

ARCH 2320: Household archaeology in the ancient Near East and beyond

Brown University
Joukowsky Institute for Archaeology and the Ancient World

Fall Semester 2014

Graduate Level Seminar
Tuesdays 4:00 - 6:20 PM

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Course description

Household archaeology as a new subfield in archaeology is becoming a major focus in the archaeological research in the coming years. Recent conferences and publications demonstrate the importance and impact of this new discipline in Near Eastern archaeology and beyond. After introducing the principles of household archaeology, the course will give an overview on the state of the field in the entire Near East and eastern Mediterranean. Drawing on developments from New World archaeology, the course will analyze the potential and problems of household archaeology and give a prospect on future directions in the field.

House, home, household, family - when looking for a precise definition of these terms it immediately becomes clear that they are not as explicit as they seem to be. A 'household' as described by thefreedictionary.com is 1a) a domestic unit consisting of the members of a family who live together along with nonrelatives such as servants; 1b) the living spaces and possessions belonging to such a unit; 2) a person or group of people occupying a single dwelling. The term 'household' thus equally stands not only for the domestic unit, the house, the space, and its belongings, but also for a single person or a group often connected with a family living together in one dwelling. The same holds true if we look for the word 'household' and its meanings in old and modern languages of the Mediterranean and ancient Near East. In Arabic and Hebrew as well as Sumerian, Akkadian, Egyptian, Latin, and Greek the words *é*, *bītu*, *pr*, *bayt*, *bêt*, *oikos*, and *domus* denote the physical house as well as the underlying social concept of the household and very often also the family. These definitions thus encompass a mix of different concepts that are closely intertwined and have to be clarified and differentiated. Whereas houses are found in almost every excavation, the question is how does a 'household' manifest itself in the archaeological record?

This seminar will explore a new branch of the archaeological research called 'Household archaeology'. In recent years, numerous monographs, excavation volumes, and conference proceedings have been published that document the increased interest in bottom-up approaches of single households. Studies from regions all around the world, but particularly from New World archaeology substantiate the

advances in the study of the private sphere and what can be gained from this understanding for wider social processes. The study of households encompasses a variety of themes, from household composition, social structure, and family types, to the expression of gender, and status. Interaction between household members, multiple households, the household and outsiders or visitors, and the household and subordinate or superior instances, as well as consumption patterns, the economic background, and production are topics addressed within household studies. Exciting new areas are explored in households' reproduction and lifecycles, as well as domestic cults and construction of identity, but also the perception of space, sensory experience, and the structuring and manipulation of the built environment. All these different aspects mirror households' behavior. In order to track these different components in the archaeological record the dwelling, its installations, and the artifacts found therein have to be investigated. With a strong focus on the architecture and artifacts found inside the dwelling, textual and scientific evidence can, however, equally be integrated. Especially from a scientific perspective, recent advances in the field have stimulated a renewed interest and added attraction to the field of household archaeology. Subsumed under the term 'Micro-Archaeology', the investigation of micro-particles, sediments, faunal and floral remains – mostly invisible to the excavator's eye – yields crucial evidence for activity areas in houses, health, diet, and migration patterns, just to name a few.

By working with an integrated approach, which combines the examination of the archaeological, micro-archaeological, and textual evidence for the study of households, the seminar should open up a discussion and present new avenues in the analysis of households that promise to tackle the array of problems that the new discipline is still struggling with.

Prerequisites

A good knowledge of the eastern Mediterranean and Near Eastern region and some background information on the most important sites in Egypt, Mesopotamia and the Levant are useful, although there are no concrete prerequisites for this course. For a first overview, please have a look at the following textbooks that will be widely used during the class.

