History and Literature

Reconstructing Pompeian Households

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Abstract

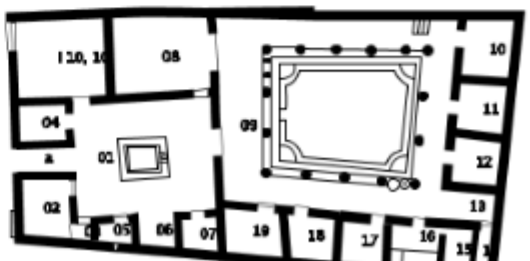
A database of objects discovered in houses in the Roman city of Pompeii provides a unique view of ordinary life in an ancient city. Experts have used this collection to study the structure of Roman households, exploring the distribution and variability of tasks in architectural spaces, but such approaches are necessarily affected by modern cultural assumptions. In this study we present a data-driven approach to household archeology, treating it as an unsupervised labeling problem. This approach scales to large data sets and provides a more objective complement to human interpretation.

1 Introduction

Over the past century the goal of archeology has shifted from finding objects of artistic value to recon-

study. Only in the past few years has
jects, which are removed for conserva
upon excavation, been compiled and
by Allison [2]. This database, which
line,[1] contains more than 6000 artifact
in 30 architecturally similar "*atrium*
Pompeii. For each artifact, the dat
type from 240 typological categories
etc.) and a find location from 574 rooms. Allison has used data about artifacts in their original context to challenge many common assumptions about the function of particular types of object, the use of particular spaces, and the consistency of patterns of use across different houses.

	bronze casseruola
0.00036	door/chest/cupboard fitting
0.00035	glass bottle/flask/pyxis
0.00028	small glass bottle
0.00026	pottery jug
0.00024	bronze jug/jug fragment
0.00022	chest/cupboard fitting
0.00020	ceramic lamp
0.00018	jewelry
0.00016	pottery beaker/small vase
0.00015	coin
0.00013	pottery pot
	...
0.00010	table/table fittings/table base
0.00010	pottery jar/vase
0.00010	**bronze cooking pot/basin/pot/fragr**



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