Final Report
By Claire Weiss
Introduction:

The area conventionally known as the Shrine is a large space fronting onto the Via Consolare. It is situated between the well-delineated properties of the House of the Surgeon, the Soap factory to the south, and the Stables to the East. The Shrine is identified within the AAPP scheme as plot four, room one of regio six, insula one (Figure 1).

The excavation of the Shrine took place over the course of four seasons, reaching completion in 2005 as AA510. AA510 incorporated only the southern half of the room and concentrated on the earliest deposits and features of the pre-shrine phases (Figure 2). This report attempts to incorporate the findings of 2005 into the previous conclusions reached by Pat Daniel, along with amending those conclusions as additional information necessitates. For the full discussion of previous years' excavations, please refer to Pat Daniel's reports and field notebooks for AAs 320, 310, and 203.

Figure 1: Location of AA 510 highlighted in red.

Figure 2: AA 510.
Phase 1: Natural

Phase 1 consists of the natural deposition of 'gritty green' friable volcanic material with black and white lava inclusions sloping downward from north to south and east to west. This material has been found at the deepest point of excavation in many of the areas excavated in the south of the insula and is assumed to be the natural soil as no cultural material has been found to be included. This soil was found at the greatest depth of excavation across the whole of AA 510 (SU 55), as well as in adjacent areas within the Shrine as excavated in previous years. Whether this deposit is truly natural accumulated volcanic material or redeposited 'natural' is unknown, but is assumed to be the earliest, precultural material of the area. It can be argued that due to the discovery of the same material at different depths across the area, the natural surface was undulating or variable in its elevation. However, extrapolating the original elevation or surface of this material from its present state is highly questionable as it has certainly been altered, truncated, cut into, and otherwise manipulated by the later activities in the area.

Phase 2: Terracing (SUs 55, 54, 33/41)

During phase two, the terracing of the area occurred, theorized to be an insula-wide cutting away of the natural soils to create even level plots for later development. This activity is thought to compensate for the disparate elevations of natural across the insula from the north to the south. Evidence of west to east terracing to accommodate the Via Consolare (lower in elevation) to the Vicolo di Narciso (higher in elevation) occurs in the earliest elevations of natural in the Shrine. This terracing is evident in elevations of the gritty green across the extent of the trench, lowest to the most southwest extreme (SU55) and highest to the northeast (SU 33/41). What kind of activity, whether there was any building or agricultural activity directly associated with these events, or whether this terracing was directly related to the first constructions extant in this year's excavation is unknown.

Phase 3a: Leveling deposits (SUs 15,43*, 53) *spot dated to 2nd century BC

Phase 3a consists of the leveling of the terracing of natural deposits for use in creating the early constructions placed in phase 3b. SU 15 and 43 (one deposit excavated in two parts keeping a section baulk between for control) were the same deposit directly overlying the varying elevations of gritty green natural below. These deposits contained a large volume of a wide range of materials, the usual makeup of a general leveling event.

In 2004 excavation, Pat Daniels found a deposit containing a dozen small votive cups and charcoal placed at the base of a cut (Figure 3) and then buried material he refers to as "dirty natural". While no evidence for similar deposits was evident in the southern half of the Shrine (there was a clear interface between culturally-included soils and 'gritty green' natural), similar types of deposits to the 'dirty natural' described were found in the Custom's House immediately to the

Figure 3: Votive cups excavated at the base of a cut as found in 2004.
north during excavation in 2004. No direct comparison in elevation or soil type was made between the two redeposited natural soils, but this similarity is worth noting. Pat discusses the common occurrence of votive deposits as offerings preceding new building events. As this deposit and the leveling deposits of AA510 seem to be preparation events for early, primary building events, this seems a likely hypothesis (see AAPP04 AA320 final report).

