‘Lost cities': form, meaning and perception of urban settlements in the Ancient Near and Middle East

Progetto di Ricerca di Ateneo 2020-2021

Abstracts
(listed according to the conference program)

Mirko Novák (Universität Bern)
‘The Citadel City in Assyria and the Northern Levant: Parallel developments or mutual influence?’

The urbanistic principles manifested in the 2nd millennium BCE in the cities of Assyria on the one hand and the Northern Levant on the other differ distinctively from each other. In contrast, the cities of the Neo-Assyrian Empire and the Luwo-Aramaean principalities of the Neo-Hittite culture in the 1st millennium BCE show striking similarities. In particular, the phenomenon of the fortified citadel located on the urban periphery connects both city planning concepts. The lecture will examine the question of whether there is a mutual influence here or whether similar socio-political structures were responsible for parallel developments. Discussed city layouts and structures will be: Mari, Qaṭna, Ugarit, Ta’idu, Aššur, Kār-Tukultī-Ninurta, Kalḫu, Dūr-Šarru-ukīn, Ninuwa, Dūr-Katlimmu, Karkamiš, Gūzāna, Śam’al, Sirkeli Höyük,

James Osborne (University of Chicago)
‘Reconsidering Space and Power in Syro-Anatolian Cities of the Iron Age’

Iron Age cities of southeastern Anatolia and northern Syria have been receiving much attention in the past two decades, partially as a result of renewed excavations at sites explored in the heyday of colonial archaeology. Much of the literature that has resulted from this welcome development (including several pieces by this author) have focused on the built environment of these cities and what their architectural form and urban layout indicate about the expression of power by political authorities. However, evidence suggesting that the power wielded by those in authority was much weaker, and much less evenly distributed, has been accumulating for several years now. At the same time, scholars working in other parts of the Anatolian Iron Age, as well as anthropological archaeologists worldwide, have recently been calling into question common but uncritical assumptions of royal power that tend to underlie archaeological interpretation. In this paper I reexamine Syro-Anatolian cities with an eye toward how power was actually experienced, not just presented, concluding that the picture is much more complicated, and specifically that royal authority was much less effective, than is typically argued in Iron Age scholarship.

Valérie Matoïan (CNRS, Paris)
‘Ugarit, social and urban geography’

One of the research challenges of ugaritic studies is to draw-up a more accurate picture of urban geo-sociology of the cities of the Late Bronze Age, based on a methodology that systematically compare the data from the study of material culture to those provided by the texts in a given architectural context. The first part focuses on buildings that have yielded major textual elements, such as the Royal Palace and mansions including the so-called houses of Urtēnu, Yabninu, Rapanu and Rashapabu. A second component focuses on urban structural units, such as residential areas previously identified by C. Schaeffer [the "Quartier égéen" (“Aegaean area”), the "Tranchée Ville Sud" (“South City”) and the "Tranchée Sud- acropole" (“South Acropolis”)], which have not yet been the object of a detailed publication, and whose material remains largely unpublished. In particular, we will deal with the results of recent work that allows us to put forward hypotheses on places that may be linked to the Hittite presence at Ugarit.

Dirk Mielke (Freie Universität Berlin)
‘Origin, Development and Decline of Hittite Cities’

In the second millennium BC, the Hittite Empire was one of the dominant great powers in the Ancient Near East and without doubt, cities played a significant role in the history of the Hittites. After the fall of their empire at the End of the Late Bronze Age, the Hittites and their cities were lost for centuries. It is only through modern archaeological research that the cities of the Hittites are gradually coming to light. But what do we know today about the cities of the Hittites? What defines a Hittite city from our modern research perspective? How differ Hittite cities from other contemporaneous or from older cities? Is there a development observable over time? Or even was there a Hittite concept of what defines a city? And finally, what happened with the cities after the fall of the Hittite empire? The talk will give a critical overview of our knowledge about Hittite cities in Central Anatolia from an archaeological point of view. Furthermore, it will be discussed how far this picture can be a reflection of the meaning and self-perception of cities in Hittite society

Giulia Torri (Università degli Studi di Firenze)
‘The king of Ḫattuša and his cities: Royal administrative duties in peripheral cities of Anatolia’

