

A PERSEVERANCE OF IDENTITY IN COLONIZED POMPEII

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Introduction

Before Pompeii acquired its modern infamy as the ancient Roman city buried and preserved under ash, it was simply a small Campanian port town. The fame that Pompeii holds now did not exist during the Roman Republic and Empire. Few ancient authors wrote about Pompeii in their literary works, but what does exist about it such as Strabo's *Geography* shows that Pompeii's rich ethnic history captured attention. From the time of its first settlement when the earliest phases of city walls were developed by Italic peoples around the sixth century BCE, Pompeii's identity began its development into a melting pot of cultural influences.¹ These influences separate from the earliest Italic inhabitants came from external dominating groups outside of the Campanian region such as the Etruscans and Samnites. Foreigners from all over the Mediterranean also came to Pompeii for trading and with them came new ideas and traditions that the Pompeians adopted as their own. During the Social Wars from 91-89 BCE, Pompeii joined the Italic allies in the combat against the Romans. The soldiers of the town fought fiercely in battle against the Roman general Lucius Cornelius Sulla Felix and his army. Ultimately, the Pompeians were not successful in defending their town and in 89 BCE, Sulla crushed the revolt in Campania. By 80 BCE, Sulla colonized Pompeii and renamed it *Colonia Cornelia Veneria Pompeianorum*, giving credit to himself, his patron goddess Venus, and the Samnite name Pompeii. Sulla sent Roman veteran soldiers to the town to take their place within the colony and subdue any possible opposition from the Pompeians who now had the status of Roman citizens. Many of the leading native citizens who were identified as creating any opposition had their political positions taken away and others may have had their property repossessed and

¹ Roger Ling, *Pompeii History, Life & Afterlife*, (Stroud, Gloucestershire: Tempus Publishing Limited, 2005) 29.

redistributed to the veteran soldiers as punishment for their defiance.² From then on until the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 CE, Pompeii was a mixed community of the Roman Republic and later the Empire.

The purpose of this paper is to study Pompeii's experience of becoming a Roman colony and how the generations after colonization maintained their pre colonized Pompeiian identity. After the colonization of the city began, the native Pompeians did not simply become Roman. They had the status of Roman citizens, but that did not mean they immediately adopted every aspect of the Roman way of life. The native Pompeians maintained their pre-colonization identity for 159 years after the veteran soldiers took over their town. This paper will examine that continuation of Pompeiian identity through archaeological evidence including a mosaic, wall paintings, and epigraphic evidence. It will also consider ancient literary sources that include Pompeii and the experience of the Campanian region. The objective is to look at the individual experience viewed through archaeological evidence and in broader historical terms provided by the written sources about the region. This project relies on evidence found through other scholars' research and attempts to bring them together to contribute a different perspective to Pompeii's experience. It will use the archaeological methodology suggested by Elizabeth Robinson in her research based on the small Samnite town of Larinum that was colonized by the Romans. Robinson suggests that following a local-level analysis of a colony while using various types of evidence will create a more accurate interpretation of the integration process of Italic peoples into the Roman Republic. Through her investigation, she found that Larinum experienced a stable process of integration into the Roman state despite ancient literary sources

² Jean-Paul Descoeudres, "History and Historical Sources," in *The World of Pompeii*, ed. John J. Dobbins and Pedar W. Foss, (New York: Routledge, 2007) 14-16.

claiming that it was a strongly disruptive process. It seems that the literary sources were describing the overall regional experience and by examining the localized archaeological evidence, Robinson concluded that Larinum's experience was not the same as the broader regional experience.³ In comparison to Southern Italy more individualized case studies have been done in north and central Italy. Those case studies provided insight into the processes of integration at the local level and revealed the changes and continuities of the community as a whole and the people themselves.⁴ Larinum seems to have some similarities to Pompeii. Both towns had an orderly and planned architectural layout and a sophisticated pre-Roman social structure.⁵ By combining archaeological and historical evidence, an improved understanding of Pompeian society can be created. The purpose of this is not to pit historical sources against archaeological evidence. The two types of sources both give insight into the past in different ways, and both offer perspectives that can be useful when put together. In the past, the fields of Roman archaeology and history were often kept separate, but now scholars have realized a better understanding of antiquity can be created by integrating the two fields of study. Eberhard Sauer wrote that breaking the boundaries between the fields of history and archaeology does not take away from a scholar's own position, "The ancient historian does not cease to be a historian once first engaged in fieldwork, nor does the archaeologist cease to be an archaeologist when embarking on studying ancient sources."⁶

³ Elizabeth C. Robinson, "A Localized Approach to the Study of Integration and Identity in Southern Italy." in *Processes of Integration and Identity Formation in the Roman Republic*, ed. Saskia T. Roselaar (Leiden: Brill, 2012) 247-250.

⁴ Robinson, *A Localized Approach to the Study of Integration and Identity in Southern Italy*, 247-250.

⁵ Robinson, *A Localized Approach to the Study of Integration and Identity in Southern Italy*, 252.

⁶ Eberhard W. Sauer, "One step forward, two steps back: Breaking down the boundaries between archaeology and ancient history in the twenty-first century" in *The Diversity of Classical Archaeology*, ed. Achim Lichtenberger and Rubina Raja (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepolis Publishers, 2017) 90. His explanation for justifying that using a separate field of study does not take away from a scholar's declared title.

This paper will contribute to the study of the complex integration of Pompeiian identity into the developing Roman colony and how that identity persisted on a case-by-case basis until the eruption of 79 CE. A simple overview of Pompeii gives the appearance of a Romanized colony, but an examination of the individual experience of some of its inhabitants reveals that some people within Pompeii's population chose to carry on their local Pompeiian identity after colonization. Enrico Benelli emphasizes this point well regarding epigraphic evidence in relation to Romanization in Italy:

These reflect a set of choices made by whoever commissioned the monument, and which are undoubtedly influenced by local culture as well as individual and familial considerations. At the same time, they are the result of a conscious interaction between the individual and his or her cultural makeup.⁷

When Benelli wrote this, the meaning of the term Romanization was still highly debated in the fields of history and archaeology. In the past, scholars believed Romanization occurred in every territory that the Romans conquered. They believed that the native people simply gave up their heritage and unanimously embraced a Roman lifestyle. This theory of an erasure of local culture stems from the time of European and American imperialism and is no longer accepted by modern scholars. It is now known that the identity of the conquered native people was much more complex and often persisted. It is true that many elements of Roman life were brought to conquered territories and changes did occur, but instead of completely disappearing, aspects of local culture prevailed. The most recent scholarly work that challenges the idea of Romanization as a process that erased local culture was done by Emma Dench, who argues that colonized non-Romans retained much of the native culture despite the overwhelming Roman presence.⁸ This

⁷ Enrico Benelli, "The Romanization of Italy through the Epigraphic Record," in *Italy and the West Comparative Issues in Romanization*, ed. Simon Keay and Nicola Terrenato (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2001) 9.

⁸ Emma Dench, *Empire and Political Cultures in the Roman World*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018) 157-159.

paper will use this approach to demonstrate through individual experiences how parts of the local culture and identity in Pompeii prevailed long after colonization.

Pre-Roman Pompeii

Pompeii had a rich ethnic history of varying cultures throughout its history. In the 6th century BCE, the area was first settled by indigenous Italic people who were likely influenced by either Greeks from the Bay of Naples or Etruscans who lived in nearby Capua. Evidence for this can be determined from the early building projects such as a Doric temple, a temple to Apollo, and a defensive wall.⁹ It was controlled politically at separate times by at least two groups that had an influence on the original Italic settlers of the area: the Etruscans and Samnites/Oscans.¹⁰ The city's geographical position along the Sarno River also opened it up to other cultural influences including Greek from the eastern Mediterranean and the surrounding Greek colonies of Campania, and Punic influences from the western Mediterranean including Sicily. The ancient author Strabo in 18-24 CE also took interest in those who occupied Pompeii before the Romans.¹¹ He wrote, "Both this settlement and the one next after it, Pompaia (past which flows the River Sarnus), were once held by the Osci; then, by the Tyrrheni and the Pelasgi; and after that, by the Samnitae; but they, too, were ejected from the places."¹² The Tyrrheni (Tyrrenians) were the Etruscans, but it is unclear on who the Pelasgi were. One theory is that the Pelasgi were the mythical Greek colonists that the Etruscans claimed their descent from, another theory is that

⁹ Pier Giovanni Guzzo, "The Origins and Development of Pompeii: the state of our understanding and some working hypotheses" in *The Making of Pompeii Studies in the History and Urban Development of an Ancient Town*, ed. Stevin Ellis (Dexter, Michigan: Journal of Roman Archaeology, L.L.C, 2011) 13.

¹⁰ Wallace-Hadrill, Andrew, et al, "Towards a History of Pre-Roman Pompeii: Excavations Beneath the House of Amarantus" in *Papers of the British School at Rome*, Vol. 67 (1995) 37-40.

¹¹ Daniele Duek, "The Date and Method of Composition of Strabo's "Geography" in *Hermes* 127, no. 4 (1999) 475.

