A CHANGING DEFENSE: Roman Impetus for the Evolution of Pompeian Fortification

Benjamin Jones

Walls and fortifications express the pressures at work on an area, and Pompeii is no exception. Defenses are indicators of external and internal influence, and at Pompeii there was no more influential force than Rome. In the city's history prior to the Social War, the expansion of the fortifications reflected Roman presence acting on Pompeii first as an ally, then as a threat. Both of these means of external influence resulted in the strengthening of Pompeii's fortifications, despite being opposite types of pressure. Once the Romans colonized the city in 80 BCE, the pressures became internal and the fortifications were weakened, literally and metaphorically.

Pompeii was established as a walled town long before the Roman influence expanded to the area; pottery analysis indicates the first walls around the city were built in the first half of the sixth century (all dates B.C.E. unless otherwise noted).[1] The first wall ran along the "tactical ridge", the lava terrace surrounding the plateau on which the city stands. Subsequent walls would more or less trace this same path, especially in the northwest and southeast corners of the city; remains of the original wall have been found at Porta Nocera, Porta Vesuvio, Porta Ercolano, and beneath the Tower of Mercury.[2] As these remains are always associated with later defensive construction, the path of Pompeii's walls displays an exceptional degree of continuity over time. This should not be particularly surprising, as the lava escarpment surrounding the plateau provides an excellent natural defense, and an obvious border on which to set a fortification. Though the first wall was established around the same time as the town itself, and theoretically

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[1] Cristina Chiaramonte, "The Walls and Gates." *The World of Pompeii*. Ed. John J. Dobbins and Pedar W. Foss. (London: Routledge, 2007), 141.
[2] Chiaramonte, "The Walls and Gates," 140.

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enclosed the full 160-acre area that would be walled for the rest of the city's life,[3] the total area was certainly not entirely urban.

It has been reasonably suggested that the *altstadt*, the original city centre, lay in the southwest corner of the later city. If the original town kept its layout, it would explain the slightly offset street grid of this part of Pompeii, as well as the winding nature of the Via degli Augustali, the Vicolo del Lupanare, and the Via dei Teatri, which may have formed the borders of the original town (Fig. 1).[4] Remains of outlying buildings have been found throughout the rest of the walled area, so the original wall was certainly protecting all the town's holdings. These outlying buildings are built in a grid pattern that remain unchanging as the city develops, suggesting that the street grid of Pompeii now visible is older than those neighborhoods and buildings.[5]

Current excavation data suggests that the original wall was comprised of a single curtain two to three meters high, built in *opus quadratum* (Fig. 2), out of sandstone and *cruma di lava*,[6] both fairly soft materials. At this point the wall was not backed with an *agger*, a reinforcing earthen slope, and the foundation trench was only a few centimeters deep,[7] which limited its usefulness as a serious defensive fortification. There are various interpretations for the purpose of the original wall. Greek and Etruscan pottery found under the structures of the early town suggest that these two civilizations were either inhabiting or heavily influencing Pompeii in its early stages.[8] Hypotheses include that the city was originally a Greek or Etruscan colony, defending itself against attacks from

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[3] Chiaramonte, "The Walls and Gates," 140.
[4] Alan Kaiser, *Roman Urban Street Networks*, (New York: Routledge, 2011), 69.
[5] Joanne Berry, *The Complete Pompeii*, (London: Thames & Hudson, 2007), 74.
[6] Chiaramonte, "The Walls and Gates," 141.
[7] Chiaramonte, "The Walls and Gates," 141.
[8] Berry, *The Complete Pompeii*, 74.

the opposing force.[9] However, given the limited defensive usefulness of the sixth-

century wall, it seems more likely that it simply served to delineate and to some extent

protect the town's agricultural border, possibly against other Greek and Etruscan

colonies. "The phases of the walls reflect, as is natural, the process of the birth and urban

development of a city that in the pre-Roma period was a crossroads of relationships,

exchanges, and conflicts between the native Oscan world and the Etruscan, Greek, and

Campano-Samnite worlds."[10] If before the arrival of Roman influence the walls were a

statement of multicultural interaction, this statement would end as they increasingly

became a symbol of a single culture's influence and eventual domination.

A new fortification wall was built during the first half of the fifth century,

completely overwriting the existing wall, which had to be demolished to make way for

this larger structure.[11] The new wall, however, followed the strategically sound course of

the original. The fifth century dating is loose and based largely on stratification, as are all

attempts to date the walls at Pompeii.[12] However, placing the construction of a new,

more sturdy wall in the early fifth century makes a good deal of historical sense, for it

was at this time that the Samnites were beginning to move into the region. They had

captured and settled Capua and Cumae by 420, and by the end of the fifth century, they

controlled all the southern coastal villages, including Pompeii.[13] Oscan thus replaced

Greek and/or Etruscan as the primary language and cultural association. The

construction of the new wall may be read either as a defensive measure against the

coming threat of conquest or a later Samnite construction after they took control of

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[9] Berry, *The Complete Pompeii*, 74.
[10] Chiaramonte, "The Walls and Gates," 141.
[11] Chiaramonte, "The Walls and Gates," 142.
[12] Chiaramonte, "The Walls and Gates," 142.
[13] Berry, *The Complete Pompeii,* 76.

Pompeii. Given the timing, the first interpretation seems more likely, since the Samnites did not occupy Pompeii until at least the second half of the fifth century, and troubles had been brewing between Greeks and Etruscans since the late sixth century.[14] However, the design of the wall, especially the double curtain, mirrors that found at the Samnite town of Saepinum, so perhaps Samnite influence was already in effect.[15] The Pompeians, whoever they were, seeing Greeks, Etruscans, and Samnites beginning to clash over the region's territory certainly had cause to build an improved wall.

This new wall, while not up to the standards of later fortification, was certainly an improvement over the original. The single curtain of sandstone and soft lava was upgraded to a double curtain of limestone 4.3 meters thick. This wall too was built in *opus quadratum* with limestone rubble filling the intramural space. The foundations remained shallow; only the bottom course of blocks was sunk into the ground, which would have limited the possible height of the wall.[16] However, the wall had stairs with which defenders could reach the bastions, and may have had towers,[17] making it a reasonably strong defensive position in those times of uncertainty.

