

THE CITY OF VENUS

SEX AND THE CITY

Both brothels and cribs are spread throughout the city of Pompeii instead of being confined to one area (see maps, 1, 2, and 5). This distribution is neither even nor random, however.¹ In fact the motive for the location of these establishments seems purely economic (convenient access to clients) rather than moral or social.² The proximity of the town Forum, a public bath, a hotel, or a town gate are all characteristic features. For example, all of the relatively high number of brothels and cribs alleged for *Regio* 7 are, as we might expect, quite accessible from the Forum. The brothel thought to lie at 7.16.B is just outside the *Porta Marina*, atop the Suburban Baths. The area east of the Forum sporting the Purpose-Built Brothel seems to have benefitted from a kind of commercial-erotic synergy. Another such area appears to have been the section in *Regio* 1 near the *Porta Stabiana* and extending back toward, and inclusive of, the *Insula del Menandro*. Still another might be seen in *Insula* 13 of

1. Brothels are not reported for areas of the city that remain largely unexcavated and/or where there is a high concentration of public building: to use Fiorelli's *Regiones* as a rough guide, 3 and 4 have no brothels alleged, 2 and 8 only one. On the other hand, *Regiones* 1 and 9 are well represented, though significant areas in both remain unexcavated. *Regio* 7 is the best attested, with as many as seventeen possible brothels and ten *cellae meretriciae*.

2. Compare the distribution of hotels and eating/drinking places that Kleberg, *Hôtels* (1957) 49–53, claims for Pompeii: a clustering near the town gates, main streets, and places of public entertainment (in my view, however, eating/drinking establishments are scattered more widely than he allows). Consider also the *taberna* at Plaut. *Pseud.* 658–64, which is located just outside the town gate and which offers at minimum food and lodging.

Regio 7, an area with its several brothels and cribs. The pattern of distribution for brothels corresponds fairly well to that for inns, restaurants, and hotels.³

A similarly uneven, but nonrandom pattern is reflected in the distribution of upper-class townhouses, which were located in many, though not all, parts of the city, with some clustering perceptible. This pattern is not the inverse of the one for brothels, though the elite's preference for showy locations on the main roads might have made it economically difficult at minimum for brothels to locate there, a fact that does not mean all of them were found in out-of-the-way places, as has been suggested.⁴

Here the question of the "fit" between archaeological and other kinds of evidence, especially literary sources, arises with particular insistence. Two texts, one from Petronius and the other from Seneca, have been used to argue the existence both of an ideology and practice of moral zoning. If correct, the argument would threaten to overturn the conclusions just drawn from the material evidence for Pompeii, or at minimum help to establish that city as a special case. The claim evaporates on close inspection, however, allowing for a more focused examination of various types of evidence in the context of specific locations in the Roman city where such zoning has been alleged.

In an important passage, Petronius emphasizes the backstreet location of a brothel in order to illustrate the gross stupidity of both Encolpius and Ascyltos, rather than to communicate a fixed rule about brothel-topography:⁵

Petron. 6: . . . Sed nec viam diligenter tenebam [quia] nec quod stabulum esset sciebam . . . 7: . . . 'Rogo,' inquam 'mater, numquid scis ubi ego habitem?' . . . Subinde ut in locum secretiorem venimus, centonem anus urbana reiecit et 'hic' inquit, 'debes habitare'. Cum ego negarem me agnoscere domum, video quosdam inter titulos nudas meretrices furtim spatiantes. Tarde, immo iam sero intellexi me in fornicem esse deductum . . . 8: Per anfractus deinde obscurissimos egressus in hunc locum me perduxit proloatoque peculio coepit rogare stuprum. Iam pro cella meretrix assem exegerat. . . .

3. As described by Jashemski, *Gardens I* (1979) 167–81, 352–53.

4. For a different view, see Laurence, *Roman Pompeii* (1994) 70, 72, 75 (brothels were relegated to the backstreets to screen them from upper-class housing [a relatively mild form of zoning], though they were often in close proximity to this housing) and Wallace-Hadrill, "Public Honour and Private Shame" (1995) 51, 54–55 (who names the Forum and part of the *Via dell' Abbondanza* as areas with zoning prohibitions on prostitution: see below in the text). Cf. Clarke, *Looking at Lovemaking* (1998) 311 n. 10.

5. Even so, the stereotype on which he relies may have greater resonance for Rome than for other towns: see Ramage, "Urban Problems" (1983) 66, 82.

6–7. (*Encolpius*). *But neither was I paying careful attention to the street nor was I conscious of where our lodgings were . . . I asked (the little old woman selling vegetables) “If you please, good woman, do you have any idea where I live/am staying?” . . . Then when we came to a place set pretty far back, the charming old lady threw open a patchwork curtain and said “Here is where you ought to live.” When I started to say that I didn’t recognize the house, I noticed naked prostitutes tiptoeing around some notices with prices written on them. Slowly, or rather much too late, I realized that I’d been led into a brothel . . . 8. (*Ascyltos*). *Next, passing through some very dark twists and turns he led me to this place, whipped out his wallet, and asked for sex. A prostitute had already charged an as for a room. . . .**

Encolpius misses a series of clues as to where he is headed. First, there is his vegetable-peddling *Sibyl*, the old woman herself, who in the mindset of male members of the upper-classes must be selling more than vegetables.⁶ The patchwork curtain is, or rather should be, another giveaway.⁷ *Ascyltos* is so oblivious that he misses the significance of the room-payment. There is also the fact that the word *stabulum* can either mean lodgings or brothel or—not at all to be ruled out—both at once. The word *habitare* also can have more than one meaning; it can refer to temporary quarters or to permanent lodgings and again has the sense that the same establishment might cater to both arrangements at the same time for different sorts of guest. The passage is valuable evidence for confirming the association of brothels with lower-class housing.⁸ Both of our (anti-) heroes fail to pick up on the ambiguity of the terminology and its implications until it is too late. Their respectability as would-be members of the elite is sadly compromised by a foray, however unintentional, into the brothel.

