

The Herculaneum Graffiti Project: Initial Field Season, 2014

Rebecca R. Benefiel - Jacqueline DiBiasie - Holly Sypniewski
with contributions from Erika Zimmermann Damer, Kyle Helms, Matthew Loar,
Karin Lundqvist and Fanny Opdenhoff

This article describes the goals and activities for the first field season of The Herculaneum Graffiti Project. Our project focuses on documenting and digitizing to make more broadly accessible the first-century handwritten wall-inscriptions, also called graffiti, in Herculaneum. Following an overview of the presence of ancient graffiti in Herculaneum, this report details the methodology we used to locate and document the inscriptions and the preservation status of ancient graffiti in each insula, or city-block, of the excavations. We further describe the preliminary results of the project's documentation efforts. We are currently studying, processing, and digitizing these inscriptions and contributing them for inclusion in the Epigraphic Database Roma and EAGLE, the European network of Ancient Greek and Latin Epigraphy. We conclude with a brief mention of development of The Ancient Graffiti Project, the digital resource and search engine devoted to ancient handwritten inscriptions.

Introduction

The Herculaneum Graffiti Project held its inaugural field season in summer 2014¹. Our main goals were 1) to provide training in epigraphy to participants, with a particular focus on the conventions that pertain to handwritten wall-inscriptions, 2) to survey the site of Herculaneum, and record and fully document the ancient wall-inscriptions that were still extant, and 3) to digitize the inscriptions still preserved and contribute this content to two major digital epigraphic initiatives: the Epigraphic Database Roma (EDR), a digital resource for ancient inscriptions from the peninsula of Italy, and The Europeana network of Ancient Greek and Latin Epigraphy (EAGLE), whose aim is to make cultural heritage more accessible. Following our fieldwork, we have been developing The Ancient Graffiti Project (AGP), a digital platform and search engine devoted to the study of ancient handwritten inscriptions².

The graffiti, or incised wall-inscriptions, of Herculaneum constitute a remarkable corpus of handwritten messages and drawings from the first century AD. The graffiti of nearby Pompeii are better known since the site of Pompeii is more extensive and has therefore yielded a much greater number of inscriptions, along with a large number of painted inscriptions, or *dipinti*. The *dipinti* were large, brightly painted messages that communicated information for public consumption, e.g. political campaign posters or advertisements for gladiatorial

¹ We are grateful to the Soprintendenza speciale per i beni culturali di Pompei, Ercolano, e Stabiae, to Soprintendente Massimo Osanna, and especially to Dottoressa Maria Paolo Guidobaldi, Direttrice degli Scavi di Ercolano, for permission to work in the site. We would also like to express our thanks to Christian Biggi of the Herculaneum Study Centre who coordinated logistics for our program.

² Available at: <http://www.edr-edr.it>, <http://www.eagle-network.eu/>, and <http://agp.wlu.edu>, respectively. EDR is a contributing database to EAGLE. EDR is responsible for the inscriptions of Italy, Sicily and Sardinia (excluding the Christian inscriptions of Rome). All three projects, EDR, EAGLE, and AGP, are linked and interoperable.

games, while the *graffiti*, incised or scratched into the wall-plaster that covered virtually every wall surface, were a spontaneous, individual means of expression that could be created by anyone on the street³.

The present is an ideal time to carry out this work of surveying and documenting the surviving handwritten wall-inscriptions at Herculaneum for two main reasons. First, the site of Herculaneum itself is currently in a splendid condition as a result of the past decade of conservation work that has been carried out by the Herculaneum Conservation Project, a collaborative venture of the Soprintendenza Archeologica di Pompei, Ercolano, e Stabia, the British School at Rome, and the Packard Humanities Institute⁴. Secondly, Antonio Varone has recently published three volumes illustrating the wall-inscriptions of Pompeii and Herculaneum, the first time images for many of these inscriptions have ever been available. His first volume, written with Grete Stefani, published historical photographs of the *dipinti* of Pompeii from the Photographic Archive of the Archaeological Superintendency⁵. The next two volumes published photographs of the graffiti from Pompeii and Herculaneum, the result of a series of photographic campaigns he had undertaken with the Soprintendenza over the past twenty years⁶. The incised wall-inscriptions of Herculaneum were the earliest of the group to be documented, in a photographic campaign in 1994. We could therefore make use of Varone's volumes and compare the graffiti and level of preservation he had documented in 1994 with what remained *in situ* twenty years later. Before we detail our methods and the results of our field season, an introduction to the wall-inscriptions of Herculaneum is in order.

History of the study of Herculaneum graffiti

The wall-inscriptions of Herculaneum are not well known and tend to be overshadowed by the graffiti of nearby Pompeii. Indeed, the primacy of Pompeii in the field of wall-inscriptions can be illustrated by the fact that the volume of the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* devoted to wall-inscriptions was titled *Volumen IV: Inscriptiones Parietariae Pompeianae* ("The Wall-inscriptions of Pompeii")⁷. Multiple factors contribute to this imbalance.

1) Pompeii has yielded thousands of wall-inscriptions. Pompeii was a larger city than Herculaneum, and significantly more of the site of Pompeii has also been excavated: 44 hectares have been excavated at Pompeii (of the town's estimated total of 60+ hectares), while 4.5 hectares have been excavated at Herculaneum (of an estimated total of 20 hectares)⁸. The vast majority of inscriptions recorded in *CIL* vol. IV, numbering in the thousands, do come from Pompeii.

2) Wall-inscriptions began to be recorded early in Pompeii's excavations. The proliferation of writing on walls through the site of Pompeii became apparent early in the excavations. The painted inscriptions on building façades were recorded in notebooks by visitors on the Grand Tour. They also appeared in watercolor paintings of the era. The first issue of *CIL* IV, presenting a collection of the wall-inscriptions uncovered in Pompeii to that point, appeared in 1871. That volume presented a total of 3223 inscriptions, only five of which came from Herculaneum⁹. Due to the significant technical challenges associated with excavating Herculaneum, most of the city was excavated only in the early twentieth century. The graffiti of Herculaneum discovered during

³ Scholarship on the *dipinti* of Pompeii includes CASTRÉN 1975, FRANKLIN 1980, SABATTINI TUMOLESI 1980, MOURITSEN 1988, FRANKLIN 2001, CHIAVIA 2002. The graffiti include a much more heterogeneous mix of material and, following Helen Tanzer's *The Common People of Pompeii. A Study of the Graffiti* (1939) and Matteo Della Corte's *Casa ed Abitanti di Pompei* (1965), have begun to garner scholarly attention more recently, with increasing numbers of articles and a few monographs at this point, e.g. VARONE 1994 (English trans. 2002), WALLACE 2005, MILNOR 2014.

⁴ For more information, see <http://www.herculaneum.org>. Cf. CAMARDO, COURT, THOMPSON 2012: 360-362; COURT, THOMPSON, WALLACE-HADRILL 2013: 355-358.

⁵ VARONE, STEFANI 2009.

⁶ Antonio Varone (2012), *Titulorum Graphio Exaratorum qui in C.I.L. Volume IV collecti sunt. Imagines I-II* Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider. A smaller number of photographs come from the DAI archives, and some line-drawings of inscriptions that have perished are included as well. Varone helpfully dates every photo he includes.

⁷ A subheading does include in smaller letters: *Herculanenses, Stabianae*. That first volume of *CIL* vol. IV contained more than 2500 wall-inscriptions from Pompeii, as well as one from Stabia (*CIL* IV.1175f), and five from Herculaneum (discussed in footnote 9).

⁸ COOLEY, COOLEY 2014: 2. The Soprintendenza Speciale per i beni culturali di Pompei, Ercolano, e Stabia reports that 4.5 hectares at Herculaneum are uncovered (*visibili a cielo aperto*). More of the site was explored by tunnels during the Bourbon era: <http://www.pompeisites.org/Sezione.jsp?titolo=Storia%20di%20Ercolano&idSezione=95>.

⁹ *CIL* IV.1176, 2513, 2513a, 2521, and 2543. Three of these (2513, 2513a, and 2543) came from the Casa di Argo, one came from a building facade (2521), one presented a label within a painting featuring Harpocrates (1176).

those excavations were ultimately published in Supplement 3, fascicle 4 of *CIL* vol. IV, which appeared in print in 1970.

3) Herculaneum has yielded virtually no public inscriptions. The bold, large, formulaic painted inscriptions advertising political candidates running for office are found throughout the town of Pompeii. Herculaneum does not feature the same type of inscriptions, leading some to suggest that elections or even city government was handled differently here¹⁰. Were it not for the long shadow of Pompeii, however, it would be easier to recognize that, even in the absence of the public inscriptions, a substantial number of handwritten wall-inscriptions appeared in Herculaneum too¹¹.

The bulk of the graffiti from the Vesuvian area are known thanks to Matteo Della Corte, an epigrapher who documented and published the inscriptions discovered at Pompeii as excavations proceeded through the early twentieth century¹². Della Corte was active at Herculaneum too, recording and collecting ancient graffiti as the excavations progressed between the years 1929 and 1941. He published all the inscriptions found during those excavations -- inscriptions on stone, graffiti, labels on pottery, and bronze stamps -- in 1958, in *Rendiconti della Accademia di archeologia, lettere e belle arti*. That article formed the basis for Pio Ciprotti's preparation of the Herculaneum graffiti for the third supplement of *CIL* IV, which appeared after Della Corte's death, in 1970.

The state of the field has been enriched since then by a handful of scholars. Heikki Solin suggested revisions to Ciprotti's publication in *CIL*, especially in regard to nomenclature, and offered the first synthetic assessment of the wall-inscriptions of Herculaneum as a whole¹³. Others have added to the total corpus of Herculaneum graffiti: Giuseppe Guadagno published the inscriptions discovered in the so-called Seat of the Augustales in 1988, Antonio Varone published new inscriptions and revised readings for a number of graffiti in 2000, and Martin Langner catalogued approximately 50 graffiti drawings from Herculaneum among his collection of figural graffiti across the Roman world¹⁴.

