

An introduction to wall inscriptions from Pompeii and Herculaneum.

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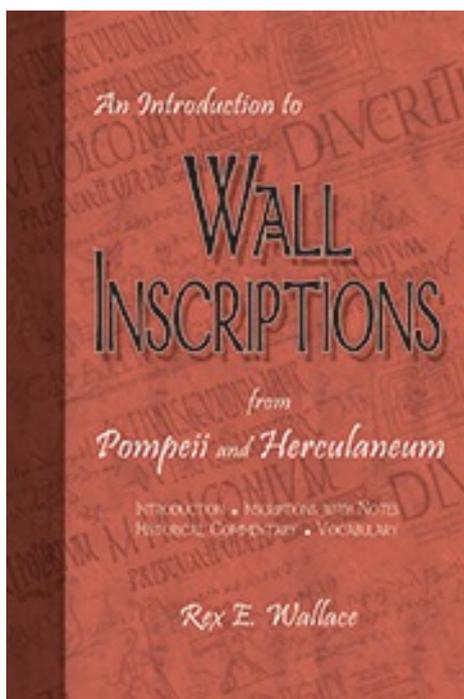
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An Introduction to Wall Inscriptions from Pompeii and Herculaneum



***** reviews

Author: Rex E. Wallace

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This edition is a representative selection of the various types of inscriptions, from political manifestos to gladiatorial announcements, found in the ancient cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum. These inscriptions, painted and incised

public and private buildings, document aspects of daily life in the first century AD. Inscriptions, particularly graffiti, were often written by less educated members of Roman society, and as such provide a rare glimpse of common Latin.

Special Features

- Introduction to the inscriptions and their language, with
- Inscriptions with same page
 - vocabulary notes
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- Abbreviations used in wall inscriptions
- Index of proper names
- Full vocabulary
- Facsimiles of twenty-four inscriptions

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Reviews

Review by: Ann Olga Koloski-Ostrow, *New England Classical Journal*, 32.4, 2005

New England Classical Journal, 32.4, November 2005
Rex E. Wallace, *Introduction to Wall Inscriptions from Pompeii and Herculaneum*. Chicago, Illinois: Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, Inc., 2005. Pp. xlvii + 133. ISBN 0-86516-570-X. \$29.00. *Nihil durare potest tempore perpetuo... "Nothing lasts forever."* The anonymous first century C.E. Pompeian graffitist who wrote the first of a four-line verse on how quickly love's passion can evaporate poignantly captured the problem scholars constantly face in the preservation of the written word from antiquity. The ephemeral nature of *dipinti* (painted wall inscriptions) and wall graffiti (writings incised with a sharp object) give them a certain urgency to our need to study them. Among the treasures preserved by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 C.E. that buried Pompeii and Herculaneum were more than 11,000 incised and painted inscriptions. While most are in Latin, we can also find inscriptions in Etruscan, Greek, and Oscan. This book makes the ancient cities on the Bay of Naples one of classical antiquity's most precious epigraphic resources. The bulk of the *dipinti* and graffiti are included in volume IV of the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (CIL). For anyone who wishes to use the CIL, Rex E. Wallace's new introduction to wall inscriptions is a most welcome teaching aid. The book developed out of undergraduate courses at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, was field-tested, and is aimed at teachers and students of Latin who might wish to learn more about Latin written by the less educated member of Roman society. Classical linguists, and students in most fields of Classical Studies will find this

