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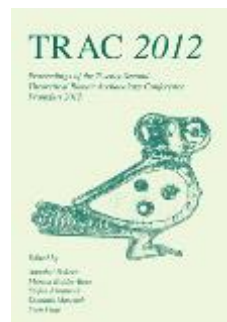www.trac.org.uk

Street Activity, Dwellings and Wall Inscriptions in Ancient Pompeii: A Holistic Study of Neighbourhood Relations

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Introduction

Many ordinary activities in the Roman world required exiting the home and going to the streets. Poor cooking facilities made it often necessary to buy and consume food and drink in *cauponae* or *tabernae*. Water was available from public fountains in the street and neighbourhood religion was practiced at the crossroads shrines. Maintaining social relationships was also probably more pleasant outdoors and the many necessary activities connected with the streetscape made meeting neighbours and friends outside a natural occurrence. This is attested by literary evidence particularly for Rome (Toner 1995: 65–88; Holleran 2011), but similar activity can be imagined for most parts of the Roman world. Literary sources place crowds usually to the forum, baths and other places intended for public gatherings and providing public entertainment. Taverns, crossroads and streets in general are also often mentioned.

Many Roman literary authors disapproved of hanging around in public places and associated such behaviour with drunkenness, rows and crime. Previous research has suggested that the Roman elite actively avoided places where crowds were likely to gather particularly in their choices of places to live (Laurence 1994; 2007; Wallace-Hadrill 1995). Archaeological evidence in Pompeii has been used to argue for moral zoning and elite control of deviant behaviour in bars and brothels. However, recent studies have shown that the locations of such deviant establishments can also be explained with economic causes (McGinn 2002; Ellis 2004; 2006). Bars and work places for prostitutes are often found in or close to main streets: the retail business of food, drink and even of sex needed to be where the consumers were. These discussions have concentrated on just a few aspects of Pompeian street life and many questions can be raised concerning both practical and theoretical aspects. What kind of activities can we recognize in the Pompeian streets apart from bars and brothels? 'Elite' are central in these discussions, but are usually not physically present. Where did the elite live? Where did the non-elite inhabitants of Pompeii live? Where were the dwellings located in relation to the suggested deviant and other activities?

In this paper, we aim firstly to map various street activities and locations of dwellings in Pompeii. The second aim is to study the wall inscriptions, electoral notices and graffiti, and their distribution in the townscape in relation to the street activities and dwellings. By adopting a more holistic approach – that is looking at the whole instead of merely some component elements as well as using varying sources and methods (see e.g. DeMarrais 2005; in classical archaeology used e.g. in Ikäheimo 2003) – we wish to gain a better understanding of how Pompeian neighbourhoods functioned. The holistic
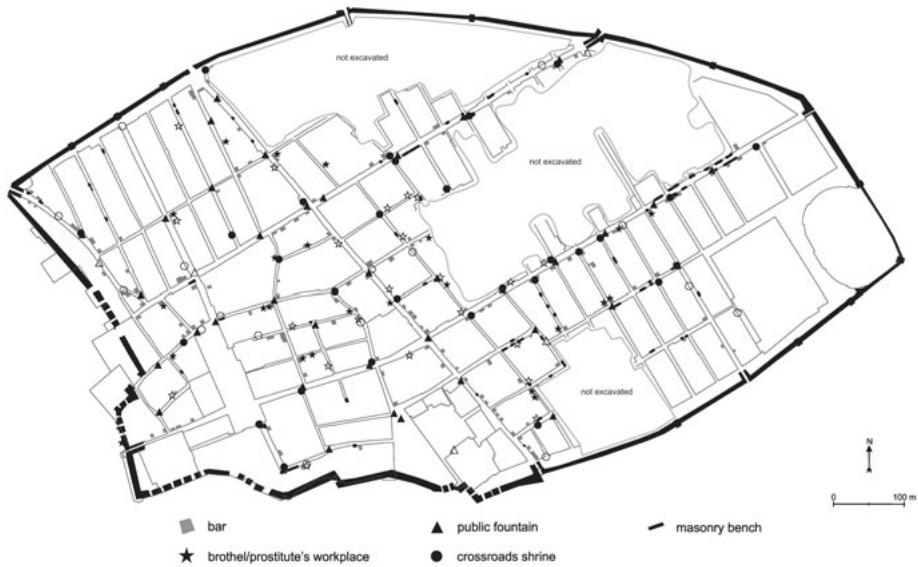
Figure 1: Distribution of elements of street activity in Pompeii: public fountains, crossroad shrines, benches, bars and workplaces of prostitutes

view is combined with micro-topography in the analysis of the locations of the wall inscriptions: only a detailed distribution map gives enough information on the contexts of the texts. Contextualization of archaeological and written evidence is used as a tool to understand neighbourhood relations in Roman Pompeii.

