

MARBLE, MEMORY, AND MEANING
IN THE FOUR POMPEIAN STYLES OF WALL PAINTING

by

Lynley J. McAlpine

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
(Classical Art and Archaeology)
in the University of Michigan
2014

Doctoral Committee:

Professor Elaine K. Gazda, Chair
Professor Lisa Nevett
Professor David Potter
Professor Nicola Terrenato
Emeritus Professor Norman Yoffee

*The difference between false memories and
true ones is the same as for jewels:
it is always the false ones that look
the most real, the most brilliant.*

Salvador Dalí,
The Secret Life of Salvador Dalí

© Lynley McAlpine
All Rights Reserved
2013

Acknowledgements

This project would have been impossible without the guidance of my advisor and dissertation chair, Elaine Gazda, who has provided unflagging support for all aspects of my work. I am grateful to have been able to work under the supervision of someone who I consider a model for the kind of scholar I hope to become: one who has a keen critical eye and who values collaboration and innovation. I have also benefited greatly from the sensible advice of Lisa Nevett, who has always helped me to recognize the possibilities and limitations of my approaches and evidence. David Potter's perspective has been indispensable in determining how literary and historical sources could be employed responsibly in a study that focuses mainly on material culture. Nicola Terrenato has encouraged me to develop a critical and rigorous approach, and his scholarship has been an important model for my own. Finally, Norman Yoffee has been a continual source of advice and guidance, while opening my eyes to the ways my research can reach across disciplinary boundaries.

I also would not have been able to write my dissertation without the financial support of the Memoria Romana Fellowship and the scholarly guidance of Karl Galinsky, whose direction and encouragement helped me to integrate memory studies into my research in a balanced and productive fashion. I have also benefited from the generous financial support of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and from the Interdepartmental Program in Classical Art and Archaeology and Rackham Graduate School at the University of Michigan.

Thank you in particular to my parents for their unquestioning and constant support as I work toward my goals. Thanks to my family and friends for their patience and understanding when I have been absorbed in my work. Special thanks to Chris Laine for his tireless help and encouragement during the final stages of this project.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	ii
List of Figures	vi
List of Appendices	x
Abstract	xi
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
I. Previous Scholarship on Roman Wall Painting and Decorative Stone	3
II. Research Questions and Approach	10
III. Regional and Chronological Scope	16
i. Chronological Problems in Roman Domestic Architecture and Decoration	17
IV. Chapter Outline	25
CHAPTER TWO: ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND LITERARY SOURCES FOR THE USE OF DECORATIVE STONE IN ROMAN RESIDENTIAL ARCHITECTURE	30
I. Literary Evidence for Marble Use in Domestic Contexts (ca. 150 B.C.E.-96 C.E.)	33
i. Imperial Memories of Republican Marble in Roman Literature	35
ii. Material, Memory and Text	38
iii. Cato the Elder (234-149 BCE) (and Festus, late 2 nd century C.E.)	40
iv. Cicero (106-43 B.C.E.)	42
v. Varro (116-27 B.C.E.)	44
vi. Vitruvius (ca. 70-15 B.C.E.)	46
vii. Strabo (ca. 64 B.C.E. - 24 C.E.)	47
viii. Augustan Poets: Horace, Propertius, Ovid, Tibullus (31 B.C.E. - 27 C.E.)	47
ix. Seneca the Elder (ca. 54 B.C.E. - 39 C.E.)	50
x. Seneca the Younger (ca. 4-65 C.E.)	51
	iii

xi. Lucan (39-65 C.E.)	55
xii. Pliny the Elder (23-79 C.E.)	57
xiii. Martial (<i>ca.</i> 40-104 C.E.)	63
xiv. Statius (<i>ca.</i> 45-96 C.E.)	63
xv. Tacitus (56-117 C.E.)	66
xvi. Suetonius (<i>ca.</i> 70-130 C.E.)	67
II. Archaeological Evidence for the Use of Marble in Domestic Contexts	
(<i>ca.</i> 150 B.C.E. - 79 C.E.)	70
i. Colored Stone in the Hellenistic World	71
ii. Colored Stone in the Roman Republic	73
iii. Colored Stone in the Augustan Period	76
iv. Colored Stone in the Julio-Claudian and Flavian Periods	77
v. The Pattern of Developments in Private Marble Use in the Archaeological Record	81
vi. Conclusions	82
CHAPTER THREE: DECORATIVE STONE IN THE FIRST POMPEIAN STYLE	84
I. The Significance of Stone in the First Style	86
II. The Use of Colored Stone in the Architecture and Decoration of Pompeii in the First Style Period	95
III. Fictive Stone in the First Style	99
CHAPTER FOUR: MARBLE AND MORALITY IN REPUBLICAN VILLAS	106
I. Fictive Stone in the Second Style	109
II. Transgressive Fantasies at Oplontis (Villa A, Room 23)	124
i. Case Study: Room 23 in Villa A at Oplontis	124
ii. Transgressive Architectural Fantasies	130
III. The Role of Second Style Painting in Republican Villa Culture	134
i. Villa Paintings in Townhouses	136
IV. Conclusions	143

CHAPTER FIVE: LOCAL HISTORY AND THE TRANSITION FROM THE FIRST TO THE SECOND STYLE IN POMPEII	146
I. Previous Explanations for the Transition to the Second Style in Pompeii	148
i. Stylistic Evolution	150
ii. Stylistic Intervention	152
II. Burial in Pompeii before and after 80 B.C.E.	154
i. Burial in Pompeii before <i>ca.</i> 80 B.C.E.	156
ii. Burial in Pompeii after <i>ca.</i> 80 B.C.E.	159
iii. The Fondo Azzolini Post-Colonization	164
iv. Conclusions	166
III. Community Dynamics in Pompeii and the Second Style	167
i. First Style Decoration After Roman Colonization	173
ii. Marble in the Second Style in Pompeii	173
 CHAPTER SIX: IMPERIAL MARBLE IN POMPEIAN WALL PAINTING	 184
I. Disappearing Marble: The Third Pompeian Style and Augustan Aesthetics	185
II. Marble Veneer and Imperial Prosperity in the Fourth Style	189
i. Marble in Fourth Style Wall Painting	189
ii. The role of "Zebra Stripe" decorations in Fourth Style wall painting	195
iii. Understanding the Reemergence of Marble in the Fourth Style	196
 CHAPTER SEVEN: MEMORY AND MEANING	 204
I. Maintaining and Viewing Antique Wall Paintings until 79 C.E.	204
i. Remembering to Maintain Paintings, or Maintaining Paintings to Remember	208
i. Heirloom-quality Paintings	212
ii. Possibilities for the Reception of First and Second Style Paintings in the First Century C.E.	217
 CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSIONS	 221
Appendices	280
Bibliography	310

List of Figures

Figure 1.	Map of Pompeii.....	228
Figure 2.	Alabaster (Kelsey Museum of Archaeology accession nos. 0000.00.2112, 0000.00.2396, 0000.00.6267, 0000.00.6766).....	229
Figure 3.	Carystian marble (Kelsey Museum of Archaeology accession no. 0000.00.6737).....	229
Figure 4.	Chian marble (Kelsey Museum of Archaeology accession nos. 0000.00.2176, 0000.00.2053, 0000.00.2362, 0000.00.2050).....	230
Figure 5.	Lucullan marble (Kelsey Museum of Archaeology accession nos. 0000.00.2079, 0000.00.2385, 0000.00.2384, 0000.00.2094).....	230
Figure 6.	Luna grey marble (Kelsey Museum of Archaeology accession no. 0000.00.2251).....	231
Figure 7.	Numidian marble (Kelsey Museum of Archaeology accession nos. 0000.00.2192, 0000.00.2188, 0000.00.2353, 0000.00.2179).....	231
Figure 8.	Taenarian marble (Kelsey Museum of Archaeology accession nos. 0000.00.2076, 0000.00.6752).....	232
Figure 9.	Phrygian marble (Kelsey Museum of Archaeology accession nos. 0000.00.2406, 0000.00.2060).....	232
Figure 10.	Porphyry (Kelsey Museum of Archaeology accession no. 0000.00.2208).....	232
Figure 11.	Diagram of First Style decoration from Casa di Sallustio.....	233
Figure 12.	Basilica, Pompeii. Masonry Style decoration of north interior wall, showing lacunae where pieces were removed.....	234
Figure 13.	Plan of Casa del Fauno, Pompeii.....	235
Figure 14.	Casa del Fauno, Pompeii. Opus sectile pavement of the fauces.....	236
Figure 15.	Casa del Fauno, Pompeii. Opus sectile pavement of the tablinum.....	236
Figure 16.	Casa del Fauno, Pompeii. Opus sectile pavement of the impluvium.....	237
Figure 17.	Casa del Fauno, Pompeii. Stone chip/crustae pavement of ala.....	237
Figure 18.	Casa del Fauno, Pompeii. First Style decoration of fauces (east wall)..	238
Figure 19.	Casa dei Quattro Stili, Pompeii. First Style decoration showing breccia design.....	238
Figure 20.	Casa del Cenacolo, Pompeii. First Style decoration showing breccia design.....	239
Figure 21.	Casa del Centauro, Pompeii. First Style decoration showing diagonally divided block.....	239

Figure 22.	Casa del Centauro, Pompeii. First Style decoration showing breccia design.....	240
Figure 23.	Casa del Centauro, Pompeii. First Style decoration showing breccia design.....	240
Figure 24.	Casa dei Quattro Stili, Pompeii. First Style decoration showing alabaster design and mappa.....	241
Figure 25.	Casa del Cenacolo, Pompeii. First Style decoration showing alabaster design.....	241
Figure 26.	Casa del Menandro, Pompeii. First Style decoration showing alabaster design.....	242
Figure 27.	Casa di Epidio Sabino, Pompeii. First Style decoration showing human figures.....	242
Figure 28.	Villa A at Oplontis. Mosaic and crustae pavement of Room 15.....	243
Figure 29.	Villa dei Misteri, Pompeii. Crustae pavement of P2.....	243
Figure 30.	Villa dei Misteri, Pompeii. Crustae/mosaic pavement of atrium.....	244
Figure 31.	Villa dei Misteri, Pompeii. Opus sectile pavement of Room 5.....	244
Figure 32.	Villa A at Oplontis. Pavement of Room 14: mosaic with colored tesserae and central emblema.....	245
Figure 33.	Villa A at Oplontis. Second Style painting in Room 11.....	246
Figure 34.	Villa dei Misteri, Pompeii. Second Style painting in Room 5. Detail of alabaster panels.....	246
Figure 35.	Villa dei Misteri, Pompeii. Second Style painting in Room 6. Detail of turquoise (?) and alabaster panels.....	247
Figure 36.	Villa dei Misteri, Pompeii. Second Style painting in Room 5, south wall.	247
Figure 37.	Villa dei Misteri, Pompeii. Second Style painting in Room 3.....	248
Figure 38.	Villa dei Misteri, Pompeii. Second Style painting in Room 6. Detail of Numidian marble pilaster with inlaid strip of Lucullan marble in center.	249
Figure 39.	Plan of Villa A at Oplontis.....	249
Figure 40.	Villa A at Oplontis. Second Style painting in Room 23, west wall.....	250
Figure 41.	Villa A at Oplontis. Second Style painting in Room 23, south wall.....	251
Figure 42.	Villa A at Oplontis. Second Style painting in Room 23, north wall.....	252
Figure 43.	Villa A at Oplontis. Second Style painting in Room 23, north wall. Detail of glass bowl.....	253
Figure 44.	Villa A at Oplontis. Second Style painting in Room 23, north wall. Detail of corner, shield.....	254
Figure 45.	Plan of Casa del Labirinto, Pompeii.....	255
Figure 46.	Casa del Labirinto, Pompeii. Oecus 43.....	256
Figure 47.	Casa di Marco Fabio Rufo, Pompeii. Second Style painting.....	256
Figure 48.	Insula Occidentalis, Pompeii (looking towards southeast).....	257
Figure 49.	Monumental tombs along Via dei Sepolcri, outside Herculaneum Gate, Pompeii.....	257
Figure 50.	Plan of Fondo Azzolini cemetery.....	258

Figure 51.	Monumental tomb on Via dei Sepolcri, Pompeii with two columellae on left, near front of precinct.....	259
Figure 52.	Casa di Obellio Firmo, Pompeii. Second Style painting in tablinum....	259
Figure 53.	Plan of Casa di Cerere, Pompeii.....	260
Figure 54.	Casa di Cerere, Pompeii. Second Style painting in Room <i>c</i>	261
Figure 55.	Casa di Cerere, Pompeii. Second Style painting in Room <i>c</i> . Detail of Chian marble (left) and alabaster (right).....	261
Figure 56.	Casa di Cerere, Pompeii. Second Style painting in Room <i>k</i> . Detail of alabaster (directly above blue row).....	262
Figure 57.	Casa di Cerere, Pompeii. Second Style painting in Room <i>k</i>	262
Figure 58.	Casa di Cerere, Pompeii. Second Style painting in Room <i>e</i>	263
Figure 59.	Casa di Cipio Panfilio, Pompeii. First Style decoration on upper wall; Second Style painting on lower wall.....	264
Figure 60.	Casa dei Quattro Stili, Pompeii. View from in front of entrance, across atrium, to room decorated in Second Style.....	265
Figure 61.	Casa di Cerere, Pompeii. Second Style painting, splatter dado.....	265
Figure 62.	Casa dei Quattro Stili, Pompeii. Third Style painting showing splatter dado.....	266
Figure 63.	Villa A at Oplontis. Fourth Style “zebra stripe” painting showing splatter dado.....	266
Figure 64.	Casa dei Casti Amanti, Pompeii. Third Style painting.....	267
Figure 65.	Villa A at Oplontis. Real stone veneer dado in Room 64 (Sagarian marble framed by Lucullan marble).....	268
Figure 66.	Casa di Ottavio Quartione, Pompeii. Fourth Style painting showing imitation stone dado (Carystian marble, Numidian marble, Chian marble, and Lucullan marble).....	269
Figure 67.	Casa di Ottavio Quartione, Pompeii. Fourth Style painting showing imitation stone dado (Taenarian marble, Lucullan marble, and Chian marble).....	270
Figure 68.	Casa della Caccia Antica, Pompeii. Fourth Style painting showing imitation stone dado (Numidian marble, Chian marble, porphyry).....	270
Figure 69.	Casa di M. Lucrezio, Pompeii. Fourth Style painting showing imitation stone dado (porphyry, Chian marble, and Numidian marble).....	271
Figure 70.	Casa di M. Lucrezio, Pompeii. Tablinum with opus sectile emblema (alabaster, Luna grey, Numidian marble, and green porphyry, among other varieties).....	271
Figure 71.	Casa di Apollo, Pompeii. Fourth Style painting showing imitation stone dado (Chian marble and Numidian marble).....	272
Figure 72.	Casa di Arianna, Pompeii. Fourth Style painting showing imitation stone dado.....	273
Figure 73.	Casa di Arianna, Pompeii. Detail of Fourth Style painting showing imitation stone dado (Chian and Taenarian marbles).....	273
Figure 74.	Villa A at Oplontis. “Zebra stripe” painting in corridor.....	274
Figure 75.	Villa A at Oplontis. “Zebra stripe” painting in Room 4, combined with imitation Carystian marble and Numidian marble.....	275

Figure 76.	Villa A at Oplontis. Opus sectile pavement of Room 69 (alabaster, Chian marble, Numidian marble, among others).....	276
Figure 77.	Casa dell'Efebo, Pompeii. Opus sectile pavement (Numidian marble, Chian marble, Lucullan marble, Phrygian marble, Luna grey marble, among others).....	277
Figure 78.	Casa di Vetutio Placido, Pompeii. Opus signinum pavement with simple marble emblema.....	278
Figure 79.	House I.6.3, Pompeii. Opus signinum pavement with marble insets (including Carystian marble and Chian marble.....	278
Figure 80.	Casa dei Marmi, Pompeii. Large pieces of Carystian marble and green porphyry in corner of peristyle.....	279

List of Appendices

Appendix I: Glossary of Marble Types and Geographical Origins.....	280
Appendix II: Index of Alternate Names and Street Addresses for Houses and Villas...	283
Appendix III: Catalog of Select Houses and Villas with Imitation Stone Decoration...	287

ABSTRACT

Marble, Memory, and Meaning in the Four Pompeian Styles of Wall Painting

by Lynley McAlpine

Chair: Elaine Gazda

This dissertation explores developments in the use of decorative marble and other stone and their representation in wall paintings from Roman domestic buildings in Campania from *ca.* 150 B.C.E. to 79 C.E. I use wall paintings from houses and villas to explore three main thematic questions: (1) how transformations in attitudes toward luxury and the display of wealth and power played out in the domestic sphere; (2) the role of wall painting in communicating social, ethnic, and political identity and status in Pompeii in the aftermath of Roman colonization; and (3) the relationship between memory and changes in the meaning and reception of visual culture. I focus on the representation of various types of decorative stone in wall paintings from the houses and country villas of the Bay of Naples region. Imported decorative stone is especially relevant to these topics, in large part because it is mentioned frequently in Roman literature in the context of moralizing discourses on luxury. These sources highlight the fascination marble held for ancient Romans and its symbolic and socio-political importance. Imitation marble is also common in most periods of wall painting and in many cases makes up the majority of the decorated wall surface.

My approach takes into account evidence in the form of relevant examples of painting, other related archaeological data, and written sources, to investigate the social and cultural significance of Roman painting. A particularly significant contribution of my project is to place developments in painting in a regional and, especially, historical

framework, in order to explore the implications of change. My study shows that stylistic changes in wall painting were motivated by a combination of individual communities' internal dynamics, local histories, and broader cultural shifts in the Roman Empire. In addition, the reception of older paintings by subsequent generations depended on shifting contemporary attitudes toward private displays of wealth as well as the construction of the past in the memory of a particular period. Using wall painting to examine attitudes toward private luxury in ancient Rome uniquely demonstrates that the ideals expressed in painting and literature could be contradicted by actual behavior. Painting functioned as an entirely separate form of communication from literature that did not always agree with what the texts presented. My examination of imitation stone in wall painting sheds light not only on how Roman attitudes toward luxury changed over time, but also on how different types of evidence provide us with information that is sometimes complementary and sometimes contradictory.

Chapter One

Introduction

Scholars of Roman wall painting, as well as those who study ancient decorative stone, have long recognized the prominence of representations of stone in painting that survives from the areas of Campania destroyed by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius. While faux stone is documented as existing in almost every phase of wall painting, it has been seen as secondary to other motifs (at best) in its symbolic or cultural importance.¹ For the Romans, however, imported stone was laden with significance: moral, political, economic, social, literary, and aesthetic. Its importance is demonstrated in Roman literature of a variety of genres, where references to exotic stone are used to add color to narratives about far-reaching imperial power, the immorality of private luxury, the delights of *otium*, participation in and affiliation with Roman culture and identity, and the erudition of the elite. In that wider context, stone's frequent appearance in wall painting seems perfectly appropriate.

Roman domestic wall painting is one of the most symbolically and aesthetically rich forms of visual culture from classical antiquity and one of the least understood. The nature of the evidence itself is an impediment. A limited regional and chronological scope, namely the territory destroyed by Mount Vesuvius in 79 C.E., is significantly overrepresented in the data. Moreover, the traditional questions scholars have asked of

¹ Previous studies have traced other specific motifs in wall painting, such as vegetal motifs (Ciarallo 2006), architectural motifs (Eristov 2007; Eristov 1994), sculpture (Moormann, 1988); still lifes, or specific types of objects from them (Bryson 1990., 17-59; Meyer 2009); landscapes and gardens (Bergmann 2002; Bergmann 2001; Bergmann 2002; Bergmann, 1991; Kuttner 1999) though some of these have been more concerned with creating typologies and catalogues than exploring the larger implications of those types of images.

the material until recently have been narrowly defined. I investigate the following issues using painting as a source: (1) transformations in attitudes toward luxury and the display of wealth and power in the domestic sphere; (2) the role of wall painting in communicating social, ethnic, and political identity and status in Pompeii in the aftermath of Roman colonization; and (3) the relationship between memory and changes in the meaning and reception of visual culture. Moreover, I use wall painting to address larger cultural and historical questions about stylistic change at both the local community and empire-wide level. Specifically, I look at shifts in the imitation of colored marble and other imported stones in domestic buildings in the Bay of Naples region and Rome from *ca.* 150 B.C.E. to 79 C.E. What can these images tell us about the social environment of the communities that produced them, about the cultural affiliations of the patron who commissioned them and the community of viewers to which he presented them, or about the messages of identity that members of the household wanted to project to outsiders and to each other? At the same time, I approach the meaning of the paintings from the opposite direction: How can what we know about a historical moment in ancient Italy, about local community dynamics, social organization, and instability in Pompeii, Rome or elsewhere, and about the various cultural and political forces and ideals operating on a larger scale, help us to understand the meaning of non-narrative elements of wall painting? This dissertation contributes answers to those questions in order to understand better both the paintings *and* the people who made and lived with them.

A multilayered project of this sort benefits from an interdisciplinary approach and, especially, attention to historical context. Studies that have ignored some of the available information or accepted it uncritically have tended to be unsuccessful or at least limited in their applicability, as I will explain below. I apply an approach that takes into account as much evidence as possible, whether relevant examples of painting, other related archaeological data, or written sources. In addition I adopt approaches from a variety of disciplines, such as classical and anthropological archaeology, history and memory studies, and art history. In order to develop a long-term historical view, this project focuses on a single element that reappears throughout the history of Roman wall painting: simulated stone, which was prominent in the decoration of Italian houses beginning as early as the second century B.C.E. and continuing well beyond the eruption

of Mount Vesuvius. A particularly significant contribution of my project is to place developments in painting in a regional and, especially, historical framework, in order to explore the implications of change. My study shows that stylistic transformations in wall painting were motivated by a combination of individual communities' internal dynamics, local histories, and broader ideological or cultural shifts in the Roman Empire. In addition, the reception of older paintings by subsequent generations depended on evolving contemporary attitudes toward private displays of wealth, as well as the construction of the past in the memory of a particular period.

I. Previous Scholarship on Roman Wall Painting and Decorative Stone

For most of the history of scholarship on Roman wall painting, the traditional goal has been to create and revise a typology of the four styles based in large part on the material uncovered in Pompeii and nearby sites. The typology has been continually refined, and as new paintings have been discovered they have been slotted into the existing framework in order to arrive at a unbroken stylistic evolution from the First Pompeian Style to the Fourth. The First Style consists of faux stone blocks molded in stucco and painted various colors to represent drafted masonry. The Second Style consists of elaborate illusionistic architecture and luxury objects effected in paint alone. Third Style paintings abandon perspectival depth in favor of flat colored panels, intricate detail in borders, and mythological figures. The Fourth Style is perhaps the most difficult to define because it contains architectural elements reminiscent of the Second Style and other details that carried over from the Third.

This classification system based on the four styles originated in the late nineteenth century with August Mau, who was influenced by Vitruvius's description of three successive fashions of painting.² The Fourth Style occurred after Vitruvius's time. Successive scholars have adjusted or expanded Mau's system and the framework of absolute dates to which it is attached.³ For example, Beyen's work in the 1930s through 1950s, which divided the Second Style into a series of sub-Phases, has been among the

² Mau 1882; Mau 1907. The work of Overbeck was also influential in this early period (e.g. Overbeck 1856).

³ Maiuri 1936; Herbig 1962; Rea 1981; Bastet and De Vos 1979; Ehrhardt 1987.

most influential and continues to be used by archaeologists, in combination with other evidence, especially wall construction technique, to date new finds of painted wall plaster.⁴ While these typological sequences for painting are useful tools for classification and comparison, their utility for dating is questionable. There is often a tendency toward circular reasoning in the way the dates for painting and construction techniques are linked, and in the choice of certain canonical paintings as benchmarks for assigning dates to comparable works.⁵

Recent scholarship has extended beyond classification and dating. Some scholars have proposed reconstructions of the organization and production methods of workshops of artisans, in order to apply methods employed by art historians of other periods.⁶ These approaches include identifying hands of painters in Campania and grouping together wall decorations that are likely to have been created by workshops of painters hired by the owners of various properties. Other questions explored in such studies concern the technical processes employed by painters, including how designs were transferred from sketches (in books or underlying the final painted layer of plaster) to finished paintings, whether or not pattern books were used in the duplication of popular compositions, and how ancient painters understood and represented perspective.⁷ Attempts to study wall paintings from the perspective of the artist are hindered by an almost total lack of information about the origins, identities, or working practices of most painters in Roman antiquity. Certainly painters and workshops were responsible for designing and producing these images and responded to the changing preferences and intentions of those who commissioned them. Unfortunately, the artistic motivations of these individuals and groups are not available to us in any form other than the painted images themselves.⁸

Other attempts to interpret the meanings of paintings in Roman houses and villas have involved quests for the origins of styles or motifs in earlier Greek art and attention to the distinction between Roman and Greek contributions to paintings from the Italian

⁴ Beyen, 1938; Beyen 1957.

⁵ Cf. Mogetta 2013, 46–47. See pp. 17–25 below for more on problems with wall painting chronology.

⁶ Richardson 2000; Barbet 2007; Leach 1993; Gabriel 1952; Tybout 1989.

⁷ Clarke 2009; Heinrich 2005; Stinson 2011; Pappalardo 1982.

⁸ Several scholars contend that studies of wall painting from the perspective of artistic creation are the most important or necessary in order to draw other conclusions: Bragantini 2007; Tybout 2001; Barbet 2007.

peninsula.⁹ Besides looking for cultural sources, those who have worked on the First and Second Styles in particular have searched for real-world architecture used as models for the images painted on private walls. For the Second Style, for example, a number of competing theories suggest variously that architectural compositions were meant to represent Hellenistic palaces, Roman or Hellenistic theatres, sanctuaries, or the most luxurious examples of Roman villas.¹⁰ Some scholars, such as Alix Barbet, avoid consideration of the sources of imagery in these paintings and take a more structuralist approach in interpreting them as private, self-aggrandizing fantasy.¹¹ The lack of consensus on these matters perhaps demonstrates the difficulty and, I would suggest, futility of trying to identify a single point of reference, whether in earlier painting or in contemporary architecture, for the complicated scenes that appear in Second Style paintings. The other styles, too, are symbolically and semantically complex.¹²

Wall painting scholarship in the 1960s and 1970s, led by Karl Schefold, addressed the relation between wall painting and the philosophical or religious affiliations of the Roman educated elite.¹³ This approach entails reading the symbolism of wall painting through direct links with specific literary passages and historical figures. Though certain scholars, such as Gilles Sauron, have continued in this vein in recent years, most new work has shied away from interpreting Roman painting in this way.¹⁴

What is often missing from scholarship before the last two decades is an attention to the impetus for and the effects of change in wall painting. Shifts from one style to another are attributed merely to changes in taste, as though this were a meaningful

⁹ E.g. Lorenz 2008; Bruno 1969; Ling 1991; Picard 1977; Wesenberg 1988; Ciardiello 2004; McKenzie 2007.

¹⁰ Hélène Fragaki's 2003 article provides a thorough and critical historiography of scholarship on architectural motifs in wall painting, which extends to general theories of Roman wall painting proposed during the last century. Her comprehensive bibliography is invaluable, but I have listed some publications of particular relevance here, including some that are more recent: Leach 2004; Bruno 1969; Fittschen 1976; Beyen 1957; Perrin 2004.

¹¹ Barbet 1985.

¹² Useful recent critiques of these approaches are Fragaki 2003 and Haselberger 2008.

¹³ E.g. Schefold 1972; Sauron 2007.

¹⁴ Fragaki (2003) notes the decline of this sort of research. Moormann's 2009 review of Sauron's 2007 monograph presents a particularly scathing criticism of this approach.

explanation on its own.¹⁵ This view results from studying wall painting as a closed art movement, rather than as a type of visual communication thoroughly entangled in other elements of domestic life, which themselves involved engagement with public life and with historical and cultural change on a large scale. The conclusions drawn from such studies make it difficult for scholars in fields other than ancient art history to make use of the information encoded in wall painting and to integrate that evidence into broader investigations of Roman culture and society. Traditional studies tend not to address the questions that archaeologists, for instance, routinely ask of their material, namely: what do these objects or images tell us about the people who created and used them? New, innovative work has begun to address questions of function, patronage, and reception, though change over time still appears too infrequently as a factor in interpretation.¹⁶

In 1988, Andrew Wallace-Hadrill drew particular attention to the limitations of traditional scholarship on Roman wall painting and proposed possibilities for using painting to understand social hierarchies.¹⁷ His article, which he elaborated in a monograph of 1994, suggested ways in which painting could be used to encode social structure in houses in Pompeii and Herculaneum. Though his focus is not on painting itself, others have elaborated on his ideas and have more fully analyzed wall painting as an organizing element in the visual articulation of household hierarchies.¹⁸ Important work by art historians, such as Bettina Bergmann, Jaś Elsner, and John R. Clarke, has considered painting and other art forms from the perspective of the viewer rather than the artist. John R. Clarke's 1991 book is a pioneering study that examines painting alongside other elements of interior decoration, and his analysis extends beyond 79 B.C.E. Clarke investigates how paintings were designed to suit the function of the spaces they decorated. More recently he has considered the impact of images of all types on the “ordinary” Roman viewer.¹⁹ Jaś Elsner's work, since the mid-1990s, also explores Roman

¹⁵ A point made by Leach 2004, critiquing Laidlaw's characterization of the shift from the First to the Second Style. Ling 1991 (e.g. 59, 119) also offers changes in taste as a motivation for stylistic transformation.

¹⁶ For a defense of traditional approaches, see: Tybout 2001 (as well as Bergmann's response, in the same issue).

¹⁷ Wallace-Hadrill 1988; Wallace-Hadrill 1994. His comments were not the first of their kind, but their particular impact can be felt in, for example, the strong reaction to such criticism by Tybout (2001).

¹⁸ E.g. Heinrich 2002; Leach 2004; Hales 2003.

¹⁹ Clarke 1991; Clarke 2003.

art from the perspective of the viewer. Elsner focuses on especially socially-conditioned viewing, or *visuality*, by considering the experience of viewing domestic paintings.²⁰

Bettina Bergmann's important work of the last three decades considers wall painting within its cultural and spatial contexts.²¹ She touches on aspects of painting from the Second through Fourth Styles. Some of Bergmann's many contributions are to analyze the ways in which visual effects were deliberately created in order to emphasize links between architectural space and painted images, for instance in the architectural schemes of the Second Style paintings at Oplontis, and to investigate how suites of mythological paintings were capable of provoking certain types of responses or memories in viewers in the Pompeian house.²² Bergmann's work also considers the relationship between cultural trends and values in specific periods to the paintings that were popular at those times; for example, conceptualizations of villa architecture and landscapes in the Republican or Flavian periods, or the cultural and literary climate of the reign of Augustus, often bringing to bear evidence from contemporary literature.²³

Overall, recent scholars of wall painting have used evidence from Roman literary sources for reconstructing Roman thought patterns and for identifying references that would be likely to occur to a Roman viewer.²⁴ Poetry and rhetorical texts have been especially called upon to provide a general ideological backdrop for painting. Pictorial panels in wall compositions that show scenes from myth and drama have proven useful for linking domestic painting with other methods of storytelling, since the same stories were often told in art and literature. Consequently, some of this scholarship focuses on these elements, i.e. pictorial panels, to the exclusion of the rest of the wall that contains them.²⁵

Eleanor Winsor Leach has used textual sources in a slightly different way: to construct a social history for painting.²⁶ One of Leach's major contributions in her 2004

²⁰ Elsner 2007; Elsner 1995.

²¹ See Bergmann 2001 on the motivations for her approach.

²² Bergmann 2002a; Bergmann 2002b; Bergmann 1995; Bergmann 1994; Bergmann 1996.

²³ Bergmann 2002a; Bergmann 1991; Bergmann 1999; Bergmann 1995.

²⁴ E.g. Bryson 1990; Kellum 1994; Bergmann 1991; Bergmann 1995; Bergmann 1994; Sauron 2007.

²⁵ Noted by Allison 2005, 2. E.g. Lorenz 2008; Thompson 1960. Bergmann, in particular, does consider aspects such as the architecture of the house or villa or the color-coding of walls, (e.g. Bergmann 1992; Bergmann 2002b; Bergmann 1995).

²⁶ Leach 2004.

book is her emphasis on the social and cultural differences between Rome and Pompeii. Noting that most of what we consider “Roman painting” actually was produced in Pompeii, in some cases even before the city was under the control of Rome, she pays attention to local historical events in Pompeii, their effects on the community’s social composition and, correspondingly, the choices people made in decorating their homes.²⁷ Leach's work influenced my choice to explore the topic from the perspective I employ, though my interpretations and conclusions often deviate significantly from hers.

Leach's scholarship is occasionally weak in paying insufficient attention to the functional differences between villas and townhouses and, instead, grouping different types of residences together simply by similarity in painting style. She also relies heavily on Roman textual sources (both literary and epigraphical) to the exclusion of other types of evidence, such as archaeological data. Leach is not always sufficiently critical in her acceptance of the implications of those texts. She sometimes appears to take their testimony at face value, despite possible complications due to generic conventions, or the fact that they are not always contemporaneous with the material remains she uses them to interpret. In 2001, Penelope Allison enumerated the difficulties with the use of written sources in scholarship on Roman domestic archaeology, and the problems she has identified have not yet been adequately dealt with in work on wall painting.²⁸

A number of recent publications have focused on one particular motif or type of subject matter in wall painting, cataloguing its appearances or exploring its significance, or both. Some of these include vegetal motifs, still-lives, small portraits, or statuary.²⁹ Publications have also appeared that directly address the representation of decorative stone in wall painting. Hélène Eristov was the first to tackle the topic in 1979 with a catalogue of examples of faux stone from Pompeii.³⁰ Eristov paid particular attention to the painterly techniques used in representing stone, but shied away from identifying with certainty the types of stone represented and did not draw overarching conclusions about the significance of faux stone. Eristov noted the lack of research devoted to the topic of imitation stone, though her comprehensive catalogue of examples demonstrated the

²⁷ Also emphasized by Allison 2001.

²⁸ Allison 2005; Allison, 2001.

²⁹ See n. 1 above.

³⁰ Eristov 1979.

motif's frequency in paintings at Pompeii. Eristov's catalogue is so thorough and includes information about paintings whose condition has severely deteriorated since 1979 that I found it unnecessary to replicate her efforts by creating my own catalogue here.

Despite Eristov's advocacy, no substantial work on faux stone was published for almost two decades. In 1998, Sylvie Vander Kelen published an article intended to extend a "new status" to faux marble in Roman wall painting.³¹ This article traces the history of stone imitation in wall painting and argues that the choice to imitate stone in paint was unrelated to the availability of real marble for private decoration. She claims that it was a "decorative" choice, rather than an "economic" one, but does not consider in depth why marble was such an attractive decorative choice. Vander Kelen's provides a particularly useful chart of the changing locations of marble in wall schemes between the Second and Fourth Styles, and she recognizes that types of stone represented in paint can potentially be recognized from the archaeological record. Her attempts, however, to identify the varieties of stone in painting were frequently mistaken, demonstrating a lack of understanding of the introduction of different types in various periods.³²

An article by Claudine Allag and Florence Monier in a 2004 collected volume on decorative stone in the ancient and medieval periods provides a brief overview of painted stone that focuses mainly on Pompeii and Gaul.³³ While they make the crucial observation that between the First and Second Styles, the depiction of stone transforms from imaginative to "un parfait réalisme," they do not address the significance of the motif in any detail, regarding it only as one manifestation the Roman preference for imitating luxury goods in painting.³⁴

J. Clayton Fant's 2007 article on real and imitation marble from Pompeii suggests a way forward in the identification of stone types in painting and in understanding their significance over time.³⁵ Though Fant devotes only limited space to wall painting, he provides a valuable perspective – the way stone was represented in painting changed as

³¹ Vander Kelen 1998.

³² For example, she suggests that certain blocks in First Style paintings represented *breccia di Aleppo*, though that stone was not quarried or imported until much later (see Price 2007, 144).

³³ Allag and Monier 2004.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 357.

³⁵ Fant 2007.

Pompeians gained greater access to imported stone, in both the accuracy of its depiction and the range of types included.

Most recently, Suzanne van de Liefvoort's has argued that early examples of imitation stone in wall painting were substitutes for real stone, and that real stone was only available in the capital at that time.³⁶ She makes little use of archaeological evidence for the development in Italy of stone decoration, whether real or imitation, or of the historical context for those developments. She claims that faux marble was popular in every style of wall painting at Pompeii, without providing any examples of marble from the Third Style.³⁷ Van de Liefvoort concludes that imitation marble was a conservative type of decoration, which explains its appearing regularly in Pompeii but almost never in Herculaneum, though her justification for cultural and social claims of this sort are scant and often confusing.

II. Research Questions and Approach

Despite progress, wall painting remains the source of a great deal of cultural and visual information yet to be exploited. Scholarly work on mythological compositions, while yielding important insights, has often neglected elements from the entire wall that communicate less overtly to the viewer. In my work, I ask what non-narrative or non-figural details of wall painting indicate about the historical moment in which those images were created or viewed. The variety of non-narrative elements in wall painting is enormous and so I have chosen to address a number of questions at different points in history by focusing on one motif: stone. The imitation of exotic colored stones (all called *marmor* by the Romans) from a variety of quarries around the Roman Empire is ideal for a study of this type for a several reasons. First, stone is a substantial component in three of the Four Pompeian Styles (First, Second, and Fourth). Its depiction covers a large portion of the wall surface in all three styles. The same limited repertoire of stones appears again and again in the corpus of wall paintings as we have it, with new types introduced occasionally as they were discovered and exploited. Some of these types are

³⁶ van de Liefvoort 2012.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 193.

immediately identifiable: Numidian marble with its yellow ground and reddish veins or streaks; Lucullan marble, characterized by a black or grayish-green background and red inclusions; alabaster of a wide range of colors identifiable by concentric swirls or fractal-like patterns;³⁸ and red (purple) porphyry stippled with white. Other stones, like the solid red Taenarian marble, are identifiable mainly by their color since they lack other identifying features. When we see corresponding solid colors in painting, therefore, it can be difficult to determine with certainty if the painter meant to depict stone or not. The specific colors employed, however, in conjunction with similar panels painted with the details of other stones, suggests that at least some solidly colored blocks or panels were intended to represent known types of stone.³⁹ Judging from the colors, these would include, along with Taenarian, solid yellow variants of Numidian marble and black and green stones of undetermined origin. White stone is much more difficult to talk about in this context; we know that the Romans distinguished between varieties of white marble, but it is not clear that they made any attempt in painting to distinguish these types. Consequently, I largely leave white stones out of this study.⁴⁰

A second rationale for my focus on painted imitations of stone is that references to the same types of stone appear commonly in Roman texts throughout the period for which we have the bulk of our painted evidence (first century B.C.E. and first century C.E.). Decorative stone was the focus of much attention in the discourse on private luxury, both negative and positive, in poetry and prose. For example, Pliny the Elder illustrates the dissipation of the late Republic with numerous anecdotes about generals and lesser officials who scandalously decorated their homes with imported marble. Statius, on the other hand, praises the use of colored marbles in the Sorrentine villa of his

³⁸ The range of stones called *alabaster* or *onyx* in Latin includes a variety of different geological types, including alabaster, onyx, gypsum, agate, and travertine. Here I follow scholarly convention and refer to them all as “alabaster.” In painting they are often difficult to identify more precisely (as are the actual stones themselves in many cases). See Harrell 1990 on the nomenclature for these various stones in archaeology – though I do not follow his recommendations here.

³⁹ See pp. 110 below.

⁴⁰ For a glossary of the stone varieties referenced in the text, see Appendix I.

patron, Pollio Felix. A number of historians and philologists have recently taken notice of the symbolism and moral implications attached to marble in Roman literature.⁴¹

A third rationale is based on the fact that the evidence for stone that we have from wall painting and from texts is complemented by archaeological evidence in a way that other luxury materials, such as exotic woods, textiles, or precious metals, that also appear in painting are not. We have a substantial amount of archaeological information for how imported stones were used in both public and private buildings throughout the period in question.⁴² We can compare this evidence to what we see in painting or read about in texts to get a fuller sense of the intentions of painters and writers and how their work related to the actual architectural and cultural environment in which they lived and worked.

I address three main thematic issues throughout the dissertation. Each requires a different approach or combination of approaches, but all relate to the role of domestic decoration in the self-presentation of homeowners. One major issue pertains to changing attitudes toward luxury within the Roman or Pompeian home over the more than two centuries in question, and how these attitudes are reflected in the imitation of luxury materials in wall painting, particularly decorative stone. Painting not only reflected attitudes toward domestic luxury, it was also an active participant in the construction of those attitudes. Following the history of the painted depiction of one luxury material – imported stone – sheds light on how Roman values evolved. Literary evidence is particularly valuable for exploring this topic, but it must be used judiciously. The attitudes expressed in Roman texts do not necessarily apply to all periods, nor did members of all social groups share them.

Often literary references to marble have been taken at face value and have not been considered in light of the possible agendas of their authors, nor of the gap in knowledge and experience between an author's own lifetime and the fairly distant historical period about which he writes. Just as these texts can be used to shed light on

⁴¹ See Chapter 2 for a more detailed analysis of the literary evidence, but examples of studies of marble in Roman literature include: Bradley 2006; Bedon 2004; Pensabene 1998a; Green 2004; Santoro 2007; Gauly 2006; Bradley 2009.

⁴² Some recent sources include: Gagliardo and Packer 2008; Fant 1999; Waelkens et al. 2002; Fant 2007; Carroll, Montana, and Randazzo, 2008; Gregarek 2002; Fant 2001; Guidobaldi and Salvatori 1988; Cancelliere, Lazzarini, and Turi 2002.

archaeological remains of the objects and materials they discuss, careful attention to the archaeological evidence can help to illuminate the meaning of the texts. Only attention to both the archaeological and literary record will allow us to understand the implications of both. A comparison of material and textual sources reveals sometimes conflicting values expressed in different media. An important observation that my study has revealed is that painting, literature, and archaeological remains often communicate quite different messages with respect to attitudes toward private luxury in particular. The relationship between these different types of evidence fluctuates from one period to the next; they do not follow exactly the same trajectory. In one period, the way people use decorative marble in their homes may contrast with the attitudes projected by painting and literature; in another, painting may more closely correspond to actual behavior, while literature still expresses a contradictory attitude. We cannot expect ideas and attitudes to be universal or static across media, even within a single time and place.⁴³

Another theme I explore is the role of wall painting in communicating cultural identity and status, especially in the aftermath of the Roman colonization of Pompeii. Homeowners might have wished to project a variety of identities via the decoration of their homes, and we cannot assume that these identities were static or universal. Painted images were capable of expressing different facets of identity depending on who viewed them, in which period, and under what circumstances. Moreover, people always had the choice to express or suppress different aspects of their identity depending on what they deemed advantageous to them.⁴⁴ The evidence of wall painting from the period following the colonization of Pompeii by Rome demonstrates that certain types of identity, such as ethnicity, may simply not be visible in the archaeological record, at least in the types of evidence where we might expect to find them. This lack of clear indication of identity might be the result of people in the past deliberately obscuring those facets, or it may rather indicate a mere lack of interest on their part.

⁴³ Cf. Nevett 2010, 8.

⁴⁴ The expression of status has been linked to wall painting in previous scholarship, for example by Wallace-Hadrill (1994); ethnicity has also been considered by Leach (2004, 69) in her suggestion that the Second Style (her “incrustation style”) was imported into Pompeii by Roman colonists to signify their Roman identity. Some archaeological scholarship on identity that I have found useful includes: Mattingly 2010; Hodos 2010; Antonaccio 2010; Wallace-Hadrill 2010; Bradley 2006; Laurence and Berry 1999; Hingley 2010; Emberling and Yoffee 1999.

Finally, a major theme of my project is the relationship between memory and material culture. Almost all surviving Roman texts that discuss the use of marble in the first century B.C.E. were written by authors who lived in periods significantly later than the things they describe. I consider the processes involved in the creation of ancient texts that describe the Roman past. I ask, therefore, to what extent authors projected their own moral attitudes and expectations about private luxury onto their historical subjects. How can we most appropriately use texts in conjunction with the material remains they describe?

Memory also comes into play when I consider the reception of paintings by later generations who lived with those paintings in their homes. Changes in a viewer's response to images might parallel changes in the meaning of that imagery elsewhere: in this case, changes in the significance of real decorative stone influenced viewers' understanding of its imitation. In an earlier period, imported stone was a rare commodity associated with individual military conquest and extreme wealth, whereas later it became a decorative material more widely accessible and symbolic of the general prosperity and power of the Roman Empire. Reception could vary depending on whether earlier meanings were still remembered and acknowledged by later viewers, or whether viewers assumed that contemporary connotations were applicable to the past. Memory also plays a role in creating an impetus for stylistic change. Remembering or forgetting certain meanings attached to images could encourage either their preservation or their replacement with newer, more culturally relevant or appropriate styles. Approaches that take into account memory allow us to move away from the idea of reception as something that is tied to a specific historical moment and to think of it instead as a dynamic, always variable process.⁴⁵

Throughout, I make selective use of concepts and approaches from the vast field of memory studies, according to what best suits the materials I examine. When I consider textual evidence, I am particularly interested in what information about the material past had been transmitted to the authors who wrote about earlier periods, as well as how closely it resembles what we can see from the archaeological record. I also carefully

⁴⁵ Cf. Hodos 2010, 15–18.

consider the active role that Roman authors took in shaping memory, especially in terms of the effects of Roman imperial ideology on the memory of the Republican past.⁴⁶ The work of Alain M. Gowing in particular informs my approach to the subject, which has explored that subject in depth, though through the lens of history rather than art or archaeology.⁴⁷

When I consider the material and visual evidence, which consists mainly of wall paintings and the living environments in which they were displayed, I am less concerned with commemoration than with everyday remembering and forgetting. As Yannis Hamilakis has recently noted, commemoration has more often been the focus of archaeological studies of memory, which often explore the ways in which objects and environments were deliberately shaped (or reshaped) as commemorative markers.⁴⁸ Instead, I am interested in how the decorated domestic environment was repeatedly reinterpreted by inhabitants of, or visitors to, those spaces as time passed. In some cases, interpretations of paintings from the past may have been consciously constructed in order to serve the needs of self-presentation on the part of members of a household. Decisions about what paintings were worthy of preservation would sometimes have relied on motivations related to self-presentation and, therefore, we may be able to understand them as recurring commemorative acts. Therefore, I do not completely discount the value of considering commemorative acts of memory in relation to wall painting.

More often, however, people who viewed old wall paintings probably viewed them more passively as objects from the past and interpreted them based on their own experiences and expectations, as well as their notions of how people in the past thought and behaved. This type of memory was occasional, informal, and not always conscious, but it was triggered by encounters with images and environments created by people who came before them. By considering a variety of possible readings of earlier paintings by later viewers, based on contemporary material environments and cultural concerns, I intend to explore the actions that shape memory: both remembering and forgetting. In doing so I acknowledge that objects and images had an existence and meaning that lasted

⁴⁶ See, for example, Cubitt 2007, 29, 77.

⁴⁷ Gowing 2005. For more on this topic, see Ch. 2, pp. 35-40.

⁴⁸ Cf. Hamilakis 2010, 191.

beyond the moment of their creation and was constantly in flux.⁴⁹ In tandem with memory studies, I incorporate other social theories developed by archaeologists and art historians. One particular approach, inspired in part by an article by Katina T. Lillios, helps me to consider the potential heirloom qualities of objects as a possible explanation for why certain paintings were maintained long after styles changed.⁵⁰

In each chapter I employ a different approach or approaches to the material, depending on the types of evidence available. The themes of luxury, self-presentation, identity, and memory link all of my interpretations, but there is no single, unified meaning for marble in Roman wall painting. The reception of each painting depended very much on who was viewing it, during which moment in history, and in which community.

III. Regional and Chronological Scope

In terms of wall painting chronology, the bulk of my study encompasses the First through Fourth Styles, three of which (First, Second, Fourth) feature imitation stone to differing extents and deploy it quite differently. In absolute chronology, this period is roughly the late-second century B.C.E. to 79 C.E., though the dates for the introduction of the First Style to Pompeii are not at all certain. Because the towns and villas destroyed by the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 C.E. provide the largest sample of paintings over a period of about 200 years, they are the focus of most of this study. The city of Pompeii is especially important, since we know more about its sociopolitical structure and history than we do about Herculaneum, for example, and because most surviving evidence for wall painting in the Roman world comes from there.⁵¹ Herculaneum is also less useful than Pompeii for my purposes because occurrences of imitation stone are much rarer than in Pompeii, in contrast to real stone, which is relatively common in Herculaneum.⁵² As a result, I introduce Herculaneum only as a point of comparison for Pompeii, since it

⁴⁹ Hamilakis (2010, 193–194) also urges this kind of research in archaeology, which allows insight into the ability of objects to bring the past into the present. He suggests that we focus on the work of memory, and the practice, instead of more vague conceptions of memory.

⁵⁰ Drawing especially on Lillios 1999.

⁵¹ Cf. Clarke 1991, 80.

⁵² See pp. 191–192 below on possible explanations for the differences between the two communities.

demonstrates that there were significant local differences even between towns that were located near one another.

The most elaborate Second Style paintings are chiefly found in villas rather than townhouses and so the villas near Pompeii and those of Oplontis, Boscoreale, and Stabiae are crucial sources of evidence. Painting from other Campanian sites, such as Baiae at the northwest end of the Bay of Naples provides some comparanda. In addition, in order to demonstrate regional variation, I compare trends in Rome to those in Campania as a means of understanding the place of developments in Pompeii and the rest of the Vesuvian region against a backdrop of political and cultural change in the broader Roman Empire.

i. Chronological Problems in Roman Domestic Architecture and Decoration

The precise chronology of wall painting styles is a vexed issue and not one that I attempt to resolve here. Nevertheless, it is important to draw attention to some problems in order to clarify how I deal with chronology in my own work. When taking an approach that focuses so much on change over time and on historical context, it is essential to have a functional chronological framework in place. As I mentioned above, the chronology of Pompeian wall painting began with the work of August Mau, and his basic framework has been reinforced and elaborated throughout the past century. Most dating of wall painting is based on two things: (1) comparison with construction techniques used to build the walls to which the paintings are attached; and/or (2) stylistic analysis that arranges paintings along an evolutionary continuum.

The main difficulty with relying on construction techniques to date paintings is the tendency toward circular reasoning when applying these comparisons.⁵³ That is, not only are paintings dated based on construction techniques, those construction techniques have themselves been assigned dates based on accepted painting chronologies. Marcello Mogetta's recent dissertation addresses these problems and proposes some solutions to them, focusing on the development of concrete architecture in Rome and Pompeii.⁵⁴ He

⁵³ Cf. Allison 2004, 15.

⁵⁴ Mogetta 2013. These problems had previously been recognized, for example: Bergmann 2001, 57.

notes that in Pompeii, it is “extremely difficult to date domestic architecture simply on the basis of masonry style, without other kinds of external evidence.”⁵⁵

There are numerous potential difficulties as well in relying too heavily on stylistic chronologies. This sort of framework does not always acknowledge factors that might account for variability – differences are explained as the result of artistic development over time. One such factor is regional difference. It has been assumed that styles originated in Rome and spread elsewhere from there, making examples from Rome that resembled examples elsewhere by default the earlier ones, though the only real basis for such a premise is the supposed cultural dominance of Rome.⁵⁶ Perhaps, however, a more “advanced” form of a painting style was simply a regional preference, while a less “advanced”, but contemporaneous, version was thought more desirable elsewhere. Other factors that could have promoted stylistic differences might include different training received by different painters and workshops, the preferences of patrons who commissioned their work, or the social requirements for the decoration of different types of spaces. The possibilities abound.

I do not suggest that those scholars who advocate the study of stylistic progress from this perspective completely ignore complicating factors. There is a danger, nevertheless, that potential complexities might not be taken into account, especially when new archaeological finds of painted plaster are assigned to one period or another based on such general principles. There is also some risk of teleological reasoning when developing chronologies of this sort, or at least of understanding evolutionary chronologies developed by others in a teleological way. Such chronologies often seem to present a certain manifestation of a style as the predetermined goal of previous artistic production, which aspired to that most advanced or developed iteration. According to this thinking, later examples must represent a decline and/or progress toward another goal.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Mogetta 2013, 226.

⁵⁶ For more on this problem, see *ibid.*, 44ff. Recent interpretations of the historical significance of wall painting have relied on this assumption, including: Welch 2006b; and Sauron 2007.

⁵⁷ I find that the dating of paintings supposed to be transitional from the Second to Third Style is especially troubling in this regard, as they tend to be based on the level of ornamentation and closing up of the wall’s surface. These explanations in particular seem to suppose that painters had the “mature” Third Style in mind and were actively and gradually trying to move toward it. For example, Clarke 1991, 134: “If [the early Third Style painting] of cubiculum 25 paves the way for the elimination of fictive architecture, room 12 [...] has already passed the point of no return”, cf. also Clarke 1991, 52; Ling 1991, 36-37; and cf.

While scholars who apply such terms (“advanced,” “developed,” “mature,” etc.) to phases of painting may simply mean them as descriptive, relative terms, the terms themselves give the impression that there is a perfected, archetypal form only achieved after a period of less successful attempts. This model also seems to suggest that painters could not make large stylistic leaps on their own, such as adopting new, unusual color palettes or different proportions, but instead operated strictly according to a process of steady, gradual change.⁵⁸ One is left with the impression that all painters at a single moment in time created paintings with similar characteristics, and that these differed in only minor ways from the decorations they themselves had designed a year or two earlier. By adhering to ideas like these, scholars obscure the variety of mechanisms that lay behind stylistic change and the external cultural forces that drove change.

Another approach to dating painting styles that has appeared in the scholarship is to interpret imagery in terms of its appropriateness for a particular historical period.⁵⁹ Understanding the relationship between the contents of paintings and other contemporary cultural phenomena is clearly a crucial part of interpreting their significance. There can be a danger, however, of forcing painting into a certain narrow period in order to support an argument, despite a lack of corroborating evidence to support that date, or even in the face of contradictory evidence. For example, in his influential book on Augustan art published in 1988, Paul Zanker assigned the elaborate Second Style architectural schemes in several rooms in Villa A at Oplontis to the early Augustan period (*ca.* 30 B.C.E.), based mainly on an image of a tripod in one painting.⁶⁰ That seems to me not nearly strong enough evidence for pushing the date of the Second Style paintings at Oplontis so much later than any other scholar had suggested. Indeed, Zanker’s proposed date has not been widely accepted in subsequent scholarship.⁶¹

Perhaps the greatest impediment to dating paintings on stylistic grounds is that proposed stylistic chronologies are very difficult to link to absolute dates. Many scholars

Leach 2004, 142 on the difficulties of assigning a date for the “late Second Style” paintings from the Villa Farnesina.

⁵⁸ Heinrich (2002) gives this impression in his arrangement of less elaborate Second Style paintings in Pompeii into phases based on color palette or proportions.

⁵⁹ Platt 2009, 43 provides a more convincing example of this kind of analysis.

⁶⁰ Zanker 1988, 266–268.

⁶¹ Tybout 2001, 35 objects to this date on stylistic grounds.

have cautioned against assigning too precise dates to phases of painting,⁶² and yet ranges of ten or so years are often suggested for those phases.⁶³ In the absence of clear rationales for these date ranges, they appear to be based on the idea that developments took place in regular, gradual stages. In most cases, we simply have no real idea of the pace at which changes took place.⁶⁴ When, in the cases of the Second through Fourth Styles, we are dealing with such a tight chronology with a large number of phases and sub-phases fitted into the space of less than a century, seemingly small discrepancies could be important. Rolf Tybout, a proponent of the study of stylistic chronologies for wall painting, has emphasized that once a new phase had been invented, painters could always continue to use older versions.⁶⁵ As a result, he argues that we have to use the most “advanced” painting in a building to date the whole set of decorations therein. I can think of a number of possible problems with this approach, including examples of houses or villas in which none of the paintings extant represented the most “advanced” available version of the style at the time they were created. We could say, then, that the paintings provided at least a *terminus post quem* for a building. We have no idea, however, how often paintings were produced that did not conform to the most “mature” possible standards for their time. Consequently, following this principle could result in misdating a number of important examples. It is not a particularly useful technique for investigating stylistic change.

I do not deny that stylistic analysis has its value, and that classification is a useful tool for the study of Pompeian wall painting. These types of studies can give us a better sense of the full variety of decoration that once existed and can allow us to detect patterns that we might not otherwise see. Problems may arise, however, when tentative relative chronologies become attached to absolute dates in a way that makes them appear more certain than they are. There are many instances in which archaeologists use painted plaster fragments to date structures, or wall paintings to date wall construction methods, when the dates for the paintings themselves are not firm.⁶⁶

⁶² E.g. Ling 1991, 23.

⁶³ E.g. *ibid.*, 24.

⁶⁴ Cf. Clarke 2005, 277.

⁶⁵ Tybout 2001, 40.

⁶⁶ Examples of questionable reliance on painting as a dating tool include Morard 2007, 61; Berg 2005, 202.

I conclude my discussion of dating with some suggested chronological markers associated with paintings in the Bay of Naples region and Rome, along with an evaluation of their potential usefulness. A few similar examples from other sites do exist. Since I argue that the archaeological or artistic tradition of an individual community relied on a variety of local factors, I contend that they should not be conflated with those of another site. I therefore leave those other sites out of this discussion.⁶⁷

One potentially reliable point of reference is the recently published excavation of the Casa del Fauno (VI.12.2/5) in Pompeii, the house that contains most of the First Style decoration that survived almost two centuries until its burial.⁶⁸ The areas in which excavation below the floor level could be undertaken were limited. Nevertheless, Adolf Hoffmann and Andrea Faber were able to conclude, based on excavated ceramic finds, that redecoration occurred near the end of the second century B.C.E.⁶⁹ This date does not tell us anything about when the First Style was introduced to Pompeii, but it does show that around 110 B.C.E. the First Style was considered desirable enough to adorn the entirety of one of the largest properties in Pompeii.⁷⁰

Another possibly useful date that has been associated with wall painting in Pompeii is the *ca.* 80 B.C.E. colonization of the town by Rome. A graffito scratched into the plaster of the basilica's walls names a Roman colonist, which has suggested to numerous scholars a *terminus ante quem* of 78 B.C.E. for that building's First Style decoration.⁷¹ In addition, the interior decoration of the Temple of Jupiter, thought by Zevi and others to have been renovated by the colonists, seems to have been in the Second Style.⁷² I hesitate to equate developments in wall decoration from public buildings with those from private homes, however, since different rules may well have governed what was appropriate and attractive in the two types of environments (or three, if we consider that a sacred space had its own requirements). When we look specifically at domestic

⁶⁷ Examples include the phase of destruction at Cosa, which had First Style paintings previously, which are replaced after the event by Second Style (Laidlaw 1985, 39), and dateable pottery from Ostia associated with some Second Style painting (Morard 2007, 59). For others, see Strocka "Pompeiani, Stili".

⁶⁸ Though these reports were only published in 2009, the excavations themselves were carried out in the 1960s.

⁶⁹ Hoffmann and Faber 2009, 104–108.

⁷⁰ For more on the decoration of the Casa del Fauno, see pp.95-105.

⁷¹ Dobbins 2007.

