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Two Lesser-Known Mosaic Floors from the 18th-Century Excavations of Villa Arianna at Stabia

The 2010–2013 excavation works at Villa Arianna¹

The Swiss engineer Karl Jacob Weber, subaltern director of the first exploration campaign (1757–1762) that brought to light the complex of Villa Arianna in *Stabiae*, informed his superior Rocque Joaquin de Alcubierre of the discovery of a mosaic floor in the grounds of the then Masseria Girace, in the area between Gragnano and Castellammare, with a brief note dated 10 December 1757: “*se ba descubriendo un pavim. de mosaico blanco con quadretos y rigas negras*” (“a white mosaic floor with squares and black lines is being discovered”) [33, p. 68]. The area within which the fortunate discovery occurred is identified in the Weber plan by the number 34 (number 27 on the current map, Fig. 1). This is a large rectangular space of about 10,50×5,45 m, presumably an *oecus* or winter *triclinium*, which opened directly onto the square peristyle (91) located SE of the *atrium* (24).

The excavation and restoration campaigns conducted at Villa Arianna by the State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg and the Restoring Ancient Stabiae Foundation in the years 2010–2013, specifically in the area of the bath complex and the square peristyle (91), also included room 27 [16, pp. 83–94; 17, pp. 213–214]. At the beginning of the investigation in 2010, room 27 had already been excavated to about $\frac{3}{4}$ of its total extension, with the exception of the SE side, which was still covered by about 2,60 m of vegetal soil and volcanic material. Since this room had repeatedly been excavated and pillaged in the past — first during the 18th-century excavations, and subsequently in the late 1960s as part of a general revival of research in Stabia promoted by Libero d’Orsi² — there is almost nothing left *in situ* of its walls and its decorative apparatus. The few surviving structures in gray tuff blocks of *opus incertum*, still present on the NW, NE and SW sides, were integrated into restored walls in the middle of the 20th cen-

¹ We would like to thank Prof. Dr. Massimo Osanna, Director of Parco Archeologico di Pompei, and Dr. Giovanna Bonifacio, Director of the site of Stabia, for their willingness to grant permission for new research.

² The excavations promoted by Libero d’Orsi on the site of Villa Arianna, in the property of the notary De Martino, began in February 1950 [12, p. 29]. In his notes he makes no explicit reference to the identification of room 27, but merely refers to some news related to the excavation of the surrounding area. Between 7 and 10 July 1950 the *caldarium* was identified and excavated [12, p. 46], while the remaining thermal rooms were partially unearthed from 1 November 1966 [12, p. 367]. The *atrium* of the villa, the vestibule, the two *cubicula* decorated in the Second Style and a small portion of the NW side of the peristyle were brought to light from 27 May 1968 [12, pp. 408–412]. For more information on the history of the excavations and on the layout of Villa Arianna, see [6, pp. 75–84].

