

Reviews

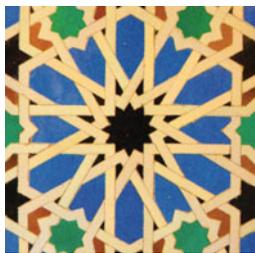
New Book Chronicle

Robert Witcher

It is no surprise that archaeologists should be drawn to the study of ancient urbanism. As markers of social complexity, cities are key to understanding the organisation and development of human societies. But why were people attracted to cities in the past? Presumably they perceived the political and economic significance of these urban centres. Yet there was also disease, crime and inequality. In this NBC, we sample recent volumes that explore the possibilities and problems of urban living. We travel from medieval Europe, through the ancient Mediterranean, to Mesoamerica; we visit royal palaces and Greek brothels; and we witness industrious city folk buying, selling, making and baking.

Message in a bottle

DAVID ROLLASON. *The power of place: rulers and their palaces, landscapes, cities, and holy places*. 2016. xxi+458 pages, numerous colour and b&w illustrations. Oxford & Princeton (NJ): Princeton University Press; 978-0-691-16762-6 hardback £37.95.



We start with a wide-ranging exploration of *The power of place* in which DAVID ROLLASON explores “the messages of power that sites created by, or associated with,

rulers could send to their subjects, to visitors, to ambassadors, and to anyone who saw or entered them” (p. 1). The European and Mediterranean case studies extend from the Roman period to the Middle Ages, and encompass the archaeology and architecture of royal palaces, designed landscapes including cities and religious places, as well as texts, objects and artistic representations. Through this evidence, Rollason aims “to get as close as possible to the rulers themselves, and to understand the nature

of their power through the palaces and buildings that they themselves created, or were created for them” (p. 7). That power is categorised into three types: bureaucratic, personal and ideological; although not discussed in detail, the endnotes clarify that these types draw from Max Weber’s work on authority.

The book is divided into five sections—each of two chapters—on palaces, landscapes, cities, holy places and places of inauguration and burial. The first chapter of each section reviews the physical structures, and the second moves on to themes. Hence, ‘Palaces’ starts with an overview of entrance facades, staircases, courtyards, halls and basilicas, treasuries and private apartments, before turning to magnificence, stylistic imitation, iconography and geometry. The examples extend from the Villa of Hadrian at Tivoli, through Frederick Barbarossa’s palace at Kaiserwerth, to Edward I’s castle at Caernarfon.

Given our urban theme, we focus here on the cities section. What ‘messages of power’ were communicated by these urban places? Prominence emerges as one important characteristic; the palaces in Palermo and Nuremberg, for example, were positioned for maximum visual effect, sending the message that their creators were at the apex of society, possibly even divinely sanctioned. Similarly, orthogonal street grids “must always have been a means of conveying a message relating to the power of the individual responsible for the planning” (p. 171). Through such geometry, rulers reflected the cosmological order and their personal position, and that of their subjects, within it; several rulers sought to project their cities as physical expressions of the Heavenly Jerusalem. The second chapter on cities turns to ‘Triumphs and entries: the city as stage set’ with examples of how Roman emperors—and later rulers such as Frederick II—moved into and around cities in order to advertise their power with the emphasis on city gates and thoroughfares as stages for theatrical displays.

A strength of the book is the breadth and diversity of examples that break down traditional chronological and disciplinary boundaries. Only by comparing

widely can patterns of repeated behaviour be discerned. But with limited context, some of the subtleties can be neglected. The positioning of important buildings in prominent locations is a good example. Were the builders of Lincoln Cathedral, for example, seeking the highest ground because prominence was directly linked to hierarchy and divine authority? Or were they also influenced by earlier activity and, especially, places of past authority (in this case, a Roman fortress)? How can we be sure that prominence, not precedence, was significant? And prominence was not always correlated with power—the emperor Trajan had an entire hillside cut away in order to make space for his forum at Rome: the antithesis of prominence and a message of extraordinary power.

