

RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Appreciation of Pompeii's Architectural Remains in the Late 18th and Early 19th Century

Eric M. Moormann

In the decades after the discoveries of Pompeii and Herculaneum in the 1730s and 1740s, the two towns attracted the attention of many European tourists, scholars, and litterati. Although they were seen as primary examples of Greco-Roman culture and of the way people lived in an ancient urban environment, the remains of their architecture aroused much less attention. This paper explores why architects did not view these sites, and Pompeii in particular, as a source of inspiration until well into the 19th century.

Introduction

Pompeii was a modest town in Campania, only a very small morsel of Antiquity, but it is the realest, strangest and most emotional morsel. (Pompeia étoit une médiocre ville de la Campanie; ce n'est qu'un très petit débris de l'antiquité, mais c'en est le débris le plus vrai, le plus curieux, le plus touchant.) (Creuzé de Lesser 1806: 181; all translations by the author)

Pompeii and Herculaneum were discovered in the 1730s and 1740s and were gradually excavated in complicated campaigns that continue to this day. Although the local authorities were eager to monopolize the knowledge gleaned from these spectacular sites and thus restricted information about them, the remains attracted the attention of many European tourists, scholars, and literati from the 1750s onwards. The two towns were immediately seen as unique examples of Greco-Roman culture. At these sites, no later intrusions disturbed the perception of that ancient world. Whereas in Rome a great number of Roman monuments have persisted, in Herculaneum and Pompeii in particular open-air excavations have gradually revealed religious and public buildings as well as houses in their original environment, in the ancient urban structure of streets and city gates and walls, conveying how life was in a Roman town. The remains were so well preserved that the buildings even contained all the utensils used by the ancient inhabitants, the Campanians, giving the impression they were not far away. Nevertheless, the architecture itself did not arouse much attention and would become an object of study only in the 1820s. This also implies that the towns were not seen as a source of inspiration for architects until the 19th century, unlike many other ruins 'discovered' at the time. This stands in

great contrast to the influence the discovery of mural decorations Pompeii and Herculaneum had on interior decoration from the 1750s onward.

The 18th century was an era of discovery of many ancient Greek and Roman 'ruins'. The Balkans, Greece and Asia Minor were travelled more intensely than ever before. Various explorers produced lavishly illustrated volumes with images of the edifices they saw during their discovery excursions, which sometimes lasted several years (Schnapp 1996; Pinto 2012: 217–273). These publications added important insights to those about well-known monuments in the Italian peninsula, mainly Rome, that had been studied for centuries, and in particular challenged traditional perceptions by adding original Greek monuments to those of the Roman world. The Italian peninsula also became subject of novel explorations, especially the region south of Naples, which was often seen as 'barbaria', that is, Magna Graecia and Sicily. In 1740, at Paestum, not far from Salerno, three Greek temples were discovered in a countryside that had long belonged to the state, but were apparently neglected not only by local scholars, but also a larger audience because of their isolated location (De Jong 2014: 1–3). Only shepherds and farmers occupied the otherwise unworked and partly marshy region, deemed unhealthy due to malaria. The discovery of these temples soon stimulated many artists and scholars to produce images of all kinds and monographic studies as well as descriptions in travelogues and poems. What is more, they constituted important elements in discussions about the origin and development of architecture and about the impact such structures might have on the architecture and aesthetics of the late 18th century (Pinto 2012: 198–214; De Jong 2014). In various cases, Greek temples in Sicily were involved in the same discourse, but the island was apparently too remote to receive the same influx of travellers as the area around Naples, ancient Campania, did. An influential Sicily account, with Winckelmann-like observations on its ancient monuments, is Johann Hermann von Riedesel's *Reise durch Sicilien und Grossgriechenland*, published in 1771 (see Osterkamp 1992; Moormann 2017a).

New Discoveries in Southern Italy: Paestum, Herculaneum, and Pompeii

Herculaneum and Pompeii decidedly belonged to this newly discovered world and became important goals for travellers to the south (Moormann 2015: 95–164). Often in the same travelogues as those which described Paestum, these towns were highlighted as absolute must-be-seens, and the authors and artists visiting these areas often worked together. For example, in 1777 Richard Payne Knight travelled with Jakob Philipp Hackert (De Jong 2014: 82–88, figs. 50–54,) and in 1787 Johann Wolfgang von Goethe travelled with Christoph Heinrich Kniep (De Jong 2014: 48, fig. 25; Moormann 2015: 148–152). Even if texts and images were not always published together, the combination of the two sources conveys a good idea of the approach the travellers adopted and the experiences they had on seeing these 'new' monuments. One superb example is Jean-Claude Richard Saint-Non's influential *Voyage pittoresque ou Description des Royaumes de Naples et de Sicile*, with plates made after sketches by skilled artists like Jean-Honoré Fragonard, Hubert Robert, and Louis-Jean Desprez (four volumes, Paris 1781–1786; on all artists, see Lamers 1995; on the Pompeii part, Pinto 2013). Whereas De Jong (2014) has made clear that the temples of Paestum – and those found in Sicily – played a great role in the discussion on ancient architecture and its position in modern society, few similar studies exist on the possible effects of Pompeian architecture in the architectural discourse of the first decades after their discovery (see Fitzon 2004; Pinto 2012; Pinto 2013). I believe that Pompeii's architecture was scarcely taken into account in the first decades after its discovery because of the difference in scale of the monuments in comparison to the temples at Paestum.

Archaeologically, Paestum was new to the 18th century because Greek temples from the 6th and 5th centuries BC had hitherto not been studied or appeared in travel accounts. What was new from Herculaneum and Pompeii, meanwhile, were the decorations and objects found in residential areas. The 18th-century excavators and visitors did not see Herculaneum and Pompeii as sources of monumental architecture or urbanism, simply because they were not looking for the modes of ancient daily life within an urban context. This limited view of the two sites was due to the agenda of the local authorities, the different scientific agenda of the time, and to the fact that much about the excavations remained unknown, since the excavators neither documented nor published their findings.

From the outset, the Neapolitan authorities considered the excavations treasure troves, sites from which to acquire curious objects, never seen before, for a new and unique museum, objects that, indeed, stemmed from urbanistic contexts and were unparalleled within European collections of antiquities. Vessels, utensils, furniture, carbonized food, and other movable objects like statues were unique testimonies of the (supposedly) rich ancient towns and could shed light on the practical matters of Greek and Roman culture – the famous antiquaria – of ancient texts (see Schnapp 1996). Still more appealing were fragments of floor mosaics and wall paintings extracted from the uncovered buildings from which antiquarians hoped to gain

illumination about ancient visual arts, especially famous works by lost artists like Zeuxis, Parrhasius, and Apelles, whose names were known from Pliny the Elder's *Natural History*, published in 77 AD, and often used by antiquarians as a source for the knowledge of (lost) ancient art. This wish could not be fulfilled, as soon became clear, for the mosaics and murals turned out to constitute the adornment of banal houses and other utilitarian buildings. Yet these items formed the main attraction of the royal collections in Portici and would become famous thanks to descriptions in travel books and in the official royal publication, the 12 volumes of *Le antichità di Ercolano esposte* (Naples 1757–1792). The find of papyri, in the Villa of the Papyri in Herculaneum, formed a third source of fascination, for all literati hoped to read unknown masterpieces by classical authors, a wish that would not be fulfilled either (Moormann 2015: 333–334).

