

❧ *Chapter One* ❧

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DESIGN OF THE BOOK

This book is a study of the evidence for the business of female prostitution in the Roman world during the central part of Rome's history, a period extending from approximately 200 B.C. to A.D. 250. The vast bulk of the legal, literary, archaeological, and documentary evidence available for inspection falls between those dates. The main focus is on the economics of venal sex, meaning precisely the manner in which it was sold, a subject that extends to the ownership, operation, staffing, and location of brothels, as well as to various aspects of nonbrothel prostitution. Though the state of the evidence discourages any and all attempts at quantification, an attempt will be made to recover a sense of the role, the presence, and, as much as is possible, the lived experience of prostitution in the Roman city. One major obstacle especially to achieving the final goal is that the available evidence is overwhelmingly the product of male members of the elite, and so reflects their concerns, assumptions, and prejudices. Unlike in most modern societies, the Roman political and legal authorities allowed the business of venal sex to proceed virtually unregulated, with a degree of tolerance that seems strange to a modern sensibility, but with consequences that emerge as sometimes equally foreign to us.

Though I consider all types of sources in this study, I tend to privilege material evidence, particularly evidence from Pompeii for the reasons given below. The focus on archaeological evidence from Pompeii enables the development of the central argument of the book, which concerns the number and location of brothels and other venues for the sale of sex in that city. I argue in

brief that there were more of these brothels, and they were more widely distributed, than most scholars have believed in recent years. Given the state of our knowledge, however, we should retain a degree of agnosticism over their precise numbers and locations.

The book focuses principally on female prostitution for two main reasons. First, the greater share of the evidence by far for the economics of venal sex concerns the prostitution of women. Second, male prostitution is an important subject nonetheless and thus is deserving of separate treatment. To be sure, I do not hesitate to adduce evidence about the latter in the course of this book when it is useful to do so, such as in the discussion of the archaeological evidence for brothels in chapter 8 or the list of possible Pompeian prostitutes in appendix 3. By the same token, I pass beyond the chronological limits of the study when necessary to shed light on the period in question. An example is my treatment of the Augustinian evidence for moral zoning in chapter 3.

I dwell longer on Augustine than I do on other Christian evidence, in part, because I share the common view that during the transition from paganism to Christianity there was a great deal of continuity in social conditions and relations as well as the ideology that surrounded them. One important change was a greater concern with the poor and the lower orders in general by members of the elite, as reflected in their writings. These writings open a window on some social practices and attitudes that we know little about from the earlier period. Still, they do not appear to represent by and large a break with the pagan past. When a change in those practices or attitudes did take place, and that which occurred with Augustine on the matter of zoning prostitution is fairly monumental, greater attention should be paid.

This book is a social history of an aspect of Roman prostitution, not an archaeological or art historical study of the same. Readers avid for lavish display of photographs of Roman erotic art must turn elsewhere. I make use of a small sample of illustrations designed to drive home the nature of art found in the brothel, other public places, and the private house. In recent years, a series of excellent studies have opened up the meaning and role of such art.<sup>1</sup> My contribution, such as it is, is to try to place their results in the context of other evidence, above all literary sources, in order to try to make sense of Roman indifference to brothels and prostitutes in their midst. But some of the detailed treatments already available of the art of the Suburban Baths, the Purpose-

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1. To name just a few of the more important ones, Jacobelli, *Terme Suburbane* (1995); Clarke, *Looking at Lovemaking* (1998); Guzzo and Scarano Ussani, *Veneris figurae* (2000); and Varone, *Erotismo a Pompei* (2000).

Built Brothel, and other venues public and private are not likely to be surpassed soon, at least not by me. For that matter, definitive publication of the places listed as possible brothels in this book must await the work of archaeologists.

