

Herculaneum

With Vesuvius brooding on the horizon, any visit to the Bay of Naples area should include a visit to Herculaneum. It is unjustly less famous than its bigger brother Pompeii as the state of preservation of the buildings is generally much superior.



Herculaneum was a peaceful seaside town which was struck by a succession of pyroclastic flows during the eruption of Vesuvius in AD 79. It was then covered with 20 metres of volcanic mud and lost to sight, now lying beneath the commune of Ercolano.

Ancient tradition connected Herculaneum with the name of the Greek hero Herakles (Hercules in Latin and consequently Roman Mythology), an indication that the city was of Greek origin. In fact, it seems that some forefathers of the Samnite tribes of the Italian mainland founded the first civilization on the site of Herculaneum at the end of the 6th C BC. Soon after, the town came under Greek control and was used as a trading post because of its proximity to the Gulf of Naples. The Greeks named the city Ἡράκλειον (Heraklion). In the 4th C BC, Herculaneum again came under the domination of the Samnites and remained under Samnite control until it became a Roman municipium in 89 BC, when, having participated in the Social War ("war of the allies" against Rome), it was defeated by Titus Didius, a legate of Sulla. So the inhabitants worshipped, above all, Hercules, and other important deities were Venus and Apollo.

Emmanuel Maurice, Duke of Elbeuf, of the House of Lorraine, lived in Naples and in 1711 commissioned the local architect Ferdinando Sanfelice to construct him a private residence on the outskirts of the city in Portici. He lived there for several years and in 1719 when a well was being dug at a depth of 50 – 60 feet they discovered the ruins of Herculaneum. Initially a series of 'robber' shafts and tunnels were dug to strip the site of any saleable valuables, but in 1738 Charles, King of Naples and his wife Maria Amalia of Saxony, visited the villa d'Elbeuf (and were so impressed that the couple ordered the construction of the Reggia di Portici – shown here). Under his patronage, between 1749 to 1765, major excavations were undertaken by Spanish engineer Rocque Joaquin de Alcubierre and then his assistant Carlo Weber, with objects being housed in the Museum of Herculaneum at the palace, opened in 1758 by King Charles.



A basic plan of the town was mapped out and much of the portable remains removed. The elaborate publication of *Le Antichità di Ercolano* ("The Antiquities of Herculaneum") had an effect on emerging European

Neoclassicism out of all proportion to its limited circulation - in the later 18thC, motifs from Herculaneum began to appear on stylish furnishings, from decorative wall-paintings and tripod tables to perfume burners and teacups. However, excavation ceased once the nearby town of Pompeii was discovered, which was significantly easier to excavate because of the thinner layer of debris covering the site (4 metres as opposed to Herculaneum's 20 metres), and eventually these tunnels collapsed and were closed down. The modern towns of Resina and Portici grew up over the site and knowledge of where the entrances to the tunnels were was lost to the scientific community.



In the 20thC, excavation once again resumed on a more modern and scientific basis, fully uncovering a small section of the town but it was found that the earlier tunnelling had damaged the structure of much of the surviving buildings. The site is also suffering from exposure to the elements and the periodic earth tremors, so there is a constant battle to try and preserve the remains. Many public and private buildings, including the forum complex, are yet to be excavated.

The enclosed site at Herculaneum is close to the modern town of Ercolano (in 1969 Resina changed its name to Ercolano in honour of the old city). Compared to Pompeii, this was a small city, of about 20 hectares and 4,000 inhabitants, but wealthier than Pompeii, possessing an extraordinary density of fine houses with, for example, far more lavish use of coloured marble cladding.

Unlike Pompeii, the deep pyroclastic material which covered it, preserved wooden and other organic-based objects such as roofs, beds, doors, food and even some 300 skeletons which were discovered in recent years along the seashore. It had been thought until then that the town had been evacuated by the inhabitants. Approximately one third of the town has been excavated and, as much of the timber has survived in a charred condition, it gives a much better idea of what a Roman town may have looked like. In Herculaneum, it is easy to imagine how the ordinary people lived and worked,

shopped and worshipped, relaxed and were governed. There are private houses with gardens and courtyards; shops and pubs; men's and women's baths; public fountains and latrines; boarding houses.

It is notable for the high standard of preservation of the houses and the public baths as well as perishable material such as wood, textiles and papyri. A significant number of high quality painted walls may be seen. The Roman sea shore has been exposed during the excavations and a Roman boat has been preserved in a special museum.

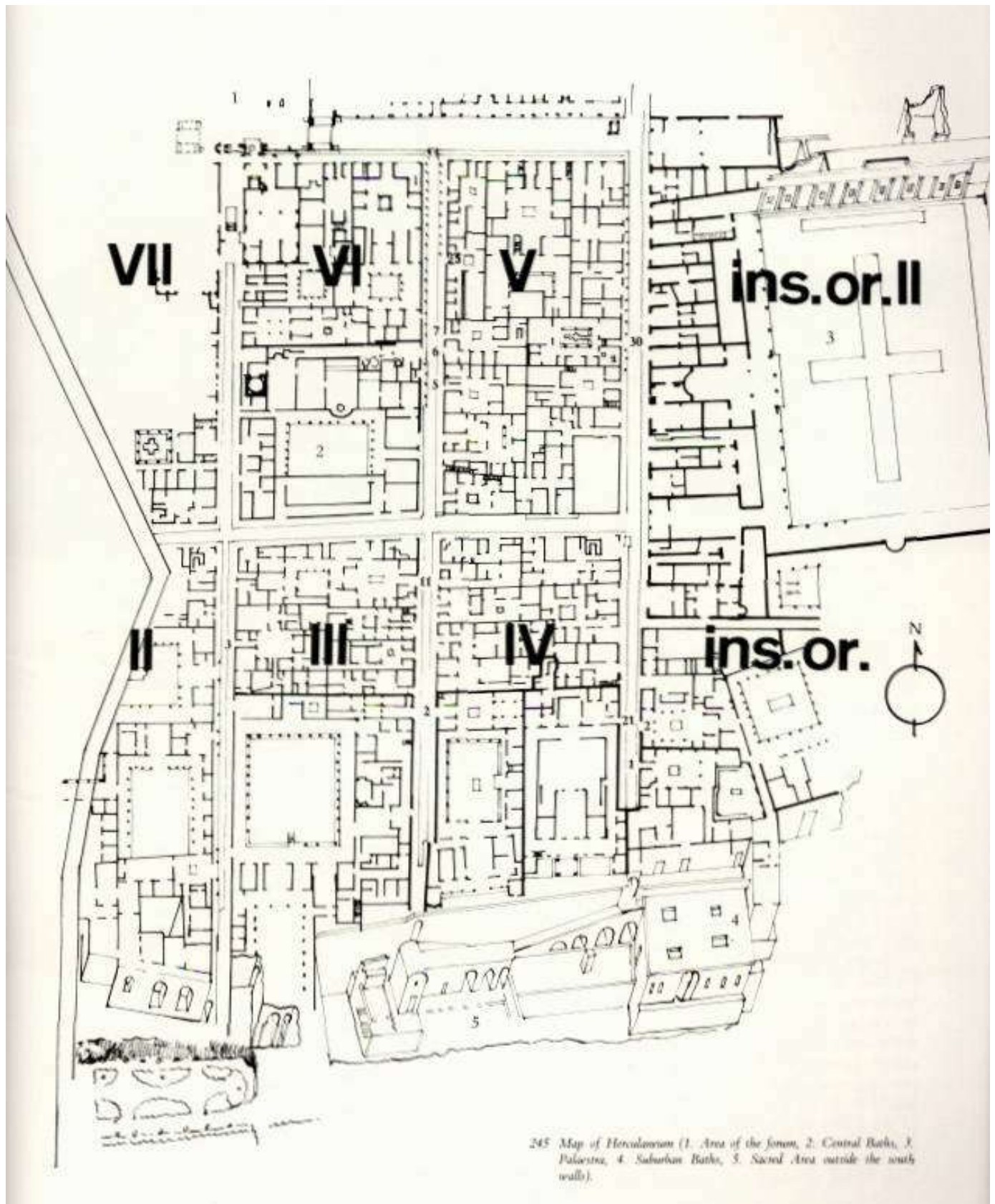
The volcanic water, ash and debris covering Herculaneum, along with the extreme heat, left it in a remarkable state of preservation for over 1600 years. However, once excavations began, exposure to the elements began the slow process of deterioration. This was not helped by the methods of archaeology used earlier in the town's excavation, which generally centred around recovering valuable artefacts rather than ensuring the survival of all artefacts. In the early 1980s and under the direction of Dr. Sara C. Bisel, preservation of the skeletal remains became a high priority. The carbonised remains of organic materials, when exposed to the air, deteriorated over a matter of days, and destroyed many of the remains until a way of preserving them was formed.

Today, tourism and vandalism have damaged many of the areas open to the public, and water damage coming from the modern Ercolano has undermined many of the foundations of the buildings. Reconstruction efforts have often proved counterproductive. However, in modern times conservation efforts have been more successful and excavations have been temporarily discontinued, in order to direct all funding to help save the city. A large number of artifacts from Herculaneum are preserved in the Naples National Archaeological Museum and a private-public partnership, the Herculaneum Conservation Project, has taken a lead restoring Herculaneum. In 2012, UNESCO's director general praised Herculaneum as a model "whose best practices surely can be replicated in other similar vast archaeological areas across the world"

The main entrance to the site is in the NE corner and the entrance road crosses a bridge over part of the site, it then goes around the eastern and southern sides before entering by a bridge in the SW corner of the site. The area available to visit is a small section of the original town basically covering three roads (Cardo III to V)

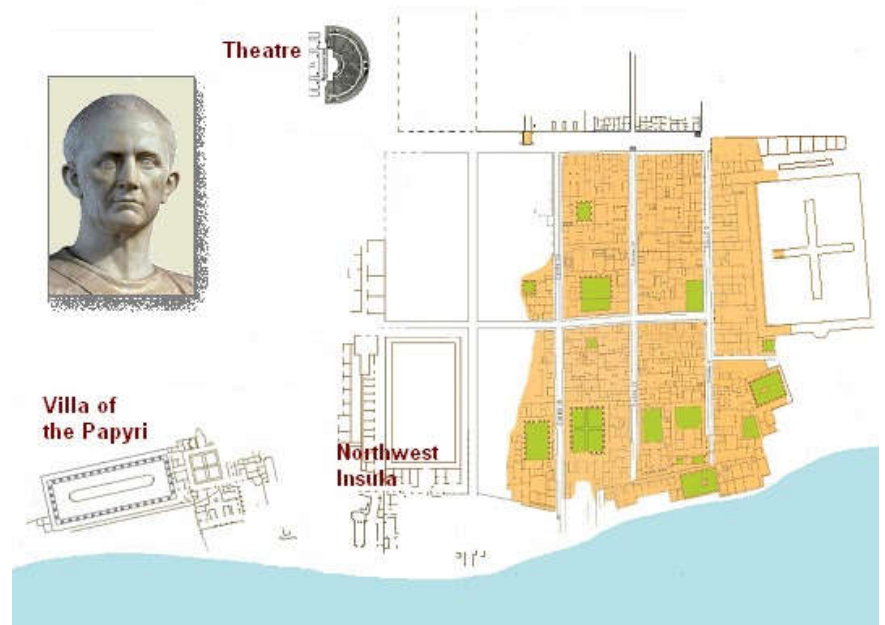
running from the ancient coastline inland to the North and two of the roads (Decumanus Maximus and Inferior) running in a East/West direction parallel to the old coast.

The buildings at the site are grouped in blocks (insulae), defined by the intersection of the east-west (cardi) and north-south (decumani) streets. Hence there is Insula II – Insula VII running counterclockwise from Insula II. To the east are two additional blocks: Orientalis I (ol) and Orientalis II (oII). To the south of Orientalis I (ol)



lies one additional group of buildings known as the "Suburban District" (SD). Each individual building had their own entrance number, for example, the House of the Deer is labelled Ins IV, 3.

The map shows the relative positions of the Theatre, the Villa of the Papyri, the Northwest Insula and the large building referred to as the 'Basilica' by its 18thC excavators, with respect to each other and to the open excavation site (coloured orange). The detail and extent of the discoveries in the explored area is largely due to the diligence of a Swiss engineer, Karl Weber, who made the first map of the subterranean galleries and the buildings they led to. His methodology was continued by the Spanish architect Francesco La Vega who produced as complete a plan of Herculaneum as was possible from the available evidence.



Because of the manner of its burial and the fact that it lies beneath a populated area, the exact size of Herculaneum is still unknown, but it appears to extend over an area roughly 320m by 350m. The section excavated to date is in the southwest corner of Herculaneum and covers about a quarter of the city.

Numbering of Buildings in Herculaneum

The main east-west axis was designated the Decumanus Maximus by Amedeo Maiuri because of its width and the fact that it runs adjacent to important civic buildings, such as the College of the Augustales and the basilica. The city blocks (insulae) created by the grid of streets were usually divided in two from east to west, then subdivided into properties of more or less the same width. Measurements obtained have shown that, with the exception of the large peristyle houses, house facades generally varied between 7m and 14m wide; the northern halves of the insulae adjacent to the Decumanus Maximus don't follow this pattern, but rather have been subdivided lengthwise, so that the houses opened onto the decumanus rather than the side streets.

Insula II

The entrance pathway to the site leads round in a gentle curve past an original section of town wall where the houses border the ancient shoreline, to arrive at Cardo III at the south-west corner of the site. Insula II lies to the west of this street, bounded on its western side by the yet to be excavated Cardo II and by the Lower Decumanus to the north. Only about half of the insula has been excavated to date, although earlier tunnelling has provided additional information about its extent and layout. Among the buildings in this insula are:

The House of Aristides (Ins II, 1) or Casa di Aristide



The first building in insula II is the House of Aristides. The house derives its name from a statue found in the building which unfortunately was wrongly identified as that of Aristides, a Greek politician, whereas it was, in fact, a bust of Aeschines, the Greek statesman and one of the ten Attic Orators. (The Attic Orators were considered the greatest orators of the classical era (5th – 4th century BC)). The name of the house, however, remains unchanged.

The entrance opens directly onto the atrium, complete with impluvium (a water tank in the floor of an atrium that has, above it, an opening (compluvium) in the middle of its roof) but the remains of the house are not particularly well preserved due to damage caused by previous excavations. The Bourbons demolished the wall on the north side of the atrium between the House of Aristides and the House of Argus, so it is also possible to enter the building by way of the north wall of the atrium from the peristyle of the House of Argus and vice versa.

The walls of the atrium are devoid of plasterwork. The atrium has three doorways on its south which give access to the southern part of the house. On the west side of the atrium a single doorway leads to a large open room. The property had a lower floor, which was probably used for storage. This level had been built by extending the edge of the promontory toward the sea by means of a wall.



Investigation of the gravel levels at the foot of the cliff beneath the House of Aristides reveals that at least part of the beach at the time of the eruption had been used as a dumping ground for waste building material. Brick and other spoils were found in this layer together with an accumulation of domestic painted plaster, probably as a result of renovations carried out after the earthquakes that preceded the eruption of AD79.

The House of Argus (Ins II, 2) or Casa di Argo

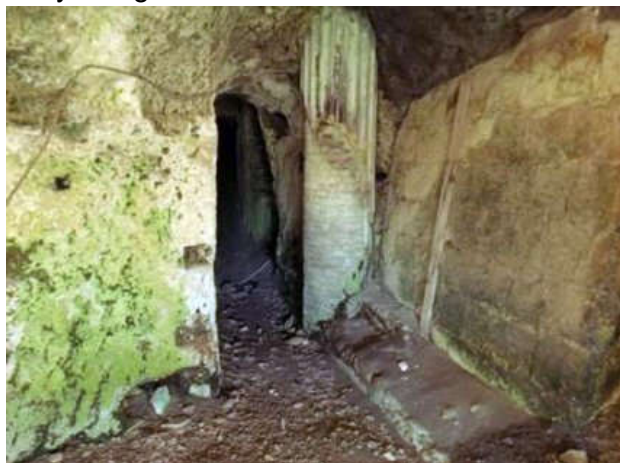
The second house in insula II got its name from a fresco of Argus and Io which once adorned a reception room off the large peristyle. (According to mythology, Argus, Hera's servant, was charged with guarding the white heifer Io from Zeus, keeping her chained to the sacred olive tree at the Argive Heraion). The fresco is now sadly lost, but its name lives on.

The entrance opens onto the north east corner of a square hall with a few plaster remnants but no surviving decoration. On the south side of the hall a doorway leads to a large peristyle (open courtyard or garden surrounded by a colonnade) which is colonnaded on three sides. Along the east side of the peristyle are a series of small rooms. In contrast, the north side of the peristyle contains several larger rooms including a large triclinium (dining-room, so called because of the three banqueting couches (klinai) arranged around the walls). On the east side of this room is an exedra (a recess, usually semi-circular or rectangular in shape, usually set into a building's facade) with an upper storey still extant.



The discovery of the house in the late 1820s was notable because it was the first time a second floor had been unearthed in such detail. The upper floor, lost in the main after the open-air digs were abandoned in 1875, had a balcony overlooking Cardo III as well as a series of small rooms used for storage. (The excavation of the upper floor also revealed a pantry with wooden shelving and cupboards, flour and newly prepared loaves ready for baking, along with jars containing olives, almonds and fruit.)

This building must have been one of the finer villas in Herculaneum. The exedra is decorated in the fourth style. This decoration consists of red panels on a red background and incorporates geometric and architectural themes. The central panel on each of the walls contains a mythological scene set in an architectural frame.



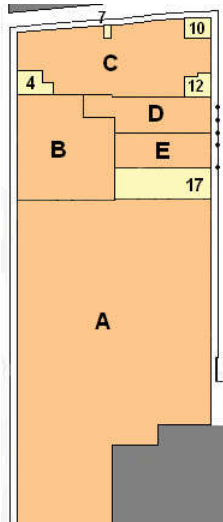
A doorway on the west side of the peristyle leads through to a second, partially excavated, peristyle. Excavation here is very limited, with only a couple of rooms cleared, but of particular interest in this area, is an example of the Bourbon tunnels which criss-cross the insula. The tunnel continues the line of the second peristyle westwards, exposing as it goes a second column on the southern side of the peristyle.



The House of the Genius (Ins II, 3) or Casa del Genio

The House of the Genius is located near the north end of Insula II on the west side of Cardo III. The house derives its name from the small statue of a winged genius or guardian spirit that decorated a candlestick found in the building. These houses were amongst the first to be openly excavated (between 1828 and 1850) and although only partially excavated, it appears to have been a spacious building. The main entrance to the house was on Cardo II, so what we see today is the rear of the peristyle, the rooms that line the back wall and the rear entrance (posticum) on Cardo III. In the centre of the peristyle are the remains of a basin with apses on either side.

Insula III



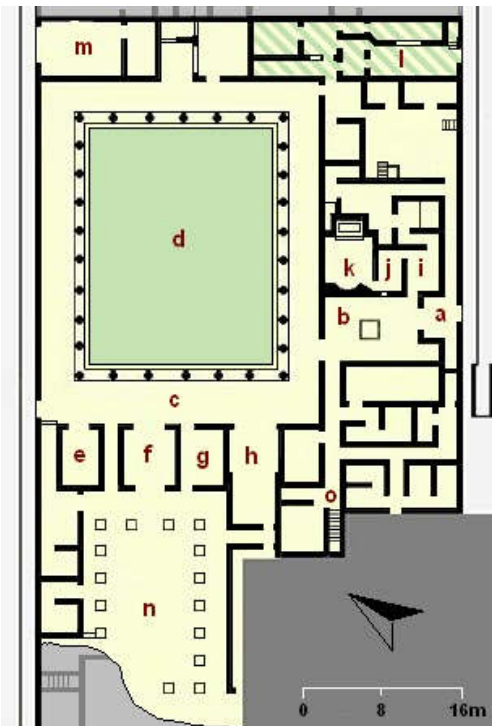
Insula III lies directly across Cardo III from Insula II and is bound by Cardo IV to the east and the Lower Decumanus to the north. At its southern limits, the insula has panoramic views over the Bay of Naples.