In recent years, archaeological investigation has made an important contribution to understanding the possible relationship between the center of the kingdom, namely the king and his capital Ḫattuša, and the regions at the core of the kingdom in different periods of Hittite history. Hittites included a number of entities of different dimensions under the term URU: The kingdom was a complex nest of settlements inhabited by people of various ethnic origins and the capital city, Ḫattuša, represented, in light of the written sources, the ideological and political center of this network. Some scholars observed that Hittite cuneiform writing appears mainly where royal seals have also been found. On the opposite, in places where seals offer no evidence of the royal family there is also more sporadic evidence of a cuneiform culture (Weeden 2011: 117-118). In this paper I have chosen to focus on the king’s administrative role and the way in which he was present in the territory through a controlled system of land allocation, and a network of cities through which he or his officials exercised power

Jason Ur (Harvard University)
‘Urban Trajectories in Ancient Mesopotamia’

In the middle of the 3rd millennium BC, settlement in northern Mesopotamia was transformed from a landscape of small villages to one of large centers. These new cities had a dramatic impact on their surroundings; patterns of intensified land use and human movement were inscribed onto the landscape and traces of these have survived. Previous models for these settlement systems have assumed that urbanism was a direct result of a powerful centralized political structure which based its power on the control of the staple economy. These models are rooted in the ecosystems school of processual archaeology.
Using data from archaeological field surveys, satellite photographs, and published excavations, this study documents the settlement landscape and its physical and social transformation in the land in between the rivers.

Giulio Maresca (Sapienza, Università di Roma)
‘From the diffused cityscape of the royal Achaemenid residences to the geometric layout of the first Sasanian capitals: considerations on the elusiveness of the urban experience in pre-Islamic Iran’

Recent archaeological researches carried out in the area of the first royal Achaemenid residences at Pasargadae and Persepolis (Fārs Province) have shed new light on the way the Great King conceived the Persian cityscape as an “open” and “diffused” urban layout entirely different from the cities known in the Ancient Near Eastern tradition or in the Graeco-Roman world. Centuries later, the first two sovereigns of the Sasanian dynasty concentrated their building activities in the same region, as testified by the urban achievements at Ardashir Xwarrah and Bishapur. Both cities seem to feature peculiar, well-delimited and precisely geometric layouts, but the functional interpretation (as well as the actual consistency on the terrain) of their alleged sectors and “quarters” remains a matter of scholarly debate. Relying on the archaeological evidence at disposal, the paper overviews the features of some of the main settled centres in Iran between the Achaemenid and Sasanian period, stressing the elusive character of the urban phenomenon in the area during those centuries.

Carlo G. Cereti (Sapienza, Università di Roma)
The *Šahrestānīhā ī Ērānšahr* in the context of late-Sasanian Iran.

The text known as *Šahrestānīhā ī Ērānšahr* (ŠĒ), a title not found in the only known independent codex of this work, MK, is a short treatise that lists the names of the cities of the Sassanid Empire, dividing them into four large regions. In this talk I intend to discuss the term *šahrestān* showing that its first meaning is "city" or, better yet, "fortified city". At the same time, I will devote some reflections to the context in which this work was composed and to its relationship with the tradition of *Xwadāy-nāmag*, which likely included information on the cities founded by each king.

Carolina Marescotti and Domenica Romagno (Università di Pisa)
'Origin, functions, and distribution of the suffix -eus in ancient Greek: between toponyms and agent nouns'

The ancient Greek suffix *-eus* has been a matter of debate ever since the birth of the comparative Indo-European linguistics (cf. Meissner 2016). Several attempts have been made to either support (e.g., Meyer 1877; Brugmann 1898; Szemerenyi 1957; Georgiev 1960; Wackernagel 1879) or deny (e.g., Chantraine 1938; Bosshardt 1942; Perpillou 1973; Meissner 2016) a proto-Indo-European origin of this suffix. The scholars who embraced the first hypothesis proposed a comparison with:

1. The class of Avestan and Old Persian *-auš* nouns (cf. Leroy 1951; Cantera 2007; de Vaan 2009);
2. The Phrygian papponyms in *-av-* (cf. Lubotsky 1988; Hajnal 2005);
3. The Sanskrit adjectives in *-ayu-* (cf. Wackernagel 1879);
4. The Balto-Slavic verbs in *-áuju/-uio* (cf. Georgiev 1960).