⁷² Zevi, 1996.

decoration in this period, it does seem that a phase of large-scale building and/or extensive renovation took place throughout the city around the middle of the first century B.C.E. These new residences were decorated with Second Style painting.⁷³ We are left, however, with a rather long period of time within which these paintings could have been produced. Though the town was made a colony around 80, we do not know how long it took for property to be distributed, for colonists to move in, for new spaces to be constructed, and then for those spaces to be decorated. We could be dealing with dates anywhere from about 75 to after 50 B.C.E. for those paintings.

Recent work on a number of villas around the Bay of Naples has dated their first phase of construction and decoration to either the first half of the first century B.C.E. or to the middle of that century. The fact that multiple projects have apparently independently come to similar conclusions, which usually revise earlier assumptions about those residences' origins, based on different types of evidence, supports a picture of particularly active villa-building in this period. These large residences, which include Villa A at Oplontis, the Villa dei Misteri at Pompeii, the Villa dei Papiri at Herculaneum, and the Republican villa under the Castello di Baia, were all originally decorated in the Second Style, putting the date for especially elaborate versions of that style around the mid-first century as well.⁷⁴ It should be noted, however, that in several cases the paintings themselves have been used as chronological markers for dating the buildings, such as in recent publications on the Villa dei Misteri and Villa A at Oplontis.⁷⁵ This type of dating makes those conclusions less useful here, as I hope to determine the chronology of those very paintings.⁷⁶ The chronology is, again, somewhat imprecise, though comparable to that proposed for the introduction of the Second Style into Pompeii.

A chronological marker from Rome that has been used as a point of reference for examples outside of Rome since Mau is the collection of structures on the Palatine hill

⁷³ For a detailed discussion of this period, see Chapter 5.

⁷⁴ Thomas and Clarke 2007; Guidobaldi and Esposito 2009; Esposito 2007; Minihero 2007. See Chapter 4 for more discussion of the relationship between Second Style painting and villas during this period.

⁷⁵ Esposito 2007; Thomas and Clarke 2007. I intend to carry out a project in the near future investigating the chronology of Republican villas and the role of Second Style paintings in that context. For preliminary observations, see pp. 134-136 below.

⁷⁶ But see Mogetta 2013, 224 who argues for a date after 70 B.C.E. for the Villa dei Misteri on analogy with other buildings from that period he has investigated.

collectively referred to as the Casa di Augusto and/or Casa di Livia.⁷⁷ These buildings are assigned to early in the reign of Augustus, after he obtained property there in the 30s B.C.E. A pipe stamp in a gallery connecting the Casa di Livia with a later imperial residence (Domus Flavia) names JULIA AUGUSTA, linking that building with the first empress. The pipe must date to the early first century C.E., after the death of Augustus in 14, when his widow received that title.⁷⁸ As is often the case, some circular logic seems to be applied to use of these paintings as references for dating other decorations and for dating the walls to which they are attached as well. The dates for the Casa di Augusto and Casa di Livia are supported by the supposed relative place of their decoration in the development of the Second Style (i.e. “mature” Second Style); however, the absolute date range assigned to that phase is in turn inferred by the fact that they are found in the Casa di Augusto.⁷⁹ Therefore, the house is dated by its paintings, and the painting’s dates confirmed by the date of the house. Moreover, comparing these paintings to others found at sites like Pompeii assumes that there was a universal stylistic evolution at various sites in Italy, an assumption that is not well-founded.⁸⁰

When we consider the Fourth Style, other imperial residences in Rome serve as important references points, namely the Domus Transitoria and the Domus Aurea, both constructed by Nero.⁸¹ The difficulties with relying on these decorations as chronological markers are essentially the same as those encountered in previously mentioned examples: namely the possibility of separate stylistic traditions outside of Rome, and a lack of information concerning how long styles took to be adopted at various sites after they were first created. We assume that because Nero prized innovative architecture, and because the painter of the Domus Aurea, Famulus, is among the only painters mentioned by name anywhere in Roman literature, that Nero’s residences would have been decorated in a cutting-edge fashion.⁸² It is entirely possible that other elements of the decoration of those buildings were pioneering, such as their stone embellishment.

⁷⁷ See Clarke 2005, 264.

⁷⁸ Kleijn 2001, 118.

⁷⁹ E.g. Tybout 2001, 35.

⁸⁰ Cf. Leach 2004, 64.

⁸¹ See, for example, Ling 1991, 71–72.

⁸² Pl. *N.H.* 35.37.120.

Nevertheless, the painting in the Domus Aurea may simply have been the height of existing fashion within that medium, and not newly created for that environment.⁸³

An unusually precise range of dates for a particular set of paintings is available from one house in Pompeii. Coin impressions in the plaster of the Casa della Caccia Antica (VII.4.48) date no earlier than 71 C.E., during the reign of Vespasian.⁸⁴ The destruction of Pompeii imposes a *terminus ante quem* of 79 on those Fourth Style paintings. Plaster analysis shows that all of the paintings in the house were produced during the same campaign of decoration, though whether or not this information can help us to draw broader conclusions is unclear. Information of this type is, unfortunately, extremely rare. While excavated finds can sometimes give us a sense of when a building decorated in a certain fashion was built or renovated, it is very unusual to have a dateable find literally embedded in a wall painting itself.

Evidence of redecoration as part of reconstruction after structural damage to houses in Pompeii constitutes another event that scholars provide as a chronological marker for certain buildings there. Though the date for “the earthquake” is usually given as 62 C.E., Allison has noted that there was a series of seismic events in the years and even decades preceding the eruption of Mount Vesuvius, and any one of those events could have caused damage to one property or another.⁸⁵ Repairs to earthquake damage, then, are of limited chronological utility.

In the course of my own research, I have considered whether or not imitation stone in painting might serve as a useful dating tool for those images. After all, different types of stone were discovered and imported to Italy at different times throughout the period from the First to the Fourth Pompeian Styles. What I have concluded is that the types of stone that appear in painting seem to confirm the generally accepted chronology, but that they probably cannot lend much more precision to it or overturn previous assumptions. For example, the types of stone that we see in paintings that have already been assigned to the late Republic – that is, Second Style paintings – correspond to the varieties that were being imported in at least a small quantity in that period, according to

⁸³ Innovations under Claudius and Nero: Pl. *N.H.* 35.1.3 (and see Chapter 2).

⁸⁴ Allison 2002.

⁸⁵ Allison 2006, 14.

textual and archaeological evidence. Types of stone imitated in Fourth Style paintings include not only those found in the Second Style, but also a number of examples not known in Rome until the Augustan period or later. This information suggests at least that the broad chronological outline followed by most scholars is reasonably reliable.

Instead of positing narrow ranges of absolute dates here (such as 60-50 B.C.E., etc.), I choose to place trends within wider historical periods, such as “the late Republic” or the “Julio-Claudian period”. Doing so allows me to link broad changes over time to political, social, or cultural changes, especially relative to dominant practices and attitudes in other periods. I do not, however, wish to create the illusion that our chronology is more precise or secure than it is.

IV. Chapter Outline

After a discussion of the literary and archaeological sources for decorative marble during the first century B.C.E. and first century C.E., I proceed chronologically from the First Style to the Fourth Style. The final chapter returns to the First and Second Styles, but considers their reception during the last phase of their use before being buried by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius – that is, during the Fourth Style period.

Chapter 2, “Archaeological and Literary Sources for the Use of Decorative Stone in Roman Residential Architecture,” is a study of the literary and archaeological sources for imported marbles in residential buildings in Roman Italy, particularly in Campania, Rome, and occasionally villas elsewhere in Italy. The literary evidence is presented first. This material sheds lights on how attitudes toward the use of decorative stone, and domestic luxury more broadly, changed over time. In many cases, authors describe and comment on practices from a period pre-dating their own lifetimes. I proceed from the Late Republic to the Flavian era, focusing on a single author at a time, in order to fully explore his aims and values, regardless of the historical period or periods he describes in his work. This understanding of each writer's context and agenda is absolutely vital for evaluating the applicability of their testimony to our interpretation of wall painting.

I then investigate archaeological finds of decorative stone from a variety of domestic contexts from the first century B.C.E. and first century C.E. I also note, when possible, evidence for the introduction of individual types of stone, which often comes

from public buildings rather than houses or villas. By comparing the material evidence with textual commentary on the behavior related to it, I trace attitudes expressed in documentary sources and assess whether they were anachronistic or whether the written record otherwise contradicts the archaeological record. Such discrepancies highlight the points at which the literary record is a less than reliable source of interpretive support for understanding wall painting.

In Chapter 3, “Decorative Stone in the First Pompeian Style,” I discuss the representation of stone in First Style, also called the Masonry Style. This stucco wall decoration seems to have been the earliest instance of simulated colored stone masonry in Pompeian houses. I describe the representation of stone in First Style decorations, which is uniquely stylized and imaginative. I demonstrate that while marble was considered symbolically important as a status symbol in this period, the precise depiction of real varieties of stone was not essential or even particularly desirable. The lack of reference to specific types of stone sets the First Style apart from all other representations of stone in painting that succeeded it. Possession of First Style decoration signaled that the owner and inhabitants of a home understood and participated in widespread, prestigious Hellenistic culture, in which well-to-do homes around the Mediterranean were decorated in a similar fashion.

Chapter 4, “Marble and Morality in Republican Villas,” introduces Second Style wall painting. This style, which represented the height of naturalistic representation of imported colored stone, flourished in an especially chaotic period in the history of Roman Italy. The Late Republic was characterized by massive overseas conquest, a resulting increase in wealth and monumental building in Italy, and vicious civil war. In this chapter, I center my analysis on Second Style paintings in the contexts of villas, as distinct from townhouses, in the Bay of Naples region. The difference between the two types of environments is a crucial one. The relationship between the growth of villa culture and the development of the Second Style during the first century B.C.E., especially in terms of Roman discourses on luxury, morality, and marble, is essential to my interpretation of the wall paintings.

I contend that the over-the-top luxury depicted in these paintings did not correspond to any real architecture that existed at the time, as can be thoroughly

demonstrated upon comparison with contemporary archaeology and literature. Instead, I argue that these painted architectural fantasies in the Second Style allowed villa owners to question traditional moral strictures on displays of wealth, while shielding themselves from criticism by confining such displays in their own homes to the medium of painting. The location of most of these paintings in villas is appropriate, at a distance from the conservative political center of Rome where they might have been exposed to harsher condemnation. Moreover, it should come as no surprise to find an innovative and experimental decorative style developing in tandem with the innovative, experimental architectural form of the luxury villa.

In Chapter 5, “Local History and the Transition from the First to the Second Style in Pompeii,” I continue my analysis of the Second Style by considering the role of internal community dynamics and local cultural identity in promoting a shift in fashion from the First to the Second Style in Pompeii. After describing the representation of stone in the Second Style in Pompeii and how it differed in fundamental ways from what I describe in the previous chapter, I introduce a case study of burial monuments in Pompeii that date to soon after *ca.* 80 B.C.E. – that is, about the same time that First Style began to be replaced by Second Style painting. I have two reasons for including this parallel case study of tombs. The first is to illustrate the usefulness, indeed necessity, of considering changes observable in material culture within a local community. In Pompeii, after its colonization by Rome, typical burial practice for those with means changed dramatically. Both Roman colonists and the previous inhabitants of the town adapted and combined forms of material culture to create a new, locally significant and advantageous means of self-presentation. I argue that we can think of the changes in wall painting (from First to Second Style) as operating in a way that is similar to what we observe in that case of burial monuments. Some ideas were imported initially from elsewhere but were then reconfigured to function in their new community. Consequently, interpretations of paintings in Pompeii based solely on Roman cultural or social ideals (from Roman literary sources, etc.) cannot fully explain the situation in Pompeii, nor can analogies with Pompeian material culture be applied in a straightforward manner to remains outside of Pompeii.

My case study of burial in Pompeii also emphasizes that the transformations that we observe in the mid-first century B.C.E. in Pompeii were not limited to the medium of painting. That is, developments in wall painting did not derive from or merely respond to earlier developments in wall painting. They were driven by larger cultural changes that materialized in a variety of arenas, of which funerary practice provides an especially striking example. Though this principle – that cultural change influenced stylistic change in painting – is true for painting of all periods, the especially tumultuous circumstances of post-Sullan Pompeii demonstrate the link between socio-political and cultural instability and visual culture especially well.

Chapter 6, “Imperial Marble in Pompeian Wall Painting,” concerns painting from the period after the Second Style went out of fashion. I begin by exploring the possible conditions that led to the abandonment of decorative stone as a motif in the Third Style, and I consider the role of Augustan cultural politics in that drastic transformation. Augustan ideology discouraged people from presenting themselves as ambitious or desirous of excessive wealth, qualities associated with the previous generation of Republican generals, who were themselves associated with the private display of imported stone.

In the second part of the chapter I analyze manifestations of imitation stone that reappear extensively in the Fourth Style. The necessity of using historical context to interpret meaning is made clear in the comparison between stone in the Second and Fourth Styles. Though the materials depicted are nearly identical, changes over a century's time in the availability of valuable building materials and drastic shifts in attitudes about private luxury mean that the connotations of these images had altered significantly. Instead of grandiose fantasies of wealth and power, fictive stone now was a more straightforward imitation of real stone, employed in cases where the real thing was not available. Imported decorative stone in this period was altogether desirable as a symbol of the extent and power of the Roman Empire, as well as the security and prosperity afforded private citizens by the emperor's benevolence.

Chapter 7, “Memory and Meaning,” draws larger conclusions from the preceding material. I begin by considering the reception in the first century C.E. of First and Second Style paintings that were still on display until the eruption of Mount Vesuvius. In doing

so, I draw together all of the themes of the foregoing chapters: the changing importance of stone as a signifier of wealth and culture; evolving attitudes toward private luxury; the use of domestic decoration to express a variety of identities, depending on the needs of the moment; and how forgetting and remembering aspects of the past shaped people's understandings of their material surroundings. Because we lack historical documentation describing for us the processes and attitudes behind the preservation of old paintings, the social theory related to memory outlined earlier is especially useful for answering these questions. What motivated homeowners to maintain old decorations in certain parts of their residences (or in a few cases, throughout entire houses) instead of updating them with the latest fashion? How did changes in the social and cultural life of the community change the way people viewed these old images? How does history change meaning, even when material remains the same? As earlier, evidence for the altered conditions under which later paintings were viewed comes from both documentary and archaeological sources.

Notes on Terminology

I use anglicized versions of common Latin names for stone in order to retain the connotations relevant for Romans, most often geographical (e.g. Numidian marble for *marmor Numidicum*). For consistency, I use Italian names for houses in Pompeii, along with their street addresses. Many houses have been given multiple names since their excavation, but every named house has at least one Italian name. Some properties without names are referred to simply by address. Appendices with alternate names for both stone types and Pompeian houses are included at the end of the text.

All Latin texts are reproduced from Loeb series, and translations are my own, unless otherwise noted.

Chapter Two

Archaeological and Literary Sources for the Use of Decorative Stone in Roman Residential Architecture

Archaeological and literary evidence for Roman decorative marble is rich and varied. A careful and critical study of the broader significance of decorative stone is crucial for recognizing how ancient viewers at different times might have responded to its imitation in wall painting. What were popular attitudes toward imported stone, and how did they change over time? What symbolism was attached to different varieties of stone? Did viewers consider imitation marble to be a straightforward substitute for a more desirable or expensive type of decoration? Did faux stone increase or decrease as the real thing became accessible to a wider group of people in larger quantities? We are fortunate to have, for most of the period under examination here (i.e. *ca.* 150 B.C.E. to 79 C.E.), a combination of archaeological remains of decorative stone from public and private buildings and texts that comment on the use and significance of those materials.

When these sources of information are investigated independently, the picture we get from each type of evidence of the practice of adorning private homes with exotic stone can be quite different. Because the literary sources attach moral significance to the practice, they give the impression that marble use was widespread and large-scale in every period, corresponding to the degree of importance and the emotional response it is accorded in the texts. A closer consideration of each author's aims and agenda, as well as the political, social, and historical context within which he was writing, allows us to form a clearer picture of the material environment he is describing. Since so many of these sources were written significantly later than the periods they describe, a vital step in

reading them is to consider the role of memory in their creation. The scholarship on Roman wall painting has often lacked such a critical and contextual reading of the texts, and so scholars have sometimes applied anachronistic interpretations or have generalized based on the idiosyncratic attitudes of individual authors. Marble in Latin poetry and prose has been the subject of previous research, as has Roman private luxury in general, and my observations here are indebted to that scholarship.⁸⁶ The relationship of either of these topics to wall painting has not, however, been addressed in any detail. My survey here combines the two subjects in such a way that they provide an illuminating background for the questions I ask about painting.

The archaeological evidence is also invaluable in clarifying the relationship between literary attitudes and actual practice. Difficulties, of course, arise from the fragmentary nature of the archaeological evidence. Nevertheless, a broad view of trends in stone decoration during the entire period under study can give us an idea of developments over time. After evaluating each strain of evidence on its own terms, I then bring them together and think about the light each sheds on the other. While it is neither necessary nor desirable to force the two to align precisely, a study of all the available evidence elucidates motivations for representing stone in wall painting, as well as possible responses from viewers. My conclusions in this chapter are crucial for contextualizing the visual culture I examine in subsequent chapters. I have found that a detailed study of these two strains of evidence reveals a discrepancy between the attitudes and ideals that people expressed in writing about decorative stone, and the actual behavior that they engaged in. Wall painting provides an interesting third source of information about the relationship between the ideal and the real, the prescriptive and the descriptive, and in subsequent chapters I will explore that relationship with reference to the conclusions I have drawn here.

I begin by examining the literary sources for decorative stone. The material is arranged by author, chronologically, from Cato the Elder to Suetonius. The dates of the authors discussed range beyond the dates of the wall paintings included in this project, because Roman writers frequently commented on periods from before their own lifetime.

⁸⁶ See n. 41 above, and Nichols 2010; Dubois-Pelerin 2008; Edwards 1993.

In each case, I consider the attitudes of the authors in the context of their own time, rather than assuming that they reflect accurate memories of attitudes from earlier periods. My analysis of specific sources and passages is necessarily brief and not exhaustive but serves as a general overview of attitudes in each period and broad shifts over time.

In the following section, I provide an overview of the archaeological evidence for decorative, imported stone in Rome and elsewhere in Italy from the late second century B.C.E. until the Flavian period. I focus on the use of decorative stone in private buildings, but some public structures are discussed when they constitute the earliest known use of a particular material or when they may have served as models for images in wall painting. Since the wall paintings I examine are located almost exclusively in houses and villas, rather than public buildings, I limit the evidence under consideration here along the same lines. We cannot assume that the cultural rules governing public and private architecture were the same – in fact there is abundant evidence to demonstrate that in many ways they were direct opposites, especially in early periods. This section is arranged chronologically and is intended to provide general information about which stone varieties appeared in which periods in Italy and in which architectural contexts. It is not comprehensive, but provides information intended to be representative of each period for which we also have literary evidence. The choices I have made in this chapter of material to include or exclude are directed toward larger questions of how we can use these sources to interpret wall painting.

The chapter concludes with a brief summary of the use of stone throughout the period of study, drawing on both the archaeological and literary evidence. The general trajectory is as follows: While the types of imported stone available for private use increase steadily throughout the period in question, attitudes toward them, and toward private luxury in general, fluctuate. From both the Late Republic and Augustan periods, we have little archaeological evidence for the use of decorative stone in private residences. Attitudes conveyed in the literature of these two periods, however, toward luxury in general and marble in particular differ significantly, despite the apparent similarities in the material evidence. After the Augustan period, both availability of imported stone for private use and acceptance of the practice increased steadily until the Flavian period. An exception in this general trajectory occurred during the reign of

Vespasian, when conservative attitudes reminiscent of Augustan ideals once are expressed in literature. As in the Augustan period, no break in the actual use of decorative stone is apparent in the archaeological record.

I. Literary Evidence for Marble Use in Domestic Contexts (ca. 150 B.C.E.-96 C.E.)

With the exception of a few brief comments by Vitruvius and Pliny, Roman authors have almost nothing to say about the habit of imitating colored stone in wall painting, despite the frequency with which painted stone appears.⁸⁷ They do, however, have plenty to say about the technology, appearance, and significance of actual decorative stone, both in public and private buildings. Accordingly, scholars seeking insight into the symbolic and social significance of marble architecture and decoration, as well as imitation stone in painting, often turn to these texts.⁸⁸

It is a commonplace when using Roman literary sources to investigate social or cultural history to include a disclaimer to the effect that the sources we have tend to reflect only a very limited outlook. That perspective is male, elite, literate, etc. Acknowledging this bias is especially important when using the documentary evidence to interpret archaeological remains from a site outside of the city of Rome. Some prominent Romans such as Cicero owned property in the vicinity of Pompeii and other sites described here. Most of the remains of buildings we now have access to, however, were owned by local people of greater or lesser local influence, who did not belong to the same social groups as the writers of our texts. Because we know so little about the ownership of individual properties in Pompeii, we cannot say for certain when studying the decoration of one building or another whether the owner belonged even to a local elite – and in every case, most of the viewers of wall paintings certainly did not. The people who viewed wall paintings on a daily basis, however closely they looked, would have included: the male or female property owner and his or her spouse, children and other relatives; other members of the household, including slaves; tenants; guests of a similar

⁸⁷ Eristov 1979, 693.

⁸⁸ See Dubois-Pelerin 2007.

status to the property owner's; and lower-status guests such as clients, merchants, and workmen.

Moreover, all the literary sources that discuss decorative marble were written by men who were part of the elite in Rome itself, while Pompeians, many or most of whom may have considered themselves Romans, were nevertheless part of a local cultural and social group distinct from Rome. We cannot be certain that the concerns and values of Pompeians necessarily aligned precisely with those expressed by Roman authors.⁸⁹ Therefore, I consider the texts I discuss below part of my interpretive framework, rather than direct evidence. That is, the texts can provide ideas about the sorts of attitudes and behaviors that were possible at a particular time for those who participated in Roman culture. They do not, however, tell us exactly why most people decorated their homes the ways they did, or how any particular viewer would have responded to a wall painting. The literary evidence opens up more possibilities of interpretation, but it rarely answers our questions directly.⁹⁰

The literary sources are of great value, nonetheless, for giving us some idea of broad trends over time, as well as possible ideologically-based reactions to them. It is important to keep in mind that an attitude conveyed by one of these authors was just one of a number of competing viewpoints that coexisted in the past, even among that author's peers.⁹¹ This fact is especially obvious when encountering criticisms of widespread or popular practices: the people who engaged in those activities must not have shared the writers' opinions.

While the social groups and identities to which most Pompeian townspeople belonged overlapped in only a few instances with those of Roman authors, villa owners may have had more in common with them. Wealthy locals surely owned some of the villas whose remains we have access to today, but we know from written sources that the wealthiest and highest ranking Romans from Rome also owned villa properties around the Bay of Naples. No easy or substantial archaeological distinction can be made between

⁸⁹ Allison 2001, 196.

⁹⁰ Cf. Hodos 2010, 13.

⁹¹ Gowing 2005, 9.

the properties of upper and middle/lower elites in terms of decoration.⁹² For example, Caesar, Hortensius, and Marius (among others) owned villas around Baiae in the Late Republican period.⁹³ The remains of these villas, situated in some of the best locations in terms of defense and views of the landscape, have the same style and quality of Second Style paintings as we find elsewhere in Campania, such as those in the Villa dei Misteri at Pompeii, the Villa Arianna at Stabiae, and Villa A at Oplontis.⁹⁴ We can conjecture, then, that the ideals governing the decoration of Republican villas were (at least partially) shared among a large group of villa owners. The attitudes, therefore, displayed by Roman authors, their peers, apply to some extent in interpreting the remains of luxury villas.

i. Imperial Memories of Republican Marble in Roman Literature

A major difficulty in interpreting many of the texts that discuss decorative marble in domestic settings is that they were written by authors living decades or even centuries later than the material environments they describe. Modern scholars who use texts to complement material or visual studies have rarely acknowledged this problem.⁹⁵ As a result, it has led to descriptions of materialized behavior (by which I mean the activities and choices that created material remains) in the Republican period, for example, that rely almost entirely on attitudes recorded in much later literary works.⁹⁶ As Alain Gowing has emphasized, it was an acknowledged part of the Roman historical process to make sense of the past for use in the present. Accordingly, historians drew on the same examples in different ways at different times; the meaning of the past was changeable even for those who labored to record the past.⁹⁷ In order to use the information those writers provide as a guide, of sorts, to understanding the significance of stone decoration and painted imitation, we have to answer a few questions about the literary work in question and its author:

⁹² See pp. 119-120 for more on this.

⁹³ D'Arms 1970, 20–27, 41–43, 45.

⁹⁴ See for example, the villa at Baiae thought once to have belonged to Julius Caesar: Miniero 2008. Also see pp. 119-120 below.

⁹⁵ Cf. Allison 2001, 182-183.

⁹⁶ E.g. Santoro 2007, who describes Republican marble use almost exclusively by reporting the opinions of Pliny the Elder.

⁹⁷ Gowing 2005, 10.

(1) Is the author describing a contemporary material environment or one from the past (i.e. before his own lifetime)? If he is describing something built/made in the past, does he still have firsthand access to examine it?

(2) What genre is the work, and what conventions are associated with that genre? What is the author's agenda in writing it?

(3) What are the author's sources for describing the material world? Does he rely on previous written accounts or on his own observation of the artifacts/buildings he describes?

(4) What role does memory play in the author's description and interpretation of the material? Does the significance he ascribes to it correspond to the ideals of the period he is discussing, or is that significance particular to his own time?

In order to use the testimony of Roman authors effectively in conjunction with painting, all of these issues, among others, need to be addressed. Penelope M. Allison is among those who have noted the lack of careful, contextual analysis of texts in scholarship on the Roman domestic environment in particular.⁹⁸ It is especially important to pay attention to historical context when dealing with the ideals surrounding private luxury, since there was a great deal of change in these attitudes from the Late Republic to the Flavian period.⁹⁹ Consequently, a simple application of Pliny the Elder's opinions about decorative stone to an interpretation of Second Style wall paintings could be misleading, despite Pliny's great interest in detailing the use of stone in the Late Republic.

The wealth of scholarly literature from recent years on memory and history is a fundamental resource in carrying out a study of this sort. I combine this theoretical apparatus with one that takes into account the relationship between history and archaeology or material culture, in order to take full advantage of written descriptions of Roman marble use and domestic decoration.¹⁰⁰ The texts are not simple guidebooks to the past, and so they must be interpreted as carefully as the material evidence. Though such a statement may seem like a truism, it is not uncommon for scholars of art and archaeology

⁹⁸ Allison 2001; cf. also Confino 1997, 1391–93.

⁹⁹ Dubois-Pelerin 2008, 118; Gowing 2005, 118.

¹⁰⁰ These approaches are more fully explored in chapter 6.

to mine the documentary sources for relevant information and to apply that information out of context and uncritically to their material.¹⁰¹ Texts, too, are artifacts from the past rather than merely descriptions of it.¹⁰²

A number of fundamental concepts that scholars of memory and history have described and debated in the scholarship are of particular value for understanding the Roman literature on imported stone. It is important, for example, to consider the sort of remembering that is practiced and displayed by our sources. Two of the categories most frequently described mentioned in memory studies are inscribed memory versus embodied memory.¹⁰³ Inscribed memory is a recording of the past, which often involves deliberate manipulation of that past to serve present political, social, or other needs. Embodied or incorporated memory, instead, describes a type of remembering that happens on a day-to-day basis, which occurs less self-consciously and requires repeated behavior to be maintained.¹⁰⁴ These categories can overlap significantly, and what we find in the Latin texts discussed below is usually a combination of the two.¹⁰⁵ Most of our authors drew upon examples from the past in order to make points or provide lessons about behavior in the present, often quite explicitly. At the same time, they rarely acknowledge or even seem aware that ideals in the past may have differed significantly from their own, and thus they tend to judge past behavior according to their own standards. Another dichotomy relevant for our purposes is collective vs. personal/individual memory.¹⁰⁶ Again, these concepts are not diametrically opposed; rather, they overlap in many ways. The beliefs about the past held by Roman writers in various periods reflect the preoccupations of large groups of contemporaries. At the same time, however, individual authors might well have drawn on their own experiences in shaping memories.

An especially vital point to emphasize is that part of the memory process requires forgetting.¹⁰⁷ This may involve the deliberate, conscious omission of details, in the

¹⁰¹ Allison 2001.

¹⁰² Moreland 2001, 26, 34.

¹⁰³ Whittle 2010, 36; Connerton 1989, 74, 94.

¹⁰⁴ This, of course, relates closely to the concepts of habitus and practice in Bourdieu 1977.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Hamilakis 2010, 192.

¹⁰⁶ Boyer and Wertsch 2009, 113; Cubitt 2007, 14–17.

¹⁰⁷ For a particularly important study of forgetting in the Roman world, see Flower 2006.

service of making the past more palatable and relevant in the present. It may, alternatively, result from a simple lack of interest in details that are difficult to relate to as time passes. Again, we are most likely dealing with some combination of these two phenomena in the Roman sources. If we can recover some sense of those aspects of the past that were rejected or forgotten in our sources, we can better understand the significance of those that were retained.¹⁰⁸

For the Romans, memory was of extreme cultural and social importance.¹⁰⁹ The past was always a point of comparison and inspiration especially in moralizing literature. When it came to exotic stone in particular, very few writers were neutral in their attitudes. Instead, Roman writers manipulated the history of decorative stone to make very different points, depending on their individual agendas. For one author, the past was a more innocent and honorable time, free from greed and displays of excess; for another it was the beginning of a repulsive decline, when one invention after another propelled people toward the decadence of the present.

ii. Material, Memory and Text

Because the picture of life in the past provided by our writers is incomplete, it is difficult to determine on the basis of their testimony alone whether the attitudes they project were shared by their predecessors, or whether they are based solely on their own experiences and interests. One way to address these questions is to compare Imperial and Republican sources. Unfortunately, while we have a wealth of imperial-period testimony on both contemporary and historical uses of stone, Republican authors like Cicero and his contemporaries have little to say on the subject. It is difficult, then, to use attitudes toward stone attested in Republican literature to test the accuracy of those attitudes attributed to that period by later writers.

The increasing use of colored stone to decorate private residences was an easy target for imperial writers, who decried the increase in luxury and displays of wealth in houses and villas. The work of scholars such as Éva Dubois-Pelerin describes a trajectory of attitudes from criticism in the Late Republic to acceptance or even praise in the

¹⁰⁸ Confino 1997, 1390, 1394; Borić 2010, 15.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Small 1997, 178–180.

Flavian period.¹¹⁰ In my view, this perhaps oversimplifies the story told by the sources when we focus on imported stone in particular. Since very few Republican works mention private stone decoration, we are left to reconstruct early practices and attitudes from later projections. For many of these later authors, their own daily experience with their material environment, and their expectations about how different types of people lived and what was appropriate for their homes, colored their interpretations of domestic life in the past.

In the remainder of this chapter, I collect and analyze references to decorative stone in public and private buildings, with an emphasis on private use, from the Middle Republic to the reign of Domitian. Though Domitian's reign falls outside the period in which our painted examples belong, literary evidence from that period can help us to understand the trajectory of attitudes toward private luxury that originated - or regenerated - late in the reign of Vespasian and under Titus (i.e. the period during which the Vesuvian sites were buried). Later authors are also valuable as they sometimes comment on the periods from which the paintings I examine come, and so I look at Tacitus and Suetonius in particular. I proceed through the texts in chronological order, i.e. by the date at which the text was written, *not* the period it describes. Though attitudes and descriptions of the material environment to which they are applied are not always contemporaneous, by discussing one author at a time, I can fully explore his aims and opinions. I can also track changes over time in ideals among all of the writers here. In contrast, the archaeological evidence discussed below is more useful for illustrating actual practice – as opposed to what was ideal – over time.

Dubois-Pelerin has demonstrated that there was a gradual, progressive, and fairly steady increase in acceptance of private luxury in general (including dining habits, private architecture and decoration, and clothing and personal adornment) from the Middle Republic to the Flavian period and beyond. If we hone in on attitudes toward decorative stone in the private sphere, as I do here, we see that the trajectory is a parallel one, with a few phases of backlash and criticism interspersed, particularly during the reigns of Augustus and Vespasian.¹¹¹ I observe that, throughout the period under study,

¹¹⁰ Dubois-Pelerin 2008, 118; Gowing 2005, 118.

¹¹¹ Dubois-Pelerin 2008, 41.

comments on marble stand in for comments on luxury more broadly, with the prominence of that coveted material growing steadily in the literature as it became more widely available and conspicuous.

iii. Cato the Elder (234-149 BCE) (and Festus, late 2nd century C.E.)

Possibly the earliest Latin literary reference we have to the use of imported stone in domestic decoration appears in a brief quotation of Cato the Elder in Festus (p. 282 Lindsey, 5-9).

Pavimenta Poenica marmore Numidico constrata significat Cato, cum ait in ea, quam habuit, ne quis Cos. bis fieret: « dicere possum, quibus villae atque aedes aedificatae, atque expolitae maximo opere citro atque ebore atque pavimentis Poeniciis tent †». ¹¹²

Despite Festus's interpreting this passage as a reference to Numidian marble, the earliest archaeological evidence in Italy for Numidian marble, a yellow stone imported from North Africa, comes from public architecture during the first century B.C.E.¹¹³ Since this was well after Cato's death, it seems unlikely that the stone was already being imported in quantities sufficient for its use in residential architecture during his lifetime. In fact, we have little evidence until the mid-first century B.C.E., textual or archaeological, for the use of any imported decorative stones in either public or private contexts. Archaeological excavations of villas that were in use during Cato's lifetime show that they could be quite monumental, built from heavy ashlar and elaborately decorated with terracottas – but evidence for fine colored stone has not been reported.¹¹⁴

More likely, I argue, by “Punic pavements” Cato was referring to *opus signinum* or *cocciopesto* floors, a type of pavement thought to have been introduced to Italy from Carthage.¹¹⁵ These floors were created from mortar, often mixed with ground pottery or

¹¹² “Cato mentioned that Punic pavements were paved with Numidian marble, when he said about them, in his opinion, that no one should have been made consul twice, ‘I could say, who has villas and residences constructed and embellished [literally: polished] with the greatest effort and with citron and ivory and Punic pavements.’”

¹¹³ See below p. 74.

¹¹⁴ Terrenato 2012, 71, 74; cf. Welch 2006b, 105.

¹¹⁵ For a more detailed summary of the scholarly debate on this question, and its archaeological basis, see Mogetta 2013, 47–48. Cf. Dunbabin (20) on “Punic pavements”. Dubois-Pelerin 2008, 118) suggests that

tile, and sometimes decorated with patterns of inset *tesserae* or larger chunks of stone.¹¹⁶ Smooth mortar floors of this sort would have been a step up from the packed earth floors found in most domestic buildings in this period; in Pompeii, almost all early-third and second century B.C.E. houses seem to have had packed earth floors, rather than pavements of any kind.¹¹⁷ A paved floor may have been considered an extravagance in a rural villa, especially by the notoriously conservative and anti-luxury Cato. *Opus signinum* floors could appropriately have been described as polished, since they were quite smooth in comparison to packed earth floors. Alternatively, *expolitae* may simply be referring to the villas as a whole (as it does grammatically), meaning “highly refined”.¹¹⁸

By Festus's lifetime, in the 2nd century C.E., it must have been difficult to conceive of mortar floors as luxurious; even figural mosaics drew no comment from moralists a century earlier.¹¹⁹ As a result, Festus may have added information based on what would have made the most sense from his own, later, perspective, without the benefit of the archaeological record we have available today.

The anxiety over private luxury displayed by Cato suggests that luxury was on the rise during the Republic, and that sumptuous living environments must have appealed to those whom Cato criticized. It does not indicate, of course, that this period represented a height of excess; nor was it the epitome of rustic simplicity imagined by later Romans.¹²⁰ The archaeological evidence shows that marble was relatively rare in private buildings even during most of the first century B.C.E. Nevertheless, it is apparent that in Cato's

Cato may be referring to bits of marble embedded in an *opus signinum* floor, but even this sort of decoration seems to come later. In general, however, archaeological evidence for each type of marble in Rome lags behind the earliest literary references: Fant 2001, 3.

¹¹⁶ See pp. 95-99 below on pavements of this type during the First Style period.

¹¹⁷ E.g. Schoonhoven, A. 2006, 116; Haan et al. 2005, 204; Nappo 1997, 103; Jones and Robinson 2005, 109; Coarelli and Pesando 2006, 3; Stella and Laidlaw 2008, 148; Berg 2005, 202; Dickmann and Pirson 2005, 164; Anniboletti et al. 2007, 2–3, 8.

¹¹⁸ Terrenato 2012, 72. Compare *expolitum* in Catullus 1, for example, in which the word is used in both the literal and figurative sense, and see *perpolitum* in Varro's *Rerum Rusticarum* (below p. 45). See also Nichols 2010, 47, 54.4 for other connotations of the adjective from second century B.C.E. literature, also translated as “refined”.

¹¹⁹ Dubois-Pelerin 2008, 138.

¹²⁰ See Nichols 2010.

time it was already possible to attack a political opponent by deriding his overly luxurious residence.¹²¹

iv. Cicero (106-43 B.C.E.)

Cicero's works span a number of topics and genres; accordingly, the context of his remarks must be taken into consideration. We cannot always take his word as a reflection popular or even widespread elite opinion. Rather, the statements he makes, especially in his public orations, were intended to serve a specific rhetorical purpose that varied depending on the situation. Cicero's work is particularly important here, because he is the earliest author I have found who includes marble in a litany of luxurious excesses, a sort of moralizing trope that became increasingly common in Augustan and Julio-Claudian literature. Earlier examples of authors listing manifestations of immoral decadence to suit a rhetorical purpose can be seen in Middle Republican literature, such as the passage from Cato discussed above, and instances in Roman comedy.¹²² Cicero seems to be the first to add marble pavements to the list.

In *De legibus* 2.2.5, Cicero has Atticus say: *Equidem, qui nunc potissimum huc venerim, satiari non queo, magnificasque villas et pavimenta marmorea et laqueata tecta contemno*; ("Indeed, I cannot get enough of this place, especially as I have come at this season of the year, and I scorn magnificent villas, marble pavements, and paneled ceilings.")¹²³ The term *pavimenta marmorea* is somewhat vague. The first association to come to mind is perhaps floors paved entirely with slabs of marble, or with *opus sectile* designs. Based on what we know of the archaeology of Republican homes, however, the reference may in fact be to mosaic floors composed of marble *tesserae* or even to mortar (*opus signinum*) pavements with inserts of colored stone.¹²⁴

Another useful passage from Cicero's work comes from *Pro Scauro* (2.45), in which the marble columns Scaurus displayed in his home are emblematic of excess: *domus tibi deerat? at habebas. pecunia superabat? at egebas. incurristi amens in*

¹²¹ Ibid., 47.

¹²² See *ibid.*, 45–46.

¹²³ Translation adapted from Keyes (trans.) 1948, 371.

¹²⁴ See pp. 112-111 below on the types of pavements found in villas, associated with Second Style paintings.

columnas.¹²⁵ Cicero does not specify the material from which those columns were made, but we can perhaps rely on Pliny's identification of them as Lucullan marble from Asia Minor in this instance, as it seems to have been particularly notorious.¹²⁶

Cicero is also valuable for reconstructing the possible range of Republican attitudes toward art and luxury in the house and villa.¹²⁷ These aspects of Cicero's writing have been the subject of a significant amount of scholarship, and so I will not replicate that work here.¹²⁸ It is worth noting, as Anne Leen has done, that while later authors including even the conservative Pliny the Elder express detailed knowledge of art history, technique, and materials, it is apparent that it was sometimes advantageous for a public Republican man like Cicero to profess ignorance of such topics.¹²⁹ In private life, the same man might display his knowledge of art and aesthetics; for instance, we can contrast Cicero's apparent bewilderedness about art collecting in the *Verrines* with his detailed instructions to Atticus about what he should purchase for his villas in his private letters. We might also see these distinctions in attitude as ones appropriate to various genres of literature (such as orations vs. letters), as well as opinions expressed in the service of specific rhetorical aims, such as those from the law speeches quoted above. None of Cicero's individual statements necessarily represent universal Republican cultural attitudes. What is important is the ambivalence that could appropriately be expressed by a single person. Depending on the circumstances, it was possible for Cicero to express very nearly opposing attitudes toward excess or elegance in a private residence.

In general, Cicero is concerned with appropriateness, or *decorum*, when it comes to decorative objects and materials.¹³⁰ From him we hear that a house should suit the dignity of its owner, and that the level of opulence acceptable for a house in the city was not as grand (or should not be) as for a villa (*De Off.* 1.40). Cicero is valuable as a source for the importance of the Republican villa as a space for negotiating culture and power.¹³¹ It is

¹²⁵ "Did you lack a house? You had one. Did you have too much money? You needed it. You went crazy over columns."

¹²⁶ Pl. *N.H.* 36.6 (and see p. 60 below).

¹²⁷ E.g. *Mur.* 75-76 (on luxury in private houses) and *De Officiis* 1.138-140 on appropriate levels of magnificence for a townhouse.

¹²⁸ E.g. Bartman, "Sculptural collecting and display in the private realm"; Miles, *Art as Plunder*

¹²⁹ Leen 1991, 231-232.

¹³⁰ Bartman 1991, 71-78.

¹³¹ Spencer 2010, 64.

evident that in his time, there was a certain measure of caution and anxiety surrounding the possession and display of luxury goods. In *Pro Murena*, Cicero makes an especially striking comment on the contrasting attitudes between private and public luxury. This idea became exaggerated during the reign of Augustus, but Cicero shows that it was already present in the late Republic. In *Pro Murena* (76) he writes: *Odit populus Romanus privatam luxuriam, publicam magnificentiam diligit* (“The Roman people hate private luxury; public magnificence they esteem”).¹³²

v. Varro (116-27 B.C.E.)

One of the subjects on which Varro’s work informs us is pavement types in villas. In fragment 533 from his Menippian Satires, he mentions λιθόστρωτα, which Nonius Marcellus (a late antique lexicographer) defines as *pavimenta et parietes incrustatos*. The fragment is hard to contextualize. Like Festus’s interpretation of the quotation from Cato discussed above, Nonius’s gloss is also difficult to evaluate, as standards for luxury would have been drastically different by his time.¹³³ Stone pavement in the late Republic or early Augustan periods could well refer to mosaic floors or the mortar pavements with small bits of stone set into them that are typically found with First and Second Style pavements, or it could refer to the more elaborate pavements from cut stone known from rare examples, such as the Casa del Fauno or the Villa dei Misteri.¹³⁴

The word *lithostrotum* in Latin also appears in Varro’s *Rerum Rusticarum*, an agricultural treatise. At 3.1.10, in the dedication to Turranius Niger, he notes that his dedicatee’s villa was noteworthy for its plaster, inlay, and fine pavements (*cum enim villam haberes opere tectorio et intestino ac pavimentis nobilibus lithostrotis spectandam . . .*: “Because just as you have a villa noteworthy for its plasterwork, inlay work, and fine *lithostrota* pavements . . .”). Similarly, at 3.2.3-4, the word appears in the context of a debate over whether older, simpler villas are preferable to newer, more luxurious versions. The speaker, Appius, provides an example of the litany of luxuries trope that I have described above, addressing another man named Axius: *Sed non haec, inquit, villa, quam aedificarunt maiores nostri, frugalior ac melior est quam tua illa perpolita in*

¹³² Zanker 1988, 135.

¹³³ “Lithostrota: incrustated pavements and walls.” See Astbury 2002, 88.

¹³⁴ See pp. 95-99 and 111 below.

Reatino? Nuncubi hic vides citrum aut aurum? Num minium aut armenium? Num quod emblema aut lithostrotum? (“But, he asked, is this villa which our ancestors built simpler and better than your very refined villa at Reate? Now do you see any citrus wood or gold here? Any vermilion or azure? Any figured mosaic or stone-paved floor?”).¹³⁵ The translation of this last word is crucial in both passages. When Pliny the Elder uses *lithostrotum*, he describes mosaic floors, such as the “unswept floor” mosaic in Pergamon (*NH* 36.62). He claims that *lithostrata* were first introduced to Rome during the time of Sulla, when he had the mosaic floor of the Temple of Fortuna at Praeneste installed (*NH* 36.64). These two pavements we know to be mosaic, and therefore mosaic is probably a better definition of *lithostrotum* than Nonius’s. The crucial piece of information we get from these passages in Varro is that in his time mosaic floors could be considered the trappings of a particularly elegant villa. In response to Appius, Axius notes that the former’s villa is no paradigm of old fashioned rusticity, either, with its paintings and sculptures on display (*Tua enim oblita tabulis pictis nec minus signis*: 3.2.5). *Tabulis* here indicates that Axius probably refers to panel paintings as signs of luxury, rather than wall paintings. The two go on to discuss just what exactly defines a villa.

Varro’s attitude toward private luxury is similar to Cicero’s, in that he displays some tolerance and admiration for luxury in villas. In particular, his work conveys a sense of how the villa could be thought of as a biographical reference for its owner, a notion later echoed by Seneca the Younger.¹³⁶ For Varro, being a good villa owner is not incompatible with some luxury.¹³⁷ For example, when describing the elegant architecture and expensive pavements of Axius’s villa (3.1.10), he characterizes the building as refined (*perpolita*), but not extravagant or excessive.¹³⁸

¹³⁵ The similarity between this passage and Cato’s has also been noted by Nichols 2010, 46. She also provides a more detailed analysis.

¹³⁶ Spencer 2010, 69ff. Similar ideas can be found in Columella (and see Edwards 1993, 152. On Seneca, see pp. 51-55 below.

¹³⁷ Spencer 2010, 78. This attitude, admiration for private luxury in the right context, dates back at least as early as the second century B.C.E., for example in the Plautus’s *Mostelleria* (see Nichols 2010, 48 - but note that imported marble is not an element of the domestic decoration described in that work).

¹³⁸ Dubois-Pelerin 2008, 120.

vi. Vitruvius (ca. 70-15 B.C.E.)

Vitruvius's attitude toward private luxury is more typical of the late Republic than the Augustan period, though his work is dedicated to Augustus. While under Augustus, luxury in the home was highly censured, in the late Republic it was sometimes deemed politically appropriate, if not taken to excess.¹³⁹ Vitruvius, like Cicero, is more concerned with the level of luxury appropriate for a particular patron, building, or space, rather than with moralizing against its existence in general. We do get a nugget of information about how colored stone could be used in the late Republican or early Augustan period when Vitruvius mentions floors paved with slabs of stone (*sectila*) cut in geometrical shapes, though he does not specify the varieties of stone used. The colored limestones, white palombino, and black slate of the Casa del Fauno and Villa dei Misteri might give us an idea of the types of cut stone to which he is referring.¹⁴⁰ These pieces, according to Vitruvius's instructions, are to be set into a mortar bed (7.1.3-4).

Vitruvius is also one of our very few sources of information about Roman attitudes about wall painting. His descriptions of changes in tastes for painting (7.5.1-2) formed the basis of Mau's four styles, though exactly how what he describes should be mapped on to the remains of paintings found at Pompeii is debatable. The earliest type of wall painting Vitruvius describes he says was meant to imitate marble veneer (7.5.1: *ex eo antiqui qui initia expolitionibus instituerunt imitati sunt primum crustarum marmorearum varietates et conlocationes*; "Those in olden days who first used polished [plaster] imitated varieties and arrangements of marble veneer.") The point on which debate over the applicability of this statement to the Pompeian First Style hinges is in the word *crustarum*. Either this means that the First Style should be understood as representing veneer, rather than masonry (or that is how Vitruvius, at least, interpreted it) or this passage does not describe the First Style.¹⁴¹ Memory of the original significance of First Style decorations may not have been transmitted in unaltered form down to Vitruvius's generation. I discuss the meaning of the First Style in more detail in Chapter 2, and its reception by later generations in Chapter 7; in general, I do not believe that it is

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ See pp. 95-99 and 111 below.

¹⁴¹ Cf. Leach 2004, 59.

necessary or fruitful to attempt to match up Vitruvius's precisely with the archaeological record.

Vitruvius displays a great deal of disapproval for the latest fashion in wall painting, which probably corresponds to what we call the Third Style. Though some of the details he describes had already been present in earlier painting, he objects to its extreme lack of realism, particularly in the depiction of forms derived from architecture (7.5.3-4). It is apparent that his objections were not shared by the majority of Romans, since the Third Style was very popular and remained so for decades.

vii. Strabo (ca. 64 B.C.E. - 24 C.E.)

According to Strabo (12.577), exotic imported stones like Phrygian marble had only been used in small pieces during the Republican period, but by his time large slabs and columns were being extracted and transported to Rome. As Fant has noted, it was only during the reign of Augustus that large-scale, programmatic use of such materials was undertaken.¹⁴² Strabo also comments that the discovery and use of more varieties of colored stone in Augustan public architecture led to the devaluation of white marble (9.5.16: he mentions Scyrian, Carystian, and Phrygian) - perhaps an exaggeration, but still a useful contemporary observation of a trend.

viii. Augustan Poets: Horace, Propertius, Ovid, Tibullus (31 B.C.E. - 27 C.E.)

Augustan poetry exhibits attitudes that had begun to appear in the late Republic but that became more widespread and entrenched during the reign of Augustus. Augustan poets generally express acceptance and praise of luxury in public building, while disdaining or even mocking luxury in private space.¹⁴³ The distinction between these two spheres was an important one and is demonstrated in Horace, *Odes* 2.15. Horace, however, disapproves here of the use of imported marble even in public spaces, an extremely conservative view, even for this period.

Priuatus illis census erat brevis,
commune magnum; nulla decempedis
metata priuatis opacam
porticus excipiebat Arcton,

¹⁴² Fant 1999, 2.

¹⁴³ See Dubois-Pelerin 2008, 119 and Leach 2004, 153–155 for discussions of attitudes to luxury in general in Augustan literature.

nec fortuitum spernere caespitem
leges sinebant, oppida publico
sumptu iubentes et deorum
templa nouo decorare saxo. (2.15.13-20)¹⁴⁴

Decorative marble can sometimes be praiseworthy in Augustan poetry, but only when it appears in public architecture (e.g. Propertius 2.31).¹⁴⁵ In a private setting, it is employed as a sign of bad taste, excess, and vanity (e.g. Horace *Ep.* 2.2.180-182 : *Gemmas, marmor, ebur, Tyrrhena sigilla, tabellas, argentum, uestes Gaetulo murice tinctas sunt qui non habeant, est qui non curat habere; Odes* 2.18; Tibullus 3.3.1-4).¹⁴⁶ These poets also boast about the simplicity of their own homes by declaring that they are without marble (e.g. Tibullus 3.3; and Horace *Odes* 3.1 in which the poet claims that Phrygian columns are a current fashion).¹⁴⁷ The motives and agendas of these poets are not identical or consistent: Propertius praises Augustus; Horace counsels simplicity in lifestyle; and Tibullus values love over wealth. Nonetheless, each poet uses exotic marble as a particular example of luxury that may be admirable in public but that is excessive or unnecessary at home.¹⁴⁸ While the poets' degree of wholesale adherence to official Augustan values may vary, distaste for private opulence remained a popular theme.

Disdain for private wealth and luxury in the Augustan period probably stemmed from two main factors, both related to that period's marking the end of protracted civil wars. First, even the upper classes were relatively impoverished as a result of the wars, and so for practical reasons, competitive displays of wealth would have been less attractive.¹⁴⁹ In addition, most people would have wished to downplay any similarities between themselves and the ambitious generals of the previous generation, who had

¹⁴⁴ "For them, private property was small, while public was vast; no porticoes measured in ten-foot lengths faced the shady north for private men; nor did the laws allow [us] to spurn fortuitous turf-altars, decrees allow [us] to adorn buildings and the temples of the gods in public splendor and exotic stone."

¹⁴⁵ See Green 2004 for possibly subversive messages in Ovid's praise for Augustus's public building program.

¹⁴⁶ Horace *Ep.* 2.2.180-182: "Gemstones, marble, ivory, Etruscan figurines, paintings, silver, clothing dyed with Gaetolian murex – there are those who do not have them; [of two brothers] there is one who doesn't care to have them."

¹⁴⁷ Horace, *Odes* 3.1.41-46: *Quod si dolentem nec Phrygius lapis / nec purpurarum sidere clarior / delenit usus nec Falerna / uitis Achaemeniumque costum...* ("What if pain is not assuaged by Phrygian stone, nor purple [cloth] brighter than the stars, nor Falernian wine, nor Achaemenian spice...").

¹⁴⁸ See Leach 2004, 29–30 on columns as signs of luxury in the Augustan period.

¹⁴⁹ Dubois-Pelerin 2008, 44.

introduced new forms of luxury to Rome. It was prudent not to present oneself as a threat to the new regime, and displays of luxury and praise for it were better focused on the public sphere.¹⁵⁰

Poetry from the Augustan period also gives us some idea of the types of stones that were used in architecture by that time. When private houses are the subject, it should be noted that these are usually single uses on a small scale. Propertius uses the phrase *limen Arabium* (“onyx threshold,” 1.14.19) as a synecdoche for a luxurious residence.¹⁵¹ In *Odes* 2.18.5, Horace mentions columns from Africa (presumably Numidian marble) in a house (*columnas ultima recisas Africa*: “columns quarried out of deepest Africa”) and, at *Ep.* 1.18.73, a marble threshold. Tibullus, however, refers both to columns from Phrygia, Cape Taenarus, or Carystos and to a marble floor in a house, but this is presented as a hypothetical list, not a description of a particular property (3.3.13-16):

Quidue domus prodest Phrygiis innixa columnis,
Taenare siue tuis, siue Caryste tuis,
et nemora in domibus sacros imitantia lucos
aurataeque trabes marmoreumque solum?¹⁵²

This passage from Tibullus (along with Horace, *Odes* 2.2 and 3.1) represents an example of the literary trope discussed above with reference to Cato, Cicero, and Varro, which cites a litany of riches in order to convey a sense of decadence. Marble, wood, and gold are among the most common elements of this type of inventory, and we will see similar lists appearing later in the works of Seneca the Elder, Seneca the Younger, and Lucan. While reference to a single instance of marble in a home was enough to show that it was a luxurious building, a longer, more comprehensive list of luxury goods and decoration could be used for more impact. A list of this sort probably was not meant to represent a typical Augustan aristocratic environment, but rather coveted and idealized – or scorned – wealth.¹⁵³

¹⁵⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, 124. See also chapter 6 for more on the lack of interest in private displays of luxury in the Augustan period.

¹⁵¹ Cf. Barker and Fant 2013, 3, who note that this indicates that few houses in this period yet had even decorative stone thresholds.

¹⁵² “Or what if your house benefits from the support of Phrygian columns, or Taenarian, or Carystian, and there are woods imitating sacred groves in your house, and gilded beams, and a marble floor?”

¹⁵³ This is in contrast to authors at later dates, who explicitly present such possessions as basic requirements for elite comfort, though morally lamentable (see sections viii-ix below).

In general, stones are classified and described in Roman literature by geographical source rather than color, and this is true in Augustan poetry.¹⁵⁴ Referring to them by origin allowed educated Romans to link the stones used to build contemporary buildings to the mythical past and to imbue those materials with special significance based on their exotic heritage. Stones evoked in this way could be valued for their ideological significance as much as for their aesthetic appeal. Citing a stone's foreign provenance served to underscore the expanse of Roman imperial power.¹⁵⁵ Usually Augustan poets' comments on marble are brief and provide only their geographical origin as a descriptor. Robert Bedon has suggested that in doing so, they may have attempted to avoid being overly precise, as a way of deflecting accusations of undue interest in luxury materials, much as, I have noted, Cicero had done before.¹⁵⁶

ix. Seneca the Elder (ca. 54 B.C.E. - 39 C.E.)

Seneca the Elder provides some evidence for conservative Augustan and early Julio-Claudian attitudes toward the use of decorative stone in private buildings, in response to a case in which a rich man had disinherited his three sons and wanted to adopt the son of a poor man (*Dives tres filios abdicavit. petit a paupere unicum filium in adoptionem. pauper dare vult; nolentem ire abdicat; 2.1.1*):

ad delicias dementis luxuriae lapis omnis eruitur, caedunturque gentium silvae;
aeris ferrique usus, iam auri quoque, in extruendis et decorandis domibus, nemp
ut anxii et interdiu et nocte ruinam ignemque metuant; [...] in hos ergo exitus
varius ille secatur lapis, ut tenui fronte parietem tegat [quam umetis seuere]? in
hoc pavementum tessellatum et infusum tectis aurum? (Con. 2.1.12).¹⁵⁷

In this passage, the rhetorician laments excessive luxury in the home and that the goodness of poverty has been forgotten. He includes thin marble veneer in his catalog of excessive riches that lead men to be ever more acquisitive, covetous, and anxious over

¹⁵⁴ Color constitutes the main basis for the nomenclature of ancient marbles in modern Italian, and the frequency with which those names are used has the potential to influence how we think about the stones in their ancient context, too.

¹⁵⁵ Bradley 2006b, 1.

¹⁵⁶ Bedon 2004. 370-372.

¹⁵⁷ “Every stone is dug up for the pleasure of mad luxury, the forests of whole peoples are felled; bronze and iron are used, and now even gold, for building and decorating houses, of course so that worried men may fear, day and night, fire and destruction; [...] Is it to these ends, therefore, that variegated stone is cut to cover a wall with a thin facade? For this they have mosaic floors and ceilings covered in gold?”

the possible loss of their possessions.¹⁵⁸ It is notable in Seneca the Elder's time, mosaic floors were still included in the litany of luxuries, alongside marble veneered walls and gilded roof beams. In contrast, half a century later, floors paved with large slabs of marble will be required to impress.¹⁵⁹

x. Seneca the Younger (ca. 4-65 C.E.)

By the reign of Nero, considerable changes in attitudes toward private luxury had taken place. To understand Seneca the Younger's attitudes, we have to consider the events of the intervening decades between the end of the Augustan period and Seneca's writing, published under Nero. There are signs that opposition to opulence in private architecture was gradually diminishing. For instance, Tacitus provides an account of a decision by Tiberius not to instate sumptuary legislation regarding domestic architecture and decoration, because the home served a political function, and a certain level of display was necessary to suit the dignity of men in public life.¹⁶⁰ Excessive spending on dining remained a concern, but Dubois-Pelerin suggests that this distinction existed because banqueting depleted the patrimony, while embellishments to houses and villas kept wealth within the estate.¹⁶¹

Yet another factor in the decreasing criticism of domestic luxury must have been the lengthening space of time since the civil wars, which lessened anxieties about displays of wealth and ambition among private citizens that had been an issue early in the reign of Augustus. The peace and security afforded to Rome and Italy by the emperors' rule also meant that there was little danger from pirates or thieves to displays of wealth in isolated properties, even those located on once vulnerable coasts.¹⁶² We can observe this increasing acceptance of private luxury sometimes in the literature, but even more often in the archaeological evidence.¹⁶³ A cycle of anxiety as the result of civil war giving way

¹⁵⁸ This passage has also been discussed by Dubois-Pelerin 2007, 104.

¹⁵⁹ See section xiii below on Martial.

¹⁶⁰ See section xiv below on Tacitus.

¹⁶¹ Dubois-Pelerin 2008, 117.

¹⁶² Cf. Leach 2004, 74.

