Observations made on the museums in Portici and on the Vesuvian sites by two Swedish professionals in 1756 and 1768, respectively

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Returns to Pompeii

Interior space and decoration documented and revived 18th–20th century

Edited by Shelley Hales & Anne-Marie Leander Touati

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Observations on the museums in Portici and the Vesuvian sites made by two Swedish professionals in 1756 and 1768, respectively

Two travel accounts

The corpus of Swedish texts describing reactions to the finds in the Vesuvius area has a beginning that is contemporaneous with the early history of excavations.1 Some texts have appeared in print before but most remain available only in their original, manuscript versions. Among these are two 18th-century travel accounts dealing with visits to Portici (Fig. 7.1), Herculaneum, and Pompeii, which do not just give exemplary testimony on the places that they describe but may also be used to show how these places were experienced and appropriated, and their impact on those who experienced them. The two texts are of particular interest because they involve people who by their position in royal service and profession, if such a term may be used to characterize the trade of an architect/decoration painter and a sculptor of the 18th century, were in a position to influence taste.

The different contexts for the “birth” of the two texts are also an issue of interest. Neither was intended for print. The older, from 1756, is the product of experiences had “on duty” during the travels of three royal craftsmen, two of whom were on a state-supported tour. The author, Georg Fröman the younger, was the humblest of the three, a journeyman accompanying two more high-ranking companions, and one possible explanation for the creation of the text was the need to record the itinerary, means of transportation, durations, and costs. The younger text, from 1768, is a personal record of observations made by a young trainee sculptor, Johan Tobias Sergel, on an excursion from Rome in the company of friends of similar distinction.

The older of these two texts, by Fröman, includes the description of a tourist descent into the famous cuniculi to the excavations of Herculaneum—presumably those of the Villa of the Papyri, then in progress. In spite of its brevity, it describes an experience that may well be the origin of a popular theme of thrill and fright recorded by visitors to the Vesuvian sites. The second text, written by Sergel little more than a decade later, is longer and far more detailed. His description of the Herculaneum Museum partly follows a well-known narrative, but is also an expression of personal views. The description of his itinerary through Pompeii reveals the patchwork impression that the site conveyed to visitors of the day.

A state-supported tour

In 1755, two Swedish artists, Jean Eric Rehn (1717–1793) and Johan Pasch (1706–1769), military draughtsman and decorative painter to the Swedish court, respectively, were sent on a study tour to France and Italy partly financed by Louisa Ulrika Queen of Sweden (1720–1782, Queen1751–1771). They were accompanied by Georg Fröman the younger (1734–1767), a companion of more lowly status who was a journeyman mason at the Royal Palaces and who financed his trip himself. The group stopped at Naples, and visited Portici and Herculaneum in 1756. It could well be that this particular stop had been decided by the Queen.

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1 The title is a play on the English translation of Grosley 1764: *New observations on Italy and its inhabitants. Written in French by two Swedish gentlemen*, London 1769. Sergel’s text was transcribed by Ulf Cederlöf, to whom we are grateful for offering the text to this volume and contextualizing its creation in the section preceding the transcript. Thanks to Lena Olsson for translating this part of the chapter into English. The rest of the chapter was written by Anne-Marie Leander Touati. For further key texts, see Leander Touati in this volume.
Louisa Ulrika’s curiosity concerning the Vesuvian antiquities was most probably awakened in Prussia, before her arrival in Sweden as bride to the heir of the Swedish throne in 1744. In the draft of a letter dated in 1749, belonging to the correspondence of the head of the state chancellery, Count Carl Gustaf Tessin, we learn about efforts made to satisfy her wishes to learn more about the excavations. Contacts had been established in Naples (unfortunately, the addressee of the letter can no longer be deciphered) in the hope of obtaining a description of the ancient city for the princess and also of furnishing her with medallions for her collections. Somewhat later, in a letter to her mother, Sofia Dorothea, Queen Mother in Prussia, Louisa Ulrika complains about the absence of information from the on-going excavations at Herculaneum. She ascribes this obstruction of the promotion of knowledge to an irregularity resulting from the insufficient schooling of those put in charge of the work; ultimately she puts the blame on the king, who she finds responsible for a neglectful recruiting policy. It is worth noting that these remarks, put forth in a letter dated 31 August 1751, substantially antedate Winckelmann’s famous letters on the excavations of Herculaneum in which he propagated similar ideas.

The interest taken in the archaeological enterprises in the realm of Naples both by Louisa Ulrika’s elder sister, Wilhelmine, Margravine of Brandenburg-Bayreuth, and by her brother, Frederick the Great, leading respectively to a visit and a request for acquisitions in the 1750s, are presented in Moormann 2003. See also Kammerer-Grothaus 1998.

3 Louisa Ulrika’s and Count Tessin’s notes on Herculaneum are collected in Laine 1998 with further archival references, 48ff., 78, nn. 59 and 67. For Louisa Ulrika’s letter to her mother see Arneheim 1910, 280. Winckelmann 1762; 1764. The rumour was triggered by the rivalry between Camillo Paderni, head of the collections and Rocque Joaquin de Alcubierre, head of the excavations. Allroggen-Bedel & Kammerer-Grothaus 1980, 184f. Recent scholarship tends to free the early directors of the excavations (Alcubierre 1738–1741; Francesco Rorro and Pierre Babé 1741–1745; Alcubierre, Karl Jacob Weber, and Francesco la Vega from 1750) from this negative verdict.

Fig. 7.1. The Palace of Portici and surroundings as seen by Filippo Morghen, engraver in Naples in 1765–1779. The Caramanico wing, which housed the Herculaneum Museum, is to the left side of the palace.
Given that the two senior travel companions were on a mission initiated by the court, it may well have been the case that the stay at Naples was intended to remedy the lack of information emanating from the kingdom. Objects that belonged to the collections of Louisa Ulrika and boast Herculanean provenance may be seen as arguments supporting such an understanding.\(^5\) In its broad outline, the itinerary of the tour, by way of Berlin to Italy and France, was dictated by the Queen. In a letter to her brother, Frederick the Great, she announces the two senior travellers' passage through Berlin.\(^6\) The interest taken in this tour on behalf of the Swedish court is also evidenced by a letter from Count Tessin, in which he asks Rehn, by then on his way back, to buy two books that had recently appeared in Paris, the Comte de Caylus' *Receuil d'antiquités* and Cochin and Bellicard's *Observations sur les antiquités de la ville d'Herculanium.*\(^7\) The account from the visit, however, does not reveal pursuit of any kind of state commission, only personal observations and impressions; perhaps because the author, Georg Fröman the younger, did not enjoy the same circumstances as his more distinguished travel companions. On the eve of departure in 1755, the royal mason Fröman had just finished his apprentice period. His travel was a training tour, admittedly of special distinction but without active state financing.\(^8\)

Fröman's travel diary starts on 28 June 1755: “At 8 o'clock after dinner I set off from Stockholm in company with Mr Lieutenant Rehn and the royal court painter H. Pasch towards the following places and towns”. It finishes abruptly on 25 April 1756 with the following brief statement: “At 7 a.m. we left Rome”\(^9\). The subsequent travel to Paris and, thereafter, return to Stockholm is not documented.