¹² Strabo, *Geography*, 5.4.8: "Ὀσκοὶ δ' εἶχον καὶ ταύτην καὶ τὴν ἐφεξῆς Πομπαιάν, ἣν παραρρεῖ ὁ Σάρνος ποταμός, εἶτα Τυρρηνοὶ καὶ Πελασγοί, μετὰ ταῦτα δὲ Σαυνῖται· καὶ οὗτοι δ' ἐξέπεσον ἐκ τῶν τόπων. Translations of the ancient texts used in this paper are from the Loeb Classical Library.

the Pelasgi were native people with whom the Etruscans intermingled.¹³ In the sixth century BCE, the Etruscans may have dominated the local native people of the area, the nature of their domination is unclear because literary sources are not specific to what the Etruscan presence was and a sufficient amount of archaeological evidence has not yet been found to make clear conclusions. Although any possibility of Etruscan control over Pompeii most likely came to an end in 474 BCE after the city of Cumae (near Pompeii) asked Hieron, King of Syracuse for naval aid against the Tyrrhenians who were waging war against them. Diodorus wrote that with the help of the Syracusans, they conquered the Tyrrhenians in a great sea fight which humbled the Tyrrhenians and delivered the Cumaeans from their fears.¹⁴ What is clear is that the Etruscans did have a cultural influence over the indigenous people of Pompeii.¹⁵ The next political group that took control of Pompeii were the Samnites possibly as early as the fifth century BCE. A working theory from recent excavations suggests that there was a defensive wall dating to the fifth century BCE surrounding the town's oldest areas in what would be the Forum. The construction of a defensive wall suggests that the town contracted in size for defense as the inhabitants sought to oppose the Samnites who were invading the Campanian region at this time.¹⁶ The Samnites were an Oscan speaking group which is why they are sometimes called Oscans, but they were only a subgroup of Oscans because the Samnites were specifically a political affiliation made up

¹³ Ling, *Pompeii History, Life & Afterlife*, 34.

¹⁴ Diodorus Siculus, *The Library of History*, 11.51.2: Ἐπ' ἄρχοντος δ' Ἀθήνησιν Ἀκεστορίδου ἐν Ῥώμῃ τὴν ὑπατον ἀρχὴν διεδέξαντο Καίσιων Φάβιος καὶ Τίτος Οὐεργίνιος. ἐπὶ δὲ τούτων Ἰέρων μὲν ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Συρακοσίων, παραγενομένων πρὸς αὐτὸν πρέσβων ἐκ Κύμης τῆς Ἰταλίας καὶ δεομένων βοηθῆσαι πολεμουμένοις ὑπὸ Τυρρηνῶν θαλαττοκρατούντων, ἐξέπεμψεν αὐτοῖς συμμαχίαν τριήρεις ἰκανάς. οἱ δὲ τῶν νεῶν τούτων ἡγεμόνες ἐπειδὴ κατέπλευσαν εἰς τὴν Κύμην, μετὰ τῶν ἐγχωρίων μὲν ἐναυμάχησαν πρὸς τοὺς Τυρρηνοὺς, πολλὰς δὲ ναῦς αὐτῶν διαφθείραντες καὶ μεγάλη ναυμαχία νικήσαντες, τοὺς μὲν Τυρρηνοὺς ἐταπείνωσαν, τοὺς δὲ Κυμαίους ἠλευθέρωσαν τῶν φόβων, καὶ ἀπέπλευσαν ἐπὶ Συρακούσας.

¹⁵ Guzzo, *The Origins and development of Pompeii*, 13: evidence such as bucchero pottery with graffiti engraved in the Etruscan language.

¹⁶ Guzzo, *The Origins and development of Pompeii*, 15.

of tribes from areas in central and east Italy.¹⁷ These people united to create a league, which is referred to as the Samnite League.¹⁸ As the theory of the purpose of the defensive wall is still relatively new, the specific date of the Samnite League conquering the territory of Pompeii is not known, but can be assumed to be sometime around or after the fifth century BCE. The Samnites gave the territory the name *Pumpaiis* by at least 200-100 BCE as evidence from the earliest Oscan inscription found in the city used that Oscan name.¹⁹ During their occupation of Pompeii, Hellenistic cultural influences flourished, but excavations also revealed Punic forms of culture in some of the material content in the houses.²⁰ Each of these influences entered the local material culture, shaping the Pompeians into an identity that continued through war and colonization.

The Social War of the Italic allies against the Roman Republic took place between 91 and 89 BCE in the Italic Peninsula. It was a chaotic, violent, and massively deadly war that changed the ways in which Roman citizenship was granted. Ancient literary sources describe the Campanian region's experience in the Social War as a more violent and deadly part of the war. Pliny the Elder wrote that Stabiae was, "reduced to a farmhouse," by Sulla and his army.²¹ Orosius wrote that when Sulla's army went to besiege Pompeii, 18,000 Samnites were killed in battle.²² Although parts of Orosius' descriptions were flawed, it is still clear that Campania experienced much violence in the areas that surrounded Pompeii.²³ The only other mention by Appian of Pompeii's place in the war is that Sulla and his army camped in the hills near Pompeii

¹⁷ Neville McFerrin has explained that all Samnites are Oscan, but not all Oscans were Samnite.

¹⁸ For more information on the Samnite League and history of the Oscans: Gianluca Tagliamonte, "The Samnites" in *The Peoples of Ancient Italy* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter Inc., 2018) 473. [The Peoples of Ancient Italy - Google Books](#).

¹⁹ M.H. Crawford, W.M Broadhead, J.P.T. Clackson, F. Santangelo, S. Thompson, M. Watmough, eds., *Imagines Italicae A Corpus of Italic Inscriptions Vol. 2* (London: Institute of Classical Studies, 2011) 637-638.

²⁰ Morgan Eriksen, "Pompeian Resistance to Roman Colonization Revealed in Material Culture of Wall Paintings and Mosaic," (Research Paper, Ohio University, 2019) 6.

²¹ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 3.5.70.

²² Orosius, *History Against the Pagans*, 5.18.22-23.

²³ Orosius dated the siege of Pompeii to the wrong year and mistakenly called Sulla a consul.

when they attacked the Italic army of Lucius Cluentius before Sulla had defeated them and before the Italic army had fled to the nearby town of Nola.²⁴ But archaeological evidence reveals what the siege of Pompeii by Sulla might have been like. Damage to the city walls by Sulla's artillery can still be seen and stone balls were found in region VI in the House of the Vestals and the House of the Labyrinth indicating that this was a violent attack on the town.²⁵ However, the actual amount of violence is not known as there is no indication of how many people died. Federico Santangelo suggests that the Pompeians may have capitulated quickly to Sulla and his army since the town was not destroyed like the neighboring town of Stabiae.²⁶ There is also epigraphic evidence within the town from graffiti written in Oscan, which gave instructions to the local soldiers and people on which towers to go to during an attack.²⁷ The chronology of Pompeii's defeat is not known, but it can be dated to the spring of 89 BCE.²⁸ After its defeat, Pompeii's status was changed to a Roman municipium until 80 BCE, when Sulla needed to find land to reward his veteran soldiers and made Pompeii a colony.

Roman Pompeii

Sulla raised Pompeii's status to a colony in 80 BCE and renamed it the *Colonia Cornelia Veneria Pompeianorum*, giving its citizens the status of Roman citizens. He sent a few hundred Roman veteran soldiers to Pompeii to take their place within the colony, where it seems that the veteran soldiers mostly lived outside of the city walls in the *ager* of Pompeii. Stefano de Caro suggests that a minority of the properties in the *ager* would have belonged to Roman nobles who

²⁴ Appian, *BC*, 1.217-220.

²⁵ Ling, *Pompeii History, Life & Afterlife*, 51.

²⁶ Federico Santangelo, *Sulla, the Elites and the Empire A Study of Roman Policies in Italy and the Greek East* (Leiden: Brill, 2007) 69-70.

²⁷ Dart, *The Social War, 91 to 88 BCE*, 160.

²⁸ Santangelo, *Sulla, the Elites and the Empire*, 69.

used the homes as vacation houses, but the majority living in the countryside would have been the members for the new local colonial aristocracy.²⁹ This is the assumption for the housing circumstances because it was typical for a general to grant farm land to veteran soldiers to make a living with and because of the lack of evidence for any major housing construction within the city during the colonization period. This could mean that the colonists simply took over the homes of the native Pompeians who had either been killed or had their lands confiscated to provide land for the Roman colonists.³⁰ But there is also a lack of evidence concerning how Pompeian properties could have been redistributed to the soldiers. Therefore, if housing outside the city walls was the case for the veteran soldiers, then the native Pompeians who lived within the city walls at least kept their homes. But even with the likely housing situation of the veteran soldiers, their presence within the public spaces of the city were substantial.

Major public building projects were undertaken rapidly by the colonists who moved to Pompeii beginning with a temple in the Forum of Pompeii, which was redesigned and dedicated to the Roman god Jupiter in region VII.8.1.³¹ The Comitium in region VIII.3.32 and VIII.3.33, to some extent was possibly constructed in the Samnite period, but was taken over and completed within the first year of the colony by the veteran soldiers.³² The colonists also redesigned the old temple of Apollo in region VII.7.32 in a Roman fashion and built a new temple for Venus in region VIII.3.1, who was the new patron goddess proclaimed by Sulla.³³ Two veteran soldiers

²⁹ Stefano de Caro, "The Villas of Boscoreale," in *Roman Frescoes from Boscoreale* (New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2010) 9-10.

³⁰ Ling, *Pompeii History, Life & Afterlife*, 58.

³¹ The dating to the new constructions or changes made to original buildings can be placed to the period of colonization because of the technique used which differed from the Pompeian style. The colonists used a form of *opus incertum* called quasi-reticulate, which is when, "the facing blocks are roughly standardized in size and shape to produce the effect almost of a network (reticulate) of little square pieces set diagonally": Ling, *Pompeii History, Life & Afterlife*, 55; A good map of Pompeii can be found at this link: <http://pompeiiites.org/en/pompeii-map/>.

³² Ling, *Pompeii History, Life & Afterlife*, 55.