¹⁶³ See below pp. 77-81.

progressively to a sense of relief and security is something we see reflected again in attitudes toward marble during the Flavian period.¹⁶⁴

Though Seneca wrote near the end of the first of those cycles of anxiety and acceptance, he was ambivalent, at best, about domestic luxury.¹⁶⁵ He expressed particular disapproval of the popular practice of covering floors and walls with thin sheets of colored stone veneer, often cut and assembled into elaborate patterns and figural designs. Seneca characterizes this technique, known to archaeologists as *opus sectile*, as deceptive, because it disguises the actual materials making up a structure and gives them the appearance of something finer, i.e. solid marble.¹⁶⁶

In Epistle 16, Seneca describes the ultimate in riches as consisting of statues, paintings, gold jewelry, purple clothing, and marble floors - so that one may not only possess but even tread upon his wealth.¹⁶⁷ This litany of luxuries echoes the trope found in the earlier works I have already discussed, but the number and scale of the elements required to demonstrate extreme wealth has continued to grow. What he describes here is luxury beyond the grasp of a single private citizen (“the property of many millionaires,” *multi locupletes*), and so he must exceed what previous generations would have considered excessive. Seneca's list also suggests that by Nero's time, painting was not completely devalued as a decorative form, but was still desirable alongside stone. This contrasts with what Pliny the Elder will have to say a decade or two later about the relative values of the two types of decoration.¹⁶⁸ Seneca's ultimate point is that a man living in such a height of luxury craves still more, and only philosophy can provide

¹⁶⁴ See section xii below and Chapter 6.

¹⁶⁵ On Seneca's attitude toward luxury, see, for example, Newlands 2012, 150-152 where she contrasts Seneca and Statius.

¹⁶⁶ Dubois-Pelerin 2007, 104; e.g. *Ben.* 4.6.2.

¹⁶⁷ Seneca, Ep. 16.8: *Congeratur in te quidquid multi locupletes possederant; ultra privatum pecuniae modum fortuna te provehat, auro tegat, purpura vestiat, eo deliciarum opumque perducatur ut terram marmoribus abscondas; non tantum habere tibi liceat sed calcare divitias; accedant statuariae et picturae et quidquid ars ulla luxuriae elaboravit: maiora cupere ab his disces* (“Suppose that the property of many millionaires is heaped up in your possession. Assume that fortune carries you far beyond the limits of a private income, decks you with gold, clothes you in purple, and brings you to such a degree of luxury and wealth that you can bury the earth under your marble floors. Add statues, paintings, and whatever any art has devised for the satisfaction of luxury; you will only learn from such things to crave more.”) Translation from Gummere (trans.), 1934, vol. I, 341.

¹⁶⁸ See p. 58 below.

satisfaction. Of course, we need not assume that Seneca's actual living environment adhered to his moral pronouncements.¹⁶⁹

Seneca (*Ep.* 86) also draws on the distant past to illustrate a contrast in lifestyle with his own more extravagant times. He describes a visit to the remains of Scipio Africanus's villa at Liternum, where the baths are undecorated and contain no marble at all. As Alain Gowing has noted, for Seneca, the residence is a locus of memory and should be able to provide information about the personality of its owner.¹⁷⁰ The characteristics of the home and the man are interchangeable.

Pauper sibi videtur ac sordidus nisi parietes magnis et pretiosis orbibus
refulserunt, nisi Alexandrina marmora Numidicis crustis distincta sunt, nisi illis
undique operosa et in picturae modum variata circumlitio praetexitur, nisi vitro
absconditur camera, nisi Thasius lapis, quondam rarum in aliquo spectaculum
templo, piscinas nostras circumdedit, in quas multa sudatione corpora exsaniata
demittimus, nisi aquam argentea epitonia fuderunt.

Et adhuc plebeias fistulas loquor: quid cum ad balnea libertinorum pervenero?
Quantum statuarum, quantum columnarum est nihil sustinentium sed in
ornamentum positarum impensae causa! quantum aquarum per gradus cum
fragore labentium! Eo deliciarum pervenimus ut nisi gemmas calcare nolimus.
(*Ep.* 86.6-7)¹⁷¹

Leaving aside the likelihood that any marble left behind at Liternum would have been stripped from the ruins for reuse, let us address Seneca's use of the past to serve his own present rhetorical aims.¹⁷² Seneca claims to have seen Scipio's baths in person, drawing on the authority attached to a first-person account. Seneca's access to the original significance attached to those material remains by Scipio and his contemporaries, however, is not equal to his access to the material remains themselves. Seneca uses Scipio's villa as an example of the simplicity, modesty, and ruggedness of powerful

¹⁶⁹ E.g. Tacitus, *Annales*, 14.52.

¹⁷⁰ Gowing 2005, 80–81; see also Newlands 2012, 150–152.

¹⁷¹ “We seem to ourselves poor and shabby if our walls do not shine with large, expensive mirrors, if our Alexandrian marbles are not framed with Numidian veneer, if they are not bordered on all sides by complicated, colorful patterns in the style of painting, if our rooms are not engulfed in glass, if our pools are not surrounded in Thasian stone, once a rare sight in any temple - pools into which we lower our bodies, weakened by much sweating - if silver spouts do not pour out the water.

And until now I have been talking about plebian water pipes; what about when I come to the baths of freedmen? How many statues, how many columns there are supporting nothing, but put up as decoration for the sake of costliness! How many streams of water fall over a slope with a crash! We have arrived at such luxury that we want nothing but to walk on gems.” Note that there is now an emphasis on excess in the homes of freedmen in particular, which had not been present in earlier similar examples.

¹⁷² On reuse of stone, see: p. 70 below.

Republican men, in stark contrast to the extravagance and softness of his contemporaries. He is aware that buildings that had once been innovative and admirable are subsequently considered quaint, and that in the past baths were rare. This change is not seen as a symptom of advancement in technology or economic growth, but of dissolution of collective character over time. Seneca does not note that in Scipio's time, having a private bath in one's villa must have been itself a luxury. He nevertheless considers the bath to have been as simple by the standards of the past as it seems to Seneca in his own time.

Scipio's death (183 B.C.E.) predates by more than half a century both the earliest archaeological evidence for imported stone use in Rome, and also the earliest literary reports of decorative stone or architectural elements in private residences of Romans. The fact that Scipio had no marble in his baths says next to nothing about whether or not his living quarters were modest by contemporary standards. For Seneca, the material remains of the past are available for his contemplation, but the memory of their significance has not remained with them – or is not useful for his rhetorical or philosophical purpose. Seneca chooses to interpret his surroundings based on contemporary standards of luxury, in order that they serve his literary needs.¹⁷³

Similarly, in *Ep.* 51, Seneca uses examples of Republican villas of Marius, Pompey, and Caesar at Baiae, which were more like military camps than villas, he says (*scies non villas esse sed castra*: 51.11), to contrast with the current state of dissolute extravagance practiced around the Bay of Naples.¹⁷⁴ While it is true that impressive Republican villas were built in defensive positions at Baiae, they were not simple and rustic. Recent archaeological work show that the Republican villa under the Castello Aragonese di Baia, for example, was decorated with fine Second Style paintings and

¹⁷³ Gowing 2005, 81, and cf. Edwards 1993, 160-161 on changing standards of luxury.

¹⁷⁴ Seneca, *Ep.* 51.11: *Literni honestius Scipio quam Bais exulabat: ruina eiusmodi non est tam molliter collocanda. Illi quoque ad quos primos fortuna populi Romani publicas opes transtulit, C. Marius et Cn. Pompeius et Caesar, exstruxerunt quidem villas in regione Baiana, sed illas imposuerunt summis iugis montium: videbatur hoc magis militare, ex edito speculari late longeque subiecta. Aspice quam positionem elegerint, quibus aedificia excitaverint locis et qualia: scies non villas esse sed castra* (“It was more honourable in Scipio to spend his exile at Liternum rather than Baiae; his downfall did not need a setting so effeminate. Those also into whose hands the rising fortunes of Rome first transferred the wealth of the state, Gaius Marius, Gnaeus Pompey, and Caesar, did indeed build villas near Baiae; but they settled them at the very tops of mountains. This seemed more soldier-like, to look down from a loft height upon lands spread far and wide below. Note the situation, position, and type of building they chose; you will see that they were not villas but camps.”) Translation adapted from Gummere, 1934, vol. I, 343. Cf. Newlands 2012, 150.

stone pavements – the equal of the most luxurious residences elsewhere in Italy during that time.¹⁷⁵ As Seneca’s text implies, at least some of these villas would have been still available for Seneca to visit, though perhaps in heavily renovated form; Tacitus mentions the villa of Caesar at Baiae as a topographical point of reference (*Annales* 14.9.1), giving the impression that he expected readers to know where it was located. Nevertheless, Seneca’s use of the material past serves his rhetorical purpose rather than reflecting a historically accurate social or ideological reality. Like Scipio’s villa, the villa of Caesar may have seemed rustic in comparison to contemporary villas, and it is those later buildings that are Seneca’s point of reference. In this way, Seneca’s reading of the ancient built environment is comparable to Suetonius’s (see section xvi below).

xi. Lucan (39-65 C.E.)

Lucan’s description of the decoration of Cleopatra’s palace is one of the main sources used in the scholarship on Second Style paintings to argue that they were representations of Hellenistic palaces.¹⁷⁶ Lucan describes the reception hall where Caesar banqueted in Alexandria with its marble walls, gilded wooden ceiling, onyx floors, and decorations in ivory and precious metals:

ipse locus templi, quod uix corruptior aetas
 extruat, instar erat, laqueataque tecta ferebant
 diuitias crassumque trabes absconderat aurum.
 nec summis crustata domus sectisque nitebat
 marmoribus, stabatque sibi non segnis achates
 purpureusque lapis, totaque effusus in aula
 calcabatur onyx. (10.111-117)¹⁷⁷

Lucan wrote his epic on the war between Caesar and Pompey during the reign of Nero, and some scholars, such as Gowing, have suggested that his portrayal and villainizing of Caesar may have served as a veiled critique of Nero.¹⁷⁸ If so, his description of Cleopatra and her extravagant palace could have been intended to add to that condemnation, perhaps by bringing to mind the ostentation of Nero’s wives and other

¹⁷⁵ See pp. 119-120 below.

¹⁷⁶ E.g. Fittschen 1976, 553-554; Wallace-Hadrill 1994, 28; Santoro 2007, 326-329;

¹⁷⁷ “That place was the equal of a temple that a more corrupt age would build, bearing a paneled ceiling and rich beams covered with heavy gold. And the house shone with marble, not just encrusted with cut pieces on the surface, and agate and purple stone stood there, not dull, and gleaming onyx was trampled underfoot throughout the entire hall.”

¹⁷⁸ Gowing 2005, 100.

female relatives, as well as Nero himself, who certainly lived in marble-clad palatial homes like the one Lucan describes. Cleopatra's palace in the poem, however, is built from solid marble, which Dubois-Pelerin has suggested may signify that her power is more real and permanent than that of people who (deceptively, as Seneca says) clad their walls in a thin layer of stone.¹⁷⁹

R. A. Tucker has demonstrated Lucan's debt to Virgil in this scene.¹⁸⁰ He noted that parallels can be drawn between the description of Dido's banquet for Aeneas and Cleopatra's banquet for Caesar. Though other sources, such as Plutarch, share some details of what happened at the reception, Lucan is alone in his description of her palace. We lack comparable documentary or archaeological evidence for the decoration of Cleopatra's palace, or indeed any Hellenistic palace, in the manner Lucan describes. That, combined with Lucan's apparent literary and socio-political agenda, suggest that the best conclusion is that Lucan's description of the setting was the product of his literary imagination.¹⁸¹

Note that the litany of riches in the passage above exemplifies the trope that was well-established by this time, closely comparable to the examples from Cato, Cicero, Varro, Tibullus, Seneca the Elder, and Seneca the Younger discussed above. Moreover, I suspect that Italian wall paintings dating from the time of Caesar and Cleopatra, i.e. Second Style paintings, may have served as Lucan's model, rather than those paintings having been modeled after the palace at an earlier date. Many of these images were still on display in Campanian villas, and elsewhere, during the reign of Nero.¹⁸²

We have no clear evidence that direct access to (or accurate memory of) the details of the interior of Cleopatra's palace were still available Lucan's time.¹⁸³ Even if they were, accuracy with respect to the type and lavishness of the decoration may not have been an

¹⁷⁹ Dubois-Pelerin 2007, 104 and cf. Seneca the Younger's comments above.

¹⁸⁰ Tucker 1975.

¹⁸¹ For more on the archaeology of Hellenistic palaces, see pp. 71-73. In the underwater excavations in the harbor of Alexandria, next to no fine decorative stone was discovered, other than in the form of a few sculptures: Goddio and Bernard 1998.

¹⁸² For more on the relationship between Second Style painting in villas and Hellenistic palaces, see chapter 4; for the reception of these paintings in the first century C.E., see Chapter 6.

¹⁸³ Certainly Romans travelled to Egypt for various reasons, but no remains of palace from the time of Cleopatra have been discovered, and so the excavators have concluded that it was built over by later Romans: Goddio and Bernard 1998.

important goal of his work. Instead, I would argue that Lucan seems to have created a new vision of the material past based on standards of luxury from his own time. A spectacular palace without colored stone would hardly have impressed upon his contemporary audience the decadence and wastefulness he meant to portray. In Lucan's time, decorative stone was more frequently used than in the first century B.C.E., but it was still the source of some moral anxiety, as is clear from Seneca's writing. Even if he were describing a material environment that was physically accessible to him or to others who traveled to Egypt, the experiences and concerns of the present, as well as literary authority, were more important than a precise reenactment of the past.¹⁸⁴ The past had to be fictionalized and reinterpreted in order for it to have relevance in Lucan's present.¹⁸⁵

xii. Pliny the Elder (23-79 C.E.)

Pliny the Elder provides us with more information than any other Latin author about Roman decorative stone use from the Late Republic up to his own time. Pliny's writing is also rich in moral commentary about these practices. It is in the exploitation of the mineral world that Pliny saw mankind as having violated nature to the greatest extent.¹⁸⁶ Imported stone in private architecture also provided Pliny with a good index of extravagance in various periods. Pliny addressed his work both to his peers – upper class educated men like himself – and to artisans. Presumably he hoped that it would be both a source of scientific knowledge and, secondarily perhaps, a moral guide to relating to and exploiting the natural world.¹⁸⁷ Pliny's evidence for the historical information he provides seems to be mostly earlier written works; he notes that he has consulted 2000 texts in his research (*N.H. praef.* 17). He adds, though, that he has supplied other information of which his sources were not aware, and this information must come from his own experience, memories, and, when possible, examination of buildings and objects. At one point he explicitly states that he saw the transportation of marble to construction sites (*N.H.* 36.1).¹⁸⁸ In most other cases, however, he does not indicate his sources so clearly.

¹⁸⁴ Cf. also Atheneus's description of Ptolemy's pleasure barge (5.37), quoting Callimachus, where there are columns inlaid with gold and jewels, similar to those found in Second Style paintings from Oplontis.

¹⁸⁵ Gowing 2005, 96.

¹⁸⁶ Isager 1991, 52.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 25.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 144.

Michael Rowlands has argued that the more exposure people have to material objects that hold authority, the more conservative cultural transmission is likely to be.¹⁸⁹ Most of the buildings Pliny describes seem to have been lost by his own time, and therefore the significance they once held was less tenacious than it might otherwise have been.¹⁹⁰ His interpretations of the material world of the past, then, could be freely adapted to suit his own agenda.

For scholars writing on domestic architecture and wall painting, Pliny has been relied on as a source for calculating the degree to which marble was used in Late Republican houses and villas as well as for understanding how Romans reacted to innovations in their use of stone during that period.¹⁹¹ Pliny also provides some comments on painting and its relationship to marble, though the majority of his writing on painting focuses on panel paintings rather than wall paintings (see his Book 35 on painting). Pliny felt that excellent painting on a wall was wasted, because it benefitted only the owner of the house or villa and could be too easily destroyed by fire (35.118). Despite this sentiment, he regretted that painting had lost its prestige by being overshadowed by marble. He saw the art of painting as one in decline, almost entirely replaced by decorative stone.

Primumque dicemus quae restant de pictura, arte quondam nobili — tunc cum expeteretur regibus populisque — et alios nobilitante, quos esset dignata posteris tradere, nunc vero in totum marmoribus pulsa, iam quidem et auro, nec tantum ut parietes toti operiantur, verum et interraso marmore vermiculatisque ad effigies rerum et animalium crustis (35.2).¹⁹²

Pliny goes on to describe newly invented practices of assembling images from cut marble (our *opus sectile*) as well as painting on stone. As usual, Pliny views these innovations as excessive:

¹⁸⁹ Rowlands 1993, 142; on the authority Roman historians ascribed to monumenta and firsthand accounts, see: Miles 1995, 10–11, 17; Cubitt 2007, 78–79.

¹⁹⁰ See Gowing 2005, 156 on Roman ruins and memory.

¹⁹¹ E.g. Leach 2004, 4–30 (and *passim*); Bergmann 2002b, 22.

¹⁹² All Latin texts of Pliny the Elder are taken from Mayhoff, *C. Plini Secvndi Natvralis Historiae Libri XXXVII*. “And first we shall say what remains to be said about painting, and art that was formerly illustrious, at the time when it was in high demand with kings and nations and when it enobled others whom it deigned to transmit to posterity. But at the present time it has been entirely ousted by marbles, and indeed finally also by gold, and not only to the point that whole walls are covered – we have also marble pieces carved in wriggling lines to represent objects and animals.” (Translation adapted from Rackham trans., 1952, vol. IX, 261.)

coepimus et lapide pingere. hoc Claudii principatu inventum, Neronis vero maculas, quae non essent in crustis, inserendo unitatem variare, ut ovatus esset Numidicus, ut purpura distingueretur Synnadicus, qualiter illos nasci optassent deliciae. montium haec subsidia deficientium, nec cessat luxuria id agere, ut quam plurimum incendiis perdat (35.3).¹⁹³

Though there has been some disagreement as to what exactly Pliny is describing here, the most convincing interpretation takes *lapide pingere* (i.e. painting *with* stone) to mean making images with cut stone of various colors, invented during the reign of Claudius.¹⁹⁴ The invention under Nero, then, was not the imitation of marble with paint (which long predated Nero's reign, and was still on prominent display in Second Style paintings well into Pliny's own lifetime), but painting directly on slabs of stone to provide them with colors and patterns they may not have had naturally.¹⁹⁵ Since pieces of stone cut from different beds, or even different sides of the same block, might not equally display the variegated colors and shapes that made them desirable, those shapes were sometimes painted on instead.¹⁹⁶

Much of Pliny's criticism of luxurious excess is reserved for the use of marble itself. He laments that entire mountains were being destroyed in order that people could lie surrounded by variegated stones, even though half of their lives are spent in darkness when they cannot see the colors anyway: *ista facere, immo verius pati mortales quos ob usus quasve ad voluptates alias nisi ut inter maculas lapidum iaceant, ceu vero non tenebris noctium, dimidia parte vitae cuiusque, gaudia haec auferentibus!* (36.3) Though Pliny emphasized the growing popularity of marble in his own lifetime, and noted that he does not have to name or describe each variety because they are well-known to everyone (36.54), a great deal of his disapproval is directed at the past. In an unusual move for a Roman moralist, he suggests that some excesses of the late Republic equal or surpass

¹⁹³ "We have begun even to paint with marble. This was invented under Claudius; under Nero indeed spots were added to stones that did not have them to add variation to their homogeneity, so ovoids are Numidian, purple indicates Synnadian [a.k.a. Phrygian], just as opulence would have wished to have produced. These are the reinforcements for deficient mountains, and luxury does not stop driving itself, so that as much as possible can be destroyed in fires." Note the concern with wealth being lost in fire, which echoes Seneca the Younger's anxiety in *Con.* 2.1.12.

¹⁹⁴ Isager 1991, 114.

¹⁹⁵ Contra Moormann 2009, 160 who argues, on the basis of this passage, that the Fourth Style paintings in the Villa dei Papiri must postdate Nero's death, because they contain faux marble.

¹⁹⁶ Dubois-Pelerin 2007, 106–108. Cf. p. 113 below on the creation of uniformly flawless panels of stone in Second Style paintings.

those of more recent times, including the reigns of Caligula and Nero: *Ingens ista reputantem subit etiam antiquitatis rubor*: “When we think of these things we feel ourselves blushing prodigiously with shame even for the men of former times,” (36.4).¹⁹⁷ He comments specifically on the use of large marble columns in an atrium (36.8). Other outrages he documented include Marcus Aemilius Scaurus' reuse of four large Lucullan marble columns (the stone from Asia Minor named after the general Lucullus: 36.50) in his residence, which were originally brought to Rome for use in an opulent temporary theater (36.6):

etiamne tacuerunt, maximas earum atque adeo duodequadragesimum pedum
Lucullei marmoris in atrio Scauri conlocari? nec clam id occulteque factum est.
satisdare sibi damni infecti coegit redemptor cloacarum, cum in Palatium eae
traherentur. non ergo in tam malo exemplo moribus caveri utilius fuerat? tacuere
tantas moles in privatam domum trahi praeter fictilia deorum fastigia!¹⁹⁸

M. Lepidus' house featured thresholds or lintels (*limina* could refer to either) of Numidian marble, which Pliny considers a gross insult to the dignity of the material (36.49): *M. Lepidus Q. Catuli in consulatu conlega primus omnium limina ex Numidico marmore in domo posuit magna reprehensione. [...] hoc primum invecti Numidici marmoris vestigium invenio, non in columnis tamen crustisve, ut supra Carystii, sed in massa ac vilissimo liminum usu.*¹⁹⁹ It may be best to understand *limina* as threshold: recall Seneca's objection to stepping on valuable stone pavements, which may relate to Pliny's characterization of a marble threshold as “very low” (*vilissimo*).²⁰⁰ This passage seems to indicate that Pliny was relying on a Republican source that expressed disapproval for Scaurus's behaviour. Pliny later notes that Lepidus's house was considered extravagant at

¹⁹⁷ Isager 1991, 146. (Translation by Eichholz, 1952, vol. IX, 261.5.)

¹⁹⁸ “Were not the laws silent also when the largest of those columns, which were each fully 38 feet long and of Lucullan marble, were placed in the atrium of Scaurus's house? And there was no secrecy or concealment. A sewer contractor forced Scaurus to give him security against possible damage to the drains when the columns were being hauled to the Palatine. Would it not have been more expedient, therefore, when so harmful a precedent was being set, to afford some security for our morals? The laws were still silent when those great masses of marble were dragged to a private house past the terracotta pediments of temples!” (Translation adapted from Eichholz, *Natural History*, X:7.) On Scaurus, see also *N.H.* 36.4-7, 50, 113-116, 189. See pp. 42-44 above on Cicero's (contemporary) reaction to these events.

¹⁹⁹ “Marcus Lepidus, who was the consul with Quintus Catulus, was the very first to lay down thresholds of Numidian marble in his house, and for this he was sharply criticized. [...] This is the first indication that I can find of the importing of Numidian marble. The marble, however, was not in the form of columns or slabs, like that of the Carystian marble mentioned above, but came in blocks to be used in the lowest manner – as thresholds!” (Translation adapted from Eichholz, *Natural History*, X:39.)

²⁰⁰ See p. 52 above.

the time but that after thirty-five years had passed, it no longer counted among the hundred most luxurious homes in Rome (36.109-110).

According to Pliny, Caesar's associate, Mamurra, was the first to cover all the walls of his house in Rome with marble veneer (though Pliny does not specify the variety), and he also had columns of solid Carystian or Luna marble (36.48). Pliny gives Cornelius Nepos as the source for this information, suggesting that in this case, at least, the remains of the house were no longer visible for him to inspect – which is also implied by his uncertainty about the exact variety of stone (*Carystio aut Luniensi*):

Primum Romae parietes crusta marmoris operuisse totos domus suae in Caelio monte Cornelius Nepos tradit Mamurram, Formiis natum equitem Romanum, praefectum fabrum C. Caesaris in Gallia, ne quid indignati desit, tali auctore inventa re. hic namque est Mamurra Catulli Veroniensis carminibus proscissus, quem, ut res est, domus ipsius clarius quam Catullus dixit habere quidquid habuisset Comata Gallia. namque adicit idem Nepos primum totis aedibus nullam nisi e marmore columnam habuisse et omnes solidas e Carystio aut Luniensi.²⁰¹

For Pliny, each innovation inspires outrage. Because he documents in such detail these instances of marble decoration in Republican homes, and reacts to them with scathing criticism, his writings have been used as evidence for widespread use of marble in domestic decoration during that period. Imitation marble in Second Style paintings, then, can be interpreted as a cheaper alternative to this use of real marble and an attempt to recreate the surroundings found in richer villas.²⁰² Considered on a case by case basis, however, it is clear that the examples Pliny provides, most from the mid-first century B.C.E. (i.e. the height of the Second Style's popularity) involve the use of only a very limited quantity of marble in houses and villas. Scaurus used columns of one stone type in one room. Lepidus had only thresholds or lintels of Numidian marble. Later, in Caesar's time, Mamurra became the first person in Rome to cover his walls with marble veneer, but not necessarily in the polychrome extravaganza depicted in Second Style

²⁰¹ “The first man in Rome to cover with marble veneer the whole walls in his house, which was on the Caelian Hill was, according to Cornelius Nepos, Mamurra, a Roman equestrian and a native of Formiae, who was C. Caesar’s chief engineer in Gaul. That such a man should have sponsored the invention is enough to make it utterly improper. For this is the Mamurra who was reviled by Catullus of Verona in his poems, the Mamurra whose house, as a matter of fact, proclaims more clearly than Catullus himself that he ‘possesses all that Shaggy Gaul possessed.’ Incidentally Nepos adds also that he was the first to have only marble columns in his whole house, and that these were all monolithic columns of Carystian or Luna marble.” (Translation adapted from Eichholz 1952, vol. IX, 261, 37-39.)

²⁰² E.g. Leach 2004, 4–30 (and *passim*); Bergmann 2002b, 22.

paintings, many of which must have predated Mamurra's house on the Caelian. According to Pliny, other than this one example, he has been unable to discover any instance of slabs of stone being used to cover the walls of buildings in Rome, even temples, until the reign of Augustus (36.8). Pliny does not, therefore, provide evidence for large scale decorative use of marble in Republican homes, though he is critical of even the smallest steps forward. Moreover, Pliny is clearly interested in “the singular” (as Jacob Isager puts it): throughout his writing, he takes note of the unusual, innovative, and outrageous.²⁰³ He is therefore a difficult source for reconstructing what was typical in a given period. It might be best, in fact, to assume that what was typical was, to some extent, the opposite of the examples Pliny describes, and that is why those exceptional examples were recorded in the past and remembered until Pliny's own time. Pliny is writing for an audience who already recognizes what is normal and familiar. Just as he does not bother to name every known type of marble because they are well-known to everyone, he did not need to describe those things that are taken for granted as part of Roman domestic life, much as we might wish he had.²⁰⁴

In Pliny's attitude toward private luxury, we can see echoes of Augustan sentiment, which characterizes his work as particularly situated within the imperial values of the reign of Vespasian.²⁰⁵ Once again, in the aftermath of the political instability and civil war that preceded the reign of Vespasian, it was unseemly at best, and threatening at worst, to make a blatant display of personal wealth rivaling the emperor's. Added to this concern was a backlash against the decadence of the Neronian period, exemplified by Vespasian in his reclaiming of land from the Domus Aurea for public use.²⁰⁶ Lavishness in public buildings was admirable; in private it was morally repugnant. In Pliny's text, I argue that we may also see an instance of the creation of memory through deliberate forgetting or omission: Pliny fails to acknowledge anywhere the growing acceptance and softening in attitudes toward private decorative stone that had been recently become more stringent under Vespasian.

²⁰³ Isager 1991, 27. Cf. Potter 2002, 175-176 on Pliny's Vespasianic attitudes toward perfumes.

²⁰⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*, 188; Bradley 2009, 89.

²⁰⁵ Cf. Baldwin 1995, 59 on Pliny's attitude toward Augustus more generally.

²⁰⁶ Cf. Isager 1991, 227.

xiii. Martial (ca. 40-104 C.E.)

By the reign of Domitian, Gowing argues, memory of the Republic was largely depoliticized.²⁰⁷ It therefore served little purpose for poets like Martial and Statius. By now the pursuit of *otium*, literature, luxury, and other pastimes that had been viewed with suspicion by most of the writers discussed above were considered legitimate and even praiseworthy.²⁰⁸ Consequently, the negative exempla of the past, drawn on so heavily by Pliny the Elder, lost their force.²⁰⁹ For the first time, private texts appear that praise private luxury outright, instead of using it as an easy source of implicit or explicit criticism.²¹⁰

Martial mentions an onyx-paved floor as a sign of luxury (*Ep.* 12.50).²¹¹ Elsewhere (*Ep.* 6.42), he describes the baths of the freedman Etruscus, clad in many varieties of imported marble (Taenarian, green Laconian, Numidian, Phrygian, onyx), as the ultimate bathing environment.²¹² Little can be read as moralizing in these passages.²¹³ Instead, marble decoration is a sign of pleasant surroundings, and polychromy is especially aesthetically pleasing.²¹⁴

xiv. Statius (ca. 45-96 C.E.)

Statius is a particularly valuable source for attitudes toward decorative marble in private buildings. Though he was writing during the reign of Domitian, it is likely that the values he espouses had been developing for some time by then, since he presents them so unflinchingly. Statius's opinions on private luxury are decidedly not the retro-Augustan

²⁰⁷ Gowing 2005, 105–118.

²⁰⁸ Newlands 2012, 17–19.

²⁰⁹ Gowing 2005, 118.

²¹⁰ Edwards 1993, 142.

²¹¹ Martial, *Ep.* 12.50: *Daphnonas, platanonas et aérios pityonas / Et non unius balnea solus habes, / Et tibi centenís stat porticus alta columnis, / Calcatusque tuo sub pede lucet onyx, / Pulveremque fugax hippodromon ungula plaudit, / Et pereuntis aquae fluctus ubique sonat; / Atria longa patent. Sed nec cenantibus usquam / Nec somno locus est. Quam bene non habitas!*

²¹² Contrast this with Seneca's disdain for luxurious houses of freedmen (p. 53 above); Martial, *Ep.* 6.42: *Illic Taygeti uirent metalla / et certant uario decore saxa, / quae Phryx et Libys altius cecidit. / Siccos pinguis onyx anhelat aestus / et flamma tenui calent ophitae / ritus si placeant tibi Laconum, / contentus potes arido uapore / cruda Virgine Marciaue mergi; / quae tam candida, tam serena lucet / ut nullas ibi suspiceris undas / et credas uacuum nitere lygdon.*

²¹³ Though Edwards suggests that Martial may be intending to mock the upper classes by praising the possessions of a freedman (163). Nevertheless, combined with Statius's poetry, described below, and Martial's other work, it seems that the idea that imported stone might be worthy of admiration was not itself ridiculous.

²¹⁴ Bedon 2004, 376.

ideals of the reign of Vespasian advocated by Pliny the Elder. As I have discussed above, those attitudes previously suited the reign of an emperor who had established peace with difficulty after a period of civil war. Private luxury, in that context, indicated ambition and represented a potential threat to the power of the emperor and, thus, to the stability of the empire.²¹⁵ For Statius, however, private luxury is impressive and praiseworthy. Of course, Statius is writing to flatter his own patron, but to frame that flattery in praise for luxury would not have been effective decades earlier. The villas described in positive terms by Statius and later writers would have strained the moral principles of earlier generations.²¹⁶ This very different attitude was appropriate for the reign of an emperor further along in a dynasty, emphasizing the continuing peace guaranteed by the monarch, his confidence and security, and the freedom and prosperity they allowed his subjects. I suspect that public expressions of such concepts were especially welcome with under Domitian's rule, given that emperor's reputation for paranoia and suspicion. Katharine T. von Stackelberg has stated that building a villa was "as close to a military campaign" as a cautious senator could get in this period.²¹⁷

Statius's *Silvae* 2.2 illustrates these ideals clearly with respect to private villas on the Bay of Naples, and their decoration with imported stone in particular. Maria Bardo Gauly's 2006 article, "Das Glück des Pollius Felix: römische Macht und privater Luxus in Statius' Villengedicht *Silv.* 2,2" provides an illuminating analysis of the cultural and political context of the poem. She asks why someone who did not know Pollio or his villa personally would be interested in reading a poetic description of the property. What relevance did such a work have? Her answer is that by describing Pollio Felix's good fortune, Statius was indirectly praising the Roman state and emperor, which allowed men like Pollio to prosper. The architecture of the villa and its subjugation of nature in particular are to be understood as metaphors for the power and welfare of the empire. The domination of wilderness and the cultivation of civilization and human well-being are linked.²¹⁸ It is important to note that this poem demonstrates that large quantities of exotic decorative stones were available not only to members of the imperial family, but also to

²¹⁵ Cf. Bergmann 1991, 58.

²¹⁶ Spencer 2010, 85.

²¹⁷ Von Stackelberg 2009, cited in Spencer 2010, 112.

²¹⁸ Bergmann 1991, 59.

wealthy private citizens. Such a detail is well-worth remembering when anonymous villas decorated with fine stone are excavated, since rich residences seem often to be automatically labeled imperial properties by archaeologists.²¹⁹

Stattius's lengthy description of the varieties and origins of stone that decorate a room with a superior view (*Silvae* 2.2.36-106) creates a particularly interesting link between public and private architecture.²²⁰ While the Greek origins of many of the stones may be noteworthy, underscoring the sophistication and erudition of both the patron and poet,²²¹ Gauly notes that the marbles described here are almost all the same types that decorated Domitian's palace on the Palatine (e.g. Chian, Carystian, Calcidian, Phrygian, Numidian, Thassian, etc.).²²² Pollio is able to display his wealth in exactly the same way that the emperor does, demonstrating that the prosperity of Domitian extends directly to his subjects. Gauly argues that because many of the quarries for the stones mentioned in this passage were imperially-controlled, private citizens like Pollio explicitly owe their good fortune to the emperor. Statius expounds on the origins and history of various stones, further emphasizing the link between marble and Roman power. In addition, Statius's ekphrasis demonstrates a hierarchy of stone. Colored marbles are more prized than white, and certain varieties/colors are more important than others.²²³

Stattius also mentions marble in the house of L. Arruntius Stella in Rome (*Silv.* 1.2.147-157)²²⁴ and lists the marbles on display in the Domus Flavia in *Silv.* 4.2.18-31.²²⁵

²¹⁹ One such example of this assumption: Guldager Bilde 2005, 5.

²²⁰ Statius, *Silvae* 2.2.83-94: *una tamen cunctis procul eminent una diaetis, / quae tibi Parthenopen directo limite ponti / ingerit: hic Grais penitus delecta metallis / saxa; quot Eoae respersit vena Syenes, / Synnade quot maesta Phrygiae fodere secures / per Cybeles lugentis agros, ubi marmore picto / candida purpureo distinguitur area gyro; / hic et Amyclaei caesum de monte Lycurgi / quod viret et molles imitatur rupibus herbas; / hic Nomadum lucent flaventia saxa Thasosque / et Chios et gaudens fluctus spectare Carystos: / omnia Chalcidicas turres obversa salutant.*

²²¹ Bergmann 1991, 51.

²²² Cf. note X below; also known from archaeological evidence.

²²³ Gauly 2006, 464.

²²⁴ Statius *Silvae* 1.2.148-157: *hic Libycus Phrygiusque silex, hic dura Laconum / saxa virent, hic flexus onyx et concolor alto / vena mari, rupesque nitent quis purpura saepe / Oebalis et Tyrii moderator livet aeni. / pendunt innumeris fastigia nixa columnis, / robora Dalmatico lucent satiata metallo. / excludunt radios silvis demissa vetustis / frigora, perspicui vivunt in marmore fontes. / nec servat natura vices: hic Sirius alget, / bruma tepet, versumque domus sibi temperat annum.*

²²⁵ Statius, *Silvae*, 4.2.18-31: *Tectum augustum, ingens, non centum insigne columnis, / sed quantae superos caelumque Atlante remisso / sustentare queant. stupet hoc vicina Tonantis / regia, teque pari laetantur sede locatum / numina. nec magnum properes excedere caelum: / tanta patet moles effusaeque impetus aulae / liberior, campi multumque amplexus operti / aetheros, et tantum domino minor; ille penates / implet et ingenti genio iuvat. aemulus illic / mons Libys Iliacusque nitet, multa Syene / et Chios et*

Here again we see an interest not only in an elite, informed connoisseurship of marble, but also an association between imported stone and the power of the emperor. Mark Bradley notes an increasing exhibition of what he terms “marble snobbery” beginning from at least the late Augustan period and reaching its height, perhaps, in Flavian poetry.²²⁶ It is apparent that a widespread familiarity with the origins of stone varieties and an ability to identify types on sight was an important part of the arsenal of aristocratic knowledge. A truly cultured Roman should also have been able to distinguish varieties of white marble visually - a skill that even modern stone specialists would regard with envy.²²⁷ Throughout these passages, Statius seems reluctant to use the word *luxuria*, which still had negative connotations.²²⁸ The things he describes, however, would once have fallen into that category. This change provides evidence of increasing acceptance of displays of wealth and an increasingly high threshold for what was considered excessive.²²⁹

xv. Tacitus (56-117 C.E.)

Surprisingly, perhaps, considering Tacitus's scathing portraits of Julio-Claudian emperors, the author was not much interested in criticizing their private luxury, though he does display disapproval of excessive dining. This attitude is in keeping with the generally increased acceptance of domestic opulence over time. Tacitus maintains that a certain level of *magnificentia* is appropriate among the upper classes when it can serve political purposes.²³⁰

Tacitus is useful as a source for changes in attitudes during the reign of Vespasian, when increased conservatism, mimicking Augustan ideals, temporarily took hold.²³¹ He contrasts the domestic simplicity promoted by Vespasian with the increasing luxury during the period between Actium and the reign of Galba. Vespasian, though, was

glaucæ certantia Doridi saxa; / Lunaque portandis tantum suffecta columnis. / longa supra species: fessis vix culmina prenda / visibus auratique putes laquearia caeli.

²²⁶ Bradley 2006b, 4–5.

²²⁷ Ibid., 10.

²²⁸ Dubois-Pelerin 2008, 121.

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Ibid., 6–48.

²³¹ E.g. *Annales* 3.55 (*sed praecipuus adstricti moris auctor Vespasianus fuit, antiquo ipse cultu victuque. obsequium inde in principem et aemulandi amor validior quam poena ex legibus et metus*). See also *Ann.* 14.52 on Seneca's vast personal wealth during the reign of Nero.

able to achieve this end by example rather than law, suggesting that we should understand these ideals as being widespread in the population at the time, or at the very least, among the upper classes.

xvi. Suetonius (ca. 70-130 C.E.)

The last of the Roman authors I will discuss here, Suetonius, wrote more than a century after the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 C.E., though his work *De Vita Caesarum* begins with Julius Caesar. The only information Suetonius provides about stone decoration in the late Republic is his gossipy comment that Caesar was so addicted to luxury that he transported mosaic and *opus sectile* pavements with him on campaign.²³² We cannot know if this story is true, of course, but the fact that mosaic is included here as a luxury may suggest that the story originated in an earlier period. Though Varro, and perhaps also Cicero, included mosaic in their litanies of luxury, it seems no longer to have been considered extravagant by the Flavian period, if not earlier.²³³ The transportation of usually permanent architectural features may well have been enough to qualify Caesar's behavior as excessive for Suetonius's contemporaries, nevertheless.

More importantly, Suetonius provides a brief description of Augustus's house and comments on its modesty and simplicity. He remarks that Augustus lived in a simple residence, not decorated with marble: *et neque laxitate neque cultu conspicuis, ut in quibus porticus breves essent Albanarum columnarum et sine marmore ullo aut insigni pavimento conclavia; (Aug. 72).*²³⁴ Kristina Milnor has noted that it is difficult to tell from the passage whether or not Suetonius had access to the House of Augustus during his own lifetime and actually saw the things he describes firsthand.²³⁵ Since he mentions that some of Augustus's modest furniture was at his time on display in the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, she concludes that he probably did not see the house in person. Certainly he was wrong in claiming that no marble was used in its decoration: evidence of imported stone paving and socles have been discovered in excavations of the Casa di

²³² Div. Jul. 46.1:[...]in expeditionibus tessellata et sectilia pavimenta circumtulisse.

²³³ Dubois-Pelerin 2008, 138.

²³⁴ “And [his house] was conspicuous neither in size nor splendor, since it had short porticoes with columns of Alban stone and rooms without any marble or remarkable pavements.”

²³⁵ Milnor 2005, 81 n. 69.

Augusto on the Palatine.²³⁶ Imprints in mortar show that entire floors were paved in stone, though the stone itself has long since been removed.²³⁷ Harald Mielsch suggests that the property Suetonius describes may instead be what is now known as the Casa di Livia on the Palatine, which was less richly decorated.²³⁸

What is usually taken from Suetonius's text is the idea that Augustus decorated his house in a particularly modest fashion, presumably in comparison to houses that had been recently built by Republican generals and politicians.²³⁹ Just as we can use the archaeological evidence to test the accuracy of Suetonius's description of the physical aspects of Augustus's home, we can also use it to test the memory of the Republican and Augustan periods that it represents. In conjunction with other texts, the archaeology sheds light on how Suetonius's memory of standards of domestic life relates to actual standards that existed in the first century B.C.E. The question remains whether Suetonius's description relied on his own inspection of the property, assuming it was still accessible during his lifetime, or whether he relied purely on descriptions from earlier written works. Even if Suetonius's attitude mimics that of earlier writers, his understanding of those attitudes may well depend on his own experiences.

Suetonius's main basis for describing Augustus's house as modest is that it was without marble or “remarkable” pavements. That is, we can infer that the house was decorated primarily with the wall paintings and mosaic floors typical of interior decoration in that period. We know from the Augustan literary sources discussed above that restraint in private architecture was idealized and that the use of exotic, expensive building materials was praised only for public projects. In the late Republican and Augustan periods, the use of imported marble in the homes of even the wealthiest Romans was limited to a few architectural elements. Painting of the sort with which the Casa di Augusto was decorated was the height of elegant interior decoration;²⁴⁰ indeed Varro and Seneca the Elder include painting and mosaic in their litanies of luxury. Suetonius was comparing Augustus's house not to the homes of that emperor's

²³⁶ Pensabene 1997, 144-192.

²³⁷ Dunbabin, 257; Edwards 1993, 167.

²³⁸ Mielsch 2007, 55.

²³⁹ E.g. Milnor 2005, 81-82.

²⁴⁰ On these paintings, see pp. 141-143 below.

contemporaries but to the palace of the emperor and the houses and villas of wealthy men in Suetonius's own time, which he sees as typical of palatial residences. Accordingly, I conclude that Augustus's domestic modesty was not as extreme as Suetonius suggests.

In contrast, we have seen that by the late Flavian period, those who could afford to do so were expected to decorate their residences with imported stone and that this indulgence was considered a benefit of living in a stable, prosperous empire. Anxiety about decorative stone seems to have all but disappeared by the reign of Hadrian (if not earlier). Consequently, Suetonius could remark with wonder at the simplicity of Augustus's house without implied criticism of more recent emperors who lived with marble veneer and pavements, as Suetonius himself likely did. It is possible that Suetonius was not entirely clear on what constituted an *insigne* (elegant or remarkable) pavement in Augustus's time, and so he takes it to mean what it does in his own time: imported stone slabs.²⁴¹

Early in Augustus's reign, when he purchased and renovated his properties on the Palatine, it would have been exceptional and infeasible, even for the wealthiest and most powerful man in Rome, to have a great deal of marble architectural elements in his home. Augustus did, in fact, have some stone pavements and veneer in his home, but he was indeed exceptional. Pliny summoned up the singularity of men only a few decades earlier who incorporated just one type of imported stone into their residences, such as a lintel/threshold or a set of columns. Augustan poets, too, mentioned only limited private uses of colored marble, not large-scale architectural projects or entirely veneered houses. Most high status homes in that period were decorated with wall paintings and mosaic or *opus signinum* floors, with perhaps minor imported stone accents, if any. Suetonius's conception of Augustus' house as modest, then, seems to come from a comparison with imperial residences as he knew them from his own time, rather than from comparison with other first century B.C.E. homes.²⁴²

²⁴¹ Dubois-Pelerin 2008, 137.

²⁴² Edwards (1993, 164-6) notes that this contrast also helps to highlight the excess exhibited by later emperors.

II. Archaeological Evidence for the Use of Marble in Domestic Contexts (ca. 150 B.C.E. - 79 C.E.)

The archaeological evidence for the use of imported decorative stone in Roman domestic buildings provides an essential alternate source of information about attitudes toward luxury throughout my period of study. I have already drawn on the archaeological evidence in certain cases above, such as the Casa di Augusto, to question the testimony of Roman authors. Moreover, while the literature communicates to us the ideals of various periods – and not necessarily the ideals of the same period it describes – archaeology sheds light on whether or not people actually behaved in accordance with those expressed ideals. That is, we can investigate when people said one thing and did another.

The history of imported stone use in the private residences of Republican Italy in particular is difficult to reconstruct from the archaeological evidence, as few remains have been uncovered. The problem of whether this dearth of Republican marble artifacts reflects a real lack of decorative stone in that period, or whether it is an accident of preservation, is a complicated one to solve. This scarcity in part resulted from reuse.²⁴³ Large architectural components must rarely have been abandoned, and even broken or scrap pieces of valuable stone were frequently recycled, a phenomenon that can easily be observed throughout Pompeii.²⁴⁴ For instance, the notorious Lucullan marble columns used by Marcus Scaurus in his house on the Palatine were removed by Augustus to adorn the theater of Marcellus.²⁴⁵ Therefore, an absence of colored stone in early archaeological phases of private buildings does not necessarily indicate that it was never there. Conversely, we cannot always be sure that marble components found in later buildings were not reused from earlier ones - that is, the earliest apparent instances of certain stones may actually have been materials reused from earlier contexts.²⁴⁶

The chronological difficulties outlined in the Introduction create other impediments to tracking the development of stone in domestic architecture and

²⁴³ Fant 2007, 336; Angelelli 2006, 870–874.

²⁴⁴ See Fant, Russell, and Barker 2013 and Barker and Fant 2013, 29ff.

²⁴⁵ Santoro 2007, 326.

²⁴⁶ More examples of reuse: Fant 2001, 195 and Fant et al. 2013.

decoration. Chronology is not only imprecise when it comes to wall painting and domestic architecture. In some instances the supposed earliest importation dates of certain stones types appear to be have been arrived at using unique archaeological finds and vice versa, without any external confirmation. For instance, a major Republican example of the early use of several prestigious marbles in Rome is the pavement of the Ludus Magnus. The floor here contains Lucullan, Numidian, Phrygian, Sagarian, and Chian marbles, as well as alabaster, grey Luna marble, Egyptian *lumachella*, and granite. Guidobaldi and Salvatori, give a late Republican date to this pavement, though it is unclear from their 1988 article on what basis.²⁴⁷ In a later article, Guidobaldi and Olevano blame the difficulty of dating pavements from the city of Rome on a high instance of reuse.²⁴⁸

Archaeologists also regularly date pavements based on the wall paintings that decorate the same rooms.²⁴⁹ In employing this type of dating, scholars often fail to consider that pavements and paintings may not have been produced at the same time. Moreover, the dates for wall paintings suffer from all of the problems discussed in the Introduction, especially a lack of links to absolute dates, so their use in dating other materials is suspect. Guidobaldi and Olevano have proposed a chronological scheme for pavement types in houses based on a large number of examples they have analyzed from Pompeii²⁵⁰; in general, however, it seems that the scarcity of archaeological evidence for decorative stone use in the late Republic in both Pompeii and Rome reflects a real lack of marble in this early period. The texts, as we have seen, support such a reading of the material remains.

i. Colored Stone in the Hellenistic World

The background of colored stone use in the Hellenistic East is fundamental for understanding the significance and mechanism of its introduction to Italy in the late second or early first century B.C.E., especially when we consider the influence of Greek art and architecture on Roman aesthetics. The nature of our evidence is similar that for

²⁴⁷ Guidobaldi and Salvatori 1988, 171-175; see also Pensabene 1998a, 335.

²⁴⁸ Guidobaldi and Olevano, 223.

²⁴⁹ E.g. Ibid., 225-227.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

Republican Rome. There are a few suggestive, but very late, literary descriptions, and a corpus of archaeological remains that does not align easily with the texts.

Archaeologists have noted the use of polychrome marble in Greek architecture as early as the Classical period, with more widespread adoption in the fourth century and later.²⁵¹ Early polychromy took the form of white marble buildings with a few architectural elements, such as cornices or single strings of ashlar, in one or two other colors of stone. In many cases, accents must certainly have been painted to achieve a similar effect. Though colored stone was sometimes used for Hellenistic sculpture in, for example, Rhodes,²⁵² we have less material evidence for its architectural use as colored ashlar, interior revetments or in private architecture.

Hellenistic palaces have sometimes been suggested as models for the multicolored marble walls depicted in First and Second Style wall painting. In Palace V at Pergamon (i.e. the “official” quarters, not the residential space), there was some polychrome stone wall decoration. This included the socle and orthostats in two important rooms, which probably had plastered walls above them.²⁵³ Earlier evidence for marble interior decoration in a residential building comes from the palace at Pella, where there are remains of stone plinths and marble three-quarter engaged columns.²⁵⁴ This stone is white, however, rather than colored. A tomb at Vergina in Macedonia has walls veneered with white marble, as did the Mausoleum in Halicarnassus, but there is no sign of anything to parallel or serve as a model for entire colored stone walls in the style of First or Second Style paintings.²⁵⁵

The main source of evidence usually cited for the use of exotic varicolored marble decoration in Hellenistic interiors places them in Alexandria, rather than elsewhere, but we have only literary references to these decorations, no archaeological remains of which I am aware. Again, preservation problems may be responsible for the lack of marble remains, as valuable materials must have often been reused or recycled, but the lack of

²⁵¹ Waelkens et al. 2002, 518-519.

²⁵² Gregarek 2002, 206-214.

²⁵³ Zimmer 2010, 156–159; Nielsen 1999, 106, 272.

²⁵⁴ Nielsen 1999, 91.

²⁵⁵ Pensabene 1998a, 334.

evidence from any Hellenistic palace site suggests that marble decoration was in fact rare and never occurred on a large scale.

ii. Colored Stone in the Roman Republic

The archaeological record provides very little evidence for imported stone in the architecture and decoration of private residences in Italy until at least the Augustan period. One important exception may be the Casa del Fauno in Pompeii (Figure 14-Figure 17). While most of the bits of colored stone used in its pavements are likely locally available limestones, Fant has suggested that the red stone must be imported Taenarian marble (Figure 8).²⁵⁶ Red stone in these floors appears in both a purplish shade and a brighter, true red, both of which are possible variants of Taenarian. The authors of *Pittura e Mosaici di Pompei*, however, identify the red stone, along with the other colors, as Italian limestone. Taenarian marble had a long history of use around the Mediterranean going back to the Minoans, with limited use in fourth-century Greek architecture.²⁵⁷ If the red stone in the Casa del Fauno is in fact Greek, it represents a use of imported stone in Italian private space that is significantly earlier than the next earliest archaeological example I have encountered. The Casa del Fauno's main phase of decoration has recently been dated by Hoffmann and Faber to the end of second century B.C.E.²⁵⁸ Moreover, this instance of Taenarian marble in Pompeii would predate the first evidence for its use in Rome itself – not an impossible situation, but a surprising one.²⁵⁹ Houses in Rome itself from the Late Republic, such as the Casa dei Grifi, have some elaborate pavements, but these too seem to consist of locally available stones, such as slate, palombino, and green limestone.²⁶⁰

In the late second century B.C.E., fine decoration for even elaborate Roman villas consisted mainly of impressive terracotta moldings, rather than fine stone.²⁶¹ Pavements like those in Fauno, consisting of mosaic or mortar floors inset with pieces of colored stone, apparently local limestones, were common in Republican houses and villas and are

²⁵⁶ Fant 2007, 336–337.

²⁵⁷ Lazzarini 2004, 583–604.

²⁵⁸ Hoffmann and Faber 2009, 107–108.

²⁵⁹ Waelkens et al. 2002, 519–520. See pp. 95–99 below for more on the pavements of the Casa del Fauno

²⁶⁰ Insalco 2005, 19.

²⁶¹ Terrenato 2012, 74. Dates for the Casa del Fauno: Hoffmann and Faber 2009, 104–112.

associated with First Style decoration (in houses) and Second Style painting (in houses and villas).²⁶² Local stones and even glass paste were used to add colors to early pavements, and these cannot always be identified as glass rather than stone on site. Analysis must also be carried out to distinguish between local and imported stones.²⁶³ Black and white marble, of course, was also used for mosaic pavements in this period, some of which contained *tesserae* of colored stone. In later periods, pavements of all these types continued to be produced, though with small or scrap pieces of imported stone instead of, or in addition to, local types.

Villa A at Oplontis serves as something of an exception for this period in terms of its stone decoration. Its initial phase of construction and decoration included at least thirteen alabaster thresholds.²⁶⁴ Fine stone thresholds were quite rare at this date, and perhaps seen as a particular extravagance, if we accept Pliny the Elder's description of Lepidus's Numidian threshold as *vilissimo* as accurately reflecting Republican sentiment.²⁶⁵ Barker and Fant have suggested that these threshold blocks were imported from Egypt, an exotic source that must have made them especially impressive.²⁶⁶

Numidian marble, a yellow stone often enhanced with red veins may have been imported to Rome from North Africa for the first time in the second century B.C.E (Figure 7). We have little evidence that it was much used in Italy until the mid-first century B.C.E., perhaps only after the conquest of Numidia by Julius Caesar, though it has been suggested that the Romans had access to the stone as early as the time of the destruction of Carthage in 146.²⁶⁷ Probably we can date its importation to Rome on a significant scale no earlier than 78 B.C.E. when, Pliny tells us, M. Lepidus introduced it.²⁶⁸ Our oldest archaeological evidence for its use in Rome may be the Numidian column drum, inscribed CN. POMPEI, from the portico of the theater of Pompey.²⁶⁹

²⁶² E.g. Villa dei Misteri, Villa dei Papiri (Guidobaldi and Esposito 2009, 334); Pensabene (1998a, 334) mentions a house on the Palatine in Rome with a *cocciopesto* floor with inserts of small pieces of Lucullan and Numidian, though he provides no reference.

²⁶³ Guidobaldi and Olevano, 224.

²⁶⁴ Barker and Fant 2013, 3-5.

²⁶⁵ See p. 60 above.

²⁶⁶ Barker and Fant 2013, 5.

²⁶⁷ Pensabene 1998a, 334.

²⁶⁸ Fant 2007, 338, citing Pliny, *N.H.* 36.44.

²⁶⁹ Gagliardo and Packer 2008, 98.

Without that inscription, we would be left with doubts here too, since the theater was renovated by Augustus, Domitian, and Septimius Severus; however, we have no reason to believe that this mark would have been added to a later column, and so it is probably evidence that the Numidian columns were part of the original portico.²⁷⁰

Lucullan marble (Figure 5) has a history similar to that of Numidian marble. The earliest literary mention of its use – that is, literary mention of its earliest use – significantly predates its earliest known archaeological context. This stone was known as Lucullan marble (*marmor Lucullum*), because the general Lucullus introduced the stone to Rome in *ca.* 74 B.C.E.²⁷¹ It may be that Lucullan marble was only being quarried in quantities large enough for export once the economy of Asia Minor, and Pergamon in particular, began to recover from its long period of war with Rome and consequently was in a position to direct resources toward the exploitation of marble in that area.²⁷² Again, however, we do not find much of it on the ground until the Augustan period, when it was used commonly enough. For example, the large columns from the Basilica Aemilia were made of Lucullan marble.²⁷³

Other stones that appear less frequently in Republican painting also have murky early histories. These include Chian marble (Figure 4), one of the most popular types in the Augustan period, which may have had a history similar to that of Lucullan marble and other eastern stones imported by the Romans.²⁷⁴ We have little idea of how much earlier this stone was introduced to Roman Italy.²⁷⁵ Carystian marble (Figure 3) and, especially, Phrygian marble (Figure 9) have similar backgrounds, the latter being particularly important in Augustan imperial architecture, but apparently entirely absent in painting until much later. Fant argues that these stones were imported on only a limited scale until the Augustan period. He suggests that they might have been used in small quantities for

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 95.

²⁷¹ *Pl. N.H.* 36.8. Dworakowska 1990, 253.

²⁷² The effects of Rome's wars in Asia Minor and their economic consequences on the Republican marble supply and imitation stone in Second Style Wall painting are explored in more detail in Chapter 4, pp. 123-124.

²⁷³ The date for these columns is not certain, but usually assigned to the Augustan period (see Dworakowska 1990, n. 46).

²⁷⁴ See pp. 123-124 below.

²⁷⁵ Pensabene 1998b, 7.

portable objects or parts of furniture.²⁷⁶ As a result, the colors and patterns associated with specific types might have been fairly familiar to those who had access to such objects, even if they were not yet available for use on a large scale. We need not have evidence of large architectural projects incorporating imported stone in order to suppose that certain Romans would have been aware of them.

iii. Colored Stone in the Augustan Period

By the Augustan period, Numidian marble, along with Chian and Lucullan, were among the most frequently used imported stones in monumental architecture. In the Augustan period, there was an explosion in the use of colored stones in public monuments in Rome. Fant points out that though the idea of Augustus' marble city usually conjures up a gleaming white landscape, we should picture a more polychromatic use of colored stone, for which there is plenty of evidence.²⁷⁷ Numidian marble is especially evident, including a column erected at the site of Caesar's funeral pyre, paneling in the portico of the Danaids attached to the Temple of Apollo on the Palatine, and the paving of the Forum of Augustus. In addition, massive columns of Carystian and Lucullan marble were part of the Basilica Aemilia in the Forum in Rome.²⁷⁸ These columns are, in fact, our earliest dateable material evidence for the use of Lucullan marble in Rome, though its reputation predates them. It is in this period that we start to see some ideological aspects of marble use and its employment in a programmatic way that was not visible in the late Republican evidence.²⁷⁹

Archaeological evidence for imported marble in public buildings outside of the capital is slim, as is evidence from private contexts inside or outside Rome. There are remains of *opus sectile* floors in the Casa di Augusto on the Palatine, though the marble itself was removed before the floors were investigated archaeologically²⁸⁰ - and labeling

²⁷⁶ Fant 1999, 2.

²⁷⁷ Fant 1999, 277-280 and *passim*.

²⁷⁸ Fant 1999, 2.

²⁷⁹ See Santoro 2007, though the author puts more emphasis on the Republican period than perhaps our scant evidence for marble use in that period justifies.

