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The Sense of Time in Early Studies on Pompeii

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*Pompei è la città che ha saputo morir meglio di tutte le altre sue bellissime sorelle della Magna Grecia, poiché la morte violenta per asfissia è l'unica morte che si addice alla bellezza. Sui giganteschi ruderi di Agrigento e di Siracusa, sui loro scheletri corrosi dal tempo, l'archeologo non può studiare che osteologia, mentre il cadavere di Pompei ha tutte le sue membra intatte; il suo sangue è fermo, ma non ha perduto il roseo colore che trasparisce sotto la pelle gentile. L'anima è partita ed il corpo non si è corrotto.*¹

Apparently, students of the antiquities of Pompeii from the middle of the 18th century onwards also paid attention to the chronological development of the city from its foundation up to AD 79. This should be the case if we may believe the well-known *pompeianista* Kurt Wallat. In his review of a work on early houses at Pompeii by a pupil of Jos de Waele he writes:

Seit dem Beginn der Ausgrabungen in Pompeji im späten 18. Jh. und schon während der systematischen Freilegung im 19. Jh. waren Wissenschaftler bestrebt, die jeweiligen Befunde in einen chronologischen Kontext einzubinden. Pompeji bot und bietet bis heute eine große Anzahl an Kriterien, die für Datierungen überaus hilfreich sind.²

Wallat's remark asks for a verification and gives me the occasion to discuss the aspect of chronology in publications on Pompeii of the first hundred years: did such works enter into the problem of time and history of the archaeological remains or did they not but stick to the literary sources and lacked a sense of time? However, first of all, we must notice that 'Wissenschaftler' were few in the first decades, and most of them were only interested in the genre of traditional antiquarianism, i.e. the study of objects like paintings and bronze statuettes without bothering about the find context, like we observe in the sumptuous volumes of the *Antichità d'Ercolano* and the *Real Museo Borbonico*. This genre of publications

and other texts was more or less purely descriptive. Moreover, as I want to make clear in this contribution, Pompeii presented itself to both tourists and scholars in that era as the exemplary antique town, showing Greek and/or Roman society in all its aspects, of undetermined antiquity and lacking a chronological development of its own from its mythical foundation by Hercules up to the eruption of Vesuvius.³ The quotation of Renato Fucino's impression at the beginning of this contribution well epitomizes the emotions of visitors and studiosi until that year (1878) and beyond.

I discuss some publications from the first hundred years that Pompeii was being explored, to look for possible glimpses of chronological insight. I concentrate on one of the first really scientific works, two influential and still valuable compendiums, adding a few examples taken from personal sources like diaries and travel books. It will become clear that all these publications have a 'monochronic' approach, i.e. they deliver a concept of Pompeii that, despite its history, both mythical and factual, lacks a historical stratigraphy in the archaeological remains.

The Enlightenment studies about the origins and oldest phases of Pompeii were purely based on the interpretation of the scarce mentions in the ancient written sources. People knew – and repeatedly told so in travel books and essays – that Hercules had founded Herculaneum and that Pompeii probably had the same origins. The authors of the first illustrated monograph about the excavations of Herculaneum,⁴ Charles-Nicolas Cochin and Jean-Charles Bellicard, argued that the year of Herculaneum's foundation was 1238 BC, calculated from the chronology in the *Antiquitates Romanae* of Dionysius of Halicarnassus.⁵ Therefore, it was one of the oldest cities of Italy. Oscans were living here before the arrival of Greeks from Cumae, but the date of that afflux of new inhabitants was not known. Pompeii had a similar history that would be highlighted in other publications. Although the texts of that age refer to considerably later

¹ T. Iermano (ed.), R. Fucini, *Napoli a occhio nudo*, Venosa 1997, 93. This page forms part of chapter III on Amalfi, Sorrento and Pompeii; the first edition was published at Florence in 1878, one year after the trip (cf. García y García 1998, no. 5565-5567 for various editions). Fucino (1843-1921) was known as a poet under the anagram-pseudonym of Neri Tanfucio. His Naples book was praised by Benedetto Croce for its realistic and severe judgment of the poverty-stricken capital of southern Italy.

² K. Wallat, review Kees Peterse, Steinfachwerk in Pompeji, *Gnomon* 74 (2002) 714-720, quotation p. 714. Two small corrections may be made. The excavations started in 1748, that is not "im späten" 18th century. The "systematischen Freilegungen" did not start earlier than under the direction of Giuseppe Fiorelli from 1860 onwards.

³ On the supposed Greekness of Pompeii see E.M. Moormann, *Pompéi à la grecque*, in: M. Haagsma et al. (eds.), *The Impact of Classical Greece on European and National Identities*, Amsterdam 2003, 241-265.

⁴ *Observations sur les antiquités d'Herculaneum avec Quelques Réflexions sur la Peinture & la Sculpture des Anciens; & une courte description de plusieurs Antiquités des environs de Naples* (Paris 1754; I saw two 'seconde édition[s]' from 1755 and 1757 in the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut at Rome, the latter of which seems a pirate edition; cf. García y García 1998, no. 3098). The extremely poor quality of the illustrations of paintings and objects in the museum at Portici can be explained by the fact that the authors had to draw these items out of their memory, after sketches hastily and furtively made because of the severe rule that neither notes nor drawings could be made. Cf. the much better illustration of other monuments (Naples, Campi Flegrei).