valuable resource. The text is divided into two main parts. Part I contains introductory material including an overview of the inscriptions from Herculaneum (inscriptions on stone are not included), more details on the nature of wall inscriptions, the orthographic and linguistic features of both dipinti and graffiti, and a short bibliography on the topic. Part II contains selections of wall inscriptions from Pompeii and Herculaneum, facsimiles of examples of the dipinti and graffiti, a list of abbreviations used in the index of proper names, and a vocabulary list relevant to the entries. Facts emerge from part one. While most writing appeared on walls or on wooden tablets (such as the 153 receipts from the House of Lucius Lucundus), and on amphorae, tiles, or metal implements and papyrus. The most common type of dipinti were programmata, electoral advertisements at which 2600 have survived, giving the names of well over 100 candidates for political offices for which they ran (x). We also have edicta muneratorum, announcements of gladiatorial contests (xv). Dipinti of these types include advertisements for rentals and sales, notices of "lost and found," prayers and salutations, and others, were painted in scripta actuaria, a script used by sign-painters. Their design, therefore, shows much diligence and care. Political programmata date to the period 50-79 C.E., while very few date to the final decades of the Republican period (80-30 B.C.E.) or even the Imperial era (30 B.C.E.-50 C.E.). We have almost no information from Herculaneum on candidates for political office (xi). Spontaneous graffiti (more than 5,000 examples survive) appeared both on public buildings and private structures. While a significant group of graffiti consists of proper names, one can also find humorous scribbles, popular wisdom, obscenities, historical references (rare), and homespun philosophizing (xvi). The most notable graffiti from Pompeii and Herculaneum are amatory in theme. Many of these, like nihil in amore, were written in poetic meter. Part II, consisting of specific examples of wall inscriptions, is organized into three subdivisions: unit I. The dipinti from Pompeii; unit II. The graffiti from Pompeii and a few villae rusticae near the city; and unit III. The inscriptions (dipinti and graffiti) from Herculaneum. One caution for readers is that the referencing system is rather complex. Unfortunately, a dizzying set of numbers accompanies each entry. When a dipinto or graffiti is discussed in part I, it is very difficult to find the full entry in part II. Instead of a simple page reference, we are given the "unit" number, followed by the "item" number, Wallace's own personal entry number, the CIL number, and a topographical location number for Pompeii or Herculaneum (region, street, house number), which itself looks confusingly like Wallace's own numbering system. The entry number 11.2.48, for example, refers to unit II (Pompeii), section 2 (Curses and Insults), item 48 (Wallace's number). This entry has the CIL number 6864, and it was found in Pompeii. If the reader craves a simple page number and accompanying item number, it is a bit of a maneuver more easily through the volume. Despite Wallace's rich selections of graffiti on gladiators, soldiers, entertainers, and lovers, some topics are, of necessity, omitted. Here are a few of my favorite graffiti from both Pompeii and Herculaneum. From unit II, Graffiti from Pompeii, Curses and Insults, #39=CIL 2409a; from Pompeii's VII, i, 1 on the wall at dell'Abbondanza: 1 Stronius 2 Stronnius 3 nil scit Wallace suggests that different people wrote the graffito: line 1, perhaps by Stronius himself and 3 as a derogatory comment by someone else deliberately miswriting his name. From unit II, Graffiti from Pompeii, section 6, Lists, Memo

#96=CIL 4000; from Pompeii's I, iii, 27 on the Vicolo di Tesmo: grocery items and their cost in asses (67). From unit II, Graffiti from section 8, Citations from Latin Poets, #159=CIL 9131; from Pompeii the Via dell'Abbondanza: fullones ululamque cano non arma virum distorted citation from Vergil's Aeneid 1.1 (83). Although Wallace's aim was possibly to call attention to the fullers and their cry for use in their cleaning and dyeing processes. From unit III, Dipinti Herculaneum, section 2, Graffiti, #9=CIL 10606; vi, 11: 1 exemta This graffito is a memorandum about the cost (eleven asses) for the dung (101). The facsimiles at the back of the book (105-110) were prepared by Mat Olkovikas, but poor quality print and paper often thin lines of the originals. (Cf. Facsimile #19, for example, from unit #159=CIL 9131 from Aeneid 1.1 above, which is scarcely readable). Wallace did not set out to write social history, his book deserves to be read within the wider context of the question of literacy in the ancient world. Harris' *Ancient Literacy* (1989) attempted to discover how widespread literacy was among the Greeks and Romans, what part the written word played and why literacy reached only a certain extent and went no further. The parameters of Harris' study were so vast, the evidence from Pompeii and Herculaneum inevitably received rather limited treatment. In response to this magisterial study came *Literacy in the Roman World*, JRA supplement 1 (1991), which offered, among its eight essays, more focus on the evidence from Pompeii and Herculaneum (especially in the article by James L. Frey, "Literacy and the Parietal Inscriptions of Pompeii"). The book as edited by J.H. Humphrey, opened discussion to the social, cultural, and linguistic differences across the Roman world. Many more questions about literacy and writing in first century C.E. Pompeii and Herculaneum, however, were not addressed. Although Wallace did not concern himself with the social history of literacy, he has made much primary evidence more accessible to a wider audience (including beginning Latinists) so that the topic of literacy can continue to be a further lively debate. As a teaching tool, Wallace's book has a lot to offer.

