

*Il santuario di Portonaccio a Veio*. A cura di GIOVANNI COLONNA. 1: *Gli scavi di Massimo Pallottino nella zona dell'altare (1939–1940)*. Con contributi di G. Colonna et al. Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei: Monumenti Antichi, ser. Miscellanea, vol. VI–6 (= 58). Giorgio Bretschneider Editore, Roma 2002. ISBN 88-7689-209-5. 295 pp., 80 tavv. EUR 150.

It sometimes happens that the results of an archaeological excavation are published – for various reasons – only decades after its completion. This is also the case of Massimo Pallottino's research in 1939–1940 in the area of the altar, at the sanctuary of Portonaccio in Veii. Without delay, the epigraphical material, architectural terracottas and fragmentary terracotta statues, the famous goddess with the child and the male torso, had been noted. But it was only in 1947 that the major part of the finds could be addressed in a scholarly manner by Pallottino's assistant, Valeria Martelli. The work, however, was interrupted, and the catalogue of the finds was finally ready in the 1980s, but bibliographically brought up to date even later. By the combined efforts of several scholars, among others, the pupils of Pallottino and their pupils, the final publication came out in 2002. Before its appearance, a summary of Pallottino's research was included in the exhibition catalogue *Veio, Cerveteri, Vulci – città d'Etruria a confronto*, in 2001, pages 45–56.

The publication consists of the catalogue of finds, altogether 1255 pieces, of a short presentation of some of the material originating from Pallottino's excavation, but which had gone astray in the meantime, and of the republication of the epigraphical material in the light of recent studies. For the most part, the finds cover several groups of pottery, both imported and locally made, but also weaving implements, votive terracottas, statuettes of bronze, ivory and bone, jewellery and decorations, among which scarabs used as signets or amulets, were brought to the sanctuary. The range of the material strongly recalls the many votive caches, which have likewise been published belatedly, and presented so meritoriously in the series *Corpus delle stipi votive in Italia*. The finds show that, from the archaic period through the third century BC, the object of the cult at the sanctuary of Portonaccio was Minerva, also supported by other deities. The finds now analyzed to the full show the contacts in the Apennines and beyond in different times.

The finds together with Pallottino's diaries and notes have enabled the publishers to reconstruct the old excavation. The text is complemented with photos and plans of different periods, and also Pallottino's sketches and pages of his diaries. Besides shedding light on an important Etruscan sanctuary, the publication is an honour to the famous etruscologist's early work, and a reward of the persistence of later generations of etruscologists.

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LAUREN HACKWORTH PETERSEN: *The Freedman in Roman Art and Art History*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2006. ISBN 978-0-521-85889-2. 294 pp., 140 figs. GBP 50.

Petronius' Trimalchio is the quintessential image of the Roman freedman: a newly franchised member of Roman society desperately trying to make sense of his new status and failing at every attempt. His imaginary personality has been used in studies of Roman history and art history to create such well-known phrases as "freedman mentality" and "freedman taste". The

undertone is usually that of failure: the freedman tried to be a member of the free Roman society and, like Trimalchio, did poorly. Lauren Hackworth Petersen's volume is an attempt to study this preconception, to see whether it is true and to even unravel it by trying to interpret the freedmen and their monuments as expressions of a more general, Roman, not merely freedman, mentality.

The contents of the book are arranged in two parts: the first deals with freedmen and how they represented themselves in public. The main part of the material discussed comes from Pompeii, concerning the rebuilding of the Temple of Isis and the presence of the Augustales, but an analysis of the Tomb of Eurysaces in Rome ends this section. The second part of the book concentrates on family and social life as expressed in the Roman house, and, again, the examples come from Pompeii. In addition, this section and the whole book end with burial monuments and an analysis of the monuments of Isola Sacra at Ostia. The book is well written and the illustrations contribute handsomely to the text.

Hackworth Petersen builds her sociological analysis mostly on recent studies on and interpretation of freedmen and then applies these to archaeological material. The choice of examples somewhat reflects the general problems of these types of studies. The persons are known from inscriptions and their status recognized by either explicit mention or then by their nomenclature. Hackworth Petersen questions many generalizations of attributions of freedman status, attempting to show also how the persons portrayed themselves more as Roman citizens in general, than as new Roman citizens. The monuments, burials, and houses are connected to these persons through inscriptions, and more often than not, the attribution has to be regarded as uncertain. With public buildings and burials, the situation is slightly better: the connection between the monument and the inscription is usually clear. Regarding the houses of Pompeii, the situation is far more complicated, but the author manages to find some fairly good examples. The second issue is then how to evaluate the art commissioned by freedmen and this happens mostly by looking at the wider context, placing the freedmen in the Roman society and seeing if they blend in; Hackworth Petersen finds that they blend in.