The royal court in Naples appropriated the archaeological finds as private property, and forbade any publications about the sites other than by those they had appointed. In the first decades the court did not even seem to have planned publications at all, but eventually, in response to the increasing demand from outside, they created their own publishing policy (Moormann 2015: 34–39). This absolute verdict did not entirely prevent people from publishing accounts, but in comparison with the many publications about Paestum dating to the second half of the 18th century, the harvest is extremely meagre. Saint-Non's *Voyage pittoresque* is almost the only published monograph with lavish illustrations showing the excavations, whereas Giambattista Piranesi's book about Pompeii would only be published in 1806 by his son Francesco (see Pinto 2013). Clearly, these artists were the happy few among the visitors to have obtained an authorization from the royal court to make drawings among the ruins. This dearth of serious studies must be taken into account in what follows.

Architecture in Herculaneum and Pompeii

The excavators of Herculaneum who crept through tunnels under the thick layers of volcanic material could not apprehend the dimensions and aspects of the buildings they explored. Nevertheless, from the outset visitors were aware that the lost vestiges belonged to a hitherto unknown Roman town, soon to be recognized as the Herculaneum devastated by Vesuvius in 79 AD.

The theatre – the first monument excavators reached, probably in 1709 or 1710 – was immediately recognized as such and was drawn by various scholars. It therefore appeared in the first illustrated publications from the 1750s onwards (Pagano 2000). It would form the only monument at Herculaneum subjected to extended study until the 20th century, when daylight excavations, carried out under the guidance of Amedeo Maiuri, would stimulate scholarly research on architectural topics. Francesco Piranesi published a seminal monograph on the theatre in 1783. He deemed it 'the most conspicuous of all buildings discovered here over the last thirty years and more' ('il più cospicuo di quante fabbriche siansi da trenta anni e più in qua scoperte') (1783: 1). He observed correspondences with Vitruvius's description of a Roman

theatre and dated it to the Augustan period, which might be accurate. His plates show plans with and without the tunnels made by the excavators and 'spaccati' or reconstructed sections of a reconstructed situation, which he presented for the purpose of theatre makers (**Figure 1**).

As far as I am aware, for almost 150 years this book was the only monograph dedicated to the architecture of Herculaneum, and in that time it evoked few if any reactions. It is even not very clear whether stage designers profited from Piranesi's reconstructions.¹ In addition, Herculaneum's street plan, reconstructed by the excavators based on their perceptions below ground, revealed a new insight in city planning – a system of orthogonally planned house blocks – that was likewise not a topic in the larger debate on urbanistics, probably because the plan, by Francesco La Vega, was not published until 1797.

Pompeii offered better chances to study urbanism and architecture. From 1748 onward, the explorers here excavated by daylight, clearing away the relatively light strata of ashes and lapilli and opening the monuments from above (Parslow 1995; Moormann 2015: 25–30). This procedure enabled them to easily identify the plans of buildings, and so we have various examples of well-documented, but unpublished, accounts accompanied by plans and other drawings. Until 1755, after the pillage of unearthed buildings for their artefacts, they were backfilled with the volcanic debris taken from one place and brought to another.² After that, the mansions were left open rather than being covered over after exploration. Soon a paved street lined by houses was recognized – the northern part of the so-called Via Consularis – that ended at a city gate (**Figures 2, 3**; see Pinto 2013: 236–239, figs 9–13).

In this section visitors saw a couple of tombs, such as the round bench, called Schola of Mamia, outside the Herculaneum Gate, and, from the 1770s onward, the

impressive remains of a three-storey villa, called the Villa of Diomedes. For Goethe, the Schola served as a seat on which to reflect on Pompeii's destiny, as we know from his *Italienische Reise*, and here Johann Heinrich Wilhelm Tischbein portrayed Goethe's patroness, the duchess Anna Amalia from Weimar, with a book in her hand.³ Inside the three-arched Herculanean Gate the visitor had access to a couple of houses and saw façades of other houses that were not yet excavated. The excavators cleaned a stretch of the street in order to create an attractive urban view, although they did not find many precious objects at this site.

A second section was excavated at the southern side of the town. This is the area of the large and small theatres, next to which are various sanctuaries. The oldest temple is the 'Doric Temple', poorly preserved, dating to the 6th century BC (**Figure 4**; see De Waele 2001 on this temple). It is situated in the centre of a triangular site at the east side of the large theatre, in those days interpreted as the *forum nundinum*, or town market, but also called Foro Triangolare thanks to its shape. At the south side of the large theatre was a large four-aisled portico, or *quadriporticus*, the alleged Caserma dei Gladiatori, in which many skeletal remains of victims of the eruption and gladiatorial armoury were found. The most curious object was the Temple of Isis, with its colourful decorations, one of the few buildings over which a shelter was built at the time of excavation in the 1760s, soon to be removed after the paintings were cut out and brought to the museum in Portici. A painting by Jakob Philipp Hackert shows this part of the site, the result of some forty years of excavations (**Figure 5**).⁴

The amphitheatre was apparently recognizable in the landscape, but being remote and its features invisible, would not have been visited by many people. Johann Joachim Winckelmann makes explicit mention of it in