The walls were reconstructed for a third time near the end of the fourth century.[18] The latest wall, which is the fortification still largely visible at Pompeii, was the most impressive yet, and certainly designed to be an effective defensive structure. The existing fifth century wall was demolished, and replaced with a new limestone wall 10 meters high which was supported for the first time with both closely spaced stone

[14] Berry, *The Complete Pompeii*, 75.
[15] Michael Grant and Werner Forman, *Cities of Vesuvius*, (London: Book Club Assn., 1971), 50.
[16] Chiaramonte, "The Walls and Gates," 141.
[17] Chiaramonte, "The Walls and Gates," 142.
[18] Chiaramonte, "The Walls and Gates," 142.

buttresses and an *agger* backing.[19] Internal pillars and deep foundations supported the

greater height of the wall. Blocks of limestone masonry averaged about 10 inches in

thickness.[20] This already substantial fortification was improved by the addition of a

second curtain behind the first. This second curtain did not run the full course of the

walls around the city, but appeared mostly in the northwest corner of the city, between

Porta Vesuvio and Porta Ercolano. Because of the steep slope of the lava surrounding the

rest of the city, this northwest section was the only part of the wall easily approachable

by an invading army, and thus the most likely direction of an attack.[21] The inner curtain,

built of tufa from the neighboring region of Nocera, was two meters higher than the

outer, possibly reaching 12 meters high.[22] The higher second curtain may have been

intended to act more as a missile shield than as a block to invading troops.[23] It is placed

five to six meters behind the outer curtain and the space between them was filled with

stones and earth to a moderate height, creating a wall walk between the two. This walk

would have provided transit from one part of the wall to another for defenders, and was

open to the sky, as evidenced by rainspouts higher up.[24] The wall was lined with

loopholes for archers and slingers,[25] showing preparation for an active defense.

      The reconstruction of the wall around the year 300 makes sense given the political

uncertainty of the time. It was the fourth century that, as Michael Burns says, "represents

a period in which there was a break with the traditional modes and cycles of conflict.

The emergence of Rome, and possibly the Samnites if we are to believe Livy, escalated

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[19] Grant and Forman, *Cities of Vesuvius*, 50.
[20] R.C. Carrington, "Notes on the Building Materials of Pompeii," *Journal of Roman Studies* 23 (1933): 127
[21] Lawrence Richardson, *Pompeii: an Architectural History*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1988), 45.
[22] Grant and Forman, *Cities of Vesuvius*, 50.
[23] Richardson, *Pompeii: an Architectural History*, 45.
[24] Richardson, *Pompeii: an Architectural History*, 45.
[25] Grant and Forman, *Cities of Vesuvius*, 50.

the pressure between various Italic peoples, and created a dynamic environment in which the scale, intensity, and duration of war increased."[26] The new type of war and political structure introduced to the Italian peninsula by the Romans would have a lasting effect on defensive construction.

The Samnite Wars, lasted from 343 to 291 and involved the entire Italian peninsula. Especially during the Third Samnite War, the Samnites rallied most of the Italian cities to oppose Rome.[27] Not only would Samnite Pompeii have felt the tensions of the Roman-Samnite conflict during the fourth century, but also when the war ended in Samnite defeat, Pompeii and the rest of Samnite-allied Campania were absorbed into the Roman Empire as *socii*, allies.[28] Pompeii itself was taken by Rome between 310 and 300. Rome was able to tax the allied towns, and use their military forces to strengthen its armies, but did not control local government. The administration, language and culture of Pompeii remained Oscan. However, according to Cristina Chiaramonte, "The installation of the fortification with limestone curtain and *agger* is to be considered part of the planned building development of Pompeii in the third century, when the city had effectively entered the orbit of Rome with the entire federation of Nuceria. The model applied…we find soon again in the Latin colony of Paestum."[29] If the installation of the greatest fortification yet was a planned development spurred by the Romans for their allies, this becomes a prime example of the external political pressure of Rome strengthening defensive fortification.

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[26] Michael Burns. "The Homogenization of Military Equipment Under the Roman Republic." *'Romanization'? Digressus Supplement.* 1 (2003), 62.
[27] John Rich, and Graham Shipley, *War and Society in the Roman World*, (London: Routledge, 1995), 11.
[28] Berry, *The Complete Pompeii*, 78.
[29] Chiaramonte, "The Walls and Gates," 146.

Ascribing the construction of the limestone fortification wall to Pompeii's early days as one of the *socii* is logical given the timing, and it is possible to make a good case for this interpretation. If the walls were constructed in the last years of the fourth century, Pompeii would already have been absorbed into the sphere of Roman allies. Excavations within the walls of Pompeii have revealed a paucity of domestic or public building prior to 300, but have uncovered a number of wells. This goes far to support the idea that during the fourth century, much of the land enclosed by the city wall was agricultural in nature.[30] Even given the pressures of the Samnite Wars, one wonders whether a primarily agricultural community would have gathered the resources for such a monumental reconstruction project without the influence and network of the Roman Empire. There also does not appear to be any destruction layer dating to the Samnite Wars in Pompeii, suggesting that the town either surrendered to Rome, or was taken without much of a fight. Had the ten-meter, buttressed, limestone fortification been present during a siege, it is doubtful there would be so little evidence of active defense.

There is some debate regarding the timing of the construction of the inner curtain for the new fortification. Lawrence Richardson, Jr., in his *Architectural History* of Pompeii, claims it was constructed simultaneously with the outer curtain, around the end of the fourth century, citing the necessary removal of the *agger* backing from behind the outer curtain to add the inner curtain and its replacement behind the inner curtain as a ridiculously unnecessary expenditure of effort.[31] This interpretation seems unlikely given the weight of evidence for a later construction date. The inner curtain is built of tufa,

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[30] Berry, *The Complete Pompeii*, 78.
[31] Richardson, *Pompeii: an Architectural History*, 45.

which, while available, was not common until the third century.[32] Additionally, the doubling of the wall along the most vulnerable approach to the city makes sense when ascribed to a third century context, due to the onset of the Second Punic War.