### Fröman’s diary notes on Portici and Herculaneum

**A.D. 1756**

**March**

**21**

[…]

**22**

We were in Portici where we first viewed the Antiquities that had been found near Herculaneum[,] among which were various curiosities such as bread, wheat, balsam that still retained its scent, figs, rather crude and more delicate miscellaneous instruments used for Sacrificing as well as for other functions[,] after that we were down below ground to view the Antique theatre because of which they first had the opportunity to dig for this lost City[,] after that we went down in another place where they at the present time work[,] here we were far below ground to view this work and it looked rather dangerous in some places seeing that they had propped up the earth with wooden timbers here and there where it would fall down[,] here were in several places the marks of the Ancients' magnificence and expenses in building, in that [there] had been found mosaic floors laid in several diverse fashions; we were here below ground about 50 alen [about 26 ells or 29.50 metres] deep. The city perished 82 years after the birth of Christ when Vesuvius erupted for the first time.

**23**

[…]

**24**

In Portici for the second time to view the Antiquities. The two courtyards.\(^\text{10}\)

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\(^5\) An inventory of the mobile furnishing contained in the palace of Drottningholm was made in 1777 (when the by then widowed Queen ceded this out-of-town residence to the public with usufruct to her son, King Gustaf III). Among the objects belonging to the Queen's museum, the inventory refers to two small bronze horses as being of Herculanean provenance (although they should be understood as Renaissance products according to Larson 1992, figs. 56a–b). Another assuredly ancient piece—a small head in *giallo antico* of a kind common on the Vesuvian sites, used to decorate ancient marble furniture (for a representation, see Leander Touati 2009, fig. 1) could, however, have come from Herculaneum. It lacks provenance in the inventory. The three items now belong to Stockholm's Nationalmuseum: inv. NM Sk 315, 316, and 124, respectively. A full publication of the Swedish royal collections of ancient sculpture is in preparation by the present author in collaboration with a series of colleagues and students.

\(^6\) *Je fait voyager un dessinateur à présent sur mes propres dépens, avec un peintre. Ils iront en France et en Italie et passeront par Berlin* ("At my own expense I have sent on a voyage a draughtsman and a painter. They will go to France and Italy and pass through Berlin") (1755), Wahlberg 1977, 16; Arnheim 1910, II, 373. On behalf of the Office of Manufacture, *Manufakturkontoret*, the precursor to the National Board of Trade, Rehn had another commission: to study silk manufacture, Wahlberg 1977, 155.

\(^7\) Caylus 1752; Cochin & Bellicard 1754.

\(^8\) It seems as though he had not asked for leave of absence from his work at the palace and continued to receive his salary as a journeyman employed at the Royal Palaces during the tour. Olsson 1945, 79; Wahlberg 1977, 155.

\(^9\) Wahlberg 1977, 16 & 155. Quotes translated by the present author.

\(^\text{10}\) Georg Fröman the younger, MS, Uppsala University Library, x290 ba 2 (Rogberg-Fantska samlingen). Text transcribed by Anne-Marie Leander Touati, translation by Lena Olsson.
Impact of the three Swedes’ visit to Portici and Herculaneum

In this narrative the display of the antiquities appears much less impressive than in the following text by Johan Tobias Sergel. In part this may be explained by the fact that the visit of Rehn, Pasch, and Fröman occurred in 1756, two years before the creation of the Herculaneum Museum in the Palazzo Caramanico wing of the Palazzo Reale.11 The text implies that the antiquities were to a large extent presented in the Palace’s enclosed courtyards,12 and small finds and organic material seem to have been displayed together, perhaps in the same room. Once organized, the museum grew progressively.13 There is no mention of paintings in Fröman’s text, something that may perhaps betray lack of interest on behalf of the author. Instead, the text focuses on two kinds of finds on display in Portici, the foodstuffs and the sacred vessels. The visit to the ongoing excavations at Herculaneum appears to have been a far more influential experience, although (probably out of professional interest) the three companions returned to the museum exhibits twice.

The Swedish travellers’ story concerning the dangers attached to the visit of ancient Herculaneum may have had a greater impact than their first-hand experience of the exhibits at Portici. It may well be the origin of the similar but greatly expanded narrative by Pierre-Jean Grosley describing two Swedish gentlemen on tour in Italy in 1758.14 In Grosley’s version of the episode, a group of visitors, the two Swedes first in line, interact in a tunnel where they become fearful and panic when they realize that loose soil flows down the walls like water. The tourists return in such a hurry and disorder that their candles are extinguished, but luckily they escape unharmed. Dangerous thrills of this kind played a given part in the themes that structure the accounts of the Grand Tour. In the lore of the Vesuvian sites, Herculaneum equalled danger and fright, while the more accessible and easily apprehended townscape of Pompeii came to signify grief,15 but soon also re-
vival and, subsequently, “time travel” in both fact and fiction. Fröman’s text bears witness to how, from the start, personal experience and adventure shape the approach to the legacy of the buried cities. As shown by notes added by Sergel to Fröman’s manuscript, the sculptor used the text as a travel guide, in preparation and during his own journey to Italy eleven years later.16 Fröman’s text was convenient for this purpose. It contains as much information on distances, roads, and hostels as on sites and curiosities.

Rehn has been made a foreground figure in this review of a tour that involved three companions because he was to become a most influential architect and designer of interiors working for both royal and aristocratic patrons in Stockholm and around. He was thus the one who could have introduced a “Pompeian” influence into Swedish interior decoration.17 But, although Rehn did introduce a new classical note to his interiors, it includes no reference to the decorative idiom of the buried cities. For the most famous of his interior designs, the Queen’s new library and the adjacent museum rooms at Drottningholm Palace, commissioned shortly after his return to Sweden, he used a very sober classicizing idiom with bookcases framed by shallow, engaged, Corinthian pilasters coupled with sparse, gilded relief ornaments on white walls, the whole discreetly highlighted by means of subtle rococo accents.18

Admittedly, there were not many ancient interiors to be seen at the time of Rehn’s and Pasch’s visit to Portici and Herculaneum since the museum included detached figured scenes only. The travel account mentions floors, never walls. The one type of artefact in the museum that may be demonstrated to have attracted his attention was bronzework. Rehn’s draughtsmanship contains a short series of four sheets with drawings representing such items: candelabra and vases;19 apparently objects which could be integrated in many different kinds of both rococo and classicizing architectonic programmes.

