RETHINKING WARREING STATES CITIES:
AN HISTORICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL PROPOSAL

BY

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Abstract

Unsatisfied with a rigid typology of Warring States cities based on static configurations of city walls, this paper approaches different urban forms during this period as linked phenomena in a broad sociopolitical movement. Through reexamining the expansion of several important cities such as Xue, Linzi, Xinzhou (Xiaodu), Wuyang, and Qufu, the author argues that the most important feature of Warring States cities was not stability (as a necessary condition for a typology), but constant change (of the layout, enclosure, centers of administration and commerce, etc.). A study of these changes undermines the rigid division of cities into different types, and leads to the reconstruction of a city’s transformation as a dynamic historical process. This analysis also provides evidence for the historicity of the “ideal capital” ascribed in the “Kaogong Ji” section of the Zhou li, an Eastern Zhou text.

The great increases in the body of archaeological data on Warring States period (453–221 BC) cities obtained through organized surveys and excavations conducted since the 1930s have led to various attempts to establish a typology of these cities. Two main directions characterize these efforts. The first direction, followed by most scholars, is to classify Warring States cities based on the two-dimensional layout outlined by their city walls. For example, in Nancy S. Steinhardt’s (1990: 43) words, “What is amazing about the Eastern Zhou capitals is that only three different plans are found among the twenty or so cities that have been excavated.” The first plan is of a rectangular “concentric city,” which has a small palatial town (gongcheng 宫城) built inside a large walled enclosure. The second plan, that of a “double city,” consists of two walled rectangles, either attached or separated from each other. The third plan is characterized by “the location of the palace-city in the north center of the outer city and by the sharing of a common northern wall portion by the two areas” (Steinhardt 1986, 1990: 47). The second direction, which runs counter to such classifications, is to trace a single orthodox
tradition in pre-Qin urban planning. For example, Yang Kuan (1993: 66–67, 88–91) argues that all major Warring States cities in the Central Plains followed the bipartite structure of the Western Zhou (ca. 1045–770 BC) city Chengzhou 成周, which was a “double city” consisting of a large guo 郭 to the east and a smaller cheng 城 to the west. According to Yang, the only exceptions to this structure were cities of the “border” states, such as Chu 越 and Qin 秦.

While these and other studies have laid a foundation for further research, they share the premise that Warring States cities resulted from and attested to some formulated and essentially self-contained “plans” or “models.” A classification based on this premise tends naturally to be static and formalistic; the differences between individual types are either erased or made absolute. This paper abandons this premise. My analysis of Warring States cities begins from a commonplace knowledge, that these cities often functioned as political and economic centers over a long period. Many of them had existed before the fifth century BC; others were reportedly founded after this date, but archaeological excavations always discover traces of earlier habitation. In both cases, the physical forms of a city were subject to constant change. A study of urban forms cannot be divorced from this historical reality.

A rigid typological approach is especially unsuitable for studying the architectural history of the Warring States period, during which China experienced one of the most intensive stages of city construction in its history. The rapid growth of cities, both in number and size, was intimately related to the political and economic conditions of the time. Textual and archaeological data suggest that starting from the middle Spring and Autumn period (722–481 BC), rulers of various states were engaged in feverish construction to enhance existing city walls, multiply enclosures and barricades, and establish satellite towns. The most frequent reason for such activities given in historical writings was military defense (see Gu Donggao 1888). Indeed, in an age when a large number of principalities were rapidly reduced to a handful of kingdoms, any ambition for political dominance had first to rely on the ability to survive, and it was only natural that great attention was paid to consolidating one’s home base. Consequently, the city gained a new definition as “[the means for] self-defense” (自守) (Mozig 17). The writings of the “School of Strategy” often contain detailed instructions about how to strengthen a city under invasion (see Mozig: 297–374; Sun Bin, bingfa: 195–98; Weixiezi 19–24).