The Second Punic War, also known as the Hannibalic War, would have given the Pompeians a justifiable cause for concern. Hannibal's army, attacking the Roman allies, reached Campania in 216. Although many Italian cities defected to follow the Carthaginian commander, Pompeii remained with Rome. Though Pompeii was never attacked by Hannibal's army, there was no reason for it not to fear such a fate. Hannibal sacked Capua and Nuceria and besieged Nola,[33] all towns close to Pompeii. Additionally, his path through Italy (Fig. 3) was complicated enough that the Romans and their allies never knew where he would strike next. It is telling that the term *Hannibal ad portas*, "Hannibal is at the door" became proverbial during this time; the fear that the armies of Carthage could at any moment be at one's gates must have been oppressive.[34] The pressure on the Pompeians to defend themselves during this period would have been immense, and the threat certainly would have warranted the construction of the inner curtain along the topographically vulnerable northwest wall. The Hannibalic War also affected Pompeii's urban fabric. There was a great expansion of planned housing during this time, and it is tempting to ascribe the rise in population to an influx of refugees from the sack of Capua and Nuceria.[35] These changes, both to the fortifications and the domestic layout can be ascribed as effects of the Romans, since it was through their assumption into the Roman sphere of influence that the Pompeians initially reconstructed

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[32] Carrington, "Notes on the Building Materials of Pompeii," 127.
[33] Livy 23.15-16
[34] Cicero, *De Finibus* 4.22, *Philippics* 1.11
[35] Berry, *The Complete Pompeii*, 80.

the wall following the Samnite War and had cause for further modification under the threat of Hannibal.

The greatest pressure and change Rome would bring to bear on Pompeian fortification would be though the Social War, both in the fighting itself and the complex political tensions that preceded the outbreak of the war. In 133, Roman agricultural reforms reabsorbed the *ager publicus* held by Italian and Roman towns. This act was probably in violation of treaties between Rome and the Italian allies, and "it is clear that the links between the upper classes of Italy and Rome, which had become ever closer in the course of the two generations which followed the Hannibalic War, were gravely compromised."[36] This measure would also have caused tension within Rome, but considering that after 167 Roman citizens did not have to pay *tributum*, while the non-citizen allies were still required to, resentment would have been much higher among the *socii*.[37] Indeed, the tensions were such that the Latin colony of Fregellae revolted in 121, giving an early indication of the coming violence.[38] During the 120s, the deteriorating political situation made the allies increasingly "aware of the need to cease to be subjects and to share in the exercise of imperial power, hence to acquire Roman citizenship."[39] These desires were met with increasing hostility on the part of many Romans, who feared that the state as an institution would suffer. This fear was no doubt echoed and enflamed by the more xenophobic elements of the Roman population at seeing record numbers of Italians from the allied towns participating in Roman assemblies.[40]

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[36] E. Gabba, "Rome and Italy: The Social War." *The Cambridge Ancient History*. Ed. J. A. Crook, Andrew Lintott, and Elizabeth Rawson. Vol. 9. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994), 104.
[37] Gabba, "Rome and Italy: The Social War," 107.
[38] Gabba, "Rome and Italy: The Social War," 105.
[39] Gabba, "Rome and Italy: The Social War," 105.
[40] Gabba, "Rome and Italy: The Social War," 105.

In 100, an agrarian law provided for citizen colonies to be established, and for a certain number of people from allied town to be admitted to these colonies as Roman citizens. Large numbers of allies must have acquired citizenship as a result of this law, enough that the Lex Licinia Mucia was passed in 95 specifically to prosecute those who had obtained citizenship illegally. This law would primarily have applied to upper-class allies who had managed to obtain citizenship in various dodgy fashions. The allies were of course incensed, and this outrage is thought to be one of the primary causes behind the Social War.[41] In 91 M. Livius Drusus attempted to grant citizenship to the allies. He gained wide, though not total, support among them, but the amount of personal influence he was amassing infuriated the Roman oligarchy. He was first voted out of the senate, then assassinated, and his measure granting citizenship to the allies was never passed. This was the last straw for the allies, who began plotting against Rome in 91, and violence soon broke out.[42] The general L. Corneluis Sulla received the command to bring the allies to heel.

Pompeii was the focus of Sulla's operations of Campania. His siege of the city in 89 closely followed his devastating sack of Stabiae, which, according to Pliny the Elder, could no longer be defined as a town after Sulla's attack.[43] The Roman army cannot have been small, as the Italian general Lucius Cluentius attacked Sulla's forces during the siege of Pompeii, escalating the conflict far beyond what Sulla must have expected for such an engagement.[44] Nonetheless, Cluentius was defeated, and Sulla ultimately took Pompeii. According to a dubious passage from Orosius, 18,000 Samnites were killed in

[41] Gabba, "Rome and Italy: The Social War," 110.
[42] Gabba, "Rome and Italy: The Social War," 114.
[43] Federico Santangelo, *Impact of Empire: Sulla, the Elites and the Empire: A Study of Roman Policies in Italy and the Greek East* (Boston: Brill Academic Publishers, 2007), 68.
[44] Santangelo, *Impact of Empire*, 69.

the battle against Cluentius. However, there is an unfortunate lack of data regarding the actual capture of the city. It is still unclear how Sulla gained the town, and Pompeii's level of commitment to its defense. It is not an unattractive suggestion that after some time of siege, Pompeii may have surrendered to the Roman army, since it was left essentially intact and as far as we can tell no significant amount of blood was spilt, unlike nearby Stabiae, which Sulla thoroughly annihilated.[45]

The Social War had a profound impact on Pompeii's fortifications. Just before the Social War, the walls, gates, and towers were restructured. "When Pompeii officially sided with the rebellion, they began to prepare the city for an inevitable siege by the Romans…the city's defenses had to withstand the stress of repeated ballistic strikes by Roman artillery."[46] To this end, the outer curtain was resurfaced, the gates were refurbished, and a number of defensive towers were added. Given the extent of the political tensions preceding the Social War, especially considering the revolt of Fregellae in 121, it seems perfectly reasonable to imagine that the Pompeians would have had both the forewarning and the incentive to strengthen their defenses. The date commonly given for the defensive additions is between 100 and the siege 89, which seems to allow enough time for the construction to have been carried out as well as being late enough for the political turmoil to have made clear the need for defense.

Prior to the Social War Pompeii's gates had probably been modified most recently during the Third Century, when the inner curtain was added to the city wall. The gates seem to have consisted of arches of tufa, the same material as the inner curtain. In their present form, however, they are made up of tufa and limestone blocks in with chunks of

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[45] Santangelo, *Impact of Empire*, 70.
[46] Annamaria Ciarallo, and Ernesto DeCarolis, eds. *Pompeii: Life in a Roman Town*, (Milan: Electa, 1999), 295.

lava and mortar in *opus incertum* (Fig. 4).[47] It is generally accepted that the restructuring

of the gates would seem to have occured just prior to the Social War, and the mix of

building methods is a result of their hurried refurbishment in the face of the crisis.[48] The

Stabia, Nocera, Nola, and Sarno gates are similar, consisting of a long, narrow passage

with the gate at the interior end, with bastions at the exterior. Between the bastions and

the gate itself, invaders would have been fired upon from above on both sides. The gates

themselves would have been heavy wooden doors secured by a beam. There does not

appear to be a portcullis, space for defensive artillery or towers protecting any of these

gates.[49] However, all these entrances sit atop the lava escarpment and the steepness of the

rise to the plateau would have made them very difficult to approach with an invading

army. Nevertheless, these gates all seem to have been refurbished before the Social War.

