Neighborhood networks: the civic and social organization of accessways in ancient Karanis
Bethany Simpson (UCLA)

The ancient town of Karanis (modern Kom Aushim) is familiar to many discussions of Greco-Roman world, thanks to the beautifully-preserved structures excavated by the University of Michigan (1924-1935), complete with wall-paintings and decorative shrines. Over time, a handful of the more photogenic Karanidian structures have been used repeatedly as exemplars of domestic architecture for the site, region, and greater ancient Mediterranean and Near East: Karanis houses have cropped up in many publications as comparanda to such far-ranging sites as Pompeii, Herculaneum, Ostia, and Delos, to name only a few.

Yet while individual houses of Karanis are often cited, they are rarely presented with respect to their wider context as part of an ancient town. Few studies have provided a careful, comprehensive analysis of how individual Karanis properties fit into the town fabric, an extraordinary oversight, considering that the large-scale excavation of the town provides ample opportunity to explore the interconnectivity of private properties within local neighborhood networks and within the larger urban fabric of the settlement. My study uses space syntax analysis to quantify access patterns and the permeability of built environments, and includes a developmental history of Karanis, from its Ptolemaic founding as a formally-planned settlement with an orthogonal street grid, to an apparent decline in civic management in the fourth century CE, characterized by decreased civic oversight and the opportunistic privatization of public space.

By focusing on the spatial organization of Karanis neighborhoods, particularly with respect to the street plan and access between private properties, my work demonstrates that even while civic management failed to maintain public access, alternative routes were being negotiated between neighboring property-owners, as many private domestic courtyards became shortcuts through private property. Because access to privately-owned land had to be granted by the owner, the use of these alternate routes required negotiation and interpersonal agreements which created and reinforced social ties between neighbors. My study therefore reveals that the architecture of Karanis was designed to foster varying degrees communal interaction, and highlights the important role of private property owners in balancing their own needs and rights to privacy with the essential social role of maintaining good relationships with their neighbors.
Tower-houses and multi-storey houses of Hellenistic period in the Delta and Fayum agglomerations: a solution to the urban pressure within Egyptian towns and villages

Gregory Marouard (University of Chicago)

The multi-storey house is a common feature of the Egyptian urban landscape, perhaps even since older phases of Pharaonic history. Known for a long time through the *pyrgoi* described in Greek papyri, the phenomenon of the tower-house from the Hellenistic period has received a new attention during the past fifteen years, due in particular to the multiplication of archaeological investigations of urban contexts and especially as a result of the recent and extensive geomagnetic surveys, which revealed many examples particularly in the Nile Delta region and more occasionally in the Nile valley. Clearly inscribed in a vernacular tradition which dates back at least to the Saite (26th Dynasty) and Persian periods, this type of habitat, which counted two floors above the ground floor, constituted throughout the Hellenistic period the main type of habitat for the Delta agglomerations, as well as for the newly founded villages in the Fayum Oasis by the first Ptolemaic rulers.

Better characterized now by a peculiar type of thick foundations and a tripartite ground plan, which can be considered as a continuation of a Late Egyptian tradition, Ptolemaic tower-houses also fit into a very particular domestic neighborhood layout, which will not be supplanted until the turn of the Roman era by more modest houses gathered in grouped and densely settled islets of habitation. This presentation will focus on recent archaeological data, combining the most explicit limestone or terracotta models and several papyrological data, which allow us to propose a three-dimensional reconstruction of this type of habitat. Despite a limited surface on the ground, imposed by urban pressure on restricted sites often exposed to the Nile flood, its vertical development was aimed at gaining through successive levels, space, stability, clarity and ventilation; the massive storage basement and the obscure ground floor stand in contrast to the upper floors and the *piano-mobile* which seems to have crowned these structures, with an elevation and an ‘ascending’ opening similar to the traditional Yemeni habitat.
In this paper I look at the transfer of houses upon death of the head of household from the perspective of the deceased's widow (or widower) and the children. Since spouses did not inherit according to Roman law and local Egyptian legal traditions, they were often granted a *habitatio*, a lifelong right of residence in the familial home. *Habitatio* was a limited right, basically the right of usus, but not usufruct. The holder of the right could occupy the house alone or with his dependents — the right of *habitatio* was inalienable. This arrangement with the widow remaining in the family home was, however, only possible if her late husband and his brothers had already divided up their parents’ estate and the couple had thus already established their own household. If the couple had been living with the husband’s family, including the deceased's parents and brothers, his widow simply received her dowry back and had no option but to return to her natal family, often leaving her children behind. We find this same pattern in many patriarchal preindustrial societies.

