



THE EXCAVATIONS OF THE PAST YEAR, GIVING THE WORLD AN ENTIRELY NEW PICTURE OF THE LIFE AND CONSTRUCTIONS OF POMPEII, REVEAL THE PROGRESS ARCHAEOLOGY IS MAKING IN THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE PAST.

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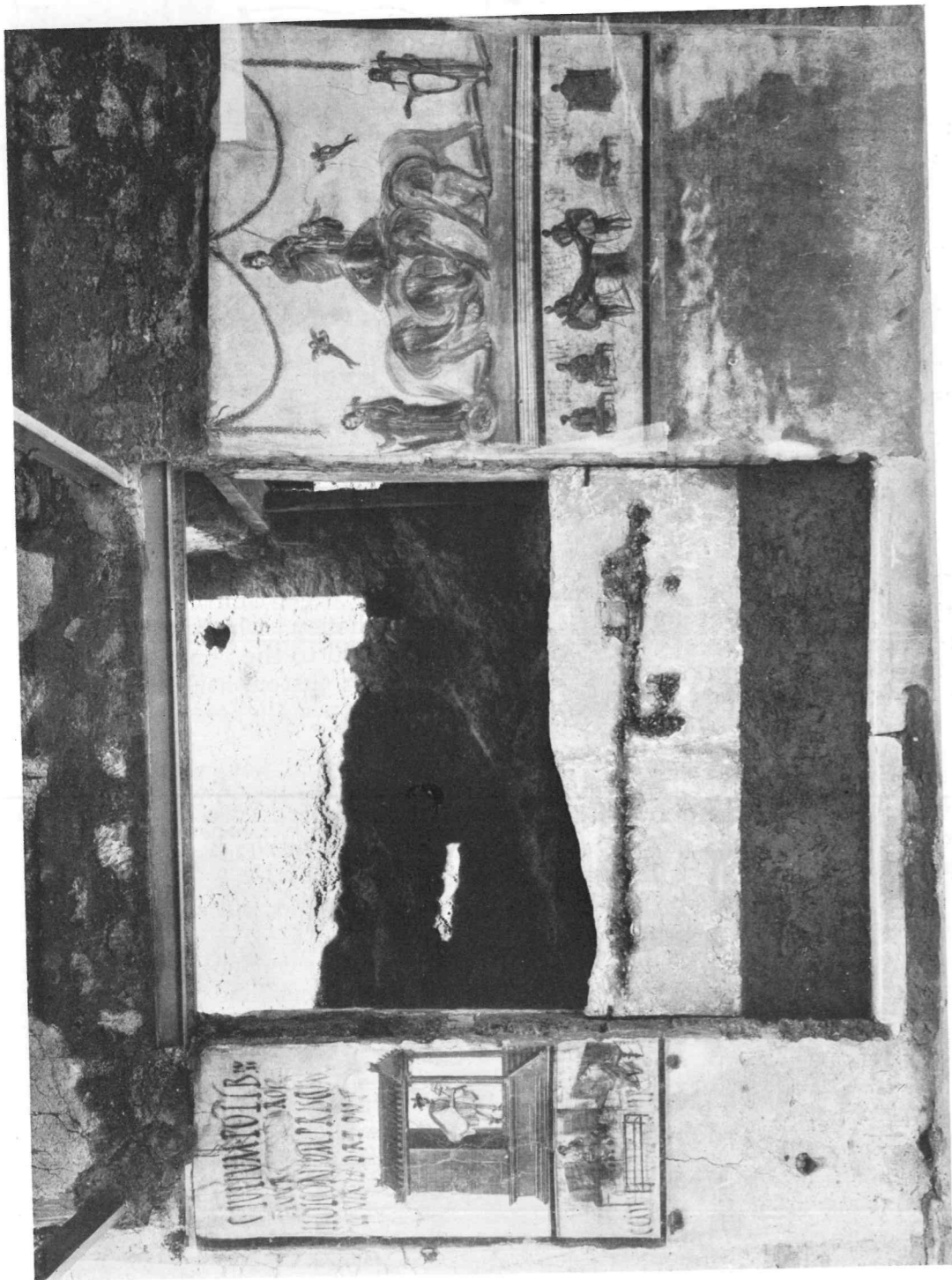
POMPEII TODAY

