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TRACING PROCESSION ROUTES FOR THE PRINCIPAL CULTS IN POMPEII

Ivo van der Graaff and Eric Poehler

Abstract

Pompeii preserves vivid representations of religious processions in frescoes painted on the *Shop of the Carpenter's Procession* and in the *House of the Wedding of Hercules*. Announcements for gladiatorial games as well as a funerary relief recovered from the necropolis at the Stabian gate attest to the presence of processions associated with festivities in the Amphitheatre and the Forum. A further inscription placed inside the Stabian gate describes a *Via Pompeiana*, presumably named for its role as a possible processional route (Greek *pompé*, procession). These glimpses into processional events suggest that vibrant displays were common in Pompeii, yet the routes that such processions took remain virtually unknown. Using evidence from inscriptions, visual culture, spatial analysis, and Roman religious traditions, this chapter is a preliminary attempt to gather the evidence for processional routes related to the principal cults in Pompeii. From this evidence, it proposes to chart a few tentative routes taken by public religious processions.

Keywords: Pompeii, religious processions, Roman religion, urban layout, *ludi*, public cults

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Biographical note

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Banner image: Detail from a garden painting, from the House of the Golden Bracelet, Pompeii (VI.17.42), collection of the Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli. (Photo: Fine Art Images/Heritage Images via Getty Images)

TRACING PROCESSION ROUTES FOR THE PRINCIPAL CULTS IN POMPEII

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In the last months of 1844, Francesco Avellino recovered a marble relief more than four meters in length that once belonged to a tomb façade just beyond Pompeii's Stabian gate (Fig. 7.1) (Emmerson, 2010, p.78; Avellino, 1845, pp.81–8). Rightly famous for the lower registers of this frieze showing both gladiatorial contests and animal hunts, the top register depicts the procession that preceded these events, en route, in all likelihood, to the Amphitheatre. Avellino identified the parade as a *pompa funebris* (a funeral parade) that would have carried the deceased to their tomb. The absence of a funerary bier, however, makes this assumption unlikely. Rather, it seems that the parade as depicted shows a *pompa* associated with the opening of gladiatorial *ludi* (games). In this procession, two lictors bearing staves walk before a pair of trumpeters, announcing the procession. Behind another attendant, four figures carry a *ferculum* with the image of two seated statues one of which is in the act of beating

an anvil. Next, a sign bearer, or perhaps two, precede a togate man who gestures back to a line of seven figures, six of whom appear to be carrying gladiator helmets, perhaps identifying them as combatants. A final trumpeter signals the end of the processional group, followed by a pair of fine horses and their grooms.

This picture of a noisy civic parade, which perhaps belonged to a tomb honouring Gnaeus Alleius Nigidius Maius outside of the Porta Stabia (Osanna, 2018, pp. 320–2), is complemented by an image of a religious procession painted on a narrow facade beside the Shop of the Carpenters' Procession (VI.7.8), discovered in 1825 (Fig. 7.2). The fresco is remarkable because it is a specific commission that depicts an idealised moment in a procession. The image depicts four men carrying a *ferculum* bearing a statue of Minerva, identified by the partial remains of the shield at her side. Other representations accompany Minerva on the *ferculum*, including two men using a planing tool on a board and an effigy of Daedalus overlooking his dead nephew, Perdix. The occasion depicted alludes to a moment in a procession to Minerva, perhaps during the *quinquatria*, her principle festival (Clarke, 2003, pp.85–7).

These two images provide diverse information on the character of processions and therefore are valuable for different reasons. The funerary relief not only offers specific details of the various individuals who participated, but also provides the Amphitheatre as an identifiable destination. It may even be possible to date the event to the last decades before the eruption. Based on size and find spot, Osanna (2018, pp.317–18) connects this relief to a recently discovered tomb with an inscription, the text of which leads him to date the

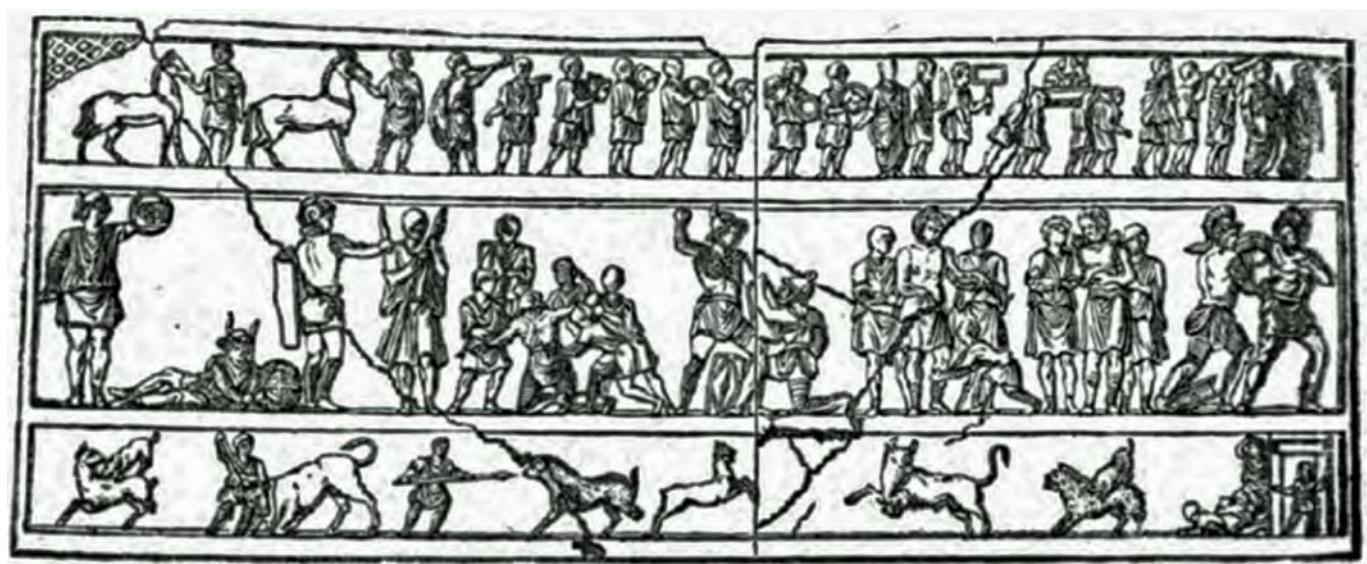


Figure 7.1: Relief showing procession from a tomb façade near to the Stabian gate. The *pompa* is in the upper register. The middle register shows a scene of gladiatorial combat whereas the lowest register shows an animal hunt. (Museo Archeologico Nazionale Napoli, Inventory number 6704. After Fiorelli, 1875, p. 401)



Figure 7.2: Procession of carpenters fresco from the façade of shop at VI.7.8–11. The partial statue of Minerva stands on the left identified by the shield by her left leg. (Museo Archeologico Nazionale Napoli Inventory number 8991. Photo: © Mondadori Portfolio / Bridgeman Images)

events depicted to immediately prior to the riot of 59 CE. More importantly, both images offer a glimpse of the paraphernalia associated with processions. They seem to have occurred mostly on foot with the only large, unwieldy objects being the *ferculum* or a cult image. Presumably, processions would have taken place on the wider roads along which viewers could gather to watch the parade. However, the relative lack of unwieldy paraphernalia in the images also suggests that patrons could choose smaller streets as part of their routes.

The images gesture towards the myriad civic processions that must have occurred in the daily life of Pompeii, but are invisible to us: wedding ceremonies and funeral cortèges (discussed by Campbell in this issue), *pompa theatralis*, *compitalia* processions, the

wagon trains of the *nundinae*, and voting day, when the population came to crowd the Forum, then filing out as individuals through the northeast exit of the *comitium* (Hartnett, 2017, p.67; Coarelli, 2000). In contrast, the fresco on the Shop of the Carpenters' Procession reveals the deity who was honoured, and perhaps those who celebrated her, but little about where this procession would have taken place. One might assume, by featuring Minerva, that her temple would be the festival's destination, and, by facing onto one of the broadest streets in the city (Via di Mercurio), that the fresco commemorates this spot as part of its route. Similarly, the frescoes on the Shop of the Four Divinities (IX.7.1), one depicting a crowd gathered around a *ferculum* carrying the goddess

Cybele and another with an image of Venus Pompeiana, have occasioned the identification of processions for the goddesses passing on the eastern tract of Via dell'Abbondanza (Hartnett, 2017, pp.277–8, following Spinazzola, 1953). These are, unfortunately, only educated guesses.

Despite the richness of evidence at Pompeii and the multitude of events that must have occurred annually, representations of actual processions from Pompeii and their routes are rare. Nevertheless, because many temples and sanctuaries and related performance spaces are identified within a nearly complete network of streets, it is possible to speculate with some confidence about the origins, destinations, and routes of religious processions at Pompeii even if we cannot 'see' them take place in the archaeological record. These opportunities for speculation, however, are circumscribed in time almost entirely to the final century of Pompeii's existence, since it is this period that provides the majority of the evidence to consider. This article examines the landscape of possibilities that Pompeii provided for the movement of religious

festivals, by first briefly discussing the basic information for sites of veneration, then taking up three specific examples in which the evidence for a particular route can be explored. In each instance, Pompeii's changing architectural and sacred landscape alters the possible routes, adding nuance – and clarity – to the image of these religious processions. Finally, the essay concludes with a brief discussion of the religious calendar.