Street Activities

The first task was to create a topographical map of the activities related to the streetscape. Various elements of the Pompeian cityscape have been recently systematically researched and published. However, these analyses usually concentrate on singular elements and rarely combine their results to other data to verify the hypotheses. We collected data on various activities that are associated with crowds in the streets and plotted them as accurately as possible to a map of Pompeii (based on map published in Dobbins and Foss 2007). The idea is simple and originally successfully used by Ray Laurence in his effort to map and interpret different kinds of activities in Pompeii's townscape (Laurence 1994; 2007). The series of maps he produced repeat very similar distributions for most kinds of activities from production and retail to those related to local identity and deviant behaviour. For our purposes, the most interesting themes discussed by Laurence are local identity and deviant behaviour (1994: 38–50, 70–87; 2007: 39–61, 82–101). Crossroad shrines and public water fountains used to study local identity are located on the very same streets which are later deemed deviant (Laurence 1994: Maps
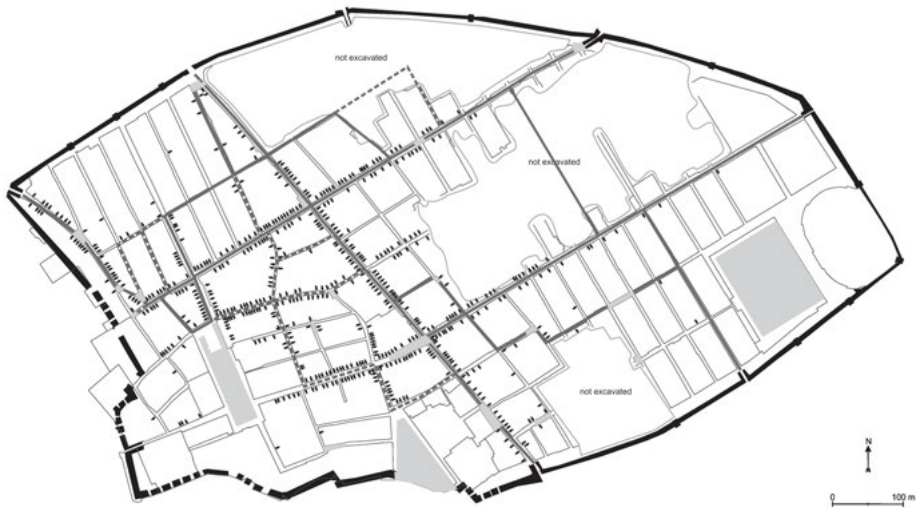
Figure 2: Wide shop doorways, traffic routes, porticoes and open areas in Pompeii

3.1, 3.2 and 5.4 – the deviant street map is not reproduced in the 2007 edition). Bars and brothels represent the activities that were disapproved by some of the Roman authors, but their locations match those of non-deviant activities almost perfectly. The two sets of evidence were treated separately enabling different interpretations, but had they been compared, the final results might have been different.

We plotted the crossroads shrines (47 based on Van Andringa 2000), public water fountains (45 based on Jansen 2002), bars with counters (154 based on Ellis 2004; 2006) and work places of prostitutes (46 based on McGinn 2002; Guzzo and Scarano Ussani 2009) and added street benches (100 based on Hartnett 2008) and probably frequently used traffic routes (Poehler 2006; Kaiser 2011a; Weilguni 2011). We also searched for plazas, wide parts in the streets and porticoes using large scale ground plans of Pompeii (RICA maps published in Vander Poel 1984; Eschebach 1993) and visits at the sites identified from the maps. Furthermore, the public spaces and buildings related to gathering of people were marked on the maps. Most of the evidence used is relatively reliable: shrines, fountains and benches are in the majority of cases clearly identifiable and easy to spot in the streetscape. The bars are identified by the presence of masonry counters (but see also McCallum 2011 for evidence of counters being used in other kinds of contexts). The evidence for *hospitia* and various other kinds of hospitality establishments could be used only cursorily as these are usually difficult to recognize archaeologically and the evidence is often ambiguous (Kleberg 1957; DeFelice 2001). In most cases (93 out of some 125 establishments), these contain a bar with a counter and are thus included in our data. The evidence for prostitution is also somewhat ambiguous, but the two studies used discuss also the criteria for identifying such sites (masonry beds, erotic art, inscriptions) and agree on the interpretation of most of the locations.

The features related to street activities were plotted on the map as accurately as possible (Fig. 1 and Fig. 2). Most of the fountains and shrines are found at crossroads or very close to them. The fountains were set at regular intervals (e.g. Eschebach 1979: Abb. 8) and they supplied water to most of Pompeii. Their locations were partly dictated by supply from the mains water and partly probably by perceived demand (see also Ling 2005). Laurence (1994: 38–50; 2007: 39–61) used the fountains as the most important evidence when discussing local identity. The locations of crossroads shrines have also been used to identify neighbourhoods and they would probably have been placed at crossroads significant to the people participating in the activities of the cult (Van Andringa 2000: 71–80). Bars with counters are often located in street corners, but they are also found elsewhere in the city block frontages (*cf.* Ellis 2004). Many of the sites related to prostitution are found in bars in the street corners and even the only certain, purpose-built brothel (VII,12,18–20) opens onto a crossroads. However, most of them are located away from the main streets (Van Nes 2011: 115). The only element used here clearly not connected to the crossroads are the benches which tend to be built along the facades of the city blocks. The crossroads were clearly an important location for the neighbourhoods and the gathering of crowds in Pompeii.