By GUIDO CALZA

THE excavations at Pompeii continue to excite the interest of the studious and of amateurs of the life of ancient Greece and Rome, because some discovery of importance is made every year which is important in the history of the past and of art. This past year [1926] four really unusual silver statuettes have come to light in the excavations of a private house in the Via dell'Abondanza, to say nothing of a large bronze statue of an ephebus which has been taken to the National Museum at Naples, and which will become one of its most valued ornaments. All four of the silver statuettes represent an old man with an excessively thin body holding a silver tray in his left hand, while his right is pressed against his throat to augment the sound of the cry which issues from his wide-open mouth. This fresh, vivacious statuette represents a peddler in the ancient market, crying the exquisite flavor of the cakes he carries in his tray. It is a caricature of the *placentarius*, or vendor

of *placentæ*, large, thin cakes made of flour and honey, which were cut in slices and sold to the populace, exactly as is still the custom at Naples, where everyone knows the *pizzaiolo* or *pastarellaro*.

The life of old has, then, been restored to us in this figure of a peddler, whose trade was not followed by Romans, but by Orientals, as the Asiatic type of the old man's face clearly shows. Moreover, as these four statuettes were discovered among the fragments of a wooden box, we may believe the owner had just received them from some Alexandrine artificer when the terrific eruption of Vesuvius overwhelmed the lovely little city. It would seem also that this unknown, evidently wealthy Pompeiian gentleman had not even enjoyed having his beautiful bronze statue, found standing on its base in the atrium beside some tall bronze candelabra. Since the ephebus was designed to carry the two candelabra standing beside it, and since



AT THE LEFT, ELECTION NOTICES STRIKE A LIVELY HUMAN NOTE (See P. 205), AND AT THE RIGHT IS THE PAINTED SIGN OF M. C. VERECUNDUS, DRYGOODS AND CLOTHING MANUFACTURER, WHILE MERCURY, GOD OF BUSINESS, COMES OUT OF THE TEMPLE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR, PURSE IN HAND.



EXCAVATING THE ATRIUM OF A WEALTHY POMPEIIAN'S VILLA, WITH THE BRONZE EPHEBUS, POSSIBLY BY PHIDIAS, EMERGING FROM THE ASHES.

the carbonized remains of the cloth which covered them were also discovered, it is evident that the catastrophe overtook the town before the new ornament could be completely erected and placed in the house proper. The house itself was not yet finished. The walls had to be painted, so all the furniture and ornaments had been removed from the interior and set in the *atrium*, or court. The statue was to have stood upon a circular base discovered in the summer *triclinium* in a garden of the house. The proprietor evidently meant the ephebus to carry the lamps used to illuminate the dining-room during his banquets.

A mere glance at this ephebus proves the good taste of the owner in matters of art, for this youthful figure sculptured in bronze is perfect in technique and rarely beautiful: a masterpiece of plastic achievement. As Professor Maiuri—the new Superintendent of the Excavations of Pompeii—holds, the figure must be the work of the immortal Phidias or of one of his pupils at the very least. It may even be that statue of the youth Pantarkes, the victor in the contest between boys in the year 436 B. C., which Pausanias saw in the sacred precincts of the Altis at Olympia.

This masterpiece of pure Greek art, which compares for beauty with the *Idolino* at Florence, was altered in order

