

NOTIZIARIO DEL PORTALE NUMISMATICO DELLO STATO – *ITINERARI E GUIDE. 1*

POMPEII N. 12

The world of money at Pompeii



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MINISTERO DEI BENI E DELLE ATTIVITA' CULTURALI E DEL TURISMO
DIREZIONE GENERALE PER LE ANTICHITÀ

N. 1 – 2014

POMPEII N. 12

The world of money at Pompeii

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SUMMARY

The steps of the itinerary

Texts : T. GIOVE [T.G.], A. VARONE A.V.] translated by R. HOBBS

1. Marine Gate entrance	[A.V.]
2. Stabian Baths	[A.V.]
3. Edoné's Tavern	[A.V.]
4. House of Golden Bracelet	[T.G.]
5. House of Caecilius Lucundus	[T.G.], [A.V.]
6. Tomb of Vestorius Priscus	[A.V.]
7. Ostelry of Fabii	[A.V.]
8. House of the lararium of Achilles	[A.V.]
9. House of Menander	[T.G.]
10. Workshop of Granius Romanus	[A.V.]
11. Thermopolium of Vetutius Placidus	[T.G.]
12. Sarnus gate	[T.G.]

BIBLIOGRAPHY

THE AUTHORS

STEPS OF VISIT



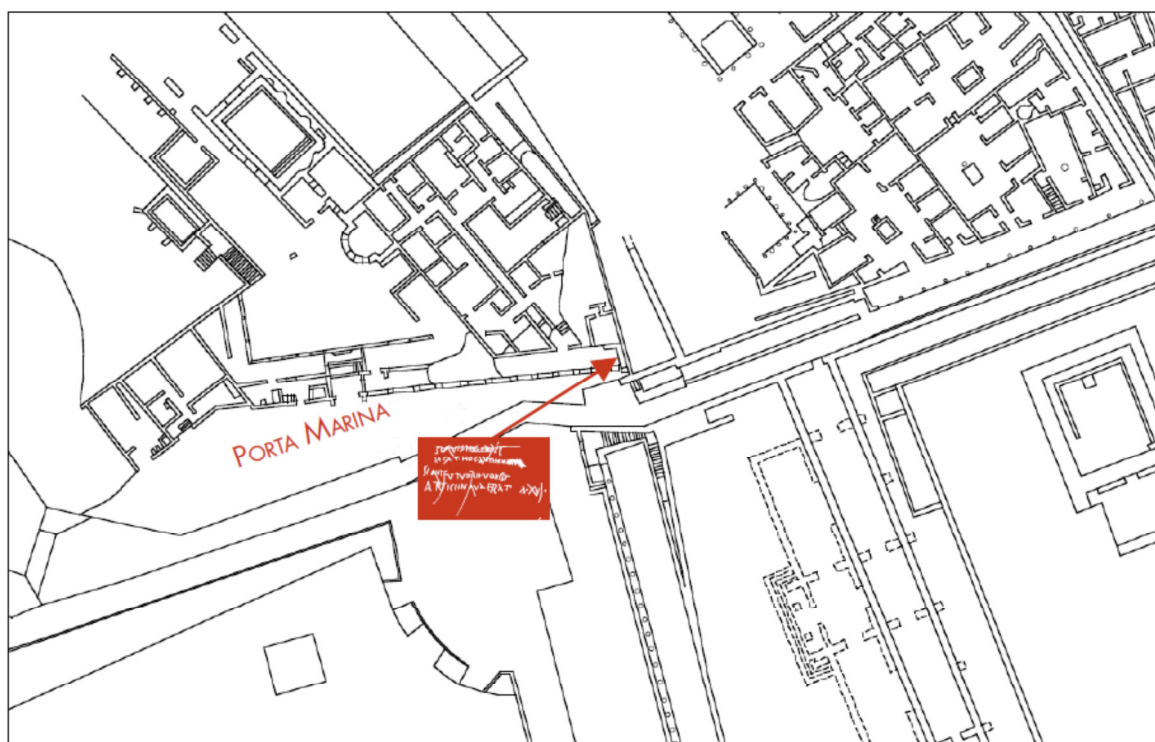
Pompeii plan: the steps of the itinerary are shown in red.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| 1 – Marine Gate entrance | 7 – Ostelry of Fabii |
| 2 – Stabian Baths | 8 – House of the Iararium of Achilles |
| 3 – Edoné's Tavern | 9 – House of Menander |
| 4 – House of Golden Bracelet | 10 – Workshop of Granius Romanus |
| 5 – House of Caecilius Iucundus | 11 – Thermopolium of Vetutius Placidus |
| 6 – Tomb of Vestorius Priscus | 12 – Sarnus gate |

Step 1 Marine Gate entrance



The site



The context



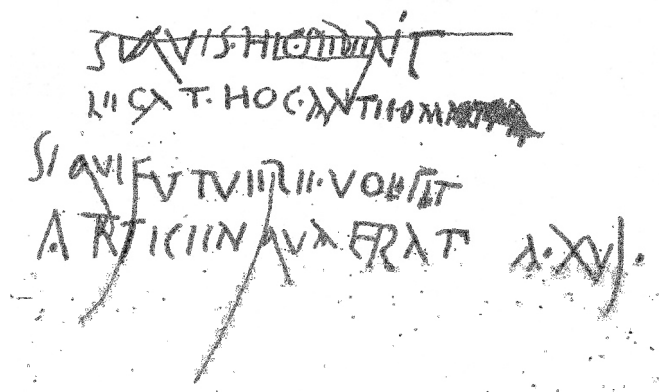
POMPEII, MARINA GATE. ©SSBAPES.



MARINA GATE. Finding place of the inscription. ©SSBAPES.

Love for sale

CIL IV 1751



Si quis hic sederit
legat hoc ante omnia

Si qui futuere volet
Atticen quaerat A. XVI

Whoever sits here should read this before anything else: if you feel like making love, ask Attica; she goes for sixteen asses.

This offer of love for sale was incised at the Marine Gate, near a masonry seat attached to the city wall.

Comment

To those who came from the port to Pompeii through the steep ramp of Via Marina, a seat placed next to the gate offered a moment's rest before entering the city.

It is here that a woman with an exotic Greek name makes her explicit overtures to wayfarers perhaps just returned from a long voyage: "If you want me, ask for me and with sixteen asses you will enjoy refined pleasures."

A very great number of Pompeian inscriptions list prices for performing various kinds of love, ranging from just one to sixteen asses, for meetings with more sophisticated women, often with names of Oriental origin.

Generally, however, service prices ranged between two and four asses, affordable by almost everybody and equivalent to about a glass of wine or a loaf of bread.

These "basic necessities" were in fact prices controlled to make them accessible to the poor, slaves and the common people, so as to keep these social groups quiet.

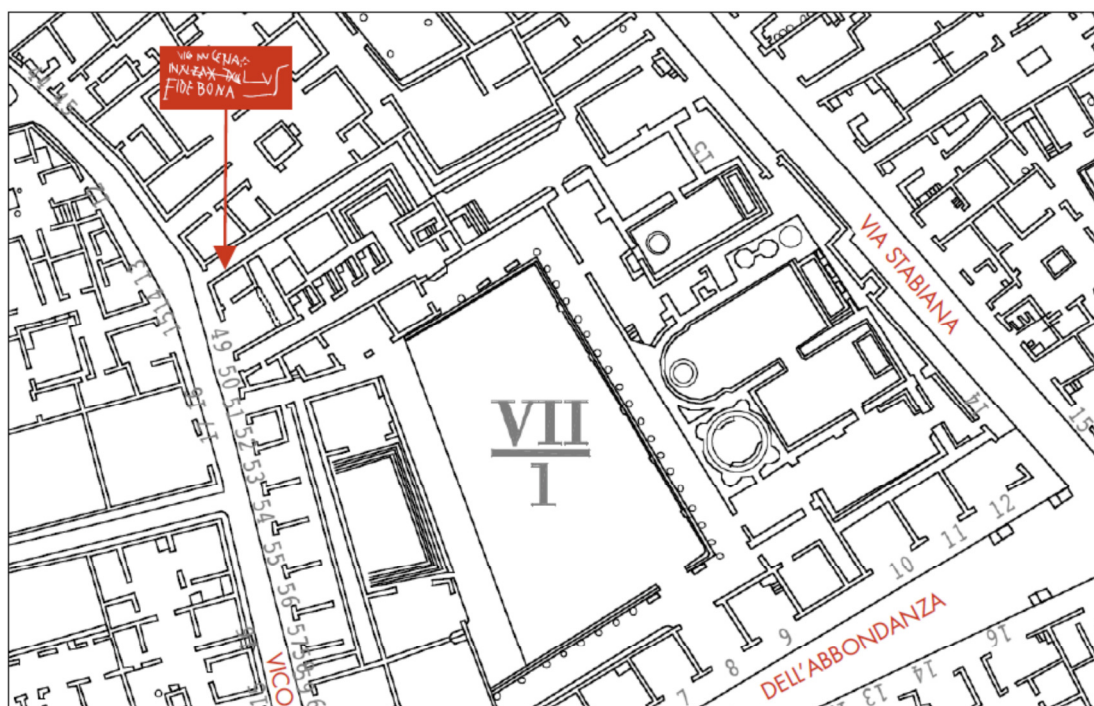
Naturally, just as for different qualities of food, there were also women who did not walk the streets, like the "*puellae*" sung about by the Elegiac Poets, whose fees were much higher.