The insula contains several interesting buildings which, in the most part, are in a reasonable state of preservation. The most important of the houses in the insula are (B) the **House of the Skeleton**, (C) the **House of the Wooden Partition**, (D) the **House of Opus Craticium**, (E) the **House of the Bronze Herma**, and, occupying a prime location in the lower half of the insula, (A) the **House of the Inn**. Unfortunately this last house, whilst being the largest and most prestigious, is the least well preserved.

Also numbers 4 (workshop, probably belonging to 11), 7 (public latrine), 10 (Shop of the Wooden Press – an undecorated single shop of a fabric merchant, inside which is the only surviving example of a wooden screw press for ironing clothes), 12 (shop) and 17 (House of the Brick Altar).



The House of the Inn (Ins III, 1-2, 18-19) or Casa dell' Albergo



The House of the Inn, which is set in a magnificent waterfront location, occupies the complete southern end of Insula III. Built during the Augustan period (27 BC - 14 AD), the house was first excavated in 1852. Because of its large size and the presence of its own private baths, it was originally considered to be an inn, but it is now believed to be a private house, albeit a rather sumptuous one.

The property is in a poor state of repair not only due to the effects of the eruption, but also to the exploratory tunnels and passageways dug in the course of early excavations, so almost all the decoration in the bath suite has been lost.

The rooms (l) off door No. 18 were originally a separate unit but were at some time linked to the north side of the peristyle. Likewise shop (m) was possibly linked to the house. It would appear that the house was remodelled sometime after the earthquake of AD62 to form a commercial establishment comprising both shops and workshops.

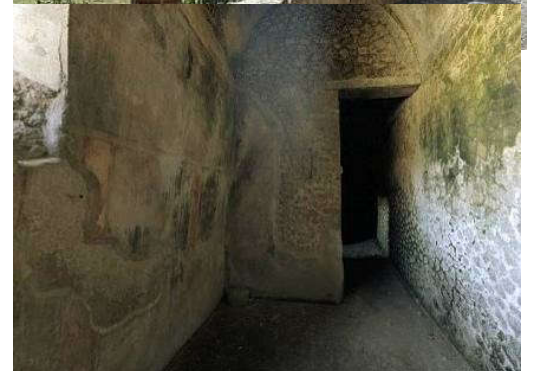
The main entrance (a) opens off the west side of Cardo IV, onto a surprisingly plain atrium (b), off which rooms radiate left and right. The west side of the atrium leads onto a large peristyle (c) with a central sunken garden (d), where the carbonised trunk of a pear tree was discovered during recent restoration work. As a living reminder of its former use, the garden has now been planted as a pear orchard.

The portico itself was supported by pilasters of opus vittatum mixtum, alternating rows of brick and tufa blocks, and had white mosaic paving with black insets and a black border. Opening off the south east corner of the peristyle is a large exedra (h) which is paved in white mosaic.

The three large rooms (e, f and g) off the south side of the peristyle all had mosaic flooring of which some fragments still remain. A flight of stairs (o) off the south east corner of the peristyle led down to the lower levels of terracing.

To the south of the peristyle is a quadriporticus terrace (n) which overlooks the Bay of Naples, built over a vaulted substructure which contained several small rooms and two larger rooms with panoramic views to the south. The rooms are reached by a winding, vaulted passageway which twists and turns its way down to the lower level, lit by occasional rectangular windows. The walls retain some areas of plasterwork with traces of fresco decoration.

The house's private baths are accessed by way of a narrow doorway in the north east corner of the atrium. These baths are the only private thermae so far discovered in Herculaneum and are richly decorated in the late second style with black and white mosaic flooring.





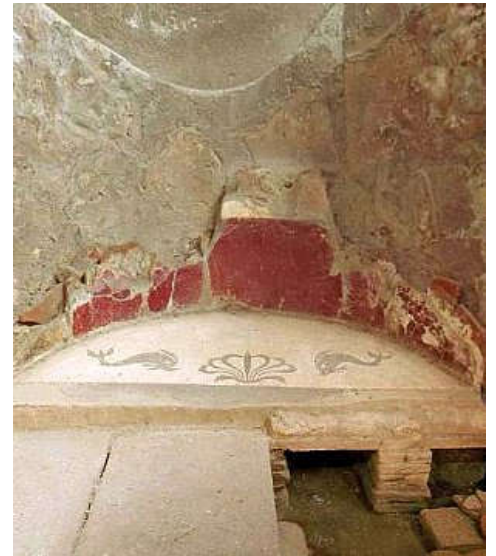
The entrance opens onto the apodyterium (i) (changing room) which is decorated in the late second style with large green panels with internal decorative borders set on a pale pink background, ornamented with floating figures and topped by a light blue painted cornice. In the north-west corner of the apodyterium is a narrow arched doorway which leads to the tepidarium (j) (warm room).

The tepidarium is decorated with dark red panels with internal decorative borders separated by broad bands decorated with a floral motif in green and blue. The room is lit by a large rectangular window in its south wall and an arched doorway in the south west corner opens onto the caldarium (k) (hot room).

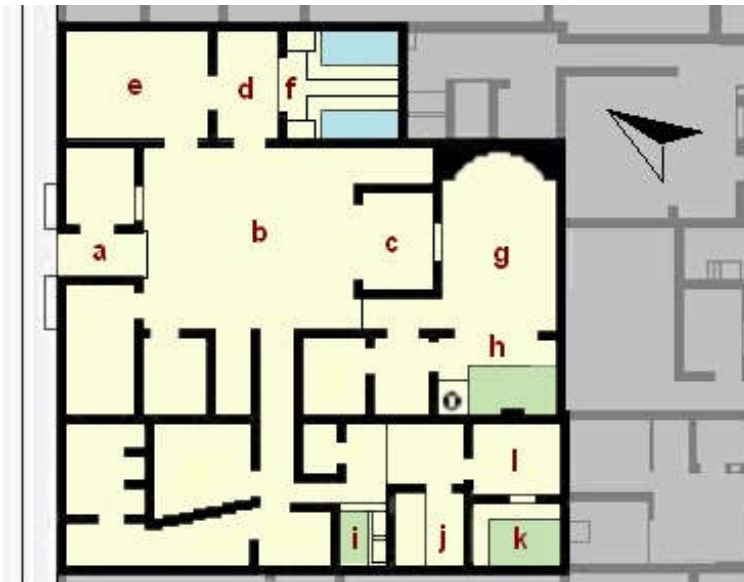


The caldarium has an arched niche but has lost most of its fresco decoration, with only an upper zone on the east wall remaining.

In the centre of the south wall is a semi circular apse which would have been the location of a labrum (basin). The apse retains some red fresco detail at the foot of the wall and is paved with a black and white mosaic featuring swimming dolphins. A large area of the floor is missing exposing the underlying hypocaust (heating system).



The House of the Skeleton (Ins III, 3) or Casa dello Scheletro



Across Cardo III from the House of the Genius is the House of the Skeleton. This building, probably the aggregation of three smaller buildings, derives its name from the discovery of human remains in a second floor room in 1831. This was the first body to be found in the town which had assumed to have been abandoned when the eruption began. Today only the ground floor of this two storey building still remains.

The fauces (a) off Cardo III, which is paved in a black and white mosaic, leads onto a reasonably sized atrium (b) (without the usual impluvium) and on the east side of the atrium is the tablinum (c) (central room at the end of the atrium, originally the master bedroom, later used for storing records) which appears to have been reduced in size in the remodelling of the house.

On the north side of the atrium there is a small hall (d) which gives access on its left to an oecus (e) (the main living room of a Greek house, adopted into Roman architecture, and often used for dining) and on its right to a nymphaeum (f) (a grotto, strictly with a natural water supply but often a constructed fountain, dedicated to the nymphs). The nymphaeum consists of two rectangular basins with a decorative rear wall (pictured overleaf) in inlaid limestone. Above the nymphaeum is a decorative frieze composed of seven panels, of which only three originals remain, the central three being modern copies.



At the rear of the atrium, to the right of the tablinum, a passageway leads through to a large triclinium (g) (dining room). The walls of the triclinium are decorated in the third style in reds and orange with illusionary architecture and views of distant landscapes all above a lower red decorative frieze. On the north wall is an large apsidal alcove while the floor is paved in opus sectile. The room is lit by a large window in its west wall which it shares with the adjoining tablinum.

The south wall of the triclinium has a broad opening overlooking a small courtyard (h) which contains a mosaic lararium (shrine to the household gods), with, high on the wall above, a tablet depicting a winged figure.

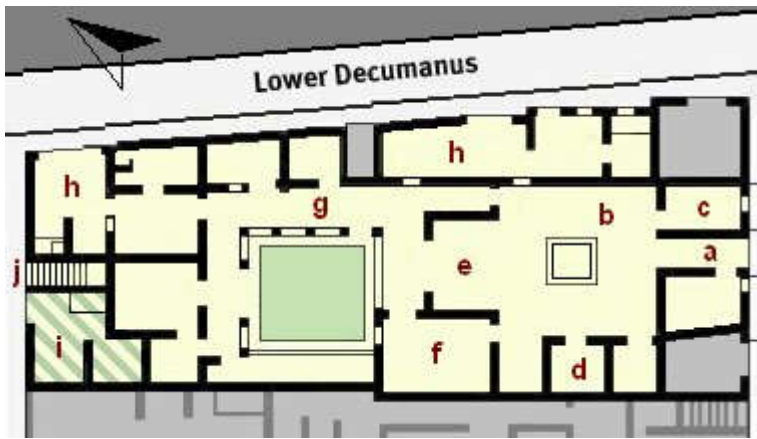


The House of the Wooden Partition (Ins III, 11-12) or Casa del Tramezzo di Legno



The House of the Wooden Partition lies on the west side of Cardo IV close to its junction with the Lower Decumanus. The house was preserved to the level of the third floor and its facade, which ends with a cornice decorated with ova, is one of the most sophisticated in the region.

The walls of the fauces (a) retain some large areas of decorative plasterwork although the actual decoration is rather faded and indistinct. The fauces leads directly to a square atrium (b) with rooms off all but its north side. (On this north side the owner appears to have preferred to allocate the space available to commercial premises opening directly onto the Lower Decumanus rather than additional domestic accommodation).



The Tuscan order atrium has an inward sloping floor decorated in opus signinum with a marble lined impluvium complete with a central fountain, with beside it a richly decorated marble display table (cartibulum). The simple mosaic floor indicates that the house was probably built sometime during the late republican period (1st C BC).

The house was remodelled early in the 1st C AD with the construction of the peristyle and redecorated with frescoes in the third style, which in the atrium consists of black, red and yellow panels beneath an upper zone decorated with architectural motifs on a red background.



Off the north east corner of the atrium is a small cubiculum (c) decorated with blue/green panels on a white background above a lower red frieze. The room has a fine black and white mosaic floor and the ceiling is partly vaulted.

In another cubiculum is displayed the remains of a bed.



At the rear of the atrium is the tablinum (e) which is separated from the atrium by an elegant wooden partition. The broad opening off the tablinum onto the peristyle may have instigated the installation of the partition which is composed of a series of panels of which two were hinged and had bronze handles for ease of opening.





During the remodelling in the early 1st C AD, the tablinum appears to have been shortened, enabling the erection of a portico on the east side of the peristyle. To the left of the tablinum is the large oecus (f) (living room) which has access to this portico by way of a wide doorway. The room is richly decorated with frescoes in the third style consisting of black panels on a light red background above a lower decorative black frieze, and a dark grey floor ornamented with rows of white marble chips.

The peristyle was colonnaded on three sides and had a small central garden. Ranged round the peristyle are a series of family rooms. The workshops and shops (h) on the north and west sides of the house were added during the period of remodelling.

It seems likely that shop (i) was also part of the property although there is no direct link. A flight of stairs at No.5 (j) led to the upper floor at the rear of the house.



Lanarius Shop

In the years prior to the eruption in 79 AD, shops were created in the side rooms of the House of the Wooden Partition. Among these is the one at n.10: this is the shop of a fabric merchant (lanarius), inside of which one can observe the only remaining example of a wooden screw press (torcular or pressorium), used to iron clothes. A staircase leads to the craftsman's small dwelling, consisting of two rooms, created over the vestibule of the House of the Wooden Partition.

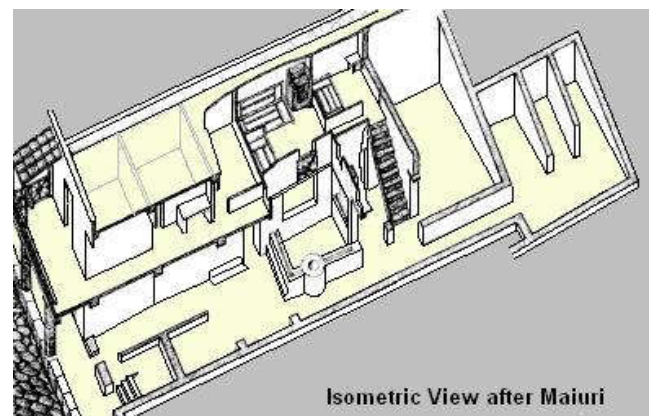
The House of the Opus Craticium (Ins III, 13-15) or Casa a Graticcio



Next door is the House of the Opus Craticium which was excavated by Amedeo Maiuri between 1927 and 1933. The house is interesting because of its timber frame construction, referred to, rather misleadingly, by Maiuri as opus craticium, which literally means partitioning made of reeds much like the traditional English 'wattle and daub'. One wall in the house does show traces of reeds but they did not form part of the construction and were simply used as a key for the plaster finishing.

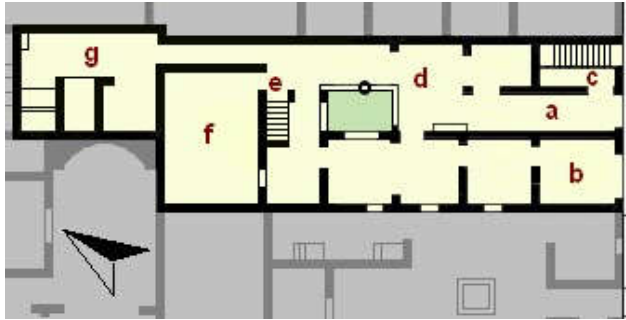
Numerous surviving examples of timber frame construction have also been found at Pompeii, but the practice seems to have been particularly favoured at Herculaneum.

To construct the walls, squared timber uprights (arrectaria) (8-12 cm thick) were combined with horizontal transversaria (6 - 8 cm) to form panels measuring between 50 and 80 cm. These were then in-filled with concrete and rubble. To provide stability, the main structure of the house was also supported by piers of brick and blockwork. Other than economic reasons, the use of timber framing was probably motivated by the amount of space which could be saved by using thin partition walls.



Isometric View after Maiuri

The house was divided into at least 3, perhaps 4, small apartments. These units are better preserved at Herculaneum than similar ones at Pompeii. The house's position in Insula III suggests that in its original form it was probably a small atrium house.

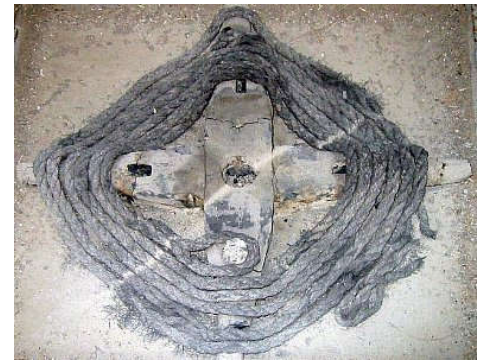


The entrance to the house opened onto a passageway (a) leading to a central courtyard (d). On the right of the passageway a doorway gave access to a small room (c) under the stairs to one of the first floor apartments.

A taberna (shop) (b), sat to the left side of the passageway and incorporated several back rooms. Because of the use of timber framing it was relatively easy to divide up the ground-floor area in this manner.



The central courtyard acted as a light well and contained an impluvium to catch rain water. A wooden windlass was found nearby giving a rare illustration of how water was drawn from the underground cistern beneath the impluvium.



A flight of wooden stairs (e) led to an apartment on the first floor. Of this small flat, two rooms, lit by windows overlooking the courtyard, retain quite elaborate fourth style decoration.



However, it is the presence of furniture that makes these rooms all the more remarkable - two beds and a cupboard in one room and a bed and a cupboard in the other. The wooden cupboards were full of objects including bronze statuettes of Jupiter, Fortuna, Aesclepius, Diana, Minerva and a pair of Lares with opposite hands held aloft holding drinking horns. Besides, there were more mundane objects including a bronze weight, glass and pottery plates and several glass paste beads.

A second apartment was accessed directly from the street by way of a flight of stairs on the north side of the entrance. This apartment was larger than the first, consisting of five rooms though the rooms to the rear are rather dimly lit. The builder integrated a balcony by moving the entrances to the outer rooms onto the exterior of the house so as a result, the occupiers of the apartment had access to a small cenatio (formal dining room) and a diaeta (day room).

This apartment was similarly decorated and some furniture survived, including a child's bed. Among the other finds were a marble statue base and the lower half of a marble oscillum, a half moon plaque carved on both sides, designed to rotate in the wind.



The House of the Bronze Herma (Ins III, 16) or Casa dell' Erma di Bronzo

A herma, herm or herme is a sculpture with a head, and perhaps a torso, above a plain, usually squared, lower section, on which male genitals may also be carved at the appropriate height. The form originated in Ancient Greece and was later adopted by the Romans.

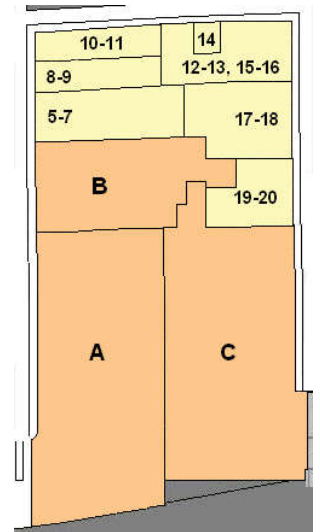
North of the exit from the House of the Inn on Cardo IV, and squeezed in between the House of the Brick Altar and the House of the Opus Craticium, lies the House of the Bronze Herma, a narrow building which can be regarded as a typical example of a small Samnite house. The Tuscan style atrium has a central impluvium, with a renovated corresponding compluvium, and the walls of the atrium are decorated in the third style with large red and black panels framed in light red while the floor is in opus signinum. Interestingly, high on the north wall of the atrium are two small windows which give light to the upper floors of the neighbouring property, the House of the Opus Craticium.



Insula IV

Insula IV lies across Cardo IV from Insula III. Along the Lower Decumanus are several small shops, while at its junction with Cardo V there is the remains of a thermopolium, the equivalent of a modern day cafe/bar where hot and cold food was sold from what was usually an 'L' shaped masonry counter containing terracotta vessels. 8 earthenware jars that would have contained cereals and vegetables are set in the counter. The insula also contained a fullonica (a laundry - fulling consisted of three main phases: soaping, rinsing and finishing), but it is the two large houses along the southern side of the insula that are the most impressive, with magnificent views over the Bay of Naples.

Properties of particular note in this insula are (A) the House of the Mosaic Atrium, (B) the House of the Alcove, and (C) the House of the Deer.



The House of the Mosaic Atrium (Ins IV, 1-2) or Casa dell' Atrio a Mosaico

The House of the Mosaic Atrium lies on the east side of Cardo IV with a southern aspect overlooking the Bay of Naples. The house occupies an area of over 1200 sq.m. much of which, like the adjoining House of the Deer, taken over by a large peristyle garden and a string of richly decorated rooms overlooking the sea. What distinguishes this house from its neighbour is its spectacular atrium.



This is an aristocratic residence built in a scenic position, elegant in both its painted decorations and architectural space. The fauces (a) is decorated in the fourth style and ornamented by a fine black and white mosaic floor of geometric shapes and stylized floral patterns. Two service rooms (d) & (e) open off this entrance passageway; service room (d) also has a flight of stairs to the upper floor.

The fauces opens onto a enormous atrium (b) which, as the name of the house implies, has a beautiful black and white, geometric mosaic floor. The floor is considerably buckled due to the weight of mud and ashes from the eruption but what the undulations also reveal are the lines of the walls of an earlier underlying house.