The frequent relocations of state capitals contributed another reason for constant urban construction. Although the relocation of the capital was a general feature of the entire Three Dynasties period, this tradition was intensified during the fourth and third centuries BC, when the struggle between the rulers of the Qi capital to receive the Shang capital five times in some since the seventh century. Among other states, Han 韓 in 375 BC, Wei to Beihai 大梁 in 361 BC, and Zhonghou 中牟 in 386 BC. In most cases, the court to Wuyang 武陽 continued to provide a city of the same name. The most important reason for the change in the cities of the small and third centuries BC. The growth of urban operations, and new techniques in population redistribution, and city walls and county towns called basic administrative units of commercial cities.

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struggle between the remaining kingdoms became red-hot. The move of the Qin capital to Xiyang 咸陽 in 350 BC, for example, largely served Shang Yang’s 商鞅 political reforms, which finally led to the Qin’s unification of China. Chu, on the other hand, was forced to relocate its capital five times in some 50 years after Ying 鄭, its traditional capital since the seventh century, was captured by the Qin army in 278 BC. Among other states, Han 韓 moved its capital from Yangzhai 阳翟 to Zheng 鄭 in 375 BC, Wei 魏 relocated its royal house from Anyi 安邑 to Daliang 大梁 in 361 BC, and Zhao 趙, after moving from Jinyang 靖陽 to Zhongmou 中牟 in 425 BC, founded its last capital in Handan 邯郸 in 386 BC. In most cases, the founding of a new capital was followed by constructing or reconstructing city walls and palaces. The old capital was not abandoned, however. As an example, after Yan 燕 moved the court to Wuyang 武陽 near Yixian 易縣, its old capital in Jicheng 城 continued to provide a stage for important political events. The two cities were known as the state’s Lower and Upper Capitals.1

The most important reason for the large-scale construction of Warring States cities, however, must be found in the economic upsurge and technical innovations, which reached a new stage during the fourth and third centuries BC. The wide use of iron tools, advanced irrigation operations, and new techniques of husbandry all contributed to a rapid increase in population and to the accumulation of great wealth. Commercial and craft activities were in full swing, giving rise to a new class of merchants. Consequently, the capitals of the states were no longer just the seats of political power, but now integrated important economic functions and became commercial and manufacturing centers. As political reforms were carried out in various kingdoms, walled prefecture and county towns called jin 郡 and xian 縣 increasingly became the basic administrative units; some of them also developed into famous commercial cities.

Writers of the Warring States period often contrasted cities of antiquity with cities of their own times. To them, the latter were much more impressive in physical scale, as well as in their concentration of people and wealth. In one instance, a minister of Zhao stated that an ancient city was never larger than 300 zhang 丈 in circumference and never housed a population greater than 300 households, but it was not rare for his contemporaries to find “cities of a thousand zhang and towns of ten thousand households within sight of one another” (Zhangye vo. 68). Although such statements should not be taken literally, they do reflect a general phenomenon, that a Warring States city was no longer

1 It is also possible that Yan never “moved” its capital to Wuyang, but only established Wuyang as its second capital. See On Yan 1988.
restricted by the traditional building codes which had regulated a city’s size according to its rank in the Zhou social/political system (Ye 1981). We know one such code from a statement made by Zhai Zhong’s《禮記》: “According to the rule of the former [Zhou] kings, the larger capital [of a lord?] should be one-third the size of the national capital; the middle capital [of a minister?] should be one-fifth the size of the national capital; and the smaller capital [of an officer?] should be one-ninth the size of the national capital” (Zhao zha, Yin 1: 1716; Legge 1781: 4–5). In the fourth and third centuries BC, however, such a rigid hierarchy in city planning had become remote memory. The most active and glamorous city at the time was not the Royal City (Wangcheng 城) of Zhou, but a prosperous regional urban center such as Linzi 隰 or Ying of Chu. It was said that Linzi had 70,000 households and at least 100,000 adult males. On its roads, “carts rub hubcaps and men rub shoulders; their blouses form a canvas wall. When they raise their sleeves it forms a tent. When they shake off their sweat it turns to rain. Families are rich, men are well off; their will high, their spirits soaring” (Shi 2257, Nienhauser 1994: 106).