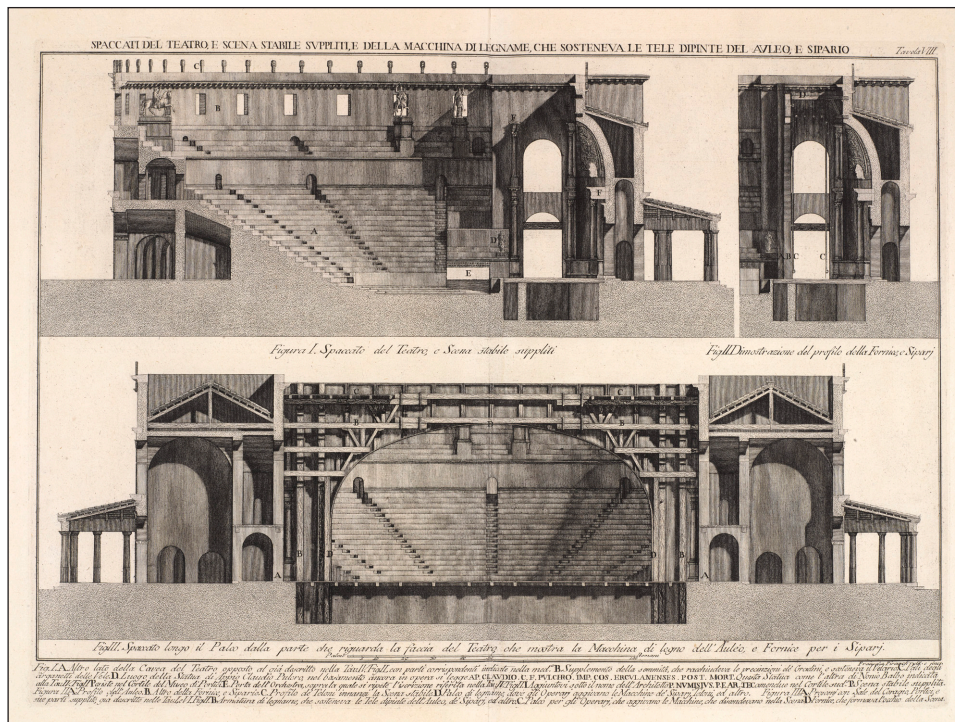


Figure 1: Francesco Piranesi, Theatre of Herculaneum, reconstruction (Piranesi 1783: pl. VIII).



Figure 2: The Via Consularis in Pompeii, looking west. The niche with a roof contains a relief representation of a phallus, which received much attention from travellers of old (Hamilton 1777: pl. XIII).

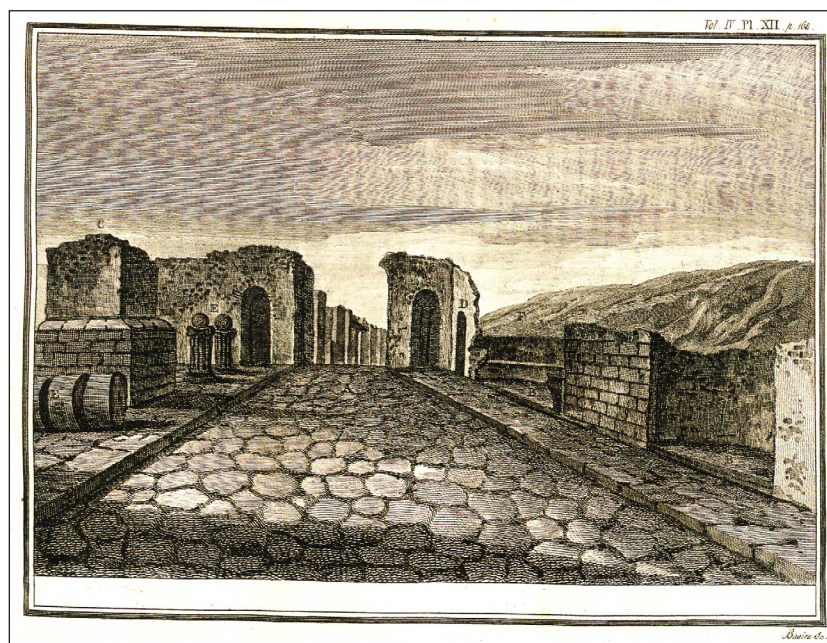


Figure 3: Porta Ercolano, with the tombs along the street towards the north (Hamilton 1777: pl. XII).

his two treatises dedicated to Herculaneum and Pompeii. He observed 'an oval depression' (Winckelmann 1764: 3 = 1997b: 9), and had also previously noted an elevation in the landscape, probably from another point of view (Winckelmann 1762b: 11–12 = 1997a: 73–74). These observations are not contradictory: the layer of ashes and *lapilli* had settled and left an oval cavity in the surface of the place called Civita (i.e. *Civitas*, town), while the perimeter walls stood erect and were not entirely covered, or at least not totally crumbled, and were therefore higher landmarks in this otherwise flat landscape.

As a result, 18th-century visitors saw nothing but small pockets of ancient architecture in holes dug amidst the vineyards and farmsteads that occupied the fertile volcanic layer; here local people earned their money with agricultural and vinicultural activities. The plans by François de Latapie and Francesco Piranesi, dating to 1776 and 1785 respectively, show the holes dug among fields and trees (**Figures 6, 7**).

Admittedly, Piranesi's patches are much larger than Latapie's – and probably larger than the actual trenches as well – and suggest that substantial remains of

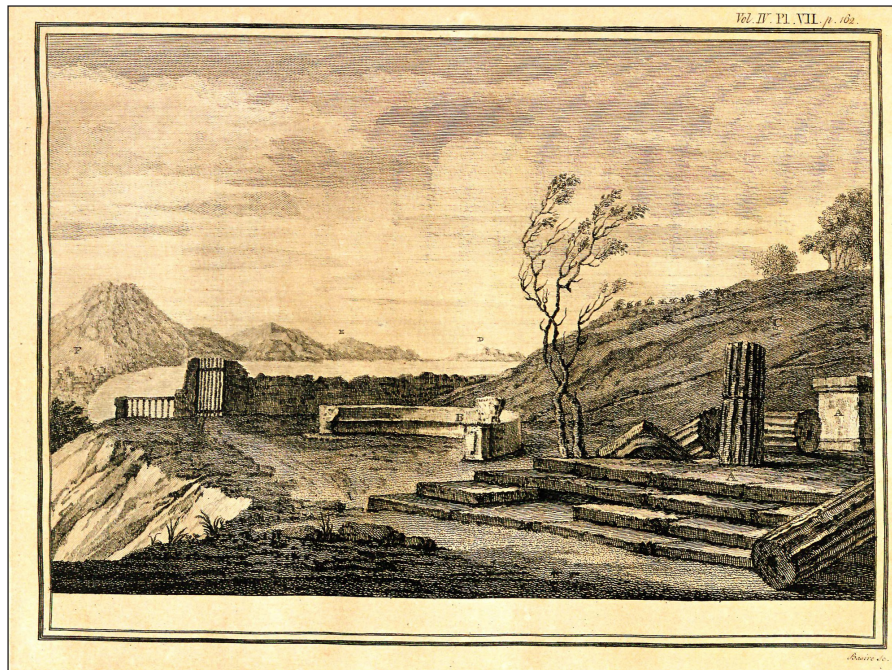


Figure 4: Remains of the Doric Temple in Pompeii (Hamilton 1777: pl. VII).