The most significant clue that both men overlook, however, is the cliché that brothels are set back along winding streets removed from a main thoroughfare and far out of the way. The cliché means of course that neither all or most nor—conversely—that no brothels were thus secluded in actual fact.⁹ If

6. On female retailers as prostitutes, see McGinn, “Definition” (1997 [1998]) esp. 107–12. What marks the woman as a procuress rather than as prostitute is her age (i.e., an “old woman” [*anus*]).

7. This detail appears at *Iuv.* 6.121 as part of a stereotypical description of a brothel. Some (literary) brothels have *cellae* with doors: see chap. 2.

8. See chaps. 2 and 8.

9. *Propertius* as well picks up on the cliché of the “arcana . . . taberna”: 4.8.19. See also *Mart.* 5.84.4: “arcana . . . popina.”

Homer Simpson were led past a sign of golden arches to discover—to his utter amazement!—that he was in a fast food restaurant we could not safely conclude that all such places displayed golden arches. By the same token, I expect that few persons nowadays would visit a red-light district expecting to find a red light, though there are of course places that cater to some customers' expectations through reliance on this symbol. Amsterdam has some good examples. This is why the cliché about brothel-location does not mean that no brothels were actually set in out-of-the-way places, as we saw with the Purpose-Built Brothel in chapter 8.

It is also possible that the cliché is treated in an exaggerated way here because Petronius wants the reader to associate a visit to this brothel with a passage to the Underworld. If true, this interpretation would explain why this locale is set further back and more out of the way than others of its kind. It is hardly necessary to insist on this point, however.

Next, in a comparison sometimes thought to reflect a notion of moral geography, Seneca provides an idealized moral distinction between good places and bad, which is valid in my view neither as prescriptive nor descriptive topography:¹⁰

Sen. *Vita Beata* 7.3: Quid dissimilia, immo diversa componitis? Altum quiddam est virtus, excelsum et regale, invictum, infatigabile; voluptas humile, servile, imbecillum, caducum, cuius statio et domicilium fornice et popinae sunt. virtutem in templo convenies, in foro, in curia, pro muris stantem, pulverulentam, coloratam, callosas habentem manus; voluptatem latitantem saepius ac tenebras captantem circa balinea ac sudatoria ac loca aedilem metuentia, mollem, enervem, mero atque unguento madentem, pallidam aut fucatam et medicamentis pollinctam.

Why do you unite things that are unlike, or, rather, completely different? Virtue is something lofty, exalted and king-like, undefeated and untiring.

10. See Wallace-Hadrill, "Public Honour and Private Shame" (1995) 39 with n. 1, who is criticized by Kellum "Spectacle" (1999) 291, who points out that some upper-class Romans such as Catullus, Augustus, and Seneca himself seem to have been well-acquainted with the seedier locales described in this text. For what is in my view a more persuasive treatment of the passage, see Edwards, *Politics of Immorality* (1993) 173–75, who omits considerations of zoning entirely. The observation of DeFelice, *Roman Hospitality* (2001) 133, regarding this evidence that upper-class attitudes were not monolithically Stoic is important. I note in passing Seneca's wish (*Ep.* 51.4) not to live "inter popinas": the context suggests this means he does not want to live "in," rather than "near," these fast-food restaurants—Baiae in fact emerges as one great *popina*!

Pleasure is something low, slavish, weak, perishable, whose hangout and home are brothels and taverns. You will find virtue in the temple, in the Forum, in the Senate-House, standing in front of the city walls, sunburned, with calloused hands. Pleasure you'll find more often hiding out, lurking in the shadows, around the baths, the sweating-rooms, the places afraid of the aedile. It is delicate, languid, soaked in unmixed wine and perfume, either pale or painted with cosmetics and laid out like a corpse.

It is interesting that in the end *Virtus* has to be moved to the edge or outside of the city entirely, evidently represented as an idealized soldier or agricultural worker. Seneca's discourse stands as a variant of the city:bad/country:good theme so popular in Roman moralistic writing.¹¹ His choice of a soldier as symbol, if this interpretation is correct, is interesting in light of the fact that soldiers were among the leading clients of prostitutes. No matter how we interpret this passage we can safely conclude that Seneca writes in a highly moralizing way and not as a topographer, at least as we conceive of this role today.¹² One of the types of "bad places" he cites are baths, which no one has argued to be the object of moral zoning.

