

# A cork model in Aschaffenburg (Bavaria) giving new evidence for Pompeii's House of Sallust

(a) Valentin Kockel

The Casa di Sallustio at Pompeii is one of the houses that belongs in every book and study on domestic life and architecture in the Roman era. The fact that it was excavated at the start of the 19th c., however, means that large parts of its decoration have long since been lost through weathering and neglect, a situation further compounded by the damage resulting from Allied bombing in 1943. In order to reconstruct, as accurately as possible, a picture of the house as it stood in antiquity, it is therefore particularly important to evaluate all the historical visual sources that document the house in a better condition. This task has already been extensively carried out in the monograph of A. Laidlaw and M. S. Stella (2014). With a similar goal, I propose to take a fresh look at a cork model dating from 1840 today housed in Aschaffenburg (Bavaria) in order to discuss its context and original function. Next, A. Laidlaw will compare the model's meticulously detailed copies of the structure and decoration, still in 1840 almost perfectly preserved, to the present battered state of the extant remains, thereby confirming the importance of the Aschaffenburg model as the primary archaeological source for the house.

## The invention of the cork model<sup>1</sup>

In the 1760s, within the sphere of travellers undertaking the Grand Tour, a new form of reproduction of ancient architecture came into fashion: scale models of ruins. Crafted out of wood, cork and plaster, these models achieved a degree of clarity and authenticity that far surpassed the architectural drawings and *vedute* that were all that had been available. Cork was popular material for models as its porous structure gave it a surface texture that bore a resemblance to the weathered limestone of the temples at Paestum and Tivoli. Individual pieces as well as entire series of buildings from Rome and surroundings soon became popular purchases for visitors, to be displayed in the palaces and academies of Europe. For decades, such models were considered to reproduce the exemplary monumental architecture of antiquity more vividly than any other artistic medium. Of the monuments outside the area of Rome, however, only the Paestum temples were available as models. The remaining ruins in the Kingdom of Naples remained under the 'copyright' of the Neapolitan authorities, who banned both accurate surveys and the making of models. This ban extended in particular to the buildings of Pompeii, where visitors were not even allowed to sketch or draw. An exception was made only for the King of Sweden, Gustav III, who in 1784 commissioned Giovanni Altieri (fl. 1765-1797) to make a model of the Temple of Isis, which is on display today in the Drottningholm Palace just outside Stockholm, although he was expressly forbidden to sell copies of this model.<sup>2</sup>

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1 V. Kockel, "Rom über die Alpen tragen," in W. Helmberger and V. Kockel (edd.), *Rom über die Alpen tragen: Fürsten sammeln antike Architektur: die Aschaffenburg Korkmodelle: mit einem Bestandskatalog* (Landshut-Ergolding 1993) 11-31; id., "Towns and tombs. Three dimensional documentation of archaeological sites in the Kingdom of Naples in the late 18th and early 19th century," in I. Bignamini (ed.), *Archives & excavations* (London 2004) 143-62; id., "Models of Pompeii from the eighteenth century to the "Grand Plastico". The three-dimensional documentation of ancient ruins," in M. Osanna, M. T. Caracciolo and L. Gallo (edd.), *Pompeii and Europe 1748-1943* (Milan 2015) 266-75 (also in Italian).

2 V. Kockel, *Phelloplastica* (Stockholm 1998) 72-89.