

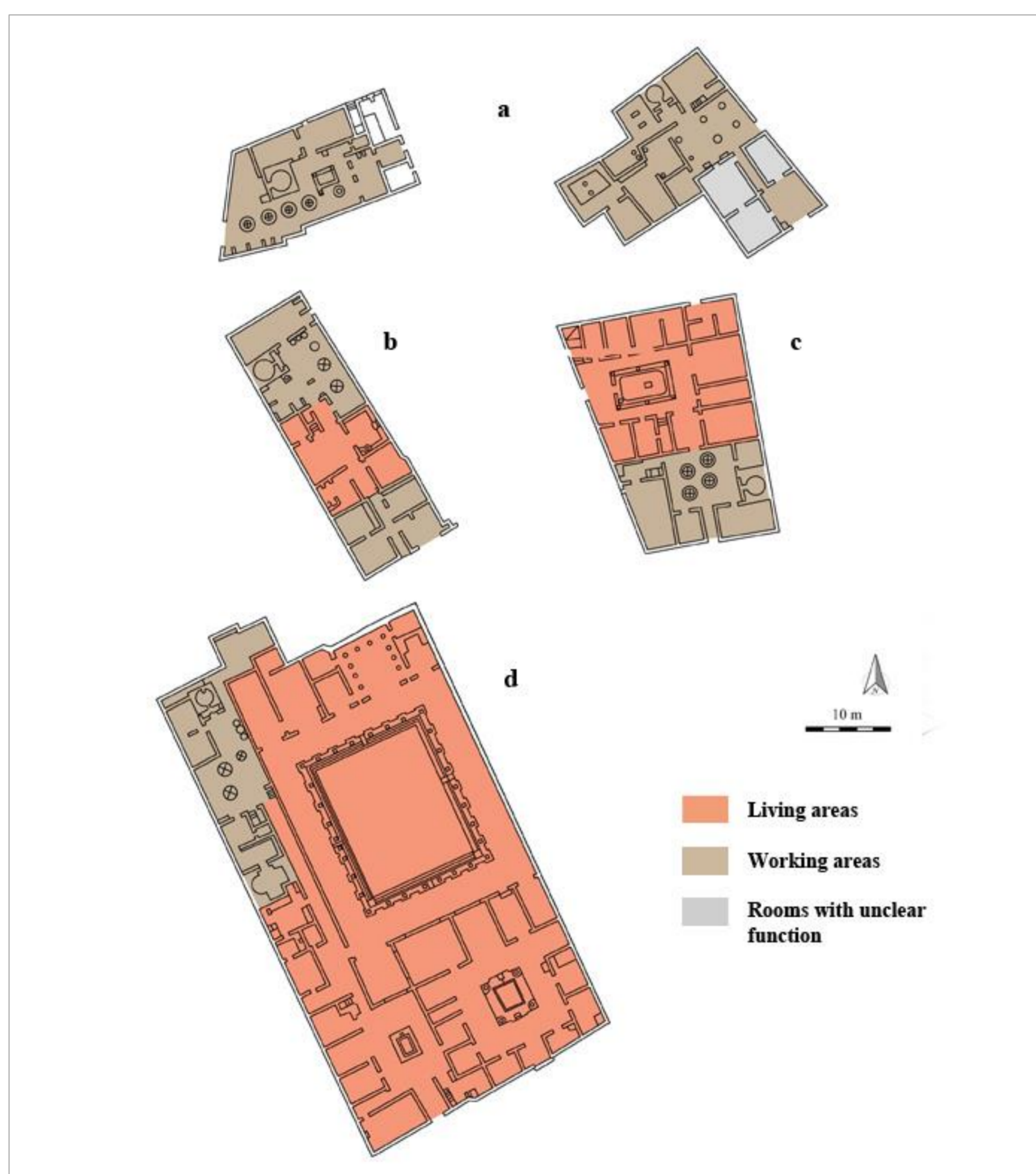
THE HOUSES OF *PISTORES* IN POMPEII

The investigation consisted in analysing the living spaces related to the bakeries of Pompeii, assessing both planimetric and decorative features and the relation between living and working areas; this allowed a social, cultural and economic profile of the pompeian bakers to be traced. The building layouts only partially follow the standard structure of the roman *domus*: the bakeries were often constructed within a pre-existing house, with a consequent rearrangement of the living areas. However some of the architectural and decorative aspects do not look like an accident caused by the workshop construction: a clear planning reveals the baker's desire of social and economic self-representation.