⁵ Dion. Hal. 1.44.1 (also quoted in García y García 1998, 37).

⁶ Until recently AD 63 was the year in which the earthquake should have taken place. I do not enter into this discussion that is not very important for my theme. Cfr. A. De Varone in this volume.

⁷ Henry Sass, *A Journey to Rome and Naples, Performed in 1817; Giving an Account of the Present State of Society in Italy; and Containing Observations on the Fine Arts*, London 1818, 195.

⁸ *Le Vésuve. Description du volcan et de ses environs*, Limoges s.d., 19. The following quotation is from p. 22.

⁹ Here I use the German edition (see García y García 1998, nos. 1721-1724 for other versions): *Briefe auf Reisen durch Frankreich Erster Band, der die Reisen durch Frankreich und Unter-Italien enthält*, Stralsund 1777: 258-259 (in Letter 17, dated 30 July 1771, pp. 246-264 on Herculaneum).

¹⁰ Mazois 1824, II, 62.

¹¹ Mazois 1824, II, 53, 80.

¹² J.J. Winckelmann, *Sendschreiben von den Herculianischen Entdeckungen*, Dresden 1762, to be followed by *Nachrichten von den neuesten Herculianischen Entdeckungen*, Dresden 1764. Both have been edited with extensive comment by Max Kunze et al., Mainz 1997. The volume with the *Sendschreiben* contains a long introduction about Winckelmann and the archaeology of the Vesuvian area (pp.17-47). See also the remarks on Cochin and Bellicard in note 4.

¹³ First edition published anonymously (Paris 1819); 2nd illustrated ed. Paris 1822. The attribution is already made in the German translation: *Der Pallast des Scaurus oder Beschreibung eines römischen Stadthauses. Bruchstück aus dem Tagebuch Merovirs, einen suevischen Königssohns, über seine gegen das Ende der Republik nach Rom unternommene Reise*, Gotha/Erfurt 1820, cured by Karl Chr. and Ernst Fr. Wüstemann (their introduction p. V-VI).

¹⁴ D. Russo, *Il tempio di Giove Meilicchio a Pompei*, Naples 1991, 29 pointedly observes: "Con l'opera di Mazois Pompei è ormai oggetto di studio scientifico."

moments in Pompeian history, chronological hallmarks like the Second Punic War, the Social War of 91 BC, Sulla's installation of the Colonia Veneria Pompeiana, the riot in the amphitheatre of AD 59 and the earthquake of AD 62⁶ were not tackled as possible indicators of urbanistic, architectural and artistic changes in the town's development. With other words, the inhabitants, from Oscans to Romans, apparently always lived in the same (sort of) houses, worshipped identical gods and made strolls in the streets the modern visitors are now trodding.

As to the old Oscan inhabitants one curious example of fantastic etymology cannot be left out. Many travellers noted 'obscenities' in the excavations and in the collections at Portici, with which they obviously hinted at erotic images, the icons of phalli on the façades of houses and the generally assumed debauchery of the Romans. Hence, Henri Sass connected the term 'obscene' with the Oscans, the first inhabitants of Herculaneum:⁷ "From the indecent tendency of their [viz. of the Osci] manners, the word *obscoenum* (*quasi oscenum*) is supposed to be derived." The Oscans would return in other attempts at etymology, now concerning the name of the city. So, in the 1850s Alphonse D'Augerot published a fictitious correspondence between Valmer and Fanny D. written from Pompeii in "September 185". Pompeii's name either stems from Syrian or Oscan *pum*: "Pum, Peah, bouche d'un fourneau ardent", or from the Greek *pompeion*, interpreted as entrepôt. It was an Oscan city with old walls from that period, pure and simple. It would become rich, which was not a positive point only: "Mais avec l'opulence, la corruption a pénétré dans son enceinte."⁸

An interesting early observation on chronology can be found in a letter of Jacob Jonas Björnstahl who published a book of letters in Swedish, sent to the editor Gjöwell at Stockholm and soon translated into several languages.⁹ He suggested that all wall paintings were made after the earthquake of AD 62 when the city was "von neuem in Stand gesetzt." The inscription in the Temple of Isis, mentioning the restoration financed by Popidius Celsinus formed his proof: "Also sieht man, von welcher Zeit man die Malereyen zu Pompeji rechnen kann." According to François Mazois, the paintings at Pompeii follow the trends initiated in the time of Augustus and therefore, without saying it explicitly, the French scholar attributed all of them to the imperial period.¹⁰ The technique of *opus tessellatum* would have been introduced under Sulla, although older cases must have been known.¹¹ It would last some sixty years before

Wolfgang Helbig and August Mau started serious studies about the murals, which would lead to a hitherto accepted subdivision of Pompeian wall decorations into four periods, the so-called four 'Styles'.