### BROTHEL IN HISTORY

Where do we go in search of Roman brothels? Pompeii has preserved more archaeological data about brothels than anywhere else in the Roman world.<sup>2</sup> One obvious reason for this is the unusual way in which the site was destroyed in antiquity and preserved through the ages. Other cities that have seen more or less continuous settlement over the years, notably Rome, do not retain the kind of evidence we require to locate and to identify brothels. Unfortunately, the same is true even of abandoned sites, such as Ostia, which declined slowly and ended less violently than Pompeii did.

So it comes as no surprise that numerous brothels and so-called *cellae meretriciae* or “cribs” (one-room venues for sex lying off of a street or in the back of a bar) have been identified in Pompeii. The most interesting development in recent years, however, is the sharp decrease in the number of Pompeian brothels postulated by scholars. In short order, the numbers have fallen from “35 or more” to one certain specimen. As a result, ancient Pompeii has been in a sense “cleaned up” almost as effectively as Times Square was cleaned up by the New York authorities in the 1990s.<sup>3</sup> Closer examination of the problem, however, suggests that at least one of these operations has been characterized by an excess of zeal, of not a surfeit of severity.

For these reasons, Pompeii is the only city in the Roman world to receive even a remotely coherent modern treatment of its brothels. This book examines in detail the late twentieth-century scholarship on Pompeian brothels, its methods and assumptions, and, above all, the criteria used to identify these establishments in light of the ancient evidence. This evidence receives further illumination from the sources for brothels in the Roman world beyond Pompeii itself. The number and location of Pompeian brothels is shown to be more problematic than either the older school (which assumed an abundance of brothels), and more recent scholarship (which has been notably skeptical of this assumption) has postulated.

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2. A preliminary treatment of the Pompeian material appears in McGinn, “Pompeian Brothels and Social History” (2002).

3. See Traub, “Land of the Naked Cowboy” (2002).

The uncertainty about the brothels has a useful result, I argue, because it permits a critique of the now-fashionable idea that the Romans practiced a form of moral zoning, keeping prostitution restricted to certain areas, even certain streets, and away from others. Despite some evidence that the Romans attempted to regulate the trade of venal sex, they did not have a coherent regulationist regime. Their true interest in “moral geography” turns out to be a commercially motivated one; their aim was to make as much money from the practice of prostitution as they could, both for the individual and for the state. Brothels and other venues for the sale of sex were located with an eye to maximizing profits, at least by those members of the elite who had no reservations about earning money in this way. They appear to have been fairly numerous, in fact, though we cannot be certain of their precise number. Pompeii was neither unusual nor atypical in this regard. Instead of keeping prostitution hidden away in the dark corners of their cities, the Romans preferred to have it out in the open as much as possible. The visibility of prostitutes was the ideal foil to the public persona of the respectable woman (*mater familias/matrona*).<sup>4</sup> It was so much easier in this way to humiliate them morally and to exploit them financially. This is the sum of the Roman policy on zoning prostitution.

In this book, I make ample use of comparative evidence in order to explain the ancient evidence. This use raises the danger of anachronism, or what might better be termed cultural inappropriateness, which it is helpful, I believe, to address in the context of arguments from social constructionism. Lack of space prohibits anything but a cursory review of the major problems. All the same, here is a welcome opportunity to defend a moderate social constructionism, which I believe in the end most authorities on Roman antiquity will be inclined to accept,<sup>5</sup> against some of the more extreme variants.<sup>6</sup>

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4. For some of the legal and social implications of this dichotomy in sexual and social status, see McGinn, *Prostitution, Sexuality, and the Law* (1998) esp. chap. 5.

5. See the recent statements by Skinner, “Zeus and Leda” (1996) esp. 118–19; Verstraete, review of *Rethinking Sexuality and Roman Sexualities* (1998) 149. See also the reception of recent radical constructionist works by Hopkins, “Looking at Lovemaking” (1999); Frier, review of *Roman Sexuality* (1999). The flashpoint of these discussions is ancient sexuality, though the problem resonates across the interpretation of Roman history.