³³ The former patron god of Pompeii before colonization.

who became leading magistrates were Marcus Porcius and Gaius Quinctius Valgus. They were responsible for the construction of the Small Theater (Odeon) in region VIII.7.19, and the amphitheater in region II.6. The Small Theater was built in a Greek fashion directly next to the Large Theater, but it was unlikely that the veteran soldiers built it to promote Greek culture. Paul Zanker suggests that it was an assembly chamber that held meetings for the colonists.³⁴ Porcius and Valgus had the amphitheater built at a later date and used it for a purely Roman type of entertainment, which were gladiator combats and wild beast hunts. The dedicatory inscription left by them also suggests that they built the amphitheater to meet the demands of the colonists rather than the native Pompeiians. The inscription reads: “Gaius Quinctius Valgus, son of Gaius, and Marcus Porcius, son of Marcus, quinquennial duumvirs, for the honor of the colony, saw to the construction of the amphitheater at their own expense and gave the area to the colonists in perpetuity.”³⁵ It is significant that the inscription specifically says, “for the honor of the colony,” and, “to the colonists in perpetuity.” This seems to suggest that the native Pompeiians were purposely not mentioned, and that this inscription was only intended for the Roman colonists. The colonists built the new Forum Baths in region VII.5.24 as well and modernized the Stabian Baths to Roman expectations.³⁶ It seems that the money to fund these projects either came from the wealth of the colonists themselves or in some cases such as with the Forum Baths, the colonists used public funds.³⁷ It is clear that the veteran soldiers had a massive impact on the city by looking at the changes in architecture. Federico Santangelo interprets the monumental

³⁴ Ling, *Pompeii History, Life & Afterlife*, 54: A suggestion made by Paul Zanker included by Roger Ling in his work.

³⁵ Pompeii in Pictures: C(aius) Quinctius C(ai) f(iilius) Valgus M(arcus) Porcius M(arci) f(iilius) duovir(i) quinq(uennales) colonia<e=I> honoris caus{s}a spectacula de sua pe<c=Q>(unia) fac(iunda) coer(averunt) et colon{e}is locum in perpetu<u=O>m deder(unt).

³⁶ Ling, *Pompeii History, Life & Afterlife*, 56-57.

³⁷ Cooley, E. Alison, and Cooley, M.G.L, *Pompeii and Herculaneum A Sourcebook*, (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2014) 31: CIL X 819 “Lucius Caesius, son of Gaius, duumvir with judicial power, and Gaius Occius son of Marcus, and Lucius Niraemius, son of Aulus, duumvirs, by decree of the town councilors, at public expense, saw to the building-work and approved it.”

landscape of post-colonization Pompeii as indicating a possible problem of coexistence between the native Pompeians and the veteran soldiers. “The colonists asserted their presence by renewing old public spaces and by creating new ones, which were usually juxtaposed to the existing structures, and imposed themselves with their size.”³⁸ This issue along with political issues created tensions between the colonists and the native Pompeians.

A *collegium* of three *deductores* carried out the political foundation of the colony. Sulla’s nephew Publius Cornelius Sulla was among these *deductores*. In the first years of the colony, the colonists were elected to the public offices while the Samnite names of the previously elected native Pompeians mostly disappeared. This suggests that many native Pompeians were disenfranchised from the politics of their own city for a period of time, most likely because they were anti-Roman supporters.³⁹ In 62 BCE, Cicero gave insight into the political tension in the city in *Pro Sulla*. In this speech, Cicero defended Publius Cornelius Sulla against charges of instigating the native Pompeians to join the conspiracy of Catiline. Cicero wrote:

Do you think that they did join the conspiracy? Who ever said this or was there even a hint of a suspicion of it? “Sulla,” he says “set them at odds with the new settlers in order to use the division and dissension he had caused to get control of the town with the aid of the inhabitants of Pompeii.” In the first place, the whole quarrel between the inhabitants and the new settlers was reported to the patrons when it had grown chronic and had been pursued for many years.⁴⁰

³⁸ Santangelo, *Sulla, the Elites and the Empire*, 160.

³⁹ Ling, *Pompeii History, Life & Afterlife*, 52.

⁴⁰ Cicero, *Pro Sulla*, 21.60: *Iam vero quod obiecit Pompeianos esse a Sulla impulsos ut ad istam coniurationem atque ad hoc nefarium facinus accederent, id cuius modi sit intellegere non possum. An tibi Pompeiani coniurasse videntur? Quis hoc dixit umquam, aut quae fuit istius rei vel minima suspicio? “Diiunxit,” inquit, “eos a colonis ut hoc discidio ac dissensione facta oppidum in sua potestate posset per Pompeianos habere.” Primum omnis Pompeianorum colonorumque dissensio delata ad patronos est, cum iam inveterasset ac multos annos esset agitata;*

The quarrel had existed for many years, the exact years are not known, but would have to be between 80-62 BCE.⁴¹ Cicero then explained further:

The inhabitants of Pompeii who have been included in the charge by the prosecution have come to court to support him with no less enthusiasm. Although they quarreled with the new settlers about promenades and elections, they were of one mind about their joint safety. And I do not think that even this is an achievement of Publius Sulla that I should pass over in silence: that although he founded the colony and although political circumstances caused the privileged position of the new settlers to clash with the interests of the inhabitants of Pompeii, he is held in such affection and is so popular with both parties that he is felt not to have dispossessed the one but to have established the prosperity of both.⁴²

Cicero's description of the native Pompeians' circumstances confirms that the colonists held privilege over them. Suffrage and representation in the city were once theirs without interference from outsiders, but the colonists changed this to their own terms. They were no longer in a position to be the main deciders on issues of legal and economic decisions for the city as the colonists now held more privilege over the city. Therefore, it is easy to see why this issue caused tension and quarrels between the native Pompeians and colonists as this happens so many times throughout history.

Identity

The study of identity in the ancient world is a subject that has received much scholarly attention in recent years as it became accepted that local culture did not disappear under colonization. Some scholars such as Martin Pitts are skeptical of the attention that identity receives in Roman archaeology, "Such overwhelming interest raises the question of whether

⁴¹ Santangelo, *Sulla, the Elites and the Empire*, 164.

⁴² *Pro Sulla*, 21.61-62: *Adsunt pari studio Pompeiani, qui ab istis etiam in crimen vocantur; qui ita de ambulatione ac de suffragiis suis cum colonis dissenserunt ut idem de communi salute sentirent. Ac ne haec quidem P. Sullae mihi videtur silentio praetereunda esse virtus, quod, cum ab hoc illa colonia deducta sit, et cum commoda colonorum a fortunis Pompeianorum rei publicae fortuna diiunxerit, ita carus utrisque est atque iucundus ut non alteros demovisse sed utrosque constituisse videatur.*

identity warrants the amount of attention it currently enjoys in Anglo-American research in Roman archaeology.”⁴³ The answer to this is that it does warrant the attention that it receives. The idea of conquered people instantly giving up every aspect of their culture and identity was imposed on the people colonized by the Romans because of the Anglo-American perception of imperialism in the 20th century, so if anything, scholars have the responsibility to give back the identity that was once overlooked.

Although this previous research into identity has opened up a new view of the people conquered by the Romans, much of this was generalized by creating rules and models that were applied to entire regions.⁴⁴ The problem with this is that each conquered people had their own cultural and historical background that differed from even the next town over. This was especially true for the Campanian region, which had a combination of Samnite communities and Greek colonies inhabiting it by the time the Romans entered the territory. Generalizing does not give a complete understanding of the people, which is why both the historical and archaeological evidence of each community needs to be researched before concluding what kind of identities existed in each community.

The research of identity, particularly ethnic identity is a modern construction resulting from the era of Western imperialism.⁴⁵ Studying identity can be handled in multiple ways, but for the identity of ancient people the type of evidence one would prefer to have (as is usual of

⁴³ Martin Pitts, *The Emperor's New Clothes*, 709.

⁴⁴ Saskia Roselaar, “Introduction: Integration and Identity in the Roman Republic,” in *Processes of Integration and Identity Formation in the Roman Republic*, ed. Saskia T. Roselaar (Leiden: Brill, 2012) 3.

⁴⁵ Guy Bradley, “Romanization the End of the Peoples of Italy?,” in *Ancient Italy Regions without Boundaries*, ed. Guy Bradley, Elena Isayeu, and Corrina Riva (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2007) 295. Defines ethnic identity, “the sense of identity possessed by social groups in relation to outsiders, an identity can be expressed in various symbols, such as elements of their material culture, and in shared beliefs.”

ancient civilizations) is simply no longer there or has yet to be discovered.⁴⁶ To conceptualize an idea about the identity of an ancient person, it requires one to research aspects such as material culture and language. Each piece of evidence is a result of a choice made by an individual who either wrote the graffito or painted an image themselves or had a mosaic, painting, or inscription commissioned for themselves. Each was done in a specific way to communicate something about themselves whether an individual was aware of it or not.⁴⁷ Pompeii offers a unique opportunity to learn about identity because of the state of preservation of the city as a result of the volcanic eruption. There is more material evidence preserved to examine and construct an identity of the people who lived there based on their material culture and displays of language. Theorizing an identity is a complex process and must be done carefully to not simply create an inaccurate identity to people of the past.⁴⁸ The examples examined in the sections below are all reflections of individual Pompeians who made choices to represent their identity in visual forms. Each explanation of identity was carefully thought through to determine a theory of what each evidence could reflect about the identity of its maker and how that evidence represented the Pompeian identity.

Epigraphic Evidence

In Pompeii, Roman veteran soldiers responded in multiple ways to uses of the Oscan language, particularly to inscriptions. They could have maliciously destroyed or erased Oscan inscriptions or reused the building material to build something with the inscription left on it but no longer visible. Other Oscan inscriptions were left in place, but Alison Cooley suggests this

⁴⁶ Evidence such as firsthand accounts written by an average person.

⁴⁷ Mark Grahame, "Material Culture and Roman Identity," in *Cultural Identity in the Roman Empire*, ed. Ray Laurence and Joanne Berry (London: Routledge, 1998).

