

THE PASTIME OF VENUS

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF MALE SEXUALITY AND
PROSTITUTION IN POMPEII



MASTER THESIS AT THE DEPARTMENT OF ARCHEOLOGY, CONSERVATION
AND HISTORY

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Front-page illustration: Priapus weighing his penis against a bag of coins, Pompeii, House of the Vettii (VI. XV.1), (Guzzo & d'Ambrosio 1998:104).

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The pastime of Venus: an archaeological investigation of male sexuality and prostitution in Pompeii

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The French philosopher Michel Foucault defined sexuality as the correlation between different fields of normativity and subjectivity, heavily dependent on time, place, and above all, the norms rooted in the society we live in. My fascination with sexuality and ancient culture came in February 2013, after a visit to the National Archaeological Museum of Naples. On this occasion I was permitted to enter the part of the museum referred to as the “Secret Cabinet”. Here, the material from the excavations from both Pompeii and Herculaneum which contained anything sexual is kept.

Beginning my research the following spring, it became clear to me that much scholarship had already been done on many aspects of ancient sexuality, such as prostitution, homosexuality and eroticism in art and objects. This presented a challenge for me in terms of finding an original angle for my MA thesis. However, with the support and guidance of Doctor Matthew McCallum I realized that in order to contribute something new to this ongoing debate on Roman sexuality, I should examine the underrepresented sides of these subjects. This resulted in a completed project description on male sexuality and prostitution in May 2013.

During the summer I succeeded in being accepted as an Erasmus student at the Università del Salento in Lecce in Southern Italy. In September I left Norway for a stay that lasted for ten months. Upon my arrival in Lecce I was introduced to my second advisor; Professoressa Francesca Silvestrelli. Professoressa Silvestrelli, who not only shared her extensive knowledge of the ancient world, but also proved to be of great support both practically and emotionally, during my stay. Without her I would probably never have found the motivation to embark on, let alone complete this study. The grant available for MA students from IAKH made it possible for me to travel to Naples and later Pompeii. With special permissions from Il Ministro dei Beni e della Attività Culturali del Turismo I was allowed both to study the material in the museum in detail, and gain access to places in Pompeii which are normally closed to the public. This would not have been possible without the invaluable help from Francesca Silvestrelli, Julianne Rustad from IAKH and Dottoressa Valeria Sampaolo at the National Archeological Museum of Naples.

To everyone twho has inspired, as well as challenged me to question well-established traditions in the field of ancient sexuality from new and reversed angles. Above all: my father Per T. Lundgren and countless discussions on art, and the constant encouragement and help from my mother Hege C.U Lundgren on language

Lecce, 16th of June 2014

Astri Karine Lundgren

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GLOSSARY

<i>Ass</i>	Copper-coin
<i>Apoclyterium</i>	Dressing-room often associated with bath complexes
<i>Atrium</i>	Open area within establishments
<i>Augustalis</i>	Member of the cult of Augustus
<i>Bellis moribus</i>	“Nice mannered” or “with a nice appearance”
<i>Biclinium</i>	Roman dining furniture
<i>Caladrium</i>	Room with hot water pools
<i>Canephore</i>	Young females used in religious processions in ancient Athens
<i>Catamitus</i>	Passive males in male-male sexual encounters
<i>Caupona</i>	An inn
<i>Cella meretricia</i>	Single-room cells used for prostitution
<i>Cinaedus</i>	Passive males in male-male sexual encounters
<i>Corpore quaestum facere</i>	Roman judicial expression referring to women who prostituted themselves
<i>Cubiculum</i>	Sleeping areas within a Roman house
<i>Cubicularius</i>	Young male slaves who worked in the bedroom
<i>Cunnilingus/cunnulictor</i>	Roman term for man who performed/offered oral sex to women
<i>Exedra</i>	Hemicycle alcove with a dome
<i>Exoleti</i>	Male prostitute
<i>Fas/nefas</i>	Auspicious/ inauspicious
<i>Fascinus</i>	Roman god with symbolized the erect phallus
<i>Fauces</i>	Paths connected to the <i>tablinum</i> in Roman houses
<i>Fellare/fellatio</i>	Refers to oral sex
<i>Figurae veneris</i>	Small erotic pictures of sexual intercourse
<i>Futuo</i>	Direct translation “to fuck”, refers to sexual intercourse
<i>Herm</i>	Stone pillars with attributes from the Greek god Hermes
<i>Hermeneus</i>	Interpretation of liturgies
<i>Hetaira</i>	Greek word for high-class courtesans who entertained as drinking-parties
<i>Hic bene futui:</i>	“Here I had a good fuck”
<i>Hic habitat felicitas</i>	“Here dwells happiness”
<i>Hospitium:</i>	An establishments renting out rooms
<i>Infames:</i>	Roman judicial term for the inferior of the lower-classes: prostitutes, gladiators, actors and pimps
<i>Irrumatio:</i>	Forceful penetration of the mouth
<i>Lebes</i>	A wide bowl with a curved bottom
<i>Leno/a</i>	Pimp/brothel madam
<i>Lex Iulia de adulteriis coercendis:</i>	Adultery law from 18 B.C
<i>Lex Iulia et papia</i>	Marriage law from 9/10 B.C
<i>Lupenar</i>	“She-wolf’s den”, but are often used in the same context as brothel
<i>Matrona:</i>	The Roman house-wife
<i>Nudatio mimarium</i>	Nude mimes depicted in art
<i>Nymphaeum</i>	Monuments depicting nymphs
<i>Paidesteria</i>	“Boy love”: the relationship between an older male and an adolescent boy
<i>Pater familias</i>	The male head of the Roman family

<i>Pedico</i>	“Bugger”: anal intercourse between two males
<i>Peristylum</i>	Open courtyard surrounded with columns
<i>Phallus</i>	The erect male sexual organ
<i>Placentae</i>	Flat cake which contains honey
<i>Placentarius</i>	Cake seller
<i>Popina</i>	Bar which offered wine and simple food
<i>Portico</i>	A veranda
<i>Priapus</i>	Fertility god from the Near East
<i>Pornographein</i>	“To write about prostitutes”
<i>Pornê</i>	Greek for lower-class women who prostituted themselves
<i>Regio</i>	Regions within Pompeii
<i>Spinteria</i>	Male prostitutes which was connected to the latrines
<i>Strupum</i>	Roman juridical terms for illicit sex
<i>Stupidus</i>	A humorous character played in the mimes
<i>Sudatio</i>	A room where one removed sweat from the body
<i>Taberna</i>	Shop often with a dining area attached to
<i>Tintinnabulum</i>	Bronze wind chimes portrayed with a phallus and bells
<i>Trapezophoron</i>	Leg of a table
<i>Tria nomia</i>	“Three names”
<i>Triclinium</i>	Dining area with a Roman house
<i>Verna</i>	A slave born within a Roman household
<i>Vestibulum</i>	Enclosed space in front of a Roman house
<i>Vir/virilitas</i>	“Real man”: the male Roman citizen.

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ABBREVIATIONS¹

- Aeschin:** *Against Timarchus*
Anthol. Lat: *Anthologia Latina*
Cat: *Poems.*
Cic.Cael: *For Marcus Caelius.*
CIL: *Corpus inscriptionum Latinarium*
Gell: *Noctes Atticae*
Hor.Od: *Odes*
Hor.Sat: *Satires*
Juv.Sat: *Satires*
Liv: *The history of Rome*
Luc: *Affairs of the heart*
Lucr: *On the nature of things*
Mart: *Epigrammata.*
Ov. AA: *Ars amatoria*
Ov. Am: *Amores*
Petr: *The Satyricon*
Plaut.Curc: *Curcelio*
Pl. Lys: *Lysis*
Pl. Phd: *Phaedus*
Pl. Smp: *Symposium*
Priap: *The Priapus poem*
Prop: *Elegies*
Sen. Vit. Beat: *De Vita Beata.*
Sen. Contr: *Controversiae*
Sulpicia: *Poems.*
Suet. Calig: *Gaius Caligula.*
Suet.Tib: *Tiberius*
Tib: *Elegies*
Val.Max: *Facta et Dicta Memorabilia*

¹Abbreviations on Greek classical sources follows the model after *A Greek-English Lexicon* 9th ed. Liddell & Scott (ed) 1940.

Abbreviations on classical Latin sources follows the model after *A Latin Dictionary; Freund's Latin dictionary* Lewis & Short (ed) 1958.

1 INTRODUCTION

“If sex was simply a natural fact we could never write its history” (Winkler 1990:171).

Sexuality represents a huge field of cultural fascination and is invested with many different meanings (Harding 1998.1). Biologically, sexual expressions in humans are based on the sexual freedom of choice and a mentality less tied to reproduction. This makes it possible for humans to engage in sexual intercourse more frequently than other animals where sex usually is tied to specific periods (Cox 2009:277). Still, human sexuality has come to heavily focus on who we are as individuals. Therefore, throughout our lives we are influenced by a variety of religious, social and cultural perspectives. Consequently, we reflect a sexual reality which relates to societies' expectations and regulative powers. When these are challenged, it is a common human reaction to deflect, and instinctively classify alternative understandings of sex as “different” and in some cases “obscene and dirty”. Prostitution, homosexual relations and sexual exploitation by means of violence represents possible examples of sexuality where the modern Western society has continually been confronted with this diversity.

“The only kisses I enjoy are those I take by violence, boy. Your anger whets my appetite more than your face, and so to excite desire I give you a good beating from time to time: a self-defending habit-what do I do it for? You neither fear nor love me more” (Mart.5.46). In the citation by the Roman poet Martial (38/41-102/104 A.D), sexuality, desire and even love are manifested in a very different way from what we today are accustomed to. Here, what we may recognize as homosexuality, the possibility of sexual exploitation of a young boy and sex acquired by physical abuse all relate to the ancient Roman understanding of sexuality. A variety of academic analyses have discussed and disputed over the different aspects which contributed to the formation of ancient sexual behavior (see Cantarella 1992; Kiefer 1975; Langlands 2006; Skinner 2005). In addition to the Roman mentality towards sex, and strongly connected to the political advancement of feminism in both archeology and other classical fields, a growing interest in Roman female prostitution has emerged from the 1960's onwards (Ditmore 2006:50; Laurence 2007& 2009; Varone 2001). The study of these subjects is not just rooted in the question: Were the Romans similar to us in their views on sexuality and prostitution? This is also a part of a wider approach in which modern scholars seek to compare and analyze elements of Roman sexuality to our own in order to understand our own attitudes in contrast to the past.

1.1 The Pastime of Venus: sexuality, prostitution, male and female

The term “The pastime of Venus” refers to seeking out the company of prostitutes. However, unlike the Roman juridical expression “*Corpore quaestum facere*” which translates as “make money of one’s body” and was generally used to describe women involved in prostitution, “The pastime of Venus” does not reveal the gender of those who sought sexual services, or those who provided them. (Lund 2006:40). For over two hundred years the provincial town of Pompeii has given scholars an insight into the many aspects of ancient Roman life. When the city was buried by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 A.D, everything within its original setting was preserved *in situ* (Beard 2008; Harris 2007; Lazer 2009). Along with several categories of materials from the town’s everyday life, archeologists have uncovered art, objects, inscriptions and graffiti, and even buildings which offer an insight into the Roman sexualities of Pompeii (DeFelice 2001:100; Lund 2006:38). Because of its sheer quantity of material, as well as the different archeological contexts, it is widely recognized that sexuality, along with prostitution, had a strong manifestation in the ancient Roman society (Cantarella 1992:154; DeFelice 2001:81). Still, what is so special about the material from Pompeii? Other examples from the Roman world also contributed to our understanding of sexuality in ancient times. Art specialist John R. Clarke (1998; 2003a) discusses the erotic frescos found in Villa under the Farnesia in Rome dated to the reign of Tiberius, sculptures from Herculaneum and Arretine bowl fragments showing men and women in a variety of sexual positions and contexts dated to the second B.C and the first century A.D. Perhaps the most well-preserved example shedding light on male sexuality from the ancient



Figure 1: Side A on the Warren-cup depicting two males engaged in intercourse (Clarke 2003a:79).

Rome is the Warren-cup. The Warren cup is dated to between A.D 1 and 30 and was found at Bittir, close to Jerusalem. It is ovoid, measures about 15 cm and is made of silver (Parkinson 2013:51). The Warren cup has two scenes of two male couples engaged in sexual intercourse. These reliefs constitutes its principal decoration. Although these artifacts are exclusive representatives of ancient sexuality, only a few of them are tied to an archeological context. Pompeii, however, offers scholars Roman attitudes towards sex and prostitution in an original context where the cultural, social and economic aspects are all preserved.

1.2 Sex into context: an archaeological investigation

The main focus of this thesis will be male sexuality and prostitution in Pompeii. The archaeological material discussed here includes art, objects, private and public dwellings, but also epigraphical evidence and written sources. The thesis is divided into three sections. Part I highlights the history behind the archeological material, and discusses the problems related to interpretation. Part II gives an account of the methodology (chapter 3) most commonly applied, as well as the theoretical approaches to sexuality and prostitution in Pompeii (chapter 4). Part III (chapter 5) analyzes the symbolisms, artistic and social objectivities and the meanings behind sexual imagery in art and artifacts. Because these are still heavily debated, and in some cases even tied to locations within the city used for the purpose of selling sex, chapters 6 and 7 will discuss locations that might have served as brothels. In chapter 6, I intend to search for evidence that might connect six private dwellings, labeled as upper-class homes, to male prostitution. Additionally, chapter 7 will examine the city's public sphere for places where male prostitutes might have conducted their trade. This project's ultimate aim is contribute to answers to the question: *How did the Romans in Pompeii relate to male sexuality and prostitution?*

PART I:

ANCIENT BODY TAXONOMIES AND MODERN MISINTERPRETATIONS

2 IS IT ART OR PORNOGRAHPY?

The archeological excavations of Pompeii started in 1748. From the earliest excavations proprietary artifacts, objects relating to phallic symbolism, images or sculptures with a central topic of sex were uncovered (Wallace 2013:276). At the time, archaeologists and antiquarians at the National Archaeological Museum of Naples had no experience in how to conduct any work on these objects, and debated whether or not they were suitable for the public view. As a result of the inadequacy of the excavators in properly classifying these artifacts according to archeological methodology, they were simply labeled as “pornographic” without any further inquiries. Clarke (2013:141) points out that the term “pornography”, used to describe this perception of ancient visual representations of sexuality in literature, art, paintings, mosaics, metalwork sculpture, inscriptions and graffiti, was actually a construct. The word was created by the German archaeologist Karl Otfried Müller in 1850. Müller used the term to describe archeological artifacts from the ancient world which other scholars had failed to label as nothing more than “obscene” (Clarke 2003a:10; Grant 1975:168-169; Kendrick 1987:33-40). Müller borrowed from the Greek and coined the word *pornographein*, which means to “to write about prostitutes”. However, the interpretation of *pornographein* is twofold. While the term *pornê* (literally, “woman for sale”) refers to the lowest class of woman (Glazebrook & Henry 2011:4), Greek literature also used the term to describe authors who recorded the behavior and practices of the reputable *hetaira*. The *hetaerai*, represented the upper-class courtesans who entertained guests at drinking parties with music and dance, as well as sex (Clarke 2003a:11-12). What caused Müller to coin the word “pornography” has created complications for the survival of the archeological material containing depictions of ancient sexuality. Considering that “pornography” related to this material was defined by content, and associated with prostitution, excavators either just destroyed the objects on the spot or locked them up, out of sight (Clarke 1998:148; Parker 1992:90). In conjunction with these attitudes, scholars saw the need to catalog and establish restricted access to the “pornographic” material.

2.1 The Secret Cabinet at the National Archaeological Museum of Naples

Much of the porn-or art debate tends to turn to sexual incitement. While “pornography” has the intention of sexually arousing its audience, art on the other hand does not (Mikkola 2013:27). In the eighteenth hundreds, when scholars were confronted with “pornographic” or “obscene” representations within what was regarded as art, complications arose. A conjoined example of art and pornography are the so-called *figurae veneris*, (see **fig.2**). Interpreted as “configurations of sex”, the *figurae veneris* are erotic paintings, mainly from Pompeii, found in brothels and more “respectable” dwellings. These are

most commonly recognizable by the man laying supine under the woman (Angiussola 2010:332; Saunders 2011:19; Meyerowitz 1992:132). Although the *figurae veneris*, together with sculptures and artifacts from Pompeii and Herculaneum were recognized as art, the material was locked in a cabinet very few had access to, known as the Secret Cabinet (Meyerowitz 1992:133).

The Secret Cabinet was established in 1819, after Francis I, Duke of Calabria and the future king of Naples had toured the collection at the National Museum. Michele Arditi, the curator of the collection at the time, together with Francis I, decided to remove 102 “obscene” objects from the collection (Beard 2012:62; Blanshard 2010:31). Almost immediately after the Secret Cabinet was established, questions concerning its administration began to surface: how should these “immoral” and potentially dangerous images be policed? Who should, or should not, be allowed to look at them, in what context, and for what supervised? (Beard 2012:61). The board of directors concluded that the cabinet should only be accessed by the educated elite. Consequently, women, children and non-elite men were strictly barred from seeing any of the objects locked inside (Clarke 2013:142). By the 1850’s, the revolutionary changes that ended in the unification of Italy brought changes to the museum. The new director Domenico Spinelli started to control access to the “pornographic” material even more rigorously, transferring

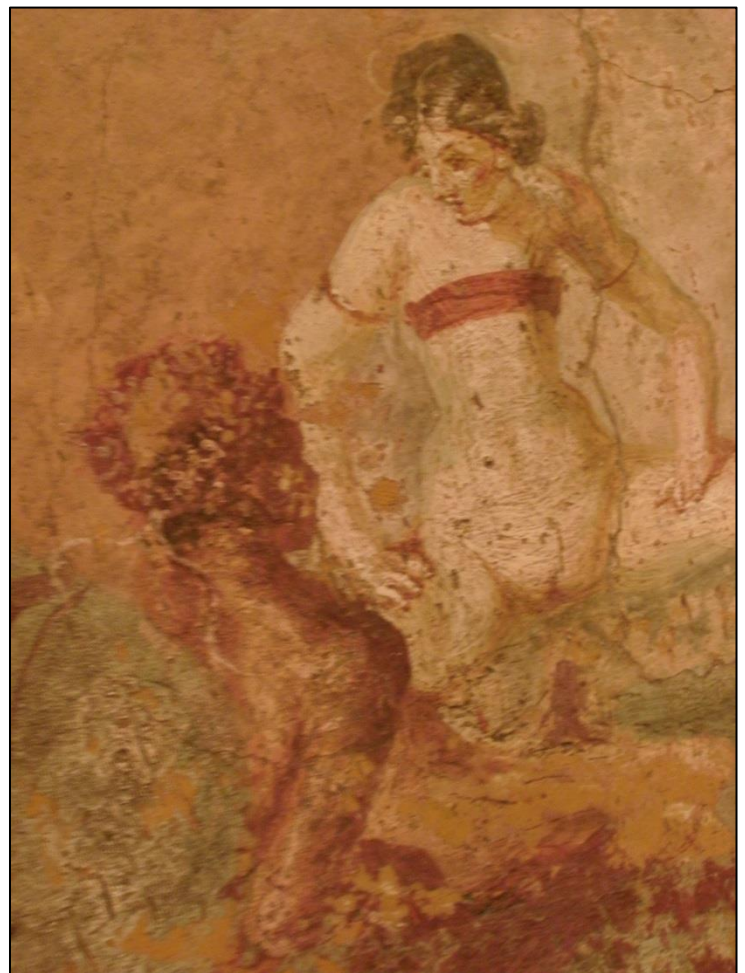


Figure 2: One example of a *figurae veneris*, where a woman is straddling her partner c.70 A.D, 41x41 cm, Pompeii, unknown location (photo by author 2013).

much of it to the first floors and secured the doors. Anyone who wished to visit under

these rules needed the expressed permission from the Minister of the Interior (Beard 2012:63). In 1849, the Secret Cabinet was closed and walled up for 11 years without any access being approved. In 1860 Giuseppe Garibaldi took over the museum for the state, and appointed his friend Alexandre Dumas as director of the museum. Dumas reopened the cabinet and organized and catalogued its content (Amery & Curran 2002:43; Blanshard 2010:32; Clarke 1991b:91). Access was restricted until 2000. Even though the Secret Cabinet today is officially open to the public, members of the museum

staff carefully supervise the collection, and there are rules in force for anyone who wishes to view the material inside.

2.2 Archaeological misinterpretations of ancient sexuality

So far this chapter has discussed how 18-and 19th century scholars used the words “pornography” and “obscenity” to describe different material depicting several aspects of Roman sexuality from Pompeii. Still, what was this mindset towards Roman sexuality based on? Catherine Johns (1982:30) suggests that “obscenity” along with “pornography” is a constructed phenomenon based on morality, and cannot be regarded as a scholarly category. Therefore, it is academically indefensible. However, for the 19th century’s researchers of “obscene” material, this became the dominant classification factor which overruled almost every other factor. In addition to being the main feature in archeological methodology, Dominic Montserrat (2011:211) argues that “obscenity” could also perhaps have been closely connected to how archeology was influenced by the moral standards, as well as the religious ideologies of the day. Moreover, these elements have, in my opinion, had a particular impact on the different branches of Roman sexuality where “obscenity” took on a challenging and contradictory role, such as male sexuality and prostitution.

Based mainly on literary evidence, Roman sexuality had a different and perhaps also a more visible role compare to the modern Western world (Beard 2008:233; Clarke 2003a:159; Skinner 2005:208). When these “obscene” texts are read differences emerge. One such “obscene” text is the Priapus Poems from the first century A.D: “I could simply die Priapus, from the shame of talking dirty, but when you expose your naked balls to me, cock and cunt are standard usage” (Priap 29). Such strong sexuality can also be found in other genres of Roman literature. For example in the elegists Catullus (84-56 B.C) and Tibullus (55-19 B.C), and in Martial’s epigrams, the poet-narrator expresses sexual desire for both a female character, as well as a young male (Cantarella 1992:128; de Plessis 1996:19; James 2003:35-41). There was no moral censure against an adult male taking an adolescent boy as a lover (see Luc 25-28). Indeed, men were expected to find both young males and female beautiful and to desire them both (Knust 2006:29).

Obviously, according to Christian theology, where “natural” roles between a man and a woman were idealized, this type of sexuality must have been somewhat difficult to accept (Stuart & Thatcher 1996:276). Perhaps this point is made even clearer in the pioneer works of identifying locations used for prostitution in Pompeii. Thomas McGinn (2006:166) claims that in regard to ancient prostitution, scholars have had a tendency to “paganize” and interpret establishments as brothel sites without any archeological evidence (Fiorelli 1873; Della Corte 1965; Eschebach 1970). McGinn (2002:16-18) also states that together with the longstanding Christian tradition of associating prostitution with dirt,

“moral zoning” has also played a significant role in forming modern interpretations of Roman sexuality. Moral zoning can be defined as a contemporary construction where the fundamental idea is that the ancient city separated “definite brothels” from more respectable establishments. However, in Pompeii this evidence is completely lacking (McGinn 2006:165; McGinn 2004:78-81). Sexual representations have also been used to identify locations where sale of sexual services might have taken place (Wallace-Hadrill 1995). This has proven to be most problematic in the sense that visual representations of sexual intercourse are, in addition to being located in taverns and inns, also found in dwellings labeled as upper-class homes (Clarke 1991a:368; McGinn 2004:112). From these observations, scholars have questioned whether or not Pompeii’s elite families were involved, and took part in the administration of the city’s prostitution (McGinn 2004:32-36). With all this in mind, is it possible to conclude anything definite about prostitution in Pompeii.