It is also important to note that the elements are not evenly distributed in the townscape. Most of them are located along the main streets starting from the gates in the town wall. The secondary streets with many signs of street activity are among the most important traffic routes inside Pompeii (Fig. 2; based on Weilguni 2011: 167–222). Benches are found mostly in the eastern part of town, particularly in *Regiones* I and II, and they are connected with both domestic and commercial buildings (Hartnett 2008: Fig.1, Table 1). Large squares are usually located close to public buildings: the forum surrounded by religious, administrative and commercial buildings, the Triangular Forum next to temples and theatres and the *palaestra* adjacent to the amphitheatre. Almost all the porticoes are also related to these areas. The streets feature some wider sections which tend to be along the main streets and in some crossroads possibly indicating a need to separate some activity from the traffic in the street or simply making turning at the crossroads easier. The streets in front of the Stabian Baths and the main entrance to the theatres are wider probably to accommodate crowds. The street section in front of the Stabian Baths is also part of a processional route (Wallace-Hadrill 1995: 49–50) which in part could explain the need for a wider street.

There are also some active streets outside the main streets and crossroads, for example the eastern end of Via degli Augustali in *Regio* IX and the streets south of *Insula* of the Menander (I,10) in *Regio* I (for the street names, see e.g. the Pompeii in Pictures web page). One further element of street activity are the wide doorways related to shops and when they are added to the map (Fig. 2; e.g. Gassner 1986; Ellis 2011) the small gaps in the otherwise active main streets disappear. Areas that feature few signs of any kind of street activity can be found inside *Regio* VI in the north-west, around the forum, the theatre district in the south and the surroundings of the amphitheatre and the *palaestra* in the south-east.

Based on this evidence we drew a map of active streets and nodes of activities (Fig. 3). The nodes are places where many different kinds of activities or a large number of one type of activity, for example several bars side by side, can be found. Nodes are usually found in the crossroads – a natural outcome of how many of the elements are located. A quarter of the some 130 intersections found in Pompeii (Weilguni 2011: 182, Fig. 43) can be regarded as activity nodes. Some of the node areas stretch further along the city block frontages, but they tend to be fairly rare. The street activities in Pompeii are located on the main streets and crossroads areas as expected, but somewhat surprisingly, the areas around public buildings and many natural locations for gatherings of large crowds are outside these actives zones.
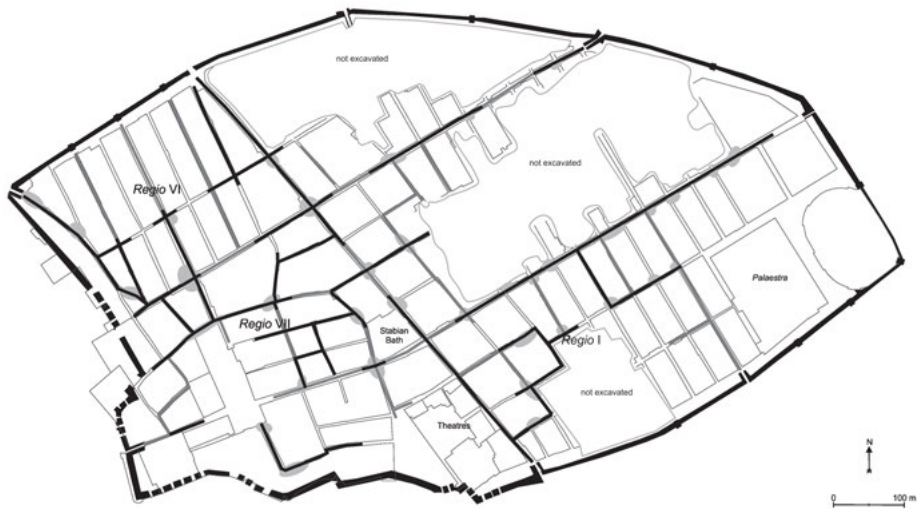

Figure 3: Active streets and activity nodes in Pompeii. The most active streets in black and streets with fewer elements in grey

Dwellings

The second task was to plot Pompeian dwellings on the map. Identifying dwellings is not as straightforward as one might think – for example some of the large and luxuriously decorated atrium houses, such as the House of Sallust (VI,2,3–5.30; Fiorelli 1875: 83–85; Kleberg 1957: 31–34), could have been used as *hospitia*. The House of Sallust features a bar with a masonry counter connected with the atrium as well as a masonry *triclinium* in its garden which make it a possible *hospitium*. It is also difficult to determine which of the smallest one-room houses were used as dwellings and not just as shops and/or workshops. Studies on use of space in Pompeii are often based on varying interpretations of the evidence and consequently result in varying statistics of what constitutes a dwelling, a shop or a workshop (e.g. Schoonhoven 1999). We

decided to use Astrid Schoonhoven's (2006: Appendix I) catalogue and classification as a starting point. Schoonhoven's list is not complete as for example the houses in *Insula Occidentalis* (VI,16; VII,17) and on the southern edge of Pompeii (*Regio* VIII) have not been included, but it is one of the few catalogues where a uniform classification to most of the housing units found in Pompeii is applied. The classification is quite detailed with its seven categories based on size and architecture of the units (Table 1). These classes can also fairly easily be combined to match Andrew Wallace-Hadrill's (1994: 80–82) or Damian Robinson's (1997) four categories for Pompeian houses (Table 1).