⁴⁸ Pitts, *The Emperor's New Clothes*, 111.

was simply because they did not notice the inscriptions or removing it would mean destroying the entire structure.⁴⁹ The Romans especially during the empire under the ideology of *tota Italia* by Augustus determined that Latin held an important role in the Roman territories.⁵⁰ An example of an erasure of the Oscan language occurred long after colonization around 20 BCE in the Forum of Pompeii. On a niche on the west side of the Forum, an Oscan inscription was erased on the *mensa ponderaria*, which was the official set of standard measurements and new measuring holes were modified as well. A Latin inscription commemorated this change as being done by a local magistrate Aulus Clodius Flaccus by decree of the town councilors.⁵¹ For the attitude towards non-Latin languages Pliny the Elder wrote:

Chosen by the providence of the gods to make heaven itself more glorious, to unite scattered empires, to make manners gentle, to draw together in converse by community of language the jarring and uncouth tongues of so many nations, to give mankind civilization, and in a word to become throughout the world the single fatherland of all the races.⁵²

The Romans saw a language such as Oscan as “jarring” or “uncouth” and had a lesser view of it and possibly the people that used it. The fact that there is evidence of Oscan continuance within the city shows that despite the inferior view of the language, there were individuals who wanted it to be preserved and prolonged. When the veteran soldiers colonized Pompeii, Latin quickly became the language used for government and law. It appeared all over the colony, particularly on monumental inscriptions as the colonists commemorated their contributions to the city.⁵³ At

⁴⁹ Alison E Cooley, “The survival of Oscan in Roman Pompeii,” in *Becoming Roman, Writing Latin? Literacy and Epigraphy in the Roman West* (Dexter, Michigan: Journal of Roman Archaeology L.L.C, 2002) 80-81.

⁵⁰ Cooley, E. Alison, “Introduction,” in *Becoming Roman, Writing Latin? Literacy and Epigraphy in the Roman West* (Dexter, Michigan: Journal of Roman Archaeology L.L.C, 2002) 10.

⁵¹ Cooley, *The survival of Oscan in Roman Pompeii*, 82.

⁵² Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 3.39: numine deum electa quae caelum ipsum clarius faceret, sparsa congregaret imperia ritusque molliret et tot populorum discordes ferasque linguas sermonis commercio contraheret ad colloquia et humanitatem homini daret, breviterque una cunctarum gentium in toto orbe patria fieret.

⁵³ Cooley, *The survival of Oscan in Roman Pompeii*, 79.

this time, the native Pompeians would have been familiar with Latin and the elite may have been able to read, write, and speak in it, but Oscan was the language of choice for the Pompeians until colonization made Latin more commonly used. Over generations, Oscan became used less and less as the use of Latin increased, but its importance and overall usage did not disappear. The epigraphic evidence examined below suggests that there were individuals in Pompeii who continued to use Oscan and in some instances who chose to preserve Oscan inscriptions and graffiti. The evidence consists of two inscriptions and two examples of graffiti found in various regions in Pompeii ranging from the second century BCE to 79 CE that were written with the Oscan alphabet or in Latinized Oscan.

The first is the inscription of Vibius Adiranus written in the Oscan alphabet on a limestone tablet and found in 1797 in the area called the Samnite Palestra in VIII.7.29.⁵⁴ It is debated whether this was a copy made during the Empire of the original inscription or if it is the original from the second century BCE reused in the wall that it was found near during the excavation. The inscription reads:

v(ibis) aadirans v(ibieis) eitiuvam paam
 vereiiaì pùmpaiianaì trisraa
 mentud deded eìsak eitiuvad
 v(ibis) viìnikiis m(a)r(aheis) kvaìsstur pump-
 aiians trìibùm ekak kùmben-
 nieis tanginud ùpsannam
 deded isidum prùfatted⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Crawford, *A Corpus of Italic Inscriptions*, 657.

⁵⁵ Crawford, *A Corpus of Italic Inscriptions*, 657-658.

This translates to, “Vibius Adiranus, son of Vibius, granted money in his will to the people of Pompeii; with this money, the Pompeian quaestor, Vibius Vinicius, son of Maras, by decree of the assembly, issued a contract for this to be built, and he himself approved it.”⁵⁶ As mentioned, the date and whether it is the original or a copy are still unknown. The records of its archaeological context only add to the questions surrounding it. In 1797, an archaeologist F. La Vega wrote, “Nell’edificio suddetto si è trovata una tavola lesionata di marmo con iscrizione, che il signor Perez Conde non comprende, né può copiare.” He later wrote, “si è trovata una lapide con iscrizione in lingua etrusca conservatissima, e di caratteri eccellentemente formati.”⁵⁷

Another archaeologist C. Bonucci wrote in 1827 that the inscription was found, “presso del muro che divide quest’edifizio dal Tempio d’Iside.”⁵⁸ Because of these differing descriptions about the find spot, it is difficult to decide whether this inscription is the original or if it is a copy and whether it was built into the wall for display or simply used as construction material. Alison Cooley provides the theory that the stone tablet with the inscription on it was purposely set in a new wall built in 62 CE after a destructive earthquake damaged much of Pompeii. The wall was built to separate the palestra from the Temple of Isis, which was rebuilt and expanded after the earthquake. She suggests that this inscription would have been on display until 79 CE.⁵⁹ This is likely because of the state of preservation of the tablet. Katherine McDonald disagrees with this and argues that it cannot be certain if the inscription was on display in the wall. She suggests that lack of precise archaeological content could mean that it was even used as part of the flooring.⁶⁰

However, this is doubtful just by the state of preservation of the block because if it were flooring

⁵⁶Cooley, *Pompeii and Herculaneum A Sourcebook*, 13.

⁵⁷ Crawford, *A Corpus of Italic Inscriptions*, 657.

⁵⁸ Crawford, *A Corpus of Italic Inscriptions*, 657.

⁵⁹ Cooley, *The survival of Oscan in Roman Pompeii*, 81.

⁶⁰ Katherine McDonald, “The Testament of Vibius Adiranus,” in *The Journal of Roman Studies* Vol. 102 (Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies, 2012) 44.

material there should be more damage to it. McDonald also argues that the inscription on the tablet was simply used as building material for either the floor or the wall and that it may have not even been visible if it was built in the wall. She claims that even if it was visible, it may not have been important to those who built the wall.⁶¹ This is also doubtful because the wall was built to separate the Temple of Isis from an old Samnite area of what possibly used to be a palestra. Romans would not have frequented the temple of Isis as often in comparison to temples for other gods or anything associated with Samnites or Oscan. On the other hand, Pompeians identifying as Samnite would have viewed the inscription as more than just building material, and deliberately placed it where it could be on display. In addition, if the tablet had been used for any purpose other than for display, the tablet most likely would have been damaged in some way other than the damage it accumulated from the eruption. Whether this inscription was a copy or the original, it still maintains significance. If it was the original, then it was carefully preserved for hundreds of years throughout all the changes Pompeii experienced through war, colonization, and natural disasters. The same idea is relevant to the inscription if it was a copy, although this means that an individual or group went to even greater length by having such a precise copy of the inscription made by someone who could inscribe Oscan letters so elegantly. One may also wonder about the Oscan word *kvaïsstur* meaning *quaestor* in Latin being used in the inscription, and whether this means that the inscription could be given a Roman date. But as mentioned before, the Pompeian elite had knowledge of the Latin language before colonization, and words like *aidilis* in Oscan for the Latin word *aedile* are also found in other Oscan inscriptions predating Roman colonization.⁶² *Quaestor* was simply another Latin word that had been learned by the pre-colonization Pompeian elite who then “oscanized” the word to be used in their own

⁶¹ McDonald, *The Testament of Vibius Adiranus*, 45.

⁶² Cooley, *The survival of Oscan in Roman Pompeii*, 83.

language. The content of the inscription is also significant because it commemorated the Pompeian financially responsible for the building project. Because the inscription was preserved, the site remained as an acknowledgement to that Pompeian. Therefore, the inscription could represent the Pompeian identity from the use of Oscan and the commemoration of the Pompeian responsible for it, and the deliberate preservation of this inscription also upheld that Pompeian identity long after Roman colonization.

Next is the inscription found in 1831 on an altar in the subsidiary atrium of the House of the Faun VI.12.2. This inscription is dated between 150-100 BCE and was preserved by the owners of the house until the eruption of Vesuvius. It was written in the Oscan alphabet and reads:

fluusai.⁶³

The translation of this inscription is, “To Flora,” who was a common goddess in many cultures. The owners built this house between 180-170 BCE during the Samnite period of the city and their descendants lived there until the eruption.⁶⁴ The house was lavishly decorated and took the space of an entire block, making it the largest house excavated to date in Pompeii, therefore suggesting they were among the most prominent and influential families in the city. In this house, the family experienced the Social War, Roman colonization, and the years after where they chose to preserve their pre-colonization identity, which was comprised of Samnite/Oscan elements. With their elite status, the family had the financial resources available to renovate their

⁶³ Crawford, *A Corpus of Italic Inscriptions*, 682.

⁶⁴ Ada Cohen, *The Alexander Mosaic Stories of Victory and Defeat* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 176: The assumption is that it was the family continuing to live there throughout the generations because of the maintenance of the Oscan/Samnite elements of the house. Other theories propose that another Samnite family could have lived there at any point and maintained the house, which is possible. Others propose a Roman veteran soldier’s family took the house, but this is unlikely.

home to keep up with the changing styles of decor. It was common among the Pompeiians to redecorate their homes especially among the elite who had the financial ability to do so. After the destructive earthquake of 62 CE, the need for renovations on homes was even greater since the earthquake had severely damaged much of the city. Despite this availability, the individuals in the family chose to maintain the original décor of their home, which included this inscription. The preservation of identity was so important to this family that even the younger generations understood its importance and maintained what was left of that identity. This was an example of an heirloom. Just as families in modern times preserve an object of particular importance to them, the individuals in this family did the same in the House of Faun. It is possible that the Oscan inscription and dedication to the goddess Flora evoked the past for this identity and reminded them of their pre-colonization Pompeiian identity.⁶⁵ In addition, devotion to household deities worshipped by ancestors was considered a positive trait, and so an essential part of identity. For this inscription to be preserved for so long until the eruption of Vesuvius, it showed just how important this inscription and altar was to the family and suggests the perseverance of the pre-colonization identity in Pompeii.