*Habitatio*, the right of residence, was also used in creditor-debtor arrangements in Roman Egypt. Instead of receiving interest, some creditors preferred to receive a house or apartment rent-free for a fixed period of time from their debtors, with this right of residence ending when the debtor had repaid the loan.

While *habitatio* was originally a personal privilege, Justinian later extended the right of *habitatio* and assimilated it to usufruct. From then on, the grantee was permitted either to live in the house, or to let it as a place of residence to someone else.
Unsafe Houses in Graeco-Roman Egypt

Yousri Abdelwahed (Minia University)

Cornelius to his sweetest son, Hierax, greeting ... Take care not to offend any of the persons at home (P.Oxy. III.531; the second century AD).

Over the past two decades, scholars with interest in the material and visual culture in the Graeco-Roman world have approached houses from different perspectives. Using archaeology and papyri, scholars have addressed the social dimension of the domestic space, the expression of the concept of cultural identity through material culture used in houses, the dynamics of the everyday family life of the common people, and different forms of ritual practices in houses in Graeco-Roman Egypt. The issue of domestic violence in Graeco-Roman Egypt, however, rarely figures in modern scholarship, though reference to it in Greek papyri is not uncommon. Roger Bagnall has primarily focused on the social status of the parties involved in acts of official and private violence in Roman Egypt without paying much attention to the topic of domestic violence. He distinguished between violence committed between approximate equals; violence of high-status persons against low-status ones; and official use of force against individual subjects. Maryline Parca has only focused on violent behaviour committed by and against women in Graeco-Roman Egypt, without fully taking into consideration the forms and causes of domestic violence. Katherine Evans was more interested in legal matters; she drew attention to the legal protection that women in fourth-century AD Egypt enjoyed from violent behaviour committed in houses, arguing that the extent of the legal protection and the

right to legal recourse was much dependent upon women’s social standing. So far, none has fully addressed the issue of the location and identification of forms and causes of domestic violence in Graeco-Roman Egypt. This article attempts to locate and identify different forms and causes of violent behaviour committed by or against the house occupants in the light of Greek papyri from Graeco-Roman Egypt. I hope that this helps widening our knowledge and understanding of daily life and social interaction around and within houses in Graeco-Roman Egypt.

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The Papyrus Trail: Houses and Households in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt
Dorothy J. Thompson (Cambridge University)

Historians interested in the lived experience of the population of Graeco-Roman Egypt are fortunate in the multifaceted nature of the evidence they have at their disposal. In most of the ancient world written records are confined to literary works and inscriptions on bronze or stone; just occasionally more everyday written records have survived. In Egypt, however, the dry desert sands have preserved numerous contemporary records, both private and official, written on papyrus in a variety of languages – Greek, Egyptian and even Latin – for the historian to exploit.