Groups	Unit Type (Schoonhoven 2006)	Classification in Wallace-Hadrill 1994	Pompeii	Reg. I, VI, VII
Small	Workshop, shop and/or dwelling, < 100m² in size, no status architecture	Class 1: size < 50m², 1–2 rooms, no decorative elements	535	336
Small	Larger workshop/shop and/or dwelling, more complex plan, no status architecture, row houses	Class 2: size 50–170m², 2–7 rooms, some decorative elements	233	125
Medium	One atrium or peristyle, no commercial area	Class 3: size 170–350m², 5–13 rooms, atrium and/or garden, more decorative elements	94	59
Medium	One atrium or peristyle, with commercial area		40	26
Large	One atrium and a decorative garden/peristyle		112	81
Very Large	One atrium and peristyle or two atria	Class 4: size > 350m², > 13 rooms, atria and gardens, lavishly decorated	55	35
Very Large	More than one atrium and more than one peristyle		39	26

Table 1: Classifications of housing units and their numbers in Pompeii

Schoonhoven's first two classes feature a shop or a workshop and they are most commonly located along the main streets (Fig. 2). Their locations can be explained with economic reasons: shops are usually located in the areas where most people move (*cf.* Van Nes 2011). The rest of the houses also feature commercial elements, but not always – they are generally more clearly dwellings. The inhabitants were able to invest in the size, comfort and luxury of their dwelling. These five classes of dwellings were divided into three groups of roughly equal size (Table 1) as some of them are very similar to one another and studying the distributions of all the original classes afforded no real analytical value. Our final grouping is also close to Wallace-Hadrill's house

types (Table 1). The classification of the dwellings represents their appearance around the time of Pompeii's destruction. Most house complexes are results of long building and habitation histories, but there is no evidence of major changes in their distribution (e.g. the distribution of late Hellenistic *domus* in Dickmann 1999: Abb. 38).

Who lived in these houses is a central question for our analysis, but one that is difficult to answer. The identifications of owners are based on epigraphic evidence, such as seal stamps, electoral *programmata*, graffiti and texts painted on amphorae. Matteo Della Corte's work (1965) is seminal and still often cited even though his methodology has been deemed faulty and unreliable (Mouritsen 1988: 18–19, 61; Allison 2001). Only in very few cases do we have reliable data to deduce who lived in the house before its destruction in A.D. 79. For example, the banker Caecilius Iucundus very likely owned the house where his archive of wax tablets was found (V,1,22–27; Karivieri and Forsell 2007). This house boasts two atria, a large peristyle garden, wall paintings and floor mosaics and consequently belongs to the group of the largest and most lavishly decorated houses in Pompeii. One of the underlying assumptions in almost all studies concerning the social significance of the Roman house is that the larger the house and the more lavishly decorated it was, the higher its owner's status was in society (e.g. Zanker 1979; Wallace-Hadrill 1994; Dickmann 1999; Hales 2003). This is the assumption that we also have to accept for lack of better or more convincing alternatives: the large houses with multiple elements of status architecture and elaborate decoration are likely to be where the Pompeian social, political and economic elite lived. The distribution of the different types of dwellings consequently should reflect where persons of different economic means and social statuses lived.

The overall distribution of the dwellings is familiar to what was encountered in the previous section (Fig. 4). They can be found in most parts of Pompeii apart from the

Figure 4: Distribution of different types of dwellings in Pompeii

south-east corner with *palaestra* and amphitheatre. Also the city blocks surrounding the theatres and the forum feature only few dwellings. Larger and smaller houses are distributed fairly evenly across the townscape. The most solidly residential area is *Regio* VI in the north-west corner of Pompeii and the most non-residential area is *Regio* II in the south-east.

Wall Inscriptions

The third type of evidence used is wall inscriptions, particularly electoral *programmata* and graffiti. These texts have been studied for many reasons, most often to understand Pompeian prosopography and town administration (Castrén 1975; Franklin 1980; Mouritsen 1988; Chiavia 2002). Particular types of texts have also been studied, for example literary citations (Gigante 1979) or texts and drawings produced by children (Huntley 2011). Recently groundbreaking work has been done in studying graffiti in contexts inside houses (Benefiel 2010; 2011). Previous research on the distribution of wall inscriptions on the house facades has been done by calculating the number of texts per facade or street metre (Mouritsen 1988: Fig. 3; Laurence 1994: 96–100, Maps 6.5–6.8; 2007: 109–113, Maps 6.5–6.8; Sakai 1993 is an exception). The resulting maps give a general impression of where texts can be found in Pompeii and they have been used to recognize the areas where people moved. However, the inscriptions were not evenly distributed on the walls of the city blocks as shown by old photographs and drawings (Varone and Stefani 2009). They were usually clustered and we set out to look at the exact locations and contexts – types of house they were connected with – of the texts. The assumption is that people not only moved regularly in these areas, but also stayed in them for longer periods of time, at least enough for reading and writing messages. They could have formed loitering crowds to the discontent of the elite house owners as suggested by previous research.

One of the reasons why this kind of study has not been done before is probably the sheer amount of work. The entries in *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* IV and its many appendices are arranged according to types of texts and not topographically requiring going through each volume to find the relevant texts. The indications of find locations are often ambiguous and sometimes require further work to place them on the map. Moreover, the sheer number of texts is daunting.