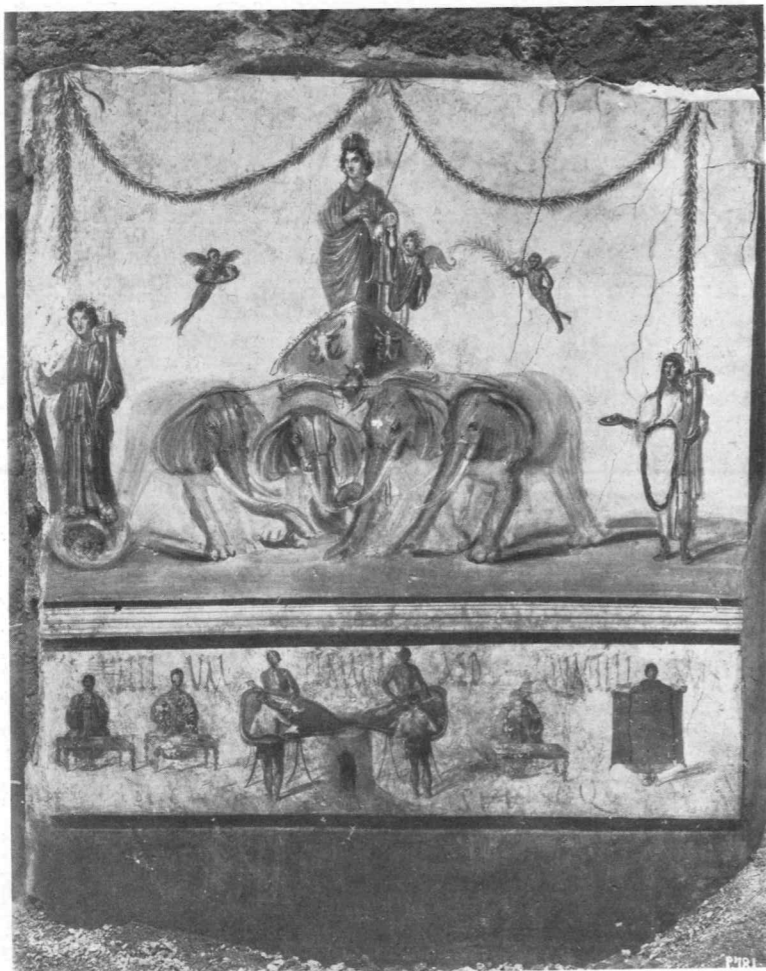
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that it might serve as a lamp-stand in this Pompeiian house, by bending the hands until they could carry the two tall, solid bronze candelabra, a treatment accorded, moreover, to other Pompeiian statues. This alteration gives a displeasing aesthetic effect, naturally; yet the effect is better today than during the Pompeiian epoch, because the figure was gilded then. Now it has taken on once more the warm tone of old bronze.

The new excavations have not only revealed masterpieces of ancient art, but have also yielded discoveries which are of importance in the study of both the architecture and the private life of the Vesuvian city. An entire, unlooked-for world that disappeared most tragically has returned to us after the lapse of twenty centuries, exciting general interest in its diverse industrial and commercial relations. Just beyond the gate which separates the old from the new excavations is the Fullonica Stephani, Mr. Stephen's laundry and dye-house, which still preserves the very graceful atrium, with such a deep *impluvium* that we may suppose it was used to wash the materials. Behind it are the vats for dyeing and wringing, and there is also an upper terrace where the goods were hung to dry. The

kitchen still contains many utensils. All the walls of the house are decorated with frescoes in the fourth Pompeiian style *with the upper borders in imitation of marble, and the walls in Pompeiian red with Cupids and dancing girls.**

Opposite the Fullonica is a large shop. Its proprietor was one Marcus Cæcilius Verecundus, who must have sold drygoods and clothing, as may be inferred from the paintings on the facade which served as advertisements of the business within. In fact Mercury, the patron of merchants, is seen



"A VERY PRACTICAL PICTURE OF A MERCHANT WHO WISHED TO SHOW HOW WORK WAS DONE IN HIS FACTORY."

*Dr. Calza's Italics.

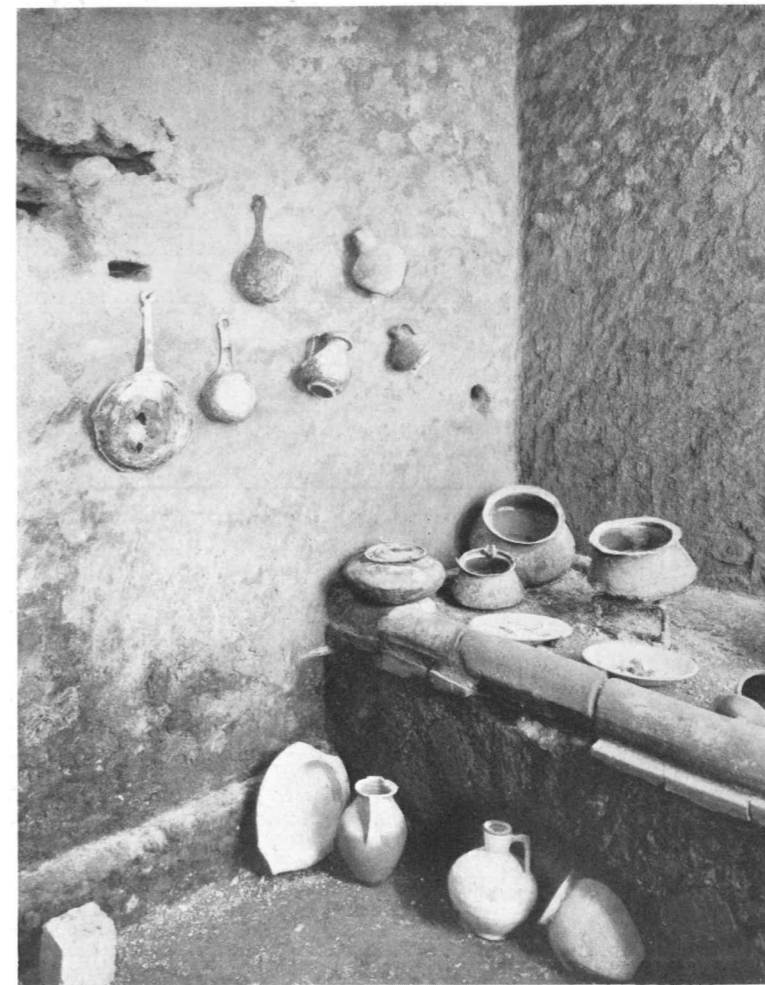
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coming out of a temple, purse in hand; and, on the other side, is the Pompeiian Venus wearing an azure robe, in a chariot drawn by four elephants and accompanied by Fortune and a priestess.