Another question concerns the precise content of these messages, and how they were communicated and received. In relation to the careful choreography of urban processions, for example, emphasis falls on the event, but the presence of rulers on the streets was only ever fleeting. It was the memory of these events, materialised through commemorative sculptural reliefs and gateways, that perpetuated these episodic appearances. Yet we get only brief acknowledgement that these works were integral in their own right to the construction and communication of power. And how were these messages received? Did the crowds assemble ready to hear and accept messages of power, that is, messages about their own social and political subordination? Or were they more interested in spectacle, a bloodthirsty celebration of group identity, a free handout of food? Were rulers and ruled in fact dancing a merry tango, well aware of the political and economic realities involved? Some messages were certainly returned to sender. For instance, Rollason discusses the cosmological associations of the ‘heavenly dome’ of Nero’s *Domus Aurea* (Golden House), but we do not hear about the fate of this palace: duly demolished when its builder’s message of power was finally rejected.

By getting as close as possible to the rulers, the rest of society slips from view, leaving power as a reified concept, existing prior to and separate from the material world. All this returns us to an old conundrum: do elites make monuments or do monuments make elites? Here, however, Rollason’s question is why rulers, over a long period of time and a large geographic region, chose similar ways to express their power. He sees “superficial imitation of the past on behalf of the later rulers who followed

these practices, but it is hard to escape the conclusion that there was more to it than this [...] a consistent desire to create mechanisms for sending messages of power which had persisted across many centuries and in many parts of Europe” (p. 389). This hints at some universal mode of elite behaviour without further explanation. Arguably, what is missing is not some general sociological theory, but rather a stronger sense of the genealogy linking these symbols and expressions of power. Specifically, despite the many examples that Rollason provides, we get no sense of the overarching model of power to which all of these rulers had access and to which they repeatedly returned: the Roman past.

We built this city

JUSTIN JENNINGS. *Killing civilization: a reassessment of early urbanism and its consequences*. 2016. xiv+360 pages, several b&w illustrations. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press; 978-0-8263-5660-4 hardback \$75.

SCOTT R. HUTSON. *The ancient urban Maya: neighborhoods, inequality, and built form*. 2016. xiii+261 pages, several b&w illustrations, 4 tables. Gainesville: University Press of Florida; 978-0-8130-6276-1 hardback \$84.95.



For many archaeologists, urbanism is strongly linked to a series of other processes—state formation, social stratification, craft specialisation, colonisation and regional cultures—

conveniently bundled as the concept of civilisation. In *Killing civilization: a reassessment of early urbanism and its consequences*, JUSTIN JENNINGS invites us not only to break these links, but to dispense with the wider idea of civilisation altogether. At the heart of the matter lies the classic “staircase of cultural evolution” (pp. 1–2) rising in distinct steps that map onto neatly defined stages in social development. Reality, however, is messier, and the structural links between these processes much looser. The critique, Jennings points out, is hardly new, but ‘civilisation’ is tenacious. Indeed, he argues, it has undergone a revival, buoyed up by world-systems approaches and concepts such as punctuated equilibrium and

tipping points. Jennings concedes the attraction of civilisation—not least as a counter to historical particularism—although he insists that it carries not only colonialist baggage (the main target of recent critique), but, also more importantly, it fails to provide adequate explanation (the real reason it should be rejected).

To set the scene, Jennings reviews the development of the civilisation concept during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, taking in key figures such as Morgan, Childe and Flannery. On the civilisation concept today, Yoffee, Pauketat and others are critiqued for their retention, despite their words to the contrary, of the underlying assumptions about cultural development and its thresholds of change. As an Enlightenment concept, Jennings concludes, civilisation is beyond resuscitation.

The solution is to return to the earliest cities and to trace how they came into being. Instead of Childe's checklist of urban traits, we are confronted by the challenge of "creating a city from a collection of people [that] is an alternately terrifying, intoxicating, exhausting, and mind-bending experience" (p. 21). But the evidence of these earliest cities is ephemeral, deeply buried and hard to interpret. Chapter 3 therefore considers more recent examples—Singapore, São Paulo, Los Angeles and Abu Dhabi—that offer a year-by-year view of "the ungainly process of becoming" (p. 83). Jennings argues that the many differences of technology and scale between early and modern cities "can blind us to the basic similarities of urban life" (p. 61), such as concerns with sanitation, food supply and crime, and of the central importance of pre-existing social structures for authority. At the same time, he also warns against using our better knowledge of later cities—where people had "already figured many things out" (p. 60)—to fill in the gaps in our understanding; even second- or third-generation cities may not be good guides to the first. Jennings therefore navigates a fine line between warning of a danger but doing something that is, superficially, similar. As a source of general models, however, his approach opens up alternative ways of interpreting the archaeological evidence from individual sites.