Our project has used these resources to locate the inscriptions still extant in Herculaneum, with the goals of fully documenting both the content of the graffiti and their contextual data, and of contributing an entry for each inscription, with current bibliography, to the Epigraphic Database Roma. To create a copyright-free, geo-referenced map of the site of Herculaneum, our team turned to the non-proprietary website OpenStreetMap.org, which in 2014 had only two buildings in Herculaneum sketched and identified. We completed a map of the full archaeological site, articulating and naming each individual property in Herculaneum (fig. 1a). Our map of Herculaneum is now viewable and freely accessible on OpenStreetMap¹⁵. From this map, we then generated the base map of Herculaneum that we will use for The Ancient Graffiti Project (fig. 1b).

Field Work

The primary task for our first season was an overall survey of the site to examine extant graffiti in the best preserved areas and an identification of areas for future work. Participants in our project were divided into teams and each team was assigned an *insula*, or city-block. Each team then focused on locating, recording, measuring, and photographing extant graffiti within its individual *insula*. Furthermore, team members proposed specific graffiti that would be good candidates for additional documentation using RTI (see below). Our efforts this season were concentrated on the best preserved houses in each *insula*.

Team members began by learning how to identify ancient graffiti and distinguish them from modern graffiti, which unfortunately appear here, as at many archaeological sites. Ancient graffiti tend to be inscribed with a

¹⁰ DELLA CORTE 1958: 239-240; SOLIN 1973b; PAGANO 1987; WALLACE-HADRILL 2011a: 291-292.

¹¹ A recent book review of Kristina Milnor's *Graffiti and the Literary Landscape in Roman Pompeii*, for example, highlights Pompeii and contrasts it with neighboring Herculaneum, which is characterized as "quiet" and "graffiti-free" (GOWERS 2014).

¹² While his methods at reconstructing the names of inhabitants and their places of residences on the basis of wall-inscriptions (DELLA CORTE 1965) have been justly criticized for overreaching the evidence (e.g. MOURITSEN 1988, 13-23), it cannot be denied that without the efforts of Della Corte, we would have little to none of this collection of fragile evidence.

¹³ SOLIN 1973a and 1973b.

¹⁴ GUADAGNO 1988; VARONE 2000; LANGNER 2001.

¹⁵ To view Herculaneum directly, go to: <http://www.openstreetmap.org/#map=19/40.80640/14.34862>

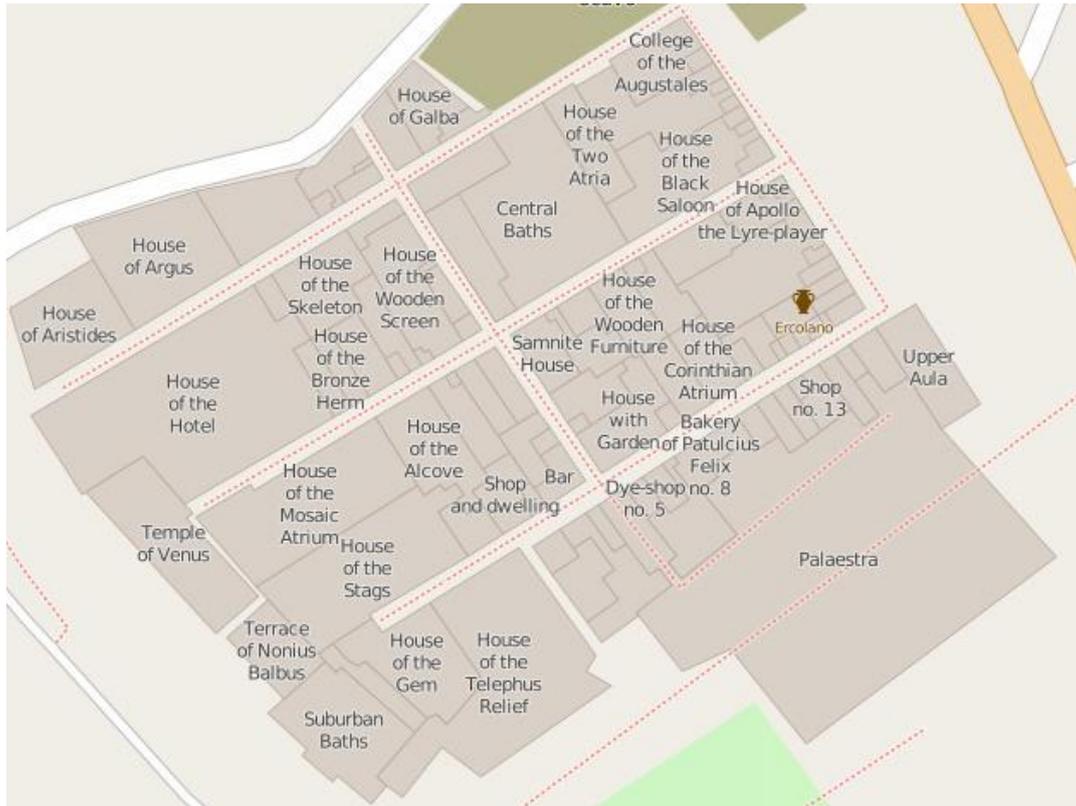


Fig. 1a. Map of Herculaneum from Open Street Map, created by the Herculaneum Graffiti Project team.

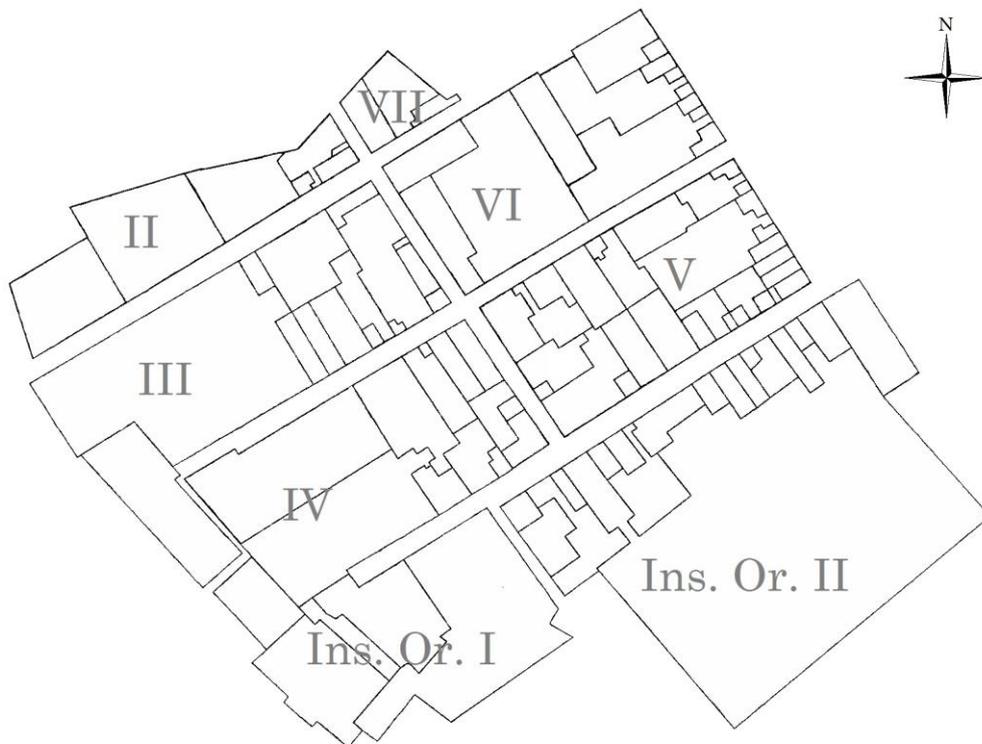


Fig. 1b. Map of Herculaneum from the Ancient Graffiti Project.

thin *ductus* (or incision) and were likely to have been made by a sharp instrument such as a *stilus* or *fibula*. Modern graffiti, perhaps made with a key, knife, or other blunt instrument, leave thicker incisions with small chunks of plaster falling from the wall. Modern graffiti also appear bright and white as the underlayer of plaster is exposed, while ancient graffiti are less conspicuous due to their antiquity and the thin *ductus* of their inscription. In addition, the contents of modern graffiti, which are often exclusively names and dates, can elucidate the date of their composition. Team members also learned how to distinguish ancient graffiti from other random marks on the wall. Because of exposure and deterioration of the wall plaster, it can sometimes be difficult to delineate purposefully intended writing from additional scratches or random marks. The size of incised marks can sometimes be a useful indicator. Graffiti tend to be small and unobtrusive; large scratches on the wall can be the result of modern equipment or modern scratches and not ancient graffiti.

The fieldwork portion of our project focused on carefully surveying the walls of the buildings in each *insula*, using the *CIL* and Varone's volume as references in order to locate extant graffiti¹⁶. When located, each graffito was documented by means of artifact record sheets on site. Each team also made drawings, took measurements (width, letter height range, and height from the ground), and took draft photographs (close-up, context, raking light). This information was later entered into our database and EDR.

In an effort to fully document the graffiti, especially those that have proved difficult to photograph, we employed Reflectance Transformation Imaging (RTI) to photograph and digitally preserve these inscriptions. RTI is a computational photography technique that captures the surface information of an object¹⁷. RTI images are created from multiple photographs of an object with a light projected from a different direction each time. The computer program then synthesizes all the photos into a single 2D image. The user can then manipulate the RTI image by changing the direction of the light on the object to examine its surface. By manipulating the light in the photograph, shallow scratches on the wall surface become easier to read. RTI makes the entire graffito easier to read by eliminating distracting color information and emphasizing the surface detail of the inscription. Further, by applying different rendering modes it is possible to highlight specific letters in order to clarify an uncertain reading.

Much of this first field season was spent evaluating the capability of this technology to capture the graffiti, determining which graffiti were the best candidates for this technology, and working through challenges associated with applying this process in the field. Team members located graffiti for which the reading was uncertain or for which better photographs of the graffito would be useful. We had good results from graffiti that were rather deeply inscribed, at eye level, and on a flat surface. RTI was not possible on very lightly inscribed graffiti, especially those in direct sunlight.

In this first season, we applied RTI to three sets of graffiti: the graffiti from the so-called *Collegium of the Augustales* (VI.21, 24), a set of three drawings (Langner 2001, nos. 1372, 1443 and 1688) in the Casa Sannitica (V.1), and a drawing in the Casa del Gran Portale (V.35). The set of graffiti from the *Augustalium* has been the subject of lively discussion due to its importance in identifying the space in which they were written and disagreement over its reading¹⁸. The RTI of the graffiti in the *Augustalium* has already proved useful in allowing scholars to examine more closely this set of graffiti¹⁹. RTI also proved useful in documenting very large graffiti or sets of graffiti. The group of drawings in the Casa Sannitica at V.1 were too large to be photographed with raking light in a single frame. RTI provides raking light from all directions, which greatly enhances our ability to document such inscriptions. These RTI images allow the viewer to view and understand the graffiti as a set and not as isolated drawings.

