

**Venus in Pompeii:
Iconography and Context**

**by
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Abstract

This thesis investigates the significance of representations of Venus and their spatial contexts in Pompeii. The database for this thesis comprises 197 representations of Venus in Pompeii, of which 162 are from domestic contexts. This is the first time a comprehensive study of images of a single deity in Pompeii has been undertaken. I identify and compare the different types of Venus representations within domestic contexts and their locations. I also compare them with those from public contexts to ascertain any wider trends regarding artworks featuring Venus across Pompeii and to assess whether the public or domestic context of an artwork featuring Venus affected its content or location.

I adopt a quantitative approach based on my database so that my conclusions are substantiated by numerical data. This is a departure from the more qualitative approach previously taken to relationships between decoration and room function.

This thesis concludes that Venus does not occur more often in areas pertaining to her spheres of influence (such as bath areas and gardens) compared with other areas of the house. It is relatively rare in domestic contexts for the room type to influence the content of artworks featuring Venus. Several artworks featuring Venus appear to have religious, ritual, or protective significance, and she was sometimes invoked as a protector of the water supply in Pompeii (ascertained through the composition and location of these artworks). An examination of the spatial distribution of artworks featuring deities in a subset of three houses indicates that despite being the patron deity of Pompeii and occurring more frequently than other deities in fixed artworks in this sample, Venus was sometimes of less significance than other deities in the paintings and pavements of these three houses when factors such as allusions to deities and sight-lines are considered.

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List of Abbreviations

Abbreviations follow the style of the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* with these exceptions:

- DNO* S. Kansteiner, K. Hallof, L. Lehmann, B. Seidensticker, & K. Stemmer (eds) 2014. *Der Neue Overbeck (DNO): Die antiken Schriftquellen zu den bildenden Künsten der Griechen*, Vols. I-V. Berlin: De Gruyter.
- Häuser in Pompeji See Strocka 1984; Ehrhardt 1988; Michel 1990; Strocka 1991; Seiler 1992; Stemmer 1992; Staub Gierow 1994; Fröhlich 1996; Ehrhardt 1998; Staub Gierow 2000; Allison & Sear 2002; Ehrhardt 2004.
- PPM I–IX* G. Pugliese Carratelli, I. Baldassarre, T. Lanzillotta, & S. Salomi (eds) 1990–1999. *Pompei: pitture e mosaici*, Vols. I-IX. Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana.
- PPM X* A. Campus, R. Belli Pasqua, F. De Caprariis, S. P. Fox (eds) 2003. *Pompei: pitture e mosaici*, Vol. X. Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana.
- PPM XI* G. Pugliese Carratelli, I. Baldassarre, T. Lanzillotta, & S. Salomi (eds) 1995. *Pompei: pitture e mosaici. La documentazione nell'opera di disegnatori e pittori dei secoli XVIII e XIX*. Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana.
- PPP* I. Bragantini, M. De Vos, F. P. Badoni, V. Sampaolo, & P. Gherardini (eds) 1981–1992. *Pitture e Pavimenti di Pompei*, Vols. I-III & Indices. Rome: Istituto centrale per il catalogo e la documentazione, Ministero per i beni culturali e ambientali.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Brief Outline of Study

My main research aim for this thesis is to investigate the significance of representations of Venus and their spatial contexts in Pompeii, and more widely to ascertain whether the location of an artwork influences its composition. To achieve this, I identify different Venus types and scenes featuring Venus in Pompeii, and take a quantitative approach to investigate how these are influenced by their spatial distribution. To do this, I create a database of every representation of Venus in Pompeii (Appendix B1) based mainly on published sources, and analyse it in terms of quantitative data – by comparing a set number of categories. My categories for this database relate to compositional elements and the location of the artworks (see Appendix A2 for the fields used in my database). I also compare my conclusions regarding artworks featuring Venus with those featuring other deities to ascertain if my conclusions relate to representations of Venus exclusively, or to deities more generally.

As I focus on the location of artworks in this study, I only use fixed artworks (wall-paintings, ceiling paintings, reliefs, and mosaics), as the location of portable, non-fixed, artworks (such as statues, statuettes, and other material culture) could change (see Chapter 3.2.2).

I chose Pompeii as a case study as it offers a unique opportunity to study the relationship between decoration and location in depth across a town because of its excellent preservation of fixed artworks (both *in situ* and in museums) and domestic spaces compared with other sites. Due to its remarkable preservation, Pompeii is a particularly useful site to examine because it includes houses of different sizes, presumably owned by people of different status, offering more representative information than ancient literary evidence that focuses on the houses of the elite. I chose to study Venus because she was the patron deity of Pompeii, and I would therefore expect her to feature prominently, perhaps more so than other deities, in the fixed artworks of the town.

In this thesis, I aim to address gaps in the study of Roman domestic religion, which focuses on the *lares*, and tends to neglect the main pantheon of deities (including Venus) represented in domestic spaces. We cannot understand how Roman religion

worked on an everyday level without considering the main pantheon of gods in the home.

1.2 Previous Scholarship and My Approach

The relationship between decoration and its location in Roman domestic space is a complicated one. Previous scholars have often used decoration to interpret or reflect the function of rooms (see Chapter 2.4.2 for references). Although such approaches have since been challenged by scholars such as Allison (2001), remnants of this remain in scholarship. For instance, Ling and Ling (2005: 94) suggest that love scenes are popular in *cubicula*, and Bacchus in dining areas, even though it is difficult to ascertain a single function for a room. These are, however, rather anecdotal statements, based on the observation of select areas, rather than based on more systematic analyses of comprehensive data. In this study, I create a database of artworks featuring Venus and analyse these artworks quantitatively, which enables me to compare elements of their composition (including different Venus types and scene types) with their spatial distribution. This approach is important because although some scholars have attempted to record the location of artworks in Pompeii in a systematic way, for instance with Schefold's catalogue (1957), such works remain in the minority and many scholars continue to make analyses based on a small number of examples.

1.3 Research Aims and Objectives

My main research aim for this thesis is to investigate the significance of representations of Venus and their spatial contexts in Pompeii. This aim is achieved through addressing the following main objectives:

- To identify and characterise the iconographic types of Venus, and identify scenes featuring Venus, represented in paintings, reliefs and mosaics in Pompeii.
- To identify patterns in the distribution of Venus representations and scenes featuring Venus within houses.
- To assess whether the public or domestic context of an artwork featuring Venus affected its content or location.

- To assess whether representations of Venus could have a religious, ritual, or protective purpose.
- To assess whether Venus was given greater prominence than other deities in Pompeian domestic space, which might be expected given her status as patron deity of the town.

1.4 The Significance of Venus to Pompeii

Venus was the patron deity of Pompeii, with the Roman colony of Pompeii named after her – Colonia Veneria Cornelia Pompeianorum (*CIL X 787*). Martial (*Epigrams*, 4.44.5) claimed that Pompeii was where Venus dwelt. The goddess is frequently represented in wall-paintings, statues and other material culture in Pompeii. Venus was invoked in graffiti and inscriptions across the town, in elections for public office (*CIL IV 26*), to protect inhabitants and their deeds (*CIL IV 538*), and invoked in announcements of love (*CIL IV 2457*).

Several scholars have argued that the cult of Venus was popular in Campania and the south of Italy before the Sullan period (Balsdon 1951: 6; Rives 1994: 302; Savunen 1997: 120). Rives (1994: 298–300) argues that the cult of Venus was popular in Pompeii before Sulla's colonisation, making several key points. Firstly, Rives argues that Sulla was not particularly associated with Venus and thus would be unlikely to name the colony after the goddess based on this association. Secondly, other towns in the area worshipped Venus in old forms (such as Venus *Iovia* in Capua, or *Fisica* in Pompeii) suggesting Venus' popularity in this region pre-dated Sulla. Thirdly, other colonies may have also been named after the Roman names for local deities, such as Iunonia (Carthage) and Narbo Martius (southern Gaul), after Juno and Mars respectively. Of the many colonies Sulla founded, only Pompeii and Abellinum had 'Veneria' in their name, although Abellinum may have been given this epithet under Augustus (Balsdon 1951: 6). This could be explained if Pompeii and Abellinum were already associated with Venus before Sulla's colonisation of the towns. However, this is speculative and it is unclear whether the association of Venus with Pompeii pre-dates the founding of the Sullan colony. While Venus could have been the patron deity of Pompeii before Sulla's colonisation of the town, there is no solid evidence for this.

There are, however, reasons to doubt that the cult of Venus was popular in Pompeii before it became a Sullan colony. By around 80 B.C. (when it became a Roman colony), Pompeii already had temples dedicated to deities including Apollo, Jupiter, and Isis, but there was no obvious temple to Venus, which would surely have existed if she was already of great importance to the town. The alleged Temple of Venus in Pompeii is located at the rear of the basilica. Its identification has been based on ‘the fragmentary remains of a marble votive statue of Venus’ (Berry 2007: 194). However, Roman temples dedicated to specific deities frequently included statues of other deities too, for instance Pompeii’s Temple of Apollo included herms and statues of Venus, Hermaphrodite, Silenus, and Diana (Petersen 2012: 329), so a temple with a statue of Venus does not definitively identify it as dedicated to Venus. The prominent location of the alleged Temple of Venus, on a large platform, visible by sea and open towards the River Sarno (Berry 2007: 194), would certainly have been a suitable location for a temple dedicated to the town’s patron deity. Carroll (2010: 69–70) offers evidence which suggests that the alleged Temple of Venus was built after the town was taken in 89 B.C. – the terrace deposits include pottery dating to the mid-first century B.C. and the lead slingshot may derive from the siege of Pompeii during the Social War, suggesting the temple was built after this event. Furthermore, the view to the south of the temple would have only been possible once the Samnite town walls were removed which again suggests a post-89 B.C. date (Carroll 2010: 70–71).

It is likely there would have been a temple dedicated to Venus in Pompeii, at least after the town’s colonisation, not only given her status as patron deity of the town, but also because when Nero and Poppaea made dedications to Venus in Pompeii it is likely that this took place at a temple of Venus. These dedications, including a beryl, pearls, and gold, are recorded in two graffiti from IX.13.1–3 (*AE* 1985: nos. 283 and 284).

1.5 Display and Recording of Pompeian Artworks

The artworks of Pompeii have always generated immense interest, ever since excavations began in 1748. Indeed, the original excavators aimed to discover artworks for King Charles VII of Naples (Cooley 2003: 69–70). King Charles destroyed many Pompeian paintings in order to keep his collection exclusive (Cooley 2003: 70). He

displayed his excavated treasures in the ‘Museo Ercolanese’ at Portici, where he jealously guarded his collection, which was only accessible to important visitors (Cooley 2003: 70). Visitors who were permitted to view the collection were not allowed to make notes or sketches whilst viewing them, they had to draw them from memory afterwards (Ramage 1992: 653–654; Cooley 2003: 70; Laidlaw 2007: 620). Finds from Pompeii and Herculaneum were published from 1757 (*Le Antichità di Ercolano esposte*), exclusively as gifts to royalty and famous scholars (Cooley 2003: 71; Laidlaw 2007: 628). These volumes later achieved wider distribution when they were sold from 1770 (Cooley 2003: 72).

Pompeii was a popular stop on the eighteenth-century ‘Grand Tour’. Artists, poets, writers, scholars, and tourists visited the site, recording the ruins and the artworks for posterity in their own ways. The works of many of these scholars and artists are now held in various institutes in Rome (see Laidlaw 2007 for key scholars and artists).

In the early nineteenth century, the Pompeian artworks were moved from Portici and publicly displayed at the Palazzo degli Studi in Naples, which was renamed the Real Museo Borbonico, and later the Museo Nazionale di Napoli, where many of them are still held. Artworks considered to depict ‘erotic’ subjects had previously been displayed in a closed room in the ‘Museo Ercolanese’ at Portici, accessible only via special permit (Cappelli 1999: 46). These were displayed to the public at the Real Museo Borbonico until the future Francis I visited in 1819 with his wife and daughter. He suggested that ‘obscene’ objects were closed off in a separate room and accessible only to ‘persons of a mature age and a well-known morality’ (De Caro 2000: 12). Thus, in 1821, the ‘Gabinetto degli oggetti osceni’ was established. Since then, the ‘secret cabinet’ has been opened and closed to the public at different times depending on politics, and is currently accessible to the public. Amongst numerous other subjects, it includes wall-paintings and statuettes of Venus. Many artworks, however, were left *in situ* at Pompeii rather than taken to Naples, and have gradually faded over the years, though conservation work has taken place. Some of these *in situ* artworks are still being removed on occasion in order to preserve them.

In terms of recording, wall-paintings were frequently mentioned in the *Notizie degli Scavi* and the diaries and reports of excavators. Sometimes the description of the painting’s content is very detailed, but on other occasions they simply state the subject (e.g. Venus) or scene (e.g. Love of Venus and Mars) without giving any details of why they identified them as such or elements within the paintings. The exact location of

artworks in Pompeii has not always been recorded as the initial excavators were not interested in the context of these artworks. Furthermore, sometimes it was not possible for the location of an artwork to be fully recorded. For instance, the Pompeii calendar medallions were discovered in the same room of a building which was later refilled, recorded as being located under the farm of Diego Cuomo, but the type of building, entrance number, room number, wall, and field of wall are unknown (Long 1992: 479). Scholars such as Helbig (1868), Sogliano (1880), and Schefold (1957) catalogued the wall-paintings of Pompeii – Helbig and Sogliano organising them by subject, and Schefold by building. Warscher compiled and documented the artworks in every building in selected *insulae* in Pompeii in her *Codex Topographicus Pompejanus*, which discusses each building in turn. This *Codex* comprises excerpts from the works of previous scholars, photographs, and Warscher's own notes. *Pitture e Pavimenti di Pompei* and *Pompeii: Pitture e Mosaici* document the paintings and mosaics across Pompeii and are also organised by region, insula, building, and room due to an increasing effort to study these artworks in their original context.

1.6 Chronology

Vitruvius (*On Architecture*, 7.5.1–4) describes three artistic styles occurring sequentially. Mau (1882 & 1899) identified these three styles, in addition to a fourth, at Pompeii, which he termed the 'Four Styles'. These were originally considered to occur chronologically, however, more recently this has been questioned and scholars have argued that the Four Styles cannot be used to securely date paintings, and thus a more contextual approach is needed to date them (Laidlaw 1985: 15–17, 39–46, 330; Wallace-Hadrill 1990: 180–181; Dwyer 2010: 35–39; Hales 2003: 135–136; Lorenz 2015: 255). Earlier Styles could be 'imitated, repeated, echoed, restored generations later' (Wallace-Hadrill 1990: 180–181). For instance, Laidlaw (1985: 45–46 & 330) discovered that the First Style continued to be retained and copied in Pompeian houses even after the earthquake of A.D. 62, suggesting that although this Style became less popular over time, it still existed. Elsner (1995: 63) argues that ancient viewers would not have seen the Four Pompeian Styles as chronological developments as ultimately, all four Styles were present in Pompeii in A.D. 79 (sometimes within the same house – as in the Casa dei Quattro Stili – I.8.17), and thus would have been viewed

simultaneously. Consequently, I will not address the chronology of artworks in this study as often they are classified as a Style rather than dated, and as we have seen, the Four Pompeian Styles do not accurately reflect the dates of the artworks. Moreover, these artworks would all have been visible in A.D. 79, regardless of the date they were created.

The earliest representation of Venus/Aphrodite in a fixed artwork in Pompeii is the Hellenistic relief of Venus burning incense with a cupid in room F of VI.16.7/38. In terms of Style, representations of Venus are mostly Fourth Style. The only pavement to feature Venus in Pompeii is Second Style – with the scene depicting the wedding of Neptune and Salacia in room d of IX.2.27. The only Venus caricatures in Pompeii are Second Style and both occur in the same frieze in room 46 of I.10.4. In this study, my intention is to categorise artworks by Venus type, not by Style.

1.7 Structure

This study is organised into three main sections. In Part I, ‘Theme, Context and Method’ (Chapters 1–4), I contextualise the thesis in terms of previous scholarship, introduce my research aims and methodology, and discuss the religio-political significance of Venus to the Romans generally. Part II, ‘Venus in Pompeian Artworks’ (Chapters 5–7), comprises the core of the study. In these three chapters I identify Venus types, and analyse the spatial distribution of artworks featuring Venus. For those within houses, I examine which room types they occur in, whether they occur within ‘predominantly reception’ or ‘predominantly non-reception’ areas, and their position within the room (wall, zone, and field of wall). In Part II, I also investigate the composition and context of artworks featuring Venus to assess whether representations of Venus had a religious, ritual, or protective purpose. In Part III, ‘Houses, Space and Deities’ (Chapter 8), I analyse the decoration of three houses in Pompeii to assess whether representations of Venus were given greater prominence than other deities in houses of different sizes. I then conclude the study in Chapter 9. Each chapter is summarised briefly below, see Chapter 3.6 for my analytical approach to each chapter.

Part I: Theme, Context and Method

In Chapter 2, I briefly place my thesis into wider scholarship on Roman religion, domestic space, and art, and outline the gaps which my study addresses. I also investigate gender, sexuality, and nudity in art; who was responsible for artistic choices; and how the Romans may have viewed and experienced art.

In Chapter 3, I define the terminology which I use in my study (why I use Latin names for deities, and definitions of ‘artworks’ and ‘narrative scenes’); explain how I have identified representations of figures as Venus given her shared iconography with other female figures and hermaphrodites; outline my processes and my reasoning behind them for data collection, collation, and presentation; and also outline my analytical methods.

In Chapter 4, I discuss the religio-political significance of Venus to the Romans generally to put her significance in Pompeii into context. In this chapter I focus on the roles of Venus, her importance to the Romans in regard to the range of people who worshipped her, and her association with political figures.

Part II: Venus in Pompeian Artworks

In Chapter 5, I identify the different Venus types found in Pompeian artworks and use my database (Appendix B1) to analyse and interpret elements of the content and location of artworks featuring each type.

In Chapter 6, I quantify which Venus types and scenes featuring Venus in Pompeii are represented in individual room types (and areas within the rooms), investigate why this might be, and assess whether artworks featuring Venus vary depending on whether they occur in public or domestic contexts. To do this, I examine the distribution of Venus representations across different room types and in predominantly ‘reception’ and ‘non-reception’ areas, and also the number of occurrences of each Venus type, and scene featuring Venus, in each room type. I compare the number of occurrences of each Venus type and scene featuring Venus on each wall, zone, and field of wall. I then compare artworks featuring Venus from domestic contexts with those from public contexts and on façades in relation to various categories (such as the type of area, and figures depicted with Venus).

In Chapter 7, I examine the evidence for artworks featuring Venus having religious, ritual, or protective purposes, in terms of composition (Venus appearing as one of the twelve gods, or with deities in non-narrative scenes) and location (Venus being depicted in *lararium* paintings and paintings on *aediculae*, on façades and at entrances, in public locations for a ritual or protective purpose, or as part of schemes of decoration featuring Venus for protective, ritual, or magic purposes). I also investigate Venus' role as protector of the water supply in Pompeii.

Part III: Houses, Space and Deities

In Chapter 8, I assess whether Venus was given greater prominence than other deities in Pompeian domestic space by investigating compositional elements and the spatial distribution of artworks featuring Venus in comparison to artworks featuring other deities in a sample of three Pompeian houses: the Casa del Menandro (a large house); the Casa della Caccia Antica (a medium-sized house); and the Casa della Venere in Bikini (a small house). I examine each house in turn, addressing the house's state of decoration, deities in the artworks of the house, deities in schemes of decoration, the location of artworks featuring deities, artworks featuring Venus, and areas of ritual activity in the house. I conclude the chapter with an analysis of spatial distribution patterns across these three houses for artworks featuring Venus and all artworks featuring deities. I then compare these analyses of artworks featuring deities with my analyses from previous chapters on representations of Venus in domestic contexts across Pompeii.

Part IV: Conclusion

In Chapter 9, I conclude the study with a synthesis of my main findings and how they can inform future studies of Roman religion, art, and domestic space. I also propose priorities for future research in this chapter.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

My aim in this chapter is to place my thesis into wider scholarship on Roman religion, domestic space, and art, and clarify how my research will contribute to this scholarship, especially in relation to the growing body of scholarship on female deities and more contextualised studies of artworks. I address the trends and gaps in the scholarship of Roman religion and Roman art, both in regard to domestic space. I do not address domestic space as a separate section, as these spheres overlap. I also include discussion sections which address scholarship on: gender, sexuality, and nudity in art; who was responsible for artistic choices; and how the Romans viewed and experienced art.

2.1 Roman Deities

2.1.1 Roman Deities in Ancient Textual Sources and Modern Scholarship

Religion was clearly very important to the Romans, encompassing all areas of their lives. The ancient authors make this abundantly clear. Livy, for instance, demonstrates the importance the Romans placed on religion and ritual throughout his *History of Rome*. Although many ancient authors mention religious matters in passing throughout their work, few provide detailed information on, or give serious treatment to, deities.

There are a few notable exceptions to this, including Cicero, Ovid, and Plutarch. Cicero considers various theological issues in his *De Natura Deorum*, written in 45 B.C. (Rackham 1951: xiii). He gives information on various deities, including the etymology of their names (2.69 & 3.62 for Venus) and details of their origins and parentage (3.59 for Venus).

Ovid's *Fasti* is a useful source on the rituals celebrated throughout the Roman year. He discusses each month in turn, giving details of the date and origins of various festivals, describing how the deities were worshipped at these festivals and why. Unfortunately, Ovid's *Fasti* only covers the first six months of the year, with the last six months either lost or unfinished (Frazer 1931: xviii).

Plutarch's *Roman Questions*, published c.A.D. 96, explains why certain Roman customs existed, predominantly describing religious rituals (Rose 1924: 47). Deities are mentioned in regard to their festivals and rites in this source, and often other information can be gleaned about them, some relating to specific gods.

Despite the importance of religion and deities to the Romans, relatively few scholars have published in-depth studies into individual Roman gods or goddesses¹, let alone their iconography. Antonella Coralini's research into images of Hercules in domestic areas of the Vesuvian region (2001) is a rare example of this and my thesis will provide another addition to this under-represented area of study.

2.1.2 Scholarship on Female Roman Deities

Ancient authors, who were predominantly male, provide little detail on female deities and their associated rituals. This was perhaps because the authors were not fully aware of these rituals due to their gender excluding them from participating in them (though some, such as Ovid in his *Fasti*, mention rituals during festivals). For instance, men were forbidden to know the true name of the Bona Dea, and were believed to be punished with blinding if they saw the rites (Cicero, *De Haruspicum Responsis*, 37–38). The resulting limitations of the Roman literary sources may have contributed to the relative lack of scholarship on female deities, which was only addressed from the latter half of the twentieth century.

The rise of 'second-wave' feminism in the 1960s and 1970s led scholars to focus more on the role of women in Roman society, at times also including research into female Roman deities. John Balsdon's *Roman Women: their history and habits* (1962) includes a chapter dedicated to holy, religious and divine women, but this focuses on the Vestal Virgins and the deification of Imperial women, rather than on goddesses such as Venus. Sarah Pomeroy's *Goddesses, Whores, Wives and Slaves* (1975), however, includes a chapter on the role of women in Roman religion, particularly the cults of Fortuna, Vesta, Ceres, and Isis². A couple of studies on female Roman deities emerged

¹ These studies include, but are not limited to, Koch's work on Jupiter (1937), Schilling's study into the origins of Venus (1954), and Pevnick's volume on Poseidon, which makes some reference to Neptune (2014). Benoît's study into Mars and Mercury in Gaul (1959), and Hutchinson's work on Bacchus in Roman Britain (1986), focus on the role of each deity in specific areas, rather than more generally.

² Venus is notably absent here, probably due to her Greek equivalent, Aphrodite, being passed over as 'pure sexual love, exercised with a pronounced irresponsibility' (Pomeroy 1975: 8), with other Olympian deities, such as Athena, Artemis, Hestia, and Hera being similarly ignored as Pomeroy views them as

in the 1980s and 1990s, such as Jacqueline Champeaux's extensive work on Fortuna and her cult (1987) and Barbette Spaeth's study of Ceres (1996). Sarolta Takács' study into women in Roman religion through festivals and major female deities and cults (2008) reflects how female Roman deities are starting to receive more attention. Recently there have been more studies focused on specific deities, such as those of Maria Cristina Vincenti on Diana (2010), Paolo Galiano on Vesta (2011), and Attilio Mastrocinque and Concetta Giuffrè Scibona's volume on Demeter, Isis, Vesta and Cybele (2012).

2.2 Venus

2.2.1 Venus in Ancient Textual Sources

There are no key Roman works dealing exclusively with Venus, aside from poetry (see the discussion of the *Pervigilium Veneris* below). Several ancient authors provide fragmentary information concerning her festivals though, with some insights into how she was worshipped, in addition to recording mythological episodes she was involved with. In this section, I discuss Venus in ancient literary works largely in chronological order.

Before the Roman sources are discussed, a significant Greek source, the *Homeric Hymns*, needs to be mentioned. These are a collection of thirty-three Greek hymns dedicated to deities, three of which are dedicated to Aphrodite. The hymns describe many myths featuring Aphrodite, such as her birth (hymn 6) and her relationship with Anchises resulting in the birth of Aeneas (hymn 5). These myths are relevant to this study as many artworks in Pompeii depict Venus/Aphrodite in narratives from Greek mythology.

Turning now to the Roman sources, several key Roman writers discuss the origins of religious rituals, and why festivals were celebrated on certain days or why certain restrictions were in place regarding worshippers and practices. This includes Cicero's *De Natura Deorum*, Ovid's *Fasti*, and Plutarch's *Roman Questions* discussed above.

'archetypal images of human females, as envisioned by males... appropriate to a patriarchal society' (Pomeroy 1975: 8).

Several authors during the Augustan period describe Venus as the ancestor of the Roman people (*Venus Genetrix*) through her son Aeneas (including Virgil, *Aeneid*, 1.613 & Ovid, *Fasti*, 4.35–6). This was not a new idea: the cult of the Venus of the Aeneadae began in Latium, possibly as early as the sixth century B.C. (see Weinstock 1971: 15–17 for evidence). Augustus promoted the association of Venus with Aeneas as the *Julii gens* claimed descent from Venus (Suetonius, *The Deified Julius*, 6; Appian, *Civil Wars*, 2.68; Dio Cassius, *Roman History*, 43.43.3). Thus, Augustus (as a descendent of Venus) could be perceived as having a divine right to rule. This was reflected in the works of authors of the period, notably in Virgil's *Aeneid*, which uses Venus and her son Aeneas to reflect the propaganda of Augustus, so that 'not only the future rule of the Julian house, but the whole history of Rome was portrayed as one of pre-destined triumph and salvation' (Zanker 1988: 193). The Julio-Claudians continued to accentuate Venus as their ancestor and this study investigates whether the Pompeians were influenced by this state patronage in the domestic sphere.

The *Pervigilium Veneris* is the only known Latin source to focus exclusively on Venus. It is a poem of unknown date and authorship, possibly written in the Hadrianic period, but perhaps more likely dating to the fourth century A.D. (Catlow 1980: 18–25). It offers background information on Venus' attributes and the circumstances of her birth, however, I will not heavily rely upon it in this study as it does not relate to the main themes of this thesis – religion in domestic space and art. Furthermore, caution should be used when using poems as sources, especially in this case as artistic licence may have led to the creation of a fictional festival.

Ancient authors frequently describe famous works of art representing Venus, for instance *Venus Anadyomene* (Strabo, *Geography*, 14.2.19; Pliny, *Natural History*, 35.36.87; Athenaeus, *The Learned Banqueters*, 13.590–1; Ovid, *Ex Ponto*, 4.1.29–30; Ovid, *Ars Amatoria*, 3.401; Ovid, *Amores*, 1.14.33–4; Cicero, *De Natura Deorum*, 1.75) and *Venus Pudica*/the Aphrodite of Knidos (Pliny, *Natural History*, 36.4.20–21; Pseudo-Lucian, *Amores*, 13–16; Athenaeus, *The Learned Banqueters*, 13.591; alluded to in Ovid, *Ars Amatoria*, 2.613–4). These descriptions have enabled scholars, including myself, to identify different Venus types (see Chapter 5). The archaeological record demonstrates that these artworks were as influential as the ancient texts imply, as they are emulated many times in Roman art.

2.2.2 Scholarship on Venus

Aphrodite has received an abundance of attention from scholars (notably Friedrich 1978; Pirenne-Delforge 1994; Budin 2003; Cyrino 2010). Venus, however, has received little attention, perhaps as scholars presume that she had the same origins and spheres of influence as Aphrodite. Relatively few scholars have focused exclusively on Venus, and most focus on particular aspects such as her origins and festivals (Wissowa 1882 & 1902, and Schilling 1954 & 1958), her relationship to leading political figures (Balsdon 1951, Weinstock 1971, and Rives 1994), or on specific epithets of Venus (*Venus Genetrix* in Bieber 1933 & Elderkin 1938; *Venus Victrix* in Speidel 1984), rather than on the goddess more generally. For this study, the works discussing Venus' association with political figures are of most relevance as this association influences some of the Venus types that will be examined. More general issues concerning the origins of Venus, addressed by Georg Wissowa and Robert Schilling, are of less relevance to this study.

The relationship of Venus with leading political figures doubtless influenced her iconography. As will be seen, Sulla may have influenced the iconography of *Venus Pompeiana* (see Chapter 5.1.2.b), and the role of Venus as ancestor of the Julio-Claudians may have affected how she was represented in Pompeii. Several scholars examine this relationship between Venus and Roman politicians, notably J. P. V. D. Balsdon (1951) studies Sulla's relationship with Venus and Pompeii, Stefan Weinstock (1971) examines the relationship of *Venus Genetrix* with Julius Caesar, Paul Zanker (1988) studies Venus' role in the political imagery of Augustus, and James Rives (1994) focuses on the association of Venus with prominent political figures such as Sulla and the *Julii*. These various associations are discussed in Chapter 4.3.

2.3 Roman Household Religion

Roman household religion has received much attention from scholars for over a century with a focus on the guardian deities of the household, the *lares* and *penates*. Interest in Roman household religion may be traced to the excavations at Herculaneum and Pompeii which revealed an abundance of household shrines, with catalogues of *lararia* (shrines) in Pompeii dating back to at least the 1860s (Jordan 1862,

Reifferscheid 1863, Boyce 1937). Since the 1970s this area has received more focussed analysis and interpretation through studies by several scholars, notably Orr (1972, 1978, 1988), Fröhlich (1991), Foss (1994, 1997), Giacobello (2008), and Bassani (2008; Bassani & Ghedini 2011). In contrast, the domestic worship of individual deities, such as Venus, has received less attention.

2.3.1 Roman Household Religion in Ancient Textual Sources

Ancient authors rarely mention the *lares* and *penates* and their place and role within households. Several mention them briefly or tangentially (for instance, Cicero, *De Re Publica*, 5.5; Cicero, *De Haruspicum Responsis*, 37; Horace, *Odes*, 2.4.15), but they are rarely discussed in more detail. The narrative of Plautus' *Aulularia*, however, is based on the household *lar* who allows the *paterfamilias*, Euclio, to find a pot of gold, which the *lar* had hidden from Euclio's father for not showing him the appropriate amount of respect. Horace states that the *lares* need to be placated with incense, grain and a sow, and the *penates* can be appeased with grain and salt if the household cannot afford a sow (Horace, *Odes*, 3.23). It is evident from such sources that the *lares* and *penates* needed to be shown the correct amount of respect, and could be venerated alongside other deities, such as Venus.

With the relative dearth of ancient descriptions of Roman household religion, archaeological evidence is crucial to understand it. As such, Pompeii offers an almost unique opportunity for the study of the household gods and their material manifestations. Many *lararium* paintings and *lararia aediculae* still exist, some with statuettes of the *lares* and *penates* still *in situ* in the shrines, as in garden F of the Casa degli Amorini Dorati (Allison 2004b – Casa degli Amorini Dorati).

2.3.2 Deities in *Lararia*

The worship of deities other than the *lares* and *penates* in *lararia* is another area which has received relatively little attention. Ancient authors rarely mention the presence of individual deities within the home (the statuette of Venus in Trimalchio's *aedicula* being a rare example – Petronius, *Satyricon*, 29). They are more concerned with the public worship of deities through temples, festivals and rituals. No comprehensive studies have yet been conducted into the various deities that could be

worshipped within the home. Celia Schultz (2006) mentions some of these deities linked to the religious obligations a woman had in the home, especially in chapter 4 of her book. She argues that most domestic worship was directed to the *lares* and the *penates*, and to Vesta, due to her association with the family hearth (Schultz 2006: 123).

Giacobello (2008) provides a more detailed study of deities worshipped in *lararia*. She identifies two different kinds of *lararia* in domestic contexts – ‘authentic’ *lararia* and ‘secondary’ *lararia*. She designates *lararia* as ‘authentic’ where they were dedicated to the household gods (the *lares*), located within or near kitchen areas, for veneration by the *paterfamilias* and his family. By contrast, Giacobello designates shrines found in other areas, such as *atria*, as ‘secondary’ *lararia*. She suggests that these might have been dedicated to deities such as Hercules, Bacchus, and Venus, and primarily used for public display. Giacobello therefore argues that ritual activity dedicated to the *lares* was segregated from ritual activity dedicated to other deities.

Studies of *lararia* were useful to this study as background information on domestic religion, however, only six representations of Venus featured in *lararium* paintings or were painted on *aediculae* in Pompeii, so these studies were of limited relevance to my thesis. By analysing representations of Venus in Pompeii, my study has the potential to help scholars further understand Roman household religion, and reach a better understanding of deities aside from the *lares* in the home.

2.4 Decoration in Domestic Contexts

The study of decoration in Roman domestic contexts has been approached by previous scholars in two main ways. From the 1950s onwards, research has increasingly focused on programmatic painting and relationships between paintings. From the 1970s onwards, many scholars have focused on the relationship between decoration and room type, often using decoration to determine the function or type of room.

2.4.1 Programmatic Painting

Programmatic painting is perhaps best explained by Thompson (1960: 1), the principle being that ‘the mythological subjects found on the walls of Pompeian houses were selected and combined to form deliberate programs’ and ‘the paintings are

practically always related by a narrative or conceptual theme'. Several scholars have argued that programmatic painting existed in at least some areas of Pompeii in both domestic and public contexts (Mau 1899: 470–471; Schefold 1952 & 1962; Thompson 1960; Brilliant 1984: 61–83; Clarke 1991: esp. 223–235; Barringer 1994; Lorenz 2008).

Although Trendelenburg (1876) was the first scholar to suggest programmatic painting as a concept, this approach was more fully developed by Schefold (1952) who wrote the first study dedicated entirely to programmatic painting in Pompeii. Schefold (1952) argued that all the paintings in a room relate to each other and if this relationship is not immediately obvious, there must be a deeper, more abstract link, usually relating to religion (and often to Isis). However, Schefold (1952) does not approach these paintings systematically and often identifies convoluted or abstract links between paintings without always explaining them properly.

Thompson (1960) addresses programmatic painting in a more structured and systematic way than Schefold. Thompson analyses evidence for programmatic painting in ancient authors, in public Greek buildings, in Roman domestic decoration, and in Pompeii. Thompson catalogues examples in Pompeii where two or more paintings occurred in the same room. She argues that mythological paintings in Pompeian houses were deliberately chosen and combined to reflect particular themes, often linked by narrative or concept (Thompson 1960: 1).

Lorenz (2008) investigates the meanings and messages of Pompeian paintings and how they relate to each other, and the atmosphere created by these wall-paintings. Lorenz identifies four main types of programmatic painting, with wall-paintings associated with others within the room by being affirmative, complimentary, contrasting, or consecutive. These associations between paintings cover most eventualities as 'affirmative' covers similarities between the paintings, and 'contrasting', those with differences, and this method does not account for the possibility that not all rooms may have had a deliberate programme of decoration. Many of the links between paintings which Lorenz identifies are convoluted and not convincing. For instance, Lorenz (2008: 291) considers room i of VII.4.57 to represent a relationship about to start (Selene floating towards the sleeping Endymion) in contrast to one which has already started (Perseus and Andromeda looking at the reflection of the Gorgon).

More recently, scholarship has started to shift focus from programmatic painting, as scholars have begun to acknowledge the Roman preference for eclecticism

in domestic decoration (Tronchin 2012a & 2012b; Petersen 2012). Tronchin (2012a) argues that the Romans had heterogeneous and eclectic attitudes, demonstrated through Roman writers and orators, and this also seems to have been the case with their attitudes towards art. Tronchin (2012a: 267) argues that there is little evidence of programmatic painting in the archaeological evidence or textual sources, as even in Philostratus' *Imagines* there is little evidence of a programme of decoration. She argues that instead, there seems to be a preference in the ancient authors (such as Philostratus and Petronius) for viewing artworks one by one. Tronchin (2012a) argues that we should recognise the flexibility in interpretations of images, not necessarily seeking a single programme of decoration. She suggests that perhaps the patron was sometimes the programme of decoration, as he may have explained his art collection to guests, thus serving as the 'agent for interpretation' (Tronchin 2012a: 279–280).

There are many problems with the concept of programmatic painting. As Tronchin (2012a) highlights, we need to recognise the flexibility in interpretations of images. Studies of programmatic painting are based on the personal subjective interpretations of an individual scholar, and presumed also to be the intention of the designer. However, the Romans were known to engage in the rhetorical exercise of *ekphrasis*, where they interpreted the same paintings in a room in different ways (see also Clarke 2003: 226 for an overview of this practice). Thus, it is possible that no single interpretation was intended, or if it was, viewers may have differed in their personal interpretations. Attempts to interpret programmes of decoration beyond a group of paintings all based around the same narrative (as in the paintings of room 4 of I.10.4 which all have the fall of Troy as a common theme), are simply the interpretations of scholars and cannot be presumed to be the single intended viewing.

That said, differences between paintings representing the same scene may indicate the intended viewing. For instance, room 4 of I.10.4 features central panel scenes exclusively relating to the fall of Troy. Usually Helen and Cassandra are depicted in separate scenes (Ling & Ling 2005: 74–75), however in this room they are shown in the same scene with their father Priam in the centre. The scene on the opposite wall depicts the death of Laocoon and his sons. Lorenz argues that these two paintings thus also formed a programme of decoration representing 'the differing fates of two fathers ... both watching the demise of their children' (Lorenz 2014: 193–194).

It is not certain that all artworks in Roman houses were designed to adhere to a set programme. Indeed, when Cicero asked his friend Atticus to acquire statues for his

house, he simply asked that they be ‘suitable’ and ‘appropriate’ rather than adhering to a set theme or programme (*Atticus*, 1.8.2 – Letter 4; 1.10.3 – Letter 6; 1.4.3 – Letter 9). The composition of paintings is sometimes influenced by others located nearby, and this symmetry in composition may have determined which scenes were chosen, rather than narrative or thematic links between the content of the paintings. To keep the symmetry in the paintings consistent, painters would sometimes emulate the poses of other compositions in the room, move indoor scenes to an outdoor setting (even when this distorts the narrative, as with room 4 of VII.4.48, where the narrative of Danae and the golden rain has been moved outdoors though she was meant to be incarcerated³ – *PPM* VII: 12), and include additional figures. For instance, the ‘Love of Venus and Mars’ scene in room f of VII.2.23 includes a maid and a cupid who are not part of the main action of the scene. Ling (1991: 139) argues that these figures may have been included to ensure a ‘compositional...balance’, with the four figures in the ‘Love of Venus and Mars’ scene balanced with the four figures in the ‘Punishment of Cupid’ scene on the opposite wall.

I have avoided identifying programmes or schemes of decoration featuring Venus as far as possible in this study due to the problems with programmatic painting outlined above. Schemes of decoration which I identify within rooms in the three houses in Chapter 8 are based on indisputable links between the paintings which would be immediately clear to anyone entering the room – those with scenes all representing the same narrative (such as the fall of Troy in room 4 of I.10.4), or all based around a clear theme (the Bacchic theme in room 18 of I.10.4 is identifiable through the representation of Bacchic objects and members of the Bacchic *thiasos* – bacchantes, Silenus, and Pan).

2.4.2 Decoration and Room Function

The second major approach to decoration in domestic contexts has been to investigate the relationship between decoration and room type – often in terms of the function of rooms (including Schefold 1952: 35; Clarke 1991: esp. 157, 159, 367–368;

³ The core part of this myth is Danae’s incarceration which led to Jupiter’s guise as the golden rain so he could reach her. Schefold (1952: 190) argues, quite rightly, that the symmetry in composition between some paintings of Leda and Danae served to highlight their association, and this was more important to the painter than accurately representing the myth.

Ling 1991: esp. 48–51, 69–70, 135–136; De Angelis 2015: esp. 575–576). Scagliarini Corlàita (1974–1976) argued that considering Pompeian paintings in their context highlights the relationship between paintings within the same room, between different rooms, and could also indicate the function of a room to guests. Ling and Ling (2005: 93) note that Scagliarini Corlàita’s seminal article was influential and led to ‘writers on Pompeian house decorations [being] far more conscious of the need to set paintings and mosaics in their spatial context’. For instance, Clarke explicitly aims to investigate Roman domestic decoration in its context within the room and the house, arguing that domestic decoration was ‘tailored to adorn a specific space’ (Clarke 1991: xxiii). He examines: how the Romans experienced interior decoration/spaces (based on ancient literary sources), the function of rooms (in terms of transitional/stationary areas and areas for the reception of guests), and the relationship between different spaces in the house (Clarke 1991: xxiv).

Allison (2001: 192–194) argues that scholars should not identify the function of rooms based primarily on their decoration as this is often based on modern analogy. She also asserts that studies of Roman domestic space need to be ‘aware of [their] biases, overinterpretations, and ethnocentrism’ (Allison 2001: 204). Since Allison’s (2001) article warning scholars against over-simplistic identifications of room function, some scholars, such as Adams (2006) have continued to use decoration to identify room function (discussed in Chapter 6.2.3.2), whereas others, such as Leach (2004), have adopted new approaches.

Leach’s study (2004) investigates how the social status of owners influenced the decoration of houses, and how inhabitants and visitors interacted with the decoration. Leach argues that domestic decoration was used for display, to reflect messages from the owner, and also for spatial coding. Leach argues that decoration can reflect different types of spaces in houses, such as transitional and stationary areas. For instance, she argues that transitional areas such as corridors were designed to make ‘minimal claims on the spectator’s attention’ through repeated motifs, or friezes or narrative panels ‘indicat[ing] the expected direction of movement’ (Leach 2004: 54). She argues that, in contrast, stationary rooms were often designed symmetrically with the central panel as the main focus of the wall (Leach 2004: 54). Leach (2004: 54) acknowledges that decoration did not always reflect the function of a room, as stationary spaces could change their function depending on the season or other factors.

However, many scholars have assumed that the decoration of a room reflected its function without investigating this in detail or basing this on a systematic approach to a dataset. For instance, Ling (1991: 135–136) argues that ‘the choice of subjects within a given decoration often unmistakably reflects the function of the room’, with Bacchic iconography and food in dining-rooms; Venus and love scenes in bedrooms; and aquatic and athletic scenes in bath-suites. However, his assertion is not supported by sufficient evidence, as it is based on individual examples rather than a systematic approach to a dataset. Furthermore, identifying the function of a room based on its decoration does not account for the multifunctional and seasonal nature of spaces in the Roman house which could have portable furniture and serve different functions at different times of the day or year (see Chapter 6.2.3.1).

Whereas previous scholars have examined the relationship between decoration and perceived room function in domestic space, I investigate how decoration corresponds to architectural room type, based on the criteria established by Allison (2004a: table 5.a). Allison identifies room types based on their openness, size, and structural features, rather than determining room types based on their decoration (which may prove circular), or on material culture (which could be moved to different rooms). I have adopted Allison’s approach because it does not attribute a function to rooms, and it allows for their multifunctional and seasonal nature. Furthermore, I adopt a quantitative approach based on my database so that my conclusions are substantiated by numerical data and so I can analyse artworks featuring Venus which occur in different room types in a systematic and quantifiable way. This is a departure from the more qualitative approach previously taken to relationships between decoration and room function.

2.5 Gender, Sexuality, and Nudity in Art

Gender studies arose from second-wave feminism in the 1960s and 1970s. This was also reflected in studies of the ancient world. Since Scott’s article (1986) on the usefulness of gender for historical analysis, this area has been increasingly studied. Kampen (2015) identifies three chronological developments in art-historical work on gender in the Roman world (though sometimes these overlap): work on women, on gender relations, and gender and sexuality. Even the gods conformed to gender roles, as Lovatt (2013: 47) argues using the example of Aphrodite and Ares trapped in

Hephaestus' net, where in Homer's version of the story, the male gods watch and laugh, whilst the female ones stay at home for 'modesty' (Homer, *Odyssey*, 8.321–328).

The rise of second-wave feminism and gender studies also led to new interest in the study of sexuality in the ancient world from the 1970s onwards. Although a few scholars had previously studied sexuality, including Licht (1932) and Kiefer (1934) who studied sexual life in ancient Greece and Rome respectively, it only became a popular area of study with the works of Brendel (1970) on Greco-Roman erotic art, Pomeroy (1975) on women in classical antiquity, Foucault's *Histoire de la sexualité* (1976–1984), Dover (1978) on Greek homosexuality, and Johns (1982) on erotic images of Greece and Rome. For more information on sexuality in the ancient world, see Skinner's (2014) excellent overview on feminist theory in relation to ancient sexuality.

The study of nudity in art developed alongside this – only from the 1950s did it start to be studied in any depth. Clark's *The Nude: A Study of Ideal Art* (1956) was the first influential study to treat the nude in art as a separate subject, exploring art from ancient Greece to the twentieth century. Scholars have often considered nudity in Greek art to be 'ideal' or 'heroic' (Winckelmann 1764; Himmelmann 1990; see also Osborne 1998). However, Hölscher (1973) argues that 'heroic nudity' is a modern idea rather than a Greek one, and Hurwit (2007) convincingly argues that the significance of male nudity in Greek art depended on its context and subject, and also the time period and part of Greece. Hurwit also argues that many kinds of nudity existed at the same time, often with contradictory meanings, for instance artworks reflecting 'heroic nudity' existed at the same time as artworks reflecting 'pathetic nudity' where nudity was used to represent vulnerability and defeat.

Scholars of Greek art often identify a chronological development in the meaning of nudity. Osborne (1998) argues that nudity was used to differentiate men from women in the Geometric period, clothing was used to differentiate significant figures in the seventh century B.C., and nudity was used to represent sexuality in the early fifth century B.C. – with a trend in male sculpture towards young, beardless men being represented naked, and older, bearded men represented clothed or having their genitals hidden. Bonfante (1989) also identifies a chronological development in the meaning of male nudity. She views nudity as a 'costume' and argues that around 800 B.C., nakedness implied 'shame, vulnerability, death, and dishonor', using Homer's poems as evidence. Bonfante argues that nudity was used to distinguish gender in the Geometric period, reflect magical/apotropaic purposes or the athletic male body in the sixth and

fifth centuries B.C., and bravery in the face of vulnerability in the Classical period. Bonfante (1989) argues that for women in Greek art and life, nudity was always seen as humiliating and reflected vulnerability, except for being briefly used as a ‘religious fertility motif’ in the Archaic period. Subsequently, naked women represented ‘pathetic appeal’, ‘magic or erotic appeal’, courtesans or prostitutes.

For the Romans, nudity in artworks was allowed, whereas it was not in most areas of public life (Hallett 2005: 61–101). Hallett (2005: 87) argues that the Greek use of nudity in art was inconsistently adopted by the Etruscans who in turn influenced the art produced in early Rome. He argues that from the late fourth century onwards, the Romans were in ‘almost continual contact’ with Greek cities in Campania and thus would have been influenced by Greek art. Furthermore, from 212 B.C. onwards, Greek images of the gods were brought to Rome as plunder and rededicated, meaning that the Romans were used to seeing naked gods in their temples and public spaces (Hallett 2005: 89–91). The first known portrait of a *nudus* Roman was that of C. Hostilius Mancinus in the late second century B.C., and the first portrait known from ancient literature of a fully nude Roman was that of the son of C. Verres in the early first century B.C. (Hallett 2005: 94–97). By the first century B.C., Greek art was common in Roman upper-class homes, often featuring nude deities, mythological figures, and athletes (Hallett 2005: 93–94).

The study of the female nude is often considered in relation to Aphrodite, most likely as a result of the Aphrodite of Knidos being renowned as the first monumental female nude in Greek art. Aphrodite’s nudity is often seen as a chronological development (see outline of this in Havelock 1995: 139–140), with scholars such as Bernoulli (1873: 137) arguing that the public would not have been prepared for the nudity of the Knidian Aphrodite if Aphrodite had not previously been depicted semi-naked in statuary. However, Havelock (1995: 141) concludes that such a chronological development in Aphrodite’s state of nudity did not exist, especially given that the naked Knidian Aphrodite was influential substantially later than it was created, and thus did not immediately give rise to further nude female statuary.

The Knidian Aphrodite is a good example to demonstrate the different interpretations of female nudity by various scholars, especially given her pose with her right hand to her pubic area. For instance, Bernoulli (1873) felt that Aphrodite would be embarrassed of her nudity so tried to justify the Knidian Aphrodite by suggesting that she was depicted bathing. Blinkenberg (1933) similarly felt that if Aphrodite was aware

that her nudity was being observed, she would have been embarrassed. Blinkenberg studied two copies of the Knidian Aphrodite and identified one as being serene and unaware of being observed (which he thought was closer to the original) and the other as anxious as she is aware of being observed, pulling her garment toward herself protectively. Rodenwaldt (1943), however, argued that Aphrodite was entitled to be naked as she was a goddess rather than a mortal woman, and the gesture of her hand was for natural modesty rather than because she was embarrassed (a human condition) or needed to protect herself. Havelock (1995: 36) argued that the Knidian Aphrodite did not need a pretext for being depicted naked, and instead her nudity referred to her birth in the sea and thus her role as protector of seafarers. Havelock argued that the gesture of the Knidian Aphrodite was for modesty in addition to emphasising and celebrating the area which it concealed. Thus, the interpretations of various scholars over time to the Knidian Aphrodite reflect their interpretations of female nudity – it was seen in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as the cause of embarrassment and a pretext was needed to excuse it, whereas gradually scholars realised that this was a modern interpretation, and instead researched ancient Greek views of nudity in an attempt to interpret it.

2.6 Artistic Choices

There is much debate in scholarship over who was responsible for artistic choices. Smith (2002: esp. 69) identifies two main trends in scholarship – ‘the Plinian or art-historical tradition’ which ‘ascribes the main motive force in ancient images to the creative interest of the artist’, and the ‘historically based tradition’ which ‘interpret[s] ancient images firstly in relation to the interests and mentalities of their buyers and audiences’. Essentially, scholars debate whether artistic choices were mainly or exclusively made by the artist (Robertson 1975), the patron (Strong 1988: esp. 11–12; Clarke 2003: esp. 273; Poulsen 2012: esp. 184), or a combination of the two / it varied (Ling 1991: 217, 219–220; Dunbabin 1999: esp. 318–319; Smith 2002: esp. 71; Stewart 2008: esp. 37–38). Dunbabin (1999: 319) also suggests that middlemen, perhaps comprising a representative of the patron from their household or a contractor or architect, could have played a part in choosing the decoration.

As Stewart (2008: 33) notes, patrons of building projects would have kept them under observation, and building works needed to be approved formally by the customer (*probatio*). Patrons thus would have watched over commissions throughout, ensuring they met with their approval, though this is not evidence of their influence in the design process.

There is evidence in ancient literary sources that some patrons were very interested in the decoration of their houses (Cicero, *Atticus*, 1.1.5; 1.6.2; 1.8.2; 1.9.2; 1.10.3; Cicero, *Letters to Friends*, 7.23.1–3; Lucian, *Philopseudes*, 18). Trimalchio in Petronius' *Satyricon* was heavily involved in the decoration of his house, with his career depicted with inscriptions near the entrance, and his idiosyncratic combination in the hall of epic scenes from the Iliad and the Odyssey with a gladiatorial display (Petronius, *Satyricon*, 29). However, this cannot be used as definitive evidence that other patrons were involved in decorative choices as this was used to make a satirical point about the artistic tastes of the *nouveau riche* freedman Trimalchio, demonstrating his lack of culture. Indeed, Mayer (2012b: 295 n.12) argues that members of the Roman elite were not always fully involved in the decoration of their homes, citing the resulting problems of the vague instructions given by Cicero and his brother Quintus regarding domestic decoration.

Birk and Poulsen (2012: 9) argue that 'the literary sources leave no doubt that the embellishment of both private and public buildings was meant to impress the viewers and to reveal the social status of the patrons'. Indeed, Scheibelreiter-Gail (2012: 161) discovered that detailed records and lists of daily expenses were scratched onto mural paintings in 'dining rooms and rooms of representation' rather than 'service quarters'. She argues that this was perhaps to emphasise the social status of the patron as they would reflect his financial resources, in addition to inscriptions by guests demonstrating the patron's hospitality and social status. If patrons were using main reception areas of the house to emphasise their social status, this would suggest that the patron was involved in the choice of artworks. Indeed, Poulsen (2012: 184) argues that the cost of mosaics and their ability to reflect messages 'makes it highly unlikely that the patron/owner would have allowed the mosaicist or a workshop to decide on the choice of motifs without his or her control'. Equally, artists were probably aware of the subjects which patrons frequently chose, and could probably be trusted to select status-appropriate subjects.

Artworks were not always commissioned, some would have been produced in advance with customers purchasing them later (though this was not the case with fresco paintings, which would have been painted directly onto the wall). When Cicero asks Atticus for statues (*Atticus*, 1.4.3; 1.8.2; 1.10.3), these all seem to have been made in advance. Even seemingly personalised artworks, such as portraits or sarcophagi could be made in advance, with elements of personalisation added later for the portraits, and standardised iconography used for the sarcophagi (Stewart 2008: 36–37). That said, personalised artworks can be identified in the archaeological record, which would suggest that the patron was sometimes responsible for decorative choices. Poulsen (2012: 184) argues that the variety in some scenes, such as those depicting hunting, suggests that patrons requested specific personalised scenes. Furthermore, there are examples of personalised mosaic commissions in Pompeii and Africa, ascertained through inscriptions (Dunbabin 1999: 319). For instance, in Pompeii there are mosaics depicting four *garum* amphorae, three with inscriptions naming Scaurus as the producer and seller, in VII.16.12–16 (*PPM* VII: 885). This personalisation suggests that at least some patrons were involved in artistic choices. There may have been more personalised commissions, but these are not always identifiable, for instance, scenes of games could reflect games generally, or commemorate specific games funded by the patron (Dunbabin 1999: 321).

The repetition of subjects and compositions in artworks between and within towns has often been used to suggest the existence of ‘pattern-books’, where the patron could select the required designs from a set repertoire of the artist or workshop (Ling 1991: 128–129, 217–220; Clarke 2003: 227–228). However, the existence of such pattern-books is uncertain, and if they did exist, there is no evidence as to whether the patron or artist made the selection of design (Stewart 2008: 36). As Dunbabin (1999: 319) points out, the standard set of images available probably would not have allowed the patron to have much influence, but his approval would have been needed.

Therefore, we cannot ascertain how involved patrons were in choosing artworks for their homes, but as they were funding them, the choice of subject clearly met their approval. Dunbabin (1999: 323) summarises this succinctly in relation to mosaics, though this was likely true of other artworks too – ‘we cannot hope in most individual cases to assess the extent to which the content of mosaics was determined by the wishes of the patrons. What we can say is that a substantial proportion of the imagery suited the interests of the class who commissioned them, and could be used to communicate a

message about the cultural expectations of their owners, as they defined their position in society’.

2.7 Viewing and Experiencing Art

Vision, and viewing, was very important to the Romans. Indeed, Cicero (*De Oratore*, 2.87.357) and Varro (*On the Latin Language*, 6.80) state that sight is the keenest and greatest of the five senses. Vision played an important role in many mythological narratives, with Gorgons turning their viewers to stone, King Candaules’ murder as a result of allowing Gyges to observe his wife naked, Narcissus falling in love with his own reflection, and Actaeon’s death as a result of viewing Artemis naked. Elite Romans were particularly concerned with viewing, both the views *from* their houses – Pliny (*Letters*, 2.17 and 5.6) often describes his houses in terms of their views, and *of* their houses – Cicero (*De Domo Sua*, 37.100) claims his house ‘stands full in view of well-nigh the whole city’ and his concern for rebuilding his house after his exile demonstrates the importance of the visibility of houses (see Hales 2003: 41–44).

As Hales (2003: 107–122) notes, Pompeian houses seem to have been constructed with viewers in mind. Viewers from the entrance could look into the house along the narrow *fauces*, framing a restricted view of the *atrium* and *tablinum*. Hales (2003: 107–108) argues that ‘as the *paterfamilias* worked in this office [the *tablinum*], he was displayed to the viewer as the current, public representative of his *familia*’. This interpretation, however, presumes a function for the room, and also that there were no doors, curtains, or other partitions blocking the view from the entrance. Sometimes the *fauces* was ramped, perhaps to visually raise the status of the inhabitants (Hales 2003: 108–109). This sight-line through the house could be used to convey messages to viewers. For instance, a view of a *lararium* could highlight an owner’s veneration of the gods, or a view of a *triclinium* could emphasise the status of an owner through his reception of guests (see examples in Hales 2003: 113). Houses without *tablina* (VI.15.1) or full peristyles (VI.8.3/5 and V.4.a) were designed to look like they did to a viewer from the outside (Hales 2003: 112). Views within the house were also important. For instance, Clarke (2003: 226) highlights how views from dining spaces could be constructed with the guest of honour (who would always sit *imus in medio*) in mind, as in room h of II.2.2.

As noted by Elsner (1995: 1), ‘people relate to works of art in different ways, depending upon different contexts and at different times’. Indeed, as Bergmann (1994: 254) argues, even the same viewer could have different experiences of the same artworks at different times depending on the viewing route taken, the weather, the level of lighting, and if anyone was accompanying them. As Carucci (2017) argues, artworks could be designed to reflect multiple levels of meaning, and the position of a viewer could affect how an artwork was interpreted. Furthermore, Tronchin (2012b: 344) hypothesises the owner of a house may have needed to explain the meaning of his art collection to visitors as his intentions may not have been immediately clear, and this would also allow him to demonstrate his erudition and understanding of contemporary trends. Thus, there is no single view or interpretation of an artwork, but a variety of possibilities. In order to determine possible viewings by the Romans, we need to try to understand their mindset rather than apply our modern understanding of the world. This is problematic, not least as ancient textual sources were predominantly written by elite men, meaning that we can discover how a few Romans of a certain gender and status viewed some artworks, but have little idea how women, lower status men, or even children viewed any artworks. Elsner (1995: 80) identified three main ways in which the Romans interacted with domestic decoration: aesthetic / experiential, as an *aide-mémoire*, and to emphasise social status. I will organise my discussion below broadly into these three categories as this complements my own research.

Swift (2009: 16) argues, based mainly on Vitruvius, that the Romans had various concepts of decoration: *decor*, relating to ideas of ‘appropriateness’; *ornamentum*, relating to ‘adornment, embellishment and decoration’; and *eurhythmia*, ‘relating to visual harmony and a balanced or graceful, well-shaped composition’. Evidence for the Romans having such a notion of ‘appropriateness’ in their decoration of rooms is provided by ancient sources such as Cicero (*Atticus*, 1.4.3; 1.8.2; 1.10.3), and also the artworks of Pompeii. For instance, with bath/water-related scenes and athletes in rooms 47 and 48 of I.10.4 – bath areas (Ling & Ling 2005: 246–253).

Elite men also used artworks in the house as an *aide-mémoire* (Elsner & Squire 2016). Cicero stressed the importance of sight to aid memory (*De Oratore*, 2.87.357), and stated that houses could fill this role (*Ad Herennium*, 3.16.29), and Quintilian (*The Orator’s Education*, 11.2.18–20) describes how rooms and artworks in the house could be used for structuring rhetoric. Furthermore, the ancient Greeks and Romans participated in *ekphrasis*, where speakers would explain and elaborate on one or more

artworks in a room, and discuss and link them in different ways (Clarke 2003: 226). How these artworks were discussed, and thus how they were viewed, depended on the speaker and which elements he drew their attention to. Thus, the ancient Greeks and Romans themselves acknowledged that there were different ways of viewing.

Scholars often argue that decoration in the domestic sphere was designed to enhance and reflect the owner's social and political status. Leach (2004: 19) argues that the Romans made their homes into a 'visual framework for [their] civic status', citing sources such as Cicero (*De Officiis*, 1.39.139). Similarly, Hales (2003: 2–3) argues that the Roman house was 'a visual, architectural construct of the *familia*'s identity and proof of participation in Roman society' with birth, marriage, and death rituals advertised in and around the house.

It is not always possible to ascertain the meaning of an artwork intended by the artist, designer, or patron. This can sometimes be ascertained, however, by identifying variations in different versions of the same scene type (see the example in room 4 of I.10.4 discussed in Section 2.4.1). Scholars of ancient art can thus put forward different suggestions for viewing (preferably with evidence), but we may never know if this was how any Romans viewed it. As Section 2.6 demonstrates, often we cannot ascertain who was responsible for decorative choices. Without knowing even that, we cannot hope to determine an intended viewing, though there was likely more than one.

Chapter 3: Data Collection, Collation and Analytical Methods

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines my methodological approaches to data identification, collection, collation and presentation, and the methods used for my analyses. Firstly, I discuss how I formed my approach and the advantages and challenges it presents (Section 3.1). This is followed by definitions of my terminology (Section 3.2). Then I discuss my approaches to identifying particular representations as Venus, including dealing with shared iconographies between Venus, hermaphrodites, and other women (Section 3.3). In this section I also discuss why I have only included representations of Venus herself in this study and not allusions to her. I then outline my processes for data collection, including the sources I consulted, how I have checked my data, and the comprehensiveness and reliability of the resulting database (Section 3.4). I then outline my methods and approaches to data collation and presentation (Section 3.5) and finally I discuss the analytical methods I have used in each analytical chapter (Section 3.6).

Scholars of Roman and Pompeian artworks often make general statements regarding how often certain subjects occurred in certain areas within houses without quantifying this. For instance, Ling (1991: 135) claims that ‘myths of Venus and symbols of love are favoured in bedrooms’ and Ling and Ling (2005: 94) that ‘in *cubicula* the subjects are of a more intimate nature and often include love-stories or scenes relating to the goddess Venus’. These comments are made in passing and no examples are given to support either of these statements. Although there are some examples in Pompeii which would support these assertions, in order to ascertain their accuracy, the categories need to be further defined and quantifiable data needs to be compiled. ‘Symbols of love’ and ‘scenes relating to Venus’ are subjective, and would need to be defined before their location could be investigated. If this was restricted to ‘scenes featuring Venus’, this could be more reliably determined. Furthermore, instead of giving a few examples where the content of scenes was affected by the type of room they decorate, a sample is needed in order to ascertain the number of examples which supported these points in relation to those which did not – for instance, comparing the number of scenes featuring Venus in *cubicula* with those in other areas. Thus, I decided to compile all representations of Venus in the fixed artworks of Pompeii to ensure my

study was comprehensive. I wanted to approach Roman art more systematically by creating a database recording various elements of the content and location of these artworks so that my conclusions were based on numerical data. This would enable scholars to clearly see the evidence for my conclusions, and also enable them to build on my work.

Furthermore, art scholars often over-interpret the artworks, especially in terms of iconography. For instance, Lorenz (2007: 667) argues that in the painting of Perseus and Andromeda in VII.16.10, Andromeda's uncovered breast alludes to the Amazons, and implies 'that the location of Andromeda's current situation is placed far away from civilization'. This is a possibility, but there is no real evidence for this – it is simply Lorenz's interpretation. My approach to artworks featuring Venus in Pompeii aims to break away from these kinds of approaches by separating each artwork into categories relating to its content and location. The categories are designed to exclude as much of my own interpretation as possible – for instance, Venus' state of nudity, the number of figures in the scene, and the attributes of Venus present in the scene, are fairly obvious to any viewer. Naturally, some subjective interpretation is unavoidable, in terms of identifying Venus and the scene type, but this is kept to a minimum. My discussion can then be based on these clearly evidenced categories rather than on my own subjective interpretation of the artworks.

In forming my quantitative approach to the artworks, I was influenced by the approach of Allison (2004a and 2004b), who created a database of material culture in 30 Pompeian houses using set criteria including artefact type and material, also recording the location of each artefact. I decided to take a similar approach to artworks, separating my database into various headings relating to elements of their composition and location. I also used Allison's room type criteria (2004a: table 5.a) as she does not identify functions for rooms, which would be subjective, but instead identifies room types based on objective evidence, such as the openness and size of the room and its location (which allows for the multifunctional and seasonal nature of rooms).

There are several advantages to adopting a quantitative approach. Firstly, it enables artworks to be compared systematically: rather than making a general point regarding a group of artworks and giving a few specific examples to illustrate it, an entire group of artworks can be easily compared. For instance, instead of stating that *Venus Pompeiana* is often depicted with other deities, and giving a couple of examples to illustrate my point, I can clearly state that 6 of the 12 paintings of *Venus Pompeiana*

depict her with other deities within the same painting. Secondly, it enables an evidence-led approach: by comparing these artworks more comprehensively using a quantitative approach, patterns may emerge, and these can then be interpreted, rather than the current approach where scholars research artworks, make conclusions, and illustrate these with a few examples. Thirdly, it enables arguments to be clearly supported by numerical data: rather than general conclusions being drawn from a group of artworks, the data produced by a quantitative approach enables conclusions to be clearly substantiated. For instance, previous scholars have frequently presumed that Venus, as goddess of love, would be particularly popular in small, closed rooms (presuming these would be used as bedrooms), using a few examples as evidence for this. However, my study of artworks featuring Venus demonstrates that she is actually represented just 23% of the time in small, closed rooms within houses, and appears far more often in larger rooms (43% of the time). Fourthly, it allows other scholars to adapt and reuse my data as the evidence to support my conclusions is clear, comprehensive and systematic. For instance, scholars of Roman art often make conclusions based on years of research, and only give a few examples to illustrate their arguments. Personal knowledge is of course invaluable, especially for identifying and communicating general trends, and in the prose of a chapter it would be impractical for scholars to list every single example illustrating their point. However, by using quantitative data, the evidence to support my conclusions is clear, comprehensive and systematic which means that other scholars can consult my database and if they feel I have misinterpreted a scene or if they want to use the information for a different analysis, they can adapt my database and make their own conclusions.

There are also challenges with adopting a quantitative approach, as art is a creative and diverse medium, and given variations between artworks, it can be difficult to set criteria to which all artworks conform. For instance, although I created criteria for identifying Venus, often I had to create further criteria in order to differentiate the goddess from other figures with similar iconography, such as women at their toilet, nymphs, and hermaphrodites. Furthermore, criteria cannot cover every eventuality in art. For instance, in room n of VII.2.25, there is a wall-painting of a semi-naked female figure wearing a crown (which could be worn by Venus), surrounded by dolphins (attributes of Venus), and riding on a sea-centaur (*PPM* VI: 715; *PPM* XI: 314–6). This could identify the figure as Venus, however, the female figure appears to be holding a greave, with the sea-centaur holding a shield, and rather than Venus, this is perhaps

more likely to be Thetis (who acquired armour made by Hephaestus for her son Achilles). Thus, some flexibility is needed. Furthermore, a quantitative approach is useful if you are studying all the artworks in an area, or depictions of a certain subject in a certain area. If you are studying Roman art more generally, or a range of locations with thousands of examples of artworks altogether, it would not be possible to adopt such an approach.

3.2 Terminology

3.2.1 Latin Names for Deities

I have used the Latin names for deities and mythological figures throughout this study – for instance Venus instead of Aphrodite, and Bacchus instead of Dionysus. This is both for the sake of consistency and also because the iconography of syncretised deities often cannot be reliably distinguished. For instance, I argue in this study that *Venus Pompeiana* represents the patron deity of the town – Venus rather than Aphrodite. However, in Greek mythological scenes, such as ‘Judgement of Paris’ scenes, the deity represented is Aphrodite rather than Venus. Thus, for consistency, I have considered all representations of Venus and Aphrodite as ‘Venus’.

3.2.2 ‘Artworks’

The database for this study is based on wall-paintings and reliefs, ceiling paintings, and floor mosaics. I have grouped these under the term ‘artworks’ to account for this variety of media. I sometimes refer to these as ‘fixed artworks’ as they are not portable and thus their location is permanent. Statuary, sculpture and other material culture can be portable, and thus these are outside the scope of this study as their location is not always fixed and is therefore difficult to establish with certainty.

3.2.3 ‘Narrative Scenes’

I use the term ‘narrative scenes’ for scenes which depict mythological narratives, such as the ‘Competition Between the Deities of Light’ or the ‘Judgement of

Paris’. I have termed these ‘narrative scenes’ rather than ‘mythological scenes’ because many artworks depict mythological subjects without a narrative (such as floating bacchantes). ‘Non-narrative scenes’ refer to scenes which do not depict a mythological narrative, for instance ‘Venus Fishing’ or the ‘Toilet of Venus’. Table 3.1 comprises a list of narrative and non-narrative scenes which feature Venus in Pompeii. For further details of these scene types, see Appendix A2.7.

Table 3.1: Individual scene types featuring Venus which qualify as narrative and non-narrative scenes

Narrative Scenes	Adonis Narrative (Adonis Wounded; Venus with Adonis)
	Aeneas Narrative (Aeneas Wounded; Venus Giving Arms to Aeneas)
	Competition Between the Deities of Light
	Love of Venus and Mars
	Paris Narrative (Helen and Paris Narrative; Judgement of Paris)
	Punishment of Cupid
	Other Narrative Scene
Non-Narrative Scenes	Venus Fishing
	Nest of Cupids
	Sale of Cupids
	Venus in a Seashell
	Toilet of Venus
	Venus Tying her Sandal
	Other Non-Narrative Scene
	No Active Scene

3.3 Identifying Representations of Venus

I first researched depictions of Aphrodite and Venus in Classical art, using the *LIMC* in particular, and created a list of Venus’ attributes (Appendix A1) and a list of Venus types and scenes featuring Venus (those present in Pompeii listed in Appendix A2). These lists informed the seven criteria which I created for identifying Venus in artworks in Pompeii (Appendix A2.2). These criteria ranged from labelled representations of Venus to those identified by previous excavators and scholars where the artwork no longer survives, so I cannot ascertain the likelihood of the female figure in a particular artwork representing Venus. In order to address instances where Venus shares her iconography with other female figures, as discussed below, I have made

some additions to these criteria. In the following section I further elaborate on these identification processes.

3.3.1 Shared Iconographies

Venus shares many aspects of her iconography with others, such as hermaphrodites and other female figures (especially women at their toilet). I have taken this into consideration when identifying representations as Venus, and in this section I explain the processes involved in my decision-making about whether or not the figure in a particular artwork can be identified as Venus.

Hermaphrodites

The god Hermaphroditus, and hermaphrodites more generally, have a similar iconography to Venus. Both Venus and hermaphrodites can be portrayed in toilet scenes with the same attributes. If a phallus is visible (or a beard), a hermaphrodite is obviously identifiable, but if the lower body is covered or this part of the artwork no longer survives, it is impossible to differentiate between Venus and a hermaphrodite as both could be at their toilet. For instance, the central panel of the east wall of room 11 in VI.7.18 represents a figure wearing jewellery (including the distinctive breast jewellery/magic girdle of Venus), with a mirror and a toiletry box being offered to it, the figure's left hand is in its hair, and it is accompanied by a cupid and other figures (fig. 3.1). The lower section of this painting is no longer visible and Helbig (1868: no. 1369) does not mention a phallus, so I originally identified this figure as a representation of Venus. However, both Abbate's sketch of the painting (fig. 3.2) and Schefold's photograph (1962: tav. 172.4) make clear the presence of a phallus, which would identify this figure as a hermaphrodite. Thus, antiquarian sketches, photographs, and first-hand descriptions have been valuable in refining such identifications.



Figures 3.1 and 3.2: The central panel of the east wall of room 11, VI.7.18

In other cases, previous scholars have identified hermaphrodites in wall-paintings which no longer survive. For instance, the figure at its toilet in the central panel of the west wall of room p in VI.14.21/22 was identified as a hermaphrodite by the *PPM*, *PPP*, and Schefold (1962: tav. 168.4), despite neither a phallus nor a beard being evident in the surviving sketch by Discanno (*PPM* V: 326) or mentioned in the description of Sogliano (1880: no.74). In this study, if a painting no longer survives and a hermaphrodite has been identified by other scholars but the phallus or beard is not visible in surviving sketches, I have assumed that one or the other was visible at an earlier date and thus that a hermaphrodite is depicted rather than Venus.

Women at their Toilet

Many well-known Venus poses and attributes are not exclusive to the goddess and could be adopted by other figures. I have assessed every representation of a female figure in a pose of Venus or with her attributes to establish whether it represents the goddess. Generally, Venus can be identified if a representation meets one or more of my seven criteria listed in Appendix A2.2. However, depictions of female figures at their toilet, using toiletry boxes and mirrors (attributes of Venus), could alternatively represent ordinary women at their toilet. These female figures at their toilet sometimes

adjust their hair with their hands, the pose of *Venus Anadyomene* (originally intended to represent the goddess wringing her hair after bathing), but these could potentially just represent ordinary women. Thus, I have developed an additional set of criteria beyond the presence of toiletry items (the mirror and toiletry box) to identify a representation of a female figure at her toilet as Venus (table 3.2).

Table 3.2: Additional criteria for identifying a female figure at her toilet as Venus

Criteria for Identifying Venus (Rather Than Other Female Figures) at her Toilet	Example from Pompeii
The artwork represents a recognisable narrative scene featuring Venus	Room s of IX.1.20
There is another deity (or statue of a deity) within the artwork	Room 5 of I.11.1
There are more exclusive attributes of Venus in the artwork, such as dolphins, cupids or a halo/crown, which may not appear with ordinary women (as opposed to jewellery, hairbands/diadems, toiletry boxes, and mirrors)	Façade of II.1.12
The context of the artwork within the room suggests the figure is Venus	Room 10 of VI.5.3 – there are other female deities depicted in the room (Ceres and Diana) and thus the female figure at her toilet is likely to represent a deity, and most likely Venus given the pose

Sometimes an artwork meets these criteria but its context suggests that the female figure does not represent Venus. For instance, although the female figure towards the right of the upper zone of the east wall in room 14 of VI.3.7 is at her toilet and perhaps wears a crown, this is one of two female figures in the upper zone, both dressed in the same way (in the same colours and style of dress, fig. 3.3). Both of these female figures clearly represent the same character, but the left figure has no attributes of Venus. Thus, it is likely that this figure on the right is adopting the iconography of Venus and toilet scenes rather than representing Venus herself. In situations like this, I have considered the artwork as ‘Criteria for Identifying Venus’ category ‘f’ (for an explanation of these categories see Appendix A2.2) and have excluded it from discussion in my chapters. The artwork remains in the database though, as there is a slight possibility it represents Venus.



Figure 3.3: The east wall in room 14 of VI.3.7

Other Shared Iconographies of Venus

Various attributes of Venus could be adopted by other figures too. For instance: the breast jewellery associated with Venus could be worn by other figures (as with the hermaphrodite example in room 11 of VI.7.18 mentioned above); cupids could accompany a variety of different deities, bacchantes, and other women (especially in love scenes), so the presence of a cupid does not necessarily identify a female figure as Venus; and a jewellery-clad female figure with an armed man could represent Venus and Mars, but could equally represent a number of heroes with their lovers.

My ‘Criteria for Identifying Venus’ (Appendix A2.2) make it clear which artworks definitely depict Venus, and which are more probable than others, by combining the attributes of Venus with other evidence to identify her. However, there are some exceptions to these criteria, such as:

- If an artwork clearly represents or forms part of a recognisable narrative scene which does not feature Venus, even if the female figure adopts her pose or attributes, it is clear that the figure represents someone else. For instance, a female figure adopts two Venus/Aphrodite poses – that of the ‘Crouching Aphrodite’ and *Venus Pudica* in room i of II.2.2, to the left of the entrance to room f. However, when this painting is considered with the one on the opposite side of the entrance of a male figure being attacked by dogs, it is clear that these paintings are intended to be viewed together as the Diana and Actaeon narrative with Diana bathing, and Actaeon being punished for observing her.
- If the context of an artwork within a room suggests an alternative interpretation of the female figure. For instance, a bust of a female figure with a cupid occurs amongst other busts all relating to Bacchic subjects in room 33 of VIII.4.4/49 (*PPM VIII*: 515 and 517). This is excluded from the database as it is more likely to represent a bacchante rather than Venus.

3.3.2 Allusions to Venus

The database for this study comprises representations of Venus herself, and not allusions to Venus. This is because allusions to Venus rely on an individual’s interpretation of the evidence, so identification is more subjective. For instance, love scenes or representations of cupids in rooms could arguably be considered to allude to Venus, but this cannot be proven. Chapter 8 focuses on representations of deities rather than allusions to them for this same reason – as everything could be considered the sphere of a deity.

3.4 Data Collection

I compiled my database from published and accessible unpublished sources (such as Tatiana Warscher’s unpublished manuscripts) to include representations of Venus that no longer survive or have been removed from Pompeii. During the data collection stage, many buildings were closed for conservation work as part of the Grande Progetto Pompei, however I viewed extant *in situ* artworks where accessible in Pompeii to ensure the completeness and accuracy of the database as far as possible. I

also viewed paintings which had been removed from Pompeii and were on display at the Museo Nazionale di Napoli. I cross-checked all these sources, particularly the published ones, to assess their reliability. From these sources, I created two types of catalogue: one with quantitative data collated into a spreadsheet (Appendix B1), and the other an illustrated catalogue (Appendix C1).

3.4.1 Sources Consulted

The two main published sources I used to collect data on Venus representations in Pompeii were *Pompeii: Pitture e Mosaici (PPM)* and *Pitture e Pavimenti di Pompei (PPP)*.

