permanent due to the political instability in the country for about a century. Garrison towns were founded at various locations. The Morphology of these *Wandering Capitals* follows a preconceived pattern based on the organisation of the army. The Emperor was the one who usually selects the site for his camp and the regional chiefs followed suit. Each regional chief has his own soldiers who were seldom paid other than indirect remuneration in land. The basic space organisation of the garrisons embodied in the organisation of the army and the society itself. The military camps occupied by

*The subterranean accesses of *Lalibela* rock-hewn churches (pp 53, 54), the mountain top location of *Ziquala Abo* and the rope hauling access of *Debre Damo* may all be meant to screen devotees from those who are not during these ritual pilgrimages.

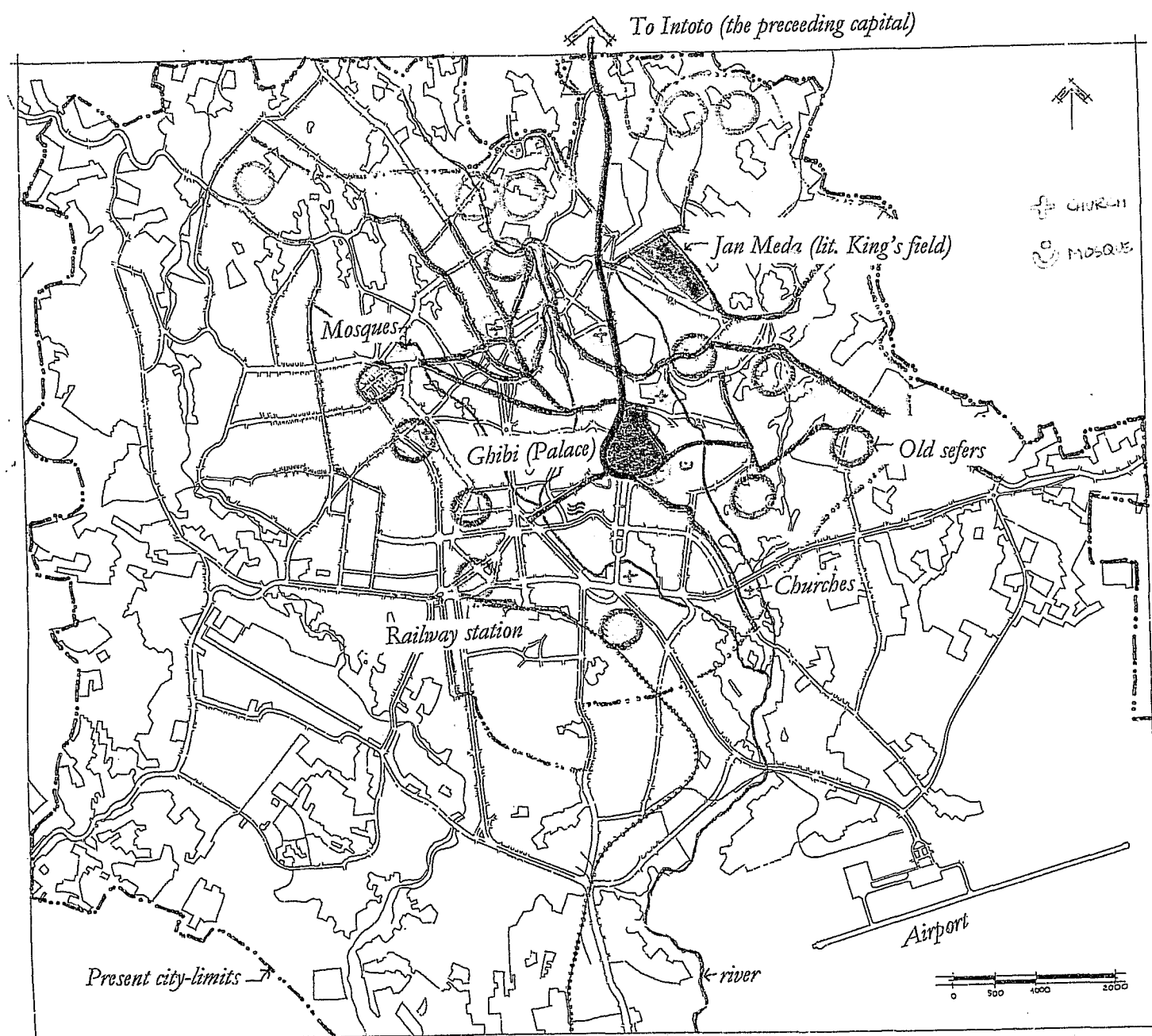


regional chiefs, designated here *Sefer* (cantonment) comprises not only soldiers but also soldiers' families and other people who are economically or on tribal basis affiliated to the chief or to any member in the group. In times of peace these garrison towns outgrow their military purposes, diversify in function and become established towns. Addis Ababa had a similar origin.

8.1.3.1 Early Addis Ababa (1886-1935)

The establishment of Addis Ababa as a permanent capital was not a planned act. It owes its existence to its proximity to *Intoto*, its predecessor. Intoto lacked sufficient supply of water and firewood because of its location on a mountaintop. It has windy, cold and stormy weather and this initiated its early abandonment for a better site. The presence of thermal springs, the comparatively plain topography and lower altitude of Finfine Plains attracted the nobility and their soldiers from the outset. It was in 1886 when Taitu, the wife of King Menilik, built her first *Ilfign* (reception house) that formal residences started to appear on the plains which was latter named Addis Ababa (New Flower).

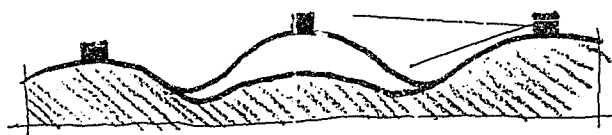
At the time of the foundation of Addis Ababa the Ethiopian Empire was in the making. Several expeditions were conducted from Addis Ababa during its first two decades of existence. Because of this the population of the city was mainly composed of soldiers and their attendants. The feudal system in Ethiopia at that time empowered the Emperor to exercise virtually all conceivable power over land and the citizens



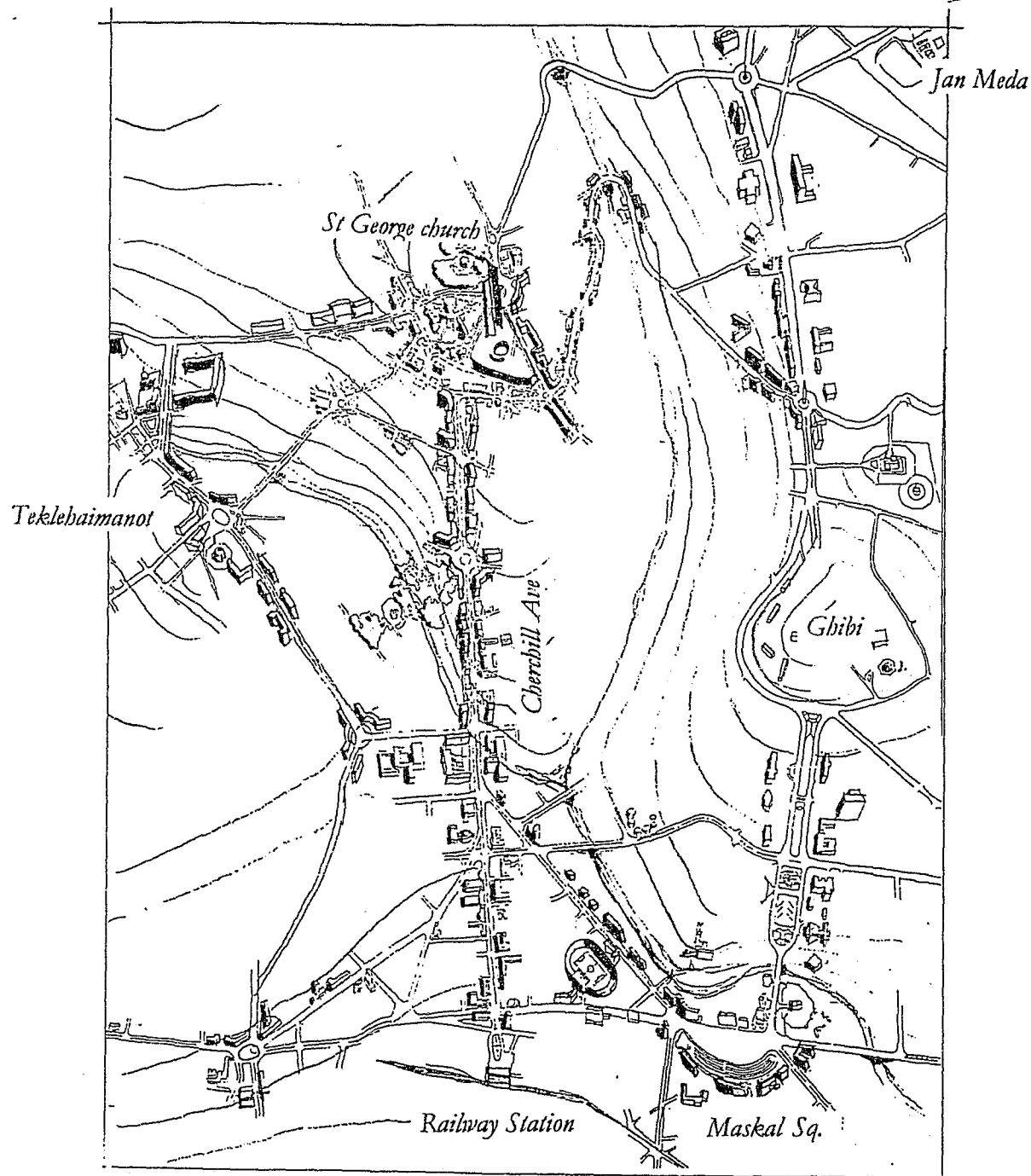
EARLY SEFERS OF ADDIS ABABA IN RELATION
TO PRESENT CITY LIMITS (After AAMP)

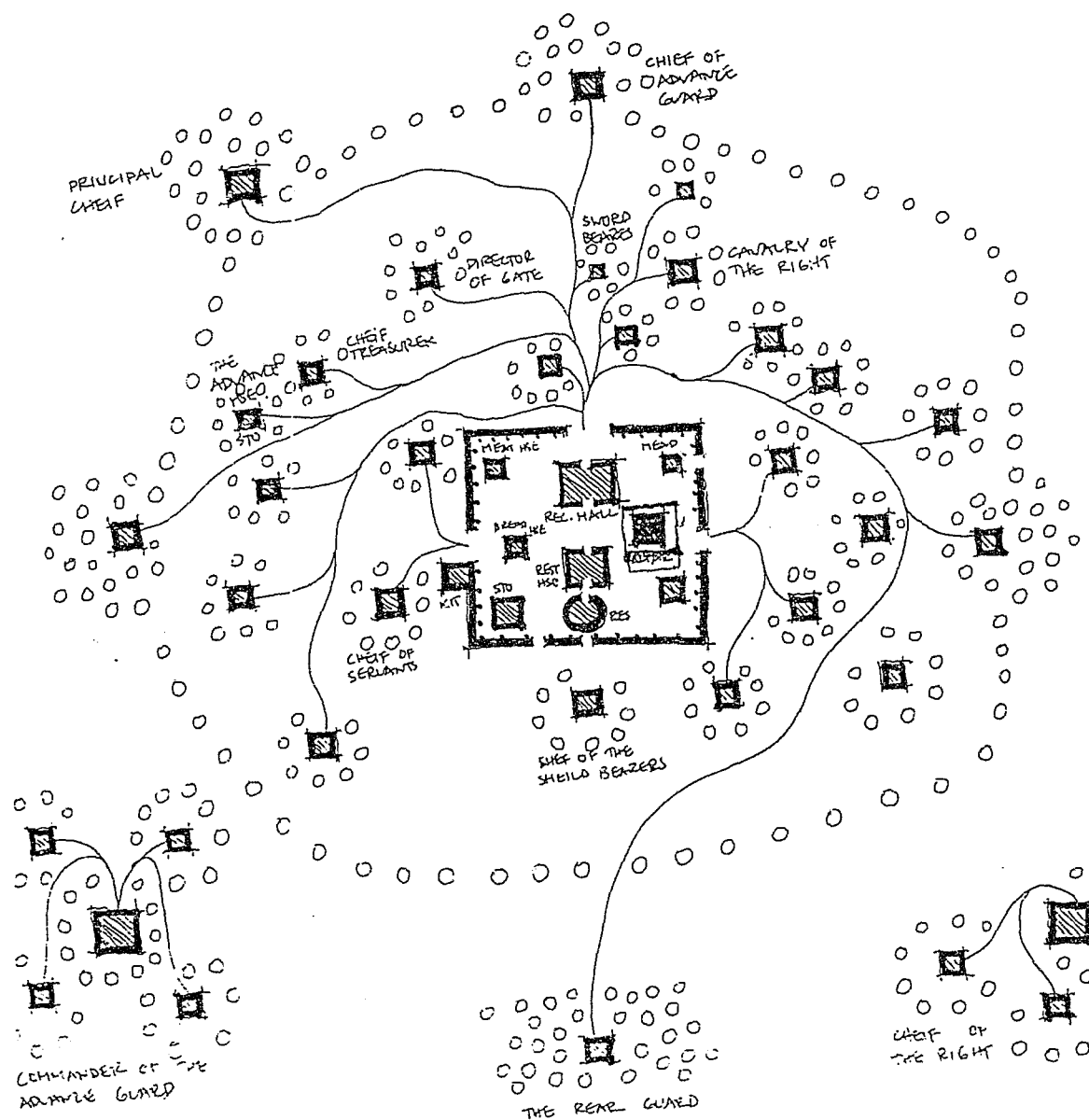


PLAN

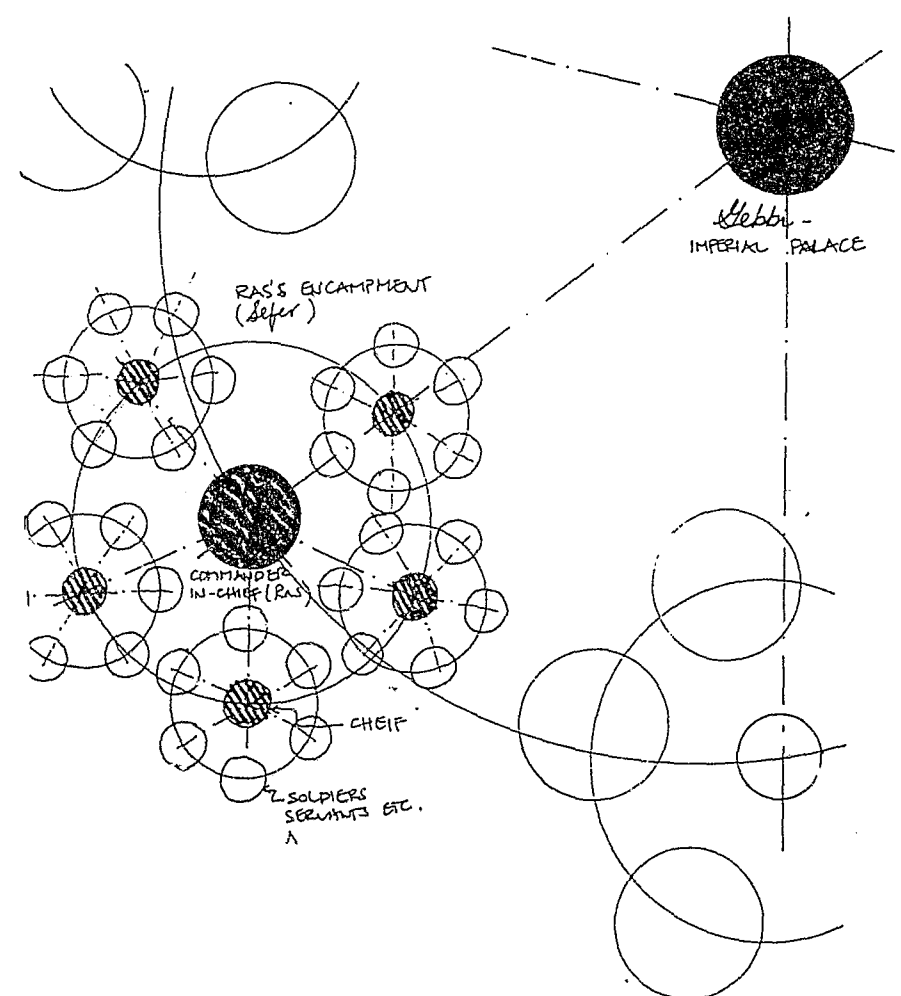


Important buildings such as the Ghibi, Rases' residences, and churches occupied prominent grounds. Foot paths that traversed these places largely followed the contours. (Source: Author)

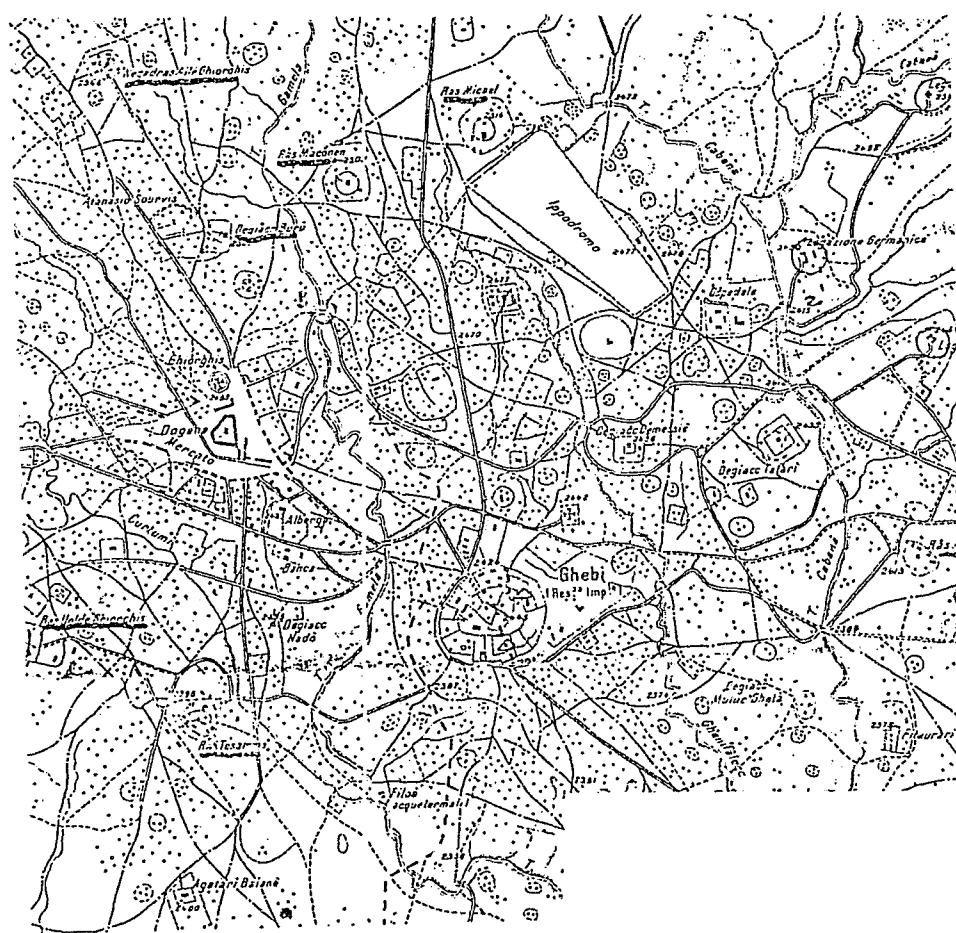




THE TYPICAL SEFER: Ras Hailu's camp. Note the conglomeration of concentric and herarchical layout (Source: AAMP)



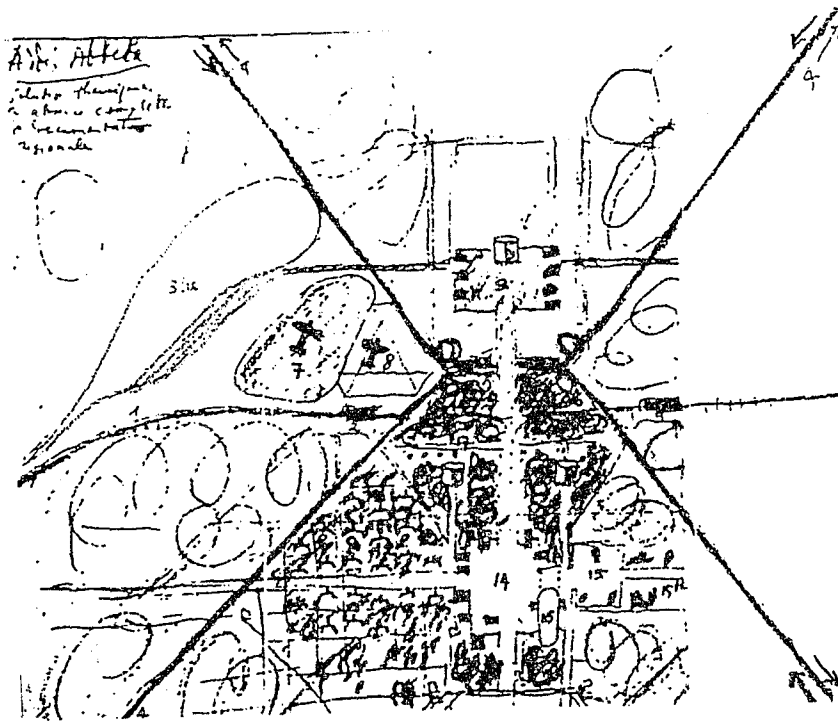
SCHEMATIC DIAGRAM OF THE IMPERIAL SETTLEMENT: The Imperial palace is at centre surrounded by the Rases' Sefers. Addis Ababa had a similar origin. (Source: Author)



8.1.3.2 Italian Interlude (1935-1941)

During the Italian interlude of 1935-1941 the ease of movement in the city was of prime importance for the occupying force. Racial segregation was envisaged from the very beginning. The decision to make Addis Ababa the capital of *Italian East Africa* necessitated the planning of the city in a "grand" manner. May be it is this ambition which led to the appointment of Le Corbusier to plan Addis Ababa for the first time. (Berhanu, 1989:29). Le Corbusier's plan was not finalised but his preliminary sketches showed street networks based on grand vistas and a city composed of distinct residential areas based on race (Tekeste 1986 in berhanu, 1989). Natural features and topography were subservient to the imposed form.

In spite of their short stay the Italians laid basic infrastructure that influenced the development of the city at latter periods. The city centre was shifted from *Arada* to the present site, the market area owes its gridiron layout to the Italian plan. District names such as Piazza, Casa Inces, Merkato originated from the Italian designation.