²⁸⁰ Dunbabin, 257; Pensabene 1997.

that building a “private” one is debatable, at best. Sculptures in colored stone may have begun to appear in private properties during the Augustan period.²⁸¹

In Clarke’s study of decorative suites in Roman houses and villas, he describes the pavements associated with Third Style paintings. That style that was most popular during the reign of Augustus and perhaps for some time later. These Third Style “decorative suites” feature black and white mosaics with simple designs, or *lavapesta* (black mortar) floors with a small number of *tesserae* or small pieces of colored stone set into them. Pavements of these types are found both in houses in Pompeii, and in larger villas, such as the Villa dei Misteri and Villa A at Oplontis. Despite references to cut stone slabs in pavements or marble floors in Augustan literature, we do not see much evidence outside of the Casa di Augusto. In cases where entire floors were paved in stone, even if the stone has been salvaged, traces of its arrangement in the underlying mortar are often visible, as in the Casa di Augusto. Part of the lack of clear evidence for Augustan marble pavements may result from difficulty distinguishing phases of houses and villas dating to the Augustan period, a relatively short period of time, from phases belonging to the Late Republic or the early Julio-Claudian era. I argue that the ambiguity in the evidence suggests that, while Augustan literature was distinctive in its disdain for houses decorated with marble, the actual use of decorative stone changed very little from the Late Republic through the Augustan period.

iv. Colored Stone in the Julio-Claudian and Flavian Periods

It is only in the first century C.E. that we begin to see widespread use of colored marble in domestic settings in Rome and elsewhere, as well as in public architecture outside the capital. The precise dates for most of these examples are difficult to pinpoint in archaeological publications. I question to what extent wall painting and marble decoration itself are used as supposed chronological markers for buildings (and, accordingly, their decoration). Presumably other methods, such as pottery chronology, are also available. In many of these cases, however, it is not possible for me to supply a date more precise than “Julio-Claudian/Flavian” or “somewhere between the reigns of Tiberius and Domitian” based on published reports. One such difficult example is the

²⁸¹ Such as in a villa at Anzio: Gregarek 2002.

imperial villa at Pausylipon, which seems to have become part of the imperial property by at least the reign of Hadrian. This property is often identified as the villa of Vedius Pollio described by Statius in *Silvae* 2.2 (see pp. X-X above). The villa has an odeon with an orchestra floor paved in Numidian, Taenarian, Parian, and Phrygian marbles. It also has a triclinium and a “triportico” with marble socles and traces of *opus sectile* floors.²⁸²

Another example is the Roman villa by Lake Nemi, recently excavated by the Nordic Institute. A great deal of imported stone was recovered from the site: a full eighteen percent of the total finds from the southern part of the villa were marble.²⁸³ The villa was occupied from the Late Republic until *ca.* 150 C.E., however, and consequently it is difficult to determine from the published accounts exactly to what phase of occupation most of the stone belongs. I am tempted to suppose, on analogy with other sites, that most of it is from the Flavian period or later. This sort of analogy is, however, used too often and without sufficient scrutiny in dating phases of domestic sites with decorative stone. The types of stone found here do suggest a later period, since they include porphyry and granite, materials that belong to the late Julio-Claudian period or later.²⁸⁴ As with most large, well-appointed villas, this residence is thought by its excavators to have been under imperial ownership.²⁸⁵

The decoration of the Villa dei Papiri, at least, is dateable to before 79 C.E. On the terrace that opens toward the ancient coast, colored stone is part of a very rich decorative system.²⁸⁶ Pavements in this area include *opus sectile* with pieces of Numidian and Taenarian marble, as well as slate. Evidence suggests that these floors belonged to a phase prior to the final one, because some pieces of fine stone had already been removed in antiquity. Fine marble wall veneer also decorated this zone of the villa. The lower sections of the walls had a low plinth of Lucullan marble with a white marble molded cornice above it, slabs of Lucullan and Numidian marble above that, another molded cornice crowning that section, and finally pieces of Numidian, grey Luna, and Carystian marble on top. The remainder of the wall surface above this stone socle was plastered. In

²⁸² Varriale 2007, 158.

²⁸³ Guldager Bilde 2005, 4.

²⁸⁴ Waelkens et al. 2002, 521; Fant 2007, 341.

²⁸⁵ Guldager Bilde 2005, 5.

²⁸⁶ Guidobaldi and Esposito 2009, 356–357.

the corners of the room, brick statue bases were covered in veneer composed of Lucullan, grey Luna, and white marbles. A recent publication reevaluating the archaeology of the Villa dei Papiri dates the construction of this part of the villa to the late Augustan or Julio-Claudian periods, based on finds of sculpture and the floor pavements, but suggests that the marble on the walls was likely added in the Neronian or Flavian periods.²⁸⁷ Because Numidian and Taenarian marble were available in Italy by at least the Augustan period, while Carystian marble seems to lag somewhat behind, these dates seem reasonable.²⁸⁸ Slate is a common element of pavements associated with the First and Second Style paintings, including several floors in the Casa del Fauno and the floor of Room 5 in the Villa dei Misteri.

In Pompeii, we find no colored imported stone in even the most important public buildings in the first century B.C.E. For example, when the sanctuary of Venus was reconstructed in the mid-first century B.C.E., no imported stone was included in its decoration.²⁸⁹ In its first century C.E. renovation, however, Chian and Lucullan marble feature prominently. The mid-first century C.E. is also when imported stone began to be used on a gradually increasing scale in private buildings in Pompeii. By the time of the city's destruction, the Casa di Giulio Polibio, for example, had at least eight varieties of colored decorative stone included in its decoration.²⁹⁰ These included: Skyrian, Chian, Taenarian, Carystian, Lucullan, Phrygian, Numidian, and grey Luna marbles. This house can serve as a typical example of imported stone use in the decoration of homes in Pompeii. Most pieces are small and irregular and, though they are examples of valuable varieties, the fragments available to the house's owner appear to have been reused or discarded scraps from other construction projects. Dozens of comparable properties in Pompeii could be listed here, with little distinction among them, but I limit myself to this single example, in part because of the thorough publication of its stone.²⁹¹ More carefully planned and executed uses of colored stone in paving tend to appear in the form of *emblemata* in the centers of floors that are otherwise paved with other techniques, such as

²⁸⁷ Ibid., 369.

²⁸⁸ Fant 2007, 340–341.

²⁸⁹ Carroll, Montana, and Randazzo 2008.

²⁹⁰ Cancelliere, Lazzarini, and Turi 2002.

²⁹¹ Ibid.; a recent, interesting study thoroughly catalogues and analyzes the scrap marble used to adorn bars throughout Pompeii: Fant, Russell, and Barker 2013.

in the *tablinum* of the Casa di Marco Lucrezio. A few examples of larger expanses of marble-paved *opus sectile* floors, for example in the Casa di Apollo and the Casa del'Efebo (Figure 77), also exist. In these cases, more regular pieces of stone were cut to fit complicated geometric designs.

By the second century C.E., colored stone paving and wall paneling seems to have become the norm for the most important rooms in major villas. The heavy use of marble in the Villa dei Quintili outside of Rome provides a useful illustration of this tendency. Exactly at what point this trend became ubiquitous is difficult to determine – often ranges of dates provided for villas are as broad as Flavian-Hadrianic.²⁹² Though there is substantial evidence for marble use in pavements and wall paneling in the Flavian period, it is important to note that large pieces of imported stone, such as columns, were still often inaccessible or undesirable to private builders. Enormous villas like the Villa dei Papiri had brick columns plastered and fluted to look like stone, rather than real marble elements of that size.²⁹³

Imported stone veneer similar to that from the Villa dei Papiri also decorated some walls and floors of Villa A at Oplontis, including a dado in Sagaritan and Lucullan marble in Room 64 (Figure 65).²⁹⁴ Elsewhere, Luna grey marble from Italy was used as veneer.²⁹⁵ Large expanses of floor were paved in Numidan marble and slate *opus sectile* (Figure 76).²⁹⁶ In addition, twenty monolithic columns of gray Lesbos marble lined the large peristyle.²⁹⁷ The scale of the use of imported stone for this colonnade marks Villa A as uniquely opulent in comparison to any other residence known from the region.²⁹⁸ As in the Villa dei Papiri, some of the veneer and columns had been already removed prior to Villa A's destruction.²⁹⁹

Other evidence suggests that we should consider 79 C.E. as falling directly within a period in which larger pieces of stone were becoming more readily available to a wider

²⁹² E.g. Di Fraia 1993, 30–31; and cf. Angelelli 2006, 927.

²⁹³ Guidobaldi and Esposito 2009, 356.

²⁹⁴ Barker and Fant 2013, 17.

²⁹⁵ Ibid., 18.

²⁹⁶ Ibid., 19–20.

²⁹⁷ Ibid., 16.

²⁹⁸ Ibid., 16.

²⁹⁹ Ibid., 23ff.

market. The Casa dei Marmi in Pompeii has enormous slabs of Carystian marble that correspond in length to adjacent doorways. These blocks were piled up in the corner of its peristyle, along with large pieces of green porphyry from Greece, a relatively unusual stone to find in this region and this period (Figure 80). It seems unlikely that the excavators of this house moved these heavy pieces to their present location, and so it appears that they had been recently transported to the residence and were awaiting installation at the time of the eruption.³⁰⁰ The last of our evidence from Pompeii, then, corresponds with a newly increased accessibility of imported stone to mid-size properties outside of Rome.

The decoration of imperial palaces and villas doubtless set the trend for other residences. Nero's Domus Transitoria and Domus Aurea both had elaborate *opus sectile* floors, which included in their design purple and green porphyry, as well as Numidian and Phrygian marble.³⁰¹ Porphyry only arrived in Italy under Claudius and became popular under Nero, so its appearance in architectural decoration and wall painting can give us a rough *terminus post quem* for the buildings it adorns.³⁰² Domitian's palace, too, was heavily ornamented with imported stone, and rather than exhibiting a preference for any particular type, the goal seems to have been variety, polychromy, and magnitude.³⁰³

v. The Pattern of Developments in Private Marble Use in the Archaeological Record

The archaeological record yields scant evidence for imported decorative stone from private buildings from the Republican period – and even for public monuments, there are few available examples. Some reuse may distort the record, but the very limited number of examples from this period suggests that there was a real lack of imported stone available for Republican domestic architecture and decoration. By the Augustan period, marble was becoming more common in major public buildings in Rome, but it remained rare in private homes and in public monuments outside of the capital. Beginning during the reign of Nero, and increasing during the Flavian period, imported stone was employed extensively in public building both in Rome and other cities in Italy. In

³⁰⁰ Fant 2007, 340.

³⁰¹ Dunbabin 2001, 258.

³⁰² Cf. Fant 2007, 342.

³⁰³ Waelkens et al. 2002, 521.

addition, private residences frequently displayed stone decoration, ranging from small scrap pieces embedded in the pavements of middling houses in towns like Pompeii to large swathes of floors and walls covered in regular, planned marble veneer in villas, no doubt inspired by the large-scale use of imported stone in imperial palaces and villas.

vi. Conclusions

The patterns in private decorative stone use that are observable in archaeological and literary evidence complement one another well in a number of ways, when close attention is paid to context. Both sources indicate that there were in the late Republic only rare instances of imported marble used for a single architectural or decorative elements in the homes of only a very few people, alongside relatively small-scale uses of the these materials in public buildings. From this time onward, there was a gradual but steady progression in the availability and use of decorative stone in both public and private space up to and beyond the Flavian period. More varieties of imported stone continued to become available, and they were employed in larger quantities, for more and more purposes as time went on.

Attitudes toward displays of decorative stone expressed in textual sources over time mirror the increasing use of stone but at the same time can distort our ability to understand the scale of stone actually employed in each period. The archaeological evidence shows a steady increase in the use of imported stone in residences, suggesting a corresponding increase in acceptability of the habit. The magnitude of outrage leveled at early introductions of this practice in texts, however, can disguise the fact that criticism was initially directed at small-scale introductions of imported stone into the private home.

Similarly, the archaeological evidence alone cannot reveal changes in attitudes at each phase. While the general trajectory of opinion of private imported stone proceeds from criticism to admiration, it is not as even a climb as the archaeology would imply. There are declines in acceptance toward the practice in both the Augustan period and under the reign of Vespasian, though corresponding hiatuses in marble use are difficult to spot in the material record. This lack of correspondence is perhaps due to limits in the fineness of our chronological resolution for private architecture, particularly in the mid-first century C.E. I argue, moreover, that analysis of these two strains of evidence shows that while attitudes toward the role of imported stone in private luxury fluctuated, actual

behavior remained fairly consistent. Throughout the period under study here, people used as many types of stone in as large quantities as were available to them. While they might sometimes have professed a lack of interest in or disapproval of the trappings of personal luxury, the majority of the population nonetheless admired colored stone enough to take advantage of what was available in every period. The literary and archaeological records reveal this discrepancy in ideals versus behavior. Wall painting, as yet another medium in which attitudes and ideals could be expressed, provides a third strain of evidence for tracking the correspondence between ideals and actual practice. I will explore in detail the sometimes complementary and sometimes contradictory messages from wall painting in the remaining chapters.

Chapter Three

Decorative Stone in the First Pompeian Style

Did First Style decoration serve as a convincing imitation of the marble interiors of Hellenistic mansions and palaces? Or was it a grand but staid evocation of Roman public space in the private residences of ambitious Pompeians? A close study of the way stone was represented in the Pompeian First Style is of enormous value in understanding its significance at the height of its production.

The earliest type of painted plaster decoration found on the walls of standing buildings in Pompeii was designated by August Mau as the First Style,³⁰⁴ and it is by this name that examples from Campania and elsewhere in Italy are usually known. Mau considered these decorations to be the ones described by Vitruvius as the most ancient style of painted plaster in Italy, which he explained was meant to imitate marble veneer (*crustarum marmorearum varietates et conlocationes: 7.5.1*). At least since Vincent Bruno's 1969 article, the label Masonry Style has also been used to group similar plastered and painted walls around the ancient Mediterranean world into the same tradition as the Pompeian First Style, and to acknowledge that what is known from Pompeii was only a local manifestation of a trend that was widespread in Hellenistic interiors.³⁰⁵

The basic elements of this style of wall covering are zones of fictive blocks molded in stucco and brightly painted. A First Style wall in Pompeii is usually divided

³⁰⁴ Mau 1882. Though an earlier type of wall painting may have preceded the First Style in buildings from a previous generation, demolished before the construction of Pompeii's standing architecture: Brun 2008.

³⁰⁵ Bruno 1969; Leach 2004, 59–60.

into five main zones (Figure 11). The lowest, the dado or socle, is a solid, usually light color without individual blocks delineated; above the dado are orthostats, which are large horizontal blocks that make up the middle zone and focal point of the wall. Often (though not always) the orthostats are painted a more somber color than other portions of the wall. Next are the isodomic courses, which are rows of smaller blocks in a mixture of bright and subdued colors. An epistyle and a frieze with a dentil cornice surmount the isodomos. The space remaining below the ceiling is left as rough plaster.³⁰⁶

The First Style in Pompeii was thoroughly analyzed and documented by Anne Laidlaw in her substantial volume on the topic, which catalogues all the examples of the style, around 400 examples in 180 houses, that were visible and accessible in the years leading up to her book's publication in 1985. Laidlaw describes the variations in the compositions and color patterns that they comprise, and determines the working methods and techniques of the artisans who created these decorations. She discusses the antecedents of the First Style in Pompeii as they exist elsewhere, but this is a topic more thoroughly covered by Bruno's article. My discussion builds upon Laidlaw and Bruno's work, which provides detailed general discussion of the First Style. I focus instead on the depiction of marble and other decorative stone in these decorations in an attempt to discern: (1) the relationship between the First Pompeian Style and later styles in Pompeii; (2) its connection to real stone architecture and decoration; and (3) its place in Hellenistic domestic decorative traditions.

According to Bruno, the entire surface of a Masonry Style wall is, as the name indicates, intended to imitate a wall constructed from drafted, ashlar blocks.³⁰⁷ His theory holds that all of the elements within the wall's decorative scheme are meant to represent blocks of solid marble or other stone. Others, beginning with Mau, have argued, in contrast, that the First Style imitated thin panels of marble veneer covering a rough masonry core, on the basis of Vitruvius's history of painting in Italy (Vitr. 7.5.1-4). Bruno's interpretation of the Masonry Style's significance must be basically correct, especially starting, as he does, at its origins in Greece. As Bruno notes, however, the version of the Masonry Style that we call the Pompeian First Style is less faithful to the

³⁰⁶ Laidlaw 1985, 28–30.

³⁰⁷ Bruno 1969, 307.

structural principles that would determine the arrangement of ashlar blocks in real construction.³⁰⁸ First Style decorations were imaginative and experimental in ways besides their arrangement of blocks, as well. For example, they sometimes included cleverly subtle working of figural details into their compositions (see below). They depicted materials, especially types of stone, that do not correspond to anything used elsewhere in the Mediterranean in architectural decoration at the time. My own research, presented here, elaborates on the extent to which the First Style in Pompeii departed from its ultimate origin in the monumental architecture of the Hellenistic world, focusing especially on that last element: its representation of decorative stone.

I begin with fictive stone as it appears in First Style Pompeian interiors. Second, I assess the use of actual colored stone in Pompeii during the period in which the First Style was being produced. Finally, I consider the implications of the above on the significance of the First Style at the height of its popularity in Pompeii.

I. The Significance of Stone in the First Style

John Clarke, reflecting a common scholarly interpretation of First Style wall decoration, described its purpose as follows:

‘It imitated costly marble masonry with inexpensive plaster and paint, thereby introducing into the private house the wealth and status associated with the palace and temple. The “illusion” in the First Style is therefore a rather literal one; like faux-marble techniques used to this day, it succeeds if the viewer is fooled into believing that the painted plaster walls are really constructed in or sheathed with precious marbles. . . . Rather than being a painting style, the First Style is really a plaster cast of architectural forms.’³⁰⁹

A thorough comprehension of the significance of First Style decoration in Pompeii and its association with the embellishment of other buildings, both in Pompeii and elsewhere, is a vital foundation for interpreting the meaning of its fictive stone blocks. At the same time, close examination of the stone painted on First Style walls tells us a great deal about the level of realism aspired to by painters and patrons in that period. I carry out a detailed analysis of the painted stone in the First Style in the final section of

³⁰⁸ Bruno 1969, 310–311.

³⁰⁹ Clarke 1991, 39.

this chapter. The upshot of that analysis is that First Style decorations do not indicate a desire to create a convincing imitation of real stone – a sharp contrast to the impression given by Second and Fourth Style paintings.

I argue that the First Style was not intended to function as a direct imitation of ashlar blocks of fine stone, nor was it understood as such by viewers. Instead, I consider it a type of interior decoration that was part of a mature tradition of plaster molding and painting in the Hellenistic period. My reading requires distinguishing between the First Style in Pompeian domestic interiors during this period and the stuccoed exteriors of (often public) architecture that were executed until the destruction of Pompeii. The latter category of wall plastering is superficially similar to First Style interiors, but belongs to a separate tradition that continued long after the First Style fell from fashion. This important point has been emphasized in an article by Stephan Mols, in which he describes later examples of stucco blocks that were, in fact, meant to substitute for fine stone masonry.³¹⁰ Wolfgang Ehrhardt similarly notes that later stucco block wall coverings more closely resemble the decoration of tombs than First Style interiors and consequently assigns them to a separate tradition.³¹¹ I contend that the meaning of these later, visually similar, decorations should not be applied to the original First Style decorations (though the meaning of even early examples of the First Style may well have shifted in response to developments like this one over time).³¹² I argue against two previous interpretations: 1) that the First Style was meant to be a convincing substitute for real marble masonry or revetment; and 2) that it was meant to evoke public space through its similarity to contemporary public interiors or exteriors in Pompeii. Instead, the First Style was a statement of participation in the widespread, prestigious, Hellenistic culture in which the Masonry Style developed.³¹³ While decorative stone was an important component of that display, the precise representation of specific types of stone was less important than variety, liveliness, and creativity.

First, let us evaluate the notion that the First Style is not a painting style, but a “plaster cast of architectural forms.” It is true that the technique involved in creating a

³¹⁰ Mols 2005.

³¹¹ Ehrhardt 2012, 110–111.

³¹² See Chapter 7 on subsequent meanings that developed for early paintings.

³¹³ Cf. Bruno 1969; Leach 2004, 62.

molded stucco First Style wall was quite different from other fresco techniques; however, illusionistic painting was not unknown to the artisans or craftsmen who created First Style decorations. In addition to widely employed marbling effects (described below), First Style walls often included illusionistically painted columns and other architectural forms, as well as *opus sectile* designs, curtains, and leafy garlands.³¹⁴ The skills of a painter, as well as a stuccoist, were required to produce these decorations.

The idea that First Style decoration is a rather straightforward representation in plaster of real architectural forms has contributed to problematic interpretations of its significance in aristocratic Pompeian homes. Scholars such as Leach and Wallace-Hadrill interpret faux ashlar masonry found in domestic settings as intended to associate the private (or semi-private) space of the house with the public arenas of political life.³¹⁵ According to this view, First Style interiors imitate or allude to the materials and construction of public buildings, especially the basilica and other architecture associated with the Roman forum and its small town versions. These public buildings were either built from genuine ashlar masonry or were themselves decorated in molded stucco blocks. Men who presented themselves to guests at home, surrounded by the First Style, emphasized their active role in public life, and the power and status they derived (or hoped to derive) from that role. This interpretation is then supported by the observation that First Style decoration is most commonly found in the most public, accessible, and visible parts of the Pompeian house, such as the *fauces* or vestibule, and the atrium. Because these are the spaces in which a house owner would most often receive clients and other visitors and conduct business, scholars have deemed the link between their décor and the public realm especially appropriate.

While aspects of this interpretation are compelling, there are obstacles to accepting it in its entirety. When we attempt to understand the meaning and function of the First Style, especially at the height of its popularity in Pompeii (roughly the mid-second to early first centuries B.C.E.), a major difficulty arises from the fact that no public buildings in Pompeii built from fine ashlar masonry can be securely dated to the period contemporary with First Style domestic interiors. The few examples of public

³¹⁴ See p. 103 below for a discussion of some examples.

³¹⁵ Leach 2004, 61–63; Wallace-Hadrill 1994, 25–26; cf. Clarke 1991, 40; Laidlaw 1985, 307ff.

buildings decorated with stucco-block interiors seem not to predate the First Style in houses; they are contemporary or later.³¹⁶ The most often cited parallel, Pompeii's basilica, possessed elaborate stuccoed interior and exterior walls, including many marbled blocks, and had been thought to belong to this early period (Figure 12). Recent work by archaeologists as part of the Pompeii Forum Project at the University of Virginia, however, has proposed that the basilica most likely was built between 89 and 80 B.C.E., a time when the First Style seems to have been on the verge of falling out of fashion for residential interiors.³¹⁷ A graffito on the northern interior wall of the basilica provides a *terminus ante quem* of 78 B.C.E. for the basilica's decoration, but previous scholars had assumed that it was built much earlier, because of its construction from tufo.³¹⁸ Traditional dating criteria that rely heavily on building materials are increasingly being questioned and found deficient, as John J. Dobbins and his colleagues' work in the forum and basilica exemplifies.³¹⁹ They have concluded that the architectural and archaeological stratigraphy of the south end of the forum indicates that the graffito was likely added very soon after the basilica went up.

Unfortunately, the decoration of the basilica is in very poor condition today. If early drawings such as those reproduced by Laidlaw are accurate, however, the types of marble depicted there may provide another source of support for a late date for the basilica.³²⁰ The range of stone varieties depicted seems to be wider than the limited repertoire of painted alabaster and generic breccias found in First Style houses.

³¹⁶ One early example of First Style in a Pompeian public building may be the Stabian Baths, renovated in the second century according to an inscription (CIL X 829 = ILS 5706; see Cooley and Cooley 2004: *A Sourcebook*, 21). If the surviving decoration of the baths is contemporaneous with First Style domestic interiors, they nevertheless hardly represent the sort of public space to allude to a man's role as a powerful political figure. The decorations of the phase of the Temple of Venus in Pompeii before it was renovated in the first century B.C.E. have been dated to a similar period as the basilica, at the end of the First Style period (Carroll, Montana, and Randazzo 2008). Again, a temple may not have provided quite the same connotations of political influence as a basilica. Perhaps it could be argued that First Style decorations brought to mind the benefactions of men who donated public buildings, but that is an altogether more complicated interpretation, and one that would largely ignore the Hellenistic origins of the style.

³¹⁷ Dobbins 2007, 159, 167–172. Also see Chapter 1, pp. 17–25 on the difficulties on the chronologies of painting styles, and Chapter 5 on the introduction of the Second Style to Pompeii at around this period.

³¹⁸ CIL IV 1842: *C PVMIDIVS DIPLIVS HEIC FVIT / AD V NONAS OCTOBREIS M LEPID Q CATVL COS* (see Cooley and Cooley, *Pompeii*, 77). Mau assigned the basilica to his “tufa period” and subsequent scholars followed suit (see Dobbins 2007, 159, 169, and 181 n. 74).

³¹⁹ See also Mogetta 2013, Cf.

³²⁰ Laidlaw 1985, 318 and see pl. 100.

According to Gell and Gandy's book of 1824, the marbled blocks were painted in red, yellow, and green, which are the colors typically found in First Style paintings.³²¹ The graffito inside the basilica suggests that it was not entirely replastered at such a late date, but nevertheless the painted blocks there do not fit neatly into the First Style tradition as we know it from houses in Pompeii.³²² If this combination of evidence is reliable, then we could perhaps include the basilica's interior decoration in the category of faux ashlar stucco in public buildings that did not develop along the same trajectory or have the same meaning and function as the First Style in private residences.

The use of Pompeii's basilica, then, as an immediate visual referent for public space contemporary with the First Style is unconvincing. This example, however, is the one most frequently cited in support of the theory that First Style in domestic spaces was mimicking First Style in public spaces.³²³ It may be that public buildings outside of Pompeii constituted points of reference. Many more residential buildings than public buildings, however, in the Hellenistic Mediterranean were decorated in the Masonry Style.³²⁴ The weight of the evidence suggests that other domestic decoration would have been a more immediate and prominent source of inspiration for the First Style in Pompeii than would public interiors or exteriors.

Leach's argument is that public life was a particularly Italian/Roman/Campanian meaning that was added to the originally Greek connotations of the Masonry Style when it arrived in Italy.³²⁵ This idea seems to rely on assumptions about Roman values in contrast to Hellenistic Greek values.³²⁶ In fact, we have little actual evidence to support the view that stuccoed blocks were first associated with public life and transferred from there to the private sphere with all their implications for the self-presentation of

³²¹ Gell and Gandy 1824, 215.

³²² I have traced references to the graffito back to Gell and Gandy's 1824 book, which was a second edition of a volume originally published in 1819, but have been unable to find any indication of on what portion of the very large northern wall that particular message was scratched. It was subsequently cut out of the wall and taken to the Naples Archaeological Museum, but there are several lacunae in the basilica's north wall indicating where pieces of plaster were removed. Many of these are in the orthostat zone, which would have been the easiest to reach by graffitists.

³²³ Leach 2004, 5, 62, and see n. 302 above.

³²⁴ For example, on Delos: Bruno 1969, 308–309.

³²⁵ Leach 2004, 61–62.

³²⁶ Though Leach (2004, 62) makes a point of distinguishing between Romans and the inhabitants of Samnite Pompeii, the Italian values she associates with the First Style seem to be essentially Roman ones.

Pompeians to their guests.³²⁷ It is certainly possible that in later periods, when monumental public buildings with ashlar or faux ashlar interiors and facades were more visible and accessible to Pompeians, the significance of the remaining First Style decorations shifted. I stated above, however, this association cannot easily be grafted backwards on to the style's origin.³²⁸ Moreover, the notion that the location of First Style decorations in the more public spaces of the home adds weight to their association with public buildings suffers from a similar weakness. While this arrangement was true of several houses as they were preserved in 79 C.E., it has not been demonstrated that any such separation existed in the houses when they were first decorated; presumably at that time all of the rooms were decorated with the First Style.³²⁹ Later associations with public life might have contributed to the preservation of the First Style in some rooms but not others, but again this was not obviously part of the style's original function.

There is considerable gap, geographical and chronological, between the architectural models that initially inspired the Masonry Style in Greece and the First Style in Pompeii. The mechanism by which this type of decoration passed from Greece to Italy is uncertain. It may have arrived with itinerant artisans, for example, other travelers who had visited the East and wished to see similar decorations in their own homes. What is clearer is that it must have originated as a type of interior, domestic decoration inspired by interior, domestic decoration elsewhere, and not as an isolated local Pompeian attempt to imitate local ashlar masonry.

People living in Pompeii surely understood that these designs represented fine stone blocks used in the construction of impressive (foreign) public buildings. Indeed, as Bruno notes, almost all of the individual components of First Style decoration derive from actual masonry forms.³³⁰ There are, however, elements of First Style walls that clearly distinguish these configurations from real ashlar masonry. The designers of First Style decoration felt free to deviate from their models and create new patterns without

³²⁷ *Ibid.*, 63.

³²⁸ See. Ch. 7 on possible later meanings that became attached to the First Style.

³²⁹ With the exception of the Casa del Fauno, all of the houses in Pompeii with preserved First Style painting only had it in a few rooms at the time of the eruption; the rest of the house was painted in one or more other styles. See, for example, my discussion of the Casa del Labirinto in Chapters 4 and 5 (pp. 136-139 and 168), as well as Appendix III.

³³⁰ Bruno 1969, 307.

constant reference to built architecture. Bruno points out that the large (and therefore, ostensibly heavy) orthostats appear higher on a First Style wall than would be wise if it were constructed from real stone; and the socle or dado of the wall is usually left blank (without blocks) so that it appears structurally illogical.³³¹ In some rooms, blocks at the corners of walls interlock as they would in a stone-built structure, but elsewhere they wrap around corners, defying logic.³³² What is more, the deployment of color found in Pompeian houses is more vibrant and imaginative than actual colored stone used in Greek architecture, or even the colors we find in Masonry Style paintings from sites like Delos. Additionally, when color was used in either of these contexts (actual Greek masonry or Masonry Style stucco from Delos), it tended to appear in continuous courses of a single color. In Pompeii, colors and patterns seem to be distributed randomly (though some patterns have been identified on careful examination by Laidlaw).³³³ Usually no two blocks of the same color or pattern are contiguous, except on a diagonal.³³⁴ The effect is much less sedate than Greek masonry and the Greek plastered interiors that imitated it.³³⁵

The types and quantities of stone in Pompeian decorations also exceeded what was available in Italy, and these I will describe in more detail below. It is reasonable to understand the First Pompeian Style as a type of interior decoration that was inspired by plastered interiors that first appeared elsewhere, and that then was developed as a distinctive local variation in Campania.³³⁶ Other sites where Masonry Style has been found also display their own local idiosyncrasies, such as Delos, Cosa, and Morgantina.³³⁷ Though the ultimate reference to ashlar masonry would not have been lost on the people who inhabited Pompeian houses, the First Style is based in and owes its development to a Hellenistic tradition of domestic stuccoed and painted interiors, rather than to architecture and stone construction techniques. On this point I am in agreement with Bruno's 1969 interpretation of the Pompeian First style, generally.³³⁸ We differ in that he sees this type

³³¹ Bruno 1969, 309–310; Clarke 1991, 39.

³³² Laidlaw 1985, 25.

³³³ *Ibid.*, 25–31.

³³⁴ Bruno 1969, 311.

³³⁵ *Ibid.*, 309–311.

³³⁶ Cf. Leach 2004, 63.

³³⁷ Bruno 1969, 305, 308–309.

³³⁸ *Ibid.*, 317.

of interior decoration as essentially an interruption in the tradition of wall painting. I contend that we can see elements in the painting of the stucco blocks that indicate continuity in technique and significance with the Second Style in Pompeii.³³⁹

Although there was a lack of local models for fine ashlar masonry buildings in Pompeii, people in the community must have been aware that such structures existed elsewhere in some form, even if they had not seen them themselves. Certainly members of the Pompeian population who had travelled elsewhere, as well as those who came to Pompeii as merchants, for instance, would have seen temples and other monumental buildings from Hellenistic cities built out of cut blocks of fine stones. These people would have served as sources of knowledge for others. Those who had not seen such things in person may have thought that the decorations of their homes were faithful imitations of the interiors of Greek public buildings or the palaces of Hellenistic rulers. Even humble visitors to grand mansions could not, however, have been naïve enough to be fooled into thinking that what they saw in Pompeii was real stone, as an examination of the details of First Style decorations themselves (see below) makes clear.³⁴⁰

There are, for example, the discrepancies in structural logic outlined above. If those details failed to register, it would be obvious that the interior and exterior surfaces of house's walls did not match: for that reason, Leach calls these decorations, “overtly fictive”.³⁴¹ Finally, people who lived in Pompeii would have been aware that, since colored stone was not available for use on such as large scale even for important public buildings like the temple of Venus, individual homeowners in Pompeii would not have had the resources to construct their houses from such materials.³⁴² The interpretation, then, that these decorations were meant as a less expensive substitute for real stone, and that they were successful if they convinced a visitor that they were not plaster, requires a rather low opinion of the Pompeian viewer's awareness of his or her surroundings. Furthermore, the labor and materials required to finish the interior of a home with high

³³⁹ See Chapter 5 below.

³⁴⁰ Leach 2004, 7.

³⁴¹ Leach 2004, 60.

³⁴² Note that this argument holds even if one interprets First Style decorations as representing, not masonry, but colored marble veneer wall coverings; colored stone was not used on a comparable scale in Italy even for those purposes in the second or early first centuries B.C.E.

quality First Style decoration was not inconsiderable,³⁴³ we have no evidence that any more costly wall decoration was in use in Italian homes at that time.

The meaning of these paintings must have been connected to participation in and understanding of Hellenistic culture, to cosmopolitanism, and to power and luxury.³⁴⁴ Being able to declare that one's home was decorated the way the Greeks, even Hellenistic kings, decorated their residences was an expression of the cultural prestige associated with belonging to an international community that held great fascination for Italians during the Hellenistic period. We know from limited archaeological evidence that the palaces at Pella and Pergamon had some marble wall decoration, and in the latter example this was supplemented with Masonry Style plaster; residents of Pompeii may have been aware of these famous monuments, if only by reputation.³⁴⁵ We also know, for example, that Italians from Campania were living in the dynamic, multicultural city on Delos,³⁴⁶ and they were just some of the many Italian merchants, soldiers and other adventurous people who traveled and lived all around the Mediterranean in the late second century B.C.E. Though the colors and patterns on the stucco blocks in First Style interiors did not have precise real-life or locally available referents, people in Pompeii understood the association between fine stone and luxurious architecture, and this association played a part in their desire for such surroundings.

The interest in marbles in this period was a fairly abstract one, however; it appears that it was enough to suggest expensive stone, without engaging in the kind of connoisseurship that was to become prevalent later.³⁴⁷ Realism and precise detail were not the primary concerns of First Style artisans, and therefore must not have been particularly important to those who commissioned their work. This lack of attention to the realities of stone architecture and the details of varieties of marbles may have been due to a lack of availability of such materials in Pompeii, and therefore a lack of knowledge about their properties. Alternately, it may simply reflect a lack of interest. Probably a combination of these factors resulted in the form that First Style decoration in

³⁴³ Bruno 1969, 317.

³⁴⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*

³⁴⁵ Zimmer 2010, 156–159. Nielsen 1999, 91, 272; Waelkens et al. 2002, 520.

³⁴⁶ See e.g. Alabe 2007, 405–406.

³⁴⁷ See Chapter 4.

Pompeii took, with its prominent representation of colored stone and simultaneous imaginative disregard for the particular characteristics of the materials it loosely imitated.

II. The Use of Colored Stone in the Architecture and Decoration of Pompeii in the First Style Period

Though the precise dates for the First Style in Pompeii are difficult to establish, we can be confident that it was being produced from roughly the early second century B.C.E. until at least *ca.* 80 B.C.E.³⁴⁸ It may have appeared in Pompeii earlier, but it is not clear that any of the houses still standing in the city today were constructed before the beginning of the second century.³⁴⁹ As will become clear, the use of colored decorative stone in Pompeii was, with a few exceptions, a later development. Though ashlar masonry, most often of tufo or Sarno limestone blocks, was used in many of the earliest standing houses in Pompeii, as well as for temples and other public buildings, fine stones like marble were exceedingly rare until well into the first century B.C.E. Colored stone in the decoration of Pompeian public architecture before the first century C.E. does not seem to have appeared apart from some mosaic pavements.

In domestic architecture during the period in which the First Style was produced, evidence for fine colored stone is limited exclusively to pavements. The pieces of stone included in them were small in size and number. Most of these materials were local solid-colored limestones, perhaps with the exception of imported Taenarian marble, rather than the alabasters and breccias painted on the walls of the same buildings (see below). Most First Style decorations are associated with mortar pavements, such as the red *cocciopesto* (*opus signinum*) or the black *lavapesta*. These floors were often embellished with simple designs made from widely-spaced white tesserae.³⁵⁰ In rare cases, the flooring was more elaborate. The Casa del Fauno (Figure 13) had lavish and colorful pavements in several rooms alongside the First Style walls that it retained until the end. It is possible that some

³⁴⁸ See Ch. 1 (pp. 17-25) for a discussion of the difficulties of creating a chronology for wall painting styles.

³⁴⁹ Fragments of plaster that archaeologists have interpreted as First Style have been found associated with houses from the second century B.C.E. that were demolished and replaced by the ones standing today. E.g. Berg 2005, 202.

³⁵⁰ Clarke 2005, 40.

floors were replaced or updated over time, though we have no evidence for that sort of renovation. Given that the owners of the house took such pains to keep up the old wall decorations, it seems likely that they also repaired or preserved the pavements. The floors, most conspicuously the famous Alexander mosaic, show a great deal of wear and repair from antiquity, in keeping with pavements that had been walked on for a long period of time.³⁵¹ The pavements of the Casa del Fauno, then, should provide an example of the most lavish use of colored stone in domestic decoration in Pompeii from the First Style period. Hoffmann and Faber's recent publication of excavations from the house (carried out in the 1960s), posits that most of the house's surviving decoration was produced during the late second or early first centuries B.C.E.³⁵²

The Casa del Fauno has colored stone pavements of three types: *opus sectile*, *crustae*, and mosaic. The floor of the *fauces*, *tablinum*, and the bottom of the *impluvium* are decorated with *opus sectile*, in this case consisting of various colored stones cut into geometric shapes and fitted together to create a regular, repeating pattern over a large area. The pavement of the *fauces* (Figure 14) is made up of triangular pieces of stone including white *palombino*, yellow, green, and pink limestones, and black slate, all of which are probably local Italian materials, along with red stones subtly veined with white and grey, which may be pieces of a rare import for this period: Taenarian marble from Greece.³⁵³ This red limestone is vivid in color but was difficult to quarry in very large pieces, making it well suited for use in pavements like the ones found here. A few other bits of fine and imported stone, including Phrygian marble, a variety that is particularly easy to identify by sight, are scattered throughout the design. Because these pieces are very few in number and distributed haphazardly, they are likely to be the result of later repairs.

³⁵¹ Though the task of distinguishing wear and tear from earthquake/eruption damage is not a simple one (Gazda, pers. comm.).

³⁵² Hoffmann and Faber 2009, 104–112

³⁵³ Baldassarre 1990, V:85, 95. He identified the red as a local limestone, arguing that the colors of the stones found here are so common in the Mediterranean that it is impossible to identify a precise source; Fant (2007) disagreed, identifying it instead as Taenarian marble. Lazzarini (2004, 594) has done isotope analysis of this stone, confirming that it is Taenarian marble. There are, however, both bright red and purplish pieces, and it is unclear whether or not these are the same type. The brighter red pieces may in fact be glass paste. See Chapter 2, pp. 73-76 on the earliest imports of decorative stone found in Italy.

In the *tablinum*, rhomboid pieces of white stone alternate with darker colors to create the optical illusion of a field of three-dimensional cubes (Figure 15), a popular choice for early *opus sectile* designs.³⁵⁴ The types of stone used in the *tablinum* are similar to those in the *fauces*: *palombino*, slate, local colored limestones, though there is no evidence of Taenarian marble.³⁵⁵ Once again, a few pieces of other stones appear here and there. These include Numidian and Phrygian marble, and, as in the *fauces*, are probably the result of later repairs.³⁵⁶ This design of perspective cubes occurs also in a painted version in the house's *fauces*, on the wall's socle, showing a clear desire to coordinate the wall and floor decoration. These faux cubes offer further confirmation that the wall decoration makes reference to stone.³⁵⁷ In the Casa del Fauno's impluvium, the pattern is made up of large and small diamond-shaped components, with dark slate pieces framing other colors (Figure 16). As in the *fauces* and *tablinum*, the stones used here are gray-black slate, white *palombino*, yellow and green limestone, and red and purple imported Taenarian marble. Here too the design was patched at a later date with pieces of Lucullan, Numidian, Chian, and Luna Grey marbles.³⁵⁸

Another type of paving found in a few other rooms in the home consists of more irregular pieces of stone than do *opus sectile* designs. These pieces are often referred to today as *crustae*. In cubiculum 31, the floor is paved with the same varieties of stone as in the *fauces*, *tablinum* and *impluvium*, but instead of carefully measured and fitted pieces, we find here irregular, roughly rectangular bits in multiple colors.³⁵⁹ Similarly, all of the pavements of the large peristyle's colonnaded walkway and the *alae* (rooms 29 and 30) opening onto the large atrium are paved with irregular *crustae* set closely together in mortar (Figure 17). The pavements in the *alae* are very colorful and are made up of the same types of stone as in the *cubiculum*, *impluvium*, *tablinum*, and *fauces*, along with a

³⁵⁴ This design may be especially typical of the second century BCE: Baldassarre 1990, V:83.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, V:109.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, V:109.

³⁵⁷ Laidlaw 1985, 32.

³⁵⁸ Baldassarre 1990, V:99.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*; This type of pavement is thought to be typical of the First Style period, though it is somewhat unclear to me to what extent archaeologists use the Casa del Fauno to determine what is "typical" of the period: Dunbabin, 53–54.

brown/beige alabaster or agate, and, interestingly, chunks of colored glass paste.³⁶⁰ In the center of the floor of *ala O* (room 29), there is a small mosaic *emblema*. The mosaic is crude in comparison with many of the others in the house and framed with large pieces of reddish-brown limestone, depicts three white birds (probably doves) and an open-lidded box, from which one of the birds is pulling a string of beads.³⁶¹ This mosaic's colors correspond more closely to those of the *opus sectile* pavements than to other mosaics in the house, described below, as it includes red, yellow, green, black, and white *tesserae*.

Mosaic floors such as the Alexander mosaic are the best-known use of decorative stone in the house. This elaborate image, and smaller ones like it, were made up of tiny *tesserae* in a technique known as *opus vermiculatum*. The compositions are highly detailed and required a great deal of skill to execute. They appear colorful, but on close examination, the range of colors of stone used is limited.³⁶² Shades of brown and beige dominate, some yellowish or reddish, alongside black, white and grey. While these pavements were visually striking, the materials used by the mosaicists (whether they worked in Italy or elsewhere) were restricted. This effect has generally been explained as a reflection of the palette employed by Greek painters, whose work may have inspired these mosaic images. This explanation may be the best one, since we do see brighter red and green stones in pavements elsewhere in the house.³⁶³

The correspondences in color between the pieces of stone found in the pavements of the Casa del Fauno and the pigments used to color the First Style wall blocks in that house are close enough that we can reasonably suppose that a deliberate choice was made to coordinate them.³⁶⁴ What is more difficult to determine is whether the colors used in paint were chosen because they were thought to represent known stone varieties best, or whether the bits of stone set into the floors were selected to complement the First Style palette. The same limited range of colors also appear in houses other than the Casa del Fauno, mainly yellow, red, purple, green, white, and black, with only rare instances of

³⁶⁰ Baldassarre 1990, V:102.

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*, V:103 suggests that the rougher quality of this *emblema* suggests a later date. (The chronological relationship between *emblemata* and their surrounding pavement is often difficult to determine: Dunbabin, 40).

³⁶² Dunbabin, 42–43.

³⁶³ E.g. Moreno 2001.

³⁶⁴ Cf. Leach 2004, 65.

blue and orange.³⁶⁵ Because the Taenarian marble found in Casa del Fauno's pavements would have been imported from the Peloponnese during a time when marble imports to Italy were very limited, its presence here is especially interesting. The fact that it is not featured in any prominent way among the other non-imported stones, perhaps suggests that it was valued less for its exoticness than for its color. That is, trouble may have been taken to obtain the red stone from a significant distance because there was no red available locally to coordinate with the wall decorations, rather than because the patron wanted to showcase the wealth and power required to bring the material to Pompeii. This significance would contrast sharply with the associations of imported stone known from later Roman texts and, accordingly, architecture and decorations that featured those materials.³⁶⁶ Of course, we cannot be sure that this scenario reflects the reality, but it may help to explain the presence of the relatively small amount of imported stones present in the early pavements of the Casa del Fauno. The lack of emphasis on displaying imported stone in pavements aligns well with the limited interest in an accurate depiction of decorative stone varieties in First Style wall decorations.

III. Fictive Stone in the First Style

Close visual analysis reveals that the varieties of stone depicted in the First Style are limited almost exclusively to two general types: alabaster and breccia. Painters represented both these types of stone with a great deal of freedom and inventiveness, with the result that their depiction only slightly resembles the source materials.

Standard elements that First Style painters included in their work were blocks painted with multicolored patterns obviously meant to suggest the natural patterns found in variegated stone. The frequency with which these details occur implies that to the painters and viewers of the First Style all of the stuccoed blocks that made up these decorations were intended and understood as colored stone of some type. This meaning extended to those blocks that were painted in solid colors, which constituted the majority. In this respect, the local character of Masonry Style decoration in Pompeii retained a

³⁶⁵ Laidlaw 1985, 28.

³⁶⁶ See Chapter 2 and Chapter 4.

significant link to its Hellenistic Greek counterparts and their origin in monumental architecture.

There is considerable variation in the ways in which patterned blocks of stone are represented in the First Style, ranging from quite naturalistic to abstract or stylized. Though the wall plaster of the Casa del Fauno (VI.12.2/5) is today in very poor condition, an example of the latter can still be seen in the *fauces*. Some of the isodomes display roughly circular blobs painted with concentric outlines of purple and green (Figure 18). As Fant has observed, the reversal of the color scheme from one block of this type to the next emphasizes the lack of naturalism of these details.³⁶⁷ In *Pompei, Pitture e Mosaici*, these patterns are identified as faux alabaster.³⁶⁸ While pieces of alabaster cut with curved surfaces, such as columns or vessels, often display a pattern of concentric rings, what appears here is so far removed from reality as to make an identification as alabaster difficult to prove. The painter very likely intended to suggest that these blocks were cut from colorful stone, but he did not seem to have a specific, real life model in mind – or at any rate, he took considerable liberties in depicting alabaster with paint.

In other cases, details appear more random and naturalistic, though it remains difficult to identify a specific variety of stone corresponding to what we find in painted representations. In a small room to the north of the entrance to the Casa dei Quattro Stili (I.8.17/11), for example, isodomes are painted with irregular ovoid shapes in yellow, reddish-purple, green, and white, a pattern that resembles a brecciated stone such as *breccia frutticolosa* or, as Vander Kelen suggests, *breccia di Aleppo* (Figure 19).³⁶⁹ Evidence for the use of either of these stones in ancient sculpture or architecture, however, significantly postdates First Style decoration.³⁷⁰ Moreover, the resemblance is only slight, certainly not exact, especially in the combination of colors used. Similar painted blocks appear in a room that opens from the southeast corner of the atrium in the Casa del Cenacolo (V.2.h), though the shapes are more angular (Figure 20), and in

³⁶⁷ Fant 2007, 336; cf. Allag and Monier 2004, 356.

³⁶⁸ Baldassarre 1990, V:91.

³⁶⁹ Vander Kelen 1998, 36. This room is perhaps a *cubiculum*, judging from a niche on the north side of the room with raised platform and evidence for a low barrel vault.

³⁷⁰ See Price 2007, 144, 146.

addition to the colors found in the Casa dei Quattro Stili, blue or gray may be included here in small quantities.

In the Casa del Centauro (VI.9.3/5), the walls of a room located on the south side of the entrance include blocks painted with details that suggest variegated stone. The variety of designs found on the isodomes in this room is especially great. In fact, some blocks are divided into multiple sections painted different colors and/or different patterns (Figure 21). One block on the east wall of a large alcove (perhaps meant for a bed/couch) has a yellow background with red and green brushstrokes outlining large yellow inclusions that resemble the characteristics of Numidian marble, which appears in later paintings (Figure 22; cp. Figure 23). The likelihood that these painted blocks represent Numidian marble, however, is diminished by the appearance of a corresponding pattern in red and yellow on a green background on the north wall of the same room, creating rhythms of alternating colors similar to those in the *fauces* of the Casa del Fauno. Elsewhere in the room, blocks are painted with naturalistic patterns that closely resemble the faux brecciated blocks in Casa dei Quattro Stili and Casa del Cenacolo. Other blocks in the same room, in contrast, display larger and more abstract patterns that seem to lie somewhere between the characteristics of breccia and alabaster. Brecciated patterns can also be found in the *fauces* of the Casa del Fauno (Figure 18), interspersed among the ring-design blocks described above, emphasizing the freedom with which these overall schemes were conceived. In all four houses (the Casa del Fauno, Casa dei Quattro Stili, Casa del Cenacolo, and Casa del Centauro), the colors that the painters combined in individual blocks do not precisely match any known stone varieties from antiquity.³⁷¹

Blocks that seem to depict alabaster, however, are painted somewhat more realistically, and these are common in First Style paintings that include any detail at all in addition to solidly colored blocks. Alabaster designs often appear on the large orthostat blocks in the middle zones of walls. The orthostats in the First Style room in the Casa dei Quattro Stili (Figure 24), as well as the orthostats in the *fauces* of the Casa del Fauno provide good examples. These panels are loosely painted with wavy lines, blobs, and swirls in various colors, predominately red, yellow, and white. As alabaster, these panels

³⁷¹ Similar blocks once existed in the First Style decorations of the Casa di Sallustio, though the brecciated patterns are now quite difficult to make out.

are quite convincing (see Figure 2). Their details appear more faithful to reality than those of the brecciated patterns, perhaps because the range of color combinations and the variety of shapes typical of alabaster are greater than those typical of breccias. With both breccias and alabasters, the painter appears to have simply started with a basic pattern in mind and to have created something original from it, rather than working from a model or from a remembered reference to a real stone type. Even less careful and precise renditions of alabaster, such as the decoration of the unusual dado in the *cubiculum* in the Casa del Cenacolo, are nonetheless easily identifiable as that stone (Figure 25).

An interesting and unusual example of faux alabaster is located on the north wall of a room that was excavated beneath Room 18 in the Casa del Menandro, which is considered by Roger Ling to be part of an earlier house that had roughly the same alignment as the later structures (Figure 26).³⁷² Alabaster-like patterns appear both on the orthostats, the lower portion of which survive, and on a solid string course directly below this zone. The pattern on the string course is the more legible of the two today. It displays swirls of faded red or pink, green, yellow, and creamy white. Like the examples of alabaster-like designs described above, this pattern is superficially recognizable as alabaster, but the technique and resulting appearance is different from most First Style versions. It is perhaps more closely comparable to alabaster in some Second Style paintings.³⁷³ Whether details like this, i.e. the degree of similarity of fictive stone in the First Style to its depiction in later paintings, can be used to date the paintings, however, is doubtful.³⁷⁴ The appearance of the painting from below the Casa del Menandro at the very least suggests the work of different painters or workshops among those who executed First Style designs.³⁷⁵ Perhaps the painters of this design went on to create Second Style designs when those came into fashion.³⁷⁶ Despite the different technique used for this painting, it remains imaginative in character and not very faithful to the appearance of real alabaster. Moreover, the fact that it is represented as a single,

³⁷² Ling 1997, 72–76.

³⁷³ See p. 176. The “upright” orthostats are also a quality often associated with the Second Style: Laidlaw 1985, 30–31.

³⁷⁴ Laidlaw 1985, 42. And see pp. 17–25.

³⁷⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, 30.

³⁷⁶ See pp. 182 below.

unbroken strip, rather than individual drafted blocks, makes its intended function as convincing *trompe l'oeil* masonry unlikely.³⁷⁷ A viewer would have been unlikely to interpret this decoration as real stone, and it seems that there was little interest on the part of the painter or patron in creating that impression.

In general, the characteristics of alabaster and breccia portrayed by First Style painters do not seem to have been rendered by referencing real stone that was visible as a permanent feature (i.e. as architectural elements or paving stones) of the same buildings. While the painted renderings correspond roughly to the qualities of actual stones, in specific detail they do not match up closely.³⁷⁸ One possible explanation is that painters used other paintings, or descriptions of them, as the models for what we find in Pompeii, rather than pieces of stone itself. The First Style examples from Pompeii, then, would represent second- or third-hand copies of what might originally have been a faithful rendition of a piece of alabaster or breccia. Another possibility is that they modeled their paintings on small stone objects, such as portable artifacts or the small pieces used in the pavement of *ala* O (above), rather than on large architectural components more closely analogous to the blocks they depicted on plastered walls. Alabaster might not yet have been exploited on a large scale for architecture by the period in which the First Style was being painted, but small objects fashioned from the attractive material very likely were been in circulation.³⁷⁹ The fact that alabaster in First Style panels sometimes appears in the form of concentric rings (such as in the fauces of the Casa del Fauno and in the *oecus* of House VI.9.3/5) could point to portable objects as a source of inspiration, since this visual effect is more often the result of carving round objects, such as cylinders or vases, from alabaster, than of cutting it into flat slabs.³⁸⁰

In addition to creative depictions of stone, painters of First Style decorations exercised their imaginations even more freely by incorporating images, such as human and mythological figures or various objects, into the swirls of marbled blocks. One

³⁷⁷ A similar solid alabaster string course can be found in a triclinium in the Casa del Fauno (*ibid.*, 188) and pl. 73a–b, and in *oecus* B of the Casa di Epidi Sabini.

³⁷⁸ Baldassarre 1990, V:91–93.

³⁷⁹ Cf. Fant 2007, 338. For example, the Etruscans used alabaster for funerary urns (Gazda, *pers. comm.*; and see e.g. Stevens 2010).

³⁸⁰ Laidlaw 1985, pl. 87c.

frequently cited example is a fringed cloth (*mappa*) shown draped as if hanging over a peg on one of the orthostats in the Casa dei Quattro Stili (Figure 24). This detail is unusual; Laidlaw suggests the fabric might have been developed organically from the pattern of the alabaster. I find that explanation difficult to accept, since the cloth stands out quite distinctly from the surrounding design.³⁸¹ Instead, this may be an image related to swathes of fabric (perhaps curtains), that appear, along with other painted details such as garlands, elsewhere in First Style decorations. These other pieces of cloth are not usually overlaid on marbled panels, but this explanation may account for the lack of integration of the *mappa* into the pattern behind it. It does not seem to be an example of the occasional practice of playfully creating figural images out of the details of imitation stone.³⁸²

More subtle examples of inserting illustrations of objects and figures into stone patterns come from three other houses in Pompeii. Mau observed a bird and a cup in the marbling of the walls of the Alexander exedra in the Casa del Fauno, where on the same wall a symposium of centaurs was painted in red monochrome with yellow marble veins crossing over the figures.³⁸³ These figures, which do not survive today, were recorded in a nineteenth century watercolor.³⁸⁴ In the Casa di Epidio Sabino (IX.1.22), a number of panels in *oecus* b that once displayed figural designs in faux stone were also recorded by Mau.³⁸⁵ Though faded, a male nude with an arm thrown behind his head, perhaps a faun, and a lyre player, are still visible in the decorations of that house (Figure 27). Other figures are visible, but too damaged to identify.

These whimsical details incorporated into the already imaginative patterns that First Style painters created to embellish their stucco blocks add to the overall impression that while stone masonry may have been the ultimate model for these decorations,

³⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 33

³⁸² Other examples of curtains include one on the socle of the wall in cubiculum 31 in the Casa del Fauno (Baldassarre 1990, V:99), and one inside a “cupboard” in the Casa del Menandro (Ling 1997, 8), and in five other First Style rooms (Laidlaw 1985, 32). Also in a Second Style painting in the Casa di Cerere.

³⁸³ *Ibid.*, 33–34.

³⁸⁴ The resemblance between these images and the monochrome landscapes found in the Second Style is intriguing, though an exploration of this topic is beyond the scope of this study.

³⁸⁵ In House 6.14.40, another watercolor indicates that there were once figures in darker colors on a yellow background, probably positioned at about eye-level.

realism was not a particular concern. I see First Style painters and patrons as interested in decorating homes with faux stone in a broad sense, but not concerned with rendering specific materials with accuracy. Alabasters and breccias were broad categories of stone that painters seem to have had in mind, but only as a very general point of reference. The sort of careful naturalism and even connoisseurship of stone varieties that would come to characterize most Second and Fourth Style examples of fictive stone did not exist in the First Style. The variety and striking arrangements of color, however, suggest that imitation stone simply provided a starting point for creative and imaginative interior décor. Overall, the presentation of self that home owners who had their houses decorated in the First Style seems chiefly to have been the refinement and sophistication associated with Hellenistic culture and with stone masonry more generally. What we see is a local Pompeian manifestation of a widespread tradition of stuccoed wall decoration in domestic interiors, rather than an attempt to fool the eye into seeing real stone, or a desire to transport the grandeur of public space into a private house.

Chapter Four

Marble and Morality in Republican Villas

The elaborate Second Style paintings that adorn reception rooms in Campanian villas are among the most spectacular and complex works of Roman art that survive. Since their discovery, they have defied scholarly consensus as to their meaning, with a wide range of interpretations classifying them as everything from direct copies or illustrations of real architecture or theater backdrops, to complicated allegories in which every detail can be linked to an aspect of contemporary philosophy.³⁸⁶ Because of the ambiguity of these images, they have garnered more writing than any other Pompeian painting style, despite their relative rarity.³⁸⁷ Most recent work on the Second Style focuses on its social, cultural, or political significance and denies that there is any one comprehensive message to be deciphered.³⁸⁸ My own discussion here of the “high” Second Style, i.e. the most elaborate and high quality paintings from the Late Republic, typically found in villas rather than houses, follows along these basic lines. I contribute, however, a number of new insights based on parallel examinations of the literary record, archaeological evidence, and historical data.³⁸⁹ I do not attempt to explore all the details of the Second Style, which are too numerous and complex to fit within the scope of this project. Instead I focus on what the depiction of imported stone in these paintings can reveal about their function and significance in the period during which they were most desirable (i.e.

³⁸⁶ On these approaches, see p. 5 above.

³⁸⁷ Leach 2004, 145.

³⁸⁸ e.g. Fragaki 2003, 269–271; Leach 2004, 85.

³⁸⁹ Also referred to as the “mature” Second Style: Clarke 1991. The characteristics of this type of painting will be described in greater detail in the remainder of this chapter.

roughly 100 B.C.E. to 30 B.C.E.). Such an emphasis reveals a great deal about these images. In particular, it allows me to draw broader conclusions about the role that the Second Style in villas played in defining acceptable luxury for the Romans, its identity as morally transgressive fantasy, and its significance in the context of Roman villa culture.

The historical situation during which these images were created was an especially tumultuous one in Italy. The Social War, in which Rome battled its Italian allies, had only ended in 88 B.C.E. The city of Pompeii had sided against Rome in the war and been defeated by the general Sulla. In 80 B.C.E., Pompeii was made a Roman colony.³⁹⁰ This change of status brought with it the settlement of perhaps a few thousand Roman veterans in the vicinity. Other cities in Campania had to deal with the aftermath of the Social War in various ways. The Social War was followed by a series of civil wars, culminating with the assassination of Julius Caesar and the defeat of Mark Antony by Octavian. This was a period of massive disruption, transformation, and adjustment in Italy. Accompanying this domestic turmoil was ongoing overseas conquest and territorial expansion, which intensified contact with foreign cultures and allowed for a large influx of exotic luxury materials from North Africa, Greece, Asia Minor, and the Near East.