We also decided to use samples for the very reasons of work economy and time. Three areas which cover approximately half of the excavated area of Pompeii were selected. *Regio* I in the south-west and *Regio* VI in the north-west are mostly residential in character although naturally it is not known what lies under the unexcavated part of *Regio* I. They are also otherwise similar in location and size: each is situated between main streets starting from the gates and close to centres of public activities – *Regio* VI next to the forum and *Regio* I to the theatres. The third area is *Regio* VII around the forum. That part of Pompeii features a great number of public buildings and less residential units. The most significant differences between the selected areas appear in their modern excavation histories. Both *Regiones* VI and VII were excavated early in

the research history of Pompeii whereas *Regio* I was excavated mostly in the twentieth century (e.g. Berry 1998: Map on pp. 4–5). Previously it has been suggested that the areas excavated earlier feature less inscriptions than those excavated later due to poorer documentation and preservation (Mouritsen 1988: 49–50).

More than 2100 inscriptions have been found in the facades of houses in our three areas of interest (Table 2). Almost 800 are graffiti and more than 1300 are electoral notices and other painted texts such as advertisements for gladiatorial games. Both main text types can be found in almost equal numbers in all three regions. Most of the texts, roughly 1600, can be located with sufficient accuracy. Most of the uncertain locations (440) are in *Regiones* VI and VII as expected based on their excavation history. It could also be suggested that the final number of inscriptions from *Regio* I should be even higher considering that parts of it are unexcavated. However, although there are slightly more electoral *programmata* in *Regio* I than in *Regiones* VI or VII, the numbers of graffiti from each are very similar suggesting that there might not be that much difference in recoding accuracy between the areas. Graffiti can be difficult to observe and disappear quickly when the plaster surface is exposed to weathering. Some of the differences between the areas might also result from different kinds of building materials. Many of the facades particularly in *Regio* VI are built of Nucerian tuff and the inscriptions were often painted directly on the stone surfaces instead of the wall plaster used to cover the facades in the other two areas. Inscriptions on wall plaster are probably easier to detect, but are preserved poorly compared to those painted directly onto stone. The plaster surfaces in the facades were exposed to the effects of weather and consequently needed to be replaced periodically. Old surfaces could also be repainted if that was needed. Most of the electoral notices have been connected to the elections of Neronian and Flavian periods (e.g. Chiavia 2002: 122–187).

Area	Graffiti	Programmata	Other	Total
Regio I	269 (32)	505 (75)	3 (0)	792 (107)
Regio VI	276 (107)	392 (135)	2 (1)	686 (243)
Regio VII	258 (60)	436 (127)	20 (10)	693 (193)
Total	803 (199)	1343 (337)	25 (11)	2171 (547)

Table 2: Graffitti, electoral notices and painted texts in Regiones I, VI and VII of Pompeii. Texts in uncertain locations in brackets

The general distribution of the electoral notices in the whole of Pompeii as calculated and mapped by Henrik Mouritsen (1988: Fig. 3; here as Fig. 5) forms a familiar pattern compared to what was seen in previous sections. When the accurately placed inscriptions in the three study areas are mapped (Fig. 6 and Fig. 7) it is worth noting that the electoral *programmata* and graffiti are usually located on the same facades. The electoral notices are usually painted right next to or very close to doorways and consequently, the facades where there are no doorways feature very few electoral *programmata*. Some side streets

*Figure 5: Frequency of electoral programmata on the facades of Pompeii calculated texts
per facade metre (after Mouritsen 1988: Fig. 3)*

particularly in *Regio* VI feature more graffiti than electoral notices. If a location has been
suggested for the uncertain cases, they are almost invariably on the same streets as the
certain locations. The distribution pattern also suggests that the number of unrevealed
inscriptions in *Regio* I might not be that high as the unexcavated areas are located
away from the active parts of the region. In conclusion it can be stated that despite
suspicions that early documentation methods might have affected the distribution of
wall inscriptions in Pompeii, what we have is a fairly accurate representation of where
they were most frequently encountered in ancient times.

Comparing Distributions

The results of the locational analysis of the street activities, dwellings and wall inscriptions
indicate that they are all most often connected with the main streets starting from the
gates and the crossroads. In other words, the elements in the streetscape indicating
street activities were related to the areas where there were dwellings and inscriptions
were written in the same areas. The zones of public activities such as the forum or the
amphitheatre were inactive despite the fact that all these must have attracted crowds.
The fountains, crossroad shrines and even bars were intended to be used mainly by the
inhabitants of Pompeii rather than by occasional visitors to see for example games in
the amphitheatre.

Most Pompeians seemed to have chosen to live in the active parts of the city despite
possible presence of crowds and possibility of encountering deviant behaviour – many
of them probably even participated in it at least by visiting bars which could be found
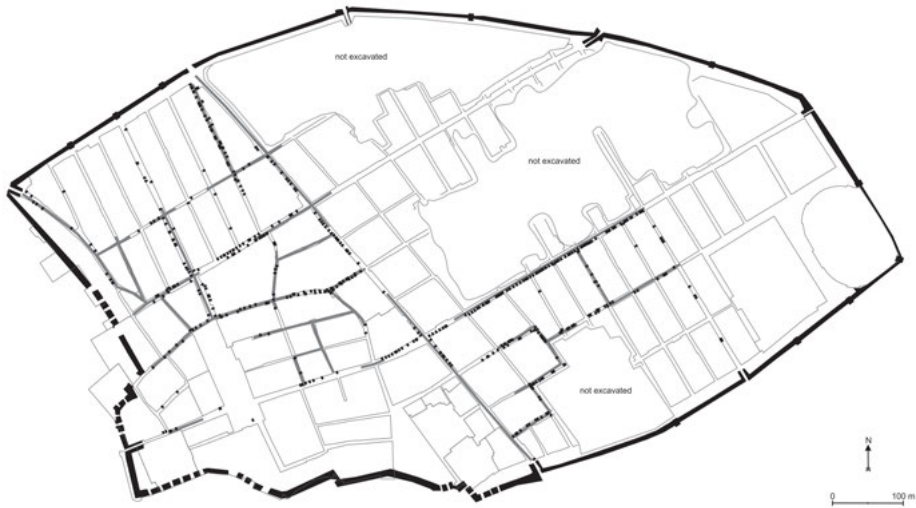
Figure 6: Find locations of electoral programmata in Regiones I, VI and VII in Pompeii