The core of the book comprises chapters on six sites—Çatalhöyük, Cahokia, Harappa, Jenne-jeno, Tiahuanaco and Monte Albán—with each of these case studies expanding to address a broader aspect of how the first generation of city dwellers dealt with the opportunities and challenges of living alongside lots

of other people without a blueprint to guide them. With populations of several thousands, inhabitants had to deal with the 'scalar stress' of excessive social relationships. Their responses might include fission (or de-urbanising), the creation of sub-communities (social and/or spatial), or greater social hierarchy. The latter would be "a bold-faced departure from village traditions and was likely the most odious of the available choices to relieve scalar stress" (p. 92).

For each case study, Jennings draws together various strands of evidence to examine the responses of individuals and communities. For Çatalhöyük, he considers the frequent replastering of house interiors and the domestic scale of tool production, pointing to a coping strategy based on the household. Scalar stress was managed by focusing inwards, with a few cross-cutting, horizontal strategies linked to communal food supply and feasting. But the solution developed at Çatalhöyük was not the same as that developed at every other Near Eastern Neolithic site, and Jennings briefly flags the different strategies adopted at Jericho and Göbekli Tepe. In no case, however, was there a plan to build a city; people were too busy getting on with their lives.

The eventual breakdown of Çatalhöyük's fiercely egalitarian solution is marked by changes in the form and size of some of the houses, combined with growing inequality of access to imported resources such as obsidian. The domestication of cattle may also have undermined shared symbolism, while the drying climate may have allowed individual households greater scope for independent action. Hence, in the early years, scalar stress was successfully managed by a symbolic focus on separate households, linked by common rituals and resources; but when some households moved towards actual independence, the unwritten agreement broke down and the other residents voted with their feet. The chapter goes on to question whether urban settlements that ultimately broke apart in this manner should be seen as 'failures' or, conversely, as examples of inhabitants successfully resisting growing inequality. Jennings suggests the latter: Çatalhöyük was an aborted city not a failed one. The point is well made, although arguably this definition gives too much emphasis to the 'end' of Çatalhöyük over its millennium of successful occupation. Each of the other case studies similarly leads into a broader point about a component part of 'civilisation', and how a closer focus on the earliest phases of these cities challenges the concept of any coherent template.

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The final chapter, ‘Without civilization’, draws together the lessons. Much of what we label as civilisation is simply a by-product of settlement aggregation; urban inhabitants were resistant to hierarchy, and they either found ways to level out or they left; state formation, regional polities and cultural horizons developed on the back of existing social networks, not newly forged ones; and colonies were integral to early cities, not because there was state or bureaucratic control, but, on the contrary, because they lacked functioning ‘countrysides’. All of this suggests that the processes of state formation and social hierarchy associated with early cities were weak (an interpretation that has also been advanced for early Greek colonies, although Jennings steers clear of the Classical Mediterranean), and that they were not structurally linked to urbanisation. “The concept”, he concludes, “is not worth keeping—it’s time to kill civilization” (p. 285).

Rollason and Jennings offer very different visions of how people lived together and negotiated social relations through the urban landscape. While the enterprising but conservative folk of the earliest cities could up sticks and leave if they did not like the way things were going, such freedom may have been more constrained in later cities, where elites, with access to long-established models of how to make social inequality work, had greater ideological—and coercive—power over urban communities.

Our next volume explores these issues further in the context of Mesoamerica: *The ancient urban Maya: neighborhoods, inequality, and built form*, by SCOTT HUTSON. Cities are places where “people are both socially distant and physically close” (p. 2), leading to problems such as anomie, disease and inequality. Given these effects, why do people move to cities and why do they stay? Hutson starts from the position that Maya leaders lacked the ability to coerce people into relocating to urban centres. Instead, they needed to be persuaded into cities, and, as with the truculent inhabitants of Jennings’s early cities, they were ready to walk away if their interests were not served. In short, “How did cities lure people to them? How did they render themselves irresistible?” (p. 1).