Central to my argument is my view that Second Style paintings did not depict or imitate any real contemporary architectural environment. Though they incorporated elements from a variety of architectural sources, they were not meant to represent any one model in particular.³⁹¹ Instead, I contend that the paintings were the product of pure fantasy and that their painters deliberately included elements to indicate the separation of these images from reality. I argue that this fantastical quality served, at least partly, a pragmatic political and social purpose: to deflect criticism of villa proprietors charging that they aspired to morally unacceptable levels of luxury.

The location of most of these paintings in villas is an essential factor in my interpretation.³⁹² Since the luxury villa was an innovative architectural form that

³⁹⁰ See Chapter 5 on the local consequences of this period in Pompeii.

³⁹¹ Others, such as Barbet 1985 and Fragaki 2003, have previously come to the same conclusion regarding the lack of a specific real model for these images, though they either have not explored the motivations for that quality, or have drawn very different conclusions from mine as to its significance.

³⁹² Villas with Second Style paintings including imitation marble architecture: the villa at Boscoreale (Bergmann 2010, 15–17, 22, 28); Villa A at Oplontis (Ciardiello 2009b, Thomas and Clarke 2007; Thomas and Clarke 2009); Villa dei Misteri (Esposito 2007); the Republican villa in the Castello Aragonese at Baia

developed in Italy in the late second and early first centuries B.C.E., we should not be surprised to find a decorative system that was developed particularly for that setting.³⁹³ This idea has not often, if ever, been proposed in scholarship on Republican wall painting or on the Roman villa. The villa's distance from the conservative political center of Rome, allowed for some freedom and exploration in decoration away from the critical eyes of passersby. But there were still limits to be tested. Though elaborate Second Style paintings may have developed especially for the villa environment, they did not necessarily originate in villas, and they certainly did not remain confined to villas. I make no claims here as to the origin of the Second Style; there is little reliable evidence for dating or locating its beginnings with any certainty.³⁹⁴ Instead, I see the Second Style in its most elaborate iteration as particularly suited to villas as opposed to townhouses in Rome or Pompeii. In houses in Pompeii, there are a number of Second Style paintings comparable to villa paintings. Such decorations are frequently found in houses whose architecture also alludes to villa architecture, which supports my interpretation that these paintings were strongly associated with villa culture.

I begin with a detailed exploration of faux stone as it appears in the high Second Style, looking at which varieties of stone are depicted and to what degree of accuracy. I compare the use of real decorative stone in the same period with its painted representation. I also investigate the role that the political events of the period, particularly expansion and conflict, played in determining the types of stones that were available, and how these developments affected wall painting. Next I argue for the characterizing these decorations as fantasies rather than representations of structures that really existed. I consider late Republican moral and ideological strictures on domestic self-presentation and argue that the setting of the villa created an environment for testing and transgressing the limits of those strictures. I use as a case study one of the reception

(Miniero 2008; Ciaccia and Miniero 1996; Miniero, 2007); the Villa dei Papiri (Moormann 2009; Moormann 2010; Guidobaldi and Esposito 2009); the Villa Arriana at Stabiae (Grimaldi 2007); Villa 6 at Terzigno (Moormann 2005); and possibly the Villa Diomede, though the painting is almost completely obliterated (Eristov 2005).

³⁹³ Bragantini (2007, 123) also notes that a new plastering technique was developed for expensive paintings in this period alongside the new figurative language, though she doesn't link this specifically with villas. On the development of the Roman villa in this period, see, for example, Terrenato 2012; Terrenato 2001; Tombrägel 2010; Marzano 2007.

³⁹⁴ Alabe 2007.

rooms in Villa A at Oplontis. Finally, I demonstrate why the Second Style was a type of decoration strikingly appropriate for the Roman luxury villa, and why the style flourished especially in that new architectural invention of the Roman upper class.

I. Fictive Stone in the Second Style

The difference between the First and the Second Styles in terms of the depiction of stone constitutes a major change in both technique and representation. The pattern of rectangular blocks or panels with drafted margins arranged in varying horizontal zones shows that there was some continuity from the First to the Second Style, or at the very least that the First Style influenced the development of the Second.³⁹⁵ Apart from the basis in architecture and masonry that it shares with the First Style, the Second Style is quite distinct and innovative. As Bragantini has noted, it was not a simple translation of a pattern from stucco to illusionistic painting.³⁹⁶ In addition to the elimination of molded stucco and the increase in illusionistic spatial depth, the change in painted stone appears to be among the most distinctive and significant differences between the two styles.

Rather than the freely imagined and loosely painted fictive stone of the First Style, which references no actual stone model, fictive stone in the Second Style was very carefully painted to represent real, known types of imported stone. As in the First Style, imitation stone makes up the majority of the wall's surface. This is true even in megalographic murals (i.e. those that include human figures, which are often nearly life-size), where fictive stone serves as background and framing elements (see Figure 36). With the exception of figures, in those cases, openings near the tops of walls that provide glimpses of sky, or portable objects, almost entire Second Style walls are painted to look like stone panels, blocks, columns, or other architectural elements. That the panels in Second Style painting were sometimes painted to look like decorative stone has been widely recognized in the scholarship for decades; only recently has it been observed that some of these panels displayed the characteristics of types of stone known from

³⁹⁵ See Laidlaw 1985, 31, though she oversimplifies the situation by claiming that “one [style] evolved directly out of the other”. Where exactly around the Mediterranean in the first century B.C.E. these stylistic shifts first began to take place is open for debate (see, for example, Alabe 2007).

³⁹⁶ See n. 395 above.

contemporary architecture.³⁹⁷ I take that observation a step further and contend that with only a few minor (and questionable) exceptions, all of the panels or blocks in Second Style paintings were intended to represent real varieties of decorative stone, even those that are painted solid colors.

This change from the imaginary stone of the First Style is clear not only from the accuracy of the depiction of variegated types of stone, with veins, inclusions or swirls (as in alabaster), but also in the change in color palette from the First to Second Styles. Even mottled stones in the Second Style are painted only in combinations of colors that correspond to real stone types. Moreover, there is a significant increase in the use of purple as an important color in Second Style paintings. While purple sometimes appeared in the First Style, it becomes the dominant color in many paintings in the Second Style. This change probably relates to the growing popularity of Taenarian marble from Greece, which could be either a bright, true red or a more purplish shade. Notably, when marble goes out of fashion in the Third Style, purple goes with it.³⁹⁸

Scholars such as Vincent Bruno, Eleanor Winsor Leach, and Claudine Allag and Florence Monier, following Vitruvius's statements on changing tastes in wall painting, have argued that the First Style represents masonry blocks, while the Second Style depicts panels of thin stone veneer attached to a wall's surface.³⁹⁹ While in some case such a distinction may have been intended, most often the panels in the Second Style appear as much like drafted masonry blocks as they do sheets of veneer. Already in the First Style, the structural logic of the faux masonry had been lost. In the Second Style, orthostats are rotated so that they are taller than they are wide, but there is no reason to believe that the size or shape of Second Style panels necessarily indicates that they represented a surface coating. Some examples, such as the intricate *opus sectile* perspective cubes and scale-pattern designs in the Second Style paintings from the Casa

³⁹⁷ E.g. Eristov 1979; Ling 1991, 26; Vander Kelen 1998; Leach 2004, 59, 64–65, 78; Fant 2007; Allag and Monier 2004; van de Liefvoort 2012.

³⁹⁸ There may have been additional connotations to the color purple and the pigments used to achieve it, which made it attractive in this period and not later, such as its association with royalty and with purple-dyed garments. Its correspondence to a prestigious stone type, however, cannot be factored out, when we consider the insistence in this period on representing stone accurately. For more on the disappearance of marble in the Third Style, see pp. 185-189.

³⁹⁹ These arguments contradict Mau (1907, 460), who believed that First Style decoration was an imitation of veneered walls. Also see Chapter 3.

dei Grifi in Rome, probably were meant to stand in for thin pieces of stone. They replicate pavement insets, including one on the floor of the same room as the painted example.⁴⁰⁰ The vast majority of other fictive stone, however, appears as rectilinear blocks with drafted margins, much like the faux masonry in the First Style, only painted rather than molded with stucco.

Leach seems ambivalent about whether Second Style paintings imitated real, contemporary veneered walls or not. At one point, she claims that the decoration of the Casa dei Grifi indicates that it was not of the highest status, since it was decorated with faux rather than genuine marble.⁴⁰¹ Later, she notes that the paintings in that same house could not have imitated contemporary marble veneered interiors, since Pliny's descriptions of veneer from that period did not involve the use of such great quantities of fine stone.⁴⁰² Indeed, the archaeological and literary records do not provide much evidence for the existence of colorful stone wall decoration in the Late Republic. Pliny the Elder notes that he was unable to find any references to marble veneer, even in public buildings, until after 78 B.C.E (*N.H.* 36.8). Pliny also refers to Mamurra's use of veneered walls in the middle of the first century B.C.E. but indicates that he was the first to employ that sort of wall covering, and Pliny says nothing about the variety of stones he used.⁴⁰³ Hellenistic palaces are not useful models, either. In Pergamon and Macedonia there is some evidence for marble elements in walls, but there too there was no colorful marble veneer resembling what we find in Roman painting.⁴⁰⁴

Even in pavements, we do not find much to correspond to the designs in stone that appear in Second Style walls, with the exception of the Casa dei Grifi, in which the floor pavement in real stone and the painted walls match closely. Small and/or thin pieces of colored stone continued to be set into mosaic or mortar (*opus signinum*) floors paired

⁴⁰⁰ Ling 1991, 24–25.

⁴⁰¹ Leach 2004, 58.

⁴⁰² *Ibid.*, 64 (and cf. 72).

⁴⁰³ See pp. 57–63 above.

⁴⁰⁴ Fittschen, who originally argued that Second Style painting was inspired by Hellenistic palaces, later reevaluated and withdrew that interpretation (Fittschen 1996, 140). See Chapter 2, pp. 71–76 on decorative stone in the archaeology of the Hellenistic and Republican periods.

with Second Style paintings, just as they had in the First Style (Figure 28-Figure 30).⁴⁰⁵ In rare cases, such as Room 5 in the Villa dei Misteri, large expanses of floor could be paved with slabs of white and black stone (marble and slate, in that case) (Figure 31); yet most of even the largest villas do not seem to have had pavements of this sort during the late Republic. For example, the villa discovered under the Aragonese castle at ancient Baiae was decorated with Second Style paintings, accompanied by *opus signinum* and *crustae* floors. This location would have been one of the most desirable in the Late Republic, and archaeologists have suggested that this villa once belonged to Julius Caesar.⁴⁰⁶ In other villas and houses, there were smaller centrally-located *emblemata* of cut stone, such as the perspective cubes from the pavement of the Casa dei Grifi, or the pavement of Room 14 in Villa A at Oplontis (Figure 32). Entire floors paved with elaborate patterns from larger slabs of imported colored marble only appear in the archaeological record from later periods. There is a possibility that pavements were installed in later periods than the paintings that decorate the same rooms, but it is difficult, or at least unusual, for archaeologist to determine those relationships with certainty.

With the exception of the pavement of Room 5 of the Villa dei Misteri and the other examples mentioned above, Second Style spaces tend to be decorated with the same few types of pavements. Some floors were paved in *opus signinum* with simple patterns of small *tesserae* or larger chunks of stone. Other pavements consisted of black and white and/or colored mosaic or insets of colored stone (*crustae*) scattered throughout simpler white mosaic or “basket-weave” floors (such as in Room 15 in Villa A at Oplontis (Figure 28). The limited range of pavements associated with Second Style paintings suggests that these types of floors and paintings were originally paired together.⁴⁰⁷ Judging from the remains of decorative stone found in late Republican and Hellenistic archaeological contexts, the deployment of marble in Second Style painting did not closely resemble either contemporary stone wall decoration, nor stone pavements. As I

⁴⁰⁵ For a more thorough study of the types of pavements belonging to the First and Second Style periods, including the introduction of more elaborate and colorful mosaic designs in the latter, see Clarke 1991, 79–123. Also see Guidobaldi and Olevano n.d.

⁴⁰⁶ Miniero 2007, 159–167. See pp. 119-120 below for more on this villa and its status in the Late Republic.

⁴⁰⁷ On the “basket-weave” and *crustae* pavements, see p. 97 above.

will argue, the Second Style represented a fantastical, imaginary world, rather than real-life model rendered in paint. Accordingly, there is probably little resolution to be gained by searching for a specific architectural source for the blocks or panels of stone it contained.⁴⁰⁸ While the details of those blocks correspond to drafted masonry, their shapes, dimensions, locations within the wall, and variety of colors and patterns did not match up with any real architecture that existed at the time. Though the materials depicted were faithful to reality, the objects supposedly made from them in painted renditions were not from real life, whether they were viewed as massive blocks or thin slabs.

A combination of naturalism and unreality is a defining characteristic of the Second Style. The objects and structures depicted have some basis in real architecture: blocks, columns, pilasters, cornices, pediments, etc. They are painted with skill and precision to create the illusion of depth, light, and shadow. But, as I demonstrate below, they are exaggerated and illogical. I argue that the portrayal of imported decorative stones, too, shares this very nature. The types of stone and their details were based on real varieties of stone that were being imported in limited quantities into Rome in the Late Republic. In that period, those expensive and rare materials were used mainly for public building projects.⁴⁰⁹ With very few exceptions, the materials depicted in paintings from this period can be matched up to types of stone known from the archaeological record.⁴¹⁰ They were painted with care and accuracy, and thus can be identified with relative ease.

The exaggeration almost to the point of absurdity of some Second Style paintings (described in detail below) results in part from the quantity and variety of precious materials shown, vastly exceeding anything that actually existed at the time (see Figure 33). The Egyptian alabaster thresholds installed in Villa A at Oplontis are enough to mark it out as unusually lavish, but even these do not nearly equal the scale of stone depicted in paintings.⁴¹¹ Entire painted buildings appear to be constructed from enormously expensive stones that were not available in large quantities in the first century B.C.E. In

⁴⁰⁸ Cf. Fragaki 2003, 258, 270–271.

⁴⁰⁹ See Chapter 2, pp. 73–76 on the use of imported stone in the Late Republic.

⁴¹⁰ The main exceptions of which I am aware are small, square panels of light blue in few paintings, on which see p. 115 below.

⁴¹¹ Barker and Fant 2013, 3–5.

some cases the stones depicted may not have been suitable for the structural purposes to which they are put in paintings. Painted stone in the Second Style also surpasses the bounds of reality in the uniform beauty and quality with which painters endowed it. Details such as veins, inclusions, or swirls of color are randomized from one panel to the next, but they are consistently elaborate, representing the most idealized and prized, or most visually interesting, forms of each type of stone.⁴¹² When solid-colored blocks were desired as part of a composition, they are rendered as perfectly solid. No flaws or inclusions increase the realism of the image. These paintings conveyed the illusion of perfect, ideal luxury; they were not meant to fool a viewer into thinking that the materials were real.⁴¹³

A particularly striking example of this combination of virtuoso naturalism and fantastical perfection comes from the famous Room 5 in the Villa dei Misteri. Painters lavished almost as much attention on painting the alabaster or agate panels above the figures as on the figures themselves, although these panels are high enough on the wall that they cannot easily be closely examined (Figure 34). Though these panels surround the entire room, no two of them are the same. They are painted in a kaleidoscope of color, with elaborate whorls carefully shaded to give the illusion of the translucency that is characteristic of the actual material (see Figure 2). A comparison of these panels with painted alabaster from First Style painting (e.g. Figure 24) illustrates the distinction between imitation stone in the two styles particularly well. It is, however, difficult to find actual alabaster as colorful and flawless as the Villa dei Misteri's painted panels in the natural world. It is unlikely that such a quantity of large pieces would have been available to villa owners to use as wall veneer in that period, underscoring the element of fantasy involved in the scale of luxury goods in display here. The faux alabaster in Room 5 is convincing as stone, but unconvincing in its perfection.

Colored stone in Second Style paintings appears in the form of rectilinear panels or blocks, columns, and carved architectural elements. I view all of the panels and blocks in Second Style painting as representations of imported stone, whether or not details such

⁴¹² For example, see Pliny *N.H.* 35.1.3 who notes that paint was added to marble during the reign of Nero to give it more attractive features (and see p. 58 above on this passage).

⁴¹³ The concept of “hyperreality” may be relevant here, though it is not one that I have explored myself (Emma Sachs, pers. comm.).

as inclusions or veins are depicted. In addition to drafted edges that originate in ashlar masonry, their identity as stone is supported by the fact that all of the colors used for these panels correspond to real stone varieties. For example, there are no orange or pale purple panels. A rare possible exception to this rule are a few small squares of pale blue with drafted edges found in the upper portions of walls in Rooms 6 and 15 in the Villa dei Misteri and in Room 14 in Villa A at Oplontis (Figure 35).⁴¹⁴ These may be imaginary, or they may represent turquoise from the Sinai peninsula or the Middle East, used for small objects in antiquity.⁴¹⁵ Turquoise was not, to my knowledge, used for architectural elements in the Greek or Roman worlds. Its appearance here may suggest that painters were working from small hand samples of stone.⁴¹⁶ In Room 15 in the Villa dei Misteri, delicate dark swirls on these panels, though not identical to the dark veins typical of turquoise, may be meant to suggest turquoise.

My interpretation requires understanding the large red panels in the background of Room 5 of the Villa dei Misteri as Taenarian (Figure 36). Such large panels of a rare and difficult-to-extract stone add not only to the luxury of the space, but also to its otherworldliness. That no white or grey veins mar these panels suggests that they are of the highest possible quality.⁴¹⁷ The luxurious and fantastical connotations of decorating with enormous slabs of imported, precious stone add to this impression of decadence. Moreover, the costliness of the cinnabar pigment used to paint those sizable panels makes them a display of the *actual* wealth of the villa's owner. In this particular room full of highly charged and, to us, often ambiguous imagery, the intense red background alone adds a great deal of potential significance. The use of such large swathes of red has a range of possible intents and meanings. Red's association with blood and wine, and

⁴¹⁴ Another recurring stone type that I have been unable to identify as of yet appears in a few instances in villas and houses. It consists of a purple background with green, white, and/or yellow splotches. It appears in Room 11 at Oplontis, in the corridor next to Room 4 in the Villa dei Misteri, in Room 15 in the Casa di Cerere, in the Casa di Cipio Panfilio Felice, and in a room opening on to the peristyle of the Casa di Obelli Firmi. I suspect that, since all of the other types of stone represented are easy to match up with real decorative stone types in use in the first century B.C.E., this variety is not imaginary.

⁴¹⁵ Price 2007, 259. At Oplontis, these panels are decorated with figures of cupids, which further sets them apart from every other panel in any Second Style composition.

⁴¹⁶ Cf. Fant 2007, 338.

⁴¹⁷ See Lazzarini 2004, 588.

therefore with Bacchus, make it particularly suitable for a painting whose central figure is that god.⁴¹⁸

The repertoire of marble types included in Second Style paintings is limited to those known to be available, in at least small quantities, during the Late Republic. The three most popular types in painting were yellow Numidian, red (and purple-red) Taenarian, and beige or multicolored alabaster.⁴¹⁹ Panels of solid green or black stone also appear frequently. Rarer are Lucullan marble, Chian marble, Carystian marble, and Sagarian marble.⁴²⁰ Phrygian marble, only introduced in the Augustan period and highly valued thereafter, does not appear in Second Style painting, perhaps indicating that by the time that stone was available, Second Style paintings were no longer desirable.

Because many of these stones were prized for their bright color rather than, or in addition to, their variegated details, solid blocks of color painted with inexpensive pigments could give the impression of opulence for a low cost in terms of time and money. For example, the small Room 3 to the south of Room 5 in the Villa dei Misteri is painted entirely in shades of yellow and green, most likely using the readily available green earth and yellow ochre pigments (Figure 37). Rectilinear outlines, however, tell the viewer that these walls are meant to represent panels of Numidian marble and green limestone (presumably) from Greece. Narrow borders around some panels have added details apparently representing the whorls of alabaster in the same colors, and there is an elaborate cornice high on the wall, both of which add to the convincing effect that this is a room covered in valuable stones of different types. For a relatively small expense, the viewer is surrounded by illusory extravagance.

In Second Style paintings in general, the patterns of variegated stone were restricted to fairly small areas of the wall, either to heighten their impact or to allow the

⁴¹⁸ Cf. Lazzarini 2004, 588 on the association of Taenarian marble with Bacchus in sculpture, and Santoro 2007, 329 on the multivalence of colored marble in general.

⁴¹⁹ Both the red and purple panels in these paintings must represent Taenarian marble, which can have either shade, and *not* porphyry, which was not used until the Julio-Claudian period (Fant 2007, 336, contra Leach 2004, 59). Purple panels in the Second Style are never speckled with white to indicate porphyry, though they are in the Fourth Style.

⁴²⁰ See Appendix 1 on stone types and origins. An example of brecciated Chian marble appears on small rectangular blocks above the doorways in Room 14 in Villa A at Oplontis. Square blocks in the upper zone of the paintings in Room 11 in the same villa seem to represent a variety of Lucullan marble (similar to Kelsey Museum accession no. 0000.00.2094).

wall to be painted more quickly (or both). Variety is the rule, within and between rooms. No two color schemes or compositions are the same. There is range of spatial depth from fully closed walls (e.g. Room 3, 5, and 15 in the Villa dei Misteri, Room H at Boscoreale, or Room 45 at the Villa Arianna at Stabiae) to small openings above painted central doors or high walls (e.g. Room 11 at Oplontis and Rooms 6 and 16 in the Villa dei Misteri) to numerous openings in the upper half of the wall or even most of the upper third of the wall receding into the distance (e.g. Rooms 14 and 15 at Oplontis or Room M at Boscoreale). These differences should not be thought of as developmental or chronological distinctions, but as reflections of a taste for variety.⁴²¹ Oftentimes very different schemes are found in neighboring rooms in the same building, or even on adjacent walls of the same room. Even on the surface of a single wall, a dividing element might serve as a transition between two very different color schemes or compositions (e.g. Room 6 in the Villa dei Misteri; and cf. Figure 54), each of which incorporated different colors and varieties of stone.

All of these varieties of faux stone had real counterparts and could be recognized by astute viewers. Scholars such as Bergmann, Clarke, and Sauron (among others) have argued in favor of one of the primary functions of wall painting being its ability to provoke contemplation and conversation among inhabitants of and visitors to residences, especially during social gatherings.⁴²² Most studies of that sort have focused on the figural and narrative elements of wall painting, especially mythological scenes, but Bradley has shown that, in later periods, the ability to identify and comment on exotic stone varieties was part of educated elite discourse.⁴²³ We cannot, of course, assume that attitudes from the late first century C.E. necessarily were relevant in the mid-first century B.C.E., but the detail and accuracy with which stone was painted suggests that its recognizability was important. Perhaps part of the motivation for the painters was to show their knowledge and skill, but recognition of that proficiency depended on a

⁴²¹ Cf. Tybout 2001, 40–44; Tybout 1993, though he sees these distinctions as perhaps indicating differing levels of status.

⁴²² E.g. Bergmann 1994; Bergmann 1996; Clarke 2005, 275–277; Massa-Pairault and Sauron 2007. Bragantini (2007, 126) notes that full understanding of certain aspects of Late Republican paintings may have been limited to viewers with the same status or level of education as the person who commissioned them, though she does not comment on stone specifically.

⁴²³ Bradley 2006b.

patron's being able to identify the materials portrayed. At this early stage in the introduction of foreign stone into Italy, knowledge of the origins and characteristics of specific materials may have been limited to a fairly restricted group who owned or had seen small objects and architectural elements carved from imported stone. In addition, in public architecture, colored stone was only beginning to be used in the capital, and so would likely not have been very familiar to people who remained outside of Rome itself. As a result, advanced knowledge about decorative stone was likely constrained to painters and to a small group of upper class Romans. Their ability to use the stones represented in Second Style wall painting as a prompt for erudite conversation would have been part of the style's appeal.

Among those scholars of Roman wall painting who compare the images depicted in the Second Style to real luxurious architectural environments, there are two main lines of argument. The first, advocated by Lehmann, Fittschen (though later withdrawn), Engemann, Schefold, Strocka, and Leach (among others) is that these compositions imitate in paint the wealthiest residences in Italy or elsewhere (i.e. villas or palaces), for those who did not have access to or could not afford the objects and materials they portray.⁴²⁴ The greatest obstacle to accepting this interpretation is the lack of archaeological evidence for contemporary architecture that resembles the architecture represented in the Second Style. We also lack tangible evidence for residential buildings that outstrip in luxury the actual villas that housed these paintings. We have no archaeological evidence for villas or Hellenistic palaces that contained more than a small amount of decorative marble, usually embedded in small fragments into pavements or, in the East, used in the lower portion only of a few walls in particularly fancy rooms.⁴²⁵ In literature, we have references to only a few, very limited uses of imported stone in contemporary Italian homes, consisting of a handful of columns or a single threshold block. It seems that many scholars have in mind the villa of Lucullus, renowned for its extravagance, when imagining these most luxurious homes to which they postulate the

⁴²⁴ Lehmann 1953, 94ff.; Fittschen 1976; Engemann 1967, 23ff.; Schefold 1972; Strocka, 237. For a recent and thorough critique of these interpretations, see Fragaki 2003, 266–269.

⁴²⁵ See Chapter 2, pp. 71-73.

Second Style patrons aspire.⁴²⁶ Even so, we do not have any reason to believe that Lucullus had more exotic stone in his residences than was typical for his time. Pliny the Elder, for example, does not even mention Lucullus' home in his catalogue of Republican marble excesses, despite noting that Lucullan marble was named for the general who liked it so much.⁴²⁷ Instead he describes massive engineering projects as indicative of Lucullus's hubris.⁴²⁸ Plutarch mentions painting among the wealth with which Lucullus surrounded himself, but not imported stone.⁴²⁹ As I have noted, even paintings such as those in the Casa dei Grifi on the Palatine in Rome that seem to depict *opus sectile* wall paneling have no real parallel in the archaeological or literary records.

It seems clear to me, based on the available evidence, that villas and houses decorated with Second Style paintings were *themselves* the height of elegant and expensive living in the Late Republic. Scholars have argued over the original ownership of many Campanian villas, sometimes suggesting on the basis of their paintings that they must have belonged to less wealth and prominent men and women who aspired to the opulence of the real Roman elite. Other assert that they belonged to specific members of the Roman upper classes themselves.⁴³⁰ In fact, we have no really good evidence, archaeological or literary, to identify the owner of any particular villa in the first century B.C.E.⁴³¹ It may be that locations along the coast near Pompeii were not considered prime real estate at this early date, and so not many were owned by the most powerful aristocrats from Rome.

The same cannot be said, however, about the Republican villas at Baiae. We know from literary records that Marius, Hortensius, and Caesar (among others) owned properties there, chosen for the particularly pleasant environment, and built on especially defensible locations.⁴³² Recent archaeological work under the Castello Aragonese at

⁴²⁶ E.g. Leach 2004, 36, 87–88; see Plutarch, *Lucullus*, 39–42 on the general's extravagant lifestyle and properties.

⁴²⁷ On Pliny, see pp. 57–63 above.

⁴²⁸ Pl. *N.H.* 9.171.

⁴²⁹ Plut. *Luc.* 39.

⁴³⁰ E.g. Sauron 2007, *passim*; Leach 2004, 88, 91; Esposito 2007, 459–462; Ciardiello 2009b, 64–65; Maischberger and Franken 2005, 96; Miniero 2007.

⁴³¹ Cf. e.g. Guidobaldi and Esposito 2009, 370.

⁴³² D'Arms 1970, 20–27, 41–43, 45. Leach (1993, 150) argued, before the discovery of the Republican rooms in the Castello Aragonese, that Second Style paintings imitated more luxurious villas, specifically suggesting those at Baiae as the prototype.

modern Baia has uncovered the remains of a Republican villa on that site, chosen also by the Aragon builders of the fortress for its strategic position.⁴³³ These discoveries have brought to light Second Style paintings and pavements identical in character to those known from other villas in Campania. The researchers who have published these findings, chief among them Paola Miniero, suggest that this villa may have been the one that once belonged to Caesar, mentioned by Tacitus in the *Annales*.⁴³⁴ Though, as they acknowledge, it is impossible to know for certain who owned this exact property, it must surely have belonged to a member of the Roman elite, given its enviable location.⁴³⁵

If it was not the villa of Julius Caesar, it was exactly the type of villa that he and his peers owned and occupied. The degree of luxury here, in a villa belonging to a member of the highest Roman elite, does *not* exceed the degree of luxury displayed in other extravagant Campanian villas. The view that those other villas were aspirational, owned by lower status, less wealthy local elites, therefore has little support. The paintings and pavements in Campanian Republican villas were not imitations of more luxurious environments that existed elsewhere – they were the height of luxury themselves. Though they may have served as substitutes for a higher level of opulence in a fashion, that higher level did not yet exist in reality.⁴³⁶

A second line of argument, proposed in particular by Vander Kelen in comparing imitation luxury in wall painting to real luxury objects and materials, contends that painting tradition and development is a decorative form entirely divorced from other decorative trends. That is, it is not an economic choice to imitate expensive marble, but a purely decorative one, with its own internal logic separate from other architectural and

⁴³³ Tacitus, *Ann.* 14.4.2; Ciaccia and Miniero 1996; Miniero Forte 2003, 15–20; Miniero 2007; Zevi and Miniero 2008, 61–75.

⁴³⁴ Ciaccia and Miniero 1996, 63; Zevi and Miniero 2008, 69.

⁴³⁵ Cf. D'Arms 1970, 45.

⁴³⁶ An exception is the atrium of the Villa Arianna at Stabiae, where a marble veneer socle once appeared below a Second Style painting. That painting is typically dated to near the end of the Second Style period and might more accurately be assigned to the Augustan period, when more marble was becoming available for private use. The atrium's painting has little in common with the architectural megalographies discussed in this chapter, consisting of a plain black ground with red borders, large human figures, and ornate vegetal embellishments. It is entirely lacking the drafted masonry blocks typical of the other examples described here. See Grimaldi 2007.

cultural changes.⁴³⁷ But the visual evidence for choices in which types of stone to feature in painting suggests that external historical and economic factors most certainly did play a role in shaping the Second Style. I have mentioned that Numidian marble from Africa, alabaster mainly associated with Egypt, and Taenarian marble from southern Greece were by far the most common and prominent stone types depicted in Republican wall painting. Stones from Asia Minor such as Lucullan and Chian marble are much rarer, despite having been discovered in the mid-first century B.C.E. Political events during the first part of that century might go some way toward explaining the choices made by painters and patrons.

Numidian marble may have been known in Rome in small quantities by the late second century B.C.E., but was not imported to Italy in quantity until around 78 B.C.E. at the earliest. Similarly, alabaster, which can be found in many parts of the world including Italy but was particularly associated with Egypt, was available at least in the form of small portable objects by the Late Republican period.⁴³⁸ Though it was associated with elegant luxury in some Roman texts, it does not seem to have been as closely linked with a particular geographical or mythological setting as other stones were. Numidian, on the other hand, was named in Latin for its origin (*Marmor Numidicum*), and so was particularly associated with Africa. Its popularity in painting may coincide with the end of the Jugurthine War, if small pieces of the stone were brought to Italy at that time, or perhaps a few decades later, when imports of stone from the region seem to have increased notably.⁴³⁹ Similarly, the red Taenarian marble from the Peloponnese may have been available in Italy from the late second century B.C.E., though perhaps its extraction and importation did not increase until later, into the first century B.C.E.⁴⁴⁰ All of these stones were accessible in limited quantities and for the most part in small pieces during the period of the Second Style. Their depiction in painting is realistic, but their scale is exaggerated.

⁴³⁷ See especially Vander Kelen 1998, but others such as Tybout (2001) have argued in favor of downplaying the social, political, and economic significance of painting.

⁴³⁸ Fant 2007, 338. And see Chapter 3, p. 100.

⁴³⁹ Fant 1999, 2–3.

⁴⁴⁰ Lazzarini 2004. See p. 96 above on pieces of Taenarian marble set into First Style pavements.

Nevertheless, that exaggeration was limited in most cases to those types of marble that were most readily available. Expeditions into Asia Minor in the late second and early first centuries B.C.E. introduced Romans to decorative stones from that area, including Lucullan marble and Chian marble. They appear only very rarely, however, in Second Style painting. I have found only one example of Lucullan marble, named for the general who particularly liked it, in the Second Style decoration of Campanian villas. It consists of narrow strips of faux Lucullan marble set into pilasters in Room 15 in the Villa dei Misteri (Figure 38). Though these strips are easy to miss, they were painted with a great deal of accuracy. Elsewhere, in houses in Pompeii, such as the Casa di Cerere, there are some blocks that may represent Lucullan or Chian marble, but these are less carefully painted and much more difficult to identify with certainty.⁴⁴¹ More freedom might have been afforded painters of small townhouses than to those who decorated larger villas belonging (presumably) to higher status patrons who might have been more particular about the messages they wanted the decoration of their reception spaces to convey. It also (or alternatively) may have been the case that villa owners who came from, or regularly visited, the capital were more familiar with imported stone, which was used almost exclusively in public monuments there, than those who resided in smaller, more marginal communities like Pompeii. If so, the painters of houses in Pompeii might have been free to exercise more creativity and dispense with the rigid precision required of the decorations in villas.

How do we explain the prominence of stone varieties from Africa and Greece, and the rarity of those from Asia Minor? The distinction seems to reflect a political and historical reality. For example, some quantity of Numidian marble technically may have been available to those who could afford it; however, the level of luxury displayed by decorating a private residence in that material was morally reprehensible. M. Lepidus reportedly had a single threshold or lintel of Numidian marble in his home, and that was enough to warrant notoriety that lasted until Pliny the Elder's time.⁴⁴² But a display in paint of what was notionally possible, but modestly avoided, was acceptable.

⁴⁴¹ See pp. 173-184 below.

⁴⁴² Pl. *NH.* 36.49.

Lucullan marble, on the other hand, may not have been accessible, even on a practical level, on the same scale as Numidian until significantly later. During the early first century B.C.E., Asia Minor was in a state of severe economic decline and instability following the Mithradatic Wars.⁴⁴³ Any revenue that came in from the surrounding territories, such as Teos, where the Lucullan marble quarries were located, would have been diverted to Rome to pay the indemnity owed.⁴⁴⁴ According to Pliny, Lucullus introduced Lucullan marble to Rome in *ca.* 74 B.C.E.⁴⁴⁵ Possibly the stone had been extracted on a small scale before this time, and Lucullus merely encouraged the development and expansion of the quarries after about 70 B.C.E. This would have occurred around the same time that he visited Pergamon and granted the city some interest relief. Before this date, even if Asian marbles were known in small quantities, the infrastructure of the region was in no condition to facilitate the quarrying and transportation of those materials.

The absence of Ionian and other Asian marbles from Second Style wall painting, then, can be explained a few possible ways. One is that stones like Lucullan marble were entirely unknown before *ca.* 70 B.C.E., and therefore any paintings that include them must postdate that period. Another possibility is that they were known on a small scale, but the severe economic recession in the East meant that resources that might otherwise have been used to quarry decorative stone were being diverted to Rome, and so the supply of these materials was extremely limited at the source. After Lucullus, who took personal interest in the stone from the region, intervened, the quarries were opened up more and some of the newly quarried stone trickled in to Rome. Nevertheless, the supply remained very small and was largely confined to public use. As a result, even in the realm of fantasy, Lucullan marble's presence in the private realm was constrained. Recent archaeological work that has redated the construction of many of the villas in Campania with Second Style decoration to the middle of the first century, i.e. *ca.* 50 B.C.E., rather than 50-100 years earlier, as had been previously thought. If these new dates are correct, then the lack of Asian stone types in their paintings may provide some evidence that

⁴⁴³ Evans 2012, 61–65. I am indebted to Michael Leese for his suggestions and contributions to the link between the economy of Asian Minor in this period and the availability of stone from that region to Rome.

⁴⁴⁴ On the quarries at Teos, see Ballance 1966.

⁴⁴⁵ Pl. *N.H.* 36.8; Dworakowska 1990, 253.

those stones were still largely unavailable by that date.⁴⁴⁶ The proportions of stone types from Africa, Greece, and Asia Minor in painting seem to have mirrored their actual availability, even when the painted representations were exaggerated and enhanced. These paintings, therefore, represented what villa owner could have possessed, ideally, if he or she had chosen not to respect the rules of propriety that restricted private magnificence. Confining such opulence to painted imitation indicated that the patron appeared to adhere to those rules.

II. Transgressive Fantasies at Oplontis (Villa A, Room 23)

i. Case Study: Room 23 in Villa A at Oplontis

Fantastical, unmistakable excess was the hallmark of Second Style wall painting. In simpler examples, consisting of colorful panels with perhaps a few projecting columns, it was the materials themselves, never seen on that scale in a private residence, that gave the impression of incredible luxury. In more complicated paintings, all of the elements were exaggeratedly unreal, placing a viewer firmly in the realm of the imaginary – a realm constructed, however, from materials and forms recognizable from the real world. To illustrate these claims, I use as a case study Room 23 in the Villa at Oplontis. In that room, the painted marble, though as always comprising the majority of the decoration, seems unobtrusive compared to the many other naturalistic details that combine to create an idealized, fantasy environment. Room 23 is not the largest reception space known from a villa, and it does not contain the most extravagant of extant Second Style paintings. Nevertheless it demonstrates principles I see at work in Second Style villa paintings in general – deliberately unrealistic spatial effects, combinations of objects that make the architectural model ambiguous, and an exaggerated, unbelievable degree of luxury. By using this comparatively sedate example to explore these ideas, I can best show that the exaggeration inherent in such paintings was not limited to a few of the most extreme examples, such as the largest reception rooms at Oplontis (e.g. Rooms 5, 14, or 15). I have already described some of these qualities, particularly exaggerated luxury, with respect to the Second Style decoration of the Villa dei Misteri, and below I will compare Room 23 with paintings from the Casa del Labirinto in Pompeii. The same

⁴⁴⁶ E.g. Esposito 2007; Guidobaldi and Esposito 2009; Thomas and Clarke 2009.

general principles and observations could be applied to almost any extant Second Style painting, regardless of where one might place it on a spectrum from simple to elaborate.⁴⁴⁷

Neither the identity of Villa A's owner nor of its painters can be determined with any certainty. Suggestions for ownership have ranged from Poppaea, the second wife of the emperor Nero, to a local, middle class merchant.⁴⁴⁸ The complicated construction and decoration history of Villa A has been further complicated by a lack of publication and by restoration work that used ancient materials to repair and rebuild walls.⁴⁴⁹ Nevertheless, archaeologists have proposed dates for the initial construction of the villa and for subsequent renovations (four or five in all), based largely on stylistic analysis of the villa's painting and mosaic decoration and on construction technique (especially the masonry types). Stefano De Caro and the current directors of a project at Oplontis, John R. Clarke and Michael L. Thomas, have (separately) dated the earliest phase – the initial construction – of the villa to the mid-first century B.C.E. Clarke originally posited this date (*ca.* 40 B.C.E.) based on the “mature phase” Second Style wall paintings found in five rooms, which are the earliest dateable paintings preserved there.⁴⁵⁰ One of the aims of Clarke and Thomas’s project is to further refine and clarify the villa's history. The Second Style rooms were the first to be studied in this project, and Thomas and Clarke believe that they have reinforced Clarke's previous date on the basis of a study of the masonry.⁴⁵¹

Room 23, a somewhat large chamber that opens onto a colonnaded walkway, contains Second Style paintings that seem to have been produced during the first phase of the villa’s decoration (Figure 39). Room 23 has a large opening in the east wall and a small doorway at the east end of the south wall, making the room functionally three-sided (measuring approximately 4 m on each side). The four walls together make up a unified scheme. I will begin my description of their compositions with the west wall, because the

⁴⁴⁷ See n. 381 above for other villas with similar paintings. An exception might be paintings that are technically classified as Second Style, but consist of not much more than a few simple outlines on a white ground. Even these, however, suggest stone blocks or veneer. See Heinrich 2002, 9-10.

⁴⁴⁸ E.g. Fergola 2004, 78-85; Ciardiello 2009b; Leach 1993, 147.

⁴⁴⁹ Thomas and Clarke 2007, 225.

⁴⁵⁰ E.g. Clarke 1991, 113.

⁴⁵¹ Thomas and Clarke 2007, 225.

shape of the room and the perspective chosen by the painter(s) encourages the viewer to contemplate one wall at a time, beginning with the west, as he or she enters the room.

The west wall (Figure 40) is painted with a symmetrical architectural composition that uses painted architectural elements, such as columns, to divide the space into precisely balanced vertical zones. The wall is also divided into three horizontal zones. A flat dado makes up a little less than the lower third of the wall. This socle is clearly derived from actual architecture (i.e. the lowest part of a masonry wall) but might also be understood as the front surface of a stage platform. The middle zone of the painting is taken up by a receding, solid, masonry wall with columns projecting in front of it. The upper zone contains open spaces framed by architectural elements. These include receding vistas emphasized by perspectively rendered architecture as well as sections of clear open sky above the roof and architrave. Above the painted surface of the wall is a projecting cornice in molded stucco that continues around all four walls. The tripartite division of the wall into vertical and horizontal zones is echoed by the illusionistic rendering of three main planes of depth. The first contains the dado, the projecting columns above it, and the roof of the central aedicular niche; the second the solid wall and doors; and the third the open space behind the wall.

The dominant colors in the paintings on all three walls are red, purple, yellow, and blue. Apart from the blue of the sky, these colors represent mainly varieties of colored stone, specifically Taenarian and Numidian marble. The yellow of the columns and cornice, for example, may alternatively have been intended to indicate gilded stone.

At the central focal point of the wall is a monochromatic landscape panel in various shades of blue. Because of its poor state of preservation, the details are difficult to distinguish, but the landscape appears to show an architectural scene. A building with an arcade is faintly visible near the center. Emphasis is given to this part of the wall by its position within a framing *aedicula* supported by unusual columns, and the peak of the roof and theatrical mask above the panel draw a vertical line down the centre of the wall. The mask is visually prominent and attracts the viewer's eye at least as easily as does the panel below it; it is a female tragic mask propped up on the top of the wall on whose surface the landscape panel is painted. Attention to the center of the wall is also

encouraged by the linear perspective employed by the painter(s), which makes the center of the room the most visually logical position from which to view the composition.⁴⁵²

Flanking the central *aedicula* are two divisions of space on each side, separated by projecting Ionic columns. Immediately flanking the *aedicula* are low, solid walls, upon which sit vessels, presumably made of metal (perhaps bronze). The outermost sections of the composition show open folding doors in the wall, which provide a glimpse into the space behind. What we see behind is a receding wall that supports an Ionic colonnade, visible in the open spaces above the front wall. An exaggerated and somewhat unrealistic linear perspective emphasizes the depth of space behind the façade.⁴⁵³ Hints of a coffered ceiling above and behind the folding doors seem illogically to disappear on the other side of the projecting Ionic columns.

The composition is filled with various other details too numerous to describe in detail here. Some of the most prominent include the following: (bronze?) cauldrons placed on top of the cornice that tops the projecting Ionic columns; garlands strung behind the *aedicula*'s roof, whose relationship to the other elements of the scene is unclear (i.e. what are they attached to?); *pinakes*, panel paintings enclosed in shutters, that depict human figures and flank the theatrical mask; stylized human and vegetal decoration in the pediment of the *aedicula*; antefixes on the corners of the *aedicula*'s roof in the form of mythological creatures (perhaps hippocamps); pillars that define the outer edges of the wall (and continue around the corners of the flanking walls); and small doors above ledges on either side of the outer folding doors.

Overall, the composition of the wall depicts an aedicular architectural façade fronting an open space, perhaps a courtyard of some kind. Exactly what type of building this façade is meant to represent is less clear – possibilities include a theater, sanctuary, or luxury residence. There is a great deal of unreality here, both in the fantastic and exaggerated architecture, and in the lack of devices to link the real space of the room with the world described by the painting (such as painted steps leading from the floor to the platform).

⁴⁵² Cf. Clarke 1991, 41-45.

⁴⁵³ For a detailed analysis of the use of perspective in the Second Style paintings from Oplontis, see Stinson 2011.

Turning to the left, one faces the room's south wall (Figure 41). Here again we see that the painter or painters have created a tripartite division of space in three (illusionistic) dimensions. Two projecting sections of the platform and architrave frame a central zone. Unlike the west wall, the architecture here is made to appear solid up to ceiling height with the exception of a small opening above the lower wall in the central recess. Like the west wall, the majority of the surface of the south wall depicts ashlar-built architecture of various exotic stones, with the same colors/pigments prominent. Similar architectural details (platform, ashlar wall, architrave) appear here with the characteristic pattern of projecting and receding elements, though the supports on this wall are all identical yellow Corinthian pillars inlaid with red, rather than columns.

Though the perspective employed by the designer of this composition encourages viewing from a central position (see below), there is not so strong a focal point for the south wall as the west. The most notable feature of this section of the wall is its opening (interrupted by a lacuna), though unlike the broken surfaces of the west wall, nothing other than the blue of the sky can be seen beyond. No attempt is made here to emphasize the depth of the plane behind. A doorway is the only other break in the surface of the wall, but this is real, not painted. The door's interruption of the illusion is not mitigated by any attempt to integrate it into the composition, as is sometimes done elsewhere in the villa.⁴⁵⁴

An object appears centrally placed upon the illusionistic floor of the lower platform on the south wall. It is perhaps a birdbath or a stand on which to place offerings; the red object on top of it may be a cake.⁴⁵⁵ Other items shown resting on the same platform and on the architrave above it deny this basin the sort of central importance given to the mask and panel painting on the west wall, as do the lack of unique framing features like the unusual columns there. To the right of the basin is a pile of fruits heaped on the floor of the platform between two pillars. A third object appears on the far right segment of the lower platform: a large bird. This is the only living creature painted in this room, though birds are common features of paintings throughout the villa. On the upper

⁴⁵⁴ Bergmann 2002b, 18.

⁴⁵⁵ Fergola 2004, 46.

third of the wall, the painter demonstrates his abilities with the repeated motif of transparent glass bowls filled with fruit placed on the architrave.

The north wall (Figure 42) mirrors the composition of the south wall exactly in terms of architecture and color. Here we have similar glass bowls of fruit sitting on the upper architrave (Figure 43). There is also an opening in the wall above the central recess; a garland hangs in this space, and we can perhaps assume that the damaged portion of the south wall in the corresponding location contained something similar. The other objects arranged on the lower platform differ from those on the south wall. The item in the center of the arrangement is obscured by a lacuna, though perhaps it had a similar votive function to the stand directly opposite. To the right is a tall basket containing fruits or cakes, whose association with agricultural produce is augmented by the ears of wheat and its religious significance by the torch behind it. Here the painter has again taken an opportunity to flaunt his skill in representing the texture of the basket and, especially, in showing a sheer cloth draped over the basket's contents.

Though the perspective created by the painter(s) of the south and north walls places the ideal viewer in the middle of the room facing the center of each wall in order to view it correctly, devices are employed to connect all the walls into one continuous composition. They are to be read together as part of a whole environment, rather than as separate images.⁴⁵⁶ One such device is the wrapping of the pillars around the corners of the room, noted above. In addition to this, a clever use of perspective at the room's corners illusionistically pushes the face of these walls behind their actual plastered surfaces (Figure 44). This impression is especially effective to the viewer in the middle of the room, though it loses coherence as the viewer moves toward the corner to inspect details at closer range. The use of fictive architecture to create this optical effect is enhanced by the inclusion of a bronze shield painted on the upper portion of each corner of the south and north walls, but apparently resting on ledges on the west and east walls. The shield is depicted in extreme perspective to enhance the viewer's perception that he or she is seeing this object from an angle.

⁴⁵⁶ Bergmann 2002b, 38.

The disassociation of the real surfaces or boundaries of the room's built architecture from its painted architecture creates an environment that challenges the viewer's interpretation. As he or she moves through the space, or even shifts his or her gaze to study different portions of each wall, adjustments must be made to make sense of the surroundings. A viewer positioned in any spot other than the center of the room is especially challenged, and the corners of the room emerge as areas where the continuity of the illusion breaks down. We would probably be mistaken, however, in interpreting these seemingly confused perspectives as a lack of expertise on the part of the designer or painter. As noted above, even within a single wall, multiple, sometimes conflicting, perspectives might be employed: the intention seems to be to heighten the unreality of the environment.⁴⁵⁷

ii. Transgressive Architectural Fantasies

The architecture fantasy created by the painter or painters of Room 23 at Villa A, and other rooms like it both at Oplontis and elsewhere, can be understood, I argue, as a deliberate representation of an unreal, even impossible, environment. These fantasies were meant to provoke discussion and inspire viewers to question the social restrictions of their time. The unreal or fantastical quality of the paintings in Room 23 can be detected on a number of levels. One such indicator is the discordant and sometimes nonsensical combination of perspectival effects employed by its painters. Though this characteristic could be explained as the result of the limited capacities of Roman painters or by the problems of a number of painters working simultaneously, when considered in the context of the complex of other elements of fantasy included in this work, it seems more likely that for the designers and patrons of the paintings it was desirable and deliberate.⁴⁵⁸

Besides challenging the viewer's understanding of his or her spatial perception through the use of perspective, the painted architecture in effect destroys, or at least calls into question, the real boundaries and surfaces of the room. As Bettina Bergmann has noted, a combination of open spaces and blocked paths – such as, in the case of Room 23,

⁴⁵⁷ Cf. Stinson (2011, 420–424) who argues against a lack of skill and in favor of complicated perspective techniques for aesthetic reasons.

⁴⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 423.

the half opened doors on the west wall and the lack of any approach to the level of the platform floor – can create an “anxiety of access and denial”.⁴⁵⁹ This sensation is underscored by the fact that the viewer can never, of course, enter the space of the painted environment. Even were the spatial aspects of these architectural fantasies realistic, the paintings depict environments that for contemporary Romans simply did not exist.

I have shown in the first section of this chapter that the use of exotic stone on such a scale was unknown and probably unfeasible, but stone was not the only real material depicted in a purely aspirational manner. Because blown glass was not being produced in Italy in the mid-first century B.C.E., the glass bowls holding fruit in this painting must be representations of objects imported from the East (Figure 43).⁴⁶⁰ These bowls, moreover, are enormous and nearly flawlessly transparent – perfect specimens of a technology that probably had not yet developed enough to produce vessels of quite that size and quality. Even smaller cups of that type were as yet rare in Italy.⁴⁶¹

The specific references that paintings like the ones in Room 23 draw upon have been the subject of a great deal of scholarly debate, as I have noted. To reiterate, the main contenders are the theater, the sanctuary, the Hellenistic palace, and the Roman villa itself, running the full gamut from public to private.⁴⁶² I would argue, instead, that the reference is neither public nor private architecture, but that these paintings borrow elements from all these spheres, and perhaps others besides. The first century B.C.E. was a period of the competitive display of wealth and military power that often played out in the medium of public architecture, especially the sacred and theatrical.⁴⁶³ The use of valuable and exotic imported materials, colored stone among the most important, was central to this type of communication.⁴⁶⁴ We can understand one of the messages of the painted decoration of Room 23 as perhaps being an exaggerated, fantastical evocation – though not a faithful representation – of forms borrowed and recombined from the public

⁴⁵⁹ Bergmann 2002b, 21.

⁴⁶⁰ Cf. Bergmann 2010, 28 on glass in Boscoreale paintings.

⁴⁶¹ Fleming 1999, 10–11 and cf. the small (around 17.5 cm high) glass vessels found in a shipwreck on route to Italy from ca. 60 B.C.E.: *ibid.*, 14.

⁴⁶² Leach 1993, 139–141.

⁴⁶³ Cf. Leach 2004, 100–104; Santoro 2007, 324–326.

⁴⁶⁴ Santoro 2007, 323–336.

architecture that bestowed such status on its patrons.⁴⁶⁵ As such, it was a means by which to import that prestige into the home while avoiding transgressing, in at least one major way, the bounds of acceptable Roman domestic display. Second Style painters therefore created a fantasy setting that never existed in reality. For instance, in Room 23 the raised platform and mask are associated with the theatre, the votive offerings are associated with sanctuary, the lavish use of prestigious materials associated with the palace, and the agricultural produce and symbols of nature associated with the villa. Our very difficulty in pinning down a single inspiration underscores the deliberate ambiguity created by the artists.

Finally, the fantasy of these painted environments is not only spatial and thematic, but also temporal. The appearance of elements of nature, namely fruits and birds, emphasizes the timelessness of the setting, as has been pointed out by Bergmann.⁴⁶⁶ The bird never flies; the fruit never spoils. These details extend the impression of an immensely wealthy environment, in which nature is endlessly tamed and agricultural produce always abounds and never decays. Everything about the situation in which the painting places the viewer is unreal and conspicuously so.

What purpose does this ambiguity and fantasy serve in the context of the Roman villa? Bergmann notes that for a modern viewer the spatial experience of these paintings can be an unnerving one, but clearly for the Roman patron who paid for and maintained this type of decoration, it was desirable.⁴⁶⁷ I propose that the fantasy created in this room is one of transgression and thus is particularly suited to the social setting of the villa. The paintings immediately prompt the viewer to question the meaning of their mixed and ambiguous imagery and to search for the limits of reality as the paintings present it. The Romans enjoyed ambiguous imagery and compositions or juxtapositions that generated discussion through encouraging multiple meanings, in both literature and art.⁴⁶⁸ Because architecture, and luxurious architecture in particular, was politically charged imagery in the first century B.C.E., one important thing these paintings did was blur the line between

⁴⁶⁵ Leach (2004, 69) argues, in contrast, that the colors and materials in Second Style painting were a way to distance it from public architecture, citing Bragantini.

⁴⁶⁶ Bergmann 2002a, 108. Cf. Leach 2004, 81.

⁴⁶⁷ Bergmann 2002b, 41.

⁴⁶⁸ Bergmann 2002b, 102.

public and private, two spheres with very different rules for the display of wealth and power.⁴⁶⁹ This confrontation is apparent both in the inclusion of details from public and private built environments in the painting themselves, such as theatrical masks, *tholos* temples, serving vessels, and agricultural produce, and in the presence of images of public buildings within a domestic structure. A viewer might question the appropriateness of this conflation and especially question the appropriateness of such a luxurious setting in a private home, which would be severely censured were it genuine.

Since the limitations on luxury at home were largely the product of social and moral conventions, these rules would have been at the core of what was being questioned, and perhaps criticized, in the villa's decorated reception rooms. By putting this social criticism in the form of a painted fantasy, a safe zone was created. The villa's owner had made no real transgression, only an imagined, experimental infraction. Within this safe space, the paintings still allowed people to debate or question where those social limits should ideally be. Moreover, the villa's location and function as a retreat far from the constraints of the city made this environment a locus for surpassing the boundaries that would apply to domestic display in an urban context.⁴⁷⁰ The villa was a site for pushing the limits of propriety, though it still served as a vehicle for displaying status and impressing visitors. Nevertheless, even in this relaxed atmosphere, in the first century B.C.E., certain barriers were respected by confining extreme extravagance to the medium of painting.

Overall, we can understand paintings like the ones in Room 23 at Oplontis as a part of intense elite competitive display that took place in the first century B.C.E. They alluded to the patronage of public works, but were located in the more secluded and safe environment of the private villa. Most importantly, they were confined to the fantastical realm of painting. The very act of questioning social norms in visual art reflects the circumstances of a period like this one, which was characterized by massive political and social change all over the Roman world, accompanied by shifting values of the upper classes.

⁴⁶⁹ See Bragantini 2007, 124 briefly on the relationship between the Second Style and new attitudes toward luxury in the late Republic.

⁴⁷⁰ Bodel 1997, 6, 19; Welch 2006b, 133.

III. The Role of Second Style Painting in Republican Villa Culture

The luxury villa was a uniquely Italian architectural form that developed largely in the early first century B.C.E., at exactly the time that the Second Style was becoming popular.⁴⁷¹ Though aspects of villa architecture were drawn from a wide range of other buildings, such as houses and monumental sanctuaries, the luxury villa itself was an innovative architectural type.⁴⁷² For such a pioneering and experimental sort of residence, we should perhaps expect an equally novel sort of decorative system to develop. Second Style wall painting seems to answer that need.

A mere expectation of a new type of decoration specifically suited to the villa is not enough, of course, to prove that the Second Style was invented for that environment. Several studies of the Second Style see the decoration of the Casa dei Grifi on the Palatine on Rome as one of the earliest, if not *the earliest*, surviving examples of Second Style painting.⁴⁷³ The dating of that house to around 100 B.C.E. is usually based on stylistic details, though it shares characteristics with rooms in villas that are dated later, or on masonry technique, which is perhaps slightly more suggestive, though not conclusive.⁴⁷⁴ It is entirely possible, nevertheless, that this style of painting in fact originated in the city.⁴⁷⁵ The development of its most complex and spectacular manifestations, however, especially those known from villas like Villa A at Oplontis, the Villa dei Misteri, the Villa di Publio Fannio Sinistore at Boscoreale, the Villa Arianna at Stabiae, and more fragmentary examples from the Villa dei Papiri and the villa under the Castello Aragonese di Baia, display characteristics that make them particularly appropriate for villa life.

I have argued above that such images tested or transgressed the limits of moral propriety when it came to displays of wealth and luxury. Behavior of that sort would have been safer and more appropriate in the *otium*-centered environment of the villa, away

⁴⁷¹ Most villas that had had their earliest phases dated to the previous century have more recently been assigned to the mid-first century B.C.E. E.g. Guidobaldi and Esposito 2009, 366–367; Esposito 2007.

⁴⁷² See, for example, Terrenato 2012; Terrenato 2001; Tombrägel 2010.

⁴⁷³ E.g. Clarke 1991, 41; Ling 1991, 23; Leach 2004, 58–59; Insalco 2005, 18–19; Welch 2006a, 525.

⁴⁷⁴ Mogetta (2013, 226) concludes that in Pompeii it is “extremely difficult to date domestic architecture simply on the basis of masonry style, without other kinds of external evidence.”

⁴⁷⁵ Welch (2006b, 137–138) makes this argument on the basis of a complicated study of iconography, though she has little in the way of archaeological evidence to support it.

from the city where visitors would be fewer and more carefully selected. The richness of detail and symbolism in these images suits the leisurely contemplation and conversation described in first century B.C.E. texts centered on the villa, such as Varro's.⁴⁷⁶ The inherent ambiguity of the painting in its relation to realities and ideals of morality, architecture, space, and time, could have provoked lively debate amongst the hosts and their visitors who gathered for social occasions in these decorated spaces. In addition, the scale and richness of detail in high Second Style paintings shows that they were designed or adapted to suit the architecture of villas. A villa comprised a wider range of sizes and shapes of rooms to decorate than did a townhouse, and so more creative variety and practical or technical development was required to decorate all of its spaces. Second Style paintings could be elaborated and given monumental dimensions to suit the large reception rooms in villas – or scaled down, and often simplified, to decorate smaller *cubicula*.⁴⁷⁷

I have argued that Second Style paintings were *not* less expensive substitutes for more luxurious decoration in real marble and gold that was supposedly to be found in other villas or palaces.⁴⁷⁸ Real-life models for these images did not exist. Second Style painting *was itself* the height of elegant and luxurious villa decoration. It stands to reason, therefore, that this decoration was developed especially to adorn the massive new luxury residences of the Roman elite. I do not mean to argue that all of the remains of Republican villas in Campania and elsewhere were once the property of the highest nobility in Rome. I suggest only that there is no distinction to be made between those villas decorated with Second Style paintings, as scholars have hypothesized. That includes villas located in some of the most desirable positions on the coast of Baiae, or any other supposed class of villa with more expensive and elaborate decoration from the same period.⁴⁷⁹ The Second Style was as good as it got for a villa. If we are to make distinctions between villas from this period in terms of status and wealth, other factors such as moveable property, size, location, and architectural complexity should be considered the determining factors, not the decoration of walls or even pavements.