6. For general considerations on this theme, see Searle, *Construction of Social Reality* (1995) 2, 4, 6–7, 27, 34, 59–60, 119–20, 149, 179, 181–82, 189, 227–28; Collin, *Social Reality* (1997) x–xi, 7, 9, 134–35, 145, 217, 221–222; Hacking, *Social Construction of What?* (1999) 24, 67–68, 94. A recent essay by Karras, “Review Essay” (2000) 1252–53, distinguishes between stronger and weaker versions of social constructionism, which do not coincide with the division made here into radical and moderate, insofar as they are for the most part variants of the radical type. The more extreme of the two, advocated by Michel Foucault himself, argues that sexuality itself did not exist before the nineteenth century.

A particular problem arises here for the study of prostitution in history. Most historians these days are alert to the fact that prostitution in past times was neither static nor inert, replicating itself over time as the “oldest profession,” a longstanding assumption.<sup>7</sup> The best way of escaping the implications of this assumption in my view is to rely on as much available data as possible, while recognizing that, given the sheer variety of ways in which prostitution configures itself in different cultural and historical contexts, some comparisons will inevitably work better than others for our purpose, or indeed anyone’s purpose. Of course comparative evidence is not always and everywhere useless simply because it does not live up to its promise in every instance. That position is more appropriate for the practitioner of rhetoric than for the writer of history. To understand the role of prostitution as a component, a fundamental component I would argue, of the enduring institution of patriarchy requires a high degree of sensitivity to similarity and difference, continuity as well as change. Only judicious use of comparative evidence seems poised to make this possible.<sup>8</sup>

I think it important, in consequence, not to exaggerate difference, taking as proven the endless variation social anthropology has seen across cultures.<sup>9</sup> If the Romans were more like us or had left us better information, resort to comparative evidence might seem otiose or even an obstacle to understanding them. That is simply not the case, however. Accurately presenting the truth depends finally on a careful use of language, and when the evidence is inadequate, as in the case of Roman prostitution, the truth can only be presented in a manner that “admits of degrees.”<sup>10</sup> To take one example of this problem as it occurs in the literary sources, the poet Martial creates a topography of Rome in his collection of epigrams as a kind of class signifier that it did not and could not function as, in quite the same way, off the page.<sup>11</sup> Attempts to reconcile material and literary topographies of this kind are themselves all but bound to be somewhat inexact. To put the matter another way, it is best to seek adequate explanations of Roman conduct and not perfect ones.<sup>12</sup>

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7. For a useful recent review of the historiography of prostitution, see Gilfoyle, “Prostitutes in History,” (1999).

8. For a useful analogy with understanding the history of the Mediterranean through a comparative approach, see Horden and Purcell, *Corrupting Sea* (2000), 465. More generally, see Macfarlane, “History and Anthropology” (1994).

9. Collin, *Social Reality* (1997) 47.

10. Searle, *Construction of Social Reality* (1995) 200.

11. See Kardos, “Épigrammes” (2001) 206, 209, 214; Kardos, “Vrbs,” (2001) 389. For place as an emotional signifier in Martial, see Kardos, “Vrbs,” 399.

12. See Collin, *Social Reality* (1997) 109.

One undeniable advantage of a comparative approach is that it substitutes a self-consciousness of method for naive positivism. To be sure, I should emphasize both here and elsewhere in this study, comparative evidence, though vital, only suggests a possible solution. It cannot by itself prove anything about ancient Roman brothels. Comparative evidence must be looked at in conjunction with ancient evidence. Otherwise, we can all too easily weave comparative data into a model or narrative with little probative value for antiquity.<sup>13</sup> Many times the most useful service comparative material can provide is to cast serious doubt on what we know, or what we think we know, about that lost and only imperfectly recoverable world. The historical evidence must in the final analysis be crucial for deciding which comparative data is most persuasive for ancient Rome.<sup>14</sup> Differences are not to be discarded automatically, however, since contrasting evidence serves a vitally useful purpose.<sup>15</sup>

The author of this study—I must emphasize—is no archaeologist, nor is the analysis based on thorough personal observation of the material remains. The only “true” archaeology practiced here is a Foucauldian exercise in the archaeology of knowledge. Unlike Foucault himself, what I am interested in unearthing is precisely the knowledge of archaeologists. There are two important questions to pose regarding Roman brothels: what did the archaeologists know and when did they know it? An attempt is made to answer these questions, at least in their broad outlines.