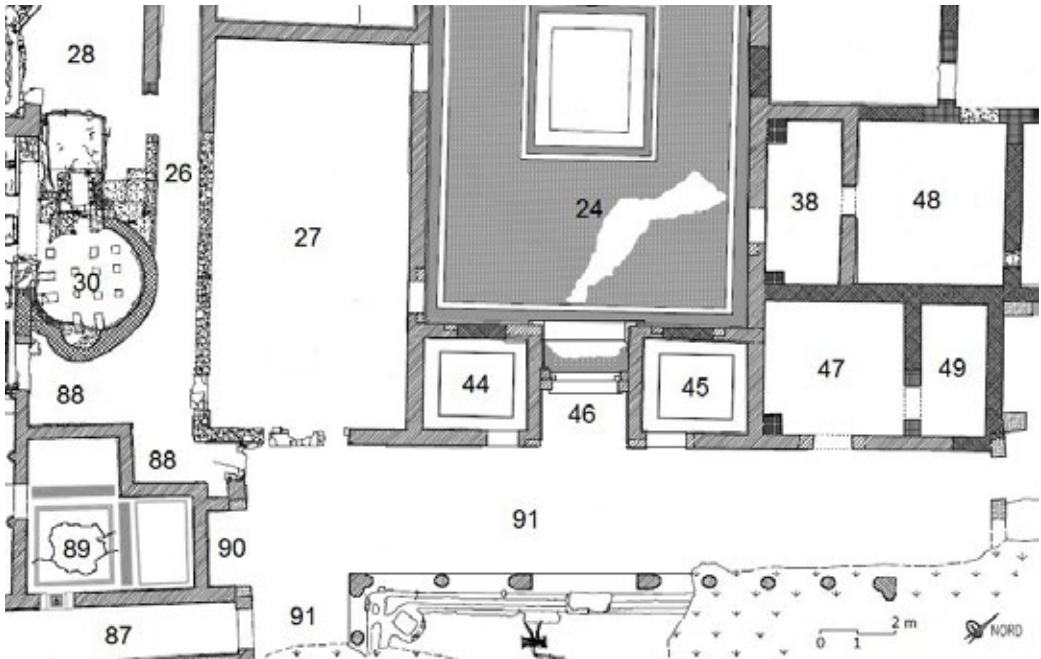


Fig. 1. The updated plan of the atrium area of Villa Arianna after the recent years' excavations (plan drawn by G. Di Nola, F. Mosca, P. Gardelli, V. Sabini) © Parco Archeologico di Pompei

tury. Instead of the pictorial decoration a few small portions of the socle have survived on the three walls, painted with a black background and white threads; on the NE and NW walls some surviving parts of the middle section of the pictorial surface are evident, consisting of a red background framed by white bands. The surveys of recent years, which have investigated not only the still buried part of room 27 but also the surrounding area, have therefore been fundamental to understanding the exact plan of this area of Villa Arianna, revealing the actual dimensions of the room, documenting the positioning of its access, and finally verifying the presence of surviving parts of the wall and floor decoration.

At the beginning of the excavation activities in the area between the *laconicum* (30), the NW wall of *cubiculum* 89 and the SW wall of room 27, a short NE–SW corridor (88) was identified and brought to light. This had never previously been documented, neither in the Bourbon age as it was not present in the 18th-century plan, nor during the excavations promoted by d'Orsi since those were suspended in the middle of the main NW–SE corridor (26) at the *laconicum* (30). This discovery has therefore allowed us to definitively fill in the gap in the modern and 18th-century plans of Villa Arianna. Corridor 88 is therefore the result of the bifurcation of the longest corridor 26 which, following the external curvature of the *laconicum* wall (30), divides into two parts: one that proceeds to the SW in the direction of the porticoed space (86), while the other leads NE towards the area of the square peristyle (91). Both corridors (26 and 88) have an *opus caementicium* floor with terracotta inclusions and very simple wall paintings consisting of oblique black and white stripes, decorations typical of pas-



Fig. 2. The doorway and the marble threshold on the SE side of room 27 © Parco Archeologico di Pompei

sage rooms and service areas. The corridors (26/88) connect with the peristyle (91) through a 1,00 m wide doorway, with two rectangular white marble thresholds (0,17×0,24 m) between the two jambs.

The continuation of the excavation partially brought to light a short section of the NW and SW sides of the square peristyle (91). The floor is made up of rammed earth, probably a preparatory layer for a subsequent mosaic floor that was never completed. The columns and pillars of the peristyle (91) rest on a tufa stylobate and are made of brick covered with white stucco with thin, shallow vertical cannellation. Contrary to Karl Weber's plan of Villa Arianna, the 2010 excavation made it clear that the entire peristyle (91) was constructed according to a markedly asymmetric pattern since its colonnaded structure is not perfectly aligned with the axis along which the *vestibulum/atrium/tablinum* lie (46, 24 and 18). In fact, along the NW colonnade side connecting with the vestibule but off-centre with respect to the median axis of the peristyle, there are two half-column piers on the short external side. The result is an asymmetrical, longer peristyle towards the NE given that in the space between the two pillars in line with the vestibule and the angular W pillar there is only one circular column, while there are three columns in the space between the two pillars and the N corner of the peristyle.