At the rear of the atrium, in place of the usual tablinum, is a large room (c) of unusual size and form. A series of square pillars on the north and south sides of the room divide it in the pattern of a nave and two side aisles, while above the pillars rises a second storey with clerestory windows reminiscent of the classical basilica layout. Maiuri described this room as a rare example of an *Oceus Aegyptius* or Egyptian dining room based on Vitruvius's description (Book VI, Chapter III), the only known example thus far discovered throughout the Vesuvian area. The sheer scale of the room, however, precludes its use as a dining room and given its position in place of the tablinum, it must have been used as a public reception area, deliberately evoking the public setting of the basilica.



On the south side of the atrium is a door (f) which opens onto the north portico of the large peristyle (g).

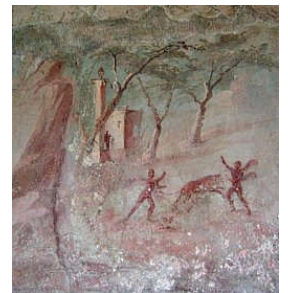
The atrium, rather than being the central hub of the building, is here isolated from the rest of the house, the remainder of the rooms radiating off the peristyle which had a large central garden, in the middle of which was a fountain in a marble lined pool.



The peristyle, which is broad on three sides, narrowing at its southeast corner, has additional rooms along its eastern and southern sides. In the centre of the eastern side is a large exedra (h), which extends out into the garden with a small terrace. The walls of the exedra are elegantly decorated in the fourth style with fantastic architecture set on a vibrant blue background.

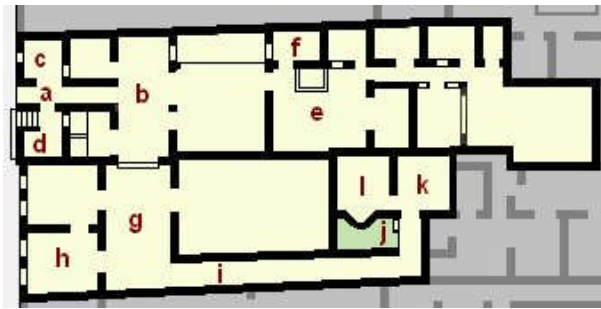
In the middle of each central panel was a mythological scene, the surviving two of which depict the Punishment of Dirce, and Diana and Acteon painted in brown monochrome, a style much favoured in Herculaneum.

Flanking this central exedra are four good sized cubicula each decorated with elegant fourth style frescoes. Leading off the southwest corner of the peristyle are the remains of a flight of stairs (n) which once led to an upper floor. Nearby is the secondary entrance or posticum (m).



In the centre of the south side of the peristyle is the large triclinium (i). Although the walls of the triclinium are substantially complete, they have lost most of their fresco decoration with the exception of the north east corner. The triclinium has a doorway at the southern end of each of its east and west walls which link the room to the adjoining apartments. In the south wall is a wide portal which opens onto the loggia (j). The loggia was decorated with frescoes in the fourth style and had a marble pavement in opus sectile. At either end is a diaerae (day room) (k) and (l), isolated from the rest of the house, but with commanding views over the Bay of Naples to the south.

The House of the Alcove (Ins IV, 3-4) or Casa dell' Alcova



Immediately north of the House of the Mosaic Atrium on Cardo IV is the House of the Alcove. This house is actually two buildings joined together, connected by the stepped entrance between the courts (b) and (g).

As a consequence of this, the house is a mixture of plain and simple rooms combined with some highly decorative ones.

Next to the entrance at No. 4 is a flight of stairs to the upper floor (at No.3). Both entrances are visible, side by side, in the centre of the photograph.

From the entrance on Cardo IV, the fauces (a) leads directly to a small entrance court (b) which is colonnaded on its east side and retains some of its fourth style decoration, especially on its northern wall. Continuing along the axis of the entrance corridor is a second, larger court (e) which gives access to a suite of rooms including a cubiculum (f) which has traces of fine third style decoration.

From the right hand side of the first court (b), two steps lead down to a third court (g) which has no remaining decoration. On the west side of this court are two rooms, the first of which has a round marble table set below two small windows. Adjoining this room to the south is the biclinium (h) with traces of fine third style decoration especially on the upper part of the walls. In the north west corner of the room are the bases of two couches. The room is lit by two windows with wooden frames and iron bars still in situ.



more elaborate with perspective and architectural views. In the south wall of the room is the semi-circular alcove, after which the house was named, with, in the middle, a square window providing light to the room. The gray floor is ornamented by irregular coloured marble insets.



An 'L' shaped corridor leads to two remote rooms which are preceded by a light well (j). The first of the two rooms (k) is plainly decorated in the third style and is lit by a window high on its south wall.

A door at the south end of the west wall leads to room (l) which is decorated in a similar manner to the preceding room but the decoration is slightly



House of the Fullonica (Ins IV, 5-7)

The House of Fullonica dates back to 2nd C B.C. and has two halls, one without impluvium, that during the 1st C BC was used as a fullonica by the construction of two tanks for washing clothes. Atrium (off No.6) at rear with impluvium converted for use as a fuller's basin. Traces of first style decoration. Shops at No.5 and No.7 linked to No.6.

House of the Painted Papyrus (Ins IV, 8-9)

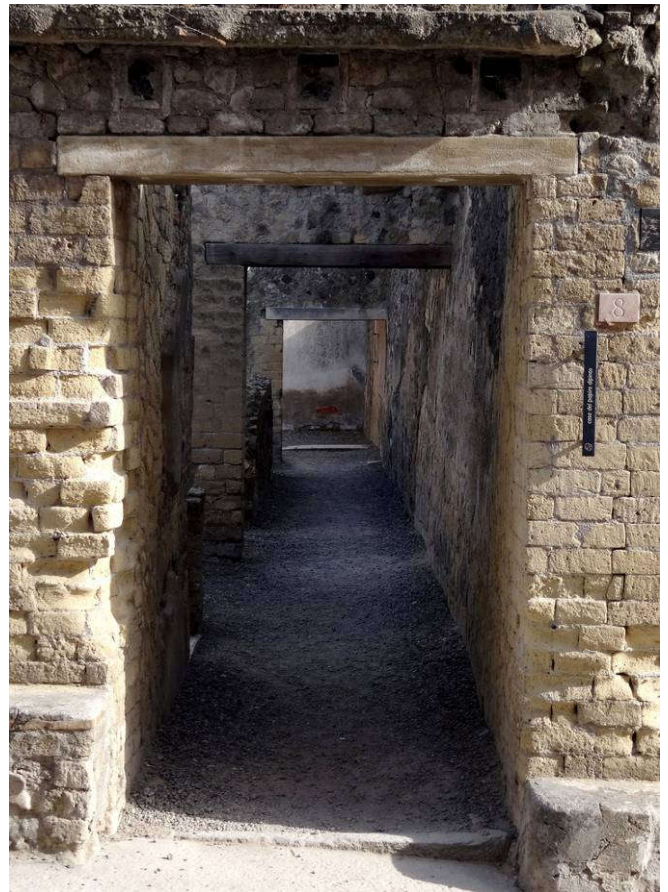
The name of the House of the Painted Papyrus comes from a fresco painted on the front door of the courtyard, depicting a roll of papyrus, bearing the name of a greek poet and two caskets calamariae. A long passage leads from No.8 to the central court with 6 rooms off. Third style decoration in 1 room and court. Stairs up at No.9.

Shop and apartment (Ins IV, 10-11)

Shop at No.10 with room to rear, linked to apartment at No.11 containing 3 rooms. Third style decoration in 1 room. Lararium (shrine to the household gods). Cereal in jars in shop.

Taberna and apartment (Ins IV, 12-13, 15-16)

Shop at No.12. Passage at No.13 (with stairs up) leads to atrium with 6 rooms off. Trace of decoration. Shop at Nos.15-16 with rooms to rear. Linked to No.13.



Taberna Vasaria (Ins IV, 14)

Opening onto Decumanus Inferior the taberna is a single room, with the mezzanine (pergula) used as living quarters. There is no sales counter and the east and west walls have two shelves; in the back is the latrine, closed by a brick partition. Here numerous wine amphorae were found, all of the same type and with an inscription in black Greek characters. It is therefore thought not to have been a 'tavern' but a shop selling amphorae and other terracotta items that were manufactured in great quantities in the many workshops of ancient Roman Campania.

Taberna and apartment (Ins IV, 17-18)

Passage at No.18 (with stairs up) leads to atrium with 10 rooms off. No decoration. Shop at No.17 with room to rear linked to No.18. Pots, pans and walnuts in shop.

House of the Stofa (boiler / stove / furnace) (Ins IV, 19-20)

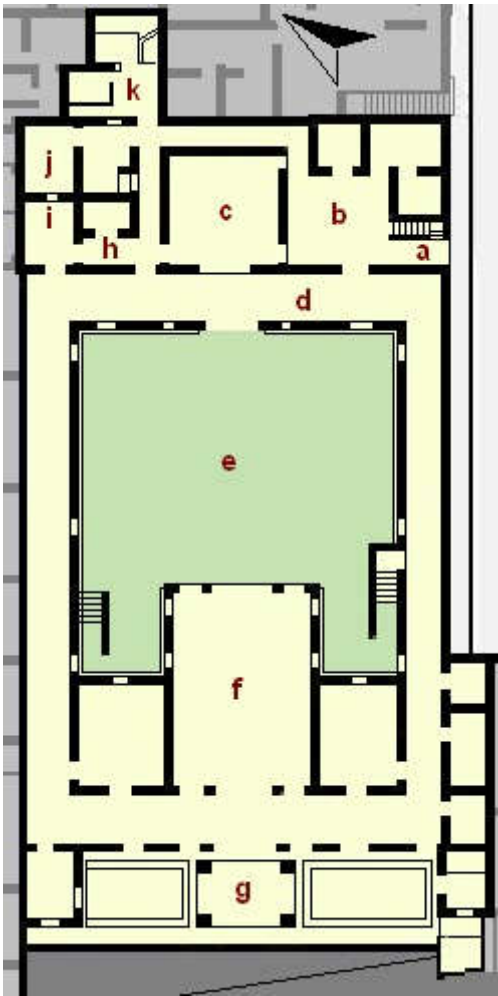
Shop at No.19 with stairs up and passage to small court with 5 rooms off. Largest room has black-ground decoration with polychrome marble floor. Stairs up at No.20.

The House of the Deer (Ins IV, 21) or Casa del Cervi



The House of the Deer opens off the west side of Cardo V. The house is one of the most luxurious waterfront dwellings so far discovered in Herculaneum and is believed to have belonged to Q. Granius Verus by virtue of the find of a loaf of bread bearing the stamp of Celer, a slave of Q. Granius Verus who was freed shortly before the eruption in 79 AD.

The House of the Deer owes its name to the discovery, in the garden, of round marble tables and statues of two deer attacked by dogs, the Satyr with a wineskin, and a drunken Hercules (originals now in the Antiquarium).



Entering the house, built around the time of Claudius, from Cardo V, through the fauces (a), in stark contrast to the neighbouring House of the Mosaic Atrium, the small, square atrium (b) is rather unprepossessing. Instead of being the focus of the house, the atrium merely acts as a gateway to the house, offering the visitor only a brief glimpse of the magnificent rooms that lie beyond. The whole visual drama of the house lies in the opposite axis that runs from the triclinium (c) through the peristyle (e) and the tablinum (f) to the gazebo set in the centre of the panoramic terrace overlooking the Bay of Naples to the south.



A flight of stairs off the atrium leads up to a second floor gallery which gave access to a series of upper floor servants' rooms. In the south-west corner, a doorway leads to the large triclinium (c) which is decorated in the fourth style, with a geometric mosaic floor of polychrome marble. As mentioned previously the main axis of the house runs from the triclinium down to the pergola and terrace, providing a dramatic view for the assembled diners.

Beyond the triclinium, in the north west corner of the house, are a series of small service rooms.



The atrium and triclinium both open onto the cryptoporticus (d), which encloses the central garden (e). A cryptoporticus is a ground-level or semi-subterranean vaulted corridor usually lit by openings in the vault. Its primary purpose is normally to buttress an adjacent structure, and secondly to provide a shady place to walk or store goods. Here it is decorated in the fourth style in a range of colours with architectural motifs and features more than sixty scenic panels. The panels (partly removed in the 18th C) represent scenes with tiny cupids, still-lives and various architectural landscapes. The cryptoporticus has a fine black and white mosaic floor and is lit by a series of rectangular windows overlooking the garden.



The tablinum (f) (sitting room) opens off the southern side of the cryptoporticus. This enormous room, flanked by two smaller rooms, has lost its roof and virtually all of its fourth style decoration.



On the garden side the walls of the cryptoporticus were painted red and white. The main architectural feature on the north side of the garden area is the portal leading to and from the triclinium. The pediment of this grand portal is ornamented with a fine mosaic of Oceanus flanked by several cupids riding sea creatures.



The north side of the tablinum extended out into the garden area with large side windows and a wide central portal. The south side of the room was open over most of its width to the cryptoporticus and the panoramic terrace beyond. The terrace, built out over the town wall, commanded magnificent views over the Bay of Naples to the south. In the centre of the terrace is a gazebo whose roof was supported by four pillars composed of opus vittatum mixtum, alternating rows of brick and tufa blocks, stuccoed and painted red and white.



Insula V

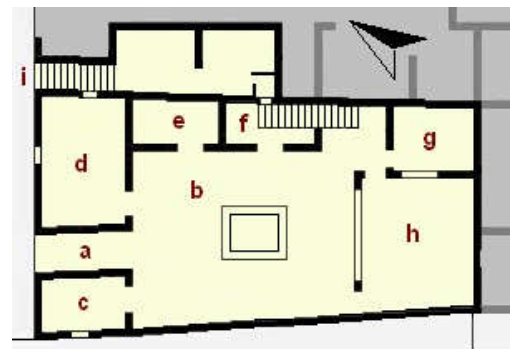
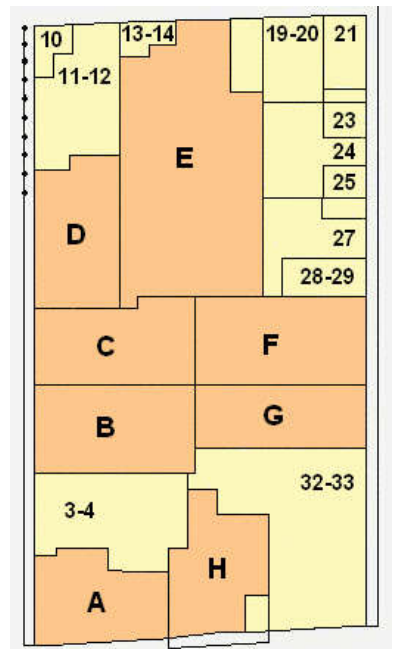
Insula V lies to the north of Insula IV across the Lower Decumanus, stretching as far as Decumanus Maximus where it faces the Forum. It is bound to the west and east by Cardo IV and Cardo V respectively.

Featured houses in the insula include the Samnite House (A), the House of the Great Portal (H), the House of the Corinthian Atrium (F), the House of the Bicentenary (E), the House of the Beautiful Courtyard (D), the House of the Neptune Mosaic (C), the House of the Carbonised Furniture (B) and the House of the Wooden Sacellum (G). There are four other houses in the insula - the House of the Tailor, the House of Apollo the Citharist and two as yet unnamed properties.

Samnite House (Ins V, 1-2) or Casa Samnitica

The Samnite House, which dates from the 2ndC BC, is one of the oldest buildings so far discovered in Herculaneum. The house originally occupied all of the southern part of Insula V and included a three sided peristyle, perhaps with a hortus (garden), which once stood on the site of the later House of the Great Portal. During the course of the first century AD the house was sub-divided, the upper floor being rented out with its own entrance at door No.2 (i).

It also appears that the eastern section of the property, including the area around the peristyle, was sold off, possibly for financial reasons. This re-arrangement allowed a separate residential property, the House of the Great Portal, to be built on the site of the original peristyle court. However, it left the remainder of the house as a huge atrium with only a few small rooms ranged round it.



The short entrance fauces (a) is decorated with frescoes in the first style imitating polychrome marble while the surrounding portal has tufa columns with Corinthian capitals both internally and externally. The fauces has a fine dark red and white mosaic floor in a geometric pattern.

The fauces opens onto an impressive atrium (b) which is decorated in the fourth style, with a central marble impluvium. The atrium has a gallery with ionic columns closed off with a stucco lined tracery screen on three sides while it is left open to the east. When the house was sub-divided, the tracery screen was partially filled in so that the upper level could be partitioned off as a separate apartment. It should be noted that much of the gallery was reconstructed by Amedeo Maiuri which, while the reconstruction is not actually wrong, gives an impression of authenticity that is largely spurious.



The large living room (d) on the north side of the entrance has lost most of its decoration with the exception of a patch of red on its east wall. The room, which has a mosaic floor with a black and white geometric pattern, is lit by a small window in its west wall. The adjoining cubiculum (e) has similarly lost most of its fresco decoration. In the north west corner of the room the wall has been recessed to accommodate a bed.

In the middle of the north side of the atrium a doorway opens onto a small room (f) which gave access to the service area and to the upper floor by way of a steep staircase. The living room (g), decorated in the fourth

style, receives its light by way of a large window in the dividing wall between it and the adjoining tablinum (h). At the rear off the atrium, the tablinum is also decorated in the fourth style and the floor is decorated in black and white mosaic with a rosette of diamond shapes around a round copper tile.



A corridor on the south side of the tablinum once led to the peristyle area at the back of the house, which consisted of a colonnade and inner court.

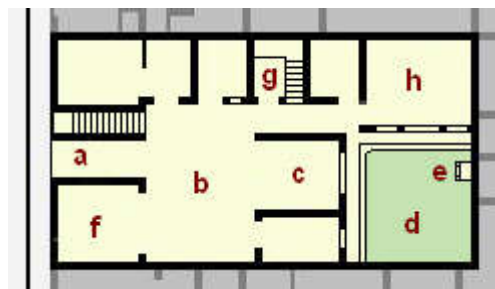
The elegant decoration of the ground floor is in stark contrast to that found on the upper floor which is entered at door No.2. Several objects which came to light during the excavations are on display, including parts of a statuette of Venus and some dog-shaped table legs.

House of the Tailor (Ins V, 3-4)

Apartment at No.3 with 7 rooms and peristyle. Shop at No.4 with 4 additional rooms. Loom frame and weights in peristyle. Undecorated.

House of the Carbonised Furniture (Ins V, 5) or Casa del Mobilio Carbonizzato

The House of the Carbonised Furniture is, like the neighbouring Samnite House, one of the oldest buildings in Herculaneum. Renovated in the Claudian era, the house is decorated in a mixture of the third and fourth style.



The fauces (a) opens off the east side of Cardo IV, leading directly to the atrium (b) which is without an impluvium. The atrium, which has rooms off all but its southern side, was decorated in the third style, but little remains of this decoration save a few plaster remnants. The atrium was styled in much the same manner as the Samnite House, with an upper gallery of columns providing a light and airy feel to the room.

The tablinum (c) is decorated in the third style and has a fine white mosaic floor with a thin black border. In the centre of the floor is a polychrome square in opus sectile.



The tablinum overlooks a small rectangular garden court (d) to the east. The courtyard itself contains an impluvium for collecting rainwater and a temple style lararium (e) adorned with stucco reliefs and paintings with a tympanum supported on two side columns.

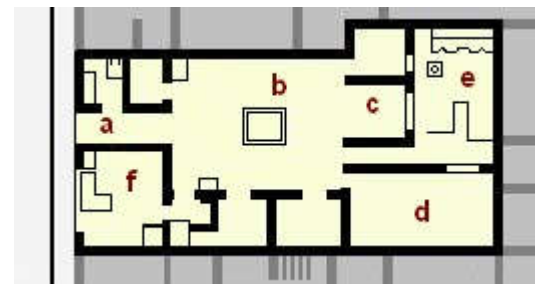
The living room (f) is decorated with fourth style frescoes depicting architectural themes framing pictures of a rooster and a still life (pictured overleaf).



The courtyard at the rear of the tablinum also acts as a light source for the living room (h), which is lit by three windows and decorated in the fourth style with red panels containing medallions and small mythological scenes above a lower black frieze. In this room is displayed the carbonised remains of a dining couch.

Two flights of stairs lead to the upper floor - one next to the entrance and one in the kitchen area (g).