Primary cults at Pompeii

By the time of the eruption in 79 CE, several cults were well established at Pompeii. Some cults were present at the inception of the city and their sanctuaries remained linchpins in its urban development (D'Alessio, 2009). The sanctuaries of Athena/Minerva in the Triangular Forum and Apollo in the Forum are the oldest, with evidence of their presence stretching back to the sixth century BCE. Although the final architectural layout of these sanctuaries is relatively late in the spectrum of the history of the city, the temples and cult locations barely moved in centuries, thereby influencing the organisational layout of the city. It seems appropriate

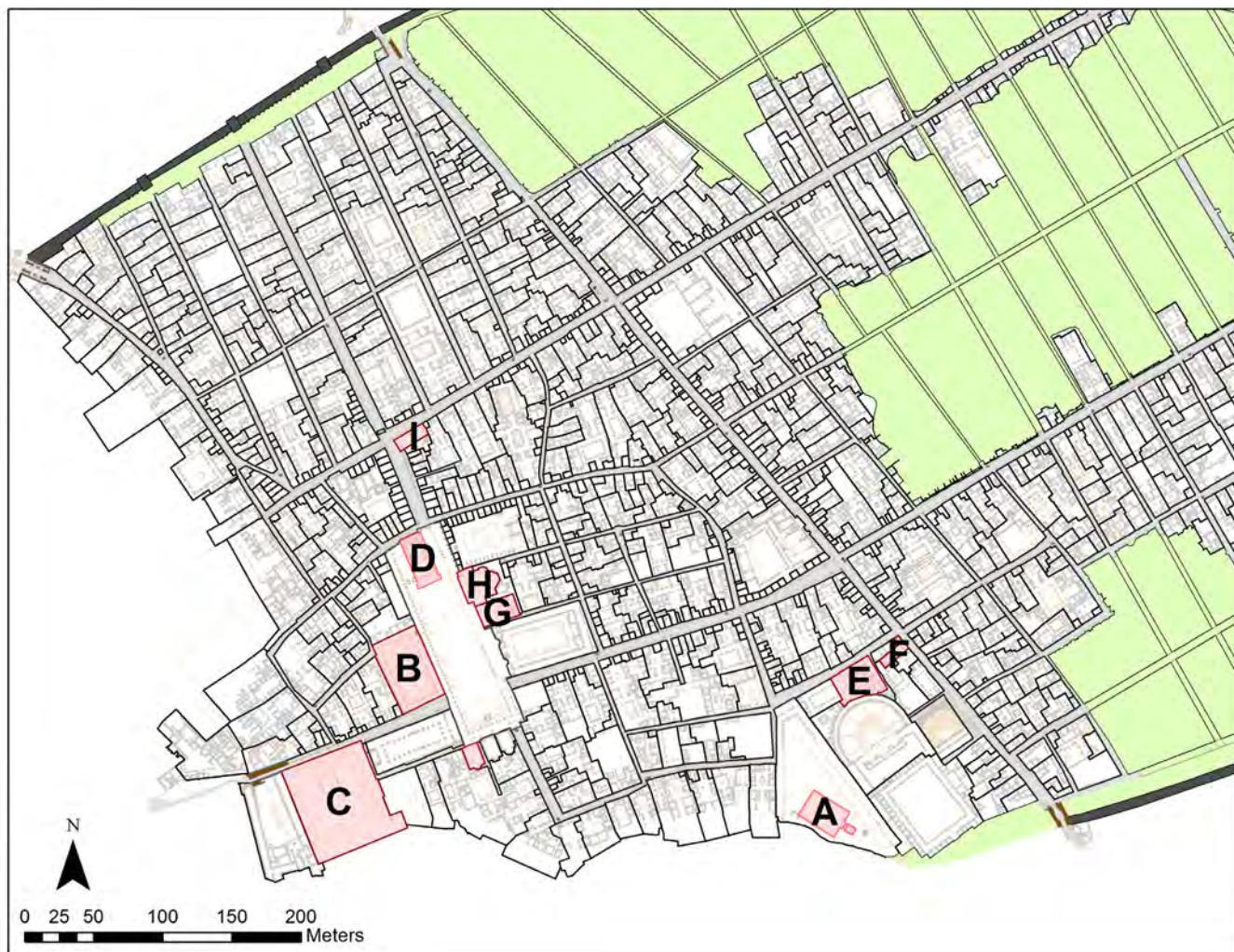


Figure 7.3: Map of sanctuary locations within Pompeii with locations marked: Sanctuary of Minerva (A); Temple of Apollo (B); Temple of Venus (C); Temple of Jupiter (D); Temple of Isis (E); Sanctuary of Asclepius (F); Sanctuary of Augustus (G); Imperial Cult Building (H); Temple of Fortuna Augusta (I). (Map by Eric Poehler and Ivo van der Graaff)

to assume that the main public cults would have had large-scale festivals associated with them. Indeed, this assumption is born out by evidence at Pompeii for *ludi* and processions for Venus, Minerva, Apollo, Jupiter, Isis, and possibly Cybele. The following section discusses the main cults found in the city and delineates their principle celebrations, but excludes Cybele both because her shrine remains unidentified and because her primary depiction, the fresco at the Shop of the Four Divinities (IX.7.1), shows a statue of Cybele resting on a *ferculum* surrounded by an entourage, suggesting a procession about to begin or having just ended rather than in motion (cf. Fig. 5.5 in Mungari & Wyslucha's essay in this issue).

Athena/Minerva and Hercules

The locus of the sanctuary of Athena/Minerva and Hercules is amongst the oldest in the city. It lies perched at the southern end of the Triangular Forum, on the edge of the rocky spur that defines the city's southern edge, overlooking the sea (Fig. 7.3, A). Pompeians built the first temple in the sixth century BCE, laying out a peripteral edifice in the Doric order largely inspired by Greek prototypes. The building was subsequently overhauled and redecorated multiple times between the fifth and second centuries BCE (D'Alessio, 2009, pp.22–32). The temple hosted a hybrid cult that included both Minerva and Hercules in a pan-regional cult that found similar sanctuaries on the coast of the Sorrento peninsula and even as far away as Paestum (van der Graaff & Ellis, 2017, pp.292–9; van der Graaff, 2018, pp.213–18).

According to the Roman calendar that was presumably in use at Pompeii in the first century CE, the principal festival for Minerva was the *Quinquatria* which occurred for five days between 19 and 23 March to celebrate the construction of her temple on the Aventine in Rome. The exact features of this festival are obscure, though it seems that school children had five days off. The last four days featured gladiatorial contests. Another festival, the *Quinquatus Minusculae*, featured a procession of flute players (Scullard, 1981, pp.91–2, 153, 186). Other minor festivals occurred on 19 June, marking the restoration of her temple on the Aventine, and 13 September in conjunction with Jupiter and Juno. Hercules, as one of the oldest foreign cults in Rome, had a celebration in his honour on 12 August that included a public banquet (Scullard, 1981, p.171).

Apollo

The sanctuary dedicated to Apollo located on the western side of the Forum is another of the earliest cult sites at Pompeii (Fig. 7.3, B). Unlike the Greek style adopted for the Temple of Minerva, the Temple of Apollo had a distinct Italic character with a typical high podium and frontal axial design. The recovery of bucchero pottery in votive pits associated with the sanctuary suggest an Etruscan origin to the cult that must have formed in the area during the sixth century BCE. Pompeians built a new temple in the third century BCE with further refinements including construction of a portico that regulated access from the Forum in the second century BCE (De Caro, 1986, pp.8–13, D'Alessio, 2009, pp.8–20; disputed by Carroll & Godden, 2000, p.753). In its final form, the precinct featured a principal access point from the Via Marina to the south, a street that connected the Forum to other principal public buildings in the area such as the temple of Venus and the Basilica. At the time of the eruption, the pavement of the Via Marina featured marble inserts, suggesting its importance in the religious and administrative landscape of Pompeii.

The *Ludi Apollinares* feature as the principal festival dedicated to Apollo which took place for eight days between 6 and 13 June. The games were among the most popular in Rome, featuring two days of chariot races and six days of theatrical performances. The festival does not seem to have included gladiatorial contests except for *venatio* games (animal hunts), presumably held in conjunction with the chariot races (Scullard, 1981, p.160). Another sacred day for Apollo occurred on 23 September in conjunction with the dedication of his temple in Rome.