Step 2 Regio VII Ins. 1 nr. 8

Stabian Baths



The site



The context



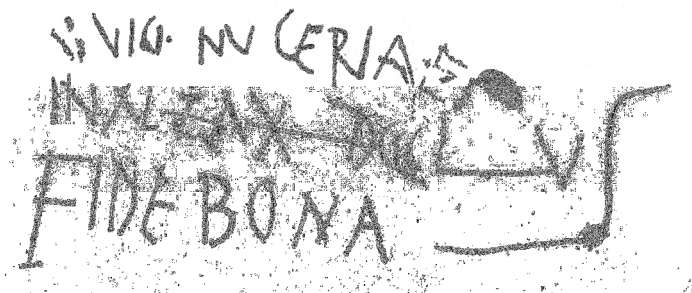
STABIAN BATHS. The entrance. ©SSBAPES.



STABIAN BATHS. Finding place of the inscription. ©SSBAPES.

The demon of gambling

CIL IV 2119

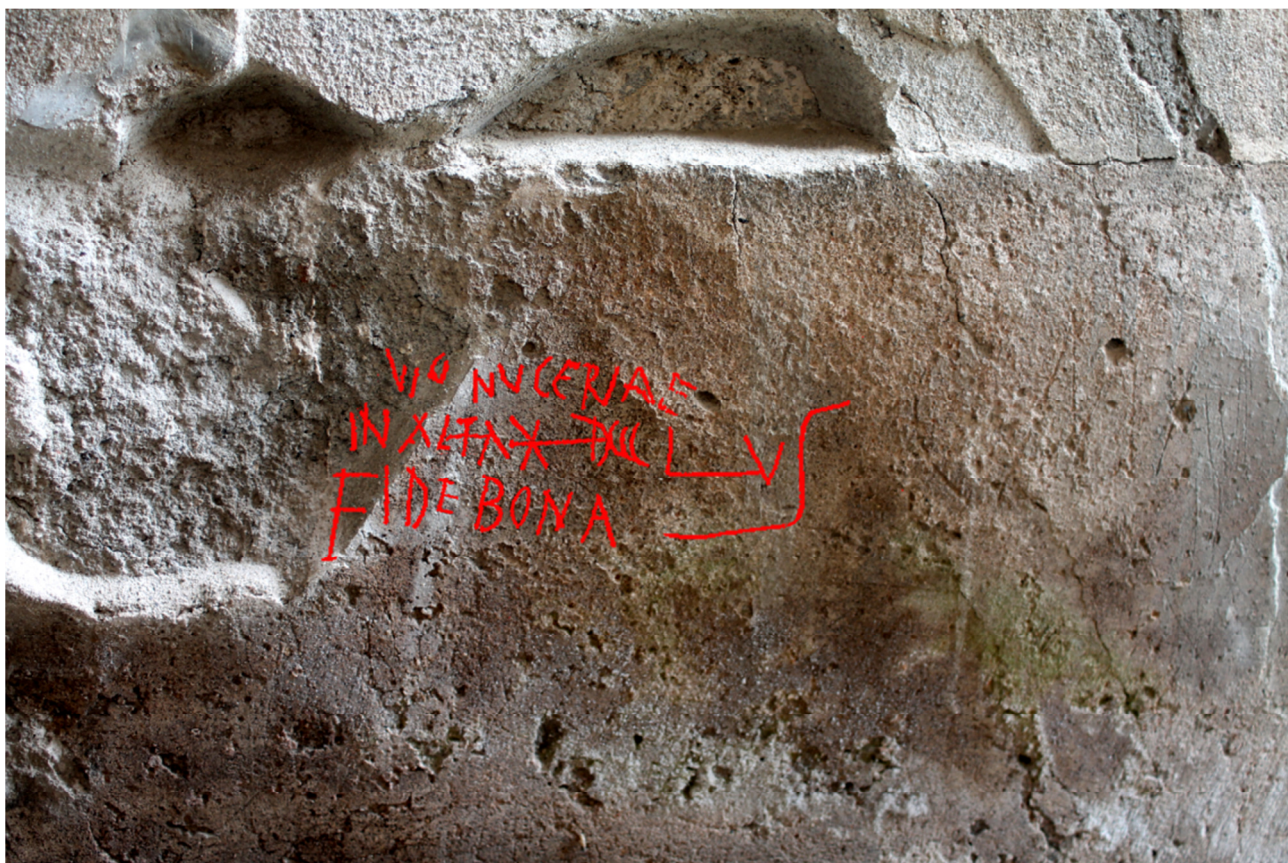


Vici Nuceriae
in alia X-DCCCCLV
S
fide bona

In the corridor accessing the female sector of the Stabian Baths, an inscription celebrated a significant amount of money won at dice in the town of Nocera: *"...855 and half denarii, and without cheating"*.



©SSBAPES.



©SSBAPES.

Comment

These winnings are truly remarkable when one considers the prices of essential goods. Gambling was essentially done with dice (*tesserae*) similar to ours, or with animal ankle bones (*tali*), which had only four faces.

Two or three at a time were cast by dropping them from a dice-cup (*fritillus*) to prevent cheating. Incredible fortunes were lost playing dice, as the sources point out, so much so that the game was severely limited by legal regulations, which were however probably mostly ignored, given that emperors liked gambling too. We know that Augustus lost twenty thousand sesterces in a single game and that Nero bet no less than four hundred sesterces every single time he cast a die.

Many dice specimens have been found in the Vesuvian cities and elsewhere, clearly showing how popular gambling was at the time, as widely attested by our sources.

Indeed we find the *fritillus* as a sign for gambling dens, and there is no shortage of engaging depictions of dice players in taverns, sometimes fighting, as in the small picture painted in caupona VI 14, 36.

Dice were also used for games of skill generally played on a *tabula lusoria*, a sort of chessboard. Under these circumstances, it was necessary for the players to reconcile their calculations with the luck factor.

Loaded dice have also been found, weighted with lead on the inside of one face to get a certain number is rolled.



NAPLES, NATIONAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM, , Dice gamblers. From Pompei, Caupona of Salvius. Inv. 111482. ©SSBAPES.

POMPEII, DEPOSITS. Rigged dice. From Pompei, House of Indian Statuette. Inv.7034B. ©SSBAPES.

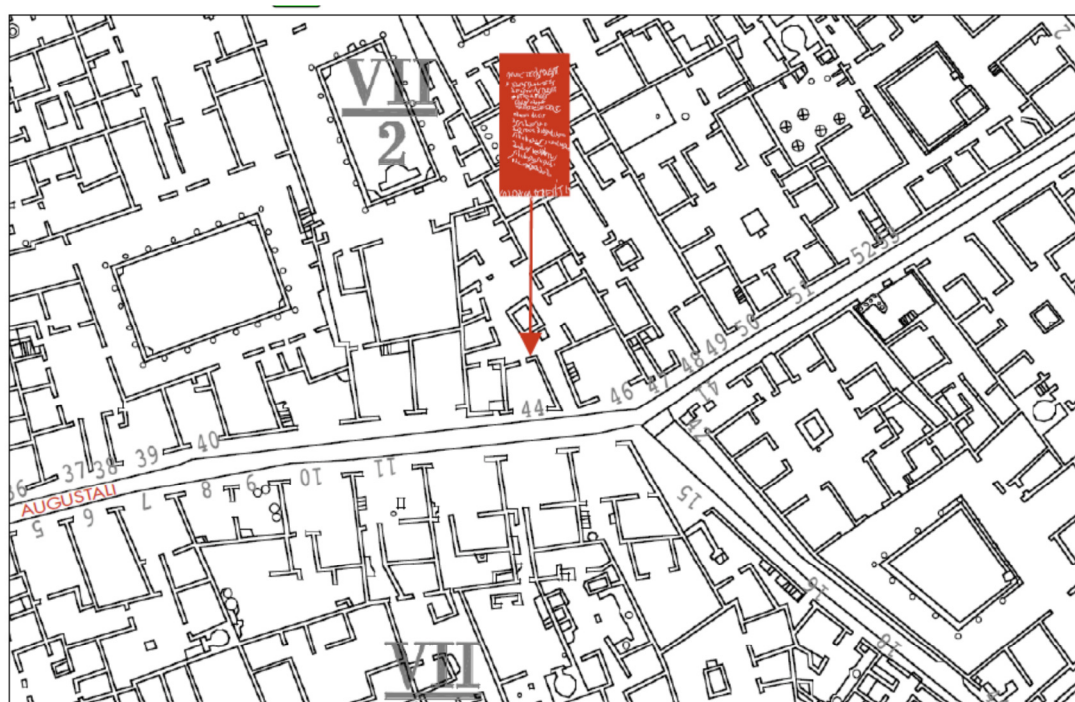
POMPEII, DEPOSITS. Astragals. Form Pompeii. House I,12,6. Inv. 13284A-B. ©SSBAPES.

Step 3 Regio VII Ins. 2 nr. 44

Edoné's Tavern



The site



The context



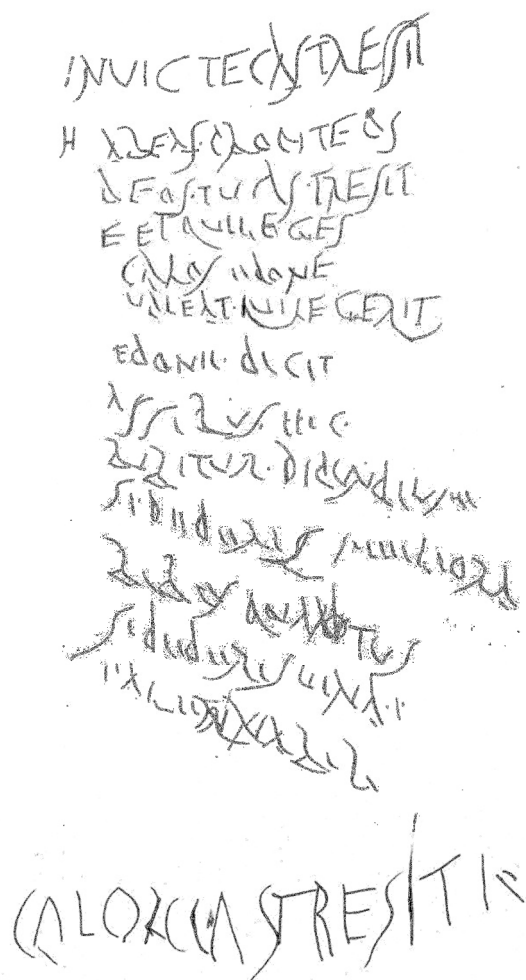
EDONÉ'S TAVERN. The entrance. ©SSBAPES.