Required textbooks

Foster, C.P.-Parker, B.J. (eds.) (2012) *New Perspectives on Household Archaeology*, Winona Lake, IN

Müller, M. (ed.) (forthcoming) *Household Studies in Complex Societies. (Micro) Archaeological and Textual Approaches*, Chicago

Yasur-Landau, A.-Ebeling, J.R.-Mazow, L.B. (eds.) (2011) *Household Archaeology in Ancient Israel and Beyond*, Brill, Boston-Leiden

PDFs of all three volumes as well as all the other readings will be available on the course wiki.

Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course students will:

- have a thorough overview on the development of this new field, its current state, and application in the different disciplines in the eastern Mediterranean, the Near East and beyond

- be familiar with anthropological models and techniques that have contributed to and constantly further the development of this new field
- have been introduced to the material culture from domestic contexts, know how to deal with different groups of objects and their respective assets and drawbacks
- be able to identify the most important sites in the eastern Mediterranean, the Near East and beyond that have enabled scholars to explore this new field
- be capable to lead and interact in a discussion, as well as formulate a critical opinion on a certain topic and debate the individual views in a group
- be able to present a specific topic in a condensed form and expand on this presentation with regards to critical comments and additions by the audience in an original piece of writing

Assignments

For each class, a student will be assigned to lead the discussion. Those assignments will be made in the first meeting according to personal interest and schedule. The student is expected to go through the required readings and study additional texts that are useful to get a broad overview on the respective topic and enable the discussion leader to form a personal opinion and critical approach to the topic that he or she will be able to present at the beginning of the discussion and thus stimulate a lively debate.

Each student will be assigned a paper topic in the second part of the course. These research topics will be based on personal interest, themes explored during the first part of the course and/or an important site that contributed to the development of the field. These topics will be presented by each student in class in the last two weeks of the semester using Powerpoint or Keynote. The class presentations should be about 30 minutes long and will be followed by 10 minutes discussion. Discussion points and results need to be incorporated into the final paper.

Field Trips

One or two field trips to a museum and/or unique building/house will be organized during the course. They will provide the students with hands-on experience of a specific group of objects in a museum's collection that is essential for the analysis of the archaeological context of ancient households (e.g., pottery) and/or will familiarize the students with the interaction of the built environment and its inhabitants.

Grading

Participation and attendance: 15%

Leading a discussion with pre-circulation of questions and critical approaches to the respective topic (schedule to be determined in the second week of class): 15%

Class presentation (30 minutes presentation with bibliography): 25%

Final paper (25-30 pages with bibliography): 45%

There is no mid-term or final exam.

Schedule

Class	Date	Topic
1	Tues 9/9	<p>Introduction – houses and households (definitions)</p> <p><u>Readings (in class):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Allison, P.M. (1999) "Introduction". In <i>The Archaeology of Household Activities</i>, edited by P.M. Allison, 1-18, Routledge, London-New York <p><u>Further readings/useful introductions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b) Birdwell-Pheasant, D.-Lawrence-Zúñiga, D. (1999) "Introduction". In <i>House Life: Space, Place and Family in Europe</i>, edited by D. Birdwell-Pheasant and D. Lawrence-Zúñiga, Berg, Oxford c) Tringham, R. (2001) "Household Archaeology". In <i>International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences</i>, edited by N.J. Smelser and P.B. Baltes, 6925-29, Elsevier, Amsterdam
2	Tues 9/16	<p>Anthropological perspectives – house societies and the social house</p> <p>(Discussion: Jennifer and Adriana)</p> <p><u>Readings:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Bender, D. (1967) "A Refinement of the Concept of Household: Families, Co-Residence, and Domestic Functions", <i>American Anthropologist</i> 69/5, 493-504. b) Rapoport, A. (1969) "Chapter 3: Socio-Cultural Factors and House Form". In <i>House Form and Culture</i>, 46-82, Prentice Hall, New Jersey c) Laslett, P. (1972) "Introduction: The History of the Family". In <i>Household and Family in Past Time. Comparative Studies in the Size and Structure of the Domestic Group over the Last Three Centuries in England, France, Serbia, Japan and Colonial North America with Further Materials from Western Europe</i>, edited by P. Laslett and R. Wall, 23-46 (chapter II) d) Wilk, R.R.- Rathje, W.R. (1982) "Household Archaeology", <i>American Behavioral Scientist</i> 25/6, 617-39 e) Parker-Pearson, M.-Richards, C. (1994) "Ordering the World: Perceptions of Architecture, Space, and Time". In <i>Architecture and Order. Approaches to Social Space</i>, edited by M. Parker-Pearson and C. Richards, 1-37, Routledge, London f) Gillespie, S.D. (2000) "Beyond Kinship: An Introduction". In <i>Beyond Kinship. Social and Material Reproduction in House Societies</i>, edited by R.A. Joyce and S.D. Gillespie, 1-21, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia
3	Tues 9/23	<p>Domestic architecture and artifact assemblages – question of reliability</p> <p>(Discussion Jessica)</p> <p><u>Readings:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Schiffer, M.B. (1972) "Archaeological Context and Systemic Context",