House of the Neptune Mosaic (Ins V, 6-7) or Casa di Nettuno e Amfitrite



The house, also known as the House of Neptune and Amphitrite, lies to the north of the House of the Carbonised Furniture on Cardo IV. The owner of the house also owned the connecting wine shop (f) at No.6, which opens directly onto the street. The shop, in the centre of the photograph (the entrance to the house is on the left), has survived almost intact and is the best preserved example of a shop in the region.

The carbonised wooden fittings are still in place. There are shelves for amphorae, the balustrade of the balcony and, behind the counter, a partition with two grilles.



The shop, fitted with meticulous care, still has the wares on the counter and amphorae lined up on a shelf. Broad beans and chick peas were found in the large jars set in the masonry of the counter.

The house has the standard layout of fauces, atrium, tablinum and garden. The fauces (a) opens off the east side of Cardo IV and leads directly to a large atrium (b), which has a marble lined impluvium at its centre. The atrium, which has rooms off all but its northern side, has lost most of its fourth style decoration, with only a few plaster remnants to hint at what must have been. At the rear of the atrium is a relatively small tablinum where some of the fourth style decoration still survives and the room has a fine white mosaic floor bordered with a simple black band. The tablinum overlooks a beautifully decorated court to the rear with a nymphaeum and mosaic decoration on the walls. In the north west corner of the atrium is what is left of the household lararium, in which were found two marble slabs painted with red lines, one of which bore the artist's signature: *Alexander of Athens painted this*.

A short passageway (andron) to the right of the tablinum leads to the garden court (e). In the centre of the court is a summer triclinium (dining area), veneered with marble.



On the far end wall of the court the nymphaeum is surmounted by the head of Silenus accompanied by two marble theatrical masks.

The side and central niches of the nymphaeum are decorated with geometric and floral motifs and hunting scenes with dogs and deer composed of glass paste mosaics. The niche borders and ends are decorated with shell and mother of pearl designs.

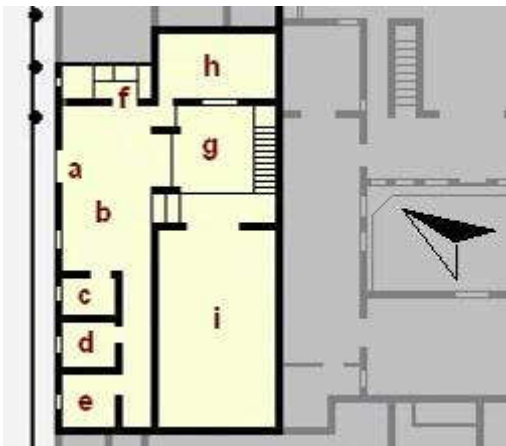


In the centre of the back wall is the mosaic after which the house is named showing Neptune and Amphitrite surrounded by a decorative motif. In the legend, Neptune saw Amphitrite dancing with the Nereids on the island of Naxos, carried her off, and married her.

The south side of the court opens onto the largest room of the house, the triclinium (d) which was also accessed off the south east corner of the atrium. The triclinium has lost much of its fourth style decoration.

The upstairs rooms (now open to the street as the front wall collapsed during the earthquakes that accompanied the eruption) were decorated in the fourth style and furnished with a bronze bed and marble table. They were probably the owner's private quarters.

House of the Beautiful Courtyard (Ins V, 8) or Casa del Bel Cortile



The House of the Beautiful Courtyard lies on the east side of Cardo IV. The house has a rather unusual layout, more akin to an Italian medieval building than one belonging to the first century AD.



The entrance (a) opens off an elevated section of footpath directly onto a long, low ceilinged room (b) which serves both as a vestibule and atrium. The room retains some of its fourth style decoration which consisted of a red central zone below a white upper zone decorated with red geometric patterns.

Off it are three small cubicula ((c), (d) and (e)) with simple fourth style decoration.

On the north side of the vestibule cum atrium is a small kitchen area (f) which has an extremely low doorway while, facing the entrance, is the interior courtyard (g) after which the house was named.



The courtyard is raised above the level of the vestibule and connects to the large tablinum (i) to the south. This interior courtyard also contains a wide masonry staircase, resembling, with its parapet and landing, typical examples of medieval civic architecture.

The four upstairs rooms connect via the staircase landing and by a wooden balcony which protruded from the front of the house to overlook Cardo IV. In these rooms are several frescoes painted in the fourth style.



The tablinum to the south of the courtyard is a large rectangular room with an intricate mosaic floor. The room, which occupies over a quarter of the entire ground floor area, is decorated in the fourth style in reds and yellows. Against the west wall is a display case with some human remains.

On the north side of the courtyard is a reasonably sized oecus (h) (living room), also decorated in the fourth style with red panels separated by architectural themes and floating figures on a white ground.

House of Apollo the Citharist (Ins V, 9-12)

House at No.11 has atrium, tablinum and 2 additional reception rooms, decorated in fourth style throughout. 2 service rooms. Stairs up at entrance. Shop at Nos.9-10 with back room. Undecorated. Storage containers. Shop at No.12 with fourth style decoration linked to atrium.

Shop (Ins V, 13-14)

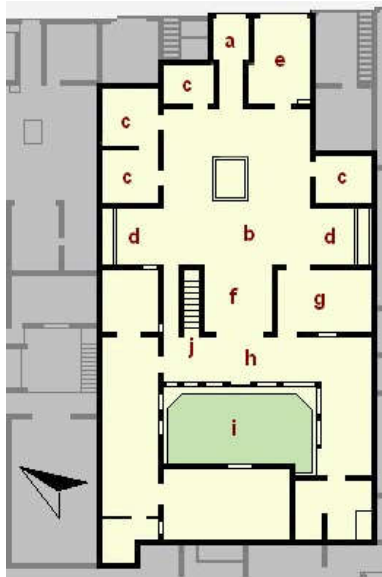
Shop at No.13 is undecorated. Linked to No.14. Apartment at No.14 with stairs up which extends over No.15. 5 rooms with fourth style decoration and lararium painting at top of stairs.

House of the Bicentenary (Ins V, 15-16) or Casa del Bicentenario

In the London Times article of July 14, 2004, "Buried Jewel of Ancient Rome", Professor Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, then Director of the British School at Rome, said, of Herculaneum in general, that '.. the place is in an appalling state. Exquisite buildings are crumbling before our eyes, mosaics are being destroyed by damp and weeds and many of the remains are covered in pigeon droppings'. In particular he said that he had been particularly dismayed by the state of disrepair of two key landmark buildings, one of which was the House of the Bicentenary (the other was the House of the Mosaic Atrium). He continued to say that '.. the House of the Bicentenary has hundreds of tiles missing from its roof. When it rains, water just cascades through it into the entrance hall. It makes me weep... '.

Since the article, the Herculaneum Conservation Project has made substantial progress in the stabilisation of the excavations. The house was discovered by Amadeo Maiuri, and named after the bicentennial celebrations being held that year to commemorate the beginning of the excavation of Herculaneum.

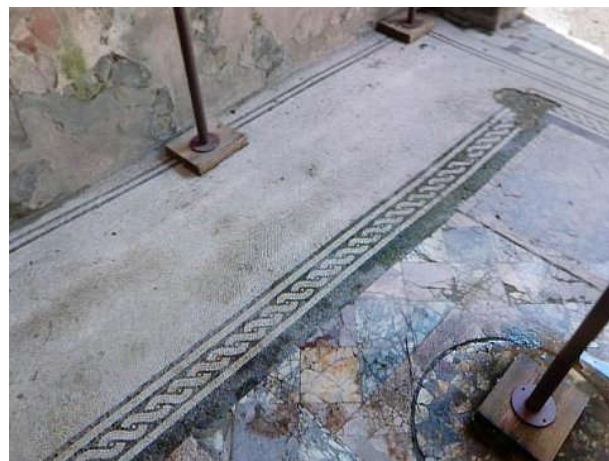
The house, which belonged to Gaius Petronius Stephanus, was one of the finest private houses in Herculaneum. The entrance to the house is on the south side of the Decumanus Maximus, situated between shops.



The fauces (a) leads to a large square atrium with a marble lined impluvium and rooms off all four sides. The fourth style frescoes are of architectural and animal motifs on a red ground with an upper zone, separated by a broad light red band, featuring geometric designs in red on white. Ranged round the atrium are several cubicula (c), one of which was screened off by a simple wooden partition. The atrium also gives direct access to the rear room of shop (e) and to a large triclinium (g).

At the far end of the atrium is the tablinum (f), flanked by lateral alcoves (d). The tablinum is decorated in the fourth style with three large red panels surmounted by a frieze of tiny cupids on the

facing east and west walls. The central panel of each wall contains a mythological scene, one of Daedalus and Pasiphae and the other of Venus and Mars.



The tablinum has a fine mosaic floor in opus tessellatum: a geometric pattern in black and white, with a central panel in opus sectile.

To the south of the tablinum is a peristyle (h), which is colonnaded on two sides with a central garden (i). A staircase (j) leads from the north west corner of the peristyle to a more modest second floor, which was probably rented out as apartments.

A white stucco panel with a cruciform cavity was discovered on the far wall of an one of these upstairs room. Maiuri proposed that it was intended to hold a wooden cross, which would have made it the oldest known Christian symbol. Below it was a low, wooden cupboard, probably used as a lararium. A more recent interpretation suggests that the cavity was simply used to support a wooden tablet.

A number of papyrus records were found in the house revealing a lengthy legal battle concerning the claims of a girl, Justa, who had been born within the household. The girl claimed to be a freedwoman, but this was contested by the widow of Stephanus, Calatoria. The claims were made in 75-76 AD and judgement had still not been given by the time of the eruption.

Shop at No.16 with back room and stairs up to living area of 2 decorated rooms on upper floor.

Shop (Ins V, 17-18)

Shop at No.17 with back room, both with fourth style decoration. Stairs up at No.18 to apartment. 3 rooms and balcony, all in the fourth style.

Shops and apartment (Ins V, 19-20, 21-22)

Shops at Nos.19-20 with interconnecting back rooms. Shop at No.21 with 2 back rooms and latrine. Amphorae and containers in shop. Stairs up at No.22 to apartment above. 4 rooms, with evidence of fourth style decoration.

Shops (Ins V, 23, 25, 26, 32, 34)

Single room. Undecorated.

Unnamed house (Ins V, 24)

Atrium. 6 rooms. No surviving decoration. Possibly linked to properties either side.

Taberna with apartment (Ins V, 27)

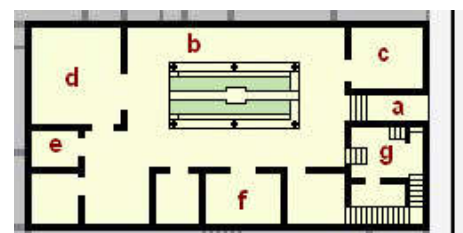
Circulation space with 4 rooms. Undecorated.

Taberna (Ins V, 28-29)

Shop at No.28 with back room. Undecorated. Stairs up at No.29 to apartment, probably extending above Nos.26-28.

House of the Corinthian Atrium (Ins V, 30) or Casa dell' Atrio Corinzio

The House of the Corinthian Atrium lies about midway along Insula V on the west side of Cardo IV. The fauces (a) opens onto the 'Corinthian Atrium' (b), a small peristyle and the only circulation space in the house. The peristyle consists of six tufa columns covered with red and white stucco, surmounted by Corinthian capitals.



The peristyle, which has rooms off all but its northern side, is decorated in the fourth style with red and black panels above a lower black frieze. The upper zone is decorated with architectural motifs on a white ground. In the centre of the peristyle is a small marble cruciform fountain.

In the north west corner of the peristyle is the tablinum (d) which, like the rest of the house, is decorated in the fourth style. Immediately to the south of the tablinum is a small cubiculum (e), decorated with orange panels bordered in red. The central panel of each wall contains a naval scene.

The living room (f) on the south side of the peristyle is decorated with orange and blue panels separated by fantastic illusionary architecture. The room has a partly vaulted ceiling.

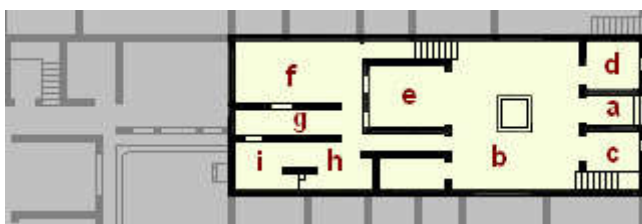
To the north of the entrance is a cubiculum (c) which is decorated with orange panels separated by columns above a lower red decorative frieze. The upper zone has a white background and features architectural themes. This room has a geometric mosaic floor in black and white with a central polychrome square.



The kitchen (g) off the south east corner of the peristyle has a flight of stairs to the upper floor.

House of the Wooden Sacellum (Ins V, 31) or Casa del tramezzo di legno

Immediately north of the House of the Great Portal on Cardo IV is the House of the Wooden Sacellum, named after a an artifact found in the house. The object consisted of a temple style sacellum on top of a base cabinet. The upper sacellum held statuettes of the owner's household gods, while the lower cabinet contained a trove of everyday objects - perfume bottles, buttons, even a dish of garlic.



The fauces (a) which opens off the west side of Cardo IV leads to a square atrium (b) with a central impluvium and two flights of stairs up. The stairs led to two separate upper floors, one above the rooms on the street and one above the rooms behind the atrium. In the later area there was a cenaculum or upstairs dining room.

The atrium has rooms off only its east and west sides. Like many houses in Herculaneum the House of the Wooden Sacellum was penetrated by the Bourbon tunnels - a recent repair of the damage caused by one such tunnel is visible in the atrium wall. The service room (c) has a niche under the stairs and is plainly decorated. The room (d) on the opposite side of the fauces is a cubiculum with simple decoration and a partly vaulted ceiling.

In the centre of the west wall is the tablinum (e). The layout of the front of the house is fairly standard with the fauces opening onto the atrium and tablinum. However the area behind the tablinum is less traditional, the result of an alteration to the rear of the house. Nevertheless in this part of the house there is a coherence both in the layout and the decoration. The decoration is quite simple everywhere except for the large oecus (f) and the room located above rooms (h) and (i). Both these rooms exhibit a more elaborate panel decoration. Elsewhere in the house the walls are plainly plastered, or simply decorated with panels in red, white or black all of which are in the first or third style.

The central corridor (g) served to illuminate and ventilate the ground and first floor. Under the stairs in the small storeroom off oecus (f) was found a quantity of amphorae.

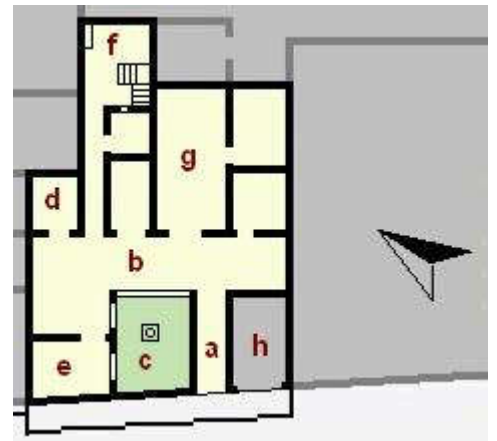
House with garden plot (Ins V, 33)

Circulation space with 6 rooms. Ruinous, with evidence of second style decoration in 1 room.

House of the Great Portal (Ins V, 35) or Casa del Gran Portale

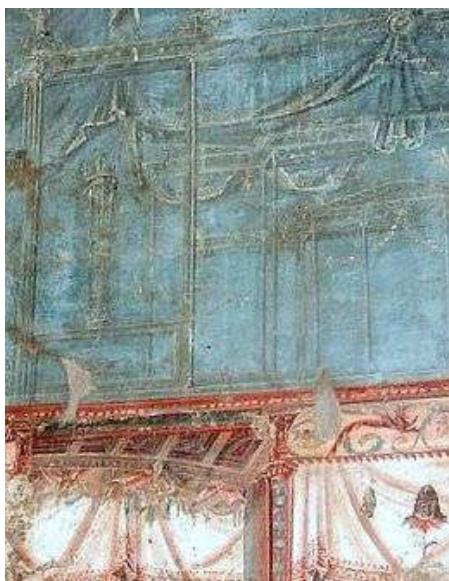


The house of the Great Portal was built on the site of the old peristyle of the neighbouring Samnite House. The name refers to its entrance, which consists of brick demi-columns, surmounted by Corinthian capitals carved with winged Victories. A footpath was later added along the length of the facade delineating the extent of the property, indicating that it did not include the insula's south east corner.



The fauces (a) opens off the north side of the Lower Decumanus onto a vestibule (b). Because of its history, the house has an unusual layout: in the absence of an atrium, the rooms radiate off an 'L' shaped vestibule which is lit by the remodelled court (c).

In building the house, the old peristyle court of the original Samnite House appears to have been reduced in size while new residential quarters and a kitchen wing were added to the north. The vestibule has lost much of its original fourth style decoration, except on its west side where the remaining structure of the building has protected it from the elements. The central panel of the west wall contains a fine scene of butterflies with a bird pecking at some cherries.



Two cubicula (d) and (e) open off this corner of the vestibule. The larger southern room (e) is decorated in the fourth style with blue panels framed in red featuring architectural themes above a lower red and blue frieze. Round the walls run two beautifully detailed decorative bands.



The kitchen area (f) including a latrine under the stairs, is reached off the north side of the vestibule. A large oecus (g) can also be found on this side of the vestibule, again decorated in the fourth style with red panels separated by columns above a lower black frieze. The upper zone

consists of geometric motifs on a white ground. The central panel of the rear wall contains a Dionysian scene.

Like many properties, the house had a shop (h) opening onto the street. It was probably rented out.



Insula VI

Insula VI stretches northwards from the Lower Decumanus to the Decumanus Maximus, bounded to west and east by Cardos III and IV respectively. Like the other insulae in Herculaneum, Insula VI is divided in two from east to west, then subdivided into individual properties. This block contains several important buildings including the Central Thermae (A) which occupies the southern half of the insula, the House of the Black Hall (B), the House of the Tuscan Colonnade (C), the College of the Augustales (D) and the House of the Double Atrium (E).

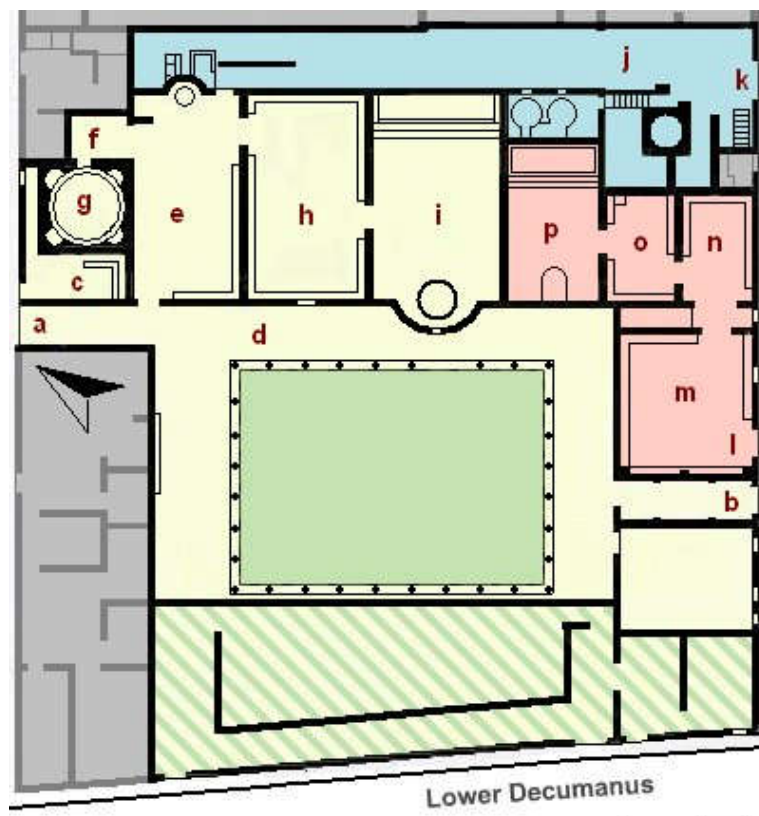
Central Thermae (Ins VI, 1,4-10) or Terme Centrali

In Pompeian and Herculanean society, leisure activities were an important component of everyday life. Leisure activities entertained, occupied and created a purpose in life, illustrated by an anonymous Pompeian graffito artist – *"Baths, wine and sex corrupt our bodies, but make our lives worth living"*

Of all the leisure activities in Pompeii and Herculaneum, bathing was both the most revolutionary and extravagant in nature. Though stemming from Greek origins, Baths, or Thermae, were revolutionised by the Romans, particularly in Pompeii and Herculaneum. The reason for this is stated assuredly by Joseph Deiss; "No people in European history were as clean as the Romans for no other people went to the lengths to provide mass bathing facilities...we can only marvel at their costly and elegant bathing establishments". Many self cleaning implements have been discovered in Pompeii, such as tweezers, scoops, razors and strigils. The intricacy of bathing complexes meant they could include a hot bath (caldarium), warm bath (tepidarium), cold bath (frigidarium), sweat room (laconium), male and female changing room (apodyterium) with partitioned shelves for depositing togas and a low podium to use as seating space with ingenious in-built steam vents, swimming pool (natatio) and exercise area (palaestra). In the women's baths there are more attractive mosaics - particularly a spectacular rendition of Neptune – but it would seem, no frigidarium, and a different heating system in the tepidarium (no hot air piped through or under, only braziers). The aristocracy recognised the importance of the Baths to the people, so they held 'free-entry' days and funded Bath construction. The existence of change rooms and bath rooms for both genders in the Suburban and Central Baths illustrates the fact that both men and women could attend the baths, but separately, belying stories of Roman licentiousness.