In the end I argue that there is indeed a fit between literary evidence and archaeological evidence in the matter of moral zoning. But there is little cause for celebration here. We may be dealing more with coincidence than with an actual fit. There is a deeper problem with literary evidence in its relation to the physical geography of a city, which should not be overlooked. This difficulty we saw arise in chapter 3 in the always immanent contrast between topography on the page and topography on the ground. A similar difficulty comes to us from nineteenth-century New York City, where middle-class residents and visitors were inclined to make sense of their city by dividing it into honorable and dishonorable zones. "They envisioned a city with regions of

11. See, for example, Wallace-Hadrill, "Elites and Trade" (1991) 244–49, where he shows that the city, the whole city, and nothing but the city was associated in this discourse with brothels, taverns, and lowlife, in contrast to the rustic virtues of country living. See also Braund, "City and Country" (1989); André, "Espace urbain" (1991); Edwards, *Politics of Immorality* (1993) 190–91; Edwards, *Writing Rome* (1996) esp. 125–29; Gold, "Urban Life" (1998); Dalby, *Empire* (2000) 208–42; Bond, "Urbs" (2001). The theme is taken up by medical writers who gloss the moral contrast of city and country with health concerns: Nutton, "Medical Thoughts" (2000) 66. DeFelice, *Roman Hospitality* (2001) 139, argues that the point of the passage is that pleasure is found everywhere in the city, and it is up to the good Stoic to rein in his passions.

12. See the cautions of Braund, "City and Country" (1989); Laurence, "Writing the Roman Metropolis" (1997) against taking the elements of such evidence as facts and not as attitudes.

virtue and vice, of safety and danger, of sunshine and shadow.”¹³ In so doing, they misread the areas they were attempting to describe, constructing a cityscape that was tidier in the popular imagination than it was in actual fact. There is no reason to suspect the Romans were incapable of a similar sort of error, imagining Rome as better, or worse, than it really was. To be certain that we understand the Roman city correctly, we must approach the literary and archaeological evidence concurrently, the cultural constructions as well as the physical.

Seneca mentions the Forum as one of the “good places,” which leads me to my final point about the argument for moral zoning. Andrew Wallace-Hadrill makes a strong argument that undesirable activities, which in concrete terms occurred in brothels and *popinae*, were zoned away from certain highly marked and highly charged public spaces.¹⁴ He identifies these spaces as the Forum at Rome and the Forum and a stretch of the *Via dell'Abbondanza* between the Forum and the Stabian Baths at Pompeii. I will argue that, despite its manifest strengths, the argument cannot hold in the end. In the end, to be sure, the Roman city is not quite as “bad” a place as the moralists would have us believe.

MORAL GEOGRAPHY

First, let us look at the *Via dell'Abbondanza*. Wallace-Hadrill emphasizes that the pavement here shows at the western end faint wheel ruts and at the eastern end, where the street opens into a small piazza, no rutting at all, which leads him to conclude that there was a restriction on wheeled traffic for this area.¹⁵ He speculates that this section of the street formed “a processional route in public festivals, religious and civic ceremonies passing between forum

13. Gilfoyle, *City of Eros* (1992) 223.

14. Wallace-Hadrill, “Public Honour and Private Shame” (1995) 46–51. The rationale behind privileging the Roman Forum is not entirely clear, given that public building took place in various parts of the city: see Frézouls, “Rome” (1987) 388.

15. Wallace-Hadrill, “Public Honour and Private Shame” (1995) 47–49. The map he reproduces at 49 shows that the middle part of this stretch of the *Via dell'Abbondanza* is in fact heavily rutted. This suggests that his inference of a “restriction” here may not be well-founded. The drop in road level at the eastern end of the piazza in front of the Stabian Baths may have been part of an effort to monumentalize the setting. The consequent obstruction to wheeled traffic may therefore have been a side effect of this monumentalization and not its purpose. Worth noting is that the study of wheel ruts on which Wallace-Hadrill relies does not offer moral zoning as an explanation for blocked-off streets, but rather a concern with drainage, though it does leave open the possibility of other explanations: Tsujimura, “Ruts in Pompeii” (1990) 65–66, 85–86; cf. 58. See also the criticism of DeFelice, *Roman Hospitality* (2001) 131 n. 386.

and theatre, or from temple to temple.”¹⁶ But his most telling piece of evidence is the relative scarcity of *cauponae/popinae* along this route, since there is only one certain example at 7.1.1, 62, compared to other stretches of the *Via dell’Abbondanza* itself.

Unfortunately, that lone example is enough to refute the zoning hypothesis, in my view.¹⁷ It makes no sense that the notional processional route was almost, but not completely, pure. In fact, if the participants in the hypothetical processions passed through the piazza in front of the Stabian Baths, they would have encountered another such establishment (with a number of rooms in back) at the corner of the *Via Stabiana* (8.4.17–18).¹⁸ Upon making a right turn on this street, on the way to the temple or theater, they would have had to negotiate at least two or three additional examples of *cauponae/popinae* (see 1.4.1–3, 1.4.4, 1.4.11, 8.4.19, 8.4.25). If they tried to avoid the piazza, and the *Via Stabiana*, by making the right turn a block earlier they would have encountered both *cauponae/popinae* (see 8.4.45, 8.4.47) and a latrine (8.4.41).¹⁹ None of these facts, however, need in the final analysis detract from the hypothesis of a processional route. Roman religion, in fact, tended to attract, rather than repel, the practice of commerce.²⁰ Or we may prefer the reverse statement that the religious import of space imposes itself on already existing relationships of production and (re)distribution.²¹ There is simply no evidence to support this hypothesis, however.