⁴⁷⁶ On Varro, see Chapter 2, pp. 44-46 above.

⁴⁷⁷ Cf. Leach 2004, 92.

⁴⁷⁸ Contra, for example, Leach 1993, 144.

⁴⁷⁹ See n. 381 above.

Nevertheless, the content of Second Style paintings ultimately derived from a variety of sources associated particularly with wealthy Romans. These figures included especially powerful generals who travelled to distant territories and saw or brought back with them the exotic objects and materials. Welch has argued that, while evidence of military prowess in the form of certain spoils or trophies was acceptable in Republican Roman townhouses, the display of art and other luxury goods in the *domus* was controversial.⁴⁸⁰ The villa, however, provided a safer location for showing off art and wealth, as did relegating luxury objects and materials to the medium of painting, as I have argued. The subject matter of the paintings incorporated many imported objects including, but not limited to, colored stone, statues, glass vessels, as well as architectural forms that originated in, or evoked, buildings from the Hellenistic East along with other details that seemed to allude to exotic lands.⁴⁸¹ Both the association with the luxury villa and Eastern subject matter, therefore, would have linked Second Style paintings with the leading men in Rome, either when they were displayed in the residences of those very men or when they were adopted by people who aspired to that level of importance.

i. Villa Paintings in Townhouses

My argument that development of the Second Style took place in and for villas does not preclude the use of that style to decorate townhouses, especially for patrons who wished to replicate some of the prestige and ambience of the villa in the city. In contrast to villa paintings, most extant examples of Second Style paintings in the townhouses of Pompeii are relatively simple, though sometimes high quality, depictions of luxury marble masonry.⁴⁸² One notable exception is the decoration of the “Corinthian *oecus*” (room 43) in the Casa del Labirinto (Figure 45), which shows an elaborate architectural fantasy comparable to those painted in Villa A at Oplontis. Indeed, the similarities are enough for Leach and, following her, Clarke to suggest that the same workshop that was responsible for the Second Style paintings at Oplontis may have worked on the Casa del

⁴⁸⁰ Welch 2006b.

⁴⁸¹ Though I am not arguing that these paintings are literal depictions of Eastern architecture, only that elements of them would have brought to mind Eastern settings or at least the booty brought back from those areas by Roman generals. See Haselberger 2008, 710–711 for a good summary of arguments against the Second Style's origin in Eastern architecture, especially that of Alexandria.

⁴⁸² See Chapter 5 on the Second Style in Pompeii generally, and Heinrich 2002 on simpler versions of the Second Style in Pompeii.

Labirinto.⁴⁸³ A feature of these paintings (and others identified as belonging to the same workshop) is the high degree of detail, often including miniature elements that tend to be noticed only after extended viewing. Another is careful attention to depicting naturalistic luxury materials (marbles, gold, jewels, etc.), though the types of materials depicted and the level of realism varied between houses and even individual rooms within houses or villas.

Whether or not the same group of painters responsible for painting Room 23 at Oplontis also painted the *oecus* of the Casa del Labirinto, the similarity in subject matter is undeniable. The context of these two painted spaces, however, is quite different. Villa A at Oplontis is a massive, lavish, country estate. Room 23 is just one of many reception rooms with high quality, complex decoration. While it is true that the Casa del Labirinto is a relatively large house in Pompeii, it certainly cannot compete in scale with Villa A. The Casa del Labirinto has multiple reception rooms that open on to its peristyle, of which *oecus* 43 is most elaborate. At Oplontis, Room 23, which is the same size as *oecus* 43 (10 m²) is among the smaller of the Second Style reception spaces in the villa. Functionally the two types of buildings differ significantly as well. While public or other business might have been conducted in both places, the townhouse the primary locus of daily life and *negotium* (work), while the Roman villa was primarily associated with *otium* (leisure) and an escape from the pressures of city or town life.⁴⁸⁴

Room 23 at Oplontis and *oecus* 43 in the Casa del Labirinto are similarly situated at a distance from the main entrance to the residence, requiring, no doubt, the special invitation of the owner to reach them.⁴⁸⁵ Both rooms are large spaces open on one side. *Oecus* 43, however, has real Corinthian columns surrounding the interior that create an imposing, though not structurally functional, internal colonnade that complemented the fictive architecture painted on the walls. It is this feature that defines a “Corinthian *oecus*”, as classified by Vitruvius.⁴⁸⁶ Both rooms also face onto colonnaded walkways. In fact, the sprawling layout of the Casa del Labirinto and its unusual architectural and

⁴⁸³ Among other houses: Leach 1993, 144; Clarke 1991, 47.

⁴⁸⁴ A point made in numerous publications, including, but not limited to: Bodel 1997; Zarmakoupi 2010b; Zerbini 2006; Adams 2006. Of course, work took place in the villa and leisure in the house – balance was desirable – but this distinction is frequently made in Latin literature (see Chapter 2, pp. 44).

⁴⁸⁵ See Wallace-Hadrill 1994, 38–61.

⁴⁸⁶ Vitr. 6.3.8-9.

decorative features may suggest that its owner or architect attempted to create, or suggest, a villa-style retreat within the city walls.⁴⁸⁷ If this was the case, the similarity of the decoration of the two buildings may not be coincidental; the luxury and fantasy of the high Second Style, I contend, was especially associated with villa life.

Though the decoration of the Casa del Labirinto is in a state of poor preservation, it is still possible to discern that the decoration of *oecus* 43 (Figure 46) was in several ways comparable to the Second Style paintings from Oplontis. The back wall of the room, directly facing the courtyard, is in especially poor condition. The general tripartite division of space (a common feature of Roman wall painting) is similar to the rear wall of Room 23 from Villa A. The bottom third of the wall is taken up by a stage-like dado, upon which stand projecting columns that support an architrave. The middle third of the composition appears to show a solid wall pierced with doors. The upper third is open below the architrave and allows a view of architecture and sky behind. The color palette too, representing exotic colored marbles and materials like gold, is similar to the painting from Oplontis, with a heavy emphasis on red and yellow, with Egyptian blue for the sky. This emphasis on luxury stone is highlighted by a pillar folded into the corner of the room, which is painted with the swirling details of alabaster.

Despite these basic similarities, the character of the decoration of the focal wall in *oecus* 43 is not identical to the focal wall of Room 23 at Oplontis, though comparanda for many of its details can be found elsewhere in the villa. For example, it is difficult to find clear allusions to the theatre on this wall, like the theatrical mask from Oplontis – granted the details of this wall are difficult to make out, and there are major lacunae. In the house, the inspiration seems to be taken especially from sanctuary architecture, and in fact the central panel of the painting on the east wall may show some sort of shrine. We can see thematic parallels, however, in the objects related to religious activity shown on the north and south walls of Room 23. In addition, the architecture above the painted low wall in *oecus* 43, on the most distant plane of the painting, is much more elaborate and complicated than the fairly basic receding colonnades at Oplontis. This, too, has parallels

⁴⁸⁷ Cf. Zanker 1998, 135-160.

elsewhere, including paintings from Room M in the Villa of Publio Fannio Sinistore at Boscoreale, on display in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.⁴⁸⁸

Both rooms, and other Second Style paintings in both buildings, share the fantastical nature of their architectural scenes, an interest in portraying luxury materials, and an apparent lack of a single, identifiable, real-life architectural model. Again, we find an evocation of luxurious public space in a constrained domestic context – though the spatial constraints of the townhouse are much more apparent. Painting served as a useful tool as well for introducing a villa atmosphere into the limited space of a house.⁴⁸⁹ The Casa del Labirinto's Second Style rooms all have large openings facing a large peristyle garden that allowed for a great deal of outdoor space within the confines of the city. This section of the house is separated spatially from the part surrounding the atrium, with its more traditional atrium-house layout, which is the section of the house visitors would have entered immediately from the street (see Figure 45).⁴⁹⁰ The painted decoration of the house also codes these two zones differently, with old-fashioned First Style decoration preserved around the atrium and more fashionable Second Style painting decorating the peristyle area.⁴⁹¹ It is possible that these distinct decorative languages not only served to separate the house into more private and more public areas, and more traditional and more current areas, but also into a “townhouse quarter” and a “villa quarter”.

Other townhouses with villa-type Second Style paintings also have architectural features that indicate that their owners wanted to import a bit of villa life into an urban setting. For example, the Casa di Obellio Firmo has a plan similar to that of the Casa del Labirinto, with a large peristyle garden at the rear surrounded by reception rooms decorated with elaborate Second Style compositions.⁴⁹² The decoration of the atrium area

⁴⁸⁸ See e.g. Bergmann 2010, 28–31 and Leach 1993, 138-139.

⁴⁸⁹ Cf. Leach 1993, 144, though she means that these paintings depict villas, not that they share imagery with paintings from villas.

⁴⁹⁰ See, for example, Leach 2004, 36–37 on the association of the peristyle with villas.

⁴⁹¹ See also p. 168 below. There is First Style decoration preserved on the walls of the peristyle as well, though not in the rooms surrounding it. It is not the absence of First Style, but the presence of high Second Style that I argue alludes to a villa. Some of the First Style decorations in rooms around the atrium were replaced in the first century C.E.

⁴⁹² The Casa del Menandro may also have been similar, though its Second Style painting was mostly replaced (Balch 2012, 167).

is, unfortunately, poorly preserved, but there is evidence in the form of plaster casts that massive shutters allowed the two halves of the house to be physically and visually shut off from one another. The restriction of the Second Style to the peristyle area is a common feature of houses in Pompeii with that style of decoration.⁴⁹³

Zanker designates the so-called *Insula Occidentalis* block of houses (see Figure 1), built on Pompeii's western city walls, as well as those located outside the city gates to the west and south of the city, as miniature urban villas.⁴⁹⁴ He observes that some of these houses are not oriented outward, so that they open toward the street like traditional atrium houses, but rather they focus on open views of the landscape or seascape outside of the city (Figure 48). Rooms in the houses of the *Insula Occidentalis* are laid out along terraces, rather than symmetrically surrounding a central atrium. The construction of the *Insula Occidentalis* houses on multiple terraces, with views over the sea from a number of stories, makes these residences much more like seaside villas than ordinary townhouses.⁴⁹⁵ The *Insula Occidentalis* houses were decorated with Second Style paintings analogous to those examples preserved in Campanian villas. Paintings in the Casa di Marco Fabio Rufo, the Casa del Bracciale d'Oro, and their neighbors include images of expensive stone panels, columns and architraves, valuable metal objects, and even large-scale human figures (e.g. Figure 47). I suggest that paintings of this sort may well have added to the villa-like ambience created by the unusual architectural plans of these houses. In doing so, owners of townhouses not only added a space for leisure and entertaining of the sort associated with the villa, they also aligned themselves with the most powerful Romans, those generals and politicians who were the owners of the finest villas in Italy. Republican villas and the houses that mimicked them were expressions of wealth, taste, and personal power or ambition.⁴⁹⁶

The desire to create a villa-like environment in an urban setting need not have been isolated in small, peripheral towns like Pompeii. We may see signs of the same impulse in the center of Rome itself, on the Palatine, in the home of the very emperor

⁴⁹³ Pesando 1997, 272–273.

⁴⁹⁴ Zanker 1998, 72–76; and see Clarke, 1991, 23–25, 23–25.

⁴⁹⁵ See Ciardiello 2009b, 431. For more on the *Insula Occidentalis* and its relationship to the colonization of Pompeii by Rome, see Chapter 5.

⁴⁹⁶ See Clarke 2005, 266–267 on the link between villas and personal power.

who was supposed to have encouraged modest domestic life through his own example. Scholars such as Manuel Royo have proposed second century B.C.E. Latin sanctuaries or Hellenistic palaces as potential architectural models for the Casa di Augusto complex. Those earlier buildings, like the emperor's residence, were characterized by a variety of spaces auxiliary to a temple, construction on multiple terraces on a hillside, and complexity and symmetry.⁴⁹⁷ Another good candidate for comparison, though not one I have encountered in scholarship on the Casa di Augusto, is the Roman villa, in particular the maritime luxury villa. Historians and archaeologists may have disregarded the possible influence of villa architecture on the Casa di Augusto because of a sense that reference to villa life would have been inappropriate for the home of the emperor who Suetonius tells us lived modestly (though allusion to a Hellenistic monarch's palace seems no less immodest!).⁴⁹⁸ Moreover, ancient Roman historians often characterized Augustus as antithetical to Nero in his behavior, and Nero is the emperor who was accused of creating a luxury villa in the heart of the city.⁴⁹⁹ I would contend that these potential contradictions have more to do with the aims of Roman historians than with the reality of architectural influences in the Late Republic and early Augustan period. A symmetrical, elaborate residence built on a terraced hillside, with separate wings connected by ramps, tunnels, and paths, brings to mind a seaside villa as easily as a Latin sanctuary or Hellenistic palace. Because we have so little archaeological evidence for the architecture and decoration of Hellenistic palaces, comparisons between them and the Casa di Augusto have to be partially conjectural, just as are claims that Second Style paintings resembled those royal residences. Architects may well have drawn inspiration from sanctuaries or palaces when designing villas.⁵⁰⁰ We know, however, that Augustus enjoyed retreating to his villas, including some on the shores of Campania and his twelve villas on Capri (Suet. *Div. Aug.* 72).

The decoration of the Casa di Augusto lends support to my comparison between that structure and luxury villas. Although the Second Style paintings on the Palatine have been characterized by scholars as “modest” or “restrained” in comparison to those in

⁴⁹⁷ Royo 1999, 154.

⁴⁹⁸ See pp. 67-70 on Suetonius's characterization of the House of Augustus.

⁴⁹⁹ See Edwards 1993, 139, 164–168.

⁵⁰⁰ Esposito 2007, 454–459.

Campanian villas, they comprise essentially the same group of elements: the imitation of expensive materials, especially imported stone and gold, theatrical masks and other references to the theater, projecting colonnades and receding vistas, and fictive and fantastical architectural and spatial details.⁵⁰¹ Though the scale and elaboration of the paintings is smaller and less complicated than some of the most detailed examples in Campania, that difference could be ascribed to their location in the smaller rooms of a house, rather than in the often massive chambers of a villa, where smaller rooms also frequently have simplified compositions. Another common assertion is that the paintings in the Casa di Augusto are later than those in Campania, but the rationale for positing a chronological difference is debatable.⁵⁰² It may be that social convention required more restrained versions of these images inside the city. Alternatively, the differences between examples in Rome and Campania could be explained by their production by different workshops with somewhat different traditions.⁵⁰³ At any rate, I am of the opinion that the differences between the Second Style paintings in the Casa di Augusto and those in Campanian villas have been overstated. In particular, the rooms located near the ramp to the Temple of Apollo have many of the features I described above in Room 23 at Oplontis, such as drafted stone panels, including some painted with the details of alabaster and brecciated stone representing Numidian or Chian marble. The dominant colors are red and yellow, with purple, blue, and green accents. Here too there are columns supporting architraves, and openings provide a fictive view out to structures in the distance and the blue sky. Theatrical masks, birds, and bronze vessels perch on top of partial walls. I suggest that these paintings, like elements of the architecture of the Casa di Augusto, ultimately derive from inventions designed for villas. Early in his career, Augustus may have shared the desire of many homeowners in Pompeii to incorporate the

⁵⁰¹ E.g. Clarke 2005, 269. Leach (2004, 95ff., 104, 111ff.) sees these paintings as belonging to an entirely separate category of painting deriving from the theater and originating in Rome, as opposed to the Campanian examples which derive from porticoes - but the distinction between these two groups is difficult to see in the paintings themselves.

⁵⁰² Tybout (2001, 35) asserts that the paintings in the House of Augustus must postdate those at Oplontis, because they are "markedly more progressive". See pp. 17-25 on chronological difficulties more generally.

⁵⁰³ Cf. Leach 2004, 104 and Eristov 1994 (the latter on differences between Fourth Style paintings in Rome and Campania).

pleasant atmosphere of the country or seaside villa into his urban residence, even if he subsequently distanced himself from that sort of display.⁵⁰⁴

IV. Conclusions

The extravagant and sumptuous architectural compositions of Second Style paintings that decorated Late Republican villas were no more straightforward depictions of reality than were the contemporary figural megalographies that were their contemporaries. Both types of paintings portrayed exotic fantasy worlds, with elements familiar from real life that are combined and exaggerated in ways that made them obviously fictional. Viewers of the famous paintings in Room 5 of the Villa dei Misteri may have recognized garments, implements, and activities of some of the figures from their own experiences, but these figures interacted with mythological entities in an otherworldly realm.⁵⁰⁵ Similarly, viewers could recognize the individual materials, objects, and architectural forms that made up paintings like those at Oplontis or in the Casa di Augusto on the Palatine, but the lavish and even uncanny combination of those elements placed such scenes firmly in the domain of fantasy.

Second Style painters were very careful to depict varieties of stone that were known to the decorations' patrons and viewers. They did so through the selection of colors and patterns that corresponded to varieties of imported stone that were becoming increasingly visible and available in Rome, but as yet only in the form of portable objects or small pieces for domestic decoration. Larger decorative stone architectural elements were rare and were reserved mostly for public building projects. If we can believe Pliny, those Republican notables who chose to incorporate even one element of exotic stone into their residences were harshly criticized. Whether or not Pliny's attitude was anachronistic, in painted form in the Second Style, these stones were desirable. It was

⁵⁰⁴ The possibility exists that the Second Style paintings in the House of Augustus complex were actually part of the original Republican property of Hortensius (or other proprietors) purchased by Augustus, and not commissioned by the princeps himself. There is some evidence, however, to suggest that these spaces were renovated and repainted at some point, presumably after Augustus acquired them (see Leach 2004, 110). Whether Augustus chose to have his house decorated in this style or simply chose to preserve these paintings rather than have them replaced, the implication is that these were desirable images to display in his home.

⁵⁰⁵ Real-life elements included costume and ritual related to weddings (see Kirk 2000, to provide just one example).

clearly regarded as important that real varieties appear in Second Style images, and that these should be recognizable to learned viewers. These types of stone were associated with the conquests of generals in Africa and the East, and so their prestige came not only from their rarity and beauty, but also from their link with the expansion of Roman power.

Although the characteristics of specific stone types were painted with precision and accuracy, other elements of the painting were designed to indicate to the viewer that the world of the painting was not their world. The level of luxury represented by such images was unbelievably excessive – far beyond what was available to even the wealthiest of the Late Republican nobility. Environments like the ones shown on these walls simply did not exist in reality; rather, the height of elegant and expensive decoration was the imitation of such luxury itself. Even the perspective and spatial logic of the paintings made it abundantly clear that this was not real, through the paintings' confusing and occasionally disorienting combination of details. There was no need for a painter to achieve a convincing version of real space. In fact, the obvious unreality of the painted luxury was desirable. This distance allowed the owner of a house or, especially, a villa to test or even transgress the limitations of what was acceptable in terms of private magnificence, but all within the safe medium of painted decoration. Such images may have inspired conversations about what was acceptable, but kept aristocrats - or aspiring men and women of influence - free from actual censure, as we can perhaps infer from the lack of criticism of these paintings in Roman literature.

The location of most of the most complex examples of Second Style paintings in villas is also significant. The luxury villa was an architectural form that was new and innovative in the first century B.C.E., and so we can expect to find a similarly novel style of decoration being developed to suit it. Moreover, the separation of the villa from the strict routine of daily political life allowed for more experimentation in that arena than might exist in a townhouse in Rome, where closer scrutiny encouraged conservative and modest behavior. As the association between Second Style paintings and villa life grew, the display of decorations in this style in houses in towns and cities may have allowed the owners of more modest properties - and perhaps even Augustus himself - to import a bit of the villa's *otium* and grandeur into the city.

It was the combination of naturalism and fantasy, of excess and modesty, and their particular appropriateness for the villa, that made the Second Style desirable in the tumultuous social and political atmosphere of the Late Republic. Though these images depicted a reality that did not and could not exist at that time, architecture that resembles what we find in the Second Style eventually developed and became popular in the palaces of Julio-Claudian and Flavian emperors, and in the villas of their contemporaries.⁵⁰⁶ In this case, the progression of events may seem counterintuitive, because it appears that the imitation of luxury presaged the real thing.

⁵⁰⁶ See Chapters 6 and 7 below on luxury and stone in the first century B.C.E., and how the Second Style was viewed in that period.

Chapter Five

Local History and the Transition from the First to the Second Style in Pompeii

Considering paintings in their local or regional context is crucial for understanding how the people who viewed them understood their meanings. We cannot assume that members of different communities, with disparate histories and social compositions, understood what they saw in paintings in precisely the same way. Just as variation in reception on the part of the individual should be accounted for, attention to community-level variation is vital. The community makes up the immediate social environment in which people negotiated their places and with respect to which people claimed their identities.⁵⁰⁷ The local community was also the source of the viewership of domestic wall painting, most of which must only occasionally have been seen by outsiders.⁵⁰⁸ Differences in the social, political, and cultural situations between Pompeii and Rome, for example, have to be taken into account when we interpret the material culture from either site. Since the relationship between Pompeii and Rome was complex in the first century B.C.E., the few texts we have that were written by elite Roman authors in this period are of limited use in comprehending the attitudes of people living in Pompeii. Instead, we can consider how outside ideas may have been adopted and combined with local traditions to create a visual and material environment that made sense in the local context. Since recourse to documentary sources will not provide much insight here, approaches that consider material culture on its own terms are indispensable. Painting is a

⁵⁰⁷ Cf. Hodos 2010, 15.

⁵⁰⁸ Powers 2006, 143–146.

form of material and visual culture, and as such it communicates and interacts with human agents in much the same way as other types of material culture. I apply an approach that combines what little historical information we have for this period with a consideration of how people might have shaped their material environments in order to present themselves to their immediate community.

This chapter considers the period of transition from the First to the Second Style in Pompeii, which coincided with major political and social upheavals in the city. After a brief introduction to the history of that period, I summarize previous explanations for the shift from the First Style to the Second Style in Pompeian homes. The remainder of the chapter consists of a detailed analysis of the relationship between the historical events following 80 B.C.E. and the gradual abandonment of First Style decorations in private homes in favor of the Second Style. As a comparative case study, I present the changes in burial practice for leading families (or those who wished to be seen as leaders) in Pompeii during the same period. I argue that we do not see simply a non-local practice coming in to replace a local one, or a division in the population between locals who continued long-established traditions and newcomers who imported Roman practices. Instead we can observe locals and Roman colonists, and the descendants of both groups, participating in new practices that incorporate elements of old ones, but are also designed to function specifically in the new community in which they live. This case study will provide an analogy for the introduction of Second Style wall painting in Pompeii and how that development relates to identities in the community (especially local vs. colonist). The comparison is vital, because for the paintings we have less evidence to link them to individuals with known origins than we do for tombs.

I argue that certain types of visual and material culture, such as paintings and monumental tombs, that were closely linked to personal, family, or household identity and its communication became popular because the messages they conveyed were ambiguous enough to allow for a variety of readings. Different readings depended on the circumstances in which they were viewed. Rather than using the permanent decoration of houses to claim membership in one, limited (e.g. ethnic) group in Pompeii, while excluding the possibility of belonging to others, these displays were appropriate for

communicating multiple messages.⁵⁰⁹ Two important options might have been: (1) Roman citizenship and an attendant understanding of the prestigious culture of Rome, and (2) participation and authority in the local community as a legitimate member who understood local traditions and values. Because the chronology of Second Style paintings proposed in scholarship is difficult to confirm, it is useful instead to consider variation and change instead in terms of choices made by the inhabitants of Pompeii. Choices for self-presentation with respect to tombs and wall paintings were based on the social and political situation in which people found themselves following the town's colonization by Rome.

I. Previous Explanations for the Transition to the Second Style in Pompeii

Under Sulla, Rome defeated Pompeii during the Social War (91-88 B.C.E.) and subsequently (*ca.* 80 B.C.E.) made Pompeii a Roman colony. This change in political status not only necessitated certain constitutional changes to the political administration of Pompeii, but also involved the settlement of a large number of Roman veterans in the territory of Pompeii (or at least the grant of land to them), some of whom were almost immediately given positions of political power in the community.⁵¹⁰ In brief, property was confiscated from locals to settle several thousand veterans in and around Pompeii. In addition, the town was given a new constitution, which stipulated the composition of the city council, called the *ordo decurionum*, a body of between 80 and 100 men. On the surface, this political organization was not fundamentally different from how the city had been administered before. These councilors, the *decurions*, were usually elected, but with the foundation of the new colony, a Roman administrator, the *deductor coloniae*, appointed a number of them.⁵¹¹ The *decurions* must have been mostly, if not entirely, chosen from the colonists in the years following colonization. Local inhabitants were at least partially disenfranchised, and their familiar political and social organization was

⁵⁰⁹ See Antonaccio 2010 on the limits of the concept of 'ethnicity' in archaeology.

⁵¹⁰ Kockel 1987, 183, cites a figure of 4000-5000 colonists.

⁵¹¹ Castrén 1975, 55 ff.

thrown into disarray.⁵¹² Some members of the original population held on to or regained their previous status in the new system, but not before a period of adjustment and adaptation, as the locals found ways to live alongside and share authority in their hometown with those who had, until recently, been their enemies in war.⁵¹³

For the colonists, adjustment was required as well. Some must have moved into already existing housing, literally sharing walls with the local Pompeians. Others inhabited houses newly built, or heavily renovated, in the mid-first century B.C.E. Scholars have interpreted the large residential block now known as the *Insula Occidentalis* as having been constructed to accommodate the new population.⁵¹⁴ It consisted of a long row of houses with unusual plans built upon the western city walls, whose defensive function was apparently no longer considered necessary. Houses in this area of Pompeii, however, had existed since at least the second century B.C.E., and there are traces of First Style decoration associated with them. Subsequent building in the *Insula Occidentalis*, including the construction of terraces, took place as early as the late second or early first centuries B.C.E. There are signs of remodeling, nevertheless, in the middle of the first century B.C.E., which may coincide with the arrival of the colonists and/or the redecoration of these residences in the Second Style.⁵¹⁵

Other colonists, who had the means, may have built the suburban villas just outside the city walls, including the famous *Villa dei Misteri*, whose construction has recently been dated to this period.⁵¹⁶ Both of these groups of residences, the *Insula Occidentalis* houses and the suburban villas, were decorated with Second Style wall paintings, a type of decoration that flourished in Pompeii following the colonization and therefore seems linked to the arrival of the colonists in the mid-first century B.C.E.

Prior to the introduction of Second Style paintings, most houses in Pompeii, as far as we know, were decorated in the First Style, which I have discussed in Chapter 3. While the compositions of Second Style paintings were sometimes comparable to those

⁵¹² Castrén (1975, 87-90) suggested that there was a short period of time in which the local aristocracy was excluded from all political power; Guidobaldi (1999, 639-650) however, argues against this notion.

⁵¹³ Mouritsen 1988, 88-89, 118.

⁵¹⁴ Zevi 1996, 130.

⁵¹⁵ See Mogetta 2013, 220-221 for a summary of the second and first century B.C.E. construction history of this area. Also see Grimaldi 2011.

⁵¹⁶ Esposito 2007; cf. Mogetta 2013, 221-227.

of the First Style, consisting in most cases of imitation masonry and architectural elements, the technique used to create these decorations was quite different: the Second Style was created with illusionistic painting, instead of the First Style's three-dimensional stucco. At some point in the mid first century B.C.E., the Second Style overtook the First Style as the most desirable mode of wall decoration for newly plastered and painted walls. Exactly how the transition from the First to the Second Style happened is not entirely settled in current scholarship.

i. Stylistic Evolution

There are two main schools of thought on this topic: (1) that the Second Style developed out of the First Style in a sort of gradual evolution;⁵¹⁷ and (2) that the Second Style was introduced to Pompeii by the Roman colonists, having been developed elsewhere.⁵¹⁸ According to the first model, the First and Second Styles at Pompeii are both understood as belonging to widespread trends in interior decoration (this point is not to be doubted), and the transformation of the former into the latter followed a comparable, or even identical, trajectory all over Italy, or at the very least, in both Pompeii and Rome. Accordingly, paintings discovered at either of these sites, or others, can be arranged along a spectrum like so:

1. First Style
2. First Style with some qualities shared by Second Style
3. Second Style with some qualities shared by First Style
4. “High” Second Style
5. Second Style with some qualities shared by Third Style, etc.

This type of classification continues through the Fourth Style and is presumed to represent a chronological development.⁵¹⁹ For the Second Style in particular, Beyen, among others, refined the chronology in minute detail, and his classification on this basis has been adopted by a number of other wall painting scholars since then.⁵²⁰ The work of Ernst Heinrich provides a recent example of the influence of this approach. In Heinrich's

⁵¹⁷ E.g. Beyen 1938, E.g.; Ling 1991; Heinrich 2002.

⁵¹⁸ E.g. Zanker 1998; Zevi 1996; Leach 2004.

⁵¹⁹ See Chapter 1, pp. 17-25 for more on wall painting chronology.

⁵²⁰ Beyen 1938.

2005 book on the Second Style, he makes the important observation that there is more to the Second Style than elaborate, high Second Style paintings with their detailed architecture and spatial depth.⁵²¹ He also notes that more spatial depth in a Second Style painting does not necessarily mean that it is later.⁵²² This point is a vital addendum to the traditional chronology of this period, which would otherwise place almost all Second Style paintings in villas later than those in towns, since the paintings in villas tend on the whole to display more spatial depth. In addition, that criterion would require attributing different Second Style paintings in individual buildings, such as the Villa dei Misteri, to different periods based on this distinction, i.e. amount of spatial depth, alone. In most of these cases, there is otherwise little evidence to suggest that a significant amount of time passed between the production of individual Second Style paintings found within a single property.

Heinrich catalogues eighty houses that contain examples of Second Style compositions in Pompeii, ranging from very simple linear designs, to those with some depth and illusionism. Only seventeen of these houses have rooms painted with elaborate schemes like those found in the villas discussed in Chapter 4 above.⁵²³ Studying the “lesser” examples as part of the painting repertoire from this period fleshes out our understanding of the development and significance of the style. These simpler Second Style decorations, Heinrich contends, are the true carrier of the trend in Pompeii. Despite Heinrich's contribution to the corpus of Second Style walls, his interpretation of the paintings is ultimately very traditional. He proceeds to develop a precise classification based on the principles outlined above, and divides each phase into more or less complicated/expensive designs. While acknowledging that Beyen's chronology is attached to unreliable absolute dates, Heinrich nevertheless orders the paintings he documents by supposed relative date based on Beyen's work.⁵²⁴

⁵²¹ Heinrich 2002, 9–11.

⁵²² See also Tybout 2001.

⁵²³ Heinrich 2002, 10.

⁵²⁴ *Ibid.*, 13. I have discussed the difficulties in accepting gradual, evolutionary stylistic change as a means for creating a chronology of wall painting (even a relative one) in Chapter 1, pp. 17-25.

ii. Stylistic Intervention

Eleanor Winsor Leach argues that the Second Style in Pompeii “belongs within the category of stylistic intervention rather than evolution”.⁵²⁵ She shares this opinion with other prominent scholars, including Paul Zanker and Fausto Zevi, who have also written on the subject. According to this hypothesis, the Second Style replaced the First Style in Pompeii when Roman colonists arrived and began to construct and decorate their new homes. The Second Style had previously been invented and developed elsewhere, and therefore was imported to Pompeii from Rome as a fully articulated decorative system. For the settlers in Pompeii, in this explanation, the Second Style was a reminder of home as well as a way to make their identity as Romans apparent.

These scholars take the assertion a step further, and argue that, because the original inhabitants of Pompeii lived in homes decorated with the First Style, and the settlers brought with them the Second Style, we can use the evidence of wall painting to locate the homes of both Roman colonists and old Pompeian families. In other words, style is indicative of cultural identity, in a rather straightforward way.

While this explanation has some advantages over the evolutionary one in that it takes into account both the social and historical impetus for change and the interests of patrons in the decoration of their own homes, it too has limitations. For example, we do not have good evidence for the ownership of individual houses in Pompeii in this period to back up such conclusions. When the owner of a property is posited in the scholarship, the evidence for that identification is usually shaky. Often evidence for property ownerships consists of moveable objects inscribed with a name, at best, or more often initials. Such artifacts include signet rings, pots, and weights.⁵²⁶ Considerable speculation is required to identify the owner of the object based on an inscription. Moreover, the discovery of a moveable object inside a property is hardly good evidence for the ownership of that property, especially after the disruption caused by the Pompeii's destruction in 79 C.E. In some cases, if multiple objects with the same name on them are found inside the same structure, we might suppose with more confidence that we can identify its owner. Such a situation is, however, exceedingly rare. In other cases, graffiti,

⁵²⁵ Leach 2004, 69.

⁵²⁶ E.g. Strocka and Frölich 1984, 19–20, 135.

usually electoral, on the exterior of houses is taken as an indication of that building's owner.⁵²⁷ No reliably demonstrated link has been found between these notices and the occupants of a house. Even in the few cases where we might believe that we know the final owner of a house in 79 C.E., it is unlikely that we can ever trace its ownership back to the mid-first century B.C.E. The logic involved in attempts to do so is frequently circular in nature: a link between a name and a colonist or local aristocrat known from a much earlier inscription is verified by the decoration of the house in question in either the Second or the First Style. Then, because these connections have been made, the connection between style and cultural identity is strengthened.

Zanker, Zevi, and Leach have argued that clusters of houses decorated in the Second Style can be used to identify those areas of Pompeii where colonists gathered. Leach even uses the term “ghetto” to refer to the supposedly separate neighborhoods for new settlers.⁵²⁸ It is problematic, however, to rely on the evidence of some Second Style paintings that happened to be preserved, for whatever reason, until 79 C.E. We must also contend with the widespread deterioration of paintings in Pompeii since its excavation. We certainly do not possess a complete sample of what existed in the mid-first century B.C.E., when everything was painted in either the First or the Second Style, and we have no good idea of how representative the surviving sample is.

Moreover, those scholars seem only to consider the most famous examples of the Second Style, those which Heinrich has convincingly demonstrated to be in the minority.⁵²⁹ Heinrich's map of the distribution of simpler examples (Figure 1) does not show any clear indication of clustering, though he only includes larger houses here. An exception may be the newly renovated group of houses with unusual plans known as the *Insula Occidentalis*. It is not surprising to find that they were painted in the latest fashion, regardless of who ultimately lived in them. We can suppose that those people were colonists, but we cannot prove it. The link between style and identity is unlikely to have been as straightforward as this argument suggests.

⁵²⁷ E.g. Mouritsen 1988, 52ff.; Leach 2004, 221ff.

⁵²⁸ Leach 2004, 69–70.

⁵²⁹ Because Leach (2004, 73) separates what she calls “incrustation style” from true Second Style, she contends that the only house within the walls of Pompeii decorated in the Second Style is the Casa del Labirinto.

The reality probably lies somewhere between these two theories: while the appearance of Second Style painting in Pompeii not long after its colonization seems significant, it must have been adapted to the local situation in order to fit into Pompeii's traditions of private self-presentation. How that adaptation was suited to the period of social and political change in which it occurred is the subject of the remainder of this chapter.

II. Burial in Pompeii before and after 80 B.C.E.

Burial practices in Pompeii before and after *ca.* 80 B.C.E. provide a useful comparative case study for stylistic choices in wall painting during the same period for a few reasons. Perhaps most obviously, these two phenomena are related because, as in other aspects of life, a significant and conspicuous change in normal behavior took place soon after the colonization of Pompeii. In the case of burial, there was a general shift from inhumation to cremation. This change coincided with a shift from fairly simple, private burial within family plots located away from the town, or at least with minimal above ground markers, to elaborate, monumental tombs for the elite lined up along the major roads leading into town (Figure 49). Monumental tombs were often combined with small markers called *columellae*, which were also adopted by less wealthy and prominent members of the community.

In both cases (painting and burial), the shift followed closely upon the arrival of the Roman colonists, and as such has been interpreted as the importation of a Roman custom by those settlers, which was quickly adopted by locals as well. In neither case is the situation quite so straightforward. While it is true that by the first century B.C.E., monumental tombs were being regularly constructed outside Rome, it is perhaps not quite accurate to describe this as a specifically Roman practice that was exported from the city of Rome elsewhere. The same type of burial was being adopted all over Italy in this period, and it is questionable whether it was always the result of direct Roman influence.⁵³⁰ What is more, the “Roman colonists” who settled in Pompeii came from a number of regions; it is naive to think that they were all born and raised in the capital

⁵³⁰ Pearce, Millett, and Struck 2001; and cf. Revell 2009, 1.

itself, and so the “Roman” practices they introduced to their new home may not have had so specific an origin.⁵³¹

The tomb and the house for Pompeians and Romans were both sites of carefully designed self-presentation. Both were monumental, in a sense: they were highly visible to people moving into, out of, or through town. Powerful Romans were expected to have their houses open to the public. It seems to have been the practice in Rome to leave the front entrances open during the day, with the result that passersby would have been able to see the spaces inside and their decorations from the street (Vitruvius, *De Architectura* 6.5). The architecture of Pompeian houses suggests that this was also the practice there.⁵³² The rooms accessed most immediately from the street, including the vestibule and the atrium, seem to have been open to any visitors, invited or not, and so they were, at times, public spaces.

Pompeian tombs were built outside the main city gates, lining the primary thoroughfares into the city. They were designed to be visible to the public, often competing in size or elaborateness to attract attention. The public had access to these tombs: some provided benches for travelers, and there is plenty of evidence that people circulated among the tombs on a regular basis, not only on special or sacred occasions.⁵³³ For example, a great deal of graffiti has been found on the exteriors and interiors of Pompeian tombs, including large painted electoral notices, like those painted on house facades, as well as more personal messages, such as greetings or tallies of gladiatorial wins. Despite their public nature, however, both tombs and wall paintings were private projects, designed to promote and aggrandize individuals or families, rather than the community as a whole. The house and the tomb were directly linked to the identities, personalities, and ambitions of men, women, and their families and households. They were tools for self-presentation.

Another similarity between the two categories of material is that in both cases it is difficult today to identify their owners, and often even if we do have a name to attach to a building, we may not know the status or origin of the person named. This problem is

⁵³¹ Wallace-Hadrill 2010, 415.

⁵³² Clarke 1991, 3. Also see Hartnett 2008 on public activity centered on the streetfronts of houses in Pompeii.

⁵³³ Cormack 2007, 585, 594.

much more pervasive with respect to houses than to tombs, since the latter sometimes have surviving inscriptions naming who built them and who was buried in their precincts, but many tombs do remain anonymous. In antiquity, of course, this information would have been much more readily available to the community. Not only were more inscriptions visible, Pompeii was a small enough community that people would have been aware of the names and origins of its most prominent citizens, undoubtedly along with many of those less prominent. What the material culture that these people used to establish and enhance their identities can tell us is less who people really were, in some sort of objective and verifiable sense, than how they wished to be seen by others.

i. Burial in Pompeii before *ca.* 80 B.C.E.

We have the most evidence for inhumation as the usual burial practice in and around Pompeii from the period before it was made a Roman colony.⁵³⁴ Some of these burials have been found among other, later graves, outside the city walls, but few have been carefully studied. A small amount of information is available about a cemetery located at some distance from the Porta Stabia, called the Fondo Azzolini (Figure 50).⁵³⁵ Its use spanned the period under consideration here, beginning in the fourth century B.C.E. and continuing until the eruption of Vesuvius. Fortunately, unlike most other tombs in Pompeii until very recently, this cemetery was excavated below the level of the ground surface of 79 C.E.; unfortunately, since it was excavated and published in the early twentieth century, much useful information such as analysis of skeletal remains and detailed stratigraphy is not available.

The Fondo Azzolini's location, at a distance from one of the southern city gates, suggests that it might once have been associated with a farmstead or suburban villa. The cemetery's territory was delineated by a wall surrounding an area of less than 40 m².⁵³⁶ The height of the wall was not indicated in Della Corte's publication; by analogy with similar, though much later, burial precincts near the Porta Ercolano and the Porta Nocera, it may have been a low wall intended simply to mark out territory rather than to prevent outsiders from seeing into or entering the cemetery. The burials comprise some 44

⁵³⁴ Kockel 1987, 187.

⁵³⁵ Della Corte 1916, 287-309.

⁵³⁶ *Ibid.*, 287

inhumations, buried at depths between 0.5 and 2 m in pits that were sometimes lined with terracotta or stone slabs (Figure 50; Samnite period burials are indicated by Roman numerals). These graves tend to be oriented roughly east-west with a few exceptions. They are also clustered into perhaps three to five groups, leaving the southeast quarter of the precinct nearly empty and suggesting that they were arranged with a concern for proximity to other burials. Grave goods tended to be fairly sparse, but include clay lamps, glass bottles, small metal objects (such as *fibulae*), and various types of pottery.⁵³⁷ Only one inhumation (VI) had relatively rich grave goods, including clay figurines, metal objects, and a large quantity of pottery.

In addition to the inhumations, 119 cremation burials were discovered. These were sometimes marked with stone *columellae* (“little columns”). Ten of these markers are inscribed with names from the Epidii family. It is believed that this was their family cemetery, and, accordingly, that the Epidii were present in Pompeii since the fourth century B.C.E.⁵³⁸

The excavators dated the inhumations to the pre-colonial, or Samnite, phase of the city and the cremations to the post-colonization, or Roman, period (i.e. after *ca.* 80 B.C.E.). Though such a distinct break at a historically crucial time seems, perhaps, overly fortuitous, the dating of these burials is helped by the fact that coins were often buried with the dead, either placed in the mouth or right hand of the corpse, and these at least provide convenient *termini post quem* for the burials.⁵³⁹ Only eleven of the 44 inhumations were found with coins, most of them Italian, and it is on the basis of these that the entire group of inhumations is dated to the pre-colonization period. The cremations, on the other hand, almost all included coins, which makes the dating of that group more secure.

Only one inhumation burial was marked by an above ground structure, or indeed by any marker still visible at the time of excavation. The possibility remains that the other graves were indicated with wooden markers, but since the excavators found no trace of

⁵³⁷ Della Corte, 291-294.

⁵³⁸ *Ibid.*, 288; Castrén 1975, 41; Kockel 1987, 187; Cormack 2007, 586.

⁵³⁹ Della Corte, 295.

these, it is inadvisable to rely too much on this possibility.⁵⁴⁰ The fact that most of the cremations are clustered around the inhumations, and only in a very few cases intrude on the earlier burials, suggests at least that later generations were aware of their locations.

Tomb X is an obvious exception to the rule. It is a stone structure, built to resemble a temple or shrine with a vestibule preceding two chambers (like the *cellae* of a temple), which were blocked off with stone slabs. In each chamber was a bed-like platform, on which a single body lay. The corpses seem to have been left exposed; at the time of excavation, however, the skeleton in room A was found partially buried, apparently due to post-depositional processes (the bed it lay on sloped down toward the foot, so only the lower part of the skeleton was covered). Room B had been disturbed, and perhaps looted, at an undetermined date.⁵⁴¹ A bronze armband and iron strigil were found in room A (but no coins).

These were also the only bodies interred above ground, and therefore were, theoretically, accessible; certainly they were highly visible and could easily be referred to by successive generations, if necessary. Six inhumations, two of which may have been children, crowd behind the structure. The lack of detail in the report, however, makes it difficult to determine if these were earlier graves cut or partially covered by Tomb X, as they appear from the plan, or if they are later pits abutting the rear wall of the tomb. Later cremations also lined up along the tomb's sides, and three cremation burials were even located in the vestibule of the tomb. We know from coins found in them that these three date to the early first century C.E. Beyond these few details there is little to say. We do not have any information about possible ages or sexes for the skeletons in Tomb X, nor do we know the tomb's date, even relative to other inhumations in the cemetery.

The apparent clustering of burials in this cemetery is intriguing, especially because we see a comparable situation in the later necropoleis where monumental tombs dedicated to one or a few individuals have multiple burials associated with them. Perhaps the intention here was similar: one or a few prominent individuals are buried, and subsequently people indicate their relationship to them by digging graves nearby. On a broader level, admittance to this cemetery must be a sign of membership in a defined

⁵⁴⁰ Della Corte (1916, 296) assumes that they existed; Kockel follows him (1987, 189).

⁵⁴¹ Della Corte 1916, 291.

group; perhaps the smaller groupings within the precinct represent finer distinctions such as individual families or branches of a family. Repeated visits to these graves on ritual occasions would have reinforced membership in these subgroups.⁵⁴² Who you were was confirmed by these ceremonies and announced to the wider community by your participation in rituals at specific graves.

ii. Burial in Pompeii after *ca.* 80 B.C.E.

At around the time of Pompeii's colonization, there was an abrupt shift from inhumation to cremation in the Fondo Azzolini. In fact, no known inhumations anywhere in Pompeii can be dated from this period or later. That this should be explained simply as a result of Romanization, i.e. that everyone in Pompeii was putting on a show of Roman identity, is doubtful. More likely, it was symptomatic of a more complex shift in funerary practices and not simple mimicry. This shift coincided with a shift to monumental tomb architecture, but as the Fondo Azzolini demonstrates, cremation was universally accepted in a way that monumental tombs were not, even among the wealthiest and highest ranked members of society.⁵⁴³

Similarly, uncomplicated Romanization does not suffice to explain the use of monumental tombs in Pompeii. We do not just see a straightforward importation of Roman grave types by colonists, which is eventually imitated by native members of the community. Though the earliest tombs might have been built by colonists, there is no reason to believe that locals lagged far behind, and even freedmen constructed tombs in the earliest periods.⁵⁴⁴ The monumental aspect of the tombs familiar from Roman architecture is present, and some of the specific architectural types are similar, but there is a markedly regional character as well. This regional character is constant and does not allow us to divide the tombs into Roman and Pompeian groups. In general, elements included or rejected do not fall along clear lines of ethnic or other groups.

Such a situation suggests not just a mutual borrowing of burial rites and tomb architecture, but participation, even competition, in the same system. The new political

⁵⁴² Cf. Hodos 2010, 18.

⁵⁴³ Cormack 2007, 586.

⁵⁴⁴ Two major publications catalogue the tombs of the two largest excavated necropoleis at Pompeii: Kockel 1983 and D'Ambrosio and De Caro 1983.

and social situation brought about after 80 B.C.E., described above, was surely not negligible in effecting this change. Prior to colonization, for families like the Epidii, family, or at least clan (*gens*), allegiance was demonstrated by admittance into certain burial grounds, along with other methods that did not leave as much of a trace in the archaeological record. We know that expressing one's membership in a certain lineage increased in importance in during the century leading up to 80 B.C.E. when the Samnites adopted second names; by the Augustan period (the last few decades of the first century B.C.E.) all Pompeian magistrates also had a third name, the *cognomen*.⁵⁴⁵ This allowed specific offshoots of the *gens* to be distinguished. From what little we know about the power structure in Samnite Pompeii, it appears that a few families were politically dominant and remained so over long periods of time. Likely in such a small community the identity of these families and their connections with others was rather common knowledge.⁵⁴⁶ Confusion could be relieved in part by the repeated and highly visible visits to family tombs mentioned above.

This equilibrium must have been severely damaged by the Social Wars, when Pompeii fought alongside other Roman allies against Rome, and during which time the upper classes in Pompeii must have been divided between allegiance to and rebellion against their former ally. Following soon after came an influx of new people with new claims to power in the transformed system, which required different ways of coping and competing, both for the settlers and the original inhabitants. As a result, there was a heightened need among locals to express and reinforce claims to power and influence.

Similarly, the colonists were strangers in an established, though altered, system. They needed to introduce themselves to the community and, in some cases, to prove that they deserved the authority they had been granted. Other colonists who wanted to gain power through ordinary channels were equally unknown to the majority of the community, not only to native Pompeians, perhaps, but to a contingent of the other colonists as well. In turn, local aristocrats, who in the past had had easy access to office and social prestige, now had to express that right emphatically, not only to compete with the intruders, but to assert an identity that had been taken for granted previously.

⁵⁴⁵ Guidobaldi, 1999, 27.

⁵⁴⁶ Cf. Castrén 1975, 44.

The monumental tomb, erected alongside Pompeii's most well-traveled roads, was one, though certainly not the only, way to make such public declarations. The most common process to achieve this was by building a tomb for oneself while still alive. This allowed the builder, if he or she wished, to determine its precise form. We know who built tombs and for whom, because a sample of tombs in Pompeii have inscriptions. Some of these inscriptions are monumental and could have been easily read from a passing cart (Figure 51). Others are less bold, but because we know that the streets of tombs and even, perhaps, the precincts of individual tombs, were areas of regular activity, there must have been plenty of opportunity for reading these inscriptions as well. In addition to the tomb's builder, inscriptions often include other names representing spouses, children, patrons, freedmen and friends. Many of the inscriptions contain the formula *SIBI ET SUIS*, meaning “[he/she built this] for him/herself and his/hers.” Who belongs to this latter group is, I think deliberately, left ambiguous.⁵⁴⁷

The tomb builder provides a dignified burial space for his family (*SUIS*), which in Rome and Pompeii, included slaves and freedmen. Although that larger group benefited eventually, the more immediate effect was self-promotion of the patron. This was not limited to a display of the patron's beneficence, but was also a demonstration of his wealth, position, and the esteem in which the community held him. This is especially true when an inscription notes that the tomb, or the land for the tomb, was granted by decree of the *decurions* (indicated by the abbreviation *D D*). Sometimes additional details were added, such as the precise measurements of the plot, or the fact that it was on public land. Notably, these details are included on the tomb of Marcus Porcius, one of those Roman magistrates appointed in the first years of the colony and a major public builder in the city.⁵⁴⁸

In most cases it is clear that these monuments were true tombs; that is, they housed the remains of the dead rather than only serving as markers for burial grounds or as the focus of ritual or commemorative activity. Some simply had a large open space inside, while others had benches lining the walls on which urns could be placed. Others were more structured, with a series of niches along the walls, in which urns, and perhaps

⁵⁴⁷ Cf. Hope 1997, 83

⁵⁴⁸ Kockel 1983, 53–57.

other objects, could be displayed.⁵⁴⁹ Other burials were located outside the tomb structure, within its precinct. These were often marked with the same *columellae* found in the Fondo Azzolini: small stone pillars with round tops that were apparently designed to approximate human heads (thus their German designation: *stelen in hermenform*) (Figure 51). Their material could be tuff stone, limestone, or marble; some of the latter were inscribed with the names, and sometimes ages, of the deceased. Of a total of about 500 known *columellae*, only about 180 are inscribed.⁵⁵⁰ We have no idea what proportion of burials were marked in this way; as in the Fondo Azzolini, there may be a large number of unmarked graves in these necropoleis. The names that appear include children and adults, men and women, free, freedmen, and slaves.

No patterns in the arrangements of these burials within tomb precincts have been detected. It seems reasonable to assume that the individuals named on the inscriptions were buried inside the tomb and others outside, but often more spaces are provided in the tomb than there are people named in the inscriptions. In later periods, extra *columellae* naming the main dedicatees appear also in the precinct, and the reason for this is unclear.⁵⁵¹ From the few graves that have been more or less thoroughly excavated, we might safely assume that each of these markers corresponds to a cremation burial below the ground; in some cases, they also indicate the position of a clay tube leading from the surface to the urn below, enabling libations to be poured directly on the remains. No pattern has been detected, either, in who received libation tubes and who did not; this is no doubt due in part to the limited nature of the excavations.⁵⁵² Libation tubes, however, are known from burials all over Roman Italy.

The *columellae* are usually understood as the native, traditional Pompeian or Campanian element in the mix, a practice that the Roman colonists readily adopted, leaving us with hybrid, ethnically homogenous necropoleis.⁵⁵³ While it is true that grave markers in this particular form have not been found outside of Campania, the fact that that they only come into the archaeological record at the same time as the monumental

⁵⁴⁹ E.g. *ibid.*, 77.3, 77.

⁵⁵⁰ Cormack 2007, 595.

⁵⁵¹ Kockel 1987, 189.

⁵⁵² Cormack 2007, 603 n. 31.

⁵⁵³ E.g. *ibid.*, 594.

tombs, as far as we can tell, creates problems for this interpretation. Della Corte and scholars such as Valentin Kockel, following him, have speculated that in previous periods similar markers were made from perishable materials, but there is no clear evidence for these objects.⁵⁵⁴

In light of such problems, I will exclude assumptions about the antiquity of the Pompeian *columellae* and only consider them as they (first) appear alongside the monumental tombs. The location of these markers varied widely from tomb to tomb. Sometimes they were arranged inside a small walled area behind the tomb structure or lined up along a side wall of the tomb itself.⁵⁵⁵ In other cases they were lined up in front of the tomb, or placed in niches in its façade or base (only in the Porta Nocera cemetery).⁵⁵⁶ It is possible that the placement of the *columellae*, and perhaps the plan of the tomb itself, was partially determined by the desired level of visibility for the *stelae*. The number of *columellae* scattered in a particular precinct or lined up in front of a structure could attest to the importance of the tomb's dedicatee, and could be useful for reinforcing the authority of his or her descendants. *Columellae* located in the front of the tomb were visible from the street, and those in the structure's façade even more so. Those who chose to keep the *columellae* more secluded may have been alluding to older cemeteries of the Fondo Azzolino's type; these markers were still outside the tombs, however, and could have been seen by anyone who ventured into the necropolis. Some later burial precincts were entirely without monumental architecture, but instead consisted of a low walled area and multiple *columellae*.⁵⁵⁷ The significance of this form, which is reminiscent of the Fondo Azzolini, is uncertain; perhaps some deliberate attempt at reviving old traditions took place.

All of this is not to say that Roman influence played no part the appearance of monumental tombs in Pompeii, of course. The practice did not arise *sui generis*, but must have been a response to similar things happening in Rome and elsewhere in Italy. Perhaps the initial impetus for the adoption of this style of burial was the construction of

⁵⁵⁴ See n. 528 above.

⁵⁵⁵ D'Ambrosio and De Caro 1983, 15 ES, 20 EN.

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid., 11 OS, 14 OS.

⁵⁵⁷ For some examples, see D'Ambrosio and De Caro 1987, 199-228.

such a tomb by one of the original colonists, Marcus Porcius.⁵⁵⁸ The use of Latin inscriptions on tombs in particular speaks of Roman influence. There was no official reason to use Latin here rather than Oscan, the language of the city's Samnite inhabitants, as there probably was in the case of public inscriptions. In fact, the very concept of funerary inscriptions seems to have been alien to the Samnites.⁵⁵⁹ Introduction and influence, however, do not explain why such a practice became so widespread and continued in use for so long. That it worked, that it played a valuable social or political role, are revealed by the fact that it was perpetuated until the end of the city's existence.

The self-erected monument served two important purposes while its founder was alive: to incur the goodwill of dependents who shared in its prestige, and to advertise that its builder was important figure in the community and a full participant in its customs. Of course this strategy was only available to those with the resources to finance the construction of an elaborate monument – except, perhaps, in rare cases when they were publicly funded, but the truly poor would hardly have been awarded this sort of honor. After the death of a tomb's builder, its function and social value shifted. Now the descendants of the original group could use it as security of a decent burial place, as a focus of their ritual attention, and, through this and their familial relationship with its founder(s), as an advertisement of their own status. For men and women who had already achieved standing in the community, this may have been a prime concern. Monuments in their name would not gain them access to power, since they had already achieved it through other means; they could only reinforce their position. But for their descendants, a visible and important ancestor could be the entry point to social or political authority.

iii. The Fondo Azzolini Post-Colonization

The continued use of the Fondo Azzolini cemetery until at least the 40s or 50s C.E. provides an interesting counterpoint to the streets of tombs. Although the adoption of monumental tomb architecture was widespread and long-lasting, it was optional. Nor did abstaining from participation in that practice necessarily exclude a family from power or doom them to obscurity forever.

⁵⁵⁸ Kockel 1987, 53–57.

⁵⁵⁹ Benelli 2009, 14.

In the Fondo Azzolini cemetery, 119 cremation burials were found, and all of those containing coins (which included almost every grave) were dated to the post-colonization period, most to the reign of Augustus (31 B.C.E.-14 C.E.) or later (Figure 50: burials marked with Arabic numerals are Roman period).⁵⁶⁰ Ninety-five of these burials were marked with *columellae*, and of them, thirty-three were inscribed with the names and sometimes ages of the deceased. Of the inscribed *columellae*, ten name members of the Epidii family. A range of other names appear on the markers, some of whom were obviously slaves, but others were from prominent Pompeian families or may have been related to the family through marriage or adoption or were permitted burial for other reasons.

The Epidii are known to have held office in Pompeii both before and after colonization.⁵⁶¹ A mosaic in the sanctuary of Dionysus names two aediles, pre-Roman magistrates in Pompeii, one of whom is a Ovius Epidius, son of Ovius.⁵⁶² The gap between this inscription and the later appearance of the Epidii is considerable: in two inscriptions from over a century later (30s and 40s C.E.) a Marcus Lucretius Epidius Flaccus is named as prefect of Gaius Caesar (a.k.a. Caligula, who was emperor by the time of the second inscription). From the last phase of the city, i.e. the Flavian period (69 C.E.-79 C.E.), we have electoral graffiti, including one notice at a major crossroads. These endorse Marcus Epidius Sabinus for election as *duumvir*, the highest office in the city. He is supported, according to these messages, by a powerful agent of the emperor Vespasian and by the entire city council.⁵⁶³

Correlating the gap in the record of the Epidii's holding office in Pompeii with their lack of monumental tombs would be an extremely difficult, if not impossible, task. For one thing, the preservation of inscriptions is so haphazard as to make arguments from silence especially risky. Furthermore, we cannot even say for certain that the Epidii did not erect a monumental tomb elsewhere. Many of the tombs we have do not have surviving inscriptions, and no doubt there are still more tombs elsewhere that have not been excavated.

⁵⁶⁰ Della Corte 1916, 287–305.

⁵⁶¹ Castrén 1975, 164–165.

⁵⁶² Cooley and Cooley 2004, 12.

⁵⁶³ *Ibid.*, 135.