		<p><i>American Antiquity</i> 37/2, 156-65</p> <p>b) Binford, L.R. (1981) "Behavioral Archaeology and the Pompeii Premise", <i>Journal of Anthropological Research</i> 37, 195–208</p> <p>c) Sanders, D. (1990) "Behavioral Conventions and Archaeology: Methods for the Analysis of Ancient Architecture". In <i>Domestic Architecture and the Use of Space. An Interdisciplinary Cross-Cultural Study</i>, edited by S. Kent, 43-72, Cambridge University Press (New Directions in Archaeology), Cambridge</p> <p>d) Nevett, L.C. (2008) "Artefact Assemblages and Activity Area Analysis". In <i>Thinking about Space. The Potential of Surface Survey and Contextual Analysis in the Definition of Space in Roman Times</i>, edited by H. Vanhaverbeke et al. (eds.), 153-60, Brepols, Turnhout</p> <p>e) Spence, K. (forthcoming) "Ancient Egyptian Houses and Households: Architecture, Artifacts, Conceptualization and Interpretation". In <i>Household Studies in Complex Societies. (Micro) Archaeological and Textual Approaches</i>, Oriental Institute Series 10, edited by M. Müller, The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, Chicago</p> <p>f) Pfälzner, P. (forthcoming) "Activity Area Analysis: A Comprehensive Theoretical Model." In <i>Household Studies in Complex Societies. (Micro) Archaeological and Textual Approaches</i>, Oriental Institute Series 10, edited by M. Müller, The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, Chicago</p>
4	Tues 9/30	<p>Microarchaeology and ethnoarchaeology – new and old techniques revisited (Discussion: Pinar)</p> <p><u>Readings:</u></p> <p>a) Matthews, W. et al. (1997) "Microstratigraphic Traces of Site Formation Processes and Human Activities" <i>World Archaeology</i> 29/2, 281-308</p> <p>b) Terry et al. (2004) "The Story of the Floors. Chemical Signatures of Ancient and Modern Maya Activities at Aguateca, Guatemala", <i>Journal of Archaeological Science</i> 31/9, 1237-50</p> <p>c) Hodder, I.-Cessford, C. (2004) "Daily Practice and Social Memory at Çatalhöyük", <i>American Antiquity</i> 69/1, 17-40</p> <p>d) Putzeys, T. et al. (2004) "Analyzing Domestic Contexts at Sagalassos: Developing a Methodology Using Ceramics and Macro-Botanical Remains", <i>Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology</i> 17/1, 31-57</p> <p>e) Weiner, S. (2010) "Chapter 1: Archaeology, Archaeological Science, and Microarchaeology". In <i>Microarchaeology. Beyond the Visible Archaeological Record</i>, edited by S. Weiner, 1-12, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge</p> <p>f) Shahack-Gross, R. (2011) "Household Archaeology in Israel: Looking into the Microscopic Record". In <i>Household Archaeology in Ancient Israel and Beyond</i>, edited by A. Yasur-Landau, J.R. Ebeling, and L.B. Mazow, 27-36, Brill, Boston-Leiden</p>