Next, we take up the question of the Forum both in Rome and in Pompeii. Here we confront a different scenario. Bars and brothels were not simply scarce, but nonexistent, or virtually so. Is this evidence for a Roman regulationist regime and a successful one at that?

Wallace-Hadrill has shown well how the Republican Roman Forum was gradually transformed, above all in the second century B.C., from a commercial

16. Wallace-Hadrill, “Public Honour and Private Shame” (1995) 49.

17. This is not to deny other possibilities might exist, for example, at 8.5.17, 20; 8.5.21; 8.5.22–23.

18. DeFelice, *Roman Hospitality* (2001) 138, points out that an old entrance to the Baths opened on the alleged processional route.

19. Both streets in question are labeled as deviant on Laurence’s map of deviant streets in Pompeii: Laurence, *Roman Pompeii* (1994) 85. The point is noted by DeFelice, *Roman Hospitality* (2001) 138.

20. See Morel, “Topographie” (1987) 144–45; Morel, “Artisanat” (2001) 253; Morel, “Rome capitale” (2001) 150.

21. See Horden and Purcell, *Corrupting Sea* (2000) 457.

and residential district into a monumental public center.²² At Pompeii, the process appears to have been even more gradual, and it was not completed until the middle of the first century A.D., when a series of public buildings dedicated to the cult of the emperor replaced the remaining shops and houses on the long eastern side of the Forum.²³ In both venues, his explanation is that the Romans “cleaned up” the Forum by pushing away undesirable activities.

There are difficulties with this view, however. First, it contains something of a paradox. Either there were bars and brothels in these places before zoning—in which case we must explain why they were at one time tolerated and then not at another—or there were not—in which case zoning was unnecessary and therefore unlikely.²⁴ In fact, the evidence for brothels near and even in the Roman Forum is not to be despised. In recent years scholars have tended to discount Giuseppe Lugli’s theory that a brothel was located along the Sacra Via near the Arch of Titus (and therefore in a strict sense just outside the Forum).²⁵ All the same, the case for a purpose-built brothel with *caupona* or, as recently argued, a *caupona* with attendant prostitution,²⁶ remains strong. Examination of the remains suggests a *terminus ante quem* of A.D. 64,²⁷ at which time the establishment was presumably either destroyed by the Neronian fire or removed soon afterwards in connection with the construction of the *Domus Aurea*. It is highly unlikely that its destruction/removal resulted from a campaign of moral zoning, since Nero stands as an unlikely avatar of such a campaign. We may compare the other two Roman purpose-

22. Wallace-Hadrill, *Houses and Society* (1994) 129–31; see also Morel, “Topographie” (1987) who inclines toward the speculative; see, for example, 153, on the motivation for the *Horrea Agrippiana*. In Morel’s analysis, as well as in Wallace-Hadrill’s, a nineteenth-century Parisian model emerges explicitly (139): “[p]ar ces opérations à la Hausmann, le centre de Rome . . . se trouve débarrassé des activités artisanales et commerciales. . . .” See also Morel, “Métiers” (1994) 150–59; Bustany and Géroudet, *Rome* (2001) 204–5.

23. See Zanker, *Pompeii* (1998) 53–55, 81–102.

24. The pre-79 levels of the Pompeian Forum await the necessary investigation; at Rome there is good evidence for a tavern in the Republican Forum: see App. BC 1.54 and the other possibilities at Kleberg, *Hôtels* (1957) 59, 135 n. 75; Morel, “Topographie” (1987) 134 (not the least of which is Catullus’s *salax taberna*: 37.1–2). Among the lowlife throng of the Vicus Tuscus (adjacent to the Forum) is a pimp, ca. 30 B.C.: Hor. *Serm.* 2.3.226–31. See also Plaut. *Curc.* 482 (male—and perhaps female as well—prostitutes in the Vicus Tuscus), 485 (a brothel in the Velabrum); Porphyrio *ad Hor. Serm.* 2.3.228 (pimps still in the Vicus Tuscus).

25. Lugli, *Monumenti* (1947); see also Morel, “Topographie” (1987) 146 n. 108; Carandini, *Schiavi in Italia* (1988) 361; Papi, *LTUR* (1995) s.v. “Domus: M. Aemilius Scaurus,” 26, 392; Wallace-Hadrill, “Case” (2000) 186, who argue against this theory.

26. See Tomei, “Domus oppure Lupanar?” (1995).

27. See Tomei, “Domus oppure Lupanar?” (1995) 610–12.

built brothels identified by Lugli, one of which was located in the Forum itself near the so-called Temple of Romulus and the other, in the Forum Boarium.²⁸

At Rome before Augustus and at Pompeii even later the program of public building proceeded gradually and at private initiative. What the new buildings displaced were not simply unsavory businesses but all or nearly all commercial activities that required permanent facilities such as shops. One fate carried off pimp, brothel-prostitute, and tavern operator, as well as the proverbial butcher, baker, and candlestick maker. Martial celebrates Domitian's freeing of the Roman streets from all manner of retailers, including barbers, tavern keepers, cooks, and butchers.²⁹ The poem participates, to be sure, in a long tradition of anti-urban moralizing.³⁰ The removal of butchers from the mid-Republican Roman Forum appears to have been gradual and partial.³¹ The shops of bankers appear to have been an honorable exception, at least for a time.³² The evidence suggests that the displacement of commerce from the Forum did not proceed in a straight line nor was it permanent in nature.³³

The same trend also resulted in the removal of private residential housing for Romans of all social levels.³⁴ It is difficult to find in this development the display of any official sensitivity toward the location of bars and brothels. Varro, for example, hails the transition from the butcher's shop to the banker's office as an enhancement of the *forensis dignitas*.³⁵ We should not conclude

28. Lugli, *Monumenti* (1947). On the concept of the "purpose-built brothel," and the identification of these establishments as brothels, see chaps. 7 and 8.

