

is simply a species of historical archaeology, and so, apart from having the odd text to help or hinder it, no different in principle from prehistory, is to ignore the variety of interests which have shaped different archaeological traditions. Historical archaeologies (there is no such thing as 'Historical Archaeology') have largely been fashioned by the historical interests to which they have been most closely attached. These archaeologies are more closely linked to the grand narratives of medieval, ancient or modern history than they are to prehistory. Classical archaeology in particular has frequently imported ideas and theoretical frameworks from Classics, often quite without realizing it. As a number of scholars have pointed out (Snodgrass 1987; Morris 1994) classical philology and Morellian connoisseurship have played a central theoretical role within the subject. These facts have been consistently ignored in many recent histories of archaeology. Trigger (1989), for example, still treats the history of archaeological thought as if only prehistory mattered. His book has not significantly departed from the whiggish genealogy that seeks its origins in nineteenth-century Britain and Scandinavia. Prehistorians would do well to remember that Gordon Childe was trained first in classical philology at a time when the prestige of German scholarship was at its height — a fact which goes a long way to explaining his conception of the archaeological culture and his interest in Indo-European origins. Bradley is not the first prehistorian to rummage profitably in the Classics' trunk of ideas.

In general, this is a very good and useful collection of papers that go to make up an attractive and well-illustrated little book. If my comments have at time sounded a little harsh, I would emphasize again that there are no *bad* papers in this volume. All contributions are accurate, scholarly and display a sound knowledge both of the relevant archaeology and the relevant ancient authors (and it is perhaps for this reason that they are disinclined to confuse real, ancient texts with 'archaeological' material culture texts). Ancient historians and classical archaeologists would profit from reading it — but some prehistorians would perhaps profit even more.

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## When in Pompeii . . .

*Houses and Society in Pompeii and Herculaneum*  
 by Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, 1994.  
 Princeton (NJ): Princeton University Press,  
 xx+244 pp.

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This stimulating volume is both a challenge and an embarrassment to archaeologists; a challenge in the avenues for research which it outlines, and an embarrassment in that, after 250 years of investigation, when a systematic overview of the social life of Pompeii and Herculaneum is finally attempted on the basis of the material record, it is done by a historian, rather than by an archaeologist. Because the volume has been and will be reviewed by specialists

in Roman archaeology and art history elsewhere, I will focus here on the approach taken, and some of the potential implications for those working in other areas in archaeology.

This volume is essentially a re-working of four previously published journal articles and conference contributions which appeared between 1988 and 1992. They are now introduced by a Preface and contextualized by an Epilogue. Additional illustrations have been added, and an appendix usefully identifying the sample of houses from Pompeii and Herculaneum used in the analyses. Considerable care has been expended in integrating the original papers, cutting duplication, adding cross-referencing, and knitting together what were originally four separate contributions with somewhat different orientations. The result is very successful, and adds to the coherence of the programme of research, in addition to making all of the studies readily accessible. As the author admits in his Preface, the contributions have not, generally, been updated to take into account similar work which has appeared over the past five years, though some of this is noted in the Preface, and in specific footnotes.

The research began as an investigation of the transformation of Roman society in the late Republic and early Empire, focusing, eventually, on the material evidence of private housing in Pompeii and Herculaneum. Where this study departs most significantly from previous and indeed most current scholarship on the Vesuvian towns, is in its demand for a representative overview of the sites, rather than the selective use of the most familiar, elaborate, or simply best preserved material. Such a re-focus raised questions about the degree to which we understand Roman attitudes to space, architecture, and decoration, which led to an exploration of the way house use, layout and elaboration was part of Roman conceptions of public and private, social competition and status.

Throughout the volume, both general patterns and specific examples of the material record are considered in reference to textual accounts, drawing on Roman literature, orations, treatises, and legal writings. It provides one of the most successful attempts I have encountered, in Classical archaeology, to treat the material and textual sources as complementary for investigating the past, as well as using the comparison to develop our understanding of each source of information.

Perhaps most significantly for the ancient historian, the material record can provide a representative cross-section of a society in a way which the

surviving urban- and élite-biased written record cannot. The problem remains, however, in being able to use that material record most effectively — our understanding is still constrained both by the nature of the written evidence which informs us about Roman society, and by the traditions of scholarship which determine what issues are considered significant; gender issues are increasingly receiving attention, but we still have little clear picture of the roles of children, servants and slaves, and so we cannot clearly conceptualize the latter within the architectural space of the household.