close to most Pompeian dwellings. What about then the largest houses owned by the presumed Pompeian elite? When the locations of the very large houses are plotted together with the active streets, the correlation is quite clear: the houses are mostly located on the active streets (Fig. 8). Further analysis shows that the very large houses had their main doors usually on the most active streets (55 of 94) and that the smaller the dwelling the more likely it was to open onto a quiet side street. Almost none of the doorways to dwellings are located near the crossroads and consequently nodes of activity and dwellings do not correlate. This is probably related to the architecture of the dwellings – building a symmetrical and consequently usually wide atrium house with an entrance in the corner of a city block is quite difficult. Economic reasons could also be important as the crossroads are clearly prime retail property and having a doorway to a private dwelling there would be a waste of potential income. Possible deviant behaviour in bars and workplaces of prostitutes is usually never too far from the main entrances of the largest houses.

Three anomalous locations can be found in the distribution of the very large houses with regard to street activity. *Regio* VI features fewer active streets in general, but the inactive northern part of Via di Mercurio running north–south through the area and the similarly inactive western part of Via delle Terme between *Regiones* VI and VII feature many very large houses (five and eight respectively). Third such street can be found between *Regiones* VII and VIII: the western part of Via dell'Abbondanza between the forum and Via Stabiana features six very large houses despite its inactive character. However, only the northern part of Via di Mercurio is truly isolated from all sorts of street activity as the two other street sections feature tight rows of shop fronts although other elements of street activity cannot be found along them (*cf.* Fig. 2). *Regio* VI has
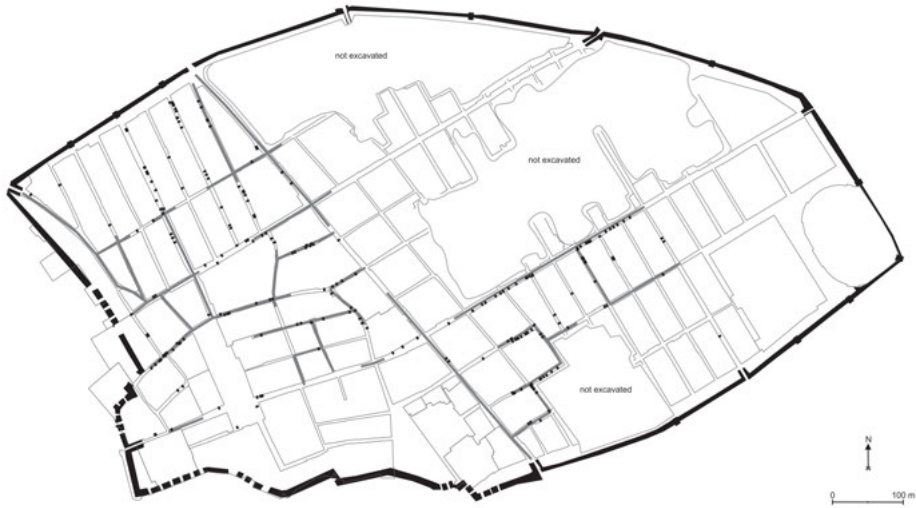
Figure 7: Find locations of graffiti in Regiones I, VI and VII in Pompeii.

been interpreted as a possible elite residential area and it does feature quite a few of the largest houses in Pompeii (e.g. Schoonhoven 1999). But even here the very large houses open onto the central streets, not to the isolated side streets which feature most of the modest dwellings (Fig. 8). The very large houses are distributed similarly to the other dwellings: along the active streets. There does not seem to be a tendency for the Pompeian elite to isolate themselves from the rest of the town population.

The general distribution of electoral notices and graffiti in the three study areas is the same as that of the active streets and the reason is fairly obvious: no audience, no messages (Fig. 6 and Fig. 7). Painting advertisements and writing graffiti on the walls of isolated side streets is not worth the trouble. Most of the texts faced streets in general instead of the crossroads (Table 3) – although the corners of the city blocks are often narrow piers with little space for writing which makes the number of texts on them perhaps more significant. On the other hand, as it was noted above, the texts are

Area	Crossroads	Street
Programmata (n = 1020)	269	751
Graffiti (n = 604)	111	493
Regio I (n = 685)	113–42	335–195
Regio VI (n = 443)	47–5	227–164
Regio VII (n = 496)	109–64	189–134
Total (n = 1624)	380	1244

Table 3: Locations of wall inscriptions in the streetscape. In the figures per regio, programmata are mentioned first and graffiti second

Figure 8: The main entrances of very large houses (Table 2) compared to the active streets in Pompeii. See Fig. 3 for explanations of the colours.

usually connected to doorways without much regard to amount of wall space around the doorway. It is also interesting to note that the activity nodes were not particularly attractive for placing texts – roughly half of the texts at crossroads are in activity nodes. Apparently, location at crossroads was more important than the activities related to it attracting passers-by. Most of the texts, however, were located away from the corners of the city blocks.