Hutson reviews the changing approaches to urbanism in the Maya world and presents his working definition: “settlements qualify as cities if they possess three of the following four characteristics: specialised functions, social differentiation, large size, and high density” (p. 16; the final trait is an explicit rejection of current research on low-density urbanism, considered

“an oxymoron”, p. 17). Built form explicitly does not qualify a settlement as urban; as Hutson’s title suggests, however, it did play an important role in attracting people and reinforcing ideological claims to power. Here, Hutson builds on Kevin Lynch’s work: “The cities that are easiest to image are the most alluring” (p. 24). But Hutson rejects the idea that cities were a form of liberation from kin-based village life; echoing Jennings, he argues that these pre-existing relations could persist and underpin urban life in the form of neighbourhoods and professional associations. Similarly, he rejects the conflation of city, state and cultural horizon, and views urban centres not as perfect expressions of ideal types, but rather as messy experiments. Key themes are multiplicity—that is the unexpected encounters and juxtapositions that lead to novelty and change—and the clustering of people and activities, which reduces costs and spurs innovation.

One example of urban clustering is the neighbourhood or “the nooks where [people] expect to find familiar faces” (p. 70), and Chapter 3 explores whether neighbourhoods can be recognised archaeologically. Hutson examines spatial concentrations of houses, focal nodes (e.g. elite compounds), craft specialisation and clusters of artefact styles. Despite the much-discussed ‘ethnic’ enclaves at Teotihuacan, Hutson’s review of the evidence highlights that similar migrant neighbourhoods are not visible at Maya cities, and he quite gloomily concludes, “To be frank, the criteria for identifying neighborhoods presented in this chapter often do not get us very far” (p. 95). Chapter 4, co-authored with Jacob Welch, tries again, this time focusing on a single site: Chunchucmil. This time he makes more progress. Crucial here is the network of paths that connected individual households, allowing Hutson to define clusters, some of which were also served by focal points such as plazas. Interestingly, however, Chunchucmil seems to have been somewhat different from other Maya sites, particularly with its lack of a central plaza, which is substituted with a series of smaller architectural compounds. This seems to reflect Jennings’s suggestion that individual cities could develop different solutions to living together.

Chapter 5 turns to ‘The spatial experience of inequality’. How unequal were Maya cities, and were there wealth-based neighbourhoods? Hutson uses Gini coefficients to demonstrate high inequality across a wide sample of Maya cities, but notes there was no clustering of wealthy groups within individual

cities; richer households were located alongside poorer ones. This facilitated multiplicity, that is, opportunities for unexpected interaction, and social and economic advances: the city as “a boiling, roiling cauldron for the brewing of novelties” (p. 169).

‘The allure of Maya cities’, Chapter 6, poses new issues. Given that village life was good, Hutson argues that people were not pushed from the countryside, but pulled to the cities. Maya rulers used buildings to help them gain renown, and to link themselves to gods and cosmological principles. This clearly resonates with Rollason’s ‘messages of power’, but, allied with the notion of attracting population, it becomes stronger; rulers might provide patronage, work or spiritual protection:

Leaders may have used massive, mountain-like temples to naturalize inequality, but those temples did not exist on their own [...] The universalizing themes that temples communicated iconically and symbolically did not completely obscure the traces of the laborers that produced them. Though these traces may index inequality between laborer and leader, they also index the agency of those laborers and can be a point of pride for the descendants of those laborers (p. 203).

Similarly, plazas were not simply architectural statements, but opportunities for multiplicity or the enlargement of social networks. Yet these incentives “did not dupe people and are not the entire story of what made cities attractive” (p. 208). People came for new opportunities and stayed because they became invested in their urban surroundings. Maya rulers worked hard, not so much to remind people of their power, but rather to ensure that they did not “question why they are participating in a social system that benefits other people much more than them” (p. 139).

Street life

ANDREW WILSON & MIKO FLOHR (ed.). *Urban craftsmen and traders in the Roman world*. 2016. xviii+408 pages, 75 b&w illustrations. Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press; 978-019-874848-9 hardback £80.

ALLISON GLAZEBROOK & BARBARA TSAKIRGIS (ed.). *Houses of ill repute: the archaeology of brothels, houses, and taverns in the Greek world*. 2016. viii+256 pages, 59 b&w illustrations. Philadelphia: University

of Pennsylvania Press; 978-0-8122-4756-5 hardback £45.50.