EDONÉ'S TAVERN. Finding place of the inscription. ©SSBAPES.

The cost of drinking

CIL IV 1679



INVICTE CASTRESE
HABEAS PROPITEOS
DEOS TUOS TRES IT-
E(M) ET QUI LEGES.
CALOS EDONE.
VALEAT QUI LEGERIT
EDONE DICIT
ASSIBUS HIC
BIBITUR DIPUNDIUM
SI DEDERIS MELIORA
BIBES QUATITUS
SI DEDERIS VINA
FALERNA BIB(ES)
CALOS CASTRESI TI(BI)

Invicte Castrese
habeas propiteos
deos tuos tres it-
e(m) et qui leges.
Calos Edone.
Valeat qui legerit
Edone dicit
Assibus hic
bibitur dipundium
si dederis meliora
bibes qua[t]tus
si dederis vina
Falerna bib(es)

Calos Castresi ti(bi)

Unbeaten "Castrense", may your three gods be propitious and so may it be for the reader.

Long live Edonè! Good health to the reader.

Edonè says:

Here you drink for an as, but if you give me two, you will drink better wines; and if you give me four, I'll have you drink some Falernian.

Long live Castrense!

Comment

Pompeii was filled with establishments where food and most of all wine was served, which in the winter was diluted with hot water placed on a stove always lit to provide an invigorating drink for every hour of the day in the absence of coffee, tea or spirits.

This room shows the asking prices for a cup, which depended on the quality of the wine.

In Herculaneum, a wine shop sign reads *Ad cucumas*, i.e., "By the pitcher". The prices are listed below the depiction of four jugs that obviously contained different types of wines, from the wine that cost 4 asses for a sextary (0.545 liters), to those that cost three, two and two-thirds, and two asses for a sextary.

Produced in vineyards planted even within the city walls in addition to the fields outside that climbed up the slopes of Mount Vesuvius, wine was the main resource of Pompeii's economy, and was also exported by sea, as evidenced by discoveries of Pompeian amphorae in Narbonne Gaul as early as Rome's Republican era and the large number of empty wine-carrying amphorae ready to be sealed with pitch found in the so-called Villa B at Oplontis.

One vine variety took its name from the Holconii family of Pompeii, but the *Surrentinum* and *Vesuvinum* can also be counted among the local wines, although they were not appreciated by connoisseurs.

In fact Pliny said that Pompeii's wine did not stay good beyond ten years of aging and an anonymous gourmet left the following inscription on a wall: "Traveller, enjoy the fragrance of Pompeii's bread, but wait until you get to Nocera to taste some wine".



HERCOLANEUM. Inscription on the wall of a tavern. ©SSBAPES.



POMPEII, HOUSE OF THE CHASTE LOVERS. TRICLINIUM (WEST WALL). Wall painting with convivium scene. ©SSBAPES.



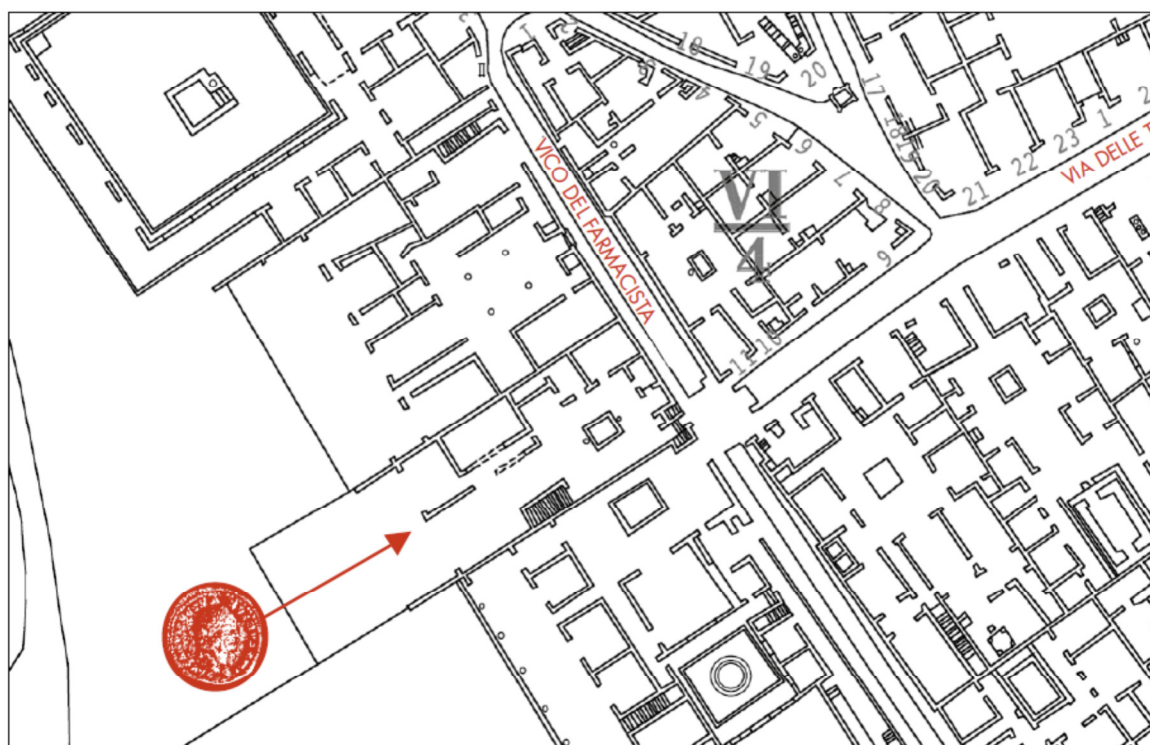
POMPEII, HOUSE OF THE CHASTE LOVERS, TRICLINIUM (EAST WALL). Wall painting with convivium scene. ©SSBAPES.

Step 4 Regio VI Ins. Occ. 17 nr. 42

House of Golden Bracelet



The site



The context



HOUSE OF GOLDEN BRACELET. The entrance. ©SSBAPES.



HOUSE OF GOLDEN BRACELET. The discovery of the coin hoard. ©SSBAPES/AF; neg. 4752.

The hoarded money



NAPLES, NATIONAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM, COIN CABINET. Aureus of Vespasian, mint of Rome, 75-79 A.D. ©SSBAPES.

IMP CAES VESPASIANVS AVG Laureate head to r.

R/ AETERNITAS Aeternitas standing l., holding the heads of Sol and Luna; to l. altar

Inv. P.14273; g 7,35; mm. 19. RIC II, p.28, n.121a

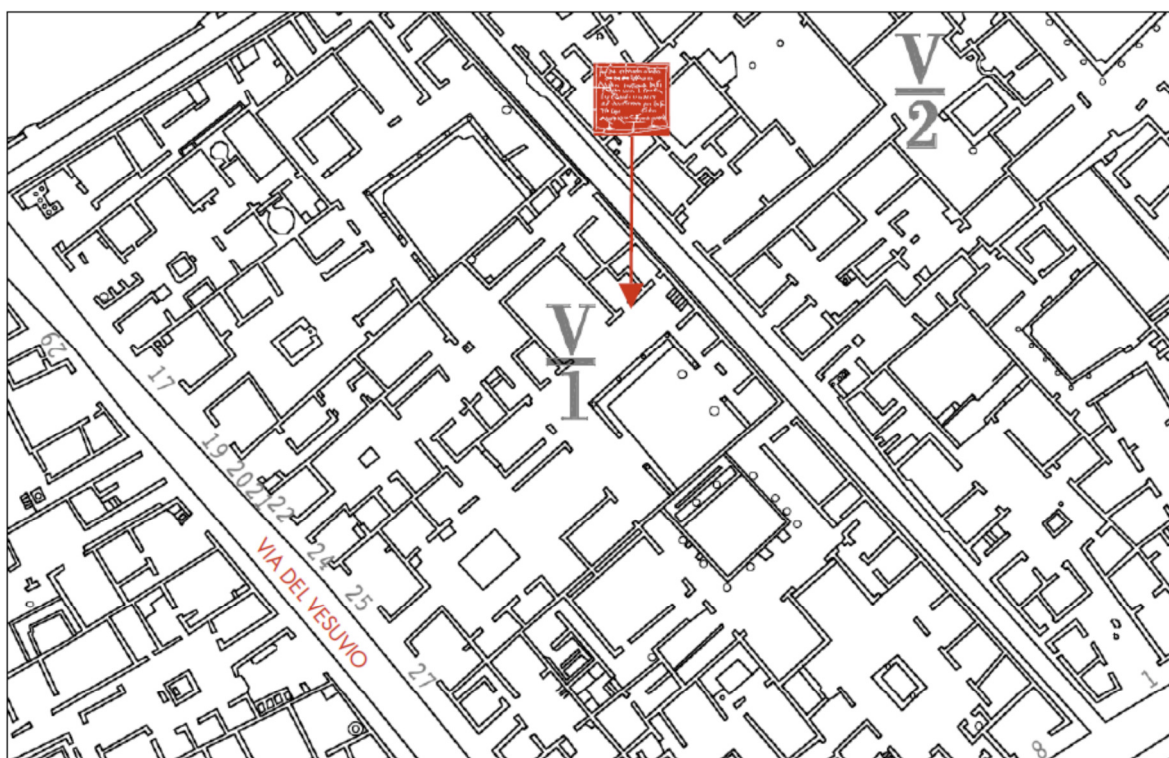
On the lower floors of the house, founded on city walls, various individuals were discovered who had met their death there, among which there was a well-to-do Pompeian lady who wore two rings and a valuable solid gold bracelet, finely decorated and weighing 610 grams. Following this exceptional discovery, the place was named the House of the Golden Bracelet. A small distance away, at the foot of the stairs that led to the garden, a wooden and bronze box was found in which one of the fugitives, perhaps the lady herself, had tried to carry her liquid assets of 40 aurei (inv. 14270 – 17309) and 175 silver denarii (inv. 14312).