Le Corbusier's Plan for Addis Ababa
(Source: AAMPP)

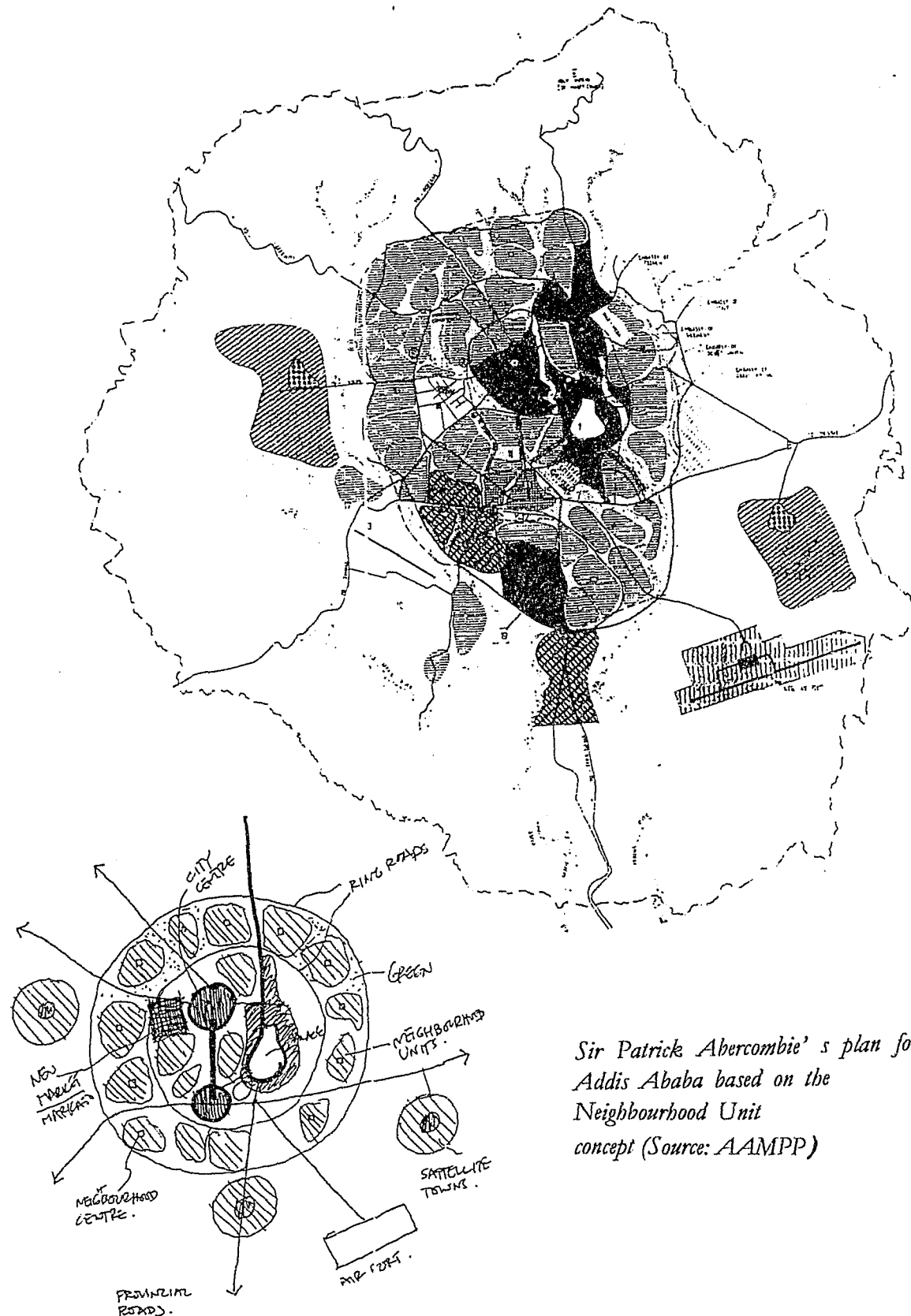
8.1.3.3 Masterplans for Addis Ababa 1941-1975

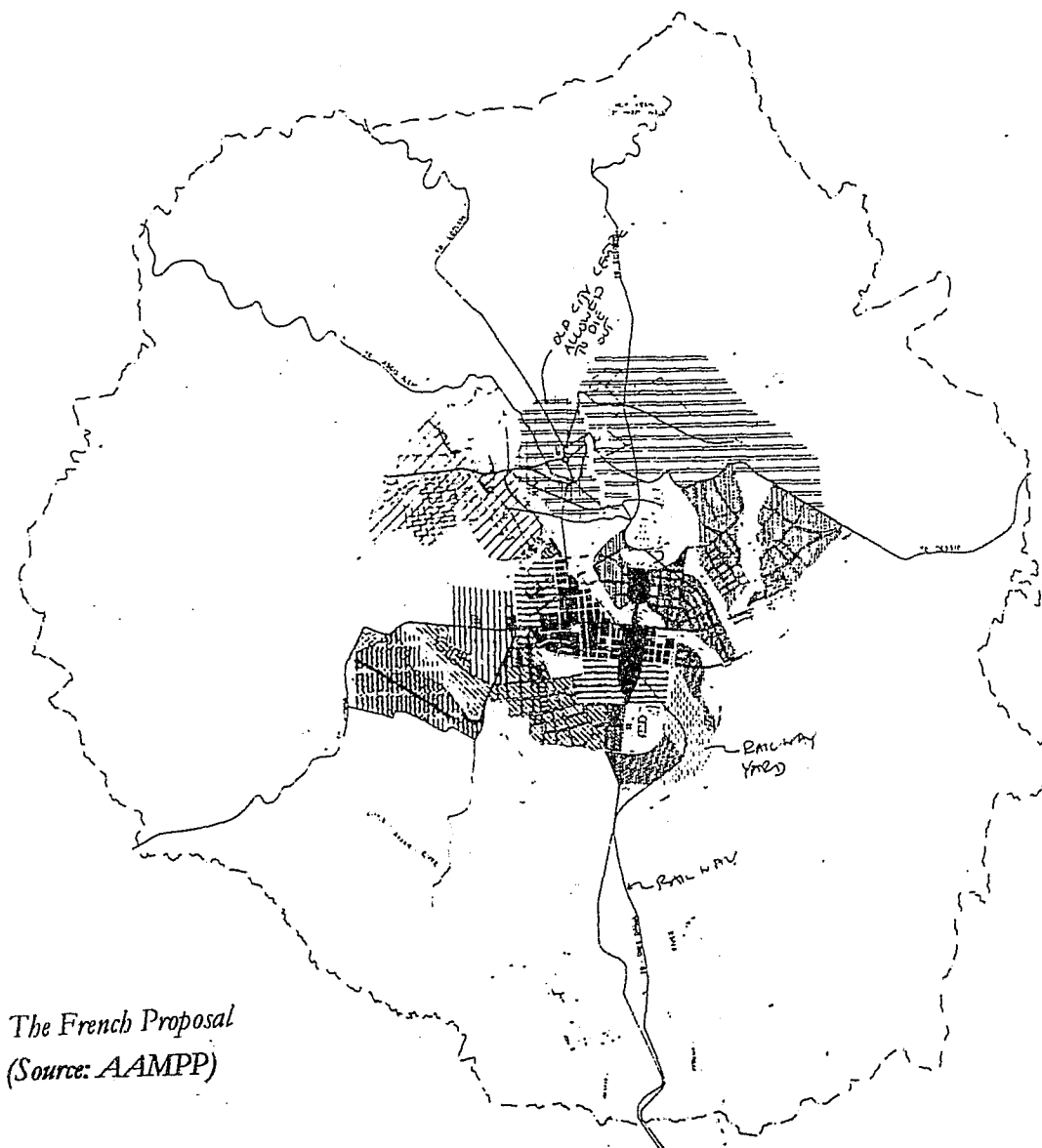
The second master plan for the city of Addis Ababa was planned by British experts, first by Sir Patrick Abercombie and latter revised by Hennessy and Partners. The main principles followed in their design were the development of neighbourhood units in the city and the establishment of satellite towns at the outskirts. Three levels of radial roads were planned to channel traffic in the city. Most of the proposed street networks were constructed with minor adjustment. The satellite towns were not developed in the city.

The 1965 master plan by a French team was monumental in scale and formalistic in approach. Churchill Avenue owes its present form to the French team proposal.

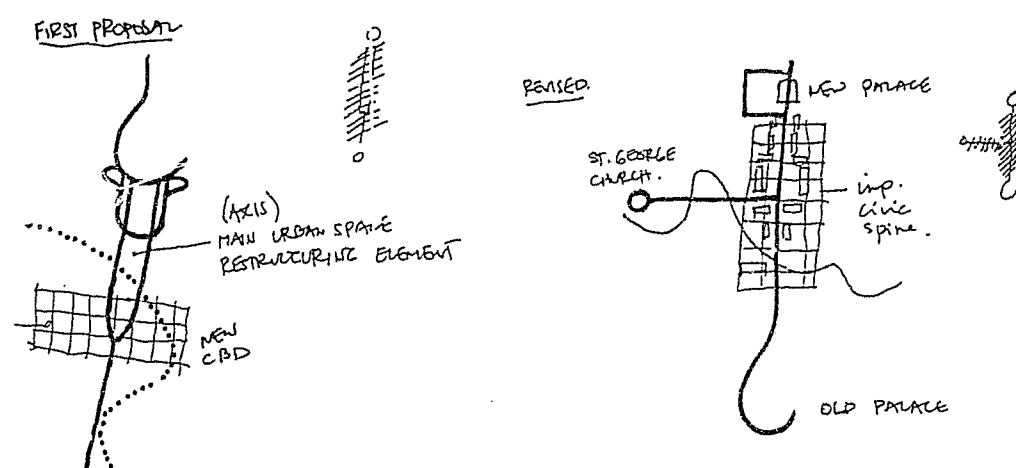
In most master plans to this stage the design parameters adopted were unrealistic to the actual situation in Addis Ababa. The designers and planning initiators did not consider the aspirations of the majority of the participants in creating the urban environment. Even then slow growth has tempered most proposals and the evolving character of the city has depended more on the indigenous initiative than any other external influence (Palen, 1976).

The master plan studies for Addis Ababa since the 1974 Socialist revolution in Ethiopia focused on the relationship between rural and urban areas. The city is conceived as the aggregate of *Kebeles*. Social Services are planned on a hierarchical level – the *Kebele* (lowest





The French Proposal
(Source: AAMPP)



administrative units in towns) the *Kefitegna*, and *Ketena* levels is the basic design principle adopted in this proposal. The main effect of this plan on the city would be its attempt to arrest urban sprawl. This could be seen from the first measures taken after the study to implement a proposal for the construction of standardised houses and apartments.

As decision and implementation is centralised, approved public projects could be carried out relatively easily. The need for a socially acceptable and economically feasible development policy is then very important.

The main factor that affected developments in the city between 1974 and 1991 is the change in land and building ownership. Almost all major developments in the city were undertaken by the government or government agencies. Nationalized buildings were converted into offices to accommodate newly created mass organisations. *Kebele Centres* grew rapidly into major activity nodes. More public parks and local sports fields came to exist since 1974. Great public places like *Abyot* (Revolution) *Square* now *Maskal* (Cross) *Square*, its original name; and *Tiglachin Square* (on Churchill Avenue) were developed between 1975 and 1985.

Despite the previous functionalist 'Masterplans' (which did not fare so well in implementation) the city has continued to grow in the spontaneous fashion which has been its distinctive feature since its founding.

The *Sefer*s discussed above, with the houses of the nobility and churches after whom they came to be called occasionally serving as landmarks, have persisted, "if understandably with the accretions of time -- living evidence of the past to the student of history, an irritating demonstration of resilience to the planner. It is to be hoped that the future growth of the city would be marked by an intelligent synthesis of these two objectives: the preservation of the past heritage and the planned and systematic utilisation of space" (Zewde: 1986)

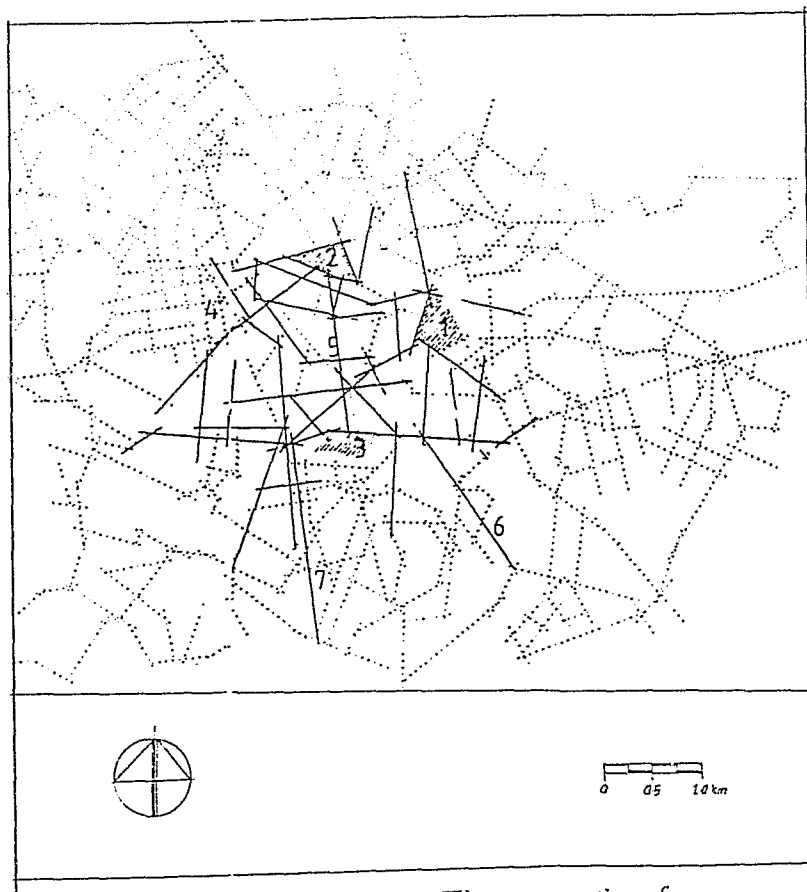
8.2 The Present Urban Form of Addis Ababa

The generative model in the evolution of the urban form of Addis Ababa is the traditional *Sefer* settlement layout. The organisation of the military into semi-independent units of specific ethnic groups resulted in an agglomeration of localities which were termed *Sefer*s. This layout promotes social cohesion by locating people of different social and economic status closely.

Despite attempts to plan the city on an often modern functionalist model, the *Sefer* still has its significance in the physical and social arrangement of the city.

Modern cities are too complex to be analysed without the help of frameworks that would enable one to deal with parts with parts without neglecting the overall view of urban problems.

It is here believed that the order of space in settlements bears the imprint of the 'use' of space by society. Constraints on random processes generate a variety of patterns if fundamental sets of generators are known by an empirical/analytic method. As discussed in the previous chapter, the methods developed by Hillier and Hanson (1984) and Rapoport (1990) are of importance in this regard. The importance of Bacon's (1987) intuitive approach to designing cities will also become evident in the case of Addis Ababa as the objective is to study the ritual use of spaces to restructure the city.



Axial Map of Addis Ababa: The concentration of integrated axial lines is more in the south part of the old city centre. 1 Old Ghibi; 2 Arada (old CBD); 3 Railway station; 4 Market area; 5 Churchill Avenue; 6 Africa Avenue; 7 Beyene Merid Street (Source: Berhanu, 1989)

Hillier and Hanson's *space syntax* addresses the central theme of urban space by treating it as a product of human acts. They argued that the relationship of spaces is more important than the nature of individual spaces. This computer model has been used by Berhanu (1989) to investigate the change in the spatial structure of Addis Ababa. The study showed that the change in the street structure of the city between the years analysed (1912, 1937 and 1986) shifted with the social decisions that located different functions in the different parts of the city. As the city grew in size there has been a minor fall in the intelligibility in all the three periods investigated.

Despite its medium intelligibility the city has a high level of diffused spaces. In Addis Ababa buildings are usually located in space; this has been described as the "structure of solids" in contrast to "structure of spaces" which is produced when buildings are located close together to enclose space. In structure of solids the identity of streets is confused with the rest of open space in a settlement. This has produced area based identification, hence the designation "architecture of areas" in contrast to the street- oriented architecture and street-based address code of Western cities. Nevertheless, this has not diminished the importance of streets in the city; streets are still the main platforms for public interaction. (Berhanu, 1989)

From this analysis it follows that the main concern lies not in the spatial structure of street in the city but on the grouping of buildings and on the general poor quality of the streetscape. A comprehensive urban design plan which takes into account not only the buildings but also the

location, interrelationship in space, and design of all elements in the city is needed.

Despite foreign influences from the very beginning, the *Sefer* layout dominated subsequent settlement patterns in the city. Unlike most other cities of similar age and size in developing countries, especially in Africa, Western influence in Addis Ababa is limited to piecemeal architectural projects in the city centre. Largely, "the growth and the evolving character of Addis Ababa has depended on indigenous initiatives to a far greater extent than that of the majority of African cities" (Palen 1969 in O'Connor 1983).

A comparison between Addis Ababa and the capitals of neighbouring countries shows a remarkable difference in the way each responded to external influences. Historically Kenya's capital, Nairobi, was established in the last quarter of the 19th century but its prolonged colonial rule has reduced its pre-existing settlement to oblivion. The city of Khartoum gives another example of urban development where the indigenous and the foreign settlement layouts exist side by side. (O'Connor, 1983)

In the case of Addis Ababa, the city started as a settlement of few nuclei: *Ghibi* (imperial palace), palaces of regional chiefs, and churches. The establishment of the market and the arrival of the rail way line established additional nuclei in the city. Subsequent developments concentrated in the direction of main approach routes to the city from the hinterland and on the intensification of areas around already existing centres. Functional differentiation in land use is a recent phenomenon in Addis.

1 A street near Urael church

(Source: Author)

2 Churchill avenue, Addis Ababa

(Selamta Magazine)

3 Aridinet Square

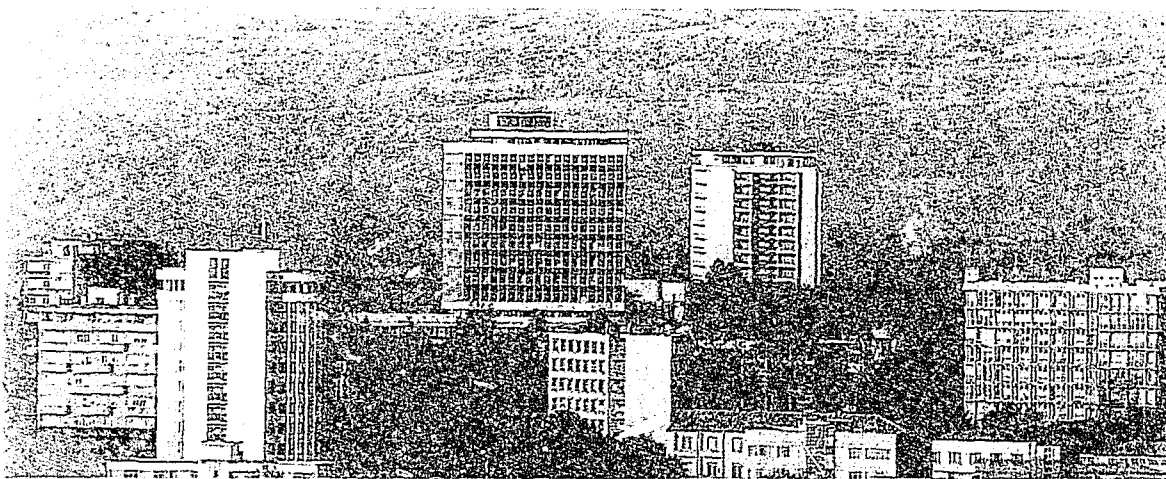
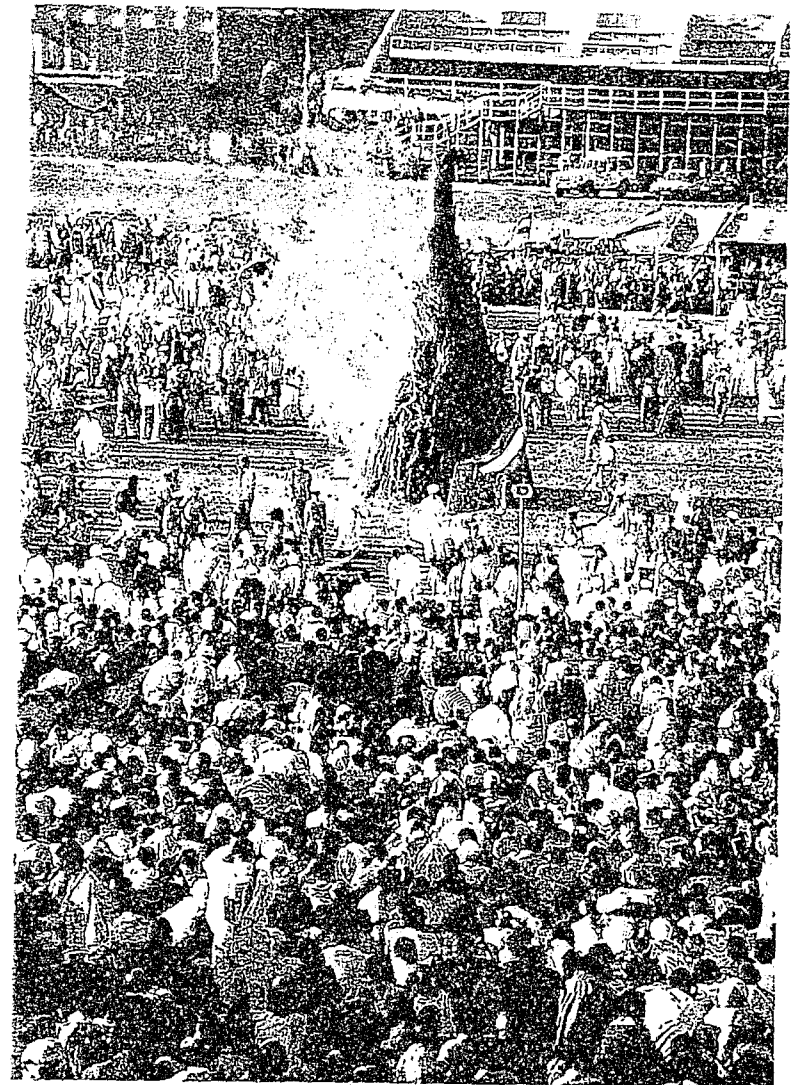
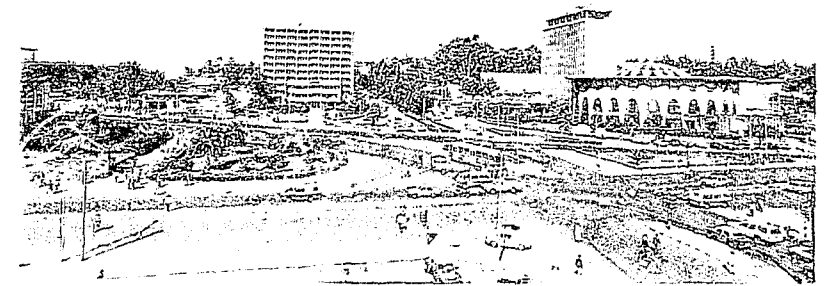
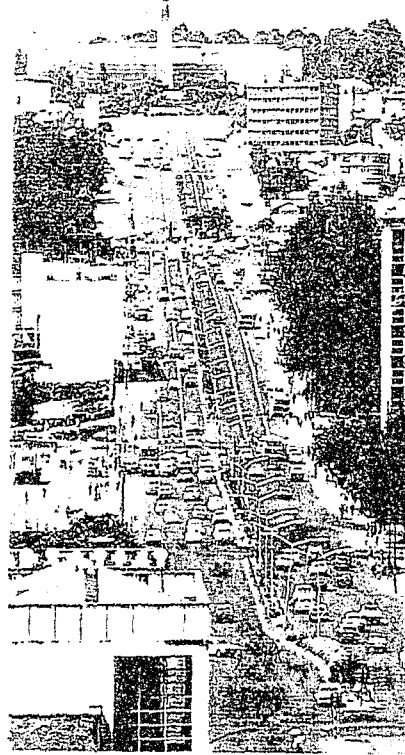
(ETC)

4 Maskal celebration at Maskal Sq.

(ETC)

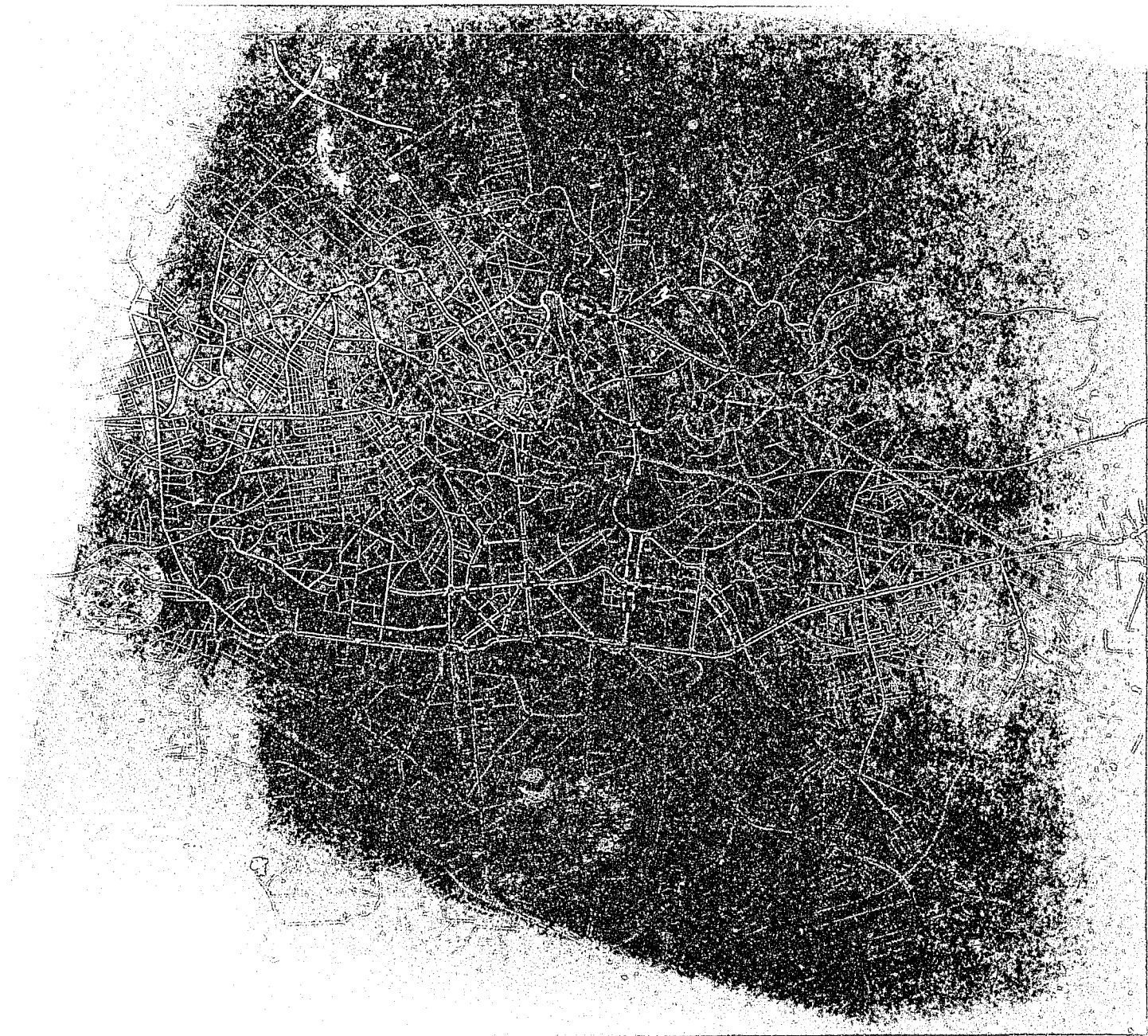
5 New CBD, partial view

(Selamta Magazine)