By the same token, no new candidates for brothelhood are advanced here, though I take seriously the possibility that not all the brothels in the Roman world have been identified. This study attempts to provoke the experts to take action, in the form of careful and critical examination of the material evidence. My task is to raise questions of the sort that I believe a social historian should pose when confronting material evidence of the kind surveyed here.

Neither social history nor archaeology is a straightforward business, a truth that is neither always very clear nor universally acknowledged.<sup>16</sup> We rarely know in advance how much of the former can be extracted from the latter. If I manage to advance the dialogue between social historians and archaeologists, my project will have succeeded. I hope to have made clear that those I

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13. See the caution of Horden and Purcell, *Corrupting Sea* (2000) 301.

14. Horden and Purcell, *Corrupting Sea* (2000) 47 have a useful statement.

15. See Horden and Purcell, *Corrupting Sea* (2000) 287.

16. On the problem of the “fit” between the archaeological record and the written sources, see Horden and Purcell, *Corrupting Sea* (2000) 325. For the general lack of interest in the archaeology of the Roman sub-elite, see Funari and Zarankin, “Consideraciones” (2001) 504.

believe to be really deserving of criticism are not the scholars with whom I quibble in this book, but the social historians who still fail to grasp the importance of material remains for the understanding of Roman history.

#### DEFINITIONS

The problem of defining prostitution is an important and interesting one. Indeed, it is so important a serious treatment would distract us from the subject at hand.<sup>17</sup> The problem is directly related to the problem of defining brothel, since a broad definition of the former would almost inevitably entail a broad definition of the latter. For example, some or all of the establishments I identify in chapter 5 as “sex clubs” and attempt to distinguish from brothels would qualify as such if I were to employ a broader definition of prostitution than I do.

Often the motive for constructing a definition determines its content, so that it has little by way of broad applicability. One major challenge is to formulate a definition that avoids confusing prostitution with other instances of nonmarital sexuality, such as concubinage. A definition, borrowed from the sociological literature, that holds out the most promise features the following three criteria: promiscuity, payment, and the emotional indifference of the partners to each other.<sup>18</sup>

The definition provided above will not necessarily coincide with Roman attempts to define prostitution and prostitute. That is, in fact, part of its value. For example, when the jurist Ulpian defines prostitute under the Augustan marriage law, he ignores the question of emotional indifference, discounts that of payment, and raises promiscuity nearly to the status of sole valid criterion.<sup>19</sup> The fact that he is elucidating a rule that stipulates inappropriate marriage partners helps explain the emphasis on promiscuity and confirms the teleological premise behind many a definition of prostitution, as just set forth. In a sense, Ulpian’s definition is a moral one converted into a legal one, which makes it difficult to use in other contexts.

By the same token, the Romans are of little help in defining brothel. For example, one of the terms they commonly employ to describe brothel only succeeds in conveying a sense of misogyny. *Lupanar* (or *lupanarium*) signifies in a literal sense “den of wolves,” specifically she-wolves, since the word for

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17. A fuller discussion is at McGinn, *Prostitution, Sexuality, and the Law* (1998) 17–18.