All the books discussed so far argue for less emphasis on grand narrative and more on the actions and experiences of people. Our next volume turns to the archaeological and documentary evidence for a particular subset of the population: *Ur-*

ban craftsmen and traders in the Roman world. This collection of 16 papers plus introduction, edited by WILSON and FLOHR, adds to the growing series ‘Oxford Studies on the Roman Economy’. The editors start with the proposition that “Craftsmen, shopkeepers, and traders made up a significant proportion (if not the majority) of the population in many urban communities” (p. 1). The aim of the volume is to get down to the “micro-scale: the direct social and physical environment in which people lived and worked, and the smaller and larger decisions that these people made to realize their social and economic ambitions” (p. 3). Resonating with the volumes by Jennings and Hutson, the contributors envisage Roman townsfolk as agents empowered to act in response to the opportunities and challenges of urban life.

The papers are grouped as: ‘Approaches’, ‘Strategies’, ‘People’ and ‘Space’. As ever, we can sample only a few, and going against the interdisciplinary spirit of the volume, we will focus on the more archaeological. The first section deals with intellectual histories of research and chapters examining, respectively, the Anglo-German, French and Italian approaches to the archaeology of urban workshops. These draw out the differences of focus and approach taken by these national, or perhaps linguistic, traditions. Flohr and Wilson, for example, trace the evolution of approaches to urban craft production in the Anglo-German literature against the dramatic changes in the underlying evidence base over the past two centuries. Aficionados of the Roman economy will find all the familiar names—Rostovtzeff and Finley, for example—but what is valuable here is the emphasis on how the reputations of these individuals have eclipsed those of others who paved the way, such as Frank and Jones. Another interesting observation is

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how concern about the relevance of Classical studies in the contemporary world led some archaeologists and ancient historians to be more optimistic than economic historians about the scale and organisation of the Roman economy (and hence its comparability with the present).

The ‘Strategies’ section explores how craftspeople sought to respond to consumer demand for more choice at the same time as limiting the range of products in order to reduce manufacturing costs. Van Driel-Murray considers footwear and explanations for empire-wide styles of sandals and boots. The similarities in footwear found around the imperial frontiers might be explained by particular military requirements and the fact that the army manufactured its own shoes. But the strongest similarities relate to civilian sandals: men, women and children, urban and rural populations, shared in relatively fast-changing fashions. Van Driel-Murray takes the rapidity of change and the in-built redundancy of these shoes as “hallmarks of consumerism” (pp. 141–43); people used these small inexpensive items to express taste and individuality: “Even the workers at the remote upland cattle yard at Pontefract (Yorkshire) aspired to fashionably pointed hobnailed boots” (p. 145). Social networks and mobility, whether soldiers moving around the empire or peasants returning home from market, spread knowledge of these fashions. But consumer demand might not be the complete picture; fascinatingly, van Driel-Murray suggests that large deposits of shoes found in wells—often considered to be evidence of ritual activity—might represent the arrival of an itinerant shoemaker and “a great re-clothing of estate (or military) personnel” (p. 148).

Meanwhile, Monteix examines the *chaîne opératoire* of milling and baking at Pompeii. Processed grain was imported to the city, ready for milling at one of the 39 known bakeries equipped with a total of 91 animal-driven mills. Dough was kneaded by machines before a first rise in special ceramic tubs and then shaped by hand into loaves and baked in ovens fuelled, at least partly, by the waste from olive oil production. All very impressive in terms of scale and organisation, but Monteix stresses how this reconstruction overlooks important details. In fact, this production sequence relies on a composite of evidence from many different bakeries—no single establishment documents every step; for example, only half of the bakeries were equipped with kneading machines, the others presumably worked the dough by hand.

Similarly, only 28 of the 91 mills were actually in operation at the time of the AD 79 eruption, perhaps suggesting reduced demand. This paper reminds us that urban production strategies for even a single commodity could vary, and that we should not assume that the most advanced or capital-intensive solution was one that was uniformly adopted.

The ‘People’ section emphasises social networks and the role of agency, focusing primarily on epigraphic and documentary texts. In contrast, the chapters on ‘Space’ draw on archaeological evidence for economic activities in the urban landscape. Goodman, for example, using post-medieval and modern parallels, shows how the clustering of producers and retailers can provide economies of scale through access to specialised labour and reduced transaction costs. She also uses the concepts of convenience and comparison goods; the former are low-value daily purchases such as bread that compete on location rather than price; the latter are high-value products such as jewellery where customers are more concerned with price and quality. Typically, retailers of comparison goods cluster as they compete for customers. Hence, bakeries at Pompeii are dispersed across the city, whereas workshops linked with textile production are clustered.