		<p>g) Rainville, L. (2012) "Household Matters: Techniques for Understanding Assyrian Houses". In <i>New Perspectives on Household Archaeology</i>, edited by C.P. Foster and B.J. Parker, 139-64, Eisenbrauns, Winona Lake, IN</p> <p>h) Kramer, C. (1979) "An Archaeological View of a Contemporary Kurdish Village: Domestic Architecture, Household Size, and Wealth". In <i>Ethnoarchaeology. Implications of Ethnography for Archaeology</i>, edited by C. Kramer, 139-63, Columbia University Press, New York</p> <p>i) Kamp, K. (2000) "From Village to Tell: Household Ethnoarchaeology in Syria", <i>Near Eastern Archaeology</i> 63/2 Ethnoarchaeology II, 84-93</p>
5	Tues 10/7	<p>Household archaeology in the New World – developing a new field</p> <p>(Discussion: Miriam)</p> <p><u>Readings:</u></p> <p>a) Hendon, J.A. (1996) "Archaeological Approaches to the Organization of Domestic Labor: Household Practices and Domestic Relations", <i>Annual Review of Anthropology</i> 25, 45–61</p> <p>b) Robin, C. (2003) "New Directions in Classic Maya Household Archaeology", <i>Journal of Archaeological Research</i> 11/4, 307-56</p> <p>c) Hendon, J.A. (2006) "The Engendered Household". In <i>Handbook of Gender in Archaeology</i>, edited by S.M. Nelson, 171-98, Alta Mira Press, Lanham, MD</p> <p>d) Hirth, K. (2009) "Housework: Craft Production and Domestic Economy in Ancient Mesoamerica", <i>Archaeological Papers of the American Anthropological Association. Special Issue: Craft Production, Household Diversification, and Domestic Economy in Prehispanic Mesoamerica</i>, 19/1, 13-32</p> <p>e) Douglass, J.G.-Gonlin, N. (2012) "The Household as Analytical Unit". In <i>Ancient Households of the Americas. Conceptualizing What Households Do</i>, edited by J.G. Douglass and N. Gonlin, 1-44, University Press of Colorado, Boulder, CO</p>
6	Tues 10/14	<p>Domestic space in the Greco-Roman World – bias of the texts</p> <p>(Discussion: Catherine)</p> <p><u>Readings:</u></p> <p>a) Berry, J. (1997) "Household Artefacts: Towards a Re-interpretation of Roman Domestic Space". In <i>Domestic Space in the Roman World: Pompeii and Beyond</i>, edited by Ray Laurence and Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, 183-95, Journal of Roman Archaeology (Supplementary Series 22), Portsmouth, RI</p> <p>b) Allison, P.M. (2001) "Using the Material and Written Sources: Turn of the Millennium Approaches to Roman Domestic Space", <i>American Journal of Archaeology</i> 105/2, 181-208</p> <p>c) Nevett, L.C. (2005) "Introduction". In <i>Ancient Greek Houses and</i></p>

