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# SCRIPTA CLASSICA ISRAELICA

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FOR THE  
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no sustained discussion of status or labour, two topics that were central to his work. The absence of dissenting views gives the impression that NIE has swept the field.<sup>3</sup>

Third, the geographical coverage of the volume is oddly skewed. Chapters that ‘reach far beyond what might reasonably be called the Mediterranean’ (presumably those on Hellenistic Babylonia and Egypt) are included on the ground that the Near East was part of the Greek economy from the Hellenistic period if not earlier. Meanwhile, the western Mediterranean, including Sicily and southern Italy, is excluded from detailed treatment for lack of space (p. 4 n. 11). Of the five regions surveyed in Part II, none is further west than Athens. If the purpose of this section is to demonstrate regional diversity, why include two chapters on the Hellenistic east but nothing on mainland Greece beyond Attica? What, for example, of the Peloponnese? A chapter on Sparta, whose economy was conspicuously *not* oriented towards market exchange and overseas trade, might have provided a valuable contrast.

Finally, there are places where a firmer editorial hand was needed. Two chapters cover only part of what their title promises: there is nothing on the grain supply in chapter 12 or on environment and resources in chapter 25. A couple of contributions (chapters 12 and 26) are exclusively cultural in their approach and barely engage with the economic aspects of their subject. Lastly, the index is skimpy: there are no entries for Cleomenes of Naucratis (extensively discussed in chapter 21), Corinth, *eisphora*, Macedonia, or silver. The book has been carefully produced, but something has gone wrong with the formatting of the index for the letter A.

In short, this is a useful but partial collection. It admirably reflects the direction in which the study of the ancient Greek economy is going but, in this reviewer’s opinion, pays too little attention to earlier scholarship or to material that does not fit the current paradigm.

Jeremy Trevett

York Univeristy  
[jtrevett@yorku.ca](mailto:jtrevett@yorku.ca)

Jennifer Baird and April Pudsey (eds.), *Housing in the Ancient Mediterranean World: Material and Textual Approaches*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022. 499 pp. ISBN 9781108954983 (DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108954983>).

The present volume: *Housing in the Ancient Mediterranean World: Material and Textual Approaches*, edited by J. A. Baird and A. Pudsey, brings together 15 articles focusing on aspects of chronology, media, and research methodologies of housing around the Mediterranean.<sup>1</sup> The volume is based, though not solely, on papers from a conference held nine years earlier (2013) in London: ‘Between Words and Walls: Material and Textual Approaches to Ancient Housing’.

Public, sacred, and military architecture, as well as wealthy private and monumental funerary architecture, received an abundance of scholarly attention, mainly in the urban sphere. Private

<sup>3</sup> Compare the cautious judgment of J. K. Davies, in his contribution to C. Taylor and K. Vlassopoulos (eds.), *Communities and Networks in the Ancient Greek World* (2015), that ‘the jury is still out on the adequacy of New Institutional Economics as an alternative.’ (p. 241).

\* Only the epub version of the book was available for review, hence remarks on the physical book appearance and quality are absent.

<sup>1</sup> There are two anomalies that ought to be addressed for the publisher: Baird’s first name appears only in initials while the second editor in full. Also, the book consists of 499 pages while the official publishing house webpage states 400 pages.

housing received relatively limited attention, usually within a specific geographical unit, but this tendency is swiftly changing in the last two decades. In this sense, a codex dealing solely with housing while combining historical, textual, and archaeological data is a desired scholarly product.

The volume begins with a 26-page-long introduction, by R. Alston, J. A. Baird and A. Pudsey, which thoroughly describes methodological issues of understanding and defining the architectural spaces within a house in confrontation with well-known ancient texts and scholarships. One of the most important methodological problems addressed is the insufficient coherence or criticism between the textual and the archaeological data or “labeling” as a terminology rightly adopted in the chapter. In many ways this introduction is a full review of the articles, which one can find too extensive; on the other hand, it is an important and in-depth description of the state of the scholarship while trying to “stitch together” the narratives within the 15 articles of the volume.