Figure 5: Jakob Philipp Hackert, *Blick auf die Ruinen von Pompeji*, oil on canvas, 1799, Attingham Park, Berwick Collection. From *Wikimedia*, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hackert,_Blick_auf_die_Ruinen_von_Pompeji,_1799.jpg.

architecture were visible (Pinto 2012: 175–176, 179, fig. 119; Pinto 2013: 232–233, **Figure 2**). Visitors, therefore, had to start in one of the excavation pits and climb down, then up again, stumbling through the vineyards before heading down for a second time. The difficulty of access – first from Naples to Pompeii in a carriage and then the cumbersome access to the different parts of the site – is one of the reasons that a visit took an entire day rather than a couple of hours. In the last quarter of the 18th and the early 19th century, what visitors saw consisted of a few tombs, façades and parts of the interiors of modest houses, the impressive theatres, and the Temple of Isis; the forum with its monuments would

not be uncovered until some decades later. To add to the somewhat negative experience, the backdrop for these visitable monuments was the ‘wall’ of the lapilli layers, rather than the blue sky. Meanwhile, the temples of Paestum and Agrigento, to name some of the most attractive buildings, were in an elevated position, contributing to their picturesque and dramatic power, overall more appealing to the taste of the travellers.

A Model City

The poor visibility of its remains diminished Pompeii's grandeur, just as the modest dimensions of its excavated buildings failed to satisfy the expectations of visitors.

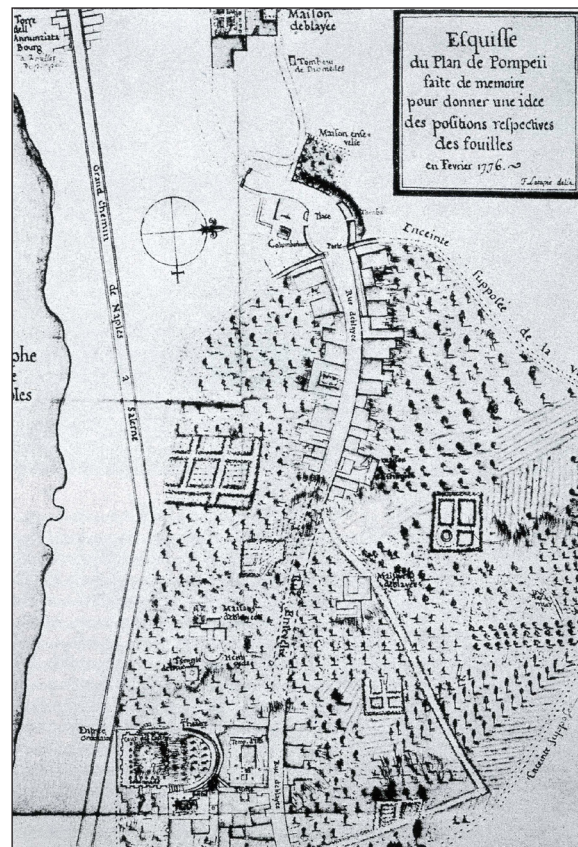


Figure 6: François de Latapie, plan of the Pompeii excavations in 1776 (De Waele 2001: figure 4).

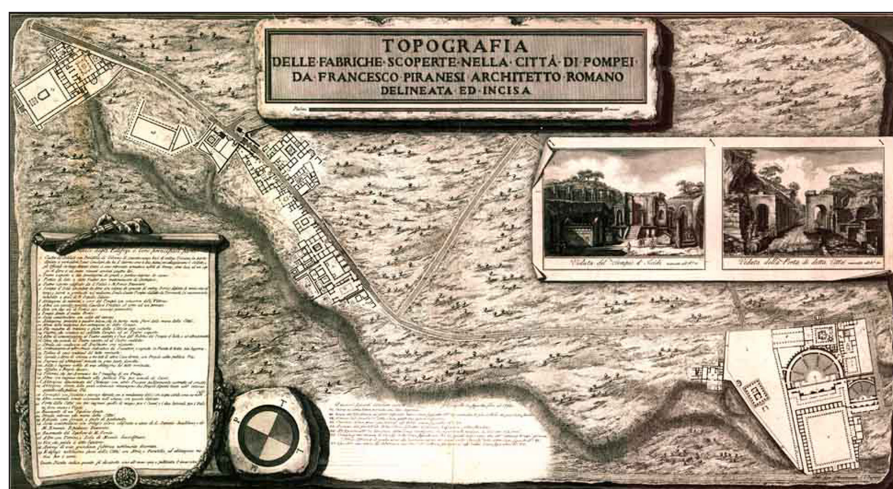


Figure 7: Francesco Piranesi, Plan of Pompeii in 1778 (Piranesi 1785: pl. 1, from Wikimedia: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map_of_Pompeii_by_Francesco_Piranesi_\(1788\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map_of_Pompeii_by_Francesco_Piranesi_(1788).jpg)).

In fact, many travellers were somewhat disillusioned after visiting the site. Goethe summed up the experience by calling the remains ‘mehr Modell und Puppenschrank als Gebäude’ (‘rather model and doll house than building’) (Goethe 1988: 198; see also Fitzon 2004: 233–234; Moormann 2015: 149). The word ‘Modell’ implies scale models like those made by architects; Goethe might also have thought of the cork models made as souvenirs of ancient buildings in Rome, Pompeii, and Paestum (Helmberger and Kockel 1993; De Jong 2015: 250–253; Kockel and Laidlaw 2018). As we know, however, Goethe was more satisfied after a second visit, albeit rather with the objects than with the architecture.⁵ Nevertheless, he

made a simple drawing of Vesuvius in full action with a grand temple in front of it.⁶

In his *Sendschreiben von den Herculanischen Entdeckungen* from 1762, Winckelmann provides the most complete summary up to that time of the state of knowledge about Herculaneum, Pompeii and Stabiae.⁷ Winckelmann briefly mentions the theatre in Herculaneum, villas in Herculaneum and Stabiae and a small temple in Pompeii, probably a small *aedicula* in a garden of a house not far from the Herculanean Gate. While he criticizes the working methods of the excavators, he does not reject the principles these people had adopted. Within the houses, he recognizes the central

court and the atrium with the impluvium in the centre, features he may have known from Vitruvius's description of houses of the Roman elite. He observes that the plans of the houses were not necessarily symmetrical, a remark that contradicts the general opinion that ancient art was based on symmetry, both in the depiction of humans and the plans of buildings. He does not address the topic of architecture and urbanism.

In the *Nachrichten von den neuesten Herculaneischen Entdeckungen*, published two years later in 1764, Winckelmann discusses some buildings in greater detail. He is the first to see the importance of the open-air excavations for the knowledge of house architecture. 'The houses excavated in Pompeii itself', he writes, 'deserve no less attention; they provide an exact indication to our eyes of the shape these old houses possessed' ('Nicht weniger Aufmerksamkeit verdienen ... die zu Pompeji ausgegrabenen Wohnungen in der Stadt selbst, von welchen da sie völlig vor Augen, eine genaue Anzeige kann gegeben werden, aus welcher die Form alter Wohnungen deutlich begriffen wird') (Winckelmann 1764: 27 = 1997b: 23). As for grand residences, Winckelmann describes two 'pleasant mansions', or 'Lusthäuser' – the Villa of the Papyri in Herculaneum and the Villa of Cicero in Pompeii, the latter located outside the city gate of Pompeii, now known as Herculanean Gate and temporarily visible before being shut again (1764: 22–26; 1997b: 20–23). He observes similarities between the houses, particularly in the technical feature for conducting water, probably water pipes and the like. In respect to the theatre of Herculaneum, he describes the differences between the Greek model (never seen by him and deduced from Vitruvius) and the Roman successor.