Nevertheless, it is interesting that at some point in the later history of the Fondo Azzolini, some tentative attempts at monumentalization were made. I refer specifically to tombs 104 and 66.⁵⁶⁴ The former has a podium 0.4 m high and was plastered and painted to look like colored marble.⁵⁶⁵ On the podium, a *columella* naming Marcus Epidius Dioscurus was found, marking the place of a libation tube. Tomb 66 was similar, with three *columellae* naming Marcus Epidius Anychus, Vibia Pelagia, and Vibia Crocine. The location of these two tombs near the entrance to the cemetery perhaps represents an attempt to make them conspicuous from the road. These details suggest that they were conceived of as being somehow analogous to the more elaborate monumental tombs elsewhere, though executed on a smaller scale and still considerate of family tradition. Although the burials in this cemetery are less attention-grabbing than those along the streets of tombs, there is evidence that they were visited by the general public on non-ritual occasions. Tomb 66 had a graffito on its plaster wall depicting a gladiatorial scene; a similar thing is scratched on the wall of a tomb in the Porta Ercolano necropolis, where the artist has returned multiple times to update the scores of the gladiators in subsequent fights.⁵⁶⁶

iv. Conclusions

The development of Pompeii's streets of tombs cannot be explained as simple aping of Roman customs with a veneer of local idiosyncrasy. The wealthy inhabitants of Pompeii, both those families who had lived there for generations and new settlers, made a choice whether or not to participate in this activity. The fact that many chose to construct monumental tombs indicates that they thought this expensive undertaking would be beneficial. It served multiple purposes. Among the most important was self-promotion, through which individuals could claim their right to power, express their ambition, or reinforce the authority and standing they already possessed in the community. During the lifetime of the dedicator, children or freedmen could benefit from the reflected glory of the tomb's owner to further their own social or political goals. For the less wealthy

⁵⁶⁴ Della Corte 1916, 300–302.

⁵⁶⁵ It would be interesting to examine the painted marble in order to make some guesses as to what period it was painted in, but these tombs are not presently accessible.

⁵⁶⁶ D'Ambrosio and De Caro 1983, 14 EN.

members of the community, a shift from inhumation to cremation may also have been a shift to more visibility. The spectacular nature of rituals surrounding cremation could have made the participants' social relationships evident to outsiders, just as it did for those local elites who were able to wrap up that spectacle with a permanent monument.

The ambiguity or flexibility in expressions of identity communicated through burial practice during this period makes funerary trends especially analogous to contemporary trends in wall painting. Two main courses of action seem to have been available to the inhabitants of Pompeii: they could continue with traditional practice (as at least some of the Epidii did), or they could participate in a new type of burial, influenced by external practices, but adapted to the local situation. A few individuals, perhaps including Marcus Porcius, imported the Roman (however we interpret that label in this context) monumental tomb wholesale. For most others, both locals and colonists of varying statuses, a new form was preferred. Though names and biographical details were inscribed on those tombs, in terms of communicating identity through visual cues, it does not seem possible to discern patterns that distinguish the tombs of original inhabitants of Pompeii from those of new settlers. This ambiguity may very well have been deliberate. To display participation in a larger, prestigious Roman culture while simultaneously emphasizing membership and position within the local community was potentially advantageous for everyone. No cultural, and therefore political or social, affiliation was explicitly excluded through the display of these highly visible and enduring personal monuments.

III. Community Dynamics in Pompeii and the Second Style

Having considered the motivations behind the adoption and development of new burial customs in Pompeii after the Roman colonization, we can now look at the details of domestic decoration in that period, and how they relate to and reflect the historical circumstances that spawned them. Zanker, Leach, and Zevi suggest that the distribution patterns of wall painting styles can be used to locate the houses of Roman colonists in Pompeii.⁵⁶⁷ In this scenario, those who preserved First Style decoration, which predated

⁵⁶⁷ Zanker 1998, 72–74; Leach 2004, 69–70; Zevi 1996; Zevi 2007, 494–496.

the Roman colonization, were members of the original population of the town. Those who redecorated houses in the Second Style, or built new ones that were then decorated in this style, were the colonists. According to this argument, Second Style paintings cluster in certain areas of the town, and as a result, we can assume that colonists settled in those areas. I contend that we cannot use the distribution of First and Second Style decorations in such a straightforward way, and that a lack of such patterning arises from the strategies employed by both groups in Pompeii during the tumultuous period following colonization.

First, there is the problem of trying to use the distribution of those Second Style paintings that survived until 79 C.E. – well over a century after the period under discussion here – to make claims about their distribution in the mid-first century B.C.E. Later styles of decoration made up the majority of paintings by 79 C.E., and we cannot now recover the proportions of First and Second Style paintings that these replaced. Second, even a map of only the largest houses known still to be decorated in the Second Style by 79 C.E. (Figure 1) does not give much indication that these paintings clustered in specific areas. Rather, it shows them scattered throughout the town – and smaller houses decorated in the Second Style exist in areas left empty here. If Second Style paintings represent the homes of colonists, they do not seem to have organized themselves in certain areas of the city. An exception may be the *Insula Occidentalis*, but Second Style decoration there simply indicates that the newly renovated residences were decorated in the latest style, rather than telling us anything specific about their inhabitants. At any rate, like other houses in Pompeii, many of these spaces were subsequently redecorated in later styles.

We can also consider houses like the Casa del Labirinto (VI.11.9), which is decorated in both the First and the Second Styles.⁵⁶⁸ Its most public and visible spaces, near the street entrance, preserve First Style decoration, as does the peristyle. Its most elaborate and prestigious rooms for private entertaining, however, are secluded near the back of the house and ornamented with elaborate and high quality Second Style compositions (see Figure 45). How can we use these decorations to identify the origin of

⁵⁶⁸ Also see my discussion of this house above, pp. 136-139.

the house's owner? Either this was a local Pompeian who added some trendy Second Style painting to his house, or it was a Roman colonist who felt it was appropriate to retain some of the house's original First Style decoration.⁵⁶⁹ Both styles adorn important spaces in the house, making it difficult to argue that either is more significant. Apparently it was possible for the owner of a large property to present him or herself to guests using both styles of painting.

We could suppose, perhaps, that the owner of the Casa del Labirinto wished to emphasize his or her affiliation with Pompeian tradition to a larger audience. The First Style was what passersby on the street and a more inclusive group of visitors would have seen.⁵⁷⁰ Visitors who entered only as far as the atrium might have been able to see into the Second Style rooms across the peristyle on occasions when barriers closing off those spaces were left open. It may have been possible, conversely, to prevent the general population from ever seeing the houses's Second Style paintings. These options suggest only that the inhabitants of the house had the ability to present themselves in a variety of ways, depending on their audience or circumstances; it does not tell us anything about their origins.

Unlike tombs, some of which have inscriptions to identify their owners, the evidence for the ownership of houses, especially at such an early date, is very slim. The evidence, then, to link Second Style paintings with Roman colonists is not much more than their roughly contemporaneous arrival in Pompeii. This detail is suggestive, and it may be that the first to decorate their homes in this new fashion were the settlers who brought knowledge of external trends with them (though Pompeii was hardly isolated from the rest of Italy). Perhaps they did so, as Leach suggests, to employ some of the prestige of their Roman connections or to show their cosmopolitanism.⁵⁷¹ It does not follow, however, that the Second Style painted houses all belonged to colonists, nor even that the First Style decorations were only preserved in the homes of the original inhabitants, much less the local aristocracy, of Pompeii. We can see in the example of funerary practices that a division between conservative locals and innovative colonists

⁵⁶⁹ See n. 514 above on previous suggestions as to the ownership of this house.

⁵⁷⁰ See pp. 136-139 above on the division of this house into two zones.

⁵⁷¹ Leach 2004, 69.

does not seem to hold up in that sphere of activity, and in my view there is no compelling reason to think that there was such a divide in the decoration of private homes, either.

Houses decorated in the First or Second Style could have been inhabited either by locals or by colonists. A colonist who moved into an already existing house decorated in the First Style was not obligated to redecorate. It is unlikely, moreover, that the only people in Pompeii who redecorated houses in the Second Style were the new members of the community. The new style favored by influential colonists must have held some appeal for the locals. In fact, the form that many of the Second Style paintings took in Pompeii suggests that they may have been adapted to fit into the local (i.e. First Style) tradition. The Second Style paintings in nearby villas, described in the previous chapter, as well as those in the *Insula Occidentalis* included elaborate, architectural compositions that created the illusion of several planes of depth behind the surface of the wall. These paintings also include realistic, detailed representations of luxury materials, including types of imported stone that were new and popular in public architecture at the time. In the redecorated houses scattered throughout the town, on the other hand, most Second Style paintings simply depicted a solid masonry wall or stone paneled wall surface, a sort of resurfacing of the rough masonry of the real wall.⁵⁷² This simpler version of the Second Style (see Figure 60) was closer to the familiar First Style, often loosely mimicking its composition in terms of the location and proportions of rows of blocks of various sizes, though it involved a different working technique for painters and plasters. Imitation stone was an important element of these paintings, too, but choices could be made regarding how much time and effort would be put into creating realistic representations. Again, this may have reflected a choice between something that was not traditionally important in domestic decoration in Pompeii, and something that was a new fashion outside of the town.

This distinction need not mean, however, that these somewhat conservative paintings all belonged to locals, while the more extravagant versions indicate the presence of colonists. As with the tombs, it may instead be the case that downplaying of cultural difference and emphasis on membership in the community was preferred – at

⁵⁷² e.g. Heinrich 2002, 23–27.

least in terms of messages sent through permanent, highly visible, material culture. For members of either group, the meanings of these paintings could be flexible and could emphasize different ideas depending on the situation or audience.⁵⁷³ The relatively conservative nature of many of the Second Style paintings could serve as a reference to the First Style, and thus local tradition, setting up someone as truly belonging to the community and as understanding and respecting Pompeii's history. Alternatively, because the Second Style was new in technique and in keeping with what was popular in Rome and in the villas of high-ranking Romans, a Second Style painted environment could emphasize one's ability to understand and deploy prestigious Roman cultural trends. It could identify one as a powerful player in a wider Roman political and social network. Prestige and authority were associated both with Rome and with the local elite, and these two sources were available for exploitation by both locals and colonists.

Why did the members of the new Pompeian community choose to be ambiguous about their cultural identity or origins when presenting themselves in their homes or through their funerary monuments? The situation there was unlike many familiar colonial settlements from the modern world or even from the Roman provinces outside Italy.⁵⁷⁴ The original inhabitants of Pompeii were familiar with Rome and its customs, having long existed in Rome's shadow, and the cultural differences were not great to begin with. We are not dealing with opposing cultural systems that had to be reconciled and radically adapted in order to be comprehensible. In addition, both groups held significant power in the community, whether formal or informal, and so it was not a clear advantage to present oneself as a Roman and a Roman alone, or as a Pompeian and a Pompeian alone. The locals were well-established, larger in population, and not outclassed technologically by the colonists. We know from epigraphical and historical evidence that a large portion of the previous ruling class regained power in Pompeii soon after it was colonized, and that even Roman senators considered them an influential power base.⁵⁷⁵ The colonists, on the other hand, had the prestige associated with Rome, along with the backing of the Roman administration, which gave them their property and installed them in positions of

⁵⁷³ Cf. Hodos 2010, 18.

⁵⁷⁴ Particularly interesting of studies on domestic architecture in colonial contexts include: Revell 2009; Jamieson 2000; Reid et al. 1997; Hosagrahar 2001; Pulhan and Numan 2006; Kus and Raharijaona 2010.

⁵⁷⁵ Mouritsen 1988, 86–89.

political authority. As a result, members from both groups may have found it advantageous at times to emphasize their importance in and compliance with the new system, and at other times to emphasize their membership in the already existing community and respect for its traditions.

Jaś Elsner introduces the idea of deliberate ambivalence and its relationship to resistance when discussing religious artworks from Dura Europas.⁵⁷⁶ He is, of course, building upon the work of many scholars studying dominance and resistance in colonial societies, especially Scott's concept of hidden transcripts.⁵⁷⁷ Elsner notes that "[t]he advantage of art as a means of "resistance" is that it is sufficiently open to multiple meanings for its oppositions not to be too obvious. To put this another way, we might say that one of the benefits of the interpretive ambivalence of images is that their viewing was always open to the casting of a blind eye.⁵⁷⁸ While the need to hide one's affiliation and attitude from an authoritative group was less urgent in Dura Europas than in many modern examples, and even less urgent in the Pompeian context I am discussing, there would have been a benefit in leaving the messages inscribed in stone or painted on walls open to multiple interpretations. In this case, a display of membership in or sympathies with multiple groups, which were not necessarily compatible, could have been advantageous. A specific message would have been conveyed through words and actions, or even through other material culture, but these flexible private expressions of identity allowed for multiple possibilities, if needed.⁵⁷⁹

For these reasons, and on analogy with the funerary evidence, I argue that it is a mistake to assume that we can use domestic decoration type to distinguish the homes of local Pompeians from those of Roman colonists. It may not have been politically and socially advantageous in the aftermath of war and colonization for people to limit severely the messages about themselves communicated by the decoration of their homes. Behavior like this could explain why we do not see a marked disruption in the archaeology of private life in Pompeii: people chose to deal with the crisis in a way that

⁵⁷⁶ Elsner 2001; Elsner 2007, 253–288.

⁵⁷⁷ Scott 1990.

⁵⁷⁸ Elsner 2007, 258.

⁵⁷⁹ Cf. Revell 2009, 19–20.

looks to us like continuity.⁵⁸⁰ What is ambiguous to us may very well be the result of deliberate ambiguity on the part of people living in first century B.C.E. Pompeii.

i. First Style Decoration After Roman Colonization

As was the case with burial practice, some prosperous Pompeians chose not to adopt (certain) new modes of self-presentation at home, and thus did not decorate their homes in the Second Style. Instead, they maintained First Style decoration throughout that period. We can conclude that such a choice was not severely detrimental to the status of those homeowners. Just as the Epidii retained, or regained, power despite their lack of monumental tomb building, the owner or owners of the Casa del Fauno kept that grand property, located near the town's center, in its original condition and even renovated it during the late first century B.C.E., while maintaining its decoration.⁵⁸¹ Though the Epidii eschewed monumental tomb building, they did make the switch to cremation. This switch necessitated a change in the ritual behavior, visible to the community, surrounding burial. It is possible that the way in which the Casa del Fauno was used and the types of interactions and rituals performed by its inhabitants and their visitors transformed as the town's composition changed. These changes in practice, if they occurred, are difficult to make out from the architectural evidence, as it would have been easier to adapt behavior to architecture, rather than vice versa. Moreover, the inhabitants of this particular house were apparently invested in foregoing changes to the decoration of their property. The motivations for preserving old decoration, and its subsequent function and significance, are the subject of Chapter 7.

ii. Marble in the Second Style in Pompeii

It is difficult to determine from the surviving evidence how many spaces that originally had First Style decoration were renovated and repainted in the Second Style period.⁵⁸² Many earlier paintings continued to be replaced in the Third and Fourth Styles,

⁵⁸⁰ The appearance of continuity is noted by Zevi 1996, 126.

⁵⁸¹ Hoffmann and Faber 2009, 104.

⁵⁸² As the results of more and more excavations of the levels below the 79 C.E. floor surfaces of Pompeian houses are published, it may be possible to make some observations about what types of decorations were stripped from walls and deposited in pits in various houses. As the evidence currently stands, however, little has been published about the specifics of these discarded paintings, and so not much can be said about patterns.

and intervening Second Style decorations were consequently destroyed. Scholars such as Laidlaw and Ling have looked at molded stucco cornices above paintings to determine whether they originally surmounted First Style walls that were later repainted – i.e. when cornices that resemble those that are usually part of First Style schemes are paired with other painting styles.⁵⁸³ I suggest that the conclusions that can be drawn from this evidence about repainting is, however, limited. We cannot be certain that supposed First Style cornices were not originally made in later periods if other evidence for redecoration is not clear. Nevertheless, from the few houses in which both First and Second Style decorations are preserved, we can make some observations about a shift that occurred during that period.

What exactly does the shift in domestic wall painting in the mid-first century B.C.E. look like? In some individual houses, there are signs that Pompeian homeowners hired the same workshops that were responsible for the decoration of the Campanian villas discussed in Chapter 5.⁵⁸⁴ As Heinrich notes, however, the majority of Second Style decorations in Pompeii are more modest, or at least less elaborate, and these are the group we should see as representing the main corpus of Second Style within the city walls.

If we exclude those paintings that most closely resemble Second Style paintings from villas (though I am not arguing for two distinct categories, as there is plenty of overlap and resemblance), we are still left with a wide variety of Second Style decorations. In most cases, this variation has been explained in terms of chronology. Yet, as I have argued in Chapter 1, there is limited evidence outside of the corpus of painting itself to link specific color combinations, compositions, etc., to outside dates, relative or absolute.⁵⁸⁵ While we may see these distinctions as chronological ones, they all appeared within a short period of time, and accordingly, the supposed relative chronology is difficult to work out with any confidence.

Another possible explanation for differences between Second Style paintings in Pompeii is that they are the products of different workshops. There must certainly have been multiple workshops active in the region, and some productive research has been

⁵⁸³ Laidlaw 1985, 21; Ling 1997, vol. 1, 168.

⁵⁸⁴ Leach 1993.

⁵⁸⁵ See pp. 17-25 above.

carried out identifying painters' hands.⁵⁸⁶ Because we know so little about the working practices or identities of painters in the Roman world, it is difficult to ascribe any significance to the choices they made. Instead, thinking about the decorations from the perspective of the house owners who commissioned them and the people who viewed and lived with them proves more fruitful, especially when we can situate them in a particular political, social, and historical context. I look specifically at the representations of decorative stone in these images, which provide a particularly useful index of differences and similarities with villa paintings and other decorations in Pompeii. I use the Casa di Cerere as a major example in the following discussion, because it contains a full suite of Second Style paintings, most of which are in fair condition and include representations of various types of imported stone.

Suppose we consider variations within the Second Style in Pompeii as choices available to homeowners within a limited historical period, perhaps from 80 or 70 B.C.E. to 40 or 30 B.C.E. Within Pompeian houses, there is a great deal of variety, ranging from those paintings that resemble most closely First Style decorations elsewhere in the town to those that look very similar to Second Style paintings in Campanian villas. In some cases, single houses contain paintings from more than one of these categories. By the end of this fairly short period, a little more than a generation, perhaps, these multiple styles-within-a-style coexisted throughout the town and in individual houses. Just as there is no easy way to group separately those houses which contained First Style and those which contained Second, there is no easy distinction between houses that contain Second Style in these different modes. For example, the Casa di Cerere (Figure 53) has Second Style paintings that have details in common with the First Style, and some that share characteristics with the Third Style. These might very well be chronological markers, but if so, rooms in the house were repeatedly painted in the Second Style over a period of time, making the link between colonization, ethnic identity, and painting change less secure. The idea that a Roman colonist moved into this house and immediately had it redecorated becomes difficult to support.

⁵⁸⁶ E.g. Tybout 1989; Richardson 2000; Leach 1993.

In general, stone in Second Style paintings in Pompeian townhouses can be described as more accurate in terms of its resemblance to specific varieties of stone than what we have seen in the First Style, just as it is in villas. Second Style painters also included a wider variety of stone types in their paintings than had been produced earlier. There is, however, a considerable range of accuracy and precision in the painting of imitation marble in these Second Style images. Many painters of houses in Pompeii seem to have been less concerned with using the intricate details of stone to display their skills in the same way the painters of villas did. Fewer colors were used, fewer minute details, and a freer hand.

The techniques used to depict alabaster in the Second Style in Pompeii's houses can be divided into three categories. First, there are those examples in which alabaster is represented as soft waves of pale color using a limited palette, usually including pink, light green, and yellow. These examples resemble alabaster from the First Style, though may be painted with more care. The *tablinum* in the Casa di Obellio Firmo (Figure 52) displays faux alabaster that is similar to that from the First Style room buried under room 18 in the Casa del Menandro (Figure 26).⁵⁸⁷ In the Casa di Obellio Firmo there is no molded stucco, but the alabaster also appears on a row of isodomes above large, blank orthostats. Other details of the *tablinum*'s painting, however, resemble supposedly later Second Style as well as Third Style decorations from Rome and from Campanian villas, including the unusual and ornate columns with leaf or petal details.⁵⁸⁸ The socle of the Second Style painting in a room opening from the north side of the atrium of the Casa di Pompeio Axiocho displays alabaster that resembles even more closely First Style alabaster, such as that of a dado in the Casa del Cenacolo (Figure 25).

The second category of alabaster consists of stripes of yellow and greenish grey and is identical to alabaster found on small panels in paintings from the Villa dei Misteri and Villa A at Oplontis (see Figure 35), among other elaborate “high” Second Style paintings. In Pompeii, this type of alabaster is found, for example, in Rooms 13 and 9 of the Casa di Cerere (Figure 55) and in the baths of the Casa di Marte e Venere.

⁵⁸⁷ See p. 102 above.

⁵⁸⁸ See, for example, the paintings from the Roman villa under the Farnesina now in the Museo Nazionale di Roma in the Palazzo Massimo alle Terme (see, for example, Bergmann 1995).

The third mode of depicting alabaster in Pompeian houses from this period uses a darker palette, including purple or red and dark green, and a more intricate and varied pattern. This type appears on small panels in Rooms *g* and *k* of the Casa di Cerere (Figure 56) and is most closely comparable to what we see in the upper register of Room 5 of the Villa dei Misteri (Figure 34). In houses, the range of pigments used tends to be smaller, and the work is less detailed and precise, than in villas. In fact, some examples are close to First Style alabaster in the looseness and sketchiness of their execution. The Second Style decoration of Room *k* (Figure 53) in the Casa di Cerere shares other characteristics with Second Style paintings typically found in villas, such as the opening up of the wall's surface to reveal architecture and sky beyond (Figure 57). This room may have served as a smaller version of the "villa zone" found in larger houses such as the Casa di Labirinto, which are typically more private rooms set further back from the house's entrance.⁵⁸⁹ While in larger houses, the more public rooms were usually decorated with First Style paintings, Second Style paintings with limited spatial depth were substituted in the Casa di Cerere.

It is difficult to determine exactly what is to account for these differences in the representation of alabaster. One explanation is that painters were using different hand samples of alabaster as references, i.e. painting varieties of alabaster from various sources with a range of characteristics (see Figure 2 for the some of the range of possibilities for that material). Another is that these variations represent the work of members of different workshops who were trained differently – though we sometimes find more than one type of alabaster in the same building, such as in the Casa di Cerere. It may be, and seems likely, that the same workshops and painters who produced First Style decorations moved on to producing Second Style paintings when these became more desirable. As I argued in Chapter 3, illusionistic painting was not entirely unknown to those painters who created First Style decorations.⁵⁹⁰ What does not work well as an explanation is chronological difference. While some examples closely resemble alabaster from the First Style, others from elaborate Second Style paintings in villas, and yet others appear in paintings that have characteristics in common with Third Style paintings, the type of

⁵⁸⁹ See pp. 136-139.

⁵⁹⁰ See p. 87 above.

alabaster that appears cannot be arranged according to the traditional chronology of the Second Style. For example, as I noted above, the painting of the *tablinum* on the Casa di Obellio Firmo has qualities that resemble Third Style paintings, yet its alabaster appears most like that of the First Style painting in the Casa del Menandro.⁵⁹¹

In First Style decorations, we saw only alabaster and breccias, painted imaginatively and using a limited palette of colors, but not necessarily closely corresponding to stones in use during the same period. In Second Style paintings in Pompeii, we find less precision in the representation of stone than we have seen in villa paintings, but other real stone types have been added to the repertoire beyond what the First Style contained. Perhaps the most commonly painted stone in Second Style painting, besides alabaster, is Numidian marble, whose prominence in wall painting of this period corresponds well with its political and historical significance.⁵⁹² This stone is usually depicted with a yellow background and red veins outlining yellow inclusions. It is accurately represented and easy to identify in the Second Style (Figure 7).

In addition, what appears to be Chian marble begins to appear now for the first time. Although, next to alabaster, Chian marble provides perhaps the greatest variety in appearance of any stone in heavy use in this period (see Figure 4), it can usually be identified in painting by the dominance of pink.⁵⁹³ Within the Casa di Cerere, different varieties of Chian marble sometimes appear in the same room (Figure 54), showing interest in and knowledge of the range of qualities exhibited by the exotic and prestigious material.⁵⁹⁴ This variety of stone appears more frequently in Pompeian houses than in

⁵⁹¹ In some cases, such in the Casa del Bracciale d'Oro and in several rooms in the Casa di Obellio Firmo, Second Style paintings have details closely resemble Fourth Style paintings in those same properties. The relationship between the two styles in these cases is difficult to ascertain. Did the Fourth Style painters borrow elements from the Second Style decoration in order to coordinate the decoration of the entire house? Do the paintings identified as Second Style actually belong to the Fourth Style period? A study of this problem is far beyond the scope of this dissertation, but it is important to be aware of potential complications in the accepted stylistic chronology for wall painting (see pp. 17-25 above).

⁵⁹² On its history, see p. 74 above.

⁵⁹³ Also in baths of the Casa di Marte e Venere.

⁵⁹⁴ Fant (2007, 338) has identified some of this pink painted stone as Sagarian marble (*breccia corallina*), which is generally thought to have been imported only much later. Some varieties of Chian marble closely resemble Sagarian, however, and so it is difficult to make a definitive identification on the basis of a painted representation. Chian seems the better option, since we know it was available at this time.

Campnaian villas, where it was rare.⁵⁹⁵ Oddly, Lucullan marble, though also in use on at least a small scale in Rome during the Late Republic, does not seem to appear in Second Style painting in Pompeian houses. In villas, too, it is rare; I have been able to find only a single instance of its representation there.⁵⁹⁶ Though there are exceptions, in Second Style painting in Pompeian houses, as we have seen in villas, there was a greater interest in depicting specific, known types of stone that were being imported to Rome during this period than had been the case in the First Style, when stone imports were scarce.⁵⁹⁷

Differences in how stone is depicted may well be chronological differences, or they may be tied to different workshops' styles and methods. I argue that it is more productive to consider whether they resembled more the traditional decoration of Pompeian houses (i.e. the First Style) or whether they appeared more like trends imported from elsewhere (i.e. the Second Style). This question is an especially interesting one in relation to the link between wall painting and identity. What we have seen is that such a division among Second Style paintings is rarely absolute. Among those houses in which the decoration of more than one room is extant, multiple homes have both First and Second Style rooms. The idea that houses in Pompeii can be divided into those with First Style and those with Second Style in an attempt to map ethnicities in the city does not hold up to scrutiny. Other houses accumulated a combination of “earlier” and “later” Second Style decorations, i.e. those that were more Pompeian or like First Style and those that were more Roman or like high Second Style – though these may not represent actual chronological differences. The process of decorating an entire house may have happened gradually over years or even decades. Nevertheless, the evidence suggests a desire to create and maintain ambiguity about cultural affiliation, or at best, a lack of interest in using the permanent decoration of the home to declare cultural identity in any definitive way. Several large and presumably prosperous homes preserved some First Style decoration when they redecorated other rooms in the Second Style. These include the

⁵⁹⁵ It is tempting to use the greater frequency of Chian marble in Pompeian townhouses as a chronological marker to date their paintings later than those in villas, but because the date for the introduction of Chian marble to Italy is unknown, and because different rules may have governed the decoration of houses as compared to villas, that basis is not a very reliable one for dating. Moreover, that absence of Lucullan marble from these paintings suggests that more was involved in choosing stone types to depict than simply what was on the market at a given time.

⁵⁹⁶ See p. 122 above.

⁵⁹⁷ See p. 182 below on Second Style paintings without marbling details.

Casa del Labirinto, the Casa dei Quattro Stili, and the Casa di Cipio Panfilio (discussed below).

Other houses had multiple rooms decorated with Second Style paintings that apparently belong to different phases in Beyen and Heinrich's schemes.⁵⁹⁸ A prominent example is the rather small Casa di Cerere. De Vos has identified the house's paintings generally as early Second Style.⁵⁹⁹ From the images themselves we cannot conclusively determine if they were created simultaneously or over a significant span of time. Tests of plasters in this house, however, have shown that there were two major phases of decoration within the Second Style period, and that the Second Style decorations probably replaced earlier First Style ones. Agneta Freccero, who carried out these studies, notes that there is no way to determine from the plasters' compositions the relative dates of the two phases of Second Style decoration, nor how long each phase took to complete.⁶⁰⁰ The painting of Room *k* (Figure 57) belongs to the first phase of decoration, while the others, discussed above, belong to the second phase. These groupings do not seem to correspond to differences in the depiction of stone, nor to the stylistic features of these paintings that would normally be used to date them, such as level of spatial depth or similarity to or difference from First Style compositions.

We also find from a quick survey that not all Second Style rooms were located in the most intimate or private zones of the house, especially when compared to First Style paintings preserved in the same buildings (as is frequently the case).⁶⁰¹ For example, in the Casa dei Quattro Stili, one room opening directly from the atrium is decorated in the First Style (Figure 24),⁶⁰² while two others have Second Style paintings. All three rooms are equally accessible to outsiders, requiring a visitor to pass three thresholds from the front entrance of the house in order to enter them.⁶⁰³ The larger of the two rooms

⁵⁹⁸ See p. 150 above on these chronological systems.

⁵⁹⁹ Baldassarre 1990, vol. V.

⁶⁰⁰ Freccero 2005, 49.

⁶⁰¹ See Chapter 4.

⁶⁰² See p. 100ff. above.

⁶⁰³ One method of determining relative privacy or accessibility to outsiders of individual spaces within a building is to use the rather complicated "access analysis" or "space syntax" approach developed by Hillier and Hanson (1989). Counting thresholds or "levels" is only one of the very preliminary steps in their process, though alone it can reveal some patterns that might otherwise be missed. For the application of access analysis to Pompeian remains, see Grahame 2000 and Longfellow 2000.

decorated in the Style Second is actually more visible from the house's entrance than the First Style room (perhaps a *cubiculum*), which is located to the rear of a visitor when he or she enters the atrium (Figure 60). Of course, doors and screens that are now missing must once have been used to control access to various spaces, both visually and physically. In the case of this house, nevertheless, the entrance to the First Style room is significantly smaller, as is the room itself.

Such a combination of factors gives the impression of this particular Second Style room in the Casa dei Quattro Stili as a more public space than that house's First Style room, in an inversion of the interpretation of the First Style's significance as advocated by scholars such as Wallace-Hadrill and Leach.⁶⁰⁴ In the Casa di Cipio Panfilio, a room with a combination of First and Second Style painting is positioned identically to the Casa dei Quattro Stili's First Style room (Figure 59). It opens from the atrium, to the left of the entrance, but is behind a visitor as he or she enters the atrium. In this case, however, we do not have preserved decoration from other rooms to compare.⁶⁰⁵ In the Casa di Cipio Panfilio, the lower two thirds of the wall, below a stucco cornice, were replastered and painted with a Second Style design. In the area above this secondary cornice, First Style decoration remained, topped by another cornice. The pavement of this room appears to have been identical to the pavements in the *alae* of the Casa del Fauno (see Figure 17).⁶⁰⁶ The flooring, too, was preserved when the room was repainted. The decoration of this room shows very clearly the distinction between the representation of stone in the First and Second Styles. While the Casa di Cipio Panfilio's imitation stone is not so accurately painted as most examples from villas, it is still more detailed and subtler, with a more subdued and complex color palette, than the First Style examples in the same room. The decoration of this room may also demonstrate a semantic link between the two styles of painting in Pompeii, at least in the case of less elaborate versions of the Second Style. They seem to have been seen as compatible or complementary, and appropriate for embellishing similar spaces. Moreover, like the Casa del Labirinto, the combination of the two styles in a single house makes it difficult to determine the ownership of the Casa

⁶⁰⁴ See p. 88 above.

⁶⁰⁵ Most of the house was leveled when it was bombed during WWII. For more on this house, see Appendix III.

⁶⁰⁶ See pp. 95-99 above for a description of the pavements in the Casa del Fauno.

di Cipio Panfilio according to the principle that the First Style indicates locals and the Second Style colonists.

I suggest that the association between public architecture and First Style developed subsequent to the period of the Second Style's popularity.⁶⁰⁷ Not everyone who decorated a house with Second Style painting used it to code the house in the same way. Notably, the Second Style paintings in the Casa dei Quattro Stili share few characteristics with more elaborate Second Style paintings from villas. The panels in this room are not embellished with any of the details of variegated stone; the painting consists simply of solid colored panels up to ceiling height, without any breaks in the illusionistic surface of the wall or the addition of other luxury objects or materials. In this way, it seems to serve an analogous function to First Style painting, providing a simple allusion to colored stone masonry. There appears to be a distinction between those patrons who wished Second Style paintings to allude to the atmosphere of the villa, and those who preferred that they function similarly to First Style decorations, but in an updated form.⁶⁰⁸

Decorative stone is not realistically depicted in all Pompeian Second Style paintings, especially when compared with examples from villas. This difference may perhaps exist because still few people outside of the Roman upper classes had been exposed to imported stone yet. Only for that limited group of villa owners was it important to demonstrate intimate knowledge of stone. Some paintings nevertheless display convincing stone, perhaps because the same painters were used for these as for villas, but those house owners were not necessarily Romans. In general, painters painted what they knew. This means that workshops that had previously produced First Style decorations would have had the skill required to create Second Style paintings that suited their clients without the need to carefully depict real types of stone.

It may be that versions of the Second Style that displayed more precise and naturalistic representations of imported stone demonstrated access on the part of their patrons to privileged knowledge, analogous to that of villa owners. At the same time, Second Style paintings that abstained from that sort of detail may well have served functions related to Pompeian decorative tradition that were just as desirable in the

⁶⁰⁷ See Chapter 3, p. 88, on this theory.

⁶⁰⁸ See pp. 136-143 above on Second Style paintings in houses that allude to villas.

community. Those paintings that combined realistic depictions of stone with fairly simple, closed-wall compositions, like those in the most accessible rooms in the Casa di Cerere, could have served both purposes depending on circumstances. They were at once linked to older styles of interior décor from Pompeii, while incorporating elements of new, cosmopolitan tastes. This link with the past, which was probably a desirable one, partially explains why scholars of Roman painting have thought of the Second Pompeian Style arising through a seamless evolution from the First Style.⁶⁰⁹ Instead, I argue that in reality it was both a new style introduced to Pompeii – Leach’s “stylistic intervention” – and a development from the First Style. The Second Style in Pompeian townhouses belongs to these two categories both in formal qualities, as an artistic development, and also semantically, as an indicator of cultural and social identity.

⁶⁰⁹ Laidlaw 1985, 31. This is not to suggest that the Masonry Style decorations that existed all over the Mediterranean world had no influence on the development of the Second Style, wherever that was first invented.

Chapter Six

Imperial Marble in Pompeian Wall Painting

In the transition from the Second to the Third Style, imitation marble disappears entirely from wall painting, only to return in an altered form in the Fourth Style. In view of its former ubiquity, the absence of fictive stone in the Third Style must be significant. Moreover, its return in the Fourth Style suggests a change, again, in attitudes toward imported stone. These attitudes toward marble in particular, and private luxury more generally, were not static, and they influenced the way viewers responded to wall paintings over time. Reception was contingent on prevailing social and cultural ideals not only with regard to newly produced paintings, but also to those that had been created in earlier periods but remained on view over a long period of time.

In this chapter, I begin by briefly discussing the circumstances in the Augustan period that caused imitation marble to fall sharply out of favor for private decoration. These conditions included a desire to avoid the appearance of ambition and, thus, of posing a potential threat to the Augustan regime, along with an increased interest in austerity in the wake of impoverishing civil wars.

In the second section of the chapter, I describe the form that imitation marble took when it reappeared in the Fourth Style, and the social and cultural changes that had taken place to foster its renewed popularity. In this period, faux stone became a rather straightforward substitute for real stone decoration, in a way that it had never been in the Second Style. Attitudes toward domestic luxury had evolved gradually so that by the Flavian period stone and its pictorial representation could be seen as positive testaments to the abundance, stability, and far-reaching power of the Roman Empire.

I. Disappearing Marble: The Third Pompeian Style and Augustan Aesthetics

Imitation stone disappears completely from wall painting with the introduction of the Third Style.⁶¹⁰ This dramatic transformation does not, of course, mean that older paintings that heavily featured stone were no longer on view. They were still prominently displayed in both villas and in more modest townhouses. Moreover, because our chronology for wall painting is a stylistic one rather than an absolute one, we cannot be sure that some Second Style paintings that included faux stone were not produced after the Third Style gained popularity. In fact, they probably were. Some motifs common to the Third Style also appear in Second Style, suggesting that there was overlap. These motifs include large, central panels with pastoral or mythological scenes, known, for example, from the Second Style paintings in the Casa di Obellio Firmo or the Casa del Criptoportico, and from the Third Style paintings in the so-called Villa di Agrippa Postumo at Boscotrescase, among other residences.

Another detail that appears in both Second and Third Style paintings (as well as some Fourth Style Paintings) is the splatter-painted dado (Figure 61-Figure 63). These lower portions of walls appear in a wide range of background colors decorated with splattered drops of paint, apparently flung from the end of a brush. In some cases, care is taken to distribute the drops of paint fairly evenly, but in general this technique appears to function as a quick and easy way to decorate the lower portions of walls, which in many cases must have been partially blocked from view by furniture.

Though this technique results in a pattern that can resemble faux stone, especially granite, in most cases its painters and their patrons probably did not intend it to be read in that way. The splatter technique appears for the first time, possibly, in the Second Style (Figure 61), alongside much more precise and realistic depictions of decorative stone in the same paintings. In almost all examples of fictive stone from the Second and Fourth Style, it is clear that it was important for the specific variety of stone to be recognizable

⁶¹⁰ In her very comprehensive catalogue, Eristov (1979, 753) identifies only one example of faux marble in a Third Style decoration: the imitation Numidian marble base of a pilaster in the doorway between the atrium and tablinum of the Casa di Marco Lucrezio Frontone. It is difficult to understand why she considers these pilasters Third Style, as the surrounding decoration of the atrium and tablinum are prominent examples of the Fourth Style.

to viewers. Splatter dados, however, are not recognizable as any particular type of stone in use at the time.⁶¹¹ They do resemble granite to a certain extent, but black and white granite, for example, was only imported to Rome from Egypt between the reigns of Nero and Domitian – well into the Fourth Style period.⁶¹² Furthermore, the range of color combinations used in these decorations does not correspond to specific types of granite, and we do not see the same combination repeated from one room to the next, as we do with the imitation of stone in the Second and Fourth Styles. Painters appear to have chosen their colors based on what they already had on hand for use on the rest of the wall rather than with a type of stone in mind. In addition, these socles often appear as a solid strip surrounding the room. They are not divided up into panels as they usually would be if they were meant to substitute for stone veneer or masonry. When we see the revival of faux stone dados in the Fourth Style, it is much clearer that they represent stone paneling when compared to these splatter patterns.

Moreover, splatter-painted dados appear regularly in Third Style painting (Figure 62), which eschews any other representation of imitation stone. If no other type of faux stone was acceptable and desirable, it makes little sense to consider this one pattern an exception. While some viewers may have interpreted this design as stone, it is unlikely that that would have been a desirable reading for the patron or painter. I contend that splatter dados were not meant to imitate anything at all.⁶¹³

It is difficult to overstate the importance of the change in decorative preference from the large swathes of carefully detailed imitation stone in the Second Style to its *complete absence* in the Third Style (alongside the disappearance of other naturalistically painted luxury materials and objects).⁶¹⁴ In addition to the loss of imitation stone from Third Style paintings, most rooms decorated in the Third Style seem to have contained relatively simple pavements. These floors, according to Clarke's survey, were usually

⁶¹¹ Some examples of buildings with splatter dados: (in Second Style) Casa di Cerere, Pompeii, Casa di Obelli Firmi, Pompeii; (in Third Style) Casa degli Quattro Stili, Pompeii, Casa del Cenacolo, Pompeii, Casa di Papiri Dipinto, Herculaneum; (in Fourth Style) Villa A at Oplontis.

⁶¹² Fant 2007, 341.

⁶¹³ Some also slightly resemble *opus signinum*, but it is not clear what the appeal of imitating that material on walls would be.

⁶¹⁴ Cf. Zanker 1988, 101, 265 on the dramatic change in aesthetic taste in Augustan painting more generally.

simple black and white mosaics or mortar floors with minimalistic *tesserae* designs.⁶¹⁵ The more colorful and lively mosaics and *crustae* floors of the Second Style (Figure 28- Figure 30) seem less desirable in this period.

Scholars who have paid some attention to decorative stone in painting have overlooked this shift, perhaps because stone is ubiquitous in the other three styles of wall painting and thus seems like a permanent and static part of the tradition.⁶¹⁶ The fact that it disappears and reappears in different periods shows that the choice to include imitation stone or not was a significant one. Imported stone had real importance that made it appropriate at some times and not others. This change in taste in the Augustan period related to a strong negative opinion of private luxury, which was complemented by admiration for public munificence.⁶¹⁷ A similar attitude had previously been present in Roman ideology to a certain extent, as can be seen in Republican texts.⁶¹⁸ In the Augustan period, however, disapproval of extravagance in private architecture seems to have become even more entrenched, or at least had a more noticeable effect on the domestic self-presentation of the Roman upper classes. A change in actual stone use in the domestic sphere, however, is not easy to see in the archaeological record. Nevertheless, changing attitudes toward luxury are evident in wall painting.

The reasons behind this shift are complex and require further study, especially in terms of how Augustan ideals of domestic life shaped the actual architecture and decoration of the period.⁶¹⁹ Paul Zanker's seminal work takes the first steps toward examining the effects of Augustan aesthetics on the private material environment, but he acknowledges chronological and contextual impediments, and those obstacles continue to exist.⁶²⁰ Nevertheless, both decorative stone and wall painting provide useful indices for examining how attitudes toward private luxury changed over time. In literature, references to the use of imported marble in domestic buildings occur in the context of moralizing discourses on luxury. A comparison of material and textual sources related to

⁶¹⁵ Clarke 1991, 142–143.

⁶¹⁶ E.g. van de Liefvoort 2012; Allag and Monier 2004; Eristov 1979.

⁶¹⁷ Here I follow Platt (2009), one of the latest of many scholars to see the Third Style as mainly an Augustan art form. Also see chapter 2, section viii above.

⁶¹⁸ See Chapter 2, pp. 47-50 above.

⁶¹⁹ I explore this issue further in a forthcoming article titled, “*Aurataeque Trabes Marmoreumque Solum*: Augustan Domestic Luxury and Third Style Wall Painting”.

⁶²⁰ Zanker 1988, 265.

the topic would be especially enlightening, as conflicting values can be expressed in different media. Such a detailed study over and above what I have done in Chapter 2 is beyond the current scope of this project, but I will introduce some ideas about what motivated the changes in attitudes toward domestic luxury that resulted in the abandonment of imitation marble in the Third Style of wall painting.

Part of the impetus for change in the decoration of private space must have come from the need to minimize threats to the new regime. This mandate came from the emperor himself through sumptuary legislation. At the same time, it must also have been somewhat voluntary on the part of many members of the upper classes, who had already suffered through decades of civil war and proscriptions and had little desire to return to those days.⁶²¹ Wealth and luxury materials were meant to be used to benefit the people and the state, not for personal aggrandizement. A general atmosphere of austerity and modesty was underscored by other new sumptuary laws.⁶²² In addition, new ideals, or newly reinforced traditional ideas, about domestic life proliferated. These ideas have already been the subject of a great deal of study.⁶²³

With regard specifically to wall painting, Bettina Bergmann has suggested that sumptuary legislation under Augustus led to the imitation of luxury objects in late Second Style wall painting as a replacement for the actual display of them.⁶²⁴ While this may be true, imitation luxury goods already had a long tradition in Second Style painting, and very soon after we see a reversal of this trend. As Verity Platt has observed, some of the motifs of the Third Style that derived from valuable goods, such as fine textiles and metalwork, became more obviously surface decoration and less blatantly illusionistic in the Third Style than in the Second (Figure 64).⁶²⁵ Even figural or narrative details that seem to have been inspired by panel paintings were quite integrated into the surface of the wall. While they may be perched on candelabra, as in the Villa di Agrippa Postumo at Boscotrecase, the unreality of the situation was even more obvious than in the Second

⁶²¹ Zanker 1988, 101–102.

⁶²² *Ibid.*, 105–108, 136–137.

⁶²³ See, for example, Edwards 1993, 137–172 on the link between luxurious building and excessive ambition.

⁶²⁴ Bergmann 1995, 98ff.

⁶²⁵ Platt 2009, 59–63.

Style, and now there was very little suggestion of three dimensions.⁶²⁶ We see an inoffensive lack of interest in fantasizing about more luxurious surroundings – though it is exactly this retreat from realism that Vitruvius deplored.⁶²⁷

There was a practical side to the new modesty as well. Many formerly wealthy Romans were left relatively impoverished at the end of so many civil wars, and their limited means meant that the trends they set for private life no longer included excessive opulence.⁶²⁸ Literary works from the period mock wasteful extravagance at home, and painting reflects the attitude that expensive imported stone is best left in public.

II. Marble Veneer and Imperial Prosperity in the Fourth Style

i. Marble in Fourth Style Wall Painting

Marble makes a major comeback as a motif of Fourth Style painting, though it appears in a minority of extant examples from Pompeii.⁶²⁹ Nonetheless, because we have such a large corpus of Fourth Style available, we have numerous surviving examples of imitation stone in it. I argue that stone was never as integral and crucial an element of the Fourth Style as it was in the Second, and that the character and meaning of stone, and its painted representation, had altered significantly by the late first century C.E.

In the Second Style, nearly every wall painting had large areas of the wall painted with blocks that could be recognized as stone ashlar or panels. When we see fictive stone again in the Fourth Style, with few exceptions, it is always relegated to the lower third of the wall surface, in imitation of socles made from real stone known from contemporary palaces, villas, and houses (Figure 65).⁶³⁰ The exceptions to this rule

⁶²⁶ On these paintings, see Blanckenhagen and Alexander 1990. and Knauer 1993.

⁶²⁷ See p. 46 above. Moreover, elements of Third Style painting may have allowed its patrons to subvert Augustan moral value in much the same way the Second Style did. I explore this idea in a forthcoming article (“*Aurataeque Trabes Marmoreumque Solum: Augustan Domestic Luxury and Third Style Wall Painting*”).

⁶²⁸ Dubois-Pelerin 2008, 44.

⁶²⁹ I have not quantified the precise relative proportions of Fourth Style paintings with and without marble, in part due to the fragmentary nature of the remains in Pompeii, the inaccessibility of many properties for examination, and the lack of previous scholarly interest in recording faux marble in published photos and drawings of wall painting. Hélène Eristov (1979) created a catalogue of all the painted imitation marble she found in Pompeii at the time, and this remains a valuable resource, especially since many paintings have not completely survived the intervening decades.

⁶³⁰ Vander Kelen 1998, 44.

include “zebra stripe” patterns (see below), as well as shrines and nymphaea.⁶³¹ These panels are divided into sections representing slabs cut from stone, but they rarely have details resembling drafted margins; they are now meant to imitate veneer rather than solid, structural blocks (Figure 66-Figure 67). There is a range from simple, large rectangular panels to more complicated geometric designs, mirroring the range of possible designs used for *opus sectile* dados in real stone. Some more elaborate examples have large circular or lozenge-shaped central panels, with backgrounds and borders in other colors or varieties of stone (Figure 68). As is the case with real veneer socles, there is an interest in displaying more than one stone type. Even the less complicated paintings with faux stone have at least an upper and lower border of a different type of stone from the larger central panels, usually in addition to alternating large blocks varying types.

My research indicates that imitation stone in Fourth Style painting from Pompeii was not limited to a certain size of home, specific subject matter of painting, or particular room types. It is difficult to detect rules governing which paintings were to include faux stone and which were not. For example, the exedra on the northeast corner of the peristyle in the Casa dei Vettii, a fairly small space decorated with mythological panel paintings, has an elaborate faux stone socle, while the very slightly smaller room at the southeast corner of the peristyle, also featuring mythological panels, does not display imitation stone. Overall, there seem to be more surviving Fourth Style paintings that do not include faux stone than those that do. Eristov catalogued at least sixty-seven Fourth Style rooms in Pompeii with imitation stone, and there are surely more than twice that many Fourth Style paintings in the town all together.⁶³² Contrast this with the at least ninety-four examples of imitation stone she counted in Second Style rooms, which survive in a much smaller number, and we can see that the proliferation of stone had declined between the two styles.

It seems to be the case generally that houses with real imported stone decoration have less imitation stone in their Fourth Style paintings, or none at all. There are exceptions to this rule. The Casa di Marco Lucrezio has a faux stone dado that includes

⁶³¹ Domestic shrines are frequently plastered with faux *opus sectile* designs and almost always depict Numidian marble in their decoration (pers. comm. Jessica Powers). Whether the prevalence of Numidian is simply because of its general popularity, or whether it had some particular ritual significance, is unclear.

⁶³² Eristov 1979 (her counts are sometimes confusing, thus “at least”).

porphyry, Numidian marble, and Chian marble, in its fauces (Figure 69). Along the same line of sight, though distant, a large *emblema* made from real colored stone of many types embellishes the floor of the tablinum (Figure 70). Smaller quantities of colored stone are also embedded in the pavements of other rooms in that house. The Casa di Apollo has a great deal of imported stone pavements throughout the house, which include Numidian and Carystian marbles, as well as grey Luna. It also has a carefully painted imitation stone dado in its unusual back garden room, where Numidian and Chian marble are represented (Figure 71). Generally, rooms painted with faux stone do not have fine stone pavements (other than mosaics), nor are they adjacent to rooms where real stone decoration is on display. It should be noted, however, that in many cases, such as the Casa di Apollo, the wall painting associated with rooms paved in imported stone is completely obliterated. It is difficult, therefore, to be confident that this apparent pattern is a meaningful one. Stone pavements survive better than wall paintings in the archaeological remains of houses that have long been exposed, and so the relationship between the two types of evidence is not fully recoverable.

Few excavated houses in Pompeii have real stone socles. According to Meyboom and Moormann, the only stone veneered dado in Pompeii was in the Casa dei Dioscuri.⁶³³ In Herculaneum, the Casa del Rilievo di Telefo has a marble socle in one room.⁶³⁴ In general, houses in Herculaneum contain more stone decoration, mostly in the form of pavements, than do houses in Pompeii.⁶³⁵ A much larger area of Pompeii has been uncovered than of Herculaneum, so it is difficult to compare the two sites broadly. It is risky then, due to the difference in scale of the excavations, to conclude that imported stone was used more overall in Herculaneum than in Pompeii, but the difference may be significant. I have not found a single Fourth Style painting from Herculaneum that includes faux stone.⁶³⁶ Indeed, in villas too where real stone decoration appears – for example on both the walls and floors of some rooms in Villa A at Oplontis – it is not

⁶³³ Meyboom and Moormann 2013, 80.

⁶³⁴ Allag and Monier 2004, 358.

⁶³⁵ van de Liefvoort 2012, 198.

⁶³⁶ Cf. Meyboom and Moormann 2013, 80.

imitated in Fourth Style wall paintings.⁶³⁷ It seems to be the case that the more real stone that was used by a homeowner, the less appealing its imitation was.⁶³⁸

Such a statement may sound obvious, but it contrasts with the interpretations of some scholars, such as Vander Kelen who argues that imitation stone in wall painting was a “decorative” rather than “economic” choice.⁶³⁹ She bases this idea on the observation that imitation increases in frequency as more imported stone becomes available, and that the same stones are imitated as are actually used in houses. Her interpretation seems confused: while it is true that on a broad scale, imitation stone increases alongside real stone use, it makes sense that as decorative stone became more popular, its imitation would have increased for those who did not have access to the actual material in the amounts they wanted. In individual properties, as I have pointed out, Fourth Style faux stone tends to appear in spaces separate from real stone, suggesting that these two types of decoration were not valued equally. Vander Kelen also argues that painted stone would have been as costly as real marble, but she uses Diocletian's price edict as a basis for that claim, which is of limited use for the period under consideration here.⁶⁴⁰ Such broad, ahistorical claims about the significance of imported stone in Roman decoration are of little interpretive value.

The detail and precision with which imitation stone was painted in the Fourth Style varies widely.⁶⁴¹ This situation contrasts somewhat with the Second Style, in which simpler paintings in modest rooms rarely included details of specific stone types, with the painters most often opting for plan, solid blocks of color. In the Fourth Style, however, there are several examples of very loosely painted, sketchy marbled panels that are nonetheless recognizable in terms of stone type. Some of these less detailed renditions of stone appear on the bottom of walls with quite carefully painted mythological scenes in elaborate architectural frameworks. One such example appears on a particularly high dado with very sketchy marbling in a room facing the peristyle of the Casa di Arianna (Figure 72-Figure 73, and cf. Figure 69). A juxtaposition of this sort suggests that

⁶³⁷ With the exception, perhaps, of the “zebra stripe” paintings, on which see pp. 195-196 below.

⁶³⁸ Vander Kelen 1998, 36–38, 40.

⁶³⁹ Vander Kelen 1998, 40.

⁶⁴⁰ Vander Kelen 1998, 40.

⁶⁴¹ Eristov 1979, 696.

precision and detail were not consistently important in fictive stone painting from this period.

This is not to say that indicating real types of stone was no longer necessary. Indeed, all of the examples of faux stone from the Fourth Style that I have collected depict real, recognizable varieties. The few ambiguous examples from the Second Style are no longer present in the Fourth Style. It was sufficient, however, to use a basic color palette and simple patterns appropriate for each stone type. The details were by this time standardized to a degree that made them easily reproduced and easily recognized, although the stone was often painted quickly and loosely. Indeed, these paintings suggest that Pliny the Elder was not grossly exaggerating when he wrote that “everyone knows” all of the varieties of stone available, and so he did not need to describe them (*N.H.* 36.54).

In identifying the types of stone represented in the Fourth Style, I have observed that its corpus of faux stone nearly replicates the Second Style corpus, with the addition or increased frequency of a few types of stone that had been newly discovered or were more popular in this period. We now see Numidian, Carystian, Lucullan, Skyrian, Chian, Phrygian, Sagarian, purple/red porphyry, and green porphyry. Porphyry had only arrived at Rome during the reign of Claudius and became popular under Nero.⁶⁴² Stones of a single, solid color were less popular than they had been in the Second Style, and white marble in particular was almost never imitated.⁶⁴³ The reason for avoiding solid blocks of color may be that a lack of distinctive details made them less attractive for those who wished to show off their knowledge of marble types and origins. While, as Bradley observed, identifying particular white marbles was the sign of a particularly sophisticated Roman in the Flavian period, those stones' characteristics could hardly be transferred to wall painting.⁶⁴⁴ Pliny the Elder describes the practice of painting shapes on pieces of stone that lack them naturally so as to make them more attractive, which he says began

⁶⁴² Fant 2007, 342. There are other possible types of stone included in the repertoire, in addition to those listed here.

⁶⁴³ *Ibid.*, 341.

⁶⁴⁴ Bradley 2006b, 10.

during the reign of Nero.⁶⁴⁵ That preference is reflected in the way decorative stone is represented on painted plaster walls as well.

An even more remarkable change from the arsenal of stones that had been standard in the Second Style is that alabaster, previously one of the most prominent stone types imitated, seems to drop out of the Fourth Style almost entirely.⁶⁴⁶ Vander Kelen states that there is Fourth Style alabaster in the Casa di Obellio Firmo, but it is unclear to which of the paintings in that house she refers.⁶⁴⁷ There is a painting in that house usually considered Second Style that contains alabaster-like panels, but I was unable to locate any Fourth Style painting with imitation stone in the building at all.⁶⁴⁸ The lack of alabaster in painting is particularly surprising when we consider that actual alabaster remained popular in pavements and other architectural decorations. Moreover, its use in private homes continued to be shorthand for wealth in the writings of Martial and Statius (see p. 63 above). It may be that, while alabaster remained popular for pavements in the mid-late first century C.E., it was not commonly used in the veneered wall socles that the Fourth Style imitates.⁶⁴⁹ So few of these real stone wall coverings survive, however, that are dateable to the same period that this proposition is a difficult one to evaluate. It may be that, as always, trends in wall painting simply developed independently of other decorative trends, even when apparently imitating those other decorations.⁶⁵⁰ In the First and Second Styles, for example, we have seen that paintings that ostensibly imitated other types of luxurious decoration were only tenuously related to real stone. In the Fourth Style, fictive stone and real stone are more closely linked, but still independent in some ways.

⁶⁴⁵ Pliny, *N.H.* 35.3.

⁶⁴⁶ See also Fant 2007, 341. The only exception of which I am aware is the decoration of the nymphaeum/triclinium in the garden of the Casa del Bracciale d'Oro. Though this painting had been partially obliterated by the installation of permanent couches in front of it, Ciardiello identifies it as Fourth Style (2009, 438).

⁶⁴⁷ Vander Kelen 1998, 39.

⁶⁴⁸ Heinrich (2002, 139–141) catalogues these alongside other Second Style paintings.

⁶⁴⁹ The Aedes Augustalium in Herculaneum may have had some alabaster in its wall paneling, but the wall decoration is very fragmentary and heavily restored, so its original composition is unclear. In any case, the decoration of a public building is not necessarily a suitable comparison for private decoration trends.

⁶⁵⁰ Cf. Eristov 1979, 698.

ii. The role of "Zebra Stripe" decorations in Fourth Style wall painting

One category of wall painting produced during the Fourth Style period serves as an exception to the rule that faux stone at this time was always limited to the lower one third of the wall's area: the so-called "zebra stripe" decorations. These paintings consist of quickly executed stripes of grey-black on a white ground (Figure 74). They are usually divided into large panels, and in most examples the lines are diagonal, though there are exceptions. It has long been observed that these decorations appear almost exclusively in corridors and other "service" areas of the buildings they adorn.⁶⁵¹ For example, in Villa A at Oplontis, they decorate a secondary peristyle, corridors, and a latrine. In Pompeii, zebra stripe paintings appear in stairways in the Villa Imperiale and the Casa del Bracciale d'Oro, as well as the latrine of the Stabian Baths. It has been argued that decoration of this sort was used to code a space as "dynamic" (to use Clarke's term) and "servile".⁶⁵² Crispin Corrado Goulet agrees that they decorate dynamic spaces, but not that these spaces tend to be servile.⁶⁵³ Rather, he argues that these designs were popular for their practical purposes, as they were highly visible. Lara Laken has argued that rather than service areas in particular, these designs designate "public or common space".⁶⁵⁴

I would add to these assessments, following some previous scholars, that these patterns are not fully abstract (and are certainly not meant to represent zebra stripes): they are a type of imitation stone. In this case, a possible identification is Luna grey marble.⁶⁵⁵ Though the painted imitation of Luna grey in these decorations is highly regularized and abstracted, its depiction often in panels with strips of red or yellow dividing them, like blocks or sheets of veneer, help us to understand its identity. Imitation Luna grey is appropriate for such spaces as a popular, but not imported, stone type. Luna grey was esteemed, but it was an Italian stone that did not have the same exotic connotations as stones that came from farther afield and are rhapsodized in Latin poetry. It was locally

⁶⁵¹ Wallace-Hadrill 1994, 39–44.

⁶⁵² Clarke 1991, 16.

⁶⁵³ Corrado Goulet 2001.

⁶⁵⁴ Laken 2003.

⁶⁵⁵ See *ibid.*, n. 11 for a thorough inventory of references to this pattern as marble imitation. She concludes, however, that if the design did in fact originate as marble imitation, it quickly lost that association (172). Corrado Goulet, however, believes that they do represent stone, though in my opinion he rather overestimates the sophistication and elegance of this particular type of faux marble (2001, 61–62).

available and more widely used.⁶⁵⁶ It is used in pavements and wall veneers in houses and villas in Campania and Pompeii, including some at Villa A at Oplontis itself, but it is rarely, imitated in wall painting apart from these zebra stripe designs. The distinction suggests that Luna grey was located in a separate intellectual category from stones imported from Greece, Asia Minor, Africa, Egypt, etc. In short, it was attractive, but not as fascinating or prestigious as those other stones.