Droß-Krüpe turns to Egypt and uses third-century AD tax registers to identify the distribution of craftspeople and traders at the town of Ptolemais Euergetis. These document 121 individuals with at least 11 different occupations, but provide no evidence for the clustering of these specialists in particular urban districts; they were instead distributed amongst the wider population across the town. This pattern is reflected at Kellis in the Dakleh Oasis where the evidence for textile production, intended for export, is found in houses across the town. Droß-Krüpe also turns to the concept of convenience goods, here arguing contra Goodman that textiles also fall into this category, as competition was high and prices low; moreover, as customers could check the quality before buying, there was a strong incentive for textile retailers *not* to cluster.

Finally, Poblome explores pottery production at Sagalassos, Turkey, where a cluster of 34 workshops and 114 kilns covering around 4ha has been identified in the ancient city’s suburbs. The scale of production is put into focus when considered alongside the city’s residential extent of approximately 25ha and an estimated population of fewer than 4000 inhabitants. Poblome argues that empire-wide tableware ‘brands’

were produced by small and independent workshops with little direct investment by wealthy landowners. Instead, “the elite created favorable conditions in the urban economy in order to market the surplus from their landed estates [...] creating opportunities for enterprising, economically independent (but possibly socially tied) craftsmen” (p. 392). In tune with Hutson’s model, Poblome envisages the elite creating urban centres to fulfil one objective, incidentally facilitating a range of other possibilities in the process.

In their introduction, Wilson and Flohr observe that the chapters in this volume provide no support for the old idea that the elite attempted to restrict or control the location of production and commerce in Roman cities. By extension, they suggest the same may go for another urban ‘industry’: prostitution. It was not ‘moral zoning’ that banished brothels to the backstreets of Pompeii, but the clientele’s wish for discretion. On which note, we turn to our final book: *Houses of ill repute: the archaeology of brothels, houses, and taverns in the Greek world*, edited by GLAZEBROOK and TSAKIRGIS.

The eight papers, plus introduction, are linked by their focus on private rather than public buildings, a corrective to the traditional emphasis on monumental and elite architecture. The uses of these buildings ranged from domestic residences to “the businesses of sex, entertainment, and drink” (p. 6). Historical texts provide a long list of terminology for (private) buildings including single- and multi-household residences, rented accommodation, inns, taverns, gambling dens and brothels (*porneia*). Can these different building types be recognised archaeologically? Tsakirgis establishes the baseline by defining the residential house, providing overviews of location, architecture and artefact assemblages, as well as broader symbolic concepts. The other contributors, of which a sample is considered here, set about investigating whether it is possible to differentiate between these domestic houses and houses of ill repute.

Lynch assesses whether household assemblages can be distinguished from those found in taverns and brothels. Quantifying material culture from urban and rural contexts, she suggests that domestic houses have more equipment for formal drinking than might have been expected, so drinking cups may not be useful for differentiating between houses and taverns. The latter, however, seem to be associated with larger quantities of amphorae. But when it comes to the brothel, Lynch finds no distinctive assemblage of artefacts: “it

is likely that it will look frustratingly like that of a house” (p. 58). Lawall follows up with an analysis of differences in amphora assemblages found in houses, taverns and brothels. Importantly, he stresses the potential circularity of using amphorae—or any other artefact or architectural feature—to differentiate between these categories of building when these may have been the very attributes used to classify them as brothels, taverns or houses in the first place.

Ault focuses on a single example, Building Z in the Athenian Kerameikos, an area notorious in the ancient sources for its night-time economy. Building Z has been widely considered the classic archaeological example of a Greek tavern/brothel, constructed, following the destruction by fire of its residential predecessor, in the third quarter of the fourth century BC. The presence of this tavern/brothel has fed a narrative of the district’s declining reputation through time. Ault, however, questions this interpretation, arguing that the earlier domestic buildings on the site may actually have been used for a range of activities: “residential to commercial, accompanied by eating, drinking, weaving, and whoring” (p. 92). Reversing the narrative of the neighbourhood’s moral decline, he even suggests the possibility of gentrification, as the sequence of buildings on the site became more elaborate and better appointed.

Turning next to the Late Hellenistic island-port of Delos, the archaeological evidence behind the identification of two buildings, a tavern and a brothel, is reviewed. The latter (‘The House of the Lake’) raises a particular problem. Trümper demonstrates that the interpretation of this building as a brothel fails to consider its supposedly diagnostic features in the context of typical Delian (rather than Greek) houses. When viewed in this way, features such as multiple entrances, courtyards, cisterns and small annex rooms are no longer so distinctive. Indeed, the implication would be that 76 per cent of all Delian houses were brothels!