Venus

The shrine dedicated to Venus is another landmark in the urban layout of Pompeii, standing on the southwestern corner of the city, overlooking the port on the estuary of the river Sarno from a cliff some thirty metres high (Fig. 7.3, C). Cult traces stretch back to the Samnite period (fifth to early first century BCE) when Pompeians identified her with the goddess Mefitis Fysica, who had strong indigenous associations. The foundation of Pompeii as a colony under Sulla (c.80 BCE) marks her metamorphosis into Venus, when a new sanctuary, later expanded by Augustus and again in the post-earthquake period, would take up a large portion of Pompeian real estate (D'Alessio, 2009, pp.39–41;

see Carroll, 2010, p. 74; as well as Battiloro & Mogetta, 2018, pp.1–6, who dispute this chronology).

The main Roman festival dedicated to Venus was the *Veneralia* which occurred on 1 April. Ovid describes how the festival included the ritual washing of her cult statue and its ornamentation with myrtle garlands. The festival also included the men's baths, where women would wash and purify themselves (Ovid *Fasti* 4, 155). In Rome, Venus found further associations with the *Ludi Victoriae Caesaris*, from 20 to 30 July, which were initiated by Julius Caesar after a vow made at the battle of Pharsalus. Venus in her guise as *Victrix* associated with her temple at the Theatre of Pompey had a festival on 12 August. She also featured prominently at the *Vinalia* on 23 April and 19 August. The completion of the temple of *Venus Genetrix* gave the goddess a festival day on 26 September. However, there is no suggestion of an elaborate procession involving Venus associated with these festivals (Scullard, 1981, pp.96–7, 106, 167, 177).

Jupiter

The Temple of Jupiter located at the northern end of the Forum housed a key public cult in the city (Fig. 7.3, D). According to Filippo Coarelli and Fabrizio Pesando, the cult of Jupiter was introduced to Pompeii in the sixth century BCE, as evidenced by a Tuscan column embedded into a later wall of the House of the Etruscan Column (VI.5.17) (2011). This cult would find its final home in the Temple of Jupiter in the Forum, built in the late second century BCE and remodelled with the arrival of the colonists (D'Alessio, 2009, pp.44–55; Richardson, 1988, pp.138–45). We have no direct evidence for any processions related to Jupiter, but a road named *Via Iuviai* (Jupiter's street) known from the inscription recovered at the Stabian gate suggests that it may have played a role in a related procession. It is likely that the space of the Forum would have acted as the background for any processions associated with the cult.

The *Ludi Romani* dedicated to Jupiter occurred between 5 and 19 September. The celebrations were among the most elaborate in Rome featuring a long procession between the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus on the Capitoline Hill and the Circus Maximus. The procession is too long to describe in detail here, but it featured youths on horseback, charioteers, and multiple cult statues of divinities carried on *fercula*. The games included both *Ludi Circensis* (chariot races and gladiatorial games) as well

as *Ludi Scaenici* (theatre performances) (Scullard, 1981, pp.183–5). The *Ludi Capitolini* (Capitoline games) in honour of Jupiter began on 14 October and lasted for sixteen days, but their staging seems somewhat inconsistent. Another festival day in honour of Jupiter was set on 13 November during the *Ludi Plebei*.

Isis

The Temple of Isis stands in the theatre district, not far from the sanctuary of Minerva (Fig. 7.3, E). The Egyptian cult arrived at Pompeii around 100 BCE, presumably finding a location for rituals at the current site. Its final architectural form is the result of post-earthquake reconstruction (D'Alessio, 2009, pp.72–78; Richardson, 1988, p.282, n.17). The location of the shrine adjacent to the theatre has occasioned the theory that it was part of a major temple-theatre complex like those dedicated to Fortuna at Praeneste and Hercules at Tibur (Gasparini, 2013, p.194). Although direct evidence that the shrine played an analogous role in the religious landscape in Pompeii is missing, the temple was undoubtedly in an important position, located just east of the Triangular Forum where spectators approaching the theatre district from the northwest would have seen it, even if in passing.

The cult of Isis was a mystery religion and not a public cult, meaning that we know relatively little about the festivals associated with the goddess because many rites were known only to the initiates. Romans were at best ambivalent toward Isis, with her cult outlawed in the late Republic and early Empire. Her principal festivals were the *Navigum Isidis* held on 5 March, the *Lychnapsia* held on 12 August, and the *Inventio Osiridis* celebrated between 28 October and 3 November. The *Navigum Isidis* relates to Isis as protectress of navigation. The festival marked the beginning of the sailing season and it involved carrying a model ship loaded with offerings from her temple to the sea where it was then set to the waves. The *Lychnapsia* was a celebration held on the birthday of Isis where worshippers would turn on lights at night to mark the five epagomenal days of the Egyptian calendar. The details of the festival are obscure, but it seems that celebrations occurred on the fourth day to mark the birthday of Isis. It was adopted in the Roman calendar in the first century BCE. The *Inventio Osiridis* celebrated the death and resurrection of Osiris with apparent festivities also taking place in the streets (Petersen, 2016, p.6; Salem, 1937, pp.165–7).

Asclepius

A sanctuary dedicated to Asclepius lies along the Via Stabiana just to the northeast of the Large Theatre and adjacent to the Temple of Isis (Fig. 7.3, F). The small shrine was composed of an *aedes* located at the back of a rectangular precinct. A large altar was erected in the sanctuary's front room and a public fountain (without basin) stood on the curb, on axis with the altar and *aedes*. The style of its construction – blocks of *opus vittatum* quoining stones in *opus quasi-reticulatum* – has led Stefano De Caro to date in the sanctuary to not earlier than the end of the second century BCE (2007, p.79; D'Alessio, 2009, pp.58–64).

In Rome, Asclepius had a festival on 1 January that celebrated his arrival and the construction of a temple on the Tiber Island. The details of this festival remain obscure perhaps because this was also inauguration day for new consuls and people took less notice of it (Scullard, 1981, pp.55–6). The limited size of the building at Pompeii might suggest that Asclepius was a private rather than a public cult. Nevertheless, its prominent location and public amenities indicate that it was an important feature in the religious landscape.

Imperial cult

A dramatic shift in the religious landscape of Pompeii occurred in the imperial period. The eastern side of the Forum would become the site of imitation and veneration of the imperial family. The Eumachia building, for example, is argued to mirror the form of the Porticus Liviae (Richardson, 1978), while the next two buildings to the north – the sanctuary of Augustus (Fig. 7.3, G) and the so-called Imperial Cult Building (Fig. 7.3, H) – are generally agreed to be dedicated to the emperor's veneration, even if they have resisted secure identification. Even the Macellum features a *sacellum* with statuary of the imperial family (Small, 1996). Undoubtedly, these buildings functioned as the locus for festivals related to imperial birthdays and any associated processions and games that may have taken place, likely also utilising the ample space that the Forum provides.

The imperial cult would also feature prominently in the temple dedicated to Fortuna Augusta commissioned by Marcus Tullius in the Augustan period (Fig. 7.3, I). The structure stands on private land at the busy intersection of the Via della Fortuna and the Via del Foro, putting it on axis with the cult buildings erected on the eastern side of the Forum (CIL X 820;

CIL X 821). Indeed, a brick colonnade, which may have preceded the temple, extends the porticoed space of the Forum up to the temple. Additionally, the wide, paved area of Via del Foro, although somewhat narrowed by the new temple, could easily have accommodated a large congregation attending festivals (Westfall, 2007, p.139, n.11; Van Andringa, 2015, pp.110–112). Presumably this was also the locus for the departure or arrival of processions dedicated to the emperor Augustus in a route that probably included the nearby Forum. Any festival connected to the imperial cult must have occurred on days important to the ruler in power. The birthday of the emperor was generally considered a public holiday. The extent of any associated celebrations remains unclear, but it seems safe to assume that processions took place in his honour.

Processions

Although there is ample evidence for cult activity, there is almost no evidence for the particular routes that religious processions took across Pompeii. In fact, despite knowing the potential origin and/or destination of many hypothetical processions, we lack any source that tells us how a religious group traversed the city between these points on the map. On the other hand, the evidence we do have – a funerary inscription, a fresco, a marble relief, and an evolving architectural landscape – does permit us to speculate with some confidence and circumscribe some possible paths for processions. Like the marble relief and painted fresco that introduced this essay, the following discussions both offer opportunities to consider the specific, if incomplete, evidence for three religious processions at Pompeii and stand in for those many processions for which there is no evidence at all.