The *PPM* documents the paintings and mosaics in almost every excavated building in Pompeii, including many artworks which no longer survive. It is the most complete catalogue of such works and consequently is the main source of data for this study. I examined the figures and captions of every volume of the *PPM* against my ‘Criteria for Identifying Venus’ (Appendix A2.2) to identify representations of the goddess in wall-paintings, reliefs, ceiling paintings, and floor mosaics.

The *PPP* is a descriptive catalogue of the inventoried photographs and sketches of Pompeii held by the *Soprintendenza di Pompei* (but lacking the images themselves), which I also examined against my ‘Criteria for Identifying Venus’ to gain further information about Venus representations. The *PPP* catalogue mainly includes images still *in situ* in Pompeii, but also includes several which have been removed and taken to the Museo Nazionale di Napoli (*MNN*).

I checked the representations of Venus identified by the *PPP* against those identified by the *PPM* to ensure that my database was as accurate as possible. In a few instances, the *PPM* disagreed with the *PPP* on the wall (or even building) on which an artwork was located, or the subject it depicted. Once I had compiled the database from information in the *PPM* and *PPP*, I took further steps to reconcile differences between the two. I checked the data, where possible, against the artworks left *in situ* at Pompeii and those now in the Museo Nazionale di Napoli, and also against other scholarship. For a list of the published sources I consulted to create my database, see table 3.3. I also consulted Tatiana Warscher’s unpublished manuscripts (1935–1946) in Rome. As a control, the studies I consulted included houses and other areas of Pompeii which did not have any Venus representations according to the *PPM* and *PPP* in case these two

sources had accidentally omitted some. I added several artworks to my database as a result of this consultation of multiple sources, in addition to gaining better photographs and sketches of the artworks.

Table 3.3: Published sources consulted to create my database

Domestic Space in Pompeii	Public Areas in Pompeii	Pompeian/Roman Art	Catalogues of Pompeian Wall-paintings	Catalogues of Lararia in Pompeii	Catalogues of Wall-paintings now in the MNN
<i>Häuser in Pompeii</i> series	Spinazzola (1953)	Gell (1835)	Helbig (1868)	Boyce (1937)	Warscher (1940–2)
Franklin (1990)	Koloski Ostrow (1990)	Peters (1963)	Sogliano (1880)	Fröhlich (1991)	De Franciscis (1963)
Peters (1993)	Jacobelli (1995)	Grant (1975)	Schefold (1957)		Borriello et al (1986)
Gallo (1994)	Curuni and Santopuoli (2007)	Moormann (1988) ⁴			
Ling & Ling (2005)		Bragantini and Sampaolo (2009)			
Dall'Armellina and Mastracci (2006)		Berg (2010)			
Laidlaw & Stella (2014)					

The *PPM* sometimes attributed the provenance of a wall-painting to the wrong wall (an issue which became evident as a result of comparing it to other sources). For instance, the *PPM* attributed a bust of Venus with a cupid in room 12 of I.10.10/11 to the east wall (*PPM* II: 495), as did Schefold (1957: 48) and the *PPP* (110111202). However, a bust of a woman with a cupid was also visible on the west wall (*PPM* II: 496–497). Unfortunately, this house was closed during my fieldtrip to Pompeii, so it was not clear that these referred to the same image. Ling and Ling (2005), however, mentioned that this was an error in the *PPM*, and this bust was located on the west wall (Ling & Ling 2005: 295 – this is the same wall-painting discussed above, which was later removed from my database). This indicates the importance of site visits and checking multiple sources to ensure the accuracy of data.

⁴ For data-collection purposes, Moormann's catalogue and index were used, though not the main text.

The works of Helbig (1868), Sogliano (1880), and Schefold (1957) were particularly valuable for their descriptions of paintings which no longer exist, though the locations of these paintings were not always clear. Schefold's work was especially useful as he listed the paintings building by building rather than grouping them by theme so it was easier to ascertain their location. He also included a list of Helbig and Museo Nazionale di Napoli catalogue numbers alongside the Pompeii building numbers in his 'Konkordanz zu Helbig', which was useful as Helbig did not always attribute wall-paintings to specific buildings.

Tatiana Warscher's unpublished manuscripts (1935–1946) proved useful both to gain more information on artworks already in my database and also to discover additional ones. These manuscripts included photographs of artworks which are currently poorly preserved, unpublished, or no longer survive. Her photographs often included details not visible in more recent photographs or currently extant. Unfortunately, not all of the volumes were available in Rome, and I was unable to consult all of them in the time available. I prioritised the use of Warscher's manuscripts during my period of research in Rome, and did not have enough time to consult other unpublished materials such as the photograph collections held at the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Rome (*DAIR*), Pompeii, and the Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo e la Documentazione (ICCD) archive. However, many of the *DAIR* photographs were available through the *PPM* or the *Pompeii in Pictures* website, so for the purposes of this study, the sources used for data collection were sufficient.

I checked my database against *Pompeii in Pictures*, a website comprising photographs from across Pompeii, scans of eighteenth/nineteenth-century sketches from the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Rome (*DAIR*), and photographs from Warscher and the Wilhelmina and Stanley A. Jashemski archive. *Pompeii in Pictures* was invaluable as a resource as it enabled me to investigate the context for artworks, and often acquire better quality photographs, which sometimes led to changes to my database. For instance, the left medallion on the west wall of room 12 of I.10.10/11 represents a female figure wearing a crown with a cupid on her left shoulder (fig. 3.4). However, upon comparison with Stanley A. Jashemski's photograph on the website (the crack through the painting confirms this is indeed the same image – fig. 3.5), the medallion clearly depicts a female figure crowned with leaves accompanied by a cupid.

It is thus more likely that this represents a bacchante than Venus and is excluded from my database⁵.



Figures 3.4 and 3.5: Left medallion on the west wall of room 12 in I.10.10–11 (Casa degli Amanti)

I use a different database for Chapter 8 to analyse artworks featuring all deities (not just Venus) in three houses (Appendix B2). As with the Venus database, the *PPM* and *PPP* were consulted for details of the decorations. These were checked against Schefold (1957), and studies into these specific houses: Descoedres & Sear (1987); Armitt (1993); Allison & Sear (2002); and Ling & Ling (2005).

3.4.2 Comprehensiveness and Reliability of the Database

My database is not comprehensive for obvious reasons: some artworks did not survive excavation or were not recorded by the excavators, while others have fallen victim to ancient looting or modern theft; fading due to sunlight; and destruction due to structural decay or twentieth-century bombing. Furthermore, 29.5% (189,000m² of 640,000m²) of the total area of Pompeii has not yet been excavated (E. Poehler pers. comm.). I have attempted to ensure this database is as comprehensive as possible by checking it against the catalogues and works of previous scholars and artists.

⁵ Although Venus sometimes wears a crown of leaves in artworks, as she possibly does in room i of VII.13.4/17–18, I do not consider this to identify Venus as there is no evidence that this was one of her attributes, though Venus is described as wearing a floral crown in *Cypria* fragment 6.1–12 (see Cyrino 2010: 63).

As outlined above, this database is heavily reliant on secondary sources (such as sketches, paintings, photographs, and written catalogues). Their potential shortcomings have been recognised – we know, for example, that eighteenth- and nineteenth-century sketches of Pompeian artworks are often inaccurate, for instance Zahn and the Niccolini family often transposed subject paintings or motifs to different walls (Laidlaw 2007: 624–625). Thus, the works of such artists cannot be relied upon to correctly locate the room, or even building, that an artwork was from. For instance, the *Venus Pescatrice* painting in room c of IX.5.14–16 was mistakenly drawn in room h of IX.1.22.29 by D’Amelio (*PPM* VIII: 971–2; *PPM* IX: 606–609). Furthermore, there are inconsistencies where the artists differ in their depictions of the same painting. For instance, the Venus on the south wall of room 8 of VII.1.25/47 (Appendix C1 – V–7–2) was drawn by different artists as wearing either a crown or leaves. However, while not all such issues can be resolved, careful use of all available sources, especially the catalogues of Helbig (1868), Sogliano (1880), and Schefold (1957), has ensured my database is as accurate as possible.

Accounts and catalogues of early excavators and scholars sometimes describe Venus artworks which no longer survive, though often with limited or incomplete information. These artworks are included in the database with as much information as can be extracted from them. Artworks from unspecified or unknown buildings are included in the database under ‘Unknown Region’ as the Venus type or scene type may have been described by these excavators and scholars, even if the location of the artwork was not.

A reliance on secondary evidence meant that in some cases the wall on which an artwork was located could not be ascertained or checked. Pompeii was not constructed with walls aligned true north, east, south, or west. Thus, some of my sources may have used different directional annotation from others. In this study, I have used site north to describe the wall an artwork originated from, using the plans in the *PPM* in conjunction with the written descriptions of their location by early scholars (Appendix A2.6). I checked the walls specified by early scholars for the artworks which were still *in situ* in Pompeii, and these seemed to correspond with site north. The *PPM* plans sometimes omit features such as doors and windows, so these were supplemented by other plans when required (see Appendix A2.5).

Though it is possible that I overlooked a small number of Venus representations in this study, my checks against multiple sources (both published and unpublished), and

in the Museo Nazionale di Napoli and Pompeii itself, have ensured this is kept to an absolute minimum. I have maintained the integrity of the overall database through the approaches to data collection outlined above, as these ensure the database is as complete as possible and a representative sample from which conclusions can be drawn.

3.5 Data Collation and Presentation

3.5.1 Data Collation for Chapters 5–7

I compiled an Excel spreadsheet (Appendix B1) to record quantitative data regarding the content and location of all Venus representations in fixed artworks in Pompeii. This is the database used in Chapters 5–7. This enabled me to create pivot tables comparing different categories to see if there was any relationship between them, for example comparing Venus types with room types. By using numerical data I was able to manipulate the data in different ways and make more straightforward comparisons than I could using descriptive data.

I separated the data in my spreadsheet into two main groups – content and location. I separated the information on content into 11 categories: criteria for identifying Venus, type of scene, Venus type, Venus' state of nudity, number of figures in the scene, number of cupids in the scene, deities depicted with Venus, other figures in the scene, type of headwear, type of jewellery, and type of attributes. I separated the information on location into eight categories: context, region, building, room, room type, wall/façade, field of wall, and zone. I explain these categories (fields in the database) in detail in Appendix A2. I state my identification criteria for each Venus type in my database in Chapter 5.

3.5.2 Data Collation for Chapter 8

In Chapter 8, I compare Venus representations with representations of other deities using three houses as case studies. To do this, I created another database with different categories to record all of the fixed artworks in each of the three houses in my sample over three Excel spreadsheets – Appendix B2a for I.11.6 (the small house), Appendix B2b for VII.4.48 (the medium house), and Appendix B2c for I.10.4 (the large

house). The categories in each spreadsheet are: room number, room type, scheme of decoration in the room, wall, central zone (separated into left, central, and right panels), lower zone, and upper zone.

3.6 Analytical Methods

Chapters 5 to 8 are my analytical chapters. My aim in Chapter 5 is to identify the various Venus types represented in Pompeii in paintings, reliefs, and mosaics (based on Venus' pose, attributes, and Venus types identified by ancient authors or previous scholars), and identify trends for each Venus type individually in terms of the composition of the scene and the artwork's location. I achieve this by using the main database (Appendix B1) to compare various aspects of these artworks featuring Venus. I identify elements in the composition of scenes featuring each type (such as the number of figures in the painting and how many are deities, cupids, or other figures) and assess whether these were indicators of the possible significance of these artworks. For instance, *Venus Pompeiana* is always represented stationary without interacting with other figures in the scene, and possibly represents a statue, which may suggest this type reflects the patron deity of Pompeii (see Chapter 5.1.5). I quantify and compare the number of representations of each Venus type in each room type, on each wall (north, east, south, west), in each zone, and each field of wall. By having a set number of categories, it is easier to make comparisons between and within the Venus types. Categories where no significant analysis can be made due to lack of data or lack of noteworthy patterns are excluded from discussion in Chapter 5, but are included in the database (Appendix B1). To assess the significance of these distributions, I analyse the approaches of previous scholars by comparing their hypotheses with my database, and also make my own conclusions. For instance, previous scholars have stated that *Venus Pescatrice* representations are exclusively located in *cubicula* but my database demonstrates this is not the case (see Chapter 5.2.4).

My aim in Chapter 6 is to quantify which Venus types and scenes featuring Venus are represented in individual room types and investigate why this might be, and assess whether artworks featuring Venus vary depending on whether they occur in public or domestic contexts. To achieve this, I use Allison's (2004b) sample of 30 Pompeian houses as an indicator of the number of occurrences of room types within

houses in Pompeii, because identifying all of the room types across the town would be a multi-year research project in itself. I then compare the number of occurrences of room types in Pompeian houses with the number of occurrences of Venus representations in different room types in my database as this reveals whether Venus is particularly popular or unpopular in individual room types. I have grouped these room types together as ‘predominantly reception’ and ‘predominantly non-reception’ areas to make clearer comparisons by grouping them in just two ways, based on the size and openness of the room and its structural features, rather than its function. I then compare the number of Venus types and scenes featuring Venus in predominantly reception and non-reception areas, in individual room types, and on each wall, zone, and field of wall to ascertain if there are any trends and to examine whether the room type or the artwork’s location within the room influenced its content. I discuss categories with few Venus representations individually, such as those in the upper zone and side fields (often in relation to other paintings or features in the room such as *aediculae* or windows), to examine why they differ from the vast majority in the central zone and central panels. In order to assess whether artworks featuring Venus vary depending on whether they occur in public or domestic contexts, I compare artworks featuring Venus from public contexts with those from domestic contexts in relation to various categories (such as the type of area, and figures depicted with Venus).

My aim in Chapter 7 is to further investigate the composition and context of artworks featuring Venus to assess whether representations of Venus had a religious, ritual, or protective purpose. For composition, I discuss artworks featuring Venus: as one of the twelve gods, and in non-narrative scenes with at least one other deity. For context, I discuss artworks featuring Venus: painted on *aediculae* or in *lararium* paintings, on façades or entrances, in public areas for a ritual or protective purpose, and as part of schemes of decoration for protective, ritual, or magic purposes. I then discuss artworks featuring Venus which occur in association with the water supply, or have compositional elements which suggest that the goddess was represented to protect the water supply or seafarers. I adopted a quantitative approach in the other analytical chapters, and this approach is continued in Chapter 7 where possible (e.g. for artworks painted on *aediculae* or in *lararium* paintings, and those flanking entrances on façades). However, an overall quantitative approach would not work here as ascertaining a religious, ritual, or protective purpose to these artworks was based on evidence so varied that it could not be covered by set criteria in the database.

My aim in Chapter 8 is to investigate the significance of artworks featuring Venus in comparison to artworks featuring other deities, by exploring their distribution in a sample of three Pompeian houses. For each house, I quantify the number of rooms with recorded decoration to put the number of artworks featuring deities into context with the number of decorated rooms. I also quantify the number of different deities in the artworks of each house, and compare the number of artworks featuring deities with those that do not feature deities in each zone and field of wall. By doing this, I hope to ascertain whether deities are mostly represented in central panels in the central zone, and why they might be represented in other areas of the wall. I look for trends within each of these areas as well as exceptions to the established patterns, and investigate why this might be. This quantitative approach enables clear comparisons to be made based on numerical data.

I adapt house plans to show which areas of each house have no evidence of painted wall decoration, so it is clear how often deities appear in relation to other decorated rooms. I also plot schemes of decoration which span multiple rooms onto house plans to ascertain whether they influenced the location of representations of deities. These visualisations demonstrate the spatial relationship between artworks, for instance, they highlight whether artworks featuring deities are all grouped in close proximity or in certain areas of the house, such as around the *atrium* or peristyle.

I research evidence for ritual activity in each house (*aediculae*, *lararium* paintings, niches, and altars) and then establish whether representations of, or allusions to, deities also occur in rooms where this evidence occurs. At the end of Chapter 8, I compare my findings on representations of deities in these three houses with my findings from Chapter 6 on the location of representations of Venus in domestic space to assess whether Venus was given greater prominence than other deities in these three houses by occurring more often, or more significantly, than other deities, and whether my conclusions relate to Venus specifically or to deities or wall-paintings more generally.

Chapter 4: The Religio-Political Significance of Venus

In this chapter I discuss the religio-political significance of Venus to the Romans generally to put her significance in Pompeii into context. First, I discuss the various roles of Venus to aid later interpretation of her iconography and location in Chapters 5, 6, and 7. Secondly, I address the importance of Venus to the Romans in regard to her place in the Roman calendar (April, the month associated with Venus/Aphrodite and perhaps named after her, is the second month in the Roman calendar) and the range of people who worshipped her. Finally, I discuss the association of Venus with various political figures as this influenced some of the Venus types and may also explain why Venus is represented in certain locations in Pompeii.

4.1: Roles of Venus

Venus had many roles – most notably as goddess of *eros*; a garden deity; patron deity of seafarers; and ancestor of the Romans. She was also associated with the evening star. Venus' different roles are attested in the variety of her epithets in temples and shrines in Rome alone: *Venus Obsequens* (Venus the compliant), *Venus Erycina* (Venus of Eryx), *Venus Verticordia* (Venus changer of hearts), *Venus Cloacina* (syncretism of Venus with the Etruscan water/sewer deity Cloacina), and *Venus Victrix* (Venus bringer of victory).

4.1.1: Venus as Goddess of *Eros*

Aphrodite possessed 'the power to arouse *eros*' (Pironti 2010: 118) and when she was syncretised with Venus, the latter also adopted this power. Pironti (2010: 118) argues that the definition of 'love' is culturally determined so Aphrodite should be considered as the goddess of *eros* which is not strictly equitable with love. *Eros* is a complicated concept to define succinctly, with multiple uses and interpretations. Plato described *eros* as an intense feeling (*Laws*, 8.837a-d), a 'kind of madness' (*Phaedrus*, 265a–266a) and 'desire which overcomes the rational opinion' (*Phaedrus*, 238b–c; see also Moore 2007: esp. 122–124 for Plato and *eros*). Faraone (1999: 41–95) in his study of ancient Greek love magic, describes *eros* as 'uncontrollable passion' and argues that

the Greeks perceived it as a disease, expressed through the language used to describe it, and that *eros* spells tend to be curses.

The desire and passion that Aphrodite provoked (*Homeric Hymn*, 5.1–6) often led to madness, violence and destruction, as described by Sophocles (*Fragments*, 941). Venus wielded similar powers of intense desire and passion. Ovid (*Ars Amatoria*, 2.563) describes how Mars was ‘plagued by frenzied love of Venus’ highlighting the extreme powers of desire that Venus could command. Mythological narratives featuring the powers of Venus over desire stem from Greek mythology. Venus only appears to wield these powers in narratives shared with Aphrodite rather than in her own right.

4.1.2: Venus as a Garden Deity

Many ancient authors attest to the association of Venus with gardens (Pliny, *Natural History*, 19.19.50 & 36.4.16; Varro, *De Re Rustica*, 1.1.6; the *Pervigilium Veneris*; Festus, *De Verborum Significatu*, in Lindsay 1965: 322). Indeed, Venus was particularly associated with myrtle and roses (myrtle – Pliny, *Natural History*, 12.2.3, 15.36.119–121; Ovid, *Fasti*, 4.15, 4.141–4; Virgil, *Eclogues*, 7.61–2; Virgil, *Aeneid*, 5.72; Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 6.24.7; roses – Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, 6.24.7). The *Vinalia Rustica*, a festival held in honour of Venus as a garden deity and celebrated by kitchen-gardeners, was held on 19th August (Varro, *On the Latin Language*, 6.20). Eden (1963) considers the evidence for Venus being associated with gardens, and argues that this association developed over time, due to her syncretism with Aphrodite, rather than being an original role of Venus.

4.1.3: Venus as Patron Deity of Seafarers

Venus/Aphrodite was particularly associated with the sea, and water more generally, in mythology. She was born from the sea and particularly enjoyed bathing⁶. Several Venus types illustrate this association, such as *Venus Anadyomene* wringing the foam from her hair and ‘Venus on a seashell’ (see Chapter 5).

⁶ Born from the sea: Cicero, *De Natura Deorum*, 3.59; Hesiod, *Theogony*, 188–200; Isidore of Seville, *Etymologies*, 8.11.77; Plautus, *Rudens*, 3.704 describes Venus as born from the shell. Bathing: Homer, *Odyssey*, 8.364–365; *Homeric Hymn*, 5.58–67; Ovid, *Fasti*, 4.133–144.

Cyrino (2010: 108) lists several epithets of Aphrodite which associate her with the sea – *Aphrodite Pontia* ('Aphrodite of the Deep Sea' – Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, 2.34.11), *Aphrodite Pelagia* ('Aphrodite of the Open Sea' – Artemidorus, *Interpretation of Dreams*, 2.37), *Aphrodite Thalassaie* ('Aphrodite of the Sea' – Nonnos, *Dionysiaca*, 2.101–103; 6.307–309; 7.226–229; 39.263–266), and *Aphrodite Galenaie* ('Aphrodite of the Calm Sea' – *Greek Anthology*, 10.21). Other epithets focus on her role protecting those travelling by sea – *Aphrodite Euploia* ('Aphrodite of Fair Voyage' – Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, 1.1.3), and *Aphrodite Limenia / Epilimena* ('Aphrodite of the Harbour' – Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, 2.34.11)⁷. Venus shares some of Aphrodite's sea-related epithets. For instance, an inscription from the island of Korčula mentions *Veneri Pelagiae* ('Venus of the Open Sea' – *CIL III* 3066, 10083).

Aphrodite is often acknowledged as a protector from the sea (*Greek Anthology*, 5.11, 5.17, 9.143, 9.144, 9.601, 10.21; Posidippus 39, 116, 119; Athenaeus, *The Learned Banqueters*, 15.675f–15.676c; Plutarch, *Theseus*, 18.2). Hintzen argues that in the *Greek Anthology*, 'poetic effects have been achieved by mingling her functions and by metaphors of the (stormy) sea of love', for instance with the metaphorical sea of love in 10.21 (Hintzen 2012: 54–55). Furthermore, an anchor from Cartagena is inscribed 'aphrodeite sozousa' ('The Saving Aphrodite'; Gianfrotta 1980: fig. 18), which suggests that Aphrodite was associated with seafarers.

4.1.4: Venus as Ancestor of the Romans

Many city-states in both Italy and abroad considered Aeneas to be their founder or ancestor, a claim made by Rome, recorded by the earliest Roman literature (Farrow 1992: 339–340). The Greeks considered Aphrodite to be Aeneas's mother (*Homeric Hymn*, 5.196–201; Homer, *Iliad*, 2.819–21; Hesiod, *Theogony*, 1008–10). Venus may have been considered the ancestor of the Romans by at least the third century B.C. as during the First Punic War, Segesta sided with the Romans, allegedly due to their mutual ancestry through Aeneas (Dio Cassius 11. frg. 43; Cicero, *Against Verres*, 2.4.72; Weinstock 1971: 16), though all of the sources which claim this date to much later. However, Venus did not receive honours as *Venus Genetrix* (Venus the

⁷ For a summary of the association of Aphrodite with the sea and sailing, see Cyrino (2010: 108–114).

ancestress) until Julius Caesar built her a temple in the Forum Julium, dedicated in 46 B.C. (Dio Cassius 43.22.2; Appian, *Civil Wars*, 2.102; expanded upon in Section 4.3.2). That said, Rives (1994: 294) argues that *Venus Genetrix* had been celebrated in poetry for at least a century preceding Julius Caesar, for instance by Ennius and Lucretius (Ennius, *Annals*, 52; Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, 1.1–2).

Venus was also considered to be the ancestor of the Romans through Romulus and Remus who were supposedly descended from Aeneas (Lycophron, *Alexandra*, 1232–4). Thus, Venus was the ancestor of the Romans through more than one of the mythical founders of Rome.

4.1.5: Venus and the Evening Star

The relationship of Venus with the evening star is well-attested in Roman literature. Cicero (*De Natura Deorum*, 2.53) identified the star of Venus as the nearest to the earth, ‘called in Greek *Phosphoros* (the light-bringer) and in Latin Lucifer when it precedes the sun, but when it follows it *Hesperos*’. Hyginus, librarian to Augustus, stated that the star of Venus could be ‘seen at both sunrise and sunset. It is thus fitting that... it should be named both Lucifer (Light-bringer) and Hesperos (the evening star)’ (Hyginus, *De Astronomia*, 2.42, trans. in Hard 2015: 131).

The relationship of Venus with the stars was probably as result of her syncretism with the Greek goddess Aphrodite, who sometimes had the epithet *Ourania* (heavenly) (Pausanias 1.14.7; Herodotus 1.105; Plato, *Symposium*, 180d). Aphrodite had previously adopted this role from the Cypriot goddess, and the Cypriot goddess may have adopted this role from Inanna/Ishtar, an eastern goddess of sexuality, fertility and war. Inanna had many epithets, including ‘Lady of the Evening’ and ‘Lady of the Morning’, directly attested in Sumerian hymns of the same names, stating her relationship with the star of Venus (Serwint 2002: 329–330, 346 n.13). She was often depicted with stars, for instance, Frankfort (1939: 195 & pl. XXXIII) gives many examples of Ishtar with the star of Venus on Assyrian seals. Inanna/Ishtar, a goddess of sexuality, was associated with prostitution, and Serwint (2002: 329–330) has argued that the goddess’s association with the evening star was perhaps partially due to her link to prostitution, as both prostitutes and the star emerged in the evening. Thus, this may suggest that aspects of Inanna’s iconography (such as stars) were incorporated into the iconography of the Cypriot goddess, later adopted by the Greek Aphrodite, then Venus.

4.2 The Importance of Venus to the Romans

The importance of Venus to the Romans is underlined by her position in the Roman calendar. The entire month of April was associated with Venus (Ovid, *Fasti*, 4.13–14; Plutarch, *Numa*, 19.2; Lydus, *De Mensibus*, 4.64; see Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, 1.12.8–15 on the arguments for and against the association of this month with Venus). Indeed, Ovid asserts that the name of the month of ‘April’ was derived from the name of the goddess ‘Aphrodite’ (Ovid, *Fasti*, 4.61–2)⁸ and Censorinus (*The Birthday Book*, 22.9) states that ‘Fulvius and Iunius are our sources that Romulus gave the names to the ten ancient Roman months, and further that he named the first two after his parents: March from his father, Mars, and April from Aphrodite’.

Staples (1998: 100–101) argues that the cult of Venus was inclusive and unifying as many different types of people, regardless of their social class or gender, could be involved in the cults and rituals of Venus. Venus boasted a variety of devotees, ranging from political figures (discussed in Section 4.3) to prostitutes – as attested by the celebration of the *Veneralia* on 1st April (Ovid, *Fasti*, 4.133–164). This contrasts with many other female deities who had restrictions on worshippers, such as the rites of the Bona Dea being forbidden to men, and the temple of Juno forbidden to concubines (Bona Dea: Cicero, *De Haruspicum Responsis*, 37–38; Juno: Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights*, 4.3.3 & Festus, *De Verborum Significatu*, in Lindsay 1965: 248). Table 4.1 gives details of four of the main festivals of Venus celebrated in Rome, which highlight her importance to different groups of people – matrons, prostitutes, gardeners, and more generally to the Roman people during the *Vinalia* and the *ludi Veneris Genetricis*.

Table 4.1: Main festivals of Venus celebrated in Rome

Date	Festival	Details	References
1 April	<i>Veneralia</i>	Celebrated by both matrons and prostitutes in honour of Venus and <i>Fortuna Virilis</i> , either a separate deity or a cult title of Venus.	Ovid, <i>Fasti</i> , 4.133–164; Staples 1998: 109–113
23 April	<i>Vinalia</i>	In honour of either: Venus and Jupiter (Ovid); Venus only (Plutarch); or Jupiter only (Varro;	Ovid, <i>Fasti</i> , 4.863–900; Plutarch, <i>Roman</i>

⁸ Macrobius cites many ancient authors who state various reasons why this could not have been the case (Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, 1.12.8–15). Plutarch states that some people thought that the origins of the month April came from the Latin term ‘*aperio*’ for the opening of the buds in this month (Plutarch, *Numa*, 19.2). Varro agrees with Plutarch due to the lack of Venus’ name in older texts about the month of April (Varro, *On the Latin Language*, 6.33).

		<i>Fasti Praenestini</i>). The festival must have been associated with Venus to some extent as both temples to <i>Venus Erycina</i> in Rome were dedicated on 23rd April, and the <i>Fasti Antiatini Veteres</i> and the <i>Fasti Caeretani</i> both mention Venus (Staples 1998: 122–123; Schilling 1954: 100).	<i>Questions</i> , 45; Varro, <i>On the Latin Language</i> , 6.16; <i>Inscr. Ital.</i> 13.2: 66 & 131
19 August	<i>Vinalia Rustica</i>	In honour of <i>Venus Obsequens</i> , the oldest epithet for Venus. This was when the kitchen-gardeners went on holiday, celebrating the role of Venus as a garden deity. This festival appears in the Roman calendar before Venus was mentioned on this date (Eden 1963: 451), and perhaps involved Venus only after the Temple of <i>Venus Obsequens</i> was dedicated on 19th August.	<i>Inscr. Ital.</i> 13.2: 17 & 148–9; Varro, <i>On the Latin Language</i> , 6.20; Festus, <i>De Verborum Significatu</i> , in Lindsay 1965: 322
26 September (under Caesar); 20–30 July (under Augustus)	<i>ludi Veneris Genetricis / ludi Victoriae Caesaris</i>	Created in 46 B.C. by Julius Caesar, this festival was celebrated on 26th September, to coincide with the dedication of the temple of <i>Venus Genetrix</i> . By the time of Augustus, this festival and its games were moved to 20th–30th July according to early imperial <i>fasti</i> and were renamed the <i>ludi Victoriae Caesaris</i> .	Dio Cassius 45.6.4; Ramsey & Licht 1997: 19

4.3 Venus and her Association with Political Figures

4.3.1: Republican Political Figures

During the Late Republic, Venus became increasingly associated with famous victors, such as Sulla and Pompey, as she was thought to bring success in battle (Appian, *Civil Wars*, 1.97; Alföldi 1956: 81–4 for Venus and Republican political figures). Indeed, generals celebrating an *ovatio*⁹ for easy victories wore a myrtle crown as a symbol that their triumph was due to Venus rather than Mars (Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights*, 5.6.20–23).

⁹ An *ovatio* was held when a victory was bloodless due to surrender, against an unworthy enemy such as slaves or pirates, or if the war was not properly declared (Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights*, 5.6.20–21).

Sulla was originally associated with several deities. He carried a golden image of Apollo with him into battle; dreamt of a goddess (either Luna, Minerva, or Bellona) before his march on Rome in 88 B.C.; and restored the temple of Jupiter on the Capitoline Hill (Plutarch, *Sulla*, 29 & 9; Tacitus, *Histories*, 3.72; Pliny, *Natural History*, 7.43.138). Sulla became increasingly associated with Venus, perhaps after he was told by the oracle at Delphi to dedicate an axe to Venus at the shrine of Aphrodite at Aphrodisias in Caria (Appian, *Civil Wars*, 1.97). Sulla brought this axe (and a crown) to Caria with an inscription describing how he had dreamt of Venus leading his army (Appian, *Civil Wars*, 1.97). Sulla referred to himself in official documents as *Epaphroditus*, favourite of Aphrodite (Plutarch, *Sulla*, 34; Appian, *Civil Wars*, 1.97). Sulla frequently depicted Venus on his coinage to acknowledge the deity who favoured him (Crawford 1974: 373–4) and after the Battle of Chaeronea in 86 B.C., inscribed the names of Venus, Mars, and Victory on his trophies (Plutarch, *Sulla*, 19). Sulla possibly constructed a temple to Venus in Rome (*CIL* VI 781; *CIL* VI 782; *CIL* VI 8710), and perhaps named two of his Campanian colonies (Pompeii and Abellinum – ‘Colonia Veneria Cornelia Pompeianorum’ and ‘Colonia Veneria Livia Augusta Alexandriana Abellinatium’) after Venus. However, Rives (1994: 302) argues that the naming of these colonies may have reflected existing patterns of worship in these areas and thus was not necessarily due to Sulla’s association with Venus. Indeed, the inscription naming Abellinum as ‘Colonia Veneria Livia Augusta Alexandriana Abellinatium’ dates to A.D. 240 (Rives 1994: 302) and thus the ‘Veneria’ title may have been added later than Sulla’s colonisation.

Pompey similarly sought to associate himself with several deities, following on from the example set by his mentor, Sulla. Pompey was especially associated with Hercules, dedicating a temple to Hercules at Rome (Vitruvius, *On Architecture*, 3.3.5; Pliny, *Natural History*, 34.19.57); his watchword at Pharsalus was *Hercules Inuictus* (Appian, *Civil Wars*, 2.76); and he depicted Hercules on his coinage (Crawford 1974: no. 426/4). Pompey was also associated with Venus, though this is little attested in the accounts of ancient authors. For instance, Plutarch only mentions Pompey’s association with Venus once (*Pompey*, 68), when describing Pompey’s dream before the Battle of Pharsalus of decorating a temple of *Venus Victrix* with spoils. Perhaps this was because the rival Julian line exploited their links with the goddess, encouraging contemporaries to ignore or minimise Pompey’s associations with her (Santangelo 2007: 233). Coins issued by Faustus Cornelius Sulla referring to Pompey in 56 B.C. represent *Venus*

Victrix with Venus on the obverse and three trophies on the reverse (fig. 4.1; Crawford 1974: 449–451, no. 426/3). These three trophies were represented on Pompey’s signet ring (Crawford 1974: 450–1, no. 426/3; Dio Cassius 42.18.3), suggesting that Pompey wanted his iconography to be associated with Venus. Furthermore, Pompey’s famous temple to *Venus Victrix* atop the *cavea* of his stone theatre, dedicated in 55 B.C. and completed in 52 B.C., also attests to his relationship with the deity (Tertullian, *De Spectaculis*, 10; Richardson 1992: 411; Gros 1999: 120–121).



Figure 4.1: Coin referring to Pompey in 56 B.C. with Venus on the obverse and three trophies on the reverse

4.3.2: Venus and the *Julii*

The *Julii* family claimed to be descendants of Venus through Iulus, son of Aeneas (Ovid, *Fasti*, 4.19–22, 4.39–40, 4.123–124; Suetonius, *The Deified Julius*, 6). Julius Caesar built a temple to *Venus Genetrix* in the Forum Julium, dedicated in 46 B.C., which emphasised his family’s link to Venus (Stamper 2005: 93; Dio Cassius 43.22; Appian, *Civil Wars*, 2.102), and thereby their deep link to Rome’s heritage. This was perhaps a political statement that Caesar had a divine right to rule as he was descended from Venus through the mythical founder of Rome, Aeneas. As Rives argues (1994: 294), it also subtly encouraged a public cult based around that of Caesar’s family. This link was constantly emphasised through the temple to *Venus Genetrix*, with Caesar receiving honours from the Senate in front of it, and an image of this temple was included in Caesar’s funeral (Suetonius, *The Deified Julius*, 78 & 84).

Octavian/Augustus, as a member of the *Julii* family, and as adopted son of Julius Caesar, was also keen to emphasise his lineage from Venus and build on the symbolism clearly established by his adoptive father. Octavian minted coins depicting Venus (Zanker 1988: 196), and famous literary works of the Augustan era, such as Virgil’s *Aeneid* and Ovid’s *Fasti*, frequently mention Venus as the mother of Aeneas (the

founder of Rome), and as the ancestor of the *Julii* (Ovid, *Fasti*, 4.19–22; Virgil, *Aeneid* – mentioned throughout).

4.3.3: The Political Significance of Images in Domestic Space

The political significance of images in domestic space is an understudied area. Scholars often consider the political significance of images in the public sphere, but rarely in domestic space. The works of Paul Zanker (1988 & 2010) are notable exceptions to this. His work on the significance of images under Augustus (1988) includes a chapter dedicated to the new imagery in the private sphere, and the political significance of images in domestic space is also a theme in his later work on Roman art (2010). The Romans did not have a central propaganda agency, but the decoration of monuments built by Augustus and his friends, in addition to the works of Augustan poets, would have influenced artistic fashions (Zanker 2010: 108–109). Despite occasional sculpted portraits of emperors, and representations of the imperial family in shrines (Ovid, *Ex Ponto*, 4.9.105–110), politics was rarely directly invoked in the images of private houses under the Empire (Zanker 2010: 125). It was alluded to, however, often through mythological allegories (Zanker 1988: 283–285).

It is not possible to determine why certain images were chosen in the home without putting them into context. For instance, a painting depicting the ‘Love of Venus and Mars’ could have been chosen in the home consciously to reflect the Augustan and Julio-Claudian pairing of these deities, or it could have reflected this sub-consciously by being selected from an artist’s pattern-book, which had in turn been copied from a public or famous artwork which ultimately reflected this pairing. If a ‘Love of Venus and Mars’ painting occurs amongst other love scenes, it perhaps suggests that the scene was chosen to fit with a love theme of decoration in the room and was not intended, or exclusively intended, to reflect the Julio-Claudian pairing of these deities. Ultimately, many images in the home would have their origins in political imagery, but whether or not this was the intention of the patron, artist, or designer, and whether this was how it was actually viewed, cannot always be determined.

4.4 Summary

Venus was celebrated as a goddess of *eros*, gardens, seafarers, and as the ancestor of the Romans. She was also associated with the evening star. She was worshipped by a range of people. She was the tutelary deity protecting Sulla and Pompey, ensuring their success in battle, and the *Julii* claimed to be her descendants. Many leading political figures were associated with her, claiming her as their protector and using her iconography on their coins. Pompeii was particularly associated with Venus (see Chapter 1.4), Sulla (who colonised the town in 80 B.C.) and the Julio-Claudians (who ruled for much of the century leading up to the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in A.D. 79).

Various sections of this chapter are referred to in my analytical chapters (Chapters 5–8). The various roles of Venus discussed in this chapter aid later interpretation of her iconography and location. For instance, the rudder in the *Venus Pompeiana* type may relate to her role as goddess of seafarers, Venus' role as goddess of *eros* has led some scholars to suggest that she is mostly represented in 'bedrooms', and her role as a garden deity could perhaps lead to assumptions that she is often represented in gardens. The association of Venus with various political figures influenced the iconography of some Venus types, such as *Venus Pompeiana* and 'Venus with a Cupid on her Shoulder' (see Chapter 5). This association with political figures may also explain why Venus is represented in certain locations in Pompeii, for instance, Venus may be represented in areas of the house which guests would frequent to reflect the Julio-Claudian pairing of these deities.

Chapter 5: Venus Types in Pompeian Artworks

Introduction to Venus Types

In this chapter, I aim to identify the various Venus types represented in Pompeii in paintings, reliefs, and mosaics. I do this by creating my own criteria based on Venus' pose, attributes, and sometimes adapting or using Venus types identified by ancient authors or previous scholars (such as *Venus Pompeiana* and *Venus Pescatrice*). I also aim to identify patterns in the distribution of each Venus type individually in terms of the content of the scenes in which she appears and the artwork's location. Table 5.1 lists these Venus types in alphabetical order and includes 'catch-all' types (such as Venus seated/standing) that are used to group together types that do not have a more iconic pose.

I created a typology of Venus representations in Pompeii to determine how she was represented and whether she was represented in certain ways in certain locations. Previous scholars have also created typologies of representations of Aphrodite / Venus (Bernoulli 1873; Neumer-Pfau 1982; Delivorrias 1984 & Schmidt 1997). These typologies are often separated into types and sub-types relating to Venus' pose, state of nudity, and figures she is depicted with. Often, the main category is Venus' state of nudity, which is then separated into Venus types. This causes problems as it means that discussion of the same Venus type can be separated – for instance in Schmidt (1997), *Venus Anadyomene* and *Venus Pudica* are each discussed in multiple places – under 'Venus stehend, halbekleidet' (Venus standing, semi-naked) and 'Venus unbekleidet' (Venus naked) – rather than discussing the type in one place and then separating it into sub-types. Scholars such as Schmidt clearly consider Venus' state of nudity to be more important than the Venus type. However, I consider Venus' state of nudity to be of secondary importance to the Venus type, as there are more similarities between representations of the same Venus type, than there are between all the clothed representations of Venus or all the naked ones. To make my typology easier to understand, instead of separating these Venus types into endless sub-types to account for every variation within the type (e.g. *Venus Anadyomene* naked, *Venus Anadyomene* clothed, *Venus Anadyomene* with Mars), I use various categories (such as scene types,

other figures in the scene, and Venus' state of nudity) to inform the discussion of each type.

A single representation of Venus may encompass more than one Venus type, for instance, Venus may lean on a pillar with a cupid on her shoulder, and this would thus qualify as both 'Venus with a Cupid on her Shoulder/s' *and* 'Venus Leaning on a Pillar'. This is what I refer to in this study when I mention a Venus type being 'combined' with another Venus type. There can only be one scene type for each artwork, however, as an artwork can only have one subject of a scene. In this chapter, Venus types are discussed individually so if a single representation of Venus combines multiple Venus types (for instance 'Venus with a Cupid on her Shoulder/s' and 'Venus Leaning on a Pillar'), the same Venus representation is discussed under both types (i.e. once as 'Venus with a Cupid on her Shoulder/s' and once as 'Venus Leaning on a Pillar'). These representations are not double-counted as I do not give a total for the number of representations of each Venus type added together.

I identified representations of Venus using my criteria set out in Appendix A2.2 (see also Chapter 3.3). In this chapter, having already identified the goddess, I discuss my criteria for identifying each Venus type. Appendix B1 is a database of all the representations of Venus in Pompeii in paintings, reliefs, and mosaics which I have identified as the goddess based on my 'Criteria for Identifying Venus' detailed in Appendix A2.2.

To aid understanding of the terms and categories used in this chapter, please consult Chapter 3.2 for my use of terminology (Latin names for deities, the term 'artworks', and which scene types I consider as narrative and non-narrative); Appendix A1 for evidence of each attribute being associated with Venus; Appendix A2 for definitions of the fields in my database; Appendix B1 for the database itself; Appendix C1 for my illustrated catalogue of all artworks featuring Venus in Pompeii and their wall/floor/ceiling of origin; and Chapter 6.2.3 for more detail on 'predominantly reception areas'.

Table 5.1: Venus types in Pompeii (those marked with a * not mentioned in this chapter, see below for reasons why)

Venus Type	No. of Representations
<i>Venus Anadyomene</i> – types (a) and (b)	15
Bust of Venus*	16
Venus Caricature	2
Venus Crouching	1
Venus with a Cupid on her Shoulder/s	19
Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing	45
Venus Holding a Fan or Palm	8
Venus Hovering*	1
Venus Leaning on a Pillar	24
<i>Venus Pescatrice</i>	25
<i>Venus Pompeiana</i>	12
<i>Venus Pudica</i>	4
Venus on a Seashell	3
Venus Seated*	6
Venus Seated on a Throne	9
Venus Sitting or Leaning on Rocks*	3
Venus Standing*	12
Venus as a Star	3
Venus Steering a Ship*	1
Venus at her Toilet	10
Venus Tying her Sandal	2
Unknown*	13

Structure

I have separated this chapter into ‘Common Venus Types’ (those with eight or more representations in Pompeii), and ‘Less Common Venus Types’ (those with seven or less representations in Pompeii). *Venus Pompeiana* and *Venus Pescatrice* are discussed first as they almost exclusively occur in Pompeii, followed by other types in descending order of how many times they occur in the town.

I structure the discussion on each Venus type into four main sections. I first discuss my own criteria for identifying each Venus type, adapting criteria proposed by other scholars where appropriate. Secondly, I outline the origins of the type. The origins of some of these types were clearly known in Pompeii. For instance, there is an inscription in the *atrium* of VI.16.15 in Pompeii in which the inscriber comments ‘Anyone who has not seen the Venus painted by Apelles should take a look at my girl:

she is equally radiant’, highlighting that Pompeii’s inhabitants were aware of the original painting of *Venus Anadyomene* (CIL IV 6842, using translation in Varone 2002: 30).

For ‘Common Venus Types’, the third and fourth sections focus on the ‘Content of Scenes’ and ‘Location’ of these artworks respectively. These two sections are not always included with ‘Less Common Venus Types’ as there are often too few representations of the type to make conclusions (I have a ‘Discussion’ section instead). In the third section, ‘Content of Scenes’, I discuss the content of artworks featuring each Venus type in terms of various categories: the type of scene; other figures appearing with Venus (including cupids, deities, and other figures); the state of nudity of Venus; the type of headwear and jewellery Venus wears; and the attributes she appears with. I only discuss categories significant to each Venus type. For instance, I omit discussion of attributes for Venus types that have specific attributes as their identifying feature, such as *Venus Pompeiana* with the rudder, myrtle and cupids. In the fourth section, ‘Location’, I examine the location of artworks featuring each Venus type in terms of their context (domestic or public). I then focus on artworks within domestic contexts, in terms of the type of room in which they occur, and their location within the room (the wall, zone, and field of wall they occur on; their relationship to other paintings within the same wall or room; and their proximity to or their appearance on *lararium* paintings and *aediculae*).

Venus Types in the Database Not Discussed in this Chapter

I only identify a representation as ‘Venus Hovering’, ‘Venus Seated’, ‘Venus Sitting or Leaning on Rocks’, ‘Venus Standing’, and ‘Venus Steering a Ship’ if it clearly represents Venus (according to my ‘Criteria for Identifying Venus’ in Appendix A2.2), if she is hovering, seated, seated/leaning on rocks, standing, or steering a ship respectively, and if the representation does not meet the criteria for any other Venus type. Thus, these types do not include all artworks featuring Venus seated or standing in Pompeii. These types cover several variations and thus do not have a shared origin. These types are therefore not discussed independently, but are only mentioned when they are combined with other Venus types.

Similarly, I do not discuss the ‘Bust of Venus’ type as an independent type in this chapter because busts encompass many different representations of Venus which do not have shared origins and often there is no scene to be discussed. However, I discuss busts of Venus when they are combined with other Venus types, such as ‘Venus with a Cupid on her Shoulder/s’. Busts limit the Venus type which can be represented – the goddess cannot be represented as a type which requires a full-length figure to be depicted, such as *Venus Pudica* or ‘Venus Seated on a Throne’. Thus, I have included ‘Bust of Venus’ as a Venus type because it affects how the subject is represented – only her head and shoulders are visible.

I identify a representation of Venus as an ‘Unknown’ Venus type if the artwork, or reproductions of the artwork, no longer survive (or survive too poorly to make out the Venus type) and the Venus type has not been described by other scholars. I include them in the database as previous scholars may have described the scene even if they do not describe the Venus type.

Common Venus Types

5.1 Venus Pompeiana



Figure 5.1 (left): *Venus Pompeiana* on the façade of IX.7.1 and IX.7.2

Figure 5.2 (right): *Venus Pompeiana* in room 24 of I.10.4

5.1.1 Identifying the Type

I have identified 12 wall-paintings in Pompeii as featuring *Venus Pompeiana*. I have identified representations as this type if Venus is standing in full regalia, heavily draped in a mantle, holding her right arm across her breast (figs. 5.1 and 5.2). Various other features are common to this Venus type, but do not appear in every representation of this type: her left arm leans on a rudder, she holds a sceptre and/or a branch of myrtle or olive¹⁰; she wears a crown (though the type of crown can vary), and/or is accompanied by cupids.

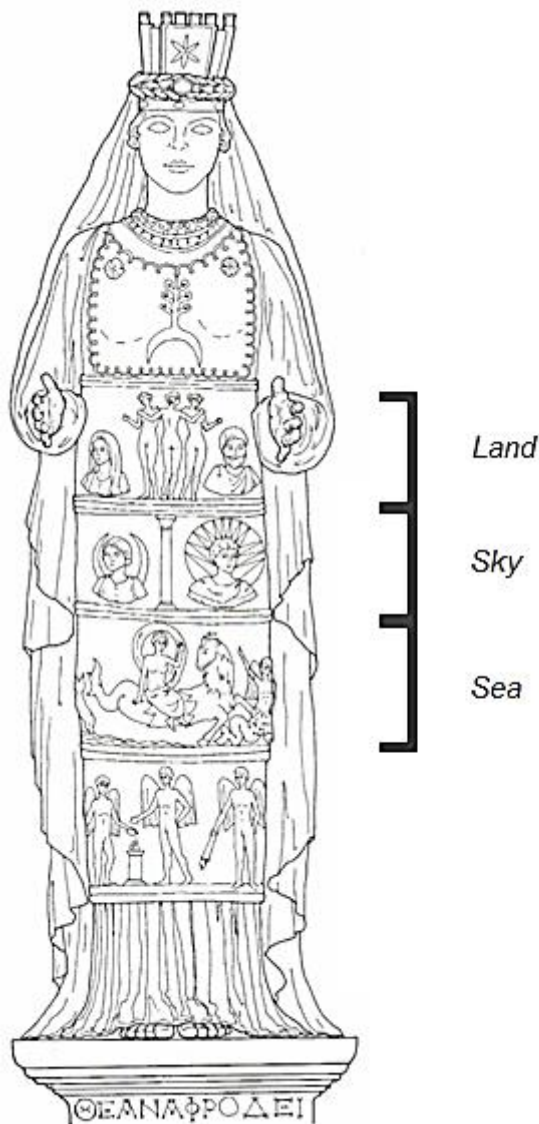
Fröhlich (1991: 148) only considers representations of Venus as *Venus Pompeiana* if she wears the *corona muralis* (walled crown) to show she is the town's tutelary deity, and indeed Clarke (2003: 106) identifies the walled crown as one of her attributes. However, I identify representations as *Venus Pompeiana* based on similarities in her pose even if she does not wear the walled crown.

¹⁰ Myrtle is well attested as an attribute of Venus (see Appendix A1) but Moormann (1988: 50–51) argues that *Venus Pompeiana* holds an olive branch, an attribute borrowed from Felicitas in the same way the rudder was from Fortuna.

5.1.2 Origins of the Type

Aside from one example in Boscoreale (Boyce 1937: 99 no. 496), the *Venus Pompeiana* type does not exist outside of Pompeii. Thus, this section discusses influences on the iconography of this type, rather than the origins of the type itself. Previous scholars have considered the iconography of the *Venus Pompeiana* type to have originated from the cult image of the Aphrodite of Aphrodisias, the iconography of Sulla, or a Pompeian cult statue (references below). In this section, I outline the evidence for each interpretation, and then make my own conclusions.

a. The Aphrodite of Aphrodisias



Marx (1899: 543) argues that Sulla adopted the Aphrodite of Aphrodisias¹¹ as his patron deity, which was adopted in turn by his veterans when they colonised Pompeii. This suggests that the iconography of *Venus Pompeiana* originated from the cult image of the Aphrodite of Aphrodisias, which has been argued to reflect the dominion of Venus over land, sea, and sky (fig. 5.3; see Galinsky 1966: 233 for the dominion of Venus over land, sea and sky in ancient authors). The Aphrodite of Aphrodisias wears a mural crown and a long garment of multiple layers, as does *Venus Pompeiana*. Brody

Figure 5.3: Reconstruction drawing of the Aphrodite of Aphrodisias highlighting the dominion of Venus over land, sea and sky.

¹¹ The iconography of the Aphrodite of Aphrodisias with the three naked Graces on her overgarment dates it to the third or second century B.C. at the earliest (Brody 2007: 1).

(2007: 85–90) argues that the overgarment of the Aphrodite of Aphrodisias symbolised the goddess' dominion over the sky (through representations of Selene and Helios) and the sea (with sea-creatures including a dolphin and a Triton). The land is perhaps also symbolised through the three Graces who Brody (2007: 86–88) argues 'are often associated with earthly fertility' and in some copies hold objects such as 'fillets, garlands, grains, flowers, or fruits', and are accompanied by either cornucopias or figures which perhaps represent the earth goddess, Ge, and her husband, Uranos. Brody (2007: 88) argues that these cornucopias represent 'the relationship between the Graces and the fertility and prosperity of the land'. As Balsdon (1951: 6) argues, though, many ancient authors attest that land, sea and sky were the dominion of Aphrodite (Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, 1.1–20; *Homeric Hymn*, 5; *Orphic Hymn*, 55; Euripides, *Hippolytus*, 447–450) and this association is not exclusive to Aphrodisias. I agree with Balsdon (1951: 6) that there is no substantial evidence that *Venus Pompeiana* is directly derived from the Aphrodite of Aphrodisias. *Venus Pompeiana*'s rudder could symbolise Venus' dominion over the sea (see Section 5.1.2.d for other interpretations of her rudder), and the sprig of myrtle could symbolise the land (though it is perhaps more likely to simply serve as an attribute of Venus). The sky, however, is neglected, when some reference could easily be made to the star of Venus. Schwitzer (1979: 34–35) argues that *Venus Pompeiana* sometimes wears a cloak decorated with stars to illustrate her dominion over the sky (though gives no examples of this), representing Venus as an 'all-encompassing cosmic goddess who protected the city of Pompeii and its prosperity over land and sea'. However, I have found just one artwork featuring *Venus Pompeiana* wearing stars, in VI.9.6/7, which no longer survives even as a sketch, photograph or painting, but Helbig (1868: no. 295) describes Venus wearing a blue mantel decorated with gold stars.

b. The Iconography of Sulla

Elements of *Venus Pompeiana*'s iconography may represent good fortune, such as the rudder and olive branch (which were symbols of Fortuna). This has led scholars such as Wissowa (1882: 15–21, esp. 15–16) and Schilling (1954: 283–289) to argue that *Venus Pompeiana* represented, or was influenced by, the *Venus Felix* of Sulla. Thus, perhaps the iconography of *Venus Pompeiana* was derived from the iconography of Sulla and became popular in Pompeii after his colonisation of the town in 80 B.C.

However, Venus was clearly associated with good luck more generally, not just by Sulla, as the highest possible score with a single dice throw was ‘Venus’ (Pseudo-Lucian, *Amores*, 16; Propertius, *Elegies*, 4.8.45). Therefore, the association of Venus with the iconography of Fortuna in the *Venus Pompeiana* type was not necessarily due to Sulla, as Venus was associated with luck generally.

Swindler (1923: 305) argues that *Venus Pompeiana* reflects Sulla’s eastern victories which would explain the merging iconographies of Venus with *Felicitas* or *Fortuna*. This may explain the painting featuring Venus in an elephant-drawn *quadriga* on the façade of IX.7.7, but this is the only painting in Pompeii to depict *Venus Pompeiana* in a particularly Eastern style.

Pompeii was colonised in 80 B.C., a year after Sulla became dictator, whereby the Sullan triad of *Venus Victrix*, the *Genius publicus* and *Fausta Felicitas* were introduced in Rome with temples dedicated to them (Coarelli 2010: 129). Coarelli (2010: 129) identifies this triad on the façade of IX.7.7 in Pompeii, arguing that this painting represents the cult images of these deities in the Temple of Venus at Pompeii inspired by those in Rome. That this painting represented cult images in Pompeii cannot be proven, but this painting certainly seems to represent Sulla’s triad of deities. In room b of V.4.3 (Pompeii), this same triad may have been represented again around the *lararium* niche, with *Venus Pompeiana* to the immediate left of the niche, presumably the *Genius* as a statuette in the niche itself¹², and Fortuna to the immediate right of the niche. However, Bacchus, Jupiter, Mercury, Victoria, Hercules and Minerva are also represented around this *lararium* niche so the location of this triad together may be coincidental. Other artworks featuring *Venus Pompeiana* do not depict her with a *Genius* and *Felicitas*, however, so we cannot ascertain the origins of this type based on these two artworks.

c. A Pompeian Cult Statue

Many scholars have argued that the *Venus Pompeiana* type, representing Venus as a statue (see Section 5.1.3), was based on a cult statue of Venus from Pompeii which no longer survives (Balsdon 1951: 6; Moormann 1988: 74; Sampaolo in *PPM* VII: 374). However, as Fröhlich and Ling and Ling argue, if such a cult statue of Venus had

¹² Although no statuettes were found in the niche, a statuette of a *Genius* was found in a cupboard in a nearby room and was perhaps used in this *lararium* niche (Boyce 1937: 39–40, no. 118).

existed, the Pompeians would probably have imitated it in statues and statuettes, especially in *lararia*, which they do not (Fröhlich 1991: 149–150; Ling & Ling 2005: 88).

The absence of a cult statue of Venus in Pompeii may be explained if it was wooden in order to be carried in processions, as Spinazzola argues (1953: 216–217), and thus would not survive today. Indeed, the painting on the right façade of the entrance to IX.7.1 represents a wooden statue, of either Venus or Cybele, being used in a procession (Clarke 2003: 89). Thus, there may have been a wooden cult statue of *Venus Pompeiana* in a temple of Venus in Pompeii, had one existed, though the identification of such a temple is disputed (see Chapter 1.4). Alternatively, the *Venus Pompeiana* type may have been designed to ‘give the effect of a statue’ without representing a specific one, as Ling and Ling suggest (2005: 88). Indeed, *Venus Pompeiana* is always represented as a statue in wall-paintings (see Section 5.1.3).

d. Summary

The *Venus Pompeiana* type clearly originated from a specific source, though not necessarily a famous artwork or a Pompeian cult statue. There is no compelling evidence that the *Venus Pompeiana* type existed before Pompeii became a colony under Sulla in 80 B.C. This Venus type can also be seen in Boscoreale, so clearly it was known outside of Pompeii, though the two settlements are both in the region of Campania so it is possible that the Boscoreale painting was copied from Pompeii (Boyce 1937: 99 no. 496).

The combination of Venus and Fortuna’s iconography (the rudder being an attribute of Fortuna – Noreña 2011: 138) in representations of *Venus Pompeiana* may simply represent the good fortune of Pompeii with such fertile land, as Balsdon (1951: 6) suggests. Indeed, the Greek Aphrodite was already associated with several personifications relating to luck or good fortune, such as *Eudaimonia* (Happiness or Good Fortune) and *Eutychia* (Good Luck) so the link between Venus and Fortuna was not a purely Sullan creation (Rosenzweig 2004: 25). Fortuna would certainly be a good choice of goddess to be merged with Venus as her *cornucopia* represented not just the fertility of the land, but perhaps also ‘women’s physical maturation and sexual fulfilment’ (Pomeroy 1975: 206). In the case of Fortuna, the rudder symbolised her direction over the lives of men (Dio Chrysostom 63.7). Göttlicher (1981: 68) suggests

that *Venus Pompeiana*'s rudder could have represented her role in guiding fortune, or perhaps related to maritime trade which made Pompeii wealthy. Varone (2007: 271) suggests that the rudder symbolises Venus 'being the helmswoman of the generating forces of all nature' based on a passage of Lucretius where he states that Venus 'alone [governs] the nature of things' (*De Rerum Natura*, 1.21). Van der Graaff and Ellis (2017: 298) suggest that the rudder could simply refer to Pompeii as a port. Therefore, perhaps the rudder in the *Venus Pompeiana* type symbolised several things to the Pompeians, unrelated to Sulla's colonisation – her dominion over the sea; the importance of sea trade to the Pompeians and its need to be protected by the town's patron goddess; and the importance of Venus in guiding the citizens of Pompeii.

To conclude, the origins of this Venus type remain uncertain. It may have become popular in Pompeii following its colonisation, particularly given Sulla's links with *Venus Felix* and the merging iconographies of Venus and Fortuna inherent in the *Venus Pompeiana* type. Alternatively, it may have been derived from a later cult statue of Venus in the town, but there is no compelling evidence for this. Nor is there much evidence to suggest that the type was influenced by the Aphrodite of Aphrodisias, especially as the association of Aphrodite with land, sea, and sky is known from other sources too.

5.1.3 Content of Scenes

This section examines the composition of the twelve *Venus Pompeiana* paintings in Pompeii to assess whether this Venus type had particularly religious and ritual significance (see table 5.6 for an overview of this evidence; see Appendix B1 for the content and location of artworks featuring *Venus Pompeiana*).

Many scholars have argued that the *Venus Pompeiana* type in the paintings of Pompeii represented a statue (Balsdon 1951: 6; Spinazzola 1953: 216–218; Moormann 1988: 74; Fröhlich 1991: 149–150; Sampaolo in *PPM* VII: 374). Moormann (1988: 74) argued that the *Venus Pompeiana* type sometimes represented a statue due to compositional elements within individual paintings, citing artworks where she is depicted on a podium (in IX.7.1–2); in a temple (in VII.9.47); in a sacred grove (in I.10.4); and amongst household gods in a *lararium* painting (in VI.11.8–10). I have also found that not only are representations of this type similar (suggesting they originated from the same source), but this type also exclusively appears as a rigid statue, rather

than Venus taking an active part in scenes as a live character. For instance, even when Venus is represented on a *quadriga* drawn by elephants on the façade of IX.7.7, she does not hold the reins or attempt to drive it, she simply stands stationary atop the *quadriga* (fig. 5.4). *Venus Pompeiana* only appears once within a narrative scene (the wedding of Hercules and Juventas scene in VII.9.47). In this scene, Venus stands on a podium within a shrine as the wedding party pass by rather than interacting with any of the other figures, suggesting that she represents a statue in a shrine rather than taking an active part in the narrative. *Venus Pompeiana* was thus always intended by the artist to represent a statue, even when she occurs within narrative scenes. This contrasts with the ‘Venus with a Cupid on her Shoulder’ type, which was perhaps popularised by a statue, but is depicted in narrative *and* non-narrative scenes in Pompeii (see Section 5.5.3), and Venus can appear as a live character rather than exclusively as a statue. This suggests that the *Venus Pompeiana* type perhaps retained the religious and ritual aspect of the original statue, whereas other Venus types did not, and thus this type had especial religious significance.



Figure 5.4: Venus Pompeiana on the façade of IX.7.7 (between IX.7.6 and IX.7.7)

Other elements within scenes featuring *Venus Pompeiana* suggest that this Venus type often had religious connotations or evoked a religious atmosphere. Four of

the twelve paintings of *Venus Pompeiana* depict shrines or altars which suggest a religious or ritual setting within the painting – Venus in a shrine overlooking her outdoor domain in I.10.4; Venus with an altar in the painting in both VI.11.8–10 and VII.4.20 as part of offering scenes; and Venus within a shrine in VII.9.47. This is especially clear in I.10.4, where Venus and her domain are emphasised as the subject of the sole painting on the one curved wall of room 24. Furthermore, the majority of paintings featuring *Venus Pompeiana* (seven of 12 – 58%) include other deities within the painting or in direct association with it. Six paintings of this type feature other deities within the same painting (VI.11.8–10; VII.4.20; VII.9.47; VIII.3.10–12; IX.1.12; IX.7.7), and in V.4.3 she is depicted within one of several paintings featuring deities around the *lararium* niche.

5.1.4 Location

This section discusses all representations of this type in Pompeii altogether as there are only 12 representations of this Venus type and many of the points discussed in this section relate to the whole type rather than just those from a domestic context.

Table 5.2: *The context of artworks featuring Venus Pompeiana*

Context	Venus Pompeiana	Venus Pompeiana combined with other Venus types	Total
Domestic	7	1	8
Public	1	0	1
Public Façade	3	0	3
Total	11	1	12

The majority of artworks featuring *Venus Pompeiana* in Pompeii (10 of 12 – 83%) occur where they could be seen by many citizens: one in a public context, three on façades, and six in ‘predominantly reception areas’ of domestic contexts – areas of the house which visitors could enter (tables 5.2 & 5.3, see definition of ‘predominantly reception areas’ in Chapter 6.2.3.3). The remaining two artworks within domestic contexts, which occur in ‘predominantly non-reception areas’ – in IX.1.12 (room type 14) and in VI.11.8–10 (room type 16 – a domestic bakery), are *lararium* paintings, which may explain their location in ‘predominantly non-reception areas’.

Table 5.3: Room types in which artworks featuring *Venus Pompeiana* occur

Room Type	Total
Predominantly Reception Areas	6
3	1
6	1
9	1
10	1
11	1
13	1
Predominantly Non-Reception Areas	2
14	1
16	1
Total	8

Three of the eleven representations of Venus on façades (27%) represent *Venus Pompeiana* (VIII.3.10–12; IX.7.1; IX.7.7). The only other types which occur more than once on façades are ‘Venus Leaning on a Pillar’ and ‘Venus with a Cupid on her Shoulder’ (each appearing twice), making *Venus Pompeiana* the most popular Venus type to occur on façades (see Chapter 6.4.2). In Chapter 7.4, I discuss how façade paintings featuring deities could be used to highlight the patron or favoured deities of the owner, and to protect the building (especially at entrances) in a visible way. This suggests that *Venus Pompeiana* was considered by the Pompeians to be the most appropriate Venus type for representing the goddess on façades, possibly for protection.

There are six paintings of Venus which occur on *aediculae* or within *lararium* paintings in Pompeii (see Chapter 7.3). Four of these six (67%) depict *Venus Pompeiana* (V.4.3; VI.11.8–10; VII.4.20; IX.1.12). This is four of the twelve (33%) representations of *Venus Pompeiana* in Pompeii. Thus, this is the most common Venus type to occur on *aediculae* or in *lararium* paintings. Additionally, *Venus Pompeiana* is the only Venus type to occur on *aediculae* or in *lararium* paintings within domestic contexts. Clearly, this suggests that this type was particularly favoured in ritual contexts (especially in the domestic sphere) compared with other Venus types.

Four of the thirteen upper zone representations of Venus across Pompeii (31%) represent *Venus Pompeiana* (I.9.3; VII.4.20; VII.9.47; VIII.3.10–12; table 5.4). The only other Venus types that occur more than once in the upper zone are ‘Venus Caricature’ (both within the same frieze), ‘Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing’, and ‘Venus Standing’, all of which occur twice (see Appendix B1). *Venus Pompeiana* is thus the most popular Venus type in the upper zone, which is even more significant

given that this type is only represented twelve times in Pompeii and is not one of the most popular Venus types in the town (table 5.1). This type was clearly considered by the Pompeians to be the most appropriate Venus type represented in this location. I suggest her popularity in the upper zone was so she could watch over inhabitants and passers-by from above, quite literally, and protect them. This cannot be determined, and is probably not the case, for all representations of deities (or even Venus) in the upper zone, but is likely for *Venus Pompeiana* given that this type represents a statue; only once appears in a narrative scene (where she overlooks a wedding as a statue in a shrine); often appears with other deities; the paintings often have a religious or ritual setting; and this is the most popular Venus type represented on *aediculae* or within *lararium* paintings.

Table 5.4: The different zones in which artworks featuring *Venus Pompeiana* occur

Zone	Total
Upper	4
Central	7
Unknown	1
Total	12

Venus Pompeiana representations are distributed almost equally between central and side fields of walls (table 5.5). This includes those in both public and domestic contexts, but three of the four in side panels are within domestic contexts. Their location in side panels, however, is influenced by two factors. Firstly, they occur in rooms where central fields are uncommon – such as front hall areas, gardens, and domestic bakeries. Secondly, two of these three *Venus Pompeiana* representations in side panels within domestic contexts, and the one from a public context, are *lararium* paintings, which are always located in side fields (where their provenance is known) as they do not conform to the usual left/centre/right panel decorative structure.

Table 5.5: The different fields of wall in which artworks featuring *Venus Pompeiana* occur

Field of Wall	Total
Centre / Central Panel	3
Left / Left Panel	0
Right / Right Panel	4
N/A – Façade	3
Unknown	2
Total	12

5.1.5 Summary

The evidence presented in Section 5.1, in terms of the content of the scenes and the location of artworks featuring *Venus Pompeiana*, suggests that this type had more religious or ritual significance than other Venus types. In terms of composition, *Venus Pompeiana* mostly occurs within non-narrative scenes, accompanied by other deities within the painting, and the setting can also evoke a religious or ritual atmosphere (with Venus appearing within a shrine or with altars). *Venus Pompeiana* always appears inactive as a statue, suggesting that she was intended by the artist to represent a statue rather than an active character. This emphasis on *Venus Pompeiana* representing a statue perhaps indicates that this type did indeed originate from a statue and retained its original religious significance. This becomes especially clear when comparing *Venus Pompeiana* to other Venus types that were popularised by statues where the pose was also used to represent live characters within artworks in Pompeii.

Venus Pompeiana occurs more often in ritual contexts (on *aediculae* or in *lararium* paintings) than other Venus types, and is the only Venus type to occur on *aediculae* or in *lararium* paintings within domestic contexts, suggesting that this type was of greater religious and ritual significance than other types. I would argue that the popularity of *Venus Pompeiana* compared to other Venus types on façades and in the upper zone suggests that this type was designed to overlook and be seen by inhabitants and passers-by, perhaps to invoke Venus' protection, given the evidence which suggests this type was of particular religious and ritual significance in Pompeii.

Just two of the twelve paintings featuring *Venus Pompeiana* offer no evidence of having religious/ritual significance, aside from the statue-like pose of Venus (in VI.8.3/5 and VI.9.6/7, table 5.6). The scenery depicted in these paintings is now unidentifiable so there may have been some religious/ritual features, but this cannot be assumed. There is no scenery depicted in the surviving sketch of the painting from VI.8.3/5 (Appendix C1 – V–6–21) and it is not mentioned by Helbig (1868: no. 296) or Schefold (1957: 104), and again there is no scenery depicted in the surviving sketch of the painting from VI.9.6/7 (Appendix C1 – V–6–40) and it is not mentioned by Helbig (1868: no. 295) or Schefold (1957: 120). The latter sketch, however, depicts the entire wall, and indicates that all of the figures on this wall, including the representation of *Venus Pompeiana*, were depicted without background scenery.

The greater level of religious and ritual significance of *Venus Pompeiana* compared with other Venus types, and the fact that this type only occurs in Pompeii and once in a villa in nearby Boscoreale (Boyce 1937: 99 no. 496), concurs with the arguments of several scholars that this type possibly represents Venus in her role as the patron deity of Pompeii (Spinazzola 1953: esp. 216–219; Schilling 1954: 283–289; Sampaolo in *PPM* VII: 374), though they do not give evidence for this assumption. Whether or not the *Venus Pompeiana* type represented a cult statue at Pompeii cannot be ascertained, as such a cult statue has not been found, and as Fröhlich (1991: 149–150) and Ling and Ling (2005: 88) argue, there are no representations of *Venus Pompeiana* in statuettes in *lararia*, which might be expected for the cult statue of a patron deity of a town. However, it is likely that this type was based on a statue of Venus from Pompeii or its environs.

Table 5.6: Evidence for *Venus Pompeiana* having religious or ritual significance in terms of composition and location

Building	Composition	Location
I.9.3		Upper zone
I.10.4	Venus in shrine in her domain	
V.4.3		<i>Lararium</i> , other deities surround the <i>lararium</i>
VI.8.3/5	(Scenery not identifiable)	
VI.9.6/7	(Scenery not identifiable)	
VI.11.8–10	Offering scene with altar, accompanied by Vesta and <i>lares</i>	<i>Lararium</i> painting
VII.4.20	Offering scene with altar, accompanied by Jupiter	<i>Lararium</i> , upper zone
VII.9.47	Venus in shrine with procession, accompanied by Priapus and Hercules	Upper zone
VIII.3.10–12	Venus as one of the twelve gods	Façade, upper zone, snakes and altar immediately below
IX.1.12	Accompanied by <i>lares</i>	<i>Lararium</i> painting
IX.7.1–2		Façade
IX.7.7	Accompanied by Fortuna and a <i>Genius</i>	Façade

5.2 Venus Pescatrice

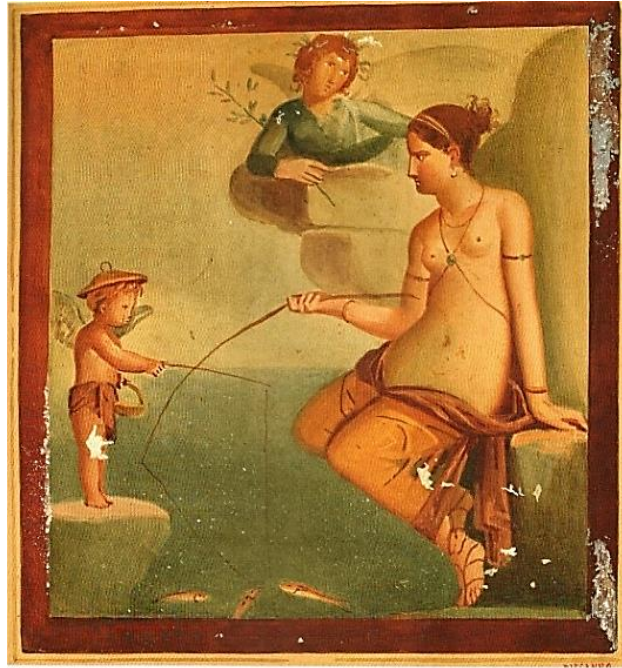


Figure 5.5: *Venus Pescatrice* in room c of VI.14.28/33

5.2.1 Identifying the Type

I have identified 25 representations in Pompeii as *Venus Pescatrice*. My identifying criteria for this type are that the female figure is fishing, sitting on a rock, and is semi-naked with her lower half covered in drapery (fig. 5.5). She typically uses one hand to support herself, holding a fishing rod in the other (Schmidt 1997: 213). She usually sits to the right of the painting, often facing a cupid or accompanied by multiple cupids, sometimes fishing themselves. There is always landscape scenery in the background.

5.2.2 Origins of the Type

Again, I cannot determine the exact origins of this Venus type. Scholars have suggested that it originated from either a sculpture or a Greek painting (see Allison & Sear 2002: 74 for an overview) but there is no real evidence for either interpretation. As Marvin (2008: 193) notes, the popularity of an artistic Venus type does not necessarily mean that it originated from a specific prototype. Indeed, famous artworks may have

been based on scenes and poses that were already associated with particular deities in order to make their subject recognisable. Furthermore, no ancient authors mention a famous work of this type.

Schmidt (1997: 213) argues that *Venus Pescatrice* only occurs in Pompeii, and is restricted to murals, with no statues known of this type. However, Herbig (1939: 57–58) notes that *Venus Pescatrice* paintings bear similarity to a representation on an Etruscan bronze mirror (c.350 B.C.) now in the Metropolitan Museum in New York (fig. 5.6). This mirror depicts a woman fishing accompanied by a cupid. Herbig identifies the woman as Aphrodite based on the presence of a dove.



Figure 5.6: *Aphrodite fishing with a cupid in an Etruscan bronze mirror (c.350 B.C.) now in the Metropolitan Museum in New York (accession number 07.260)*

There are a few representations of Aphrodite/Venus which are similar to *Venus Pescatrice* scenes in terms of composition and the pose of the goddess. A plaster cast of a bowl from Mit Rahîne (Memphis) dating to the late third century B.C. has a very similar composition to scenes featuring *Venus Pescatrice* (fig. 5.7). Delivorrias (1984: 94) states that this is ‘an archaic Aphrodite image’ but offers no further information on the type. The composition of the scene and the pose of Aphrodite on this plaster cast is similar to scenes featuring *Venus Pescatrice* with Aphrodite to the right of the image, semi-naked, leaning on a rock, supporting herself with her left arm, her right arm raised,

but without the fishing rod. A cupid flies above her in the centre of the scene, while a figure to the left extends their hand towards Aphrodite (again without a fishing rod).



Figure 5.7: Aphrodite in similar pose to Venus Pescatrice scenes, plaster cast of a bowl from Mit Rahîne, late third century B.C.

Two coins from Eryx dating to c.420 B.C. also depict Aphrodite in a similar pose, with the goddess seated on rocks with her left hand supporting her and her right arm outstretched (figs. 5.8 and 5.9; Bernhart 1936: nos. 150–151). These coins include some differences from the *Venus Pescatrice* type though, in terms of the goddess' state of nudity and the content of the scene. *Venus Pescatrice* is always semi-naked, but in these two coins Aphrodite is either clothed or naked (Bernhart states that both coins represent Aphrodite clothed, however, fig. 5.8 appears to depict her naked). Venus is not fishing in either coin, instead her outstretched arm is used to display her attributes – in fig. 5.8 a dove sits on her outstretched arm, and in fig. 5.9 she reaches towards a cupid, who takes her hand.

Both the plaster cast and the coins depict Aphrodite in a similar pose to *Venus Pescatrice* in the wall-paintings of Pompeii. They lack the fishing context, however. This perhaps suggests that the *Venus Pescatrice* type was derived from earlier

representations of Aphrodite seated on rocks with the fishing context adding a new element to the scene in Pompeii. Fishing was associated with Venus, perhaps because it had erotic associations¹³, or else because it was a water-based activity associated with Venus as she was born from the foam of the sea and counted sea-creatures among her retinue (Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*, 4.31; Cicero, *De Natura Deorum*, 3.59; Hesiod, *Theogony*, 188–200; Isidore of Seville, *Etymologies*, 8.11.77).



Figure 5.8 (left): Aphrodite with a dove represented in a coin from Eryx, Sicily (c.420 B.C.)

Figure 5.9 (right): Aphrodite with a cupid represented in a coin from Eryx, Sicily (c.420 B.C.)

5.2.3 Content of Scenes

In this section, I examine the content of paintings featuring *Venus Pescatrice* to ascertain whether the female figure represents Venus or someone else. I examine this in regard to: other figures in the scene (cupids, and a winged male – Eros?), and the female figure wearing headwear and jewellery. These paintings are all so similar in terms of subject and pose that they clearly all depict the same woman fishing, though there is some variation.

The presence of a cupid could identify the woman fishing as Venus, as cupids are amongst her attributes. However, fishing may have had erotic associations

¹³ Fishing metaphors are used to explain desire in *Greek Anthology*, 5.67, 5.247 and 12.241; see also Engemann 1969: 1009–1010 for fishing and eroticism. Davidson describes how fish could be used as love-gifts in Attic vase-painting, and that ancient authors often associated fish with desire, though often in comedy (Davidson 1997: 8–11). Apuleius (*Apologia*, 27–41) highlights that fish could be used as love charms (see also Butler & Owen 1914: 85). Oppian often describes catching fish in terms of *eros*, passion and desire (*Halieutica*, esp. 4.1–438), with the fish ‘beguiled by the sweet spells of Aphrodite’ (*Halieutica*, 4.141).