Winckelmann then passes to the Herculanean Gate. He expands his sober description of the remains to an analysis of city gates at other places and from other textual sources. He comments upon the remains in a philological and antiquarian manner, singling out the particularities to be known about city gates. Again, he does not mention their urban situation, which was barely known to him, as only tiny patches of the town had been excavated (see **Figures 6, 7**). Still, he is a pioneer by starting with the town's circumference and observing the presence of the amphitheatre in the outer field. He continues by describing the street and its plaster of volcanic basalt.

In Winckelmann's day the existence of glass window panes in Roman architecture was a topic of debate. Considering that the windows at the street side were very small and could contain iron fetters, people believed that glass was not used and that this material only served for vessels. Winckelmann – rightly, as it turns out – advocates the existence of panes (Winckelmann 2001b: 43), relying for evidence on the remains of glass, while admitting that ancient authors do not describe them. He also defends this opinion in his notes for a possible second edition of the *Anmerkungen über die Baukunst der Antiken* (1762a = 2001a); however, in this booklet no word was spent on Pompeii at all.

Despite the many details observed and the interest of these remains for the knowledge of Greco-Roman architecture, Winckelmann does not describe the buildings at Pompeii as important monuments in their own right.

Although he does not say so, he probably could not see them as examples of grand architecture. In contrast, he had considered specimens of the Doric order (from other locations, without having seen them, apart from Paestum) as principal sources of the paramount Greek culture in two treatises, *Anmerkungen über die Baukunst der alten Tempel zu Girgenti in Sizilien*, published in 1759 in *Bibliothek der schönen Wissenschaften und der freyen Künste*, and *Anmerkungen über die Baukunst der Alten*, published in 1762 (1762a = 2001a; see also Osterkamp 1992; Moormann 2017a). Winckelmann could not yet describe and comment upon the Doric temple in Pompeii, since it was not found until 1767, but it would have provided him with a good link to the Paestum temples (for the earliest explorations, see De Waele 2001: 13–26). For the reader not familiar with the excavations, the main problem with his two pamphlets is the absence of illustrations, which would have helped to clearly convey the importance of the diggings.

Towards a Picturesque Pompeii

It is not until Sir William Hamilton's paper of 1777 that more or less faithful reproductions appear of what was visible in the town of Pompeii. Hamilton was British ambassador in Naples, and in addition to his activities as a diplomat – which for the greater part consisted of hunting with the King of Naples and receiving tourists on their grand tour – he studied volcanic phenomena and the ongoing excavations. His account of the archaeological situation in Pompeii was the result of a presentation at the Society of Antiquaries in London in 1775, which then was published in 1777 in the periodical *Archaeologia* (which continues to be produced today). The text is very brief and mainly consists of commentaries for a set of plates (**Figures 2–4**). These plates were probably based upon the drawings by his private artist, Pietro Fabris, who was especially known for the beautiful illustrations in *Campi Phlegraei*, a lavish book Hamilton had published in 1776. In modern terms, we would describe the 1777 contribution as a print of the slides shown during the presentation. These engravings are factual and do not include picturesque formulas (see Osanna et al. 2015: 61). Hamilton's way of presenting the remains was not taken up as a model until the early 19th century, when scholars like François Mazois began to publish extensive monographs about these excavations similar to those printed in the 18th century about Paestum and other important sites (see De Waele 2001: 22–26; Osanna et al. 2015: 118–120, 171; Moormann 2015: 49, 55, 479).

Much more picturesque, and more influential than Hamilton's essay, was Saint-Non's section on Herculaneum and Pompeii in the second volume of his *Voyage pittoresque*, edited in 1782, with suggestive representations of the buildings in a dramatically overwhelming landscape. Or as John Pinto put it, 'we cannot fail to note the degree to which the ruins are dwarfed by a rich landscape' (Pinto 2013, 236; italics mine). Other dramatic views published in the 18th century include a watercolour by Desprez shows the Herculanean Gate, which conveys the idea that this gate is huge but barely emerges from the enormous amounts of volcanic material.⁸ Large trees

grow on top of the mountains and people are humble (Osanna 2015: 67; on Desprez, see Lamers 1995: 80–84). Piranesi's plates, published much later (see Pinto 2013) give us the idea of a town hidden under the earth thanks to the infinite powers of God. We know that in many of his fascinating works man is a micro-organism.

For some visitors of Pompeii its picturesque nature also lay in the perception of its being Greek, like the discoveries at Paestum, though very few indications were at hand. When the Doric Temple in Pompeii was discovered, it soon became seen as proof that Pompeii was a Greek town. Its remains, however, were scarce, and we must assume that the temple had been demolished in Roman times, probably during the reign of Augustus. Little more was uncovered than the stereobate and stylobate, as well as the layout of the cella and some column drums (**Figure 4**). A capital was the main proof that the order was Doric hence the temple was deemed a sister to those in Paestum (e.g., Denon 1997: 122). Despite the scanty remains, Saint-Non recognized the intercolumniations, so that the plan could be reconstructed (De Waele 2001: 14–22). The Temple of Isis contained a mass of Egyptian and egyptianizing objects and decorations. Architecturally, it was too small to rouse interest, but its discovery increased fascination for the still largely unknown Egyptian world. Only in the early 19th century were the larger temples of Jupiter and Apollo (the latter first seen as a temple dedicated to Venus) discovered in the forum. They inspired visualizations by architects, especially those of the French envoys of the Prix de Rome (see *Pompéi. Travaux*, 1981).

The Houses of Pompeii

Throughout the late 18th and early 19th centuries, the general opinion about the houses in Pompeii was that they were like Goethe's dollhouses: small and insignificant, though they provided much information about ancient daily life (as discussed by Fitzon 2004: 230–247; see also Moormann 2015: 43, 121–123). In the widely read works of Johann Jacob Volkmann, the author placed little value on an open-air excavation of Herculaneum: 'And for what reason? To see dilapidated brickwork, many small and miserable houses in a ruinous state, and the bare walls of some bigger ones from which the paintings have already been stripped meticulously' ('Und zu welchen Ende? Um verfallenes Mauerwerk, viele kleine elende Häuser, die in Ruinen liegen, und die kahlen Wände einiger größeren, wovon man die Malereyen bereits sorgfältig herabgenommen zu sehen') (1777, II: 304). At the same time, Volkmann concludes about Pompeii: 'Nowhere else one can get a more correct understanding of the furnishings of the houses of the Ancients than by seeing a couple of entirely unearthed houses in Pompeii' ('Man kann sich nirgends besser einen richtigen Begriff von der Einrichtung der Wohnungen der Alten machen, als durch ein Paar ganz aufgedeckte Häuser zu Pompeia') (1777, III: 371–372).