The leveling deposits (SU 15, 43) were spot dated to the 2nd century BC, possibly even into the late 3rd century sporting a high volume of black glossware, but with some doubt considering the typology of thinwalledware present. This time period is one at which a great deal of general reorganization and initial building events occurred across the whole of insula VI.i. The primary wall of the Soap Factory (plot 3, room 4, wall 3/19) and the construction of the well at the tip of the insula were also spot dated to the second century BC. This suggests a general development of the area of the commercial triangle/middle transition properties during this time.

Phase 3b: Primary building activity (SU 11, 17, AA320 SU 56)

Phase 3b sees the construction of the first major space-dividing wall, SU 17, which is on a NW-SE alignment, parallel to the Via Consolare, of a sarno and black lava incertum construction (Figure 4). This wall had no discernable construction cut, seeming to be build directly atop the natural soils described in phase one. A greater extent of this wall had been excavated in 2004 and found to span over 6.5 meters in length across the middle of the room with a sarno-quoined gap halfway along its length (the northern portion excavated in 2004 was AA320 SU89) (Figure 5). The gap is presumed to be a doorway allowing access to the rear area, though no threshold stone or seating survives. It seems that this wall divided eastern and western spaces.

Figure 4: Blocked out in red, SU 17 is the primary construction of the wall, built of sarno and black lava stones. No foundation trench was present.
All other walls relating to this wall abut it, clearly making wall SU 17 the earliest construction of the area. Unfortunately, due to the surviving portions of mosaic floor around the edges of the final-phase shrine and the construction of a support pier underlying the northeastern brick pillar (AA 310 SU 123), the relationship of this early wall to the space-defining walls of the final phase of the Shrine remain unknown. Whether this wall respects the boundaries of walls number 5 and 10, keeping the footprint of the space as a whole consistent through its existence, or whether it predates them is a matter of speculation. However, no evidence of the wall has been found in the earlier phases of the adjoining properties (AA 277 excavated in 2004 and AA 140 excavated in 2001).

Running through the aforementioned sarno-quoined ‘doorway’ was a stone, tile and mortar constructed drain, SU 11 (AA 310 SU 270) (Figure 6). A second portion of the same construction (AA 320 SU 56) was evident at the west extent of the AA. This portion of the construction was cut by the threshold stone-supporting wall (wall 46) at its west extent and by the very late phase pit cut centered in the room (AA 510 SU 18, AA 320 SU 113). Whether the drain existed prior to the construction of wall SU 17, or whether the drain was constructed contemporarily to the doorway of SU 17 is unknown. It is assumed to have been part of this phase it is decommissioned in a later phase by a doorway narrowing. The leveling deposits of phase two may have well had the purpose evening out the slope of the area as the drain is built on ‘gritty green’ natural at its east extent and SU 15 leveling deposit at its west extent, creating a gradual slope to facilitate drainage. The middle section of the

![Figure 5: The large sarno stone is the edge of the ‘doorway’, later narrowed by the incertum construction at left.](image)

![Figure 6: Mortar and tile drain construction. The drain ran through the opening of the sarno-quoined doorway before being put out of use by the narrowing of the doorway.](image)
drain does not survive, cut by the very late phase pit, SU 18.

A good deal of additional activity is attributed to this phase as excavated by Pat Daniel in AA 320. Two water cisterns, a rammed earth wall footing, a hypothesized post pad, and several deep pits all occur during this phase (AA 320 SUs 57, 72, 65, 16 and 35, 45, and 51 respectively). These structures and events were evident in the northern portion of the space and were neither excavated nor de-backfilled during the 2005 season. The rammed earth wall footing may have been the foundation for an early wall that was also part of this phase, defining a north and south room with cisterns on either side. For a full description and discussion, please refer to AA 320 final report.

A relative date for the features attributed to this phase can be extrapolated from deposits before and after. As mentioned above, the leveling deposit upon which the western extent of the drain is built was dated to the early second century BC. As found in 2004, an amphora from the fill of one of the pits (AA 320 SU45) produced a date of late 2nd to early 1st century BC. From these, a terminus post quem can be given of early 1st century BC.