Festival of Apollo

The first procession we can locate is a series of parades held in honour of Apollo and commemorated on the funerary inscription of Aulus Clodius Flaccus, who held his political offices in the final decade of the first century BCE (Castrén, 1975, p.155; Franklin, 2001, p.45; see also Mugnari & Wyslucha in this issue). According to his funerary epitaph, Flaccus celebrated the *Ludi Apollinares* twice in association with his election to *duumvir* (CIL X 1074d (ILS 5053 (4)):

A CLODIVS A F
 MEN FLACCVS II VIR I D TER
 QVINQ
 TRIB MIL A POPVLO
 PRIMO DVOMVIRATV APOLLINARIB IN FORO POMPAM
 TAVROS TAVRO_CNTAS SVCCVRSORES PONTARIOS
 PARIA III PVGILES CATERVARIOS ET PYCTAS LVDOS
 OMNIBVS ACRVAMATIS PANTOMIMISQ OMNIBVS ET PYLADE ET
 HS n ((I)) IN PVBLICVM PRO DVOMVIRATV.
 SECVndo DVOMVIRATV QUINQ APOLLINARIBVS IN FORO
 POMPAM TAVROS SVCCVRSORES PVGILES
 CATERVARIOS POSTERO DIE SOLVS IN SPECTACVLIS ATLETAS
 PAR XXX GLAD PAR V ET GLADIAT PAR XXXV ET
 VENATION TAVROS TAVRO_CNTAS APROS VRSOS
 C_ETERA VENATIONE VARIA CVM COLLEGA.
 TERTIO DVOMVIRATV LVDOS FACTIONE PRIMA
 ADIECTIS ACRVAMATIS CVM COLLEGA

Aulus Clodius Flaccus, son of Aulus, Tribe Menenia, Duovir three times (once as Quinquennial), Military Tribune elected by the People. In his first term, at the Apollo Games (first half of July) in the Forum (he presented) a Procession, bullfights, bullbaiting, boxers and games with all the usual appurtenances and pantomimes and Pylades, and (spent) 10,000 HS on the public for his duumvirate. In his second (Quinquennial) term, at the Apollo Games in the Forum he presented a procession, bullfights,boxers ; on the next day he alone put on at the spectacles 30 pairs of athletes, 5 pairs of gladiators, and with his colleague he presented 25 pairs of gladiators and the animal hunts, bullfighting, bull-baiting, wild boars, bears and other animals in various hunts. In his third term along with his colleague he presented games with the appropriate accompaniments? in the first round?

(Adams, 2010)

The *ludi* would almost certainly have taken place during the official festivities dedicated to Apollo on the Roman calendar and we should imagine that Flaccus organised the processions to be highly visible events. They must have included all of the actors, athletes, animals, and, in its second iteration, gladiators that participated in the subsequent athletic and theatrical events (Sabbatini Tumolesi, 1980, pp.18–21).

Although the inscription does not reveal the route, there are some architectural clues to follow including the Forum as a specific location where a procession occurred (Fig. 7.4, blue line). For example, because the Temple of Apollo is a likely destination for the procession, its position at the south end of the Forum should suggest that the procession's origin was somewhere to the north, allowing the length of the

Forum to be used as a parade route. Certainly, the wide surface of the Via del Foro (Fig. 7.4, A) arriving at the Forum from the north would have provided an ample staging ground, if not a route of its own, supporting Carroll William Westfall's supposition that processions occurred on this street. Conversely, the Temple of Fortuna Augusta (Fig. 7.4, B) was not yet completed, or perhaps even started, when Flaccus first held his celebrations, the date of which we can estimate to have been in the last decade(s) of the first century _{BCE} based on this third duumvirate having been in 2/I _{BCE} (Franklin, 2001, pp.23–5, 45); Ball & Dobbins, 2017, pp.487–93).

This final point reminds us that the architectural arrangement of the Forum at this time would have afforded different opportunities than we see in the plan of 79 _{CE}. The most recent research from the Pompeii

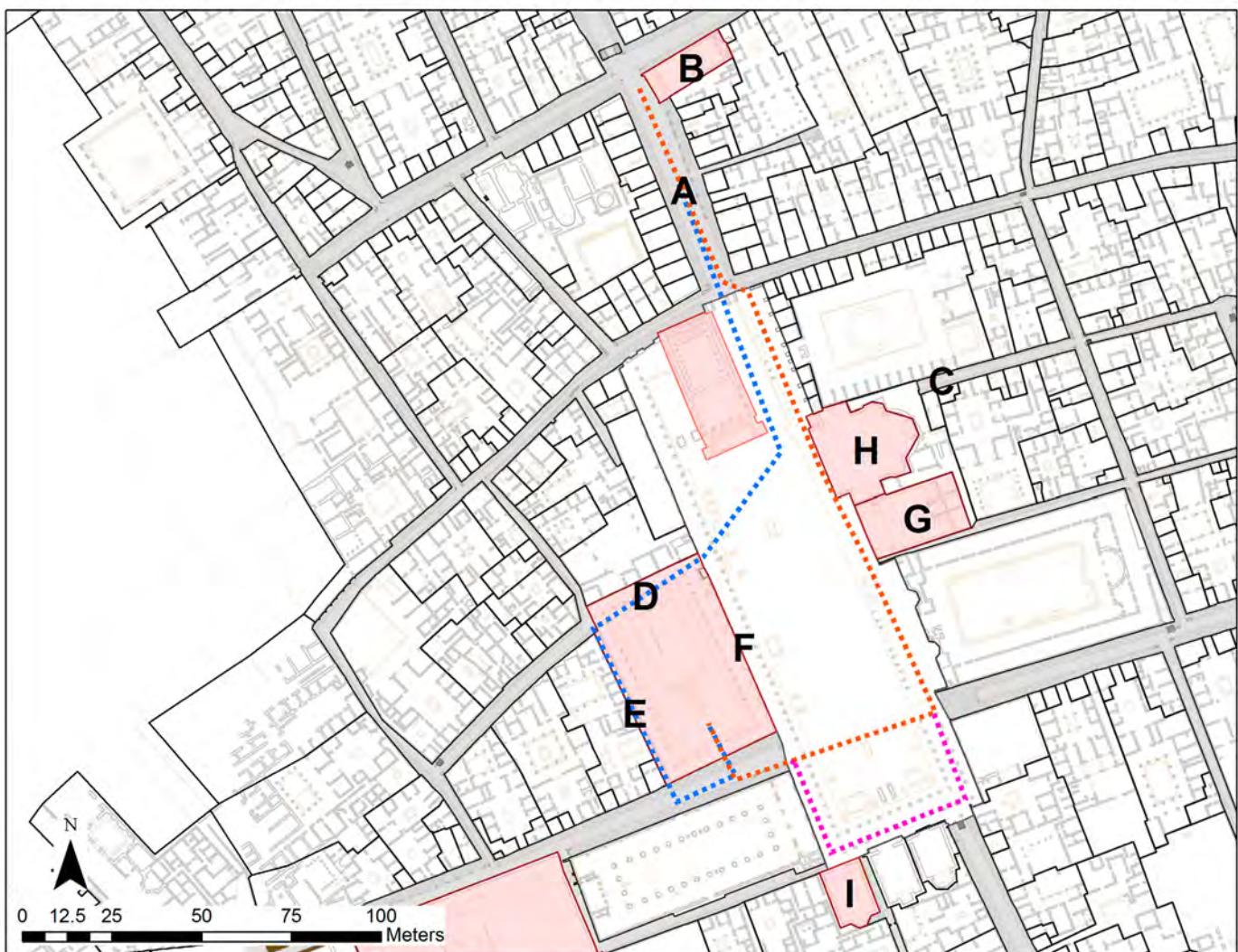


Figure 7.4: Possible routes of the Ludi Apollinares procession. The blue line shows a possible early route before the expansion of the Temple of Apollo. The red line, and its pink extension, mark possible routes after the expansion of the Temple of Apollo and the construction of the Sanctuary to Augustus (G), the Imperial Cult Building (H), and the possible Augsteum (I). Architectural landmarks are marked: Via del Foro (A), Temple of Fortuna Augusta (B), Vico del Balcone Pensile (C), closed portion of the Vico del Gallo (D), street closed by the extension of the temple of Apollo (E), openings between the Temple of Apollo and the Forum (F), Sanctuary to Augustus (G), Imperial Cult Building (H), and Augsteum (I) (Map by Eric Poehler and Ivo van der Graaff)

Forum Project describes the changes to the Forum in the imperial period, which includes the occlusion of several streets by new buildings on three sides of the Forum. For example, when Flaccus staged his first procession, at least one of the streets on the east side of the Forum, Vico del Balcone pensile (Fig. 7.4, C), was still connected to the Forum, offering another point from which a procession (or parts thereof) might have entered. The final occlusion of Vico del Gallo at the Forum seems to have occurred after the 63 CE earthquake, though the street was narrowed significantly already in the Augustan era by the sanctuary of Augustus (Fig. 7.4, G) and the Eumachia Building, which seems to have been closed only after the earthquake of 63 CE (Dobbins, 1994, pp. 661–8). Across the Forum, Larry F. Ball and John J. Dobbins

hypothesised another street once met the space from the west (Ball and Dobbins, 2013, p.477; 2017, pp.470–72, 476–78), extending the Vico del Gallo (Fig. 7.4, D). The subsequent expansion of the Apollo sanctuary to the north and west at c.10 BCE came at the expense of this street to the north of the sanctuary, as well as another street along its western side (Fig. 7.4, E), the southern extension of Vico Storto Nuovo. The prior existence of these streets offered the possibility for Flaccus' first parade to partially circumambulate the sanctuary before entering from the southern entrance on Via Marina (Dobbins et al., 1998).