(discussed above), so an ordinary fisherwoman could also appear alongside a cupid. Thus, the presence of a cupid cannot definitively identify the woman fishing as Venus. While the presence of a cupid may not be diagnostic, there is a clear preference for including at least one in this type. Paintings featuring this female figure fishing predominantly include at least one cupid (in 18 of 20 – 90% paintings featuring this type where the presence of cupids can be ascertained¹⁴, table 5.7). Two paintings of this type do not include a cupid (10%). Of the two paintings which do not include a cupid, in one (in VII.4.48) the figure wears a crown to identify her as a deity or member of royalty, and to distinguish her from an ordinary fisherwoman, and in the other (in II.2.2), all the panels in the room include single figures with very limited background scenery, and thus the addition of a cupid would not fit with the rest of the decoration in the room. This suggests that the cupid was not always needed to identify the woman fishing, indicating it was a well-known type and pose recognisable with or without the cupid.

Table 5.7: The number of cupids in artworks featuring Venus *Pescatrice*

No. of Cupids in Painting	Total
Presence of cupids unknown	5
Unaccompanied by cupids	2
Accompanied by 1 cupid	12
Accompanied by 2 or more cupids	6
Total	25

Five *Venus Pescatrice* paintings include a winged male in the background (table 5.8), which Sogliano (1880: no. 146) describes as a *Skophia*. *Skophiai* were personifications of place, watching over scenes from mountains (Balty 1994: 792). However, the winged figure is alongside the woman fishing in IX.3.5/24, as opposed to watching over the scene from above (with the winged figure in the other four paintings depicted at varying heights). As such, the interpretation of this figure as a *Skophia* is unlikely. I think it is more likely that these winged males represent the adult Eros. In the two paintings where the winged male can be clearly seen (in VI.14.28/33 – fig. 5.5 – and IX.3.5/24; and presumably in the other three where he is not as clear), he wears a floral crown and holds a branch (perhaps both of myrtle), suggesting the figure is Eros (floral crowns and flowers were attributes of Eros – Aristophanes, *Acharnians*, 991–

¹⁴ For five paintings, the presence of cupids cannot be ascertained as the paintings have deteriorated.

992; Plato, *Symposium*, 196a-b; Hermary, Cassimatis & Vollkommer 1986: 852; and he is often depicted wearing the floral crown – see Hermary, Cassimatis & Vollkommer 1986). Depicting Eros alongside the woman fishing would be appropriate for either a fisherwoman or Venus due to the potential erotic symbolism of fishing.

The winged male occurs in both paintings from public contexts featuring this Venus type, perhaps suggesting that this was closer to the iconography of the unknown original artwork representing *Venus Pescatrice*. If the winged male occurred in the original *Venus Pescatrice* painting, it may have been omitted in many of the domestic paintings for several reasons. Perhaps expense limited the number of figures in the composition – Diocletian’s Edict of Prices in A.D. 301 allowed a figure-painter to earn 150 *denarii* per day (Ling 1991: 213). Extra figures would have taken longer to paint, thus artists would have been working for longer and the painting would have been more expensive. Consequently, house-owners may have wanted the painters to reduce the complexity of the painting to save costs while making the scene identifiable. If the depiction was considered recognisable enough with just Venus in this pose, accompanied by a cupid, the winged figure was unnecessary. Alternatively, perhaps the decision to include a winged figure in the scene was in order to ‘[achieve] a formal balance’ with the number of figures within other artworks in the room (Ling 1991: 138–141). To do this, Pompeian painters sometimes added figures to, or removed figures from, scenes.

Table 5.8: Deities depicted in the same artwork as *Venus Pescatrice*

Deities Depicted with Venus	Total
Winged Male	5
None	17
Unknown	3
Total	25

The presence (or not) of headwear on the fisherwoman can be ascertained in 16 paintings (table 5.9). The majority (15) have some form of headwear – be it a crown, diadem or hairband, and just one has none. The presence of this headwear, with five of these with a clear crown and four with a clear diadem, suggests that the figure represents a deity, queen, or another mythological figure rather than just an ordinary fisherwoman.

Table 5.9: The type of headwear Venus wears in artworks featuring Venus Pescatrice

Type of Headwear	Total
Crown	5
Crown of Leaves / Hairband (sources vary)	1
Diadem	4
Hairband	5
None	1
Unknown	9
Total	25

This is supported by the fact that the fisherwoman often wears jewellery (in 14 of 16 – 88% paintings where it can be ascertained if she is wearing jewellery or not; table 5.10). Bracelets are the most common type of jewellery that she wears (in 11 paintings) and notably she wears the breast jewellery (or girdle) often associated with Venus/Aphrodite in four paintings. This does not necessarily identify the fishing woman as Venus as artists were inclined to ornament naked and semi-naked women with jewellery, perhaps to emphasise their erotic nature or their femininity (see Livy 34.7.8–10 on the association of jewellery with women). However, Venus is often described as wearing golden jewellery so this *may* be an indicator of Venus (*Homeric Hymns*, 5 and 6; Ovid, *Fasti*, 4.135–7).

Table 5.10: The type of jewellery Venus wears in artworks featuring Venus Pescatrice

Type of Jewellery	Total
Arm-bracelets	8
Bracelets	11
Breast Jewellery	4
Earrings	2
Leg-bracelets	5
Necklace	7
None	2
Unknown	9

It is difficult to determine whether all these paintings featuring a woman fishing represent Venus or an ordinary fisherwoman, as the cupid and jewellery could indicate either, though the crown and the winged male wearing a myrtle crown and holding myrtle would perhaps be more definite indicators of Venus.

5.2.4 Location

21 of the 25 *Venus Pescatrice* representations in Pompeii are within domestic contexts (84%, table 5.11); two are from public contexts (a shop – VI.14.28/33 and the back room of a *caupona* – VI.10.1); one is from a domestic and public context (a *caupona* which later became part of a house – IX.8.3/7); and the domestic or public context cannot be ascertained for the painting recovered from region IX (possibly to the east of *insulae* 5 and 6) as the building it originated from was not recorded.

Table 5.11: The context of artworks featuring *Venus Pescatrice*

Context	Total
Domestic	21
Public	2
Domestic and Public	1
Unknown	1
Total	25

Arnold de Vos (in *PPM* II: 1059) argues that *all* artworks featuring *Venus Pescatrice* occur in *cubicula* (small, closed rooms – room types 4 and 12). This would suggest that artworks featuring this type exclusively occur in areas of the house which are slightly more private. This is demonstrably not the case, however, especially given the two paintings featuring *Venus Pescatrice* from public contexts in Pompeii (one in a *caupona* – VI.10.1, and one in a shop – VI.14.28/33).

The room type can be ascertained for 19 of the 21 artworks featuring *Venus Pescatrice* in domestic contexts. Although *Venus Pescatrice* more often occurs in *cubicula* – in 11 of 19 (58%) artworks, the remaining eight (42%) artworks are from ‘predominantly reception areas’ of the house (table 5.12). While de Vos’ claim that this *Venus* type is exclusive to *cubicula* is incorrect, it is clear that *cubicula* were the preferred room type in which artworks featuring *Venus Pescatrice* occurred. Indeed, *Venus Pescatrice* is the most common *Venus* type in ‘predominantly non-reception areas’, with 11 representations of *Venus Pescatrice* out of 38 artworks featuring *Venus* in ‘predominantly non-reception areas’ in domestic contexts (29%). After *cubicula*, large/medium rooms (types 6, 10, and 11) are most popular for artworks featuring *Venus Pescatrice*, comprising just five of 19 (26%) artworks.

Interestingly, *Venus Pescatrice* is not represented in *atria* (room type 3) or garden areas (room type 9), the more public areas of the house, which may have

included water features, such as *impluvia* or fountains, appropriate settings for a fishing scene.

Table 5.12: Room types in which artworks featuring *Venus Pescatrice* occur

Room Type	Total
Predominantly Reception Areas	8
5	2
6	1
7	1
10	1
11	3
Predominantly Non-Reception Areas	11
4	9
12	2
Unknown Areas	2
Unknown	2
Total	21

5.2.5 Summary

I identify Venus as the woman fishing in representations of this type based on several criteria: the usual presence of at least one cupid accompanying the female figure fishing, and sometimes Eros too (the winged figure); the presence of headwear (often a crown or diadem); the presence of jewellery (including the breast jewellery of Venus); and evidence outside Pompeii of Venus/Aphrodite in a similar pose (see Section 5.2.2). Given that these paintings all clearly represent the same subject (with the possible exception of V.4.a, which is very degraded), despite some not wearing headwear or jewellery, the subject is probably a mythological queen or deity, and given the attributes, most likely Venus.

Venus Pescatrice more commonly occurs in artworks within domestic contexts (in 21 of 25 – 84% artworks featuring this type). Not all artworks featuring *Venus Pescatrice* occur in *cubicula*, as has previously been thought (de Vos in *PPM* II: 1059). Although this Venus type is most often located in *cubicula* within domestic contexts (in 11 of 19 – 58% artworks of this type where the room type is identifiable), a substantial amount occur in other areas (42%). None occur in *atria* or gardens.

5.3 Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing



Figure 5.10 (left): Venus and Mars in room f of VII.2.23

Figure 5.11 (right): Venus and Adonis in room 22 of VII.4.31/51

5.3.1 Identifying the Type

I have identified 45 artworks as featuring ‘Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing’ in Pompeii. My identifying criterion for this Venus type is simply Venus touching or embracing a figure (figs. 5.10 and 5.11). This Venus type varies immensely as it is quite broad and includes Venus: embracing a figure; being embraced/touched; holding the figure’s arm or hand; being undressed; or leaning on or being leant on by another figure. Venus may pose in a variety of ways, seated or standing, but is always accompanied by another figure.

To identify such representations as Venus as opposed to another female figure, the representation must also adhere to at least one of the following criteria:

- the figure adopts a known pose of Venus (for instance with a cupid on her shoulder);
- the figure appears with attributes of Venus either instead of, or in addition to, cupids (as cupids would be appropriate in any love scene);
- the figure occurs within a recognisable narrative scene relating to Venus (for instance ‘Adonis Wounded’ scenes are identifiable by Adonis’ wounded leg);
- the female figure is accompanied by a male figure that can be identified as Mars (through armour and weaponry) or Adonis (with hunting paraphernalia).

Many artworks featuring this Venus type are very similar in composition, enabling me to identify some representations as Venus even if her attributes are not included in the artwork, perhaps because they no longer survive.

I do not identify a representation as ‘Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing’ if Venus is touching cupids as I consider them as an attribute of Venus rather than a figure (also ‘Venus with a Cupid on her Shoulder’ is a separate type). I do not identify a representation as ‘Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing’ if Venus is atop a winged figure in the artwork, as these qualify as ‘Venus as a Star’.

5.3.2 Origins of the Type

This Venus type encompasses many variations, discussed in Section 5.3.1. This means that this type does not have a specific origin. The nature of this type, with the goddess touching or embracing a figure, means that it usually occurs in love scenes. Thus, this Venus type appears within mythological narrative scenes. The most famous lovers of Venus (Mars, Anchises, and Adonis) are mentioned in ancient literature. The love affair between Venus and Mars is described by Homer and Ovid, who both describe how the deities were caught in a net during their affair and embarrassed by Vulcan, Venus’ husband (Homer, *Odyssey*, 8.266–369; Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 4.167–189; see also the vivid depiction of this in Bruneau 1984: no. 59). The affair between Venus and Anchises, which led to the birth of Aeneas, is detailed in *Homeric Hymn*, 5. The love of Venus for Adonis is described by Ovid (*Metamorphoses*, 10.519–739), who recounts how Cupid wounded the goddess with an arrow which made her fall in love with Adonis.

5.3.3 Content of Scenes

‘Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing’ occurs in 45 artworks in Pompeii. Two of these artworks represent Venus as a facilitator with her arm around a male figure pointing out the woman to be desired rather than being the lover herself (figs. 5.12 and 5.13). In room E of VI.16.7/38 she has her arm around Paris (encouraging him to persuade Helen to leave Troy), and in room 8 of VII.1.25/47 she has her arm around a hero or deity (encouraging them to approach a woman). In these two paintings, she embraces the other figure as a confidante rather than a lover. As these two paintings are

markedly different from the other 43 where she appears with one of her lovers (Mars or Adonis), and because they may represent Peitho (Persuasion) rather than Venus, these are excluded from discussion in this chapter. Thus 43 rather than 45 representations are examined. Although Seiler (1992: 110 n.646) argues that the figure in the painting in room E of VI.16.7/38 is Aphrodite/Venus and cannot be Peitho as Paris does not need to be persuaded, I would argue that the female figure is encouraging Paris to persuade Helen to leave Troy so could represent Peitho. Indeed, Peitho (sometimes labelled) is known to feature in scenes in various media depicting the Helen and Paris narrative (Buxton 1982: 45–46). Although aspects of Peitho’s iconography, such as a ball of twine, are not included in these two Pompeian paintings, Buxton (1982: 45) argues that ‘Usually there is nothing in the attributes, attitude or gestures of Peitho to characterize her specifically as the goddess of *persuasion* in love... But there are some works in which the character of the myth being depicted makes it likely that the reason for the goddess’ presence is precisely her role as the embodiment of erotic persuasion. These works portray the legend of Helen’. These two artworks are in my database as ‘Criteria for Identifying Venus’ category ‘e’ as they possibly depict Venus, but as I have outlined above, they could represent Peitho so are not discussed in this section.

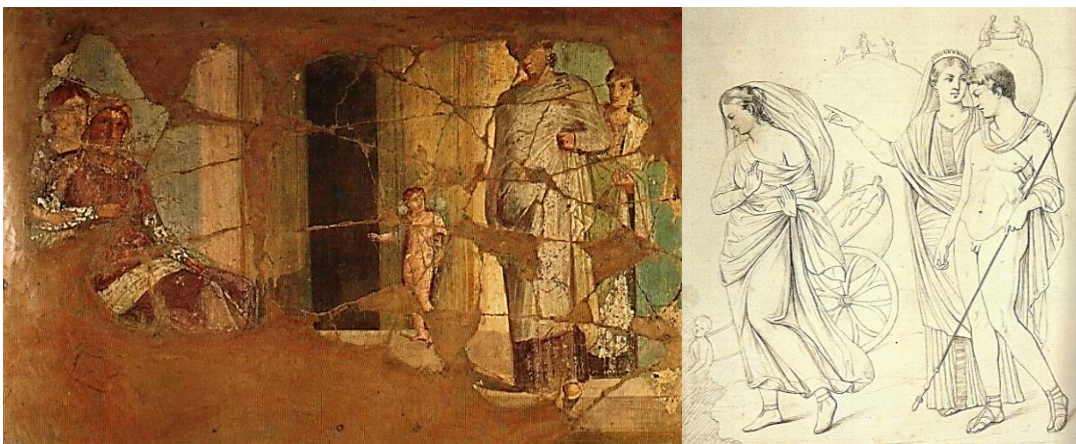


Figure 5.12 (left): Venus embracing Paris in room E of VI.16.7/38
Figure 5.13 (right): Venus embracing a hero in room 8 of VII.1.25/47

Five of 43 (12%) representations of ‘Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing’ are combined with other Venus types. ‘Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing’ is mostly accompanied by her famous adulterous partner, Mars, in 33 of 43 (77%) artworks, and with Adonis in the remaining 10 (table 5.13). Mars always features in

‘Love of Venus and Mars’ scenes, but Adonis features in two different narrative scenes – ‘Venus with Adonis’ (in five artworks) and ‘Adonis Wounded’ (in five artworks).

Table 5.13: The lover depicted with Venus in artworks featuring ‘Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing’

Venus Type	Lover Depicted with Venus		Total
	Mars	Adonis	
Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing only	30	8	38
Combined with Bust of Venus	1	0	1
Combined with Venus Seated on a Throne	2	0	2
Combined with Venus with a Cupid on her Left Shoulder	0	2	2
Total	33	10	43

Obviously, the very definition of this type requires that Venus is depicted with another figure within the same artwork. However, just 11 of 43 (26%) artworks feature Venus and a single other figure (Mars or Adonis); and 32 of 43 (74%) include other figures in addition to Mars or Adonis. These 32 artworks with additional figures always include at least one cupid, presumably to emphasise the love theme of the scene. Just three artworks feature a deity other than Mars – two depict Somnus (in room c of I.7.19 and room 7 of V.4.a), and one depicts Sol discovering the affair of Venus and Mars (in room 20 of I.4.5.25). With the exception of the artwork in room 20 of I.4.5.25 which depicts Mars’ sleeping servant Alectryon, other figures represented in artworks featuring this Venus type (i.e. not Venus, Mars, Adonis, Sol, or cupids) are all figures which are not crucial to the scene. These figures were perhaps added to these scenes to make them more aesthetically pleasing through making the scene similar in composition to other scenes within the same room (see Thompson 1960: 64–65; Ling 1991: 138–141 for other examples), or making the scene more detailed to show the owner’s wealth, as it would have been more expensive to have additional figures due to the extra time needed to paint them. More complex paintings would have required greater skill from artists (even if they were copying from a template), and more time, making them more expensive, as evidenced by Diocletian’s Edict of Prices in A.D. 301 which allowed a figure-painter to earn 150 *denarii* per day (Ling 1991: 213).

In the 40 artworks featuring this Venus type where Venus’ state of nudity can be ascertained, Venus is mostly represented without clothing on her upper torso (in 30 of

40 – 75% artworks, table 5.14). This is almost certainly due to this type featuring in love scenes, further emphasised by 18 of 43 (42%) artworks featuring this type representing Venus being undressed by her lover (always Mars) – this is 18 of 33 (55%) of ‘Love of Venus and Mars’ scenes.

Table 5.14: The state of dress of ‘Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing’

Venus’ State of Nudity	Total
Clothed	10
Semi-naked	16
Naked (drapery falls below pubic area)	12
Naked	2
Unknown	3
Total	43

A toiletry box appears in eight of 38 (21%) artworks featuring this Venus type where attributes of Venus can be ascertained (always in ‘Love of Venus and Mars’ scenes). However, the mirror of Venus is never depicted in scenes with this Venus type.

5.3.4 Location

Artworks featuring ‘Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing’ mostly occur in domestic contexts (39 of 43 – 91% artworks featuring this Venus type; table 5.15). The two artworks featuring this type from public contexts and the one on a façade all feature Venus with Mars. The remaining artwork featuring this type in *fullonica* VI.8.20 is from both a domestic and public context (as the *fullonica* may have previously been a house). This artwork depicts ‘Venus with Adonis’.

Table 5.15: The context of artworks featuring ‘Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing’

Context	Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing	Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing combined with other Venus types	Total
Domestic	34	5	39
Public	2	0	2
Public Façade	1	0	1
Domestic and Public	1	0	1
Total	38	5	43

This Venus type occurs exclusively in love scenes. Previous scholars have argued that love scenes were appropriate decoration for *cubicula* ('bedrooms' in Ling 1991: 135–136; '*cubicula*' in Ling & Ling 2005: 94), perhaps because they reportedly 'provided the necessary privacy for intimacy and intercourse' (Mayer 2012a: 195). Thus, this Venus type could be expected to occur predominantly in *cubicula* (room types 4 and 12). I have discovered, however, that love scenes featuring 'Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing' occurred throughout the house. This type mostly occurs in 'predominantly reception areas' (29 of 38 – 76% representations within domestic contexts where the room is known, table 5.16). That said, a substantial proportion are from 'predominantly non-reception areas' (nine of 38 – 24%, all in small, closed rooms) compared with other Venus types. 'Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing' comprises nine of 38 (24%) artworks of all Venus types in 'predominantly non-reception areas' – the second most common Venus type in these areas after *Venus Pescatrice*.

After 14 of 38 (37%) artworks featuring 'Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing' occurring in large/medium rooms (types 6, 10 and 11), and 24% in small, closed rooms (types 4 and 12), this type most often occurs in room type 7, with eight of 38 (21%) representations of this type. This is the most common Venus type to occur in type 7 rooms, with eight representations out of 18 artworks featuring Venus in type 7 rooms (44%).

Table 5.16: Room types in which artworks featuring 'Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing' occur

Room Type	Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing	Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing combined with other Venus types	Total
Predominantly Reception Areas	24	5	29
3	1	1	2
5	0	1	1
6	2	0	2
7	6	2	8
9	2	1	3
10	2	0	2
11	10	0	10
13	1	0	1
Predominantly Non-Reception Areas	9	0	9
4	6	0	6
12	3	0	3
Unknown Area	1	0	1
Unknown	1	0	1
Total	34	5	39

The ‘Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing’ type occurs in a ceiling painting representing the ‘Love of Venus and Mars’ in room 8 (a large/medium room) in I.10.11. This is one of just two ceiling paintings of Venus in Pompeii (the other representing ‘Venus as a Star’ in I.6.11). The paintings on the walls of room 8 of I.10.11 include ‘Bacchus discovering Ariadne’ and ‘Dido abandoned by Aeneas’¹⁵, both love stories, with Venus overlooking them from the ceiling.

5.3.5 Summary

I have identified 45 artworks as featuring ‘Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing’ in Pompeii. In two of these, Venus appears to facilitate an amorous encounter, pointing out the woman to be desired. These two artworks are very different to the 43 where she appears with one of her lovers, and the figure in these two artworks may represent Peitho (Persuasion) rather than Venus. Thus, 43 artworks are summarised below.

In these 43 artworks featuring the ‘Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing’ type, Venus mostly appears with Mars (in 33 of 43 – 77%). In the remaining 10 artworks featuring this Venus type, she appears with Adonis in scenes where either Adonis is wounded or where she just accompanies him. Relatively few artworks featuring this Venus type depict Venus and her lover alone (11 of 43 – 26%), with the majority featuring additional figures (32 of 43 – 74%). These additional figures always include at least one cupid.

30 of 40 (75%) artworks featuring this type represent Venus naked at least in the upper torso (where her state of nudity can be ascertained), compared with 25% where she is clothed. This can be explained by this type occurring in love scenes. In 18 of 33 (55%) artworks featuring this type where Venus appears with Mars, Mars undresses Venus. In the artworks of Pompeii, Venus is never undressed by Adonis, presumably because Mars is the higher status partner between Mars and Venus, being a male deity, whereas Venus is the higher status partner between Venus and Adonis, as she is a deity and Adonis is a mortal. Indeed, in artworks featuring Aphrodite and Adonis in a chariot, Aphrodite has her arm around Adonis rather than vice versa (Delivorrias 1984: nos. 1556 and 1558), which could be for this same reason.

¹⁵ These are the only identifiable central panel paintings in this room because the east wall has a large doorway in the centre and the decoration of the north wall does not survive to be identified.

Breast jewellery occurs most often with this Venus type. It probably represented her *kestos himas* (embroidered strap) which was tied from her breasts, and could inspire lust (it was used to inspire Zeus' lust in Homer's *Iliad*, 14.214–223, see Appendix A1). Breast jewellery would thus be appropriate to feature in the love scenes that this type exclusively appears within. The visibility of breast jewellery is probably also due to the high level of semi-nudity/nudity in this type. Eight of 43 (19%) artworks featuring this Venus type include a toiletry box (all eight in 'Love of Venus and Mars' scenes), but she never appears with a mirror.

This Venus type occurs predominantly in domestic contexts (39 of 43 – 91% artworks featuring this type). The three from public contexts (including public façades) all represent Venus and Mars, perhaps to highlight the importance of these deities under the Julio-Claudians. Of the artworks featuring this type within domestic contexts, 29 of 38 (76%) are from 'predominantly reception areas' (where the room is known), compared with nine of 38 (24%) from 'predominantly non-reception areas' (all small, closed rooms). This is the second most common Venus type to occur in small, closed rooms after *Venus Pescatrice*, although it more often occurs in other locations. This Venus type is particularly common in type 7 rooms compared with other Venus types.

5.4 Venus Leaning on a Pillar



Figure 5.14: Venus leaning on a pillar in room 16 of VI.9.2/13

5.4.1 Identifying the Type

I have identified 24 artworks as featuring ‘Venus Leaning on a Pillar’ in Pompeii (fig. 5.14). My criteria for identifying this Venus type are self-evident. I identify the figure as Venus, as opposed to another female, if she: occurs within a known narrative scene featuring Venus; appears with her attributes (especially cupids); or is depicted with other deities either within the scene or in associated artworks within the room. For instance, in room 21 of I.6.2, there is a female figure leaning on a pillar and holding a palm with an armed male figure in the opposite side panel, probably representing Venus and Mars. As Moormann (1988: no. 148/4) notes, the symmetry between their poses suggests that the two figures were designed to be viewed together. If a female figure leaning on a pillar meets some of these criteria but is part of a recognisable narrative in which Venus does not feature, then I have not identified it as Venus.

5.4.2 Origins of the Type

The pose of ‘Venus Leaning on a Pillar’ is well-attested in Greek and Roman art. Its origins, however, are uncertain. The first recorded example seems to be a work of Phidias in the fifth century B.C. (Delivorrias 1984: 29). Alternatively, it perhaps originated from the ‘Venus leaning on a tree’ type, which may have been derived from the late fifth-century B.C. cult statue of ‘Aphrodite in the Gardens’ by Alcamenes, mentioned by Pausanias (1.19.2). Pausanias himself gives no details of the iconography of this statue, but later scholars have argued that it is likely that Aphrodite leaning on a tree was the type used as it would be appropriate for a statue of the goddess in a garden (Simon 1983: 43), and also because Alcamenes ‘showed a preference for depicting Aphrodite leaning against a tree’ in his other works (Rosenzweig 2004: 43, 53–5).

Archaeological evidence attests to the existence of this Aphrodite/Venus type from at least the fifth century B.C.¹⁶ Figurines from the sanctuary of Demeter and Kore at Corinth depict Aphrodite leaning on a pillar from the fourth century B.C. onwards (Merker 2000: 172–4).

Aphrodite was not the only deity to be represented leaning against a pillar though¹⁷, as engraved gems from at least the third century B.C. onwards depict other deities, such as Apollo and Artemis, in the same pose (Marvin 2008: 190). The pillar may have been particularly appropriate for Aphrodite given her epithet as *Ourania* (heavenly – Pausanias 1.14.7; Herodotus 1.105; Plato, *Symposium*, 180d), and for Venus as morning and evening star as the pillar was symbolic of both the universe and deities relating to the heavens (Yalouris 1980: 313). Alternatively, the pillar may have originally served a practical purpose, supporting the statue, given the origins of this type in statues and statuettes, later becoming associated with Aphrodite/Venus.

The Pergamon Hermaphrodite leaning on a tree, dating to the second century B.C. (fig. 5.15; Ajootian 1996: 107), has a similar pose to ‘Venus Leaning on a Pillar’ (Paribeni 1959: 95 no. 243; Bol 1972: 100). It is thus possible that later depictions of this Venus type may have been influenced more specifically by the Pergamon Hermaphrodite.

¹⁶ See Delivorrias 1984: nos. 185–196, 200–224 for examples across the Empire from the fifth century B.C. onwards.

¹⁷ Figures other than deities could be depicted leaning in art, as attested by the popular ‘Resting Satyr’ type, thought to be the ‘Famous Satyr’ of Praxiteles (Pliny, *Natural History*, 34.19.69).



Figure 5.15: The Pergamon Hermaphrodite in a similar pose to ‘Venus Leaning on a Pillar’

5.4.3 Content of Scenes

‘Venus Leaning on a Pillar’ features in 24 artworks in Pompeii. 17 represent this type alone, and seven combine it with other types (table 5.17).

Table 5.17: Venus types combined with ‘Venus Leaning on a Pillar’

Venus Type	Total
Venus Leaning on a Pillar only	17
Combined with Venus Anadyomene (b)	1
Combined with Venus Holding a Palm	2
Combined with Venus Tying her Sandal	1
Combined with Venus Pompeiana	1
Combined with Venus with a Cupid on her Left Shoulder / Venus Holding a Fan	1
Combined with Venus with a Cupid on her Left Shoulder	1
Total	24

This Venus type mostly features in non-narrative scenes (13 of 23 – 57% identifiable scenes, table 5.18). That said, although the representation of this Venus type in I.3.25 appears within ‘No Active Scene’, when considered in context with the rest of the room, this artwork is part of a scheme of decoration representing the ‘Competition

Between the Deities of Light’ narrative with each of the three deities involved depicted on a different wall in the room.

Table 5.18: Scene types in which ‘Venus Leaning on a Pillar’ occurs

Type of Scene	Venus Leaning on a Pillar	Venus Leaning on a Pillar combined with other Venus types	Total
Narrative Scenes	8	2	10
Aeneas Narrative (Venus Giving Arms to Aeneas)	1	0	1
Competition Between the Deities of Light	2	1	3
Love of Venus and Mars	1	0	1
Paris Narrative (Judgement of Paris)	3	0	3
Punishment of Cupid	0	1	1
Other Narrative Scene (Echo and Narcissus)	1	0	1
Non-Narrative Scenes	8	5	13
Sale of Cupids	1	0	1
Venus Tying her Sandal	0	1	1
Other Non-Narrative Scene (The Production and Sale of Perfumed Oil / Venus with Cupid Burning Incense (relief) / Venus in her Domain / Venus with Swimming Cupids)	2	2	4
No Active Scene	5	2	7
Unknown	1	0	1
Total	17	7	24

5.4.4 Location

Artworks featuring ‘Venus Leaning on a Pillar’ mostly occur in domestic contexts (21 of 24 – 88% artworks featuring this type), with two on façades, and one from a domestic and public context (table 5.19).

Table 5.19: The context of artworks featuring ‘Venus Leaning on a Pillar’

Context	Venus Leaning on a Pillar	Venus Leaning on a Pillar combined with other Venus types	Total
Domestic	14	7	21
Domestic and Public	1	0	1
Public Façade	1	0	1
Unknown Façade	1	0	1
Total	17	7	24

Of the 21 artworks featuring this type which occur in domestic contexts, the majority are from ‘predominantly reception areas’ (20 of 21 – 95%, table 5.20). The remaining single artwork is from a small, closed room. Large/medium rooms are particularly popular (room types 10 and 11), comprising 13 of 21 (62%) artworks featuring this type within domestic contexts.

This Venus type occurs most often around the garden area (room types 9–14), comprising 16 of 21 (76%) artworks featuring this type within domestic contexts, including two actually in gardens.

Table 5.20: Room types in which artworks featuring ‘Venus Leaning on a Pillar’ occur

Room Type	Venus Leaning on a Pillar	Venus Leaning on a Pillar combined with other Venus types	Total
Predominantly Reception Areas	13	7	20
5	1	0	1
7	0	1	1
9	2	0	2
10	4	1	5
11	6	2	8
13	0	1	1
16	0	1	1
21	0	1	1
Predominantly Non-Reception Areas	1	0	1
4	1	0	1
Total	14	7	21

5.4.5 Summary

‘Venus Leaning on a Pillar’ features mostly in non-narrative scenes. This Venus type often includes additional indicators that she is Venus – the representation may be combined with another Venus type, wear breast jewellery, and/or wear a crown or diadem. Breast jewellery is particularly common in this Venus type compared with other types.

‘Venus Leaning on a Pillar’ occurs mostly in domestic contexts, and almost always within ‘predominantly reception areas’. This Venus type often occurs in large/medium rooms and garden or garden-adjacent areas.

5.5 Venus with a Cupid on her Shoulder/s



Figure 5.16 (left): Venus with a cupid on her shoulder in room 7 of VI.7.6
Figure 5.17 (right): Venus with a cupid on her shoulder in room f of VII.2.23

5.5.1 Identifying the Type

I have identified 19 artworks as featuring ‘Venus with a Cupid on her Shoulder/s’ in Pompeii, of which nine are busts. I identify a female figure as this Venus type if she is represented with a cupid on her left, right, or both shoulders (figs. 5.16 and 5.17). Other attributes are not required to identify this type. For instance, in VI.7.6, a female figure with a cupid on her shoulder appears with no other attributes of Venus, however as this figure is depicted with Bacchus and Jupiter, it can be presumed that the female figure is a deity, and the cupid on her shoulder would suggest Venus.

Figures other than Venus could also have cupids on their shoulders¹⁸. I consider all representations of a female figure with a cupid on her shoulder to depict Venus unless there is evidence to suggest a different female figure is represented. For example, I do not identify Venus as the female figure with a cupid on her shoulder if the figure is part of a discernible narrative scene which does not feature Venus, or is part of a scheme of decoration which would suggest another female figure, for instance in a Bacchic-themed room, a female figure is more likely to be a bacchante than Venus.

¹⁸ Hercules has a cupid on his left shoulder in a cameo now in the Museo Nazionale di Napoli dating to the mid-first century B.C. (Blanc & Gury 1986: 612) and in a terracotta medallion from the Musée de la Maison Carrée, Nîmes dating to the mid-first century A.D. (Blanc & Gury 1986: 620).

5.5.2 Origins of the Type

The ‘Venus with a Cupid on her Shoulder/s’ type existed by the fifth century B.C.¹⁹ A fifth-century B.C. vase-painting by Makron depicts four erotes floating around Aphrodite (fig. 5.18; Elderkin 1938: 373–4; Pfuhl 1923 (I): 467–8 & (III): pl.153, n.441), and a mid-fifth-century B.C. Greek statuette from Medma features Aphrodite with a cupid on her left shoulder (Delivorrias 1984: no. 1233).



Figure 5.18: A fifth-century B.C. vase-painting by Makron depicting four erotes floating around Aphrodite (highlighted)

Elderkin (1938: 373) argues that in sculpture, cupids appear on the shoulders of Aphrodite/Venus as they needed to be attached to the main body of the statue, whereas in paintings, cupids could be represented flying above Aphrodite/Venus. The fact that painters and artists decided to depict a cupid on her shoulder instead suggests that this had some significance (for instance, a c.350 B.C. bronze mirror from Tarquinia depicts Venus with a cupid’s head on her left shoulder when there is space for him to appear elsewhere – see Delivorrias 1984: no. 1222), probably indicating that this type originated from statuary.

¹⁹ Numerous examples exist of this type (figs. 5.21 & 5.22). These include: mirrors (Delivorrias 1984: nos. 92–4 & no. 317); a cameo (Delivorrias 1984: no. 165); terracotta statues (Delivorrias 1984: nos. 581, 582, 583, 586); a *lekythos* (Delivorrias 1984: no. 1271); and a *pelike* (Delivorrias 1984: no. 1437). See also Blanc & Gury 1986: nos. 590–592c.



Figure 5.19 (left): Venus with a cupid on her right shoulder 75 B.C.
Figure 5.20 (right): Venus with a cupid on her left shoulder 46 B.C.

Roman numismatic evidence represents ‘Venus with a Cupid on her Shoulder’ from at least the first century B.C. (figs. 5.19 and 5.20)²⁰. Coins issued by Julius Caesar in 46 B.C. depict this Venus type (Weinstock 1971: 86; Crawford 1974: 473–5, nos. 463/1a & b). These coins perhaps represent the statue of Venus placed in Caesar’s temple of *Venus Genetrix*. Pliny (*Natural History*, 35.45.156) mentions this statue but does not describe the Venus type used. However, scholars have proposed that this statue was either the ‘Venus with a Cupid on her Shoulder’ type, or else Venus with Victoria in her hand (see Weinstock 1971: 85–6 for references to these scholars and a summary of the evidence for these interpretations). Although ‘Venus with a Cupid on her Shoulder’ existed as a Venus type before the *Venus Genetrix* statue was created, attested by earlier Roman coinage and Greek statuary, this statue perhaps increased the popularity of this Venus type.



Figure 5.21 (left): Venus with a cupid on her right shoulder, marble relief from Sperlonga
Figure 5.22 (right): Venus with a cupid on her left shoulder, statuette of Venus from Rome

²⁰ 75 B.C. – Crawford 1974: nos. 391/1a, 1b, 3; 46 B.C. – Crawford 1974: no. 463/1a; 42 BC – Crawford 1974: nos. 494/6a-b; Weinstock 1971: pl. 6, n.10–12.

5.5.3 Content of Scenes

There are 19 artworks featuring this type in Pompeii, nine (47%) of which are in the form of busts. This Venus type thus comprises nine of 16 (56%) busts of all Venus types across Pompeii²¹. The restricted space in busts – with just the head and shoulders visible – meant that figures needed to be immediately recognisable. In the case of Venus, this limited the possible Venus types and attributes available, resulting in the use of cupids as visual shorthand for identifying her. Since cupids were most likely depicted in busts of Venus for the express purpose of identifying the goddess rather than representing this particular type, they are excluded from most of the discussion and tables below. This leaves just 10 artworks in Pompeii which feature this Venus type.

Seven of 10 (70%) artworks featuring ‘Venus with a Cupid on her Shoulder’ combine this type with at least one other type aside from busts (table 5.21). Of these 10 artworks, Venus with a cupid on her left shoulder (70%) is far more common than with one on her right (30%, table 5.21). Numismatic evidence represents Venus with a cupid on either her left shoulder (Crawford 1974: nos. 463/1a, 494/6a(?), 494/6b) or her right shoulder (Crawford 1974: nos. 391/1a, 391/3, 468/1, 468/2). Elderkin (1938: 373) noted that there was a preference for the cupid being on the left shoulder of Venus in his sample of statuettes of the goddess.

Table 5.21: Venus types combined with ‘Venus with a Cupid on her Shoulder’

Venus Type	Total
Venus with a Cupid on her Left Shoulder	7
Venus with a Cupid on her Left Shoulder only	1
Combined with Venus at her Toilet / Venus Anadyomene (b)	1
Combined with Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing	2
Combined with Venus Holding a Fan	1
Combined with Venus Holding a Fan / Venus Leaning on a Pillar	1
Combined with Venus Leaning on a Pillar	1
Venus with a Cupid on her Right Shoulder	3
Venus with a Cupid on her Right Shoulder only	2
Combined with Venus Holding a Fan	1
Total	10

‘Venus with a Cupid on her Shoulder’, when not depicted as a bust, most often features in narrative scenes (seven of 10 – 70% artworks, table 5.22). Despite Elderkin

²¹ The remaining busts in Pompeii include six busts of Venus which are not combined with another Venus type, and one of ‘Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing’.

(1938) arguing that this Venus type represents the triumphant goddess in the ‘Judgement of Paris’ narrative, I have discovered that this Venus type never occurs within ‘Judgement of Paris’ scenes in Pompeii.

Table 5.22: Scene types in which ‘Venus with a Cupid on her Shoulder’ occurs

Type of Scene	Venus with a Cupid on her Left Shoulder	Venus with a Cupid on her Right Shoulder	Total
Narrative Scenes	6	1	7
Adonis Narrative (Adonis Wounded)	1	0	1
Adonis Narrative (Venus with Adonis)	1	0	1
Competition Between the Deities of Light	1	0	1
Love of Venus and Mars	1	0	1
Paris Narrative (Helen and Paris Narrative)	1	0	1
Punishment of Cupid	1	0	1
Other Narrative Scene (Wedding of Neptune and Salacia)	0	1	1
Non-Narrative Scenes	1	2	3
Toilet of Venus	1	0	1
No Active Scene	0	2	2
Total	7	3	10

In six of 10 (60%) artworks featuring ‘Venus with a Cupid on her Shoulder’, Venus appears with other deities (table 5.23). Excluding the artwork on the façade of IX.11.1 which features 12 deities within the same painting (marked with a * in table 5.23), this Venus type never appears with the same deity, or deities, twice.

Table 5.23: The combination of deities depicted in the same artwork as ‘Venus with a Cupid on her Shoulder’

Deities Depicted with Venus	Total
Apollo, Vesper	1
Bacchus and Jupiter	1
Jupiter, Juno, Mars, Minerva, Hercules, Mercury, Proserpina, Vulcan, Ceres, Apollo, Diana *	1
Mars	1
Neptune, Salacia	1
Peitho or Nemesis	1
None	4
Total	10

5.5.4 Location

As discussed in Section 5.5.2, ‘Venus with a Cupid on her Shoulder’ was perhaps popularised by the statue of Venus placed in Caesar’s temple of *Venus Genetrix*. As Venus was the patron deity of Pompeii and Caesar was the founder of the Julio-Claudian dynasty through his adoption of Octavian/Augustus, I would expect this Venus type to be popular in artworks from public contexts. However, no artworks featuring this type are known from public contexts, though two are on façades (both non-busts, table 5.24). The majority of artworks featuring this type occur within domestic contexts (15 of 17 – 88%), where the context can be ascertained.

Table 5.24: The context of artworks featuring ‘Venus with a Cupid on her Shoulder’

Context	Busts	Non-Busts	Total
Domestic	8	7	15
Unknown Façade	0	2	2
Unknown	1	1	2
Total	9	10	19

Five of 15 (33%) artworks featuring this type within domestic contexts occur in large/medium rooms (room types 6 and 10) and four of 15 (27%) in small, closed rooms (room types 4 and 12, table 5.25).

Table 5.25: Room types in which artworks featuring ‘Venus with a Cupid on her Shoulder’ occur

Room Type	Busts	Non-Busts	Total
Predominantly Reception Areas	5	6	11
3	1	0	1
5	1	1	2
6	1	2	3
7	0	1	1
9	0	1	1
10	2	0	2
16	0	1	1
Predominantly Non-Reception Areas	3	1	4
4	2	1	3
12	1	0	1
Total	8	7	15

In the seven busts of this type where the field of wall can be ascertained, four occur in side panels (four of seven – 57%), an appropriate location for busts, as they often flanked a central painting rather than being the main focus of decoration on a wall. A bust of Mars appears opposite in the only instance where the content of the opposite panel on the same wall can be ascertained (in room 7 of IX.3.5/24). Given that 46% of all side panel artworks featuring Venus depict a deity on the opposite panel of the same wall (where this can be ascertained), and of these 50% represent Mars (see Chapter 6.3.3), perhaps more of these busts of ‘Venus with a Cupid on her Shoulder’ had another bust of a deity opposite.

Notably, the only artwork featuring Venus on a pavement in Pompeii (in IX.2.27) features this Venus type combined with ‘Venus Holding a Fan’. The scene on this pavement depicts the wedding of Neptune and Salacia.

5.5.5 Summary

The nine busts of this Venus type presumably included the cupid as it was an attribute of Venus that could be easily fitted within a small space encompassing the goddess’ head and shoulders. Other attributes such as a mirror or dolphin were too large to include in the bust and therefore while these busts depict ‘Venus with a Cupid on her Shoulder’, it is an expediency to help with identification rather than referencing this particular type specifically. Thus, I have excluded busts from discussion with the non-bust representations of this type.

Where this type features in non-bust artworks, it is likely that the composition of the artwork was influenced by statuary; in statuary, cupids would need to be attached to the figure of Venus, whereas in a painting the artist had to make a deliberate choice to position a cupid on her shoulder. Venus mostly occurs within narrative scenes in the 10 non-bust artworks featuring this type. The majority of artworks featuring this type occur within domestic contexts, of the remainder: two occur on façades, one where the context cannot be ascertained, and none from public contexts. This Venus type is used on the only pavement featuring Venus in Pompeii (in IX.2.27).

Four of the seven busts of this type (where the field of wall can be ascertained) occur in side panels (57%). This was an appropriate location for busts generally, rather than specific to busts of Venus.

5.6 *Venus Anadyomene*: types (a) and (b)



Figure 5.23 (left): *Venus Anadyomene* (a) in room m of VI.15.7/8
Figure 5.24 (right): *Venus Anadyomene* (b) in room 10 of VI.5.3

5.6.1 Identifying the Type

I have identified 15 wall-paintings in Pompeii as featuring *Venus Anadyomene*. The original painting of *Venus Anadyomene* by Apelles was so-called as it depicted Venus emerging from the sea (see Section 5.6.2), however, scholars have identified artworks as this type where Venus has her hands in her hair with no indication of the sea. Therefore, I identify a female figure as this type if she is posed with one or both of her hands in her hair, but the sea setting is not an identifying feature of this type (figs. 5.23 and 5.24). My identification criterion is based on the description of Antipater of Sidon (in *Greek Anthology*, 16.178) who describes Venus wringing the foam from her hair in Apelles' original painting of *Venus Anadyomene*. I identify all representations of a female figure in this pose as Venus unless they form part of a narrative scene which does not feature Venus, or they are accompanied by attributes which suggest a different female figure.

Water nymphs could also adopt this pose, and thus it is sometimes difficult to identify a figure wringing her hair as Venus, as a nymph adopting this pose, or simply as a figure with no association with Venus. It is more likely that a figure in this pose

represents Venus if it occurs with her attributes, combines this type with another Venus type, or the figure features in a scene Venus is typically associated with (for example, a toilet scene or narrative scene featuring Venus). Where I am more confident that a figure in this pose is Venus, I have classified the representation as one of the ‘Criteria for Identifying Venus’ categories a–d (see Appendix A2.2).

I separate representations of *Venus Anadyomene* into two categories – type (a) where Venus has both hands in her hair, and type (b) where Venus has just one hand in her hair. Although *Venus Anadyomene* type (b) could be considered a variant of the ‘Venus at her Toilet’ type, as she often holds a mirror, examples exist outside of Pompeii where she has one hand in her hair and no mirror, suggesting that this pose bears more similarity to *Venus Anadyomene* than to the ‘Venus at her Toilet’ type. For instance, there are several Greek coins which depict Aphrodite with one hand in her hair whilst the other holds a garment over her hips (Bernhart 1936: nos. 204–213, 216–7, 221).

5.6.2 Origins of the Type

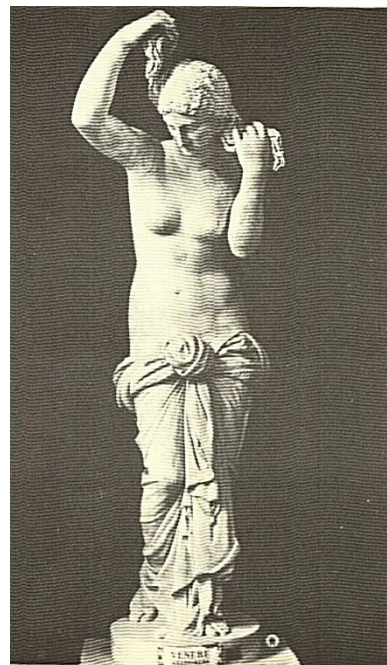
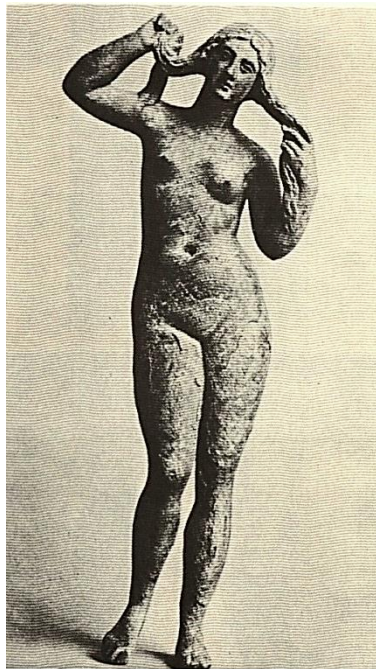


Figure 5.25 (left): Naked Venus Anadyomene from Madyos
Figure 5.26 (right): Semi-naked Venus Anadyomene from the Museo Vaticano, Rome

The *Venus Anadyomene* type was made famous by the fourth-century B.C. painting of Venus emerging from the sea by Apelles, originally located at the

Asclepieium in Cos (Strabo, *Geography*, 14.2.19). This painting depicted Venus emerging from the sea with her hair down. Antipater of Sidon (in *Greek Anthology*, 16.178) describes *Venus Anadyomene* wringing the foam from her hair, but as Havelock (1995: 88–89) notes, in some artworks featuring *Venus Anadyomene*, the goddess appears to be arranging her hair rather than wringing it. Unfortunately, we know little else about either the scenery in the painting or the pose of Venus – for instance, whether she had one hand in her hair or two, and what position her legs were in. Many examples of this Venus type exist outside Pompeii²² (figs. 5.25 & 5.26).

5.6.3 Content of Scenes

For most of this section, I discuss *Venus Anadyomene* in terms of types (a) and (b) altogether. In the tables below the combination of *Venus Anadyomene* (b) with other Venus types is typically not shown separately as the numbers become too small to analyse. I discuss types (a) and (b) separately where there are clear differences or patterns.

In Pompeii, *Venus Anadyomene* is mostly depicted with just one hand in her hair (type b) – in nine of 15 (60%) artworks of this type, compared with six of 15 (40%) where she has both hands in her hair (type a).

The nine representations of *Venus Anadyomene* (b) are always combined with another Venus type – eight of these with the ‘Venus at her Toilet’ type (table 5.26). The popularity of these two Venus types combined is probably because Venus is adjusting her hair as part of her toilet routine rather than wringing her hair.

Table 5.26: *Venus types combined with Venus Anadyomene*

Venus Type	Total
Venus Anadyomene (a)	6
Venus Anadyomene (b)	9
Venus Anadyomene (b) alone	0
Combined with Venus at her Toilet	7
Combined with Venus with a Cupid on her Left Shoulder / Venus at her Toilet	1
Combined with Venus Leaning on a Pillar	1
Total	15

²² Schmidt lists examples of this type from across the empire in media such as statues (Schmidt 1997: nos. 84 and 85), intaglios (86 and 87), and in a North African mosaic (169).

Despite the original painting of *Venus Anadyomene* by Apelles depicting Venus emerging from the sea, none of the artworks featuring this type in Pompeii depict the sea. That said, it is perhaps alluded to by the dolphin in the artwork in II.1.12, and by the river god and nymphs in the artwork in the *Castellum Aquae*. All but one representation of *Venus Anadyomene* appear in non-narrative scenes (14 of 15 – 93% representations of this type, table 5.27). This may indicate that perhaps not all of these artworks represent Venus, however the figures I have identified as *Venus Anadyomene* are often depicted: in scenes appropriate to Venus, such as toilet scenes; with other deities or cupids; as a statue in a temple or on a podium, or as a statuette. The one narrative scene featuring *Venus Anadyomene* represents the ‘Judgement of Paris’ (in VII.2.13–15).

Table 5.27: Scene types in which *Venus Anadyomene* occurs

Type of Scene	Venus Anadyomene (a)	Venus Anadyomene (b)	Total
Narrative Scenes	1	0	1
Paris Narrative (Judgement of Paris)	1	0	1
Non-Narrative Scenes	5	9	14
Toilet of Venus	0	7	7
Other Non-Narrative Scene	1	1	2
No Active Scene	4	1	5
Total	6	9	15

The *Venus Anadyomene* type is never represented fully clothed in Pompeii (table 5.28), probably in-keeping with the original painting of Apelles as the goddess would perhaps be more likely to emerge from the sea naked rather than fully clothed. Indeed, the third-century B.C. poet Leonidas (in *Greek Anthology*, 16.182) described her naked breast. However, Hintzen (2012: 33–34) argues that the original painting of *Venus Anadyomene* probably had the vulva covered in some way as ancient sources did not comment on the state of nudity of her lower body at the time, though later ones (probably writing once the lower part of the painting had been destroyed) describe her as naked. Venus’ state of semi-nudity/nudity is thus a key feature of this type: even with the variety of accompanying deities and scenery in artworks featuring *Venus Anadyomene* in Pompeii, this remains constant.

Table 5.28: The state of nudity of *Venus Anadyomene*

Venus' State of Nudity	Venus Anadyomene (a)	Venus Anadyomene (b)	Total
Clothed	0	0	0
Semi-naked	2	3	5
Naked (drapery falls below pubic area)	1	1	2
Naked	3	5	8
Total	6	9	15

Just two artworks featuring this type in Pompeii include no attributes of Venus. In room a of III.4.4, *Venus Anadyomene* (a) appears alongside Pan with her son, Hermaphroditus, depicted on the same wall. An artwork featuring *Venus Anadyomene* (a) from an unknown region and building, represents Venus as a statue in a temple (see Appendix C1 – V–U–4). Thus, *Venus Anadyomene* always appears with either some of her attributes, or in a Venus-related context (depicted with her son, or represented as a statue in her temple), despite these not being part of the criteria used to identify this Venus type.

5.6.4 Location

The majority of artworks featuring *Venus Anadyomene* occur within domestic contexts (nine of 13 – 69%), three are from public contexts, and one is on a façade (table 5.29). The remaining two are from buildings where I cannot ascertain their domestic or public context.

Table 5.29: The context of artworks featuring *Venus Anadyomene*

Context	Venus Anadyomene (a)	Venus Anadyomene (b)	Total
Domestic	4	5	9
Public	1	2	3
Unknown Façade	0	1	1
Unknown	1	1	2
Total	6	9	15

The majority of *Venus Anadyomene* representations within domestic contexts occur in ‘predominantly reception areas’ (in six of nine – 67% artworks, table 5.30). When similar room types are grouped together, large/medium rooms (types 6 and 11)

and small, closed rooms (types 4 and 12) emerge as slightly more common. These are small numbers, though, so it is difficult to draw conclusions.

Table 5.30: Room types in which artworks featuring *Venus Anadyomene* occur

Room Type	Total
Predominantly Reception Areas	6
6	2
7	1
11	2
13	1
Predominantly Non-Reception Areas	3
4	1
12	2
Total	9

5.6.5 Summary

I identify a female figure as *Venus Anadyomene* if she is posed with one or both of her hands in her hair. This pose could be adopted by other female figures. However, elements of the composition of the scenes she occurs in often secure the identification of the figure as Venus. For instance, this type occurs once in a narrative scene in Pompeii (the ‘Judgement of Paris’ scene in VII.2.13–15) even though this is not part of my identifying criteria for this Venus type. Furthermore, when *Venus Anadyomene* occurs in non-narrative scenes, she is further identifiable by being depicted: in scenes appropriate to Venus; with deities most often associated with Venus (such as Bacchus or Pan); with Venus’ attributes; or as a statue in a temple.

Just two artworks featuring *Venus Anadyomene* do not include any attributes of Venus. One depicts her as a statue in a temple (from an unknown building – see Appendix C1 – V–U–4), and the other with her son Hermaphroditus on the same wall (in room a of III.4.4).

Venus Anadyomene never features in scenes which depict the sea or another watery landscape. This is interesting as Apelles’ original painting depicted Venus emerging from the sea, and, if Venus is wringing her hair rather than arranging it, the pose of Venus with her hand/s in her hair would directly relate to this setting. While *Venus Anadyomene* never appears in artworks featuring water settings, she is never fully clothed, perhaps in-keeping with the original painting of Apelles. Alternatively, as

Moormann (pers. comm.) suggests, conceivably scholars are erroneously identifying the *Venus Anadyomene* type, as it lacks the context of the sea, and this type should perhaps be considered as ‘Venus arranging her hair’.

The *Venus Anadyomene* type was probably intended to emphasise Venus’ role as goddess of beauty. This is evidenced by this Venus type never being represented fully clothed, in addition to the popularity of the mirror (which features in 10 of 15 – 67% artworks featuring this type), and the action of dressing the hair, even in non-toilet scenes. The original painting of Apelles presumably also emphasised her marine role.

Venus Anadyomene mostly occurs in domestic contexts and ‘predominantly reception areas’ though there are too few representations to make reliable interpretations.

5.7 Venus at her Toilet



Figure 5.27: The 'Venus at her Toilet' type on the façade of II.1.12

5.7.1 Identifying the Type

I have identified 10 representations in Pompeii as this Venus type. My criterion for identifying representations as the 'Venus at her Toilet' type is that the figure is titivating her appearance (sometimes with a hand in her hair) in front of a mirror (fig. 5.27). Although the pose of the figure with a hand in her hair is also the identifying criterion for *Venus Anadyomene* (and indeed these two types are often combined), representations of this type must feature a mirror, as mirrors were an integral part of a woman's toilet (Varro, *On the Latin Language*, 5.129 and Justinian, *Digest*, 34.2.25.10). Venus may use or be offered a toiletry box.

Ria Berg (2010) argues that when ordinary women are depicted at their toilet, this is to emulate Venus rather than representing ordinary women in their own right at one of their everyday activities²³. There is a danger here, however, of identifying ordinary women at their toilet as Venus. Thus, I only identify a female figure at her toilet as Venus if: the figure appears alongside Mars or other deities; the figure features

²³ Berg (2010: 289) also argues that the mirror is 'almost exclusively rendered as an attribute of Venus' and that toiletry boxes are a 'secondary attribute' of Venus though they are also found in *gynaecium* scenes. She argues that when hermaphrodites are depicted with a mirror, they adopt the role, attitudes and attributes of Venus, rather than simply copying the toilet of women in general (2010: 291).

as part of a narrative clearly relating to Venus/Aphrodite; this type is combined with other Venus types; or if the artwork includes other attributes of Venus (such as a cupid or dolphins) – unless the artwork clearly represents another woman. Jewellery and crowns could be worn by other women besides Venus and thus these attributes cannot be used to identify Venus specifically. Similarly, mirrors and toiletry boxes could be used by ordinary women at their toilet so again these cannot be used to identify Venus explicitly (as in room z of IX.1.22/29 – *PPM VIII*: 1004 fig. 82; and the bride in the famous frieze in the Villa dei Misteri – De Grummond 2002: 75 fig. 22). Berg, however, argues that mirrors rarely appear with figures other than Venus: Berg (2010: 290) identifies 33 mirrors in Pompeian wall-paintings, and considers 25 as being associated with Venus, five with Hermaphroditus, two with Achilles in Skyros, and just one with a mortal woman.

If there is a mirror in the scene but Venus does not look into it or titivate her appearance, I do not identify the type as ‘Venus at her Toilet’, as the mirror is used as an identifying attribute of Venus rather than as an active part of the scene. Although Venus does not seem to titivate her appearance in room 2 of VII.9.33, she holds the mirror to her face to view her reflection so it plays an active part in the scene. As such, I identify this figure as the ‘Venus at her Toilet’ type. Similarly, I identify the figure in room s of IX.1.20 as the ‘Venus at her Toilet’ type, as the figure takes the mirror offered to her by a cupid, and is presumably about to titivate her appearance.

5.7.2 Origins of the Type

The ‘Venus at her Toilet’ type encompasses several different poses, for instance Venus can be seated or standing. The variety inherent in this Venus type means that its exact origins cannot be specifically ascertained²⁴.

As Berg (2010: 294) argues, scenes featuring the ‘Venus at her Toilet’ type bear similarities to fifth-century B.C. Attic vase paintings, and may have derived from these Attic scenes of women at their toilet. These Attic vase paintings depict toiletry boxes, cosmetics, and myrtle branches, and often depict a closed door, perhaps as Berg (2010:

²⁴ For details on the variety of scenes featuring this type, see Schmidt 1997: nos. 163–176 and Bernhart 1936: nos. 195–200 for Greek numismatic examples of this type. The majority of Schmidt’s examples feature Venus holding or being offered a mirror, or being depicted alongside one in no. 177. The two examples which do not include mirrors either include a toiletry box or depict Venus simply dressing her hair (nos. 170 and 176).

294) argues to symbolise the *gynaecium* (women’s quarters) present in Greek houses. This iconography was copied in artworks in Pompeian houses, including the door to the *gynaecium* (as in the toilet scene on the south wall of room z of IX.1.22/29), despite there being no evidence for Roman houses having such gender segregation (Allison 2004a: 156–157). This indicates a Greek origin for these artworks.

Delivorrias (1984: 59) proposes a fourth-century B.C. date for the naked Venus at her toilet, with this type growing in popularity throughout the Hellenistic period, in conjunction with the growing popularity of depictions of deities in everyday scenes.

5.7.3 Content of Scenes

I have identified 10 representations in Pompeii as the ‘Venus at her Toilet’ type. Eight representations of this type (80%) are combined with the *Venus Anadyomene* (b) type (table 5.31), due to Venus with her hand in her hair being a common feature of both types.

Table 5.31: Venus types combined with the ‘Venus at her Toilet’ type

Venus Type	Total
Venus at her Toilet only	1
Combined with Venus Anadyomene (b)	7
Combined with Venus Pudica	1
Combined with Venus with a Cupid on her Left Shoulder / Venus Anadyomene (b)	1
Total	10

The ‘Venus at her Toilet’ type features once within a narrative scene (the ‘Competition Between the Deities of Light’ scene in IX.1.20, see table 5.32). This demonstrates that this Venus type does not exclusively appear in scenes where the main subject of the scene is the ‘Toilet of Venus’. This Venus type emphasises Venus’ role as goddess of beauty, as the goddess beautifies herself in front of a mirror. Thus, this type would be relevant to the ‘Competition Between the Deities of Light’ narrative in which a beauty competition takes place between Venus and Vesper/Hesperus.

Table 5.32: Scene types in which the 'Venus at her Toilet' type occurs

Type of Scene	Total
Competition Between the Deities of Light	1
Toilet of Venus	7
No Active Scene	2
Total	10

The 'Venus at her Toilet' type depicts Venus either naked (seven of 10 – 70%) or semi-naked (three of 10 – 30%), she is never clothed (table 5.33). This is probably again to emphasise her role as goddess of beauty, as she is depicted beautifying herself, and the viewer is encouraged to admire the beauty of her naked body.

Table 5.33: The state of nudity of the 'Venus at her Toilet' type

Venus' State of Nudity	Total
Clothed	0
Semi-naked	3
Naked (drapery falls below pubic area)	3
Naked	4
Total	10

5.7.4 Location

The 'Venus at her Toilet' type in Pompeii occurs five times in domestic contexts; three times in public contexts; once on a façade; and once where the context cannot be ascertained (table 5.34). 'Venus at her Toilet' is the joint most common Venus type in public contexts with *Venus Anadyomene*, each comprising three of the 12 (25%) representations of Venus from public contexts. One of the 11 (9%) façade paintings featuring Venus depicts the 'Venus at her Toilet' type. Thus, four of the nine (44%) artworks featuring this type²⁵ occur in more public areas (from both public contexts and on façades). This type occurs proportionally more in public areas compared with domestic ones than all other types except for 'Venus as a Star' and 'Venus Steering a Ship', however these two types have so few examples – three and one respectively – that an in-depth quantitative analysis would not be fruitful. Although these are quite small numbers, this is also one of the joint most common Venus types from public areas in absolute terms, with *Venus Anadyomene* and *Venus Pompeiana*

²⁵ Where the context can be ascertained.

also occurring four times each in public areas (these numbers are not mutually exclusive).

Table 5.34: The context of artworks featuring the 'Venus at her Toilet' type

Context	Total
Domestic	5
Public	3
Unknown Façade	1
Unknown	1
Total	10

The five examples of this type within domestic contexts are from both 'predominantly reception areas' and 'predominantly non-reception areas' in almost equal numbers (table 5.35). The near parity of the two figures makes it difficult to draw conclusions, however, especially with such a small sample.

Table 5.35: Room types in which artworks featuring the 'Venus at her Toilet' type occur

Room Type	Total
Predominantly Reception Areas	3
6	2
11	1
Predominantly Non-Reception Areas	2
4	1
12	1
Total	5

5.7.5 Summary

The 'Venus at her Toilet' type highlights Venus' role as goddess of beauty through both her pose (at her toilet), and often in the types of scene she appears within, which include not only 'Toilet of Venus' scenes, but also a 'Competition Between the Deities of Light' scene (where Venus is involved in a beauty competition). This Venus type is always depicted naked or semi-naked to emphasise her beauty.

This Venus type is predominantly combined with *Venus Anadyomene* (b) (in eight of 10 – 80% representations of this type). *Venus Anadyomene* (b) often appears with a mirror, even in non-toilet scenes, and her attention to her hair and the fact that she is never depicted fully clothed suggests that *Venus Anadyomene* represents Venus in

her role as goddess of beauty and eroticism and this would be compatible with the 'Venus at her Toilet' type.

Of the nine artworks featuring this type where the context can be ascertained, five are from domestic contexts, three from public ones, and one on a façade. Artworks featuring this type within domestic contexts occur in both large/medium rooms and small, closed rooms in almost equal numbers. This is one of the joint most common Venus types (with *Venus Anadyomene* and *Venus Pompeiana*) from public areas (on façades and in public contexts) in absolute terms, and it has a higher percentage of occurrences in public areas in comparison to domestic ones than all other types, except for 'Venus as a Star' and 'Venus Steering a Ship' which have three or less depictions each.

5.8 Venus Seated on a Throne

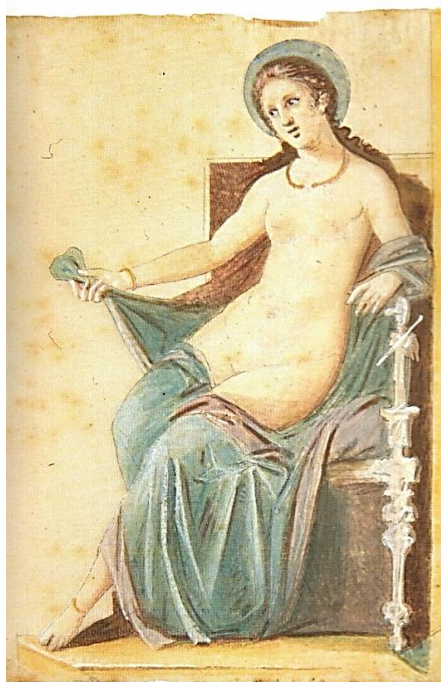


Figure 5.28: Venus seated on a throne in room 25 of VI.7.23

5.8.1 Identifying the Type

I have identified nine representations in Pompeii as this Venus type (fig. 5.28). An enthroned female figure could represent a royal woman or a female deity, such as Danae or Juno. Thus, I only identify an enthroned female figure as Venus if the figure appears within a narrative known to feature Venus (such as the ‘Competition Between the Deities of Light’), or if the figure is represented with attributes that are more specific to Venus than to other goddesses or royals. For instance, crowns and sceptres indicate a female deity or a queen/princess, but not Venus specifically, whereas cupids may identify the figure as Venus²⁶. I also consider the painting of the ‘Procession of Venus’ on the façade between IX.7.1 and IX.7.2 as this type for reasons I discuss below.

There are several representations of an enthroned goddess or royal in the upper zone. I have designated all of these as ‘Criteria for Identifying Venus’ category ‘f’

²⁶ I consider the artwork from room 34 of VII.1.25/47 as ‘Criteria for Identifying Venus’ category ‘f’ despite the cupid on the throne, however, as the sex of the figure on the throne cannot be confirmed. Scholars have suggested it may represent a male magistrate (Brizio 1868: 38–39, cited by *PPM* VI: 347), Paris with a companion in front of Helen (Schefold 1957: 166), or Iphigenia with Orestes and Pylades in Tauris (Minervini, cited by Helbig 1868: no. 1387).

because they do not meet the criteria above so there are no attributes to identify Venus specifically. Some of these are naked or semi-naked, which could represent Venus, though these have traditionally been identified as Danae holding her clothing back to receive the golden rain. The rain is not depicted, however, so these could represent either Venus or Danae.

5.8.2 Origins of the Type

Deities and monarchs are frequently depicted in Greek and Roman art, and described in ancient literature, as sitting on thrones. Richter (1966: 13–15) has outlined the types of people who sat on Greek thrones, and provided examples of Greek and Roman thrones from ancient textual sources, artworks and artefacts (Greek thrones – Richter 1966: 13–33; Roman thrones – Richter 1966: 98–101). However, it is difficult

to ascertain an origin for when Venus/Aphrodite was first represented on a throne.

As highlighted in Section 5.8.1, a female deity on a throne cannot be easily identified as Venus. Sappho, in the seventh to sixth centuries B.C., describes the throne of Aphrodite as ‘ornate’ (Sappho, fragment 1.1), offering no other details to identify Aphrodite on a throne more specifically. During the sixth to fifth centuries B.C., sphinxes were used to decorate the throne of Aphrodite/Astarte (Prückner 1968: 48) but this does not appear to have been a lasting iconographic type, and the sphinxes may have been decorative rather than an exclusive trait of Aphrodite (Ammerman 2002: 28). That said, there are several examples of Aphrodite on a throne decorated by or alongside sphinxes²⁷ (figs. 5.29, 5.30, 5.31). After the fifth



Figure 5.29: Aphrodite on a throne with sphinxes on the backrest, terracotta statuette from Sicily, c.470/460 B.C.

²⁷ These include a seventh-century B.C. terracotta statuette from Nicosia, Cyprus; a fifth-century B.C. terracotta statuette from Sicily; a fifth-century B.C. *pyxis* painting now in Antikenmuseum Basel; a fourth-century B.C. coin from Nagidos, Cilicia; a fourth-century B.C. stater from Aphrodisias; and a late fourth/early third-century B.C. statuette from Larnaca (Delivorrias 1984: nos. 789, 796, 806, 815, 816, 800).

century B.C., figures of Aphrodite seated on a throne are rare in monumental sculpture according to Delivorrias (1984: 88), but examples exist in other media (Schmidt 1997: nos. 225–243).



Figure 5.30 (left): Aphrodite on a throne with sphinxes, pyxis painting, now in Antikenmuseum Basel, fifth century B.C.

Figure 5.31 (right): Aphrodite on a throne made of sphinxes, stater from Aphrodisias, 379–374 B.C.



Figure 5.32 (left): Aphrodite leaning on backrest of throne with cupid in her hand, gold ring, now in the Victoria & Albert Museum, London, fourth century B.C.

Figure 5.33 (right): Aphrodite leaning on backrest of throne with kneeling cupid, vase painting, now privately owned, c.430/420 B.C.

In classical Greek art, the *Aphrodite Olympias* type is represented fully clothed, seated on a throne and leaning on her backrest (figs. 5.32 and 5.33). This type is represented in a variety of mediums from statues to coins (Delivorrias 1984: 90–1, nos. 819–841). *Aphrodite Olympias* is represented on a few early classical vases, but gained

popularity later, possibly due to a marble statue from the Aphrodite sanctuary in Athens of ‘Agrippina-Olympias’ (c.450–440 B.C.) by Phidias or Alkamenes (Delivorrias 1984: no. 819). There are several Greek coins which depict Aphrodite seated on a throne, often leaning on the backrest or the arm of the throne (see Bernhart 1936: nos. 134–160 for examples of Aphrodite seated, often on thrones).

5.8.3 Content of Scenes

The ‘Venus Seated on a Throne’ type occurs in nine paintings in Pompeii. Two representations of this type are combined with the ‘Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing’ type, both in ‘Love of Venus and Mars’ scenes. Most representations of this type (five of nine – 56%) feature within non-narrative scenes, including a ‘Procession of Venus’ scene and four of ‘No Active Scene’ depicting Venus with a cupid (table 5.36). The remaining four feature within narrative scenes.

Table 5.36: Scene types in which ‘Venus Seated on a Throne’ occurs

Type of Scene	Venus Seated on a Throne	Venus Seated on a Throne / Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing	Total
Narrative Scenes	2	2	4
Competition Between the Deities of Light	1	0	1
Love of Venus and Mars	0	2	2
Punishment of Cupid	1	0	1
Non-Narrative Scenes	5	0	5
Other Non-Narrative Scene (Procession of Venus)	1	0	1
No Active Scene	4	0	4
Total	7	2	9

The Procession of Venus Scene on the Façade of IX.7.1 and IX.7.2

The ‘Procession of Venus’ scene on the façade of IX.7.1 (fig. 5.34) has often been identified as a procession of Cybele (Schefold 1957: 267; Fröhlich 1991: F63; Clarke 2003: 89; Curuni & Santopuoli 2007: 272; Potts 2009; *PPM* IX: 773; *PPP* 90701AA01). However, other scholars have suggested it may represent a procession of Venus (Della Corte 1921; Boyce 1937: 111, no. 24; Schmidt 1997: no. 228). The female

deity is thought to be Cybele because she wears a walled crown; the round object in the crook of her arm could be a *tympanum*; the two animals at her feet could be lions; and she may have a ‘net of prophecy’ between her knees (Clarke 2003: 90–91). Some of the worshippers have musical instruments, known to be used in the worship of Cybele.



Figure 5.34: The procession of Venus scene on the façade of IX.7.1 and IX.7.2

Scholars who have identified this scene as a procession of Venus have not given any explicit explanation for their identification (Boyce 1937: 111 no. 24; Schmidt 1997: no. 228). I consider this painting to represent Venus as the walled crown could reflect her role as patron deity of Pompeii; the starred throne she sits on could refer to her role as the evening star; the golden branch and *patera* that she holds could refer to her epithet of ‘golden’ and the branch could represent myrtle; and the animals at her feet could be sphinxes, associated with the throne of Aphrodite. The item identified as a net could refer to Venus’ association with fishing and the water supply in Pompeii (see Chapter 7.7), or alternatively be drapery. The round object in the crook of her left arm is hardly visible but has been interpreted as a musical instrument. Venus may have been worshipped in processions with music, indeed it would be unlikely for a procession to be quiet. For example, Fless & Moede (2007) offer many examples of music and dance being used in Roman religious rituals and processions. Indeed, the painting featuring *Venus Pompeiana* as part of the ‘Wedding of Hercules and Juventas’ scene in VII.9.47

depicts a figure with a *sistrum* leading the procession to the right, suggesting that music was used in the worship of deities besides Cybele.

All of the other artworks featuring deities on this façade depict deities alone within each panel – the cupids in the artwork featuring Venus to the left of the doorway (see Appendix C1 – V-9-25) are used as attributes. It would therefore be odd to represent five deities alone and for a different deity a procession. Thus, I would suggest that this painting to the right of the doorway is likely to be directly associated with that on the left, the same purple of the dress also highlighting that these both depict the same deity (though Luna who is depicted above the procession scene also wears purple). It would certainly be appropriate for the bust of Bacchus to feature within a procession of Venus scene given the association of Bacchus and Venus in the town – both were particularly important to the Pompeians in their roles as god of viticulture and patron deity respectively. They were perhaps associated with each other outside of Pompeii too, given their links with gardens and fertility, and given Venus’ association with wine (Varro, ‘Eumenides’, XXIV (49.26.26) in *Saturarum Menippearum*; Ovid, *Ars Amatoria*, 1.244). The absence of a cupid to clearly identify Venus in this procession scene is probably because this is a realistic scene of a procession. A cupid flying overhead would be unrealistic. No sanctuary of Cybele has been discovered in Pompeii, so it is unlikely that this represents a procession to Cybele which took place in the town.

5.8.4 Location

The ‘Venus Seated on a Throne’ type mostly occurs in domestic contexts (eight of nine – 89% artworks featuring this type, table 5.37), with one depicting a procession of Venus on a façade of a public building, between a possible felt-working shop (IX.7.1) and a dyeworks (IX.7.2; see also Chapter 7.4.1).

Table 5.37: The context of artworks featuring ‘Venus Seated on a Throne’

Context	Venus Seated on a Throne	Venus Seated on a Throne / Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing	Total
Domestic	6	2	8
Public	0	0	0
Public Façade	1	0	1
Total	7	2	9

In domestic contexts, this Venus type is more common in type 7 rooms (table 5.38). This is probably because two of the three representations in this room type combine this Venus type with that of ‘Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing’. The latter type often occurs in room type 7 – eight of 38 (21%) representations of ‘Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing’ within domestic contexts occur in type 7 rooms (where the room type can be identified; see Section 5.3.4).

Table 5.38: Room types in which artworks featuring ‘Venus Seated on a Throne’ occur

Room Type	Venus Seated on a Throne	Venus Seated on a Throne / Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing	Total
Predominantly Reception Areas	3	2	5
5	1	0	1
7	1	2	3
11	1	0	1
Predominantly Non-Reception Areas	2	0	2
4	1	0	1
12	1	0	1
Unknown Areas	1	0	1
Unknown	1	0	1
Total	6	2	8

5.8.5 Summary

The ‘Venus Seated on a Throne’ type occurs in both narrative and non-narrative scenes in almost equal numbers. With one exception (the façade painting between IX.7.1 and IX.7.2), this Venus type always occurs within domestic contexts. ‘Venus Seated on a Throne’ could occur throughout the house, though rarely in large/medium rooms (room types 6, 10 and 11) compared with other Venus types.

5.9 Venus Holding a Fan or Palm

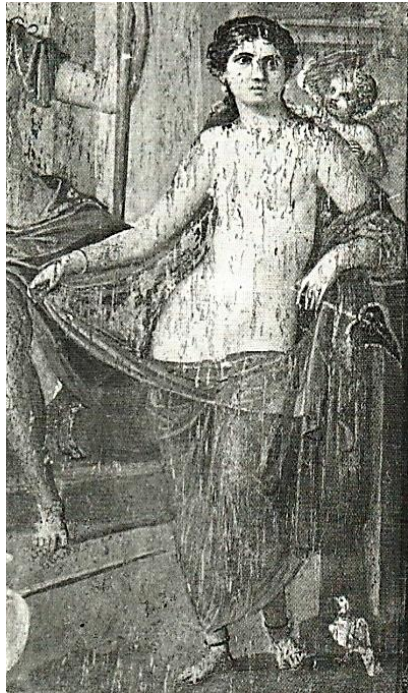


Figure 5.35 (left): Venus holding a fan in room 62 of VII.16 (*Ins. Occ.*).22

Figure 5.36 (right): Venus holding a palm in room 21 of I.6.2

5.9.1 Identifying the Type

I have identified six artworks in Pompeii as ‘Venus Holding a Fan’, and two as ‘Venus Holding a Palm’. My criteria for identifying this Venus type are self-evident – Venus must hold a fan or a palm (figs. 5.35 and 5.36). To identify a figure as Venus rather than an ordinary woman, the figure must appear in a narrative associated with Venus or be combined with another Venus type, such as ‘Venus with a Cupid on her Shoulder/s’.

5.9.2 Origins of the Type

The origins of this Venus type are unknown. Venus is not attested in ancient textual sources as having a fan (*flabellum*) or a palm as attributes. Palm branches were associated with the goddess Victoria and victory generally (Caesar, *Civil War*, 3.105; Martial, *Epigrams*, 7.2, 7.28, 7.72), but could also be associated with Venus, perhaps to denote victory, relating to her role as patron deity of various political figures or as *Venus Victrix* (as on the coin of Julia Domna discussed below, where *Venus Victrix*

holds a palm – fig. 5.39). Ovid (*Heroides*, 16.140) refers to the ‘palm of Venus’ in reference to her victory over the other goddesses during the judgement of Paris but this does not mean this attribute was often associated with her outside of this context, and here it denotes victory rather than being used as an attribute of Venus.