29. Mart. 7.61. On the widespread distribution of all manner of shops (which were also often dwellings) throughout the city, see Purcell, "*Plebs Urbana*" (1994) 659–73.

30. As shown by Joshel, *Work* (1992) 68.

31. See Wallace-Hadrill, *Houses and Society* (1994) 130.

32. Varro *apud* Non. Marc. 853L (see below in the text).

33. See Platner and Ashby, s.v. "Tabernae circa Forum" (1929) 504–5; Wagner, "Tabernen" (1982) 394; Morel, "Topographie" (1987) 139 n. 60, 154 (on the *Horrea Piperataria*); Purcell, "*Plebs Urbana*" (1994) 647. For the possible return of shops just outside the Forum after they were removed by Nero, see Lugli, *Monumenti* (1947) 160–61. The evidence of Martial suggests the continuity, or at least the return, of shops in and near the Forum: Kardos, "Quartiers" (2002) 123–24, 127. Wallace-Hadrill, "Emperors and Houses" (2001) 135, now appears to concede the point that the displacement neither proceeded in a straight line nor was permanent. See now also Morel, "Artisanat" (2001) 252–53; Morel, "Rome capitale" (2001) 148–49. Cf. the design of the imperial Fora, which shows some interesting divergences over time. The Julian had shops, the Augustan did not, and the Trajanic did: Wagner, 394–95. On commercial establishments in and near the Forum Romanum, see now the survey by Papi, "Artigiani" (2002).

34. This is well described by Guidobaldi, "Abitazioni" (2000) 143–61. For the phenomenon of the residences of the wealthy being pushed out of the center, see also Patterson, "On the Margins" (2000) 96. It is at bottom difficult to separate the removal of residential buildings from that of commercial premises: see Kunst, "Dach" (2000) esp. 300–301.

35. Varro *apud* Non. Marc. 853L. The phrase *forensis dignitas* signifies the social and moral stature of the Forum, especially as reflected in its appearance: see OLD s.v. *dignitas*.

that this was the reason for the change, as some historians appear to assume, or that the government was involved in zoning change, or that butchers' shops were equated with brothels. Aside from celebrating the emperor's glory, the monumentalization of public space in the urban center might have also have been designed to free up space in a very crowded area.³⁶ For the same reason, public building pushed out private residences. To the extent that this involved lower-class housing, brothels may well have been affected.³⁷ But this does not mean that they were in any sense targeted for removal.

It is instructive here to compare the absence of brothels from the monumentalized city centers with the absence of the luxury latrines that were popular in Roman cities during the imperial period. The more crowded with public buildings a forum became, the less likely it was to sport a fancy facility of this kind.³⁸ The rationale for not installing one there was evidently based on a perception of pedestrian traffic reduced by the spread of monumental buildings, not on the idea that such establishments were somehow aesthetically or morally inappropriate for that setting. The whole point of the imperial luxury latrine was evidently to guarantee a certain nobility to defecation, above all defecation by (male) members of the elite, in part by making it so public (which a Forum location might be thought to assist).³⁹ So the reasons behind the lack of showcase latrines in the Forum are vastly different from those that hold for brothels, which were incidentally displaced by the spread of public buildings. Both explanations, however, are related to the increasing monumentalization of this space, and both might seem rather foreign in different ways to modern experience and expectations.

There is no evidence here of what might be called "reverse zoning," that is, the encroachment of respectable society on a traditional vice district, resulting in calls for the latter's removal.⁴⁰ And, of course, removal of shops

36. For this argument, see Frézouls, "Rome" (1987) 384.

37. The *insulae* were not distributed evenly throughout the city: see Hermansen, "Population" (1978) and chap. 2. This fact in itself militates against the idea of a random distribution of brothels. Relevant here is the entry *lupanarii* in the late-antique Regionary Catalogs for Rome. Once thought to denote a concentration or even a complex of brothels in *Regio* 2, this has been interpreted to signify government offices responsible for record-keeping on, and taxation of, brothels: Richardson, *Topographical Dictionary* (1992) 238; Palombi, *LTUR* (1996) s.v. "Lupanarii" 198; Ginouvès, *Dictionnaire méthodique* (1998) 3, 84.

38. See Neudecker, *Pracht der Latrine* (1994) 76.

39. See Neudecker, *Pracht der Latrine* (1994) 153. In some cases latrines may have been provided for women: Neudecker, 63–65.