The greatest benefit of RTI in comparison to traditional photography is it allows users to access and analyze the graffiti for themselves. They can manipulate the light on the graffito and apply different rendering modes to examine the graffiti (fig. 2 and 3). In 2016, we plan to experiment with multiview RTI (RTI on an object from multiple viewpoints), which would aid even further in capturing graffiti that are difficult to read. This technology is the digital frontier for capturing, preserving, and disseminating inscriptions from the ancient world.

In what follows, we provide a summary of our results, *insula* by *insula*.

¹⁶ VARONE 2012.

¹⁷ RTI was invented by Tom Malzbender and Dan Gelb of Hewlett-Packard Labs. The software and a methodology for capture was developed by Cultural Heritage Imaging (<http://culturalheritageimaging.org>).

¹⁸ GUADAGNO 1988; VARONE 2000; WALLACE-HADRILL 2011b.

¹⁹ Our team intends to reexamine these graffiti in 2016.



Fig. 2. Figural graffito of a rooster (Langner 2001, no. 1688) from the Casa Sannitica (V.1).

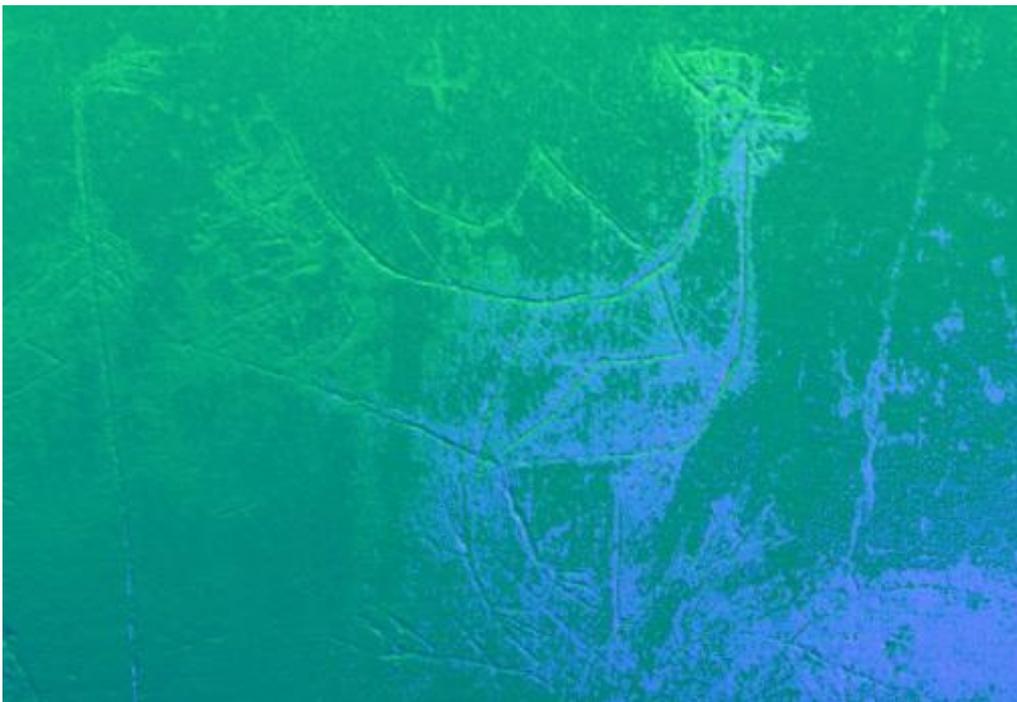
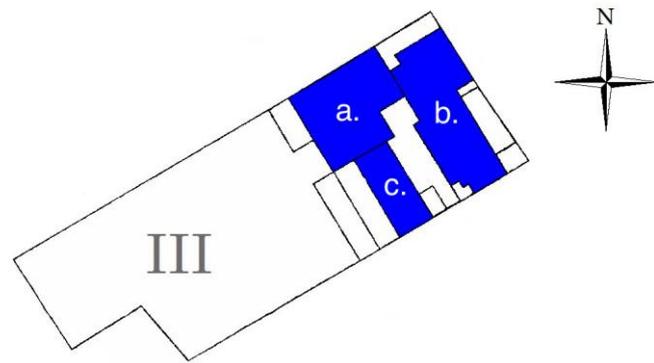


Fig. 3. Figural graffito of a rooster (Langner 2001, no. 1688) from the Casa Sannitica (V.1). Photographed using Reflectance Transformation Imaging (RTI).

Insula III

Insula III, enclosed by *Cardines III* and IV and the *Decumanus Inferior*, is the first *insula* that visitors encounter when entering the site via the NW footbridge²⁰. A handful of smaller shops border the NE edge of the *insula*, including a *pressorium* (III.10), but the majority of the *insula* is comprised of six residences²¹. Two of these houses, the Casa a Graticcio (III.14) and the Casa dell’Ara Laterizia (III.17), were closed for conservation work during the 2014 season. The largest property in *Insula III*, the Casa dell’Albergo (III.1, 2, 18, 19), is poorly preserved; chisel marks on plaster indicate that this residence was undergoing renovation at the time of the eruption²². Our efforts accordingly focused on the other three residences in the *insula*: the Casa dello Scheletro (III.3), the Casa del Tramezzo di Legno (III.4, 11), and the Casa dell’Erma di Bronzo (III.16) (fig. 4).



- a. Casa dello Scheletro, III.3
- b. Casa del Tramezzo di Legno, III.4
- c. Casa dell'Erma di Bronzo, III.16

Fig. 4. Plan of Insula III.

The first of these three houses, the **Casa dello Scheletro (III.3)**, is a large, richly decorated, atrium house fronting *Cardo III*. The house is remarkable for its well-preserved and well-protected wall mosaics and floors of *opus sectile*²³. Three graffiti have been documented in *CIL IV* for this residence: two sets of tally marks and a pair of Roman numerals etched into yellow plaster and clustered together approximately one meter from the ground on the southern portion of the *triclinium*'s NE apse (*CIL IV.10495a-c*). We were able to replicate Varone's findings from 1994, documenting two of these graffiti (*CIL IV.10495a, c*); the third, recorded in *CIL* as a single tally mark (*CIL IV.10495b*), eluded both Varone and us, though perhaps only because it is indistinguishable from the various incidental markings and scratches on the wall²⁴.

The **Casa del Tramezzo di Legno (III.11)**, situated behind the Casa dello Scheletro and fronting *Cardo IV*, is the second largest residence in the *insula*, after the Casa dell’Albergo²⁵. Typical of elite residences, the axial view into the house looks through the impluviate *atrium* and *tablinum* into a large peristyle garden²⁶. Just off the main axis sits a grand and lavish *triclinium*. The graffiti in this house were located in the peristyle garden (*CIL IV.10498a-d*) in the *fauces*. The graffiti in the *fauces* (*CIL IV.10497*) records the loan of a denarius to Colonus and is still visible just inside the doorway, 150 cm from the ground on the SW wall (fig. 5, 6)²⁷. Varone documented and photographed this graffiti in 1994, and we were able to confirm its preservation, despite its location in a heavily trafficked area often frequented by tourist groups. A group of four graffiti concerning a certain “Mus” (*CIL IV.10498a-d*) were once found on the eastern wall of the peristyle garden (room 22)²⁸. Varone identified and photographed only one in this group, (*CIL IV.10498d: MMMMUS*), where he saw four letters,

²⁰ For a history of the excavations in Insula III, see MUNGARI 2011.

²¹ On the shops around the Casa del Tramezzo di Legno, see MAIURI 1958: 218-222.

²² Maiuri characterized this house as: “gravemente danneggiata dal terremoto dell’anno 62 e lasciata in abbandono o venduta dagli antichi proprietari” (MAIURI 1958: 324). Guidobaldi likewise notes that its “poor state of preservation is probably due not only to the effect of the eruption but also to an extensive renovation campaign just begun at that time” (2012: 119). We were able to locate and photograph the two known graffiti in the latrine: *CIL IV.10511* and *10512*.

²³ On the house, see MAIURI 1958: 265-275; DE KIND 1998: 98-104; GUIDOBALDI, ESPOSITO 2012: 287-292.

²⁴ VARONE 2012: 483, with photos.

²⁵ On the house and its adjacent shops, see MAIURI 1958: 207-222; DE KIND 1998: 105-113; WALLACE-HADRILL 2011a: 206-210; and GUIDOBALDI, ESPOSITO 2012: 217-225.

²⁶ WALLACE-HADRILL 1994: 10-16. On the privileged view in the Roman house, see DRERUP, 1957: 145-174; BEK 1980: 183-185; CLARKE 1991: 12-23; DWYER 1991; BERGMANN 1996: 202-207.

²⁷ *CIL IV.10497: Col / x / ono*.

²⁸ All references to room numbers follow the plans in VARONE 2012. Room 22 mentioned here is found at VARONE 2012: 484.

CIL IV.10498a: mus nequa; CIL IV.10498b: s nequa; CIL IV.10498c: mus; CIL IV.10498d: mmmmus.

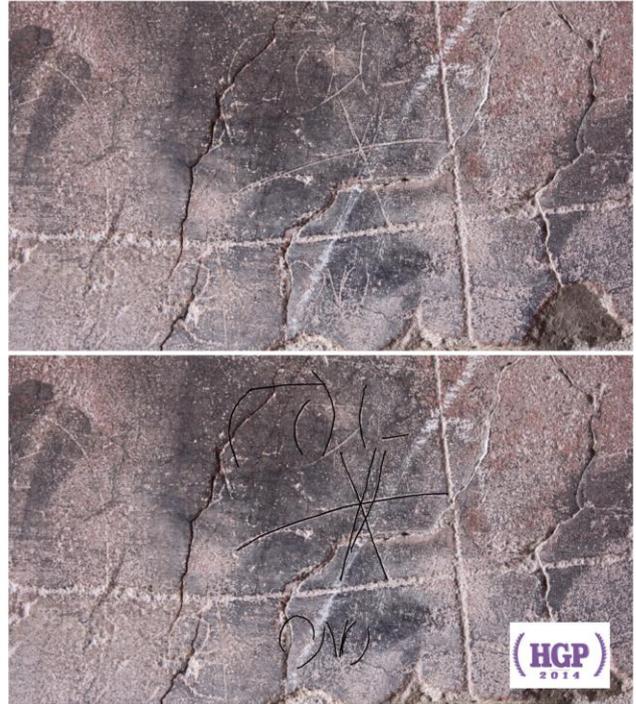


Fig. 6. Detail of CIL IV.10497, photograph (above) and enhanced photograph (below).

