Andrew Wallace-Hadrill has written four important papers since 1988 which have been gathered and slightly revised in this book. I see it as preliminary rather than definitive (as does the author, xvii), though not less valuable for that. Wallace-Hadrill’s work is a mine of new approaches and insights, combining archaeological and literary evidence from the Roman world with judiciously chosen comparative material (e.g. Ariès on ‘a big house’ in the 17th century, 91). However, one feels constantly that future study and measurement at Pompeii and Herculaneum will affect conclusions that rely unavoidably on the notebooks of early excavators whose standards of accuracy have now been superseded.

Wallace-Hadrill (W-H) asserts that the ‘purpose of this book is to make some tentative steps toward unlocking the memories of social language of the Roman house’ (xv). He holds the view that Roman houses reflect patterns of social behaviour. This basic approach has been in place for some time, but there has remained

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2 e.g. F.E. Brown, Roman Architecture, New York, c.1960, p. 9: ‘The architecture of the Romans was, from first to last, an art of shaping space around ritual.’
a tendency to see houses as sites for ‘paintings’ which can be extracted from their context and used to describe development in artistic style. By contrast, W-H sees houses as surroundings upon which the élite lavished resources in order to impress their crowds of visitors. The fashions they set were taken up and imitated by ordinary citizens. There is a social, rather than an artistic, language to be decoded. The house should be seen ‘... as a stage deliberately designed for the performance of social rituals, and not as a museum of artifacts’ (60).

After a useful Preface, Part I encompasses Chapters 1-3, which represent an attempt to formulate the social language of the Roman house. There is not much change from the original article on ‘The social structure of the Roman house’, although Varro’s evidence in *De Lingua Latina* on the use of decoration and furnishings to differentiate the rooms of a house has been incorporated. In Chapter 1, W-H starts from the fact that the quality and decoration of a Roman’s house were closely linked with his social standing. From this point, however, the Roman house appears as a more ambiguous social setting than its modern western successor. Neither gender nor age appears to influence the differentiation of space: there are no women’s rooms (as in a Greek house) or children’s rooms (8-10). An area of a Roman house may be public and grand (the magistrate’s atrium [central hall]) or private and grand (his triclinium [dining-room] or cubiculum [bedroom]). It may be private and humble (the slave’s bedroom, the farmer’s storeroom), or even public and humble (a shop, a public lavatory, or a service corridor) (11). Roman social relations determine this system of spatial differentiation.

In Chapter 2, W-H continues to expose misconceptions derived from modern culture. A Roman notable did not go to an office to work, he did not retire to his home to escape the pressures of work, and his home was intentionally more open to outside visitors. The bedroom was a place both for sleeping and for granting an audience to clients. Certain architectural features evoke a public building: scale, an ample atrium, the pattern of nave—aisles—clerestory windows which recall the classic basilica form, and the column. These features mark public reception areas for the conduct of quasi-public business (17-23).

The mix of public and private in a Roman house underlies the choice of wall decoration too (23-37). W-H understands Mau’s four ‘styles’ of mural painting in terms of social function rather than artistic development over time. For example, first style decoration was carefully preserved and renewed into the Empire in the House of the Faun, where public spaces are particularly dominant. It is argued that the governing principle behind the styles should be restated as *allusion* rather than *illusion*, and that the world
of public rather than private buildings is primarily evoked—temples, basilicas, gymnasias, etc. Second style decoration owes much to stage scenery because, like the scenographer, the mural decorator aimed to create a backdrop against which the actors could be transported into a world of luxury, grandeur, and public life suitable for their action and status. Third style, with its rejection of architectural vistas, indicates a fundamental change in ideology during the latter part of the first century BC. W-H sees a link with Augustus' elimination of traditional avenues by which the aristocracy advertised its status. In the changed circumstances a new self-image was required by the aristocracy (29-30):

'The dominant image of the aristocrat is no longer the republican patronus, surrounded by a crush of clients, but rather the imperial courtier or amicus principis, adept in his social contacts and mediating the web of imperial patronage.'