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11 For a review of the documents concerning the museum at Portici and its development, see Allroggen-Bedel & Kammerer-Grothaus 1980, 182.
12 “The two courtyards” refers to the court opening towards the garden of the Palazzo superiore and the inner court of the Caramanico wing of the Palazzo inferiore.
14 Grosley 1764. One reason to change the date from 1756 to 1758 may be found in another spectacular event that occurred during the descent into the coni出色的 as narrated by Grosley. In one of the tunnels, the tourist bumped into the famous bronze sculpture representing the seated Mercury. This sculpture was not found until 1758 and then brought to the museum in Portici, where Winkelmann saw it in place (Winkelmann 1762, 93).
15 “Pompeii ne fait qu’attrister mon ame, mais l’Herculaneum l’atterre” (“Pompeii only saddens my soul but Herculaneum terrifies it”), de Gon-
16 Olsson 1945.
17 Pasch was a decorative painter in royal employment, but never achieved anything like the same impact as Rehn. Fröman stayed true to his craft. At his return, he succeeded his father as master brick mason of the Royal Palaces.
18 Laine 1998, pl. VII. For a recent description and good photographs, see Vahlne 2003.
19 For representations, see Wahlberg & Sundblom 1993, 12–13. Some of these may well have been drawn with the aid of the engravings of the Antichità after the draughtsman’s return to Sweden. They are very precise and include scale indications. Two sheets, however, may have been made in Naples. The drawings are different from the others in that they have no indications of measurements and in that certain details have eluded the artist, such as the proper elaboration of ancient candelabrum feet. It could be that these drawings were drawn from memory rather than from models; that they bear witness to the prohibition against documentation in the Portici museum.
Johan Tobias Sergel on excursion from Rome to Naples, Portici, and Pompeii

BY ULF CEDERLOF

SERGEL’S FIRST YEAR IN ROME

Half-way through the month of August 1767, when the worst of the summer heat had abated, the then 27-year-old sculptor Johan Tobias Sergel (1740–1814), holder of a royal Swedish scholarship, arrived at the French Academy in Rome. The scholarship that was to last eleven years was a reward for the skills he had displayed at Ritari-akademin (the Royal Drawing Academy) in Stockholm and given proof of in various sculptural assignments at the Swedish royal palaces.

Sergel mastered the French language as a student of the royal sculptor, Pierre Hubert L’Archevêque (1720–1778), who was born in Paris but whose family came from Montpellier. Although the educational principles of the Academy in Rome were similar to those to which Sergel was used from his training in Stockholm, his background differed radically from those of his earliest friends at the Academy in Rome. While his foreign friends saw their stay in Rome as a natural stage in their training, Sergel felt more like an exceptional trainee, with high demands on him from home to be successful. While his colleagues shared a historical participation in the European artistic tradition, Sergel had largely had to content himself with engraved reproductions of the works of the great masters during his schooling in Sweden. For this reason, the encounter with classical antiquity and Roman reality came as something of a cultural shock to him. A paralyzing feeling that all his knowledge was without value forced him to start again from the beginning with his drawing-pencil. There were, as he later wrote in his reminiscences, only two paths to follow: classical antiquity and nature itself. To further his studies he made frequent visits both to Rome’s classical ruins, and to various churches and private galleries containing famous works of art; his evenings were spent at the Palazzo Mancini on the Corso, then seat of the French Academy in Rome, producing studies from life models by the light of an oil lamp.

Industrious and talented in his studies, and sincere and appreciated by his friends, Sergel soon became a prominent figure among the motley crew of foreign friends who surrounded him in Rome. Here were painters, sculptors, and engravers, as well as architects. Apart from France, they had come from Germany, Switzerland, Austria, England, Scotland, Ireland, Poland, Russia, Denmark—and also from Sweden.20 They all hoped to establish themselves as leading artists in their respective native countries after completing their studies in Rome.

THE JOURNEY TO NAPLES AND THE VISIT TO PORTICI, AUTUMN 1768

Only a year after his arrival in Rome, Sergel travelled together with a few of his newly-found friends to Naples. Among the participants were the French painter Dominique Lefèvre (1737–1769), Lefèvre’s countryman César Vanloo (1745–1821), the two German scholarship-holders Johann Christian von Mannlich (1741–1822) and Christian Traugott Weinlich (1739–1799), and a today completely unknown artist by the name of Reuschuh, who had the Elector of Saxony as his eminent patron.

There are two widely divergent sources available regarding the reason for the visit to Naples. The more romantic one is Christian von Mannlich’s reminiscences, published in 1910 by Eugen Stollreither,21 according to which the journey was occasioned by a little love adventure in which Mannlich and some friends of the same age had been involved during the summer of 1768, when they were busy drawing Raphael’s Loggia of Psyche in the Villa Farnesina by the Tiber. From the nearby Palazzo Corsini, the former Roman residence of Christina of Sweden, they had secretly been observed by a beautiful Roman lady. When it transpired that the fair lady had taken a fancy to the German draughtsman Mannlich, he had been goaded by his companions to ever more bold exploits in order to return her affections. It could only end in one way when the father of the beauty, the steward of Cardinal Corsini, found out about the affair and, in the presence of the then director of the French Academy in Rome, the painter Charles-Joseph Natoire, demanded that they immediately marry. If they did not, he threatened revenge in the Roman way; that is to say by assassination. When an agreement could not be reached, Mannlich found it prudent to leave Rome for a time and go to Naples, together with some reliable companions who could also function as his bodyguards. Mannlich’s statement is, however, contradicted by the account of the journey to Naples that Stollreither, who was born in Paris but whose family came from Montpellier, delivered in his reminiscences, published in 1887,22 according to which the journey was entirely down to Lefèvre’s poor health, which also led to his premature death in Rome in the following year.

Sergel’s own account of the journey is expressed in minute detail in a soft-covered, leather-bound notebook-cum-diary he kept during his early days in Rome. It was long kept as an heirloom by the family, but was finally purchased by the Na-

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20 Regarding Sergel and his circle of friends during Sergel’s early days in Rome, see Antonsson 1942, 112–122; Cederlöf 2004, 30–45.
21 Stollreither 1910, 123f.
22 de Montaiglon 1887, 209.
In the autumn of 1994. From this notebook it can be learned that the group left Rome on 6 October 1768, and took the road via Valmontone, Frosinone, and Cepano before, in a place Sergel calls Lisolletta, they reached the border of the United Kingdoms of Naples and Sicily and had their luggage thoroughly inspected. They then travelled on across Monte Cassino, making a detour of 18 Neapolitan miles to Capua, until, late in the evening on the third day or early in the morning on the fourth, they reached Naples, their final destination. With curiosity and eagerness, they immediately visited the city’s most important tourist landmarks, strolled among its churches, visited the Royal Palace with its art collections, and picked up laurel from the Tomb of Virgil.

In the course of the following days they visited the Royal Palace of Caserta, the architecture of which did not immediately appeal to Sergel. In a rented carriage and, for the last bit of the way, on the backs of mules, they made an excursion to the foot of Vesuvius, and climbed to the summit of the volcano with the aid of ropes and hired guides. In nearby Herculaneum they went underground to view the excavated theatre, and, in the museum of antiquities at Portici, they saw the excavated finds. Sergel was dazzled by the wealth among the finds, and filled page upon page in his combined notebook and diary with observations and reflections on the art of the ancient Romans and their uninhibited manner of living and socializing. From Portici the travellers went on to Pompeii. When Sergel arrived, Pompeii was still largely buried under pumice, ash, and earth, and covered by a multitude of vineyards that spread across the fertile lands below the volcano.

The journey to Naples was concluded by a visit to the ancient ruins of Pozzuoli, Baiae, and Cumae. After little more than a three-week stay in Naples and its surroundings, the group was back in Rome by the end of October or possibly the beginning of November 1768.