Step 5 Regio V Ins. 1nr. 26

House of Caecilius Iucundus



The site



The context



HOUSE OF LUCIUS CAECILIUS LUCUNDUS. The entrance. ©SSBAPES.



HOUSE OF CAECILIUS LUCUNDUS. On this side of peristylum were found the tablets, fallen by the collapse of the upper floor. ©SSBAPES.

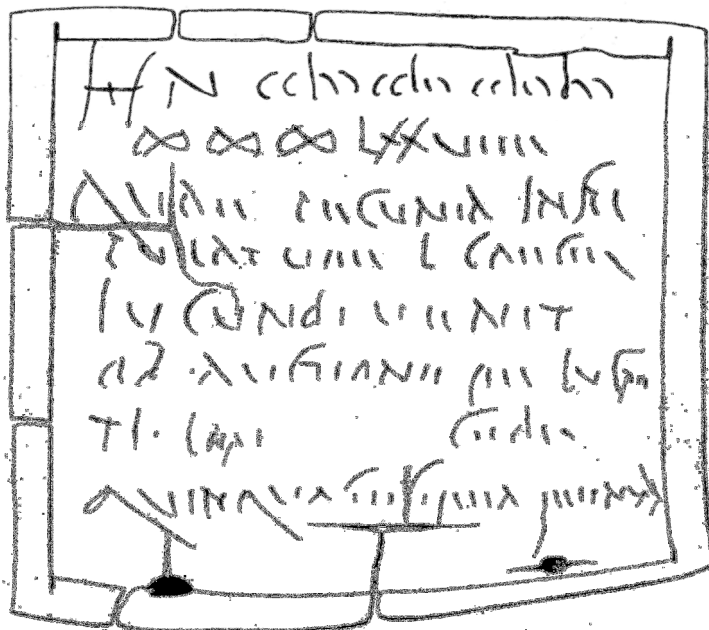
During the 1875 excavations in the home of the "banker" *Lucius Caecilius Lucundus*. Entrance., the discovery of a series of wax tablets provided extraordinary documentation on the use of credit for some types of economic transactions and activities.

Wax tablets were a common writing tool in the ancient world: the text was engraved on a rectangular tablet coated with wax with a pointed instrument (the *stilus*). Depending on the length of the document, several tablets could be tied up and used together. The devastating effects of the Vesuvius eruption charred the tablets, allowing them to be read, albeit with considerable difficulties of decipherment.

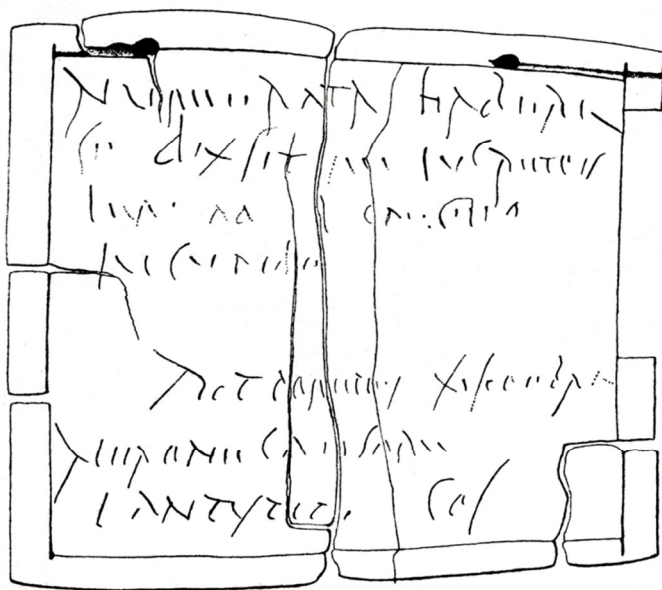
153 documents were recovered showing receipts (*apochae*) issued to *Lucundus* in front of witnesses for the sums paid by him to buyers in auctions or private citizens for small transactions. The receipts show the name of the seller and in one case the buyer, sometimes the object of the sale, the names of witnesses and the amount paid by the "banker". These are mostly modest sums, sometimes a few hundred sesterces (the highest of all is 38,000 sesterces), confirming that the citizens benefitting from this service belonged to the middle class, medium-sized merchants or landowners.

The use of Capital

CIL IV 3340, X



hs n. XXXV
MMMLXXCIII
quae pecunia in sti
pulatam L. Caecili
Lucundi venit
ob auctione(m) M.
Lucre
ti Leri [mer]cede
quinquagesima
minu[s]



numerata habere
se dixit M. Lucretius
Ler[us] ab L. Caecilio
lucundo.

Act. Pompeis XI k. Febr.
Nerone Caesare
L. Antistio cos.

The sum of 38,079 sesterces was given in obligation to Lucius Caecilius lucundus for the auction of the property of Marcus Lucretius Lero, which includes a 2% premium.

Marcus Lucretius Lero assented to have it collected by Lucius Caecilius lucundus. Deed signed in Pompeii on January 22 in the consulship of Nero Caesar and Lucius Antistius (55 AD).

Comment

The parts shown above are pages two and three of a triptych consisting of three tablets originally joined together, of which the other pages are either unwritten (p. 1 and 6), or no longer legible (pp. 4-5). The tablets, which were sealed with sealing wax after being signed by the parties and witnesses, were documentary evidence and had a value similar to that of our notarial deeds.

Our *Caecilius lucundus*, in whose house was found an archive containing a large number of these documents, proves to be a kind of banker and stockbroker. In this case, the tablets act as a receipt given by Marcus Lucretius Lero to *Lucius Caecilius lucundus* for the auction sale of his possessions. The recorded sum, consisting of 37,332 sesterces, to which must be added a premium equal to its fiftieth part, namely 746.64 (rounded off to 747) sesterces, is the most significant sum among all the economic transactions found in *Caecilius lucundus* 's archive.

As papyrus, considerably more expensive, was usually reserved for literary works, wax tablets constituted the most common writing medium for the most varied uses. They were made out of a framed wooden support coated with wax that was engraved with a special pointed tool, the stylus, which had a flat side used to delete the text already written and re-use the tablet.

Usually in groups of two or three linked together, the tablets would be closed like the pages of a book and sealed with the mark or the name of the person who wrote them as proof of authenticity, if they were to be sent as a message. If they were to be used as deeds, the procedure was more complex, requiring the signatures of various witnesses before sealing.

The wax tablets discovered in *Caecilius Iucundus*'s archive contained the Deeds pertaining to financial transactions performed between 52 and 62 AD regarding the purchase and sale of securities and real estate assets, animals and slaves, and also the collection of rents, loans secured by merchandise, and taxes (on behalf of the colony).

Another rich archive belonging to the Sulpici family was found in a building outside the town, at Murecine, on the river Sarno.



NAPLES, NATIONAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM. Wall painting with writing instruments (waxed tablets, ink pot with stylus, papyrus scroll). From Pompeii, House of Julia Felix. Inv. 8598. ©SSBAPES.



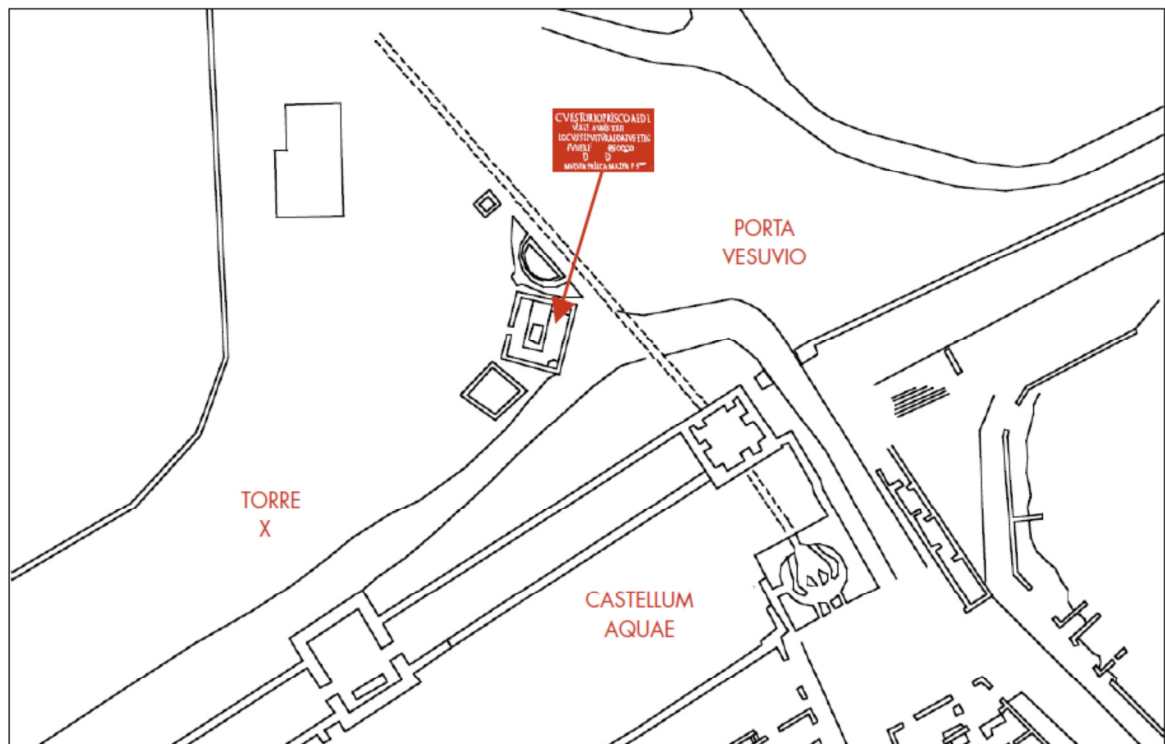
POMPEII, ANTIQUARIUM. Waxed tablet. Inv. 14382 ©SSBAPES.