Additional evidence of the local preservation of the Oscan language comes from a mixed Latin-Oscan graffito found during an excavation in 1926 on a wall near the outside of the entrance to the Thermopolium of Prima which was a part of the multifunctional complex of the House of Menander in I.10.4.⁶⁶ This graffito was incised on the wall in a quadratic shape and reads:

⁶⁵ Lynley McAlpine, "Heirlooms on the Walls: Republican Paintings and Imperial Viewers in Pompeii", in *Beyond Iconography Materials, Methods, and Meaning in Ancient Surface Decoration*, (Boston: Archaeological Institute of America 2015) 176. McAlpine applies this "evoking of the past" to first style wall painting in the House of Faun, but the same idea is relevant to inscriptions as well.

⁶⁶Peter Schrijver, "Oscan Love of Pompeii," in *Glotta* (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2016) 223.

R O M A
 O I I M
 M I I O
 A M O R⁶⁷

This graffito had many interpretations over its translation since its discovery. Many scholars who tried to solve it simply ignored that there were four vertical strokes in the center of the graffito that represented letters, or they mistakenly replaced the strokes with dots. Margherita Guarducci, first proposed a possible solution, but there are still issues with her interpretation. She concluded that OIIM and MIIO were the Latin equivalents of OLIM and MILO, which would make this graffito translate to, “Rome was my love once, now it is Milo”. This translation does not make much sense and Guarducci explained it as a palindrome, which was not written to make sense. Peter Schrijver does not accept this interpretation. He argues that the original strokes in the graffito must be taken as the letters they represent. If these strokes in the middle lines are letters as Schrijver suggests, then Oscan is the only language that provides the alphabetical script and vocabulary to make sense of these words in the graffito. Therefore, this graffito combines the Latin words *Roma* and *Amor*, and the Oscan words *Miio* and *Oiim*. Schrijver determined that MIIO is nominative singular feminine form of a first-person possessive pronoun, meaning “my”.⁶⁸ He also determined that the Oscan word OIIM could be the equivalent of the Latin word *odium*, which means “hate”. By accepting that this is a mixed Latin/Oscan graffito, it would translate to, “Rome (is) hate, mine (is) love.”⁶⁹ This suggests that this ancient person was describing love for Pompeii and hate for Rome. This is significant because this individual inscribed the graffito in a public area where it would have been seen by passersby, especially

⁶⁷ Schrijver, *Oscan Love of Pompeii*, 223.

⁶⁸ Schrijver, *Oscan Love of Pompeii*, 224. MIIO is the Oscan equivalent of the Latin *mea*.

⁶⁹ Schrijver, *Oscan Love of Pompeii*, 224.

those approaching the entrance to the Thermopolium of Prima. It shows that its author was bilingual in both Oscan and Latin, so it most likely was written by someone of native Pompeian descent. Since there were others in the city that could also read Oscan, this graffito could have been seen as a joke, a bold statement, or possibly even a passive expression of resistance because only these people would be able to read and understand the meaning, while excluding the Roman colonists from it. The Roman colonists might have simply seen *Roma* and *Amor* and assumed it was expressing love for Rome, while locals who still used Oscan knew the true meaning of the graffito. The dating of this graffito can be placed around 59-79 CE as the wall it was inscribed on had only been reconstructed with a style characteristic of Pompeii's final years to better fit the new Thermopolium which was also decorated with fourth style wall paintings.⁷⁰ The inscription remained on the wall until 79 CE and only faded from poor preservation after excavations in 1926. Because the dating of the inscription is so late in Pompeii's history, it suggests that Oscan never disappeared from use or importance. One must also wonder why the owners of the Thermopolium never removed the graffito. Did owners share the same opinion as the author of the graffito? Did the owner himself write it? The placement of the graffito was near the entrance to the House of the Menander, which was owned by Quintus Poppaeus Sabinus of the wealthy and very elite Campanian Poppei family.⁷¹ Whether he also owned the Thermopolium of Prima is unknown, but the fact that such a bold statement was written near the home of such an elite family who would need to be concerned with their reputation and relations with the Romans suggests that they may have allowed this graffito to stay in place.⁷² The Poppei family name is

⁷⁰ Roger Ling, et al, *The Insula of the Menander at Pompeii Volume 1: the Structures*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997) 45-46.

⁷¹ Pompeii sites

⁷² Curiously, this is the family that was related to Poppea Sabina, the second wife of Nero who murdered Poppea's son and Poppea herself while she was pregnant. I hope to explore the connection of this graffito to the Poppei's family home in a future work.

also of Oscan origin, suggesting that this family may have lived in Pompeii before Roman colonization, which could mean that they identified with the pre-colonization Pompeiian identity. With the multiple theories on who the author of the graffito was and assuming Schrijver's translation is correct, it remains clear that the individual was bilingual in Oscan and Latin, was a non-supporter of the Romans and intended for other Oscan speakers to know it, and had a love for their town of Pompeii and Oscan language that they wanted expressed for public display. From this evidence it can be suggested that this graffito shows local traditions, language and identity continued long after the colonization of the city.

The last example of epigraphic evidence is an incised graffito found on a wall of a brothel in region VII. 12.18, written in the Oscan alphabet. This graffito is dated from 72-79 CE and suggests that Oscan was still in use by an individual this late in Pompeii's existence. It reads:

markas⁷³

This translates to, "of Marca," or, "Marcus".⁷⁴ The dating of this graffito is supported by obverses and reverses of coins depicting Galba, Vespasian, and Titus that were pressed into wet plaster on the same wall and were close to this graffito. This specifically included a coin with its reverse dating to 72 CE.⁷⁵ The precise dating of this graffito is significant as it suggests that Oscan never completely disappeared from use in Pompeii. An individual in the final years before the disaster of Vesuvius knew enough about the Oscan language to be able to write a name whether it was his own or someone else's.⁷⁶ Because the individual chose to write in the Oscan alphabet for spontaneous writing such as this graffito, it could be presumed that Oscan was this

⁷³ Crawford, *A Corpus of Italic Inscriptions*, 703.

⁷⁴ Crawford, *A Corpus of Italic Inscriptions*, 703.

⁷⁵ Crawford, *A Corpus of Italic Inscriptions*, 702.

⁷⁶ Who the name belongs will most likely never be known.

person's first language as well. This is not to infer that every person descended from a native Pompeiian still knew and used Oscan, but it does suggest that there were individuals who did and those who expected others to be able to comprehend what they wrote. With this evidence of an Oscan graffito preserved in Pompeii so late in its history, it can be suggested that the local Pompeiian identity incorporated Oscan as a spoken and written language.

Material Evidence:

Material evidence such as mosaics and wall paintings provide scholars with the opportunity to interpret what an individual wanted to represent or convey in an image. Cohen states, "all interpretation is based on certain constitutive assumptions that often cannot be empirically proven or sustained with complete rationality and without contradiction. However, interpretation can be explicit in its own assumptions and launching points."⁷⁷ By interpreting any symbols that seem distinguished within the image and taking into consideration the placement of it within a domestic space, one can begin to understand the purpose and symbolic message that an individual may have wanted to represent in each image. The placement of the image within the house is important because Pompeiian houses were constructed on the concept of private and public spaces. The public areas of the house were situated near the entrances, which were closest to the streets. These were the rooms intended for anyone to see. Often times, the public spaces in the home had some type of shop near the entrance and then the domestic parts followed. The private spaces were located in the areas closest to the back of the home. These spaces had limited access points and would only be used by members of the household or by those who were invited to enter.⁷⁸ To distinguish between public and private spaces, archaeologists use the axis of

⁷⁷ Cohen, *The Alexander Mosaic Stories of Victory and Defeat*, 90.

⁷⁸ Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, *Houses and Society in Pompeii and Herculaneum*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994) 10-12.

differentiation to determine whether a room was public or private.⁷⁹ The material evidence examined in this paper includes the *Alexander Mosaic*, the parodies of Aeneas and Romulus wall paintings, the *Spartacus* wall painting, and the *Brawl at the Amphitheater* wall painting. The images represent the pre-colonization identity displayed in both public and private areas of the domestic spaces, with the exception being the “Parodies of Romulus and Aeneas” paintings as their placement is not known.

Figure 1



80

The *Alexander Mosaic* found originally in the exedra of the House of Faun in region VI.12.2. was massive and expensive for its time. The mosaic took up most of the space within the exedra near the back of atrium and was almost impossible to see all at once.⁸¹ Andrew F Stewart describes the surroundings of the mosaic, “Fronted by a Nilotic mosaic and entered via

⁷⁹ A scale applied to Roman houses to determine what parts of the house are public and what parts are private.

⁸⁰ Late 2nd or early 1st century BCE. Battle between Alexander the Great and King Darius (Battle of Issos).” Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli, Artstor, accessed November 8, 2019. https://library-artstor.org.proxy.library.ohio.edu/asset/LESSING_ART_1039490327.: Figure 1.