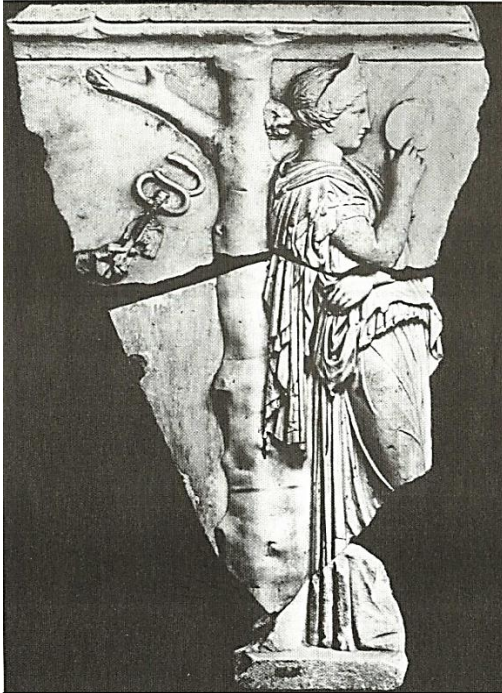


Figure 5.37: Venus holding a fan whilst leaning against a tree – Neoattic relief from Hadrian’s Villa at Tivoli

The fan and palm would certainly be appropriate objects to appear with Venus, as symbols of femininity. They would therefore emphasise her role as goddess of sexuality and beauty. The fan and the palm are both well-attested as women’s accessories by ancient authors (Terence, *Eunuch*, 595; Martial, *Epigrams*, 10.30.14–15; Claudian, *Against Eutropius*, 1.108–109). In Greek art, the fan was often used as a symbol of femininity and social status, as it signified leisure (Miller 1997: 198–200). Thus, it is likely that in these Pompeian artworks, the fan was used to emphasise Venus as goddess of beauty with a symbol of femininity. A Neoattic relief representing Aphrodite holding a fan from

Hadrian’s Villa at Tivoli attests to the existence of this type (fig. 5.37; Rosenzweig 2004: 54–5).

Numismatic evidence from the first century B.C. depicts Venus in association with a palm. For instance, Crawford (1974: 443–4, no. 419/1c) argues that a diademed female head with a palm branch behind her, depicted on a coin of M. Lepidus dated 61 B.C., represents Venus as it ‘resembles some contemporary heads of Venus... and the palm-branch perhaps suggests Venus Victrix’. Crawford also states that two coins of Mn. Cordius Rufus, dated 46 B.C., represent a diademed Venus on the obverse, and a cupid holding a palm branch and wreath on the reverse (fig. 5.38; Crawford 1974: 473–5, nos. 463/5a and b). While Crawford does not explain his identification of the head as Venus on these latter two coins, it is probably because a cupid was depicted on the opposite side of each coin, and representations of Venus with a cupid on her shoulder in other coins minted by the same moneyer in the same year, provide a visual link between the two.



Figure 5.38: Venus on obverse and cupid with palm on reverse (46 B.C.)

Several examples of ‘Venus Holding a Palm’ survive in various media. A grave relief from Rome depicts Venus (or more likely the deceased in the guise of Venus) with a Trajanic hairstyle, leaning on a pillar, a dove at her feet, with a palm in her left hand (Schmidt 1997: no. 193). Schmidt does not say why this figure has been identified as Venus, but this is probably due to the use of a Venus type (‘Venus Leaning on a Pillar’), the figure being semi-naked and wearing a crown, and the presence of the dove (an attribute of Venus). A coin of Julia Domna (A.D. 193–6) and a plasma from Aquileia both depict Venus leaning on a pillar, with an apple and a palm (Schmidt 1997: nos. 202 and 206). The coin is inscribed ‘VENERI VICTR.’ which clearly identifies the figure as *Venus Victrix* (fig. 5.39). Schmidt presumably identified the representation on the plasma as Venus due to the figure wearing only token drapery, wearing a diadem, leaning on a pillar, with a star under her feet.



Figure 5.39: Venus Victrix with a palm on a coin of Julia Domna (A.D. 193–6)

5.9.3 Content of Scenes

‘Venus Holding a Fan’ is represented in six artworks in Pompeii, and ‘Venus Holding a Palm’ in two (table 5.39). ‘Venus Holding a Fan or Palm’ is mostly combined with other Venus types.

Table 5.39: Venus types combined with ‘Venus Holding a Fan or Palm’

Venus Type	Total
Venus Holding a Fan	6
Venus Holding a Fan alone	1
Combined with Venus on a Seashell	2
Combined with Venus with a Cupid on her Left Shoulder	1
Combined with Venus with a Cupid on her Left Shoulder / Venus Leaning on a Pillar	1
Combined with Venus with a Cupid on her Right Shoulder	1
Venus Holding a Palm	2
Combined with Venus Leaning on a Pillar	2
Total	8

Of the six representations of ‘Venus Holding a Fan’, four (67%) occur within narrative scenes, and two (33%) occur in non-narrative scenes (table 5.40). The two in non-narrative scenes both combine this type with the ‘Venus on a Seashell’ type. Both representations of ‘Venus Holding a Palm’ occur within ‘No Active Scene’. Although the representation of ‘Venus Holding a Palm’ in I.3.25 features within ‘No Active Scene’, when considered in context with the rest of the room, it is part of a room representing the competition between the deities of light narrative with each of the three deities involved depicted on a different wall.

Table 5.40: Scene types in which ‘Venus Holding a Fan or Palm’ occurs

Type of Scene	Venus Holding a Fan	Venus Holding a Palm	Total
Narrative Scenes	4	0	4
Aeneas Narrative (Venus Giving Arms to Aeneas)	1	0	1
Competition Between the Deities of Light	1	0	1
Paris Narrative (Helen and Paris Narrative)	1	0	1
Other Narrative Scene (Wedding of Neptune and Salacia)	1	0	1
Non-Narrative Scenes	2	2	4
Venus in a Seashell	2	0	2
No Active Scene (Venus with Palm)	0	2	2
Total	6	2	8

In the two artworks featuring ‘Venus Holding a Palm’, the identification of the figure as Venus is further supported by the wider decorative programme on the wall or in the room. On the south wall of room 21 of I.6.2, Venus is represented in the left panel, opposite Mars in the right panel. As Moormann (1988: no. 148/4) notes, these two figures act as pendants in regard to their pose and iconography, suggesting that they were designed to be viewed together. In room h of I.3.25, Venus is represented on the west wall, Bacchus or Apollo²⁸ on the east wall, and Vesper on the south wall. It has thus been noted by Schefold (1957: 13) that this room represents the ‘Competition Between the Deities of Light’ narrative, with Venus and Vesper competing, and Bacchus/Apollo judging (see table A2.4 for a brief discussion of this scene type; see Moormann 1983: 91–100 for an alternate explanation – he identifies the figures as Venus, Bacchus, and Adonis).

Two (possibly three) representations of ‘Venus Holding a Fan or Palm’ in non-narrative scenes use this type to contrast Venus’ symbols of femininity (the fan or palm) with Mars’ symbols of masculinity (weaponry and armour) on the same wall (in I.6.2, II.3.3, and possibly I.3.25).

5.9.4 Location

‘Venus Holding a Fan or Palm’ occurs exclusively in domestic contexts and occurs in a variety of different room types (table 5.41). The two artworks that feature this Venus type in gardens combine this type with the ‘Venus on a Seashell’ type which may explain their location in this area (see Section 5.11.3).

The only artwork featuring Venus on a pavement in Pompeii represents this Venus type combined with ‘Venus with a Cupid on her Right Shoulder’ in a scene depicting the wedding of Neptune and Salacia (in room d of IX.2.27). Bragantini (in *PPM IX*: 119) notes that this scene is very similar to that of Neptune and Salacia in a chariot on the Altar of Domitius Ahenobarbus, now at the Glyptotek in Munich. On this altar, nymphs accompany Neptune and Salacia, but the figure in the lower half of the

²⁸ There is a seated male between Venus and Vesper, judging their beauty, and the lack of attributes makes it difficult to ascertain whether this figure is Bacchus or Apollo. The myth of the competition between the deities of light does not survive in literature, but is alluded to by Hyginus with the judge not named – ‘Hesperos... surpassed many others in beauty. In that regard he even rivalled Aphrodite, so it is said’ (*De Astronomia*, 2.42.4, trans. in Hard 2015: 131). Thus, the judge cannot be identified in this artwork.

painting in Pompeii is more likely to be Venus given that she wears a crown, and that one cupid embraces her and the other holds the breast jewellery associated with Venus.

Table 5.41: Room types in which artworks featuring ‘Venus Holding a Fan or Palm’ occur

Room Type	Venus Holding a Fan	Venus Holding a Palm	Total
Predominantly Reception Areas	4	2	6
6	1	0	1
9	2	0	2
11	0	1	1
16	1	0	1
21	0	1	1
Predominantly Non-Reception Areas	2	0	2
4	2	0	2
Total	6	2	8

5.9.5 Summary

‘Venus Holding a Fan’ features in six artworks in Pompeii – four depict narrative scenes and two depict non-narrative scenes (both ‘Venus in a Seashell’ scenes). The two wall-paintings featuring ‘Venus Holding a Palm’ both depict non-narrative scenes (both ‘No Active Scene’) where Venus is part of a scheme of decoration within the room relating to Mars or the ‘Competition Between the Deities of Light’.

This Venus type occurs exclusively in domestic contexts but in different room types. The only representation of Venus on a pavement in Pompeii depicts this Venus type combined with ‘Venus with a Cupid on her Shoulder’.

Less Common Venus Types

5.10 Venus Pudica

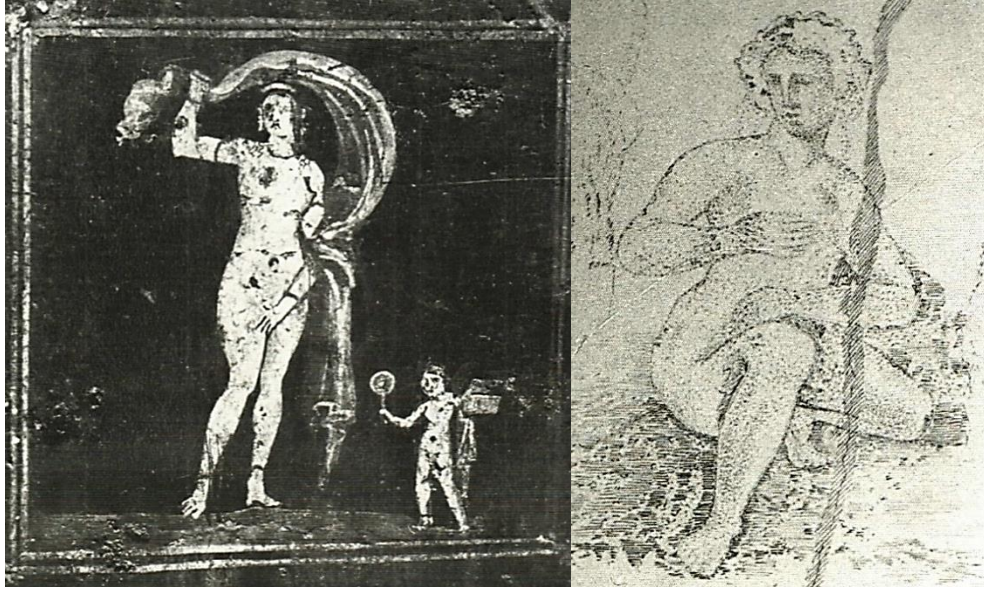


Figure 5.40 (left): Venus Pudica in room 2 in I.14.5
Figure 5.41 (right): Venus Pudica in room h in VI.13.19

5.10.1 Identifying the Type

I have identified four representations in Pompeii as *Venus Pudica*. My identifying criteria are that the figure must be represented either naked or with token drapery, and hold one hand to her pubic area while the other is sometimes held to her breasts (figs. 5.40 and 5.41). These criteria are based on the pose of the Knidian statue of Aphrodite by Praxiteles, where the goddess held her hand to her pubic area, and later copies of this statue where she held her other hand to her breasts (see Section 5.10.2).

Delivorrias (1984: 50) argued that despite there being a number of variations in the type, representations of *Venus Pudica* can be grouped in two main ways: the first group represents Aphrodite undressing before bathing; and the second group represents Aphrodite being interrupted whilst bathing. This grouping is not used in this study, however, as it relies on the interpretation of the individual scholar rather than being based on well-defined iconographic aspects. Furthermore, there are only four representations of this type in Pompeii so it would not be useful to separate them further.

5.10.2 Origins of the Type

Praxiteles sculpted two statues of Aphrodite in the fourth century B.C., one of the goddess clothed, which was bought by the citizens of Cos, and one of the goddess naked with her hand to her pubic area, bought by the citizens of Knidos (Pliny, *Natural History*, 36.4.20–21). The Knidian statue was destroyed in a fire in the palace of Lausus, Constantinople in A.D. 476 (Havelock 1995: 9), but by then it had been depicted on several coins and described by many ancient authors (figs. 5.42 and 5.43; Pliny, *Natural History*, 36.4.20–21; Pseudo-Lucian, *Amores*, 13–14; Athenaeus, *The Learned Banqueters*, 13.590; alluded to in Ovid, *Ars Amatoria*, 2.613–4; *DNO* III: nos. 1855–1888). Several copies of the statue were also made (Havelock 1995: 9). That said, the statue did not seem to be particularly revered at the time – coins of Knidos from the fourth century B.C. onwards represent a head of Aphrodite (not based on the statue), and the entire statue was not represented on coins until the Roman period (Havelock 1995: 64). There are no known copies that date before the late second century B.C. (Havelock 1995: 65). Furthermore, the statue was first mentioned in 70 B.C. by Cicero (*Against Verres*, 2.4.135).



Figure 5.42 (left): Bronze coin representing Aphrodite of Knidos (from Knidos, A.D. 211–218)
Figure 5.43 (right): Bronze coin representing Aphrodite of Knidos (from Tarsus, A.D. 235–238)

The Capitoline Venus and the Medici Venus (figs. 5.44 and 5.45) were both based on the Aphrodite of Knidos, with Venus holding her hand to her pubic area. However, in these examples, Venus holds her other hand to her breasts. This pose was termed the ‘pudica gesture’ by Bernoulli (1873: 220–248).

Blinkenberg (1933: 44) argues that *Venus Pudica* statues perhaps gained their pose from images of Astarte, an eastern fertility goddess. Blinkenberg (1933: 44) argues that the images of Astarte emphasise the areas relevant to fertility, sometimes with the

goddess forcing milk from her breast, whereas *Venus Pudica* is hiding her body from the viewer. However, Havelock (1995: 79) argues that both the Capitoline and the Medici Venus, of the *Venus Pudica* type, were designed to emphasise rather than hide the goddess' nudity. In these two statues, Venus is arguably emphasising her sexuality, using her hands to draw attention to her breasts and pubic area rather than to cover them. D'Ambra (1996) studies nude portraits of Roman matrons which combined the portrait head of the matron with the body of Venus. D'Ambra (1996: 222) states that copies of the Capitoline Venus use 'gestures that either hide or draw attention to the breasts and genitals', avoiding a single interpretation of this gesture. She argues that nude statues of Aphrodite/Venus represent 'erotic attraction', whereas nude statues of Roman matrons in the guise of the Capitoline Venus emphasise their fertility rather than erotic desire as they have 'swelling breasts, rounded abdomens, and full hips' (D'Ambra 1996: 221–222).

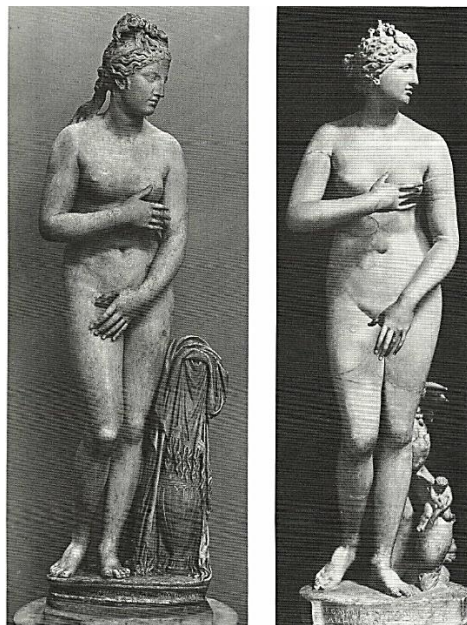


Figure 5.44 (left): Capitoline Venus, Rome (Capitoline Museum 409)
Figure 5.45 (right): Medici Venus (Uffizi 224)

5.10.3 Content of Scenes

There are just four artworks featuring *Venus Pudica* in Pompeii. The figure in three of these artworks can be identified as Venus by the presence of her attributes (in I.14.5, VI.8.3/5, and VII.9.33). Furthermore, in VII.9.33, the representation of *Venus Pudica* is combined with another Venus type ('Venus at her Toilet') and features

alongside Mars and two altars. The remaining painting featuring this type (which is combined with the ‘Venus Crouching’ type), in VI.13.19, is the only representation of *Venus Pudica* in Pompeii where she holds her hands to both her pubic area and her breasts, and appears within a narrative scene (fig. 5.46). While the specific scene cannot be determined, there is clearly a man observing the goddess bathing and she is covering herself. This would normally suggest the myth of Diana and Actaeon, as hypothesised by Sogliano (1880: no. 118) and Schefold (1957: 131), however, there are no attributes of Diana in the scene, or dogs attacking the male figure which are typical elements of Diana and Actaeon scenes in Pompeian paintings (e.g. in room 22 of I.10.4 – Ling & Ling 2005: fig. 71; and in room 32 of VI.2.4 – *PPM* IV: fig. 76). It is possible these elements existed originally but did not survive when the painting was sketched (the painting has now entirely faded). However, given its differences from other scenes featuring Diana and Actaeon, and the female figure’s adoption of two known Venus poses, I consider this painting to be a possible depiction of Venus (‘Criteria for Identifying Venus’ category ‘e’). This is the only representation of *Venus Pudica* where the goddess is crouching rather than standing, perhaps a reference to the ‘Crouching Venus’ type, but equally the combination of the figure crouching and covering herself would also be appropriate to Diana or a nymph surprised whilst bathing.



Figure 5.46: Venus Pudica in room h of VI.13.19

5.10.4 Location

All but one representation of *Venus Pudica* occur in domestic contexts (three of four – 75%), with just one from a public context. The artwork from a public context (VII.9.33), is from a building of unidentifiable function – various scholars have interpreted it as a *caupona*, *lupanare*, or a *fullonica* (see *PPM* VII: 353 for an overview), but all suggest that it was a public building rather than a domestic one. The *lararium* painting featuring *Venus Pudica* in VII.9.33 is located in a garden area, with a masonry basin directly in front of it, perhaps to encourage Venus to protect the water supply (see Appendix C1 – V-7-41; and Chapter 7.7).

5.11 Venus on a Seashell



Figure 5.47: Venus on a seashell in garden 8 of II.3.3

5.11.1 Identifying the Type

I have identified three artworks in Pompeii as this Venus type. I identify a representation as this type if the female figure is sitting, standing, or lying across a seashell (fig. 5.47). Venus may appear alone or with one or two cupids.

5.11.2 Origins of the Type

Aphrodite was thought to have been born out of a shell (Plautus, *Rudens*, 3.704), and this was probably the inspiration for this Venus type. Goodenough (1958: 96) identifies just three ancient textual references to Aphrodite being born out of a shell, the earliest being this reference in Plautus in the second century B.C. However, this story of the goddess' birth likely pre-dates this first recorded mention.

Originally, Aphrodite was depicted being born out of the two parts of the scallop shell, as in the fourth-century B.C. *lecythus* now in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (fig. 5.48; Goodenough 1958: 96–7; see also Delivorrias 1984: nos. 1011–7, 1184–5). However, over time, the fashion changed to depict Venus lying on one half of the shell or in front of the shell (Goodenough 1958: 98; Delivorrias 1984: no. 1183). There are examples of Venus lying on one half of the shell or in front of the shell in wall-paintings

from Pompeii, a lamp from Cyprus, and a terracotta relief of Tunisia (figs. 5.47 & 5.49, Goodenough 1958: 98).



Figure 5.48 (left): Aphrodite born out of the shell on a fourth-century B.C. lecythus
Figure 5.49 (right): Venus standing in front of a shell on a terracotta relief of Tunisia (date unknown)



Figure 5.50 (left): Aphrodite holding a shell over her vulva (terracotta figurine)
Figure 5.51 (right): Nymphs holding shells over their vulvas on a marble votive relief

The association of Aphrodite with the shell probably referred to her sphere of influence over fertility and sexuality, as the shell was a symbol of the vulva, with the Greek word *kteis* applying to both the vulva and the scallop shell (Goodenough 1958: 97; this double meaning is also clear in Plautus, *Rudens*, 3.704). Indeed, there are examples in classical art where female figures hold the shell over their vulva (figs. 5.50 and 5.51).

5.11.3 Discussion

There are only three artworks in Pompeii featuring ‘Venus on a Seashell’ (in II.2.2, II.3.3, and VII.6.7), the latter two each combine this Venus type with the ‘Venus Holding a Fan’ type. All three representations of this type represent Venus lying across the shell.

‘Venus on a Seashell’ always occurs in domestic contexts and in garden areas – a *portico* (room i) in II.2.2 where Venus is depicted on the north wall, and the garden itself in II.3.3 (room 8) and VII.6.7 (room 48), where Venus appears on the south wall. This Venus type exclusively features in outdoor scenes and thus would have been appropriate decoration for gardens. Furthermore, each artwork featuring this Venus type occurs amongst other artworks depicting outdoor scenes in the same garden: Diana and Actaeon, and Orpheus with wild beasts in *portico* i of II.2.2; birds, architectural scenes, and garden scenery with shrubbery, flowers, fountains, and a statue of Mars in garden 8 of II.3.3; and garden scenery with a fence in garden 48 of VII.6.7. Indeed, many paintings of gardens (or scenes with garden settings) occur within actual gardens in Pompeii (Jashemski 1979: 55–73). Furthermore, this type may have been depicted only in gardens as these areas allowed for longer paintings, as they did not always conform to the left/central/right panel structure common in wall decoration in domestic contexts.

Three fountains within domestic contexts feature Venus. Two of these depict ‘Venus on a Seashell’ (in VII.2.44–46 and IX.7.16), suggesting that this water-related Venus type was considered more appropriate than other Venus types for fountains. That said, these numbers are too small to identify a wider trend.

5.12 Venus as a Star

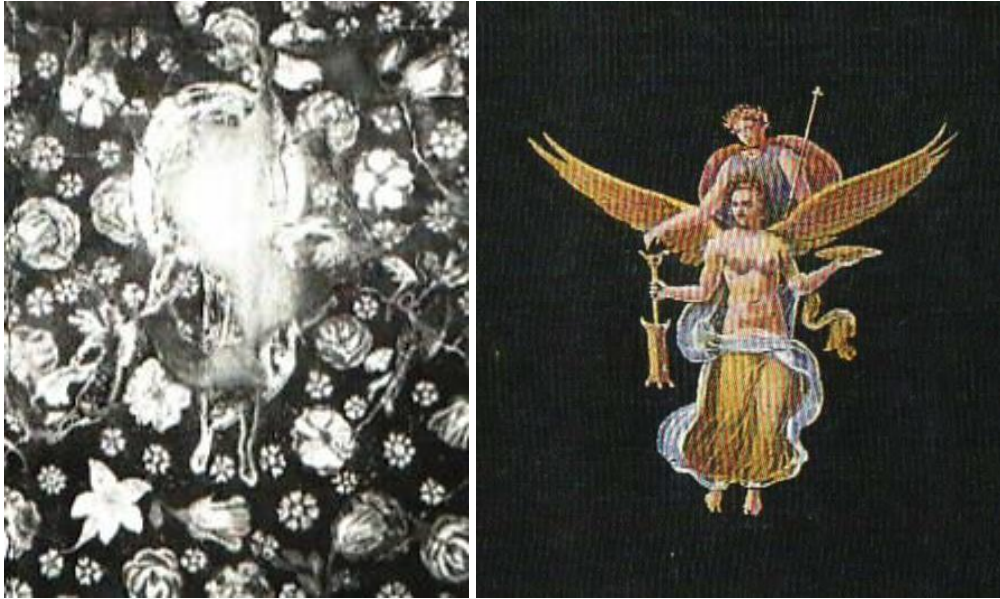


Figure 5.52 (left): Venus as a star on the ceiling of room 2 of I.6.11
Figure 5.53 (right): Venus as a star on the far right of the west wall of room d of VII.9.7 (the Macellum)

5.12.1 Identifying the Type

I have identified three representations in Pompeii as this Venus type. I identify a representation as ‘Venus as a Star’ if the female figure is in flight, and is accompanied by star deities (such as Lucifer/Phosphorus or Vesper/Hesperus), or is atop a winged figure (figs. 5.52 and 5.53; examples of this Venus type can be found in Schmidt 1997: nos. 324–327). To be identified as Venus, a female figure atop a winged figure must be depicted with attributes more exclusive to Venus, such as a cupid or a rudder.

Floating female figures often occur in Pompeian paintings, so the presence of another star deity or winged figure is needed to identify a representation as this type. For instance, bacchantes and muses can appear floating individually in panels but they are usually depicted with their attributes (as in rooms 15 and 18 of I.10.4). I do not consider artworks featuring Venus accompanied by star deities where she is not in flight, for instance those representing the ‘Competition Between the Deities of Light’ narrative, as this type.

Allison (in Allison & Sear 2002: 68) has argued that where star deities appear with one atop another, the specific deities were perhaps interchangeable. This is

probably the case given other examples of this form which do not depict Venus, such as Victoria carrying Apollo in room 2 of VI.10.11 (*PPM* IV: 1086 & 1090). To identify Venus rather than other star deities when the figure is atop a winged deity, the female figure must appear with attributes more exclusive to Venus (for instance, with a cupid rather than just wearing a crown).

Star deities are often represented with a *velificatio*, a billowing garment above their head, as in room 10 of VII.4.48. This is one indicator of a star deity, and of *Aphrodite Urania*, but it is not exclusive to the iconography of star deities, and it can also indicate the *Aurae* (winds); Nereids; *Horae*; Maenads; Lycomedids; Niobids; Niobe; Selene; Helios; Caelus; Europa; Dionysos; Ariadne; Poseidon; Amphitrite; and Aphrodite (Pliny, *Natural History*, 36.4.29; Spaeth 1994: 77–78). Thus, a *velificatio* can be incorporated as part of the iconography of ‘Venus as a Star’, but is not a defining feature of this type.

5.12.2 Origins of the Type

Venus Alongside Lucifer and Vesper



Figure 5.54 (left): Venus with cupids (Lucifer and Vesper?) on a loutrophoros from 360/350 B.C. Figure 5.55 (right): Venus with cupids (Lucifer and Vesper?) on a cup from the second half of the fourth century B.C.

Two examples from the fourth century B.C. represent Venus in flight, hand-in-hand or arm-in-arm with cupids, perhaps representing Lucifer and Vesper – a

loutrophoros from 360/350 B.C. now in the Louvre, and a cup now in the Palazzo Jatta, Ruvo Di Puglia, Italy (figs. 5.54 & 5.55; Delivorrias 1984: no. 1213 and 1215). This is especially clear in the latter where one of the cupids is holding a torch, the symbol of Lucifer and Vesper. These two examples are similar to the representation of Venus as a star on the ceiling of room 2 of I.6.11.

Venus Atop a Winged Figure



Figure 5.56 (left): Aphrodite with a swan on a fifth-century B.C. cup from Kameiros
Figure 5.57 (right): Venus atop Aurora in the armour of the Augustus of Prima Porta

The iconography of Venus atop a winged figure probably derived from various other representations of Venus, such as Venus floating on swans or sea-birds, and apotheosis scenes. Imperial iconography from the Augustan period onwards probably inspired the use of this type in Pompeii.

Schwinzer argues that this type originated from images of Venus floating on swans or sea-birds on Greek vases and Hellenistic terracotta, and that it emphasised Venus' dominion over the sea and sky (1979: 37 & 51, examples in n.131). This type is attested from at least the fifth century B.C., with a cup from Kameiros depicting Aphrodite (labelled) with a swan, amongst other examples (fig. 5.56; Galinsky 1966: 230).

Alternatively, Toynbee noted similarities between the four Victories with deities on their backs in the Palace of Gaius Caesar (discussed below) and apotheosis scenes where members of the imperial family were carried to heaven by an eagle or Aeternitas (Gow & Page 1968: 57, citing a conversation with J. M. C. Toynbee). Thus, representations of deities atop winged figures were perhaps derived from apotheosis scenes with this iconography later being adapted to depict deities carried across the sky.

Schwinzer (1979: 37) identifies Venus atop Aurora in the armour of the Augustus of Prima Porta (fig. 5.57). Schwinzer (1979: 52, 38) argues that Venus, Apollo, and Diana all featured on the armour of the Augustus of Prima Porta as they were the protectors of Augustus and when they appear atop winged figures in Pompeii, they represent the adoption of imperial art in the private sphere. Schwinzer (1979: 52–3) also notes that in Pompeii, these groups of star deities occur in public areas (i.e. the *macellum*) and in more public areas of the house used by visitors, such as the *atrium* and *tablinum* in VI.10.11 and VII.4.48 respectively. Thus, Schwinzer hypothesises that these star deities perhaps demonstrate religiosity and loyalty to the imperial family; in domestic space, this relates to the house owner, while for public areas such as the *macellum* it relates to portrayals of civic identity.

Representations of star deities atop winged figures may have been influenced by a specific ceiling painting in the Palace of Gaius Caesar (the grandson and adopted son of Augustus), depicting Venus, Minerva, Hercules and Mars atop winged Victories (*Greek Anthology*, 9.59; Schwinzer 1979: 52). The Villa San Marco in Stabiae also has a ceiling painting of floating star deities, with Minerva atop Victoria (Schwinzer 1979: 52; Nunes Pedroso 1999: 272 & fig. 591). However, the Pompeian artworks featuring Venus atop a winged figure all occur on walls rather than ceilings. There may have originally been some depicted on ceilings, but this cannot be ascertained as not many ceiling paintings in Pompeii survive.

5.12.3 Discussion

There are only three artworks in Pompeii featuring ‘Venus as a Star’, one from a domestic context (I.6.11) and two from the *macellum* (VII.9.7). The representation in I.6.11 occurs in the centre of the ceiling of a small, closed room (room type 4). This is one of just two ceiling paintings to feature Venus in Pompeii. In this artwork, Venus is floating alongside two cupids (Lucifer and Vesper) amongst roses and other flowers

(fig. 5.52). Both representations of Venus in the *macellum* occur on the right side of the west wall of courtyard d. One represents Venus (identified by the cupid) atop a winged Lucifer, and the other represents Venus (identified by the crown, sceptre, and rudder) atop a winged Victoria (fig. 5.53).

Other scholars have identified two artworks in other houses as Venus atop a winged figure (in VI.10.11 and VII.4.48), but these do not occur with attributes more exclusive to Venus than to other star deities (such as cupids or the rudder), so there is not enough evidence to be confident in this identification. Thus, I do not discuss these representations here, though they are included in the database (Appendix B1) as ‘Criteria for Identifying Venus’ category ‘f’.

5.13 Venus Caricature



Figure 5.58: Caricature of Venus in the left section of the east wall frieze in room 46 of I.10.4

5.13.1 Identifying the Type

I identify representations as this Venus type if the features of Venus are exaggerated to parody her (fig. 5.58). I have only identified this type in room 46 of I.10.4 in Pompeii, with two scenes within the same frieze (see Section 5.13.3). Both examples in Pompeii are Second Style (Ling & Ling 2005: 244).

5.13.2 Origins of the Type

Caricatures of figures were popular in Egyptian and Hellenistic art. Pliny (*Natural History*, 35.37.114) describes the popularity of ‘Gryllus’ paintings, created by Antiphilus, an Egyptian active in the fourth century B.C. The exact definition of these ‘Gryllus’ paintings is uncertain, but Clarke (2007: 45) suggests that ‘Gryllus’ paintings may have referred to satirical depictions of mythological scenes or ‘ugly or deformed persons’, a popular feature of Hellenistic art.

Deities could be subject to parody, with the famous example of Octavian’s dinner themed around the Olympians, where he and his guests dressed as deities (Suetonius, *Augustus*, 70). Caricatures of deities in wall-paintings are not widely attested, probably because, generally, public buildings would be unlikely to include caricatures of the gods, and public buildings often survive better than domestic ones. The frieze of deities in mythological scenes in room 46 of I.10.4 is a rare example of deities depicted in caricature in wall-paintings. Caricatures of other mythological

figures are evidenced outside of Pompeii, though, with a painting of Aeneas and Anchises as ‘macrophallic dogs’ at Stabiae (Ling & Ling 2005: 22). Furthermore, caricatures of deities exist in other media, as attested on two *kantharoi* from the Kabirion sanctuary in Boeotia dating from the fifth century B.C. onwards, which depict caricatures of goddesses, including Aphrodite, in parodies of ‘Judgement of Paris’ scenes (Mitchell 2009: 270–1).

Although artworks depicting caricatures of the gods may be lacking, there are many humorous depictions of Roman deities. The various sexual exploits of the gods are frequently depicted in Roman art, such as Leda and the swan (Jupiter) with Cupid pushing the swan into Leda; Venus and Mars caught in their adulterous embrace by the net of Vulcan; humorous depictions of Hercules in various scenarios (such as in drag with Omphale); Hermaphroditus surprising Pan, Silenus, or simply the viewer, with male genitalia; Priapus and his large phallus; amongst others (Clarke 2007: 166–189). These humorous depictions of deities were also a feature of Greek art (see examples in Mitchell 2009: 302–5), with Mitchell (2009: 303, 202–3) identifying Aphrodite being mocked in scenes such as the ‘Judgement of Paris’, or beating Eros with her sandal. The pose of Venus/Aphrodite could also be parodied, for instance a terracotta relief from the late second century B.C. represents *Venus Anadyomene* with a cupid by her side mimicking her pose (Havelock 1995: 92 & fig. 32).

5.13.3 Discussion

Maiuri (1932: 128–139) argued that the mythological frieze in the upper zone of the east wall of room 46 in I.10.4 depicted mythological scenes with no underlying narrative, but Della Corte (1965: 297) suggested that this frieze perhaps depicted scenes from the same narrative, the story of the Minotaur. Ling and Ling (2005: 64–65) argue that if this is indeed the subject of the frieze, these two scenes featuring Venus caricatures perhaps represent Venus encouraging Cupid to fire his arrow of desire at Pasiphae to create her love for the bull (the far-left scene of the frieze on this wall, fig. 5.58), and Venus with Daedalus (where the characters are labelled).

The owner of house I.10.4 must have had a reason for keeping this Second-Style decoration. The presence of Fourth-Style paintings throughout the house indicates the owner had sufficient money to follow decorative trends. Even if the owner had run out of money, they must have prioritised redecoration in other parts of the house before this

one, perhaps indicating the owner particularly liked this frieze, though it provides an interesting contrast with the more formal depictions of deities within their domains with Diana in room 22 and Venus in room 24.

5.14 Venus Tying her Sandal

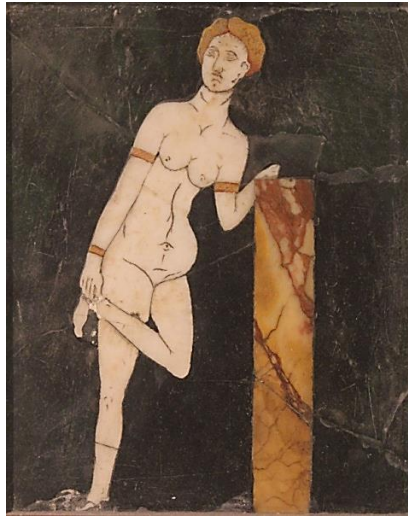


Figure 5.59: Venus tying her sandal in room f of I.2.10

5.14.1 Identifying the Type

I have identified two representations in Pompeii as ‘Venus Tying her Sandal’ (sometimes known as the *Sandalbinder*). I identify a female figure as this type if she is represented naked and holding her foot up to adjust her sandal, although the sandal itself may not be visible (fig. 5.59). The figure may lean on a pillar to support herself.

Anti (1927) and Delivorrias (1984) separate representations of the *Sandalbinder* in different ways based on slight differences in pose. The two types identified by Delivorrias – those where Venus adjusts her sandal in front of her body, bringing her leg upwards (fig. 5.60; Delivorrias 1984: nos. 462–474), and those where she adjusts it from behind, pulling her leg back (fig. 5.61; Delivorrias 1984: nos. 475–481) can be seen in the two representations of this

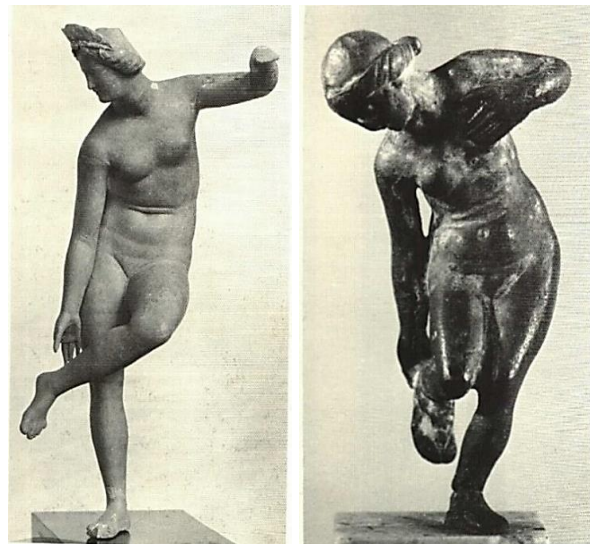


Figure 5.60 (left): Venus adjusting her sandal in front of her body, terracotta statuette possibly from Smyrna, first century B.C.

Figure 5.61 (right): Venus adjusting her sandal from behind her body, bronze statuette from Alexandria

type from Pompeii. However, due to the low number of fixed artworks featuring this type in Pompeii, I have not separated this Venus type into two categories.

5.14.2 Origins of the Type

The origins of the ‘Venus Tying her Sandal’ type are unknown, but numerous versions exist across the Roman Empire in a variety of media. Bernoulli (1873: 329–330) interprets it as the goddess removing her sandal before bathing, one of her favourite activities, and if this is the case, this pose may have been considered particularly appropriate for Venus. The pose of Venus was clearly meaningful as several artworks feature Venus in this pose without depicting the sandal itself, as in the Boston *Sandalbinder* from the first century B.C. (Havelock 1995: 84).

Artworks depicting women tying their sandals are evidenced from at least the fifth century B.C., with a red-figure *pelike* possibly from Nola (c.440 B.C.), and the Nike from the balustrade around the Temple of Athena Nike on the Athenian Acropolis (c.410 B.C.) (Delivorrias 1984: no. 462; Havelock 1995: 85).

Künzl (1970) catalogued c.180 examples of the ‘sandalenlösenden Aphrodite’ across a variety of media – marble, bronze, terracotta, coins, gems, and reliefs, with none dating before the late Hellenistic period. Künzl (1970: esp. 136) considers the ‘sandalenlösenden Aphrodite’ to have originated from a single original, probably from western Asia Minor. Indeed, Künzl’s distribution map highlights that replicas of this type were particularly clustered around this area (1970: 135).

Bernhart (1936: 50–51) argues that Venus removing her sandal was possibly derived from a lost statue because she leans on a dolphin in some examples, for instance in coins from Apollonia. In a statue, the tail would have provided greater stability; for a coin or painting this was unnecessary, suggesting these depictions – and perhaps the type more generally – may have been derived from a statue.

5.14.3 Discussion

There are just two artworks featuring figures that can be identified as this Venus type in Pompeii. One is an *opus sectile* artwork from the north wall of room f of I.2.10 (fig. 5.59), and the other a wall-painting from room 6 of I.13.2 (fig. 5.62). Neither are part of a narrative or other scene, so I identify the scene type as ‘Venus Tying her

Sandal' too as this is not only her pose, but also the main action of the scene. Although the painting in I.13.2 no longer survives, the sketch by De Vos (fig. 5.62) demonstrates the size of Venus in relation to the panel and although there is space for a setting to have been depicted, there is not enough space for Venus to appear as part of a wider scene. In both artworks, she appears alone.

The painting featuring this Venus type in room 6 of I.13.2 does not survive today and a pillar cannot be identified from De Vos' sketch (fig. 5.62). However, Venus' centre of gravity is not above her grounded foot, indicating she may have been leaning against something which can no longer be identified. As she is not holding onto the supporting object with her hand or leaning on it with her elbow, it is likely that this type was copied from a statue where the support would have been needed to provide stability.



Figure 5.62: Venus tying her sandal in room 6 of I.13.2

5.15 Venus Crouching



Figure 5.63: 'Venus Crouching' in room h of VI.13.19

5.15.1 Identifying the Type

I have identified one representation in Pompeii as 'Venus Crouching', in room h of VI.13.19 (fig. 5.63). My identifying criteria for this Venus type are: the female figure must be crouching, and must not form part of a narrative which excludes Venus. For instance, Diana is sometimes represented crouching and shielding herself from the prying eyes of Actaeon (as in room i of II.2.2).

In this artwork, Venus is represented in a crouching form of the *Venus Pudica* pose, with none of her attributes. The subject of the scene with a man observing her suggests a narrative not known to involve Venus, and thus it may represent a nymph or the myth of Diana and Actaeon, though Actaeon is in an unusual pose and there are no signifiers of either (see Section 5.10.3). It is therefore unlikely that this example depicts Venus, though it has been included in the database as a possibility.

5.15.2 Origins of the Type

This Venus type is known in Greek art from the late sixth century B.C., gaining popularity from the late fifth century B.C. (Delivorrias 1984: 101). This type is attested in a variety of media (Delivorrias 1984: nos. 987–1043), but it is not always clear whether Venus, another goddess (such as the well-known narrative of Diana being surprised by Actaeon whilst bathing), or a mortal is represented. Venus can only be identified more definitively when she is crouching being born from the sea or a shell (Delivorrias 1984: nos. 1011–7), or if she is accompanied by her other attributes, such as a mirror.

Conclusion

There are 15 different Venus types in Pompeii (excluding those marked with a * in table 5.42 which are catch-all types). The most popular Venus type by far is ‘Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing’, followed by *Venus Pescatrice*. The least common Venus type out of the 15 main types is ‘Venus Crouching’ with just one representation.

*Table 5.42: Venus types in descending number of representations (those marked with a * indicate catch-all types) – a single representation of Venus may encompass more than one Venus type so may be counted more than once in this table*

Venus Type	No. of Representations
Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing	45
<i>Venus Pescatrice</i>	25
Venus Leaning on a Pillar	24
Venus with a Cupid on her Shoulder/s	19
Bust of Venus*	16
<i>Venus Anadyomene</i> – types (a) and (b)	15
Unknown*	13
<i>Venus Pompeiana</i>	12
Venus Standing*	12
Venus at her Toilet	10
Venus Seated on a Throne	9
Venus Holding a Fan or Palm	8
Venus Seated*	6
<i>Venus Pudica</i>	4
Venus on a Seashell	3
Venus Sitting or Leaning on Rocks*	3
Venus as a Star	3
Venus Caricature	2
Venus Tying her Sandal	2
Venus Crouching	1
Venus Hovering*	1
Venus Steering a Ship*	1

Many of these Venus types reflect specific roles of Venus. For instance, ‘Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing’ highlights her role as goddess of *eros*; *Venus*

Anadyomene and ‘Venus at her Toilet’ highlight her role as goddess of beauty; and *Venus Pompeiana* highlights her role as patron deity of Pompeii. Several of these Venus types also highlight Venus’ association with water – of the 15 main Venus types, *Venus Pescatrice*, *Venus Anadyomene*, *Venus Pompeiana* (with the rudder), and ‘Venus on a Seashell’ highlight this most clearly. Two Venus types are almost exclusive to Pompeii and both highlight her association with water – *Venus Pompeiana* (with one other example in nearby Boscoreale), and *Venus Pescatrice* (where the pose is derived from other representations of Aphrodite, but the fishing aspect adds a new element to the scene in Pompeii).

‘Venus at her Toilet’, *Venus Anadyomene*, and *Venus Pompeiana* are the joint most common Venus types in public areas (on façades and in public contexts) in absolute terms. The ‘Venus at her Toilet’ type has a higher percentage of occurrences in public areas compared to domestic ones than all other types (except two types which have three or less representations each).

Previous scholars have put forward different, and often conflicting, interpretations of the nudity of Venus / Aphrodite (see Chapter 2.5). As these interpretations are subjective, and often depend on the individual scholar’s views and cultural-historical background, here I base my conclusions on empirical evidence rather than my own subjective interpretations of nudity. Venus’ state of nudity often depends on the Venus type, for instance, *Venus Pudica* needs to be fully naked in order to cover her pubic area, *Venus Pompeiana* always appears fully clothed in her formal role as patron deity of Pompeii, and *Venus Pescatrice* is always semi-naked or with drapery falling below her pubic area, perhaps reflecting her erotic role and the association of fishing with eroticism, but also because these were likely all based on the same prototype. Aside from *Venus Pompeiana*, the other Venus types which highlight Venus’ association with water – *Venus Pescatrice*, *Venus Anadyomene*, and ‘Venus on a Seashell’ – never appear clothed. Some of the other Venus types which were unrelated to the goddess’ association with water also never appear clothed, notably ‘Venus at her Toilet’ and *Venus Pudica*. This is probably to emphasise her role as goddess of beauty in the ‘Venus at her Toilet’ type, and as previously stated, *Venus Pudica* needs to be fully naked in order to cover her pubic area. Other types which never appear clothed have only one or two examples so detailed analysis cannot be made. Venus’ state of nudity in an artwork depends more on the Venus type used than the location of the artwork. In artworks from domestic contexts and also public ones, Venus is mostly

depicted naked or semi-naked, whereas on façades, she is more likely to be clothed (table 5.43).

Table 5.43: *Venus' state of nudity in artworks from different contexts*

Context	Venus' State of Nudity						Total
	Clothed	Semi-naked	Naked (drapery falls below pubic area)	Naked	Unknown	N/A – head only	
Domestic	45	39	30	21	26	1	162
Public	3	2	4	2	1	0	12
Domestic Façade	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Public Façade	4	0	2	0	0	0	6
Unknown Façade	2	1	0	1	0	0	4
Total	55	42	36	24	27	1	185

In this section, I outline some of my main conclusions regarding each Venus type in the order they were discussed in this chapter. This is with the exception of ‘Venus Leaning on a Pillar’, ‘Venus Tying her Sandal’, and ‘Venus Crouching’ which did not yield significant results.

The *Venus Pompeiana* type had more religious or ritual significance than other Venus types. *Venus Pompeiana* always appears inactive within the scene, probably representing a statue rather than an active character. This type probably originated from a statue, and by retaining this statuary aspect in paintings of this type (which was not retained in artworks featuring other Venus types popularised by statues), this perhaps suggests that *Venus Pompeiana* retained the religious and ritual aspect of the original statue and this type had especial religious significance.

Venus Pompeiana occurs more often in ritual contexts (on *aediculae* or in *lararium* paintings), on façades, and in the upper zone, than other Venus types. All three artworks featuring Venus within *lararium* paintings or painted on *aediculae* within domestic contexts represent *Venus Pompeiana*. Thus, this was the Venus type which was most associated with ritual activity in the house. When *Venus Pompeiana* is located on façades and in upper zones this indicates a protective purpose, that Venus was intended to look down on passers-by. The combined evidence from this Venus type’s composition and location, and the fact that it is found in a very restricted geographical

area, almost exclusive to Pompeii, perhaps suggests that this type represents Venus as the patron deity of Pompeii.

Artworks featuring *Venus Pescatrice* all clearly depict the same female figure fishing despite slight differences, for instance the figures in the scene. The figure is identifiable as Venus rather than an ordinary fisherwoman based on the occasional presence of Eros in the scene; the figure sometimes wearing a crown, diadem, or breast jewellery (associated with Venus); and evidence outside Pompeii of Venus/Aphrodite in a similar pose. It is interesting that this Venus type never occurs in *atria* or gardens, as these areas may have included water features (such as *impluvia* or fountains), which would have been appropriate for a fishing scene.

‘Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing’ represents Venus in her role as goddess of *eros*. She appears in two scenes as a facilitator of a love affair. The remaining 43 representations of this type occur in scenes depicting Venus with one of her lovers – in 77% of these scenes she appears with Mars, and in 23% with Adonis. This Venus type is mostly represented at least semi-naked, if not fully naked, in 75% of representations of this type, which would be appropriate given that this type exclusively appears in love scenes. Mars undresses Venus in 55% of the representations of this Venus type which occur with Mars. This is in contrast to when this Venus type occurs with Adonis, who never undresses her. This perhaps reflects the higher status partner in each love affair – Mars as a male deity could undress Venus, but Adonis as a mortal could not. Breast jewellery most often appears with this Venus type, probably as this was symbolic of the goddess’ powers over *eros* which would be appropriate for a love scene, and also due to the high level of nudity/semi-nudity in this Venus type. The vast majority (91%) of representations of this Venus type occur in domestic contexts, and of these, 24% occur in small, closed rooms – this is the second most popular Venus type in these rooms after *Venus Pescatrice*.

There are 19 representations of ‘Venus with a Cupid on her Shoulder/s’ in Pompeii. Nine of these are busts, probably because this type could easily be used to make Venus identifiable from just her head and her shoulders. The only representation of Venus on a pavement in Pompeii is this Venus type. The presence of a cupid on Venus’ shoulder suggests that this type perhaps originated from statuary because cupids would need to be attached to Venus in statuary, but could be depicted elsewhere in paintings.

Venus Anadyomene never features in scenes which depict the sea or a watery landscape in the background, though this is perhaps alluded to by a dolphin in the artwork in II.1.12, and by the river god and nymphs in the artwork in the *Castellum Aquae*. This is despite the original painting of Apelles depicting Venus emerging from the sea. It is interesting that in a town which created its own water-related Venus types (*Venus Pescatrice* and *Venus Pompeiana*), the marine setting for this type is omitted. This Venus type reflects the goddess' role as goddess of beauty as she dresses her hair, is never fully clothed, and 67% of artworks featuring this type include a mirror.

'Venus at her Toilet' also highlights the role of Venus as goddess of beauty, evidenced by Venus being at her toilet, the type of scenes she features in (not just 'Toilet of Venus' scenes but also in a beauty competition – the 'Competition Between the Deities of Light'), and given that this type is always naked or semi-naked. 80% of representations of this type combine it with *Venus Anadyomene*, which also represents Venus as goddess of beauty, so these types are compatible.

The procession scene on the façade of IX.7.1 depicts the 'Venus Seated on a Throne' type. The figure on the throne has often been identified as Cybele, but I have identified it as Venus because: she wears a walled crown (which Venus wears as patron deity of Pompeii); she sits on a starred throne (representing Venus' role as the evening star); she holds a golden branch (Venus was often described as 'golden' in ancient sources, and this could represent myrtle); sphinxes flank the throne (associated with the throne of Aphrodite); there is a bust of Bacchus nearby (Venus and Bacchus were both important to the economy of Pompeii, as patron deity of the town and seafarers, and god of viticulture respectively); the enthroned figure appears to be associated with the figure of *Venus Pompeiana* on the opposite side of the entrance (both wear the same shade of purple); and a procession of Venus would be likely in Pompeii, given her role as patron deity, whereas there is no evidence for the public worship of Cybele in the town. Although this representation of Venus shares some similarities with the *Venus Pompeiana* type, with Venus in full regalia, wearing the walled crown and holding a sceptre and a branch of myrtle, this representation does not meet the criteria for the *Venus Pompeiana* type in terms of pose – she is not standing or holding her right arm across her breast. Aside from this one façade painting, 'Venus Seated on a Throne' exclusively occurs in domestic contexts, and rarely in large/medium rooms compared with other Venus types.

The ‘Venus Holding a Fan or Palm’ type represented Venus with symbols of femininity. The palm associated Venus with victory – perhaps as the victor in the ‘Judgement of Paris’ narrative, as *Venus Victrix*, or more generally.

There are also some interesting elements in less common Venus types (those with four or less examples), despite these having too few numbers for any conclusions to be more than speculative.

Venus Pudica in VII.9.33 (a possible *fullonica*) appears on a *lararium* painting with a masonry basin directly in front of it, presumably to protect the water supply. Given that Venus’ powers are being invoked, it perhaps calls into question Blinkenberg’s (1933: 44) theory that this Venus type represents Venus covering her body, as this would be a passive Venus type.

‘Venus on a Seashell’ always occurs in domestic contexts and garden areas. This is probably because it features in an outdoor scene, which would be appropriate in gardens, and also because this location offered the extra space needed for such a long representation of Venus which was not available in other room types.

One of the three representations of ‘Venus as a Star’ occurs on a ceiling, which is appropriate for this type as Venus is floating.

The two representations of the ‘Venus Caricature’ type both occur within the same frieze (probably depicting the story of the Minotaur) in I.10.4. These caricatures contrast with the more formal depictions of deities in their domains in other rooms in the same house.

The range of 15 Venus types in Pompeii demonstrates that there was great variety in how Venus was represented, with different types highlighting her different roles. Sometimes the location of these various types further emphasises these roles, as in the case of *Venus Pompeiana*. The relationship between Venus types and their location is further addressed in Chapter 6.

Chapter 6: Location, Decoration and Room Function

6.1 Introduction

My aim in this chapter is to quantify which Venus types and scenes featuring Venus in Pompeii are represented in individual room types (and areas within the rooms), investigate why this might be, and assess whether artworks featuring Venus vary depending on whether they occur in public or domestic contexts. I examine artworks within domestic contexts first (Sections 6.2 and 6.3), and then those from public ones and those on façades (Section 6.4) to compare and contrast them.

The relative frequency of various room types in Pompeian houses needs to be established in order to understand the distribution of artworks featuring Venus across these room types. For instance, if Venus occurs more often in a room type which is particularly common, this is less significant than if Venus occurs more often in a comparatively less common room type. I use Allison's (2004b) sample of 30 Pompeian houses as an indicator of the number of occurrences of room types within Pompeian houses (Section 6.2.1). I then compare this with the number of occurrences of Venus representations in different room types to determine whether artworks featuring Venus were concentrated in particular types of room (Section 6.2.2).

I have grouped room types together as 'predominantly reception' and 'predominantly non-reception' areas to make clearer comparisons by grouping them in just two ways, based on the size and openness of the room and its structural features rather than its function (my criteria for this are explained in Section 6.2.3). I then compare the number of Venus types and scenes featuring Venus in predominantly reception and non-reception areas (Section 6.2.4.1), in various room types (Sections 6.2.4–6.2.6), and on each wall, zone, and field of wall (Section 6.3) to ascertain if there are any trends and to examine whether the area, room type, or the artwork's location within the room may have influenced its content.

Venus was the patron deity of Pompeii and thus I would expect her to feature prominently in both domestic and public contexts. In Section 6.4, I compare artworks featuring Venus from public contexts with those from domestic contexts in relation to various categories (such as the type of area, and figures depicted with Venus). This

enables me to examine whether artworks featuring Venus varied in terms of content and location outside the house to inside the house.

I identified five Venus representations as located in both public and domestic contexts as the function of these buildings appears to have changed from a house to a public building or vice versa²⁹. It is therefore not ascertainable whether these paintings date to its period as a domestic house or when it had a public function. These are included in my database (Appendix B1) but not my analyses as if I considered them alongside those from public contexts, I would also have to consider them alongside those from domestic contexts, and each of these five artworks featuring Venus would be included twice.

In this chapter, I give percentages to the nearest full number for ease of discussion, except for tables 6.1–6.3 where figures are given to one decimal place to avoid the appearance of rounding errors.

6.2 Domestic Context: Room Types

In this section, the percentage of occurrences of each particular room type within Pompeian houses is compared with the percentage of occurrences of all Venus representations in Pompeian domestic contexts. This demonstrates whether certain room types occur more often in the dataset simply because these rooms occur frequently in Pompeian houses or because they were significant for the depiction of Venus. Specific Venus or scene types are then analysed in relation to different room types to discover if the location of an artwork influenced the type of Venus or scene chosen, or vice versa.

I do not discuss specific Venus and scene types if there is little to note about them, or just one example of the type exists in Pompeii. I sometimes use the Latin nomenclature for room types to avoid confusion and to enable comparisons to be made with the works of scholars who use these terms, though this should not be considered as

²⁹ Two of these occur in VI.8.20 and one in VI.14.21/22, each a *fullonica* at the time of the eruption, but the decoration may date from when it was a house. These houses may have continued to be inhabited in their role as *fullonicae*, indeed Flohr (2013: 196) argues that ‘the vast majority of all *atrium* houses with a workshop were not only inhabited but also maintained a primarily domestic character’. Flohr (2013: 198–199) gives evidence of this being the case for both VI.8.20 and VI.14.21/22. Of the remaining two Venus representations located in both public and domestic contexts: one occurs in VIII.2.17–21, which was previously a house but the buildings were undergoing amalgamation at the time of the eruption, and the other occurs in IX.8.3/7, which was originally part of a *caupona* but was later made part of a house.

a functional interpretation of these rooms (where Latin nomenclature is used, the room types that they refer to are also given).

6.2.1 Percentages of Different Room Types Within Houses in Pompeii

Before the distribution of Venus representations can be analysed, the number of occurrences of room types within houses needs to be examined. Allison's (2004b) database of 30 *atrium* houses in Pompeii is used as a sample for this, as counting the number of rooms of each type in all Pompeian houses would be a research project in itself. Although Allison's focus is exclusively on *atrium* houses and my study uses other types of houses too, this sample is probably representative of houses in Pompeii, and is a large enough sample of houses to establish a baseline.

Table 6.1: The frequency of each room type and corresponding percentage within Allison's (2004b) sample of 30 Pompeian houses

Room Type	Number of Rooms of Each Type within Allison's Sample	Percentage of Rooms of Each Type within Allison's Sample
1	37	4.3%
2	9	1.1%
3	35	4.1%
4	130	15.2%
5	31	3.6%
6	34	4.0%
7	33	3.9%
8	63	7.4%
9	45	5.3%
10	22	2.6%
11	55	6.4%
12	70	8.2%
13	22	2.6%
14	44	5.1%
15	11	1.3%
16	78	9.1%
17	24	2.8%
18	15	1.8%
19	10	1.2%
20	11	1.3%
21	19	2.2%
22	58	6.8%
Total	856	100%

Table 6.1 demonstrates how many times each room type occurs within Allison's sample of 30 Pompeian houses (based on Allison's 2004b database). Small, closed

rooms (types 4 and 12) are the most common room types in these houses, with 200 of 856 (23%) rooms of these types. Large, medium rooms (types 6, 10 and 11) are less frequent, with 111 of 856 (13%) rooms of these types.

6.2.2 The Distribution of Venus Representations Across Room Types

There are 162 representations of Venus within domestic contexts in Pompeii. For five of these, there is no information as to which room they occurred in, thus leaving 157 where the room type can be identified.

In table 6.2, the number of occurrences of each room type in Allison's (2004b) sample and their corresponding percentages are compared with the number of Venus representations in each room type, and their corresponding percentages. If the percentage of Venus representations in each room type is higher than the percentage of rooms of each type in Allison's (2004b) sample, this suggests that Venus was particularly popular in this room type. Conversely, if the percentage of Venus representations in each room type is lower than the percentage of rooms of each type, this suggests that Venus was less common in this room type.

Table 6.2: The frequency of each room type and corresponding percentage within Allison's (2004b) sample of 30 Pompeian houses. This is compared with the frequency and percentage of Venus representations in each room type.

Room Type	Number of rooms of each type within Allison's sample	Percentage of rooms of each type within Allison's sample	Number of Venus representations in each room type	Percentage of Venus representations in each room type
1	37	4.3%	0	0.0%
2	9	1.1%	0	0.0%
3	35	4.1%	7	4.5%
4	130	15.2%	25	15.9%
5	31	3.6%	7	4.5%
6	34	4.0%	15	9.6%
7	33	3.9%	18	11.5%
8	63	7.4%	0	0.0%
9	45	5.3%	10	6.4%
10	22	2.6%	16	10.2%
11	55	6.4%	37	23.6%
12	70	8.2%	11	7.0%
13	22	2.6%	5	3.2%
14	44	5.1%	1	0.6%
15	11	1.3%	0	0.0%
16	78	9.1%	2	1.3%
17	24	2.8%	0	0.0%
18	15	1.8%	0	0.0%

19	10	1.2%	0	0.0%
20	11	1.3%	0	0.0%
21	19	2.2%	3	1.9%
22	58	6.8%	0	0.0%
Total	856	100%	157	100%

6.2.2.1 Room Types Where Venus Representations Do Not Occur

Venus representations are absent in room types 1, 8, 17 and 19 (entranceways, corridors and stairways). This was perhaps because, generally, detailed scenes would be less desirable in these room types as they were transition areas rather than areas where inhabitants and guests would stay for any length of time.

Type 2 rooms (rooms leading directly off the front entranceway) are the least common types of room in Allison's sample, with just nine examples over six houses (Allison 2004a: 65). Only one example of a type 2 room included painted wall decoration in Allison's sample, so the absence of Venus representations in this room type is not significant.

Venus' absence from type 15 rooms (latrines) is also unsurprising as Jansen's study reveals that Pompeii has few decorated toilets, with these mostly having 'purely functional' decoration – 'a dark dado to hide dirt and damp and a white upper area to make the space seem lighter and brighter', and rarely including paintings of humanoid figures³⁰ (Jansen 1993: esp. 32).

There is an absence of Venus images in type 18 rooms (secondary gardens or courtyards), probably because secondary gardens received less decorative attention than main garden areas (type 9 rooms). Indeed, Allison's (2004b) sample of 30 Pompeian houses revealed just 15 rooms of type 18, of which 29% had wall-paintings³¹ (four of 14 where the presence or not of wall-paintings can be ascertained³²). This is in comparison to 45 rooms of type 9 in her sample (Allison 2004b)³³, of which 62% had wall-paintings³⁴.

³⁰ Though there were paintings of Fortuna in four Pompeian toilets.

³¹ Though Allison (2004a: 108) states there are 13 rooms of type 18.

³² From Allison's (2004b) descriptions of each room of this type, four had wall-paintings, 10 did not have wall-paintings (including two with a painted socle only), and for one she did not state whether or not the room featured wall-paintings.

³³ Though Allison (2004a: 84) states there are 33 rooms of type 9.

³⁴ 26 of 42 where the presence or not of wall-paintings can be ascertained: From Allison's (2004b) descriptions of each room of this type, 26 had wall-paintings, 16 did not have wall-paintings, and for three she did not state whether or not the room featured wall-paintings.

This study considers shops attached to houses (Allison's room type 20) as public spaces, so they are excluded from this discussion of domestic room types.

The lack of Venus representations in type 22 rooms is due to a lack of survival or adequate recording of upper-floor artworks due to the collapse of many upper floors in the eruption.

6.2.2.2 The Redistributed Percentages of Room Types

Comparing the distribution of Venus types with all room types would include room types where there is typically no decoration. Therefore, the percentage of Venus representations in each room type should ideally be compared with the percentage of decorated rooms of each type to establish whether Venus was more common in particular room types. Allison (2004b) identifies 856 rooms in her sample of 30 Pompeian houses. Although she includes descriptions of each room, which sometimes include its state of decoration, she does not give this information for every room in her sample as the material culture is her focus rather than the artworks. Thus, I use room types which feature at least one representation of Venus as an indicator of which room types were decorated. Although this could be considered circular, this includes room *types* which feature Venus rather than the rooms themselves. This approach seems reasonably accurate. For instance, eight room types are excluded as being infrequently decorated (1, 2, 8, 15, 17, 18, 19, 22). Of these, only one type 2 room in Allison's sample has painted wall decoration; type 15 rooms are rarely decorated; type 18 rooms mostly have no painted decoration; and type 22 rooms tend not to survive so their decoration cannot typically be ascertained (see Section 6.2.2.1). Entrances, corridors, and stairways (types 1, 8, 17, and 19) could include decoration however.

Thus, to provide a better model for comparison, in table 6.3, I only include room types in which artworks featuring Venus occur and therefore I recalculate the percentage of rooms of each type as a proportion of 618 rooms, rather than the 856 in table 6.2. The result is that the percentage of room types as a proportion of 618 rooms is much closer to the percentage of Venus representations in each room type.

Table 6.3: The numbers and percentages of each room type within Allison's (2004b) sample of 30 Pompeian houses in comparison to Venus representations in each room type (excluding room types where Venus does not occur). 'Predominantly Reception Areas' are highlighted in green; 'Predominantly Non-Reception Areas' in red; and those where the room needs to be considered individually rather than as a type in blue (discussed later).

Room Type	Number of rooms of each type within Allison's sample	Redistributed percentage of rooms of each type within Allison's sample	Number of Venus representations in each room type	Percentage of Venus representations in each room type
3	35	5.7%	7	4.5%
4	130	21.0%	25	15.9%
5	31	5.0%	7	4.5%
6	34	5.5%	15	9.6%
7	33	5.3%	18	11.5%
9	45	7.3%	10	6.4%
10	22	3.6%	16	10.2%
11	55	8.9%	37	23.6%
12	70	11.3%	11	7.0%
13	22	3.6%	5	3.2%
14	44	7.1%	1	0.6%
16	78	12.6%	2	1.3%
21	19	3.1%	3	1.9%
Total	618	100%	157	100%

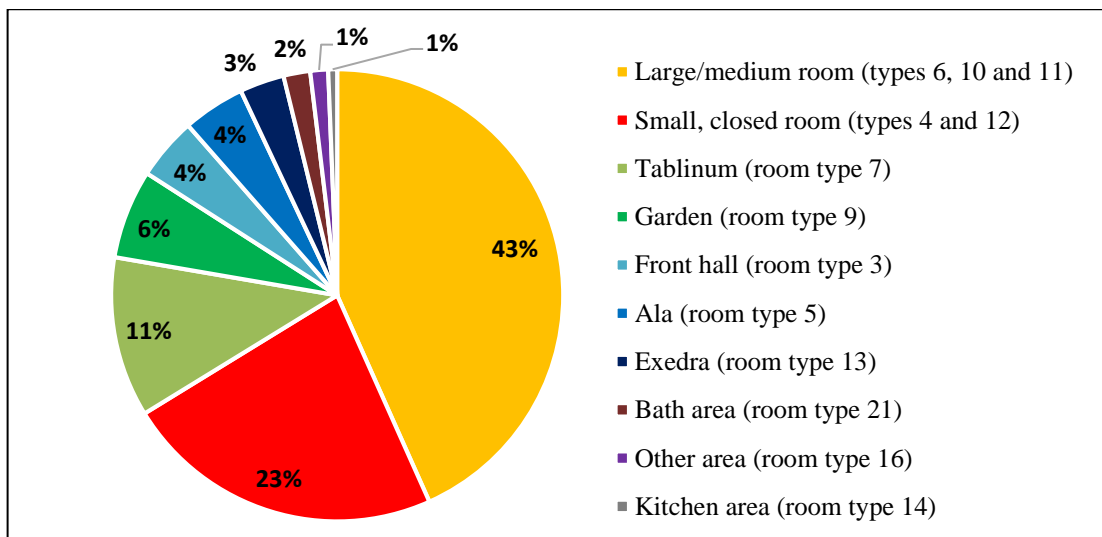


Figure 6.1: Percentage of all Venus representations in domestic contexts according to room type – 2% rounding error

6.2.2.3 Types of Room Where Venus is Particularly Common

With this adjustment, large/medium rooms (room types 6, 10 and 11) now comprise 111 of 618 (18%) rooms in Pompeian houses. However, 68 of 157 (43%) Venus representations in domestic contexts occur in these types of large/medium rooms (fig. 6.1). This indicates that artworks featuring Venus are particularly common in these room types compared with the occurrence of these room types in Pompeian houses (the percentage is more than double). However, this could be explained if these kinds of reception room, traditionally considered as *triclinia*, received more detailed decoration than other areas of the house.

Type 7 rooms comprise 5% of the rooms in Allison's sample (33 of 618 – 5%). 18 of the 157 (11%) Venus representations in domestic contexts occur in type 7 rooms. This means that the percentage of Venus representations in type 7 rooms is more than double the percentage of this room type within Pompeian houses. Thus, Venus occurs more often in this room type than would be expected.

6.2.2.4 Types of Room Where Venus is Particularly Uncommon

36 of the 157 Venus representations in the dataset for this study (23%) occur in small, closed rooms (room types 4 and 12). Small, closed rooms comprise 200 of 618 rooms (32%) in Allison's sample of 30 Pompeian houses (2004b)³⁵. Thus, Venus is proportionally less common in small, closed rooms in comparison to the occurrence of this room type within Allison's sample of houses.

However, for 182 of these 200 small, closed rooms (91%), it is possible to ascertain how many were decorated³⁶. 111 of these 182 rooms (61%) were decorated (Allison 2004a: 71–76; 94–98)³⁷. If the percentage of Venus representations in these

³⁵ The number of rooms is taken from Allison's (2004b) database rather than her analysis (2004a: 71, 94–98) due to discrepancies between them. The database is given preference because it is the source material for Allison's analysis.

³⁶ There are 18 rooms of types 4 and 12 which do not have ascertainable decoration. Allison (2004a: 71 & 94) gives six instances where the decoration of room type 4 is not ascertainable, and 11 for room type 12. An additional two were missed out in relation to room type 4 in Allison (2004a: 71) compared with Allison (2004b) – compare 128 and 130. This suggests that 19 rooms of these types do not have ascertainable decoration. However, Allison (2004a: 95–96) counts 33 decorated rooms of room type 12, with 27 undecorated, and 11 with no record of decoration – adding up to 71 rather than the 70 in the dataset (Allison 2004b). This would make 18 rooms without ascertainable decoration.

³⁷ 78 type 4 rooms are decorated (excluding the six with undocumented decoration, which Allison categorises as decorated – Allison 2004a: 71) and 33 type 12 rooms (Allison 2004a: 95). There are 44

room types (36 of 157 – 23%) is instead compared with the percentage of these room types which were decorated (111 of 618 – 18%), Venus is revealed to proportionally occur more frequently in room types 4 and 12. Unfortunately, the ratio of decorated to undecorated rooms of each type is not given by Allison for other room types so this can only be ascertained for small, closed rooms. To make accurate comparisons between room types the same methodology needs to be used to establish whether they were decorated; as this more detailed information is only available for room types 4 and 12, comparisons cannot be made with other room types so instead I still use the percentages given for these room types in table 6.3.

Type 14 rooms (cooking areas) include just one representation of Venus, despite comprising 7% of all room types. Type 14 rooms would be unlikely to contain detailed paintings as the smoke from the hearth would have continually damaged them. Indeed, Vitruvius (*On Architecture*, 7.4.4) recommends avoiding detailed paintings in winter *triclinia* due to smoke damage, and this would surely have been worse in cooking areas. Thus, the hearth in type 14 rooms would perhaps prevent the location of paintings in this room, except in the case of *lararium* paintings, where it would aid burnt offerings. Indeed, the only representation of Venus in this room type is within a *lararium* painting.

Just two Venus representations occur in type 16 rooms (other rooms outside the main front hall/garden complex). One of these representations is in a *lararium* painting, which explains its location in a domestic bakery (room 16 of VI.11.8–10). The other is in a hall on the lower floor (room 62 of VII.16.22).

6.2.2.5 Types of Room Where Venus Occurs as Proportionally Often as the Room Type

Type 3 rooms (front halls) have a slightly lower percentage of Venus representations (4.5%) in comparison to the percentage of this room type within houses (5.7%). However, this could be explained by these areas tending not to depict narrative scenes, instead depicting still life paintings, landscape scenes, busts, and depictions of real-life activities, such as theatre productions.

type 4 rooms and 27 type 12 rooms which are undecorated (Allison 2004a: 73 & 96), once the 11 rooms which do not have ascertainable decoration are excluded (Allison 2004a: 94–95).

4.5% and 3.2% of Venus representations occur in room types 5 and 13 respectively. This is very close to the proportion of these room types within Pompeian houses (5.0% and 3.6%).

Venus is associated with gardens (see Chapter 4.1.2) and bathing (Homer, *Odyssey*, 8.364–365; *Homeric Hymn*, 5.58–67; Ovid, *Fasti*, 4.133–144; Bernoulli 1873: 329–330) and so might be expected to occur more often in areas relating to these associations. However, the percentage of Venus representations that occur in gardens (type 9 rooms – 6.4%) is lower than the percentage of this room type within houses (7.3%). Thus, Venus representations actually occur slightly less often in gardens than could be expected. Similarly, Venus representations are slightly less common in bath areas of houses (type 21 rooms), as the percentage of Venus representations that occur in this room type (1.9%) is lower than the percentage of this room type within Pompeian houses (3.1%). Therefore, while the percentages are similar, Venus representations actually occur marginally less frequently in areas relating to her associations with gardens and bathing. Statues of Venus also occur infrequently in gardens, judging by Allison's sample (2004b), where just one statue of Venus was discovered out of all 30 houses in the sample, and this was in an *atrium* (in I.11.6) rather than a garden area. Jashemski (1979: 125–128) mentions several statues and statuettes of Venus in gardens within domestic contexts in Pompeii (for instance in I.2.17; I.11.12; VII.12.23; and VII.3.6). However, as she does not offer a comprehensive list, this means any resulting conclusions about the popularity of Venus in gardens drawn from these examples should be treated cautiously.

6.2.2.6 Summary

Table 6.4 demonstrates the room types in which Venus occurs proportionally more frequently compared with the proportion of each room type in Pompeian houses. Room types with the difference highlighted in green are those in which Venus representations occur more frequently than would be expected (type 7 rooms and large/medium rooms – types 6, 10 and 11). Room types with the difference highlighted in orange/red are those in which Venus representations occur less frequently than expected (room types 14 and 16, and small, closed rooms – types 4 and 12). Those with the difference highlighted in yellow are room types where the percentage of Venus

representations roughly corresponds to the redistributed percentage of rooms of each type within Allison’s sample (room types 3, 5, 9, 13, and 21).

Table 6.4: This table demonstrates the room types in which artworks featuring Venus occur (percentages are given to one decimal place). The colour scale runs from green (artworks featuring Venus which occur proportionally more frequently than expected) to red (those which occur less frequently than expected).

Room Type	Number of rooms of each type within Allison’s sample	Redistributed percentage of rooms of each type within Allison’s sample (A)	Number of Venus representations in each room type	Percentage of Venus representations in each room type (B)	B-A
11	55	8.9%	37	23.6%	14.7%
10	22	3.6%	16	10.2%	6.6%
7	33	5.3%	18	11.5%	6.2%
6	34	5.5%	15	9.6%	4.1%
13	22	3.6%	5	3.2%	-0.4%
5	31	5.0%	7	4.5%	-0.5%
9	45	7.3%	10	6.4%	-0.9%
21	19	3.1%	3	1.9%	-1.2%
3	35	5.7%	7	4.5%	-1.2%
12	70	11.3%	11	7.0%	-4.3%
4	130	21.0%	25	15.9%	-5.1%
14	44	7.1%	1	0.6%	-6.5%
16	78	12.6%	2	1.3%	-11.3%
Total	618	100%	157	100%	N/A

6.2.3 Grouping Room Types

As the numbers of Venus representations in individual room types are quite small, it would be useful to group these room types in just two ways to make clearer comparisons. Previous scholars have divided Roman domestic space in various ways including: ‘public’ and ‘private’ areas (see overview in Tuori 2015); ‘grand’ and ‘humble’ areas (in addition to public/private – Wallace-Hadrill 1994); ‘static’ and ‘dynamic’ areas (Scagliarini Corlàita 1974–6); and ‘stationary’ and ‘transitional’ areas (Leach 2004). These scholars usually acknowledge that these existed on a spectrum rather than there being a clear dichotomy between the two (for instance, see Wallace-Hadrill 1994: esp. 17 & 38). A room’s place on this spectrum could change depending on the season or time of day.

In this section, I first discuss the evidence for multifunctional rooms and spaces as this affects how the room types can be grouped. Then I summarise Adams’ (2006) grouping of rooms as ‘potential entertainment spaces’ as he also uses Allison’s (2004a

and 2004b) room types. Then I discuss the criteria for how I group room types: ‘predominantly reception areas’ and ‘predominantly non-reception areas’ (table A2.3 gives the grouping for each room type). I identify these areas based on the structure of the room type (the openness of a room, its size, and structural features) rather than its function.

6.2.3.1 Multifunctional Rooms and Spaces

Roman houses generally had multifunctional rooms which could be used for different purposes depending on the season or time of day (Pliny, *Letters*, 2.17.10; Richardson 1983: 62–64; Allison 1993; Laurence 1994: 122–132; Berry 1997: esp. 194; George 1997: 302–303; Nevett 1997: 291–292; Allison 2001: 192). The ancient sources corroborate this, for instance, Pliny (*Letters*, 2.17.10) describes a room in his Laurentine villa which could be used as either a large *cubiculum* or a moderate-sized *cenatio*. There is also archaeological evidence for this multifunctionality: Allison’s (2004a and 2004b) study of the material culture in Pompeian households revealed that individual room types often contained a diversity of finds, indicating that a variety of activities could take place within a single room type. As Allison (1993: 2) argues, we cannot assume that rooms had unchanging functions and that the Romans separated domestic activities as we might in the modern day.

As Laurence (1994: 122–132) argues, activities in Roman houses were probably organised temporally – rooms were probably used for different purposes and by different people at different times of day. For instance, in elite households, the *salutatio* would take place in the morning, during which patrons would receive clients in their houses. Patrons would then leave their homes and likely go to the forum (to conduct public business) and later perhaps go to the baths, returning to the house for the evening meal where they would again receive guests. It is likely that the rooms used by the patron for the morning *salutatio*, or for receiving guests in the evening, would also have been used throughout the day for other purposes by other members of the household.

Mols (1999: 137–139) considers some of the wooden furniture from Herculaneum to have been multifunctional, with some couches used for both dining and sleeping. This would suggest that rooms were also multifunctional. However, his evidence for this is not always clear. For instance, he states that the *biclinium* in the Casa a Graticcio was used for sleeping in addition to dining due to the ‘find

circumstances' (Mols 1999: 137), but does not state how the finds support his argument, simply that they '[do] not exclude the possibility that people also spent the night [t]here' (Mols 1999: 152–153).