The highly public, indeed regal and sacral, is replaced by a more intimate and private kind of luxury during this period. Subsequently, fourth style decoration is known for its range and flexibility. Mythological paintings form the summit of a hierarchy of motifs that allow areas to be differentiated in importance by their decoration. Heroic and divine scenes enjoy prestige over more humble scenes of landscapes, still lifes, human faces in circular frames, floating figures of gods, nymphs and cupids, a variety of birds, panthers, griffins, swans, and even vases, thunderbolts, and the like.

Chapter 3 shows how certain areas could be marginalized, both architecturally and decoratively, in order to render low-status areas, servile quarters and the like, 'invisible' to the visitor. Conversely, a grand area like the peristyle was designed to impress visitors to the morning salutatio. This impression is supported by the visual transparency of the Roman house (44-45). The visitor standing in the fauces [entrance-passage] of the standard Vesuvian house is immediately presented with a vista that leads through the heart of the residence. This vista normally passes directly through the central point of the tablinum [record room], which functions as the morning reception area. But the vista does not terminate with the tablinum: it passes through it, into the garden world of the peristyle or into an imaginary, painted garden, and even past that to the mountain peaks of the real natural world (cf. Fig. 3.10, House of the Menander). Beyond the owner lie both the countryside and nature, suitably tamed.

Chapter 4 is the fruit of W-H's decision to take a sample of houses by block, to look systematically at every house in the blocks selected (Regio I, Pompeii; Regio VI, Pompeii; the central group of four Insulae in Herculaneum), and to set up a database to analyze comparable features. The chosen houses are differentiated according to size, function, whether they contain an impluviate atrium or colonnaded garden, and decoration. Results are presented in four quartiles. Associated artifacts were not employed because of the unrecorded removal of the great majority of such finds. Statistics feature heavily. The overall exercise is adventurous and competently performed but it is doubtful if many of the plans and figures pertaining to individual houses can bear the weight of analysis to which
W-H’s sophistication subjects them. As an undergraduate in the early 1980s I remember Jean-Paul Descoeudres (mentioned with gratitude [xvi] for ‘scepticism and questioning’) describing some of the massive discrepancies in plans and measurements that he had uncovered in work at Pompeii. Perhaps this chapter best encapsulates the positive and negative features of the book as a whole—powerful and interesting conceptualization brought to bear on imperfect evidence.

Chapter 5 relates the houses to the human households that populated them. It is especially valuable for its wide range of questions about how populations live together, and for the myriad permutations that appear to have been possible in the Roman world. In broad terms, the quartiles produced in Chapter 4 correspond to a progression of wealth and status of the inhabitants, but W-H argues strongly that not every large house necessarily contained, or even belonged to, wealthy people, and that not every small shop belonged to, or was inhabited by, poor people. The poor cannot be said to have lived exclusively in the smaller houses; many lived in the largest houses, as slaves, dependants, tenants, and lodgers of the rich. Indeed, one is struck not so much by a gulf between ‘rich families’ and ‘poor families’ in this analysis. What emerges is the promiscuity of the big household, in which rich and poor, male and female, young and old, inhabit the same spaces, separated by social rituals rather than physical environment.

Chapter 6 relates commercial activity and the world of work to leisure and entertainment. W-H does not see the clear differentiation between and within houses that Amedeo Maiuri envisaged. How, for instance, does one understand a large open area in a Pompeian house? It might serve to enhance the standing of the house, if surrounded by gracious porticoes, planted with specimen trees and flowering shrubs, and decorated with statuary and fountains. On the other hand, it might serve the purely practical function of a horticultural plot as a vineyard, for the commercial cultivation of flowers, or simply for raising vegetables for the table.

Chapter 7 is about the social diffusion of luxury, in particular the social diffusion of decoration (the core of ‘the social spread of Roman luxury’). W-H asks how widely the luxuries of the rich spread among the houses of craftsmen and shopkeepers. He looks in particular at wall painting—the light it casts on the spread of luxury and its role in the construction of status and identity. The largest houses offered the greatest potential for status display and they do indeed give the richest displays; yet ripples of luxury spread outward and downward to all but the smallest houses. W-H argues that the dramatic rate of innovation in wall decoration between the mid-second century BC and the reign of Nero was accompanied by an equally dramatic extension of the use of such ‘luxuries’. This innovation and spread was driven by emulation, both inside and outside the élite, for example by members of the local élites of Italy, or by members of socially suppressed groups, particularly ex-slaves.