⁸¹ Andrew F Stewart, *Faces of Power: Alexander’s Image and Hellenistic Politics*, (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993) 131.

two columns *in antis*, the exedra as decorated with First Style imitation masonry embellished with trompe l'oeil drapery on its socle, and figured frieze in stucco on the central section of the wall.”⁸² It took over one million small tiles to create the piece and it was 17 X 9 ft. long and it was preserved in the House of Faun until it was excavated and eventually removed for display in Naples.⁸³ The image depicts Alexander the Great and the Persian King Darius III with their armies meeting in a violent battle. This mosaic is generally accepted as a legitimate copy of a lost late fourth century BCE original Greek painting. However, even though this was a copy of a Greek painting, it does not mean that this mosaic had no originality of its own that differed from the original painting.⁸⁴ Since the mosaic was laid between 120-100 BCE, it can be considered a mosaic of the Samnite period that predated the Social Wars by a short period of time. It was another example of the Samnite appreciation and display of Greek cultural influences. In her study, Ada Cohen produced a particularly detailed interpretation and examination of this mosaic, but her point of view on the image is that it was a Roman mosaic despite the fact that there are no elements of Roman art depicted. She suggests that it is presumptuous to associate and assert a voice to the depictions within the image on behalf of the owner of the mosaic that they did not explicitly voice.⁸⁵ The simple fact is that this was not a Roman mosaic, therefore her interpretations pertaining to Roman reasoning or elements do not relate to this mosaic. It was commissioned before the Social Wars even began, at least 20 years before Sulla colonized Pompeii and before Roman veteran soldiers began to change the city. There were no elements of

⁸² Stewart, *Faces of Power: Alexander's Image and Hellenistic Politics*, 131.

⁸³ Donatella Mazzoleni and Umberto Pappalardo, *Domus, Wall painting in the Roman House* (Los Angeles: Getty Publication, 2004) 54.

⁸⁴ Cohen, *The Alexander Mosaic Stories of Victory and Defeat*, 51-52. Although Cohen agrees that this mosaic is a copy, she argues that it is only a part of a few examples of painting and mosaics made in the Roman period that copy Greek works. She challenges scholars to look at paintings and mosaics made in the Roman period as original and to not assume that every image is an “echo of lost Greek masterpieces”.

⁸⁵ Cohen, *The Alexander Mosaic Stories of Victory and Defeat*, 194.

Roman art as Cohen even stated herself, but instead Greek elements which were appreciated by the Samnites. In addition to this, there were also elements shared by the Samnite culture, and the Italians in general. Neville McFerrin points out that one element in the image is the withered tree positioned behind Alexander the Great, which would not be a good omen to Italic viewers who associated trees with divine intervention. She also points out that the luxury in the adornment of Darius' armor would resonate with Samnite warriors who favored armor similar to what Darius wears in the image.⁸⁶ Cohen describes what this luxury is for both Darius and other Persians in the image, "One can see it all: minute embroideries on Persian trousers and kaftans, elaboratively decorated horses and military gear, complete with stars, hippocamps, pegasoi, birds, swans, and griffins with furred wings and beaked heads."⁸⁷ In addition to this, the mosaic was created in the House of Faun, a house belonging to a Samnite family until the eruption of Vesuvius. The family is seen as Samnite because of the preservation of the first-style wall paintings, the preserved Oscan inscription, and the from Samnite elements in the *Alexander Mosaic*. The mosaic is an example of a traditional Greek scene being presented with Samnite elements, producing a Samnite interpretation of the scene.

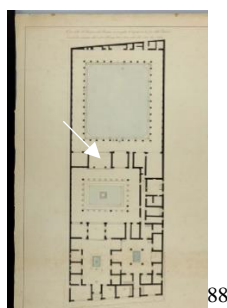
It could be possible that the mosaic was placed in a private area of this enormous domestic space to simply to enjoy its beauty, but another explanation is possible as well. One must wonder if this mosaic came to have a meaning to the family that they did not want known publicly. When the mosaic was originally commissioned the owner may have been less concerned with the placement of the mosaic being private and more concerned about the position for display within the home. But when Pompeii was colonized, the placement and display may

⁸⁶ Neville McFerrin, "In the Eyes of the Beholder: The Alexander Mosaic, the House of Jason, and Resistance to Roman Rule in Pompeii" (Los Angeles: College Art Association Annual Conference, 2018) 3-5.

⁸⁷ Cohen, *The Alexander Mosaic Stories of Victory and Defeat*, 162.

have suddenly become a concern. Because of their elite status, just as with the Poppei family discussed previously, these people would need to be concerned with their reputation and relations with the Roman colonizers. More care would need to be taken with who looked at or even knew about this mosaic. This meant that this mosaic was unlikely to be seen by others unless they were invited into this area of the house or by those who were a part of the household.

Figure 2



What would potentially be risky about this mosaic in a Roman colonized Pompeii? The danger could be the display of an image with Samnite elements of identity in a colonized Pompeii that the Roman veteran soldiers were rapidly changing to meet their needs. It can be inferred that as more time went on after the initial colonization and as the mosaic increasingly became an heirloom to the family's descendants, it is possible that the danger increased as well. As many of the houses in Pompeii changed their décor and painting styles to 2nd, 3rd, and finally 4th styles, the House of Faun remained the same with its Samnite elements, Oscan inscriptions, and 1st style wall paintings. With all these Samnite and Oscan elements in the home, it is possible that the family intended to boast their native connection since these elements were in both public and

⁸⁸ ©Jackie and Bob Dunn www.pompeiiinpictures.com Su concessione del MiC - Parco Archeologico di Pompei: <http://www.pompeiiinpictures.com/pompeiiinpictures/r6/6%2012%2002%20p1.htm>.

private spaces of the home. In the Augustan period of the Empire when the *tota Italia* ideology was promoted, the House of Faun would obviously stick out against this principle. Especially when the Emperor Augustus began symbolizing himself as Alexander Great in portraiture after the conquest of Egypt in 30 BCE. Augustus had a characteristic cowlick that corresponded to the hairstyle that Alexander the Great was known for and was always portrayed with a strong youthful look.⁸⁹ Although the Alexander Mosaic was created before Augustus was born and the original intent of the mosaic did not involve him, the Pompeians of later generations would have been aware of the famous characteristics used in depictions of the Emperor Augustus. Therefore, the tendency for Augustus to copy Alexander's characteristics could have been connected to him in this mosaic by the later generations who viewed it. If this connection was made, the depiction of Alexander the Great in this image would not be ideal or suitable to someone who admired him. Although the scene does depict the victory of Alexander the Great against the Persians, Alexander's face and body language in this image is not one of a conqueror and ruler of an empire, but instead he looks fearful as he gazes on to Darius. Cohen describes Alexander the Great's expression, "He is merciless in movement but hardly appears to be in a confident state of mind, as his down turned mouth, wavy eyebrow, and grotesquely enlarged eye suggest."⁹⁰ The mosaic could then have different layers of identity as the original owners commissioned it with their own and as the descendants fashioned it into their own. McAlpine explains this as, "harnessing important elements of the past and representing oneself in light of them is a useful way of expressing identity, and the past can be used in different ways at different times by

⁸⁹ McFerrin, *In the Eyes of the Beholder*, 3.

⁹⁰ Cohen, *The Alexander Mosaic Stories of Victory and Defeat*, 110.

different people, depending on the identity that is most useful.”⁹¹ Even if this interpretation is not accepted, the importance of this mosaic to the later generations cannot be denied.

Because parts of this mosaic display imagery similar to Samnite customs, it can be recast as pro-Samnite, and so an expression of the old Pompeiian identity. The House of Faun was full of such expressions, which were important to the inhabitants of the home. It was important to them and especially to the later generations because Pompeii was constantly changing, from the addition of the Roman veteran soldiers and their building projects, the new status as Roman citizens, the change of Republic to Empire, and much later natural disasters causing exceptional damage and change to the city. Maintaining the display of this mosaic was a way for this Samnite family to preserve a sense of normalcy and to preserve their Pompeiian identity through all this change. Evidence of this careful preservation supports this conclusion because there are visible restoration attempts on the mosaic. Much of the damage still obvious in the mosaic most likely happened during the 62 CE earthquake and evidence for the restoration of this damage can be seen in areas where patches were made with larger tesserae and gaps filled with white stucco. Cohen believes that this was a temporary measure to restore the mosaic until a better restoration could be made, but it never happened because of the eruption of Vesuvius.⁹² For attempts of restoration to even be made, it is clear that the mosaic was important enough to the descendants to restore it to its original picture. For as famous as this mosaic is, it is mostly known as the copy of a Greek painting, but now it can be acknowledged for its importance to a Samnite family and its display of the persevering pre-colonization Pompeiian identity.

⁹¹ McAlpine, *Heirlooms on the Walls*, 177.

⁹² Cohen, *The Alexander Mosaic Stories of Victory and Defeat*, 180.

Figure 3

Figure 4



Figure 3 and 4 are the “Parodies of Romulus and Aeneas”. These are fourth style wall paintings that were found in an area of Pompeii called the Masseria di Cuomo between regions VI and VII.⁹⁴ Their current state of preservation is poor due to being excavated in 1760 and little is known about the house they originated from or where the paintings had been placed in the house.⁹⁵ The fragment on the left is a representation of Aeneas as a dog-headed ape with a human body and exaggerated phallus carrying his father Anchises on his shoulder and holding the hand of his son Ascanius who are also depicted in the same exaggerated style. The painting on the right is considered by scholars to be a representation of Romulus as another dog-headed ape with a human body and exaggerated phallus.⁹⁶ It seems that these paintings were spoofs of paintings and sculptures found in the House of Ululitremulus in region 9.13.5. In these, Aeneas and Romulus are depicted in the same position but are portrayed with human bodies with no

⁹³ “A painted Parody of Aeneas and Romulus and Dog-Headed Apes,” *Judaism and Rome*, accessed November 22, 2019, <http://www.judaism-and-rome.org/painted-parody-aeneas-and-romulus-dog-headed-apes>. Figure 3 & 4.

⁹⁴ Mazzoleni and Pappalardo, *Domus*, 44.

⁹⁵ Clarke, *Looking at Laughter*, 152.