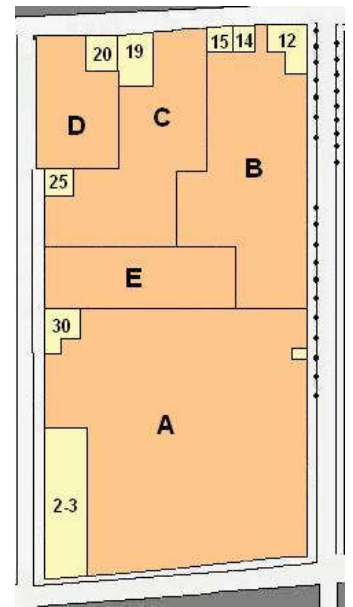
A key Roman innovation in Baths was the addition of 'central heating' beneath the floors, known as hypocausts. Tile stacks supported Bath floors, under which a furnace burned, to heat up the room.

Apart from bathing, one could exercise in the complementary Palaestra, where ball games such as pila and trigon were played, along with other sports. Nowhere else is the Hellenistic cultural influence more obvious



than in the presence of Palaestrae – "a public place for training or exercise in wrestling or athletics". The Palaestra has its origins in the Greek Gymnasia, a complex for exercise and training. The main Palaestra at Herculaneum is situated in the north-east corner, occupying an entire insulae, or block. It consists of a large, open space for exercise, and a central cross-shaped swimming pool. Palaestrae were places for recreating and socialising, as well as keeping physically fit, which according to Archaeology of the Roman Empire was "regarded as of great importance in the ancient world".

The Central Baths, located in 1873 and fully uncovered in 1931, have the typical division into men's and women's sectors. This facility, originally fed by a large well, was built in the late 1st C BC. The men's baths had two entrances, (a) and (b), both opening onto the palaestra (d) which served not only as a recreational area, but also as a meeting place and an open-air lounge. (The hatched area on the plan to the south may or may not have been part of the complex).



Men's Baths

The entrance (a) to the men's section is in Cardo III and just to the north are the men's latrines (c) which consisted of an 'L' shaped channel drain fed by the continuous inflow of water from the nearby frigidarium (g).

Next to the latrine is a long narrow room, lit by a small window that Maiuri identified as the site for the doorkeeper of the spa. He had the task of monitoring entry and checking the passes required for admission.

A corridor leads to the apodyterium (dressing room) (e), which has a vaulted ceiling and paved floor. On the north wall is a small arched apse, with some remaining traces of decoration, containing a labrum (basin), while in the north-west corner are the remains of a rectangular tank. Both were used for washing prior to entering the inner rooms of the baths.



On the west wall of the apodyterium is the entrance to the frigidarium (g), a circular room with a domed ceiling, preceded by a small vestibule (f). The frigidarium was the last room involved in the bathing process, a cold pool to close the pores after bathing in the hot caldarium. Directly from the entrance two steps lead down to the plunge pool, which has a diameter of 4.1m and is about 1m deep. The frigidarium is decorated in the fourth style.

The tepidarium (h) is accessed off the east side of the apodyterium. The tepidarium, 12m long by 6m wide has a vaulted ceiling decorated with stucco while the floor has a fine mosaic depicting a Triton (sea god) surrounded by dolphins.

The room is lit by a window at the top of the south wall and on all four sides there are benches above which are stalls for the bathers' clothing and perhaps bathing goods such as oils and unctions. The tepidarium was heated by means of hot air beneath the floor and in ducts in the walls.



The caldarium (i) is entered by way of a small door located near the centre of the east wall of the tepidarium. The room, measuring 12.5m by 6.3m, has not fared as well as the preceding rooms, a large portion of the ceiling having collapsed. The caldarium was lit by a window on its southern side above an apse and on the opposite side of the room is the large rectangular tank for hot bathing. In this room, the yellow wall decoration was enhanced by a marble plinth, which covered the perimeter of the room. The room had a mosaic floor but this is now sadly lost.

Women's Baths

The women's baths, although smaller and less elaborate, have survived in even better condition than the men's. Preceded by a waiting room which has its own entrance (l) on Cardo IV, these baths consist of an apodyterium (m) decorated in red and white with an elegant marine mosaic floor, a tepidarium (n) again decorated in red and white with a mosaic floor of meanders and squares,



and finally a caldarium (o) with vaulted ceiling, two sumptuous seats, one of white marble, the other dark red, a rectangular basin and a circular labrum.



Behind these rooms is the service area (j) (with its own entrance (k) on Cardo IV) with the heating furnace and the well, which drew water from 8.25 m deep.

To the south the bath complex is connected to the palaestra, an outdoor courtyard surrounded by porticos, with brick Ionic columns covered with stuccoes.

2-3 Hospitium Property of indeterminate use. Ruinous state. Plaster remnants.

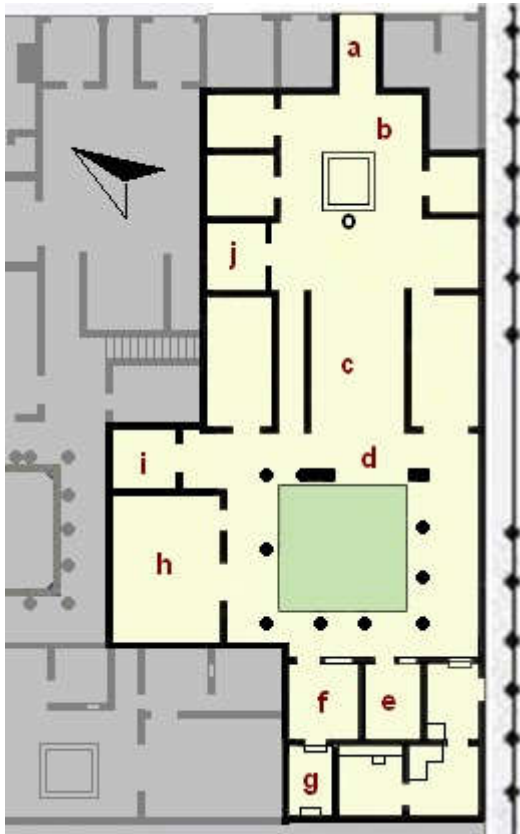
12 Shop Undecorated blacksmith shop with back room and stairs up. Smelting crucible, lead ingots, sections of piping, a bronze candelabrum, and a statuette in shop.



House of the Black Hall (Casa del Salone Nero) (Ins VI, 11,13)

The House of the Black Hall is one of Herculaneum's more luxurious mansions. It is situated at the junction of Cardo IV with the Decumanus Maximus. The house has a monumental entrance (in the left of the picture) which still retains the carbonised remains of the doorposts and lintel. The house follows the sequence vestibule, atrium, tablinum, peristyle: the latter has a black mosaic floor and columns arranged so that the garden could be seen from the rooms. The fauces (a) which shows a few traces of second style decoration, opens onto a rectangular atrium (b). In the centre of the atrium is a marble lined impluvium and a puteal with a fluted shaft made from a single block of white limestone. The walls of the atrium, built in opus incertum, are devoid of any decoration except for a few faded plaster remnants.

On the west side of the atrium are two cubicula and a kitchen (j) while on the east side are a third cubiculum and an ala. At the rear of the atrium is a large tablinum (c) (in the centre of photograph below) measuring 7.7m by 5.1m.



The atrium and its surrounding rooms, as well as the remaining rooms on the east side of the property are all in a very poor state. Of all the rooms round the atrium, the tablinum has survived best. The walls of the tablinum are in opus incertum with frames made of square blocks of tufa, with fourth style decoration.

The tablinum opens directly onto a square peristyle (d) to the south. The two diaetae (living rooms) (e & f) are painted in a sophisticated 'fourth style' and both have partly vaulted ceilings. On the south side of room (f) a door leads down to a small open area (g) which contains a temple style lararium, which has lost all its original stucco decoration. Opening off the west side of the peristyle is the large 'black hall' (h) after which the house was named. The decoration is again in the fourth style and consists of black central panels framed by columns flanked by black side panels containing architectural motifs. The room has a vaulted ceiling decorated with geometric patterns on a black background.



In the 'black room', with its white mosaic floor, excavators found a marble table and a prized wooden lararium (aedicula), with marble capitals (now at the Antiquarium).

On a half column of the peristyle near the tablinum, was graffiti listing the price (11 as) for purging a cesspool: exemta ste(14r)cora a(ssibus) XI.

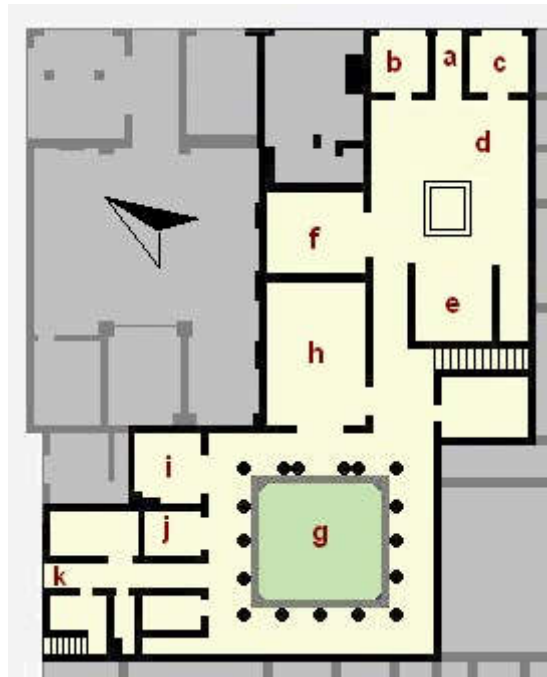
In an upper floor room, overlooking the peristyle, were found 20 wax tablets bearing the name of L. Venidius Ennychus as well as a number of texts concerning his eligibility for public office. He may or may not have been the owner as the upper floor could have been rented out.

On the right hand side of the entrance is a shop sign for the adjoining property (14).

14 Shop Undecorated single room with stairs up. Exterior decoration displaying price of drinks.

15 Shop Undecorated single room with stairs up.

House of the Tuscan Colonnade (Casa del Colonnato Tuscanico) (Ins VI, 16-18, 26-27)

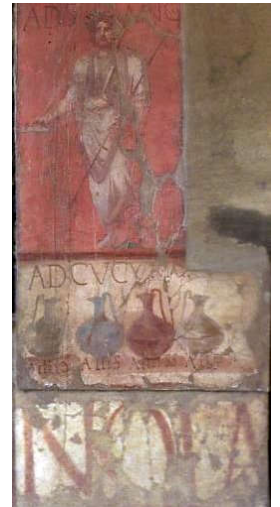


Nos.16 (c) and 18 (b) are shops linked with the atrium (d). Posticum at No.26. Stairs up at No.27.

The House of the Tuscan Colonnade, situated on the Decumanus Maximus, is a fine patrician villa that was built during the Samnite period. Originally consisting of a suite of rooms ranged round a central atrium (d), it was considerably extended in the early years of the 1st C AD when additional ground was acquired by merging with a second house with an entrance (k) on Cardo III. The space gained allowed the building of the Tuscan colonnade and garden (g).

The house was again modified after the earthquake of AD62, when two of its street facing rooms (b & c) on the Decumanus Maximus were turned into shops.

The shop (b) on the west side of the entrance to the house has not survived well and is now in very poor condition. However shop (c) (pictured) has fared much better and retains much of its third style decoration.



The fauces (a), which has little surviving decoration, opens onto a fairly square atrium (d) with a central, marble lined impluvium but the walls are in a rather distressed condition, having lost all but a few traces of their original fourth style decoration. At the rear of the atrium is the tablinum (e) which appears to have been redecorated in the fourth style after the earthquake of AD62.

On the east side of the atrium is an oecus (f), the walls decorated in third style, still holding two paintings, depicting a seated Maenad preceded and Pan conversing with two women, respectively. Between the tablinum and oecus, a corridor leads through to the peristyle (g) around which runs the Tuscan order colonnade after which the building was named.





On the north side of the peristyle is the triclinium (h). This large room is decorated in the fourth style in a very similar manner to oecus (f). The decoration is preserved only moderately on the east wall, while on the north wall the upper zone is virtually intact.

On the west side of the peristyle are three cubicula, two of which (i & j) are decorated in the late third style with fine black and white mosaic floors. The decoration in cubiculum (i) consists of a mix of elements including niches, chandeliers, patterned bands, canteens and winged beasts all set on a white ground above a lower purple decorated frieze.



A flight of stairs off the north east corner of the peristyle originally led to the upper floor where a small treasure in gold coins (to the value of 1400 sesterces) and a bronze seal came to light during the excavations.

When the two houses were combined the entrance to the lesser of the two properties on Cardo III was retained, latterly acting as a posticum or secondary entrance to the enlarged house. The corridor from this entrance (pictured opposite) led straight to the peristyle and also gave access to the service areas north and south.



19 Shop Undecorated single room. Storage jars.

20 Shop Undecorated single room.

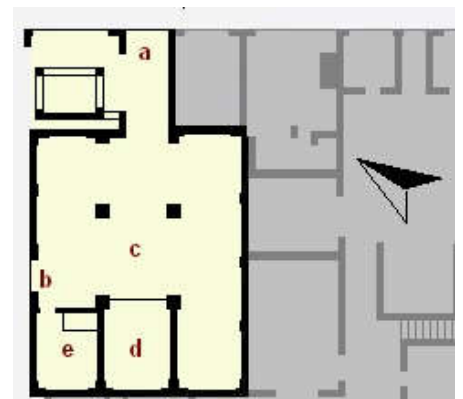
College of the Augustales (Collegio degli Augustali) (Ins VI, 21-24)

The College of the Augustales lies at the corner of Cardo III where it intersects with Herculaneum's main street, the Decumanus Maximus. It is thought that the building was a centre of the cult of the Emperor Augustus and the headquarters of the Collegium Augustalium (or possibly even the local curia).

For the liberta (freed slaves), becoming Augustals meant entering into the dynamics of upward mobility. Their 'board', dedicated to worshipping the emperor Augustus, held its meetings in the area of the Forum, where all political, religious and commercial life took place.

The rectangular building has two entrances: the main entrance (a) on the Decumanus Maximus which gives access to the building by way of a long corridor, and the side entrance (b) on Cardo III which opens directly onto the main hall.

The interior is composed of one large room (c) divided into three naves by four Tuscan columns which support the roof, with light entering via a skylight. The capitals of the columns are decorated with polychrome stucco. The perimeter walls are articulated by pilasters that frame blind arches while the floor is in opus spicatum (bricks arranged in a herringbone pattern).



At some stage a room was made on the back wall by constructing two walls connecting the back wall to the two rear pillars. The room (d), which served as a sacellum, was raised above the rest of the hall and was completely decorated in the fourth style. On the left wall is depicted the entrance of Hercules in the Olympus, accompanied by Jupiter, in the form of a rainbow, Juno and Minerva; the one on the right alludes instead to the battle between Hercules and the Etruscan god Acheloo. On the back wall of the sacellum is a plinth on which a sculpture, or more likely a bust, might have been placed. A wreath plant, painted above the decoration, suggests a tribute to the Emperor, Augustus.

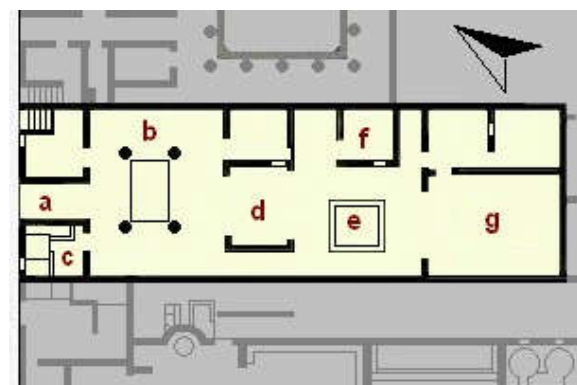


In the back, to the right of the sacellum, is the caretaker's room (e), whose skeleton was found lying on the bed.

An inscription now placed on the wall reminds us that the building, dedicated to Augustus (27 BC-14 AD) while still living, was built by the brothers A. Lucius Proculus and A. Lucius Iulianus, who offered a luncheon to the members of the municipal senate and the Augustals on its inauguration day.

25 Shop Undecorated single room with stairs up.

House of the Double Atrium (Casa dei due Atri) (Ins VI, 28-29)



The House of the Double Atrium is situated on the east side of Cardo III, at the midway point of Insula VI. The house has an imposing entrance set in an attractive facade, almost entirely composed of opus reticulatum. There are two small windows in the ground floor facade, one of which still has its original ironwork frame.

Over the entrance there is a terracotta Gorgon mask to ward off the evil eye.



The first atrium (b), in front of the entrance, is tetrastyle (with its roof supported by 4 columns).

The kitchen (c) is located off the south west corner of the atrium. The kitchen had an 'L' shaped work surface on which was placed a small oven. In the south west corner, next to the work surface, was a latrine. This archive photo shows the kitchen with a dolium next to the work surface for the provision of water. The kitchen was lit by a small square window in its west wall.

The tablinum opens onto the second atrium to the east (pictured below). The second atrium has a central impluvium, 2 well-heads and also acted as a garden and a source of light for the upper floor, which extended the length of the house. On the north side of the atrium is a small oecus (f) where the third style decoration is well preserved except for the lower parts of the north and east walls.



The triclinium (g) opens off the east side of the second atrium. This is a large room, with a low doorway on its north wall that connects to a cubiculum and anteroom. The remaining decoration, particularly on the north wall, is in the late third style with red panels with decorative borders above a lower red frieze. The panels contain small scenes, including that of a still life with pears and crossed fishes.



Stairs up at No.28.

30 Workshop 2 rooms. Plaster remnants. Perhaps a fullonica.

Insula VII

Insula VII stretches northwards from the Lower Decumanus to the Decumanus Maximus, bounded on the west by the yet to be excavated Cardo II and on the east by Cardo III. Very little of Insula VII has been excavated to date as most of it still lies beneath present day Ercolano.

The Basilica occupies the northeast corner of the partially excavated block, directly across Cardo III from the College of the Augustales. Although the Basilica is still mostly buried, it was extensively explored by tunnel during the Bourbon period while some minor excavations were carried out in the early 1960s. Although the Basilica is not part of the open excavation, for the sake of completeness it is described here along with the one property which has been excavated, the House of Galba.



**House of Galba (Casa di Galba)
(VII.1-2)**

One of only two buildings so far excavated in Insula VII, the House of Galba occupies a small part of what is a much larger area lying beneath a residential part of Ercolano.

The house was named after a silver portrait bust of the emperor Servius Sulpicius

Galba, found outside the building. (Galba was the first emperor of the Year of the Four Emperors and reigned for a period of just over seven months from June, AD68). The bust, of beaten silver, was badly damaged, but is now restored and can be seen in Naples at the National Archaeological Museum.