2.3 Pompeian prostitution: management and economy

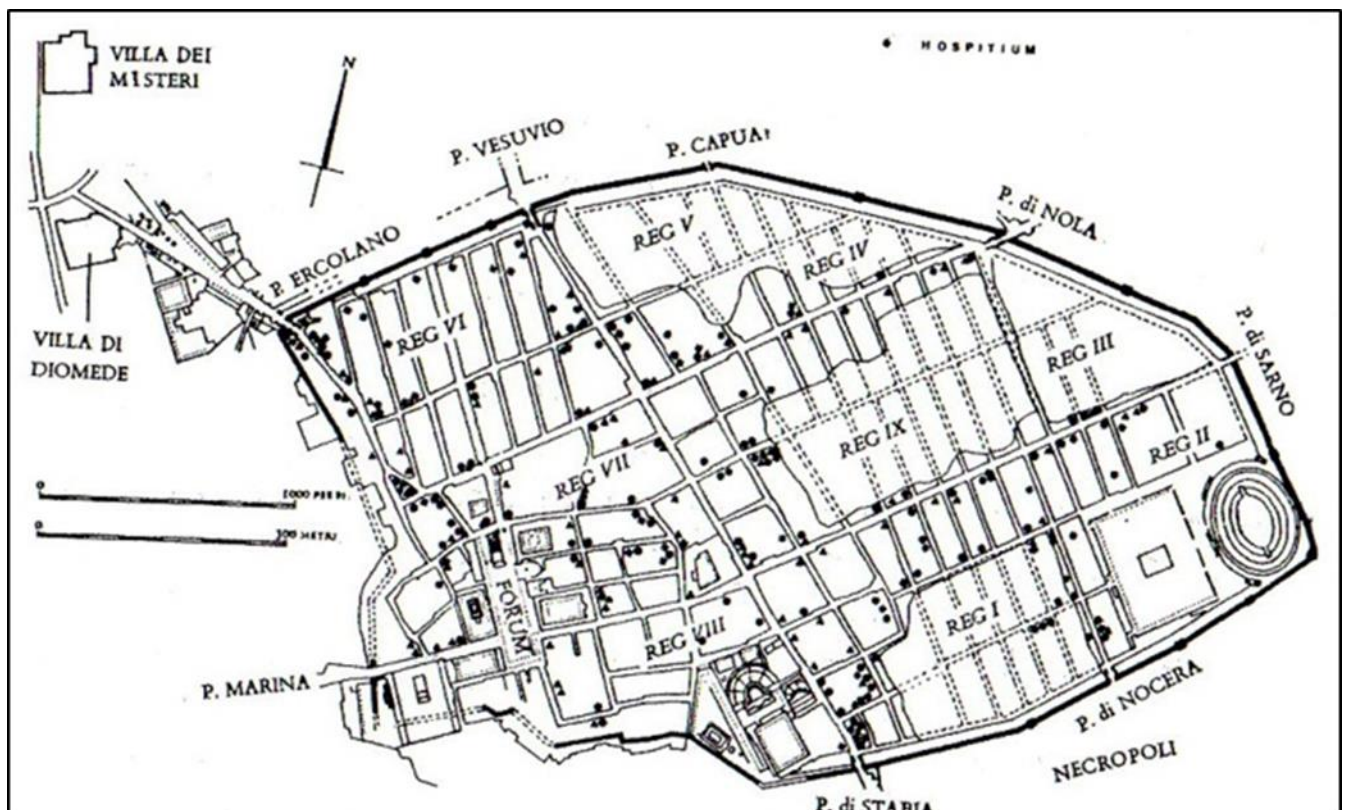


Figure 3: Locations in Pompeii labeled as brothels (Wallace-Hadrill 1995: 44).

Fig. 3 provides an overview of thirty-five places labeled as brothels in Pompeii. Is it possible that Pompeii with a population of ten thousand, or perhaps twelve thousand could support as many as thirty-five brothels when the city of Rome with a population of almost one million, supported only

forty-six? (McGinn 2004:167-170). The question is based on a number of dubious premises. The population of Pompeii is unknown and unknowable. However, estimates range from as low as approx. seven thousand to as high as approx. twenty thousand (Lazer 2009:75; McGinn 2004:170-172). If these numbers are studied carefully, the number of brothels identified does not correspond well with the estimated population of Pompeii. Consequently, Andrew Wallace-Hadrill (1995:51-52) has not only developed critical standards of how to investigate different spatialities that might have served as brothels, but perhaps also contributed in shedding light on how prostitution was organized.

Firstly, these constructions are often associated with leisure, the sale of food, beverages, accommodation and gambling. The margins of these different spaces are usually very simple, for example occupying only a single room or consisting solely of one entrance. Correspondingly, it has become an accepted notion that both male and female prostitution was thought to be connected to places such as inns, taverns, *cella meretricia* (single room-cells), theaters and baths (DeFelice 2001:78; Edwards 1997:82; Knapp 2001:246; Laurence 2007:86-7; Lund 2006:32; McGinn 2004:23; Skinner 2005:252; Tanzer 1939:41; Yegül 2010:27). Secondly, there are erotic paintings located over the entrances or within the rooms themselves. One interpretation of erotic paintings in public buildings is that they were sexually stimulating to the viewers, and that they were placed inside “brothels” to arouse potential customers (Johns 1982:108; McGinn 2004:118). However, this particular criterion has been received with much skepticism, and led to problems in past archeological interpretations mainly because erotic representations are also found in private homes. Examples of private homes, associated with the town’s elite, containing erotic paintings are House of the Vettii, House of the Centenary and the House of Caecilius Iucundus (Clarke 1991a:212; Clarke 2003b:99; Spivey & Squire 2004:56).

In addition to the second criterion, Wallace-Hadrill also points to the visibility of a concrete bed. In other situations where conformations of beds, sofas or benches are lacking, these areas have been identified based on their size and locality, for example the House at IX.5.16. Clarke (1998:178) questions whether or not this dwelling underwent a house-to brothel transformation. It is accessible from the street at the doorway at number IX.5.14, has small rooms and is decorated with four erotic



Figure 4: Erotic painting from the House at IX.5.16, room f, north wall, eastern picture (A.D. 62 -79). Underneath the couple a bed is visible decorated with pillows and a mattress cover. (Clarke 1998: 185).

paintings, but has no evidence of concrete beds. Still, in at least two of the pictures wooden beds are recognized (Clarke 1998:184). Finally, a broad spectrum of obscene graffiti and inscriptions can in some cases be uncovered within places associated with the sex trade, especially the so-called *hic bene futui*-type (here I had a good fuck) (DeFelice 2001:101; Varone 2001:106). Although these criteria are somewhat controversial in identifying establishments used for the purpose of selling sex, in fact only the “purpose-built” brothel at VII.12.18-20, and the seven *cella meretricia* fulfill all three requirements (Clarke 1998:196; McGinn 2004:185). This could either indicate that Wallace-Hadrill’s criteria are too restricted, or perhaps prostitution was so generally organized and widely practiced that it was not tied to any specific type of establishment (Cantarella 1992:154; DeFelice 2001:81; McGinn 2004:201; Sanger 1920:64).

Inscriptions and graffiti located in Pompeii attest to the fact that sex often came with a price and was bought with cash (McGinn 2004:40). For example *CIL IV 3999: Glyco cvnnvm lingit assibus II*-Glyco licks cunt for two *asses* (Lund 2006:18) and *CIL IV 4259: II pa frex Firma III*-Firma for III *asses*. The two inscriptions confirm that both men and women worked as prostitutes in Pompeii (Williams 2010:324). In addition to names, sexual services offered as well as prices, prostitutes could also use the phrase *bellis moribus* to advertise with. (See **app IV** *CIL IV 4024, 4592, 5127*). *Bellis moribus* literary translates to “nice mannered”, and could refer to age, appearance and skill, all contributing factors to the price charged by prostitutes (Evans 1991:138; McGinn 2004:46-7; Varone 2002:144). Much academic attention has been given to women involved in prostitution. This can perhaps be explained by the inferior role women played in the Roman society, both socially, economically and legally (Joshel 1992:121; Williams 2010:19). Furthermore, when ancient authors such as Martial and Juvenal (1st century B.C) developed the themes of sexual exploitation and sexual degeneracy, they relied on the connection between women and their economical participation in prostitution (McGinn 2004:73-75). Therefore, it has in my opinion become almost a tradition within the field of Roman sexuality and prostitution to automatically consider the link between females and prostitution, disregarding the archeological and literary evidences which points to women being involved in the sexual exploitation of men.

2.4 Female exploiters and male attendants: considering reversed gender role

You have given, Chloe, to young Lupercus cloaks of Spanish wool dyed with Tyrian purple and with scarlet, and a toga dipt in mild Galesus, Indian sardonyxes, Scythian emeralds, and a hundred sovereigns of new-mined money, and whatever he asks you give over and over again. Woe to you, enamored of smooth-skinned boys, woe to you, wretched woman! Your Lupercus will leave you naked (Mart. 5.46).

Edward Cohen (2006:95-97) calls attention to how the modern languages use the word “prostitution” loosely to cover a multitude of conflicting meanings denoting a variety of physical, commercial and social arrangements. Here the word “status” has been the differentiating characteristic between the

variety of prostitutes co-existing in the Roman world, but also used to distinguish between those who exploited and those who were exploited. As mentioned above, it is a widely accepted notion that services from female prostitutes were far more prevalent than those of male prostitutes, and therefore it is believed that these women were far more likely to have been sexual prey for male perpetrators, than having acted as sexual exploiters of perhaps both freedmen or slaves. Among other examples the quotation above by Martial highlights these problematic perceptions. The poet warns a woman named Chloe of the implications of her relationship with a young man she spoils with gifts. The narrator informs us of the social standing of Chloe, namely that she is rich, but he fails to mention whether or not she is married. Ancient custom dictates that if a husband found his wife copulating with a male servant, he had the legal and moral right to kill the servant (Skinner 2005:206; Williams 2010:56). Extra-marital intercourse and relationships were forbidden by law to both married and upper-class women and girls (Defluxe 2001:48; Langlands 2006:46). Therefore, Roman adultery laws such as *lex Iulia de adulteriis coercendis* punished women severely if they were caught in adultery (McGinn 1998:140-141; Skinner 2005:199). The penalties for a female caught in the act varied from public humiliation, physical thrashings, and even death (Grimal 1986:109; Kiefer 1975:31). It was also strictly prohibited for the *matrona* and females belonging to the aristocracy to exploit their slaves sexually, or to pay for the company of a male prostitute. One anthropological explanation for this attitude to female sexuality is that in a patriarchal society such as that of ancient Rome, secure paternity was important, and a husband wanted a wife only to be impregnated by him (Langlands 2006:47).

These principles are perhaps best illustrated in the Roman historian Livy (see Liv. 1.58:5-12, 3.48:3.8). Here, the two women Lucretia and Verginia both choose to die, rather than be engaged in the immoral behavior displayed by Chloe in Martial (Joshel 1992:115-17; Kiefer 1975:14). Perhaps these reversed gender roles are less complicated to accept where the difference in power is obvious, for example upper-class women and slaves or upper-class women and freedmen working as prostitutes in addition to another lower-class occupation. However, complications arise when the representatives of such unions are found within the same social class. Nevertheless, these relations reflect on a social reality versus a cultural perception of sexual gender roles and challenge the modern theories towards Roman sexuality. These reversed gender roles imply both a sense of identity between people in different social and sexual roles and a loss of stability and inversion of what is regarded as standard norms (Foley 1984:60). Perhaps one explanation of this archetypal point of view would be rooted in how contemporary scholars define gender in the Roman sexual hierarchy and the gender roles attached to these.

PART II:

**APPROACHING AND THEORIZING ROMAN MALE SEXUALITY AND
PROSTITUTION**

3 STRATEGIES FOR DEFINING THE LIMITS

While the previous chapter examined some of the issues connected to modern interpretations of Roman male sexuality and prostitution in Pompeii, chapters 3 and 4 will aim at giving an account of the methods, as well as the theories applied when approaching sex and prostitution in the Roman world. Because this thesis is based upon archeological as well as textual material, the methodologies discussed will include: iconography, Latin epigraphy, spatial analyses, and philology. In addition to explaining how these are most effectively used to yield systematic evidence in both fields, I also intend to explore the various theoretical frameworks of sex and morality possibly co-existing in the Roman world which may, directly or indirectly, have influenced the Pompeian outlook on male sexuality and prostitution.

3.1 Feminism, gender and the male body in Roman sexual imagery

In today's scholarly world sexuality and prostitution are hot topics. However, it was only after the liberation movement of the late 1960's that the study of ancient sexuality became a valid scholarly pursuit (Clarke 2003a:63). Until today the classical archaeological and art-historical research completed on sexuality and prostitution has mostly focused on the lower forms of prostitution, and mainly on the female aspects rather than the male (Allison 2004; Berg 2002; 2010a;2010b; Cenerini 2009; Clarke 1998; DeFelice 2001; Grimal 1986; Guzzo & Ussani 2009; Varone 2001). As I have argued in chapter 2, the causes of this lack of attention to male prostitution are perhaps the modern assumption which associates ancient sexual exploitation with women, as well as reversed roles connected to status where males are sexually inferior to women. However, perhaps the most important reason, in my opinion, might be related to the way modern academics identify and understand sexuality and gender in the classical world.

Sociologist Mary Holms (2007:2) highlights the distinction between sex (biological differences between males and females) and gender (socially produced differences between being feminine and being masculine). In archeology, this clarification can be found in feminist archeology which studies the role of women and female relationships within a certain society. In addition to challenging a particularly male-centered point of view, feminist archeology also regards women in contrast to the patriarchy (Brown 1997:13). One example which illustrates the feminist perspective is Roman images of female nudity in contrast to male nudity. For the Romans the male body image was not regarded as a site for erotic pleasure, but an icon of vitality and phallic power, whereas females found regularly naked in art are often associated with prostitution (Blanshard 2010:20; Brown 1997:15-16).

Gender archeologist Benjamin Alberti (2007:69-71) addresses the visibility of the male body in archeology, but at the same time points to the invisibility of their gender and personhood.

Archaeologies of personhood tend to emphasize the different identities situated in a series of social relations and entanglements that define who individuals are within a community (Clarke & Wilkie 2007:2; Fowler 2004:14). When scholars approach sexual personhood and gender situated within archaeological contexts, the investigations can loosely be grouped around five major and sometimes overlapping themes: 1) fertility management, 2) sexual or erotic representations, 3) prostitution, 4) architecture and space, 5) homosexuality/transsexuality (Voss 2007:33).

The male genital or phallus was widespread in the ancient world. The Romans identified the phallus with the god *Fascinius*, and it was usually seen a symbol of fertility and good luck, which also had the power to ward off evil spirits (Grant 1975:109; Williams 2010:100). The erect phallus from Pompeii certainly served as the shop sign for the *lupenar* (brothel), but equally appeared on house walls, on paving stones, at the baths and as objects represented as animals (or in the same contexts as animals), dwarves or as the fertility god Priapus. Perhaps the most well-known are the *tintinnabulum*, whimsical doorbells, projected in at least three dimensions, and hung with bells (Kellum 1997:171). In addition to artifacts illustrating the male member, erotic frescos with different representations of sexual intercourse also survive (Clarke 1991b:90; Meyerowitz 1992:142).

Within classical archeology those who in general study art may easily fall methodologically out of tune with those who excavate and survey. This has resulted in classical archeologists and ancient art historians examining stylistic and topological changes for their own sake, often on the basis of emotional and badly defined criteria. Many have assumed, at least as far as gender is concerned, that art simply reflects reality, and so does not require much in the way of analysis and criticism (Brown 1997:19). Furthermore, archaeological knowledge tends to reproduce an image of the contemporary dominant form of masculinity, and the past is used as repositories of idealizing archetypes that are called upon by popular culture to reinforce given essentialist ideas, usually heavily dependent on time and place (Connell 1995:185). Material culture found in ancient contexts is not merely things; it is a flexible medium that can be used to create notions of traditions, the maintenance of conventions, and normal behavior. Material culture can therefore not only be seen as a source for the finding of representations of personhood and gender, but it is in itself implicated in the construction of the two (Sørensen 2006:105).

In terms of sexual or erotic representation, iconography or “the study of images” has been used to identify the meaning of motifs and images with an explicit sexual nature (D’Alleva 2005:20-26). Iconographical analysis can be employed in different processes. Andrew Harrison (2006:161) points to what he refers to as “the sense of presence” in response to representational works of art and objects.

This can also be defined as the specific feeling the art or objects give the viewer. The underlying assumption here is that iconographical themes are represented differently, often based on tradition, style, patterns and specific features, for example different uses of symbolism. The exegetical commentary of these elements often includes two parts: a translation of the symbols, and an optimal motivation of these versions (Sperber 1974:23). As a result, the visual effect on the beholder is to give an expression to certain imagined conceptions of the events represented (Hölscher 2004:58). How archeologists and other academic disciplines observe erotic art and objects is based on the independency of the viewer (Hatt & Klonk 2006:20). For the ancient Romans, as for other civilizations around the Mediterranean, society viewed masculinity and femininity based on biology, gender roles and sexual expectations (Parker 1997:55; Sissa 2008:139; Simons 2011:25-38; Van Nortwick 2008:50). In representations of male sexuality from Pompeii, evidence points to both women and men being depicted as sexual objects, which challenges the traditional Roman mentality of sexual identity in terms of active and passive partners (Meyerowitz 1992:154). Here, masculinity is not depicted as an exclusive property of men, nor is femininity an exclusive property of women. Women are prone to masculine impulses, and vice versa (Connell 1995:22-23; Lawler 2008:91). Gender can therefore not be regarded as a fixed bodily state, but a shifting cultural category in which biological sex may or may not be a determining factor; and the assignment of individuals into particular cultural categories primarily determined by differences in hierarchy (Montserrat 2002:154).

3.2 Latin epigraphy

The method of epigraphy is defined as the study of texts written on durable material (Grafton, Most & Settis 2010:325). Latin epigraphy, consequently, examines the graffiti and inscriptions from the Roman world (Keppie 1991:23; Schaps 2011:217). The most extensive corpus of Latin inscriptions is the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (CIL), and was initiated by Theodor Mommsen in 1853 (Cooley 2012:327). The study of Latin inscriptions usually involves two components: classification and interpretation. The first procedure-classification-is technical and specific, and to that extent labeled as “scientific”. The second-interpretation- requires as much art as science and covers a great deal of uncertain ground (Bodel 2001:2). Latin epigraphy offers an insight into the constructed social and cultural attitudes towards male sexuality and prostitution. Additionally, it contributes to a methodological discussion on the “lived reality” in these inscriptions (Riess 2012:491). Since graffiti and inscriptions are one-time items, they are preserved as they were cut or scribbled out, important methodical questions used to analyze and catalog these linguistic evidences are “who wrote?” and “who read?” (Baird & Taylor 2011:10-14; Baldi 1999:121).

The epigraphical samples used in this thesis will first and foremost be related to expressions within the Latin vocabulary which describe different types of sexual activities (vaginal, anal and oral), the participants involved in these, and the phrases used to define male prostitution. In the epigraphical evidence on male prostitution special attention will be paid to the following: name/alias, type of sexual services offered, preferred clientele (male or female) and price. As an attempt to analyze these inscriptions within their original context, location and/or type of establishment will also play a significant role in shedding light on the existence of men engaged in prostitution in Pompeii.

3.3 Within the sexual spatiality

As previously mentioned, several criteria have been used to try to classify establishments used for the purpose of selling sex. Perhaps the most widely discussed today are the three standards suggested by Wallace-Hadrill (erotic art, archeological remains of concrete beds and inscriptions referring to *hic bene futui*). However, these criteria have resulted in a large figure of supposed brothels that does not correspond to the number of inhabitants, or with the economic structure of prostitution. Furthermore, these have also created issues as they are not restricted to private or public dwellings. In addition to the criteria listed by Wallace-Hadrill, I also intend to examine potential structures related to prostitution by applying spatial analyses. This method is generally used to determine the spatial organization of buildings and within settlements. Spatial analysis relates to the formalization of establishments and activity locations within settlements and is viewed as evidence for the existence of architects and planners who possessed the power to make decisions regarding where to locate new dwellings and facilities. The analyses will be divided into three categories: 1) the building components, 2) the annexed components, and 3) the interior components (Dawson 2006:169-179).

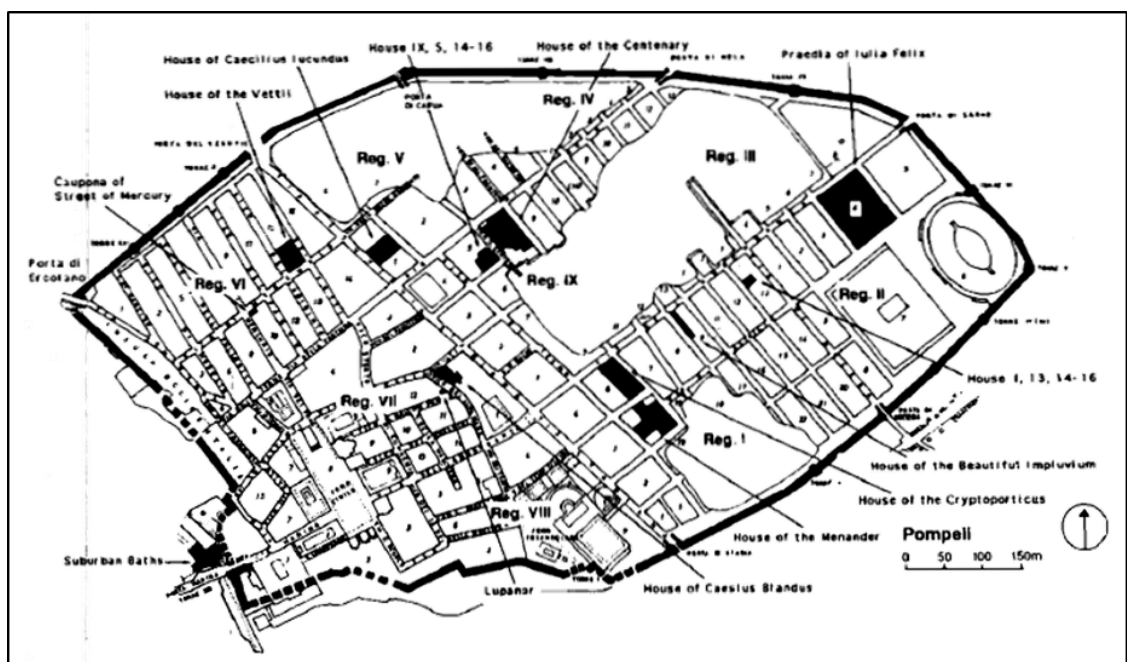


Figure 5: Both private homes, as well as public structures have been connected to prostitution (Clarke 1998:146).

Fig 5 above points out the different structures believed to be associated with prostitution. As the map indicates, these are both private and public establishments distributed throughout the city. In the process of examining these establishments this thesis will be divided into two analyses. The first part will concern itself with the upper-class homes previously thought to be connected to female prostitution, and therefore labeled as a place with a brothel incorporated within its structure. The second section will explore public spaces containing either erotic art or sexual inscriptions. Along with the elements intended to be investigated by applying epigraphy (names, sexual services, clientele and prices) my main intention is to illuminate the existence and social organization of male prostitution.

3.4 Philology

I thank you that, in your assurance, you grant yourself great leeway about me, lest quite the fool I suddenly tumble!
The toga and the whore, weighted with the wool's creel, may be your greater concern that Servius's daughter,
Sulpicia. They are worried on our behalf whose greatest reason for disgust is lest I yield my place to lowborn lust
(Sulpicia 4.3.16).

In addition to textual evidence such as inscriptions and graffiti from Pompeii, the Roman world also left behind a considerable body of literary work. The methodology of philology applies to two closely intertwined methods: hermeneutics and critique. It can be said in general that hermeneutics is about the understanding of signs, either as signs indicating a known object, or as a separated form of signs (Seebohm 2004:57). The word hermeneutics derives from the classical Greek term *hermeneus*, which means an interpreter or expounder of literary works. Methodologically, hermeneutics recognizes the connection between intention and meaning, as well as the association of written words and human recollection. One and the same text may be understood very differently by different people based on important underlying factors such as age, gender and cultural assumptions (Jasper 2004:7-14; Szondi 1995:1). The poem by the female Roman poet Sulpicia (late first century B.C) cited above, expresses a woman's feelings on sensuality. This is one example which underlines the problematic relation in regard to understanding the erotic literature which has come down to us: it was all written by elite men for other men of high standing. Meaning that when interpreting form and content, these texts only provide scholars with a selected outlook on sexuality, eroticism and moral aspects of prostitution. As a result, the voices of women or men belonging to the lower classes have not been taken into account (Clarke 2003a:10-11; Finley 2002:148). The connection within the Latin culture between women's voices and the Greek language is strengthened by an important fact of literary history. We know of

many more Greek female poets, where perhaps the most famous is Sappho writing in the 6th century B.C, than we know from the Roman body of literature (Farrell 2001:54). Overall, literary sources are in most cases personal opinions and feelings rather than objective observations, and must be read and analyzed critically (Wyke 2002:18).

4 SEXUAL IDEOLOGIES

The archeological and textual material might give us an indication as to how the Romans depicted male sexuality and prostitution in art, inscriptions and various types of literature, but does not paint an altogether clear picture of where these mindsets originated from. However, it has been suggested by scholars that the Roman mentalities towards both of these subjects were to some extent shaped by contact with Hellenistic ideals (Arieti 2005:312; Pickett 2009:13; Roman & Roman 2010:110; Skinner 2005:253; Williams 2010:6). Pompeii was not in every respect a typical Roman city. It was a small seaport town, situated in a region that was half-Hellenic and had strong ties with Hellenistic traditions (Frank 2006:245). We can only assume so much about the sexual ideologies which influenced Pompeii's earliest periods as a Greek settlement. Ancient theories and philosophical viewpoints on sexuality and prostitution in for example Pythagoreanism and Platonism were adopted and developed in Epicureanism and Stoicism, which impacted the works of Roman authors such as Cicero (106-43 B.C, Lucretius (99-55 B.C), Seneca the Elder (56 B.C-34 A.D) and Seneca the Younger (4 B.C-65 A.D).