Fig. 5. View of the fauces, Casa del Tramezzo di Legno (III.4), denoting location of CIL IV.10497.

MMMM, with ligatures²⁹. Nonetheless, Varone's photograph shows that the plaster was already damaged in 1994, and it seems that the plaster has now degraded entirely, as we could find none surviving in the area indicated by Varone's measurements.

The largest collection of documented graffiti in *Insula* III comes from one of the smaller residences, the **Casa dell'Erma di Bronzo (III.16)**³⁰. Named for the bust of a bronze herm found in the *atrium*, and better known for the sacral-idyllic landscapes painted on its walls, this is another typical *atrium*-style house, albeit on a much less grand scale than the others in the *insula*³¹. Despite its modest dimensions, the house is notable for three reasons: first, the SW outer wall preserves the *insula's* only surviving *dipinto*, along with a few graffiti inscribed on a facade. These four inscriptions are all found between the entrances to the Casa dell'Erma di Bronzo at III.16 and the Casa dell'Ara Laterizia at III.17 (CIL IV.10479, 10504, 10508a and b). Both the graffiti and the *dipinto* are above benches that were constructed between the two homes (fig. 7)³². As Antonio Varone has proposed, we might imagine a scenario in which *clientes*, sitting on the shaded benches while waiting to make their morning *salutationes*, have etched short messages onto the façade of the building: two women's names, *Moecia* and *Amata* (CIL IV.10504, 10508a), and a complaint, *algemus* ("We're cold")³³.

Secondly, the house contains the only known Greek graffito in the *insula*, a Latin name (*Cogitatus*) that has been transliterated into Greek, to which has been appended a possible Latin greeting: *KOΓITATOYC s(alutem?)* (CIL IV.10505). This particular graffito is inscribed faintly and in miniscule letters (0.5 cm tall) on the NE wall of the *fauces*, nearly 2 m from the ground. The small size of this graffito makes it an ideal candidate for

²⁹ VARONE 2012: 484, with photo. The ligature was first indicated by DELLA CORTE 1958: 243, no. 9.

³⁰ On the house, see MAIURI 1958: 243-247; DE KIND 1998: 123-126; and GUIDOBALDI, ESPOSITO 2012: 143-149. Della Corte published other inscribed material from this house, DELLA CORTE 1958: 244, no. 17 (a stone inscription); 244, nos. 19-20 (roof tile fragments); and 245, nos. 23-24 (amphorae).

³¹ For paintings, see e.g. Naples inv. 9419.

³² MAIURI 1958: 47-49: "un protiro di due colonne apre l'ingresso della Casa dell'erma di bronzo".

³³ VARONE (2000: 278) corrected this reading from the original reading given in CIL IV.10508b: *Alcimus*. The inscription is now online in EDR (www.edr-edr.it): EDR140149.

enhanced photographic methods, such as RTI photography or photographing by a digital microscope camera, but because of the narrowness of the entryway and the height of the graffiti from the ground, the conditions are not ideal for either.

Lastly, this house is unfortunately noteworthy for the quantity of modern graffiti found here. The two side rooms off the *atrium* contain the most, from the floor up to a height of two meters, including names, dates, and obscene images. While modern graffiti are present on other walls throughout the building, nowhere is the concentration quite so high as it is in these rooms. This can be explained by the concealment that the rooms afford: a modern visitor can easily mark the rooms' walls without being seen from the entryway or even from most points in the *atrium*.

Among these, this home contains what we surmise is a message left by a pair of modern visitors who marked nearly a dozen locations throughout Herculaneum. On a small piece of black wall-plaster that has been reattached to a pilaster in the *tablinum*, two ancient graffiti are attested (*CIL* IV.10506 and 10507)³⁴. At the very top of this fragment of wall-plaster we also identified a string of additional characters: the first six letters, MINXIA, are deeply inscribed and clearly modern, but next to these are five more letters, LIPIN, etched faintly enough to make them appear possibly ancient. The modernity of both, however, was apparent once we discovered that these characters occur in three other places in the house: on a wooden lintel above a door between the *exedra* (room 7) and hallway (room 6), on a wall in the same hallway, and on a wall in the *triclinium* (room 8).³⁵ What we have, then, are the names of two modern visitors, "Min Xia" and "Li Pin." While the graffiti on the plaster of the *tablinum* was written by two different hands, as indicated by the varying depths and angles of the inscriptions, the other three instances were all written in one hand. During our investigations of the rest of the *insula*, we found their names inscribed at least seven more times: once in the Casa dello Scheletro (III.3), twice in the Casa del Tramezzo di Legno (III.11), twice in the Casa d'Argo (II.2), once in the Casa dell'Alcova (IV.4), and once in the Terme Femminili (VI.8, room H). The last of these includes a date: 23•03•02 [March 3, 2002]. We were exceedingly dismayed to find these two visitors marked the ancient wall plaster at all, let alone so frequently.

Overall, there are 21 numbered *CIL* entries listed for *Insula* III, comprising two *dipinti* (*CIL* IV.10478-10479) and 25 discrete graffiti (*CIL* IV.10495-10512, 10707); there are no figural graffiti documented for this *insula*. Of the *dipinti* and graffiti located in areas that were accessible during the 2014 season, we were able to locate twelve³⁶. There was only one graffiti that Varone had photographed which we could not locate (*CIL* IV.10498d), and this was already barely visible when Varone saw it. The exceptional preservation of graffiti in the accessible portions of this *insula* is a testament to excellent conservation practices: *CIL* IV.10498d is the only graffiti from the three houses we explored that had no protection from the elements; the graffiti from the three houses' interiors are all protected by full roofs, and even the graffiti and remaining *dipinto* on the façade of the Casa dell'Erma di Bronzo are shaded by a short protruding roof (cf. fig. 7).

Insula IV

Insula IV contains a diverse array of properties, ranging from its grand urban villas, the Casa dell' Atrio a Mosaico (IV.1–2) and the Casa dei Cervi (IV.21), each occupying approximately one quarter of the *insula*, to

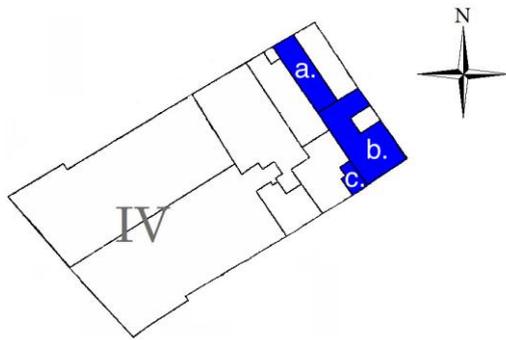


Fig. 7. Façade between III.16 and III.17, with short roof protecting façade and benches.

³⁴ *CIL* IV.10506: *Se(xtus) Porcius / s s*; *CIL* IV.10507: *Iusta r.* These were not photographed in VARONE 2012.

³⁵ References to rooms follow the plan in VARONE 2012: 483.

³⁶ Three of these (*CIL* IV.10505, 10507, and 10512) do not appear in Varone's publication, likely due to difficulties in photographing them.



a. Casa del Papiro Dipinto, IV.8-9
 b. Grande Taberna, IV.12-13,15-16
 c. Taberna, IV.17-18

Fig. 8. Plan of Insula IV.

the moderately sized Casa dell' Alcova (IV.3–4), as well as smaller properties like the Casa del Papiro Dipinto (IV.8–9)³⁷. The *insula* also has several commercial properties tered in the northern half of the *insula*: a shop, the Bottega (IV.10–11) at the *insula*'s north corner, at the intersection of *Cardo IV* and the *Decumanus Inferior*, the Grande Taberna (IV.12–13, 15–16) at the *insula*'s NE corner at the intersection of *Cardo V* and the *Decumanus Inferior*, a small pottery workshop, the Taberna Vasaria (IV.14) along the *Decumanus*; as well as another Taberna (IV.17–18) on the *insula*'s eastern side, located on *Cardo V*. At the time of our survey, both of the urban villas were closed, with the Casa dell' Atrio a Mosaico in the process of undergoing conservation and restoration and the Casa dei Cervi closed in anticipation of future conservation efforts. We therefore surveyed the other properties of the *insula*, focusing our efforts on the three properties discussed below (fig. 8). In total, the team was able to locate five extant ancient graffiti in *Insula IV*.

The **Casa del Papiro Dipinto (IV.8–9)** is a narrow property positioned along the western side of *Insula IV*, with entrances 8 (first floor) and 9 (stairs to a second floor) opening onto *Cardo IV*³⁸. The rectangular profile of the property as well as components of its wall construction suggest that this house is among the oldest properties at Herculaneum—though it includes later modifications³⁹. The house takes its name from a wall-painting of a papyrus roll, originally found in room 7 towards the rear of the property, a space transitioning into the large *triclinium*. Left *in situ* and now lost, the painted papyrus once included lettering which suggested choriambic verses of a certain Eutychos⁴⁰. Along the south wall of the same room, however, *CIL IV.10520* survives, scratched into well-preserved wall plaster (on this, see further below), and was easily documented by our team. The graffito is a particularly interesting one, providing evidence for regional connectivity in ancient Campania, as it refers to the commercial port Puteoli to the north together with small Herculanean boats⁴¹.