Although only a hypothetical route, its existence was surely foreclosed by the expansion of the Apollo sanctuary. But, when Pompeian architects close a door, they open a window: the sanctuary's new eastern

wall was rebuilt in the Augustan era as a series of widening piers that would have permitted a large number of spectators in the Forum to see into the sanctuary without having to crowd the space itself (Fig. 7.4, F) (Ball & Dobbins, 2013, p.477; 2017, pp.470–2, 476–8). Later celebrations of the *Ludi Apollinares*, if they continued to feature processions through the Forum (Fig. 7.4, red line), would have had new opportunities to structure their route based on new developments in and around the area. For example, after its construction c.3 CE (Franklin, 2001, p.28), the Temple of Fortuna Augusta (Fig. 7.4, B) marked an appropriate starting point for processions during the late Augustan age (and later), solidifying the origin point suggested earlier. Moreover, the addition of the sanctuary of Augustus (Fig. 7.4, G) and, two generations later, the Imperial Cult Building (Fig. 7.4, H), might have drawn any procession down the eastern colonnade. From here,

the procession would turn west across the Forum, or possibly continue around the southern colonnade (Fig. 7.4, pink line), if Lawrence Richardson, Jr, (1988, pp.269–73) is correct in identifying one of the buildings along the Forum's southern end as an Augsteum (Fig. 7.4, I). By either route, the procession would next meet Via Marina's broad, decorative pavement, likely resurfaced as part of the Venus temple's renovation, and the door to the Apollo sanctuary.

Venus, Hercules, and Isis

Another glimpse of religious processions at Pompeii comes from a fresco within a large triclinium facing the peristyle in the House of the Wedding of Hercules (VII.9.47). The upper register of this Fourth Style fresco shows the arrival of a procession led by the goddess Isis at the Temple of Venus and the departure of a procession for Hercules on the occasion of his

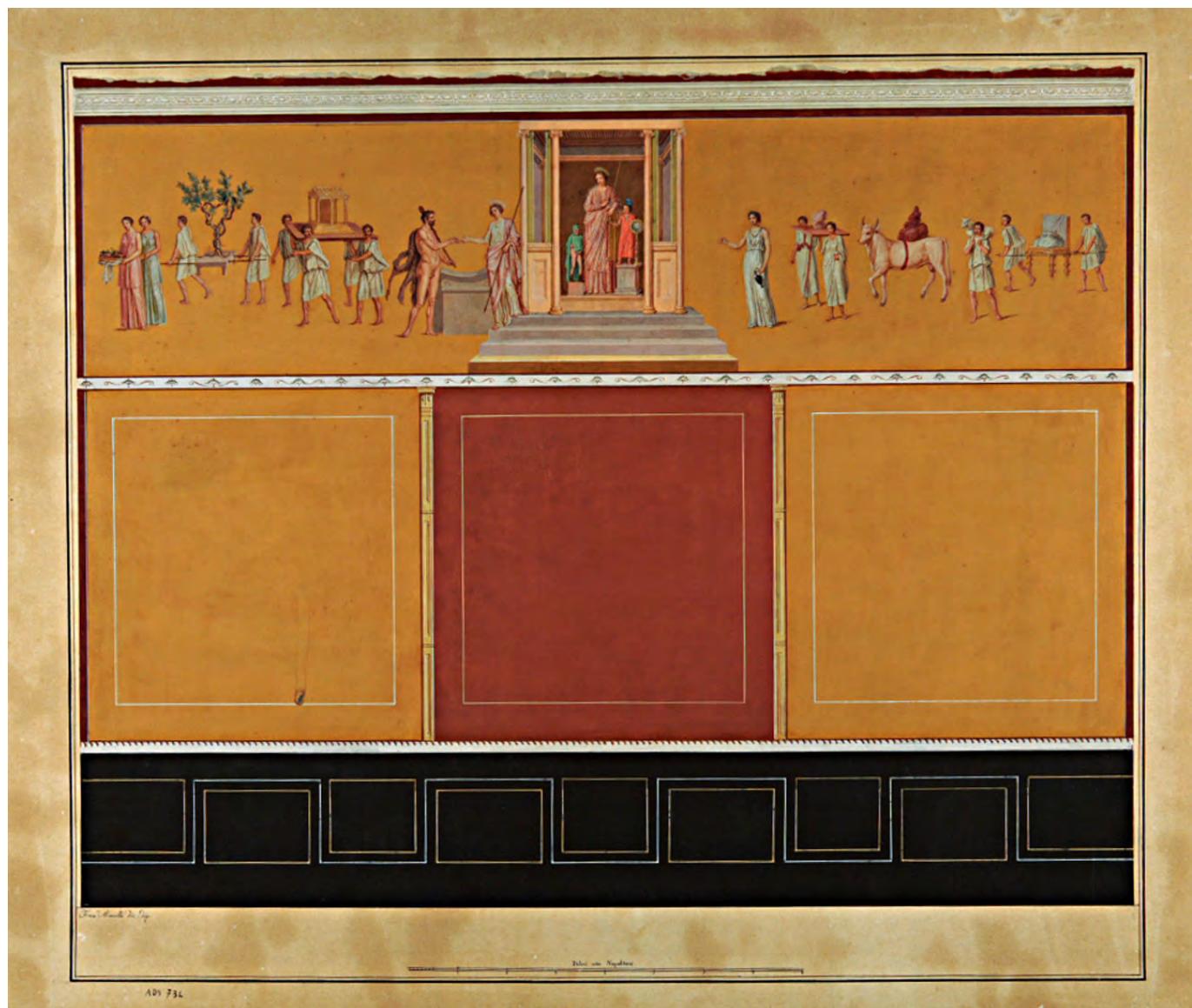


Figure 7.5: Francesco Morelli, Fresco of the Wedding of Hercules procession from House VII.9.47 (Parete IV Stile), mid-19th century, tempera drawing, 56.5cm x 67.3cm. (Source: Archivio dei Disegni della Soprintendenza Archeologica di Napoli 734. Retrieved from Culturalitalia on 03/12/2020 under Creative Commons Licence oai:oaicat.iccd.org:@ICCD3725544@)

Wedding to Hebe (Fig. 7.5). Venus is identifiable within the *aedes* by her disposition and attendants (Eros and Priapus), while Hercules and Isis are identified by the attributes they carry with them, a club and sistrum, respectively. Elements borne by their entourages also implicate these deities (Marcattili, 2002, pp.320–2; 2006, pp.56–8). Accordingly, these processions can be identified as the festival of *Hercules Invictus* and *Venus Victrix* as well as the *Lychnapsia*, a nighttime celebration of Isis' birth, both of which occurred on the 12 August (Marcattili, 2002, pp.320–1). Gasparini connects these events to similar celebrations in Rome, which further commemorated the dedication of Pompey's theatre and the rededication of Hercules' temple in the Forum Boarium (Gasparini, 2013, p.191).

With a temple attested at Pompeii to each of the deities, it seems possible to identify not only the points of origin and destination for these processions, but also their sequence in time (Fig. 7.6). Thus, the procession of Hercules (Fig. 7.6, blue line) would likely begin at the so-called Doric Temple in the Triangular Forum (Fig. 7.6, A) during the day, while the procession of Isis (Fig. 7.6, red line) would start from her temple (Fig. 7.6, B), only 150 metres walking distance to the northeast, later that night as part of the ritual associated with the *Lychnapsia* (a festival of lamps). Once reaching the entrance to the Triangular Forum, both processions would have taken the same route to the Venus temple: north along the wide Via dei Teatri, then west along Via dell'Abbondanza (Fig. 7.6, C), finally crossing the Forum onto Via Marina (Fig. 7.6, D) to enter the sanctuary of Venus (Fig. 7.6, E). Along this route in 79 CE, the processions would have encountered surfaces of increasing quality, from the rough and worn pavement of Via dei Teatri to the smooth paving stones on Via dell'Abbondanza, to the new travertine slabs in the Forum, and finally to the fresh, marble flecked surface of Via Marina ending at the sanctuary of Venus. Indeed, the western section of Via dell'Abbondanza was identified by Andrew Wallace-Hadrill as a processional route by the quality of its road surfaces and supposed moral character of its architectures, which not only included a monumental gateway and fine tufa facades, but also lacked bars, brothels, and noxious industries (1995, pp.46–51; 2008, p.281). Although the chronological (e.g. recent repaving) and economic (e.g. real estate values) factors likely had a greater impact on the character of this street than deliberate efforts at moral zoning, few streets could better serve the needs of religious processions than western Via dell'Abbondanza (Poehler & Crowther, 2018, pp.590–4; Ellis, 2018, pp.95–8).