Step 6 Cemetery near Vesuvian Gate

Tomb of Vestorius Priscus



The site



The context



TOMB OF VESTORIUS PRISCUS NEAR VESUVIAN GATE. ©SSBAPES.



TOMB OF VESTORIUS PRISCUS. Wiew from north. ©SSBAPES.

Public Munificence

“Mem Acc. Napol.” II, 1913, pp. 179-201.



©SSBAPES.

C(aio) Vestorio Prisco aedil(i)

Vixit annis XXII

locus sepulturae datus et in

funere sestertium duo milia

d(ecreto) d(ecurionum)

Mulvia Prisca mater p(ecunia) s(ua)

To Gaius Vestorius Priscus, aedile. He lived 22 years.

His burial place was granted along with two thousand sestertii for his funeral by decree of the decurions.

Mulvia Prisca his mother arranged it at her own expense.

Comment

The inscription placed on the funerary monument of Vestorius Priscus is an exquisite example of the interaction that took place between public and private in the tribute of honours to eminent people. In this case the death of a young magistrate, an aedile, who probably died during the year of his office is publicly honored by the citizenry via a resolution of the civic council with the granting of public ground and a sum of two thousand sesterii for the funeral. At the expense of the mother of the deceased, or with private family money, the funeral monument was erected in which the valuable paintings recall the funerary banquet celebrated in memory of the aedile.

The law assigned a strip of 100 feet, approx. 33 metres, all around the outside of the city walls to the public domain. It is in this space that funerary monuments were often found for people who had received public funerary honors, in that they had performed public roles or were thought well-deserving by the citizenry. In this case a young magistrate, who died at the beginning of his political career, was honored. The magistrates were elected annually and formed an executive collegiate body made up of two major magistrates, the *duoviri iure dicund*, similar to mayors, who officially represented the city and administered civil justice while criminal justice was reserved for the magistrate of Rome. There were also two minor magistrates, the aediles, who were like councilors responsible for the maintenance of the roads and public buildings, food administrations and services. On finishing the year in office, magistrates remained life members of the Municipal Council, the *Ordo Decurionum*, a deliberative body which represented the continuation of the citizen's political life. The *duoviri* elected at the end of each five-year period also received censorial power which allowed them to investigate the existence of the census and morality requirements of all the decurions.

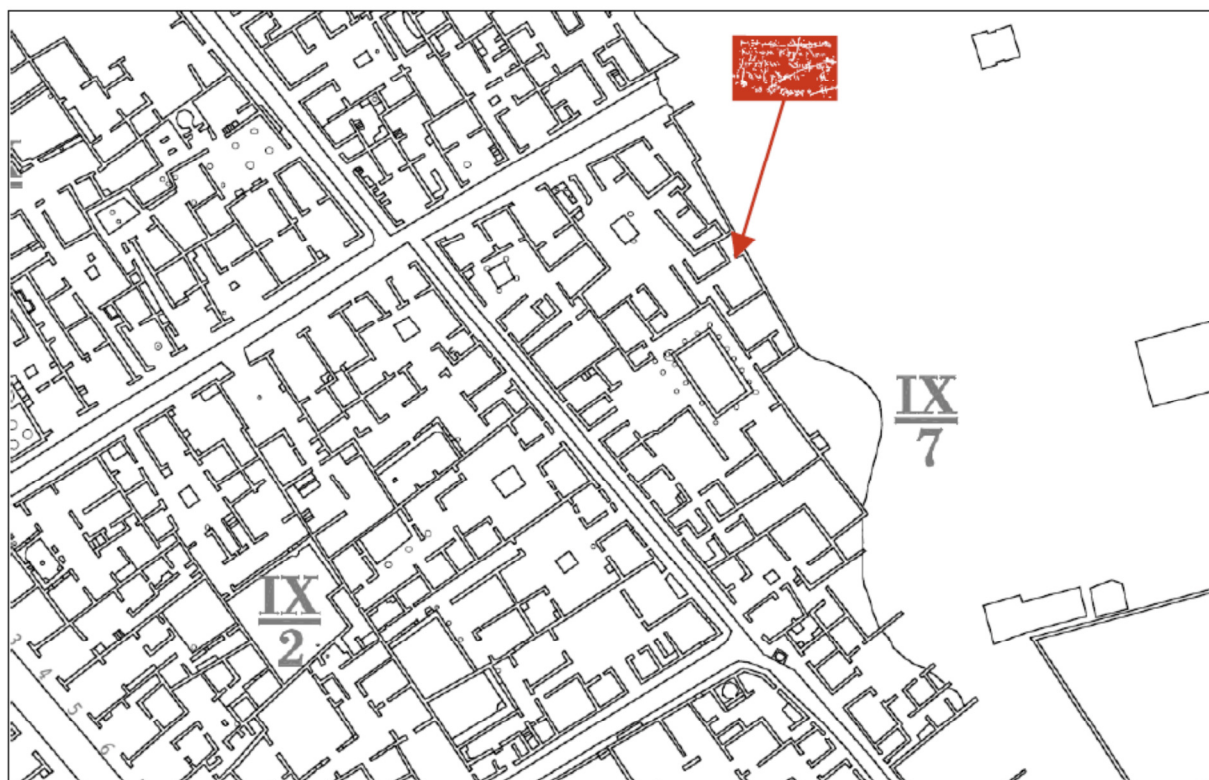
The citizens with the right to vote directly elected the members of the executive who received from this honors and benefits in addition to the status of elders, but in exchange they were required to organize games or public works at their expense and to pay all the expenses for the functioning of the municipal administrative system during their year in office.

Step 7 Reg. IX Ins. 7 nr. 25

Ostelry of Fabii



The site



The context



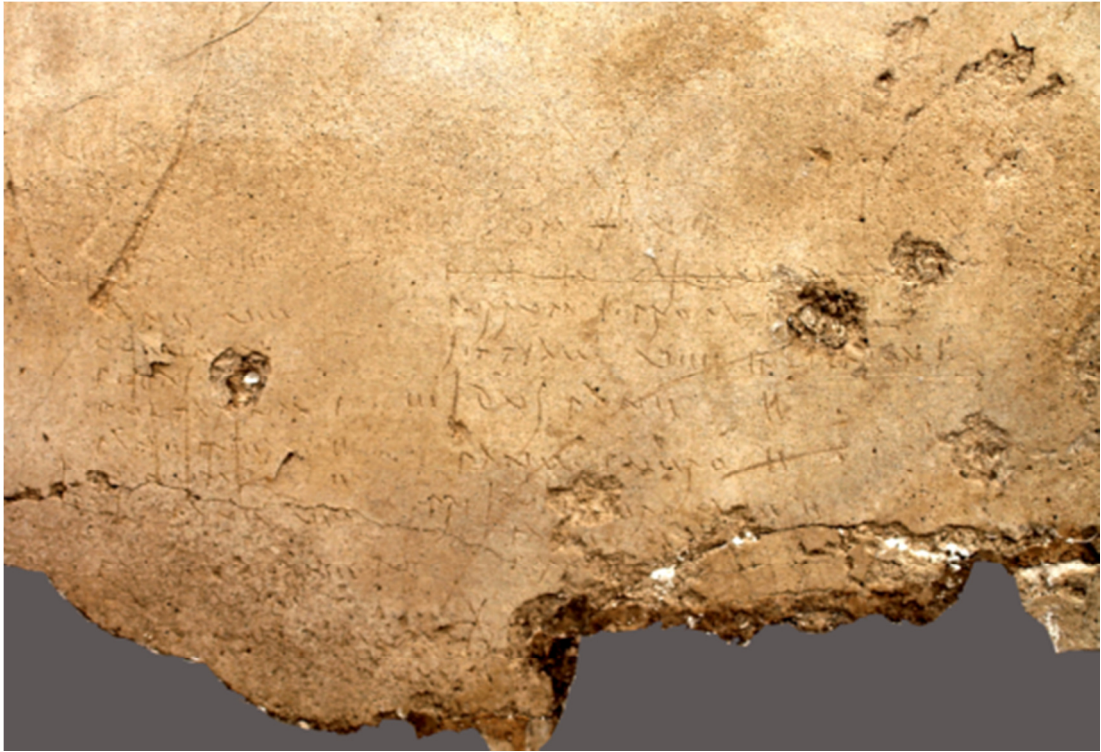
OSTELRY OF FABII. The Entrance of the building from thermopolium. ©SSBAPES.