Unfortunately, it is hard to discuss any renovations done to those gates nearer to the

physical site of the attack, as the Porta di Ercolano and Porta Marina were reconstructed

during the Roman period, and the Porta del Vesuvio was destroyed in the 62C.E.

earthquake.[50] However, it is reasonable to assume that they, too, were reinforced in

anticipation of the coming battle.

At the same time that Pompeii's gates were restructured, a number of towers were

added along the course of the wall (Fig. 5). Excavation has revealed the construction of

at least 11 towers, and may suggest as many as 13. There were two main groupings of

towers, four around the southeast corner near the amphitheater, and three between Porta

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[47] Chiaramonte, "The Walls and Gates," 143.
[48] Richardson, *Pompeii: an Architectural History*, 47
[49] Richardson, *Pompeii: an Architectural History*, 47.
[50] Richardson, *Pompeii: an Architectural History*, 47.

del Vesuvio and Porta di Ercolano.[51] These towers are constructed from limestone and

lava set in mortar in *opus incertum*, the same material used in the reconstruction of the

gates. The towers were then covered in white plaster, which was carved in relief to

simulate the *opus quadratum* limestone blocks of the existing outer wall (Fig. 6). The

towers had three floors, all connected by interior stairs. The first floor was a guardroom

and had a backdoor that opened onto the *agger* inside the city. The second floor was

level with the wall walk, allowing defenders to travel from one tower to another between

the two wall curtains; arrow slits were also found along this second level. The third floor

had large windows from which defensive artillery might have been fired.[52] All in all, the

towers seem to have been designed not just as lookouts or bulwarks, but as an active

fortification to be manned by a defending army.

Richardson attempts to make the case that Pompeii's towers were not, in fact,

built just before the Social War, but after it, during the Roman occupation. He cites the

workmanlike construction of the towers as evidence that they were not built in a hurry as

a response to danger, but were a sustained peacetime social project. Additionally, while

the walls around the Porta di Ercolano are peppered with holes from Roman artillery,

these holes are hard to find on the towers, suggesting that they are a post-bombardment

construction.[53] However, this interpretation falls apart on closer examination. The *opus*

incertum construction of the towers would have been easier to construct than the *opus*

quadratum of the walls, and uses local lava rather than Sarno limestone or Noceran tufa.

This is the same style and building materials used to restructure the gates, a

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[51] Richardson, *Pompeii: an Architectural History*, 48.
[52] Chiaramonte, "The Walls and Gates," 143.
[53] Richardson, *Pompeii: an Architectural History*, 49.

reconstruction that Richardson admits happened just prior to the Social War.[54]

Additionally, the varied construction of *opus incertum* would show damage much less easily than the adjacent flat surface of limestone blocks. Finally, since the towers are also an effective fortification for active defense, they fit much better into a prewar context than the de-emphasis on fortification that followed Roman colonization (discussed later).

When the Social War reached Pompeii in 89, Sulla's attack came along the exact lines the defenders of the city had expected; the marks in the walls left by Roman projectiles surround the Porta di Ercolano (Fig. 7),[55] the gate reinforced by the double wall and towers, and the only gate beyond which the slope of the hill is shallow enough to permit the approach of an army. The dimensions of the marks on the wall show that several different types of artillery were used (Fig. 8-9); stones, wooden beams, and pointed projectiles were all fired at the Porta di Ercolano, probably with the intent of clearing the wall and causing destruction within the city rather than bringing down the wall itself. COMPARATIVE The largest projectiles found at Pompeii are too large for ballistae, and would have required an onager, which, as the furthest-reaching catapult type, would account for much of the damage within the walls (Fig. 10).[56] This succeeded at least to some extent; the northern part of *insula* VI.I was thoroughly destroyed (Fig. 11).[57]

[54] Richardson, *Pompeii: an Architectural History*, 47.
[55] Grant and Forman, *Cities of Vesuvius*, 23.
[56] Ciarollo and De Carolis, *Pompeii: Life in a Roman Town*, 295.
[57] Rick Jones and Damian Robinson, "Intensification, Heterogeneity, and Power in the Development of Insula VI," *The World of Pompeii*. Ed. John J. Dobbins and Pedar W. Foss. (London: Routledge, 2007), 396.

The assertion that the walls were constructed and intended for an active defense against the Sullan siege is underscored by what have become known as the Eîtuns Inscriptions. These inscriptions, in the native Oscan language of Pompeii, were painted in red on the exterior walls of houses.[58] As can be seen in a map of the inscriptions (Fig. 12), each faces a street corner on a major road, and there is a significant concentration in the northwest corner of the city, on roads leading toward Porta di Ercolano and Porta del Vesuvio. A translation of one of these inscriptions reads: "By this route, there are paths where the public temple may be seen, as well as the middle road and the towers, which are to the left of the Urblana gate. On that road, to the left, Lucius Pudidus, son of Lucius and Marcus Purilius, son of Marcus, have the Urblana gate and the Mefirian tower, the outpost."[59] This translation is based on an archaic reconstruction of the Oscan text by F. Ribezzo, who attempted to restore the fragment after the second half of each line was lost to a window; it is likely that the Latin *veru urublanu* is an incorrect reconstruction of *veru sarnu*, and the gate in question is the Porta di Sarno.[60] Additionally, the Eítuns Inscriptions are so named because each begins with the Oscan phrase *Eksuk amvíanud eítuns*, meaning, essentially, 'Go to this wall…'[61]. As we can see in the reconstruction above, following this command, the inscription gives a list of directions to the Mefirian tower outpost and the officer, Lucius Pudidus, at that outpost. This structure is consistent with that of the shorter, more conventional of the Eítuns Inscriptions, which read more like, "Go to this wall between tower 12 and the Sarno gate, where lives Marius Atrius."[62]

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[58] Carl Darling Buck, *A Grammar of Oscan and Umbrian* (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1904), 242
[59] Trans. Kelly Lougheed. 12/7/11
[60] Carl Buck, "Greek ´   , Oscan Amvíanud, and the Eítuns-Inscriptions," *Classical Philology* 17 No. 2 (1922): 111
[61] Trans. Catherine Teitz. 12/11/11
[62] Buck, *A Grammar of Oscan and Umbrian*, 242. Trans. Ben Jones & Catherine Teitz. 12/11/11

In this case, the terms 'lives' (Latin *ubi habitat*, Oscan *puf faamat*) carries the connotation 'is stationed' in the original Oscan, and almost certainly refers to the post of a soldier.[63] Read this way, the Eítuns Inscriptions were directions for the people of Pompeii to various marshalling points on the city's defenses. Conceivably, when the city was under attack, the inhabitants of each neighborhood, called to defend the walls, would be able to read these inscriptions and know to which guard post and commander they were to report.[64] Not only to the Eítuns Inscriptions "suggest a fair degree of organisation, as well as a community literate enough to make use of written instructions in an emergency"[65], but they also show a deliberate preparation for the defense of the city and the active use of the walls and towers as a defensive mechanism.