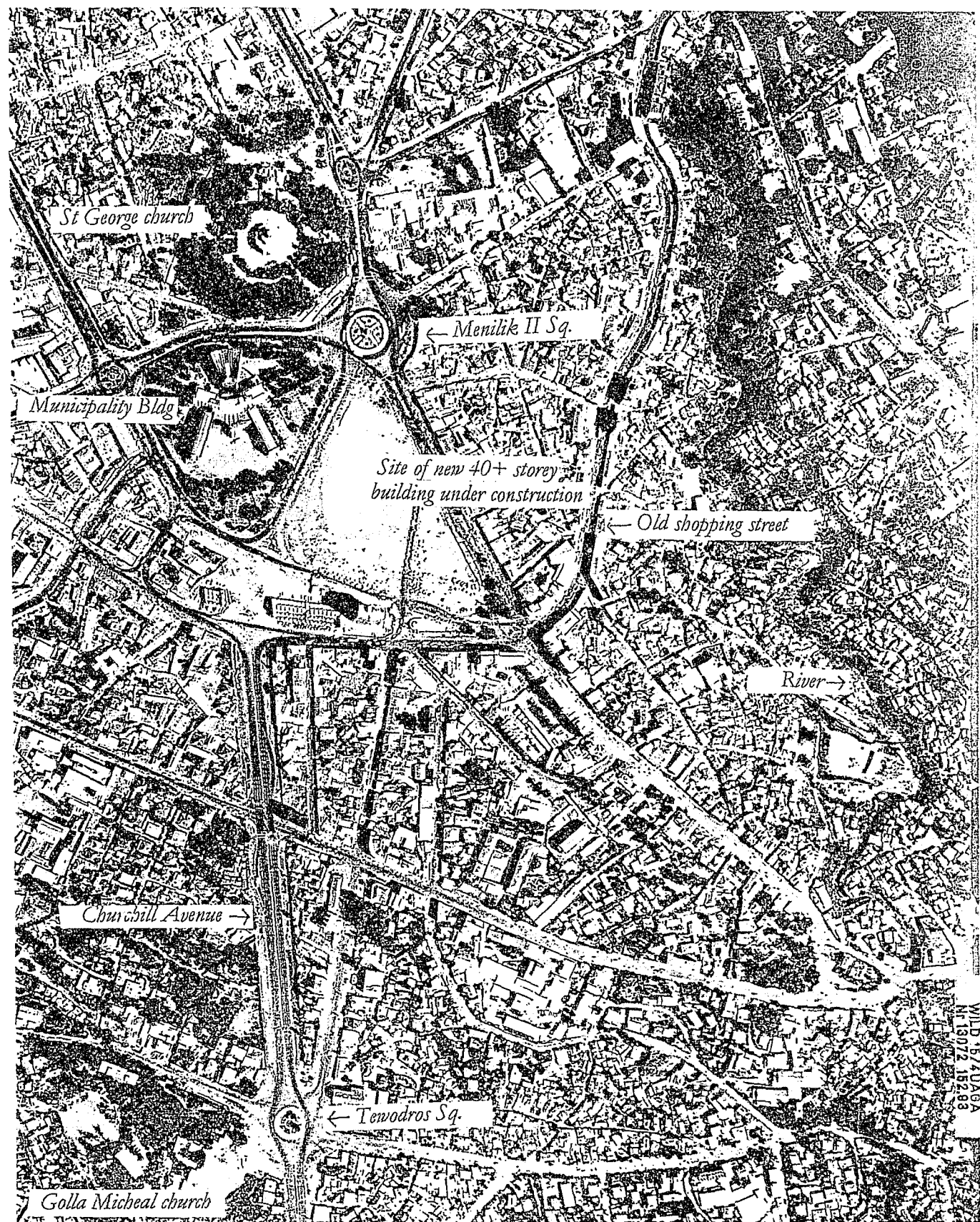




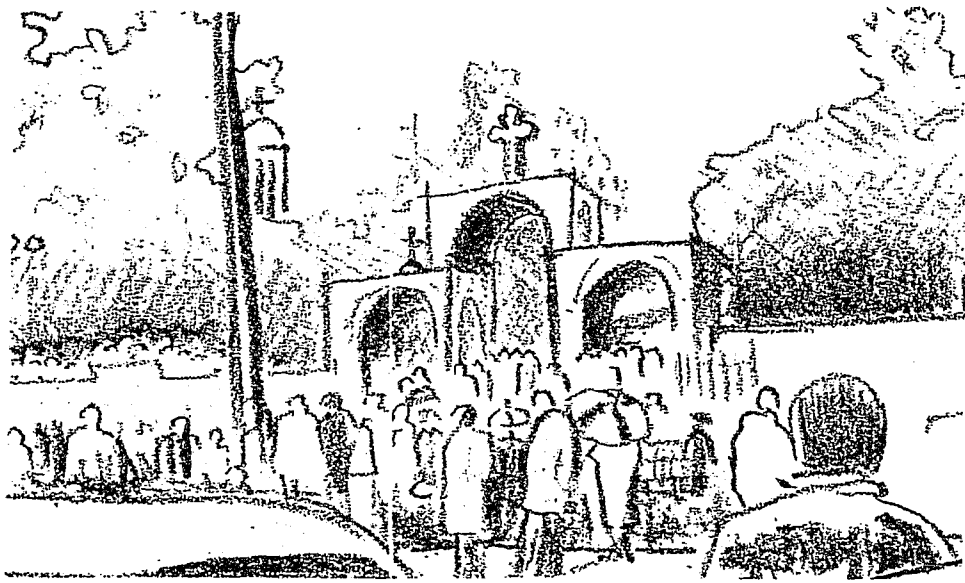
Present form and structure with the Sefers
(Source:ETC)



A PARTIAL AREAL VIEW OF
CENTRAL ADDIS ABABA:
Note the concentration of trees around St
George church in old CBD (Arada)
(Source: AA City Council)



WILD 15/4/1983
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Entrance to Urael church. Note the congregation outside the church compounds spilling over onto the busy street, above. Below, St George church (Source: Author)



8.3 Ritual Use of Spaces in Addis Ababa

8.3.1 Introduction

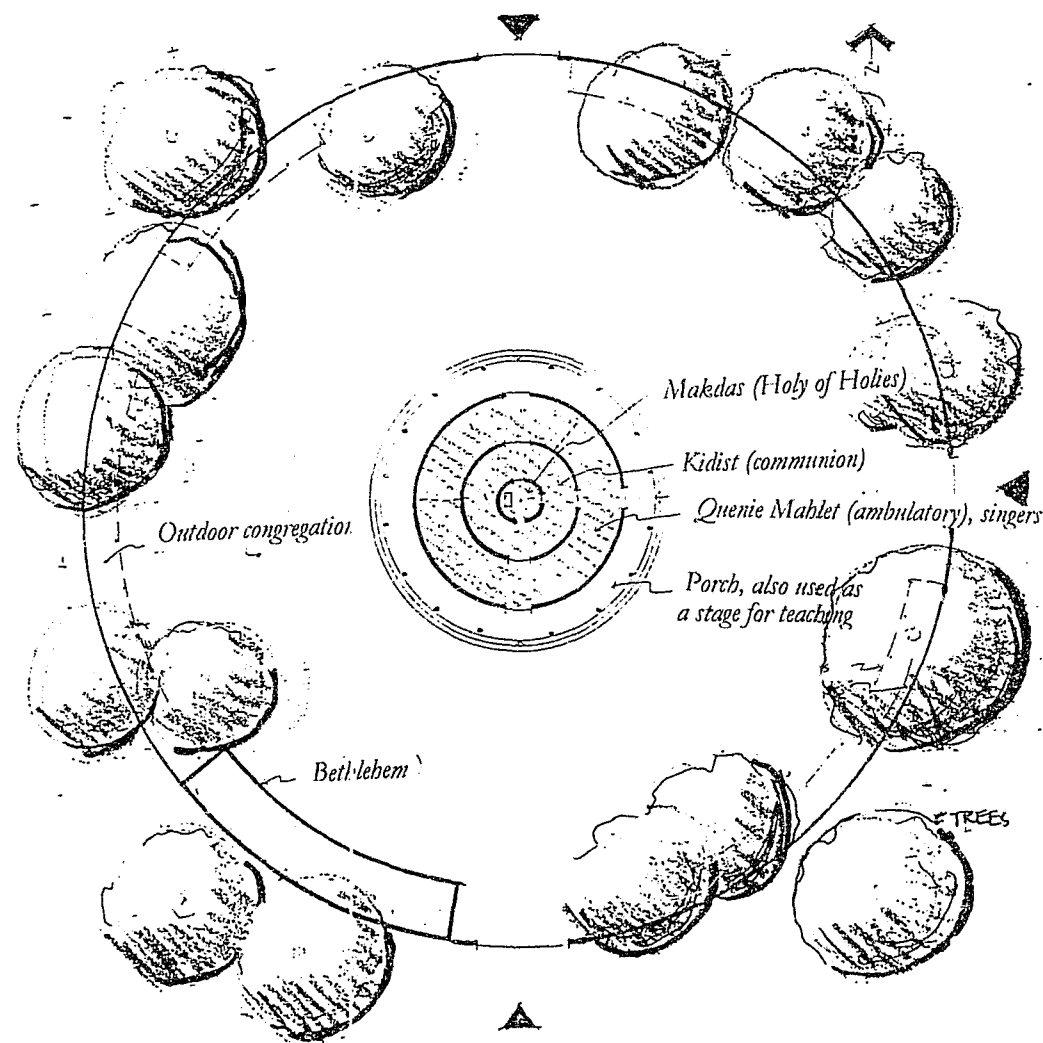
Orthodox Christianity is not only the dominant religion in Ethiopia, it has also, historically, been the “most profound expression of the national existence of the Ethiopians. In its particular indigenized form, impregnated with strong Hebraic and archaic Semitic elements as well as pagan residua, Abyssinian Christianity had long become the store-house of the cultural, political, and social life of the people”. (Ullendorf, 1960).

It has been well said (Buxton, 1970; Ullendorf, 1960 etc) that religious and secular life are inseparable among the peoples of Semitic culture. This is so true of traditional Abyssinian life. In this regard Church has been the main focus of rural and urban life, though other focal centres- the market and the courts – also played an important part.

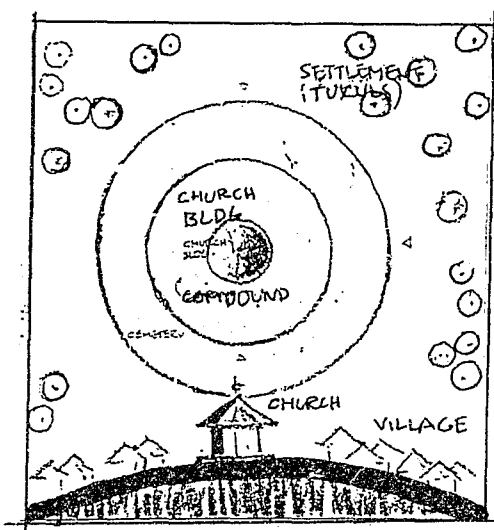
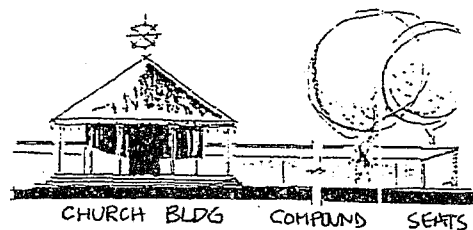
8.3.2 Religious Rituals

The Abyssinians’ yearly round is marked out by the succession of feasts and fasts ordained by the Church, and ordered according to the ancient calendar. It is to be noted, however, that every week has its rhythm. All Wednesdays and Fridays are fast days when no food or drink may be touched before noon and none but strictly vegetarian food for the rest of the day. Moreover, Saturdays as well as Sundays are regarded as holy days when no heavy work should be done.

The Ethiopian Orthodox Church is one of the few Churches of Christendom where the worship of the primitive church has been



THE TYPICAL TRADITIONAL ETHIOPLAN CHURCH: Compound and settlement layout (Source: Author)



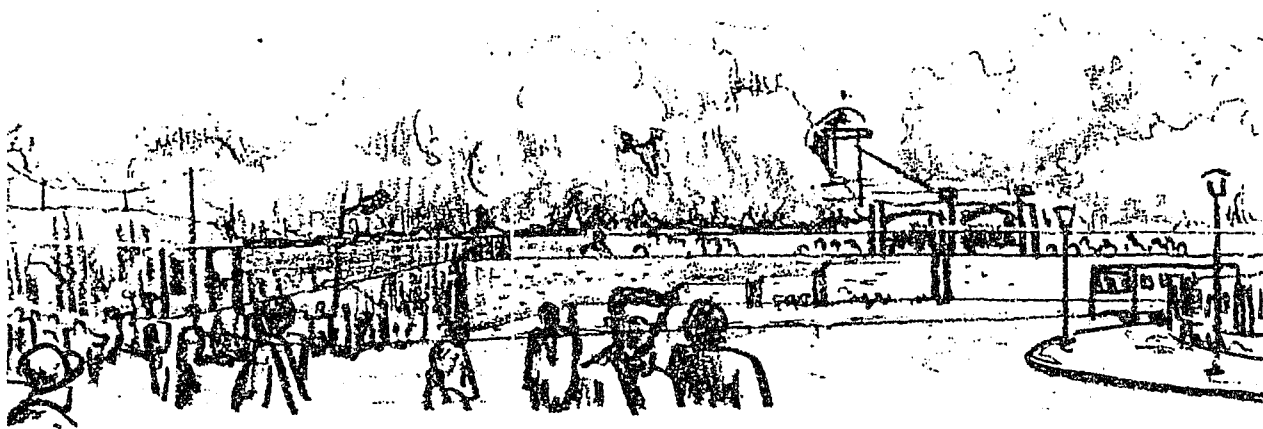
preserved. This is largely due to the geographical position of Ethiopia and to the historical developments that led to her virtual isolation from the rest of the Christian world from the 17th century, as a result of which Ethiopia retained the form of worship she had received in the 4th century. (EOC, 1997:65)

The internal structure of the typical Ethiopian church (circular or octagonal) consists of three concentric rings. The innermost part is the *Makdas* or Sanctuary, also known as *Qeddusa Qeddusan* or Holy of Holies, where the *Tabot* or Ark rests; only priests and deacons have access to it. The second chamber is the *Keddist*, which is reserved for communicants, who receive the sacrament. The third division is the outer ambulatory which is known as the *Qenie Mabket* (the place of the cantors). The *Qenie Mabket* is divided into three sections by curtains. The western part is occupied by the *Debteras* or cantors who sing hymns and praise God to the Accompaniment of musical instruments, drums, prayer sticks and sistra. One part of the ambulatory is reserved for women and the other for men. There are three doors, to the east, north and south. Those of the congregation who feel particularly unclean ritually stand in the churchyard throughout the service. Often there are more people in the churchyard than in the church. It should be noted that the church precincts and the surrounding walls are considered sacred, therefore those who remain outside the church during the service are considered to have attended church.

The times of the services depend upon fasting periods and holidays. During fasting periods the service commences at 1pm. The normal duration of a service is about two hours, but it may be lengthened or



CHURCH ARCHITECTURE: Polygonal plan with tapering roof is typical in Addis Ababa. Churches are raised on podiums and usually a generous porch is provided. St George church, above. Below the same church in its urban context.



shortened upon occasions. At Easter mass is celebrated at 1am and at Christmas about 4am. On Sundays the service commences usually at 6am.

Fasting is strictly observed by all faithful members of the Church. There are approximately 250 fast days in the year, although not all of these are compulsory for everyone. The average person may fast about 180 days in the year. (EOC, 1997) There are seven official fasting periods for Ethiopian Christians.

1. All Wednesdays and Fridays except for the 50 days after Easter.
2. The Lenten Fast of 55 days.
3. The Nineveh Fast of 3 days.
4. The Vigils, or *gabad* of Christmas and Epiphany.
5. The Fast of the Apostles; depending upon the date of Easter, minimum of 14 days maximum of 44.(compulsory for clergy only)
6. The Fast of the Prophets of 43 days
7. The Fast of the Assumption, 15 days in August.

Nine major and nine minor holidays are observed in the Church of Ethiopia. All are connected with the events in the life of Christ. Other feast days include one for each of the twelve apostles. The Martyrs, St George, St Stephen and St John the Baptist are also commemorated. Other important holidays are those in commemoration of St Michael and St Mary. No less than thirty-three holidays are devoted to St Mary.

A feature of the feast days in Ethiopia is that many of them are commemorated monthly and not only annually. As in the rest of the



*Ecclesiastics in festive attire at Easter with processional cross and its canopy
An old painting of singing priests, below. (Source: Buxton, 1970).*



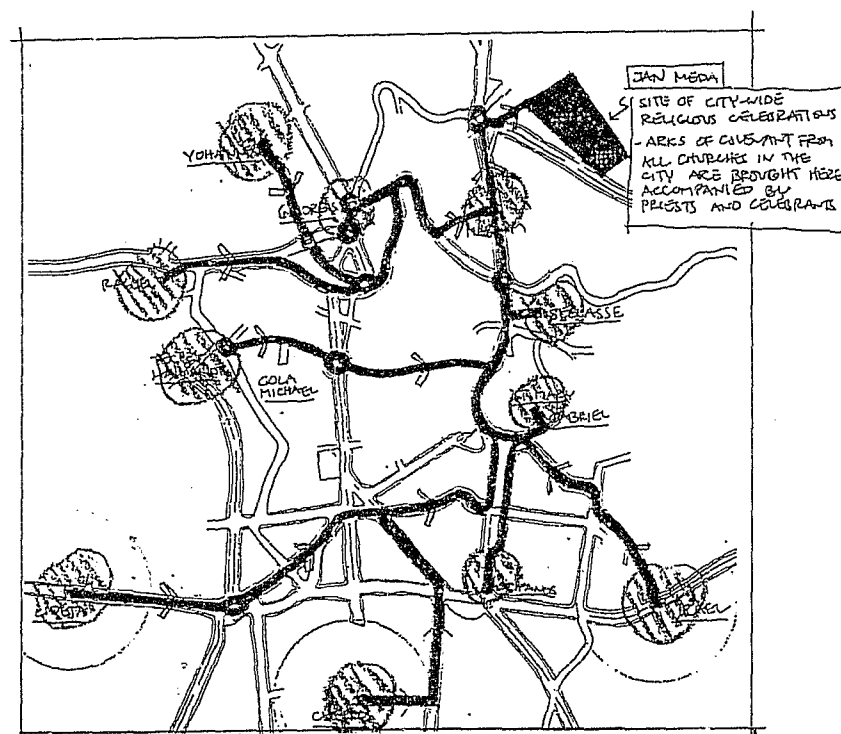
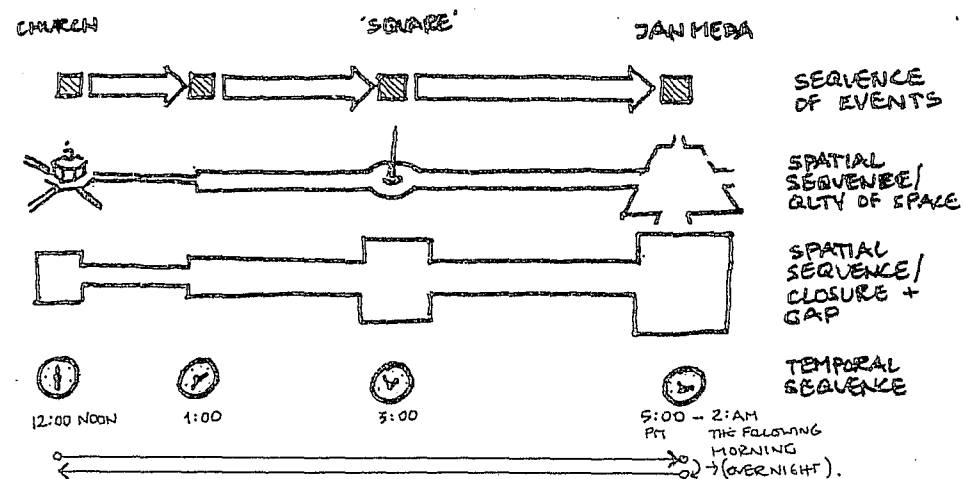
Christian world Sunday is observed as a day of rest. In former times Saturday, the Biblical Sabbath, was also observed. On holidays believers are expected to refrain from heavy labour and manual tasks. Various transactions are permitted, however. On these days it is customary to carry out charitable and philanthropic acts, to visit the sick or those in prison and to arrange reconciliation between those who have quarrelled. Sundays and other holidays are also occasions of social events, weddings, dancing and sport.

8.3.2.1 Christian Rituals

Timket: Feast of Epiphany

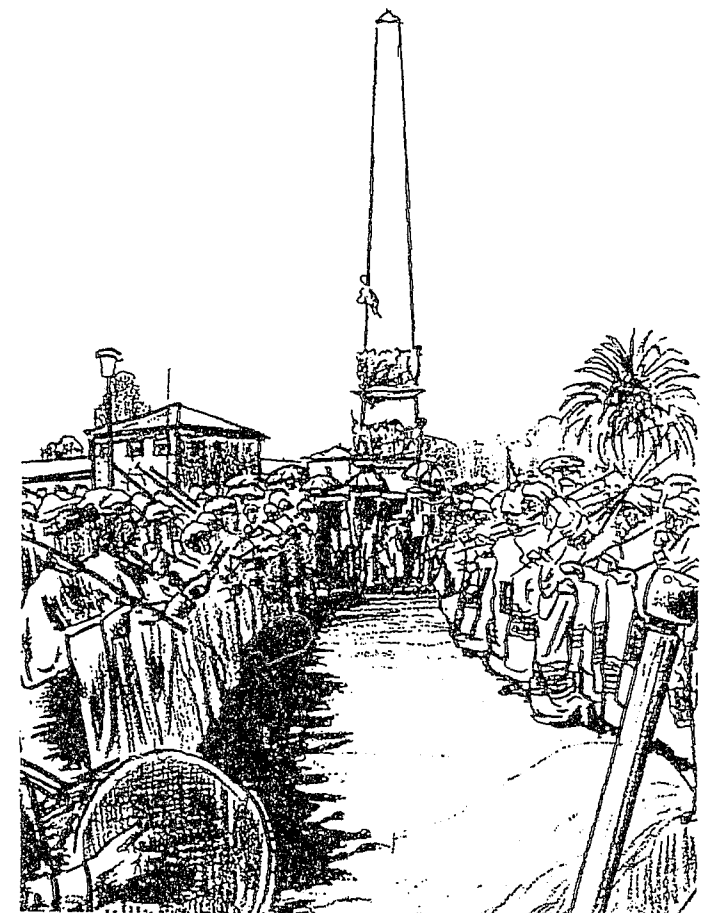
This is the greatest festival of the year falling on the 19th of January, just two weeks after the Ethiopian Christmas. It is actually a three-day affair, beginning on the Eve of *Timket* with dramatic colourful processions. The following morning, the great day itself, Christ's baptism in the Jordan River by John the Baptist is commemorated. The third day is devoted to Feast of St Michael, the Archangel, one of Ethiopia's most popular saints.