However, each proposal raises either formal (phonetic) or functional (semantic) questions relating to the reconstruction of a unique proto-Indo-European morpheme (cf. Perpillou 1973; Meissner 2016).
On the other hand, the second line of interpretation considers *-eus* as a loan from a non-specified Aegean, pre-Indo-European language. However, no evidence has yet been provided to support this hypothesis.
The present study focuses on the suffix *-eus* in Mycenaean and ancient Greek and aims at clarifying the pattern of extension of this morpheme, from the II millennium B.C.E. to the V century B.C.E., from a historical and functional perspective.
The results of this study show that in Mycenaean and ancient Greek, the suffix *-eus* occurs in combination with specific kinds of nouns, adjectives, and verbs to mainly derive:

1. Personal names (e.g., Gr. Ἀχιλλεύς, ὁ 'Achilles'),
2. Agent nouns (e.g., Gr. δρομεύς, ὁ 'runner'),
3. Ethnicisms (e.g., Gr. Δωριεύς, ὁ 'Dorian'),
4. Toponyms or place names (e.g., Gr. Καφηρεύς, ὁ, an Euboean headland; Φανοτεύς, ὁ, a Phocian city; δονακεύς, ὁ 'thicket of reeds').

We propose that the principles underlying the pattern of extension of *-eus* rely on an interaction between the individuation hierarchy (Timberlake 1977) and the animacy hierarchy (Silverstein 1976; see also Dixon 1994, Croft 2003). We, then, show how this hypothesis allows us to account for the various functions of this debated morpheme in a unitary model, as it provides a key to the understanding of how onomastic, agentive, and toponymic values coexist in the functional domain of *-eus*.

Mark Janse (Ghent University)
'Lost & Found: Trading Places in Ancient Anatolia'

Cappadocia has always been a multicultural and multilinguistic region. In the second millennium BCE it was the heartland of the Hittite Empire and in the first half of the first of the Neo-Hittite kingdom of Tabal. The Hellenisation of Cappadocia began under the Ariarathids, but the indigenous Cappadocian language continued to be spoken at least until the fourth century CE. Cappadocian Greek is one of the most archaic Modern Greek dialects. Although it has been described as a "form of idiomatic Medieval Greek", it has retained numerous features predating the Byzantine period. Some of these can be traced back to an Ionic substrate, which must have reached Cappadocia via ancient trade routes after the Milesian colonisation of the Black Sea coast of Asia Minor. Others can be plausibly explained as belonging to the Anatolian substrate. The Anatolian substrate is

still visible in Cappadocian place names such as Τύανα (Luwian *Tuwana*) and toponyms in -(σ)σός such as Τελμησσός / Delmeso and Σινασός (cf. Luwian *Parnassa* / Greek Παρνασσός).

Hamlet Petrosyan (Yerevan State University)

‘White city on the edge of the Armenian empire of Tigranes the Great: the late Hellenistic and Early Christian Tigranakert in Artsakh and its parallels’