E. Varto (Ch. 1 – Kinship “In the Halls”) opens the volume with a history of research on the correlation and understanding of Homeric poetry and the archaeological data in hand on the Early Iron Age palaces and houses, and mainly to question—how did a Homeric house look like and to which extent we may use the poetic architectural phrases? Varto addresses the 19<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup>-century tendency of “romanticisation” of the archaeological remains in early Greece and their suggested architectural reconstructions in a very appealing manner. In many ways, the article is of a philological nature with the *megaron* being in the center of the poetic and physical spheres. The 40-pages-long article is well written but would have benefited from more up-to-date archaeological data and a new proposed reconstruction of a “Homeric house”. In some ways, the reader will find that Ch. 3 tackles similar problems between the textual and the proposed reconstructions of house spaces and their function. One particular passage caught my eye—‘Poetry, Homeric or otherwise, should not be excavated for fragments of historical reality. To do so is to strip the epics of the meaning and, therefore, neglect the power they held in their historical context’.

C. Meyer’s article (Ch. 2—Domesticating the Ancient House) deals exclusively with museology and Classical-period household-related exhibitions critique. In this sense, the article is somewhat off-grid with the rest of the volume contributions. The latest of the three exhibitions treated in the article was opened in 2006, but the arguments shed light on long-lasting trends that are still valid in modern museology.

In Ch. 3, J. Morgan (Mind the Gap) bases her arguments on a similar methodology as does Varto in Ch. 1—the terminology of domestic spaces and functions of the Greek Classical house (mainly 4<sup>th</sup> cent. BC) based on historiography. In this sense, one article should have followed the other. While emphasizing the gaps, mainly based on 19<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> century reconstructions, a proposed new reconstruction of a Classical house is missing.

K. Volioty’s article (Ch. 4—A Family Affair) deals with domestic depictions on *lekythoi* and their contribution to understanding and recreating an Attic Classical house. Most of the discussion is centered on the Attic white background funerary *lekythoi* while their contribution to better understanding the Classical house is limited. The three tables included in the article do not bring further conclusions.

A. M. Smith deals in her article (Ch. 5—Textiles in Alkestis’ *thalamos*) with textiles used by the newlywed couples in their chambers (*thalamos*) and beds as part of the marriage ceremonies depicted on ceramics. The discussion is focused on the private and less on the architectural features of the house.

L. Nevett’s article (Ch. 6—Architectural Rhetoric and the Rhetoric of Architecture) offers several theoretical concepts related mainly to 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE Athens and Macedon while bringing to the front the overall area and design comparisons between private and palatial architecture,

arguing that in many ways one may reflect on the other in the region. The article does not bring new data or architectural analysis but rather aims at convincing that ‘...the evidence points to the use of housing as a symbol of wealth...’—a point that is not much objected to anyway.

I. Uytterhoeven’s article (Ch. 8—Mudbricks and Papyri from the Desert Sand) is the first to accumulate hardcore regional archaeological and historical data, assisted by papyrology, that allows for a better understanding of how houses and *insulae* looked like in Graeco-Roman Fayum, Egypt. The author looks mainly at the old excavations data emphasizing architecture, spaces, and settlement grid while deliberately omitting a discussion of small finds. The data is relevant and clearly stated, moreover, a comparative study is offered throughout the text and the author should be complimented on the results.

A. Pudsey’s article (Ch. 9—Housing and Community) brings crucial data on practices and legalities of house sharing from the village of Tebtynis in Roman Egypt based on papyri documentation. Such information is priceless in order to understand the complex daily-life practices. In a few occasions a correlation between papyri and archaeological data is offered in a convincing way. The article illuminates house division, house sharing, and even house leasing in Roman Egypt—issues that archaeological data by itself cannot provide insight on.

S. Speksnijder (Ch. 10—The Elusive *vestibulum*) successfully defines, locates and analyzes *vestibula* in the literary and archaeological record. The author convincingly rejects most of the *vestibula* addressed as such in archaeological publications. The article perfectly addresses the architectural-functional problem, hence serves as a valid tool for any future research on the Roman *domus*.

J. A. Baird (Ch. 13—Houses and Time) observes the changes in houses in Dura-Europos as chronological representations which will assist us in better understating of the house phases in time. Baird offers a variety of examples taken from the descriptions and plans of early excavators of Dura-Europos, e.g. phases of a wall, mudbrick blocking, secondary use of building materials and other elements of building continuity. The author illuminates ‘changes in the house’ that the eye of the previous archaeologists missed or did not pay sufficient attention to. Every modern field archaeologist is well aware to keep an eye out for any blocking, changes, various building materials, and secondary plastering, which help to date the whole construction and its phases. In all that concerns the ancient people’s perspective of time and change of their own house, I think we should be cautious in attributing a deeper meaning to it: we have to remember that *all* walls, from within and out were plastered again and again, hence a well-maintained house revealed no signs of change to its inhabitants.