The first decades of the explorations provided little space for research to people who were not connected with the Neapolitan court. The Bourbon kings wanted to keep the excavation results as a personal means to illustrate their power and splendour and gave no permission to study both the sites and the finds to others than the members of the *Accademia Herculanensis*. This climate certainly was not stimulating independent researchers to work on Pompeii and we know how many difficulties Winckelmann encountered after the publication of his famous *Sendschreiben*.¹² At the beginning of the 19th century, during the Napoleonic era, under the government of Joaquin Murat and his wife Caroline who was a great lover of the Pompeian antiquities, liberty was bestowed upon the students of Pompeian antiquities to make notes and so not only local scholars but also foreigners could carry out research. The successive Bourbon kings mostly continued this policy, although Sir William Gell observed some problems about making notes like in the past century. The most eye-catching result of the French digs was the systematic excavation of the Forum area, with a series of temples, public buildings and arches that completed the image of a Roman town: Pompeii had no longer only houses, tombs and ramparts, but also a commercial, political and religious heart. These items provoked a large amount of new publications.

The afore-mentioned French architect François Mazois (1783-1826) lived at the spot from 1809 until 1811 and in the period 1816-1819, wanting to write a thorough work on all aspects of architecture of Pompeii. With his zeal he gave a good example of this new spirit. He was renowned for his novel *Le palais de Scaurus, ou description d'une maison romaine, fragment d'un voyage fait à Rome, vers la fin de la République, par Mérovir, prince des Suèves*.¹³ But, more importantly, we can still use the four splendid volumes of his *Les ruines de Pompéi*, a cornerstone of scholarship, admirable for its exactitude and completeness of observations.¹⁴ Unfortunately, Mazois died before the two last volumes came from the press. In several cases he is keen at finding answers for unsolved questions and at establishing the origin and development of techniques, branches of art and other aspects. Some of his chronological remarks will come to the fore in this essay.

Mazois' collection of data assembled in the excavations and not dependent from the old-fashioned products by the Neapolitan scholars or other second-hand sources gave way to the publications of informative books on the excavations, mostly highly descriptive of character, but not devoid of scientific pretensions by the generation of *pompeianisti* like Thomas Donaldson (1795-1885), and the architect Carlo Bonucci who became director of the excavations and museum (1799-1870). A few decades later, Ernest Breton (1812-1875) and Johannes Overbeck (1826-1895) provided the public with new well-documented and richly illustrated handbooks.¹⁵ Sir William Gell (1777-1836) was at Pompeii in 1815 (after the fall of Napoleon, when the English could visit Italy again), worked there only shortly after Mazois, from 1820 onwards, and came to surprising conclusions independently (see *infra*). Some of his ideas were discussed by François Christian Gau in his contributions to the last two volumes of Mazois' *magnum opus*.

In the following, one section discusses various chronological topics related in Mazois, Gell and Breton. Their works have been singled out for several reasons. Mazois' work can be considered as the main scientific publication of the first hundred years, Gell's as the first sound general description or compendium and Breton's as a good example of the second generation of such compendiums. A short section is then dedicated to the 'Doric' temple and another to the city walls. An *intermezzo* gives a curious addition to Jos de Waele's own complete overview of scholarship on the Doric temple and its surroundings.

Mazois, Gell and Breton

Apart from the monuments sorted out in the following sections, Mazois paid attention to various aspects that could help us to date specific buildings. In general, he considers Pompeii's architecture as Greek. Some influences, albeit "très légères", from other peoples can be noticed.¹⁶ According to him and many others, houses were simple and only grew in dimensions and luxury at the end of the Republic, when Roman influences increased. This does, however, not lead him to specifications of this phenomenon.¹⁷ In the volume on the public buildings – the first overview of this category, made possible after the discoveries on and around the forum – he argues that cisterns might be an older system for the

collection of water than the pipes one sees above the ground. The forum shows restorations from after the earthquake and its layout has oddities due to the succession of phases. The 'Temple of Venus' (i.e. of Apollo) must be older as well as some streets that arrive at the forum. Moreover the capitals of the temple and the Temple of Juppiter must be Greek. Laconically he also notes that the quarter of the theatres must be the oldest part of the town; perhaps he points at the Doric temple again.¹⁸

Sir William Gell was known as a kind man, always willing to guide persons of a certain rank to the excavations or the museum collections although he suffered of podagra. He had studied archaeological sites in Greece before he settled at Naples in 1820, where he first worked with the architect John Peter Gandy (1771-1832), later with Richard Keppel Craven (1799-1851), who had probably become his living partner. *Pompeiana* came out in 1819 and is the first English textbook on Pompeii. It had much success, was re-edited in 1821 and 1824 and a third edition came from the press in 1852, at a time that this work in fact was entirely out of date.¹⁹ The success stimulated Gell to publish a second *Pompeiana* in 1832, describing the discoveries between 1819 and 1826.

Pompeiana set a model for future books with its articulation of the topics: first some words about the discovery, then sections about the name and origin of the city, to be followed by chapters on the various categories of buildings, from the city walls, via the public and religious buildings to the houses. As to Pompeii's history Gell duly lists the various sources, only to conclude that they do not abound in important events. In early times there had been Osci, followed by Etruscans and Campanians. From the Sulla revolts onwards the city was Roman. The only consequences for the buildings mentioned explicitly are restorations made after the earthquake of 62. The descriptions of the monuments themselves produce a monochronic image. Various features are illustrated with text sources from different periods: indiscriminately Plautus, Livy, Vitruvius, Vergil and the satyrists of the 1st century AD, to record a few only, instruct the author – and the reader – as to the names and functions of parts of temples, houses and public buildings.