The urban culture of Armenia begins in the 9th-8th centuries BCE, when a significant part of the country was occupied by the Urartian kingdom. The cities were founded by the king and in the name of the king, spatially they consisted of a powerful fortress-citadel, unwalled districts and suburbs.
After the fall of Urartu, in the 6th-4th centuries BC, under the kings of Armenian Yervanduni, the Urartian "tradition" of naming the city after the king continued (Armavir, Yervandashat).
The new stage of urban development begins from the second century BCE, when local kingdoms were formed in the territories conquered by Alexander the Macedonian, one of which was the Armenian kingdom of the Artashisians. They were Hellenistic cities, which also bore the names of kings and were created by the method of synoikismos. Along with the Hellenistic innovations, the Urartian, post-Urartian and Achaemenian arts also had a certain spread, but from the point of view of city planning and construction techniques, the Hellenistic innovations prevail.
Tigranakert of Artsakh is one of the archaeologically well-studied cities of Armenia. From the archaeological point of view, it was really a lost city, its exact location was found out only in 2005 and the archaeological survey was carried out in 2006-2020. As a result of the 44-day war of 2020, the monument came under the control of Azerbaijan.
The late Hellenistic city of Tigranakert, is located in the lower valley of the Khachenaget river, which is the second largest river in the highland. It is spread over the south-eastern slopes of Mount Vankasar and is adjacent to the slopes near the “Royal Springs”. The city was founded at the end of the 90s BCE by the Armenian King Tigranes II the Great (r. 95–55 BCE) and functioned until the end of the 13th century.
Tigranakert in Artsakh is one of numerous settlements carrying the name of Tigran; however, it is the only settlement that has a precisely identified location and has been explored archaeologically.
As a result of the archaeological research, it is possible to talk about a large residential settlement with advanced urban planning and construction technics. Ancient Tigranakert was constructed in accordance with the advanced Hellenistic urban planning principles and masonry techniques: a triangle model of planning of the fortified district by using zigzag walls, a strong alternation of rectangular and round towers, the foundation of fortifications exclusively on a rocky base, quadras with rustication, facettes with “swallow-tail” connections, and the usage of limestone cement. All structures were made with local white limestone which gave the city a white appearance, making it visible from afar. From the point of view of the layout and the architectural solutions, it was very similar to Priene (e.g., the triangular citadel dominating the surrounding area, districts with regular planning spread at the foot, and zigzag walls) and Dura-Europos (wall constructions), dating to the turn of the 3rd–2nd centuries BCE, and especially to Artashat (the triangular citadel dominating the area; districts with regular planning spread around the base of the hills; zigzag walls; and juxtapositions of rectangular and round towers). In some of its details, in terms of structural technique, it was very close in design to the synchronous fortification of Armaztsikhe-Bagineti in Georgia. Thanks to the study of these parallels we can confirm that Tigranakert reflects the full benefits of an advanced architectural mindset and building technique. These circumstances made Tigranakert one of the key sites of the 1st century BCE – 1st century CE, being better preserved than the complexes of the above-mentioned sites.
In the Early Christian period Tigranakert continued to play a role of an important military-administrative and religious center. As a result of excavations the Early Christian square of the Central district with two churches, remains of a monumental stela with a cross, as well as an Early Christian underground reliquary and a graveyard were unearthed. Some parallels of organization and constructions of Early Christian Tigranakert show its similarity with capitals of Early Middle ages Armenia (Dvin, Vagharshapat) and Jerusalem.

Alessandro Orengo (Università di Pisa)

‘Ideas of the “City” in Armenia in the 4th–5th centuries AD’ [*in Italian*]

The present paper relates some results of an inquiry into the terms for the “city” or the “village” – occasionally also the “fortress” – in Armenian texts written in the 5th century and depicting *realia* from the 4th–5th centuries AD.

The research aims at defining the ways in which Armenians in the relevant timeframe conceived the notion of "(urban) settlement", be it large or small, in Armenia and abroad. Therefore, this is an investigation into the ideas and ideology linked to the notion of "city" rather than into real cities as documented by archaeological data (which occasionally reveal a rather different picture).
So far, the research has focused on the following texts: the *Bowzandaran*, Koriwn's *Vark^{c} Maštoc^{c}i*, the Canons of the Council of Šahapivan and the *Ełc Ałandoc^{c}* by Eznik Kołbac^{c}i. Later on, Agat^{c}angełos's *Patmowt^{c}iwn* and the writings of Łazar P^{c}arpec^{c}i and Ełišē will be included as well.
However, based on the data analysed thus far some preliminary conclusions can be drawn.
1. In Armenian texts written in the 5th century and describing *realia* from the 4th or 5th centuries, the term *k^{c}ałak^{c}* usually refers to foreign and/or not-quite-Armenian entities.
2. This is not true for Vałaršapat, Artašat, and Tigranakert, but these settlements are all much older than the 4th or 5th centuries AD.
3. A passage from the *Bowzandaran* seems to suggest that founding a city, or turning a village into one, was perceived as a sinful enterprise deserving of divine punishment (the city in question is Aršakawan).
4. Life in Armenia was chiefly based in fortresses (*berd*) – in accordance with the noble ideology reflected in the *Bowzandaran* itself – or in villages (*gewł*). However, far from being small, unimportant settlements, the latter seem to have had some substantial autonomy and juridical status.
5. Finally, quite independently from the geographical location of the entities in questions, a phrase such as *gewłk^{c} ew k^{c}ałak^{c}k^{c}* (lit. "villages and cities") seems to synthetically refer to any and all types of urban settlements.