Main research topics

I. Relationship between domestic and working areas:

- Exclusion: the living spaces were never found on the ground floor, while in some cases they were placed on the upper one. Some *pistrina* showed large and painted rooms for an as yet unappreciated use: private *triclinia* or public dining areas?
- Inclusion: the working area contained living spaces.
- Proximity and communication: the house, with independent entrance, was adjacent to the bakery and communicating with it.
- Patrician *domus* with a built-in bakery, probably for domestic bread consumption.



Some examples of the relationship between living and working areas:

- Exclusion: bakeries VII 2, 22 and IX 3, 19-20
- Inclusion: V 4, 1-2
- Proximity and communication: VIII 6, 1.8-11
- Bakery built inside a patrician *domus*: VI 11, 9-10 (House of Labyrinth)

Results

The numerous housing sizes and structures, ranging from small bakeries with an upstairs living space to more complex houses with painted halls, state different social and economic profiles, although it is not always clear if the baker was just the business owner or if the entire building (bakery included) was his property. The main self-representation examples were shown by those cases where working and living areas appeared separated: this layout was often associated with an intensive and profitable business, as demonstrated by the huge number of mills on site. Furthermore, despite the wealthy life style of the owners, some connections with the bakery were always present. This was probably a way to protect and separate the domestic context from the working area. Finally, some of the typical characteristics of the roman housing structure were also recognisable for the bakers' houses, e.g. different functions within the same building, alternating public and private spaces, and the presence of paintings as a sign of social distinction.

The research was carried out in 2012 for a degree thesis in Roman Archaeology at the University of Bologna, under the supervision of Prof. D. Scagliarini and within the Project PRIN 2009 L4WEYY (*Emptor* and *mercator*. Spaces and representations of Roman trade) coordinated by Prof. S. Santoro, University of Chieti-Pescara.

II. Architectural and decorative features as forms of social and economic self-representation.

- Explicit self-representation: VII 2, 3.6-7 (House and bakery of *Terentius Neo*) and VII 3, 30.

These famous frescos show two opposite styles of self-presentation: the appropriation of a patrician attitude in contrast with the house's simplicity and the celebration of work as source of personal success.

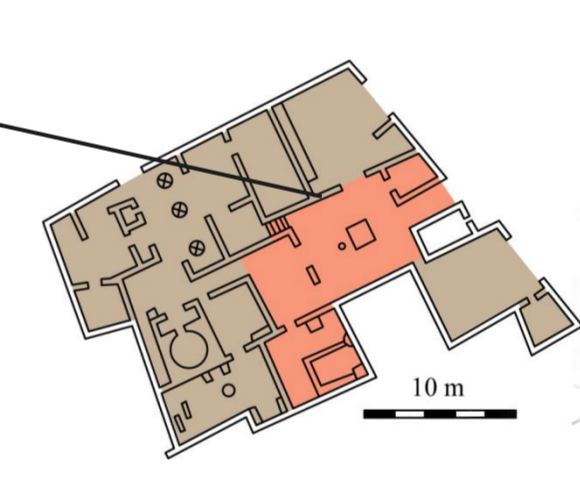


Pompeii, VII 2, 3.6-7. Portrait of *Terentius Neo* and his wife (MANN 9058)



Pompeii, VII 3, 30. Bread selling /*Ilargitio* scene (MANN 9071)

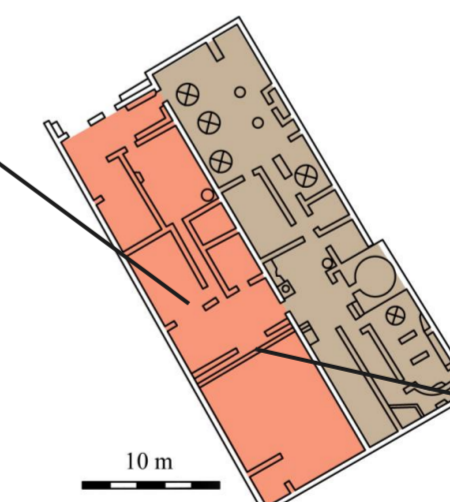
- Existing decoration preservation: VI 14, 28-32 (House of Laocoon). After 62 AD, when the bakery was established, the upper floor and the *atrium* area kept a residential use and, in order to enrich the house, the paintings were preserved.



Pompeii, VI 14, 28-32. *Atrium*, north wall: *Laocoon's death* (MANN 111210)

- Care of the living spaces and decoration: I 12, 1-2 (House and bakery of *Sotericus*); VI 14, 33-34; VIII 6, 1.8-11.

These houses did not exhibit remarkable decorative details but the space organization proves the householder's desire to have available all the typical rooms of an aristocratic *domus*.



Pompeii, I 12, 1-2. *Triclinium* and *peristylum*