The existence of a doorway (0,34×2,20 m), already detected during the Bourbon excavations, that connected the peristyle (91) with what is likely to have been the *triclinium* (27), was confirmed by the discovery of some parts of the threshold on the short SE side of the latter room (Fig. 2). The discovery consists of a fragmentary white marble slab, of which

about 1,53 m in width and about 0,34 m in length is preserved. During the cleaning and consolidation of the numerous fragments of the marble slab along the inner edge of the threshold, a small surviving portion (0,12×0,38 m) of the mosaic floor that decorated the whole room was found. This is distinguished by a band formed by three rows of black *tesserae*, followed by a band of three rows of white *tesserae* and a band of black *tesserae*. It was clear from this discovery that the floor consisted of a black and white *tessellatum* bordered with bands of contrasting color with tiles set horizontally. Two walls in *opus incertum*, which had been brought to light near the S corner, are still preserved to a height of 0,70 m and also display a very small portion of the original surface decoration, which consists of a black socle with white threads, as already mentioned in relation to the remains of the NW, NE and SW walls.

With the investigations along the SW wall, a second incomplete white marble slab was identified near the S corner, 0,60 m wide and 0,34 m long. This formed part of the access threshold (0,34×0,92 m) opening onto the service corridor (26). Its identification has clarified the exact position of the doorway between rooms 26 and 27 and that, contrary to what was indicated by the plans drawn up in previous decades, it should not be positioned in the north-western part of the SW wall but should be moved a few meters closer to the S corner. Here, as with the inner side of the threshold, the cleaning work also led to the identification of a second mosaic fragment (0,06×0,21 m) consisting entirely of black colored *tesserae* set horizontally.

Room 27 was therefore served by two entrances: the main one on the SE side, which opened onto the square peristyle (91), and the second one on the SW wall, almost certainly a service entrance, which connected it to the corridor (26) and consequently to the servants' quarter (21) and the kitchen (04) located at the NW end of the long passageway. The presence of a doorway behind *cubiculum* 44, blocked with irregular blocks of gray tuff still visible along the SW wall of the large *atrium* (24), reveals that in a previous construction phase (Late Republic period) the room (27) was probably accessed from there. The dimensions of room 27 were almost certainly smaller in this phase since they were limited by the greater extension of room 25 to the NW. This room, originally a *cubiculum*, was reduced to a narrow and simple service area at a later time when the NW partition wall was moved to accommodate the expansion of room 27. The construction of the mosaic, the subject of this article, was therefore completed once the expansion works of the large hall 27 towards the NW were completed, following a more general phase of structural changes to the entire *atrium*, presumably in the first half of the 1st century A.D.

The recovery of the two small mosaic fragments has provided the opportunity to begin a series of investigations that have made it possible to work out exactly how the mosaic was detached and to document its transfer from Castellammare to the Palace of Portici and finally to locate its current position at the National Archaeological Museum of Naples (MANN).

The 18th-century discovery of the mosaic floor in room 27 and its current location

The first news of this discovery was given by the master Stefano Caruso on 30 November 1757, the day on which eight of his laborers came across a mosaic surface that he considered to be a "*buon pavimento*" ("nice floor") [33, p. 66]. In the following days, as the excavation operations continued, the entire room was brought to light, as described by the master:

“lunga palmi 40 e larga palmi 20, e le mura sono pittate di vari colori” (“a room 40 palms long and 20 palms wide, and the walls are painted in various colors”)³. The news of the discovery piqued the interest of Karl Weber who, during an inspection of the excavation in the Masseria Girace, visited the room that had just been unearthed and sent a brief description of the “*blanco con quadretos y rigas negras*” (“white with black squares and lines”)

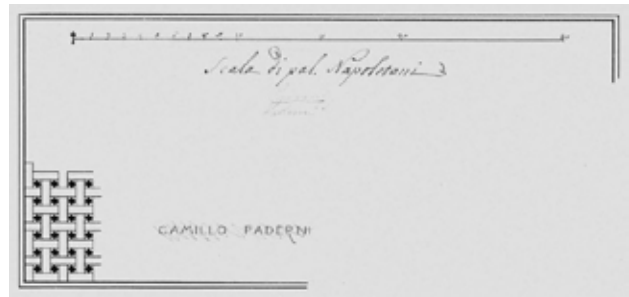


Fig. 3. The sketch drawn by Camillo Paderni in December 1757. Published by M. Ruggiero [33]

