

## Recent Research on First and Second Style Wall Painting at Cosa

During the American Academy of Rome's excavations in the 1960s at the ancient Latin colony of Cosa, an important group of first and early second style wall painting fragments were found and excavated (Brown 1960). The group composed a stratum of a dump used to level the hilly terrain of the highest point of Cosa for the construction of a temple. The group includes fragments of first style paneling with painted imitation stone. Additional fragments of early second style frescos provide important evidence for the history of wall painting at the site and the development of styles within the region. This collection of fragments was assigned soon after their excavation to be prepared for publication by Ann Laidlaw, who turned to Pompeii for comparanda and ultimately led to her important work, "The First Style in Pompeii: Painting and Architecture."

This paper will utilize legacy data initially collected by Laidlaw and the AAR team to discuss the dating, stylistic elements, and documentation of the fragments. The difficulties presented by the excavation context and the use of legacy data will be carefully considered within the analysis. Evidence of other wall decoration at the site of Cosa will be used to contextualize the fragments and comparative evidence of Republican paintings from Pompeii and Rome will be used to argue that the fragments originated within a public monument in the religious center of Cosa (Laidlaw 1985, Bruno 1993).

The materials from Cosa were never published and represent the opportunity to integrate the evidence into the koine of wall decoration and practices in the western Mediterranean. To that end, the paper will conclude with a discussion of the future research plans for the group, including testing and analysis of the mortar layers of the plaster to organize the fragments into

groups of similar construction techniques to facilitate possible reconstructions of full decorative schemes.

#### Bibliography

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