4.1 Influencing ancient mentalities

Pythagoreanism was founded upon the teachings of Pythagoras who established an academy at Croton in southern Italy in the fifth century B.C. (Salisbury 2001:347; Schweitzer 2006:31). Little is known about Pythagorean sexual ethics; however, several features become clear from other philosophical schools, for example Platonism, which was influenced by the teachings of Pythagoras (Gaca 2003:94; Lacoste 2005:281). The followers of Pythagoreanism saw the act of sexual intercourse as the moment when the soul became embodied in the matter and insisted that intercourse must be temperate and controlled to ensure an undisturbed transition. Otherwise, the Pythagoreans argued, harm was done to the offspring, and what was already an upset of harmonies might lead to disorderly thought and behavior later in life. In addition to careful calculations in terms of intercourse, passionate sex threatened the entire society. According to the Pythagorean doctrine, sexual intercourse belonged exclusively within marriage and extra-marital relations, such as prostitution, were not acceptable for either men or women (Foucault 1987:74; Huizenga 2013:205; Loader 2012:91-2; Pomeroy 2013:24).

In his writings Plato (428-348 B.C) introduces Hellenistic theories on love, sexuality and morality. According to Platonic ideals, male sexuality implied that a man should only make sexual contact with his own wedded wife and did not permit intercourse with a free person (Treggari 1991:200). Still, several of Plato's texts deal with sexual contact between free individuals, and especially the relation between men. The *Symposium* for example, reinforces our understanding of the

Greek view and feelings about homosexual behavior (DeYoung 2000:205; Foucault 1987:230; Most 2005:33; Sheffield 2006:8-15).

Our customs are intended to test these lovers well and truly, and get the boys to satisfy the good ones, and avoid the bad. That is the way we encourage lovers to chase after boys, but tell the boys not to get caught. In this way we set up trial and a test, to see which category the lovers come in, and which category the boy he love come in. This explains a number of things- for instance, why it's thought wrong for a boy to let himself be caught too quickly. It is felt that some time should be elapse, since time is a good test for most things. Also why it's wrong to be caught by means of money or political influence-whether it's a case of boy being threatened , and yielding rather than holding out, or a case of being offered some financial or political inducement, and not turning it down. No affair of this kind is likely to be stable or secure, quite apart from the fact that it is no basis for true friendship (Pl. *Smp* 184a-b).

The passage above illustrates the rules of engagement in relationships between boys and the male citizens. The boy was expected to ignore the attention at first, resist advances for a while and yield at the right moment (Laurin 2005:77). Plato's teachings saw same-sex relationships as a mutually admiring relationship between the philosopher-citizen and the young and freeborn adolescent male (Bartsch 2005:59). The ethical motive here is that love between individuals should be free from pleasure and erotic passion (Greenberg 2008:628-631). In addition to the *Symposium* the topic is also addressed in *Lysis* and *Phaedrus* (see Pl. *Lys* 212b-c; 213e, Pl. *Phd* 232c-d). Here, the character of Socrates argues that if A loves B, he does so because of some benefit he needs from B and for the sake of just that benefit (Vlastos 1973:8). Indeed, the structure of the friendship should exclude the exercise of lust in itself and rather focus on the educative. The male citizen is in search of a boy with a beautiful body and with a promising mind. One and the same person may possess both. The citizen, who is also a pedagogue may have reasons (mercenary or generous) for taking the boy as his object in both roles; but his erotic and educative projects may come together only in their objects (Price 2002:172). Males who prostituted themselves or, as Plato implies "caught by the means of money" were seen as moral transgressors.

In addition to Plato, another example which highlights the Greek attitudes towards this transgression and the consequences of hired homosexuality can be found in Aeschines (389 -314 B.C) who wrote at the same time as Plato:

If any boy is let out for hire as a prostitute, whether it be by father or brother or uncle or guardian, or by anyone else who has control of him, prosecution is not to be against the boy himself, but against the man who let him out for hire and the man who hired him; against the one because he let him out for hire, and against the other, it says, because he hired him (Aeschin 1.13).

The ancients had no word that corresponded to our word "homosexuality". *Paidierastia*, the term closest to it meant literally "boy love" and was not considered illegal among the Greeks (Crompton 2003:3; Phang 2001: 262-3). Pederasty can be defined as either the sexual acts between a man and a

boy of any age or the erotic relationship involving a man and an adolescent boy regardless of whether actual sex occurs (Boswell 1980:55; Crompton 2003:6; Greenberg 1988:17; Lear 2008:63; Rind 2013:8).

Epicureanism derives from the Greek philosopher Epicurus (341-270 B.C). In terms of sexuality Epicureanism maintained that the good and the ultimate goal of all human actions is pleasure (West 2005:50). By nature all animals pursue pleasure and avoid pain and behave appropriately in doing so. Since humans are animals too, and particularly intelligent ones at that, the good life is the pleasant life. However, the best strategy for achieving what can be defined as a pleasant life may not be quite so obvious. The Epicureans would consider all kinds of gratifications, including sex, to be worth pursuing. In spite of this, the followers of Epicurus's teachings rejected the idea that all pleasures should be sought equally. Striving for pleasure was to be achieved through the attainment of tranquility and equanimity (Foucault 1990:59; Greenberg 1988:204; Stephens 2010:77). This point is illustrated in the Roman poet and Epicurean, Lucretius. In his *On the nature of things*, Lucretius suggests that "The man who avoids love does not deprive himself of the joys of Venus, but rather chooses those that involving penalty" (Lucr. 1070-1080) In addition to the understanding that sexual pleasure was good, the Epicurean man expected women to be objects for his pleasure (Kelly 2004:39). Sexual pleasure was regarded as a higher good than marital fidelity because the male persona was identified as the stronger sex and not able to live in chastity (Allan 2002:848-850).

The most widely influential philosophical school of Greco-Roman times was Stoicism, founded by Zeno of Citium. It developed in Athens in the third century B.C, and attained widespread influence among educated Romans from the first century B.C onwards (Colish 1990:7) Stoicism is often perceived as an ascetic philosophy that subordinated feeling of duty and held pleasure in contempt - the opposite of what popularly denoted Epicureanism. It is, consequently, often assumed that the Stoics express a negative view of sex. However, this is not true. Stoic teachings on sexuality were centralized around what corresponded with nature. Since the role of sex among animals in nature appeared to be the perpetuation of the species, it seemed to follow that procreation must be the purpose of human sexuality. Hence, Stoics defined any sexual activity other than that specifically directed towards the production of children to not be in accordance with "nature" (Crompton 2003:66; Gaca 2003:60-1; Irvine 2008:135; Neill 2009:211). Men were expected to conduct themselves with virtue, inner strength and self-mastery (Foucault 1987:17). In regards to same-sex relations, the love between the participants was simply to be based on character and was not to be governed by passion (Brunt 2013:43). Therefore, it has been suggested that Stoics favored loving older youths (up to the age of twenty-eight), rather than adolescents who were capable of a philosophical education (Foucault 1984:199; Hubbard 2003:166).

Among others, the works of Cicero and Seneca the Elder hold a special place in the history of the Stoic tradition (Colish 1990:61). Here, both the Stoic mentality towards sexuality and prostitution and its ethical approach are featured. In *For Marcus Caelius* Cicero attacks an upper-class woman named Clodia and accuses her of behaving like a prostitute:

For what charges could there be on which he would not find it easy to defend himself? I am not now saying anything against that woman, but suppose it were someone quite unlike her—a woman who made herself summon to all, who openly has some special lover every day, into whose grounds, house and place at Baiae every rank had a right of free entry, who even supported young men, and made their fathers' stinginess bearable at her own expense; if a widow were casting off restraints, a frisky widow living frivolously, a rich widow living extravagantly, an amorous widow living a loose life, should I regard any man guilty of misconduct if he had been somewhat free in his attentions to her? (Cic. *Cael* 38).

In fact Cicero suggests that Clodia has distorted the normal social order and debased the elite by emulating the behavior of a prostitute. There was no stigma attached to the elite man privately purchasing sexual favors. We can deduct this from numerous passages in Roman literature. There was obviously a great stigma attached to elite women publicly presenting themselves as promiscuous (McCoy 2006:182-3). Seneca the Elder also expressed his feelings on the subject: “They thought it would count as a miracle if freedom were seen in a captive, chastity in a prostitute, innocence in one accused” (Sen. *Contr* 1.2.17-18). In both Cicero and Seneca, prostitution was closely connected to moral decay which threatens the whole community. In conjunction with the Stoic morality, prostitutes were often regarded with suspicion and the trade itself was thought to be unsavory (McGinn 1998:65; Williams 2010:40).

4.2 Sex in the lives of the Romans: behaviors, images, desires and passions

Up to this point I have given an account of the most influential concepts used in archaeological studies of Roman male sexuality and prostitution, as well as essential ancient Hellenistic theories which might have played an important role in shaping the Roman mentalities towards both of these subjects. Still, how did the Romans themselves relate to sex and prostitution?

Perhaps the best-known modern scholar who tried to explain Roman sexuality was the French philosopher Michel Foucault (1926-1984). In *The history of sexuality* Foucault (1984:92-102) proposes to establish the many structures and institutions within the Roman mentality of sexuality by introducing the relationship between power and sex (Edwards 1993:57). According to Foucault this correlation is not principally repressive but productive. This recognition is rather based on the idea that individuals are repressed through an apparatus of sexuality that incites discourse about sex, produces desire and norms of psychosexual development, and thereby produces sexual subjects (Sawicki 2006:364; Vizier 1998:70-1). Foucault pays special attention to the concept which he names “biopower”. This is an umbrella concept for two mechanisms of power in a society: disciplinary

power, which controlled individual bodies, and “regulatory” power, which was embodied in politics and strategies for governing populations. Foucault argues that sexuality occupied a particularly important role within the concept of biopower, both as a vehicle and a target. In other words, sexuality can be analyzed on two social-theoretical levels: firstly as an object for human science and normalization, a vehicle for the administering of health, education, and welfare of the population, and secondly as a target for interventions for families and individual lives by medical, psychological, and legal authorities (Sawicki 2006:363).

Several academic disciplines, such as art history, classical archeology and philology have explored important key elements between modern and ancient sexual behavior and sexual activity (Aldrete 2004:113-115; Black 1998:45; Sawicki 2006:364-5; Skinner 2005:242-7). In the twenty-first century sexuality is strongly founded on the choice of object and heavily dependent on biological gender. More important still, our society tends to consider heterosexuality and homosexuality as opposites of each other (Clarke 2003a:13; Parker 1992:98-99). The Romans lacked this notion of dividing sexual predisposition into two separate components. In other words, the ancient Romans did not distinguish sexual activity with one’s own sex and with the opposite sex as two separate alternatives, and therefore the terms homosexual and heterosexual did not apply to them in the same manner (Foucault 1987:187-89). Consequently, good sex in whatever form was considered a much-appreciated gift from the Gods and an activity to be enjoyed (Clarke 2003a:15; Varone 2001:38).

Based mainly on written texts and epigraphical evidence, it is assumed that Roman male sexuality was founded upon the concepts of active and passive partners, not so much the gender of the individuals within relationships (Brisson 2002:41; Cantarella 1992:151; Kiefer 1975:56; Parker 1997:47; Williams 2010:18). The active part was usually associated with the freeborn male citizen referred to by the Romans as the *vir* or “real man” (Skinner 2005:212; Williams 2010:179-180). The *vir* symbolized the mature and fully-grown man who acted as an adult both in his anatomy and his behavior (Sissa 2008:152). The role of *vir* was in fact very restricted and was not bestowed upon youths, members of the working class, disreputable persons or slaves (Cantarella 1992:98; Skinner 1997:14; Walters 1997:31). A specifically phallic nuance of the language of manhood is clearly visible in the noun *virilitas* meaning “manhood” or “virility” (Williams 2010:183). The identification of *vir* was closely connected to both his role and status, firstly as active penetrator, and secondly as *paterfamilias* with unlimited power over people within his household. Consequently, the *vir* could openly seek sexual relations with both women, boys and in some cases other men without any major interventions from his surroundings (Brisson 2002:64; McDonnell 2006:72; Sissa 2008:158). Marriage was no obstacle, and it was tolerated for men to find sexual satisfaction outside marriage (DeFelice 2001:48; Kiefer 1975:39; Lefkowitz & Fant 2005:117). However, I should point out that it is incorrect

to assume that the Roman men classified as *vir* could freely sexually abuse whomever they pleased. One example which clearly illustrates this point is from Plautus's *Curculio* written in the second century B.C, where a slave reminds his master of the rules and guidelines concerning frequent sexual relations:

In that case nobody stops or forbids you from buying what is on the open market, if you've got the cash. Nobody stops anybody from walking on the public highway. Provided you don't make inroads on fenced-in reserves, provided you keep away from married women, widows, virgins, young innocents and children of respectable families, love anyone you want (Plaut. *Curc.* 35-38).

In contrast to the Greeks, who could engage in sexual relations with other freeborn citizens, the Romans rather exploited their slaves or sought the company of prostitutes (Clarke 1998:84; Foucault 1990:35; Kiefer 1975:63; McGeough 2004:135; Montserrat 2011:138). To initiate any form of sexual advances towards either freeborn Roman men and adolescents, or women thought to be the property of other male citizens was not acceptable and was characterized as *stuprum*. The term refers to illicit sexual relations that were punishable (Cantarella 1992:104-7; Foucault 1990:190; McGinn 1998:140-41; Williams 2010:63). To modern individuals the sexual freedom attached to the status of *vir* might seem overwhelming. However, it expresses a moral reflection on sexual behavior of the age that is exceedingly different from modern standards. This was the sexual ethics for men, taught and addressed to men, where women, adolescents and non-citizens served as objects of pleasure (Foucault 1987:22-3; Laurence 2009:76). However, it is important to realize that not all males were recognized as men (Walters 1997:32).

Male prostitutes or *exoleti* would probably not have been accepted as "real men" by society. Along with gladiators, actors, slaves, prostitutes they amounted to a social class known as *infames*, which was associated with the lower classes of society (Boswell 1980:77; Clarke 1998:222; DeFelice 2001:50; Edwards 1997:66; Lund 2006:51; Savunen 1997:102). In addition to enjoying very few legal and financial privileges, men who prostituted themselves were labeled as insignificant by the Roman courts (McGinn 1998:98). As a result, pimps and prostitutes could never aspire to the higher orders of Roman society. It was in fact impossible to improve one's status without a legal decision or official authorization (McGinn 1998:28-30). Furthermore, the Augustan marriage law the *lex Iulia et Papia*, prohibited unions between senatorial ranks and members of the *infames* (McGinn 1998:72). Therefore, pimps and prostitutes were situated beyond the freeborn Roman community, eligible only for unions with freedpersons (Lund 2006:65; McGinn 1998:102; McGinn 2004:74).

4.3 A paralleled language: filthy terms and despicable actions

In addition to literature as well as inscriptions and graffiti surviving from Pompeii, Latin terminology also gives us an idea of how the Romans viewed sexuality and prostitution. Incorporated into the Latin

vocabulary were numerous expressions used to describe male sexuality and also prostitution. The Latin term *futuo* refers to the basic obscenity for the male part in sexual intercourse with women. The etymology of this word is obscure, but it may be related to “hit” or “beat”. A number of Pompeian graffiti using *futuo* seems to be the work of prostitutes praising their clients (see *CIL* IV 2176, 2274, 2185-88, 2219). In addition, in male boasts *futuo* is chosen merely as the proper designation of an act or acts indicative of the subject’s virility. The writer scarcely sees himself as humiliating his partner, whose identity is of no consequence (see *CIL* IV 2175, 2184, 2248). Except in the passive, *futuo* was not as a rule used for the female role (Adams 1990:118-122).

Both *fellatio* and *irrumatio* signifies oral stimulation of the penis while a *cunnilinctor* offered oral sex to women (Cantarella 1992:124; Clarke 2002:164-165; Lund 2006:28; Skinner 1997:15). *Fellatio* conveys the action of the mouth, whereas *irrumatio* conveys the action of the penis, thus a type of rape. The verb itself implies forced fellatio and is interpreted from an epigraphical point of view as a hostile and humiliating act, reserved for prostitutes (see *CIL* IV 10030). *Fellatio* in whatever form was thought unclean, more so for men than for women, because the Romans saw the mouth as a kind of social organ, since social encounters (as today in the Mediterranean) required kissing as a form of greeting (see *CIL* IV 3925, 5408). Therefore, the focus on the purity of another’s mouth pervaded Roman society (Adams 1990:127; Clarke 2003a:118; DeFlice 2001:102; Lund 2006:18; Varone 2002:146; Younger 2005:69).

As a supplement to *futuo*, the character of the *pedico* or “bugger” points to the object usually being male and emphasizes anal penetration (see *CIL* IV 2194, 2210, 2449). The most common words in Latin which referred to men who subjected themselves to penetration were *catamitus*, *pathicus* and *scultimidonus* (Adams 1990:123). However, the term possibly most frequently used to classify men who submitted themselves to anal penetration was *cinaedus* (Laurence 2009:84; Sissa 2008:157; Skinner 2005:252; Walters 1997:34). The nominal correspondents to *pedicare* were *pedico* and *pedicator*. In addition, *pedico* is sometimes used in threats. The expression also denotes punishment or humiliation that could be inflicted on an enemy or malefactor as a sexual violation. *Pedico* also shows signs of a weakening sense. There is a type in Pompeian graffiti whereby the reader of the inscription “he who read” or “I who read” is to “be X”, or to “do X”, where X represents a sexual term (see *CIL* IV, 2360, 2266, 4008, 8617) (Adams 1990:123-125; Williams 2010:178).

In a society where personal status, civic responsibilities and sexuality were closely linked together, a *cinaedus* was a male who had failed to live up to the traditional standards of masculine comportment and violated the prescriptions for virile behavior (Skinner 1997:17; Williams 2010:193). The ancient Roman stigma and popular judgment of character associated with this group of men were mainly founded on a social dislike for male passivity (Foucault 1987:194; Laurence 2009:85). To the

Romans, men who submitted themselves to domination and acceptance of servitude were considered shameful and an act against nature, simply because they offered themselves as the obliging objects for another's pleasure (Foucault 1987:216; Laurence 2009:86; Lund 2006:28; Walters 1997:41).

4.4 Summary and outline-challenging the Roman representation of men

This project has the intention of contributing to an understanding of the different representations of male sexuality and prostitution in Pompeii. The methodological aspects bring together different sources in which these depictions are displayed. The Roman apprehensions towards sexuality and prostitution are illustrated by theoretical frameworks based on philosophical viewpoints, as well as the Latin vocabulary related to sexual acts. How then, did male sexuality and prostitution manifest itself in Pompeii;

- a) The Roman understanding of male sexuality was different from ours, *what did the artistic representations of male sexuality and gender in erotic imagery signify to the ancient Romans?*
- b) Prostitution was legal and conductible both within the town's public as well as private spheres, *where did male prostitution take place in Pompeii?*
- c) Men who worked as prostitutes were slaves, or members of the lower classes, *how can the archeological and textual material highlight the realism surrounding the identity and social status of males engaged in the Pompeian sex-trade?*

Combined, these questions form the base of this project's approach to male sexuality and prostitution as they are employed in the analysis of a selected material, both archaeological and textual, from Pompeii.

PART III:

UNCOVERING THE SEXUAL TOPOGRAPHY OF POMPEII

5 SAMPLING SEX

The preservation of numerous objects from Pompeii shows the many varied and abundant forms of sexuality which pervaded Pompeian life (Rowland 2014:74). From the city itself archeologists find erotic images on pottery lamps, engraved gems, carved marble, cameo glass, silver vessels, and most famously: painted plaster walls. These last depictions are perhaps the most important because they allow us to reconstruct the viewing context for this imagery. Apart from its liturgical context, images in art and objects often have a theological resonance far beyond their formal, material, or stylistic implications ((Blanshard 2010:32; Elsner 2007:39).

Furthermore, buildings suspected of being connected to the town's sex-trade have also been uncovered. However, only a handful of these actually contain erotic imagery, sexual inscriptions and graffiti. Normally, scholars have organized these buildings into three categories: public establishments, private residences and bath complexes. This classification is mainly based on locations where the archeological evidence used to identify prostitution has been discovered (Bird 2006:45). By employing the methods and the three cross-examination questions defined in chapter 4, my main aims will be to illuminate the different representations of Roman male sexuality and gender from Pompeii, and also to evaluate the evidence which could describe the existence and social organization of male prostitution. With special emphasis on the social and artistic aims, chapter 5 will mainly concern itself with the symbolisms of the erect phallus, and the depictions of sexual intercourse in artifacts and paintings labeled as personal items.

In order to draw attention to male prostitution, chapter 6 aims to investigate six establishments labeled as upper-class homes; House of Caecilius Iucundus (V.I.26), House at I.XIII.16, House of the Beautiful Impluvium (I.IX.1), House of Centenary (IX.VIII.6), House of the Vettii (VI.XV.1), and the House of the Restaurant (IX.V.14/16). These examples will serve as test subjects for any indications that might connect an elite household to an involvement with the city's male sex-trade.

The choice of structures is based on the following criteria: 1) all were identified as brothels at the time of excavation, 2) their spatial layouts are accommodated and classified as large enough to have a brothel set up inside 3) each subject contains erotic paintings or sexual inscriptions, either located internally or in the immediate vicinity. In addition to the locations mentioned above, chapter 7 will apply the same principles used in chapter 6, but to examine communal spaces for any evidence that might shed light on the social organization, as well as the social identity of male prostitutes found in Pompeii.

5.1 The symbolisms of the erect phallus

“If you should see unchaste obscenities display about our temple building’s frieze, don’t be offended at their contents. We’re a lot more cock than overbearing sneer” (*Priap*: 49).

The phallus is defined as the cultural icon of the male reproductive organ in permanent erection (Keuls 1985:2). As illustrated above in the passage from the *Priapus Poems*, the phallus was a symbol on display in different settings throughout a Roman town. However, unlike the modern Western world, the sight of the erect male member was never regarded as a motivator for offence (Merritt 2012:57). The Romans identified the phallus with different deities who had the power to make new shoots in the spring from withered plants, to make sterile women fertile, and to ward off evil spirits (Grant 1975:110). In the archaeological material from Pompeii (see **app. I**) the erect phallus appears often in three forms; firstly, as sculptures and wind chimes, secondly, as a prominent feature on statues of the god Priapus and on vertical stone herms, and thirdly as an oversized attribute on characters which the Romans probably would have labeled as diverse, and perhaps also even as humorous in terms of body type (Varone 2001:16-26)

The Romans lived out their lives in a world full of rituals which had to be scrupulously observed. The religious calendar not only set aside days for religious festivals, but decreed whether any individual day was auspicious (*fas*) or inauspicious (*nefas*), which might affect the outcome of battles or business. The goodwill of the gods, as well as the happy outcome of events, could only be procured by doing the right thing at the right time, following the rules of strict formalism (Grant 1975:107-108). Anything that fell outside the bounds of tradition might be rejected; any person who violated the established rules was a bearer of misfortune, or *fascinum* (Francese 2007:195). Such an evil sight or harmful stigma from the gods could be neutralized by making an appropriate gesture with the fingers crossed, resembling the act of intercourse. Such sexual symbolism was first and foremost seen as a defensive force against harmful spirits, which were ubiquitous (Adams 1990:63; Beacham 1991:4; Røheim 1981:217).



Figure 6: Phallus in Nocera tufa, 64 cm, Pompeii, PR, Inv.no 113415 (photo by author).

5.1.1 The *tintinnabula*

Apart from the religious aspect, the phallus may have had other possible interpretations. They decorated the walls, were placed on terracotta plaques outside small temples, or were carved into the street surface itself, which might indicate that in addition to being a protective force, the phallus could also have had other meanings (Beard 2008:59). Perhaps the most remarkable example illustrating other usage is a travertine bas-relief of a phallus and the engraved words *Hic Habitat Felicitas* or “here dwells happiness”. This was found above a large oven in a bakery at VI. VI.17 where it served as a good-luck charm intending to bring wealth and prosperity (Friedman 2001:30; Knapp 2011:67; Ròheim 1981:218).

In addition to the sculptured phalluses, wind chimes or *tintinnabula* in bronze, whose bells had the symbolic function of ensuring good fortune in trade, are also preserved (Grant 1975:138; Williams 2010:92; Younger 2005:78). These good-luck phalluses were popular with shop-owners, and it is likely that they were placed outside family businesses to defend them from destructive and envious attention from rivals. Altogether, four *tintinnabula* survive from Pompeii, together with four from Herculaneum. With a difference in length, they measure between 14.5 to 23 cm, and show various depictions: a dwarf riding on a phallus, a snail, Mercury sitting on top of a ram, an ithyphallic figure with an erect penis holding a lamp in his left hand, a polyphallus, a lion, a tortoise sitting on the back of a mouse and a gladiator about to kill a cougar,



Figure 7: Examples of *Tintinnaula* from Pompeii. (photo by author).

which in fact represents his own penis (Grant 1975:139-140). Together with gods and human figures the *tintinnabula* are also decorated with distinct animal features such as wings, legs or tails. Even though their true symbolic meanings still remain unclear, I would argue that the *tintinnabula* could symbolize the violent image of male sexuality. Not with any obvious parallelism to fertility, it has been suggested that these animal attributes served as an indication of strength associated with the imagined powers of mystery gods. One example is Mithras, who often is depicted with animal features, especially as the lion (Clauss 1990:163). The cult of Mithras, or Mithranism originally came from Asia

Minor and together with Isis and her consort Sarapis became well-established deities in the Roman world during the second century B.C (Skinner 2005:371-372). Although there is no surviving archeological evidence supporting the fact that the cult of Mithras was fundamental in Pompeii, the cult of Isis seems to have played an important role. A small temple dedicated to the goddess (VIII. VII.28) was believed to have been consecrated around the first century B.C. (Petersen 2006:28). Based on the modest size of its remains, German archeologist Paul Zanker (1998:53) suggests that this indicated a relatively small group of devotees. With this in mind, I would imply that perhaps the animal features displayed in the *tintinnabula* could in fact be related to a more Egyptian or perhaps a Near Eastern mindset towards male sexuality. Because only a handful of the *tintinnabula* are found in the city, they could represent segregated ideological perceptions of male sexuality that co-existed alongside the Roman, which credited the phallus with the substantial protective powers linked to different animal (Harris 2007:120).