In addition, Luna grey is quick and easy to imitate in paint, compared to other types of stone. Of course, quickly painted faux stone was not unusual in the Fourth Style, so it was the combination of practical and ideological factors that made Luna grey ideal for secondary or service areas of buildings. It simultaneously indicates that those areas were less important than reception areas decorated with real or imitated imported stone, while providing them with an attractive and rich decor. Other types of stone, such as Carystian marble, would have been equally easy to reproduce. In fact, the decoration of Room 4 at Oplontis, which is mostly decorated with faux Luna marble, also features some similar green imitation stone, which is probably meant to represent Carystian, as well as some sketchy Numidian (Figure 75). The Carystian marble is depicted using the same techniques as the Luna, and may be intended to add a little more elegance to that area. As far as I know, that is the only extant painting that combines Luna with faux imported stones. The choice not to represent imported stone in most areas where Luna grey is depicted suggests that there was a value distinction between foreign imports and the local Italian material that make the latter more appropriate for lower-status spaces. It is important to note that though imitation Luna grey does not appear alongside imported stones in typical Fourth Style paintings, the stone itself was frequently used in high quality decorations.⁶⁵⁷ Though its abstracted representation was relegated to service areas, Luna grey marble itself was a desirable decorative architectural material.

iii. Understanding the Reemergence of Marble in the Fourth Style

In the Fourth Style, imitation stone made a strong recovery from its lack of popularity in the Third Style, though it was less prominent and ubiquitous than it had

⁶⁵⁶ This type of stone is still quarried and widely used in Italy (and elsewhere) today. See Price 2007, 72.

⁶⁵⁷ Such as wall veneer at Oplontis: Barker and Fant 2013, 18.

been in the Second. Now instead of pure fantasy that transgressed the bounds of what was acceptable in real architecture, fictive stone in the Fourth Style is a fairly straightforward substitute for a real, popular type of decoration in actual stone. Since stone was deemed an entirely unappealing subject for Third Style painters, what were the conditions for its return in the Fourth Style? What had changed to make it again appropriate and desirable?

These conditions were complex and had developed gradually over several decades. We can find suggestive evidence in both the archaeological record for decorative stone, particularly in private buildings, and in the literary sources, which have a lot to say on the subject of stone during the Flavian period. A combination of these types of information shows increasing availability and use of stone in the decades following the Augustan period. Alongside this increase was an alternating anxiety and acceptance of its use in the literary sources, with anxiety giving way, eventually, to acceptance. These two coexisting phenomena (availability and acceptance) reinforced and stimulated one another. The general trend and evidence for it is laid out in detail in Chapter 2. Here, I will consider how these large-scale changes may have specifically motivated changes in wall painting as we see them in Fourth Style painting in Pompeian houses and Campanian villas.

We can observe in both the literary accounts and the archaeological record that new types of stone were being imported to Italy in larger and larger quantities during the first century B.C.E. These materials were used on a massive scale in the capital, but also, by the Julio-Claudian period, in substantial quantities in public buildings outside of Rome. In Pompeii, for instance, when the Temple of Venus was renovated, a number of imported stones were included in its decoration, including Chian and Lucullan marble.⁶⁵⁸ In its previous renovation during the first century B.C.E only local stones were used, demonstrating the increased availability and importance of such materials for public building outside of Rome. Other public spaces, such as those in the forum of Pompeii, contained substantial imported stone decoration. Walls and statue bases were veneered with colored stone, and the Macellum even had monolithic columns of Lucullan marble. The decoration of the Flavian cult building included a variety of colored stone types, as

⁶⁵⁸ Carroll, Montana, and Randazzo 2008.

did the Eumachia building and the Central Baths.⁶⁵⁹ If we generalize from examples like these, we get the sense that by the Flavian period, imported stone was a part of the everyday environment of most people. These materials were visible everywhere in public spaces and had been, increasingly, throughout the lifetimes of people who were adults by this time. A long experience with visible, accessible imported stone in public places would have made it familiar to most people. Consequently, it would be less exotic and, potentially, less provocative, in contrast to when it was a rarity in the Late Republic.

This increased familiarity with imported stone may explain the decrease in the precision and detail with which it was painted in the Fourth Style. Knowledge of stone types and origins was still a part of educated elite self-fashioning. The proliferation of these stones meant, however, that the identification of stone must no longer have been as esoteric and socially-limited a type of information. If imported stones were more familiar, the need for them to be represented very carefully may have been less pressing. A few streaks or loops of red on yellow could easily be recognized as Numidian marble. It is important to note that this explanation for a lack of precision in painting stone is the opposite of the explanation for imprecision in the First Style (pp. 86-95 above). Then, since most people were unfamiliar imported decorative stone types, there was no desire to depict the actual qualities of specific varieties accurately. Now, widespread familiarity makes precision unnecessary. The most important difference is that, while imaginary stone was abundant in First Style paintings, in the Fourth Style, the sketchiest of representations always nonetheless corresponds to a real stone variety.

In addition to its frequent use in public buildings, imported stone was becoming available for private use in a wider range of property types and by varying economic classes. In luxury villas, like Villa A at Oplontis, we find marble veneer covering partial or entire wall surfaces, arranged in elaborate polychrome pavements of large rooms (Figure 76), and even used in the form of monolithic columns of Lesbos grey for extensive peristyles.⁶⁶⁰ In wealthy houses in Pompeii and Herculaneum, we find some stone veneer socles and *opus sectile* floors, though on a smaller scale, because the rooms they decorate tend themselves to be smaller than those in villas (Figure 77). In less

⁶⁵⁹ Fant 2007, 340.

⁶⁶⁰ Barker and Fant 2013, 15-16.

opulent, but still fairly wealthy houses, *opus sectile* pavements are limited to nicely executed *emblemata* in *tablina* and other important reception rooms, or veneer decorating shrines and *nymphaea* (Figure 70). In even smaller homes, the *emblemata* are less neatly produced (Figure 78), or irregular bits of stone are set together in a sort of collage to cover relatively large floors or are inserted into neat mosaic pavements. In some modest homes and shops, irregular, reused pieces of imported stone are dispersed widely across the surface of *opus signinum* floors, demonstrating the availability of marble and its prestige even for those who could only afford small quantities of scrap material (Figure 79). By the time Vesuvius erupted, imported stone was visible on a daily basis for everyone in the town, whether in public or private space,

There are indications that in 79 C.E. Pompeii was on the cusp of a major surge in private imported stone use.⁶⁶¹ For instance, the Casa dei Marmi seems to have been undergoing renovations at the time of the eruption, which included the installation of imported stone architectural elements on a scale that we otherwise would expect only in luxury villas up to this time. Massive stone thresholds cut from vibrant green porphyry and Carystian marble are today piled up in the corner of the house's large, overgrown peristyle, but their measurements correspond to the widths of the doorways facing that courtyard (Figure 80). While it is possible that they were previously installed and then removed again (like the Lesbos grey columns from Villa A at Oplontis), it is just as likely that they were awaiting installation at the time the property was destroyed.⁶⁶² These remains are evidence of a general trend of increasing access to imported stone on larger scales during the decades leading up to the destruction of Pompeii.⁶⁶³

Of course increased *access* alone would not necessarily be enough to result in increased *use* in private homes if there had not been an accompanying shift in attitude toward private luxury and toward stone decoration specifically. For this, the Roman documentary sources are invaluable. In previous chapters, I avoided relying too heavily on texts in interpreting Second Style paintings, in large part because most of the texts that commented on marble use in that period were written much later. For the late Julio-

⁶⁶¹ Fant 2007, 340.

⁶⁶² Cf. Barker and Fant 2013, 27ff. on spoliation and renovation at Oplontis.

⁶⁶³ For more on the development of the marble trade in imperial Rome, see, for example, Fant 2001; Pensabene and Alvarez Pérez 1998; Long 2012 among many others.

Claudian and Flavian periods, however, we have a relative wealth of contemporary commentary on marble. In addition, while texts focusing on the city of Rome and activities of elite Romans are of limited use in describing the behavior of residents of Pompeii in the late Republic, Roman literature becomes increasingly applicable as time passes.

This is not to suggest that local community dynamics in Pompeii were interchangeable with those of other communities at any period. As David Mattingly notes, local identity was always distinct from Roman identity – even in Italy, and even at periods like the reign of Augustan when central Roman culture was particularly influential outside of the capital.⁶⁶⁴ In addition, the audience who viewed wall paintings in houses in Pompeii would have been made up almost exclusively of other Pompeians, though visitors to villas may often have come from farther afield.⁶⁶⁵ Nonetheless, Campania, which long had cultural links with Rome, became increasingly Roman during the empire.⁶⁶⁶ While Cicero observed a division between the Pompeian and Romans in Pompeii in the first half of the first century B.C.E., by the reign of Nero at least, texts that describe the private living environments of the Roman elite as often as not direct attention to Campania. Broadly speaking, by this time we can chart the same trends in decoration from elite residences in Rome, Campanian villas, and Pompeian townhouses.⁶⁶⁷ As a result, texts from this period are of particular interest in interpreting the remains of residential properties in the region destroyed by Mount Vesuvius.

Many of the relevant details of the sources that illustrate changes in attitudes toward private luxury have been discussed in Chapter 2, and these broad, widespread shifts influenced the decorative choices of people inside and outside Pompeii.⁶⁶⁸ As the Julio-Claudian dynasty became more established and the empire became more stable, two

⁶⁶⁴ Mattingly 2010, 143–146.

⁶⁶⁵ Cf. Powers 2006.

⁶⁶⁶ For an exploration of the cultural links between Campania and Rome during the reign of Domitian, see Newlands 2012. There are some minor stylistic differences in motifs in the Fourth Style in Rome and Pompeii, as noted by Eristov 1994, 124. Moormann 2009, 162. points out that within the Fourth Style there are also significant, non-chronological, differences between Pompeii and Herculaneum. I have not observed major general distinctions between the form of Fourth Style painting that appears in villas and the form that appears in townhouses, though, as with the Second Style, paintings would have been designed to suit the scale and shape of the specific spaces they decorated.

⁶⁶⁷ Eristov 1994, 124.

⁶⁶⁸ For specific sources for the following summary, see pp. 51-66 and 77-81 above.

major factors affected opinions of private luxury. First, anxiety about potential civil wars waned (though never disappeared entirely), and so a display of wealth by a private citizen did not automatically signify ambition and threat so much as it demonstrated the abundance brought by imperial rule. Stability in Italy and freedom from external threats also allowed luxurious villas with rich furnishings to be constructed in coastal regions without a need for fortification. These elements – diminishing possibility of civil war, increased wealth available to a wider population of Roman citizens, and decreased external threats - combined to encourage private homeowners to accumulate and display greater and greater wealth, often in the form of imported stone. Moreover, as Catherine Edwards has noted, approval of and competition for wealth and luxury among the upper classes in the imperial period could directly benefit the emperor. Those who wished to take part in such competitive luxury would have to look to the emperor for favor and support while directing their resources toward private building, since imperial appointments would be necessary to maintain wealth and recoup expenses.⁶⁶⁹

A temporary interruption in this pattern of growing acceptance of private luxury occurred during the reign of Vespasian, when attitudes reappeared that closely resembled those of the Augustan period.⁶⁷⁰ These attitudes were motivated by events nearly identical to those that preceded the reign of Augustus, namely civil war. Again we can observe, especially in the writing of Pliny the Elder, suspicion and disapproval of displays of personal wealth and of the use of imported stone in particular.⁶⁷¹ Pliny attacks innovations in marble as especially unnatural and disgraceful. Tacitus notes that Vespasian encouraged modesty and frugality through his own example, rather than by legislation, as Augustus had done.⁶⁷² Like Augustus, Vespasian instituted massive public building programs to contrast with the private aggrandizement of previous generations of imperial rulers.⁶⁷³

How were these fluctuating attitudes reflected in wall painting? While we can see a reappearance of imitation stone in the Fourth Style, we do not have the chronological

⁶⁶⁹ Edwards 1993, 124.

⁶⁷⁰ Baldwin 1995, 59.

⁶⁷¹ See pp. 57-63 above.

⁶⁷² See p. 66 above.

⁶⁷³ Boyle 2003, 30.

resolution necessary to distinguish phases within the style itself – or at least to date them absolutely. It is tempting to speculate that some or most of the paintings that omit faux stone belong to the reign of Vespasian. These, then, would comprise the majority of what survives, because they were the newest batch of decorations created before Pompeii was destroyed (just as the Fourth Style, as the latest style to be produced, makes up the majority of extant paintings).⁶⁷⁴ Unfortunately for that theory, coin impressions in the Casa della Caccia Antica date the wall paintings there, many of which include faux stone (e.g. Figure 68), to 71-79 C.E.⁶⁷⁵ Perhaps marble came back into style or acceptance late in Vespasian's rule. More likely, I would argue, marble never went out of style to the extent that already existing uses of it were considered unattractive. Indeed Vespasian's residences in the Garden of Sallust and, though he occupied them less often, on the Palatine were decorated with marble.⁶⁷⁶ This theory accords well with what occurred during the reign of Augustus, when imported stone use continued and probably even increased, but became symbolically bankrupt. A third possibility is not mutually exclusive from the others. As is suggested also by the lack of interest in alabaster in Fourth Style painting, Campanian wall painting trends followed a path that was sometimes parallel to and sometimes diverged from trends in real stone decoration or trends in painting current in the city of Rome.⁶⁷⁷

The attitudes toward displays of expensive stone in private houses, and especially in villas, that were exhibited by poets writing under Domitian had gradually developed in the wider population over the preceding decades. These attitudes influenced the way imitation stone appeared in wall painting. Under Domitian, Martial and Statius wrote about marble in the homes of wealthy associates without moral disdain, intending it as a compliment to the patron of their poems rather than a criticism.⁶⁷⁸ It is in this period that we first get a strong sense that private wealth can represent a compliment to the emperor for providing abundance and stability to his subjects. Again, by the reign of Domitian,

⁶⁷⁴ Contra Moormann (2009, 160) who suggests that faux marble in the Fourth Style only appears in Campania after the death of Nero, based on what I believe is a misreading of Pliny the Elder (see p. 58 above).

⁶⁷⁵ Allison 2002, 204.

⁶⁷⁶ See Acton 2011, 107–110 on Vespasian's residences.

⁶⁷⁷ See p. 194 above.

⁶⁷⁸ Newlands 2012, 18–19.

there was a seemingly firmly established dynasty free from threat of civil war. If Domitian was in fact insecure and paranoid about his position, that might have been all the more reason for literature from the period to celebrate his benevolence and stability. Though Domitian's rule began just after the burial of the Fourth Style paintings in Pompeii that I consider here, we can assume that ideals expressed during his reign had gained some footing in earlier periods. It is possible to imagine that similar attitudes obtained during the late Julio-Claudian period as the result of similar circumstances, just as attitudes during the reign of Vespasian resemble those of the Augustan period. Some anxiety over luxury remains in the writings of Seneca the Younger, however, while it is almost entirely absent from Statius.⁶⁷⁹

In wall painting itself, imitation stone reappears in the Fourth Style in a changed form and with a correspondingly different meaning from what it had conveyed in the Second Style. The interruption in its popularity likely allowed it to regenerate anew. Fictive stone in the Fourth Style carried little of the baggage that had been attached to it in the Second Style and caused it to become undesirable in the Third. As a result, the new imitation stone was just that: imitation. It replaced real stone decoration in places where such materials were inaccessible. Representations of imported stone no longer acted as transgressive fantasies stretching the bounds of what was acceptable in private decor. Instead, they glorified the abundance, stability, and far-reaching power of the Roman Empire.

⁶⁷⁹ The genres in which each is writing (moral philosophy vs. honorific poetry) certainly also has something to do with that distinction. See Newlands 2012, 153-157 for a comparison of Seneca and Statius.

Chapter Seven

Memory and Meaning

I. Maintaining and Viewing Antique Wall Paintings until 79 C.E.

In this chapter, I ask why certain Republican wall paintings were preserved until 79 C.E. and discuss the reception of those earlier paintings in the period of the Fourth Style. I consider how changes in ideas about marble and luxury could have motivated people to maintain old paintings rather than to replace them with newer styles, and ask how they would have understood the relationship of those antique objects to the past. I argue that old wall paintings could have served as heirlooms to affiliate certain people who possessed them with the values of previous generations. In addition, I contend that Republican paintings may have influenced ideas about the material environment of the past while serving as inspiration for imperial architectural designs.

I explore the use of theoretical approaches to the study of memory and the material culture and environment in order to explain possible motivations behind the preservation and maintenance of Republican wall paintings in later periods. I begin by treating these decorations somewhat abstractly by considering their role simply as potentially prestigious objects from the past. In the second half of this section, I go into more detail about memories related to imported stone in particular. There I consider how what we know about changing attitudes toward marble use from literary and other evidence can help us to understand the reception of specific imagery and motifs in First and Second Style paintings by later viewers.

Conventionally, scholarship on wall painting in Pompeii has focused on the presumed date of production of various styles based on evolutionary stylistic sequences, with little attention drawn to the fact that in houses in 79 C.E. old paintings coexisted with new.⁶⁸⁰ Thus, while the dates of their creation may have differed, all of the paintings available for study today were used, i.e. viewed, (and buried) at the same time.⁶⁸¹ Some brief attempts have been made, however, to address the reasons that people living in Pompeii preserved and even repaired decorations that were apparently out of style in the last phase of the city's existence. As I discussed in Chapter 3, Laidlaw and Leach, for example, have commented on the potential prestige associated with First Style paintings.⁶⁸² They suggest that the decorations were kept as a representation of old-fashioned Roman aristocratic values, or because of their association with public life since similar decoration could be found in public buildings such as the basilica in Pompeii.

Jessica Powers discusses some of the reasons that have been proposed for the repair of old paintings, in this case mostly Third Style.⁶⁸³ She notes that it is sometimes assumed that old paintings were retained for economic reasons and only replaced if serious damage required it. An exception is made for the highest status houses like the Casa del Fauno, presumably, where old decoration is uniquely significant. Powers argues, however, that if the owner of the house was (apparently) spending money on other aspects of domestic decoration, this may not be a sufficient explanation.⁶⁸⁴ Other reasons for the retention of old décor mentioned by Powers are its value, based on its age and expression of traditional values (i.e. Laidlaw's explanation, critiqued below), or its sentimental connection to previous generations. Her most compelling suggestion is that an eclectic mixture of new and old styles is a matter of Roman taste; I will return to this point briefly below. Other than the last of these explanations, all of them are speculation based on modern common sense and analogy: i.e. asking ourselves, if unconsciously, why we would choose to keep our own grandparents' things. The problems with modern

⁶⁸⁰ An important recent exception is Ehrhardt 2012.

⁶⁸¹ Noted by Powers 2006, 161. The one exception that I discussed in Chapter 3 is the First Style painting that was excavated from an earlier house replaced by the Casa del Menandro (see p. 102 above).

⁶⁸² See pp. 86-95. Laidlaw 1985, 1; Leach 2004, 63, 234.

⁶⁸³ Powers 2006, 163-164.

⁶⁸⁴ One could also argue that if there was no immediate need to replace serviceable wall painting, a house owner might simply choose to direct the majority of his/her funds, however lavishly, on other elements of décor.

analogy and common sense interpretations has been long agonized over in the archaeological literature; fairly recently, with respect to Pompeian houses, the use of unselfconscious analogy has been masterfully dismantled by Allison.⁶⁸⁵

The explanations mentioned above may go some way toward understanding what an old style meant to later generations, but they are ultimately unsatisfying. Laidlaw's suggestion does not take into account the context of the paintings and their history. I have argued above that the First Style in Pompeii is part of a Hellenistic, not specifically Roman, tradition.⁶⁸⁶ Leach's association of the First Style with public buildings in an important one; however, the paintings in houses seem all to predate the examples found in (or on) public structures. Mols has suggested that these later, public decorations may not have been directly connected to the tradition of the interior decoration of houses, especially when found on the exterior of buildings.⁶⁸⁷ At least at the beginning of their history, the connection between First Style interiors and public business does not seem to have been a strong one. Things, however, changed.

It seems unlikely that one explanation will apply to all the survivals of early paintings until 79 C.E. in Pompeii. Different people at different times made choices either simply to neglect to replace paintings or actively to preserve and maintain them for a variety of reasons. It is not enough to speculate that old paintings were valued because they were old (or “traditional” or “venerable” etc.). Nor can we assume that houses with old paintings remained in the possession of old families, while updated decorations signify changes in ownership.⁶⁸⁸ What power did an old decoration have when displayed in a house that a new, more trendy painting, did not? Why was having something old a good thing? Preserving old decoration was not an obvious, default choice when the majority of people in Pompeii were living in very different Fourth Style residences.

One way to try to understand these choices is to employ approaches related to the use of material culture in the construction of pasts that are meaningful in the present, i.e. approaches to memory and material culture. Scholarship on the social function of heirlooms seems especially promising. In this way, I take into account the personal

⁶⁸⁵ Allison 2001, 181-208.

⁶⁸⁶ Mols 2005, 245; cf. Leach 2004, 69, and see Chapter 3 above.

⁶⁸⁷ Mols 2005, 245.

⁶⁸⁸ Contra Leach 2004, 234.

agency of individual inhabitants of houses, changes in attitude over time, and the historical context in which decisions were made – that is, the full complexity in which these domestic decorations operated.

I do not mean to suggest that pure theory or analogy can give us all the answers, and certainly we should not neglect the detailed information we have about the cultural context of 79 C.E. Pompeii, especially what is provided by the study of epigraphical and literary sources. For instance, if we intend to consider how wall painting was used to construct identity in Pompeii, we need to think about the specific identities that might have been relevant and desirable at the site. Certain people at certain times might have wanted to express an ethnically Roman identity; others might have preferred to emphasize their Pompeian roots or their allegiance to Greek culture. Besides ethnicity or cultural identity, other Roman or Italian values are possible, such as military or political authority, social rank, wealth, frugality or modesty, beneficence, education, or cultural sophistication. Identifying specific possibilities in meaning requires looking at these objects in their precise cultural context, rather than thinking of their use in a trans-historical or pan-cultural way.

Art historical studies of Roman habits of collecting might be particularly useful for understanding the preservation of antique paintings. This topic has been explored thoroughly by others, and so I will not duplicate their work here, but Roman values related to *decorum* (or appropriateness), emulation of past accomplishments, or eclecticism, are especially valuable for understanding decorative assemblages in Pompeii that combine old and new styles of painting along with other works of art in a variety of styles.⁶⁸⁹

Economic and other pragmatic factors for not replacing existing decoration cannot be dismissed entirely. These must have come into play regularly. Leach notes that the general pattern in Pompeii shows that existing paintings were not replaced on a whim or simply to keep up with trends.⁶⁹⁰ In her view, the replastering and painting of walls almost always accompanied other architectural restructuring of the house, whether in the context of renovations or expansion of property, or as repairs carried out after an

⁶⁸⁹ See, for example, Perry 2005; Powers 2006; Bartman 1991, 71-88.

⁶⁹⁰ Leach 2004, 236.

earthquake or other damage. This means, however, that when people made choices to repairs existing decoration in certain areas of the house despite the opportunity for renewal, it is likely to have been a significant decision. This is especially true when they have chosen to update other paintings in the same property in the latest fashion (or when they chose not to permit any new styles at all in their house, a very rare situation). The upkeep of centuries- or decades-old painting must have required attention and expenditure.

Not everyone would have had the ability to make such a choice. The majority of houses with Second Style paintings, for example, are quite modest, as is their decoration.⁶⁹¹ In these cases, limited resources may have been the deciding factor in the preservation of paintings. Conservatism is a negative rather than a positive choice, then, especially if that decoration was allowed to deteriorate. Even if the walls were kept in good repair, presumably this was the less expensive option. For that reason, I will focus in this chapter on processes affecting large scale, elite homes, whose owners at some point during the perhaps 200-year life of their homes could have made the conscious choice either to preserve their houses' existing decoration or to replace it with something new. It is under these circumstances that we can begin to discuss the implications of such choices. Specifically, most of my discussion in the first section of the chapter will revolve around First Style wall decoration, since it is the oldest type of painting that remained on Pompeian walls, and also because it is less symbolically complex than other styles. Its age, therefore, could easily be one of its most important characteristics. Similar principles could be applied to other early styles of painting or to floor decoration, etc., but since my focus is on imitation stone, those fall outside of the scope of discussion here.

i. Remembering to Maintain Paintings, or Maintaining Paintings to Remember

Studies of the role of memory in ancient societies have become common, within both classical studies and archaeology. Work has even been done on Roman memory and wall painting in particular.⁶⁹² What I contribute here has not yet been taken up in the scholarship. I offer some thoughts on how theoretical approaches to memory and material culture illuminate the ways in which Republican wall paintings functioned in Imperial-

⁶⁹¹ Heinrich 2002, 9-10.

⁶⁹² E.g. Bergmann 1994, 225-256; and cf. Leach 2004, 211.

period Pompeii. Most similar work in archaeology has focused on portable artifacts or landscapes as bearers of memory, though houses too have been the subject of some discussion.⁶⁹³ I see painted plaster wall decoration as existing somewhere in between the category of an object that can be held in the hand, sold or handed down to another person, buried in a grave, etc., and a constructed or natural landscape imbued with meaning. A painted room is an environment. A painting is also, however, a thing that can be owned by an individual or single household, whose ownership can be transferred, and that can be destroyed, replaced, or deposited like other artifacts. It is in some ways both an object and a landscape, and neither.

The study of memory and its materialization in the archaeological record tends to focus on the active creation of social memory both through the production and maintenance of landscapes and objects and through ritual or repeated performances that revolve around those spaces or things and reinforce their significance. These may be special, carefully orchestrated activities, or they may be everyday interactions with the meaningful object. Objects might be created specifically to commemorate events – an example of “inscribed memory” – or already existing artifacts or features of the environment might be given new meanings, which have to be supported by actions and words – “incorporated or embodied memory”.⁶⁹⁴ Material culture also allows people a physical reference point with which to situate themselves in relation to the past.⁶⁹⁵ All of these aspects of memory are closely related to the formation, expression, and negotiation of social identity. Harnessing important elements of the past and representing oneself in light of them is a useful way of expressing identity – and the past can be used in different ways at different times by different people, depending on the identity that is most useful. Construction of the past in this way, which tends to include active forgetting alongside the creation of new histories, may be especially characteristic of periods of social and political upheaval and transformation.⁶⁹⁶

It is not difficult to see how ideas about memory’s relationship to material culture can encourage us to think about the roles old paintings played in the homes of the elite

⁶⁹³ E.g. Lillios and Tsamis 2010; Jones 2007; Yoffee 2007; Van Dyke and Alcock 2003.

⁶⁹⁴ Van Dyke and Alcock 2003, 4. And see pp. 14 and 35-40 above.

⁶⁹⁵ Jones 2007.

⁶⁹⁶ See Yoffee 2007, 3.

(or not-so-elite) in Pompeii. We have seen that the preservation of a wall decoration for decades or, in some case, nearly two centuries, was the result of active decision making on the part of at least those home owners who could have afforded to update it. Thus, I argue that it is a choice made repeatedly and consciously with the awareness that the continued display of old paintings has meaning in the present. In the rapidly changing social and political environment of Pompeii between *ca.* 150 B.C.E. and 79 C.E., those meanings would not have remained static. Members of each successive generation would have had to reinterpret and re-express their relationships to the past as the painted domestic environment that they inhabited symbolized them.

The active process of constructing memory explains how old paintings retained enough social and cultural relevancy to be preserved over generations and through changes in ownership. I focus my discussion on the Casa del Fauno, an atypical example in a number of ways, but one that might help us to understand these processes in their most exaggerated form. Recently published archaeological investigations of the Casa del Fauno shows that its first phase dates to *ca.* 180 B.C.E. and that it was renovated and received its earliest extant decoration around 110 B.C.E.⁶⁹⁷ Since this is the largest (excavated) house in the town, its inhabitants presumably had the resources to choose the type of decoration they preferred at various points during the house's history. Even though the house underwent renovations and expansions throughout its history, it preserves more First Style painting than any other house in town. Furthermore, its conspicuousness due to its size and prominent location suggests that it would have been the focus of a certain amount of public attention.⁶⁹⁸ Its appearance, therefore, is likely to have been carefully calculated to send a particular message.

We do not know who occupied the Casa del Fauno. It has often been presumed by some archaeologists that it belonged to an old Pompeian family, and its ownership has been supplied as an explanation for its traditional appearance.⁶⁹⁹ There is significant danger of circular reasoning here. As I argue below, the *real* identity of its owners

⁶⁹⁷ Hoffmann and Faber 2009, 111.

⁶⁹⁸ On the streetfronts of houses and loci of public activity, see, for example, Hartnett 2008.

⁶⁹⁹ E.g. Leach 2004, 62. Clarke (1991, 85; citing De Vos and De Vos 1982, 162) suggests that an inscribed base naming, in Oscan, the aedile Satrius, may suggest that the Satrii owned this property. This base was found “near tablinum 35”. According to prosopographical studies, the Satrii fell out of political influence for most of the period following the colonization of Pompeii, until the last years of the city.

actually makes little difference to our understanding of how the inhabitants used the house to represent themselves. What matters is the kind of identity they wanted to present to the community, whether that identity was *authentic* in some sense or not.

First Style painting still surviving in 79 C.E. must have carried a substantially different meaning from when it was introduced in the second century B.C.E. Not only did its relation to the past (i.e. its character as an object of the past rather than purely of the present) give it meaning, it also existed in relation to all manner of other images, environments, and objects which did not exist at its moment of its creation. It may be that First Style decoration, at the time it was introduced to Pompeii, was especially significant as a sign of cultural membership in a larger Hellenistic milieu, where it originated in a form now called the Masonry Style.⁷⁰⁰ The fact that Pompeian First Style has features that differentiate it from similar Masonry Style paintings found elsewhere around the Mediterranean demonstrates that it was simultaneously a manifestation of a broader trend and the result of a very local tradition.

As time passed and the cultural position, as well as the social or political composition, of Pompeii were transformed, other meanings would have been added to, and in some cases would have replaced, the original ones.⁷⁰¹ For those inhabitants of the city who wished to represent themselves as adhering to Roman values, the choice not to redecorate may have been an expression of frugality and simplicity. Leach notes that First Style paintings tend to be preserved in the most public rooms of large houses and sees a link with political and business life, because important public buildings often also contained similar wall decoration.⁷⁰² If this link to public life was an important one, then, as I have argued above, it seems to have been acquired at a later stage, since evidence for public buildings with stuccoed imitation masonry dates later than First Style houses.⁷⁰³

The inhabitants of the Casa del Fauno preserved their First Style decorations not only in the vestibule or atrium, but also more extensively throughout the house. The scale of this display alone suggests that it held a great deal of significance. In Chapter 5, I

⁷⁰⁰ Cf. Bruno 1969, 305-317 and pp. 84-86 above.

⁷⁰¹ Cf. Whittle 2010, 37.

⁷⁰² Leach 2004, 62-63.

⁷⁰³ See p. 88 above.

described the redecoration in the Second Style of many houses in Pompeii following its colonization by Rome. First Style wall decoration that was not replaced and that continued to be maintained may have been meant to represent a link not to the Roman past but to the Pompeian past and to Pompeian identity constructed in opposition to Roman identity. A choice not to alter one's domestic self-presentation in the face of intensified Roman presence and political interference may have been regarded as an alternate path to authority.⁷⁰⁴ In this case, rather than expressing an adoption of Roman identity but redecorating in the Second Style, resistance to change and clinging to old tradition seems to have been a successful tactic, if we can judge the success of its owners by the Casa del Fauno's survival intact until the town's destruction.⁷⁰⁵ The meaning of the First Style vis-à-vis identity was not inherent in the decorations. It would, rather, have been demonstrated and reinforced by the behavior and language of the people who interacted with those decorations. The visual and material environment of the house provided a setting and backdrop for the self-presentation of its owners, and so needed to appropriately represent them.

I emphasize that wall paintings never had a single, static meaning even in their relation to the past.⁷⁰⁶ At any given time, the way memory was articulated by First Style decoration must have been multivalent. The inhabitants and visitors to the Casa del Fauno could have extracted different meanings depending on their own experiences and what was expedient in that moment, as I explain in more detail below. It is only continuing engagement with the object/environment that activates its role as bearer of memory.⁷⁰⁷

i. Heirloom-quality Paintings

A related line of approach to this material comes from archaeological studies of residual artifacts and predepositional processes. These are processes in which objects move from the possession of one person to another, sometimes with a resulting change in function, before becoming part of the archaeological record. Residual artifacts are objects

⁷⁰⁴ Cf. pp. 146-148 above on the contentious social and political environment surrounding the colonization of Pompeii by Rome.

⁷⁰⁵ Cf. the success of the Epidii family in Pompeian politics despite their choice not to adopt Roman burial customs (p. 165 above).

⁷⁰⁶ Cf. Confino 1997, 99.

⁷⁰⁷ Cf. Rowlands 1993, 142

that significantly predate the archaeological context in which they were found. Michael Schiffer, in his 1976 volume on *Behavioral Archeology*, set out some of the processes that might prevent objects from being deposited for a prolonged period of time (S-S or systemic-systemic processes).⁷⁰⁸ For instance, artifacts might pass from the ownership of one person to another for an extended period of time (“lateral cycling”), as wall paintings clearly did. Pompeian paintings eventually entered the archaeological record either when they were stripped from the wall and discarded or reused in construction with other debris or, ultimately, when all of them, including those still attached to the walls, were buried by the eruption of Vesuvius – though of course the biographies of these paintings continue to this day. Schiffer also discusses the preservation of objects as parts of collections in libraries and archives, in which those artifacts change function as a result.⁷⁰⁹ This concept might have some bearing on the decorative assemblages of Pompeian houses, but the form of “lateral cycling” that seems most relevant to the preservation of old paintings in Pompeii is that of heirlooms.

A more recent (1999) study of heirlooms in the archaeological record was carried out by Katina T. Lillios.⁷¹⁰ Wall painting does not fit one of her strict criteria for heirlooms, i.e. that of portability. Lillios stipulates that heirloom objects can be kept with an individual if he or she relocates and continue to be used to display identity.⁷¹¹ For this reason, she is especially interested in objects that can be worn or carried. I would argue, however, that wall paintings can, nonetheless, be appropriately categorized as heirlooms according to Lillios’s criteria. Though wall paintings cannot be easily taken away from their houses (and, as far as I know, Romans never did this), the house and its decoration were closely entwined with personal identity. Several of the functions of heirloom artifacts are fulfilled by antique wall decorations preserved in later periods in Pompeii. Accordingly, I apply Lillios’s heirloom theory to wall painting. Until now, this kind of approach has not been used for Roman painting – nor has it been applied to the study of

⁷⁰⁸ Schiffer 1976, 37-39.

⁷⁰⁹ Ibid., 39-40.

⁷¹⁰ Lillios 1999.

⁷¹¹ Ibid., 241-242.

any other artifact in Roman archaeology, to my knowledge.⁷¹² I, however, adapt Lillios's theory significantly to allow it to shed light on the preservation of Republican paintings.

Lillios relates cycles in the importance of heirlooms to developing forms of social organization. She sees them as being especially linked to the rise of chiefdoms.⁷¹³ Such a social evolutionary framework is not especially useful in the context of Pompeii, but her observations about the type of social and political situations in which heirlooms are advantageous may be salient. Lillios associates the creation and maintenance of heirlooms with unstable societies, especially those in which achieved status is in the process of giving way to ascribed or inherited status. She goes on to add that heirlooms are likely to function similarly in societies in which there is conflict between those whose status is inherited and those who are able to rise in rank through other means such as military and political achievement.⁷¹⁴ This latter condition brings to mind the social and political environment of Pompeii, especially in the years following the town's colonization by Rome, during which time local aristocrats competed for power with newly settled authority figures.⁷¹⁵ Indeed, the social fabric of Pompeii was such that this dual system of achieved and inherited rank continued throughout the town's history, as freedmen and other non-aristocrats laid claim to positions of influence. As a result, tools for negotiating power never became obsolete.

The way that heirlooms operate to mediate these tensions is, I suggest, closely related to the role material culture plays in shaping memory, discussed above. Objects can create mnemonic links to the past, in this case to the authority of ancestors or other powerful historical figures.⁷¹⁶ This visual, material indication of the relationship between the current possessor of the object – the owner of a house and other members of his or her household, in our case – and the authority of ancestors serves to situate the living in relation to a prestigious past. It allows them to borrow the prestige of their predecessors. The heirloom is a record of the success of previous generations, and possession of it is proof of identity. It is this property of an heirloom – its demonstrable ownership by an

⁷¹² Though Ellen Swift (2012) briefly addresses the concept when considering the reuse of Romano-British bracelets in the post-Roman period.

⁷¹³ Lillios 1999, 235-236, 256-257.

⁷¹⁴ Her "Condition 4" society: *ibid.*, 256-257.

⁷¹⁵ See Chapter 5 above.

⁷¹⁶ Lillios 1999, 236.

individual or group (especially a family group) – that distinguishes my adaptation of Lillios’s approach to specific types of material culture from my more general discussion of memory above.

The difficulty with the concept of heirlooms applied to houses and their decoration in Pompeii is, first, that we rarely have any idea of the identity or status of the owners of specific houses, such as the Casa del Fauno, even at the time of the town’s destruction, never mind at earlier points in its history.⁷¹⁷ As a result, we cannot be sure that any particular house remained in the hands of a single family over generations, thus qualifying as a true heirloom, according to Lillios’s criteria. Objects can pass in and out of heirloom status, for example by becoming commodities when they are sold outside of the family.⁷¹⁸ This surely was the case with certain houses and their paintings.

Rosemary Joyce, however, has explored the role of houses as heirlooms. She notes that the material continuity of the physical forms of a house can stand in for the continuity of a lineage or household.⁷¹⁹ Moreover, she points out the inhabiting the same house may in some cases be a stronger basis for bonds than biological relationships. Joyce also argues that keeping moveable objects in the confines of a house despite the fact that they could be transferred attests to the continuity of the household as well.⁷²⁰ Much the same could be said about wall paintings in Pompeian houses. Their scale made their continuity particularly conspicuous. Joyce’s approach to houses as heirlooms provides a useful link between Lillios’s work on moveable objects and my own study of domestic wall paintings.

Lillios distinguishes between true heirlooms and objects that are passed around between members of the elite, but not necessarily down individual lineages.⁷²¹ I do not consider this distinction vital to understanding how heirloom paintings were meant to function, even if there was a qualitative difference between possession of a painting that

⁷¹⁷ Leach (2004, 208-238) bases a lengthy discussion of the decorative habits of political candidates on the idea that we can identify certain homeowners on the basis of electoral graffiti found on the facades of houses. I am less convinced that this is a foolproof method. Even if/when we can know inhabitants of houses by name, their precise identity or status may still elude us. It is, for example, difficult to distinguish prosopographically between old aristocratic families and their freedmen.

⁷¹⁸ Lillios 1999, 243-244.

⁷¹⁹ Joyce 2000, 190; cf. Boozer 2010, 142.

⁷²⁰ Joyce 2000, 203.

⁷²¹ *Ibid.*, 255.

could be shown to have once belonged to one's ancestor and a situation where the link with the past was less direct – fictive, even. I contend that whether or not the owner of the heirloom was a biological descendant of its original owner, possession of it could still have functioned (ideally) to grant legitimacy and to suggest that the current owner shared the qualities and values of previous generations.⁷²² These qualities need not have been attributed to a single person, but merely to an admirable group of people who lived in the past and to whom living generations looked for inspiration. In Pompeii, because the paintings are fixed in place, I argue that their status as heirlooms links them to a specific locally-constituted authority, tied to place, community, and history rather than to individual or lineage. My broader definition of heirlooms can help us to understand how wall paintings continued to have relevance and power even when houses changed ownership. That continued relevance must have existed when people made a conscious choice to preserve old paintings.

Let me return to the specific case of the Casa del Fauno to discuss how my adaptation of this theory of heirlooms can allow us to arrive at a more nuanced understanding of the motivations of this residence's owners in maintaining their home's decoration for two centuries. My approach helps to deal with a case such as this in which a great deal of specific detail, such as the identities of the house's inhabitants at any given time, or even their general status, is unknown. To reiterate: we cannot even conclude that the house remained in the possession of a single family throughout its history. To claim that it did so based on its conservative decoration, as several scholars have done, is a mistake. The biological or adoptive descendants of the house's early owners and those who simply wanted to claim an association with them could have used the same tactics of maintaining old decorations instead of replacing them with newer versions. These two groups cannot be distinguished archaeologically.

However, while acknowledging the limits of our evidence, we can use approaches to the material constructs of memory and the social utility of heirlooms to say something about this unusual building. What we arrive at is a range of possibilities for how the people who lived with and maintained the First Style paintings in the Casa del Fauno

⁷²² Cf. Bodel (1997, 13) who suggests that sometimes the decoration of villas may have been maintained as tributes to their previous, famous owners.

used them for their own aims and understood their social role. First of all, the meaning of the decoration likely changed frequently in the tumultuous two centuries that the house was in use. Reception was shaped by the behavior of each person who interacted with the paintings, and those interactions were shaped by the artistic, cultural, political, and social environment of the moment. One inhabitant could have expressed his sophistication as a collector in the Roman style by having old-fashioned Campanian wall paintings as a backdrop to a collection of various other eclectic, decorative objects. Another might have emphasized the traditional simplicity of the decoration, perhaps in his political dealings with magistrates from Roman backgrounds. Yet another might have used the paintings to demonstrate her descent from an old Pompeian elite family, whose influence was, in the eyes of some, more legitimate than that of Roman colonists and their descendants. There are endless possibilities. The point is that this decoration survived in this house because of its capacity to be reimagined and to be employed in exploiting the past for immediate use by successive generations of Pompeians. Because the choice to preserve old paintings was an exceptional one, we can understand this appeal to the past as just one of many routes to power, chosen by a select few who wanted to distinguish themselves from the rest of the population who did not possess these heirlooms.

ii. Possibilities for the Reception of First and Second Style Paintings in the First Century C.E.

So far I have discussed the reception of First Style paintings, in particular, as objects from the past. But we can also consider how later viewers would have understood both First and Second Style paintings as representative images and how they would have responded to imitation marble in particular. Applying what we know about the use and imitation of decorative stone in the mid-late first century C.E., I suggest some possible readings of First and, especially, Second Style wall paintings by contemporary viewers.

The rich luxury depicted by First and, particularly, Second Style paintings, combined with comments on aristocratic residences by authors such as Pliny the Elder and Suetonius, have led modern scholars to imagine that there once existed extravagantly decorated Roman villas modeled after Hellenistic palaces, decked in gold and imported

stone.⁷²³ A close reading of the texts combined with a study of archaeological evidence does not support such an image, however. As I have argued in previous chapters, the actual use of decorative stone in the Roman Republican period never nearly equaled its depiction in wall painting. Nevertheless, Romans living at the height of the Fourth Style's popularity might have entertained similar misconceptions based on their own appraisals of Republican painting. When compared to Nero's sprawling residence in Rome, Second Style paintings might have looked realistic and attainable, while First Style decorations might have seemed positively restrained.

When in the Augustan period faux stone fell out of style, some homeowners maintained the elaborate Second Style decorations of some rooms in their houses and villas, rather than redcorate them in the Third Style. The high quality of many of these paintings may have been enough to compensate for their lack of fashionableness. As for the inappropriateness of their subject matter for conveying contemporary Augustan ideals, there is surely a distinction between creating a new decoration with less-than-tasteful details and maintaining something that already exists. While in a new wall painting, the latest fashions would often have been preferred, we should not expect that a change in taste would compel everyone to destroy existing paintings. Moreover, new styles would have spread gradually.⁷²⁴ The politically unpalatable ambition and extravagance represented by the Second Style in the Augustan period could remain safely behind as those decorations transitioned from something current and groundbreaking to relics of the past. As time passed, and these paintings continued to be maintained, more and more of the meanings associated with imitation stone in the Fourth Style period, such as the power and abundance of the Roman Empire and the comfort afforded private citizens by emperor's benevolent rule, would have become attached to the Second Style walls.

As the Fourth Style and the renewal of interest in faux stone took hold, the reaction of viewers to the elaborate architectural schemes and luxury materials depicted in Second Style paintings very likely regenerated. Imported stone is recategorized from

⁷²³ See pp. 71-73 above on marble in the Hellenistic period.

⁷²⁴ Zanker (1988, 283) states that the Third Style spread outside of Rome rapidly, but it is unclear on what basis he makes that claim. Cf. Clarke 2005, 277, who notes that we do not know the speed of transmission.

something people liked in the past to something people still like in the present. No longer controversial or excessive, as it might have been in the Augustan period, imported stone in the home was once again appealing. Socially-conditioned viewing of the paintings, then, would have resulted in an altered reception of them. We can return to the context analyzed in the previous chapter, in which I discussed the conditions surrounding the revival of imitation stone in the Fourth Style, to get a sense of the possibilities for the reception of the Second Style in this period. To review: private luxury in general, and marble decoration in particular, had transformed from a moral evil to a moral good.⁷²⁵ It symbolized the extent and power of the Roman empire along with the peace and prosperity afforded its citizens by the benevolent rule of the emperor. Large scale displays of imported stone were unexceptional in both public and private spaces by the Flavian period, and grew ever more common.

As a result, viewers of Second Style paintings in the mid-to-late first century C.E. likely did not attribute to them any of the innovative or transgressive significance that they originally would have had. Texts from this period suggest that the memory of late Republican domestic space was muddled at best, even among the most literate.⁷²⁶ For the rest of the population, it is unlikely that the exact relation of these decorations to real architecture from the past would have been remembered. Active, repeated reaffirmation of meaning is required for significance to remain attached to an object over generations.⁷²⁷ There was little incentive for the original meaning of Second Style paintings to be passed down over a period in which they were preserved despite their previous significance being unattractive at best and subversive at worst. Moreover, by the reign of Nero at the latest, Second Style decorations closely resembled real palaces and villas that had been built in Italy in the interim. Thus, their imitation stone could easily have been viewed as a simple substitute for real stone veneer or architectural elements that were supposed to have existed in the past, just as they did in the present – just as faux marble in Fourth Style painting was a substitute for real marble decoration.

⁷²⁵ Newlands 2012, 18.

⁷²⁶ See Chapter 2 above.

⁷²⁷ Small and Tatum 1995, 168–171.

I have already suggested that preserved Second Style paintings could have served as models for authors and poets who attempted to evoke the material environment of palaces and villas during the late Republic, as does Lucan in his description of Cleopatra's palace.⁷²⁸ Similarly, the architectural fantasies created by Second Style painters might have provided inspiration for later architects designing palatial interiors, once imported stone became available on a larger scale.⁷²⁹ Archaeological finds of decorative elements made from marble and other prestige materials from imperial villas and palaces suggest environments resembling Second Style schemes. For instance, finds of gold filigree and gems that once decorated walls or columns in the Horti Lamiani in Rome bring to mind the gilded and bejeweled columns painted in Room 14 room in Villa A at Oplontis, though they belong to a later date. Rooms covered floor to ceiling with imported marble have been reconstructed for Nero's palaces in Rome and the Flavian palaces on the Palatine.⁷³⁰ Perhaps, in an unusual twist, the “imitation” in this case inspired the new reality.

⁷²⁸ See pp. 55-57 above.

⁷²⁹ Zarmakoupi 2010a.

⁷³⁰ See, for example, Meyboom and Moormann 2013; Gibson, DeLaine, and Claridge 1994.

Chapter Eight

Conclusions

The question that initially prompted my research on wall painting was: What motivated homeowners in Rome and Pompeii to decorate their properties with painted imitations of imported stone? The usual answer supplied in the scholarship on wall painting is a common sense one: those paintings served as a substitute for real stone for those who did not have access to it because of its expense or rarity. A closer look at the paintings in context suggests that the explanation was much more complicated – and, especially, that it varied greatly over time. Moreover, in the course of studying this one element of wall painting, I have been able to draw conclusions regarding a variety of broader issues pertaining to Roman culture and to methodologies for utilizing and integrating multiple forms of evidence from the past.

In the Introduction to the dissertation, I noted that I would address three main thematic issues. To reiterate: (1) transformations in attitudes toward luxury and the display of wealth and power in the domestic sphere; (2) the role of wall painting in communicating social, ethnic, and political identity and status in Pompeii in the aftermath of Roman colonization; and (3) the relationship between memory and changes in the meaning and reception of visual culture. I have explored each of these issues by combining a study of wall painting with a study of other types of evidence, including material remains such as domestic architecture and decoration or monumental tombs and literary texts from a variety of periods and genres.

The first of the three issues – changes in attitudes toward private luxury – is perhaps the most unifying of the three throughout the dissertation. Moreover, this subject demonstrates particularly clearly the value of considering evidence from as many sources as possible to obtain a nuanced view of attitudes and behavior in the past. Perhaps the

most obvious issue that imitation stone in domestic painting raises is its relationship to real decorative stone and, accordingly, to luxury goods and concepts of luxury generally. Considering the evidence of wall painting adds another dimension to our understanding of private luxury in Roman thought. In addition, it can tell us a great deal about how the experience of living in the Roman Empire played out in the domestic sphere. For example, does the painted imitation of luxury in the home show a simple admiration and desire for goods that were not available for economic or other reasons? Does it serve the function we would usually associate with a faux finish, or does it, instead, represent a separate architectural environment altogether, one that happens to contain those luxury materials? Does painted luxury communicate a longing for or envy of foreign environments? Or does it celebrate the success of Roman power in bringing those exotic objects and materials back to Rome? By studying painting separately and in conjunction with other archaeological evidence and with literary evidence, we gain access to other perspectives on attitudes toward private luxury in various periods that the latter two sources would not provide on their own.

For example, Second Style painting highlights the tensions and conflicting attitudes that could be felt and expressed by the same people with respect to private luxury in the Late Republic. The strong desire to imagine the possibilities of luxury was evident in the fantastical wall paintings produced in that period. How far could luxury go, if all restrictions – practical and ideological – were removed? At the same time, there was a clear effort to emphasize that this exploration was only imaginary through the use of exaggerated scales and quantities of valuable goods and through the creation of obviously unreal spatial effects in the perspective employed by painters, among other things.⁷³¹ We can see a similar conflict in Republican literature, in which someone like Cicero could express markedly different attitudes toward luxury depending on the context and circumstances. Wealth and luxury were signs of status, certainly, but there were still limits on how much they should be flaunted. The Late Republic was neither a period of no-holds-barred decadence, nor an extreme example of moral severity and conservatism

⁷³¹ See Chapter 4.

in this sphere of life. Studying wall painting from this time draws out these aspects of culture and ideology, particularly the ambivalences that might otherwise be obscured.

Similarly, by examining Fourth Style wall painting we can achieve a better sense of how the broader population viewed luxury and imported stone, as well as their place in the Roman Empire.⁷³² We can see that the use of imported stone in private decoration was not generally seen as outrageous and shameful, as Pliny the Elder would seem to suggest.⁷³³ Rather, exotic stones were desirable and attractive, and they were fascinating in certain ways, but they also were not extraordinary. That is, while imported stone was seen as a particularly beautiful addition to a private interior space, and one that could provoke learned conversation, by the mid- to late first century C.E., it was not especially rare. Imported stone was an accepted part of daily life. Even for those people who could afford neither the real thing nor its painted imitation, colorful, polished stone was part of the everyday visual landscape of public and private architecture, at least in towns and cities and on villa properties. Wall painting elucidates imported stone's status in first century C.E. Marble was a popular motif in painting, but it was not ubiquitous. On the surface of the wall, it was always a secondary element in a painting's composition, relegated to the socle.

The techniques used to depict stone in the Fourth Style also attest to widespread familiarity with the qualities of specific varieties of imported stone. I have observed that types of stone usually appear in standardized formats in houses of a variety of economic levels, painted with varying degrees of precision, but always recognizable as one of a number of known varieties. Painters made sure that viewers would be able to identify stones, which suggests that these could be a point of discussion, much like scholars have argued for the function of mythological scenes in wall paintings. The poetry of Statius, with his long ekphrases on the origins of the exotic marbles decorating wealthy properties, helps to confirm this interpretation.⁷³⁴ Moreover, my interpretation of Fourth Style wall painting demonstrates that Statius was not unique in his admiration for imported stone, nor was he simply behaving like a sycophant in his praise for its beauty

⁷³² See Chapter 6.

⁷³³ See pp. 57-63 above.

⁷³⁴ See pp. 63-66 above.

in the villa of his patron. Statius's representation of a kaleidoscope of imported stones as an interesting and utterly acceptable phenomenon is realistic for the Flavian period.

Using wall painting to address questions about private luxury highlights clearly the distinction between practice and ideals. The ideals expressed in literature and art do not always correspond to what people actually did – and this was especially true in the Augustan period.⁷³⁵ The decoration of private homes with marble was universally derided in Augustan texts that survive; simultaneously, the representation of imported stone disappeared completely from new wall paintings adorning domestic spaces. Nevertheless, the archaeological evidence suggests that Romans, including even Augustus himself, did not actually stop using decorative stone in their homes. The contradictions exhibited by these sources of information show us that wall painting could and did function as a display of cultural ideals, rather than as a simple, literal illustration of other forms of material culture.

The role of painting with respect to ideology and behavior, and its relation to other forms of expression, was not, however, constant in every period. In the Julio-Claudian period, the attitudes of painters and their patrons toward decorative stone shifted to align with actual practice.⁷³⁶ As a result, we find painted imitations of the real stone decoration that was being used to adorn private homes. Meanwhile, Roman authors continued to condemn marble in the home as excessively luxurious and frivolous well into the Flavian period. Wall painting sheds light on the ways that broad groups within the Roman world wished to present themselves. This self-presentation via the painted decoration of the home may or may not have aligned with the rhetorical or moral ideas expressed by the literary elite. In the case of imported stone and private luxury more generally, it seems that the ideals expressed in literature were more conservative and slower to change than those expressed in painting.

In every period, how people felt, or said they felt, about luxury and marble did not necessarily correspond to how they behaved. In the Late Republic, the small quantities of stone used in private residences and the rare and rather neutral comments on that practice in literature would suggest that imported stone was not an especially fascinating or

⁷³⁵ See Chapter 6.

⁷³⁶ See Chapter 6.

controversial subject. Second Style wall painting, however, says otherwise. In painting, we can observe a great deal of interest in the possible architectural uses for colored stone on massive scales, for the particular details of specific varieties of imported stone, and for the combination of those lavish materials with other luxury goods. In contrast, in the Augustan period wall painting and literature both seem to suggest that decorating houses with imported stone was abhorrent. Nevertheless, people appear to have continued to use decorative stone in much the same ways as they had before. In Julio-Claudian period, painting and archaeology suggest that exotic stone was thoroughly desirable, despite the fact that literature remains ambivalent at best – and is usually negative. By the late Flavian period, all three strains of evidence are at last in agreement, and ideals have seemingly caught up or aligned with actual behavior.

I argue that including the evidence of wall painting in an exploration of changing attitudes toward private luxury in ancient Rome uniquely demonstrates how expressed attitudes toward luxury and wealth could be contradicted by actual behavior. It is evident that literature is not the only surviving record of the expression of those ideals. Painting functioned as an entirely separate form of communication that did not always agree with others. My examination of imitation stone in wall painting, in particular, sheds a great deal of light not only on how attitudes toward luxury changed over time, but also on how different types of evidence can provide sometimes complementary and sometimes conflicting information. It is absolutely vital to examine as much evidence as possible in order to get a complete picture of cultural attitudes and their effects on behavior.

The second issue – the relation between domestic decoration and identity – is similarly complicated. We cannot necessarily expect any single type of material or visual culture to provide all of the information we might seek about the identities of the people who used it. In the cases explored here, namely wall painting and monumental tombs in Pompeii, it is very difficult to find evidence for the cultural origins or ethnic identity of the people who commissioned those works and employed them as means of self-presentation to their community. The ambiguity of these materials may be the result of indifference toward displays of certain types of identity, chief among them ethnicity, or it may be the result of deliberate efforts to obscure those distinctions.

My study of wall painting in particular from the phase following Pompeii's colonization by Rome leads me to conclude that painting styles or specific images in paintings from that period do not correspond in any detectable way to cultural background.⁷³⁷ The same wall painting could be used at different times to express different ideas, and for this reason, ambiguous or flexible imagery was preferred. Both locals and colonists in Pompeii chose to live in environments painted in apparently identical fashions, ones which continued the local tradition exemplified by the First Style, while incorporating elements of an external trend in the form of the Second Style. Much like the ability of different media to express different attitudes toward luxury, people could employ other types of material culture and behavior to express identities that were different or less ambiguous than the messages of wall painting. Monumental tombs, however, seem to have communicated in ways analogous to paintings. As with painting, the combination of elements from different cultural traditions allowed people to obscure their origins, or to emphasize one aspect of their identity or another, depending what was expedient or appropriate.

Examining wall painting in Pompeii in the period following the major disruption of colonization has also enabled me to make important observations about the motivations and mechanisms that drive stylistic change. The argument that style is an indicator of cultural identity does not hold up to scrutiny. Instead, I argue that we see a widespread choice to adopt a new style not only because it was attractive or trendy, but also because it served the social and political aims of members of the community. Different Pompeian residents chose to respond to the introduction of the Second Style in different ways. Some, such as the owners of the Casa del Fauno, ignored it completely and maintained the previous decoration of their homes. Others chose to adopt or adapt versions of the Second Style that were semantically and functionally similar to the First Style.⁷³⁸ These tend to appear as rather simple versions that decorate publically and visually accessible areas of houses. Though these Second Style paintings show continuity with the First Style in many ways, several examples supplement its basic association between stone decoration and status with a Roman-style interest in representing real types

⁷³⁷ See Chapter 5.

⁷³⁸ See Chapter 3 on the First Style.

of stone. Yet other residents of Pompeii chose to combine older First Style decoration with newer Second Style. In some of these cases, like the Casa del Labirinto, the owners seem to have split their houses into two wings. In the more public wing, they preserved First Style decoration. In the more private wing, they added elaborate Second Style painting inspired by the decoration of much larger luxury villas. In these cases, I argue, Second Style painting does not continue local tradition, but instead imports a villa atmosphere into the city.

Considering the role of displays of identity in periods of disruption allows us to shed light on one possible motivation for stylistic change in domestic wall painting. The third issue mentioned in the introduction – social memory and reception – provides another avenue for exploring choices homeowners made in the decoration of houses and villas. Just as multiple messages could be conveyed by different types of media, or by the same material depending on the behavior and choices of its owner or viewer at a given moment, multiple meanings for wall paintings could accrue over time. New significance could replace the original. Changes in reception over time could take place despite paintings being preserved and maintained, and so not altering visually. These changes also relate to what was useful or expedient to the owners of wall paintings and to their viewers. The communication of identity to the community via the house's decoration remained important over time. Just as Roman writers manipulated the memory of past events' significance to suit their literary or philosophical aims, people who owned and interacted with wall paintings could use their own experiences and needs to interpret those images from the past. I argue that the prominence of colorful, exotic, and symbolically rich stone in First and Second Style wall paintings was a crucial component in their continuing relevance. Until the Fourth Style period (and beyond), the Romans remained fascinated by the beauty and origins of marble. Old imitation stone took on new meanings related to Roman power and personal prosperity, which gave it continuing utility long after the memory of its original significance may have faded.