Enormous effort is put into the occasion. Everyone – men, women and children appears resplendent for the three-day celebration. Dressed in the dazzling white of the traditional dress, the locals provide a dramatic contrast to the jewel colours of the ceremonial velvets and satins of the priests' robes and umbrellas.



CELEBRATION OF TIMKET (EASTER):

Top, sequences of events, spaces, and temporal sequences. Above, ritualized routes leading to and from the site of the city-wide celebration. Top right one of the events (stops) usually at important squares in the city. Right, Priests in festive robes in procession carrying the Tabot. (Source: top, top right and above, Author; right, *Selamta Magazine*)



On the eve of 18 January, *Ketera*, the priests remove the *Tabots* (altar) from each church and bless the water of the pool or river where the next day's celebration will take place. It is the *Tabot* (symbolising the Ark of the Covenant containing the Ten Commandments) rather than the church building which is consecrated and accorded extreme reverence. Not to be desecrated by the gaze of the lay men, the engraved wooden or stone slab is carried under layers of rich cloths.

In Addis Ababa, many churches bring their *tabots* to Jan Meda accompanied by priests bearing prayer sticks and sistras, the ringing of bells and blowing of trumpets, and swinging bronze censers from which incense smoke escapes into the evening air. The *tabots* rest in their special tents in the meadow, each hoisting a proud banner depicting the church's saint in front.

The Priests pray throughout the night and mass is performed around 2am. Huge crowds of people camp out, eating and drinking by the light of flickering fire and torches. Towards dawn, the patriarch dips a golden cross and extinguishes a burning consecrated candle in the water. Then he sprinkles water on the assembled congregation in commemoration of Christ's baptism.

Following the baptism the *Tabots* start back to their respective churches, while feasting, singing and dancing continue at *Jan Meda*. The procession winds through town again as horsemen proceed alongside, their mounts decorated with colourful embroidery. The elders march solemnly, accompanied by singing, leaping priests and young men, while the

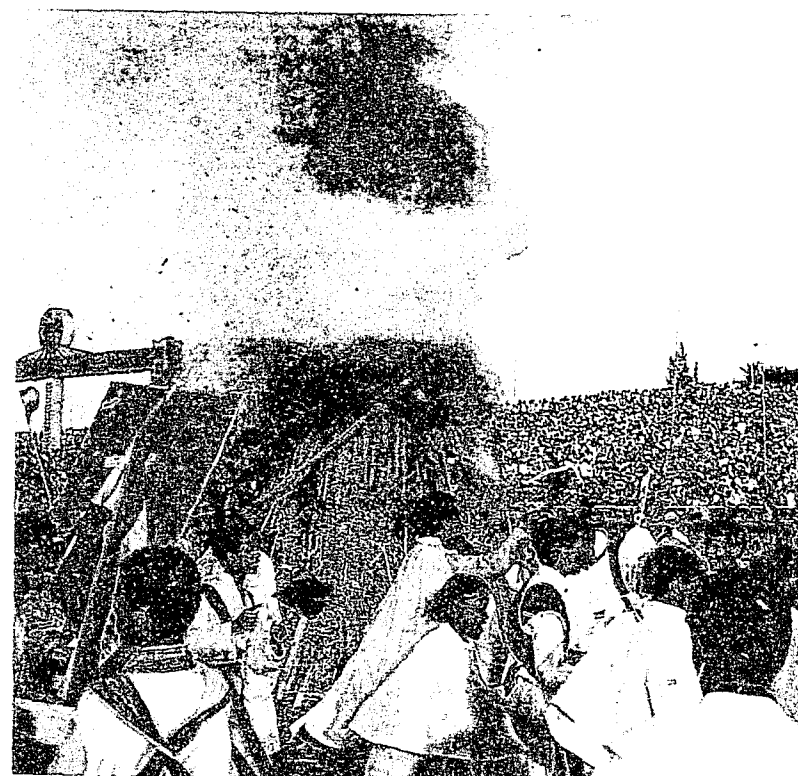
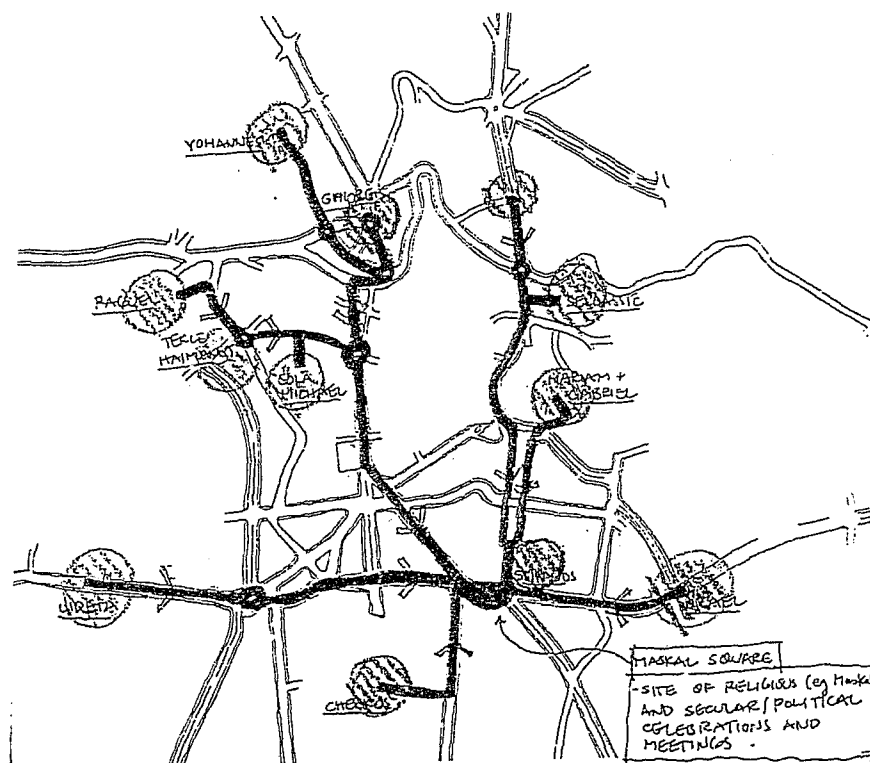
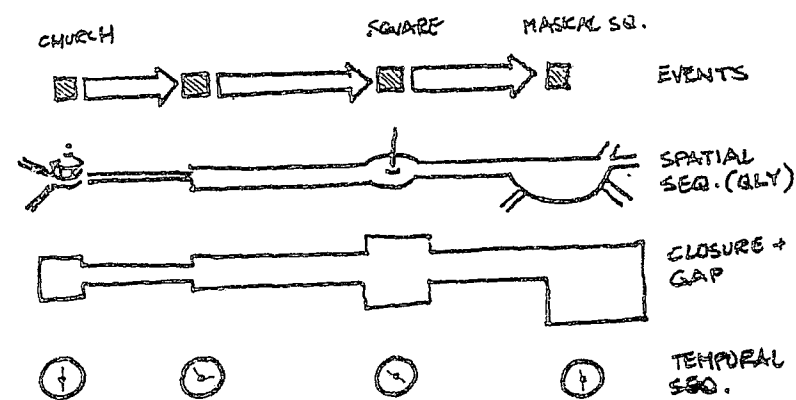
beating of staffs and prayer sticks recalls the ancient rite of the Old Testament.

Maskal: Finding of the True Cross

Maskal is second in importance only to Timket and has been celebrated in the country for over 1600 years. The word actually means 'cross' and the feast commemorates the discovery of the Cross, upon which Jesus was crucified, by the Empress Helena, the mother of Constantine the Great.

Many of the rites observed throughout the festival are said to be directly linked to the legend of Empress Helena. On the eve of Maskal tall branches are tied together and yellow daisies, popularly known as Maskal flowers, are placed at the top. During this time of year flowers bloom on mountain and plain and the meadows are yellow with the brilliant Maskal daisy. Dancing, feasting, merrymaking, bonfires, and even gun salutes mark the occasion. The festival begins by planting a green tree on Maskal Eve in town squares and marketplaces. Everyone brings a pole topped with Maskal flowers to form the towering pyramid that will soon be a beacon of flame. Torches of eucalyptus twigs called *chibo* are used to light the bundle of branches called *damara*.

In Addis Ababa celebrations start in the early afternoon, when a huge procession bearing flaming torches approaches Maskal Square from various directions. The marchers include priests in their brightly hued costumes, students, brass bands, contingents of the armed forces, and



CELEBRATION OF MASKAL:

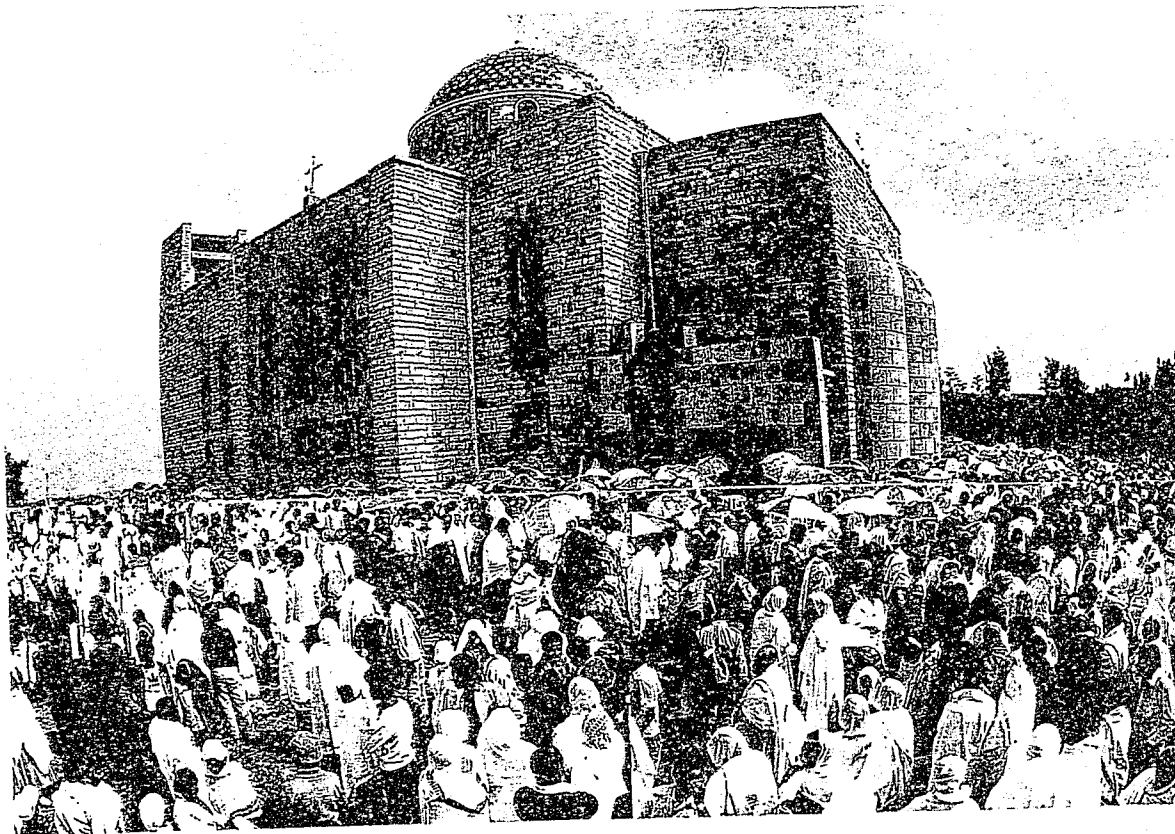
Top, sequences of events, spaces, and temporal sequences. Above, ritualized routes leading to and from the site of the city-wide celebration. Top right, Maskal Square with a capacity of 500 000 people. Right, Lighting the Damara at the centre of the square. (Source: top, top right and above, Author; right, ETC)

bedecked floats carrying huge lit crosses. They circle the damara and ring their torches in it, while singing a special Maskal song. Tens of thousands gather at the square to join in welcome at the season of flowers and golden sunshine called *Tseday*.

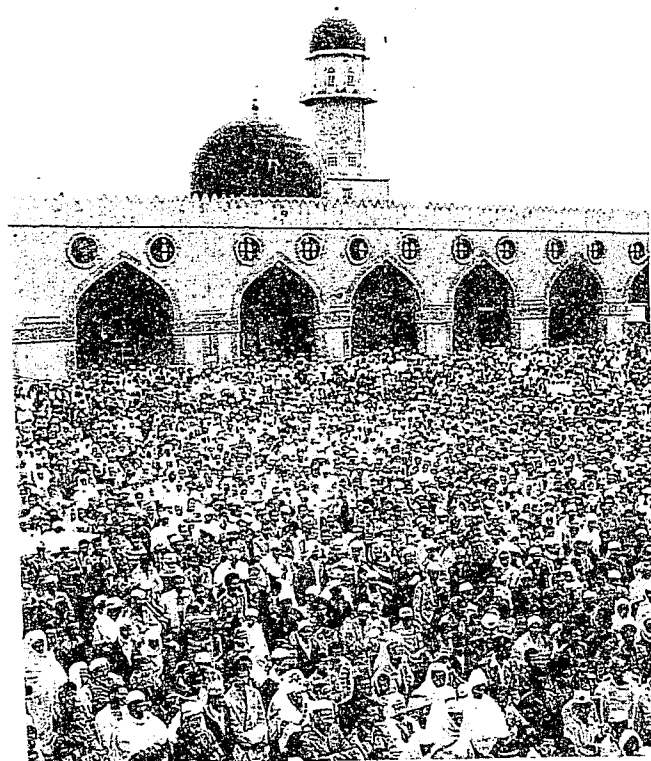
Enkutatash, New Year

September 11 is both New Years Day and the Feast of St John the Baptist. Legend has it that when the famous Queen of Sheba returned from her visit to King Solomon in Jerusalem, her chiefs welcomed her back by replenishing her treasury with *kufu* or jewels. Children clad in brand-new clothes, dance through the neighbourhoods giving bouquets of flowers and painted pictures to each household. The spring festival has been celebrated since these early times and as the rains come to their abrupt end, dancing and singing can be heard at every village in the green countryside. After dark on New Year's Eve people light fires outside their houses.

The Raguel church, on top of Entoto Mountain north of Addis Ababa, has the largest and most spectacular religious celebration. But Enkutatash is not exclusively a religious holiday, and the little girls singing and dancing in pretty new dresses convey the message of spring-time and renewed life.



Above, feast of St Gabriel, at Kulubi, a place of pilgrimage in Eastern Ethiopia. Below, the Anuar Grand mosque in the commercial area of Addis Ababa. (Source: ETC)



Kulubi, Feast of St Gabriel

Almost every Christian in Ethiopia has a patron saint, and one of the most popular is Gabriel, the archangel who protects home and churches. The 19th of every Ethiopian month is devoted to St Gabriel, but in particular two main dates see colourful celebrations – 26 July and 28 December. The festivities on the 28th culminate in a huge pilgrimage to his church at Kulubi. To celebrate this day, people travel hundreds of kilometres to his church to tell him their wishes.

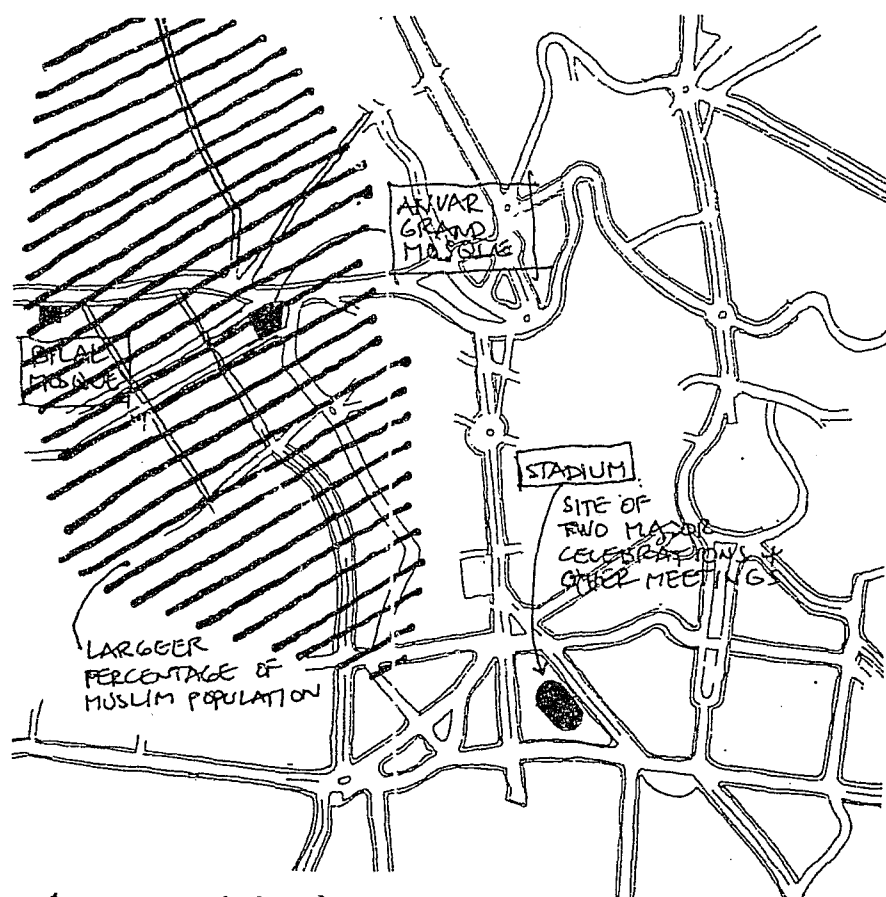
8.3.2.2 Islamic Rituals

Ethiopian Muslims account for about 50% of the total population. In Addis Ababa, however, only 12.6% of the approximately 3.2 million people are followers of the Islamic faith.

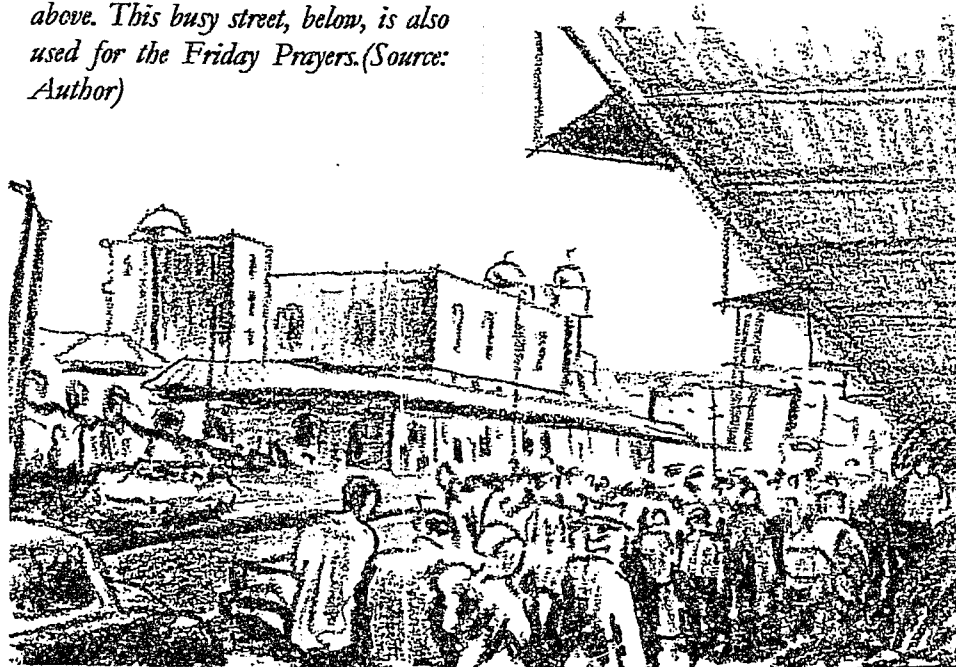
Two of the major Islamic ritual ceremonies that have direct impact on urban space need are:

- 1 Ed al Fetir, at the end of the fasting month of Ramadan,
- 2 Ed al Adha, two months after Ed al Fetir

Since Muslims do not have a specific ritual space for the two important celebrations, they are held at the Addis Ababa Stadium within the new CBD. Despite their huge proportion in the population, Muslims have



Annuar mosque in its urban context, above. This busy street, below, is also used for the Friday Prayers. (Source: Author)



been historically marginalized as Orthodox Christianity was the dominant State Religion in the Imperial days.

The other major weekly ritual is that regularly observed on Fridays. Most Muslim in Addis Ababa converge at the Annuar Grand Mosque. Since the area within the mosque compound is limited, Friday prayers are conducted on the vehicular streets adjacent to the mosque. The mosque is situated near the commercial heart of the city, *Markato*, where traffic congestion is the highest.

8.3.3 Secular Rituals

Although all repeated behavioural actions are considered to be rituals, it is necessary to focus on those which are done collectively and have a visible influence on spatial arrangement at different scales of the city. Some of these are:

8.3.3.1 Political rallies:

Political rallies and mass demonstrations have obviously become the main rituals of 'modern' society. At the city level in Addis Ababa, this takes place in its biggest urban ritual space - Maskal Square (or Revolution Square during the socialist year of 1974 – 1991). Prior to the revolution of 1974 this space was mainly used for a major religious celebration of Maskal (finding of the True Cross). Maskal was removed

to Jan Meda , and the square was devoted only for political gatherings which where a frequent occurrence during those days; and still are. Apart from its main function as the only space for the city-wide celebration of Epiphany, Jan Meda is the other major place of open-air markets, concerts, etc. However, this historical space does not seem to be physically connected with the rest of the city.