5.1.2 Priapus and Mercury: protectors of gardens, pastures and travelers

In addition to the phallic representations of mystery gods of Eastern origin, the god Priapus also appears in sculptures and figurines. Priapus was the son of Venus and Bacchus, and because he is always portrayed with a huge erect phallus he is generally associated with fertility (Brumble 1998:278). Four preserved sculptures in terracotta and bronze, as well as two frescoes from Villa of the Mysteries and the brothel at VII. VIII.18-20 present the god with his erection either carrying a basket of fruit, holding a jug whilst pouring and accepting a sacrifice, would support this approach (Clarke 2003a:105; Grant 1975:124-127). Priapus also served as the protecting god of gardens and doorways against thieves trying to steal or violate the harvest: “If boy, or man, or woman steals I hump (in converse order) pussy, head and rump” (*Priap*: 22). Here Priapus threatens to forcibly penetrate the vagina, anus or mouth of those who steal the fruit of the gardens. In many ways he embodies both the male fantasies of the omnipotent phallus and men’s fears of impotency. Additionally, he articulates the widespread notion that sex was the act of a man inserting his penis into someone’s orifices-be that someone boy, girl, woman, or another man (Clarke 1998:48; Clarke 2003a:104).

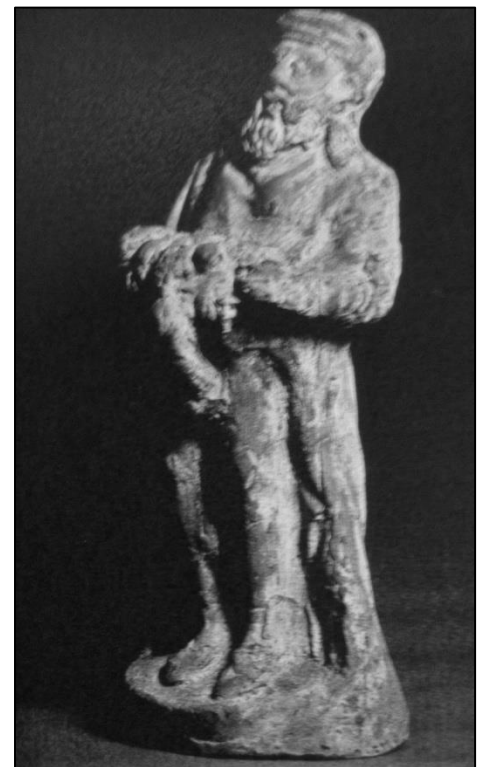


Figure 8: Priapus, sculpture in terracotta, 5.5x14cm, Pompeii, 1st century B.C, RP,Inv.no 27717 (Grant 1975:124).

In art Priapus has much in common with the stelae of Mercury. These are vertical stone pillars topped with a head of the god and figure his erect phallus on the shaft below, known as the *herm*, after the Greek designation for Mercury as Hermes. The herm was commonly represented by rectangular pillars which had male attributes, and were surmounted by a human head. They were placed as boundary-stones between estates and served as landmarks to protect travelers. These herms eventually came to be venerated as divine objects and began to appear at the entrances of houses, in gymnasiums, in libraries and on tombs. They were considered sacred and inviolable, and the faithful made offerings to them of incense and garlands.



Figure 9 (left) Herm with head of boy, sculpture in bronze, 4,5x17 cm, 1st century A.D, PR, Inv.no 129434, (Grant 1975:115).

Figure 10 (right) Clothed herm, sculpture in pavonazzetto marble, 142 cm, Pompeii, 1st century A.D, without number (Grant 1975:116).

Mainly dating from the first century A.D and manufactured in pavonazzetto marble and bronze, the four herms from Pompeii represent a *Canephorae* (girls who took part in processions in Ancient Greece, carrying baskets on their heads full of offerings to the gods), a boy, a clothed herm and a *trapezophoron* (construction supporting a table top). The herms' display of phallicism is used to warn

potential trespassers to keep their distance. It is unclear, however, whether Mercury's phallicism was an ancient part of his cult. One theory concerning the male sexuality these herms represent, is the view that Mercury's phallicism is linked to his pastoral and generative function. Synonymously with his equally phallic compatriot Pan, Mercury multiplies his flocks (Larson 2007:147). Based on these assumptions in terms of the symbolism of the herms, I would suggest that their purpose were to exhibit protective powers in the areas they were placed. Moreover, the herm could also be a sign of reproductivity, not just in terms of human sexuality but also in nature. In addition to a protective element attached to male sexuality, the herm became a decorative element in the Roman garden; a miniature herm might be placed in the domestic shrine with the household gods (Grant 1975:114-119; Grossman 2003:52; Humphrey 1986:135).

5.1.3 Ithyphallicism and humor

So far I have discussed different representations of the erect phallus as a religious symbol, protective force, and as a possible sign of fertility. However, the archeological material from Pompeii also reveals figures with oversized phalluses, with strange and twisted faces often engaged in dance, theater or other activities. Among these, two statuettes in gilded bronze portraying a *placentarius* measuring 25 cm each have been found in the House of the Ephebe (I.VIII.10-12). These statues feature a thin naked man which could both symbolize

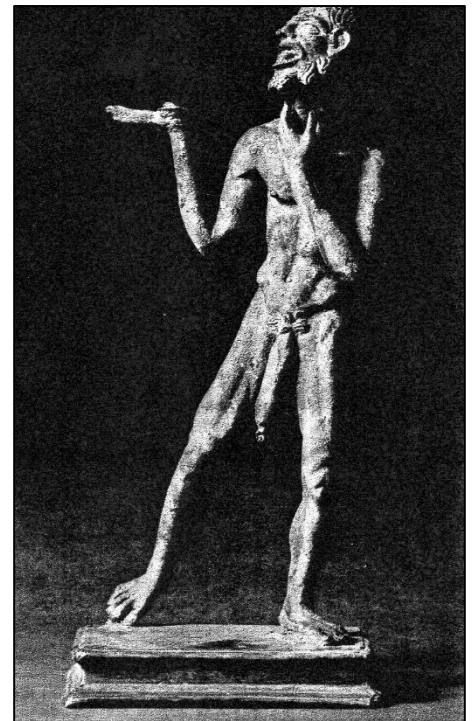


Figure 12: *Placentarius*, sculpture in gilded bronze, 25 cm, Pompeii, Last years of Pompeii, RP, Inv.no 143760, (Grant 1975:120).

ithyphallicism related to humor. The *placentarius* was originally a street seller of *placentae* (flat muffin-like cakes of pastry and honey served on a shallow tray). It has been argued that these statues were used in a domestic context as sauce dishes. Other examples of representations which combine both male sexuality and humor are *stupidus*, pygmies, dwarves and ithyphallic blacks. The *stupidus* was a bold character with a rather unpleasant appearance who played a central role in mimes, for example the cuckolded husband in the numerous popular adultery plays (Barton 1993:139; Grant 1975:120,129; Varone 2002:196). From both the House of the Doctor (VIII. V.24) and the House of the Quadrigas (VII.II.25) frescos with pygmies engaged in an outdoor banquet and



Figure 11: *Stupidus*, 35,5 cm, Pompeii, 1st century A.D, PR, Inv.no 27729, (Grant 1975:122).

sexual intercourse are still preserved (Clarke 1998:44). Also, from the House of Cryptoporticus (I.VI.2), House of Menander (I.X.4) and House of Caesius Blandus (VII.I.40) mosaic pavements decorating the *sudatio* and *caladrium* display ithyphallic black swimmers either together with amphorae or sea-creatures (Clarke 1998:121-124).



Figure 14: Pygmies copulating, 2.17x0.56 m, Pompeii, House VIII.V.24, peristyle, 45-70A.D, (Clarke 1998:44).

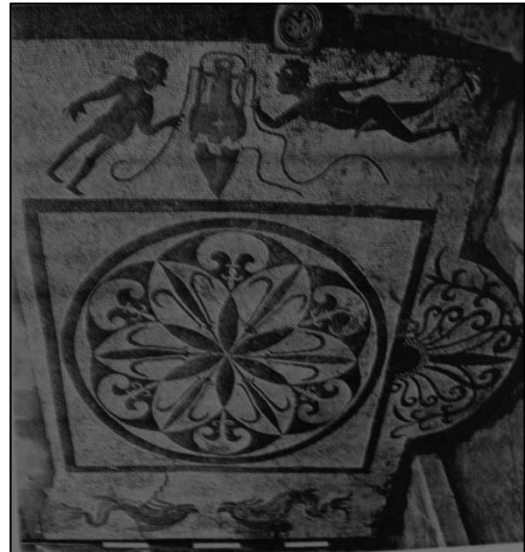


Figure 13: Black bath attendant, Pompeii, House of Menander (I.X.4), mosaic paving, entryway to *caladrium*, 40-20 B.C, (Clarke 1998:125).

Other artifacts from Pompeii representing male sexuality are three bronze lamps and a drinking-bowl for birds dated to the first century A.D. Two lamps measure 22 cm and depict a dwarf fully clothed, in a riding position with a large phallus in-between his legs. One lamp measures 20 cm and appears as a faun with a huge phallus. The drinking bowl-mask is fairly small (9.5x9 cm) and in terracotta (Grant 1975:132-133). The mask has a base wider than the upper parts. As a result it is very stable and the ring-shaped handles on the sides may act as perches. In the mouth of the mask was a mobile phallus that could be used as a float when the vessel was filled with water. All these technical points add up to a convincing identification, given that the Romans were particularly fond of birds. The Romans took a special interest in augury, a precise practice that observes the movements of birds. The bird omnia could affirm the prototypical nature of geniality,



Figure 15: Drinking-bowl, terracotta, 9.5x9 cm, Pompeii, 1st century A.D, PR,Inv.no 27859, (Grant 1975:128).

as they were regarded as message-bearers between gods and mortals (Lawrence 1997:134; Peppard 2011:116).

Experts on ancient Rome disagree on the purpose with regard to these representations of the phallus. However, in our culture we are taught not to laugh at persons with physical disabilities, and to accept without remark other people with a body or a skin-color different from our own. Although controversial, with their atypical body shapes, contorted faces, and over-sized phalluses, these individuals could have been the targets for both laughter and humorous outbursts (Abbott 1965:32; Clarke 2002:159; Clarke 2003a:108; Kidd 2014:42). This view-point has given rise to the understanding among scholars that the “outrages” or “abnormal” (for example creatures with unusually large phalluses or with enormous erections) actually evoked laughter among their viewers. The laughter produced would in return help ward off evil spirits threatening both people and households (Clarke 2003a:195; 1998:131; Grant 1975:131).

5.2 Considering sexual intercourse: social and artistic objectives

Material	Amount	Archeological context	Type of intercourse	Active/passive
Frescos displaying intercourse	8	Private homes	Heterosexual	5 examples: active female/passive male, 3 examples: active male/passive female
Frescos portraying a couple on a bed	4	Private homes	Heterosexual	
Frescos displaying intercourse	4	Unknown location	Heterosexual	2 examples: female active/male passive, 2 examples: male active/female passive
Frescos of intercourse	13	Public buildings	Oral sex, foursome, threesome, heterosexual intercourse	3 examples: female active/male passive, 5 examples: male active/female passive, 2 examples: oral sex, 1 example: threesome, 1 example: foursome, 1 example: woman and man on bed
Erotic fresco	2	Public buildings	Priapus, poet	
Erotic frescos with mythological scenes	3	Unknown location	Heterosexual	
Erotic frescos with mythological scenes	4	Private homes	Heterosexual	
Bas-relief with erotic scene	1	Unknown location	Heterosexual	Active female/passive male
<i>Lebes</i> in bronze	1	Unknown location	Heterosexual	Active female/passive male
Attic red-figure vase	1	Unknown location	Heterosexual	Active male/passive female
Etruscan black-figured pottery	1	Unknown location	Homosexual	Active male/passive male
Brown-painted terracotta lamp	2	Unknown location	Heterosexual	Active female/passive male

Red-painted terracotta lamp	1	Unknown location	Heterosexual	Active male/passive female
Vase handle in bronze	1	Unknown location	Heterosexual	Active female/passive male
Silver cup with erotic mythological scene	1	Private home	Heterosexual	
Silver cup with sexual intercourse	1	Private home	Heterosexual	Active female/passive male

Table 1: Data showing an overview of the archeological material depicting sexual intercourse, eroticism or sexual related acts from Pompeii (by author).

My investigations of erotic and sexual imagery in art and objects are summarized in **table 1**.

Altogether from private contexts eighteen scenes survive, either depicting sexual intercourse, mythological creatures involved in foreplay, or couples on a bed either before or after intercourse. Twelve of these illustrate a female active/ male passive attitude, and eight represent a male active/ female passive attitude. From unknown locations in Pompeii four frescos survive with two showing female active/male passive, and two with male active/female passive (see **app. II**) Erotic representations recovered from public structures are a more complex matter (see **app. III**). With depictions of oral sex, threesomes and foursomes, in addition to three examples showing female active/male passive and five examples portraying male active/female passive. All in all, the House of Caecilius Iucundus (V.I.26), House at I.XIII.16, House of the Beautiful Impluvium (I. IX. 1) and House of the Centenary (IX. VIII.6) each reveal erotic illustrations of a couple on a bed or a sofa preparing for intercourse. Additionally, three houses contain more than one erotic representation depicting intercourse; House of Centenary (IX. VII.6) and House of the Vettii (VI.XV.1) contain two each, while House of the



Figure 16: *Lebes* with satyr and nymph, 12x24 cm, Pompeii, 1st century B.C, RP,Inv.no 27671, (photo by author).



Figure 17: Red-painted terracotta lamp: a man penetrating a woman, 11.5x7.3 cm, Pompeii, first half of 1st century A.D, (photo by author).

Restaurant (IX.V.14/16) includes four altogether. Artifacts found in a variety of dwellings in Pompeii also portray different aspects of male sexuality. These include two brown-painted and one red-painted terracotta lamp, one silver cup with a heterosexual intercourse, one bas-relief in marble and one vase handle (all, except the red-painted terracotta lamp, depict a woman straddling a man), one silver cup representing Mars and Venus on a bed, a *Lebes* (see **fig.16**) in bronze showing a satyr and a maenad (with a female active and male passive décor), an attic red-figure vase where a man is penetrating a woman from behind (ca. 480 B.C) and an amphora where two men are engaged in anal intercourse (ca. 6th B.C) (Grant 1975:101-102).

Based on the material described above, it is clear that the male sexuality in erotic art and objects had different forms. They illustrate the way Roman artists imagined sexuality, and the roles men played in art. Additionally, these erotic representations also provide scholars with an understanding of what society considered and related to acceptable sexual behavior. In the compositions where the male is the active part he is either penetrating his partner from behind or from the front. In addition to corresponding with Roman male fantasy of sexual dominance over his female partners, Lucretius also emphasizes the right position of conception for women: “The generally accepted view is that wives conceive most readily in the style and matter of four-footed beasts, because in this position, with the breasts below and the loins raised, the semen can occupy the appropriate parts” (Lucr.4.1260) Therefore it could be suggested that these scenes may be related to signs of fertility, emphasizing the correct way of conceiving for women. In addition, I would argue that the representations showing the more “theoretically” accepted form of intercourse could also be an artistic reflection of the perception of Roman male sexuality and the correct gender roles in sexual relation between men and women.

Surprisingly from Pompeii, the representations portraying heterosexual intercourse actually display a larger number of women as active participants in sexual intercourse than men. This could be sporadic, but at the same time it could also demonstrate a different aspect of male sexuality in art, challenging what we know from the literary sources. In Ovid’s (43 B.C-17-18 A.D) *Ars Amatoria* book three for example, the poet gives advice on how women could position themselves for intercourse and how to manipulate their own bodies in order to look attractive to men (Parker 1992:95-96; Myerowitz 1992:136):

What remains I blush to tell; but kindly Dione says “What brings a blush is before all else my business”. Let each woman know herself; from your own bodies fix your methods; one fashion does not suite all alike. Let her who is fair of face recline upon her back; let those whose backs please them be seen from behind. Milanion bore Atlanta upon his shoulders; if they are comely, let them be taken thus. A small woman should ride astride; because she was tall, his Theban bride never sat Hector like a horse. A woman whose long flanks deserve to be seen should press the coverlets with her knees, her neck bent backward somewhat. If her thighs be youthful and her breasts without blemish, her lover should stand, and she herself lie slantwise on the couch. Nor think it unbecoming to

loose your hair, like the Phylleian mother, and bend back your neck amid flowing tresses. And you whose belly Lucina has marked with wrinkles, like the swift Parthian, use a backward-turned steed (Ov. AA, 3.769-88).

In the passage above I would imply that even though Ovid sees women as objects for men's pleasure he also urges them to take control and to play on their physical advantages to arouse men, it could also imply a sort of fantasy scenario for both sexes outside of the literary sphere. Recognizing how the Romans felt about male passivity and how these representations were meant to resemble the upper-class perception of sexual intercourse, depictions showing an active female straddling her partner might apply to a fantasy in the male Roman mind. Here women, whose sexuality seems to have been quite restricted, were depicted in literature and iconographical representations as the active and dominating part rather than in the traditional passive role. In terms of men who theoretically were identified as the active penetrator, these illustrations might point to a different way of portraying the male body that perhaps accepted the more passive role of the man and the more prominent role of the woman. This could symbolically have challenged the Roman outlook on masculinity and sex with the artistic purpose of imitating mythological intercourse drawing a resemblance and attachment to the Roman gods and mystical creatures. The material discussed is dated to different periods, expanding from the 6th century B.C right up to when Pompeii was destroyed. Another suggestion for a more female active and male passive mentality in art is a shifting display towards new ideas of the male body as well as new valuations of sexual behavior, where women could in fact play the active part (Harper 2011:321). However, because these erotic displays and the sexual activities they depict do not synchronize with the conventional norms of Roman sexuality between living humans, it has been suggested that these were so outrageous that their graphical purpose was simply to evoke laughter to protect against harmful spirits (Barton 2002:216-227; Clarke 2002:177; Koloski-Ostrow 1997:242).

5.3 Confronting sexual abnormality

The Romans defined different sexual acts as either normal or abnormal (Parker 1997:60). As I have demonstrated in the previous section, sexual acts in art and objects do not always correspond with the traditional view regarding Roman sexual theory. Keeping the active/passive paradigm in mind, men who subjected themselves to penetration assimilated the sexual behavior of the female. Roman men could claim their full masculinity by seeking the insertive role in penetrating acts. If they sought the passive partner in sexual acts or performed orally on either women or other men their masculinity was challenged and labeled as effeminate (Knust 2006:30). In artistic representations from Pompeii one black-figured amphora dated to the 6th century B.C and three frescos from the Suburban baths (VII.XVI.a) depict sexual acts and positions the Romans would have classified as "abnormal".

The black-figured amphora is, as already mentioned, dated to the 6th century B.C. It measures 24 x 11.5 cm with upper-parts decorated with birds and ivy leaves. The iconography, which is repeated on both sides, shows two males engaged in anal intercourse, each with his right arm stretched out (Grant 1975:103; Younger 2005:315). Unfortunately, the amphora's archaeological context remains unclear. However, interestingly enough, this object has been identified as Etruscan (Grant 1975:101-103). Little of Etruscan culture is still extant except for some pieces of art, many of which depict homoerotic themes or same-sex sexual acts (Pickett 2009:13). It has in fact been suggested that the Etruscans had a great enthusiasm for homosexuality.

The Greek historians, for example Athenaeus from Naucratis, also wrote of the Etruscans lack of sexual inhibitions, and the great pleasure Etruscan men found in the sexual pursuit of other males (Neill 2009:186). Still, because of the absence of an archeological context and proper dating, I would imply that perhaps this amphora also could represent early Pompeian outlook on male sexuality portrayed in art. Based on the iconography, the two characters are depicted exactly the same, and there is no clear distinction between an older and a younger partner. In contrast to for example the Warren-cup (see **fig.1**), where distinction is made very clear by the highlighting of male attributes such as a mature body and a beard, versus hairlessness and a soft figure (Joshel 2010:99; Lund 2006:42) Also in literature, these characteristics are used to shed light on Roman norms for acceptable sexual behavior between males (see *Anthol. Lat.* XII.12, XII.23, XII.29, XII.31,

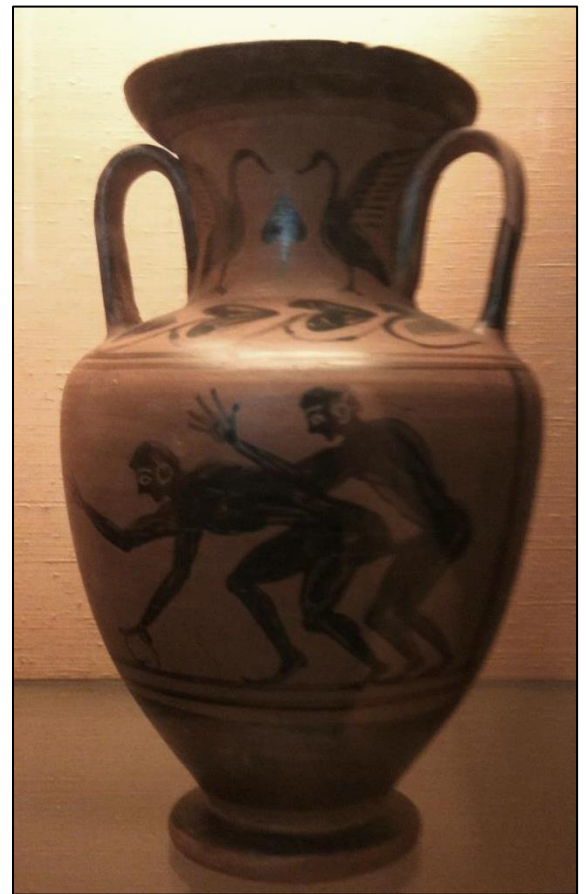


Figure 18: Amphora depicting homosexual intercourse, Etruscan black-figure pottery, 24x11,5 cm, 6th century B.C., PR,Inv.no 27670 (photo by author)

Hor.*Od.*10, Mart.4.7). Because these artistic features are missing, the characters could classify as either two adults or two adolescents: Considering the preliminary dating and the Roman mindset towards passive penetration, this object could confirm the early Pompeian acceptance of homosexual intercourse in art between men of equal social standing. Perhaps, at this point, before Pompeii became a Roman province, same-sex intercourse resembled more the Greek model and was not yet stigmatized as a subject for social ridicule and cultural prejudice towards failing masculinity.

The frescos from the Suburban bath have received much attention because of their sexual acts and positions. Altogether eight frescos were recovered in the *apodyterium* (dressing room), where especially three feature unusual depictions of male sexuality. **Fig. 19** shows scene IV from the Suburban baths. Here, a man performs cunnilingus on a woman. They are not represented as equal in size, as she is portrayed much larger than him. She is depicted with fine proportions, graceful gestures and expensive jewelry. The man in contrast, has no proportions at all, he is inappropriately dressed, and his gestures are comic (Clarke 1998:226; 2002:153). **Fig. 20** represents fresco VI. A nude man kneels at the left-hand side of a bed, and penetrates another male partner. The second male is penetrating a woman from behind (Jacobelli 1995:52-53). The man who is doing the penetrating seems to be brawnier than his partner. Because of the similar height and stature of the two men, it is very difficult to make the middle man into a boy (Clarke 1998:231). **Fig. 21** corresponds to representation VII and sketches out four people engaged in sexual intercourse. A nude man kneels on the left-hand side of the bed. He looks out on the viewer while he raises his right hand in the air as he penetrates the man kneeling in front of him. The man who is being penetrated leans forward as a woman crouches on her elbows to fellate him. A second woman, kneeling on the floor performs cunnilingus on her (Clarke 1998:233-236). These erotic frescos illuminate forms of male sexuality beyond the normative sex roles discussed earlier (Dunstan 2011:109; Laurence. Cunnilingus performed by a man is very rare in art, and to the Romans this was an act that was regarded as



Figure 21: A man performing cunnilingus on a woman, 33x25 cm, Suburban baths (VII.XVI.a), Pompeii, (photo by author).



Figure 20: A threesome between two males and one female, 33x24 cm, Suburban baths (VII.XVI.a), Pompeii, (photo by author).