18. See, for example, Palmer and Humphrey, *Deviant Behavior* (1990) 150.

19. See McGinn, *Prostitution, Sexuality, and the Law* (1998) 126–35.

female wolf, *lupa*, is often used for prostitutes.<sup>20</sup> Such terminology emphasizes the rapacious, predatory, and greedy nature of the prostitute as a type, and, at the same time, denies her humanity. It tells us nothing about brothels that might help us define what one is. The same holds true for another term commonly used for brothel, the euphemism *fornix*, which literally means “archway” (and whence comes *fornicatio*, “fornication”). The term obscures the fact that the Roman brothel was not simply a location on the street or the front, or face, of a building, but an establishment, a business where venal sex was available. Examples of other terms for brothel might be multiplied, for example, *lustrum*, *stabulum*, and (at least in later Latin) *prostibulum*, to no avail. Roman words for brothel at best offer, by way of definition, the tautology that this was a place where prostitutes worked.

Using the literary and archaeological evidence to define brothel is also problematic, especially in regard to the latter. The descriptions of brothels in the literary sources are unhelpful because they are vague, stereotyped, and laden with upper-class male prejudice.<sup>21</sup> They do not contain anything that would enable us to be sure of the difference between a brothel and other venues where prostitution was practiced, for example. In fact, given their moralizing inclinations, we cannot know for certain if the Romans themselves routinely and consistently recognized such a difference. The clearest suggestion of such a distinction arises in the legal sources, which appear to accept a notional differentiation, for example, between *lupanarium* and *taberna cauponia* (tavern or inn), though they do not draw any consequences at law from this.<sup>22</sup> At least, the problem of identification is resolved for the literary and legal sources in that the texts speak of brothels, even if only to assert or assume that these are places where prostitutes work.

Using the archaeological evidence to define the brothel is even more difficult. Here the problem is inextricably tied to that of identification, itself an even thornier issue. This is because no Roman brothel has been uncovered to this day that identifies itself, in a literal sense, as a brothel. Our most certain specimen, which is for some scholars the only certain brothel in the Roman world, displays features that allow for neither easy generalization nor ready application to other contexts.

There is no eluding these difficulties. For that reason, I must return on different occasions to the problem(s) of defining and identifying brothels, above

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20. See Adams, “Words” (1983) 333–35.

21. See the discussion in chap. 2 and in app. 1.

22. See chap. 7.

all, in the discussion of archaeological evidence in chapters 7 and 8. As with the concept of prostitution, however, a working definition of brothel is necessary at the start for the sake of clarity. For my purposes a brothel is an establishment where two or more prostitutes can work simultaneously and whose activity forms the main, or at least a major, part of the business as a whole. In practical terms this means that an establishment where a prostitute must go outside or elsewhere with a customer is not a brothel. The criterion of "main or major" component of the business is of necessity treated loosely, so as to include all or most taverns and inns showing evidence of prostitution, but to exclude most baths, even if the evidence suggests that prostitutes worked there. "Business," of course, implies that the place is open to the public at large.

#### PLAN OF THE BOOK

The central problem of this book may be put in the form of a broad but blunt question. Just how did the Roman people manage their prostitutes? In an earlier study, I looked at this problem from the standpoint of the law.<sup>23</sup> I concluded that, while a number of legal rules could be recovered from the sources for analysis, the Romans did not have a coherent policy, or set of laws, toward prostitutes and pimps or toward the profession itself. There are two overriding trends detectable in public policy on the subject, toleration and degradation, but the legal rules themselves remain a diverse and fragmented lot.

Here we are dealing with a side of the social organization of prostitution that seems to have been left almost entirely to the private sector. The operation of brothels was overseen loosely by junior magistrates, in Rome the aediles, about whose precise responsibilities we are rather poorly informed. Virtually no rules have been preserved here to guide us, though the law that exists in regard to prostitution strongly suggests that the state recognized an interest in the profession. The state, among other ways, profited from the sale of sex through the imposition of a tax, and it appropriated the enormous symbolic potency of prostitution to make a series of statements about ideal social hierarchy, above all regarding Roman women. The implications of this appropriation were more than simply symbolic. As in the case of other societies, Rome had an interest in preserving public order on the ground, both in and out of the brothel.