The last article in this volume (Ch. 15—A Response: ‘Using the Material and Written Sources’ Revisited) presents P. Allison’s personal research-oriented perspective. This review-and-summary text hardly stands by itself and would have been better included as part of the introduction.

The volume addresses a vital and wide subject of interest and research – households in antiquity around the Mediterranean. Most articles in the volume deal with theoretical and textual approaches from Homeric Greece to Rome, but the archaeological toolkit nowadays is very diverse and allows a wide variety of spatial and analytical analyses which could have been emphasized more. Much of the archaeological attention in the last two decades is towards the people themselves and their environment, from the analysis of imported vessels used in a symposium to the gutters and garbage dumps where most information regarding fauna and flora is to be obtained. This information is absent from the present volume. The task of accumulating together a variety of conference topics is not an easy one and here the editors should be complimented. The advantage is also the high quality of the illustrative material. Unfortunately, the use of endnotes instead of footnotes is demanding for



the reader. The length of the articles and lack of one clear argument for some contributions is another problem that prevents most public from enjoying the book. The volume will be mostly appreciated by researchers seeking to better understand the methodological and textual orientations towards housing in Classical archaeology.

Michael Eisenberg

The Zinman Institute of Archaeology, University of Haifa  
[mayzenb@gmail.com](mailto:mayzenb@gmail.com)

Julia L. Shear, *Serving Athena: The Festival of the Panathenaia and the Construction of Athenian Identities*. Cambridge – New York: Cambridge University Press, 2021. Pp. xxii, 532. ISBN 9781108485272 \$135.00.

This book builds upon Julia L. Shear's doctoral dissertation submitted at the University of Pennsylvania in 2001, which explored the history and development of the Panathenaia. In her book S. refocused her interest on the festival as an occasion for constructing Athenian identities. The author describes her approach as holistic in that she combines literary, epigraphic, and archaeological sources. While such method will (hopefully) appear obvious to many, the principle of using all the evidence available for understanding and interpreting the ancient past is not as commonly practiced as some might expect. S. also draws on theories developed in the social sciences, and proclaims that this is 'the direction in which the study of ancient (Greek) history needs to go' (p. xvii). This may be true, yet one may reasonably argue that the study of past societies should not be limited to going one direction only.

Lavishly illustrated with high-quality figures, this book comprises eight chapters, eight appendices (on the Hellenistic archons of Athens, the Parthenon frieze, the races for the *apobates* and the dismounting charioteer, the *pyrrhiche*, the third-century BCE officials of the Great Panathenaia, the imperial cult and the Panathenaia, and a few epigraphic sources of the Hellenistic period), several tables, a bibliography, and three indices (textual sources, collections, general).

Chapter 1 introduces the Panathenaia and sets out the theoretical underpinning of the book. In reviewing past scholarship on the topic, S. stresses that her book provides the first diachronic investigation of this major Athenian festival spanning almost 1,000 years, from 566/5 BCE to the 390s CE. She draws on the now classic polis religion model and uses it in association with work done in the social sciences on identities, especially Social Identity Theory. The emphasis is on identities as being socially constructed, multiple, fluid, and constantly re-negotiated. Although useful, the section on 'Evidence for the Panathenaia' appears a little to didactic in the context of a learned book as the one under review.

Chapter 2 deals with the mythologies of the Panathenaia. S. argues that the multiplicity of stories connected with the festivities collectively commemorated the gods' victory over the Giants and Athena's role in that battle. The festival's two founders, Erichthonios (not to be confused with Erechtheus, as most scholars have done) and Theseus, referred to issues of autochthony, unity, and inclusivity. To these stories and heroes are connected the *pyrrhiche* and the apobatic race, two of the occasion's signature events, which involved armed contestants and thus emphasised the overall martial theme of the Panathenaia. With the addition of the cult of the Tyrannicides to the festival's rituals in the late sixth century BCE, the Panathenaia also came to celebrate the end of the tyranny and the introduction of democracy. Collectively, these various narratives and activities made the Panathenaia the most important occasion for constructing Athenian identities.