8.3.3.2 Wedding and funeral processions.

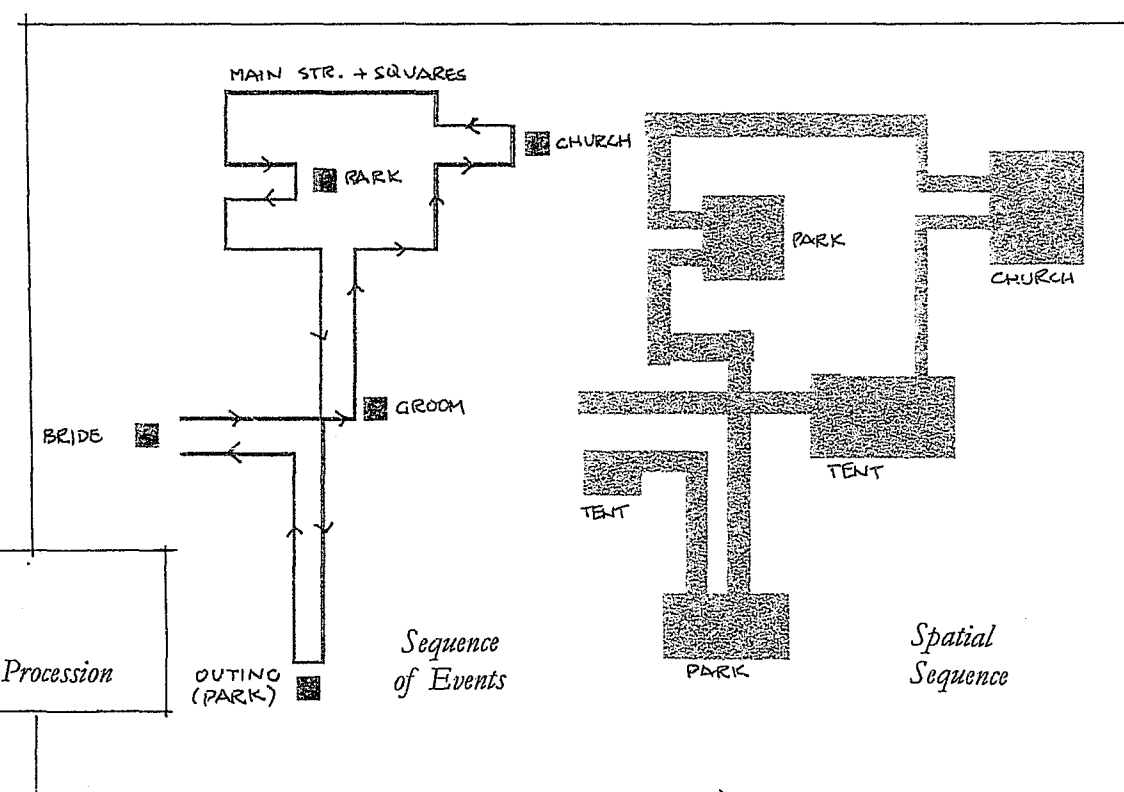
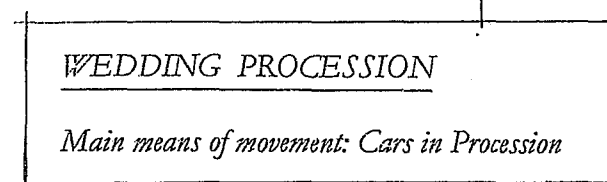
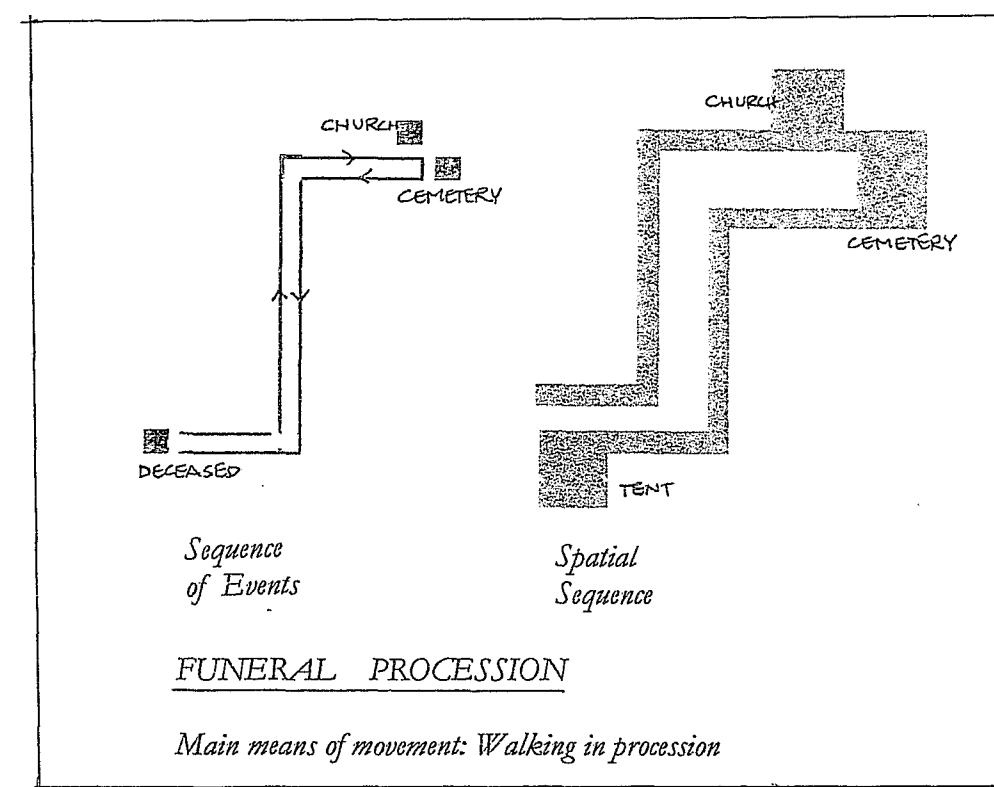
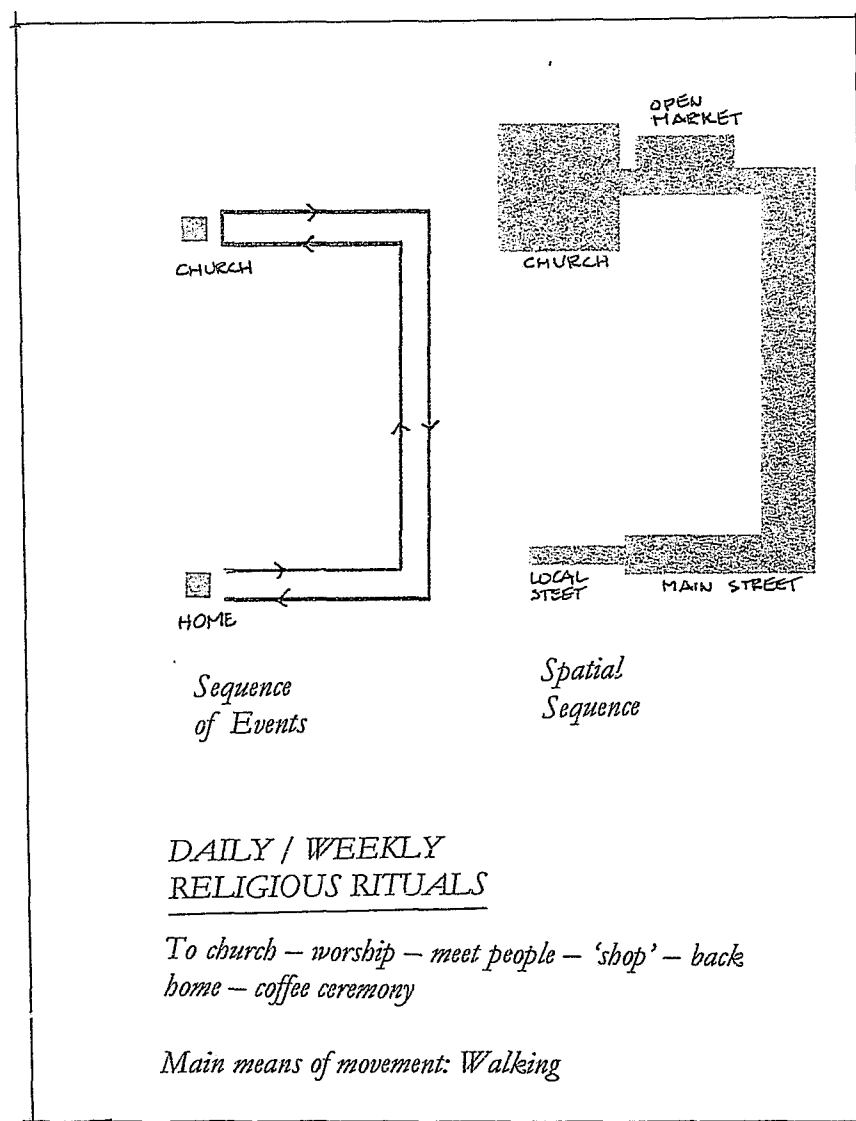
Wedding and funeral ceremonies and processions have an importance place in the ritualistic behaviour of both followers of Christianity and Islam in Addis Ababa. The sheer amount of people that take part in these ceremonies draws much interest due to their social and spatial significance at all levels of the community and society.

Wedding processions, which usually take the form a relatively huge numbers of cars, follow distinct routes and visits to the main squares in the city. From start to finish, it is easy to observe a series of events that have a clear and direct correspondence to a spatial sequence.

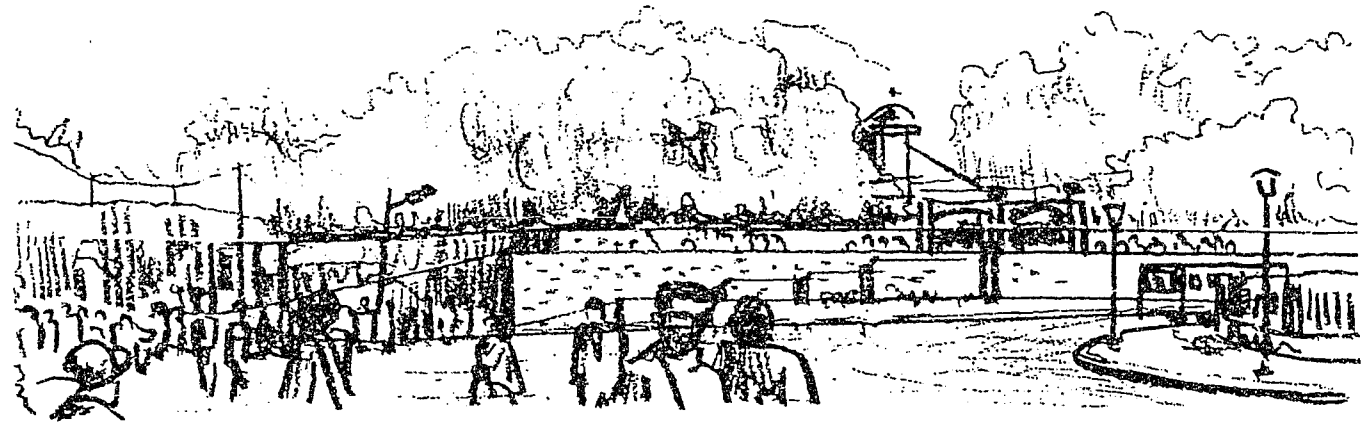
Use of cars during funeral processions is extremely minimal, as walking , regardless of distance, to and from the cemetery shows respect for the deceased.

What is most significant in spatial terms during those prolonged periods after the funeral is the erection of makeshift tents where members of the local community must visit the mourners.

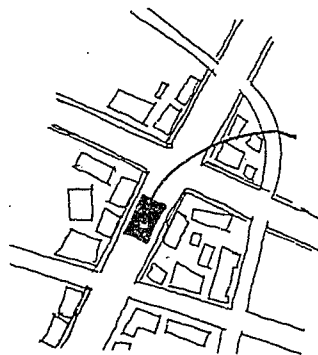
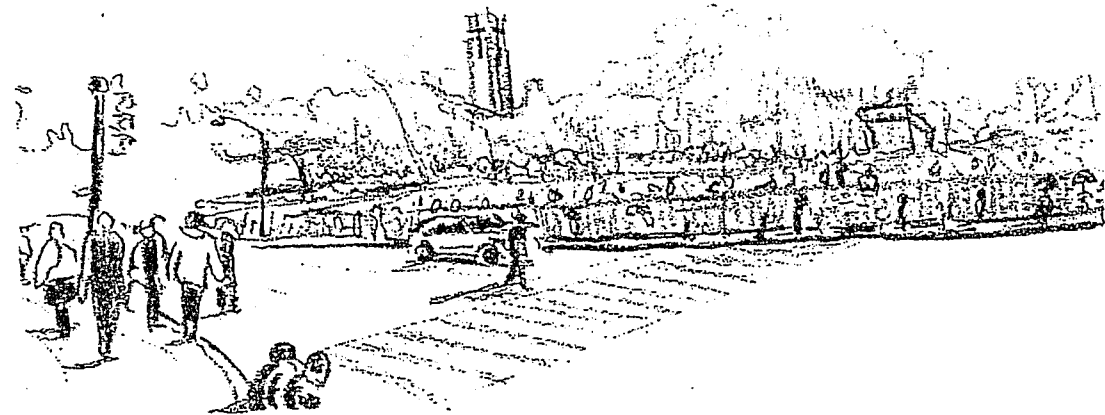




(Source: Author)



Almost all churches in Addis Ababa are spatially cut off from their respective urban contexts. St George church, above and Stifanos church, right. (Source: Author)



Tent for wedding parties and mourning rituals



A typical neighbourhood in central Addis Ababa: Make-shift tents erected on streets that usually last for weeks are a very common sight. They serve as temporary enclosed spaces for wedding and mourning rituals. (Source: Author)

8.4 Problems, Constraints and Opportunities for Urban Design

8.4.1 Problems

- Lack of physical integration between ritual spaces and surrounding areas
- Lack of a network system that relates urban ritual spaces and enhances the city as a single entity
- No visible hierarchy of spaces for religious and secular rituals
- Lack of appropriate design that enhances the role of ritual spaces (e.g., church surroundings) as centres of social interaction
- Non-existence of clear planning and design policy to accommodate current 'urban renewal' projects within the traditional urban form in the historical centre of the city
- Ever-increasing use of cars which is beyond the capacity of existing roads creating problems on traditional ritual routes and spaces

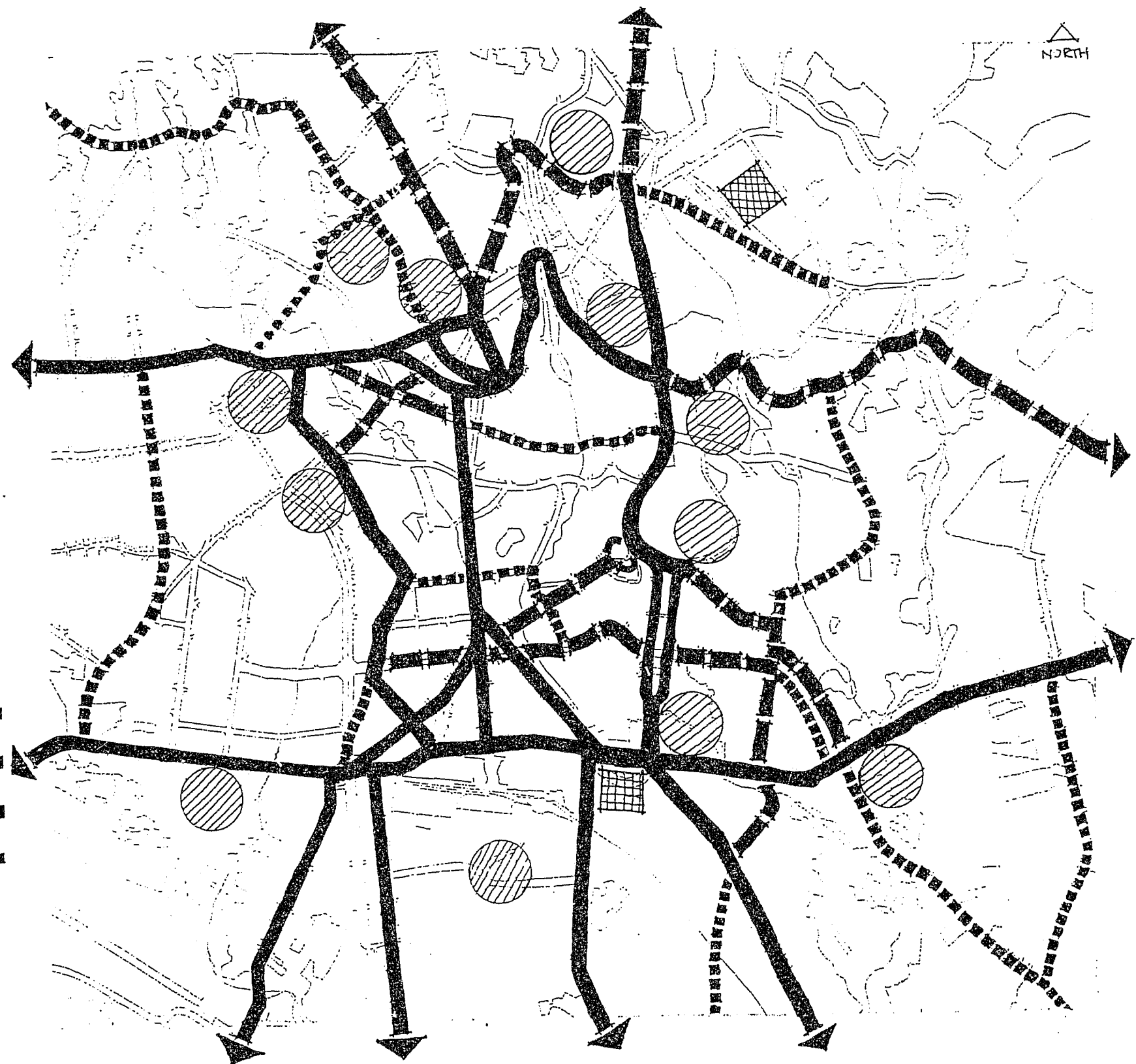
8.4.2 Constraints

- Lack of adequate data on ritual use of spaces
- Unrealistic zoning plan (1986) imposed by the city council which needs a major revision
- Rapid urbanisation

HIERARCHY OF ROADS:

- NATIONAL ROADS 
- MAIN ARTERIALS 
- SECONDARY ROADS 
- TERTIARY ROADS 
- CHURCHES 
- CITY SCALE URBAN RITUAL SPACES 

Note that the road hierarchy is not well pronounced



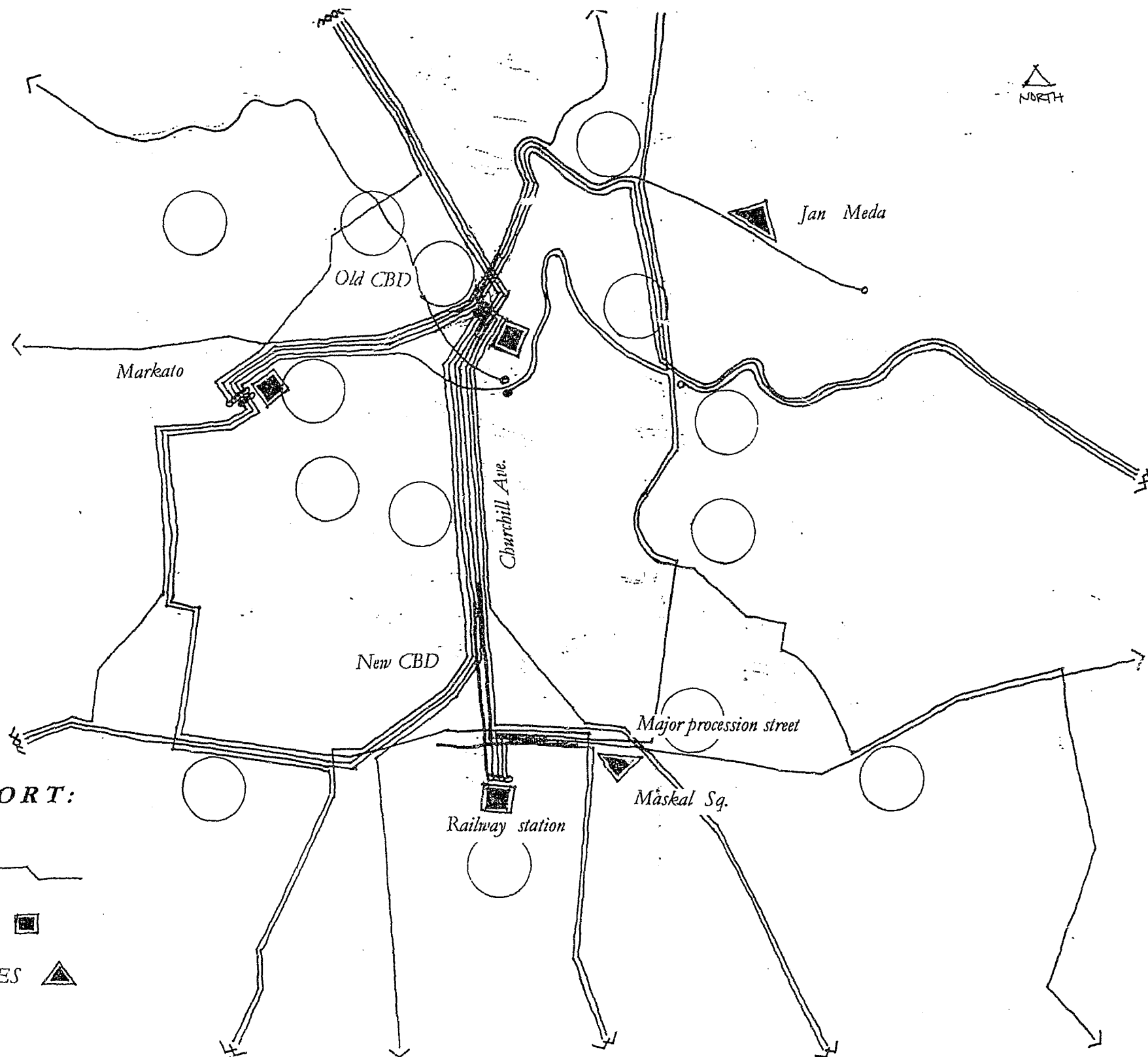
PUBLIC TRANSPORT:

BUS AND TAXI ROUTES

TRANSPORT TERMINALS

CITY-SCALE RITUAL SPACES

CHURCHES

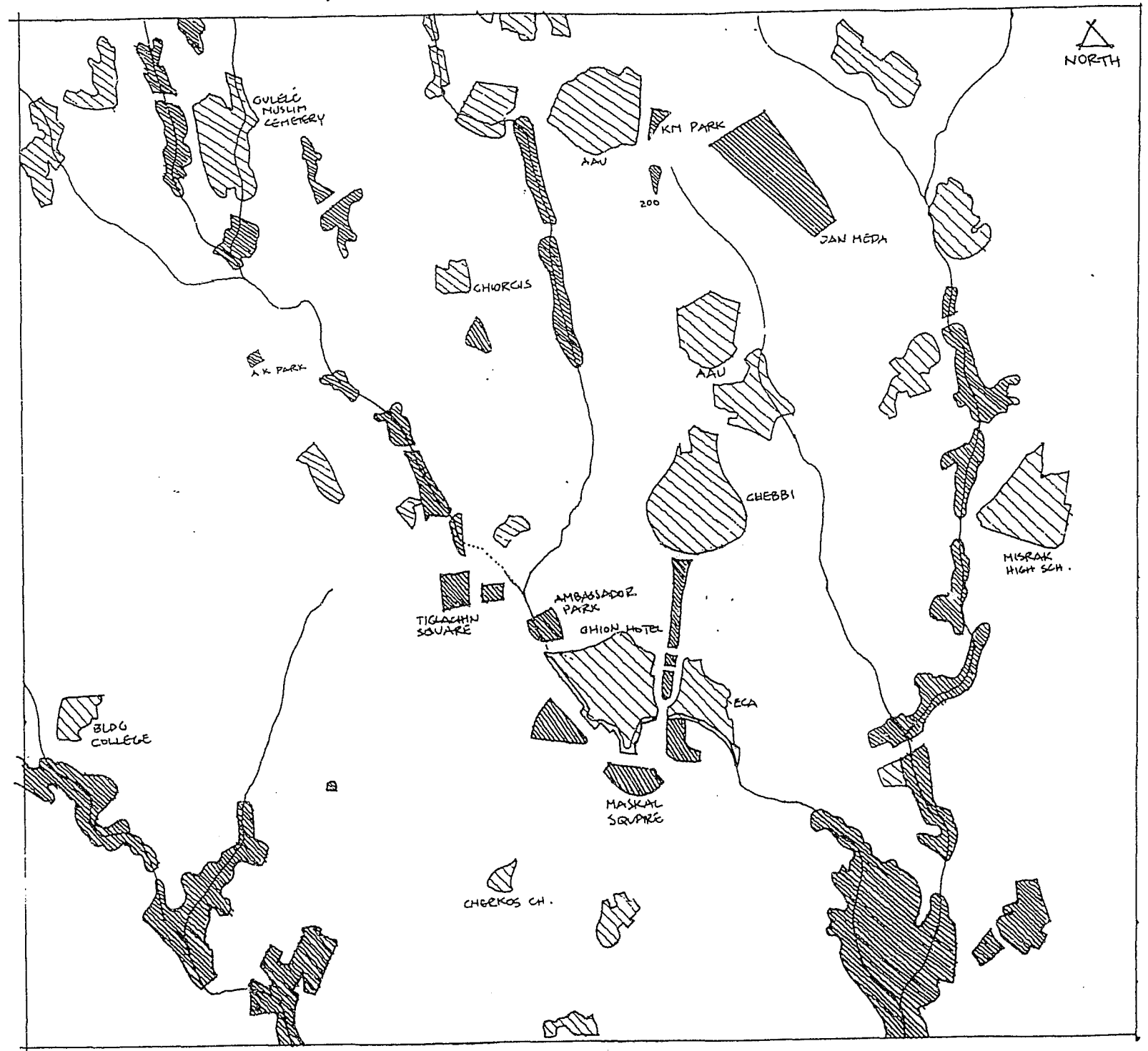


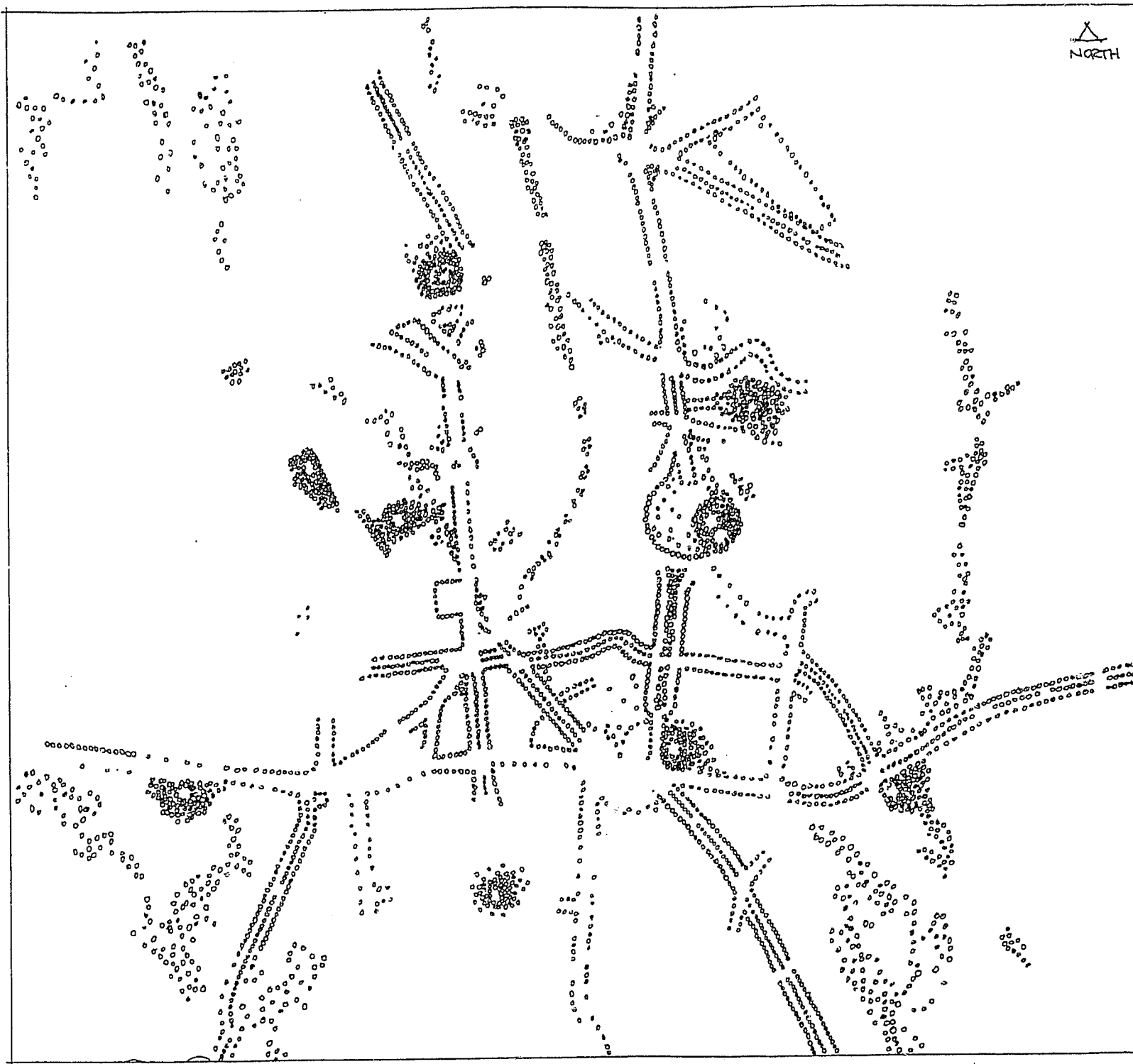
**EXISTING
OPEN SPACES:**

PUBLIC 

SEMI-PUBLIC 

STREAMS 



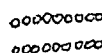


VEGETATION:

TREES AROUND CHURCHS



TREES ALONG MAIN STREETS



TREES ALONG RIVERS



*Large concentrations of trees are found
around churches as trees are considered sacred*



8.4.3 Opportunities

- Emphasising the ritualistic behaviour of the society in restructuring the city
- Survival and existence of the historical neighbourhoods (*Sefers*) – an opportunity for urban design to enhance and provide appropriate social facilities
- Existence of wooded streams in the city which provide the possibility of creating usable open spaces and route. Enhancing the microclimate and cultural significance of water.

