PART V
POMPEIAN ART

CHAPTER LII
ARCHITECTURE

In the preceding pages the principal buildings of Pompeii have been described, and reference has been made to many works of art. We shall now offer a few observations of a more general nature in regard to the remains of architecture, sculpture, and painting.

The different periods in the architectural history of the city have been defined in a previous chapter. [The most significant of these, from every point of view, is that which we have called the Tufa Period, which corresponds roughly with the second century B.C. Its importance is chiefly due to the fact that it records for us a phase of architectural development, a style, of which only slight traces are found elsewhere,—in the East.] It is the last offshoot of untrammelled Hellenistic art in the field of construction; the architecture of the following period was still derived from Hellenistic sources, but was dominated by Roman conceptions, and received from Rome the impulse that determined the direction of its development. The remains of the Tufa Period at Pompeii furnish materials for a missing chapter in the history of architecture.

As we have seen, the stone preferred in this period for all purposes was the gray tufa. Where used for columns, pilasters, and entablatures, it was covered with stucco; in plain walls it appeared in its natural color. Unfortunately, the covering of stucco is preserved in only a few cases; the best example is presented by an Ionic capital in the first peristyle of the house of the Faun. The stucco was generally white, but color was sometimes
employed, as in the Corinthian columns and pilasters of the
exedra in the same house, which are painted a deep wine red.

No other period of Pompeian art shows in an equal degree
the impress of a single characteristic and self-consistent style,
Alike in public buildings, temples, and private houses, in the
interior decoration as well as in the treatment of exteriors.
The wall decoration of the first style is simply the adaptation
of tufa construction to decorative use. The motives are identi-
cal. The forms are the same, but these naturally appear in a
freer handling upon interior walls, the effect being heightened
by the use or imitation of slabs of marble of various colors.

This style throughout gives the impression of roominess and
largeness. It is monumental, especially when viewed in con-
trast with the later architecture of Pompeii. No building erected
after the city became a Roman colony can be compared, for
ample dimensions and spatial effects, with the Basilica. In the
same class are the temples of Jupiter and Apollo, with the
impressive two-storied colonnades enclosing the areas on which
they stand; the contrast with the later temples, as those of
Fortuna Augusta and Vespasian, is striking. All the more im-
portant houses of this period are monumental in design and pro-
portions, with imposing entrances, large and lofty atriums, and
high doors opening upon the atrium; the shops in front also
were high, and in two stories.

In point of detail, the architecture of the Tufa Period reveals
less of strength and symmetry than its stately proportions and
modest material would lead us to expect. The ornamentation
is a debased descendant of the Greek. It is characterized by
superficial elegance, together with an apparent striving after
simplicity and an ill-concealed poverty of form and color.
Though the ornamental forms still manifest fine Greek feeling;
they lack delicacy of modelling and vigor of expression. They
are taken from Greek religious architecture, but all appreciation
of the three orders as distinct types, each suited for a different
environment, has disappeared. In consequence, we often find
a mixture of the orders, a blending of Doric, Ionic, and Corin-
thian elements; and still more frequently do we meet with a
marked departure from the original proportions.

Thus in the court of the temple of Apollo and in the first
peristyle of the house of the Faun we see Ionic columns sup-
porting a Doric entablature; in the house of the Black Wall,
Doric columns with an Ionic entablature. The Doric architrave,
contrary to rule, appears divided into two stripes, not only in the
colonnade of the Fo-
rum, where the stripes
represent a difference
of material, but also in
the house of the Faun,
where the architrave is
represented as com-
pounded of single blocks
reaching from column
to column (p. 51). In
the Palaestra (p. 165), and in many private houses, the Doric
column was lengthened, in a way quite out of harmony with the
original conception, in order to make it conform to the prevai-
lng desire for height and slender proportions. The shaft no-
where appears with the pronounced entasis and strong diminu-
tion characteristic of the type, and the capital has lost the breadth
and graceful outline of the Greek Doric.

The Ionic columns in the cella of the temple of Jupiter (p.
65) are of the Greek type, with volutes on two sides; elsewhere
we find only the so-called Roman Ionic,
with four volutes, a type that appears in
several well defined and pleasing ex-
amples. One of these, a capital from the
portico at the entrance of the Forum
Triangulare, is shown in Fig. 249. The
deep incisions of the egg-and-dart pat-
tern, which give the egg almost the
appearance of a little ball, is charac-
teristic; it is found only at Pompeii, and there not after the Tufa
Period. A still freer handling of the Ionic is seen in the capital
of a pilaster in the casa del duca d'Aumale (Fig. 250).
The Corinthian capital appears in the usual forms, but the projecting parts are shallow, on account of the lack of resisting qualities in the stone. The best examples are the capitals of the columns and pilasters of the exedra in the house of the Faun. The workmanship here is fine, the realistic treatment of the acanthus leaves being especially noteworthy. An interesting series of variations from the normal type is seen in the capitals of the pilasters at house entrances; we have already met with a striking example of this series, ornamented with projecting busts of human figures (Fig. 178). The design is often so fantas-

![Fig. 251. - Altar in the court of the temple of Zeus Milichius.](image)

tic that the essential character of the Corinthian capital seems entirely lost sight of.