Figure 19: A foursome between two males and two females, 31x25, 5 cm, Suburban baths (VII.XVI.a), Pompeii, (photo by author).2007:176).

distasteful. A gender distinction existed in relation to oral sex: it was considered much worse for a man to provide oral stimulation than for a woman to provide the same service. Men should not go down on other men or women, as it would undermine their status (Laurence 2009:78; Peakman 2013:365). Martial gives a description of a man associated with being a *cunnilictor*: “He is healthy, yet he’s deadly pale; seldom drinks wine and has a hale digestion, but looks white and ill; sunbathes, rouges his and still has a pasty face; licks all the cunts in Rome, and never blushes once” (Mart.1.77). The poet portrays a man who is marked out as feeble, waxlike and with feminine tendencies (sunbathing and make-up). Artistically in the painting from the Suburban baths, and in the passage from Martial, the man’s “perversion” is exaggerated. This could have made him an extremely comic figure in the eyes of the ancient Romans of both sexes (Clarke 2002:165). This point is perhaps made even clearer in the depictions of both the threesome and foursome. Because these frescos were located within the bath, it has been suggested that their “abnormal” sexuality incited laughter that drove away evil spirits (Bartsch 2006:159; Clarke 2003b:195; DeLaine 1999). Laughter is itself apotropical; and supports the likelihood that sexual imagery could provoke humor, and therefore release tension and anxiety (Skinner 2005:363). Apart from conjuring laughter, I would also suggest that these representations could in fact serve as evidence for a sexual “reality” in society; where men performed oral sex on women, and were penetrated by other males.

5.4 Corresponding with modernity?

This chapter has discussed the different contexts of male sexuality and gender in the archeological material from Pompeii. The phallus, as I have argued, was a sign of fertility and prosperity to the Romans. It had a particular magic, a religious and protective power used to ward off evil spirits. Sexual representations in art and objects highlight a different artistic mentality in depicting sex, where women are portrayed as active and men as passive receivers. The reasons for this could be many. However, as I have pointed out, it could perhaps offer a challenging mindset towards the traditional male role as active penetrator, or perhaps reflect on a shifting artistic understanding of the male body as well as norms for sexual behavior. In conjunction with characters (dwarves and pygmies), sexual acts and positions that were considered “abnormal”, the displayed male sexuality acted as a factor which evoked laughter among its viewers which prevented harm from bad omens. To the Romans the phallus and the various illustrations of male sexuality in objects, private and public art were not meant to cause offence or to be connected to the “obscene” as we tend to think in our modern Western world. For them, it represented values which could ensure safety and eminence for the community. Still, as I shall demonstrate in chapters 6 and 7, these attributes have also been linked to prostitution.

6 ELITE HOME OR BROTHEL?

Just as scandalous was the dinner-party which Gemellus, a messenger for the tribune who was of free birth but disgraceful, below the bearing of a slave, in his behavior towards his superiors, staged for the counsel Metellus Scipito and the Board of Tribunes of the Plebs, to the great embarrassment of the community. What he did was set up a brothel in his house, in which he prostituted Mucia and Fulvia, both women distinguished not only by their fathers but by their husbands, as well as a well-born boy named Saturnius (Val. Max 9.1.8, quoted in McGinn 2004:159).

The passage above by Valerius Maximus (17-37 A.D) offers a potential insight on the management of prostitution inside a private residence. In 52 B.C, a man called Gemellus hosted a dinner party together with some of his high-profile friends. In his home he kept both male and female prostitutes available as part of the entertainment (McGinn 2004:159-160). Textual evidence has given rise to the theory that elite owners were not only connected to prostitution, but used sections of their homes as brothels. In this chapter I will examine six private establishments that were labeled as brothels, either because of erotic art, sexual inscriptions, or spatial layout. Furthermore, I will explore the possibility for any evidence that might connect these homes to male prostitution in Pompeii.

6.1 The House of L. Caecilius Iucundus (V.I.26)

In nearly every way the House of L. Caecilius Iucundus, lying on the Via del Vesuvio near the Central baths, seems to be a typical Pompeian house. Originally constructed at the end of the third century B.C, the establishment measured approximately 524 square meters (Cooley & Cooley 2014:40-41; Petersen 2006:166). When the house was excavated in 1875, 154 wax tablets were found, recording the sums paid by the banker L. Caecilius to persons for whom he had sold land, animals and slaves between A.D 52 and 60 (Clarke 1998:154; Wallace-Hadrill 1994:175).

In terms of the possible involvement in prostitution, three elements have been used as identification factors. Firstly, James Renshaw 2012: 309 points to the huge and extraordinary layout of the house. It is composed of two front doors, a back entrance, two *atria*, two *peristylia*, a large *exedra*, and four dining rooms. This size could support the fact that the house itself was large enough to set up a potential brothel complex inside its many rooms. However, I have to point out that no archeological evidence has been found to attest to this assumption. Secondly, between *triclinium* o and *cubiculum* p one erotic painting was discovered.

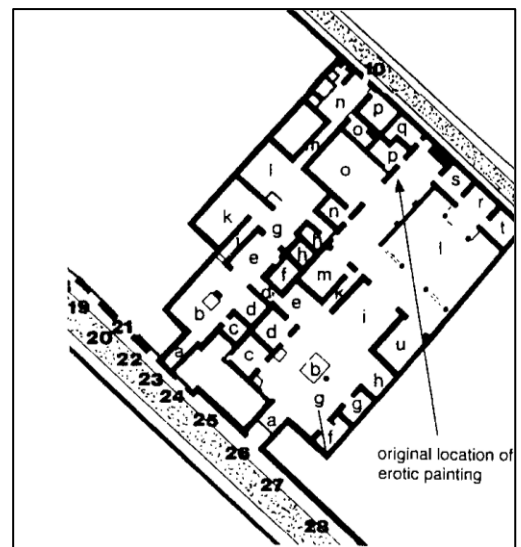


Figure 22: House of L.Caecilius Iucundus,(V.I.26), plan, (Clarke 1998:154).

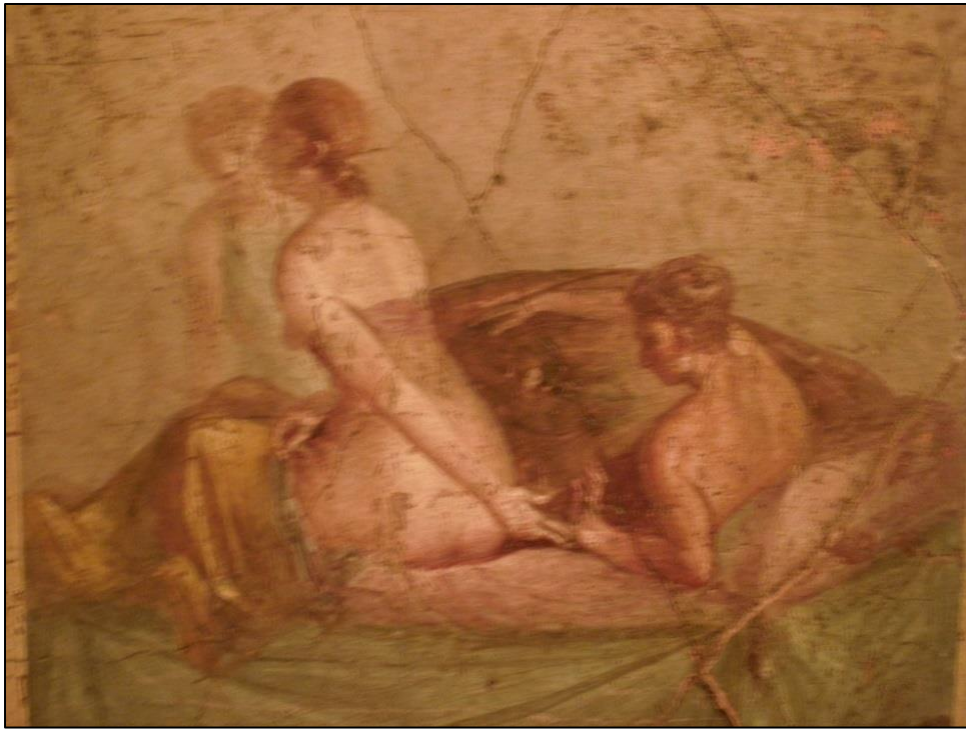


Figure 23: Erotic painting from House of L. Ceacilius Iucundus, 44x52 cm, Reign of Nero, RP, Inv.no 110569, (photo by author).

It was originally located on the north wall of the *peristyle*. It measures 44 x 52 cm, and shows a man and a woman on a bed either just before or after sex (Clarke 1998:156; McGinn 2004:164). She is nude to the waist, wears a veil around her head and sits with her back turned to her partner. Because of her clothing she has been identified as an upper-class woman and not a prostitute, who according to Roman law wore togas (Beard 2008:236; McGinn 1998:157; Sanger 1858:75). The woman reaches for the man's hand behind her back, but he seems disengaged by this gesture, or perhaps by the woman's passion. In the background of the scene a boy is placed behind the woman (Clarke 2003a:32-33). It has been suggested that he is a slave whose task it was to serve in the bedroom in aristocratic homes (Grant 1975:156). According to Clarke (1998:157), the painting was uncovered next to a special kind of *cubiculum*, with an anteroom and two barrel-vaulted alcoves. It is believed that this was not just a normal bedchamber, but a carefully decorated room that an elite citizen might use as a reception-space for high-ranking guests. In addition to the painting located in the *peristyle*, erotic mythological scenes depicting Mars, a semi-naked Venus together with Cupid, were identified in the *triclinium*, as well as paintings of Bacchus in the company of muses in room *t* (Clarke 1998:158-159). The close architectural relation between the *triclinium* and the *cubiculum* might be an indication of the connection between dining and sexual encounters (Clarke 1998:160). However, these claims are in my opinion rather circumstantial; there is no proof supporting the fact that the double-alcove bedroom was used as a place for prostitution. Nor are there any other pieces of evidence, such as inscriptions or graffiti which could point to the use of this house as a potential brothel.

Thirdly, the owner of this residence was considered to have belonged to the son of a freed slave, and has been identified as a classic example of the “working rich” (Harper 2013:66; Mayer 2012:55). Although freedmen of this kind could quickly archive a measure of affluence and occasionally even great wealth, they could not aspire to a career in public life or social recognition (Zanker 1998:201). Based on the character of Trimalchio in Petronius’s *The Satyricon*, a parallel has often been drawn to the tastes of L. Caecilius Iucundus. Trimalchio, himself a freed slave became rich and took great pleasure in installing erotic scenes in his house (Clarke 1998:161). Petronius (27 A.D-66 A.D) depicts a dinner party held by Trimalchio where the host serves outrageously expensive dishes and engages in obscene efforts to impress his guests (Clarke 2003b:185; Harper 2008:83; Hyde 2011:352; Sanger 1858:81). One example of the behavior of Trimalchio is his obvious sexual attraction to a young male slave:

Our hilarity was somewhat damped soon after, for a boy, who was by no means bad looking, came in among the fresh slaves. Trimalchio seized him and kissed him, lingeringly, whereupon Fortunata, asserting her right in the house, began to rail at Trimalchio, styling him an abomination who set no limits to his lechery, finally ending by calling him a dog. Trimalchio flew into a rage at her abuse, and threw a wine cup at her head, whereupon she screeched, as if she had an eye knocked out and covered her face with her trembling hands (Petr.74).

We lack firm archeological proof that would tell us whether or not this also applied to the owner of the house of L. Caecilius Iucundus. Still, I would like to point out one additional factor which might highlight the owners view on male sexuality. In the painting from the *peristyle*, the boy in the background has been identified as a *cubicularius*. It is believed that many unmarried men kept young male slaves as sexual companions (Cantarella 1992:125; Neill 2009:190). In Roman texts, these boys are often portrayed as timeless and lovely, viewed in golden adolescence (see *Anthol. Lat.* XII.125, Hor. *Od.*10, Hor. *S.*1.2.114-120, Mart. 11.43, Tib.4. 30-35). The poet Strato (A.D 117-138) reflect classical tastes by describing his interest in youths between the age of 12 and 16 (Blanshard 2010:110):

I delight in the prime of a boy of twelve, but one of thirteen is much more desirable. He who is fourteen is a still sweeter flower of the Loves, and one who is just beginning his fifteenth year is more delightful. The sixteenth year is that of the gods, as for the seventeenth it is not for me, but for Zeus, to seek it. But if one has a desire a desire for those still older, he no longer plays, but now seeks “and answering him back” (*Anthol. Lat.* .XII.4).

Neither in art or in literature are these young males regarded as potential adults, who one day will become members of the citizen body, carry out business or pursue a political career, have a wife and children, or grow old (Richlin 1983:33-34). If we turn our attention back to the erotic painting in the house of L. Caecilius Iucundus, the most common explanation for this picture is that it is a reflection of an elite owner’s good taste and refinement as well as the Roman elite’s link to Hellenistic ideals concerning sophistication (Clarke 1991b:93; Welch 2009:570). Seen in the light of these arguments, I

would imply that this painting corresponds to the assumptions of the Roman's preservations of the Greek mentality towards sexual relations between an older and a younger partner.

6.2 The House at I.XIII.16

The small house at I.XIII.16 was excavated in 1953, and dates to the last period of the city's life. Yet the fact that more than half of its ground-floor area has been identified as a garden, and the evident care in outfitting that garden with an ornamented outdoor dining room, signals the importance that the idea of upper-class entertainment had for the owner. The house lacks an *atrium*, instead it has a wide entryway from the street (Clarke 1998:187). A variety of different imagery has

been found here. The imagery of the *triclinium* shows Venus and Priapus with a live peacock between them, a sketchy landscape, two marble heads of Hercules and Bacchus fitted into improvised niches, as well as two ejaculating phalluses (Skinner 2005:367). However, what is of real interest is the scene of a man and a woman copulating, located on the north wall of *triclinium* 3. Despite paint losses, the little picture provides details not seen elsewhere. The setting seems to have been important to both artist and patron, for not only is there a door to the extreme left in the picture, the artist has also represented an elaborate drapery extending along the entire upper edges of the painting (Clarke 1998:188). These very elements are also found in the Warren-cup (Clarke 1998:61-67; Clarke 2003b:79-81). There is no obvious connection between the sexual imagery in the painting at the House I.XIII.16 and the Warren-cup, other than the background of the scene. Still, in my opinion this could perhaps point to artistic exchanges, and perhaps also a mutual understanding in the elements chosen to depict sexual intercourse amongst artists in the Roman Empire. To my knowledge there has been very little archeological investigation conducted on the building in terms of both sexuality and its possible function as a brothel. However, I would

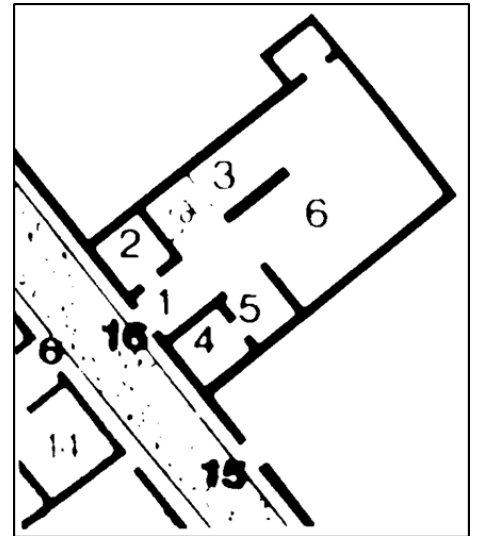


Figure 24: The House I.XIII.16, plan Pompeii, (Clarke 1998:189).



Figure 25: Entrance of the House at I.XIII.16, (Clarke 1998:190).

like to point to a few important factors that might illustrate these ideas. Fig. 25 shows the entrance of

the house, with a naked Venus and the head of Priapus above. As mentioned previously, Priapus is often associated with male sexuality in terms of fertility and as an aggressive protector of gardens. In addition, he is also considered to be the protector of brothels (Younger 2005:160). He certainly appears over the entrance at the “purpose-built” brothel at VII.12.18-20. The naked Venus with a phallic figure situated behind her, as well as the erotic painting showing a man penetrating a woman could illustrate the owner’s attitude towards sexuality, in the favor of a passive female and active mentality, and perhaps also a sign of what this establishments offers (Clarke 1998:191). Personally, I am very skeptical towards calling this building an elite home, mainly because of its small size and the poor quality of the decorations found here. From my point of view I think this served as a relatively large and perhaps also an exclusive tavern or inn, where prostitution may have been practiced. Unfortunately, this establishment lacks any inscriptions or graffiti which might give support to this theory.

6.3 The House of the Beautiful Impluvium (I.IX.1)

The House of the Beautiful Impluvium was excavated in 1916 by Della Corte, and completed by Amedeo Maiuri in 1954. The house consists of a *fauces*, *atrium*, *peristyle*, kitchen and latrine, attached shop, and eight other rooms. An upper floor was reached by the means of stairways from room (3) and room (4). Additionally, the house appears to also have had a cellar under the kitchen (6) and a latrine (5) (Berry 2007:294). This dwelling was identified as a brothel because of three erotic paintings discovered in *cubiculum* 11. Today, only two out of the three representations survive (McGinn 2004:163). A glance at the plan of the house reveals that *cubiculum* 11 is hardly a place for either sexual encounters or for prostitution (**fig 26**). The atrium is the most public of the spaces in a Roman house, and *cubiculum* 11 is at the center

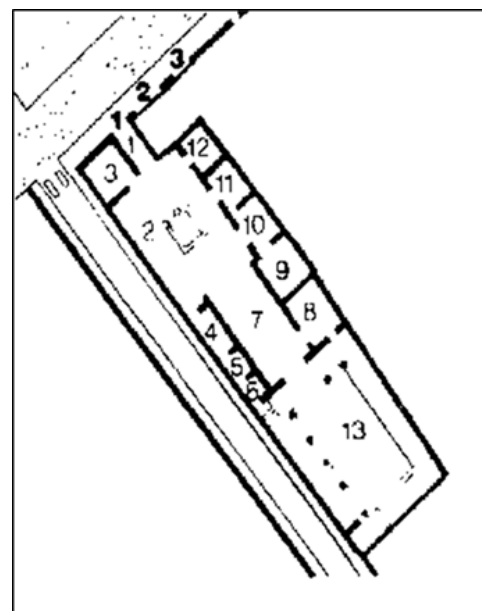


Figure 26: House of the Beautiful Impluvium(I.IX.1), plan, (Clarke 1998:152).

of the atrium’s left (east) wall. This room also communicates with the wing of the *atrium* itself via a door in its south wall. The male, reclining with his arm crooked over his head in erotic repose, welcomes the woman as she kicks off her sandals and climbs into the bed (Clarke 1998:148-149). She wears a breast band, but her clothes have fallen from her upper body to a bunch in an arc around the circle of her buttocks. Drapery clings to her left leg. She turns in profile to gaze at the man as she

supports herself on her right arm, slipping her hand around his neck. He grasps her right shoulder with his left hand (Clarke 1998:151).



Figure 27: A couple in a bed, House of the Beautiful Impluvium (I.IX.1), *cubiculum*, south wall, Pompeii, (40-45 A..D), RP.Inv,no:66009, (Clarke 1998:150).

In the absence of the other central pictures that the artists incorporated into this *cubiculum* we cannot determine the meaning that this single surviving picture of eroticism once had for the owner and his guests. To judge from the refinement of the entire room, as well as the easy accessibility to the atrium, this could classify as a room not only used for sexual encounters, but also for the reception of guests (Clarke 1998:152). Apart from these assumptions in regard to the utilization of this room, there is no evidence, either epigraphical or archeological, to support the idea that the owners of the House of the Beautiful Impluvium was involved in prostitution.

6.4 The House of the Centenary (IX.VIII.6)

The House of the Centenary was excavated in 1879 (Beard 2008:21). This was a wealthy household; it takes up an entire city block and is three times larger than the House of L. Caecilius Iucundus. The *cubiculum* in the southwest part has two explicit scenes of sexual intercourse (Clarke 1991b:89; Clarke 1998:163). The main entrance leads to a peristyle with several lavishly decorated rooms.

However, the back door leads to an area with private baths and room 43. To reach this section of the house one had to pass through an *atrium*, down a corridor, through a *triclinium* (room 41), and then an antechamber (room 42) (McGinn 2004:164; Wallace-Hadrill 1995:56). The central picture of the left wall is the most damaged of the two: here a man reclines on a bed where he supports his head and upper-body on his left elbow, while the rest of his body leans to the left. The woman has her back to the man and places her hands of her knees as she squats down



Figure 28: Erotic scene from the House of the Centenary (IX.VIII.6, room 43, south wall (62-79 A.D), Pompeii, (Grant 1975:36).

on the man’s penis. The man’s right arm passes behind her hips, but paint losses makes it difficult to know the exact position of the hand, whether on her back or around her waist. The picture on the right wall shows a woman, with her hair arranged in a high helmet of curls, with a breast band, as well as an anklet and an armband. She is straddling the man, who leans on his left elbow while holding his right arm crooked around his head in a gesture of erotic repose. From her crouching position she supports herself with her extended left arm while reaching down with her right hand, most likely to grasp the man’s penis (Clarke 1991a:368; Clarke 1998:164-165).

Perhaps the most essential elements which could link the House of the Centenary to prostitution is its size, the location of room 43, and the position of the erotic paintings. Although solid archeological evidence is missing, the house was technically large enough to set up a separate “brothel section” where the owner could have

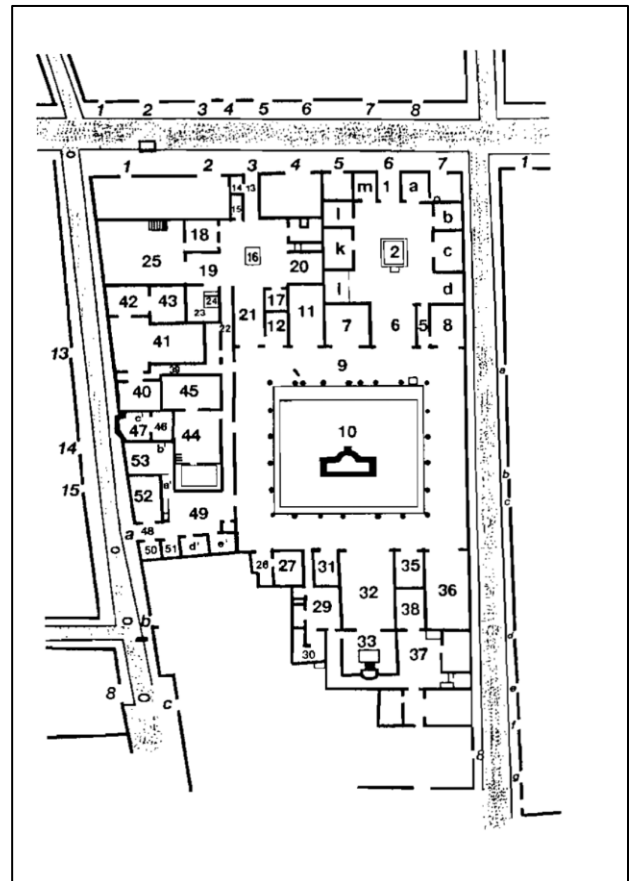


Figure 29: House of the Centenary IX.VIII.6, plan, Pompeii, (Clarke 1998:162).

hired out his household slaves. Moreover, prostitution could also have been conducted to the different shops in close proximity. However, these assumptions are still debatable. The position of room 43 and its two erotic representations are not visible from any public parts of the establishment. It could only be accessed from a back door or a corridor leading from the *atrium*. This observation has led to speculations concerning the actual purpose of the room, and the assumption classifying room 43 as a “hidden” chamber used by the owner for sexual encounters or a place for prostitution. However, whether or not the owners also had the same “secret” intentions are impossible to know. Still, other architectural features strongly contradict any involvement in the sex-trade. In addition to being large establishments with many rooms and private bath complexes, the House of Centenary also had a *nymphaeum* at the northern wall. Here, the lower part of the wall which had a stripe all the way around it was presented as a garden balustrade huge with ivy, and at its footing were depictions of various birds and lizards. Above it, the remains of a pond which contained a rich assortment of fish is still parsley visible. Finally, the wall at the entrance and the door at the end are covered with scenes of game parks, with a real fountain painted to resemble rare marble (32-33) (Zanker 1998:189). The architectural design features described above, as well as the layout of the house spells “luxury” not “lust”. As a result, the House of the Centenary does not meet the criteria as a potential place for male prostitution (Clarke 1998:162).