artefact to Rocque de Alcubierre informing him that he had already informed Camillo Paderni, director and curator of the Real Museo in Portici, of the discovery [33, p. 68]. The mosaic certainly did not meet the taste of Paderni since, on 30 December 1757, the day after his visit to Gragnano, he strongly advised Prime Minister Bernardo Tanucci against removing the floor, it being a “*musaico bianco e nero ordinario*” (“an ordinary black and white mosaic”) devoid of “*cosa particolare che meritar possa la pena di levarlo*” (“anything special that justifies removing it”), also citing, as a secondary reason, that the costs of dealing with such a large surface area were too high [33, p. 70]. Paderni concluded the communication with the suggestion that “*quando disegnato fosse detto musaico, come soglio fare di tutti li altri, mi parrebbe che ciò potesse bastare*” (“I think it is enough, as I usually do with all the others, to simply draw the mosaic”) and also attached a quick sketch of the geometric motif (Fig. 3) which, punctually reproduced by Michele Ruggiero in his work, turned out to be of fundamental importance for the identification of the floor plan [33, pl. IV].

Evidently, both the sovereign Charles of Bourbon and the Prime Minister Tanucci did not care too much about the heartfelt advice given by Paderni since, as documented by Weber, some wooden caissons were brought to Castellammare to transport the mosaic floor a few months later, in May 1758 [33, p. 75]. In the weeks that followed, due to its considerable size, the floor was sectioned into 12 smaller portions, which later, in August 1758, were loaded [33, p. 78] on a boat chartered to dock at the marina of Castellammare. Finally, it is once again Weber who gives the news, “*el día miércoles (16 August 1758) los han conducido con una barca hasta la marina del Granatelo y con los forzados se han conducido sobre el carro hasta el R. Palacio*” (“on Wednesday [16 August 1758] it was taken by boat to the Granatelo marina and then it was moved on a wagon by the convicts to the Royal Palace”). Once the 12 portions of the floor reached the Palazzo Reale in Portici, “*cada uno es de 8 pal. por 6 pal.*” (“each one is 8 palms for 6 palms”), they were handed over to the sculptor Joseph Canart who then proceeded to collect them in the forms still visible today [33, p. 79].

³ [33, p. 68]. The ancient Neapolitan palm corresponds to 0,26455 m, therefore the dimensions reported in the note, 40×20 palms, are equivalent to 10,582×5,291 m. These measures were further proof of the fact that the original context of the floor was room 27, since there are no other rooms with similar dimensions at Villa Arianna.

For many of the *tessellata* and *sectilia* floors, detached and stored first at the Herculaneum Museum⁴ and then at the former Palazzo degli Studi, in what would later become the Real Museo, it is difficult to determine their original contexts⁵ today, with the exception of some fortunate examples [29, pp. 63–65], one of which is the floor from room 27 of Villa Arianna.

Most of the mosaic floors from *Pompeii*, *Herculaneum* and *Stabiae*, after being detached and cut into large or smaller fragments, were arbitrarily recomposed first in the Museo Ercolanese and then in the Real Museo without any consideration for their original context or pattern but purely for decorative purposes⁶.

The floor of room 136 has a tessellated frame from Lucera in the center, decorated with circles and half-circles of animal motifs, plant motifs and a Medusa head, and is bordered by herringbone motifs and a meander⁷. The meander connects the mosaic floor from Lucera with the grid of interlaced outlined bands of *triclinium 27*.

The floor from Stabia, most of which is conserved in room 136 and in some portions in room 144 of the MANN, has a grid of interlaced outlined bands with compartments containing inscribed squares rotated on the diagonal (Fig. 4), and is classified in the *Décor géométrique de la mosaïque romaine* with the number 104 a. The reference note states that the place of conservation is the MANN and the place of discovery is generically “Campania? (Italie)”, without a specific bibliographic reference [4, pl. 140 a].

Cuts are visible on the floor that show the modifications made to adapt the original size of the mosaic to the hall that would then host it. The mosaic decoration of *triclinium 27*, like the other *tessellatum* and *opus sectile* floors in the western wing of the MANN, was subsequently further altered as a result of restoration work⁸.



Fig. 4. A section of the floor plan from room 27 now preserved in room 136 at MANN © Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli

⁴ Inside the ancient Palazzo Caramanico, later incorporated in the Royal Palace of Portici.