40. See Best, *Controlling Vice* (1998) 30.

does not necessarily imply banishment of ambulatory vendors or those who set up their wares under porticoes, for example.⁴¹ Finally, the effect of a policy targeting undesirables for removal might have resulted in their displacement to the city's edge, but Rome's margin shows a decidedly mixed use at various periods of the city's history.⁴²

When Wallace-Hadrill makes, in another context, the excellent point about the change in terminology for honorific arch, from *fornix*, which can mean brothel, to *arcus*, he certainly seems correct that the motivation here was sensitivity over the appearance of the ambiguous word *fornix* in official documents.⁴³ He notes in this context that, ". . . the rhetoric of the Principate is not the same as that of the Republic."⁴⁴ The key to the change in terminology, as he demonstrates, has to do with the change from the Republican practice of erecting an honorary arch through private initiative to that of the Principate, when the Senate authorized this. "The *fornix* was a symbol of the seamy side of city life."⁴⁵ So it was, but what remains to be demonstrated with regard to zoning is the precise connection between this rhetoric and the reality of prostitution.⁴⁶

Two factors above all militate against the case for moral zoning in the Forum, both at Rome and elsewhere, in my view. One is that prostitutes worked in the Forum. The other is that the authorities wanted them there. The first point is attested for Pompeii, Rome, and elsewhere.⁴⁷ For example, in

41. Mart. 7.61 certainly seems to suggest that special measures were required to this end. See also Spano, "Illuminazione" (1920) 62–64; Sperber, *City in Roman Palestine* (1998) 12; Kardos, "Vrbs" (2001) 404; Morel, "Artisanat" (2001) 254.

42. See Wiseman, "A Stroll on the Rampart" (1998) 15; Hope, "Contempt and Respect" (2000) 112, 123; Patterson, "On the Margins" (2000) 96–97, 102–3. On prostitutes frequenting the tombs and walls on the city's edge, see also chap. 2.

43. Wallace-Hadrill, "Roman Arches" (1990) esp. 145–47.

44. Wallace-Hadrill, "Roman Arches" (1990) 147.

45. Wallace-Hadrill, "Roman Arches" (1990) 145, citing Sen. *Vita Beata* 7.3, discussed in the text above. I agree that the Seneca passage is hugely symbolic, deploying however not topography per se, but items in the Roman cityscape as metaphors for vice and virtue.

46. It is beyond doubt that with the advent of the Principate, a significant change occurred in the Roman management of public space: see, for example, Wallace-Hadrill, "Roman Arches" (1990); Zanker, "Veränderungen" (1994). But to argue that this involved the express, permanent removal of prostitution from areas like the Forum is to rely on a modernizing assumption not justified by the ancient evidence.

47. For graffiti at Pompeii alluding to the practice of prostitution in the area of the Forum, see CIL 4.1860, 1948 (both from the Basilica). For the Forum Romanum, see Plaut. *Curc.* 470–73, *Truc.* 66–73 (pimps and prostitutes near the shops of bankers); Prop. 2.23.15 (on the *Sacra Via*); Sen. *Ben.* 6.32.1 (inferred from Julia's alleged behavior); Mart. 2.63.1–2 (*Sacra Via*); [Quint.] *Decl.* 385.1 (though this might be any forum, not just the Forum Romanum); C. Titius *apud* Macro. 3.16.15–16; see Papi, "Artigiani" (2002) 61–62. For cities in Roman Palestine, see *Babylonian Talmud Shabbath* 33b; further, Sperber, *City in Roman Palestine* (1998) 12–17. For late antiquity, see Proc. *Anec.* 17.5.

an important passage, Dio of Prusa attacks pimps for installing prostitutes in brothels (and/or cribs) that are in full view of every part of the city—in front of the houses of magistrates, in the marketplaces, near public buildings and temples, and in the midst of all that is holy.⁴⁸ Dio's assault on pimps is a very thinly veiled indictment of Roman society and its approach to prostitution. This speech, which was almost certainly delivered at Rome, criticizes conditions prevailing not just in the Greek cities of the East, but throughout the Empire and above all in the capital itself.⁴⁹ It is significant that Dio attacks the widespread diffusion of prostitutes and brothels in the Roman city, and equally important that he is the only Greek or Roman to do so.⁵⁰ His critique is extreme, and for all that there is not a hint here that he is exposing a failed policy of moral zoning.

In fact, on a more general level we have plenty of evidence identifying women who worked in the marketplace as prostitutes.⁵¹ No doubt much of this evidence is grounded in elite, male bias against lower-class working women. But it would be hyperskeptical to use this conclusion to reject the idea that prostitutes were a common feature of the monumental center of many Roman towns. Of course evidence of prostitutes in the Forum proves nothing about the presence or absence of brothels there. Commercial sex does not always require a building, for one thing. Moreover, residential housing that could harbor brothels, as in the Subura, was not far away.

Why would the authorities want prostitutes in the Forum? From a modern perspective, one of the creepier aspects of Roman public policy on prostitution was the way in which it tried to make the activity as visible as possible. Hidden deviance is what tended to exercise the Roman moralist.⁵² Horace exploits this theme to argue for the advantages of sex with prostitutes over sex with *matronae*: what you see is what you get.⁵³ Statute law gives stark expression to this concern. The *lex Iulia* on adultery insisted on the public registration of prostitutes and the wearing of the toga associated with prostitutes by

48. Dio Chrys. 7.133–34. The point is supported by the evidence presented in chap. 2.

49. Evidence, argument, and literature at McGinn, *Roman Prostitution* (forthcoming). In his speech to the Alexandrians, Dio appears to assume that prostitution is rife throughout their city: Dio Chrys. 32 (esp. 90–94) with Montserrat, *Sex and Society* (1996) 121.