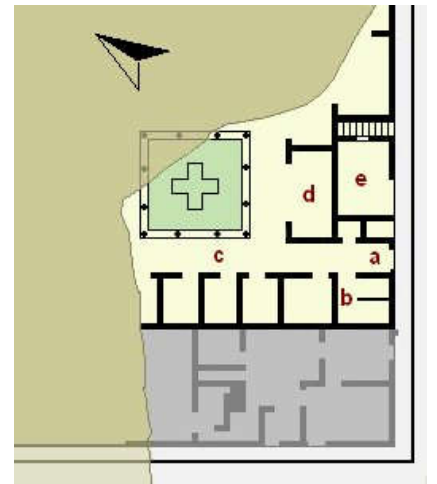
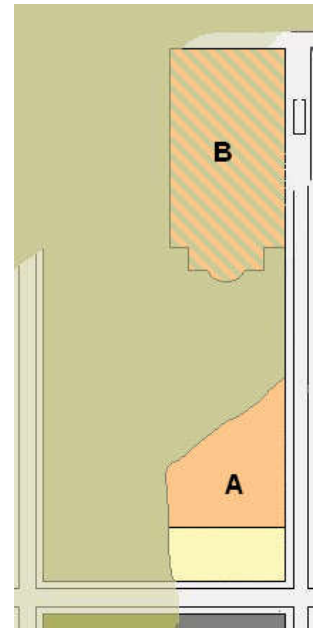
Like several other houses in Herculaneum, the house was built during the Samnite period. The main entrance has yet to be unearthed, but the posticum or secondary entrance (pictured above) opens off the west side of Cardo III.

The fauces (a) leads directly to the partially excavated peristyle (c). The walls of the fauces have some plaster remnants, but not enough to easily determine the original decoration. Immediately left of the entrance is the kitchen area (b) and latrines.

The pre-Roman peristyle was remodelled sometime in its history; the original tufa Doric columns were stuccoed, and a pluteus inserted between the columns. In the centre of the peristyle is a cruciform piscina.

Several of the rooms ranged round the peristyle have been excavated, the most imposing of which is the exedra (d) on its eastern side. The exedra is decorated in the fourth style with the rear wall containing a central pavilion in red flanked by perspective architectural vistas.

Much of the house has yet to be uncovered, especially as it extends as far as Cardo II. The property appears to have included a taberna (e), north of the secondary entrance on Cardo III. Beyond the taberna a flight of stairs led to an upper floor.



Basilica Noniana

The Basilica Noniana was re-discovered when one of the tunnels being mined randomly by Rocque Joaquín de Alcubierre broke into the building. An inscription found in the building records that the building had just been rebuilt following the earthquake of AD62 thanks to the generosity of proconsul Marcus Nonius Balbus, Herculaneum's principal benefactor.

Facing onto the Decumanus Maximus, the building lies at the corner of Insula VII, directly across Cardo III from the College of the Augustales.

Although mostly buried, it was extensively explored by tunnels during the Bourbon period and more recently the eastern side of the building was partially excavated, including a small room (e) which had access to the rear of the building.

More exploratory work has since been carried out, starting in 2003 with the reopening of some of the Bourbon tunnels in conjunction with conservation work that was required to stabilize the surrounding embankments.

What has been revealed is a large rectangular building approximately 29m by 16.5m with a large apse (c) at its southern end, confirming earlier plans drawn up by Cochin and Bellicard in 1754. Around the walls are a double order of half columns, ten on the long sides and six across. The columns (pictured opposite) are of tufa and brick, covered with fluted stucco. The lower order of columns are capped with Ionic capitals while the upper order have Corinthian capitals.

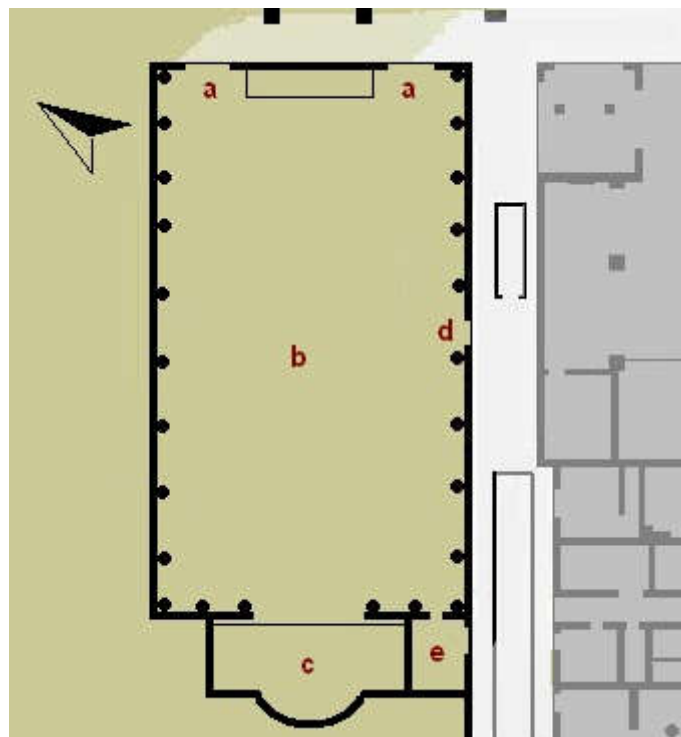
The discovery of fragments of a frieze between the two orders, depicting the labours of Hercules, places the decorative renovation in the fourth style. The bulk of the are decorated with red, yellow and black panels, in places displaying the typical colour change of yellow to red under the intense heat of the pyroclastic material.

Excavations have also revealed the presence of an additional entrance (d) on Cardo III. At the current time it is not known if the building was sub-divided into aisles.

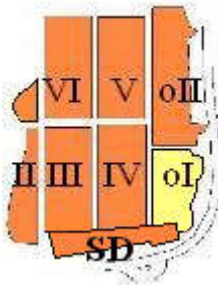
At the entrances (a) to the building stood two equestrian statues, one depicting the town's major benefactor, the afore-mentioned Marcus Nonius Balbus, whilst the other was of his son. Inside the building were further statues of the proconsul and his family.

During stabilization of the earthworks surrounding the basilica an extremely well preserved marble head was uncovered. The head is remarkable in that its painted pigments have survived. The head once formed part of the Herculean themed decoration of the basilica and it is thought the head is possibly that of an Amazonian warrior (in Hercules' ninth labour, he had to obtain the girdle of Hippolyte, Queen of the Amazons).

The delicacy of the decoration comes as something of a surprise, for although Roman statues were often painted, before this discovery only faint traces of pigment had been found. It had been assumed that classical statues were quite brightly painted, but in fact, the colouring of the hair and eyes on this head is composed of soft pastel shades, which, although some fading may have occurred, would indicate that classical colouring may have been more subtle than previously thought.



ol



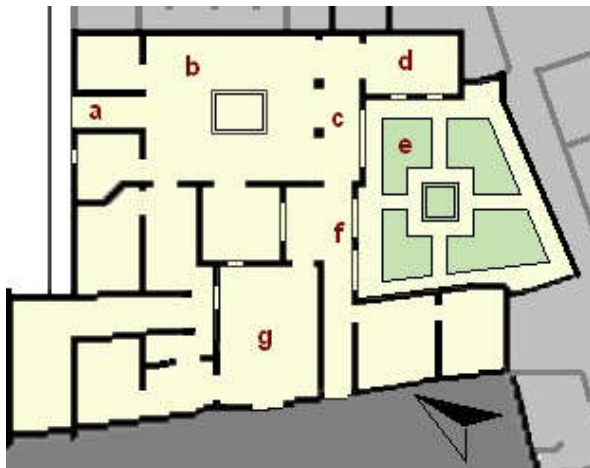
Insula ol (Orientalis I) lies to the east of Cardo V, bounded on its eastern side by unexcavated material and to the north by a narrow lane separating it from Insula oII, as indicated in the schematic. Its southern extremity overlooks the Suburban Baths.

Due to the incomplete nature of the excavation of this insula, it is not possible to list all the properties located herein, or to provide accurate data regarding their physical attributes - area, number of rooms, etc. - although earlier tunnelling has provided additional information about its extent and layout.

The two main properties in this insula are the House of the Gem (A) and the House of the Relief of Telephus (B). 1a. is the House of M. Pilius Primigenius Granianus.

House of the Gem (Casa della Gemma) (ol.1)

The House of the Gem was named after a piece of jewellery found there. The jewellery dates from the Claudian period and bares the engraved effigy of Livia. Together with the adjoining House of the Relief of Telephus they originally formed a single large property developed from a string of standard plots.



The house is located at the southern end of Cardo V. The photograph below is of the House of the Gem viewed from the site entrance ramp to the south. The lower rooms which open onto the broad terrace overlooking the Suburban Thermae belong to the House of M. Pilius Primigenius Granianus (Ins ol, 1a).

The lower photograph is also taken from the entrance ramp and shows the east side of the house, in particular the tablinum and enclosed garden.



The fauces (a) retains some of its third style decoration and is paved in black with polychrome marble insets, opening onto a Tuscan order atrium (b) with a central marble lined impluvium.

The atrium, which has rooms off all but its northern side, is decorated with red and black panels above a deep, lower red frieze. The atrium has a black and white mosaic floor with a single white border. At the eastern end of the atrium is the tablinum (c), delineated by a transverse row of Doric columns.



On the north side of the tablinum is a doorway to what was once a good sized cubiculum (d) (now sadly completely ruinous) while a doorway on the south side leads onto a fine terrace (f) which was originally enclosed by windows.

The terrace, which has a simple black mosaic pavement with a white border, together with the tablinum, bound the west side of the house's enclosed garden (e).

Opening off a small vestibule on the west side of the terrace is a large triclinium (f) which is decorated in the third style with red, yellow and black panels above a lower black decorative frieze. The room has a fine white mosaic floor edged with a double black border. In the centre of the floor is a virtual carpet of mosaic which is sub-divided into twenty different styled blocks featuring geometric designs surrounded by a rosette.

Off the south west corner of the atrium, a passageway leads to the kitchen area and the latrines, where some graffiti (CIL IV 10619) on one of the walls records the visit of a certain Apollinaris:

'Apollinaris medicus Titi imp(eratoris) hic cacavit bene'

The graffiti translates as 'Apollinaris, the doctor of the emperor Titus, defecated well here'. Short and to the point.

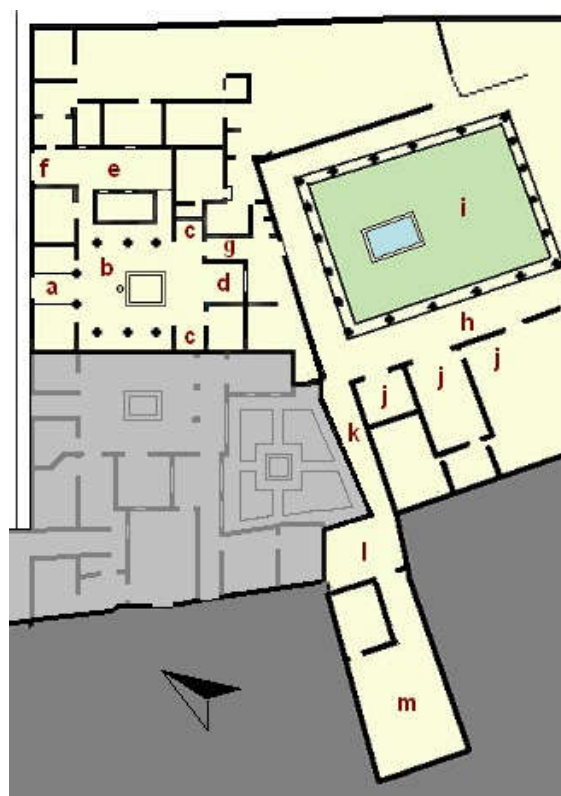


House of Relief of Telephus

The House of the Relief of Telephus is one of the largest houses in the excavated area covering about 1,800m². Together with the adjoining House of the Gem they originally formed a single large property developed from a string of standard plots. The two atria that became the separate atria of these houses reflect the orientation of the older standard plots. The current house has an irregular layout due mainly to its location and its owner's efforts to provide sea views to as many rooms in the house as possible.

The house possibly belonged to one of the town's leading benefactors, Marcus Nonius Balbus and is somewhat unusual in that it has its own private access to the adjoining Suburban Thermae to the south.

Built in a scenic position, on the slop leading down to the marina, the house was built on three levels and held a rich collection of sculptures of the neo-Attic school, including the relief with the myth of Telephus, son of Hercules (mythical founder of the city). The structure current dates from the Augustan period (27 BC-14 AD), and was remodelled after the earthquake in 62 AD. The atrium is similar to a peristyle, with columns supporting not the slopes of the roof, but the rooms of the upper floor as in certain Greek houses. Between the columns hang the plaster casts of the marble oscilla found here (discs or masks, generally in a Dionysian theme, used to ward off evil).



The entrance to the house opens directly onto a bright vestibule (a) which in turn gives way to the atrium (b).

The atrium, which seems to reveal the influence of earlier Greek civic architecture in its three part division and ornamentation, has a central impluvium and puteal and is colonnaded on two sides.



But appearances can be deceptive. What the visitor sees today is a reconstruction of the house conceived by Amedeo Maiuri between 1934 and 1936. Although the reconstruction of the house is impressive it is partly false, particularly in the area of the atrium. The central impluvium shows that the atrium roof originally covered the central space and the side columns, rather than supporting the colonnades of a peristyle originally acted as supports for an upper floor.

The decoration of the atrium is in the third style with yellow panels (turned red in places by the heat and gases from the eruption) with architectural motifs above a lower red frieze. The doorway in the north west corner of the atrium leads to the stables (e) which had their own separate entrance (f) on Cardo V wide enough for carts and wagons.

On either side of the tablinum (d) at the east end of the atrium, are twin alae (c), both continuing the red and yellow theme of the main hall. The tablinum (d) is decorated in a similar manner to the atrium, with yellow decorative plasterwork (again turned red in places). The room is open to the atrium over its full width and has a large window in its east wall overlooking a large peristyle. On the south wall of the atrium is a copy of a neo-Attic relief depicting an episode from the myth of Telephus. The relief, which was found in an oecus off the peristyle, depicts Achilles in the presence of his mother Thetis (pictured below), treating the wound of the Mysian king, Telephus in return for the king showing the Achaeans the way to Troy.



The rest of the house, laid out along a different axis, is on a lower level and is reached by way of a ramped corridor (g) located to the left of the tablinum. The ramped corridor leads down to a large terrace with an imposing peristyle (h) which was porticoed on all four sides and had thirty-one columns of opus vittatum mixtum, alternating rows of brick and tufa blocks, supporting the inner margins of the roof. Bridging the gaps between the columns was a low wall or pluteus.

The peristyle encloses a garden (i) with a rectangular pool (piscina) which still retains some of its decorative blue plasterwork. Off the south side of the peristyle are three reasonably sized drawing rooms (j) each

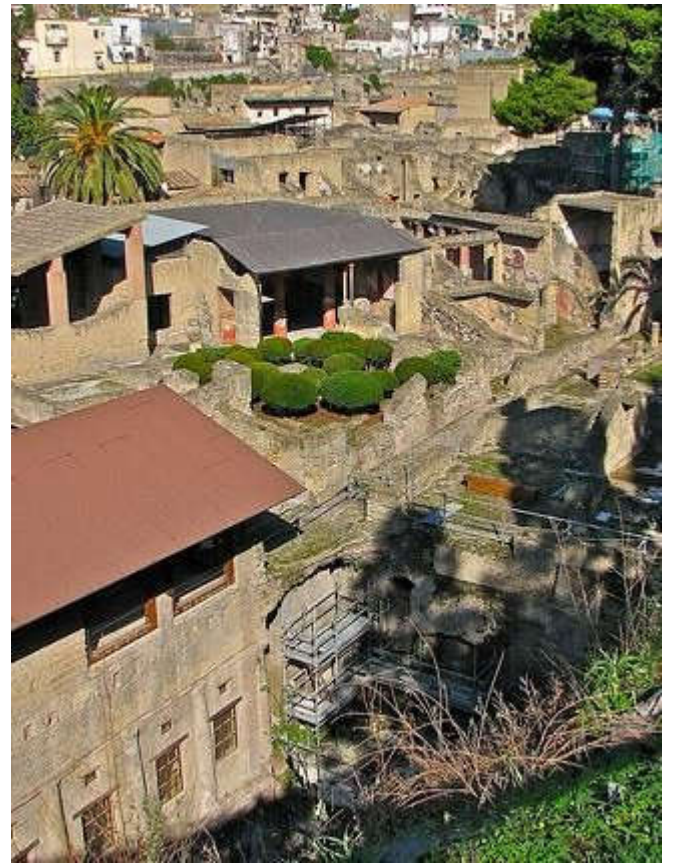


ornamented with mosaic flooring. Below them, still to be excavated, are two more levels of rooms. From the exposed edges it can be seen that they too were richly decorated.



A second passageway (k) leads to the top floor of the most unusual feature of the house, a tower like structure (m) built out over the shoreline with three lower floors, the bottom two of which were abandoned as sea levels rose and fell.

Although only three floors are currently visible a test trench along the east side of the tower revealed the lowest of what we now know to be four levels, with a facade composed of a series of engaged columns framing arched openings. These arches, like those immediately above them, were later filled in because of a significant drop in ground level which resulted in the encroachment of the sea and the abandonment of the two lowest floors.



southern side. Thereafter the land once again rose. This rise and fall of ground level was almost certainly connected to the build-up in activity in the magma chamber beneath Vesuvius.

On each floor of the tower were three or four rooms, but it is the rooms at the southern end with the sea views that were the focus.

The top floor is currently undergoing conservation work with the addition of a new roof and the installation of windows but even in its current state the decoration is outstanding with a polychrome marble floor and a spectacular dado composed of panels of cipollino, pavonazzetto and africano marble.



The room immediately below this one has survived in even better condition although the marble cladding on the lower part of the walls is less lavish with plain marble slabs and plain dividers in place of the large plaques of varied marble and richly decorated dividing columns.

The central and upper zones of the walls are decorated in red with a wallpaper style design of repeated horizontal patterns etched out in white. The room also retains its entire marble floor in opus sectile



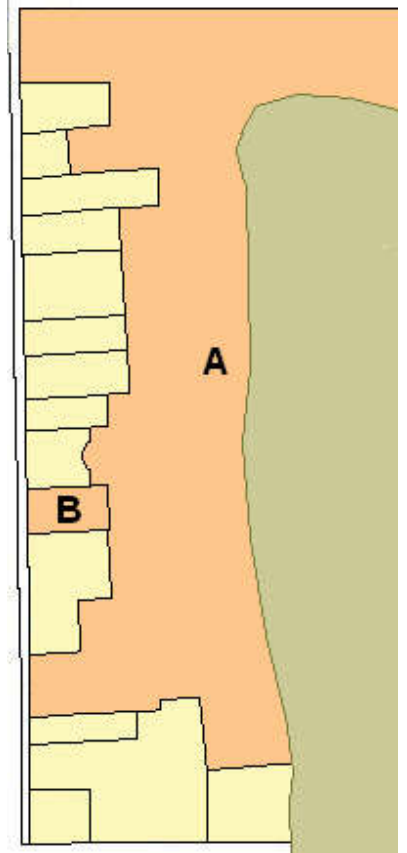


oII

Insula Orientalis II lies north of Insula Orientalis I and east of Cardo V. The whole block is occupied by a single building of opus reticulatum which runs for approximately 55 metres along Cardo V.



Cardo V, looking north with Insula oII on the right.



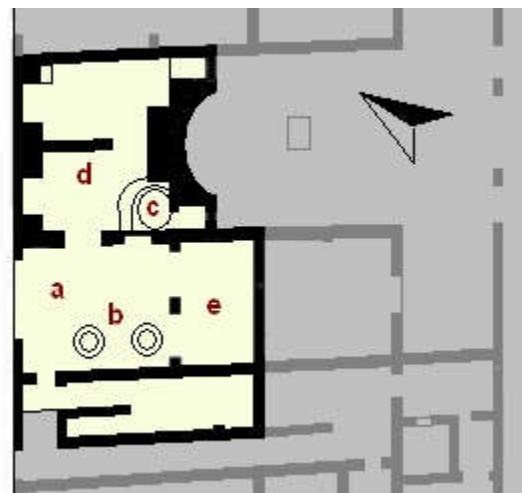
A number of stores, built against the monumental edifice, supplied the needs of the public who frequented the Palaestra at the rear. They are long and narrow, and their mezzanines were used as living quarters. These stores include a pistrinum. At the northern limit of the insula is the Aula Superiore (upper hall) of the palaestra complex which opens off the eastern limit of the Decumanus Maximus.