Below the figures are to be seen the various stages of cloth-making and selling. This is a very practical picture of a merchant who wished to show how the work was done in his factory, and thereby persuade his patrons to make purchases.

The long Via dell' Abbondanza, now excavated for five hundred metres, is animated with the life of ancient days by the paintings and *graffiti* the Pompeiians left for us. Each building had its shops, among them many *thermopolia*, which may be compared to the modern bars and wineshops. There is one, for example, with a marble bar on which are many bronze jugs. In the bottom of one, which is hermetically sealed, is some liquid—all that remains of a drink prepared on that June day in

the year 79 A. D., just before the catastrophe. There are vessels of every form and size, from large amphoræ to *fiaschi* and bottles shaped like fowls and foxes. The accounts of the bartender have been found scribbled on the walls, allowing us to know how much he charged his customers for bread and wine. One of them, indeed, is represented in caricature on the wall near the entrance as having a monkey's head. Evidently he was a fashionable youth, who came here to flirt with the barmaids, who were from every part of the world, as may be gathered from the inscriptions. There was a Zmigrina from Smyrna, a Jewish Maria, a Greek Aigle. The presence of these women, whose names are mentioned in the scrawls left by their admirers, makes it evi-



AN EXCAVATED KITCHEN, WITH ITS POTS AND PANS IN PLACE, PRESENTS A MORE CONVINCING PICTURE THAN WHEN IT IS BARREN.

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THE SHOPS OF THE VIA DELL' ABBONDANZA WERE JUMBLED TOGETHER IN VERY MODERN FASHION: A DUBIOUS BAR, A CHAPEL OF THE GODS, A BLACKSMITH'S FORGE, ETC.

dent that there were lodgings above the barroom. However, one must not believe that the Pompeiians were all pleasure-seekers, for next door to this bar of dubious repute is a *compitum*, that is, a little chapel where the *lares*—the divine protectors of the house and of the street—were worshipped: Jupiter, Juno, Minerva, Mars, Hercules, Venus, Mercury, Prosperpina, Vulcan, Ceres, Apollo and Diana, all painted on the walls, while four priests—Succosus, Victor, Asclepiades and Constans—are shown offering sacrifices on the altar, around which two *lares* dance. Beneath the altar is

the serpent *agathodæmon*, which was said to bring good luck.

Civil life seems, in this way, to be mingled with religious customs; and close beside the useless, or superfluous, shops like the bar there are useful ones, like that of the iron-founder and geometrician Verus [?name illegible in manuscript.—Ed.]. This shop was lighted by a large lamp which also served as a sign. The many utensils found in this little smithy—among them the remains of a groma, the ancient surveyor's device for measuring land—had quite evidently been taken there to be repaired.

But all the houses in the Via dell' Abbondanza are a delight to both eye and spirit: one really has the sensation of relieving a bygone age in all its manifestations. There is one house which it seems should have been named the House of the Triclinia, because of its marvelous stuccoes. It was about to be "done over" when the great eruption buried the city, and a quantity of materials have been discovered which show the preparations for re-decorating the apartments. The *tablinum* is especially remarkable with its marvelous white stuccoes on a blue ground, representing scenes from the last canto of the Iliad, and from the

combat between Hector and Achilles. These stuccoes, which were broken into fragments and have been carefully re-composed from more than a thousand pieces, are a prodigy of archaeological learning, patience and skill.