Archaeological discoveries of more than 50 Warring States cities, ranging from major metropolises to small county towns, have proven that such records are not just some ancient authors’ fantasies. Most significantly, none of these cities and towns followed the Zhou regulations cited by Zhai Zhong, and some of them even surpassed the Eastern Zhou capital in both size and grandeur. Archaeological surveys have shown that the Zhou Royal City at Luoyang 洛阳 was roughly square in shape and its north wall was 2,890 m long; the length of the entire city wall was thus about 12,500 m (Figure 1). However, the walls of Linzi stretched over 15,000 m (Figure 2); the outer city walls of Xinzhe 新郑 were about 16,000 m in circumference (Figure 3); and the walls of Wuyang were over 27,000 m (Figure 4) (see Ye Xiaojun 1988: 61–76). These and other Warring States cities acquired such immensity, however, only after a long period of expansion; to reconstruct their history we should explore the cumulative process of their construction.

Xue 酉, the capital of the state of Xue at present-day Tengzhou 滕州 in Shandong 山东, was modest in size if compared with agglomerations such as Linzi and Wuyang. But it provides perhaps the most illuminating example for the continuous construction and transformation of an ancient Chinese city. Altogether four towns, built over a period of close to two millennia and superimposed onto one another, were found during the archaeological surveys and excavations made from 1964 to 1993 (Figure 5) (Shandong Gongzuozhan 1965; Xueguo

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Figure 1. Royal City of the Eastern Zhou at Luoyang (after Li Xueqin 1985: fig. 3).

1991; Zhongguo wenwu bao 1994). The oldest of the four was a Longshan Culture (2600–2000 BC) town (no. 1) 170 m east to west and 150 m north to south, its walls built of solid rammed earth. While this ancient town was rebuilt toward the end of the Shang 尚 dynasty (ca. 1100 BC), another town of similar size and shape was constructed to the east (no. 2). The result was a dualistic complex similar to the paired structures found at the last Shang capital at Anyang 安陽 in Henan 河南 Province (see Chang 1980: 90–95). During the Western Zhou period, a larger walled enclosure (no. 3), about 900 m east-west and 700 m north-south, was constructed to encircle these two towns, with the no. 1 town placed at its exact center. It is thus possible, as the excavators have suggested, that this old town inherited from pre-Shang and Shang times now functioned as a “palatial town” inside the Zhou
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Figure 2. Lixian of Qi (after Li Xueqin 1985: fig. 55).

city. Tombs and inscribed bronzes found outside the city help identify it as the capital of Xue during the Western Zhou and the Spring and Autumn periods. Finally, a much larger city (no. 4) was built during the Warring States period. About 5,000 m east to west and 3,500 m north to south, it integrated the Zhou city into a walled space 28 times larger. This Warring States city continued to exist during the Han dynasty period.

Ancient texts add more information to the archaeological evidence. The *Zhao zhuan* records that an official of the Xia dynasty named Xi-zhong first had a town built in Xue. After the Shang conquered the Xia, Zhonghui 仲虺, placed his home as his residence, one of the many feudal states at the Zhou kingdom center. After Xue was finally swallowed up by the Warring States period, the illustrious Lord Meng of its walls was unsurprising. This textual evidence contains aspects of an ancient city that constantly altered its shape in a process of expansion. Therefore, a single city absorbed into the Shang turned into the “palatial town” Xue’s outer walls (guo) during the Spring and Autumn periods would be replaced by the “double city” — two
Xia, Zhonghui 仲虺, the Left Minister of King Tang, took over this place as his home (Zuo zhuan: 2131, Legge 1781: 744–45). Xue became one of the many feudal states of the Zhou, and its lords paid regular audience at the Zhou kings' court (Zuo zhuan: 1735, Legge 1871: 32). After Xue was finally swallowed-up by its powerful neighbor Qi during the Warring States period, one of its new masters, none other than the illustrious Lord Mengchang 孟嘗君, “rebuilt the city; the strength of its walls was unsurpassable” (Gu Zuyu, vol. 2: 1418). Supported by this textual evidence, the excavation of Xue highlights two important aspects of an ancient Chinese city. First, it demonstrates that a city constantly altered its shape and function in the course of the city’s expansion. Therefore, a single Longshan town (built by Xizhong?) was absorbed into the Shang “twin cities” (built by Zhonghui?) and was then turned into the “palatial town” of the Western Zhou Xue. Likewise, Xue’s outer walls (guo) during the Western Zhou and the Spring and Autumn periods would encircle Xue’s inner city (cheng) during the Warring States period. Second, it suggests that the “concentric city” and the “double city”—two main types of Warring States cities identified...
by previous authors—were actually two prominent period styles in the development of the Chinese city during the Three Dynasties. The first type—a city with a coherent enclosure and an internal palatial district (as represented by Western Zhou Xue)—was the main form of Western Zhou and early Eastern Zhou cities. The second type—a city consisting of two separate or attached enclosures (as represented by the Xue of Lord Mengchang)—resulted from Warring States modification of an earlier city.