**Sergel in Portici and Pompeii**

On Wednesday we went to Portici to see the antiquities. In the King’s palace is the Balbus Equestrian statue in marble, on the same side on the floor is the precious collection of antique [wall] paintings, I observed that the small figures are far better than the large ones, in the case of the latter they are in the grand style but not by far as well-executed as the smaller[,] which are painted with all the good taste that one could wish for in such frescoes, I especially noticed a small Bacchante holding a Centaur by the hair and supporting herself with her knee on his back. In a frieze above this are several dancing women who are also of great merit. A faun holding a Bacchante about the breast and kissing her. Another one holding a young boy in his arms. Two small paintings that are more finished than the others represent a group of women dressed in white[,] very beautiful. Friezes with arabesques that are admirably beautiful.

Some of these were found in Herculaneum and some in Pompeii, the number approaches 1,500 paintings, one of the larger[,] Chiron the Centaur teaching Achilles to play the lute[,] is well-composed but badly drawn. A Bacchus likewise. A small tiger fighting a snake coiled about its front leg is admirably well-painted and drawn. Numerous fish and birds which are painted very tastefully and rather brightly coloured, several of them are masterfully executed. All these paintings are painted in fresco, and for preservation’s sake they are coated with varnish and set in glass frames.

The Royal Museum is doubtlessly the costliest and rarest collection in existence of antique vases in metal, sacrificial vessels, and all the appropriate items required for the Ancients’ worship of their Divinities. In the first room is a Tripod [with] three satyrs with their privy members erect, on their heads is a brazier in which the fire was contained[,] it is well-wrought and preserved, in this room is also a sacrificial casket in which the old ashes and some pieces of coal can still be seen. The cabinets lining this room are filled with metal vases of a fine shape, the ornamentation is well-fashioned. In the second room are several vessels that were used in the old baths, such as vials of balsam [and] a curved iron implement for scraping the feet, several kinds of lamps, one more beautiful than the next. One can also see individual surgical instruments. A great many lamps for reading, Plaster moulds for masks. Old flutes made of ivory, a kind of metal bassoon, keys, locks, hinges, dice, in

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23 The leather-bound notebook, 19.50 × 11 cm in size, has the inventory code number NMH 87/1995 in the collections of the Nationalmuseum. It has a total of 108 pages divided into three sections. The account of the journey to Naples in 1768 can be found on pp. 14–43. However, the notebook was not unknown to earlier Sergel scholars. Oscar Antonsson, for instance, had ample opportunity to study it in preparation for his 1942 book on Sergel’s youth and time in Rome, wherein the Naples visit is dealt with, 123–131.
a cabinet by the window are individual Priapi, one in particular on which rides a small Cupid, the hind part ends in a lion, another whose head is crowned by a laurel wreath by Cupid, one in silver that the women wore about their necks when barren. A seated satyr whose privy member is erect, at the back next to the head was poured in milk which then flowed out of the *membrum virile*, this also served for [carnal] stimulation, in addition to these are several others with peculiar shapes.

In the third Room are several beautiful metal heads, well-wrought, in a cabinet are preserved old manuscripts that are almost completely charred, but a monk has conceived of a method of fastening them to linen so that they can be read, if with great difficulty.

In the fourth and fifth rooms are several kinds of tall candlesticks, in the sixth room are all manner of kitchen utensils. In the next room is a large vase in white marble, two metal figures that are well-wrought. NB next can be seen all manner of foodstuffs, such as beans, bread, almonds, wheat flour, in a tall vase one can see wine that has been calcined. In a vase is oil which still gives off a fatty odour, here is also some of the Balsam that was used to embalm the dead. In another room is a Mercury in metal who sits leaning [forward], supporting himself with his elbow on his left knee, this is the best figure they have recovered, next can be seen various helmets and parts of armour, a long bar of iron to which they secured prisoners, in addition to these are yet another few rooms full of antique bas-reliefs and mosaics. Everything that can be seen that is made of iron is severely rusted but everything that is made of [precious] metals is still as pure as if it had just been produced.

NB in this cabinet is a beautiful vase in silver on which is engraved in bas-relief the apotheosis of Homer, fairly ably wrought; a bas-relief representing the death of Cleopatra, well-composed and wrought, here are several beautiful vases and bowls, everything in silver. On the side is a box filled with women's bracelets, earrings, rings, a kind of order young nobles wore upon their chests, everything in gold, and braid made from solid gold thread. A collection of gold medals, one carrying the portrait of the Emperor Augustus, which is the largest there is, and a collection of cameos and carnelians. The floors are laid with antique parquets in mosaic. It would be desirable if one would be permitted to draw several vases for their handsome shapes. Here are also two chairs or *chaise Curile* [curile chairs] which are beautiful. In the staircase are several metal figures that were recovered from the Coliseum [the theatre] in Herculanum, of marble are also two figures that appear to represent Vestals, these are in the courtyard, a horse’s head which is admirable. From Portici we went to Pompeii. This entire sea shore is very fertile with vineyards along almost 3 [Swedish] miles [i.e., approximately 30 kilometres] of road, but after that the lava begins, which has run down into the sea and demolished the many country residences whose walls can still be seen partially covered in lava and destroyed. Pompeii is everywhere overgrown with vineyards. One can see a temple dedicated to the Goddess Isis, around this is a colonnade, the temple itself is decorated with stucco, before this is a portico of which can still be seen broken columns that remain standing, inside the Temple is the room in which the oracle was consulted, on the right is another small temple, before this is an altar; on either side of the large temple are also two altars, in several rooms surrounding this temple were found the paintings which are now in the King’s Museum. Farther on are several other houses and small temples. One can also see a square building, facing the courtyard are stone columns, on the one side there was a gaol cell, for there was found the iron bar that can be seen in the Museum[,] and the many skeletons that have been found lead to this assumption as well, for they have not been able to save themselves from the ash that has covered this unfortunate city. To the left of the main road was a subterranean bath, there remains still a skeleton next to a large clay urn, it is clear from the attitude of the skeleton that the ash has covered him without his being able to save himself, in this room is an unbearable offensive air
which prevents anyone from long remaining there, on this side one can see a large chair in the shape of a semicircle, farther on in the vineyard are also many excavated houses that used to be lavishly decorated with paintings, some of the inferior ones are usually left in place so that one can see where these beautiful paintings used to be. The city gate has also been excavated, on the one side is a large pedestal and on the other a magistrate’s seat. For five years now the King has not had the excavated parts of the town covered over, he purchases vineyards little by little as he proceeds to have the town excavated, but formerly the one side was covered over while the other was excavated.