Whatever the moral status of this route, in 79 CE the Temple of Venus was undergoing substantial renovations

following the earthquake(s) of 63 CE, and any processions at this time would have entered a builder's yard (Carroll, 2010, pp.90–2) rather than a place of veneration. Indeed, the cult statue was never found in the excavations. Where, then, did the processions find Venus in the final years of the city, if not at her temple by the Marina Gate? The answer may lie in the statuary recovered from the sanctuary of Aesclepius (Fig. 7.6, F). The main sculptures, a bearded male figure and a draped female one, have been conventionally identified as Asclepius and Hygeia since their examination by Johann Joachim Winckelmann in the eighteenth century (D'Alessio, 2009, pp.65–7). Stylistically, however, these statues are notably asynchronous, with the male figure dating to the third century BCE and the female to the Sullan era. In addition, it is often overlooked that these were not the only statues recovered from the sanctuary: Fiorelli recorded finding a small bust of a child wearing a bulla (Fiorelli 1860 I, I, p. 195), and Bonucci reports that a statue of Priapus stood between the figures identified as Asclepius and Hygeia (Bonucci 1825, p. 37). For De Caro (2007, pp.78–9) this incongruence suggests that the statues representing Jupiter, Juno, and Athena were moved here after the earthquake, the former two presumably from the Capitolium and the latter from the Triangular Forum. Careful scrutiny of the statuary by Francesco Marcattili may suggest another answer, though not exactly the one he arrived at. For Marcattili, the smaller sculptures suggest a reinterpretation of the female figure, which together demonstrate the presence of Venus and her attendants at the Asclepius temple on the Via Stabiana. He goes on to argue that the *aedes* was a second shrine to Venus where Sullan colonists fused the cult with an earlier shrine to Magna Mater. The *aedes* in the fresco in the House of the Wedding of Hercules is also critical to his argument because the Temple of Venus and the Temple of Asclepius have a nearly identical footprint, despite their difference in size (Marcattili, 2002, p.328; 2006, p.58). While it is impossible to ignore the evidence of additional statuary, it is equally difficult to overlook the coincidence that the female figure's Sullan date is equivalent to the colonial reconstruction of her temple near the Forum. That coincidence therefore suggests that the Venus statue was produced in order to stand in her temple by the Forum. One also cannot ignore the presence of the statue of Asclepius, which is equally out of place if this were Venus' temple alone. Therefore, it seems best to suggest that Venus and her attendants were moved to the Asclepius temple for safekeeping during her temple's renovation prior to 79 CE.

Although either temple matches the depiction in the House of the Wedding of Hercules' fresco, if our theory about the temporary movement of Venus to the Temple of Asclepius on the Via Stabiana were correct, then the subsequent processions of Hercules and Isis after the earthquake of 63 CE would have been significantly truncated. Instead of a parade more than 500m in length along grand streets and across the Forum, these annual processions would have been reduced by more than half in distance along a single wide street, arriving at a sanctuary that could allow only a fraction of the spectators possible at the Venus temple, even when overflowing into the street beyond.

Minerva and Hercules

The Asclepius temple has acted as a cornerstone in a series of earlier debates about a procession involving Hercules and his shared cult space with Minerva. The reconstruction of this procession relies on an

inscription and various authors who, writing in late antiquity, describe how Pompeii received its name from the triumph (*pompé* in Greek) which Hercules celebrated as he led Geryon's cattle to Eurystheus from Spain (Servius ad Aen. 7.662; Solin. 2.3; Mart. Cap. 7.642; Isid. Etym. 15.1.51). During the trek, Hercules chose to rest the cattle at the site that worshippers would later mark with the Temple to Hercules and Minerva built in the Triangular Forum. To honour these deities, the Pompeians held a yearly procession that presumably proceeded to the temple at the Triangular Forum (Fig. 7.7, A). In 1851, the so-called Road Maker's tablet was recovered inside the Porta Stabia (Fig. 7.7, B) and revived interest in this procession by not only giving a name to the processional route, *Via Pumppaiiana*, but also by making reference to Jupiter Meilichios, who was at that point identified at the Asclepion on Via Stabiana (Fig. 7.7, C).

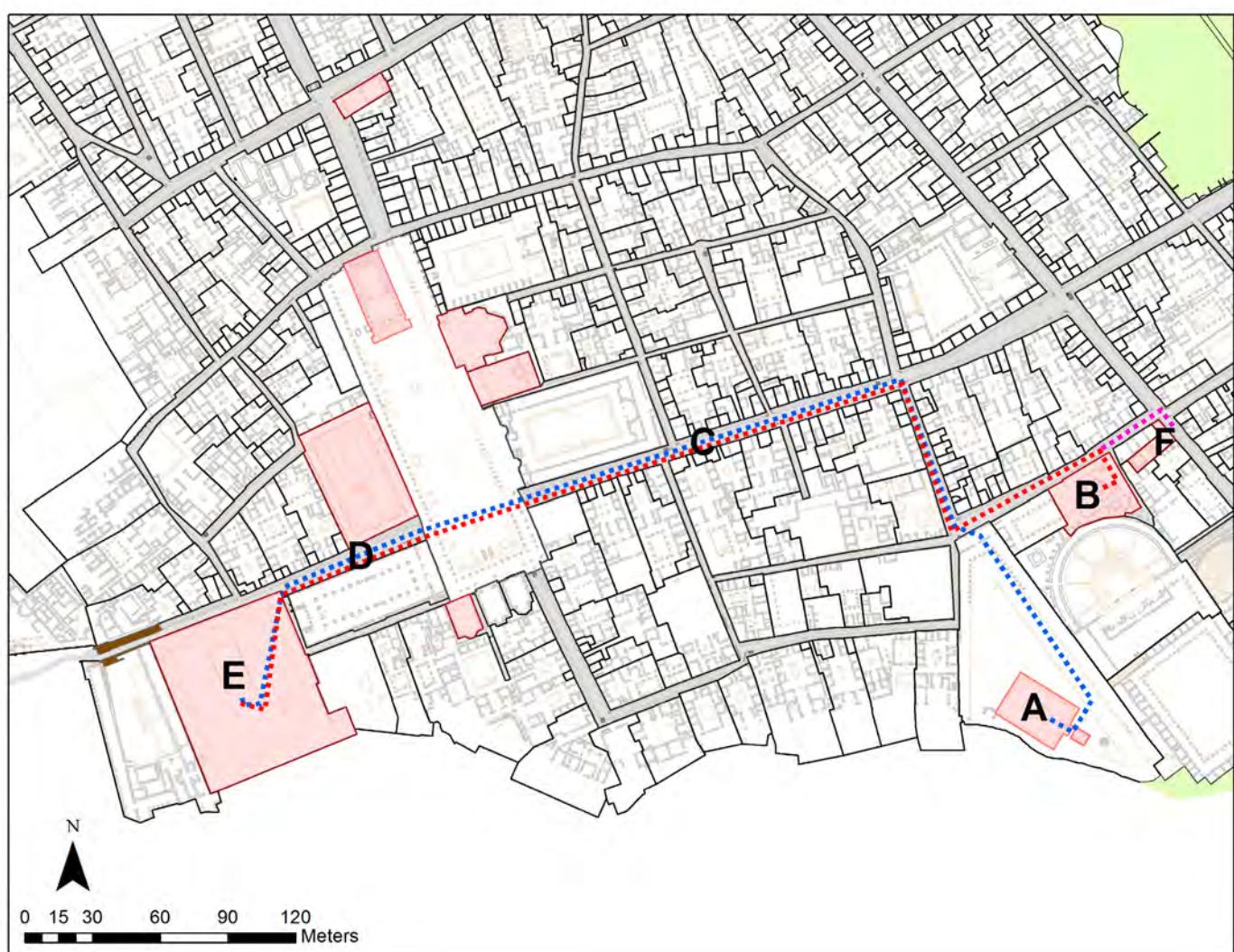


Figure 7.6: Possible routes of the Hercules (blue line) and the Isis (red line) processions. The pink line denotes the possible new route after the earthquake of 63 CE. The architectural landmarks are: Sanctuary of Minerva-Hercules/Triangular Forum (A), Temple of Isis (B), Via dell'Abbondanza (C), Via Marina (D), Sanctuary of Venus (E), and Sanctuary of Asclepius (F). (Map by Eric Poehler and Ivo van der Graaff)

The most recent translation is as follows:

M (?). Suttius, son of M (?), N (?) Pontius, son of M (?) [?], aediles, demarcated this street until the Lower [street] of Stabiae. The street has been demarcated by ten perticae. The same [men] have demarcated the street of Pompeii by three perticae, until the Temple (?) of Jupiter Milichius. These streets and the street of Jupiter and the dekkviarim [-street], they have built [them] on the behalf of the magistrate of Pompeii, imaden. The same aediles have approved.

(Dupraz, 2011, p.103)

Fixing these points in the landscape encouraged Antonio Sogliano (1918, pp.178–80; 1937, pp.170–2), Italo Sgobbo (1942, pp.26–7), and later others (e.g. Onorato, 1951, pp.251–2, D’Alessio, 2009, pp.65–7) to propose a processional route from outside the city gate up to this temple, then turning west toward the temple in the Triangular Forum (Fig. 7.7, blue line).

