

hierarchization, privatization and ritualization in late antique society. These approaches developed from an assumption that late Roman houses are fundamentally different from their predecessors. Bowes would like to contend, however, that continuities with earlier houses are as striking as their novelties.

The second chapter on 'The Archaeology of Later Roman Houses' explains how difficult it can be to provide a careful analysis of late Roman houses when the archaeological evidence is either fragmentary or incomplete. For example, there are no artifacts or small finds to accompany plans of late Roman houses published at the beginning of the twentieth century. Although the buildings can be placed physically in space, they are missing a large part of their associated contexts. As with anyone hoping for a contextual approach to archaeological material, B. believes that careful analysis of more recently emerging archaeological evidence can serve to shift interpretive paradigms in the understanding of late Roman houses.

The third chapter on 'Houses and History' relates the disciplinary trends in social history to the study of archaeology and its impact on the study of late Roman houses. B. frequently refers to the dangers inherent in making assumptions about history and imposing them on the material culture of the era without critiquing the sources first and utilizing a contextual approach. The highly complex social systems at play in the late antique period may or may not be reflected in the architecture of domestic spaces, and the historical models suggested thus far for late antique society that have deeply influenced the study of late antique houses are out of date.

Throughout the book, the author often repeats the paradigm she seeks to unravel: that enlarged and elaborated *triclinia* have been seen to indicate ritualization in society; that large apsed audience halls have been used as evidence for civic activities unfolding in the house so that rituals formerly part of civic life are understood to be taking place increasingly within the realm of the private household; and that separation of dining and reception areas reserved for different social classes as they relate to the head of the household have been considered as a reflection of social separation and hierarchization. Calling for a more nuanced approach to the understanding of provincial élites and the relationship of urban construction and house construction, B. shows that the decline of urban forms does not necessarily influence the rise of domestic life. In fact, the two may not even be related, and in many instances there is evidence for growth and rebuilding of urban fabrics in tandem with the growth and refurbishment of both urban and rural villas. Ultimately she seeks to understand whether it is possible to find in the late Roman house the material evidence for the less pretentious élite of Roman society, and suggests that the available evidence may point to a more nuanced and less stratified set of social classes.

A brief fourth chapter on 'New Directions' restates the need to recognize the limitations of both the archaeological evidence and the assumptions made by previous scholars who see late Roman houses as an imprint of a social history garnered from the analysis of textual sources. In her exclusive focus on the late Roman house, B. missed an opportunity to explain how the study of domestic architecture in Late Antiquity relates to the study of other art historical, architectural, and archaeological evidence from the same period. For example, all aspects of Late Antiquity, not just late antique houses, have been used as evidence for a transition from the ancient to the medieval worlds. More generally, classical archaeology was founded as a discipline that took texts as the primary point of departure, using material evidence to show the validity of information found in written sources. This methodology has been generously critiqued in other areas of scholarship over the past decades and is vastly different from many new and current approaches to art historical, archaeological, and cultural studies. It would have been interesting to see how the author situates her proposed new approaches to the study of late Roman houses within other current trends in the study of Late Antiquity as well as new methodologies in archaeological and art historical inquiries specifically.

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K. VÖSSING, *DAS RÖMISCHE BANKETT IM SPIEGEL DER ALTERTUMSWISSENSCHAFTEN: INTERNATIONALES KOLLOQUIUM 5./6. OKTOBER 2005, SCHLOSS MICKELN, DÜSSELDORF*. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2008. Pp. 215, 32 pls, illus. ISBN 9783515092357. €44.00.

Konrad Vössing has edited this interesting and useful collection of essays on Roman dining, with a strong emphasis on visual material and a range across the Empire, from Rome and Pompeii to

Carthage, Antioch and the Greek East. In some ways it resembles William Slater's 1991 volume, *Dining in a Classical Context*. The aim of the volume is to reconsider the Roman banquet in some detail, outside the twin traditional approaches of the details of daily life in ancient Rome and the nostalgic retrospectives of Republican life to be found in Satire and moralizing texts that contrast pastoral simplicity with the corroding power of luxury in the contemporary world of the poet. The volume has a strong archaeological and artistic component, along with literary and historical approaches. Though more has been written on the Greek symposium under the stimulus of Oswyn Murray and others, much new work has appeared on Roman dining in recent years, not least Vossing's own *Mensa Regia* (2004), Dunbabin, *The Roman Banquet* (2003), Stein-Holkeskamp, *Das römische Gastmahl* (2005) and other studies, Donahue, *The Roman Community at Table* (2005), and Roller, *Dining Posture in Ancient Rome* (2006). Quite how élite dining in a reclining posture, which Greeks, Etruscans and Romans inherited from the Near East, was then integrated into their own cultural practices and passed on one to another within the complex exchanges of the Roman Empire will be the subject of much more investigation. The present volume though offers much, not least its very welcome focus on the Romans, and the frequent reference to Greek authors of the Roman period, notably Athenaeus and Plutarch in his table talk.

V.'s own contribution is the final essay, in which he argues that the *commissatio* was not a regular Roman institution, but an occasion that an author might use to compare with the Greek *komos* and to colour the character of a particular gathering, often in a negative way. Earlier in the volume, Katherine Dunbabin presents visual images of music and dancers at *convivia* from the first century B.C. to the sixth A.D. These may be elegant or lewd, but imply greater variety of practice than literary texts; they imply varied levels of representation of those who owned them, and like the well-known Menander mosaics from Pompeii, Mytilene, Antioch and Zeugma make a statement about householders in a Roman Empire with a rich Greek prehistory. The chapter points to further profitable research in this area. Harald Mielsch reviews still-life paintings, also from a wide geographical range, and a range of locations in the home and of apparent representation – of birds, fish, animals and plants, that might be in a natural setting, that might be dead or alive, or in stages of preparation for the table, along with other tableware, sometimes in glass.

Eric Morvillez discusses 'sigma-fountains', a form of dining beside water, which became an important development of the *stibadium* in later antiquity but has earlier manifestations in Pliny's letters and elsewhere. Salvatore Ciro Nappo assesses in detail the building complex at Murecine, beside the Sarno at Pompeii, with particular reference to the baths, kitchen, *triclinium* and wall decorations. Anja Bettenworth discusses the banquet of the emperor Maximus at which St Martin is a guest in the *Life of St Martin* by Paulinus of Perigueux. Ulrike Egelhaaf-Gaiser in 'das versteinerte convivium' offers a striking interpretation of the Medusa section of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 4.607–5.272, in which the familiar motif of the gorgon's head at the banquet/symposium is made to work within the sophisticated elaboration of the myth of Perseus and Andromeda. Elena Merli discusses the *eranos*, or contributory dinner, as a 'literary fossil' in a Roman setting, which was elaborated by Lucilius, Horace, Martial, Juvenal and others, with reference to the problematic area of *aequalitas*. William Slater discusses conversation at the *convivium*, the importance of speech, and the delicate balance that needed to be maintained between appropriate and inappropriate words and jokes in order to maintain the order of the occasion and avoid quarrels at table. Dirk Schnurbusch discusses the process by which the emperors appropriated the hierarchical aristocratic banquet of the late Republic in order to enhance their status and prestige. Elke Stein-Holkeskamp discusses mealtimes and the banquet with reference to time, the ordering of the day, and deviations from that order by distinctive literary characters who carry strong moral agendas, such as Cato the Elder and Trimalchio. Werner Tietz builds on earlier work on the solitary meal in Roman thought, and the striking position of those who deviate from social norms, such as the parasite, the solitary host, and the emperor.

There is a good index of sources and a useful bibliography.

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