6.5 The House of the Vettii (VI.XV.1)

The House of the Vettii was excavated in 1890 and lies in the northwest corner of the town, east of the forum area, close to the Vesuvian gate. The size of the ground floor of the house is approximately 11000 m², placing it among the largest houses in Pompeii (Clarke 2013:152; Severy-Hoven 2013:23). It belonged to two freedman brothers, A. Vettius Restitutus and A. Vettius Conviva (Clarke 2003a:99). From the wax tablets found in the House of Caecilius Iucundus, it appears that A. Vettius Conviva was an *augustalis*. Being a participant of an exclusive Augustan fellowship, the former slave had to expend considerable sums for public works (Clarke 1998 169; Petersen 2006:80). The building contains two erotic representations, a fountain statue of Priapus and several images of Cupids and Psyche. The two

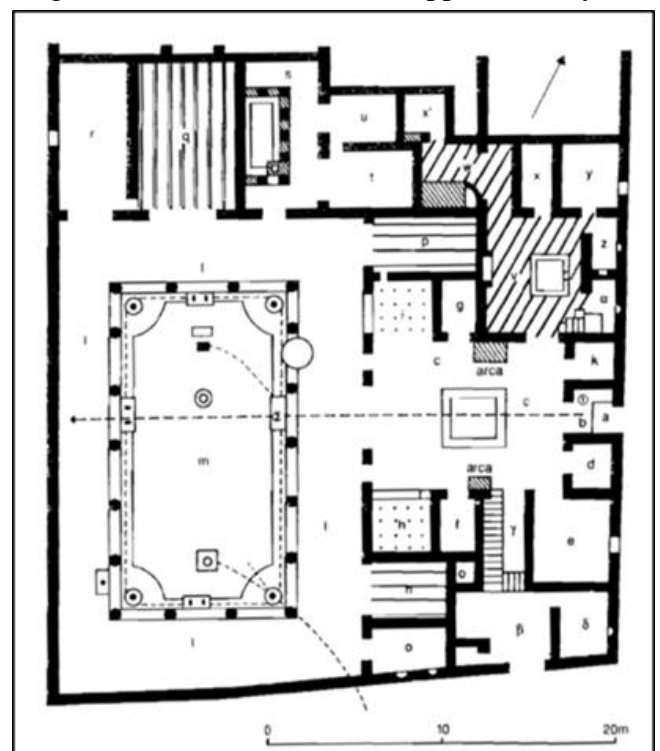


Figure 30: Plan over the House of the Vettii (VI.XV.1), Pompeii, (Clarke 1998:170).

erotic paintings are located in the secluded room *x*, referred to as the “cook’s room”, because of the remains of a large stove in the southwest corner of *w* (Clarke 1991:234; Clarke 2003a:176). The room is believed to have been reached through a servant’s *atrium* connected to the kitchen area of the house (McGinn 2004:164).



Figure 31: (Left) Erotic scene from the House of Vettii (VI.XV.1), south wall, central picture (62-79 A.D), Pompeii, (Myerowitz 1992:132). (Right) Erotic scene from the House of the Vettii (VI.XV.1), room *x*, east wall, central picture (62-79 A.D), Pompeii, (Clarke 1998:173).

However, the area itself only measures 1.60 m in height, and square holes at the top of the middle-zone rectangles may have held beams to support a lightly constructed mezzanine (Clarke 1998:172). At the center of the left west wall a man reclines on his back, resting on a pillow and propped up on his left elbow. The woman, clad only in a firm breast band, faces him, her buttocks resting on the man’s legs at mid-thigh. She leans slightly forward while resting her right hand on the man’s head; the man reaches up to her unseen shoulder with his right arm. The central picture on the opposite wall inverts the position of the couple by presenting the woman reclining while the kneeling man faces her. She stretches out her right leg but raises her left over the man’s right shoulder as he prepares to enter her (Clarke 1998:172-173). In addition to the erotic paintings in room *x*, an inscription was also located here: *CIL IV 4592: Evthchis Graec aa(sibvus) II morbyus bellis-* Euthchis, Greek, nice mannered, for two asses (Varone2002:145).

Based on the erotic representations and the inscription it has been suggested that room *x* functioned as a sex alcove, where servant wenches and young male slaves may have been obligated to be prostitutes. The prostitution trade may have been vertically integrated; the male household slaves may have been expected to seek out the services of the prostituted female slaves, on income-produced property owned by the masters of the house (Harris 2007:121). However, because these paintings were found in an establishment belonging to two ex-slaves, it could be argued that these representations highlight the sexual dynamic between a slave and master regardless of sex or gender. Something, an

ex-slave was certainly aware of if not intimate experienced with. For an audience of male and female slaves, who perhaps would have spend a lot of time around these images, they may have served as a reminder of one of their servile tasks (Severy-Hoven 2013:44). In addition to *CIL* IV 4592, *CIL* IV 4602 *Iros ciniidaii*-Eros is a *cinaedus* is located inside the service atrium *v* on the wall near the doorway. Personally, I do not believe this is definite proof of any involvement in male prostitution, but rather as an insult most common in graffiti from Pompeii perhaps between male servants? (see *CIL* IV 4082, 4201, 5001, 5064, 5156).

It is highly unlikely that the Vettii set up a room in their servants' quarters as a brothel. For one thing it was not a profitable business, considering the low prices commanded by the owners of prostitutes in Pompeii. The prices for female prostitutes varied between one and sixteen asses, and between one and twenty-seven asses for male prostitutes (Clarke 2003a:64; DeFelice 2001:77; Lund 2006:39; McGinn 2004:43-5). For another, wealthy and pretentious freedmen like the Vettii brothers would probably have avoided this type of commerce within their house, because this could be the kind of association that would remind people of their servile origins (Clarke 1998:174).

6.6 The House of the Restaurant (VI.XIII.13)

The House of the Restaurant has been subjected to almost the identical questions I raised in regarding to its possible utilization as elite home or brothel, House at VI.XIII.13. This house was excavated in 1877-1887 and is located directly to the west of the House of the Centenary. Today this establishment is in a deplorable state of repair. The only thing really left intact is a room decorated with erotic art.

Descriptions from earlier research reveal that this location originally consisted of two houses. One was

a fairly large *atrium* house with a *peristyle* entered from number 14 (see letters *a-v*). The other house, accessible through a door at the back of the *atrium*, but with a street entrance at 16, has only six rooms (see letters *a-f*). The general interpretation is that this was a tavern-brothel. The criteria that labeled this location as a brothel were first and foremost the remains of a stove which indicated that this was a wine-shop. Secondly, in the *atrium* of the *peristyle* house there was a decoration of pygmies copulating (Clarke 1998:178; DeFelice 2001:119). Perhaps the strongest evidence is four erotic paintings located

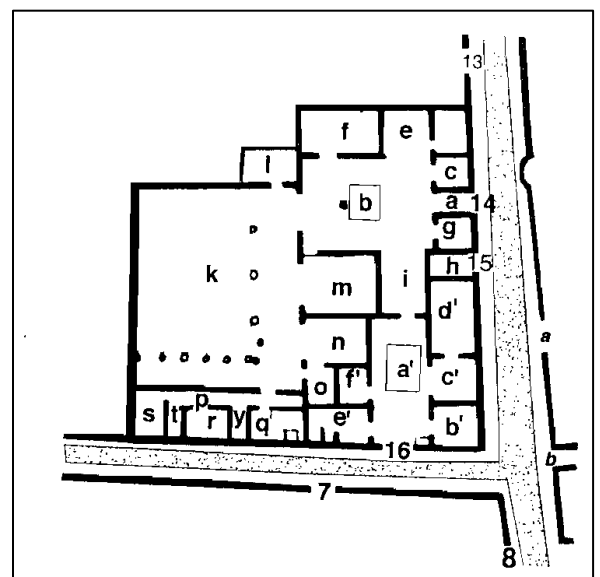


Figure 32: House of the Restaurant (IX.V.14-16), plan, (Clarke 1998:179).

in room *f*. On the west wall with a double frame is a close-up view of a couple on a bed. Her hair is pulled back away from her face and her right arm is raised over her head to signify both response and sexual readiness. The man kneels on the bed and parts her legs to enter her. The decorative scheme of the north wall features two lateral panels. On the left hand images, the man kneels facing to the right. The woman is crouched down and supports her upper torso with her right elbow while she raises her buttocks to receive the man's thrusts (see **fig.33**). The right-hand panel depicts a woman straddling a man so that her genitals are near his (see **fig.4**). Her body is leaned backwards from the man- perhaps coyly or perhaps intimidated by the way the man waves his right hand in her face. Because of paint loss it is impossible to understand what the woman is doing. She is either grasping the man's penis or touching her own genitals. Similarly, it is unclear what the man's gesture means, since although his right hand seems to say "stop" the rest of his body seems quite relaxed. Only the right-hand panel of the south wall remains. It shows a woman straddling a man's hips as she leans forward to kiss him. He is reclining, his head is resting on the pillow as he supports his upper torso with his left elbow (Clarke 1998:179-187).

Within this establishment a variety of representations are found. These depict both active female and passive male and active man and receiving woman. I would imply that perhaps the owners of this house or brothel had a broader mindset towards sexuality in art, than that exercised in the House at I.XIII.16. The only archeological evidence connecting the House of the Restaurant to a place where food and beverages might have been distributed is the remains of the stove. As I shall demonstrate in chapter 7, there are several strong indications of male prostitution tied to locations where it was possible to buy a meal, or



Figure 33: Male-female couple, House of the Restaurant (IX.V.14-16), room *f*, west wall, center picture (62-79 A.D), Pompeii, (Clarke 1998:181).

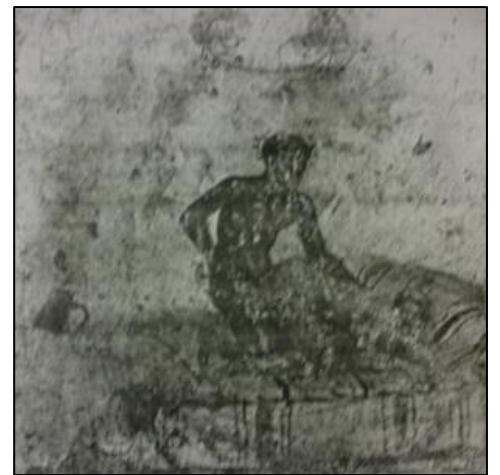


Figure 34: Male-female couple, House of the Restaurant (IX.V.14-16), room *f*, north wall, western picture, (62-79 A.D), Pompeii, (Clarke 1998:183).



Figure 35: Male-female couple, House of the Restaurant (IX.V.14-16), room *f*, south wall, western picture (62-79 A.D), Pompeii, (Clarke 199:186).

something to drink. However, there is no certain proof of the stove being a part of an inn or a tavern; it could also simply have been used by the household which once occupied this establishment. The layout of the house is not nearly large enough to establish a separate “brothel complex” inside, but the location is fairly easy accessible from the street at entrance number fourteen, fifteen and sixteen. Notably, the house also has several small rooms around the *atrium* which could serve as potential locations for prostitution (Younger 2005:17). Although there are no indications of any concrete beds ever being found here by earlier excavators, the beds depicted in the erotic paintings might offer a clue of to the type of furniture used here. Additionally, in style I would argue that the erotic representations located within room *f* do not share the quality nor, the artistic skills appearing in for example the paintings at the House of L. Cealicus Iucundus and the House of the Beautiful Impluvium. Personally, I would imply that the erotic paintings here bear a resemblance to those located in the brothel at VII.XII.18-19 and the inn-brothel at VII.III.26-28.

As the test-subjects above have demonstrated, the connection between elite homes and the involvement in male prostitution is difficult to detect. The archaeological remains of the houses, the erotic paintings located inside, as well as the limited quantity of epigraphical material all point in different directions. The upper-class dwellings discussed above were all potentially large enough to set up a secluded brothel area, where the owner might have kept prostitutes of both genders as part of his household. The erotic paintings inside were decisive elements in contributing to the labeling of these dwellings as potential brothels when they were first excavated. Because of the confusion which arose from the presence of such imagery in both private establishments, as well as public buildings where the evidence for involvement was much more obvious, it was assumed at the time that the sexuality and eroticism these paintings displayed defined the areas in which they were found as likely places for paid sex. However, these theories have later evolved into an acceptance among scholars that sexual imagery displayed good taste, as well as an understanding of upper-class ideals. The almost total lack of inscriptions and graffiti left by customers, or by the prostitutes themselves, might indicate previously that, Pompeian elite families did not use their homes as brothels, because this would be socially stigmatizing.

Based on the test-subjects examined I would argue that potential locations where activities that hypothetically might have attracted the services of prostitutes are the House at I.XIII.16 and the House of the Restaurant. These assumptions are first and foremost founded on their relatively small size compared to for example The House of the Centenary and the House of the Vettii. The style of the paintings do not resemble those found in an upper-class home, but rather those located inside public buildings. Controversial as it may seem, I personally am not convinced that these establishments were

upper-class dwellings, but rather well-kept taverns imitating the artistic decorations of elite households.

7 MALE PROSTITUTION IN POMPEII

<i>CIL IV</i>	Name or alias	Status or service	Price (in asses)	Regio	Establishment
1307	Rhodius	oral sex men	11 asses	VIII. I.1	Basilica
1784	Jangastes	uncertain	2 asses	Street: Vicolo di Mercurio	<i>Taberna</i>
5408	Felix	oral sex men	1 ass	Street	
8812	Arruntius	uncertain	27 asses	Street	
10078	Supremus	anal intercourse	4 asses	Street	
3964	Commune Successus Nicepor Amunus Cresi	uncertain uncertain uncertain uncertain <i>verna</i>	3 asses 3 asses 2 asses 4 asses 4 asses	I.III.1	Bakery
7339	Felix	uncertain	4 asses	I.X.3	House
7339	Florus	uncertain	10 asses	I.X.3	House
3999	Glyco	oral sex women	2 asses	I.II.27	Doorway with an upper-floor
8939/8940	Maritimus	oral sex women	4 asses	III.VII-VIII.1	Shop
4024	Menander	uncertain	2 asses	V.I.14-15	Shop
4150	Atenais	uncertain	2 asses	V.II.15-16	Shop
4277	Vitalio	uncertain	4 asses	V.V.3	House of the Gladiator
4441	Isidorus	uncertain	2 asses	VI.11.15-16	<i>Hospitium</i>
4699	Isidorus	<i>verna</i>	2 ½ asses	VI.11.15-16	<i>Hospitium</i>
5203	Logas	<i>verna</i>	8 asses	IX.6b	Bar
5204	Logas	<i>verna</i>	5 asses	IX.6b	Bar

Table 2: Overview of male prostitutes in Pompeii based on graffiti and inscriptions found in public buildings and in the streets (by author).

7.1 Locations

“Pleasure will more often be found lurking away and hugging the darkness around the baths and sweating-rooms and places that fear the magistrate: feeble, languid, soaked in wine and perfume, and either pale or painted with cosmetics and smeared with unguents like corpses” (Sen. *Vit. Beat.* 7). A central question in investigating the extent of male prostitution in Pompeii is where did it take place? Based on the information from **table 2**, and the description given by Seneca the Younger, it becomes clear that different types of establishments were involved. With this in mind, I would personally argue that male prostitutes mingled in places where large numbers of people would gather, or in the town’s commercial centers. A recent study has been done on the wheel-tracks in the paving of the city in order to locate the flow of traffic. The results show that the most heavily trafficated areas were along Via

dell' Abbondanza, in particular the southwestern sector of the town where all the public buildings were located (Wallace-Hadrill 1995:47-49).

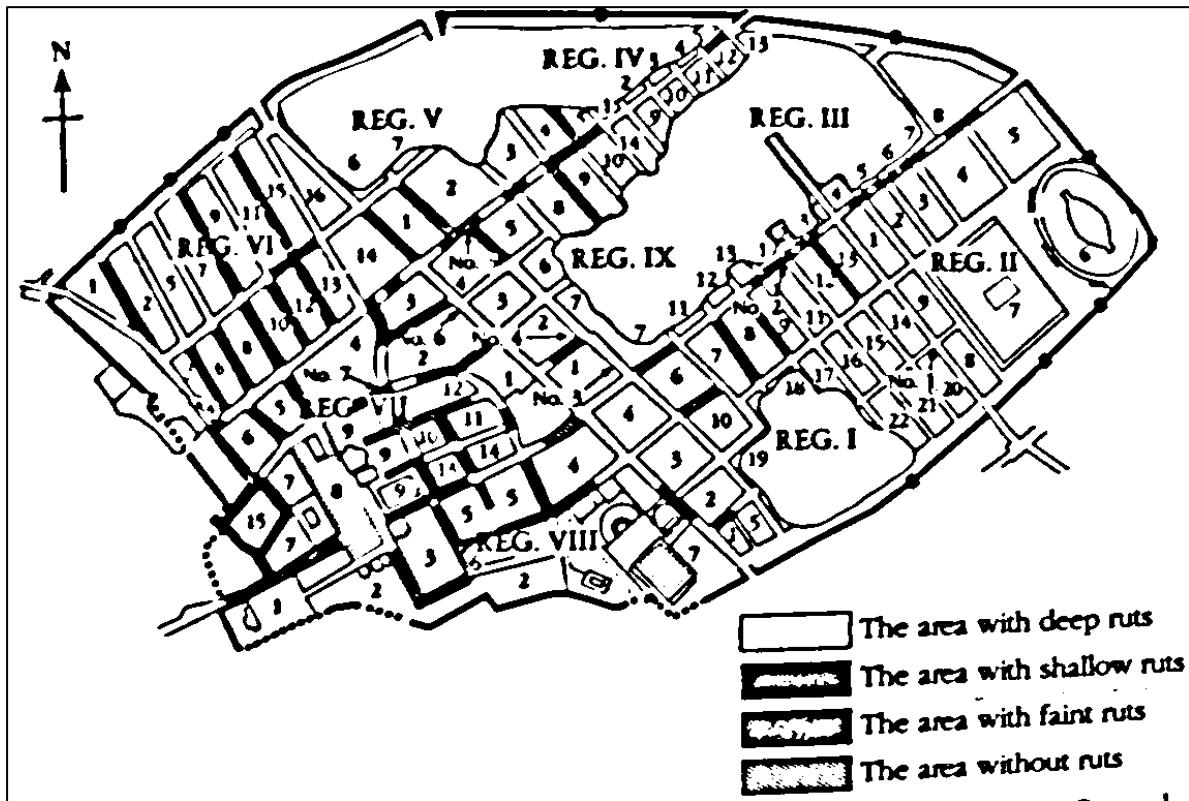


Figure 36: An overview of wheel-tracks highlighting potential trafficated areas in Pompeii (Wallace-Hadrill 1995:49).

7.2 Working the streets

CIL IV 1784 does not belong to a particular establishment. Instead it is located in the basilica (VII. I.1). The site of the basilica was on the left side of the forum near the harbor. Originally the *portico* opened directly into the forum, and as a result it was possible to access the building through five additional entrances. Here much of the town's daily commercial, financial and juridical activities would have taken place. The milieu surrounding the east side of the basilica shows no signs of grand public buildings;

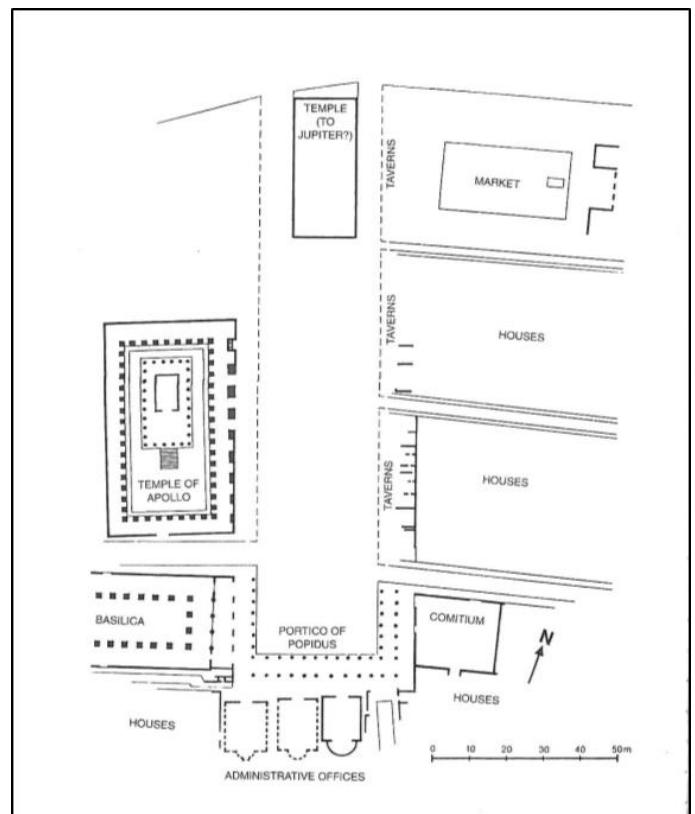


Figure 37: The Pompeian Forum (Zanker 1998:54).

here two very narrow streets provided a passage to the Forum on either side of a motley assortment of *tabernae* (Zanker 1998:53-57). In addition, the basilica also has clear evidence of several other types of graffiti like greetings, small poems but also crude sexual insults such as *CIL IV 1825a-Narcissvs fillator maximus*-Narcissus is a giant cock-sucker and *CIL IV 1882-Accensvm qui pedicat vrit mentuyl*-the man who fucks Accensus in the ass burns his cock. Based on the different contents and themes in the inscriptions found here, I would suggest that this was a very central place which attracted many different categories of people.

CIL IV 1784 informs a potential reader that a man called Rhodius offers oral sex to men for 11 *asses*. *CIL IV 8812* is another example located in the street in which a certain Arruntius charges as much as 27 *asses* for his unspecified services. If these are compared to two other example also situated independently from an establishment, namely *CIL IV 5408* where Felix preforms fellatio for 1 *ass* and *CIL IV 10078* where Supremus offers anal intercourse for 4 *asses*, I would suggest that both *CIL IV 1784* and *CIL IV 8812* depict rather costly male prostitutes. Highlighting the price difference between possibly male prostitutes, who apparently could perform the same services, illustrates two critical points in the Roman management of men involved in the sex trade. Not all prostitutes worked or were connected to a brothel or a *leno*, but instead solicited costumers from public spaces like the streets or the Forum (McGinn 2013:373). Moreover, textual evidence reveals that Roman law introduced taxation on prostitution under the emperor Caligula:

He levied new and unheard of taxes first through the tax farmers and then, because the revenues were so great, through the centurions and the tribunes of the Praetorian Guard. There was no type of commodity or profession upon which he did not impose some kind of levy. For the sort of eatables that was sold throughout the city, a fixed, flat rate was set. For lawsuits and legal processes began anywhere, a fortieth part of the sum involved, providing a penalty in case anyone was found guilty of compromising or abandoning a suit; on the daily wages of porters, an eighth; on the earnings of prostitutes, as much as each received for one embrace; and a clause was added to this chapter of the law, providing that those who had ever been prostitutes or acted as panders should be liable to this public tax, and that even matrimony should not be exempt (Suet. *Calig*: 40).

According to Suetonius (70-130 A.D) the tax on prostitution was one eighth of every sexual encounter. McGinn (2004:40-45) has examined the taxation and the possible effect on the prices for sexual encounters with female prostitutes from both Rome and Pompeii. However, if the Caligulan tax also applied to male prostitutes Rhodius might have been obliged to pay almost 1 ½ *asses* (1,375) for every sexual encounter and Arruntius would have paid almost 3 ½ *asses* (3,375) in taxation. Based on the evidence discussed so far, I would argue that perhaps independent prostitutes were more expensive that those connected to an establishment because of this taxation. Furthermore, based on the relatively substantial difference in price, perhaps an independent marked for high-priced male prostitutes also existed in Pompeii.