There is no time path running through Gell's description apart from a few exceptions. First of all there is the section on the city walls (see below). Arriving at the Forum, Gell feels the need to give some remarks about the Greek architectural orders, all of which present in

¹⁵ The reader may find short but useful biographies in the respective entries in García y García 1998.

¹⁶ Mazois 1824, I, 21.

¹⁷ Mazois 1824, II, 7, 63 (here Etruscan influence is mentioned). The presentation of the Forum Baths leads Mazois (1829, 68) to a comparison with the simple baths of Scipio, described by Seneca: the baths of Pompeii, therefore, must be of recent date and offer an example of the degeneration of Roman society.

¹⁸ Mazois 1829, 17, 34, 35.

¹⁹ García y García 1998, nos. 5825-5826 even lists the American edition of ca. 1880.

²⁰ Gell/Gandy 1852, 145.

²¹ Gell/Gandy 1852, 150 no. 2 and 158 no. 33, explanations to the map on plate XLIV. Gell remarks ad no. 2 that his idea that this arch had a pendant at the other side now has to be rejected, viewing the results of later excavations. This correction in the 2nd and 3rd edition is not taken into account in the description of the gate and the reconstruction of the Forum at p. 167, pl. LI. As to the “Old Arch” Gell 1832, I, 81 and II, 78 connects it with Tiberius or Caligula. De Maria 1988, 253 nos. 36-37 has the ‘old’ theory about a couple of arches, dated to AD 18. De Maria 1988, 254-255 discusses the other arch, attributed to Germanus’ sons Nero and Drusus, dated to AD 23 or a little later.

²² Gell 1832, I, ix-x, xxii-xxiii. He does no longer present the discoveries according to the functions of the buildings, but in the order of their excavations.

²³ Gell 1832, I, 69, 74-75.

²⁴ In contrast, an inscription mentioning an *augustalis*, found elsewhere is correctly interpreted as naming a priest of the emperor’s cult (Mazois 1829, 61).

²⁵ Mazois 1838, 35 (text Gau, but on the basis of Mazois’ own notes).

²⁶ That fascination for Cicero as living at Pompeii can be found in fiction and poetry, e.g.: G. Bianco, *Una notte sulle rovine di Pompei*, Naples 1833, Third ‘colloquio’; W.G. Dix: *Pompeii and other Poems*, Boston 1848, 33-38; A.C. Vecchio, *Pompeii*, Torino 1864, chapter III (dedicated to Giuseppe Fiorelli).

²⁷ Mazois 1838, 35 (text Gau, but on the basis of Mazois’ own notes).

²⁸ Breton 1855, 63.

²⁹ García y García 1998, 235 no. 2099 describes the immediately necessary re-edition of the same 1855 edition and its differences. As late as 1876 impressions of a third 1869 edition were printed.

³⁰ Breton 1855, 9.

³¹ Breton 1855, 27. Indeed Mazois 1824, I, 21 remarks that the decoration could have been made by one group of decorators, guided by one single person.

³² Breton 1855, 48, 52 (temples), 136 (portico).

³³ Breton 1855, 172.

the various buildings. Pompeii, unfortunately, is not a good example of their use and development: the custom to cover columns and capitals with stucco layers obscures the pure forms.²⁰ A sense of chronology pertains the two triumphal arches that flank the Temple of Jupiter. In the explanation of the beautiful plan of the Forum area he states that the arch at the west side (left from the temple) might be younger as it was composed of brick and rubble. The other one is called the “Old Triumph Arch”.²¹

The second series of *Pompeiana* is still more descriptive and Gell states that the atmosphere at Naples has become more restrictive towards people who want to take notes and to make illustrations, whereas, at the same time, the lack of protective measurements regarding the unearthed monuments causes the loss of innumerable important monuments, objects, mosaics and mural paintings.²² For this reason, the reader obtains less information about the city as a whole, which does not detract from the importance of many of Gell’s observations.

In our context, however, it is relevant to single out Gell’s discussion of the Temple of Fortuna Augusta. The excavators had found various inscriptions mentioning a Marcus Tullius, son of Marcus, who had built this marble temple on a private lot of ground. This example of the imperial cult of the Fortuna Augusta was erected at the beginning of the 1st century AD. The fact that Gell calls the shrine ‘Temple of Fortuna’ implies that he does not understand the importance of the adjective *augusta*, that, as a matter of fact, illustrates its specific dedication. Gell shares the opinions of previous scholars who suppose that this Tullius may have been the great orator Cicero himself, whose properties at Pompeii were well known since long. Gell concludes from a family tree that Cicero or his son must have been the builder.²³ Mazois had come to another interpretation, but also neglected the information given by the epitheton *augusta*.²⁴ The lack of a cognomen could be an indication for the attribution of the temple to the father or grandfather of the most famous Pompeian, Cicero.²⁵ Like other authors²⁶ he was spellbound by the idea that Rome’s most famous orator could be ‘reached’ via his parents. Nevertheless, when discussing the relief with the offering priest of the altar in the Temple of the Genius Augusti at the eastside of the Forum, he criticised those who wanted to see a portrait of Cicero in that servant: nonsense, we must not try to find Cicero everywhere!²⁷ Our third man, Breton,

also briefly tackled the question of the dedication of the Fortuna temple and followed Gell.²⁸

Finally, one may notice that Gell cites a great number of inscriptions among which various in old Latin. The author, however, never makes remarks about the possible old date of these texts and does not gain insight whatsoever about the chronology.