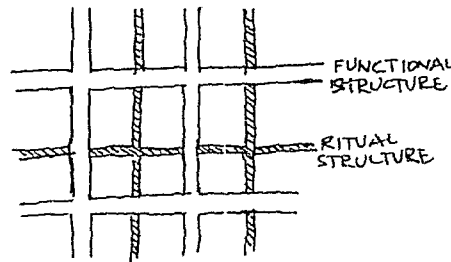
8.5 Urban Design Concepts

- The city as a socio-culturally ordered space
- Urban design that accommodates socio-economic changes while maintaining traditional/ritualistic use of space
- Designing to maximise the role of urban ritual spaces as centres of social convergence
- Design /reinforce 'movements in space', to establish unity of a diverse townscape and a haphazard townplan.



PROBLEM:

In the final analysis, the main challenge is to bring to terms the physical structure of the city (transport, services etc) with the ritualistic use of the society which tends to have its own layer in the city.



PROBLEM:

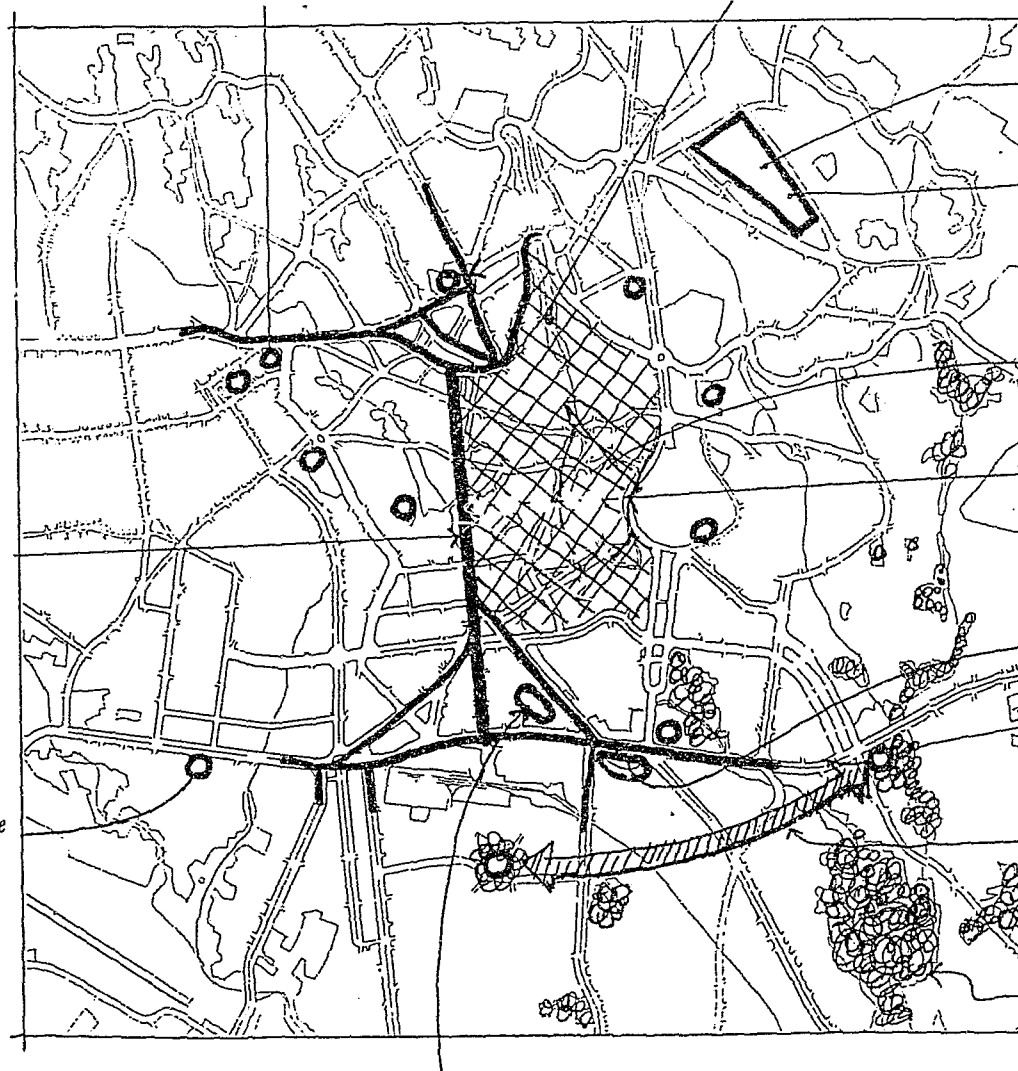
A high volume of traffic as this street (Churchill Road) is the only major link between the old and new CBD's

PROBLEM:

Almost all churches, mosques and other ritual spaces are spatially cut-off from the rest urban context

PROBLEM:

Conflict of functions between Muslim Friday worshipers on streets adjacent to the Grand Mosque and the high level of traffic



OPPORTUNITY:

Ritual spaces and their associated routes such as Jan Meda suggest tourist related development opportunities

PROBLEM:

Existence of this city-wide historical ritual space (eg, Maskal) threatened by its accessibility becoming less and less since the city started growing southwards

PROBLEM:

Area of current Urban Renewal Schemes. The area comprises a significant part of the historic core of the city

OPPORTUNITY:

A panoramic view of the city from the semi-oval street surrounding the palace which is on a high ground – a promenade.

PROBLEM:

Maskal Square – spatially not well defined major urban religious and secular ritual space, at least in 3-d

OPPORTUNITY:

Existence of well pronounced ritualistic behaviour. An opportunity to structure the city through design based on this behavioural use of space

PROBLEM:

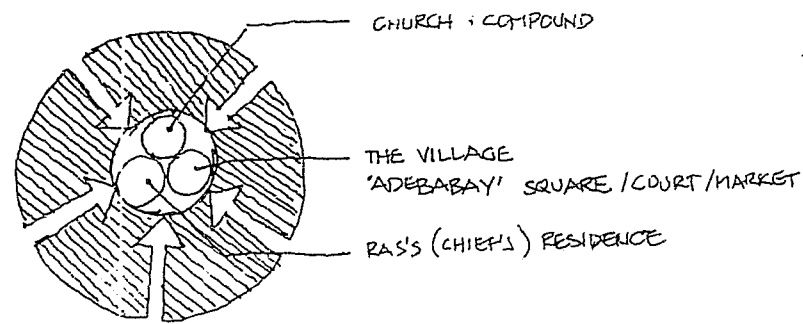
Lack of appropriate linkages to create a workable framework and hierarchy of ritual spaces that reflect a meaningful urban ensemble.

PROBLEM:

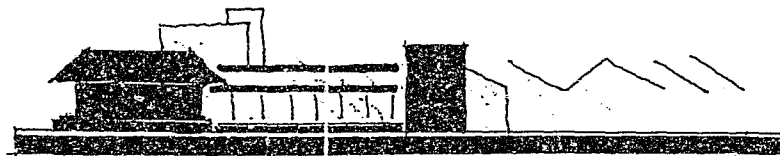
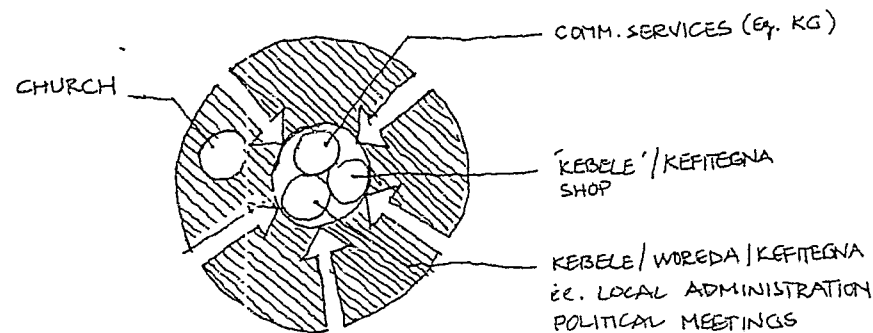
Disjointed patches of green open spaces that are more of left-over spaces than an integrated system

PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES

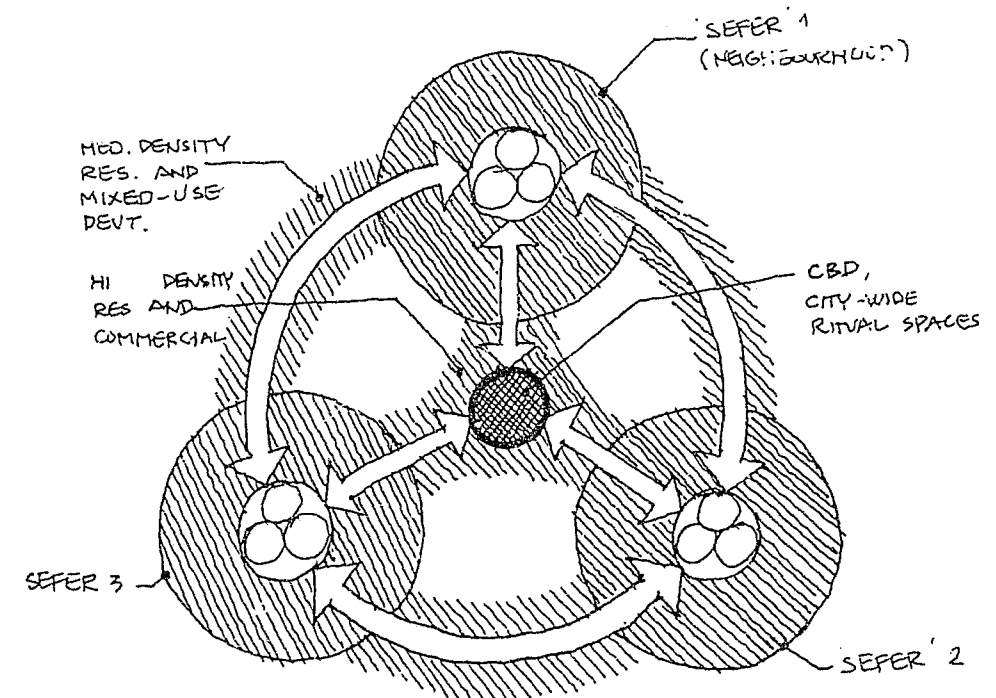
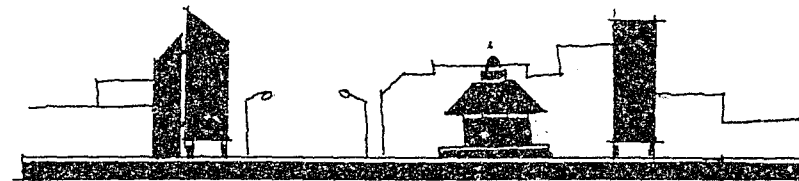
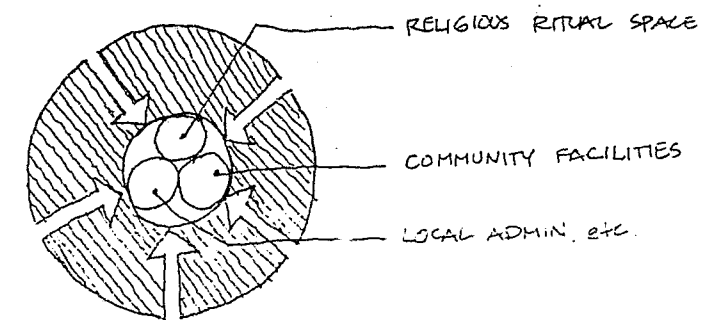
FOR URBAN DESIGN IN CENTRAL ADDIS ABABA.



CENTRE OF COMMUNITY LIFE IN EARLY ADDIS ABABA
THE CHURCH + COMPOUND AS THE MAJOR SPACE OF RITUAL

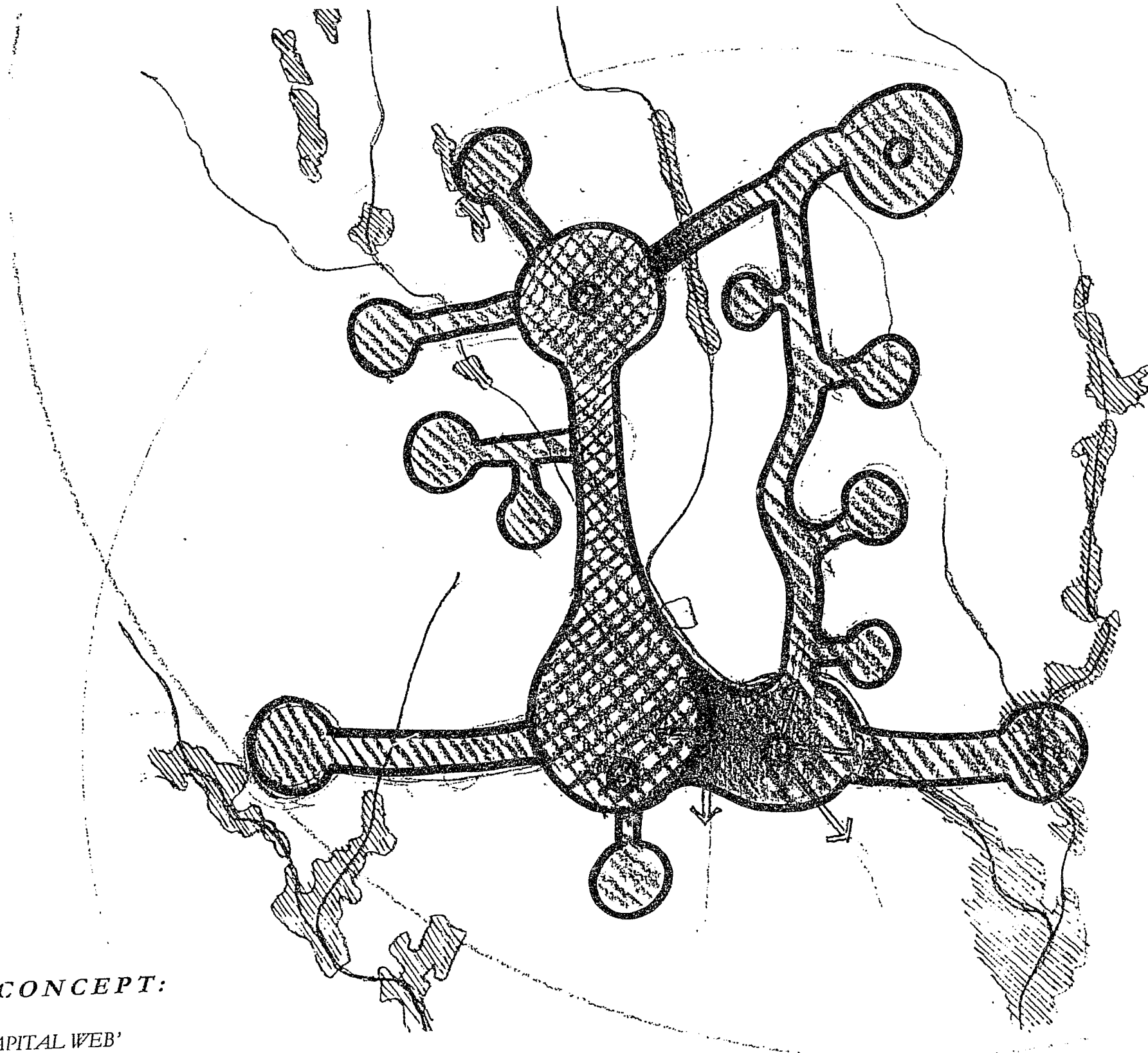


COMMUNITY LIFE DURING SOCIALIST MOV'T OF 1974-91
ATTEMPT TO ORGANISE SOCIAL LIFE AROUND THE KEBELE &c LOCAL
POLITICAL ADMINISTRATION. DESPITE THIS ATTEMPT RELIGIOUS RITUALS
STILL PERSISTED.



DESIGN CONCEPT:

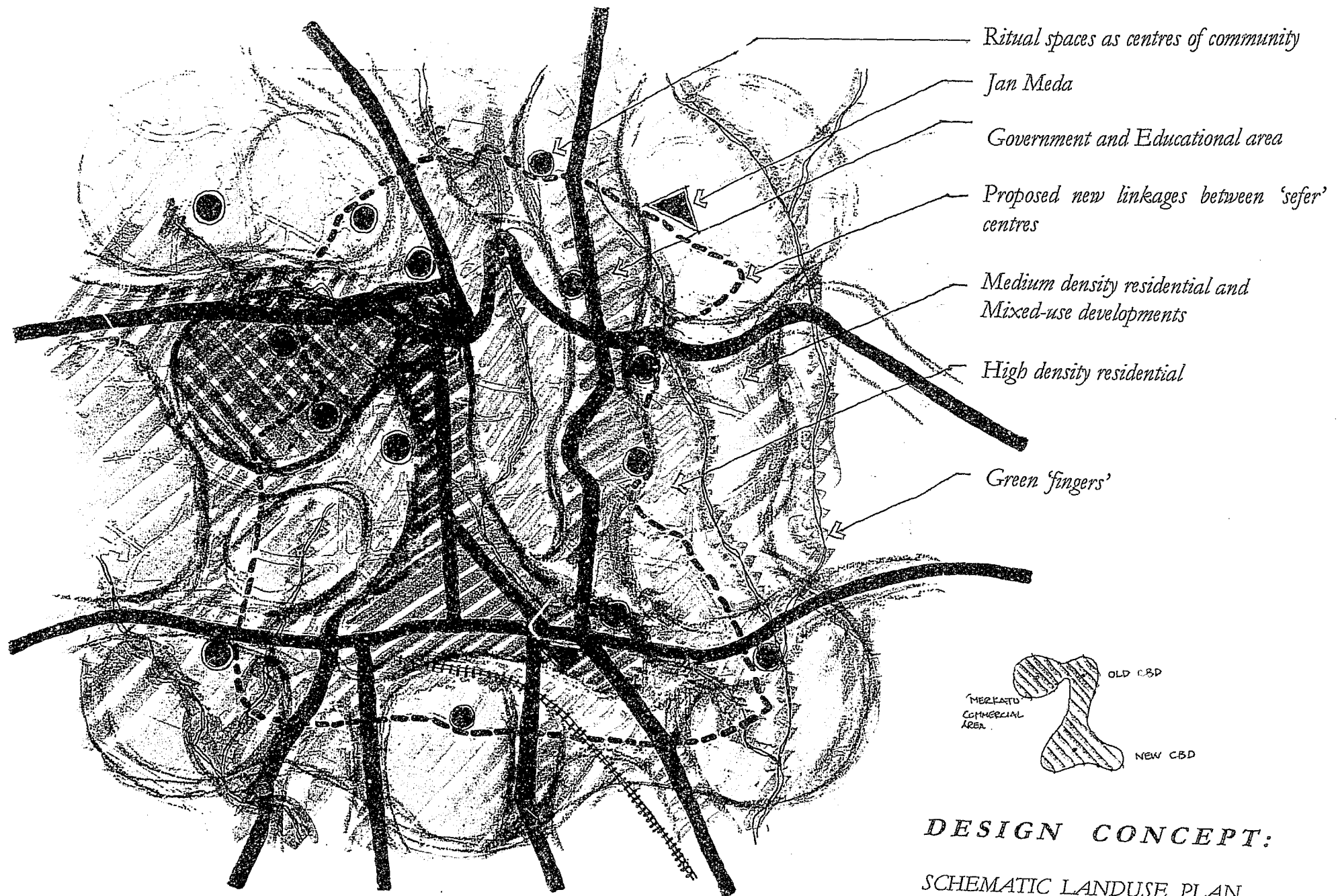
RESTRUCTURING THE CENTRAL AREA OF THE CITY BY
CREATING A HEIRARCHY OF RITUAL SPACES AND
SERVICES



DESIGN CONCEPT:

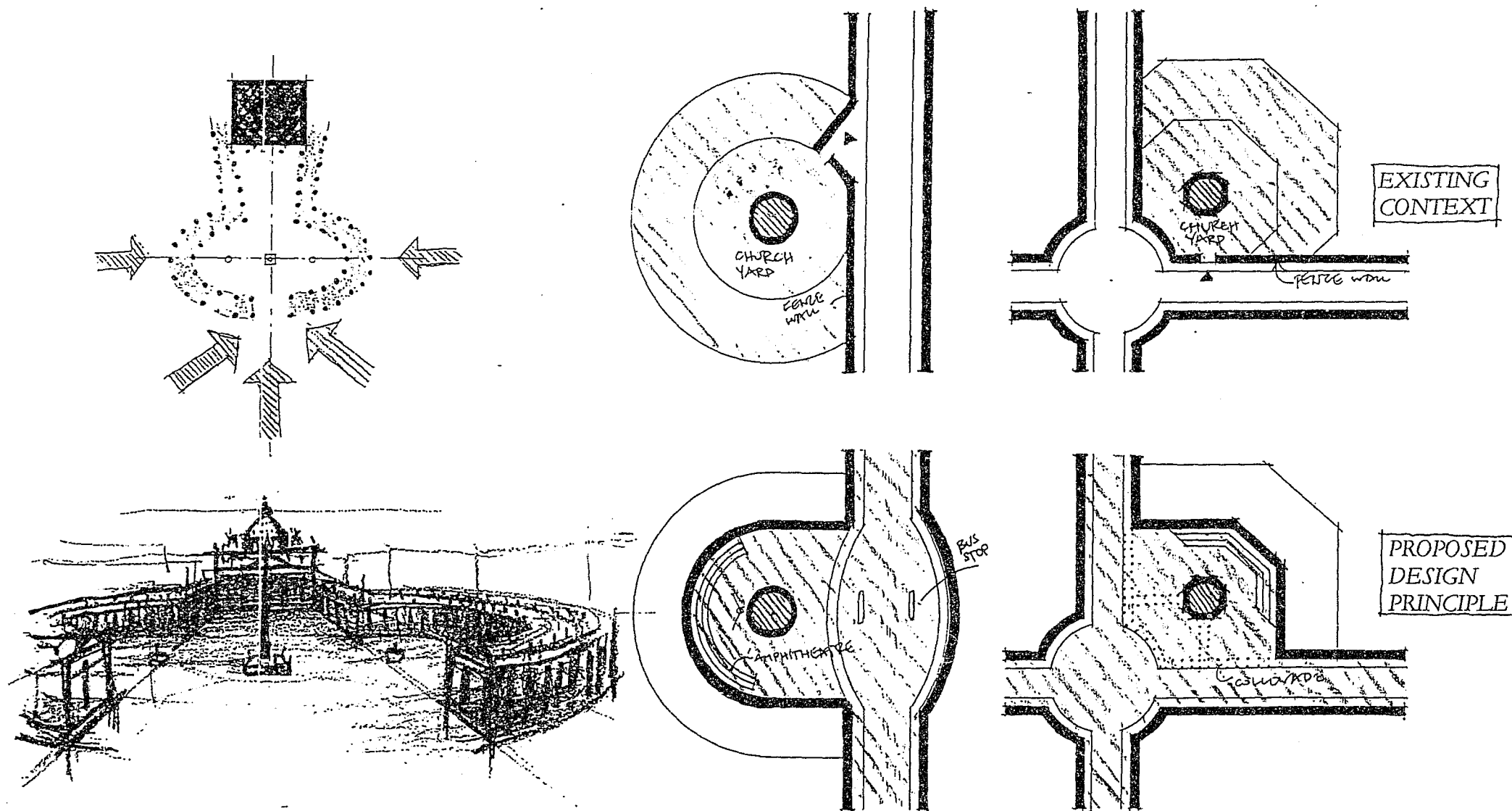
RITUAL AS 'CAPITAL WEB'





DESIGN CONCEPT:

SCHEMATIC LANDUSE PLAN,
INTEGRATING THE FUNCTIONAL
WITH THE RITUAL

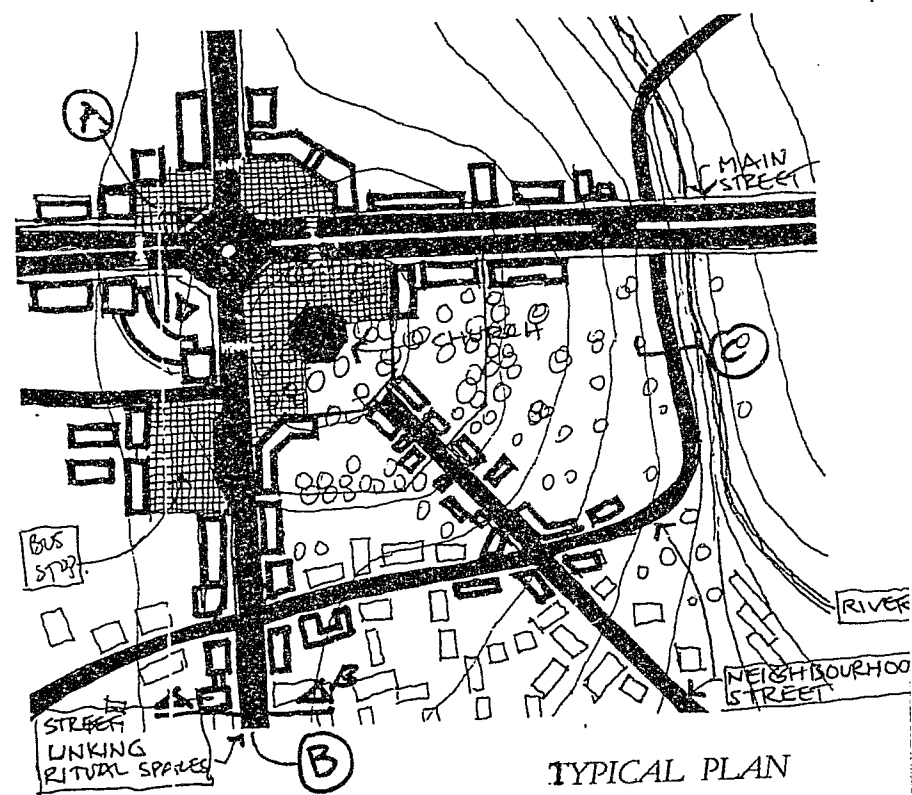


St Peter's Cathedral, Rome: Spatial integration of ritual and secular urban space

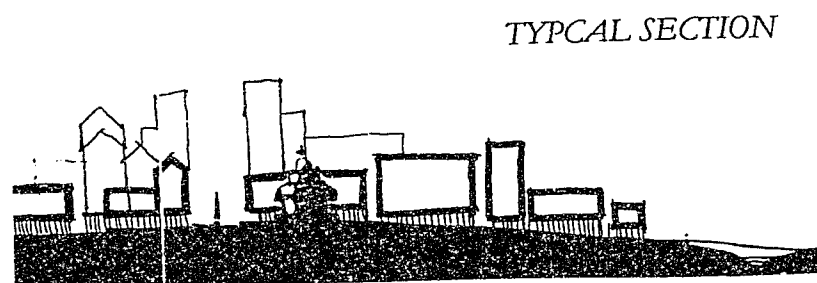
Church spaces in Addis are spatially cut-off from their respective urban contexts. NB. DRAWINGS NOT TO SCALE.

DESIGN PRINCIPLE:

**ENHANCING THE ROLE OF RITUAL SPACES
AS CENTRES OF SOCIAL CONVERGENCE**



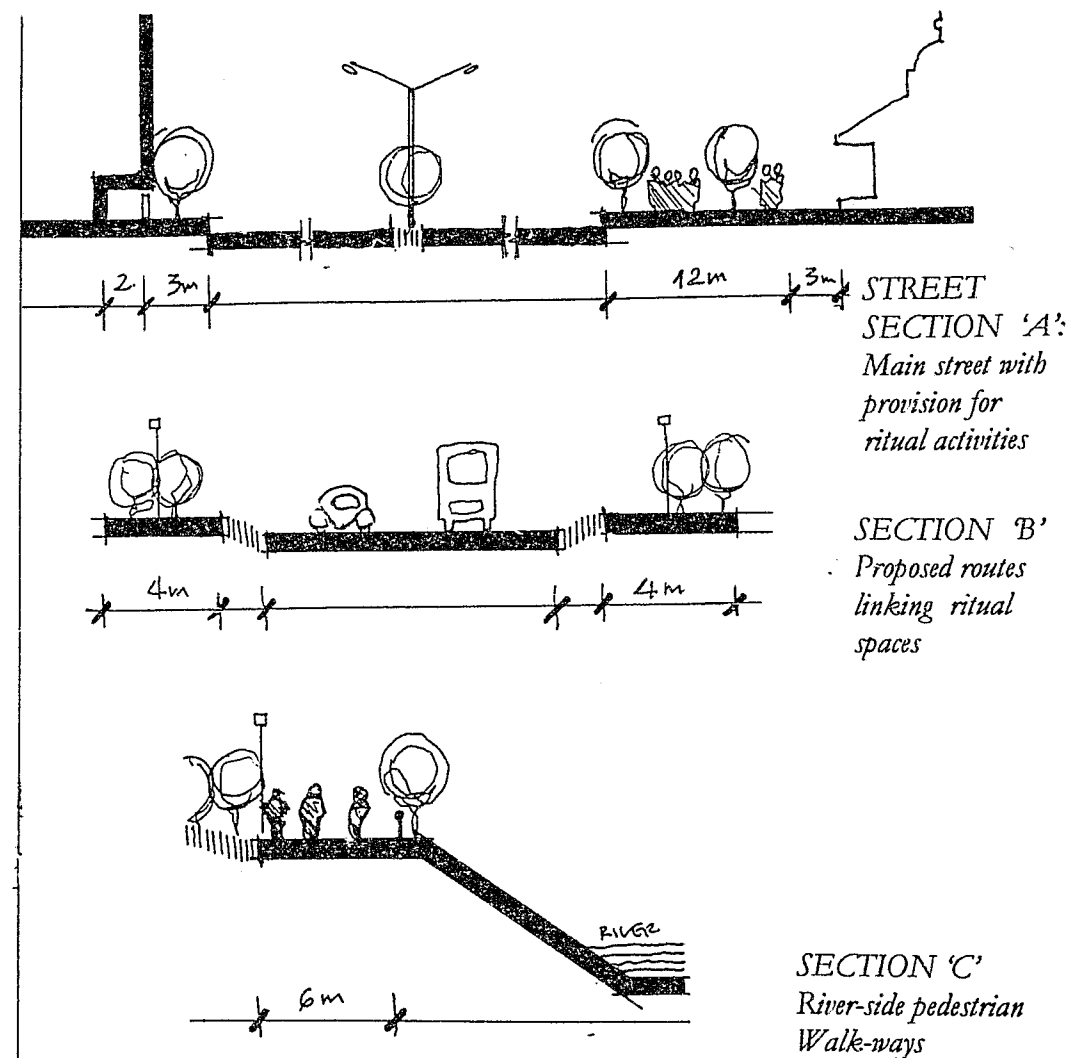
TYPICAL PLAN



TYPICAL SECTION

DESIGN PRINCIPLE:

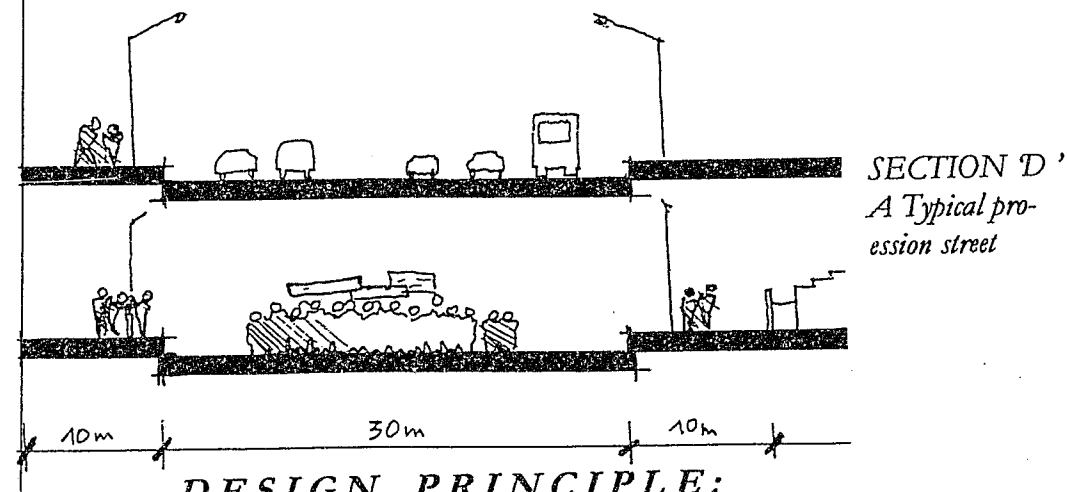
SPATIAL INTEGRATION OF RITUAL SPACES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES



SECTION 'A'
Main street with provision for ritual activities

SECTION 'B'
Proposed routes linking ritual spaces

SECTION 'C'
River-side pedestrian Walk-ways



SECTION 'D'
A Typical procession street

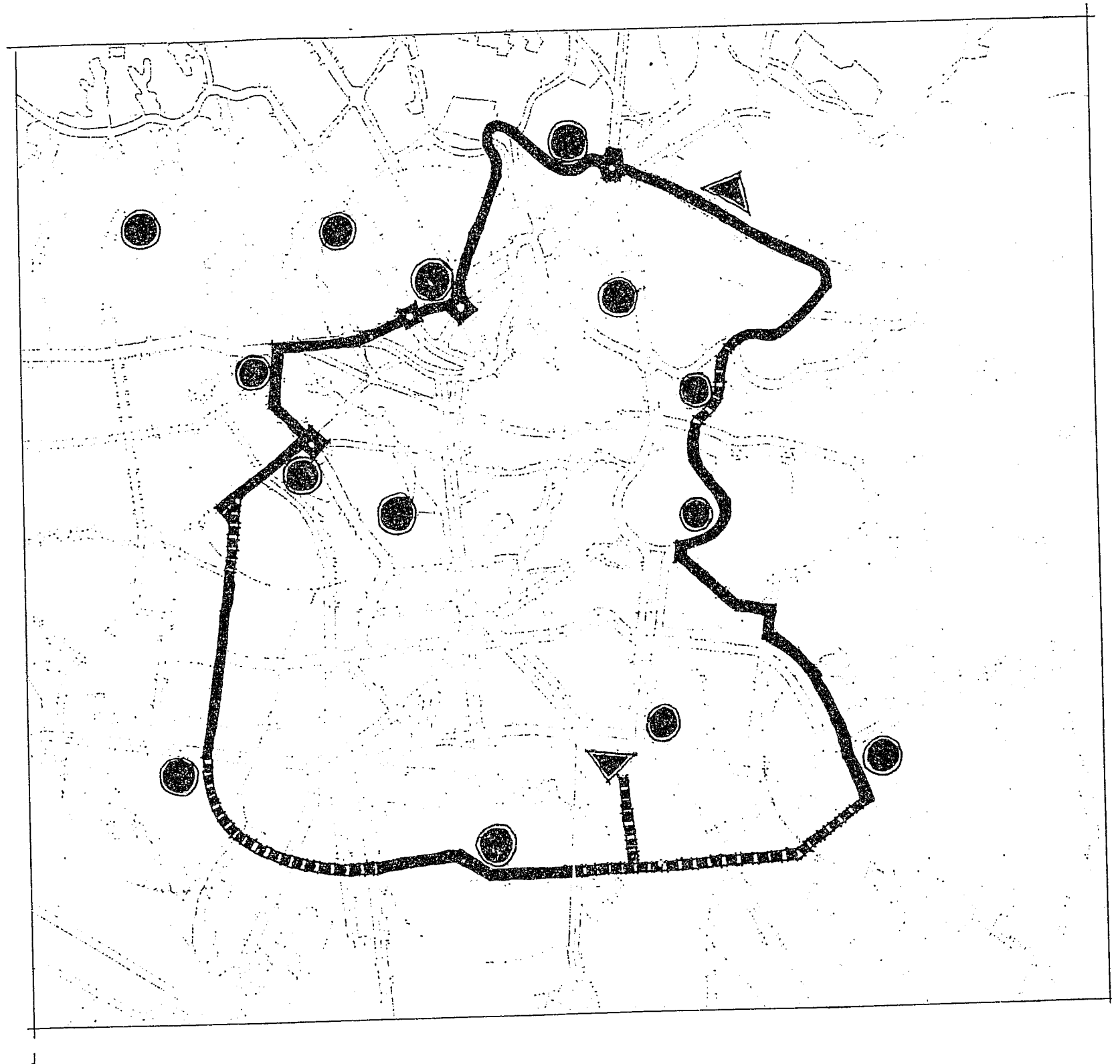
DESIGN PRINCIPLE:

REDESIGNING OF STREETS TO PROVIDE FOR RITUAL ACTIVITIES

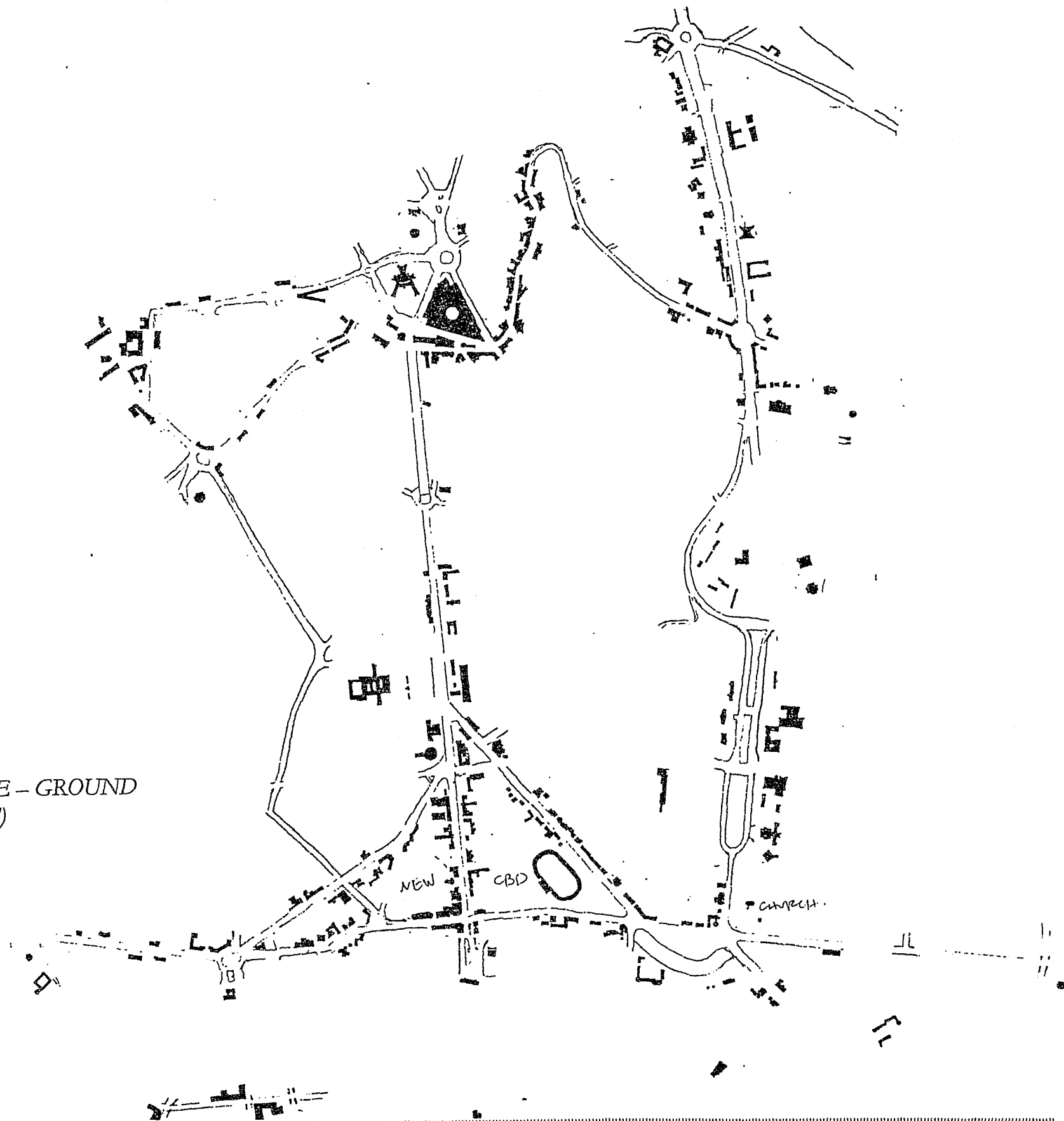
**URBAN DESIGN
FRAMEWORK:**

PROPOSED NEW
LINKAGES BETWEEN
SEFER CENTRES

- CHURCHES ●
- CITY-SCALE RITUAL
SPACES ▲
- EXISTING PUBLIC
TRANSPORT ROUTE —
- PROPOSED LINKAGES ■■■■

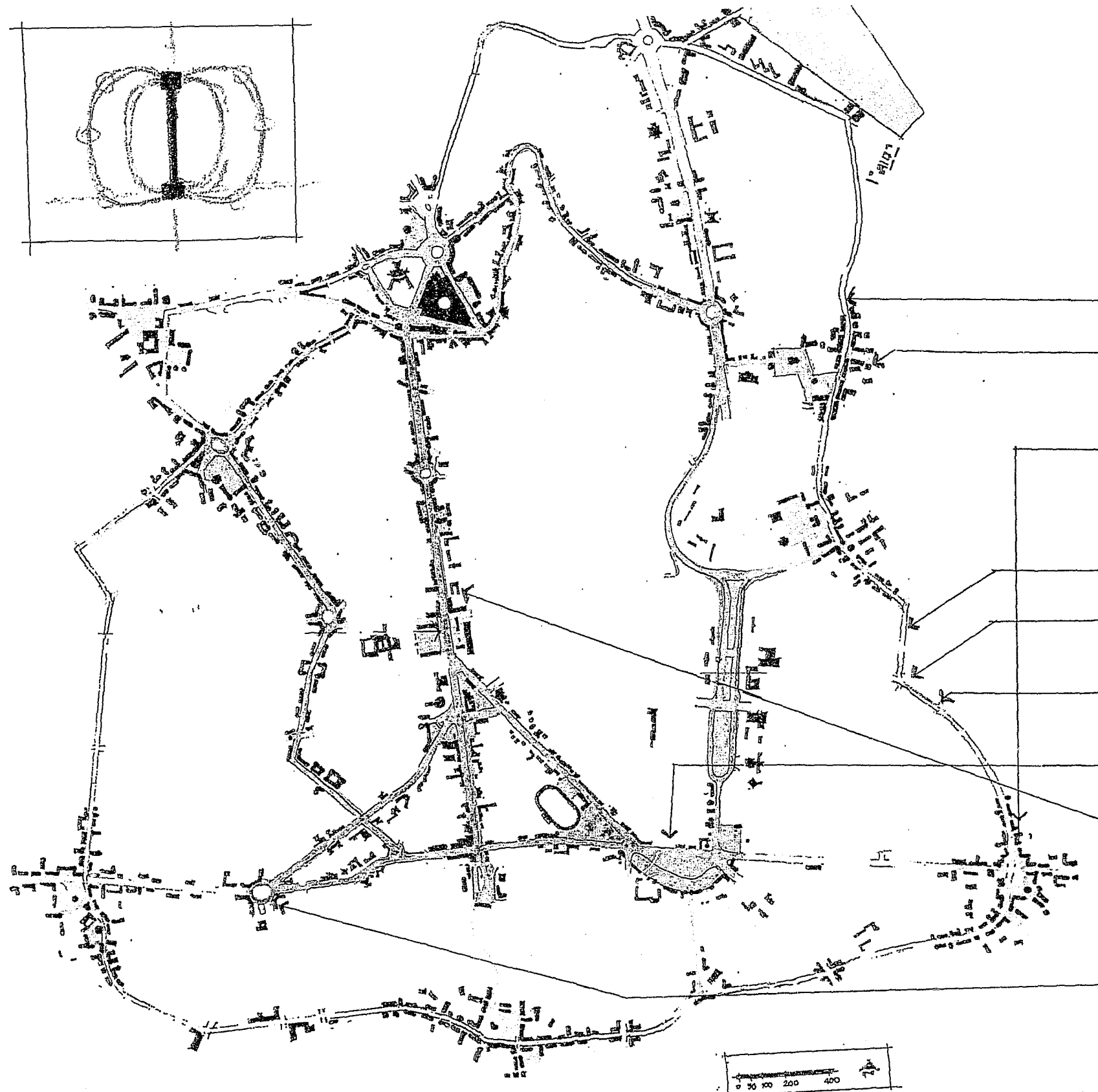


EXISTING FIGURE - GROUND
(*'Soft' buildings excluded*)