Nazenie Garibian (Matenaradan, Erevan)
'The concept and the architectural organization of "City-Churches" in Early Christian Armenia'

In early Christian Armenia (4th -5th century) an interesting but little-studied phenomenon were the "city-churches" - large ecclesiastical enclosures that shaped the face of future monastic complexes. These particular urban spaces were housed as a separate entity in the capital cities or encircled the sites of the major shrines. The analysis of the primary sources and archaeological remains allowed us to identify three different types, the study of which is the subject of this paper. The first one is Aštišat - the southern centre of Armenian Christianity. Being honoured with the title of "mother of all churches", this place is constituted from the ancient temple-town, which was entirely offered to the service of the most important deities of the country. Its architectural arrangement was based on former pagan customs, which were strongly influenced by Hellenistic Parthian culture. It occupied rather a large territory and included not only several religious buildings and a palace, but also a small beech forest, a sacred water source and some inhabited caves.
The second type is Vałaršapat - a royal military residence, founded according to the norms of Roman town planning. It became the northern centre of Armenian Christianity during the 4th century. The first church founded here after the conversion of the country was in the citadel, next to the royal palace. At the beginning of the 5th century, when the Catholicos definitively fixed his see there, installing also the first Armenian exegetical school, the urban space of Vałaršapat was reorganized according to a new concept of the Christian sacred city. This concept was inspired from the topography of the Holy City par excellence - Christian Jerusalem.
The third city is Duin, one of the former residences of the Arsacid kings, which became the capital of the Persian rulers - the Marzpans, in the middle of the 5th century, after the suppression of the Armenian kingship. With the transfer of the Catholicossal see to Duin, the new political and religious conditions led to the development of a double-enclosure urban structure: the administrative and military citadel of the foreign Zoroastrian governors was located on the upper hill, while the lower hill housed the Armenian Christian religious precinct, where the residence of the Catholicos with the cathedral and other sanctuaries were situated, transforming thus the walled quarter into a city-church. Bridges connected these enclosures, and other districts evolved around the two poles.

Daniele Mascitelli (Università di Pisa)
'Imagining ancient Arabian city. Examples in Arab-Muslim classical historical literature'

Several examples of descriptions of ancient Arab cities, found in narrative of historical Arab-Muslim literature, will be here introduced, namely: Iram Ḏāt al-ʿImād (the mythological city of the ancient ʿĀd tribe quoted in Qur'ān); Jabal Malḥā', a mythical city in Central Arabia whose foundation is ascribed to a Ḥimyar king.

Through a deep analysis of the sources, here is given an attempt to trace key-elements that may have signed the classical "Islamic vision" of urban development in Arabia (and elsewhere), and to sketch some basic pattern for the narration od rising of cities ("foundation myths").

Matteo Cecchetti e Paola Esposito (Università di Pisa)
'Nāʿiṭ: folklore and architectural curiosities of a Yemenite city in classical Arabic sources'

Al-Hamdānī's account about the city of Nāʿiṭ, in both *Kitāb al-Iklīl* and *Ṣifa Jazīra al-ʿArab*, ascribes to that city some peculiarities which opens two fields of research: the architectural terminology in the area; the magic characters of a "talisman city".

Silvia Lischi (Università di Pisa)
'Of Settlers and Nomads: A Diachronic Perspective on Population Dimorphism in pre-Islamic Arabia'

This presentation aims to outline the specific characteristics of urban centres in southern Arabia, trying to understand how the concept of the city – as a delimited space that unites a group of people differentiating them from what is foreign – was significant and how it varied over time and space. Throughout this region, in fact, archaeological and textual evidence highlighted the existence of a dichotomy between a segment of the population that developed a stratified society and built cities – often related to long-distance trade – and other groups that maintained a nomadic lifestyle perpetuating subsistence strategies developed in the Neolithic.
It is evident that the path towards sedentarization was not consistent throughout the region. There was (and somewhat still is) coexistence of sedentary, seasonal semi-nomadic, and fully nomadic communities. By considering the environmental features of the region and the climatic changes recorded for the period under review, this presentation will try to define how the resulting variability in the available resources can be linked with specific production strategies and demographic fluctuations with measurable impacts on the social-economic trajectories and the eventual development of a cultural dimorphism in the population patterns.