Wooden furniture was relatively lightweight and portable. It could therefore be moved both between rooms (as and when required), enabling rooms to be multifunctional, and also within rooms, which may have been useful in some circumstances. For instance, diners may have needed to move the table to reach their couch, and a moveable table would also enable easier cleaning of the room (Mols 1999: 129).

There is evidence for Roman houses having temporary partitions, such as curtains and screens (many references in Pliny, see George 1997: 317–318; Proudfoot 2013: 93 & 100). We have direct evidence for a wooden partition separating the *atrium* from another room in the Casa del Tramezzo di Legno (III.4–12), Herculaneum (De Kind 1998: 105). Temporary partitions could have also divided space within the same room, changing large reception areas into smaller non-reception areas if needed, and could be moved for use in different rooms at different times. This can be suggested by a room's wall-paintings. For instance, I suggest that the panel structure on the north wall of room 8 of VII.1.25/47 (fig. 6.11) perhaps indicates the presence of a temporary partition. In this example, the wall decoration is clearly separated into two sections – two panels on the left and three on the right. If there was a partition, the three panels to the right of it would have their own central panel. The doorway on the south wall of the room is set to one side, so would not have been interrupted by a partition if one existed.

6.2.3.2 Adams and 'Potential Entertainment Spaces'

Adams (2006) uses the room types identified by Allison (2004a and 2004b) to identify rooms in villas as 'potential entertainment space[s]' (Adams 2006: 2). Adams identifies six room types as having a potential entertainment function for the following reasons (Adams 2006: 2–3):

- type 6 rooms as they are often finely decorated with a trend towards dining;
- type 7 rooms as they are accessible and have a central location;
- type 9 rooms given their use for display (though he acknowledges that some served a utilitarian function);

- and types 10, 11 and 13 as they are decorated and likely food preparation or dining areas.

I disagree with Adams (2006) that the decoration of a room can identify a particular function for it, especially given the multifunctional nature of rooms (see Section 6.2.3.1). Thus, I use Allison's (2004a and 2004b) room types, which are identified based on their openness, size, and structural features, in isolation from the decoration and material culture to ascertain whether a room was likely to have been used as a reception area.

Adams (2006) identifies rooms used for 'entertainment' rather than for 'reception' purposes. Although these two categories could overlap, reception areas include more room types as these include areas where guests were received for business purposes, such as for the *salutatio*, in addition to those used for entertainment purposes. Using my own criteria as detailed in Section 6.2.3.3, I have identified all six room types which Adams identifies as having a potential entertainment function (types 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, and 13) as 'predominantly reception areas', in addition to others (types 3, 5, and 21). The room types which I have identified as 'predominantly non-reception' areas are room types 1, 4, 8, 12, 14, 15, and 17; with room types 2, 16, 18, 19, and 22 considered on an individual basis (discussed below). As previously mentioned, I consider type 20 rooms to be from a public rather than a domestic context so these are not discussed here.

6.2.3.3 'Predominantly Reception' and 'Predominantly Non-Reception' Areas

In this study, I categorise rooms as 'predominantly reception' or 'predominantly non-reception' areas. The reception level of a room ranged from 'reception' to 'non-reception' along a spectrum, depending on the season or time of day, but the structure of a room type suggests whether it was designed to be *predominantly* one or the other. For instance, as discussed below, small, closed rooms suggest a 'predominantly non-reception' function, whereas larger rooms lend themselves to a 'predominantly reception' function. I therefore categorise these rooms as 'predominantly reception' or 'predominantly non-reception' areas based on their structure (how open the room is and its size), as this reveals the potential capacity for a room, and the presence of structural features which suggest a clear function (such as domestic bakeries and kitchen areas indicating 'predominantly non-reception' areas). This avoids using decoration and

material culture to interpret the function of a room, as Adams (2006) does, since establishing the capacity of a room is not an interpretation of its function.

‘Predominantly Reception Areas’

Before I state my criteria for ‘predominantly reception areas’, I need to establish which rooms were used by guests. Front hall and garden areas would often be open to guests, even without an invitation (Vitruvius, *On Architecture*, 6.5.1; see Leach 2004: 21–40 for a detailed examination of the ancient textual evidence for this), and large rooms could be used for large gatherings. For very large gatherings, multiple rooms may have been used (Cicero, *Atticus*, 13.52.1–2). Guests invited to dinner with Trimalchio in Petronius’ *Satyricon* explored other areas of the house before dinner (see Wallace-Hadrill 1988: 44 for a summary of the experiences of these visitors). Indeed, in late antiquity, guests seem to have been able to visit other rooms in large houses, such as the library, before having dinner (Ellis 1997: 42 – Sidonius, *Letters*, 2.9; Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, 1.6.1). Pliny (*Letters*, 2.17.9) describes how a wing of his house was used by slaves and freedmen but most of the rooms in this area were ‘quite presentable enough to receive guests’. This suggests that guests were welcome in many areas of the house, and that rooms could have been used as reception areas even if this can no longer be ascertained from the archaeological remains.

In this study, I identify a room or space as a ‘predominantly reception area’ based on the following criteria: the room or space being either open (room types 5, 7, and 13); a medium/large room (room types 6 and 10); or both (room types 3, 9, and 11). Bath areas (type 21 rooms) also qualify as ‘predominantly reception areas’ as they were presumably used by guests as well as the family (Vitruvius, *On Architecture*, 6.5.1). Open rooms were probably designed as reception areas as they could be viewed by guests (partitions could be used to make these rooms more closed, but the open structure suggests that they were designed to serve a predominantly reception function). Medium or large rooms could support a large gathering of people and thus were probably designed as reception areas as they could provide the space necessary for entertainments such as singing, dancing and acrobatic displays, in addition to the required furniture (such as dining couches), and space for servants to pass through (Witts 2000: 293).

‘Predominantly Non-Reception Areas’

In this study, I identify a room or space as a ‘predominantly non-reception area’ based on the following criteria – if the room or space is a: transition area (room types 1, 8, 17); small, closed room (room types 4 and 12); kitchen area (room type 14); or a latrine (room type 15).

Although guests could pass through transition areas, such as entranceways, corridors and stairways (room types 1, 8, 17), they would not be received or entertained in these rooms. Similarly, guests may use the latrine (room type 15), but this was not a reception area. While guests could be received in small, closed rooms (room types 4 and 12) on a more intimate level (Riggsby 1997: 41–42), the structure would not physically allow for large gatherings.

Type 14 rooms contain cooking hearths and qualify as ‘predominantly non-reception areas’ based on practical reasons rather than more modern ideas as to reception areas for guests: for instance, type 14 rooms are unlikely reception areas as they would have been noisy and smoky due to cooking, and also given the availability of other rooms more suited to the reception of guests with furniture and more space. Foss (1994: 72) argues that cooking areas occur ‘with other service areas of the house’ near storerooms, latrines and stables based on the accounts of ancient authors. If this was the case, this would suggest that type 14 rooms were unlikely reception areas.

Room Types Assessed Individually

Room types 2 (those leading directly off the front entranceway), 16 (other rooms outside the main front-hall/garden complex, such as domestic bakeries), and 22 (upper floor rooms) are identified by Allison (2004a and 2004b) based on their location rather than structural elements (the openness of a room, its size, and structural features). Thus, for these room types, I assess each individual room, rather than the type as a whole, against my criteria for identifying ‘predominantly reception areas’ (the space being open, medium/large, or both) as the reception level cannot be generalised for the type.

I also consider secondary gardens (room type 18) and secondary entrances and courtyards (room type 19) on a case-by-case basis rather than as a type. Although these areas could be large and open, offering space to receive guests, Allison’s study has revealed that industrial activities were sometimes amongst their uses, and some were

possibly productive gardens (2004a: 108–110). Thus, I consider type 18 and 19 rooms to be ‘predominantly non-reception areas’ if they contain material culture suggesting an industrial function, and ‘predominantly reception areas’ if they do not.

6.2.3.4 Venus in ‘Predominantly Reception’ and ‘Predominantly Non-Reception’ Areas

Using Allison’s (2004b) sample (table 6.1), I have identified 296 rooms which are ‘predominantly reception areas’ (room types 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 13, 21); 379 rooms which are ‘predominantly non-reception areas’ (room types 1, 4, 8, 12, 14, 15, 17); 170 rooms which need to be considered individually (room types 2, 16, 18, 19, 22); and 11 shops (room type 20). When the shops (which are considered in this study as public rather than domestic areas) and the rooms which need to be considered individually are excluded, this leaves 44% ‘predominantly reception areas’ (296 of 675) and 56% ‘predominantly non-reception areas’ (379 of 675).

However, it is futile to compare the proportion of representations of Venus with the proportion of all areas of houses, including those which are not decorated. Thus, to ascertain the percentage of decorated ‘predominantly reception’ and ‘predominantly non-reception’ areas in Pompeian houses, I only consider the 618 rooms in Allison’s (2004b) sample where Venus features in at least one room of each type (see Section 6.2.2.2 and table 6.3). 540 of these are room types which I consider either ‘predominantly reception’ or ‘predominantly non-reception’ areas without analysing each individual room. The remaining 78 are type 16 rooms where the reception level needs to be analysed for each individual room rather than the type as a whole. Using Allison’s (2004b) sample in this way, I categorise 55% of rooms as decorated ‘predominantly reception areas’, compared with 45% decorated ‘predominantly non-reception areas’ (table 6.5).

Table 6.5: The number and percentage of ‘predominantly reception’ and ‘predominantly non-reception’ areas in the 540 rooms in Allison’s (2004b) sample from room types which feature Venus (excluding type 16 rooms)

Type of Area	Number of Rooms	Percentage
Predominantly Reception Area	296	55%
Predominantly Non-Reception Area	244	45%
Total	540	100%

Decorated ‘predominantly non-reception areas’ of the house (45%) are thus proportionally less frequent than decorated ‘predominantly reception areas’ (55%). Representations of Venus are also proportionally less frequent in ‘predominantly non-reception areas’ though by a larger margin. 119 of 157 artworks featuring Venus (76%) occur in ‘predominantly reception areas’ of the house, whereas 38 (24%) occur in ‘predominantly non-reception areas’ (fig. 6.2). *Venus Pescatrice* is the only Venus type to be more often represented in ‘predominantly non-reception areas’ of the house (see Chapter 5.2.4). Sometimes other Venus types occur almost as often in ‘predominantly non-reception’ areas as in ‘predominantly reception’ ones, but these tend to be types with few examples in Pompeii, such as ‘Venus Tying her Sandal’, so are not statistically valid.

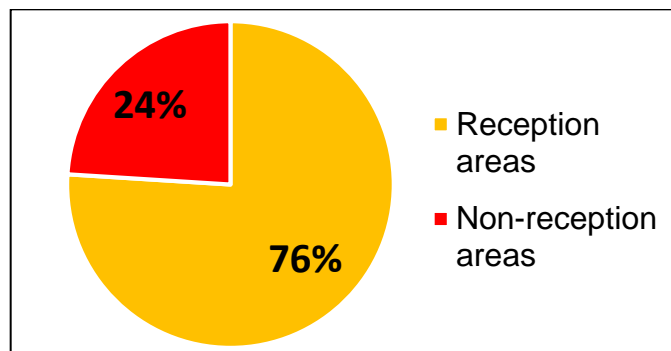


Figure 6.2: Percentage of Venus representations occurring in ‘predominantly reception’ and ‘predominantly non-reception’ areas in Pompeian houses

6.2.4 Frequency of Venus and Scene Types Within Room Types

Having established general patterns, we may then explore the distribution of particular Venus types (table 6.6) and scene types (table 6.7) within different room types. In some cases, the nature of the room influenced its decoration. For instance, in Pompeian houses, panel paintings occur less frequently in front halls (type 3 rooms). This was perhaps due to a lack of wall space as a result of multiple entranceways to rooms opening off them, or because people would have gathered here and blocked the visibility of these paintings (Leach 2004: 54), such as clients waiting to be received during the *salutatio* (if indeed they waited in this room type). Indeed, one of the two paintings of Venus in type 3 rooms within actual scenes (i.e. where the scene type is not ‘Unknown’ or ‘No Active Scene’) occur in the upper zone, perhaps for this reason. Other forms such as busts and still-life paintings occur in these halls instead. Thus, it is

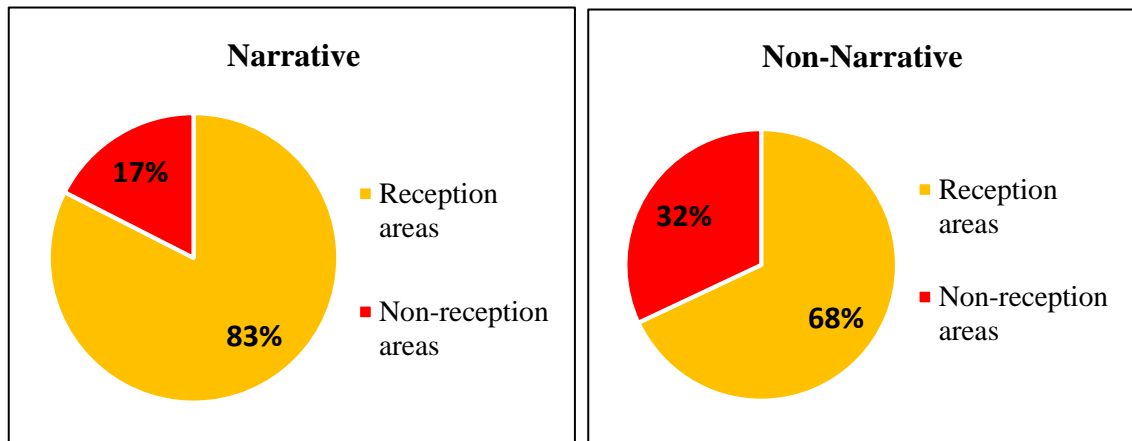
logical that busts of Venus occur more frequently than other Venus types in this room type. The relative dearth of narrative panels in type 3 rooms was perhaps also designed to encourage guests to continue through the house rather than linger in the entrance hall as Ling & Ling argue (2005: 94).

Table 6.6: Venus types in relation to room types (a single representation of Venus may encompass more than one Venus type)

Venus Type	Room Type														Unkn own	Total	
	3	4	5	6	7	9	10	11	12	13	14	16	21				
Venus Anadyomene (a)				1	1				1	1							4
Venus Anadyomene (b)		1		1				2	1								5
Bust of Venus	4	3	1	1	1		2	1	1								14
Venus Caricature													2				2
Venus Crouching				1													1
Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing	2	6	1	3	9	3	2	10	3	1						1	41
Venus Holding a Fan		2		1		2							1				6
Venus Holding a Palm								1						1			2
Venus Hovering				1													1
Venus Leaning on a Pillar		1	1		1	2	5	8		1			1	1			21
Venus Pescatrice		9	2	1	1		1	3	2							2	21
Venus Pompeiana	1			1		1	1	1		1	1	1					8
Venus Pudica	1			2													3
Venus on a Seashell						3											3
Venus Seated					1		4	1									6
Venus Seated on a Throne		1	1		3			1	1							1	8
Venus Sitting or Leaning on Rocks			1	1				1									3
Venus Standing					1		1	5	1	2							10
Venus as a Star		1															1
Venus at her Toilet		1		2				1	1								5
Venus Tying her Sandal		1					1										2
Venus with a Cupid on her Left Shoulder		2	1		1	1	1						1				7
Venus with a Cupid on her Right Shoulder	1	1	1	2			1		1								7
Venus with Cupids on Both Shoulders				1													1
Unknown					2	1		5	1							1	10

6.2.4.1 Scene Types in ‘Predominantly Reception’ and ‘Predominantly Non-Reception’ Areas

Although there are 162 Venus representations in Pompeian houses, two have an unidentifiable scene type, and five have an unidentifiable room type (table 6.7). Once these have been excluded, this leaves 81 narrative scenes and 74 non-narrative scenes.



Figures 6.3 and 6.4: Narrative scenes in ‘predominantly reception’ and ‘predominantly non-reception’ areas (left) compared with non-narrative scenes in ‘predominantly reception’ and ‘predominantly non-reception’ areas (right)

As mentioned in Section 6.2.3.4, Pompeian houses have proportionally more decorated ‘predominantly reception’ areas than ‘predominantly non-reception’ ones (55% to 45%), and Venus representations are also proportionally more common in ‘predominantly reception areas’ (76%), compared with ‘predominantly non-reception areas’ (24%). The majority of both narrative and non-narrative scenes featuring Venus occur in ‘predominantly reception areas’ (figs. 6.3 and 6.4)³⁸ which is reflective of the fact that the majority of decorated rooms in Pompeian houses are ‘predominantly reception areas’. Narrative scenes are more likely to occur in ‘predominantly reception areas’ compared with non-narrative scenes (compare 83% with 68%). This could perhaps be explained if, as Fredrick (1995: 266) argues, mythological paintings were used by house owners to display their education and culture to guests. This would suggest that narrative scenes were more suited to reception areas.

³⁸ 67 of 81 (83%) narrative scenes and 50 of 74 (68%) non-narrative scenes are from ‘predominantly reception areas’, where the room type can be ascertained.

In ‘predominantly non-reception areas’, non-narrative scenes featuring Venus are almost twice as common as narrative scenes featuring Venus, with 32% of non-narrative scenes in these areas compared with 17% of narrative scenes³⁹. This is largely due to the popularity of ‘Venus Fishing’ in small, closed rooms (room types 4 and 12), comprising 11 of the 24 non-narrative scenes featuring Venus (46%) in ‘predominantly non-reception areas’.

³⁹ 24 of 74 (32%) non-narrative scenes and 14 of 81 (17%) narrative scenes occur in ‘predominantly non-reception areas’.

Table 6.7: Number of each scene type featuring Venus in each room type

Type of Scene	Room Types														Total
	3	4	5	6	7	9	10	11	12	13	14	16	21	Unknown	
Narrative Scenes	2	9	3	8	14	3	7	24	5	3		1	2	2	83
Adonis Narrative (Adonis Wounded)		1				2		1						1	5
Adonis Narrative (Venus with Adonis)			1		2			3							6
Aeneas Narrative (Aeneas Wounded)				1											1
Aeneas Narrative (Venus Giving Arms to Aeneas)		1						1							2
Competition Between the Deities of Light				1	1		1	2	2	1		1			9
Love of Venus and Mars	2	6		2	7	1	2	9	3	1					33
Paris Narrative (Helen and Paris Narrative)		1			1		1								3
Paris Narrative (Judgement of Paris)				1	2		2	6						1	12
Punishment of Cupid			1		1										2
Other Narrative Scene			1	3			1	2		1			2		10
Non-Narrative Scenes	4	16	3	7	4	7	9	13	6	2	1	1	1	3	77
Venus Fishing		9	2	1	1		1	3	2					2	21
Nest of Cupids					1		1	1							3
Sale of Cupids								1							1
Venus in a Seashell						3									3
Toilet of Venus		1		1				1	1						4
Venus Tying her Sandal		1					1								2
Other Non-Narrative Scene		1				2	2	2		1		1			9
No Active Scene	4	4	1	5	2	2	4	5	3	1	1		1	1	34
Unknown	1		1												2
Total	7	25	7	15	18	10	16	37	11	5	1	2	3	5	162

6.2.4.2 Small, Closed Rooms (Room Types 4 and 12)

Proposed Functions of *Cubicula*

Scholars often consider *cubicula* to be bedrooms, drawing on Varro's description of how the word *cubiculum* is derived from the Latin verb *cubabant*, to 'lay down' (Varro, *On the Latin Language*, 5.162). Varro here refers to the origins of this word and even if this nomenclature was still used in Varro's period (the first century B.C.), the function of these rooms may have changed over time (Allison 2004a: 161). Many ancient authors describe *cubicula* as places for rest, sexual activity and adultery (see Riggsby 1997: 37–8 for a comprehensive list) and several ancient authors describe a *lectus* (a bed) in *cubicula* (see Nevett 1997: 290–1).

However, ancient authors also attest to *cubicula* being used for activities other than sleeping, including meeting clients, friends or businessmen (Cicero, *Pro Scauro*, 11.26; Pliny, *Letters*, 5.1.6 and 5.3.11; Wallace-Hadrill 1988: 59 n.44; Riggsby 1997: esp. 41–43). Furthermore, Allison's sample of 30 *atrium* houses in Pompeii uncovered surprisingly little evidence for sleeping in rooms conventionally identified as *cubicula*. Small, closed rooms (room types 4 and 12, *cubicula*) comprise nine of the 33 (27%) rooms with possible evidence for sleeping in Allison's sample (2004a: 134–5), however proportionally few *cubicula* include evidence of bedding.

Vitruvius (*On Architecture*, 6.5.1) does not describe the function of *cubicula*, but highlights that *cubicula*, along with *triclinia* and *balneae*, were more private areas of the house which guests would need an invitation to enter. Thus, he does not state that these were areas which guests could not enter, specifically intended for sleeping. Vitruvius (*On Architecture*, 6.4.1) also mentions that *cubicula* ideally should face east 'for their purpose demands the morning light', perhaps hinting that the morning *salutatio*, where the patron would meet his clients, took place in this room type.

Allison (2004a: 72 & 95–6) proposes that *cubicula* were used for private rather than communal activities, given the lack of evidence for cooking, eating, drinking and storage taking place in type 4 rooms; and the finds in type 12 rooms suggesting this room type was used for personal activities with hardly any evidence for sleeping, with fittings for beds found in just one or two rooms of this type in her sample. Although they appear to have served a more private purpose, type 4 rooms were apparently

infrequently used for sleeping⁴⁰. Given the number of *cubicula* in houses and the range of activities they encompassed, ‘*cubicula*’ was perhaps a more general term for rooms, as Nevett argues (1997: 291).

Love Scenes Featuring Venus in *Cubicula* (Room Types 4 and 12)

Perhaps as a result of *cubicula* being interpreted as bedrooms, and scholars often considering decoration to reflect the function of a room, some scholars have argued that love scenes and themes were popular in *cubicula*. Ling & Ling (2005: 94) argue that scenes associated with Venus, and love scenes more generally, were particularly common in *cubicula*, and Anguissola (2010: 435) argues that love themes played a prominent role in the decoration of *cubicula*.

If the majority of love scenes occur in *cubicula*, it could be expected that a high proportion of representations of the goddess of love would also occur in such rooms. However, my research has discovered that just 36 of 157 (23%) representations of Venus within domestic contexts occur in small, closed rooms (room types 4 and 12 – *cubicula*) where the room type can be ascertained (table 6.3). This is even more significant when compared with the percentage of these small, closed rooms in relation to other room types in the house which are decorated (32%, table 6.3). These room types occur more often than other types in the house, yet there is a notable lack of Venus representations in these rooms compared with others. This does not necessarily invalidate Ling and Ling’s (2005: 94) assumption regarding love scenes in *cubicula* as their hypothesis is not tested here in full. That is, scenes ‘associated’ with Venus are not investigated here unless Venus herself is depicted.

Love scenes comprise 48 of the 157 Venus representations in domestic contexts in Pompeii where the room type can be ascertained (31%)⁴¹. Just 10 of these 48 love scenes (21%) occur in small, closed rooms (*cubicula*, fig. 6.5). The largest proportion of love scenes occur in large/medium rooms (room types 6, 10 and 11 – 22 of 48 – 46%).

⁴⁰ Indeed, this room type in the Casa di M. Lucretius may have been used as storage space, given the varied nature of the artefacts found (Dwyer 1982: 115–6). Dwyer notes that there could have been furniture in these rooms made of perishable material, thus not surviving in the archaeological record. Unfortunately, this theory cannot be verified, and on balance the available evidence points towards *cubicula* not being used primarily as sleeping areas.

⁴¹ These scenes comprise ‘Venus with Adonis’; the ‘Love of Venus and Mars’; various ‘Helen and Paris’ narratives; ‘Echo and Narcissus’; the weddings of various deities; ‘Venus encouraging cupid to fire an arrow’; and ‘Venus encouraging a hero(?) to approach a woman’.

Love scenes occur in *tablina* (type 7 rooms) as often as in *cubicula* (10 of 48 – 21%). Thus, love scenes featuring Venus occur more often in non-*cubicula* room types than in so-called *cubicula*. Artworks featuring Venus touching or embracing one of her lovers (Mars or Adonis) rarely occur in small, closed rooms (just nine of the 39 artworks featuring this type in domestic contexts occur in room types 4 and 12, where the room type can be identified – 23%).

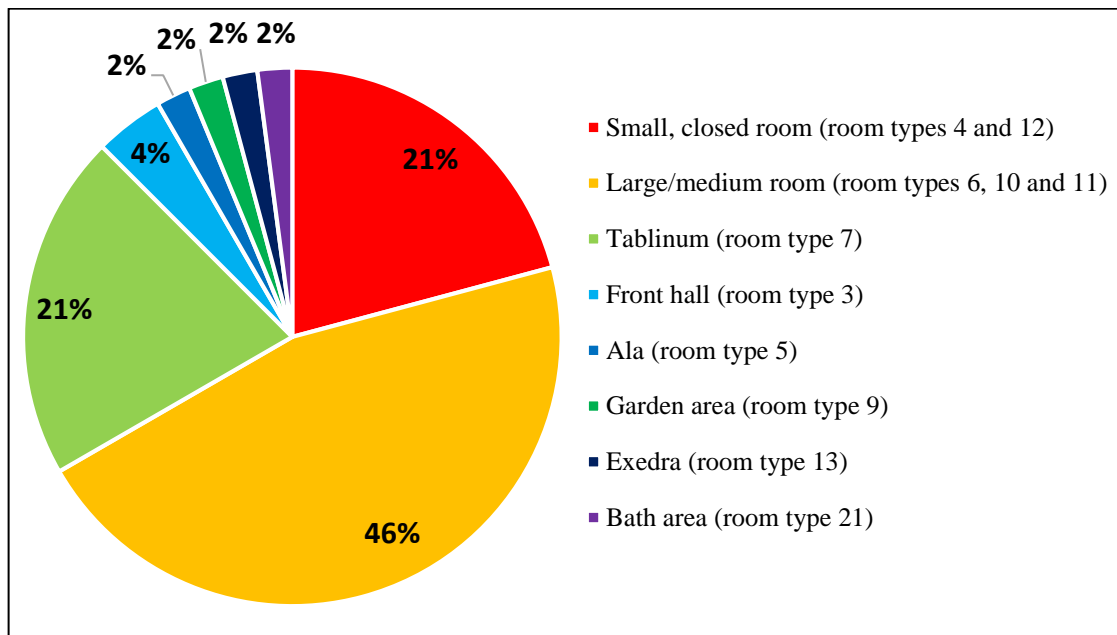


Figure 6.5: Chart showing the percentage of the 48 love scenes featuring Venus in each room type

In regard to love scenes in *cubicula*, Mayer specifies that non-mythological sex scenes (rather than more general love scenes) predominantly occur in *cubicula* as they are more private rooms for sleep, sex and private conversations (Mayer 2012a: 178). This may be more accurate than considering love scenes more generally as occurring in *cubicula* but is outside the scope of this study, which focuses on scenes featuring Venus rather than love scenes more generally.

Venus in *Cubicula* (Room Types 4 and 12)

Venus Pescatrice is represented in 11 of the 36 (31%) artworks featuring Venus in small, closed rooms (room types 4 and 12, fig. 6.6). Previous scholars have considered this type to occur exclusively within *cubicula* – small, closed rooms (de Vos

in *PPM II*: 1059). Arnold de Vos does not explain why he thinks this, but the likely explanation is that he perceived the scene as erotic, and interpreted *cubicula* as bedrooms (see Chapter 5.2.2 for the symbolic eroticism of the *Venus Pescatrice* type). I demonstrated in Chapter 5.2.4 that this Venus type occurs in other room types too, and also outside the house, with one in a shop (VI.14.28), one in the back room of a *caupona* (VI.10.1), one in a *caupona* which later became part of a house (IX.8.3/7), and one where the exact building cannot be ascertained (in region IX, to the east of *insulae* 5 and 6; see Appendix B1).

21 *Venus Pescatrice* representations occur within domestic contexts, and the room type can be identified for 19 of them. Out of these 19 representations, 11 occur in room types 4 and 12. Thus, *cubicula* (small, closed rooms) are the most common location for representations of *Venus Pescatrice*. However, this type does not occur exclusively within *cubicula*, with the remaining eight artworks from domestic contexts occurring in ‘predominantly reception areas’, such as large/medium rooms (types 6, 10 and 11), open-fronted areas off the front hall (room type 5), and *tablina* (room type 7).

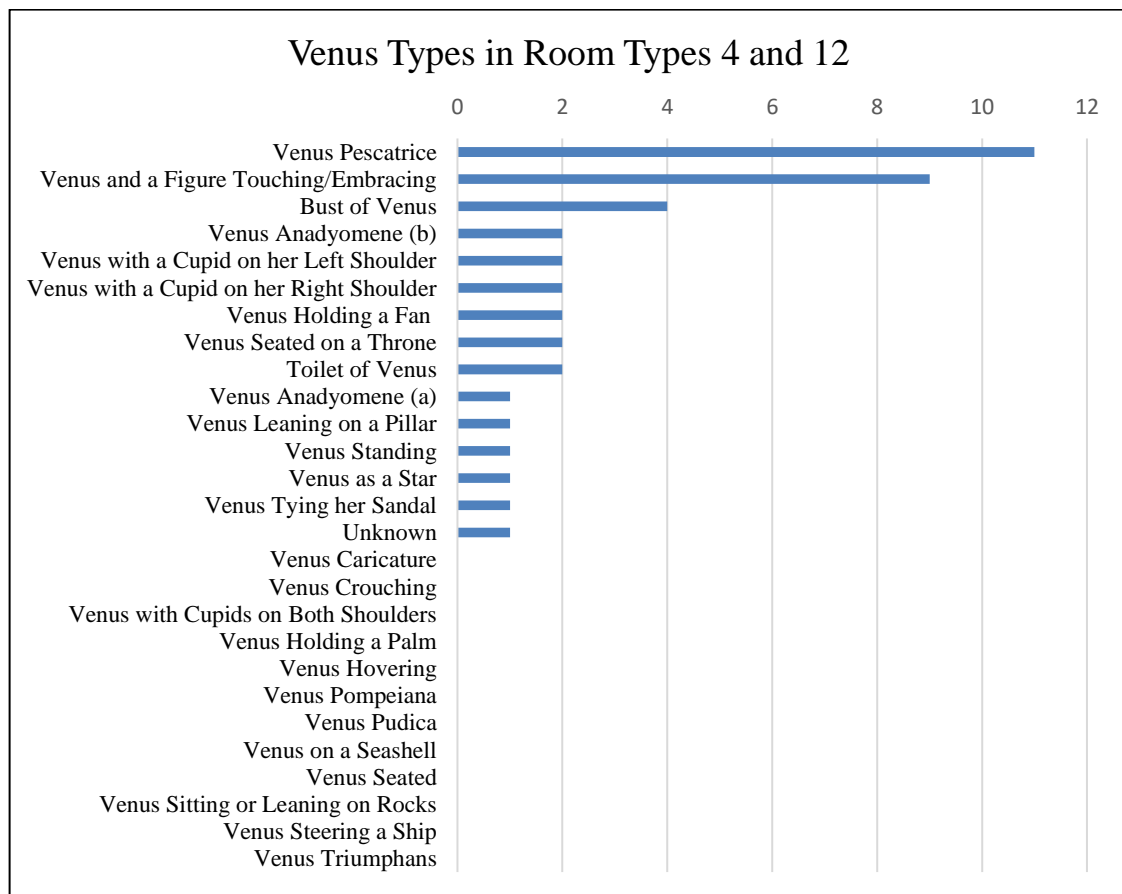


Figure 6.6: *Venus types in room types 4 and 12 (small, closed rooms) – a single representation of Venus may encompass more than one Venus type*

After *Venus Pescatrice*, the next most frequent Venus type found in small, closed rooms is ‘Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing’, comprising nine of 36 (25%) Venus representations occurring in these types of room, always within love scenes. However, this is the most common Venus type in Pompeii. Thus, ‘Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing’ is also the most common Venus type in more open areas. For instance, nine of 18 (50%) representations of Venus in type 7 rooms (so-called *tablina*) and three of 10 (30%) Venus representations in type 9 rooms (garden areas) depict ‘Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing’. This is also the most popular Venus type in large/medium rooms (room types 6, 10 and 11) too, with 15 representations of ‘Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing’ out of 68 artworks featuring Venus in these rooms (22%).

The two most popular Venus types in small, closed rooms (fig. 6.6) closely correspond to the two most popular scenes featuring Venus (fig. 6.7). All *Venus Pescatrice* representations depict ‘Venus Fishing’ and vice versa, and all but one of the ‘Love of Venus and Mars’ scenes in small, closed rooms feature the ‘Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing’ type.

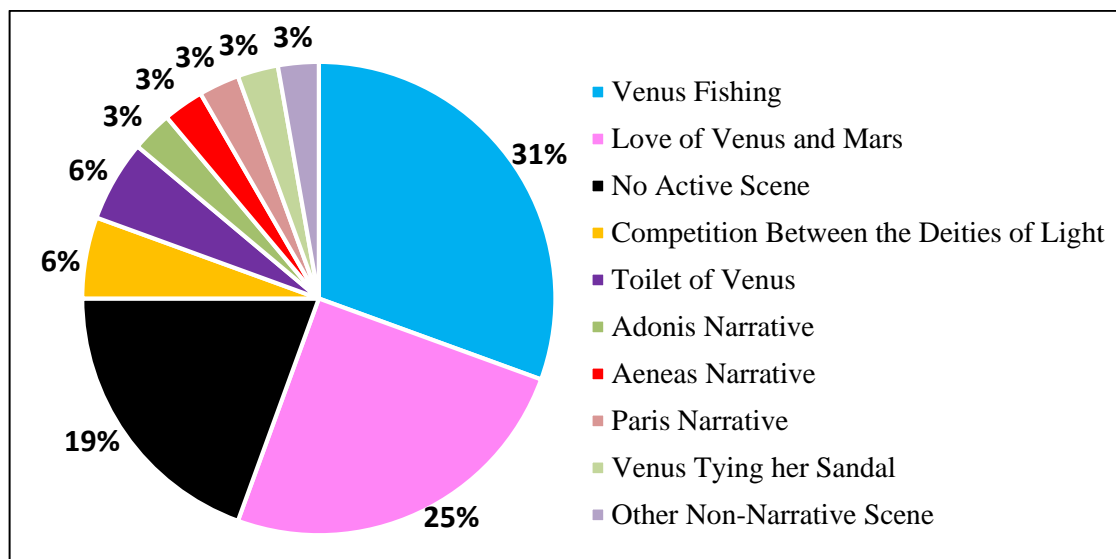


Figure 6.7: Percentages of scenes featuring Venus that occur in small, closed rooms (room types 4 and 12) – 2% rounding error

Thus, the popularity of ‘Love of Venus and Mars’ scenes in small, closed rooms (often considered *cubicula*) may lead scholars to presume that love scenes were particularly popular in this room type compared with other room types. However, ‘Love of Venus and Mars’ scenes clearly occur throughout the house, with the majority (24 of

33 – 73%) occurring in areas other than small, closed rooms. This type is also attested in public buildings (see Section 6.4.1).

16 of 36 (44%) representations of Venus in small, closed rooms depict scenes other than ‘Venus Fishing’ and the ‘Love of Venus and Mars’ (fig. 6.7). Of the 36 representations of Venus in these rooms, just ten occur within love scenes (nine ‘Love of Venus and Mars’ scenes and one Helen and Paris narrative). Thus the vast majority of scenes featuring Venus in these rooms are not love scenes.

6.2.4.3 Large/Medium Rooms (Room Types 6, 10 and 11)

Some of these large/medium rooms were perhaps dining areas, and Ling and Ling (2005: 94) have argued that generally their decoration often depicts food; Bacchic scenes; or subjects relating to Greek culture. Although these scenes may seem appropriate to dining areas, food is not represented in all dining areas; Bacchus also occurs in other rooms (especially in association with gardens); and Greek mythological scenes occur throughout the house (for instance, all of these features occur in I.10.4, see Appendix B2c). There may be ‘a tendency towards more grand and heroic subjects’ in *triclinia* (Ling & Ling 2005: 146), but as a main reception room, such scenes may be expected as these areas were likely to be used to impress visitors. It is possible that dining rooms were used seasonally⁴², with a summer dining room perhaps used for a different purpose in winter, thus decoration may have been required to accommodate more than one function of the room and not just reflect a dining function. That said, houses which offered the opportunity to orientate dining rooms in all four directions, such as the Villa dei Misteri and Settefinestre, do not do this, suggesting that seasonal dining-rooms were not always desired, even in large houses (Wallace-Hadrill 1988: 90).

Representations of Venus most often occur in large/medium rooms (types 6, 10 and 11), with 43% of Venus representations in domestic contexts occurring in these types of room. The most popular scene types featuring Venus in large/medium rooms are the ‘Love of Venus and Mars’, comprising 13 of 68 (19%) artworks featuring Venus in these room types, and the ‘Judgement of Paris’ comprising nine of 68 (13%, fig.

⁴² See Cosh 2001 for seasonal dining rooms in the houses of Roman Britain and in ancient authors – seasonal dining rooms mentioned in Varro, *De Re Rustica*, 1.13.7; Columella, *De Re Rustica*, 1.6.1–2; and Sidonius, *Letters*, 2.2.11. It is not easy to identify seasonal dining rooms in Mediterranean sites as the warmer climate meant heated winter dining rooms may not have needed such intense heating as hypocausts (Cosh 2001: 220).

6.8)⁴³. This may be reflective of these being the two most popular narrative scene types featuring Venus in Pompeii, rather than being a trend in these specific room types. That said, the ‘Love of Venus and Mars’ was perhaps the most popular narrative scene type in large/medium rooms because inhabitants or house owners wanted to reflect the Julio-Claudian pairing of Venus and Mars in ‘predominantly reception areas’ as the paintings in these rooms would have been seen by many guests. Alternatively, love scenes in general may have been popular in such rooms as an appropriate background to readings given in the room, or to remind guests of famous literary works, highlighting the owner’s erudition (Ling & Ling 2005: 146).

The popularity of ‘Judgement of Paris’ scenes in large/medium rooms, however, may have been of more significance. Nine of the 11 artworks featuring this scene type within domestic contexts (where the room type can be ascertained) occur in large/medium rooms (82%) with the remaining two in type 7 rooms. Thus, ‘Judgement of Paris’ scenes are particularly common in large/medium rooms.

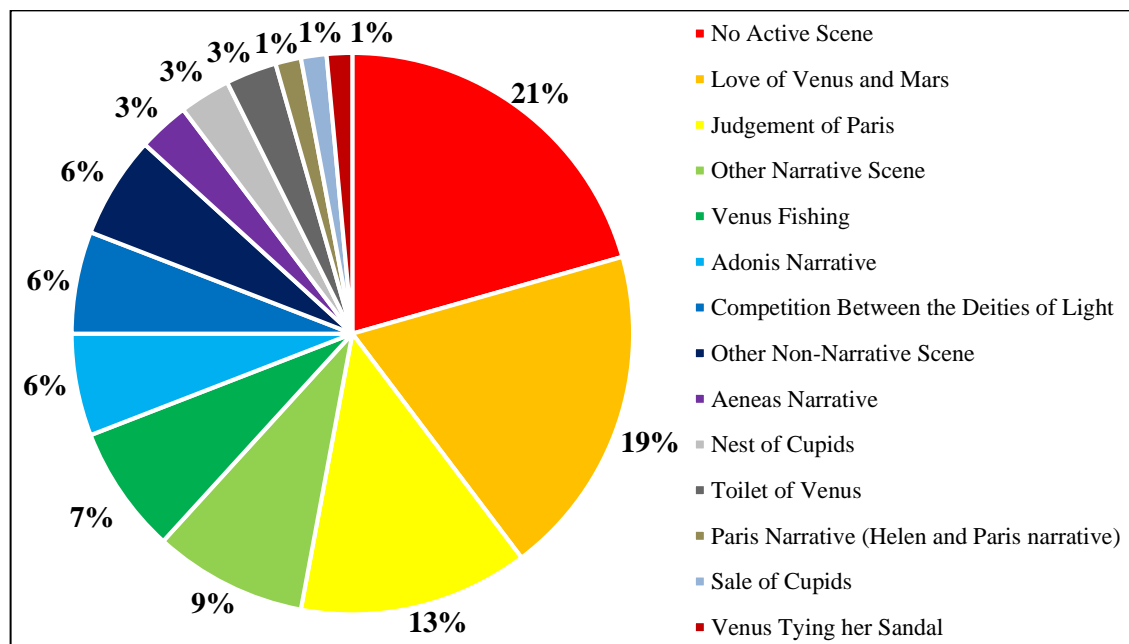


Figure 6.8: Percentages of scenes featuring Venus that occur in large/medium rooms (room types 6, 10, and 11) – 1% rounding error

⁴³ Technically the most popular scene type in large/medium rooms is ‘No Active Scene’, comprising 14 of 68 (21%) artworks featuring Venus in these room types, but as there is no scene taking place, and this type encompasses a range of scenes, it is not discussed here.

The most popular Venus type in large/medium rooms is ‘Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing’ which comprises 15 of the 68 (22%) artworks featuring Venus in these room types. 12 of these depict the ‘Love of Venus and Mars’, and the popularity of this scene type in large/medium rooms has already been discussed above. The second most popular Venus type in large/medium rooms is ‘Venus Leaning on a Pillar’ (comprising 13 of 68 – 19% artworks featuring Venus in large/medium rooms). These 13 artworks comprise 13 of 21 (62%) representations of this Venus type in domestic contexts, making this the most popular location for this Venus type.

6.2.4.4 Open-Sided Rooms (Room Type 7)

Type 7 rooms are often located between front hall and garden areas, comprising two parallel walls with the other two sides of the room open to the *atrium* and peristyle, making these more open areas of the house. As a result of this, type 7 rooms probably served a ‘predominantly reception’ function (although screens could make this room type more private) and guests would presumably pass through this room, at least occasionally.

Type 7 rooms are often referred to by scholars as *tablina* (Allison 2004a: 168 lists such scholars). The *tablinum* is often interpreted as the office of the *paterfamilias* based on Pliny’s description of this room type as ‘filled with books of records and with written memorials of official careers’ (Pliny, *Natural History*, 35.2.7; see Allison 2004a: 168 for scholars who consider *tablina* to be offices), perhaps being named after the location where the *tabulae* (account books) were kept (Meyer 2004: 27–8 after Festus 356M).

Wallace-Hadrill (1988: 55), Ellis (1995: 166), and Dwyer (2010: 27) argue that the *salutatio* occurred in *tablina*. Indeed, the *salutatio* would most likely occur in a room where records and accounts were kept in order to document the business taking place. If these were kept in *tablina*⁴⁴, this type of room could be expected to reflect political or other messages that the patron wanted to convey.

⁴⁴ Though *tablina* may not have served this role at all, with Allison’s sample of 30 Pompeian houses discovering no evidence for archival material in this room type, but rather a preference for utilitarian storage (Allison 2004a: 168), though this may have been a more recent use of the room type. Furthermore, *tablina* were perhaps originally ‘summer house[s] built of boards’ used for dining in the summer (Varro, *De Vita Populi Romani*, according to Nonius 83.16 in Riposati 1939: 137, translated without reference given in Mau 1899: 251), and Allison (2004a: 168) discovered evidence for bedding in *tablina*.

Vitruvius (*On Architecture*, 6.5.1) states that *tablina*⁴⁵ were only required in the houses of patrons rather than the houses of common people (who would have been clients), as clients ‘pay their respects by visiting among others, and are not visited by others’. This implies that this room type was used for the *salutatio* as patrons would receive clients and thus would require this type of room, whereas clients would attend *salutatio* at the houses of their patrons and would not need this type of room. However, this room type also occurs in smaller houses, such as I.11.6–7, which would not have needed a room for the *salutatio* so clearly this room type did not exclusively serve this function. Indeed, a relatively high proportion of dining furniture and tableware has been found in type 7 rooms, perhaps suggesting that they were sometimes used as dining areas (Allison 2004a: 131–2).

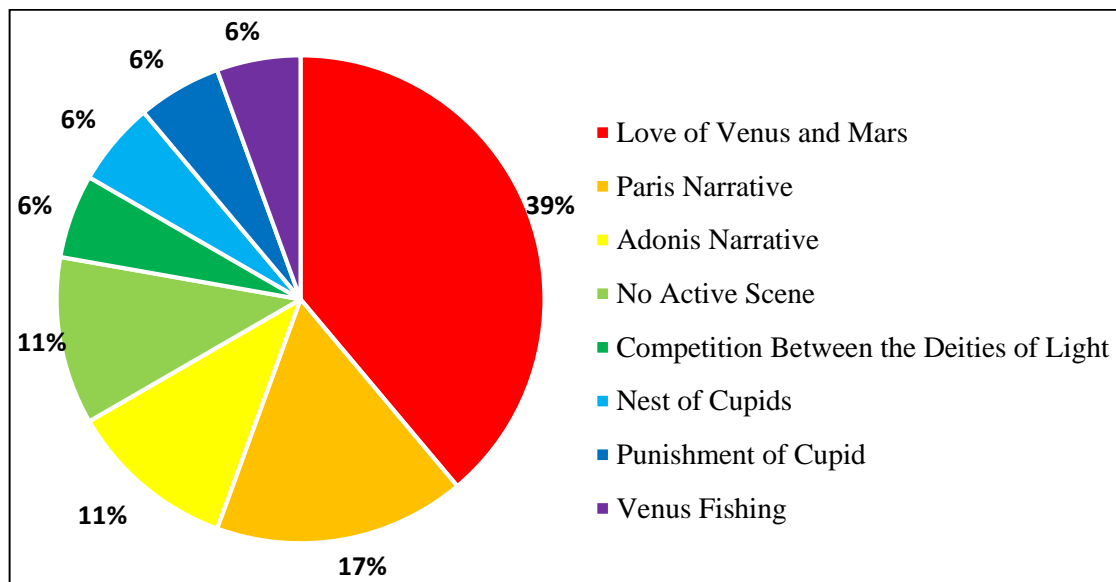


Figure 6.9: Percentages of scenes featuring Venus that occur in open-sided rooms (room type 7) – 2% rounding error

The scene featuring Venus portrayed most often in type 7 rooms is the ‘Love of Venus and Mars’, which comprises seven of the 18 artworks in this room type (39%, fig. 6.9). The owner may have chosen to depict these deities in type 7 rooms to reflect the political pairing of Venus and Mars under the Julio-Claudians (Zanker 1988: 195–201). This room type was perhaps particularly suited to this purpose as its openness and its location between the *atrium* and the garden meant guests were likely to view this area, at least in passing. This is a possibility regardless of whether this room type was

⁴⁵ Vitruvius uses the word ‘*tabulina*’ but this term is synonymous with ‘*tablina*’ so the latter term is used here for simplicity.

used as an office or dining area, as the pairing of Venus and Mars was still visible to guests in an open room and likely reception area.

Although it is uncertain whether the *salutatio* took place in this room type specifically, the ‘Love of Venus and Mars’ scene in type 7 rooms tends to occur in larger houses, which would have been owned by patrons who would have needed a room to hold *salutatio* in, and to whom it would be especially important to highlight Julio-Claudian ideology⁴⁶.

As type 7 rooms consist of two walls facing each other, usually with the other two sides of the room open to the *atrium* and peristyle, the decoration on the opposite wall may help to indicate whether an overall message or theme was intended through the decoration of the room. For instance, Strocka (1997) proposes that Venus and Mars scenes in *tablina* always occur amongst love scenes as a representation of ideal ‘happy love’, either enhanced by other scenes of ‘happy love’ or in contrast to scenes representing ‘unhappy love’. I have discovered that when Venus is represented in type 7 rooms, the decoration of the opposite wall is almost always a narrative scene (table 6.8). In all but two instances where this can be ascertained, this is a love narrative (love narratives in the central panel of the opposite wall are marked with a * in table 6.8). That said, these two exceptions could be interpreted as love scenes as a cupid is perhaps being punished for a love-related misdeed in the ‘Punishment of Cupid’ scene, and Ariadne appears alongside Bacchus in his chariot in the ‘Triumph of Bacchus’ scene, however their love is not the main focus. This would perhaps support Strocka’s (1997) hypothesis about ‘Love of Venus and Mars’ scenes occurring amongst other love scenes in this room type, and also suggest that this was true of other scenes featuring Venus in type 7 rooms (with the love theme further emphasised by cupids often occurring in the side fields). Four scenes in this room type occur opposite another scene featuring Venus – the north and south walls of room g in V.1.18, and the north and south walls of room f in VII.2.23.

‘Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing’ is the most popular Venus type in type 7 rooms, comprising nine of the 18 (50%) representations of Venus in this room type. Six of these representations of ‘Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing’ feature

⁴⁶ Two of the seven ‘Love of Venus and Mars’ scenes which occur in type 7 rooms are in Allison’s (2004b) sample – room c of I.7.19 and room 7 of V.4.a. Neither of these rooms include evidence to suggest that the patron met with his clients in these rooms, though room 7 of V.4.a includes fittings for a possible chest, which may suggest this room served as an office (at least on occasion), but it is unknown what the chest held (Allison 2004b – Casa di M. Lucretius Fronto).

this Venus type as part of 'Love of Venus and Mars' scenes, which may explain the popularity of this Venus type in this room type.

Table 6.8: Scenes featuring Venus in type 7 rooms within domestic contexts in relation to other scenes in the room (scenes featuring Venus which are opposite other scenes featuring Venus are highlighted; love scenes are marked with a * in the central panel on the opposite wall column)

House	Room	Wall	Field of Wall	Zone	Type of Scene	Venus Type	Central Panel Scene on Opposite Wall	Side Panels on Same Wall	Side Panels on Opposite Wall	Central Panel Scene on Same Wall if Venus is in a Side Panel
I.7.19	c	N	Central panel	Central	Love of Venus and Mars	Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing	Hylas abducted by the nymphs *	Left – unknown; Right – cupid	Left – Psyche; Right – cupid	N/A
V.1.18	g	N	Central panel	Central	Adonis Narrative (Venus with Adonis)	Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing	Love of Venus and Mars *	(Vignettes) Left – cupid with a dead tiger; Right – cupid with a hound	Left – unknown; Right – three cupids with a shield	N/A
V.1.18	g	S	Central panel	Central	Love of Venus and Mars	Unknown	Adonis Narrative (Venus with Adonis) *	Left – unknown; Right – three cupids with a shield	(Vignettes) Left – cupid with a dead tiger; Right – cupid with a hound	N/A
V.4.a	7	N	Central panel	Central	Love of Venus and Mars	Venus Seated on a Throne / Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing	Triumph of Bacchus	Both – architectural landscape scenes	Both – architectural landscape scenes	N/A
VI.5.3	5	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	No Active Scene (Bust of Venus)	Bust of Venus (with cupid/s)	The decoration of each wall cannot be ascertained. Centre of East wall – Apollo with tripod and snake; Busts – man & woman (possibly bacchante & satyr), Venus with cupid, man and woman, old man and male child			

VI.7.23	7	N	Central panel	Central	No Active Scene (Venus Enthroned with Cupid Showing her a Mirror)	Venus Seated on a Throne	Adonis Wounded (does not survive to ascertain if Venus was in the scene) *	Both – busts of women with cupids (Venus?)	Both – busts of women with cupids (Venus?)	N/A
VI.9.2/13	8	Unknown	Central panel	Central	Love of Venus and Mars	Venus and a Figure Touching/ Embracing	Io guarded by Argos *	Unknown wall – winged female figure with plate of fruit		N/A
VI.13.6	7	W	Left	Central	Adonis Narrative (Venus with Adonis)	Venus and a Figure Touching/ Embracing	Bacchus discovering the sleeping Ariadne *	Left – this one; Right – satyr & nymph	Unknown (East wall destroyed in bombing)	Hercules & Omphale
VI.16.7/38	E	W	Central panel	Central	Paris Narrative (Helen and Paris Narrative)	Venus and a Figure Touching/ Embracing	Doorway	Unknown	Left: unknown; Right: doorway	N/A
VII.2.13–15	e	S	Left panel	Central	Paris Narrative (Judgement of Paris)	Venus Anadyomene (a)	Unknown (does not survive)	Left – this one; Right – a nereid on a seahorse with dolphins	Left – nereid on a sea animal with two cupids; Right – satyr discovering a bacchante	No central panel, just left and right
VII.2.23	f	N	Central panel	Central	Punishment of Cupid	Venus with a Cupid on her Left Shoulder / Venus Leaning on a Pillar	Love of Venus and Mars *	Unknown	Unknown	N/A

VII.2.23	f	S	Central panel	Central	Love of Venus and Mars	Venus Seated on a Throne / Venus and a Figure Touching/ Embracing	Punishment of Cupid	Unknown	Unknown	N/A
VII.3.29	r	S	Right	Central	Paris Narrative (Judgement of Paris)	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
VII.9.47	7	W	Central panel	Central	Love of Venus and Mars	Venus and a Figure Touching/ Embracing	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	N/A
VIII.3.8-9	7	E	Central panel	Central	Love of Venus and Mars	Venus and a Figure Touching/ Embracing	Unknown	Medallions (subject unknown)	Left – medallion (subject unknown); Right – unknown	N/A
VIII.4.4/49	10	E	Central panel	Central	Nest of Cupids	Venus Seated	Selene & Endymion *	Left – Winter; Right – unknown (presumably Spring)	Left – Summer; Right – unknown (Autumn acc. to Schefold)	N/A
VIII.4.34	4	Unknown	Central panel	Central	Competition Between the Deities of Light	Venus Standing	The artwork featuring Venus is from an unknown wall so the opposite wall cannot be determined. Unknown walls – Spring & Winter, two cupid panels, Nike panel, Hercules & Omphale with Summer & Autumn in the side panels. South wall – large entrance. West wall – Dirce tied to the bull.			N/A

IX.9.d	f	E	Central panel	Central	Venus Fishing	Venus Pescatrice	Doorway is opposite – no panels (other walls: North wall – unknown; South wall – Narcissus central panel, side panels unknown)	Cupids in side panels	Doorway is opposite – no panels	N/A
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6.2.4.5 Gardens (Room Type 9)

Pompeian gardens often include wall-paintings of wild animals, or gardens which are frequently ornamented with painted statues, fountains and birds (Jashemski 1979: 55–73; Moormann 1988: 40–48). As Kondoleon (2010: 106) argues, ‘the peristyle often functioned as an interior garden, and its decoration reflected activities, both imaginary and real, set in the garden’.

Gardens (type 9 rooms) feature relatively few artworks featuring Venus (just 10 within domestic contexts). The two joint most common Venus types within gardens are ‘Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing’ and ‘Venus on a Seashell’, each occurring three times (this is every representation of the ‘Venus on a Seashell’ type). Jashemski (1979: 130) argues that Venus is always ‘scantly clad or nude’ when depicted in gardens, however, I have discovered that of the nine artworks featuring Venus in gardens where the state of nudity of Venus can be ascertained, four represent the goddess clothed, one semi-naked, and four naked (see Appendix B1).

Of all the scene types portrayed in gardens, ‘Venus in a Seashell’ occurs most frequently, comprising three of the 10 (30%) artworks featuring Venus in this room type (fig. 6.10). Garden areas are the only areas where the ‘Venus in a Seashell’ type occurs. The Venus type ‘Venus on a Seashell’ and the scene type ‘Venus in a Seashell’ encompass the same paintings.

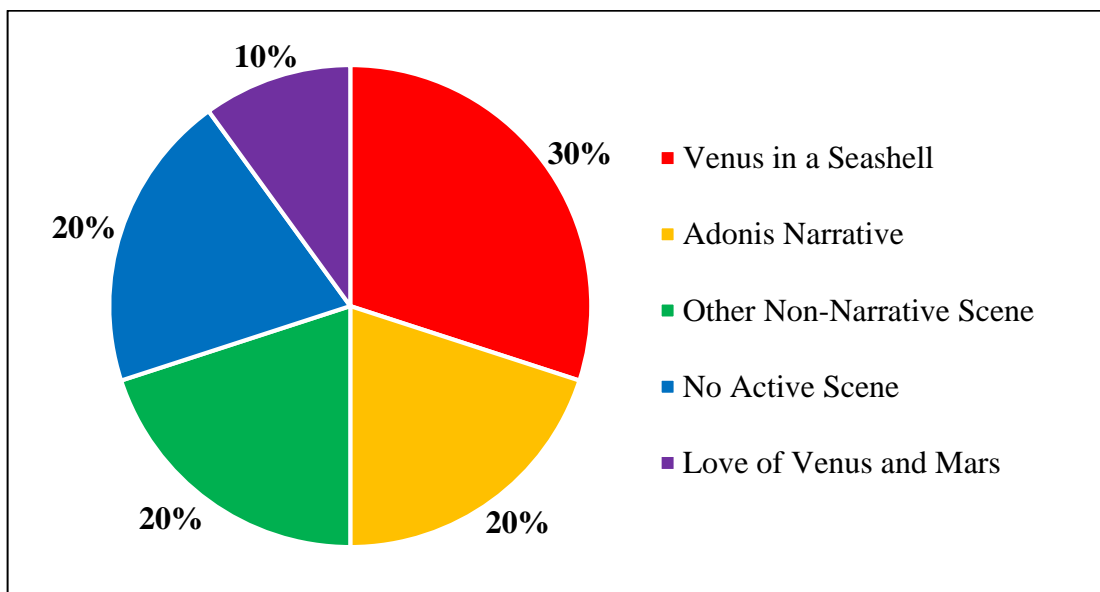


Figure 6.10: Percentages of scenes featuring Venus that occur in gardens (room type 9)

Eight of the 10 artworks featuring Venus which occur in gardens depict outdoor scenes, which supports Kondoleon's argument that peristyle areas often depict scenes set in gardens (2010: 106). All three 'Venus in a Seashell' scenes and the two scenes depicting Venus with the wounded Adonis are set outdoors. Interestingly, the 'Love of Venus and Mars' scene is also set outdoors, which is not always the case for this scene type. The two non-narrative scenes are also set outdoors – in I.7.19 Venus is represented as a statue within a garden scene, and the relief in VI.16.7/38 of Venus and a cupid burning incense seems to be set in an outdoor grotto or cave. This would suggest that in garden areas, decoration is often tailored to the room type.

The two artworks featuring Venus that occur in gardens and do not depict outdoor scenes both depict 'No Active Scene'. One appears to be set indoors from the surviving sketch (room 16 of VI.9.2/13 – see Appendix C1 – V-6-29), and the other has no background scenery in the artwork, as with the other artworks on this wall (on the north wall of room 53 in VI.9.6/7 – see Appendix C1 – V-6-40).

6.2.5 The Spatial Distribution of Individual Venus Types

In Chapter 5, I used statistical analysis to investigate trends within individual Venus types, including their location within different room types. Thus, this is not addressed again here.

6.2.6 The Spatial Distribution of Individual Scene Types

In this section, I use statistical analysis to investigate trends within the distribution of individual scene types featuring Venus in relation to room types (see table 6.7 for the data informing this discussion; see Appendix A2.7 for definitions of scene types). Only scene types with more than four examples in domestic contexts in Pompeii are discussed here (except where there is a clear pattern emerging) as otherwise the numbers are too small to make conclusions.

'Adonis Wounded' scenes occur five times in domestic contexts in Pompeii. One of these is from an unknown room type. Three occur in gardens or garden-adjacent areas. The remaining scene occurs in a small, closed room (room type 4). Adonis was killed by a wild boar whilst hunting, and thus the action of the scene takes place outdoors, explaining the popularity of this scene in gardens and rooms with a garden

view. Both artworks featuring ‘Adonis Wounded’ which occur in gardens are clearly set outdoors (in VI.7.18 and VI.9.2/13). Of the two from other areas of the house, the painting in room 4 of VI.13.6 (a type 4 room) portrays Venus and Adonis seated on a rock but without garden scenery, and the surviving sketch of room 37 of I.4.5.25 (a type 11 room) does not include details of the scenery, nor is the scenery described by Helbig (1868: 330) or Schefold (1957: 16).

‘Venus with Adonis’ scenes occur exclusively in open rooms (room types 5, 7 and 11), suggesting that this scene type was designed to be viewed by a wide audience.

There are nine ‘Competition Between the Deities of Light’ scenes, which occur in seven different room types. Only the ‘Love of Venus and Mars’ scene type occurs in more room types but there are almost four times as many representations of this latter scene. Clearly the ‘Competition Between the Deities of Light’ scene was versatile enough to occur throughout the house.

‘Love of Venus and Mars’ scenes occur throughout the house. There are 33 artworks featuring this scene type in domestic contexts in Pompeii. This scene type occurs most often in large/medium rooms (room types 6, 10, and 11), with 13 of 33 representations of this scene in these room types (39%), followed by nine of 33 (27%) in small, closed rooms (room types 4 and 12). ‘Love of Venus and Mars’ scenes often occur in type 7 rooms too, as seven of the 33 depictions of this scene type (21%) occur in this room type. ‘Love of Venus and Mars’ scenes were perhaps sometimes chosen to highlight the Julio-Claudian pairing of these deities, whilst also acknowledging the town’s patron deity. This is not always the case, however, as this scene type sometimes appears as part of a love theme in rooms (see Section 6.3.2).

Nine of the 11 (82%) artworks featuring ‘Judgement of Paris’ scenes occur in large/medium rooms (room types 6, 10 and 11), and the remaining two (18%) are located in type 7 rooms (*tablina*)⁴⁷. These were reception areas of the house where guests could be entertained or clients could be met by the patron, and the decoration perhaps served as a subtle warning of the dangers of making the wrong decision.

‘Venus Fishing’ most often occurs in small closed rooms (room types 4 and 12) with 11 of the 19 (58%) artworks depicting this scene type occurring in these rooms⁴⁸. As mentioned in Section 6.2.4.2, this scene type only features the *Venus Pescatrice* type.

⁴⁷ Excluding the one of unknown room type.

⁴⁸ Excluding the two depictions of unknown room type.

‘Venus in a Seashell’ exclusively occurs in garden areas (type 9 rooms), presumably as this allows for a wider, elongated representation of this scene, without the restraint of more square panel paintings, and also because the painted scene reflects the location of the painting – outdoors.

6.3 Domestic Context: Location Within the Room

In Section 6.2, I investigated room types in relation to Venus types and scene types. In this section I compare the number of Venus types and scenes featuring Venus which occur in each wall, zone, and field of wall in domestic contexts to investigate whether the location of an artwork within a room influenced its content.

6.3.1 Wall

Once the 23 artworks from walls which cannot be ascertained are excluded, artworks featuring Venus most frequently occur on the north wall (41 of 139 – 29%), and least frequently on the west wall (22 of 139 – 16%). These Venus representations do not just occur on walls, but two ceiling paintings and a pavement also depict Venus (table 6.9).

Table 6.9: Number of Venus representations on each wall in domestic contexts in Pompeii

Wall	Total	Percentage
N	41	29%
E	33	24%
S	40	29%
W	22	16%
Ceiling	2	1%
Pavement	1	1%
Unknown	23	N/A
Total	162	100%

Tables 6.10 and 6.11 demonstrate that when individual Venus types and scene types are compared with their location on a particular wall, few discernible trends emerge as the numbers are so small. Where the numbers are larger, these broadly correlate with the overall pattern of distribution across walls for Venus representations in domestic contexts in Pompeii (table 6.9). For instance, 11 of 32 (34%) representations of ‘Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing’ occur on the north wall (where the location is identifiable), compared with eight (25%) on the south wall, seven (22%) on the west wall, and five (16%) on the east wall, with one on the ceiling (3%).

Table 6.10: Number of each Venus type on each wall in domestic contexts in Pompeii

Venus Type	Wall							Total
	N	E	S	W	Ceiling	Pavement	Unknown	
Venus Anadyomene (a)			2	2				4
Venus Anadyomene (b)	1	3					1	5
Bust of Venus	3	5	1	2			3	14
Venus Caricature		2						2
Venus Crouching	1							1
Venus with a Cupid on her Left Shoulder	3	2	1				1	7
Venus with a Cupid on her Right Shoulder	3	1		1		1	1	7
Venus with Cupids on Both Shoulders		1						1
Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing	11	5	8	7	1		9	41
Venus Holding a Fan		2	3			1		6
Venus Holding a Palm			1	1				2
Venus Hovering	1							1
Venus Leaning on a Pillar	6	5	8	1			1	21
Venus Pescatrice	7	3	5	2			4	21
Venus Pompeiana	2	2	2	2				8
Venus Pudica	1	1	1					3
Venus on a Seashell	1		2					3
Venus Seated	1	3	2					6
Venus Seated on a Throne	2		1	3			2	8
Venus Sitting or Leaning on Rocks			3					3
Venus Standing	2	2	2	3			1	10
Venus as a Star					1			1
Venus at her Toilet	1	3					1	5
Venus Tying her Sandal	1	1						2
Unknown	3	1	4				2	10

Table 6.11: Number of each scene type on each wall in domestic contexts in Pompeii

Type of Scene	Wall							Total
	N	E	S	W	Ceiling	Pavement	Unknown	
Narrative Scenes	24	12	22	11	1	1	12	83
Adonis Narrative (Adonis Wounded)	1		1				3	5
Adonis Narrative (Venus with Adonis)	3			1			2	6
Aeneas Narrative (Aeneas Wounded)	1							1
Aeneas Narrative (Venus Giving Arms to Aeneas)	1	1						2
Competition Between the Deities of Light		3	4	1			1	9
Love of Venus and Mars	8	6	8	5	1		5	33
Paris Narrative (Helen and Paris Narrative)	1		1	1				3
Paris Narrative (Judgement of Paris)	6		4	1			1	12
Punishment of Cupid	1			1				2
Other Narrative Scene	2	2	4	1		1		10
Non-Narrative Scenes	17	20	17	11	1	0	11	77
Venus Fishing	7	3	5	2			4	21
Nest of Cupids	1	2						3
Sale of Cupids			1					1
Venus in a Seashell	1		2					3
Toilet of Venus	1	2					1	4
Venus Tying her Sandal	1	1						2
Other Non-Narrative Scene		4	5					9
No Active Scene	6	8	4	9	1		6	34
Unknown		1	1					2
Total	41	33	40	22	2	1	23	162

6.3.2 Zone

Central zone artworks appear at eye-level and thus detailed scenes (especially narrative ones) tend to occur in this zone. Unsurprisingly, the majority of Venus representations in wall-paintings and reliefs within domestic contexts occur in the central zone (122 of 131 – 93% where the zone can be identified⁴⁹), with none in the lower zone, and just nine in the upper zone (table 6.12). Three artworks occur in the upper zone as they are part of friezes depicting narrative scenes (the depiction of ‘Venus Sitting or Leaning on Rocks’ and the two Venus caricatures). The four representations

⁴⁹ There are 159 Venus representations on walls in domestic contexts and the zone cannot be identified for 28 of these.

of Venus standing inactive (the two *Venus Pompeiana* and the two ‘Venus Standing’ representations) perhaps occur in the upper zone to invoke the protection of Venus over the room and have her literally watching over them. This is evidenced by: *Venus Pompeiana* representing a statue of Venus and this type having more religious and ritual significance than other Venus types in Pompeii (see Chapter 5.1.5); and the two representations of ‘Venus Standing’ both featuring within ‘No Active Scene’ and clearly chosen to represent Venus specifically rather than being part of a narrative scene (see Chapter 7.2 for the significance of this). It is unsurprising that there is not always an active scene depicted in the upper zone as the central zone was often designed to be the main focus of the wall.

Table 6.12: Venus types and scenes in the upper zone

Venus Type	Type of Scene			Number of Upper Zone Depictions
	Love of Venus and Mars	Other Narrative Scene	No Active Scene	
Venus Caricature	0	2	0	2
Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing	2	0	0	2
Venus Pompeiana	0	1	1	2
Venus Sitting or Leaning on Rocks	0	1	0	1
Venus Standing	0	0	2	2
Total	2	4	3	9

The two paintings in the upper zone of Venus embracing Mars (in VI.2.4 and VII.2.44–46) were perhaps located in this zone so that both deities could watch over the inhabitants. However, the painting of Venus and Mars in room 34 of VI.2.4 occurs above a painting of Helen and Paris which is flanked by cupids (*PPM* IV: 141–142). This suggests that Venus and Mars were probably depicted in the upper zone as a love scene, to correspond with that of Helen and Paris in the central zone. Strocka (1997: 130) argues against this as the Venus and Mars painting was added later than the Helen and Paris one, and instead argues that Venus and Mars were chosen to protect the building. Even if the Venus and Mars painting was added later, this does not exclude a love theme of decoration as a possibility. In room b of VII.2.44–46, Venus and Mars were again perhaps chosen as part of a love theme, to complement other couples represented in the room (satyrs with bacchantes or nymphs). The location of this

painting in the upper zone was probably due to the central zone being interrupted by several doorways (this room is an *atrium*) so there was not enough space in the central zone to do the scene justice.

6.3.3 Field of Wall

The majority of artworks featuring Venus within domestic contexts in Pompeii occur in the central field (103 of 129 – 80% where the field of wall can be ascertained), with 26 in side fields (table 6.13). The majority of these side field artworks (17 of the 25 - 68% where the scene can be ascertained) depict non-narrative scenes which perhaps partially explains their location in these areas. In general, the Romans particularly favoured the right-hand side over the left (see Ellis 2011: 166–169 for literary, art-historic, and archaeological evidence for this). A preference for displaying depictions of deities on the right rather than the left could therefore be expected, but, as table 6.13 demonstrates, this is not the case.

Table 6.13: *The number of Venus representations in each field of wall*

Field of Wall	Total
Centre Field / Central Panel	103
Left Field / Left Panel	14
Right Field / Right Panel	12
N/A – Pavement	1
Unknown	32
Total	162

Busts of Venus are the most popular Venus type in side fields, appearing in six of the 26 (23%) side field artworks featuring Venus (table 6.14). Busts were often located in side panels generally, so this is unsurprising. Four of these busts represent ‘Venus with a Cupid on her Shoulder’, which explains the popularity of this type in side fields.

Venus Anadyomene is the next most common Venus type in side fields, occurring in four of the 26 (15%) artworks. *Venus Anadyomene* mostly occurs in non-narrative scenes which perhaps explains the high number of representations of this Venus type in side fields of the wall compared with other Venus types. Notably, the one narrative scene featuring *Venus Anadyomene* (in VII.2.13–15) does not occur in a central panel.

Venus Pompeiana is the next most popular type, featuring in three of the 26 side field artworks (12%). This is particularly significant given the relatively small number of representations of this Venus type. Again, the vast majority of *Venus Pompeiana* representations occur in non-narrative scenes which perhaps explains this.

Artworks featuring *Venus Pudica* always occur in side fields in Pompeii (where the field of wall can be ascertained). Although these numbers are too small to make reliable conclusions, with just three artworks featuring *Venus Pudica* in domestic contexts in Pompeii (and only two where the field of wall can be ascertained), the only artwork featuring this type from a public context also occurs in a side field. The high percentage of this Venus type in side fields is probably because two of these three depictions in side fields (67%) from both domestic and public contexts occur on walls with no central panel. There is a doorway in the centre of the south wall of room 3 in house VI.8.3/5 so the artwork featuring *Venus Pudica* could not appear in a central location, and the artwork featuring this type from a public context (in room 2 of VII.9.33) represents *Venus Pudica* on the west wall which does not have the usual left/central/right panel structure.

Table 6.14: The number of each Venus type in side fields (some Venus representations encompass more than one type)

Venus Type	Total
Venus Anadyomene (a)	2
Venus Anadyomene (b)	2
Bust of Venus	6
Venus Caricature	1
Venus Crouching	1
Venus with a Cupid on her Left Shoulder	2
Venus with a Cupid on her Right Shoulder	2
Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing	2
Venus Holding a Palm	1
Venus Hovering	1
Venus Leaning on a Pillar	2
Venus Pescatrice	1
Venus Pompeiana	3
Venus Pudica	2
Venus on a Seashell	1
Venus Seated	1
Venus Sitting or Leaning on Rocks	1
Venus Standing	1
Venus at her Toilet	1
Unknown	1

There is often a practical reason why Venus occurs in side fields. 10 of the 26 representations of Venus in side fields (38%) did not have the opportunity to depict Venus in a central location due to: architectural features such as doorways and windows; no central panel existing, just left and right ones; or for various reasons the wall should not be considered in terms of left/centre/right (table 6.15)⁵⁰. For instance, the north wall of room 8 in VII.1.25/47 does not have the usual left/central/right panel structure and instead forms two distinct sections: the left half of this wall forming two panels, and the right half forming three (fig. 6.11), perhaps sometimes used with a partition separating the room in two⁵¹. Two representations of Venus occur in side fields as they are part of friezes portraying narratives (in I.6.4 and I.10.4) and thus their location is determined by their place in the narrative, and no central field exists within these friezes. Once these 10 depictions have been removed, just 16 Venus representations occur in side panels when there was an opportunity for them to occur centrally. Two of these occur on *aediculae* or within *lararium* paintings, which would explain their location in side fields rather than more central areas.

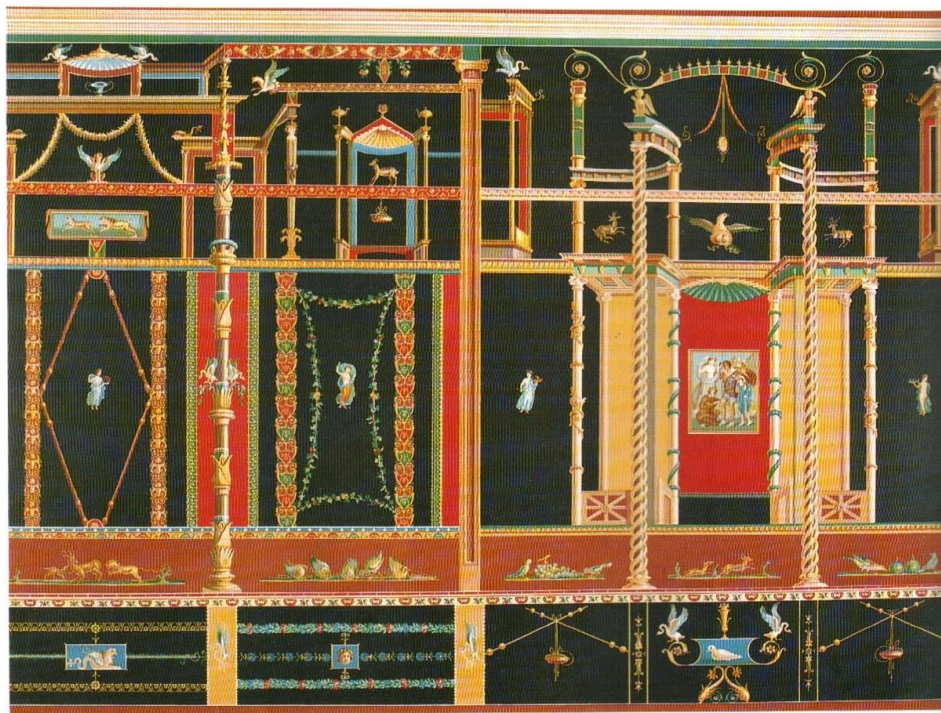


Figure 6.11: The panel structure on the north wall of room 8 of VII.1.25/47

⁵⁰ Representations of Venus occur in side fields due to doorways in room i of II.2.2, on the west wall of room b in V.1.18, in VI.8.3/5, and in VI.9.6/7; due to windows in III.4.4; and due to no central panel existing in VI.16.26 and VII.2.13–15.

⁵¹ Although the decoration of the south wall opposite does not survive well enough to ascertain if it suggests a partition was used, the doorway is set to one side, which does not preclude this as a possibility (it would not have been interrupted by the partition).

The opposite field can be ascertained for just 13 of the 26 side field artworks featuring Venus (50%)⁵². Six of these 13 (46%) depict a deity opposite (three depict Mars; one Hermaphroditus; one Mercury; and one the wedding of Jupiter and Juno). Five of 13 (38%) portray mythological narratives or creatures (Orpheus; a satyr and a nymph; cupids working gold; Adonis wounded; and a nereid on a seahorse). The remaining two artworks comprise a male figure with a spear (perhaps depicting or referencing Mars), and a seated naked woman.

Only one of the five artworks featuring Venus from a ‘domestic and public context’ occurs in a side field – the representation of *Venus Pescatrice* in room 42 of IX.8.3/7. No central panel exists in the room, just left and right ones, which may explain its location in a side panel.

6.3.4 Summary

The available evidence suggests that Venus types and scenes featuring Venus were not influenced by the wall, zone, or field of wall they appeared on. Artworks featuring Venus occur almost twice as often on the north wall compared with the west. The vast majority of Venus representations occur within the central zone (122 of 131 – 93% where the zone can be identified). The nine in the upper zone include three as part of upper zone friezes depicting narrative scenes; four where Venus is standing still, often within ‘No Active Scene’ (rather than illustrating a narrative), probably to watch over the inhabitants; and two depict the ‘Love of Venus and Mars’ where perhaps these two deities were chosen to watch over the inhabitants, in addition to also reflecting the Julio-Claudian pairing of these deities.

Narrative scenes typically appear in the central field of walls. As Venus is often depicted in narrative scenes in domestic contexts (83 narrative scenes – 52%, 77 non-narrative scenes – 48%; table 6.11), representations of the goddess mostly occur in central fields. The majority of artworks featuring Venus in side fields depict the goddess within non-narrative scenes. Venus representations often occur in side fields due to: central panels not existing on the wall; their depiction as busts (busts generally occur in side rather than central fields); their appearance within friezes; or their appearance

⁵² The opposite side panel cannot be ascertained or does not exist for the remaining 13 side field artworks featuring Venus.

within *lararium* paintings or on *aediculae*. In the latter instance, their need to occur in proximity to, or on, *lararia* was more important than their depiction in a central field.

Table 6.15: All Venus representations within domestic contexts in side fields. Decoration of central panel and opposite side field within the same wall included for context.