Not all concentric cities grew into double cities, of course. Several major Warring States cities, such as Qufu in Lu 鲁 (Figure 6), Ji’nan 成 in Chu (Hubei Sheng Bowuguan 1982), and probably also Yong 龍 in Qin (Shaanxi Sheng Yongcheng Kaogudui 1985), were old cities which survived into a new historical period without altering their overall shape. They were all defined by a continuous wall. Although the

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Steinhardt’s (1990: 47) third type, that of a city with an internal palatial town attached to the north wall, is only represented by a Spring and Autumn town found in Xiangfen in Shanxi 山西, probably Ju 聚 or Jiang 江 of the state of Jin. It may be considered a variation of a “concentric city.”
two prominent period styles in the Spring and Autumn period. The first style, an internal palatial district, was the main form of Western Zhou cities. A second type—a city consisting of a double city formed by an inner wall and therefore forming a nested "palatial town." Most importantly, these cities were constructed before the Warring States period—during the Spring and Autumn period or even earlier—and the basic principles of their design had been established by Shang precedents (Wu 1988: 80). Among these cities, Qufu, the capital of Lu founded by the Duke of Zhou at the beginning of the Western Zhou, has been most thoroughly investigated. Excavations at Qufu have continued since the early 1940s, and archaeologists have concluded that although the earliest phases of the city were built and rebuilt many times from the Zhou to the Han, its basic layout remained basically unaltered. (Kamai Kazuchika 1951; Qufu 1965; Buck 1986) Very little remains of the early Zhou period can now be found: the wall, which defined a roughly rectangular city of about 14 km in circumference, was probably built in the late Western Zhou period, and continuously strengthened during the Eastern Zhou period. Eleven city gates have been located. Two on the southern wall and three on each of the three other sides, these gates led to broad avenues that ran
across the city. A coherent city plan is also indicated by the location of temples and palaces. The center of the city was marked by the expanse of a rammed-earth platform about 1,000 m east-west, probably the base of a large palatial district. The northeast portion of this area was occupied by a well-defined compound, whose foundation still rises 10 m above the ground. Local people call it Zhongong Miao 周公廟 or the Temple of the Duke of Zhou, a name which suggests the identity of the oldest buildings established there. It is unclear whether this temple had survived into the Warring States period: what archaeologists have discovered there are Eastern Zhou period foundations, superimposed by Han buildings including the famous Hall of Spiritual Light (Lingguang dian 靈光殿). In Qufu, the palatial district at the center was surrounded by residential areas as well as workshops manufacturing bronze, iron, pottery, and bone artifacts. The location of these workshops next to the palaces suggests that they were probably under the direct government control. Eastern Zhou period tombs, including some very large Warring
States period burials, have been found in the west and northwestern part of the city.

The second group of Warring States cities, the "double cities," includes Linzi in Qi, Wuyang in Yan, Xinzhou in Zheng, and Han, Handan in Zhao (Komai Kazuchika and Sekino Takeshi 1954; Beida 1959; Handan 1980), and Anyi in Wei (Tao and Ye 1962; Hunan Sheng Bowuguan 1963) Most of them consisted of two walled enclosures, either divided by a shared wall or completely detached from each other. In the majority of cases (such as at Linzi, Handan, Anyi, and Xinzhou), the smaller enclosure containing the palatial district was located to the west or southwest of the larger enclosure. Although Yang Kuan (1993) believes that the "double city" had an ancient origin and actually represented an orthodox Western Zhou urban form, the archaeological data allow us roughly to reconstruct the formation process of some of these cities and to realize that their bipartite structure, instead of reflecting an original design, is the result of these cities' gradual expansion. In other words, before the Warring States period, most of these double cities had only a single enclosure and therefore resembled a concentric city like Qufu; they became double cities only later, when a new walled section was added to the existing city. Sometimes, the old town in a double city retained its role as an administrative center; the new town was built next to it to serve certain economic or military functions. Other times, the new addition was a "palatial town" and its construction reflected a major change in the power structure.