⁵ Most of the mosaic and opus sectile floors visible today at the MANN had been removed from their original contexts in the early phases of the Bourbon excavations in the Vesuvian cities. In the second half of the 19th century, there prevailed the desire, especially on the part of Giuseppe Fiorelli, to leave the decorative floors *in situ* [23, pp. 112–114].

⁶ Bayardi refers to the fact that during the first phase of the Vesuvian excavations mosaics and *sectilia* were used in the noble floor of the Palace of Portici. The floors, coming from both the Vesuvian villas and the villas of Capri, were brought to the still incomplete building of the Real Museum at the end of the 18th century. See [5, p. 447; 24, pp. 141–160].

⁷ The mosaic of Lucera was brought to light in 1786 by a certain Domenico Andrea Pellegrino [29, p. 67, fig. 13].

⁸ Particularly significant consolidation and restoration works were carried out on the floors between 1808 and 1813 [23, p. 115].

It is not possible to reconstruct the border band with precision from the surviving fragments but it is assumed, as was confirmed by the findings made during the excavation operations, that the mosaic was bordered by bands of *tesserae* set horizontally in contrasting colors.

The black and white tiles, which measure on average between 0,5 and 0,7 cm, are composed of calcite (white limestone *tesserae*) and plagioclases, mica, pyroxenes, amphiboles and leucite (black lava *tesserae*)⁹.

The grid of interlaced outlined bands with compartments containing inscribed squares in a repeated design and generally extended over the entire surface area is not particularly widespread in geometric *opus tessellatum*. It is made both in cement, as documented in *Pompeii*, in the Casa degli Amorini Dorati (VI, 16, 7.38)¹⁰ and in *opus sectile*, as in the case of a specimen from the *Palaestra of Herculaneum* [21, p. 202, pl. 10, 1; 32, p. 91]. From the known examples it seems that this motif was widespread during a relatively narrow time period, basically covering the entire 1st century A.D., with the exception of a single isolated case from Porto Torres dated between the 3rd and 4th centuries A.D. [2, p. 176, n. 143, pl. XLIV].

The compositional scheme finds few comparisons in the Campania area: from the well-known examples, the preference is for white *tesserae* with bands outlined in black, while less frequently it is found on a black background with inverted two-color; sometimes the open interstices are inset with small squares or squares rotated on the diagonal.

The closest comparisons come from *Pompeii*, where the pattern is evident in the decoration of the floor of peristyle 53 of the Casa dei Dioscuri (VI, 9, 6–9) with the loose weaving of oblique bands of tiles set diagonally, dated to the third quarter of the 1st century A.D. [31, vol. IV, pp. 958–959, figg. 190–192] and in *triclinium* 7 of the Casa del Cinghiale (VIII, 3, 8–9) with interlaced bands of tiles set horizontally, dated around the middle of the 1st century A.D. [31, vol. VIII, p. 373, figg. 17–19]. In these two cases the square panels are riveted by black squares, in contrast to the floor of *triclinium* 27 of Villa Arianna, which has squares placed on the diagonal.

A mosaic fragment from Alife, currently preserved in the former Civic Museum of Piedimonte Matese, was found in a building, the original location or use of which is unknown. It has the same decorative scheme in inverted colors on a black background, dated to the 1st century A.D. [22, p. 423].

In the middle-Italic area a variant of the scheme made with tiles set diagonally can be found in the villa in Cavallacci at Albano Laziale (Caesarean-Augustan age) [9, pp. 562–563, fig. 4]; in Gubbio in the so called *Domus dei Mosaici* the scheme is in a fragmentary polychrome floor (white, black and pink) of the 1st century A.D. [8, pp. 390–391, fig. 2]; and in room 14 of the Villa di Cazzanello in Tarquinia (mid 1st century A.D.) [3, p. 76, fig. 15].

The scheme can also be found in the northern regions of the Italian peninsula: in a *triclinium* in Milan, Piazza della Scala (2nd century A.D.) [13, figg. 281–286]; and in Veneto in the town of Confortin near Adria (mid 1st century A.D.) [32, pp. 91–94]. The scheme is evident on a black background decorating a threshold of the *domus* found in via Gambarà, Brescia (1st century A.D.) [26, pp. 423–424, fig. 7].