32.4 (2005) Ann Olga Koloski-Ostrow Brandeis University

Review by: M.G.L. Cooley, JACT - September 1, 2005

AN INTRODUCTION TO WALL INSCRIPTIONS FROM POMPEII AND HERCULANEUM, Rex E. Wallace; Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, 1997, \$29-00; ISBN 0-86516-570-X THE STATED AIM of this book is to provide 'Latinists with a reasonably comprehensive introduction to wall inscriptions from Pompeii and Herculaneum.' Wallace succeeds in this aim. His introduction is suitable for [American] undergraduates and more advanced students. Though the most interesting texts from an historical point of view, these wall inscriptions are of a linguistic nature, rather than of Roman history, since the notes on the text are of a philological nature. Technical terms (clearly explained in the introduction) such as 'monophthongization' being particularly common. (One can imagine a centurion in *The Life of Brian* shouting 'How many times have I told you to monophthongize?' at some hapless innkeeper writing copo for copo). The book is a reliable guide to what the people of Pompeii wrote on their walls and how they should interpret it. He reminds us that Latin was an everyday language and that there were many variations in spellings, even when the graffiti is a quotation from Ovid. The book also contains colloquialisms. My favourite is da fridam pusillum which, with the

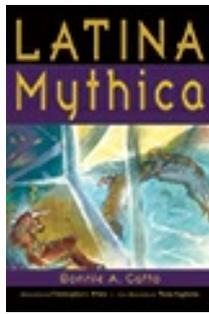
accompanying drawing, we can translate as 'Give me a drop of c
book contains a full vocabulary list though this does not really do j
colloquialisms. *Secundus hic cacat* does rather lose its impact if tra
accordance with the vocabulary list) '*Secundus defecates here*'. W
reliable in historical notes, though he seems not to realize that annu
Pompeii ran from July 1, rather than January 1, (as can be shown f
wax tablets) so a set of games announced in February (his no. 65)
one year, thus missing an important connection with the earthquak
Some facsimiles of inscriptions are included, taken (with due ackn
from the drawings in *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum IV*, though
measurements provided there. M. G. L. Cooley King Henry VII
Coventry

Review by: Vicki Wine, Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers - March 15

Chilroius was Here—in Pompeii and Herculaneum by Vicki Wine
published *An Introduction to Wall Inscriptions from Pompeii and*
Rex E. Wallace offers several opportunities for teachers' use in the
any level, for a variety of courses: ? college: elementary Latin to th
undergraduate or graduate; Classics Civilization or Introduction to
high school: all levels of Latin; world history ? middle school: Latin
introductory Roman civilization or the Roman culture of "...Popul
? elementary: language, culture, or "College for Kids" classes The
provide instruction in two major areas: ? Reading: The book is wr
intermediate college or advanced high school levels and provides
into both the daily life of the Romans and the colloquial use Latin l
known half of Roman society. The dialect and changes in the lang
to the upper level reader how varieties of Latin developed. ? Cult
inscriptions would be an excellent component of a course about a
society, in which both the culture of well-known personages as w
citizens and slaves on the street is discussed. The examples show r
contexts. Knowing the language is not necessary in order to unde
addressed, or even the linguistic changes. The book contains 351
illustrations, 24 of which are reproduced as facsimiles as well. The
probably want to put an example on an overhead for the class, in
the abbreviations, typical structure and style, variations in forms (lo
orthographic changes in vowels), and then demonstrate a reading
and follow with elaboration on the cultural interest. The facsimiles
the students closer to the Roman writer and the wall, by showing
artistic flourishes, and the actual style of writing, not entirely legibl
with the reproduction or with the help of the notes or teacher. By
overhead some of the facsimiles or the reproduced illustrations, th
explore linguistic or cultural topics, to enrich students' acquaintanc
Romans about whom they are reading or studying. The illustration
by categories. The electoral announcements; advertisements for re
lost and found notices; public acclamations and salutations; and cu
reflect everyday, commercial, and romantic life of the Romans, sp
Pompeii and Herculaneum. The gladiator advertisements can be u
demonstrate different forms of dress, winning and losing, styles of
as understanding of this form of entertainment. Some of the misce
(I.95, a birth announcement; I.107, found in a room next to a latriu