**Phase 3c: tank**

A plaster-lined tank in the southwest corner of the AA had been partially excavated in 2004, and completed in 2005 (Figure 7). This tank was rectangular, of opus incertum, constructed by pressing stone and mortar around the periphery of the cut made to the dimensions of the tank and then lined with a medium-fine grained white, hard plaster believed to be waterproof (Figure 8). The base of the tank sloped slightly from south to north, presumably directing liquid toward a hole in the northeast corner of the base of the tank. Results of flotation of the soils at the base of the tank returned a high concentration of mammal bone, fish bone, and bird shell, medium concentration of fish scales, marine shell, and charcoal, and a low concentration of sea urchin.

![Figure 7: Tank construction in the SW corner of the AA.](image)

![Figure 8: Detail of the white plaster lining of the tank (NE corner of tank pictured here).](image)
The variety of the ecofacts and well-distributed concentrations of each type suggest no particular use that might be assigned to the tank, and seem to be most closely associated with the fill signifying the destruction of the tank. It is possible that the tank was used for water storage for some industrial purpose and did not hold any goods or processing materials. A tank of similar dimension and construction was found in AA 502, also lacking in materials that might clarify its use.

The phasing of the tank is presumed to align with the use of other such tanks in the northern extent of the shrine. However, dating of the creation of the tank cannot be gleaned from the archaeology remaining. The tops of the tank walls do not preserve their original elevation or any relationships to architectural features or deposits. The decommissioning of the tank (discussed in phase 4) can be dated to the last quarter of the first century BC based on Augustan redslipware in the fill (good reliability from assemblage size). This tank does postdate the leveling fills of phase 3a and predates the surfaces associated with the opus testaceum constructions of phase 4. No direct relationship remains giving a relative chronology for the construction of the primary wall (SU 17) and the tank. Thus, the tank has been divided into its own subphase.

Phase 4: Secondary construction of wall, creation of rooms C and D (Sus 8, 9, 10, 5, 6, soakaway*) *spot dated tentatively to 1st Century AD

Phase 4 signifies a significant change in the use of this space. While previously an industrial, production space earmarked by a large number of cisterns and tanks in its street-front room, this phase sees the features used in industry put out of use and a further subdivision of the area. The specific purpose or use of the space during this phase, however, remains unknown.

The first activity of this phase seems to be the destruction of the major NW-SE running wall down to its foundations. The destruction appears to be for the purpose of creating several doorways to small back rooms. In previous years of excavation, a series of opus testaceum secondary constructions atop the early wall base were found, creating a colonnaded brick wall with a number of doorways, allowing access to a range of spaces to the east.

The threshold (with threshold stone robbed out) referred to as SU 9 in 2005 and pictured here as SU 38, AA320, allowed access to room C (Figure 9). After construction of the opus testaceum pillars, the walls delineating the boundaries of room C and D were constructed, abutting the brickwork. Argued in the AA 320 report, the doorway in the earlier wall (SU 17) was narrowed, likely to standardize the width of the brick walls and doorways they defined, putting out of
commission the drain that ran through it. Room D is hypothesized to have had a doorway through this wall as well, though the presence of mosaic floor prevented excavation in the locale that would have had this doorway. The deposits within room C and D were excavated to completion in 2004, leaving only the natural deposit on which the walls were built.

A soakaway situated on the west side of wall 8/9/10/17 just below the threshold gap seems to have been associated with the destruction and secondary construction of the wall during this phase (Figure 10). The soakaway was constructed of two amphorae buried mouth to foot and packed with large rubble-stones and mortar around the ceramic. The rubble was very similar to the building material of SU17, suggesting that some of the materials remaining from the destruction of the wall were reused to pack around the soakaway. The top of the first amphora was very close in elevation to the interface between the first and second constructions of the wall. It is suggested that this soakaway may have served as a port-a-john during the construction activity. A high volume of fish scales and small fish bone were found in flotation of the soils from within the amphorae (SUs 48 and 50). This is the type and size of material that would have made it through the digestive tract and, had the soakaway been used as a privy, been excreted. Additionally, as the soakaway was being excavated, a distinct smell of urine was detected, strongest within the amphorae.