House	Room	Room Type	Wall / Façade	Zone (height)	Field of Wall	Venus' State of Nudity	Venus Type	Type of Scene	Scene on Central Panel on Same Wall	Scene on Opposite Field on Same Wall
I.6.2	21	21	S	Central	Left panel	Semi-naked	Venus Leaning on a Pillar / Venus Holding a Palm	No Active Scene (Venus with Palm)	Woman with a Maid (Venus and Mars part of overall scene covering entire wall)	Mars with a Spear(?)
I.6.4	e	5	S	Upper	Left	Naked	Venus Sitting or Leaning on Rocks	Other Narrative Scene (Iliad Narrative)	N/A – Venus is part of a narrative frieze depicting scenes from the Iliad spanning all walls of the room	
I.10.4	46	21	E	Upper	Left	Clothed	Venus Caricature	Other Narrative Scene (Venus Encouraging Cupid to Fire an Arrow)	N/A – Venus is part of a narrative frieze spanning the N and E walls (S and W walls razed in antiquity)	
I.13.16	3	11	N	Central	Left	Naked	Venus at her Toilet / Venus Anadyomene (b)	Toilet of Venus	Erotic Scene (bird with cherries beneath, landscape scene above Venus, with peacock and marble head of Hercules)	Unknown (these two panels perhaps designed to be viewed together and right panel was part of next room)
II.2.2	a	4	N	Central	Right	Unknown	Venus with a Cupid on her Right Shoulder / Bust of Venus	No Active Scene (Bust of Venus)	Unknown (not documented before bombing)	Unknown (not documented before bombing)
II.2.2	i	9	N	Central	Right	Unknown	Venus on a Seashell	Venus in a Seashell	Doorway to room h in the centre	Orpheus with Wild Beasts
III.4.4	a	12	S	Central	Right	Naked	Venus Anadyomene (a)	No Active Scene (Venus Surprised by Pan)	Large window in centre	Hermaphroditus

V.1.18	b	3	S	Central	Left	Clothed	Bust of Venus	No Active Scene (Bust of Venus)	Bust of Vulcan	Bust of Mars
V.1.18	b	3	W	Central	Left	Clothed	Bust of Venus	No Active Scene (Bust of Venus)	Entranceway in centre (bust of Venus far left; bust of Minerva second from left)	Bust of Mercury
V.4.3	b	3	W	Central	Right	Clothed	Venus Pompeiana (a)	No Active Scene (Venus with Cupid/s)	Unknown	Unknown (Fortuna in exact opposite panel within the <i>lararium</i> though)
VI.8.3/5	3	3	S	Central	Right	Naked	Venus Pudica (a)	Unknown	Doorway leading to entrance in centre	Wedding of Jupiter & Juno
VI.9.6/7	53	9	N	Central	Right	Clothed	Venus Pompeiana (a)	No Active Scene (Venus with Cupid/s)	Doorway to room 37 in centre (Odysseus & Penelope to far right)	Male Figure Armed with Spear (opposite Venus, with bacchante to immediate left of the door)
VI.11.8–10	16	16	E	Central	Right	Clothed	Venus Pompeiana (a)	Other Non-Narrative Scene (Offering Scene)	Unknown – decoration of wall was probably just this <i>lararium</i> painting	
VI.13.6	7	7	W	Central	Left	Clothed	Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing	Adonis Narrative (Venus with Adonis)	Hercules & Omphale	Satyr & Nymph
VI.13.19	h	6	N	Central	Left (above recess for bed)	Naked	Venus Pudica (b) / Venus Crouching	Other Narrative Scene	Unknown	Unknown
VI.15.1	q	11	E	Central	Left	Naked (drapery falls below pubic area)	Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing	Love of Venus and Mars	Unknown (five panels – Perseus & Andromeda on far left panel)	Unknown

VI.15.1	q	11	E	Central	Right	Naked	Venus Leaning on a Pillar / Venus Anadyomene (b)	Other Non-Narrative Scene (The Production and Sale of Perfumed Oil)	Cupids in Chariot Race (far right – Cupids Manufacturing and Selling Flower Garlands)	Cupids Working Gold (second from left panel; far left – Cupids as Fullers)
VI.16.26	G	6	N	Central	Right panel	Semi-naked	Venus Pescatrice	Venus Fishing	No Central Panel	Adonis Wounded
VII.1.25/47	8	6	N	Central	Right	Semi-naked	Venus Hovering	Aeneas Narrative (Aeneas Wounded)	Wall not separated into left/central/right panels – instead the left half of the wall is split into two panels, and the right section into three, with the Aeneas panel in the centre. All of the side panels depict floating female figures, probably bacchantes	
VII.2.13–15	e	7	S	Central	Left panel	Naked (drapery falls below pubic area)	Venus Anadyomene (a)	Paris Narrative (Judgement of Paris)	No Central Panel	Nereid on a Seahorse
VII.3.29	r	7	S	Central	Right	Unknown	Unknown	Paris Narrative (Judgement of Paris)	Unknown	Unknown
VII.4.31/51	17	10	E	Central	Left panel	Clothed	Venus with a Cupid on her Left Shoulder / Bust of Venus	No Active Scene (Bust of Venus)	Apollo & Cyparissus	Unknown
VII.4.31/51	17	10	W	Central	Left panel	Clothed	Venus with a Cupid on her Right Shoulder / Bust of Venus	No Active Scene (Bust of Venus)	Perseus & Andromeda	Doorway
VIII.4.4/49	31	11	E	Central	Left	Naked	Venus Seated	No Active Scene (Venus Seated)	Hermaphrodite with <i>thiasos</i> of Bacchus	Seated Naked Woman (with drapery)

IX.3.5/24	7	4	N	Central	Right	Unknown	Venus with a Cupid on her Left Shoulder / Bust of Venus	No Active Scene (Bust of Venus)	Venus Pescatrice	Bust of Mars
IX.14.4	3	11	E	Upper	Left	Clothed	Venus Standing	No Active Scene (Venus Standing)	Vase and Shields (in centre of upper zone)	Unknown (does not survive and not documented)

6.4 Venus in Public Areas and on Façades

In this section, I identify the Venus types and scenes featuring Venus which occur in public contexts and on façades in Pompeii. I compare artworks featuring Venus from public contexts and on façades with those from domestic contexts in relation to various categories (such as the type of area, and figures depicted with Venus). I define façade artworks as those on the exterior of buildings (both public and domestic buildings), and artworks from public contexts as those within spaces frequented by the public, such as shops, fulleries, bars, the *macellum*, and the gladiator barracks. These artworks from public contexts can aid interpretation of those within domestic contexts, and can also enhance our understanding of individual Venus types: For instance, the two representations of *Venus Pescatrice* in public contexts contrast with the previously held opinion that this Venus type exclusively occurs in *cubicula* (de Vos in *PPM* II: 1059; see Section 6.2.4.2).

6.4.1 Artworks from Public Contexts

There are 12 artworks featuring Venus from public contexts in Pompeii. There are few discernible trends regarding the location of these artworks, though it is interesting that four of the 12 (33%) occur in garden areas (in VII.4.20; VII.9.33; and two in VII.9.7 – the *macellum*; table 6.16). Two of these artworks depict offering scenes within *lararium* paintings – in VII.4.20, Venus appears alongside Jupiter sacrificing at an altar and in VII.9.33, Venus appears with Mars, each deity with a separate altar. These are the only *lararium* paintings featuring Venus to occur in Pompeian gardens in all contexts. Ritual activity and offerings often took place in the garden due to its access to the open air (Orr 1988: 294–5; Jashemski 1979: 115–118 details the number of *lararia* in different types of gardens), and thus these types of scene would be appropriate within gardens as they reflect activities which would have taken place in the garden in reality⁵³.

⁵³ Religious fixtures, in the form of *aediculae* and *lararium* paintings, are rare in Pompeian gardens, however (with just two in gardens, and four in ambulatories in Allison's sample of 30 houses – Allison 2004a: 85 & 88). Niches and portable altars could have been used for ritual purposes, but niches may have also served other purposes and portable altars could have been moved into different rooms as required, and thus they have been excluded from these numbers of religious fixtures in gardens.

In contrast, just 10 of the 157 (6%) representations of Venus from domestic contexts occur in main garden areas (type 9 rooms), and just one of these is within an offering scene (in VI.16.7/38). Therefore, representations of Venus are proportionally more common in gardens in public rather than domestic contexts. Furthermore, two of the four (50%) Venus representations in gardens in public contexts depict offering scenes (both within *lararium* paintings), compared with one of the 10 (10%) domestic ones. As previously stated, in public contexts, two of the four artworks featuring Venus which occur in gardens are *lararium* paintings. In domestic contexts, none of the ten artworks featuring Venus which occur in gardens (type 9 rooms) are *lararium* paintings. This indicates that artworks featuring Venus which occur in gardens from public contexts more often had a ritual purpose than those from domestic ones.

Table 6.16: Venus types in relation to types of area in public contexts

Venus Type	Type of Area				Total
	Garden	Shop	Other	Unknown	
Venus Anadyomene (a)	0	0	1	0	1
Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing	0	0	2	0	2
Venus Pescatrice	0	1	1	0	2
Venus Pompeiana	1	0	0	0	1
Venus Pudica / Venus at her Toilet	1	0	0	0	1
Venus as a Star	2	0	0	0	2
Venus at her Toilet / Venus Anadyomene (b)	0	0	1	1	2
Unknown	0	0	1	0	1
Total	4	1	6	1	12

Six of the 12 (50%) representations of Venus in public contexts feature in ‘No Active Scene’ (table 6.17), two of these occur on *aediculae* or within *lararium* paintings – in the *Castellum Aquae* and VII.9.33. This contrasts with the 34 of 160 (21%) Venus representations in domestic contexts which feature ‘No Active Scene’ (where the scene type can be ascertained). The higher percentage of the ‘No Active Scene’ type in public contexts in comparison to domestic ones suggests that in public contexts Venus was more likely to be chosen specifically rather than to illustrate a scene (see Chapter 7.2).

Table 6.17: Venus types in relation to scene types in public contexts

Venus Type	Type of Scene					Total
	Love of Venus and Mars	Other Non-Narrative Scene (Offering Scene)	Toilet of Venus	Venus Fishing	No Active Scene	
Venus at her Toilet / Venus Anadyomene (b)	0	0	1	0	1	2
Venus Anadyomene (a)	0	0	0	0	1	1
Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing	2	0	0	0	0	2
Venus as a Star	0	0	0	0	2	2
Venus Pescatrice	0	0	0	2	0	2
Venus Pompeiana	0	1	0	0	0	1
Venus Pudica / Venus at her Toilet	0	0	0	0	1	1
Unknown	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total	2	1	1	2	6	12

10 of the 12 (83%) artworks featuring Venus from public contexts feature the goddess with another deity in the same scene (table 6.18), this includes all three on *aediculae* or in *lararium* paintings in public contexts. Of the remaining two artworks from public contexts: Mercury is painted on the opposite door jamb to Venus in the doorway to room e of V.4.6/7/8 (discussed further below), and currently there is no published detailed information on any paintings, reliefs or mosaics discovered near the painting from IX.12.6 (excavation at IX.12.6 began in 1987 with no publications currently dedicated to a detailed analysis of this house)⁵⁴. Thus, in public contexts, Venus is always accompanied by other deities either within the painting or in another artwork in direct association with it (where there is sufficient information on other artworks in the room).

Table 6.18: Deities depicted within the same scene as Venus in public contexts

Deities Depicted with Venus	Total
Bacchus	1
Jupiter	1
Lucifer	1
Mars	3
River god	1
Victoria	1
Winged male	2
None	2
Total	12

⁵⁴ The painting of Venus is known from Varone (2007: 148–9) who does not give details of its context beyond the building.

In public contexts, Venus is represented in her role as a deity rather than as a participant in a mythological scene. The evidence for this is that in public contexts: Venus is represented mostly in non-narrative scenes; and with one exception⁵⁵, she is accompanied by other deities, or with a cupid as her attribute, rather than other figures. In domestic contexts, however, Venus is depicted in scenes alongside a greater variety of figures, such as Adonis, Aeneas, Paris, and maids. This is probably due in part to the prominence of narrative scenes in domestic contexts, however, other figures aside from deities and cupids (such as maids, sea-centaurs, and personifications) could also appear in non-narrative scenes.

Six of the 12 (50%) Venus representations from public contexts in Pompeii occur in relation to ritual activity or invoke Venus in some way, perhaps for protection: three are clearly associated with ritual activity as they occur on *aediculae* or within *lararium* paintings (in the *Castellum Aquae*; VII.4.20; and VII.9.33) and the remaining three occur in VIII.8.x, V.4.6/7/8, and I.11.1. The representation of Venus in VIII.8.x (the gladiator barracks) is flanked by paintings of trophies, and offerings of weaponry were perhaps made there (see Chapter 7.5). In V.4.6/7/8, Venus was depicted on the north door jamb between rooms d and e, with Mercury on the south door jamb. Bragantini (in *PPM* III: 1058) suggests that Venus was represented to protect the wine stored in room f, with Mercury protecting the financial aspects of the resource. However, given that both deities flanked the entrance to room e, this was probably to protect the contents of room e (see Chapter 7.4.2). The artwork from I.11.1 (a *caupona*) depicts Venus with Bacchus and a panther (one of his attributes) within ‘No Active Scene’, in a central panel. The owner perhaps decided to represent the patron deity of the town and the god of wine in a non-narrative scene to invoke the protection of the two deities most relevant to the business (see Chapter 7.5).

6.4.2 Artworks on Façades

There are 11 representations of Venus on façades in Pompeii. Just one artwork featuring Venus is on the façade of a domestic building, with six on public buildings,

⁵⁵ This exception is the painting in the *Castellum Aquae* which depicts a river god with three figures, one of whom may be Venus, but it is more likely that all three are nymphs, or perhaps the Graces as suggested by Moormann (1988: 53).

and four where the public or domestic context of the building cannot be ascertained (in two instances, this is because the precise building cannot be ascertained).

Table 6.19: The number of each Venus type on façades

Venus Type	Total
Venus with a Cupid on her Left Shoulder / Venus at her Toilet / Venus Anadyomene (b)	1
Venus with a Cupid on her Right Shoulder	1
Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing	1
Venus Leaning on a Pillar	2
Venus Pompeiana	3
Venus Seated on a Throne	1
Venus Standing	1
Venus Steering a Ship	1
Total	11

The most popular Venus type to occur on façades is *Venus Pompeiana*, with this type comprising three of the 11 (27%) artworks on façades (table 6.19). As this type likely represented Venus as the patron deity of Pompeii, it was perhaps used on façades to invoke Venus in this role to watch over passers-by and protect those within the building.

Table 6.20: The number of each scene type featuring Venus on façades

Type of Scene	Total
Love of Venus and Mars	1
Other Non-Narrative Scene	3
Toilet of Venus	1
No Active Scene	6
Total	11

The majority of artworks featuring Venus on façades depict ‘No Active Scene’ (six of 11 – 55% artworks; table 6.20). In two of these, Venus is represented as part of the pantheon of 12 gods – within Pompeii this scene only occurs on façades. Aside from this, no scene type appears more than once. This indicates that the people who commissioned these paintings on façades wanted unique depictions of Venus rather than emulating other well-known scenes. This contrasts with people who commissioned paintings in domestic contexts who often chose to repeat the same scene types.

As with artworks from public contexts, Venus never appears alone on façades. In six of 11 (55%) artworks featuring Venus on façades, Venus appears alongside at

least one deity, and in six of 11 (55%) alongside at least one cupid (these categories are not mutually exclusive). When Venus appears with other deities in the same scene on façades, all except one are non-narrative scenes, often the ‘No Active Scene’ type. Thus, these deities were mostly represented for a reason unrelated to the illustration of a narrative, perhaps to invoke these deities specifically for protection or to advertise the owner’s patron deities (see Chapters 7.2 and 7.4).

Seven façade artworks featuring Venus flank an entrance. These artworks always have at least one deity on the opposite side of the entrance, where this can be ascertained (see Chapter 7.4). These representations of deities on the entrances to buildings suggest they were invoked to protect the inhabitants and visitors; ensure they favoured them (and their business, where relevant); and perhaps also advertised the owner’s patron deities (see Chapter 7.4).

These façade artworks overwhelmingly invoke Venus for protection or in ritual contexts (see Chapter 7, especially Chapter 7.4). This is evident by the goddess being represented: in areas of ritual activity, either in a temple complex (VIII.7.28 – the façade of the *purgatorium* facing the Temple of Isis) or in proximity to altars or *lararium* paintings (VIII.3.10–12 and IX.11.1, see Chapter 7.1); on entrances (I.13.9; II.1.12; VII.4.22–23; two on IX.7.1; IX.7.7; and the unknown façade in Region IV on the north side of the Via di Nola), suggesting Venus was invoked for protection; or as *Venus Pompeiana* (VIII.3.10–12; IX.7.1; IX.7.7), possibly based on a cult statue of Venus in Pompeii (or at least represented as a statue – see Chapter 5.1.3), perhaps invoking or acknowledging her as the town’s patron deity or having ritual connotations. This leaves just one artwork which does not overtly invoke Venus (that from an unidentifiable location on the Via di Nola – in Region III or IV)⁵⁶. The context for this painting is unknown.

⁵⁶ The numbers above are not mutually exclusive.

6.5 Summary

There are 197 representations of Venus in Pompeii – 162 within domestic contexts, 12 from public contexts, 11 on façades, five from domestic and public contexts, and seven where the context cannot be ascertained.

6.5.1 Domestic Context: Location in Room Types

I can identify the room type for 157 of the 162 representations of Venus within domestic contexts in Pompeii. When the proportion of representations of Venus in each room type is compared to the proportion of each room type within houses, representations of Venus are particularly common in large/medium rooms (types 6, 10, and 11) and type 7 rooms; particularly uncommon in small, closed rooms (types 4 and 12), type 14 rooms and type 16 rooms; and they occur as proportionally often in rooms of type 3, 5, 9, 13, and 21. This latter group includes garden and bath areas, which is surprising given her role as goddess of the garden and her love of bathing.

Using Allison's (2004b) sample, I identified 296 rooms as 'predominantly reception areas', 379 as 'predominantly non-reception areas', 170 as rooms which needed their 'predominantly reception' or 'predominantly non-reception' character considered individually, and 11 shops. Once I considered only room types which included decoration (based on the presence of at least one artwork featuring Venus in the room type) and excluded type 16 rooms (as each room of the type would need to be considered individually), I identified 55% of rooms as 'predominantly reception areas' and 45% as 'predominantly non-reception areas'. When this is compared with the proportion of Venus representations in 'predominantly reception areas' (76%) and 'predominantly non-reception areas' (24%), artworks featuring the goddess occur substantially more often in 'predominantly reception areas' than the proportion of these areas in houses. Indeed, *Venus Pescatrice* is the only Venus type to occur more often in 'predominantly non-reception areas' of the house.

83% of narrative scenes featuring Venus occur in 'predominantly reception areas', compared with 68% of non-narrative scenes. The use of *ekphrasis* as entertainment for guests may explain why narrative scenes occur proportionally more often in 'predominantly reception areas' than non-narrative scenes. It would be easier

for guests to engage in *ekphrasis* if narrative scenes were represented. Clarke (2003: 226) argues that when engaging in *ekphrasis*, ‘typically the speaker elaborated on the myth represented, filling in details of the story – what had happened before, [and] what happened later on’ suggesting that *ekphrasis* required narrative scenes. However, Philostratus in his *Imagines* uses *ekphrasis* to describe the artworks in a house, and although he mostly describes narrative scenes, a small number are non-narrative scenes, such as fishermen catching tunny-fish (Philostratus the Elder, *Imagines*, 1.13).

32% of non-narrative scenes featuring Venus occur in ‘predominantly non-reception areas’, compared with 17% of narrative scenes. Thus, non-narrative scenes are more common in ‘predominantly non-reception areas’ than narrative scenes. This was perhaps because non-narrative scenes could be used for protection as well as decoration (see Chapter 7.2).

Previous scholars have suggested that love scenes were particularly common in *cubicula* (probably because they have been traditionally identified as bedrooms) – room types 4 and 12. However, love scenes featuring Venus occur more often in large/medium rooms (types 6, 10 and 11). Just 10 of 36 artworks featuring Venus in room types 4 and 12 are love scenes. Previous scholars have also argued that *Venus Pescatrice* occurs exclusively within *cubicula*. Although *cubicula* are the most common location for this Venus type, *Venus Pescatrice* also occurs in other room types in the house and indeed outside it. While the ‘Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing’ type (which almost exclusively features in love scenes) is popular in *cubicula*, this is probably due to this being the most popular Venus type in Pompeii rather than relating to *cubicula* specifically.

The most popular scene types in large/medium rooms (types 6, 10, and 11) are the ‘Love of Venus and Mars’ and the ‘Judgement of Paris’. This is likely attributable to the fact that these two scene types are the most popular in Pompeii rather than relating to these types of room. That said, the popularity of ‘Love of Venus and Mars’ scenes in these ‘predominantly reception areas’ was perhaps to reflect the Julio-Claudian pairing of Venus and Mars in areas large enough to accommodate many guests.

The most popular scene type featuring Venus in type 7 rooms is the ‘Love of Venus and Mars’. Once again, aside from this being the most popular scene type featuring Venus in Pompeii, its popularity in type 7 rooms was perhaps to advertise the Julio-Claudian pairing of Venus and Mars in an open room. Indeed, this scene type tends to occur more often in type 7 rooms in larger houses, owned by wealthier people

for whom it would be more important to highlight Julio-Claudian ideology. However, when Venus is represented in type 7 rooms, a love scene is usually depicted on the opposite wall, which perhaps suggests that love scenes more generally were preferred in this room type.

‘Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing’ and ‘Venus on a Seashell’ are the two most popular Venus types in gardens (type 9 rooms). Almost all scenes featuring Venus which occur in gardens depict outdoor scenery, even a ‘Love of Venus and Mars’ scene which is normally set indoors.

Thus, scene types were not usually determined by the type of room that they occurred in, except in garden areas where there was a preference for outdoor scenes. ‘Venus in a Seashell’ exclusively occurs in garden areas as the scene is set outdoors, and also because this location allows for a wider, elongated scene. Furthermore, three of the four artworks featuring ‘Adonis Wounded’ scenes (where the room type can be ascertained) occur in gardens or garden-adjacent areas. This scene was probably located in gardens because the action of the scene takes place outdoors, as Adonis was killed by a wild boar whilst hunting.

6.5.2 Domestic Context: Location Within the Room

Artworks featuring Venus occur most often on the north wall, and least often on the west wall. This pattern is also evident in the distribution of artworks featuring individual Venus types on walls. Two artworks occur on ceilings, and one on a pavement. The vast majority of artworks featuring Venus occur in the central zone (122 of 131 – 93%), with none in the lower zone, and nine in the upper zone.

The majority of artworks featuring Venus occur in the central field (103 of 129 – 80%) with 26 in side fields. Ten of these artworks featuring Venus in side fields could not depict Venus in a central location due to doorways, windows, no central panel existing, or the wall not being separated into left/central/right fields. Six of the 26 artworks in side fields are busts, which often occur in side fields; and three represent *Venus Pompeiana* which is significant as there are only twelve representations of this Venus type in Pompeii. It is possible to ascertain the subject of the opposite side field for 13 of these 26 artworks in side fields – six represent another deity, five depict mythological narratives or creatures, and two depict other subjects (a male figure in one

and a female figure in the other). The majority of artworks featuring Venus which occur in side fields depict non-narrative scenes.

Thus, the location of an artwork within a room in terms of wall, zone, and field of wall, did not influence the Venus type or scene featuring Venus which was chosen (except in the case of *Venus Pompeiana* which often occurs in the less common areas of the upper zone and side fields). Artworks featuring Venus which are markedly less common than the mean on a certain wall, zone or field of wall sometimes have practical reasons explaining their location. For instance, artworks featuring Venus sometimes occur in the less common area of side fields because no central field was available, because the artwork is a bust (with busts often appearing in side panels), or because the representation of Venus is part of a narrative frieze, where the location of Venus is determined by her place in the narrative. Some distributions cannot be explained, however, such as Venus occurring notably less often on west walls.

6.5.3 Artworks Featuring Venus from Public Contexts and on Façades

There are 12 artworks featuring Venus from public contexts. 33% occur in garden areas including the only two *lararium* paintings featuring Venus to occur in gardens from any context. This contrasts with domestic contexts, where 6% of artworks featuring Venus occur in main garden areas (type 9 rooms). Thus, Venus representations are proportionally more common in gardens from public rather than domestic contexts.

In public contexts, Venus is mostly represented in non-narrative scenes (83%). 50% of artworks featuring Venus in public contexts represent ‘No Active Scene’, compared with 21% in domestic contexts. This suggests that Venus was chosen more specifically in artworks from public contexts rather than just to illustrate a scene. Furthermore, in public contexts, Venus is always accompanied by at least one other deity or cupid within the scene, and never by other figures, with the exception of the *Castellum Aquae* painting discussed above which may not represent Venus in any case. This all suggests that Venus was represented in her role as a deity rather than as a participant in a mythological scene, and thus she is accompanied by other deities or a cupid rather than other mythological figures. This contrasts with artworks featuring Venus from domestic contexts where there is more variety in the figures she is depicted with, partially due to the number of narrative scenes, but other figures also appear with

Venus in non-narrative scenes in domestic contexts. Furthermore, 50% of artworks featuring Venus in public contexts occur in relation to ritual activity (on *aediculae* or in *lararium* paintings) or invoke Venus in some way (sometimes perhaps for protection). This again emphasises that Venus was represented in public contexts as a deity rather than a mythological figure as she was the subject of ritual activity or was being invoked.

11 artworks featuring Venus occur on façades – six on the façades of public buildings, one on a domestic façade, and four where the public or domestic character of the building with the façade cannot be ascertained. *Venus Pompeiana* is the most popular Venus type on façades (comprising 27% of representations of Venus from these contexts). If this type represents the patron deity of Pompeii, as has been suggested by previous scholars (see Chapter 5.1.5), perhaps she was represented on façades to protect the business or the house, or so that passers-by felt their patron deity was watching over them.

55% of artworks featuring Venus from façades represent ‘No Active Scene’, which suggests that Venus was chosen specifically rather than as part of a scene. Aside from representations of the pantheon of 12 gods, the same scene never occurs twice on façades. Although this dataset is small, this suggests that the people who commissioned these paintings wanted to represent Venus in unique ways, compared to those commissioned in domestic contexts which often repeated the same scene types. As with artworks from public contexts, Venus never appears alone on façades, often appearing with at least one deity and/or cupid. When Venus appears with other deities on façades, all except one depict non-narrative scenes, often the ‘No Active Scene’ type. Thus, in these instances, Venus and the other deities are represented specifically, not to illustrate a narrative, perhaps for protection or to emphasise the owner’s patron deities.

Seven artworks featuring Venus on façades flank entrances. There is always at least one deity depicted on the opposite side of the entrance (where this can be ascertained) and these artworks were perhaps used to invoke their protection or favour, or to advertise the owner’s patron deities.

All artworks featuring Venus on façades, where the location can be ascertained, either occur in a ritual context (such as the *purgatorium* of the Temple of Isis), flank an entrance (probably for protection), or depict Venus as one of the twelve gods in proximity to scenes of a religious or protective nature (see Chapter 7). Three feature *Venus Pompeiana* which had more religious and ritual significance than other types.

6.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I aimed to quantify the number of Venus types and scenes featuring Venus in Pompeii which are represented in individual room types (and areas within the rooms), investigate why this might be, and assess whether artworks featuring Venus vary depending on whether they occur in public or domestic contexts.

I discovered that it is relatively rare in domestic contexts for the room type to influence the choice of content of artworks featuring Venus. Previous suggestions that love scenes and scenes featuring Venus often occur in *cubicula* do not find support and artworks featuring Venus are actually more likely to occur in other areas of the house (particularly in large/medium rooms). Perhaps this was because rooms in Roman houses were multifunctional (Section 6.2.3.1) and could be used for different purposes or by different people at different times of day (see Laurence 1994: 122–132 for the temporal use of space). However, almost all of the artworks featuring Venus which occur in gardens are set outside. Sometimes this influences which scenes are chosen – such as ‘Adonis Wounded’ or ‘Venus in a Seashell’, and sometimes scenes are changed to be set outdoors even if the narrative is set indoors, as with the ‘Love of Venus and Mars’ scene in room 19 of I.7.11.

The ‘Love of Venus and Mars’ is the most popular scene type featuring Venus in Pompeii, perhaps due to the prominent role of these deities under the Julio-Claudians. Patrons may have consciously decided to represent Julio-Claudian ideology, especially given how many occur in ‘predominantly reception areas’ of houses where guests would have been received. That said, this scene type sometimes occurs amongst other love scenes which would suggest that this scene type was sometimes chosen to correspond with a love theme in a room.

Despite decorated room types being only slightly more common in ‘predominantly reception areas’ than those in ‘predominantly non-reception areas’ (55% to 45%), artworks featuring Venus are substantially more common in ‘predominantly reception areas’ (76% to 24%), suggesting they were often on display to guests. Narrative scenes featuring Venus are more common in ‘predominantly reception areas’ than non-narrative scenes (83% compared with 68%), indicating that narrative scenes were preferred in areas where larger numbers of guests would be received, perhaps so

guests could participate in *ekphrasis*, or so they could more easily be used as conversation pieces.

The location of an artwork within a room in terms of wall, zone, and field of wall did not influence which Venus type or scene featuring Venus was chosen (except in the case of *Venus Pompeiana* which often occurs in the less common areas of the upper zone and side fields), and there are often practical reasons why artworks occur in the upper rather than the central zone, and in side panels rather than central ones.

An interesting contrast occurs between artworks from a domestic context and those from a public one. Although it is important to note that there are substantially fewer artworks featuring Venus from public contexts (12) and on façades (11), compared with those from domestic contexts (162), patterns still emerge. Artworks featuring Venus from public contexts (in comparison to those from domestic ones) occur proportionally more often in garden areas, and there are proportionally more artworks featuring ‘No Active Scene’ and non-narrative scenes generally. In artworks from public contexts, Venus is always accompanied by at least one other deity or cupid, and, with one exception, never by other figures, whereas in artworks from domestic contexts, there is more variety in the figures she is depicted with. This suggests that in artworks from a public context, Venus is often represented in her role as a deity rather than as a participant in a mythological scene.

‘No Active Scene’ occurs proportionally more often on façades than in artworks from a public context. As with artworks from public contexts, Venus never appears alone on façades, often appearing with at least one deity and/or cupid. When Venus appears with other deities in the same scene in artworks on façades, all except one are non-narrative scenes, and aside from the two scenes representing the twelve gods, the same scene never occurs twice. Thus, Venus was chosen specifically on façades rather than appearing just as part of a narrative. Venus was probably represented on façades for protection, given that five of the seven paintings which flank entrances represent another deity on the opposite side, creating a protective axis over the entrance. She may have also been represented as one of the owner’s patron deities, but this cannot be ascertained without knowing who the owner was and his/her religious preferences. Furthermore, with one exception (that from an unidentifiable location on the Via di Nola – in Region III or IV), all artworks featuring Venus on façades appear to have been used for protection (creating a protective axis over the entrance), occur in ritual

contexts, or depict Venus as one of the twelve gods in proximity to scenes of a religious or protective nature.

Thus, in this chapter I have demonstrated that it is relatively rare in domestic contexts for the room type to influence the choice of content of artworks featuring Venus. Though she is the goddess of gardens, and is associated with bathing, Venus does not often appear in the fixed artworks of the corresponding areas of the house (garden areas – room type 9, and bath areas – room type 21). Individual scene types do not tend to be influenced by the type of room they decorate, except in garden areas. Love scenes featuring Venus, and representations of Venus more generally, are not favoured in *cubicula*, as has previously been thought. I have demonstrated that there is a difference between artworks within domestic contexts and those from public contexts and on façades. Artworks featuring Venus from public contexts, in comparison to those from domestic contexts, occur proportionally more often in gardens, feature proportionally more non-narrative scenes and scenes of the ‘No Active Scene’ type, and only include other deities and cupids within the scene, never other figures (with one exception). This suggests that in public contexts, Venus tends to be represented as a deity rather than as a participant in a mythological scene. Furthermore, Venus occurs proportionally more often in ‘No Active Scene’ on façades than in domestic or public contexts, and artworks on façades were overwhelmingly used for protection, occur in ritual contexts, or depict Venus as one of the twelve gods in proximity to scenes of a religious or protective nature.

Chapter 7: Religious, Ritual and Protective Representations of Venus

Introduction

In this chapter, I examine the evidence for artworks featuring Venus having religious, ritual, or protective purposes, in terms of composition and location. ‘Religious’, ‘ritual’, and ‘protective’ purposes are inter-related and therefore are often discussed together rather than separately in this chapter.

The artworks which I discuss in regard to composition are those where Venus appears: as one of the twelve gods (Section 7.1); or with other deities in a non-narrative scene (Section 7.2). The twelve gods always appear on façades in association with *lararium* paintings (with ritual activity suggested by the presence of an altar against the façade of IX.11.1). The presence of other deities with Venus in non-narrative scenes, and the fact that the combination of these deities and their composition was rarely the same, suggests they were specifically chosen for a reason other than being purely decorative, perhaps to protect the owner or business.

The artworks which I discuss in regard to their location are those where Venus occurs: in a *lararium* painting or on an *aedicula* (Section 7.3); on a façade or entrance (Section 7.4); in a public location for a ritual or protective purpose not covered by one of the other categories (Section 7.5); or as part of a scheme of decoration which suggests she was represented for a protective, ritual, or magic purpose (Section 7.6). Ritual activity took place at *aediculae* and in some form in front of *lararium* paintings (perhaps using a portable altar in proximity to the *lararium* painting as in the *atrium* of VI.16.26 – Allison 2004a: 146). Representations of Venus on façades often flank entrances, always with another deity opposite (where this can be ascertained). As the Romans considered boundaries to need extra protection, representations of deities flanking entrances were likely to serve a protective purpose, especially when a deity was represented on both sides of the entrance, creating a protective axis over the most vulnerable part of the building.

I then discuss artworks featuring Venus which occur in association with the water supply, or water generally, which might have had a protective purpose, and

artworks where her association with water is referenced in the composition of the artwork (Section 7.7).

The religious, ritual, or protective purpose of artworks featuring Venus could encompass those from both domestic and public contexts (and on façades). Artworks from these contexts will be discussed altogether in the sections below as my conclusions span all contexts. For instance, representations of Venus on *aediculae* and in *lararium* paintings occur equally in domestic and public contexts (three from each), so conclusions can be based on a broader body of evidence when discussing artworks from domestic and public contexts (and façades) simultaneously.

7.1 Venus as One of the Twelve Gods

Two façade paintings in Pompeii represent Venus amongst the pantheon of twelve gods (on VIII.3.10–12 and IX.11.1), with slightly different deities depicted in each painting.

The painting of the twelve gods on the façade of VIII.3.10–12 is located immediately above a painting featuring snakes and an altar (fig. 7.1), common features of *lararium* paintings. Boyce (1942: 21) argued that the snakes were represented for protection, due to their role as protectors in Greek mythology. The two registers were probably intended to be viewed together, and were probably represented for protection.

The painting of the twelve gods on the façade of IX.11.1 appears amongst offering scenes with a *genius* and two *lares* depicted immediately underneath, an offering scene featuring the *Vicomagistri* to the right, and a snake and an altar depicted immediately underneath the *Vicomagistri* scene (fig. 7.2). These scenes all depict religious or ritual subjects, featuring deities, offering scenes, or altars. A masonry altar containing ash and coal stood against the façade of IX.11.1 (Della Corte 1965: 306; altar visible in fig. 7.2). This altar was clearly used for ritual activity, with offerings probably dedicated to both the *lares* and the gods of the Roman pantheon.

These two examples suggest that paintings of the twelve gods were represented for protection and were seen as being particularly ‘religious’ in that they only appear amongst scenes with altars and other deities, and never amongst narrative scenes. They may have been the subject of offerings and sacrifices, given the proximity of the altar to

the painting on IX.11.1, but there is no evidence in the form of an altar or burnt offerings for this around the painting on VIII.3.10–12.

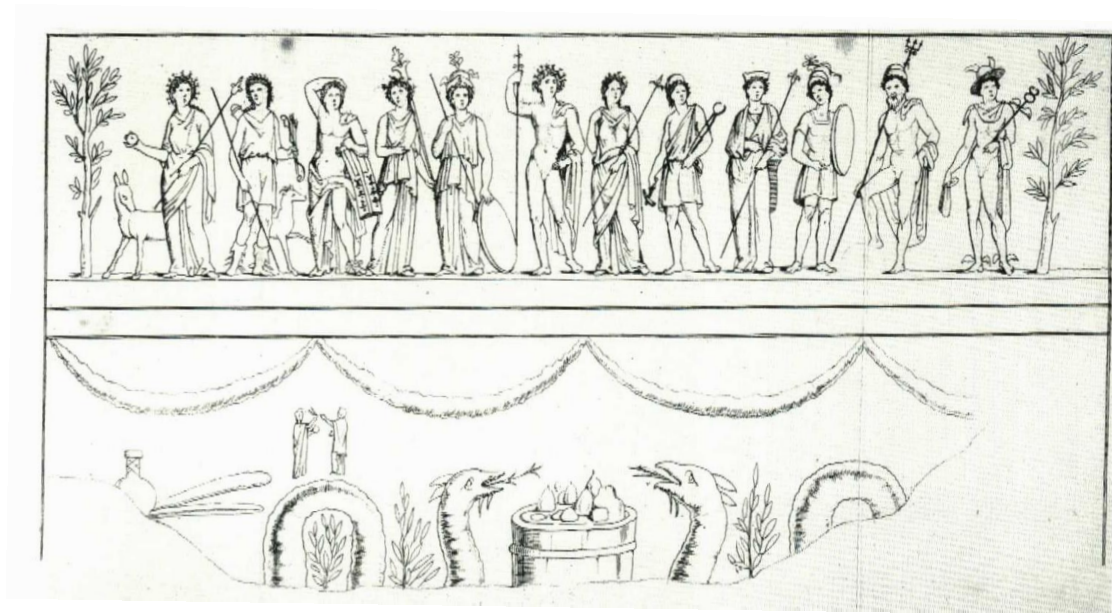


Figure 7.1: Venus (fourth figure from right) as one of the twelve gods on the façade of VIII.3.10–12

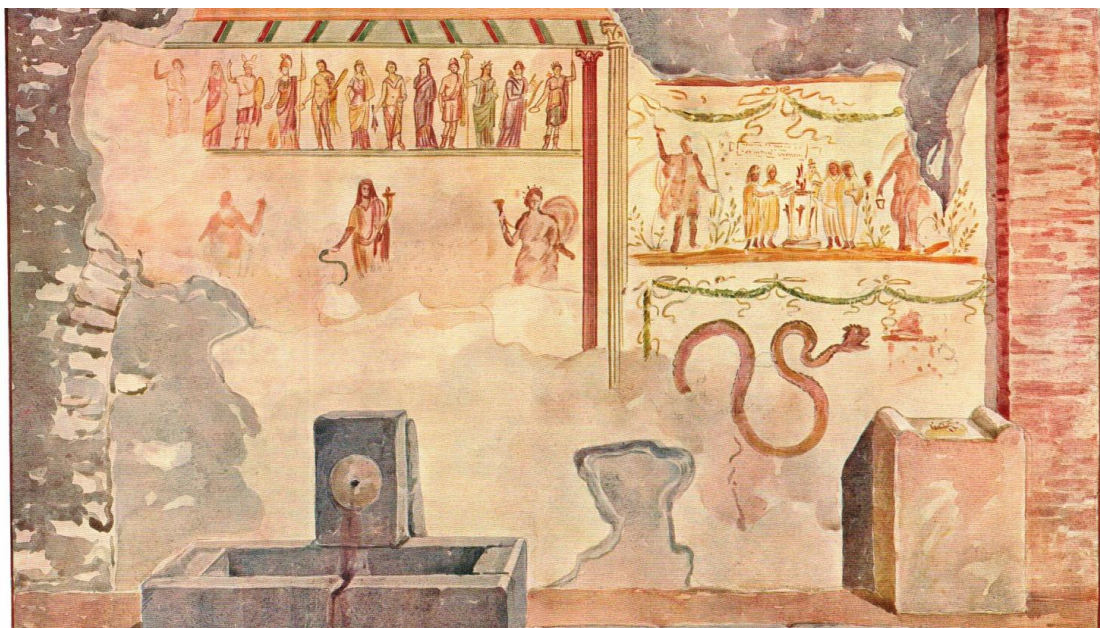


Figure 7.2: The twelve gods (Venus sixth figure from left) in proximity to the masonry altar on the façade to the left of the entrance to IX.11.1

7.2 Venus with Other Deities in Non-Narrative Scenes

In narrative scenes, deities were chosen to illustrate a particular story and their presence was necessary to make the narrative clear (though sometimes additional deities were included⁵⁷). When deities occur within non-narrative scenes, however, they were clearly chosen for a more specific reason, rather than because they were needed to illustrate a narrative. This is perhaps even more significant when deities occur within the ‘No Active Scene’ type, as it is clear that the person commissioning the artwork wanted to represent these deities specifically and was not wanting a specific scene (though some could have imitated famous artworks which no longer survive).

Non-narrative scenes sometimes represented deities to invoke them for protection. For instance, all six artworks featuring Venus which are *lararium* paintings or occur on *aediculae* in Pompeii feature non-narrative scenes (four of these featuring ‘No Active Scene’ – table 7.2). This suggests that non-narrative scenes were considered most appropriate for ritual contexts, where Venus could be invoked, presumably sometimes for protection. Furthermore, all seven artworks featuring Venus on entrances to buildings, which were probably used for protection (see Section 7.4), feature non-narrative scenes (three of these featuring ‘No Active Scene’, table 7.3).

When Venus is represented alongside other deities in non-narrative scenes in Pompeii, the same combination of deities and the same composition within the scene is rare. This suggests that the owner or designer chose the combination of deities specifically, rather than emulating well-known scenes. This is in sharp contrast to narrative scenes which frequently repeat the same composition in paintings of the same scene, for instance with Bacchus discovering Ariadne, or Narcissus gazing at his reflection, with the majority composed in a very similar way.

24 artworks feature Venus with other deities in non-narrative scenes. Among these, five depict ‘Venus Fishing’, where Venus is accompanied by a winged male (probably Eros) who exclusively appears with Venus in paintings of this scene (see Chapter 5.2.3). These five artworks are excluded from discussion here, as the winged male is clearly a part of this scene type rather than being represented in his own right. Thus, there are 19 artworks featuring non-narrative scenes, where the presence of other

⁵⁷ For instance, Mercury is depicted in the ‘Punishment of Dirce’ scene in I.10.4 when he does not appear at this stage of the story (Ling & Ling 2005: 77).

deities with Venus is not determined by the scene type (table 7.1). 13 of these depict ‘No Active Scene’, four depict ‘Other Non-Narrative Scenes’ (grouping scenes with few examples in Pompeii)⁵⁸, and two depict the ‘Toilet of Venus’.

Once the two paintings of the twelve gods (marked with a * in table 7.1) are excluded, as they skew the data⁵⁹, Venus is most often accompanied by Bacchus and Priapus in non-narrative scenes (each occurring in three artworks), followed by Jupiter, Mars, and the *lares* (each occurring twice). The popularity of Venus and Bacchus together in non-narrative scenes can probably be explained by their popularity in Pompeii in their respective roles as the town’s patron deity and the god of viticulture. Pompeii was known for its wine production (Pliny, *Natural History*, 14.4.35, 14.4.38, 14.8.70; Columella, *De Re Rustica*, 3.2.27), and thus Bacchus would have been particularly important to many Pompeians, of whom many were involved in the production, distribution, or consumption of this local produce. That said, these two deities were also associated with each other outside of Pompeii, for instance, *Orphic Hymn*, 55.7 describes Aphrodite as the companion of Bacchus. Even when they are not represented within the same painting, Bacchus and Venus can appear in association with each other (see discussion of I.10.4 in Section 7.6 and Chapter 8.4.4). Priapus was the son of Venus (Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, 9.31.2; Diodorus 4.6.1) and this association probably explains why Priapus is depicted with Venus more often than other deities.

It may seem surprising that Venus is not represented more often with her lover, Mars, in non-narrative scenes. However, this can be explained by my categorisation of scenes featuring Venus. When Venus is represented with Mars in the painting, I have considered these as ‘Love of Venus and Mars’ scenes except when another scene type can be ascertained. Thus, they do not occur together in non-narrative scenes as frequently as could be expected, despite frequently occurring together in Pompeii (in 41 of the 197 representations of Venus from all contexts in Pompeii – 21%).

⁵⁸ These four scenes comprise two offering scenes, the production and sale of perfumed oil, and Venus on a chariot pulled by elephants.

⁵⁹ For instance, Bacchus does not feature in either of these paintings, but Jupiter as father of the gods does, superficially increasing the likelihood of Venus appearing with Jupiter over Bacchus.

Table 7.1: Deities depicted within the same non-narrative scene as Venus (excluding 'Venus fishing')

Deities Depicted with Venus	Public	Public Façade	Domestic	Unknown Façade	Total
Two Lares			1		1
Bacchus	1			1	2
Bacchus and Jupiter			1		1
Fortuna, Genius		1			1
Jupiter	1				1
Jupiter, Juno, Mars, Minerva, Hercules, Mercury, Proserpina, Vulcan, Ceres, Apollo, Diana (*)				1	1
Vesta, Diana, Apollo, Ceres, Minerva, Jupiter, Juno, Vulcan, Mars, Neptune, Mercury (*)		1			1
Lucifer	1				1
Mars	1		1		2
Mercury, Priapus		1			1
Pan			1		1
Priapus (herm/statue)			2		2
Psyche			1		1
River god	1				1
Vesta, two Lares			1		1
Victoria	1				1
Total	6	3	8	2	19

7.3 Venus in *Lararium* Paintings and Paintings on *Aediculae*

Just six of the 197 artworks featuring Venus in Pompeii occur in *lararium* paintings or on *aediculae*. In terms of the number of *lararia* in Pompeii, Boyce (1937) identified 469 *lararia* across regions I-IX (this high number is probably inaccurate due to his inclusion of niches), and Fröhlich (1991) identified 115 *lararium* paintings in Pompeii (excluding those with no visual documentation). Since *lararia* were common in Pompeii, there were ample opportunities for Venus to be depicted on them, but she appears relatively infrequently.

These six artworks featuring Venus which occur in *lararium* paintings or on *aediculae* comprise three of the 162 artworks featuring Venus within domestic contexts (V.4.3; VI.11.8–10; IX.1.12), and three of the 12 from public contexts (*Castellum Aquae*; VII.4.20; VII.9.33)⁶⁰. This is a substantial proportion of artworks featuring

⁶⁰ None of the 11 artworks featuring Venus on façades, the five from domestic and public contexts, or the seven where the context cannot be ascertained, are *lararium* paintings or are painted on *aediculae*.

Venus in public contexts (three of 12 – 25%) compared with the small proportion of artworks featuring Venus in domestic contexts (three of 162 – 2%). This suggests that artworks featuring Venus from public contexts were more likely to occur in ritual contexts than domestic ones. The percentage of representations of Venus in *lararium* paintings or on *aediculae* in domestic contexts is particularly low given that in Allison's (2004b) sample of 30 *atrium* houses in Pompeii, there were nine *lararium* paintings and 11 *aediculae* (sometimes with more than one within the same house).

These six Venus representations within *lararium* paintings or painted on *aediculae* are the only identifiable depictions of Venus in each of these buildings. All six are from areas with access to the open air, which, as Orr (1988: 294–5) argues, would be needed for ritual activity involving burnt offerings. Although we do not know for certain that burnt offerings took place in front of all *lararium* paintings (especially if there are no permanent altars nearby), portable altars have been discovered in Pompeii and were perhaps used in proximity to *lararium* paintings (as in the *atrium* of VI.16.26 – Allison 2004a: 146).

Venus Pompeiana is the most popular Venus type to be represented within *lararium* paintings or painted on *aediculae* across both domestic and public contexts (table 7.2). The popularity of *Venus Pompeiana* in these ritual contexts is perhaps because this type represented the goddess in her role as the patron deity of Pompeii (see Chapter 5.1.5). Interestingly, all three representations of Venus within *lararium* paintings or painted on *aediculae* within domestic contexts depict the *Venus Pompeiana* type. Thus, this was the Venus type most associated with ritual activity in the house.

With one exception, scenes featuring Venus within *lararium* paintings or painted on *aediculae* also include other deities (table 7.2). This exception (V.4.3) instead depicts Venus as one of several deities in separate artworks surrounding the *lararium* niche – with Bacchus to the left of Venus, Fortuna and Jupiter to the right of the niche, and Mercury, Victoria, Hercules, and Minerva in a single artwork underneath the niche (see Appendix C1 – V–5–20). Venus is probably depicted with, or in close proximity to, other deities in *lararium* paintings and paintings on *aediculae* because multiple deities would have been invoked at *lararia*.

Table 7.2: Context and composition of Venus representations within lararium paintings or painted on aediculae in Pompeii

	Building					
	V.4.3	VI.11.8–10	Castellum Aquae	VII.4.20	VII.9.33	IX.1.12
Context	Domestic	Domestic	Public	Public	Public	Domestic
Room	b	16	N/A	3	2	k
Room Type	3	16	Other	Garden	Garden	14
Wall	W	E	N	N	W	S
Zone of Wall	Central	Central	Unknown	Upper	Central	Unknown
Field of Wall	Right	Right	Unknown	Right	Right	Unknown
Type of Scene	No Active Scene	Other Non-Narrative Scene (Offering Scene)	No Active Scene (Venus with Nymphs and River God)	Other Non-Narrative Scene (Offering Scene)	No Active Scene (Venus & Mars with Attributes and Altars)	No Active Scene
Venus Type	Venus Pompeiana	Venus Pompeiana	Venus Anadyomene (a)	Venus Pompeiana	Venus Pudica / Venus at her Toilet	Venus Pompeiana
Venus' State of Nudity	Clothed	Clothed	Naked	Clothed	Naked (drapery falls below pubic area)	Clothed
Minimum No. of Figures in Scene (incl. Venus)	2	5	4	3 (in upper section)	2	4
No. of Cupids in Scene	1	1	0	1	0	1
Deities Depicted with Venus	None	Vesta, 2 Lares (Sarno river god below this section of the painting)	River god	Jupiter	Mars	2 Lares
Other Figures in Scene (excl. deities & cupids)	None	None	2 nymphs	None	None	None
Type of Headwear	Unknown	Walled crown	Unknown	Crown	Hairband	Unknown
Type of Jewellery	Unknown	N	Unknown	E	A, B, L, N	Unknown
Type of Attribute	Cupid, rudder, myrtle, mirror	Cupid, crown, jewellery, myrtle/olive, mirror, rudder, sceptre	Unknown (one nymph holds possible shell)	Cupid, sceptre, rudder, mirror, myrtle, crown, jewellery	Jewellery, hairband, mirror	Cupid, sceptre, rudder

7.4 Venus on Façades and Entrances

Dupont's study of daily life in ancient Rome found that boundaries often involved religion and ritual (1992: 83–5). Boundaries, thresholds, and entrances were considered by the Romans to require particular protection, which is evidenced in decoration through the use of apotropaic and protective motifs, and statues or paintings of deities (Dunbabin 1978: 162–164; Johns 1982: 64; Swift 2009: 41; van der Graaff & Ellis 2017: 287–288, 296–297). Thus, deities represented on façades might serve as guardians of entrances, protecting those inside at the most vulnerable part of the building. Representations of deities on façades also presumably invoked the protection of these gods within the building too, or highlighted to visitors that the owner's property was under the protection of these specific gods.

Fröhlich (1991) argues that representations of deities on façades reflect the interest of the owner in particular spheres. For instance, he argues that Mercury is probably depicted on façades in his role as god of trade and good fortune; Minerva as patron deity of craftsmen; and Bacchus as god of wine (Fröhlich 1991: 49–51). Thus, the public nature of façade paintings offered the owner an opportunity to highlight his favoured deities, or those he considered to be his patron deities (or perhaps those of his profession). As we rarely know who owned these buildings and which deities they considered to be their patron deities, we cannot test this hypothesis. However, in public contexts, archaeological evidence often helps us to identify the function of a building, and the choice of representing a particular deity can sometimes be linked back to this function. For instance, Bacchus was the patron deity of taverns, and Minerva was the patron deity of craft businesses.

Venus is represented on 11 façades in Pompeii – seven of these artworks flank an entrance (table 7.3); two depict the twelve gods on façades but not entrances (VIII.3.10–12 and IX.11.1); one is on the west façade of the *purgatorium* of the Temple of Isis (VIII.7.28); and the exact location of the remaining façade painting is unknown (Via di Nola – Region III or IV). I will mostly focus on the paintings flanking entrances in this section, as the twelve gods and *purgatorium* artworks are discussed elsewhere in this chapter, and the location of the other façade painting is unknown so I cannot determine its context.

Artworks featuring deities which flanked entrances perhaps invoked the deities for protection as these were routes into the building and therefore required guarding. Five of the seven Venus representations flanking an entrance depict at least one deity on the opposite side (table 7.3), creating a protective axis over the entrance. Of the remaining two representations, it is unknown if there was another painting opposite, but one of them (VII.4.22–23) includes another deity within the painting itself. Clearly, multiple deities were considered by the Pompeians to be necessary at entrances, perhaps to offer extra protection.

Six of these seven artworks featuring Venus which flank entrances represent Mercury either within the same painting or around the same entrance (table 7.3). The only exception to this is on I.13.9, the only domestic façade to represent Venus on an entrance. Thus, Venus is always combined with Mercury on façade entrances to public buildings (shops and businesses), presumably to invoke her protection and favour as patron deity of Pompeii, with Mercury as god of commerce to ensure prosperity.

Table 7.3: Artworks featuring Venus which flank entrances

Context	Building	Type of Scene Featuring Venus	Scene on Opposite Side of Entrance
Domestic	I.13.9	Other Non-Narrative Scene (Venus on a Ship)	No known painting
Unknown	II.1.12	Toilet of Venus	Mercury and Bacchus (also inner side of both entrance doorjambs depict Priapus)
Public	VII.4.22–23	No Active Scene (Venus and Mercury)	No known painting
Public	IX.7.1	No Active Scene (Venus with Cupids)	Procession of Venus (Sol, Jupiter, Mercury, and Luna depicted above)
Public	IX.7.1	Other Non-Narrative Scene (Procession of Venus)	Venus with Cupids (Sol, Jupiter, Mercury, and Luna depicted above)
Public	IX.7.7	Other Non-Narrative Scene (Venus on Chariot Pulled by Elephants)	Mercury
Unknown	Unknown (Region IV on the north side of the Via di Nola)	No Active Scene (Venus with Bacchus)	Mercury and Hercules (three paintings of deities on the entrances to the two buildings)

Here I examine the composition and context of these paintings individually to investigate possible explanations for why Venus was represented on paintings flanking entrances. The only domestic façade to represent Venus is on I.13.9. This artwork

depicts the goddess steering a ship with ‘aphrodeite sozousa’ (‘Σώζουσα’ – ‘The Saving Aphrodite’) inscribed at the bottom of the painting (*CIL* IV 9867, see Appendix C1 – V–1–27). This would suggest that the protection of the goddess over seafarers was being requested, or else she was being thanked for her protection at sea (see Chapter 4.1.3 and Section 7.7 for this being a role of Venus).

The façade painting on VII.4.22–23 represents Venus with Mercury, with Priapus much smaller in the background of the same painting (see Appendix C1 – V–7–20). As this is a shop façade, these deities were probably chosen for their roles as patron deity of Pompeii, god of commerce, and god of good fortune respectively. The shop-owner was probably trying to acknowledge the most relevant deities to him, and ensure his business flourished under their patronage.

The façade painting to the right of the entrance to IX.7.7 (a *coactiliaria*) depicts Venus in a chariot drawn by elephants, accompanied by Fortuna and a *Genius*. Coarelli (2010: 129) argues that this painting referenced the Sullan Capitoline triad of *Venus Victrix*, the *Genius populi Pompeiani*, and *Fortuna*. Immediately below this painting was a felt-production scene, with Mercury represented on the opposite pilaster (see Appendix C1 – V–9–27). Varone (2007: 271) argues that Venus and Mercury were represented so the owner could put both the felt-production business and himself under the protection of both the patron deity of Pompeii and the god of commerce, which seems likely. Fortuna is also depicted with Venus, presumably adding further protection and ensuring good fortune. Sampaolo (in *PPM* IX: 777) argues that the chariot drawn by elephants is an Eastern feature representing wealth. This would suggest that the owner wanted to represent a variety of deities and symbols to ensure prosperity and wealth in his business.

7.4.1 The Façade Paintings of IX.7.1–2

The façade paintings surrounding the entrance to IX.7.1–2 have been a popular subject of scholarship. I discuss this entrance in detail here because it is the only example in Pompeii where Venus is represented on both sides of an entrance. These two buildings have not yet been fully excavated so the function of these buildings is unknown. Scholars have suggested that one was a felt-working shop (IX.7.1) and the other a dyeworks (IX.7.2) based on political graffiti on the façade stating who the

coactiliari (felt-workers) and the *infectores* (wool-dyers) were supporting for political office (CIL IV 7809 & 7812; Potts 2009: 58 & 60).



Figure 7.3: The façade paintings of IX.7.1–2

Venus appears on both sides of the entrance in similar coloured garments, with Sol, Jupiter, Mercury, and Luna depicted above (fig. 7.3). Potts (2009: 61) argues that the façade paintings on IX.7.1–2 represent the days of the week (Sol-Apollo – Sunday; Jupiter – Thursday; Mercury – Wednesday; Luna-Diana – Monday; and Venus – Friday). The two missing weekday deities (Saturn and Mars) could be explained by their status as *noxii* (Descoedres 1987: 136; Allison & Sear 2002: 74). Potts (2009: 62–63) identifies the deities in the central zone flanking the entrance as Venus and Cybele, arguing that it would be appropriate to depict them in association with each other due to several similarities between the goddesses in terms of their iconography, their spheres, and their festivals (both have festivals in April – the *Veneralia* and the *Megalesia* respectively). I have identified both deities as Venus, however, for reasons outlined in Chapter 5.8.3. Although the weekday deities on this façade do not occur in chronological order, nor do other paintings of deities representing time (see Allison & Sear 2002: 67 for discussion of the placement of the Seasons; see also Chapter 8.3.3 for room 4 of VII.4.48). That said, I would agree with Clarke (2003: 88–89) that perhaps the deities on this façade were not represented as the weekday deities. Clarke (2003: 89) interprets the four divinities above the entrance as creating a cosmos of the gods – with

the Sun, Moon, father of the gods, and god of commerce – while below this architrave the owner's specific religious practices are depicted. I would concur that these were probably the roles of these deities which were emphasised and further suggest this was for protection, with Sol and Luna representing day and night, protecting the business at all times of day, with Jupiter and Mercury represented centrally to protect the business as the father of the gods and the god of commerce respectively. Venus was represented more prominently below – in two panel scenes in the central zone – probably to ensure the protection of the town's patron deity. These same deities are represented in room 4 of VII.4.48 (see Chapter 8.3.3), however, perhaps again for protection day and night, and from the father of the gods and the town's patron deity, but the presence of Mercury cannot reliably be interpreted.

Thus, the deities on this façade were probably represented to protect the business and its workers, or as Fröhlich (1991: 53) argues, so the owner could place himself under the protection of Venus and the other deities. The small terracotta phallus (a good luck symbol) to the left of the painting of Jupiter (Potts 2009: 56) perhaps emphasises this protective purpose.

Schefold (1972: 101) argues that the owner of this building was trying to highlight their veneration of Isis, Venus and Cybele – with Luna-Diana representing Isis-Io (with Sol-Apollo as her son, Jupiter as her husband, and Mercury as her auxiliary), *Venus Pompeiana* below, and the procession scene representing Cybele rather than Venus. There is no evidence to support this Isis interpretation, however.

Potts (2009: 61–62) argues that the clothes worn by Venus on either side of the entrance served as advertising for the types of clothing that this business could create (though Potts identifies the enthroned figure in the procession scene on the right as Cybele). It is possible that Venus wears the type of items sold by the fullery, however, Potts' argument interprets the decoration based on a proposed rather than known function of the building.

7.4.2 Entrances to Rooms

Two representations of Venus occur in association with entrances to rooms – either flanking the entrance or occurring above it. In V.4.6/7/8 (a *thermopolium*), Venus and Mercury are represented on opposite door jambs flanking the entrance to room e. Bragantini (in *PPM* III: 1058) has argued that this was to invoke the protection of

Venus over the wine stored in room f, and to gain Mercury's favour regarding the business. However, I think it is more likely that they were invoked to protect the contents of the room they flanked the entrance of – room e. In the *atrium* of VII.2.44–46, Venus and Mars are depicted above the main entrance (within the house). I think this location was chosen so these two deities could overlook the main entrance and exit to the house and protect the inhabitants. Although this painting is slightly offset from the centre of the entranceway, this does not invalidate this interpretation.

Sometimes when Venus is depicted in the upper zone of a room, but not as part of a frieze, the artwork is located on the wall opposite the entrance (I.9.3; VI.2.4; VII.9.47), visible to inhabitants and visitors as they entered the room, perhaps so Venus could watch over the entrance.

7.5 Venus in Other Public Locations

Venus is sometimes represented in public locations for a ritual or protective purpose, which can be ascertained from the artwork's location or other evidence within the building. In this section, I only discuss examples not mentioned in detail elsewhere in this chapter.

In room 5 of I.11.1 (a *caupona*), Venus and Bacchus are depicted in a central panel painting featuring 'No Active Scene'. These deities were probably the two most relevant deities to the business – Venus as patron deity, and Bacchus as god of wine. This non-narrative scene featuring deities relevant to a *caupona* suggests that they were represented to protect the business. Other deities are represented elsewhere in the same *caupona*, but these appear as busts rather than as a panel painting (the busts of Diana, Bacchus, and Apollo in room 2 – *PPM* II: 508–509). The more prominent location of Venus and Bacchus in comparison to the other deities suggests that they were considered more important by the owners of the establishment.

Venus was represented at the top of the south-east pillar in the peristyle of *fullonica* VI.8.20 (fig. 7.4). Directly opposite Venus was a pillar representing a river god, with a fountain between them (Clarke 2003: 114; fig. 7.5). The location of these artworks facing the fountain suggests that they were represented to invoke their protection over the water supply, which would have been important for a functioning fullery.



Figure 7.4: The south-east pillar from the peristyle of VI.8.20 featuring Venus and fullery scenes

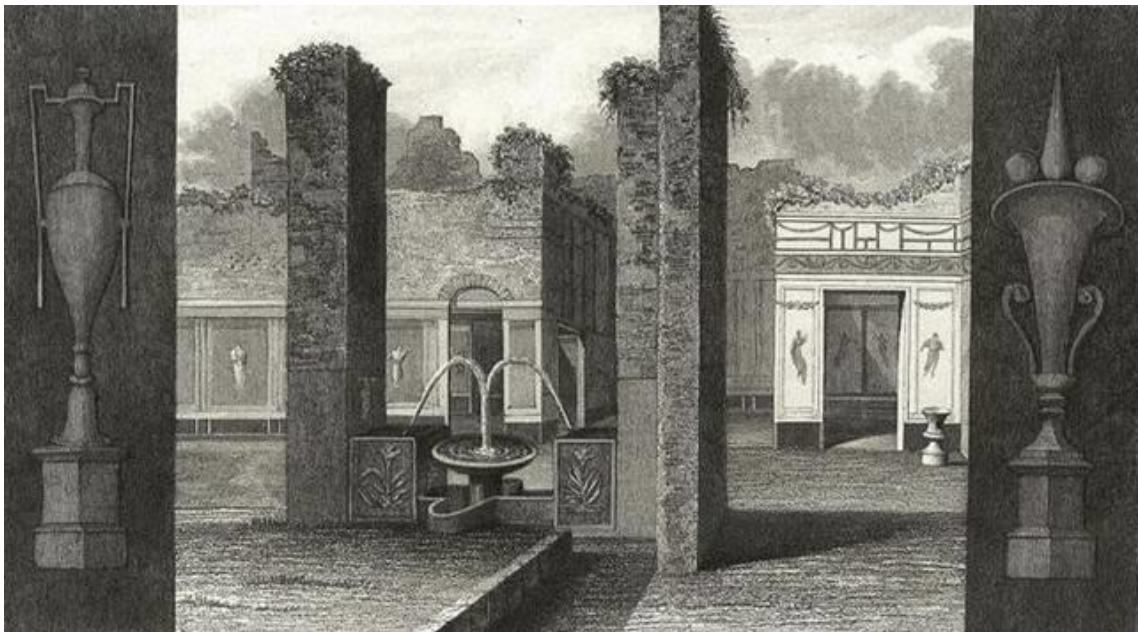


Figure 7.5: The pillars with paintings of Venus and a river god face each other over the fountain in the peristyle of VI.8.20

Both VI.8.20 and IX.7.7 (the latter discussed in Section 7.4) represent Venus in close proximity to scenes depicting the activity of the business – fullery scenes on the same pillar as Venus (though on a different face) in *fullonica* VI.8.20, and Venus occurs immediately above a felt-production scene on the façade of *coactiliaria* IX.7.7. Both examples occur with other deities – Bacchus and Apollo are also represented on the pillars of the peristyle of VI.8.20, and Mercury is represented on the opposite pilaster to Venus on the façade of IX.7.7. These scenes perhaps just represent activities which took place in the buildings they decorate, but I think that the representations of Venus and other deities in close proximity to these activity scenes were intended to visually put the business under the protection of these gods. Boyce (1937: no. 171) argues that the representations of Venus, Bacchus, and Apollo in the peristyle of VI.8.20 were perhaps chosen as the patron deities of this particular fullery, but there is no evidence for this.

Venus and Mars are represented together in a relief on the *purgatorium* of the Temple of Isis (VIII.7.28). This relief is situated in an area of ritual activity, overlooking the temple, on a *purgatorium* used for ritual cleansing. However, Perseus and Andromeda are represented in the corresponding relief on the opposite side of the *purgatorium* (PPM VIII: 802), suggesting that the decorative theme here was intended to be mythological couples rather than deities, and thus although this relief was located in a ritual area, its immediate context with other artworks suggests that it did not have any ritual significance. Indeed, Moormann (2011) discovered that paintings which decorated temples were similar in composition to those in domestic space. He outlines the attempts of several scholars to link the diverse topics which decorate the Temple of Isis complex back to Isis and Egypt, but he argues that these artworks were decorative and reflected contemporary tastes (Moormann 2011: 149–162). Moormann (2011: 152) also argues that as a whole, the artworks on the *purgatorium* have nothing to do with Egypt.

Venus and Mars are also represented together in a painting in the gladiator barracks (VIII.8.x), flanked by 8ft-high paintings of piles of gladiatorial weapons, presumably representing trophies. Trophies were perhaps dedicated to these deities here in reality too. Indeed, in the *exedra* in the middle of the east wall of the barracks, decorated helmets and armour were found – some decorated with silver, with one helmet depicting the capture of Troy (Gell & Gandy 1852: 184). Gell and Gandy (1852: 184) argued that the size, weight, and decoration of these helmets and armour suggest they were unlikely to have been used in combat, and were perhaps trophies. Thus,

Venus and Mars were perhaps represented here so gladiators could petition both the town's patron deity and the god of war for victory and protection.

7.6 Schemes of Decoration Featuring Venus for Protective, Ritual, or Magic Purposes

Venus sometimes features as part of planned decorative schemes within a room or spanning multiple rooms in Pompeii, as will be highlighted in Chapter 8. Three examples suggest that Venus was represented as part of schemes of decoration for protective, ritual, or magic purposes – in I.10.4, VI.15.7/8, and VI.17 (Ins. Occ.).

In I.10.4, Venus, Diana, and Bacchus are represented in their domains in rooms completely open onto the south side of the peristyle (fig. 8.5) – Diana is represented in room 22; Bacchus in room 23; and Venus in room 24 (see Chapter 8.4.4)⁶¹. The domain of each of these deities is the sole decoration of each room – both rooms 22 and 24 are comprised of a single curved wall, each with a single painting featuring the respective goddesses in their domains, and Bacchus is represented amongst theatre masks and poets in room 23 (Ling & Ling 2005: 85–88). These three deities were all associated with gardens and the outdoors (Diana – hunting; Bacchus – viticulture; and Venus – gardens) and were perhaps represented here to watch over their garden domain. Thus, a religious and protective ambience is created by the south side of the peristyle as the three deities are the main focus of each room open to the peristyle, overlooking their outdoor domain. The altar in room 25 is explicit evidence that one of the rooms on the south side of the peristyle was used for ritual activity. Thus, the south side of the peristyle was perhaps the main area for religious and ritual activity in the house. Furthermore, the painting of Bacchus in room 23 was designed to be visible to those entering the house and located so that the deity overlooked as much of the house as possible, perhaps for protection (see Chapter 8.4.4).

Strocka (in *PPM V*: 677) argues that the windows and entrances in VI.15.7/8 were deliberately designed so the *lares* in rooms g and n could overlook every room in the house (fig. 7.6). The niche in room g did not have any associated wall-paintings or finds to suggest that the *lares* were worshipped in it (Boyce 1937: no. 215; see the list

⁶¹ This combination of Venus, Bacchus, and Diana was not unique to I.10.4 and also occurs in room q of VI.15.1 (Schwinzer 1979: 86).

of finds in this room in Allison 2004b – Casa del Principe di Napoli), however, and the windows and entrances were perhaps positioned to let light from room n into other rooms. Nevertheless, if the house was designed so the *lares* could overlook every room, it could be expected that other deities depicted in the house would have their location considered carefully by the owners or designers too. For instance, *Venus Anadyomene* is represented in the central panel of the west wall of room m. A viewer could stand in front of the *Venus Anadyomene* painting and see both Venus in room m and the *aedicula* in room n through the window in the west wall (fig. 7.6). The central panel paintings in room m represent Bacchus, Venus, and cupids with the attributes of Venus (PPM V: 668–673), all within non-narrative scenes, suggesting that these two deities were chosen specifically rather than for their part within a narrative. Venus and Bacchus were perhaps represented to provide extra protection in addition to that of the *lares*.

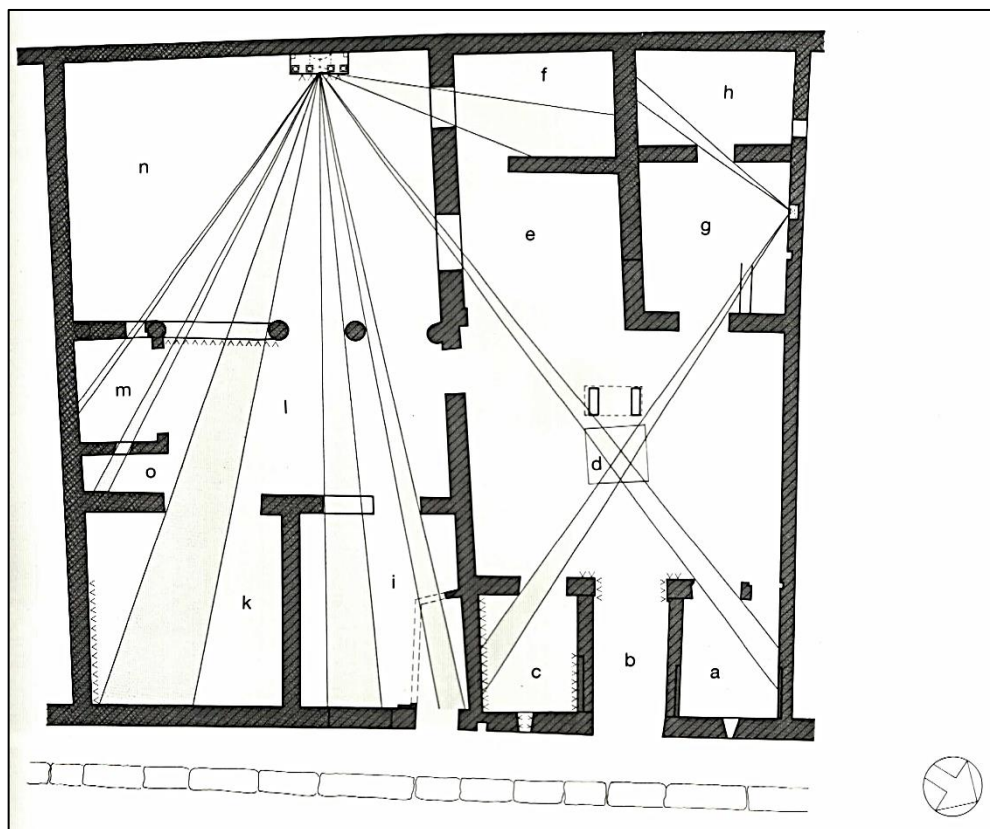


Figure 7.6: The sight-lines of the lares in rooms g and n of VI.15.7/8 overlooking every room in the house

Venus is part of a decorative scheme within the same room in an unrecorded building in VI.17 (Ins. Occ.) consisting of deities representing different measures of time – the days, months, seasons, and possibly the signs of the zodiac (Long 1992: 496).

The building and type of room are unknown, as the room was refilled after excavation and its exact location was not recorded (Long 1992: 479). A bust of Venus occurs amongst the busts of weekday deities⁶² in this room, and a possible bust of Venus⁶³ amongst the busts of month deities (Helbig 1868: no. 1006). This high concentration of busts of deities in a single room may suggest that the room had some kind of ritual or magic significance. Indeed, the gods of various measures of time (such as the hours, days, weeks and months) were sometimes invoked in Greek magic rituals (*PGM XIII*: lines 30–38, 53–60, 114–122, 671–679, 735–740, in Betz 1986: 172–189). Depictions of deities representing periods of time are also represented in VII.4.48 in Pompeii (the morning and evening star, weekday deities, and the seasons – Chapter 8.3.3), however, these are spread over multiple rooms with other decoration also present.

7.7 Venus as Protector of the Water Supply and Seafaring

Venus was entrusted with protecting the water supply in Pompeii, and perhaps seafarers too (see Chapter 4.1.3 for evidence of the goddess having this role more generally). At least eight artworks in Pompeii depict Venus in association with the water supply (in I.7.11; V.4.3; VI.8.20; VI.11.8–10; VI.16.7/38; VII.4.20; VII.9.33; and the *Castellum Aquae*), perhaps to protect it. This includes five of the six artworks featuring Venus in *lararium* paintings or on *aediculae*. The exception to this occurs in room k of IX.1.12, a kitchen area; thus, rather than being associated with the water supply, this painting was probably located in a kitchen to enable ventilation for burnt offerings.

In room 19 of I.7.11 (a house), Venus is depicted with Mars on the *castellum aquae* which supplied the fountain in the garden, presumably to protect the water supply, especially given the two *lararia* located in close proximity to it – the *lararium*

⁶² The weekday deities are: Saturn – Saturday; Sol – Sunday; Luna – Monday; Mars – Tuesday; Mercury – Wednesday; Jupiter – Thursday; and Venus – Friday, according to Dio Cassius 37.18–19 and two lists of the weekday deities on the walls of Pompeii (*CIL IV*: 5202 and 6779).

⁶³ Long (1992: 493–4) argues that this bust represents Juno as it is similar to other representations of Juno in Pompeii, numismatic evidence, and in other artworks where deities represent the months, Jupiter is paired with Juno. I agree with Long that as the month deities are here represented with their most recognisable attributes (Diana with the crescent on her head, holding her bow; Jupiter with a beard and sceptre although not his iconic thunderbolt; Vulcan with his *exomis* and tongs), this bust probably represents Juno with her diadem and sceptre, as presumably Venus would have been represented with a cupid here to distinguish her from other deities. However, there is still a chance that this bust represents Venus (representing April as Helbig 1868: no. 1006 attests), so it is still included in the database.

painting and niche on the west wall of room 18 and the *aedicula* against the west wall of room 19 (see Appendix C1 – V–1–13). In the peristyle of VI.8.20 (a *fullonica*), the fountain is flanked by two pillars, one with a representation of Venus and the other with a representation of a river god (facing inwards), as discussed in Section 7.5. The choice of these deities in this location suggests that Venus and the river god were invoked to protect the water supply. In the peristyle of VI.16.7/38 (a house), the relief of Venus with a cupid burning incense had two cisterns just beneath it (see Seiler 1992: fig. 86; also noted by Petersen 2012: 330), suggesting that Venus was invoked to protect the water supply.

The other five are *lararium* paintings or paintings on *aediculae* (in V.4.3, VI.11.8–10, VII.4.20, VII.9.33, and the *Castellum Aquae*). In room b of V.4.3 (a house), Venus is depicted in the same room as an *impluvium* and a cistern (*PPM* III: 1047; *PPP* 504030B07–8). Venus is represented here as part of a series of paintings of deities around a *lararium* niche, which perhaps emphasises that the inhabitants wanted the gods to protect their water supply. In room 16 of VI.11.8–10 (a house), Venus is depicted with Vesta and two *lares* in the same painting with a personification of the Sarno River below, which Strocka (in *PPM* V: 68) argues was to protect the water supply of the oven given its location immediately above a podium with a lead pipe and basins. In room 3 of VII.4.20 (a room behind a shop), Venus is depicted as part of a *lararium* painting in the same room as a cistern and a latrine (*PPM* VI: 983), which again suggests that she was represented in order to protect the water supply. In room 2 of VII.9.33 (a possible *fullonica*), the painting featuring Venus and Mars with altars has a masonry basin directly in front of it, suggesting that this painting served to protect the water supply (see Chapter 5.10.4). In the *Castellum Aquae*, Venus is represented in the same scene as a river god and two nymphs (see table 7.2). The location of this *lararium* painting directly above the water inlet channel within the *Castellum Aquae* clearly suggests that it was intended to serve as protection for the water supply, especially given the other characters in the scene.

Interestingly, when Venus is represented in association with the water supply, it is not always a water-related Venus type which is used. One artwork uses a water-related Venus type (*Venus Anadyomene*), and the remaining seven use other types (‘Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing’, *Venus Pudica* / ‘Venus at her Toilet’, two depict ‘Venus Leaning on a Pillar’, and three depict *Venus Pompeiana*). Perhaps the popularity of *Venus Pompeiana* in contexts associated with the water supply suggests

that the patron deity of the town protected the water supply as one of her roles. That said, it might just reflect her popularity in *lararium* paintings and paintings on *aediculae*.