(p. 36)
It is five and twenty years since they discovered Pompeii, the city was covered with ash at the same time that the lava destroyed Herculaneum which lies buried under the whole of Portici.\footnote{24}

The contribution of Sergel’s text
BY ANNE-MARIE LEANDER TOUATI

DESCRIPTION OF THE HERCULANENSE MUSEUM

Given that it was directly linked to the excavations, it is natural that the Portici Museum was a constantly expanding institution. Ironically enough, the first attempt to inventory the museum was not made until 1798, in view of its first closing (the core of the collections was prepared for a move to Palermo ahead of the revolutionary events in Naples that would lead to the creation of the Repubblica Partenopea).\footnote{25} Because of the late date of this inventory and the famous Bourbon policy of secrecy,\footnote{26} the early development of the display is impossible to follow in detail. Since visits were viewed as a privilege accorded by royal decision and all visitors were accompanied, surveyed, and prohibited to keep any kind of written or drawn record, it is difficult to decide whether actual change of the display or confusion in memorizing explains divergent descriptions. A restricted number of documents, involving plans made by Giovanni Battista Piranesi in 1770 (Fig. 7.2), help but each one of them presents its own particular problems of interpretation.\footnote{27} Two fairly far-reaching presentations of the Herculaneum Museum were printed in the early and mid-1770s.\footnote{28} Three earlier, less detailed accounts include a passage in the first of Johann Joachim Winckelmann’s two long essays in epistolary form on the discoveries of Herculaneum,\footnote{29} the two others, by Auguste-Denis Fougéroux de Bondaroy and Pierre Sylvain Maréchal, stem from visits in the 1760s although published at later dates.\footnote{30} To these may be added numerous other impressions of the museum. They are generally descriptions of more personal intent focusing certain points of interest or general impressions,\footnote{31} or again repeating the already published texts.

From the creation of the museum in 1758, and likely from before this time, the display was divided in two parts, one for the paintings (Museo delle Piture) in the Palazzo superiore (north of the highway spanned by the Palace, Fig. 8.2) while the lion’s share of other kinds of finds were collocated in the Caramanico wing of the Palazzo inferiore (the Herculaneum Museum, south of the highway, Figs. 7.1, 8.2). No doubt, pieces also remained in the courtyard of the Palazzo superiore in the later life of the museum.\footnote{32} In pride of place, in focal position of the two vestibules of the palace (entrances to its superiore and inferiore parts) stood the two equestrian statues representing the Nonii Balbi, father and son, or plausibly both representing the same Marcus Nonius Balbus.\footnote{33} At a later date, the paintings were moved to the ground floor of the Palazzo Caramanico (west wing of the Palazzo inferiore), that is to premises beneath the original Herculaneum Museum.

\footnote{24} Text transcribed by Ulf Cederlöf, translated by Lena Olsson.
\footnote{25} When escaping to Palermo, the royal family brought 60 trunks of antiquities from the Portici museum in their luggage. The relocation of the collections from Portici to Naples started during the following French administration in 1808. Allroggen-Bedel & Kammerer-Grothaus 1980, 183.
\footnote{26} Allroggen-Bedel 2008; Allroggen-Bedel & Kammerer-Grothaus 1980, 191.
\footnote{27} The Piranesi plans, for example, were not published until 1804–1807 (in the second volume of the Antiquitie de la Grande Grece), not by Giovanni Battista, by then long since deceased, but by his son, Francesco. For further problems concerning these particular documents, such as a confusion of the ground and first floors in the plan, see Allroggen-Bedel & Kammerer-Grothaus 1980, 191f.
\footnote{28} Volkmann 1770/1771, 278–303; Bernoulli 1775, 77–87.
\footnote{29} Winckelmann 1762.
\footnote{31} For a short review of this variety, see Cantilena 2008b, 80.
\footnote{32} For the layout of the Palace, see Bragantini & Cantilena in this volume, Fig. 8.1.
\footnote{33} None of the portrait sculptures representing Marcus Nonius Balbus, patron of Herculaneum, has survived with portrait head preserved. The probability that both equestrian statues represented the same man has been put forth by Muscettola 1982. I thank Eric Moormann for this reference.
Plan général du Musée de Pompéi, dans lequel sont indiquées les salles où ont été conservés les objets trouvés à Pompéi et à Herculanum dans l'an 1779.
Sergel started his visit in the Museo delle Pitture in the Palazzo superiore. He describes the access from the vestibule housing the equestrian statue of Marcus Nonius Balbus. Although he is mistaken about the alleged identity of the rider (in most accounts Marcus Nonius Balbus was identified as the rider in the vestibule of the Palazzo inferiore; the corresponding space of the Palazzo superiore was believed to house the monument to his son), his remark makes clear that the entrance to the Museo delle Pitture was separate from that to the Museo Ercolanense proper. The latter was entered directly from the highway, through the famous gate situated in the north façade of the Palazzo Caramanico.34

Among the few paintings commented on by Sergel, several belong to the group of most renowned pieces, many times mentioned in the museum and to comment upon such items that he found in the so-called Basilica of Herculanum in 1738. After the description of the paintings, the stage changes abruptly. Without mentioning how we got there, Sergel takes us inside the Royal Museum (that is, the Herculaneum Museum proper on the first floor of the Palazzo Caramanico). In the description that follows, it is obvious that Sergel has a double purpose, to let his memory challenge the secrecy of the museum and to comment upon such items that he found of particular interest. He numbers the first six rooms and then proceeds to more imprecise indications, such as “the next room”, “next”, “in another room”. If these introductory phrases may be understood as marking passage from one room to the other, we may count ten rooms mentioned individually and further as wholesale: “in addition to these are yet another few rooms full of antique bas-reliefs and mosaics”.

This progress of his description is fascinating by itself for what it tells of the ways of memory. The text starts off with assurance, numbering each of the visited rooms. Then, after the sixth room, it becomes more approximate until finally, it loses control over the calculus and, subsequently, remembers no piece in particular, only categories of objects. And then, as the terminus of the visit approaches, once again it becomes detailed and, anew, a pick of choice pieces are advanced for remembrance. In this context it is worth remarking that the best descriptions of the museum made by visitors confronting the same difficulties as Sergel (Winckelmann, Volkmann, Bernoulli and Piranesi)35 tend to agree on the contents of the five to six first rooms but then become increasingly divergent concerning the rest of the total of 17 (or 18). The organization of the rooms may have contributed to this mnemonic result. Apparently the first rooms were centred on themes or show pieces. Each could be apprehended as an identity-bearing entity and were, thereby, easier to remember than the later suite of rooms, differently organized. Like Sergel, when Winckelmann turns attention towards the tenth to seventeenth rooms he talks about them and their contents as lacking a particular showpiece or category of finds: “Die übrigen zimmer sind noch nicht zu besonderen Dingen bestimmt” (“the remaining rooms are not yet given over to particular categories of things”).36

Sergel’s description deviates from the other at a much earlier stage, when exiting the sixth room. Apparently he was already confused as he turned to the fourth. However, a comparison with the most thorough accounts of the display in the 1760s, as collated by Agnes Allroggen-Bedel and Helke Kamm er-Grothaus,37 may be used both to demonstrate Sergel’s errors and to restore his credibility.