Due to the incomplete nature of the excavation of this insula, it is not possible to list all the properties located herein, or to provide accurate data regarding their physical attributes - area, number of rooms, etc.

Pistrinum of Sex. Patulcus Felix (oll.8)

Among these are the city's only two known pistrina (bakeries), both equipped with two millstones and smaller than those of Pompeii; the many manual millstones found in the digs also inform us that, in Herculaneum, most people ground their own flour at home. The Pistrinum, or bakery, occupies a central location on the east side of Cardo V. Inside the bakery, the whole cycle of bread-making from milling the grain to baking the bread, which came in a variety of forms, was carried out.

The pistor (baker) Sextus Patulcus Felix is the owner of the pistrinum at n.8, as evidenced by a signet ring found here. The oven (built behind the apsidal room of the Palaestra) was protected from the evil eye by two stucco phalluses at the entrance: the same ones appear on a slab in the workroom. The 25 round bronze baking pans found in the back room of the shop (e) were used for baking the flat loaves (placentae).



On the south side of the main room (a) are two flour mills (b). The mills consist of a catullus rotating on a cone-shaped centre set on a masonry base. To enable the millstone to be turned (either by slave or mule), a wooden beam was slotted into the hole in the catullus. In this particular bakery it can be assumed that the mills were turned by mules or donkeys due to the discovery of their remains on the premises.

The room (e) at the rear of the bakery was probably the dough preparation room where mixers and kneaders mixed up the dough in large stone bowls and worked it into shape ready for baking.

The prepared loaves were then placed in the oven (c) for baking.

The baked bread was then removed for storage or sale. Due to the limited space available, it seems unlikely that the bread was sold directly from the bakery.

The Pistrinum at No. 8 described here is one of two bakeries in the block. The second bakery (pictured below) is at No. 1.



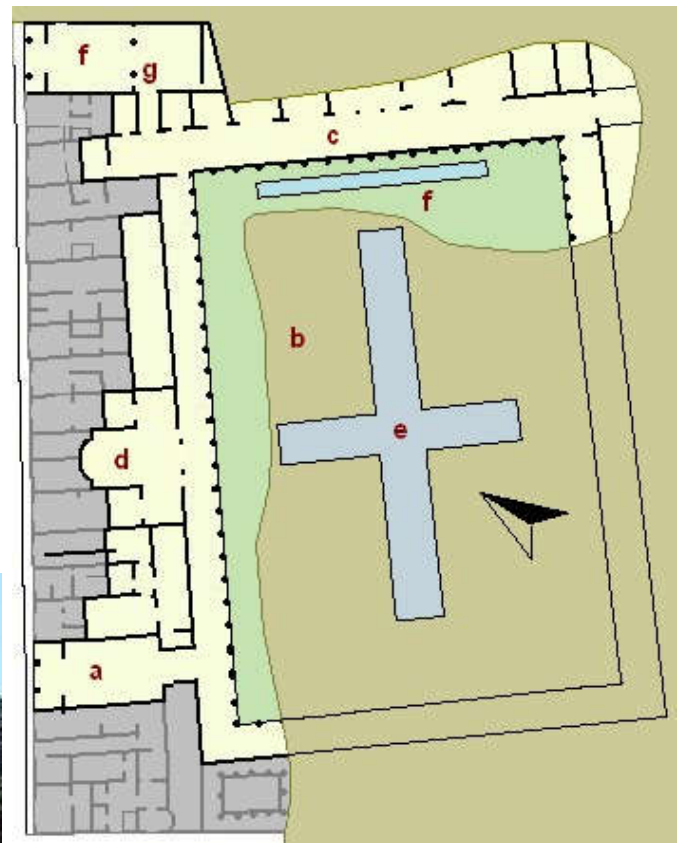
Palaestra (oll.4)

The eastern side of Insula Orientalis II is almost completely taken up by the partially excavated Palaestra (note: the unexcavated area is coloured brown in the accompanying plan opposite). The Palaestra was built during the Augustan period (27 BC-14 AD) and occupies an area of approximately 105 x 70 metres. This gigantic building complex, used primarily for sporting activities, was developed on two terraces, and the building has only been partly uncovered.

The main entrance (a) to the complex on Cardo V consisted of a large rectangular room with a vaulted ceiling, preceded by two stuccoed brick columns, which were mistakenly identified in the past as the temple of the Mater Deum.



In the centre of the portico, on the side running parallel with Cardo V (the west side), is an apsidal room (d) (pictured opposite), a vast hall, nearly 10 m high, with a niche at the back containing a central marble platform and table, perhaps for the display of prizes.

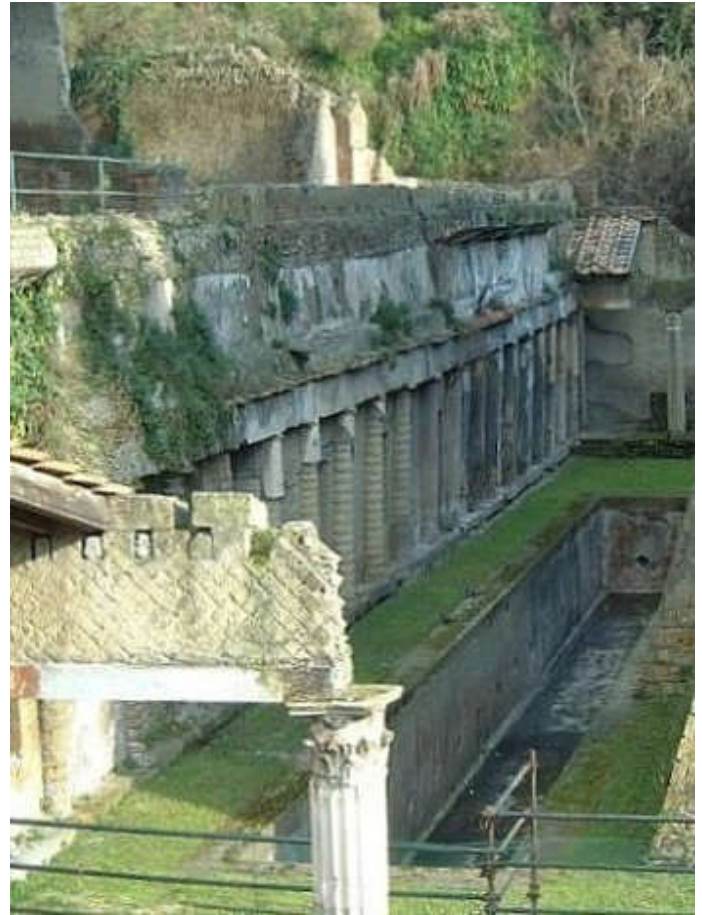


The lower terrace is made up of a large area with porticos on three sides and a cryptoporticus on the north side to support the terrace above.



The exterior wall of the cryptoporticus (pictured opposite) consists of engaged Ionic columns of stuccoed brickwork flanking a series of windows that give light to the enclosed corridor.

The basic structure of the cryptoporticus itself (pictured below) survived the effects of the eruption in remarkably good condition.



Occupying the middle of the open area was a cruciform pool 5.5 m wide by 1.1m deep with arms measuring approximately 50m and 30m. This pool (e) still remains buried. At the centre of the pool (reached by a short tunnel) was a bronze fountain depicting Lerna's Hydra, a five-headed serpent entwined round a tree.

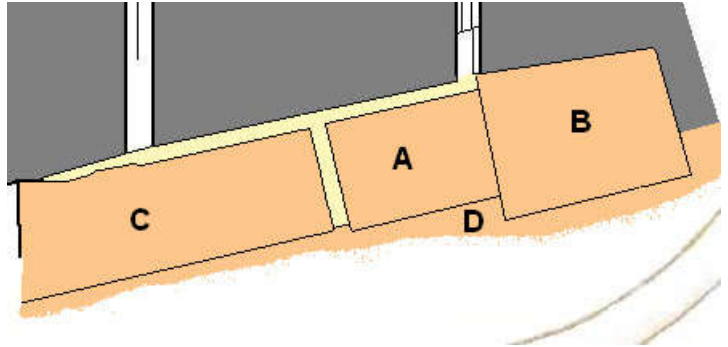
To the north of the central pool is a second pool (f) 30m long (in the picture above) which may have been used for swimming or as a fish tank. It was not in use at the time of the eruption.

Most of the marble decoration that once adorned the Palaestra was destroyed or removed during the 18thC by the early excavators. Two panels, however, have survived and can now be seen in the National Archaeological Museum in Naples along with some of the remaining fresco decoration.

The Palaestra was laid out straight and level over its length while, to its west, Cardo V rises steadily from the main entrance (a) northwards. As a consequence the Aula Superiore or Upper Hall (f), which is at street level where it opens off the east end of the Decumanus Maximus, gives access, by way of a short passageway (g), to the Palaestra at first floor level in the form of an upper storey to the cryptoporticus.

SD

The Suburban District lies immediately south of Insulae III, IV and Orientalis I. It is accessed via the Marina Gate at the southern end of Cardo V and by a narrow ramp at the southern end of Cardo IV.



The Suburban District is the ancient waterfront area. Its central feature is the Terrace of M. Nonius Balbus which lies directly over the boathouses that once lined Herculaneum's ancient shore. To the east of the terrace lie the Suburban Thermae while to the west is the so called Sacred Area which incorporates two sacelli at its western end.

Terrace of M. Nonius Balbus

Climbing the ramp against the walls brings you into a large rectangular piazza, in front of the complex of the Suburban Baths. (The Terrace of Marcus Nonius Balbus also lies at the foot of the ramp from Cardo IV). Here stands the funeral altar, covered with marble, which by decree of the local senate was dedicated to the senator M. Nonius Balbus, a native of Nuceria, praetor and proconsul of the provinces of Crete and Cyrene, tribune of the plebes in 32 BC and partisan of Octavian, the future 'Augustus' (27 BC-14 AD). M. Nonius Balbus did good service towards the city of Herculaneum by restoring and building many public buildings: at least 10 statues were erected in his honour, and great honours bestowed upon his death, recalled in the long inscription engraved on the face of the funeral altar facing the sea. On the marble base next to the funeral altar was the armoured statue of M. Nonius Balbus himself, also made of marble: the head was already found during the excavations led by A. Maiuri, while the large fragment of the bust was recovered in 1981.

The inscription reads:

In view of the proposal of Marcus Ofillius Celer, twice duumvir, that the dignity of the township required recognition of the merits of Marcus Nonius Balbus, the Council resolved the following:

Seeing that Marcus Nonius Balbus, so long as he lived here showed a parental disposition of extraordinary generosity to individuals and the community, the councillors decided that an equestrian statue be erected to him at public expense in the most frequented spot with the inscription:

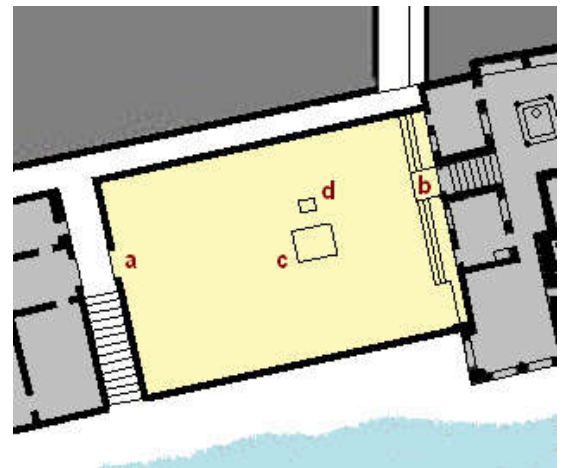
'To Marcus Nonius Balbus, praetor, proconsul, patron, (from) the entire Council of the people of Herculaneum in recognition of his merits.'

Further, at the spot where his ashes are laid a marble altar should be made and erected, and publicly inscribed:

'To Marcus Nonius Balbus son of Marcus'

and that the procession of Parentalia should part from this spot, and that at the customary athletic games one day should be dedicated to his honour, and on the occasion of performances at the theatre a seat should be placed for him.

Resolved.





The equestrian statue was erected in front of the Basilica and was rediscovered during the Bourbon excavations. It can be seen at the National Archaeological Museum in Naples.



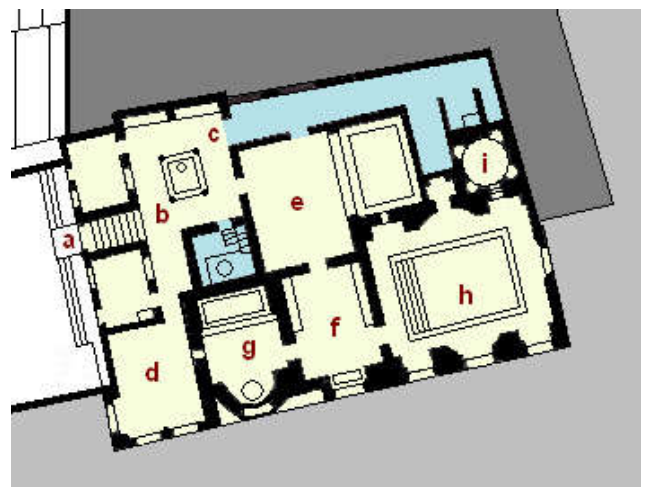
The statue of the Senator, set on a marble base next to the altar, was erected by his freedman Nonius Volusianus. It was considerably damaged by the effects of the eruption and what we see today is a partial restoration. The head was found during excavations led by Maiuri while a large segment of the trunk was recovered in 1981.

Access to the Suburban Thermae (b) is at the eastern end of the terrace.

Suburban Baths

Built between the walls and the sea in the early 1st C AD, this bath complex is one of the best preserved in ancient times.

The Suburban Thermae appear to have been a gift to the town by Proconsul M. Nonius Balbus whose statue and memorial altar stand in the terrace in front of the building. The baths held up extremely well against the eruption and are in a remarkable state of preservation. The fact that the shoreline was pushed nearly half a mile out to sea shows that the volcanic avalanche had not lost any of its strength by the time it reached the baths. The building owes its survival to its construction - walls of brick-faced concrete with vaults supporting the roof. Debris pouring in through a skylight and filling the interior may also have helped its survival by offsetting the pressure from outside.



The main entrance (a) to the baths consists of a portal with half columns supporting a tympanum. A flight of stairs leads down from there to the vestibule (b).

The vestibule, which gives access to all areas, has a pierced vault supported by four plain columns topped by rounded arches. A marble bust of Apollo stands on a pillar which used to emit a stream of water into the basin below.



In the north east corner of the vestibule a doorway (c) opens onto a service area (coloured blue on the plan) which in turn gives access by way of a corridor to a private dwelling, the House of the Relief of Telephus, possibly the property of the Balbus family.

A second service area off the south side of the vestibule (also coloured blue on the plan) held the boilers for heating the caldarium.

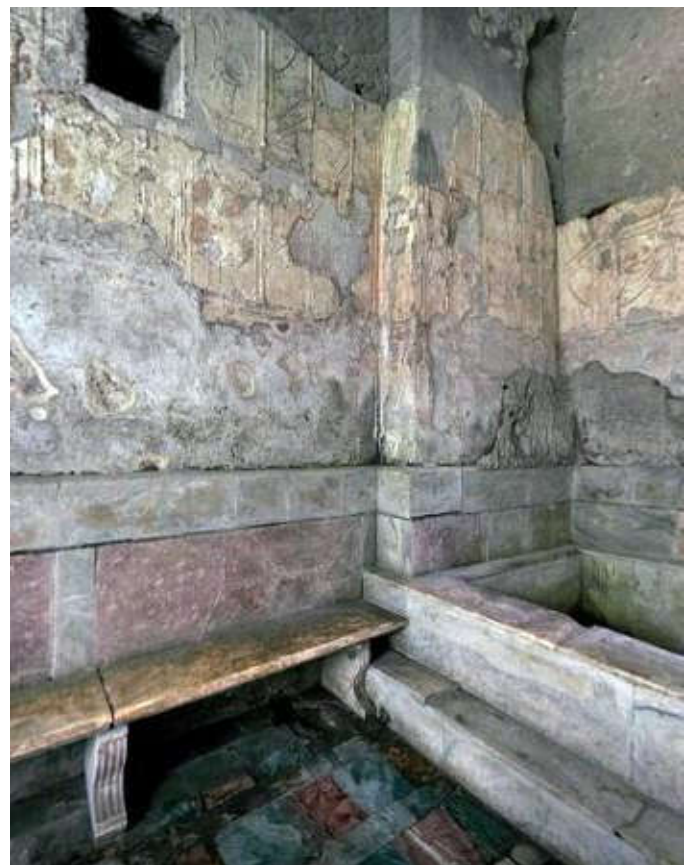
Unlike the Central Thermae, these baths were not segregated, and were probably used alternately by both sexes. A well lit day room (d), with large panoramic windows overlooking the Bay of Naples, opens off the south west corner of the vestibule. The room was possibly simply used for general relaxation and convivial conversation. The walls are stuccoed with pilasters supporting a faux entablature beneath a vaulted ceiling.

Between the two service areas, a door leads to a large vaulted room (e) with a fine white marble slab floor which served as a combined apodyterium and frigidarium. On the east side of the room is the cold pool (pictured right). A doorway on the north side of the room (bottom left of picture) remains plugged by the volcanic debris from the eruption.

A door on the south side of the room opens onto the tepidarium (f) (pictured below). This vaulted room is decorated with stuccoes of warriors framed in panels above a reprise of the dado from the preceding room. Marble benches line the walls.



On the west side of the tepidarium a door leads through to the vaulted caldarium (g) which has a large labrum set in an apse on the south wall while on the north wall is the marble lined hot pool. The walls of the caldarium are decorated with many small stuccoed panels above a multi-coloured marble dado and floor.



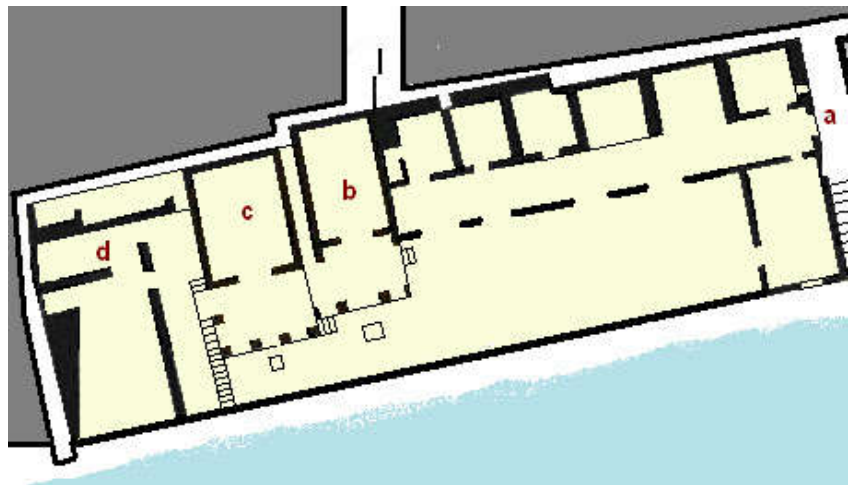


To the east of the tepidarium is a room (h) with a large swimming pool, heated using the 'samovar' system (a receptacle placed in the centre of the room, below which the fire was lit directly). The room's vaulted ceiling is decorated with ribbed stucco and the room is lit by four large windows, two of which are set in apses. The frescoed walls have, like the rest of the bath suite, a marble dado.

In the north east corner of the room is a doorway which leads through to a laconicum (i), (steam bath room) - a small round room with an intense dry heat - with a black mosaic floor on a white background.

Sacred area

The western sector of the South Terrace, supported by heavy vaulted structures, is occupied by a Sacred Area containing various rooms and two temples side by side, dedicated to Venus and four divinities, respectively. Here, as recalled by an inscription, the board of Venerii held its meetings. The Sacred Area lies to the west of the Terrace of M. Nonius Balbus, accessed off a passageway (a) at its eastern end where the ramp from Cardo IV joins the terrace. This western terrace contains two sacelli at its westmost end and, like the adjoining Terrace of M. Nonius Balbus, was built over vaulted boat houses lining the ancient shore. Past some rooms that were possibly used for storage, the first of the two temples (b) was dedicated to Venus.