The **Grande Taberna (IV.12–13, 15–16)** in *Insula IV* is also of particular interest⁴². The property presents a large commercial space, with a *taberna* accessible through doors 15 and 16 and a series of other rooms which can be reached from the *Decumanus Inferior* via entrances 12 and 13. Eight *dolia* line the shop-counters of this *taberna*, which was characterized by Maiuri as the largest and richest of those excavated in Herculaneum⁴³. Late Third Style frescoes still remain in room 9, where they incorporate elegantly rendered peacock feathers, statues of women, birds, a tambourine, and a panpipe⁴⁴. During excavation of the residence, a windlass was found near a well in room 10⁴⁵. The property also contains two niche *lararia*⁴⁶. As for the wall inscriptions, the bulk of the graffiti in this property were found in room 6, located immediately to the west of the main *taberna* entrance with the *dolia* counters⁴⁷. Of the many wall inscriptions once recorded in this room, today only one survives (on this issue, see discussion below), now rather faded. But this is without doubt the most famous inscription of the *insula*: *CIL IV.10529* (= *SEG XXVI.1138*; *SEG XXX.1171*; *EDR112869*). Written in Greek, it

³⁷ For a survey of the properties in *Insula IV* with relevant bibliography up to 1994, see DE KIND 1998: 131-183.

³⁸ MAIURI 1958: 423-425; DE KIND 1998: 151-154.

³⁹ MAIURI 1958: 66; GANSCHOW 1989: 322; DE KIND 1998: 153.

⁴⁰ *CIL IV.10481*: Εὔτυχος χοριαμ[βικά . . .]; MAIURI 1958: 424-425.

⁴¹ *CIL* provides a line-drawing and records two possible readings for the second line, proposed by Della Corte and Maiuri. *CIL IV.10520*: [---]jas[---] Puteolis / [Navic]ul(a)e convi(c)tores Herculane(n)ses nav(i)culae (Della Corte); line 2: [navicula]rii consi(s)ton(t) Herculane(n)ses nav(i)culae (Maiuri). SOLIN (1973a: 276) disputes the accuracy of the transcription and interpretation in *CIL* here, but does not offer his own corrections; VARONE (2012: 486) remarks that the text is still legible and offers a revision of the first letter of the second line: [---]LI CONSITONT. Puteoli is mentioned a number of times also in graffiti from Pompeii: see BENEFIEL 2004.

⁴² On the Grande Taberna, see MAIURI 1958: 433-436; DE KIND 1998: 159-164; GUIDOBALDI, ESPOSITO 2012: 179-182.

⁴³ MAIURI 1958: 434.

⁴⁴ GUIDOBALDI, ESPOSITO 2012: 179.

⁴⁵ MAIURI 1958: 436, fig. 380.

⁴⁶ ORR 1979: 195, nos. 12-13; pl. 2, fig. 8; pl. 3, fig. 9.

⁴⁷ *CIL IV.10528-10545* were found in room 6; two others (*CIL IV.10546a* and *b*) were found in a *cubiculum*.

preserves a saying of the Cynic philosopher Diogenes of Sinope, concerning a woman being swept away by a river⁴⁸. The inscription has already attracted a great deal of scholarly attention and garnered a considerable bibliography of its own⁴⁹.

The **Taberna (IV.17–18)** along *Cardo V* on the *insula's* eastern side, another property which combines commercial and residential spaces, was also a focus of our fieldwork⁵⁰. Behind the shop's counters was found a painted scene that included an ithyphallic Priapus as well as a woman beside a large *dolium*, now very faded⁵¹. The presence of nuts found in the shop suggests at least one item that was once sold within these walls⁵². Our team was able to locate two graffiti in this property. *CIL* IV.10547, *Crocale barbata*, is still visible in the main room of the *taberna*, along the western wall (fig. 9). *CIL* IV.10548 is found in the back room of the *taberna*, in a space that has been interpreted as a *triclinium* and storage room.⁵³ In the case of *CIL* IV.10548: *Rufūla pus*, Della Corte suggested the second word be understood as an abbreviation for *p(ondo) V s(emis)*, i.e. “five and half pounds,” but Ciprotti seems to suggest instead a disparaging epithet for *Rufula*, pointing readers to the milieu of Roman satire for a parallel⁵⁴.

Originally unearthed by Maiuri between November 1928 and October 1932⁵⁵, most of the properties in *Insula IV* were never re-roofed following excavation. The result is that much of the plaster in *Insula IV* has crumbled where its walls were left entirely or partially exposed to the elements. This situation has created preservation problems for the graffiti of this *insula* that are rather different from elsewhere at the site. Indeed, our study of *Insula IV* highlighted the exceptionally perishable nature of ancient wall-inscriptions, when left mostly or entirely exposed to the elements. By collating our finds with earlier scholars' reports and, especially, the photographs taken by Antonio Varone in 1994, it was possible to understand how these inscriptions have fared in this open environment, and to make some calculations regarding the survival rate of the graffiti in the *insula*.



Fig. 9. Graffito naming *Crocale* (*CIL* IV.10547), in the *Taberna* at IV.17-18, photograph (above) with enhanced photo (bottom left) and line-drawing (bottom right).

⁴⁸ The text according to the edition of STROHMAIER 1967 (= EDR112869): Διογένης ὁ κυνικός φιλόσοφος / ἰδὼν γυναῖκα ὑπὸ ποταμοῦ φε/ρομένην, εἶπεν ἄφες φέρεσθαι (*pro* φέρεσθαι) / τὸ κακ-ὸ-ν (κακὴν *paries*) ὑπὸ κα'κού' {κίως}.

⁴⁹ See STROHMAIER 1967, LEBEK 1976, GIANGRANDE 1980, MOLES 1983, GIANGRANDE 1987, OVERWIEN 2005: 199-200.

⁵⁰ MAIURI 1958: 436-440; DE KIND 1998: 165-170.

⁵¹ MAIURI 1958: 438, fig. 383.

⁵² MAIURI 1958: 437-438 with fig. 384.

⁵³ The back room is room (14) in Varone's map (VARONE 2012). MAIURI 1958: 437; DE KIND 1998: 165.

⁵⁴ DELLA CORTE 1958: 261; CIPROTTI, *CIL* IV.10548, ad loc.; Hor. *Sat.* 1.7.1 with *scholia ad loc.*; cf. too Lucilius fr. 494 Marx. See VARONE 2012: 490 for the ligature.

⁵⁵ MAIURI 1958: 59.

A total of 76 graffiti have been documented in *Insula IV*: 54 textual and 22 figural⁵⁶. Of these, the team had access to locations that could have yielded 51 graffiti (48 textual; 3 figural), meaning that our finds (5 total) represent only 9.8% of the total graffiti once recorded in these parts of the *insula* — and that 90% of the textual and figural graffiti previously recorded in these areas seem to have perished. As to the rate of loss, Varone, focusing on the textual graffiti, was able to photograph 17 such graffiti in *Insula IV* in 1994⁵⁷. One textual graffiti in the *insula* was discovered and published after Varone had surveyed and photographed the *insula* in 1994⁵⁸. Assuming that Varone was able to locate all of the known material that had survived up to that point, it follows that only 32% (17 of 53) of the previously known textual graffiti in *Insula IV* were still extant in 1994; 68% (36 of 53) of the previously known textual graffiti from the *insula*, therefore, perished between the end of excavations in *Insula IV* in 1932 and Varone's survey in 1994. Furthermore, Varone also noted that 10 of the graffiti that he had been able to photograph in 1994 had perished due to the collapse of wall plaster (*lapsu tectorii perit*) between the time that they had been photographed in 1994 and the publication of his volume in 2012⁵⁹. Therefore, it appears that the period of 1994–2012 witnessed the loss of 59% (10 of 17)⁶⁰ of the remaining textual graffiti that had been discovered up to that point. Of the remaining seven graffiti photographed by Varone, our team had access to the *insula* such that six could have been located, and we determined that five of these currently survive. *CIL IV.10539*, which Varone had already noted was in a deteriorating condition⁶¹, has now perished from loss of plaster. It seems likely that two more graffiti (*CIL IV.10525* and *CIL IV.10547*) will be lost in the near future; both are on plaster that is fully exposed and disintegrating, and comparison with Varone's photographs indicate that both have deteriorated since 1994.

While these are sobering finds, the team in *Insula IV* also observed a model of good practice for preserving graffiti in a roofless environment. In the Casa del Papiro Dipinto (IV.8–9), *CIL IV.10520*, discussed above, remains in excellent condition, and comparison with Varone's 1994 photograph indicates that it has been well preserved over the last 20 years. The difference appears to be that in the case of *CIL IV.10520*, minimal yet effective conservation measures were implemented at an early stage. The graffiti is protected in two ways (fig. 10): first, a plate of glass was installed and mounted at a distance from the plaster to provide sufficient ventilation and avoid condensation that might otherwise damage the medium; second, protective eaves were installed above this portion of plaster. Although only projecting outwards 47 cm, this combination of overhang and glass has effectively kept this inscription in stable condition.

Insula V

Insula V is occupied by private dwellings and shops. Among all the excavated *insulae* it presents the most entrances and single units, and many of the documented ancient graffiti are still visible today. *Insula V* features a total of 56 ancient graffiti (41 textual graffiti published in *CIL IV*, 13 graffiti drawings collected by Langner, and two additional figural graffiti)⁶². In the summer of 2014, the Casa del Bicentenario (V.15) and the building at V.18 were sites of active conservation work, so we were unable to examine these spaces where *CIL IV* has published 12 graffiti. In the buildings that were accessible, we identified a total of 24 graffiti that are still extant and visible (15 textual, 9 drawings). Thus, we found evidence for over 50% (24 of 44) of the accessible published graffiti of the *insula*. We hope to return to V.15 and V.18 when the conservation efforts have concluded.

The dwellings in *Insula V* are of different sizes and shapes. The floor plans of the houses at the southern end of the *insula*, Casa Sannitica (V.1), Casa del Telaio (V.4), Casa con giardino (V.33) and Casa del Gran Portale (V.35), suggest that the outlines of the properties have shifted over time⁶³. The largest house of the *in-*

⁵⁶ Textual graffiti: *CIL IV.10480-10483* (*tituli picti*), 10513-10561 (not counting separately, e.g., 10523a, 10523b, etc.), 10708; VARONE 2000: 279; figural graffiti: LANGNER 2001, nos. 11-12, 734, 909, 1055, 1108-1110 1124-1125, 1310, 1509-1511, 1595-1596 2318-2322.

⁵⁷ VARONE 2012: 486-490.

⁵⁸ VARONE 2000: 279 (illustrated at fig. 1f): *Hic situs / Suellius*. This publication escaped the notice of *L'Année Epigraphique*.