In 1855 Ernest Breton publishes a counterpart to Gell’s book, rather popular in France.²⁹ This man was a rich amateur, lover of travelling and author of several works on art and antiquity. He expressly remarks that *Pompéia* is destined for the general reader, not for the specialist, but the text shows a lot of shorter and longer discussions with other scholars that make the book worth to be inserted into this short overview. Breton does not include many observations concerning the chronology of Pompeian antiquities. As to the walls he observes their disuse after the entrance of Sulla’s troops and the clumsy repair during the Civil War of Pompey.³⁰ In general the buildings of Pompeii have been constructed in Greek style, albeit in Roman way. “Quant à leur décoration, c’est avec raison que Mazois dit qu’elle est d’un goût tellement uniforme, qu’on serait tenté de croire au premier moment que toute la ville fut ornée par les mêmes artistes et sous la direction d’un seul homme.”³¹ Some cases of damage caused by the AD 62 earthquake are mentioned. The Temple of Apollo (then still of Venus) showed signs of that disaster, whereas the absence of columns in the Jupiter Temple was the consequence of a restoration project. The same was true for the forum. The restoration of the columns in the portico behind the grand theatre is not dated precisely, but alluded to.³² A vague indication of dating is given for the theatre: the first permanent one was that of Pompey and a lot of them were constructed consequently, like that of Pompeii.³³ A new proposal concerns the Basilica. Apart from the possibilities to reconstruct the hall, Breton involves the Ionic capitals as a clue for dating, viz. the 1st century BC. An observation on the capitals of the entrance hall of the Forum Triangulare leads to their ‘early’ dating: the comparison with those of Theron’s monument at Akragas stresses that opinion.

The Doric Temple

The Doric Temple at the *Foro Triangolare* formed the main link with the beginnings of the Campanian

city from the outset. It was a happy coincidence that its discovery and subsequent excavation ran contemporaneously with the first explorations of the Doric temples of Paestum in the 1750s. Johann Joachim Winckelmann dated these sanctuaries to the archaic period and was followed by all other scholars.³⁴ Jos de Waele collected a great deal of descriptions and studies in the first part of his monograph,³⁵ and therefore, I can limit myself to a few examples only.

The German traveller Friedrich Leopold Graf zu Stolberg was fully inspired by both Winckelmann's view of classical antiquity and Romantic fascination for landscape when he wrote:³⁶

Von weit höherem Alterthum als alle andre Gebäude, die aus Pompeji's Schutt bisher aufgehüllet worden, sind Trümmer eines Tempels, dessen große dorische Säulenknäufel von früher Zeit altgriechischer Kunst zeugen, da sie in halb roher Einfalt noch nicht ausgebildet, aber voll Adels und Stärke war, und im wahren dorischen Geiste jede Zier als Tändelei verschmähte. Eben dieser Geist athmet aus dem dorischen Dialekt des Pindars und des Theokritos; er athmete, nach den Zeugnissen der Alten, aus der dorischen Musik.

Bonucci ranked the Doric temple under the "Monumenti etruschi",³⁷ whereas Donaldson compared the temple to those at Paestum and attributed it to Hercules. The *Foro triangolare* should be the *Forum Nundinarium*.³⁸ In Gell's work the Doric Temple gets a very short description, apparently being less attractive a monument than the adjacent theatre area that is amply illustrated. Too little was preserved for a reconstruction of this monument and Gell does not go beyond saying that it was a 'Greek temple'.³⁹

Breton stresses the antiquity of the temple and argues that the *Foro triangolare* probably was not open to everybody and had been closed under Sulla. Originally it had formed the town's acropolis.⁴⁰ Its bad state of conservation should be explained as the result of continuous spoliation after AD 79, when parts of the monument were still jutting out above the lapilli.⁴¹

The Walls of Pompeii

Parts of the city walls were explored in combination with the discovery of the city gates. The *Porta Ercolano* became a main hallmark as early as the 1750s, being

for long time one of the few monuments not covered again after exploration, together with the picturesque Street of the Tombs. The walls' circuit was recognised in the landscape, as we see on the oldest maps, but could be studied better when the French excavated the greater parts of them in the early 19th century, to be followed by a complete freeing in the 1850s.

During the French excavation works Oscan letters forming mason's marks were discovered and from the outset they were used as a token of the walls' antiquity. One of the first to comment upon these inscriptions was Mazois. In the first volume of *Les ruines de Pompéi* he starts his observations about the city walls – at that moment only partly excavated – as follows:⁴²

Les plus anciens monuments d'une ville sont ordinairement ses murailles; car le premier besoin des hommes qui s'y rassemblèrent dans l'origine, étant d'y trouver la sécurité, ils durent réunir leurs efforts pour élever autour d'eux quelque enceinte capable de défendre leur cité naissante.