However prepared its defenders might have been, Pompeii ultimately fell to Sulla's siege. The town was not pillaged like its neighbors Herculaneum and Stabiae,[66] nor was a Roman colony immediately established in the city. It is impossible to tell whether this was because Pompeii surrendered after the siege had gone on for some time rather than being taken by force, or if it was because of other extenuating factors. Regardless, between 89 and 80, Pompeii became a *municipium* of Rome, without much change in status from before the revolt of the *socii*, though certainly with greater influence and oversight from Rome.[67] In many cases, status as a *municipium* was associated with *civitas sine suffragio*, citizenship without a vote.[68] It is hard to tell what

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[63] Buck, *A Grammar of Oscan and Umbrian*, 242.
[64] Ling, Roger. "A Stranger in Town: Finding the Way in an Ancient City." *Greece & Rome* 2nd ser. 37.2 (1990): 209.
[65] Mary Beard, *The Fires of Vesuvius: Pompeii Lost and Found*, (Cambridge, MA: Belknap of Harvard UP, 2008), 39.
[66] Berry, *The Complete Pompeii*, 84.
[67] Santangelo, *Impact of Empire*, 71.
[68] Purcell, Nicholas. "Municipium." *Oxford Classical Dictionary*. Web. 9 Dec. 2011. <http://www.oxford-classicaldictionary3.com/entry?entry=t111.e4285>.

the association between Rome and Pompeii entailed during these nine years, but in the year 80, Sulla established a Roman colony at Pompeii, changing this relationship dramatically. His reasons for doing so are unclear, though it has been suggested that the foundation of the colony was a retributive act for hypothetical Pompeian support of Gaius Marius, Sulla's rival in the Roman Civil War of the 80s.[69] After colonization, the town received its new name, Pompeii, and Publius Cornelius Sulla, probably L. Cornelius Sulla's nephew, became its leader. The city received a new constitution, magistrates, patron deity (Venus Fisica), and an influx of colonists, who became the "new political elite."[70]

Most of these colonists would have been soldiers from Sulla's army; it was customary in the Roman army at the time to pay veterans in land and loot from captured towns, as there would not have been enough money to equip and pay each soldier out of the army's coffers.[71] After the Civil War, Sulla was known to settle his veterans in confiscated lands that had been loyal to Marius,[72] lending credence to the theory that this is where Pompeii's allegiance had lain. Appian at one point estimates that Sulla settled 120,000 veterans throughout Italy on shares of land taken from the *ager publicus* and the *ager* of "cities Sulla punished for their stance during the Civil War".[73] For Pompeii, it is likely that this would have translated to an influx of at least a couple thousand colonists, a number that would have increased the city's population by almost 50%.[74]

[69] Santangelo, *Impact of Empire*, 158.
[70] Berry, *The Complete Pompeii*, 84.
[71] Rich and Shipley, *War and Society in the Roman World*, 102.
[72] Rich and Shipley, *War and Society in the Roman World*, 103.
[73] Santangelo, *Impact of Empire*, 148.
[74] Beard, *The Fires of Vesuvius: Pompeii Lost and Found*, 39.

It is useful to note that following the Roman colonization of Pompeii, significant construction efforts were undertaken, with the implicit purpose of rebranding the city as Roman. Houses in the southeast were demolished to make way for a Roman-style amphitheater, new administrative buildings were added to the forum, a new altar was dedicated in the Temple of Apollo, and the Samnite temple of Mephitis was demolished and replaced with a temple to the patron Roman goddess Venus.[75] "From the arrival of Sulla's veterans to the eruption of Vesuvius, Pompeii was transformed into a Roman city."[76] If we are then to examine the constructions in Pompeii after 80B.C.E., it must be in the light of this ultimate goal.

Despite the influence the Roman colonial demographic would have brought to bear in the city, no clear colonists' quarter can be found in Pompeii. Because of this, it has been suggested that a large portion of the colonists lived outside the walls, with villas and properties in the fertile land between Pompeii and Vesuvius.[77] This interpretation solves two problems at once, namely the lack of a colonist section in the city, and the fact that Pompeii's urban infrastructure, well established by the year 80, probably would not have tolerated a 50% increase in population within its walls. As for those Romans who did live inside the city limits, the coastal houses on the west and southwest edges of the city seem like likely dwellings for the more elite colonists.[78] These lavish homes, comprising a strip of residences along the coast and exemplified by the House of the Golden Bracelet, were built right on top of the city wall (Fig. 13), in order to maximize the scenic sea views. This of course vastly compromised the defensive potential of this

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[75] Santangelo, *Impact of Empire*, 160.
[76] Kaiser, *Roman Urban Street Networks*, 70.
[77] Beard, *The Fires of Vesuvius: Pompeii Lost and Found*, 40.
[78] Beard, *The Fires of Vesuvius: Pompeii Lost and Found*, 40.

strip of wall, but defense was "no longer a strategic necessity once Pompeii was part of a supposedly peaceful, Roman Italy".[79] This same encroachment of elite housing on the fortifications can be seen in the House of the Vestals. This house predated the Social War, and being located in the north of *insula* VI, was heavily damaged by the Sullan bombardment. In the wake of the war, the house was rebuilt on a grander scale, absorbing the land of two smaller neighboring properties that had also been destroyed during the attack.[80] This expansion necessitated the removal of the *agger* from part of the wall. Again, the defensive integrity of Pompeii's city wall was sacrificed to elite domestic construction. It is hardly surprising that what was previously a functioning defensive wall must have taken on a very different social character during this period, when many members of the political elite class lived *outside* the walls.