A first point is that Sergel does not mention the famous reading machine in the fourth room (compare the alternative solutions of room layout offered by the plans, Figs. 7.2 and 8.2) nor the 800 or so rolls of papyri kept in the fifth. On the subject of papyri, he only mentions the presence of a couple of rolls in the third room and, in the same context, makes a note on how the papyri were consolidated in order to permit opening and reading. This small first taste of what was further developed in the following two rooms is not mentioned by other contemporary accounts of the display, but it recurs anew in the much more detailed inventory made of the museum in 1798.38 The impression conveyed is that Sergel evaded or missed the visit of the two main papyri rooms for some reason. Maybe he was not interested or, perhaps, for some reason the rooms were closed. The plan of the palace offered a parallel set of rooms (Figs. 7.2 and 8.2), an arrangement that may have presented the possibility to continue the visit without entering the papyrus workshop and storage room.39

On the following rooms Sergel is very brief. He reports on the main categories of objects or the “highlights” that characterized the sixth through to the tenth room (which he numbers differently). His sequence is mostly correct: the candelaabra (candlesticks) of room six—99 bronze pieces according to the 1798 inventory; the kitchen utensils suit the seventh

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34 See Bрагanตini & Cantilena in this volume, Fig. 8.6.
35 Piranesi’s plan (Fig. 7.2) displays a serious misunderstanding concerning the layout of the suite of rooms after the twelfth room. The total does not sum up to 17.
36 Winckelmann 1762, 93.
38 For the full title of and discussion on this inventory, see Allroggen-Bedel & Kamm er-Grothaus 1980, n. 36.
39 There is no reliable plan showing the museum. Piranesi’s plan seems more comfortable with numbering and positioning museum exhibits than with the actual size and appearance of individual rooms—even in positioning doorways and so forth.
room, a vaulted niche furnished as a kitchen by means of a bench brought from Pompeii (no. 115 in Fig. 7.2); the large marble vase in mid-position on the floor was a show piece of the eighth (or seventh room in the numbering of Winckelmann who chose not to number the kitchen alcove); the famous bronze sculpture representing the seated Mercury in the ninth (or eighth) room and then, in the tenth room, the many silver vessels, cameos, and jewellery, including silver and marble reliefs and other precious objects. The tenth room was the treasury of the museum. It also housed the famous display of foodstuffs and balsam ointment which Sergel mentions at an earlier room stage in his description.

In spite of the somewhat divergent numbering of the rooms, the sequence (and the objects listed) agree fairly well with that in Winckelmann’s Sendschreiben. More differences occur when the comparison is made to include Bernoulli’s and Volkmann’s descriptions. Obviously, the display changed in the 1760s in that the last rooms of the sequence of 18, initially sparsely used, were progressively furnished. Some of the showpieces, such as the Mercury, were moved from the place where Winckelmann and Sergel saw them to new positions in the later rooms of the tour and new finds were added.

Sergel’s most important contribution to knowledge about the Herculaneum Museum is no doubt his focus on the erotic. Due to the personal, that is to say private, character of his text he could indulge in the description of and comments on the “priapi” in a way that was impossible for reviewers who intended to print and propagate their observations. Furthermore, Sergel’s text points out that in the late 1760s the “obscene” objects had not yet been sorted out and banished to the last room of the display; the eighteenth room developed into a forerunner to the famous Gabinetto segreto, a secluded part of the later Museo Archeologico in the Palazzo degli Studi in Naples. In the 1760s, these objects were instead permitted to greet the visitor in the very first rooms of the museum, where they were obviously willingly commented upon by the museum guard who, as a more or less compulsory companion, followed the visitor through the collection. Why else would Sergel state with such assurance that a silver pendant representing an erect phallus was worn by “women [...] about their necks when barren”. Similarly, the idea that a lamp shaped in the same way was used as a milk pitcher in antiquity, a conclusion most likely born from the likeness in colour between milk and semen, was most likely put forth by a guide. However, it is not unlikely that the other idea concerning the function of this same object, that it was intended for “stimulation”, that is to say as a kind of dildo, may well stem from Sergel himself. His interest in and uninhibited relation to carnal pleasure is well-known, not least through the erotic themes that form part of his own draughtsmanship.40

**DESCRIPTION OF POMPEII**

On route to Pompeii, Sergel describes the fertile countryside and the consequences of recent eruptions:41 walls of country residences demolished by pyroclastic flows, sticking out of the otherwise covering lava. In Pompeii, the work of unearthing the ancient city had just entered a new phase. “For five years now the King has not had the excavated parts of the town covered.” This remark gives accurate dating. It agrees with the date of the circumstances leading to the excursion, presented above. In fact, the renowned Villa of Cicero, in which the famous paintings that Sergel had admired in the Museo delle Pitture at Portici had been discovered in 1748/9 and 1763, was one of the last important houses to be backfilled. Concerning the other date he gives for his visit, 25 years after the discovery of Pompeii, he is less precise. If he alludes to the official start of the works at Pompeii in 1748, he should more correctly have written, 20 years.

The unearthed parts were few. Sergel starts his description with the Temple of Isis, excavated in 1764–1766. He is impressed by the columns and the stucco decorations and remembers the painting with provenance from the temple that he saw in the Museo delle Pitture. Then he continues his visit to the nearby Gladiator Barracks, described as a square building with porticos. It was excavated in 1766–1769. Here, he remembers the bar on which “prisoners were secured” seen in the Herculaneum Museum in the room that also housed helmets and various pieces of armour, some of which came from the same find-spot. The subterranean bath in which Sergel saw a skeleton lying by a basin must have been the Sarno Baths,42 since the Stabian Baths were not excavated until the mid-19th century, later than the Forum Baths excavated in the 1820s. Moving north, there were obviously more piecemeal excavated sites to be seen, implying that not all trenches were backfilled. It is worth noting that Sergel saw walls on which both framework and central panels were left in place: “farther on in the vineyard are also many excavated houses that used to be lavishly decorated with paintings, some of the inferior ones are usually left in place so that one can see where these beautiful paintings used to be”. In the space outside the Her-

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40 On Sergel’s and his friend Carl August Ehrensvärd’s continuous interest in the priapic theme, see Nilsson 1990. For more on Ehrensvärd, see Leander Touati in this volume.

41 Numerous through the 17th and 18th centuries. A series of eruptions in 1631, 1737, 1751, 1754, 1760, and in 1767—the year before Sergel’s visit, and so forth, are listed in Cooley 2003, 75; for a thorough description, see Scarth 2009.

42 Moorman 2003.
culaneum Gate, excavated in 1763–1764, he mentions the two sepulchral monuments closest to the gate on each side of the street.

**SERGEL’S PROFESSIONAL ASSESSMENT OF THE ANTIQUITIES OF PORTICI AND POMPEII**

Sergel’s text reveals a professional who uses both his trained eye and his personal intuition when selecting points of interest in the display. Three themes recur frequently throughout the description. During his museum tour, Sergel is the trainee artist used to surfing collections in search for models. He discusses quality. But he also returns willingly to the thrill of the senses, the erotica, and the gruesome. The latter is a main *topos* on site, of course, but is experienced also in the museum. When discussing art and craft, Sergel’s primary interest is in qualities that match his own talents: skill in plastic rendering, figure drawing, and choice of motif.

The negative assessment of the paintings in the Portici museum resulting from neoclassical expectation is well-known from many accounts. In this context, it should come as no surprise that Sergel’s passage on the paintings is short. Although his emphasis is on positive impressions, he expresses reservations concerning what he sees as examples of “grand style”. Instead, his preference goes to the small figures which may be apprehended as part of the over-all decorative designs of the wall rather than pictures in their own right, although presumptuously displayed in the museum as framed pictures. In this he reveals not only his professional gaze but also an understanding of the intent of the art at which he is looking. The same interest in whole original designs draws his attention to the walls still to be seen in the abandoned trenches of Pompei. It is also worth noting that he is pleased with the ornamental repertoire on display in the museum: “I observed [...] friezes with arabesques that are admirably beautiful”.

