

production (or storage?) of more developed phases of sigillata production, of around 50–70 CE. The early producers of this rural industrial place marketed their products locally, and its consumption was identified in the project's excavations at Pievina, Case Nuove and Tombarelle, and at four non-excavated survey sites. The second phase (50–70 CE) indicated an increase in scale and specialisation based on the quantities of vessels present. Marzuolo is furthermore thought to have functioned as a distribution centre for imported and local foodstuffs on account of an amphora deposit in Area 1, dated to 50–70 CE. The final phase of this remarkable site – that has continued to be under excavation – falls within the second to third centuries CE, when the area changes function from an industrial/commercial role to a rural vocation. On the basis of this important producer/marketing evidence in the 'locale', it does not seem too far-fetched to see the development of the non-elite agricultural landscape mapped by Ghisleni and partly excavated by Bowes and her team as a relatively short-term response to the increased market demand for agricultural produce in the late Republican and early Imperial period. The question that readers are left with is whether the late Republican to early Imperial peasant households brought to light in the project should be considered as representatives of the Roman rural poor. Finally, a methodological remark: according to Bowes the results of the project 'emphasize the unreliability of surface survey for functional attributions, without extensive, open area excavation as a check' (p. 449). One could, however, also state that (more) excavations are needed to inform the interpretation of systematic artefact surveys in order to increase the reliability of the interpretation of surface scatters. After all, even in the most ideal situations, only a small percentage of surface scatters in any project can be excavated considering the high costs and permits needed. Therefore, excavation projects targeting surface scatters from systematic surveys, as has been done by the Roman Peasant Project, are tremendously important for the advancement of site and off-site interpretations in archaeological survey. Bowes and her team are to be commended for this groundbreaking multidisciplinary project that has opened up new avenues in the archaeological study of non-elite rural society.

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SPACE AND ROMAN HOUSES

ANDERSON (M.A.) *Space, Movement, and Visibility in Pompeian Houses*. Pp. xiv + 261, ills, map. London and New York: Routledge, 2023. Cased, £120, US\$160. ISBN: 978-1-472-48595-3.

BEACHAM (R.C.), DENARD (H.) *Living Theatre in the Ancient Roman House. Theatricalism in the Domestic Sphere*. Pp. xxx + 515, b/w & colour ills. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023. Cased, £120, US\$155. ISBN: 978-1-316-51094-0.
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These two books are both essentially about Pompeian houses. Yet, the way in which they represent their subject differs remarkably. Anderson uses computerised methods inspired

by space syntax analysis (SSA) to map the accessibility and visibility of the spaces inside Pompeian houses and to study the effect that these qualities had on the users of the houses. The book attempts to establish comparable data on which to base its interpretations. Its 59 figures are almost entirely composed of augmented house plans.

Beacham and Denard aim at drawing a comprehensive picture of the role played by theatre and theatricality within the Roman house. Most of the book focuses on the interpretation of wall decorations of Pompeian houses and near-by villas. The authors discuss theatrical and domestic life, analyse architectural structures and other subjects represented in wall paintings and aspire to restore an awareness of the 'erotics' (p. 3) of theatrical associations in Roman houses. They are not afraid to refer to a largely fantastic mid-nineteenth-century history painting of a Pompeian house instead of its plan (p. 459, fig. 247a). The same painting is chosen to adorn the jacket of the book, promising on its front flap a 'sumptuously illustrated' representation of the Roman house.

Anderson's sample consists of 68 Pompeian houses studied both as a whole and through case studies. Two plans are produced of each house of the sample. An 'access heatmap' shows the degree of isolation or integration of each part of each room in the house distinguishing those spaces that tend to attract high degrees of traffic flow from more isolated spaces. A 'visibility heatmap', calculated on the basis of a grid of viewing points spread across the house, presents 'a general collective impression of the experience of the complete structure, highlighting areas that play a large or small visual role in the experience of individuals as they travel through it' (p. 66). In addition, Anderson usually visualises the view of the house from the front door.

Some interesting observations arise. The importance given to the vista through the house from the front door is strongly confirmed. Atria and peristyles dominated both the domestic visual topography and the household movement, but in houses with both atrium and peristyle the latter tends to draw the high point of traffic deeper within the structure away from the atrium. Reception rooms are often provided with vistas of open garden spaces and consequently have the next highest visibility values. Different reception rooms within a single house usually present different amounts of access, vista and exposure to view, potentially catering for different needs. Kitchens, as sources for intense traffic, were often located next to the traffic centre of the house, leading to a higher degree of visibility compared to other service rooms.

Besides accessibility and visibility, Anderson maps the recorded finds within his sample. In a chapter devoted to an analysis of the consequences of the earthquake that devastated Pompeii in 62/3 CE Anderson compares evidence indicative of construction work in relation to the front door vistas and access and visibility maps of the houses. He argues compellingly that certain houses tried to maintain the appearance of normalcy suggesting a continuation of daily life alongside the rebuilding process whereas other houses prioritised on-going renovations.