⁵⁹ These were *CIL IV.10532-10534*, 10537-10538, 10540-10545.

⁶⁰ Assuming the survival of VARONE 2000: 279.

⁶¹ VARONE 2012: 488: *litteris tenuissimis nunc valde abrais*—an observation readily confirmed from his photograph.

⁶² Textual graffiti: *CIL IV 10562-10591*, 10711; LANGNER 2001 nos. 486, 963-971, 1372, 1443, and 1688. The two additional figural graffiti are both phalloi; neither is listed in LANGNER 2001 (cf. *CIL IV 10568*, 10711).

⁶³ cf. MAIURI 1958: 197-198, 377-379, 431; GUIDOBALDI, ESPOSITO 2012: 81, 205.



Fig. 10. Conservation measures have preserved CIL IV.10520 at the Casa del Papiro Dipinto (IV.8-9).

sula is the Casa del Bicentenario (V.15), which opens to the *Decumanus Maximus* at the north of *Insula V*. Here, as well as in several other houses like the Casa Sannitica (V.1), the Casa di Nettuno e Anfitrite (V.7) and the Casa del Bel Cortile (V.8), the floor and wall decoration are extraordinarily well preserved. Several houses contain single handwritten texts as well as clusters of graffiti. We focused our efforts on the Casa Sannitica, the Casa di Nettuno e Anfitrite, and the Casa del Gran Portale (fig. 11).

The **Casa Sannitica (V.1)** had three areas that feature graffiti: the façade to the right, or south, of the entrance; the *fauces*; and the *cubiculum* to the north of the *fauces*⁶⁴. A painted inscription in Oscan is located in the *fauces*⁶⁵. The most impressive graffiti are located in the *cubiculum* (fig. 12). All of them are figural (Langner nos. 1372, 1443 and 1688) and have been scratched into the southern wall, roughly at eye level (1.3–1.5 m above floor). They present a winged demon, which seems to be female (Langner 1372, EDR145030), a rooster (1688, EDR145032), and a four-footed animal (1443, EDR144514). While Langner identified 1443 as a donkey, the feet are clearly even-toed and the head sits on a long neck in-

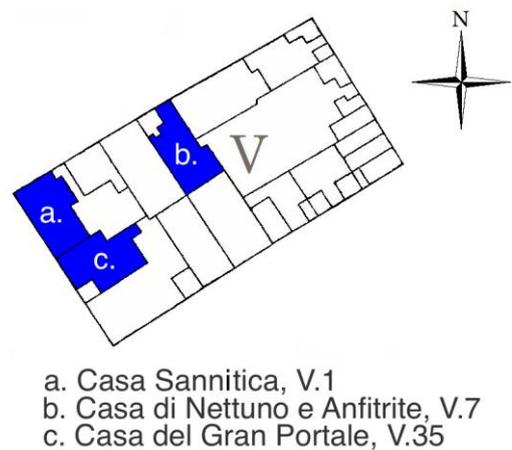


Fig. 11. Plan of Insula V.

⁶⁴ On this house, see MAIURI 1958: 197-206, WALLACE-HADRILL 2011a: 202-206, and GUIDOBALDI, ESPOSITO 2012: 81-83.

⁶⁵ cf. ANTONINI 2007: 86, 87 pl. IV-V, 93 fig. 9.



Fig. 12. Casa Sannitica (V.1), overview of front room, with location of figural graffiti.



Fig. 13. Three figural graffiti in the Casa Sannitica (Langner 2001, nos. 1372, 1443 and 1688), photographed with RTI.

dicating, we propose, a dromedary (fig. 13)⁶⁶. It seems likely that some of the details of the demon figure (such as the deeply gouged circles for the eyes, nipples, and belly button) have been added more recently. These three remarkably elaborate and deeply scratched drawings are set close to each other and may represent a deliberate grouping or composite scene. Their good state of preservation and the fact that they are located in roofed interior space (thus, with indirect lighting) made them ideal candidates for enhanced digital imaging with RTI photography, which we realized during our campaign (cf. fig. 2-3).

The **Casa di Nettuno e Anfitrite (V.7)** contains three textual graffiti published in *CIL* IV (*CIL* IV.10565–10567)⁶⁷. They are unusual with regard to their position and content. All three are located in the *nymphaeum* in the rear part of the house at a height of more than three meters above the floor. They are not easily visible since they were scratched delicately into white plaster and have worn away with the degradation of the surface.

Two of these graffiti represent a note and a lists of goods (*CIL* IV.10565 and *CIL* IV.10566)⁶⁸, whereas the third (*CIL* IV.10567) has been the object of some debate⁶⁹. Much of this graffito is surrounded by an oval, and contains four columns of text, which are separated by vertical lines (fig. 14). Below the oval, two additional columns have been added, again separated by a vertical stroke. The text consists of a number not of words but of syllables. Some are parts of words or different inflected forms of the same word and have been interpreted as grammatical exercises⁷⁰. In this field season, we were only able to identify the lines separating the columns of *CIL* IV.10567. We were not able to capture these remaining traces in a photograph.

The south side of the *insula* has only two entrances, one of which gives access to the **Casa del Gran Portale (V.35)**. Outside this dwelling, to the left of the entrance, we found traces of one graffito (*CIL* IV.10588a). Inside, a number of textual and figural graffiti were discovered (*CIL* IV.10589-10591, 10711), most

⁶⁶ The form of the neck and the head is similar to the respective details in the depiction of a camel caravan at Dura Europos: LANGNER 2001, no. 1357.

⁶⁷ On this house, see MAIURI 1958: 393-403, WALLACE-HADRILL 2011a: 76-80, and GUIDOBALDI, ESPOSITO 2012: 283-285.

⁶⁸ *CIL* IV.10565: *Vinum acceptum / ab domino VII idus Apriles*; *CIL* IV.10566: *Aquaria dua cum basis / aqua in manus dua cum basis / hamas duas cum basis / aqua in manu cotidian CII / cum basis / urciolos duos / candelabra quatuor (sic) / et lucubratoriu(m) unum / lucerna aenea / hamula una / pelvi(s) cum basim / et Lytrum / gut(t)os tres / scaepheola dua / ferreas strig(i)les (septem) / haenas quattuor // marmor cum basim / aenea / fuminaria dua.*

⁶⁹ For the discussion of this graffito, see SOLIN 1973a: 275, RUIZ GUTIÉRREZ 2008: 65, and KRUSCHWITZ, CAMPBELL 2009: 77-78.

⁷⁰ For full bibliography, see now the entry in EDR: EDR140039.

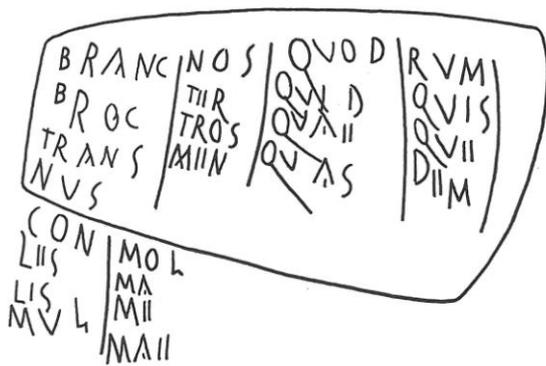


Fig. 14. Line drawing of CIL IV.10567.



Fig. 15. Photograph of CIL IV.10590 (left) and line-drawing (right).

Fig. 16. Casa del Gran Portale (V.35), south wall of ala B. Circles indicate the location where an alphabet (left) and a series of gladiator helmets (right) can still be seen.

located in *ala* B on the west and south walls⁷¹. Both CIL IV.10590, which features lines and limited text (fig. 15), and parts of CIL IV.10711, an alphabet from A to the letter Q, are still visible and relatively well preserved. Most interesting is a cluster of six drawings in the southwest corner of the *ala*, which are still visible and which represent different types of gladiatorial helmets⁷². The helmets and the alphabet are situated on the lowest part of the wall, the socle, here painted red, and their low placement suggests that they were drawn by someone sitting on the floor (fig. 16).

Insula VI

Situated directly south of the *Decumanus Maximus*, *Insula* VI occupies a prominent location in Herculaneum. It is comprised of two significant public buildings and three large houses, with several small shops at the entrances of the major structures, primarily along the *Decumanus Maximus*. In this *insula*, 31 textual graffiti have been identified along with five figural graffiti documented by Langner⁷³. We concentrated our fieldwork in the Terme Centrali (VI.1, 7-10) including the women's baths at entrance 8, the Collegium degli Augustali (Curia) (VI.21, 24), and the Casa del Salone Nero (VI.11, 13) (fig. 17). Among these properties, a total of 24 textual graffiti and five figural graffiti had been found. Of these, our team located and documented eleven textual inscriptions and one drawing.

The Terme Centrali (VI.1-10) occupy nearly half of the *insula*, and are bordered by *Cardo III*, the *Decumanus Inferior*, and *Cardo IV*. This prominent complex contained nearly three-quarters of the graffiti recorded in the *insula*: 16 textual inscriptions (CIL IV.10592-10605) and five known drawings⁷⁴. In comparison, the



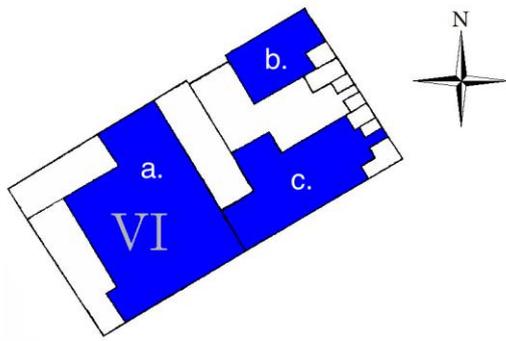
⁷¹ CIL IV.10590, CIL IV.10711, LANGNER 2001: nos. 963-971. For a detailed map of the house, see VARONE 2012.

On this house, see MAIURI 1958: 377-383, and GUIDOBALDI, ESPOSITO 2012: 204-216.

⁷² The helmets are mentioned above the entry at CIL IV.10711. They are LANGNER 2001, nos. 963-971.

⁷³ For the textual graffiti, see CIL IV.10592-10616, GUADAGNO 1988 on the initial publication of the five graffiti in the *Augustalium*, and VARONE 2000 on a recent find in the Casa del Salone Nero.