Until now I have examined three epigraphical cases of male prostitution which do not belonging to a specific building. However, *CIL* IV 1307 represents a boundary between public spheres and a public enclosed dwelling. It is located in the same street as VI.X.1.19-20. It is, however not possible to determine whether or not there was any connection between the graffiti and VI.X.19-20. This location has previously been identified as a brothel because of the erotic images that once decorated the walls. Today, the archaeological remains of a four- room *taberna*

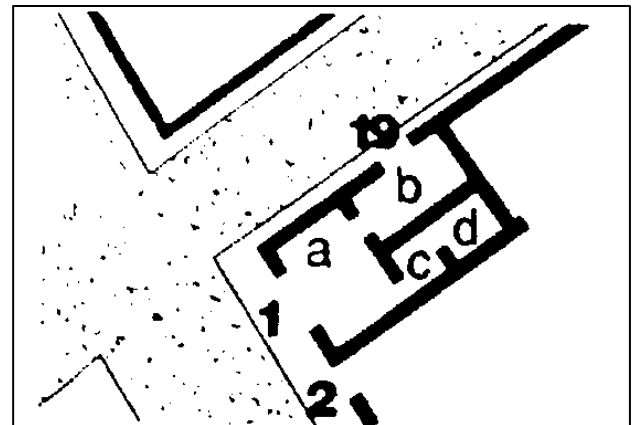


Figure 39: Pompeii, Caupona of the street of Mercury, plan, (Clarke 1998:207).

are still visible and is given the name the *taverna di Mercurio* because of its location in Vicolo di Mercurio. Originally it had thirteen erotic wall paintings. Today only three survive as engravings made by Henri Roux. Scholars have suggested that several of the paintings belonging to this tavern reflect the popular nude mime known as *nudatio mimarum* (Clarke 1998:208-209). It is possible to enter the tavern from both number nineteen (northern doorway) and at number

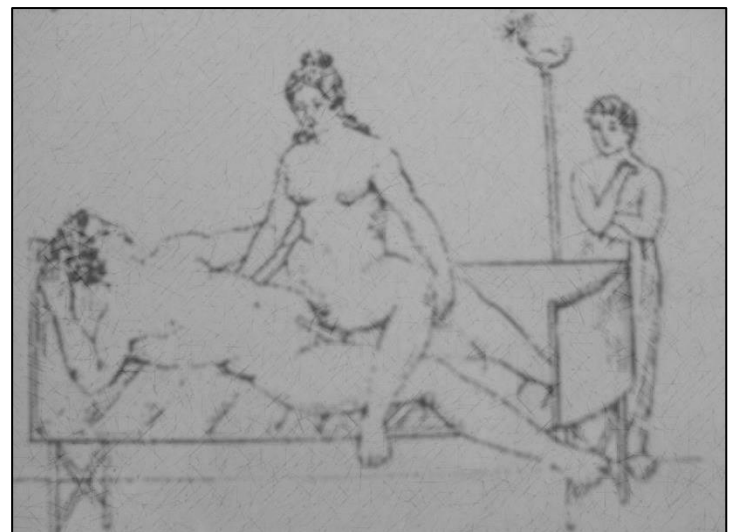


Figure 38: An erotic scene from tavern wall painting at VI.X.19 capture by H.Roux in the early 19th c. (DeFlice 2001:122).

one (southern doorway). What first meets the eye is a wall with five painted panels (Clarke 2003b:134-5; DeFlice 2001:111-113). These are mainly scenes of gambling, eating and drinking. Although there is no direct evidence pointing towards this location being involved in selling sexual services, I would still, based on two indications, suggest that this tavern could have been used for male prostitution based on two indications. Firstly, set high on the northern wall (19) there is clear evidence of a window-shaped structure that could imply that an upper floor might have existed here. In addition, a personal observation reveals that the posterior rooms of the tavern are not visible at a direct angle from the street Vicolo di Mercurio. Therefore, these rooms and their intended purpose, as well as the activities that possibly went on here, with perhaps Jangastes for 2 *asses*, would have remained concealed from the public. Also, other establishments suspected of being involved in prostitution either lack windows or have rooms hidden

from public view. Although male prostitution was widespread during the Roman Empire and the services like fellatio and passive anal sex were detailed in contemporary literature, they had to be performed discreetly: (see *Anthol. Lat.* 12.42; Gell. 3.5; Mart. 3.95; 7.62; 9.67). Whenever it became common knowledge that a prominent man liked to play a passive sexual role, this was considered an attack on the honor of all free Roman males (Ringdal 2004:95). Secondly, in these surviving frescos it is possible to detect men servicing both male and female clientele by pouring wine. It may be noticed that a man leans rather suggestively close to either a woman or a man (young male?). Whether or not



Figure 40: (Left) A man serving win to another male, VI.X.19, Pompeii, (photo by author). (Right) A man leaning close to a woman or a young male? VI.X.19, Pompeii, (photo by author).

she is a prostitute or a client is difficult to tell, but we know that taverns, bars and cookhouses often were equipped with rooms for sex in the back and/ or upstairs (McGinn 2013:377). Still, no examples of sexual graffiti are found here, nor any certain evidence that organized male prostitution occurred.

7.3 Regio I

From *regio* I, three epigraphical examples of male prostitution are found. The structure I. III.1 is situated on the east side of the Via Stabiana. On the west side it leads to both the amphitheater and gladiator barracks (region VIII). In ancient times Via Stabiana would have been one of the most important roads and responsible for much of the daily activity (Lawrence 2007:106; Zanker 1998:126). The establishment was identified as a type of bakery, an assumption I would support based on the visible remains of large ovens located inside. Here, within a small room *CIL* IV 3964 lists the names of five male prostitutes and their prices: Commune for 3 *asses*, Successus for 3 *asses*, Nicepor for 2 *asses*, Amunus for 2 *asses* and Cresi for 4 *asses*. The latter is also displayed with his legal and social status, namely the term *verna*. In the epigraphical evidence from the Roman world the expression refers to a home-born slave (Joshel 2010:38; Weaver 1972:43). Other examples from Pompeii are *CIL* IV 4593-*cis verna (a)ssibus* (VI,15) and *CIL* IV 4035-*Felicia verna A II-Felicia verna* for 2 *asses* (I,4).

Because these inscriptions are found inside this building, one could in fact suggest that these men either worked at, or were connected to I.III.1. In my opinion these individuals were slaves, who in addition to their work at the bakery could also either have prostituted themselves, or been hired out by their owners. The mentioning of *verna* supports these assumptions. Also, from an onomasiological (the process of studying names) point of view, these males were probably not Roman citizens. In the Roman world the *tria nomina*, like for example Quintus Julius Severinus was a privilege only a citizen could possess, though freedmen could use the praenomen of their master in place of a filial cognomen once they had attained their freedom. A slave did not have a *nomen* because he or she was considered to be a *res* (thing) (McLean 2002; Stern 2008:110; Wolf 1998:103).

I.X.3 is considered to be the remains of a house. Inside the *vestibulum*, *CIL* IV 7339 advertises the services of Felix and Florus, costing 4 *asses* and 10 *asses* respectively (Varone 2001:154-155). Although there is not much evidence pointing to their social status as slaves, one theory could perhaps be that these two were poor freedmen, or ex-slaves prostituting themselves in addition to another source of livelihood. However, there is no archaeological evidence supporting this, because I.X.3 was never identified as a brothel, tavern or inn. Still, it is possible that both males were being hired out by somebody else. At the doorway at I.II.27 Glyco offers oral sex to women for 2 *asses*. This entrance, and the upper-floor connected to it, is located on Via del Conciapelle, which was in close vicinity to many of the city's inns (Laurence 2007:107). If there is a connection between inscription *CIL* IV 3999 and this establishment, it could perhaps be argued that also male prostitutes were based in a small room, where they advertised their services outside, and conducted business inside.

Two additional establishments in *regio* I that have been associated with prostitution. However, they do not contain any kind of information depicted in table 2, but may reflect the social reality and organization of male prostitution. I.II.18-19 was excavated by Giuseppe Fiorelli between 1872 and 1874, although there were earlier excavations already in 1795-6 and 1869. The structure was then believed to be a *caupona* (an inn which often rented out rooms). However, in the early 1900 Matteo Della Corte identified this site as a brothel. These assumptions were loosely based on the location of the building and its connection to Via dell' Abbondanza, which, after the earthquake in 62 A.D was one of the main centers for daily activity and commerce (Zanker 1998:127), Altogether there are 53 examples of graffiti and election notices associated with this location. None of the alphabetized sub-headings of *CIL* IV 2993 a-z are sexual in nature. These are limited to names, election notices, and greetings. Of the fifteen alphabetized subheadings of *CIL* IV 3200, only *CIL* IV 3200 can classify as sexual, *Felix felat* -Felix sucks or Felix gives fellatio. This cannot be taken as evidence for organized male prostitution, because as already mentioned, *fellare* could also be used as an insult (see *CIL* IV, 3995, 4580, 4652). The inscriptions *CIL* IV 2993a: *Demetrius rog* and 2993z: *Demetrius rogat*, in

addition to *CIL IV 2993 z-c Helpis Afra rogat* might indicate the managers of this *caupona*. Based on the names of the possible owners, I would argue that they belong to the lower-classes. Also, because of the somewhat large amount of inscriptions left by potential clients, this place seems to have been quite attractive as a place to rent rooms and perhaps enjoy food and drink. Therefore, it is not totally impossible that prostitution was practiced here. While there are several indications of rooms on the second floor, there is no evidence other than Della Corte's assertions that make this a *lupanar* (Beard 2008:67; Calabrò 2012:73; DeFelice 2001:106).

I.II.20-21 was excavated in 1869. This was a large business with seven rooms on the first floor that included a kitchen and a latrine, a store room, the counter room, two dining rooms, and a garden with a *biclinium* (dining sofa). The layout included masonry benches for visitors and small rooms have been detected on the second floor. In addition, wall paintings were also discovered of Bacchus and Fortuna. The most interesting feature of this *caupona* is the graffiti it contains of the *futuo* variety (DeFlice 2001:107; McGinn 2004:271). Those that concern us are the ones that may be associated with male prostitution. *CIL IV 3932: Ic Rvfvm karvm dolete pvellea pedico cvnne svperbe va-* Here I bugger darling Rufus, Girls be sad, Goodbye, pretentious cunt! *CIL IV 3934: Iarinvs cvm Atheto hic-* Here Iarinus with Athetus, *CIL IV 3935: Festvs hic fvtvit com sodalibvs-* Festus was fucked here with his comrades, *CIL IV 3938 Iarinvs cvm Atheto hic fvtvit-*Iarinus with Athetus fucked here, *CIL IV 3941- Ampliatvs cvm svs sodalibus hic-* Ampliatius here with his friends and *CIL IV 3941- Ampliatvs afer hic fvtvit svs sodalibvs-* Here Ampliatius the African fucked with his friends.

The inscriptions here, and especially the reference to *pedico*, might suggest that this accommodation could be related to homoerotic sexual activity (Keegan 2013:86). The names *Ampliatius*, *Iarnius* and *Festus* might refer to guests of the inn, and *Refus* and *Athetus* are perhaps males who worked here. In addition, the names of three females are also mentioned. *CIL IV 3928-31 Serenae salutem, (Serenae)-* Serena greets (you), *CIL IV 3922-Mandata tua-*Mandata (is) yours and *CIL IV 3916-Primicthnia svcchssvs-* Primicthnia. Because of the size of the establishment, the clear sexual implications in the inscriptions and the mentioning of the names of both male customers as well as male and female workers, it could be implied that I.II.20-21 did operate with both male and female prostitution. However, important evidence on price and sexual services offered are still lacking. *Regio I* exhibits the evidence of five locations where male prostitutes might have offered their services, or been hired out by somebody else. Personally, I believe I have demonstrated that male prostitution did manifest itself in shops, taverns and inns, where male prostitutes either worked or where hired out by potential owners who did not belong to the upper-class.

7.4 *Regio III*

Regio III is located near Porta di Sarno, which led to Stabiae and Salerno (ancient Salernum) (Kaiser 2011:68). In a small shop at VIII.1 *CIL IV 8939/8940* reads: *Maretimvs cvnnvm liget a(ssibus) IIII. uirgines ammitti*-Maretimus licks cunt for four *asses*, Virgins (young women) he also services (Cantarella & Jacobelli 2013:126; Lund 2006:17). The inscription advertises for the services of a male prostitute, which offers oral sex to women for four *asses*. Additionally, he also receives young women as potential clients. The name Maretimus actually translates to sailor or seaman, and could perhaps imply that male prostitutes worked under a pseudonym either selected by themselves, or by possible owners. This inscription is scratched out on the wall of what resembles a shop. Therefore, I would argue that *CIL IV 8939/8340* could be interpreted in two different ways. Firstly, this might be evidence pointing to that shop owners, in addition to owners of bakeries demonstrated in I.III.1, also kept male prostitutes as an extra source of income. Secondly, based on the somewhat insulting nature of the inscription, namely that he except virtually every age group of women could perhaps also be understood as a possible slander (see *CIL IV 4304, 5178, 5193*).

7.5 *Regio V*

CIL IV 4024 Hic Menander bellis moribus aeris assibus II- Here Menander, nicely mannered for two *asses* was located outside the front door post at a private home with an incorporated store (Williams 2010:428). In addition, the names of two female *verna* *CIL IV 4023 Felicia virna assibus II*-Felicia *verna* two *asses*, and *CIL IV 4025 Svssessa verna assibus V bellis moribvs* (4025)-Sussessa *verna* for five *asses*, nicely mannered. Again I will argue that these three examples, as well as the possibility that the building could be a potential lower-class dwelling could in fact prove that male prostitutes in most cases were slaves who were indeed hired out by their owners. At the shop at V.II.16 on Via Nola there is evidence of a male prostitute who calls himself Atenais, and who charges two *asses* for unspecified services to perhaps both genders. Additionally, at the House of the Gladiator, Vitalio also advertises for undefined sexual favors for four *asses*. The House of the Gladiator was a converted house with a central peristyle courtyard surrounded by rooms. This establishment appears to have served as a training-center for gladiators, possibly until the much larger barracks behind the theater were established in the mid-first century A.D. A considerable quantity of graffiti was scratched upon the columns of the peristyle provides a vivid picture of the variety of gladiators who performed in Pompeii (Cooley & Cooley 2014:88). It is believed that gladiators also served as prostitutes in addition to fight in the games (Ditmore 2006:32; Edwards 1997:82; Jacobelli 2003:19). Textual evidence from the satirist Juvenal reveals that especially women sought the company of gladiators:

By now her darling Sergius had started to scrape his chin, and a wounded arm gave hope of retirement. His face had also numerous flaws: a weal on his forehead, chafed by his helmet, an enormous wen in the middle of his nose, and the severe complaint of a constantly weeping eye. But he was a gladiator. That's what makes each on an Adonis; that she prized above country and children, sister and husband. Yes, the steel is the thing they like. Has this Sergius received his discharge, he would have come to resemble Veiento (Juv.Sat 6.105-115).

However, because there is only been located one example of this type at V.V.3 I would suggest that this inscription is an insult perhaps from other gladiators, or from potentially admirers.

7.6 Regio VI

VI. XI. 15-16 was originally thought to be a *hospitium*, and consisted of three houses with fairly irregular plans linked together. On the first floor there are more than twenty rooms and evidently with the potential for more on the second floor, which has not survived. What labeled this structure as a potential place for prostitution in the first place is the cluster of graffiti with sexual references found at VI. XI. 16. One possible issue with identifying this location as a brothel is that all the inscriptions are found outside the structure and there are no signs of erotic art (DeFlice 2001:114-115). Of particular interest in shedding light on male prostitution is *CIL IV 4441 Isidorvs (aris) II*-Isidorus for two *asses* and *CIL IV 4699 Isidorvs verna pvtiolanvs cvunnvligget II*- Isidorus from Puteoli, born a domestic slave, licks cunt for 2 and ½ *asses* (Varone 2002:81). Based on the inscriptions it is possible to identify three important elements. Firstly, Isidorus is available for 2 *asses* and 2 ½ *asses*. Secondly, he specializes as the graffiti dictates, in oral sex for women. Thirdly, he is not a Pompeian but from Puteoli and he is a *verna*. Although it is possible that detractors wrote these graffiti to debase their male enemies by saying that their tongues were for hire, it is equally possible that these graffiti reveal actual sexual practices (Clarke 2002:165). Additionally, this building also has many inscriptions referring to female prostitutes. Personally I would argue that if the graffiti concerning Isidorus and the assumed utilization of VI. XI. 15-16 is examined together the structure could simply have been a favorite pick-up spot for prostitutes where a *leno* might have rented out rooms for them to conduct their business or could have kept slaves for sexual exploitation.

7.7 Regio VII

Regio VII does not contain examples of inscriptions described in table 2. In ancient times this area would have had been an additional center for the city's activities, as it was connected to

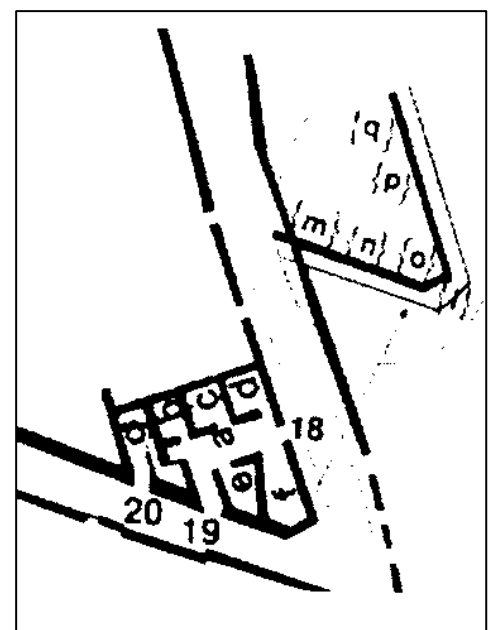


Figure 41: Pompeii, Lupanar at VII.XII.18-20, plan, (Clarke 1998:197).

the Forum and the main roads. At VII. XII. 18-20 the town's only confirmed brothel is located at Vico del lupanar and Vico del Balcone Pensile (Wallace 2005:88; Williams 2010:428). This building, which was excavated in 1862, is known as the *lupanar grande* and is thought to be the largest construction used for both male and female prostitution in Pompeii. Based on the inscriptions found here this brothel was most likely owned by two men named Africanus and Victor (D'Alvino 1967:44; DeFlice 2001:114; Wilkinson 2005:173). It is a two-story structure occupying a triangular plot at the intersection of two narrow back streets. The interior of the ground floor consists of a broad corridor with five cubicles opening off it. Each cubicle has a concrete bed and erotic frescos above their entrances (Clarke 2003a:60). The upper-floor also include five units which could be reached by a wooden staircase. There was also a bell to the

entrance of the staircase and a latrine under the stairs. In addition to erotic art and built-in cells with concrete beds, over 150 graffiti, including a good number of the *hic bene futui*-type have been located here (Beard 2008:238; Clarke 1998:196-197). There are notably no windows set on the walls. Instead they are located high on the walls, and as a result it is not possible to get a direct view into the building. This particular observation I believe can also be connected to the discussion of the brothel's clientele. Was the bordello deliberately constructed this way so that the identity and social status of the potential customers, in addition to the types of sexual engagements that took place here would remain hidden? It is difficult to give a clear answer to this question; however, there are a few pinpoints which could help shed light on this argument. Based on the graffiti it is possible to

distinguish names of people who were slaves or freedpersons from those who were free citizens (Clarke 1998:199). Names like Felix (*CIL* IV 2176, 2224, 2232) Phoebus (*CIL* IV 2184, 2194, 2248), Sollenmus (*CIL* IV 2185, 2186, 2207, 2218a), Vitalus (*CIL* IV 2187), Arphocras (*CIL* IV 2193), Neptunalis (*CIL* IV 2214), Victor (*CIL* IV 2218, 2258, 2260, 2294), Abestus (*CIL* IV 2222), Posphorus (*CIL* IV 2241) Fruetus/Fruetos (*CIL* IV 2244, 2245, 2245a), Bellicus (*CIL* IV 2247), Syneros (*CIL* IV 2251, 2253), (Severus (*CIL* IV 2263), Coruenius (*CIL* IV 2262), Sisinius (*CIL* IV 2264), Synethus (*CIL* IV 2285, 2287) are found scribbled on the walls. From an onomastic point of view I would argue

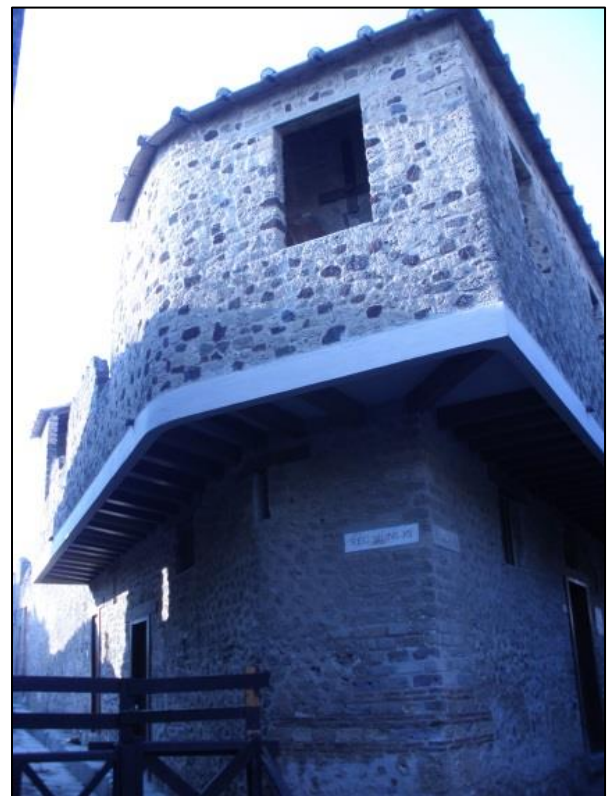


Figure 42: The *lupanar* of Africanus and Victor, Pompeii, VII.XII.18-19, (photo by author).

that these are not typical names associated with the elite. This could indeed indicate that this building was a brothel used by the city's lower classes. In addition to the male names, female names such as Veronica, Fabia, Myrtale, Fourtunata and Victoria are thought to have belonged to a higher class and are either presumed to have been customers or to have rented one of the brothel rooms (Harris 2007:122). In the written sources it is evidence of women being portrayed as just as capable of seeking out the services of a prostitute (see *Ov. Am* 1.10.9, 2.2-8, *Priap.*26, *Prop.* 2.16, *Tib.*1.6.1-5). Graffiti *CIL IV 2173 Salvi filia*- Salvius's daughter or *CIL IV 2217 Fvtvta svm hic*- Here I (feminine) was fucked) could lean weight to this theory. Additionally, perhaps this may also offer an alternative explanation of the much debated purpose of the second floor, which has often been identified as a private "sex-club" for the elite (McGinn 2004:158). All in all, there is no direct evidence that could tie the lay-out of the building to its types of clientele, but what about the descriptions of sexual acts or the sexual acts performed by possibly male prostitutes?

CIL IV 2194 Phoebvs piidico- Phoebus pedico, *CIL IV 2210 Piidicarii volo*- I wish to paedicare, *CIL IV Hyginvs cvm messjo hic*- Hygnius with Messio/Messius here, *CIL IV 2254 Ratio mi cvm ponis Batacarii te pedicaro*- when you have given over the coins Batacare, I will practice pedication with (on) you and *CIL IV 2288 Syniithvs favstillam fvtvit obiqeritii*-Synethos/Synethus fucked Faustillus are specially important. Additionally, there are also graffiti like *CIL IV 2191 Fvtvj*- I fucked, *CIL IV 2241 Posphorvs hic fvtvit*- Posphorus fucked here and *CIL IV 2265 Placidvs hic fvtvit qvem volvit*-Placidus fucked whomever he wanted. These examples does not offer a clear indication of who was being the passive partner, it could most likely have been a female or a male. From the evidence above it is possible to infer that male prostitution and same-sex relations actually did occur in his brothel, and that clientele and prostitutes of both genders did exist.

The structure at VII. III. 26-28 has been identified as a *caupona* and as the inn-brothel of Phoebus. It is a two room tavern with stairs that led to a second floor from the entrance 27. A j-shaped counter is at the entrance 28 with several display shelves. The counter room is connected to another room behind entrance 26 through a passage under the stairs (DeFelice 2001:115; Varone 2002:71). The association with prostitution started when the location was excavated in the 19th century and several examples of sexual graffiti were found. For example *CIL IV 2310b Evpilia hic cvm hominibvs bellis*- Eupilia here with good-looking men and *CIL IV 3103 Verecvndvs mentula ling*-Verecundus licks cock. Apart from the rooms on the second floor there is no direct evidence that this was a brothel used for male prostitution. The vocabulary and words found in the inscriptions are not common in Pompeii, and may actually be insulting rather than sexual. *Lingo* was not inherently obscene. However, it had a well-established use in the reference to oral stimulation of the sexual organs, and in this sense it had no doubt acquired an offensive tone (Addams 1991:134). Yet, the inscriptions cannot be

classified as the *hic bene futui*-type according to Wallace-Hadrill's standards. Furthermore, there is no erotic art recoded, no *cella meretricia* located here and no mention of price for sexual services (DeFlice 2001:116). Personally, I would argue that the location was identified as a brothel because of its geographical position near Vicolo del Panettiere which lead to the north-east part of the forum where the city's daily business would have occurred and prostitutes might have conducted their trade.



Figure 43: Erotic fresco at the *taberna* VII.IX.3, Pompeii, (photo by author).

The establishment at VII. IX.30-33 includes two businesses, designated as *taberna* or *popina*. They are listed as potential brothels because of their close proximity to a suspected *cella meretricia* at VII.ix.32. At the entrance of number 30 a typical counter can be found, and



Figure 44: The couple is wearing their sandals (photo by author).

behind this are four display shelves. Behind the counter is another room with the remains of a stove. Entrance 31 is an exit to the street from this room. Entrance 32 follows a door leading to a stairway and upper rooms. This is perhaps the reason why the location was linked to prostitution. The tavern at VII ix.33 next door has three rooms. Down a passageway to the left of the counter room there is a door to the shop at VII.ix.34. Behind this are sleeping areas, presumably for the staff, a latrine, and stairs that go to the second floor. Moreover, a sexual painting was located in the main room of this tavern with the words over the woman's head *CIL IV 794-Lente impelle*-enter me slowly/push in slowly (DeFlice 2001:116-117; McGinn 2004:279; Varone 2002:75).

In addition to the impression that this was a brothel, various interpretations of this painting and its actual significance in VII.IX.34 exist. It has been suggested by Clarke (1998:259-260) and Varone (2001:56-57) that the painting is a desire to imitate fashions that were the prerogative of the upper classes where the woman is admiring her sexual partner. This is mainly based on the artistic illustration of the sofa with the pillows as well as the drapes, the position of the characters involved, and the fact that she is wearing nothing more than a breast band. This could signify that she is not depicted altogether naked as a prostitute. However, I would like draw attention to one small but important artistic detail which might suggest to that casual or even paid sex might have taken place here. In the left corner of the painting it is possible to catch a glimpse of the couple's feet. They are

both wearing their sandals. In my opinion this might very well imply that sex here that was quick and efficient. Additionally, keeping in mind that scholars also have accepted that women could be potential clients for male prostitutes as we have seen in location VII. XII. 18-1 who is to say that *CIL IV 794* is not a demand from such a woman?