Additional problems are specific to the archaeological database of the Vesuvian towns. Despite the wealth of information and its extensive recovery, documentation is far more limited, and publication is generally extremely poor. In some parts of Pompeii, in particular, the houses and their decoration have deteriorated significantly, such that present documentation efforts will never be able to establish what was originally excavated. The lack of attention to finds is a particular liability, leaving us reconstructing the use of space based on normative statements by Roman architectural commentators, or through dubious ethnocentric assumptions. Finally, particularly at Pompeii, the continuous history of changes in the use of space, exacerbated by the long-term effects of the earthquake of AD 62, often makes the distinction between earlier patterns of room use (and room features and decoration), and those at the time of the destruction of AD 79, difficult to untangle. These difficulties plague any study of the sites, and are noted on an individual basis, but cannot be dealt with comprehensively in a study of this scale; the hope is obviously that patterns will come through despite these complications, and to a degree, this is the case, though the ambiguities should not be overlooked.

In considering the material evidence, the author recognizes the need to deal with a representative sample of households; large enough to allow the identification of general trends, while small enough to allow consideration of details. Two spatial samples were selected from Pompeii totalling some 182 houses (approximately 18 per cent of those excavated to date), and four blocks with 52 houses from Herculaneum. The majority of the houses in the sample were visited by the author, both to clarify published data, and to appreciate the architectural and decorative details in their spatial contexts.

In terms of the size distribution of houses, the three samples are remarkably consistent; in terms of architectural and decorative patterns, there are

interesting differences between the two sites which usefully caution against extrapolating the patterns documented at one site to the other, let alone to the wider Roman world. Broad consistency between the three samples, however, does not guarantee that they are likewise representative of the towns as a whole, and given previous work identifying differences between different quarters of Pompeii, the overall representativity of the samples could be further considered.

Following the selection of the sample, the analyses undertaken are sensibly and simply pursued. Most patterns are identified as scalar, rather than discrete, supporting the author's view of a continuum of social grades, rather than clear strata distinctions in Roman society. The complexity of the interactions between the different material variables calls for, but also holds out promise for, more complex multivariate approaches to analysis in the future.

The sample is usually analyzed by quartiles, distinguished by size. This has an advantage in ensuring that a reasonable number of examples is included in any assessment, though there are several disadvantages as well. The first is that, because of the predominance of small houses, the first three quartiles consist of houses with ground-floor areas of 10 to 350 square metres, while those considered together in the upper quartile range from 350 to 3000 square metres. The very considerable range in the latter division might suggest that this grouping of the data may mask many of the most significant differences which could have been extracted from the analyses. The second issue concerns the definition of houses for the analysis: the lowest quartile is almost exclusively made up of shops and workshops, many of which may not have been residential. This would seem to qualify various of the analyses and add considerable ambiguity to their interpretation — recognized in some of the discussions, but not assessed overall. Despite the difficulty in doing so, particularly when the evidence for upper floors is often not preserved, it would have been preferable to give more attention to the selection of architectural units considered to be residential. A related issue is apparent in the discussion of larger houses which were adapted as workshops — it is never clear whether they are also considered to have continued as residences, but the implication of the discussion is that some probably were, and others were not, yet all are analyzed as if they were residential.

Interestingly, given the author's concern with a systematic consideration of the archaeological evidence, no such approach is taken to the treatment of

the textual material. While one may argue that the written record will not, by its nature, be as representative of the whole spectrum of society, it is still essential to engage in a similar degree of source criticism to understand the context of the views considered. A wide range of individual sources is skillfully cited where relevant, but we have no idea of how widely in time, space, or society the expressed views were held. Surely the next step must be to use the currently existing computerized corpus of Roman texts to investigate the variety of uses of particular named spaces within the Roman house, the spatial locations of specific activities and individuals, and variability in the expressed perceptions of the use and meaning of spaces and architectural behaviour.

Another overall concern of the author is to highlight the difference between Roman conceptions and our own aesthetics — a very welcome reminder, too often over-looked in Classical art-historical scholarship. This being said, it is impossible to shrive oneself entirely of ethnocentrism or the bias of existing scholarly traditions. Despite the author's awareness of this issue, such assumptions still permeate the study, from the conventional naming of individual rooms and the consequent expectation of prescribed patterns of behaviour, to the presumption that small, poor, restricted-access or otherwise nondescript rooms represent servant or slave quarters, to the undocumented assertion that art becomes increasingly banal as it diffuses down the social scale. The author draws upon comparative historical examples outside of Classical scholarship in considering the house and household, but wider exploration in architecture, anthropology, and archaeology, where similar issues are also beginning to be considered, might more clearly highlight the degree to which the present study is still working within the conceptual confines of traditional Classical assumptions.

Despite these areas of unease, I consider this a truly exciting study, illustrating the clear potential of archaeological analyses within a relatively well-understood historical context, to expand our approaches to thinking about material culture. It easily takes a place high among the rapidly increasing number of archaeological studies exploring the social meaning of architecture and community space. I have no hesitation in recommending that it be read by archaeologists, anthropologists and architects dealing with the interpretation of architecture and space. I feel that it could have been made more accessible to non-Romanists if it provided more information on the changing social and historical context

of the Campanian sites, and changing Roman social systems. This background could be taken for granted in the more specialized contexts in which the original studies were initially published, but would have made the present volume more accessible to the wider audience which it deserves.

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