Sacellum of Venus

Completely restored after the earthquake in 62 AD by Vibidia Saturninus and his son A. Furius Saturninus, this small temple is dedicated to Venus. It is preceded by a marble-covered altar, and had a vestibule (pronaos) with grooved and stuccoed tufa columns, now stacked nearby; the vaulted cell contains the remains of frescoes with a garden motif: in the painted panel to the left of the entrance we can recognize a rudder, an attribute of Venus-Fortuna who guided sailors.

Sacellum of the four Gods

The second temple (c), also restored after AD62, was dedicated to the four gods Vulcan, Neptune, Mercury and Minerva, all divinities related to the world of manufacture, trade and crafts, as evidenced by the neo-Attic reliefs which were torn from the building by the force of the pyroclastic flow. The reliefs were recently rediscovered and copies have been placed in the cella. Like the adjoining temple, the cella is on a raised podium, fronted by a pronaos which was framed by Corinthian columns.

Part of the wooden structure of the roof was recently recovered, dragged onto the beach below by the force of the eruption.

In the extreme northwest corner of the area are the remains of other buildings (d) whose use has yet to be determined.



The Shoreline

The beach, which was between 2m to 4m wide in front of the Suburban Thermae, narrowing to about 1m in front of the boat houses, consisted of a layer of gravel approximately 0.6m thick overlying black beach sand. The gravel was composed of rounded pebbles of limestone, lava and general rubbish (fragments of pottery, tiles, stucco, glass and bones) and is clearly the result of using the beach as a rubbish tip for building rubble and other material. Underlying the black beach sand was bedrock, consisting of consolidated pyroclastic material from a previous eruption. Excavations have shown that the bedrock outcropped about 20m from the shore, forming a reef. The surface of this area of exposed rock had been worked to provide a slipway to allow large boats to be pulled out of the water for maintenance.

An analysis of the beach material has shown that the pre-eruption sea level was about 4m below that of the present day, leading to the conclusion that Herculaneum has experienced major subsidence in the years since the eruption. This subsidence may have occurred rapidly after the eruption due to the depletion of the magma reservoir under Vesuvius, or may be due to regional tectonic tilting and long term structural events in and around the Bay of Naples.



In 1980, whilst digging a drainage trench, Italian public works employees, under the direction of Dr. Giuseppe Maggi, uncovered human remains in one of the twelve boat houses that lined the ancient beach. Each boat house is a vaulted chamber 3.75m high, 3.15m wide by 3.85m deep.

They initially turned up more than 55 skeletons (30 adult males, 13 adult females and 12 children) on the beach and in the first six boat chambers. Because earlier excavations had revealed only a few skeletons, it was long thought that nearly all of the inhabitants had

managed to escape, but this surprising discovery led to a change of view. The last inhabitants waiting for rescue from the sea were killed instantly by the intense heat, despite being sheltered from direct impact. The study of victims' postures and the effects on their skeletons indicate that the first surge caused instant death as a result of fulminant shock due to a temperature of about 500 °C (932 °F). The intense heat caused contraction of hands and feet and possibly fracture of bones and teeth.



In all about 300 skeletons have been found along with the precious and everyday items they carried with them. Casts of skeletons were also produced, to replace the original bones after taphonomic study, scientific documentation and excavation but in contrast to Pompeii, where casts resembling the body features of the victims were produced by filling the body imprints in the ash deposit with plaster, the shape of corpses at Herculaneum could not be preserved, due to the rapid vaporization and replacement of the flesh of the victims by the hot ash. A cast of the skeletons unearthed within chamber 10 is on display at the Museum of Anthropology in Naples.

Close by, a well-preserved Roman boat over 9m long was discovered in 1982. Along with the body of the oarsman was that of a soldier complete with belt, swords, and other military paraphernalia.

Dr Sara Bisel, a physical anthropologist from the United States, was called in to oversee the excavation and study the bones of the citizens found in the boat houses. The skeletons, some of them carbonised by the extreme heat, were well preserved by ground water that kept them from oxidising. During her six year study of the chemical analysis of those remains, Dr Bisel was able to gain greater insight into the health and nutrition of the citizens of Herculaneum. By examining the skeletons she determined each person's age and sex. Her analysis showed that the average male citizen stood 1.70m tall while his female counterpart was in the order of 1.55m. She also concluded that in general their teeth were in good shape and that they ate a lot of seafood as indicated by a concentration of strontium in their bones. Most appeared to be in general good health but several were suffering from advance stages of lead poisoning, possibly having developed their condition through the consumption of cheap wine sweetened by syrup boiled in lead pots, and the presence of scarring on the pelvis, for instance, may give some indication of the number of children a woman had borne.

Amongst them there are apparently two armoured figures. There are hopes that research being carried out on these last two may help with future knowledge about how Roman arms and armour were worn and used in this period.



Papyri Villa and Insulae septentrionales

Between 1996 and 1998 open-air excavations were carried out in the area of the Villa of the Papyri and the so-called Northwest Insula. These 'New Excavations' covered an area of about 14,000 m² and were limited to the land that had been available at that time. For this reason, it was only possible to partially excavate the buildings that lay close to the limits of the excavated area making it particularly difficult to grasp their architectural and functional relationships. After a lengthy period of consolidation new work began in 2007 for the excavation, conservation and enhancement of the area. These works, which were completed in autumn 2008, included a portion of the Northwest Insula incorporating the Bath Complex and the House of the Dionysian Reliefs. The area of the New Excavations opens up into the heart of the modern city of Ercolano.

During the summer of 1750 well diggers came across what turned out to be the belvedere of a sumptuous Roman villa, Villa dei Papiri (Papyri Villa). For six years the remains of the building were explored by tunnelling operations under the supervision of Karl Weber, a Swiss engineer acting on behalf of Rocque Joaquín de Alcubierre. He made detailed plans of the layout of the villa that were well ahead of their time.

The villa, believed to have been owned by the father-in-law of Julius Caesar, Lucius Calpurnius Piso Caesoninus, stretched for more than 250m along the shoreline. It would appear that it was



originally built in the 1st C BC, as a formal atrium villa, subsequently extended to what we see today. (The J. Paul Getty Museum in Malibu, California, based on Weber's plans, gives a good idea of what it would have looked like - see picture).

In 1752 an astonishing find was made when a tunnel was extended, opening up a room lined with shelves and crates stacked with 'scrolls' - a collection of blackened cylinders that at first were a mystery to the excavators. On examining some broken fragments, however, it was discovered that the

cylinders were indeed scrolls containing Greek text written on scorched papyrus.

All attempts to read the papyri (altogether over 1800 scrolls were recovered) resulted in the destruction of the document, until Antonio Piaggio, a priest from the Vatican Library, created a mechanical 'unroller'. His process was extremely slow, but it did allow the documents to be read. Most of the scrolls have turned out to be the work of Philodemus, an Epicurean philosopher of the 1st C BC. It has been speculated that there may be other Papyri with Latin texts in a lower unexplored section of the Villa. The villa was owned by a relative of Julius Caesar so it is entirely plausible that a more complete copy of Caesars 'Civil War', which is known to have missing or corrupted sections, or any number of texts that are known about from surviving fragments or other texts but have since been lost to history, are just waiting to be rediscovered.

The Northwest Baths

The Bath Complex is located at the northern limit of the Northwest Insula. Considering the size of the town it is quite remarkable how many bathing establishments there are in Herculaneum, although it should be remembered that they must have served not only the resident population but a host of visitors from the surrounding area.

Discovered in the late 1990s the large apsidal building was initially thought to be a temple until further excavation revealed it to be a vast bath building, part of a thermal complex which remains mostly buried due to the limitations of the site.

The building, discovered with its gable roof intact, was lit by a series of large rectangular windows, three on each of the north, west and south sides. With the exception of one window in the centre of the apse the windows remain blocked by the pyroclastic deposits, making the interior rather dark in contrast to the luminous atmosphere that must have prevailed in antiquity.

On the side walls the large windows alternated with rectangular niches. At the eastern end is a large nymphaeum, pictured below, framed by two small doors that led to the rooms at the rear.



The surface of the walls was covered in part with tegulae mammatae, large flat tiles with a raised boss at each corner. (The tiles were built against a wall, from which the bosses kept the tiles at a constant distance, forming a cavity for circulating hot air).



Occupying most of the room is a large heated pool with steps provided on the short sides and equipped with a 'samovar' heating system, as in the nearby Suburban Thermae.

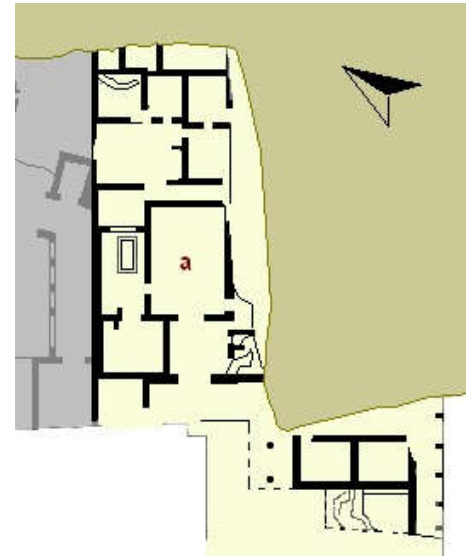
The large building formed only part of a thermal complex, of which a section of a colonnaded portico has also been excavated. In this

area were found the remains of a small boat and the charred skeleton of a horse. A flight of marble steps led down from these baths towards the sea through an area ornamented with pools, fountains and gardens. The decorated female statue imitating those of the Greek Classic Age and the head of Amazon, a replica of the original attributed to the Greek sculptor Policleto (c mid 5th C BC), also come from this area.

The House of the Dionysian Reliefs

The House of the Dionysian Reliefs is located in the Northwest Insula immediately south of the Baths Complex. Discovered in the 1990s it has only been partially excavated due to the limitations of the site. Because of this it is difficult to establish the interrelationship between the excavated rooms and the house as a whole.

Perhaps the best preserved of the rooms so far uncovered is the large room (a) which was decorated in the fourth style on a red background.



A striking feature of the room were the reliefs found on the south and east walls. The first of the two marble reliefs, which both show Dionysiac scenes, was discovered in 1997 on the south wall (pictured on the right of the picture).

The scene shows three figures. On the left is a naked satyr shown in profile, sitting on a rock drinking from a cup. Opposite him is a female figure, with her left foot raised resting on a rock. She collects water from a lion headed spout in a rhyton, held in her left hand. The girl is naked with only her legs covered with a slight mantle. To the right is a small satyr, in left profile, shown standing while pouring wine from an oinochoe vase into a skyphos which he holds in his left hand.



The second relief was discovered in early 2009 inserted into the painted wall plaster of the east wall of the room about 2m above floor level. Inserting marble reliefs into fresco decoration was particularly fashionable in the Roman world from the 1st C BC onwards although few have been found in Herculaneum or Pompeii.

The recent discovery has allowed the technique used for embedding the relief in the wall to be recorded in detail: a recess about 5cm deep was formed in the face of the wall and the relief placed in this niche without mortar. To hold the relief in place the builders used iron cramps, two on the long sides (1.08 m) and one on each of the short sides (0.66m) where there was no frame. Once painted plaster was added the edges were totally covered.



The scene shows four figures. On the right-hand side of the relief are a dancing Maenad with a bearded divinity, probably Dionysius while on the left are two figures of indeterminate gender standing in front of a free standing archaic sculpture of Dionysius holding a kantharos.

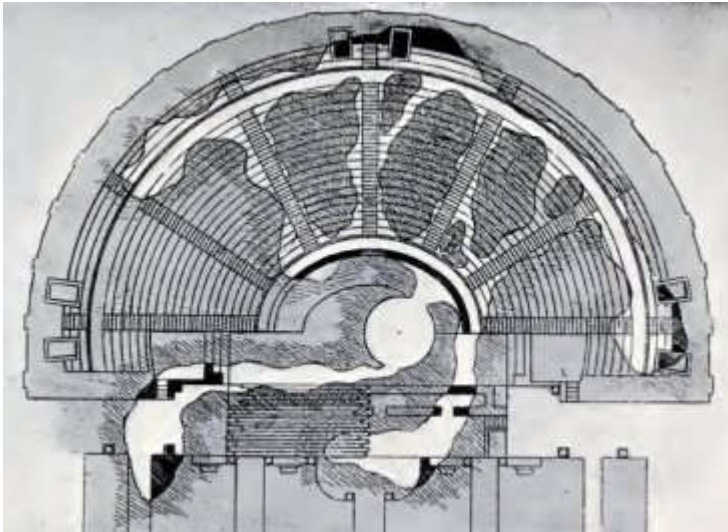
The kantharos was a drinking cup, said to be invented by Dionysius himself. Unlike the skyphos, which was round, with small handles, the kantharos had a high base and

projecting handles that stretched from the rim to the foot of the cup. Dionysius' own kantharos was always full, and could never be drained - even by Hercules himself.

The scene clearly depicts a ritual or celebration of some sort, but the identity of the two figures on the left are unknown. It is also unclear if there is a narrative connection between the two separate reliefs.

The Theatre

One of the first finds at Herculaneum was its theatre, first discovered in 1709 whilst digging a well. The plan and elevation show that it was of a standard Roman layout, complying very much with the definitions specified by Vitruvius in his Ten Books on Architecture (Book V, chapter VI, 'Plan of the Theatre').



The diameter of the exterior circle of the theatre measures 34m, of which the orchestra measures 9m. In height the theatre measures 19.5m and could hold about 2500 spectators. This is only about half the size of the theatre in neighbouring Pompeii, but considering the population of Herculaneum could not have been much more than 5,000, its capacity was more than adequate.

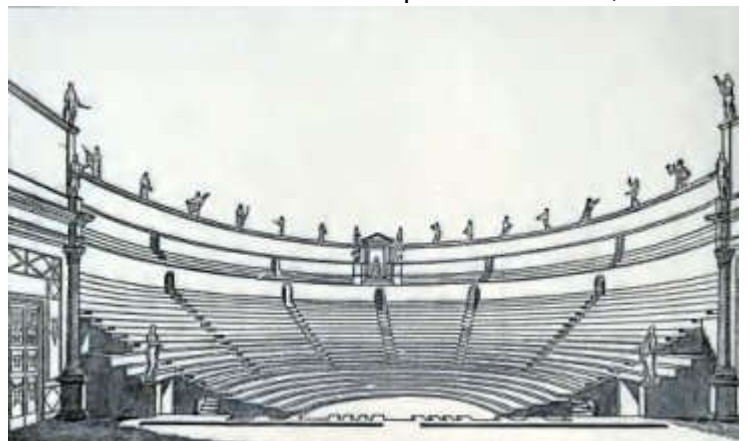
The scaenae frons was adorned with two superimposed rows of pilasters and arcades with niches and doors, painted in red and yellow, with two red marble columns, now in the Church of St. Januarius in Naples, and with two fluted columns. Behind the stage was a narrow room (postscenium) used as a dressing room and entered by a door at

the back. The orchestra was paved with thick slabs of giallo antico, of which fragments still remain. To the right and left of the orchestra, supported by vaults and approached by stairs near the ends of the stage, were the large boxes (tribunalia), probably reserved for the more important magistrates. A similar layout is found in the theatre at Pompeii.

All the seats and stairs are of tufa. The tiers of seats for the spectators (cavea) are divided into six wedges by seven flights of steps radiating from the orchestra and terminated by seven exits (vomitoria). They are divided, parallel to the circumference, by two passages (praccinctiones). The lowest division, the ima cavea, consists of four rows of somewhat broader seats, 18cm high and 90cm wide. This was the place of honour, and was approached by the orchestra entrances which were closed off by bronze gates.

The vast majority of the spectators sat on the eleven tiers immediately above (media cavea), and reached their seats by stairs connected with the passage dividing the ima cavea from the media. Above the media, and divided from it by a corridor, were three more rows of seats, the summa cavea.

Round the top of the cavea stood statues of the imperial family and municipal benefactors, all larger than life, and six bronze equestrian statues.



The outside of the theatre was constructed of tufa in opus reticulatum. The walls are faced in part with brick. The lower part was adorned with superimposed rows of eighteen arches, supported on pilasters, and the whole was covered with stucco, painted and decorated with marble cornices. Along the exterior, at the back of the stage, was a portico of Doric order, with fluted columns, coloured red below and white above.



The theatre was decorated with many kinds of marble. Of these, all have been lost, not so much by the violence of the eruption as by the rapacity of the excavators. Every part of the building, inside and out, was decorated with statuary. When the mud torrent rushed down, it destroyed much beyond recognition. Of the fifteen marble statues of the stage, of the bronze gilt equestrian statues of the cavea, of the bronze chariots and horses over the entrances of the orchestra, we have only broken fragments, except for one magnificent bronze horse, found in sufficiently large fragments to be pieced together.

In rather better condition are some of the large bronze statues that crowned the cavea including those of a Vestal, Nero Drusus as a priest, the ugly and realistic Marcus Calatorius and Tiberius Claudius Drusus (below).



The building survived the eruption remarkably well. Because of its structural strength, it must have resisted the onslaught of rock and ash until the volcanic flow spilt over the top of the semi-circular drum and poured in, eventually filling it up completely. The theatre as seen today, unfortunately, has been stripped of all decoration. Since it remains buried, it can only be reached through a section of the old tunnels, entered on Corso Ercolano. Two staircases, at either end of the lower portico, lead to a corridor whose walls are covered by graffiti left by visiting patrons. There is little else to be seen of the once magnificent decoration, save the remains of the scaenae frons, now devoid of any ornamentation.

As to the treasures found in the theatre, anything that was moveable and could be hauled up the well, was carried off, in the first instance, by its original discoverer, Prince d'Elboeuf of Austria. Not to be outdone, his successor, Rocque Joaquín de Alcubierre, was even more tenacious, enlarging the original shaft and stripping the place bare.

Taberna of Priapus

This thermopolium stands out among the numerous shops in the area for two reasons: the half-buried dolium (jar) near the hearth, in which some walnuts were found, and the small pantry covered with signinum opus, located in front of the counter. The painted Priapus behind the bar kept the evil eye away. From the shop the owner could directly enter his home, with 4-columned atrium and an upper floor.

Large Taberna

This is a pub with a marble-covered counter in which dolia (jars) are inserted. On the staggered shelves, also covered with marble, were stored the containers for serving food and drink. On the partition in the back room are a painting of a ship and some graffiti, including a Greek maxim saying: "Diogenes, the cynic, in seeing a woman swept away by a river exclaimed: 'Let one ill be carried away by another.' The taberna is connected to a small atrium-style dwelling, with two rooms frescoed in 'fourth style', partly preserved.

Plumbarius Shop

This shop, with a long counter of reused limestone blocks, belonged to a blacksmith or 'welder' (plumbarius); here we can see the smelting crucible and a few terracotta vats used to cool the forged pieces. Lead ingots, sections of piping, a bronze candelabrum, and a statuette in the process of being repaired, representing Bacchus with damascening (decorations) in gold, silver, and copper. Also note the wooden loft, still partly preserved.

Cucumas Shop

The pilaster at the entrance bears the painted sign, depicting four pitchers (cucumae the name has remained in a few dialects) of different colours, with the drinks sold here and a listing of the price of wine. At the top instead hovers the figure of Semo Sancus, a divinity often compared to Hercules and who was said to protect business, with the inscription ad Sancum. The panel at the bottom with the inscription NOLA in red letters is the announcement of a show: unusually, here we can also read the name of who wrote it: scri(ption)tor Aprilis a Capua. The shop may have been a caupona (inn), where drinks and food were served. One realises how like Europeans today these people were in so many aspects of life and lifestyle.

Thermopolium

The thermopolia were public dining establishments that served hot food and drinks (whence the Greek-style name): it was customary to lunch (prandium=midday meal) outside the home. This is a typical, simple structure: one room opening onto the road, with a brick tap - often decorated - into which were sunk the dolia (jars) containing the goods: at times, one could sit down in the back rooms to eat one's meal. In this thermopolium, note the dense tunnels dug in the Bourbon period, to recover archaeological material.

Thermopolium

This is a typical, simple structure: one room opening onto the road, with a brick counter decorated with marble or terracotta slabs, into which were sunk the dolia (jars) containing the goods: at times, one could sit down in the back rooms to eat one's meal. Many amphorae were found in the back room of this thermopolium, one of which bore an inscription painted by a Herculaneum craftsman: M. Luvi Alcimi Herclani.