The paintings to which he gives the most unreserved praise are: “two small paintings that are more finished than the others represent a group of women dressed in white [,...] admirably well executed”. Although not divided in two pictures, the thus-described representation should probably be identified as the painted scene representing Niobe and her daughters in-...ed thus-described representation should probably be identified as the painted scene representing Niobe and her daughters in-...ed thus-described representation should probably be identified as the painted scene representing Niobe and her daughters in-...ed thus-described representation should probably be identified as the painted scene representing Niobe and her daughters in-...ed thus-described representation should probably be identified as the painted scene representing Niobe and her daughters in-...ed thus-described representation should probably be identified as the painted scene representing Niobe and her daughters in-...ed thus-described representation should probably be identified as the painted scene representing Niobe and her daughters in-...ed thus-described representation should probably be identified as the painted scene representing Niobe and her daughters in-...ed thus-described representation should probably be identified as the painted scene representing Niobe and her daughters in-...ed thus-described representation should probably be identified as the painted scene representing Niobe and her daughters in-...ed thus-described representation should probably be identified as the painted scene representing Niobe and her daughters in-...ed thus-described representation should probably be identified as the painted scene representing Niobe and her daughters in-...ed thus-described representation should probably be identified as the painted scene representing Niobe and her daughters in-. The second group, the metal vases, belong to the first group. Both monumental vases and fine tableware were central to elite life and ordered public space. As such they were a group of objects which would naturally interest professional designers. Sergel was not alone in admiring them. Neither was he alone in expressing admiration for the bronze sculptures. Concerning this art, closely related to his own, it is important to note both for what objects he expressed his liking and what he chose not to mention. In this quest, once again, the collected knowledge of the display of the Herculanese Museum helps to complete the image conveyed by Sergel’s text, just as the comparison with Winckelmann’s *Sendschreiben* demonstrates Sergel’s independence from this authority in aesthetic judgement.

Apart from the ithyphallic tripod which may be brought to the sculpture category, the first objects of the kind mentioned are “three metal heads, well-wrought” to be found in the third room. The other sources on the museum help to identify these as the three small bronze busts of Greek “intellectuals”: Her-...thers, sculpted in intarsia in the floor of the so-called Red Drawing Room (Wahlberg 1977, 160).

The Antichità presents this kind of candelabrum as ornament separating...America, 2017, 271, pl. XXXIV. The same kind of candelabrum is repeated within the painted *velum* that covers the roof above the apsidal-shaped divan niche at Rosenborg Palace (Toilette of Queen Hedvig Eleonora Charlotte. Sjöberg 2005, 208). The niche and its *velum* decoration clearly recall the mosaic-decorated niche brought from Herculanenum (from the house later known as the House of the Skeleton) to be restored in the Portici Museum by Giuseppe Canart (MANN inv. 1008. Bragantini 2008, 181, pl. 5). where Winckelmann saw it in the ninth room. Winckelmann 1762, 93. 46 Alroggen-Bedel & Kammerer-Grothaus 1980, 285.


44 Tullgarn Palace, refurbished for Fredrik Adolf (1750–1803) youngest brother of King Gustav III in the 1780s, also boasts other scenes borrowed from the Antichità, such as that of the Cupid Seller, rearranged as an *intarsia* in the floor of the so-called Red Drawing Room (Wahlberg 1977, 160).

45 Rosenborg Palace, residence for the second of the three royal brothers, Carl, was refurbished 1809–1813 upon the former regent’s ascension on the throne (Sjöberg 2005, 198). The model candelabra were displayed at Portici as framed pictures in their own right. Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli (MANN) inv. 8538, 9869, 9874.

46 On Masreliez, see Nisser-Dalman in this volume. On further painters, see Sjöberg 2005, 285.

47 The Antichità presents this kind of candelabrum as ornament separating...America, 2017, 271, pl. XXXIV. The same kind of candelabrum is repeated within the painted *velum* that covers the roof above the apsidal-shaped divan niche at Rosenborg Palace (Toilette of Queen Hedvig Eleonora Charlotte. Sjöberg 2005, 208). The niche and its *velum* decoration clearly recall the mosaic-decorated niche brought from Herculanenum (from the house later known as the House of the Skeleton) to be restored in the Portici Museum by Giuseppe Canart (MANN inv. 1008. Bragantini 2008, 181, pl. 5). where Winckelmann saw it in the ninth room. Winckelmann 1762, 93. 46 Alroggen-Bedel & Kammerer-Grothaus 1980, 280–209.
The “two metal figures that are well-wrought” are the two “runners”, also from the Villa of the Papyri. According to the Piranesi plan of the museum, they stood on each side of the doorway leading from the eighth towards the ninth room (Fig. 7.2, nos 120 and 120bis). Both these rooms were centred on monumental vases, which Sergel probably confused in his memory; more correctly, it would seem, the one in the eighth room was in bronze, the one in the ninth of marble. Finally, in the tenth (?) room, the seated Mercury: “the best figure they have recovered”. Further, Sergel mentions sculptures in the staircase, both in bronze (praised by Winckelmann) and marble, though apparently he was not very impressed. The last piece he finds to his taste is the famous horse head in bronze. It was kept in the courtyard of the Palazzo Capranico.

It is worth noting that his appraisals do not totally agree with Winckelmann’s. The six bronze dancers from the Villa of the Papyri which Winckelmann included in his group of “schoensten Statuen” (“most beautiful statues”) is only dismissed as: “several metal figures” in Sergel’s description of pieces to be seen in the staircase of the museum (and attributed an erroneous provenance). Likewise he does not mention Winckelmann’s “hettrutsche Diana” (“Etruscan Diana”). Sergel’s aesthetics were attracted by the classical, not by the archaic (or, as in this case, the archaizing) style in sculpture. Perhaps more surprising is his silence concerning the two large Bacchic bronzes from the Villa of the Papyri; the Drunken and the Sleeping satyr. Winckelmann reported them in the same room as the Mercury, to which he considered them equals. Since Sergel’s description of the museum finds its closest parallel in Winckelmann’s, we may suspect that these three bronzes were still displayed together in the same room in 1768. Bernoulli, apparently experiencing the museum at a slightly later date, reports the Sleeping satyr to be in the twelfth room and the Mercury as focal point in the thirteenth.

Sergel’s omission of the two resting characters of the Bacchic retinue is all the more surprising as his first important work in Rome, started fewer than two years later, was a sculpture representing a reclining, drunken faun (Fig. 7.3).

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50 Allroggen-Bedel & Kammerer-Grothaus 1980, 202 and fig. 7.
51 On Sergel’s preferences in the collection of ancient sculpture in Stockholm, see Leander Touati 2005, 25.
52 Allroggen-Bedel & Kammerer-Grothaus 1980, 207f.
Fig. 7.4. Sketch by Johan Tobias Sergel representing a drunken faun probably made during Sergel’s stay in Naples. Note the close similarity of the anatomy and twist of the torso as compared to the satyr from Villa of the Papyri. Red chalk. Nationalmuseum, Stockholm.