In 1786, Karl Philipp Moritz, whom Goethe met in Rome, frequently uses the adjective 'klein' (small, tiny) to characterize the houses, which have a simple structure: 'Everything possesses a both manageable and familiar look, when you enter the small courtyard with the covered

colonnade. In its centre there is a water basin, and at its sides the entrances to the living rooms can be grasped in one view' ('Alles hat gleich ein wirthbares und vertrauliches Ansehen, wenn man in den kleinen Hof, mit dem bedeckten Säulengänge tritt, in dessen Mitte gemeinlich ein Wasserbehälter befindlich ist, und an dessen Seite die Eingänge zu den Wohnzimmern mit einem Blick zu übersehen sind') (Moritz 1792: 63–64). The water basin is the impluvium of the atrium, and the colonnade is the surrounding open area originally supporting the slanting roof, in the middle of which is the compluvium or opening to catch rainwater. Moritz ascribes the diminutive of 'Tempelchen' to the Temple of Isis, which he describes as possessing small rooms, while the Villa of Diomedes has a small garden (Moritz 1792: 66, 67). Latapie observes, 'But we should realize that the interest all these monuments convey originates less from their beauty than from the curious spectacle they provide to the lovers of antiquity, for nowhere does something similar exist, and Rome itself has nothing of this kind with which one can compare the small town of Pompeii' ('Mais il faut convenir de bonne foi que l'intérêt que tous ces monumens inspirent vient moins de leur beauté que du spectacle rare qu'ils présentent aux amateurs de l'antiquité, car il n'existe encore nulle part rien de semblable et Rome elle-même n'a rien en ce genre qu'on puisse comparer à la petite ville de Pompéi') (Barrière and Maiuri 1953: 234). He found the rooms of the houses small, as did Friedrich Münzer who, in 1785, questions – as did others – whether these small houses had more than one floor. This makes him wonder where the women lived (Andreasen 1937, II: 231). In 1797, Antoine-Laurent Castellan was apparently not very impressed by Pompeii's architecture either: 'The houses, streets, and squares of this town do not seem to have been inhabited but by a people of Pygmies' ('Les maisons, les rues, les places de cette ville ne paroissent avoir été habités que par un peuple de pygmées') (Castellan 1819: 366). The Pygmies simile had also been used by Dominique-Vivant Denon in 1778, who thought Pompeii's architecture seemed a toy for children (Denon 1997: 120, 117). The architect Friedrich Wilhelm von Erdmannsdorff, who would introduce Pompeian decorative elements in the villa at Wörlitz near Dessau, built by him for the Grecophile prince Von Anhalt-Dessau, observed in 1790, long after his 1766 visit to Pompeii, that architects could learn a lot from the site, but in his travel journal he wrote that the Temple of Isis was a bad building, clearly too simple (Von Erdmannsdorff 2001: 306, 224).

The fact that, indeed, the first houses excavated along the Via Consularis were rather small (e.g. Houses of the Surgeon and of the Vestals), while others were only partly explored, greatly influenced this opinion about Pompeii's lack of grandeur. The houses identified as villas were apparently the only good specimens of domestic splendour, especially that of Diomedes, with its three levels. It is worth noting that the opinions presented here were penned by members of the northern European elite who, themselves, lived in large and expensive residences.

It may be illustrative that several decades later Edward Bulwer-Lytton chose two relatively richly decorated houses of different sizes, excavated briefly before his own

visit in 1833 – those of Sallustius (big) and the Tragic Poet (small) – as the residences for his protagonists in *The Last Days of Pompeii*. While the House of Sallustius (on which see Kockel and Laidlaw 2018) serves as the residence of Pompeii's magistrate, the House of the Tragic Poet is the equivalent of the London flat of a bachelor gentleman, thus characterized as not a real permanent residence. Although this book is a novel, and appears at least thirty years later than the testimonies studied here, its erudition and exactitude of descriptive parts about Pompeii's *realia* makes it a good example of the continuing appreciation of Pompeian houses. The discovery in 1834 of Pompeii's largest house, the 3,000-square-metre House of the Faun provided opportunities in later novels to imagine this mansion as the residence of Pompeii's wealthiest people.

Charles Mercier Dupaty did not recognize anything of grandeur in Pompeian architecture (De Jong 2014: 39; Moormann 2015: 37), and, admittedly some decades later, Lady Blessington probably was not very impressed by the Doric architecture of Pompeii either, but noted some antique elements in the 'Temple of Venus' (which is now called the Temple of Apollo) (De Jong 2014: 55; Moormann 2015: 125). She found that the Doric portico, however, was marred by the addition of stucco: 'For example, in the Temple of Venus, several Grecian entablatures, in tolerable taste, have been barbarously plastered over and painted, transforming them from a pure Grecian to a bad Roman style' (Blessington 1839: 277). Presumably Paestum was (too) rough and Pompeii (too) refined in her eyes.

A City of Pygmies

Returning to the aspect of visibility and approach, Pompeii was not a picturesque site, as it sat in a recession within the landscape surrounded by heaps of debris. Although the area was praised as part of the Bay of Naples in general, during the trip to the site, the landscape provided no opportunity for the traveller to become acquainted with the monuments from afar. The traveller arrived suddenly at the rim of a deep trench in which lay the ruins. The unique view by Jakob Philipp Hackert of 1797 (Figure 5) is likely an attempt to satisfy the demands of the picturesque to a certain degree: distance, the ruinous state of the monuments, imperfection, and good light. At the same time, this view of Pompeii fails to transmit the sense of grandeur evoked by the views of Greek temples of Paestum and Sicily during Hackert's travel of 1777 (De Jong 2014: 85, figs. 50–54). Even if these views show the monuments at a similar distance as the *vedute* of Pompeii, they try to 'diminish' the size of the temples or suggest a greater distance, even though the buildings are much larger than any in Pompeii.

Despite the great discoveries made in the early 19th century, such as the forum and its temples and public buildings, only slowly did a debate concerning the architecture and urbanism of Pompeii develop. Pompeii was and would remain a city of small houses, which were considered to be a major source for many aspects of ancient domestic architecture. On the one hand, these houses would inspire architects in the 19th century to create new, neoclassical houses, like the Pompeianum in

Aschaffenburg (1840–1844; Von Roda 1988; Bergmann 2016), the pavilion in Crystal Palace (1851; Nichols 2015) and the Maison pompéienne in Paris (1856; Bellot 1998; Hales 2016). On the other hand, interior decorations were modelled upon Pompeian examples as early as the 1750s, when the illustrations of the *Antichità d'Ercolano* circulated in learned and artistic circles in northern Europe. Von Erdmannsdorff recreated the interior of a Pompeian house in Villa Hamilton in the park of Wörlitz (1788–1794; I. Pfeifer in *Der Vulkan*, 2005: 109–120) and Goethe designed a Römisches Haus in the landscape park of Weimar for his Maecenas and employer Karl August, with an exterior that reflected the image he had of a Greek Doric temple (1791–1798; Beyer 2001).