Finally, Glazebrook asks, ‘Is there an archaeology of prostitution?’ She stresses the inappropriate influence of the Roman evidence on understanding of the Greek case. In particular, the purpose-built brothel at Pompeii, the Lupanar, finds no parallel in the Greek world, and, more broadly, she emphasises the very different attitudes towards prostitution in Greek and Roman societies—while elite Greek males invited prostitutes to dinner, the customers of Pompeian brothels were lower class men.

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Encouraged by the unambiguous case of the Lupanar, Roman archaeologists have confidently (if not always successfully) set out to find other brothels; Greek archaeologists, however, seem to have been more restrained. And here we return to the problem of differentiating between houses, taverns and brothels. This, Glazebrook demonstrates, is not a problem unique to the ancient Greek world, and she points to historical archaeology research on nineteenth-century brothels in New York and Washington where very similar problems of identification are encountered. Given the challenge presented by the evidence—a problem duly emphasised by all the contributors—it is not unreasonable to question whether the endeavour is doomed to failure. When, for example, it is accepted that innkeepers might live and work in the same buildings, blurring the line between house and tavern, could the same not be true for sex workers as well? If so, is it really a surprise that the large-scale excavations at Corinth have failed to find any architecturally or artefactually distinct examples of brothels, despite the ancient city's reputation? The historical texts clearly attest the presence of such places in the Greek world. Perhaps this knowledge alone is sufficient to justify the endeavour; the problem seems to lie in the overconfidence of many identifications rather than any doubt about whether such houses of ill repute existed.

As usual, we have covered considerable ground, from the earliest cities to the oldest profession. So, what attracted people to urban life? Opportunities too good to miss: the possibilities for different identities, new wealth or status, and novel forms of work and leisure; but the coercive role of the elite might equally bear greater scrutiny. There were also challenges to be faced such as disease and social isolation. These might be mitigated by clustering in order to be surrounded with familiar faces—or by finding comfort in the arms of a stranger for the night. But everywhere there was creativity. Perhaps it is this nebulous but powerful concept, not a checklist of physical attributes, that defines urbanism, both ancient and modern.

Books received

This list includes all books received between 1 September 2016 and 31 October 2016. Those featuring at the beginning of New Book Chronicle have, however, not been duplicated in this list. The

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listing of a book in this chronicle does not preclude its subsequent review in *Antiquity*.

General

CHRISTOPHER CAPLE (ed.). *Preservation of archaeological remains in situ*. 2016. xxi+524 pages, numerous b&w illustrations, tables. New York: Routledge; 978-0-415-83253-3 hardback £125 & 978-0-415-83254-0 paperback £36.99

MICHAEL J. HARROWER. *Water histories and spatial archaeology: ancient Yemen and the American West*. 2016. x+214 pages, 4 colour and 14 b&w illustrations, 2 tables. New York: Cambridge University Press; 978-1-107-13465-2 hardback £69.99.

European pre- and protohistory

B.V. ANDRIANOV. *Ancient irrigation systems of the Aral Sea area*. 2016. xxxiv+393 pages, several b&w illustrations, 12 tables. Harvard (MA): Oxbow & American School of Prehistoric Research Monograph; 978-1-84217-384-8 hardback £20.

HANS BROWALL. *Alvastra pälbyggnad 1976–1980 års utgrävningar. Västra schaktet* (Antikvariska serien 52). 2016. 180 pages, numerous colour and b&w illustrations, CD-ROM. Stockholm: Kungl Vitterhetsakademien; 978-91-7402-444-9 hardback SEK 235.

JOAKIM GOLDBAHN. *Sagaholm: north European Bronze Age rock art and burial ritual*. 2016. viii+140 pages, numerous b&w illustrations. Oxford & Havertown (PA): Oxbow; 978-1-78570-264-8 paperback £36.

Mediterranean archaeology

PHILIP P. BETANCOURT. *Hagios Charalambos: a Minoan burial cave in Crete* (Prehistory Monographs 47). 2015. xx+180 pages, numerous b&w illustrations. Oxford & Philadelphia (PA): Oxbow; 978-1-931534-80-2 hardback £36.

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