50. For criticism from Roman Palestine over prostitutes in the marketplace (i.e., the forum), see *Babylonian Talmud Shabbath* 33b.

51. See McGinn, "Definition" (1997 [1998]) esp. 89–97, 107–12.

52. McGinn, *Prostitution, Sexuality, and the Law* (1998) 125 n. 124. Add Meyer-Zwiffelhofer, *Phallus* (1995) 133, 150–51, 165–66. See also the discussion of body language in chap. 3. Again, I think it more appropriate to regard such evidence as Sen. *Vita Beata* 7.3 as part of this moralizing discourse, rather than as a realistic indication of where brothels were located.

53. Hor. *Serm.* 1.2.83–110; cf. Athen. 13.569A–F.

convicted adulteresses (and perhaps use of the toga by prostitutes themselves, converting what had been custom into a legal regulation). This suggests that the ideal official treatment of the prostitute was openly to humiliate her.⁵⁴ Hence, there was no advantage to driving prostitutes and prostitution underground. The prostitute would only be more difficult to tax and to blame and therefore less apt to serve the public interest.⁵⁵ For the Romans there was something honest and almost honorable about open vice, especially as compared with the hidden variety, which they thought *must* be bad.⁵⁶

“Prostitutes were a very visible part of the cityscape.”⁵⁷ Repugnant as this is to modern sensibilities, the respectable matron’s honor was constructed in no small measure from the dishonor of the whore. For the Romans, as for Simone Weil, purity was the power to contemplate defilement. The prostitute had her place in the Forum, after all, just as she had her place in the moral economy. She served the purpose of maintaining not public honor and private shame, as Wallace-Hadrill would have it, but rather public honor and *public* shame.

Serving this purpose was not just a matter of prostitutes and their trade. The public humiliation and execution of criminals, in the arena located in the very center of the city, had precisely the same aim.⁵⁸ What is more, the mangled bodies of criminals might be dragged through the streets in front of a crowd to make the same point.⁵⁹ These examples might suggest that Romans had no interest in socially constructed urban space. More likely is the possibility that their practices proceeded from such a radically different set of premises and values than our own as to render our attempts to comprehend them very rough going indeed.⁶⁰ From our point of view, their conception of “honorable space,” like their conception of “religious space,” seems enormously mutable and flexible.⁶¹ Discussions of the sacralization of space in the Forum and elsewhere might with profit take up this point.⁶²

54. Only after a set period of relegation (its length is unknown) could convicted adulteresses be seen in the Forum wearing a toga. See McGinn, *Prostitution, Sexuality, and the Law* (1998) 156–71, 216–19.

55. For the role of the prostitute in Roman moral pedagogy, see McGinn, *Prostitution, Sexuality, and the Law* (1998) chap. 5, esp. 207–15. For the tax on prostitutes, see McGinn, chap. 7.

56. See the discussion about privacy in the brothel in chap. 2.

57. Kellum, “Spectacle” (1999) 295 n. 27.

58. As Laurence, “Emperors” (1993) 84, argues.

59. See Bodel, “Dealing with the Dead” (2000) 147.

60. See the comments of Horden and Purcell, *Corrupting Sea* (2000) 555. For a recent, interesting effort to tackle the problem of Roman domestic space, see Grahame, *Reading Space* (2000).

61. On the latter, see Horden and Purcell, *Corrupting Sea* (2000) 444, who point out that the geography of religion in Mediterranean cultures is neither independent of other geographies, nor particularly modern.

62. See, for example, Hinard, “Rome dans Rome” (1991) esp. 46.

From a modern perspective, it might seem highly inappropriate to allow the two brothels identified in and near the Roman Forum to stand so close, for example, to the Atrium Vestae. Ovid's Vestal did not have to look very far after all to catch a glimpse of bodies for sale. The Vestals were in fact so heavily invested in urban real estate—their activity in this field is thought to have helped legitimize private interests—we cannot exclude the possibility that they owned a brothel or two.⁶³ As a fundamental premise of economics and morals, the prostitute had to be as accessible as possible.⁶⁴

The literary evidence for the diffusion of prostitution in the ancient Roman city encourages the view that it was practically ubiquitous. Catullus has Lesbia, reconfigured as a whore after their breakup, servicing her clients at the crossroads, and in the alleys, of the city.⁶⁵ Prostitutes were not only at the city's center but at its edge, among the tombs that lined the great consular roads, or near the city walls, according to Martial.⁶⁶ Dio of Prusa is not the only author to place them near temples.⁶⁷ It is Juvenal in fact who poses the famous question: "at what temple does a woman not prostitute herself?"⁶⁸ Though in this context he assimilates adulteresses to prostitutes, the most likely interpretation is that prostitutes at least might be found in and around some temples.

As for Pompeii, an examination of the next-door neighbors of establishments identified as brothels, carried out with the assistance of the two "Address-Books" compiled in recent years for that city,⁶⁹ suggests that these establishments were fully integrated into the fabric of city life.⁷⁰ The neighboring residences were of various sizes and quality, including a few *atrium*-style houses (such as the famous House of the Menander). Other neighbors were a number of commercial establishments, including a dyer's, a wool worker's, and a weaver's shop, and one or two fuller's shops, and representatives of the service sector, including a barbershop, a hotel, several inns and taverns, and, of course, other brothels.