This argument is indicative of the expressed scope of the book, which is to explore what Pompeian domestic space can reveal about the actors and activities that populated it, how they experienced it, and the ways in which their priorities and motivations are reflected in its form. Such a task requires social contextualisation and interpretation of the apparent patterns distinguished in the material. Anderson opens his book with a concise chapter on the current state of understanding of the 'Pompeian house' and a highly useful discussion of the different users of a Roman house and their daily activities, expanding on a similar chapter by R. Laurence (*Roman Pompeii: Space and society* [1994], pp. 122–32). In the analysis Anderson aligns himself with the paradigms of the study of Pompeian space and society associated with the work of Laurence and, above all, A. Wallace-Hadrill (esp. *Houses and Society in Pompeii and Herculaneum* [1994]).

This approach, combined with the used methods, leads Anderson, for instance, to include the service quarters and their users in his discussion with an emphasis that they far too seldom receive.

Yet, as Anderson points out, Pompeian houses constitute a more varied sample than the 'atrium house' concept leads one to expect. What constitutes a generalisable pattern, therefore, is often not immediately obvious. Furthermore, when scholars think that they can distinguish a pattern, its social implications are often complicated by potentially contradicting possible patterns. Anderson insists that there was a conflict between the visual display of elite status and the low-status traffic required by the practical functions of domestic daily life. Indeed, 46% of the houses seem to have structured the precious view from the entrance in a way that avoids corridors and access routes. However, much of the evidence could be interpreted differently. The axial views through the house unavoidably crossed many of its highest points of traffic, and Anderson notes that the practical needs of household operation were often valued at the expense of elite display. If the book had been written with the premise that busyness was a welcome sign of a prosperous and successful household, and that it would have been an advantage for the patrons of the house to be able to supervise their staff – both possibilities acknowledged by Anderson –, it might have resulted in a slightly different story than one of tension and conflict.

The most significant limitation of Anderson's methodology is that the presented 'heatmaps' do not take into account some variables such as wall decoration or lighting. The penultimate chapter introduces to the maps references to a rough categorisation of wall decorations. They serve mostly to discuss chronological issues and the status given to period decorations, and do not affect the representation of people's movement in the space or the visibility of spaces. D. Fredrick and R.G. Vennarucci (*Studies in Digital Heritage* 4 [2021]) have tested human player experiences of Pompeian houses in navigable virtual reconstructions and, unsurprisingly, wall paintings have proven to be a significant attraction altering the movement of players. This would seem to question the accuracy of Anderson's 'heatmaps'. Fredrick's and Vennarucci's approach comes with its own obvious limitations. Moreover, these scholars do not discredit the usefulness of SSA-inspired methods as predictive tools. The more computerised methods are explored, and their results reviewed, the more they push the scientific community to discuss the methodological issues and theoretical premises of the field: how to study human experience in a culture long gone? How to connect material remains to past mentalities?

These are also relevant questions regarding Beacham and Denard's book. The authors approach their wide topic by distinguishing between what they call 'theatricalism' and 'theatricality'. 'Theatricalism' is 'the whole range of borrowings, in any medium or form, from the domain of the theatre as place, institution and activity' serving as 'a culturally ubiquitous, collective reservoir of examples, similes and metaphors' (p. 2). 'Theatricality' denotes direct references to the domain of theatre itself. These terms, the authors claim, will help them to discern relationships between the fictional and the real in Roman culture, characterised in the discussed material by 'mixed-reality' (used seemingly interchangeably with 'mixed-vision', 'double-vision' and sometimes 'multi-perspectival') in which real and fictional materials intrude upon the other. The authors proceed to describe theatre's ubiquity as a metaphor and medium as 'an entire vernacular "language"' arising from 'theatricalism' (p. 16). The scope of the book is set on understanding 'something of the grammar, syntax and vocabulary of this vernacular, by studying how the theatre, as an institution and sets of practices, impacted upon the domestic sphere' (p. 17).

The use of modern concepts and theories is to be encouraged among studies of antiquity. Anderson's thinking of the social significance of Pompeian houses is informed by the theories of P. Bourdieu, A. Giddens and M. Foucault, discussed in relation to the central concepts of actor, agency and power, which these theories help to define. C. Gill (*The Structured Self in Hellenistic and Roman Thought* [2006], p. 342) points out how the conceptual dialogue with ancient cultures benefits our own thinking. Selecting within modern ideas those that seem to correspond most closely with the ancient ideas we are seeking to understand enables us to think critically about the ideas that are prevalent in our own culture.

The problem with Beacham and Denard's conceptual framework is that its connections to both ancient and modern theories are weak. The practices of Roman theatrical entertainments receive a fair amount of expert attention from the authors, but there is little discussion of ancient philosophical thinking on theatrical representation, such as Plato's or Aristotle's. The concept of *mimesis* is mentioned only in passing, not even gaining an index entry. The authors do engage with the concept of *phantasia*. However, it is discussed mainly as a rhetorical device rather than as a key function of human perception, cognition and action in general with crucial epistemological and art theoretical implications (see e.g. A.A. Long, in: S. Everson [ed.], *Psychology* [1991], pp. 102–20; G. Watson, *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* II.36.7 [1994], pp. 4765–810). After such a limited discussion it seems vague to interpret *phantasia* as 'the interplay of self-awareness and absorption into fictional domains' (p. 209).