Although not of cyclopic technique and therefore not extremely old, the ramparts of Pompeii indeed must be archaic, because the dry masonry is composed of trapezium-shaped blocks with oblique sides, and one sees very old Oscan or Greek characters carved on their surfaces that prove the Oscan or Greek origin of the town.⁴³ Mazois observed reparations made during the Social Wars, recognisable for their neglected technique.

Gell admires the masonry technique and the decoration of the facings with stucco. "The walls of Pompeii are, perhaps, the only part of the city at all calculated to resist that rapid decay, which seems to hasten the disappearance of every other remain within their circuit."⁴⁴ He compares them to the Etruscan walls at Volterra. Oscan marks on the blocks and the Oscan inscription in the Nolan Gate are mentioned. "Oscan is supposed to have been the language of the lower orders" and so the strange spelling of the gate's inscription can be explained as the consequence of the corruption of the language, like one still observes in the dialect of Naples.⁴⁵ The shape of the Nolan Gate is compared to that of the Lion Gate at Mycenae. These comparisons do not lead to a tentative of dating the walls. The reader remains a little puzzled as to the meaning of the quoted sentence about decay: does Gell mean that the walls can sustain the decay of nowadays – a development he observes in the excavations for the lack of protective measurements – or

³⁴ J.J. Winckelmann, *Anmerkungen über die Baukunst der Alten*, Leipzig 1762 (see new edition with comment in J.J. Winckelmann, *Schriften zur antiken Baukunst*, Mainz 2001).

³⁵ De Waele 2001, 13–42.

³⁶ E.L. Graf zu Stolberg, *Reise in Deutschland, der Schweiz, Italien und Sicilien in den Jahren 1791–92*, III, Königsberg/Leipzig 1794, here quoted from *Gesammelte Werke* VIII, Hamburg 1822, 69 [= *Gesammelte Werke*, 20 Bände in zehn Bände, IV, Hildesheim/New York 1974]. This fragment stems from Letter 71, 1 March 1792, p. 62–80. García y García 1998, no. 13.274–13.276 also records translations of this popular series of letters.

³⁷ Bonucci 1827, 178.

³⁸ Th.L. Donaldson, *Pompeii, Illustrated with Picturesque Views engraved by W.B. Cooke from the original drawings of Lieut. Col. Cockburn, of the Royal Artillery*, London 1827, I, 41–42. This idea was taken over from Mazois.

³⁹ Gell/Gandy 1852, 178–179, 190–191, plate LXVII; quotation of the first passage in De Waele 2001, 22. As to its location see also Gell 1832, II, 203; Mazois' thesis about the acropolis on this spot (Mazois 1829, 18) cannot be accepted.

⁴⁰ That limited access was put forward by Mazois (1929, 18) who referred to Cicero, *Pro Sulla* 22. On the acropolis see above and the two previous notes.

⁴¹ Breton 1855, 38, 39, 129. The idea of the acropolis probably is taken from Mazois 1829, 18.

⁴² Mazois 1824, I, 33. The first fascicles, among which that with the chapter devoted to the city walls, had come out in 1812.

⁴³ Mazois 1824, I, 34–35, plate XII.

⁴⁴ Gell/Gandy 1852, 87: opening sentence of the chapters on the city walls.

⁴⁵ Gell/Gandy 1852, 92 note 1 (quotation); 92–93 note 3 (corruption). Gell gives the text at p. 92 and an illustration can be found at p. 98 (vignette). Mazois 1824, 52–53 expressed great doubts as to the relationship between gate and Popidian inscription, according to him placed there by some "ouvrier".

⁴⁶ Gell/Gandy 1852, 18.

⁴⁷ Gell 1832, II, 162-163, quotation at p. 163. Ibid., 163-164 and 203, Gell also makes some remarks on the Nolan Gate and adds the beautiful plate LXXXV showing its inside. On the basis of the Oscan inscription with the dedication to Isis he prefers the name Gate of Isis.

⁴⁸ Bonucci 1827, 79-82.

⁴⁹ E. Breton, *Athènes*, Paris 1862.

⁵⁰ M. Starke, *Travels in Italy between the Years 1792 and 1798; containing a view of the late revolutions in that country*, London 1802, II, 105.

⁵¹ August von Kotzebue, *Erinnerungen von einer Reise aus Liefland nach Rom und Neapel*, Berlin 1805, I, 363.

⁵² [Louise Demont,] *Voyages and Travels of Her Majesty, Caroline, Queen of Great Britain, ... by one of Her Majesty's Suite*, London 1821, 292-293. Her party was at Pompeii in 1814.

⁵³ Breton 1855, 366, last words of the long last phrase.

does he allude to the durability of these ramparts in antiquity? The Oscan texts seem of no consequence either, while they are dismissed as expressions of lower classes. We may remember that the oldest inhabitants, according to Gell, had been the (same?) Oscans!⁴⁶ In the publication of 1832 Gell is puzzled about the same tokens on the walls and concludes: "They are of a very remote time, if we may judge from the appearance of the masonry." An element hitherto not considered, the construction technique, now represents an argument for an early date.⁴⁷ He probably had read Mazois' notes on this topic.