We appear with the preceding paragraphs to have reached the much

63. On the Vestals' urban real estate interests, see Horden and Purcell, *Corrupting Sea* (2000) 429.

64. See Flemming, "Quae Corpore" (1999) 46, on this point.

65. Catull. 58. Cf. Hor. C. 1.25.10 for the alley and Prop. 4.7.19 for the crossroads.

66. See n. 47 for Martial's evidence on prostitutes in the Forum and chap. 2 for the rest.

67. See chap. 2.

68. Iuv. 9.24: "... quo non prostat femina templo?"

69. See De Simone, *Pompei* (1988) 103–84; Eschebach and Müller-Trollius, *Gebäudeverzeichnis* (1993).

70. For the argument that prostitution was pervasive in ancient Attica, see Cohen, "Economic Analysis" (forthcoming), citing Xen. *Mem.* 2.2.4.

desired fit between archaeological and literary evidence. Once again, however, the result is somewhat illusory. We have something of a tale of two cities here, with, minor exceptions aside, the archaeological evidence deriving from Pompeii and the literary evidence concerning Rome. Rome's exceptional status as the capital informs this literary evidence, as it functioned as the city many Romans affected to hate. To take one notable example, Tacitus, describing the spread of Christianity, has this phenomenon bursting forth ". . . not only throughout Judaea, the source of this evil, but also throughout the capital, where all things terrible or shameful from everywhere flow together and become fashionable."⁷¹ Examples might be multiplied to no purpose.⁷² This tradition, allied to, or even embedded in, the country:good/city:bad dichotomy explored above, raises the suspicion that Roman writing on the sale of sex in the city presents a darker picture than the facts can sustain.⁷³ In other words, just as nineteenth-century New Yorkers conceived of their city as nicer than it was in actual fact, the Romans tended to favor pessimism over realism.

This conclusion complicates our reliance on the literary evidence as a guide to the presence of sex in the city. We cannot simply cite a text such as the *Curculio* of Plautus as self-evident proof that sex was extremely widespread or mobile.⁷⁴ Such evidence emanates from a long tradition that draws the map of Roman "vice" essentially by overlaying it on the Roman city and above all on the capital itself, making that city more difficult to read.⁷⁵

The result, we can almost say with certainty, is that the presence of prostitution is exaggerated for moralizing purposes or possibly, in the case of satirists, for making fun of moralizing purposes. Can Juvenal literally mean that at least one prostitute stands before *every* temple? It is risky to take this evidence as strictly factual. Of course this conclusion hardly means we are entitled to assume the opposite was true—that no temples had prostitutes in

71. Tac. *Ann.* 15.44.3: ". . . non modo per Iudaeam, originem eius mali, sed per urbem etiam, quo cuncta undique atrocia aut pudenda confluunt celebranturque."

72. It is difficult all the same to avoid mentioning such texts as Hor. *Serm.* 2.6; Iuv. 2 and 3; *Amm. Marc.* 14.6.

73. The positive tradition extolling to the point of exaggeration the grandeur of the capital finds its counterpoint—there is an ancient as well as a modern branch of each—in a negative one that (over)emphasizes the dark side of city life, which is often, though not always, contrasted with life in the country, the past, or both. See Purcell, "City of Rome" (1992) 424; Eyben, *Youth* (1993) 265 n. 92; Edwards, *Writing Rome* (1996) esp. 3, 7, 42–43, 102–5, 112; Laurence, "Writing the Roman Metropolis" (1997) and the country-city literature cited above in notes 11 and 12.

74. Plaut. *Curc.* 461–85.

75. See the comments of André, "Espace urbain" (1991) 94.

front of them. We would simply then fall into the trap of imagining ancient Rome as nicer than it was, in fact.

Roman practice regarding the landscape of venal sex may not seem utterly outlandish when compared with some modern official approaches to prostitution. They suggest the truth of a point made elsewhere in this study, namely that “modern” does not automatically signify rational or successful. The nineteenth-century Parisian regime advocated by Alexandre Parent-Duchâtelet sought to guarantee both the accessibility and the invisibility of prostitutes, but it devoutly feared clandestine ones.⁷⁶ It was not only successful in helping to generate that which it feared most, but allowed or encouraged clandestine prostitutes to be bold about their activity. This led to an even more undesirable situation, the oxymoron of open clandestinity. “The clandestine prostitute of the late nineteenth century made no attempt to hide her status or to conduct her trade in secret.”⁷⁷ A similar experience of policy leading to unintended and most unwanted consequences can be seen with other systems modeled on the Parisian, such as in late-imperial Russia.⁷⁸

The Roman approach is itself easy to criticize, even easier to dislike. A full understanding of its implications, however, demands comparison with other cultures whose hostility to prostitutes is no less patent. What emerges is that the Roman policy, for all of its paradox and repulsiveness, may have done a fairly satisfactory job of managing the challenge of prostitution as perceived by the Romans themselves. The implications of this fact for the economy of Roman prostitution remain to be drawn out in the next chapter.

76. Bernheimer, *Figures of Ill Repute* (1989) 16–17, 25.

77. Harsin, *Policing Prostitution* (1985) 246.

78. Bernstein, *Sonia's Daughters* (1995) 28, 46–56, 79, 83.