		<p><i>Households</i>, edited by B.A. Ault and L.C. Nevett, 1-11, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia</p> <p>d) Ault, B.A.-Nevett, L.C. (2005) "Summing Up: Whither the Archaeology of the Greek Household?" In <i>Ancient Greek Houses and Households</i>, edited by B.A. Ault and L.C. Nevett, 160-75, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia</p> <p>e) Nevett, L.C. (2011) "Family and Household, Ancient History and Archeology: A Case Study from Roman Egypt". In <i>A Companion to Families in the Greek and Roman Worlds</i>, edited by B. Rawson, 15-31, Blackwell, Oxford</p> <p>f) Trümper, M. (2011) "Space and Social Relationships in the Greek <i>Oikos</i> of the Classical and Hellenistic Periods". In <i>A Companion to Families in the Greek and Roman Worlds</i>, edited by B. Rawson, 32-52, Blackwell, Oxford</p> <p>g) Huebner, S. (2011) "Household Composition in the Ancient Mediterranean - What do we really know?" In <i>A Companion to Families in the Greek and Roman Worlds</i>, edited by B. Rawson, 73-91, Blackwell, Oxford</p>
7	Tues 10/21	<p>Houses and households in the Mesopotamian heartland – texts and archaeology (Discussion: Margaret)</p> <p><u>Readings:</u></p> <p>a) Gelb, I.J. (1979) "Household and Family in Early Mesopotamia". In <i>State and Temple Economy in the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the International Conference Organized by the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven from the 10th to the 14th of April, 1978</i>, Vol.I, edited by E. Lipinski, 1-97, Departement Oriëntalistiek, University of Louvain, Leuven</p> <p>b) Stone, E.C. (1981) "Texts, Architecture and Ethnographic Analogy: Patterns of Residence in Old Babylonian Nippur", <i>Iraq</i> 43/1, 19-33</p> <p>c) Roaf, M. (1989) "Social Organization and Social Activities at Tell Madhhur." In <i>Upon this Foundation. The 'Ubaid Reconsidered. Proceedings from the 'Ubaid Symposium, Elsinore, May 30th-June 1st 1988</i>, edited by Elizabeth F. Henrickson and Ingolf Thuesen, 91-146, Museum Tusculanum Press, Copenhagen</p> <p>d) Postgate, J.N. (1990) "Archaeology and the Texts – Bridging the Gap." <i>Zeitschrift für Assyriologie</i> 80, 228-40</p> <p>e) Brusasco, P. (2004) "Theory and Practice in the Study of Mesopotamian Domestic Space", <i>Antiquity</i> 78, 142-57</p> <p>f) Baker, H. (2010) "The Social Dimensions of Babylonian Domestic Architecture in the Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid Periods". In <i>The World of Achaemenid Persia—History, Art and Society in Iran and the Ancient Near East</i>, edited by J. Curtis and S. Simpson, 179-94, IB Tauris, London</p> <p>g) Otto, A. (forthcoming) "How to Reconstruct Daily Life in a Near Eastern</p>

		Settlement: Possibilities and Constraints of a Combined Archaeological, Historical, and Scientific Approach". In <i>Household Studies in Complex Societies. (Micro) Archaeological and Textual Approaches</i> , Oriental Institute Series 10, edited by M. Müller, The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, Chicago
8	Tues 10/28	<p>Household archaeology in the Levant – pioneers in a new discipline (Discussion: Jennifer and Miriam)</p> <p><u>Readings:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Stager, L. (1985) "The Archaeology of the Family in Ancient Israel", <i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i> 260, 1-35 b) Faust, A.-Bunimovitz, S. (2003) "The Four Room House. Embodying Iron Age Israelite Society", <i>Near Eastern Archaeology</i> 66/1, 22–31 c) Chesson, M.S. (2003) "Households, Houses, Neighborhoods and Corporate Villages: Modeling the Early Bronze Age as a House Society", <i>Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology</i> 16/1, 79-102 d) Yasur-Landau, A. (2010) "Under the Shadow of the Four-Room House. Biblical Archaeology Meets Households Archaeology in Israel". In <i>Historical Biblical Archaeology and the Future. The New Pragmatism</i>, edited by E.T. Levy, 142-55, Equinox, London-Oakville e) Hardin, J.W. (2011) "Understanding Houses, Households, and the Levantine Archaeological Record". In <i>Household Archaeology in Ancient Israel and Beyond</i>, edited by A. Yasur-Landau, J.R. Ebeling, and L.B. Mazow, 9-25, Culture and History of the Ancient Near East 50, Brill, Boston-Leiden
9	Tues 11/4	<p>Study of domestic space in Egypt – first steps in an unexplored territory (Discussion: Darcy)</p> <p><u>Readings:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Shaw, I. (1992) "Ideal Homes in Ancient Egypt: the Archaeology of Social Aspiration", <i>Cambridge Archaeological Journal</i> 2, 147-166 b) Meskell, L. (1998) "An Archaeology of Social Relations in an Egyptian Village", <i>Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory</i> 5/3, 209-43 c) Lehner, M. (2000) "Fractal House of Pharaoh: Ancient Egypt as a Complex Adaptive System, a Trial Formulation." In <i>Dynamics in Human and Primate Societies: Agent-based Modelling of Social and Spatial Processes</i>, edited by Timothy Kohler and George Gumerman, 275–353, Oxford University Press, New York-Oxford d) Spencer, N. (forthcoming) "Creating a Neighborhood Within a Changing Town: Household and Other Agencies at Amara West". In <i>Household Studies in Complex Societies. (Micro) Archaeological and Textual Approaches</i>, Oriental Institute Series 10, edited by M. Müller, The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, Chicago

