

THE ANCIENT CITY
Anthropology 3510
Fall 2019

Week 3 Readings: Some Discussion Questions

Soja

1. What is "synekism"?
2. What's the "conventional" picture (or model) of urban origins? How does Soja challenge it?
3. What's the role of Catalhoyuk in the alternative model that Soja advocates? That is, how does the settlement provide evidence for his alternative model?

Lawler

4. What are the key material markers of "urbanity" at Uruk?
5. What is it about the geographical context and urban development of Uruk that makes the organization and regional role of the city so difficult to understand?
6. What are the key questions about urban life at Uruk that remain to be answered?

Van De Mieroop

7. What is meant by a "semiotic" reading of the city? What interpretive method does Van De Mieroop use to achieve his semiotic reading of Babylon?
8. What specific ideological and/or social meanings are associated with each of the following material elements of Babylon's cityscape: (a) the moat, (b) the "du-ku" cult platform, (c) the walls, (d) the processional way?
9. What does Van De Mieroop identify as the "central paradox" of the city gates at Babylon?
10. What objects are found in association with the North Palace and what is their possible meaning?
11. What political and cosmic functions were served by Babylon's New Year Festival?

McMahon

12. How are city plans conceivably limited in helping us understand the "lived experience" of citizens?
13. What's unusual about the Citadel at Khorsabad?
14. What was the function of planned *non*-axiality/asymmetry at Khorsabad?
15. How might Khorsabad exemplify a particular kind of "Radiant City"?