Cities are paradoxically resilient: even the ones that eventually failed in ancient times were occupied for hundreds of years, and even the most fragile modern ones continue to be inhabited. Using an archaeological perspective, this lecture will examine the many ways in which ancient cities constituted resilient social and economic networks that provide a blueprint for our own sustainable futures. Such futures are not unproblematic, of course, because cities necessarily draw in food, water, and raw materials from the countryside. Urbanites’ comfortable assurance of resiliency can mask a neglect of rural needs and realities, resulting in significant and sometimes deleterious social, economic, and political consequences.

Monica L. Smith
Professor, Department of Anthropology
Institute of the Environment and Sustainability at UCLA

Monday, October 21, 2019
Dinner at 5:45 pm - Talk at 6:30 pm
Roosevelt House
47-49 E. 65th St. New York, NY 10065 (Hunter College)

DISCUSSANT
Richard Leventhal
Executive Director of the Penn Cultural Heritage Center
Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of Pennsylvania

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ABSTRACT
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