A counterargument to this route for the procession came from Stefano De Caro who pioneered the argument that the Temple of Jupiter Meilichios is not inside the city but rather an extramural sanctuary located at the Fondo lozzino (De Caro, 1991, pp. 39–41). If this is correct, then one is inclined to make the *Via Pumpaiiana* an external road (see Poehler & van der Graaff, 2022, forthcoming). The extramural location of the sanctuary, however, does not necessarily impact the idea that the *Via Stabiana* is an important street *within* Pompeii, and one that could have been part of a processional route for Minerva in the third century BCE. Recently, Eric Poehler and Benjamin Crowther (2018) have documented the *Via Stabiana*’s history of paving, demonstrating the existence of a stone pavement dating to as late as the first century BCE, slightly further north than the Temple of Asclepius (Fig. 7.7, D). They argue not only that *Via Stabiana* was the *Via Pumpaiiana*, but also that the inscription documents the paving of the entire length of this street, from Porta di Stabia to Porta del Vesuvio (2018, pp.588–90). For the present discussion, it is enough to note that one of the first stone-paved streets in Pompeii, if not the first, demonstrates the elevated status of the route between the Porta Stabia and the street leading to the Temple of Hercules and Minerva.

While these factors present *Via Stabiana* as a route of some importance in the city, the shrine to Minerva inside the Porta Stabia demonstrates the presence of the goddess along this route and supports the idea that a procession between the gate and the temple occurred, but was (or had evolved to be) in celebration of Minerva rather than Hercules. Two niches were carved into the blocks on the eastern side of the corridor that cut through the earthen defensive agger and undoubtedly accommodated a prophylactic cult

dedicated to protecting this dangerous and liminal space. At the time of excavation, the upper of the two niches preserved plaster with a graffito mentioning PATRVA in an apparent reference to Minerva Patrua (CIL IV, 5384; also Fiorelli, 2001, p.29; Calderini, 1924, p.87). Recent excavations indicate that traces of the cult stretch back into the late fourth century BCE, demonstrating these activities were associated with the first construction and each subsequent modification of the gate (van der Graaff and Ellis, 2017, pp.283–92; van der Graaff, 2018, pp.205–13).

The presence of the cult of Minerva at the Porta Stabia suggests that it was the locus or a point of passage for a single or even multiple processions. One such route may have involved a circumambulation of the city in a lustral procession to cleanse the city that left shrines and references to Minerva at the Porta Nola, Vesuvio, and Porta Marina. The Osco-Sabellic Iguvine tablets, dating between the third and first centuries BCE, describe a similar kind of procession at the city of Gubbio, which journeyed to every gate to perform specific animal sacrifices in an effort to purify the city (tablet Ia 1–34 as translated in Poultney, 1959, pp.158–62). A second scenario for this shrine emerges if one considers the theory that the *Via Pumpaiiana* was the performance space for a *pompé* directed toward the Temple of Minerva in the Triangular Forum. The Porta Stabia may have operated as the staging point for this procession in a manner that echoes the role of the Dipylon gate as the gathering and starting point for the Panathenaic procession as it would head to the Athenian Acropolis.

Further evidence that such a procession did exist can be recognised in the decision to fix a direct and monumentalised pathway up to the Temple of Minerva (Fig. 7.7, red line). When the theatre and its quadriporticus were built in the second half of the second century BCE, Pompeians chose to construct a grand stairway (Fig. 7.7, E), approximately 25 metres in length, to negotiate the 9-metre change in elevation between the floor of the quadriporticus and the temple plateau. At nearly 3.5 metres wide, these stairs could easily accommodate five people walking abreast, who,

as they ascended, would have seen the temple's roof and portico slowly and dramatically rise up before them. The scale and performativity of this architecture clearly links the temple to the movement toward it, but there are further clues that suggest processional routes extended beyond the theatre complex. In its original form, the quadriporticus' northern colonnade appears to have taken a more stoa-like form, the roof of which may have continued over the stairs on a series of arches that climbed along with the stairs (Poehler and Ellis, 2012, pp.5–9). At the east end of the colonnade stood an Ionic Propylon (Fig. 7.7, F) that marked the entrance to the theatre district, welcoming those who approached from the Via Stabiana 40 metres to the east. Thus, by the late second century BCE, a monumentalised route was fixed between the Temple of Minerva and the ancient *Via Pumpaiana*. Christopher

Parslow and Paolo Carafa have argued that processions also likely descended these stairs (Fig. 7.7, pink line), turning northward at the quadriporticus' Ionic Propylon along another colonnade toward the entrance to the theatre, within which a variety of activities could be performed before an enormous audience (Fig. 7.7, G) (Parslow, 2007, p.212; Carafa, 2011, p.98).

In Pompeii's final years, this monumental stairway was interrupted by an enfilade of rooms, which significantly reduced the width of the stairs and bifurcated all movement into the quadriporticus or into the theatre's post-scaenae area. Processions were still possible, of course, but the character of the spaces to be traversed would seem to undermine the solemnity of their purpose. Ironically, or perhaps with conscious, archaising intent, the processions to the Minerva temple just prior to 79 CE would have had to return

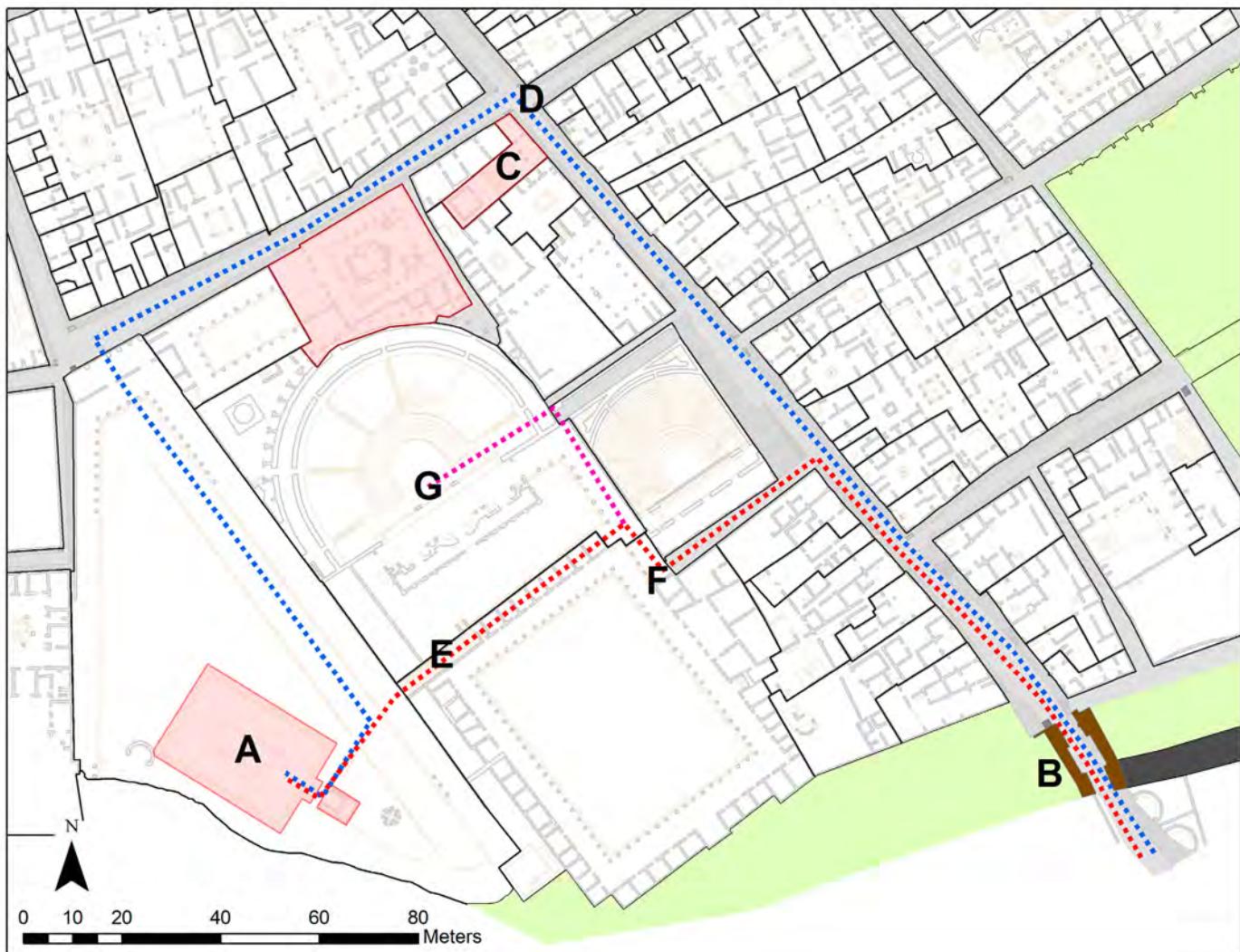


Figure X.7: Possible routes of the Minerva processions. The blue line marks the procession route from the Porta Stabia (B) to the Temple of Minerva-Hercules (A). The red line marks a proposed new route connected to the construction of the Theatre (G) in the second half of the second century BCE. The pink line marks a possible route from the Temple of Minerva-Hercules (A) to the Theatre (G) after its construction. The architectural landmarks are: Temple of Minerva-Hercules (A), Porta Stabia (B), Via Stabiana (C), Temple of Asclepius (D), Grand Stairway (E), Ionic Propylon (F), and Theatre (G). (Plan by Eric Poehler and Ivo van der Graaff)

to the ceremony's original path of the third century BCE, proceeding up the Via Stabiana to the Temple of Asclepius, then travelling west until the entrance to the Triangular Forum.