The association of texts with facades rather than crossroads areas can be explained by analysing the types of houses associated with texts. In the study area, the modest shop-houses outnumber the large and very large dwellings roughly three to one (461 to 142) and feature most of the bars and shops which attracted crowds. Most of the properties in the crossroads were of this kind. The large and very large dwellings have their doorways along the facades of the city blocks and more than half of all the texts that could be located accurately – some 970 of the 1600 – are associated with these houses either exclusively or then between these and more modest units. Almost half of the texts (755) are found associated exclusively with the large and very large dwellings. The presence of texts probably indicates places where passers-by were likely to stop and possible even gather and consequently the doorways of the most prestigious houses were obviously preferred spots along the busy streets.

The graffiti are different from the electoral notices as they are not official in character. They are private and comparing their locations to the public electoral notices might give a different picture of where people hung out. However, their distribution is very similar to the distribution of the *programmata* and corresponds also well with the active streets (Fig. 7). Roughly half of the graffiti are connected with bar and shop fronts and the other
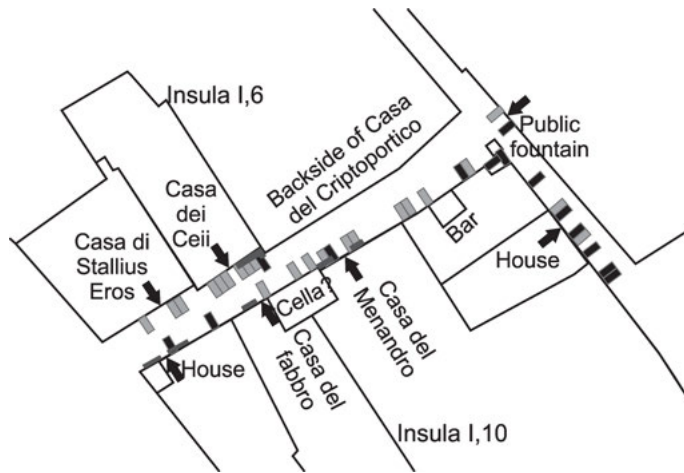
Figure 9: Distribution of electoral programmata and graffiti in the street between insulae I,6 and I,10. 'Cella' is the possible prostitute's workplace. Graffiti in grey, programmata in black. Arrows indicate doorways to dwellings

half to facades of dwellings. Most of the graffiti related to dwellings were scribbled on the facades of the large and very large houses. Particularly many graffiti were related to dwellings in *Regio* VI: 127 of the 169 found in the area compared to the 80 (of the 235) in *Regio* I and 55 (of the 198) in *Regio* VII. In general the distribution of graffiti suggests that people loitering in the street by the large dwellings scribbling on the facades were not a problem for the house owners.

Only relatively few texts are connected with public buildings and electoral notices are particularly rare. Some of the facades of the public buildings in *Regio* VII attracted writers: the south-east corner of the portico surrounding the temple of Apollo along the Via Marina and the south facade of the Building of Eumachia on the opposite side of the forum. These are the preferred places, but otherwise inscriptions – mostly graffiti – can be found inside the public buildings, for example the Stabian Baths, *macellum* and the Building of Eumachia. Basilica flanking *Regio* VII as well as the purpose-built brothel (VII,12,18–20) feature most graffiti in the western part of Pompeii, but all are strictly inside. Outside the study area, the *palaestra* and the region of the amphitheatre in general as well as the entrance gallery to the theatres in the southern part of Via Stabiana are similar preferred locations (Keegan 2011: Table 9.4). Even in these contexts, graffiti are far more common than electoral notices. The electoral notices were painted usually only on the facades of housing units owned privately and they were apparently intimately connected with the persons who controlled the facades over which they were painted.

The graffiti writers were active in two locations differing from the general distribution pattern: the middle of *Regio* VI as well as in one of the side streets in the eastern part of the region, Vicolo del Labirinto. A group of large houses can be found in the first location and it could be imagined that the graffiti were scribbled by clients

and other visitors waiting in front of the house. It has been suggested recently that the ritual of *salutatio* would have been socially and geographically mostly limited to the city of Rome (Goldbeck 2010). However, patronage relationships were abundant in all parts of the Roman world and could have resulted in similar practices elsewhere. The strong association between the wall inscriptions and doorways of large houses certainly suggests gatherings of people.