While these cases demonstrate close bonds with Pompeian architecture, these monuments do not convey elements that were considered 'grand'. They reflect the perception of Pompeii as a town of houses rather than of large monuments. The patrons of these neo-Pompeian houses wanted to evoke an ancient way of living, especially by introducing the decorative arts within their walls. The houses – let alone other buildings – were not copied or adapted for their architectural value. As observed by Fitzon, Pompeii's architecture had little to add: cheap materials instead of marble and limestone, small dimensions and lack of great luxury, made the construction less appealing. As we have seen, the architecture of Pompeii also had its disadvantages in the sense of poor visibility and lack of grandeur. Even when large monuments like the amphitheatre and the forum, with its religious and public buildings, were unearthed, there was little to be learned from these monuments for the architects of public buildings. Pompeii predominantly became an example of a residential area, with many aspects inspiring the design of private architecture and interior decoration in the late 18th and 19th centuries. The city of the Pygmies, as it was called by some, had its limitations, but also its attraction as a foreign culture, as far from its admirers as were the Pygmies themselves.

Notes

- ¹ De Jong (2014: 138–139, figs 85–87) remarks on stage design in which the influences of Paestum worked out clearly. Pacini's *L'ultimo giorno di Pompei* from 1825 would get stage arrangements by Antonio Niccolini immediately inspired by Pompeii (Moormann 2015: 362–364), but here the subject of the opera was decisive.
- ² As an example, I give the large property (called Praedia) of Julia Felix, not far from the amphitheatre, where excavations were carried out in 1755 and the rooms were backfilled. It was, now definitively, excavated under Maiuri in 1952. See Parslow (1995) and Olivito (2013).
- ³ Johann Heinrich Wilhelm Tischbein, Anna Amalia, *Herzogin von Weimar in Pompeji*, oil on canvas, 1789, Weimar, Stiftung Weimarer Klassik, Goethe-Nationalmuseum. About this 'Bank am Tor', Goethe penned some of his reflections while he was in Pompeii (Goethe 1988: 204): 'The tomb of a priestess in the shape of a semicircular bench with a stone back ... a

lovely spot, worthy of sweet thoughts' ('Das Grab einer Priesterin als Bank im Halbzirkel mit steinerner Lehne [...]. Ein herrlicher Platz, des schönen Gedenkens wert'). Note from March 13, 1787.

- ⁴ Jakob Philipp Hackert, *Die Grabungen in Pompeji*, oil on canvas, 1799, Attingham Park, The Berwick Collection, here fig. 5. See also Moormann (2016).
- ⁵ De Jong (2014: 124–125) notes how Goethe reacted in two ways upon seeing Paestum: he immediately noted his first impressions and could alter his opinion thanks to his on-site experiences. If we consider the fact that the published account was carefully constructed, this might be intentionally written.
- ⁶ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Vesuviusbruch*, water-colour, 1787, Weimar, Kunstsammlungen. Not to be confused with a colour drawing in the same collection (see <http://www.goethezeitportal.de/wissen/projektpool/goethe-italien/goethes-reiseroute/goethe-neapel/goethe-vesuv.html>, accessed March 27, 2017).
- ⁷ I leave out some earlier descriptions, mainly concentrated on Herculaneum, for which refer to my discussion in Moormann (2015: 39–43). On Winckelmann and his Pompeii publications, see also Moormann (2017).
- ⁸ Jean Louis Desprez, *Pompéi, Porte Herculane*, water-colour, ca. 1781, Stockholm, Statens Museet. See Pinto (2013: 238, fig. 10).

Acknowledgements

This paper was presented during the international conference 'Origins and the Legitimacy of Architecture in Europe, 1750–1850', May 1–2, 2015, organized by Maarten Delbeke and Sigrid de Jong from (formerly) Leiden and Ghent Universities. I thank them and their Leiden colleagues for the opportunity to present my thoughts on Pompeii's 'quality' as an example of late 18th-century architecture. Various important suggestions for improvement were made by the anonymous peer reviewer, whom I would like to thank as well. My research was carried out as part of the Anchoring Innovation research agenda launched by OIKOS (National Research School in Classical Studies, The Netherlands). This agenda is being developed with the financial support of Leiden University, Radboud University, the University of Amsterdam and the University of Groningen. The Anchoring Innovation projects investigate the way in which novelties in all domains are anchored in existing traditions and practices. I myself focus on the question of how Pompeii influenced the study of antiquity and the use of elements from it in modern culture.

Competing Interests

The author has no competing interests to declare.