of a man defecating and with cacator inscribed; I.109, cacator ap-
 sign near a water reservoir) reflect other daily activities and remind
 humanness of the people using the language they are studying. In
 a cultural unit, the teacher (either high school or college) could spend
 days or weeks with assignments and discussion in class. Or this could
 activity days on either a regular or irregular basis. In a Latin class,
 assign (or allow students to select their own) inscriptions on the ba-
 matter, names used, vocabulary, or illustration of grammar. A set of
 Introduction to Wall Inscriptions from Pompeii and Herculaneum
 would allow for individual students to work on their own assigned
 Accessing the books' vocabulary glossary, lists of abbreviations, and
 finally the teacher's help should allow each student to come up with
 understanding of what the piece means and allow for presentation and
 discussion with the class; the different inscriptions can then be con-
 teacher can find selections appropriate to the students' level. Many
 forms of the subjunctive, but just as many don't. The examples are
 both in the number of lines and length of lines, and sentences. Repre-
 the style and structure. Translating short phrases with nouns, prepo-
 and few verbs, or verbs in short phrases or sentences, allows for a
 teacher may wish to use illustrations of particular grammar points:
 frequently; the lists use nouns in the accusative; genitive, dative, and
 for specific purposes as well. The reproductions themselves offer
 fun of decoding the abbreviations and reading real Latin, which was
 real purpose, on a real wall, in a language they are studying but which
 undergone dialectic, regional, and colloquial modifications. Study
 itself then provides the student with an insight into the use of a language
 seem "foreign," detached, or unapproachable. Students will be able to
 vocabulary (oro, vos, vir, cupit, cum, optimos, signi sunt, sum, fac
 iuvenem, civem, bonum, universi, ille, et, te, suos, ex, sententia, re-
 quicquam, gloria, debet, e.g.) while learning new vocabulary use
 abomino (despise), amator (lover), aquarium (water pitcher), aucti-
 axungia (hog's fat)--to use the a's as an example. For review at the
 the second semester of my college elementary Latin class, I select
 inscriptions, all of them using vocabulary the students would recognize
 case endings from the first three declensions. Some used verbs in
 present with one perfect (docuit). This list shows the grammar I want
 students to review in the inscriptions: II.45—all nominatives in 1st,
 declensions II.37—all words in vocative in 2nd, 2nd-i, 3rd declen-
 nominative 2nd declension (er and us) (11)—3rd declension nomin-
 (13)—2nd declension nominative, accusative, and genitive II.164—
 relative pronoun; 3rd person present tense verb ending II.33—no-
 tense verb II.183—nominative; present tense verb II.179—nomina-
 perfect tense verb The short sentences illustrated cases and declen-
 the pungent intent of an insult; the other graffiti showed how both
 gladiators wanted to proclaim their presence. Culture will be easier
 through reading the inscriptions, but understanding a little Latin can
 introduced through looking at the inscriptions for cultural purpose

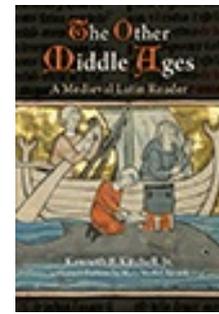
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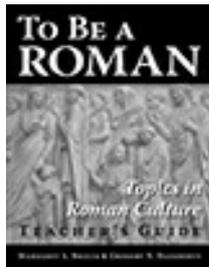
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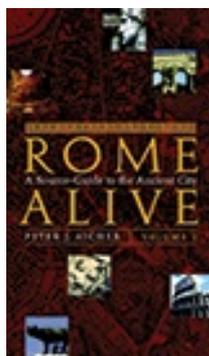
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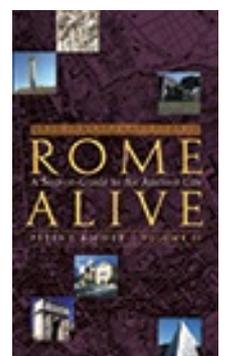
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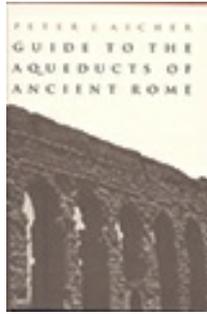
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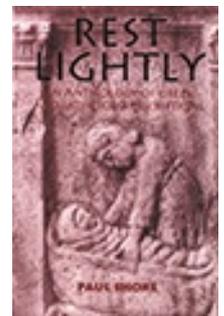
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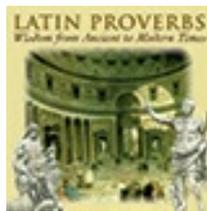
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