The entablatures of the temples built in the Tufa Period, as of those erected in later times, have all perished. The entabla-
tures of the colonnades, however, are at least in part well pre-
served in a number of instances, and are of two types, the Doric, characterized by the use of triglyphs, and the Ionic, dis-
tinguished by the dentils of the cornice.

Both types are found also in the wall decoration, the first rarely, the second very frequently. On the altar of the temple of Zeus Milichius, which is of tufa coated with stucco, the Doric entablature appears in association with the characteristic dec-
oration of the first style, the imitation of large blocks of marble; on the top are terminal volutes of Ionic origin, as generally

upon Roman altars and altar-shaped tombs (Fig. 251). On walls decorated in the first style, however, only Ionic entabla-
tures are seen,—sometimes even twice upon the same wall, as in the example shown in Fig. 122. From this we infer that in the temple construction of the Tufa Period, the simple and elegant Ionic entablature was the prevailing type.

Notwithstanding its free adaption of Greek forms, the Tufa Period availed itself very sparingly of polychrome decoration for architectural members. The stucco of the Ionic capital in the house of the Faun is white; white likewise are most of the capitals of pilasters found in the houses, and also the numerous Ionic cornices on the walls.

There are, nevertheless, scanty traces of the application of color. In the wall decoration of the house of Sallust we find a Doric frieze with the metopes painted red. The frieze under the Ionic cornices on the walls also is usually made prominent with color,—red, yellow, or blue; and a red frieze is seen in the peristyle of the house of the Black Wall, above the pilasters of the garden wall. The lower stripe of the painted architrave in the house of the Faun, already referred to, is yellow.

It seems probable that in some cases color was applied to the projecting figures of the peculiar capitals used in houses; at the time of excavation, traces of coloring were distinctly seen upon those belonging to the alae of the house of Epidius Rufus (p. 309). The exposed capitals at the entrances (Fig. 178), if originally painted, would naturally have lost all traces of the coloring before the destruction of the city, unless it were from time to time renewed. Notwithstanding these exceptions, we must conclude that the stucco coating upon public buildings and temples was generally white, in the case of capitals and cornices as well as of the shafts of columns and outside walls; colors were used to a limited extent, upon friezes and perhaps other parts of entablatures.

The architectural remains of the half century immediately succeeding the Tufa Period, between the founding of the Roman colony at Pompeii and the establishment of the Empire, present nothing specially characteristic outside of the peculiarities of construction mentioned in chap. 6.
Greek forms were replaced by fantastic designs of every sort, worked in stucco. The capitals of columns and pilasters retained a semblance of Doric and Corinthian types, but were adorned with motives from many sources; the variety of form and treatment can best be appreciated by inspecting the examples shown in our illustrations (Figs. 242, 253, 254).

The entablatures no longer retained the ancient division of architrave, frieze, and cornice, but were made to represent a single broad stripe, sometimes, however, with a projecting cornice; this stripe was ornamented with stucco reliefs, and was frequently painted in bright colors. Sometimes the decorative theme is taken from a vine, as in the entablature of the portico in front of the temple of Isis (Fig. 80) and that of the peristyle of the house of the Vettii (Fig. 161). In some cases the stripe is divided into vertical sections; the broad sections correspond with the intercolumniations, the narrow ones with the spaces above the columns; and the ornamental design is varied accordingly, as in the palaestra of the Stabian Baths (p. 198), the court of the temple of Apollo (Fig. 31), and the peristyle of the house of the Silver Wedding. In many instances the background is white, frequently part of the details of ornament as well; but colors were freely used, particularly red, blue, and yellow, in all parts of the entablature.

The lower third of the columns also was painted a bright red or yellow — a treatment that would have been abhorrent to the...
taste of the Tufa Period. The desire for variety and brilliancy of color increased, and was more pronounced in the years immediately preceding the eruption than at any previous time.

Consistently with this change in the standard of taste in regard to details, the Pompeians no longer had pleasure in the ample dimensions of the olden time. Houses were not now built with high rooms, great doorways, and lofty columns as in the Tufa Period. The rooms were smaller and lower, and also, we may add, more homelike. But curiously enough, the columns were often made thick as well as short, doubtless in order to afford more space for the display of color on the capitals and the lower part of the shaft.

Roman public and religious architecture in most cities still adhered to the forms of marble construction, a suggestion of which we find in the white walls of the temple of Isis; but the lower third of the columns in the colonnade about this temple was painted red, and the entablature was no doubt ornamented with colored designs, as was that of the temple of Apollo. The best preserved example of this last phase of Pompeian architectural ornamentation is in the semicircular vaulted niche at the right of the Street of Tombs.

Thus we see accomplished at Pompeii, in less than two centuries, a complete revolution in matters of taste, so far as relates to architecture. An entirely new feeling has been developed. The beauty of contour and of symmetrical proportion found in the Greek architecture had no charm for the Pompeian of the later time; its place had been usurped by a different form of beauty, that produced by the use of a variety of brilliant colors in association with forms that were intricate, and often grotesque.