In the AA 320 final report, a separate phase was set aside for the laying of floors in the various rooms of the property (Figure 11). This author agrees that the specific relative sequence of the creation of each floor with respect to each room and determination of the contemporaneity of these floor-laying events cannot be realized from the archaeology. However, the laying of floors within rooms that maintained their boundaries throughout should not constitute a separate phase. Thus, the floor surfaces, reflooring and plastering events that respect the wall boundaries belong in the same phase as that of the creation and use of the rooms. For a discussion of each surface and/or floor, please refer to the final report for AA 320, phase 5. These surfaces signal the decommissioning of several features of the previous phase. The tank (SU 3) was sealed over by AA 320 SU 61. Additionally, the soakaway was sealed by surfaces covering the extent of room B after the finished construction of the wall, putting it out of use.
Phase 5 (possible): Wall 9

As discussed in AA 320 final report, wall 9, the eastern wall separating the shrine property from the stables, was built cutting through the construction of rooms C and D. Remnants of what may have been a plaster floor were found adhered to wall 9, suggesting a possible intermittent phase between the multi-room configuration of phase 5 and the shrine phases. The evidence, however, is tenuous at best. The construction of wall 9 may well have been an event occurring in the construction of the shrine, reconfiguring the full layout of the plot.

Phase 6: Shrine phase 1

Very late in the life of Pompeii and the space in question, the purpose and use of this area of 6.1 was drastically changed. What had been an area of small, subdivided rooms and industrial or commercial activity was entirely reconfigured and given a very different purpose: to be a public temple/shrine. The early phase constructions were destroyed, knocked down to fairly consistent elevation across the whole of the room. The frontage wall (as found in 2004) was destroyed to accommodate a supporting wall for the threshold stones. This is markedly important as the original frontage wall and indeed the whole of the space respected the alignment of the Via Consolare in all of its early phases. The destruction of the frontage wall allowed for a realignment of the space to take place, creating a squared off, symmetrical and monumental property, appropriate to the reassignment of purpose. When approached from either the North or South on the Via Consolare, a clear view of the interior of the area would not be possible until one was in front of it.

In the same event of creating the threshold support wall, large masonry piers were built to support at least two of the brick pillars extant in this final phase. The construction of the threshold wall and support piers seems to have been accomplished in two parts, an uneven, poured construction for deeper stability, and a more ordered, layed construction immediately below the features each supported. The second part of this construction corresponds to builders’ cuts for the threshold wall and support pier (as found in 2004 to cut through the packed earth floors of phase 4) (Figure 12). As demonstrated by the completely

Figure 11: Hardpacked earthen floors spanning rooms B, C, and D.

Figure 12: Hardpacked floor (SU 36) with construction cut through it for the building of the support pier (upper left corner of photo).
intermingled fabric of the southwest brick pier and threshold wall (Figure 13), these two constructions must have been created at the same time. The lower portions of both were built right up against the deposits and features cut for their construction, creating rough, uneven mortar fingers protruding with no intentional form.

Upon the completion of these two supporting structures, the brick pillar in the southwest corner of the property was constructed, possibly at the same time as the threshold stones were laid. Both the north and south junctions of the threshold stones to the brick pillars overlap with the brick built around the threshold stone, demonstrating the likely-hood that they were constructed at the same time. Presumably at the same time, the other three brick pillars framing the edges of the property were built. It is hypothesized that these pillars were constructed to support a large, monumental roof vaulting over the entire space. The weight of such a structure demands a solid foundation. The northeastern pillar was found to have a mortar support block beneath it, similar in construction to that of the southwest pillar support pier. The northwestern pillar, however, did not have the same type of support construction. The southeastern brick pillar foundations were not excavated due to surviving mosaic surrounding its build. Why at least one brick pillar was constructed without a supporting structure remains unclear. It may be that this northwestern corner was not deemed sufficiently stressed to require a support construction. The northeastern pillar is constructed at the junction of the back rooms of the House of the Surgeon (Figure 14) and might need to buttress a larger volume of soil since the elevation of these rooms is significantly higher than the Shrine elevation. The southern pillars (or at least one) are built along another elevation change and may serve the purpose of shoring up the volume of soil contained by the Shrine, preventing it from stressing the southern wall.