⁹ Like almost all the black and white floors of the Stabian villas [14, pp. 68–72].

¹⁰ Dated between the III and the IV Style [30, vol. V, p. 845, figg. 236–237].



Fig. 5. The vestibule of the *atrium* of Villa Arianna © Parco Archeologico di Pompei

Despite the preliminary nature of these findings and the lack of a real study of the architectural evidence in the *atrium* area, but above all given the impossibility of investigating the structural relationships between the pictorial surfaces and the floor of room 27, it can be hypothesized that the laying of the mosaic surface, as well as that of the wall decoration, was completed once the expansion works of the great hall (27) towards the NW were completed, following a more general phase of structural changes to the nearby parts of the *atrium* and the bath complex in the first half of the 1st century A.D.

In the absence of direct comparisons for the use of floor decoration inset with squares on the diagonal, which would seem to be a less widespread variant than the panels filled with black squares, one can ascribe the floor of Villa Arianna to the Third Style like the contemporaneous Pompeian floors which are similar to our specimen.

The mosaic floor with the inscription SALVE from the vestibulum of Villa Arianna

In the years 2010–2013, the extension of the cleaning works along the NW side of the square peristyle (91) has further highlighted the presence of a cut (2,30×1,28 m) visible at floor level inside the vestibule (46) in front of the *atrium* of Villa Arianna (Fig. 5).

Here, on 15 September 1761, four years after the discovery of the mosaic of room 27, the threshold in *opus tessellatum* was identified inside the vestibule (46), on which the word SALVE was clearly legible [33, p. 157]. The observation was confirmed by Alcubierre who, on 18 September 1761, wrote “*En el proprio cavamento se ha descubierto tambien un pedazo de mosaico en el vacante de una puerta, 6 pal. y 8 on. largo y 2 pal. ancho, en medio del cual se lee distintamente hacha tambien de mosaico la palabra, SALVE*” (“In the same excavation was also discovered on the threshold of a door a portion of mosaic floor, 6 palms and 8 ounces wide and 2 palms long, in the middle of which is clearly legible the word in mosaic, SALVE”) [33, p. 158]. In a note on 10 October 1761 Weber writes that the mosaic, once detached, was taken away in a cart: “*Ademas han traído con un carro la sollera de mosaico con la inscripcion, SALVE*” (“They

also took away by cart the mosaic threshold with the inscription, *SALVE*”) [33, p. 160]. The threshold was transported to the Herculaneuse Museum in the Palazzo Caramanico in Portici. Here, the mosaics and *sectilia* were arbitrarily recomposed for their final display following their separation from their original contexts and their subsequent restoration¹¹. This is the case of the floor with the *SALVE* threshold, re-assembled in the Herculaneuse Museum. The mosaic with its inscription was reproduced in matrices and prints made by the artist Giovanni Casanova and the engraver Niccolò Cesarano in the second half of the 18th century and finally published in 1808 in a plate of “*Gli ornati delle pareti ed i pavimenti delle stanze dell’antica Pompei: incisi in rame*” [18] (Fig. 6).

In a subsequent edition of “*Gli Ornati*”, printed in 1838, a brief description of the mosaic is given in the index:

“*Bello è il pavimento riportato sotto questo numero. Nel mezzo sembra espresso un seno di mare con pesci guizzanti e mostri marini, chiuso dalle mura di una Città turrata ai quattro angoli, e con quattro porte dischiuse in mezzo de’ quattro lati. Alla parte esterna di uno di questi leggesi in caratteri cubitali il cordiale motto SALVE, motto che ha dato nome all’abitazione del Salve tanto rinomata in Pompei, per essersi in quella il pavimento rinvenuto. Incisione del Cesarano.*” (“The floor shown under this number is beautiful. In the middle seems to be represented a sea scene with darting fish and sea monsters, enclosed by the walls of a towered city at the four corners, and with four gates opened in the middle of the four sides. On the outside of one of these is visible in large letters the cordial motto *SALVE*, the motto that gave the name to the house of the very famous *Salve* in Pompeii, since the floor was found there. Engraving by Cesarano.”) [19, p. 7].