OSTELRY OF FABII. Finding place of the inscription. ©SSBAPES.

The shopping list

CIL IV 5380



©SSBAPES.

VIII Idus casium I	Servato	Idubus pane(m) II
pane(m) VIII	montana (denario) I	pane(m) cibar(em) II
oleum III	oleum (denario) I VIIII	oleum V
vinum III	pane(m) IV casium IV	halica(m) III
VII Idus		domato[ri] pisciculum II
pane(m) VIII	porrum I pro patella I	
oleum V	sittuae VIIII	
cepas V	inltynium I	
pultarium I	III Idus pane(m) II	
pane(m) puero II	pane(m) puero II	
vinum II		
VI Idus pane(m) VIII	pri(die) Idus puero pane(m) II	
	pane(m) cibar(em) II	
puero pane(m) IV	porrum I	
halica(m) III		
V Idus		
vinum domatori (denarius)		
pane(m) VIII vinum II casium II		
IV Idus		
hxeres (denario I) pane(m) II		
femininum VIII		
tridicum (denario) I		
bubella(m) I palmas I		
thus I casium II		
botellum I		
casium molle(m) IV		
oleum VII		

Seven days before the ides: cheese, 1 as; bread, 8 asses; oil, 3 asses; wine, 3 asses. Six days before the ides: bread, 8 asses; oil, 5 asses, onion, 5 asses; for the pignatta, 1 as, bread for the slave, 2 asses, wine, 2 asses. Five days before the ides: bread, 8 asses, bread for the slave, 4 asses; spelt, 3 asses. Four days before the ides: wine for the tamer, 1 denarius (=16 asses); bread, 8 asses, wine, 2 asses; cheese, 2 asses. Three days before the ides: dried fruit, 1 denarius; bread, two asses; steak, eight asses; wheat, 2 asses; beef, 1 as, dates, 1 as; incense, 1 as, cheese, 2 asses; sausage, 1 as, caciotta cheese, 4 asses, oil, 7 asses; at the storehouse,...; clover, 1 denarius and 1 as; oil, 1 denarius and 9 asses; bread, 4 asses; cheese, 4 asses; leek, 1 as, for a plate, 1 as; at Sittia, 9 asses; thyme ointment, 1 as. Two days before the ides: bread, 2 asses; bread for the slave, 2 asses, The day before the ides; bread for the slave, 2 asses; black bread, two asses, leek, 1 as. On the ides, bread, two asses, black bread, 2 asses, oil, 5 asses, spelt, 3 asses, fish for the tamer, 2 asses.

Comment

The inscription records the small daily expenses made by a person who stayed in the hostelry over nine days. Note the convenience of prices of basic necessities such as bread, oil, wine, cheese, sausage, fish and meat that ensured survival even to the more disadvantaged. For example, the recurrence of the item bread for the slave appears as the only food obligations for a servant. The mystery is yet unsolved for the figure of the tamer who is given a substantial amount of wine one day and fish another.

Finally it is noted how the costs incurred for the various foods fluctuate from day to day, perhaps in relation to the quantity purchased or else because of different food quality, as we have already seen for the price of the wine.

"Shopping lists" which were found in Pompeii in various places of the city (i.e. CIL IV 4000, 4422, 5380, 8561 etc.) clearly suggest that costs of basic food necessities were very low, affordable to everyone and probably controlled for this purpose. This was to avoid unhealthy conflicts that could lead to the loss of control of the huge mass of the poor in a small economy that had as its reference point the *as* and the *sestertius*.

Already by the Republican era the historical sources testify to the crazy amounts that the Roman aristocracy was able to spend on luxury goods, property or even on the organization of a "Lucullus-style" dinner, or the purchase of the biggest mullet on offer at the market. This was the direct relationship with the equally incredible riches which came to Rome from all over the world, and it is no surprise that Lucullus, for example, spent on organizing a dinner, the equivalent of the annual salary of a *grand-commis* of the imperial bureaucracy, equal to around 100,000 *sestertii*, or 400,000 *asses*.

Step 8 Regio I Ins. 6 nr. 4

House of the lararium of Achilles



The site



The context



HOUSE OF THE LARARIUM OF ACHILLES. The entrance. ©SSBAPES.



HOUSE OF THE LARARIUM OF ACHILLES. Wall with the inscription. ©SSBAPES.

Production and sales

CIL IV 8022



©SSBAPES.

VII K(alendas) Iul(ias)
vinacia
venit (assibus) XXXII

On June 25 Vinacia was sold for 32 asses.

Comment

The inscription recalls the sale of the vinasses or the residue obtained from pressing grapes for the preparation of wine on 25th June.

These operations were likely to have taken place on a small farm located in the countryside belonging to the owner of the house, whose decorations suggests he was somewhat well-to-do.

The date on which this sale took place, well after the usual date of the grape harvest, indicates that it involved grape pomace left to dry which was then used for feeding various animals, according to the writers Varrone and Columella (see above all Col., **D. R. R.** VI 3, 4).

The process of distillation that gave rise to the production of spirits was not known in the Roman world.

On the other hand, the inscription shows the interest with which revenue was procured, even if small, from the production waste aimed at optimizing the performance deriving from the various agricultural activities.



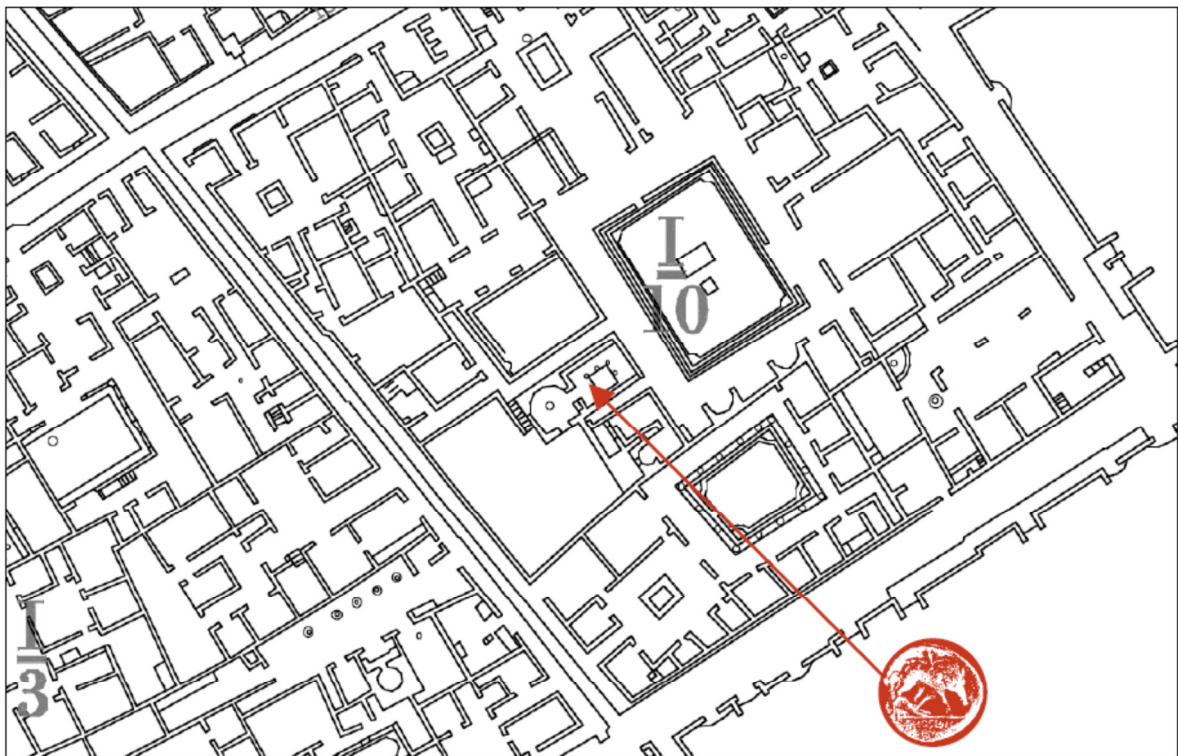
HOUSE OF VETTII, TRICLINIUM (EAST WALL). Pictorial frieze with grape harvest.
©SSBAPES.

Step 9 Regio I Ins. 10 nr. 4

House of Menander



The site



The context



HOUSE OF MENANDER. The entrance. ©SSBAPES.



HOUSE OF MENANDER. Door of the "treasure" cellar. ©SSBAPES.



HOUSE OF MENANDER. Cellar in which was discovered the wooden chest containing the rich silver service. ©SSBAPES; neg. C 1755.

Riches in safe



NAPLES, NATIONAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM, COIN CABINET. Silver denarius of C. Hosidius C.F. Geta, mint of Rome, 68 B.C. ©SSBAPES.

Bust of Diana r., draped, with bow and quiver over shoulder ; behind, GETA downwards; before III VIR

Boar r., wounded by spear and attacked by hound; in exergue, C.HOSIDI

Inv. 1455504/20; g 2,95; mm 17. RRC n.407/2

This large property, which takes its name from a fresco depicting the dramatist Menandro, most likely dates back to the Late Republican era, to the family of the *Poppaei*, as suggested by the seal with the name of Q. *Poppaeus Eros* found in the *procurator's* quarters.

The original core of the house underwent various transformations over four centuries. The first building in the southern part of the *insula*, had a regular plan built around the atrium. The adjacent house was annexed and, in the back section, the colonnade was extended on all sides to create a house with an aristocratic set-up featuring a double atrium and peristyle.