Several of Pompeii's gates were reconstructed following the Roman occupation. These reconstructions were most dramatic at the Porta Marina and the Porta de Ercolano. It is unclear what the Porta Marina looked like in the pre-Roman period, but in the early years of Roman colonization it was rebuilt to be a long narrow vault climbing the steep side of the plateau (Fig. 14), with a guard post and a passage large enough for war machines to pass through.[81] This is an unusual departure from the postwar trend towards de-emphasis on defense, and would bear further study. However, it could be argued that this was an important aspect of Romanization of the colonized city, with the city's ability to admit Roman artillery as a reminder of the power of Rome. Functionally, given the weaknesses elsewhere, and the fact that the Porta Marina never seemed to be a reasonable candidate for attack, it seems unlikely that this restructuring would have been for a

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[79] Beard, *The Fires of Vesuvius: Pompeii Lost and Found*, 40.
[80] Jones and Robinson, "Intensification, Heterogeneity, and Power in the Development of Insula VI," 396.
[81] Chiaramonte, "The Walls and Gates," 143.

primarily defensive purpose. The Porta de Ercolano (Fig. 15) was also restructured

following the colonization. Its new form was more elaborate and monumental, and

presumably less defensible than its Samnite predecessor.[82] Porta de Ercolano became a

triple gate with an inner court, designed for receiving important visitors or collecting

taxes on delivered goods,[83] all reconstructions that would have made this gate rather

difficult to secure in case of an attack. This does follow the general trend of removal of

defensive framework in favor of 'Romanized' peacetime necessity.

Taken as a whole, the history of the walls and fortifications of Pompeii forms a

dramatic arc. The fortifications were built up over the course of centuries from a low

sandstone wall protecting a provincial town's agricultural land to "a unified concept of

engineering for defense that is without any important parallel elsewhere".[84] This buildup

was due to the political pressures exerted by the Roman Empire as an external force. The

third, and lasting fortification was a planned construction spurred by Pompeii's new role

as a Roman ally. The addition of the second curtain, representing the transformation of

an already formidable wall into a tactically sound defensive structure, and indeed the

influx of refugees that transformed much of Pompeii's enclosed space from agricultural

land to planned urban center, was due to their fear of Hannibal. Yet again, Rome was an

external force responsible for further strengthening the walls of Pompeii. In the end, it

was Rome as an external and *threatening* force that led to construction of towers, the

reinforcement of gates, and the creation of a social network of defenders, finalizing the

transformation of Pompeii's fortifications into an active and battle-tested defensive

machine. After the Roman conquest and colonization, and the resulting shift to Rome as

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[82] Grant and Forman, *Cities of Vesuvius*, 53.
[83] Richardson, *Pompeii: an Architectural History*, 48.
[84] Richardson, *Pompeii: an Architectural History*, 44.

an internal, colonizing force, the de-emphasis of the defenses and their replacement with the elite housing and monumental architecture necessary for a 'Romanized' city is inescapable. Ultimately, it was the pressure of empire as an external force, whether supporting or opposing Pompeii, that led to the greatest advances in the complex history of the city's fortification.
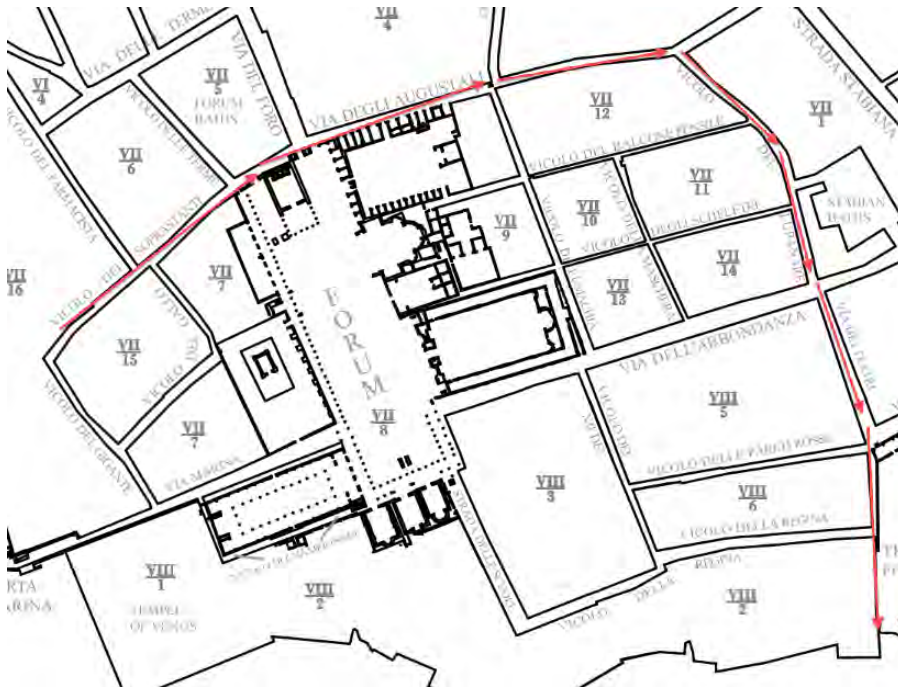
Fig. 1 – Theorized original border of *altstadt*

Map 2. "Plan of Pompeii. Streets, gates, towers and principal monuments." *The World of Pompeii*. Ed. John J Dobbins and Pedar W. Foss. New York: Routledge, 2007. (Notes mine)

Fig. 2 – Example of *opus quadratum*

Pompeii Vesuvian Gate. May 2006. Looking North. 2006. Photograph. Pompeii. Pompeiiinpictures: A Complete Photographic Plan of Everything at Ancient Pompeii as It Is Today, Produced by Jackie and Bob Dunn for Those as Enthusiastic about Pompeii as We Are. Web. 11 Dec. 2011.

Fig 3. Hannibal's Route Through Italy
  Martini, Frank. "Hannibal's Route of Invasion." Map. *Wikipedia*. The Department
  of History, United States Military Academy, 17 Mar. 2006. Web. 11 Dec. 2011.