From the drawing and the description one can clearly understand how the mosaic with the inscription *SALVE* was recomposed with other mosaics of different origins: a frame with turreted walls [23, p. 113; 29, pp. 60–70], which is supposed to have come from the *tablinum-essedra* of the Villa dei Papiri in *Herculaneum*, and a carpet with a central geometric emblem framed by a mosaic strip depicting a *thiasos* with sea monsters and dolphins, found in 1755 during the excavation at the *Praedia* of *Iulia Felix* [15, pp. 108–109].

It is important to note, however, that it is incorrectly reported in the 1838 edition that the



Fig. 6. The plate of *Gli Ornati*, on the top of which is visible the *SALVE* inscription from Villa Arianna [18; 19]

¹¹ For further information about ancient floors in the Herculaneuse Museum, see [27, pp. 335–342]. To find out more about the transport of the so called Gran Musaico by architect Pietro Bianchi to the Royal Museum between 1844 and 1845 and about its installation in a special room located on the mezzanine floor of the eastern wing of the recently completed building, see [25, pp. 38–41 and footnotes 51–55 at p. 46].

SALVE mosaic represented in the volume is the one found in 1785 in the so called Casa del Salve (or Casa delle Vestali) in *Pompeii*. Indeed, the mosaic floor from *Pompeii* is completely different from the one found in *Stabiae* as the auspicious inscription (CIL X 873b) is made with white *tesserae* arranged on a *tabula ansata* made with black *tesserae* [28, p. 83]. In contrast, the greeting inscription from *Stabiae* is made with black *tesserae* on a white monochrome background and is enclosed by a trapezoidal black band. The oblique shape of the mosaic threshold is not its original form. Its current form is in fact the result of a subsequent modification by the court artists in order to adapt the threshold to the trapezium between the squares of the window of room 14 on the first floor of the Palazzo Caramanico and it is in this form that it appears in “*Gli Ornati*” [15, p. 109]. Once the large recomposed mosaic floor was moved to the Real Museo in Naples it was dismantled into many fragments that were placed in different rooms: the *SALVE* threshold was inserted into the floor of room 46 on the ground floor of the building that houses the current MANN, maintaining its acquired trapezoidal shape; the floor with marine *thiasos* from *Pompeii* was set in room 132 with a figure of a *furnacator*, also from the property of *Iulia Felix*; and finally, the geometric patterned frame that distinguished the first composition was subdivided into several parts and inserted into another floor made up of mosaics of different origins in room 140 of the current MANN.

The floor examined here is not unique in terms of being a recomposition from different contexts: geometric mosaics figured with black and white *tesserae* were used for the flooring of the Herculaneum Museum in Portici, and later the Real Museo Borbonico welcomed visitors with a “*effetto mirabile*” such as the circular floor composed of colored marbles from the Villa dei Papiri [1, p. 201] or the one in polychrome mosaic depicting the head of Medusa, now in the Capodimonte Museum¹².

After the floors were transferred from the Herculaneum Museum of Portici to the Real Museo Borbonico the main characteristic of the royal collection was lost: i.e. its strong link with the objects’ original contexts. In fact, the royal collection was born and grew out of the excavations that were taking place from 1738 in *Herculaneum* and in the following years in *Pompeii* and *Stabiae*. The excavations and the growing number of findings over a short space of time necessitated the creation of a local museum as well as its subsequent, continuous expansion. Therefore, moving the objects to Naples has resulted in an ideological separation of the collections from their original sites. So, as often happened and as we can now observe at the MANN, *tessellatum* floors of different origins have been assembled in the most disparate ways simply for decorative purposes to add a “*gran pregio a quei decori*” [10, pp. 143–144].

Mosaics with the *SALVE* inscription, considered more hospitable than *CAVE CANEM*, are frequent in the Vesuvian area, particularly in *Pompeii*: according to some 19th-century descriptions it has been found on the floor of the *fauces* of the Casa di Pansa (VI, 6, 1); in room 29 of the Casa delle Vestali (VI, 1, 6–8.24–26); in the Casa di Sirico (VII, 1, 25.46.47), where the auspicious inscription on cement-based mortar *SALVE LUCRU(M)* appears on the threshold of one of the entrances to the house; and in Boscoreale in the villa di Popidio Floro, in front of an emblem with a scene of struggle in the cement paving, the auspicious inscription “*HAVE SALVE*” is inserted in white lithic tesserae, preserved for a stretch of 1,20×0,27 m

¹² For the history of this mosaic see [1, p. 202; 7, pp. 173–187; 11, pp. 351–358].