Following this, with the purchase of some small adjacent properties, further changes were made: a bath area with an independent entrance, a farm area with the stable, rooms for servants and the procurator's quarters, in addition to a small independent house with a Tuscan atrium, were built. After the earthquake of 62 AD an upper floor was built with an independent entrance and further renovation work was still underway at the time of the eruption.

Lots of finds were unearthed during the various stages of the excavation of the complex which took place between 1926 and 1932 under the guidance of Amedeo Maiuri. The coins discovered in different parts of the house were extremely interesting, the most significant and famous being the "treasure" kept in the cellar in a wooden chest containing the rich silver service (108 pieces), made up of drinking vessels (*argentum potorium*), tableware (*argentum escarium*) toilet items (*argentum balneare*), many prized pieces of jewellery for both men and women placed in a small wooden box with bone inserts and a hoard of coins (13 gold and 33 silver) amounting to a total value of 1432 sesterii.

In other areas of the house the skeletons of some victims were found, mainly adults, perhaps the servants who lived in the farm area who were trying to reach the upper floor to escape via the roof. Beside these skeletons four hoards of just a few coins were found, their modest peculium. However, another find of particular interest is a hoard made up of two gold and ninety silver coins (equivalent to 560 sesterii), perhaps kept in a leather bag, found in a cubicle of the servant's quarter next to a body of an adult and a young girl; the discovery in the area of a bronze seal with the name of Q. *Poppaeus Eros* suggests that the hoard belonged to the procurator, the administrator of the household farm, and that he needed them to meet the costs of running the house and for the renovation works in progress.

In many Pompeian houses, almost always in the atrium, the tablinum or the peristyle, coin hoards of different values were discovered, kept in *arcae* (strongboxes) of wood and bronze, in wardrobes, in money banks or terracotta jars.

However, in the houses belonging to the highest class, recognizable by their size, layout and decoration, significant quantities of money were not found, as we might expect.

This is due to both the missing and irregular documentation of the most ancient excavations and because many liquid assets were saved by the owners, as demonstrated by the strongboxes found empty in some rich houses

such as, for example, the House of the Faun, the House of the Vettii or the House of the Ephebe.

Instead, the large house named “of Menander” was uninhabited at the time of the eruption as renovation work was underway; therefore the owner, belonging to the powerful *Poppaei* family, had placed the family “treasure” in the cellar closed in a chest, and had entrusted the *procurator*, the administrator of the household farm living in the rustic area, the task of managing the house and overseeing the work.



Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli. Silver cup from Pompeii, House of Menander. Inv. 145506. ©SSBAPES.



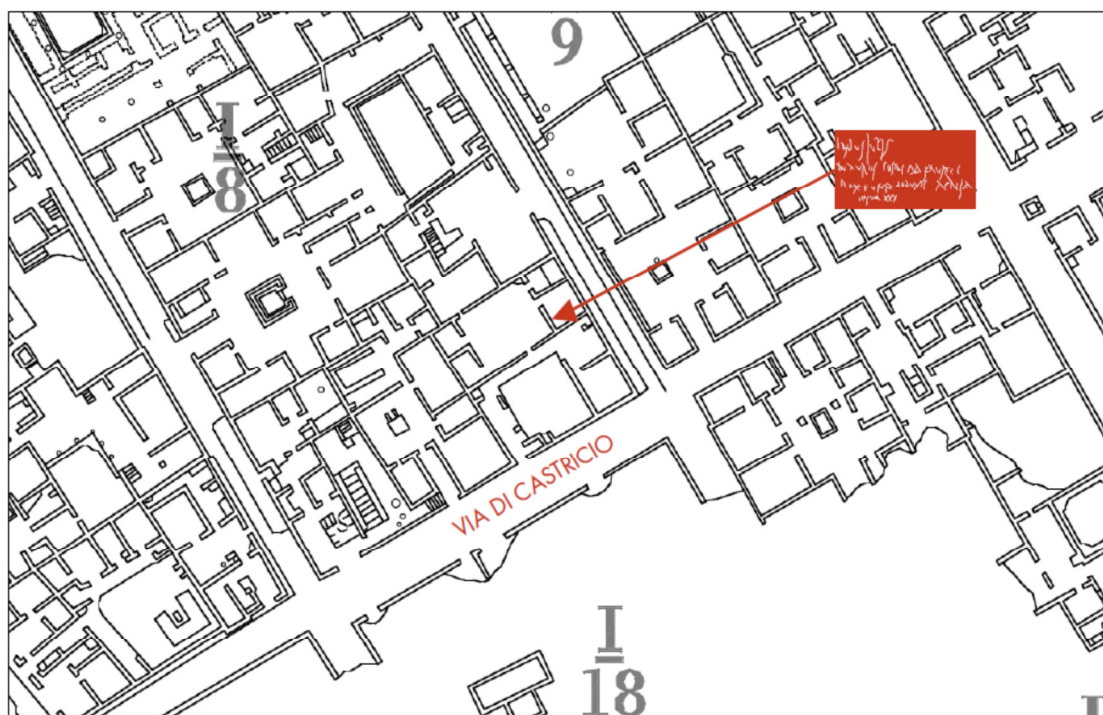
Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli. Silver cup from Pompeii, House of Menander. Inv. 145514. ©SSBAPES.

Step 10 Regio I Ins. 8 nr. 13

Workshop of Granius Romanus



The site



The context



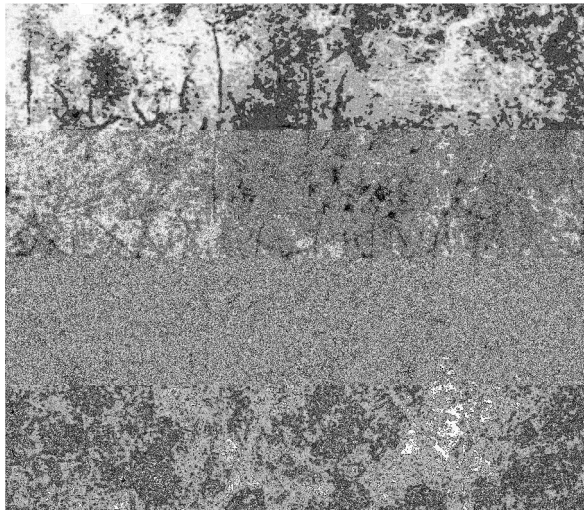
WORKSHOP OF GRANIUS ROMANUS. The entrance. ©SSBAPES.



WORKSHOP OF GRANIUS ROMANUS. The wall with the inscription. ©SSBAPES.

Pawning and usury

CIL IV 8203



©SSBAPES.

Idibus Iulij
In aures postas ad Faustillam
Pro denariis duobus usura(m) dedit aeris a(ssem)
Ex suma XXX



Idibus Iulis

In aures postas ad Faustill(am)

Pro denariis duobus usura(m) deduxit aeris a(ssem)

Ex suma XXX

*On 15th July I pawned my earrings to Faustilla for two denarii.
She deducted the lending of a bronze as coin as a thirtieth of the
sum.*

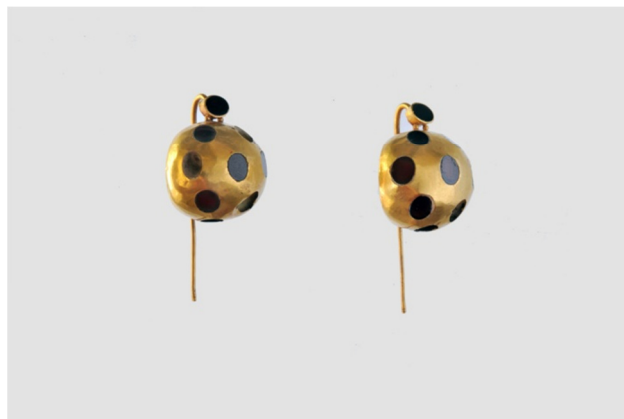
Comment

The inscription is written by a woman who fell into financial difficulties, forcing her to pawn a pair of earrings to a usurer, Faustilla, to guarantee a loan.

From the evaluation of the possession which was two denarii, or 32 asses, Faustilla kept one *as* for herself at a premium, corresponding to one thirtieth of the rounded-up sum and gave 31 asses to the creditor.

The monthly interest rates for the pledge are therefore 3.3%, competitive with respect to 3.75%, the equivalent to 45% of that annually granted by Faustilla and the others (see CIL IV 4528).

It should be noted that, as another inscription located in the same room informs us (CIL IV 8204), a few days earlier, on the fourth of July, a cloak and a hood had gone down the same route of Faustilla, a woman well known in Pompeii for loaning and usury but under different names and disguises. Each time and place Faustilla, speculating on the demands and needs of others, managed to gain high rates of interest and thus evidently performed the same role in Pompeii in the 1st century AD as performed by the modern "Mounts of Piety" or institutional pawnbrokers.