Fig. 7.5. Drunken satyr from Villa of the Papyri, Herculaneum. Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli.
Although Sergel ultimately found other, more well-balanced, classicizing sources of inspiration for his Faun, a red chalk sketch by his hand (Fig. 7.4), belonging to an early stage in the process of creation, may be taken as evidence that the Drunken satyr in Portici (Fig. 7.5) counted among his early sources of influence. In the sketch, the lifted leg, the raised arm, and the torsion of the torso of the satyr (the first two abandoned in the achieved sculpture) are traits that may well be in debt to the Herculanean satyr. It may also be taken as evidence of the exceptional acuteness of his faculty to memorize.

The experience

The most striking common trait of the two texts presented above is the prominent place given to personal involvement, the thrills and frights on site, and the almost tangible proximity to ancient lives experienced in the museum. Even though the protagonists of these texts were professional builders and decorators, the impression of access to ancient daily life conveyed by the finds and the easily felt impact of catastrophe largely prime the accounts.

The text recording the visit of the three companions in 1756 is too short to reveal specialized intents but there is little doubt that Sergel was out to make professional use of his visits. Still, he constantly returns to the other sides of the experience. In the museum he lingers on the feeling of physical involvement, on the objects telling tales of carnal pleasure, and of the threat of violence and corporeal compulsion, the latter conjured by the “long bar of iron to which they secured prisoners”. In approaching Pompeii, the visitor is reminded of the treacherous security of modern life. The landscape is anew and, this time, recently covered by volcanic debris. In Pompeii, the gruesome presents itself in the guise of the skeleton of a victim struck in vain flight in a subterranean room, which still presents its dangers to the modern visitor who is forced to leave because of the unbearably offensive air. There is little wonder that the personal experience of past life and event largely outdid their professional considerations.54


54 Later Swedish architects testify to the fact that it took a longer stay to learn to appreciate the Pompeian decorations. See Leander Touati in this volume.
CHAPTER 2

Fig. 2.1. Courtesy of Giobby Greco and Pietro Micillo. Photo: Hans Thorwid, 2014.

Fig. 2.2. Photo: Hans Thorwid.

Fig. 2.3. Courtesy of Notaio Mario Matano and Avvocato Sergio di Lauro. Photo: Flavia Bellardelli.

Fig. 2.4. Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg, C 3594 I. 1. Photo: Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg.

Fig. 2.5. © Soprintendenza Speciale per il PSAE e per il Polo Museale della Città di Napoli e della Reggia di Caserta. Photo: Hans Thorwid.

Fig. 2.6. © Soprintendenza Speciale per il PSAE e per il Polo Museale della Città di Napoli e della Reggia di Caserta. Photo: Hans Thorwid.

Fig. 2.7. Soprintendenza Speciale per i Beni Archeologici di Napoli e Pompei. Photo: Hans Thorwid.

Fig. 2.8. Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg, C 3594 IV. pl. 24. Photo: Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg.

Fig. 2.9. © Soprintendenza Speciale per il PSAE e per il Polo Museale della Città di Napoli e della Reggia di Caserta. Photo: Hans Thorwid.

Fig. 2.10. © Soprintendenza Speciale per il PSAE e per il Polo Museale della Città di Napoli e della Reggia di Caserta. Photo: Hans Thorwid.

Fig. 2.11. Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg, C 3594 II. 214. Photo: Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg.

Fig. 2.12. Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg, C 3594 II. 147. Photo: Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg.

Fig. 2.13. Per concessione della Biblioteca del Monumento Nazionale della Badia di Cava di Tirreni. Courtesy of Padre Don Leone Morinelli. Photo: Werner Heilmann.

Fig. 2.14. Photo: Hans Thorwid.

Fig. 2.15. Courtesy of Comune di Caserta, dott.ssa Ezia Pamela Cioffi. Photo: Hans Thorwid.

Fig. 2.16. Soprintendenza per i BAPSAE per Napoli e Provincia. Courtesy of Ermanno Bellucci and Ingeniere Liccardi. Photo: Hans Thorwid.

Fig. 2.17. Photo: Hans Thorwid.

Fig. 2.18. Photo: Hans Thorwid.

Fig. 2.19. Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg, C 5988 2, pl. 2. Photo: Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg.

Fig. 2.20. © Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte, su concessione del Ministero delle Attività Culturali e del Turismo. Photo: Hans Thorwid.

Fig. 2.21. Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg, C 2422 5, pl. 17. Photo: Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg.

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Fig. 2.23. © Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte, su concessione del Ministero delle Attività Culturali e del Turismo. Photo: Hans Thorwid.
Fig. 2.24. Soprintendenza Speciale per i Beni Archeologici di Napoli e Pompei. Photo: Hans Thorwid.

Fig. 2.25. © Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte, su concessione del Ministero delle Attività Culturali e del Turismo. Photo: Hans Thorwid.

Fig. 2.26. Soprintendenza Speciale per i Beni Archeologici di Napoli e Pompei. Photo: Hans Thorwid.

Fig. 2.27. Photo: Hans Thorwid.

Fig. 2.28. Photo: Hans Thorwid.

Fig. 2.29. Photo: Hans Thorwid.

Fig. 2.30. Photo: Hans Thorwid.

Fig. 2.31. Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg, C 2422 7. pl. 51. Photo: Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg.

Fig. 2.32. Photo: Hans Thorwid.

Fig. 2.33. Photo: Hans Thorwid.

Fig. 2.34. Photo: Hans Thorwid.

Fig. 2.35. Photo: Hans Thorwid.

Fig. 2.36. Photo: Hans Thorwid.

Fig. 2.37. © Fototeca della Soprintendenza Speciale per il PSAE e per il Polo Museale della Città di Napoli e della Reggia di Caserta. Photo: Hans Thorwid.

Fig. 2.38. © Fototeca della Soprintendenza Speciale per il PSAE e per il Polo Museale della Città di Napoli e della Reggia di Caserta. Photo collage: Hans Thorwid (original photographs: Margot Hleunig Heilmann, 1983 and Hans Thorwid, 2014).

Fig. 2.39. Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg, C3612 1–2, 2, pl. 26. Photo: Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg.

Fig. 2.40. © Fototeca della Soprintendenza Speciale per il PSAE e per il Polo Museale della Città di Napoli e della Reggia di Caserta. Photo: Hans Thorwid.

Fig. 2.41. Photo: Margot Hleunig Heilmann.

Fig. 2.42. Soprintendenza Speciale per i Beni Archeologici di Napoli e Pompei. Photo: Hans Thorwid.

Fig. 2.43. Photo: Margot Hleunig Heilmann.

Fig. 2.44. Soprintendenza per i BAPSAE per Napoli e Provincia. Photo: Hans Thorwid.

Fig. 2.45. Photo: Hans Thorwid.

Fig. 2.46. Soprintendenza per i BAPSAE per Napoli e Provincia. Photo: Hans Thorwid.

Fig. 2.47. Soprintendenza per i BAPSAE per Napoli e Provincia. Photo: Werner Heilmann.

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