The other cluster in *Regio* VI is located on the facades of fairly modest dwellings. Two benches and a possible prostitute's work place are located in the middle of the cluster. Some graffiti with sexual content have been connected with the latter site. A similar cluster of graffiti in a quiet side street can be found in the south side of *insula* IX,5 (Keegan 2011: Table 9.4) where two prostitutes' workplaces have been suggested in previous research (IX,5,14–16 and IX,5,18–21; McGinn 2002: 42 nr. 35 based on presence of a possible tavern and some erotic art and 42 nr. 36 based on erotic graffiti). Some of the active streets which feature few electoral *programmata* and a large number of graffiti also have connections to prostitution, for example the street in the north-west part of *Regio* VII between *insulae* VII,2 and VII,3. Another similar site can be found north-west of the forum between *insulae* VII,6, VII,7 and VII,15. In each case the graffiti are not directly connected with the prostitute's workplace but were incised on the facades nearby. Based on these clusters in Pompeii, it could be suggested that abundant graffiti on otherwise quiet streets indicate places where prostitutes worked. The graffiti with sexual content have been used to identify these locations in previous research (McGinn 2002: *passim*; Guzzo and Scarano Ussani 2009: *passim*), but the results of the analysis of all the graffiti in the adjacent areas and elements of street activity can be used to strengthen the hypotheses.

In *Regio* I, the wall inscriptions occur mostly on the busy traffic routes, but in its western part there is one anomalous area. A narrow street, Vicolo del Conciapelle, starts from Via Stabiana and wounds its way between city blocks (I,1; I,2; I,5; I,10; I,19) towards north-west (Vicolo del Citarista and an unnamed street). All the sections are among the active streets. Only two medium sized dwellings opened to the first part which also makes the high number of inscriptions anomalous. Several bars and possible brothels, on the other hand, can be found along the route. The connection to Via Stabiana is blocked from vehicular traffic (Kaiser 2011a: Map 3.6) and it seems likely that the route was frequently used by pedestrians who would have been either passing through towards the eastern part of town or were headed for the bars and/or brothels on the streets.

The eastern part of Vicolo del Menandro in *Regio* I located between city blocks 6 and 10 illustrates the results of these locational analyses well (Fig. 9). It is an active street based on three elements: fountain, benches and a possible prostitute's work place. The fountain is located in the crossroads in the north-eastern corner of *insula* I,10. Two doors west there is a bar (I,10,2–3 *caupona–popina*), followed by main entrances to five large dwellings on both sides of the street (south: I,10,4.14–17 Casa del Menandro, 1,10,7 Casa del Fabbro and I,10,8 unnamed house; north: I,6,15 Casa dei Ceii and I,6,13–14 Casa di Stallius Eros). There are several benches along the facades of the large houses

on both sides of the street. A prostitute's workplace (I,10,5) has been proposed to have existed in the south side of the street next to the entrance to the House of the Menander, the largest of the dwellings (McGinn 2002: 38 nr. 5 based on erotic graffiti CIL IV 8357–61 found both inside and to the east of the doorway). The electoral notices and the graffiti are mostly located next to the main entrances of the dwellings – only a few of the texts are connected to the bar or the crossroads area. The doorway to the prestigious Casa del Menandro was flanked by a bar and a possible *cella meretricia* which was also almost opposite to the entrance to the Casa dei Ceii. The owners of these two large and lavishly decorated houses displayed their support to electoral candidates on their street fronts and their visitors and clients probably scribbled the graffiti on the facades. Part of the graffiti could have been written by the clients to the prostitute working right next to the main entrance to the prestigious house.

Conclusions

Studying the micro-topography of the elements in the cityscape holistically gives a more complete and different perspective to neighbourhood relationships in Pompeii. Only by combining many types of data and studying their distributions at both micro and macro-level can we gain insights into what happened in the streets and how the neighbourhoods were constructed.

Street activity and residential areas were intimately connected in Pompeian topography. The regions with major public buildings were dedicated to the public activities and attracted but few dwellings. Consequently the amenities and services intended for the residents were also missing from these public areas.

The large houses probably owned by the Pompeian elite were not placed far away from the active streets with their locations of deviant behaviour as has previously been suggested. Bars were more often located just a few doors away from the entrances of the large houses and their doors could not be reached without passing bars. The presence of wall inscriptions suggests that groups of people were common by their main entrances. Practices similar to the morning *salutatio* are one way of explaining the presence of texts by the doorways. The distribution of the large houses in Pompeii does not reflect isolation of the elite, but rather reminds of another quality that was required of elite housing: visibility and openness to their clients and other contacts (e.g. Wallace-Hadrill 1994: 10–16, 38–61). A different reading of the ancient sources also produces evidence for elite wishing to place their houses on the busy *viae* instead of quiet side streets (Kaiser 2011b: 117–118). The better integrated, active streets afforded more visibility and consequently were a natural choice for an elite house. The only large houses isolated from all kinds of street activity can be found in the central part of *Regio* VI. Despite this they feature many graffiti indicating that people loitering in the street were not a problem for their owners.

The owners of the houses apparently had an active role in promoting electoral candidates and the activity of the street was probably an important factor here (*cf.* Mouritsen 1988: 44–52). The facades of the large houses in the northern part of *Regio*

VI feature few electoral notices whereas there are many on the facades of the houses on the busier thoroughfares in *Regio* I. This suggests that the houses on the active streets were better integrated into the social networks of Pompeii. The close connection of the wall inscriptions with the large dwellings could also suggest differences in rates of literacy among the inhabitants of Pompeii – the clients of the individuals living in the houses could have been more literate than others.

The social and political activity of a rich and influential patron brought crowds to his door, but also benefited the shops and bars in his street by bringing them customers. If the owners of large houses somehow controlled their city blocks (e.g. Ynnilä 2012: 142–178 for an analysis of ownership relationships in *insula* IX,3), it seems more likely that they encouraged all kinds of activity on their home streets rather than tried to stifle it.

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