Massimo Vidale (Università di Padova) and Dennys Frenez (Università di Bologna)
'Building a Heterarchical Society: The Concept of City and Urban Life in the Indus Civilization'

In the panorama of the third millennium BCE urbanisation processes of Eurasia, the Indus (Harappan) Civilisation of present-day Pakistan and North-western India presents some important anomalies. With the persisting impossibility of reading the short inscriptions in the so-called Indus Script, the deliberate lack of any representations of political power, and the almost absence of tombs and ritual buildings, the debate on the Indus social organisation is still open. The concept of city and urban life also followed a distinct path compared to what was happening in the neighbouring regions. Instead of resulting from a gradual site expansion possibility interrupted by periods of abandonment or contraction, Indus cities and larger settlements were polycentric urban centres based on the repeated construction and agglomeration over time of segregated compounds raised on mud-brick platforms and/or surrounded by walls with independent guarded entrances. Although formally integrated into a single urban entity with solid cultural bonds, these walled neighbourhoods underwent significant fluctuations in their structural evolution and maintenance, possibly reflecting a shifting in the locus of political and economic power within the city. This presentation will highlight the salient characteristics of the Indus civil engineering and urban setting to eventually discuss their implications for developing a more refined model of social-economic and political organisation.

Rocco Palermo (Università di Pisa)
'Seeing like a City. Urbanscape(s) and Society of Roman Era Cities in South-West Asia'

The Roman Empire, of all the large-scale territorial polities of the pre-modern world, was evidently a *state of cities*. Although ancient urban centers did not necessarily require a solid state-like level of socio-political organization to grow and prosper, Rome's authority certainly had an impact on the physical aspect of many

cities, and equally on their respective social and economic development. This *imperial trace* is somewhat marvelously exemplified before our very own eyes by the monumental vestiges scattered over three different continents, from Rome to Sabratha, from Augst to Petra. While focusing on the easternmost part of the Roman world, this paper aims at illustrating the physical and socio-economic landscape of urban centres that thrived or failed in a region of environmental, social, and political diversity. The structural settings of centres like Dura Europos, Gerasa, or Palmyra will be discussed emphasizing the contradictory behavior of ancient as well as modern cities, simultaneously formed by unmovable and tangible *things* and the constantly moving society that inhabit(ed) them.

Mustafa Şahin (Bursa Uludağ Üniversitesi)
‘Sunken Basilica in Nikaia/Iznik and its Form, Meaning and Perception in the Urban Settlement’

The ancient city of Nikaia is well known in Christian circles as the place from which an early and important statement of faith was issued: The Nicene Doctrine. The remains of the basilica church were discovered approximately in 2 meters of depth, and 30 m from the shore of the İznik Lake, outside the city walls that surround the ancient city of Nikaia in 2014. Excavation questions include to whom the structure was dedicated, why and when the church was demolished and submerged under the waters of the lake.
In 2019, excavation was carried out in the atrium where we thought a water well was situated. This is because the British pilgrim Willibald, pointed out that the site of the 1st Council had a rectangular open roofed courtyard with a sacred source of oil in the middle. Although we went down 150 cm deeper than the foundation walls, we could not find the bottom of the well. It was also found that the well was filled with stone. Therefore, we think that the structure was abandoned in the approximately 13th century A.D. and then sank into the lake waters. Could the assembly hall mentioned by the British pilgrim Willibald be in the atrium of church?
Column bodies, pediment fragments or ancient finds dating back to the 1st century BC are found in the area. Could these belong to the lost temple of Apollo in the city?
Finally, it is rumored that there is a church dedicated to St. Neophtos on the lake shore, outside the city walls. Could the basilica here belong to St. Neophtos?
In the paper, the basilica church remains and its form, meaning and perception in the urban settlement of will be discussed.