With so much at stake, it is surprising to find so little official intervention

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23. McGinn, *Prostitution, Sexuality, and the Law* (1998).

in the business of prostitution. For that reason, and given the relentless poverty of the evidence, I shrink from characterizing those views with which I take issue, above all on the crucial matter of the number and location of brothels, in the language of subadult polemic as absurd or preposterous. The views of scholars advocating the thesis of very few brothels in very few locations merit respect, especially given the uncertainty that still surrounds much of the material evidence for prostitution. Sustained engagement with their evidence and arguments has in fact forced me to concede much to these scholars, and one major concession is worth mentioning here. They are absolutely correct about one important fact, that the Romans did have a public policy that mapped venal sex on their cityscapes. Their policy was that this aspect of the organization of prostitution should be left entirely to the private sphere, where wealthy landowners, whose interests the state was bound if not designed to serve, were free to act as their desire for profit and their sensibilities about honor dictated. It is not at all events possible to write the state out of this story entirely.

Chapter 2 contains a comprehensive discussion of the basic economic facts about prostitution that can be recovered for the Roman world. The elite showed an interest in profiting where it could from the sale of sex, a cash-rich business that required relatively little outlay beyond the cost of urban real estate, even when slaves had to be purchased, compared with the profits to be made. Partly for this reason, prostitution was widespread, implicated as it was in a series of venues and events designed to draw people in numbers, from baths to festivals. For the male consumer, sex was both widely available and relatively inexpensive. For the prostitutes themselves, the prospect of material ease from selling sex was perhaps an inducement to enter the profession when they were not compelled to do so by slave owners or aggressive pimps. Compared with the bleak alternatives the Roman economy offered women forced to find work, prostitution may have been an attractive prospect, though I argue this was illusory, given the degree to which even “free” prostitutes were exploited.

The idea that prostitution, if it is not utterly repressed, should ideally be contained in some areas and prohibited from others seems such a natural one that we have difficulty imagining a world where few people, if anyone, thought this mattered. And yet absolutely no evidence exists to suggest that this did matter for the Romans, a problem raised in chapter 3, where the arrangement of social space in the Roman cityscape is shown to be not random, but fairly promiscuous all the same. This indifference is rather striking, especially given the ample evidence that elite Romans did not at all regard brothels as whole-

some places. But there is no indication that anyone proposed zoning prostitution until the Christians did. And even with them the idea was a late one and perhaps controversial. A text of Augustine's is the source for a policy that, apart from perhaps one failed experiment in late antiquity, was long left to be a weapon lying in its sheath.

Chapter 4 attempts to understand the apparent obliviousness of the Romans to the moral challenge posed by prostitutes in their midst by examining the role of erotic representation in their lived experience. There is broad consensus that erotic art was fairly ubiquitous in the public and private spaces of the Roman city, though it turns out that some places, such as brothels and certain areas of private homes, for example, were more sexualized than others. All the same, we cannot assume that Roman responses to such representations were the same as ours, if it is indeed correct to assume a monolithic modern reaction. Also surprising is the apparent indifference of the Romans, those avid and aggressive moralizers, to women's and children's exposure to erotic art.

In chapter 5, I engage what is perhaps the central problem in the Roman sexual economy, the relatively low level of state intervention. The role of the officials entrusted with oversight of brothels seems to have been limited to maintaining public order, which largely meant the preservation of status distinctions between prostitutes and respectable women, and to collecting payments for taxes and lease of public property for the state, as well as, we may imagine, bribes for themselves. They did intervene to protect the public interest in exceptional cases, such as during the great water-stealing scandal of the mid-first century B.C., which embroiled brothels and other users of the public water supply. All else was left to the discretion of the owners of private property, many of whom were no less inclined than the state to profit from the sale of sex, and some of whom felt free to install an ersatz brothel in some part of their homes, for purposes that do not appear to have been commercial in nature.