Bonucci also states the old age of the walls, mentioning the presence of Etruscan letters and observing that the walls were repaired after the siege of Sulla.⁴⁸ For Breton, the city walls are the oldest parts of the town, like elsewhere: the reader gets references to Mycenae and Praeneste and other fortified sites. They stem from the Oscans and the shape of the inscriptions is identical to that of the Agger of Servius Tullius at Rome, and therefore the Pompeian fortifications are dated to the middle of the 6th century. In his view, the walls between the towers near via di Mercurio and Porta Vesuvio are newer, as one may deduce from the technique and a construction in 91 BC (Social War) would be plausible. In the third edition of his work (1870) Breton compares the presence of column drums in the ramparts of Pompeii to those in the northern walls of the Acropolis of Athens. It was this monument he had just described in a book of 1862.⁴⁹

These mason's marks and texts in other 'strange' letters got, as we see, various labels: Oscan, Etruscan, old Greek. For Mariana Starke they even were Hebrew characters.⁵⁰

Why this Absence of Time?

The reason not to reflect upon the antiquity of the city itself stems from the dominating impression most visitors kept after their stroll: the idea of a city not yet dead or almost waiting for new inhabitants pervaded a lot of travel accounts and memoirs. The German writer August von Kotzebue waited for a drink in one of Pompeii's bars:

Wir möchten den Hausherrn bei Namen rufen, er scheint nur, um eines kleinen Geschäftes willen, sich auf kurze Zeit entfernt zu haben, vielleicht um die Gefäße wieder zu füllen, die in diesen Vertiefungen standen,

denn seht, der Marmortisch trägt ja noch die geringelten Spuren der Tassen, welche von Trinkern, die eben weggegangen sind, hier niedergesetzt wurden. Wird niemand erscheinen? wohlan, wir gehen in das nächste Haus.⁵¹

And Louise Demont even expected to encounter the proprietor of the house, when she walked around in its rooms:

While you are wandering through the abandoned rooms, you may, without any great effort of imagination, expect to meet some of the former inhabitants, or perhaps the master of the house himself, and almost feel like intruders, who dread the appearance of any of the family. In the streets you are afraid of turning a corner, lest you should jostle a passenger; and on entering a house the least sound startles, as if the proprietor was coming out of the back apartments. The traveller may long indulge the illusion, for not a voice is heard, not even the sound of a foot to disturb the loneliness of the place, or interrupt his reflections. All around is silence, not the silence of solitude and repose, but of death and devastation, the silence of a great city without one single inhabitant!⁵²

Alternatively, the fact that modern man enters a city described by Pliny and Tacitus in their famous works could satisfy: the guest, educated with the texts of the ancient writers, among which these authors, plus Cicero, another 'inhabitant' of Pompeii, did make less desirable the quest for Pompeii's own history. The last words of Breton's *Pompeia* illustrate lucidly this idea: "... et pourtant, quel est celui d'entre nous qui au retour de Pompéi et d'Herculanum n'éprouverait le besoin de se recueillir et de vivre encore quelque temps dans la solitude et de la méditation avec les contemporains de Pline et de Titus?"⁵³

The indiscriminate use of various genres of texts, works from Republican to late Imperial periods and of phrases quoted out of their context was widely spread and would be normal until recently. Learned novels like Mazois' *Scaurus* and August Böttiger's *Sabina oder Morgenszenen im Putzzimmer einer reichen Römerin* (Leipzig 1803) are the 'best' examples of this custom. They also do not attribute to a finer understanding of chronology and historical dimensions.

I shall not give more examples of this mood that can be found abundantly in both travel books and fiction. In

all cases, the observer does not arrive at further investigations of the old remains and doesn't ask to which age in Pompeii's history buildings and objects belong. Even those persons who remember that Cicero had a villa here and know about the Oscan roots, do not seek the earliest remains.

Intermezzo: The oldest Dutch contribution to Pompeian Studies

As said before, De Waele collected most testimonies about the Doric temple and its surroundings from the moment of its discovery until the modern times. One addendum from Dutch origin can be given.⁵⁴

De Waele and his co-author Bruno D'Agostino discuss the topography of the area around the Doric temple, including the so-called *palaestra sannitica*. This small area north of the theatres and next to the Temple of Isis is formed by an open field surrounded by a portico and containing a high podium on which once stood the marble copy of Polykleitos' Doryphoros (now in the Museo Nazionale at Naples). This small platform to which a flight of steps was added, invited several visitors and students to a fervid debate as to its function. Many people saw the place as a Greek gymnasium in which orators could be trained on this podium. Others interpreted the complex as a training centre for the *juventus* of Pompeii.