In the House of the Cryptoporticus, so-called because of a covered portico with windows giving upon the garden, is a scene of death which makes a profound impression: the tragic end of those last Pompeiians who had no opportunity to flee the catastrophe. Eight unfortunates sought refuge here in the portico, which had been used as a cellar; but instead of safety they found immortality of a sort. Beyond



THE LAST REFUGE OF EIGHT UNFORTUNATES IN THE HOUSE OF THE CRYPTOPORTICUS PROVED A TOMB, HERMETICALLY SEALED FOR MORE THAN A THOUSAND YEARS.



THE NEW METHODS OF EXCAVATION PRESERVE THE UPPER STORIES OF THE HOUSES AND SAVE A GREAT DEAL OF CONSTRUCTION FORMERLY LOST.

them thundered the volcano; the earth shook with the retching of the enraged Titan. Into every crack and cranny, through every opening large or small, filtered the steadily increasing downpour of powdered, calcined stone and probably poisonous gases. Little by little the ashes increased in depth; little by little the life-supporting air grew denser and more choking. Escape there was none. Outside the suffocating black pall of cinders completely cut off the light of day. And so they waited, knowing the end.

Especially terrifying is the figure of a young girl, hiding her head on her mother's breast. Graphically have the plaster casts preserved her pathetic dis-

tress, and that of the man who fell alone, grimly holding over his mouth the cloth which failed to keep out the stifling, strangling cloud.

Plaster casts have also been made of doors and of wardrobes, as in the house of L. Caius Secundus, also called the House of the Hunt because of the pictures of wild animals upon its garden walls. Nor are mosaics lacking in the apartment of the Duumvir (or Mayor) P. Proculus. In fact, there is one representing a dog tied to a door, while others show birds and peacocks. A certain C. Cuspius Pansa must have been a very good man. At least, he must so have regarded himself, since he declares of himself in an inscription.



UNTIL RECENTLY POMPEII WAS THOUGHT TO HAVE HAD ONLY ONE HOUSE WITH A BALCONY, BUT THE LATEST WORK HAS REVEALED GALLERIES, BALCONIES, WINDOWS ON UPPER FLOORS AND SHEDS.

found in this house: "*Si qua verecunde viventi gloria danda est huic juveni debet gloria digna dari*", which is to say: "If praise and glory should be given to one who lives honorably, praise and glory must be given to this young man." Very likely he belonged to the society of the *Juvenes Venerii Pompeiani*, which united the *jeunesse dorée* of the city and had as its object the preparation of good citizens and brave soldiers. Records of its training are found in many imperial Roman cities. It was fostered and favored by the emperors themselves and by the princes of the Imperial House, who willingly accepted membership in it as *patroni*.

The meeting-place of the *Collegium*

of Pompeii has been discovered. The entrance is decorated with trophies of war and with the palms given to the victors in the games and races. Within is the *armamentarium*, a vast hall with large wardrobes or lockers containing arms and gymnastic apparatus, while the walls are painted with winged Victories and the standards of the legions.

Almost opposite the *Collegium* is perhaps the most beautiful house in the whole Via dell' Abbondanza. It compares for interest and for the state of its preservation with the famous houses of the Vettii and of the Faun. This is the house of Loreius Tiburtinus. The large garden with its grapevines is more fasci-

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THE TRICLINIUM IN THE HOUSE OF CRESCENTIUS, WHOSE GUESTS WERE ADMONISHED GRAVELY NOT TO FLIRT WITH ONE ANOTHER'S WIVES.

nating than all the rest, and has been planted anew so that it flourishes again today. A little stream of fresh water runs through the garden between banks of polished marble, while along the front of the portico is a channel ornamented with little marble figures. This tiny runlet cooled the rooms opening on the portico. At the end of the channel, which is about twenty metres long, one metre wide and one deep, is a *biclinium* or diningroom for two people, with a figure of Narcissus looking at himself in the water painted on the wall, and one of Thisbe killing herself upon the body of Pyramus. This diningroom is curiously situated around the end of the channel, where the guests could amuse themselves by watching the fish swim about in the water, or even—if the Fates were propitious—by catching them.