References

- Andreasen, Ø.** (ed.) 1937. *Aus den Tagebüchern Friedrich Münters. Wander- und Lehrjahre eines dänischen Gelehrten*. Kopenhagen/Leipzig: Haase & Sohn.
- Barrière, P** and **Maiuri, A.** (eds.) 1953. F. Latapie, Description des fouilles de Pompéii. *Rendiconti dell'Accademia delle Belle Arti a Napoli*, 28: 223–248.
- Bellot, L.** 1998. *La maison pompéienne de SAI le prince Napoléon: Alfred-Nicolas Normand architecte: 18 avenue Montaigne Paris VIII, 1855–1891*, 3 Paris: L. Bellot.
- Bergmann, B.** 2016. A Tale of Two Sites: Ludwig I's Pompejanum and the House of the Dioscuri in Pompeii. In: Hales, S and Leander-Touati, A-M (eds.), *Returns to Pompeii. Interior Space and Decoration Documented and Revived, 18th–20th Century*, 183–215. Stockholm: Svenska Institutet i Rom.
- Beyer, A.** 2001. *Das römische Haus in Weimar*. Munich/Vienna: Hanser.
- Blessington, M. G. Power, Countess of.** 1839. *The Idler in Italy*. Paris: Baudry's European Library.
- Castellan, A-L.** 1819. *Lettres sur l'Italie, faisant suite aux Lettres sur la Morée, l'Hellespont et Constantinople*. Paris: A. Nepveu.
- Creuzé de Lesser, AF.** 1806. *Voyage en Italie et en Sicile, fait en MDCCCI et MDCCCII*. Paris: F. Didot.
- De Jong, S.** 2014. *Rediscovering Architecture. Paestum in the Eighteenth-Century Architectural Experience and Theory*. New Haven/London: Yale University Press.
- Denon, V.** 1997. *Voyage au royaume de Naples*. Paris: Perrin.
- De Waele, JAKE.** 2001. *Il tempio dorico del Foro triangolare di Pompei*. Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider.
- Der Vulkan im Wörlitzer Park.** 2005. Berlin: Nicolai Verlag.
- Fitzon, Th.** 2004. *Reisen in das befremdliche Pompeii. Antiklassizistische Antikenwahrnehmung deutscher Italienreisender 1750–1870*. Berlin/New York: De Gruyter.
- Goethe, JW.** (von) 1988. *Italienische Reise*. Hamburger Ausgabe. Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag.
- Hales, S.** 2016. Living with Arria Marcella: Novel Interiors in the Maison Pompéienne. In: Hales, S and Leander-Touati, A-M (eds.), *Returns to Pompeii. Interior Space and Decoration Documented and Revived, 18th–20th Century*, 217–244. Stockholm: Svenska Institutet i Rom.
- Hamilton, W.** 1777. Account of the Discoveries at Pompeii. *Archaeologia: or Miscellaneous Tracts Relating to Antiquity*, 4: 160–175.
- Helmberger, W** and **Kockel, V.** (eds.) 1993. *Rom über die Alpen tragen. Fürsten sammeln antike Architektur: Die Aschaffener Korkmodelle*. Landshut/Ergolding: Arcos Verlag.
- Kockel, V** and **Laidlaw, A.** 2018. A Cork Model in Aschaffenburg (Bavaria) Giving New Evidence for Pompeii's House of Sallust. *Journal of Roman Archaeology*, 31: 259–284. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1047759418001319>
- Lamers, P.** 1995. *Il viaggio nel Sud dell'Abbé de Saint-Non: il Voyage pittoresque à Naples et en Sicile: la genesi, i disegni preparatori, le incisioni*. Naples: Electa.
- Moormann, EM.** 2015. *Pompeii's Ashes: The Reception of the Cities Buried by Vesuvius in Literature, Music, and Drama*. Boston/Berlin/Munich: De Gruyter.
- Moormann, EM.** 2016. Da paesaggi a veri misteri. Temi pompeiani nella pittura a partire dalla scoperta di Pompei. In: Osanna, M, et al. (eds.), *Pompeii e l'Europa. Atti del convegno*, 92–99. Milan: Electa.

- Moormann, EM.** 2017. Winckelmann's Herculaneer Schriften. In: Disselkamp, M and Testa, F (eds.), *Winckelmann-Handbuch*, 164–79. Stuttgart: Metzler Verlag. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-476-05354-1_18
- Moormann, EM.** 2017a. Winckelmann und die griechischen Tempel von Agrigento. In: Disselkamp, M and Testa, F (eds.), *Winckelmann-Handbuch*, 180–83. Stuttgart: Metzler Verlag. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-476-05354-1_19
- Moritz, KPh.** 1792. *Reisen eines Deutschen in Italien in den Jahren 1786 bis 1788*. Berlin: Friedrich Maurer.
- Nichols, K.** 2015. *Greece and Rome at the Crystal Palace: Classical Sculpture and Modern Britain, 1854–1936*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199596461.001.0001>
- Olivito, R.** 2013. *Il Foro nell'atrio. Immagini di architetture, scene di vita e di mercato dai Praedia di Iulia Felix (Pompei, II, 4, 3)*. Bari: Edipuglia.
- Osanna, M,** et al. 2015. *Pompei e l'Europa 1748–1943*. Milan: Electa.
- Osterkamp, E.** 1992. Johann Hermann von Riedesels Sizilienreise. Die Winckelmannsche Perspektive und ihre Folgen. In: Jäger, H-W (ed.), *Europäisches Reisen im Zeitalter der Aufklärung*, 93–106. Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag.
- Pagano, M.** 2000. *Il teatro di Ercolano*. Naples: Electa.
- Parslow, CC.** 1995. *Rediscovering Antiquity: Karl Weber and the Excavation of Herculaneum, Pompeii, and Stabiae*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Pinto, JA.** 2012. *Speaking Ruins: Piranesi, Architects, and Antiquity in Eighteenth-Century Rome*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.3086663>
- Pinto, JA.** 2013. Speaking Ruins: Piranesi and Desprez at Pompeii. In: Mattusch, C (ed.), *Rediscovering the Ancient World on the Bay of Naples, 1710–1890*, 229–244. New Haven/London: Yale University Press.
- Piranesi, F.** 1783. *Il teatro di Ercolano*, Rome: Stamperia Salomoni.
- Piranesi, F.** 1785. *Topografia delle fabbriche scoperte nella città di Pompei*. Rome: Stamperia Salomoni.
- Pompéi. Travaux et envois des architectes français au XIX^e siècle.** 1981. Paris: École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts/Rome: École française de Rome.
- Schnapp, A.** 1996. *Discovery of the Past: The Origins of Archaeology*. London: British Museum Press. (First published: *La conquête du passé*. Paris: Éditions Carré, 1993).
- Volkman, JJ.** 1777. *Historisch-Kritische nachrichten von Italien*. Leipzig: Caspar Fritsch.
- Von Erdmannsdorff, EW.** 2001. *Kunsthistorisches Journal einer fürstlichen Bildungsreise nach Italien 1765/66*. Munich/Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag.
- Von Roda, B.** 1988. *Schloß Aschaffenburg und Pompejanum*. Munich: Bayerische Verwaltung der staatlichen Schlösser, Gärten und Seen.
- Winckelmann, JJ.** 1762a, 2001a. *Anmerkungen über die Baukunst der Alten*, 1st ed. Leipzig: Johann Gottfried Dyck. Gross, M (ed.), *Schriften und Nachlaß* 3. Mainz am Rhein: Philipp von Zabern.
- Winckelmann, JJ.** 1762b, 1997a. *Sendschreiben von den Herculianischen Entdeckungen*, 1st ed. Dresden: Walter. Bruer, SG and Kunze, M (eds.), *Schriften und Nachlaß* 2.1. Mainz am Rhein: Philipp von Zabern.
- Winckelmann, JJ.** 1764, 1997b. *Nachrichten von den neuesten Herculianischen Entdeckungen*. 1st ed. Dresden: Walter. Bruer, SG and Kunze, M (eds.), *Schriften und Nachlaß* 2.2. Mainz am Rhein: Philipp von Zabern.
- Winckelmann, JJ.** 2001b. *Briefe, Entwürfe und Rezensionen zu den herculianischen Schriften*. Bruer, SG and Kunze, M (eds.), *Schriften und Nachlaß* 2.3. Mainz am Rhein: Philipp von Zabern.

How to cite this article: Moormann, EM. 2018. The Appreciation of Pompeii's Architectural Remains in the Late 18th and Early 19th Century. *Architectural Histories*, 6(1): 24, pp. 1–11. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5334/ah.244>

Published: 27 December 2018

Copyright: © 2018 The Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC-BY 4.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited. See <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

]u[*Architectural Histories* is a peer-reviewed open access journal published by Ubiquity Press.

OPEN ACCESS 