


The City in History: Its Origins, Its Transformations, and Its Prospects

By *Lewis Mumford*

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The City in History: Its Origins, Its Transformations, and Its Prospects By Lewis Mumford **Bibliography**

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Lewis Mumford's massive historical study brings together a wide array of evidence--from the earliest group habitats to medieval towns to the modern centers of commerce (as well as dozens of black-and-white illustrations)--to show how the urban form has changed throughout human civilization. His tone is ultimately somewhat pessimistic: Mumford was deeply concerned with what he viewed as the dehumanizing aspects of the metropolitan trend, which he deemed "a world of professional illusionists and their credulous victims." (In another typically unrestrained criticism, he dubbed the Pentagon a Bronze Age monument to humanity's basest impulses, as well as an "effete and worthless baroque conceit.") Mumford hoped for a rediscovery of urban principles that emphasized humanity's organic relationship to its environment. *The City in History* remains a powerfully influential work, one that has shaped the agendas of urban planners, sociologists, and social critics since its publication in the 1960s.

Review

Lewis Mumford was the author of some 30 influential books, many of which expounded his views on the perils of urban sprawl and a society obsessed with "technics." In this classic text first published in 1952, Mumford contends that an overemphasis on technics has contributed to the depersonalization and emptiness of 20th-century life. He issues a call for a renewed respect for artistic impulses and achievements. This edition contains a new introduction by Casey Nelson Blake, professor of history at Columbia University. Annotation c. Book News, Inc., Portland, OR (booknews.com) (*Booknews*)

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