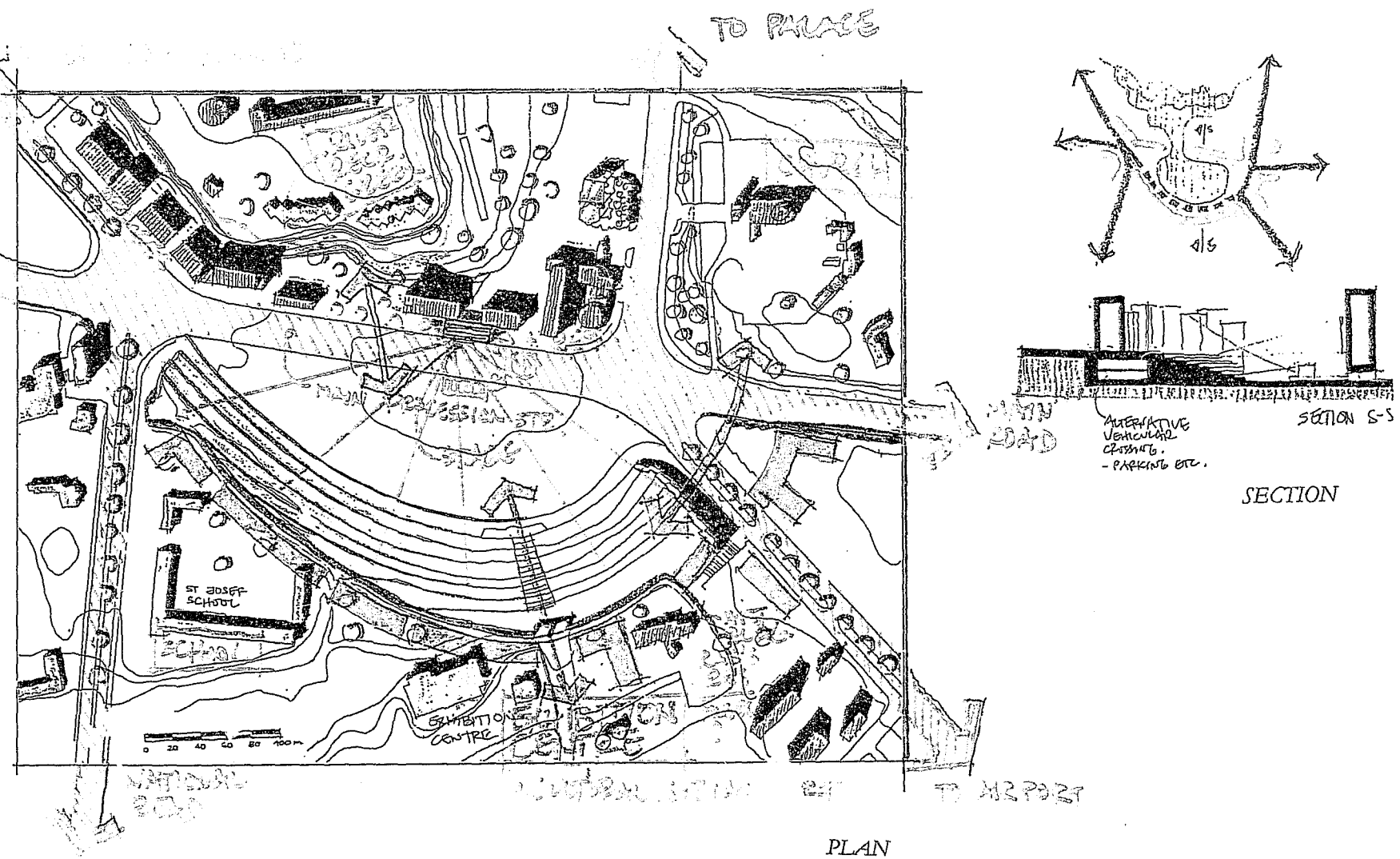


URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK:

A FRAMEWORK OF RITUAL SPACES, ROUTES AND URBAN FACILITIES

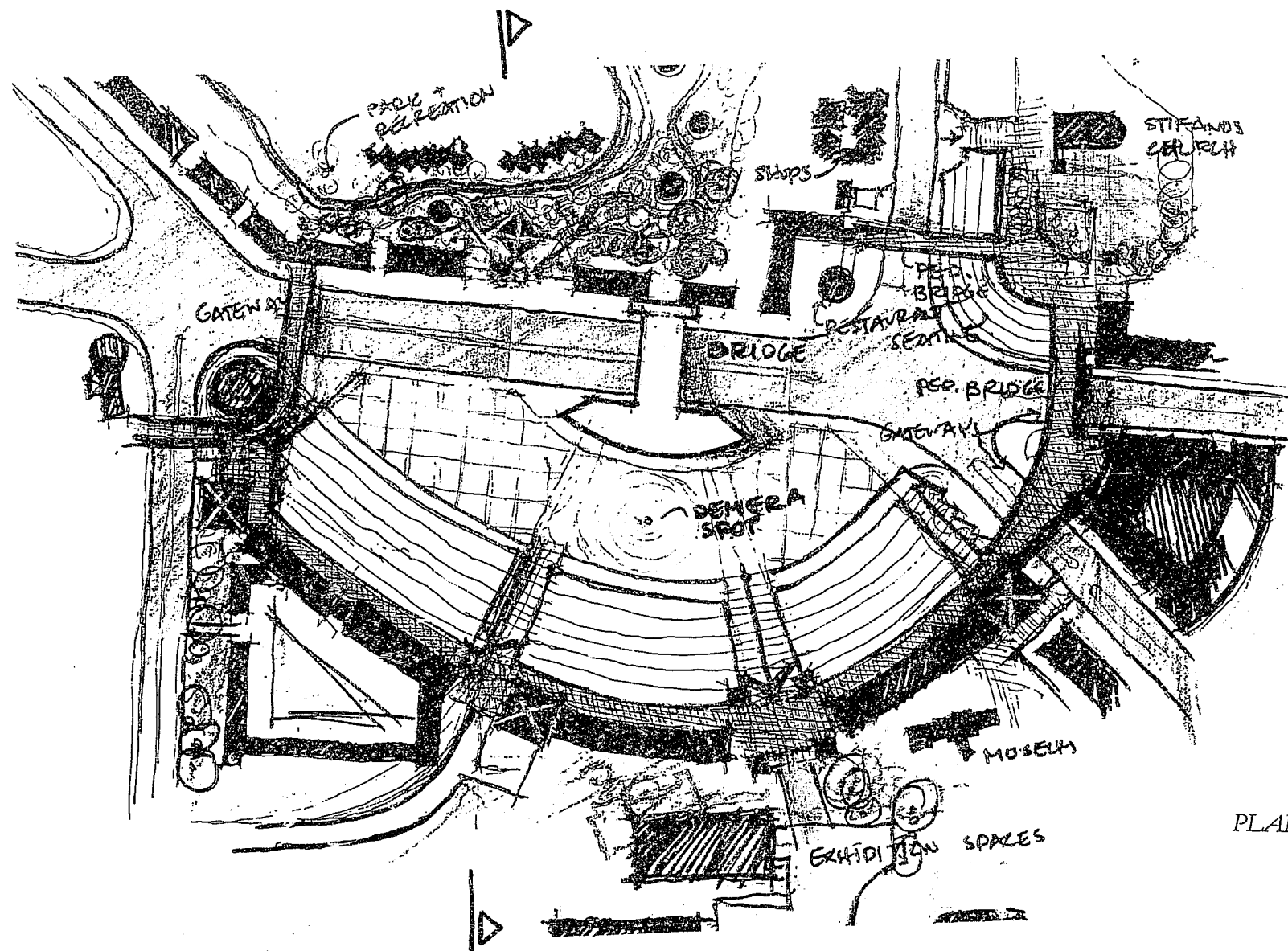


- Upgrading of poor infrastructure and level of services
- Detail study and redesigning of each *Sefer* in relation to ritual use of spaces (eg. the use of tents for ritual purposes)
- Implementation of *Sefer* centres as community centres (in relation to ritual spaces, eg. churches and mosques and their ethical/binding values)
- Upgrading or constructing new routes relating *Sefer* centres
- Enriching the quality of existing ritual routes (urban spaces and vegetation along streets)
- Increase residential density along the specified routes and *Sefer* centres
- Upgrading city-scale ritual spaces (eg Jan Meda and Maskal Square). Enhance their city-scale functional values as well touristic benefites.
- Maintain the importance of Churchill Avenue as an axial link between the old CBD (Arada) and the new CBD by increasing high density development
- Enhance the ritualistic value of 'squares'

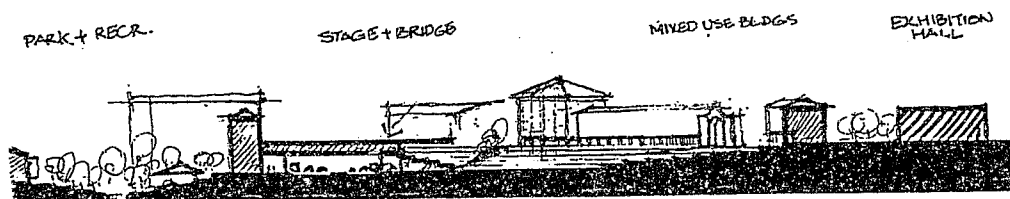


REDESIGNING MASKAL SQUARE:
AS THE RITUAL AND FUNCTIONAL FOCUS
OF THE CITY

Alternative 1



PLAN



SECTION

REDESIGNING MASKAL SQUARE:
AS THE RITUAL AND FUNCTIONAL FOCUS
OF THE CITY

Alternative 2

8.5 Some Issues of Implementation

8.5.1 Broad Policy: Urban Design as Part of a Comprehensive Planning Process

For urban design interventions to be successfully implemented, they need to be considered as important aspects of the comprehensive planning policy. It is also important to devise design processes and implementation strategies that offer a spatial matrix within which the individual and the community at large can live a full and rich life, yet take part in a creative economy that benefits all scales of conglomeration.

From the revision of previous Masterplans for Addis Ababa, it has been shown that 'planning' has never been anything more than unrealistic visions of functional development, with little or no regard to the inherent ritualistic behaviour of the society. The main cause for this has been that land-use zoning plans were the only means for directing development in the absence of detail urban design plans.

Other problems of implementation included the lack of co-ordination between sectoral implementing agencies and the Municipality. The current institutional set up and capacity is also too weak to carry out an efficient urban planning and development management.

8.5.2 Issues of Implementation Tools, Process and Procedure

The following points observed from past implementation problems must also be looked at.

- Planning documents are usually too complex and too vast, lacking simplicity in planning
- Public participation, a crucial plan preparation and implementation strategy, has not been given due emphasis. Many of the urban development schemes thus lack collaboration of the community
- The implementation process is also uncoordinated. Provision or upgrading of services, for instance are carried out without setting out proper priorities

8.5.3 Implementation of the Urban Design Framework for Central Addis Ababa

8.5.3.1 Players and roles

- Religious institutions such as The Ethiopian Orthodox Church (see Appendix A & B) and the Ethiopian Islamic Society. A significant amount of money is raised by religious institution for religious and community purposes. The EOC specially had historically been blessed huge amounts of land and property (used to exercise a third of the power and owned a third of landed property during the imperial days).

Recent planning applications (for building schools, clinics, shops, houses, etc) lodged at the city administration are an indication of the interest these religious institutions show in continuing to be centres of community life. (This coupled with the willingness of the population has been the basis of this whole exercise).

- The community: As rituals are highly valued by the society, despite the poor standard of living, communities are more than willing to participate in improvement of the built environment for the purpose of enhancing a sense of *identity*. This, it is believed here, is rather achieved through the community and religious institutions more than administrative or political institutions can do.
- The City Administration, in devising a policies that co-ordinate the design and provision of community services and facilities on the basis of the ritual use of spaces and economic development.
- The Private and Public Sectors. The challenge in attracting private investors (which are now the key players in the new 'free market economy') and public sector (government owned banks and insurance companies) to take part in the implementation process is in convincing all parties that the framework benefits the city as a whole. This obviously requires a strong and committed city administration. Planning controls and incentives which have so far unfortunately been absent will also play a major role.

8.5.4 Phasing

Institutional

- Forming a 'commission' of the role players
- Establishing Priorities
- Implementing priorities

Technical

- Upgrading of poor infrastructure and level of services
- Detail study and redesigning of each *Sefer* in relation to ritual use of spaces (eg. the use of tents for ritual purposes)
- Implementation of *Sefer* centres as community centres (in relation to ritual spaces, eg. churches and mosques and their ethical/binding values)
- Upgrading or constructing new routes relating *Sefer* centres
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- Maintain the importance of Churchill Avenue as an axial link between the old CBD (Alada) and the new CBD by increasing high density development
- Enhance the ritualistic value of 'squares'

Conclusion

This dissertation set out to highlight the importance of urban ritualism in cities of the developing world as contemporary urban practice seems to preclude this profound human need.

Briefly, the following dimensions may best summarise the conclusions of this study:

- The **philosophical dimension**

Rituals do have more powers at ameliorating stress in city life than all the material comforts that the city might provide.

- The **cultural dimension**

Understanding of the meaning of the built environment provides a method for its users to see a *culture in space* as a basis for design strategies which are contextually sensitive to both people and place.

- The **procedural urban design dimension**

Urban Design should not be viewed as the mere provision of form; it must be relevant to specifics of *space, time, meaning and communication*.

- The **substantive urban design dimension**

For a successful urban design, unconscious/habitual/ritualistic use of space is more important than its planned/forced/functional use. Urban use is not simply evoked by the environments three dimensional form. The existence of an impressive city life depends neither on the presence of spatial facilities, nor on climate. The driving force behind public

behaviour is generated elsewhere! It must be the task of Urban Design to identify this force and design with it.

- The **precedent and design dimension**

“Space Speaks” (Hall, 1960)

- The **empirical dimension of design**

The recognition of culturally compatible space and the process of re-creating it requires that some system of logic be understood in terms of generic principles.

The applicability of these theoretical explorations has proved invaluable in the attempt to strike a balance that should exist between two ways of structuring urban space: that applied by planning authorities, which involves formalistic signals and that applied by the community which has to do with signals of a *ritual* nature.

POPULATION SIZE OF ADDIS ABABA BY RELIGION , SEX
1994 (RESULT) C . S

ADDIS ABABA - TOTAL

RELIGION	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	FROM TOTAL	CUMMULATIVE
ORTHODOX	820,912	911,912	1,732,374	82.00	82.00
PROTESTANT	38,037	43,722	81,759	3.87	85.87
CATHOLIC	8,050	8,438	16,488	0.78	86.65
MUSLIM	149,252	118,441	267,693	12.57	99.32
OTRERS	6,065	6,319	12,384	0.58	99.90
TRADITIONAL	230	155	385	0.02	99.92
NOT STATED	906	748	1,654	0.08	100
TOTAL	1,023,452	1,089,285	2,112,737	100	

DISTRIBUTION OF ETHIOPIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH S
AROUND ADDIS ABABA ADMINISTRATIVE REGION

SOURCE: Addis Ababa Diolese Secretariat

No	Wereda	No. of churches	No	Wereda	No. of Churches
1	1	2	15	15	1
2	2	0	16	16	2
3	3	2	17	17	4
4	4	0	18	18	1
5	5	1	19	19	7
6	6	1	20	20	2
7	7	1	21	21	2
8	8	2	22	22	1
9	9	1	23	23	4
10	10	1	24	24	4
11	11	7	25	25	3
12	12	4	26	26	3
13	13	0	27	27	3
13	13	0	27	27	3
14	14	4	28	28	6

Total 74 churches *2 churches are not located within the city Addis Ababa.

Appendix A

DISTRIBUTION OF MOSQUES AROUND ADDIS ABABA ADMINISTRATIVE REGION.

SOURCE :- ISLAMIC AFFAIRS SUPREME COUNCIL OF ADDIS ABABA ADMINISTRATIVE REGION.

ITEM NO.	WEREDAS	OF MESQUES	ITEM NO.	WEREDA	OF MESQUES
A	1	-	O	15	1
B	2	2	P	16	1
C	3	1	Q	17	2
D	4	2	R	18	2
E	5	4	S	19	4
F	6	3	T	20	1
G	7	4	U	21	1
H	8	5	V	22	-
I	9	1	W	23	- 2
J	10	1	X	24	6
K	11	-	Y	25	8
L	12	-	Z	26	-
M	13	-	O	27	2
N	14	1	O	28	1

TOTAL = 55 MOSQUES

Appendix B

		INCOME (Eth.Br)				EXPENDITURE (Br)				BALANCE (Br)													
		NAME CHURCH	ESTAB. (EC)	MEMBERS	DONATIONS	DEVT. SECTOR	TOTAL					TOTAL	TOTAL	TOTAL	TOTAL								
				IN				OUT															

Sermon in Stone

Robert Maxwell

Dean Robert Maxwell was interested in discovering "readings which were relevant to the recent discourse on ritual," and this led to a search through the indices of his favorite books, a process that became in his own words — "a skit on me as a teacher." He explained, "there is skepticism in the face of propaganda, if you like. I wanted to explore ideas... arouse curiosity... with a theatrical quality. In a piece this short, for teaching purposes, it's not as important to cover a field as to stimulate the student." The article takes the form of a dialogue between Man and Woman, yet it is "hardly a Socratic dialogue — more like the alternation of male and female voices on a French radio station." When asked whether he thought the act of writing itself had become a ritual activity, he replied, "as a shadow of an idea."

Q: What can this elusiveness of meaning suggest?

A: Exactly that it is elusive.

IN A SMALL ART GALLERY in Manhattan it is no surprise to encounter an easy-chair, an occasional table, a television set, all made of stone. After soft sculpture, hard. These objects are not made for relaxation, but for re-creation. We know this. We accept it. We collaborate with it. Yet there is some surprise, when we press the button marked participation, to be made party to a conversation. By a knowing trick of the display, the voices appear to emanate from the television, whose stony screen maintains an inospitable blankness. There is nothing for it but to listen for the moment, always expecting to give up at a certain point

Woman: Ritual is a communal form of magic.¹

Man: Connected at first with the prolongation of magic in myth; then as history speeds up, with the prolongation of myth in religion, of religion in art, of art in life. Today the most commonplace object has its aura of magic, to which its price in the marketplace is not unrelated.

Woman: To us the most essential point about magic and religious ritual is that it steps in only where knowledge fails. Supernaturally founded ceremonial grows out of life, but it never stultifies the practical efforts of man.²

Man: There is always a point where knowledge fails. In science, the known stretches to the edge of the unknown. Nothing, therefore, is fully known. What remains unknown is framed within the known, but the unknown also frames the known.

The practical efforts of man constitute a sphere of activity which, like the earth's own biosphere, is extended between unknown heights and depths. It is both tenuous and hollow. This sphere is

1. Langer: *Philosophy in a New Key*.

2. Malinowski: *The Foundations of Faith and Morals*.

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maintained as much by artifice as by common sense.

Woman: A constant component of poetic significance is that the poem's language looks as much like a ritual or a game...or pure artifice, as it does like a means of conveying sense.³

Man: Games and rituals are sustained as much by artifice as by common-sense. They both exist to perpetuate a myth, to prolong its efficacy, to extend its hold on life.

Woman: Regardless of whether the myth or the ritual is the original, they replicate each other; the myth exists on the conceptual level and the ritual on the level of action.⁴

Man: In the football game, the level of action is constantly interrupted by the intervention of the rules; the match cannot for instance be allowed to degenerate into a brawl. The rule structure is sacrosanct, it defines the nature of the game; thus the rules of the game are repeatedly brought to our liminal consciousness, although we believe that what we see is at the level of action. By exposing its rule-structure as a fragile creation of the mind, the game returns us to ritual solidarity, to the will to perpetuate it.

Woman: All games are defined by a set of rules which in practice allow the playing of any number of matches. Ritual, which is also "played," is on the other hand like a favored instance of a game, remembered from among the possible ones because it is only one which results in a particular type of equilibrium between the sides. The transposition is readily seen in the case of the Gahuku-Gama of New Guinea, who have learnt football but who will play several days running, as many matches as are necessary for both sides to reach the same score. This is treating a game as a ritual.⁵

Man: In the modern game the ritual is implicit. We like to think that we read newspapers only for information. To the extent that we protect our rituals, our rituals protect us. In good health, we forget how much we depend on ritual.

Woman: While other diseases de-socialize, tuberculosis project[s] you into a minor ethnographic society, part tribe, part monastery, part phalanstery; rites, constraints, protections.⁶

Man: It is in the minor ethnographic society that the power of ritual is most energetically affirmed — the perpetuation of solidarity requires it.

Woman: There are perhaps no other external traits which are so typical of the secret society, and so sharply distinguish it from the open society, than the high valuation of usages, formulas, and rites, and their peculiar preponderance over the purposive contents of the group, if not their contrast with them. At times, in fact, the contents are less anxiously guarded than the secret of the ritual.⁷

Man: We have heard of the rites of learned discourse, another instance of implicit values. However, if we cease to protect our rituals from life, they will no longer have the power to protect us: like stories, like art, they depend on a willing suspension of disbelief.

3. Riffaterre: *The Semiotics of Poetry*.

4. Levi-Strauss: *Structural Anthropology*.

5. Levi-Strauss: *The Savage Mind*.

6. Barthes: *Roland Barthes on Roland Barthes*.

7. Simmel: *The Secret Society*.

Woman: Ritual...is primarily an articulation of feeling. The ultimate product of such articulation is not a simple emotion, but a complex, permanent attitude.... A rite regularly performed is the constant reiteration of sentiments toward "first and last things": it is not a free expression of emotions, but a disciplined rehearsal of "right attitudes."⁸

Man: With the loss of belief comes the loss of power. Ritual is a fragile form; it constitutes a discipline and exacts good form in behavior. It cannot survive doubt. Outside of tribal loyalties, outside of the monastery, outside of the Unité d'Habitation, doubt is endemic.

Woman: Life can express itself and realize its freedom only through forms: yet forms must also necessarily suffocate life and obstruct freedom.⁹

Man: So long as good form governs behavior, so long as belief persists, forms render objective and universal all that which, at its origin in feelings and urges, is confused and inarticulate. So long as belief persists, forms enable us to see ourselves in relation to others. When belief fails, we suffer an unrelenting urge to re-establish belief at another level: new form, new art, new ritual. Is not new ritual a contradiction?

Woman: The forms in which life manifests itself and by means of which it acquires an objective form signify both a resistance to life and an indispensable support. If they present obstacles to it, it is obstacles through which it becomes conscious of its power and learns to use that power.¹⁰

Man: To be constructive, then, we have first to destroy; but that also implies that in order to be properly, fully destructive, we have to construct.

Woman: Life can manifest itself only in particular forms: yet, owing to its essential restlessness, life constantly struggles against its own products, which have become fixed and do not move along with it. This process manifests itself as the displacement of an old form by a new one. This constant change in the content of culture, even of whole cultural styles, is the sign of the infinite fruitfulness of life. At the same time, it marks the deep contradiction between life's eternal flux and the objective validity and authenticity of the forms through which it proceeds. It moves constantly between death and resurrection--between resurrection and death.¹¹

Man: There is something paradoxical in that. Although it is possible to distinguish, correctly it seems, between the objective forms of art and the subjective states of mind which both produce it and are reproduced by it, that formulation does not seem to allow for the intensity of the struggle between art and life, as I myself experience it.

Woman: The work of art leads its life beyond reality. To be sure, the work of art draws its content from reality; but from visions of reality, it builds a sovereign realm.¹²

Man: That realm is itself magical, in that it will resolve for me only what it has resolved for itself. To participate in that resolution I have to give myself to it. To enter that sovereign realm demands that I be abject -- a loss of my own sovereignty. By contrast, ritual is less demanding. Through ritual even a simple object of common utility can draw me into magic, without leaving the every-day.

8. Langer: *Philosophy in a New Key*.

9. Simmel: *The Conflict in Modern Culture*.

10. Cassirer: *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*.

11. Simmel: *The Conflict in Modern Culture*.

12. Simmel: *The Handle*.

Woman: A spinning machine is perhaps the most impressive manifestation of a functional idea, and an "abstract" painting is perhaps the most expressive manifestation of pure form, but both have a minimum of content.¹³

Man: It would seem then that there is nothing made by man which does not have both form and content. Form is indispensable, but obtrudes itself between our desire and its fulfillment. We long for form to be transparent, but the longer we gaze, the more it becomes opaque... the way the photograph of someone we love turns into an enigma.

Woman: The Photograph belongs to that class of laminated objects whose two leaves cannot be separated...¹⁴

Man: But an enigma whose ...

Woman: The Photograph belongs to that class of laminated objects whose two leaves cannot be separated without destroying them both.

Man: It's hard to see how disbelief can affect a photograph. Its loss of power is more a loss of stimulus--it reveals less and less of what we first thought we knew. Of all objects, the photograph is among the flattest. Yet it is this minimal quality which allows it to function as an object of common utility, to be carried in the wallet, shown to friends unexpectedly, found in due course on our dead body, listed among our effects. What started as an actuality has hardened into a replica, lived on as an emblem, died as a relic, been resuscitated as a symbol.

Woman: Symbolic liaisons can be included among the liaisons of coexistence; these exist between the symbol and what it evokes and are characterized by the relation of participation. They are set in a mythic or speculative vision of a whole in which symbol and thing symbolized are equal parts.¹⁵

The tape comes to an end. Our curiosity aroused, we look keenly around the gallery. It is empty. The custodians are looking at us strangely. It is time to go. From the door, we look back at the stone television. Its screen is still completely blank, although fleetingly we have the impression of an image. Something, or some idea of something

13. Panofsky: *Meaning in the Visual Arts*.

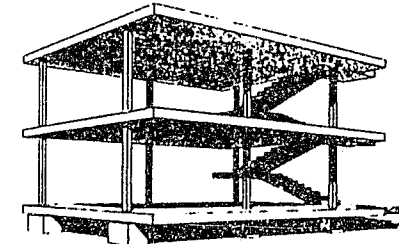
14. Barthes: *Camera Lucida*.

15. Perelman: *The Realm of Rhetoric*.

1. Duchamp: "Hidden Noise."



2. Le Corbusier: The Domino Diagram.



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