In the middle of the channel is a niche ornamented with four Doric columns and a mask of Ocean, beneath which is a little basin with a marble Cupid, while on the wall Diana and the luckless Actæon are admirably painted. All is charming, vivid and fresh. The paintings are not very finished, though the pictures of Narcissus and Thisbe bear the signature of the artist—*Lucius pinxit*—but there is great variety in both subject and coloring everywhere, from the room with scenes taken from the Trojan epic to the one in which are painted nude figures of little girls. It has been possible to replace even the shutters in this room, with their movable slats, just as they were in ancient times. And is it not marvelous to have found the *triclinium* in the house of Crescentius almost intact—with a heavy marble table in

the centre on which is a mark left by some vessel which stood there, who knows how long? The walls are blue in color, and are covered all around the room with moral inscriptions which do honor to the host and proved useful, let us hope, to his guests, for he reminds them to behave as they should, to wash their hands and feet, and, most amusing of all, not to flirt with another man's wife—“*lascivos vultus et blandos autem ocellos conjuge ab alterinius sic tibi in ore pudor*”!

The importance of the election-posters is recognized by all; also that of the Pompeian *graffiti*; not solely because they reconstruct the life of ancient times for us, but because they help us to identify the owners of the houses. The municipal elections must have been just held at Pompeii when the catastrophe occurred, or they were to come off within a short time. This is why numbers of the posters have been found which would have been cancelled had the elections already been held. The method of writing on the walls was very simple. The facade was white-washed. Then the most popular names were written on it in red letters with the names of their supporters. Sometimes it is a workman's guild which supports a candidate, as witness the fullers who plead for their man in the line: “*L. Holconium fullones universi rogant*.” The women also took an active part in the local politics—“*C. Julium Polybium duumvirum Specla rogat*”, from which it appears that Specla was the legitimate wife. But it was not always the wives who supported the candidates. Indeed, the opponents of this very Polybius put up a poster in which he is recommended by a certain Cuculla, which, we strongly suspect, was the name of a courtesan, since this name is all scratched out, as

if Signor Polybius was ashamed of being supported by Signorina Cuculla.

Now comes the question of why this Via dell' Abbondanza seems so different from the other streets in Pompeii, because, though the old town is always interesting with its temples and theatres, *thermae*, Forum, etc., and some houses of singular importance, it is certain that no other street offers such important and seductive elements of architecture and of everyday life as this. Perhaps it was the principal thoroughfare, or the wealthiest in the city? Not at all. It is not even in the centre of town. The difference is the result, to a great extent, of the new method of excavating adopted here: that is, the result of the great progress made by archaeology during recent years not only at Pompeii, but at Ostia and in all the excavations of ancient cities. The old excavators were satisfied to free the buildings from the ashes and *lapilli* which hid them, and left only such walls standing as were well-preserved. Almost all the fragments of walls were thrown away. The objects found were taken to the Museum at Naples, far from the place where they belonged. For instance, there was only one house with a balcony in all Pompeii, the Casa del Balcone Pensile, we were taught to believe. But in the Via dell' Abbondanza the existence has been proved of houses with sheds, and with balconies, galleries and windows on the upper floors!

The new method proceeds by strata from above downwards; the roof of a house or shed is freed first from the ashes, then photographed, then supported on new rafters in place of the old wooden ones, which were completely carbonized. The roof having been put in place, the archaeologist continues to

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excavate, returning the fragments of walls and fallen ceilings to their original position and recomposing the paintings and stuccoes with the most elaborate care, just as has been done in the House of Achilles. So, when the excavators reach the ground floor, the house is in perfect order and quite ready for visitors. Moreover, everything abandoned by the last inhabitants is left where found: that is, where it was while the city was alive. For example: all the bronze vessels were found in the ancient barroom, and all the utensils are still hanging on the wall in a kitchen. It is the same with the many *viridaria*, or gardens inside the house: plaster casts have been made, preserving the forms of the roots of the plants; and the same trees, the same flowers that grew there in ancient times are planted

again, exactly as was done in the grape arbor in the garden of Loreius Tiburtinus.

These, then, are the marvelous results which the progress made by archaeology has yielded; for archaeologists are no longer satisfied with bringing the ruins of the Past to light. They must restore to its fullest value every element of life in ancient times because a ray of light may come from some tiny dead thing. The archaeologist is no longer a necrophore but the marvelous resuscitator of a bygone life and art. As the engineer constructs for the future so the archaeologist, employing his skill as excavator and scientist, reconstructs an ancient civilization in all its various manifestations, from the cult of the gods to the practical life of every day.



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