Fig. 4 – Refurbishment of gate in *opus incertum*, visible at top
  Pompeii Porta Nola. May 2005. Looking East out from City. 2005. Photograph.
  Pompeii. *Pompeiiinpictures: A Complete Photographic Plan of Everything at
  Ancient Pompeii as It Is Today, Produced by Jackie and Bob Dunn for Those as
  Enthusiastic about Pompeii as We Are.* Web. 11 Dec. 2011.
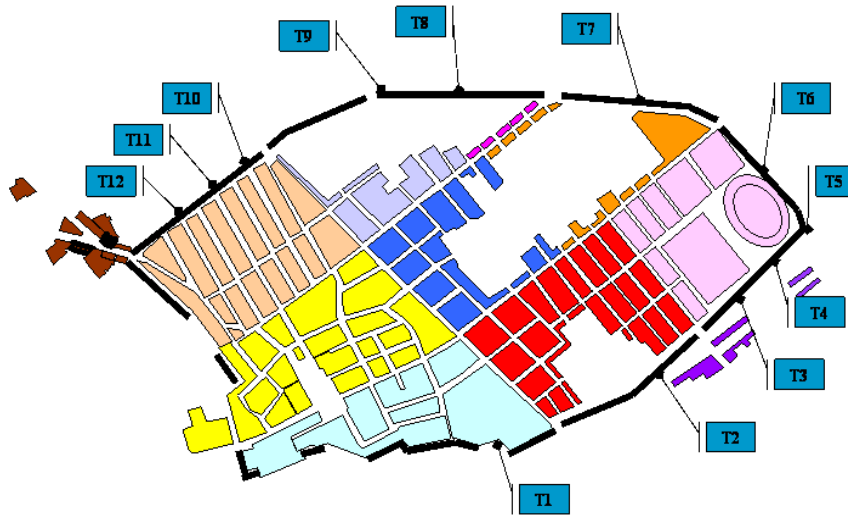
Fig. 5 – Placement of towers along city wall
   Interactive Map - Towers. Photograph. Pompeii. *Pompeiiinpictures: A Complete Photographic Plan of Everything at Ancient Pompeii as It Is Today, Produced by Jackie and Bob Dunn for Those as Enthusiastic about Pompeii as We Are.* Web. 11 Dec. 2011.

Fig 6. – Tower construction materials, *opus incertum*, plaster visible at base with relief imitating surrounding *opus quadratum* wall.
   Tower X, Pompeii. December 2007. Looking North from VI.11.20. 2007. Photograph. Pompeii. *Pompeiiinpictures: A Complete Photographic Plan of Everything at Ancient Pompeii as It Is Today, Produced by Jackie and Bob Dunn for Those as Enthusiastic about Pompeii as We Are.* Web. 11 Dec. 2011.

Fig 7. Projectile marks near Porta Ercolano

Walls at Pompeii Porta Ercolano or Herculaneum Gate. May 2006. Looking South towards East Side. 2006. Photograph. Pompeii. Pompeiiinpictures: A Complete Photographic Plan of Everything at Ancient Pompeii as It Is Today, Produced by Jackie and Bob Dunn for Those as Enthusiastic about Pompeii as We Are. Web. 11 Dec. 2011.

Fig. 8, 9 – Projectiles from outside walls
    Ciarallo, Annamaria, and Ernesto DeCarolis, eds., *Pompeii: Life in a Roman Town*, (Milan: Electa, 1999), 333.
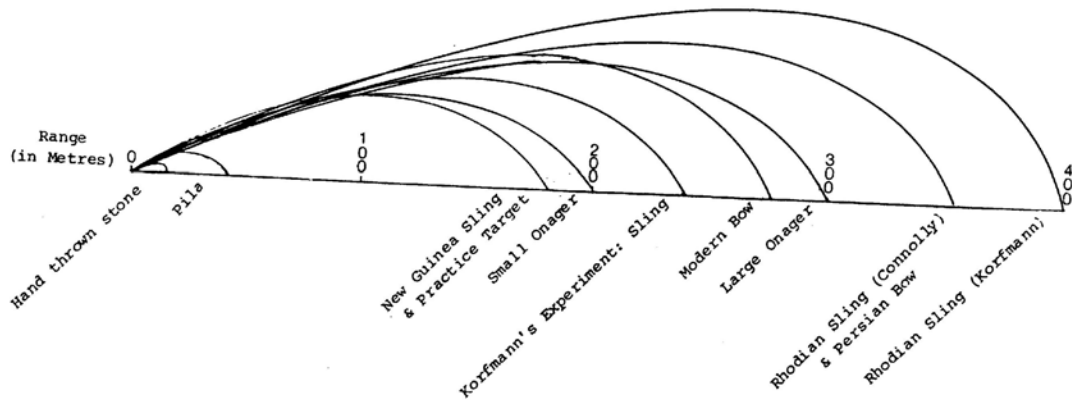
Fig. 10 – Comparative Ranges of Missile Weapons
     W.B. Griffiths, "The Sling and its Place in the Roman Imperial Army," *Roman Military Equipment: The Sources of Evidence*. Ed. C. van Driel-Murray, (Oxford: B.A.R., 1989), 262.
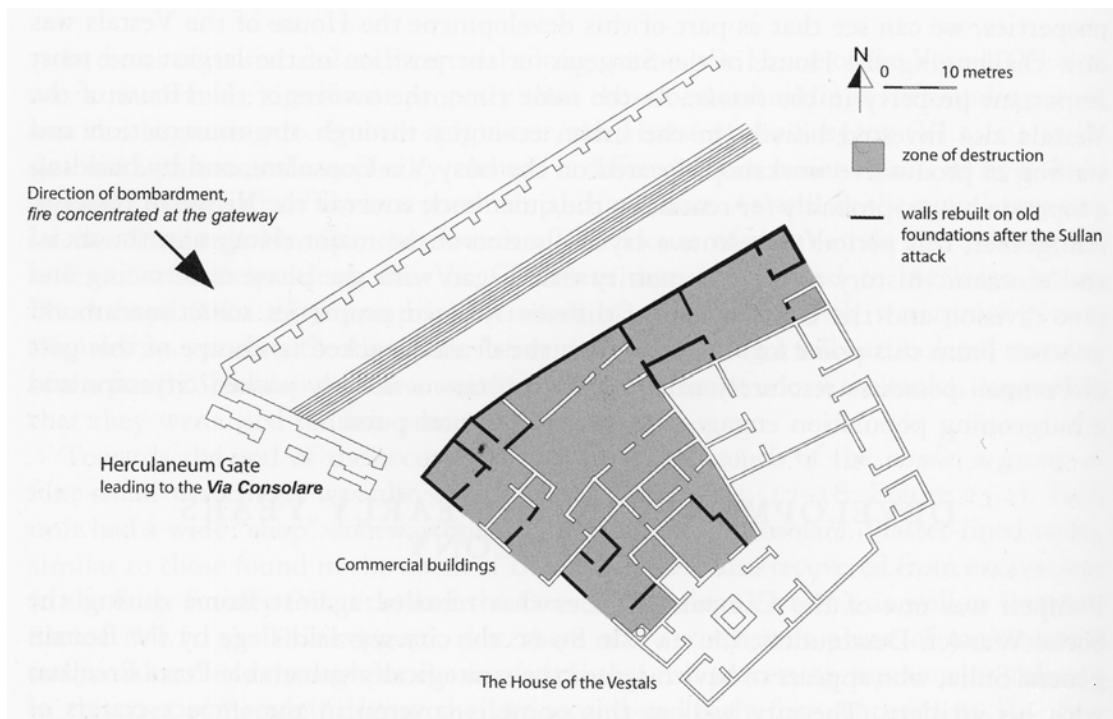