Xinzhou, the capital of Zheng before 375 BC and the capital of the state of Han afterwards, represented the first situation (Figure 3) (Xinzhou 1980). As in the case of Xue, this city had come into existence long before the Warring States period. When the rulers of Zheng moved there from Shaanxi in the eighth century BC, Xinzhou was a city with a single enclosure. Roughly rectangular and rather large, the northern side was about 2,400 m and the eastern side about 4,300 m. More than a thousand rammed-earth foundations, some as large as 6,000 square m, covered the north and middle sections. An underground structure found in this area yielded pottery vessels that belonged to a palace kitchen. This rammed-earth area, therefore, must have been part of the palatial district, although it was outside a walled compound at the center of the city. It is possible that this walled compound, about 500 m east-west and 320 m north-south, housed the most important ceremonial structures and/or the ruler's residence. Xinzhou was expanded into a double city during the Eastern Zhou period, when walls were added to the east to enclose a space even larger than the original city. The relatively later date of this east section is indicated by the lack of palatial, residential, and burial sites. What have been found inside
are remains of many Eastern Zhou workshops, including an enormous bronze foundry and a manufacturing site of iron works. It is possible that the eastern town of Xinzhenang was constructed to protect these workshops, which not only supplied luxury goods but, more importantly, produced weapons and agricultural tools. As a piece of evidence, the irregular shape of its eastern wall seems to have accommodated the existing bronze foundry.

Linzi in Qi exemplified the second sort of double city, in which a palatial town was built later to become the locus of political power (Figure 2). One of the most famous cities in Chinese history, Linzi has been under archaeological investigation since the 1930s. Sekino Takeshi identified its basic layout in 1940 and 1941; subsequent excavations by Chinese scholars have not only yielded much information concerning its various components, but have also provided invaluable evidence for the city's construction process (Wang Xiantang 1936; Sekino Takeshi 1956; Shandong Sheng Wenwu Guanlichu 1961). In short, the large enclosure in this double city, with overall dimensions of about 3,300 m from east to west and 5,200 from north to south, was built much earlier than the smaller enclosure attached to its southwest corner. Although archaeologists have not located a palatial district within the large enclosure, sufficient finds indicate its grandeur during the Western Zhou and the Spring and Autumn periods. Seven broad avenues, some 20 m wide and over 4,000 m long, ran north-south and east-west, roughly forming a chessboard pattern. Four major avenues met in the northeast section of the city. Not coincidentally, this area had the richest cultural remains from the Western Zhou to the Han period (Qun Li 1972). In 1965, a horde of bronze artifacts, including some ritual vessels, was discovered there, suggesting nearby residences or temples of noble families (Qi Wentao 1972). It is also in this area where some 30 large Western Zhou and early Eastern Zhou burials are located. Among them, an enormous tomb excavated in 1972 and 1973 had unfortunately been looted, but the unusual status of the deceased is revealed by his stone burial chamber and the sacrificial pits surrounding the tomb, which contained an astonishing 600 horses. These and other factors have led the excavators to attribute this tomb to Duke Jing 景公 (d. 539 BC) (Shandong Sheng Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiusuo 1984).

Strong archaeological evidence indicates that the small enclosure at the southwest corner was not constructed until the Warring States period. When it was built over the large enclosure, it broke through the existing city walls; thus its northern wall wrapped the southern end of the western wall of the large town. Likewise, the Huagongtai 樑公台 (Platform of Duke Huan), the most important palatial building inside the small town, was also built no earlier than the middle Warring States period.\(^4\) This archaeological data suggests a transition between the construction of a double city and a political event. In 386 BC, the Tian family in the state, took over what had been ruling Qi since the beginning of the state, thus divided the history of Qi into two parts: the time of the old and new Qi. It is possible that the Tian family's old city was the old capital and the new capital was the new city, the new city's name being Linzi.