The Pompeians clearly associated Venus with the water supply, representing her in locations overlooking it, presumably for protection. That said, despite occurring in association with the water supply in the examples above, Venus rarely occurs in bath areas of the house, with only three of the 157 representations of Venus within domestic contexts occurring in bath areas (type 21 rooms), where the room type can be ascertained (table 6.2).

Venus is also depicted in association with water in other contexts in Pompeii. Venus is represented on the façade of the *purgatorium* of the Temple of Isis (VIII.7.28), which was used for ritual cleansing with water from the Nile (see Section 7.5). As discussed in detail in Section 7.4, the façade painting of house I.13.9 depicts Venus steering a ship with ‘aphrodeite sozousa’ (‘Σώζουσα’ – ‘The Saving Aphrodite’) inscribed at the bottom of the painting (*CIL* IV 9867), perhaps linking the goddess with protection at sea, and acknowledging her role as the protector of seafarers (see Chapter 4.1.3).

Two Venus types are almost exclusive to Pompeii and its environs (*Venus Pompeiana* and *Venus Pescatrice*). Both reflect Venus’ role as a water goddess – the iconography of the former including a rudder, and the latter represented fishing. The *Venus Pompeiana* type probably reflected her role as the patron deity of Pompeii, and thus the rudder perhaps highlighted the Pompeians’ desire to have their patron deity protect seafarers and the town’s trade links by sea. Given Pompeii’s coastal location, the town partly relied on the sea for trade, so it is unsurprising that the iconography of the town’s patron deity acknowledges this role.

Conclusion

Venus representations from public contexts and on façades appear to have had a more obvious religious, ritual, or protective function than those from domestic contexts. Proportionally fewer artworks featuring Venus within domestic contexts are *lararium* paintings or are painted on *aediculae* (2% - three of 162), in contrast to artworks from a public context (25% - three of 12). That said, artworks from domestic contexts may

have had some religious, ritual, and protective significance. For instance, *Venus Pompeiana*, which had more religious and ritual significance than other Venus types, mostly occurs in domestic contexts, and Venus occurs at least twice as part of schemes of decoration in houses for protective, ritual, or magic purposes.

In public contexts, archaeological evidence often helps us to identify the function of a building, and the choice of representing Venus can sometimes be linked back to this function. For instance, the fountain in fullery VI.8.20 is flanked by two pillars, one with a representation of Venus and the other with a representation of a river god (facing inwards); this suggests that Venus was represented to protect the water supply, which was important for this type of business. In contrast, we often know little about the owners of houses and it is more difficult to ascertain why they chose to depict specific deities.

There are 10 façade paintings where the location of the painting is known, and only one of these is on the façade of a house. Seven flank entrances and five of these have a representation of another deity opposite, creating a protective axis over the entrance. Of the remaining three: one is from a ritual context (on the *purgatorium* of the Temple of Isis); and two represent the twelve gods amongst scenes of a religious or protective nature – one of which has an altar next to the painting suggesting that ritual activity took place in proximity to the painting.

Venus is sometimes represented in association with the water supply in Pompeii (in public contexts: VI.8.20; VII.4.20; VII.9.33; the *Castellum Aquae*; in domestic contexts: I.7.11; V.4.3; VI.11.8–10; VI.16.7/38). Given that five of these examples are *lararium* paintings or are painted on *aediculae*, it is likely that Venus was represented to protect the water supply. In domestic contexts, Venus is rarely represented in bath areas of the house – just three of the 157 (2%) representations of Venus occur in bath areas, and two of these are from the same Minotaur frieze in I.10.4. Venus is also depicted in association with water in other contexts in Pompeii. Her water-related role as protector of seafarers is attested on the façade of house I.13.9, and she is depicted on the façade of a building used for ritual cleansing (the *purgatorium*) in the Temple of Isis complex (VIII.7.28). The *Venus Pompeiana* and *Venus Pescatrice* types are almost exclusive to Pompeii, both reflecting her role as a water goddess, in the case of *Venus Pompeiana* perhaps to acknowledge her importance in protecting seafarers and the town's trade links by sea.

There are 19 artworks featuring Venus with other deities in non-narrative scenes (where the presence of other deities is not determined by the scene type): eight are from domestic contexts, six from public contexts, and five on façades. Deities in non-narrative scenes are more significant than those in narrative ones because they were chosen specifically rather than to illustrate a narrative. Perhaps they were used to invoke the deity's protection given that all six paintings featuring Venus on *aediculae* or in *lararium* paintings in Pompeii feature non-narrative scenes (associating non-narrative scenes with ritual contexts where Venus could be invoked), and the seven artworks featuring Venus which flank entrances to buildings all depict non-narrative scenes (and were likely depicted to invoke her protection).

Chapter 8: Deities, Place and Space

8.1 Introduction

My aim in this chapter is to investigate the significance of artworks featuring Venus in comparison to artworks featuring other deities in a sample of three Pompeian houses by assessing their distribution within each house. I use three houses of different sizes in Pompeii – a small house, a medium one, and a large one – as case studies to investigate the potential greater significance of Venus in comparison to other deities. I identify which deities are depicted, where these artworks featuring deities are located, and investigate the significance of these factors. This enables me to consider whether Venus was given greater prominence than other deities in these houses in Pompeii, which might be expected given her status as patron deity of the town, and whether my conclusions relate to Venus specifically or to deities or wall-paintings more generally.

Each house in this sample includes at least one representation of Venus in fixed artworks (wall-paintings, reliefs, floor mosaics, and ceiling paintings). I selected the Casa della Venere in Bikini (I.11.6) as the small house in this sample (*c.*200m² floor area including the shop – Descoeudres & Sear 1987: 32) to assess whether the statue of Venus in the *atrium* (one of just two statues discovered in the house) reflected her prominence compared with other deities in the fixed artworks of this house. I selected the Casa della Caccia Antica as the medium-sized house (VII.4.48 – *c.*435m² floor area⁶⁴ based on Allison & Sear 2002: fig. 43) due to the existence of a comprehensive study from the *Häuser in Pompeji* series (Allison & Sear 2002), and also because of the interesting astronomical scheme of decoration within the house featuring deities including Venus. I selected the Casa del Menandro (I.10.4) as the large house (1,800m² – Lorenz 2014: 188) due to the existence of detailed studies into this house (Maiuri 1932; Ling 1997; Painter 2001; Ling & Ling 2005; Allison 2006), and because it includes two very different representations of Venus – two caricatures in room 46, and a more formal representation of Venus as *Venus Pompeiana* in room 24 where she surveys her domain.

⁶⁴ Excluding rooms 22–27 as given in Allison’s figure, as these are not part of the domestic space of this house.

Important Information

For the small and medium houses (I.11.6 and VII.4.48), I only analyse wall-paintings as there are no reliefs, and the floor and ceiling decoration is not identifiable. However, I discuss wall-paintings in addition to floor mosaics and ceiling decoration for the large house (I.10.4).

There are multiple representations of Psyche in room 4 of I.11.6, and of Victoria in room 10 of VII.4.48, suggesting that these represent Psychai and Victories rather than the goddesses themselves. I do not consider them as deities in this study as Psychai are part of the retinue of Psyche, and Victories represent victory but not the actual goddess.

This chapter includes representations of Venus which I consider as ‘Criteria for Identifying Venus’ category ‘f’ – those which may represent Venus but there is not enough evidence to support this identification (see Appendix A2.2). This is because this chapter deals with a smaller sample than Chapters 5–7, allowing me to consider each artwork in its context. Thus, in this chapter, representations can be identified as Venus from their location and the content of nearby paintings rather than just the content of the painting representing Venus. For instance, the possible representation of Venus in room 10 of VII.4.48 could represent a different star deity, as it does not include any attributes more exclusive to Venus (see Chapter 5.12.1). Thus, it is not included in my main discussion in Chapters 5–7 but is included in this chapter because the astronomical scheme of decoration in the house, with the weekday deities and the Seasons, indicates that the two star deities depicted in this room perhaps represent Venus and Luna-Diana.

Definitions of terms (such as ‘artworks’ and ‘narrative scenes’) are outlined in Chapter 3.2, and explanations of fields in the database (including fields of the wall) are given in Appendix A2. I present the data for this chapter in three spreadsheets in Appendix B2, one for each house in the sample, stating every identifiable artwork in each house in terms of subject/scene and its location.

8.2 Casa della Venere in Bikini (I.11.6): Small House

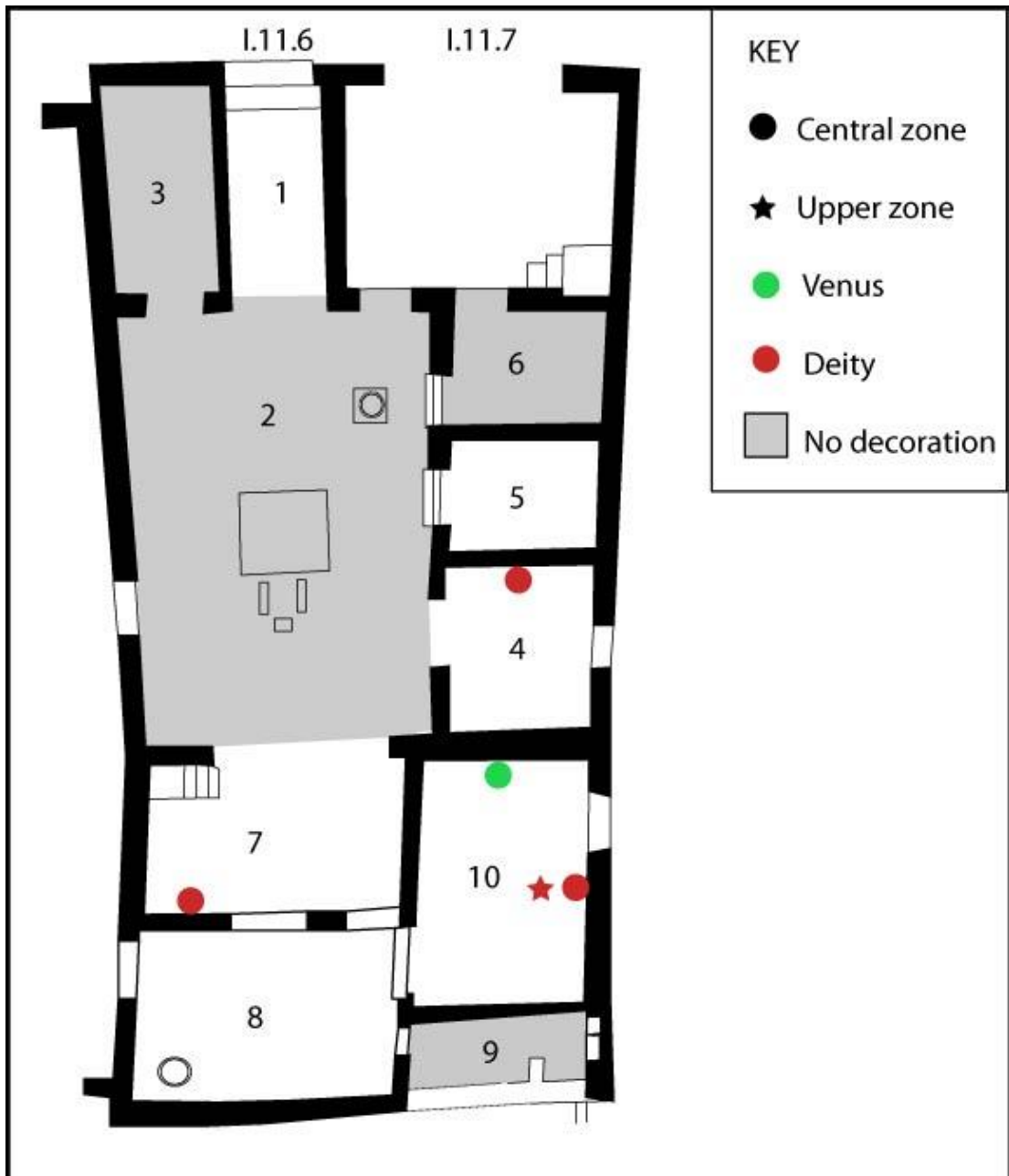


Figure 8.1: The distribution of wall-paintings featuring deities in I.11.6

I only include the residential part of this house in my analysis, and thus I do not address the decoration of the shop at entrance I.11.7.

8.2.1 State of Decoration

The residential part of I.11.6 consists of 10 rooms (rooms 1–10) with no extant evidence of painted decoration in four of them (shaded in fig. 8.1). Nothing remains of the upper storey (Armitt 1993: 237). All of the preserved wall-paintings in this house are Fourth Style, and Armitt (1993: 238–239) suggests that the house was being redecorated prior to the eruption in A.D. 79 as many of the paintings were unfinished.

8.2.2 Deities in the Paintings of this House

In this section, I quantify and compare paintings featuring deities with paintings of other subjects in the house in regard to their location. Deities feature in five paintings in this house – three in central fields, one in a side field, and one in the upper zone (fig. 8.1). These include eight different deities (multiple deities can appear within the same painting).

Three of the seven identifiable central fields in I.11.6 feature deities. These central fields depict Hercules and Omphale; the ‘Judgement of Paris’; and Diana and Actaeon. The four central fields in this house which do not depict deities depict Pyramus and Thisbe; birds(?); and two garden scenes.

One of the 17 identifiable side field paintings features a deity – Bacchus with his *thiasos*. This painting was located in a side field, presumably because there was a large window in the centre of the wall overlooking the peristyle, and thus it was not possible for this painting to occur in a central location. The remaining 16 side panels depict: four Psychai; four birds; four cupids (including one with the attributes of Mercury); three female busts; and one bust of a bacchante.

The decoration of the upper zone can only be ascertained for five walls in this house. Just one of these represents a deity – Hymen in the centre of the upper zone of the east wall of room 10 (table 8.1). No representations of deities occur in the lower zone.

Four wall-paintings in this house (all central panels) depict identifiable narrative scenes within two rooms. These include: Hercules and Omphale, and Pyramus and Thisbe (in room 4); and the ‘Judgement of Paris’, and Diana and Actaeon (in room 10). Three of these four narrative scenes feature deities – Hercules with Omphale; Juno, Minerva, Venus and Mercury in the ‘Judgement of Paris’ scene; and Diana with

Actaeon. Thus, there was just one narrative scene in this house which did not feature a deity (depicting Pyramus and Thisbe).

Table 8.1: The location of paintings featuring deities in I.11.6

Deity	Central Zone			Upper Zone	Total
	Left	Central Panel	Right		
Bacchus			1		1
Diana		1			1
Hercules		1			1
Hymen				1	1
Juno		1			1
Mercury		1			1
Minerva		1			1
Venus		1			1

8.2.3 Deities and Schemes of Decoration

There is no obvious decorative scheme in this house. Instead, it appears to have been designed on a room-by-room basis – room 1 with female busts; rooms 4 and 10 with narrative scenes in the central panels and Psychai or cupids in the side panels; room 5 with birds; room 7 with Bacchic iconography; and room 8 with garden scenes.

8.2.4 Location

The deities depicted in the central panels of this house all feature within narrative scenes – Hercules with Omphale; Diana with Actaeon; and Juno, Mercury, Minerva and Venus in the ‘Judgement of Paris’ scene. Deities depicted in other areas of the wall (Bacchus in a side field and Hymen in the upper zone) do not appear within narrative scenes.

The painting of Bacchus with his retinue in a side field in room 7 is located to the immediate right of the window overlooking the peristyle. Bacchus was the god of vegetation and viticulture, and thus was associated with gardens. Therefore, the placement of this painting next to the window overlooking the garden meant that a viewer could observe both Bacchus (painted) and his domain (the real garden).

It is less clear why Hymen is located in the centre of the upper zone, above the Diana and Actaeon painting. There appears to be no specific link between Hymen and the Diana panel beneath it – perhaps its location above this painting is incidental.

No deity is represented more than once in the wall-paintings of this house. Bacchus was perhaps of greater significance than the other deities, however, as he appears as part of a non-narrative scene viewed alongside his domain (the garden) through the adjacent window. Thus, Bacchus was chosen specifically rather than to illustrate a narrative, and also occurred in a location which emphasised his domain.

A cupid with the attributes of Mercury – the winged helmet, money bag, and *caduceus* – is depicted on the west wall of room 4, immediately to the right of the entrance to room 2. The location of this painting by an entrance perhaps suggests it was intended to invoke Mercury's protection or acknowledge him in some way (see Chapter 7.4). The subject of the painting on the opposite side of the entrance is unidentifiable, but the other side panels in the room depicted Psychai rather than cupids, suggesting that this cupid may have been unique within the room (in having the attributes of a deity), and thus was perhaps of special importance. Armitt (1993: 239) suggests that this cupid with Mercury's attributes may have indicated the owner was involved with business in some way – perhaps with the shop at entrance I.11.7 which is directly connected to rooms 2 and 6 of I.11.6. Although Mercury was perhaps referenced here in his role as god of trade, he was also a god of good fortune. Indeed, Mercury appears alongside Fortuna in three paintings on façades, which further emphasises his own link with good fortune (Fröhlich 1991: 50). Thus, this representation of a cupid with the attributes of Mercury in I.11.6 was perhaps intended to ensure good fortune, which may have been particularly desired near entranceways (see Chapter 7.4).

8.2.5 Venus

As highlighted above, Venus only appears once in the wall-paintings of this house, and is no more prominent than the other deities depicted, especially as she appears as one of four deities within the same narrative scene (the 'Judgement of Paris'). This is interesting given the prominent statue of Venus in the *atrium* – one of two statues found in the house (Allison 2004b – Casa della Venere in Bikini). Jashemski (1979: 125–128) suggests that there was another representation of Venus in this house.

She argues that the painting of a statue on the south wall of the garden (room 8) also represented Venus because it was in line with this statue in the *atrium*, and the window between rooms 7 and 8 meant they could be viewed at the same time from the *atrium*. In my opinion, there is not enough evidence to conclude that this painting of a statue represents Venus, though it remains a possibility.

8.2.6 Ritual Activity

There are no fixtures associated with religious/ritual activity in this house – there are no documented *aediculae*, *lararium* paintings, or altars (Allison 2004b – Casa della Venere in Bikini). There are two niches in this house (in rooms 8 and 9) but there is no evidence to suggest that either had a religious or ritual purpose – they were not painted with the *lares* or other deities and there were no finds in either to suggest they had a religious purpose.

8.2.7 Summary of House

In the Casa della Venere in Bikini (I.11.6), eight different deities are depicted. Each is represented just once in the house's artworks. Six deities feature in narrative scenes, all occurring in central panels. Two deities feature in non-narrative scenes and occur in different locations: Bacchus is depicted in a right field, as there is a window in the centre of the wall and thus no central panel; and Hymen is depicted in the upper zone. The location of the artwork featuring Bacchus emphasises his role as god of vegetation and viticulture as the artwork is located adjacent to a large window overlooking the garden. The cupid with the attributes of Mercury was perhaps represented to invoke the god's protection or to acknowledge him in some way, perhaps in regard to business (though there is no evidence for this), or to ensure good fortune generally, which may have been particularly desired near entranceways.

8.3 Casa della Caccia Antica (VII.4.48): Medium House

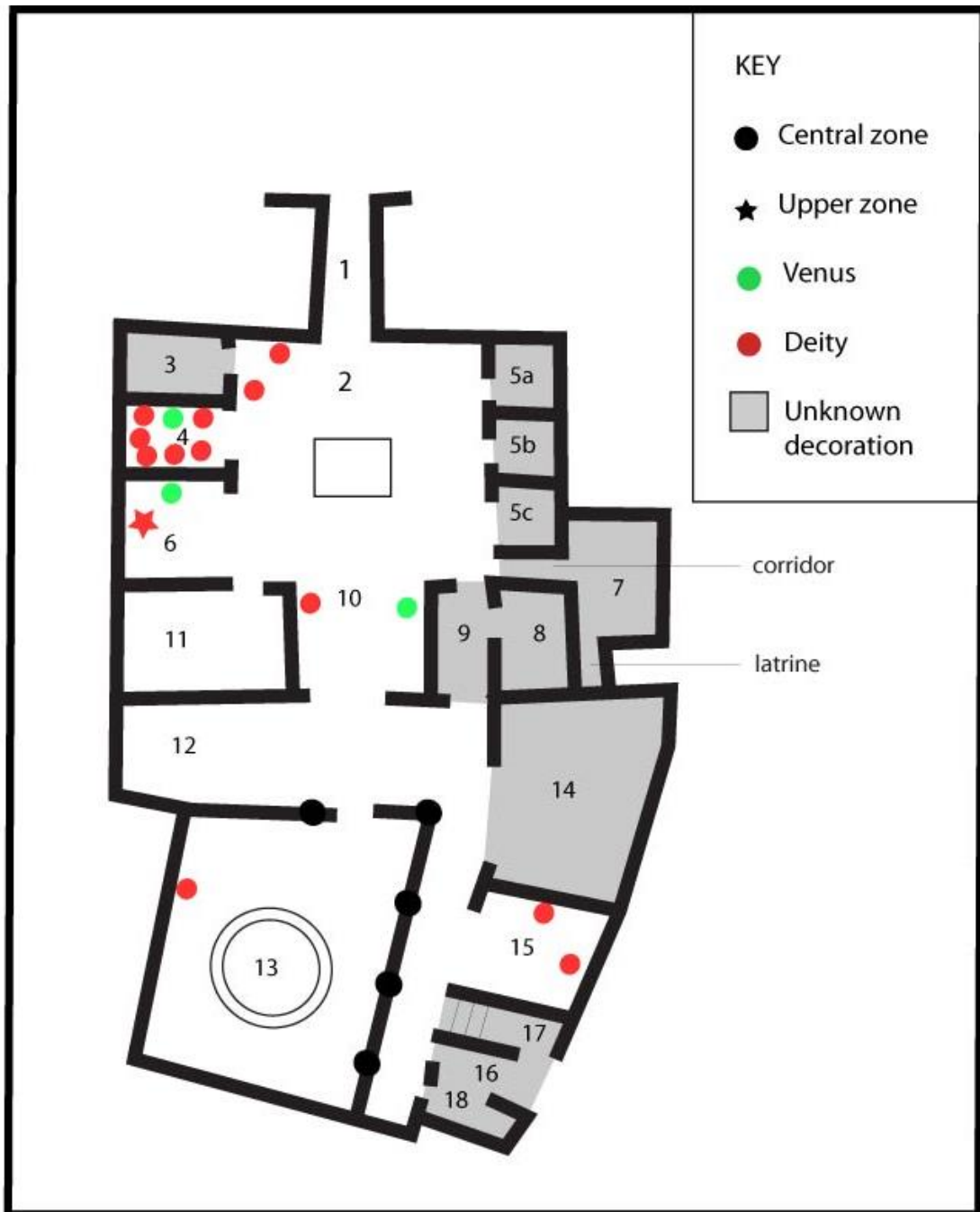


Figure 8.2: The distribution of wall-paintings featuring deities in VII.4.48

8.3.1 State of Decoration

There are 22 rooms in VII.4.48 (fig. 8.2). No record of the subjects of any paintings exist for 13 of these 22 rooms⁶⁵ (shaded in fig. 8.2). Thus, just nine rooms have recorded decoration in this house. All of the preserved wall-paintings are Fourth Style and date to the same phase of decoration (after A.D. 71) – Allison has used stylistic analyses, iconographic analyses, plaster analyses and coin impressions in the plaster in the *atrium* (room 2) to date the extant decoration to A.D. 71–79 (Allison & Sear 2002: 83–84).

8.3.2 Deities in the Paintings of this House

Deities feature in 16 paintings in this house – six in central fields, nine in side fields, and one in the upper zone (table 8.2). These include 11 different deities. These deities mostly feature as part of the two decorative schemes in the house – the astronomical scheme and the hunting scheme (as discussed in Section 8.3.3).

Six of the 13 identifiable central field paintings (including scenes which cover entire walls) feature deities (fig. 8.2). These central field paintings comprise: Venus fishing; Jupiter as a swan with Leda; Jupiter as the golden rain with Danae; an unidentifiable scene with *Venus Anadyomene* in the centre (possibly the dispute between Achilles and Agamemnon and referred to as this in the discussion below for simplicity – Schefold 1957: 181 & *PPP* 704480602); Diana and Actaeon; and Apollo with a lover. The remaining seven central field paintings which do not feature deities depict Achilles in Skyros; Theseus and Ariadne; Pasiphae and Daedalus; two sets of satyrs with bacchantes; a hunt scene; and Polyphemus and Galatea.

Nine of the 17 identifiable side fields feature deities: Autumn; Winter; Mercury; Sol; Jupiter; Luna; Venus with Lucifer; Luna-Diana with Vesper; and statues of Diana and Apollo. Table 8.2 records 12 paintings of deities in side fields because sometimes more than one deity appears within the same painting. Of the remaining eight side fields: five depict cupids; two depict winged Victories; and one depicts Polyphemus and Galatea.

⁶⁵ I consider room 9 to have no record of the subjects of any paintings because the only identifiable decoration in this room is a *bucranium*, and as Allison argues, Schulze's suggestions of paintings in this room appear to have been mistaken (Schulze 1835: 40, cited by Allison in Allison & Sear 2002: 24).

The decoration of the upper zone is recorded for just nine walls in this house. Just one of these walls with upper zone decoration features a deity: Mercury with a *caduceus* sat on a throne (table 8.2). No deities are represented in the lower zone.

Table 8.2: The location of paintings featuring deities in VII.4.48 (Luna-Diana in room 10 qualifies as Diana only in this table to avoid counting the same deity twice)

Deity	Central Zone			Upper Zone	Total
	Left	Central Field	Right		
Apollo		1	1		2
Autumn	1				1
Diana		1	2		3
Jupiter	1	2			3
Lucifer	1				1
Luna			1		1
Mercury	1			1	2
Sol			1		1
Venus	1	2			3
Vesper			1		1
Winter			1		1

Although not represented himself, Bacchus is alluded to in the wall-paintings of room 11, with satyrs and bacchantes with Bacchic symbols such as grapes, pomegranates and *thyrsi* in the central panels, and ivy *omphaloi* in the lower zone. As one of the larger rooms in this house, this room probably served a ‘predominantly reception’ function (see Chapter 6.2.3.3 for discussion of ‘predominantly reception’ and ‘predominantly non-reception’ areas), and thus allusions to Bacchus (god of wine, feasting and parties) would be appropriate.

Ten wall-paintings in this house depict narrative scenes within five rooms, all located in the central zone. Nine of these are clearly identifiable: Leda and the swan, and Danae and the golden rain (in room 4); Achilles in Skyros (in room 6); Theseus and Ariadne, and Pasiphae and Daedalus (in room 10); Polyphemus and Galatea (in room 13); and Diana and Actaeon, Apollo and his lover, and Polyphemus and Galatea (in room 15). The tenth painting possibly depicts the dispute between Achilles and Agamemnon (in room 6). Five of these ten narrative scenes feature deities – Jupiter (in the form of a swan) with Leda; Jupiter (in the form of golden rain) with Danae; Venus in the dispute between Achilles and Agamemnon; Diana with Actaeon; and Apollo with his lover.

The importance of investigating paintings which do not feature deities in comparison to those which do is particularly clear in this house as the sphere of Bacchus is alluded to through representations of his followers, but the god is not represented himself.

8.3.3 Deities and Schemes of Decoration

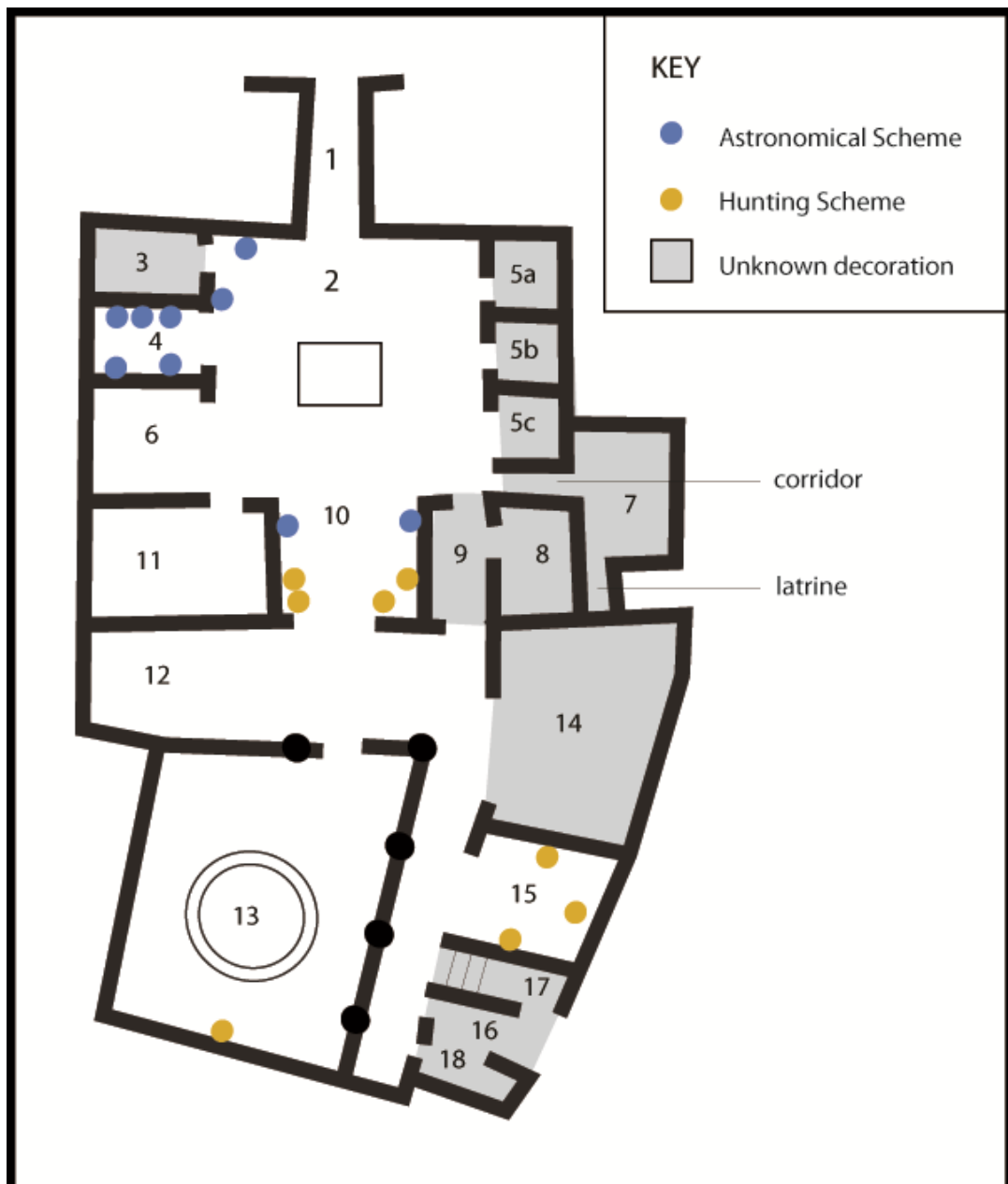


Figure 8.3: The distribution of deities pertaining to different schemes of decoration in VII.4.48

Many representations of deities in this house are part of house-wide schemes of decoration (fig. 8.3). Indeed, Diana, Jupiter, and Venus are the three deities most often

represented in this house because they are associated with schemes of decoration – Diana with the hunting scheme, and Jupiter and Venus with the astronomical scheme.

The Astronomical Scheme

Allison (in Allison & Sear 2002: 80) has argued that the decoration of rooms 2, 4, and 10 in this house represent an astronomical cycle through paintings of deities representing at least two of the Seasons, five of the seven days of the week, and the morning and evening star respectively (fig. 8.3). All of these rooms were decorated during the same period, and thus could have been designed as part of an iconographic programme. Such programmes are identifiable elsewhere in Pompeii – for instance, a building in VI.17 (Ins. Occ. – exact building number not recorded) features busts of deities representing different measures of time – days, months, seasons, and possibly the signs of the zodiac – in the same room (see Chapter 7.6; Long 1992: 496). The representations of time in the Casa della Caccia Antica, however, appear in two forms – a combination of floating figures and busts (Allison & Sear 2002: 80).

Two of the Seasons (Autumn and Winter) are depicted in room 2 (the *atrium*), and Spring and Summer were probably also represented here, though the Seasons do not always appear in their full number (Hanfmann 1951: 133–134).

Several deities are depicted in room 4, a small closed room which opens off the *atrium* – busts of Mercury, Sol, Jupiter and Luna; two panels representing Jupiter (the Danae and Leda scenes); and a panel depicting Venus (fig. 8.4). Allison (in Allison & Sear 2002: 74) has argued that the busts of deities in room 4 represent the days of the week (Mercury – Wednesday, Sol – Sunday, Jupiter – Thursday, and Luna – Monday), and that the panel of Venus fishing was also part of this scheme with Venus representing Friday. This same painting of Venus, however, also appears as part of a love theme in the central panels of this room, with the two other central panels depicting Leda and the swan, and Danae and the golden rain. Both of these paintings represent Jupiter, not in human form, but in disguise. His presence is further emphasised by the thunderbolt in both of these paintings. These two paintings portray the actual moment of seduction and thus have erotic connotations, emphasised by the third central panel depicting the goddess of love (although she is fishing rather than appearing as part of a love scene). Thus, in this room, Venus is represented both as part of this astronomical

scheme, and also as part of the love theme in the room, where she observes Jupiter and his lovers.

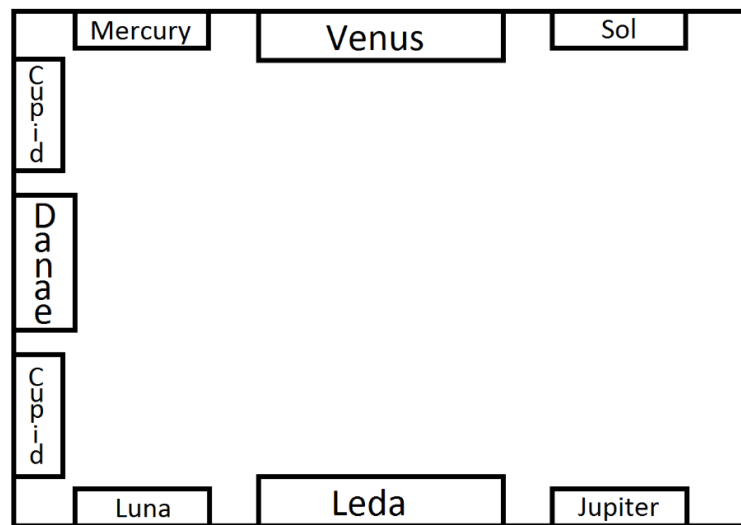


Figure 8.4: Plan of room 4 with identifiable central and side panels labelled (not to scale)

Although the central panel depicting Venus is of similar size to those of Leda and Danae, suggesting all three central panels were of equal importance, Venus has a more prominent place compared with the other deities who appear as side panel busts in this room rather than as central panel scenes (Mercury, Sol, Jupiter, and Luna)⁶⁶. Perhaps this was to emphasise her role as the patron deity of Pompeii and thus her greater importance in comparison to the other deities involved in this astronomical scheme.

Descoedres (1987: 136) argues that the panel depicting Venus and the busts of the other deities instead represent the planets in order of getting progressively closer to the earth in the Ptolemaic model of the universe, starting from Luna. This is unlikely, however, given the same five deities appear, but in a different order, on the façade of IX.7.1 in Pompeii (Allison & Sear 2002: 74).

The façade of IX.7.1 similarly depicts four busts of these same deities (Mercury, Sol, Jupiter, and Luna) with a panel painting of Venus (Allison & Sear 2002: 74)⁶⁷. Venus appears to have been of greater significance than the other deities depicted in

⁶⁶ Although Jupiter is represented (in non-human form) in the Leda and Danae scenes, he appears as part of a narrative rather than in his own right, whereas Venus is not depicted within a narrative scene and appears more prominently – appearing alone and occupying half of the painting.

⁶⁷ Both room 4 of VII.4.48 and the façade of IX.7.1 omit Saturn (Saturday) and Mars (Tuesday). This was most likely because Saturn and Mars were ‘*noxii*’ and considered unlucky, and were associated with infertility and death/murder respectively (Allison & Sear 2002: 74; Descoedres 1987: 136).

both room 4 of VII.4.48 and on the façade of IX.7.1 by appearing within a scene rather than as a bust, and in a more prominent location than the other deities – the central panel rather than side ones in VII.4.48, and the central zone rather than the upper zone on the façade of IX.7.1. This was perhaps because the people who commissioned these paintings wanted to acknowledge their town's patron deity more explicitly than the other deities.

In room 10, floating figures are depicted in the side panels nearest the *atrium*. Previous scholars have identified these figures as the morning star rising in the east (Venus and Lucifer on the east wall); and the evening star setting in the west (Luna-Diana and Vesper on the west wall; Allison & Sear 2002: 68). Their iconography (a figure atop a winged figure) identifies them as star deities (see Chapter 5.12), and they can be identified as Venus and Lucifer, and Luna-Diana and Vesper due to their location on the east and west walls of this room. Venus and Diana are often paired in Pompeii, probably due to their contrasting roles as goddess of love and virgin goddess (Thompson 1960: 175–176), in addition to those of morning and evening star. Thompson (1960: 171–185) terms this pairing the 'Aphrodisian-Artemisian Antithesis'.

This astronomical scheme of decoration occurs in the *atrium* (room 2) and rooms leading directly off it (rooms 4 and 10). The star deities represented in room 10 (which leads between the *atrium* and the garden), are located in the side fields nearer to the *atrium* side, presumably for proximity to other rooms which are part of this scheme of decoration.

The Hunting Scheme

A viewer progressing through the house is gradually introduced to a hunting scheme of decoration around the peristyle with images explicitly depicting a hunt in the *predella* of the east, south and west walls of room 10, with Victories perhaps representing success in the hunt in the same room, before approaching the large hunt scene on the south wall of peristyle 13 (fig. 8.3). This supports Descoeudres' theory (1987: 137) that the wall of the *tablinum* which opens onto the peristyle is slightly off-centre in order to make the scene on the south wall of the peristyle (the hunt scene) the main focus.

Wild animals (panthers and bulls) are depicted in room 15 as if on a plinth in front of the central panel on each wall, in addition to other animals appearing within the

central panel paintings – Apollo and a lover with a bull (perhaps identifying the lover as Branchus the cowherd – Allison & Sear 2002: 78); Diana and Actaeon with a dog (hinting at the impending death of Actaeon); and Polyphemus and Galatea with a ram (as Polyphemus was a herdsman). Thus, hunting is alluded to though not explicitly represented.

The hunting theme in the decoration of this house may explain the prominence of Diana, goddess of the hunt (she is represented three times). The scene representing Venus fishing in room 4 was therefore perhaps chosen rather than other scenes featuring Venus as part of this hunting theme.

Other Schemes of Decoration

Descoedres (1987: 137) argues that the astronomical scheme spanning rooms 2, 4, and 10 formed part of an Isis scheme of decoration, with the deities in these rooms representing the seasons, planets and the stars as the realm of Isis according to Apuleius (*Metamorphoses*, 11.7); and the landscape paintings on the west wall of peristyle 13 having ‘Egyptianizing’ and other features relating to Isis. He argues that Diana is a ‘manifestation’ of Isis, which may explain the hunting scheme of decoration in this house. This Isis scheme of decoration is less clear than Descoedres makes it appear, however. Peristyle 13, as with numerous other gardens in Pompeii, is decorated with outdoor scenes. The ‘Egyptianizing’ scenes in this room depict Polyphemus and Galatea in the left field, and a sanctuary of Apollo in the right field, and do not evoke Isis specifically. The astronomical scheme of decoration could have alluded to Isis, but there is no evidence to support this, so considering it as an astronomical scheme is more accurate.

8.3.4 Location

Schemes of decoration affect the location of paintings featuring deities in this house – many are part of the astronomical scheme in and around the *atrium*, or the hunting scheme within and surrounding the peristyle.

The six central field paintings featuring deities were chosen as part of the overall scheme of decoration in each room. In room 4 (which has a love theme), Venus

observes the love scenes taking place⁶⁸ – Jupiter as a swan with Leda, and Jupiter as the golden rain with Danae. In room 6 (which has an Achilles scheme), *Venus Anadyomene* visibly ignores the dispute between Achilles and Agamemnon to illustrate her role in the Trojan War (see Section 8.3.5). In room 15 (which has outdoor scenes as its scheme), scenes depicting Diana (with Actaeon) and Apollo (with a lover), were probably chosen because the outdoor setting for both scenes was considered appropriate decoration for a room open to the peristyle.

The decoration of VII.4.48 was clearly designed to emphasise two schemes of decoration spanning multiple rooms – the astronomical scheme and the hunting scheme. These are mostly located in side field paintings and thus side fields featuring deities are particularly significant in this house. Deities were less significant in the side field ‘Sacrifice in the sanctuary of Apollo’ painting in peristyle 13, however, which was not part of either scheme. This painting represents statues of Apollo and Diana(?) in a landscape, and places emphasis on the scenery rather than on the deities themselves, given their small size in comparison to the painting (though they do appear in the foreground). The deities serve to add detail to the landscape (as with the figures in the Polyphemus and Galatea scene on the same wall) and are of secondary importance to the landscape scene itself. Both Apollo and Diana were associated with archery, and thus hunting – a main scheme of decoration in this house.

There is only one identifiable painting of a deity in the upper zone of this house – an enthroned Mercury on the west wall of room 6. ‘Achilles in Skyros’ is depicted in the central zone below as if on a stage in front of the *scenae frons*. Mercury played an important role in this narrative and appears to watch over the scene. Scholars have debated whether he is represented in his role as the god of trickery (with Achilles disguised as a woman in Skyros and Odysseus tricking him into revealing himself) or as the messenger god (he helped Odysseus bring Achilles back from Skyros) – both relevant to this scene (Moormann 1983: 108; Allison & Sear 2002: 72). As Moormann (1988: 34) argues, the lack of other statue-like figures in the upper zone of this room may suggest that Mercury was depicted in association with the Achilles scene below rather than depicted in isolation. That said, the upper zone decoration of the north and south walls does not survive, so other deities or figures may have also been depicted.

⁶⁸ This painting of Venus also forms part of the astronomical scheme of decoration in the house.

8.3.5 Venus

The location of artworks featuring Venus within rooms in this house highlights the different roles of the goddess. In room 4, Venus appears within a central panel with the other central panels in the room depicting love scenes, highlighting her role as goddess of love, and this same painting also appears amongst busts of weekday deities, where she represents Friday.

In room 6, Venus appears above the main scene of the dispute of Achilles and Agamemnon (but still in the central zone), highlighting her role as goddess of beauty, whose beauty led to the Trojan War. I suggest that this painting may have been intended to represent Venus watching over the events unfolding, but with disinterest – although starting the war, Venus is preoccupied with her hair rather than taking an interest in it. Other interpretations are also possible. Venus could be depicted here to reflect the goddess ignoring the plight of Agamemnon as a result of his brother, Menelaus, disrespecting her (Menelaus neglected to give Venus a *hecatomb* for winning Helen's hand in marriage – Ptolemy Hephaestion, *New History*, 4 in Photius, *Bibliotheca*, 190). Moormann (1983: 110) argues that Venus is represented here to symbolise the love of Achilles for Briseis, whom Agamemnon abducted, leading to the dispute between the two men, which is also a possibility. Venus was clearly intended to watch over this scene very visibly from the central zone, especially as the other deity featured within this room (Mercury) is depicted in the upper zone.

In room 10, Venus appears with a floating figure (Lucifer) on the east wall, opposite Luna-Diana with a floating figure (Vesper) on the west wall, suggesting that here Venus represents the morning star rising in the east.

8.3.6 Ritual Activity

As with I.11.6 (Casa della Venere in bikini), there are no fixtures associated with religious/ritual activity in this house – there are no evident *aediculae* or *lararium* paintings (Allison & Sear 2002). There was a small filled-in niche in the *atrium*, and another niche in the north wall of room 8, but no religious purpose can be ascertained for either (*atrium* – Allison & Sear 2002: 17; room 8 – Allison & Sear 2002: 23 and Boyce 1937: no. 275).

8.3.7 Summary of House

Eleven different deities are depicted in the Casa della Caccia Antica (VII.4.48). Five of them appear more than once – Apollo; Diana; Jupiter; Mercury; and Venus. Just six paintings in central fields feature deities. Nine paintings in side fields feature deities, most of which are part of the astronomical scheme of decoration in the house. One representation of a deity is located in the upper zone. There are several hunting scenes and allusions to hunting in this house, which would explain the popularity of representations of Diana. The location of artworks featuring deities sometimes emphasises their roles. For instance, Venus appears amongst love scenes in room 4, emphasising her role as goddess of love (though she serves a dual purpose as she also appears as a weekday or planetary deity), and Diana appears as goddess of the hunt in rooms 13 and 15, amongst depictions of other hunting scenes and animals in these rooms. Venus is given more prominence than the other deities represented in room 4 in terms of appearing within a scene rather than a bust, and as a central panel rather than a side one.

8.4 Casa del Menandro (I.10.4): Large House

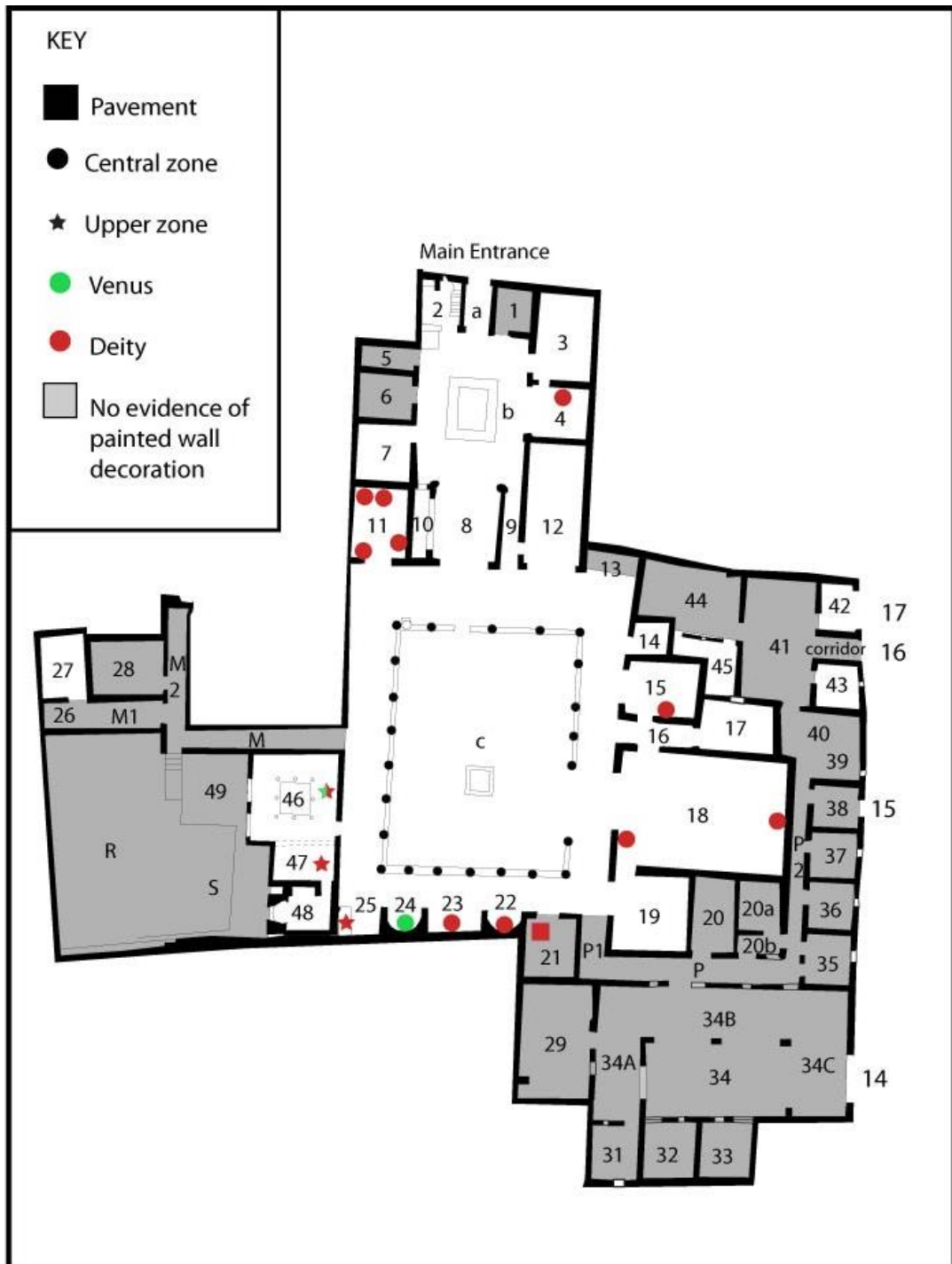


Figure 8.5: The distribution of artworks featuring deities in I.10.4

The room numbers for this house vary between scholars. In this study, I use Ling and Ling's (2005) room numbers, with the *fauces* labelled 'a', the *atrium* labelled 'b', and the peristyle 'c' after Allison (2004b – Casa del Menandro), with my own label for the unnumbered corridor at entrance I.10.16 (fig. 8.5).

In the discussion below, I consider rooms R and S to constitute a single room, and rooms 34, 34A, 34B, and 34C to constitute a single room. In the discussion below, I treat the entrance passage to room 48 as part of room 48 rather than as a separate area; it has painted decoration, but no figured decoration (by which I mean any kind of figure – human, animal, creature, or deity), except for the winged female figure on the lunette of the north wall. I also exclude room 42 from the discussion below as it is a shop and thus not part of the domestic space.

8.4.1 State of Decoration

I.10.4 comprises approximately 60 rooms, when each corridor is considered as a separate room even if they are connected (for instance corridors P, P1, and P2), and excluding lower floor and upper floor rooms⁶⁹, as only one of them (the room above 20 and 20a/b) has recorded figured decoration – a swan. There is no record of painted wall-decoration in 32 of these 60 rooms⁷⁰ (shaded in fig. 8.5). A further three rooms have decoration but no extant evidence for figured wall-paintings⁷¹. Figured wall-paintings are thus only identifiable for 25 rooms in this house. This house underwent several phases of decoration, but the two main periods of surviving decoration date to *c.*50–25 B.C. – late Second Style, and *c.*A.D. 50–75 – Fourth Style (Ling & Ling 2005: 3)⁷².

8.4.2 Deities in the Paintings of this House

Deities feature in 14 paintings and pavements in this house – seven in central fields, three in side fields, three in the upper zone, and one in a pavement. These include 10 different deities.

⁶⁹ Lower floor rooms – rooms under 18: A, B, and C; Upper floor rooms – rooms above: 20 and 20a/b, 29, 34A-C, P2, and 35–38 (only the ground floor is shown in fig. 8.5).

⁷⁰ I consider room 13 as not having evidence of painted wall-decoration. This is because although Ling & Ling (2005: 215) state that there are a few remains of plaster and traces of yellow vertical bands in room 13, they do not specify whether the yellow bands were coloured plaster or paint. Room 21 has no wall-paintings but does have a figured pavement.

⁷¹ There are traces of paintings on the west wall of room 2 but the subjects are now unrecognisable. There are traces of decoration in rooms 10 and 14, though these were patterns or simple linear decoration rather than figured decoration.

⁷² First-Style paintings and pavements exist but these were not visible at the time of the eruption, being buried under the floor, situated inside cupboards, or hidden beneath later plaster, and did not depict figures (Ling & Ling 2005: 3). Only a fragment of Third-Style decoration survives, probably found in corridor P1 (Ling & Ling 2005: 3).

Seven of the 37 identifiable central field paintings (including scenes which cover entire walls) feature deities (fig. 8.5). These central field paintings include: the sack of Troy (with a statue of Minerva); a bacchante feeding grapes to Bacchus as a child (Bacchus identified by Schefold 1957: 41); the punishment of Dirce (with Mercury); a bust of Pan; Diana in her domain; Bacchus seated (the rest of the room representing his domain); and Venus in her domain. See table 8.3 for the subject of the remaining 30 central field paintings.

Table 8.3: The subject of central field paintings which do not feature deities in I.10.4

Subject of Artwork	No. of Subject in Central Fields
Animals, birds, or creatures	11
Mythological subjects within non-narrative scenes (e.g. nereids, satyrs, bacchantes, cupids)	6
Narrative scenes which do not feature deities	5
Bacchic objects with panels of trees and birds	3
Poets	2
Athletes	1
Landscape scene	1
Other	1

Three of the identifiable side fields feature deities. These include: a nautical scene with a statue of Neptune; a reclining figure on an animal skin (possibly Hercules⁷³); and a seaside landscape scene with a possible statue of Neptune. There are too many side field artworks which do not feature deities to list them all here, but the vast majority depict animals, birds, creatures, or mythological subjects within non-narrative scenes (see Appendix B2c for the content of all the side fields in this house). No narrative scenes occur in side fields, either with or without deities.

⁷³ Hercules was often associated with Bacchus and could appear as part of the Bacchic *thiasos*, so he would be appropriate within this room with its Bacchic scheme of decoration. Works of art depict the two deities feasting or drinking together, or engaging in drinking contests; and they had many common features – a love of wine, both had Jupiter and a Theban princess as parents, and both triumphed over death (Collins-Clinton 1977: 25–26). They were also worshipped together in some areas (Collins-Clinton 1977: 26–27).

The decoration of the upper zone can be ascertained for 38 walls in this house. Three of these walls with upper zone decoration feature deities: a possible Diana on a shield; the Minotaur frieze featuring the deities Iris(?), Venus (twice), Epithymia, and Minerva; and a lunette depicting Hercules with Deianira, Nessus and a personification of the river Euenus (table 8.4). Deities are not represented in the lower zone.

Just one pavement features a deity – Pan observing a satyr and bacchante in room 21, forming part of the Bacchic scheme of decoration in the house. This is one of five pavements in the house representing figures or objects (i.e. not just patterns), the others depict: pygmies in boats on the Nile (room 11); a variety of scenes including marine ones (room 46); an oil flask flanked by strigils (room 47); and marine and bath scenes (room 48).

Table 8.4: The location of artworks featuring deities in I.10.4

Deity	Central Zone			Upper Zone	Pavement	Total
	Left	Central Field	Right			
Bacchus		2				2
Diana		1		1		2
Epithymia				1		1
Hercules			1	1		2
Iris(?)				1		1
Mercury		1				1
Minerva		1		1		2
Neptune	1		1			2
Pan		1			1	2
Venus		1		2		3

Masks of a horned and bearded figure are depicted in the *atrium* and room 18. These have been previously identified as Jupiter Ammon but could equally represent a satyr or Pan (for the iconography of Pan, see Boardman 1997: esp. nos. 13–35). These are perhaps more likely interpretations given the Bacchic iconography in these rooms, so these masks are not discussed below.

Although Venus is the most frequently represented deity in this house (appearing three times), two of the three representations of the goddess are in the same frieze depicting the same narrative so she should perhaps only be considered as appearing twice. Of the other deities which occur twice, Bacchus, Diana, Hercules and Neptune each have at least one representation where the identity of the figure is

uncertain. Neither artwork featuring Bacchus can be identified securely as the god, though that in room 23 is likely to represent him for reasons discussed in Section 8.4.4. Therefore, the most frequently represented deities in this house are Venus, Minerva and Pan. Minerva is only depicted within narrative scenes, Venus is depicted in the Minotaur narrative frieze and also in room 24 emphasising her domain, and Pan never appears in a narrative scene. Pan is probably represented as part of the Bacchic scheme of decoration in the house rather than in his own right, especially as he appears with a satyr and bacchante within the pavement in room 21, and with bacchantes and Silenus(?) in the same room in room 18. Despite not being one of the most frequently represented deities in this house, Bacchus was particularly significant – the likely figure of Bacchus in room 23 is located on a main sight-line (see Section 8.4.4), and even if this figure is not in fact Bacchus, he is alluded to through a number of rooms with a Bacchic scheme.

In this house, two central panels feature deities in minor roles – the statue of Minerva in the ‘Sack of Troy’ scene, and Mercury in the ‘Punishment of Dirce’ scene. It is interesting that Mercury is included here as he does not have a role in the story of Antiope and Dirce until a later stage and does not feature in any other identifiable Dirce scenes (Ling & Ling 2005: 77). Deities form the main focus of the scene in the other five central field paintings which feature deities, with three of these (Diana, Bacchus, and Venus) as the focus of the entire room, the former two also positioned on main sight-lines through the house (discussed below). These three scenes featuring Diana, Bacchus, and Venus depict their domains, which is further emphasised by their location as each of these artworks overlooks the peristyle as the outdoors was part of the domain of each deity. The contrast between the formal representations of these three deities in their domains with the caricatures of the gods in the Minotaur frieze of room 46 is striking.

Just eleven wall-paintings in this house depict identifiable narrative scenes within six rooms⁷⁴. These depict: three Trojan scenes; three Perseus scenes; three Bacchus-related scenes (Dirce, and the two centaur scenes); and two other scenes (Diana and Actaeon, and the Minotaur frieze). Three of these narrative scenes occur in

⁷⁴ These include: the sack of Troy, the wooden horse entering Troy, and the death of Laocoon (room 4); Perseus and Andromeda, and the centaurs and the Lapith women (room 11); Perseus at the court of Cepheus, Perseus and Andromeda, and the punishment of Dirce (room 15); Diana and Actaeon (room 22); the Minotaur frieze (room 46); and Nessus abducting Deianira (room 47).

the upper zone (the centaurs and Lapith women frieze, the Minotaur frieze, and Hercules, Nessus and Deianira in a lunette). Five of these eleven narrative scenes feature deities – a statue of Minerva in the sack of Troy scene; Mercury in the punishment of Dirce scene; Diana in the scene with Actaeon being torn apart by dogs; Iris(?), Venus, Epithymia, Venus (again), and Minerva in the Minotaur frieze; and Hercules rescuing Deianira from Nessus in the lunette. There is a possible twelfth wall-painting in a seventh room which may have depicted a narrative scene, but the subject is uncertain: the painting on the east wall of room 8 represents either the rape of Europa (with Jupiter as the bull), or more likely a nereid and cupid on a sea-bull (Ling & Ling 2005: 75).

Deities are perhaps also alluded to in room 4. Aside from the obvious narrative links between the paintings of the sack of Troy and the death of Laocoon in this room, Lorenz (2014: 193–195) also identifies further links. For instance, she argues that both of these paintings relate to specific deities – Minerva (from whom Cassandra sought protection) in the sack of Troy painting, and Neptune (who caused Laocoon’s misfortune) in the Laocoon painting. The statue of Minerva features in the sack of Troy scene but there is no obvious allusion to Neptune in the Laocoon painting. Although Lorenz’s interpretation of these paintings is possible, there is no evidence that a focus on deities was intended in the central panels of this room, especially as this does not apply to the third central panel (which depicts the wooden horse entering Troy).

To summarise, although due to its size this house has more decorated rooms than the other two houses in this chapter, there are fewer artworks featuring deities – more occur in VII.4.48 (with 19 paintings) than in I.10.4 (with 13 paintings and one pavement). Sometimes deities have a minor role, for instance Mercury in the ‘Punishment of Dirce’ scene, but at other times they appear more prominently. For instance, Diana, Bacchus, and Venus are represented within their domains in rooms 22–24, their location overlooking the peristyle echoes their domain, and two of them are located on main sight-lines. No narrative scenes occur in side fields either with or without deities and where deities are depicted in side fields, often these may represent other figures instead. Two of the three side field paintings which depict deities feature statues of Neptune as ornamentation for scenes with the landscape as the focus.

8.4.3 Deities and Schemes of Decoration

I discuss schemes of decoration in Section 8.4.4 as these influence the location of artworks featuring deities within this house.

8.4.4 Location

The location of artworks featuring deities in this house is influenced by the deity's spheres of influence, decorative schemes within the house, and in some cases the broad function of rooms.

Spheres of Influence

Artworks featuring Diana, Bacchus, and Venus as the main decorative focus of the room occur in rooms overlooking the peristyle (rooms 22, 23, and 24 respectively) as all three deities are associated with the outdoors – Diana as goddess of the hunt; Bacchus as god of vegetation and viticulture; and Venus as goddess of the garden. Thus, the location of these artworks in rooms open to the peristyle was determined by the spheres of influence of these deities.

Rooms 22 and 24 are very similar. Both feature a single large painting on the sole wall of the room which curves around to form three sides of a room, open to the peristyle. Room 22 was clearly designed to reflect the domain of Diana, with her powers highlighted by Actaeon being torn apart by dogs in the background (Ling & Ling 2005: 84). Actaeon's death is not the main focus of the scene, highlighting the owner or artist's intention to illustrate the goddess' domain and power rather than simply representing a narrative scene (Ling & Ling 2005: 105). Room 24 reflects the domain of Venus, who appears within a shrine in a watery landscape, accompanied by cupids. This scene does not represent Venus wielding her power, as Diana does over Actaeon in room 22.

The large seated figure, flanked by tables with theatre masks, on the south wall of room 23 probably represents Bacchus (Ling & Ling 2005: 86–87)⁷⁵. This would

⁷⁵ This central figure cannot be another tragic or comic poet (with Menander and Euripides(?) represented on the other walls of the room) as this would spoil the balance of the room's decoration, especially as there are tragic and most likely comic masks to either side of the figure (Ling & Ling 2005: 86–87). This,

seem logical as the rooms to either side of this one (rooms 22 and 24) represent Diana and Venus respectively in their domains, meaning that a deity depicted within their domain would also be likely for the south wall of room 23. Indeed, in a house with so much Bacchic iconography, it would be counter-intuitive not to represent Bacchus himself somewhere in the house⁷⁶. From this location, Bacchus could overlook his domain within the room (with the poets and theatre masks), his domain in the rest of the house (the peristyle, and large/medium rooms off it where guests may be received for dining, drinking, and parties), and possibly even overlook those entering and leaving the house as this painting is directly opposite the entrance (fig. 8.6). The size of the figure of Bacchus and the mostly yellow colour of this room contrasted with the other paintings in the open-fronted rooms off the south wall of the peristyle (Ling & Ling 2005: 100). This painting would thus have been particularly prominent and may have been intended to be visible to a viewer from the entrance.

Schemes of Decoration

Deities feature in the three main schemes of decoration in this house – in Bacchic, hunting, and literary schemes. Scenes sometimes allude to specific deities and their spheres of influence even if they are not represented themselves, especially with Bacchus. Deities were clearly considered when the decoration of this house was planned. Both Bacchus and Diana are particularly prominent in schemes of decoration in this house, for instance both were placed along important sight-lines.

The Bacchic Scheme

There are six rooms in this house with Bacchic schemes of decoration (rooms b, 11, 18, 19, 23, and 25; fig. 8.6). Some of these date to the Second Style, and others to the Fourth Style, suggesting there was an extended period in this house's history in which Bacchus was considered important to the owners. As fig. 8.6 demonstrates, these

in addition to the size of this figure compared with those of the poets; and the exposed leg (rather than the draped leg of a poet) has led scholars such as Ling and Ling (2005: 86–87) to suggest that this figure could be Bacchus, god of the theatre, with a panther at his feet. For a summary of other scholars' arguments, related discussion, and alternative interpretations, see Ling & Ling (2005: 86–87).

⁷⁶ The child depicted with the bacchante on the north wall of room 11 could be Bacchus but this identification is not certain.

rooms all have at least a partial view of the peristyle, relevant to the vegetation and viticulture spheres of the god.

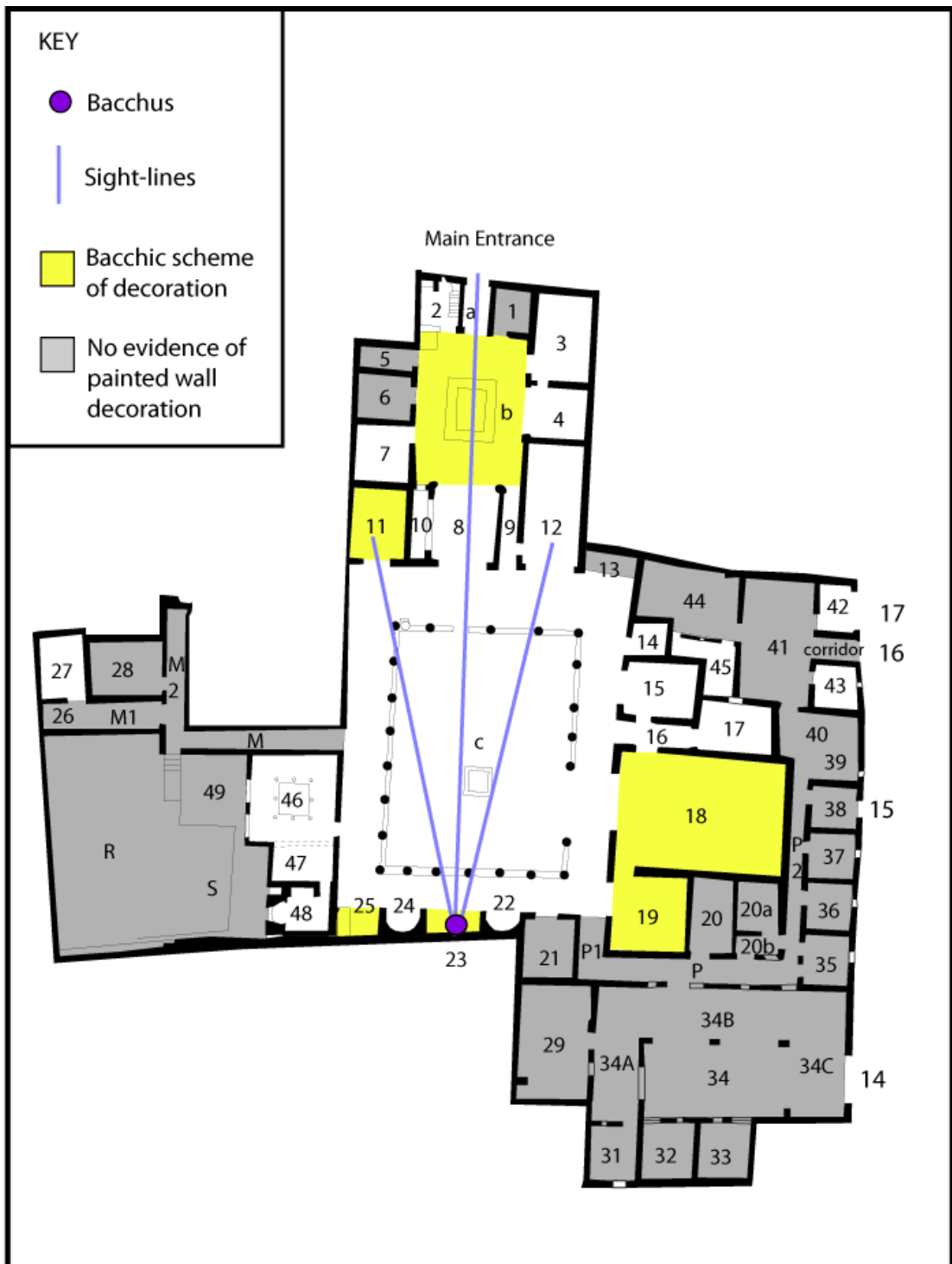


Figure 8.6: Bacchus in room 23 with sight-lines through the house in blue, and rooms with an overall Bacchic scheme of decoration highlighted yellow

The different spheres of Bacchus are acknowledged in different rooms. Room b alludes to Bacchus generally: between panels are pine trees with Bacchic objects

hanging from them, with panther and stag heads beneath them. There are also theatre masks depicted in this room, perhaps emphasising his role as god of the theatre. Rooms 11, 18 and 19 represent members of the Bacchic *thiasos* and Bacchic objects. These rooms emphasise the role of Bacchus as god of wine (with the bacchante offering grapes to Bacchus as a child in room 11, and the drunk Silenus(?) in room 18), and depict elements of cult practice (the bacchante frightening a cupid with a tragic mask in room 19 appears to be a Bacchic gesture or motif – Ling & Ling 2005: 82). In room 23, Bacchus is represented amongst poets and theatre masks in his role as god of the theatre. In room 25 (which also contains an altar), there are Bacchic objects hanging from the panels. Bacchus' role as vegetation god is acknowledged in this room through the pine-like trees and ivy columns painted on the walls, and this is further emphasised by the room's proximity to the peristyle. The decoration of room 25 with fantastic rather than realistic birds and trees, was perhaps designed to 'convey a mystic quality', and represent the nature realm of Bacchus (Ling & Ling 2005: 63–64). Initially, room 11 was completely open to the garden, and thus before the south wall was constructed, guests received in room 11 would have had a clear view of room 25 directly opposite (Ling & Ling 2005: 98). This would have been particularly appropriate if room 11 was used for feasting or parties, the spheres of Bacchus.

Other rooms in the house contain Bacchic scenes even if there is not an explicit Bacchic scheme of decoration in the room, such as the 'Punishment of Dirce' in room 15; the Second-Style pavement of Pan observing a satyr and bacchante in room 21; and the large satyr herm in room 46 (initially this was probably one of several herms in this room). Furthermore, members of the Bacchic *thiasos* are depicted throughout the house, not just in rooms with a Bacchic scheme, as is the case with the rearing centaurs flanking the central panel on the east wall of room 47. This would suggest that Bacchus was particularly important to the owner as they incorporated Bacchic iconography and scenes throughout the house, not just in rooms which had a Bacchic scheme of decoration.

The Hunting Scheme

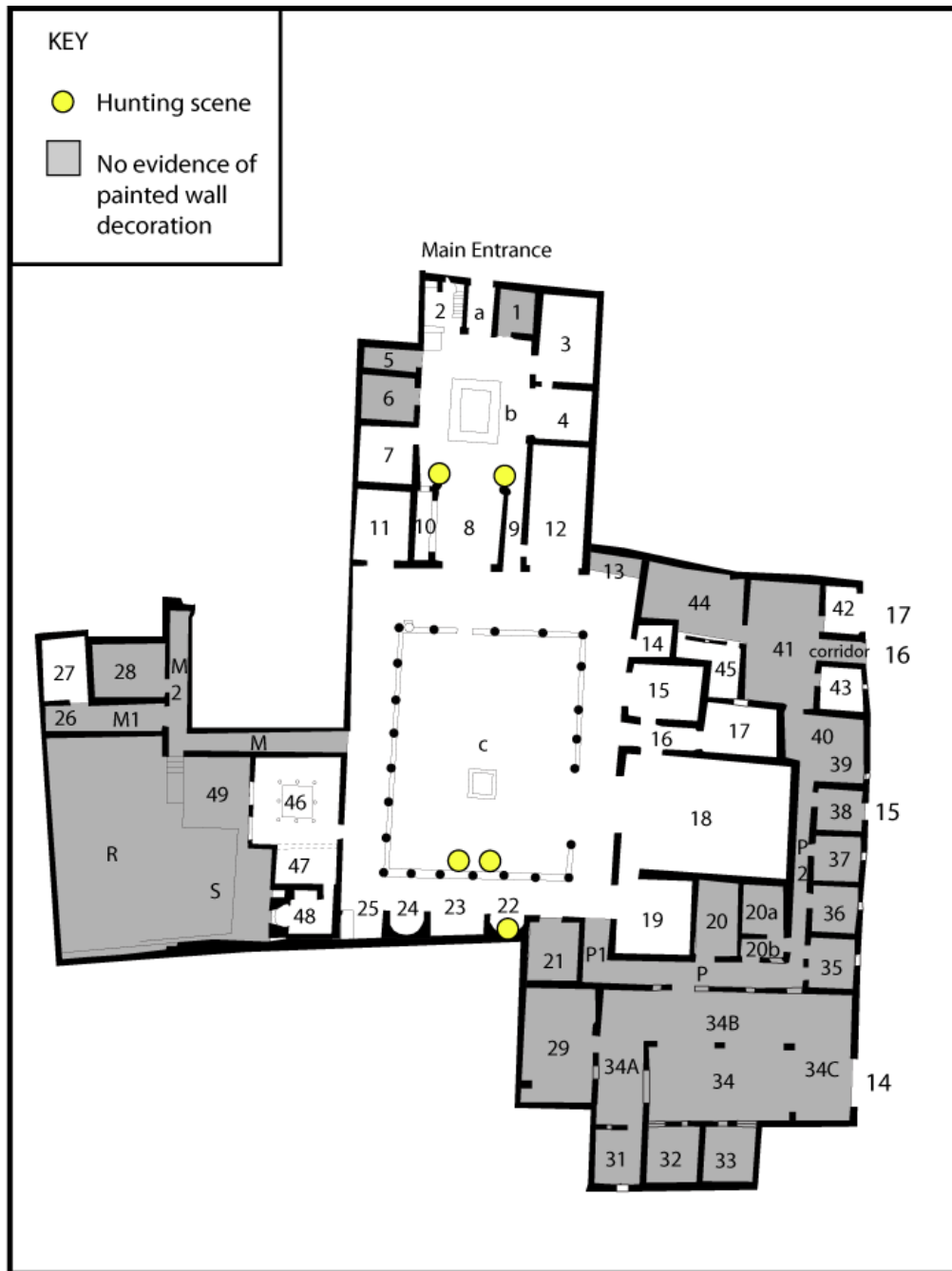


Figure 8.7: The distribution of hunting scenes in I.10.4

This house also features a hunting decorative scheme, which explains why Diana appears so prominently in room 22. The south parapet panels in the peristyle which depict wild animals (a lion, boar, deer and dog) are located immediately in front of rooms 22 and 23, perhaps intentionally (Ling & Ling 2005: 106). As Ling and Ling (2005: 106) note, the house may have been designed in concept (if not entirely visible in

practice), so that hunting and wild animal scenes could be viewed in different layers from the entrance – on the south wall of the *atrium* and the south wall of the peristyle parapet, with the goddess of hunting herself in room 22 (fig. 8.7). The lack of hunting iconography in other wall-paintings in the *atrium* and on the peristyle parapets emphasises the deliberate design of the hunting scenes leading towards Diana. Indeed, a viewer would be reminded of Diana and her domain from the entrance to the house, or the *atrium*, made more explicit as they walked further into the house. This is similar to house VII.4.48, where the hunting scheme of decoration becomes more visible to a viewer as they progress through the house (see Section 8.3.3).

The Literary Scheme

The owner's literary tastes are also reflected throughout the house, with room 4 influenced by Virgil's *Aeneid*⁷⁷; Menander and Euripides(?) represented in room 23; and all three central panels in room 15 ('Perseus at the court of Cepheus'; 'Perseus and Andromeda'; and the 'Punishment of Dirce') are scenes from tragedies written by Euripides⁷⁸ (Ling & Ling 2005: 72–73; Lorenz 2014: 190–191, 210). Rooms 4 and 23 were entirely open on one side to the *atrium* and peristyle respectively, and room 15 also had a large entrance, perhaps suggesting that the owner wanted to 'make his literary culture visible' (Ling & Ling 2005: 104). The literary scheme of decoration was perhaps also emphasised by the Muses represented in rooms 15 and 18, and the theatre masks depicted throughout the house (Ling & Ling 2005: 104).

Deities are represented as part of this literary scheme: a statue of Minerva in the sack of Troy painting in room 4, Mercury in the Dirce painting in room 15, and Bacchus between the poets Menander and Euripides(?) in room 23. However, Minerva and Mercury are both represented for their roles in narrative scenes, whereas Bacchus is of more significance, evidenced by his position on the main sight-line through the house and the decoration of this room representing his sphere of influence (discussed above).

⁷⁷ The fall of Troy scenes in this room appear to be based on Virgil's version of the story, given the role of Laocoon in the narrative; the wooden horse being brought into Troy (which was not represented in art until the publication of Virgil's *Aeneid*, where this event is emphasised); and details of the wooden horse scene 'correspond to specific references in the poem' (Ling & Ling 2005: 72–3).

⁷⁸ The Perseus scenes represent the tragedy of *Andromeda*, and the Dirce scene refers to the tragedy of *Antiope*.

Room Function

The function of a room can only reliably be determined for gardens, and where structural features suggest a clear function, for instance, hearths indicating kitchen areas, and bath features indicating bath areas. In this house, the function of a room (where this is ascertainable) sometimes influences its decoration and the location of artworks featuring deities. For instance, the lunette in room 47 (a *tepidarium*) depicts Hercules firing an arrow at Nessus, who is in the process of abducting Deianira. This narrative takes place whilst Hercules and Deianira attempt to cross the river Euenus, thus this water-related scene would be an appropriate subject for a bath area, emphasised by a personification of the river appearing within the painting. Furthermore, Bacchus and Bacchic iconography feature in large and/or open rooms (likely reception areas) which were perhaps used for dining and parties (his domain); and Venus, Bacchus and Diana are represented within their respective domains overlooking the peristyle, appropriate to their roles as outdoor deities.

8.4.5 Venus

Venus is represented three times in this house, in two very different ways – she appears formally as *Venus Pompeiana* surveying her domain in room 24, and twice as a caricature in the Minotaur frieze in room 46. Venus (in room 24), Bacchus, and Diana are each represented in rooms which emphasise their respective domains along the south side of the peristyle, which suggests that the house owner favoured these particular deities. However, Bacchus and Diana occur more significantly than Venus, as these representations also form part of wider schemes of decoration in the house, and occur on important sight-lines through the house (with Bacchus appearing particularly prominently). Thus, despite Venus featuring prominently in this house, other deities are more significant when sight-lines and schemes of decoration are also considered.

8.4.6 Ritual Activity

In contrast to the other two houses in my sample (I.11.6 and VII.4.48), ritual activity is evident in this house through structural features and decoration (Boyce 1937:

nos. 48–53; Allison 2004b – Casa del Menandro). Two shrines occur in rooms with paintings of, or allusions to, deities – there is an *aedicula* in the *atrium* (room b), and a shrine consisting of a podium/altar and a niche containing five figures in room 25 (Boyce 1937: nos. 48–49; Allison 2004b – Casa del Menandro). Deities are not represented in the *atrium*, but there are several allusions to Bacchus (see Section 8.4.4). Diana is possibly depicted in a shield in the upper zone of room 25, but there is not enough evidence to identify her. This room strongly alludes to Bacchus with pine-like trees, ivy, and Bacchic objects hanging from the panels. Thus, although representations of deities themselves may not have occurred in areas of ritual activity in this house, allusions to them were considered to create a suitable ambience for ritual activity.