10	Tues 11/11	Synthesis – what do we learn from household archaeology? (Discussion: Samantha) <u>Readings:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) De Lucia, K. (2010) “A Child’s House: Social Memory, Identity, and the Construction of Childhood in Early Postclassic Mexican Households”, <i>American Anthropologist</i> 112/4, 607-24 b) Singer-Avitz, L. (2011) “Household Activities at Tel Beersheba”. In <i>Household Archaeology in Ancient Israel and Beyond</i>, edited by A. Yasur-Landau, J.R. Ebeling, and L.B. Mazow, 275-301, Culture and History of the Ancient Near East 50, Brill, Boston-Leiden c) Tringham, R. (2012) “Households through a Digital Lens”. In <i>New Perspectives on Household Archaeology</i>, edited by C.P. Foster and B.J. Parker, 81-120, Eisenbrauns, Winona Lake, IN d) Matthews, R. (2012) “About the Archaeological House: Themes and Directions”. In <i>New Perspectives on Household Archaeology</i>, edited by C.P. Foster and B.J. Parker, 559-65, Eisenbrauns, Winona Lake, IN e) Routledge, B. (2013) “Household Archaeology in the Levant”, <i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i> 370, 207-219 f) Arnold, F. (forthcoming) “Clean and Unclean Space: Domestic Waste Management at Elephantine”. In <i>Household Studies in Complex Societies. (Micro) Archaeological and Textual Approaches</i>, Oriental Institute Series 10, edited by M. Müller, The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, Chicago g) Dickmann, J.-A. (forthcoming) “Crucial Contexts: A Closer Reading of the Casa del Menandro at Pompeii.” In <i>Household Studies in Complex Societies. (Micro) Archaeological and Textual Approaches</i>, Oriental Institute Series 10, edited by M. Müller, The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, Chicago
11	Tues 11/18	Field Trip: Harvard Semitic Museum
12	Tues 11/25	No Class: Thanksgiving
13	Tues 12/3	Student presentations: Jennifer, Samantha, Margaret
13	Tues 12/9	Student presentations: Miriam, Pinar, Darcy
14	Thu 12/17	Submission of final papers

Bibliography

General overviews:

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Ault, B.A.-Nevett, L. (eds.) (2005) *Ancient Greek Houses and Households*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia (online)

Beck, R.A., Jr. (ed.) (2007) *The Durable House: House Society Models in Archaeology*, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale

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- Laurence, R.-Wallace-Hadrill, A. (eds.) (1997) *Domestic Space in the Roman World: Pompeii and Beyond*, *Journal of Roman Archaeology (Supplementary Series 22)*, Portsmouth, RI
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Excavations with a special focus on household archaeology:

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