This paper will illustrate how the evidence such texts provide enriches and complicates what we can learn from archaeology. Theoretical constructs arising from the material record may be checked against the evidence of family and household structure contained in official records, in surveys and in tax registers, as also in the literary sources, both Greek and Egyptian. The units used in analysis require definition (house, household or family) and the interplay of the archaeological and documentary material will be taken into account as I investigate potential differences in household make-up between geographical areas, in the varying units of habitation (city, town and village) or in the ethnic identity of householders (mainly Greek and Egyptian). This study will concentrate on change within the Ptolemaic period but by considering developments in the Roman period I hope to establish some important differences in several aspects mentioned above.
In this paper, I shift our focus from the architecture of Romano-Egyptian houses to the agentive everyday practice of living within and beyond their walls. In particular, I explore activities of cleaning and disposing because they are critical components of both domestic life and the archaeological record. Moreover, unlike other events in the life history of houses and objects, trash has great longevity and is more easily accessible to the archaeologist (Rathje & Murphy, 2001). Close attention to trash and discard behavior helps us to understand how people related to the material goods and places that once made up their object worlds – their material habitus (c.f. Meskell 2005: 3). For example, sometimes refuse deposits are associated with “household clearances”, which might be due the rapid abandonment of a house or a transitional event in the household, such as a death or marriage (Beudry, 2015). Other depositions might be more habitual and part of everyday practice over a long period of time. I argue that a close examination of rubbish depositions and the discarded items themselves might be able to tell us how households refashioned themselves and their dwellings over time. Careful analyses of site formation processes are key to understanding these events.

In this paper, I explore how an individual case study of domestic discard fits into larger social processes at work on local, regional, and global scales. In this sense, I hope to privilege neither the microscale or the macroscale (see Fletcher, 1992) or limit myself only to the study of houses and their courtyards. Instead, I explore the linkages between households and broader society through the act of domestic discard. To this end, I will explore cleanliness and refuse disposal in House B2 and Courtyard C2 from Trimitithis (Roman Amheida), compare this case study to aggregated refuse data from other Romano-Egyptian sites (namely Karanis), and situate these disposal practices within the broader global context of domestic discard. Through this multi-scalar exploration of discard, I demonstrate that refuse can tell us an enormous amount about identity construction, the maintenance of family and communal traditions, and dwelling as place-making.

References
Modes of Production and Reproduction in Egyptian Villages

Richard Alston (Royal Holloway, University of London)

This paper argues that the house was ‘a machine for living’. It enabled and was produced by the modes of production in Romano-Egyptian society. Those modes should be understood not just within the context of economic production, which was, of course, a central requirement, but also of social and biological reproduction. The house was both a container of family and household, and means by which family and household were structured and represented.

The house has tended to be understood in relation to the wider understanding of Egyptian social history of the Roman period and the influence of imperial structures on domestic arrangements. Such issues relate to the problematics of cultural change in the Roman imperial period, and especially the vexed question of Romanization. The anthropological model attaches considerable weight to the house in its symbolic power: it is the central element in the *habitus* through which the regularities of society are replicated. But even at the point at which Bourdieu was developing his model and his theories, the Khabyle house had a fictive, nostalgic element. The society that was being inculcated in that *habitus* was undergoing rapid socio-economic change and many were moving to different types of residences in new towns. The methodological problem is that inserting the house into a narrative of cultural identity gives the house a symbolic weight that it may not or perhaps could not have had. In a similar way, if we write the house into a narrative of acculturation or indeed resistance to acculturation, then we load the house with certain forms of symbolic meaning which reflect an external narrative. It is not that a house might not have powerful symbolic values or a relationship to identity politics: Bourdieu’s description was not fiction; Philo’s discussion of the Jewish house in Alexandria clearly loads it with symbolic meaning. But the symbolic meanings of the domestic must be generated within a dialectic of household and society in which the needs of the household likely were more influential than social discourses of identity.

The context for making sense of the house needs to be that of micro-history. The house is a form of social technology that enables the household to function and, indeed, fulfil the primary requirement for social and biological reproduction. If a house is seen as a ‘machine for living’, the spatial arrangements of the house must be also embedded within the economic structures of the society and its reproductive patterns. The emphasis on micro-history, however, points away from seeing the house as a reflection of wider social patterns to its functioning in adherence to specific social and
economic requirements for reproduction. In Egyptian rural society, the house must have functioned within the agricultural regime of the household, enabling the practical requirements of storage and food processing, labour, and pooling land. The mode of economic activity, the house, and the formation of the household were intimately related and co-extensive.
**Figurines and the material culture of domestic religion**

Ross Thomas (British Museum)

In his ground-breaking catalogue on figurines from Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt, British Museum curator D.M. Bailey (1931-2014) recognised that the study of figurines was hindered by a lack of contextual information. He was trying to answer many of the same kinds of questions that we are today: What gods were worshipped, what types of ritual are represented by figurines, where and how were they used, and how did this change during their (individual) use-lives or (collectively) over time?