Conclusion

To be clear, we do not claim these routes to be necessary, to be exclusive, and certainly not exhaustive. The discussion of these three potential processions, however, does begin to put some lines – if dotted lines – on the map of Pompeii's religious topography. Moreover, the examination of these routes in the context of the changing shape, or changing place, of sanctuaries over time provides an opportunity to think through changes in practice those new landscapes might have afforded. Paradoxically, although time changes the physical organisation of processions, the religious calendar might be one of the most fixed elements of their practice. That is, we may not know exactly where a procession was led, but we can be more confident in when that event took place. This information, provided below as a list and Fig. 7.8, not only allows us to see how processions clustered or

spread across the year, but also to consider the festivals of cults known only obliquely at Pompeii:

- January 1, Asclepius.
- March 5, Isis, *Navigium Isidis*.
- March 19–23, Minerva, *Quinquatria*.
- April 1, Venus, *Veneralia*,
- April 23, Venus *Vinalia*.
- June 6–13, Apollo, *Ludi Apollinares*.
- July 20–30, Venus, *Ludi Victoriae Caesaris*.
- August 12, Hercules.
- August 12, Isis, *Lychnapsia*.
- August 12, Venus, *Venus Victrix*
- August 19, Venus, *Vinalia*.
- September 5–19, Jupiter, *Ludi Romani*.
- September 23, Apollo.
- September 26, Venus, *Venus Genitrix*.
- October 14–28, Jupiter, *Ludi Capitolini*.
- October 28–November 3, Isis, *Inventio Osiridis*.
- November 13, Jupiter, *Ludi Capitolini*.

Annual Festival Calendar

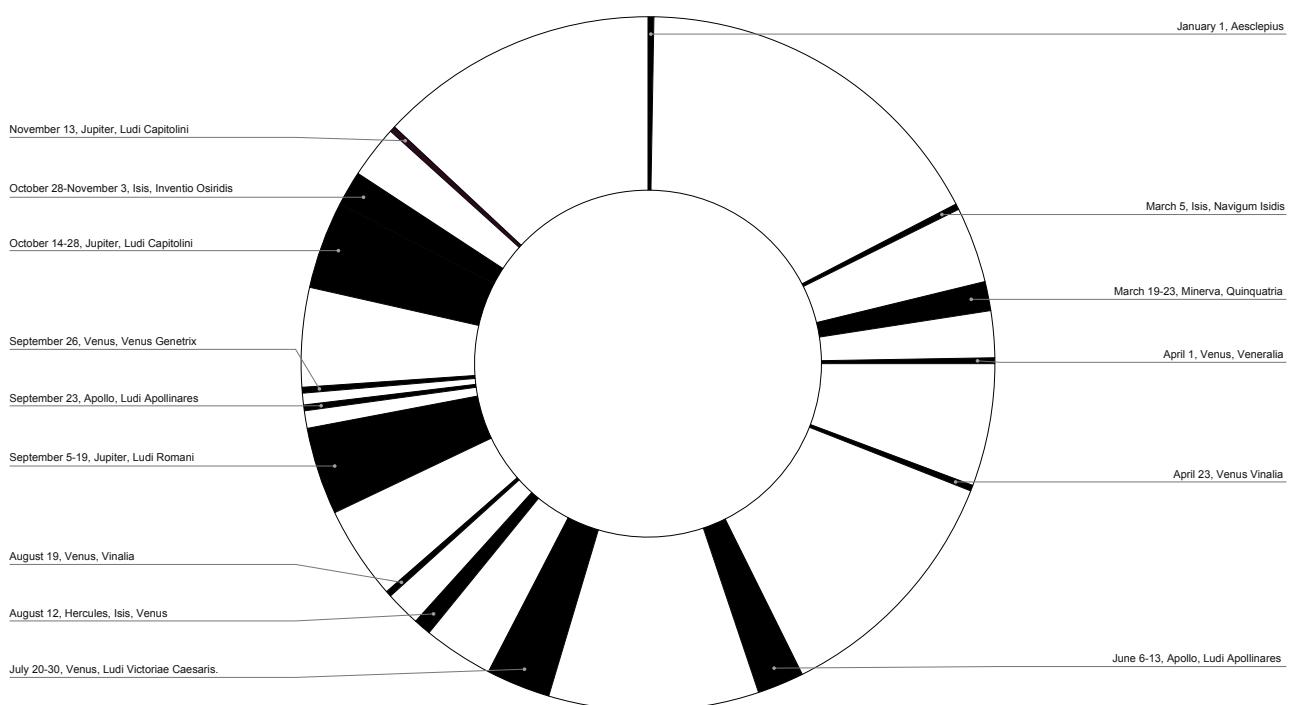


Figure 7.8: Calendar of likely annual religious festivals. (Figure by Eric Poehler)

If these festivals were celebrated at the same time as their Roman counterparts, and certainly at least the *Ludi Apollinares* were, then Pompeii's streets would have been witness to 71 days of religious festivals and any attendant processions, totalling nearly one-fifth of the year. It also allows us to imagine further routes embedded in the layout of the city. A particularly prominent example might be the *Navigium Isidis*. If such a procession did take place, it must have departed from the Temple of Isis to reach the sea either using the Via Stabiana to exit the Stabian gate to the south, or to the west along Via dell'Abbondanza through the Forum and out through the Porta Marina. Similarly, if the *Ludi Romani* occurred at Pompeii in a fashion that mimicked those in Rome, then one can imagine a procession that began at the Temple of Jupiter in the Forum and then headed toward the Amphitheatre in lieu of the Circus Maximus in the capital.

It is the gaps between celebrations, however, that should draw equal attention for these are the periods when other events might seem more likely to have been scheduled. Two *dipinti* recovered on house façades suggest that festivals and parades might have conflicted on the same calendar day. The painted inscriptions announce games financed by Gnaeus Alleius Nigidius Maius in the final decades of the city (Sabbatini Tumolesi, 1980, p.38 n.11, p.40 n.12 CIL IV 7993, n.13 CIL IV 3883; Franklin, 1997). Although it has now faded, inscription CIL IV 7993 was once on the facade of the House of Trebius Valens (III.2.1):

Dedicatione
operis tabularum Cn(aei) Allei Nigidi Mai Pompeis idibus iunis
pompa venatio athletae vela erunt

At the dedication of (Ocella)
of the opus tabularum of Gnaeus Alleius Nigidius Maius, at Pompeii on the 13 June,
there will be a procession, hunt, athletics, and awnings.

(Cooley & Cooley, 2004, p.54)

A few details supply a location and rough year date for the procession: the awnings are presumably those used to shade spectators at the Amphitheatre, whereas the lack of gladiator contests suggest that the celebration occurred after the ban on such games after 59 CE.

More important is the 13 June date, which falls on the last day of the *Ludi Apollinares*. The question then arises if the two events were mutual or exclusionary, and if they would have interfered with each other. The answer is elusive since the identification and translation of the *opus tabularum* to which the games

were dedicated has occasioned various translations including: a display of paintings, the dedication of a new stage at the Theatre, or a restored public archive (Franklin, 1997, p.442). It might be reasonable to connect the first two theories with the *Ludi Apollinares*, given Apollo's patronage of the fine arts. One may thus envision scenarios where parades advertised for both events may have featured a single united procession. On the other hand, the events may have featured two separate processions on the same day. They need not have obstructed each other; if the processions were localised events staged at opposite ends of the city, for example if one were in the Forum (*Ludi Apollinares*) and the other at the Amphitheatre. Similarly, the evidence suggests that multiple processions may have occurred in separate events associated with the same festivities.

At the same time, one can equally imagine the dedicators of the tomb relief that opened this article as well as Maius desired to have the many processions, games, and spectacles they provided neither compete with nor be overshadowed by the movement of the gods across the city. On the other hand, the question arises if other, more spontaneous activities, such as funerals, would have been equally delayed. Moreover, if the day could not be avoided, perhaps a funeral cortege would take a different route than a religious procession or travel across the city at a different hour. If none of these solutions were possible, we are left with a fascinating image of two processions of a varying solemnity passing each other in the space of a Pompeian street. We hope that thought experiments such as these, however speculative they must necessarily be, will provoke further interest in and debate on Pompeii's religious processions and spur the search for evidence and arguments not present in this essay.

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