Federico Procchi (Università di Pisa)
‘'Let the owner renovate his house or sell it to a willing fellow citizen'. Hadrianic Provisions to Stratonicea on the Caicus’ [*in Italian*]

In my opinion, four different regulatory “seasons” can be identified in Roman law regarding the voluntary demolition of private buildings at the turn of the first century BC and the third century AD.
The first “season” is represented by some municipal laws of the first century BC, which provide for some local communities (inside and outside the Italian peninsula) to prohibit owners from carrying out the total or partial demolition of their buildings without the intention of repairing them. In my opinion, the legislative motive for these measures is to be found in the need to ensure continuity in the presence of residential buildings in certain areas of Italy or abroad. Also in my opinion, these rules did not apply to the city of Rome.
The second regulatory “season” is represented by three decrees of the Senate, adopted respectively during the reign of Emperors Claudius (Hosidianum decree), Nero (Volusianum decree) and Hadrian (Acilianum decree). Hosidianum decree was applied to all urban and suburban areas, including the city of Rome, and was intended to sanction speculative sales of private buildings. In particular, it was forbidden to buy a building for the sole purpose of demolishing it to speculate on the sale of waste materials, highly sought after on the market to give life to new constructions in opus caementicium. According to the Volusianum decree, the provisions dictated by the Hosidianum do not apply in the event that the buildings have been collapsing and not lived in for a long time. In this case, in fact, demolition is the only sensible choice, both in the event that the owner remains the same, and in the case in which he sells to other subjects. Thanks to Acilianum decree all testamentary dispositions by which parts of the buildings are transmitted to legatees or with which the heir leaves in his will indications for the demolition of buildings that he had owned in life are null and void. Specific derogations from these prohibitions are provided for. In addition, the heir who had detached parts of buildings would have been sanctioned with a fine, even if moved by non-speculative purposes. Thus, at the beginning of the 2nd

century AD, the protection of the architectural unity of valuable private buildings, which were part of an urban context, was established.
The third regulatory "season" concerns the definition of precise maintenance obligations for owners of private buildings within cities. It had to start during the reign of Emperor Vespasian, but we have no certain news until Emperor Hadrian addressed an imperial constitution to the citizens of Stratonice in Mysia, regarding the restoration of the house of a certain Socrates. This epigraphic document demonstrates that in the provinces during the imperial period owners of ruined and dilapidated buildings were compelled either to repair them or to sell them to those persons who would restore them.
The fourth normative "season" can be identified in the age of the Severi and is unified in a framework of the different regulatory guidelines established during the Principate. The point of reference now becomes the protection of the general appearance of the cities that must show themselves beautiful and orderly as a whole. The individual buildings, public and private, are pieces of a mosaic to be preserved with precise rules: this is, finally, the Roman idea of "urban protection".

Alessandro Grillone (Pisa)

'Brief juridical remarks on Neo-Assyrian programs of cities' foundation/re-foundation and urban regeneration as attribute of regality' [*in Italian*]

Cities' foundation/ re-foundation and the planning of specific interventions for the benefit of the urbanized areas are fundamental elements in the framework of the competences of the Assyrian Royalty and in the context of the Neo-Assyrian imperial hegemonic mission. If in the Mesopotamian mindset Cities pre-exist to men, since they were founded by the Gods, who have their own home in them, also their destinies, after the foundation, are often determined by the evolution of the relations between these divinities and populations that live there. A paradigmatic case is represented by Babylon, which under the Assyrian Empire suffers a tragic cycle of devastation and rebuilding, when the God of the Hexagila, Marduk, manifests his will to abandon the people of Babylon due to Marduk-apla-iddina's looting of temple treasures, aimed at financing anti-Assyrian military alliances. Sennacherib devastates the City and his son Esarhaddon undertakes the reconstruction according to the will and directives of the same Gods. Likewise, under divine will and command, Assyrian Kings civilize regions on the borders of the known World: they build roads where they have never been; irrigation canals in desolate lands, which will become cultivated plains at service of the near Cities and, sometimes, Artificial Capitals will be founded in places never urbanized before. A King proves to be better than his predecessors when he has conquered, civilized and urbanized lands previously not under the control of Assur. Even the case of the urban regeneration of Nineveh is emblematic: specially, for the meticulous attention with which, under the guidance of Gods, Sennacherib's building program addresses all the main urban planning issues that still affect the contemporary debate on this topic. For this reason, Sennacherib's inscriptions about this city planning somehow provide a General Urban Development Plan of the Assyrian City. If the non-prescriptive content of these inscriptions is evident, nonetheless, in other sources, on one hand, some specific rules seem to exist in relation to the procedures to be followed in the construction process of public buildings, and, on the other hand, citizens were explicitly forbidden to build, for example, compromising the planned layout of the streets.