VII.VXI.15a is one of two bath complexes uncovered from Pompeii. In 1986, the discovery of unique paintings representing sexual activity in a bath complex renewed the debate about whether the presences of erotic paintings meant that this building saw use as a brothel (Clarke 1998:212). For Luciana Jacobelli, excavator of the Suburban baths, a long- standing tradition posed a problem when she uncovered room 7 and discovered eight erotic pictures. As mentioned in chapter five, this room with the erotic art has been identified as an *apodyterium* (dressing room). Traditionally, whenever an archeologist found a painting of explicit sex, he identified the room- if not the entire building-as a place where sex was for sale.

The establishment lies just outside Pompeii's walls in a two-storey structure located along the steep road that leads to the ancient river port up to the Marine gate. The large bath complex occupies the ground floor and three apartments fill the upper story. The rooms were both large and well-lit with many luxury features. More important still, the Suburban baths are the only ones not divided into separate sections for women and

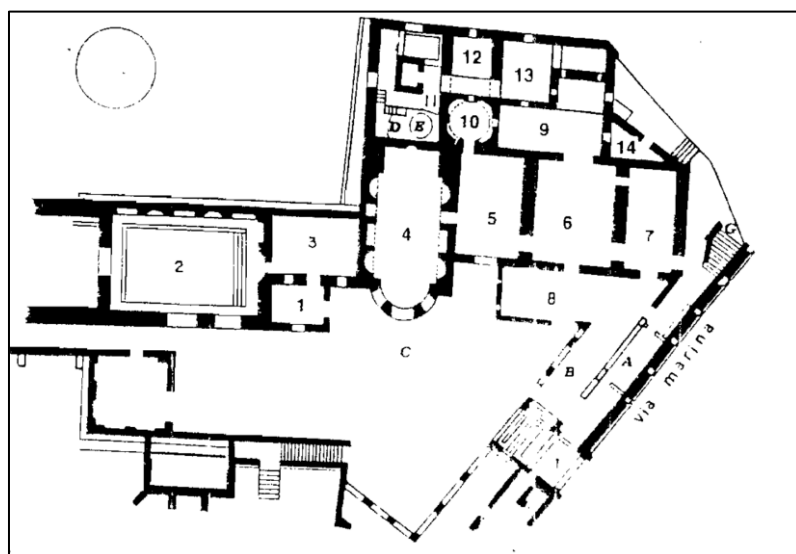


Figure 45: Suburban baths, VII.VXI.15-16, Pompeii, plan, (Clarke 1998:213).

men. There is only one dressing room in the Suburban baths, and whether the two sexes bathed at the same time, or at different times, this *apodyterium* had to serve all patrons (Beard 2008:248-249; Clarke 1998:213; Clarke 2002:151-152). The Romans often associated going to the baths with the idea of sex, for the physical and mental benefits it brought and as a purely enjoyable interlude (Varone2001:41). Graffiti recorded from the Suburban baths in Herculaneum reveals several activities: *CIL IV 10675*- Two companions were here and, since they had a thoroughly terrible attendant called Epaphroditus, threw him out onto the street not a moment too soon. They then spent 105 ½ sesterces not agreeably when they fucked, *CIL IV 10677*-Apelles, chamberlain of the emperor, and Dexter had lunch here most pleasantly and fucked at the same time, *CIL IV 10678*-We, Apelles Mus with his brother Dexter lovingly fucked two women each twice (Cooley & Cooley 2014:116; Peachin 2011:366). On this

basis, it is correct to assume that women exploited for sexual purposes were accessible in the baths, but is it also possible to find evidence of males working as prostitutes?

In addition to the epigraphical evidence, literary sources may also give an indication as to the activities that could occur in baths: “We bathe together, and his line of vision keeps below waist-level, he devours ocularly boys under the showers, and his lips twitch at the sight of a luscious member. Did you ask his name? How odd, I can’t remember” (Mart.1.96). Also in Seneca the Younger a man named Hostius Quadra seeks out the baths:

Hostius Quadra depravity was not restricted to only one sex, but he was voracious for men and women alike. He had mirrors made especially to reflect distorting images...they set up at angles around the room, so when his arse was penetrated he could see it all...and he relished the exaggerated size of his own penis as much as it was real. He used to cruise the baths checking penises, recruiting from the ranks of those who measured up (Seneca. *Natural questions*.1.16/quoted in Laurence 2009:63).

In the citations above sex connected to bathing were common. Furthermore, perhaps the most well-known example of acts performed by male prostitutes in bath contexts are found in Suetonius and his description of Tiberius (see Suet.*Tib*:44). This particular passage outlines one particular sexual preference of the emperor, who is said to have trained boys to perform oral sex on him while he went bathing. These were called *pisciculos* meaning “little fishes”. Moreover, it is also believed that he turned the latrines of Capri into male brothels for which he procured “fancy boys” also known as *spintriae* (Younger 2004:196). Also, the Latin term *spintria* refers both to a passive male prostitute as well as a certain type of coin with erotic scenes often associated with the baths (Campana 2009:43). Whether or not these coins are also found in Pompeii is unclear, but in the other parts of the Roman world they are thought to have functioned as payment for sexual services (Varone 2001:30-31). The erotic wall paintings have also contributed to the speculation of potential prostitution in the Suburban baths. In chapter 5 I argued that these representations perhaps could arouse laughter and protect the viewers from potential evil spirits. However, another explanation is that the pictures would help the bathers to remember which box which was theirs, either by sexual position in the illustrations, or by number I-VIII. Moreover, it has also been suggested that the paintings actually refer to a brothel incorporated into the building. A graffito for example nearby declares in *CIL* IV 1751 “if you want to fuck, ask for Attica, 16 *asses*” (Younger 2005:152). Although, there is no direct archeological data which could link the Suburban baths to being a brothel or involvement in male prostitution a potential place would be the upper floor. Figure 47 show where a possible staircase on the left wall of the *apodyterium* might have stood. This would have led to the upper floor consisting of several small rooms hidden from the public view (see **fig.47**)



Figure 46: Excavators have replicated a staircase to indicate where the entrance to the upper floor might have been (photo by author)



Figure 47: The remains of the upper floor at the Suburban baths, Pompeii, (photo by author).

7.8 *Regio IX*

The last example in *table 2* is located in *regio IX 6 a* and *b* between the entrance of a *caupona* (Varone 2002:144). *Regio IX* is connected to *Via Stabina* and *Via di Nola*. *CIL IV 5203* and *5204* notifies that *Logas*, a *verna*, is accessible for both 8 *asses* and 5 *asses*. Synonymously with other examples already discussed, this male prostitute was probably hired out to customers of both genders as a contribution to the economy of this establishment.

As this chapter has demonstrated male prostitution did exist in Pompeii. It was connected to regions where much of the city's commercial activities occurred. Male prostitutes offered a variety of sexual services, however, the most common were oral sex to women and anal intercourse. Still, in most cases this detail is left out, supporting the theory that men involved in the sex-trade did in fact service both genders. The social status of these males is clear: they were either *verna* and who were connected to an establishment who either advertised or were hired out by either the owners or a possibly by *leno/a*, non-domestic slaves who also worked as prostitutes, or lower-class men. In Pompeii male prostitution

is linked to lower-class dwellings associated with the sale of food and drink, places of leisure and locations with manufactured goods such as, bakeries and shops.

8 CONCLUSION

“The Pastime of Venus” has sought to contribute to an understanding of ancient Roman male sexuality and prostitution in Pompeii. Roman male sexuality, in theory, was built on the contrast between active and passive partners, and not so much on the gender of individuals. However, in the exploration of the archaeological material from Pompeii this project has shown that sexuality took on diverse forms. The erect phallus was regarded as a symbol of fertility and a protective charm against evil spirits. In art sexual representations depict both heterosexual acts, homosexual intercourse and sexual acts thought to be abnormal, for example oral sex on women, threesomes and foursomes. In the heterosexual illustrations this project has revealed a larger number of erotic scenes where women play the active role, and the man the passive. For the Romans male passivity was associated with the acts connected to prostitutes, and was regarded as a symbol of failed masculinity. In art, though, these gender roles are artistically challenged. My conclusions here are based on two premises; firstly, the Roman society accepted women as active partners in sexual intercourse, and secondly, the artistic aims linked to these could in fact represent a change in the Roman mentality towards male sexuality. Homosexual intercourse was not forbidden according to Roman law, however, it was highly stigmatized. From Pompeii three examples depict males engaged in anal intercourse. Also here the interpretation is ambiguous. Sex between men did occur either between individuals of the same social status, or these depictions represent humor and comedy, evoking laughter to protect against harmful energy. As we have seen, male sexuality in art and objects from Pompeii illuminate a variety of artistic aims and intentions. The erect male member, as well as the male body is presented in different ways to meet several levels of social expectations. Men could be active penetrators and passive receivers. From Pompeii several scholars have examined female prostitution connected to private and public establishments. This project has, on the other hand concerned itself with archaeological and epigraphical material which could highlight the existence and social organization of males in the Pompeian sex-trade. Based mainly on textual evidence and an assumed private sex-trade incorporated into elite homes, chapter 6 examined six upper-class homes for evidence that might tie the city’s elite families to any involvement in male prostitution. Subsequently, based on the presence of erotic frescos, sexual graffiti, as well as the spatial layout of the test-subjects no direct or convincing evidence that could connect these establishments to male prostitution. In contrast the city’s public sphere did reveal buildings directly connected to male prostitution and also of the social identity of

those involved. The dwellings analyzed in chapter 7 display evidence of the existence of male prostitution in Pompeii, most commonly in small shops, inns, taverns, establishments used to manufacture commercial products, or where food and drink were sold. Based on the inscriptions found in the different regions throughout the city, the results clearly show that male prostitutes were either *verna*, domestic slaves, or lower-class men who either advertised, or were hired out by others to perform sexual services costing between 1 and 27 *asses*. The sexual services offered were oral sex to women and anal intercourse. However, in most cases the inscriptions did not specify which services the prostitutes specialized in. This could in fact indicate that male prostitutes did obtain a clientele consisting of both women and men.

Another aspiration of this project is to consider the complexities which may arise from the ideas and attitudes of archaeologists themselves. As was discussed in chapter 2, 18th and 19th century excavators had little experience in properly classifying the erotic artefacts found in Pompeii and therefore frequently interpreted them in the light of contemporary ideas. “Pornography” related to this material was defined by content, and associated with prostitution. Unfortunately it was no uncommon occurrence that excavators either simply destroyed the objects on the spot or, at best, locked them up out of sight. We have also seen how the application of a set of criteria to determine the extent of prostitution, with particular emphasis on male prostitution, may yield a number of brothels that does not correspond well with the estimated population of Pompeii. This topic is interesting in itself, but it also has a wider significance. Archaeology will constantly re-examine and re-evaluate its own premises and perceptions as new material and interpretations are questioned. I hope to be able to contribute to this process in the future.

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APPENDIX I: ARCHAEOLOGICAL MATERIAL FROM POMPEII

Objects:

Type	Description	Active	Passive	RP, Inv.no	Measurement	Dating and style	Reference
Vase handle with erotic scene	Heterosexual act: man being straddle by a woman	Female	Male	129477	13 cm	Beginning of 1st century B.C	Grant 1975:90
Bas-relief with erotic scene	Heterosexual act: man being straddle by a woman	Female	Male	27714	37 x 37 cm	Mid-1st century B.C	Grant 1975:96
<i>Lebes</i> with satyr and nymph	Heterosexual act: man being straddle by a woman	Female	Male	27671	12 x 39 cm	1 st century B.C	Grant 1975:98
Attic red-figure vase with erotic scene	Heterosexual act: man penetrating a woman from behind	Male	Female	Without number	9.5 x 23.5 cm	480-460 B.C	Grant 1975:102
Amphora with erotic scene	Same-sex act between two males	Male	Male	27670	24 x 11.5 cm	Last quarter of 6 th century B.C	Grant 1975:103
Brown-painted terracotta lamp with erotic scene	Heterosexual act: man on his back, woman straddling him	Female	Male	109412	12 x 6.4 cm	First half of 1 st century A.D	Grant 1975:105
Red-painted terracotta lamp	Heterosexual act: man penetrating a woman	Male	Female	27865	11,5 x 7,3 cm	First half of 1 st century A.D	Grant 1975:105
Brown-painted terracotta lamp with erotic scene	Heterosexual act: man being straddle by a woman	Female	Male	109413	12 x 4.6 cm	First half 1 st century A.D	Grant 1975:105
Bas-relief in travertine	Sculptured phallus			s.n	31 x 45 cm	unknown	Grant 1975:108
Bas-relief in travertine	Sculptured phallus with the words "Hic habitat felicitas"			27741	25 x 40 cm	unknown	Grant 1975:109
Sculpture in Nocera tufa	Giant phallus in painted tufa			113415	64 cm	IX, V	Grant 1975:111
Bronze sculpture	<i>Canephora</i> -Herm			Without number	3 x 21 cm	1 st century A.D	Grant 1975:114

Bronze sculpture	Herm with head of boy			129434	4.5 x 17 cm	1 st century A.D	Grant 1975:115
Sculpture in pavonazetto marble	Clothed Herm			Without number	142 cm	1 st century A.D	Grant 1975:116
Sculpture	Tapezophoron in the form of male herm			27730	102 cm	1 st century A.D	Grant 1975:118
Two sculptures in gilded bronze	<i>Placentarius</i> with oversized penis			143760	25 cm	I, VIII, House of the Epebe, Last years of Pompeii	Grant 1975:120-121
Bronze sculpture	<i>Stupidus</i>			27729	35 cm	1 st century A.D	Grant 1975:122
Sculpture in terracotta	<i>Priapus</i>			27717	5.5 x 14 cm	1 st century B.C	Grant 1975:124
Sculpture in terracotta	<i>Priapus</i>			27719	4.5 x 16 cm	1 st century B.C	Grant 1975:125
Terracotta	Drinking-bowl mask			27859	9.5 x 9 cm	1 st century B.C	Grant 1975:128
Bronze lamp	Dwarf riding			27872	22 cm	1 st century A.D	Grant 1975:132
Terracotta lamp	Shape of a faun			27869	20 cm	1 st century A.D	Grant 1975:133
Bronze sculpture	Polyhallic Mercury			27854	27 cm	1 st century A.D	Grant 1975:134
<i>Tintinnabulum</i> in bronze	The rider			27844	10.5 cm	1 st century B.C-1 st century A.D	Grant 1975:139
<i>Tintinnabulum</i> in bronze	Mercury and the ram			27855	15 x 18 cm	1st century B.C-1st century A.D	Grant 1975:141
<i>Tintinnabulum</i> in bronze	The lamp			27873	26 x 18.5 cm	1 st century B.C	Grant 1975:141
<i>Tintinnabulum</i> in bronze	The mouse and the tortoise			27841	8.5 cm	1st century B.C-1st century A.D	Grant 1975:142
Silver cup from the house of Menander (IX, 4)	Mars and Venus			145515			Varone 2001:46
Silver cup from the house of Menander (IX, 4)	Sex scene: a woman striding a man with her back turned away from her partner	Female	Male			30 B.C-30 A.D	Clarke 1998:69
House of the Vettii (VI, XV,I), from peristyle I	Fountain statue of Priapus					62-79 A.D	Clarke 1998:178

House of Julia Felix (11.4)	Bronze tripod with legs in the form of ithyphallic fauns			27874		1 st century B.C	Varone 2001:18-19
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APPENDIX II: Wall-paintings connected to private homes and unknown location

Location	RP,Inv.no/location	Description	Active	Passive	Measurement	Dating	Reference
House of Epidus Sabinus (IX,I,22)	27875	Dionysiac scene with Hermaphroditus and Silenius			50x50cm	Last years of the reign of Nero	Grant 1975:143
House of the ancient hunter (VII,IV,48)	27687	Polyphemus and Galatea			75x82 cm	Last years of the reign of Nero	Grant 1975:152
Unknown location	27697	Male and female intercourse	Male	Female	37x37 cm	1 st century A.D	Grant 1975:153
Unknown location	27684	Male and female intercourse	Female	Male	41x41 cm	Reign of Nero	Clarke 1998:167; Grant 1975:153
Unknown location	27696	Male and female intercourse	Male	Female	51x54 cm	Reign of Vespasian	Grant 1975:154
Unknown location	27686	Male and female intercourse	Female	Male	41x44 cm	Ca 70 A.D	Grant 1975:155; Varone 2001:58
House of Caecilius Iucundus (V,I, 26)	110569	Erotic scene with man and woman on a bed, and with a boy in the background			44x52 cm	Reign of Nero	Grant 1975:155-156; Varone 2001:71
House of the Epigrams (V,I, 18)	27705	Satyr and Maenad			37x44 cm	Reign of Nero	Grant 1975:160
Unknown location	100878	Hermaphroditus struggling with satyr			51x56 cm	Reign of Nero	Grant 1975:159
Unknown location	27699	Satyr and Hermaphroditus			35.5x38cm	45-79 A.D	Clarke 1998:52
Unknown location	27693	Satyr taking by a maenad by surprise			48x48 cm	Reign of Vespasian	Grant 1975:158
House of the Beautiful Impluvium (I, IX,1)	66009	Male and Female on bed				40-45 A.D	Clarke 1998:150; Varone 2001:64
House of the Centenary (IX, VIII,6)	South wall, room 43	Male and female on bed	female	male		62-79 A.D	Varone 2001:66

House of the Centenary (IX, VIII,6)	North wall, room 43	A woman striding a man	female	male		62-79 A.D	Varone 2001:66
House of the faun (VI, XII,2-5)	27707	Foreplay of a faun and a nymph				Second half of the second century B.C	Varone 2001:93
House of the restaurant (IX, V, 14/16)	West wall, central picture	Sex scene: man penetrating woman	male	female		62-79 A.D	Clarke 1998:181 Varone 2001:65
House of the restaurant (IX, V, 14/16)	North wall, eastern picture	Sex scene: a woman is striding a man while fondling herself?	female	male		62-79 A.D	Clarke 1998:185
House of the restaurant (IX, V, 14/16)	north wall, western picture 53016	Sex scene: a man taking a woman from behind	male	female		62-79 A.D	Varone 2001:62
House of the restaurant (IX, V, 14/16)	South wall, western picture	Sex scene: a woman is striding a man whilst kissing him	female	male		62-79 A.D	Clarke 199:186; Varone 2001:62
House at IX, XII,9	bedroom	Sex scene of a satyr groping a maenad from behind	male	female		45-79 A.D	Varone 2001:64
House of the doctor (VII, V, 24)	113196	Pygmies at an outdoor banquet	female	male	2.17x0,56 m	45-79 A.D	Clarke 1998:44
House of the Quadrigas	27698	Pygmies engaged in sex	male	female		45-79 A.D	Varone 2001:39
House of the Vettii (VI,XV,1)	room x, west wall	Sex scene: a woman is striding a man and at the same time grabs his head	female	male		62-79 A.D	Clarke 1998:172
House of the Vettii (VI,XV,1),	east wall, room x	Sex scene: a man is penetrating a woman with her leg is over his right shoulder	male	female		62-79 A.D	Clarke 1998:151
House of the Vettii (VI,XV,1),	Entrance <i>b</i>	Priapus weighing his member against a sack of money				62-79 A.D	Clarke 1998:175
House of the Vettii (VI,XV,1),	Room <i>q</i> , south wall, right part	Silenius and Hermaphroditus				62-79 A.D	Clarke 1998:54

House at I, XIII,16	North wall, triclinium 3	Venus and Priapus with landscape				62-79 A.D	Clarke 1998:190
House at I. XIII.16	North wall, triclinium 3	Male and female on a bed				62-79 A.D	Clarke 1998:191

Appendix III: Wall-paintings from public establishments

Location	RP,Inv.no/location	Description	Active	Passive	Measurement	Dating	Reference
VII.XVI.a	South wall (scene one)	A woman striding a man	Female	Male	26x30cm	Reign of Nero	Jacobelli 1995:32; Varone 2001:33-32
VII.XVI.a	South wall (scene two)	A man penetrates a woman from the side	Male	Female	22x28cm	Reign of Nero	Jacobelli 1995:41
VII.XVI.a	South wall (scene three)	A woman preforms fellatio on a man	Female	Male	29x20cm	Reign of Nero	Jacobelli 1995:43, Varone 2001:32-32
VII.XVI.a	South wall (scene four)	A man preforming oral sex on a woman	Male	Female	33x25	Reign of Nero	Jacobelli 1995:44
VII.XVI.a	South wall (scene five)	A man penetrates a woman from the front	Male	Female	24x24 cm	Reign of Nero	Jacobelli 1995:47-48
VII.XVI.a	South wall (scene six)	Threesome	Male	Male/female	33x24cm	Reign of Nero	Jacobelli 1995:48
VII.XVI.a	South wall (scene seven)	Foursome	Male	Male/female/female	31x25,5 cm	Reign of Nero	Jacobelli 1995:54)
VII.XVI.a	South wall (scene eighth)	Poet with oversized testicles			25 cm	Reign of Nero	Jacobelli 1995:56-57
VII.XII.18-20	South wall, upper zone, second panel from east	Male-female on bed: man penetrating woman	Male	Female		A.D.72-79	Clarke 1998:205
VII.XII.18-20	South wall, upper zone, east part	Male-female: woman straddling a man	Female	Male		A.D.72-79	Clarke 1998:203
VII.XII.18-20	West wall, upper zone, south part	Male-female reclining on bed				A.D.72-79	Clarke 1998:201; McGinn 2004:213
VII.XII.18-20	North wall, upper zone, central part	Priapus				A.D.72-79	Clarke 1998:200
VII.XII.18-	Downstairs panel	Male-	Female	Male		A.D.72-	McGinn

20		female couple in bed: a woman straddling a man				79	2004:213
VII.XII.18-20	Downstairs panel	A man taking a woman from behind				A.D.72-79	McGinn 2004:2013
VII.IX.33	27690	A man takes a woman from behind	Male	Female		A.D.69-79	Varone 2001:57

APPENDIX IV: SEXUAL INSCRIPTIONS AND GRAFFITI

CIL	Inscription number	Content (Latin)	Translation	Translated by
IV	2175	Hic ego puellas mvltas fvtvi	Here I fucked many girls	Williams 2010:297
IV	2176	Felix bene fvtvis	Felix fucks well	By author
IV	2184	Phoebvs vngventarivs optime fvtvit	Phoebus the perfume-seller fuck really well	Williams 2010:297
IV	2185-88	Sollemnes bene fvtves	Sollemnis you fuck well	Williams 2010:297
IV	2194	Phoebvs pedico	Iam Phoebus, I preform paedicare	By author
IV	2210	Piidicarii volo	I want to paedicare	By author
IV	2219	December bene fvtuvis	You fuck well December	By author
IV	2248	Phoebvs bonvs fvtor	Phoebus is a good fucker	Williams 2010:297
IV	2274	Victor bene valeas qvi bene fvtvis	Victor you fuck well	By author
IV	2266	Viir...Fiilas	man [you] suck	Adams 1990:123-125; Williams 2010:178
IV	2360	Pedicatvr qvi leget..paticvs est qvi praeterit.. ersi me comedant, et ego verpa qui lego	he who read this is a buttfucker.. Pervert is he who passes this...I may suck or fuck he who reads	By author
IV	2449	Hyginvs cvm messio hic	Hyginus together with Messius here	By author
IV	3925	Satvrnine cvnnvm linge re nol	Saturnius don't lick pussy	By author
IV	3995	Cvis felator	Cuis sucks	By author
	4008	Pedi(a)t(u)r qvi leg(et)-	a pathetic is he who reads	By author
IV	4082	Natalis cindidvs iist	Natalus is a cinaedus	By author
IV	4201	Ivlivs ciadiidvs	Iulius (is) cinaedus	By author
IV	4304	Servilivs cvnnvlinge	Servilius licks cunt	By author
IV	4580	Amilate tii fellator	Amilate you suck	By author
IV	4652	Fiilat Luci	You suck Luci	By author

IV	5001	Crescens pvlicvs cinaedvs	Crescenes is a cinaedus	By author
IV	5064	Solvsmyvs ciniidvus iist	Solumus is a cinaedus	By author
IV	5156	Celer cinaedvs	Celer is a cinaedus	By author
IV	5178	Corvs cvunnvm lingit	Corus licks cunt	By author
IV	5193	Qvod cvnnvm lingis	Here cunt is licked	By author
IV	5408	Felix felat as (sibus) I	Felix sucks for I <i>ass</i>	Lund 2006:17
IV	8617	Verpes qvi istvc leges	lustful are you who reads	By author
IV	10030	Malim me amici fellent qvam inimici irrvment	I would rather suck my friends than being face- raped by my enemies	By author