The lack of a more aggressively manifested state interest in controlling prostitution may be less surprising to readers after they finish the chapters preceding chapter 5. More importantly, the articulation and division of responsibility between the government and private investors for managing prostitution in the areas of public order and financial profit amounts to a fairly sophisticated balance of both sets of interests. It leaves scant space for primitivist concerns about the Romans' alleged inability to develop and/or implement policy of any kind.

Chapter 6 raises a set of thorny demographic questions. How many broth-

els and how many prostitutes might a city like Rome or Pompeii have maintained? For these cities, we have some data to generate estimates of overall population, but even so the totals largely involve guesswork. That fact in itself should encourage caution about assuming a certain number of prostitutes, whether high or low. Comparisons with other cultures and consideration of conditions in Pompeii—especially in the years between the damaging earthquake in A.D. 62 and its final destruction in A.D. 79—and in Rome as the out-sized metropolis it was, suggests all the same that the number of brothels and prostitutes in such places might well have been rather high.

The next two chapters (7 and 8), supplemented by the appendices, present the archaeological evidence for Roman brothels in Rome, Pompeii, and elsewhere. Our main focus is of necessity on Pompeii, from where the vast bulk of the material evidence derives. The central challenge of course resides in defining and identifying brothels. *Cellae meretriciae* or cribs (one-room venues for sex lying off a street or in the back of a bar) are important to the economy of venal sex as well. Also important are the other places where prostitution flourished, such as baths, though it is difficult to describe many of these as brothels. That perennial favorite as a tourist attraction in the modern Pompeian *scavi*, the Purpose-Built Brothel, contains much of interest in its own right, but is of little help in identifying other brothels, even in Pompeii itself.

Chapter 9 confronts head-on some very plausible-seeming arguments for the prohibition of brothels in certain parts of the ancient city, above all in the Forum. In fact, the Roman use of space, even or especially in such high-profile and central urban areas, was designed to accommodate brothels when property values and public building programs permitted. When this was not the case, it was because a general squeeze on residential and commercial property had occurred, and not because of any campaign specifically targeted at the removal of brothels. As for prostitutes, they seem always to have been tolerated, to say the least, in the Forum. Again we see the consequences of a largely “privatized” approach to the management of selling sex.

In chapter 10 the results of the study are laid out in summary fashion. The evidence suggests the existence of three subtypes for brothels, plus two for cribs. These were scattered throughout the Roman city, though some patterns of clustering are perceptible, a fact that upon further analysis might help identify more brothels. More might be said about patterns of ownership in terms of the physical relationship of brothels to stately *domus*. The conclusion, albeit tentative, is that considerations of profit dictated the number and location of brothels in the Roman city, so that we would expect any patterns that emerge to exemplify the results of a loose and informal practice of “commercial zon-

ing” rather than of a top-down, officially imposed “moral geography.” Where prostitution is absent in the Roman cityscape this is better explained as manifesting the impact of private concerns over honor, where sheer economic calculation is not in play.

The three appendices contain a wealth of source material, both primary and secondary, on brothels, cribs, and prostitutes in Pompeii. The hope is that this evidence might be of use in pursuing a longer-term project of archaeological investigation and publication. I anticipate that at some point in the future a more satisfactory “fit” between social history and archaeology may be possible than is true at this time of writing.

No one book can do justice to as broad and complex a subject as Roman prostitution. Each type of evidence presents its own challenge, and to an extent merits discrete study. Just as my earlier book concentrated on legal sources, this one focuses mainly on material evidence. These divisions are far from airtight of course, and the best approach is to use each to illuminate the other, invoking the aid of the literary evidence where necessary. The literary evidence calls for study in its own right nevertheless, and it is my hope to devote a separate monograph more especially to this subject. This project will look back on and will integrate the results of my first two books.<sup>24</sup>

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24. McGinn, *Roman Prostitution* (forthcoming).