

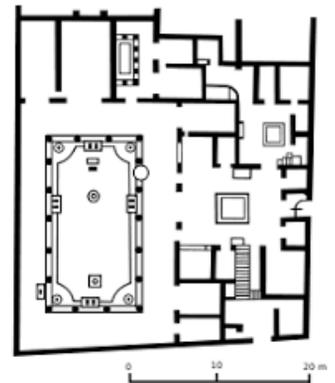
Houses in Pompeii

There are many surviving written texts in both Latin and Greek which describe Roman houses; for example, the architect **Vitruvius** (writing in the 1st century BC) describes the proportions and characteristics of the ideal house (see image below). He discusses rooms called **triclinia (dining rooms)**, which can also be called **exedrae** or **oeci**, the length of which should be twice the width. The layout of his ideal house was symmetrical; the **entrance corridor (fauces)**, led into the **atrium (an open-roofed entrance hall)** with a **central pool (impluvium)**, and then to the **tablinum** (often used as a reception room, study or family archive), and beyond it the **garden (hortus)**. Other **reception rooms (alae)** and **bedrooms (cubicula)** surrounded the atrium. The view from the street was very important, and the line of sight through the house was often emphasised by columns and sculptures. Some houses in Pompeii, such as the House of Menander, have benches to the sides of the **fauces** for those waiting to visit **the owner (paterfamilias)**. Written texts reveal that large houses were very important for social and political success.

Excavations of houses in Pompeii give us a more detailed picture of what life was like in a medium-sized town in Italy before AD 79. Houses were often decorated with mosaics, wall paintings and sculptures. While the majority of houses in Pompeii include an **atrium**, and many of the rooms described by Vitruvius, there is no typical Pompeian house; the houses come in many shapes and sizes, and the decoration was equally varied, depending on the wealth, social status, personal tastes and preferences of their owners. Rooms often had more than one function, as shown by the wide range of evidence for daily life which has been found by archaeologists.



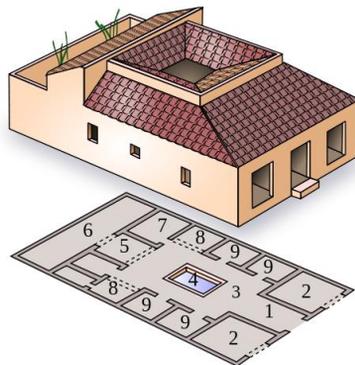
The House of the Vettii
Credit:
http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ancient/romans/pompeii_art_gallery_01.shtml.



Plan of the House of the Vettii. Credit: M.violante 10:28, 10 March 2007 (UTC) / CC BY-SA (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>)



Fig. 134.—Plan of the house of Sallust.



1. *fauces*
2. *tabernæ*
3. *atrium*
4. *impluvium*
5. *tablinum*
6. *hortus*
7. *triclinium*
8. *alæ*
9. *cubiculum*



Restored Exterior of the House (after Mau)

House of Sallust, Pompeii Credit: August Mau 1902 / Public domain

An 'ideal' Roman house (domus). Credit: Tobias Langhammer / CC BY-SA (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>)

Reconstruction of the House of the Vettii Credit: <https://sites.google.com/site/ad79eruption/pompeii/regio-vi/reg-vi-ins-15/house-of-the-vettii>



Corner of the peristyle (colonnaded walkway) in the House of Sallust, Pompeii, Credit: watercolor by Luigi Luigi Bazzani / Public domain

Atrium of the House of the Vettii VI 15 1 in Pompeii Credit: watercolour 1895 by Luigi Bazzani / Public domain