⁹⁶ Clarke, *Looking at Laughter*, 152.

comical aspects.⁹⁷ Although there are not any clear Samnite or Greek elements displayed in these painting, it is still an expression of local identity as the individual lived and owned this home in Pompeii. One must wonder who would have such offending portrayals of Roman myths commissioned and why would they do it? A possible reasoning to why this individual may have still felt anti-Roman sentiments could be due to events in Pompeii that occurred around the time these paintings were produced. In 59 CE, a riot at the Pompeiian amphitheater broke out between the Pompeiians and their local rivals the Nucerni. This violence that occurred at the amphitheater resulted in a ten-year ban of event at the amphitheater, the dissolution of local *collegia*, and the expulsion of several citizens by decree of Nero and the Senate, a decision that most likely angered many Pompeiians.⁹⁸ The anti-Roman sentiment in these paintings suggest that the individual responsible was not an ideal Roman citizen as a good Roman would not have images such as these in their home. Because the images are dated so late in Pompeii's history, it is possible to infer that Pompeiian local identity was retained by individuals until the eruption in 79 CE.

What was offensive in these paintings? During the historical period of this painting's creation between 59-79 CE, Aeneas symbolized the legitimatization of the Roman empire. He represented Augustus's ancestral connection to the goddess Venus and the foundations of the Roman people created by Virgil in his epic *The Aeneid*. Aeneas was the son of Venus and in the *Aeneid*, Virgil claimed the Julio-Claudian line was descended from Aeneas, which established Augustus's relationship with the gods. Augustus used this imagery from the *Aeneid* in much of his propaganda to legitimize his position as emperor. In this depiction Aeneas, Anchises, and

⁹⁷ Clarke, *Looking at Laughter*, 147-151: To view the non-comical painting in the House of Ululitremulus, see Pompeii in Pictures <https://pompeiiinpictures.com/pompeiiinpictures/R9/9%2013%2005.htm>.

⁹⁸ Tacitus, *Annals*, 14.17.

Ascanius are painted with the heads of a dog, the upper bodies of a human, exaggerated phalluses, legs of a dog, and the tail of an ape. An image like this would have been taken as an insult by anyone who was a supporter of Augustus and the Romans as Aeneas had become a symbol to the ancestry behind the man who made Rome an empire. Not only is this an insult to Augustus and the Roman Empire, but also to Sulla and the Pompeiian colony as whole. Venus was Sulla's patron goddess and he made her the patron goddess of Pompeii. He even renamed Pompeii *Colonia Cornelia Veneria Pompeianorum* in the honor of the goddess. With Aeneas being the son of Venus, this painting was just one more way for the individual responsible for these painting to add insult to the colony. For an individual to have an image with so many layers of offending imagery to both the empire and the colony itself, it is possible that they did not care for the Roman Empire or even want to be Roman since a good Roman citizen would not depict offending imagery about Rome in their own home. Because of the anti-Roman sentiments in the imagery, it is possible that the individual who had this image commissioned may have been descended from a native Pompeiian family who experienced colonization by the Romans. If this were true, this would mean that the wall painting is a representation of local Pompeiian identity that harbored negative feelings against the Romans.

The wall painting identified as Romulus is a further representation of local Pompeiian identity expressing negative feelings towards the Romans, but this example went after Rome's namesake. This is an image of Romulus as another dog-headed ape with a half human body and exaggerated phallus.⁹⁹ The writing surrounding Romulus in the painting is indecipherable and was probably used for comical effect.¹⁰⁰ Romulus was supposedly the son of Mars and the

⁹⁹ Clarke, *Looking at Laughter*, 152.

¹⁰⁰ Clarke, *Looking at Laughter*, 152.

eponymous founder of Rome. Virgil extended this myth in the *Aeneid* to link Romulus as a descendant of Aeneas and therefore a descendant to Venus and Augustus, once again legitimizing his power and connecting him with the divine.¹⁰¹ Livy also linked Romulus to Aeneas through his mother Rhea Silvia and her ancestors.¹⁰² Just as in the Aeneas painting, this individual took an important character from the mythological founding of the Roman Empire and had it painted in such a way that would be offending to any Roman citizen or supporter of Rome. Although there are not Samnite or Greek elements in these paintings, it is useful to think about these paintings similarly to the preservation of the *Alexander Mosaic* by the later generations. The later generations may have taken the *Alexander Mosaic* and connected their own identity to it with the identity of their ancestors. The same idea may have been done with the Aeneas and Romulus wall paintings, but in a different way. The house that the paintings were found in is very poorly preserved and does not give off any indications of it belonging to an elite family, therefore the individual would not have had the resources available to preserve anything from the past. With no examples of Samnite elements in their own home to fall back on, the individual used the knowledge available to him (Roman mythology) and created an image that displayed what the Pompeiian identity was to them as an individual, which expressed a dislike of the Roman Empire and the status of Pompeii as a colony. In this example, the individual was expressing a negative opinion about the Roman mythology and Augustan propaganda. If these paintings were commissioned in reaction to the punishments decreed by Nero and Senate for the riot at the amphitheater, then it expresses an opinion about the Julio-Claudian propaganda, and the group most likely to express this opinion would be an old Samnite Pompeiian family.

¹⁰¹ Virgil, *The Aeneid*, 8.738-858.

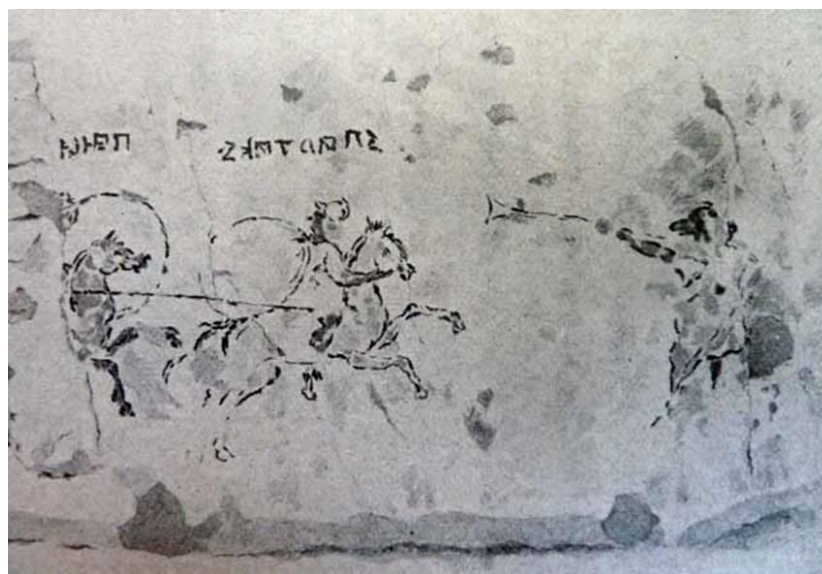
¹⁰² Livy, *History of Rome* 1.3-1.4.9.

Figure 5



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Figure 6



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Figure 4 is called the “Spartacus” painting found in the public vestibule of the House of the Priest Amandus in region I.7.7, named after a graffito found on an outside wall of the

¹⁰³ ©Jackie and Bob Dunn www.pompeiiinpictures.com Su concessione del MiC - Parco Archeologico di Pompei. Figure 4: <https://www.pompeiiinpictures.com/pompeiiinpictures/R1/1%2007%2007.htm>.

¹⁰⁴ ©Jackie and Bob Dunn www.pompeiiinpictures.com Su concessione del MiC - Parco Archeologico di Pompei. Figure 5: <https://pompeiiinpictures.com/pompeiiinpictures/index.htm>.

home.¹⁰⁵ This poorly preserved painting is unique among the other wall paintings described in this work. It lacks the use of multiple colors and the level of detail put forth in the others. The image depicts what seems to be a series of gladiatorial combats. Barry Strauss described this painting in his work dedicated to the story of Spartacus:

On the far right there is a trumpeter. To his left ride two horsemen armed with lances, helmets, and round shields. The first rider looks like he is trying to escape the second, but without success: the second horseman spears him in the thigh. To the left of the horsemen two men are fighting on foot. They are armed with swords, large body shields, and helmets. Finally, on their left comes a rectangular shape, possibly an altar.¹⁰⁶

Above the men in the painting are illegible names written in Oscan, except for one name written in a latinized script above the man on a horse closest to the trumpeter that reads “Spartaks”, which is the Oscan word for Spartacus.¹⁰⁷ Although it cannot be certain that this Spartacus is a depiction of the famous Spartacus from the slave revolt, this argument presumes that this is the case. Strauss wrote that the figure of Spartacus seems to be escaping the second without success and looks to be stabbed in the thigh by the second rider.¹⁰⁸ However it is also possible that what seems to be a spear is not stabbing the Spartacus character, but simply just overlapping with the figure since there is no tradition of the historical Spartacus being killed on a horse. The use of Oscan supports a subversive interpretation of Pompeian identity just as with the epigraphic evidence discussed previously. The image of the gladiators and the placement of the painting gives more clues to the identity of the individual who either had the painting commissioned or possibly painted it himself since the image was not done in any of the typical four styles of wall paintings in Pompeii.

¹⁰⁵ “House of Sacerdos Amandus,” *Pompeii Sites*, accessed April 20, 2021. <http://pompeiiites.org/en/archaeological-site/house-of-sacerdos-amandus/>

¹⁰⁶ Barry Strauss, *The Spartacus War*, (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2009) 206.

¹⁰⁷ Strauss, *The Spartacus War*, 206.

¹⁰⁸ Strauss, *The Spartacus War*, 206.