(second half of the 1st century A.D.).

The use of words of greeting at the entrance of a dwelling is evidenced in the Hellenistic period in Paternò (Sicily) on a cement floor decorated with lozenge shapes, on the outside of which there is a regular dotted line of white *tesserae* and a scroll with the *XAIPE* inscription (3rd–2nd century B.C.) [20, pp. 219–222, fig. 4]. The motif of the cartouche with *tabula ansata* is not well known either in Sicily or in the whole Italian territory.

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Title. Two Lesser-Known Mosaic Floors from the 18th-Century Excavations of Villa Arianna at Stabia.

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Abstract. The present paper is focused on the study of two lesser-known mosaic floors from rooms 27 and 46 of Villa Arianna at Stabia. The two mosaics were completely removed during the excavations of the 18th century and today are preserved at the National Archaeological Museum of Naples (MANN). The 2010 RAS/Hermitage excavation campaign provided the opportunity to launch a series of investigations that have identified the technique used to detach the two mosaics and transfer them from Castellammare di Stabia to the Royal Palace of Portici, and has recently led to the identification of the mosaics in their present location at the MANN.

The first of the two was found inside the room identified in Weber's plan by the number 34 (no. 27 of the current plan), a large rectangular space of about 10,50×5,45 m, most likely an *oecus* or *triclinium*, which opened directly onto the square peristyle at the SE of the *atrium*. Except for the few *tesserae*, nothing remains of the mosaic *in situ*, as it was almost completely stripped away during the 18th-century excavations. Four years later, on 15 September 1761, during excavation operations in the *atrium* (24) of the same villa, the threshold in *opus tessellatum* was identified inside the vestibule (46) on which the word *SALVE* was clearly legible. Once detached, the threshold was transported to the Herculanense Museum in the Palazzo Caramanico in Portici where it was assembled with a large mosaic depicting a *thiasos* with sea monsters and dolphins found during the excavation at the *Praedia of Iulia Felix* in Pompeii in 1775. The greeting inscription is made with black *tesserae* on a white monochrome background and is enclosed by a trapezoidal black band.

Keywords: Stabiae; Villa Arianna; black and white mosaic floor; Bourbon excavations; otium Roman Villas.

Название статьи. Два малоизвестных мозаичных пола из раскопок XVIII века виллы Ариадны в Стабиях.

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Аннотация. Предлагаемая статья посвящена малоизвестным напольным мозаикам, происходящим из помещений 27 и 46 виллы Ариадны в Стабиях. Мозаики были изъяты в ходе раскопок XVIII в. и теперь демонстрируются как автономные произведения в Археологическом музее Неаполя. Раскопки 2010 г., проводимые совместно фондом RAS и Государственным Эрмитажем, позволили исследовать технический процесс поднятия и переноса мозаик из Стабий в королевский дворец в Портичи, а также идентифицировать их среди экспонатов музея Неаполя. Первая из двух украшала помещение, которое на плане Вебера обозначено как комната 34. Это большое прямоугольное помещение (10,50×5,45 м), вероятно, ойкос или триклиний, открывавшийся в квадратный перистиль, расположенный к юго-востоку от атриума. Ничего не осталось от мозаики *in situ*, за исключением нескольких тессер.

15 сентября 1761 г. во время раскопок в атриуме (24) той же виллы была обнаружена мозаика, украшавшая порог вестибюля (46), выполненная в технике *opus tessellatum* с хорошо различимой надписью *SALVE*. Эту мозаику перевезли во дворец Караманико в Портичи, где она была соединена в одну композицию с найденной ранее (в 1755 г.) мозаикой из усадьбы Юлии Феликс в Помпеях со сценой морского фиаса. Приветственная надпись выложена черными тессерами на белом монохромном фоне и выделена черной окантовкой.

Ключевые слова: Стабии, вилла Ариадны, черно-белые мозаики, раскопки Бурбонов, римские виллы.