The "Trimalchio Vision", as the author calls the overpowering interpretative model derived from Petronius' text, does affect how freedmen have been regarded in most previous research. Trimalchio's social climbing and attempts at showing off his position in society and his belief in the power of wealth have been used to interpret every aspect of what freedmen have left behind for modern scholars to see in that negative way. The "freedman taste" evokes images of poor taste, imitation of the society's true upper echelons and their good taste. The freedman monuments have been singled out and discussed with Trimalchio in mind, even though – if they had been set in a wider context – the result might have been different. One of the classic examples is the rebuilding of the Temple of Isis in Pompeii. The inscriptions indicate that it was due to the benefaction of N. Popidius Celsinus, a six-year-old who was then accepted as member of the decurions despite his age. It is obvious that the rebuilding was done by the boy's family and not by the boy himself. The most common interpretation has been that his status-hungry freedman father did the deed to promote his and his son's status in Pompeian society. The worship of Isis has also been connected to social inferiors, further accentuating the slightly negative tone of the discussions of the temple. Hackworth Petersen's point of view is rather that of assimilation: she points out how family benefaction and commemoration is generally used in Roman society for public advancement, and how Egypt and Isiac imagery is common in all kinds of contexts in Pompeii. The freedman, rather than blatantly promoting himself and his

newly acquired status, participated in the functioning of the society in quite a similar manner to everyone else. Trimalchio is an image created by the Roman elite in Rome, maybe even a satire of the Roman upper classes or Emperor Nero himself; he does not necessarily have much to do with reality in towns outside Rome.

The Roman *domus* and its decoration is also given a large role in the book. The first example used is the Pompeian House of D. Octavius Quartio (II 2,2). This is a large "miniature villa" on the eastern side of Pompeii. The property covers more than 3/4s of a city block and features one of the more elaborate and fantastic gardens in the whole of Pompeii with fountains, huge fish ponds and statuary. It has also been described as the "Disney World of Pompeii" and used as an emblem of "freedman taste": imitating the large buildings and fine decorations of villas and doing it with rather poor results, cramming as much as possible into a small space; trying too hard and failing. The owner of the house remains unknown, but the decorations and the Isiac imagery found there have been connected to a rich freedman. If the house could be connected to the *gens* Octavia, it could be noted that members of that family had lived in the city since the establishment of the Roman colony and thus could not be described as of libertine status. The decorations are associated with a more common desire to include glimpses of art combined with nature in Pompeian houses.

The second domestic example is the House of L. Caecilius Iucundus (V 1,26), one of the few houses in Pompeii where the owner is known by way of an archive found in the house. At least two generations of the Caecilii family are known and they are of freedman stock. Hackworth Petersen associates the phases of extension and decorations to the two generations and argues how the freedman family created itself an ancestry by employing subtle indications that they shared a common history with the house. Although her analysis is quite plausible, the uncertainties of dating the changes and connecting a person to specific changes in the house make it slightly problematic. The case is so unique, even in Pompeii, that comparisons cannot be made.

Hackworth Petersen's book is a welcome fresh look at freedmen, their status and how they projected themselves in Roman society. It is also a welcome deconstruction of a stereotype created by modern scholarship, which affects interpretations of many kinds of evidence.

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GEOFF W. ADAMS: *The Suburban Villas of Campania and their Social Function*. BAR International Series 1542. Archaeopress, Oxford 2006. ISBN 1-84171-974-9. IX, 175 pp., 72 Figs., 13 Tables, 42 Graphs. GBP 38.

Roman villas have been studied from many different points of view, although publications of excavation results and typology tend to be the most common ones. This volume by Geoff Adams is based on his doctoral dissertation and it concentrates on architectural analysis and social interpretations. The principal idea is very simple: to recognize spaces potentially used for entertainment in villas and compare their ground areas to the total ground area of the complex. In this way, it is hoped that the possible intended social uses of spaces and types of villas can be identified. The data set consists of the villas located near the ancient towns of Pompeii, Herculaneum and Stabiae, where the good preservation of architecture and other types of