The construction of the new city (Figure 4). Although the walls of the old city were still in use (King Zhao 104), archaeological evidence shows that the new city had long been abandoned. During the Spring and Autumn period, a new city was established to the north and west of the old city. Another problematic site was the so-called "Walled City." An unusual architectural platform was built, with two revisions to the east building, east and west. The new city was probably due to the homogeneity of its architecture.

\(^4\) This view, held by Qu Yichao (1985) and not substantiated by the excavations, was probably due to the homogeneity of its architecture.
workshops, including an enormous site of iron works. It is possible was constructed to protect these goods in the past. As a piece of evidence, the remains to have accommodated the masonry in the west of Linzi is also important.

In the late 1960s, Sekino Takeshi and Xiantang Shizuo (1961) suggested discussing the construction of the city, which was built with defensive walls and gates. However, in the early 1970s, Li Jun (1972) and others pointed out that the construction of the city was prior to the Warring States period. This archaeological information suggests a possible connection between the construction of this small town and an important political event. In 386 BC, the Tian family, the most powerful ministerial family in the state, took over power from the Jiang and Qi, which had been ruling Qi since the beginning of the Western Zhou. This event thus divided the history of Qi into two phases, known as Jiang Qi and Tian Qi. It is possible that when the reign of the Tian Qi began, the family's old quarter was enlarged into a "palatial town," with command structures and elaborate halls to demonstrate the transition of rulership (Qu Yingjie 1991: 236). But the significance of this new town was not purely symbolic. Its thick walls (28 to 38 m across the base) and the surrounding ditches reveal an intense concern for security. Interestingly, the ditches outside the north and east walls, along the joining lines with the old town, were much wider than those outside the south and west sides—25 m instead of 13 m in width. It seems that to the master of this new town, the main threat came not from outside but from Linzi's old quarter. The new town also gained strength from its production facilities and an intellectual community. The workshops inside it produced, among other items, iron implements and bronze coins. The town is traditionally thought to have housed the famous Jixia Academy. Sponsored by various Tian Qi rulers from Duke Huan (r. 374–355) to King Wei (356–317 BC) and King Xuan (318–262 BC), this academy is said to have attracted influential thinkers such as Zou Yan, Chu Yu, and Shen Dao (Shiji 1895; for the location of the Jixia school, see Qu Yingjie 1991: 250).

The construction of the Yan capital Wuyang presents a more complex case (Figure 4). Although it was traditionally believed that this city was "walled" by King Zhao in the late fourth century BC (Shouzhen 104), archaeological excavations have proven that at least part of the city had existed long before this date: what have been found here include bronze weapons from earlier reigns, residential and burial sites of the Spring and Autumn period, and even a thick layer of Western Zhou period cultural deposits (Hebei Sheng Wenwu Yanjiusuo 1987). Another problematic statement is that the city consisted of an east town and a west town. It actually had three walled sections: a partition wall divided the so-called east town into two sections north and south. These two revisions lay a new basis for reconstructing the city's history. All the

4 The attribution of this structure to Duke Huan of Qi was therefore retrospective, probably due to the homophony between heaven 火 and lue 夫, the original name of the platform.