At the beginning of the 19th century, in 1818, the first chair of Archaeology in the world was installed at the University of Leiden and this professorship was given to Caspar Jacob Christiaan Reuven (1793-1835) who taught more or less all mediterranean cultures plus the prehistory of The Netherlands.⁵⁵ Moreover, he started to build up a collection of ancient art in the newly established Rijksmuseum van Oudheden at Leiden. It is this scholar who contributed, although in an *abgelegene Stelle* to the studies of Pompeii, a site he never visited.

His contribution forms an addendum to a PhD by a young gentleman who was to become one of the main Dutch politicians of the 19th century, Jan Rudolf Thorbecke (1798-1872). Thorbecke studied classics and law and published two dissertations in 1820, one juridical and one about a historical topic. The latter work is entitled *Disputatio historico-critica inauguralis de C. Asinio Pollione* and focuses on the personality of the famous intellectual C. Asinius Pollio and his cultural activities

in Rome and Campania. Thorbecke tried to establish the location and nature of Pollio's library in the *atrium libertatis* at Rome and suggested that Asinius also was the proprietor of the Villa dei Papiri at Herculaneum.⁵⁶ Reuven's postscriptum, *Epimetrum de quibusdam monumentis cum Pollionis historia conjunctis ad Thorbeckii commentationem de C. Asinio Pollione*, also discusses the *atrium libertatis* and takes into account the Schola Rhetorum at Pompeii (p. XV). That should be the so-called *palaestra* near the Temple of Isis (*tabula* III), defined as a school for orators "propter dignitatem", not for grammar. The small podium-like structure must have been a pulpit. Reuven apparently did not know that the Doryphoros copy had been found there.⁵⁷ He praised Mazois, albeit "Mazoisii opus non vidi; sed si vere ejusdem est opusculum, quod illi tribuitur, eruditum et elegans, sed sine iconibus, *le Palais de Scaurus*, hoc poterit opinionum ejus quasi summa et compendium haberi."⁵⁸

Conclusion

Both Thorbecke and Reuven were impressed by the library of the Villa of the Papyri, almost *per forza* a possession of Pollio. The two Dutch intellectuals came under the spell of the discoveries in the shadow of Vesuvius and used modern publications. Without travelling to Pompeii they could take into account the discoveries made there, thanks to the new spirit creating interesting and informative publications.

These and other *pompeianisti* were not yet eager at discriminating different types of sources and keeping an eye on a critical use of either material or literary sources. As to Campania, it would last until the introduction of more precise excavation techniques and, consequently, thorough analyses of the finds by Giuseppe Fiorelli in the 1860s, that scholars could start to distinguish historical layers in that Pompeii of AD 79.⁵⁹ With the arrival of August Mau and Heinrich Nissen in the 1860s-1870s a new era of Pompeian studies began. These students of Pompeii added the historical dimension to the descriptive approach of the archaeological remains and developed a greater insight into the growth of the city. Nevertheless, that does not mean that the previous authors had only produced void descriptions. Despite the lack of methodology some of them are still worth to be read and quoted, as I hope to have shown.

⁵⁴ On Dutch scholarship in Pompeii see Mols 1999, where (p. 69) the Hamburg scholar Lucas Holste, who worked for many years at Leiden, is considered the first one, viz. as early as 1666. Mols does not mention Reuven.

⁵⁵ See now the biography by J.A. Brongers, *Een vroeg begin van de moderne archeologie: leven en werken van Cas Reuven*, Amersfoort 2002.

⁵⁶ As to publication regarding Pompeii Thorbecke mentions (p. 40) Mazois' *Scaurus*, "elegantiissimi libelli", and Gell's *Pompeiana*. As to the *atrium libertatis* see F. Coarelli, *Atrium Libertatis*, *LTUR* I (1993) 133-135; C.M. Amici, *Atrium Libertatis*, *LTUR* V (1999) 229.

⁵⁷ I. Fiorelli (ed.), *Pompeianarum Antiquitatum Historia*, I, Naples 1860, 66 (at the date of 13-4-1797) "In un edificio con colonne da dietro il cisternone si è trovata una statua di marmo che rappresenta un uomo, con le mani rotte e le gambe mancanti. Questa si conserva qui nello scavo fino a che si trova la parte mancante." *Ibidem*, 68 (at the dates of 3-8-1797 e 17-8-1797): si ritrovano le parti mancanti; "... se il sig. La Vega comanda, che si mandi tale statua con li corrispondenti pezzi trovati, se ne attende il suo oracolo." Cf. the entry of 7 October 1797 in the excavation diary by Francesco La Vega, now edited by M. Pagano: *I Diari di scavo di Pompei, Ercolano e Stabia di Francesco e Pietro La Vega (1764-1810)*, Rome 1997, 145 [not recognised by the editor; cf. my review in *BABesch* 73 (1998) 199-201] "... rappresenta un uomo in età fresca, del tutto nudo, e con corti capelli, senza avere distintivo alcuno pel quale possa essere caratterizzata..."

⁵⁸ He probably either saw the first French edition or the German translation, while the later ones contain some illustrations.

⁵⁹ However, the first really stratigraphic excavations at Pompeii under the 79 level would be carried out by Amedeo Maiuri in the 1930s on the Forum and in the Doric Temple. The innovation of Fiorelli is the careful lifting of the various destruction layers like roofs and walls and the reconstruction of the buildings using these materials.

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