Any analysis of this material from the archaeological data relies upon three main factors: the quantity of data available to us, the quality of that data, and our ability to distinguish what is significant.

This paper surveys a corpus of figurines from recently excavated sites (Myos Hormos, Mons Claudianus, Memphis and Naukratis) alongside c.2500 figurines found at Naukratis between 1884 and 1903, for which the archaeological context has been recently reappraised by the British Museum Naukratis Project. Archaeological data of this scale provides distinct chronological and spatial distributions. These new insights into the domestic context of figurine use will be explored and compared with the patterns observed in studies of related objects that may have signalled (or distinguished) identity through performance or consumption practices.
Three Monks and a House:
The Archaeology of Monastic Householding in Byzantine Egypt
Darlene L. Brooks
Hedstrom (Wittenberg University)

Apa Zacharias, Apa Philotheus, and Apa Mena were granted a house in Jeme in the eighth century by a woman named Anna (P.KRU 106). The house was found within the bustling town of Jeme located with the walls of Medinet Habu, the old mortuary complex for Ramesses III. The house and its contents were to become the legal property of the monastic community of Apa Paul. What interest could three monks have in acquiring property in a nonmonastic village? Were their interests purely financial for the benefit of their monastery or something else? How did this house and its contents compare with the archaeological record of monastic housing found elsewhere in Byzantine Egypt?

This paper weaves together archaeological evidence of the anthropogenic landscape with the words of monks and nuns found in their letters and legal contracts to examine what we can reconstruct of the monastic landscape of Egypt. In particular, I employ methodologies from household archaeology (P. Allison; R. Wilk; Hirth), dwelling studies (T. Ingold), communities of practice (C. Minar; T. Pauketat; W. Wendrich), and thing theory (B. Brown; B. Olsen) to offer new ways of thinking about monastic households. As monastic archaeology emerges as a more distinct field within Byzantine archaeology in the Near East, Egypt offers an exciting array of monastic settlements for examining the new anthropogenic landscape that emerged due to monastic building projects.

By looking at the physical houses of individual monks, like Zacharias, Philotheus and Mena, I will illustrate what we can learn about monastic building habits, monasticism in general, and the value in integrating the “big” household into discussions of the households of Byzantine Egypt.
Abandonment and Assemblage: the Ptolemaic Fort at Bir Samut, Egypt
Jennifer Gates-Foster (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)

The fortress at Bir Samut in Egypt’s Eastern Desert presents a rare opportunity to observe the architecture and contents of a largely-intact Hellenistic fortification abandoned in the latter decades of the third century BC. Located on the route that connected the Nile Valley at Edfu with the desert mines and Red Sea coastal settlements of the Ptolemaic era, Bir Samut remains the largest known Ptolemaic fortification in Egypt. Excavated between 2012-2016 by the Mission archéologique française du Désert Oriental under the direction of Bérangère Redon, the fortress was comprised of more than 50 architecturally-defined spaces, almost all of which included intact floors and deposits dating to the late third century BC. In addition to these rooms and corridors, two expansive middens were excavated near the gates of the fort that included material spanning the entire period of the structure’s use.

The remains recovered from these rooms were diverse and plentiful, yet the most common object type recovered from these deposits were ceramic vessels, many of which were intact and are being published by the author. This paper presents an overview of the assemblage of late third century pottery recovered from the abandonment levels at Bir Samut and asks the larger, and more important, question, of how such deposits should evaluated. The questions of date and activity areas are intuitive but are not the only vectors along which the analysis of such a group should be framed. Given the location and nature of the site, what processes might be in play as we consider the taphonomy of these artifact groups? How were these assemblages formed and what factors influenced their recovered parameters? These are critical questions not only for our broader understanding of Bir Samut’s history, but also for broader methodological approaches to Hellenistic domestic and military contexts.