Fig. 11 – The destruction of the northern end of *insula* VI.I caused by the Sullan bombardment.
     Rick Jones and Damian Robinson, "Intensification, Heterogeneity, and Power in the Development of Insula VI.I," *The World of Pompeii*, Ed. John J. Dobbins and Pedar W. Foss, (London: Routledge, 2007), 396.
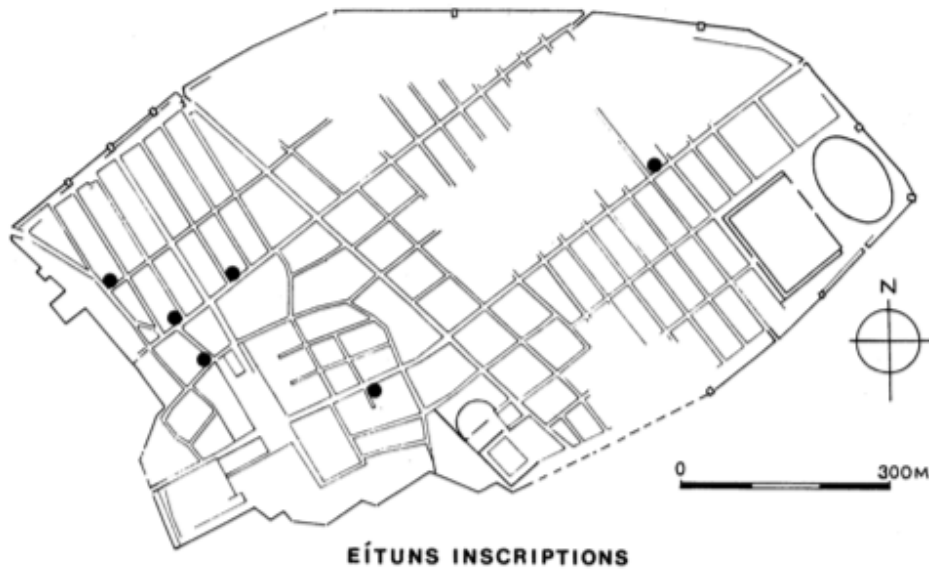
Fig. 12 – Location of the Eítuns Inscriptions
Roger Ling, "A Stranger in Town: Finding the Way in an Ancient City." *Greece & Rome* 37 (1990), 209.
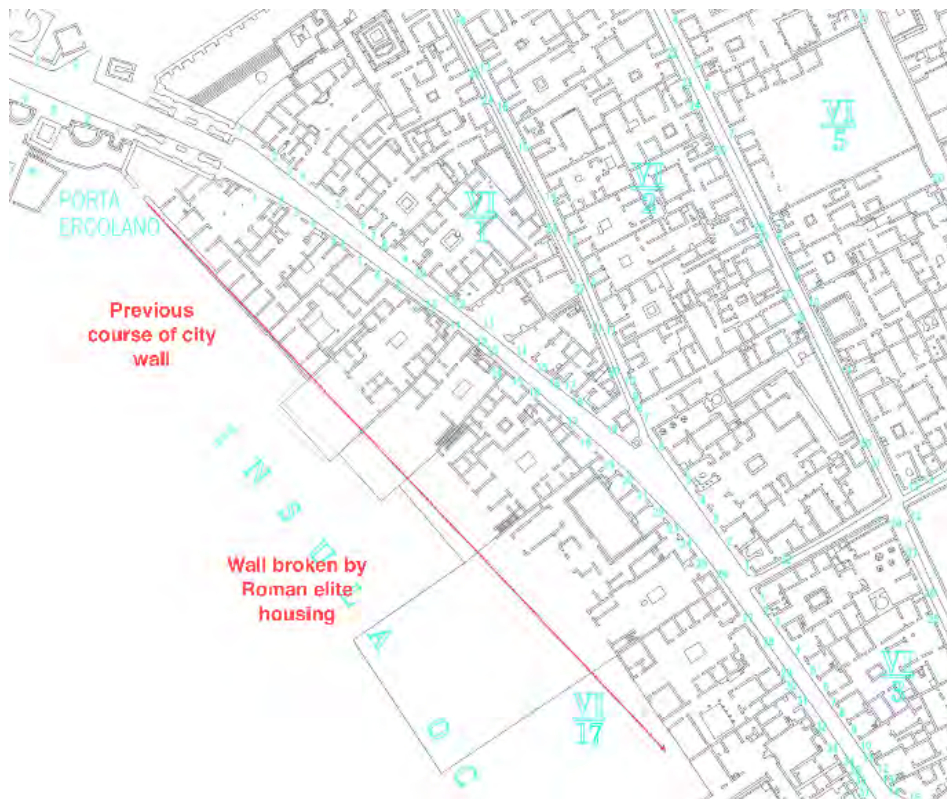

Fig. 13 – Large Roman residences laid over wall site
Map 3. "Plan of Pompeii. Streets, gates, towers and principal monuments." *The World of Pompeii*. Ed. John J Dobbins and Pedar W. Foss. New York: Routledge, 2007. (Notes mine)

Fig. 14 – Porta Marina

Pompeii Porta Marina. May 2010. 2010. Photograph. Pompeii.
*Pompeiiinpictures: A Complete Photographic Plan of Everything at Ancient
Pompeii as It Is Today, Produced by Jackie and Bob Dunn for Those as
Enthusiastic about Pompeii as We Are*. By Rick Bauer. Web. 11 Dec. 2011.

**Fig. 15 - Pompeii Porta Ercolano or Herculaneum Gate. May 2006. Looking south
from the Via dei Sepolcri.**

*Pompeii Porta Ercolano or Herculaneum Gate. May 2006. Looking South from
the Via Dei Sepolcri*. 2006. Photograph. Pompeii. *Pompeiiinpictures: A Complete
Photographic Plan of Everything at Ancient Pompeii as It Is Today, Produced by
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