⁷⁴ LANGNER 2001 cataloged the drawings according to type: no. 40 (circles), nos. 384 and 486 (herms), no. 1377 (figure of a man), and no. 1521 (stag). On the baths, see MAIURI 1958: 91-112 (Terme del Foro).



a. Terme Centrali, VI.1-10
 b. Sede degli Augustali (Curia), VI.21,24
 c. Casa del Salone Nero, VI.11,13

Fig. 17. Plan of Insula VI.



Fig. 18. Room (E) in the women's section of the Central Baths at VI.8.



Fig. 19. Photograph (above) and enhanced photo (below) depicting a series of circles (Langner 2001, no. 40).

Suburban Baths along the coast of Herculaneum contain only ten textual graffiti and two drawings. The texts there, however, tend to be longer and are better preserved. While there is some dispute about the original organization of the Terme Centrali, at the time of the city's destruction, the structure seems to have been divided into a large men's area with a series of large thermal rooms and an open peristyle (VI.1, 9-10 and perhaps 2-7) and a smaller women's section (VI.8) consisting of five rooms. We found none of the seven textual graffiti recorded in the men's baths (*CIL* IV.10592-10597 and 10605), despite the relatively good preservation of the rooms which are roofed. Five of the seven graffiti had been written in charcoal, a very fragile medium, so there was little chance that they would have survived to this point. The women's section of the baths included four graffiti in charcoal (*CIL* IV.10604a-c and Langner 2001, no. 384), now lost, and another nine incised inscriptions⁷⁵. Most of these graffiti were located in the first room one enters at VI.8, described by Maiuri as a waiting room⁷⁶; they were located on the podium, or the lower portion of the wall, above the benches where attendants might wait (fig. 18). Some plaster remains at the top of the podium, while much of the plaster below has worn away. Nevertheless, we were able to document the traces that remain of five of the nine textual graffiti (*CIL* IV.10598-10602). A solitary letter "N" is all that remains of the three lines of *CIL* IV.10598⁷⁷. We found similarly scant traces of *CIL* IV.10599, 10601, and 10602. Better preserved are six compass drawn circles (Langner 2001, no. 40), which were more deeply incised into the plaster (fig. 19). Just beyond this room, the best-preserved graffiti from the *insula* offers the text: *Nicanor ovas* (*CIL* IV.10603)⁷⁸. The large inscription (16.7 cm high and 59.5 cm wide) was deeply incised in wet plaster and remains fully legible, preserved on a section of plaster that has been reattached to the wall (fig. 20). The graffiti looked just as it did when photographed by Varone in 1994. It is well protected in a roofed, now dead-end hall-

tion of the wall, above the benches where attendants might wait (fig. 18). Some plaster remains at the top of the podium, while much of the plaster below has worn away. Nevertheless, we were able to document the traces that remain of five of the nine textual graffiti (*CIL* IV.10598-10602). A solitary letter "N" is all that remains of the three lines of *CIL* IV.10598⁷⁷. We found similarly scant traces of *CIL* IV.10599, 10601, and 10602. Better preserved are six compass drawn circles (Langner 2001, no. 40), which were more deeply incised into the plaster (fig. 19). Just beyond this room, the best-preserved graffiti from the *insula* offers the text: *Nicanor ovas* (*CIL* IV.10603)⁷⁸. The large inscription (16.7 cm high and 59.5 cm wide) was deeply incised in wet plaster and remains fully legible, preserved on a section of plaster that has been reattached to the wall (fig. 20). The graffiti looked just as it did when photographed by Varone in 1994. It is well protected in a roofed, now dead-end hall-

⁷⁵ *CIL* IV.10598, 10599a and b, 10600-10603, Langner 2001, nos. 40 and 1521.

⁷⁶ MAIURI 1958: 102-103.

⁷⁷ *CIL* IV.10598: [O]vēciμoc / [- - -] EYNVVC / li [- - -] em. We should note that Pio Ciprotti likewise found a single "N" for this inscription when preparing publication of the Herculaneum graffiti for *CIL* IV.

⁷⁸ Della Corte recorded the second word as *ovas*, while Ciprotti saw only *ova*. If the initial "o" were a misformed letter or error the graffiti would read *Nicanor, {o} va(le)* with second word *va(le)* completing a friendly greeting.

way⁷⁹. The hallway is aligned on the central axis of the building and may have originally led to the central peristyle of the thermal complex, opposite the main entrance to the men's baths (VI.1). This secluded location has effectively shielded the graffito from direct sunlight and atmospheric elements, aiding in the graffito's remarkable preservation. Although we were unable to find the remaining textual and figural graffiti recorded in the women's baths, the distribution of the graffiti in the building and the greater number of inscriptions in the women's area, some with vocative addresses to women, merit further study⁸⁰.



Fig. 20. CIL IV.10603, in the Central Baths at VI.8.

The **Collegium degli Augustali (Curia) (VI.21, 24)**, the other public building of *Insula VI*, is located at the northern corner of the *insula* with its main entrance on the *Decumanus Maximus* and a secondary entrance on *Cardo III*.

Although the building was explored initially during the Bourbon excavations (1793-1845), it was only excavated fully in 1960-61⁸¹. The function of the building has been the focus of much debate. It was first identified as a temple, and later as a shrine to Hercules based on well preserved mythological frescoes, including two portraying Hercules, that decorate a *cella* on the southern wall with a raised podium⁸². Maiuri identified the structure as the College of the Augustales, an idea later championed by Guadagno (1983) based on three inscriptions found in the building, including a dedicatory inscription commemorating a feast given to the *Augustales* and the *decuriones*. A cast of this inscription is now displayed on the north wall of the building⁸³. Other suggestions have included a *lararium publicum* or, more recently, the *curia*⁸⁴. Several graffiti, discovered on the northwest column of the central hall and first published by Guadagno, have played an important role in conjectures about the building's function⁸⁵. The appearance of the word *curia* in three of the graffiti has been used to argue that the building had an important political role in Herculaneum beyond serving as the center of *Augustales*⁸⁶. Guadagno's arrangement and reading of the five graffiti were subsequently revised by Antonio Varone⁸⁷. Following Varone, we read the inscriptions as follows:

- (1) *C. Messenius Eunomus im curia,*
- (2) *Mamium Anicetum / rogamus guria Augustiana,*
- (3) *P. Arriûs / Sp(h)aerus,*
- (4) *Arrius / L(uci) f(ilius),*
- (5) *in curia {Aus} Augustiana.*

These five graffiti all appear in close proximity to each other on the same column, indeed on the same face of the column, which is one of four large columns within the building. At 130 cm from the ground level, these graffiti are vulnerable to casual damage as visitors to the *Augustalium* often lean on the column while listening to tour guides. They have been damaged by modern scratches atop the ancient inscriptions. In light of their cultural significance and their vulnerable location, we documented these graffiti extensively taking full measurements, GPS data, and digital photographs. Additionally, we photographed the column with Reflectance

⁷⁹ Identified as room (n) in VARONE 2012: 498.

⁸⁰ E.g. *Cave(a)s, Timinia, / ffjures* (CIL IV.10600) and *Phlavia, Ø li(n)gis* (CIL IV.10602).

⁸¹ WALLACE-HADRILL 2011a: 123.

⁸² GUADAGNO 1988: 199. On the decorative scheme of the frescoes see GUIDOBALDI, ESPOSITO 2012: 313-325.

⁸³ On the dedicatory inscription, see GUADAGNO 1978, AE 1979, 0169, GUADAGNO 1983, and AE 1986, 0164.

⁸⁴ On the function of the building see MAIURI 1958: 90, GUADAGNO 1983: 159-75, GUADAGNO 1988, ETIENNE 1993: 345-49, WALLACE-HADRILL 2011a: 178-180, and GUIDOBALDI, ESPOSITO 2012: 313-325.

⁸⁵ See GUADAGNO 1988 and WALLACE-HADRILL 2011b.

⁸⁶ GUADAGNO (1988). Wallace-Hadrill reviews the evidence for identifying the building and favors the theory that the building was used as a *curia* (2011b: 135-141).

⁸⁷ GUADAGNO 1988 and VARONE 2000.



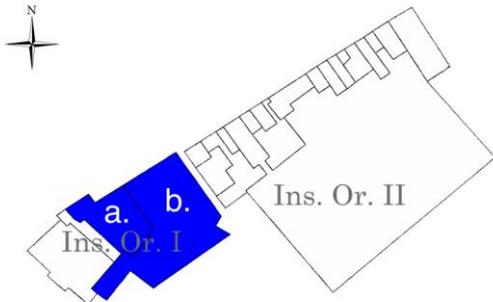
Fig. 21. Detail of the graffiti cluster from the Collegium of the Augustales (or Curia), photographed with digital camera (above) and with RTI (below).

Transformation Imaging (RTI) which allowed us to gain better images of the graffiti than have been available to date (fig. 21).

The **Casa del Salone Nero (VI.11, 13)**, one of three grand homes in *Insula VI*, measuring some 600 square meters, is located centrally on the northeastern corner of *Cardo IV* and the *Decumanus Maximus* with its primary entrance on the *Decumanus* (VI.13)⁸⁸. Better known as the find-spot of the wax tablets of Lucius Venidius Ennychus⁸⁹, which had been kept in the upper storey, the house also contained five graffiti, four of which were inscribed on the columns of the peristyle (*CIL* IV.10606-10609). Fully exposed to the elements, they have completely vanished with the exception of *CIL* IV.10607, of which a few letters may remain. Varone's

⁸⁸ On this house, see MAIURI 1958: 239-242, WALLACE-HADRILL 2011a: 226-236, and GUIDOBALDI, ESPOSITO 2012: 237-245

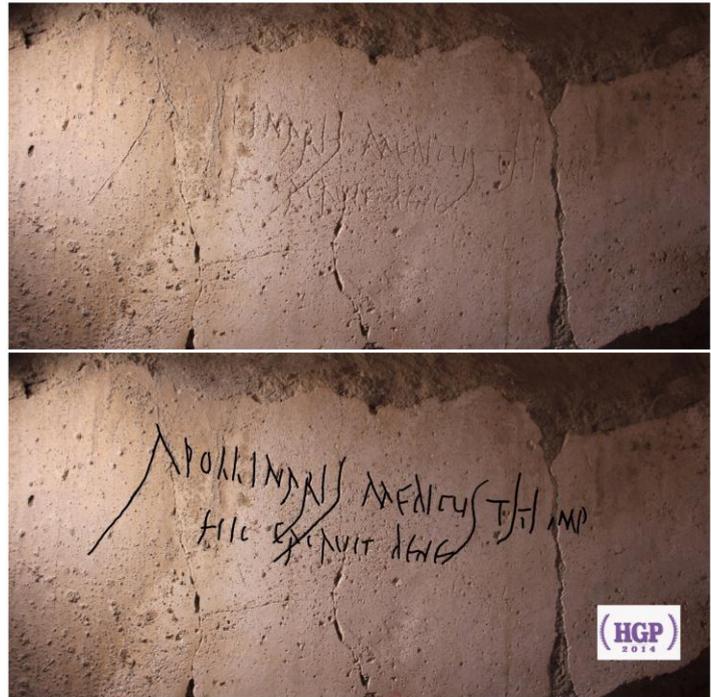
⁸⁹ CAMODECA 2002 and 2006.



a. Casa della Gemma, Ins. Or. I.1
b. Casa del Rilievo di Telefo, Ins. Or. I.2-3

Fig. 22. Plan of Insulae Orientales I and II.