The book cites comparisons made by Roman writers between theatre and life, but these are not connected to the Roman understanding of the self (see e.g. S. Bartsch, *The Mirror of the Self: Sexuality, Self-knowledge, and the Gaze in the Early Roman Empire* [2006]; C. Gill, *op. cit.*). Nor are they or the 'language' of 'theatricalism' discussed in the light of modern theories of, for instance, performativity or semiotics. Consequently, the book stays on the level of grammar and vocabulary, to use the authors' metaphor, but readers are left puzzled about their significance for the ancient users of the supposed language. Nor is it clear how the authors understand the role of theatre and performance in people's conceptions of reality and the self in the modern world.

Many of the main arguments of the book are interesting and plausible. Beacham and Denard suggest that the Roman house provided an experience often analogous to that occurring in the theatre. Certain wall paintings might have referred directly to tragic, comic and satyric stage settings, as proposed by Vitruvius, and a significant part of decorations is argued to have sought the effect of 'mixed-reality' or 'double-vision', immersing the viewers into the painted illusion while simultaneously underlining the fictive character of the decoration through, among other things, direct references to theatre. Wall paintings are argued to be 'intermedial' (sometimes 'intramedial'): they draw synthetically upon various sources. These can be directly theatrical, like stage architecture. Other sources, like palaces, aristocratic villas or pinacothecae, were often themselves theatrically influenced, and wall paintings might have referred to their onstage representations. The book uses computer models to visualise in 3D the illusionistic architectural structures of the decorations.

Highly problematic, instead, is Beacham and Denard's interpretation of the decorations of certain Pompeian houses in the light of their presumed owners and reconstructions of the owners' political careers, ambitions and associations. These are stated as facts or framed by formulations like 'several of the houses . . . are definitely known, or confidently believed to have belonged to prominent residents of Pompeii' (p. 135). The evidence used to attribute Pompeian houses to known political personalities 'has always been tenuous', to quote Anderson (p. 70), a state of things most recently demonstrated by E.-M. Viitanen

(*Arctos* 55 [2021], 296–304). The source for Beacham and Denard's confident attributions and family trees seems to be J.L. Franklin Jr.'s book (*Pompeis Difficile Est: Studies in the Political Life of Imperial Pompeii* [2001]), called out by A.E. Cooley (*CR* 53 [2003], 419) for its 'over-conjectural approach', but the references, when given, are often too far from the problematic claims and too clustered for readers to be sure of the origin of the claims.

The structure of the book makes it difficult to follow any of its potential threads. The discussion of individual wall decorations, covering four (6–9) out of the ten chapters of the lengthy book, proceeds as a sequence of examples loosely organised according to the traditional four Pompeian painting styles instead of the proposed arguments. This means that the authors end up repeating the same questions, answers and scholarly disputes, and introducing new threads halfway, like the interesting consideration of perspectival points (pp. 353–62) suddenly emerging to conclude the discussion of one decoration example. On four occasions we re-encounter the exact same figure a few pages later with a slightly different caption (figs 105 and 159b, 108b and 132b, 132a and 137a, 174 and 202b), illustrative of the scattered nature of the argumentation. When the same happens on opposite pages (figs 227b and 228b), one begins to question the editing process of the book.

Anderson manages his large material by having a seemingly clear picture of the kinds of questions it might, in practice, be able to answer within the book's frames of interpretation. Beacham and Denard have isolated a phenomenon and gathered a great deal of material to exemplify it, but it is often hard to discern where their analysis of these examples is leading us and why.

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A HISTORY OF ROMAN LONDON

PERRING (D.) *London in the Roman World*. Pp. xviii + 573, figs, ills, maps. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022. Cased, £40, US\$50. ISBN: 978-0-19-878900-0.

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The book under review is P.'s second synthesis of London's Roman history, following his 1991 *Roman London*. Like R. Hingley's *Londinium. A Biography* (2018), *London in the Roman World* benefits from the avalanche of high-quality archaeological evidence accumulated by London's archaeologists in the last three decades in fieldwork, the lab and the archive. This, however, is no mere update. In an engaging and provocative argument, P.'s *Londinium* is created to consolidate and extend the hegemony of emperors and their delegates in Rome's north-west. Its history was recurrently interrupted by 'exogenous shocks', i.e. war, pandemic and political dislocation, the latter ultimately terminal for the city's fortunes. Although the introduction invokes contemporary shocks, Brexit and Covid, this thesis about the Roman period was already outlined in P.'s work preceding both.

The clear outline of the volume, succinctly framed by introductory and concluding chapters, lends itself to a wide audience. Chapter 1 introduces *Londinium* both as