8.4.7 Summary of House

Ten different deities are depicted in the Casa del Menandro (I.10.4) and seven of them are represented more than once. Venus is the most frequently represented deity in this house (appearing three times), but given that she appears twice within the same narrative frieze, she should only be considered as appearing twice. Thus, the most frequently represented deities in this house are Venus, Minerva and Pan, excluding instances where the identification of a deity is uncertain (Bacchus, Diana, Hercules, and Neptune). However, Pan is probably represented as part of the Bacchic scheme of decoration in this house in his role as a member of the Bacchic *thiasos*, rather than as a deity in his own right.

Seven central field paintings feature deities – two of these include deities in minor roles rather than as the main focus of a scene. Deities are also depicted in a pavement, three side field paintings, and three upper zone paintings (with four different deities depicted within the same Minotaur frieze). There is an interesting contrast in this house between the Fourth-Style formal representations of deities, with Diana, Bacchus and Venus depicted in their domains, and the Second-Style caricatures of deities in the Minotaur frieze. Deities and their spheres of influence are often alluded to even if the deities are not depicted themselves, for instance six rooms have an overall Bacchic scheme. Diana and Bacchus are represented in rooms 22 and 23 respectively on important sight-lines through the house, suggesting that the location of artworks featuring deities within the Casa del Menandro was carefully designed. In this house,

the function of a room (where this is ascertainable) sometimes influences the location of artworks featuring deities, and the choice of particular deities or scenes. For instance, in room 47, a *tepidarium*, the narrative of Hercules and Deianira crossing the river Euenus was presumably chosen as it is a water-related scene.

8.5 Analyses Across These Three Houses

In this section, I bring together the house by house analyses in this chapter to analyse distribution patterns across these three houses for artworks featuring Venus (Section 8.5.1) and all artworks featuring deities (Section 8.5.2). I compare these analyses of artworks featuring deities in these three houses with my analyses from previous chapters on representations of Venus in domestic contexts across Pompeii. This enables me to assess whether Venus was given greater prominence than other deities in these houses by occurring more often, or more significantly, than other deities, and whether my conclusions relate to Venus specifically or to deities or wall-paintings more generally.

8.5.1 Discussion of Venus Across These Three Houses

As demonstrated above, there are seven representations of Venus in six different artworks across the three houses sampled (she appears twice in the same frieze in I.10.4). All of these are wall-paintings. One is in the small house (Casa della Venere in Bikini – I.11.6); three are in the medium house (Casa della Caccia Antica – VII.4.48); and three are in the large house (Casa del Menandro – I.10.4).

The seven Venus representations in these three houses comprise six of the 15 Venus types I have identified in Pompeii. Two types are repeated – ‘Venus Caricature’ where both examples occur within the same frieze in room 46 of I.10.4; and ‘Venus Leaning on a Pillar’, which occurs in both room 24 of I.10.4 and room 10 of I.11.6 (the former is combined with *Venus Pompeiana*). The scene type or scheme of decoration in which Venus features often determines the Venus type chosen and which of her spheres of influence is emphasised. For instance, in room 6 of VII.4.48, the *Venus Anadyomene* type was probably chosen to emphasise Venus’ beauty – appropriate to the narrative depicted (the dispute between Achilles & Agamemnon – see Section 8.3.5); in room 10 of VII.4.48, ‘Venus as a Star’ was probably chosen with Venus representing the morning star as part of the astronomical scheme of decoration; in room 24 of I.10.4, *Venus Pompeiana* was probably chosen as one of the more formal types of representation of the goddess, to complement the formal representations of Diana and Bacchus in rooms 22 and 23 immediately to the east, who also overlook their domain;

and in room 46 of I.10.4, Venus caricatures form part of the Minotaur frieze where all of the figures are represented as caricatures.

In these three houses, Venus occurs four times in narrative scenes: in the ‘Judgement of Paris’; the ‘Dispute between Achilles and Agamemnon’; and twice as part of the frieze depicting the story of the Minotaur. The non-narrative scenes featuring Venus depict: ‘Venus Fishing’; ‘Venus with Lucifer’ as floating figures; and ‘Venus in her Domain’. No scene type featuring Venus occurs in more than one of these three houses.

Two of the three houses in this sample (I.10.4 and I.11.6) always represent Venus in rooms adjacent to the garden. In VII.4.48, however, the three paintings featuring Venus occur in rooms adjacent to the *atrium* (even that in room 10, which connects the *atrium* to the peristyle, depicts Venus nearer to the *atrium* end of the room). This is partially explained by Venus being depicted in rooms 4 and 10 as part of the astronomical scheme of decoration in this house which is only present in the *atrium* and rooms adjacent to it. However, Venus is depicted in room 6 as part of the Achilles scheme of decoration in the room, and this occurrence in another room adjacent to the *atrium* is coincidental.

Across these three houses, Venus almost always appears in ‘predominantly reception areas’ (in room types 5, 7, 10, 13, and 21), the central zone, and the central field (table 8.9). Venus only appears in a ‘predominantly non-reception area’ in room 4 of VII.4.48 (a type 4 room), and in a side field in room 10 of the same house. These exceptions might be explained by Venus forming part of the astronomical scheme of decoration in this house which is limited to the *atrium* and surrounding rooms, and mostly occurs in side panels. The only upper zone representations of Venus are the two in the Minotaur frieze of room 46 in I.10.4, where the nature of the artwork as a frieze determined its location in the upper zone.

8.5.2 Discussion of Venus and Other Deities Across These Three Houses

There are 35 artworks featuring deities in these three houses, some represent more than one deity within the same artwork (table 8.9). Six of these 35 artworks (17%) represent Venus (she appears twice in one of these).

In this sample of three houses, Venus occurs more often than other deities (Venus is represented seven times, table 8.5), however, as I selected these houses

because each of them included at least one representation of Venus, this is not a random sample and may not accurately represent how often she occurs in comparison to other deities elsewhere in Pompeii. Diana is the next most frequently occurring, appearing in six artworks (including one of Luna-Diana), followed by Mercury in four. Each of these three deities occur at least once in each of the three houses.

Table 8.5: The distribution of representations of deities in I.10.4, VII.4.48, and I.11.6

Deity	House			Total
	Large (I.10.4)	Medium (VII.4.48)	Small (I.11.6)	
Apollo		2		2
Autumn		1		1
Bacchus	2		1	3
Diana (see also Luna-Diana)	2	2	1	5
Epithymia	1			1
Hercules	2		1	3
Hymen			1	1
Iris	1			1
Juno			1	1
Jupiter		3		3
Lucifer		1		1
Luna		1		1
Luna-Diana		1		1
Mercury	1	2	1	4
Minerva	2		1	3
Neptune	2			2
Pan	2			2
Sol		1		1
Venus	3	3	1	7
Vesper		1		1
Winter		1		1

12 of these 35 (34%) artworks featuring deities depict narrative scenes, whereas 23 depict non-narrative scenes. The small house (I.11.6) is the only house in this sample that includes more narrative than non-narrative scenes featuring deities, although only by a narrow margin (table 8.9). In the other two houses, however, there are substantially more non-narrative scenes featuring deities than narrative ones. This contrasts with Venus representations across Pompeii, which proportionally occur slightly more often in narrative than in non-narrative scenes in domestic contexts (83 narrative scenes –

52%, 77 non-narrative scenes – 48%, see table 8.6). The lower proportion of narrative scenes featuring deities (34%) in comparison to non-narrative scenes featuring deities (66%) in these houses could be due to the small size of the sample, with the astronomical scheme in VII.4.48 partially causing this discrepancy as nine artworks which form part of this scheme feature deities in non-narrative scenes. The only scene type featuring deities to appear in more than one house in this sample is that of ‘Diana and Actaeon’, which occurs in both the small and the medium house (I.11.6 and VII.4.48). Actaeon also appears in the same painting as Diana in the large house (I.10.4), but the main subject of the scene is Diana in her domain rather than the narrative of Diana and Actaeon.

Table 8.6: The percentage of artworks featuring deities and the percentage of representations of Venus in narrative and non-narrative scenes

	Narrative Scenes	Non-Narrative Scenes
Artworks Featuring Deities (in these three houses)	34%	66%
Venus Representations (from all domestic contexts in Pompeii)	52%	48%

There are similarities between these three houses in terms of the location of artworks featuring deities. For instance, a slight majority occur in garden or garden-adjacent areas (room types 9–13, and also 7 as these often lead to garden areas but not in all cases). 20 of the 35 (57%) artworks featuring deities in these three houses occur in garden areas or rooms adjacent to the garden (11 of 14 in I.10.4; five of 16 in VII.4.48; and four of five in I.11.6). Overall in Pompeii, 97 of the 157 (62%) representations of Venus in domestic contexts occur in gardens or garden-adjacent areas. Thus, the percentage of Venus representations in garden and garden-adjacent areas (62%) is only slightly higher than the percentage of artworks featuring deities located in these areas in the three houses examined in this chapter (57%; table 8.7). This indicates that Venus only occurs slightly more often than other deities in garden or garden-adjacent areas, despite her role as a garden deity. Other outdoor deities, however, including Diana (goddess of hunting), Bacchus (god of vegetation and viticulture), and Pan (god of nature) are exclusively located in garden and garden-adjacent areas in these three houses.

Table 8.7: The percentage of artworks featuring deities and the percentage of Venus representations located in garden / garden-adjacent areas

	Located in Garden / Garden-Adjacent Areas
Artworks Featuring Deities (in these three houses)	57%
Venus Representations (from all domestic contexts in Pompeii)	62%

Representations of deities in these three houses occur most often on the north and east walls, even when Venus is excluded from the sample (table 8.8). However, deities are represented five times (including Venus twice) within the same Minotaur frieze on the east wall of room 46 in I.10.4, making the east wall appear more popular than is actually the case. There are also four deities (including Venus) represented within the same ‘Judgement of Paris’ painting on the north wall of room 10 of I.11.6. Once these nine representations of deities in these two artworks have been excluded, the distribution of deities represented on each wall becomes closer to the mean: north – 10 (29%); east – 8 (23%); south – 9 (26%); west – 8 (23%). This distribution is similar to that of Venus representations on each wall in domestic contexts across Pompeii, though there is a lower proportion of Venus representations on west walls in domestic contexts across Pompeii (table 8.8). This indicates that the increased likelihood of Venus appearing on the north wall in Pompeii is not a specific trait to representations of Venus and is exhibited by representations of other deities too.

Table 8.8: The distribution on walls of representations of deities in the three houses discussed in this chapter, and representations of Venus in domestic contexts across Pompeii

	Wall			
	N	E	S	W
Representations of Deities in these Houses	14	13	9	8
Percentage of Representations of Deities in these Houses	32%	30%	20%	18%
Representations of Deities in these Houses (excluding Venus)	11	10	8	8
Percentage of Representations of Deities in these Houses (excluding Venus)	30%	27%	22%	22%
Venus Representations in Domestic Contexts in Pompeii	41	33	40	22
Percentage of Venus Representations in Domestic Contexts in Pompeii	30%	24%	29%	16%

29 of the 34 (85%) artworks featuring deities which occur on walls (excluding ceilings and pavements) in these three houses occur in the central zone, compared with five (15%) in the upper zone. Each house includes at least one deity in the upper zone.

This contrasts with representations of Venus across Pompeii where 122 of the 131 (93%) wall-paintings and reliefs from domestic contexts occur in the central zone, compared with nine of 131 (7%) in the upper zone. Thus, Venus appears proportionally less often in the upper zone than deities generally.

In these three houses, 20 artworks featuring deities occur in central fields (including one underneath a central panel), 13 in side fields, one is a frieze which spans an entire wall, and one is a pavement. The high number of deities in side fields can be explained by eight of these forming part of the astronomical scheme of decoration in VII.4.48. The remaining five artworks featuring deities in side fields occur in these areas because: a central area was not available (due to a window or door, or a left/central/right panel structure does not exist for the wall); the deity is used as detail to a landscape scene rather than being the main focus of a panel; or the figure in the artwork cannot be definitively identified as a deity. This suggests that central fields were the preferred location for artworks featuring deities, except where specific reasons caused them to occur in side fields. This is similar to representations of Venus from domestic contexts, where 12 of the 26 (46%) in side fields occur in these areas because: a central area was not available (due to windows or doors, or no central panel existing); a left/central/right panel structure does not exist for that wall; they are part of narrative friezes where their place in the narrative determines their location; or Venus is depicted on a non-central *lararium* or *lararium* painting (see Chapter 6.3.3).

8.6 Conclusion

Venus is the most frequently occurring deity in houses I.10.4, I.11.6 and VII.4.48, appearing in six of the 35 (17%) artworks featuring deities. Venus' frequent occurrence in this sample may be partially due to her role as patron deity of Pompeii, however the artworks more often reflect her other roles (see Section 8.5.1). It could also be due to the nature of the sample as one of my criteria in selecting the houses was that they each must include at least one representation of Venus.

Diana, Mercury, and Bacchus are also either depicted or alluded to in each house. This is perhaps because Mercury represented good fortune, and the spheres of Bacchus and Diana reflected activities commonly associated with the Roman elite – the entertainment of guests through dining and parties (Bacchus), and hunting (Diana). Venus mostly appears in narrative scenes in domestic contexts across Pompeii, whereas the majority of deities in this sample of three houses appear in non-narrative scenes. This suggests that Venus was mostly depicted to illustrate a narrative, whereas other deities tended to be chosen more specifically, indicating they had greater significance than Venus. However, this marked difference could be partially explained by the astronomical scheme of decoration in VII.4.48, in which deities are depicted as isolated figures or busts rather than within narrative scenes, thus giving an exaggerated impression of the popularity of other deities in non-narrative scenes.

There are several similarities between the location of artworks featuring deities in these three houses and artworks featuring Venus in domestic contexts in Pompeii. Both mostly occur in garden-adjacent areas (including the garden itself), probably because guests were received here so decoration was more common in these areas anyway. For both sets of artworks, the north wall is the most common location, and the west wall the least common. While the north/east/south/west orientation of artworks is not significant, the correlation in these variables indicates that this sample of three houses may be representative of Pompeii in general. Venus and other deities both mostly appear in central rather than side fields, and their location in side fields can often be attributed to various factors, for example, a central field being unavailable due to windows or doors occurring in central locations, or no central field existing (for example if the wall was too narrow and consisted of only two panels).

As I have only examined fixed artworks in this chapter, statues and statuettes of deities in these houses have not been considered. An alternative approach to understanding these three houses would be to integrate the information here with a contextual study of these portable artworks. For instance, there were just two statues (of Venus and a hermaphrodite) in I.11.6 and thus even though Venus only occurred as often as other deities in the wall-paintings of this house, combined with this, Venus would have been of greater significance.

To conclude, Venus is the most frequently occurring deity in fixed artworks in these three houses. In two examples over these houses, she appears to have held a particularly significant role in the decoration of individual rooms: in room 4 of VII.4.48, Venus' presence in a central panel painting, whereas the other weekday deities appear as busts in side fields, perhaps suggests she was of greater significance than the other deities as she appears in a more prominent position. In room 24 of I.10.4, Venus is the subject of the sole painting in the room, spanning the entire curved wall, overlooking the peristyle (her domain as a garden deity). That said, other deities appear more prominently, or are alluded to more often, in these houses. For instance, despite the fact that Bacchus is not one of the more commonly depicted deities in these houses, he is often alluded to (especially in I.10.4). In I.11.6, despite being represented just once, Bacchus appears more significantly than the other deities depicted in the house; he is the only deity to occur in the central zone but not in a narrative scene, instead his role as god of vegetation and viticulture is emphasised through the artwork's location next to a large window overlooking the garden. Furthermore, although Venus is one of the three deities who received greater decorative attention in I.10.4, Bacchus and Diana (who also appear in rooms representing their domains) are depicted on more important sight-lines within the house, suggesting they were of greater importance to the owner than Venus. Thus, Venus was sometimes of less significance than other deities in the paintings and pavements of the three houses in this sample when factors such as allusions to deities and sight-lines are considered. This is despite being the patron deity of Pompeii and occurring more frequently than other deities in fixed artworks in this sample.

Table 8.9: The location of scenes featuring deities in I.11.6, VII.4.48, and I.10.4. Scenes featuring Venus are highlighted.

House	Room No.	Room Type	Deity	Scene	Narrative Scene? Y/N	Wall	Zone	Field of Wall
I.11.6 (Small)	4	4	Hercules	Hercules & Omphale	Y	N	Central	Central panel
	7	7	Bacchus	Bacchus and his <i>thiasos</i>	N	S	Central	Right
	10	10	Mercury	Judgement of Paris	Y	N	Central	Central panel
			Minerva					
			Juno					
			Venus					
			Diana	Diana & Actaeon	Y	E	Central	Central panel
		Hymen	Hymen holding a torch	N	E	Upper	Centre	
VII.4.48 (Medium)	2	3	Autumn	Autumn	N	N	Central	Left
			Winter	Winter	N	W	Central	Right
	4	4	Mercury	Bust of Mercury	N	N	Central	Left
			Venus	Venus Fishing	N	N	Central	Central panel
			Sol	Bust of Sol	N	N	Central	Right
			Jupiter	Bust of Jupiter	N	S	Central	Left
			Jupiter	Leda and the swan	Y	S	Central	Central panel
			Luna	Bust of Luna	N	S	Central	Right
	6	5	Jupiter	Danae and the golden rain	Y	W	Central	Central panel
			Venus	Dispute between Achilles & Agamemnon	Y	N	Central	Centre
	10	7	Mercury	Mercury on throne	N	W	Upper	Centre
			Lucifer	Venus with Lucifer	N	E	Central	Left
			Venus					
Vesper			Luna-Diana with Vesper	N	W	Central	Right	
Luna-Diana								

	13	9	Diana	Sacrifice in the sanctuary of Apollo	N	W	Central	Right
			Apollo					
	15	11	Diana	Diana & Actaeon	Y	N	Central	Central panel
			Apollo	Apollo & lover	Y	E	Central	Central panel
I.10.4 (Large)	4	5	Minerva	The sack of Troy	Y	N	Central	Central panel
	11	11	Neptune	Nautical scene	N	N	Central	Left
			Bacchus?	Bacchante with a child (Bacchus?)	N	N	Central	Central panel
			Hercules?	Hercules reclining on a cloak/animal skin	N	E	Central	Right
			Neptune?	Seaside landscape scene	N	S	Central	Right
	15	11	Mercury	The punishment of Dirce	Y	S	Central	Central panel
	18	11	Pan	Bust of Pan	N	E	Central	Centre (underneath central panel)
	21	12	Pan	Symplegma of a satyr and bacchante with Pan observing	N	Pavement	Pavement	Pavement
	22	13	Diana	Diana in her domain	N ⁷⁹	S	Central	Centre
	23	13	Bacchus?	Bacchus seated	N	S	Central	Central panel
	24	13	Venus	Venus in her domain	N	S	Central	Centre
	25	13	Diana?	Diana in shield above panel of trees with birds	N	W	Upper	Centre
	46	21	Iris?	Minotaur frieze	Y	E	Upper	N/A
Venus								
Epithymia								
Venus								
47	21	Minerva	Hercules, Deianira & Nessus	Y	E	Upper	Centre (Lunette)	
Hercules								

⁷⁹ Although Actaeon is also represented in the painting, the main focus is on Diana in her domain (a non-narrative scene) rather than on Diana and Actaeon (a narrative scene).

Chapter 9: Conclusion

In this thesis, I aimed to investigate the significance of representations of Venus and their spatial contexts in Pompeii, and more widely to explore whether the location of an artwork influenced the choice of subject and composition. In this chapter, I discuss my main findings and assess to what extent I achieved my research objectives. This chapter is arranged in six main sections, one for each of my five research objectives, followed by some final conclusions.

9.1 To Identify and Characterise the Iconographic Types of Venus, and Identify Scenes Featuring Venus, Represented in Paintings, Reliefs and Mosaics in Pompeii

I have identified 197 representations of Venus in paintings, reliefs, and mosaics in Pompeii – 162 within domestic contexts, 12 from public contexts, 11 on façades, five from domestic and public contexts, and seven where the context cannot be ascertained. Of these 197 representations, 191 are wall-paintings, two are ceiling paintings (in I.6.11 and I.10.11), one is a floor mosaic/pavement (in IX.2.27), two are reliefs (in room F of VI.16.7/38 and on the façade of the *purgatorium* of VIII.7.28), and one is an *opus sectile* artwork (in I.2.10). I analyse these different types of ‘fixed artworks’ altogether because the mosaics and reliefs featuring Venus are present in such small numbers.

These representations comprise 15 different Venus types (excluding catch-all types) and appear in 15 main scene types (excluding those for which there is only one example of the scene type). The most common Venus types in the town are ‘Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing’ and *Venus Pescatrice*. The most common scene types featuring Venus are the ‘Love of Venus and Mars’ and ‘Venus Fishing’.

Many Venus types emphasise specific roles of the goddess. Her role as goddess of *eros* is emphasised in the ‘Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing’ type; her role as goddess of beauty by the *Venus Anadyomene* and ‘Venus at her Toilet’ types; her role as patron deity of Pompeii by the *Venus Pompeiana* type; and her water-related associations are emphasised by the *Venus Pescatrice*, *Venus Pompeiana*, *Venus*

Anadyomene, and ‘Venus on a Seashell’ types. Sometimes these roles are further emphasised by the location of individual Venus types. For example, *Venus Pompeiana* further highlights the role of Venus as the patron deity of Pompeii by appearing more often than other types in areas of ritual activity (on *aediculae* or in *lararium* paintings), and on façades (in addition to other evidence – see Chapter 5.1.5). The state of nudity of representations of Venus depends on the Venus type rather than the location of the artwork. For instance, *Venus Pudica* needs to be fully naked in order to cover her pubic area. Most water-related Venus types never appear clothed.

9.2 To Identify Patterns in the Distribution of Venus Representations and Scenes Featuring Venus Within Houses

While most of my chapters discussed the distribution of artworks featuring Venus within houses, this was explored in most depth in Chapter 6. The results of which are summarised here.

In Chapter 6, I demonstrated that it is relatively rare in domestic contexts for the room type to influence the choice of content of artworks featuring Venus, except in garden areas (as mentioned below). This contrasts with previous scholars who have sometimes considered room type to directly influence the choice of content of artworks. For instance, many scholars have considered small, closed rooms to be *cubicula*, and have interpreted them as ‘bedrooms’. Consequently, they assert that love scenes and scenes associated with Venus, as goddess of *eros*, were particularly common in *cubicula* (Ling & Ling 2005: 94). However, I have demonstrated that artworks featuring Venus more often occur in other areas of the house – especially in large/medium rooms. Although I have only studied artworks which depict Venus, rather than those associated with her, if scenes associated with Venus were particularly common in these room types, it could be expected that the goddess herself would also be represented often in these room types.

The various roles of Venus rarely determine where artworks featuring the goddess are located within the house. Despite being the goddess of gardens and associated with bathing, Venus rarely occurs in fixed artworks in garden or bath areas in

Pompeian houses. That said, artworks featuring Venus which occur in gardens seem to exhibit a stronger relationship between their content and the artwork's location. These artworks almost all depict outdoor scenes, even if the narrative represented is meant to take place indoors, as with the 'Love of Venus and Mars' scene in garden 19 of I.7.11. 'Venus in a Seashell' occurs exclusively in gardens, probably due to the artwork's content (the depicted scene takes place outdoors) and location (being located outdoors allows for a wider, elongated representation of the scene). Similarly, 'Adonis Wounded' typically occurs in gardens, probably because the action depicted takes place outdoors and therefore this scene would be appropriate for this setting.

76% of all artworks featuring Venus in domestic contexts occur in areas which I classify as 'predominantly reception areas', areas where guests would be received. A higher proportion of narrative scenes featuring Venus occur in 'predominantly reception areas' (83%). This is perhaps because it would be easier for guests to engage in *ekphrasis* if narrative scenes were represented, so narrative scenes would be depicted more often in areas where guests would be received. This contrasts with non-narrative scenes featuring Venus, which occur less often than narrative scenes in 'predominantly reception areas' (68% compared with 83%). This is perhaps because non-narrative scenes could be used for protection, and this purpose did not require them to be located in areas frequented by guests.

Artworks featuring Venus usually occur in the central zone and within central fields. Some of the more unusual locations for these artworks, such as the upper zone or side fields, appear to have been determined by practical considerations, such as an entrance located centrally causing there to be no central panel.

9.3 To Assess Whether the Public or Domestic Context of an Artwork Featuring Venus Affected its Content or Location

There are substantially fewer representations of Venus in artworks from a public context (12) or on façades (11), compared with those from a domestic context (162). That said, there is still a significant contrast between artworks featuring Venus from domestic contexts and those from public ones.

Venus is depicted proportionally more often in garden areas from public contexts than domestic ones: four of the 12 artworks featuring Venus from public contexts occur in gardens (33%), compared with 10 of 157 from domestic contexts (6%), where the room type can be ascertained. Interestingly, the content of artworks featuring Venus which occur in gardens from public contexts do not reflect her role as a garden deity. Garden locations were probably popular for artworks featuring Venus from public contexts as two of these were *lararium* paintings or were painted on *aediculae* (VII.4.20 and VII.9.33), which would have benefitted from being located outdoors to enable ventilation for burnt offerings.

In public contexts, Venus is more often represented in her role as a deity rather than as a participant in a mythological scene. Proportionally more artworks featuring Venus from public contexts depict non-narrative scenes (83%), compared with those from domestic contexts (48%). Furthermore, proportionally more artworks featuring Venus from public contexts depict ‘No Active Scene’ (50%), compared with those from domestic contexts (21%). Additionally, in artworks from public contexts, Venus is always accompanied by at least one other deity or cupid, and never by other figures (with the exception of the painting in the *Castellum Aquae*), whereas in artworks from domestic contexts, there is more variety in the figures she is depicted with. This could be partially explained by the fact that three of the 12 (25%) artworks from public contexts are *lararium* paintings or are painted on *aediculae* and therefore do not feature narrative scenes. However, even if the *lararium* paintings and *aediculae* are excluded, 78% of artworks from public contexts depict non-narrative scenes and 40% depict ‘No Active Scene’.

Venus is also represented as a deity rather than as a participant in a mythological scene on façades: 55% of façade paintings depict ‘No Active Scene’; Venus never appears alone – often appearing with at least one deity and/or cupids; and where Venus appears with other deities in the same scene, all except one are non-narrative scenes. Venus was thus chosen specifically on façades, rather than just as part of a narrative. Venus was likely represented on façades for protective purposes, given that five of the seven paintings which flank entrances represent another deity on the opposite side, creating a protective axis over the entrance. She may have also been chosen to depict

one of the owner's patron deities, but this cannot be ascertained without knowing who the owner was and his/her religious preferences.

9.4 To Assess Whether Representations of Venus Could Have a Religious, Ritual, or Protective Purpose

As I demonstrated in Chapter 7, many representations of Venus had a religious, ritual, or protective purpose, which is evident from their composition (elements within the scene) and/or their context (location). This purpose is often more obvious in artworks from public contexts and on façades, compared with those from domestic contexts. This is because in public contexts, the choice of representing Venus can often be linked back to the function of the building. For domestic contexts, however, we often know little about the owners of the houses and it is more difficult to reliably ascertain why they chose to represent particular deities.

Façade paintings featuring Venus all appear to have served, or been associated with, a religious, ritual, or protective purpose. Of the 10 façade paintings where the context can be ascertained: seven flank entrances, the majority with another deity represented on the opposite side, creating a protective axis over the entrance; one is from a ritual context (the *purgatorium* of the Temple of Isis); and two represent the twelve gods amongst scenes of a religious or protective nature – one with an altar next to the painting indicating ritual activity took place nearby (perhaps in association with the painting).

Proportionally fewer representations of Venus from domestic contexts have an obvious religious, ritual, or protective purpose. Only three of the 162 artworks featuring Venus within domestic contexts (2%) are *lararium* paintings or are painted on *aediculae*, in contrast to three of the 12 artworks from a public context (25%). That said, other artworks from domestic contexts may have also had religious, ritual, or protective significance. For instance, artworks featuring *Venus Pompeiana*, which had more religious and ritual significance than other Venus types, mostly occur in domestic contexts, and Venus occurs at least twice as part of schemes of decoration in houses for protective, ritual, or magic purposes.

Venus is sometimes represented in association with the water supply in Pompeii, possibly to protect it, given that five examples of this are depicted on *aediculae* or are *lararium* paintings (in V.4.3, VI.11.8–10, VII.4.20, VII.9.33, and the *Castellum Aquae*). Venus occurs in association with the water supply at least four times in public contexts (VI.8.20 – a *fullonica*, VII.4.20 – a shop, VII.9.33 – a possible *fullonica*, and the *Castellum Aquae*) and four times in domestic contexts (I.7.11, V.4.3, VI.11.8–10, and VI.16.7/38). Interestingly, despite occurring in association with the water supply in these examples, Venus rarely occurs in bath areas of the house – just three of the 157 Venus representations in domestic contexts occur in bath areas (2%), two of these from the same frieze.

Venus' water associations are also emphasised in other artworks in Pompeii. Venus is represented steering a ship, with an accompanying inscription – 'aphrodeite sozousa' ('The Saving Aphrodite') – on the façade of house I.13.9, acknowledging her role as the protector of seafarers (see Chapter 4.1.3), and she is depicted on the façade of a building used for ritual cleansing (the *purgatorium*) in the Temple of Isis complex (VIII.7.28). Furthermore, the two Venus types which are almost exclusive to Pompeii and its environs (*Venus Pompeiana* and *Venus Pescatrice*) both reflect Venus' role as a water goddess – she is represented with a rudder in the former type, and in the latter type she is depicted fishing. The *Venus Pompeiana* type probably reflected her role as the patron deity of Pompeii, and thus the rudder perhaps highlighted the Pompeians' desire for their patron deity to protect seafarers and the town's trade links by sea. This would presumably have been an important role for a patron deity of a coastal town for which sea-trade was an important part of its economy. Thus, Venus sometimes appears in Pompeii as a protector of water and water-related activities – the town's water supply and trade links by sea. This is perhaps unsurprising, given that before Pompeii became a colony, the Pompeians had honoured the Phrygian Minerva who protected seafarers (van der Graaff & Ellis 2017: esp. 296).

Non-narrative scenes depict Venus for a reason other than to illustrate a narrative. In some instances, this was probably for protection, given that non-narrative scenes were used in all six artworks where Venus is represented on *aediculae* or in *lararium* paintings, and all seven artworks featuring Venus which flank entrances to buildings in Pompeii.

The *Venus Pompeiana* type appears to have had more religious and ritual significance than other Venus types for several reasons. Firstly, this type is always represented as a statue and appears inactive within scenes, whereas other Venus types which were popularised by statues were also represented as live characters in scenes. This suggests that the *Venus Pompeiana* type was derived from a statue and retained part of its original context. If this type derived from the cult statue of Venus in Pompeii, representations of *Venus Pompeiana* perhaps retained some of the religious and ritual connotations of the original statue, and had especial religious significance. Secondly, *Venus Pompeiana* occurs more often in ritual contexts (on *aediculae* or in *lararium* paintings), than other Venus types. No other Venus type is represented on *aediculae* or in *lararium* paintings within domestic contexts in Pompeii. Thirdly, *Venus Pompeiana* also occurs more often on façades, and in the upper zone, than other Venus types. This was probably so that she could watch over and protect passers-by from façades, or literally watch over people from above in the upper zone. All this evidence, in addition to the fact that *Venus Pompeiana* almost exclusively appears in Pompeii (she is depicted once in nearby Boscoreale), suggests that this type represents Venus as the patron deity of Pompeii.

9.5 To Assess Whether Venus was Given Greater Prominence than Other Deities in Pompeian Domestic Space

In Chapter 8, I used a sample of three houses of different sizes (I.11.6, VII.4.48, and I.10.4) to investigate the significance of artworks featuring Venus in comparison to artworks featuring other deities. I identified which deities were depicted in these houses, where these artworks featuring deities were located, and investigated the significance of these factors. This enabled me to consider whether Venus was given greater prominence than other deities in these houses in Pompeii, and whether my conclusions relate to Venus specifically or to deities or wall-paintings more generally.

There are 35 artworks featuring deities across these three houses, and Venus appears in six of them (17%). The scene type or scheme of decoration in which Venus is represented often determines the Venus type chosen and the sphere of influence which

is emphasised. For instance, in VII.4.48, the astronomical scheme of decoration in the house determines the Venus type chosen in room 10 ('Venus as a Star').

These three houses each represent Venus, Diana, and Mercury, and representations of, or allusions to, Bacchus. This is perhaps because Venus represented the patron deity of the town, Mercury represented good fortune, and the spheres of influence of the other deities reflected activities commonly associated with the Roman elite – dining and parties (Bacchus' realm) and hunting (associated with Diana).

Artworks featuring deities in these three houses and artworks featuring Venus in domestic contexts across Pompeii, mostly occur in garden and garden-adjacent areas, probably because decoration is more common in these areas as guests were received there. For both sets of artworks, the north wall is the most common location, and the west wall the least common. While the north/east/south/west orientation of the artwork itself may not be significant, the fact that the distribution of artworks featuring deities in these three houses is similar to that of artworks featuring Venus in domestic contexts across Pompeii, suggests the sample may be used for comparative study. Both Venus and other deities mostly appear in central rather than side fields, with their presence in side fields often attributable to practical reasons (such as no central field existing).

Venus occurs more often than other deities in the fixed artworks of these three houses. Two examples from these houses indicate that Venus could form a significant part of the decoration of a room: in room 4 of VII.4.48, Venus occurs in a more prominent position (a central panel) than the other deities in the room (who appear as side field busts); and in room 24 of I.10.4, the painting of Venus in her domain is the exclusive decoration in the room, emphasising her dominion over water and the garden, whilst located in a room completely open to the peristyle on one side – also emphasising her garden domain. In I.10.4, however, Bacchus and Diana occur more prominently than Venus, as they not only appear in similar rooms exclusively representing their domains, open to the peristyle, but are also located along important sight-lines within the house.

Thus, despite being the patron deity of Pompeii, Venus was sometimes of less significance than other deities in the paintings and pavements of the three houses in this sample when factors such as allusions to deities and sight-lines are considered. However, portable artworks (such as statues and statuettes) were not considered when

investigating these three houses, and when taken into account they could suggest that Venus was more prominent than other deities. For instance, house I.11.6 contained two statues (one of Venus and one of a hermaphrodite) which may indicate that Venus was of greater significance than she seems from the fixed artworks of the house, where she is represented just once as part of a ‘Judgement of Paris’ scene.

9.6 Conclusion

In this study, I aimed to investigate the significance of representations of Venus and their spatial contexts in Pompeii. I identified the different Venus types and scene types featuring the goddess in the fixed artworks of Pompeii and recorded their locations. I analysed their spatial contexts, including their position on the wall, in addition to their distribution across different room types. I adopted a quantitative approach, encompassing every representation of Venus across the town. This study has demonstrated that by taking a quantitative approach to artworks, rather than using examples selectively to support arguments, it is possible to compare artworks systematically and support arguments with numerical data more comprehensively across the town. I discovered that:

- It is relatively rare in domestic contexts for the room type to determine the content of artworks featuring Venus, except in garden areas.
- The various roles of Venus do not determine where artworks featuring the goddess are located within the house.
- Artworks featuring Venus from domestic contexts differ from those from public contexts – for instance, Venus is more often represented as a deity rather than as a participant in a mythological scene in public contexts and also on façades.
- All artworks featuring Venus on façades (where the location can be ascertained), either occur in a ritual context, flank an entrance – probably for protection, or depict Venus as one of the twelve gods in proximity to scenes of a religious or protective nature.
- Many representations of Venus had a religious, ritual, or protective purpose, which can be determined by their composition (elements within the scene) and

their context (location). This purpose is often more obvious in artworks from public contexts and on façades, compared with those from domestic contexts.

- *Venus Pompeiana* had more religious and ritual significance than other Venus types.
- Venus is sometimes represented in association with the water supply in Pompeii, presumably to protect it. Her association with water (including her role as protector of seafarers) is also emphasised in other artworks in Pompeii.
- Despite Venus occurring more often than other deities in the fixed artworks of the three houses in my sample, she was sometimes of less significance than other deities when factors such as allusions to deities and sight-lines are considered.

This study has challenged assumptions about perceived room functions influencing decoration. For instance, just 23% of Venus representations occur in small, closed rooms, traditionally termed *cubicula* (previously interpreted as ‘bedrooms’), despite previous scholars assuming Venus-related scenes to be particularly common in these areas. That said, artworks featuring Venus which occur in garden areas tend to depict outdoor scenes, so room type could influence the choice of decoration to some extent. It serves as a reminder that long-held assumptions need to be tested against quantifiable data to establish their value.

This thesis relates to multiple areas of scholarship. It addresses a gap in the study of Roman domestic religion, which has previously focused on the *lares* and *penates* to the detriment of our understanding of the domestic worship of individual deities, which has received little attention. As previously stated, we cannot understand how Roman religion worked on an everyday level without considering the main pantheon of gods in the home. This study is a further addition to the growing body of scholarship on female Roman deities and is one of the few detailed studies on Venus rather than Aphrodite. It contributes to multiple areas of Pompeian studies including domestic space, religion, and art, and is the first comprehensive study of images of a single deity in Pompeii. This thesis also contributes to scholarship on Roman art, especially contextualised studies of artworks, and ideas of how the Romans viewed and experienced art – particularly in terms of the religious, ritual, and protective

significance it could have. This study follows the current trend of considering Roman art as eclectic, and avoids the identification of programmes of decoration as far as possible (as this is subjective and there is little evidence that such programmes actually existed).

This study is a first step in using this kind of evidence to provide new insights into Roman religion in the domestic sphere. I hope that my approach has demonstrated that this is a worthwhile area of study. I have demonstrated that artworks are significant beyond being artistic objects, and sometimes their content and location can indicate a religious, ritual or protective purpose. Further investigation is still needed, however. For instance, the significance of Venus in comparison to other deities in the fixed artworks of Pompeii is only addressed in Chapter 8. It would be beneficial to investigate the significance of other deities in Pompeii, such as Bacchus, in equal detail as a control. It would also be useful to expand the approach used in Chapter 8 to other houses in Pompeii. This would enable me to put more artworks featuring Venus into context with other artworks in the same house, and by including more houses and thus having a larger dataset, my sample would be more representative of the whole of Pompeii. It would also be beneficial to study representations of patron deities in fixed artworks elsewhere. Furthermore, an investigation of other towns which had Venus/Aphrodite as their patron deity, such as Aphrodisias, would also provide a useful comparison. This would enable me to discover whether my conclusions are specific to Venus in Pompeii, Venus as a patron deity of a town, or to patron deities generally.

It would be beneficial if future scholarship investigated Roman domestic religion more broadly than the *lares* and *penates*, and if scholars used quantitative evidence (where possible) to make conclusions about the location of artworks rather than searching for a relationship between room function and decoration, or programmes of decoration which may not exist. Further investigation into patron deities of other towns would enable us to better understand whether their importance to the town was reflected in the domestic sphere, and thus how civic religion related to personal identity.

I hope that this thesis has demonstrated that a quantitative, spatial approach to Pompeian artworks can have important results as it enables analyses to be firmly evidenced based on a systematic approach to a comprehensive database. Although this thesis has focused on representations of one deity in one town, this approach could

easily be transferred to the study of other deities, other subjects, artworks in other media, and other areas.

Appendix A1: Attributes of Venus

Attribute	Evidence	
Apple	In mythology, the apple was the prize won by Venus after Paris judged her the most beautiful goddess, which led to the Trojan War (Hyginus, <i>Fabulae</i> , 92; Apollodorus, <i>Library</i> , E.3.2).	
Crowns	Floral crown	Cyrino (2010: 64) lists many ancient references for Venus wearing floral crowns or garlands. Cyrino argues that Venus probably wore floral crowns to emphasise her role as goddess of beauty, and her association with fertility.
	Pointed crown	Venus and other goddesses are often depicted wearing a pointed crown. Republican coinage often represents Venus wearing a pointed crown – Venus can be identified in these coins based on the opposite side of the coin indicating Venus in some way (such as representing Aeneas and Anchises, or the labelled temple of Venus at Eryx), or by cupids appearing with Venus or on the opposite side of the coin (Crawford 1974: nos. 359/1; 359/2; 391/1a; 391/3; 424/1; 458/1; 463/1a; 463/3; 463/5a; 468/1; 468/2).
	Walled crown (<i>corona muralis</i>)	The <i>corona muralis</i> was the symbol of Tyche/Fortuna, goddess of good fortune. The walled crown was also used by the Greeks to symbolise the patron deity of a city (Allègre 1889: 190–1). James (1888: 187) argues that the fortifications of Paphos were represented on a double stater with Aphrodite wearing ‘a richly decorated stephanos, a crown of towers’. However, this cannot be considered an exclusive attribute of Aphrodite/Venus in areas beyond Paphos or other towns where she was the patron deity, such as Pompeii.
Cupid/Eros	Some sources describe Cupid/Eros as the son of Venus (Simonides, 575; Seneca, <i>Octavia</i> , 560). Cicero (<i>De Natura Deorum</i> , 3.23.59–60) identifies three cupids, two as sons of Venus. Alternatively, Hesiod (<i>Theogony</i> , 201–202) describes how ‘Eros accompanied [Venus]... as soon as she was born’, suggesting that although associated with her, Eros/Cupid was not her son. The various named cupids personify the powers of Venus, for instance Himeros (Desire) and Eros (Love) (Rosenzweig 2004: 24). Eros was originally depicted as a winged youth in Greek art, but from the Hellenistic period onwards, he was more frequently depicted as a child (March 1998: 153).	
Diadem	This was not an exclusive attribute of Venus, but Aphrodite/Venus is sometimes described as wearing one, as in <i>Homeric Hymn</i> , 6.	
Doves	The Syrians believed that Venus hatched from an egg incubated by brooding doves (Hyginus, <i>Fabulae</i> , 197). Venus was associated with doves generally (Ovid, <i>Metamorphoses</i> , 13.673–4; Aelian, <i>On Animals</i> , 10.33; Budin 2003: 29–30; Breitenberger 2007: 15–16). Venus was believed to ride a chariot pulled by doves (Ovid, <i>Metamorphoses</i> , 14.597 & Apuleius, <i>Metamorphoses</i> , 6.6).	
Fan	Ancient authors do not describe Venus having a fan as one of her attributes, though she can be represented with one (as in a Neoattic relief from Hadrian’s Villa at Tivoli – Rosenzweig 2004: 54–5). See Chapter 5.9.2 for why it might be associated with her as a symbol of femininity.	

Graces / Charites	<p>The Graces/Charites often accompanied Aphrodite and were frequently associated with her (Pausanias 6.24.7). Aphrodite sometimes dances with them (Homer, <i>Odyssey</i>, 18.193–4), or is bathed and dressed by them (Homer, <i>Odyssey</i>, 8.364–366; <i>Homeric Hymn</i>, 5.61–67; Claudian, <i>Epithalamium</i>, 100–106). Sometimes the Graces even make her clothes (Athenaeus, <i>The Learned Banqueters</i>, 15.682e). The Graces are depicted on the overgarment of the Aphrodite of Aphrodisias (Brody 2007: 86–88). ‘Greek and Roman artists frequently depicted the Graces with Aphrodite, as her personal attendants and as secondary personifications of feminine beauty, charm, and fertility’ (Brody 2007: 87).</p>
Jewellery	<p>Generally</p> <p>Venus is often described as ‘golden’ or wearing jewellery. <i>Homeric Hymn</i>, 5.64–65 describes Venus as ‘adorned with gold’, and she is described as wearing bracelets, earrings, necklaces and breast jewellery/her girdle in lines 84–90 and 161–167. <i>Homeric Hymn</i>, 6 similarly describes Venus wearing a gold diadem, earrings, necklaces and breast jewellery. During the festival of the Veneralia on 1st April, women removed gold necklaces from the marble statue of Venus to wash the statue, and then replaced them (Ovid, <i>Fasti</i>, 4.135–7). The Eastern deity, Inanna/Ishtar, who influenced the iconography of Aphrodite, is often described as wearing necklaces (Serwint 2002: 328 & 331).</p>
	<p>Breast Jewellery (the strap / saltire of Aphrodite)</p> <p>In the <i>Iliad</i>, Aphrodite gives Hera an embroidered/split strap (<i>kestos himas</i>) tied from her breasts to inspire Zeus’ lust (Homer, <i>Iliad</i>, 14.214–223). This breast strap is also mentioned in the <i>Greek Anthology</i> (16.288). In artworks, Aphrodite/Venus sometimes wears a split strap or jewellery around her breast, crossing over between her breasts and on her back, leading to Du Buisson (1947) labelling it a ‘sautoir’, and Bonner (1949) translating this as ‘saltire’. This breast strap, or saltire, may have been the same ornament worn by many naked goddesses of fecundity, including Ishtar, Astarte, and Atargatis (Bonner 1949: 1; examples in Du Buisson 1947). The saltire was probably considered to possess magical properties, with diagonal motions having apotropaic significance (Bonner 1949: 2–3). See Delivorrias 1984: 61–2, nos. 505–513 for statuettes of Aphrodite putting on her breast band.</p>
Marine Symbols: conch shell and dolphins	<p>Some Romans believed that Venus was born from the foam of the sea (Isidore of Seville, <i>Etymologies</i>, 8.11.77), and she is therefore associated with marine iconography, such as the conch shell and dolphins. Venus’ retinue encompassed many sea-creatures, including Tritons with conch shells (Apuleius, <i>Metamorphoses</i>, 4.31). Some Romans believed that Venus was born out of a shell (Plautus, <i>Rudens</i>, 3.704). The shell symbolised female genitalia, with the ancient Greek word <i>kteis</i> referring to both the scallop shell and the vulva (Goodenough 1958: 97). Thus, this would be an appropriate attribute for the goddess of sexuality. See also Goodenough 1958: 96–99; Serwint 2002: 328–9.</p>
Mirror	<p>Venus is well attested in ancient sources as having the mirror as one of her attributes. Apuleius (<i>Metamorphoses</i>, 4.31) describes Venus’ retinue, one of whom holds a mirror for her. The <i>Greek Anthology</i> (6.1, 6.18–20) suggests that mirrors could be dedicated to Venus. It seems obvious why Venus as the goddess of beauty had the mirror as an attribute. There may have also been a somewhat practical reason why mirrors were associated with Venus – in early Greece, mirrors were made of bronze (made mainly of copper), and copper was a product found in large quantities on Cyprus, the home of Aphrodite (Cyrino 2010: 66).</p>

Myrtle	Ancient authors often describe myrtle in association with Venus or as one of her attributes (Virgil, <i>Aeneid</i> , 5.72; Virgil, <i>Eclogues</i> , 7.61–2; Ovid, <i>Fasti</i> , 4.15; Pliny, <i>Natural History</i> , 12.2.3, 15.36.119–121; Pausanias 6.24.7; Pseudo-Lucian, <i>Amores</i> , 12; and the <i>Pervigilium Veneris</i> , 6, 28, & 44). Worshippers at the <i>Vinalia</i> offered Venus myrtle, mint, rushes and roses (Ovid, <i>Fasti</i> , 4.869–870). During the <i>Veneralia</i> , worshippers bathed under myrtle, allegedly because Venus used myrtle to shield herself from the prying eyes of satyrs when she was naked on the shore (Ovid, <i>Fasti</i> , 4.139–144). Myrtle was given as a crown to those achieving an <i>ovatio</i> , which was considered to be a triumph of Venus (Pliny, <i>Natural History</i> , 15.38.125; Aulus Gellius, <i>Attic Nights</i> , 5.6.20–23). See also Maxwell-Stuart 1972, who discusses references to myrtle in an abundance of ancient sources, as both a plant and a woman’s name, to convincingly suggest that this plant had overt sexual connotations and symbolised lust and sex.
Palm	Palm branches had a strong association with victory and success in the Roman world (Martial, <i>Epigrams</i> , 7.2, 7.28, 7.72; Caesar, <i>Civil War</i> , 3.105) and were often associated with the goddess Victoria. No ancient author attests to Venus having a palm as one of her attributes, aside from in reference to her victory in the judgement of Paris (Ovid, <i>Heroides</i> , 16.140). There are several numismatic examples associating Venus with a palm, however. A coin dating to 61 B.C., which depicts a diademed female head with a palm branch behind her, has been argued to depict <i>Venus Victrix</i> (Crawford 1974: 443–4, no. 419/1c); and two coins dating to 46 B.C. depict Venus on the obverse, with a cupid holding a palm branch on the reverse (Crawford 1974: 473–5, nos. 463/5a and b). A coin dating to A.D. 193–6 is inscribed ‘VENERI VICTR.’ and depicts Venus leaning on a pillar, holding an apple and a palm (Schmidt 1997: no. 202).
Roses	Roses were also associated with Venus (Pausanias, 6.24.7; Ibycus, 288; and the <i>Pervigilium Veneris</i> , 22–26). During the <i>Veneralia</i> , worshippers offered Venus roses (Ovid, <i>Fasti</i> , 4.138). During the <i>Vinalia</i> , worshippers offered Venus myrtle, mint, rushes and roses (Ovid, <i>Fasti</i> , 4.869–870).
Sceptre	As can be seen throughout the Roman world, deities were often depicted with sceptres. <i>Orphic Hymn</i> 55.11 describes Aphrodite as ‘sceptered’. Venus is sometimes depicted with a sceptre on coins (Weinstock 1971: 99; Crawford 1974: nos. 313/1c; 349/1; 463/1a; 480/3; 480/4; 480/5b; 480/7b; 480/8; 480/9; 480/14; 480/17; 480/18). Schmidt (1997) gives scattered examples throughout her catalogue of Venus holding a sceptre in various media, especially when she is enthroned (for instance, Schmidt 1997: 214–215, nos. 225, 227, 229, 234, 236, 237, 238, 239, 241). The presence of a sceptre in an artwork indicates that the figure depicted was a deity or queen rather than an ordinary woman (see Yates 1875: 1011 for how the sceptre indicated royalty and leadership to the Greeks and Romans, in addition to being an attribute of Jupiter and Juno to indicate their sovereignty: Jupiter – Servius, <i>Commentary on the Eclogues of Vergil</i> , 10.27; Juno – Ovid, <i>Metamorphoses</i> , 3.264–265; Pausanias, 2.17.4).

Appendix A2: Fields in the Database

A2.1 Catalogue Number

I have organised the catalogue entries in the database in the following order: region; insula; building entrance number; room; wall (north, east, south, west); and field of wall (left, centre, right). The catalogue numbers for entries in the database reflect this order.

A2.2 Criteria for Identifying Venus

I have allocated each Venus representation a letter on a scale from 'a' to 'g' based on how I have identified Venus and how likely a representation is to depict Venus (table A2.1). The seven categories range from certain representations of Venus ('a'), where she is labelled, to those which do not have any visual evidence surviving but are mentioned by the original excavators or early scholars ('g').

If a Venus representation meets more than one of these criteria, the higher-ranking criteria is preferred. For instance, if a Venus representation depicts the *Venus Pudica* type but features within a 'Judgement of Paris' scene, I have considered it as criteria 'b' rather than 'c'. The 'g' category is an exception to this, as it comprises artworks where neither the artwork itself nor photographs or sketches of it survive, only the written descriptions of early excavators or scholars. Without pictorial evidence, I am unable to check the accuracy of these descriptions and am entirely reliant on the interpretations of others. I therefore use category 'g' for Venus representations that have been identified by others rather than by myself.

If an artwork depicts a figure within an identifiable narrative scene which does not feature Venus, even if the figure adopts a known pose of Venus (Venus type) or includes some of her attributes, I do not consider it to represent Venus. For instance, the figure of Diana adopts a combined pose of two Venus types (*Venus Pudica* and 'Venus Crouching') within the same painting in room i of II.2.2 as part of the Diana and Actaeon narrative.

Table A2.1: 'Criteria for Identifying Venus' categories and descriptions of each category

Category	Description
a	Named/labelled depiction of Venus/Aphrodite – Venus/Aphrodite is labelled within the artwork (or in direct association with the artwork, as with the epigrams underneath the paintings in V.1.18).
b	Known/recognisable narrative involving Venus/Aphrodite – Venus/Aphrodite is clearly identifiable within a recognisable narrative (such as the 'Judgement of Paris').
c	Known Venus type from surviving artworks or ancient authors – Venus/Aphrodite is clearly recognisable as a known type, known from surviving artworks or ancient authors (<i>Venus Pudica</i> , <i>Venus Anadyomene</i> (a), <i>Venus Pescatrice</i> , and <i>Venus Pompeiana</i> only ⁸⁰). This excludes Venus types known from surviving artworks or ancient authors which are likely to represent Venus but could depict a different woman in that pose, for instance a different female figure could also occur at her toilet.
d	Very likely to be Venus due to one of the following criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The figure appears with many of Venus' attributes • The figure is depicted as a <i>Venus Anadyomene</i> (b) type, with her hand in her hair, and with attributes of Venus (unless there is evidence to suggest this is not Venus) • The figure appears in the same scene as another deity and with a more exclusive attribute of Venus (such as a mirror, dove, or cupid to distinguish her from other female deities who may be depicted with diadems/crowns, sceptres and jewellery) or is depicted with a deity and in a common pose of Venus (e.g. leaning on a pillar – VII.4.22–23, on the façade between entrances 22 and 23) • The scene bears similarity to other artworks which depict an identifiable scene featuring Venus
e	Possibly Venus but not certain – enough of Venus' attributes are depicted; a possible narrative featuring Venus can be ascertained; or the depiction bears similarity to other Venus representations from Pompeii or elsewhere.
f	Not enough evidence to suggest Venus – only one attribute depicted with the figure (e.g. a woman with a cupid or an enthroned woman with a sceptre); or a scholar/excavator has suggested it represents Venus and I disagree. N.B. Artworks which qualify as this category are not discussed in Chapters 5–7.
g	The artwork itself, or photos or sketches of it, do not survive or are unclear so the identification of Venus/Aphrodite relies on the written accounts of earlier excavators or scholars.

⁸⁰ Exceptions: *Venus Anadyomene* (a) from the Castellum Aquae is an 'e' type instead as it may represent a nymph; *Venus Pescatrice* from V.4.a is an 'e' type as the painting is very degraded and it is not certain whether it depicts a fisherwoman, let alone Venus; *Venus Pudica* in VI.13.19 is also an 'e' type, as although this is a known pose of Venus, the narrative is unclear and perhaps depicts Diana and Actaeon; *Venus Pompeiana* in VIII.3.10–12 is a 'd' type as she is represented amongst the 12 deities, so one of these must be Venus, but she is not depicted with a cupid, and the rudder, sceptre, crown and branch could indicate Fortuna instead.

A2.3 Context

Although this study focuses primarily on Venus representations from domestic contexts, artworks from public contexts are also included in the database. The domestic or public context of these artworks relates to the context of the room the artwork is located within, rather than the building as a whole (table A2.2). This is because many shops and bars had domestic areas at the rear, and houses could have direct access to bakeries or shops. If I cannot ascertain which room the artwork occurs in, the public or domestic context of the building itself is taken as a proxy.

Table A2.2: Criteria for artworks to qualify as public or domestic

Context	Qualifying Criteria
Domestic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rooms which do not meet the criteria for having a public context • If the artwork is in the back area of a shop or bar which is clearly a domestic area e.g. the back room has direct access to an <i>atrium</i>
Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obvious public buildings, such as the Temple of Isis or the Gladiator Barracks • Shop/bar/fullery areas with access to the street⁸¹ • Rooms with direct access from the main shop/bar area which are not clearly part of a domestic dwelling and were perhaps used as storage areas (e.g. room 5 of I.11.1 or room d of VI.10.1). I also consider the artwork from room a of VII.3.8 to be from a public context because although this room is not directly connected to the shop, it was perhaps related to this purpose.
Domestic and Public	Buildings which changed in function from domestic to public, or public to domestic e.g. the two houses which became <i>fullonicae</i> in Region VI (VI.8.20 and VI.14.21/22), and VIII.2.17–21 (as the house had been converted into baths by the time of the eruption). These artworks are considered both domestic and public as the decoration may predate the change in the building's function.

⁸¹ Predominantly using the *PPM* to ascertain this through the building descriptions, which often mention or include photographs of relevant structures and other features (e.g. masonry counters to suggest *thermopolia*, or shutter indentations for shops).

A2.4 Building and Room Numbers

The building and room numbers in Pompeii vary according to which scholar or source is consulted. I use those from the *PPM* in my database. Where the *PPM* does not include a plan of the building or insula, I use the *PPP* or other sources instead. For instance, there is not a plan of II.9.3/4 in the *PPM* so I consulted the *Rivista di Studi Pompeiani* (Sodo 1988) to acquire a copy of the plan and further details about the painting mentioned by Strocka (1991: 130).

A2.5 Room Type

I use, and slightly adapt, the room type criteria of Allison (2004a: table 5.a) as her study focuses on *atrium* houses, and the houses in my study cover a range of types. These room types are only assigned for artworks from domestic contexts, and thus room type 20 is not used in this study as I consider this room type to be from a public, rather than domestic, context. See table A2.3 for my adapted version of Allison's room type criteria. The categorisation of 'small', 'medium', and 'large' is based on comparison to other rooms in the same house.

I applied my adapted version of Allison's room type criteria (table A2.3) to the house plans in the *PPM*, using plans from other studies where those in the *PPM* were unclear or erroneous. For instance, the *PPM* plans do not have an entrance marked for room 7 of VI.8.23/24, so I used Fröhlich's plans (1996) instead to discover that room 7 was open-sided from the *atrium*. I could not always ascertain the open or closed nature of rooms based on these house plans alone, as I could not always determine the size of entrances. This was problematic because whether a room had a wide view of the garden (making it an 'open' room) or a fairly small entrance (making it a 'closed' room) affects the room type. Sometimes photographs of the room in the *PPM* showed an entrance or window which was not marked on the plan⁸², but these did not exist for every house, so I checked the open or closed nature of each room through fieldtrips to Pompeii, where

⁸² For instance, the plan for VII.14.5 fails to depict the large window (visible from photos in the *PPM*) overlooking the garden from room 12, making this an open rather than closed room.

access was possible. Despite taking these measures, the open or closed nature of rooms could not always be ascertained. For instance, the photographs in the *PPM* for room h of VII.12.26 show that there is a direct entrance from the garden, though this is not shown on the plan. The width of the doorway could not be ascertained, however, as this house was not open during my fieldtrip to Pompeii. Thus, room h could either be a type 10 (closed) room, or a type 11 (open) room. Issues with the size of entrances mainly affected room types 10 and 11, and I addressed this by grouping together these room types (along with room type 6) in Chapters 5–7 as they are all medium/large rooms.

Throughout this study, I group together various room types as ‘predominantly reception areas’ (types 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 13, and 21) or ‘predominantly non-reception areas’ (types 1, 4, 8, 12, 14, 15, and 17). Room types 2, 16, 18, 19, and 22 need to be considered on an individual basis. These are marked on table A2.3 for ease of reference. The room types which have their reception level marked with an asterisk are those where Venus representations do not occur (room types 1, 2, 8, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, and 22). Room type 20 is neither a ‘predominantly reception’ nor ‘predominantly non-reception’ area, as I consider this to be a public rather than domestic context (as mentioned above). For discussion of what is meant by ‘predominantly reception’ and ‘predominantly non-reception’ areas, see Chapter 6.2.3.

*Table A2.3: Allison’s room type criteria (after Allison 2004a: table 5.a) with my slight adaptations in bold, and the reception level of the room stated (room types where representations of Venus do not occur are marked with a *)*

Room Type	Section of House	Room Location and Description	Predominantly Reception or Non-Reception Area
1	Front hall area	Main entranceway	Non-Reception*
2	"	Room leading directly off front entranceway	Depends on individual room*
3	"	Front hall, usually with central opening and pool	Reception
4	"	Small closed room off side of front hall	Non-Reception
5	"	Open-fronted area off side of front hall	Reception
6	"	Large/medium room usually off corner of front hall	Reception
7	"	Open-sided room usually opposite main entrance or leading to garden	Reception
8	"	Long, narrow internal corridor	Non-Reception*
9	Main garden area	Main garden, colonnaded garden and ambulatories, or terrace	Reception

10	"	Large/medium closed room off garden/terrace but with no view	Reception
11	"	Large/medium open-fronted room off garden/terrace with window or wide entranceway giving view of garden or lower floor	Reception
12	"	Small closed room off garden/terrace or lower floor	Non-Reception
13	"	Small open-fronted (at least partially) area off garden/terrace or lower floor	Reception
14	Other areas	Room with cooking hearth or associated room (kitchen area)	Non-Reception
15	"	Latrine as entire room	Non-Reception*
16	"	Other room outside main front-hall/garden complex – including rooms open to the street if linked to the house and did not function as shops	Depends on individual room
17	"	Stairway	Non-Reception*
18	"	Secondary internal garden or court, usually not colonnaded	Depends on individual room*
19	"	Secondary entrance or entrance courtyard	Depends on individual room*
20	"	Room at front of house open to street (shop) – excluding rooms open to the street if linked to the house and did not function as shops	N/A*
21	"	Bath area	Reception
22	"	Upper floor rooms and material in upper-level deposits	Depends on individual room*

A2.6 Wall / Façade

N/E/S/W Walls

Although Pompeii is arranged with a grid pattern to its streets, they are not aligned true north, east, south, or west. For ease of reference, I use site north for attributing paintings to a specific wall (fig. A2.1). For artworks included in the database where I am reliant on published catalogues because the artwork no longer exists, it is unknown how the individual scholars decided on the wall of provenance (for instance, a wall facing north-west could qualify as either north or west). However, I checked as many *in situ* artworks as possible with a compass during field trips to Pompeii, and the walls of provenance given by these catalogues corresponded with the *in situ* artworks

where I used site north. Thus, it is likely that previous scholars such as Schefold (1957) also used site north and I can use their recording of locations for artworks which no longer exist.

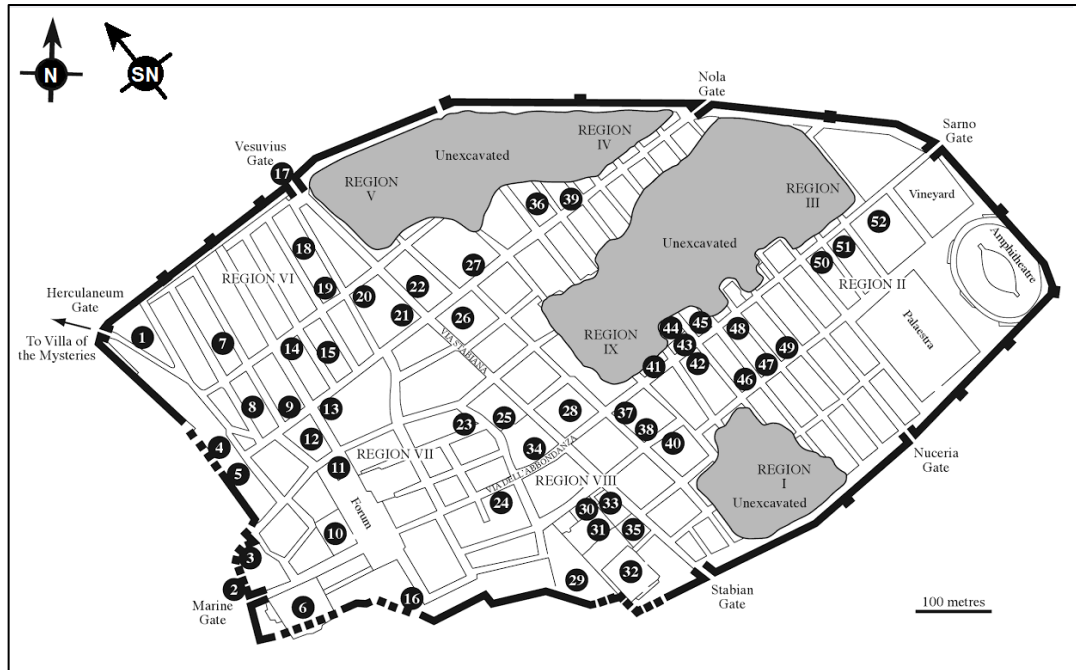


Figure A2.1: Map of Pompeii, with true north (N) and site north (SN) marked by the compasses

Façades

The orientation of façades is determined based on the direction they face (fig. A2.2). For instance, a ‘north façade’ would be a façade facing north.

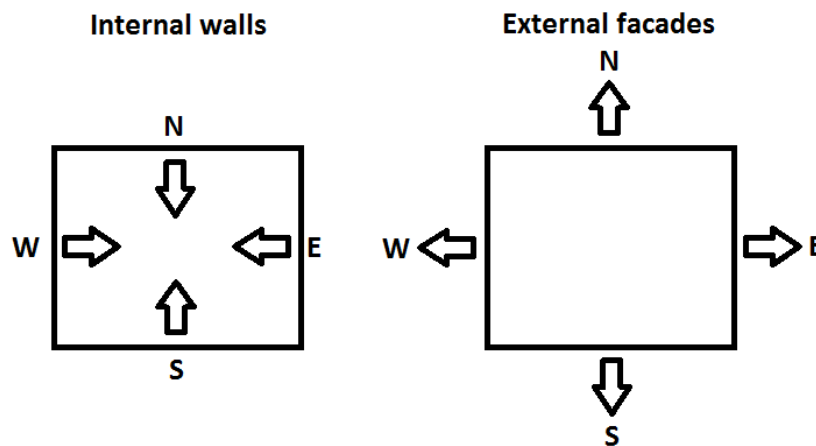


Figure A2.2: Diagram showing the labels given to internal walls and external façades

Field of Wall

This refers to the horizontal placement of the painting on a wall, for instance, left/left panel; centre/central panel; and right/right panel (fig. A2.3). There is not always a centre field, sometimes the wall is just separated into left and right fields.

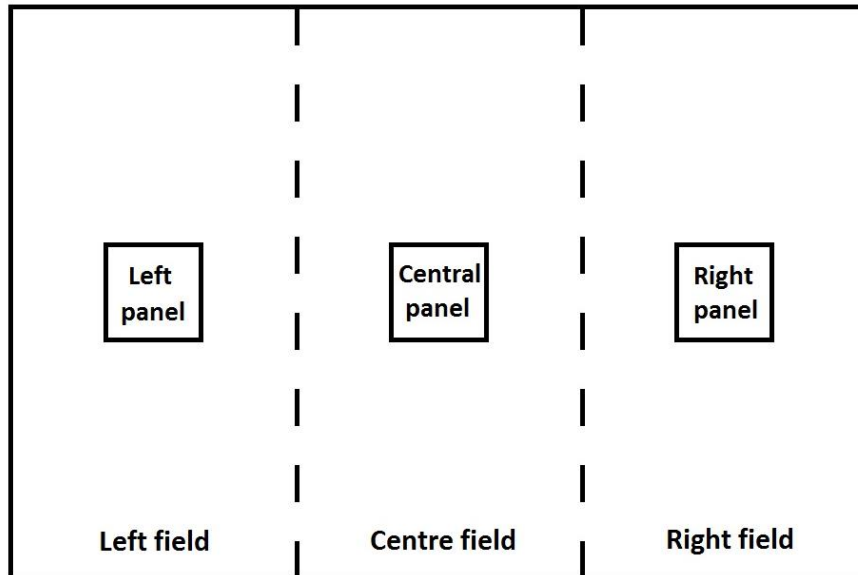


Figure A2.3: Diagram showing the different fields of a typical wall

I do not allocate a field of wall to façade artworks. This is because seven of the 11 (64%) façade paintings are located to the side of an entrance. This would produce a disproportionate number of side panel paintings in the database, when a central location for the façade painting would not be possible due to the entrance. Furthermore, façade paintings are often located on the exterior shared by two buildings (fig. A2.4). Thus, a single painting could be to the left of one entrance and the right of another, making the field of wall difficult to discern. The artwork on the façade of VIII.7.28 (the Temple of Isis) is an exception to this, as it does not occur on the façade of the entrance to the temple, but instead occurs within the temple complex in the central panel of the west façade of the *purgatorium*, which is clearly separated into left/central/right panels.



Figure A2.4: Venus Pompeiana between entrances IX.7.6 and IX.7.7

Zone of Wall

This relates to the vertical placement of the painting on the wall: the upper zone; central zone; or lower zone (fig. A2.5).

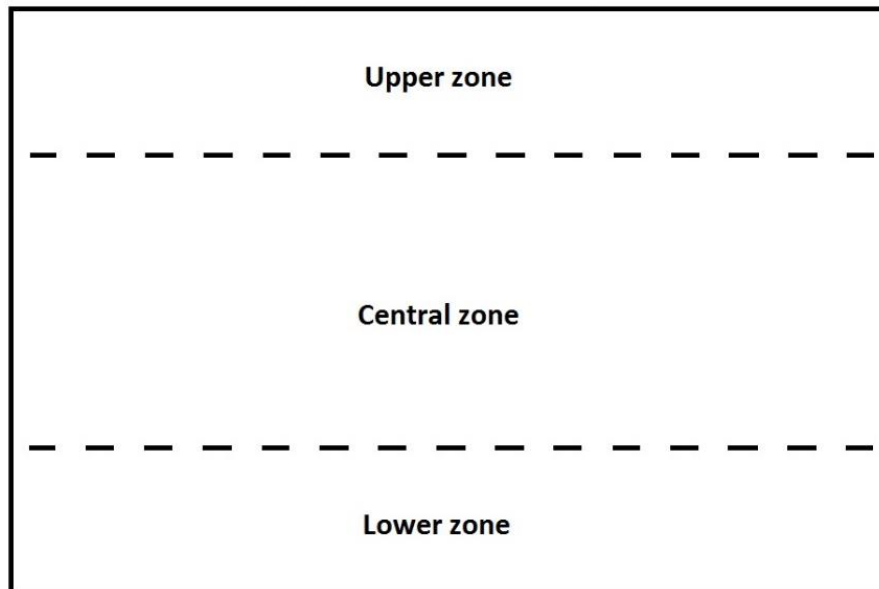


Figure A2.5: Diagram showing the zones on a typical wall

A2.7 Type of Scene

This category refers to the type of scene Venus is represented within. In this thesis, I sometimes group individual scene types into narrative and non-narrative scenes (table A2.4).

Table A2.4: Individual scene types grouped as narrative and non-narrative scenes

Narrative / Non-Narrative Scene	Type of Scene	Reference
Narrative Scenes	Adonis Narrative (Adonis Wounded)	Ovid, <i>Metamorphoses</i> , 10.708–739
	Adonis Narrative (Venus with Adonis)	Ovid, <i>Metamorphoses</i> , 10.519–739
	Aeneas Narrative (Aeneas Wounded)	Virgil, <i>Aeneid</i> , 12.311–440
	Aeneas Narrative (Venus Giving Arms to Aeneas)	Virgil, <i>Aeneid</i> , 8.608–625
	Competition Between the Deities of Light	Artworks featuring this scene type are very similar and clearly depict the same narrative taking place. Venus is often identifiable, and her opponent is always naked (where the artwork survives for this to be ascertained) and is clearly a star deity given its halo, probably representing Hesperus/Vesper. The judge (where depicted) seems to be either Apollo or Bacchus. Hyginus (<i>De Astronomia</i> , 2.42.4) perhaps alludes to such a beauty competition taking place between these two deities, but as Hijmans (1995: 55) points out, this is by no means explicit. Rehm (1912: 1255) argues that when a cupid holds a palm in scenes of this type (as in room 10 of VIII.3.14), this is to allude to the competition. See also Moormann 1983: esp. 87–91; Hijmans 1995; & Balch 2006: 304–312.
	Love of Venus and Mars	Homer, <i>Odyssey</i> , 8.266–369; Ovid, <i>Metamorphoses</i> , 4.167–189
	Paris Narrative (Helen and Paris Narrative)	Colluthus, <i>Rape of Helen</i> ; Ovid, <i>Heroides</i> , 16–17
	Paris Narrative (Judgement of Paris)	Hyginus, <i>Fabulae</i> , 92; Ovid, <i>Heroides</i> , 16.51–88; Colluthus, <i>Rape of Helen</i> , 1–201
	Punishment of Cupid	This myth is not mentioned by ancient sources. In these scenes, there is a cupid on the shoulder of Venus and another crying in front of her.
	Other Narrative Scene	N/A

Non-Narrative Scenes	Venus Fishing	N/A
	Nest of Cupids	N/A
	Sale of Cupids	N/A
	Venus in a Seashell	N/A
	Toilet of Venus	N/A
	Venus Tying her Sandal	N/A
	Other Non-Narrative Scene	N/A
	No Active Scene	N/A

Each artwork has just one scene type, even though a single representation of Venus could comprise multiple Venus types. This is because there can only be one overall subject of the scene, whereas several Venus types can be combined within one figure, for instance ‘Venus Leaning on a Pillar’ can be combined with ‘Venus with a Cupid on her Shoulder’.

I group together scenes with few examples in Pompeii as ‘Other Narrative Scenes’ or ‘Other Non-Narrative Scenes’ as there are not enough of them to be considered individually.

I consider artworks to have ‘No Active Scene’ if there is no scene or other activity occurring aside from what Venus is doing (e.g. Venus simply seated on a throne or leaning on a pillar), or if she appears with other characters who are equally not participating in any activity. Busts often have ‘No Active Scene’ because their small size means there is no space for activities to be depicted.

Scene types are mutually exclusive so I cannot create scene types where the subject of the scene is simply ‘Venus being offered a toiletry box/mirror’ as there are many ‘Toilet of Venus’ scenes that this would also apply to. Thus, I consider scenes where Venus is offered a toiletry box or a mirror by a cupid but is not actively at her toilet as ‘No Active Scene’ as she is not actively participating in the scene (for instance, the representations of Venus in the central panel of the north wall of room 7 in VI.7.23, and in rooms 13 and 16 of VI.9.2/13).

A2.8 Venus Type

This refers to the iconographic type of Venus which is depicted (see table A2.5 for list). For further details of each individual Venus type, see Chapter 5.

Table A2.5: Venus types in Pompeii

Venus Type
<i>Venus Anadyomene</i> – types (a) and (b)
Bust of Venus
Venus Caricature
Venus Crouching
Venus with a Cupid on her Shoulder/s
Venus and a Figure Touching/Embracing
Venus Holding a Fan or Palm
Venus Hovering
Venus Leaning on a Pillar
<i>Venus Pescatrice</i>
<i>Venus Pompeiana</i>
<i>Venus Pudica</i>
Venus on a Seashell
Venus Seated
Venus Seated on a Throne
Venus Sitting or Leaning on Rocks
Venus Standing
Venus as a Star
Venus Steering a Ship
Venus at her Toilet
Venus Tying her Sandal
Unknown

A2.9 Venus' State of Nudity

This category records whether Venus is represented naked, semi-naked, or clothed in the artwork. If Venus has token drapery below her pubic area but her breasts and pubic area are not covered, the representation qualifies as 'naked (drapery falls below pubic area)'. This enables me to group the representations with token drapery with the naked representations of Venus, whilst acknowledging the drapery.

A2.10 Other Figures in the Artwork

I have separated the data for other figures in the artwork into four main sections: the minimum number of figures in the scene including Venus (excluding animals); the number of cupids in the scene; the names of any deities in the scene; and the names/types of other figures in the scene (e.g. nymphs).

The **minimum** number of figures in the scene is given for each artwork. For instance, if a painting of the ‘Love of Venus and Mars’ is mentioned by a scholar with no other details as to its content and no visual evidence of it survives (either the painting itself or a sketch of it), this qualifies as two figures, even though extra figures may have existed in the painting.

Hermes and statues of deities are included in the ‘Deities Depicted with Venus’ field in the database. I consider personifications of place as ‘Other Figures in [the] Scene’ rather than deities. I consider other personifications, such as Zephyrus (the west wind), Vesper/Hesperus (the evening star), and Lucifer/Phosphorus (the morning star) as ‘Deities Depicted with Venus’ as they are also deities in their own right. I only consider Eros as a deity if he is represented as a grown man, otherwise he qualifies as a cupid.

‘Other Figures in [the] Scene’ consists of characters not encompassed by the other categories i.e. not cupids or deities. This category includes maids although they could represent the Graces. I was unable to ascertain a distinct iconography for the Graces to aid their identification – Pausanias (9.35.7) and Harrison (1986: 200) describe how the defining iconography of the Graces is their depiction naked. However, none of the maids represented with Venus in Pompeii are naked. Thus, I only identify maids, not the Graces.

A2.11 Venus Attributes in the Artwork

This field in the database is separated into three categories: ‘Type of Headwear’; ‘Type of Jewellery’; and ‘Type of Attribute’ (a list of all the Venus attributes which appear in the artwork).

Venus sometimes wears some form of headwear (crowns; diadems; hairbands; halos – see Appendix A1). Crowns indicate that a female figure is a deity or queen. Some crowns are more significant to the iconography of Venus than others, such as the pointed crown worn by female deities, and the walled crown – an attribute of Tyche also worn by the patron deities of cities, such as *Venus Pompeiana*. Hairbands are not an identifying attribute of Venus but are included in the database as Venus may wear a hairband when she is identifiable through other means.

Venus is often depicted with jewellery (see Appendix A1), either wearing it, putting it on, or being offered it. Breast jewellery (or the girdle/saltire of Aphrodite) was particularly associated with Venus as it symbolised her powers over *eros*. Table A2.6 lists the different types of jewellery worn by Venus and their abbreviations in the database.

Table A2.6: Types of jewellery worn by Venus and the abbreviation used in the database

Abbreviation used in the Database	Type of Jewellery
A	Arm-bracelets
B	Bracelets
Br	Breast jewellery
E	Earrings
L	Leg/ankle-bracelets
N	Necklace
R	Ring

The ‘Type of Attribute’ field in the database lists the attributes of Venus represented within the scene. These include: apples; cupids; dolphins; doves; fans; headwear (diadems/crowns/hairbands/halos); jewellery; mirrors; myrtle/olive; palms; peacocks; roses; rudders; sceptres; shells; and toiletry boxes.

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