Fig. 23. Photograph of CIL IV.10619 (above) and enhanced photo (below).



more recent find of the lightly scratched name *A. Memm(ius)* survives quite well, tucked away in a short hall next to the richly decorated reception room that gives the house its name⁹⁰. The two other large homes in the *insula*, the Casa dei Due Atri and the Casa del Colonnato Tuscanico, were closed at the time of our survey, but provide opportunities for further fieldwork.

Insula Orientalis I

Insula Orientalis I consists of three houses, the Casa della Gemma (Ins. Or. 1.1), the Casa di M. Pilius Primigenius Granianus (Ins. Or. 1.1a) and the Casa del Rilievo di Telefo (Ins. Or. 1.2-3). The last of these has been the subject of extensive conservation measures by the Herculaneum Conservation Project⁹¹. The *CIL* lists 33 inscriptions in the *insula*, 5 in the Casa della Gemma and 28 in the Casa del Rilievo di Telefo⁹². Of these, Varone photographed three graffiti from the Casa della Gemma and four from the Casa del Rilievo di Telefo⁹³. In addition, Langner has published two figural graffiti in the Casa del Rilievo di Telefo⁹⁴. Our efforts focused on these two properties (fig. 22).

Although the atrium and an adjacent room of the **Casa della Gemma (Ins. Or. 1.1)** are now under the protection of a roof, they have not always been, resulting in wear and damage to the wall plaster in this house.⁹⁵ Our team did not find *CIL* IV.10617, which had been photographed and described by Varone in 1994 as already eroded (*litteris tenuibus nunc abrasis*)⁹⁶. However, the well-known graffito about the doctor of the emperor Titus (*CIL* IV.10619: *Apollinaris medicus Titi Imp hic cacavit bene*) remains clearly legible due to the protective covering of a roof over the latrine of the house. The wall plaster containing that graffito has been re-mounted; the rest of the wall-plaster in the room is mostly missing (fig. 23).

The **Casa del Rilievo di Telefo (Ins. Or. 1.2-3)** has benefitted significantly from restoration measures undertaken by the Herculaneum Conservation Project⁹⁷. This was one of the largest houses in Herculaneum and, with a location along the coast at the edge of the city, residents and visitors to the house would have en-

⁹⁰ VARONE 2000, esp. 277-79, illustrated at apograph (m).

⁹¹ Cf. CAMARDO 2007, WALLACE-HADRILL et al. 2008, WALLACE-HADRILL 2011a, COURT et al. 2013.

⁹² Casa della Gemma: *CIL* IV.10617-10621; Casa del Rilievo di Telefo: *CIL* IV.10622-10644.

⁹³ VARONE 2012, 500-501.

⁹⁴ LANGNER 2001, nos. 2169 and 2220.

⁹⁵ See MAIURI 1958: 336-342, WALLACE-HADRILL 2011a: 246, 295-297.

⁹⁶ VARONE 2012, 500.

⁹⁷ See MAIURI 1958: 345-360, WALLACE-HADRILL 2011a: 246-253, and GUIDOBALDI, ESPOSITO 2012: 303-311.



Fig. 24. Casa del Rilievo di Telefo (Ins. Or. I.2), photograph of CIL IV.10624 (above) and line-drawing (below).

ΛΙΑΒΙΧΤΑ



Fig. 25. Casa del Rilievo di Telefo, Team members indicating the size of CIL IV.10622.



joyed expansive, panoramic views over the Bay of Naples. Only part of the house was accessible in 2014; we therefore cannot determine how the inscriptions in the peristyle and the multi-storey building at the southeast corner have been affected. These areas were not photographed by Varone either. The walls of the *atrium* and its adjacent *alae* are protected by a limited roof, protruding as far as the depth of the *alae*. Four graffiti (CIL IV.10622–10624, 10625b) from the *atrium* had been photographed in 1994⁹⁸. We located all of these. Preservation of the graffiti located in this room is generally quite good. CIL IV.10625b is in the same, rather good, condition as it was when documented by Varone in 1994. We discovered that CIL IV.10625a, which had been recorded in the *CIL* as located on the south side of the first column, instead exists on the north side of that column and remains in fair condition. The plaster is lacking both above and to the sides of it.

The north wall of the *atrium* holds ancient graffiti and unfortunately some modern graffiti. Two ancient graffiti written in Greek letters appear rather low on the wall. These texts, however, do not communicate known word combinations and *CIL* IV recorded Della Corte's suggestion that they may have been writing exercises (CIL IV.10623 and 10624, cf. fig. 24)⁹⁹. Both graffiti are in the same condition as they

were in Varone's photographs, taken twenty years earlier. Nearby these two messages is a group of lines interpreted by Langner as a ship's keel¹⁰⁰. The plaster in the upper portions of the wall is in very good condition and free from modern graffiti. In this upper section, we located CIL IV.10622, presenting the greeting '*feli(c)ter*,' written in the shape of a boat, with the text above a line representing a ship's keel and the letter "T" of *feliciter* forming the mast of the boat. The entire graffito is quite large in size (the keel is 0.62 m wide), but the ductus, or incision, is extremely shallow, which makes the drawing extremely difficult even to see and impossible to photograph. We instead photographed that section of the wall with team members pointing to the edges of the boat, to show the size of this faint yet extant greeting of "may things go happily" (fig. 25). Langner does not record the image of the boat drawn in conjunction with the *feliciter* graffito among his group of *Buchstabenschiffe* ("letterboats"), due to his confusion with the other ship's keel in this room (Langner 2001, no. 2220). This com-

⁹⁸ VARONE 2012: 501.

⁹⁹ CIL IV.10623: ΚΛΗΒΙΧΝ, and 10624: ΛΙΑΒΙΧΤΑ.

¹⁰⁰ LANGNER 2001, no. 2220. Langner mistakenly connects this with CIL IV.10622, which contains a different ship's keel.

bination of text and drawing (*CIL* IV.10622: *feliciter* + boat sketch), then, represents a third figural graffito from this property. All three of these in the Casa del Rilievo di Telefo present drawings of boats¹⁰¹.

Conclusions and Moving Forward

In the months since completing our field season, we have been processing and digitizing both the content of the ancient graffiti we located as well as their metadata. Project members are contributing entries for all of the graffiti of Herculaneum to the Epigraphic Database Roma (EDR, <http://www.edr-edr.it>), a digital database dedicated to the ancient inscriptions of the Italian peninsula. EDR is one of the founding databases contributing to the Europeana network of Ancient Greek and Latin Epigraphy (EAGLE), an EU best practice network whose goal is to make cultural heritage more broadly accessible (<http://eagle-network.eu>). EDR is able to present illustrations of inscriptions since it has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Cultural Heritage. In addition, the digital format of EDR allows it to host multiple images of an inscription, a great improvement over the limitations of print media. We have therefore been gathering a range of illustrations: processing photographs from our fieldwork, locating line-drawings for handwritten inscriptions that are no longer visible, and creating enhanced images to aid in the visibility of ancient graffiti. We are contributing all relevant images to EDR. We have already uploaded many of these illustrations; more will be available as they are processed. Since the wall-inscriptions of Herculaneum also include figural graffiti, or drawings sketched by hand, we have furthermore been designing a schema for processing and digitizing these figural examples. As of October 1, 2015, we have completed entries for 140 ancient graffiti from Herculaneum. These include 49 figural graffiti, or graffiti drawings.

At the same time we have been designing a digital resource and search engine, the Ancient Graffiti Project (<http://agp.wlu.edu>), which allows a user to search for ancient graffiti spatially within an interactive map of Herculaneum. We aim to bring that resource online once we have finished another season of fieldwork, with the goal of having a repository that is as accurate, current, and comprehensive as possible. Interoperable and linked with EDR and EAGLE, The Ancient Graffiti Project will offer multiple possibilities to search and browse through the ancient graffiti of Herculaneum and will provide direct access to this unique class of epigraphy, handwritten inscriptions.

It is heartening to see that so many ancient graffiti remain extant in Herculaneum decades after their excavation. We are grateful to have the chance to work on-site with this fascinating material and our hope and motivation is to make it available to a wider audience of scholars and students.

Acknowledgements

We express our profound gratitude to Soprintendente Massimo Osanna and Dott.ssa Maria Paola Guidobaldi for the opportunity to work on site. Our field season was also enhanced with lectures by leading scholars and archaeologists of the Herculaneum Conservation Project. We wish to express our thanks to Christian Biggi, Ascanio d'Andrea, Domenico Camardo, Sarah Court, Silvia Evangelisti, Pia Kastenmeier, Pietro Liuzzo, and Silvia Orlandi. An extra special thanks go to Professor Giuseppe Camodeca of L'Università di Napoli, "L'Orientale," for an outstanding lecture on the wax-tablets of Herculaneum and to Dr. Antonio Varone of the Soprintendenza Archeologica di Roma for a generous discussion of his decades-long experience working with ancient graffiti.

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¹⁰¹ LANGNER 2001, no. 2169 (boat drawing, in a cubiculum), no. 2220 (ship's keel, in the atrium), and the boat drawing associated with the word *feliciter* (*CIL* IV.10622) in the atrium.

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