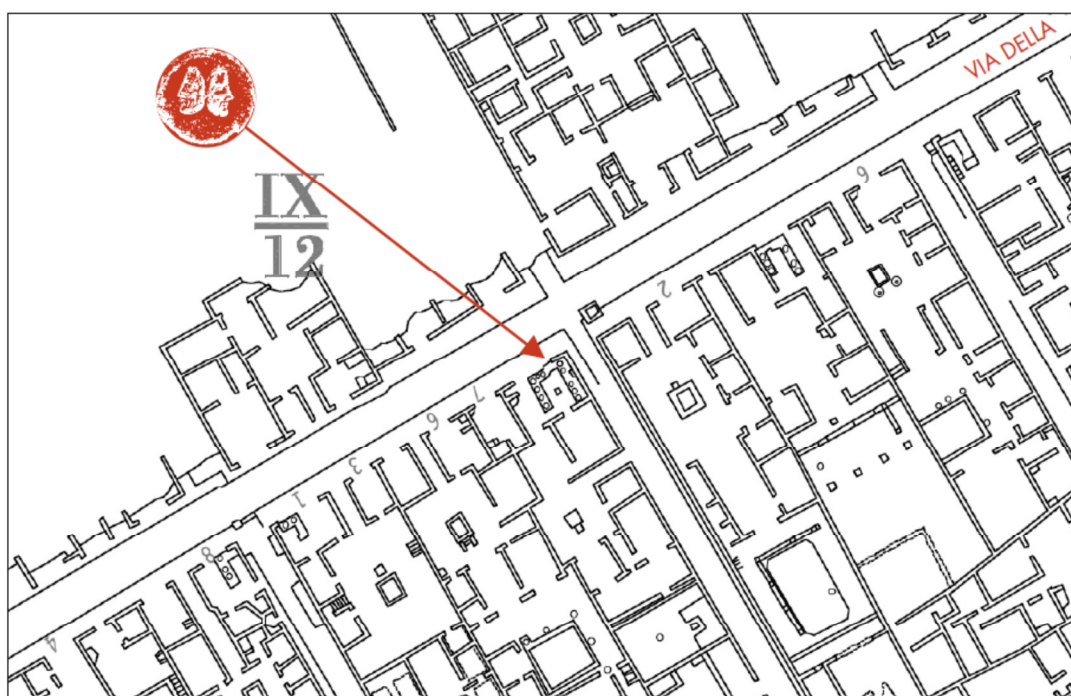
NAPLES, NATIONAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM. Earrings found in a small chest together with a coin hoard in the House of Menandro. Inv. 145483; Inv. 145484. ©SBAN.

Step 11 Regio I Ins. 8 nr. 8

Thermopolium of Vetutius Placidus



The site



The context



THERMOPOLIUM OF VETUTIUS PLACIDUS. The entrance. ©SSBAPES.

The tavern taking



NAPLES, NATIONAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM, COIN CABINET. As of L.Sulla, mint –moving with L.Sulla, 82 B.C. © SSBAPES.

Laureate head of Janus; above, I

Prow r.; above, L. SVL[A]; below, IMPE

RRC 368/1; Inv. 6942/107; g 20,21; mm 33. RRC 368/1

The complex located along Via dell'Abbondanza, made up of a shop, back room and adjoining house, occupies the north-east corner of the eighth *insula*; the owners were most likely *L. Vetutius Placidus* and his partner *Ascula*, names recorded several times on the inscriptions of the house and, in particular, that of Vetutius, was copied on lots of electoral programmes and on wine amphoras found inside.

The thermopolium, one of the best preserved and representative of the trading concerns dedicated to food service that were spread along the main roads of Pompeii, preserves, in addition to the *lararium aedicule* with the depiction of Mercury, Dionysus and the serpents, the sales counter with the upper surface covered in multi-coloured marble chips and tiles and complete with *dolia* set inside the wall structure. In one of these an extremely interesting storage place was found made up of 1285 bronze coins of a value of around 585 *sestertii*, perhaps the shop's takings of several days.

Again from the same thermopolium, in addition to some sporadic finds brought to light during the first stage of the archaeological survey of 1912 and other discoveries made in different places to the house or the back room, there are other small interesting groups of coins, again in bronze found both in the other *dolia* and on the sales counter that, not dissimilar in size to those found in other food service establishments of the same type, most likely represent the daily takings.

The huge hoard composed entirely of coins of the time allows us to make some observations, even if only partially, on the circulation of the bronze coin in Pompeii in AD 79: the most popular coin seems to have been the *as* (63.3% of the total), the series attested by a greater number of examples are those of the Flavian era (47.59%), chronologically closer to the date of the eruption, following by issues of the Julio-Claudians (42.09%) and those of Galba (7.58%). Present, even if only in a very small percentage, were both the most ancient coins, issued by Greek Mints (0.14%) and Republican issues (1.59%).

Along the main roads of the Vesuvian city there were lots of shops, particularly many places for overnight stays, the *hospitia*, and for meals, the *cauponae*, some with their own vineyard for the production and sale of wine, and the *thermopolia* aimed at the sale of food and hot drinks, a sort of modern inn where, as the epigraphic sources indicate, a measure of house wine cost 1 as, Falerno wine cost 4 asses and a bowl of flour and spelt soup cost 1 as.

In Pompeii, in the part which has been excavated, 89 *thermopolia*, have been identified, many of which were located close to popular public places (the amphitheatre, theatres, gymnasiums, baths) or close to the gates of the city where those who had travelled from the hinterland and the nearby centres arrived.

In these trading places, bronze coins were prevalently found as they were more commonly used in the activities of a minor and daily nature. In particular the *as* was the most commonly adopted coin.



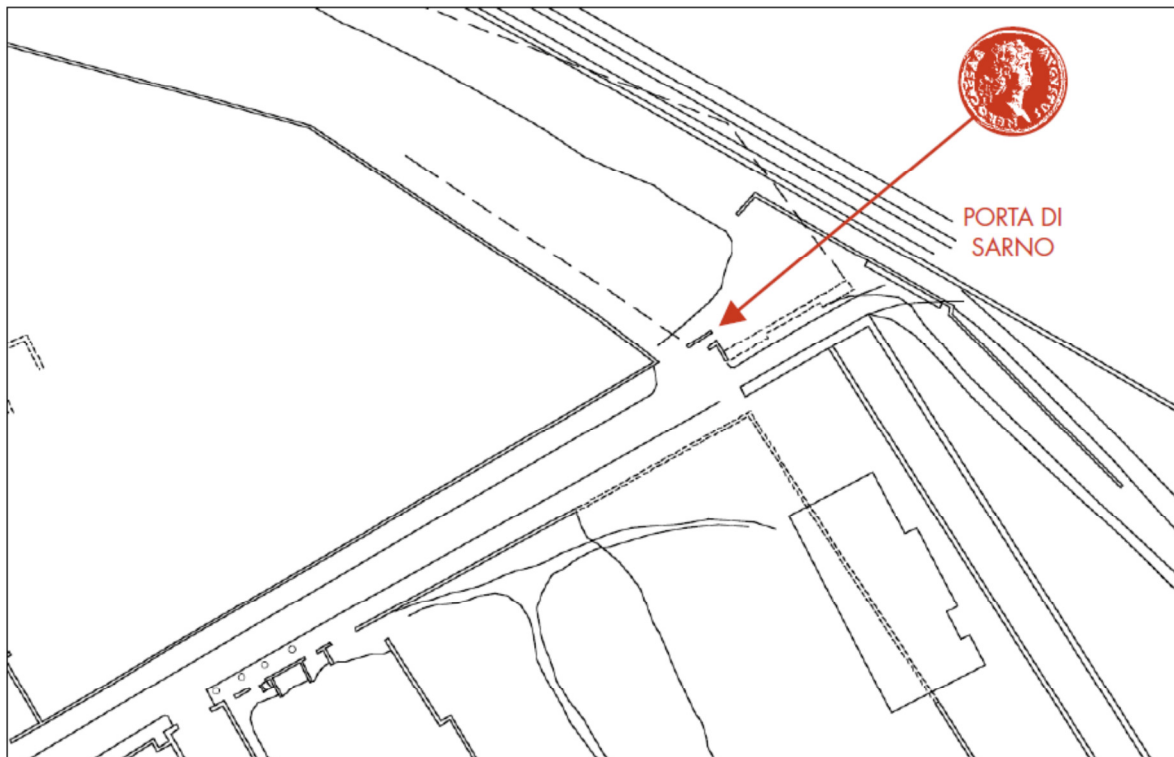
THERMOPOLIUM OF VETUTIUS PLACIDUS. Sales counter. ©SSBAPES.

Step 12

Sarnus Gate



The site



The context



SARNUS GATE. View from north-east. ©SSBAPES.

The “treasure” of the fugitive



NAPLES, NATIONAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM, COIN CABINET. Aureus of Nero, mint of Rome, 64-65 d.C.

NERO CAESAR AVGVSTVS Laureate head of Nero r.

AVGVSTVS AVGVSTA, Nero standing left, radiate and togate, holding patera and scepter, and Poppaea standing left holding patera and cornucopiae

Inv. 161524 (57); g 7,35; mm 19. RIC I, 44.

Close to the gate "of Sarnus" (III,8) a person who had died while trying to escape from the city towards Nocera was found. During his escape he had tried to save his "treasure": a large hoard of money (49 denarii and 61 aurei; inv. 161468-161577), some jewellery, a valuable mirror with an embossed plate decorated with fishing Cupids and four simple and elegant silver cups.

Via dell'Abbondanza, one of the most important roads in Pompeii passes through the city from east to west, starting from the Forum and reaching Via dei Teatri. It then crosses Via di Stabia and continues to the *Regiones* I and II terminating at the Sarnus Gate, one of the seven gates that opened into the walled city.

During the first eruption stages of Vesuvius lots of Pompeians tried to get away from the city, taking their most precious possessions with them: money, jewellery, family silver, the keys to the house. The hoards found next to the skeletons were usually kept in small wooden boxes finished in bronze or ivory, in leather or cloth bags, of which the weft is sometimes still visible on the coins.



HERCOLANEUM, DEPOSITS. Wooden box with coins from suburban area (inv. 3277). ©SSBAPES.

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Vetrina 1. Il tesoro della Casa del Menandro; Vetrina 2. Gioielli e monete dalla Casa del Bracciale d'oro

Vetrina 3. Il "tesoro" del fuggiasco della Porta di Sarno; Vetrina 4. Tesori e spiccioli: rinvenimenti nelle botteghe e attività industriali

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