In Chapter 8 W-H concludes that the luxury of the early Empire, as apparent in the houses of Pompeii and Herculaneum, is the cultural language through which in their daily and domestic lives people staked
their claims to standing as Romans (184). In the late second and early first centuries BC, members of Italian communities were clamouring for membership of the Roman citizen body. This was achieved during the Social War (91-88 BC), partly in recognition of the fact that, in cultural terms, much of Italy was very similar to the Hellenized society at Rome. As Paul Zanker in particular has shown us, the spread in Italy during this period of a material culture we call 'Hellenistic' is one of the surest measures of Romanization (184-185). The local élites of Italian towns had successfully employed material culture as an instrument of their own assimilation, a way to penetrate the élite at Rome. This in turn showed other newcomers, such as freedmen and foreigners, how to penetrate the local élites (186):

'The paradox of luxury is that, in trying to set apart an élite in the use and display of material culture and lifestyle, it renders the élite penetrable.'

W-H can be seen as part of a new era in Pompeian research. American scholars in particular have begun to produce interesting works which attempt to explore the social reality associated with Roman houses. However, there are certain features of the new scholarship which cause some disquiet.

Firstly, there is the matter of statistics. In the end there is a lingering doubt about just how useful are the many tables and figures. New ground-plans often look very different, and new measurements at times differ greatly from old ones. The time is not yet here when statistics from the Vesuvian cities inspire real confidence.

_Houses and Society_ required me to read it slowly, put it down and think about it, pick it up, re-read sections, and even then to realize that there were points still to be fully assimilated. It is that kind of book, the product of prolonged periods of deep and

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innovative thought that the reader has to admire. It is a book that rewards patience. Yet it seemed to me that the sections which flowed least were those that contained tabular or other displays of data. One has to break from the text to give them attention, and then pick up threads from the point of departure.

Then there is a question about the degree to which the ‘social encounter’ or ‘public business’ model can be pressed. Much depends upon how you interpret the traditional Roman distinction between *otium* (leisure) and *negotium* (work). Does it imply that the two worlds are mutually exclusive at all times (Maiuri)? Or could they coexist within houses, differentiated by rooms (W-H)? Or, I submit, could they even supersede one another in time and space? Might a *tablinum* (say) have had a public function in the morning but a commercial or other function later in the day? W-H uses the Younger Pliny to support a morning / afternoon—*negotium* / *otium* correlation (47) but does not seem to follow through with its possible implications.

Recognition of ambivalence produces further queries. Why, for instance, are the exteriors of Roman houses not decorated as ornately as the interiors? W-H uses evidence pertaining to Lucullus quite freely (e.g. 4, 143, 146, etc.). Yet here was a man who withdrew from public life. Others, like Silius Italicus for example, did likewise (Pliny, *Ep.* 3.7). Such men were evidently able to reconcile ostentation and seclusion. The element of send-up may even be present at times (an impish thought about the House of the Vettii). These things lead one away from W-H’s primary model, though their effects are difficult to quantify.

Proofreading is of the very highest standard. A rogue parenthesis on page 10—‘... amateur architecture) ... ’—is the only such error that I encountered. On page 33 there is a discrepancy in relation to the shop I 1.18, which appears above the text in Figure 2.17 as ‘Shop / house I 7.18’.
The general conclusion is that this is a fine book containing scholarship of the highest importance. It might in future be seen as a major stimulus for the new era in Pompeian scholarship.⁵

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New books on Menander are always welcome. This one comes with an endorsement by Sir Hugh Lloyd-Jones on its dust-jacket as 'by far the best general study of Menander' and 'absolutely essential reading' for those interested in him. In fact, the book is not so much a general study as a collection of essays loosely centred on the theme of Menander’s originality within the conventions of New Comedy, as indicated in the subtitle. It sets out in particular 'to interpret Menander out of Menander' rather than from the Latin adaptations; to make ‘comparisons with other Greek authors—mainly dramatists like himself who influenced or may have influenced him’, which turns out to mean mainly Euripides; and 'to bring out the social aspects of Menander’s characters and their

⁵ I would like to thank my colleagues Bill Barnes, Paul McKechnie, and in particular Marcus Wilson, who offered valuable comments and references that helped me greatly. I am, of course, completely responsible for any remaining infelicities.