5 This view, held by Qu Yingjie and other scholars, however, would be challenged by Nathan Sivin's opinion (1993: 19–29) that the Jixia Academy is an imaginary creation and did not actually exist.
archaeological evidence leads me to believe that Wuyang's lower east section had existed long before King Zhao's time. In addition to the Spring and Autumn and early Warring States period sites found in this part, the most convincing evidence is a group of ten large tombs located in its northwest corner (Hebei Sheng Wenhuaju Wenwu Gongzuodui 1965a). One of them, Tomb 16, has been excavated: its extraordinary size and unusual construction technique prove that it belonged to a person of high social status. A set of 135 mingqi ritual vessels found in this tomb had the forms and decorations of the early Warring States period (Hebei Sheng Wenhuaju Wenwu Gongzuodui 1965c). This graveyard in the lower east section was separated from another cemetery in the upper east section by the partition wall. The 13 tombs in this second group, which are also enormous mausoleums with huge tumuli, can be dated to the middle to late Warring States period based on archaeological surveys and an excavated example (Qu Yingjie 1991: 310). Other sites in the upper east section, including palatial structures and weaponry workshops, have also been dated to this period (Hebei Sheng Wenhuaju Wenwu Gongzuodui 1965b; Hebei Sheng Wenwu Guanlichu 1982). These excavations suggest that what King Zhao "walled" was this upper east section as his new palatial town. This is perhaps why the Wuyangtai, the most important structure in the city, stood next to the partition wall which linked the two sections of the city into a whole. But this was not the end of the city's expansion; an enormous western section was added onto the eastern section towards the end of the Warring States period. In sharp contrast to the old town, which was filled with palatial foundations, burials, workshops, and residential sites, very little remains have been found inside the new enclosure. It is possible that Yan perished not long after its construction.

The Warring States double cities, therefore, most clearly reflected the tendency towards fortification: what we find in Linzi, Handan, and Wuyang is the increasing independence and detachment of the administrative center from the rest of the city. It is a question whether the Royal City of the Eastern Zhou could have escaped this trend. As shown in Figure 1, its remaining walls seem to have belonged to two interconnected rectangles: a small enclosure with more precise cardinal orientations of the walls was constructed over the southwest corner of a main enclosure. The similarity between this plan and other double cities such as Linzi may not be superficial: according to the excavation report, the southwestern walls were built during the Warring States period, later than the other walls (Kaogu Yanjiusuo Luoyang Fajuedui 1959).
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Figure 7. “The state capital” ascribed in the “Kaogong ji” (after Kaogong ji tu).

This reexamination of Warring States cities also leads to a reinterpretation of the famous plan for a capital city delineated in the “Kaogong ji 考工記; Jiangren 匠人” section of the Zhou li 周禮 (Figure 7):
The official architect (zhangong) constructs a state capital. He makes a square nine li on each side; each side has three gates. Within the capital are nine streets running north-south and nine streets running east-west. The north-south streets are nine carriage tracks in width. On the left is the Ancestral Temple, and to the right are the Altars of Soil and Grain. In the front is the Audience Hall and behind the markets (Zhou li vol. 14: 3423–3428; Steinhardt 1990: 33).

Scholars have interpreted this plan either as a factual record of the Zhou capital or as an idealized city proposed by some late Eastern Zhou Confucian thinkers. This paper substantiates the second approach with two observations. First, the basic layout of the “Kaogong ji” city follows the dominant form of Chinese capitals before the Warring States period; the adaptation of the form of a more traditional “concentric city” attested to the Confucian ideology of “returning to” Zhou orthodoxy. Second, the “Kaogong ji” city also differs from a traditional Western Zhou capital in placing a palatial compound at the center. The most important feature of a Western Zhou city was the ancestral temple—the city’s political and religious center which was supposed to be constructed before any other buildings (Wu 1988: 79–96). But a palatial town now occupies the center of the Eastern Zhou ideal city; the ancestral temple is pushed to one side, becoming a secondary element affiliated to the palace. My discussion in this paper supplies a historical basis for this change: all excavated Warring States period cities contained a special “palatial district.” Although the district occupied different positions in the plans of the various capitals, its dominance is indicated by the large remaining foundations, enclosed by walls that originally divided a city into areas for the ruler and for his subjects. The promotion of the palace was most clearly revealed by the double cities, in which the palatial town appeared as a self-contained unit only loosely connected to the rest of the city. The shift of the seat of power from temple to palace was intimately related to China’s transformation at the time, described by Jacques Gernet as a transformation in which “political power was trying to free itself from the matrix of which it formed an integral part in the ninth to seventh centuries BC”—and that as it gradually broke loose it was conceived more and more clearly as a specific factor (Gernet 1972: 62). The ideal capital in the “Kaogong ji,” therefore, confirms this transformation even as it tries to bestow a more traditional image on the new Warring States city.
Rethinking Warring States Cities

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