It may not be surprising to find an image of the famous rebel Spartacus in Pompeii since his slave rebellion affected the city. Spartacus used Mt. Vesuvius as a base camp for his rebellion and at night his followers would come down from the volcano and raid areas in the countryside, which could have included the Pompeians within the city or more likely the veteran soldiers in the *ager* surrounding it. While the slave rebellion against the Romans was happening from 73-71 BCE, the Pompeians would have had a constant reminder of Spartacus' presence on Vesuvius since it is visible throughout the entire city. Strauss also wrote that archaeological evidence suggested that the Pompeians were fans of Spartacus when he was a gladiator.¹⁰⁹ Since the slave rebellion began only seven years after Pompeii became colonized and the Pompeians were presumably already familiar and fans of Spartacus, perhaps there were native Pompeians who admired or were influenced by what Spartacus stood for. In contrast, there could have also been those who despised him as it was possible that some of their own slaves fled and joined the revolt, depriving owners of their property. From a native Pompeian perspective, he was probably not looked up to for his slave revolt, although the people of slave status within Pompeii may have admired him for that, but instead for the fact that there was someone once again standing up to the Romans in a revolt. Contrary to the other images discussed in this work, the "Spartacus" wall painting was placed in a very public area within the domestic space in the vestibule. The vestibule of the home was the area entered upon when coming in from the outdoor entrance. It was unusual and dangerous to place such a painting in a vestibule which would explain why it was covered up with two layers of plaster. Because the image was covered up by plaster, one must wonder what the reasoning behind this decision was. One idea that comes to

¹⁰⁹ Strauss, *The Spartacus War*, 205: Strauss writes that the Pompeians were ardent fans of Spartacus and that archaeological evidence supports this at least for the first century CE, but he does not specify what the archaeological evidence is.

mind is that the owner may have been forced to cover it up. With the combined display of the Oscan language and the figure of a rebel who caused so much trouble for the Roman Republic, this imagery is like a package deal on how to anger a Roman. Its placement in a public area meant that anyone entering the home would easily see it. Its public aspect also meant that it was not meant to be kept secret and therefore its existence was meant to be spread around the city. Perhaps a Roman saw the danger in this and ordered the image to be covered up. Another theory is that the owner of the painting covered the image up to protect himself from repercussions that could be possible for displaying something that represented the pre-colonization Pompeiian identity and represented a figure ideologically dangerous to the Romans. A third possible idea is that a Roman moved into this home, saw the image, and covered it up since an image of Spartacus and an unknown language would not be ideal. A fourth potential reasoning could be that the painting was simply covered with plaster in repairs after the 62 CE earthquake, but this would mean that this painting displaying Spartacus and Oscan writing would have been on display for a much longer period of time than originally thought. Although the reasonings behind the purpose of the display and eventual covering up of the image are theoretical, the use of the Oscan language in this image is significant. It shows that Oscan was still common enough for an individual to be using it and still important enough to choose to label figures with it on a painting in a public space and it suggest that the Pompeiian identity prevailed in colonized Pompeii.

Figure 7



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Figure 6 is a fourth style wall painting originally found in region 1.3.23 in the House of Actius Anicetus. The house is named Actius Anicetus from a graffito found on a wall within the poorly preserved home, although there is no clear evidence on who actually owned the house.¹¹⁰ The smaller size and condition of the home compared to others in the region 1 of Pompeii suggest that the owner was not of the elite class. Due to the historical context and style of the painting, it can be dated to after 59 CE. The historical context depicted in this painting is a violent dispute that took place at the Pompeiian Amphitheater in 59 CE between the Pompeians and the Nucerni, a neighboring rival in Campania. Tacitus wrote about this incident in *Annals*:

About the same date, a trivial incident led to a serious affray between the inhabitants of the colonies of Nuceria and Pompeii, at a gladiatorial show presented by Livineius Regulus, whose removal from the senate has been noticed. During an exchange of raillery, typical of the petulance of country towns, they resorted to abuse, then to stones, and finally to steel; the superiority lying with the populace of Pompeii, where the show was being exhibited. As a result, many of the Nucernians were carried maimed and

¹¹⁰ "Riot in the Between the People of Pompeii and Nuceria, wall painting." Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli, Artstor, accessed November 8, 2019. https://library-artstor-org.proxy.library.ohio.edu/asset/LESSING_ART_10311441161. Figure 6.

¹¹¹ Eriksen, *Pompeiiian Resistance to Roman Colonization Revealed in Material Culture of Wall Paintings and Mosaic*, 14.

wounded to the capital, while a very large number mourned the deaths of children or of parents. The trial of the affair was delegated by the emperor to the senate; by the senate to the consuls. On the case being again laid before the members, the Pompeians as a community were debarred from holding any similar assembly for ten years, and the associations which they had formed illegally were dissolved. Livineius and the other fomenters of the outbreak were punished with exile.¹¹²

The depiction in the painting gives the viewer a “birds eye” view of the fight. It shows people fighting on the arena inside the amphitheater, on the steps of the amphitheater leading up to the seating, and in the outside areas surrounding the building.¹¹³ Although just as in the “Parodies of Romulus and Aeneas” wall paintings, there are no clear Samnite elements such as the Oscan language displayed the “Spartacus” wall painting. But the event depicted in this painting does give a clue that an individual had this image created to display the Pompeian identity.

The rivalry between Nuceria and Pompeii began long before gladiatorial games were brought into the Campanian region by the Romans. During the Samnite period of control in Pompeii, the Nucerians and the Pompeians had a conflict over territory taken by the Nucerians that had belonged to the town of Stabiae. This territory was near the Sarno river and was of vital economic interest to the Pompeians, thus starting a long history of rivalry between the two cities.¹¹⁴ Because of this, an individual most likely to have an image created depicting this specific event would be someone who felt deeply about this rivalry, someone like a descendant of a native Pompeian who would have carried this hatred of the Nucerians and taught it to their

¹¹² Tacitus, *Annals*, 14.17: Sub idem tempus levi initio atrox caedes orta inter colonos Nucerinis Pompeianosque gladiatorio spectaculo, quod Livineius Regulus, quem motum senatu rettuli, edebat. Quippe oppidana lascivia in vicem incessentes probra, dein saxa, postremo ferrum sumpsero, validiore Pompeianorum plebe, apud quos spectaculum edebatur. Ergo deportati sunt in urbem multi e Nucerinis trunco per vulnera corpore, ac plerique liberorum aut parentum mortes deflebant. Cuius rei iudicium princeps senatui, senatus consulibus permisit. Et rursus re ad patres relata, prohibiti publice in decem annos eius modi coetu Pompeiani collegiaeque, quae contra leges instituerant, dissoluta; Livineius et qui alii seditionem conciverant exilio multati sunt.

¹¹³ Eriksen, *Pompeian Resistance to Roman Colonization Revealed in Material Culture of Wall Paintings and Mosaic*, 14-15.

¹¹⁴ Walter O. Moeller, “The Riot of A. D. 59 at Pompeii,” in *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 19, no. 1 (Franz Steiner Verlag, 1970) 90.

descendants. The hatred between the cities grew once gladiatorial fighting was introduced into the region, giving the people more reason to feel a rivalry with each other as the two cities became involved in gladiator fights. By 59 CE, the rivalry was so strong that it caused a violent and deadly riot to break out between the cities at the Pompeiian amphitheater, where the Pompeians were able to claim victory in the brawl. This victory over their rival was so important to this individual that he felt it needed to be commemorated. Although it is also possible that 130 years after colonization, an individual of Roman descent may have associated with this rivalry as well and could possibly be the person responsible for the painting, this work believes that it was more likely to be someone of native Pompeiian descent. Such strong feelings for a local rivalry do not show a roman attitude, but instead emphasizes the local Pompeiian identity through the display of a longtime local dispute that turned violent and ended in a victory for the Pompeians.

Figure 8



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¹¹⁵ ©Jackie and Bob Dunn [www.pompeiiinpictures.com](http://pompeiiinpictures.com) Su concessione del MiC - Parco Archeologico di Pompei: <http://pompeiiinpictures.com/pompeiiinpictures/R1/1%2003%2023%20p2.htm>. Figure 7, model of the house of

Another reason why this individual could have been of native Pompeiian descent is from the placement of the painting within the domestic space. This painting was found in the peristyle of the domestic space, which is considered a private part of the home. Although it could be possible that the individual placed it in a private area of the home to simply enjoy the artwork, another explanation is possible as well. Similar to the Alexander mosaic and its placement in a private area, this placement indicated that the painting was only meant to be seen by those of the household and those who were invited. This suggests that the image may not have resonated well with certain people in the city, possibly those who were descendants of Roman veteran soldiers or those who supported the Roman Empire. This explanation is possible because of the extreme punishment given to Pompeii, ordered by Nero and the Senate when the Nucerians appealed to them after the riot. The punishment was to ban gladiatorial fighting at the amphitheater for 10 years, to disband local illegal *collegia* in the city, and they expelled a few of the citizens responsible for the event. The riot and the punishment from Nero himself and the senate gave the town negative attention that people uninvolved in the riot probably did not appreciate. If anyone within the city would be proud of the victory at the amphitheater and want it commemorated, it would be an individual who cared about the rivalry, which was a rivalry existing before colonization. The individual may have been so proud of the Pompeiian victory that the threat of punishment from a Roman or someone supporting the Roman government did not prevent them from creating a type of victory monument within the home. Therefore, this wall painting is evidence of the persevering Pompeiian identity in a Roman controlled Pompeii because of the display of long-standing rivalry dating back to Samnite period of control in Pompeii.

Actius Anicetus; the arrow points to where the painting was originally found before being take to the Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli for preservation and display.

Conclusion:

Although many explanations are possible for the evidence discussed in this paper, this work strives to shift the perception of Pompeii from a famous Roman colony to a complex and unique city where local identity persisted through substantial changes made by the Romans through colonization and eventually natural disasters. The epigraphic evidence provides examples of the continuation of the Oscan language long after scholars had thought it disappeared. The material evidence of the mosaic and wall paintings provides examples of how art could be utilized to express and preserve identity through images and the placement of these images within a domestic space. Each separate piece of evidence represents choices made by individuals who lived in Pompeii before, during, and after Roman colonization. Throughout all the difficult experiences that the Pompeians experienced during and after colonization, when it may have seemed their way of life was being challenged against the changes brought by the Romans, individuals still found ways to maintain their Pompeian identity. That identity stayed with them until the city was destroyed by Vesuvius, but in a way, it still prevails on today as scholars rediscover the experiences of these individuals through their preserved identity.

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