**Figure 13:** Construction of the support pier and wall 46 (inset is a detail picture of the interface of the two constructions).

**Figure 14:** Red arrow indicates the juncture of wall 4/23 and 7 where the north central brick pier stands.
bordering with the Soap Factory. It may simply assist in lessening the stress placed upon the wall as it supports both the roof and difference in elevation.

Departing from previous understanding of the frontage of the Shrine-phase frontage, evidence points to the presence of a door or some sort of front closure. On the extreme northern and southern threshold stones are grooves - settings for a frame of some sort (Figure 15). They were carved into the threshold stones after placement and after construction of the brick pillars. This is demonstrated by the difference in the southern and northern grooves. The northern beam-seating encompasses the center groove (Figure 16) while the southern beam-seating is independent of the center groove in the stone. Additionally, both are grooves are carved flush with the brick pillars.

The thin remains of plaster, following what would have been the edge of this frame, remain on the southern brick pillar, lining up with the seating groove (Figure 17). Each of the other threshold stones between exhibits a centered groove, previously thought to be quarry carvings to ease carrying difficulties. The uniformity of the stones, the presence of the groove in each (unlike the outer sidewalk stones, a few of which have the same grooves), and the relative regularity of the distance between these grooves suggests purpose and deliberateness. These may be the settings for some sort of doorway, screen, or gate, possibly for closing up at night.

A rubble layer was deposited across the whole of the area. This leveling up of the space, with an additional step up from the elevation of the sidewalk to that of the threshold stones,
monumentalizes the area that much more, forcing the passerby on the street to look up into the room. This deposit (excavated in 2004) was put in place to support a thick, set-stone surface spanning the entire area. This surface abutted the threshold stones, going in after their final placement (Figure 18). Over this supporting surface, a mosaic floor of black and white tesserae was laid, remnants of which survive along the edges of the property.

Included in this phase is a large pit cut into the center of the property with a sluice sloping away from it and under the threshold stones to the west. Pat addresses the theory of these cuts as the remains of a robbed-out water feature of some sort as both the pit and the sub-floor tunnel sluice were at least partially lined with clay. Please refer to AA320 final report, phase 6 for a full discussion.

Phase 7: Shrine-phase 2

The last event in the life of the Shrine was the theorized removal of the object resting in the cut of the pit at the center of the room. It has been suggested that this event may have corresponded to the earthquake of 62AD and the fall of the aqueduct as supplying water to a large public water feature after such a water-limiting disaster would have proved difficult and ill advised. However, this theory is tenuous as no direct evidence for the removal of whatever feature rested in the pit during ancient times, nor earthquake damage has been found.

This phase does see the placement of a brick plinth against wall 9, centered on the wall (Figure 19). This plinth, unlike its similar brick pillar neighbors, has its base is lined with marble, it is constructed of several types of bricks, rests atop the mosaic floor, which abuts each of the other brick structures. This feature may have been put in to replace the feature in the pit cut. Again, assigning purpose to this feature is pure speculation as only its presence can be verified, not the activity that occurred around or upon it.
Phase 8: Modern activity

Since the initial excavation of Pompeii, this phase refers to the reconstruction, pointing, excavation, and deposition that has occurred.

**Figure 18:** Set stone floor excavated in 2004 as AA 320. The setting spanned the entire room, abutting both wall 9, the brick pillar, and threshold stones.

**Figure 19:** Brick Plinth with marble lining. The base of the plinth lies directly atop mosaic tesserae.